

## DRAFT

### Renfrew-Collingwood

## Social and Cultural Community-Based Amenity Strategy

May, 2016 Draft

### Executive Summary

Collingwood Neighbourhood House is developing a community-based strategy to secure social, cultural and recreational facilities in Renfrew-Collingwood.

1. ***An Intercultural Approach*** which builds bridges between diverse residents and organizations to co-create visions, actions, and relationships to improve the neighbourhood. This approach challenges us to design spaces that support groups that need it most and connect different groups rather than creating silos in gathering places and service delivery.
2. ***A Renewed Working Relationship with the City*** that uses the knowledge and skills of residents, local businesses, community groups and City staff to co-manage how facilities are planned and the programs they provide.
3. ***Increasing Affordable Housing*** for local young people, immigrants, working families and seniors. This can include multiple family developments near transit as well as secondary suites, live-work units, and new forms of housing near schools and parks.
4. ***Community Facilities*** to meet the needs of existing as well as new area residents. An intercultural lens will connect services for youth, seniors, child care, small business supports, and a variety of recreation, cultural, library and educational facilities.
5. ***Community-Based Arts and Culture*** is essential not only to help showcase the area's many professional artists, but also to build creative opportunities with the area's diverse population. There is a need for a variety of arts production, display and performance spaces as well as shared offices and storage areas. In addition, public art should reflect the work of local artists and the area's rich cultural diversity.
6. ***Public Spaces*** throughout the neighbourhood area provide opportunities for community building. Many larger parks need updated playground equipment and covered spaces for year-round programming. More field houses should be renovated and made available to community organizations and local artists. There is an urgent need to create safe and active spaces near SkyTrain.
7. ***Linking Community Amenities***, including local shopping streets. It is challenging for many residents to get from their homes to local amenities. Improved walking streets, bikeways, traffic signals and lighting will encourage more residents to use a wider array of local services. The area's many seniors, families with young children and people with

disabilities need more frequent and affordable local transit that is available throughout much of the day.

**8. Equitable Transit-Oriented Development** ensures that development benefits people of all income levels.

## **Background**

In 1986 City Council adopted the Joyce Station Area Plan which reflected to views of many local residents and led to the development of Collingwood Village, the Neighbourhood House, Community Safety Office, and improvements to many public spaces including the Renfrew Ravine.

In 2004 City Council adopted the Renfrew-Collingwood Community Vision. It contained community-endorsed priorities. These were updated through community discussions culminating in a 2009 City staff report on implementation. This is funded through City Capital Budgets, Development Cost Levies from new construction and Community Amenities Contributions from developers seeking rezoning.

## **An Inter-Cultural Community-Based Approach to Community Amenities**

The Renfrew-Collingwood Community-Based Amenity Strategy began in 2010 when the Neighbourhood House sponsored meetings with local residents and agencies to review and update the amenities identified in the Community Vision. It also includes community input from the Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre Planning process.

Underlying this effort is an intercultural approach which emphasizes the need to plan services and amenities with and for the community's diverse population.

## **Key Recommendations**

### ***Recommendations for Housing***

a. New Affordable Multiple-Family Housing

There are many sites available for new multiple family housing especially along Kingsway and near the area's five SkyTrain stations. Zoning needs to require that much of this housing be geared to neighbourhood incomes, working people and their families.

b. Renovations

A social enterprise could coordinate affordable renovations and create secondary suites in single family homes. It may also be possible to create new affordable units by encouraging developers to provide very basic interiors and allow residents to upgrade their housing over time.

c. Live-Work Housing

Many local residents work out of their homes. Zoning should be reviewed to ensure it encourages self employment while addressing potential impacts on neighbours.

d. Supportive Housing

As the population ages and there are more people facing health issues such as mental illness or addictions, it is important to provide housing with health services so people facing these challenges can remain in the neighbourhood.

e. New Housing forms in Single-Family Areas

During the Visioning process there was broad support for increasing densities near major shopping streets such as Kingsway. There should be further discussion about housing that might be appropriate in other parts of the area, especially near schools and parks.

f. Social Housing

Non-market housing will ensure that housing will remain affordable for a longer period of time. There is a long waitlist for BC Housing where seniors and families need to be housed in the short term.

***Recommendations for Community Facilities***

Many community facilities are now operating at or beyond capacity and there is a need for more space as the area's population is expected to grow and change.

a. Multipurpose Spaces

A 10,000-square-foot facility has been approved to be built as part of the Wall Central Park development on Boundary Road. The Norquay Village Neighbourhood Centre plan calls for 15,000 sq. ft. of indoor unfinished multipurpose space with programming for arts, seniors and youth to be built as part of the future redevelopment of the 2400 Kingsway site. In addition, there is City-owned land that could accommodate a 15,000 square foot facility adjacent to Collingwood Neighbourhood House.

b. Ongoing Support for Amenities

One of the challenges facing the community is the need for an ongoing endowment to support social, arts and cultural activities in multiple languages at the new CNH annex associated with development at Vanness and Boundary Road. New capital spending is required but an endowment would be extremely valuable to ensuring the success of the space and ongoing programming. This new space will be a wonderful addition but requires support to ensure that CNH unique role in developing social, artistic and cultural life in the community is supported.

c. Centre(s) for Seniors and for Youth

A 2,000 square foot facility is needed to provide drop-in, fitness and other informal services to meet the needs of seniors. A 2,000 square foot facility is also needed to meet the needs of youth. In keeping with intercultural principles, these could be part of a multipurpose facility.

d. Child Care Facilities

With about 6500 children, Renfrew-Collingwood ranks third on the list of Vancouver communities most lacking in childcare spaces. It has just 10% of the needed child-care

supply for children under the age of three, only 20% of needed spaces for 3 to 5 year olds, and only about 15% of needed supply for school-age children. There is also a need for a drop-in Family Resource Program.

e. Recreation Facilities:

Facility needs include: Fitness Centre (especially for people with physical disabilities or recovering from injuries), Pool, Skating Rink, High Ceiling Gym, Weight Training, Pool Tables, and Ping Pong Tables. Some of these can be accommodated through expansion of the existing centres; others through collaborative efforts with local organizations, including community use of schools and/or park field houses.

f. Small Business Hub

A privately owned business hub is currently located on Kingsway. It provides affordable office space as well as shared access to services, meeting spaces, and equipment. An assessment is needed to determine whether similar facilities should be established elsewhere to accommodate the area's growing number of home-based businesses.

g. Educational Facilities

Because of the growing population and emerging needs, residents have expressed a strong interest in keeping all 10 local public schools open and expanding community use for other educational, cultural, recreational and child care programs and services. There is also an interest in providing tutoring for children and adults in storefront settings. Many residents take pride in the area's history and have collected memorabilia and would like space where this material could be archived and made available to the public. Residents would also like the Collingwood Library replaced by a new facility or expanded in a way that respects its historic character to accommodate companion educational services.

***Recommendations for Community-Based Arts and Culture***

Renfrew-Collingwood is home to more than 100 professional artists and many residents who make arts and crafts in their homes or at community facilities. Thousands of others participate in community cultural activities.

a. Displays at Galleries and Other Public Venues

There is a need to showcase the work of local artists in a variety of local settings. This could include businesses, such as small performance cafes, pop-up galleries or performance spaces, as well as community facilities and public spaces.

b. Creation, Performance and Rehearsal Spaces

There is a need for well designed, safe and affordable studio and performance spaces as well as for secure storage space for materials used by professional and community artists. Local arts organizations, contractors, and self-employed artists also need access to affordable office space and meeting rooms.

c. Public Art

A strategy should be developed in consultation with local artists, residents, businesses and community agencies to feature the work of local artists in public places including parks, SkyTrain stations, streetscapes, community facilities and local businesses.

### ***Recommendations for Public Spaces***

The community is in the process of identifying specific possible improvements for each of the area's parks other public spaces and is forming a working group to help spearhead ongoing community engagement – in the planning and implementation of needed improvements.

***Current Plans:*** Processes are underway to improve Collingwood Park and the Renfrew Ravine as well as a linear park linking Norquay and Slocan Parks. The Still Moon Arts Society has received funds to develop an innovative ecosystems approach to managing the Renfrew Ravine. In addition, the City has allocated funds for several new mini-parks in underserved single family areas. The Norquay plan calls for three public outdoor plazas.

#### ***a. Area-Wide Approach***

It is recommended that the entire community have an opportunity to look at the neighbourhood's parks and other public spaces and the ways in which they are linked as a system. Some parks may be best suited for arts and culture, others for sports, still others for playgrounds, community gardens or for off-leash dogs.

#### ***b. Priorities for Investment***

Residents believe that the priority for investments should be in the parks that are already heavily used and that more existing field houses and covered spaces should be made readily available to local artists, recreation groups and others that are interested in providing services for the entire community. There is also considerable interest in expanding community gardens.

#### ***c. Staff with Local Knowledge***

Residents suggest that relevant Park Board and City staff responsible for local community centres, public spaces and the linkages between them be assigned on a local area basis. Staff with an in-depth knowledge of local facilities and residents can significantly enhance the programming, safety and beauty of these amenities.

#### ***d. SkyTrain Stations and Shopping Streets Improvements***

In addition to the spaces around the area's five SkyTrain Stations, the Joyce St, Kingsway and Grandview Highway shopping streets are the most frequently traversed parts of Renfrew-Collingwood. These spaces need to be improved to better communicate the rich character of the area.

### ***Recommendations for Linking Community Amenities***

Renfrew-Collingwood contains many excellent facilities and public spaces, but it is challenging for many residents to get from their homes to these amenities. Linking these

to one another and the neighbourhood shopping areas is critical to creating a complete community. Making these linkages safe, beautiful and reflective of its diversity will significantly contribute to enhancing the community's intercultural objectives.

a. Public Transit

The Renfrew-Collingwood area is very well served by rapid transit and the buses along major arterials and that link to the area's five SkyTrain stations. However, there is a need for more locally oriented transit so that young people, seniors and others without private vehicles can more easily use local recreational, cultural and social amenities, especially at night.

b. Greenways and Bikeways

Several city-wide greenways and local bikeways traverse Renfrew-Collingwood including the BC Parkway, Central Valley, Ridgeway and the proposed Eastside Cross Cut.

- The network of safe bike and walking routes needs to be expanded to link the neighbourhood's local shopping areas, parks, schools and SkyTrain Stations.
- Traffic controls signs should be provided where bikeways cross busy arterials.
- Where practical, local streams should be day lighted to create natural greenways.
- The BC Parkway needs considerable improvement to its paving and lighting.

c. Street Improvements

Many local streets need more pedestrian lighting, bike racks and garbage containers. There also needs to be a creative inclusive planning to beautify and enliven major commercial shopping streets.

Under the Joyce-Collingwood Station Area Plan, there is expected to be thousands of new residences – a situation that raises concerns about traffic congestion and parking on main and residential streets. This will occur both during construction phases and after. This is an important issue for many residents, and one requiring a close working relationship between the City of Vancouver and the community.

## **Implementing the Community-Based Amenities Strategy**

Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood leaders have been implementing parts of the Community Vision as opportunities arise. At the same time ongoing work is underway to identify and gather community support and resources to implement other emerging community priorities.

### **1. *Confirming Community Priorities with an Intercultural Lens***

The priorities identified in this report need to be broadly discussed with local residents, business, agencies and other groups to confirm that these items have widespread community support and to seek local champions for specific initiatives.

### **2. *Fleshing Out Gathered Ideas***

The community will flesh out estimates about the size, cost and potential champions for amenities that have considerable local support. Each initiative will also be measured in relation to City standards and city-wide priorities.

**3. Preliminary Costs and Sources of Funds for the Gathered Ideas**

After further community discussion, local leaders will work with City staff and other partners to develop detailed capital and operating budgets for high-priority ideas.

**4. Developing Partnerships for Implementation**

The preliminary table will be circulated to relevant partners and potential funders for comment and consideration. Some projects may be supported by community organizations, funders, developers or property owners; others will require formal applications to funders or await applications from developers for permits or rezoning.

**5. Implementing and Monitoring the Community Amenity Initiative**

Once the community, City and relevant partners have approved the implementation strategy, the initiative will be piloted and assessed. There will be periodic meetings amongst the partners and advisors as well as an annual report to the community. The process will also be evaluated to ensure it is functioning effectively.

**6. Community Impact Studies**

Given the significant impacts of development in the area, the community should consider undertaking a Community Impact Study to monitor the ramifications of growth.