



Request to Advance the Britannia Renewal

Rebuilding Britannia Centre
for Future Generations

2024

Britannia Board of
Management

OUR GRATITUDE FOR THIS PLACE

This land gives us all that we have and all we will ever need. Our lives here are possible thanks to the stewardship through time immemorial of these unceded traditional lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) people.

We strive to show our gratitude for this place and its people by doing what we can to make life better where we can have an impact, by doing our work in a good way and by steadily deepening our commitment to Reconciliation.

At Britannia, we're on a committed journey of Reconciliation with our Indigenous neighbours. We continue to make the changes we can to further that journey.

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Society Request to the City

The Britannia Community Services Centre Society (the Society) manages Britannia Centre for the purpose of developing and providing community services and programs to meet the needs of the public in the Grandview Woodland and Strathcona neighbourhoods. The City of Vancouver (the City) and the Vancouver School Board (the VSB) together own the parcels of land and buildings which make up the Britannia Community Centre, Britannia Elementary School and Britannia Secondary School.

After 50 years, our Centre is at end-of-life and crumbling. We have no more space to expand our programming to serve our growing community.

Many City-led reviews and reports have identified the need for our Renewal and since Council approved the Britannia Master Plan in 2018, the City has embarked on preliminary building designs in partnership with the VSB, the Society, Vancouver Park Board and the Vancouver Public Library. Over \$5M have been spent and countless staffing and volunteer hours have been put towards a vision for Phase 1, a multi-use Aquatics and Fitness Centre.

After years of design and consultation with our Partners and the Community, the Society is asking the City to move forward with detailed plans for our new Aquatics and Fitness Centre (Building 1/Phase 1).

Our Community needs Renewal of Britannia Centre now.



VISION FOR THE AQUATICS & FITNESS CENTRE

The renewed facility will provide much needed spaces for our Community

- 25m/8 Lane Lap Pool with poolside teaching and event space
- Leisure Pool and Hydrotherapy (Hot Pool, Cold Plunge, Steam and Sauna)
- Dividable Community Gymnasium, that joins to form an NBA-sized court
- Childcare Centre/Early Learning Hub with 69 new spaces
- Indigenous Ceremonial Gathering Space
- Expanded Fitness Centre with adjoining Wellness and Treatment spaces
- Gymnastics Annex, Dance, Martial Arts and Active Living Program Studios
- Multipurpose Event Spaces and a Community Living Room
- Covered Outdoor All-Wheels Activity Pad

The Aquatics & Fitness Centre will be fossil fuel-free, achieving LEED™ Gold, Passive House and Rick Hansen Accessibility Gold certifications.

Project Context & Background

Britannia Community Services Centre Society and the Britannia Pool opened in 1976. Serving the Grandview Woodland & Strathcona neighbourhoods, the pool is one of Vancouver's oldest aquatic facilities. Due to its inability to meet current and future programming demands and aging building systems, the facility is in urgent need of redevelopment.

The 2019 Vancouver Park Board VanSplash Aquatics Strategy identified that many of the building components of the nearly 50 year old facility are approaching the end of their functional lifespan and are in need of renewal to meet contemporary energy, accessibility, seismic and program requirements.

Vancouver City Council prioritized the Renewal of the facilities through the approval of the Britannia Master Plan in 2018 and the 2019-2022 Capital Plan. The public endorsed this direction through the October 2018 election plebiscite. Since then, countless staff and community volunteer hours and over \$5M have been spent in planning and consultations to develop a vision for this facility.

In response to the unanimous City Council decision from November 1, 2023 and the VSB Trustees decision from November 27, 2023, the Society struck a working group to review the site evaluation, conceptual designs, phasing plan, construction feasibility and cost estimates. The Society worked with independent third parties, unrelated to the City or VSB, to provide an analysis of all aspects of the project including a cost estimate and general site assessment.

The conclusion is that Building 1/Phase 1 of the Britannia Master Plan, fully on City-owned land, should move to detailed design for construction.

The Aquatics Building is estimated to cost \$135M in today's value, with that cost escalating 3-5% every year that the project is delayed. There are opportunities to take advantage of capital funding from other levels of governments for facilities such as the childcare centre.

The Society is committed to working collaboratively with the City to secure public and private funding for this project.

The Business Case

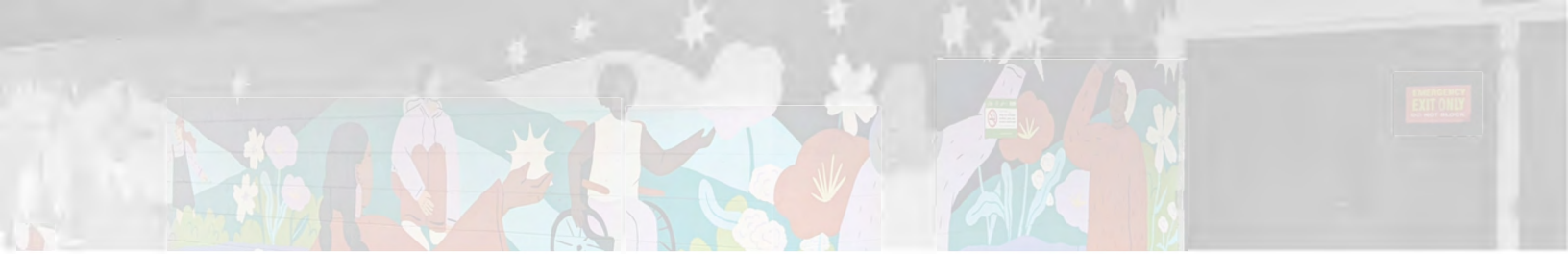
Already some of the densest neighbourhoods outside of the downtown core, Grandview Woodland and Strathcona continue to welcome increasing numbers of residents, many from disadvantaged and marginalized communities, for whom community centre programming present the only accessible offerings.

Well used and generating significant revenue, Britannia Centre has reached its capacity, with no room to bring in the many new user groups that regularly approach the Centre.

Our programs offer health enhancement through recreation, wrap-around support for the vulnerable, resilience in the face of climate change and disaster, community connectedness and cultural exchange, food security, personal development and life-long learning, broader opportunities for our school community and real steps toward Reconciliation.

We serve the very goals and objectives to which the City of Vancouver and other levels of government have committed and we do it well.

Based on design work completed in 2021 & 2022 with architects Perkins&Will and the site Partners (the City, the VSB, the Society, Vancouver Park Board and Vancouver Public Library), construction of the Britannia Aquatics & Fitness Centre is estimated to cost \$135M. This includes a 69 space child care centre to be built for an estimated cost of \$25M that is likely to qualify for federal and provincial capital funding.



Detailed design is needed to explore provincial, federal and private funding options and to negotiate agreements. We are committed to leading those discussions and bringing resources to the Renewal.

Without prompt renewal, the cost of operating and maintaining the existing facility will continue to escalate with significant risk of complete facility failure, leaving the city with further deficiencies in aquatic, recreation and social services.

The new facility will have a larger fitness centre, a community gym and a contemporary aquatic facility that will generate a dramatic increase in revenue for the City.

Every year of delay in the Renewal is projected to add 3-5% to the cost of the project.

The Britannia Renewal is designed to meet the goals outlined in many City of Vancouver long-term strategies, such as: Vancouver Plan 2050, VanPlay, VanSplash, Greenest City Action Plan, Grandview Woodland Community Plan, Healthy City Strategy, City of Reconciliation Framework, Creative City Culture Plan and the Housing Vancouver Strategy, among many others.

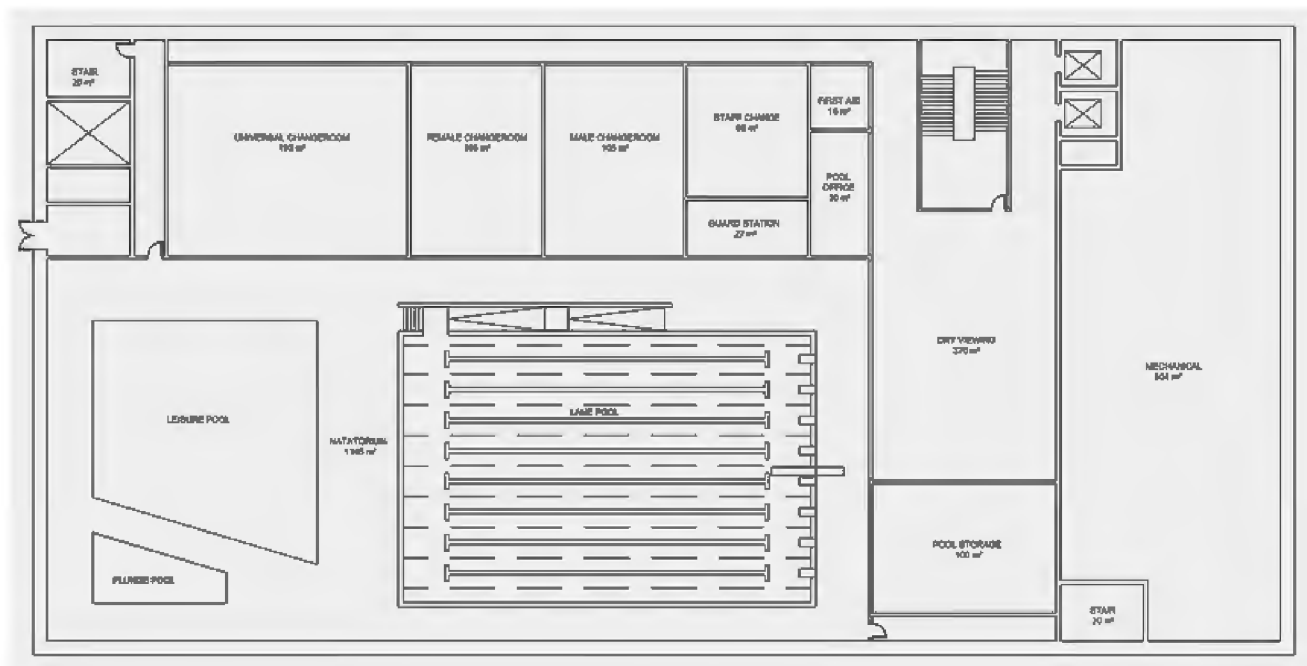
With Renewal, we can help the City meet its goal and obligations. We're ready to go!

A Tour of Building 1 (Phase 1)



Level 1

Level 1 will house the modern, energy-efficient Aquatics Centre



It will expand our lanes for recreational and competitive swim programs to eight.

It will offer hot, cold and temperate hydrotherapy options for those in need. It will host the City's first cold plunge pool, a feature that sees tremendous and increasing interest in other parts of Metro Vancouver while taking up a space no more than about 200 sq.ft.

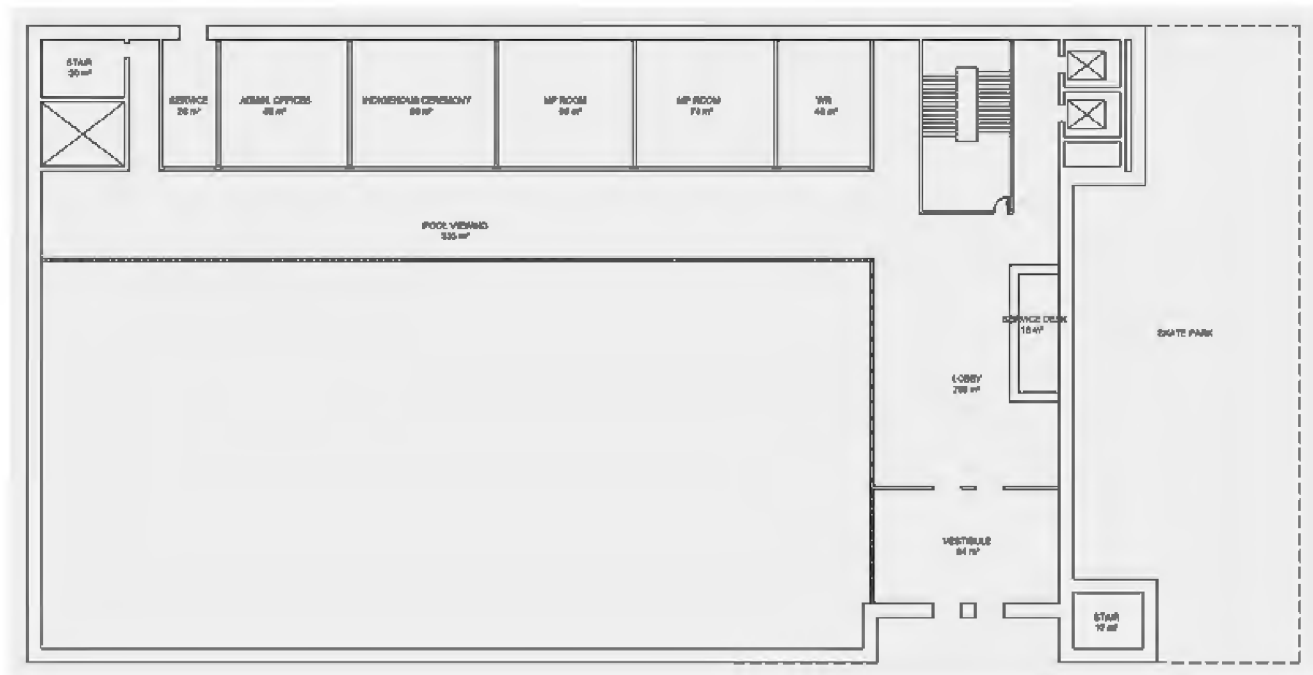
The aquatics level will include a deck-side program room allowing us to act as a nexus for youth lifeguard training and also offering us much-needed multipurpose space.

The careful design of the facility will allow us to host several levels of aquatic programming at the same time, from tot and elementary lessons, to after-school swim to survive programs and aqua-fit along side regular lane and family recreation uses. This sort of density of programming, with the potential to bolster our revenue, is something well beyond our current pool and is an identified need in this community.

We see huge potential in a modern well-designed Aquatics Centre.

Level 2

Level 2 will be the Main Entrance for Building 1 from the Parker Promenade



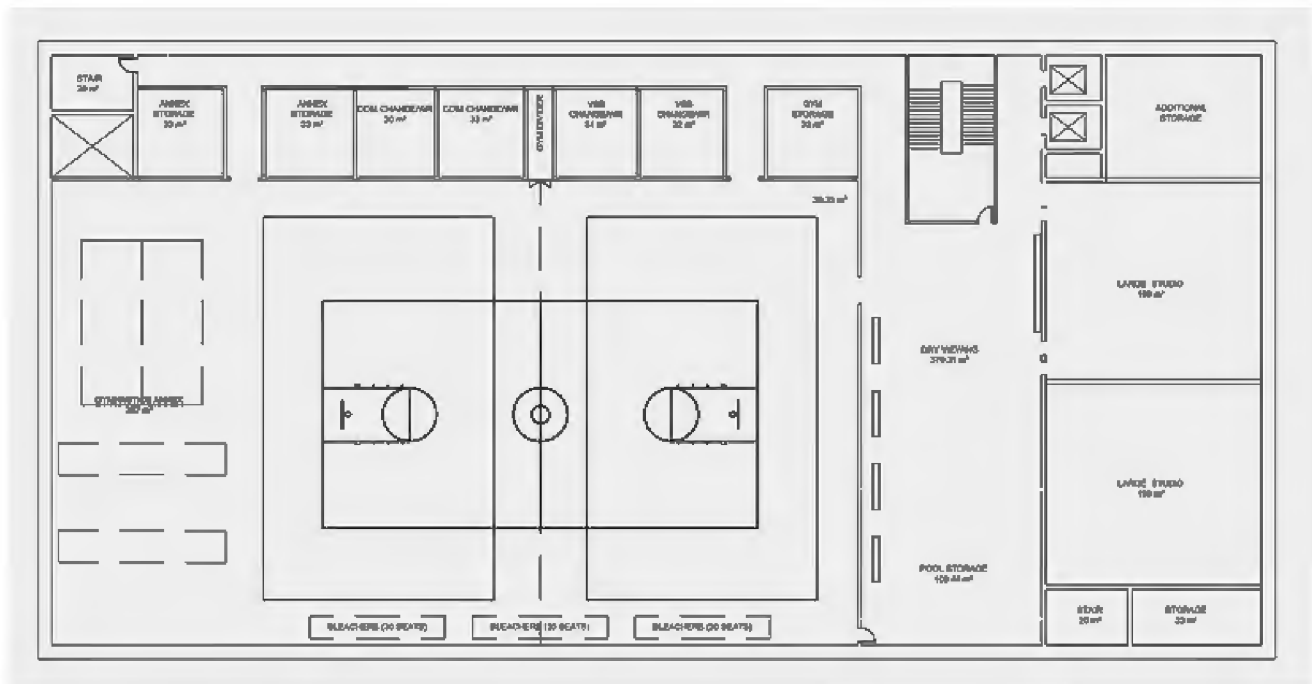
Through the main doors, neighbours will be welcomed into a Community Living Room lounge bathed in natural light, with several adjacent multipurpose event rooms, including a space dedicated to Indigenous gatherings and ceremony.

To the east of the main entrance will be the covered outdoor all-wheel park, where our current Courts community can learn a diversity of maker skills as they craft their own design-build skate features and sharpen their moves in pursuit of their Olympic dreams.

An inviting staircase centred in the design and full of natural light will draw users upward to the Community Gymnasium level above or downward to the Aquatics level below.

Level 3

Level 3 will host a much-needed Community Gym and Active Living Studios



Large Studio spaces will welcome dance, fitness classes, martial arts, boxing and more – all the programs benefiting from sprung floors will be welcomed here.

Glass walls will offer an engaging view of the gymnasiums inviting in potential participants.

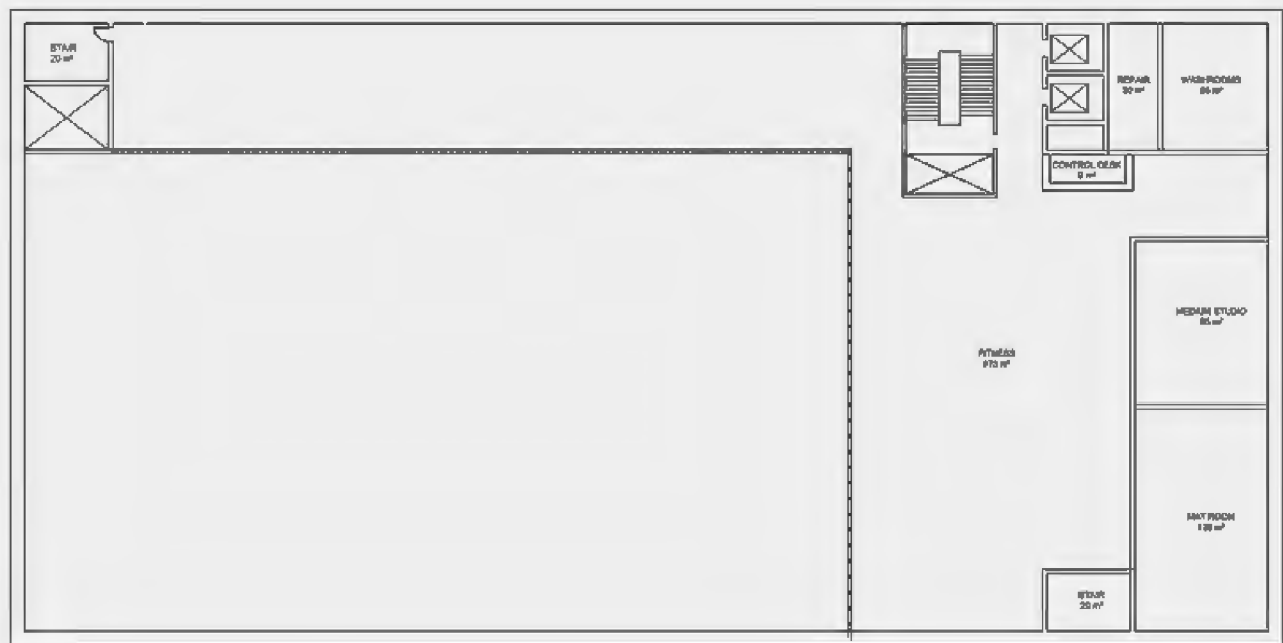
The Community Gym will finally offer our community weekday daytime programming options. Families with preschool aged children will find active early learning options, along side elders engaged in fitness and mobility activities, both supported with healthcare outreach meeting them where they are.

The gymnastics annex will offer flexibility and capacity to expand our gymnastics academy, offering opportunities for sports excellence to our youth, particularly many young women not served elsewhere in the Park Board recreation system.

The two gym spaces when joined into one, will make Building 1 one of the only locations in East Vancouver with the ability to host full NBA-court tournaments, something available in several other Metro Vancouver communities that will give East Van kids a vision of what basketball can offer them - basketball represents a particularly strong thread for many in our local Indigenous community.

Level 4

Level 4 will see a renewed and expanded Fitness Centre



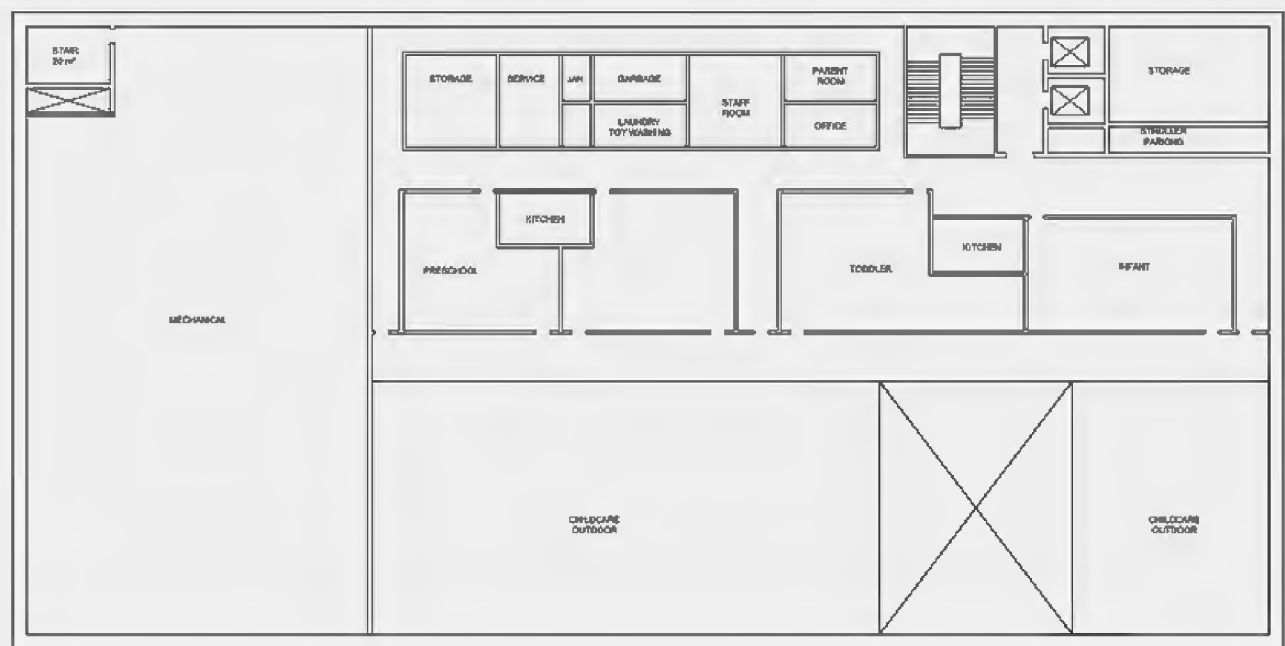
Level 4 brings us a renewed and expanded Fitness Centre, one of our most well-used programs.

Along with a responsive modern design and a substantial increase in programming space, the new Fitness Centre will include Active Living Studios equipped to host novel health and wellness programs, clinics and special instructional sessions.

The Fitness Centre should yield significantly increased revenue to the City, over our current offering.

Level 5

Level 5 will bring 69 new Childcare spaces to our Community and City



The rooftop space of Building 1 will be optimized with a new 69 space Childcare and Early Learning Centre.

This will help address a well demonstrated and significant need City-wide and will allow us to expand our existing early learning and health programs to a host of new families, in a supportive Community Centre setting, offering a breadth of wrap-around services to ensure their success.

We expect that this part of the project will attract substantial funding and support from senior levels of government.

The Master Plan

SKODEN

Info Centre



The vision for the Britannia Renewal is to create an inclusive place for learning, social connection and development, Reconciliation, cultural exploration and expression, play and recreation to enhance the life and well-being of all. Our work moving forward is to ensure that our spaces are safe and welcoming to everyone and to challenge systemic inequality within our community.




The Britannia Renewal Master Plan



Building 1 will bring a modern sustainable Aquatics Centre, a much-needed Community Gym for daytime programming, multipurpose event rooms, an enhanced expanded Fitness Centre and a new 69 space Childcare & Early Learning Centre. Beneath the overhang of Building 1, we'll see a covered DIY all-wheel space to host The Courts skate community, a diverse local youth-driven initiative that has emerged from our Community in recent years.

Building 2 will renew and enhance our ice rink, helping us dramatically reduce operating costs thanks to tremendous improvements to our energy efficiency. Building 2 will also offer an Indigenous gathering space and potential for social housing above.

Building 3 will expand our Public Library, one of the busiest in the City, facilitating more of the stunning innovative programs developed here and offering tremendous resources to support our local student population among others. Building 3 will also include our Art Gallery, an Indigenous Oral History sharing space, an incubator Maker Space and social service spaces to provide extreme weather and disaster relief. On the top level of Building 3, we'll see another 69 space Childcare Centre and potential for even more social housing.



Building 4 will rescue and modernize the Britannia High School's Technical Education and Science Wing, which is a 1960's addition at significant seismic risk, requiring remediation. Building 4 will relocate the Technical Wing in a modern safe facility, at grade with the High School. Building 4 has the added benefit of hosting a rooftop all weather field at the same level as Britannia Elementary, eliminating the current long staircase to the Elementary School's play spaces below, which pose significant accessibility challenges.

Building 5 will be the heart of our Community. With a large new green and naturalized public Commons, giving prominence to our ʔxʷqʷeləwən ct Carving Centre, and connecting and expanding an adjacent community dining hall, fed by a commercial kitchen – offering tremendous opportunities to host local celebrations and to expand our food security, food education and poverty reduction programs. Additionally, adjacent to the Commons will be a black box performance space for sharing arts and culture and hosting powerful local events.

Building 5 will house rehearsal space for local performers, Youth and Seniors Centres co-located with a shared kitchen to foster intergenerational connection, a Community Living Room to welcome interaction, health clinic spaces to bring health and wellness services to where people are and a vibrant new Eastside Family Place early learning and play centre.

Further, Building 5 will host a Non-Profit Hub, an incubator space for nascent local initiatives that need infrastructure support. The Non-Profit Hub will offer flexible work spaces, meeting and event rooms and supporting business infrastructure to help local groups develop into self-sustaining powerful community players. Britannia has a long history of providing this sort of support and has helped launch many local non-profit initiatives that continue their important work throughout the City, standing on their own.

The top level of Building 5 will house the VSB Streetfront and Outreach programs, two essential local initiatives that work hard to keep students connected to an education when they are struggling with the conventional school system. Both programs offer innovative alternative ways of remaining within the education system and supports for students who might otherwise leave school.

A rooftop Community Garden will enhance the VSB alternative programs and produce local food to fuel our food education and food security offerings.

With a renewed Community Centre we can strengthen and deepen the social fabric of this community. We can build health and wellness. We can foster learning and economic success for our most vulnerable youth and their families.

The Britannia Story



Britannia is the result of the hard work and activism of our community members. Since our founding, we have been a place for communities to come together, learn and develop. Our dream is intercultural and rooted in where we are located in the Grandview Woodland and Strathcona neighbourhoods. We envision the Renewal as a way of strengthening our foundation in order to continue to provide services to as many of our community members as possible over the long-term.



Our History – The Origin of Britannia Centre

Britannia was born out of the activism of our students and community.

Grandview Woodland and Strathcona are low income inner-city neighbourhoods, with some of the highest rates of poverty in the City.

We have a high proportion of our population living in rental accommodation, a tremendous density of housing co-ops, supportive and social housing and the largest urban Indigenous population in British Columbia.

In the late 1960's, there were no community recreation amenities in our neighbourhood. Our east side inner-city community had few opportunities for health and wellness and no space to connect and grow.

The neighbourhood stood up to say that we needed more for our youth and their families. We needed places to gather and share ideas and culture. We needed facilities to help us get well and stay well throughout our lives. Our students needed the wrap around supports and additional opportunities that the school system wasn't able to provide.

They took that conversation to the community and to the people in power. They worked hard to gather the support, land and resources to make it happen and Britannia Centre was born, putting our school and students at the centre of what we do and offering tremendous benefits to the generations that followed.

After nearly 50 years, the dream of Britannia Centre has grown into a deep, connected and impactful network of community, offering a tremendous diversity of services, support and opportunities.

Our commitment and success has left us out of space to welcome new people into our Centre. With our lack of space for new programming and our aging facilities crumbling around us, it's time for Renewal.

We know what we do has deep and lasting benefits for our City and community. With Renewal, we can continue to build on this 50 year journey toward a healthier happier future.



Why it Works – Our Many Partnerships

Since our beginning, Britannia Centre has been about Partnerships.

We connect with our schools and students, local art and community organizations, cultural societies, ad-hoc citizen initiatives, health and wellness providers and people with knowledge, skills and resources to share.

Our partners bring their expertise, volunteers and resources and their passion for change and we help them deepen the work that they do, by offering space and support and by connecting them with others who share their vision.

In this way, our partnerships grow into strong local networks that knit our community together culturally and intergenerationally – helping ensure that everyone, particularly our most vulnerable, are supported to thrive.



The Heart of Britannia – Community Consultation

We bring the voice and values of the community into everything we do.

We're driven by a community-led Board of Management made up of volunteer Directors from the area.

Our Board is guided by a network of committees of local volunteers, reviewing every aspect of our operations.

Our work is amplified by a broad community of volunteers who contribute tremendous time and resources to make a difference.

We are graciously supported by our small group of staff who do so much with so little.





Our Dream for the Future

We need to move forward. Renewal takes time and we're running out of it.

We need to see our well-used facilities replaced before they crumble. The cracks are visible.

Renewal will give us a place where we can share food and culture and grow together.

It will give us a spaces to create and learn skills and help each other.

We can offer our students programs and facilities that they wouldn't otherwise be able to access, supporting them toward graduation and introducing them to the many possible paths beyond.

We can build connection at a time when isolation is growing and loneliness is an epidemic.

We can build bridges between cultures at a time when suspicion and fear of others needs a remedy.

We can enhance the health and wellness of our aging community, lessening the impact on our strained healthcare resources and bringing complementary care programs to people where they are.

We can build wrap around support to help our most vulnerable people and families thrive, offering opportunities for them to get what they need, keep well and grow into a stronger place.

We can incubate nascent arts and culture producers into strong networks, delivering valuable social benefits and building our creative economy.

We can deliver much needed childcare, coupled with early learning strategies that support school readiness and family resilience.

We can strengthen the health and wellness of our community throughout the lifespan, so that we are all best positioned to live well and serve our world.

Renewal offers a generational opportunity to this community. With the right partners, we can deliver deep and lasting benefits to our world.

Contributing Strategies

Grandview-Woodland Community Plan (2016)

City of Reconciliation Framework (2014)

Greenest City Action Plan (2011, updated 2015)

Transportation Plan 2040 (2012)

Healthy City Strategy 2014-2025 (2014)

Creative City Culture Plan 2008-2018 (2008)

Cultural Facilities Priorities Plan (2008)

Housing Vancouver Strategy (2017)

Age Friendly Action Plan 2013 – 2015 (2015)

Heritage Action Plan (2013)

Building a Path to Parks and Recreation for All: Reducing Barriers for Trans and Gender Variant Community Members (2014)

Park Board Strategic Framework (2012)

VanPlay, Vancouver's Parks and Recreation Services Master Plan (2020)

VanSplash, Vancouver Aquatic Strategy (2020)

Urban Forest Strategy (2014)

Vancouver Plan 2050 (2023)

Britannia COVID-19 Response (2022)