



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

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Author: Vicki Potter
Phone No.: 604.871.6013
RTS No.: 05942
VanRIMS No.: 11-4200-10
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of Development Services and Director of Current Planning, in consultation with the Chief Building Official and Director of Legal Services

SUBJECT: Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project (VCCEP) - Construction and Permitting

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council advise the Director of Development Services and the Director of Current Planning that it considers it appropriate in this circumstance to proceed to finalize and issue permits (Development and Building [DB] Permits) as they deem appropriate to allow continued construction to the next phase as set out in the report, of the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project (VCCEP), prior to the applicant's full submission of responses to conditions of development permit approval established by the Development Permit Board, recognizing the City and Province's interest in ensuring this complex project is completed on schedule.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

City Staff have been working cooperatively with the VCCEP team to ensure this project meets the highest standards for quality, given the site's prominence on the Coal Harbour Waterfront. Staff are reviewing the next scope of work sought by VCCEP, to ensure that proceeding with this work in advance of issuance of a full Development Permit will not compromise the high quality expected by the Development Permit Board in its approval.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the RECOMMENDATION.

COUNCIL POLICY

There is no formal Council policy that allows for early issuance of permits in advance of full development permit review and issuance. However, in February 2005, Council did authorize staff to finalize and issue permits for construction on this project to the 3.5 metre level in advance of the Development Permit Board receiving a complete development application for its consideration.

PURPOSE

Staff seeks administrative direction from Council on the advisability of proceeding with review and issuance of a partial development/building (DB) permit for the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project. Council direction is sought because issuance of this partial permit in advance of full review of complete Development Application plans is unprecedented.

BACKGROUND

The Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project (VCCEP) represents an investment of \$565 million through a funding partnership involving the Province of British Columbia, the Government of Canada, and Tourism Vancouver. When completed in 2008, convention centre space in Vancouver will triple, and the site will serve as the broadcast centre for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. VCCEP estimates this project will generate 6,700 construction-related jobs, and 7,500 permanent jobs once the facility opens. The building itself will be the City's largest, with over 1.1 million square feet of floor area, and is situated on a prime waterfront site adjacent to Harbour Green Park and several new waterfront residential towers.

The development application process for this project commenced in May 2004.

Following considerable review and assessment by City Staff, the public, and the Urban Design Panel, the Development Permit Board gave the Preliminary Development Application approval in principle, subject to conditions. Shortly after, in February 2005, Council authorization was sought to allow construction on the project to commence in advance of full development permit consideration. Staff sought Council authorization as this would be a deviation from the City's normal practice of requiring issuance of a complete development permit prior to construction. Council gave authorization for staff to process a partial permit, and subsequently work to the 3.25 metre level was permitted and initiated.

DISCUSSION

In June 2005, the Development Permit Board approved the Complete Development Application, subject to conditions. A full response to those conditions has not yet been submitted by the applicant. The key conditions, in summary, include:

- design development to the base building, including glazing systems, roof edges, and loading dock screening;

- design development to the public realm, including the plazas, perimeter pedestrian /bicycle paths, and transition area from Harbour Green Park;
- arrangements for completion of off-site works;
- completion of a number of associated legal arrangements, including site consolidation; and
- confirmation that servicing for, and access to, future water-based developments (float plane and commercial marina facilities) are accommodated in this development.

In May 2006, Staff received a partial response to the above-referenced prior to conditions, specifically to those conditions involving the base building and confirmations for accommodation of future water-based developments. Staff is reviewing this material to assess whether proceeding with the next phase of work, involving above-grade construction of the base building, will compromise the expected high quality completion of the building or surrounding public realm. Staff expects a full submission in response to the Development Permit Board conditions of approval in the fall.

Limit of Further Construction

The Director of Current Planning and Chief Building Official have been asked to consider issuance of a "Development/Building" (DB) permit to allow for construction above-grade of the structural steel frame, deck reinforcing and concrete on the deck; mechanical, electrical rough-ins, the perimeter exterior glazing system, and the roofing membrane.

City By-laws vis a vis Issuance of Permits

The Zoning and Development By-law and Vancouver Building By-law contain provisions of co-dependence and support, requiring that when a development permit is required, it be issued before a companion building permit is issued. In responding to infrequent circumstances where a compelling public purpose has posed constraints in seeking strict adherence to this, a joint development/building permit for site excavation and shoring, and very occasionally for structure to grade, has been issued by the Director of Current Planning and the Chief Building Official, in advance of the complete Development Permit. This has only occurred upon confirmation from the Director of Current Planning that a complete Development Application has been in process, obtained approval, and is nearing permit issuance in terms of satisfying conditions of approval.

In this instance, a complete Development Application is in process and has obtained approval; however, issuance of a full Development Permit is still at least six months off, and is dependent on Staff receiving, then reviewing revised materials reflecting adherence to all of the conditions of approval outlined by the Development Permit Board.

In order to achieve the desired timing for delivery of the Vancouver Convention Centre Expansion Project, a "DB" is sought for construction above-grade, as described above, prior to Staff's receipt or review of a full response to prior-to conditions of approval. Before issuing this permit in this unprecedented manner, the Directors of Development Services and Current Planning, and the Chief Building Official seek Council advice and direction.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

CONCLUSION

The construction schedule of this important civic project is critical, due to the significant development it will provide in the City both during and after construction, and to the completed facility's role in the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. The City is eager to assist in ensuring the timely delivery of this facility, and Council's approval of the RECOMMENDATION will facilitate the City's contribution in this regard.

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