



To: Richmond City Council **Date:** ☻
From: Councillor Bill McNulty **File:** 11-7000-01/2006-Vol
Chair, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee 01
**Re: PLANNING FOR PARKS AND RECREATION AND CULTURAL FACILITIES IN
THE CITY CENTRE**

The Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee, at its meeting held on Tuesday, February 28th, 2006, considered the attached report, and recommends as follows:

Committee Recommendation

That the guiding principles for planning for parks and recreation and cultural facilities in the City Centre (as outlined in the report dated February 14th, 2006, from the Director, Recreation & Cultural Services and the Director of Parks Operations), be adopted, with the addition of Part (4), 'That the City is ensuring the future capacity of a City Centre facility'.

Councillor Bill McNulty, Chair
Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Committee

Attach.

VARIANCE

Please note that staff recommended the following:

That the guiding principles for planning for parks and recreation and cultural facilities in the City Centre (as outlined in the report dated February 14th, 2006, from the Director, Recreation & Cultural Services and the Director of Parks Operations), be adopted.

Staff Report

Origin

On January 18th 2005, Planning Committee endorsed the following resolution:

That:

- (1) the following be referred to staff for further review: for the West Cambie Planning Area, land not be acquired for a community recreation facility and the community recreation facility needs of the West Cambie area be incorporated into City Centre planning; and*
- (2) staff identify the specific North City Centre and South City Centre community facility needs, funding alternatives and report back to Council for further direction.*

On March 29th 2005, Council endorsed the West Cambie Area Plan update in a report dated March 15th 2005 from the Manager, Policy Planning. An attachment to this report, "Cambie & North City Centre Community Centre Considerations," (**Attachment 1**) detailed the need for a City Centre Community Centres, Parks & Trails Implementation Strategy.

The purpose of this report is to recommend the adoption of guiding principles for the planning of parks and recreation & cultural facilities in City Centre and to outline the workplan required to identify specific locations and an implementation strategy.

Analysis

Since November 2005, Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services (PRCS) has been engaged in a planning process to meet the following objectives:

- To identify the guiding principles for development of PRCS Places & Spaces within the City Centre Planning Area;
- To develop a coordinated approach to the planning of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities in the City Centre Planning area; and
- To prioritize locations for future PRCS places & spaces within the City Centre Planning Area in order to coordinate with the development permit and property acquisition processes.

Context:

A number of factors are driving the need for a comprehensive planning process for parks and recreation & cultural facilities in City Centre including a changing and rapidly growing population, aging infrastructure in the Minoru precinct, the acquisition of the Garden City Lands and the development of the Richmond Oval and the surrounding neighbourhood.

The draft Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services Masterplan 2005-2015 recognizes the need for the following improvements or additions to City Centre in the coming years:

- City Centre Community Centre & Park – South City Centre
- City Centre Community Centre & Library – North City Centre

- Minoru Place Activity Centre expansion
- Richmond Oval and Waterfront Park
- Minoru Park review and re-design
- Garden City Lands Open Space development

Guiding Principles:

A team of PRCS and Policy Planning staff developed the following guiding principles to provide a framework for further planning and a common language for staff and community partners to use in discussion planning alternatives:

- 1. *Recognize our unique urban environment.***
 - a. Densely populated residential areas
 - b. Thriving business sector
 - c. Culturally diverse community
 - d. Transit oriented community
 - e. Proximity to the waterfront
 - f. International Gateway City
- 2. *Plan for sustainable development.***
 - a. Social - plan for places and spaces which support cultural harmony and a complete community
 - b. Environmental – plan for safe environments, appropriate open spaces and green facilities
 - c. Financial – take advantage of partnerships and development opportunities to support initiatives
 - d. Cultural – include arts and heritage as a vital part of the planning process
- 3. *Balance current and emerging needs.***
 - a. Acknowledge the differences in the North and South areas of City Centre
 - b. Recognise the existing needs of current residents
 - c. Coordinate planning with progress regarding the Richmond Oval, Minoru Precinct, Garden City Lands, CanadaLine and the International Destination concept.

Work Plan:

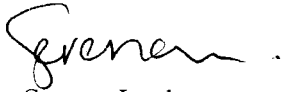
A work plan included in **Attachment 2** has identified the steps required to ensure a comprehensive planning process including appropriate opportunities for community input. It is expected that the work plan will be complete in June 2006 with a recommendation for adoption of a Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services City Centre Strategy and Implementation Plan being presented at that time.

Financial Impact

There is no financial impact of approving the guiding principles or reviewing the work plan.

Conclusion

Guiding principles are important to provide a framework and common language for discussing the planning process for parks and recreation & cultural facilities in City Centre. The proposed guiding principles are comprehensive and will help support the remainder of the work plan.



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ATTACHMENT 1

West Cambie & North City Centre Community Centre Considerations

1. Referral

On January 18th, 2005, Planning Committee endorsed the following resolution:

That:

- (1) *the following be referred to staff for further review: for the West Cambie Planning Area, land not be acquired for a community recreation facility and the community recreation facility needs of the West Cambie area be incorporated into City Centre planning; and*
- (2) *staff identify the specific North City Centre and South City Centre community facility needs, funding alternatives and report back to Council for further direction.*

2. Background

□ Richmond City Centre Plan

Richmond's City Centre Area Plan, adopted by Council on May 8, 1995, directs that the City should:

"Develop multi-purpose community centres within a 'comfortable walking distance' (no more than 1.0-1.5 km or about 15 minutes) of the majority of the City Centre's resident and worker population."

The Plan's Implementation Strategy indicates that satisfying this directive will require the provision of two new community centres (e.g., assumed to be approximately 30,000 ft² each):

- One of which should be located in the vicinity of City Hall where the City Centre's existing population is centred, and
- The other should be further north where it can better serve the downtown's future growth.

□ Aircraft Noise Sensitive Development Policy

As a result of amendments to the Official Community Plan (OCP) in November 2004, new residential development is possible in certain areas of the City Centre, north of Cambie Road, and the West Cambie planning area (**Schedule 1**).

In the north City Centre, this development is expected to be higher density and transit/pedestrian-oriented to complement the proposed Richmond-Airport-Vancouver rapid transit system (RAV).

In West Cambie, which is more distant from RAV, densities are proposed to be lower.

In both areas, access to services and facilities, including a community centre, will be important to local livability.

□ November 16th, 2004 Planning Committee Meeting

At the Planning Committee, during the presentation of the "West Cambie – Proposed Land Use Option", staff were asked to consider the need for a community centre in the area, particularly near Tomsett Elementary School (**Schedule 2**).

3. Community Centre Models

□ The Traditional Model

Richmond is served by a network of community centres, each of which is co-located with a large community park and one or more schools, and is intended to serve an area of 1,600 m (1 mile) in diameter or more.

This model, while very successful in Richmond's suburban areas, is inconsistent with the City's objectives for a higher density, vibrant, mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented downtown as the model's:

- Large site size is unaffordable where land in the City Centre is more costly and development densities are to be higher;
- Large facility size and catchment area assume that users will typically access the centre by car; and
- Siting and extensive open spaces and parking lots isolate its public use from complementary private sector uses nearby.

□ The Mixed Use Model

- General

As an alternative to this traditional model, there is a trend towards locating community centres on smaller sites (e.g., independent of conventional park space) within mixed-use buildings that incorporate housing, shops, and/or other uses. Locally, North Vancouver has recently opened a mixed community centre/high-rise housing project and Vancouver is pursuing a similar project.

The advantages and disadvantages of this model for the north City Centre/West Cambie area include:

"Mixed-Use Model"	
Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>A community centre could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated closer to the "heart" of the community • Better integrated into the growing community it serves • Located within a more reasonable walking distance of residents • More timely, as it will be built in tandem with local private development • Less expensive due to lesser land needs, lower parking needs, and cost-sharing with non-City uses (e.g., market housing) 	<p>A community centre would be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Situated independent of significant open space (e.g., play fields) • More constrained with regard to noise, etc. due to the proximity of neighbours • Limited with regard to expansion, as its site would likely be built out • More complicated due to various legal/tenure issues (e.g., strata or lease) • More expensive per m² to construct

- Recommendation – Mixed Use Model

The lesser land needs, lower potential costs, pedestrian-orientation, proximity to RAV and the greater ability to integrate public and private uses made possible by the "mixed use community centre model" outweigh its disadvantages and make it the most desirable means by which to meet the community centre needs of Richmond's growing downtown. It is recommended.

4. City Centre Community Centre Planning Principles

In considering the community centre needs of West Cambie and the north City Centre (e.g., north of Alderbridge Way), the following principles are proposed as a basis for achieving the "highest and best" community use possible:

A. Shared Facility

Based on projected populations, provide one community centre to meet the combined needs of West Cambie and the north City Centre.

West Cambie's population is currently 6,500 and could almost double. The existing population of the north City Centre is less than this, but will meet or exceed this number when it is built out. Together, the area's projected +/-25,000 residents warrant the establishment of a new community centre.

B. Proximity to Users

Based on anticipated population distribution, locate the community centre along Cambie Road, near Garden City Road or a short distance to its west.

From a population perspective, the Garden City/Cambie intersection is the rough centre of this area. However, with the opportunities afforded by RAV, it is expected that the population of the north City Centre will exceed that of West Cambie.

C. Pedestrian Orientation

Based on City objectives for wellness, the establishment of this facility as a focus of community life, and the need to keep costs down (e.g., through reduced parking, site size, etc.), locate the community centre where it is within convenient walking distance of the majority of area residents.

While the populations of the north City Centre and West Cambie may be roughly equivalent, the City Centre's development will be concentrated within a smaller area, which will place significantly more people within easy walking distance of Cambie Road.

D. "Mixed-Use Model"

Based on objectives for a cost-effective, vibrant, accessible facility, encourage the development of the community centre mixed-use model, as part of an urban, mixed-use project (e.g., not Richmond's traditional "facility in a park" model).

Anticipated higher densities and mixed residential/commercial opportunities in the north City Centre present greater opportunities for the mixed-use community centre model.

E. Timely Provision

Based on the anticipated rate of growth in West Cambie and the north City Centre, make provisions to ensure that a new community centre will be in place in 5-8 years (e.g., 2010-2013).

There are currently few residents in the north City Centre, and existing West Cambie residents are served, on an interim basis, by the existing Cambie Community Centre. Construction of a new community centre can, therefore, wait until residential development begins. It cannot, however, wait too long as prime opportunities for a "mixed-use community centre model" could be missed during City center re-development and the area's livability would suffer.

5. Alternate Locations

Based on the above principles, it is preferable to locate a new community centre along the Cambie Road corridor, roughly between Garden City Road and Brown Road.

With this in mind, four general locations have been considered (**Schedule 2**).

The results of this review are as follows:

Options		Comments	Conclusion
South of Cambie Road			
1	East of Garden City Road <i>Proposed for medium-density housing</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside the area's population focus • Limited pedestrian activity (e.g., fairly car-dependent) • Near the Tomsett school & multiple-family housing, but opportunities for the "mixed use model" will be limited due to lower densities and few potential development partners 	Not appropriate
2	East & west of Garden City Road <i>Proposed/designated for urban business park (e.g., office)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally inside the area's population focus • Weak office market and relatively low densities (e.g., little or no demand for more than 1 floor area ratio) makes the "mixed use model" impractical • Housing not permitted due to aircraft noise 	Not appropriate
North of Cambie Road			
3	West of Sexsmith Road <i>Higher-density mixed-use likely (including housing)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally inside the area's population focus • Pedestrian-oriented & in easy walking distance of a majority of residents • Higher density mixed-use presents good opportunities for the "mixed-use model" • High developer interest in this area could help to facilitate timely community centre construction • Near the existing Cambie Field park 	Preferred
4	East of Sexsmith Road <i>Higher density housing likely</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inside the area's population focus • Pedestrian-oriented & in easy walking distance of a majority of residents • Higher density housing presents good opportunities for the "mixed-use model" • High developer interest in this area could help to facilitate timely community centre construction • Neighbourhood commercial & small park (e.g., +/-2 ac.) could be built nearby 	Preferred

6. Recommendation

Proximity to residents, pedestrian-orientation, and opportunities for the successful implementation of the "mixed-use community centre model" strongly favour a location near the north side of Cambie Road between Garden City Road and the west side of Brown Road (e.g., Options 3 & 4).

7. Next Steps

- City Centre Community Centres, Parks & Trails Implementation Strategy
 - To ensure that the necessary north and south community centres, parks and trails are provided in a timely and cost effective manner in the City Centre, the Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services (PRCS) Division will prepare a City Centre Community Centres, Parks & Trails Implementation Strategy by December 2005.
 - The Implementation Strategy will address how the community centres, parks and trails can be established including their size, use, location, cost, budget, funding and timing. This will include proactive site acquisition options and any changes to the Capital budget.
 - This work will complement the updating of the City Centre Area Plan which, itself, is to be completed Policy Planning in December 2005.
 - In this way, the establishment of the community centres, parks and trails can be well managed.
- North City Centre Community Centre Timing
The development of the North City Centre Community Centre along the Cambie Road corridor is expected to be implemented within the next 5 to 8 years to coincide with the corresponding redevelopment increases in the area's residential population.

Prepared by the City of Richmond

**Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
City Centre Planning
WORK PLAN**

Project Scope:

1. To identify the guiding principles for development of PRCS Places & Spaces within the City Centre planning area.
2. To develop a coordinated approach to the planning of parks, open spaces and recreational facilities in the City Centre planning area.
3. To prioritize locations for future PRCS places & spaces within the City Centre planning area in order to coordinate with the development application and property purchase processes.

Project Deliverables:

A comprehensive paper identifying the following:

1. Guiding principles for PRCS development in City Centre;
2. General plan for coordination of PRCS places & spaces in City Centre;
3. Specific recommendations regarding desired recreational facility locations in City Centre;
4. Inclusion of the recommendations regarding desired recreational facility locations in City Centre in the City Centre Area Plan; and
5. Inclusion of the recommendations regarding desired recreational facility locations in City Centre in the Official Community Plan.

Work Plan:

Planning Phases	Deliverable	Date (2006)
Preparation	Preparation of Background Materials	November / December '05
	Commitment to Project Team Participation	early January
	Review of background materials and research into key issue areas	January – February
	Draft Guiding Principles	February
	Management Approval of Guiding Principles	February
Report to Council	Presentation of Draft Guiding Principles to Committee / Council	End of February
Initial Community Consultation	Community Consultation - education & awareness	March
Identification and coordination of parks and facilities	Identification of desired amenities and features of parks and facilities	March
	Identification of appropriate locations of parks and facilities	April
	Management approval of work to date	April
Primary Community Consultation	Opportunity for input and recommendations regarding proposed locations and amenities	May
Report to Council	Report to Council identifying coordinated plan for parks and recreation & cultural facilities in City Centre	June
Implementation Strategy	Development of Implementation Strategy	June