Corporation of the City of
NEW WESTMINSTER

REPORT
Planning and Development

To:	Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council	**Date**:	December 16, 2024
From:	Jackie Teed, Director, Planning and Development	**File**:	13.2535.04 #2588155
		Item #:	2024-713

Subject: **reGENERATE: A Long Range Vision for the Neighbourhood Around the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station**

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **THAT** reGENERATE: A Long Range Vision for the Neighbourhood Around 22nd Street SkyTrain Station be endorsed; and

2. **THAT** staff proceed with implementation actions listed in the reGENERATE Vision, including that staff report back to Council in Q1 of 2025 with a workplan for the implementation actions and timeline for accepting development applications.

PURPOSE

To seek Council's endorsement of the Vision and next steps to implement it.

SUMMARY

Long range visioning for the neighbourhood around the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station is complete. The Vision for the area (Attachment 3), titled reGENERATE, reflects the larger area and higher growth opportunities set by the Province's TOD Areas, and is expected to develop over decades. To accommodate this growth, the Vision imagines a high density mixed-use core at the transit hub, in the form of a Transit Village, with services and amenities that enable residents to meet their daily needs close to home. At build-out, the neighbourhood would have abundant housing with a diversity of tenures and affordability levels. To support development of a livable neighbourhood, the Vision calls for social infrastructure like sufficient school capacity, child care spaces, and a neighbourhood scaled community centre; green features and places to recreate and

connect with neighbours through park expansions, creation of new parks or open spaces; and, leveraging streets as public spaces oriented to people. The Vision aims for the neighbourhood to be climate resilient through focused growth (which reduces transportation emissions), climate-friendly buildings, resilient infrastructure, and natural systems.

Work to create a land use framework for the area around the SkyTrain station has been underway for many years, most recently restarted in the spring of 2023. The project is one of seven initiatives in New Westminster supported by the Housing Accelerator Fund program, established by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The visioning process has included extensive consultation with community, technical analysis with external and impacted agencies, and initial discussions with First Nations. Visioning was informed by an international ideas challenge and the Province's new housing legislation. The eight "Big Moves" which form the chapters of the Vision, were shared with community earlier this fall. Feedback collected helped refine and shape the final Vision (as described in Attachment 1).

Implementation of the Vision and the pace of change will depend on many factors, including market conditions and development community uptake, as well as property owners' interest. However, there are a number of City-led actions will first need to be completed to ensure development of the neighbourhood delivers public amenities and infrastructure for function and liveability in both the short and long-term futures. The work to put these infrastructure/amenity plans and financing strategies in place must be completed in order to inform development in the area. The City requires time to plan for the infrastructure and amenities necessary to support community livability as the area grows, and to put in place a financing strategy to ensure the infrastructure and amenities can be sustainably funded. Establishing these plans and strategies before development applications are considered is crucial, as this area is anticipated to absorb significant growth.

It is anticipated that all high-density applications, and possibly many medium- to low-density applications, received prior to the completion of that work would be considered premature, particularly in the Transit Village area. Timing and approaches for updating the City's financing growth framework are currently being finalized. Staff will report back to Council in early 2025 outlining a workplan for the implementation actions and expected timelines for accepting development applications.

BACKGROUND

Council Direction

The area around the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station is identified in the Official Community Plan (OCP, 2017) as an area of the city intended to accommodate higher density development, with good access to transit and amenities. In 2019, Council launched a visioning process for the area and, after a delay due to the global Covid-19 Pandemic, restarted the work in 2023.

In the last year and a half, work on the Vision has been centered on three key pieces of Council's direction:

- Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency and identification of Seven Bold Steps towards Climate Action;
- A commitment to relationship building with First Nations, underpinned by the findings of the City's A Year of Truth program; and
- Council's Strategic Priorities Plan (2023-2026), especially the "Homes and Housing Options" area and reflecting the document's lenses and foundations such as diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.

Inputs and Contributors

The Vision process brought together ideas, expertise, analysis, and advice from many varied sources including:

- the reGENERATE Ideas Challenge submissions in winter 2023/2024;
- community consultation in the fall of 2023 and fall of 2024;
- various workshops and check-ins with Council and City committees;
- guidance from the project's Coast Salish Cultural Advisor and initial discussions with four local First Nations who expressed interest in this project;
- external impacted agencies including New Westminster Schools, City of Burnaby, BC Hydro, TransLink, and the Provincial Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (now the Ministry of Transportation and Transit, or MTT, and the Ministry of Infrastructure); and
- technical subject matter experts both interdepartmentally within the City and though consulting contracts.

On September 9, 2024, Council workshopped "Big Moves" which now form the chapters of the Vision document. A summary of feedback received from Council and how it shaped the Vision is detailed in Attachment 1. At the conclusion of the workshop, Council directed staff to undertake a second round of community engagement for the project, focused on the "Big Moves", and for staff to integrate the feedback received from community when drafting the final Vision. A summary of the consultation and integration of the results into the Vision is also in Attachment 1.

The full final draft of the Vision (Attachment 3) was shared publicly on the City's *Be Heard* page in advance of Council's consideration.

<u>Feedback from New Westminster Schools</u>

At various points in the visioning process, City staff held conversations with New Westminster School District (NWSD) staff related to school capacity in the Vision area. On October 8, the School Board also sent a letter to Mayor and Council (included as Attachment 2) encouraging a focus on planning for schools, given the anticipated

population growth. The NWSD has not confirmed preferred school site locations at this time, so these have not been mapped in the Vision. However, the Vision includes strategies to support New Westminster Schools as they:

- explore the creation of an urban school within the Transit Village,
- develop a middle school somewhere within the Vision area,
- acquire new sites in the Vision Area, and
- intensify existing school sites in the Vision Area.

The City is committed to working with NWSD to advocate for senior government funding for necessary schools to support the Vision area, as well as the city overall.

Senior Government Initiatives

Housing Accelerator Fund

This project is one of seven initiatives to be completed through the City's participation in the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). HAF provides financial support that enables the City to advance initiatives aimed at improving the housing approval process, increasing housing supply, and expanding housing choice.

New Provincial Housing Legislation

While visioning was underway, the Province of British Columbia brought forward a series of sweeping changes to the legislation under which local governments operate, including the establishment of Transit Oriented Development (TOD) areas with a minimum density framework for residential properties around SkyTrain stations. Primarily, this shaped the Vision in three ways: expanding the geographic scope of the Vision area, informing the density and housing forms anticipated, and establishing an approach to housing supply and diversity.

THE VISION

The reGENERATE Vision provides a picture of what the long range build-out of the TOD area around the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station could look like over the coming decades. The Vision provides a path to ensuring neighbourhood climate resilience, livability, and equity and inclusion as redevelopment occurs. The area within the Vision is bounded by Tenth Avenue to the north, Burnaby to the West, Marine Way and Stewardson Way to the south, and Seventeenth Street to the east. The full Vision for Council's consideration of endorsement is included as Attachment 3.

Big Moves

The Big Moves shared with Council and the community in September are the foundation of the Vision. They each act as chapters, with a goal statement as listed below:

- *Transit Village:* A high-density mixed-use core, centered around a regional transit hub, featuring a central plaza and high street where daily needs can be met.
- *Housing Capacity and Choice:* A neighbourhood of abundant housing with a mix of tenures and affordability levels, and somewhere for everyone to call home.
- *Streets for People:* A well-connected place with a range of safe, sustainable, and enjoyable mobility options that reduce vehicular dependence and lower transportation-related emissions in any weather.
- *Coast Salish Cultural Contributions*: A community that celebrates the Coast Salish history and context of the lands, and where opportunities for cultural revitalization and reconciliation are provided.
- *Green Networks:* A diverse system of ecologically-rich, resilient public green spaces and corridors, supported by green private and semi-private spaces.
- *Social Connections:* A vibrant and inclusive community with a range of social spaces where diverse people can gather, connect and support each other.
- *Climate-Friendly Buildings:* Low-carbon, low-emissions buildings, powered by clean and renewable energy, and designed to provide safety and comfort through extreme weather, support reduced energy consumption, and minimize waste.
- *Fiscally Responsible Approach:* A livable, sustainable neighbourhood that supports long-range municipal financial resilience.

Each chapter includes a range of strategies for achieving its goal, and most include further detail on strategy highlights, such as redeveloping Twenty-First Street as a new neighbourhood spine, or allowing for development of a mixed-use tower precinct.

IMPLEMENTATION ACTIONS

Implementation of the Vision and the pace of change will depend on many factors, including market conditions and development community uptake, as well as property owners' interest. However, there are a number of City-led actions which would be taken to further unlock development potential and ensure delivery of public amenities and infrastructure for function and liveability in both the short and long-term futures.

The following table summarizes proposed City-led implementation actions. Further details on the actions listed above are included in the implementation chapter (chapter 12) of the Vision (Attachment 3).Before being able to consider development applications, it is crucial that this City-led work is complete. Staff will report back to Council in early 2025 outlining a workplan for the implementation actions and expected timelines for accepting development applications.

Immediate Actions	Medium Term Actions	On-Going Actions
• Land use designations in the OCP that align with the Vision • Interim Development Permit Area(s) with guidelines • A Transit Village Development Concept • Area based infrastructure and amenity planning • Integration of area-specific land lift considerations into a City-wide Financing Growth strategy	• Full Development Permit Area guidelines • Neighbourhood parks and recreation planning • Public realm and streetscape design • Regulatory amendments, programs, and incentives for climate-friendly buildings • A BC Hydro Corridor Development Concept	• Relationship building with local First Nations to confirm Nations' priorities and identify opportunities • Continued advocacy with New Westminster Schools to increase school capacity • Collaboration with TransLink related to transit improvements and integration of development with transit facilities • Specific issue referrals for the City of Burnaby and the Province, as required

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Implementation Actions

The five-year budget projection includes $345,000 for the implementation actions identified above. This amount is included in the proposed 2025 Capital Budget, $190,000 of which would be carried forward from 2024.

Financing Growth

The growth unlocked by the Vision would result in significant infrastructure needs – including increased capacity needed for sewer, storm and water, road cross-section improvements, and new connections (either lanes or roads). Community facilities such as a neighbourhood scaled community centre including satellite library, satellite fire hall, and new and expanded parks are also called for in the Vision, as part of creating a livable neighbourhood. Development will need to pay for a significant portion of the cost of these items through an updated financing growth framework. The public benefits and infrastructure planning and financing growth work scheduled to happen in 2025 will determine timing and strategy for obtaining necessary infrastructure improvements and amenities and calibrating development charges accordingly.

NEXT STEPS

Continued Relationship Building with First Nations

The Visioning process allowed for early conversations with First Nations. Further relationship-building work is needed to advance those conversations. It is the City's intention to continue engagement with all six interested First Nations through the implementation actions in 2025 and beyond. Continued engagement would aim to better understand Nations' priorities for planning projects, collect feedback on the Coast Salish Cultural Contributions chapter of the Vision, and explore further opportunities to support or reflect the Nations in planning for the area.

Development Applications and Timing

The work to put infrastructure plans and financing strategies in place must be completed in order to inform development in the area. The City requires time to plan for the infrastructure and amenities necessary to support community livability as the area grows, and to put in place a financing strategy to ensure the infrastructure and amenities can be sustainably funded. Establishing these plans and strategies before development applications are considered is crucial, as this area is anticipated to absorb significant growth.

It is anticipated that all high-density applications, and possibly many medium- to low-density applications, received prior to the completion of that work would be considered premature, particularly in the Transit Village area. Timing and approaches for updating the City's financing growth framework are currently being finalized. Staff will report back to Council in early 2025 outlining a workplan for the implementation actions and expected timelines for accepting development applications.

Neighbourhood Change and Construction Impacts

The build out of the Vision is expected to be long term, potentially occurring over generations. Regardless, the Vision signals a great deal of change. No matter the rate of growth, it is important to acknowledge that this is an area with existing homes and residents. Construction activity will occur among those homes, and may have impacts on the daily life of residents. City policies and provincial regulations will help support tenants through development processes. And existing City bylaws would be applied to lessen the degree impact from construction such as regulating noise and ensuring that special attention is given to temporary traffic, access, and circulation.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

A staff team across multiple City Departments has been engaged throughout the visioning process, with more intensive contributions from Engineering, Energy and Climate Action, and Parks and Recreation. This interdepartmental team would continue to work on the implementation actions, should they be endorsed by Council. Given the

scope of work and neighbourhood redevelopment opportunities represented in the Vision, all City Departments, including Fire, Police, and Library, were consulted as part of drafting the final Vision.

OPTIONS

The following options are presented for Council's consideration:

1. That reGENERATE: A Long Range Vision for the Neighbourhood Around 22nd Street SkyTrain Station be endorsed;

2. That staff proceed with implementation actions listed in the reGENERATE Vision, including that staff report back to Council in Q1 of 2025 with a workplan for the implementation actions and timeline for accepting development applications; or

3. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends options 1 and 2.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1:	Summary of Fall 2024 Engagement and its Integration in the Vision
Attachment 2:	October 8, 2024 Letter from New Westminster Schools Board of Education
Attachment 3:	reGENERATE: A Long Range Vision for the Neighbourhood Around the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station

APPROVALS

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