



Date: May 15, 2002

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
**SUBJECT: Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre Site:
Rezoning and Street Closures**

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board support the proposed rezoning of the Burrard Landing site to accommodate the Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre (VCEC), as outlined in the attached Council Report (Attachment 1), in the understanding that the existing open spaces will be connected to the new open spaces according to the proposed CD-1 Guidelines (Appendix E of Attachment 1):**
- **the Seawall in Harbour Green Park will continue in its full width up to the foot of Burrard Street at grades not exceeding 5%;**
 - **a secondary walkway will continue at the Seawall level around the development to the foot of Burrard Street;**
 - **the Thurlow Waterfront Plaza will be linked to the Seawall via a set of convenient and generous “grand steps”;**
 - **Harbour Green Park will be connected to the foot of Thurlow Street by wide stairs and ramps convenient for pedestrians.**
- B. THAT the Board support the proposed road changes, as outlined in the attached Council Report (Attachment 2), including a reduction in the future size of Harbour Green Park by 185.5 square meters.**

POLICY

The proposed rezoning and the proposed attendant road changes are formally outside the Board’s jurisdiction, however, the Board’s input is sought as Harbour Green Park and the Seawall are immediately adjacent to the site and affected by the proposal.

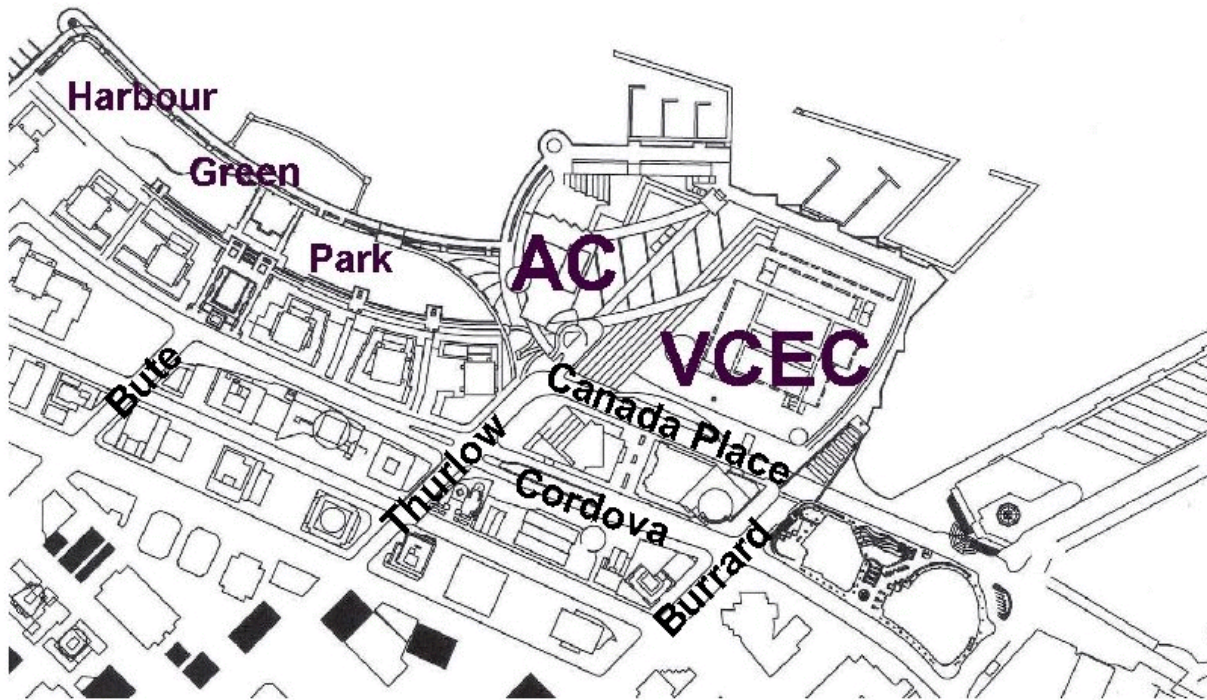
BACKGROUND

Burrard Landing is located at the foot of Burrard Street between Harbour Green Park and Canada Place (see site plan). The site is regulated by the Coal Harbour Official Development Plan and

the Burrard Landing CD-1 By-Law. It is now proposed to amend these policies to allow for the expansion of the VCEC onto this site, including new CD-1 Guidelines which establish the performance targets for any development application to be submitted under the revised policies.

DISCUSSION

The Burrard Landing site is the place where the Seawall comes to town, connecting the offices of the Central Business district, the residences of the downtown neighbourhoods, the hotels and tourist attractions to Stanley Park and parts beyond. It is a challenging connection to make because of the elevation difference between the Seawall at +3.5 meters and the downtown streets higher up on the embankment: the north end of Burrard Street is projected at +13.4 meters, the north end of Thurlow Street at +14.8 meters.



Burrard Landing is also the site for the long-proposed Arts Complex (AC) whose relationship with the adjacent Harbour Green Park - as expressed in the current ODP and guidelines policy - is problematic due to underground and aboveground easements that basically allow the Arts Complex to extend into the park, and due to the previous design concepts which put the tall fly tower onto the park edge.

The proposed guidelines provide for connections between the existing open spaces - Seawall, Harbour Green Park, downtown streets - and the proposed new open spaces - Civic Plaza,

Thurlow Plaza - in various ways:

- Seawall to continue along the water's edge, ramping up gently at a gradient not over 5%, at least 12 meters wide with separated paths for pedestrians and cyclists, consistent with the design, dimensions, functions and finishes of the Seawall in Harbour Green Park (see proposed guidelines 3.7.1);
- a secondary walkway continuing along the water's edge, but staying at the lower elevation level (3.7.2) and connecting up to the downtown street level with elevators (3.7.3);
- gradual, convenient and generous "grand steps" to connect Thurlow Plaza to Civic Plaza and Seawall (3.7.4); and
- a wide stair and ramped connection to be provided from the foot of Thurlow Street to Harbour Green Park (3.7.9).

These connections are the primary ones, there are secondary connections from many other parts and levels of Burrard Landing to the existing and proposed open spaces.

The proposed rezoning does not require but opens the door to a reconsideration of how the long-proposed Arts Complex addresses Harbour Green Park. The design has not yet progressed to a definitive stage, however, there is an expectation that the Arts Complex will no longer position the fly tower towards the park but instead face the park with glazed lobby spaces. There is further hope that the allowed underground and aboveground encroachments of the Arts Complex into the park will no longer be needed.

Parallel to the Council Report on the rezoning, Council is receiving a report on changes in road configuration involving the north ends of Thurlow and Burrard Streets, and a western extension of Canada Place (the road). As part of these road changes, a small triangle of land (185.5 square meters or 0.05 acres) that was intended to eventually become part of Harbour Green Park will now become part of the straightened Thurlow Street road allowance.

On balance, staff conclude that the overall improvements in the quality of the open space system as expressed in the many connections mentioned in this report outweigh the loss of a very small piece of land; and that the proposed rezoning, the guidelines and the road changes are therefore supportable.

Prepared by:

Planning and Operations
Board of Parks & Recreation
Vancouver, B.C.
TCD