

**THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA**

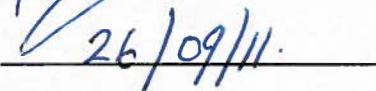
**FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

**FORWARDED TO:** BOARD OF GOVERNORS ON RECOMMENDATION  
OF PRESIDENT STEPHEN J. TOOPE

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION:

  
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Stephen J. Toope, President & Vice-Chancellor

**DATE:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
26/09/11.

**PRESENTED BY:**

Pierre Ouillet, Vice President – Finance, Resources and  
Operations  
Stephen Owen, Vice-President – External, Legal & Community  
Relations  
Nancy Knight, Associate Vice President, Campus and  
Community Planning

**DATE OF MEETING:** September 27, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Update on Gage South “Area Under Review” & Environs  
Planning Process

**DECISION REQUESTED:** For Information Only

**A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This report presents a progress report on the Gage South “Area under Review” & Environs Planning Process approved by the Board in April 2011. This report was discussed at the Community Planning Task Group at its September 19, 2011 meeting. At that meeting, the Administration clarified that there will be three options presented for public consultation, that no decision has been made regarding whether any housing will be located in this area, and that if there is housing located in this area, it will be non-market, affordable, university rental housing for faculty, staff and/or students. Careful and thorough consideration will be given to compatibility of land uses in this area.

Work completed to date includes a preliminary technical review of the site area, more detailed definition of the land use program, particularly the aquatic centre and diesel bus facility

requirements, refinement of planning/design criteria, and ongoing development of land use layout and circulation options.

The results of an aquatic centre feasibility study provided critical information regarding the size, configuration and optimal location of a planned new aquatic centre. Staff is currently refining options for the layout of all remaining program elements in the study area, and will be inviting feedback from the Working Group at its next meeting. Campus community comment is also expected in the fall 2011 consultation on the Gage South and Environs options.

Consideration of whether university rental housing is to be maintained within the study area or relocated to Wesbrook Place is still under discussion and proceeding in parallel with the Wesbrook Place Neighbourhood Plan amendment process. Options under discussion allow both possibilities.

TransLink is conducting feasibility work to enable pragmatic planning for a terminal facility, and the Working Group provides a useful forum to test preliminary ideas and ensure they are kept in context with community values and adjacency issues.

The purpose of the Working Group is to provide guidance and help staff develop a plan that anticipates and avoids possible concerns on the part of the various stakeholders in the area. There will also be consultation with the campus community in October. Once the draft plan is finalized, associated Land Use Plan designation changes will be forwarded to a Public Hearing in the new year.

## **B. REPORT**

### **Background**

On January 13, The Board of Governors approved the UBC Land Use Plan and asked staff to report back with a planning framework to resolve the long-term land use designation for the Gage South 'Area Under Review'.

The Land Use Plan was adopted by the Minister in March 2011. A planning framework and principles for the Gage South "Area Under Review" & Environs planning were then adopted by the Board of Governors on April 5, 2011.

A Working Advisory Group of stakeholders was established to help guide the planning work. The group includes AMS, GSS, UNA, TransLink, and the UEL, as well as relevant UBC departments (e.g. Athletics & Recreation).

This area of campus between Wesbrook Mall and the SUB North Plaza, University Boulevard and the Student Recreation Centre, will be the home to substantial investments in critical academic needs and infrastructure over the next five years. These include a new aquatic centre, transit diesel facility, open-air bookable space for student events, public realm improvements, and possible university rental housing. A well thought-out plan is needed to properly integrate these significant uses in an efficient, effective, and elegant way for this important part of campus.

Also to be considered, the AMS voiced concern during Land Use Plan consultations last year that the original plan for market or non-student housing in the future Gage neighbourhood (current temporary bus loop site) was incompatible with student activities in the area.

## **Discussion**

### *Technical Review*

A Preliminary Technical Review of the planning area was completed and reported to the Working Group. This exercise reviewed whether there were any significant service relocations, bearing capacity issues or other development constraints that could significantly affect land use planning.

- A full engineering topographical survey of the area has been completed in readiness for more detailed layout and design work.
- A geotechnical review for the study area concluded there are no major impediments to a variety of layouts on the site.

### *Program Refinement*

The latest program refinements are understood as follows:

- *Aquatic Centre:* An Aquatic Centre Feasibility Study has recommended a 79,400 ft<sup>2</sup> (7,374 m<sup>2</sup>) facility be located on MacInnes Field (Attachment 2). This allows the most efficient facility design possible in a location central for the university community. The goal of the program is to balance the needs for a competition facility and a neighbourhood leisure facility to meet current and future needs of the full UBC community. It is proposed to include a 50 metre competition pool, 25 metre recreational lap pool, leisure pool and range of amenities such as hot tub, sauna, family change rooms and multi-purpose rooms to suit campus and community requirements.
- *Diesel Bus Facility:* TransLink has advised that five drop-off bays, eight pick-up bays and 17 parking (layover) bays would be needed to address projected ridership. Minimum single direction lane widths for buses must be 7 metres. Minimum island or sidewalk areas where people wait for and load onto buses are 9 metres. No additional facilities are proposed, but TransLink has encouraged UBC not to abandon the notion of a freestanding building over the bus parking area to camouflage it without the cost of excavation. This idea would preclude the provision of a replacement field on top of the bus parking space.
- *MacInnes Field:* The current 0.9 hectare field provides outdoor bookable open space for student activities. If this area is used for the aquatic centre, replacement space would ideally be located within the study area. It need not be the identical configuration nor meet professional playfield standards. Natural grass is preferred over artificial turf as it is more suited to informal gatherings and play. Current field programming includes the AMS Welcome Back Barbeque in September, the AMS Block Party in the spring, approximately 12 club social events per year, and infrequent outdoor social events associated with conference activity at the Student Recreation Centre or the War Memorial Gymnasium. The current field has poor drainage, no power, water or lighting. The replacement space should be serviced with water, power and lighting to avoid

running of hoses and wires through the public realm during social events. Some of these activities could be located on the SUB North Plaza which will be redeveloped into a significant grassy open space as part of the Public Realm Plan.

- *University rental housing:* Future development capacity for 28,800 gsm (310,000 gsf) of university rental housing (approximately six storeys) originally planned in the area currently occupied by the temporary bus loop, is either be retained there, or may be transferred to Wesbrook Place. Non-market university rental housing is an important program element to address faculty-staff housing challenges, to bring a year-round customer base to planned retail in the University Boulevard and SUB areas, and contributes revenue to UBC's Student Housing Endowment, which finances new student housing on campus.

It will require creativity to fit these important university program needs into the subject area while maintaining the pedestrian circulation and character objectives.

#### *Design/Planning Criteria*

- Draft planning/design criteria were developed to guide design of each significant program element within the precinct.

#### *Study Area Layout Options*

- The Working Group suggested a range of preliminary layout bubble diagrams regarding the relative positioning of key program elements in the study area, for further exploration.
- Subsequent resolution of the preferred aquatic centre siting has since provided further contextual clarity within which to work.
- Subsequent preliminary diesel facility spatial layout work by TransLink within that aquatic centre location context then helped UBC staff and consultants generate several realistically scaled layout options for the area. These options explored possibilities within the basic relationship bubble diagrams, while meeting TransLink's drop-off, pick-up and parking space needs. These diagrams were provided to the Working Group on August 25 and the tradeoffs and benefits of each will be discussed in detail at the group's next meeting. Some involved an underground parking area and associated ramping; others rely on surface level parking facilities. The Working Group will work toward identifying three of the most viable ideas by the end of September for further technical exploration, and discussion with the campus community in the fall.

If by the end of September the Working group is unable to agree on at least one plausible layout option for discussion with the larger campus community, Campus and Community Planning may have to return to the Board with some suggested basic program adjustments.

#### **Issues**

- a. The AMS concerns regarding potential conflict between university non-market rental housing and student activities in the campus core are being addressed carefully. Possible solutions under exploration are:

- Relocation of some or all of the university rental housing to Wesbrook.
  - Use of aquatic centre as a buffer between university rental housing and outdoor student activities.
  - Relocation of field to a location less vulnerable to complaints from renters.
  - Designing physical size, layout, and architecture of rental units to be oriented to singles and young people rather than families.
  - Introduction of lease conditions that new tenants acknowledge likely noise and light conditions from proximity to central student area.
- b. Early in the process, TransLink expressed concerns that the Working Group may not have the technical expertise to set realistic design constraints for the future terminal. These concerns have been addressed as follows:
- TransLink is a regular stakeholder member of the Working Group.
  - Gage South Working Group is to be allowed early input into appropriate neighbourhood choices to set the context for detailed terminal design. These include basic location, orientation, typology, and suitable interface to the surrounding pedestrian public realm and academic facilities.
  - A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with TransLink is under development to guide the process for more detailed transit terminal technical design and operations (draft still under discussion).
  - A protocol letter is being developed to outline how the Gage planning process and the MOU processes will align with respect to facility design.
  - UBC is insisting that capital commitment by TransLink be in place prior to finalizing the plan.
- c. Enquiries have been received as to why media and observers are not invited to the Working Group meetings and whether this could compromise transparency of the process.
- The Working group does not make decisions. It is advisory.
  - The Working Group members are fully committed to transparency and have agreed that all their meeting notes should be posted on the Campus Planning web site so people can follow progress.
  - The Working Group understands that draft plans reflecting its deliberations and recommendations will be forwarded through a campus community consultation process for feedback.
  - The Working Group has discussed the pros and cons of allowing press and visitors into their working sessions, and has opted to keep them closed for now, on the understanding that the above measures will still allow the campus community to follow progress and provide feedback at key points.



The planning problem in this central university space with varied interests is extremely challenging, and a functional collaborative process is important. It is critical that stakeholders build trust, come to understand each other's perspectives, and achieve a productive working relationship. This type of problem-solving can require deferred judgment during the creative thinking stages, some risk-taking to explore solutions that may differ from predefined positions, and requires a growing technical knowledge base of the program and area limitations. The group felt it could better achieve the necessary group dynamic and results with some creative working space away from the media spotlight.

### **Next Steps**

The Working Group and Campus and Community Planning staff are working toward preparation of three options for public consultation with the university community in October. Community feedback from this consultation process will be brought to the Board for discussion and direction regarding finalization of the Land Use Plan.

The Land Use Plan amendment process to officially assign the appropriate land use designation for the "Area Under Review" will be referred to a Public Hearing in the new year.

### **Attachments:**

1. Board History
2. Subject Area Map

### Previous Board History

Date of Meeting: April 5, 2011  
Subject: Gage South "Area Under Review" & Environs Planning Program  
Board Action: Resolution (Excerpts):  
BE IT RESOLVED that *the Board of Governors hereby approves as circulated the planning program and principles for the Gage South "Area Under Review" and adjacent academic environs.*

Date of Meeting: January 13, 2011  
Subject: UBC Land Use Plan Amendments Next Steps  
Board Action: Resolution:  
BE IT RESOLVED that *the Board of Governors, subject to adoption of the Land Use Plan Amendments by the Minister of Community Sport and Cultural Development, hereby directs staff to:*

- *Report back with a planning framework for the Gage South "Area Under Review" including project scope, principles, process and timeline, noting that the planning for academic facilities and lands adjacent to the "Area Under Review" but related to this process, may proceed in advance of the Minister's adoption.*

