



Date: June 10, 2004

**TO: Board Members - Parks and Recreation**  
**FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation**  
**SUBJECT: Childcare Buildings on Captain Cook and South China Creek Parks**

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## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- A. *THAT the Board approve the use of the required portion of Captain Cook Park for a fenced play area, and that the Board enter into a 5 year agreement with the operators of the Gingerbread House Daycare for the purposes of operating licensed childcare programs on a portion of Captain Cook Park, at no cost to the Park Board.***
- B. *THAT the Board grant YMCA Childcare Services permission to construct at South China Creek Park:***
- *a 2-storey, 550 sq metre permanent facility for the purposes of licensed childcare and for a shared community room, and 520 square metres of fenced outdoor licensed childcare play yard;***
  - *that detailed design drawings be presented to the community involved in the park redevelopment process for consideration and comment and be subject to design approval by the Park Board;***
  - *that the building become the property of the Board upon substantial completion;***
  - *at no cost to the Park Board.***
- C. *THAT the Board enter into a 10 year agreement with a 10 year renewable option clause with YMCA Childcare Services to operate the aforementioned facility at South China Creek Park, at no cost to the Board.***
- D. *THAT the Board correspond with the Director of Childcare Services of the British Columbia Ministry of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, with a request to relax the funding deadline in order to better coordinate the Nanook Childcare facility development process with the current GVRD sewer upgrade and the park redevelopment process.***
- E. *THAT in the event that the operator of a childcare facility cease the operation of the licensed childcare services specified in this report, the facility or parkland in question shall revert to the Park Board for public park use.***
- F. *THAT all arrangements be made subject to the satisfaction of the General Manager, Director of Legal Services and Director of Risk Management.***

## **POLICY**

In February, 1974, the Board resolved that day care centres could be a suitable facility in or adjacent to neighbourhood and community parks.

In June, 1992, the Board adopted guidelines and procedures for locating daycare on parks. A copy of those guidelines and procedures are attached as Appendix I.

In March 2004, the Board approved a Child Care Protocol which sets out a framework for the Park Board to work with the City and School Board to build a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services. The Protocol intends that there shall be no loss of licensed group childcare spaces as a result of issues within the control of local governments, and that the 3 bodies will work to increase child care spaces in the city by 5% in the next two years.

## **BACKGROUND**

In 1974, the City entered into lease arrangements with the Provincial Government for the use of city, park and BC Hydro land on which to build 10 childcare portables. Over 30 years, these programs have operated in buildings owned by the Province which covered occupancy costs, annual maintenance and repairs. The BC Buildings Corporation approached each childcare operator in the 8 remaining portables with offers to upgrade the portables to modular buildings, or to use funds in lieu to construct a permanent building for childcare use.

The BCBC offer was contingent on childcare operators receiving access to land, and to being the owner/operator of the new facilities. Subsequently, new agreements would be required between the childcare non-profit society and the Board, and the BC Buildings Corporation would no longer have an interest in the facilities.

At the Park Board meeting of May 3, 2004, the Board resolved to provide land for the construction of 3 portables at Burrardview Park, at Kits Area parksite, and at South China Creek Park, subject to the satisfaction of the General Manager and the Director of Legal Services. The Board also authorized staff to conduct community consultation processes to seek public opinion on requests from two childcare operators to change the nature of park use at South China Creek and Captain Cook Parks.

The proposal from YMCA Childcare Services sought permission to build a permanent facility at South China Creek Park to provide for the existing 25 licensed spaces for 3 to 5 group daycare, and expand to provide for 12 infant-toddler spaces, and additional space for parent education and shared community use.

The proposal from Gingerbread House Daycare sought permission to build a new modular building for 25 licensed childcare spaces for 3 to 5 group daycare. The Gingerbread House proposal is conditional to joint land access from the School Board and the Park Board. Gingerbread intends to relocate the current portable from its present location on Hydro land, to a site where the modular building would sit on Captain Cook School property, and some of the fenced open space required would be on Captain Cook Park.

Appendix II charts the locations and names of the 4 childcare organizations involved in the operation of child care portables on parkland, the status of their approvals and the requests currently under consideration.

The childcare organizations are operating on a deadline of June 30, 2004 established by BCBC to advise on both the status of their access to land, and on their preference for a modular building or a permanent building. The deadline for completion of the construction of modular buildings is March 31, 2005, and the construction of a permanent building must commence by March 31, 2005 in order to qualify for funding.

## **DISCUSSION**

Requests from childcare providers to change current or approved use of parkland for licensed childcare services requires a series of steps outlined in Board guidelines for the use of parks for this purpose. Guidelines (Appendix I) indicate an analysis which includes a search for alternative sites, a public process, siting within parks, and the nature of the built form.

### Guidelines for Reviewing the Request

Guidelines suggest that facilities should complement park functions, that a series of alternate priorities be considered, that childcare facilities on smaller parks (less than 3 acres) should be adapted to existing buildings instead of building more than one facility, that no ancillary facilities such as parking will be provided on park space, and that freestanding facilities should be designed sympathetic to the landscape and consistent with other structures, where they may exist.

Procedures for requests for new facilities where none exist were also listed, which in this case applies to Gingerbread House, but do not apply to Nanook Childcare as this service is already in place at South China Creek Park.

### Gingerbread House Daycare at Captain Cook Park

Captain Cook Park is a 5.5 hectare park located at Tyne, between 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Champlain Crescent in Champlain Heights. There are no existing facilities on this park, which consists of a linear green space between an urban forest to the east, and Captain Cook School to the northwest.

The proposal to share land between the school and park properties reduces the impact on park users. An extension of the existing chain link fencing into the park to enclose a dedicated daycare play space is the impact on the park and its users. All construction costs will be borne by the applicant and the BC Buildings Corporation, including any required relocation of pathways. Fenced play area of 350 square metres is required by design guidelines for 3 to 5 group daycare, or 14 square metres per child. Building design guidelines stipulate a facility of 250 gross square metres.

An initial review of available options, as required under Board guidelines, was launched by Park Board staff, School Board staff, and the City's Child Development Coordinator. Alternative city-owned land was not available in this neighbourhood, and this site was recommended by School Board staff as the best location within their jurisdiction in the neighbourhood, because of access to site services and to adjacent on-street parking.

#### Input from Public Consultation

Public consultation consisted of a flyer (Appendix III) which was distributed to 120 households in a 2-block radius to the north of East 54<sup>th</sup> Avenue, along Tyne Street within 2 blocks, and to members of the Champlain Heights Community Centre Association and the Parent Advisory Council at Captain Cook School. Flyers were circulated May 14<sup>th</sup> thru the 18<sup>th</sup> by community centre staff, and a return was requested by June 4<sup>th</sup>. Feedback was minimal. The School's PAC and staff are reportedly in favour of the proposal, and concluded that the inclusion of a daycare for kindergarten-ready children would help to address the lack of appropriate childcare options for families in the school's catchment area. At least 8 families chose to relocate their kindergarten children for entry in September 2004 to another school with affiliated childcare services onsite.

Residents expressed concerns related to the potential loss of trees, competition with childcare services planned for the Champlain Heights Community Centre, and a general concern for the concept of childcare facilities and/or fenced open space on public parkland. Staff review of these issues conclude that no loss of trees is foreseen, however existing trees on the park may be located within a fenced enclosure. Gingerbread House Daycare provides half-day or full-day care, while the new community centre service is designed to accommodate pre-school services which are typically 2-hour development programs, so the two are compatible and complementary.

The proposal to set the modular building on school property will be discussed by the Vancouver School Board at its Planning and Facilities - Committee II meeting on Tuesday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>. A standard design for all of the modular buildings has been established by the BC Buildings Corporation and their general contractor.

Approval of this application will still require the completion of a legal agreement with a term of five years, with a five year renewal option, which is standard for the Park Board. Park planning

staff will monitor the development permit and construction process in order to ensure compliance with established park design and fence construction criteria. A 'reversion to parkland' clause will be incorporated that provides for the park land to be returned for public park purposes should it not be required for licensed child care by the operator.

#### Nanook Daycare at South China Creek Park

South China Creek Park is a 1.63 hectare park situated west of Clark Drive between Broadway and East 11<sup>th</sup> Avenues. Formerly land assembled by the city, the park was converted to permanent park land subsequent to the placement of the daycare portable. South China Creek is due for park redevelopment project in 2005. The park is currently under construction for a GVRD sewer line upgrade which intersects the park, southeast to northwest, thus limiting the possible locations within the park to support a permanent building. There are no buildings on this park other than the childcare portable, which occupies a total of 600 square metres of park.

Subject to guidelines for daycares on parks, staff consulted the City of Vancouver, the School Board and other parks in the vicinity. No suitable alternate locations could be found in the immediate neighbourhood, which has been identified by the City's Coordinator of Child Development Services as a high-needs, childcare-deficient priority.

YMCA Childcare received permission from the Board on May 3, 2004 to replace the existing portable with a modular building at South China Creek Park. In principle, the City has stated its preference for permanent buildings for childcare. Consequently, the City is in the process of converting its own portables to permanent buildings, over time. Park Board practice holds that built in place (permanent) buildings become the property of the Board once they are built.

YMCA is in agreement with these conditions and has indicated that it prefers a permanent building to provide security for its families, and a stable base from which to provide quality licensed childcare services. The YMCA proposed a permanent building to allow the addition of 12 licensed spaces for infants and toddlers to complement its 25 licensed spaces for 3 to 5 year-olds. In addition, they have recognized the need for a complementary multipurpose space at that location, which could be available for parent and family education, professional development and shared use with the community.

The total space occupied by the current portable structure and outdoor playspace total 600 square metres. The request for a permanent building includes the following elements necessary to meet licensing guidelines:

##### Indoor Space:

- 250 square metres to maintain the current 25 licensed spaces for 3-5 year-olds,
- 180 square metres to provide 12 new infant-toddler licensed spaces, plus

##### Outdoor Space:

- 350 square metres fenced space for 3 to 5 year-olds,
- 170 square metres of separate fenced space for the infants-toddlers

##### Additional (non-licensed) Indoor Space:

120 square metres for shared childcare/community multipurpose space

In combination, these elements total 430 square metres of licensed indoor space, 120 unlicensed indoor space and 520 square metres of licensed outdoor space for a grand total of 1,070 square metres, or an increase of almost 80% compared to Nanook Childcare's current use of parkland. The proposal suggests a two story structure which would minimize the impact of the footprint on the park.

YMCA is a leader in the childcare industry in the Lower Mainland, operates over 40 childcare programs across the region, and has the demonstrated ability to raise funds in the \$ 1.5 to \$ 2 million range, which are the anticipated total project costs. YMCA Childcare seeks an agreement which provides for a term of not less than 20 years in order to provide the type of assurances to funders which they feel is essential for this major fundraising initiative.

YMCA Childcare records demonstrate that local community members are the dominant user group. At present, 37 families participate in shared use of the 25 spaces.

- 24 families/4 staff walk or use transit, while 13 families/3 staff drive part-time or full-time
- 22 families live in Mount Pleasant, 11 live in Grandview-Woodlands, 4 live elsewhere in Vancouver
- 26 families live within a 2-km radius of Nanook Childcare Centre

#### Input from Public Consultation

Public consultation consisted of a flyer (Appendix IV) which was distributed to 390 households in a 2 or 3-block radius of the park, west to Keith Drive, south to East 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, east to Clark, further east along 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue one block, and further east along 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue 2 blocks. Copies were also circulated to the Queen Alexandra School Parent Advisory Council and staff, to the Helping Spirit Lodge Society's facility adjacent to the daycare, and to both the Grandview and Mount Pleasant Community Centre Associations. Flyers were circulated May 14<sup>th</sup> thru the 18<sup>th</sup> by staff of the YMCA, and a return was requested by June 4<sup>th</sup>. A total of 54 surveys were returned by the June 4<sup>th</sup> deadline.

Feedback from the two community centre associations was limited, while school staff and community health nurse offered supportive comments in response to the proposal. Most respondents were supportive of the work of the daycare staff, identified with the need for services in the area, and suggested they should be encouraged to expand. Concerns were expressed by 4 respondents. One commuter cyclist expressed concerns about the current co-location of the 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue cycle route with the vehicular drop-off traffic adjacent to the childcare facility. One expressed concern about the potential loss of more trees, beyond those already lost during the sewer upgrade project. These issues will be addressed by the subsequent park redevelopment process following completion of the sewer upgrade project. Two letters of concern expressed by neighbours point to the deeper social problems associated with South China Creek Park, questioned the timing of the proposal in light of the impending park redevelopment process, and recommendations in relation to broader social issues. Dialogue with these letter writers helped to inform this report and the broader park process.

A petition was received, signed by 40 householders in the immediate neighbourhood around the park. In summary, petitioners recommended the Board:

- hire a community development design consultant to produce a park design
- ensure the building design is consistent with the character requirements in the neighbourhood
- combine the childcare facility and park redevelopment processes to include such common needs as public restrooms, community meeting space, message posting structures, and park maintenance standards
- ensure the childcare design contributes to and complements the overall park plan
- that residents be provided with design details for better understanding of the proposed facility

The YMCA hosted a community meeting on June 8<sup>th</sup> which was attended by neighbours, childcare staff, parents in the programs, and a representative of Park Board staff. This meeting led to a better understanding of the tight project timelines, and resolved some of the misunderstanding about the proposal, and helped to reassure the neighbours present that it is the intention of all parties to contribute to the park redevelopment process as full partners, despite the awkward timing of the funding deadlines. The YMCA's interest is to ensure that they are left with sufficient time to raise the required capital funding, while the neighbours' interests, beyond those statements above, is to integrate both the park planning process and the childcare facility development process to ensure that the facility complements the park, fully considers the needs of other park users and contributes to park safety.

Further and regular public information about the childcare decisions and its relation to the broader park redesign process are desirable and would contribute to greater awareness of the needs of all stakeholders. Park planning staff will monitor the development permit and construction process in order to ensure compliance and integration with the park redesign process and Park Board facility standards. All plans are subject to Park Board final design approval.

No financial obligations to the Board are foreseen. Current agreement with the YMCA call for all maintenance costs for the portable are to be borne by BCBC. Future agreements with the YMCA will stipulate that all facility development, operating and maintenance costs pursuant to the structures and fenced open space requirements are to be borne by the YMCA.

A 'reversion to public use' clause will be incorporated that provides for the building to be returned for public use purposes should it not be required for licensed child care by the operator, at no cost to the Park Board.

## **CONCLUSION**

Requests were received from two childcare facility operators to change the nature of park use at Captain Cook Park and at South China Creek Park. Following Board direction, staff consulted residents and community groups with an interest in the proposal in the affected neighbourhoods. Feedback to the Gingerbread House proposal for Captain Cook Park was minimal, and the project received general support, and is conditional on mutual acceptance by the Vancouver School Board.

Feedback in the vicinity of South China Creek Park was more intense, as the complexity of social issues in and around the park, its overall poor physical condition and the impending park redevelopment project led to expression of numerous concerns beyond the scope of the childcare facility decision. Residents clearly stated their desire that the childcare facility reflect the nature of South China Creek Park, and that the facility development and park planning process integrate to ensure that the childcare facility contributes to overall park safety and park function.

Approval of the recommendations addresses the goals of the Vancouver Childcare Protocol by protecting existing group childcare spaces and increasing licensed childcare by 12 infant-toddler spaces. In addition, the report provides for new community room space to be shared with the YMCA at China Creek Park at no cost to the Park Board.

Prepared by:

Vancouver East District

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## Appendix I - Guidelines and Procedures for Daycare on Park Space

In light of the Board's commitment to provide, where practical, childcare facilities and its role to preserve park and open space for future generations, the following guidelines and procedures have been developed which are appropriate to meet these two, sometimes conflicting, objectives.

When discussing the use of parks for daycare purposes, the Board should consider the following:

- public process
- inventory of sites to be considered
- location within individual parks; and
- built form

### Guidelines

1. Proposed facilities should complement existing active or passive park functions, not dominate the overall experience of the park, or compromise the park's overall aesthetic quality.
2. The Board's preference for locations is in the following order of priority:
  - A) sites under the jurisdiction of agencies whose primary function is child related (School Board) or City owned sites not already dedicated to another use;
  - B) within existing park buildings;
  - C) in an addition to an existing park building;
  - D) the construction of a new freestanding facility
3. On parks of less than 3 acres where a building already exists, childcare facilities should be developed as an extension or adaptation of that building.
4. No ancillary facilities, such as parking stalls, will be provided on parkspace.
5. Freestanding childcare facilities should be designed to be sympathetic to the landscape and consistent with other buildings in the park.

### Procedures

- A. Alternative site analysis and justification for requesting a park location will be documented and presented as the initial step.
- B. Any application for a daycare facility on parkland should be accompanied by a program outline of the facility, the operating and capital costs, sources of funding, background of the operating society or group, site works and building plans and elevations and park impact statement.

Guidelines and Procedures for Daycare on Park Space - *continued*

- C. Following Board referral to a public consultation process, staff will organize a public involvement process directed at park users and neighbours, as well as potential users of the childcare facility. Public involvement could include a brochure, park sign, survey, public meeting or a combination of the above.
- D. Upon approval by the Board, a legal agreement with a term not to exceed 10 years will be drawn up.
- E. Upon approval by the Board, staff will monitor the construction of the building in order to ensure compliance with the Board's intent and design criteria.

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation  
Approved 22 June, 1992

## Appendix II - Requests to Upgrade Childcare Portables on Parks

<b>Park</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Name &amp; Operator</b>	<b>Approved May 2004</b>	<b>Requests Pending</b>
Burrard View	Wall, Yale, N Penticton & Slocan Streets	Harbourview Childcare Centre*; Kiwassa Neighbourhood Services Assoc.	Permission to upgrade to a modular building for 25 licensed spaces for 3-5 group childcare	none
Kitsilano Parksite	W 6 <sup>th</sup> Avenue & Maple	Kits Area Childcare Centre; Kitsilano Area Childcare Society	Permission to upgrade to a modular building for 25 licensed spaces for 3-5 group childcare	none
South China Creek	E 10 <sup>th</sup> Avenue & Clark Drive	Nanook Childcare Centre; YMCA Childcare	1- Upgrade to modular building for 25 licensed group childcare spaces for 3-5 yrs 2- Public Consultation on Request for a permanent structure	Permission to construct permanent building for 25, 3-5 yrs spaces, 12 infant-toddler spaces, and public amenity space
Captain Cook	** E 54 <sup>th</sup> Ave, Butler & Tyne Streets	Gingerbread House Daycare; Gingerbread House Daycare Society	2- Public Consultation on Request to locate fenced play space on parkland adjacent to VSB property	Permission to build modular building for 25 licensed spaces for 3-5 group childcare

\* Harbourview Childcare Centre, as it is now known, was originally known as the Hastings Townsite Daycare when first established in 1974

\*\* Gingerbread House Daycare must be relocated from its present location on land owned by BC Hydro at 48<sup>th</sup> & Boundary in Vancouver, permission required by June 20, 2004