



CITY OF VANCOUVER

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POLICY REPORT
URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date: January 21, 2008
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Meeting Date: January 31, 2008

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Planning in consultation with General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Northeast False Creek Update and BC Place Stadium Work Request

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council approve undertaking a process to develop and assess a proposal by the BC Pavilion Corporation to amend the False Creek North Official Development Plan, in parallel with the Northeast False Creek High Level Review, with the aim of getting to Public Hearing in October 2008, as outlined in this report.
- B. THAT Council approve an allocation of \$290,000 for the necessary work to amend the False Creek North ODP, as described in this report, source of funding to be:
 - \$145,000 as a contribution from B.C. Pavilion Corporation; and
 - \$145,000 from the 2008 Operating Budget to be determined as part of the 2008 Operating Budget process.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

COUNCIL POLICY

In 1988, Council adopted the False Creek Policy Broadsheet which provided policy directions for the preparation of the False Creek North Official Development Plan.

In 1990, Council adopted the False Creek North Official Development Plan (FCN ODP) which established the development allowances, land uses and public benefit requirements for the area.

On June 19, 1995, Council instructed City staff and developers of sites near B.C. Place Stadium to make noise mitigation a key design consideration for residential buildings, requested that the stadium implement noise abatement measures, and approved the exemption of BC Place Stadium from Noise By-law provisions for up to 10 events per year.

In 2001, Council approved, as policy, the Northeast False Creek Urban Design Plan that described pedestrian and cycling linkages, a land use plan, a public benefits package, infill commercial development on the BC Place Stadium site and other elements for the redevelopment of the area. However, the FCN ODP was not revised to reflect the Council approved policies.

In 2005, Council adopted the "False Creek North: Land Use Policy for Special Events, Festivals and Entertainment Functions" which is aimed to ensure that land use in NEFC supports the special event, festival and entertainment functions currently in the area.

In 2005 Council approved the Metropolitan Core Jobs and Economy Land Use plan to ensure there is appropriate land supply and zoning for future jobs and service. In 2006 Phase 2 of the study had established that there is a projected shortfall of about 5.8 million square feet of "job space" in the downtown peninsula.

On May 3, 2007 Council approved Terms of Reference and resources for the Northeast False Creek High Level Review (NEFC HLR) to develop a high level plan including land use, development capacity, streets and linkages, gathering places, building massing, and a public benefits strategy.

SUMMARY

The Northeast False Creek High Level Review (NEFC HLR) is a 13 month study approved by Council on May 3, 2007, to develop a new Plan including land use, urban structure, built form and public benefits for most of the NEFC area (see Figure 1). It has been proceeding, but more slowly than planned due to inability to recruit the temporary staff team, followed by the 3 month labour disruption. Before and since the strike, existing staff have been used to make progress on the land use scenarios. A temporary staff team has now been recruited. As Figure 2 shows, it would be possible to complete the HLR by January 2009.

In the fall of 2007 the B.C. Pavilion Corporation (PavCo) met with the City Manager and staff to discuss their desire to rehabilitate the BC Place Stadium; and their need to have some certainty about the development potential of the stadium site in order to know what level of financial return they might have to support the rehabilitation. The stadium site is the only one in NEFC that has never had any development allowances under the NEFC Official Development Plan. PavCo feels it is critical to achieve the ODP amendment by the end of 2008 in order for the Province to commit to the funding for the BC Place rehabilitation project.

Staff is supportive of the stadium rehabilitation. It is an important piece of the downtown tourism and event infrastructure, with 200 event days a year, generating \$58.1 million in economic activity in 2007. It hosts football games and concerts, but equally importantly it is the Province's largest trade and consumer show facility. These functions are not ones that the new convention centre can or should accommodate. The stadium's location is ideal from a transportation sustainability perspective. It would be costly (and unsustainable) to demolish and rebuild the facility somewhere else, even if it were possible to find an appropriate site.

Staff therefore supports undertaking a work program to develop and assess an ODP Amendment for the stadium site, in parallel with work on the NEFC HLR. The work program and schedule are summarized in the report and is aimed at achieving a Public Hearing and enactment by October 2008.

In terms of effect on the NEFC HLR, work will continue. While on the one hand there will be some delay, on the other hand the knowledge that the stadium will remain simplifies the HLR by reducing the options that need to be considered for that site.

PavCo is proposing to pay for the costs of rehabilitating the stadium through the sale or lease of the surrounding development sites. They propose that the rehabilitation of the stadium be considered the sole public benefit. Because the stadium is a publicly-owned and operated facility which is unique and critical to the downtown and city economy, staff feels that, in principle, the stadium rehabilitation should be considered the primary public benefit, noting that a final decision on this matter would be taken by Council at the typical time, when the ODP amendment is reported out in fall 2008.

In terms of staffing and resources, the HLR has a fixed budget, costs funded by the City. The budget will not cover the additional work on the stadium ODP. An additional \$290,000 will be required. PavCo has offered to cover half the cost, with a contribution of \$145,000. It is recommended that Council approve funding up to \$145,000 for the other half of the needed resources, with the source of funding to be the 2008 Operating Budget, to be determined as part of the budget process.

PURPOSE

The purposes of this report are:

- to provide an update on the NEFC HLR;
- to describe, and support, a request from the BC Pavilion Corporation (PavCo) to undertake an ODP amendment for the BC Place Stadium site in parallel with the NEFC HLR, in order to further their objective of rehabilitating the stadium;

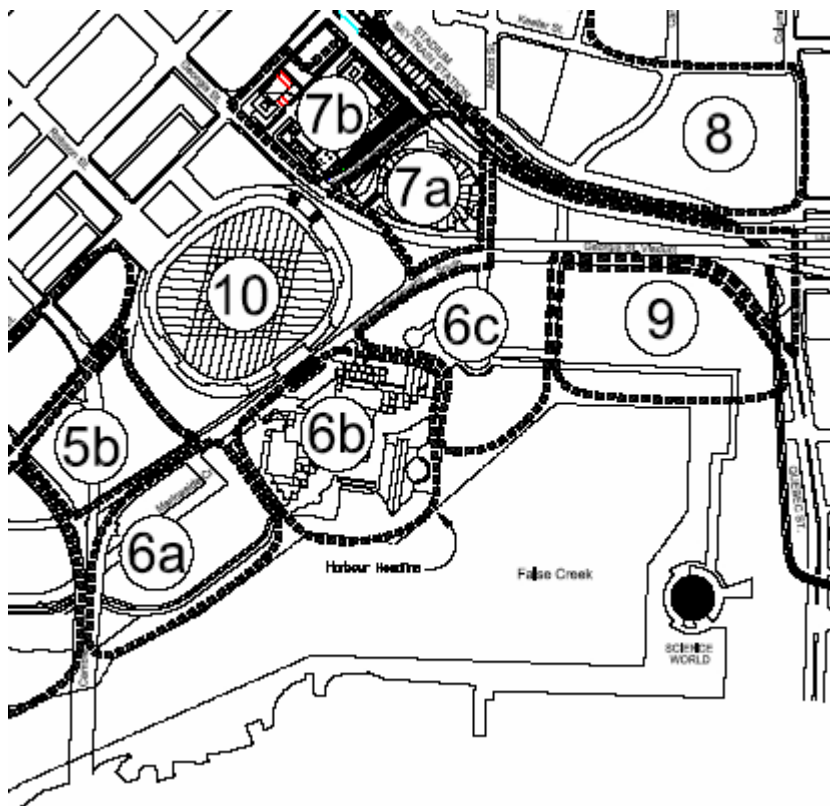
- to recommend that this be done in parallel with the NEFC HLR, noting the implications for work program, staffing, and resources; and
- to recommend recovery of the costs of the ODP amendment work through a contribution from PavCo.

BACKGROUND

1. Status of Northeast False Creek High Level Review

On May 3, 2007 Council approved terms of reference and funding for the Northeast False Creek High Level Review (NEFC HLR). The purpose of the review is to produce a new Northeast False Creek Land Use, Structure and Urban Design Plan, as well as a Public Benefits Strategy for the area. The Stadium site, Area 10, is included in the review area (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. North False Creek ODP Areas, including B.C. Place Stadium (Area 10)

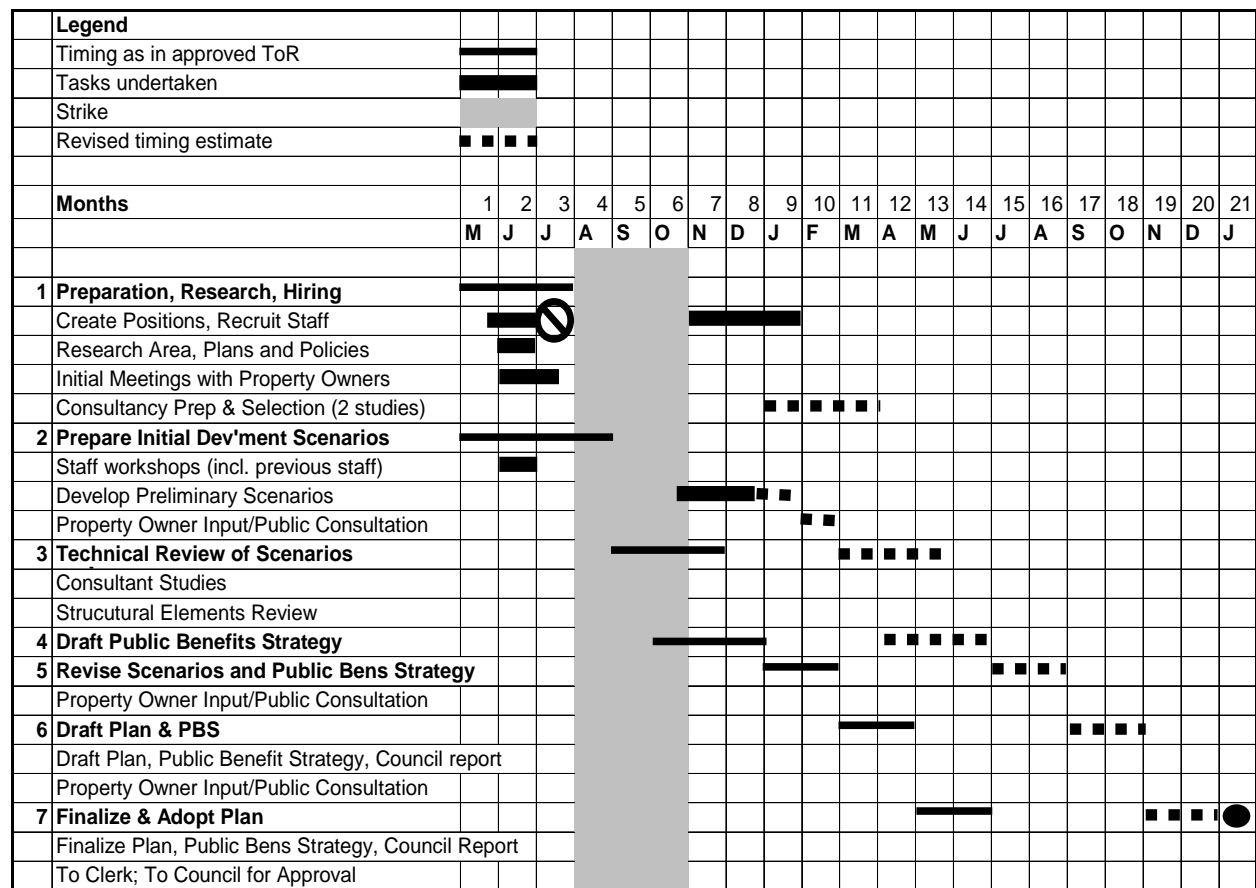


The NEFC High Level Review was initially estimated to require 12 months. Following Council's instruction to include additional public consultation, the time required became 13 months. The schedule was premised on the ability to hire the temporary staff team in a reasonable time.

Two factors have affected progress on the NEFC HLR. First, there were no qualified internal applicants for the temporary Planner II and Planning Assistant III positions. Second, just as the competition was to be extended to external candidates, a 3 month labour dispute shut work down. Nevertheless, both before and after the strike, the existing staff in the Downtown Group of the Central Area Division made significant progress on some tasks in the study, particularly looking at land use and development capacity scenarios. Furthermore, we have now successfully recruited staff to fill the 2 positions, and they should start by the end of January.

Figure 2 shows the original schedule for the HLR; the work undertaken so far by the existing staff; and what the revised schedule for the NEFC HLR would look like. The work could be completed by the beginning of February 2009 (month 22 from the Council approval in 2007).

Figure 2 NEFC HLR Status and Revised Schedule



2. Request from PavCo to Pursue an ODP Amendment for BC Place Stadium Site

Meanwhile, this fall PavCo approached the City to gain support for the idea of rehabilitating the 25 year old B.C. Place Stadium so that it continues to function for another 30 years. They have requested that the City consider working with them to achieve an ODP amendment for the site within a year. The stadium site is the only one in NEFC that has no development

potential stated in the ODP, and PavCo feel it is critical to understand the development potential in order to provide the financial foundation to support the cost of rehabilitation.

The proposed rehabilitation work will include the replacement of the roof with an improved air-supported roof, as well as other up-grades to the building prior to the Olympics. Following the Olympics, there will be further work including improving the environmental performance of the building and addressing staging and operational issues.

DISCUSSION

1. Support for Pursuing Stadium ODP Amendment

Staff support pursuing an ODP amendment for the stadium site in parallel with work on the NEFC HLR, in order to achieve a commitment to the stadium rehabilitation, for a number of reasons:

- The stadium is a key piece of infrastructure in the City's economy, particularly in the tourism and exhibition sectors. It hosts football games and concerts, but equally importantly it is the Province's largest trade and consumer show facility, accommodating the events like the Boat Show, Home Show and Auto Show. The stadium will also be hosting the Opening and Closing ceremonies of the 2010 Olympic Games. According to PavCo, the expanded Vancouver Convention and Exhibition Centre cannot host many of the events and shows using the Stadium. The facility is used for at least 200 days each year, and it is estimated that in 2007 it will generate \$58.1 million of economic activity. (For more information on the Stadium, see Appendix A.)
- Replacing the facility elsewhere would be very costly in terms of land and construction costs, if indeed an appropriate site could be found.
- Rehabilitating the stadium is very sustainable. From a transportation and access perspective, its location near mass transit and the future streetcar line is ideal. Demolition and disposal of the construction material, only to replace it in a new building, would be a very unsustainable approach.
- The stadium site is the only one in the NEFC area that has no development allowances in the ODP. Earlier planning studies showed it to have the potential to accommodate about 730,000 sq. ft., and more may be possible. Understanding the capacity will contribute significantly to the NEFC HLR objective of accommodating "job space".
- Work on the HLR can continue, and will provide a context for the stadium work. In addition, the HLR will become considerably simpler because it will no longer be necessary to develop multiple options for the stadium (i.e. staying, being removed, or being modified).

2. Proposed Parameters for ODP Amendment and Work

It is envisaged that the ODP amendment for the stadium site will encompass the following parameters:

- Permitted land uses;
- Permitted floor space;
- Tower locations and permitted height.

The proposal will be expected to adhere to the NEFC HLR Objectives, as approved by Council (see Appendix B). Below are a few remarks on some key factors related to the stadium site.

A. Land Use and Floor Space

Land use is the key issue being considered in the NEFC High Level Review: in particular, maintaining a focus on jobs capacity (office, hotel, retail, institutional) and entertainment, sports, cultural and public activities. The FCN ODP currently allows for 1.7 million square feet of non-residential floor space on the remaining Concord lands, Plaza of Nations, and GM Place lands in NEFC, and this is being taken as a starting point. (The stadium site currently has no development potential specified in the ODP.) Residential is to be included as may be compatible with these objectives, and to the degree that impacts of noise and crowds can be addressed.

Noise has historically been a particular issue with the stadium, given the fabric roof. (See Appendix A for some history.) This is an issue that will need to be carefully assessed in relation to residential use.

In 2001, the NEFC Urban Design Plan work identified the potential for about 730,000 square feet of development on the vacant lands adjacent to the stadium structure. It is anticipated that there may be potential for more, but the amount will be the outcome of the planning work.

B. Structure

A key objective of the 2001 Northeast False Creek Urban Design Plan was improving connections for pedestrians and cyclists between the downtown and NEFC. In particular, when considering the 2001 plan, Council in the following resolution endorsed an offer from PavCo:

“to allow for an improved barrier-free connection from Georgia Street to Pacific Boulevard on the eastern edge of the Stadium, noting that the design and financial responsibility for this will be determined during later phases of planning for the Northeast False Creek study area.”

Development around the stadium provides the opportunity to further the creation of this connection.

Also in 2001, an agreement was drafted to allow the extension of Smithe Street between Expo Blvd. and Pacific Blvd., with associated land exchanges between the stadium and Concord Pacific sites. This will be taken as given in the stadium ODP review process.

C. Built Form

As per the adopted NEFC HLR objectives, building heights will be limited by the protected public view cones. Within these limits, the 2001 Northeast False Creek Urban Design Plan illustrated two towers of 14 and 16 storeys on the west side of the stadium, and a 31 storey tower on the southeast corner. Working with PavCo, staff will revisit possible built form on these sites.

It should be noted that over the next 12 - 18 months staff will be undertaking the Capacity Options Review for the downtown, which will involve reassessing heights and possibly some of the view corridors. The results will not be available in time to inform the ODP amendment. However, should any changes to height limits occur, PavCo may wish to revisit the ODP amendment at a later date.

D. Public Benefits

The FCN ODP includes a range of public benefits to be provided by the developers as development occurs: parks and open space including the waterfront walkway; social housing sites; community centre; school sites; etc. False Creek North was not included in the City-wide DCL area, and no DCLs are paid, because the costs of growth had already been fully taken care of in the ODP. In cases where the floor space or uses in the ODP have been changed through rezonings, the City has negotiated additional Community Amenity Contributions.

PavCo wishes to recover the costs of stadium rehabilitation from the proceeds of selling or leasing development sites around the stadium. They have requested that the City consider the rehabilitation to be the sole public benefit. On the other hand, they have offered that the new development pay Development Cost Levies.

Because the stadium is a publicly-owned and operated facility which is unique and critical to the downtown and city economy, staff feels that the stadium rehabilitation should be considered the primary public benefit. However, given that at this stage there is no certainty about the amount of floor space and types of uses that may be approved; about the level of demand there may be from new residents; or about introducing DCLs onto the site; the final decision on the public benefits should be made at the time the ODP amendment is reported out to Council later in fall of 2008.

E. Infrastructure Costs

Normally for any significant rezonings, the necessary infrastructure improvements (street improvements, traffic signals, sewer and water upgrades, hydro undergrounding, etc.) are direct costs paid by the developer. (They are not considered to be public benefits.)

PavCo is proposing that the City consider undertaking any improvements necessitated by the stadium rehabilitation (not by the surrounding future development—which would still be handled as a cost to the development). They feel that given that the seating capacity of the stadium is not increasing, changes to City streets attributable to the rehabilitation will be limited.

Staff feel that the City could consider undertaking these changes related to the stadium rehabilitation, alone, but that as with public benefits, the final decision would need to be made by Council when the ODP amendment is reported out in the fall of 2008.

3. Steps and Schedule

Figure 3 shows how it is proposed to combine continued work on the NEFC HLR with the stadium OPD amendment.

Barring unforeseen problems, the ODP work will take about 9 months to get a Public Hearing and enactment, in October 2008. The work includes a pre-application phase to explore issues and guide preparation of the application, the review of the application including public consultation, and drafting of the ODP amendment and report. (The schedule assumes the submission of all necessary materials in a timely way, as well as a development proposal which meets the Council Objectives from the NEFC High Level Review and other parameters noted above.)

Since the HLR was approved, because the temporary staff had not yet been hired, the existing Downtown Group team has focused on the land use scenarios, looking at what can be accommodated in basic built forms. While the ODP work is proceeding, work on the NEFC land use and floor space will continue, including necessary consultant studies, discussion with landowners, and public consultation. This will provide context for the stadium ODP work. An information report to Council on NEFC land use will occur at the same time as the ODP referral report.

Once the ODP referral has occurred, the focus will return to the NEFC for a final 5 months, dealing with further technical review, the public benefits strategy, and preparing the draft Plan that brings together all aspects of the work—land use, structure, built form and public benefits.

In summary, the HLR completion will be delayed by about 4 months compared to what would be the case if the ODP work were not underway at the same time. This can be seen by comparing the end dates in Figures 2 and 3.

As noted in the schedule, landowner input will occur at various points. In addition, as approved by Council in the Terms of Reference, there are three rounds of public consultation for the HLR, and an additional one added related to the ODP Amendment.

4. Staffing

The temporary team that has been assembled for the NEFC HLR will devote 80% of their time to the ODP amendment work during the 9 months of that process. In order to keep the NEFC HLR moving along, the existing Downtown Group staff who have been working on it for the past months will continue to be involved during the ODP period. Then, after the ODP referral, the temporary team will return to NEFC work full time.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The budget for temporary staff, consultancies, and public consultation for the NEFC HLR is city funded for a specific time and scope of work. The stadium ODP work will add an additional \$290,000 to those costs, as shown in Appendix C. PavCo has offered to contribute half the cost, \$145,000. It is recommended that the City fund up to \$145,000 for half of the City's staff and related costs for the ODP amendment, source of funding to be the 2008 Operating Budget to be determined as part of the 2008 Operating Budget process.

CONCLUSION

The rehabilitation of the stadium is an objective the City supports for many reasons. The requested work to achieve an ODP text amendment is worthy of immediate attention by Council and staff. It can be accomplished while work on the NEFC HLR proceeds, and without impacting the funding that has been set aside for the HLR.

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FACTS ABOUT THE STADIUM

Site and Current Zoning

The B. C. Place stadium was completed in 1983. The site is 6.56 hectares in size, (approximately 16 acres) of which 2.93 hectares (approximately 7 acres) are outside. The False Creek Official Development Plan states for the B. C. Place Stadium site (designated as Area 10 in the ODP) that the development of this site remain and continue to function generally as built, as of April 10, 1990 for stadium and ancillary uses. This is the only site in the FCN ODP which has never had any development allowances assigned to it.

As a follow-up to the 2001 False Creek Urban Design Plan, a three party legal agreement between PavCo, Concord Pacific and the City has been drafted that identified a number of exchanges of ownership of parcels of land, east of the Cambie Bridge, between Pacific Blvd. and Expo Blvd. to allow for the extension of Smithe Street south of Expo Blvd.

Noise Issues

In 1995, staff conducted a number of noise level tests and found that the noise levels from the stadium at the nearest residences (e.g. residences at 950 Cambie St.) could be in excess of the allowable limits of the noise bylaw. The readings also showed that the levels noted on the south side of False Creek, and east of the stadium at Quebec and Terminal were within the allowable limits. Council resolved that the Stadium should be allowed up to 10 events per year that exceed the noise levels permitted in the surrounding area by the Noise By-law. The management of the stadium cautioned that the fabric roof offered very limited opportunities for the mitigation of noise from concerts and other events generating significant noise. In some respects, the ambient noise of the downtown from car and truck traffic, crowds arriving and exiting events and pedestrians are more significant noise generators.

EXCERPT FROM NORTHEAST FALSE CREEK - HIGH LEVEL REVIEW TERMS OF REFERENCE
(adopted by Council May 3, 2007)

4.0 Key Assumptions and Objectives

City policies, past plans and studies have informed the assumptions and objectives.

4.1 The key assumptions shall be:

1. Generally, rezonings will not be considered until Council has adopted policies for land uses, built form, infrastructure and amenities in Northeast False Creek, subject to Council agreement. An exception will be the consideration of a rezoning application for the western portion of Area 5B west of the Smithe Street-ramp, subject to certain conditions in the attached Council Report. Rezoning applications that clearly reflect Council policy can also be considered, such as minor adjustments to the existing zoning on the GM Place site.
2. The public benefits and amenities secured in the False Creek North Official Development Plan (i.e. the waterfront walkway, the amount of park space required in the ODP, an elementary school site, community centre, child care, roads and utilities, public art and others required in the ODP) will continue to be required as a baseline.
3. The casino shall remain until at least July 31st, 2013 at the Plaza of Nations.
4. The extension of Smithe Street from Expo Blvd., approved by Council as part of the 2001 NEFC Urban Design Plan, will not be revisited.
5. The projected Downtown Streetcar (Pacific Boulevard Extension) line will require a ROW through NEFC.
6. The design of the Carrall Street Greenway will not be revisited.

4.2 The Plan Objectives shall be:

4.2.1 Land Use

- Maintain a strong focus on economy and jobs capacity (office, hotel, retail other commercial, institutional). Start from the perspective of maintaining the commercial and non-residential floor space currently included in the FCNODP. (1.688 million square feet), evaluating the feasibility and appropriate locations, and come to a conclusion on a viable jobs and economy role for NEFC.
- Maintain and enhance the role of the area as a transit-oriented citywide entertainment, sport, cultural and public activity draw, including, among others, BC Place Stadium, GM Place and the Casino.
- Include retail, restaurant, and services uses that:
 - serve the needs of the local employees and residents; and/or
 - form part of the citywide entertainment etc focus noted above; and
 - provide retail or other pedestrian-friendly, active uses at-grade on key pedestrian routes.
- Include residential use in amounts and locations as may be compatible with other objectives.

- Consider the appropriate scale and locations for marina facilities, maintaining at least the capacity of the marina planned for the foot of Abbott Street, noting Council's objective to make the east basin of False Creek primarily for 'motorless' watercraft.
- Plan to deal with the various contingencies related to BC Place Stadium, i.e.
 - it stays in its current footprint and configuration
 - it is removed
 - it is reconfigured within its current site.
- Replace the Plaza of Nations (PoN) public outdoor performance space with an equal or better facility. Consider locations in the Plaza of Nations or elsewhere, including a location associated with the major civic plaza described below. (Note that the Plaza of Nations zoning created an obligation to keep and maintain the performance space, and if the replacement space is not located on the PoN site, a major contribution from the owners of the PoN to a facility in a new location will be expected.)

4.2.2 Structure

- Create a major civic plaza that will be the premier public gathering space in Vancouver. Investigate the possibility of partial and/or movable weather protection for the space.
- Improve the pedestrian environment, access and connections from the downtown to NEFC, and cycling and transit facilities by:
 - Extending Smith Street from Expo Blvd. to Pacific Blvd. with a visual extension to False Creek, as presently approved;
 - Providing a continuous waterfront pedestrian and bicycle route;
 - Creating a new pedestrian and cycling connection from Georgia Street to Pacific Blvd;
 - Widening sidewalks and providing pedestrian bulges adjacent to significant pedestrian routes;
 - Ensure the area is barrier-free for the people with disabilities;
 - Providing improvements to Terry Fox Plaza;
 - Improving connections to and from rapid transit stations;
 - Improving cycling and transit facilities; and
 - Locations of connections should be informed by adopted City policy (Downtown Transportation Plan, Bicycle Plan, Greenways Plan).
- Resolve the future design of Pacific Blvd., including consideration of the 'Great Street' treatment.
- Accommodate the loading requirements, truck movements, and other operational needs of BC Place Stadium and GM Place.

- Improve the connectivity, accessibility, crowd marshalling and the quality of the public realm in and around B.C. Place and G.M. Place stadiums.
- Accommodate the proposed Downtown Streetcar alignment, as well as other planned transit.
- Design a “normalized” street network, as far as possible:
 - preferably at grade
 - if required to be above grade, using adjacent development to effect transitions to grade
 - clear and simple routings
 - bounded by inhabited development (office, residential, retail, or other) for pedestrian interest and safety.
- Investigate whether additional development sites around B.C. Place and G.M. Place stadiums are feasible and desirable.
- Consider the implications for the possible removal of a portion of the viaducts when considering form of development and transportation options.

4.2.3 Built Form

- Respect adopted protected public views.
- Secure water views down Georgia Street to Science World and Abbott Street to False Creek, and create a new water view down Smithe Street and down Robson Street (if BC Place Stadium is redeveloped);
- Use built form to create a defined, pedestrian-friendly public realm, and to assist in resolving transitions between grade and elevated streets and structures.
- In locating tower forms, consider issues of private views and appropriate spacing for livability. Consider tower locations that have been previously approved or proposed, noting that adjustments to these may be appropriate and consider reconfiguration of major open spaces and alternative locations for towers.
- Create an ensemble of buildings, open spaces and landscaping in the Cambie Bridgehead and Georgia and Dunsmuir Streets to reinforce their role as a gateway to the downtown.

5. Public Benefits

- Identify appropriate and affordable public benefits to serve the additional development capacity. Public Benefits could include, but are not limited to: funding for affordable housing, child care, additional open space and recreation facilities, the provision of a major civic plaza and performance spaces, a pedestrian and cycling connection between West Georgia and Beatty Streets and Pacific Boulevard, north of BC Place Stadium and the downtown streetcar.

B.C. PLACE STADIUM ODP AMENDMENT - BUDGET

Item	Amount	Comments
Salaries & Benefits	(\$)	
Planner II	53,100	assumes 80% of time over 9 months
Planning Assistant III	35,900	ditto
Civil Engineer II	73,400	Assumes 100% of time over 9 months
Subtotal	161,400	
Consultants		
Miscellaneous	40,000	e.g. economics/market advice; urban design; acoustic
Survey	50,000	
Subtotal	90,000	
Other Costs		
Public Consultation	10,000	
Overtime	10,000	
Computer Application	5,000	
Subtotal	25,000	
Contingency	13,600	
TOTAL	290,000	

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