

Coquitlam

For Committee

April 20, 2007

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To: City Manager

From: General Manager Planning and Development

Subject: **Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan –
Results of Charrette for the Design of the Village Commercial Centre**

For: **Committee of the Whole**

Recommendation:

That Council receive the report of the General Manager Planning and Development dated April 20, 2007 concerning the results of the charrette for the design of the Partington Creek village centre and comments received on the alternative designs presented at the March 14, 2007 Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan Public Open House.

Executive Summary:

On January 20 2007, Planning and Development staff hosted a design charrette to develop alternative concepts for the form and character of the village centre to be located in the Partington Creek Village neighbourhood. The charrette is part of the larger Partington Creek Village neighbourhood planning process, which is underway. Although the village centre will be located in the Partington Creek neighbourhood, it will serve the entire northeast and will become an integral part of Coquitlam's evolving network of complete communities. Three design firms worked with teams made up of Neighbourhood Working Group members and students from University of British Columbia's (UBC) School of Community and Regional Planning to define and illustrate three different concepts. The public had the opportunity to review the three concepts at the March 14, 2007 Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan Public Open House and their comments have been summarized and attached to this report. The public will have further opportunity to comment on the concepts at the Public Open House tentatively scheduled for June 27, 2007. Staff will complete a detailed evaluation of the three concepts and will report to Council on the results of the public review and evaluation process after the June Open House. The final preferred concept will become part of the Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan and will form the basis for subsequent development of urban design guidelines for the village centre.

Background:

The Charrette

A charrette is a short, intensive group design or planning process intended to stimulate ideas and propose design or planning concepts for a particular area. A charrette was hosted by the Planning and Development staff on January 20, 2007 to develop three different concepts for the form and character of the village centre which will be located in the Partington Creek Village neighbourhood. The charrette is part of the larger Partington Creek Village neighbourhood planning process, which is underway. Although the village centre will be located in the Partington Creek neighbourhood, it will serve the entire northeast and will become an integral part of Coquitlam's evolving network of complete communities. The City contracted with three highly-qualified design consultants - Jordan Cook & Associates, The Zeidler Partnership, and Busby, Perkins and Will to lead teams made up of Neighbourhood Working Group members and students from UBC through the charrette process.

Guiding Principles and Goals

The development of the village centre and the surrounding residential neighbourhoods is governed by the Northeast Coquitlam Area Plan (NECAP). The design brief for the charrette reflected input received through the NECAP public consultation process as well as input currently being received from the Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan process, and policies articulated in the Citywide Official Community Plan (CWOCP). The CWOCP and the NECAP provide the following principles to guide the development of the village centre:

- Meet everyday needs primarily through the local marketplace.
- Develop effective transportation linkages between the community and the rest of the city.
- Create a sense of place, of neighbourhood, and of community that builds upon what is locally inherent and enduring (e.g. topography, ravines and views) yet establishes a unique "village" character.
- Establish a varied and equitable mixture of land uses, household types, and building forms to support a variety of socio-economic groups, and provide important community services.
- Encourage all modes of transport, especially walking, cycling and public transit.
- Create a more compact community form, preserve open space and natural systems, reduce resource and energy consumption and provide a greater number of local amenities closer to home.
- Rekindle the spirit of the public realm, especially the streets that are the veins of the community.

Background cont'd/

Guiding Principles and Goals cont'd/

- Develop strategies for integrated stormwater management planning and reflect watershed conditions and needs in neighbourhood planning processes.
- Consider district energy supply options in Northeast Coquitlam, particularly the village centre.

Consequently, the charrette process was guided by the following goals:

- 1) Buildings, landscaping and other amenities should establish a unique character for the village and enhance the public realm.
- 2) The village centre should provide all necessary services for all anticipated users of all ages and socio-economic groups, including those who work there.
- 3) Residential units should be available above retail and office spaces.
- 4) The centre should accommodate all modes of transportation but give functional and visual precedence to pedestrian and other non-vehicular transportation modes.
- 5) The village centre should include a transit hub that provides connections to Coquitlam Regional Town Centre.
- 6) The centre should enable a safe, stimulating, comfortable and satisfying lifestyle for all residents.
- 7) The development of the village should take advantage of the bio-physical attributes and spectacular natural setting of the site and it should be designed so that stormwater runoff is not increased.
- 8) The village centre should use land, water and energy efficiently.
- 9) Buildings in the village centre should be designed to provide efficient, flexible spaces that can transform over time and serve a variety of purposes.
- 10) Buildings in the village centre should be heated via a district heating system.

Each of the concepts generated during the charrette illustrate different orientations and internal street networks for the village centre. While these alternative orientations are helpful to generate discussion, determining the best orientation of the village centre with respect to slope and the transportation network is a technically challenging exercise that cannot be completed in a one-day workshop. Consequently, the orientation of the village centre and the transportation network in and around the village centre will be determined through the current neighbourhood planning process.

Background cont'd/

The Results

Each of the teams successfully developed a concept that met the goals of the charrette while illustrating a unique vision for the form and character of the village. Each design team provided circulation, parking, landscape, land use, stormwater and site plans to illustrate their concept and provided a number of perspectives and sections to illustrate major intersections and various qualities of the streetscape and pedestrian realm. Teams also provided drawings and photographs of street furniture, public art, plantings, etc. as examples of the envisioned public realm and described sustainable design features such as green roofs, rain gardens and permeable paving.

The three concepts were displayed at the Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan Public Open House on March 14, 2007 at Leigh Elementary School. Written submissions from the public are attached to a separate staff report on the results of the open house. However, Table 1 (attached) provides a summary of the comments received that were specific to the design of the village centre.

A booklet presenting the results of the charrette is also attached.

Next Steps

The three concepts will be presented to the public for a second time at the Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan Public Open House tentatively scheduled for late June 2007. City staff will subsequently report to Council on the results of the public review and an internal evaluation process. The preferred concept (or a new concept that incorporates the most desirable elements from each of the three concepts) will become part of the Partington Creek Village Neighbourhood Plan for Council's consideration and will form the basis for subsequent development of urban design guidelines for the village centre.



J.L. McIntyre, MCIP

PB/lmc

Attachments:

1. Table 1 – Summary of Comments
2. Design Charrette Concepts – January 20, 2007

Table 1: Summary of Public Comments on Various Aspects of the Three Proposed Concepts

Circulation, Parking and Transit	Planning, Social and Economic Aspects	Design, Landscape, Environment and Stormwater
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a community shuttle to and from village to the other neighbourhoods in the Northeast • The LRT should be expanded to the new village • Keep the bulk of traffic out of the centre (or exclude vehicles altogether except for deliveries and short-term parking) as per Whistler Village • A pedestrian oriented centre is preferred; through-traffic and transit should be routed around the centre • Underground or rear access parking is preferred • Buses should be excluded from the centre because of noise and pollution • Provide a pick-up/drop-off area near the transit hub • Provide secure bike storage at the transit hub • The transit hub should be underground or under pedestrian walkways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plazas support business viability • A branch library and skateboard park would be nice • There is no need to designate a site for a church in the village; village site perhaps better used for multi-faith educational facilities • Through-traffic is not necessary for economic viability • Design the village to be a virtual campus or educational focal point/information centre by including library, community centre, and conference and meeting facilities • Space on the second floor of buildings should be flex space and should be available for office, residential or mixed use 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plazas are a desirable feature in the village centre • The centre and the transit hub should be pedestrian-oriented • Orient Main Street towards Mount Baker to take advantage of view • Limit building height to four storeys to create a small-town feel. Lower density building-types are preferred over high-rise • Buildings should be no more than seven storeys • Cascade buildings down the hill, placing taller buildings higher on the slope • Provide as much permeable surface as possible • Manage stormwater with the least amount of pipe • Capture and reuse rain water • Retention ponds are a good idea • Keep green space along streets (e.g. use boulevards and street trees) • Like the small gardens and courtyards, and rooftop gardens and green roofs • Would like a site for a community garden • Minimizing slope will favour pedestrians and cyclists • Parks, trails, bike paths and walkways will all have longer term benefits • Design should be complex to provide a stimulating environment, with many points of access and egress, courtyards and gardens • Public gathering spaces should be covered or partially covered