

The National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic

Rezoning Application

A Presentation to City of North Vancouver Council

by Isabel Gordon, Waterfront Project Manager

Thank you your Worship, Members of Council

As you are already aware, the City of North Vancouver proposes to create *The National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic* as a national and regional attraction at The Pier development site in Lower Lonsdale.

The Vision

More than a museum, the *National Maritime Centre* (NMC) will be the destination for people to celebrate, discover and participate in the unique maritime fabric of the west coast and the Arctic.

The Centre will be an entire site dedicated to maritime experiences and learning – a hub and gathering place for all things maritime. To this end, close and meaningful partnerships with the community, the maritime world,

the VPA, First Nations, educational institutions, and business and tourism organizations, will be key to its success.

The Centre's indoor and outdoor spaces will have the capacity to host events such as business forums and trade shows, sea festivals, film festivals and education programs, as well as private corporate and community events.

The facility itself will serve as a training and education centre for all aspects of maritime activities such as boating safety and restoration, promoting active, experiential learning on the water and on land.

Interactive and educational exhibits will celebrate national and regional stories from the maritime world in a way that is entertaining and inspiring for visitors and residents alike. It will bring alive the history of Pacific shipbuilding, Pacific immigration, Asia–Pacific trade, and First Nations coastal stories in a way that will be historically compelling and in a world-class venue that will be second-to-none.

And the Centre will serve not just as a destination in itself, but as a link to other destinations on the North Shore, and along the beautiful BC coastal waters all the way to Alaska and the North.

The North Shore Location

The National Maritime Centre is proposed to be located at the foot of Lonsdale in the City of North Vancouver, at the former Versatile Pacific Shipyards site now known as The Pier. The specific location within the site includes parcels 9 and 10 and the open space between the existing buildings on these parcels.

Studies to-date conclude that this location is ideal from an historical and heritage standpoint. A significant part of BC's shipbuilding industry was once situated on the site and the *St. Roch*, and many other famous ships, were built there. It is located at the centre of Canada's largest and busiest port and is within clear view of downtown Vancouver, and served by the Seabus, an excellent and unique Harbour ferry that is a key part of the regional transit system. Just east of the site is the Washington Marine group's Panamax Dry Dock, a site of great potential public interest, along

with other adjacent Vancouver Port facilities. Immediately to the west are Lonsdale Quay, with its food service, market, shops, and hotel, and the colourful and interesting Washington Marine Cates Tugs operation.

Heritage Precinct

When a facility such as the National Maritime centre is proposed, the immediate question that springs to mind is “Who is going to pay for this?” This is a very important question, and City staff have worked very hard and very creatively to come up with an answer to it, one which does not involve a subsidy from any level of government, including the municipal. There are two reasons for this:

First, the City of North Vancouver is a small municipality, with only 5 square miles and 45,000 people, fiscally conservative, and unable to take on the responsibility of supporting a national institution as a charge on the public purse. At the same time, the Canadian federal and Provincial Governments have made it clear that, while they are supportive of the concept, and willing to consider making the capital investment to create the facility, they also are not willing to commit to ongoing operational support.

Secondly, and even more important for the future of this facility, however, is the somewhat new notion that, as a service to the public, such an institution should in fact be oriented towards the public, by being forced, if you will, to offer the programs and services that the public wants to buy. An institution that is in this position operates quite differently than one positioning itself to obtain governmental funding. With no need to play politics, and every need to 'appeal to the market', such an institution is far more likely to make the choices that will ensure its popularity and success. This is the new model for arts institutions, which, worldwide, are finding that while governments are willing to create conditions of success, success itself must come from interpreting the organizations own mandate, and organizing its affairs and partnerships, in a way that makes it appealing to the general public.

The responsibility the City of North Vancouver is proposing to take on, then, is not to provide an operating subsidy to the National Maritime Centre, but rather to create the conditions of success that will allow the NMC to operate as an independent entity, without a subsidy.

To create these conditions of success, the City of North Vancouver proposes to create a Shipyards Historic Precinct (SHP) around the Centre's proposed location, to act as a manager of the entire site. To support the NMC, the SHP will feature restored historic shipyard buildings and a deepwater pier, outdoor classrooms, a seawall and a pedestrian plaza. It will also provide visitors with a view of the working waterfront.

The SHP goes far beyond this, however. This waterfront site is located directly across the harbour from the new Vancouver Trade and Convention Centre. This area is ideally positioned to work with the VTCC and other tourism partners to co-ordinate fee-paying events and visitors. The SHP will also include a significant retail component, with up to 17,500 sq ft of leasable space in Parcels 7 and 8, along with another 18,500 sq ft of leasable space in the NMC building itself, providing projected lease revenues in excess of \$1.6m (on 26,000 sq ft), which can be used for the short and long term maintenance and replacements needs of the facilities in the precinct, plus a significant annual operational subsidy to the NMC. This retail precinct will include waterfront restaurants, retail shops and major event venues to complement the other revenue generators included as part of the Centre. In other words, the City is creating a Shipyards

Historic Precinct Trust to manage the site as a whole and to ensure the financial sustainability of the National Maritime Centre. After providing for maintenance, the Trust will dedicate the excess revenue stream from the precinct's retail and venue components to the operation of the Centre.

The Proposal

The Centre will occupy the site and buildings located on Parcel 9 and 10. Included in the site is the north-south open space located between the existing buildings which will likely be developed with a new structure for housing the dry-land vessel display part of the Centre's program. The maximum building program anticipated for the Centre will be 10,200 square metres (110,000 square feet). Certain exhibits (i.e the dry-land vessel display) require a very tall space. As such, a maximum height of 30 metres (100 feet) is requested as part of this zoning amendment.

As well as land and buildings, the Centre will require water area to accommodate the exemplary range of boats and ships that comprise a key aspect of the exhibitry.

The form and character of the Centre will be both traditional and contemporary. That is, where existing, historic buildings are reused they will be developed in a manner that respects their heritage. New buildings, if required, will be designed to complement the precinct while utilizing more contemporary forms and materials. This approach is consistent with accepted best practices recognized by heritage groups and agencies across Canada.

The National Maritime Centre will bring to North Vancouver, British Columbia and Canada a nationally significant cultural amenity that will be of lasting benefit, to both citizens and visitors, in telling the maritime story of our country.

In summary I would like to emphasis the following four points:

1. To ensure success of the Maritime Centre the City requires ownership not just Parcel 9, which has previously been negotiated between the developer and the City, but also of Parcel 10, which is included in this rezoning submission.

2. The NM Centre concept requires additional water access to the water on the east side of the pier for a heritage marina, the mooring of historic boats and the restoration of boats. Creation of this access also forms a part of this application.

3. The requirement for operational support to the NM Centre in the previously-developed business model was estimated to be in the region of half-a-million dollars each year. Provincial and Federal funding for the capital works will not be forthcoming unless the global operational costs have been identified and a corresponding revenue stream has been developed. To realize the conditions of success outlined earlier, a substantial amount of the revenue stream must come from the Shipyards Historic Precinct which includes parcels 7 and 8.

4. Finally, It is important to the success of the NM Centre and the economic development of Lower Lonsdale to have an integrated approach to all the Pier sites. This application accelerates the development of the whole area, which means the NM Centre

would open having a completed hotel and not one in the middle of construction.

The City has been deeply concerned about the development of the Shipyards site for almost 15 years, since the 1992 closure of the Versatile operation. This is a key site for the City and for the North Shore. Waterfront project staff feel that the model we have now developed meets the conditions for success on this site, and will bring a major attraction of national significance to the North Shore, on a cost-neutral basis. It is to create the possibility of making this project cost-neutral, and to accelerate the development of this crucial City site, that staff have negotiated, with Pinnacle International, the OCP/rezoning package you see before you tonight.

We have many bridges yet to cross in making this project a reality, but we have every reason to believe that the significant level of community and governmental support required does exist. We therefore are pleased to recommend this OCP/rezoning package to Council for your consideration.