

Report to Council



Date: February 11, 2019
File: 1200-70
To: City Manager
From: Ross Soward, Planner Specialist
Subject: Capri-Landmark Plan – Transportation and Parks Review

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives, for information the report, from the Planner Specialist dated February 11, 2019, with respect to the Capri-Landmark Plan.

AND THAT Council approves the recommended parks and transportation options in principle and directs staff to move forward with the development of the final plan as described in the report from the Planner Specialist dated February 11, 2019.

Purpose:

To provide Council with a review of the parks plan and transportation network options for Capri-Landmark.

Background:

On September 17, 2018, staff presented the draft Capri-Landmark Urban Centre Plan (CLUCP) for Council endorsement. Council deferred consideration of final plan endorsement until a further review of the transportation network and parks plan for the urban centre was provided. Based on Council direction on September 17, 2018 this report focuses primarily on the transportation and parks network for Landmark.

Staff have conducted further technical analysis of the four transportation options for Landmark that were considered earlier in the planning process. These options aim to address the major structural issues in the transportation network that are challenging the Landmark area today and that limit its ability to realize its full potential as an urban centre.

Capri-Landmark provides a unique opportunity to advance the Imagine Kelowna (IK) direction of “focusing growth in the urban centres to limit sprawl” and to reduce the City’s long-term infrastructure costs. The plan also aligns with the December 10, 2018 Council direction to move forward with growth scenario 3 for the Official Community Plan review, accommodating roughly 65 per cent of future growth via redevelopment of the city’s five urban centres, underscoring the importance of densifying Capri-Landmark. The Capri-Landmark Plan allows the City to deliver on key goals such as building live-work communities, enhancing housing diversity, and increasing transportation options as it implements Council’s preferred growth management strategy.

Although each of the city’s urban centres are expected to receive considerable growth, not all are set up equally to deliver the quality of life that Kelowna’s residents have come to expect. Each of the five urban centres are at different stages of maturity and will, therefore, have different needs in terms of infrastructure investments and retrofits. For comparison, in downtown Kelowna, the historical street network and recent parks and streetscaping improvements provide a physical structure that is well positioned to accommodate growth. However, in other urban centres such as Capri-Landmark, Midtown and Rutland, the physical structure is less mature, meaning that strategic investments in transportation and public space are required over the next 20 years (and beyond) to deliver a high quality of life as growth occurs. Overall, advancing the Capri-Landmark plan contributes to the City’s goals to build complete communities in the urban core and enhance the fiscal and environmental sustainability of Kelowna.

Within the urban centre, the Landmark area (Burtch Rd to Spall Rd) was historically a service commercial and industrial hub at the periphery of the city. Because the area was not originally envisioned as an urban centre, the type of infrastructure investments that were made in areas such as Downtown or South Pandosy never occurred in Landmark. Moreover, in the 1990s when Landmark saw the development of large office towers under land use contracts, no major infrastructure investments were made, resulting in a transportation network that was poorly equipped to handle the roughly 3,500 office workers that commute to Landmark daily. Because of the significant shift in character as well as the area’s proximity to downtown and the City’s goal of encouraging growth in the urban core, Capri-Landmark was ultimately designated as an urban centre in 2010. Subsequently, council prioritized Capri-Landmark for further revitalization directing staff to develop an urban centre plan to guide redevelopment and long-term infrastructure planning.

Ingredients for long-term Urban Centre Success

Staff technical analysis, background research and input received through public engagement highlighted five areas of focus to position Landmark for its transformation as a successful urban centre:

1. Rebalance the land use mix by increasing the number of people living in Landmark area, providing a critical mass for services and amenities, thereby reducing number of people that must commute via automobile to the city’s largest employment hub.
2. Spur residential development by investing in parks that ensure residents are within a short walk of a range of parks and public spaces.

3. Create a connected street network with a new continuous east-west street that will make it easier for people to get in and out of the heart of the Landmark District.
4. Bring transit service to heart of the city's largest office employment hub (Landmark District).
5. Increase transportation options for thousands of people working in the area by making it easier for people to walk or cycle between major destinations within the urban centre and surrounding neighbourhoods.

The Landmark area is uniquely positioned to become a successful live-work district. Landmark is close to one of the region's most important employment hubs and daily shopping amenities, and on the rapid bus corridor, reducing the need for residents to drive. The Landmark area is in close proximity to downtown and other citywide destinations and directly across from the future Parkinson Recreation Centre and future high school – amenities that will increase demand for housing in the area. Landmark itself boasts a large concentration of office and tech workers, providing a critical mass of people for enhanced services and amenities. Meanwhile, Landmark is one of the few areas in the urban core where large parcels with high redevelopment potential exist. However, a long-term plan is needed to ensure future redevelopment translates into a complete community where these different assets are harnessed to deliver a successful urban centre.

Current Transportation Issues

Because Landmark was not envisioned as an urban centre until recently, the area's transportation infrastructure is not set up to accommodate high-density office and residential development. The street network currently has high levels of congestion as thousands of commuters leave the Landmark office towers at the same time each afternoon. Also, the road layout (road widths, turning radius, and intersection design etc.) makes it challenging to bring transit service into the Landmark District, reducing the competitiveness of transit in the area. The lack of sidewalks and bicycle routes make it inconvenient and dangerous for people looking to travel to the area without a vehicle. As a result of the high levels of congestion and limited transportation options, Council directed staff on October 18, 2016 to provide recommendations of non-support for any future rezoning that increase density within Landmark until an area transportation plan was completed. The current building permit application for a new office tower in Landmark will only exacerbate the congestion challenges further. Based on the transportation challenges in Landmark, there is an urgent need for a long-term strategy that will ease congestion, enhance transportation options and position the area for growth.

The proposed land use plan for the Capri-Landmark plan projects roughly 8,000 new residents in the urban centre and roughly half of this growth in Landmark over the next 20 years. The 8,000 new residents projected is roughly equal to the population of the Kettle Valley community in the Upper Mission. This allocation of growth requires a commensurate level of infrastructure retrofits to ensure the area meets the standard for urban centres that Kelowna residents have come to expect. The structural changes required to retrofit a transportation network and add new public spaces in an already built-up urban area are considerable and the corresponding impacts can be challenging. However, these changes are vital to support the long-term growth of the urban centre and making these changes in the form of new roads and parks will only become more challenging in the future as land values rise and more landowners invest in the area. The proposed infrastructure investments aim to limit impacts

to local landowners while delivering the greatest opportunity for the area to redevelop over the next 20-30 years as a successful live-work urban centre.

Key Transportation Strategies

The transportation challenges of Landmark are best tackled by applying the following three levers:

1. ***Rebalance the land use mix with residential / non-office land uses:*** This strategy allows more residents to live/work within the urban centre, creating short trips that can be completed by walking/biking and trip patterns from new developments that will differ (in direction and timing) from existing office uses for which road network capacity is limited.
2. ***Strengthen the street network, for all modes:*** Improve street network connectivity and redundancy; strengthen east-west road capacity and make it easier to access the surrounding major road network.
3. ***Shift transportation behaviour by investing in pedestrian / cycling and transit infrastructure:*** Make streets comfortable and attractive places for walking and cycling and make transit more competitive by making it a faster and more convenient travel option for workers in area.

The Capri-Landmark Plan applies these three levers in a coordinated way to accommodate future growth and to deliver the quality of life that Kelowna's residents have come to expect.

Transportation Network Assessment

To support major densification of an area that was originally envisioned as a low-density industrial / service commercial area (Landmark), technical analysis determined that significant upgrades to the street network would be required. More specifically, the transportation analysis established the importance of creating a continuous east-west street connection to knit together the Capri area with Landmark and potentially Midtown in the future. Further, an effective east-west street connection that runs through the heart of Landmark represents the greatest opportunity to improve transportation options for the thousands of people commuting to the Landmark towers daily. Accordingly, the transportation network options review (Attachment-A) compares four east-west street alignments, assessing their relative performance to ease current transportation challenges and position the area for growth in a manner that is consistent with the City's policy objectives for urban centres.

Criteria for Network Assessment Comparison

1. Ability to provide a continuous east-west connection through Landmark, adjacent to existing employment and future residential development, linking Capri and potentially Midtown in the future.
2. Improved access in and out of the Landmark District from the west.
3. Improved access in and out of the Landmark District to the east.
4. Improvements to access and convenience of transit, cycling and walking within Landmark.
5. Minimize land acquisition costs and impacts and enhance potential to secure land via redevelopment versus solely through acquisition.
6. Capital costs of options based on corridor length and major infrastructure elements.

Summary of Network Assessment

Based on the technical analysis (Attachment A) summarized in Table 1, the east-west connectivity offered by Option 4 (Sutherland Extension) best responds to the transportation criteria. Option 4 delivers the following major benefits:

- Provides the greatest potential to improve access in and out of the Landmark area, easing the acute congestion challenges in Landmark.
- Allows for direct transit service to be re-routed into the Landmark District, providing door-to-door transit service for the thousands of office workers.
- Creates a safe and continuous Active Transportation Corridor (ATC) that will provide direct access to the employment hub in Landmark.
- Has the greatest potential for a long-term connection to the Midtown urban centre in the future via Kent Rd.

In summary, Option 4 – Sutherland Extension best addresses the transportation challenges of Landmark today and into the future while minimizing capital costs and impacts on adjacent properties.

Table 1: Network Assessment Ranking

Network Option	Overall Ranking	Summary Comments / Analysis
Option 1 Existing Network	4	Limited opportunities to improve vehicle capacity, viability unlikely, poor transit and cycling capacity / connections and will not support proposed densification and growth.
Option 2 Dickson Extension	2	Similar property impacts to Sutherland with poorer performance, particularly at east end of corridor.
Option 3 Ritchie	3	Poor east-west connectivity due to two offset intersections. Not adjacent to Landmark Centre. Largest property impacts, including major residential areas.
Option 4 Sutherland	1	Improved vehicle, transit and cycling capacity and connections to improve existing issues and support proposed densities and future growth. Property impacts are similar to Dickson extension.
Network Option Ranking Rubric: 4= Poorest alignment with objectives - 1= Best alignment with objectives		

Next steps

Should Council endorse the Capri-Landmark Plan, it would represent a first step in signaling the proposed transportation network improvements for the urban centre. The recommended transportation network (Option 4) project would then be added to a list of long-term capital priorities that Council reviews annually. If Council were to approve Option 4, staff anticipate that the realignment of Sutherland Ave could be implemented incrementally over the course of twenty years in three to four phases of work. By delivering the project incrementally, there is a greater opportunity to align road construction with private redevelopment in the area, reducing overall costs. Also, each phase of work would require further detailed design work to finalize land acquisition impacts and would allow for several years of notice to each individual landowner impacted by the proposed transportation corridor.

Parks Planning Review

In response to the Council direction on September 17, 2018 staff reviewed the parks and public space improvements proposed for Capri-Landmark. Based on the 8,000 new residents projected for the urban centre by 2040, the parks and public spaces will be critical to delivering a high quality of life and transforming the area into a successful urban centre. Parks are essential to encouraging a healthy and active community and will serve as a catalyst to support the transformation of Landmark from an employment hub to a live-work district. Currently, the area has limited parks with only two existing neighbourhood parks in Capri (Pacific Court Park and Mary-Ann Collinson Park) totaling 0.9 ha of active park space and no parkland in Landmark.

In reviewing the city's parkland targets, staff acknowledged that no additional Citywide or Recreation parks would be required in the urban centre, given the close proximity to Parkinson Recreation Centre and its surrounding playing fields. Instead, the parks plan focuses on adding new community and neighbourhood parks to ensure easy access to community gathering and amenity space for the thousands of new residents moving to the area. Staff developed a reduced parkland target of 8.0 ha for Capri-Landmark that excluded citywide parks and recreation parks. Ultimately, the parks and public space plan proposed, identifies 3.8 ha of active park space, equating to less than 50 per cent of the target for community and neighbourhood parks, reflecting the high costs to acquire and assemble land in an urban centre. However, as opportunities arise additional parkland may be acquired in an effort to meet the Citywide parkland targets.

To provide adequate parks and recreation opportunities in the urban centre, the parks plan (map below) also proposes the following strategies to optimize the available park space in the area:

- Develop parks and open spaces in the area to a high standard to reflect increased density and intensive use that is expected within an urban centre.
- Integrate linear parks (Mill Creek & Ritchie Brook) to provide a safe and continuous pedestrian connection to amenities as well as enhancing drainage and stormwater management.
- Develop Active Transportation Corridors and main streets that can also function as public spaces for residents and workers during community events.
- Allocate additional parkland acquisition DCCs in a flexible and opportunistic manner, responding to where growth and redevelopment occurs in the urban centre.

- Promote privately developed publicly accessible amenity spaces through major development application review.

Figure 1: Parks and Public Space Plan



The 1.2 ha community park proposed in Landmark was established as a future park in 2010-11 through the 2030 OCP process.

Parks Summary

The parks plan was tailored to the urban centre context to provide the appropriate amount of parkland to deliver a high quality of life for future residents. The parks plan ensures all future residents and workers will be a short walk from a community gathering space or green space. The rebuilding of Parkinson Recreation Centre will be an important objective for not only residents of the urban centre, but also more regionally for all residents in Kelowna in order to deliver high quality recreation opportunities (gyms, aquatics, multi-purpose rooms, etc.). Smaller more neighbourhood focused parks will provide day-to-day social and passive recreation opportunities for local residents and workers and provide relief from the built environment; they are the basic units of a park system. The proposed linear parks, both Mill Creek Linear Park and Ritchie Brook Greenway will offer strong connections between the various park spaces and provide for trail opportunities and environmental protection. Further, the private sector will be encouraged through redevelopment to include publicly accessible courtyards, plazas and amenity spaces to potentially further supplement the public parks system. The proposed parks plan recommends the minimum amount of new parkland investment, while ensuring a high quality of life for future residents.

Conclusion

Due to the ad-hoc growth within Landmark over the last 40 years, significant challenges exist in the area today, ranging from the lack of public spaces to the congestion levels that are limiting the desirability of the area. The proposed plan aims to address current challenges, while positioning the area for future growth. The addition of more housing in Landmark will rebalance the land uses in the area and help to relieve congestion as the area densifies. The strategic investments to retrofit the street network will enhance east-west connectivity, improving access as the area adds a growing number of residents and workers. The realignment of Sutherland Ave brings both transit service and an ATC to the heart of the Landmark District and improves the safety and desirability of transit, cycling and walking. Meanwhile, the proposed parks will enhance quality of life and allow the area to flourish in the same way that Downtown has over the last 20 years.

The parks and infrastructure works proposed by the Plan are not insignificant, but there are no easy solutions to address the challenges facing the area, with the plan looking to prioritize strategies that will ensure the long-term success of the area as a dynamic live-work district. Without leadership and investment on the part of the City, the challenges facing the area will only become more acute as development occurs. The recommended improvements deliver the maximum long-term benefit by positioning the area for the long-term transformation as a successful urban centre, while limiting the impacts to area landowners.

Next Steps

Should Council choose to support the recommended transportation and parks improvements staff will move ahead with final updates to the draft Capri-Landmark Urban Centre Plan. Staff anticipate that the final plan would return to Council for consideration of final endorsement in spring 2019.

Internal Circulation

Divisional Director, Community Planning and Real Estate
Manager, Long Range Policy and Planning
Department Manager, Policy and Planning
Department Manager, Community Planning
Manager, Urban Planning
Manager, Integrated Transportation Department Manager
Manager, Transportation Engineering
Manager, Infrastructure Engineering
Manager, Development Engineering
Manager, Parks & Buildings Planning
Manager, Communications

Submitted by:
Ross Soward, Planner Specialist

Approved for inclusion:



James Moore, Manager of Long Range Policy & Planning

Attachment A - Landmark Transportation Network Assessment