

# REPORT

## *Climate Action, Planning and Development*

**To:** Advisory Planning Commission      **Date:** September 19, 2023

**From:** Meredith Seeton, Senior Policy Planner      **File:** 13.2525.02

**Item #:** Report Number

**Subject:** 22nd Street Station Area Visioning

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT** the Advisory Planning Commission provide comments on the visioning process for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain station area, key opportunities for the area and how to reach project goals.

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### **SUMMARY**

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area has been identified as an area that could accommodate growth in a compact, transit-oriented form. Visioning for this area has recently been relaunched, with a dual focus on creating a climate-friendly station area and collaborating closely with First Nations. Community engagement is being planned to start in late September, and an ideas challenge is anticipated to be launched in November and close in early 2024. Vision development is anticipated for Spring and Fall of 2024 with the goal of having a vision endorsed by the end of 2024. This report seeks APC's perspective on key considerations for the area and early ideas on how to reach the project objectives.

#### **1.0 PURPOSE**

To update the Advisory Planning Commission on the relaunch of visioning for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain Station Area, and seek preliminary feedback on the visioning process and early ideas.

**2.0 BACKGROUND**

After declaring a climate emergency in 2019, the City identified the opportunity to plan this area as a climate-friendly or “eco” neighbourhood. Planning was put on hold through the pandemic, with further operational-related delays. In anticipation of relaunching the project in 2023, staff reached out to First Nations to gauge the level of interest in participating in the project. Early expressions of interest from several First Nations communities have created an opportunity to explore closer collaboration with them in this planning process, and embed reconciliation as a fundamental project focus along with climate resilience aspirations.

At their regular meeting on June 12, 2023, Council directed staff to relaunch the visioning for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station area, with a dual focus on climate action and closer collaboration with First Nations (staff report included as Attachment 1). A further update was included on the September 11 Council agenda.

**3.0 PROJECT GOALS AND APPROACH**

The idea behind creating a bold vision for a climate-friendly station area is to be as ambitious as possible on climate mitigation and adaptation, while also meeting additional project goals around truth and reconciliation, and equity and inclusion:

- **Climate Action:** In 2019, the City of New Westminster declared a climate emergency and committed to reducing GHG emissions by 100% by 2050. By putting climate action at the forefront of planning for the station area, the City will be looking for ways to create a zero emission neighbourhood, ideally with local energy generation initiatives, bold action on embodied carbon, and proactive planning for adaptation and resilience.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** Council’s direction to collaborate more closely with First Nations elevates that collaboration to a key goal of the project. Staff will be collaborating with Nations to look for opportunities to advance First Nation interests through the planning process, whether through more visibility of Coast Salish context of the lands, exploring opportunities for economic reconciliation, and/or other opportunities.
- **Equity and Inclusion:** As the station area transitions to a low-carbon community, the burdens and benefits must be equitably distributed. Many groups—based on race, age, gender, sexual orientation, immigration status, religion or disability—disproportionately experience inequities, such as adequate housing, health, income, and mobility. The future 22nd Street Station area needs to acknowledge and respond to the needs of everyone, ensuring that this becomes an inclusive neighbourhood with opportunities for all.

This project is also closely aligned with multiple priorities from Council’s recently endorsed Strategic Priorities Plan, such as:

- **Homes and Housing Options:** One of the desired outcomes is More Homes Near Transit, including advancing planning for transit-oriented development with a climate lens. There is the potential to unlock a variety of housing forms, tenures and affordability levels at the station area, meeting needs for different individuals and household types.
- **Asset Management and Infrastructure:** Early consideration of asset management potential will ensure infrastructure is renewed through development (and careful consideration of financing growth).
- **Safe Movement of People:** Focusing growth by rapid transit and a regionally significant bus loop is tightly connected to shifting to sustainable modes of transportation. Consideration will also be given to opportunities to improve the transportation network in the neighbourhood.

**4.0 VISIONING PROCESS**

1. **First Nations outreach and collaboration (on-going):** All six First Nations that staff reached out to in 2022 (Kwantlen, Qayqayt, Kwikwetlem, Tsleil-Waututh, Squamish, and Musqueam First Nations) have expressed an interest in being involved with this project. Staff reached out to these Nations again following the June report to Council, and continue to explore ways to collaborate. First Nations have expressed interest in participating at different project milestones, and there is interest in exploring both economic reconciliation and enhanced cultural recognition through the visioning. Taking a collaborative approach with First Nations means that the City’s approach will need to be flexible, and further discussions with Nations may reveal opportunities to change and improve process described below as visioning proceeds.
2. **Ideas Collection:** The ideas collection phase will start with community engagement, and be followed by an ideas challenge.

Community engagement from late September and through October will ensure early visioning is shaped by aspirations of the community. Community engagement will include an event at Anvil Centre on October 11<sup>th</sup>, on-line engagement through a BeHeard New West page, pop-up engagement throughout the city, workshops in the neighbourhood, and targeted outreach to lesser-heard voices.

Community engagement results will then inform an ideas challenge, targeted to be launched in November. Global experts on climate resilience and community planning, students, and members across the community will be invited to provide creative ideas about how to achieve the project goals described above. The intent of the challenge is to tap into a wide range of bold ideas, many of which can then inform the vision, together with community and First Nation input.

3. **Ideas Evaluation and Iteration:** The evaluation and shortlisting of ideas is anticipated to include both expert analysis and community and First Nation input, as well as a public showcase and celebratory event. After community engagement and

the ideas challenge, a three-day design charrette will be held (targeted for Winter 2024), to start integrating the ideas and input.

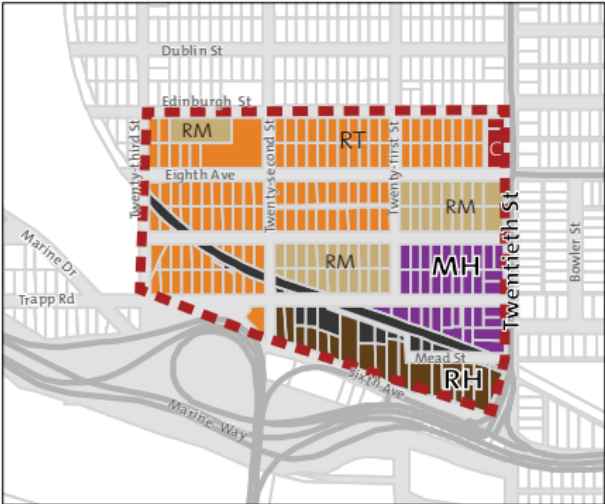
- 4. **Vision Development:** Through the Spring and Fall of 2024, the consulting team will further develop the ideas and concepts that come out of the design charrette, draft a vision, and seek interdepartmental review of that vision.
- 5. **Vision Refinement:** The draft vision will be brought to First Nations and Council for discussion and endorsement to seek community input on the draft. Input will be sought from City committees and community members. A revised vision will be brought back to Council for consideration of endorsement.
- 6. **Vision Implementation:** Once the vision is endorsed by Council, an implementation process would be determined, based on identified next steps and priorities. Implementation will likely include further developing financing growth strategies to deliver required amenities and infrastructure, transportation network options, and/or design and public realm guidelines.

It is anticipated that the phases outlined above will take place through 2023 and 2024.

**5.0 LAND USE CONCEPT**

The Official Community Plan (OCP) does not include land use designations for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street SkyTrain station area, and instead designates the area Comprehensive Development, and calls for a master planning process, which has now become a visioning process.

The OCP does include proposed land use designations for the area (shown adjacent), showing a concept for high density and mixed use areas, stepping down to mid-rise and then townhouse designations farther from the station.



*Proposed Land Use Designations included in OCP (RH: Residential - High Rise, MH: Mixed Use - High Rise, RM: Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings, RT: Residential – Infill Townhouse), station area boundary in red*

With the pivot to creating a bold vision for a climate-friendly station area, and the continued exacerbation of the housing crisis, new ideas for different land use patterns will be considered. The concept included in the OCP continues to reflect common practice around focusing growth near rapid transit, and including a supportable amount of commercial space to create opportunities for daily needs to be met within the neighbourhood. The concept also reflects physical constraints on the area. The land use concept will be explored and refined through the visioning process.

In discussion at their June 12, 2023 meeting, Council raised questions about the station area boundaries (shown in red above). The boundaries were determined through consideration of a walkable distance from rapid transit, and through community consultation during the OCP process. Since several years have passed, and the housing and climate crises have worsened, the visioning process – both through community consultation and the ideas challenge – will include an openness to adjusting the exact boundaries of the station area. If there are supportable opportunities for changes outside of the station area, to create an improved land use concept or better meet project objectives, these could be considered.

**6.0 DISCUSSION**

APC is being requested to review the above approach and project goals related to land use planning for the 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Station Area, and provide feedback on the following:

- 1. What are some key considerations for the area from APC’s perspective, or early ideas on how to reach and balance project objectives?

**7.0 NEXT STEPS**

Staff and the project consulting team will proceed with community engagement, the ideas challenge, and further engagement with First Nations through the fall. Staff anticipate reporting back to APC in early 2024 with the findings from this engagement and collaboration.

**ATTACHMENT**

Attachment 1: June 12 Report to Council on the Relaunch of 22<sup>nd</sup> Street Visioning

This report was prepared by:  
Meredith Seeton, Senior Policy Planner

This report was reviewed by:  
Lynn Roxburgh, Supervisor of Land Use Planning