

The waterfront debate

NUB OF THE HUB

By Karenn Krangle

Several prominent urbanists urged the City of Vancouver last week to hold wide public consultations before approving any major developments on the downtown central waterfront.

The comments were made during a Simon Fraser University event on the city's 2009 waterfront hub plan and the project that brought it back for discussion: **Cadillac Fairview's** scheme for a faceted glass tower at 555 West Cordova.

That scheme, which was not supported by the urban design panel, drew a lot of negative reaction earlier this year because the building was seen as out of context with the site.

"I was so shocked when I saw the picture of the proposed building and the way it didn't relate to anything at all ...," said former city planning director **Ray Spaxman**, sitting in the packed lecture hall in the City Conversations series. "And yet I was concerned, why did I suddenly come across this?"

Anita Molaro, the city's assistant planning director for urban design, described the hub plan as "a vision for a world class transportation interchange and dynamic new downtown extension in the central waterfront area."

She said the hub includes the old CPR station, 200 Granville and area to be built above the rail tracks, the SeaBus area, and envisions elevated roadways over the railway tracks and an extension of the north end of Granville.

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Financing growth

CACS AND AFFORDABILITY

Community amenity contributions are not the cause of rising housing prices in Vancouver, a consultant's study done for the city says.

The year-old study by **Coriolus Consulting Corp.**, which the city has just released, was commissioned because the city wanted to know if CACs were putting upward pressure on prices. It also responds to provincial-government concerns about the impact of CACs, which are charged on rezoning applications.

Coriolus looked at the effects of CACs on affordability, and found no evidence that the charges have constrained the pace of apartment development in Vancouver or contributed to increasing housing prices.

"Housing prices have clearly increased significantly in the city and the region as a whole," the study says, noting that Vancouver continues to absorb a large share of regional development. "There are factors pushing up housing prices in Vancouver, on the demand side and the supply side, but CACs are not one of them."

The study also found that the CAC policy is not restricting development.

"In fact, CACs have been associated with a large increase in the city's capacity for new development, have paid for amenities that otherwise would have been funded by property taxes, and in some cases have created

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UPCOMING DATES

- JUNE 8**
Vancouver park board, 7 p.m.
- JUNE 9**
Vancouver city council, 9:30 a.m.
- JUNE 10**
Vancouver city council finance and services committee 9:30 a.m.
Public hearing, 6 p.m.
- JUNE 12**
Metro Vancouver board, 9 a.m.
- JUNE 15**
Vancouver heritage commission, 11 a.m.
Development permit board, 3 p.m.
- JUNE 17**
Vancouver city planning commission, 12:15
Urban design panel, 4 p.m.
- JUNE 22**
Vancouver park board, 7 p.m.
- JUNE 23**
Vancouver city council, 9:30 a.m.
- JUNE 24**
Vancouver city council planning, transportation and environment committee 9:30 a.m.
- JUNE 25**
Public hearing, 6 p.m.
- JULY 3**
Metro Vancouver board, 9 a.m.
- JULY 6**
Vancouver heritage commission, 11 a.m.
Vancouver park board, 7 p.m.



Heritage conservation

SAVING SHAUGHNESSY

Vancouver city council this week is being asked to schedule a public hearing on a staff recommendation to make Shaughnessy the city's first heritage conservation area.

The recommendation is part of a new development plan and stems from a year-long review of the Shaughnessy official development plan as part of a larger new heritage action plan.

"Once complete, the plan will result in an updated, comprehensive heritage conservation program," says a staff report to council. "The purpose of this review is to strengthen the city's long-standing goals for the conservation and preservation of neighbourhood character and pre-1940 heritage homes in the First Shaughnessy area."

Making Shaughnessy a heritage conservation area would also require new zoning regulations but would give the area increased heritage protection. It could also allow for infill development to offset costs of retaining older houses.

An increase in requests to demolish some of Shaughnessy's large houses led council last year to approve a moratorium on demolition.

"In the 18 months leading up to the approval of the heritage control period

for the temporary protection of First Shaughnessy in June 2014, the number of inquiries proposing to demolish pre-1940 buildings in First Shaughnessy had risen from an average of 0.4 per cent per year to 5 per cent per year, with 19 inquiries active at that time," the report says. "The increase in proposals to demolish resulted from a lack of requirements to retain the pre-1940s homes, and the current zoning regulations have also enabled development of some of the largest homes in the city."

The report notes that many of the old houses in the area are listed in the Vancouver heritage register, which means they have enough heritage value or character to be worthy of conservation but are not "protected heritage property" as defined in the Vancouver Charter.

In such a case, council may withhold an approval or make an order to provide temporary protection for the property, but without further action, such as designation as protected heritage property "(which may require compensation to be made to the owner), or entering into a heritage revitalization agreement with the owner, the property is not provided with continuing protection

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Urban design panel

CEDAR COTTAGE PROJECT SUPPORTED

By Chris Rose

A controversial rezoning proposal in Cedar Cottage that was discussed last week at Vancouver’s urban design panel meeting has been supported by the advisory group members.

The panel endorsed with an 8-2 vote **Cressey Development’s** application to rezone 3365 Commercial and 1695-1775 East 18th from RS-2 (single family) to CD-1 (comprehensive development).



Rendering of project at Commercial and 18th.

NRU PHOTO

The existing site, which is quite heavily wooded and home to a significant number of birds, is currently made up of five lots and is about 33,700 square feet.

The smaller of the two parcels in the application is to contain a relocated and refurbished heritage house facing East 18th, which would be made into two dwelling units, and three infill townhouses.

The larger parcel includes a six-storey structure facing Commercial and a four-storey structure on East 18th. The two buildings would be joined by a bridging structure. The mid-rise apartments would have 112 market rental units. Altogether there would be 25 studios, 45 one-bedroom apartments, 32 with two bedrooms and 10 with three bedrooms.

There would be 84 parking spaces for the entire project which would utilize wood-frame construction.

While noting panel members were fairly unanimous in most

of their comments about the application, chair **Jennifer Marshall** said the proposed entry for the apartment units was miserable.

Marshall also described the four-storey apartment as being “neither fish nor fowl” and said the six-storey building was okay in principle but needs extra work. She said the building did not reflect the character of Commercial Drive and East Vancouver, as it looks institutional and block-like.

She also said a “re-look” of the infill townhouses is merited because they are currently too close to the heritage house.

Several of the panel members suggested the six-storey building would benefit from having setbacks. Many also suggested the four-storey building have either a green roof or a large patio-type area on the roof that residents could share as an amenity.

After listening to comments from panel members, architect **Taizo Yamamoto** agreed there were a lot of things in the proposal that needed to be worked on.

Cedar Cottage Area Neighbours, a local group opposing the project, says it is too large and would require the removal of about 35 trees.

The group wants each lot developed separately to keep more of the established trees and retain the character of the neighbourhood. It is lobbying for two-storey townhouses be built along East 18th instead of the four-storey

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Rendering of project at 6318-6340 Cambie.

SOURCE: CITY OF VANCOUVER

VANCOUVER BRIEFS

[Regulating marijuana sales](#)

Dozens of people have registered to speak to city council this week over a proposal to make marijuana dispensaries subject to city

zoning and licensing bylaws just like any other business.

Council holds a public hearing Tuesday night on a proposed amendment to the zoning and development

bylaw that will include a new conditional land use. As well, the licence bylaw will have a new business category called “retail dealer — medical marijuana-related use” if

council approves a staff recommendation.

There will also be new regulations with an annual licence fee of \$30,000, a

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SAVING SHAUGHNESSY

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and may be subject to demolition,” the report says.

Only 80 of the 317 pre-1940 houses in Shaughnessy are listed and just 11 are protected from demolition.

Development of First Shaughnessy, roughly bounded by West 16th and West 15th, West King Edward, Oak and East Boulevard, began by the CPR in 1907. It was meant from the

start to be an elite neighbourhood

“An example of the Garden City movement, the neighbourhood still possesses many of the fundamental characteristics that defined its origins: winding, tree-lined streets that followed the topography of the land, and layered views of elegant homes on lushly landscaped lots,” the report says. [nru](#)

URBAN DESIGN PANEL

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apartment and a small building of two to three storeys constructed along Commercial instead of the six-storey proposal.

Grace MacKenzie, a member of the group whose family has owned the home west of the project since 1942, said later in an interview she was disappointed with the panel’s decision to support the application.

“The density, we think, is too high,” MacKenzie said. “It’s going to put so many more people in the neighbourhood.”

She said the group opposes the proposed four-storey building on East 18th and the six-storey structure on Commercial because they have a density of 2.85 FSR. Instead, she added, two-storey townhouses on East 18th would have a density of no more than 0.83 FSR while the small building of two to three storeys along Commercial would have a density of no more than 0.90 FSR.

“We don’t mind densification,” she said, “but it should respect the growth that is already there and it should respect the neighbourhood.”

[6318–6340 Cambie](#)

The panel also unanimously supported a seven-storey mixed-use building in the Cambie corridor near the Oakridge shopping centre.

Integra Architecture has applied to rezone the two-parcel site between West 46th and 48th from RT-2 (duplex) to CD-1 to accommodate 50 dwelling units, including seven townhouses, plus commercial uses at street level. There would be 61 underground parking spaces.

The project, which covers about 20,000 square feet, has one additional storey than is allowed along much of the Cambie corridor since the plan allows for eight storeys at 48th.

Many panel members said they had no problem with the mass, the height and the density of the building, since the application conforms to the planning guidelines used to redevelop Cambie along the Canada Line mass transit route from the city centre south to Vancouver International Airport and Richmond. [nru](#)

Emily Carr University of Art and Design

ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

By Karenn Krangle

Final approval on the new building for Emily Carr University of Art and Design will rest on some design tweaks to the project, particularly regarding accessibility on the site.

Vancouver's development permit board last week conditionally approved the building on False Creek flats, but called on the project team to work with city planners on design development of a proposed pedestrian spine and the roof line of the school as well as a possible new elevator core near assembly spaces.

City staff said the east-west pedestrian spine along the south edge of the building was their major concern over the project.

"We wanted a very gracious pedestrian spine," planner **Tim Potter** told the board. "We feel it's definitely the most important issue in front of us."

As the project is currently designed, there are stairs at the western end of the spine, with a ramp alongside.

The city wants the spine at a uniform grade of 5 per cent, with no steps or guard rails.

But both architect **Don Schmitt**, of **Diamond Schmitt Architects**, and university president **Ron Burnett** said the concern is that changing the grade into a single, long ramp might put part of one of the floors below ground.

Schmitt said the area has a 16-foot grade change at its highest point and a gradual slope could mean that classroom windows look out on a retaining wall.

"We are trying to figure out how to get to that very, very careful sloping in a manner that doesn't take an important part of the campus away," Burnett said.

As well as classroom and studio space, the building at 520 East First on the Great Northern Way campus will include public galleries, flexible gallery space, a 400-seat lecture, a large, open common area, a group of meeting spaces, a theatre and a series of entry points. Its public realm plan features two plazas and the pedestrian spine.



Stairs on pedestrian spine (top left) are an issue.

NRU PHOTO

The project team took issue to another proposed condition of approval calling for design development on the building's north and south roof line because "the current array of roof shapes are random and appear superficially applied to the building."

Schmitt showed a rendering of how the roof line would look from the inside and responded: "They've been considered very carefully with the university.

"They're really integral to the design of the studios. If they were false fronts, I'd agree with the comments but they are part and parcel of the design."

The urban design panel, which reviewed the application in April, had suggested another look at the roof line as well as improvements on the pedestrian spine and the landscaping.

Urban design panel member **Roger Hughes** told the board that the panel was divided on the roof line, but noted the roof line looked less tacked-on in the design plan than on the model.

The board agreed not to impose that condition strictly but have staff explore it with the project team,

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VANCOUVER BRIEFS

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ban on customers under 18 and a 300-metre minimum distance between stores and from schools and community centres.

City manager **Penny Ballem** told council in April that the number of stores dramatically increased after 2012 when the federal government indicated it would change the rules on access to medical marijuana.

For its part, the government has told the mayor that the stores are illegal and the city should not be regulating them. Vancouver is the first city to try to do so.

[Building healthy places](#)

The **Urban Land Institute** presents a panel discussion Thursday on building healthy places and communities. The event will also feature a presentation on the parent ULI body's recent Healthy Places Initiative, which came up with 21 recommendations for health development practices.

On the panel are ULI senior vice-president **Rachel MacCleery**; **Sean Hodgins**, president of **Century Group**; **Martin Nielsen**, a principal at **DIALOG**; and **Ashley O'Neil**, vice-president for

corporate strategy at **CBRE**. The moderator will be **John Saliken**, an associate at **Chandler Associates Architecture Inc.**

The event is from 3 to 6 p.m. at the Terminal City Club, 837 West Hastings.

For tickets and more information: www.britishcolumbia.uli.org/event/uli-bc-building-healthy-places-good-business-everyone/

[Veteran developers](#)

Also on Thursday, the **Urban Development Institute** presents a lunchtime

conversation between developers **Nat Bosa** (**Bosa Development**), **Michael Audain** (**Polygon Homes**) and **David Podmore** (**Concert Properties**) and UDI chair **David Porte**.

The event is from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel.

For more information and tickets: www.udi.memberzone.com/events/details/udi-vancouver-lunch-the-legends-129

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ACCESS IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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and made the same decision on a new elevator core.

Burnett also had concerns over adding a new elevator core may be difficult because it could hinder the movement of large objects.

But acting city transportation director **Lon LaClaire** noted that the building has a long floor plate and could use the extra elevator.

The new school, expected to accommodate 1,800 students will have two plazas — the larger St. George Plaza at the building's broad entrance with amphitheatre stairs on the south face of the school and an arts plaza at the east end.

The campus will connect to the Central Valley Greenway bikeway and will have bicycle parking, with vehicle parking at surface lots off-site, but that could change if SkyTrain station to serve the area is built as part of a Broadway extension of the Millennium line.

The board and its advisory panel had generally positive comments over all about the project, although Hughes said the urban design panel had some issues with the proposed metal cladding.

"This is not Phoenix, and we get a lot of rain here," he said.

Head planner **Brian Jackson** said the building is an important new educational facility in the city and deputy city manager Sadhu Johnston called it a great addition to the community.

Advisory panel member **Jonathan Denis-Jacob** said the project is consistent with the city's long-term vision for the area.

The proposed building is part of the Great Northern Way campus, a consortium specializing in digital media comprising Emily Carr, Simon Fraser University, B.C. Institute of Technology and the University of B.C.

Construction is expected to be complete in 2017. [nru](#)

Burrard Bridge

CHANGES TO 'EASE CONGESTION'

By Chris Rose

Closing down another lane of traffic on Vancouver's iconic Burrard Bridge and carrying out \$30 million in repairs and other improvements will actually ease motor vehicle congestion, a city official said Saturday.

"It'll be faster and it'll be viable," acting transportation director **Lon LaClaire** said during an open house held to explain the proposed changes.

LaClaire said about \$20 million will be used to repair concrete handrails, sidewalks, and widen the last 100 metres of the north end of the bridge to create two right-turn lanes on to Pacific. In addition, he said, about \$10 million will be used to redesign the Pacific Street intersection, which is described as the second-highest collision location in Vancouver with an average of 150 collisions per year.

Spanning the mouth of False Creek, the bridge is a major gateway between the downtown core and city's western neighbourhoods. The city estimates tens of thousands of people walk, bike, take transit, and drive across the bridge every day.

LaClaire said the work will take approximately 18 months and will likely start early next year. The city will also replace sewer and water pipes on roads at both ends of the bridge during the construction phase.

Motorists will be able to use the bridge during construction but there will only be three lanes open. Upon completion, the biggest change to the Art Deco structure will be a reduction from the current five lanes to four, which will allow pedestrians to once again walk on both sides of the bridge. There will also be protected cycling lanes on both sides.

When Burrard Bridge opened in 1932 there were six lanes for cars and trucks, in addition to sidewalks used by both pedestrians and cyclists.

In 2009, according to a city timeline, protected bike lanes



Intersection of Pacific and Burrard.

NRU PHOTO

were created in both directions by reallocating one southbound motor vehicle lane, and by restricting walking from the east sidewalk.

In 2013-14 the city upgraded the southern approach, at the Cornwall intersection, and replaced bearings and expansion joints on the bridge, removed toxic materials and carried out various concrete repairs.

Burrard Bridge, with its graceful architecture, has always held a special

place for Vancouverites.

Since opening, the bridge, which offers stunning views of the city's downtown core, English Bay and the North Shore mountains, has become a conduit for civic protests.

During the Cold War, tens of thousands of so-called "peaceniks" would march across the structure to nearby rallies.

Premier **Christy Clark** announced Friday that the bridge will be closed for seven hours on June 21, the International Day of Yoga.

LaClaire said planners are hoping the maintenance work will make the bridge safe for 100 years. "It's kind of nice we have such a strong bridge. The fundamentals are all in place."

Planners hope to get city hall approval for the design and the \$30 million of work in July, he said, adding most people he talked to at the open house were positive to the planned changes.

But Emmanuel Leroy said he wants the bridge to again offer six lanes for motorists.

"I think what they are doing is appalling," Leroy said, adding he would like planners to use the 17-foot-tall archways in the centre of the bridge for cyclists on the bottom and pedestrians on the top. The double-height approach could be extended along the rest of the bridge using the original sidewalks.

He also described the plan to further reduce the number of lanes as madness.

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Coquitlam

RIVERVIEW PLANNING CONTINUES

The provincial government and **BC Housing** continue their visioning process for the Riverview Hospital site this week with a panel discussion on mental health, complete communities and economic sustainability Wednesday in Coquitlam.

The last round of open houses on the future of Riverview was held from September to November last year featuring “co-design workshops,” with artists doing illustrations of participants’ ideas. Workshops with the **Kwikwetlem First Nation** and university students were also held.

A summary prepared by **Brook Pooni Associates Inc.** said mental health was the mostly highly rated category among participants.

Participants gave preference for acute and long-term care services on the site, particularly for dementia, therapeutic activities and life skills, with high votes for preserving the natural environment and local history.

The provincial government began the visioning process for the former mental hospital in 2013 to plan future uses of the site.

Riverview, with 75 buildings, began as the Hospital for the Mind in 1904, was named Essondale in 1913 and renamed Riverview in 1966.

Its main buildings have included the Provincial Industrial School for boys; West Lawn, Centre Lawn and East Lawn, all psychiatric units; and Crease Clinic, which began as a veterans’ facility.

The hospital closed in 2012. The site also includes Colony Farm, which for years provided food for the hospital, and is now a provincial park.

Three rounds of public consultation have been held so far

on the future of the 1,000-acre site in Coquitlam.

Most people responding have said there should be some kind of mental-health facility on the site and it should remain in public lands. Some have said there should be some parkland at Riverview and there has been some resistance to market housing there.

Any residential development on should have diversity, should be low rise with a lot of public space and there should be some mixed uses, the latest summary of public comments said. The provincial government has not agreed to any of these ideas.

Wednesday’s panel event, which is also being billed as an open house, will also touch on themes brought up in earlier stages of the process.

Panel members are **Julian Somers**, professor of health sciences at Simon Fraser University, and former director of the SFU Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction; **Darrell Burnham**, CEO of Coast Mental Health; **Brent Toderian**, former Vancouver planning director and president of **Toderian UrbanWORKS**; **Tsur Somerville**, director at the University of B.C.’s Centre for Urban Economics and Real Estate.

The moderator is **Gordon Price**, director of SFU’s City Program.

The event is from 7 to 9:30 p.m. at the Executive Plaza Hotel, 450 North Road, Coquitlam.

Information will also be available online after the panel discussion.

Visit: www.renewingriverview.com 

BURRARD BRIDGE

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Sophia van Norden said she had come to the open house with negative thoughts about the plans but having seen the proposed details now has mixed feelings about the proposal. Especially important to her is the planned intersection improvement. “The intersection is dangerous and needs improvement,” she said.

Liz Haan said she was extremely pleased with the plan since the two right-turn lanes on to Pacific and an improved intersection should significantly reduce vehicular congestion. “It looks like it should work,” Haan said.

There will be a second open house at the Roundhouse Community Centre on June 16 from 7 to 9 p.m. 

Financing growth

DEVELOPER CHARGES

Faster-than-expected growth in Vancouver means the city must reassess its need for community facilities, transportation, infrastructure and housing that goes with it, senior staff at city hall say.

“Since the financing growth strategy was adopted in 2004, the city has experienced a much faster growth in population than originally anticipated,” city manager **Penny Ballem** and head planner **Brian Jackson** say in a report to council. “There has also been a substantial shift in senior governments’ involvement in delivering social housing and child care.

“As a result, it would be timely to update the growth projection, the need for public amenities as they align with the various community plans, and the city’s strategy to finance such growth needs over the long term.”

Council will receive more information on growth projections next month, the report says.

The comments are included in an annual report from city finance director **Patrice Impey** on developer charges, and the associated projects and benefits from them, specifically the mandatory development cost levies, which are charged on all new development.

An accompanying report from deputy planning director **Jane Pickering** gives an update on the community amenity contributions that are applied to rezoning applications, and a review of density bonusing.

“To balance community livability and affordability, a basic principle embedded in the city’s financing growth policy is

that new development should contribute a share of its growth costs through development cost levies and voluntary community amenity contributions (for projects involving rezoning),” Impey’s report says. “Developer contributions are a significant source of funding for growth-related public benefits, and relieve what would otherwise fall entirely on to property taxes and other city funding.

“Development contributions, including DCLs and voluntary CACs, are a significant funding source for growth-related public benefits. They help advance key council and community priorities, and relieve what would otherwise fall entirely on to property taxes and other city funding.”

Impey notes that 2014 was another heavy real-estate development year, with approved permits for new construction in Vancouver last year totalling 8.1 million square feet across all DCL districts. That breaks down to 6.37 million square feet of residential development and 1.77 million square feet of office or commercial uses.

DCLs are charged according to 10 districts in three categories: city-wide, area-specific and “layered” districts, which carry an extra charge on top of a city-wide one.

“In 2014, \$57.5 million was collected from all DCL districts and \$4.5 million of interest was accrued totalling \$62.0 million,” Impey’s report says, noting that \$61.5 million was collected in DCLs in 2013. (The record year was 2012, with \$80 million in receipts.) “Of this amount, 78 per cent came from the city-wide DCL

district and 22 per cent came from the area-specific and layered DCL districts.

Pickering’s report says there were 50 approvals of additional density in 2014, resulting in a net increase in floor area of 6.5 million square feet.

“The 2014 approvals of additional density will secure public benefits valued at approximately \$234 million,” it says. “Approximately two-thirds of these public benefits (\$157 million) and about 60 per cent of the added floor area were attributed to the approval of one major project rezoning at Oakridge Centre.” Pickering says rezoning is the primary tool used to create additional density.

She says density bonus zoning permits developers to build additional floor space in exchange for a range of amenities and/or affordable housing needed by the community and that CACs from most rezonings to help address added costs to the city.

“In 2014, there were approximately 1,400 building permits for new construction issued within existing zoning (building permit activity in 2014 was a record year),” Pickering’s report says. “The 50 approvals of additional density (rezoning/bonusing) represent only 3.5 per cent of this number.

“The vast majority of development in the city occurs within existing zoning (i.e. conforms to density, land use and design of existing zoning regulations). However, while the number of projects adding density to the city is relatively small, their impact on growth can be significant.”

Pickering says the largest amount of the

VANCOUVER BRIEFS

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Rezoning application

A 26-storey mixed-use building has been proposed for 225 Smithe downtown.

GBL Architects has applied to rezone the site at the northwest corner of Smithe and Cambie from DD (downtown district) to CD-1 (comprehensive development) for the building containing four floors of commercial space and 114 condos, with a density of 11.85 FSR.

The project is being considered under the city’s rezoning policy for the central business district and the CBD shoulder, where this site is located.

The policy calls for more

commercial uses, with some market residential development in certain conditions.

An open house on the project is scheduled for June 15 from 5 to 8 p.m at the Hampton Inn and Suites, 111 Robson.

Tiny student suites

The University of B.C. is planning to build some 145 square-foot micro units in its new Gage South student residence on campus.

The tiny suites, aimed at “addressing affordability issues for some students,” will be included in the new complex, which will also have a range of units, from studios to four bedrooms, with kitchens.

“Typical residence amenities will be provided including lobby, front desk, house lounge, meeting/study rooms, bike storage, fitness/games room, music practice rooms and laundry,” UBC’s board of governors was told in a report.

It noted that wait lists for student housing continue to grow and that 92 per cent of first year international students live on the Point Grey campus.

The four-tower student residence, with 500 to 600 units, will be on a podium built over a bus exchange at the southwest corner of Wesbrook and Student Union Boulevard, next to the

student recreation centre and new aquatic centre. It was designed by **DIALOG**. [nru](#)

VANCOUVER PEOPLE

Vancouver architect **Michael Green** has proposed a 35-storey wood construction building for Paris. The project, proposed for the Boulevard Pershing in the 17th arrondissement, is an entry in the Réinventer Paris competition. The mixed-use building would include social housing, a hotel, a grocery store and a bus area.

DEVELOPER CHARGES

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\$234 million in CAC money (\$111 million) went to build 290 units of social housing. Community facilities (\$52 million), parks and open space (\$40 million), child care (\$17 million), heritage (\$12 million) and transportation (\$1 million) made up the rest, with \$1 million unallocated.

“Approximately 80 per cent of public benefit value was offered as in-kind contributions, meaning that they will be provided on-site when the new developments are constructed.

“The remainder of the allocated funds

(20 per cent) were offered as cash-in-lieu contributions, meaning that these funds when received at enactment are then assigned to the specific public benefits by council though multi-year capital planning and budgeting processes.”

Impey says the balance of unallocated DCLs at the start of 2014 was \$133.2 million, including DCL receipts of \$62.0 million and DCL allocation of \$15.6 million. The 2014 ending balance was \$179.5 million.

Both reports provide an analysis

of projects and amenities bought by developer charges, amounts collected and other data.

The city has also produced a booklet on CACs and amenities. It’s at:

www.former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20150610/documents/cfsc7-CommunityBenefitsBookletJune2015.pdf

The city’s financing growth strategy document is at: www.former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/financinggrowth/pdf/fgchoices.pdf [nru](#)

CACS AND AFFORDABILITY

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affordable housing units,” Coriolus’s report says. “CACs are not the cause of rising housing prices in the city of Vancouver.”

It compares the charges to a unit on a site needing soil remediation, which would cost more than one across the street on a clean site, or a unit in a project with a cost overrun due to a mistake, which would cost more than one in a better-managed project.

The study, which also looked at the pace of development since 1988 and apartment start says CACs also may increase project costs, but rezoning also creates new land value by allowing a larger development opportunity.

“The impact of CACs, then, comes down to what happens to the increased land value created by rezoning. If the CAC eats up all of the increased land value, developers and land owners will have insufficient incentive to participate in the redevelopment process. If less new development happens, housing prices would increase.

“But if the CAC is calibrated appropriately so that the land value gain is shared among stakeholders there is the possibility of a win-win-win: land owners reap an increase in the value of property, developers find it rewarding to seek rezoning and develop projects, and the community obtains new amenities.” However, it warns against asking too much: “If the expectation of community benefit is so high that existing land owners have insufficient incentive to sell their land into the development market or developers are unable to achieve reasonable profit margins, there is a risk that the amount of land available for new development is reduced.”

The study also notes that new units in projects where CACs were charged are selling for prices similar to units in projects that did not pay CACs. “There is no empirical evidence that CACs are added on to housing prices.”

The study found Vancouver has existing or planned capacity for enough new multi-family development for 20 years at the recent pace of development, although that depends on what locations are attractive to the market.

“There is room for 25,700 units on lands that are already zoned for multi-family and for which no CAC is required. In addition, rezonings over the last five years have added capacity for about 15,137 units, of which very little has to date been completed.”

The effects of CACs on developer and owner profits is also examined in the report, and argues that rezoning increases land value.

The ABCs of DCLs and CACs

Development cost levies (DCLs) are a growth-related charge on all new development. They are applied on a per-square-foot basis and are payable at building permit issuance. DCL allocations to public benefits are limited by the Vancouver Charter for use only towards growth-related capital projects including parks, child care, affordable replacement housing and engineering infrastructure. Since they were introduced in 1993, more than \$400 million has been collected from DCLs to help pay for growth-related facilities. There are 10 DCL districts in Vancouver, divided into three types, with their own rates: city-wide, area-specific and layered districts, subject to both city-wide and area DCLs.

Community amenity contributions (CACs) are voluntary in-kind or cash contributions provided by new development as part of rezoning approvals and are paid in addition to DCLs. CACs

are payable at enactment of new zoning. CAC allocations are not limited by the Vancouver Charter and are applied toward a wider range of public benefits than DCLs. CACs can help address increased demands on city facilities from additional residents and/or employees, as well as mitigate the impacts of a rezoning on the surrounding community.

Examples of in-kind amenity contributions include child-care facilities or park space incorporated into the new development. Cash contributions may be put toward benefits such as these and others including libraries, community centres, transportation improvements, cultural facilities and neighbourhood houses and are generally applied to off-site benefits in the surrounding community.

CACs can be part of a public benefits package offered by the developer, which may also include the transfer of density from a heritage site, and/or affordable housing.

- Source: City of Vancouver

“Clearly, there is an optimal target for CAC policy: finding the right mix of incentive for land owners, compensation for developers, and community benefits that enables rezoning and new development to proceed at a pace that is not impeded by the CAC policy,” it says. This is the balance that is called for in the provincial guidelines and in the City of Vancouver’s policy statements.”

The Coriolus study, which also makes a number of regional comparisons, is appended to a staff report to council on CACs, at: www.former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20150610/documents/cfsc7.pdf 

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Spaxman said he had seen the hub framework and thought it was a great plan.

“It was moving in the right direction, and then to suddenly find that [building] there, after what I’d believed would be months or at least weeks of discussion with the city, without any commentary at all about anybody being concerned,” he said. “Why does it get to this stage without all the concerns worked out before being worked out with the confusion in public discussion?”

Molaro said the design team for 555 West Cordova is rethinking the scheme since the urban design panel withheld its support for the project earlier this year.

“City staff have not been apprised of what that approach is. Basically, the project is on hold until they choose to engage with us again.”

Urban designer **Frank Ducote**, representing the citizen-led Downtown Waterfront Working Group, which wants the city to take another look at the hub plan, suggested the urban design panel hold a workshop on the project and the area.

“As much as I think the hub plan is a good statement and a flexible statement about the evolution

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The hub and Granville Street

Anita Molaro, an assistant planning director at city hall, said the urban design objectives of the waterfront hub plan are:

- To connect the city with the waterfront;
- To introduce high-quality new development integrated with a transportation hub;
- To create a world-class transportation interchange.

The hub plan includes street improvements and extensions as well as development.

“The plan looks at how we can get a Granville Street extension and at what elevation it would connect with the Canada Place extension,” she said, adding that the city would also like to remove the elevated walkway above Granville, which also has an impact on Sinclair Centre.

“We did a structural study to look at removing the upper level of the parking plaza of 200 Granville and allowing [Granville] through. What we learned was that because that facility was built to support fire trucks, it’s been built to road capacity. By removing that upper level of the parking structure, the road would come through more naturally.”

Molaro said land ownership in the area is complex, ranging from private owners to **Port**

Metro Vancouver.

“The city doesn’t actually own any land in this area, however, we do have some rights of access, particularly over the east end of the Waterfront station site,” she said. “We have a right of access to create a road through that parking lot ... [to be called] the Cordova connector.

Molaro said another objective of the plan is to extend the waterfront walkway that goes around the edge of Vancouver and to look at open-space opportunities with street-end views.

Development would aim to extend the central business district with high-density mixed-use commercial uses, with a commitment to environmental sustainability, she said. She said challenges to the plan include the impacts on the rail yards and freight, development funding and achieving the Granville extension.

Steve Brown, the city’s manager of traffic and data management, told the SFU event that the area currently contains all modes of transportation, including air, rail, water, freight, sea planes and helicopters.

The plan would include a “grand” passenger concourse directly north of the station building, a marine transportation terminal and clear and direct links to transit, he said.



The city feels the north foot of Granville should not end in a garage entrance.

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of the waterfront, but when the first thing that comes out of the box looks like this, you start questioning the whole plan,” he said. “If this is the first toe in the door, it’s so out of keeping with what we thought we had a good framework for.”

Ducote said the waterfront hub framework called for an 11-storey building on the Cordova site.

Former city planner and urban designer **Scot Hein**, now at the University of B.C., recommended the city hold a public design charrette on the precinct.

While there was general support for the plan, there appears to be a consensus that the community should be included in the details of what will be developed.

“The city needs to demonstrate some leadership,” planner and author **Lance Berelowitz** said, adding that he has worked with various directors of planning and city councils on several integrated and comprehensive planning processes, such as the waterfront policy, Coal Harbour and **Concord Pacific** lands. “What we don’t have I think yet is the political leadership that would give power to the planning department in order to go out and do that properly.

“So I would suggest, with all due respect to the process, that we put some kind of moratorium until we know what we want to do with comprehensive study. And then we bring all those parties to the table and ... we have an extensive public planning process that revisits the hub plan and then we get the political buy-in and support for this.”

Berelowitz said the project is huge, with wide ramifications.

“The provincial and federal interests are at stake here,” he said. “I think this is a premature moment and a dangerous moment if we allow this project to go forward as is or some variation thereof. If it meets the development permit process, which is a very narrowly defined and limited process that the city is imposing on this particular developer, then I think we will have missed a key opportunity.

“This is far too charged a site — historically, politically, economically, and in terms of the potential opportunities and risks here, for us to just go ahead and approve it on the basis of one single interest.”

Gordon Price, director of SFU’s City Program, wondered if it would make sense for council to have a separate planning process to look at all of the projects in the context of the area to see if the hub plan needs to be renewed, “given that there

are so many projects out of scale.

“Council would then have something before it, community consultation, and when it moves forward, all the parties know where they stand,” he said.

Molaro said there was community consultation when the plan was developed and, when pressed by Price, said there was no implementation strategy.

Architect **Graham McGarva**, of **VIA Architecture**, is working on more than one site in the area for **Carrera Management** owner **Greg Kerfoot**, who also owns the Vancouver Whitecaps, including an already-approved tower across Cordova at 320 Granville and some projects to be built over the rail tracks, called the area “the fundamental workhorse of the region,” and said development needs to be encouraged.

Molaro said public discussion on the waterfront hub had died down after it went to council because no development proposal had been presented until 320 Granville came along a couple of years ago.

“Really, the one that sort of triggered the conversation is 555 Cordova, [raising the questions] ‘How does this fit?’, ‘How does this work?’ and ‘Are we achieving our objectives?’ and how this departs from the framework concept.

“So that’s still the question for us. In terms of the conversation, I think getting people to understand the complexity of the waterfront hub plan and the vision of the hub plan is really, really important.

“What we know about this plan is that it’s real, it can be built and conceptually presented. It’s not saying things can’t change and adjust if there’s a better idea.” [nruc](#)

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