

REPORT

DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

To: Mayor W. Wright and Members of Council in Committee of the Whole Date: July 12, 2010
July Lisa Spitale, File: 2535.10
From: Director of Development Services
Subject: Queensborough Community Plan Update- Summary of June 24, 2010
Open House

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive this report for information.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to advise Council of the progress on the Queensborough Community Plan and provide a summary of the comments received at the Open House held on June 24, 2010 at the Queensborough Community Centre.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the meeting was to update the community regarding new information (heritage inventory and ecological assessment), provide an update on the progress of Queensborough initiatives such as the Development Assistance Compensation (DAC) and Ewen Avenue Streetscape projects, and seek community input and review regarding various aspects of the Queensborough Community Plan.

BACKGROUND

In 2008, City staff commenced with the update of the Queensborough Community Plan. The purpose of the new Plan is to provide a renewed vision to guide the future growth of the Queensborough neighbourhood. The plan review process is considering a number of issues that have been raised in the Queensborough neighbourhood, including:

- Increasing the diversity of the housing stock
- Need for additional open space and pedestrian-oriented connectivity

- Need for community services and amenities, including child care
- Transportation issues, such as the impact from non-Queensborough commuter traffic, traffic calming and cycling routes
- Consideration of Development Assistance Compensation (DAC) priorities in relation to land use and community needs
- Environmental issues including the impact of Riparian Area Regulations
- The protection of industrial lands and integrating opportunities for contemporary forms of industrial development
- Infrastructure and servicing issues
- Floodplain issues

On April 12, 2010 staff brought forward a report outlining areas of community consensus in the Queensborough Community Plan. The report also included the consultant work on the heritage inventory and assessment and the ecological assessment review.

At the June 22, 2009 Council meeting, Council instructed staff to commence with an Employment Land Strategy to help inform the City-wide OCP, including the update to the Queensborough Community Plan. Over the last several months, consultants have been collecting data for the Employment Land Strategy. A preliminary draft was presented to Council at the June 14, 2010 Committee of the Whole meeting. Council has requested that the Employment Land Strategy be the subject of a Council workshop, which will be held after the summer.

ANALYSIS

On June 24, 2010, the City hosted an Open House regarding the development of the Queensborough Community Plan at the Queensborough Community Centre. Approximately 50 people attended the Open House. Staff from the Planning Division and Engineering Department were available to provide information and answer questions. After the event, Staff posted the questionnaire and display boards on the City's website. Staff has received 10 questionnaires. A summary of the responses is attached as Appendix A.

In addition to the questionnaires, Staff has compiled comments received during the Open House. These are grouped by general topic area.

Environment

- Several participants had questions regarding the infilling of ditches. Some were supportive, others were not
- Several participants noted seeing herons, frogs and beavers in/around the ditches and felt it was important to keep habitat area for this wildlife
- One individual noted an increase in pollution in the Boundary canal system over the years and thinks the City should address this as it is limiting/affecting wildlife
- One individual noted the loss in wetland habitat in the last few years by the highway
- One individual noted seeing lots of invasive plant species
- Concern was raised regarding the loss of habitat when streets are extended due to new development
- Question raised of would the City consider buying land to meet the environmental goal regarding forest restoration.

Transportation

- Residents were very interested in knowing the timing for Ewen Avenue streetscape upgrades
 - no sidewalks between Port Royal to Stanley Street; kids need sidewalks to safely walk to school
 - Ewen is poorly lit, has narrow sidewalks and truck traffic
 - people living in Port Royal want to have the eastern section rebuilt first, and people living near Ewen Avenue and Howes Street want to have the middle section rebuilt first
- Most of the attendees preferred a traffic signal controlled intersection at Ewen Avenue and Howes Street
 - people are not familiar with using a roundabout
 - motorists' compliance with yielding to pedestrians at the roundabout would be poor
 - a traffic signal controlled intersection is safer for pedestrians
 - a traffic signal controlled intersection needs less land
- Several people noted interest in having an impressive gateway feature at the Ewen Avenue and Howes Street intersection
- More frequent transit services is needed in Queensborough

- Desire for the perimeter trail to be completed including a waterfront trail through the Port Authority's Property and connecting trails between Walmart and Casino

Heritage

- The heritage inventory list appears to be comprehensive
- Older buildings with exceptional architecture, components and usability should be listed on the Heritage Register
- 1238 Ewen Avenue (old pool hall), the former bowling alley, and 30 South Dyke Road (fishing shack on South Dyke Road at Boyd) should be added to the Heritage Register
- As many historic buildings as possible should be added to the Heritage Register in order to preserve the cultural history of the community
- The creation and inclusion of the proposed Queensborough Community Heritage group is important
- There was a significant Portuguese community in Queensborough – they lived along one road – and every Christmas they would get together to go carolling door to door;
- The dykes and the canal are important heritage elements

Community & Social Issues

- All participants expressed support for the proposed program of the Queensborough Community Centre expansion
 - Felt the program reflects the consultation which has occurred in the community and addresses documented needs and gaps
 - Several questions regarding upgrades to the existing facility and the location of the proposed new community use spaces
 - One participant expressed concern about the current parking situation, noting that the addition of a library would likely aggravate the situation
- Several participants expressed surprise regarding the lack of licensed child care spaces in Queensborough and they felt that this area should be given greater priority
- Support for the creation of an All Wheel Park and the development of a designated space for youth as part of the expansion to the Queensborough Community Centre

- Several participants reiterated the need for improved accessibility and the creation of senior-friendly housing, including adaptable, affordable and rental housing which is ground-oriented and provides access to private outdoor space
 - One participant emphasized the need for assisted living options in Queensborough, enabling seniors to remain longer in the community
- Participants commented that the community is multi-cultural and welcoming and inclusive

General Comments

- There is a need for local serving commercial, particularly a food store closer to Port Royal and also at the Howes Street and Ewen Avenue area.
- Several participants expressed concern regarding industrial operations and the future of industrially zoned lands near residential areas and issues around noise, safety and value of residential lands
- Several participants expressed support for retaining the current Official Community Plan designation of industrially zoned lands in the vicinity of Derwent Way and Ewen Avenue as residential
- Residential/industrial interface: problems at Mercer & Duncan Streets
 - Parked semi-trucks frequently block half of Duncan Street
 - No lines painted on Duncan Street which creates a safety issue at night
 - Don't want to shut industry down, just want them to be good neighbours

NEXT STEPS

As outlined in the April 12, 2010 Council report, the following are the next steps involved in the Queensborough Community Plan

Heritage	Status
Creation of a community working group to review the heritage reports with representation from the Queensborough Community Centre, the Residents' Association, the Old Age Pensioners Association, Roma Hall, and interested members of the community	In-progress
Organize a community Open House with the New Westminster Museum and Archives, with display boards and Queensborough artifacts	Complete
Provide the draft studies to the City's Community Heritage Commission for review and comment	Sept. 2010

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Ecology	
Provide the Ecology report to City committees and the community for review and comment	Complete
Incorporate recommendations from the Ecological report into the draft Queensborough Community Plan	In-progress
Social Issues	
Consultation with Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and the New Westminster School District; and with the Sikh Temple Sukhsagar Representatives	In-progress
Prepare a Social Issues Backgrounder	Complete
Park and Open Space Issues	
Incorporate high level recommendations from the 2008 Parks & Recreation Comprehensive Plan into the draft Queensborough Community Plan	In-progress
Industrial Land Issues	
Further meetings with Port Metro regarding their short and long term plans for sites owned in Queensborough	In-progress
Meet with Southern Rail regarding projected growth of rail goods movement in Queensborough	Staff pursuing

After Staff has reviewed the Draft Employment Land Strategy with Council, a public open house and meeting with the community regarding all aspects of the Queensborough Community Plan will be scheduled.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

The Queensborough Community Plan is being developed under the three tenants of sustainability: social, economic and environmental.

OPTIONS

There are two options for Council's consideration; they are:

1. Council receive this report for information; or
2. Provide staff with other direction.

Staff recommend Option 1

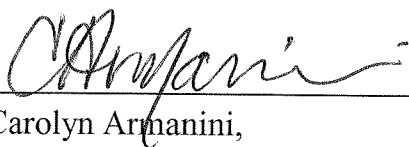
INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

Staff from the Engineering and Development Services Departments were present at the open house. Parks, Culture and Recreation staff have been involved in the development of the Queensborough Community Plan.

CONCLUSION

There was great interest from participants on new information presented at the June 24, 2010 Queensborough Community Plan Open House and participants were appreciative of learning about the recent developments on a range of City initiative including Ewen Avenue Streetscape and the DAC projects. Feedback received from the Open House, as well as the new information will be incorporated into a draft Community Plan which will be the subject of future public consultation actions.

Report Author

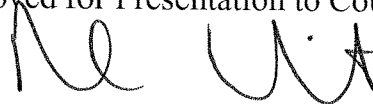


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Approved for Presentation to Council



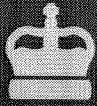
Paul Damiano,
City Administrator



Lisa Spitale,
Director of Development Services

Appendix A

Summary of Questionnaire Responses



A total of 10 questionnaires were filled in and returned to City staff. Listed below is a summary of the comments, grouped by question.

Plan Goals

1. What goals are most important to you?

- Re-elevate driveway culverts, so ditch water will flow towards pump house
- Removal of traffic circles from Ewen Avenue
- Infrastructure upgrades along Ewen Avenue
- Protecting Environment
- Keeping citizens informed of changes
- Preserving the Social History and “Sense of Community”
- Preserving our ability to adjust for a multi-cultural multi-opportunity future for all residents
- Increasing liveability of the area, particularly:
 - Facilities for children
 - Recreational value
 - Preserving the semi-rural character of Queensborough
- Traffic access to Port Royal, upgrading the road for the increase in traffic that will result when the condos are complete
- After hours bus access to Port Royal and walkability from Derwent Way
- Safe sidewalk between Derwent Way and Ewen Avenue down to Port Royal
- Improve pavement on roadway and over rail crossings
- Preserving the wildlife in Queensborough, eagles heron little peeper frogs
- No ditch on 200 block of Wood Street
- Public transit, flood control, environment
- Need more community bus/public transportation connect to SkyTrain system
- Ensuring that the dykes are brought up to standard
- Creating a complete bike path/trail along the riverfront
- Concerned about the proposed industrial plans in the Port Royal neighbourhood. Property was purchased on the understanding that the majority of the land would be changed to residential. Do not want to live in the middle of an industrial park.

Heritage

2. Are there any buildings that we have missed in the list of Industrial and Residential buildings?

- List looks comprehensive
- 1238 Ewen Avenue: old pool hall
- Fishing shack, South Dyke Road (30 South Dyke Road)
- Former bowling alley
- 83 South Dyke Road (Q'boro Traps) is an error, should be approximately 830 South Dyke Road. The same for 91-93 South Dyke Road. However, there appears to be a shipyard and marina near the location (just west of the Derwent Way Bridge)

3. Should any of these buildings be listed on the City's Heritage Register?

- Older buildings with exceptional architecture, components and usability
- As many as possible to preserve the cultural history of the community.
- The creation of the community heritage group is paramount
- No, the buildings shouldn't be listed on the register

Housing

4. Do you support the introduction of duplexes on lots that are 6,000 square feet or more in some of the low density neighbourhoods?

Response	Times Mentioned
yes	4
no	5
not sure	0

- Large houses with multiple suites is enough, we need more land to each house not pavement
- If done as a pilot rather than as a one-size fits all plan may enable the island to absorb the increase in current and future populations while lowering the environmental impact footprint
- Consider townhouses. The large +4000 sq ft homes are expensive and do not allow for lower income families to relocate to our area.
- No, the design of duplexes are not attractive
- Too much multi-family housing/density, especially for our wet ground to support and be stable
- Also being able to hear your neighbours fight when you are in your own house with windows and doors closed

- Do not want duplexes with secondary suites. Street side parking in Vancouver is poor due to large number of duplexes and secondary suites. It causes friction between neighbours.

Community Well-Being

5. Are you aware of other youth-related issues?

- No (*listed twice*)
- Transportation to NWSS - is the direct bus to/from NWSS to Queensborough twice a day? (Before school/after school)

6. Are you aware of other senior-related issues?

- Health care
- Safe sidewalks
- No

7. Based on the consultation, what was the most surprising finding?

- Environmental commitments, want to see more actions for a greener community
- The extent to which the City has had to plan and contemplate given the time period. Knowing where you are at any one time, helps you know where you can roam; in order to enrich the experience of life.

Environment

8. Are any sites missing on the main features map?

- What about air quality?
- The wood inventory doesn't seem to include wooded residential properties

9. Which conservation measures should be included in the Plan?

- Ensuring riparian waterways are protected along with entire Fraser River shorelines
- Protect bird habitats
- Preserving habitat for the frogs, helps control mosquitoes
- Keep the ditches uncovered as much as possible
- Protect the Fraser foreshore (although accessibility – interpretive trail would be desirable)
- Keep the large old trees that provide habitat for birds and give the area a 'sense' of history and pleasant atmosphere