

# Environmental Education in Downtown Vancouver

On behalf of the Vancouver Parks Board, we investigated: **How do the characteristics of downtown neighbourhoods and community centres affect environmental education programs and activities?**

## Methodology

### Background Research

We met with Vancouver Parks Board representatives to define the objectives and scope of the project.

We also became familiar with the City of Vancouver's various strategic plans on urban ecology and environmentalism.

### Community Centre Research

Online research was conducted through ActiveNet, community centre websites, and demographics.

This gave us an understanding the neighbourhoods and environmental education programs offered at each community center.

### Interviews with Community Centre Programmers

Interviews were conducted with a standardized set of questions to discuss: existing and past programs, resources, challenges, and opportunities to expand environmental education.

Findings of our project will be used to inform the Vancouver Parks Board on how to promote environmental education.



## Findings

**Potential Environmental Education**

5%  
(234)

Examples:

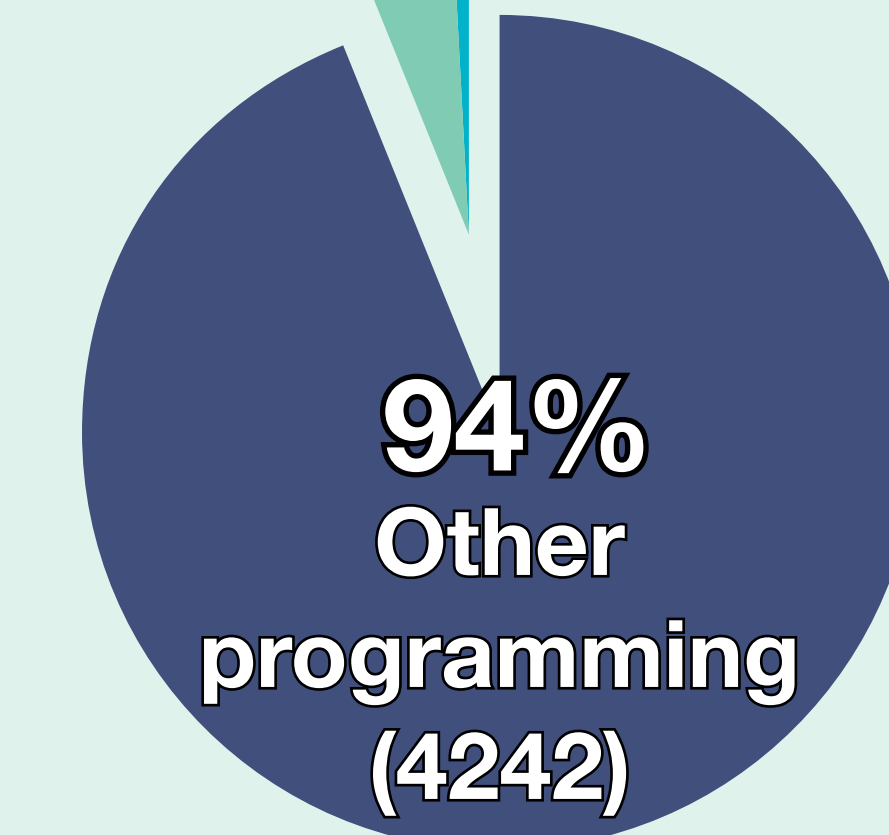
- Kayaking with discussion of marine ecosystems
- Arts and Crafts with recycled or eco-materials

**Existing Environmental Education**

0.8%  
(35)

Examples:

- Bird watching
- Nature walks with the Stanley Park Ecology Society
- Gardening Club



Of a total of registerable programs from Fall 2017 to Spring 2018

## Challenges and Needs

### Understanding of Environmental Education

Learning resources for programmers on how to implement environmental education is needed to build a common understanding across community centres.

### Need for Contacts

Lack of partners and orwith expertise in environmental education programs.

### Budget and Staff Capacity

Unstable and uncertain funding. Challenges of finding internal or contracted instructors.

### Need for Outdoor Spaces

Lack of access to dedicated outdoor spaces for environmental education.

### Transportation Accessibility

Access to bike, car (parking), and public transit varies.

## Recommendations

**Create** environmental education training for programmers. a database of environmental education contacts and organizations to facilitate the collaboration of partners across more community centres.

**Enhance** targeted environmental education funding and grants to offset instructor and partner costs.

**Infuse** discussions of environmental concerns to existing outdoor sports activities for meaningful interactions with nature.