

# WELCOME TO THE CENTRE'S FEASIBILITY STUDY OPEN HOUSE



In 2006 *The Centre* took a major step toward the goal of creating a new LGTB centre: we undertook an extensive community consultation process to identify our communities' needs, wants and dreams for a new centre.

The consultation process identified a wide range of elements that were considered desirable for a new LGTB centre.

In early 2007, we engaged Cornerstone Planning Group to guide us through the next stage: to provide a space analysis of an ambitious wish list to help us determine what will eventually be a more realistic, sustainable and feasible project.

This Open House outlines the key aspects of our collective work to date.

*The Centre is hosting today's Open House to encourage comments and suggestions from our communities regarding the overall process being followed.*

You can pick up an **Information Package** and **Comment Sheet** at the main entrance reception table.

If you have any questions, you can ask anyone wearing a nametag.

Please help yourself to the refreshments provided.

**Please drop off your completed Comment Sheet** in the box at the entrance when you leave or submit it by no later than Wednesday, June 13<sup>th</sup>.

You can:

- Drop it off at The Centre (1170 Bute St.)
- Fax it to (604) 684-6201
- Email it to [ana@cornerplan.com](mailto:ana@cornerplan.com)

The Comment Sheet and Information Package are also available on The Centre's web site ([www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com](http://www.lgtbcentrevancouver.com)).

**Thank you for coming to today's Open House!**

# PROJECT STEERING GROUP



A Project Steering Group (PSG), appointed by *The Centre's* Board of Directors, has provided invaluable guidance and insight into this process.

The Board of Directors would like to thank the following people for their participation in the Project Steering Group:

Phillip Banks	Sharalyn Jordan
Shimpei Chihara	Brent Lehmann
Drew Dennis	Pat MacDiarmid
Jim Deva	Colin McKenna
Richard Dopson	Barb Snelgrove
Paul Harris	Ray Sullivan
Pat Hogan	Christine Waymark
Donna Lee Johnson	Frank Yang

PSG CoChairs: Craig Maynard, Rebecca Shields

*The Centre* Executive Director: Donna Wilson



## What is *The Centre*?

*The Centre* emerged from the 1970s celebration of “gay” culture and equality activism. It is built on a proud history of community involvement and volunteer commitment.

*The Centre* is a volunteer-based, professionally managed organization guided by principles of inclusion and a commitment to working within and between diverse populations.

## What does *The Centre* do?

- ♦ Provides service, support, advocacy, education and community development for lesbian, gay, transgendered, bisexual (LGTB) people and allies in the Lower Mainland and throughout the province of BC.
- ♦ Provides a range of programs and activities that celebrate LGTB identities and cultures and builds bridges with other communities.
- ♦ Provides services that enhance health, wellness, and builds on the strengths of individuals and communities.
- ♦ Partners and works in collaboration to inform, educate and develop innovative opportunities that contribute to safer communities and a celebration of diversity within the cultural mosaic of Vancouver and BC.
- ♦ Touches the lives of more than 30,000 individuals every year through its diverse programming.



## What kinds of programs and resources does *The Centre* offer?

- ♦ *Gab Youth Services*, including drop-ins and *PrideSpeak* workshops
- ♦ Recreational activities such as *Queer Women on the Drive* and *Guys Night Out*
- ♦ *LGTB Generations Project* for aging and older LGTB people
- ♦ *Prideline* information and referral line
- ♦ *Chronically Queer* and *Building Accessibility Together*
- ♦ *National Day Against Homophobia* awareness events
- ♦ Population-specific drop-ins
- ♦ Coming out and social support groups
- ♦ Counselling
- ♦ Anti-violence resources
- ♦ Education and outreach within the LGTB communities and with health and social service sectors
- ♦ Skill development and volunteerism
- ♦ Meeting spaces
- ♦ *Out on the Shelves* Library
- ♦ A host of other resources that celebrate LGTB identities and culture and build on the strengths of individuals and communities

### ***The Centre's* mission:**

***The Centre* values, celebrates and transforms the lives of LGTB people by creating physical, social and inclusive spaces; and by empowering individuals and communities in BC through innovation, volunteerism, collaboration and professional resources.**

*Additional background information about The Centre is included in your information package.*



*The Centre* has been located on the second floor of 1170 Bute Street since 1985. The location provides an affordable facility close to a significant concentration of Vancouver's LGTB communities.

However, there are significant problems with the current facility:

- ♦ ***It is difficult to find***: anonymity was considered essential 20 years ago, but over the years Canada has become increasingly more inclusive and tolerant. While anonymity and safety are still important considerations, the communities *The Centre* represents want a more prominent presence that celebrates their place in Canadian culture.
- ♦ ***It does not have elevator access***, which excludes people with disabilities from participating in many programs.
- ♦ ***The organization has long outgrown its current space***. Demand for programs and resources has grown substantially since *The Centre* moved into its current location. Its meeting rooms cannot accommodate many of its programs; *The Centre* regularly uses space in other organizations with larger and/or better-equipped facilities.
- ♦ ***The space layout is not ideal***. The existing space was designed for other uses, and *The Centre* has adapted the spaces to its needs as best as possible given existing limitations. Nonetheless, many spaces are overcrowded and layouts are inefficient, which does not allow *The Centre* to serve clients to the best of its ability.

***The Centre's aim*** is to create a safe, inclusive, and accessible community gathering place that

- ♦ Provides a wider range of activities,
- ♦ Continues *The Centre's* important education and advocacy work, and
- ♦ Openly celebrates the diverse communities it represents.



## ***Beginnings of a Dream...***

There has been discussion of a new centre for LGTB communities for many years.

In 2006, the City of Vancouver provided funds for *The Centre* to begin to study the possibility of a new facility.

The first phase of the study (Phase I) focused on wide-ranging community consultation, including:

- ♦ Focus groups
- ♦ Town hall meetings
- ♦ On-line and paper surveys
- ♦ Interviews

The consultation process generated a wide range of possible activities, services and programs that a new centre could offer.

### ***Phase 1 result:***

A clearer understanding of the scope of the LGTB communities' hopes, dreams, and expectations for a new centre.

### ***Challenge arising from Phase 1:***

How to refine the wide-ranging list of possibilities into a realistic, attainable and feasible project.



## *Refining the Dream...*

The second phase of the Feasibility Study (Phase 2) has carefully studied community input about programs, services and activities from Phase 1. The list has been refined to include those functions that reflect *The Centre's* mission most directly.

The refined list became the starting point for a rough estimate of space requirements for a new centre, which was developed into a *Full Analysis Model*.

There are several spaces and functions in the Full Analysis Model that will need to be studied further to determine if they are financially viable in the long term. This study will be undertaken in the next stage of the project (Phase 3).

## *How did we decide which functions to include at this stage?*

- ♦ We reviewed all the services, activities and spaces identified through the Phase I consultation.
- ♦ We reviewed all the services currently available at *The Centre*.
- ♦ We identified which new services, activities and spaces were most in line with *The Centre's* mission to serve LGTB communities.
- ♦ Cornerstone translated these into an overall *space model*, reflecting the amount and types of space that would be needed to deliver all the services and programs identified.

The following three panels outline the process of refining the services included in the Full Analysis Model and show a schematic diagram of the Full Analysis Model.



## Refinement Process...

### Services, spaces currently available:

Services		Spaces Available
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Support groups</li> <li>♦ Advocacy</li> <li>♦ Information, peer support, referrals</li> <li>♦ Counselling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Student practicums</li> <li>♦ Workshops</li> <li>♦ Population-specific outreach</li> <li>♦ Education in schools and with service providers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Meeting spaces</li> <li>♦ Mailboxes for community groups</li> <li>♦ Library</li> <li>♦ Quiet space</li> <li>♦ Health clinic</li> </ul>

### Potential future services, spaces (from Phase I report):

#### Services

- ♦ Mental health services
- ♦ Home support
- ♦ Education for health, service providers
- ♦ Trans programming
- ♦ Housing: transitional, long-term, short-term
- ♦ Queer family resources

#### Spaces

- ♦ Outdoor space
- ♦ Café
- ♦ Social spaces
- ♦ Craft room
- ♦ Kitchen
- ♦ Fitness facilities
- ♦ Media room
- ♦ Performance space
- ♦ Gallery space
- ♦ Rental office space
- ♦ Archive, library
- ♦ Daycare
- ♦ Career centre
- ♦ Computer lab
- ♦ Health centre: medical, dental, psychiatric services

#### REFINEMENT:

- ♦ Which services are most suited to a new centre facility?
- ♦ What kinds of facilities are required to accommodate them?



#### CRITERIA:

- ♦ Identify functions that will enhance The Centre's ability to meet its mandate
- ♦ Ensure there are appropriate spaces for changes in programming over time



## *Refinement Process (continued) ...*

### **FACILITIES INCLUDED IN “FULL ANALYSIS MODEL”**

#### **Community Spaces**

- ♦ Counselling rooms
- ♦ Small meeting rooms
- ♦ Large meeting/activity/craft rooms
- ♦ Family resource centre
- ♦ Outdoor space

#### **Public & Service Spaces**

- ♦ Lobby/reception area
- ♦ Library & Archives
- ♦ Café
- ♦ Performance space
- ♦ Health clinic

#### **Admin & Support Spaces**

- ♦ Information/reception desk
- ♦ Staff offices
- ♦ Rental offices (for compatible organizations)
- ♦ Office & building support

- ♦ Some functions not included in the Full Analysis Model were seen to be outside The Centre’s mandate.
- ♦ Some services could be delivered in partnership with other organizations, or The Centre could play a strong advocacy role in establishing these functions and services in the community at a later time.
- ♦ Some services were seen as representing a major shift in The Centre’s operations and requiring significant restructuring, and were therefore not included.

#### **Facilities not in Full Analysis Model**

- ♦ Housing
- ♦ Fitness studio
- ♦ Media room
- ♦ Licensed daycare
- ♦ Computer lab
- ♦ Full medical centre

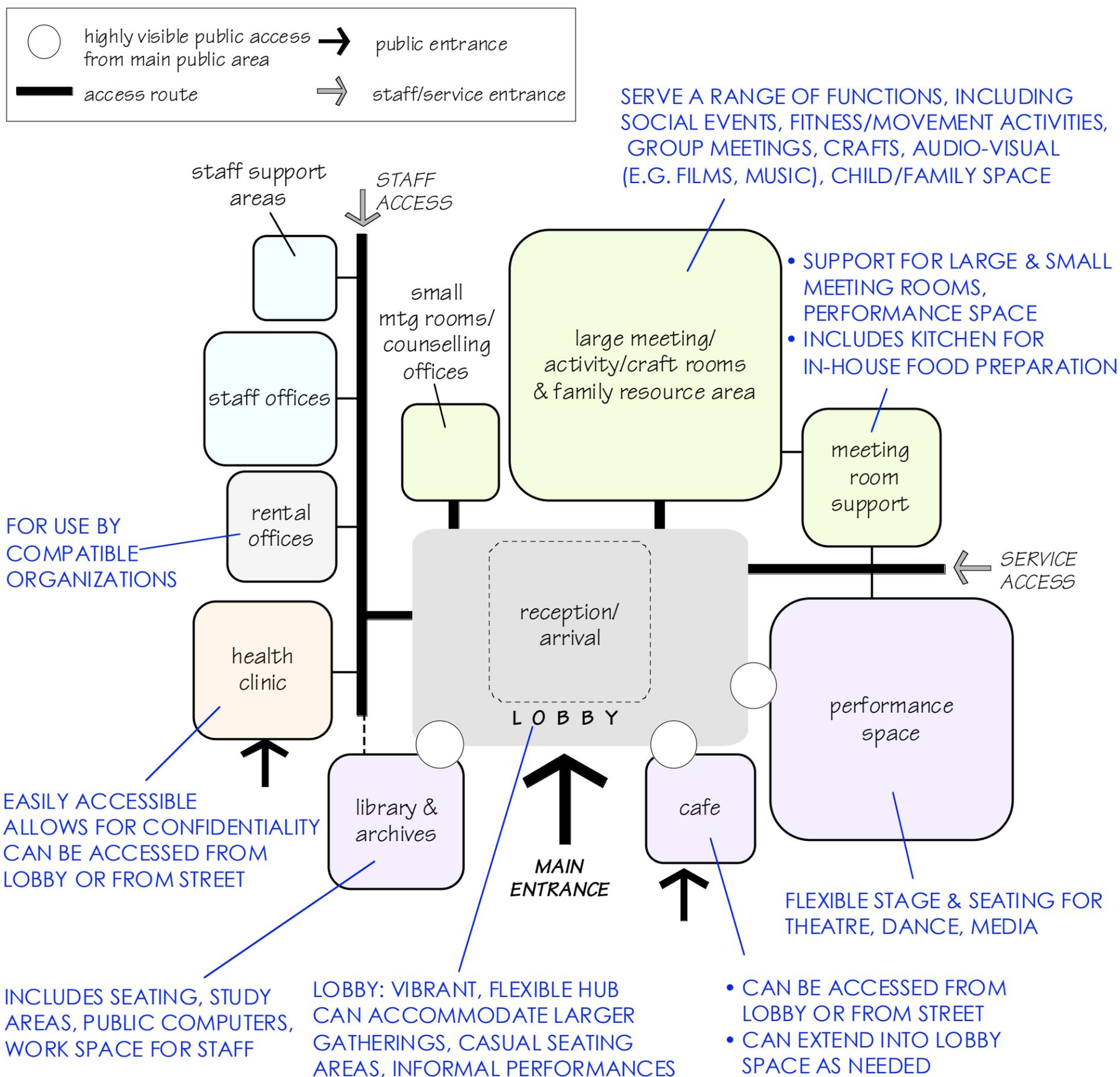
## ***Do we know how big it would be?***

To accommodate all the functions identified, the Full Analysis Model would require approximately 2,700 to 3,700 square metres (30,000 to 40,000 square feet).



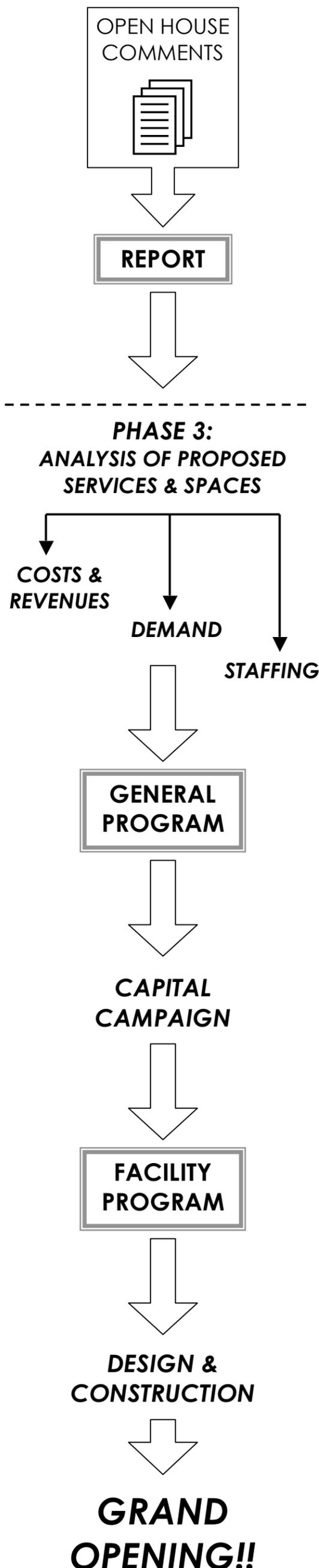
## What will it look like?

The Phase 2 refinement resulted in a Full Analysis Model for a new centre. There is still considerable work required before a building design is developed; however, the following schematic diagram shows how the different groups of spaces in the Full Analysis Model could be organized:





## What are the next steps?



- ♦ After today's Open House, we will review your comments and decide if additional refinements are needed before proceeding. Cornerstone will generate a report that will be used as a base for Phase 3.
- ♦ Several aspects of the Full Analysis Model need to be studied in greater detail in Phase 3, including:
  - ♦ *Analyzing the performance space and café to determine if there is enough demand for these facilities to justify the expense of building and operating them; if appropriate, adjusting the size and capacity of each*
  - ♦ *Analyzing the costs and revenues of community programs, meeting room rentals, office rentals*
  - ♦ *Reviewing the future staffing needs to operate the expanded facility*
- ♦ These will lead to a *General Program* outlining the overall facility needs of a revised Optimal Sustainable Model in more detail. (A *General Program* would typically include total building area, functional requirements, design and site selection guidelines, operational overview, and cost analysis. Costing typically includes both capital and operating costs.)
- ♦ The *General Program* can be used to launch a capital campaign to raise funds for the new facility. At that point, discussions with potential partners, funders, sponsors, etc. may be undertaken in earnest.
- ♦ Once *The Centre* has raised enough capital, it will need to update the *General Program* and generate a detailed *Facility Program*.
- ♦ A *Facility Program* explains to architects and designers what the requirements are for the facility. This document will become an important reference throughout the building design stage.

# The Centre: background

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## MISSION STATEMENT

*The Centre* values, celebrates and transforms the lives of LGTB people by creating physical social and inclusive spaces; and by empowering individuals and communities in BC through innovation, volunteerism, collaboration and professional resources.

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*The Centre* has its roots in the celebration of “gay” culture and equality activism that began in the mid 1970s. It is built on a proud history of community involvement and volunteer commitment. *The Centre* is a volunteer-based, professionally managed organization. Over two hundred volunteers and a core of employees provide service, support, advocacy, education and community development for lesbian, gay, transgendered, and bisexual (LGTB) people and allies in the Lower Mainland and throughout the province of BC.

The organization is guided by principles of inclusion and a commitment to working within and between diverse populations. *The Centre* provides a range of programs and activities that celebrate LGTB identities and cultures and builds bridges with other communities. *The Centre* provides services that enhance health and wellness, and builds on the strengths of individuals and communities. *The Centre* partners and works in collaboration to inform, educate and develop innovative opportunities that contribute to safer communities and a celebration of diversity within the cultural mosaic of Vancouver and BC.

*The Centre* provides the resources for more than 80,000 service contacts each year. Increased access to project funding has resulted in expanded programs, services and activities. The number of paid employees has grown from one part-time position in 1996 to an average of ten paid employees (12 in 2005).

### services

*The Centre* touches the lives of more than 30,000 individuals every year, through the Gab Youth Services Program; Education and Outreach within the LGTB communities and with health and social service sectors; the LGTB Generations Project for aging and older LGTB people; the toll-free Prideline Information and Referral line; Anti-Violence resources; Coming Out and Social Support Groups; Counseling; Meeting Space; Out on the Shelves Library; skill development and volunteerism; and a host of other resources that celebrate LGTB identities and culture and build on the strengths of individuals and communities.

*The Centre* provides cultural activities and resources in addition to services that enhance health, wellness, public safety, and build on the strengths of individuals and communities. *The Centre* collaborates extensively with other organizations, community leaders, funders, decision-makers, and service providers.

*The Centre* provides leadership and facilitates partnerships on important

community issues and needs such as youth, homophobia in schools, seniors, violence in relationships, accessible healthcare, families and parenting, to mention a few. As a volunteer-based organization, *The Centre* provides opportunities for individuals to serve their community while developing valuable leadership skills and strengths. *The Centre* is a home for many community groups and resources that celebrate LGTB culture and contribute to the safety, health and well being of LGTB people.

## location

*The Centre* has been located at 1170 Bute on the second floor since 1985. Affordability and proximity to a significant concentration of gay communities were primary reasons for locating at Davie and Bute. The second floor location also provided greater anonymity and a sense of safety for individuals accessing the resources of the centre in earlier times.

While safety and anonymity continue to be significant issues for LGTB individuals, the overall climate has begun to change with the modernization of laws in Canada. Increased visibility is a critical component of valuing LGTB individuals and cultures. There is less of a need for the LGTB community centre to be tucked away and hidden from view.

## need for space

Demand for and expansion of resources has meant that *The Centre* has outgrown the current operational space of just under 5,000 square feet. Additionally, the main location of *The Centre* is housed on the second floor of a building with no elevator. Accessibility is a critical concern on many levels.

The physical inaccessibility of 1170 Bute Street means that some LGTB individuals and allies are excluded from participating in community activities and accessing needed resources. The “as is” condition of the building has also raised concerns about accessibility on other levels. In the current state, it does not reflect pride and celebration of LGTB cultures.

Insufficient and inaccessible space does not allow for a central gathering place where LGTB people and the broader community may benefit from culturally relevant resources and activities. Other LGTB community groups and organizations are also challenged to find affordable and accessible sites. The LGTB communities need a new facility that is fully accessible and reflects pride and the valuing of LGTB cultures.

Much has changed in Canada for LGTB people in recent years, yet there is a significant gap between legislative changes and the attitudes that continue to perpetuate hatred and discrimination. From a content perspective, *The Centre* provides a range of resources intended to close the gap and contribute to a society that values diversity and celebrates the unique cultures of LGTB populations. What is lacking at present is an accessible gathering place that reflects a visible expression of the value of LGTB individuals, cultures, and communities within Vancouver and BC.

## highlights

### *The Centre is a community resource centre for LGTB communities and allies providing:*

- Welcome for newcomers (refugees; newly out; new to the city, province, or country)
- A focal point for cultural awareness and recreational activities
- Population-specific programs for lesbians, gay men, trans and bi individuals
- A meeting place and activities that bring diverse individuals and groups together
- Information, referral, and peer support services
- Age-specific resources for younger and older LGTB people
- Mentoring and opportunities for generations to connect
- ESL classes and opportunities to connect with others from diverse cultures
- Resources for LGTB people with disabilities and chronic conditions
- Counseling, social support, and recovery groups
- Health information, education, and services for LGTB people and allies
- Diversity training for schools, educators, health and social service providers
- Public safety and anti-violence initiatives
- Learning opportunities through practicum placements for post-secondary students
- Skill development for volunteers
- Activities that celebrate diversity and build individual and community capacity

### *The Centre is committed to addressing the following community issues:*

- Inclusion and equality that celebrates pride and values diversity
- Mitigating the impact of homo/trans/bi phobia and heterosexism
- Decreasing isolation
- Increasing LGTB visibility
- Working across differences and building bridges
- Increasing access to culturally relevant resources
- Community development and capacity-building
- Working in partnership to share resources and maximize benefits to LGTB and mainstream communities

### *The Centre delivers a range of programs and services:*

- In diverse locations throughout Vancouver and BC
- In collaboration with government funders and many community partners
- With the skills and dedication of 200+ volunteers
- Through the expertise and coordination of 9 paid employees
- That are responsive to diverse and changing needs within the LGTB communities