

**Minutes of Meeting
Planning and Environment Committee, Vancouver Park Board
2099 Beach Avenue, Vancouver**

DATE OF MEETING: September 15, 2005

ATTENDEES: Park Board Commissioners

Commissioner Loretta Woodcock
Commissioner Eva Riccius
Commissioner Suzanne Anton (arrived at 7:25 pm)
Commissioner Heather Deal (arrived at 8:50 pm)
Commissioner Lyndsay Poaps
Commissioner Anita Romaniuk (arrived at 7:35 pm)

Park Board Staff

Piet Rutgers	Director of Planning and Operations
Rudy Roelofsen	Manager of Facility Development
Mark Vulliamy	Manager of Research and Planning
Michel Desrochers	Research Planner
Ian Harvey	Supervisor of Maintenance Management
Alan Duncan	Environmental Planner
Barbara Joughin	Recorder of Minutes

Delegations

Cory McIntyre	Vancouver Skatepark Coalition
Matthew Smed	
Julia Davis	Vancouver Skatepark Coalition
Paul Bunt	Bunt and Associates, Transportation Planners and Engineers
Eric Dagenais	
Evan Sahmet	
Gordon Deyell	Little Mountain Baseball
Steve Gustavson	Little Mountain Baseball
Louise Longridge	
Richard Campbell	Better Environmentally Sound Transportation
Spencer Herbert	

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 pm, with the following Agenda:

1. Approval of the minutes of July 5, 2005 meeting
2. Skateboard Strategy
3. Hillcrest/Riley Parking
4. Water Conservation
5. Waterfront Policy Plan Update

1. Skateboard Strategy

Michel Desrochers told the Committee that staff are preparing a draft skateboard strategy to plan for the next ten years and to achieve better skatepark distribution in the City. There is also a need to set priorities for the 2006-08 Capital Plan.

Key elements in the strategy include:

- A statement of support from the Board that “skateboarding is a legitimate recreation activity within the park system”
- More and better distribution of skateparks
- Variety within the skatepark system (beginner to advanced)
- Small skateboard spots evaluated on a case by case basis
- A move toward development of an indoor skateboard facility
- Enhanced skateboarding programs
- Strategies for other youth leisure sports, ie BMX cycling
- Location criteria for siting proposed skatepark sites.

Staff highlighted that the strategy will prioritize site development in south and southeast Vancouver and at waterfront locations. All subsequent proposals will involve consultation with local residents. Staff collected 60 surveys at the Slam City Jam in August 2005, with questions about the skatepark system and skatepark location criteria.

Delegations

- Cory McIntyre said the strategy was very thorough, and suggested adding a staff position, mobile parks/moveable objects, and funding for maintenance once facilities are installed. His goal for 2006 is a skatepark on the beach.
- Matthew Smed, a youth worker and skateboard programmer, said the strategy provides an opportunity for more youth work, and suggested that it include more about skateboard programming and support for a staff position and for training programmers.
- Julia Davis thanked staff for including many important elements in the report, and said it is important to have west side parks, and to provide programming for girls and at-risk youth.

Commissioner Woodcock thanked the delegations for their clear presentations and brevity.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked why southwest Vancouver was not mentioned in the skateboard strategy. Staff noted the report identifies a significant gap in south and southeast Vancouver, and that many sites will be identified for consideration in all areas of the city.
- The Committee discussed the need to prepare strategies for other youth leisure sports (for example, BMX cycling) and whether different strategies should be developed separately or combined with the skateboard strategy.
- The group discussed the idea of using moveable objects for events and to test parksites, and staff noted that the equipment is available and will be considered for inclusion in the draft strategy.
- A Commissioner inquired about exploring partnership possibilities with the Vancouver School Board and the group raised concerns about timelines.

Next Steps

Staff will work with the delegations to finalize a strategy for Board approval. The revised strategy would incorporate suggestions about mobile parks/pieces, partnerships, and programming. Staff will circulate a draft skateboard strategy for public comment, and report back to the Board by the end of October 2005.

2. Riley/Hillcrest Master Plan – Traffic and Parking Management

Rudy Roelofsen reviewed recent progress development of the Riley Hillcrest Master Plan. In May 2005 the Board approved the Riley, Hillcrest, and Nat Bailey Parks Master Plan for building massing and siting for the Aquatic Centre and Legacy facilities, and requested that staff bring forward improvements to parking and traffic in the area, including the development of a transportation management plan for Nat Bailey Stadium. A stakeholder/community working committee was established and reviewed the location of on- and offsite parking; intersection control at Ontario Street and 30th Avenue; and traffic control and parking measures in the adjacent neighbourhood. He introduced Paul Bunt, who has been retained as a traffic consultant to provide the Board with technical advice on traffic and parking.

The existing Master Plan identified 778 parking spaces. There will be an increased parking load in the parks due to the development of the new facilities. Staff proposed 550 permanent parking stalls to service the various facilities and fields in the parks, and 440 temporary stalls to deal with the demands generated by Nat Bailey Stadium, for a total of 990. Three options were prepared and presented to the public at an Open House on September 12, 2005, along with five variations on the options. Two options (B and C) included moving the Little Mountain Baseball facility at a cost of \$800,000 to \$1 million. It was noted that the existing Master Plan is fully funded in the Capital Plan and funding for any additional costs in the various options would need to be found.

The 250 attendees at the Open House were surveyed, and 201 questionnaires were returned. 52% of respondents lived within 1km of the parks, and 57% preferred Option A.

Delegations

1. Eric Dagenais expressed concern that the three options presented at the meeting are not what went to the Steering Committee, and said that many people could not access the information presented at the Open House. Because it is a family oriented neighbourhood with safety as a primary concern, an acceptable proposal for residents is one that omits traffic on Ontario Street and omits a parking lot at Ontario Street and Peveril Avenue.
2. Evan Sahmet, a representative on the Steering Committee, was surprised at the inclusion of the small parking at Ontario Street, and asked why the option of moving Little Mountain Baseball at significant cost was included while structured parking was not. Features of concern include all-movement entrances onto Ontario Street; a roadway between the Aquatic Centre and Legacy building; drawing traffic from a big street to small; and use of greenspace behind the Nat Bailey Stadium.
3. Gordon Deyell told the Committee that his family uses the facilities at Riley Park and Little Mountain, and that he recognizes that the community is shared with people from all over. He spoke about the process of growing through different ages and areas of the park for park users, and the importance of valuing how the parks are actually used. He asked the Committee to carefully consider the impact parking will have on the practical working space of the different baseball and soccer fields, and said that while access is important, moving

Little Mountain Baseball is not practical.

4. Steve Gustavson, president of Little Mountain Baseball, agreed that there was a strong turnout of their supporters at the Open House, but stated that they included many people who live in the neighbourhood. He said he was very disappointed in the parking planning process which went from exploring parking strategies to defending their existence too quickly to develop options properly. He told the Committee that the clubhouse was built with community funds in 2001 and donated to the Park Board with the understanding it would be a legacy, and that it would be better to move the Legacy building than Little Mountain Baseball.
5. Kit Fortune told the Committee that the area has been a baseball hub for over 50 years, and that he was speaking for the children who imagine themselves eventually playing in the stadium. He asked the group to consider what message will be sent to the children if Little Mountain Baseball is moved to make room for a parking lot. He reminded the Committee that the Park Board's mission statement includes "to preserve", and spoke for the preservation of the whole park area as a historical site in the neighbourhood because there is value in permanence and a sense of place. He asked why the Park Board is privileging the car, and requested that Little Mountain Baseball be left untouched.
6. Louise Longridge spoke in support of removing the parking lot proposed for Ontario Street and Peverill Avenue, and for underground parking at the new community centre.
7. Richard Campbell said a goal of the Park Board and the Olympics is to push the envelop on sustainability and encourage people to use alternatives to cars. He suggested different strategies to reduce the parking load and encourage transit and bicycle use, and requested that the site be designed for pedestrian and bicycle access. He said that Ontario Street should be closed between 30th and 33rd Avenues because greenways encourage people to cycle.
8. Kerie Johnston, a little league coach in West End, said that the experience of going to Little Mountain Baseball is valuable for children and that the spirit of the whole development is to encourage youth to play sports. The area will be more highly developed than any other neighbourhood in Vancouver, and if it is not designed properly, children will not be safe, and a family community will be disrupted. She said that the parking should be designed for safety and needs to be more carefully considered.
9. Spencer Herbert said that including a roundabout for drop off between the Aquatic Centre and the Legacy building is a good idea.

Discussion:

- The consultant told the Committee that is possible to design options without access to parking from Ontario Street, but recommended a small amount of parking with access from Ontario Street for local residents. He noted that there have been no requests to the City for calming traffic infiltration in the neighbourhood, and that the amount of traffic on Ontario Street will decrease when Riley Park Community Centre is relocated.
- The Committee reviewed the number of permanent and temporary parking stalls that were proposed and questioned how many spaces will be needed and the potential consequences of reducing the number of parking spaces from the proposed 990. The consultant advised that the proposed total of 550 permanent stalls takes into account TransLink's new route and is a reduction of 10-20%, and that temporary parking should be provided for Nat Bailey events to prevent spillout into the neighbourhood. A Commissioner noted that more stalls could be designated as temporary at this time and funds found later to convert to permanent or tiered parking if necessary. A Commissioner said that transportation patterns will change over the lifetime of the buildings and expressed concern about applying suburban planning values in an urban context.

- A member of the Committee noted that some activities require the use of a car rather than a bicycle or transit, and the consultant estimated that about 75-80% of visitors need an automobile for transporting children, or heavy gear. The group discussed the need for providing parking close to the facilities for convenience and security and to avoid crossing playing fields.
- A Commissioner noted that placing a road between the Aquatic Centre and the Legacy facility eliminated the possibility of a public plaza between the buildings and created risks for pedestrians on dark winter nights. A suggestion was made to create a drop-off area between the buildings.
- Significant concerns were raised about relocating Little Mountain Baseball's facility to make room for parking. A Commissioner asked why moving a facility was proposed in response to an request to move parking off Ontario Street and Peveril Avenue, and staff said that it was an attractive site that provided a way to locate parking stalls within a reasonable walking distance of all facilities. As an alternative, it was suggested that the buildings be moved closer to Peveril Avenue. Staff responded that moving the building was not considered as an option because the community requested that the building be placed away from residents and the location of the building was approved by the Board in May 2005 and has been confirmed with VANOC. In addition, the approved site of the building is adjacent to a GVRD storm sewer line which would cost up to \$1 million to move.
- The group talked about the cost of multi-level parking and different possibilities for structured parking, including locations underneath the Legacy building and on the rooftop. About 80 parking stalls could be created within the Legacy building. Cost per stall could range from at \$12,000 – 30,000/stall and could reach a total of \$2 million. The consultant noted that the Legacy building could be set into the ground to reduce its overall height.
- The group discussed the idea of introducing pay parking into the design, and while there was agreement that people expect to pay for parking, there was also concern about parking intrusions into the neighbourhood. The consultant guessed that pay parking revenues could provide 30-40% cost recovery on the capital costs of underground or multi-leveled parking structures.
- A Commissioner inquired about introducing permit-only parking into the surrounding neighbourhood and the consultant explained that because enforcement is on a complaint basis, it is not a fully effective solution.

Summary

Commissioner Woodcock summarized the discussion as follows:

- The community opposes in and out access off 30th Avenue and Ontario Street
- Develop an option that does not move Little Mountain Baseball
- Create a drop-off area between the Aquatic Centre and the Legacy building
- Consider pay parking
- Cost out structured parking options

Next Steps

Staff will review the concerns and the points of discussion with the consultant and the community committee, and identify an acceptable configuration of park use and parking. A revised option will be made available to those who have been involved in the process, and a report will be brought to the Board in October.

Commissioners Riccius and Romaniuk left the meeting at this time (10:30pm).

3. Water Conservation Strategy

There is increasing demand on Vancouver's summer water storage and supply system and the Board requested that staff develop a water conservation program as part of its new Strategic Plan. Ian Harvey presented a report on the Park Board's present water consumption and strategies for future reductions of up to 25%. The Park Board's estimated annual water consumption is 570 million imperial gallons, of which 43% is metered and billed. In 2004, the Park Board's water and sewer costs were \$564,700. The Board does not pay sewage rates for water used for irrigation.

Recent steps have reduced consumption of potable water and staff are proposing several initiatives to save water, such as converting high consumption automatic irrigation systems to centralized control, installing timers on fountains, and designing new fountains to use recirculating rather than potable water.

Ian Harvey acknowledged the contributions of John Hollander and John Wong in the development of the water conservation strategy.

Discussion

- A member of the Committee asked about the feasibility of recirculating water in fountains. Staff said some fountains currently recirculate water, and described the issues associated with using non-potable water. When non-potable water is used in fountains to conserve water there are potential public health risks, and more staff are required for the labour-intensive process of chlorination and filter cleaning.
- The group discussed the use of storm- and potable water on golf courses, and staff commented that long term storm water conservation is appropriate at Fraserview.
- The Committee inquired about rainwater collection and storage. Staff noted there is a very long-term payback on the construction of a cistern system in parks.
- Staff noted that the City is focusing on Trout Lake, which is fed with potable water and has problems with high fecal coliform counts.

A member of the Committee commented that this is the first conservation document from the Park Board, and was a good foundation document. Staff said that the water conservation strategy brings different initiatives together and provides a good baseline for the Board and policy development.

4. Waterfront Policy Plan Update:

In July 2003, the Board approved four components of a waterfront policy plan – an inventory, a vision for the waterfront, a policy framework, and an action plan. Alan Duncan provided the Committee with an update on the development of a waterfront inventory, and described the different elements of the document. The objective of the waterfront inventory is to record existing physical and environmental waterfront features and to summarize different data and its relationships. The document is divided into five sections, including shoreline typography; existing waterfront structures; Park Board commercial uses and public washrooms; summary of inventory and opportunities by linear section; and the 2005 seawall count.

All the information included in the 2005 waterfront inventory will be mounted into VanMap for

easy access and will continue to be updated over time. The Committee was asked to note any omissions or errors.

Discussion

- The group discussed the issue and extent of encroachment by invasive species and staff highlighted the urgency of addressing the problem of rapidly-spreading invasive plants. A series of recommendations are nearly complete and will be brought to the Board shortly, and staff will focus on human encroachment in identified locations.
- A Commissioner inquired about portions of the inventory that were completed without input from the City of Vancouver Disability Committee. Staff noted that the results of this preliminary collection of accessibility data will be presented to the Board later this year as part of implementing accessibility and universal design directions of the Strategic Plan.
- A member of the Committee asked how the public will be able to access the information in the draft waterfront inventory. Staff said that it will be posted on the Park Board's website and updated as data collection continues.
- The group discussed the need to identify areas for potential boat launch access.

The Committee commended staff, especially summer students Ann Jackson and Anne-Marie Whittaker, for their work gathering waterfront information this summer and for completing the draft inventory.

Next Steps

Staff will:

- Continue to incorporate additional elements and mapping into the inventory;
- Analyze inventory data and report back with a process for the next stage;
- Bring the Board strategies on accessibility and invasive species.

5. Approval of July 5, 2005 meeting minutes:

The minutes of the July 5, 2005 meeting were approved as amended. Under Discussion, a sentence was added, "A member of the Committee was interested in design features that did not keep the berm".

6. Next Meeting:

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 pm. The next Planning and Recreation Committee meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2005, at 7:00 pm.