

Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Infrastructure and Planning Committee recommend that Council:

1. Hold a Public Hearing at the 2023 January 17 Combined Meeting of Council:
 - a. Give FIRST READING to the proposed bylaw, the proposed Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan (Attachment 2); and
 - b. WITHHOLD second and third readings of the proposed bylaw until the Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan has been approved by the Calgary Metropolitan Region Board.
2. Following third reading of the proposed bylaw, the proposed Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan:
 - a. REPEAL, by bylaw, the Killarney/Glengarry Area Redevelopment Plan, the Shaganappi Point Area Redevelopment Plan, and the Westbrook Village Area Redevelopment Plan; and
 - b. AMEND, by bylaw, the Richmond Area Redevelopment Plan as shown in Attachment 6.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The proposed Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan will provide direction on how growth and change could occur in ten inner city and established communities in Calgary, helping to achieve the goals of the Municipal Development Plan.
- **What does this mean to Calgarians?** Calgarians living in the Westbrook Communities will benefit from greater certainty around growth and development and the Plan provides direction on improved mobility options, increased housing choice, improved public spaces and more commercial amenities.
- **Why does this matter?** The Westbrook Communities have experienced a population decline since 1968, despite the construction of the west leg of Blue Line LRT, the MAX Teal BRT and the MAX Yellow BRT, although there was an approximately 375% increase in the population of Calgary in that same time period. Planning for growth and change in the area and improving amenities in the area will help reverse population declines, support community vitality, the viability of local businesses and facilitate growth adjacent to those key transit assets. for future public improvements in the area to support that growth and change.
- The greatest proposed growth and change is focused around existing transit stations, the 17 Avenue SW, 37 Street SW and Richmond Road Main Streets and two Community Activity Centres. This focus will provide a greater number of people with the choice to live near transit infrastructure and commercial amenities.
- The Plan is the second pilot of the Local Area Planning Program, which takes a multi-community planning approach that leverages the connections and shared assets between communities.
- Previous Council Direction is included in Attachment 1.

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DISCUSSION

The Plan comprises ten established and inner-city communities including Glenbrook, Glendale, Killarney/Glengarry, Richmond (west of Crowchild Trail SW and north of 33 Avenue SW), Rosscarrock, Shaganappi, Spruce Cliff, Westgate, Wildwood and Scarboro/Sunalta West (west of Crowchild Trail SW). Located in the southwest quadrant of the city, these communities are collectively known as the Westbrook Communities.

While each community has its own individual boundaries and community associations, the Westbrook Communities share common amenities including schools, neighbourhood Main Streets, Community Activity Centres, public infrastructure, transit, natural areas, and regional and neighbourhood parks. The Westbrook Communities are located to the south of the Bow River, west of Crowchild Trail SW, north of 33 Avenue SW and Richmond Road SW and east of Sarcee Trail SW.

The Plan refines and implements the strategic goals and objectives of overarching policy plans including the Municipal Development Plan (MDP). The development of this Plan considered participant input gathered through an extensive, five-phase engagement and communications plan which included a review and audit of existing statutory plans in the area. A working group, consisting of representatives from community associations, residents and industry provided feedback on the Plan through each phase of engagement.

The Plan provides a long-term vision, development policies, and objectives for supporting growth and change in ten communities. The Plan's vision recognizes, celebrates, and builds upon the shared elements that connect these communities.

The population of the Westbrook Communities has declined by 1,561 people since a peak in 1968 with half of the communities in the area experiencing population losses ranging from 23.7% to 36.9%. Only two communities, Killarney and Spruce Cliff, have more people than they did 40 to 50 years ago. These population declines have affected the viability of local amenities and school utilization and closures. By supporting increased density in key locations, such as transit stations, Main Streets and Activity Centres, and gradual growth within neighbourhoods, population in the Westbrook Communities can start to recover, reversing trends of school closures and loss of neighbourhood amenities.

The Plan took a balanced approach to limited scale development (i.e. single-detached, semi-detached, rowhouse and townhouse development), with no Single-Detached Special Policy Areas proposed within the plan area, but a more nuanced approach to rowhouse and townhouse development taken. Rather than supporting rowhouses and townhouses throughout the entire plan area, the Plan supports these housing forms on parcels that meet select criteria, which are outlined in Attachment 3. Balancing trends of population decline with public concerns about rapid change in communities, the plan supports semi-detached homes throughout the area, and rowhouses and townhouses only in select areas.

The Plan's future growth concept aligns with the direction from the MDP by identifying policy areas and locally specific development policies for the area's Main Streets, transit station areas, and activity centres. The Plan also supports continued incremental evolution and change within primarily residential areas including the potential for increased development intensities along important corridors outside of the Main Streets such as 17 Avenue SW west of 27 Street SW, 26 Avenue SW, Richmond Road SW east of 37 Street SW, 29 Street SW, 37 Street SW north of Bow Trail SW and 45 Street SW.

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A detailed background and planning evaluation are found in Attachment 3.

PARTICIPANT ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION (EXTERNAL)

- ☒ Public Engagement was undertaken
- ☐ Public Communication or Engagement was not required
- ☒ Public/Residents were informed
- ☒ Public dialogue/relations were undertaken

Engagement Overview

A detailed description of Administration's engagement strategy, tactics, what we heard and what we did throughout the project is found in Attachment 4. Input from public engagement was highly valuable and led to numerous changes, including reducing several key corridors in building scale, reducing building scale around most community parks and developing the policies for limited scale areas.

Calgary Planning Commission (CPC) Workshop

On 2022 June 02, Administration had a closed session workshop with Calgary Planning Commission to review the draft plan including the draft Urban Form and Building Scale map. Commissioners were generally supportive of the Plan and provided comments that inform subsequent revisions to the Plan but did comment that the Plan should have been bolder and supported more growth and density. Attachment 5 provides a summary of key themes from that session and Administration's response.

Lessons Learned

A brief lessons learned document is found in Attachment 7. Beginning in 2023, lessons learned will be presented annually to the Infrastructure and Planning Committee for information as the Local Area Planning Program continues to be implemented. These lessons learned will be independent of individual local area plan approvals.

IMPLICATIONS

Social

Policies and specific implementation options listed in the Plan provide clear direction for how the Westbrook Communities will change over time to become more diverse, accessible, and inclusive communities. Policies for parks and open space improvements focus on improving accessibility and inclusion by providing a diversity of activities within parks while improving accessibility through the construction of accessible pathways. Increased safety in the communities is supported through policies and implementation options that improve mobility safety, improve lighting in parks, open spaces and near transit stations and main streets. Increased development and activity around key areas in the Plan will also provide more "eyes on the street", thus improving passive surveillance.

Allowing for increased housing choice in the Westbrook Communities means that more Calgarians will be able to find a home that meets their needs, lifestyle and in a community of their choice. Allowing greater housing options, and thus more housing units, also will support recovery of the population of school-aged children, reversing trends of school under-utilization

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and closures in the area and will better support local business and community amenities like recreation facilities and libraries.

Environmental

An analysis of greenhouse gas emission profiles (not including transportation, waste management, and public infrastructure such as street lights) and future projections for the Westbrook Communities shows that currently the Westbrook Communities produce 186,000 tons of carbon dioxide emissions (tCO₂e) annually, which equates to an average per capita emissions rate of 5.24 tCO₂e/person/year. This is lower than the city-wide average of 7.47 tCO₂e/person/year. An evaluation of redevelopment projections based on the Westbrook Plan shows that the average per capita emissions will decrease to 5.10 tCO₂e/person/year by 2039 and then to 4.71 tCO₂e/person/year by 2076.

The Plan includes several policies for greenhouse gas reduction and climate mitigation in Section 2.4.2 of the Plan. Policies for complete communities, net zero homes and buildings, zero carbon energy transition, built infrastructure, natural infrastructure, water and sustainable development encourage more efficient buildings, encourage renewable energy generation and improve physical and natural infrastructure to respond to the Climate Emergency.

The Plan also includes policies to increase the tree canopy in the area, both on private and public land, with a goal of 25% tree canopy coverage, increasing from 22.78%. Finally, the Plan includes policies to improve stormwater retention and mitigation by reducing impervious surfaces and incorporating stormwater infrastructure on private and public property.

Economic

The Plan seeks to enable a more compact urban form that will aid in more efficient use of existing infrastructure including The City's investments in the West LRT, main streets and MAX Yellow and Teal in the Westbrook Communities. The Plan envisions that the Westbrook Communities will provide physically attractive areas where people will want to not only live, work and recreate but also invest. Increasing the number of people who can choose to live in the Westbrook Communities will also support businesses along the area's main streets and commercial areas.

Providing for more commercial opportunities within the area will improve amenities for local residents, while also providing more opportunities for Calgarians to start new businesses. Increasing residential population in the area and particularly around main streets and transit stations will increase local customers for businesses, improving their viability.

Increasing housing choice within the area will have numerous economic benefits. By increasing housing supply, more affordable options will be available to Calgarians, reducing household costs and helping to attract new residents to Calgary. Additional details regarding housing choice are found in Attachment 3.

Service and Financial Implications

No anticipated financial impact

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RISK

There may be a reputational risk as some residents had the misperception that approval of the Plan will result in community-wide land use redesignations, specifically within the low-density residential districts. City-initiated land use redesignations, however, are not within the scope of this project, nor within the recommendations of this report. To clarify any potential impacts to communities following approval of the Plan, Administration developed frequently asked questions and answers that are publicly available on the project website:

www.Calgary.ca/Westbrook.

There is a risk that should the Plan not be approved, members of the public, community associations, members of the working group, industry and others who have contributed significant amounts of time to participate in the engagement process would feel frustration that their time was not valued. They may also be hesitant to participate in future planning or other city initiatives given that their time and feedback did not result in the adoption of a plan. A similar risk exists for highly engaged participants, such as community associations in areas where other Local Area Plans are to be undertaken, as members of the public may be hesitant to participate in a process for a Local Area Plan knowing that a similar process did not end in adoption of a Plan.

Additionally, The City has invested in several major infrastructure projects in the area, including the Blue Line West LRT and Main Streets improvements on 17 Avenue SW and 37 Street SW. Failure to realize additional development in these areas would undermine The City's investment into these key pieces of infrastructure.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Previous Council Direction
2. Westbrook Communities Local Area Plan
3. Background and Planning Evaluation
4. Engagement and Communications Summary
5. Calgary Planning Commission Review
6. Proposed Amendments to the Richmond Area Redevelopment Plan
7. Lessons Learned
8. Community Association Letters
9. Limited Scale Policy Map
10. Public Submissions

Department Circulation

General Manager/Director	Department	Approve/Consult/Inform
Stuart Dalgleish	Planning and Development Services	Approve
Debra Hamilton	Community Planning	Consult