

# City Services/Facilities and Population Growth

**CityPlan**

*Riley Park/South Cambie* **RPSC**

The City of Vancouver is responsible for providing certain services and facilities to residents. As the population grows, more services are needed. As well, residents and their needs change over time. In the future, Vancouver will have a higher proportion of older people and an increase in the number of children. In 2001, about half of our residents spoke English as a second language, and about 27% of the city's population lived in low-income households.

This fact sheet summarizes:

- the standards that the City tries to keep for City services relative to population; and
- the basic methods the City has to achieve these standards.

## Services/Facilities Standards

### Parks and Recreation

The Board of Parks and Recreation aims to provide 1.1 hectares of "neighbourhood park" for every 1,000 new residents. Parks offer residents a variety of recreational, athletic and leisure activities. Some parks also have a natural or ecological focus.

Park Board land acquisition priorities are to expand existing parks or create new parks in "park-deficient" neighbourhoods, to create new parks in neighbourhoods experiencing significant population growth, and to acquire land of "special merit" including land on the waterfront.

The Board of Parks and Recreation aims to provide 1.2 square feet of community centre space per capita. This can be reached by expanding an existing community centre or the construction of a new community centre.

Throughout the City, residents of Vancouver have access to nine indoor swimming pools. In keeping with the Aquatic Services Plan (2002) the Board is undertaking the development of seven better designed pools: one new "city-wide pool", two "community pools" and four renovated "neighbourhood pools". This reconfigured aquatic system will provide a higher level of service to existing and new residents than is currently the case.

Eight ice rinks are distributed throughout the city. Parks & Recreation are currently working on a long-term renewal plan for these facilities.

Funds for new parks, upgrading existing parks, new community facilities and expansion to existing facilities come from four major sources:

- a) the Park Board's Capital Plan;
- b) contributions by non-profit partners and senior levels of government;
- c) Community Amenity Contributions (CACs), which can either be cash contributions or in-kind contributions (e.g. providing a new park as part of a new housing development);
- d) Development Cost Levies (DCLs), which can be used on parks but not on community recreation facilities.

### Childcare

The City's Child Development Coordinator monitors and facilitates the availability of licensed non-profit childcare throughout the City. It is the responsibility of the Child Development Coordinator to negotiate development cost levies, community amenity contributions and bonusing opportunities for child care facilities or endowments.

The City Council approved a strategic plan on childcare in the spring of 2002.

Further policy work is now underway, including a review of the standards for childcare places which developments are expected to contribute to.

Wherever possible new childcare facilities are integrated with new school and community/recreation facilities.

### Library Service

The Vancouver Public Library Board strategic plan, called "Area Services" provides a model for four levels of service.

- The Central Library acts as the resource library for the system and provides special collections and services not available elsewhere, in addition to serving its local community.
- Area Branches service their local communities and provide a complex reference service, materials and programs to a broader catchment area.
- Community Branches serve their local communities through a basic reference service and programs with a focus on recreational reading.
- Neighbourhood Branches provide a library presence in the community and offer popular reading and children's materials and programming.

The plan defines the space required to deliver each level of service and responds to the functionality, size, condition and location of the City's branch libraries. The branch system is divided into quadrants and the Area Services Model calls for one Area Branch and a combination of Community and Neighbourhood Branches per quadrant.

The Library's strategic plan for its branch facilities supports City Plan

Directions. The function of branch libraries conforms to the City Plan vision for neighbourhood centres and accessible community-based services, as the branch library is an access point to the resources of the whole library system. In that context the Vancouver Public Library Board has identified six priority branches for redevelopment over the next three Capital Plans: Kensington, Strathcona/Downtown Eastside, Riley Park, Kitsilano, Joe Fortes and Britannia.

Riley Park Branch Library operates from a small storefront location on Main Street. The long term plan is to offer a Neighbourhood Branch service from a 6,000 sq. ft. location in the Riley Park community.

### Achieving Added Services and Facilities

Meeting new needs involves two kinds of costs: capital costs (building the facility) and operating costs (staffing and running the facility and programs). CityPlan directions on Financial Accountability are to continue a cautious approach toward increasing City spending; and to redirect allocation of the City's budget towards achieving CityPlan directions, rather than looking to significant tax increases.

#### Capital Costs

Various sources are used for capital costs of new facilities:

- Direct City funding, through capital borrowing that is paid back from taxes. There is a vote every three years on a Capital Plan.
- Funds from Development Cost Levies (DCLs). These levies are paid by most new developments ( e.g., residential projects with less than four dwelling units are exempted). At present DCLs may be used to fund park land, park development, child day care, replacement housing, and infrastructure (i.e., transportation and utilities).

DCLs only cover some of the service needs. Other mechanisms include:

- Community Amenity Contributions (CACs). These are charged when a rezoning takes place and are applied against the additional density created by the rezoning.
- Acquisition through subdivision. On larger subdivisions, the City can acquire park and school sites. However, these are rare in Vancouver.
- Fundraising, sponsorship, concessions, direct marketing. Both the Library and the Park Board have used these means to generate funds in the past.

More details on DCLs and CACs are available in Fact Sheet 1.3.3.

#### Operating Costs

Various methods are used to cover operating costs:

- Direct funding through the City operating budget, which comes from property taxes as well as investments;
- Fees for service. Fees and memberships for recreation facilities, and for use of childcare facilities;
- Senior government funding. Funds traditionally available from the Provincial government (and Federal government, via the Province) for certain programs have been curtailed, and are likely to be insignificant in future; and
- Fundraising, sponsorship, concessions, etc.

#### Sources

Census of Canada, 2001

City of Vancouver Planning Department

City of Vancouver Social Planning Department

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

Vancouver Public Library