



## **REPORT**

### *Development Services*

**To:** Mayor Côté and Members of Council  
in Open Council Workshop

**Date:** 1/30/2017

**From:** Jackie Teed  
Acting Director of Development  
Services

**File:** 13.2525.20

**Item #:** 55/2017

**Subject: Official Community Plan Review: Draft Official Community Plan and Revised Land Use Designation Map**

---

---

### **RECOMMENDATION**

*THAT Council support in principle the draft Official Community Plan, including the revised Land Use Designation Map, as a basis for public consultation.*

---

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The purpose of this report is to present the first draft of the Official Community Plan (OCP) to Council for their review and comment. The draft OCP is included as **Attachment 2**. If Council supports this draft OPC in principle, it would then be presented for public consultation in February. After the consultation, the final edit and polish (e.g. adding captions, additional photos) of the document would be completed. The final version of the document would then be presented to Council for adoption.

The OCP will provide a renewed vision to the year 2041 and the regulatory framework to guide the future growth toward achieving the vision. The framework of the plan includes: the vision, goals, policies, actions, design guidelines, land use designations and Land Use Designation Map. The map shows the types and locations of land uses that will be encouraged over the next 25 years. The map included in this draft of the OCP has been revised based on the feedback received from the community and direction from Council. The OCP includes land use designation definitions that provide further detail regarding what land uses and/or building forms are permitted. This new OCP takes a different approach to the

land use destinations than the current Plan. The purpose of this change, which is outlined in this report, is to provide additional detail about the expectations for new development under each designation.

Overall, the OCP provides comprehensive guidance in all areas related to the economic, environmental, social and cultural development of New Westminster. The plan review process considered a number of issues that were raised which have been incorporated as themes, such as increasing housing choice. Each of the themes is outlined in the report.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to provide for Council's review the draft Official Community Plan (OCP). The report seeks Council's support in principle of the draft Plan, including the revised Land Use Designation Map, prior to the next stage of consultation.

### **BACKGROUND**

In January 2014, Council endorsed a general scope, work plan and budget for the Official Community Plan (OCP) review process. The purpose of the OCP is to provide a renewed vision for New Westminster to the year 2041 and the regulatory framework to guide future growth of the city. The first year of the process focused on conducting background research, including an Urban Development Forecast and an Ecological Inventory. During this year, the public process was also launched with community events to let people know about the OCP review and gain community input on key ideas. The second year focused on exploring housing needs and opportunities and creating the draft OCP framework: the vision, goals, and policies. Through the Neighbourhood Visioning Process, this year also began the discussion about what new housing forms should be permitted in the city and where they should be located. This was the first step towards the creation of the Land Use Designation Map. Further refinements to the map were made after the Community Conversation on Housing, through which community members provided feedback on three different land use options.

The third year has focused on the drafting of the Official Community Plan, which is a focus of this report. A November 7, 2016 Council report summarized the findings of the most recent round of public consultation, the Our Future City events held in September and October 2016. The goal of this last major milestone of the public consultation process was to obtain community feedback on the draft vision, goals, policies and Land Use Designation Map. The focus of the consultation and of the discussion with Council at the November 7 Open Workshop was the map. Council provided input on key locations where staff wanted more direction prior to making revisions to the draft map. This input has now been incorporated into the map, and is a focus of this report.

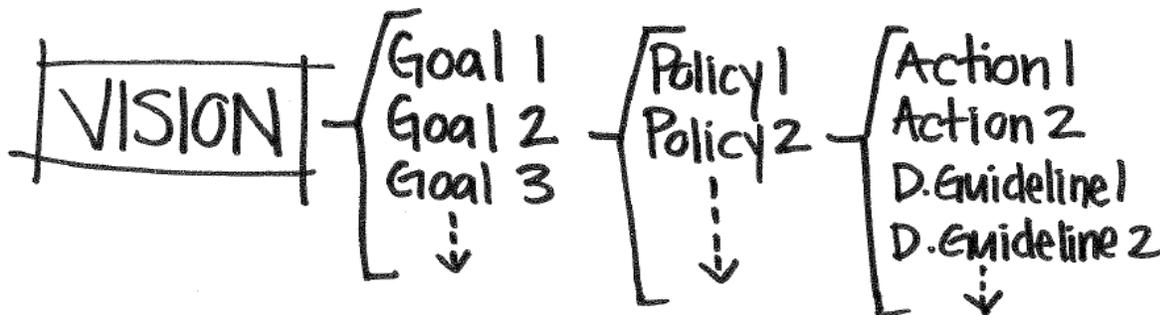
## PURPOSE OF THE OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

The draft Official Community Plan (OCP) provides a renewed vision to the year 2041 and the regulatory framework to guide the future growth toward achieving the vision. The OCP contains a Land Use Designation Map, which shows the types and locations of land uses that will be encouraged. The land use designations will determine future development, redevelopment and rezoning of property. 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 also includes actions for the City to undertake or continue to do toward implementing the vision.

### Planning Framework

The OCP is organized around a framework that connects the “big picture” vision to the specific policies, actions, development permit guidelines and land use designations, needed to achieve that vision (see Figure 1). The complete planning framework will have six elements: the vision, goals, policies, actions, design guidelines and the Land Use Designation Map. Each successive element of the planning framework provides progressively more detailed instructions such that, together, they create a clear “road map” to achieve the OCP vision.

Figure 1: Planning Framework for the Official Community Plan



Each of the planning framework elements blend best practice with the community’s priorities, as expressed by community members during the public consultation process:

- **The Vision** – the vision is a vivid description of the communities’ aspirations for the future of the city. It provides a clear direction for the plan. (See page 25 of the attached Draft OCP).
- **Goals** – the goals are broad statements describing the results that the plan would seek to achieve in relation to each of the ten policy areas. (See page 26 of the attached Draft OCP).
- **Policies** – the policies describe the City’s objectives or course of action related to each policy area. (Policies are dispersed between pages 31 and 146 of the attached OCP).

- **Actions** – the actions describe specific next steps to be taken by the City to further Plan implementation. Actions identify future policies to be created, relationships to be developed and specific projects to be completed. In some cases, they reinforce continuing actions that the City is already undertaking. (Actions are dispersed between pages 31 and 146 of the attached OCP).
- **Design Guidelines** – the guidelines shape the form and character of new development, protect development from hazardous conditions, and encourage best practices for promoting water and energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The guidelines ensure that all new development helps to implement the land use policies in the Plan. (Design guidelines, which are organized into Development Permit Areas, will be included at the end of the OCP but have not yet been added).
- **Land Use Designations and Map** – land use designations shown on the Land Use Designation Map help determine future development, redevelopment and rezoning of property. The location of land use designations helps achieve the land use policies. (See pages 145-158 of the attached Plan).

### **EXISTING POLICY/PRACTICE**

The 2017 Official Community Plan (OCP) will replace the 2011 Plan, and will become the document that guides growth and development throughout the city. In addition to the OCP, the City relies on community plans (e.g. Queensborough and Downtown) as policy documents which guide growth and development in specific neighbourhoods. Community plans align with the overarching OCP but include greater detail. These community plans will be schedules to the citywide OCP.

In some cases, further detail on implementation of the various policy areas will be found in other policies, plans, strategies and bylaws. The Affordable Housing Strategy, Master Transportation Plan, Community Energy and Emissions Plan and Envision 2032 are some examples. These documents are compatible pieces that work collaboratively with the OCP to help implement its vision.

### **ANALYSIS**

The draft Official Community Plan (OCP) is attached for the Council's review (see **Attachment 2**).

### **Official Community Plan Themes**

The OPC provides comprehensive guidance in all areas related to the economic, environmental, social and cultural development of the community. The plan review process considered a number of issues that were raised by Council, community members and other stakeholders, including:

### *1. Increasing Housing Choice*

As New Westminster grows, the City must ensure that there is housing to meet the needs of different ages, incomes, family types and abilities. To do so, the City must increase the housing options available by encouraging more ground-oriented housing forms, increasing the variety of tenures and unit sizes, and making affordable housing available, all of which will help create diverse, intergenerational neighbourhoods.

In addition to the policies included under the Housing Policy Area, the OCP also now includes laneway and carriage houses as a permitted use in the “Residential – Detached and Semi-Detached Housing,” which applies to the city’s single detached dwelling neighbourhoods. The OCP also includes two new land use designations: “Residential – Ground Oriented Housing” and “Residential – Townhouse.” By applying these designations in strategic locations throughout the city, there will be an opportunity for new small-scale ground oriented housing forms in each neighbourhood.

### *2. Neighbourhood Hearts*

Each neighbourhood in New Westminster should have a heart—a central place where people gather to shop, play, access services and meet their neighbours. Neighbourhood hearts can be community facilities, Great Streets with an improved mix of shopping and amenities, or small-scale, local-serving commercial nodes. They should have a mix of uses for living (housing), working (offices, shopping, artisan studios) and playing (community centres, parks and green spaces).

### *3. Strengthened Connections*

The City strives to build a more connected city both physically and socially. It is important that the City foster growth in a way that will make it easier and more pleasant to get around using all modes, including bicycles and on foot. This can be achieved by preserving connections to and along the waterfront as well as by creating new connections. Addressing physical barriers will open up access and also create opportunities for people to meet and connect with each other. For example, removing barriers to pedestrian movement and cycling and improving physical connections across large, busy roads will allow people to move more easily between neighbourhoods.

The City must also work to strengthen connections to regional destinations or important places in neighbouring municipalities. Acknowledging these important connections and working to improve them will strengthen the city overall.

#### *4. Supporting Innovation*

Innovation introduces new concepts or ideas and can effect positive change among residents, businesses and institutions. The City is committed to pursuing innovation, essential to a healthy economy, through many means and is aiming to be a world-recognized Intelligent City. The City will work to keep the economic benefits of innovation local and to create an environment that engages the entire community in positive change. This will include making investments in technology that contribute to the culture of innovation and improve services to citizens while reducing operating costs.

#### *5. Heritage*

New Westminster's heritage is strongly felt across the city. It is present in both traditions and its physical spaces. The city's rich history can be read through its stunning and diverse array of architecture, including housing forms, greenspaces and street patterns, an industrial riverfront, and in the historic Downtown. The city is anchored both by its original core, established over 150 years ago, and by the customs of community building.

Throughout its history, the city continually added new layers upon the original buildings, traditions, and stories – all of which contribute to New Westminster's cultural identity, and reflect the people who call it home. The City will also be open to continued growth and evolution. These new stories, traditions and places which contribute will one day become part of the city's history. As the City endeavors to achieve this Plan's Vision, it will strive to celebrate and enhance the community heritage and character that makes New Westminster unique.

#### *6. Community Health*

Chronic illnesses and diseases like high blood pressure, cardiovascular disease, obesity, diabetes and mental illnesses like depression are on the rise and put pressure on community resources and the health care system. As the population ages, more residents will experience health and activity limitations. An aging population's specific health and housing needs can also impact local resources.

In striving to achieve this Plan's Vision, health will serve as a guiding principle. Land use planning and design can have a positive impact on health and well-being. A well-planned community can influence health by promoting physical activity, improving access to healthier foods, addressing housing needs, reducing pollution, promoting healthier natural environments and fostering good mental health. All of the policy areas in the OCP directly and indirectly support health, with the ultimate outcome of a healthy community. Healthy people are more likely to be efficient and productive because they are better at assimilating knowledge, have improved physical capabilities and are less often absent from work and school.

## 7. Resilience

Envision 2032 is an Integrated Community Sustainability Plan that informs and guides City activities—including plans, policies, projects and practices—using a sustainable lens. This Plan is one means of implementing the directions of Envision 2032. For example, Envision 2032's Descriptions of Success were used to help shape the specific goals for each policy area in this Plan, creating a model for the process through which the broader sustainability directions flow into other City plans and policies.

Becoming a resilient community requires taking a cohesive approach in which all policy areas contribute to a more socially, economically and environmentally sustainable city. This will also require the City to be forward thinking and adaptable to the impacts of climate change, whether that be by encouraging buildings that are designing to be more energy efficient and safe from floods, making it easier to move through the city on foot or bike, or through continued evolution of the City's extreme weather response plans.

### **Land Use Designations**

This Plan takes a different approach to land use designations than the current OCP does. The purpose of the new approach is to provide additional clarity and direction regarding the expectations for development within each designation.

In particular, this approach hopes to make clearer the opportunities presented through Heritage Revitalization Agreements, or other similar heritage conservation tools, to retain and protect heritage assets throughout the city. Through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement a property may be eligible for incentives such as an increase in floor space, reduced parking requirements, a creative reuse of a building, regularizing an existing non-conforming use, or incorporating a heritage building into a larger comprehensive development. The purpose of the incentives is to make it viable to conserve buildings with heritage merit.

Each land use designation includes most of the following elements.

**Purpose** – an explanation of the vision and objectives of this designation.

**Principal Forms and Uses** – the primary uses or category of uses, and/or the building forms expected in areas with the designation. While these uses and forms are expected on a majority of the properties within this designation, complementary uses may occasionally occur.

**Complementary Uses** – other uses that may happen in areas with the designation. These uses may happen on the same site as primary uses or other complementary uses, or they may occur as the primary use on the site. Unlike primary uses, complementary uses are only expected occasionally and are not expected on many sites.

**Maximum Density** – a general density category to set expectations. Additional detail about height and massing may be included as design guidelines in the Development Permit Areas. Specific height and density entitlements are established by the Zoning Bylaw.

**Heritage Assets** – retention of heritage assets is a priority for the City. This section helps communicate the expectations for heritage assets that exist in areas with this designation. The appropriate incentives are unique to each property and situation. The City's heritage policies and the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada (as amended from time to time) will be considered.

**Precedent Image** – an example of what the permitted form or primary use could look like.

**Building Form Image** – a simple model showing the general massing expected for buildings in areas with the designation.

### **Revisions to the Land Use Designation Map**

After the most recent round of consultation staff identified key locations where community members suggested changes, which were in keeping with the guiding city building principles. Before moving forward with making changes to the Land Use Designation Map staff sought additional direction from Council. These key locations included the following:

1. Land Uses in Brow of the Hill
  - a. Bent Court
  - b. Sharpe Street
  - c. Uptown Local Centre Boundary and Increased Density
2. Townhouses and Ground Oriented Infill Housing
3. The “Residential – Townhouses Designation” City-wide
4. The Special Employment Area

**Attachment 1** includes maps which identify areas relevant to these topics. Additional minor revisions have also been made to the Land Use Designation Map, which are also outlined in **Attachment 1**.

## *1. Land Uses in Brow of the Hill*

### 1.a. Bent Court

Bent Court includes nineteen properties with single detached dwellings that were all built between 1890 and 1941, some of which also have cultural heritage values. Many of the buildings are still used as dwellings but a number have been converted to commercial buildings. This pocket of older homes clustered around Bent Court creates a unique and special feel to the area.

Staff proposes that the new Official Community Plan include a land use designation and development permit area that clarifies and provides additional direction about how this area could redevelop. The options for redevelopment would include:

- A. Building under the existing Community Commercial Districts (High Rise) (C-3) zoning which requires commercial at grade and allows residential or commercial above. Given the constraints of the sites, it is unlikely that the maximum allowable buildable area would be able to be developed.
- B. Rezoning to allow residential only development (e.g. residential mid-rise). To support a rezoning the City would expect that a certain number of the existing heritage buildings would be protected through a Heritage Revitalization Agreement (HRA) and for guiding principles to be met. Like today, the retained heritage buildings could be used either as residential or as commercial. Through the HRA relaxation other zoning regulations could also be considered as further incentive and to help make the project viable, even with the reduced total allowable buildable area. This would be a similar approach to that taken for the project proposed on Brantford Street.
- C. Transferring density to another development site. The density eligible to be transferred would be based approximately on the density the site could reasonably achieve (over and above the existing density on the site).

### 1.b. Sharpe Street

There is a pocket of five industrial properties on Sharpe Street. The combined area of the properties is 8,568 square meters (2.1 acres). The properties are currently designated "(I) Industrial" and are zoned "Light Industrial Districts (M-4)." The intent of the zoning is to allow industrial uses that are generally compatible with adjoining residential uses.

The discussion at the November 7, 2016 Council Workshop focused on whether these properties should be designated "Mixed Employment," "Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings" or a combination of both. Council had mixed opinions regarding the appropriate land use designation.

Staff now proposes that the land be designated “Special Study Area” along with the Lower Twelfth Street Area. Both Sharpe Street and Lower Twelfth Street have similar features and are areas where staff want to see a creative mix of uses which could include commercial, office, ultra-light industrial and residential. After the OCP process is complete a master plan, including design guidelines, would be created for both areas. The development of the master plan and design guidelines may occur in tandem with an application for development of a catalyst project to set the standards for the Lower Twelfth Street Area.

### 1.c. Uptown Local Centre Boundary and Increased Density

At the November 7, 2016 Council Workshop staff proposed that the additional density be permitted around the Uptown core and that the western boundary of the Uptown Local Center be extended to a larger area. This was seen as an appropriate location for higher density and an important way to support the vitality of the commercial businesses. Council expressed concern about there being added pressure to redevelop the rental apartment buildings in the area. As a result, staff did not make the proposed changes to the Land Use Designation Map.

### *2. Townhouses and Ground Oriented Infill Housing*

During the public consultation there were discussions about the proposed “Residential – Townhouse” designation in all neighbourhoods. Overall, the strong message received was that more land should be designated for townhouses and rowhouses. Numerous areas were identified where community members felt townhouses would be appropriate. In the November 7, 2016 Council report staff identified specific areas that were designated “Residential – Detached and Semi-Detached” but that would be appropriate locations for townhouses.

Concerns continue to be raised by the owners on Fifth Street whose properties were proposed to be designated “Residential –Townhouse.” Staff is now recommending that this block be designated “Residential – Detached and Semi-Detached.” The 900 block of Sixth Street will still be designated “Residential – Townhouse” since the block is already designated Residential – Medium Density in the current OCP.

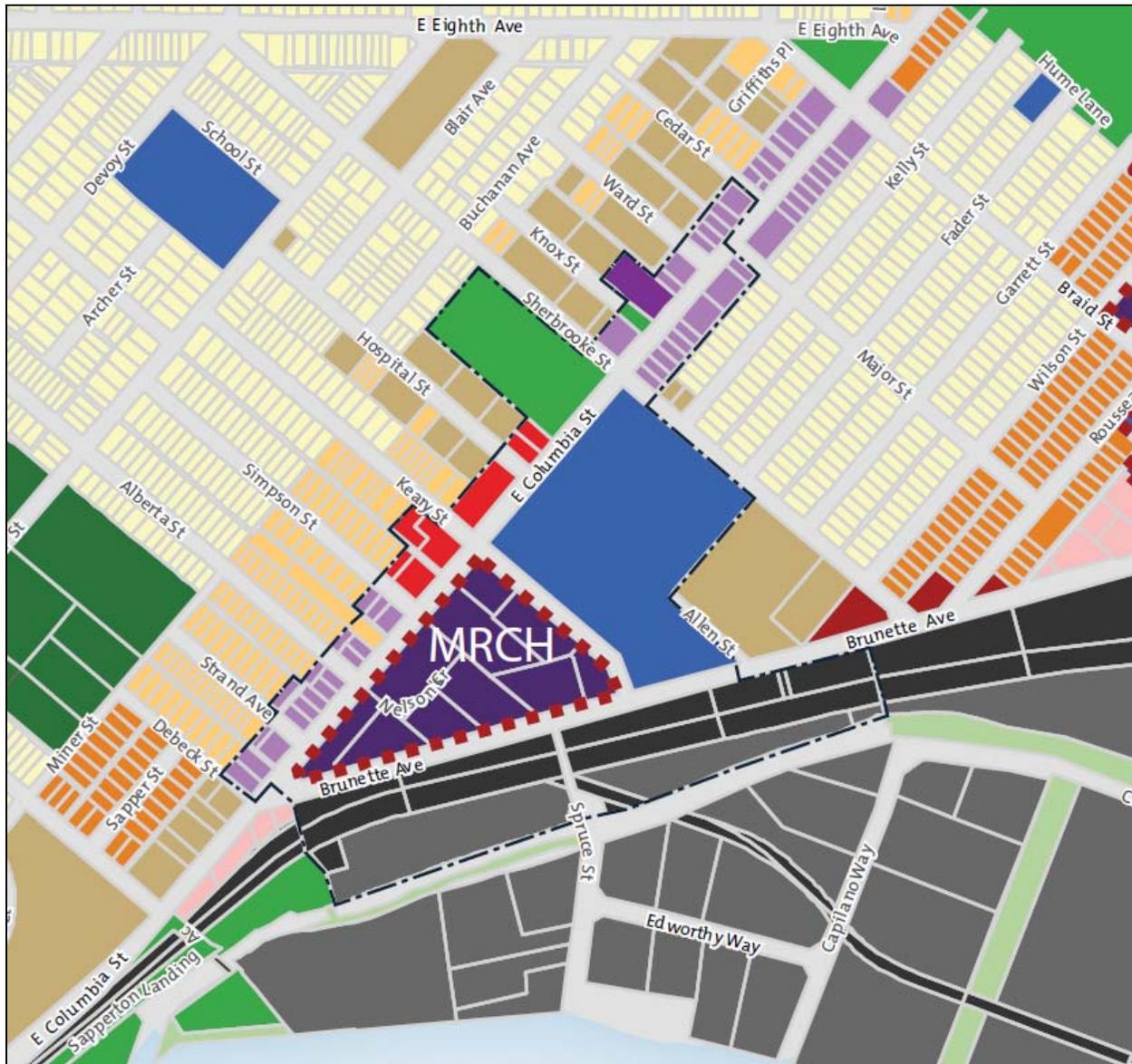
There was also a lot of discussion about the difference between the “Residential – Ground Oriented Infill Housing” and “Residential – Townhouse” designations during the public consultation, especially in the Brow of the Hill neighbourhood. At the November 7, 2016 Council Workshop, staff proposed that townhouses and rowhouses be added as permitted uses in the “Residential – Ground Oriented Infill Housing” designation. This would increase the flexibility of the designation which would also allow the following forms: single detached dwellings which may also include a secondary suite and/or a detached accessory unit (laneway/carriage house), duplexes, triplexes, quadraplexes, cluster houses and other equivalent housing forms.

Council supported this change and directed staff to examine whether there are any areas where the “Residential – Townhouse” designation was proposed that should instead be designated “Residential – Ground Oriented Housing”. The changes staff is proposing are outlined on the map in **Attachment 1**. Generally, areas that were seen to benefit from greater flexibility (e.g. do to the cross slope on the properties) or where there was already a mix of housing (including new duplexes) were changed to ground oriented housing. Areas where staff want to see consolidation of properties in order to complete a back lane or where the site orientation would work well for townhouses, kept the townhouse designation.

### *3. Special Employment Area*

The Regional Growth Strategy identifies special employment areas around hospitals or post-secondary institutions, which play a special role in the economic development of the city. The intent of a Special Employment Area is well aligned with the work being done on the Economic Health Care Cluster (IDEA Centre). Identifying a special employment area around the Royal Columbian Hospital would integrate the Economic Health Care Cluster work with the Official Community Plan, and help implement the outcomes of that work.

The boundaries of the Special Employment Area have been extended south to Debeck Street and north to Cedar Street (see map in **Figure 2**) to include additional properties that are designated “Mixed Use – Mid-Rise”. Additional land within the Special Employment Area has now been designated “Mixed Use – Mid-Rise” rather than “Commercial Health Care.” The Special Employment Area would specify that buildings within this designation will be limited to four stories (first floor commercial and three stories of residential), unless the building includes a floor of office in which case the total building height could be six stories (first floor commercial, a minimum of one floor office, a maximum of four stories of residential). This is intended to incentivize the development of more office space in close proximity to the hospital.

**Figure 2: Revised Special Employment Area Boundary (outlined by a dashed dark blue line)**

## **CONSULTATION**

The purpose of the next round of consultation would be to share the draft Official Community Plan with the community, so that they can see the final product that they helped create. This round of consultation would be the final consultation prior to the Advisory Planning Commission meeting and public hearing.

## **Public Consultation**

Staff would host two drop-in style public open houses titled “Your Plan for Our City”, which will take place:

- Saturday February 25, 12pm to 3pm – Century House, Douglas Fir Rooms
- Tuesday February 28, 5pm to 8pm – New Westminster Public Library, Auditorium

At the open houses, members of the community would have the opportunity to review the draft document and see how the consultation process and feedback received has shaped the OCP. Staff would be available to discuss the content of the draft OCP, discuss the revised draft Land Use Designation Map and collect any feedback related to refinements of the document.

The advertising for the events will begin three weeks prior to the first event. The events will be advertised through:

- Ads in the Record (print and online),
- Ads on the City electronic billboards,
- Posts and ads on social media (Facebook, Twitter),
- Ads in CityPage (print and online),
- Posts on the City’s website under “What’s Happening” and on the project page ([www.newwestcity.ca/ourcity](http://www.newwestcity.ca/ourcity)),
- Invitations sent to the OUR CITY email distribution list,
- Invitations sent to members of City Committees and Residents’ Associations, and
- Advisory Group members will help promote the events through their social networks.

## **OUR CITY Advisory Group**

The OUR CITY Advisory Group would meet prior to the open houses to review the draft OCP and presentation materials. The Group would also be invited to help staff the open houses. Having been closely involved in each round of OUR CITY consultation they have a clear understanding of where the process and how it advanced to the draft OCP that is being presented.

## **Stakeholder Consultation**

In a January 19, 2014 Council report staff outlined the requirements of the Local Government Act for early and ongoing consultation with agencies and organizations such as Metro Vancouver, TransLink, New Westminster Schools and neighbouring municipalities. Updates are sent to each of the organizations identified in the report at key milestones in the process. A new update will be sent giving stakeholders an opportunity to review the draft OCP and provide feedback.

At this point in the process staff is starting to work more closely with Metro Vancouver and TransLink. Metro Vancouver staff is providing feedback that will help ensure that the policies and land use designations are aligned with the Regional Growth Strategy. This will help ensure that the Regional Context Statement receives the support of Metro Vancouver. While still providing overall feedback, TransLink is interested in working closely with the City regarding the future of key growth areas such as Sapperton Green and the area around the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain Station.

Staff will also work more closely with New Westminster Schools to examine the implications of the Plan on the District's schools.

In addition to the organizations formally identified in the January 2014 Council report other stakeholders will also be consulted during this milestone. This will include the development community. Builders, developers and representatives of the Urban Development Institute will be invited to give feedback on the OCP.

### **NEXT STEPS**

If Council supports this draft OPC in principle, it would then be presented for public consultation in February. After the consultation, the final edit and polish (e.g. adding captions, additional photos) of the document would be completed. The final version of the document would then be presented to Council for adoption.

The proposed timeframe for the next steps are as follows:

- Present draft OCP to Council (January 30, 2017)
- Public Consultation on draft OCP (February 25 and 28, 2017)
- Revisions based on feedback (March)
- Present design guidelines to the New Westminster Design Panel (March)
- Present revised OCP to the Advisory Planning Commission (April)
- Present revised OCP to Council for First and Second Reading (May)
- Public Hearing (June)
- Adoption of the OCP once referral process is complete (June)

### **INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

The OCP is being 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. Interdepartmental teams are involved with research and analysis, and will continue to be invited to contribute their insights and feedback.

**OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

1. That Council support in principle the draft Official Community Plan, including the revised Land Use Designation Map, as a basis for public consultation.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Option 1.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Outline of Land Use Designation Map Revisions

Attachment 2: Draft Official Community Plan

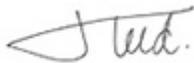
This report has been prepared by:

Lynn Roxburgh, Senior Planner

This report was reviewed by:

John Stark, Acting Manager of Planning

Approved for Presentation to Council



---

Jackie Teed  
Acting Director of Development  
Services



---

Lisa Spitale  
Chief Administrative Officer

**Signatures:**

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large loop followed by a horizontal stroke.A smaller, more legible handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Lee".