

CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT



Report Date: March 9, 2006
Author: Ted Sebastian/
Cathy Buckham
Phone No.: 7458/7265
RTS No.: 05470
VanRIMS No.: 05-1000-20
Meeting Date: March 23, 2006

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets

FROM: Director of City Plans

SUBJECT: Additional Staffing to Bring the Vision Implementation Team
to Full Strength

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council receive for INFORMATION this report on the creation of a permanent Planner I position and a permanent Planning Assistant III position, effective August 2006, to work on the implementation of adopted Community Visions, initially focussing on the Arbutus-Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shoughnessy and Riley Park/South Cambie Community Visions. This provides implementation support for the recently approved Visions and brings the implementation team to full strength. The estimated annual cost of these two positions including fringe benefits is \$131,600 (\$54,900 prorated for fiscal 2006), plus a one time cost of \$12,000 for computers, software, and office equipment. Approval and funding to be deferred to the 2006 Interim Operating Budget.
- B. THAT Council receive for INFORMATION this report on the approval of an annual budget of \$20,000 or \$10,000 per Community Vision area (\$10,000 prorated for fiscal 2006) for communications and outreach expenses related to on-going implementation in Arbutus-Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shoughnessy and Riley Park/South Cambie. Approval and funding to be deferred to the 2006 Interim Operating Budget.
- C. THAT staff report back on action plans to implement the Arbutus-Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shoughnessy and Riley Park/South Cambie Community Visions.

CSG GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

Since 1998, as new Visions have been adopted, Council has approved staffing, action plans, and budgets for Vision implementation. Up until mid-2004, the staffing complement for the Vision Implementation program was one Planner and one Planning Assistant for each pair of Vision communities.

In 2005, Council adopted two new Community Visions: Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaugnessy (ARKS) and Riley Park/South Cambie (RPSC).

PURPOSE & SUMMARY

This report requests that Council approve two new permanent positions to provide implementation support for the recently approved Visions and bring the Implementation Team up to full strength. Staff also request Council approval of funding for communication and outreach for Vision implementation in ARKS and RPSC. Due to efficiencies from a reorganization of the implementation team, no additional staff will be requested when the final Community Vision (West Point Grey) is adopted in 2007.

A separate report outlines a request for public program funding for intensive, short duration future planning carried out by existing permanent staff in Area Planning Teams. Subject to Council's direction, these initiatives could include: New Local Area Planning in non-Vision communities, Neighbourhood Centre Planning, Canada Line Station Area Planning, a Shopping Area Initiative in non-Vision communities, and Unique Area Planning Initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The Community Vision program marked a new approach to community planning. Previous Local Area Planning processes took five years to develop a plan and additional time to implement. In order to bring CityPlan directions to the 13 largely single family areas of Vancouver in a reasonable time frame, the Community Vision process develops a long-term plan with local residents in 18 months. The Vision planning team then moves on to plan a new community. Implementation is a separate initiative.

Each community Vision includes over 100 directions that have been endorsed through a community survey and adopted by Council. Each Vision includes directions which generally identify new housing types and locations which, totalled over the 8 adopted Visions (12 communities), would add the potential for over 16,500 units of ground oriented housing in the largely single family areas of Vancouver.

Following the adoption of a Community Vision, there are two streams of implementation work. The Neighbourhood Centre Planning process works intensively with the community to determine detailed housing types and boundaries for each centre identified in a Vision (17 in all). Prior to Neighbourhood Centre Planning, a separate Implementation Team has been

working to implement the 80+% of Vision directions which relate to Traffic and Transportation, Community Safety and Services, Existing Residential Areas, Shopping Areas, Parks/Streets/Lanes, the Environment, and Community Involvement. The Implementation staff help to build community capacity to address community issues and interact with City staff to direct existing programs to community priorities. These implementation activities build a framework for new housing options in the Neighbourhood Centre Planning process.

This report describes the on-going work of the Implementation Team before requesting two permanent staff to start implementation in the recently approved Vision areas. The new staff would bring the Implementation Team to full strength.

Major responsibilities of the Implementation team include:

- creating action plans to implement Vision directions;
- ensuring City initiatives are consistent with Vision directions and providing advice on rezoning and development proposals to maximize movement toward Vision directions;
- assisting other departments with city-wide implementation actions and projects that are consistent with Vision directions;
- meeting regularly with community-based implementation committees to develop priorities for Vision implementation action, monitoring actions, and managing each community's \$10,000 budget for communication and outreach;
- assisting and supporting a range of community initiatives such as special events and projects that build community capacity and move toward Vision directions;
- developing and translating communications materials, including web-based information; and
- facilitating community action and problem-solving on local Vision-related issues

Over the past year, Vision implementation staff have been involved in a variety of implementation activities including:

- development of sidewalk design standards for Hastings (Hastings-Sunrise [HS])
- development of a public realm design and façade guidelines for Hastings (HS)
- development of a skateboard park/pedestrian walkway at Leaside Tunnel (HS)
- exploration of a design for house with two legal suites (HS)
- school greening projects (Windermere, McDonald, Franklin, Hastings)
- school seismic upgrade and heritage retention (Dickens in Kensington/Cedar Cottage [KCC], Sexsmith in Sunset)
- public art processes (Avalon Greenway in Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney [VFK] and PEPART in Sunset)
- park improvement proposals (Tecumseh in VFK and Slocan in Renfrew-Collingwood [RC])
- waterwise blooming boulevard and public art on Prince Edward Street (Sunset)
- development of public realm improvements on Fraser Street (Sunset)
- formation of Fraser Street Business Association (Sunset)
- retention options for Firehall #15 (RC)
- the Blenheim Street Reclassification Process (Dunbar)
- local traffic calming initiatives (Slow Down Dundas Street, sign-making, and monitoring activities)

- community festivals (Renfrew Moon Festival, Fraser Street Festival, and Light Water Drums)

In addition to leading these neighbourhood-based initiatives, Implementation staff also created opportunities for local groups to tackle shared problems by:

- working with Engineering staff on workshops to establish a traffic calming toolkit, priority system, and implementation process for Neighbourhood Collector streets;
- working with Vision Committee members and staff from different departments and the Province to reduce the speed limit on residential streets to 40 km/hr;
- setting up workshops with committee members and staff to discuss innovative traffic calming measures for local streets and collectors with a consultant;
- enabling participation in city-wide processes like the VSB's Learning About Heritage Schools Project.

Overall, timely initiation of Vision Implementation builds on the broad community involvement generated in the Community Vision process. It demonstrates the City's intent to move forward on community priorities. It also builds a positive, constructive relationship between the community and City staff. All these factors are important precursors to conducting successful planning processes that are more localized and intensive, such as Neighbourhood Centre or Canada Line Station Area Planning. On a more detailed level, Implementation staff can help development proposals move incrementally toward implementing Vision directions and prevent some decisions from thwarting desired neighbourhood change.

DISCUSSION

Staffing

Starting the Vision Implementation program in new areas, like ARKS and RPSC, requires a major dedication of staff time. The Planner responsible for Vision implementation in a new area must develop an action plan based on Vision directions, organize and hold a community-wide implementation workshop to present the Community Vision, form a Vision Implementation Committee of community volunteers, set priorities for action, and establish implementation subcommittees around community projects or issues.

As previous Visions have been adopted, staff have requested, and Council has approved, additional positions to implement the newly adopted Visions. In the past, staffing requests have been based on a formula of one Planner and one Planning Assistant for each pair of Vision communities. In 2004, Council approved funding for a Planner and a Planning Analyst to implement the Hastings-Sunrise and Renfrew-Collingwood Community Visions based on this formula.

Currently the Vision Implementation team consists of four staff: two Planners and two Planning Analysts who work with other City departments and local resident Vision Implementation Committees to implement Vision directions in six communities. In 2004 an implementation position was transferred to the Sustainability Program to support this key City initiative. As a result, the current staffing level is inadequate to implement the ARKS and RPSC Community Visions, which were adopted by Council in late 2005. In other communities,

timely follow-up of implementation has been crucial to maintaining community involvement following the Community Vision process. As a result, staff request two new positions to start in August, the latest point in the year which would allow Implementation Committees to be established and implementation to begin in 2006. The additional staff will enable implementation to start in ARKS and RPSC while continuing the work underway city-wide and in other communities with adopted Visions.

In addition, a reorganization of the Vision Implementation team has resulted in more efficient delivery of implementation services. For this reason, this staff request would bring the Implementation Team to full strength. No additional staff will be required to implement the West Point Grey Community Vision currently underway and scheduled for completion in 2007.

Communications and Outreach Budget

In July 2003, Council approved an annual budget of \$10,000 per adopted Community Vision to cover communication and outreach costs for community events, meetings, workshops, newsletters, advertisements, surveys, and translation. Council instructed staff to ensure that each budget be spent based on recommendations made by the local Vision Implementation Committee. Funds were not to be spent on capital projects and surpluses could not be carried over from year to year. Providing this level of communication and outreach in ARKS and RPSC requires that on-going funding of \$10,000 for each community be added to the City Plans operating budget, beginning in 2007. In 2006, \$5,000 per community would be sufficient to cover communication and outreach costs associated with kick-off activities that would begin in September, if the two additional staff are approved.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The annual cost for a permanent Planner I, including fringe benefits is \$75,256. The annual cost for a permanent Planning Assistant III, including fringe benefits is \$56,340. The 2006 prorated funding estimate for both positions, beginning in August 2006 is \$54,900 plus one-time costs of \$12,000 for computers, software, and office furniture. Funding for 2006 and beyond is requested to be added to the City Plans operating budget without offset.

For communications and outreach costs for ARKS and RPSC, an additional \$10,000 (prorated to \$5,000 per community) would be required in 2006. In fiscal 2007, the communication and outreach budget for ARKS and RPSC would total \$20,000 (\$10,000 per Vision community).

Approval and funding to be deferred to the 2006 Interim Operating Budget.

CONCLUSION

Following Council approval of a new Community Vision, staff work with the community and City staff to implement the Vision. New implementation staff have been approved over time as additional Visions were adopted. The new staff requested in this report is required to start implementation of the recently adopted Visions in ARKS and RPSC. This request brings the Vision Implementation Team to full strength. No additional staff will be required after adoption of the West Point Grey Vision in 2007.

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