

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

Principles for Vancouver Park Board - 2014-2018

Preamble:

The system of park land in the City of Vancouver is an important facet of overall sustainability, especially when extensive reduction of green space and permeable land is foreseen for all private land through densified redevelopment. The existing parks and recreation lands are precious, limited, and extremely difficult to augment. The public interest requires avid protection of all these green and open spaces. Justification for any new building whatsoever on park land must undergo extensive and rigid scrutiny.

Basic Principles:

The Vancouver Park Board should:

- 1) Preserve all green open space in as natural a form as possible for future generations. Continue to recover natural features such as streams through daylighting. Buildings or parking lots expansion should find other locations.
- 2) Acquire new land for recreational facility and green space expansion in direct proportion to the increasing population growth, such that the natural open public space remains at or above the historical standard of 2.75 hectares per thousand residents. Both human and ecological health rationales underlie this strictly defined goal.
- 3) Improve and increase community spaces – both indoors and out – to service population growth and the changing cultural and generational priorities of Vancouver residents.
- 4) Prioritize the safe and comfortable use of all park facilities by the full range of the ever-growing human population of the City, with particular attention to the requirements of children, youth, and seniors.
- 5) Provide a participatory process for determining priority funding for Community Centres and Recreational Facilities.
- 6) Purchase, maintain and refurbish churches and their properties as the community spaces they already are. To use these sites for development would always be a net loss to the city (e.g. St. James Square on W. 10th Ave.) This is an affordable way to expand public amenities for growth while preserving neighbourhood character.
- 7) Protect and /or purchase neighbourhood theatres as affordable options for public amenities.
- 8) Ensure that any change in existing park space use is supported by the adjacent communities and that all park activities are overseen with these critical neighbouring stakeholders in mind.
- 9) Maintain full public access to all park spaces, and permit fenced and gated special events only for short durations.
- 10) Avoid light pollution on Park Board land by avoiding stadium style lighting on artificial turf fields. Use only fully shielded down lighting to avoid reflection beyond the fields, in order to maintain healthy natural ecosystems, to protect residential areas, and to conserve energy.
- 11) Limit amplified noise pollution from park event users onto adjacent residential areas to retain livability.
- 12) Advocate City Council to fund the Park Board at the level required to support existing and expanded facilities.
- 13) Respect Park Board sovereignty and decision-making independence.
- 14) Avoid all Public-Private-Partnerships (P3's), long term leases, real estate sales, and/or housing/commercial development on existing Park Board land.

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- 15) Productively work with community centre associations to help balance local neighbourhood and city-wide issues, including to help those community centres that need assistance rather than eliminating associations altogether.
- 16) Hastings Park Plan - Return to community-supported directions to green the majority of the park and address the east side's park deficiency. Place Hastings Park under Park Board governance as requested by the community.