



December 8, 2017

MEMO TO : Mayor and Council

COPY TO : City Manager's Correspondence Group
Park Board Senior Leadership Team

FROM : Malcolm Bromley
General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Park Safety and Cleanliness - Budget Implications**

Dear Mayor and Council,

Background

On November 28, 2017, a motion titled "Funding Support for Park Board Service Costs Associated with Key Problem Parks" was presented at the Regular Council Meeting. Council passed the following decision:

THAT Council refer recommendation A to staff for a budget impact analysis ahead of the Special Council meeting on December 6, 2017, regarding the budget.

FURTHER THAT recommendation B and C be referred back to staff as part of their deliberations already underway.

Original motion below:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. *THAT Vancouver City Council direct City of Vancouver staff, as part of the 2018 operating budget planning process, to prioritize forthcoming requests from the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation for increased funding to cover the service costs associated with key problem parks, as well as additional security attendants in Andy Livingstone and Creekside Parks in 2018, as per the Park Board resolution at the November 6, 2017, Park Board meeting;*

FURTHER THAT the funding be sufficient to maintain the cleanliness and safety of impacted Vancouver parks on an ongoing basis.

- B. *THAT Vancouver City Council direct City staff to assist as needed with Park Board efforts to develop a comprehensive and sustainable Park Ranger Service Model, as per the Park Board resolution at the November 6, 2017, Park Board meeting, in consultation and collaboration with the Vancouver Police Department and community partners to address safety, security, cleanliness and maintenance concerns, particularly in relation to the increased use of injectable drugs in Vancouver parks.*



- C. *THAT Vancouver City Council direct City staff to continue to liaise with their Park Board staff counterparts to explore ways in which Park Board can assist in efforts to locate appropriate housing and supports for those struggling with mental health and addiction challenges.*

Analysis

Vancouver's current opioid crisis and homeless challenges have had significant impact on the safety and cleanliness of many urban parks. Injectable drug use in public spaces has led to mounting community concern regarding park safety and cleanliness, particularly around discarded used needles in areas where children play. As well, the increasing number of people seeking overnight shelter in parks, combined with higher demands on limited green space due to growing urban density, has made making park spaces safe and accessible for all users more complex. Responding to these concerns has required that additional attention and services be directed to some of the highest impacted areas, which has added stress to existing Park Board resources and systems. In June 2017, the Park Board increased resources dedicated to maintaining safety and cleanliness at key problem parks identified in the Downtown core.

At the October 3, 2017 Regular Council Meeting a motion entitled "2018 Budget Enhancements Pertaining to Littering and Residents' Safety" was brought forward for consideration. The motion requested for funding to provide 24-hour-a-day Park Ranger patrols at all Vancouver parks impacted by the significant challenges of drug use and littering, as well as additional funding to maintain the cleanliness and safety of impacted Vancouver parks on an ongoing basis. Council postponed voting on this matter until it had been fully considered by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation as part of their regular business.

At the Regular Park Board meeting held on October 2, 2017 (reconvened October 11, 2017), a motion on notice titled "Park Ranger Funding and Safety" was brought forward. The motion followed the spirit of the motion brought forward to Council on October 3, 2017 requesting 24-hour-a-day Park Ranger Patrols and increased funding for cleanliness and safety. The Park Board referred this motion back to Staff.

At the Regular Park Board meeting held on November 6, 2017, Park Board Staff presented the "Park Ranger Funding & Safety - Report Back". In this report, Staff reported back on the actions taken in 2017 by the Park Board, and in collaboration with the Vancouver Engineering Streets division. The key actions taken were as follows:

- A permanent satellite Park Ranger stations was established at Andy Livingstone Park
- A dedicated Ranger patrol was assigned from dawn to dusk to monitor activities at Andy Livingstone Park
- Two security attendants were added to provide more frequent service to Andy Livingstone and Creekside Parks playgrounds and public washrooms five days per week (implemented in October)
- A service level agreement with Engineering Streets division provided a dedicated crew 5 days a week to service 6 specifically identified parks to help manage the rising the number of encampments, at a rough cost of \$80,000.



Following this report back from Staff, the following motion was approved by the Park Board which requested (in Part E) for specific inclusions in the 2018 operating budget:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

- A. THAT the Vancouver Park Board receive the information outlined in this report in response to the referred motion titled "Park Ranger Funding and Safety";*
- B. THAT the Board direct staff to develop a comprehensive and sustainable Park Ranger Service Model, in consultation and collaboration with the Vancouver Police Department, City of Vancouver, and community partners, to address safety, security, cleanliness and maintenance concerns, particularly in relation to the increased use of injectable drugs in Vancouver parks;*
- C. THAT staff continue to liaise with City of Vancouver and community partners to explore ways in which the Park Board can assist in efforts to locate appropriate housing and support for those struggling with mental health and addiction challenges;*
- D. THAT staff report back to the Board by June 2018 with recommendations that include considerations for financial, legal, and cross-jurisdictional issues; and*
- E. THAT the Vancouver Park Board continue a service agreement with the City's Engineering Streets division to assist with key problem parks, as well as additional security attendants in Andy Livingstone and Creekside Parks in 2018; and further that costs be supported through a funding request to the City of Vancouver or through the Park Board's 2018 Operating Budget.*

Impact on Park Board Operating Budgets

The total forecasted cost of this program in 2017 is estimated to be \$265,000, broken down as follows:

- \$105,000 - Costs for Engineering Streets division crew (~\$17.5K/month),
- \$30,000 - Two security Attendants (\$10,000/month)
- \$130,000 - Park Rangers (~\$22.5K/month)

Costs with respect to the SLA with Engineering exceed the original budget estimate due to additional crews deployed on Saturdays on occasion in order to stay on top of clean-up demands. This has been funded through operational surpluses within the Park Operations budget.

For consideration in the 2018 Operating Budget, Item E of the above motion required that the Vancouver Park Board continue the service level agreement with the City's Engineering Streets division to assist with key problem parks, as well as additional security attendants at Andy Livingstone and Creekside Parks in 2018.



In evaluating the financial implications of the above decision, a cost of \$150,000 was estimated, and included in the Park Board 2018 Operating Budget to be self-funded through the allocation of a portion of contingency funding. The \$150,000 is broken down as follows:

- \$90,000 - Engineering Streets Division (SLA continuation to June 2018)
 - Coverage of 6 specifically identified parks, 5 days per week
 - One crew - three staff and one truck + allocation of supervisor time
- \$60,000 - Security Attendants, continuation to June 2018

In addition, the Park Board also has incremental funding in its 2018 operating budget to hire 2 new full time Park Rangers as part of the Park Safety investment approved in 2017. These additional staff will also be available to address the safety and cleanliness concerns in key problem parks, and as a result no additional funding specifically related to Park Rangers was requested.

These funding commitments have been put in place to cover from January 1, 2018 through to June 30, 2018 to align with the direction to report back to the Park Board by no later than June 2018 with a new comprehensive sustainable Park Ranger Service Model.

In consultation with the Engineering Streets division, in order to provide coverage through the full year, and have sufficient resources to attend all 6 parks, 7 days per week, the cost is estimated at roughly \$500,000, which is broken down as follows:

- \$380,000 - Costs for Engineering Streets division crew(s)
- \$120,000 - Two security attendants

This represents a roughly \$350,000 incremental funding gap based on the current budget submission.

The cost to implement a new comprehensive Park Ranger service model is not known at this time, but will be quantified and provided as part of Staff's report back in mid-2018.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Malcolm Bromley".

Malcolm Bromley
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

(T) 604.257.8448

(E) malcolm.bromley@vancouver.ca

/SJ