

REPORT

Planning and Development

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: May 27, 2024

From: Jackie Teed, Director
Planning and Development
File: REZ00239
#2485934

Item #: 2024-316

Subject: Rezoning: 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) – Introductory Report

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to work with the applicant to create an appropriate Zoning Amendment Bylaw for Council's consideration within 2024, as outlined in this report.

PURPOSE

For Council to endorse a revised application review process for the rezoning proposal for 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Staff have been working with the owner/developer of 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) to develop a detailed master plan which would serve as a blueprint for the future development of the site over the next ten years. On April 8, 2024 Council directed staff to prepare a basic Zoning Amendment Bylaw for Council's consideration within 2024, and which secures requirements to complete a master planning process prior to construction.

To meet these timelines and implement Council's direction, staff intend to work with the developer and focus primarily on basic zoning parameters, key considerations and high level master plan principles prior to Council consideration of Third Reading of a rezoning bylaw. This is expected to include fundamental elements such as density, building heights, uses, open space, developer contributions and/or in-kind amenities through the City's density bonus program, development phasing, massing and an

approach to adjacent City land. These items would then help inform staff in working with the developer to secure a more detailed master plan document that would be completed in future prior to Final Adoption.

This report outlines the overall approach to achieving Third Reading of a basic Zoning Amendment Bylaw on an expedited timeline for Council consideration of endorsement within 2024.

BACKGROUND

Staff have been meeting with the owner of Columbia Square for a number of years regarding the potential redevelopment of the site. On February 23, 2023, the applicant submitted a rezoning application with the intention of developing a detailed master plan which would serve as a detailed blueprint for the development of the site over the next ten years or more. Staff brought forward a preliminary report on June 12, 2023 which outlined staff's understanding of the initial application. This report can be found in Attachment 1.

The applicant's original application intended to complete the master plan, prior to Council's consideration of the rezoning bylaw. This would provide a high level of detail regarding specific alignment with a variety of City policies and a fairly robust and detailed design concept. At that time, Council directed staff to work with the applicant to revise the initial concept to better align with the City's Inclusionary Housing Policy and general approach to affordable housing and amenities.

Since that time, two key items have occurred:

- 1) Staff have worked with the applicant to identify the issues with the site which prevented the viability of affordable housing on-site. This included an in-depth financial analysis which was reviewed by the City's preferred land economist.
- 2) Council has adopted the [Interim Development Review Framework \(IDRF\)](#). This policy facilitates continued development review while staff implement the multiple pieces of provincial legislation which govern municipal approvals of housing development. One key aspect of the IDRF is the intention to transition away from negotiated amenities through a Voluntary Amenity Charge and toward fixed rate Density Bonus system.

Given the above, Council, at its meeting on April 8, 2024, Council passed the following motion:

THAT Council direct staff to work with the applicant for 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) to:

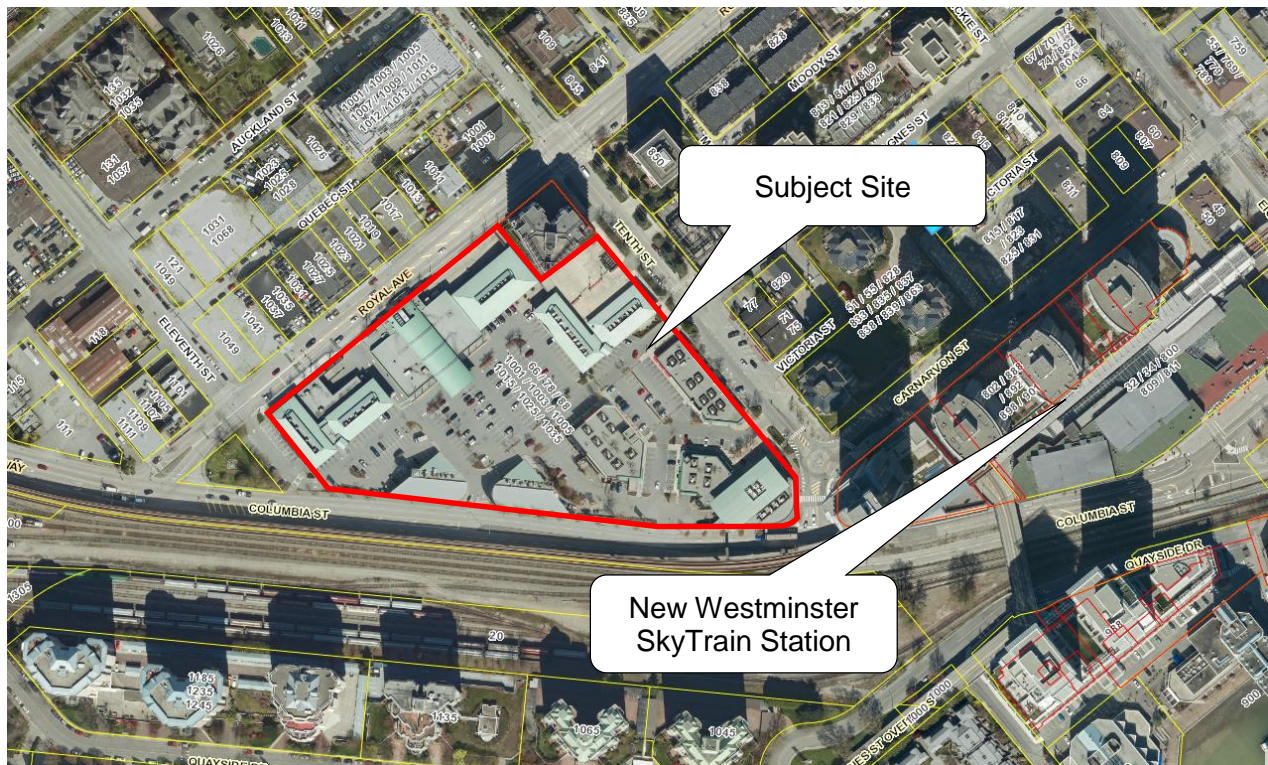
- a) revise their proposal for the 7.2 acres site, as outlined in the Council Report of June 12, 2023, to include 20% secured market rental, a not-for-profit child care, and 0% affordable rental units or related land dedication, in exchange for which the future density bonus charges would apply

across the entire site, generally consistent with the City's Interim Development Application Review Framework, and which Council could use to fund future affordable housing development in the City;

- b) prepare a basic zoning bylaw to authorize that revised proposal for consideration of Council within 2024, and which secures requirements to complete a master planning process prior to construction.

Site Characteristics and Context

The subject site is a large (29,084 square metres / 313,062 sq. ft. / 7.2 acre) triangular shaped lot located in the Downtown neighbourhood bounded by Royal Avenue and Columbia and Tenth Streets. The site is relatively flat and the majority of it is located within the flood plain. The site is proximate to New Westminster SkyTrain Station; the closest edge of the site is located about 100 metres (328 feet) away and the furthest edge is about 380 metres (1,248 feet) away.



More site characteristics and context is provided in the June 12, 2023 report included in [Attachment 1](#).

Interim Application Review Framework

One of the key intents behind the recent changes in provincial housing legislation is to create requirements and tools which allow greater transparency and certainty in the development approval process. Implementation of new legislative requirements and tools within the City are underway but will take time to fully complete. Given the need to continue to review development applications to address the housing crisis, staff developed the IDRF to facilitate continued development approvals in the short-term. On January 29, 2024, Council endorsed the IDRF.

One of the key aspects of the IDRF is the transition to a fixed rate density bonus system in-lieu of negotiating directly for on-site amenities such as affordable housing through a land lift analysis. The transition to a fixed-rate density bonus framework would both create greater transparency in the development process and improve application processing times. Staff are currently developing the parameters of a revised density bonus policy for Council's consideration by the middle of 2024.

PROPOSAL

The subject site is designated Mixed Use High Density within the Downtown Community Plan (DCP) and the general form of development is expected to be tower residential with a mix of retail, office and residential podiums interfacing with grade. Based on key tower planning principles and design guidelines it is anticipated the site could accommodate 6 to 8 towers. Significant residential density of up to 279,000 square metres (3 million square feet) is anticipated consistent with the DCP designation. This is anticipated to support up to an initial estimate of 4,000 residential units and 7,250 residents. As per Council direction, this site would be required to secure 20% of the residential use as market rental tenure. The proposal does not include inclusionary or affordable housing, however future density bonus charges would apply to the site which Council could use to fund future affordable housing development in the City.

The site is also expected to support commercial development – both retail and office. It is expected that the existing retail floor area would be replaced on site and would be consistent with the Retail Strategy. Additional office floor area is also expected.

The application will also include a non-market child care component. While opportunities for an on-site school would be maintained, the applicant does not intend to secure this as a requirement through zoning.

DISCUSSION

Application Review Process

As directed by Council, staff are working towards preparation of a basic zoning amendment bylaw to authorize a revised proposal for the rezoning and creation of a Master Plan for the site at 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square Plaza Shopping Centre) for consideration of Council within 2024.

Typically, a majority of the application review process is completed prior to Council consideration of bylaw readings. However, in order to advance this application within this timeframe, an adapted review process is required. In reviewing the application, staff intend to focus primarily on three key areas: 1) basic zoning bylaw parameters, 2) high level master plan principles and 3) key considerations (discussed further below) prior to Council consideration of the application.

Based on a preliminary assessment, items expected to be either included in the basic zoning bylaw or high level master principles could include:

- density
- amount and general phasing of residential (including minimum of 20% residential floor area for secured market rental)
- amount and general phasing of commercial office and retail floor area
- minimum required open space
- minimum secured non-market childcare
- accessible parking, bicycle parking and loading requirements
- general development phasing
- tower heights and conceptual massing

The development review process for this application is intended to expedite City reviews and provide appropriate opportunities for public feedback for a project of this size and magnitude. In particular the process is intended to prioritize advancement of the items needing public and Council review early in the process allowing more technical details to be completed and finalized after third reading but prior to final adoption.

Master Plan Process

Given the “light touch” approach to the amending zoning bylaw, many of the specifics regarding the site’s future development including its design, phasing, servicing and other technical details, would be developed through the Master Plan after Third Reading.

The Master Plan would provide a blueprint for the future phased development of the site through subsequent Development and Building Permits. Staff intend to work collaboratively with the applicant through a series of workshops to develop the Master Plan. The finalized Master Plan would be registered on title through a restrictive Covenant and Development Agreement, prior to Final Adoption of the rezoning.

Review Timeline

In order to advance the application on an expedited schedule, staff would anticipate the following steps:

1. Introductory Report to Council seeking direction (This Report) **We Are Here**
2. Applicant led-public consultation (June 2024)

3. Interdepartmental Staff Review Toward Suitable Zoning (June-September 2024)
4. City-led Consultation (September 2024)
5. Council Consideration of First, Second Readings of Zoning Amendment Bylaw; (October 2024)
6. Development of Master Plan and Development Agreement
7. Council consideration of adoption of Zoning Amendment Bylaw

Key Considerations

In the application review, staff intend to work collaboratively with the applicant to address a number of key considerations prior to Council deliberation on the bylaw amendment. Some potential items for resolution are discussed below.

City Owned Lands

The subject site is directly adjacent to City properties including an unaddressed triangular lot at the corner of Royal Avenue and Stewardson Way as well as a section of Eleventh Street which is intended to be closed. In total these lands measure roughly 1,620 sq. metres (17,435 sq. ft.).



Staff would work with the developer to maximize the potential of City lands to deliver future community amenities and assets to serve the City's needs.

Density Bonus

As indicated above, the City has commenced the transition to a fixed rate density bonus system which is intended to be in place by the fall of this year. The subject application would be subject to the updated Density Bonus program.

Although density bonus policy is envisioned to permit cash contributions, provision of in-kind on-site amenities which are similar to the value of the density bonus is also contemplated. Staff would intend to work with the applicant to identify and secure any appropriate in-kind amenities for Council's consideration. The applicant would be required to agree to any density bonus cash contributions, in keeping with the future policy, prior to Final Adoption of the rezoning bylaw.

Child Care

As directed by Council, the applicant will be required to provide on-site non-profit childcare. Details on the amount, location and timing of the delivery of this child-care would be provided prior to Council consideration of the Zoning Bylaw Amendment.

Public and Stakeholder Consultation

The applicant held several events with the public and stakeholders in June and July, 2023 to gather public input to help inform their thinking on the site. In addition, the applicant is proposing to proceed with formalized applicant-led public consultation in June of this year. This public consultation would help inform the development of the appropriate zoning bylaw. Feedback from the applicant led public consultation would be provided to Council at the comprehensive report stage, alongside the applicant's response. Staff would additionally explore opportunities for City-led consultation, within the Council directed timeline, including the creation of a Be Heard Page.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The City has a project-based team approach for reviewing development applications, which facilitates interdepartmental review, providing comments to the applicant throughout the development review process. This project-based team includes staff from Engineering, Climate Action, Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Electrical and, Fire Departments.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Development of 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square) represents a unique development opportunity to secure amenities to help finance growth. Financial considerations will be evaluated as part of the application review process and detailed in the comprehensive report to Council.

OPTIONS

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to create an appropriate Zoning Amendment Bylaw for Council's consideration within 2024, as outlined in this report.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Option 1

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – June 12, 2023 Staff Report

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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This report was approved by:

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