



ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: January 28, 2014
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Meeting Date: February 4, 2014

TO: Vancouver City Council
FROM: General Manager of Planning and Development Services
SUBJECT: Oakridge Transit Centre (Bus Barns) Policy Planning Program

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT Council endorse a planning program to develop a Policy Statement to guide redevelopment of the Oakridge Transit Centre site.
- B. THAT the staff resources outlined in Appendix B and the estimated cost-recovery budget of \$723,000 outlined in Appendix C be approved to complete the Policy Statement; and

FURTHER THAT, consistent with the City's cost-recovery practice, Council accept a financial contribution of \$723,000 from the project proponent, TransLink, to fully cover the program costs.

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's endorsement of a program to create a Policy Statement to guide redevelopment of the Oakridge Transit Centre, a 13.8 acre site located at 949 West 41st Avenue. The Policy Statement will establish principles and objectives relating to a range of topics, including: land use, density, height, public benefits, transportation, built form and character, sustainability and development phasing. The Policy Statement will be presented for Council's consideration at the end of the process and, if adopted, used to inform any future rezoning of the site.

COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (1995)
Riley Park South Cambie Vision (2005)
Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings (2010)
Cambie Corridor Plan (2011)
Greenest City Action Plan (2011)

Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 (2011)
 Priority Action Plan from the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability (2012)
 Transportation 2040 Plan (2012)
 Vancouver Neighbourhood Energy Strategy and Energy Centre Guidelines (2012)
 Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments (2013)

CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

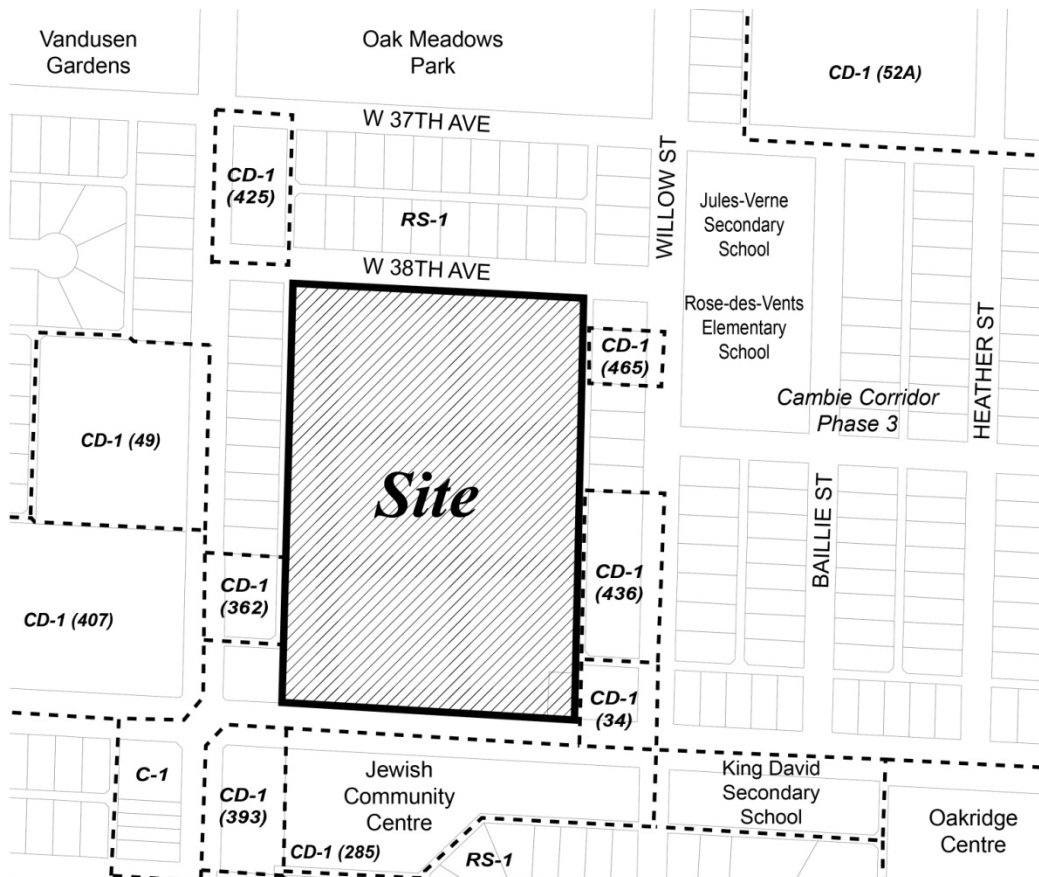
The General Manager of Planning and Development Services **RECOMMENDS** approval of the foregoing.

REPORT

Background/Context

Site Background and Zoning

The Oakridge Transit Centre Bus Barns (OTC) is located on a 5.6 hectare (13.8 acre) site at 949 West 41st Avenue, west of Oak Street bounded by the lanes behind Willow Street and Oak Streets, and West 38th Street to the North. The property is currently zoned single family (RS-1) but has been utilized as a transit centre since August 13, 1948. It is owned by TransLink. Prior to the opening of the transit centre, the site was used as an army barracks. The site was converted shortly after WWII, and at the time housed diesel buses and trolley buses.



The OTC was formerly home to 244 trolley and 182 diesel buses, and over 1200 transit staff including drivers, mechanics and administrators. It provided buses for routes running in Vancouver, Richmond, Surrey and White Rock prior to the opening of Richmond Transit Centre. With the completion of the Vancouver Transit Centre on the Eburne Lands in 2006, almost all services moved out of OTC. Since 2006, the site was used periodically for retrofitting new Novabus and New Flyer orders.

Transit-related uses resumed on the OTC site in 2008, following re-organization and expansion of the Burnaby Transit Centre. Subsequently the Community Shuttle Service has also located on the site. Today the site continues to function as an operations and maintenance facility, primarily for vehicle maintenance, commissioning and decommissioning, and storage of retired buses. TransLink has determined that the OTC site is no longer required to perform these limited functions and is considered surplus land as a result they are seeking to explore redevelopment options for the site.

Council Policy

Riley Park South Cambie Vision (2005): The Riley Park South Cambie (RPSC) Vision provides general direction for large sites within the study area. For the OTC the RPSC Vision refers to policy direction established in the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement. The Vision also provides general direction to increase the supply of 'ground-oriented' housing units with access to either a front or rear yard, to meet the demand for mature households as an alternative to basement suites or apartments.

Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (1995): The Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (OLPS) provides policy to evaluate rezoning applications. The OTC site is identified as a potential large-scale redevelopment site that could accommodate a mix of housing, local serving retail along 41st Avenue, and a neighbourhood park.

The OLPS describes a rezoning policy for the OTC site with the following conditions:

- Provide a range of ground-oriented housing types including townhouses, stacked townhouses, low-rise and mid-rise buildings.
- Limit density to an overall range of 0.9-1.0 (gross) FSR.
- Limit height to 30-50 feet with a 20% increase available, provided that no significant negative impacts can be demonstrated on the surrounding community.
- 20% of the dwelling units are to be designated for non-market housing.
- Consider limited local convenience shopping and services on 41st Avenue.
- Provide an adequately sized neighbourhood park of 0.81-1.21 hectares (2-3 acres).
- Provide community facilities on sites that are large enough to accommodate facilities which are suitable for public needs.
- Provide street linkages and pathways through the site to improve access and to integrate the site into the fabric of the community.

Green Buildings Policy for Rezonings (2010): Requires that all buildings demonstrate high green performance. Currently, a minimum LEED Gold certification (with specific points in energy performance, water efficiency and stormwater) is mandatory for all new buildings where there is a rezoning. All new buildings at OTC will be required to meet or exceed this standard.

Cambie Corridor Plan (2011): The plan establishes an urban pattern along Cambie Street that optimizes investment in the Canada Line, creates complete communities with a mix of housing types and employment space, enables low carbon energy sources and provides key public amenities. The plan provides direction to increase density from single family housing (RS-1) to allow multi-family residential buildings of up to 6 storeys, with consideration for up to eight storeys within two lots of Cambie Street, between Willow Street and Cambie Street. While the OTC falls just outside of the plan boundary, the Plan and the introduction of the Canada Line itself provide a new context in which to consider the OTC site.

Greenest City 2020 Action Plan (2011): The plan outlines actions required to achieve a healthy, prosperous and resilient city - with the ultimate goal of becoming the world's greenest city by 2020. It identifies strategies to promote green economic development, eliminate dependence on fossil fuels, promote green transportation options, utilize green building design and ensure everyone has access to nature, clean water and local food. The plan calls for compact, complete communities which promote walking and cycling, and are well-served by services, amenities and green space. Furthermore, the plan promotes the development of neighbourhood-scaled renewable energy systems, green construction and carbon-neutral buildings.

By design, the OTC site will be required to embody many of the goals in the Greenest City Action Plan: Climate Leadership, Green Buildings, Green Transportation, Zero Waste, Access to Nature, Lighter Footprint, Clean Air and Local Food.

Vancouver's Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 (2011): This strategy is a framework for addressing homelessness and increasing the variety of affordable housing options across the entire housing continuum to improve choice and affordability for all residents within the city. The three strategic directions are:

- Increase the supply of affordable housing.
- Encourage a housing mix across all neighbourhoods.
- Provide strong leadership and support partners to enhance housing stability.

With the direction to achieve affordability in market housing and the provision of new housing to the market, the OTC will provide a range of housing opportunities including the required 20% non-market housing and a mix of other housing forms (i.e. townhouses, condominiums, etc).

Priority Action Plan from the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability (2012): The Task Force provided recommendations to increase the supply and diversity of housing, enhance the City's and community's capacity to deliver affordable rental and social housing, protect the existing social and affordable rental stock, and explore opportunities to renew and expand that stock, and to streamline and create more certainty and clarity in the regulation process, and improve public engagement. To implement these recommendations the following items, which apply to the OTC site, were identified as priority actions:

Action 1 - Implement an Interim Rezoning Policy that increases affordable housing choices across Vancouver's neighbourhoods. The intent of the policy is to encourage ground-oriented affordable housing types in 'transition zones' (within 100m of an arterial) and mid-rise forms to a maximum of 6 storeys, on arterials that are well served by transit and neighbourhood centres.

Action 5 - Revise and clarify Council's inclusionary housing policies to emphasize a flexible and creative approach to the delivery of affordable housing in large developments. The intent of the policy is to secure 20% of the units in large developments for affordable housing. When sufficient funding is not available to achieve 20%, the City will consider flexible options to create units for low to moderate income households such as innovative housing models, rental housing, etc.

Action 10 - Enhance the City's family housing requirements to encourage more 3 bedroom units in new development. Exploration of redevelopment options on the OTC site will consider opportunities to deliver 3 bedroom units.

Transportation 2040 Plan (2012): Transportation 2040 is a long-term strategic vision for the city that will help guide transportation and land use decisions for the years ahead. The plan sets long-term mode share and safety targets and includes both high-level policies and specific actions to support a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable future. A number of goals are relevant to OTC, including the following:

- Support compact community development, helping to preserve natural habitat and agricultural land throughout the region.
- Making the majority of trips on foot, bike and transit.
- Prioritize and encourage a dense and diverse mix of services, amenities, jobs, and housing types in areas well served by frequent, high-capacity transit.
- Support vibrant public spaces that encourage a culture of walking, cycling and social interaction.

Vancouver Neighbourhood Energy Strategy and Energy Centre Guidelines (2012): This strategy identifies the Cambie Corridor as having significant potential for neighbourhood energy given the number of large new developments (including the OTC site) and potential conversion of Children and Women's Hospital to a low carbon energy source.

Vancouver Park Board Strategic Framework (2012): This framework established four key directions: Parks and Recreation for All; Leader in Greening; Engaging People, and; Excellence in Resource Management. The redevelopment of the Oakridge Transit Centre site will provide new park space to meet the needs of the current and future communities (Parks and Recreation for All), and improve access to nature (Leader in Greening).

Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments (2013): When generally applied to large site developments, this policy requires plans or studies on the following as part of the rezoning process:

- Sustainable Site Design
- Access to Nature
- Sustainable Food Systems
- Green Mobility
- Rainwater Management
- Zero Waste Planning
- Affordable Housing
- Low Carbon Energy Supply

Strategic Analysis

The 1995 Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (OLPS) defines limits on height and density on the Oakridge Transit Centre site. If redevelopment adheres to these limits, the site is not likely to meet the urban potential the City has been striving for in locations well-served by transit and accessible to urban amenities and employment. It is important to recognize that the OLPS was approved prior to the decision that the Canada Line would run along Cambie Street and its subsequent construction.

In 2011, the Cambie Corridor Plan established a higher density form of development along 41st between Cambie Street and Willow Street, just east of the OTC site. The Cambie Corridor Plan and the presence of the Canada Line warrant exploration of increased heights and density on the OTC site. (The Canada Line Station at 41st Ave and Cambie Street is a 10 minute walk from the site).

Staff believe that restricting redevelopment to the height and density limits of current policy would result in a less-than-optimal use of the site, and could unnecessarily limit:

- The site's ability to respond to important Council policies approved since 1995.
- The site's potential to create a mid-rise development that is sustainable, socially inclusive and highly-liveable.
- The capacity of the redevelopment to provide amenities to serve the new development and the surrounding neighbourhood.
- The creation of new social housing and public parks.
- The potential to provide housing within walking distance of a rapid transit station, shops, services and employment centres e.g. Oakridge Centre and Women's and Children's Hospital.

It is recommended that Council endorse a program that looks at options reflecting the approved Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments, Greenest City 2020 Action Plan, Transportation 2040, Priority Action Plan from the Mayor's Task Force on Affordable Housing, and the Housing and Homelessness Strategy to maximize the OTC site's potential to meet City and community needs around sustainability, affordable housing, transit-oriented development, provision of ground-oriented housing suitable for families and public benefits.

Through exploration of redevelopment options for the OTC, we are also recommending that the study area be expanded to include adjacent properties. This would include, but not be limited to, 5680 Oak Street (Petro Canada Station), 809 W 41 Ave (Oakmont Medical Centre), and 950 W41 Ave (Jewish Community Centre).

Policy Process: A policy planning process offers the opportunity to explore various possible redevelopment forms for the site. The vehicle for this exploration will be a comprehensive public process.

The process will lead to a Policy Statement which establishes principles and objectives relating to a range of topics, including: land use, density, height, public benefits, transportation, built form and character, sustainability and development phasing. The Policy Statement will be presented for Council's consideration at the end of the process and, if adopted, used to inform any future rezoning of the site.

As part of the process, TransLink's design team will be expected to prepare a range of conceptual redevelopment options with advice from City technical staff. The options will respond to key directions in the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement, and will be based on and evaluated against guiding principles relevant to the site and its potential in the context of existing and planned urban patterns. While staff believe the existing height and density policies in the OLPS may be overly restrictive, this site is not envisioned as a location for high-rise tower forms.

The options will be discussed and evaluated through community consultation and technical analysis undertaken as part of the process. There will be numerous opportunities for public involvement in the planning program, including open houses, on-line engagement, and stakeholder meetings (including with established residents groups such as RPSC Visions implementation committee). It is anticipated that the Policy Statement will include one or more redevelopment concepts for illustrative purposes to inform more detailed planning and design work at the rezoning phase.

The City and the proponent's team will undertake a review of the neighbourhood context for the redevelopment of the OTC site and consultants will be retained to assess traffic patterns and impacts, tree preservation, configuration of park space, retail impacts (if necessary), and other issues as may be identified through community consultation. There will be integration with the work underway on the Oakridge Centre site and the future Cambie Corridor Phase 3 planning program.

Housing: The policy to provide 20% of all units as social housing is established in the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement and the Rezoning Policy for Sustainable Large Developments, and will apply to the OTC site. Of these units, 50% must be for families with children consistent with the High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines. The OTC site is well suited for a range of household types, and as opportunities to create housing suitable for families with children in the city are limited, staff will seek to explore redevelopment options that optimize ground oriented family housing (including 2 and 3 bedroom units).

Parks: The Oakridge Langara Policy Statement requires the OTC site to provide an adequately sized neighbourhood park of 0.81-1.21 hectares (2-3 acres). The planning program will investigate park programming requirements in reference to the proposed development densities and surrounding context, and will recommend an appropriate amount and configuration of park space.

Schedule: The key steps in the policy planning process for the site are outlined in Appendix A. The process leading to consideration of the Policy Statement by Council is expected to take approximately one year, with work anticipated to commence in January 2014. A contingency has been built into the budget to allow for unforeseen delays up to an additional two months.

The following stage would be the rezoning process, which provides additional opportunities for community consultation and review (including a Public Hearing) and will likely take approximately 18 months to complete through to enactment. This would be followed by the Development Permit stage.

Program Staff and Resources: To provide the public and proponent with the service needed to achieve appropriate and timely policy conclusions requires a dedicated program team including urban design resources and a range of departmental technical representatives (see

Appendix B). The technical staff team will report to the Major Projects Steering Committee comprised of senior staff for direction.

Implications/Related Issues/Risk (if applicable)

Financial

The program budget is estimated at \$723,000 as outlined in Appendix C, which includes staffing, external consultancies, Policy Statement development, public open houses, report to Council, and contingency. TransLink will contribute the necessary funds to cover the program costs, to be paid upon approval of the program by Council.

TransLink recognizes that the \$723,000 contribution may increase if actual program costs exceed the budget. It also understands that this contribution covers the costs of assessing the structure of the site but brings no obligation or expectation of City staff or Council support for any particular outcome.

Public Benefits

Development Cost Levies (DCLs): Council recently approved replacement of the area-specific Oakridge-Langara DCL with the City-wide DCL effective March 12, 2014. Given the anticipated timing for the potential redevelopment, Citywide DCLs will apply to the subject site at rates subject to Council approval of an annual inflationary adjustment which takes place each year on September 30.

Community Amenity Contributions (CACs): The Policy Statement will outline a preliminary public benefits package for the site. Consistent with the City's Financing Growth Policy, an offer of a CAC from the owner of a rezoning site to address the impacts of rezoning can be anticipated. Such a CAC is typically made through the provision of on-site amenities and/or a cash contribution towards public benefits in or near the site. As part of the rezoning process, the public amenity needs will be assessed with public input, taking into consideration existing amenities and infrastructure in and near the surrounding community. CACs are negotiated and evaluated by staff in light of the increase in land value expected to result from rezoning approval, and will be reported to Council as part of the rezoning application.

Human Resources/Labour Relations

The salary costs of the Major Projects and Technical Team staff members engaged in this program will be funded through the cost-recovered planning funds from the proponent according to the allocations identified in Appendix B. The majority of staff are in existing positions and their respective departments' operating budgets will receive allocations from the cost-recovered budget. Any new positions that are created through this program will be funded through the cost-recovered funds, or from a combination of cost-recovered funds if the staff position supports two or more concurrent programs (e.g. Oakridge Transit Centre and Langara Gardens).

Environmental

A Policy Statement for the Oakridge Transit Centre will facilitate the redevelopment of the site into a vibrant mixed-income community located within walking distance of a rapid transit station. It has the potential to achieve significant environmental benefits through redevelopment including reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, improved stormwater management performance, connection to a neighbourhood energy utility, as well as application of green principles in site planning and design.

Translink indicates that soil remediation on the site is largely complete but will continue over the next year in two small areas. The remaining building, located on W. 41st Avenue, contains asbestos and will be demolished accordingly.

CONCLUSION

This report seeks Council's endorsement of a planning program to create an Oakridge Transit Centre Policy Statement to establish new site-specific policy relating to land use, density, height, public benefits, transportation, built form and character, sustainability and development phasing. The redevelopment of the site following a future rezoning would help achieve City policies for sustainability, transportation and affordable housing. Staff recommend that the program be carried out as a cost-recovered major projects process, with the program costs covered by a financial contribution from the project proponents.

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Oakridge Transit Centre Policy - Planning Program Schedule

<i>Scoping Phase</i>	
July - November 2013	Program Scoping and Background
February 2014	Program Report to Council

<i>Policy Statement Planning Phase</i>	
February - April 2014	Phase #1: establish planning program - objectives, scope, timelines
April - August 2014	Phase #2: develop draft Guiding Principles, site plans and initial concepts
September - October 2014	Phase #3: refine Guiding Principles, site plan and redevelopment concept, plus draft policies
November - December 2014	Finalize Draft Policy Statement
February 2015	Policy Statement to Council

Staff Resources (Months)

	Scoping Phase	Planning Phase	<i>Total Allocation</i>
Senior Planner	1.0	4.0	5.0
Major Projects Planner	0.0	12.0	12.0
Planning Analyst	1.0	8.0	9.0
Urban Designer	0.0	4.0	4.0
Senior Development Officer	0.0	1.0	1.0
Development Officer	0.0	0.5	0.5
Civil Engineer II	0.0	5.0	5.0
Social Planner	0.0	3.0	3.0
Housing Planner	0.0	3.0	3.0
Park Planner	0.0	3.0	3.0

Program Budget (Rounded to Nearest \$1,000)

	Scoping Phase	Planning Phase	<i>Total Budget</i>
Salaries and Benefits	\$17,000	\$412,000	\$429,000
Contingency (20% on Policy Phase)	\$0	\$96,000	\$96,000
Process Costs (Open Houses, Publicity, Consultancies)	\$0	\$64,000	\$64,000
Management and Allocated Costs	\$4,000	\$100,000	\$104,000
Overheads (Office Space, Supplies, Equipment)	\$2,000	\$28,000	\$30,000
Total by Phase	\$23,000	\$700,000	\$723,000