

REPORT*DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DEPARTMENT*

To: Mayor J. Côté and Members of Council in Committee of the Whole Date: January 12, 2015

From: Beverly Grieve, Director of Development Services File: 13.2525.20

Subject: Official Community Plan Review – OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Council endorse the proposed scope for the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

This report contains an outline of the upcoming OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process. The purpose of the event, the structure and the event logistics are all detailed in the report.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting of January 20, 2014, Council endorsed a general scope, work plan and budget for the Official Community Plan (OCP) review process. The purpose of the revised OCP is to provide a renewed vision for New Westminster to the year 2041 and a regulatory framework to guide future growth of the city. The OCP will contain a land use designation map, which indicates the future land uses that will be supported by Council. The land use designations will determine future development, redevelopment and rezoning of property within the city. The land use policies in the OCP will be implemented through development permit areas, design guidelines, zoning regulations, and in some cases, heritage revitalization agreements. The OCP will also include actions for the City to undertake or continue to do toward implementing the vision.

The comprehensive review of the OCP will take into consideration the contemporary context, new planning policy, and community, stakeholder and Council feedback in the creation of a fully updated OCP document. Year one of the two year process has focused on conducting background research and a traveling community workshop which went to different neighbourhoods and community events to let people know about the OCP review and start the community thinking about key ideas. The next stage of the review process will be the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process which is the subject of this report. The remainder of year two will focus on drafting policy, including the land use designation map, followed by the development of the updated OCP document.

At their May 5, 2014 meeting, Council received a report that outlined a proposed community consultation program for the Official Community Plan including a charrette (the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process). The report also included a suggested Terms of Reference for the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group (included as Appendix A). Council passed the following resolution:

THAT Council endorse the following as outlined in the report:

- *The community consultation program; and,*
- *The Terms of Reference for the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group.*

This process will be the first event in an extensive public engagement process that will be held over the following year. Each public engagement event will correspond to a key milestone in the OCP review including the creation of the draft vision and goals, the draft policies, and future land use scenarios. To encourage a higher level of participation a variety of different events and media will be utilized and guest speakers will be invited to present at events. Council, relevant agencies, stakeholders and City committees will also be consulted regularly throughout the process.

DISCUSSION

OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process

A significant public consultation event during the Official Community Plan (OCP) review will be the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process which will to be held in February 2015. The purpose of this process will be:

- To attract many community members into the OCP review conversation.
- To learn from community members about OCP-relevant issues, ideas and opportunities including both neighbourhood and citywide perspectives.
- To incorporate community input into a comprehensive design exercise to “envision” the future of New Westminster that will inform the new OCP.

- To widen understanding and appreciation of complex planning and urban design issues and broaden the capacity of community members and stakeholders to participate in the planning process in a meaningful way.
- To generate a variety of graphic- and text-based outputs that can illustrate and articulate the community's vision and provide key directions for the OCP review.
- To identify and build on the unique qualities of New Westminster and its neighbourhoods and reflect these unique qualities in the process outputs.

The Neighbourhood Visioning Process will be run by Modus, consultants retained by the City, and will involve community members, an advisory group (outlined below) and City staff. The process includes four components: a workshop, processing workshop input, an open house and a final report. Each of the components is outlined below.

The Neighbourhood Visioning Process is seen as the first major community consultation event in the overall OCP review process.

1. Neighbourhood Visioning Workshop:

The Neighbourhood Visioning Process will be kicked off by a conversation with the community about the future of the city, facilitated by consultants that will create drawings of what people imagine. This one-day workshop will also be an opportunity to explore issues together through discussion and design.

The preliminary schedule for the day proposes the workshop start with a guest speaker who will inspire participants and encourage creative thinking about the future of the city. The rest of the day will generally be structured around three key themes that the City would like to explore with the community: the future of your neighbourhood, a growing city, and big moves towards a great city. City staff will continue to work with the consultants to refine the workshop schedule to ensure that the scope and workload is appropriate and engaging.

The Future of Your Neighbourhood

A livable city is one that provides places to live, work, play and learn. The city should include a diversity of stores, amenities and green space that are easily accessible to community members. Creating a complete and connected community will allow residents to fulfill their day-to-day needs in their neighbourhood, without having to live the city and without relying on driving to access these amenities.

Explorations on this topic could include questions such as:

- Where is the heart of the neighbourhood? Is there more than one heart?
- Where does the heart connect to?
- Where do you tend to go to meet people in your neighbourhood?
- What is missing in your neighbourhood (e.g. housing types, stores, services, amenities, greenspace) and where could these best be located?
- Thinking about the potential for a “Great Street” in your neighbourhood – how could this street be improved to make it safer, more vibrant, better for pedestrians (8 to 80)?
- Choose a park or greenspace in your neighbourhood – how could it be improved to create opportunities for all community members to meet and spend time in this space?

A Growing City

The city will continue to grow. Metro Vancouver’s Regional Growth Strategy anticipates that New Westminster will grow to 102,000 people by 2041. The Urban Development Forecast completed for the OCP review forecast that the population will grow to 104,000 by 2041. This equates to approximately 36,000 additional people. The workshop will explore with the community different ways to accommodate this growth.

Explorations on this topic could include questions such as:

- Should there be any changes to the City’s principles for growth and housing?
- How can new growth (housing and commercial) appropriately fit into each neighbourhood?
- Where in the city should the “in-between” forms of housing (e.g. laneway housing, duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes, townhouses, rowhouses) be located?
- To what extent should housing types be mixed together?
- How can the neighbourhood maintain its character and key qualities while growth happens?

Big Moves Towards a Great City

The new Official Community Plan should be ambitious about what the city should look like in 25 years. Big moves can take a long time to implement and are often implemented one small piece at a time (e.g. completing the walkway along the riverfront). Steps towards achieving the vision and the big moves can start as soon as the OCP is adopted.

Explorations on this topic could include encouraging participants to think about big and bold ideas for ways to make New Westminster a great place to live, work, play and learn through questions such as:

- What would make this City great? What significant, big moves do we need to support the evolution of the City?
- Where do we need to innovate?
- Where do we need to adapt?
- Thinking about a chosen topic (e.g. heritage, environment, energy and emissions, housing), what would improve the city?

2. Processing Workshop Input

Over two days following the workshop, the consultants will work with staff and the Advisory Group to process and further develop and refine the ideas generated during the workshop. The Advisory Group will provide clarification and context information, and will act as representatives for the community at large. The two days will include a recap of results and key learnings from the workshop. The consultant team will synthesize key ideas from the workshop in the form of sketches, plans, policies, design approaches, and guidelines.

3. Open House

An open house will be held on a Saturday after the Processing Workshop Input Phase. All of the material produced through the process will be presented. Community members will be invited to drop in, review the materials and give their feedback. A survey will be created that will be available in hard copy and online for people to be able to provide additional feedback.

4. Final Report

The consultants will draft a final report that summarizes the overall process and all of the findings. The document will include each of the drawings, sketches and vignettes produced, as well as an explanation of what each represents. This document, and the overall outputs of the visioning process, will be used by staff as one input to create the draft policy statements and draft land use plan.

Advisory Group

An OUR CITY Visioning Advisory Group will be involved throughout the Neighbourhood Visioning Process, working closely with staff and the consultants. The members of the group will add value to the process by providing input and a variety of perspectives on the future of the city, and by advising on project components and products throughout the entire process, including the “Processing Workshop Input”

phase. The Advisory Group will be made up of community members who frequent or live in, or have an interest in New Westminster.

Sustainability Implications

The Official Community Plan (OCP) review will integrate the City's Envision 2032 Sustainability Framework into the updated OCP document. The resulting OCP will be based on best practices in sustainability, and will be developed with extensive community engagement and full consideration of social, cultural, economic and environmental perspectives. It will provide a sustainable decision-making framework for the future development of the city. The indicators developed parallel to the OCP review process will provide a tool for implementing the sustainability directions of Envision 2032.

Financial Implications

The Official Community Plan (OCP) review process will be conducted primarily with internal staff resources. The budget for the work will be allocated from the Department's annual operating budget. A consultation budget of \$35,000 has been allocated to the Neighbourhood Visioning Workshop. This excludes the cost of the event logistics (e.g. venue and catering) and the speaker. Staff is currently identifying the potential speakers for the OCP review process and associated costs (e.g. speaker fees, travel costs).

NEXT STEPS

The OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process launches the second year of the Official Community Plan review, which will focus on community consultation and preparing and refining the draft vision, goals, policies and land use plan. Each of these components will be presented to Council, Council's committees/commissions, other stakeholders and relevant agencies, and the public in future public engagement events. Feedback will be used to further refine each of the components.

In addition, there will be detailed technical workshops or follow up studies on key issues (e.g. infill housing) that require more in-depth understanding that what is possible in the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process. These workshops will build on the direction set during the Visioning Process.

Staff will incorporate the vision statement, vision drawings, policy area goals, policies, land use plan, and other components into an updated draft OCP document. The document will be laid out similar to the Queensborough Community Plan to be easily understandable and useable by Council, staff, the public and other users. The draft OCP will be presented to Council, to the public, and circulated for review. It is expected that the final OCP will be presented to Council for adoption in the summer of 2016.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The OCP will be developed as a coordinated interdepartmental process, focused on creating a single, commonly-held vision that is supported by the community and understood by all potential audiences. An interdepartmental team is involved with researching components of the OCP and meets on a regular basis to discuss process strategy and policy issues. Other related staff are updated regularly on the process at the inter-departmental Development Review Committee. Staff will continue to be invited to contribute their insights and feedback and ultimately will be presented the final documents with regard to applying them in their areas of responsibility.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That Council endorse the proposed scope for the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process outlined in this report; or
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

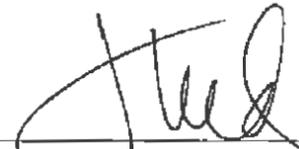
Staff recommends Option 1.

CONCLUSION

The City is currently undertaking a review of the Official Community Plan. The purpose of this review is to provide a renewed vision for New Westminster to the year 2041 and a regulatory framework to guide future growth of the city. A significant public consultation event in the review process will be the OUR CITY Neighbourhood Visioning Process. The Visioning Process will include the following components: a workshop, processing workshop input, an open house and a final report. The purpose of the process will be to create a vision in drawings of what New Westminster might look like in 2041.

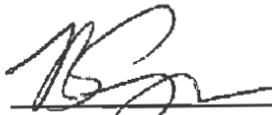


Lynn Roxburgh,
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Approved for Presentation
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Appendix A
*Terms of Reference for the
OUR CITY Visioning Advisory Group*

Terms of Reference for the OUR CITY Visioning Advisory Group

Purpose

The purpose of the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will be to represent the needs and values of community members who frequent or live in, or have an interest in New Westminster now and in the future, throughout the entire charrette process.

The Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will:

- Participate in a four day visioning charrette.
- Provide feedback on the draft policy statements and land use map.
- Provide feedback to their resident association as appropriate.

Membership of Advisory Group

The Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will include:

- One (1) representative from each of the City's Residents' Associations (11 total); and,
- Between Fifteen (15) and Twenty (20) community members. The exact numbers of members will be determined through consultation with the consultants retained to facilitate the charrette process.

The members will be confirmed by Council.

Term of Appointment:

- Term of membership on the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will coincide with the visioning charrette process. Once the members have had an opportunity to review the output from the charrette and provide input on the draft policy statements and land use plan the term of the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will come to an end.
- If a member of the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group is required to withdraw a new member will be confirmed by Council.

Meeting Schedule:

Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group meetings will take place up to three (3) times during the course of the term of appointment, a period of approximately eight (8) months. The tasks of the Group will consist of the following:

- Attend an introductory meeting regarding the role of the Group, the Official Community Plan process, and the draft vision and goals;
- Participate in the four day visioning charrette; and

- Attend a final meeting to provide feedback on the vision pictures, charrette summary documents, draft policy statements and draft land use plan.

The Role of Staff:

The Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will be coordinated by a staff member from the Planning Division of the Development Services Department. Other City staff will be included as necessary. Staff will:

- Organize meetings, develop agendas, take and distribute meeting notes;
- Organize the charatte process ;
- Provide information on the results of the charrette to the members (e.g. vision drawings);
- Provide the draft policies and draft land use plan to members feedback; and
- Where requested and feasible, respond to information requests from the Stakeholder Advisory Group.

Procedures:

- Meetings will be facilitated by New Westminster Planning Division staff.
- Input from the Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will be made available to Council who has final authority on Official Community Plan Bylaw amendments.
- While efforts will be made to reach agreement on and resolve concerns raised throughout the process, it is understood that differing positions/perspectives between Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group and staff may arise and will be noted.

Rules of Conduct:

The Charrette Stakeholder Advisory Group will be guided by the City of New Westminster Rules of Conduct: Advisory Committees & Bodies of Council. These will be provided to the group at their first meeting.