



Corporate Report

NO: R172

COUNCIL DATE: September 8, 2008

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: August 20, 2008
FROM: General Manager, Parks, Recreation and Culture FILE: 0510-20/K
SUBJECT: Adaptive Reuse of Kensington Prairie School as a Community Centre

RECOMMENDATION

The Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Approve in principle the adaptive reuse of Kensington Prairie School (the “School”) as a Community Centre operated by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department; and
3. Authorize staff to include as part of the 2009 budget, capital and operating funding to allow for the conversion of the School to a Community Centre.

BACKGROUND

In March 2008, Council approved a multi-parcel land exchange with the Surrey School District. One of the parcels that the City of Surrey will be obtaining from School District is the Kensington Prairie Elementary School site at 16824 – 32 Avenue (See Appendix A). The site contains two buildings and has an area of 2.9 acres. The transfer of the site will occur in the fall of 2008 when the subdivision of one of the other parcels included in the exchange is completed.

Kensington Prairie School is listed on the City of Surrey’s Heritage Register, meaning that City Council has recognized that this site has heritage value due to its architectural, historical and cultural significance. The original school building, with a floor area of approximately 3,000 square feet, was constructed in 1914. In 1955, a 7,000 square feet annex was constructed onto the School, which contains four classrooms, an office, a staff room with kitchen, a library, and a 2,700 square foot gymnasium.

DISCUSSION

Based on the projected population growth in the Grandview Heights area and the recommendations in the Parks, Recreation and Culture Strategic Plan, additional recreational/community space is supportable in this general area of the City. Based on available funding and the need to allocate this funding across a variety of pressing capital needs, the adaptive reuse of the Kensington Prairie School as a Community Centre is an appropriate interim approach to providing a recreation centre in the Grandview Heights/Morgan Creek/Rosemary community while the area continues to develop and the population continues to grow. In the longer term, the proposed Kensington Prairie Community Centre would be replaced with a new full-scale multi-purpose recreation centre located on a community park site in a more central location in Grandview Heights. The Kensington Prairie Community Centre would also be reasonably accessible for the Morgan Heights and Rosemary communities as well as Cloverdale and the West Cloverdale communities.

Based on an assessment of the spaces that are available within the existing school buildings, the proposed Community Centre would focus on the following service areas:

- Early childhood services hub;
- Community meeting space; and
- Community leisure and recreation programs.

Early Childhood Services Hub:

An integrated approach to children and family recreation services involves community and leisure services, health services and family resource services. The Early Childhood Partnership Initiative was established in 2006 through the Make Children First Initiative. This multi-agency partnership includes the City of Surrey, the Surrey School District, the Fraser Health Authority the Ministry for Children and Family Development and the United Way of the Lower Mainland. The partnership is focused on the development of a comprehensive continuum of health, family support and recreation services to meet the needs of children in Surrey. The priorities of the partnership have included the coordination of Early Childhood Development (ECD) planning and funding in Surrey, improved access to services for families, the support of Child Friendly Initiatives, improved resource networks and increased public awareness. The Early Childhood Partnership Initiative is interested in participating in the development of a child-oriented services hub in the proposed Kensington Prairie Community Centre.

Based on Canadian experience, there is evidence to show that “hub” models are the optimum approach for the provision of early childhood services. The Kensington Prairie location could accommodate such a hub, which would provide integrated programs, resources, and supports for families with young children. The key partners from the community that would assist in the services provided through the hub include: Fraser Health, Ministry for Children and Family Development, OPTIONS Services to Community, DiverseCity, and the Surrey School District. The community centre hub would:

- Provide quality early learning opportunities to preschool children;
- Assist in ensuring that at-risk or isolated children are supported;
- Provide parents with education and information regarding child development;
- Improve the literacy skills of children;

- Create strong community liaisons or partnerships that are designed to enhance early childhood development and literacy;
- Provide family resource programs;
- Provide parenting workshops;
- Provide pregnancy programs and resources; and
- Develop and support infant and toddler care that would meet the growing demand in the community.

This integrated approach to service delivery by way of partnerships with the Early Childhood Partnership Initiative and the Community School Partnership Initiative is effective in leveraging existing knowledge and expertise in the community and builds on programs and services that are already in place in other areas.

Community Meeting Space:

Several community groups are currently finding it difficult to locate meeting and program space in South Surrey. Some of the multi-purpose space in the proposed Community Centre would accommodate these groups and their related meetings/uses. The space will also satisfy the need for rehearsal space for some of the arts groups.

Community Leisure and Recreation Programming:

In addition to the above, the space available in the proposed Community Centre would also allow for the delivery of some general leisure, recreation and arts programming for the broader community as is provided at other community centres in the City.

Cost Estimates:

Capital Costs

The City has commissioned a consultant to review the condition of the existing buildings on the School site and provide an estimate of the costs to retrofit the building to a condition that would support occupancy for community uses. Based on that work, it is estimated that it will cost \$1.6 million to convert the School to a Community Centre, which amount will address the electrical, mechanical, HVAC, and seismic requirements as well as the parking needs. This estimate is based on improvements to achieve satisfactory condition for occupancy and not a complete retrofit of the buildings.

Operating Costs

Based on estimates prepared by staff, the net operating budget for the proposed Community Centre and related services/programming is \$445,000 per year (2008\$).

The Finance Department has advised that these amounts are reasonable to include in the 2009 budget for Council consideration during the budget approval process that will occur later this year.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

- Approve in principle the adaptive reuse of Kensington Prairie School (the “School”) as a Community Centre operated by the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department; and
- Authorize staff to include as part of the 2009 budget, capital and operating funding to allow for the conversion of the School to a Community Centre.

Laurie Cavan
General Manager,
Parks, Recreation and Culture

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Appendix A: Air Photo of Kensington Prairie School Site and Surrounding Area