

SUBJECT: GUARANTEE OF LOAN FOR PURCHASE OF VANCOUVER PLAYLAND CAROUSEL

PURPOSE: To advise Council on the legality of a loan guarantee to the Lower Mainland Friends of the Vancouver Carousel for the purchase of a carousel.

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MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT this report be received for information purposes.

REPORT

Council on 1989 October 02 requested a staff report on the legality of a loan guarantee to the Lower Mainland Friends of the Vancouver Carousel (LMFVC) for the purchase of the Vancouver Playland Carousel.

The Municipal Act prohibits the municipality from guaranteeing any loans. Council can, however, make funds available by:

- . a grant-in-aid, or
- . a short term borrowing bylaw, or
- . an appropriation from capital reserves

Any alternative is acceptable and the operating or capital budget would have to be amended to reflect the funding. However, as a condition of the funding availability, the ownership of the carousel would need to be transferred to Burnaby before any funds can be released.

The Society plans to give the carousel to the Museum upon its restoration.

Of concern is the total amount of money needed to complete the project. LMFVC, in a proposal to the Museum Board (see copy attached), have summarized their goals as follows:

1. To find a permanent home for the carousel.
2. To raise funds to purchase it from the present owners.
3. To raise funds for and complete the museologically correct and historically accurate restoration of the carousel.
4. To construct a proper carousel house that will shelter and protect the ride while also permitting it to be operated year round.
5. To ensure its long term operation and maintenance.

A project budget has not yet been prepared, but total costs are likely to be in the range of:

	<u>\$000</u>
Purchase	350
Renovation	120 to 150
Infrastructure (location)	70 to 100
Housing structure	<u>200 to 500</u>
Total	740 to 1,100
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The Museum Board has accepted the offer of the LMFVC as outlined in the proposal attached. Because of the uncertainty of Burnaby's potential commitment to both capital, restoration and future operating costs, discussions among staff, the Museum Board and the LMFVC would need to continue to resolve these issues.

Unless Council directs to the contrary, the discussions will progress on a priority basis in recognition of the urgency in making a final decision on this subject.

May 26, 1989

174

Mr. Terry Malone  
Director  
Burnaby Village Museum  
4900 Deer Lake Avenue  
Burnaby, B.C.  
V5G 3T6

Dear Mr. Malone,

I am writing to you on behalf of the newly-formed Friends of the Carousel Society and its campaign to save, restore and find a home for the 1917 Parker Carousel at Playland on the Pacific National Exhibition Grounds. We believe that Burnaby Village Museum could provide a suitable home indeed, from a heritage standpoint, by far the most suitable home of the various locations we are considering.

We also believe that the carousel would constitute an extremely valuable asset, with considerable benefits, for your museum. After we have secured the funds for purchase and restoration, we would be willing to donate the fully restored carousel to Burnaby Village. All we require from your organization in return is a commitment to provide a permanent home for the carousel, subject to our completing all the fund raising and restoration work and constructing a proper carousel house. There would be no financial cost to Burnaby Village.

But in order for us to succeed in raising those funds we must first be able to assure potential sponsors that we do indeed have a firm commitment for a suitable location. And because there is not much time, these matters are urgent. We need that commitment soon.

That is our proposal in a nut shell. I wanted to cover the salient points (and gain your interest, I hope) right at the outset. I also wish to emphasize the importance of acting quickly and decisively if the carousel is to be saved. We have only until November to acquire it. However, that does not mean acting heedlessly; both your organization and ours must consider this matter with care. The owners of the carousel have agreed to give us until November to raise the funds for purchasing it. We are confident that there is enough time, but there is certainly none to waste.

... 2

-2-

ITEM 13  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 64  
COUNCIL MEETING 89/10/10

Enclosed is a separate proposal, discussing in more detail the background of the carousel, our society, the efforts we are making to preserve it, and the subject of its possible location. In light of a recent meeting between two of our board members and your curator, Mr. Stevens, we have attempted to address some of the concerns that Burnaby Village might have with respect to accepting the donation of the carousel.

We look forward to an early meeting with yourself and with your board. In fact we have been informed that your board is holding a special meeting on Monday evening, May 29. We hope that it will be possible to at least present our proposal at that time. Once again, we must emphasize that time is of the essence.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please do not hesitate to call me at 665-3072. Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,



Doug McCallum  
Orpheum Heritage Coordinator  
Secretary, The Lower Main Land Association of  
Friends of the Vancouver Carousel Society

PROPOSAL

FROM: The Friends of the Carousel Society

TO: Burnaby Village Museum

RE: Locating the Playland Carousel at Burnaby Museum

176

INTRODUCTION

The Parker Carousel presently located at Playland on the Pacific National Exhibition grounds is not only a valuable part of Lower Mainland history, but is a magnificent example of North American folk art and a moving symbol of our common culture. It has been a thing of beauty and a source of infinite delight for generations of people.

But now the current owners are threatening its continued existence through two destructive courses of action. We are working as quickly as we can to rescue this historic artifact from destruction and preserve it for future generations to appreciate and enjoy. But there is not much time left. We are offering Burnaby Village Museum an opportunity to make a vital contribution to this act of heritage conservation and to gain a priceless treasure and a tremendous attraction for its museum collection. There will be no cost to Burnaby Village; on the contrary, the restored carousel will ultimately provide the museum with a source of additional revenue and a means of attracting additional visitors to the village itself.



#### BACKGROUND

This carousel was built in 1917 at the Leavenworth, Kansas, factory of Col. C.W. Parker, one of the most famous names in the history of North American carousel building. It is one of only two Parker Carousels from that year still in existence. Several years after the carousel's construction the owner at the time replaced a number of the horses, which had either been lost or damaged, with Parker horses of an earlier vintage. All the horses now on the carousel are original Parker creations, and with the exception of some smaller metal ones, are of hand carved wood. All elements of the carousel fit comfortably within Burnaby Village's time period of 1905 to 1925.

With its 36 horses, the Parker is a medium sized carousel not a big city model, but a portable or travelling type originally intended for small towns and villages. Operators hauled them from town to town, often as part of a circus or carnival, or to provide entertainment at local country fairs. As touring circuses declined, carousels often became permanently located at amusement parks, fairgrounds, or in community parks. Sometimes streetcar companies bought them when they were opening a branch line to outlying districts. It became a common practice to install carousels and other rides at those remote rural stations in order to encourage people to use the new streetcar lines. A local example of a similar practice was the roller coaster that B.C. Electric installed at the village of Cedar Cottage at the turn of the century.

The carousel at Playland was of this small town, travelling type and was undoubtedly used for some or all of these purposes during its first three decades of existence.

In 1947 it became a fixed installation at the Pacific National Exhibition, replacing an earlier Spillman carousel. In the 42 years it has been here generations of British Columbians have ridden it. At some point the band organ for the carousel disappeared. Efforts to determine its whereabouts have not been successful, but it will not be difficult to acquire another of the correct type and vintage. Otherwise the carousel is intact and fully operational.

But its future integrity and operation are threatened from two courses of action on the part of the carousel's present owners, York-Hannover, a Toronto based company that operates Playland Amusement Park. For a number of years the owners have allowed the carousel to deteriorate from continued exposure of the wooden parts to rainy weather and excessive dampness. In 1987 they made a token effort to repair the horses, which they quickly abandoned when it was publicly revealed to be a mere pretense that was doing more harm than good, aggravating the effects of the existing dry rot.

Now, as public and political pressure has increased, Yorke-Hannover has announced its intention to break up the carousel and sell off the horses at an auction. The superbly carved and painted horses have become highly prized by private collectors, whose demand has made them objects to speculate on, pushing their prices ever higher, and making it ever more tempting to break up the remaining carousels. This fate has already befallen most of the 6,000 carousels that existed in North America before 1918. Only about 40 have so far been rescued from this form of destruction. We want to rescue this one.

ITEM 13  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 64  
COUNCIL MEETING 89/10/10

#### THE SAVE THE CAROUSEL CAMPAIGN

As with many such historic preservation efforts, this campaign began with the struggle of a concerned individual. Venus Solano was hired to work on the restoration that the carousel owners briefly carried out. In short, she fell in love with the carousel. Realizing the pretense and its counterproductive effects, she sought to make people aware of the threat to this piece of local heritage. With the support and assistance of the National Carousel Association in the United States, she alerted municipal, provincial federal governments and private citizens.

By the time York-Hannover announced its plans to auction off the carousel horses, the Mayor of Vancouver was prepared to intervene. He persuaded the owners to hold off on the sale until November of 1989, thus supplying an essential commodity for a campaign to save the carousel, time. Not a lot of time, but enough time, as long as we make effective use of it.

#### THE FRIENDS OF THE CAROUSEL SOCIETY

For the purpose of saving and preserving the carousel we have established a registered non-profit society, which has recently been incorporated under the B.C. Societies Act. We are now awaiting a federal tax number, which will allow us to issue tax receipts for donations, apply for foundation and government grants, and so forth.

The board of directors is headed by Venus Solano, President, who has led the campaign from the beginning. Vice President is Wayne McKay, who is also Vice President of VanCity Credit Union. Elio Luongo, the Treasurer, is a chartered accountant and member of Thorne, Ernst and Whinney,

one of B.C.'s largest accounting firms. Secretary is Doug McCallum, historian, author, and the coordinator of the Orpheum Heritage Project for the City of Vancouver. Other board members are Keith Jamieson, an internationally recognized authority on the history, art and operation of carousels, and Nina Fried Rhodes, a public relations and fund-raising consultant and the niece of Frederick Fried, founder of the National Carousel Association, with which we are affiliated. We are a group of professionals with a great deal of combined expertise and a serious commitment to preserve for future generations an irreplaceable part of our popular culture and common heritage.

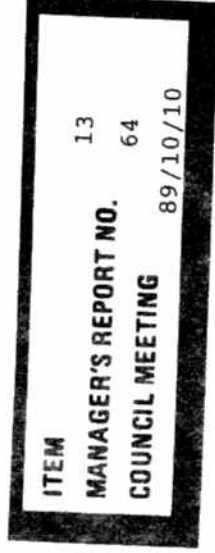
180

We can summarize the goals of the Friends of the Carousel Society as follows:

1. To find a permanent home for the carousel.
2. To raise funds to purchase it from the present owners.
3. To raise funds for and complete the museologically correct and historically accurate restoration of the carousel.
4. To construct a proper carousel house that will shelter and protect the ride while also permitting it to be operated year-round.
5. To ensure its long-term operation and maintenance.

These five goals are of course inseparable parts of the overall goal of saving and preserving the carousel for the people of the Lower Mainland and their descendants. On the one hand it is necessary to keep all of these goals in mind at the same time. Yet as a subsequent section of this proposal makes clear, some of the goals are more immediately imperative and must receive prior attention at this point.





WHAT WE HAVE ACCOMPLISHED SO FAR

In addition to the tasks involved in establishing the Friends of the Carousel Society, we have laid the foundation for accomplishing the various goals outlined above. From the National Carousel Association we have acquired a complete set of blueprints for the construction of an authentic and environmentally sound carousel house. We have secured the services of William Dentzel, great grandson of the man who introduced carousels to North America, and currently the continent's foremost builder and restorer of carousels. At our request he has thoroughly inspected the carousel at Playland and has given us a written appraisal of its present value and detailed recommendations and estimates for completely stabilizing, repairing and restoring the carousel. Mr. Dentzel will supervise this work, together with a qualified museum conservator and assisted by professional and volunteer labour where appropriate.

We have developed a fund-raising strategy that will involve both corporate sponsors and individual donations, and, later, fund-raising events, the sale of carousel momentos, and grants from governments and foundations. The core of our fund-raising campaign for acquiring the carousel is an "adopt-a-horse" program. This will involve 36 sponsors, with each one contributing \$10,000 - one sponsor for each horse. In this way each sponsor will have a sense of specific personal involvement, and each sponsor will have their name affixed to a small plaque on the pole that supports that particular horse. Other forms of sponsor recognition will include acknowledgements on a large placque attached to the wall of the carousel house and a series of "thank-you" ads in the Vancouver Sun newspaper.

Our major corporate player at this point is VanCity Credit Union, whose board has made a commitment to involve the organization fully in supporting and assisting the entire campaign. In addition to representation on The Friends of the Carousel Society's board of directors (in the person of Wayne McKay, VanCity's Senior Vice President, Marketing & Member Services), the company has agreed to "adopt" the first horse and is providing space for our meetings and administration support services from its staff. It will act as the financial institution to hold the donations in trust and will install donation boxes and carry out other fund-raising activities through its various branches and through employee involvement.

VanCity has also brought Grey Advertising on board, and that firm has designed a logo and corporate sponsorship package for us. Ted Calder, head of the Vancouver Sun's advertising department, has committed the newspaper to serve as our key media sponsor. The Sun will run a series of free large-format advertisements from June through November to acknowledge cash sponsors and to promote our campaign. The paper has also promised full editorial support. Another "in-kind" sponsor has been the legal firm of Davis & Company, who have donated many hours of professional time to speed up the process of incorporating our society and acquiring tax numbers. Lumberland has indicated that it would supply materials for the carousel house. We also have verbal commitments already from six corporations to sponsor horses. But before they will do so they want a firm commitment that we have a home for the carousel, and indeed that is the chief obstacle to the successful accomplishment of our fund-raising and other goals.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION

As in real estate and house-hunting, those are the three most important considerations for the Save the Carousel

ITEM 13  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 64  
COUNCIL MEETING 89/10/10

Campaign at the moment. We cannot expect sponsors to committ dollars unless we can assure them there is a specific and suitable location available. Neither they nor we want to save the carousel simply so it can sit on the back of a truck (as has happened to a carousel in Portland, Oregon). Their criteria for what would constitute a suitable location are essentially similar to our own. We all want a public place that attracts a good deal of pedestrian traffic, where people will see and make use of the carousel on a daily basis throughout the year. We want a pleasant setting that will set off the carousel, and where the environment will be in harmony and in scale with it. It should also be a location where some form of existing protection and security can be extended to the carousel.

We have singled out five desirable locations that we are exploring at the moment:

1. Stanley Park adjacent to the Children's Zoo
2. Granville Island
3. The proposed False Creek development of Concord Pacific
4. Burnaby Village Museum
5. Science World

Because time is in short supply we will probably have to accept the first location that is offered to us. However, we feel that the best location would be Burnaby Village. We hope Burnaby Village will agree.

#### WHY BURNABY VILLAGE?

Despite its sentimental value, which is considerable, to us the carousel is first and foremost a historic artifact. It should be ideally associated with a museum that will view it in the same spirit and will respect the particular security, environmental and preventive maintenance procedures and the controls and regulations that will be essential for its long term preservation. 184

From the interpretive point of view we feel that the carousel will gain immeasurably from the environment of a museum which has the expertise to interpret artifacts in ways that enrich and communicate their significance to people. The carousel deserves to be with "its own kind", that is, with other historic structures. As a historian the writer of this proposal believes that context is essential for people to fully appreciate any historic objects, events or persons. Context bestows meaning, understanding, true enjoyment.

And no museum could provide a better context than Burnaby Village, whose time period is perfect and which is an object lesson in the value of bringing together historic structures so that they provide an illuminating context for each other. And as a living history museum that allows visitors a direct experience of the past, a slice of life from another time, Burnaby Village again provides an ideal setting for the carousel, which is precisely something to be experienced, and surrounded by, not merely looked at. It, too, evokes a vanished way of life, and basically the same way of life as Burnaby Village. In short, the carousel could fit into other locations, but this one will give it a happier home, and it will mean more and people will enjoy it more in that environment.

### WHY NOT A CAROUSEL AT BURNABY VILLAGE ?

Burnaby Village would gain a number of tangible benefits from the carousel, but before mentioning those, let us consider possible objections or reservations about its presence there. First, it is understandable that the museum would not want such a large, complex artifact if it is going to arrive in its present condition, or be improperly restored or be housed in an inappropriate building. Nor would it want the carousel if its presence will drain the museums's budget by requiring capital or operating expenditures in either the short or long term, or by placing any additional burdens on the museum's staff.

As we have already suggested, The Friends of the Carousel Society will secure all necessary funding and will provide for all the work being done without any participation by the museum, except where the museum wishes to be involved. We have also indicated that we are committed to ensuring that the carousel restoration and the carousel house will be historically authentic and therefore in keeping with the letter and spirit of Burnaby Village.

We are not asking the museum to provide any money, shoulder any burden or take any risks. We are asking the museum only to commit itself to provide a location. And that commitment would be subject to our living up to all of our commitments and completing all of the work involved to the museum's satisfaction.

The museum need not even take the carousel as a donation if that is the preferred option. In that case The Friends of the Carousel Society would retain ownership and operation of the carousel as an affiliate of the museum. Removed from a private commercial operation, with no rent and no capital investment to pay back, the carousel will not only

sustain itself through ride tickets and concession sales; it will make a profit. Once that benefit becomes tangible the museum may decide it wants to take over the operations, or share it with our organization. We are agreeable to any arrangement and are willing to keep the options open.

186

Burnaby Village may also be concerned that the size and nature of the carousel may not fit in with the rest of the museum, its rural atmosphere and its Lower Mainland focus. We have already pointed out that the carousel's time period is appropriate and that it is of a size and type that was originally designed for small towns and rural rather than urban locales. In the U.S., towns as small as 6,000 people have permanent carousels in their parks and town squares even now. This was more common in the past.

If necessary, the carousel does not have to be within the museum as such. It could be on the outskirts, so to speak (though still enclosed by the fence - like the miniature railway). There it could evoke the fair ground, the carousel in the park, or the travelling carousels (and other visiting attractions) that were all representative of early twentieth century rural life.

#### BENEFITS

Quite apart from the negative virtues of not being a burden or spoiling the atmosphere of Burnaby Village, the carousel would confer some extremely valuable benefits on the museum. In fact one of these would become immediately apparent as soon as the museum agreed to provide a location.

Not only is the Vancouver Sun a sponsor, but other media organizations, including VU 13 and B.C. TV, are committed to support the save the Carousel Campaign, which by its very nature will be a very high profile and prestigious

ITEM	13
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	64
COUNCIL MEETING	89/10/10

affair that is, after all, one of the reasons why our sponsors are naturally eager to be involved. By agreeing to provide the location at the outset, Burnaby Village will receive maximum recognition, publicity, and free advertising, from the moment we are able to announce this fact to the press.

As the future home of the carousel, Burnaby Village will be a focus of public attention throughout the fund raising campaign. Its name will appear again and again in media stories and advertisements and will be carried into corporate board rooms and government granting agencies as the institution that is making it all possible. For the restoration phase of the project we would first like to construct the carousel house and carry out the restoration work there. Together with exhibits and publicity about these phases of work, the on site activity will arouse more interest about what is going on at Burnaby Village and the new attraction that will be opening there.

We will organize the opening as a major media event, with press corporate sponsors, and prominent politicians invited and Burnaby Village as the proud host. We can easily time the opening to coincide with the Burnaby Centennial, thus allowing the museum to add to that celebration as well, without incurring any expenses.

With the opening of the restored carousel Burnaby Village will gain a permanent visitor attraction that will increase in interest as original carousels become ever more rare in North America. Perhaps the carousel could be located so as to be visible from outside the park, thereby helping to draw people into it. In any case it will add colour, movement, music and nostalgic appeal. It has both aesthetic and historic interest that everyone of any age

can readily enjoy. It is an exhibit, a moving sculpture and a ride all in one. It offers a multi-sensory, hands on experience and possesses "critical mass". Whatever one may think of such current buzz words, they express real trends and changes in visitor habits, which the success Expo 86 and Science World have both influenced and benefitted from locally. The carousel offers Burnaby Village an opportunity <sup>to</sup> enjoy such a benefit without compromising its historic and museological integrity.

In fact they will be enhanced. The carousel will constitute a historic exhibit itself, especially with the addition of documentary display material and appropriate text and signage. And far from taking anything away from the existing structures and exhibits, it will add to them by complementing and supplementing the experiences and themes they convey. For example, while the majority of the structures are concerned with building up a vivid picture of the ordinary, everyday rural life of a small community in isolation, with the normally sober, respectable image it strove to convey the carousel will provide a contrasting reminder of the village in a holiday mood, of its extraordinary occasions, of those times when the carnival came to town, or the town hosted its own fair or carnival, or enjoyed summer afternoons in the park. The carousel will represent the contacts with the larger world beyond, the colour and excitement that impinged on even the smallest, most sober sided and isolated communities from time to time.

The carousel also provides kaleidoscopic impressions of historic transitions from folk art to commercial art, from natural to mechanical horsepower, from traditional handicrafts to modern industry, from rural to urban ways of life. The very process of building the carousel was a



ITEM 13  
MANAGER'S REPORT NO. 64  
COUNCIL MEETING 89/10/10

fascinating mixture of cottage industry and assemblyline manufacturing, of age old human skills and the new age of technology. Popular art always reflects the society that produces it, and the carousel is an eloquent, multi-faceted symbol of the values and forces at work in early twentieth century community life. It will provide many interpretive and thematic dimensions.

We have heard that Burnaby Village is under going an expansion and that it may acquire an operating street car. From what has already been said, it is clear that the carousel will become all the more relevant and appropriate as Burnaby Village continues to grow and "come of age". Perhaps one day visitors will be able to take a ride on the streetcar and get off at the carousel, just as people did 75 or 100 years ago.

#### CONCLUSION

We hope that Burnaby Village will give serious consideration at the earliest opportunity to our proposal, which is certainly the result of serious consideration on our part. As we say to our other sponsors, we invite you to get on board and ride the carousel with us ... forever. And for you, admission is free.

