



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 21, 2007
Author: Trish French
Phone No.: 604.873.7041
RTS No.: 06952
VanRIMS No.: 07-3000-20
Meeting Date: December 3, 2007

TO: Standing Committee on City Services and Budgets
FROM: Director of Planning
SUBJECT: Planning Department Resource Proposals

RECOMMENDATIONS

- A. THAT Council approve, in advance of the 2008 Interim Operating Budget, improving service in the Current Planning Division through:

- creating 1 regular full time Planner I and adding 0.5 of a position to a current 0.5 Clerk Typist in the Rezoning Group; and
- creating 1 regular full time Planning Assistant III position in the Urban Design and Development Planning Group;

at a cost in 2008 of \$163,950, and in subsequent years of \$158,950, to be added to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget, noting that costs will be recovered by rezoning and development permit fee increases that have been approved to start in January 1, 2008, subject to these positions being approved;

- B. THAT Council receive the balance of this report for INFORMATION, and defer the following Recommendations to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget:

- C. THAT Council approve, subject to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget, improving the efficiency of the Central Area Division through:

- converting 3 temporary full time Planner II positions and 1 temporary full time Planning Assistant III position to regular full time positions;
- creating 1 new regular full time Planning Analyst position; and

-providing annual funding of program expenses (public consultation and consultant studies);
at a cost in 2008 of \$144,400, and in subsequent years of \$590,700, without offset, with approval and funding to be deferred to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget;

- D. THAT Council approve, subject to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget, increasing the level of service in the Urban Design Studio by creating 1 new regular full time Planner II position at a cost in 2008 of \$64,600 and in subsequent years of \$88,900, without offset, with approval and funding to be deferred to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget;
- E. THAT Council approve, subject to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget, a temporary staff team to undertake the Capacity Options Review through creating a temporary full time Planner II and a temporary full time Planning Analyst positions for 12 months, at a cost of \$107,600 in 2008 and \$48,000 in 2009, without offset, with approval and funding to be deferred to the 2008 Interim Operating Budget; and
- F. THAT Council direct that all new positions be subject to review and classification by the General Manager of Human Resources.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the recommendations.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the Recommendations.

COUNCIL POLICY

City Council must approve all changes in permanent staffing levels.

City Council must approve all significant changes in service levels and programs.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to request Council approval of a number of resource proposals which will allow Planning Department to "work smarter", to more easily retain and recruit staff, and to better meet the work program expectations of Council, the public, and the development industry.

SUMMARY

The resource proposals are shown in Table 1, and summarised below.

A. Current Planning

In the Current Planning Division, it is proposed to increase staff available for rezoning and development permit work by adding 1.5 new positions in the Rezoning Group and 1 new position in the Urban Design and Development Planning Centre. The ongoing cost of this staff will be covered by an increase in rezoning and development fees included as part of the Year 2008 Zoning, Building, and Trade Permit Increases report, as well as by the increased rate of application intake (and fee payment) facilitated by the positions. It is proposed that this be approved in advance of the 2008 Interim Operating Budget because the fee increase is planned to take effect January 1, 2008.

Recently staff advised Council on the rezoning application and inquiry workload, and how staff is prioritizing it. The proposed 1.5 positions in the Rezoning Group will assist, but by no means represent a full, longer term response to this issue. Rezoning requires significant contributions from staff in other departments including Engineering, Legal Services, Social Planning, Housing and Park Board. A number of measures are being taken and/or explored to address the backlog issue, and those requiring Council approval to implement will be reported back.

B. Central Area Division

In the Central Area Division, it is proposed to make 4 temporary positions permanent, add 1 new position, and provide stable annual funding for program expenses (i.e., public consultation and consultant work). The Division will then have 13 permanent staff, and the other necessary resources, to allow Council-requested work items to be handled in sequence, without repeatedly needing to report back for temporary staff and resources. Over the past 10 years the Division has averaged 17 positions, with 43% temporary. Over-reliance on temporary positions is not cost effective, and makes it difficult to retain and recruit staff. While this proposal will mean an increase in the Department's Operating Budget, it is important to note that historically, most of the temporary positions have been paid for by the City through project-specific funding— little has come from external sources.

C. Urban Design Studio

For the Urban Design Studio, it is proposed to augment an existing position with another regular full time position. This will allow the Department to meet the increasing demands from within Planning and from other Departments for specialized urban design assistance with particularly difficult or lengthy projects. Woodward's, SEFC Olympic Village, and Firehall 15 are examples.

D. Capacity Options Review

To undertake the Capacity Options Review, it is proposed to create 2 temporary 12 month positions. Two recent reports--Metro Core Issues and Directions (July 10, 2007) and Heritage Incentive Program Review (July 26, 2007)--have advised Council that this study will be key to ensuring that there is adequate capacity to achieve a range of Council objectives:

accommodating more jobs; bonusing to support affordable housing, social and cultural amenities; and accepting density from the heritage density bank. The Review will involve re-examining current height limits, and if necessary, the current view cones. There is considerable external pressure to move forward with this work.

Table 1. Planning Department Resource Proposals

			2008	Comments	2009 &
			Cost		Beyond
1	Current Planning				
a	Planner I (Rezoning Centre)	new	\$75,300	Costs will be recovered from fees	\$75,300
b	0.5 Clerk Typist (Rezoning Centre)	new	\$20,350		\$20,350
c	Planning Assistant III (UDDPC)	new	\$56,300		\$56,300
d	Rent (2a)		\$7,000		\$7,000
e	Set-up Costs (2a)	one time cost	\$5,000		\$0
	Subtotal		\$163,950		\$158,950
2	Central Area Division				
a	Planner II (Downtown)	make permanent	\$0	2008 covered by previously approved program funding	\$81,900
b	Planner II (SEFC/Flats)	make permanent	\$0		\$81,900
c	Planning Assistant III (SEFC/Flats)	make permanent	\$0		\$56,300
d	Planner II (DTES)	make permanent	\$0		\$81,900
e	Planning Analyst (DTES)	new (2008 6 mo)	\$31,900		\$63,700
f	Program Expenses	pro-rated 6 mo	\$112,500		\$225,000
	Subtotal		\$144,400		\$590,700
3	Urban Design Studio				
a	Planner II (Urban Design Studio)	new	\$54,900		\$81,900
b	Rent		\$4,700		\$7,000
c	Set-up Costs	one time cost	\$5,000		\$0
	Subtotal		\$64,600		\$88,900
4	Capacity Options Review				
a	Planner II (Central Area)	temp 12 months	\$54,900	8 months in 2008, 4 months in 2009	\$27,000
b	Planning Analyst (Central Area)	temp 12 months	\$42,700		\$21,000
c	Set-up Costs (4 a & b)	one time cost	\$10,000		\$0
	Subtotal		\$107,600		\$48,000
	TOTAL		\$480,550		\$886,550

BACKGROUND

The Planning Department undertakes a wide range of work with a limited number of staff. Table 2 shows the number permanent and temporary staff positions with each of the four Divisions. It also shows the current work items: some are ongoing commitments or projects currently underway, and some (*italics*) are items due to start in 2008.

This report's recommendations reflect the Planning Department management team's judgement of the minimum necessary augmentation of Department resources, noting that 2 regular full time Planner positions and 1 regular full time Planning Assistant position will be created as a result of the recently approved (Nov 13, 2007) Broadway Rapid Transit Study Staffing report (RTS#6857). Beyond this the team feels that, given the ongoing increases in Council, industry and public expectations for planning work, there is a need for a more in-depth review of Departmental resources. We hope to undertake this in 2008 in consultation with Engineering and Corporate Services.

Table 2 Planning Department Overview

Division	Staff*	Current Work Items: Plain text: Underway/Ongoing; <i>Italics: To Start in 2008</i>
Citywide & Regional Planning	12 Perm 3 Temp	Financing Growth (e.g. Citywide DCL Rate Review; <i>Oakridge /Langara Public Benefits Review</i>) BIA Program (18 BIAs) Regional Liaison Research & Data Services Metro Core Jobs & Economy Plan <i>Metro Core Implementation</i> Regulation Policy & Projects: (Olympic signage, billboards, liquor retail, recycling depots, exotic pets, taxis etc.) EcoDensity: Phase 1; <i>Phase 2</i> <i>Broadway West Rapid Transit Study</i>
Community Planning	22 Perm	Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre <i>Hastings Neighbourhood Centre</i> <i>Mid-Main Neighbourhood Centre</i> West Point Grey Vision Mt. Pleasant Plan Canada Line Team <i>Marine Drive Station Area Plan</i> <i>Marpole Gateway Plan</i> Vision Implementation (9 Community Visions) Development & Rezoning Inquiries
Current Planning	27 Perm 8 Temp	Development Applications (70+ currently) Rezoning Applications/Pre-App or Inquiries (16/40+ currently) Heritage Applications/Pre-App or Inquiries (38/50+ currently) Heritage Incentive Program Review <i>Heritage Register Update</i> East Fraserlands Rezoning Central Waterfront Hub Study (& Whitecaps Stadium Evaluation) <i>Oakridge Centre Rezoning</i>

		Arbutus Village Policy Review Little Mountain Housing Project <i>Possible Major Projects: (e.g. Providence Healthcare; Whitecaps Rezoning)</i>
Central Area Planning	8 Perm 10 Temp	Downtown Projects (e.g. Under Granville Bridge; Granville Loops Area Plan; <i>Granville Island Reference Document revision</i>) Metro Core Jobs & Economy Plan <i>Metro Core Implementation</i> <i>Capacity Options Review</i> NEFC High Level Review Chinatown Revitalization Plan (including Society Buildings, Heritage Precinct Height Review) DTES Economic Revitalization & Vancouver Agreement DTES Strategic &/or Contentious Projects (e.g. library site, WISH, UGM) DTES Housing Plan Implementation: (DEOD & Hastings M-1 Zoning Review) <i>Strathcona Area Planning</i> SEFC: Olympic Village, Private Rezoning, misc. ODP tasks False Creek Flats Long Range Plan Development & Rezoning Inquiries
TOTAL	69 Perm 21 Temp	*staff count does not include Director, Assistant Directors, or Clerical.

DISCUSSION

1. Current Planning Division

Proposal

- Create a new Planner I position and add a 0.5 Clerk Typist (to an existing 0.5 Clerk Typist position) in the Rezoning Centre
- Create a new Planning Assistant III position in the Urban Design and Development Planning Centre (UDDPC)

Rationale

The Rezoning Centre currently comprises 4 Planner and 2 Planning Analyst positions. The Planners are responsible for the processing of the more complex rezoning applications and pre-application inquiries, while the analysts deal with the simpler applications, as well as housekeeping amendments, notifications, application tracking, and many tasks involved with keeping the bylaws up to date.

The additional Planner I is needed to assist in meeting the increased work demands in the Rezoning Centre. While the number of privately-initiated rezoning applications has not increased substantially, the proportion that is site-specific CD-1 zonings has increased from 25% in 2002-03 to more than 50% in 2005-06. CD-1s usually involve complex interpretation of policy, negotiation of public benefits, and public consultation. An indication of the increased

work involved is that the average rezoning processing time has increased from 5 to 8 months in 2002 to 11 to 18 months currently. In addition, the annualized number of rezoning inquiries was up 20% in the first 4 months of 2007 compared to last year. These same factors have resulted in a need to add 0.5 Clerk Typist II to the current 1.5 clerical positions in the Rezoning Group. These positions will be beneficial but by no means represent a long term response to the application and inquiry backlog. Staff are taking and/or exploring additional measures with other departments involved in the rezoning process, and will report to Council for approval of improvements is required.

The Urban Design and Development Planning Centre comprises 10 development planners (architects) who evaluate all major development applications and rezonings for conformity to land use and urban design policies, regulations and guidelines. Currently the group has only one Planning Assistant III, which is insufficient and has resulted in the time of more highly paid Planning Analyst being pressed into service. The proposed Planning Assistant III position in the UDDP Centre is needed to provide technical support to the Urban Design Panel and Development Permit Board, as well as general technical support to the Centre staff.

Cost and Financial Implications

The cost of the Current Planning staff requests is \$163,950 in 2008 and \$158,950 annually thereafter. Most of the cost for the Rezoning Centre portion will be recovered through a 10% increase in rezoning fees approved recently on Nov 15, 2007 in the Year 2008 Zoning, Building, and Trade Permit Increases report (subject to these positions being approved). The balance of the cost will be recovered by about a 7% increase in rezoning application volumes which will be achievable because increased staff will allow processing times to be reduced, and therefore the pace of applications (and fee payment) to go up.

The cost of the Planning Assistant III for the UDDP Centre will be recovered through the recently approved 1% increase in Development Permit fees. It will also enable applications to be processed somewhat more quickly.

2. Central Area Division

Proposal

- Convert 4 temporary positions to permanent ones, and add 1 new permanent position to create a 13 person core Central Area team.
- Provide annual program expenses to cover public consultation and smaller consultant studies of various work program items.

Rationale

The Central Area Division handles planning for a large area with a great deal of planning and development activity: Downtown, West End, False Creek, Gastown, Chinatown, Strathcona, Downtown Eastside, and False Creek Flats. For the past 10 years, the Central Area Division of the Planning Department has ranged from 14 to 25 positions, averaging 17. However, there has been a heavy reliance on temporary positions: on average 43% have been temporary.

Most of the temporary positions have been funded from City sources such as the PEF or special project funding to develop area plans for multiple owners (e.g. Southeast False Creek,

Chinatown, False Creek Flats, Northeast False Creek, Central Waterfront Hub Study) or general planning policy (e.g. Metro Core Jobs and Economy study). A smaller number of the positions have been "cost recovery" from external landowners (e.g. False Creek: North Land Use Policy - Special Event, Festival and Entertainment Functions, Whitecaps Stadium Initial Review).

While temporary staff positions are appropriate when Council wishes to accomplish a particular project more quickly than the permanent staff groups can get to it, it is not an efficient way to take care of an ongoing work load:

- recruitment of new staff and retention of existing staff is negatively affected by having too many temporary positions;
- hiring costs (including subsequent related staff moves, and "ramp up" times) for an average 18 month temporary position are equivalent to 19% of the salary and benefits cost of the position. For a permanent position, the figure is about 6%. This does not include senior managers' time writing reports to request the necessary temporary funding approvals; and
- temporary positions are less efficient in that the staff cannot be reassigned to other work items when delays in programs occur, or Council priorities change, because the funding is dedicated to one project.

In addition to achieving a permanent core team, it is proposed to provide \$225,000 annual funding for program expenses, i.e. public consultation and consultant studies, so the permanent staff have something to work with. This is the same model that Council endorsed in the 2006 Operating Budget for the area planning programs run by Community Planning (formerly CityPlans) Division.

If this proposal is approved, Central Area would have a permanent core group of 13 staff that can take on work program items in a timely way. Among the items anticipated in the next 3 years are:

- completing and implementing the Metro Core Jobs and Economy Plan through a series of Downtown and Central Broadway zoning changes and other measures;
- continuing essential planning work in the Downtown Eastside, including area planning for the Strathcona community;
- undertaking ongoing Southeast False Creek ODP implementation including rezonings of City and private lands;
- once the long range plan for False Creek Flats is completed using an already-approved temporary staff team, undertaking the needed rezonings and implementing the aspects of infrastructure plan; and
- handling various anticipated rezonings and other initiatives in the Northeast False Creek Area.

Cost and Financial Implications

The annual cost for the Central Area proposal in 2009 and beyond will be \$590,700. However, in 2008, only \$144,400 of new funding will be needed because previously-approved project funding will cover most of the staff costs. Furthermore, as noted above, for the past 10 years many temporary Central Area staff have been funded by the City through project funding approvals in any case. Staff feel that this proposal is far more cost effective, efficient and resilient than continuing to request the temporary staffing and costs on a piecemeal basis.

3. Urban Design Studio Position

Proposal

- Create a new Planner II position in the Urban Design Studio

Rationale

The Urban Design Studio is intended to provide urban design and design problem-solving expertise to complex, controversial or lengthy projects. In the last few years, service has been provided to Departments other than Planning, i.e. Real Estate (PEF), Facilities, Engineering, Social Planning, the Office of Cultural Affairs, and the Olympic office. Examples of projects include Woodward's, the Carrall Street Greenway, SEFC Olympic Village, Fire Hall 15, and the Public Art Program review. The Studio currently has only one position, the Senior Urban Designer who despite working a lot of extra time has not been able to take on many of the urban design requests.

The demand for urban design services will continue, with upcoming projects including the participation in the detailed design for Granville Street, Olympic Live Sites and Look of the City, revision of plans for City lands in SEFC, and EcoDensity initiatives.

Cost and Financial Implications

The cost in 2008 will be \$64,600, and \$88,900 annually thereafter. There are no potential revenues or offsets associated with this proposal. If the position is not approved, the Planning Department will not be able to continue to provide Urban Design Studio service to other departments' projects, which will require the services of consultants at greater cost to the City.

4. Capacity Options Review

Proposal

- Create a staff team with 1 temporary Planner II and 1 temporary Planning Analyst position, for 12 months, to undertake the Capacity Options Review.

Rationale

The Metro Core Jobs and Economy Study has shown that additional commercial space will be needed to accommodate job growth to 2031 in the Downtown and Central Broadway areas, beyond what can be built under current zoning. Preliminary analysis indicates that if all the potential development sites in the Central Business District and CBD Extension were rezoned to allow commercial development to the maximum height achievable within the view cone limits, most of the downtown job space demand could be met. However capacity is also desired to accommodate bonus floor space to support affordable housing, social and cultural amenities, as well as transferred floor space from the heritage density bank. The Capacity Options Review will look in detail at where additional floor space capacity could be created, through reviewing the current zoned height limits and, if necessary, some of the current view cones. Both the Metro Core Issues and Directions Report (July 10, 2008) and the Heritage Incentives Program Review Report (July 26, 2008) advised Council that this work would be needed.

In the meantime, there is considerable external pressure. In the past year there have been at least a dozen development inquiries proposing buildings significantly higher than what can be considered under current zoning and Council-adopted policies. In addition, the recently-approved the Heritage Incentive Program Review involves a slowdown in the number of heritage development proposals that can be considered.

Cost and Financial Implications

The cost of this proposal will be \$107,600 in 2008 and \$48,000 in 2009. There are no potential revenues or offsets. The Capacity Options Review, aimed at finding floor space capacity that can support the cost of public amenities, is of longer term financial benefit to the City. If this staffing is not available, the start of work on the Capacity Options Review will be delayed by about a year, at a rough estimate. This is because it will need to be undertaken by permanent staff (assuming the proposal in section 2 above is approved), for whom work on implementing a number of Immediate zoning changes coming out of Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan will be more urgent.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial implications of each proposal have been dealt with in the Discussion above.

Overall, as shown in Table 1, the cost in 2008 will be \$480,550. In future years, the increase totals \$886,550. While there are no direct offsets, the following financial rationales apply:

- the Current Planning positions' cost will be recovered through rezoning and development permit fees
- the Central Area proposal to convert 4 temporary positions to permanent, and add one new position, will create the minimum appropriate core team that is more cost effective than repeatedly using temporary funding.
- the Urban Design Studio position will provide service requested by other Departments in a more cost effective way than hiring consultants
- the Capacity Options Review temporary staff team will undertake work needed to create more floor space capacity in the Downtown and Central Broadway, to support public objectives such as social housing, social and cultural amenities, and transfer of heritage density. This will have financial benefit to the City, longer term.

PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

Current Planning - Creation of 2.5 Regular Full Time positions.

Central Area Division - Conversion of 4 Temporary Full Time positions to Regular Full Time positions and creation of 1 Regular Full Time position.

Urban Design Studio - Creation of 1 Regular Full Time position.

Capacity Options Review - Creation of 2 Temporary Full Time positions for 12 months (8 months in 2008 and 4 months in 2009)

In total, 8.5 Regular Full Time positions (RFT) and 2 Temporary Full Time positions (TFT) will need to be created.

All positions would be subject to review and classification by Human Resources, as per Recommendation E.

CONCLUSION

The Planning Department resources proposed in this report are aimed at “working smarter”—retaining and recruiting staff, reducing hiring costs—while meeting the work program and service expectations of Council, the public, and the development industry.

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