

For Immediate Release

The National Maritime Centre to be Located on the North Shore

Wednesday, January 11, 2006 – The City of North Vancouver announced today that it is taking the next steps towards creating *The National Maritime Centre for the Pacific and the Arctic* on The Pier development site in Lower Lonsdale (National Shipyards precinct). It will create The National Maritime Society to govern the new institution and obtain the necessary funding for the development of a design concept.

States Mayor Darrell Mussatto: “Our councilors voted unanimously to endorse the Western Economic Partnership Report which concluded that The Pier site in North Vancouver met key factors for success that were identified in the initial report, *Creative Concept and Business Case* (December 2004).”

The most recent report was funded by Western Economic Diversification, Government of Canada, and the Ministry of Economic Development, Government of British Columbia. The initial study was funded by Western Economic Diversification and the Vancouver Maritime Museum.

The report stated that the location is ideal from an historical and heritage standpoint: “A significant part of BC’s shipbuilding industry was once situated on the site and the *St. Roch* and many other famous ships were built there. It is located at the centre of Canada’s largest and busiest port and is within clear view of downtown Vancouver, the nation’s gateway to the Pacific and Asia. Just east of the site is the Burrard Dry Docks and Vancouver Port. To the west are Lonsdale Quay and Washington Marine’s Cates Tugs.”

This location would provide the only site in the Vancouver Inner Harbour that is capable of hosting water festivals and events with a wide range of vessels, including tall ships, deep sea vessels and naval vessels. The Pier site has the closest relationship to active port industry.

The City is working closely with Pinnacle International, developers of the Shipyards site, who will complete the heritage structures, as well as develop a hotel with a conference facility, commercial and residential buildings on the site. Two valuable waterfront assets have recently been completed: the *St. Roch* Dock and the Burrard Dry Dock Pier – important components for a successful public waterfront and maritime precinct.

The City of North Vancouver initiated the conversion of the former Versatile/Burrard Shipyard into what is now known as The Pier development. It will continue to support the Centre by contributing waterfront land, significant heritage structures, and maintenance of the public realm assets including the pier and public plazas. Creation of additional commercial sites to support the Centre is also being considered. Overseeing *The National Maritime Centre* initiative is the City’s recently created Waterfront Project whose goal is to enhance public access to the water across the entire west half of the City.

Key partners for *The National Maritime Centre* will be the Vancouver Port Authority, Washington Marine Group, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh First Nations, Tourism Vancouver, and BCIT's Pacific Marine Training Institute. As well, the new Society will work closely with the Vancouver Maritime Museum, the North Vancouver Museum and Archives, Translink and Sea Bus, the newly expanded Vancouver Convention Centre, Grouse Mountain, the Capilano Suspension Bridge, Canadian Coast Guard, Bluewater Cruising, the Canadian Power and Sail Squadron, and Nuytco Research Ltd. along with many other maritime partners.

More than a museum, the *Centre* will be the destination for people to celebrate, discover and participate in the unique maritime fabric of the west coast. The Centre will offer interactive and educational exhibits celebrating stories from First Nations Coast; the Frozen North; Shipbuilding; Navigation and Working Boats; Ocean Trade; Oceanography; Underwater Exploration; Immigration; and much more.

The indoor and outdoor spaces will have the capacity to host events such as business forums and trade shows, sea festivals and film festivals. The Centre will serve as a training centre for all aspects of maritime activities such as boating safety and restoration -- promoting active, experiential learning on the water and on land. A seaside restaurant and a marina of sea-going vessels will be a dynamic part of the Centre experience.

The sustainable business model requires the *Centre* to ensure it is used throughout the year. Factored into the model will be revenues from admissions, gift shop, restaurant, meetings, training programs, events, membership fees, public and private sector donations and grants, and moorage. In addition to finalizing the design and capital costs for the Centre, a more detailed business plan must be prepared.

The City's cultural services will provide youth, festival and public arts programs to ensure that site is an active dynamic place to visit year-round. As well, the North Vancouver Museum and Archives will be able to showcase shipbuilding and other maritime historical artifacts in the new *Centre*. *The National Maritime Centre* will be the anchor tenant in what has become a world-wide phenomenon of cities' transforming parts of their waterfront into vibrant maritime precincts.

Concludes Mayor Mussatto: "Both of my colleagues, Mayor Pam Goldsmith-Jones of West Vancouver and Mayor Richard Walton of the District of North Vancouver, support the creation of *The National Maritime Centre* on the North Shore at the foot of Lonsdale.

Together we recognize that *The National Maritime Centre* will bring cultural and economic benefits to the entire region: the North Shore, the GVRD, Province of British Columbia and Canada."

For further information, please contact: Connie Rabold, Communications Manager 604 983-7383 or Isabel Gordon, Waterfront Project Development Manager 604 983-7387