

NO: R153

COUNCIL DATE: July 27, 2009

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **July 27, 2009**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development**

FILE: **6430-01**

SUBJECT: **International Design Competition – Town Centres**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Authorize staff to proceed with an International Design Competition in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached as Appendix 1 to this report; and
3. Approve the expenditure of \$350,000 to cover the costs of the Competition, including prizes.

BACKGROUND

In the fall of 2008, Council requested that staff develop a process for an International Design Competition with respect to the public open spaces and special features in Surrey's town centres similar to processes that have taken place in other cities around the world.

A Steering Committee was formed to prepare a Terms of Reference for such a Competition including a Competition timeline and a budget. The Steering Committee will remain in place to oversee the Competition. The Steering Committee is comprised of the following individuals:

Chair:	Allen Aubert, Architect;
Documentation:	John Sprung, Educator, Kwantlen Polytechnic University;
AIBC Advisor:	Scott Kemp, Architect;
Content & Communications:	Trevor Body, Architect, Urban Designer; and
Surrey Liaison:	General Manager, Planning and Development.

DISCUSSION

The proposed Terms of Reference for the competition are attached as Appendix I to this report.

The International Design Competition is structured as an ideas competition for five of Surrey's urban town centres. The aim of the Competition is to shift thinking and opportunities in each of these town centres towards more intense, public-minded and productive urban futures. The Competition will provide an opportunity to harvest concepts and initiatives put forward by citizens and professionals and will display entrepreneurial energy and a spirit of openness and

innovation. Design competitions such as this, provide a powerful form of public consultation that deal with images not just verbal opinions.

The Competition will focus on the following town centres and will reinforce notions of place making and urban identity:

- Guildford;
- Fleetwood;
- Cloverdale;
- Newton; and
- Semiahmoo.

It is not proposed that City Centre be included in the Competition, since by definition it is "more than a town centre", i.e., the "locus" for the entire City. Should Council wish to include City Centre in the Competition, the budget would need to be revised to reflect the additional award of prizes. A five member jury, consisting of an architect, urban planner, academic, landscape architect and a developer will be selected to evaluate the designs and select winners in accordance with the Competition rules. A timeline for the Competition is included in the Terms of Reference.

Budget Considerations

The Finance and Technology Department has reviewed the requested funding and confirms that funds are available within the 2009 budget to cover the noted costs.

CONCLUSION

A Steering Committee was structured to prepare a Terms of Reference for the proposed International Design Competition and will continue on to oversee the process of the Competition. Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council:

- Authorize staff to proceed with an International Design Competition for Surrey's town centres in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached as Appendix I to this report; and
- Approve the expenditure of \$350,000 to cover the costs of the Competition, including prizes.

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

JLL:saw

Attachment:

Appendix I Terms of Reference for International Design Competition

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TownShift:

An Ideas Competition for Surrey’s Urban Hubs

The City of Surrey invites designers worldwide
to re-define Surrey’s Town Centres as vibrant urban places

*Management and Content Outline,
Prepared by Competition Steering Committee members Allen Aubert, John Sprung,
Scott Kemp and Trevor Boddy*

Summary of Proposal

This document identifies the members of the competition Steering Committee, describes a management plan, and proposes a schedule and terms of reference (TOR) for an open international design competition to seek innovative ideas for five of Surrey’s established Town Centres: Guildford, Fleetwood, Cloverdale, Newton and Semiahmoo. The aim of the competition is to “shift” thinking and opportunities for each of these “town” hubs towards more intense, public-minded and productive urban futures. Sanctioned by the Architectural Institute of British Columbia, the competition is a cost-effective means of generating design ideas and public debate on future directions for a rapidly changing city.

Why an Open Ideas Design Competition?

Open ideas design competitions are consultative mechanisms, which harvest the concepts and initiatives of citizens and designers. Anyone, anywhere can enter an open competition—there is no requirement whatsoever for professional or educational credentials. The sketches, plans and texts are produced free of charge by entrants (in fact, they pay a registration fee of \$50 for the privilege of submitting their freely-given labour, a mechanism which also discourages superfluous submissions) and will be extremely useful for both the public and private sector in upping the design standards of Surrey’s Town Centres for years to come.

The TownShift competition matches the entrepreneurial energy of our entrants with the spirit of openness and innovation that increasingly characterizes Surrey’s building for the future. There is no intention and utterly no compunction for the City of Surrey to fund or build any aspect of the winning schemes, and the competition process and outcome does not commit the City to any changes in zoning, urban design policy, transportation planning, or disposition of public lands. The open ideas design commission is not an architect-selection or building-commissioning process, and has much more in common with a public consultation process, but a particularly powerful one as it deals in images, not just verbal opinions.

Why The Competition Focus on Five of the Town Centres?

Long established City of Surrey urban policy identifies five “Town Centres” as the focus of increasing intensity and quality of development: Guildford, Fleetwood, Cloverdale, Newton and Semiahmoo. City Centre is not included as part of the competition scope, as by definition, it is more than just another Town Centre, but the locus for the entire city. Because of work by the city and consultants currently underway for a civic centre there, the range and nature of urban design issues at Central City is quite different than the five other hubs.

The competition will enforce notions of place-making and announced urban identity appropriate to each of the hubs, and this proposal amounts to five different design competitions run at once, with entry requirements adjusted to the particular potential of each Town Centre. While this

proposition is not a city-planning exercise but a design competition simultaneously exploring five sites, the results could help develop and implement mobility options that connect the City Centre to the Town Centres and amongst each of them.

By clarifying in the public eye the huge potential of all five as vibrant places, it will aid future public policy and planning work by the City of Surrey, Translink, Metro Vancouver and other agencies. A well-conceived image can be hugely useful in setting a course for cities, and the stock in trade of design competitions is images.

Vision and Hopes for the TownShift Ideas Design Competition:

- The designs will help change perceptions of Surrey Town Centres by generating exciting visions of how architecture and public realm improvements could together shape their futures.
- As the city evolves into British Columbia's most populous municipality, involve Surrey citizens in the transformation and re-invigoration of their city, by opening up and publicizing the ideas and values implicit in urban development.
- Improve and promote the Surrey "brand" during its moment of the 2010 Winter Games exposure by showing itself open to innovative and inclusive patterns of city-building.
- Generate imagery and concepts to be used by civic officials, planners, designers, citizens and developers for future projects and planning consultations
- Undertake the largest public consultation (through the media, public events, exhibition, publications and website) on design, urban identity and architectural expression issues ever conducted in Surrey, with potential benefits to many other initiatives.
- Assist in clarifying the character and potential of all five Town Centres through the scrutiny and donated services of designers from far away who are not limited by conventions or clichés.
- Provide civic officials and city staff with innovative examples to improve the quality of the town centre's public and private realms.
- Engage the attention of the design and development industries about the urban potential of Surrey's Town Centres and thereby stimulate future investment and encourage creative new urban development.
- Capitalize on pre-2010 winter games publicity potential by encouraging best urban practices, forging a unique 2010 legacy of ideas and images. From the perspective of decades from now, FormShift may well be one of the most important 2010 legacies in the entire Lower Mainland.

General Competition Principles

These are the over-arching design concepts that will apply to all sites. These are value-laden statements of direction, a listing of those principles, which the competition would wish to advance. The design of all entries should advance the following for their specific sites in Surrey:

Arrival: Gateways, Icons and Markers

Visual signals of arriving, announces character elsewhere, a sense of change, scaled appropriately to the region, city and street. Architecture and civic realm elements as wayfinding—a sense of ‘there’ to be there.

Place: Shared and Unique

May be defined by buildings, plantings, urban infrastructure, significant public art or information itself. After arriving, specific qualities of community and rootedness should be present, a sense that this is a place like no other.

Onward: Networks and Integration

Integration into the social patterns of the city and transportation systems at all scales. A sense of using design to ensure the relationship of the part to whole, in culture, in social systems, and in the economies of energy and materials.

General Competition Ethos

These are the ethical and sustainability guidelines, which underlie our efforts and requested of all entrants. These are background values, but no less important:

SUSTAINABILITY: Schemes will marshal resources and energy, building towards a Surrey as one of Canada’s greenest communities—all entrants will be referred to the city’s Sustainability Charter.

CULTURAL, HISTORICAL, and SOCIAL CONTINUITY: Schemes will respect the historical evolution and heritage resources of the city, and build in a manner that respects the social patterns that exist before, helping to provide new ways of making public spaces accessible to citizens of all backgrounds, incomes and abilities.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP: The urban interventions proposed need to be achievable, practical and as sustainable in the economic realm as in the green, social and cultural zones considered above. Wealth needs to be created, stored, shared and re-initiated with every development.

Specific Design Competition Sites

Generally, the competition sites will include the public domain (roadways, sidewalks, medians, parks) and city-controlled land parcels, unless otherwise stated.

[The specific sites are to be selected in consort with city staff, and chosen for their ability to inspire entrants and to prompt considered work advancing the above principles of the competition.]

Specific Competition Design Criteria

[These are site-specific restrictions as to location, program, form, material or any other design criterion required of entries. These will be developed in association with the principles above, and the potentials of the sites below to sustain and host them realistically.]

Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC) Approved ‘Ideas’ Competition

TownShift is a design competition approved by the Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC). As the association responsible for the profession, the AIBC - through the professional advisor - oversees all aspects of the competition to ensure compliance with professional regulator requirements. The competition rules govern the obligations and rights of the City of Surrey, the AIBC and the entrants to ensure fairness. Architects, as registered professionals, must maintain their accountability and responsible to the public for the safety of the built environment. Architects are not permitted to participate in a competition that has not been approved by the regulatory authority.

Building on Previous Competitions:

PoTo Tower, FormShift

TownShift is building on the success of two previously approved competitions recently held in BC: PoTo Tower – a creative interpretation of the tower/podium building typology common in downtown Vancouver (www.poto.ca) and FormShift – looking at innovative policies and principles to guide greener and denser development (<http://www.formshiftvancouver.ca/> \o "blocked:<http://www.formshiftvancouver.ca/>" www.formshiftvancouver.ca). Both competitions attracted participants local and international. TownShift would continue building on this increased awareness, participation and dialogue concerning the nature and character of our cities. The organizing committee includes members who organized both of these recent Lower Mainland design competitions, which will ease knowledge and best-practices transfer, plus build credibility amongst our potential entrants.

Entry Qualifications

Entry is open to all designers, urban development professionals, and interested citizens from Surrey and anywhere else in the world—there are no educational or professional qualifications required. Familiarity with design, urbanism or construction practice is an asset, but not obligatory. Competition teams are encouraged, as are entries from students. This is an AIBC sanctioned ‘open’ competition.

Jury

The jury’s responsibilities are to assess the designs and select winners and honorable mentions in accordance with the competition rules. Reflecting the multi-faceted character of the competition, the jury is composed of recognized architects – both national and international – a landscape architect, a prominent developer, and a senior staff member of the City of Surrey. Such diverse backgrounds, training and focus of the jury members brings credibility and added benefit to the competition process for identifying those ideas and principles that will guide the City of Surrey. The jury will produce a brief written report citing reasons for their choices, and general commentary on the quality and ambition of all entrants.

Jury Composition

A jury of five members is the right number, three being too small (especially in the case of last minute cancellations), and seven too large and expensive. The TownShift jury will be assigned two key tasks: selection of a long list of finalists to be printed and displayed for several weeks prior to the announcement of winners; one and one only winner in each First and Second Prize categories as outlined below (further non-monetary honorary mentions are fine.)

- Prominent architect or urbanist from the Pacific Northwest USA
- Prominent architect/urbanist/academic from elsewhere in Canada
- Developer or real estate investor active in the Lower Mainland
- Prominent landscape architect from the Lower Mainland
- Current or former city planner or urban designer with the City of Surrey.

Prizes

There will be three, and three only classes of cash prizes. The best overall design may win up to \$25,000 (\$15,000 for 'best overall' and \$10,000 for 'Town Centre Site First Prize'), a sufficient amount to attract some of the most talented designers in the region and nation, especially given the current state of the construction industry. The jury may give as many honorary mentions (without cash awards) as it deems appropriate. The jury will also select 20 or 30 of the most interesting entries (which, of course, will include the winners) for a public exhibition during the 2010 Winter Games.

A total of \$75,000 in prize money will be distributed by the jury according to the following categories:

\$15,000 Grand Prize for Best Overall Design;

\$10,000 First Prize for each and all of the Five Town Centre competition sites;

Five Second Prizes of \$2,000 each, which may be awarded for designs on any site; and

Honourable mentions as deemed appropriate, but all without cash prizes.

Key Dates

July 8 – Start-up meeting with City of Surrey Planning Department

July 20 – TownShift proposal including budget and other details to Planning & Development Manager for incorporation into a Corporate Report for consideration and approval by Council.

July 27 – Surrey Council approval of competition Terms of Reference and budget so that the results can be announced during the 2010 Winter Games. If approved, website/graphic designer engaged and competition process to start immediately.

August 25 – Draft competition rules, policies and promotional materials to City of Surrey and AIBC for review.

September 24 – Public announcement of design competition and jury composition and potential sites. Registration begins, launch of competition website with all documentation, promotion of competition online and in the professional and general press.

November 17 – registration closes (November 1 to 30, questions and answers on competition rules and principles.)

January 6 – Competition entries due by electronic submission at website only.

January 15/16 – Jury meets, selects both 20 or 30 entries for public exhibition plus the one winner for each town centre

January 20 to February 3 – Printing of finalists and preparation of exhibition and related public programs. Posting of all entries on the website.

February 4 – Exhibition opens at the peak of pre-winter games press arrivals looking for non-sports stories. Public programs with speakers and discussion of the ideas for the Town Centres.
February 24 – Announcement of the winning schemes by the Mayor and Council, press releases out.

March 4 – Public panel with the winning designers and representatives of the development industry on “Where do we go from here?”, discussing implementing the ideas.

Organizing Committee Duties

Allen Aubert. MAIBC Architect, *Chair*

Chair and Coordinator, oversight of all competition processes

Key liaison with Surrey City Hall and Planning Department on policy issues

Treasurer and budget minder

Co-author of competition brief and guidelines

Institutional knowledge and information transfer

Background issues and documentation on Surrey history and urban form/character

John Sprung B.Sc Educator, *Documentation*

Supervision of visual and map content preparation for entrant’s packages

Liaison with City of Surrey on information issues

Supervision of website consultant, uploading of submitted entries, visual documentation and printing of entries for exhibition

Institutional knowledge and information transfer

Background issues and documentation on Surrey history and urban form/character

Scott Kemp MIABC Architect, *AIBC Advisor*

Liaison with AIBC and other professional bodies

Promotion of the competition in professional circles

Co-author of competition brief and guidelines

Assistant treasurer and budget minder

Management of entrant’s queries and answers

Assistant to jury recruitment and liaison

Hospitality management and bookings

Trevor Boddy, M. Arch. Urban Designer, *Content + Communications*

Supervisor of competition content and policies

Principal author (the actual writing) of competition brief and all promotional and media materials

Information and policy transfer from prior management of design competitions

Manager of media relations and competition promotion, in consort with City of Surrey staff

Supervision of media and jury site tours

Content liaison/edit for website and promotional materials

Supervisor of public programs and exhibition

Jury recruitment and liaison, hospitality

Jean Lamontagne GM Planning and Development, *City of Surrey Liaison*

Represents City of Surrey interests and desires for the competition, key conduit for information, linkages to council and communications, financial oversight

Liaison for visual and map content preparation for entrant's packages

Micro-knowledge of competition site concerns and politics

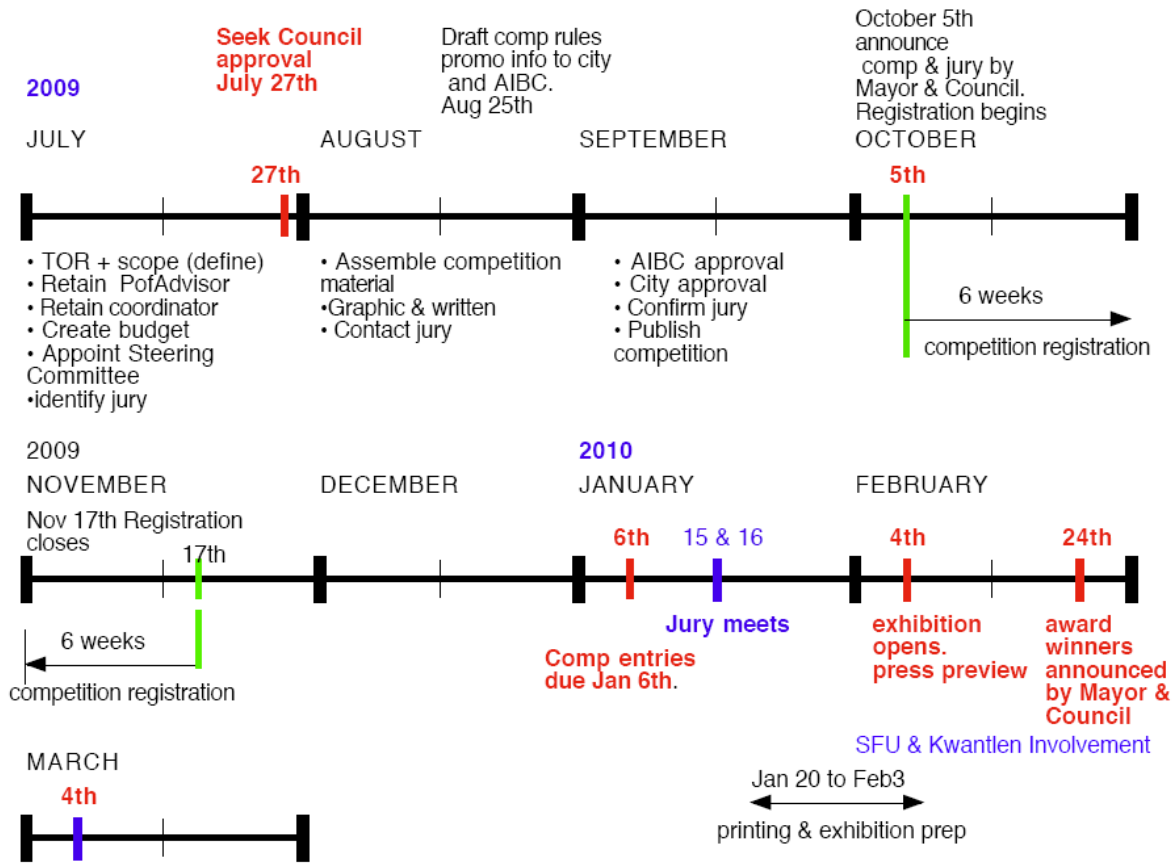
In-house promotion and explanation of the competition and related events

Editing/review of draft competition brief and promotional materials

Space-booking and arrangements for jury needs, exhibition and public events

Hosting for web-site

Junior staff availability for jury period and public programs



Public panel with winning designers and reps of dev industry on “ where do we go from here”

TownShift:
 An Ideas Competition for Surrey's
 Urban Hubs
 Revised July 20th 2009