



Architect's rendering of the national maritime centre planned for the Lonsdale Quay area.

## Plans for maritime centre unveiled

### NORTH VANCOUVER: City hopes to have complex built by 2009

BY JOHN COLEBOURN  
STAFF REPORTER

The City of North Vancouver has unveiled plans for a \$30-million national maritime centre on the former Versatile-Burrard Shipyards property to the east of Lonsdale Quay.

North Vancouver Mayor Darrell Mussatto said yesterday he's optimistic that both Ottawa and Victoria will each agree to contribute about a third of the cost. The final third will come from the city.

"This really is an exciting day for North Vancouver," the newly elected Mussatto told reporters.

"It is truly a great location for the facility — and it is the site where the *St. Roch* and other famous ships were built."

The *St. Roch*, the RCMP schooner that in the 1940s became the first vessel to sail the Northwest Passage in both directions, is now housed at the Vancouver Maritime Museum in Kitsilano.

Mussatto predicted the maritime centre would be self-sufficient by its third year of operation.

In December, North Vancouver councillors approved the proposal for the state-of-the-art, 7,400-square-metre facility dedicated to Canada's rich nautical heritage.

Instead of calling it a maritime museum, city planners — noting that it will include a wide range of educational programs and events — have dubbed it the National Maritime Centre for the Pacific

and the Arctic.

Plans include deep-water berths, a deep-water moorage, a 213-metre public pier and the capability of hosting an event the size of a tall-ships festival.

"It is very important the centre is self-sustaining," said Isabel Gordon, the city's waterfront project manager. "It's a concept that includes a lot of other things, like retail and commercial areas."

Plans call for an interactive educational centre with a library, retail and restaurant space and a variety of historical exhibits.

The city also hopes the *St. Roch* can be moved from its Vanier Park location to the site where it was built.

If funding does come through as hoped, Gordon said, the maritime centre could open by the spring of 2009.

"Leading up to the Olympics,

Vancouver will be on the world's stage, and we need to be open," she said. "We have a lot of work to do."

Gordon Houston, head of the Vancouver Port Authority, lauded the idea of a well-planned maritime centre in the active port.

"It's a very exciting thing for us, and we will definitely be part of this project," Houston said. "There's a lot of work to do."

Ian Rokeby, speaking for the Vancouver Maritime Museum, also applauded the plan.

"In this day, we're competing with so many other attractions," he said. "So go big or go home."

Rokeby said it is unclear what will eventually happen to the Vancouver Maritime Museum, which is short on space and has been contemplating an expansion or move of its own.

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