

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** May 2, 2022
From: Gerald Schlesiger, Project Manager
Subject: **Official Community Plan (OCP) Bylaw Amendment - Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan (Comprehensive Planning Area)**

Recommendation

1. That the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan be received.
2. That Official Community Plan Amending Bylaw 6095-2022-5670(33) to add reference to the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan be considered for first reading.
3. That, upon due consideration of Section 475 of the *Local Government Act*, referrals go forward for the proposed OCP bylaw text amendment in accordance with Council Policy LAN.47, and that persons, organizations and authorities receiving those consultation referrals are considered to be those affected for the purposes of the Section.
4. That, subject to the Bylaw receiving first reading, a Public Hearing be scheduled for June 20, 2022, or alternatively on a date to be determined.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to receive First Reading for an amendment to the Official Community Plan (OCP) that will incorporate the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan (WRMP) as a Reference Plan in the OCP.

As a Reference Plan, the WRMP is a living document that provides clear guidance on land use while retaining the flexibility to incorporate amendments where needed on an ongoing basis without the requirement to amend the OCP Bylaw.

Background

The formal planning process to create the WRMP began in March 2021. After assembling and analyzing the background information, three concept land use plans were presented to the community, First Nations, Stakeholders, the Advisory Committee and Landowners. Further analysis was undertaken based on the feedback resulting in the development of a preferred land use plan that was endorsed by Council on March 21, 2022.

The introduction of the Bylaw to adopt the WRMP serves as another progressive step along the Waterfront's Revitalization Roadmap.

Discussion and Analysis

Context:

The WRMP encompasses all lands south of Highway 11 from the mouth of Lane Creek in the west, to the East End watercourse where the CPR transcontinental rail line rejoins the shores of the Fraser River below Stave Lake Street. The area extends 3.5 km and covers 120 ha (296

acres). All the lands are in the Floodplain. First Nations respected the nature of the Fraser to flood the area and used the lands as a resource area, rather than a place for permanent settlement.

The objective of the WRMP was to create a plan that addressed the Social & Community, Culture & Arts, Environmental & Health, Employment, and Economic priorities of the City of Mission. Council understood a different approach was required for these lands to break the economic stagnation that had set in. The path forward had to be grounded in a comprehensive technical evaluation of the constraints along with ground-truthed solutions that reflected real-world market economics. The planning framework was put into motion by designating the Waterfront lands as the “Waterfront Comprehensive Planning Area” in an amendment to the OCP.

The Mandate:

Council mandated staff to create a plan that addressed the Social & Community, Culture & Arts, Environmental & Health, Employment, and Economic priorities of the City of Mission. That mandate has been filled with a plan that:

- Expresses openness to leveraging Mission’s competitive advantage in rail, port and highway services to attract nationally scaled employers.
- Creates Hubs to attract like-minded people to interact, explore, experience, and promote social interaction
- Creates a naturalized interface with the Fraser River’s edge.
- Leverages and integrates flood protection with environmental, educational, recreational and cultural amenities to re-establish people’s relationship with the river and its estuaries.
- Increases accessibility between Mission’s historic Downtown and the Waterfront with a new pedestrian friendly link to strengthen the heartbeat and add a new dimension of urban living in the City.
- Intertwines the natural experience with opportunities for iconic and interactive cultural and artistic creations.

The WRMP capitalizes on the waterfront’s attributes to strengthen Mission’s outstanding reputation as a stable, progressive, family-focused community offering experiences from the shores of the river up to mountain forests.

The Approach:

The WRMP has been developed over the last year through an extensive process of assessing the natural characteristics of the land, its legal fabric, economic capacity, historical development, environmental significance, and archaeological potential.

The WRMP was driven by the objective to increase existing land values by offering a higher order of land uses above the current allowance. The lift in economic value is in relative terms, not absolute terms. Lower ordered lands received a viable economic lift, but not so much as to circumvent or compete with the revitalization of other lands that already held a higher order of land use. Existing high order lands were scaled up so that they too had a motive for revitalization. In essence, the goal was that all lands would be lifted in value by a margin that would incentivize their redevelopment. The result is a plan that provides a broad spectrum of

revitalization possibilities and meets the key objectives of Council and is grounded in land economics. It provides industrial (employment), commercial, and residential uses that reflect the natural attributes of the land. It builds on the relationship to the river and creates a balance of uses that define healthy communities, with the preservation of natural areas.

Public input to the WRMP has been continuous and included three specific public engagement sessions involving the voices of First Nations, Landowners, Stakeholders, the Advisory Committee and Mission residents.

The Plan

The key features of the WRMP are:

- 1) The retention of Mission Raceway's current operations;
- 2) The clustering of employment lands on either side of the Mission Bridge;
- 3) The intentional and complementary creation of a new urban heart that accentuates Mission's historic downtown;
- 4) The fortified flood protection measures with a natural shoreline and preservation of environmentally sensitive areas; and
- 5) The extension of Highway 11 eastward to reconnect with Highway 7 near Stave Lake Street.

The WRMP does not create a new urban core on undeveloped lands. Rather, it reinforces the historical development pattern by having higher densities and a greater mix of commercial and residential development overlaying those lands that provide commercial and residential land uses in the past. Non-residential lands that had employment activities continue to be earmarked for employment, but at a more intensive level.

Spatial Separation

The 120 hectares of land divide geographically into three proportionally balanced areas. Each area has its unique features.

- 1) Mission Raceway and the Lane Creek estuary cover approximately 52 ha. The land use designations will not change with the exception of approximately 2 ha between the Raceway and Highway 11 designated for Employment uses. However, the WRMP will bring the civic infrastructure services to the Raceway's property line should future opportunities present themselves.
- 2) The land assembly on either side of the Mission Bridge between the Raceway and the CPR Bridge covers 35 ha and is under one ownership group. Portions of these lands have been raised for flood protection and the WRMP has a primary designation of employment (industrial) uses.
- 3) The lands east of the CPR Bridge cover the remaining area and are characterized by fragmented ownership involving nearly 90 different property owners with parcels ranging from 33 sq. meters to over 3 hectares. These lands focus on commercial / residential uses with Hubs of public activities near the West Coast Express Station.

Each of these three areas have their own distinct points of access reflective of the existing highway or railway infrastructure.

Time Horizon

The WRMP's horizon to complete build-out is 40+ years. The first 10 years are expected to require substantial infrastructure investment to service the lands. Some lands are absent of any civic services while the existing services in some areas are approaching the end of their operational lifecycle.

Key items are the construction of Flood Protection measures, upgrading stormwater, sanitary sewer, and watermain infrastructure, and improving lift and pump stations.

Given the fragmented land ownership pattern east of the CPR Bridge, it is expected that these lands will experience coordination challenges towards achieving early build-out. The larger land assemblies are expected to be revitalized first.

Three Key Features

1) Shoreline

While the Waterfront lands may be viewed as three distinct geographic areas in response to the way the highway and rail infrastructure transect the lands, these lands are unified into one cohesive district by the flood protection approach taken along the River's foreshore. The approach recognizes the natural dynamics of the river's flow cycle from freshet to low season. The flood protection method enhances the ability to restore, rehabilitate, and enhance riparian areas. It sees a way to integrate human activities in a manner respectful of the natural forces, and it offers a way to provide resiliency from climatic events. The application of the Greenshores approach originated from the conversations with First Nations.

Affirming the resiliency to flooding is a critical feature that is not readily adaptable to a phased-in approach, yet it remains a foundational element to the waterfront's revitalization. The flood protection system contains three elements. These are the structural component of a mound along the river's shoreline, the associated features to prevent scouring, and the backfill to raise the lands between the structural dike and Highway 11 above the flood construction level. However, the utilitarian nature of the flood protection system is overshadowed by its contribution to improving the environmental, educational, and recreational functions over and above the security the dike offers against flooding. It is Mission's design of the dike that makes it a landmark that will distinguish the City from other riverfront communities.

2) Mobility

The WRMP recognizes that the key transportation infrastructure of rail and highway will remain. It sees the opportunities these key elements provide and the competitive advantage they lend to broadening the employment opportunities within Mission. As part of this, the WRMP supports the eastern extension of Highway 11 to reconnect with Highway 7. Nevertheless, the WRMP goes further by facilitating the use of non-vehicular modes of travel. It provides greater mobility with a network of multi-use paths for walking or biking, and capitalizes on existing public transit facilities such as the West Coast Express to transition to a more sustainable community. A Transit Hub and a new pedestrian access to the Downtown are identified off Mershon Street.

3) Economic Transition

The WRMP is transformative. The collar of stagnation that has beset the waterfront is broken with viable land use designations that incentivize revitalization. The land uses are compatible with Mission's long-standing vision to support its downtown, retain its natural forest setting, and solidify Mission's strong sense of community. The WRMP touches all aspects of living in an enhanced, sustainable way by delivering jobs, strengthening Mission's urban heart, and renewing natural spaces for all residents to enjoy.

Land Use & Density

New land use districts with additional details on building heights, design guidelines, and edge conditions are at the core of the revitalization strategy. Land uses range from institutional public hubs to employment lands to residential areas and everything in-between. Each land use district provides specific guidance for the types of development anticipated, with seven districts in total.

Higher levels of density developments are required in areas where the core category of land use (commercial, residential, or industrial (employment)) remains the same. For example, stacked warehousing is envisioned in the employment lands to address the region's acute shortage of industrial space. The higher density will help to overcome the infrastructure investment costs and it incentivizes redevelopment. Floor space ratios between 1.0 to 2.5 cover most of the land use designations. Floor space ratios up to 5.0 (hi-rise) are permissible where an appropriate contribution towards community amenities is made.

The new land uses provide an appropriate mix for Council to exercise a level of control that will give residents a sense of comfort in the execution of the WRMP, and developers the convenience of reduced risks.

The land use plan retains a significant amount of open space composed of undevelopable lands. The lands are undevelopable because of environmental constraints such as flood protection or their contribution to sustaining natural habitats. Some lands will need to be acquired for park purposes.

Alignment with other Plans and Policies

The focus of the WRMP has also been looked at through a Developer's lens. It is comprehensive in its ability to ignite revitalization of the Waterfront. With physical revitalization, the opportunity to integrate social and community values avail themselves. As a living document, a number of elements still need to be advanced to bring its fullness to the community. The development of detailed form and character guidelines, the integration of Mission's affordable housing strategy, the transportation master plan, and others, as well as further discussion with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure is required.

The WRMP is closely linked to several other plans and policies at the local, regional, and provincial levels. These documents set the overarching goals, visions, and objectives for land use, transportation, and other key long-term planning considerations in the City and beyond.

In referencing the WRMP, it should be clear that it strives to align the numerous internal master planning, neighbourhood planning, infrastructure planning and policy development initiatives that have been and will continue to be brought forward.

To strengthen awareness, understanding, and alignment of the efforts that guide development in the City, the following local and regional planning and policy abridgments inform the context of the WRMP:

- The Master Infrastructure Strategy (MIS)
- Mission Mobility 2050: City of Mission Transportation Master Plan
- Parks, Trail, and Bicycle Master Plan (2009)
- Parks, Recreation, Arts & Culture, Fraser River Heritage Park, & Centennial Park Master Plans (2018)
- BC Transit: Local Area Transit Plan
- Port of Vancouver: The Vancouver Gateway Strategy 2030
- Fraser Valley Regional District – Regional Growth Strategy: Fraser Valley Future 2050
- Employment Lands Strategy: 2021 – 2041
- City of Mission Affordable Housing Strategy: 2022
- Environmental Charter: Mission’s Plan for Environmental Sustainability
- District of Mission, Community Energy and Emissions Plan, January 2012

As the WRMP advances following its adoption further integration of these components will be woven into the plan. For this reason, the WRMP will be a Reference Plan to the OCP.

Legal Framework

Adoption of the WRMP will reduce the uncertainty with respect to land uses, but work remains on strengthening awareness, understanding, and the alignment with other plans and policies at the local, regional, and provincial levels. Therefore, the WRMP is presented as a Reference Plan to the OCP. As a reference document to the OCP, the plan has the capacity to provide clear guidance on land use while having the flexibility to incorporate amendments where needed on an ongoing basis without the requirement to amend the OCP Bylaw. This flexibility includes those matters related to the interests of other organizations such as the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.

As a Reference Plan, the land uses designations contained in the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan will become the criteria by which to evaluate development applications in the Waterfront Comprehensive Planning Area. The proposed text changes to the current OCP to facilitate this are captured in the OCP bylaw text amendment.

Council Goals/Objectives

The Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan aligns with:

- Council’s 2018 – 2022 Strategic Plan with respect to:
 - # 3. Bold Economic Development
 - 3.1 Waterfront development
 - Undertake waterfront pre-development planning
 - Develop a roadmap and preliminary business case (feasibility assessment) for waterfront planning
 - # 4. Livable Complete Community
 - To develop distinct neighbourhoods and a livable community
 - To be an attractive community for living working and playing

- To the greatest extent possible meet the social, cultural and physical needs of the community.
- The Official Community Plan with respect to:
 - Establish a pedestrian-oriented precinct along the waterfront with a continuous walkway, viewpoints, commercial uses, public art, interpretive features, and other dynamic urban elements
 - Revitalize the waterfront, restore and enhance riparian areas, and provide public access to the river as part of Experience the Fraser.
 - Encourage high-density, affordable residential development, integrated with service commercial uses
 - Encourage the development of pedestrian-friendly infrastructure as new development takes place.

Financial Implications

The projected engineering costs of implementing the WRMP are estimated to be approximately \$212 million. The investment will be spread out over more than 30 years. This estimate includes the engineering works of flood protection, waterworks, sanitary sewer, stormwater, franchise utility works, and landscaping.

Land acquisitions are not included in the costs as municipally required lands are anticipated to be acquired through typical development processes. There are several cost recovery mechanisms that are available to the City that will be used to minimize burdening the taxpayers as is done with all development planning. The financial plan that is being completed as part of the WRMP is using market conditions to demonstrate feasibility of the WRMP.

Communication

The preferred Land Use Plan was the focus of the Phase 3 Public Engagement that ran from March 22 to April 5th. The outreach involved contacting all landowners in the area, community stakeholders, First Nations, the Advisory Committee, and Mission's residents at large.

In the third phase of public engagement, the public was encouraged to explore the draft plan and its concepts primarily via an interactive "StoryMap". Over 8,800 persons visited the site to virtually explore the Waterfront, view conceptual renderings of key locations, and review the individual strategies that comprise the WRMP.

The outcome of Phase 3 was generally positive. Almost 90% of the survey respondents were excited by the plan's vision. Their highest category of interest was in recreational features. One of the more emphasised discussion items included the retention of Highway 11 along the preferred alignment of the 2008 study. While the City has engaged in preliminary discussions with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on how this alignment could be revisited, continued dialogue is required to reach a mutually agreed upon way forward. A second theme of concern was the uncertainty in the implications to taxpayers.

Overall, all three public engagement phases received in excess of 12,500 website visits and 1600 survey responses along with hundreds of webinar and workshop attendees.

Should first reading be granted, staff will refer the WRMP to external stakeholders as per LAN.47 policy.

Summary and Conclusion

The Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan has been crafted under Council's leadership with the input from First Nations, Landowners, Stakeholders, the Advisory Committee and the community at large. It is a viable and vivid land use plan; a living document that will break the collar of stagnation that has restrained Mission's Waterfront in past years. It is also a plan that is apt at responding to other local, regional, and provincial plans and policies.

At its heart, the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan is a set of long-term strategies. Viewed together, these strategies work in tandem, interweaving policy, partnerships, and infrastructure to create a guidebook for how the Waterfront will grow and develop over the next 40 years. Together, these strategies will deliver jobs, offer a new dimension for urban living in the City, renewed natural spaces, and re-establish a connection with the river for all Mission residents to enjoy.

It is recommended that the Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan be received and that OCP Text Amendment Bylaw # 6095-2022-5670(33) receive First Reading.

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Reviewed by: Stacey Crawford, Director of Economic Development
Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

Attachment A: Official Community Plan Amending Bylaw 6095-2022-5670(33)

The Waterfront Revitalization Master Plan will be distributed under a separate cover