

**Planning & Development Department
Development Advisory Committee
Meeting Notes for January 28, 2010**

Members:

Andy Aadmi
Jeff Fisher
Jake Friesen
Avtar Johl
Steve Kurrein
Gopal Sahota
Kevin Shoemaker
Amy Spencer-Chubey

Councillors:

Councillor Marvin Hunt

City Staff:

Sandra Dent
Remi Dube
Jean Lamontagne
Sam Lau
Sheila McKinnon
Judith Robertson
Fay Keng Wong

Regrets:

Deana Grinnell
Greg Sewell

1. Acceptance of Previous Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of November 26, 2009 were received as circulated.

2. Land Development Engineering Staffing Update – Sam Lau

- Rob Wilson, P.Eng., is currently away from the office.
- Sam Lau, P.Eng., is the Acting Manager, Land Development (E-mail: SLau@surrey.ca; Telephone: 604-591-4356) responsible for the Division.
- Remi Dube, P.Eng., is the Acting Development Services Manager (E-mail: RDube@surrey.ca; Telephone: 604-591-4893) responsible for the Section and commercial/industrial/corporate priority projects. Remi's Drainage Planning portfolio has been re-assigned to Carrie Baron.
- John Wilson, ASCT, Development Project Coordinator (E-mail: JMWilson@surrey.ca; Telephone: 604-591-4294) and Bob Ambardar, P.Eng., Development Project Engineer (E-mail: BAmbardar@surrey.ca; Telephone: 604-598-5983), most recently with Cressey Developments, are responsible for residential projects.

3. Update on DCC By-law, 2010, No. 1711

- A handout regarding the Surrey Development Cost Charge By-law, 2010, No. 17111 was distributed to the DAC members.

4. Private Sector Developer Contributions to Public Art – Sheila McKinnon and Sandra Dent

Sheila McKinnon, Manager of Arts Services, presented on the City of Surrey's Public Art Program. A copy of her PowerPoint presentation, along with brochures on some of Surrey's current art initiatives, was distributed to the DAC members. The PowerPoint presentation is also attached to these minutes.

Surrey's Public Art Advisory Committee is seeking the DAC's input and support to bring a detailed Corporate Report to Council on a plan to improve Surrey's Public Art Policy. Staff heard from Council and stakeholders, through the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan planning process, that more impactful public art in the city is needed. To achieve this, the City will need to expand and diversify funding sources.

The benefits of public art are that it can inspire, beautify, amuse, create character, create identity and sense of place, support tourism, and commemorate and celebrate. Sheila showed integrative and interactive public art examples from New York, Chicago, and Florida. Public art can also help with way-finding.

In 1998, Surrey's Council approved the establishment of a Public Art Policy program. 1.25% of the City's construction project budgets for various capital projects are allocated to public art. In the first 10 years, the City spent about \$1 million on public art and 27 projects have been completed. The Cultural Capitals of Canada Award contributed to 6 completed projects budgeted at \$816,000. Over \$683,000 has been allocated to future capital projects. The collection will soon be over \$3 million.

The Public Art Advisory Committee (PAAC) is a Council appointed committee of volunteers who work with staff to administer the Public Art program. Comprised of 9 members, the PAAC promotes and are actively engaged in the establishment of a public art installation for a variety of City sites including aquatic centres, arenas, libraries, recreation centres, parks, fire halls, the Museum, Arts Centre, and engineering infrastructures.

The Public Art process begins with Council's approval of the annual capital budget. The inter-departmental art team meets to review proposed projects, the budgets, sites, and possible themes. The Public Art Master Plan for the City is updated, reviewed by PAAC, and forwarded to Council. With each project a decision is made to proceed with a direct commission, a limited call to artists, or an open call. Artists are generally asked to submit their resumes with a portfolio of their work. A selection panel reviews these materials and will often shortlist 2 or 3 artists (teams). The artists will be paid a small fee to develop a site specific proposal, which is often a model of their proposal. Then the artists present their proposals to a selection panel and staff conducts a technical review. The selection panel reviews this work and makes a recommendation to PAAC, which then goes to Council.

For some projects, artists engage the community in the hands on creation of the art work. These are called community art projects. When community partners are involved, it helps the City extend the impact of its budgets and it builds community awareness and appreciation for the finished art work.

Sheila showed a sample of art works that have been donated to the City's public art collection from individual donors and community associations who want to improve their neighbourhoods or commemorate an occasion.

There are a few places that have a high collection of items, such as Bear Creek Park, Newton Town Centre has a few, City Centre (Holland Park), Guildford Town Centre, Fleetwood, Cloverdale, and South Surrey. The federal Cultural Capitals of Canada program has funded quite a few art works near SkyTrain stations.

PAAC has been very involved in research and has visited Seattle to view their various art works. Sheila also showed examples of art work found in other cities:

- *Toronto*. Since the early 1990's, Toronto has required public art in Official Plan amendments and rezonings with thresholds of 20,000 square meters. Over \$40 million in public art commitments have been secured through the development approval process. The private sector has worked with Urban Design staff and the Toronto Public Art Commission to produce dozens of high profile and popular public art sites. Public art is also secured in residential condominium projects.
- *Calgary*. In the early years of their program with funds from the bequests of various prominent citizens, the Calgary Allied Arts Foundation augmented the City's civic art collection through purchases, donations and commissions. With the total appraised value of the Civic Art Collection currently exceeding \$4 million, the City is responsible for ensuring that proper care and preservation is carefully balanced with providing citizens and visitors the opportunity to access and enjoy the Collection. Through the creation of their Public Art Policy, the City of Calgary believes that they will provide cultural leadership, guide the evolution of a distinct and vibrant artistic character for the city's emerging public places, and ensure a visual legacy. Established in 2004, the Public Art Program oversees the allocation of 1% of all capital Upgrade and Growth projects (over \$1 million, and excluding land purchase, capital maintenance programs, moveable equipment and rolling stock) to public art. In many areas of the Centre City, density bonusing is used. One of the streams in the Density Bonusing Program for the downtown core is B12 – Public Art, wherein private developers invest in public art for installation in a publicly accessible location on the development site. The commissioning of artwork is in accordance with Public Art Program procedures and each project is approved by the Public Art Board. The Public Art Program is responsible for the oversight of these projects. Public art bonusing is now being considered outside of the downtown, most frequently in 'beltline' areas adjacent to the core. Calgary's

Downtown Art Circuit is an accessible, free, self-guided art circuit located in the downtown core that presents 12 interesting art pieces from its Civic Art Collection. The Art Circuit runs through a park, City Hall, performing arts centre, museum, and convention centre, which are all within a 1.2 km walking radius. A few years ago, PAAC identified an “Art Walking Loop” as a long term strategy for Surrey City Centre on a smaller scale.

- *Vancouver*. Examples of public art in Vancouver include “Coopers Mews”, which was installed in 2002 by Concord Pacific Group for \$125,000; and “Pendulum” in the downtown HSBC Building, which was installed in 1987 by the Hong Kong Bank of Canada.

- *Richmond*. Richmond’s Public Art Policy encourages developers to provide 0.5% of the construction costs to public art. A developer's contribution to public art is not a separate process, but is carried out as part of the rezoning, development permit and building permit approval process. The program applies to Residential building proposals with 20 units or more; or non-residential building proposals with a gross floor area of 2,000 m or more. (There are exceptions.) Developer Public Art Options include the following:
 - Option 1 - Developer Donates Cash to City's Public Art Statutory Reserve Fund
 - Option 2 - Developer Funds and Manages Public Art
 - Option 3 - Developer Funds and the City Manages Public Art

- *White Rock*. The City of White Rock has recognized that public art contributes to a city’s identity by making it more livable and relevant to the residents, working people and those who visit. Their guidelines have been developed to assist and advise the development community in the inclusion of public art within their development. The guidelines are in a draft stage and have not been approved by White Rock Council. Participation in the program by the development community at this time is voluntary. Options for participation include the following. Option 1: Participate in the Development of a Public Art Project, which is on the development site or the public right-of-way. Option 2: Donate funds to a Public Art Special Reserve Fund in lieu of providing art. These funds will be used to create Public Art close to the development site or in other locations of the City.

Questions and Comments from the DAC:

- Jeff Fisher commented that if developers are required to put in public art, they would prefer a density bonusing incentive. Look at Richmond’s Public Art Policy, as they are considering adding more flexibility to their policy. Vancouver’s process is convoluted because the art consultant gets more money than the artist. Would we be looking at Surrey’s Public Art Policy in certain areas? Sheila commented that PAAC would like to

keep the Public Art Policy program very simple and have an even playing field. It is hard to compare Surrey with Vancouver because Vancouver is experiencing a lot of redevelopment while Surrey is experiencing new development.

- Kevin Shoemaker asked how long public art has been 1.25% of the City's construction project budgets for capital projects. Sheila answered since 1998. Because of the Cultural Capitals of Canada Award, it is one of the few times we have had 6 projects at the same time.
- Kevin further commented that public art cannot be looked at in isolation. Keep it simple and flexible. Richmond is a good example to look at for a public art process that is not bureaucratic and where everyone is happy including artists. Richmond charges a per square footage rate. Vancouver's public art process is too complicated.
- Steve Kurrein commented that the new homebuyer is already absorbing fees and would like to see an even playing field. There should be some sort of City matching grant.
- Avtar Johl commented that public art should be incorporated into the NCP process. This way the people residing there will benefit. As a general levy, it does not make a lot of sense. Who is really benefitting? Developers are really focusing on new homebuyers. Why should they pay for this artwork? General affordability is why people come to Surrey.
- Steve K. asked if Surrey will be producing a brochure on public art. Sheila commented that having an up-to-date website on public art has been sufficient.
- Steve K. also asked who paid for the public art in Cloverdale. Sheila responded that the City paid 25% and the federal government paid 75%.
- Steve K. asked how costs are controlled. Is there a list of artists? Sheila responded that the City does a call to artists. The artist shows a sample of their works and references. By contacting references, City staff check to see if the artist was good to work with, on time, etc. The artist does a site specific proposal and must include a budget. PAAC reviews them and see if they will be a good fit. Sandra Dent added that the City also has a database of artists, too. The integration of the art work into the community is important (e.g. placemaking).
- Sheila commented that a lot of the older developments in which the older amenities were fixed became a big burden to owners, who did not want to deal with them. They asked the City if they were interested in helping but would keep the amenity use. It is better to focus on public amenities than a lot of private ones that are harder to be maintained by the stratas. Public art is a good investment.
- Kevin asked what the timeline is. Sheila responded that there is not a lot of time pressure due to the economy. Council assigned this project in March 2009. Over the next couple of months, staff are looking to revise the policy and then go to Council. Kevin asked if Sheila can come back to the DAC with the draft proposal. Sheila said yes.

5. Comments on the Market – All DAC Members

- Jean commented that Council adopted the proposed changes to 164 St Alignment between 16 Ave and 24 Ave, which will allow staff to complete Grandview Heights NCP #2. The final number of building permits for 2009 is \$825 million (\$200 million more than anticipated). The first half of the year was quiet and rose in the second half.
- Jeff commented that UDI had a forecast luncheon this month with good attendance (over 1100 people). The housing starts are at their lowest since 1962. There is a feeling that the banks might be coming on side mid-year.
- Steve K. commented that there has been a lot of activity. Single family homes have been selling at high numbers, almost as high as before. Things are beginning to recover. In North Surrey and Clayton, there is a short supply of building lots. There is a trend towards uniformity of products; RF-9's and coach houses are all looking the same. The City may want to have a rethink of architectural guidelines to add some variety.
- Amy Spencer-Chubey distributed copies of CMHC's December 2009 housing starts and the Altus Group's "Year-End Reflections on Housing" for CHBA.
- Kevin commented that the markets are robust. In the third quarter, there were 18,000 new immigrants. 90% of them moved to the Lower Mainland and 30% are buying homes. Immigration is a major factor in home buying. In the last couple of years, Polygon Homes has been able to pick up a lot of land, but it has been changing. There has been a shortage of trades people.
- Gopal Sahota commented that the demand and activity is hot. First time buyers are on the borderline on whether or not they can afford a home. A blip in the interest rate will dramatically affect housing prices. Those who can afford it are jumping in. What drives the consumer is confidence. Downtown construction is booming right now. Multi-family units are what are in demand. The amenities in multi-family are added onto strata fees and increases in strata fees are a concern. Rent ability beyond the "grandfathered" first owner's right is important, as well as quality. Not so attractive units are what seem to be affordable.
- Andy Aadmi commented that we should anticipate housing affordability in the future.
- Avtar commented that the market is very positive. Current economics do not explain the hot market. The hot market is because of immigration.
- Steve K. commented that it is important to get statistics on who the immigrants are. We do not know their profile (are they grandparents, singles, etc.?). The echo baby boom is often ignored as they are the group who make up new homebuyers and have the flexibility to return to their parents' home. Their preferences for homes are different than previous generations.

6. Other Business

Jeff noted that the Regional Growth Strategy comments are due next week. A statement was issued that needs more clarity. Johnny Carline is going to the GVHBA meeting. When the draft comes out, staff should read it closely.

7. Next Meeting (February 25, 2010)

The meeting adjourned at 4:01 pm.