

Date: March 3, 2005



TO: Board Members – Parks and Recreation

FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT: ALLOCATION OF COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTION: IMPROVEMENTS TO PARKS IN MOUNT PLEASANT

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Board support the allocation of \$350,000 from the Community Amenity Contribution to be collected from the rezoning of Vancouver Community College - King Edward Campus (1155 East Broadway) toward park development in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood.

POLICY

Community Amenity Contributions (CACs), which are collected at the rezoning stage, can be used for a variety of projects, including park land acquisition, park development, park upgrades and recreational facilities. The allocation of CACs requires Council approval.

BACKGROUND

Vancouver Community College – King Edward Campus (VCC) is located at 1155 East Broadway, in the eastern portion of Mount Pleasant. In July 2004, the College applied to rezone their site to permit a phased expansion over the next couple of decades. The proposal is to allow the College to increase its floor area from 25 176 m² (271,000 square feet) to 88 815 m² (956,027 sq. ft.), an increase of 63 639 m² (685,027 sq. ft.). The number of students, faculty and workers will double from about 9,000 today to about 17,000 at build-out. The rezoning is scheduled for Public Hearing on March 15, 2005.

On December 9, 2003, Council approved the following with regards to a rezoning of the College: “that consistent with the Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) Policy, a CAC of at least the flat rate be negotiated in kind or cash”.

VCC is located in Mount Pleasant, one of the city’s most park deficient areas (0.44 hectares of neighbourhood park per 1,000 residents in 2001 – the most recent Census year – less than half of the city average of 1.1 hectares per 1,000). Two parks are situated in the immediate vicinity: China Creek North Park (corner of 7th Avenue and Glen Drive) and China Creek South Park (near the corner of Broadway and Clark Drive).



DISCUSSION

As part of the rezoning process, City and Park Board staff prepared a needs assessment. This study asked the following questions:

- Will the demand by VCC students, faculty and workers for public open space and indoor recreation be met on site?
- If not fully met on site, will the demand put pressure on existing resources in the neighbourhood?

The study concluded that the demand for public open space will be partly met on site and that there will be a significant gap, especially with regards to places for physical exercise and places for respite and contemplation. While some students, faculty and staff will choose to meet their open space needs in the communities where they live, there will be a segment of the College's population who will use China Creek North Park and China Creek South Park on a regular basis. Usage of these two parks will therefore increase as the College grows.

The study also concluded that the demand for indoor recreation will likely not put pressure on nearby community centres (Mount Pleasant, Trout Lake and Britannia), even though the existing College and its proposed expansion will not offer any opportunities for indoor recreation on site. This is because the three community centres are relatively far away from the College (about 1.5 km) and that travelling this distance will discourage many of the College's population from using these facilities. More likely is that students, faculty and staff will choose to meet their needs in the community where they live.

The priority is therefore on augmenting the Park Board's ability to serve a growing population in Mount Pleasant, especially because the neighbourhood is park deficient. Staff believe that this will mean investing in either China Creek North Park or China Creek South Park in the future, as the College grows.

If the rezoning is approved, the College will be making a Community Amenity Contribution equivalent to \$2,055,000, which will be secured through a legal agreement. As part of the rezoning process, an inter-departmental staff team is convened to review proposals and make recommendations to Council on how to allocate the CAC. The staff team has recommended that the majority of the CAC (\$1,291,000) be earmarked for the expansion of the existing childcare centre at VCC and the creation of an endowment fund for the childcare centre, that \$350,000 be allocated to park improvements in the Mount Pleasant neighbourhood, and that the remaining portion of the CAC (\$414,000) remain unallocated at the present time.

Because the expansion of VCC will be phased over the next two decades, the staff team agreed that the CAC can also be phased. Accordingly, the CAC associated with the first two phases of development will be earmarked for the childcare centre. The \$350,000 payment for park improvements will be made prior to commencement of their third phase of development, anticipated to be in about eight years. The final payment (\$414,000) will be made prior to commencement of their fourth phase of development, anticipated to be in about 12 to 15 years.

The decision as to how the park improvement funds will be allocated will be made by the Board when the CAC payment is received.

SUMMARY

On March 15, 2005, Council will be considering the rezoning of Vancouver Community College – King Edward Campus, including the allocation of a Community Amenity Contribution equivalent to \$2,055,000. A portion of this total (\$350,000) is earmarked for park improvements in Mount Pleasant. The Board is asked to support this proposal.

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