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**POLICY NAME:** "Adopt-A-Park" program for City of Vancouver      **POLICY NO. 2011-01**

**DEPARTMENT DIVISION:** Parks Administration / Public Works Grounds

**Date:** 15 April 2011

**Supersedes:** NEW

**APPROVED:**

*Signature on file*

Peter M. Mayer, Director, Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation      Date

*Signature on file*

Brian Carlson, Director, City of Vancouver Public Works      Date

**Recommended by:**

*Signature on file*

Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission      Date

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## 1.0 PREAMBLE

City of Vancouver properties, including public parks, trails, urban open space, rights-of-way, cemeteries, etc. are maintained by the City of Vancouver Public Works Department. Most structures within these public areas are maintained by the City's Facilities Division, respectively. The City of Vancouver recognizes the opportunities for greater volunteerism are a critical element in supplementing and supporting the skilled work of parks and facilities maintenance staff and in building a stronger, more healthy and sustainable community.

The City of Vancouver seeks greater consistency, coordination and expansion of volunteer opportunities via an "Adopt-A-Park" program- focused on longer term commitments by volunteers in maintaining a particular public property within the City. The policy will:

- Establish parameters for the oversight and support of the City's "Adopt a Park" maintenance program;
- Establish expectations amongst and between the City and interested volunteers in accepting a longer term maintenance commitment of public property;
- Identify the general scope of maintenance tasks that may be performed by volunteers.

## 2.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED

- 2.1 Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission
- 2.2 Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department
- 2.3 City of Vancouver Public Works Department – Grounds, Greenways, Forestry Divisions
- 2.4 City of Vancouver General Services Department - Facilities
- 2.5 City of Vancouver City Manager's Office – Office of Neighborhoods
- 2.6 Evergreen School District
- 2.7 Vancouver School District
- 2.8 Parks Foundation of Clark County

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*We create community through people, parks, programs and partnerships.*

### **3.0 REFERENCES**

- 3.1 Vancouver Municipal Code
- 3.2 City of Vancouver Charter Article VIII  
General Development Section 8.04 Parks and Recreation

### **4.0 POLICY**

It is the policy of the Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department and the City of Vancouver's Public Works to:

- 4.1 Encourage volunteerism and seek individuals and groups to supplement the ongoing maintenance of City public spaces in neighborhoods from which they reside to build pride and community ownership. A volunteer database shall be created and maintained to further these efforts. One time volunteer events, activities and park repair projects are addressed by separate Department policy.
- 4.2 Provide “Adopt-a-Park” maintenance opportunities for interested individuals to volunteer their time and resources for an extended period to maintain a city property of their choice, including parks, trails, urban open space, cemeteries and right of way.
- 4.3 Provide individual and group volunteer opportunities for a prescribed term, frequency, and duration to be specified in a Volunteer Agreement with the City of Vancouver. Maintenance tasks will be jointly identified by the volunteer(s) and the City as specified in the Agreement. The “Adopt-a-Park” program requires a commitment to a minimum of six (6) months duration and requires select tasks to be performed a minimum of (2x) month. By entering into a volunteer agreement, the volunteer(s) will agree to indemnify and hold harmless the city and other applicable parties associated with the ownership, maintenance, operations or capital improvements of the specified public property(ies), the volunteer tasks performed, and any volunteer or donated improvements.
- 4.4 Provide volunteer coordination, including the recruitment, training, retention, support, and recognition of volunteers. The City, via VCPRD and Public Works, shall support the “Adopt-a-Park” program with adequate resources for this program.
- 4.5 Insure the safety of volunteers and the public and take reasonable steps necessary to minimize risks to all parties, address legal liabilities and promote safe practices. VCPRD may require the completion of and compliance to written agreements, liability releases, background checks and other remedies. VCPRD reserves the right to immediately suspend or terminate any Volunteer Agreement with or without cause.
- 4.6 Persons under the age of eighteen (18) may volunteer with the permission of their parent or guardian. Children under the age of twelve (12) must obtain permission in writing from their parent/guardian and have their parent or guardian present during all volunteer activities.

## **5.0 DEFINITIONS**

- 5.1 Vancouver-Clark Parks and Recreation Department (VCPRD) – Park and Recreation administrative office managed by a Director who oversees programs to provide park, trail, open space, sports fields and recreation services. The Director is authorized to administer policies directing business decisions for the department, including the “Adopt-a-Park” program. The Director, at their sole discretion, may designate responsible persons to manage assigned programs and services.
- 5.2 City of Vancouver Public Works Department- responsible for grounds and greenway maintenance duties in all public parks, ballfields, trails, open spaces, cemeteries and right of way.
- 5.3 City of Vancouver General Services - responsible for all facilities/structural maintenance duties in public parks, ballfields, trails, cemeteries and right of way.
- 5.4 Park and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC) – created by ordinance and appointed by the City of Vancouver Council (5 members) and the Clark County Board of Commissioners (5 members). Non-voting representatives attend from the Evergreen School District, the Vancouver School District and the Parks Foundation of Clark County. The PRAC advises the City Council, Board of Commissioners, Department Director and other city service areas concerning formulation of policy, plans and programs to carry out duties of parks and recreation services.
- 5.5 Volunteer Coordinator – The city shall designate a staff person to serve as the coordinator that will act as the liaison between the City and volunteers and administer the policy and programs for volunteer tasks and activities.

## **6.0 RESPONSIBILITY**

- 6.1 The VCPRD Director, or designee, shall oversee the City of Vancouver “Adopt-A-Park” program.
  - 6.2 The VCPRD Director, or designee, is authorized to enter into Volunteer Agreements with interested individuals or groups for purposes of conducting specific maintenance tasks in or on public parks, trails, urban open space, cemeteries, and right of way. The Director, or designee, is also authorized to immediately suspend or terminate such Agreements with or without cause.
  - 6.3 The VCPRD Director, or designee, shall approve a list of volunteer maintenance tasks and safety requirements in conjunction with the City of Vancouver General Services Director and Public Works Director, or their designees.
  - 6.4 The VCPRD Director, or designee, shall coordinate with the appropriate school district in the event that a volunteer project will occur on a joint school/park property. If the property is owned by the school district, the volunteer effort must comply with the applicable school district policies.
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- 6.5 Prior to the approval of a volunteer agreement for maintenance of a park, special feature or facility within a park (e.g. sport field), the VCPRD Director, or designee, shall consult and coordinate with Public Works grounds staff regarding the proposed maintenance tasks.

## 7.0 PROCEDURES

- 7.1 VCPRD, via its designee “Volunteer Coordinator”, shall coordinate opportunities between interested individuals and appropriate City of Vancouver departments responsible for maintenance activities for the identified City property.
- 7.2 The Volunteer Coordinator shall be responsible for the recruitment, training, retention, support and recognition of individuals and community groups to participate in the “Adopt-A-Park” program throughout the City of Vancouver.
- 7.3 The Volunteer Coordinator, in coordination with the appropriate City Department, shall identify specific maintenance tasks volunteers can perform, taking into consideration particular interests and abilities of the volunteers, City policies and safety considerations.
- 7.4 The Volunteer Coordinator shall consult with interested volunteers to identify appropriate roles for citizens.
- 7.5 A Volunteer Agreement shall be entered into between the parties that shall address:
- i. Schedule – Identification of and commitment to a minimum of six (6) months, with minimum twice (2x) a month frequency in performance of identified tasks;
  - ii. Participants – Names and contact information of the participating individuals
  - iii. Liability waivers / forms – All required city forms with signatures, including authorization forms for minors working in the park,
  - iv. Training / safety information – All required training, support, and safety/emergency procedures
  - v. Tracking information –Volunteers will track and report their work, including date, participants, hours worked and tasks completed.
  - vi. Tasks / Scope of Work– May include the following:

**Table 1.**

<b>Task Name</b>	<b>Description</b>
Debris / litter pick-up	Provide litter pick-up throughout park
Weed pulling	Remove weeds from landscaped areas
Planting	Tree, shrubs, flowers, etc.
Picnic table cleaning	Wash, clean, sand, paint tables
Playground cleaning	Wash, clean play structures
Play surfacing raking	Rake fiber chips in the play pits
Mulching	Spread and rake mulch/compost in beds
Raking	Leaves / debris, play pits, gravel, sand
Watering	Manual watering of new plant material
Facility cleaning	Cleaning the various features in the parks

*\* Note- other tasks such as weed-eating, blowing, graffiti removal or painting may be discussed on a case-by-case basis.*

- 7.6 Volunteers shall provide all necessary tools and equipment to perform the identified tasks, including appropriate clothing and personal protective equipment. By arrangement, VCPRD or others may provide additional support resources, including tools, safety materials and equipment.
- 7.7 By arrangement and with VCPRD pre-approval, select use of personal power equipment may be permitted. Safety and operational conditions will be imposed for any use of personal power equipment on public property.
- 7.8 Debris pick-up (limbs, leaves, garbage, etc.) service may be provided by the City as arranged by the Volunteer Coordinator.
- 7.9 Volunteers shall not perform tasks outside of the specified list contained in the Agreement without written consent of VCPRD.
- 7.10 The Volunteer Coordinator or other VCPRD designee, will meet on-site with volunteers to review the Agreement, conduct safety training, review anticipated maintenance tasks, address questions, etc. prior to the start of work.
- 7.11 VCPRD shall specify in the Agreement required event and warning signage, safety procedures, proper use of safety barricades, equipment and clothing, etc. to ensure the protection of volunteers and the public during the performance of maintenance tasks.
- 7.12 The Volunteer Coordinator shall periodically review the Agreement and work progress with the volunteer(s) and other applicable City Department to insure that all work is proceeding as specified in the Agreement and provide support as needed. The Coordinator shall insure that all required information is being monitored appropriately, will notify volunteers when they are not in compliance with the Agreement and identify steps to resolve outstanding issues.
- 7.13 The Volunteer Coordinator shall solicit feedback from the volunteers via a survey to understand their interest, issues, and concerns with the “Adopt-A-Park” program. This feedback shall be analyzed by the Coordinator and needed changes identified to insure success of the program.
- 7.14 The Volunteer Coordinator shall compile, monitor, analyze and respond to volunteer tracking data and periodically report performance data to the PRAC and VCPRD Director as requested. The Volunteer Coordinator shall maintain a current volunteer database. An annual report shall highlight the effectiveness of the program for City officials.

- END OF POLICY -

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