



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: General Purposes Committee **Date:** October 12, 2021
From: Marie Fenwick **File:** 11-7141-01/2021-Vol
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services 01
Re: **Phoenix Net Loft - Phase One Public Consultation Results, Guiding Principles and Next Steps**

Staff Recommendation

That the report titled “Phoenix Net Loft - Phase One Public Consultation Results, Guiding Principles, and Next Steps,” dated October 12, 2021, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services, be endorsed to guide the next phase of planning for the Phoenix Net Loft.

Marie Fenwick
 Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services
 (604-276-4288)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO:	CONCURRENCE	CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER
Facility Services & Project Development Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY GAO

Staff Report

Origin

At the regular Council meeting on February 24, 2020, Council endorsed the following resolution:

- (1) That the Capital Program budget be amended from the previously approved \$11.5M to \$19.44M for the Phoenix Net Loft Preservation project for Option C – Museum-style Interpretive Centre use for the Phoenix Net Loft preservation project;*
- (2) That the difference of the \$11.5M and the Proposed \$19.44M (\$7.94M) to be used for the Phoenix Net Loft preservation project be withdrawn from the Capital Building and Infrastructure Reserve Fund; and*
- (3) That the Consolidated 5 Year Financial Plan (2020-2024) be amended accordingly.*

At the regular Council meeting on June 22, 2020, Council endorsed the following resolution:

- 1) That staff be authorized to proceed with Phase One of the Phoenix Net Loft Public Consultation Process as described in the staff report titled "Phoenix Net Loft Public Consultation Process", dated May 22, 2020, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services; and*
- 2) That staff add the Steveston Community Society, Richmond School District No. 38, the Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee, the Richmond Centre for Disability, youth groups, and the Musqueam First Nation to the primary list of stakeholders in the consultation process.*

The purpose of this report is to:

- 1) Report back to Council on the findings of phase one of the public consultation process; and*
- 2) Seek Council endorsement of the proposed Guiding Principles to advance the program options.*

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #3 One Community Together:

Vibrant and diverse arts and cultural activities and opportunities for community engagement and connection.

3.2 Enhance arts and cultural programs and activities.

3.4 Celebrate Richmond's unique and diverse history and heritage.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #4 An Active and Thriving Richmond:

An active and thriving community characterized by diverse social and wellness programs, services and spaces that foster health and well-being for all.

4.2 Ensure infrastructure meets changing community needs, current trends and best practices.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #6 Strategic and Well-Planned Growth:

Leadership in effective and sustainable growth that supports Richmond's physical and social needs.

6.4 Recognize Richmond's history and heritage through preservation, protection and interpretation.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 Strategy #8 An Engaged and Informed Community:

Ensure that the citizenry of Richmond is well-informed and engaged about City business and decision-making.

8.1 Increased opportunities for public engagement.

Analysis

Background

History of Building

Located adjacent to the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site, the Phoenix Net Loft was constructed in 1943 as a facility to dry, mend and store fishing nets. It is part of a collection of historic buildings on the waterfront, constructed to service the fishing and boat building industry in Steveston. The Phoenix Net Loft originally supported the Phoenix Cannery's operation and served as a net storage and repair facility until the early 2000's when the City acquired the building from BC Packers as part of the redevelopment of their land in Steveston.

It is an identified heritage building and its character defining elements include:

- association with the canning and fishing industry in Steveston;
- location on the riverfront adjacent to the Britannia Shipyards buildings;
- scale, massing, and heavy timber construction; and
- details of its construction including board and batten siding, unique gabled roof design and piling foundation.

On February 24, 2020, Council approved \$19.44 million for deconstruction, select salvage and reconstruction of a shell building. In the past year, the building was deconstructed with a portion of the original building materials salvaged and stored for reuse. Building reconstruction remains on hold until Council has endorsed a program and provided any additional budget necessary to implement the selected program. The current construction climate has significant volatility that could lead to increased reconstruction costs.

Provincial Water Lot Lease

The Phoenix Net Loft is located within a lot that the City leases from the Province. This water lot lease went into effect January 1, 2017 and expires in 30 years. The terms of this lease dictate the current allowable activities at this site. The City is required to have the consent of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development (FLNRORD) before undertaking any activities outside the current lease agreement and Management Plan and this will need to be considered in planning.

Phase One Public Consultation

Part of the standard City approach to program planning for a public facility is an extensive public consultation process to ensure the building program meets the current and future needs of the community. As articulated in the report to Council dated December 13, 2019, the purposes of a public consultation process are:

- To ensure the building design and programming meet the current and future needs of the general public and stakeholder groups;
- To ensure the development process for the facility is transparent and provides opportunity for input into decision making where appropriate; and
- To ensure the public is informed, engaged, and excited about the benefits to the community of the facility.

Council endorsed the recommendations in the staff report titled “Phoenix Net Loft Public Consultation Process”, dated May 22, 2020, from the Director, Arts, Culture and Heritage Services for a two-phase public consultation process.

Phase One, which is now complete, included consultation with key stakeholders to:

- determine target audiences for the facility;
- define key interpretive theme(s); and
- identify amenities and interpretive elements that would be required to support the interpretive themes and attract target audiences.

Consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken between December 2020 and March 2021. Consultation included a variety of engagement methods to better understand the needs, wants and opportunities identified by the community. A list of the 15 stakeholder groups engaged through this process is found in Attachment 1.

Phase One Consultation included:

- 1) Workshops with the following groups:
 - Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site Society board members;
 - Richmond Museum Society board members;
 - A Heritage Focus Group including representatives from the Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society, Tourism Richmond, and the Steveston Historical Society; and
 - Richmond Museum and Heritage Services youth volunteers and Heritage Fair Alumni.

- 2) Interviews with 11 individual community members representing people in different stages of life with involvement in the fishing industry, business community, education system, and heritage sector. All interviewees are active in the community, share an interest in heritage, and a love of Steveston. Some respondents have deep multigenerational roots in Steveston and most have lived in Richmond for many years. The interviews reflect diverse cultural backgrounds including people of Japanese, Chinese, European, and other descents.

- 3) A survey was circulated to 14 Richmond organizations for distribution to their membership and /or stakeholders. 65 responses were received from individuals who identified as follows:
 - 16 historical or heritage stakeholders;
 - 30 community volunteers;
 - 10 educators;
 - 11 local business persons;
 - nine tourism sector stakeholders; and
 - 21 others ranging from Steveston residents to business persons to board members of local non-profits.

- 4) Staff had informal discussions with a Musqueam representative who indicated interest in the future use of the Phoenix Net Loft. Of particular interest was the potential connection of this project to the current work they are undertaking with the Fraser River Discover Centre in New Westminster to create a network of interpretive sites related to the Fraser River.

Phase One Consultation Results

The tables below outline the stakeholder recommendations that emerged through the engagement process detailed above.

Topic	Stakeholder Recommendations
Value	demonstrate good value for taxpayers and community generate income to sustain operations
Audience	Richmond residents and visitors all ages, particularly families and youth
Interpretive Approach	a fun, dynamic environment highly interactive, hands-on experiences curriculum-based school programming and teacher training year-round arts opportunities serve as a hub to explore the local environment and heritage sites
Interpretative Topic	local and global environmental issues First Nations cultural heritage the fisheries, particularly the experience of being a fisher culturally diverse communities, but do not repeat what has been done at other sites in Steveston

Amenities	offer food services and/or shopping opportunities provide an outlet for local and regional products provide additional boat moorage and support for recreational boaters
Space and Place	adaptively reconstruct building for intended use design for year-round use and seasonal flexibility celebrate the waterfront location contribute to Steveston's sense of place be part of, or relate to, the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site

The stakeholder consultation process also identified several considerations that cannot be fully addressed by the Phoenix Net Loft project but are critical to the project's long-term success.

Topic	Stakeholder Recommendations
Connectivity and Orientation	develop connections between the heritage sites improve wayfinding and interpretation along the waterfront provide a welcome and orientation to Britannia Shipyards
Heritage Strategic Planning	undertake a strategic plan for all City museums and heritage sites to help residents understand how specific projects fit into the entire Richmond picture
Parking and Transportation	address the actual and perceived parking situation in Steveston and at Britannia Shipyards improve public transportation to Steveston and Britannia Shipyards improve transportation from one end of Steveston to the other

The concepts for interpretive and other uses that were identified by the stakeholders included a Fraser River and estuary interpretive centre; a maritime and fishing interpretive centre; a First Nations interpretive centre; public market for local and regional products; and a space for local artists and artisans. Different interpretive and program options and typologies will have different capital and operating impacts that will be further explored in the next phase of planning. Attachment 2 provides a high-level understanding of the operating costs and ratio of earned revenue to subsidy associated with different types of spaces.

While no single interpretive theme or program use emerged strongly through the stakeholder consultation, there was consensus that this is not a suitable location for the new Richmond Museum. Although the location has some alignment with the criteria established for the Richmond Museum in the *Richmond Museum Models Study* completed in 2018 (ie: near other cultural amenities), it is not aligned with the vision of the Richmond Museum being in a central location, well connected to transportation networks. Additionally, the environmental conditions created by the location over the water will create challenges to the display of environmentally sensitive artefacts, and the ability to meet the environmental standards often required to display borrowed artefacts and host travelling exhibitions.

The feedback received during Phase One engagement was mixed. Interpretive centre options preferred by the stakeholders consulted are high-impact options that require further planning to determine the feasibility of the Phoenix location. Alternatively, community members identified program options, which, although not strictly interpretive in nature, suit the location and address different community needs.

During the consultation process, some stakeholders expressed concerns about the value of this project relative to the investment. The majority of stakeholders felt strongly that any use of the space should bring significant value back to the community and enhance Richmond's profile. Stakeholders expressed that value to the community could be found through direct and indirect economic benefits and/or the offer of exciting new services for community members.

In consideration of the feedback received, staff are seeking Council-endorsement of guiding principles and recommending additional work be undertaken prior to proceeding with the next phase of public consultation.

Proposed Guiding Principles for the Phoenix Net Loft Project

The following guiding principles were identified based on the stakeholder input described above.

The program offered at the Phoenix Net Loft should:

- serve Richmond residents and visitors equally;
- appeal to all ages;
- not duplicate what is offered at other sites in Richmond;
- provide highly interactive and dynamic experiences;
- contribute to Steveston's sense of place;
- complement the experience offered at the Britannia Shipyards National Historic Site; and
- provide revenue-generating opportunities to sustain on-going operations, such as food service or retail.

The reconstruction of the Phoenix Net Loft should:

- retain the character defining elements of the original building;
- be adaptive to meet the needs of the new program;
- support year-round use; and
- celebrate its waterfront location.

With Council endorsement, these guiding principles will help define the potential options for future use.

Next Steps

Should Council endorse the proposed Phoenix Net Loft Guiding Principles to guide future work on the project, staff propose the following next steps:

1. Conduct further analysis on site limitations, including parking and transportation, and market opportunities for a cultural facility;
2. Consult with FLNROD to understand the potential water lot lease impacts of any proposed changes to current use (ie: food service and/or retail); and
3. Report back with proposed program options, order of magnitude capital costing and operating budget impact and seek further Council direction.

This work can be done within the existing budget.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

Phase One of public consultation to identify a program for the Phoenix Net Loft is complete with 15 stakeholder groups participating. Staff are seeking endorsement of guiding principles identified thru the Phase One consultation process. Based on these principles and with additional analysis, staff will report back to Council with proposed program options, order of magnitude capital costing and operating budget impact.



Rebecca Clarke
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- Att. 1: List of stakeholders engaged in Phase One
- 2: Financial Considerations

List of stakeholders engaged in Phase One

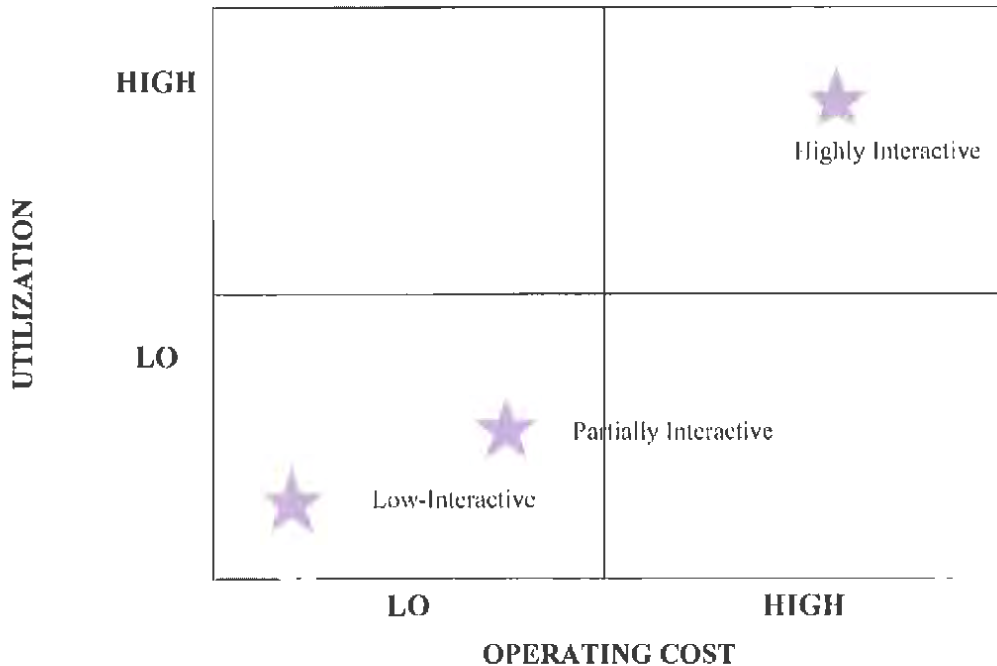
1. Britannia Shipyard National Historic Site Society
2. Steveston Historical Society
3. Richmond Museum Society
4. Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society
5. Steveston Merchants Association
6. Richmond Intercultural Advisory Committee
7. Richmond Heritage Commission
8. Richmond Seniors Advisory Committee
9. Steveston Community Society
10. London Heritage Farm Society
11. Tourism Richmond stakeholders
12. Musqueam
13. School District No. 38 teachers
14. Richmond Centre for Disability
15. Richmond youth
16. Individual heritage site volunteers and staff

Financial Considerations

Utilization and Operating Cost

The following chart looks at the utilization of various types of venues versus operating cost. Aquariums and highly interactive science centers are among the highest utilized types of museums. They tend to attract something in the range of five times the utilization of similar-sized passive, history-based museums.

In terms of utilization, an arts space or public market would likely fall somewhere between a highly interactive venue and a partially interactive venue. At this point in planning, we have not developed enough data to advise on the relative operating cost for these venues.



Support to Earned Income Ratio

Each of these four “first look” possibilities has different operating income and cost implications. We can look at the possible ratio of operating earned income to support that may expected for each of the potential venues.

Support includes all income from grants, donations, City of Richmond subsidies, endowment draw and other contributed income.

Earned Income is the result of all income from business activities including sales, admissions, memberships, and rents.

The suggested ranges are experienced based views, not based upon business modelling at this early stage of planning.

Market



Artist Space



Estuarium or Highly Interactive Maritime Activity Centre



Low Interactivity Interpretive Centre



Information provided by Kei Space Consulting Group.