



Date: March 12, 2004

TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
**SUBJECT: WEST POINT GREY PARK AND RECREATION
NEEDS ASSESSMENT**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT a park and recreational facilities needs assessment for the West Point Grey neighbourhood be conducted in cooperation with the West Point Grey Community Association and guided by the terms of reference contained in this report.

POLICY

The Park Board regularly collects information about park and recreational needs in order to adjust programs offered in our existing facilities and to help plan for new and expanded facilities and/or parks.

BACKGROUND

On December 15, 1999, the City received a preliminary proposal from the British Columbia Buildings Corporation (a Provincial Crown Corporation) to subdivide the provincially-owned upper Jericho lands for single family dwellings. Park Board staff expressed a concern that this subdivision and subsequent development would impede the delivery of recreational programming in the community and diminish community assets including views, open space and trees. Park Board staff suggested that a planning process, involving broad community participation, be instituted to ensure development scenarios that meet the aspirations of all parties involved. On May 29, 2000, Council approved a re-zoning of the upper Jericho lands (including the Provincial as well as the Federally-owned properties) from RS-1 to CD-1, which effectively invalidated the subdivision proposal and forestalled the need for an associated planning process.

At its meeting of March 12, 2001, Park Board rejected a proposal by the West Point Grey Academy to lease the building on Jericho Park currently tenanted by the Jericho Hostel. The proposal was for the development of an educational institution, with some recreational and cultural amenities provided in exchange for the use of dedicated park land. It was noted in the discussion of this proposal, and recorded in the minutes, that a needs study should be in place before any major changes were made to Jericho Beach Park.

Subsequently, on May 28, 2001, Park Board approved a recommendation that a parks and recreation needs assessment be prepared for the WPG neighbourhood. The staff report made to the Board on this topic outlined a process and summarized the information currently available with respect to area demographics and to parks and recreation services in WPG.

DISCUSSION

The proposed terms of reference for the needs assessment were developed in consultation with District staff and representatives of the WPG Community Association. However, a number of months have passed since the terms of reference were last circulated in draft for District and Association input. There has since been some turnover amongst stakeholders, and possibly new issues and priorities to consider. Therefore it is proposed that the first step in the assessment process will be a joint review of the overall project to clarify and set assessment objectives.

Exploratory discussions on this subject have revealed that a critical issue to be addressed through the assessment process is how to effect an eventual consolidation of the West Point Grey Community Centre from multiple program sites into a single, highly visible location. Two scenarios have emerged as to how such an outcome might be achieved.

Initially it was thought that consolidation would best be achieved at a facility more centrally located in WPG, in the context of a denser 'neighbourhood centre' likely to result from the redevelopment of either or both of the federal and provincial upper Jericho lands. This redevelopment would both trigger and enable the construction of the new community centre building, possibly co-located with other compatible City services, at a prominent location closer to public transit and hence more accessible by the broader community. Such a scenario in connection with West Point Grey is reflected in the Community Centre Renewal Plan (see Appendix B) but, since the re-zoning of the upper Jericho lands four years ago, neither the provincial or federal governments have signaled an intention to proceed with the sale or redevelopment of their properties.

Meanwhile, an alternative consolidation scenario has evolved, in consideration of the facilities centred upon the existing heritage building, extending to and including the Jericho Arts Centre. Enhancements over the short and long term would strengthen the linkages between these facilities and take full advantage of local waterfront and park settings. The combined facilities would serve as a community centre for WPG, but some programming might be more specialized or address a broader catchment than is typically the case for most centres.

A number of renovation or expansion projects consistent with this alternative vision have been proposed in the last year by the Community Association, or by organizations affiliated with the Association. These include:

- Remodeling of and an addition to the Jericho Arts Centre, proposed by the United Players;
- Construction of a fencing hall, proposed by the Vancouver Theatrical and Modern Fencing Club; and
- Access improvements to the fitness and gym facility, proposed by the Association.

Given these and other works that are or may be contemplated, the needs assessment should now proceed in order to establish a long term direction to guide community centre and other recreation facility development. Terms of reference for this study have been revised and updated based upon the exploratory discussions held with the Community Association. The work will be conducted over the next six months, with a report back to the Board in the Fall. The budget of the study, including consultancies if required, is \$20,000, with costs to be charged to the park planning capital account.

SUMMARY

The Board is asked to approve a needs assessment for the Point Grey Neighbourhood, focused upon setting directions for facility development and related capital investment. The project will be conducted by staff in consultation with the West Point Grey Community Association and other stakeholders, with a report back to the Board in the Fall.

Prepared by:

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