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New hope for rec centre

BY CHRISTINA MONTGOMERY
 STAFF REPORTER

Vancouver parks board is optimistic — and residents near Trout Lake are ecstatic — that the city seems poised to restore \$20 million in funding to renew the neighbourhood's community centre.

The well-used but run-down building was at the top of the board's list of centres in need of work, and was included in its capital plans for 2009-11. But when the plan went to city council for consideration early this year, staff — grappling with a very tight budget — took the project off the list.

Because the centre, now 45 years old, had been on the list for years, major repairs have been put off. There is limited wheelchair access, a hot tub that

has been broken for years, and leaks in parts of the roof.

News that the repairs would be delayed angered centre users, who have seen \$16 million spent on a new 2010 Olympics practice rink at the site. It was assumed the renovation would follow.

Parks Commissioner Ian Robertson said yesterday that the board has lobbied hard to have funding restored in the capital budget before council this month, and he is now "very optimistic" council will agree.

"Ultimately, it's in council's hands," he said. "But I feel very strongly that at least one community centre should be renewed in each capital plan. If [Trout Lake] isn't [in this year's plan], it will be the first time in many years."

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