

# **REPORT**

## ***Climate Action, Planning and Development***

**To:** Mayor Cote and Members of Council      **Date:** December 13, 2021

**From:** Emilie K. Adin, MCIP      **File:** 13.2525.02  
Director, Climate Action, Planning and  
Development

**Item #:** 2021-605

**Subject:** 22nd Street Station Area: Bold Vision Work Plan

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** Council direct staff to proceed with the proposed 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area Bold Vision work plan as outlined in this report, subject to the adoption of the 2022-2026 City Budget.

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### **PURPOSE**

To inform Council on the work plan for the relaunch of the 22nd Street Station Area Bold Vision project.

### **SUMMARY**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area has been identified as an area that could accommodate growth in a compact, transit-oriented form. After declaring a climate emergency in 2019, the City identified the opportunity to plan this area as an eco-neighbourhood. Planning was put on hold through the pandemic and it is now proposed to proceed, starting with an ideas competition and a visioning process through 2022 and into 2023. This report outlines a work plan and budget for undertaking this process.

### **BACKGROUND**

The area around 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain Station is identified in the Official Community Plan (OCP) as an area intended to accommodate higher density development, with good access to transit and amenities.

Through the development of the OCP from 2015 to 2017, neighbourhood planning for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area was initiated. Following adoption of the plan, a master planning process began. A draft land use designation map was created with community and Council input, a comprehensive transportation study was completed, and analysis on how to finance growth was initiated. Attachment #1 outlines the background work that was undertaken.

### **Previous Council Direction**

At Council's February 24, 2020 meeting and as an outcome of its 2019 declaration of the climate emergency, Council endorsed creating a bold vision for a climate friendly neighbourhood centred around the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain Station. The bold vision will respond to the climate emergency, and the City's Seven Bold Steps for Climate Action, while also incorporating other Council priorities such as affordable housing, equity, and inclusion.

Originally scheduled to proceed in 2020, the City postponed the planning process to focus resources on pandemic response and recovery efforts.

However, given previous Council direction, funding for this project has been included in the proposed 2022 Budget.

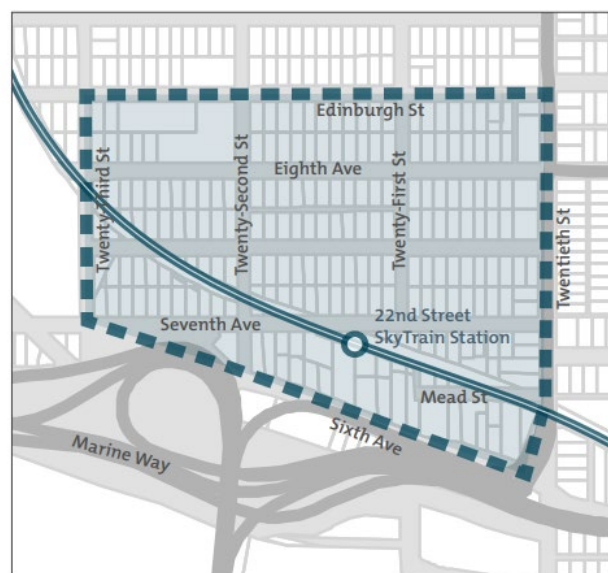
### **PROPOSED WORK PLAN**

#### **Project Scope**

The proposed project would create a bold vision for an eco-neighbourhood in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area. The vision is intended to be an ambitious forward-looking statement on the bold steps that could be taken in developing the area.

The station area is currently defined by Twentieth Street to the northeast (a collector road), Twenty-Third Street and the Schara Tzedek cemetery to the southwest, Sixth Avenue and the on-and off-ramps for Queensborough Bridge to the southeast, and Edinburgh Street to the northwest.

The vision area may be expanded somewhat through the planning process, but this area was purposefully delineated as the area immediately adjacent to and within a short walk of the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain Station, where higher density uses are generally seen



22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area

to be appropriate, with middle density uses intended for stepping down into the surrounding Connaught Heights community.

The vision will be implemented through a detailed neighbourhood planning program, building on the work that has already been undertaken. Significant neighbourhood engagement occurred during development of the 2017 OCP and in the initial phases of the master planning process for the station area following the adoption of the OCP. While the process of creating a new bold vision will result in big ideas and potentially lead to some new directions, the previous neighbourhood input will be considered, as well as the land use and transportation planning work completed to date. All of these inputs will feed into the next phase of neighbourhood planning following the completion of the visioning process.

## Goals

The goal of the 22nd Street Station Area Bold Vision process and subsequent steps will be to create a roadmap for redevelopment and the transformation of the station area into an eco-neighbourhood. Specifically, a neighbourhood that is designed in such a way as to adapt to climate impacts and to achieve a net zero or positive impact on climate. The eco-neighbourhood can catalyze the City's Bold Steps for Climate Action. For example, the eco-neighbourhood could reflect a car light community with pollution-free vehicles (Bold Steps #2 and 4), as well as carbon-free homes and buildings (Bold Step #3) and a quality people-centred public realm (Bold Step #7).

As a compact urban city, much of New Westminster's growth is through infill and redevelopment, as will be the case in the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area. Creating an eco-friendly community in that context will be challenging, as opportunities are constrained by a number of factors: an existing street network, existing in-ground services and infrastructure, a range of landowners and stakeholders, and lands that are not assembled or consolidated under one or few owners.

One of the goals of the 22nd Street Station Area Bold Vision, using an ideas competition, is to break the mould of traditional planning processes and identify how we can achieve climate excellence, even with the challenges inherent with redevelopment in a built-out urban area. The process is anticipated to generate some helpful lessons for application across the city and other municipalities.

The Bold Vision process must also address other City priorities, namely affordability, equity and inclusion. Balancing these various goals and objectives will require:

- engaging with First Nations to ground all planning in an understanding of the area's past and present significance and context, and to ensure that the resulting vision furthers reconciliation;
- careful consideration of process to ensure that the interests and wellbeing of existing and future residents are considered in any strategy for neighbourhood transition;

- exploration of creative ways of using the planning tools available, such as residential rental tenure zoning or performance metrics if appropriate;
- careful analysis of how to finance growth to ensure needed amenities are achievable; and
- exploration of partnerships with non-profit organizations and senior levels of government to bring further investment and improvements to the neighbourhood.

## Process & Timelines

As outlined in the February 24, 2020 report, the process to create the Bold Vision will include four main phases: an ideas competition, evaluation and shortlisting of ideas, drafting of the bold vision, and vision implementation. Each phase will entail significant community engagement.

A consultant will be retained to further refine the process, to run the ideas competition, and draft the vision with the community and stakeholders.

The four phases of vision development and implementation are further described in the table below:

Phase	Timeframe
<b>1. Ideas Competition:</b> The ideas competition will invite leading global experts in climate resilience and community planning, and members across the community to provide creative ideas about how to achieve the project goal. The intent of the competition is to tap into a wide range of bold ideas, many of which can then inform the vision.	Open through summer 2022
<b>2. Evaluation and Shortlisting of Ideas:</b> The evaluation and shortlisting of ideas will include both expert analysis and community input.	Fall 2022
<b>3. Develop a Bold Vision:</b> Creating the bold vision will entail taking the top ideas and turning them into a cohesive and implementable plan for the neighbourhood that responds to the climate emergency.	Winter 2022 to spring 2023
<b>4. Implementation of the Bold Vision:</b> Once the Bold Vision is adopted by Council, an implementation process will be launched, based on the next steps identified by the consultants, likely including further development of plan elements such as climate action opportunities, amenity strategies, transportation network options, and/or design and public realm guidelines.	Spring/summer 2023 & onwards

## **NEXT STEPS**

Following adoption of the 2022 budget, staff will put out a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) from consulting teams to frame and lead the ideas competition and visioning process. The EOI process is being proposed to allow for consultant teams to use their expertise to pitch creative framing of the planning process.

From the EOI responses, the top teams will be invited to submit a response to a Request for Proposals, which will be partially shaped by the EOI submissions.

A diverse team could include experts on climate adaptation, urban design, land use and multi-modal transportation. The consulting team may propose bringing in other experts as needed throughout the process (e.g. an expert panel for reviewing or evaluating ideas).

The consulting team will be selected by early April, to run the ideas competition through the summer and visioning process in the fall and winter.

Staff will report back to Council following the hiring of a consulting team, to provide a more detailed project plan for the first phases of the project.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposed 2022 budget includes \$370,000 for this project. The budget will be further broken down following the RFP process, but is expected to include:

- a consultation budget that allows for the deep level of engagement that occurred through the OCP development, including efforts to bring new voices into the conversation, significant online engagement, speakers or panelists at events, graphic design support, and additional creative events; and
- compensation for the consulting team and all other project costs, such as any needed sub-consultants, and all additional expenses related to the ideas competition and visioning.

Following the adoption of a vision, staff will report back on implementation processes and any additional financial considerations for that phase.

## **INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

Staff across multiple departments will be engaged in the station area planning process:

- Transportation staff have already been involved with early transportation study and will continue to be engaged;
- The Climate Action Team will be involved with evaluating ideas and ensuring climate measures are implementable and aligned with City plans;

- Parks & Recreation staff will be involved with discussions of amenities in the area; and
- Infrastructure planning staff will help ensure that significant upgrade needs are identified early and considered in the implementation process.

## **OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to proceed with the proposed 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area Bold Vision work plan as outlined in this report.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Option 1.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1 - 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area Planning to Date

## **APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
Meredith Seeton, Policy Planner

This report was reviewed by:  
Lynn Roxburgh, Acting Supervisor of Land Use Planning and Climate Action  
Jackie Teed, Senior Manager, Climate Action, Planning and Development

This report was approved by:  
Emilie K. Adin, Director, Climate Action, Planning and Development  
Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer

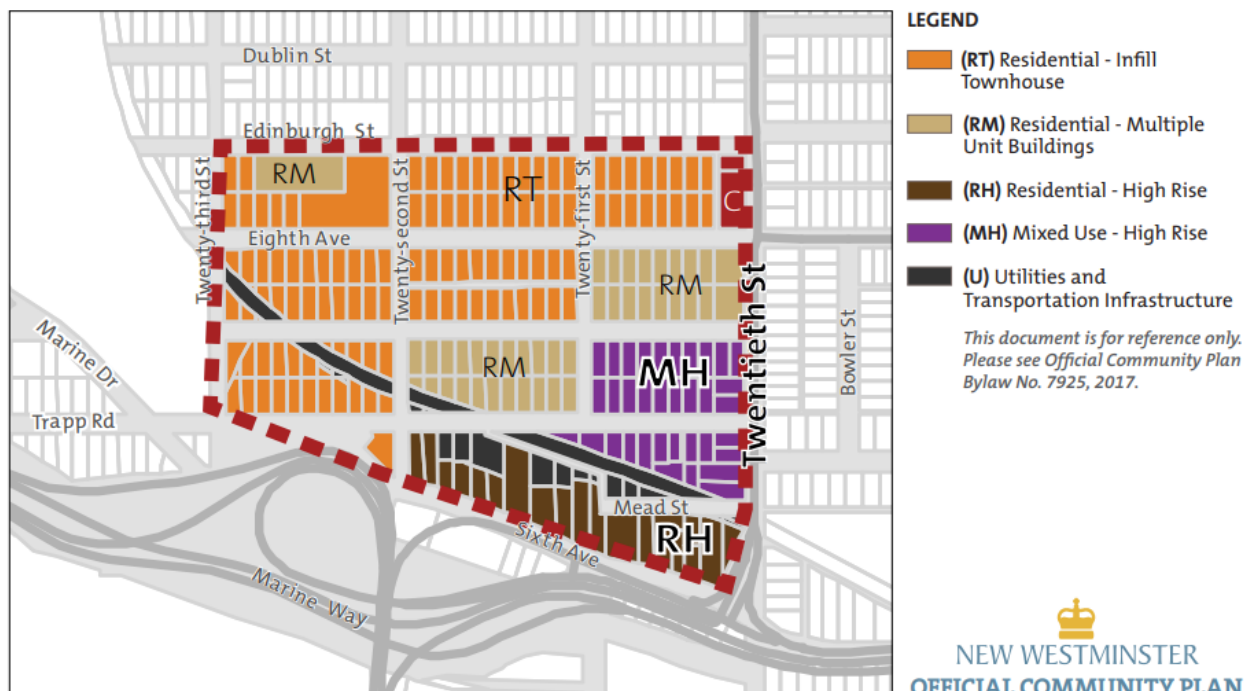
Attachment 1  
*22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area Planning to Date*

## **Attachment 1: 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area Planning to Date**

Staff has engaged the community and consultants in significant planning for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area over the years.

- A station area backgrounder for the planning process was produced (downloadable at [https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/files/library/22ndStreetBackgrounder\\_Updated\\_July\\_2019\(1\).pdf](https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/files/library/22ndStreetBackgrounder_Updated_July_2019(1).pdf)), outlining the community context and key planning challenges, as well as guiding policies and plans.
- Community planning for the Official Community Plan development included significant neighbourhood-specific engagement. There were 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area findings from processes such as a neighbourhood visioning charrette, community conversations on housing, “Your Future City” workshops and surveys on draft land use designations, and other surveys and open houses.
- A land use concept for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area was created during the Official Community Plan (OCP) review, which was adopted in October 2017. The neighbourhood is envisioned as a high density, mixed-use node, with shops and commercial services on Seventh Avenue, east of the station. Higher density residential development would locate near the SkyTrain station, while low rise residential buildings and infill townhouses would “step down” into the surrounding neighbourhood of Connaught Heights. A proposed land use designation map was produced (shown below), through a significant public engagement process.

### **Proposed Land Use Designation Map for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area**





- A detailed transportation study was undertaken, to start to imagine how to address some of the major transportation challenges of the neighbourhood. The intent of the study was to capture the “big and bold” potential changes that could be considered for the station area, and then narrow down and provide guidance on which ideas are most technically feasible. The study evaluated the context, community and stakeholder input, and applied design objectives to come up with feasible options for further consideration. The study provided two station area concepts, with Seventh Avenue either opened or closed, and further broke these into short term and long term concepts, with different implications for greenway alignments, transit exchange areas, pedestrian network, road network and development access. Future transportation planning work can build on this study with further engagement and technical analysis.
- Staff began high level research on amenity options and approximate costs, such as:
  - Community facility space, such as a neighbourhood house, potentially including child care;
  - Street realignment or widening for multimodal improvements;
  - Public realm improvements like public art, wayfinding, mid-block greenways, multi-use paths or improved street landscaping;
  - Additional community or neighbourhood park space, community gardens, off-leash dog areas, pocket parks or privately-owned public spaces operating as usable publicly-accessible open space; and/or
  - Electric vehicle infrastructure such as DC fast charging stations, space for EV car sharing or electric bike sharing.
- A consultant was engaged to undertake some early analysis of how growth and amenities could be financed by leveraging development to pay for community amenity priorities. This early exploration informed discussions around the number and density of potential high rises within the area. Further analysis on financing growth will be needed following the bold vision process.