

Local Growth Planning in North Central Green Line Communities

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report outlines a high-level scope for local growth planning for north central Green Line communities. The catalyst for this review is the significant investments in public transit, including the North Crosstown Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) route and the Green Line, along with the Council-approved Main Streets work.

The Scope of Work (Attachment 1) proposes a combined local area planning process for nine communities, and provides an opportunity to pilot the proposed Local Area Plans Strategy introduced to Council in 2018 January (PUD2018-0011). Included in the scope are four Main Street areas (4 Street NW, Centre St N, Edmonton Trail NE, and 16 Avenue N), and the adjacent communities including: Capitol Hill, Crescent Heights, Greenview Industrial Park, Highland Park, Mount Pleasant, Renfrew, Rosedale, Tuxedo Park, and Winston Heights / Mountview.

Local area planning for Highland Park was directed by Council in 2017 June (C2017-0521) and this Scope of Work proposes incorporating work on the Highland Park Area Redevelopment Plan, as it was approved by Council, to be completed in coordination with this project.

The project requires amending or consolidating ten existing local area plans, prepared in different eras that have minimal references to the important new investments in public transit and no references to the Developed Areas Guidebook. The previously approved *Main Streets implementation plan* (Attachment 2) would require minor adjustments to reflect updated sequencing and implementation timelines if Council approves this scope.

The outcome of this work includes a comprehensive set of community plans that: incorporates and aligns with the Developed Areas Guidebook (DAG); provides policies written in plain language; and helps facilitate economic development in the area. Included in the scope is an estimated timeline and budget to complete the work as outlined.

ADMINISTRATION RECOMMENDATION:

That the SPC on Planning and Urban Development recommends that Council:

1. Approve the Scope of Work outlined in Attachment 1 and direct Administration to report back to Council through the SPC on Planning and Urban Development no later than Q4 2019.
2. Approve, as amended, the *Main Streets implementation plan* as shown in Attachment 2.

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PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION / POLICY

At the 2017 September 11 Combined Meeting of Council, a Notice of Motion (NM2017-29) moved by Councillor Farrell, Seconded by Councillor Carra, directed Administration, in anticipation of updating existing north central Area Redevelopment Plans as part of the Green Line LRT and Main Streets work, to explore incorporating work on community planning, economic development and the Developed Areas Guidebook and that City Administration report back to Council through the Standing Policy Committee on Planning and Urban Development no later than Q2 2018 with a scoping report that includes timelines, resources, and budget.

At the 2017 June 26 Regular Meeting of Council, as moved by Councillor Carra, seconded by Councillor Pincott, Council directed Administration to include the Highland Park Area Redevelopment Plan in the Planning & Development Department's 2018 policy work plan, in accordance with the Scope of Work identified in Attachment 1 (CPC2017-0521), with the work to be coordinated with the area's regional drainage study.

At the 2017 April 10 Combined Meeting of Council, moved by Councillor Chabot, Seconded by Councillor Woolley, that the SPC on Planning and Urban Development Recommendation contained in Report PUD2017-0241, be adopted, and that Council approve the Main Streets Implementation Plan.

BACKGROUND

Detailed planning for the Green Line is underway and construction on Green Line enabling projects has started. Further, the North Crosstown Bus Rapid Transit service that will run along 16 Avenue N begins service in 2018. This route will be a limited stop bus service operating in regular traffic lanes with several transit priority measures such as queue jumps and priority signals. It will intersect with the future Green Line route on Centre Street N.

The *Main Streets implementation plan* was approved by Council in 2017 April (PUD2017-0241) and provides an action plan for Planning, Investment and Innovation in all of Calgary's main streets. Planning includes a new policy and land use regulation framework created with local stakeholders. Investment is focused on the redesign and reconstruction of a main street's public realm (e.g. streets, sidewalks, safety features, crosswalks). Innovation provides a range of new approaches for a variety of factors facing main streets, including parking management, heritage conservation and improved facilitation of local economic development.

On 2018 January 22, Administration, responding to the challenge of maintaining a current set of local area plans citywide, presented a new approach to local area planning (PUD2018-0011). It proposed new multi-community local planning areas that reflect catchment areas for existing and future LRT/BRT stations and main streets as well as recognizing significant natural or constructed features that separate certain areas from others. The 41 tentative local planning areas under consideration are shown on Figure 1 of Attachment 3.

There are currently nine communities that abut the four main streets noted above. There are also ten local area plans, but these ten plans do not cover the entire catchment area nor do they reference the Developed Areas Guidebook. Furthermore, only the 16 Avenue North Urban

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Corridor ARP includes references to the North Crosstown BRT and the approved Green Line alignment. The existing plans, listed below, are shown on Figure 2 of Attachment 3

- Highland Village Green Design Guidelines (2017)
- 16 Avenue North Urban Corridor Area Redevelopment Plan (2017)
- South Nose Creek Site Plan (2008)
- Winston Heights / Mountview Area Redevelopment Plan (2006)
- North Hill Area Redevelopment Plan (2000)
- Crescent Heights Area Redevelopment Plan (1997)
- Centre Street North Special Study (1989)
- North Bow Special Study (1979)
- Inner City Policy Plan (1979)
- North Bow Design Brief (1977)

(brackets indicate year of original adoption or when an entire new version was adopted.)

INVESTIGATION: ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Given the number of initiatives within the same geographic area, Administration's investigation focussed on finding synergies and efficiencies through coordination of the work.

Retaining independent scopes of work for Main Streets, Highland Park ARP and updated local area planning or combining them into one coordinated process has benefits and drawbacks. A combined effort would allow the larger area to be planned comprehensively and is logical considering that the four main street areas under consideration intersect nine communities, including Highland Park (Centre Street N, Edmonton Trail NE). Area residents and business owners as well as The City would have greater opportunity to learn whether opportunities or issues identified are common across multiple nearby communities or if they are unique to their community.

The primary drawback of a scope limited to only Main Streets is that existing local area plans become a mix of new and old policies, which can prove challenging for stakeholders to interpret and requires subsequent amendments. For example, following Council approval of Main Streets work in Bridgeland and Killarney and considering feedback from community members, Administration subsequently added a comprehensive review of the rest of the area redevelopment plans for these two communities to the 2018 Policy Work Plan. This is not the most efficient use of City, community and Council resources.

The next generation approach to local area plans (Local Area Plans Strategy, PUD2018-0011) proposes building upon existing multi-community plans, such as the North Hill ARP. Multi-community plans offer an opportunity to highlight main street areas or LRT/BRT station areas that draw people from multiple communities. It still permits community specific chapters to communicate the unique features of each community and address community specific land use topics, such as Neighbourhood Activity Centres. Read together, the plan's components should better illustrate the various economic development opportunities available across the larger area. It also facilitates long-term planning for transportation, recreation and social services infrastructure as those groups typically have a multi-community focus already. Although the intent is to pilot larger multi-community plans as outlined in the Local Area Plans Strategy, the

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attached Scope of Work allows flexibility in determining the appropriate plan format and type(s) after the engagement sessions with stakeholders and detailed analysis.

Undertaking this multi-community planning process requires amending the Council approved *Main Streets implementation plan* (Attachment 2). This plan identified 33 streets for staged implementation within three time periods for Planning, Investment and Innovation. Since adoption by Council in April 2017: five main streets areas have received Council approval for Planning (redesignations and policy updates) and Investment has funded the initiation of a concept design process for 11 main streets and reconstruction of four streets. Future investment funding requests for the remaining priority streets are being proposed in the One Calgary budget process. The proposed amendments in the attached *Main Streets implementation plan* reflect the significant completion of the original priority projects, and an updated project list, and revised timelines. The project list has been split into two groups which allows for greater flexibility so additional amendments to the *Implementation Plan* do not have to be made following approval of the One Calgary service plan and budgets.

In conclusion, Administration believes the multiple directives from Council to undertake local area planning for Highland Park, the local main streets and north central Green Line communities may benefit from a combined analysis and engagement process. These benefits may include:

- Providing a citizen-centric coordinated engagement that takes a community approach rather than a project approach;
- Bringing communities together to identify and support intensification of certain strategic corridors and nodes, which subsequently support regional infrastructure such as the North Crosstown BRT and Green Line LRT;
- Consolidating or rescinding of several local area plans written in different eras that have varying effect across the nine communities;
- Implementing the policies of the Developed Areas Guidebook;
- Facilitating economic development as a result of new investments in transit, clarified opportunities for private development and City investment in an improved public realm; and
- Opportunity to test and refine the next generation approach to local area plans.

Stakeholder Engagement, Research and Communication

Administration has initiated discussions with the affected community associations to notify them of the potential for this proposed multi-community planning process. An outline of proposed engagement is detailed further in the Scope of Work. Development of a detailed engagement plan to supplement the Main Streets' established engagement process will be undertaken should Council direct that this work proceeds.

Strategic Alignment

This policy work is intended to advance the Municipal Development Plan, Section 1.4.4 – Local Area Plans. It also offers the opportunity to align the local area plans with the statutory Developed Areas Guidebook.

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A comprehensive planning policy approach will align land uses and development opportunities in the north central communities to support Main Streets planning, public realm investments and transit investments in this area including the North Crosstown BRT and the Green Line LRT services.

By expanding the new local growth planning areas, Administration may also be able to have a more robust conversation with citizens, community members and stakeholders and ultimately direct new growth to strategic areas within a wider range of communities in alignment with the Municipal Development Plan and Calgary Transportation Plan.

Social, Environmental, Economic (External)

Social

This project will build on the success of the multi-community engagement approach used by Main Streets and the Green Line projects. It is the aim of this project to bring communities together to confirm intensification of strategic corridors and nodes, while also identifying community specific issues related to making the area a good place to live, work or go to school.

Environmental

Facilitating population and job growth in this developed area of Calgary will increase transit usage and walkability, reduce vehicle miles travelled and renew the supply of new development in the Developed Area. It also promotes consideration of compact development towards achieving environmental objectives of the Municipal Development Plan.

Economical

The Green Line LRT and North Crosstown BRT services represent significant capital and operating investments by The City. Supporting that investment with appropriate, consistent, and plain language land use development policies that facilitate appropriate local growth is critical to ensuring The City realizes a beneficial return on its investment in public transit.

Secondly, having easy-to-use and comprehensive policy plans for the area may facilitate private investment in the area to complement City investments.

Financial Capacity

Current and Future Operating Budget:

This policy planning work has been considered in the work plans of Administration, and it is not anticipated that there will be additional operating budget impacts. Total project cost is estimated to be \$750,000 of which \$345,000 would be related to engagement costs.

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Current and Future Capital Budget:

There are subsequent capital budget implications related to infrastructure improvements with associated Main Street upgrades, however, those recommendations will be incorporated into the One Calgary (2019-2022) budget request process.

Risk Assessment

Should Council not adopt the recommendations contained in this report, there is a risk of disappointing communities expecting updated local planning policy because of the 2017 September 11 Notice of Motion. There is also a risk of duplicating engagement resources if Administration does not approach this local planning exercise comprehensively. The main streets in this area represent a good opportunity for achieving medium to high density transit supportive development but the main streets impact multiple communities and in several cases, fall on boundaries between communities. Therefore, updating only the main street areas could leave existing local area plans with a fragmented policy written in different eras within the same document.

There is a risk that expanding the scope could negatively impact the *Main Streets implementation plan*, which is not desirable. To mitigate such a risk the Scope of Work is flexible to allow for Main Streets to complete its objectives should delays arise resolving other local planning issues.

There are risks with engaging multiple communities at once and ensuring that they feel heard during the process. However, communities in the area are familiar with multi-community engagement with the 2016 Green Line Charrettes, which helps to minimize the potential risk.

Should Council not authorize Administration to proceed with the attached Scope of Work, the creation of a Highland Park Area Redevelopment Plan would still proceed in accordance with the 2017 June Council direction to include it on the 2018 work plan.

REASON(S) FOR RECOMMENDATION(S):

The proposed Scope of Work will enable a comprehensive update to local area planning policies and land use districts in north central Green Line communities. Continued local population and job growth near the under construction North Crosstown BRT and future Green Line LRT as well as on nearby main streets is important for achieving the objectives of the Municipal Development Plan. More specifically, in addition to better supporting local and regional public transit infrastructure the project will identify growth opportunities for new or existing Neighbourhood Activity Centres which are important for retaining and expanding the supply of local businesses. The work will replace, consolidate and/or update ten existing policies in the area that currently do not cohesively describe or facilitate the growth opportunities in north central Green Line communities.

ATTACHMENT(S)

1. Scope of Work
2. Replacement pages for *Main Streets implementation plan*
3. Supporting Maps