



POLICY REPORT
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Report Date: April 21 2009
Contact: Matt Shillito /
Steve Brown
Contact No.: 604.871.6431 /
604.871.6944
RTS No.: 07691
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20
Meeting Date: June 2, 2009

TO: Standing Committee on Transportation and Traffic

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

SUBJECT: Central Waterfront Hub Framework

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council endorse the document entitled "Central Waterfront Hub Framework" (attached as Appendix A) to supplement existing policy and guide future planning in the Central Waterfront Hub area.
- B. FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to develop a strategy for seeking the support and involvement of senior levels of government, area landowners and other stakeholders in the implementation of the vision established in the Central Waterfront Hub Framework.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

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

COUNCIL POLICY

Downtown Official Development Plan (1975, amendments to 2009)
Central Waterfront Official Development Plan (1979)
Central Waterfront Port Lands Policy Statement (1994)
City of Vancouver Transportation Plan (1997)
Downtown Transportation Plan (2002)
Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan - Issues and Directions Report (2007)
Central Waterfront Hub Study and Whitecaps Stadium Terms of Reference (2007)

PURPOSE

This report recommends that Council adopt the Central Waterfront Hub Framework to supplement existing City policy and guide future, more detailed planning for the area. It also recommends that Council direct staff to develop a strategy to involve senior levels of government, area landowners and other stakeholders in realising the vision established in the Framework.

SUMMARY

The Central Waterfront is the principal focal point of the regional transportation network, where multiple rail, road, marine and air transportation modes converge. The area is expected to see a significant increase in passenger volumes over the next few years as the current transit operations expand and new services are added, placing further strain on the existing infrastructure. As a result, there is a need to plan for an expanded, better-integrated transportation interchange with a wider range of facilities available to transit passengers.

At the same time, the potential exists to physically reconnect the city to the waterfront in this area and introduce new commercial and mixed use development in a location with unparalleled transit accessibility.

The City not only has an interest in realising these transportation and 'city building' benefits, but is also in a unique position to show leadership by creating an integrated vision for the area, given its mandate for overall land use planning. Accordingly, in February 2007 Council authorised staff to undertake the Central Waterfront Hub Study to explore the potential for an enhanced transportation hub and associated new development. Through extensive technical work and consultation, staff have now prepared a Framework for the area, which is attached and recommended for adoption.

The Framework outlines an exciting and compelling vision for the creation of a world-class transportation interchange and dynamic new downtown extension in the Central Waterfront. It also establishes planning principles and objectives to guide further, more detailed work. The Framework vision has the potential to make a very positive contribution to two of Council's priorities:

- Environment and Sustainability - emphasising sustainable modes of transportation and facilitating increased transit ridership.
- Creative Capital and a Growing Economy - enabling economic growth by increasing the supply of 'job space' downtown.

There are existing Council-adopted land use policies and regulations in place which cover the Framework area, including Official Development Plans (ODPs) and a Policy Statement. The Framework does not replace these, and conveys no development rights or obligations. Eventually, through further, more detailed planning, staff expect that there will be revisions to the ODPs and subsequent rezonings.

The Framework also identifies and explores some significant challenges facing development in the area which require resolution before the vision can be realised, most notably:

- Complex engineering and technical issues, particularly the need to maintain the capacity of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) rail yard while enabling development to occur over the western section of the yard.

- The expense of developing over the rail yard relative to expected development revenues, which is expected to result in the need for significant public investment.

The Framework area includes multiple landowners and stakeholders with differing interests and objectives. As a result, one of the keys to moving forward will be to identify a 'champion' for the project. This could either be a single party, or a consortium, with the capacity for multi-year involvement, lengthy negotiations and significant financial investment, as well as the ability to present a comprehensive approach to development which demonstrates how the complex, interlinked challenges could be resolved.

The City cannot function as the champion due to its regulatory role, lack of land ownership and limited capital investment potential, however, staff can play an important part in interpreting the Framework and guiding further planning work. In addition, it is recommended that Council direct staff to develop a strategy to seek the support and involvement of senior levels of government, area landowners and other stakeholders in realising the vision established in the Framework.

This report also provides an update on the status of the proposed Whitecaps Stadium in the Central Waterfront. As part of the early stages of the Hub Study, staff reviewed a proposal by the Whitecaps to locate the stadium on the SeaBus terminal site. This was found to be unworkable due to conflicts with cruise ship operations and the difficulty in finding an alternative site for the SeaBus terminal. Subsequently, discussions began between the Whitecaps and Port Metro Vancouver (PMV) over an alternative site on the Central Waterfront Port Lands. These discussions are ongoing and it is unclear at this time whether they will result in another stadium proposal. In creating the Framework document, staff have taken care to ensure that it is robust and flexible enough to accommodate various future development scenarios on the Port Lands, including a stadium.

BACKGROUND

Hub Study Terms of Reference

The Central Waterfront Hub area comprises 8.9 hectares (22 acres) focussed on Waterfront Station and extending north from Cordova Street to include a portion of the CPR rail yard, the SeaBus terminal and adjacent water lots, and the Granville Square complex (see Figure 1). The area has three principal landowners including Port Metro Vancouver (Waterfront Road and areas to the north), Vancouver Whitecaps (CPR rail yard and 320 Granville) and Ontrea Inc (Waterfront Station and Granville Square).

The area is currently covered by sections of the Downtown ODP (1975, amendments to 2009), Central Waterfront ODP (1979) and Central Waterfront Port Lands Policy Statement (1994). In many respects these policies are out of date, however, at this time the owners are not in a position to come forward with proposals that would lead to comprehensive revisions to these documents. Nevertheless, the City has for some time identified the need to investigate the Central Waterfront Hub area in more detail in order to plan for an improved transportation facility and associated development.

To this end, in April 2006 Council first approved Terms of Reference for the Central Waterfront Hub Study which called for the creation of a detailed Urban Design and Transportation Plan for the Hub area. The main objectives of the study were:

- To plan for the development of an enhanced transportation Hub which would better integrate the many existing and planned transportation modes which converge in the area and accommodate projected increases in passenger volumes.

- To examine the various potential development sites in the area in terms of the appropriate type and scale of development and the role they could play in the creation of the Hub.

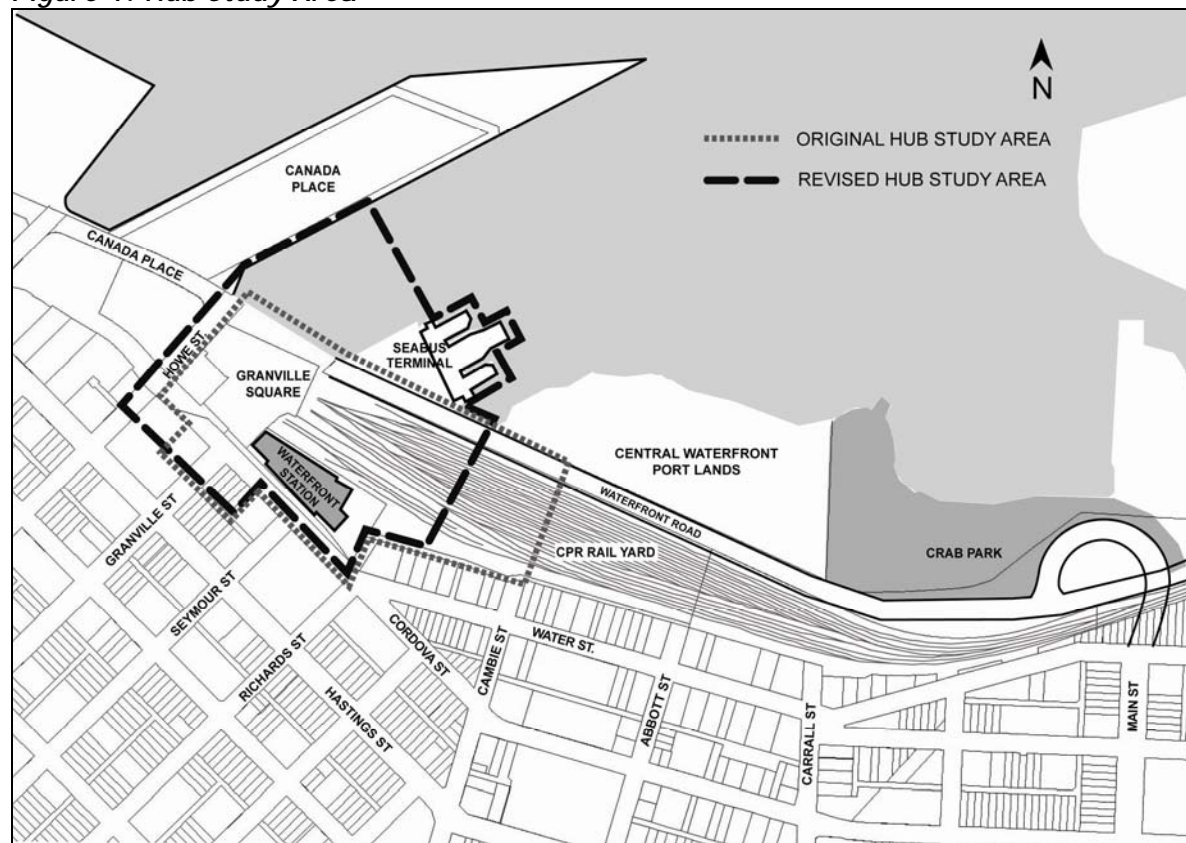
In February 2007, Council approved a revised terms of reference, with the same objectives, but including an additional component of work: evaluation of a revised Whitecaps Stadium proposal on a site adjacent to the study area.

At the outset of the study, staff reviewed the area boundaries and determined that:

- It would be beneficial to include the section of port lands to the north of Waterfront Road covering the SeaBus terminal and adjacent water lots as this area is critical to the integration of marine transit services into the Hub. Staff collaborated with PMV in examining this area, recognizing that the planning and management of development on port lands is under PMV's jurisdiction.
- The eastern boundary of the study area should be brought further west to more realistically reflect the extent of development that could occur over the CPR rail yard, which is expected remain over the long-term.

The originally-approved and revised Hub Study area boundaries are shown on Figure 1.

Figure 1: Hub Study Area



Whitecaps Stadium Proposals

In 2006, prior to the Hub Study, staff had carried out an Initial Review of a proposal by the Vancouver Whitecaps to develop a 15-30,000 seat soccer stadium on a site over the CPR rail yard immediately to the north of the 300 block of Water Street (Site #1 on Figure 2). The

conclusion was that while the stadium is a highly desired amenity for the city, the proposed site was not feasible because of five fundamental issues.

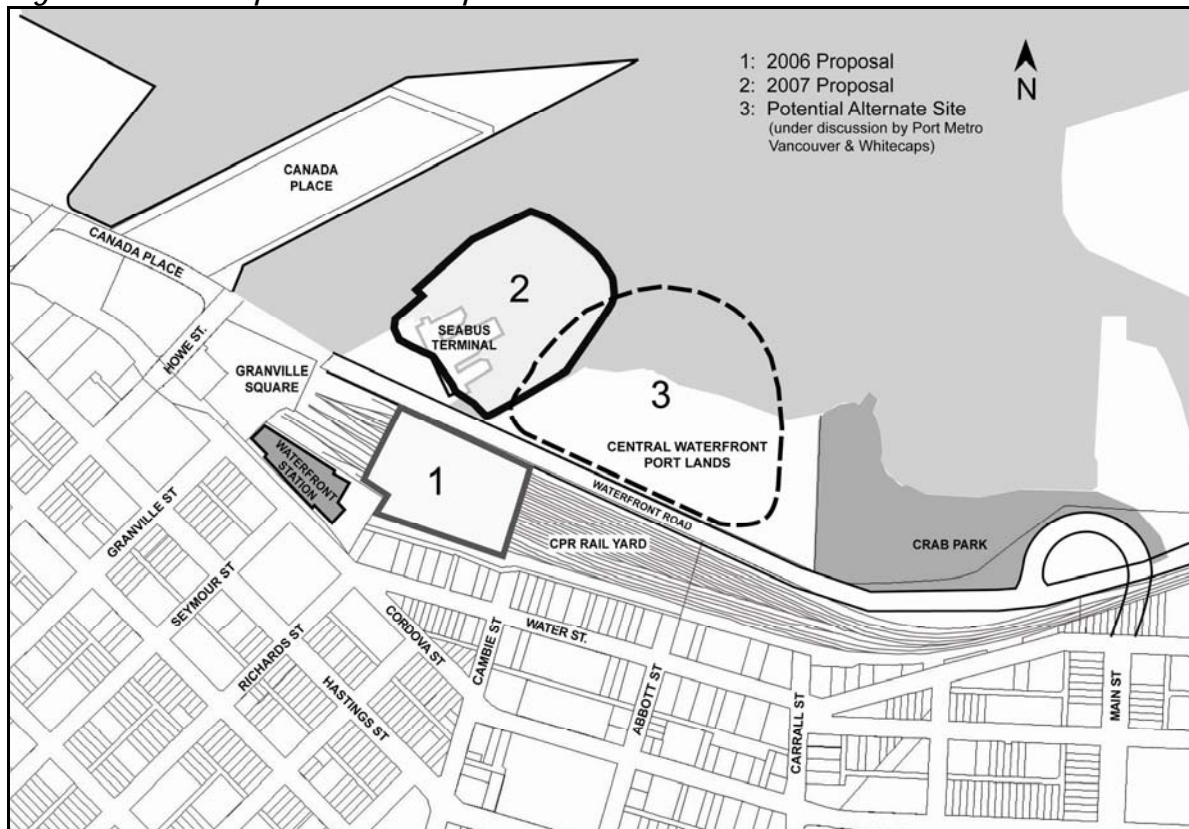
The Whitecaps subsequently began discussions with PMV over the potential to locate the stadium on the site of the SeaBus terminal (Site #2 on Figure 2). As noted above, the terms of reference for the Hub Study were revised to allow staff to provide advice, evaluate this new proposal, and determine if it could resolve the five issues.

In parallel with the early stages of the Hub Study in 2007, staff began an initial technical and public review of this proposal. During this review it became clear that the proposal was unworkable due to conflicts with cruise ship operations at Canada Place and challenge of finding a suitable alternative location for the SeaBus terminal.

Since July 2007, the Whitecaps have been holding discussions with PMV over the potential to use part of the Central Waterfront Port Lands as an alternative site for the stadium (Site #3 on Figure 2). It is unclear at this time whether these discussions will result in another stadium proposal. In creating the Framework document, staff have taken care to ensure that it is robust and flexible enough to accommodate various future development scenarios on the Port Lands, including a stadium.

If the Whitecaps do make another stadium proposal in the Central Waterfront, it would need to be treated as a new work program item for staff, who would report to Council for direction.

Figure 2: Whitecaps Stadium Proposals



DISCUSSION

The following discussion explains the need for a Central Waterfront Hub vision; the technical work and consultation that occurred during the Hub Study; the nature and role of the Framework document Council is being asked to endorse; the exciting possibilities presented by the Hub as well as the significant challenges that have to be overcome to realise them; and the next steps.

The Need for a Central Waterfront Hub Vision

The Central Waterfront occupies a unique position in the regional transportation network due to the convergence of multiple transportation modes: SkyTrain, West Coast Express, SeaBus, Heliport and numerous bus routes. This position will be further reinforced over the coming months and years with the completion of the Canada Line and the planned introduction of additional passenger ferry services and Downtown streetcar. The Canada Place cruise ship terminal and planned float plane dock at the Convention and Exhibition Centre are also in the vicinity.

As a result of increased passenger volumes on existing services and the introduction of new services, the number of passengers using the area daily is expected to increase from 50,000 in 2007 to approximately 90,000 by 2011¹. Having developed incrementally over several decades, the existing transportation infrastructure does not present a fully integrated facility, becomes congested at peak times, and lacks many facilities and amenities needed by transit users.

Beyond the transportation role, the area presents significant opportunities to connect the downtown with the waterfront, and introduce high density commercial “job space” in an attractive location with unparalleled transit accessibility.

None of the previous planning for the area (Downtown ODP 1975, Central Waterfront ODP 1979, Central Waterfront Port Lands Policy Statement 1994) addressed the need for a transportation hub in keeping with the importance of this location, nor the details of how development could integrate with it. In addition, none of the key landowners or agencies active in the area - PMV, Whitecaps, Ontrea Inc, TransLink - had the creation of a vision for the whole area as a task within their mandate.

The City not only has an interest in realising the major transportation and ‘city building’ benefits, but is also in a unique position to provide leadership in creating an integrated vision for the area, given its mandate for overall land use planning. The Hub Study was undertaken to create this longer term vision, in close cooperation and consultation with the area landowners and stakeholders. It identified and examined a complex array of technical planning considerations, as well as numerous, often conflicting interests.

The complex nature of the area, together with the absence of a current development proposal, indicated that a Framework document which established the City’s vision and provided guidance for subsequent work would be the most suitable planning tool at this stage. Staff believe that the Framework document achieves the objectives of the Hub Study and will play a crucial role in enabling and guiding future planning efforts.

¹ Based on number of passengers entering the area from all transit modes, TransLink Regional Transit Model

Technical work

The Hub Study involved a wide range of technical work carried out by City staff and consultants, including:

- Transportation needs assessment.
- Urban design analysis, option generation and concept plan preparation.
- Traffic and parking analysis.
- Preliminary street and intersection design.
- Structural feasibility study and costing.
- Real estate analysis.
- Preliminary financial analysis.

This technical work enabled staff to investigate the opportunities and constraints presented by the study area and informed the guidance established in the Framework.

Consultation

The Hub Study involved extensive consultation with a broad range of interested parties, including:

- Meetings through the course of the process with the study area landowners - Port Metro Vancouver, Vancouver Whitecaps, Ontrea Inc, and major stakeholders - TransLink and Canadian Pacific Railway.
- Meetings with the Hub Study Working Group, which comprised the study area landowners and major stakeholders, as well as the Carnegie Community Action Project, Gastown Neighbourhood Coalition, Central Waterfront Coalition, Gastown BIA, Downtown Vancouver BIA, Stadium Now and Friends of Soccer.
- Meetings with Council Advisory Committees: Urban Design Panel, Vancouver Heritage Commission, Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee and Bicycle Advisory Committee.
- Three sets of public Open Houses, held in March 2007, April 2008 and March 2009.

The feedback from these consultations informed the preparation of the Framework document and is summarized in Appendix B: Summary of Consultation Responses.

The Framework Document

The purpose of the Framework is to clearly establish the City's vision for the area, to inspire other stakeholders, and to set parameters to guide future work towards the implementation of the vision (the Framework document is attached in Appendix A and can also be found at <http://vancouver.ca/hub>).

The Framework is less prescriptive than the Urban Design and Transportation Plan originally envisaged in the Terms of Reference, however it captures the critical directions and requirements, while also providing the necessary flexibility given the uncertainties that landowners and agencies currently have about their specific development plans.

There are existing Council-adopted land use policies and regulations in place which cover the Framework area, including the Downtown ODP, Central Waterfront ODP and Central Waterfront Port Lands Policy Statement. The Framework does not replace these, and conveys no development rights or obligations. Eventually, through further, more detailed planning,

staff expect that there will be revisions to the ODPs and subsequent rezonings. In the meantime, following Council adoption of the Framework, the City will endeavour to ensure that no rezoning or development occurs that would contradict the parameters put forward in the Framework: it will be interpreted as a supplementary “overlay”.

The Framework includes ‘Directions’ and ‘Specific Requirements’ relating to the following topics: Transportation, Land Use and Density, Urban Design, Public Benefits and Environmental Sustainability. The Directions provide principles, objectives and guidance for future, more detailed planning. The Specific Requirements provide detailed guidance on certain aspects of the Framework where the technical work undertaken indicates that there are critical parameters that must be observed.

The Framework also includes an Illustrative Concept Plan which indicates one development scheme for the area that satisfies the Directions and Specific Requirements. It is included to help readers visualize the exciting future that could occur. The specifics of the transit facilities and connections could be different once detailed planning occurs. In addition, other scenarios are possible for the development around the transit interchange: another convention centre expansion is something that has been mentioned, for example.

As noted, area landowners were extensively consulted and have expressed interest in continuing to further develop the vision. However, at this stage staff have not sought or been offered any commitment from the landowners to a specific development proposal.

The Central Waterfront Hub Vision

The Framework presents an exciting and compelling vision for the creation of a world-class transportation interchange and dynamic downtown extension in the Central Waterfront. The key elements of the vision can be briefly summarized as:

- A fully-integrated transportation interchange which combines the best attributes of successful transit nodes around the world and celebrates its unique Vancouver setting.
- A ‘land terminal’ focused on a grand, contemporary passenger concourse which complements the historic Waterfront Station building and provides a wide array of passenger facilities and amenities.
- A ‘marine terminal’ on the waterfront serving SeaBus and other ferry passengers within a coordinated facility.
- A vibrant downtown extension which re-unites the city with the waterfront.
- High density commercial and mixed use development which expands the central business district and complements the activity of Gastown.
- Architecture of exceptional quality, reflecting the prominence of the setting and respecting the existing heritage buildings.
- A welcoming and beautiful public realm of new streets and open spaces which entices people to the area to enjoy the waterfront and views.
- A strong commitment to environmental sustainability expressed in all aspects of the design and construction of the buildings and infrastructure.

This vision has the potential to make a positive contribution to two of Council's priorities:

- Environment and Sustainability - emphasising sustainable modes of transportation and facilitating increased transit ridership.
- Creative Capital and a Growing Economy - enabling economic growth by increasing the supply of 'job space' downtown.

This vision also aligns with *Quick Start Recommendation #29* that Council received from the Greenest City Action Team (GCAT) on May 5, 2009. GCAT recommendation #29 is that the City should "Advocate for Immediate Investments and Improvements in Public Transit".

Development Challenges

The Framework also provides information and guidance relating to some significant challenges which will need to be resolved if the vision is to be realised, including:

a) Development over the CPR Rail Yard:

The CPR rail yard is owned by the Vancouver Whitecaps, however, CPR owns the freight rail infrastructure and operates the rail yard through registered rights binding on the owners. The yard is critical to the operations of the Centerm and Vanterm container terminals on Burrard Inlet, which are of major importance to the city, regional and Canadian economies. CPR and PMV have confirmed that the rail yard will be required over the long term.

The Framework envisages construction of street viaducts, transit infrastructure and buildings over the western section of the rail yard. As landowners, the Whitecaps have legal rights to develop over the yard provided that there is no impact on the quality of the rail facility. This implies that any rail capacity lost through development (e.g. due to placement of supporting columns) must be replaced.

The Hub Study included a preliminary investigation of the impacts on the rail yard likely to result from the development anticipated in the Framework. This concluded that development over the yard would require realignment of tracks and lead to a reduction in yard capacity. Additional technical work is needed to examine the full range of opportunities for maintaining capacity within the yard as well as options for increasing capacity at other locations within the rail system. This work will need to involve the developer(s) of the sites over the rail yard in close collaboration with CPR and PMV. Addressing this issue to the satisfaction of all parties is expected to be a major challenge.

b) Development Funding:

The Hub Study included a preliminary financial analysis of potential development within the Framework area. This was an 'order of magnitude' exercise based on cost and revenue estimates which are subject to considerable variation, however, some general conclusions can be drawn, as follows:

- Revenues generated from private development within the Framework area will probably not be sufficient to cover the costs of the street infrastructure needed to service the new development sites.
- As a result, development revenues are highly unlikely to be able to make a contribution towards the delivery of the public transit infrastructure.

- The high costs and significant market risks associated with the development would make it extremely challenging for a single, private enterprise to undertake.

These conclusions suggest that realising the vision for the Framework area will require government support, including public funding for infrastructure to supplement contributions from private development revenues. Accordingly, the next stages of work will need to include investigation of potential sources of funding from all levels of government.

c) Granville Street Extension:

The extension of Granville Street to the waterfront is a key element of the Framework vision which would open up views to Burrard Inlet from one of Vancouver's principal streets and enhance Waterfront Station by removing the insensitive addition of the Granville Square parkade from its western façade. The Granville Street extension would require the demolition of part of this parkade, resulting in a loss of parking spaces which is of concern to the property owners (Ontrea Inc).

Staff believe that the negative impacts of the street extension could be mitigated by replacing the lost parking spaces nearby and redesigning the Granville Square street frontage and entrance arrangements. However, there is no existing obligation (e.g. a statutory right-of-way) for the owners to allow the street extension, so further dialogue will be needed between the City and Ontrea Inc, as well as the developer(s) in the Framework area, to explore all available mechanisms and mitigation measures to enable the extension of Granville Street.

d) Dangerous Goods within the CPR Rail Yard:

A wide variety of goods are moved through the rail yard, some of which are identified as 'Dangerous Goods' by Transport Canada. As a federally regulated entity, CPR is required to move these goods and there are a number of procedures currently in place to reduce the risk of incidents, including Emergency Response Assistance Plans, cargo screening, yard security and container inspections. Concern over the risks posed by dangerous goods has been raised by Council and members of the public and therefore further planning work should include a study to assess the risks posed to new development in the Framework area and to propose mitigation measures and/or revised emergency management procedures as necessary.

Next Steps

The primary roles in resolving the challenges identified in the Framework and preparing proposals for the area will need to be played by the area landowners (PMV, Vancouver Whitecaps, Ontrea Inc) and major stakeholders (TransLink, CPR). This will require a combination of technical work and dialogue and implies a collaborative effort between the parties. Senior levels of government will probably also need to become involved.

One of the keys to moving forward will be to identify a 'champion' for the project. This could either be a single party, or a consortium, with the capacity for multi-year involvement, lengthy negotiations and significant financial investment, as well as the ability to present a comprehensive approach to development which demonstrates how the complex, interlinked challenges could be resolved.

The City cannot function as the primary champion due to both its regulatory role, and its limited stake (i.e. no ownership, use as an agency, or major capital investment potential). However, Recommendation B is that Council direct staff to develop a strategy for seeking the involvement of senior levels of government, area landowners and other stakeholders in the implementation of the vision established in the Framework.

In addition, staff are committed to participating as productively as possible in the realisation of the vision through the following:

- Providing technical background information from the Hub Study.
- Guiding the landowners and stakeholders in the interpretation of the Framework document.
- Endeavouring to ensure that no rezoning or development occurs which would contradict the parameters established in the Framework.
- Closer analysis of how development could be phased to enable an incremental approach to achieving the overall vision.
- Coordinating with other City policy initiatives which may influence the Framework parameters, notably the Downtown Capacity and View Corridor Study.
- Investigating sources of funding from senior levels of government.
- Ultimately, reviewing proposals for rezoning and amendment of the Downtown and Central Waterfront ODPs.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications for the City's Operating Budget associated with the recommendations in this report.

The program budget for the Hub Study and Whitecaps Stadium review has now been used up. If either the follow-up work on the Hub Framework or review of a new stadium proposal were to result in significant additional work, staff would need to report to Council with recommendations on how this work this could be resourced.

CONCLUSION

This report summarizes the findings of the Hub Study and recommends that Council adopt the Central Waterfront Hub Framework to supplement existing policy and guide future planning in the area. The Framework establishes a vision, objectives and planning principles for the creation of a world-class transportation interchange and dynamic new downtown waterfront extension in the Central Waterfront. It also identifies and explores some significant challenges facing development in the area which require resolution before this vision can be realised.

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DRAFT CENTRAL WATERFRONT HUB FRAMEWORK

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

The feedback received from consultations with Framework area landowners, major stakeholders, Hub Study Working Group, Council Advisory Committees and the public open houses is briefly summarised below:

1. Framework Area Landowners

Port Metro Vancouver

- Expressed support for the vision established in the Framework.
- Expressed desire to maintain development opportunities on Port property, particularly residential development.
- Emphasised the importance of maintaining the capacity of the CPR rail yard and the challenges involved in doing so.
- Provided input to the Framework on port operational requirements at the waterfront, including Cruise Ships and passenger ferries.

Vancouver Whitecaps

- Expressed general support for the vision and the desire to continue to work with staff to further develop the concept.
- Expressed desire for greater building height in development over the rail yard and flexibility to increase the residential component of the land use mix.

Ontrea Inc

- Raised concerns over the impact of the Granville Street Extension, primarily loss of parking revenue and disruption to existing tenants.
- Expressed interest in participating in subsequent planning work with respect to development opportunities on landholdings around Waterfront Station.

2. Major Stakeholders

TransLink

- Expressed general support for the vision and the desire to continue to work with staff to further develop the transit planning concepts.
- Provided input to Framework on transit operational requirements.
- Sought flexibility to carry out more detailed analysis and design in subsequent stages of planning to ensure that transit needs are fully explored and addressed.

Canadian Pacific Railway

- Expressed concern over potential impact of development on the capacity of the rail yard.
- Expressed desire to consolidate the development over the yard into a smaller footprint and suggested greater building heights should be considered to facilitate this.
- Expressed willingness to work with landowners and PMV to explore ways to maintain rail capacity.

- Expressed concern over inclusion of residential uses in close proximity to the rail yard due to the likelihood of complaints about noise, fumes, etc.
- Expressed desire to be closely involved in future transit and development planning.

3. Hub Study Working Group

The Working Group meetings provided a forum for questions and input from representatives of a broad cross-section of interested parties - area landowners, major stakeholders, and community, resident and business groups. It was not intended to reach a consensus, however, the Working Group was supportive of the Hub concept, and expressed some common themes:

- Providing improved integration of the area transit modes and enhanced facilities for passengers is logical and necessary.
- Taller buildings than currently allowed under the City View Cones would be appropriate for the area and could help the project finances.
- Concerns over the impact of traffic from the development on Gastown streets.
- Providing sufficient public open space in the area will be important.

4. Council Advisory Committees

Bicycle Advisory Committee

- Resolved at their meeting on June 18, 2008 to provide support in principle for the plans for the Waterfront Hub project.

Urban Design Panel

- Provided support for the Hub concept and general advice on design development at a (non-voting) Workshop session on June 18, 2008.

Vancouver Heritage Commission

- Resolved at their meeting on March 9, 2009 to request the following prior to the draft Framework being considered by Council:

- A copy of the draft Framework document.

(Note: The draft document was subsequently provided to the Commission)

- Statements of Significance covering three Municipally designated heritage buildings in the Central Waterfront - Waterfront Station, Sinclair Centre, Landing.

- Heritage Impact Assessments addressing the impact of new development on the three heritage buildings and Gastown Historic Area as a whole.

(Note: The Framework includes Directions requiring preparation of these documents prior to consideration of rezoning proposals in the area, which staff consider to be the appropriate timing)

Gastown Historic Area Planning Committee

- Resolved at their meeting on March 11, 2009 to support the draft Hub Framework with the following considerations:
 - The area could be developed more intensively than shown in the Illustrative Concept Plan.
 - The area should be considered as a location for absorption of heritage transfer density.
 - No development should be considered immediately north of the Landing.
 - Early provision of a walkway / bikeway connection to Crab Park should be pursued.
 - All levels of government should be encouraged to support the delivery of the transportation interchange.

5. Public Open Houses

The key themes raised in public responses from open houses held in March 2007, April 2008 and March 2009 can be briefly summarized as follows:

- Strong support for the need to generally improve the area around Waterfront Station, which is viewed as an unfinished part of the city.
- Virtually unanimous support for an improved transportation interchange with ample capacity and better integration between modes. Suggested features include: public washrooms, public telephones, bike storage and maintenance, luggage storage, clear signage and wayfinding, shops and food/beverage outlets, childcare, sitting areas, improved security, sustainable design, public space.
- Strong support for prioritizing pedestrian, cycling, and transit over private auto movement. Many respondents expressed a desire for a pedestrian-friendly environment, some for a pedestrian only environment. The importance of an extension of the seawall to the east was mentioned by many respondents.
- With respect to land use, comments indicated support for an extension of the downtown functions (office, commercial, entertainment, cultural) into this area but there was a mix of views on the appropriateness of residential, given the noise associated with the working harbour and rail yard and any possible new entertainment/commercial uses introduced to the area.
- A mixed response on the issue of building heights. Some respondents felt this is a good location for a landmark tall building and significant density, some felt the suggested heights are too high and block views or are inappropriate so close to historic Gastown.
- Many respondents commented on the importance of protecting the heritage buildings in the area, and don't want to see new development compromise those buildings, particularly Waterfront Station. Other comments encourage beautiful and/or bold architecture in the area, one suggests building "a cathedral to transit" and a "palace to sustainability".