
NEWS RELEASE

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Office of the Premier

PREMIER UNVEILS NEW VISION FOR BC PLACE & ART GALLERY

VANCOUVER – A major renovation of BC Place Stadium – including a retractable roof after 2010 – will expand the city’s sport, culture and entertainment district; feature a new home for the Vancouver Whitecaps; and provide a waterfront site for a new Vancouver Art Gallery, Premier Gordon Campbell announced today.

“We asked PavCo chair David Podmore to develop a long-term plan for one of British Columbia’s landmark facilities. What he found was BC Place is in good shape but, like any facility that age, is in need of upgrades,” said Premier Campbell. “The upgrades pre- and post-Olympics will significantly reduce energy consumption and extend the life of this world-class facility for another 30 years. It will also give us the opportunity to create a vibrant arts and sporting community for residents and visitors alike.”

Upgrades to BC Place will occur in two phases. Renovations to suites, seating, washrooms and concession stands, and enhancement of the existing roof liner will occur before the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. A new retractable roof will be put in place after the 2010 Games. Both phases are expected to go out to tender within five months, subject to design, completion of a business case and cost-benefit analysis and government approval.

“Once we’ve completed our design and planning, we’ll finalize the budget and, subject to provincial government approval, get a fixed price contract with a guaranteed timeline,” said Podmore. “As much of the preparatory work on the roof as possible will be done prior to the 2010 Games. The remaining work to install the new roof will be completed over an estimated eight months after the Games are over. This is exactly how BC Place was planned and built more than 25 years ago. By waiting until after 2010 to complete the retractable roof, we’ll get better competitive pricing.”

A retractable roof by itself will cut energy costs for BC Place by one-third, \$535,000 annually. A further \$100,000 annually will be saved through operational savings. For example, the stadium will no longer need air-lock doors to support the roof. Further options, such as solar panels and geothermal heating, will also be explored.

As part of the new roof and upgrade, which is expected to be complete early in 2011, the Whitecaps will start playing at BC Place in the summer of 2011, part of a five-year lease with renewals after 2016. That will give the team the opportunity to apply for a Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise.

“We are looking forward to playing under the retractable roof at BC Place starting in 2011,” said Bob Lenarduzzi, president of Vancouver White caps FC. “We are confident that the planned renovations will make BC Place a more versatile venue, very suitable for soccer and a variety of other international calibre events. The move to BC Place will allow us to pursue the opportunity for an MSL franchise and will open up a host of additional opportunities that we are excited to bring to Vancouver.”

“BC Place has been our home field for 25 years, so we’re thrilled with the plans to upgrade it and add a retractable roof,” said Bob Ackles, BC Lions president and CEO. “To be able to play outdoors under a retractable roof is going to make the whole experience even more enjoyable for our fans. As much as we enjoy playing under the dome, the chance to enjoy a game on a summer night will be very popular with our fans and players alike.”

As part of the bigger vision for this part of downtown Vancouver, PavCo has been working with the City of Vancouver, the Vancouver Art Gallery and Canadian Metropolitan Properties, the owners of the Plaza of Nations, to move the Vancouver Art Gallery to False Creek. Currently, less than three per cent of its collection is on display, because of space restraints.

In return for future development considerations from the City of Vancouver on its False Creek property, Canadian Metropolitan Properties is providing the Vancouver Art Gallery with a waterfront site for its new 320,000 square-foot facility. The Province has already contributed \$50 million towards the new gallery.

“The gallery has experienced unprecedented growth in the last decade, and with more than 40,000 members, record-breaking admissions and a growing collection of 10,000 artworks, is now bursting at the seams,” said gallery director Kathleen Bartels. “The False Creek location presents an exciting opportunity to imagine a new Vancouver Art Gallery on this beautiful waterfront site, one that would serve as an anchor for this extension of Vancouver’s thriving cultural community. In addition to Premier Campbell’s recent commitment of \$50 million, we are extremely grateful to the Province of British Columbia for bringing us another step closer to realizing our dream for a new Vancouver Art Gallery.”

Development and the sale, or lease, of lands around BC Place are expected to generate more than \$100 million towards the cost of the new roof and upgrades. Additional revenues will come from new sponsorships and expanded business opportunities.

2 backgrounder(s) attached.

Media contact:	Bridgitte Anderson Press Secretary Office of the Premier 604 307-7177	Norman Stowe PAVCO 604 646-3556
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