



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Committee

Date: October 24, 2002

From: Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Parks Recreation and
Cultural Services

File: -

Re: **Imperial Landing Water Lots**

Staff Recommendation

1. That Council maintain the current park/trail program in front of the Imperial Landing water lots as the primary vision for this upland area; and,
2. That Council direct staff to further explore the development of the City water lots in front of Imperial Landing.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Parks Recreation and Cultural Services

Att. 1

Staff Report

Origin

At the closed General Purpose meeting of October 21, 2002, the Committee passed a resolution:

“That the ongoing park/trail program in front of Imperial Landing water lots, be continued as the primary vision for this upland area be referred to open Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Committee meeting scheduled for Oct 29, 2002.”

Background

Staff had previously prepared a report that outlined options to investigate the possibility of utilizing dredged material to widen the dyke in front of the Maritime Mixed Use area at Imperial Landing.

The analysis is as follows.

Analysis

Staff have reviewed infilling of the water lots and have identified three options. They are:

- a) Utilizing dredged materials to widen the dyke at the City owned water lots at the Imperial Landing site
- b) Construct a structure on piles on the city’s water lot (s)
- c) Maintain the current trail/park program as is currently under construction.

Option 1 Utilizing dredged materials to widen the dyke at the City owned water lots at the Imperial Landing site

Filling the City’s water lots at the Imperial Landing site for the purposes of widening the dyke is a technically feasible project. Such a project could provide an extension to the current public space of approximately 1.9 acres in size, and could be developed into a waterfront park feature along the waterfront trail system. There are a number of regulatory, environmental, legal, cost and structural considerations to such an undertaking.

These include:

- In order for fill to be placed in this area, a number of regulatory approvals would have to be acquired (See Appendix 1). Preliminary discussions with authorities indicate a lengthy approval process with no guarantee of success of an application to fill any portion of the water lots. Decomposition of contaminants, provincial and federal environmental policies on fish habitat displacement, etc. are major concerns.

- If fill were to consist of the dredged product from the area (see attached map, Appendix 2) the material would be mostly silts, and is contaminated. The environmental agencies may not allow the material to be utilized. Given the high moisture content of this material, compaction would be difficult to achieve, and future settlement would be a given. It could only be considered if a soft surface park is desired.
- Filling the water lots for the purpose of widening the dyke to increase the amount of public open space along the riverfront is not specifically addressed in the Official Community Plan (OCP). The OCP land use designation for the water lots includes a specific mixture and delineation of 'Maritime Mixed Use' and 'Public Open Space'. In addition, the OCP also contains several relevant policy statements regarding this area, specifically;
 - *“Maximize continuous unobstructed public access to and along the waterfront. Where buildings or structures extend out over the water, developers will be encouraged to incorporate innovative designs to ensure public access along the water side of these developments;”*
 - *“Encourage the development of commercial and industrial uses that support or complement the maritime economy within the context a 3.5 acre 'Maritime Mixed Use' area adjacent to the waterfront west of the Phoenix Pond. Accommodation for a half acre of parking to support these uses is included in the 3.5 acres.”*
 - *“Require a master plan be completed to the City’s satisfaction for the Maritime Mixed Use area west of the Phoenix Pond prior to any development approvals being issued for this area. The central purpose of the master plan will be to ensure that the objectives of the Maritime Mixed Use area will be met as development proceeds.”*
- In order to accommodate fill, a retaining structure would have to be built. Estimated costs of filling Lot H (approximately 1.9 acres in size) are as follows:
 - i. Fill with imported, compacted material and retain with a sheet piled retaining wall: **\$3,400,000**
 - ii. Fill with imported, compacted material and retain with rip rap slope protection: **\$1,600,000**
 - iii. Fill with dredged material from outside of lot H: reduction in above costs by **\$750,000**, but could not support any buildings or structures.

None of the above would provide a surface that would be suitable for building structures without further support and costs. What also is not understood is the impact to other landside amenities.

- Filling in Lot H would require the City to assess any legal issues regarding the impact on the upland owner.

While the filling in of the water lots is a technically feasible and potentially exciting project, the costs, environmental impacts, limited use and lengthy processes involved in undertaking this work suggest that continuing the current park/trail program (being completed by Onni Developments) may be a more practical vision for this area.

Option 2 Construct structures on piles

An option that has been mentioned but not investigated due to lack of detail, or defined scope, is to place a piled foundation to support a structure over the open water. A concrete deck on concrete piles with a wrap around walkway and building(s) in the centre that extends from the current dyke out over a portion of Lot H is a possibility.

This option is technically feasible. The regulatory approval process would be lengthy with no guarantee of success similar to Option 1. There are also a number of regulatory, environmental, cost, legal, geotechnical and structural considerations to such an undertaking.

- In addition to a lack of detail or scope, a consultant for geotechnical analysis, environmental consulting and structural recommendations would be required. This option could be more cost effective than Option 1 if a structure is proposed, as any structures in Option 1 would also have to be supported on piles regardless of filling Lot H or the water lots.
- Placing structures on/over Lot H would require the City to assess any legal issues regarding the impact on the upland owner.
- Construction of a structure over the water lots was not part of the community consultation process during the rezoning approval for the Imperial Landing site. While the redevelopment of the former BC Packers lands included the removal of decks and buildings over the water lots, the OCP does not specifically address the re-establishment of decking or buildings over the water lots. The OCP land use designation for the water lots includes a specific mixture and delineation of 'Maritime Mixed Use' and 'Public Open Space'. In addition, the OCP also contains several relevant policy statements regarding this area, specifically;
 - *"Maximize continuous unobstructed public access to and along the waterfront. Where buildings or structures extend out over the water, developers will be encouraged to incorporate innovative designs to ensure public access along the water side of these developments;"*
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Option 3 *Maintain the current trail/park program currently under construction*

By comparison, the ongoing park/trail option would retain the linear riverfront park and waterfront walkway currently under construction by the upland developer as part of the approved servicing agreement for the Imperial Landing development with minimum further costs to the City.

The dyke trail in front of the subject water lot areas has been designed to be 7.5 metres wide, and already accommodates seating areas, artefacts, lighting standards, planting areas, and 4.0 meter pathway for public use and public works dyke maintenance. This approach:

- Is consistent with the OCP and community vision regarding the redevelopment of the former BC Packers lands. The work being completed provides maximum public access to the waterfront, including pedestrian and cycling links to and from Steveston Village and other heritage features along the river such as Britannia and London Farm. It also takes advantage of a very scenic and uninterrupted view across the river to Steveston Island.
- Provides a balance in the type of waterfront development in the Steveston area. There are extremely scenic, unobstructed views across the river to Steveston Island, which provides a nice contrast to the more heavily developed waterfront to the west (consisting of significant moorage at the westerly end, followed by the commercial/retail character of the Steveston Landing and village area, and further moorage and a more “historical” built zone to the east including Britannia and London Farm).
- Represents the least cost option.
- Could possibly include habitat enhancement measures in the form of marsh benches along the toe of the existing riprap slope. Similar habitat compensation has already occurred on the eastern portion of these water lots as part of the overall approval process for the Imperial Landing development. Habitat compensation areas will likely be required as the City begins to implement further amenity development along the river’s edge.

Conclusion

Filling in the water lot or developing a structure on or over the water lot at the Imperial Landing site is a technically feasible option for creating increased public space in this area. Such a project would involve significant environmental considerations, lengthy regulatory approval processes with no guarantee of success, consultation, major structural limitations and cost factors.

Each option has different benefits and challenges. Staff believe the continuation of the current park /trail development as the primary vision for this area is the best option.

Costs to the City with this option are minimal other than maintenance costs. This work is proceeding as part of the servicing agreement between the City and Onni Development Corporation for the Imperial Landing Development.

Staff recommends that the City continue with the current park trail development associated with the Imperial Landing Development. The continued park/trail development is consistent with the vision for the Steveston Zone in the waterfront amenity strategy and the OCP, it provides a good balance to the other waterfront development in the area, and is the least expensive option.

In addition, it is viable to consider further development of the water lots. A more detailed review of this option is required to ascertain the environmental requirements, legal issues, partnership opportunities, revenue generation and the financial viability of any development.



Cathryn Volkering Carlile
General Manager - Parks Recreation and Cultural Services

Response from FREMP

Re: preliminary investigations into filling of water lots

“All works in inter-tidal and sub-tidal areas require formal authorization. Hence the hypothetical project of the scale and location we discussed would require several authorizations including:

1. Approval of the Minister, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, in order to comply with the provisions of the Fisheries Act. Fisheries have a no-net-loss habitat policy, and landfill in a channel of the Fraser River estuary would constitute a considerable loss of water column habitat.
2. Approval from the Canadian Coast Guard under the provisions of the Navigable Waters Protection Act. Any significant fill would be a definite concern for marine navigation.
3. Amendment of the Area Designation Agreement between FREMP partners and the City.
4. Amendment of the Regional Context Statement in the Richmond Official Community Plan bylaw in coordination with the Regional Growth Strategy.
5. Amendment of the Fraser River Port Authority's Land Use Plan.
6. Screening for a trigger for an Environmental Assessment under the Canadian Environmental Assessment Act (CEAA). Triggers include, Federal Lands (including Port Authority holdings and First Nations territory), Federal funding, Involvement of Federal agencies, etc. One consideration here is the potential for Federal Government expropriation of the City's water lot.
7. Compliance with Provincial Flood Plain regulations and approval from the Inspector of Dikes.

Given this web of approval requirements, the success of any application to fill a significant portion of the Fraser River is unlikely.”

(received: May 29, 2002 4:51 PM)