

November 26, 2020

Mr. Tony Gugliotta
TransLink Board Chair

Dear Mr. Gugliotta,

Re: The Future Planning for Vancouver Waterfront Station and Current Office Tower Proposal (555 West Cordova Street, Vancouver)

We request TransLink's Board involvement in a key regional transportation issue: the future of the multimodal hub at Waterfront Station. The Downtown Waterfront Working Group is concerned that the proposed development will compromise future opportunities to improve connections, facilities, and services at the region's busiest transit centre.

Cadillac Fairview has proposed a 26 storey office tower, immediately adjacent to and hovering over Waterfront Station, at 555 West Cordova Street. First proposed in 2015, Cadillac Fairview has recently re-activated its Development Permit Application. The City has scheduled advisory committee reviews beginning in December 2020, prior to a decision at the Development Permit Board on March 22, 2021.

As a development permit application under the City's Downtown District zoning, it must comply with City regulations, guidelines, and policy. In the assessment of our experienced members, it does not meet with City regulatory and policy frameworks, including the conceptual physical planning framework in the Council-approved Central Waterfront Hub Framework (see attached). One of the main purposes of the Hub Framework was to determine the future expansion needs of the transportation hub.

City staff are currently working on a review of the Central Waterfront Area (see attached). Staff have asked all three landowners, Carrera Management, Cadillac Fairview, and Port of Vancouver to wait until this work is completed before they submit development proposals. Cadillac Fairview has decided to proceed with their application.

The public interest risks of allowing any development to proceed without a comprehensive regional transportation network and operational analysis of future Station hub needs are unacceptable.

We ask that TransLink Board request the City of Vancouver to suspend the development review process and seek a collaborative process with TransLink and the Province to determine future multimodal Station requirements, including:

- 1) **Long term transportation forecasts** to ensure adequate capacity, efficient and safe access to regional transit, buses, ferries, cruise ship terminal, planes, helicopters, taxis, car-share, bike share and bike storage.
- 2) **Physical space analysis** including a conceptual design of a station extension/galleria on the north side of the Waterfront Station; potential capacity increases for passenger ferry docking facilities/terminal; potential twinning of the passenger rail line; future North Shore transit options; possible high speed rail options; station amenities; potential use of the adjacent parking lot for future transit access, such as adding a second exit point from West Coast Express; natural disaster and extreme weather event preparedness; bike-share, etc.

- 3) **Business case analysis** to assess merits of the Station and related rail lands to be secured in public ownership. Complex station and land ownership patterns on the waterfront hamper efficient planning and operations. TransLink pays rent to Cadillac Fairview for transit operations and office space. We have been told that the amount of annual rent paid is information not available to the public. The current assessed value of Waterfront Station including the parking lot is \$75 million. The low assessment is a result of the heritage designation and discretionary rather than outright current zoning.
- 4) **A viable phasing plan** to maintain capacity, service and safety during construction.
- 5) **Maximum urban vitality** of the transportation hub to transform the waterfront and Waterfront Station into an inclusive, well-designed special public place for all to enjoy.

This proposed development, like many other office proposals in the Downtown, no longer requires parking to be provided other than disabled parking, furthering the future demand for transit. The City's and region's transportation policies have continued to evolve to respond to climate change imperatives and transportation choice. Accordingly, it is even more important to ensure that future options for expansion and flexibility are left open.

Thank you for considering this request. We would be happy to make a presentation to your Board. If you would like additional information, please call me at 604 250-7825 or email at cdemarco@telus.net.

Sincerely,



Christina DeMarco on behalf of the Downtown Waterfront Working Group

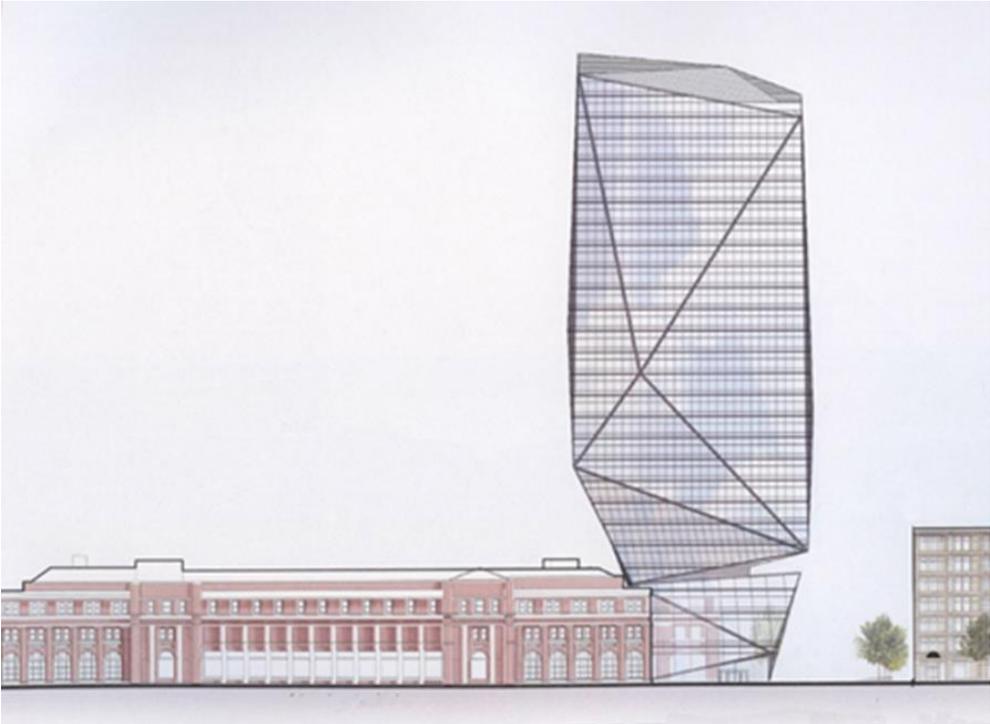
Steering Group of the Downtown Waterfront Working Group

- Tom Phipps, former City of Vancouver planner
- Mary Pynenburg, former Director of Planning, New Westminster
- Michael Alexander, Urbanist, and convenor of SFU City Conversations
- Charles Dobson, Professor Emeritus, Emily Carr University
- Frank Ducote, former City of Vancouver urban designer
- Gordon Price, former City of Vancouver councillor
- Richard Johnson, former City of Vancouver planner
- Christina DeMarco, former City/Regional planner
- Ray Spaxman, former Director of Planning, City of Vancouver
- Anthony Norfolk, former member of Vancouver Heritage Commission

Attachment: Background on City of Vancouver Waterfront Station Area Planning Policy



The Waterfront Station and parking lot are one land parcel, owned by Cadillac Fairview.



Proposed Cadillac Fairview Office tower (26 storeys and 383,000 square feet)

Central Waterfront Hub Framework, Approved by Council, 2009

In February 2007, Council authorized staff to undertake the Central Waterfront Hub Study. The City realized that as trip-making was shifting increasingly to transit, walking and cycling, the future requirements of the regional transportation hub needed to be assessed. They also saw the considerable place-making benefits that could be realized from a well-designed waterfront and transportation hub, as had been demonstrated in Europe and around the world. The Central Waterfront Hub Framework was adopted by Council in 2009. TransLink staff were somewhat involved in that study, however, most of the transportation work on future bus movements, transit passengers flows and logistics, and facilities was carried out by City staff

The Hub Framework clearly states that development should not proceed in advance of the design of transit facilities, including the expanded transit concourse, transit mode connections and land-marine terminal connections. It also states that development should not proceed in advance of road infrastructure, including the Granville Road Extension which is on Cadillac Fairview property. (see Page 44, Section 9. Phasing of the Central Waterfront Hub Framework)

<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/C031-central-waterfront-hub-framework-2009.pdf>

The Hub Framework is Council's current policy to guide development in the Station area.

Review of Central Waterfront, Approved by Council 2017

In October 2017, City Council approved a work program to complete a review of the Central Waterfront. The terms of reference are outlined below:

The Review will focus on the iconic northern shore of Vancouver's downtown waterfront, one of the most diverse and multi-modal transportation nodes in the world.

The review will build on the Central Waterfront Hub Framework (2009) and explore the broader waterfront interface with the Port Lands and Convention Centre activities. The review will recalibrate early aspirations to better align with the current opportunities and constraints within the area. Working together with the Port of Vancouver and TransLink, the work program will include the following tasks:

- Clarify the extent of waterfront lands to be included in the review
- Identify optimum infrastructure to service changing demands
- Explore ways to better integrate transit services and increase capacity to meet growing needs
- Explore ways to transform the hub into a world-class transportation interchange and a dynamic extension of the downtown to the waterfront.
- Advance a framework for a possible larger master plan process (future phase)

Source: Central Waterfront Review (Council report City Core 2050 and Related Planning Programs, October 17, 2017)