

Date: November 30, 2005



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Childcare Developments on the Kitsilano Area Park Site and Burrard View Park

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the Board receive for information an update of the Kitsilano Area Childcare project;*
- B. THAT the Board receive for information the results of the community consultation on the replacement of the Harbourview Daycare facility on Burrard View Park.*

POLICY

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

In June 1992, the Board adopted guidelines and procedures for locating daycares in parks. A copy of those guidelines and procedures is attached as Appendix I.

In March 2004, the Board approved a Child Care Protocol that sets out a framework for the City, Park Board and School Board to work together to build a comprehensive range of childhood education and care services to increase licensed childcare spaces in Vancouver by 5% in the subsequent two year period.

BACKGROUND

The City, the School Board and the Park Board have been working over the past year to guide the conversion of up to ten aging BC Building Corporation (BCBC) portables into updated childcare facilities on city, school and park land. Four of these childcare portables are located on, or proposed to be sited adjacent to, parkland and have been the subject of reports to the Board in the past 18 months. This report deals with childcare portables being upgraded on the Kitsilano Area Parksite and on Burrard View Park.

In May 2004, the Board approved a motion to enable these childcare societies to negotiate with BCBC to replace the aging portable facilities with new structures.

In April 2005, the Board directed staff to continue working to execute the agreements with these childcare societies to reflect the changes in ownership related to the BCBC Portable Replacement Program. They also directed that, prior to entering into an agreement with the Hastings Townsite Society operating the Harbourview Program at Burrardview Park, staff shall seek a quit claim from BCBC in favour of the operating society regarding current ownership of the existing portable.

Kitsilano Area Childcare Centre

This site is located on 2041 West 6th Avenue just west of the Kitsilano Community Gardens. The site is owned by the City, and is currently under the care and custody of the Park Board. The Kitsilano Area Childcare Society (the Society) is working with BCBC to construct a modular building which the Society will maintain once the building is completed, at no cost to the Park Board. No changes to the license are proposed for the 25-space 3 to 5 year group childcare program and while the indoor space will be larger to satisfy the city's current childcare design guidelines, the combined indoor/outdoor spaces are easily housed within the existing two city lots.

The land parcel has been used exclusively by the Society and by the adjacent community gardens since the portable was first sited in 1974, and there is little or no community use beyond these interests.

The Society has obtained a development permit through the City and the public was consulted within a two block radius. A building permit application has been submitted and is being processed by the City. City and Park Board staff are currently reviewing site plans and the impact on existing trees as well as construction details on the modular building.

Current plans call for the child care program to be temporarily relocated at the end of 2005, the portable removed and the replacement modular building constructed over the winter, with the program operating on the site by the spring of 2006.

The City and Park Board are continuing to work on an agreement with the Kitsilano Area Childcare Society for the use of the property for the purpose of operating a childcare centre consistent with other childcare operations on civic properties.

Harbourview Childcare Centre

Harbourview Childcare Centre is sited on the southwest corner of Burrard View Park, which is located at Wall, Trinity, Pentiction and Slocan Streets. Burrard View is a neighbourhood park of 2.76 hectares which has a fieldhouse, 2 tennis courts, playground, wading pool, a hospice operated by the St. James Community Services Society and the Harbourview Childcare.

The current licensed childcare program houses a 25-space licensed childcare program for 3 to 5 year-olds. Proponents of this development include the Hastings Townsite Childcare Society as the principal operators of the program and the Kiwassa Neighbourhood House, which staffs and administers the program.

The proponents would like to expand the program and add a 12-space toddler program for 18 to 35 month-old children. Current city design guidelines would require additional indoor and outdoor space, which, if expressed on a single level, would result in an increased footprint of roughly 50% of the park space now dedicated to this program. In order to minimize loss of public green space, the Hastings Townsite Childcare Society was asked to investigate a two story design.

Proponents have reached an agreement with BCBC on compensation to replace the portable and the city has set aside capital funds to support this project through the Social Planning Department. Additional funding will be required to complete the project as planned. The original proposal was to construct a permanent building, although this issue is under discussion by the proponents due to the significant costs associated with such a structure. The comparative merits of a modular building are under study by the proponents and a final proposal is expected shortly.

The proposal to replace the existing portable was discussed at the June 14, 2005 meeting of the Board's Planning and Environment Committee. The Committee directed staff to consult the neighbourhood on the proposal, according to the guidelines outlined in the policy on childcare in parks.

Consultation Results

The community consultation process involved the development of a survey as well as a community open house.

The survey asked two questions to solicit the views of the community in relation to their level of support for:

- the use of a portion of Burrard View Park to construct a permanent childcare building for the expanded program
- their preference for siting at the existing location or consolidated with the fieldhouse building in this park

Four hundred surveys were distributed door to door in a two block radius of the park as well as through a residential community newsletter and through the Burrard View Park summer playground program. 25 surveys were completed with 84% (21 people) supporting a permanent building and 16% (4 people) against. Of those who supported a permanent building, 100% of them preferred the present childcare location. Of those who did not support a permanent building 8% (2 people) suggested parks were not appropriate places for childcare.

On August 4, 2005, the Harbourview Childcare and Park Board staff co-hosted an open house to provide local residents an opportunity to see the current facility, meet with representatives of the daycare board, Kiwassa and Park Board and to ask questions about the proposal. The 13 residents who attended the event all favoured the existing childcare site over the fieldhouse location and when asked about the size of the building all favoured a one-storey building over a two-storey building.

SUMMARY

The Kitsilano Area Childcare project is underway with provincial funding, a site and a preliminary design for a modular structure for a 25 space, 3 to 5 year old childcare. A future Board report will be required to approve final site and building plans.

A community consultation process has been completed for the Harbourview Childcare Centre on Burrard View Park with residents and stakeholders favouring the replacement of the existing facility with a separate permanent childcare facility at or near the existing location. Proponents of the Harbourview Childcare will be preparing financial and building options. A future Board report will present the options and recommendations on the size and style of development for this park.

Prepared by:

Vancouver East District
Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Appendix I - Approved 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:

- a) public process
- b) inventory of sites to be considered
- c) location within individual parks; and
- d) 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 park space.
5. Freestanding childcare facilities should be designed to be sympathetic to the landscape and consistent with other buildings in the park.

Procedures

1. Alternative site analysis and justification for requesting a park location will be documented and presented as the initial step.
2. 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.

Appendix I - Approved Guidelines and Procedures for Daycare on Park Space – cont'd

3. 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.
4. Upon approval by the Board, a legal agreement with a term not to exceed 10 years will be drawn up.
5. 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.

Approved by the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
22 June, 1992