

# Report to Council



**Date:** December 6, 2021

**To:** Council

**From:** City Manager

**Subject:** Mill Site Area Redevelopment Plan Authorization (ARP21-0001)

**Department:** Policy & Planning

---

## **Recommendation:**

THAT Council authorize the preparation of an Area Redevelopment Plan as outlined in the report from the Policy & Planning Department, dated December 6, 2021, for the following properties:

- Lot 1, DL 9, 5289, 5290 and 5104, ODYD, Plan KAP73053
- Lot D, DL 139, ODYD, Plan KAP71362
- Lot 8, DL 9, ODYD, Plan 2669
- Lot 1, DL9, ODYD, Plan KAP62263
- Lot A, DL9, ODYD, Plan 39328

AND THAT the Area Redevelopment Plan be required to provide high-level direction on the following additional properties:

- Lots B & C, DL9, ODYD, Plan KAP27467 (BC Tree Fruits Cooperative)
- Leased water lot (Provincially owned) north of Lot 1 Plan KAP73053 (DL5291, DL526)

## **Purpose:**

To authorize the applicant to prepare an Area Redevelopment Plan for the Mill Site.

## **Background:**

In early 2020, the Tolko lumber mill permanently closed its operation, ending nearly 100 years of lumber processing on the site. While this represents the end of one era, it also represents the beginning of an exciting opportunity to envision the future of the Mill Site in a new context. Opportunities of this scale are rare and hold the potential to make significant shifts in a community's evolution.

This opportunity advanced the development of a North End Plan (NEP) to provide more detailed guidance for the future of the North End neighbourhood, of which the Mill Site is a part. This process was initiated on July 12, 2021.

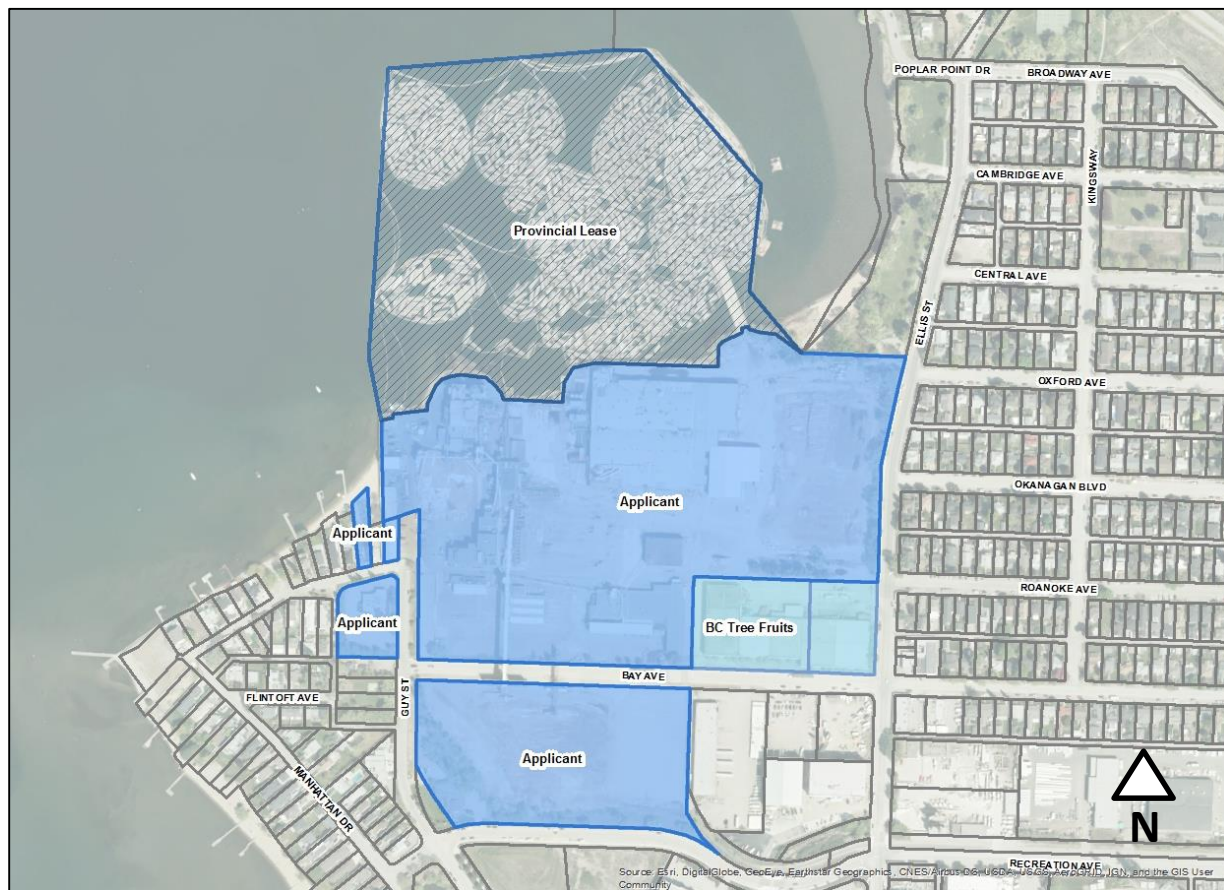
On August 12, 2021, a formal application was made for an Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP) on the Mill Site (see *Attachment 1*). The purpose of an ARP is to establish a clear, long-term plan for the redevelopment of large and/or complex sites like this so that they develop in a manner consistent with established policy, industry best practices and community input.

ARP's are prepared in general accordance with *Council Policy No. 247 - Hierarchy of Plans*. Following application and the preparation of a Terms of Reference, Council Policy No. 247 requires that Council formally authorizes the applicant to begin preparing an ARP.

Since the application date, staff have been working to establish a clear Terms of Reference that sets out the requirements, standards and processes that the applicant team will need to follow as they work to prepare the ARP. The details of the Terms of Reference are outlined in the Discussion section of this report.

While the formal application is being made for the lands owned by the applicant team only, the TOR requires the applicant team to consider a select group additional parcels that logically form part of a single redevelopment site. A map showing the ownership of the lands within the ARP study area is shown in Figure 1. Lands not owned by the applicant team will be considered and high-level planning considerations will be conducted for them; however, it is acknowledged that planning for those lands will not be conducted to the same level of detail as those lands owned by the applicant team.

*Figure 1: ARP Subject Properties Map*



### *Relationship to North End Plan*

The NEP process already underway was launched in response to the rapid pace of change in the North End in general, but also in anticipation of the Mill Site ARP being advanced. It was seen to be important that the broader neighbourhood plan process take the lead here, providing vital direction and input from the city-wide and neighbourhood scale that will help inform the Mill Site ARP work. In short, the Mill Site ARP will need to tackle some critical issues that require resolution at the neighbourhood scale with a plan led by the City.

Both the NEP and the Mill Site ARP are proceeding in a broadly parallel process; however, the NEP will generally take the lead, particularly at key Council decision-points. This approach allows both processes to be responsive and adaptable, recognizing that the two plans will ultimately need to be mutually reinforcing. The Mill Site ARP will be informed by the goals and objectives of the NEP, and the NEP will be informed by the opportunities granted by the Mill Site ARP. The NEP will be required to be endorsed by Council first, reinforcing its role in guiding the evolution of the neighbourhood, including the more detailed Mill Site ARP.

### **Discussion:**

Council Policy No. 247 establishes the broad content requirements of an ARP. The Terms of Reference (TOR) builds on these and establishes a more detailed set of requirements, standards and processes to ensure that the ARP is prepared in a thorough, comprehensive and transparent manner. The TOR requires that the ARP provide a clear plan that considers the following critical elements:

- Direction from other relevant bylaws, plans and policies
- Environmental and hazardous conditions analyses
- Land use (e.g.: residential, mixed-use, commercial, industrial, institutional)
- Development potential and building heights
- Housing and affordability strategies
- Parks and public spaces
- Urban design approaches
- Heritage conservation strategies
- Recreation and cultural facilities needs
- Transportation and mobility strategies and infrastructure requirements
- Utility servicing strategies and infrastructure requirements
- Phasing and implementation strategy

Ultimately, these elements will be woven together to create the Mill Site ARP. The process to achieve that outcome is also set out in the TOR. The City and the applicant team will work closely through the ARP planning process, with regular submissions being reviewed by City staff. While there are nine required submissions, major submissions include the draft vision for the site, draft concept plans, and the draft final plan. Importantly, these check-ins provide the opportunity to ensure that the ARP is being prepared in alignment with the City-led NEP.

The ARP also has included a mid-point Council check-in. While not a formal approval, it provides the applicant team and Council an early opportunity to ensure that the ARP is moving in a direction consistent with Council expectations.

### *Community Engagement:*

Through the standards set out in the TOR, the Mill Site ARP will be built on a strong foundation of public engagement. The TOR includes minimum requirements for public engagement at three key milestones: drafting the vision and objectives, reviewing and selecting a preferred concept, and consideration of the draft plan proposal. Engagement will be led by the applicant team, guided by the standards outlined in *Council Policy No. 367 – Public Notification and Consultation*, and will include notice signs, neighbourhood consultation, and public information sessions at a minimum. If pandemic protocol prevents hosting in-person meetings, the applicant team will be required to develop alternate methods for engagement. The TOR further establishes a requirement that the applicant team engage with Indigenous peoples and reflect their input in the plan process.

The Mill Site ARP will also benefit from the robust public engagement undertaken as part of the broader NEP process. It is expected that the applicant team will be active participants in NEP public engagement.

### *BC Tree Fruits Site:*

As discussed earlier, the TOR requires that the Mill Site ARP consider several sites not owned by the applicant team. Of these, some lands are leased by the applicant under provincial land tenure, others are City-owned. However, the most significant lands not owned by the applicant team are located at 858 Ellis Street and 399 Bay Avenue, and are currently owned by the BC Tree Fruits Cooperative (see Figure 1). These sites have been listed for sale and staff understand that redevelopment of these sites is likely to be proposed.

Should that proposal come forward in the near future, the owner(s) of that land will be required to participate in the Mill Site ARP process. This may require adjustments to the TOR and process and may require additional Council approval.

Alternatively, the owner(s) of the BC Tree Fruits site could participate as a landowner in the NEP process and could work with the high-level planning conducted by the Mill Site ARP to inform a later development application once both the Mill Site ARP and the NEP are completed.

### *Staff Resources:*

The applicant team has been required to support staff resources that will be used to manage and process the NEP and Mill Site ARP. This requirement is in recognition of the fact that the Mill Site ARP advanced the urgency of the NEP process and has caused significant staff resourcing demands. These resources have been brought on board in the form of a Planner Specialist in the role of project lead, and additional communications resources.

### **Conclusion:**

Should Council support staff's recommendation, the applicant team will initiate a robust Area Redevelopment Plan process for the Mill Site over the coming months. The process laid out in the TOR will ensure that the content and process of the ARP follow all appropriate policies and standards, and industry best practices, including a foundation of meaningful public engagement.

The potential redevelopment of the former Tolko mill site represents an important opportunity for the community. Sites of this scale and in this location are extremely rare. While the precise form of the site in the future is to be established through this process, it will undoubtedly have a significant and lasting legacy for the city.

**Considerations applicable to this report:**

***Existing Policy:***

Council Policy No. 247 – Hierarchy of Plans

***Financial/Budgetary Considerations:***

As part of the staff review of the Mill Site ARP, a full evaluation of the long-term infrastructure costs and revenues associated with the development will be undertaken using the City's ModelCity Infrastructure analysis tool.

The applicant team provided a total of \$125,000 in funding to support the dedication of additional staff resources towards the North End Plan and the Mill Site ARP. These resources have been brought on board and are actively participating in the project. A Planner Specialist has taken the role of project lead, and additional resources have been provided from Communications.

Submitted by:

A.D. Thibeault, MCIP, RPP, Planner Specialist

**Approved for inclusion:**



J. Moore, Long Range Policy Planning Manager

CC:

*R. Smith, Divisional Director, Planning & Development Services*

*C. Weaden, Divisional Director, Corporate Strategic Services*

*D. Edstrom, Divisional Director, Partnership & Investments*

*J. Gabriel, Divisional Director, Active Living & Culture*

*G. Davidson, Divisional Director, Financial Services*

Attachments:

Attachment 1 – Letter from Dialog, dated August 12, 2021