



**To:** Planning Committee

**Date:** November 14, 2011

**From:** Cathryn Volkering Carlile  
General Manager - Community Services

**File:**

**Re:** **Operator Selection for the Hamilton Child Care Facility**

**Staff Recommendation**

That the Society of Richmond Children's Centres be endorsed as the operator of the City-owned child care facility to be constructed, pending rezoning, at 23591 Westminster Highway.

Cathryn Volkering Carlile  
General Manager - Community Services

FOR ORIGINATING DEPARTMENT USE ONLY					
<b>ROUTED TO:</b>		<b>CONCURRENCE</b>		<b>CONCURRENCE OF GENERAL MANAGER</b>	
Project Development		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
Financial Services/Purchasing		Y <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N <input type="checkbox"/>			
<b>REVIEWED BY TAG</b>		YES	NO	<b>REVIEWED BY CAO</b>	
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
				<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

## Staff Report

### Origin

As part of a rezoning agreement with TransLink to develop a Bus Operations and Maintenance Facility at Westminster Highway and Boundary Road, the City negotiated the transfer of 2.43 acres plus a monetary contribution of approximately \$1,770,000 for community amenities, and an additional \$50,000 for trail development.

In June 2010 Council endorsed the use of these lands and funds for the establishment of a City-owned child care facility on the understanding that, prior to opening the facility, traffic safety concerns will be addressed as outlined in the recommendations. A rezoning report to Council to ensure an appropriate land use designation to accommodate the facility is anticipated in early 2012. This report will include information regarding traffic safety improvements.

### Findings Of Fact

To ensure that the City-owned facility is designed to optimize its use and suitability for the intended age groups and programs, staff sought to secure an operator for the centre prior to facility design. Involving the operator in design helps to ensure that the layout is well suited for its purpose. As an architect for the project has been engaged by Project Development staff, the provider selection process was initiated so that design may proceed.

On June 30, 2011, a Request for Expressions of Interest (RFEOI) was published on BC Bid and the City website. It was also sent to Child Care Licensing (Vancouver Coastal Health) and the Richmond Child Care Resource and Referral Centre for distribution to their networks. A closing date of September 16, 2011 provided eleven weeks for submission preparation. One Expression of Interest (EOI), submitted by the Society of Richmond Children's Centres (SRCC), was received by the closing date. The complete submission is on file with the City's Purchasing Department.

A panel consisting of City staff plus a representative of the Child Care Development Advisory Committee and the Hamilton Community Association participated in the selection process. The process involved completing an evaluation matrix of the submission and a follow-up interview with the SRCC Executive Director. The proponents' understanding of the submission requirements, community context, operating vision, experience, proposed programming and human resource/financial capacity were assessed.

### Analysis

#### 1. RFEOI Response

The limited response to the RFEOI, whereby only one submission was received, may reflect a number of factors. Child care operators face a number of administrative challenges, including attracting and retaining staff; remaining financially viable with the introduction of full school-day kindergarten; and offering care to priority age groups (infant/toddler and/or school age care) while maintaining financial viability.

Another set of limitations pertain to the capacity of child care operators to meet the RFEOI requirements. Although eleven weeks were provided to complete the EOI, many child care

providers are challenged to prepare submissions due to limited staff time and experience with such processes. To provide the type and extent of information required by the RFEOI, experience in starting up and operating child care facilities is needed, as well as sufficient time and expertise to provide the required information and documentation. The CCDAC representative indicated that, while other providers may have considered preparing submissions, requirements were such that potential applicants were discouraged.

While challenging, staff consider that the RFEOI requirements realistically reflect the skills and experience required to successfully plan, open and operate the new centre. To identify ways of increasing child care provider capacity, CCDAC will be asked to consider roles that various stakeholders might play to enhance providers' capacity to participate in future RFEOIs.

## 2. SRCC Submission

Based on a submission review and interview results, the selection panel unanimously recommended the SRCC as the child care provider for the Hamilton facility, based on their philosophy, programming, operational practices, experience in planning and opening new facilities, and history of providing quality care in Richmond. However, the panel acknowledged that logistical challenges, as identified by the SRCC and outlined below, must be addressed for successful implementation.

The SRCC identified constraints related to their ability to open two centres in anything less than a six-month window, in terms of both human resource and financial capacity. As the SRCC will be operating the City-owned facility at the Oris "Remy" development, estimated to open in January 2013, their first commitment is to successfully open that facility.

Following rezoning approval of the community amenity land, site preparation will commence. A pre-load period of at least six months is anticipated. As the facility will be modular, construction of the building may occur simultaneously with site pre-loading, resulting in a time saving of several months. If no unforeseen delays occur, the facility would likely be ready to open in January 2013, coinciding with the Remy facility opening. Rather than delaying the schedule, staff propose that facility construction proceed, following rezoning approval, to avoid rising construction costs. As a September opening is preferred by the operator to ensure full enrolment, staff propose that the facility opening be adjusted accordingly. This opening date reflects the timeframe anticipated in the RFEOI.

## 3. Options

(1) Select the SRCC as the operator of the Hamilton Child Care Facility (Recommended).

Pros:

The SRCC:

- was the sole responder to the RFEOI and met the requirements,
- is experienced in facility planning and opening new centres,
- has a well-established reputation for providing quality care,
- is committed to providing infant/toddler and/or school age care in the Hamilton facility,
- was unanimously endorsed by the selection panel.

Cons:

- No other child care providers submitted EOIs.
- SRCC is unable to open two new centres in less than six months due to human resource and financial constraints, and their first commitment is to open the Remy facility.
- The Hamilton facility opening will be delayed by several months.

(2) Re-issue the RFEOI to see if submissions from other child care providers might be received.

Pros:

- Child care providers would be given another opportunity to prepare submissions.
- Opening two new centres simultaneously is unlikely to be a concern for other providers.
- It is unlikely that the opening schedule would need to be amended to accommodate a prior commitment (e.g., to the Remy facility).

Cons:

- There is no assurance that additional submissions would be received.
- The scope of work and submission requirements identified in the current RFEOI would have to be significantly changed, before re-issuing the RFEOI, which is not recommended.
- Facility design would be delayed.
- As a September opening is optimal for any child care provider, and the facility will not be ready in September 2012, opening may be postponed until September 2013 regardless of the provider selected.

As re-issuing the RFEOI would not benefit the City nor the Hamilton community in a substantive way, and the SRCC has a history of providing quality, affordable, accessible care, staff recommend that the SRCC be selected as the operator of this facility.

If the staff recommendation is endorsed, Real Estate Services will bring forward a report detailing property lease terms at a future date.

### **Financial Impact**

There is no financial impact at this time.

### **Conclusion**

Staff recommend that Council endorse the selection of the SRCC as the operator of the Hamilton child care facility.



Lesley Sherlock  
Social Planner  
(604-276-4220)  
LS:ls