



**CITY OF VANCOUVER
POLICY REPORT
URBAN STRUCTURE**

Report Date: March 30, 2006
Author: Trish French
Phone No.: 604.873.7041
RTS No.: 05727
VanRIMS No.: 11-2000-30
Meeting Date: April 18, 2006

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Current Planning and General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Central Waterfront Hub & Rail Lands Study

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT City Council endorse undertaking the Central Waterfront Hub & Rail Lands Study generally in accordance with the Terms of Reference in Appendix A.
- B. THAT Council approve the temporary staffing and other program components to undertake this work, as outlined in Appendix B, noting that funding is available to cover the costs

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Managers of Community Services and Engineering Services recommend approval of A and B.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of A and B.

COUNCIL POLICY

Central Waterfront Official Development Plan (adopted June 1979)
Central Waterfront Port Lands Policies (adopted February 1994)

These policies are briefly described in Appendix A, Section 2.2.

PURPOSE

This report presents, for Council approval, a Terms of Reference and proposed budget and staffing for a major study in the Central Waterfront area.

BACKGROUND

The Central Waterfront Official Development Plan (CWODP), adopted in 1979, covers the area between Burrard and Gore Streets, south of the Port Waterfront Road and north of Gastown. It covers the entire CP Rail yards. Rezoning and redevelopment of the portions of the ODP area between Burrard and Granville Street is almost complete. However, many of the provisions of the ODP for the area east of Granville Square are very outdated. In particular, that plan assumed that the rail yards might someday be removed: given growth of the port and freight movements, it is now known that they will remain in place over the long term.

There are a number of current opportunities and challenges that create a compelling need to undertake further planning now.

There is a need to do detailed planning for the multi-modal transportation Hub linking two transit lines, SeaBus, West Coast Express, and various bus services; and to plan for the development sites immediately around it. In particular, there is a need to investigate options to replace the pedestrian bridge to Granville Square which is being removed for the construction of the waterfront Canada Line station.

For the area over the rail tracks east of the Hub, there is a need to investigate whether it is possible to create road and other linkages across the rail tracks to integrate the City with the waterfront, and to determine the feasibility of development over the tracks. This is particularly challenging since there is no natural topographic change to assist in integrating the raised podium, as has been the case with waterfront development to the west.

The rail yards have been purchased by the owner of the Whitecaps Soccer Club, and a Stadium has been proposed on the westerly portion of the yards. This proposal is currently undergoing a separate Initial Review that will be reported to Council in spring 2006. (Terms of Reference for the Review can be accessed at <http://internal.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20051020/documents/pe6.pdf>.) If Council does not support continuing with the stadium proposal, this Study can investigate alternative development options that would be compatible with the transportation Hub. If Council agrees that the stadium should proceed further, the further planning work on it and the work of this Study will need to be coordinated.

DISCUSSION

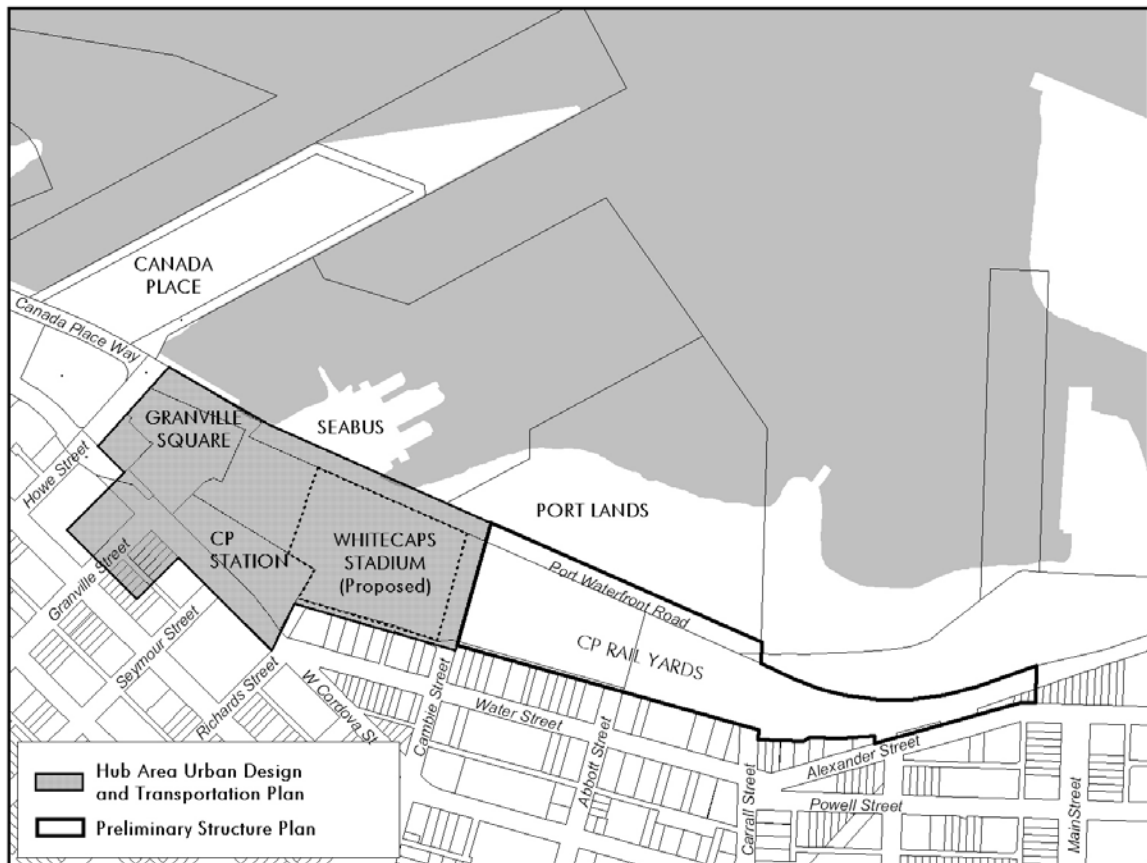
1.0 Study Terms of Reference

Recommendation A is for adoption of the Terms of Reference in Appendix A. This discussion presents only a brief summary.

The purpose of this Study is to:

- Create a detailed Urban Design and Transportation Plan for the Hub area, bounded roughly by Hastings Street, Howe Street, Port Waterfront Road, and the north foot of Cambie Street (see map).
- Create a Preliminary Structure Plan for the area over the rail yards east of the Hub area to approximately Main Street, to determine what access and linkages can be created, and to forecast whether future development over the rail tracks is feasible.

Figure 1. Central Waterfront: Hub & Rail Lands Study - Study Areas



After the Study is complete, the adopted Hub Area Urban Design and Transportation Plan will form the basis for one or more CD-1 zonings, or a new ODP followed by CD-1 rezonings, whichever is deemed most appropriate at the time. This will replace the CWODP in this area. (It should be noted that the ODP or rezoning work is not included in this Terms of Reference.)

For the area east of the Hub, the Preliminary Structure Plan will not address land use, building massing or floor space, but it will provide an initial assessment of whether it will be possible to achieve access and create a podium for development in an acceptable way. This is necessary before further planning in that area can occur. If further planning is appropriate, it

will need to be undertaken by the City in collaboration with the landowner, with the timing depending on the landowner's timing and availability of City resources.

The Terms of Reference outlines the major steps and a general schedule over 18 months. Once the project team is in place, they will need to further detail the work program.

The consultation program will include a range of activities involving:

- extensive work with directly-affected landowners and agencies including owners of the rail lands (Whitecaps Soccer organization), Fairmont, Cadillac Fairview (Ontrea), Granco Holdings, Federal Government (re: Sinclair Centre), Port of Vancouver, CP Rail, C.L.CO, TransLink, representatives of adjacent Gastown land and strata owners, and others as may be identified in Step 1 of the study.
- review and input at key steps from residents, businesses, owners and groups in the communities around the Study Area

2.0 Staffing and Resources

Recommendation B is to approve the temporary staffing and other components required to do the study, as outlined in Appendix B. The cost totals \$750,000, and funding is available to cover the cost.

The Study will be jointly undertaken by Planning and Engineering. An experienced Planner 3 and Civil Engineer 3 already on staff will manage a team of four temporary staff positions, and will report to the Director of Current Planning and the General Manager of Engineering Services. The new temporary staff positions will be subject to classification by the General Manager of Human Resources.

Staff work will be supplemented by consultant resources (engineering, urban design, costing), and by advice from other City staff on a Technical Team.

The staff team will also be liaising with City staff who are involved in related planning including the Whitecaps Stadium Initial Review, the detailed rail study, and the Canada Line.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The estimated \$750,000 required for the study is available without impact on the City's operating budget.

CONCLUSION

Council is asked to approve the Terms of Reference, budget and staffing for the Central Waterfront Lands: Hub & Rail Lands Study, as set out in this report and Appendices, in order to provide an Urban Design and Transportation Plan that will guide future rezoning for development in and around the Hub area, as well as a Preliminary Structure Plan that will assess the feasibility of linkages and development in the area over the CP Rail yards east of the Hub.

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CENTRAL WATERFRONT HUB & RAIL LANDS STUDY TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this Study is to:

- Create a detailed Urban Design and Transportation Plan for the Hub area, bounded roughly by Hastings Street, Howe Street, Port Waterfront Road, and the Cambie Street end (see map); and
- Create a Preliminary Structure Plan for the area over the rail yards east of the Hub area to approximately Main Street, to determine what access and linkages can be created, and to forecast whether future development over the rail tracks is feasible.

The study will be done in close communication with the major landowners and relevant agencies in the area, including Cadillac Fairview, the owner of the rail lands (Whitecaps Soccer organization), Federal Government (Sinclair Centre), Port of Vancouver, TransLink, RAVCO, and adjacent Gastown owners. Broader public consultation will involve input from residents, owners, and community groups of nearby communities including the downtown CBD, Gastown, and Downtown Eastside.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Current Opportunities and Challenges

There are a number of opportunities and challenges that make it timely to undertake this Study.

- A number of transit modes converge in the Granville/Cordova area: the Expo Line, new Canada Line, West Coast Express, SeaBus, and various bus services. The cruise ship terminal, seaplanes, and helijet port are also nearby. Many of the intermodal transfers occur through the CPR station. A transportation Hub that would accommodate more volume and ease transfers among these modes has long been called for but never planned.
- There are also a number of potential development sites in the Hub area, including the area immediately north of the CPR station, the parking lot east of the heritage-designated CPR station, and the site at the SE corner of Cordova and Granville. The appropriate scale of development, role that these could play in the creation of the Hub needs to be detailed.
- In the 1960s, the first phase of Project 200, known as Granville Square, was built with its front door and plaza at an elevation about 18 ft. above adjacent Cordova Street, accessed by an elevated pedestrian bridge. The Canada Line station construction necessitates the removal of the bridge. There is a need to determine what could replace it: a similar structure, or an extension of Granville Street that could form a

more usable connection to Canada Place Way while providing an equal or better situation for Granville Square.

- Because of the existing topography, development in the Central Waterfront between Burrard and Howe (Canada Place, the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel, office tower) was able to simply extend the existing City street grades over the rail yard, and establish a new "ground level" that was compatible with adjacent development. However, the grade difference diminishes to virtually nothing at the north foot of Cambie Street, one block into Gastown. The feasibility of development over the tracks east of Richards Street depends whether it is possible to create needed linkages and an acceptable development podium level over the tracks.
- The owner of the Whitecaps soccer organization has purchased the rail yard, and proposed a major stadium on the portion between the CP station and Cambie Street. This stadium proposal is currently undergoing an Initial Review by the City. Terms of reference for this Review can be accessed at <http://internal.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20051020/documents/pe6.pdf>. See further discussion below.

2.2 Previous Planning

The Central Waterfront Official Development Plan (CWODP) which covers the area between Burrard and Gore Streets (excluding the Central Waterfront Port Lands: see below) was originally adopted in 1979. Most of sub-area 3, between Burrard and the foot of Seymour, has been developed (Granville Square, Canada Place, Fairmont Waterfront Hotel and office building). For sub-area 4, east of Seymour, the CWODP stipulated that "no major urban development will be anticipated until such rail facilities are relocated." Given Port growth and the need for sustainable freight and passenger movement, it is now not anticipated that the rail yards will leave.

In 1994, after a joint City/Port planning process, the Central Waterfront Port Lands Policies (CWPLP) were adopted for the Port lands north of the Waterfront Road, from Canada Place to the overpass at the foot of Main Street. The policies envision up to 2.6 million sq. ft. of various uses: transportation (especially port-related), tourism, commercial, community, and compatible residential. The Port has not yet approached the City to enter into the more detailed planning that would be needed to further development plans.

Around the same time, the City obtained a right-of-way for a road over the tracks connecting Cordova Street to the extension of Canada Place Way.

In the late 90's, extensive planning was done for a convention centre to be located north of the Port Road on the east side of Canada Place. While this project was eventually abandoned, the preparatory planning further investigated road alignments and development podium levels.

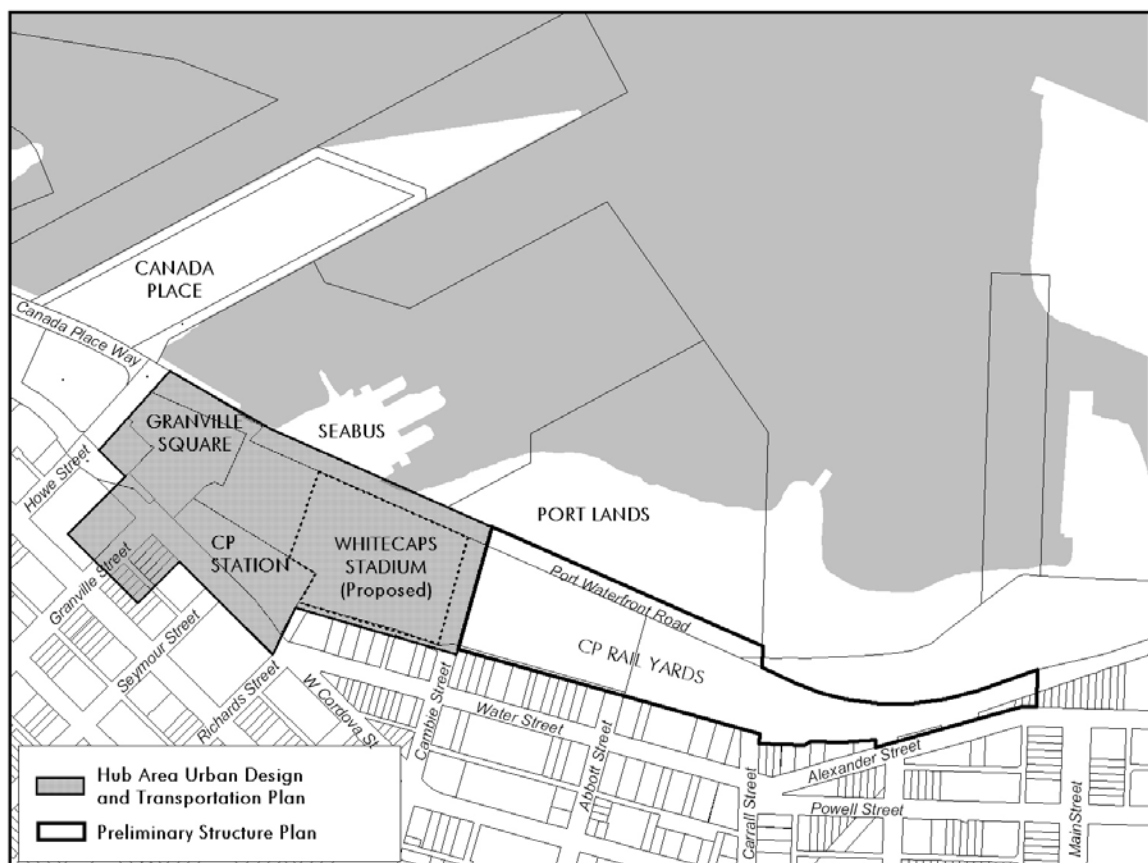
In early 2005, a technical feasibility study of three options for the extension of Granville north of Cordova was completed for the City by Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd. The mid-level option best meets the City's objectives, but this Study will need to investigate this further, in particular as it affects Granville Square.

4.0 SCOPE AND PRODUCTS

The Study will result in two products:

- A detailed Hub Area Urban Design and Transportation Plan which will include land uses; locations, elevations, dimensions of future streets and other linkages for automobiles, trucking, transit, pedestrians, and bikes, and utilities; building form and massing; parking and loading; floor space; and a public realm concept. This Plan will be adopted as Council policy.
- A Preliminary Structure Plan for the area east of the Hub, which will include a preliminary concept for future streets and other linkages over the rail tracks, and investigation of creating a podium level over the tracks as a base for development; and assessment of the feasibility and desirability of such development from a public policy perspective. This will form the basis for future planning, if appropriate.

Figure 1. Central Waterfront Hub & Rail Lands Study: Study Areas



After the Study, the adopted Hub Area Urban Design Plan will form the basis for either

a single city-initiated CD-1 zoning or for a number of privately initiated rezonings that will replace the CWODP in this area. (The rezoning work is not included in the Terms of Reference or budget under consideration.)

For the area east of the foot of Cambie Street-, the Preliminary Structure Plan will not address land use, building massing or floor space, but it will provide an initial assessment of whether it will be possible to achieve appropriate access and create a podium for development in an acceptable way. This is necessary before further planning in that area can occur. If further planning is appropriate, it will need to be undertaken by the City in collaboration with the landowner, with the timing depending on the landowner's timing and availability of City resources.

The Whitecaps Stadium Initial Review is due to report out to Council in Spring 2006. The outcome of that report will influence how this site should be handled in the context of the Hub area planning. If Council does not support continuing with the stadium proposal, then alternative development options can be investigated within this Study. However, if pursuing the stadium further is supported, the manner in which further work on the stadium can occur either as part of, or parallel with, the Hub study will need to be detailed at that time.

5.0 KEY ASSUMPTIONS

The following key policies or studies will inform the Study.

- The key civic objectives that underlie the current CWODP will continue to be City objectives in this Study.
- The Central Waterfront Port Lands Policy Statement (adopted 1994) sets out policies for the Port lands north of the Port road. The Policies lay out maximum floor areas for a range of uses: residential, commercial, port-related such as a cruise ship terminal. Some basic aspects of form, such as general heights, are also addressed. A wide range of development options are possible. Continued active and noisy uses of the Port lands and water area (e.g. heliport, seaplanes etc) must be assumed.
- The CPR rail yard will remain in its current footprint, and its usage for freight and passenger rail will increase. The 2005 Lower Mainland Rail Infrastructure Study projected high growth in rail demands related to Port activity. The Port and rail companies have begun a more detailed study of rail operations and configuration in the Waterfront and False Creek Flats yards, which should be completed in about 6 months. CPR is in discussion with the Whitecaps Stadium proponents, who have purchased the land on which the yards sit, regarding how the track alignments could be adjusted to accommodate structural columns.

6.0 STEPS AND SCHEDULE

The following are the major steps in the Study as currently conceived. Based on previous planning programs, it is anticipated the Study will take about 18 months after hiring of the staff team. It should be noted that this is a general and preliminary schedule. When the work commences, the study team will be responsible for doing a more detailed work program.

Major Phases and Tasks	Approximate Time
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<p>1. Start-up , Issues, and Opportunities -set up contact lists, website; recruit Stakeholder Group -research and document existing situation: base drawings/maps, policy and regs, legal agreements -do detailed work programming -undertake a transportation needs assessment -hold Creative Workshop with key landowners, agencies and others focussing on Hub area -do ToR for consultant components; RFP, hiring etc -identify issues and opportunities</p>	<p>4 months</p>
<p>2. 1st Draft Plans -draft plans (options) for Urban Design and Transportation Plan and Preliminary Structure Plan -develop criteria for review -technical review: feasibility, costs, advantages, capacity -review with individual landowners, stakeholder group -amend options if required prior to public review -conduct 1st public review: preparation, open houses, meetings with groups, documentation</p>	<p>6 months</p>
<p>3. Final Draft Plans -based on input, prepare final draft Plans -further technical review if needed -review with individual landowners, Stakeholder Group -amend options if required prior to public review -begin final draft policy plan documents (e.g. -conduct 1st public review: preparation, open houses, meetings with groups, documentation -finalize draft policy plan documents</p>	<p>4 months</p>
<p>4. Council Endorsation -draft Council endorsation report -concurrences, finalization -Council Endorsation</p>	<p>2 months</p>
<p>TOTAL</p>	<p>16 months + 2 months contingency = 18 months</p>

7.0 LANDOWNER AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The consultation program will include a range of activities to allow:

- extensive work with directly-affected landowners and agencies
- review and input at key steps from residents, businesses, owners and groups in the communities around the Study Area

7.1 Directly Affected Owners and Agencies

Who:

- representatives of: owners of the rail yards (Whitecaps Soccer organization), Fairmont, Cadillac Fairview (Ontrea), Granco Holdings, Federal Government (re: Sinclair Centre), Port of Vancouver, CP Rail, C.L.CO, TransLink; representatives of adjacent Gastown land and strata owners. In Step 1 of the Study, staff will identify other directly affected interests that may need to be added to this list, e.g. transit operators, YVR, helicopter terminal operator.

Role:

- reps of landowning companies and agencies to speak on behalf of their companies or agencies. Representatives of Gastown owners to speak as well as possible for their fellow owners (but check back with other strata owners by staff will be needed).
- to come as close to agreement on the selected option as possible, noting that City Council will be making the ultimate decision

How:

- as a Stakeholder Group, through structured meetings throughout the course of the Study
- as individual landowners, through small meetings with staff when necessary
- mailings and staff meetings with other strata owners

7.2 Surrounding Community

Who:

- residents, businesses, owners and groups in the communities around the Study Area including nearby Downtown, Gastown and Downtown Eastside areas

Role:

- to be informed, to provide input on the options

How:

- meetings with key community groups at key points in the Study;
- open houses (advertised and mailed updates/invitations);
- project web-site to provide access to information on an on-going basis

8.0 STAFF AND CONSULTANT ROLES

The bulk of the work on the study will be done by a team of Planning and Engineering Department staff, supplemented by consultants.

The staff team will be responsible for study management, consultant management, creating, reviewing and refining the Plans, (with consultants and Steering Committee), organizing and undertaking consultation, reports and communication with Council and City managers, and writing of the Plans.

Other City staff will be involved in a Technical Team providing input. The core team will also be liaising with City staff involved in related planning projects including the Whitecaps Stadium Initial Review, the detailed rail study, and the Canada Line.

The Study will be the joint responsibility of the Director of Current Planning and the General Manager of Engineering, with management resting with experienced Planner 3 and Civil Engineer 3. The City's Major Projects Steering Committee, which includes senior staff from a range of departments, will also provide guidance on substantive policy decisions at key points.

Consultants will be used as determined by the staff team for tasks such as documentation of existing situation, engineering, urban design, costing, or economic analysis.

**CENTRAL WATERFRONT HUB AND RAIL LANDS STUDY
PROPOSED BUDGET AND STAFFING**

OVERALL BUDGET	\$750,000
Salaries & Benefits (see below for details)	\$463,253
Consultants	\$120,000
Set-up Costs	\$20,000
Public Consultation Costs	\$33,500
Contingency	\$63,675
Overhead (rent)	\$49,500
Total	\$749,928
Staff Team Details	
Total Salaries & Benefits	\$463,253
Planner 3 (1/4 time) (for "backfill")	\$34,835
Planner 2 (18 mo.)	\$122,814
Planning Assistant 3 (18 mo.)	\$84,510
Civil Engineer 2 (18 mo.)	\$136,584
Engineering Asst 3 (18 mo.)	\$84,510