

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** August 16, 2021
From: Gerald Schlesiger, Project Manager
Subject: **Update on the Waterfront Revitalization Initiative**

Recommendation

That this report be received for information.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to apprise Council of the progress on the Mission Waterfront Revitalization Initiative. An in-person presentation by O2 Planning + Design Incorporated will be made to accompany this report.

Discussion

The Mission Waterfront Revitalization Initiative has completed Phase 1 and is advancing into Phase 2. Phase 1 entailed collecting and assessing the background information. This involved reviewing Mission's policies, background reports and studies, collecting up-to-date information, new technical studies, and follow-up analysis. Phase 1 also initiated First Nation dialogue, engagement of the public, stakeholders, landowners and business owners. This work informs Phase 2, where three (3) land use options will lead to the ultimate Master Plan.

Economics

An economic analysis indicates that existing land values can be uplifted if the Master Plan adopts the appropriate mix of land uses and development density thresholds. Revitalization is financially viable. The degree of financial viability is improved by coordinating efforts to gain economies of scale and delivering on the key attributes that define desired commercial, residential, and industrial neighbourhoods.

Flood Protection

The targeted flood protection level of 9.76 meters equates with the top-of-dike at Jack Poole Harbourside Park. A number of different types of dykes are being considered. This includes a super dike, setting some parts of the dike back from the waters' edge to provide greenshores and wetland habitat, sheet wall dikes where there is a desire for direct connectivity to deep waters, or standard diking for cost efficiencies.

First Nations

Dialogue has commenced with the six First Nations whose traditional territories overlap the City's boundaries. The discussions are in keeping with the City's principles of reconciliation.

Archaeology

No specific pre-contact archaeological sites have been identified in the area. This is reflective of the waterfront traditionally flooding prior to the construction of the dikes. Seasonal flooding rendered the area less suitable for permanent habitation, but favoured seasonal activities.

There are 11 areas of archaeological interest (AOA). The potential archaeological significance of the AOAs rank from low to high. The higher categories are in the vicinity of less disturbed shoreline features. The treatment of the AOA areas will be assessed at the time of undertaking activities in the area in keeping with current practices.

Public Engagement

Phase 1 Public Engagement targeted Mission residences, landowners and stakeholders. The engagement program was composed of an On-line Survey, Workshops, the opportunity to submit Discussion Papers, and a Webinar. The City received 585 responses to the on-line survey. Unfortunately, the On-line Workshops were not well attended.

The Advisory Committee convened once with a majority of its 24 organizations able to attend. Special interest meetings are slated for the coming weeks with Committee members becoming more active as the Master Planning process moves toward developing land use options in Phase 2. Discussions were also held with several landowners including the 2 largest owners in the area.

Engineering Analysis

With sanitary sewer capacity being increased by a new sewer line crossing the Fraser River, there are no unusual civic infrastructure impediments. At 50 – 70 years of age, most of the civic infrastructure in the area is at the end of its useful life cycle and needs upgrading and replacement regardless if new development occurs. The phasing of development and the associated funding mechanisms for new or replaced services will be a key component in the Master Plan's Implementation Strategy.

The road network needs upgrading to improve vehicular access, provide better pedestrian and bicycle circulation, and address railway movements. All of these modes of transportation will be integrated into the Master Plan recognizing that residential neighbourhoods will have a higher reliance on internal connectivity, while lands serving regional commercial and industrial services, will be more responsive to external connectivity. Strengthening the connectivity between the Waterfront and the Downtown with 'at grade' and 'grade separated' crossings are being explored. Some roadways and lanes will be altered or closed to improve functionality.

Franchise Utilities

An above ground high voltage electrical transmission line west of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) bridge is anticipated to remain. Other overhead electrical circuitry is anticipated to go underground as development occurs. Additional circuitry may be required if electricity demand exceeds current capacity.

Underdeveloped Telecom services comprised of copper, coaxial and fiber networks exist in the Waterfront. Upgrades and new power supplies would be sourced as development occurs.

District Energy

With the addition of significant floor space and higher densities, the waterfront area has the potential to benefit from a District Energy System. The model for a District Energy System will be explored upon confirmation of land use designations.

Highways

Evaluation on the Highway 11 by-pass alignment is underway. The expectation is that the Murray Street overpass will service local needs, while the Highway will extend east of Horne Street to a new crossing of the CPR line near Stave Lake Road to facilitate through traffic. The current width of the Highway is anticipated to be narrowed by reducing its median and side slopes while retaining 2 travel lanes in each direction.

Sound and Vibration

Staff continue to examine methods to reduce noise emanating from the railway tracks and the raceway. Measurements at the raceway's bleachers have indicated noise levels up to 115 dba.

Environmental

No immediate environmental issues have been identified at this time. However, this does not mean there are no environmental concerns. Rather it recognizes that as the Master Plan is prepared, there is the ability to develop strategies, target improvements, and strengthen and increase habitat diversity through thoughtful choices that support species that are endangered, threatened, or of special concern. Some of those choices will be engrained in the selected land use designations of the Master Plan itself, while others will be actualized through the land development approval process or construction techniques employ when redevelopment occurs.

Biophysical Inventory

The environmentally valuable resources are aquatic and riparian ecosystems, wildlife habitat such as birds, amphibians, and bats. The vegetation is generally native, but there are a number of invasive species. The waterfront is not characterised as a significant or relatively unmodified sensitive ecosystem. Through selective land uses, the creation of strategies, the targeting of improvements, and the employment of mitigation measures, key habitats can be protected, degraded ones can be enhanced, and new ones can be created.

Geotechnical Characteristics

The soil profiles are relatively consistent across the waterfront area and consist of Fraser River sediments. The exception is at the northern precinct (toe-of-slope) where Glacial Till was encountered at relatively shallow depths. There are no broad-based concerns.

Soil Contamination

Numerous sites, particularly in the eastern sector have been identified as areas of potential contamination. This reflects the historic activities that occurred in the waterfront. The levels of contamination have not been determined and the means to resolve the contamination depends upon the type of future land uses and the types of products causing the contamination.

Land Development Activities

A Development Permit has been issued for 7129 Abbott Street. The Applicant intends to construct a 5-unit, 1,275 m² highway commercial facility over 2 levels. The development was granted an exemption to flood proofing. No other land development activities are in the area.

Summary of Phase 1

Revitalization of the Mission Waterfront faces numerous challenges, but they are not insurmountable.

Phase 2 – Land Use Plan Development

In Phase 2, the Consulting Team will use the background information of Phase 1 as the foundation for unifying Council's vision with the aspirations of the community, stakeholders, land owners, and other levels of government. This will culminate in the development of three land use concept plans that will define, bring substance, expression, and cohesion to the vision. The concepts will articulate different forms and character. The interrelationship of compatible land uses and the transition between less compatible land uses will be expressed.

Financial Implications

The revitalization of the Mission Waterfront is viable with the right mix of land uses and densities. Phase 3 of the Master Planning process will identify capital costs, and the Development Cost Charges and Community Amenity Contributions required to bring the plan to fruition.

Summary and Conclusion

The revitalization of the waterfront faces numerous challenges, but they are not insurmountable. In Phase 2 the viable options will be narrowed and the focus on possible outcomes will become more tangible. Phase 2 will reduce the intensity of the challenges as the planning options take shape and implementation strategies begin to formulate reflecting the collective ambitions of the community.

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Reviewed by: Stacey Crawford, Project Director
Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment

Attachment A: OCP map of Waterfront area

Attachment A: Waterfront Map

