

Q&A

Education Services Centre and AfK Gallery

Lonsdale Redevelopment

as at: June 18, 2010

Overview

Since the mid 1990s, the School District has been working to reduce its administrative operating costs by consolidating its services in fewer, newer buildings. Parallel to the work to build new schools, the School District requires a revenue-generating, long-term solution to its need for a central and accessible Education Services Centre (ESC), Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art (The Gallery), and art education space operated by Artists for Kids (AfK).

Over the past several years, an innovative project designed to service educational, residential, heritage, business and community needs *without drawing on educational funding* has been refined for the site at Lonsdale and 22nd street.

Summary and status of the project

The Lonsdale redevelopment project involves the sale of 2.84 acres of the 3.43 acre site of the former Lonsdale Elementary School as well as the sale of the Chesterfield Board office site for development as residential housing. The remainder of the lot fronting Lonsdale (.59 acres) will be retained as the site of the new Education Services Centre and home of the Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art. Proceeds from the land sales will be used to fund the construction of the Education Services Centre/Gallery. The combined projects include multi-family housing, improvements to Rey Sargent Park and an independent living facility for young adults with disabilities. The project has been designed to generate partial funding for the heritage restoration projects at Queen Mary and Ridgeway Elementary.

The estimated cost of construction for the ESC/AfK building, including furnishings is \$31.3 million. Other costs funded by the project, which includes the redevelopment of both Lonsdale and Queen Mary and related sale of density:

- Major improvements to Rey Sargeant Park - \$450,000
- Contribution to Ridgeway Heritage restoration- \$3 million
- Cash contribution to Lonsdale Energy Corporation to secure geothermal heating and cooling - \$200,000
- In-kind contribution of the mechanical room for the Lonsdale Energy Corporation
- Market value of land donated to HYAD - \$2.5 million
- Commitment to the heritage component of the restoration of Queen Mary Elementary School – in the range of \$3 million



The current expected completion date for the Education Services Centre and Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art is the spring of 2012.

Q&A

What are the objectives of developing the Lonsdale and Chesterfield sites?

- Improve the efficiency of school district administration through the consolidation of district services currently provided at multiple locations;
- Reduce the operating costs of the existing School District administrative services
- Improve the value and utility of a School District asset; and
- Provide additional revenue for public education in North Vancouver.

What exactly does the redevelopment project include?

The benefits to the School District and community are numerous. A centralized facility allows the NVSD to make efficient use of operating funds. Other benefits include:

- Reduced operating costs through replacement of the School District's administration buildings into one, consolidated Educational Services Centre
- Reduced energy costs by connecting the ESC to the Lonsdale Energy Corporation, and building it to a LEED silver standard or better
- Funding for the needs of heritage preservation at Queen Mary and Ridgeway Elementary Schools
- A cultural destination, community-accessible, 4,000 sq. foot Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian Art, operated by the Smith Foundation, including art education classrooms and a climate-controlled facility to house the AfK permanent collection, valued at approximately \$2 million
- An independent living facility for young adults with disabilities, HYAD, (provision of land at no cost)
- A high-density residential building
- Full restoration of Rey Sargent Park
- Protection of heritage chestnut trees at the Lonsdale site

How does the project help the heritage rebuilds of Ridgeway and Queen Mary Elementary?

School Districts are not funded to preserve heritage landmarks, but in many communities, school buildings are recognized for their significant heritage and cultural value. Through increased density granted by the City, the School District will be able to generate additional funds through the sale of land and density bonuses to fund the premium costs associated with heritage restorations for Ridgeway and Queen Mary.

Why does the School District need a new administrative building?



The Board of Education takes its obligations to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all students and staff seriously, whether they work in a school or administrative office. The current School District office on Chesterfield was erected in the 1950s to a standard of construction significantly lower than regulations require today. It is not wheelchair accessible and has degenerated past the point of any viable solution to bring it up to current operating standards.

School District administrative staff also work in similarly outdated buildings in the Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre and Lucas Centre, creating a scenario of ongoing inefficiencies and unnecessary expense.

Why should the School District develop this project now, when the economy and its own finances are so restricted?

The project has generated its own funding, through the sale of the identified parcels on Lonsdale and Chesterfield. It is neither dependent, nor will it draw from, educational services and Ministry funding. As well, construction costs are 10 to 15% less now than they were 18 months ago.

Consolidation of services at the ESC enables the elimination of duplicate services, reduction in travel costs and time for staff currently working between buildings, and reduced facility operating, energy and maintenance costs. The project priority to lower administrative operating costs is further enhanced by providing the Board with a suitable venue for hosting special events onsite.

Over the long term, once services have been consolidated into the ESC and new homes are found for the alternate programs and maintenance yards, the School District has the option to proceed with redeveloping the property that currently houses the Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre (821 West 21st Street in Hamilton Heights) for further revenue to fund its ongoing capital needs.

The ESC/Gallery represents the public face of the largest employer on the north shore. This primary location maintains the prominence and importance of public education in our community for present and future generations. It serves to enhance the image and reputation of the school district as progressive, innovative, creative, professional and highly visible in the community. This development will support improved coordination of our efforts to recruit and serve students from other districts and other countries.

AFK already has a gallery space, why does it need to move to Lonsdale?

The current AfK Gallery in the Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre (821 West 21st Street in Hamilton Heights) is not in an area easily accessible to the public. The building is outdated, does not offer a climate-controlled facility to preserve AfK's permanent collection (valued at over \$2 million) and is inadequate as a teaching facility for students.

Developing the current AfK Gallery into the Gordon Smith Gallery of Canadian art and relocating it to Lonsdale establishes it in a highly-accessible area for both our schools and the public. The move provides adequate space and climate-controlled conditions for the collection and art education programs and creates a new cultural destination to view and appreciate the work



of Canada's premier artists on the north shore. With the addition of the ESC and Gallery in the vicinity of Centennial Theatre and the Harry Jerome Recreation Centre, the north Lonsdale location is further primed as a centre for arts and recreation.

Relocating the Gallery will also support its revenue generating potential through the sale of prints from the AfK collection. The proceeds from these sales go towards funding art education programs and enrichment for our students. Easy access to the Gallery at this prime location will facilitate a higher number of print sales.

What do local businesses and the City of North Vancouver stand to gain from the Lonsdale development?

The residential portion of the project will provide 234 small, (primarily 2 and 3-bedroom) and townhouse units and 47 adaptable homes suitable for elderly and handicapped residents. Nearby businesses will appreciate the proximity of an influx of regular customers through the residential project as well as the relocation of our staff and the ongoing draw of the Gallery to the public.

The new residential units are family friendly and will support enrollment in local schools.

The project demonstrates the capacity of the North Vancouver School District and the City of North Vancouver to achieve significant long-term benefits for the community through effective cooperation and collaboration.

Are there other benefits for the community?

Yes, the project expands accessible opportunities for instructional and community use during weekends and summer break, particularly through the use of art classrooms and instructional areas.

As well, meetings, special events and social gatherings can be hosted in the ESC and Gallery to assist the School District in growing and diversifying its funding base.

Located on the main artery for public transit in North Vancouver, the site facilitates transit commutes to and from work. Employees who live in the city will continue to have a convenient location to walk to, while others who currently bring their cars to enable them to travel to meetings at the Lucas Centre or Leo Marshall Curriculum Centre will no longer require a vehicle for this reason during the work day.

What standards must the building achieve in terms of environmental efficiencies and sustainability?

The project will reduce the footprint of administrative facilities from the current 63,000 sq. feet to 57,000 square feet.



A portion of the new space constructed within the new AfK/ESC building will be dedicated to the Lonsdale Energy Commission's mechanical room to connect the project to the LEC heating and cooling system. It is the intent of the LEC to provide energy efficient heating and cooling to this building and other neighbouring buildings through the development of a series of geothermal wells.

The ESC/Gallery building has been designed with maximum energy efficiency as a primary driver incorporating solar sun shading, displacement ventilation, and occupancy sensing devices. An efficient floor plan has been developed for operational economy. The new building will be completely compliant with all current safety codes, will be compliant with all current occupational health and safety measures, and will be fully accessible to those with disabilities.

The ESC/Gallery project has been registered with the Canada Green Building Council and it is the School District's intent to achieve a LEED silver classification on the project by targeting 50 – 60% better energy efficiency than the Model Energy Code.

The Lonsdale location corresponds with surrounding density, enables transit and bike commuting, and facilitates centralized operating efficiencies and savings. Salvaged materials from Lonsdale school (timber and stone) will be re-used in the construction. The goal is to achieve a LEED silver designation or better for both the Gallery and Education Services Centre

How will parking be designed?

The new proposal includes 100 underground parking spaces (an increase from the original 85, at no additional cost to the project).

Many options are being considered at this time to balance the reasonable provision of parking while encouraging alternative forms of transportation to the site. Pay parking, the use of a share car for staff who don't need to bring a car to work, but may need to travel during the work day, and even partial funding of bus passes may be possibilities to encourage alternative transit use. As well, we will continue to promote our internal carpooling bulletin board to staff.

Regular meetings and inservice training may bring about 100 teachers and administrators to the ESC at one time, in addition to staff in the building. Many will carpool, but a reasonable amount of parking should be available reduce dependency on street and neighborhood parking spaces.

As well, we would like building to be welcoming as a rental facility, able to accommodate functions for up to 300 people at one time. Although not all those individuals will drive to the site, 100 spaces and the possibility of overflow parking at Centennial Theatre should accommodate community needs. The availability of our parking spaces to the Harry Jerome Rec Centre and Centennial Theatre will also alleviate potential parking congestion in the neighborhood during off hours.

This parking will also be available to guests visiting residents of the Polygon development and users of the Harry Jerome facility and will reduce the parking spaces they would otherwise need to provide.



What about the landscaping? What enhancements does it offer to the Lonsdale corridor?

The trees now growing on the site will be preserved and incorporated into the new landscape. An “Artists Walk” between the chestnut trees on Lonsdale and the front of the Gallery will beautify this city neighborhood and create a welcoming environment for reflection and instruction.

Landscape upgrades will be done concurrently with construction of AfK/ESC, and the cost of these upgrades will be incorporated into the project.

Can the new offices be modified if the School District changes in structure or size?

School District administration changes constantly to meet new demands. The building will have features such as a raised access floor and modular work stations. Workspace will feature a minimal number of permanent offices to facilitate any organizational reconfigurations at a low cost.

How has public consultation contributed to the development of this project?

Extensive opportunities for feedback from the public, City staff and advisory bodies have contributed several important details to the final plan. Of particular note, the south portions of the residential buildings have been reduced from five to four storeys; a communal car will be provided for car-sharing by residents; the east-west pedestrian walkway will be made fully handicap-accessible and Rey Sargent Park will be completely redesigned as a usable, appealing park for the community.

As well, parking on West 22nd and Chesterfield will be maintained; traffic calming will be introduced at both the West 21st and West 22nd intersections, West 22nd will remain its current width; residents will receive passes to allow them to park in time-restricted street spaces and any Chestnut trees that required removal due to their condition will be replaced with the same species.