

RE: B. C. PLACE REPORT NO. 3

ITEM	10
MANAGER'S REPORT NO.	37
COUNCIL MEETING	1983 05 24

MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendations of the Director Planning & Building Inspection be adopted.

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TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER 1983 May 17

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

SUBJECT: B. C. PLACE REPORT NO. 3

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council express to the B.C. Place Development Corporation, the GVRD and the City of Vancouver its continued serious concern with the potentially high concentration of commercial office space at B.C. Place particularly in relation to the balance of jobs to labour force, transportation and Regional Town Centre objectives within the Livable Regional Program.
2. THAT Council re-state its request to the B.C. Place Development Corporation and the City of Vancouver to support the Livable Region Program by substantially reducing the provision for potential commercial office space at B.C. Place.
3. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to the Minister responsible for B.C. Place (Hon. Stephen Rogers).

REPORT

SUMMARY

This report is submitted in response to a letter dated 1983 May 09 from Mr. P. Manning of B. C. Place inviting comments from the Municipality on Report Number 3 published by B.C. Place which outlines their proposals for an overall development framework to guide development at B.C. Place.

1.0 BACKGROUND

Appearing on the Council Agenda of 1983 May 16 was a letter from Mr. Paul Manning of British Columbia Place forwarding a copy of their Report Number 3 and inviting comments from the Municipality on its contents. Report Number 3 schematically outlines the revised plans for the development of B.C. Place which will form the basis of more detailed presentations to Vancouver City Council at the end of May.

Municipal staff last reported on this subject in Item 4, Manager's Report No. 19, Council meeting 1982 March 22 (see attached) in which serious concern was expressed about the possible implications the proposed seven million square feet of office space at B.C. Place could have on the Livable Region Program, particularly in relation to a better balancing of jobs and labour force within sub-areas of the region and an increased decentralization of office development within Regional Town Centres.

2.0 THE REVISED PLAN

The revised overall development framework for B.C. Place reflects numerous site planning changes that have occurred since the publication of the original concept plan. Nevertheless, the basic structure of the plan appears generally similar with a reduction in the developable area from 111 acres to 96 acres in the most recent statistics.

At the outset, we can state that the B.C. Place development concept has, in our opinion, many laudable elements that have the potential to provide a significant and positive contribution to the overall livability for the region as a whole. However, there still remains a serious concern that there has not been a commitment made to significantly reduce the total office commercial component of the plan. The total potential commercial space listed in the brochure amounts to 7,750,000 sq.ft. which is the same figure as contained in their previous concept summary sheet. Of the 7.75 million sq.ft., 3.50 million is designated for office commercial, 900,000 for hotel and 3.35 million for "mixed use" commercial. In response to an enquiry as to definition of "mixed use" commercial, representatives of B.C. Place indicated that up to 1,000,000 sq.ft. could be for retail with a potential for residential development for the balance. However, assurances could not be given that this designation would not result in office development being its major component. The result is therefore more of a change in terminology than in concept as far as the commercial office space component is concerned.

A central issue, as it affects this Municipality and the region as a whole, is the degree to which B.C. Place will affect the rate of downtown employment growth and distribution of office space consumption in the region. If, in fact, over 7 million sq.ft. of office space is ultimately developed at B.C. Place, then this project will have resulted in a substantial increase in jobs over resident workers thereby compounding the jobs to labour force imbalance in the Vancouver downtown area and the outlying areas of the region which runs counterproductive to several objectives underlying the Livable Region Program. From this perspective, a greater commitment to housing rather than office opportunities should be an objective at B.C. Place and/or adjacent areas.

The GVRD has consistently shared this view as can be seen from this excerpt from their recent letter on the subject to B.C. Place Development Corporation:

"GVRD has strongly supported BC Place's housing component as a complement to expected downtown employment growth. We have, however, objected to proposals for office development which encourage an excessive concentration of office employment in downtown Vancouver and reduce the potential for development of regional town centres. The appended transportation study indicates that there will be transportation benefits from the residential development. This benefit will not be realized, however, if the promotion of British Columbia Place increases downtown office development one to one and a half million square feet above that

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which would otherwise occur. In our view, governments should lead the way, providing a demonstration for the development and business communities, in promoting an office development pattern which makes the most sense for regional transportation and urban quality. The encouragement of an excessive office concentration in downtown Vancouver is not appropriate."

In response to Mr. Manning's invitation to comment on the latest pamphlet summarizing the B.C. Place development framework, staff would recommend that our previous request to substantially reduce the provision for commercial office space at B.C. Place be re-stated.

JSB/jce
Attach.



A. L. PARR
DIRECTOR PLANNING &
BUILDING INSPECTION

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COUNCIL MEETING	1983 05 24	1982 03 22

RE: LETTER FROM MICHAEL J. AUDAIN, EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT, POLYGON PROPERTIES LIMITED, SUITE 1604, 1166 ALBERNI STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C., V6E 3Z3, (ITEM 5e); AND MR. PAUL MANNING, VICE PRESIDENT, CORPORATE RELATIONS, BRITISH COLUMBIA PLACE, 650 WEST GEORGIA STREET, VANCOUVER, B.C. V6B 4N9 (ITEM 5b), WHICH APPEARED ON THE COUNCIL AGENDA 1982 MARCH 15 PROPOSED B. C. PLACE DEVELOPMENT

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MUNICIPAL MANAGER'S RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT the recommendations of the Director Planning & Building Inspection be adopted.

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PLANNING DEPARTMENT
1982 March 16

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING & BUILDING INSPECTION
SUBJECT: PROPOSED B.C. PLACE DEVELOPMENT

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT Council indicate to the B.C. Place Corporation, the G.V.R.D. Board and the City of Vancouver its serious concern with respect to the likely implications the proposed seven million square feet of office space at B.C. Place will have on the Livable Region Program, particularly in relation to the proportion of employment prospects in Regional Town Centres and its balance of jobs to labour force and transportation objectives.
2. THAT Council request the B.C. Place Corporation and the City of Vancouver to support the Livable Region Program by substantially reducing the provision for commercial office space at B.C. Place.
3. THAT Council request the City of Vancouver to support the objectives of the Livable Region Program by considering reducing the amount of its office zoning potential elsewhere in the downtown core by an equivalent amount mutually agreed to at B.C. Place, by the City of Vancouver and B.C. Place, with the provision of housing opportunities being given priority as the principal replacement use.
4. THAT a copy of this report be forwarded to The Greater Vancouver Regional District Board, the Minister responsible for B.C. Place (Hon. Stephen Rogers), the City of Vancouver and Mr. M. Audain of Polygon Properties.

REPORT

1.0 SUMMARY

Appearing on the agenda of 1982 March 15 was a letter dated 1982 March 04 from Mr. M. J. Audain of Polygon Properties Limited expressing his concern that the large amount of office space projected in the conceptual plan for B.C. Place could have a serious negative impact on commercial development in regional town centres such as Metrotown. This report provides an overview of the B.C. Place project and responds to the concern as outlined in Mr. Audain's letter. In addition, this report provides an initial response to Mr. P. Manning's letter appearing on the 1982 March 15 Agenda.

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2.0 OVERVIEW OF B.C. PLACE

The project covers 232 acres of B.C. Place Development Area lands on the North Shore of False Creek extending from Hornby Street in the West to Quebec Street on the East. The lands are currently zoned Urban in the Official Regional Plan. Of the total 232 acres, 35 acres and 86 acres have been designated for transportation and open space/public facilities respectively leaving a net developable area of 111 acres. The net developable area of 111 acres is comprised of 80 acres residential and mixed residential/commercial, 19 acres commercial (office) and 12 acres "future Urban" (primarily commercial office). A summary of the major development components within these areas is as follows:

- A major office commercial core in the vicinity of the B.C. Place Stadium. The concept plan calls for up to 7.7 million square feet of office, commercial and local service space on 30 acres of land over the next twenty years.
- Residential development of up to 12,000 units with an average density between 125 and 150 units per acre accommodating over 20,000 people in a full range of housing types.
- Development of a 60,000 seat stadium occupying about 20 acres between the Cambie Street Bridge and the Georgia Viaduct.
- One or two first-class hotels near the stadium.
- A variety of "people places" at a Provincial Public Park possibly including the B.C. Forest Foundation Centre, the Vancouver Arts Science and Technology Centre, a "Children's World", a waterfront theatre, etc.
- An upgraded transportation infrastructure involving public transit, rapid transit, local and major parks and parking.

2.1 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT TIMING

Construction of the B.C. Place Stadium is under way with completion scheduled for mid-1983. The proposed timetable for the residential and commercial components is as follows:

	Pre Expo (1982-1987)	Post Expo (1988-1996)	Total
Residential	up to 4,500 units	5,500-750 units	12,000 units
Major Office Space	3.0 million sq. ft.	4.0 million sq.ft.	7.0 million sq.ft.
Hotel	800 - 1,000 rooms		1,000 rooms
Local Retail	50,000-100,000 sq.ft.	100,000 sq.ft.	200,000 sq. ft.
Other Commercial	200,000 sq.ft.	300,000 sq.ft.	500,000 sq. ft.

3.0 REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 BALANCE OF JOBS TO LABOUR FORCE

The Livable Region Program, as one of its major objectives, promotes a balance of jobs to labour force in each part of the region to reduce commuting time and transportation costs. A continuing problem is the very high concentration of jobs in the Vancouver City area while most of the residential growth is occurring outside in the suburban Municipalities of Delta, Surrey, Richmond and Coquitlam.

There is already an imbalance of jobs to labour force within the City of Vancouver, especially in the downtown area. In 1976 the ratio was 3.66 workers to every member of the labour force resident in downtown Vancouver. That figure had increased to an estimated 4.64 in 1980. The aim of the Livable Region Program has been to reduce the ratio by 1986 by emphasizing more residences downtown and more jobs in the suburbs. B.C. Place's projected office space, if realized,

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would result in an additional 30-35,000 workers in the downtown peninsula. Assuming 10,000 people (or about one-half of the projected population of B.C. Place) will be in the labour force, there would be a net increase in jobs over resident workers of between 20,000-25,000 thereby compounding the jobs to labour force imbalance in the Vancouver downtown area and the outlying areas of the Region. From this perspective, more housing rather than office opportunities should be an objective at B.C. Place and/or adjacent areas.

3.2 REGIONAL TOWN CENTRES

The regional town centres element of the Livable Region Program, which includes the Burnaby Metrotown area, was proposed to bring shopping and cultural facilities, and most particularly, jobs closer to where people live. The GVRD, in reviewing the B.C. Place proposal, have concluded that commercial development of the magnitude proposed will reinforce the downtown's role as the preferred location for commercial office uses and cultural and entertainment activities. It is expected the B.C. Place will be competing with regional town centre locations offering sites with lower rents and/or higher amenities than the downtown core area. In the opinion of GVRD Planning Staff the possibility of developing four regional town centres and achieving a better distribution of employment opportunities throughout the region is called into question by the scale of the B.C. Place office component when combined with the expected rate of office development elsewhere in the downtown over the next 10-15 years. Over the last decade, downtown Vancouver added more office space than all other central municipalities combined - almost 5.5 million square feet. If decentralization of significant office development to regional town centres is to occur then coordinated policy assistance from all levels of government will be needed to counteract the continuing trend towards the centralization of office related employment opportunities in the Vancouver City core area. The injection of the B.C. Place office development, as an additional inner core location for office development, in our opinion, will only accelerate this trend and undoubtedly have an adverse affect on this Municipality's attempts to develop the office space component of the Metrotown Development Plan.

The reason for our concern is that B.C. Place will not create any significant employment that will change the regional demand for office space. Rather, B.C. Place will represent an increase in the supply of office space both in the downtown area and the region as a whole. As such B.C. Place therefore provides for office developments that will replace development that could occur elsewhere in the region. It has been estimated that to the year 2,000 the region could expect an increased demand for office space in the order of 48 million square feet. With seven million square feet being proposed at B.C. Place, this equates to approximately 14.6 percent of all office development in the region over the next twenty years. Alternatively expressed, City of Vancouver staff have indicated that seven million square feet of office space equates to about 8 to 10 years of office space demand for the downtown core. By way of comparison, the Burnaby Metrotown Development Plan had provided an estimated 1996 office space target of 2.6 million square feet. The development of the office space component at B.C. Place to the magnitude proposed should be a concern not only to this Municipality for the reasons cited but to the Region as a whole.

4.0 PAST AND PROPOSED ACTIONS

At their meeting of 1981 July 14 and 1981 July 29 the GVRD Planning Committee and Board respectively moved to take several steps to help ensure that the regional implications associated with the B.C. Place project are more fully understood by all those involved in the planning process for the development. As a result of discussions with B.C. Place officials, there is apparently a willingness to limit the committed office development to a potential of 2.5-3 million square feet in the area surrounding the new stadium, leaving a decision on the remaining four million square feet in the "future urban"

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area until after Transpo 86. B.C. Place describes their attitude as "agnostic" on the question of whether significant office development can be attracted to regional town centres. City of Vancouver staff generally support the 2.5-3 million square feet office figure in the viaduct area but propose residential rather than office development for the "future urban" area.

In view of the preceeding, it is recommended that the Burnaby Municipal Council indicate its concern to the GVRD, the City of Vancouver and B.C. Place Corporation about the magnitude of the proposed office space component at the development. More specifically it is recommended that Council advise that from a policy viewpoint it would prefer to see the office component potential substantially reduced to at least the 2.5 million square feet ceiling mentioned, but that this represent the final rather than first stage total for the project. It is further recommended that if the City of Vancouver considers this site to represent a beneficial office development area within the downtown area, then the City of Vancouver be requested to consider its office zoning potential elsewhere in the core area by an equivalent amount provided for at B.C. Place with housing opportunities being given priority as the replacement use. This would not alter the magnitude of the downtown core office space but at least such an approach would not further compound the problems of realizing office space decentralization particularly in regional town centres.

JSB/nb

Alan

A. L. Parr
 DIRECTOR PLANNING &
 BUILDING INSPECTION

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