Welcome to the Vancouver Aquarium Community Consultation

Aquarium Revitalization & Expansion In Stanley Park
The Vancouver Aquarium is proposing a revitalization and expansion to improve its animal habitats and public spaces, and is seeking community input on the desirability of the proposal, given the impacts on land, trees, and greenspace.

How do I participate?

Community feedback can be provided through the following:

– **The Vancouver Sun Newspaper Insert**  
  (September 26)

– **The Province Newspaper Insert**  
  (September 26)

– **Stakeholder Meetings**  
  (September 27 – October 16)

– **Focus Groups**  
  (Week of October 2)  
  Randomly-selected Vancouver residents

– **One-on-One Interviews**  
  (September 27 – October 30)  
  At approximately 10 locations

– **Public Attitude Survey**  
  (Week of October 2)  
  Randomly-selected Vancouver and Greater Vancouver residents

– **Public Open Houses**  
  (listed to the right)

– **On-line Feedback Form:**  
  [www.aquariumconsultation.ca](http://www.aquariumconsultation.ca)

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### Open House Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Location Details</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver Downtown</strong></td>
<td>Thursday, September 28, 2006</td>
<td>6:00 pm - 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Vancouver Public Library Alice MacKay Room 350 West Georgia Street</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver Eastside</strong></td>
<td>Saturday, September 30, 2006</td>
<td>2:00 pm - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Killarney Community Centre 6260 Killarney Street</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Vancouver Westside</strong></td>
<td>Tuesday, October 3, 2006</td>
<td>6:00 pm - 9:00 pm</td>
<td>Dunbar Community Centre 4747 Dunbar Street</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>3-D Model</strong></td>
<td>September 29 – October 30, 2006</td>
<td>West End Community Centre Lobby 870 Denman Street</td>
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Vancouver Aquarium Today

- The Aquarium is home to more than 70,000 creatures including fish, invertebrates, mammals, birds, reptiles and amphibians

- Over 900,000 visitors come to the Aquarium every year, including 60,000 school children

- The Aquarium has 350 employees, 900 volunteers (including Board members) and over 18,000 household memberships

- In the past 40 years, the Aquarium has rescued, rehabilitated, and released hundreds of injured marine mammals, including seals, seal lions, sea otters, killer whales and a gray whale
Benefits of Revitalization and Expansion

Benefits to the Animals

Vancouver Aquarium staff are generally acknowledged as providing among the best animal care in the world. While the Aquarium facilities meet all current standards, we know these standards will change over time. The revitalization will ensure that the Vancouver Aquarium remains a world leader for the next 25 years and beyond.

The proposed revitalization will benefit animals in the following ways:

~ Larger pools, which could accommodate up to eight whales and eight dolphins, will provide more room for swimming
~ Deeper pools with more varied underwater landscapes will provide environmental stimulation
~ More pools will give these highly social animals more room to interact as individuals and families
~ Dedicated medical and maternity facilities will ensure appropriate care for all animals including mothers and calves
~ Ensure excellent water quality
~ Provide space for new species such as sea birds and beavers
~ Better conservation of species in-the-wild through enhanced public understanding of the natural world

Benefits to Aquarium Visitors

Over 900,000 people visit the Aquarium every year. At times, visitors experience crowded facilities, which restricts their opportunity to view the animals. In the outside areas, often visitors have trouble seeing presentations and are exposed to rain. Also, there is little space available to present information about global environmental concerns.

The proposed revitalization will enhance the visitor experience by:

~ Expanding visitor spaces to reduce crowding
~ Providing new viewing opportunities such as an underwater theatre, a walk-through underwater tube, and interactive displays
~ Retaining the unique Vancouver Aquarium appeal of outdoor displays against the natural backdrop of Stanley Park trees and greenery
~ Adding weather protection for outdoor viewing
~ Providing new specialized facilities such as classrooms and areas for early childhood learning and special events
~ Creating new space for presentations about key ecological concerns such as global warming and the impacts of pollution on the oceans
~ Enhancing accessibility and providing additional seating
~ Improving the entrance and expanding services to include larger washrooms and covered food services
Benefits to the Aquarium

The Aquarium celebrated its 50th birthday this year. Many of its facilities have reached the end of their life cycle. Pumps and mechanical equipment that keep the water clean need replacing. Concrete immersed in saltwater is crumbling. Also, with the Aquarium’s desire to lead in conservation, energy conservation is a larger concern.

The proposed new facilities will:
~ Implement principles of green building design using LEED guidelines
~ Be designed to conserve energy to promote recycling, and save fresh water
~ Reduce repair and maintenance costs, enabling more funding for public programs
~ Use construction methods and materials that ensure the sustainability of the Aquarium
~ Provide expanded spaces to enable more public programming which will keep the Aquarium at the forefront of environmental education

Benefits to Stanley Park

As the Park Board technical review shows, the former Zoo lands need to be reorganized, the public washrooms replaced, and the outdoor food service relocated and expanded. In addition, the pedestrian paths and the public plaza area in front of the Aquarium need to be better organized. The Park Board transportation plan seeks to enhance alternative transportation modes such as walking, cycling, carpooling and the use of transit while reducing the number of parking spaces in Stanley Park.

As part of the revitalization, the Aquarium – at its cost – will provide:
~ Expanded free viewing opportunities
~ Extended salmon stream and a publicly-accessible salmon hatchery
~ New public plaza spaces to enhance Park visitor experience
~ New public washrooms with modern facilities
~ New outdoor Park Board food service facility replacing the current food trailer
~ Better organized pedestrian pathways
~ Lighting on key public pathways
~ Safer school bus drop-off and pick-up areas
~ Two new trees will be planted for each tree removed
The Vancouver Aquarium is proposing a revitalization and expansion which would require an additional 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres) of Stanley Park.

The Aquarium revitalization and expansion proposal includes changes on the ground level (see plan below) and on the lower level.

The following elements are proposed within the Aquarium on the **ground level:**

1. New, larger pools for dolphins as part of the “Southern B.C.” exhibit
2. New, larger pools for sea lions, seals, and sea otters as part of the “Northern B.C.” exhibit
3. New, larger pools for beluga whales as part of the “Arctic” exhibit
4. A new entrance gallery near the Aquarium entrance
5. A new educational gallery for the “Arctic” exhibit
6. New facilities for animal care
7. A new main entrance into the Aquarium
8. A new, expanded gift shop
9. New, expanded food service in the Aquarium (includes café on ground level)
10. A new, enclosed loading dock for deliveries and garbage pick-up

The following elements are proposed within the Aquarium on the **lower level:**

- New underwater viewing galleries for all pools
- New education, research, office, service, and meeting spaces
- New mechanical life support equipment and mechanical rooms

The Aquarium revitalization and expansion proposal also includes the following elements **outside the Aquarium:**

11. Re-organization of pedestrian pathways leading to the Aquarium
12. Redevelopment of public open spaces to create a formal plaza and an informal plaza
13. A new location for Bill Reid’s sculpture near the new Aquarium entrance
14. Three locations for free public viewing of Aquarium animals
15. An extension to the fish-bearing section of the salmon stream near the Aquarium
16. A new, larger and publicly-accessible salmon hatchery
17. New public washrooms
18. A new Park Board owned restaurant with covered terrace
19. Re-organization of car and bus parking near the Aquarium along Avison Way

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The plan above shows the existing boundary of the Aquarium with a solid red line, and the proposed areas to be added to the Aquarium with a dashed red line.
Amount of Land Required For Expansion

Today the Aquarium occupies 1.2 hectares (2.9 acres) in Stanley Park. The proposal would increase the Aquarium’s footprint to 1.8 hectares (4.4 acres), an addition of 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres) or a 50% increase.

Impact on Greenspace

Today the zone surrounding the Aquarium has a significant amount of public greenspace, including lawn and areas with trees. The proposal would remove about 0.54 hectares (1.34 acres) of greenspace.

Impact on Trees

The proposal will require the removal and replacement of 32 trees.

Indicates tree removal
**Impacts on Stanley Park**

**Impact On Free Public Viewing**
There is currently one free public viewing area located along the major north-south pathway, south of the Japanese War Memorial.

The proposal would provide additional free public viewing. The new public viewing area would have a combined length greater than the existing public viewing area.

**Impact On Salmon Hatchery**
The salmon hatchery is currently located in the former bear exhibit south of the Aquarium, more than 20 metres (65 feet) away from the stream. Located on a minor pathway, the hatchery is fully enclosed in a windowless structure and is inaccessible to the general public.

The proposal would move the salmon hatchery into a new building located adjacent to the Aquarium and the informal plaza. The hatchery would be accessible to both Aquarium visitors and the public in the park.

**Impact On Salmon Stream**
Currently a 300 metre (1,000 feet) stream runs parallel to the main pathway connecting Coal Harbour to Burrard Inlet, with the stream ending near the Aquarium.

The proposal would modify the upper 150 metres (500 feet) of the stream so that it would become fish-bearing. The proposal would link the stream to the new salmon hatchery.
Impact On Public Plaza (Open Spaces)

There is currently about 0.5 hectares (1.3 acres) of public open spaces near the Aquarium entrance, some with soft surface (lawn and trees) and some with hard surface (concrete or asphalt).

The proposal would create two public open spaces: a formal plaza as a forecourt to the Aquarium and an informal plaza in a more natural setting adjacent to the stream.

Each is about 0.12 hectares (0.3 acres), for a total of about 0.24 hectares (0.6 acres).

Impact On Food Service In Public Plaza (Outside Aquarium)

There is currently a Park Board food concession located in a trailer just west of the Aquarium entrance. The concession is small and only offers take-out food and drinks. There is no indoor or covered seating.

The proposal would create a larger food service building that would offer take-out food and restaurant-style service. There would be both indoor and outdoor seating, with a portion of the outdoor seating under a canopy.
Public Washrooms
There is currently a public washroom located east of the Aquarium entrance, close to Avison Way. Although the facility has been refurbished, the building is old and dates back to the 1950s. The proposal would rebuild the washrooms closer to the Aquarium entrance.

Pedestrian Pathways
There is currently a grid of pedestrian pathways in the vicinity of the Aquarium, connecting to destinations such as the seawall, transit loop, the Stanley Park Pavilion, Malkin Bowl, Rose Garden, Lumbermen’s Arch, Miniature Train and Brockton Oval. The proposal would maintain the basic grid of pedestrian pathways and would create two main entries into the public open space located in front of the Aquarium.

Vehicular Traffic & Parking
There are currently about 950 parking spaces within a 10-minute walk of the Aquarium. The proposal would not alter existing vehicle access routes to the parking lots close to the Aquarium, but would result in the loss of about 20 to 30 parking spaces along Avison Way.

Visitors To Stanley Park During Construction
The proposal would be constructed in two phases. The first phase would involve the construction of the “Southern BC” exhibit and the addition to the Aquarium building. The second phase would involve the reconstruction of the “Northern BC” and “Arctic” exhibits and the extension of the salmon stream. Both phases involve construction below and above ground and each phase will likely take about 18 months.

Park Board Revenue During Construction
During the construction phase, the proposal would require the closure of the existing food concession (operated by the Park Board) and a reduction in the number of pay parking spaces (managed by a private company on behalf of the Park Board).
Public Plaza (Open Spaces)
The existing public open spaces provide visitors with places for activity and places for relaxation. A central feature is the sculpture entitled “Chief of the World Beneath the Sea” by Haida artist Bill Reid. There are also benches, tables for eating, and areas for portrait artists and buskers. The proposal would create two public open spaces; a formal plaza as a forecourt to the Aquarium (see image in upper corner), and an informal plaza in a more natural setting adjacent to the stream (see image in lower corner).

> The public is being asked to comment on how appealing they find the following features in the public open spaces:

a) The sculpture by Bill Reid.

b) A zone for portrait artists and buskers.

c) Benches and tables for visitors to sit and eat/drink.
Aquarium Building

The design of the Aquarium building influences how great a presence it will have in Stanley Park. One option features a contemporary glass façade, which would create a larger presence in the park. Another option features a partially screened façade with foliage, and the upper level stepped back, which would create a reduced presence in the park.

> The public is being asked for their preference between the following two options:

Contemporary glass façade that may have a larger presence in Stanley Park.

Or

Partially screened façade with foliage and stepped back upper level that may more readily blend into Stanley Park.
Viewing Above Water (Outdoor)

In developing the Aquarium revitalization and expansion proposal, consideration has been given to the outdoor viewing of animals. Currently, none of the viewing space is covered in the outdoor displays. One of the unique properties of the Vancouver Aquarium has been the mixture of indoor and outdoor experiences. The goal has always been to display animals against the stunning backdrop of Stanley Park. It is also believed that for many of the animals, a natural outdoor setting has advantages over indoor facilities. As a result, visitors currently make do with little protection from the rain and sun.

> The public is being asked for their preference for:

Covered viewing areas with permanent canopies over some of the outdoor viewing areas to allow visitors to sit and/or stand shaded from the sun and rain all year round.

Or

Primarily uncovered areas where visitors view the animals without weather protection.
Viewing Above Water (Outdoor)

Currently, the Aquarium provides limited seating around the outdoor pools.

> To accommodate the number of people that wish to view outdoor marine mammal presentations, the public is being asked for their preference for:

**Bleacher or theatre-style seating** This type of seating can accommodate large crowds and provides comfortable, unobstructed views of the outdoor marine mammal presentations. It also minimizes the natural setting and theming possibilities, and this type of seating space has limited use between presentations.

Or

**Terraced viewing with limited seating** This informal style seating provides mostly standing space for viewing with very limited seating. It creates an immersion-style exhibit that is more natural and provides for informal activity and gathering in the open space between presentations.
Viewing Underwater (Indoor)

Currently, the Aquarium provides limited seating in front of the underwater viewing areas, which can lead to crowding around the windows. However, it allows people to get closer to the windows to watch the animals and move more freely within the viewing area.

> The public is being asked for their preference for:

Theatre-style or tiered seating (with approximately 60 – 90 seats).

Or

Limited seating that is consistent with the current underwater seating.
Consultation Topics

Design Choices

Food Service Inside the Aquarium

Currently, the Aquarium provides an informal cafeteria-style take-out food service located in an outdoor setting near the sea otters and beluga whales, with very limited all-weather protection and limited patio table seating.

> The public is being asked for their preference for:

A cafeteria-style food service with limited seating, similar to the current food service.

Or

A restaurant-style, self-serve food service with a slightly larger menu choice and with additional seating indoors and views of the animal exhibits.
Review of Rules Governing Whales and Dolphins (Cetaceans) in Captivity

With the cooperation of the Vancouver Aquarium and after significant public hearings, the Aquarium and Park Board agreed on principles that would ensure that whales and dolphins brought into the Aquarium were not captured directly from the wild for the purpose of public display.

In 1996, the Park Board approved rules to control which whales or dolphins (cetaceans) could be acquired and displayed at the Aquarium. These new rules were written into a park by-law to restrict which whales or dolphins (cetaceans) the Aquarium is allowed to acquire to the following four cases:

Existing

1. a new whale or dolphin if it was in captivity prior to September 16, 1996 (the date specified in the park by-law);
2. a new whale or dolphin if it was born in captivity;
3. a new whale or dolphin if it is a member of an endangered species;
4. a new whale or dolphin if the purpose is to rehabilitate it from injury or to prevent its death due to stranding, subject to its subsequent release back to its natural habitat.

Proposed

1. a new whale or dolphin if it was in captivity prior to September 16, 1996 (the date specified in the park by-law);
2. a new whale or dolphin if it was born in captivity;
3. a new whale or dolphin if it is a member of an endangered species and part of a research or captive breeding program;
4a. a new whale or dolphin if it was recently injured or otherwise in distress and needing rehabilitation or assistance to survive, with the intention of safely releasing it back into the wild;
b. a new whale or dolphin, possibly from another organization, if it was injured or otherwise in distress at any time in the past and requiring permanent human care to survive, with no intention of releasing it back into the wild.

The Aquarium is interested in gathering public input on the following proposed rules governing the acquisition of new whales and dolphins (cetaceans) at the Aquarium: