



To Public Hearing
Date: <u>Nov 19 2012</u>
Item # <u>3</u>
Re: <u>BYLW 9000</u>

Schedule 2 to the minutes of the
Regular Council Meeting for Public
Hearings held on Monday, November
19, 2012

Office of the Chief Operating Officer
Richmond
7000 Westminster Highway
Richmond, BC V6X 1A2
(604) 244-5537

November 05, 2012

Mayor and Council
City of Richmond
6911 No. 3 Road
Richmond, BC V6Y 2C1
mayorandcouncillors@richmond.ca



Dear Mayor Brodie and Council:

Re: 2041 Official Community Plan – City of Richmond

On behalf of the Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH), we are pleased to have this opportunity to provide comment and response to the 2041 Official Community Plan (2014 OCP) that Council gave first reading on September 24 2012.

Vancouver Coastal Health appreciates the opportunities over the past two and half years to work with City staff on the 2041 OCP. In our letter of December 2009 (attached) to Mr. Terry Crowe, we identified a number of areas in the OCP that are of great interest to VCH. We are pleased with the directions taken in the 2014 OCP on many of these areas of common interest. In particular we commend the document in recognizing the vital links between the health and wellness of residents and the natural and built environments of the community. We do have a number of comments for Council's consideration in areas where the 2041 OCP can be strengthened or where attention is required when implementing the OCP. Our comments are not exhaustive. They do nevertheless point to the need and the benefit for continued dialogue between the Health Authority and the City.

Section 3.0 Connected Neighbourhoods With Special Places

We support the principles underlying this section. One very positive outcome of past planning decisions in Richmond is the existence of neighbourhoods with mixed income levels. Mixed neighbourhoods have contributed to the health and wellbeing of Richmond residents. Diversity matters, not only for a sustainable ecological system and environment, but also for a sustainable built environment and community. A healthy city needs diversity in housing type, in transportation modes and in public spaces. Section

3.0 has the potential to build on this past success. There are challenges however in achieving the vision of connected and diverse neighbourhoods. Some examples:

- **Density and Neighbourhood Shopping Centres:** To achieve the benefit of mixed land use around neighbourhood shopping centres will require multiple elements to come together in synergy. Density without associated meaningful transit, active transport options, without the right mix of institutional / commercial / retail use, without sufficient open space, for example, could actually result in fewer options for healthy living.

Vancouver Coastal Health respectfully requests active participation with City staff in any future development or update of area and sub-area plans, in order to assist in assessing the health and wellness impacts of these plans. See also Section 13.2 Objective 1 in the 2041 OCP. Participation of the Health Authority is supported and consistent with section 879(2)(vi) of the Local Government Act.

- **Accessible Housing:** Vancouver Coastal Health strongly supports the 2041 OCP policy directions to enhance residents' capacity to age in place. Our staff, through their day to day interactions with elderly residents and others with accessibility challenges, has extensive hands-on experience on the building designs that improve accessibility as well as designs that are barriers to independence.

Vancouver Coastal Health will be pleased to work with City staff to further refine the policies described in Section 3.4.

- **Conflicts from mixed land use:** Section 3.6.3 correctly identifies noise management as an increasingly important issue as the City densifies, with increasing interfaces between different land uses as well as increasing areas of mixed use. While the development permit application process, public notifications, noise bylaws, buffers, and building envelope design will all help in minimizing the impact of unwanted noise, the fundamental issue on an ongoing basis is human relationships as neighbours. This would also hold true for other unwanted intrusions such as light. Land use conflicts will no doubt emerge in spite of every good intention to prevent such. Currently VCH enforces City noise by-laws on behalf of the City. Enforcing noise by-law compliance can often be protracted and unsatisfactory to all parties involved. The City may wish to consider establishing policies on conflict resolution and mediation expectations between property owners / users as a complement to existing regulations and by-laws.
- **With regard to managing aircraft noise sensitive development, Vancouver Coastal Health respectfully requests active participation with City staff to assess the health and wellness impacts of aircraft noise sensitive land uses, whenever such uses are being considered pursuant to the City of Richmond Aircraft Noise Sensitive Development Policies, Table and Map.**

Section 6.0 Resilient Economy

- Health care access: We assume *Health Care* to be one of the Population Services under Objective 5 of this section. While we are pleased to see medical centres identified as one of the institutional uses that need to be incorporated into planned areas of dense population and employment, we are disappointed that the future land use requirements of large health care facilities that serve the entire community, such as the Richmond Hospital, are not identified in the OCP. Indeed the ideal mix and locations for health care as the population grows and ages are evolving.

Section 881 of the Local Government Act legally requires the local government to consult on a yearly basis with the school district on the anticipated needs for school facilities and support services. While the Local Government Act does not include a similar requirement with respect to health care facilities, we respectfully request that, given the anticipated size of population growth for the next 30 years and the aging health care infrastructure in Richmond, Council considers engaging in the same annual dialogue with Vancouver Coastal Health regarding health care facility needs. In this way, we can apprise and better include the City in ongoing health care facility planning processes.

Section 7 Agriculture and Food

- Equitable access to food: While this section identifies the need to strengthen the food system beyond production, the policy intent with respect to equitable distribution and access to healthy foods across the whole municipality requires more clarity and definition. For example, Section 7.2 states an intent to ensure that neighbourhoods have grocery stores within walking or cycling distance (page 7-8), but there is no clear accompanying policy to implement this intention. The grocery store is the major access point for food for most residents including the vulnerable populations. The City is encouraged to enhance the policy links between equitable food access and the development of connected neighbourhoods (Section 3). Ensuring healthy food access for the vulnerable populations, however, requires a multi-faceted approach. VCH is therefore also supportive of the ongoing food security work in Richmond such as community kitchens, community gardens, farmers markets, and the promotion of food security awareness in general.

Vancouver Coastal Health supports the intention in the OCP 2014 to develop a Richmond Food Strategy, and looks forward to participating in the development process.

Section 8 Mobility and Access

- Walking to school: How we go to work, to school, to shop for groceries, have an important influence on our level of physical activity and thence health and wellness. The recent *Healthy Richmond Survey* conducted by VCH with the assistance of City staff found that Richmond residents are more likely to achieve the recommended daily physical activity level if they take the transit, walk, or bike to work as opposed to commuting by private automobile. We are pleased to see the stated policies in this section include the provision of direct walking routes to schools, and the reduction of school related vehicle trips and congestion. In terms of healthy physical environments for schools, reducing vehicular traffic around schools and increasing walking or cycling to school have multiple benefits.

Vancouver Coastal Health would be pleased to work with the City and the Richmond School District in making walking to school the norm.

- Walking and the aging population: In terms of promoting walking, the perspectives through the lens of the aging population have to be considered, in particular on issues such as pedestrian crossing placement, lighting and timing.
- Walkability Index: The 2014 OCP includes the transportation mode share target for Richmond for 2014. Another measurement that is more closely linked to land use decisions is the Walkability Index. This index can be a tool for performance monitoring as well as public education. The City may wish to consider collaborating with researchers in using the Walkability Index for tracking progress towards achieving the mode share targets.

Section 12 Sustainable Infrastructure and Resources

- Water Supply and Distribution: The City currently relies on one single water main from the Metro Vancouver water system to supply the vast majority of the Richmond water users. A second Metro Vancouver water main supplies Hamilton and parts of East Richmond separately. There is currently no substantial east – west linkage of the two systems. Given the population growth, the expected growth of the airport, and the geological vulnerability of the city, Vancouver Coastal Health believes that building redundancy in the water supply to the city should be stated as a priority for Section 12.3.
- Energy: Vancouver Coastal Health supports the principles of energy reduction and alternative energy options that can reduce GHG emission. As a major energy user, VCH is interested in the potential to partner with the City on district energy development.

Section 13 Implementation Strategy

- o Phasing and Priorities – Partnership with senior government, stakeholders, and the community: Vancouver Coastal Health is prepared and very interested in being a partner with the City to work on areas in the 2014 OCP that are of mutual concern, in setting priorities as well as developing joint actions. Our request to be included in the development of area and sub-area plans has already been made above. Furthermore, to recognize the links in the 2014 OCP to resident health and wellness, we respectfully recommend that Section 13.4, Objective 1, Policies (b) be amended to include mention of Vancouver Coastal Health as one of the agencies the City will "continue to co-operate with in their planning".

In summary, Vancouver Coastal Health is pleased to have had the opportunity to contribute to the development of the 2041 OCP. We believe the document is a thoughtful high level blue print for the future of Richmond. We note the many places where the interests of VCH intersect with that of the City, particularly in the areas of health and wellness. We also recognize that the work has just begun in achieving the 2041 OCP vision of a Sustainable Richmond. Implementing the 2041 OCP thus provides an opportunity for taking the existing partnerships and collaborations between the City and Vancouver Coastal Health to higher levels. The Richmond Community Wellness Strategy is an example of a collaboration that is facilitating synergy in program development between VCH and the City. We can do more. One way is to transform the many current ad hoc referral and consultation processes into a formal partnership agreement. A more structured approach to our collaboration will enhance the timeliness, the consistency, as well as the quality of the dialogue between the City and VCH. We would be pleased to explore this further. While directly and indirectly both the Public Health Act and the Local Government Act require the health authority and the local government to work together, at the end of the day, it is simply the right thing to do for the benefit of the people we serve. We thank you for this opportunity to provide comments to the 2041 Official Community Plan.

Respectfully



Dr. James Lu
Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health – Richmond



Mike Nader
Chief Operating Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health – Richmond

att.

cc: David Weber, Director, City Clerk's Office, City of Richmond
Terry Crowe, Manager, Policy Planning, City of Richmond

December 14, 2009

Terry Crowe
Manager, Policy Planning Division
Richmond City Hall
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Richmond BC V6Y 2C1

Dear Mr. Crowe:

Vancouver Coastal Health is very interested in participating in the updating of the Official Community Plan (OCP) for the City of Richmond. The purpose of this letter is to provide some high level comments on the OCP, and also, to convey to City Staff and Council our desire and readiness to be an active partner throughout the City's process.

In the past 10 years Richmond has experienced very significant population growth, demographic shift, cultural diversification, and urbanization. It would be important for the OCP 2041 to provide a constant vision and a robust framework for our community to continue to grow and to be the most appealing, livable and well-managed community in Canada.

General Feedback on the OCP for City Staff and Council Consideration

Vancouver Coastal Health has been (and continues to be) a partner to the City on a number of initiatives over the past decade, including the Richmond Substance Abuse Task Force, the Richmond Poverty Response Task Force, the Parks, Recreation and Culture Services Master Plan, and the soon to be completed Richmond Community Wellness Strategy. These are initiatives that should inform the OCP update.

As well, there is increasing evidence that a "healthy built environment" is critical to achieving a sustainable community. The characteristics of our human-constructed physical environment – the built environment – have significant effects on population health. This is especially important as Richmond grows. We respectfully submit that the following areas, where population health and the built environment intersect, require consideration as the OCP is updated:

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- Physical activity
- Access to healthy foods
- Ambient air quality and noise
- Injury and safety
- Housing and homelessness
- Sense of belonging and well-being
- Recreation choices and access
- Transportation choices
- Social and health services access
- Public infrastructure
- Child and age friendliness

We are pleased to note that many of these topic areas have been identified in the documents and displays produced for the first round of public consultation. The challenge for Council and City staff would be to achieve the best possible balance between competing priorities. As an example, we draw on the need to pay attention to the sense of belonging among Richmond residents. Research has shown that people who have a strong sense of belonging are healthier and are more engaged in their community. As the City contemplates focusing future residential and business development / densification along the major transit corridors, and in the city centre, there is a need to consider how such a strategy might sustain or change the nature of existing neighborhoods and what impacts there may be to residents' sense of belonging across the different neighborhoods.

Request to be an Active Partner Throughout the Process

We respectfully ask City Staff and Council to consider the formal inclusion of a Vancouver Coastal Health representative in the OCP update process, for the purpose of working directly with City staff throughout the process. Although not specifically referred to as such, the OCP is the type of public health planning envisaged in section 3 of the new BC Public Health Act. Areas where Vancouver Coastal Health can add value to the OCP update process include:

1. **Population health and health service data and related interpretive expertise.** Vancouver Coastal Health is prepared to share with the City information we have and use to evaluate population health and health service needs. In particular, Vancouver Coastal Health recognizes that as Richmond grows, the existing health care infrastructure will need to be renewed and expanded. Our long range acute care facility planning can benefit from mutual understanding of each other's needs and priorities.

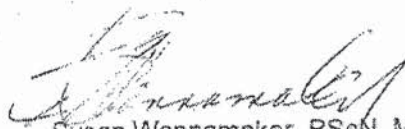
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2. **Assistance in public engagement activities.** Through the office of our Medical Health Officer, Vancouver Coastal Health can assist City staff in providing public presentations to increase community awareness on the vital links between health and wellness and the built environment.
3. **Assistance to City staff in translating population health and wellness pre-requisites into achievable objectives within the OCP.** VCH can work in partnership with the City towards a healthy and sustainable Richmond.

In summary, the OCP update could have a significant impact on population health and wellness, as well as health services infrastructure. Vancouver Coastal Health respectfully submits that greater inclusion of the Health Authority, a key stakeholder in the OCP update process, can bring significant benefits to the City, to Vancouver Coastal Health, and, most importantly, to the residents of Richmond. The OCP update is an excellent opportunity to further strengthen the partnership between the City of Richmond and Vancouver Coastal Health.

Yours truly,


James LU, MD
Medical Health Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health – Richmond


Susan Wannamaker, BScN, MHA
Chief Operating Officer
Vancouver Coastal Health - Richmond

CC: Mayor and Council Members, City of Richmond