

The Centre Feasibility Study **Phase 1 Summary**

Development planning for a new LGTB community centre in Vancouver began several years ago. Last fall, the Feasibility Study portion of that plan was officially launched with Phase 1, the community consultation stage. Between October 12 and December 20, 885 people made their views known through a variety of ways, including 13 focus groups, two town hall meetings, an online survey, and a paper survey.

More than 95% of those who participated were in favour of creating a new centre. They want it to be clean, welcoming and inclusive with something for everyone. They want programs and activities to include health and educational workshops, social gatherings as well as art and cultural celebrations for all ages. Some specific populations such as youth and the transgender communities identified needs regarding housing and employment. Directed outreach is needed to make the proposed centre more welcoming to people of colour. A housing component and home support programs for LGTB elders were also suggested.

The majority of respondents want a new centre to be located in the West End of Vancouver but many also want a presence in other neighbourhoods, particularly the Eastside. Some want programs linked with existing city community centres throughout the Lower Mainland. More than 70% of survey respondents, or 545 people, are willing to volunteer their time at a new centre. More than 70% said they would contribute to the development of a new centre, 58% specifically offered to help fundraise and more than 50% said they would contribute financially to the on-going operations of a new centre.

Participants had ideas for partnerships to help a centre become a reality. Many see a natural link with organizations like Vancouver Coastal Health, Vancouver Public Library, BC Housing and Parks and Recreation Department of the City of Vancouver. They outlined private and non-profit groups who could benefit from partnering or co-locating with the project. They see a need for all three levels of government to support the vision developed here.

The challenges identified were marketing, corporate and business support, the scope of need versus the availability of sustainable funding, stable and reliable government support, leadership, unity within the LGTB communities and location opportunities.

Two models are presented:

- 1) Purchase or build a new centre at 1170 Bute Street site or at a comparable site. In 2004, the owners of 1170 Bute expressed interest in partnering on this project. The design at that time included street level access as well as a building of 20,000 sq ft and 4 floors. Other features identified were:
 - 40 feet fronting a Bute Street Plaza, 125 feet fronting Davie Street

- Increase the size of the building to four stories, totalling approximately 20,000sq feet, including green space or deck access.
 - Main floor- space for open bright reception, credit union or retail business tenant (café) or partner, reception area could be large enough for small gallery space as well.
 - Second floor- multi purpose activity space/meeting space, deck, roof access, open areas showcasing art and culture.
 - Third floor – community centre space, library, multi-use meeting/film room, medical clinic, program space for other LGTB groups, e.g. employment program or counselling
 - Fourth floor – community centre offices, and tenant offices for LGTB organizations willing to co-locate, common administrative support services.
- 2) Develop a new central hub space with several satellite spaces. This model provides smaller spaces but more flexibility than model one. In terms of the hub space it would mean finding a new accessible space for the administrative operations of a new centre, including some programming and leasing or sharing several smaller spaces with other agencies to ensure the geographical distribution of programs and activities. The identified features of the central hub space were:
- street level access, open, light, possibly gallery space and library attached
 - reception, meeting room and administrative offices accessible to all
 - LGTB partnerships possible to share retail/street access space
 - Likely 3500-5000 sq ft needed
 - Support programs delivered out of this space but less than currently, majority of programming to happen in satellite spaces
 - A café nearby or run by partner willing to offer employment opportunities in conjunction with programming from a new centre
 - Likely located in the West End or downtown area near Skytrain.

Specifications will be developed and the capacity to create a new Centre will be measured in Phase 2. Regardless of the model chosen, however, the communities involved want to see this project through to completion and proudly open a new LGTB centre in Vancouver in the future.

PFAME/*The Centre* Board

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