

# Report to Council



**Date:** March 14, 2022

**To:** Council

**From:** City Manager

**Subject:** Council study tour to the Lower Mainland

**Divisions:** Partnerships & Investments, Active Living & Culture, Planning & Development Services

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## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council receives, for information, the report from Partnerships and Investment and Planning and Development Services, dated March 14, 2022, recapping the Special Meetings held during Council's tour of community recreation centres and brownfield waterfront redevelopment sites in the Lower Mainland on February 24 and 25, 2022.

## **Purpose:**

To summarize Council members' Special Meetings that took place while touring the community recreation centres and brownfield waterfront redevelopment sites in the Lower Mainland.

## **Background:**

As part of Council's decision-making process for the Kelowna Community Campus/ Parkinson Recreation Centre redevelopment project (KCC) and the redevelopment of the Tolko lands, a tour of prominent community/recreation facilities and redeveloped waterfront brownfield sites was taken. The community recreation centres included in the tour were West Vancouver Community Centre (WVCC), Edmonds Community Centre (ECC) in Burnaby, Minoru Centre for Active Living (MCAL) in Richmond and Hillcrest Aquatic Centre (HAC) in Vancouver. North Vancouver Shipyards and the Olympic Village of False Creek in Vancouver were toured the following day as precedents for the Tolko lands.

## **Community recreation centres tour:**

The following narrative contains the broad themes that emerged from Council's review during the tour of the four Lower Mainland community recreation centres:

## ***Get it right:***

This facility will serve our community for the next sixty-plus years and needs to be designed and built with this longevity in mind. While the project needs to be guided in a financially responsible way, the project should be focused on building what will best serve the community for the coming decades. It

was expressed on multiple occasions that there will be no complaints about the facility being too large, but would be concern about building a facility that is too small or missed the the needs of our growing, diverse community. It was also noted that this building cannot be everything to everyone, but for the defined services at this facility, we need to focus on purposeful investment to get it right.

***A sense of arrival:***

The KCC will be the face of our community to both locals and visitors and needs to have a strong sense of place that lets a user know that they have arrived, which was very well represented at WVCC. The KCC will be more than a community centre, but something special that inspires and creates community. Through optimizing the natural beauty and connection to its surroundings, this facility will embody health as was exemplified at MCAL.

As was shown at WVCC, the internal entrance area needs to serve as a community space that welcomes people with lots of natural light, high ceilings and a sense that this is someplace special. This space will be the "living room" of the community. This communal space could be the location of a revenue-generating food services.

***Integration with the outdoors:***

This project includes a 48-acres park bisected by Mill Creek and contains all the amenities associated with the Apple Bowl. These are site characteristics to be leveraged and celebrated. A person should see a sea of green from this facility, including fields, the track, Mill Creek, playgrounds, and creative outdoor space.

The facilities that were the most successful had seamlessly connected to the outdoors; this was particularly well done at MCAL. Programmable plazas and paved outdoor spaces surrounded the building. They acted as a place to host events or provide areas for seating where people could watch the activity. Spaces that could be accessed from the outside, such as changerooms and revenue-generating event support space, expanded the facility's capacity to support and host various sport and community events, including tournaments, track meets, and festivals.

***Accessibility, inclusivity and safety:***

Careful thought and consideration need to be given to ensure the KCC will be accessible, inclusive and safe for all. Universal change rooms are a key component to achieving this goal, and anecdotal evidence from visiting these facilities suggests that the best investment would be to create more universal and family change rooms rather than spend the resources on gender-specific facilities. Having two elevators is critical to ensure that there is always a functional elevator, to serve those with specific needs. A focus on building standards that address this theme is important during design.

***Parking:***

The location of the building cannot be dictated by vehicle access and parking alone but must be one consideration of the overall site solution. Care and attention need to be focused on encouraging other modes of transportation, including thoughtful and safe bike storage. It was noted the importance of building location integrating with the remainder of the site being a very important factor, after reviewing MCAL.

***Tournament hosting:***

The building needs to be designed to host indoor and outdoor tournaments, complete with revenue-generating event hosting support space accessed from both. There is an opportunity to be known as a regional leader for aquatics and team sports from this facility. Design should incorporate national level hosting standards to ensure compliance for future events.

***Aquatics:***

The aquatics centre needs to be built appropriately to engage the needs of health and wellness user and the standards used for aquatic sports. The addition of saunas, cold plunge pool, and steam rooms which were seen at MCAL have been an attractant for wellness in the aquatic centre.

The configuration of a ten-lane pool, as opposed to an 8-lane pool, adds flexibility to what sorts of programs can be provided in the pool. Researching how the community would best maximize the recreational elements, such as lazy rivers are important.

**Brownfield waterfront redevelopment site tours:**

The purpose of the site visits was to understand some of the key success factors behind two successful brownfield (former industrial) waterfront redevelopment sites in Vancouver/North Vancouver.

**Shipyards (mid-1990's, nearing completion)**

- Flexibility for change over time but maintained the overall vision
- Good example of trading density for amenities
- Consistency over time (staff)
- Most important amenities were built first (waterfront)
- Primary spaces are pedestrian with very limited vehicle access
- Public spaces heavily programmed (successful)
- Did not provide affordable housing (not a project goal)
- Strong placemaking elements (heritage preservation and public realm elements)
- Separation between public spaces and residential development
- Multi-purpose spaces can adjust to seasons

**Olympic Village (built out shortly before 2010 Vancouver Olympics)**

- Built out all at once which had some advantages and disadvantages
- Affordable housing components mixed in which was considered a success
- Sold all at once (challenge)
- Able to try some new technology (challenges with stormwater management)
- Lots of pedestrian/shared environments
- Less ground floor commercial/retail than originally planned
- Street treatments brick/stone finishes very high quality (but high maintenance)
- Public art somewhat of an after-thought
- Great access to the waterfront and active modes of transportation

Prior to Council visiting both sites in question, key City staff visited both sites and shared the same experiences and take-aways. As staff seek to incorporate best practices into the Tolko Area

Redevelopment Plan process and the North End Planning process, we will endeavour to highlight area's of consistency for Council.

**Total expense of study tour:**

The expense for the study tour including airfare, transportation, accommodation and food costs totalled \$16,863.31.

**Next Steps:**

- KCC report to Council with a recommendation on which site plan layout is the preferred solution
- Council to tour the existing Parkinson Recreation Centre and the H2o
- Council to tour the Tolko site
- North End Plan report to Council with a Vision & Objectives (neighbourhood vision statement and high-level goals) as well as public engagement update. (Spring 2022)
- Tolko site Area Redevelopment Plan initial report. This will include public engagement and Vision & Objectives statement for the Mill Site which would be reviewed by staff and brought to Council for endorsement. (Likely spring 2022)

**Internal Circulation:**

Partnerships & Investments  
Active Living & Culture  
Planning & Development Services  
Infrastructure  
Financial Services Communications

**Existing Policy:**

Imagine Kelowna called to create great public spaces and opportunities for people of all ages, abilities and identities, grow vibrant urban centres and limit sprawl, build healthy neighbourhoods for all, nurture entrepreneurship and collaboration, support innovation, and take action in the face of climate change.

Council Priorities 2019-2022 identified measures to transform this vision into action. Specifically, relevant to this report:

- Vibrant neighbourhoods, by pro-actively planning key sites.
- Vibrant neighbourhoods, through developing accessible and multipurpose amenities.
- Economic resiliency, through the reduction of the infrastructure deficit.

The accompanying Corporate Priorities also identify:

- Clear direction, encouraging and supporting innovation.
- Community Climate Action Plan.
- Corporate Energy and GHG Emissions plan.

**Considerations not applicable to this report:**

Legal/Statutory Authority:

Legal/Statutory Procedural Requirements:

Financial/Budgetary Considerations:

External Agency/Public Comments:

Communications Comments:

**Submitted by:** Derek Edstrom, Divisional Director, Partnerships & Investments  
Jim Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture  
Ryan Smith, Divisional Director, Planning & Development Services

**Approved for inclusion:** Doug Gilchrist, City Manager