



Item
Meeting..... 2009 Jul 20

COUNCIL REPORT

TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2009 July 15

FROM: DIRECTOR ENGINEERING **FILE:** 38100 04
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING *Reference:* 485 MacDonal d Ave.

SUBJECT: PARKING GARAGE AT 485 MACDONALD AVENUE

PURPOSE: To address security concerns and maintenance costs of the parkade.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council endorse the alternate management approach of the City parking facility as outlined in this report.
2. **THAT** Council allocate \$40,000 from Capital Contingency for the installation of a security system and entry gate to the public parking facility at 485 MacDonal d.
3. **THAT** Council authorize staff to enter into an agreement with West Coast Community Homes Society for the maintenance of the parking facility as outlined in this report.
4. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Heights Merchants Association, 4019 Hastings Street, Burnaby, B.C., V5C 2J1, and to West Coast Community Homes Society, #201-1646 West 7th Avenue, Vancouver, B.C. V6J 1S5.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The subject parking facility is located at 485 MacDonal d Avenue, at the southwest corner of Hastings Street and MacDonal d Avenue, with access being taken from MacDonal d Avenue (see *attached* Sketch #1). The site is comprised of two airspace parcels and one remainder parcel, all of which are owned by the City, and which was developed in partnership with VanCity Enterprises for public parking, affordable housing and commercial space. Airspace Parcel 1 accommodates the at-grade commercial space and is leased to Dr. Jaffer of the Heights Medical and Laser Centre. Airspace Parcel 2 is the first two levels of an underground parking garage, which is used for public parking in line with the Hastings Street Area Plan's network of City-owned public parking lots in the Heights commercial corridor. 57 parking spaces are designated for municipal public parking purposes in Airspace Parcel 2. The remainder parcel accommodates the 43 affordable rental units within townhouse and low-rise built forms, with related parking being accommodated within the third level of underground parking. The remainder parcel accommodating the residential use is leased from the City for a 60-year period by West Coast Community Homes Society who manages the 43 rental units.

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2.0 DISCUSSION

The subject public parking facility is underutilized, partially as a result of concerns for personal safety at this location. Field observations show utilization of about 50% of the public parking spaces during business hours. In contrast, public on-street parking spaces are more frequently used and occupied. Similar safety concerns have resulted in almost no usage of the 43 underground parking spaces allocated for residents, both day and night. As a result, this has also increased parking pressures in the surrounding streets.

More recently, concerns related to public safety in the parkade have been raised by the City's community partners (Heights Merchants Association, West Coast Community Homes Society). These concerns are substantiated by the RCMP having responded to numerous 911 calls for assistance related to the underground parking garage. In particular, since 2008 November 21, the RCMP recorded 51 calls for service for such reasons as: loitering, disturbance, theft, mischief, trespassing and assault. During that same time period, the RCMP made up to 150 additional visits for surveillance purposes. Both the City and West Coast Community Homes Society are investing increasingly significant resources in an attempt to maintain the parking facility at a standard which is clean and safe for residents, commercial patrons and employees. The open accessibility of the public parking facility is contributing to the difficulties in keeping it well maintained and secure. Currently, the City's share of annual maintenance costs exceeds \$20,000.

3.0 PROPOSAL

In an effort to resolve the aforementioned issues, staff have worked with the RCMP, Heights Merchants Association, West Coast Community Homes Society, B.C Housing and the nearby businesses, toward a workable solution. Several options were considered, ranging from security guard presence, better lighting and camera surveillance. However, each of the options considered by staff had cost and efficacy issues. As such, it is recommended that a security system and gate be installed, effectively closing the public parking portion of the parking garage. The closure of the public parking is proposed to be on a temporary basis for one year, as suggested by both the City and West Coast Community Homes Society. Consulting with the signatories to the leases for Airspace Parcel 1 (Dr. Jaffer) and the remainder parcel (West Coast Community Homes Society), as well as with various business owners along the 3900 and 4000 block Hastings Street, there appears to be general support for the proposal inasmuch as it would improve safety and security at the subject location. Use of the parking facility, therefore, will primarily be by the residential and commercial uses on the subject site. An option is also being explored to make available reserved paid parking within the secured facility to surrounding business owners and staff following installation of the entry gate.

The cost of the proposed security system and entry gate to the parking garage is estimated to be \$40,000. It is recommended that this be funded by the City from Capital Contingency. In exchange, West Coast Homes would be responsible for the maintenance of the parking facility

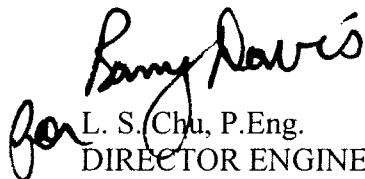
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including the security gate itself. Staff would conclude with West Coast Homes the final terms of an agreement for the one year temporary closure.

The need for extending the temporary closure, or for making any minor modifications to the above arrangement, will be reviewed by staff on an administrative basis upon the anniversary date of the facility's closure. Should it become necessary to make significant changes to the proposal outlined in this report or to respond to new conditions or circumstances, further Council direction and/or approval would be sought at that time.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The public parking facility at 485 MacDonald is underutilized due to safety concerns and has been difficult to maintain due to its open accessibility. As a result, increasing resources from Engineering and the RCMP have been required to address the ongoing issues. After consultation with the RCMP, the Heights Merchants Association and other stakeholders, it is recommended that the public parking facility be temporarily closed to the public for one year. It is also recommended that a security system and entry gate be installed at a cost of \$40,000 funded from Capital Contingency. After one year, the situation will be reassessed to determine the success of the changes and to renew or modify the arrangements as required for the benefit of all stakeholders.

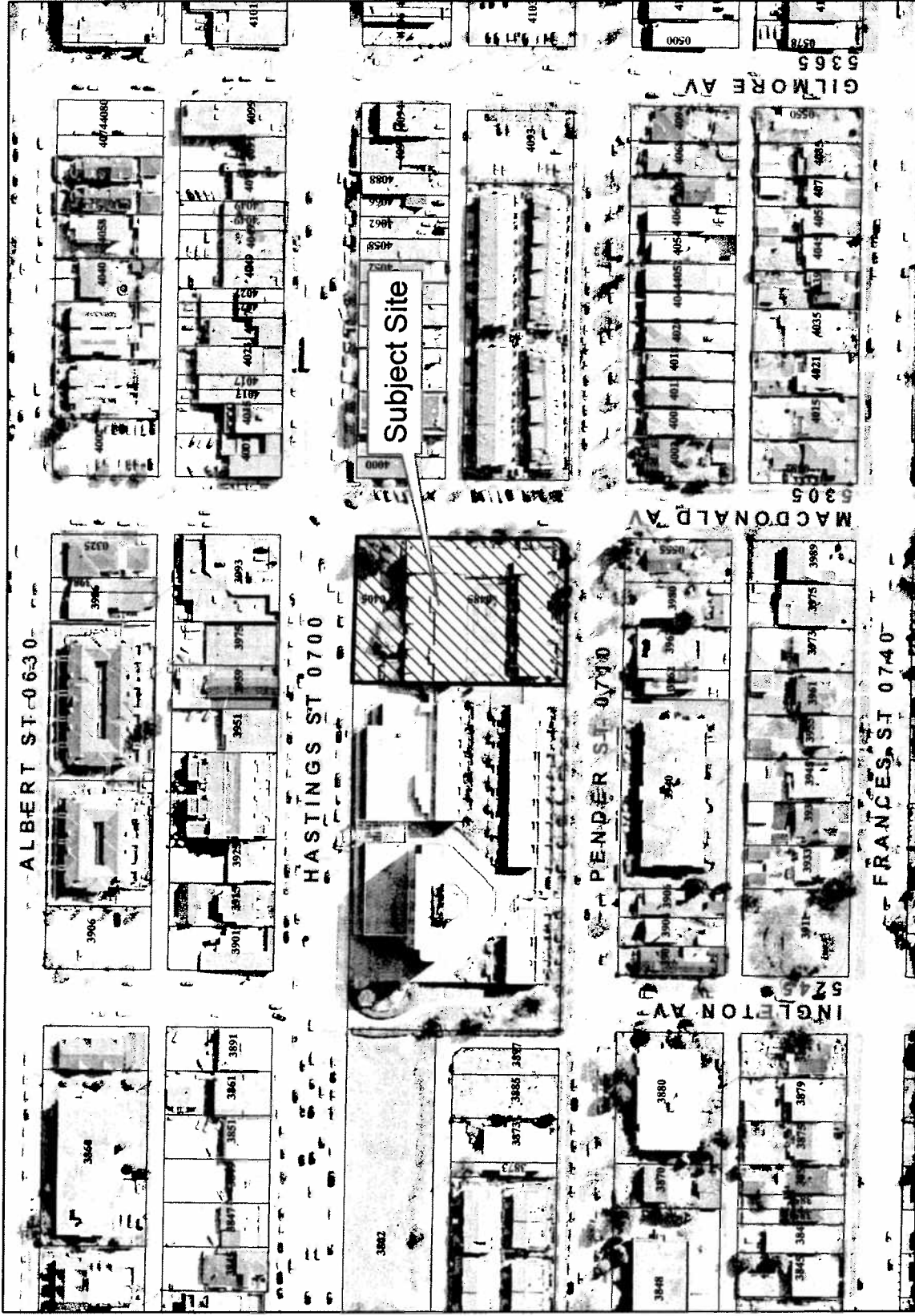

for L. S. Chu, P.Eng.
DIRECTOR ENGINEERING


B. Luksun
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

EK:gk

Attachment

cc: City Manager
Director Finance
City Solicitor
Chief Licence Inspector
Chief Building Inspector
Director Parks, Recreation & Cultural Services
Officer-In-Charge RCMP



City Public Parking Facility - 485 MacDonald Avenue
Proposed Gate Installation