



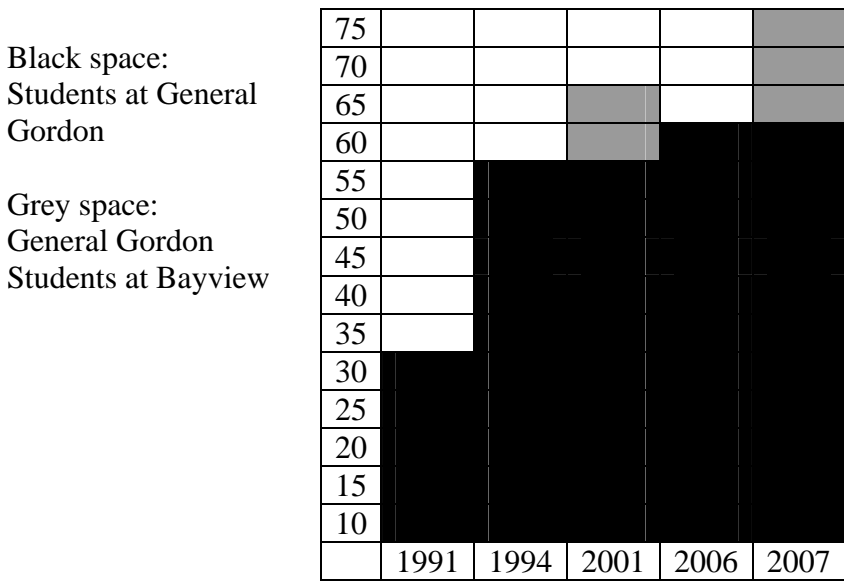
November 2, 2007

Re: Seismic Upgrades at General Gordon

Background

Jericho Kids' Club is a school-age child care program that has operated at General Gordon School since September 1991. The program is licensed within the Community Care Facilities Act and is monitored through Vancouver Coastal Health. Regulations under this act govern health and safety issues and include minimum space requirements, number of children allowed as well as supplies and equipment required to operate the program.

Originally licensed for 30 children, demand soon went beyond this and by 1994 the capacity was increased to accommodate 55 children. Over the past 10 years demand for spaces has continued to grow. In September of 2001 demand was so great that we were faced with turning away approximately 12 families. A solution was found by walking a group to Bayview School after school every day. In September of 2006 a similar situation occurred and we applied to increase the General Gordon capacity to 60 spaces. This increase was granted in December 2006. In September this year demand again outstripped capacity and there were over 15 families on waitlist for General Gordon space. We are again accommodating most of these families with a walk-over schedule to Bayview School.



Current Situation

Need for Child Care:

As seen in the information included, demand for child care space at General Gordon has continued to increase. Recent research, our current economic boom and labour market needs suggest that this demand is not likely to decrease.

Although the Ministry of Education and the regional school boards acknowledge the needs and values of quality child care, this acknowledgement is not supported in terms of funding, consideration in planning and sometimes at a more local level within individual schools. Rental agreements between the Vancouver School Board and daycare facilities are fragile at best. Agreements contain the following condition: **“The Lessee understands and agrees that this Contract may be revoked or cancelled by the Board at any time, with or without cause, and, in such event, the Lessee shall have no claim or right to damages, or reimbursement on account of any loss, damage or expense whatsoever.”**

The Child Care Advocacy Forum says that in 2003, over 126,000 BC mothers whose youngest child was under the age of 5 were in the paid labour force. Those children are now school-age, we know that labour force participation rates increase for mothers of school-age children. Working families need quality child care for the full working day. Quality child care requires safe, sufficient space that is stable, accessible and affordable. Middle Childhood Matters a framework document released in February 2005, states that Children who have access to quality, affordable school-age child care have a greater opportunity to reach their optimum potential and experience environments that are conducive to learning, yet, only 12% of children age 0-12 have access to a regulated child care space.

Space:

Jericho Kids' Club currently rents 2 spaces. The school lunchroom and basement area can support 60 children in total, this capacity is allowed under a grandfathered licence and is the maximum allowable for those spaces. Within the lunchroom space we have the use of the large walk-in storage cupboard. Furniture and floor coverings are pushed back and stored at the end of the day to allow for school daytime use of the spaces.

Concerns:

Current guidelines restrict capacity to a maximum of 20 children per group. If new areas are licensed we may not be able to achieve the same capacity let alone meet the current demand.

If the gym in the new building plan is to be a JKC after-school space where would furniture, rugs and possibly supplies be able to be stored to enable safe use of the gym during school time.

Kitchen:

Jericho Kid's Club offers snacks on all regular days and hot and cold lunches on pro-d days and holidays. Baking for lunches and also as an activity with children is also a part of the program.

Concern:

This is not so much an issue if the lunchroom can be retained. However, if the gym in the new building proposal is the only common area will there be an adjacent kitchen that will have at least basic appliances? We would require a dishwasher, full size fridge and storage and prep areas to comply with licensing and health requirements and preferably a stove and freezer as well.

The Future

Retention of the lunchroom would only provide space for approximately half the current demand in child care spaces. The loss of registration capacity would have a profound impact on General Gordon families and on the organizational structure of Jericho Kids' Club. There may also be a significant impact on school registration as families may need to register their children at schools where child care is available. There is also the potential for a direct impact on the children who are more likely to spend time at home alone for want of a child care space. Middle Childhood Matters says that children who are at home alone, or in the nominal care of another young sibling, are at increased risk for injury, missed meals and other health and well-being challenges.

In order to meet both the current needs and the projected needs of General Gordon families we would need a minimum of 2 separate physical spaces. In order to retain the existing lunchroom as one of those spaces there is the question of funding (amount TBD) for some seismic upgrading. Other child care programs in similar situations have, or are purchasing portables to provide adequate care. Costs to purchase and renovate a portable seem to be in the \$350,000 to \$400,000 range. Ongoing maintenance and cleaning costs for "out of main building" space is also likely to be much higher than we are currently charged.

All costs that do not relate directly to school use would need to be borne by Jericho Kids' Club. Although we do have a reasonable contingency fund there would likely be a significant shortfall. Again, other child care programs who have faced similar situations have had to raise mortgages to cover such costs. There may be some possibility for grant applications but ultimately of course, the majority of the cost is passed back down to the users of the program in the form of increased parent fees.

Contact Information:

Jericho Kids' Club
2251 Collingwood Street
Vancouver BC
V6R 3L1
604 736 4080

jerichokidsclub@telus.net

Christine Hibbert, Executive Director
Tyler Summers, Program Manager