

Response to the Britannia Renewal Master Plan

July 10 2018



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge that we live, work and play on the unceded Coast Salish territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam), sk̓w̓x̓ wú7mesh (Squamish) and sel̓ íl wítulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations.

The voices, vision, and knowledge of Indigenous residents contributed a richness of possibilities for the whole community that could not have been realized without their participation. We are committed to respectfully consult and be guided by the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh nations on whose traditional territories Britannia rests, as well as by the diversity of Indigenous residents in our community who come from many nations to make their homes here.

The Britannia Board of Management would like to recognize the hard work, dedication and generosity that so many brought to the process to create this Master Plan. This is a unique, inspiring and sometimes bewildering site that has continually challenged us to innovate and problem-solve as we move forward, building on the site's current assets and opportunities as well as previous master planning work undertaken in 2005 and 2011. There is no doubt that everyone brought their best to the table in order to create a compelling vision for the future.

This process would not be possible without the work of Britannia volunteers. Volunteers have taken on roles as community hosts at our Renewal events, as translators helping to make our process more inclusive, and as backbone support making sure we are prepared to welcome the community for dialogue with shared meals and accessible spaces. Britannia committee members have also gone above and beyond- meeting (often), going on fact finding tours, reading numerous documents, working through issues, and providing insightful, well-considered opinions to our consultant team and Board. We must particularly acknowledge Britannia's Planning and Development Committee, who have worked tirelessly for decades to initiate and guide this process.

Of course there would be no Britannia without the community. Our thanks go to the thousands of residents who gave of their time to be at open houses, respond to surveys, listen to presentations,



Community members gather to discuss the Master Plan at a Britannia Renewal Open House.

inform themselves, share their expertise, and reach out to their neighbours. It would be remiss not to acknowledge the contributions of the seniors and Elders of our community, the members of BritPlan55+, and all those who came forward to advocate for the programs and communities at Britannia that mean so much to them. We have been inspired and educated by their dedication to this place. This neighbourhood represents the best of our city's aspirations for citizen engagement driving collective community benefit.

We would also like to acknowledge the work of our project partners. Our sincere appreciations to Jennifer, Ori, John, Colleen, and the rest of the consultant team for their outstanding professional abilities in addressing the complexity and uniqueness of this project and community. We thank Danica, Michelle, Matthew, Amanda, Spencer, and their colleagues at the City of Vancouver for their exceptional attention to this project, their willingness to make themselves available to the community for difficult conversations, and their ability to apply unconventional approaches to the work. We thank Jim Meschino of Vancouver School Board, Diana Guinn of the Vancouver Public Library, Donnie Rosa and Darren Peterson of the Vancouver Parks Board and their respective teams for the expertise, collaborative spirit, and collective efforts to parlay diverse perspectives into the Master Plan. It has been a pleasure working with all of you.



The Lax Kxeen Traditional Tsimshian Dance Group share a song at a Britannia Renewal event.



Britannia Renewal concept options posted for community review in the Info Centre "B-LAB".

The Britannia Community Services Centre Society continues to sit at the table with our site partners as the voice of the community. We acknowledge our responsibility as a Society to listen to our community and balance our diverse needs for collective benefit. We commit to respect the spirit of our guiding mission and principles, working towards transparency and accountability to the community through inclusive, participatory decision-making processes. We do not forget that Britannia's unique community-driven integrated service model is the 42 year legacy of dedicated and visionary community activism to build a better future for everyone in this neighbourhood.

Table of Contents

Foreword 5

Executive Summary 6

- Site organization 6
- Green Space 7
- View Corridors 7
- Phasing 7
- Non-Profit Office Hub 7
- Non-Market Housing 8
- Moving Forward 8

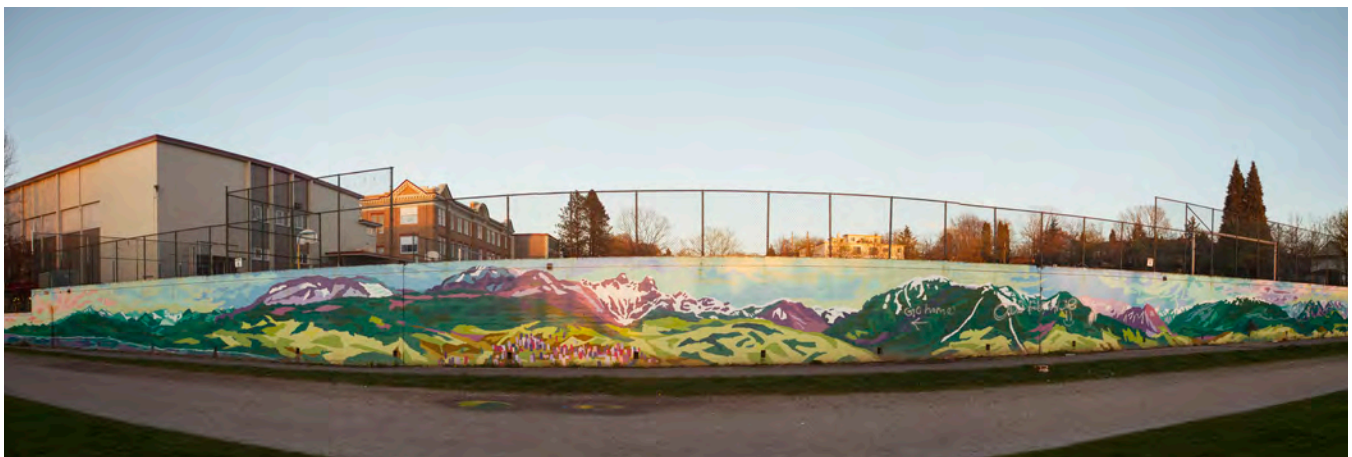
Project Process 9

- Community Engagement 9

Master Plan Overview 10

- Vision 10
- View Corridors 10
- Arts and Cultural Space and Food Hub 11
- Gymnastics Gym and Black Box Theatre 11
- Kickstand 12
- Twinning the Britannia Rink 12
- Site Organization 12
- Phasing 13
- Building Height and Massing 14
- Non-Market Housing 14
- Partnership, and Land Title Agreements 15

Onward 16



What is now Britannia sits on the unceded traditional territories of the Coast Salish peoples, and has been home to local Indigenous nations for thousands of years. Early settlers arrived in the late 1800s, and the Britannia site was established in 1910 with the construction of the secondary school. The surrounding Grandview Woodland community experienced several waves of immigration as first English settlers, then Japanese, Italian, and Chinese residents moved in. As the population grew the school went through a series of expansions, however the neighbourhood continued to lack crucial public amenities; traditionally a low income community, it suffered a chronic lack of investment from City Council. Finally, in the 60s and 70s, a groundswell of activism from local residents, students, and community groups led to the development of Britannia Community Services Centre as it stands now- a visionary model incorporating multiple facilities and services into one integrated, community-governed centre. The site has operated in a unique partnership by the Britannia Community Services Society, the Vancouver Parks Board, the Vancouver School Board, the Vancouver Public Library, and the City of Vancouver since 1976.



“Britannia Centre serves the community from cradle to grave”. A June 3rd, 1976 Vancouver Sun article reports on the grand opening of Britannia Centre.

Britannia continues to grow with our community as it is increasingly confronted with the challenges of urban development. Grandview Woodland has transitioned from an underserved low-income area to one of the most desirable communities in Vancouver due to the dedication of past and present community members who have worked to create a neighbourhood that is active, inclusive, creative, and diverse. As we have for over forty years, we will continue to provide a place for community to gather to develop collaborative solutions to community issues. We believe that Britannia is and will continue to provide an important place for education, recreation, social development, library services, arts, and culture for everyone in the neighbourhood. For decades, the Society has worked to secure a much-needed renewal of the site, and we see this process as the next steps towards a renewed Britannia that will continue to meet the needs and feed the aspirations of our community well into the future. As we move forward, we strive to continue in the tradition of community leadership, inclusivity, social consciousness, and innovation.

The Society is committed to accountability and transparency in this important decision making process. This report by the Britannia Community Services Centre Society is a response to the Britannia Renewal Master Plan which provides additional commentary, notes, and recommendations for moving forward. We hope this document will clarify our position to our community and partners as we continue the Britannia Renewal process. It has been a privilege to work with our site partners and community members on the development of the Master Plan. The depth of community involvement brought deep insight, creativity, and thoughtfulness to our shared process. We look forward to working together in the next phases as we refine our site plans and begin the rezoning process.

Executive Summary

As a Society, we believe that the Vision Report produced for the Master Plan generally reflected the current aspirations of the community. We support the recommendation from City of Vancouver staff* that Council approve the Master Plan and take steps to proceed with the next phase of the project in continued consultation with the community. We salute the work and insight from our consultant team, site partners, and community that has gone into developing creative solutions to overcome the physical challenges of the site and balance the diverse needs of the community. There was common agreement on the priorities of indoor and outdoor spaces which, considering the diversity of needs, reflected healthy alignment between the priorities of the community and our site partners. We anticipate the enrichment of our community with the new spaces outlined in the master plan with excitement.

While the Society is generally supports the Master Plan as developed, we also note opportunities for further development and discussion as the process moves forward. This Executive Summary will lay out some of our major areas of focus including:

- site organization and interconnection;
- maximizing greenspace;
- preserving view corridors;
- project phasing;
- non-profit office hub;
- non-market housing, and;
- the role of the Society moving forward.



The AML 55+ Centre is packed for a shared meal. Limited space creates further challenges for seniors with mobility issues.



Britannia gymnasts pose in Gym D. Shared gym space limits program capacity and means equipment must be moved for each practice.

Site organization

We recognize the organizational challenges of accommodating a multitude of demands on a limited and challenging site. Moving forward, we hope to continue to come up with innovative solutions to create more open space on site, maintain the neighbourly scale of the facilities, and create better connections between and within buildings. This will both help us to improve accessibility and create opportunities for incidental interaction among users of different facilities.

While we look forward to the new arts and culture facilities and flexible multi-purpose spaces that will be delivered, there has been disappointment expressed by the community at the lack of certain dedicated facilities, specifically a stand-alone gymnastics gym, an additional rink, a dedicated space for Kickstand Community Bikes, and a black box theatre. It is hoped that as the site design is further refined the inclusion of these spaces can be reviewed to determine the feasibility of their incorporation in the final facility design.

* City of Vancouver Administrative Report dated July 10, 2018, Subject: Britannia Renewal- Approval of Master Plan

Maximizing Green Space

The 11% increase in greenspace delivered in the Britannia Renewal Master Plan is an improvement but much lower than hoped for, especially considering the relative deficiency of greenspace per capita in Grandview Woodland. The Society also has concerns that the majority of greenspace is located on parcels of the site owned by the Vancouver School Board, especially given recent discussions around school closure. We have no doubt that the added greenspace will have a huge impact on the quality of experience on the renewed site and hope to be able to secure it for the enjoyment of the community well into the future.



Artist in Residence Giles Chin and a volunteer refresh paintings on a Britannia path. Colourful murals help brighten the largely concrete site.

View Corridors

The Society believes that the view corridors across the site are a feature of the site that have not been given appropriate consideration in this iteration of the Britannia Master Plan. Our community is called “Grandview” in recognition of the prominence and importance of the views in this neighbourhood. The anchoring of the mountains and two sisters to the north and the city and Salish Sea to the west speak to the unique geography and history of these lands. Moving forward, the Society requests that any opportunities be maximized to accentuate and preserve these significant regional features and improve the views for users of the site, neighbouring residents, and the broader community.

Phasing

One of the major concerns of the Society is the proposed phasing of the project. The Britannia Renewal plan seeks to both maximize program continuity and address the institutional constraints of our partners through the construction process, however the phasing proposed in the Master Plan delays the completion of much needed social development spaces and the Food Hub over a protracted building timeline. We wish to emphasize that these social purpose spaces are core to the operations and mandate of Britannia. Delay in the development of these spaces jeopardizes important partnership opportunities and, more importantly, impacts the day-to-day quality of life for many Britannia community members.

Non-Profit Office Hub

One of the new functions proposed for Britannia is providing shared office and programming space for local non-profits. While there is unanimous support for the principle and intention of the Non-Profit Office Hub, there are also questions and concerns regarding the operating model, funding, and size of the hub, which has been proposed to occupy two stories of one building. Further deliberations should be conducted in partnership with the community, taking into account the need to retain the character and neighbourly scale of the facilities and positively integrate the operations and governance of the non-profit office hub into the broader site.

Non-Market Housing

The provision of non-market housing is another function proposed for the Britannia site that requires careful and sensitive exploration with the community. There are some in our community who feel that the site should be exclusively retained for education, recreation, social, and cultural purposes to protect and maximize the public use of this community asset for future generations. That said, there are many in our community who are interested in exploring how Britannia might contribute to addressing local housing challenges, and feel that social housing would integrate well with the community facilities on site. While housing consultations were conducted as part of the Britannia Renewal process, the number of potential units (200-300) was not detailed until the latter part of the consultation, hence this issue was not fully canvassed. It is clear that there are many questions to be answered regarding the scale, operating model, and type of housing that is proposed before the community can definitively respond to the question of housing at Britannia. The position of the Society is that any potential development should be non-market, affordable housing that is designed in alignment with the directions in the Grandview Woodland Community Plan to protect neighbourhood character and view corridors.

Moving Forward

To date the planning and consultation experience has been mutually enriching and productive. This is an important opportunity for the community to renew the purpose and function of Britannia in collaboration with our partners. We eagerly anticipate the next steps of the Britannia Renewal as we work together on common goals to strengthen our community. The Britannia Community Services Society is excited to continue this collaborative approach as we move forward on key priorities:

- Developing solutions to increase open space, create better facility interconnection, and preserve the neighbourly scale of Britannia;
- Exploring feasibility for the inclusion of a dedicated gymnastics facility, an additional rink, a designated Kickstand space, and/or a black box theatre in the new facility;
- Developing strategies to improve site experience by maximizing greenspace and preserving view corridors;
- Encouraging new approaches for sustainable stewardship of public lands;
- Reviewing phasing to reflect community and Society priorities, and;
- Continuing dialogue with our partners and community on the proposed non-profit office hub and non-market housing.



Snapshots from the ɬəwq̓wələwən ct Carving Centre, Britannia pool, and community garden capture some of the variety of activities that are offered at the Centre.

The Society's role in the Britannia Renewal process is to engage and reflect the diversity of the community through the renewal process. Amplifying the voice of the community has been of utmost importance to us, and to date we have supported public participation in a variety of ways: sharing information, conducting outreach, hosting engagement events, facilitating discussions, taking public input, and supporting community decision-making through our public committee meetings. Since 2016, we have also hosted a Britannia Renewal website (www.britanniarenewal.org) where the community can access information, records, project updates, and get in touch.



Community members work together at a cedar weaving workshop.

The Society sits with our site partners at the working group table to help guide the process, discuss strategy, and resolve issues. We work to represent the aspirations of the community while collaborating with our partners to move the project forward and land on common goals and priorities. Through a great deal of discussion and deliberation, general consensus was arrived at for most key renewal areas. The Society has also worked to develop its own positions in key areas including housing and land use. Documents were developed in collaboration with community through the Planning and Development Committee and are available on our website.

In all our work, we have been guided by the vision and principles of the Society. We remain committed to ensuring that the Community Centre provides accessible services to everyone in the community through integrated public partnerships. This may mean an evolution of service provision as it has been practiced at Britannia. Our community has changed over time, and we know that there continues to be a high proportion of residents who are challenged to participate fully in the various opportunities that this city has to offer. The Society's goal is for all community members to have equitable access to the resources they need to help them succeed so that our community can flourish.

Community Engagement

Engaged and informed communities consistently develop innovative and effective solutions that address the real needs of their neighbourhood. Residents who can take ownership in projects from the beginning are more likely to support development over the long term, contribute to the resilience of a project across government and funding cycles, and become a part of success once complete. It is critical to seek and include the voices of all the diverse members of our community as we develop a plan for the future of Britannia. We recognize that traditionally underserved communities are the best equipped to identify opportunities to maximize inclusiveness and articulate their own needs and goals. Engaging these residents often requires approaches and strategies outside of typical consultation activities, however this plan is importantly enriched by their perspectives as our city is confronted with large and growing inequality and polarization*. Moving forward, we commit to continue to work sensitively and respectfully to create an inclusive process.

* see City of Vancouver, Social Indicators and Trends 2014: Making Ends Meet and Working Well Fact Sheet – April 2015

Master Plan Overview

The Master Plan provides important information to understand the potential of the Britannia site in terms of physical capacity, site experience, flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic, and integration into the surrounding neighbourhood. These functional and technical elements shape the possibilities for translating our community vision into a detailed site plan that reflects the unique character, needs, and goals of our neighbourhood. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with our partners as we review and refine the Master Plan. We will continue our work to bring the community's insight and aspirations to the forefront in project development. The Society's detailed responses to the Vision and Master Plan are outlined in the sections that follow.

Vision

The Society believes that the vision that has been developed to guide the Britannia Renewal generally reflects the values and priorities of the community, and incorporates innovative elements appropriate to the active, diverse, and socially conscious community that animates this site. We particularly appreciate the commitment to use the Britannia Renewal process to take action on Reconciliation under the leadership of the Indigenous community. The Society also strongly supports accessibility and inclusivity as key priorities for the Britannia Renewal; in and through this process we will continue to work to provide a safe space for everyone in the community to work, play, learn, share, and be heard.

View Corridors

The Society is concerned that the priority to preserve of view corridors across the site was not effectively highlighted in this iteration of the Vision, especially as compared to previous master planning efforts. The views to the North Shore mountains, two sisters, city skyline, and Salish Sea are distinctive and striking features of the *Grandview* Woodland neighbourhood which should be protected for the enjoyment of future community members. We are continually reminded of the remarkable geography and history of our surroundings by these views and their importance to site experience and placemaking should not be overlooked.



A striking and familiar view: the historic Britannia High School set against the North Shore Mountains.

There is great appreciation for the work that was done to balance the needs of the community in the Britannia Renewal Master Plan. Creating a Master Plan for the Britannia site is a challenge, and most recommendations were very well received. It is clear that innovation and inspiration has gone into developing a Master Plan that maximizes limited space to meet a broad spectrum of current needs while at the same time building in flexibility to continue working for a changing community well into the future. While we are generally supportive of the current Master Plan, the Society also recognizes common areas of support and concern. Notable points comment regarding the indoor and outdoor spaces are summarized below.

Dedicated Arts and Cultural Space and Food Hub

There is common excitement over the prospect of including dedicated arts and culture spaces and a community food hub as part of the Renewal. Dedicated arts and cultural spaces are currently lacking on the Britannia site, although the centre continues to provide cultural programming using what limited spaces exist. New arts and culture facilities will help to expand our program offerings in addition to enhancing the profile of Commercial Drive as a cultural hub in the area. The inclusion of a food hub will similarly allow for a much-needed expansion of our current food security programming to the benefit our partners and the community at large. The Society further anticipates that the creation of a dedicated food facility would build our potential for future growth through new partnerships and funding opportunities. The Grandview Woodland Food Connection and Society are already working on developing the resources needed to help make this space and programming a reality. The timeline of delivering the Food Hub is a major point of concern which will be discussed further below.

Dedicated Gymnastics Gym and Black Box Theatre

There is disappointment that a designated gymnastics facility and black box theatre were not among the facilities recommended for inclusion in the Master Plan. Through this process, Many youth and families came forward to express their appreciation for the inclusive nature of Britannia's gymnastic program, especially due to a lack of accessible gymnastics programming city wide. These programs consistently fill within minutes of being opened for registration and generate long waitlists. Capacity is currently limited by lack of programming space despite strong community demand. The Society also recognizes the particular importance of gymnastics as an activity that helps to keep young women engaged in physical activity over the long term.

Community members, including the Society's Arts and Culture Committee, have similarly affirmed the community's need for a Black Box Theatre. A general lack of accessible facilities of this sort has been exacerbated by recent losses, creating challenges for local performers and particularly smaller productions and grassroots theatre companies. The Society hopes that there may be opportunities for further consideration of these dedicated facilities during future design refinement. These are important facilities for underserved populations which have unique space and resource requirements and would be welcome additions to the renewed community centre.

Kickstand

Kickstand is an innovative self-organizing program that has evolved into a community-based, volunteer-driven bicycle training and education centre. Kickstand supports communities that utilize active transportation and helps to allow for equitable access to the bike roadway infrastructure created by the City. Currently Kickstand generates enormous benefit to the community in an extremely limited space. The inclusion of a dedicated space for Kickstand Community Bikes is a priority for consideration as the Britannia Renewal project proceeds.

Twining the Britannia Rink

During the engagement process community members indicated support for the addition of a second rink to the Britannia site. The Society has heard particularly from the minor hockey community on a severe lack of affordable local ice time during prime hours which limits program capacity and drives fee increases. The society understands that twinning the arena is a huge undertaking, and that there are complexities and limitations of the site that make this challenging to deliver without making tradeoffs elsewhere. We recognize strong demand for locating a second rink at Britannia, however, and there is hope that creative solutions may be explored with commitments from our partners to use additional ice time to provide ice sports programming that is accessible to low income community members.




Young skaters circle up during a lesson. An additional rink would allow public skate times and lessons to run simultaneously with hockey games during peak hours.

Site organization

Despite the size of the overall Britannia site, many factors limit where and when facilities can be developed on the land. The complexity of navigating ongoing operations of the schools, library, and community centre on site is further complicated by the priorities of each site partner, neighbourhood constraints, and an unconventional land ownership arrangement. The Society sincerely appreciates the effort that was made to improve the amount of open space at the facility, while not reducing or removing core program space opportunities. This was mostly achieved through stacking facilities and creating flexible multi-use space. The Society understands the careful balance required to create a plan which is both practical and visionary and we look forward to continuing refinement with our partners. Some key concerns that the Society and community have regarding the site organization included:

- improving connections between facilities and creating a central reception area for the site;
- maximizing open spaces and green spaces;
- ensuring that traffic management is well thought-out and planned;
- ensuring a suitable amount of vehicle parking;
- ensuring that plans for “activating” the laneways around Britannia are carefully reviewed for safety and feasibility, and;
- planning for a potential future presence on Commercial Drive or Venables Street to enhance the Community Centre’s public presence.



Many of the programs and services to be delivered in the renewed Britannia require or benefit from direct access to the ground plane, increasing the necessary footprint of the facility and limiting open space. Due to certain physical challenges of the Britannia site, this has also meant greater distances being created between new buildings in the Master Plan. The Society is concerned that the spread of buildings across the site may create accessibility problems for community members with mobility issues and those accessing the site on foot or by public transit. There are also concerns that this layout limits the potential for incidental interaction between users of different facilities and is less likely to contribute to exploration across program areas. We hope to continue to work with our partners moving forward to develop solutions to address these concerns, specifically to enhance the ability for safe and comfortable navigation between facilities in all seasons and to increase the amount of open space. We would also like to consider creating a single integrated reception point for the pool and rink

Other site organization concerns mainly address the flow of traffic and people into and around the site. The Society anticipates greatly increased traffic to the new facility and wishes to ensure our neighbours on surrounding residential streets are not unduly impacted. Adequate secure parking for not only cars but bikes, mobility devices, carts, and strollers is also an important consideration. There are some concerns that plans for activating the surrounding lanes as pedestrian thoroughfares are impractical given that they are currently used for passenger drop-off as well as by local businesses for loading and parking. We are excited, however, to work with our partners to imagine how these laneways can be used in a way that does accomplish those activation goals. Given the site's current lack of street frontage, there is an opportunity for Britannia to develop a new model in the function of commercial lanes while we pursue opportunities to establish a presence on Commercial or Venables.

Phasing

The Society understands that the phasing plan for the renewal project was driven by service continuity and budget considerations. The consultants and City partners have worked very hard to align partner funding schedules and capital projects timelines to develop the most logical approach. While the Society supports the first phases which limit disruption to aquatic and rink services, there are concerns with the ordering of subsequent construction, and specifically the timeline for building the social development and Food Hub spaces currently slated for the final phase of construction. The Society is concerned that the time horizon for delivering needed improvements to these facilities is too long, jeopardizing partnership opportunities and the well-being of current and future community members. Older adults in particular have noted that seniors' facilities are already overcrowded, inaccessible, and deteriorating. Continued reliance on undersized and outdated spaces as the community grows and new users are attracted by the renewed pool, rink, and library only exacerbates existing issues.

Social development and wellness services are essential to the core work and unique quality of Britannia. The Society is prioritizing further work in this area to explore strategies that could significantly reduce the time horizon for the renewal of these facilities, potentially through adjustments to current project phasing and/or the establishment of new funding partnerships.

Building Height and Massing

The massing of buildings and program spaces is a strategy by which the Master Plan increases the open space on the site at the same time as increasing the amount of facility space. The Society understands that the Master Plan used adjacent zoning limits as a guide for potential maximum building heights, however there are some fundamental concerns regarding the interpretation of this adjacent zoning to define the Britannia site, which is currently zoned CD-1 (mixed-use). In particular concerns are that the projection of the adjacent I-2 (Industrial) zoning on Venables across the site at the 100' maximum height is misleading as this maximum is conditional and requires specific City approval. The projection of this conditional maximum may have created the perception that view corridors across the site to the North Shore mountains would be cut off by future development on Venables, decreasing the priority of preserving these views through the Britannia Renewal Master Plan. It is recommended that future public consultation and consideration of neighbourhood context be made with more clarity in reference to surrounding zoning and projected development. Careful analysis is also required to determine whether attaining additional heights above large span facilities like pools and rinks as indicated the Master Plan is efficient or desirable. The additional costs of building above the pool and rink might be better spent in other areas of the site or community.

Frequent users of Britannia are accustomed to a village-like feel that provides a sense of community and welcome. It is to be expected that a renewal of the scale of Britannia's will create major changes to the look and feel of the site, however it is the hope of the Society that careful work with the community in further design stages can ensure that what is beloved about the current site will be retained and incorporated into the look and feel the new site. It is an exciting challenge to try to scale up the special qualities of Britannia and deliver increased programming space without overwhelming the site with buildings that feel oversized and impersonal.

Non-Market Housing

The question as to whether to develop housing at Britannia is by far the most sensitive to be tackled through this process. It is impossible to deny the critical need for affordable housing in this neighbourhood and across Vancouver. Dialogue will continue to centre on whether social housing is right for the Britannia site. There are many in the neighbourhood who feel that the Britannia space should be prioritized exclusively for public use given the local lack of greenspace and community amenities. Discussions on potential housing are further complicated by the concern that upzoning will have cascading impacts on surrounding land values and affordability. Rapid development in Grandview Woodland already threatens the much-valued character, inclusivity, and diversity of our neighbourhood. It is clear that this community already has considerable density when compared to other parts of the City*, and care must be taken to ensure that further growth occurs at a reasonable pace, maintains the neighbourhood's unique feel, and does not drive further displacement of lower-income community members.

* see Grandview Woodland Community Profile 2012, Strathcona Community Profile 2012

We look forward to continuing discussion on housing and feel strongly that the community needs to remain engaged in further deliberation. We are specifically concerned that the community is consulted in decisions on the scale and number of units under consideration moving forward.

The Society has elaborated principles for potential housing to align with the purpose and function of the Britannia site. These criteria are fully laid out in the Society's Housing Guidelines (2018)* and include the directions that:

- any housing should be affordable non-market housing;
- the scale and density of housing should compliment and not overwhelm other site functions;
- the operating model should prioritize resident engagement to be consistent with our principles of community governance;
- priority should be given to tenant groups currently experiencing displacement from our neighbourhood, and;
- design should be aligned with Grandview Woodland Plan directions to retain view corridors.

Further, the Society would like to reiterate that the cost of building housing over large span buildings like the pool and rink should be carefully assessed to see if housing funds would be maximized by delivering non-market housing elsewhere, particularly given the uncertainty of funding streams for non-market housing development. We recognize that Vancouver's critical housing challenge requires immediate action making the best possible use of the limited resources that are currently available.



The 2018 Mother's Day Pow Wow filled the Britannia Secondary Gym.
Photo Credit: Brittany Quinn

Partnership, Land Title, and Operating Agreements

The Britannia partnership has been a successful integration of multiple facilities and uses. This partnership between civil society and public institutions has helped to ensure local involvement in decision-making and has maximized the use of public resources for our community. It is essential for this model to continue through this process and into the future. This requires that all site partnership agreements continue to reflect the original intent of community governance and public ownership for the long term. The Society would like to ensure the long term commitment of the two partners with site ownership (Vancouver School Board and City of Vancouver) are reflected in the legal title and operating agreements of the site. This must include zoning and agreements that permanently protect the entirety of the site for community use and guarantee the maintenance of open space and green space delivered on the renewed site. The Society is interested in exploring whether these goals could be efficiently accomplished with the establishment of a land trust.

* accessible online at www.britanniarenewal.org

Onward

The common refrain from the community is the need for Britannia site partners to continue the good work of consulting and including community in making decisions for the future of Britannia. It is our view that both the Britannia Community Services Centre Society and broader community need to remain extensively involved in project development for the duration of this process to ensure the ultimate success of this renewal. Many important community discussions on site layout, facilities, housing, green space, massing, and view corridors need to take place as we develop the site rezoning plan. It is imperative that community members continue to be informed and involved in decisions through the rezoning process, and in other discussions that determine the future of the site, including legal title, operating agreements, and partnership agreements.

The Society looks forward to working with all stakeholders of this Britannia Renewal project and hopes to continue using the positive communication channels that have been established through the Master Plan process. The collaborative and engaging process utilized during the Master Plan was a wonderful democratization of concept and capital project planning, and helped to create greater knowledge, understanding, accountability and public support for this extremely important community undertaking. In closing, we reiterate our major priorities moving forward:

- Developing solutions to increase open space, create better facility interconnection, and preserve the neighbourly scale of Britannia;
- Exploring feasibility for the inclusion of a dedicated gymnastics facility, an additional rink, a designated Kickstand space, and/or a black box theatre in the new facility;
- Developing strategies to improve site experience by maximizing greenspace and preserving view corridors;
- Encouraging new approaches for sustainable stewardship of public lands;
- Reviewing phasing to reflect community and Society priorities, and;
- Continuing dialogue with our partners and community on the proposed non-profit office hub and non-market housing.

Contact: Lindsay Grant, Project Coordinator
Britannia Community Services Society
lindsay.grant@vancouver.ca

