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Coquitlam

For Council

April 17, 2012

Our File: 13-6480-20/11/1

Doc #: 1238592.v1

To: City Manager

From: Acting General Manager Planning and Development

Subject: **Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TDS) – Proposed Work Plan**

For: **Council**

**Recommendation:**

That Council endorse the proposed Work Plan as outlined in the report dated April 17, 2012 of the General Manager Planning and Development, entitled “Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TDS) – Proposed Work Plan” and direct staff to proceed with immediate initiation of the TDS.

**Report Purpose:**

To present a proposed work plan for the preparation of a Citywide Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TDS) to support growth and development in the vicinity of future Evergreen Line rapid transit stations.

**Strategic Goal:**

This report supports the corporate objectives of supporting neighbourhoods, enhancing economic opportunities, innovating to meet changing needs, and continually improving processes, policies and services.

**Executive Summary:**

Preparation of a Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TDS) is proposed in order to effectively manage the opportunities presented by the Evergreen Rapid Transit Line. The TDS will provide a framework to guide orderly, yet timely planning, consultation and development in the vicinity of future Evergreen Line rapid transit stations.

The TDS is a new type of initiative for Coquitlam, involving an innovative and accelerated approach to develop a high-level policy framework to guide more detailed neighbourhood level planning and transition of the City’s rapid transit station areas to highly vibrant urban nodes.

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**Background:**

The Evergreen Line represents a significant, long-term transportation investment in Coquitlam and a key city-building opportunity. To effectively capitalize on this investment, it is essential that future development aligns with transit-oriented development principles. This means higher, mixed-use densities within the commercial core around future stations, and higher residential densities supported by pedestrian-friendly streets and public spaces within a 10-15 minute walking distance of stations.

Evergreen Line rapid transit stations in Coquitlam are planned for the Burquitlam and City Centre neighbourhoods, and the line will connect to the existing Louheed SkyTrain station, just outside Coquitlam's boundary.

With the planned construction of the Evergreen rapid transit line, there is an opportunity to re-assess and coordinate significant city-wide policy objectives affecting all station areas, in order to ensure a consistent policy framework and to guide more detailed planning at the neighbourhood level.

On March 19, 2012, Council directed staff to prepare a work plan for development of a Citywide Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TDS) and also adopted "location criteria" for guiding interim OCP amendment applications in the Burquitlam neighbourhood. These priority initiatives recognize the importance of coordinating high-level station area policies for the overall transit corridor, while also acknowledging the need for immediate planning action in Burquitlam to coordinate current development pressures, improve connectivity, and take steps towards improving amenities in the area.

The proposed process seeks to first establish planning principles that apply across the City TDS Corridor and immediately follow-up with planning efforts in Burquitlam as a pilot process. Community Planning will return to Council with a work plan for more detailed planning in other station areas after the TDS principles are adopted.

***A Layered Process***

The TDS is the first step in a layered process to coordinate transit-oriented development around Coquitlam's future stations and address neighbourhood growth implications as these areas transition. The inter-related planning processes are summarized as follows:

1. ***Transit-Oriented Development Strategy (TDS)***: Identify high-level planning principles and key policy directions applicable to all Evergreen Line station areas in Coquitlam. This will support future detailed neighbourhood planning and interim applications in Burquitlam. The TDS will commence immediately.

***A Layered Process cont'd/***

2. ***Interim Burquitlam OCP Amendment Applications:*** Coordinate interim applications in Burquitlam consistent with Council's adopted criteria of March 19, 2012, and as the TDS policy work progresses. Applications may proceed once TDS policy work has sufficiently advanced, but applicants should expect to adapt proposals as TDS directions evolve towards a final Council endorsed strategy. Interim OCP amendment applications will also require independent public consultation responses to *Local Government Act* 5.879 if they proceed in advance of the Burquitlam Neighbourhood Plan update.
3. ***Burquitlam Neighbourhood Plan Update:*** Guided by TDS policies, the Neighbourhood Plan update will address more detailed local planning issues. The Burquitlam Neighbourhood Planning process can proceed in tandem with the TDS but will require completion of the early phases of the TDS, including preliminary policies.

Importantly, while the TDS is not a substitute for local area planning, the outcomes from the TDS are expected to reduce the need for high level policy work typically developed in local area planning and will further inform and complement these processes, thus streamlining future work. The TDS will establish citywide principles that will bring consistency and clarity of expectations for future development in all transit-oriented areas.

A more detailed plan update process for both the City Centre and Lougheed areas will be completed after the TDS is adopted. In order to best coordinate issues related to servicing, local context, and interface conditions it is expected that neighbourhood level planning work in these areas (City Centre, Lougheed) will need to be completed prior to, or concurrent with future development applications within TDS areas to properly support and coordinate applications not consistent with existing plans.

**TDS Goals:**

The TDS is a new type of initiative for Coquitlam, involving an innovative and accelerated approach to develop a high-level policy framework to guide transition of the City's rapid transit station areas to vibrant urban nodes.

Given the focused and compressed timeframe for the proposed TDS process, the work plan includes opportunities at key milestones to re-assess the project timeline with Council to confirm or adapt the process as policies are evaluated and stakeholder feedback is considered. Staff anticipate encountering unknowns during the process that may affect timing and the required depth of analysis in each policy area. It is recognized that this timeline is ambitious and may need adjustment.

**Work Program/Scope:**

Station areas will realize increased redevelopment pressures with implementation of the Evergreen Line. The proposed scope of work for the TDS focuses on the following primary transit supportive land development policy areas and supporting implementation tools, seeking to balance opportunity with mitigation of growth impacts.

***Guiding Growth and Development in Transit Areas***

1. Building height and transition of density
2. Land use interface
3. Rental housing replacement
4. Parking principles
5. Employment integration

***Implementation Tools***

6. Density bonus provisions
7. Community Amenity Contributions
8. Development Servicing.

Analysis is already under way for some of these key policy areas, including rental housing replacement and density bonus provisions. This work will be brought forward to Council as part of a comprehensive strategy.

***Study Area***

The study area for the TDS will generally focus on lands within 800 metres of each Evergreen Line station, however, an initial step in the process will refine the boundaries in consideration of the local context for each station. In each area, analysis will recognize different conditions in relation to station proximity.

As specific policies are prepared, areas of application within the study area will be considered, or direction will be provided for further work at the Neighbourhood Planning level.

**Timeline and Key Milestones:**

The TDS process is proposed to commence immediately, with a completion target of July 2012. Attachment 1 outlines the proposed TDS timeline and key milestones, illustrating the streamlined nature of this process and its relationship to other associated processes. The work plan integrates Council check-ins at key milestones in early June and July and includes stakeholder/community feedback.

Council should be aware of key variables and associated risks inherent with the compressed project timeline, which may require future work plan revisions.

**Timeline and Key Milestones cont'd/**

These variables include a reduced depth of technical review and public consultation, as well as shorter timeframes for consideration and discussion of policy ideas by the public. To support this expedited approach, the process will provide opportunities to discuss policy options and at several intervals check-in with Council related to any required refinements to the work plan.

**Consultation:**

The TDS process is structured around the following consultation components. Attachment 1 outlines the integration of each component within the overall process and how each step will support parallel planning processes (i.e., interim OCP Amendment Applications in Burquitlam).

- › **April 2012** – Council considers the project Work Plan.
- › **Late May/Early June 2012** – Workshop with Council-in-Committee to review and discuss preliminary policy directions (process check-in).
- › **Late June 2012** – Public Open House to introduce the process and gain community feedback on preliminary policy directions (two locations).
- › **Early July 2012** – Report back to Council with feedback from the Public Open House and seek direction regarding preferences for further analysis and consultation (process check-in).
- › **July 2012 or Fall 2012** – Council considers the proposed TDS.

**Financial Implications:**

The development of station areas is expected to yield considerable long term economic benefits to the City of Coquitlam. In support of these objectives and as directed by Council, the Planning and Development Department has adjusted its 2012 work plan to complete the TDS within its assigned budget. The city will engage external consultants for specific technical studies funded within the Community Planning budgets. Given the compressed timeline of this work program, the overall costs - while not yet known - are expected to be far less than a typical area planning process.

**Conclusion:**

The pending construction of the Evergreen Line provides a tremendous opportunity to build vibrant transit-oriented communities in Coquitlam and capitalize on this unprecedented investment.

**Conclusion** cont'd/:

The proposed Transit Oriented Development Strategy will provide an opportunity to re-assess and coordinate the important policy areas guiding growth and mitigating the impacts of change in station areas. This initiative will provide a framework for more detailed discussions at the neighbourhood scale.

Staff recommend that Council endorse the proposed work plan and direct staff to commence the TDS process.



Raul Allueva

RP/lmc  
Attach.

This report was prepared by Ryan Perry, Community Planner, and Bruce Irvine, Project Consultant, and reviewed by Raul Allueva, Acting General Manager Planning and Development.

TIMELINE

