

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** June 17, 2024
From: Barclay Pitkethly, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer
Subject: **Prioritizing Planning Areas**

Recommendation(s)

That the Council Policy LAN 64(C) Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area Neighbourhood Planning Terms of Reference be amended to include:

Thresholds

Because the Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area is such a vast and important growth area for the City, the community and the lower mainland, careful consideration should be given as to when Neighbourhood Planning shall be initiated to remain current to emerging market trend and demands.

Council will not consider initiation of either the West or East neighbourhood (or portions thereof) until the **65%** of the land area of the 'South Slopes' of the Central Neighbourhood Plan is under application, OR engineering services have been constructed and in the ground to within **500m** of a neighbourhood plan boundary within an identified **Arterial Roadway**.

Under Section 2 Authorization, after the opening paragraph and prior to Step 1: Council Authorization Process.

Purpose

The province is establishing housing targets for the City of Mission. When combined with inflationary rates higher than the historical average, and land speculation in Mission, land prices increase which can exacerbate the housing affordability issues experienced throughout BC.

To curtail land speculation within Mission this report proposes establishing neighbourhood planning priority areas via the OCP update process as well as introduce thresholds to the Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area to provide some certainty to when neighbourhood planning may be expected in the East and West neighbourhoods.

Background

Land speculation within Mission is rampant, causing inflated raw land prices resulting in many consequences for housing issues the City and province are currently facing, including: 1) driving housing costs up for the end consumer (which in turn exacerbates inflationary pressures), 2) places undue pressure to expand or upsize existing public services (roads, utilities, schools, parks, recreation etc.), and 3) potentially reduces the economic viability of housing projects for the development community which could cause delays in housing starts.

On May 6, 2024, Council resolved:

That due to speculation regarding development outside of established planning and servicing areas within the City of Mission, causing artificial inflation of property values that may undermine the City's ability to deliver on needed housing within defined and established areas, that staff prepare a report to regulate priority planning areas and establish a phasing strategy within the SCPA to define when Council should consider neighbourhood planning outside of the completed Central Neighbourhood Planning area.

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Discussion and Analysis

Council is seeking to provide clarity and certainty to residents as well as the development community in terms of prioritizing planning areas. Given that undertaking neighbourhood planning is a resource consuming exercise, it is important to understand what its purpose is.

Neighbourhood Planning in Mission can be defined as a finer grain of detailed land use planning than provided by an Official Community Plan (OCP) for a defined area that is subject to increased development pressures where a comprehensive analysis is needed to ensure predictability for landowners, residents, the public, Council, and the development community.

Official Community Plan

The first level of planning is the City's Official Community Plan delineating future land uses including:

- a) The location, amount, type and density of residential development required to meet anticipated housing needs over a period of at least 5 years;
- b) The approximate location, amount and type of present and proposed commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreational and public utility land uses;
- c) The approximate location and area of sand and gravel deposits that are suitable for future sand and gravel extraction;
- d) Restrictions on the use of land that is subject to hazardous conditions or that is environmentally sensitive to development;
- e) the approximate location and type of present and proposed public facilities, including schools, parks and waste treatment and disposal sites; and
- f) the approximate location and phasing of any major road, sewer and water systems;

The City of Mission is currently undergoing a refresh of its Official Community Plan which will, update the current land use designations for the entire City. It is also designed to contemplate the numerous Master Plan updates that have recently concluded, including the City's:

- a) Master Transportations Plan;
- b) Facilities Master Plan;
- c) Utilities Master Plan; and the soon be completed
- d) Parks and Trails Master Plan amongst others.

The OCP is an excellent guiding document providing guiding principles and policies for future development within a municipality. For much of Mission, the OCP provides enough clarity and definition to guide future growth. Where the OCP does not provide as much clarity or definition for a specific sub area of the City, a Neighbourhood Plan may be required.

OCP Neighbourhoods

The City's current OCP defines several neighbourhoods laying a framework for future neighbourhood planning.

Section 8.2 Neighbourhood Planning states:

Like many communities, Mission is comprised of distinct neighbourhoods, each with its own unique character and needs. Within Mission, these can generally be defined as the following:

- *Mission City Downtown*
- *Cedar Valley*
- *Central Mission*
- *Waterfront*
- *Hatzic/North Hatzic*
- *Ferndale*
- *Silverdale (including Silverdale Gateway)*
- *Stave Falls*
- *Steelhead*
- *Other Area (Keystone, Silverhill, Israel Bench)*

Map 4 Communities, attached as Attachment A: OCP Communities, outlines the identified potential neighbourhood planning areas for Mission.

Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning scale, scope, and complexity vary depending upon many differing factors such as geography, servicing availability, infill vs greenfield, growth pressures, etc. Neighbourhood Planning also utilizes many different naming conventions such as, Local Area Planning, Comprehensive Development Planning, Master Planning, Secondary Land Use Planning, Neighbourhood Concept Planning amongst others.

There is no standardized definition, terms of reference, nor legislated requirement to do neighbourhood planning, thus many municipalities develop their own terms to meet locally specific needs.

The City of Mission has completed four neighbourhood plans, three since the adoption of the current OCP in 2018

1. Cedar Valley Local Area Plan, incorporated into the City's OCP.

The Cedar Valley Local Area Plan has been around since 1996 and has been updated through multiple OCP revisions and most recently as the engineering servicing plan for the area had been updated. Council adopted the newest version of the Cedar Valley Local Area Plan in 2019.

Cedar Valley is an identified neighbourhood planning area within the current OCP.

2. Stave Heights Neighbourhood Plan, incorporated into the City's OCP.

The Stave Heights Neighbourhood Plan was completed due to development pressures within one greenfield sub area of the Central Mission neighbourhood. This plan was adopted by Council in 2022.

3. SCPA Central Neighbourhood Plan, adopted by resolution of Council.

The SCPA Central neighbourhood Plan is a subset of the OCP defined area of Silverdale which is part of a greater Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area. The Central Neighbourhood represents the first of three neighbourhood planning area within the SCPA.

The Central Neighbourhood Plan was adopted by resolution of Council in 2022.

4. Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan, adopted by resolution of Council.

The Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan is a planned community within the City's OCP and Council finalized the planning for the area in 2022 as well.

There are no Neighbourhood Plans currently in development within the City of Mission as the City embarks on the update of the Official Community Plan.

Through the new Official Community Plan update process, there is direction to clearly define neighbourhoods within Mission and prioritize which areas will need neighbourhood planning.

Within the analysis, the level of planning should also be clearly defined. For example, in north Mission, Stave Falls and Steelhead, are two communities identified as seeking neighbourhood planning. However, the level of detailed planning needed will likely not be as intense as what occurred through the Central Neighbourhood or Waterfront planning processes as development pressures and densities are not as intense. A more thoughtful finer grained OCP process may be able to accomplish the planning goals for the area instead of conducting an intense, resource rich, and long planning process.

Other areas in Mission that may be identified as a distinct planning area may include the area around the Hospital, the Lougheed highway corridor between the current Downtown Core and Oliver Street, as well as other neighbourhood within what is currently defined as Mission Central.

LAN 64(C) Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area (SCPA) Neighbourhood Planning Terms of Reference (ToR)

The Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area (SCPA) with specific terms of reference sets the standard for most neighbourhood planning processes within Mission, see Attachment B: LAN 64(C) Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area Neighbourhood Planning Terms of Reference. The adopted Central Neighbourhood Plan is the first within the overarching SCPA. Now complete, there is growing pressure to move on to other neighbourhoods within the SCPA, with added speculation on land prices within the SCPA.

LAN 64(C) Terms of Reference Overview

Given recent land speculation pressures in both the East and West neighbourhoods of the SCPA, an overview of the current terms of reference identifies what is necessary for neighbourhood planning to occur.

Firstly, Council must authorize, by resolution, to undertake a neighbourhood planning process. This first step is critical, as Council is the sole decision making authority that may initiate the neighbourhood planning process.

Secondly, Council, again, as the sole decision making authority, will determine which process the neighbourhood plan will be crafted; by either Proponent Application or a City of Mission led process.

For clarity no developer, development group, residential association, or proponent may make an application to initiate a planning process within the SCPA without firstly having a Council resolution indicating the need/demand for neighbourhood planning within a defined neighbourhood.

To provide greater clarity, Council resolved to include thresholds, that should be met prior to entertaining consideration of implementing neighbourhood planning for either West of East neighbourhoods.

Master Infrastructure Strategy and Central Neighbourhood Plan Phasing Strategy Overview

Both the Master Infrastructure Strategy and the Central Neighbourhood Plan identify development sequencing in which all financial analysis has been formulated. The City made sure the development of Silverdale would be a tax benefit to the City as opposed to tax burden. In other words, development and its related charges and fees plus taxation would pay for the new infrastructure needed and provide enough revenue to cover the ongoing operations and maintenance of that infrastructure. Infrastructure includes engineering works and services (water, sanitary, rainwater, roads, waste management, etc.), transportation networks (cars, transit, bicycles, walking, on and off road trails, etc), and recreation facilities (passive and active parks, recreation, hiking, urban forestry, etc.) and public spaces including schools.

Deviation from the identified and planned sequencing would require a re-examination of both the Master Infrastructure Strategy and the Central Neighbourhood Plan to ensure fiscal sustainability for the City's long term finances.

Both the MIS and CNP show the planned sequencing for development for the entirety of the SCPA, Attachment C: Figure 26: Conceptual Development Sequencing, and for the Central Neighbourhood Plan specifically, Attachment D: Figure 8 Development Phasing Plan. Each plan is consistent and addresses orderly and logical extensions for engineering infrastructure to provide efficiencies through a planned approach.

Development is planned to start where infrastructure enters the SCPA at Loftus Street and Silverdale Avenue. Once development reaches Gunn Avenue, both the MIS and CNP have planned growth to occur to the west along Gunn Avenue – identified in the CNP as the 'South Slopes'. It is anticipated the build out of the first phase of the South Slopes to be approximately 10 – 15 years depending upon demands. The entirety of the South Slopes is expected to take at least 20 years to build out.

Adding to the phasing strategy already identified within both the MIS and CNP, thresholds are recommended to be included within Council Policy LAN 64(C) to provide even more clarity. The proposed development thresholds will allow Council to make informed decisions regarding prioritizing limited neighbourhood planning resources.

LAN 64(C) Terms of Reference Proposed Amendments

There is no clear consensus as to which neighbourhood should receive neighbourhood planning first as both the East and West neighbourhoods identify certain areas as 'Phase 3'. That being stated, it is very difficult to determine where development pressures will lie 20 years from now, so the determination as to which neighbourhood should go first shall be left up to the Council of the day. Development threshold proposed for inclusion within Council Policy LAN 64(C) are based on the current phasing strategy approved by Council, thus any deviation from that phasing strategy should also include a review of LAN 64(C) at the same time the MIS and CNP are reviewed.

Because both the MIS and CNP rely on mostly engineering works and services to determine financial (capital and operational) sustainability, the threshold shall be based upon both and development and location of servicing.

It is proposed that, under Section 2 Authorization (After the opening paragraph and prior to “Step 1: Council Authorization Process”) the following proposed section should be added:

Thresholds

Because the Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area is such a vast and important growth area for the City and Mission and the lower mainland, careful consideration should be given as to when Neighbourhood Planning shall be initiated to remain current to emerging market trend and demands.

*Council will not consider initiation of either the West or East neighbourhood (or portions thereof) until the **65%** of the land area of the ‘South Slopes’ of the Central Neighbourhood Plan is under application, OR engineering services have been constructed and in the ground to within **500m** of a neighbourhood plan boundary within an identified **Arterial Roadway**.*

Rationale for the proposed thresholds include, but not limited to:

1. Early neighbourhood planning in areas not under imminent development pressure could prove wasteful as trends, legislation, and market demand change over time.
2. At 65% of the land base under consideration for development, the City should have a very good understanding of
 - a. the imminent development pressures,
 - b. what the current trends and demands for land uses are, and
 - c. capacity to undertake a neighbourhood planning exercise.
3. Major capital investment is required to service large areas such as the East and West neighbourhoods. The MIS has identified efficiencies for those major services where Arterial Roads are the conduit for the infrastructure.
4. The transportation network depends upon certain critical Arterial Roads to be established to manage traffic and provide transit and multi modal transportation choices for getting up and down and across the hillside. Placing greater stresses on underdeveloped roadway systems could prove costly as the City may end up having to pay for the costs to increase capacity on under serviced roadways.

Planning Priorities

Through the Official Community Plan process, there is opportunity to refine the City’s currently identified neighbourhoods. Once defined, Council, through the OCP update process, may decide further refinement in certain areas of the City will be required and thus develop a priority list for neighbourhood planning.

That being stated, and through the OCP process, many ‘neighbourhoods’ may have enough detail developed via new land use designations, refined land use policies, and new development permit design guidelines that neighbourhood planning is not needed.

Insofar as the SCPA is concerned, developing thresholds within LAN 64(C) should allow greater certainty in terms of timing for the City to contemplate neighbourhood planning. Knowing the South Slopes is predicted to be an approximate 20 year build out, there is no imminent development pressures in either the West, or the East, neighbourhood at the present time.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Neighbourhood planning is a resource intense activity, both human and monetary, and prioritizing planning areas is a wise financial decision for Council can make.

Communication

If accepted by Council, LAN 64(C) will be amended and published on the City's website which shall provide any prospective land purchaser, developer, resident (present and future), with clarity as to when and how neighbourhood planning will occur within the SCPA,

From a City wide perspective, the OCP is currently undergoing its update with its own communication strategy. Once complete, the OCP will provide a clear prioritized list of imminent planning areas for the City (if needed).

Summary and Conclusion

In summation, Council resolved to establish priority planning areas and develop a phasing strategy for areas outside of the recently completed Central Neighbourhood Plan for the Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area.

The OCP is currently undergoing an update which may redefine, and refine, the current list of neighbourhoods in Mission. Through this process, Council will have the opportunity to not only define these areas of the City but establish a prioritized list for conducting neighbourhood planning processes.

Report Prepared by: Barclay Pitkethly, Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Reviewed by: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment(s)

Attachment A: OCP Communities

Attachment B: LAN 64(C) Silverdale Comprehensive Planning Area Neighbourhood Planning Terms of Reference

Attachment C: MIS Figure 26: Conceptual Development Sequencing

Attachment D: CNP Figure 8: Development Phasing Plan