



Date: May 8, 2014

TO: Board Members - Vancouver Park Board
FROM: General Manager - Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT: Non-Motorized Boating Centre at Creekside Community Centre

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Board endorse the concept outlined in this report for improvements to the paddling centre in False Creek next to Creekside Community Centre.

POLICY

In July 2013, Council approved funding for a project definition report regarding the "establishment of a permanent home for the greater paddling community".

BACKGROUND

The City/Park Board have long been stakeholders in the provision of access to non-motorized boating for both the local and regional population. Vancouver's waterfront is a destination for many, including people interested in learning to paddle along with competitive athletes who use the waterways for training or competition. However, over time our facility investment, maintenance and arrangements with service providers have evolved in an uncoordinated manner. This has resulted in varying levels of facility quality, public access and engagement among stakeholders.

The Park Board is focused on the provision of quality recreation programs and services across the inventory of facilities, as outlined in the Strategic Plan. To achieve this outcome, resources and investment must be linked to a clear vision and strategy. Staff resources are now dedicated to leading this work cross-departmentally and with stakeholders.

At a high-level, the City/Park Board have committed to the following objectives which align with existing policy, such as the Vancouver Sport Strategy:

- Public access to quality waterfront facilities for sport and recreational use, including events, programs, and drop-in access
- Effective partnerships with relevant stakeholders (clubs, sport organizations, non-profit societies) to deliver affordable, high-quality programs across the inventory of public facilities
- Maintenance, operational and investment plans which balance "need" with the City's fiscal capacity.

NON-MOTORIZED BOATING IN FALSE CREEK

The provision of a non-motorized boating facility east of the Cambie Street Bridge has been a long term planning objective for False Creek. In 2009, when the North East False Creek (NEFC) Directions were approved it was anticipated that the Creekside Community Centre

would provide a new dock and facilities to support a range of non-motorized boating activities, and that a separate dragon boating facility would be accommodated at a location on the north side of the creek.

Dragon boating has been growing in popularity since its introduction to Vancouver at Expo '86 and False Creek has become the home for dragon boating. Since 2010, the Dragon Boat Festival Society (DBFS) has been operating a very successful dragon boating program and providing other paddling opportunities in collaboration with the Park Board at Creekside. In 2013 approximately 4,400 participants participated in these programs. This volume is the second highest in the city next to Jericho Sailing Centre, which provides programs for approximately 6,000 participants annually.

The DBFS is currently using the City-owned former ferry dock in the south east corner of False Creek and has added floats over time to meet program needs. The metal storage containers used by the DBFS for their operations, located next to the waterfront path, are nearing the end of their useful life and are subject to frequent vandalism. Administration and meeting space is also provided within Creekside for the DBFS. In 2012, the City constructed a new ferry terminal with universal access immediately north of Creekside, but the originally planned docks and sheds were not funded or built.

DISCUSSION

STUDY SCOPE AND FINDINGS

In late 2013, staff proceeded with a non-motorized boating facility study, led by McFarland Marceau Architects that began with a review of the existing City facilities and programs, and identified the provision of improved paddling facilities to meet the existing programs offered at Creekside as the highest priority. While locations on both the north and south side of the Creek were initially considered, an early screening of these options led to a preference for a south side location. Among the factors considered were the availability of existing support services and public investment, as well as the uncertainties and timing challenges relating to further developments on the north side of the Creek.

The study objectives required that the paddling centre be designed to be incremental (phased), movable, expandable and adaptable so that it can meet the needs of both current and future boating programs.

The study specifically confirmed that:

- Current paddling facilities in south east False Creek (east of Creekside Community Centre), are in need of replacement due to their poor condition;
- These facilities had the largest gap between existing program demand (primarily dragon boaters and kayakers) and quality infrastructure;
- The site immediately north of Creekside adjacent to the ferry dock is the desired location for investment to meet the existing demand for paddling activities

FACILITY PROPOSAL

Discussion based on the results of the consultant's report and meetings with community members on the local Boating Advisory Group, led to a conceptual design for an improved paddling centre. As proposed "Phase 1" will address the immediate needs in south east False Creek and will replace the existing dock, floats and equipment sheds at an estimated cost of \$3M (see design schematic in Appendix A).

It is planned that the City will own the facility and enter into service contract(s) with partner agencies for components of the operation. The Dragon Boat Festival Society is expected to continue to be a primary partner agency in the delivery of paddling programs at the new facility, through its existing relationship with the Park Board.

NON-MOTORIZED BOATING STRATEGY

To rationalize future planning relating to non-motorized boating facilities beyond the paddling centre described above, staff intend to develop a comprehensive strategy. This effort, currently scheduled for completion in 2014, is expected to include:

- A review of leading practices from other jurisdictions
- The determination of a framework to assess overall Creek capacity
- The development of service level benchmarks and priority areas of focus, including recreational and competitive paddling sports
- The identification of potential opportunities for collaborative programming and coordination among service providers
- The development of an approach to long term service planning for waterfront facilities

The completion of this strategy will serve as an important guide for the City/Park Board to maximize the use of existing facilities and to better respond to emerging waterfront opportunities.

SUMMARY

Staff, with support from community stakeholders, including the Boating Advisory Group, recommends the Park Board endorse improvements to the paddling centre in False Creek, as outlined in this report. The facility will meet the strong current demand for paddling programs offered in this area of the city. This proposal aligns well with the Park Board's priorities relating to the provision of quality recreation programs and services.

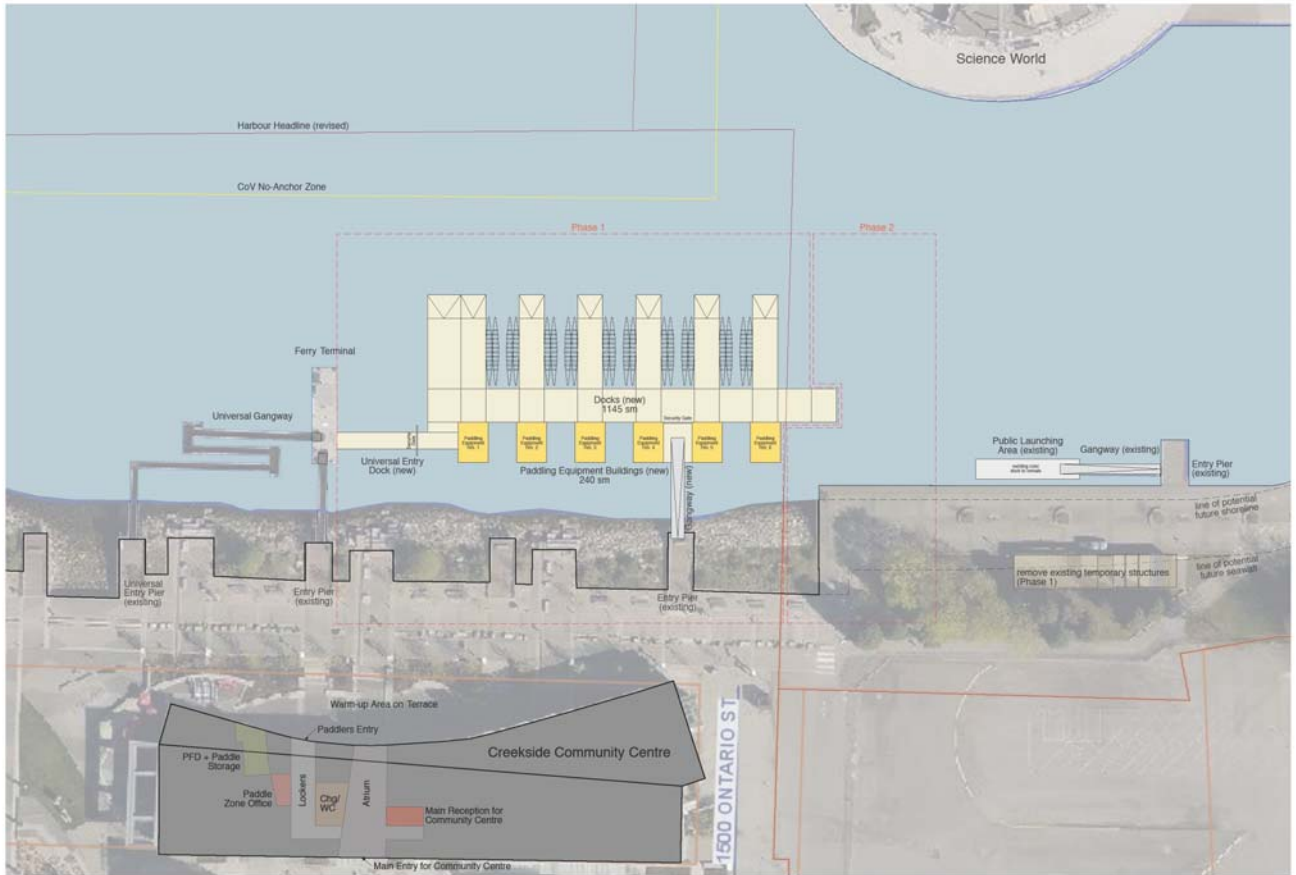
The information above will be presented in a future Council report relating to new developments on the False Creek waterfront.

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Appendix A

Creekside Paddling Centre - "Phase 1" Design Schematic



False Creek Non-Motorized Boating Facility
City of Vancouver
Site Diagram
Scale 1:200
2014.03.27 v1 Draft

PHASE 1
Schematic Design
replacement + enhancement of existing paddling facilities