

## **Summary Britannia Community Centre Facilities Master Plan**

**By Levi Higgs**

In 2007 a Facilities Master Plan process was completed by the Britannia Community Services Society to demonstrate the opportunities that a renewal of the Britannia Community Centre facilities could provide, and to complete a detailed and well founded basis for an application to the City of Vancouver for future funding. It was hoped that this Master Plan would help the Britannia Community Services Society guide the process of the Britannia Centre renewal to meet the changing needs and wants of the surrounding community.

Extensive consultation was conducted with program staff, Britannia committees, and Britannia Board members, to ensure that the current Site challenges were well understood and the direction of the Facilities Master Plan (Master Plan) was in line with community expectations. In addition, existing Site information was reviewed to help understand the current facility conditions at that time. The Master Plan followed a Program Needs Analysis that was conducted in 2005.

To help shape the overall vision of the Master Plan, various people, movement, and site challenges were identified during the initial stages of the process. A key challenge that was identified early on was the fact that Britannia lacks sufficient programmable space (space that can serve multi program functions) and has no rental space to offer. In comparison to the other 22 Vancouver community centres, the report indicated that Britannia was ranked as the fourth lowest in terms of programmable space, and was one of only two community centres that did not have any community rental spaces.

In general, it was determined that Britannia should look increase the program space for a number of heavily used programs, and also create new spaces to address the needs of the community. The proposed changes amounted to approximately 28,000ft<sup>2</sup> in additional programmable and/or rental space, bringing Britannia more in line with other Vancouver community centres.

Through this planning process two key improvement areas were identified for the site, improve the public activity nodes and improve overall look and feel of Centre buildings. The Master Plan also examined opportunities for the Britannia Community Services Society to work with the Vancouver School Board and use surplus space to allow for the expansion of Britannia program space, as well as improving outdoor areas of the entire Site. In addition, the Master Plan mentioned that incorporating improved health and wellness services and homeless support services should be considered during any renewal process.

The existing condition of the facilities was reviewed through the completion of architectural, structural, mechanical, electrical, and building code compliance assessments. In general, assessments found that most buildings were in decent condition from an architectural, structural, mechanical, and electrical standpoint. It was also found that since many changes to the Vancouver building codes were brought in after the Britannia Centre was built, most buildings reviewed would need significant upgrades to their life safety systems (e.g. doorways, interior finish, sprinklers, etc) if extensive renovations were to be implemented. This would make cost effective renovations to the existing facilities difficult to justify as compared to simply fully re-building certain facilities.

The Master Plan outlined a development plan for each of the select Britannia Centre buildings. The proposed development plans included ideas such as; renew and expand the Info Centre to create more

of a central Britannia Community Centre focal point and to add programming space, incorporate the Senior's lounge in the Pool Complex, move the Teen Centre closer to the fitness facilities, expand the Fitness Centre, create greater separation between the Teen and Pre-Teen Centres, add a new arts facility, and expand the child care centre.

In addition to development plans for the select buildings, the Master Plan looked at improving the Britannia Centre's outdoor space as well. The Plan proposed increasing green space to improve the look and feel of pedestrian areas, and improvements to landscaping in strategic locations to enhance and create gathering places. The 2007 Facilities Master Plan offered a vision of how the Britannia Centre could be improved and enhanced, with improved facilities, additional programming space, enhanced outdoor areas, and added green space.

The full plan can be found in the Document Library at [britanniarenewal.org](http://britanniarenewal.org)