

Date: October 6, 2006



TO: Board Members – Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager – Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Southeast False Creek - Rezoning of the Olympic Village Site

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board recommend to Council approval of the rezoning application for the Olympic Village site including the proposed change in location for the community and boating centre.

POLICY

The Park Board provides advice to Council regarding park and recreation issues in the context of major rezoning applications and planning initiatives.

The Park Board, at their regular meeting of July 21, 2004, recommended to Council approval of an amendment to the Southeast False Creek Policy Statement requiring a full-size community centre including a community boating facility for non-motorised boating, and confirmation of the requirement for a public park of 26.4 acres.

The Park Board, at their regular meeting of January 31, 2005, supported approval of the proposed Southeast False Creek Official Development Plan, subsequently approved by Council and enacted, including a requirement for a 30,000 sq. ft. community and boating centre, and a public park of 25.8 acres.

The Park Board, at their regular meeting of January 16, 2006, recommended to Council to maintain the Official Development Plan (ODP) requirements for a 30,000 sq. ft. community and boating centre, and the planned funding contribution to park development from the Property Endowment Fund.

BACKGROUND

The policy work for SEFC has developed from the initial Policy Statement in 1999 and the adoption of the Official Development Plan (ODP) in 2005 to the current application for a rezoning of the Olympic Village site, referred by Council to Public Hearing on October 17, 2006 (a copy of the referral report is either attached as Appendix A or available on the City's website:

<http://vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20060926/documents/p4.pdf>).

Development and building permit applications for the different components will follow shortly. This report discusses new park and recreation issues resulting from the rezoning application and its associated ODP amendments.

DISCUSSION

The rezoning application is based on the ODP but proposes some changes in massing, density, height and many other aspects. This is not unusual, staff expected that the more detailed design and planning work required for a rezoning application would lead to a more refined proposal. Most of these changes have little impact on the park and recreation facilities. Shadow impacts have increased in some park areas and decreased in others, but remain overall within the range anticipated in the ODP.

COMMUNITY CENTRE

The major proposed change from a park and recreation perspective is the shift of the community centre from parcel 4 (where it was attached to a residential building) to parcel 11 (where it is freestanding), see Figure 1.

Figure 1



Park staff have been supportive of this move for the following reasons:

- a stand-alone facility avoids conflicts between adjacent uses;
- a childcare facility can be co-located with the community centre;
- larger water area for the floating components of the boating centre; and
- integration of a restaurant facility on the west portion of the site.

Staff conducted three open houses in August where the public expressed their support for the change in community centre location.

The program for parcel 11 therefore is expected to include a 30,000 sq. ft. community and boating centre, a separate childcare facility, a restaurant and one floor of underground parking with approximately 120 stalls.

GREENWAYS AND BIKEWAYS

The Seaside Greenway's bicycle path originally had been proposed to run along the northernmost street in the Olympic Village. Recent changes in the configuration of the waterfront parcels and other modifications have allowed shifting the bicycle path from the street to the waterfront. The public response to this change has been favourable. Staff agree that the waterfront is a more desirable route for cyclists, further noting that this change will make it easier to provide both vehicular and pedestrian access the waterfront parcels.

The Ontario Greenway's bicycle path is proposed to run along the eastern edge of Ontario Street in the park, consistent with the ODP. The organization BEST (Better Environmentally Sound Transportation) is currently advocating that Ontario Street be closed to vehicular traffic, allowing the proposed bicycle path in the park to be converted to greenspace (for a gain of about 0.17 acres). While any additional greenspace is generally desirable, staff are not pursuing this closure as it has been previously considered by Council during the ODP public hearing. Council at the time decided to favour a shared street approach that includes vehicles for a more efficient overall street system in the neighbourhood. Closing Ontario Street for vehicles would also reduce access to the new community centre location.

SUMMARY

The rezoning application for the Olympic Village site with its new site for the community and boating centre, and the relocation of the Seaside Route bikeway onto the waterfront is an improvement from a park and recreation perspective when compared to the Official Development Plan. Staff recommend that the Board support its approval.

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