

Date: October 16, 2006



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Arbutus Corridor

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board endorse the inclusion of greenway features in the future development of the Arbutus Corridor.

POLICY

In the 1990's the Board endorsed the incorporation of the Arbutus Corridor, in the GVRD's regional greenway system.

In 1999 Council adopted the Arbutus Corridor Official Development Plan which designates the land only as a public thoroughfare for the purposes of -

“(a) transportation, including without limitations:

- (i) rail;
- (ii) transit; and
- (iii) cyclists paths

but excluding:

- (iv) motor vehicles except on City streets crossing the Arbutus Corridor; and
- (v) any grade-separated rapid transit system elevated, in whole or in part, above the surface of the ground, of which one type is the rapid transit system known as “SkyTrain” currently in use in the Lower Mainland;

(b) greenways, including without limitation:

- (i) pedestrian paths, including without limitation urban walks, environmental demonstration trails, heritage walks and nature trails; and
- (ii) cyclist paths. ”

BACKGROUND

The Arbutus Rail Corridor stretches from Fir Street in the north to the Hudson Street near the Arthur Laing Bridge in the south. The lands are owned by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), and are no longer an active railway line. The corridor traverses several neighbourhoods which are not park deficient.

The CPR challenged Council's 1999 decision in the Courts, but the Supreme Court of Canada in 2005/2006 upheld Council's right to adopt an Official Development Plan.

DISCUSSION

At the Finance Committee of September 6, 2006, the Committee received a presentation from representatives of the CPR.

The presentation is attached as Appendix I. The presentation was an overview of the results of a recent CPR/Community visioning process on the future use of these lands. The consultation highlighted three options for future exploration:-

- Greening
- Combination of light rail and greenway
- Combination greenway, light rail and development

The third option was recommended by the CPR's consultants because it was financially balanced and it includes some 1,000,000 square feet of development particularly in the wider sections of the corridor. The CPR consultants also stated that the plan could be realized through a combination of land exchange, cash debt and donations.

The CPR representatives suggested that out of the 45 acres of land 50% could become parkland. Under the provision of the Vancouver Charter, in most cases, Council determines, which lands are placed under the jurisdiction of the Park Board.

CPR representation also stated that if its preferred vision were adopted by City Council it would be willing to remove restrictive covenants on certain lands in Kitsilano and Queen Elizabeth Park. These covenants restrict the use of those lands to parks and recreation purposes only.

CONCLUSION

The Board's endorsement of the inclusion of greenway features in the future development of the Arbutus Corridor are consistent with the provisions of the Official Development Plan, and the Board's earlier support for the greenway system.

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