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## City of Kelowna

# MEMORANDUM

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**DATE:** June 22, 2004  
**FILE:** 1853-20  
**TO:** City Manager  
**FROM:** Manager Community Development & Real Estate  
**SUBJECT: CULTURAL DISTRICT DESIGN CHARETTE**  
**REPORT PREPARED BY: H. CHRISTY, SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER**

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### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT** Council endorse the Design Directions for the Cultural District generated in the Cultural District Charette held February 27-29, 2004 at the Rotary Centre for the Arts;

**AND THAT** Council direct the Planning and Corporate Services department to review the Design Directions identified in the Cultural District Charette and bring forward any necessary Zoning By-law and OCP Development Permit Guideline amendments that will achieve the form and character goals articulated in the Cultural District Charette;

**AND THAT** Council extend appreciation, on behalf of the City of Kelowna, to the Real Estate Foundation for its financial assistance in holding the Design Charette.

### **BACKGROUND:**

A charette is an intensive workshop held over a period of several days in which competing teams of design professionals and community representatives develop design solutions that address a specific issue, site or geographic area of the community. The Cultural District Design Charette was held over the weekend of February 27-29, 2004 in the Rotary Centre for the Arts. Fifty individuals representing the arts community, adjacent neighbourhoods, downtown, business and real estate interests worked in three groups with design professionals, coordinated by Urban Systems Ltd. and city staff, to develop three separate visions for the District. It was a highly focused, energy intensive weekend and produced some imaginative concepts.

Recognizing the initiatives put forth in the "Cultural District Implementation and Marketing Plan", and the progress being made in the coordination, strengthening and marketing of the District, the Cultural District Charette sought answers to the question: "What does the future Cultural District look like?"

The three teams, facilitated by three different urban design professionals took separate approaches, and over the course of the three day charrette, graphically presented their vision for the Cultural District.

## **DESIGN DIRECTIONS**

The three concept designs and the design directions are illustrated in the Cultural District Charette summary, available in hard copy and on CD.

Design Directions, which were distilled by Urban Systems from common elements, were:

### **Land Use and Programming**

All teams supported mixed use with commercial on ground floor levels and office, work studios and residential above. Special opportunities are advocated, including institutional / arts facilities such as expansion of the Theatre, Art Gallery and Museum and the development of additional educational facilities such as a Culinary Arts School and an Arts College. Civic, arts / museum institutional and residential land uses were proposed for the Civic Block as was the re-use of the Memorial Arena for a public market. Mixed use commercial development was proposed for Ellis Street. All teams dedicated the waterfront to public open space and proposed piers to enhance connections to the lake. Various uses were proposed for the piers including public promenades, water transit, Kelowna Yacht Club and housing.

### **Building / Architecture and Development**

All teams proposed low building heights within the Cultural District (3 – 6 storeys) with taller accent buildings in strategic locations and at the district's edges. Building heights are lower adjacent to the street, and upper floors of buildings are set back from the street to promote a pedestrian scale streetscape environment. Tower structures within the district are blended with the existing built form or are isolated as landmarks. Buildings are set back from the street to create entry nodes, public plazas, and streetscape amenity areas. Outside the Cultural District, high density tower development is proposed for the surrounding area.

### **Circulation / Mobility**

All plans called for maintaining Ellis Street as the main N / S route into the District. All other streets were treated with traffic calming measures to enhance pedestrian mobility. All groups identified Art Walk as the major N / S pedestrian route through the Cultural District. Sites were redeveloped to allow the Art Walk to continue straight through the District from Queensway Ave. north to Clement Ave. Smith Ave. and Doyle Ave. were identified as major E / W pedestrian routes with access over the lake extended via piers.

### **Public Spaces**

Important nodes were identified and used to guide public space development. A major public space was identified at the intersection of Art Walk and Smith Ave. All teams dedicated the waterfront to public open space.

### Streetscape

All teams emphasized the importance of creating pedestrian friendly streetscapes with wide tree lined sidewalks and interesting architectural features. Major pedestrian routes received a higher degree of streetscape enhancement. All teams proposed wide shady sidewalks, enhanced paving, low building heights adjacent to the street and articulated building facades to create a pedestrian oriented streetscape. Teams encouraged the integration of architectural features to create a dynamic and contemporary streetscape image; seating areas, public art and green space to create amenity areas. Teams proposed a variety of traffic calming measures to enhance the pedestrian environment throughout the Cultural District.

### Signs / Wayfinding

Teams used a combination of entry features, mid-block nodes, street hierarchies, landmark buildings and public art placement to create distinct precincts and provide way finding clues throughout the Cultural District.

### Parking

All teams identified the existing surface parking as detracting from the Cultural District, weakening the streetscapes and the urban form. The concept plans show parking relocated to parking garages and the sites developed for a variety of uses, including public open space, residential and institutional development.

### Water Features

All groups identified the integration of water features into the Cultural District as an important element to strengthen connections between the district and the lakeshore.

### Public Art

Teams expressed a desire for public art to be infused throughout the Cultural District in plazas, green spaces, pedestrian walkways, and adjacent to buildings such as the Art Gallery.

### Landscaping / Green space

Teams noted the lack of existing green space within the Cultural District and proposed significant green space additions on the waterfront, south of the Laurel Packinghouse, at Prospera Place, and in numerous courtyard oases.

### **CONTEXT**

The vision articulated within the Cultural District Charette is generally consistent with OCP directions for the Downtown Town Centre and can be implemented within the context of existing OCP development permit guidelines. The matter of building height for city owned properties within the Cultural District (lots adjacent to the library and the library parkade) may require further consideration given that they are zoned C7 and

currently would allow 12 to 14 storeys. This is inconsistent with the charette recommendation of 3 -6 storeys within this portion of the Cultural District.

**CONCLUSIONS**

The work done as part of the charette highlighted some of the key elements considered to be part of the present and future Cultural District. The charette underlined the District's importance to Kelowna as an expression of who we are as a community, and the concept plans that were generated envision facilities and public spaces that would appeal to city residents and visitors alike. The charette also reaffirmed many of the design directions contained in the Kelowna Centre Plan, prepared in 1990. The Design Directions proposed in the charette will be valuable tools to guide development proposals within the Cultural District and surrounding area.

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D.L. Shipclark



R.L. (Ron) Mattiussi, ACP, MCIP  
Director of Community & Corporate Planning

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cc: Director of Parks & Leisure Services  
cc: Manager, Policy, Research & Strategic Planning-