



Pod of Orcas Popping Up @ Centennial Square

Date: Thursday, July 20, 2017

For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Grab your binoculars! A pod of life-sized orca replicas are popping-up in Centennial Square tomorrow and will stay for the summer.

The 'Follow the Pod' play structure aims to raise awareness of the threatened Southern Resident Killer Whale population by allowing visitors to play and interact with the life-sized sculptures. Each whale represents a local orca.

One of the whales represented is Springer, a Northern Resident killer whale who gained international attention as an orphan in 2002. She was found alone and in poor health in the Puget Sound. Canada and the U.S. worked together to rescue her and reunite her with her family in B.C. She is the first known whale to have been captured and then successfully reunited with her pod in the wild. Springer has recently given birth to a second calf, on B.C.'s north-central coast.

"As more people move downtown, we want our downtown public realm to be a place of play and exploration for people of all ages," said Mayor Helps. "This playful orca feature in Centennial Square does just that."

PHOTO AND INTERVIEW OPPORTUNITY:

What: Photo opportunity of new life-sized orca pod play structure, with remarks from Mayor Helps
Where: Centennial Square
When: Friday, July 21, 10 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.
Who: Victoria Mayor Lisa Helps, Council members, Ian Pears, Cultural Outreach Manager, DVBA, Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities and team members from WildVision Edutainment Inc. and Envision Designs and Development

BACKGROUND

Earlier this year urban designers, industrial designers, architects, landscape architects, contemporary artists and other creative types were invited to submit concepts for a temporary pop-up play feature in Centennial Square. Selected from 33 submissions, ranging from design concepts from a local secondary school to as far afield as Indonesia, Mexico and Poland, the jury selected 'Follow the Pod' as the overall winner of the Pop Up @ the Square Design Competition.

The winning design was submitted by a Vancouver Island-based team led by WildVision Edutainment Inc. and Envision Designs and Development. They have received a \$5,000 award, and up to \$50,000 for the design, construction and installation.

Recognizing there are currently few play opportunities for families with children living in the downtown core, the City is excited to team up with the Downtown Victoria Business Association to provide the orca pod play at Centennial Square.

This temporary play feature is the first step in a larger commitment to renewing Centennial Square through a master plan. This long term planning exercise will begin in 2017, and will guide future renovations to this square.

For more information: victoria.ca/popupsquare.

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For More Information:

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