

Report to Council



Date: July 24, 2023
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: North End Plan – Neighbourhood Concept Plans
Department: Policy & Planning

Recommendation:

That Council receives, for information, the report from the Policy & Planning Department dated July 24, 2023, with respect to neighbourhood concept plans for the North End Plan.

Purpose:

To inform Council of the neighbourhood concept plans for the North End Plan, upcoming public engagement, and next steps in the planning process.

Background:

The North End Neighbourhood

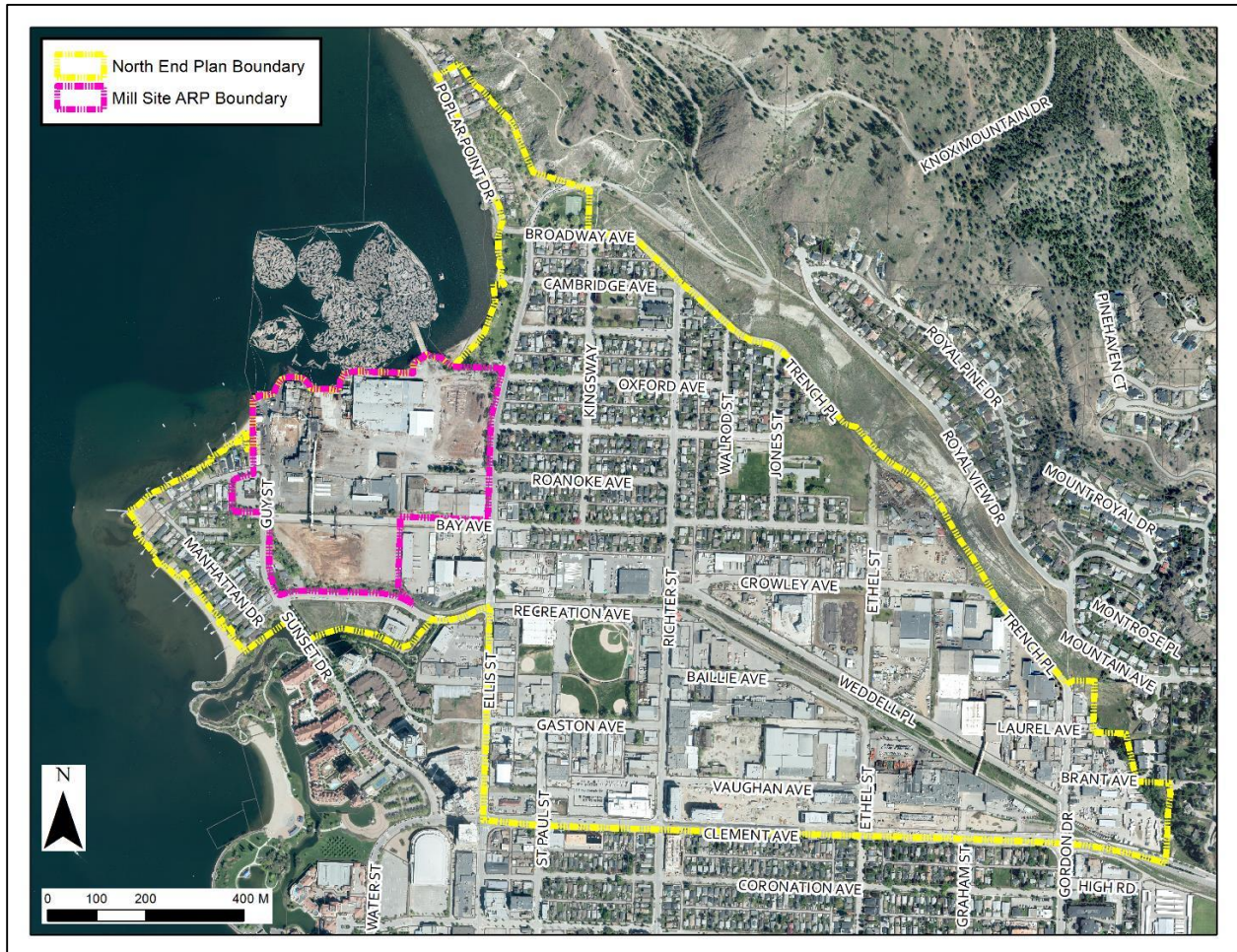
The North End (Figure 1) is a diverse neighbourhood with a rich and varied history—and a neighbourhood poised for change. The North End contains a range of distinct areas, from wartime housing; to long-established industrial businesses; to waterfront parks; to important recreation facilities; to a young and growing craft industrial district. Of note, the Tolko lumber mill and adjacent BC Tree Fruits site have both closed permanently and are looking to redevelop.

The North End Plan & Mill Site Area Redevelopment Plan

The North End Plan (NEP) is intended to guide and manage the evolution of the North End neighbourhood over the next 20 years or more. The NEP will identify the land use mix, housing approach, transportation network improvements, utilities, new parks and public spaces, and other community amenities needed to ensure the neighbourhood evolves in a deliberate way that benefits both North End residents and the city as a whole.

The Mill Site, which includes both the old Tolko lumber mill and the adjacent BC Tree Fruits site, is located within the boundary of the NEP (see Figure 1). As such, the NEP will provide high-level guidance for the redevelopment of the site. However, detailed guidance for the redevelopment of the site is being addressed through the Mill Site Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), which is also underway and is being led by the landowners.

Figure 1. Plan Area



North End Plan Progress

The NEP launched in the summer of 2021, with the first phase concluding in November of that year. The Background Summary Report was the primary outcome from Phase 1 of the NEP and provided a base of knowledge on which to begin the planning process.

Phase 2 of the NEP focused on establishing a high-level Vision & Objectives to guide the development of the plan through future phases. The Vision and Objectives were prepared using feedback from public engagement, staff input, and guided by the direction established in existing City plans and policies—such as Imagine Kelowna and the Official Community Plan (OCP). The Vision & Objectives were endorsed by Council in principle in April 2022 (see Attachment A).

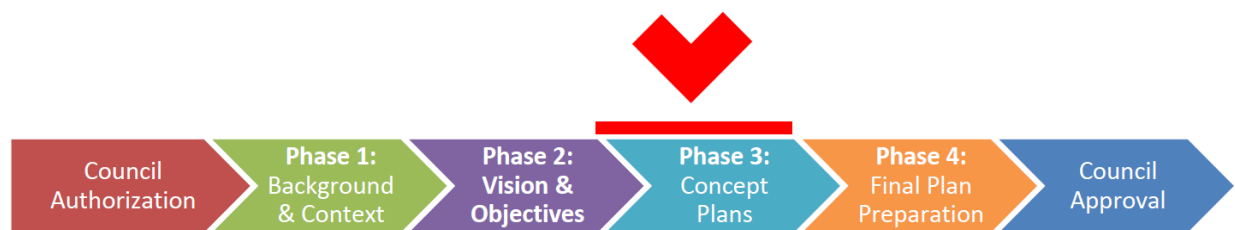
The NEP process is currently in Phase 3 (see Figure 2). At the beginning of this phase, Staff used the Vision & Objectives to develop a list of prioritized community needs for the neighbourhood. The prioritized community needs include parks and public spaces, recreational and community facilities, housing variety and affordability, schools and childcare facilities, and other uses that support day-to-day needs. The list was endorsed by Council in August of 2022.

Also in Phase 3, Staff launched a series of technical studies to aid in the development of neighbourhood concept plans. These included a study on transportation, a study on industrial lands, and a study to address the funding of proposed infrastructure and amenities.

In addition, Phase 3 of the planning process included an engagement meeting with members of Westbank First Nation (WFN) coordinated through a consultant. The meeting generated important insights with respect to broader Indigenous interests as well as specific WFN interests in the planning process. As an example, WFN members showed support for the protection and restoration of sensitive environmental areas in the Plan Area and nearby vicinity—including Knox Mountain Park, the waterfront and Brandt’s Creek. In addition, WFN members expressed a desire to have their knowledge and culture on display in the neighbourhood.

Staff then used both the Vision & Objectives as well as the community needs list to develop a series of neighbourhood concept plans for the North End. The concepts were also informed by insights from the technical studies as well as phase 3 engagement with WFN. The resulting concept plans are the subject of this report.

Figure 2. NEP Process



Discussion:

The Structure of the Neighbourhood Concept Plans

Three neighbourhood concept plans were developed that explore different approaches to the North End neighbourhood and its distinct areas. In all cases, the concept plans respond directly to the NEP Objectives and prioritized community needs list; however, each of the concepts respond in different ways. The three concepts will be used to guide upcoming discussions with the community with the intent to develop a preferred concept at the end of Phase 3 that will guide the development of the NEP document.

The concept plans include high-level direction for the Mill Site and more descriptive integrated planning (ie. land use, transportation, and parks/open space ingredients) for the North End based on NEP Objectives. However, the concept plans do not include detailed site plans for the Mill Site—nor do they provide specifics on community amenities to be introduced there. Site plans for the Mill Site are to be addressed through the Mill Site ARP application and guided by the direction of the NEP. A Report to Council outlining these site plans will be provided when the Mill Site team is prepared to bring them forward to Council.

Presentation of the Neighbourhood Concept Plans

A series of maps highlighting the main differences between the concept plans is included as Attachment B.

Attachment C provides a full description of the neighbourhood concept plans. Specifically, a series of maps are included that focus on the themes of land use, parks and transportation. An explanation of the features is incorporated and the rationale behind them—including an accounting of how the features address the NEP Objectives is also included.

Some key features are shared across all three concepts. These features include but are not limited to:

- Redevelopment of the Mill Site into a mixed-use neighbourhood, complete with mixed-housing, local services and supported with public amenities—including a new waterfront park and pathway
- The inclusion of a variety of housing types and tenures across the full spectrum of the housing wheelhouse
- Improvements to Sutherland Bay and Walrod Parks already identified in existing plans
- Expansion of Walrod Park to the east in connection with a future water filtration facility
- Support for conservation of identified heritage assets
- Protection of industrial lands in the southeast corner of the North End—including support for craft industry
- Improvements to transit services and the introduction of new active transportation corridors
- Road upgrades and improvements—including a full connection of Recreation Avenue and Weddell Place to improve network connectivity

Where the concept plans differ is where future growth is signaled in the neighbourhood and where investments are made in various community needs.

Concept Plan #1 focuses most future development in the Mill Site, with modest infill opportunities in the neighbourhood's existing residential areas. This concept includes smaller investments in community needs, reflecting the slower pace of change in the neighbourhood, such as the introduction of smaller pocket parks along the lake in Manhattan Point and Parks on Streets on Kingsway.

Concept Plan #2 introduces more opportunities for residential growth, focused on a new school site adjacent to an expanded and improved Walrod Park. This area would be connected to the Mill Site, which would continue to be signaled for most of the neighbourhood's future growth by way of a new greenway lined with additional housing. This concept also includes more residential development in Manhattan Point and an extension of the waterfront park on the Mill Site through to the western tip of the Point. Finally, a new hub for commercial office employment is introduced in the neighbourhood, as well as a westward expansion of the craft industrial district.

Concept Plan #3 expands Downtown into the North End by focusing future growth on the west side of the neighbourhood, around Recreation Avenue Park and along Ellis Street in addition to the Mill Site. On Manhattan Point the focus of waterfront parks is shifted to the western edge of the Point where sandy beaches are deepest. More neighbourhood growth is supported on the interior of Manhattan Point in response to the added waterfront park space. Office employment plays a larger role in this concept, and the craft industrial district expands eastward towards the Okanagan Rail Trail, and in a node focused on Gordon Drive.

Council Priorities

Features introduced in the concept plans advance Council Priorities in multiple ways. Below is a listing of Council Priorities that are addressed. Details on how each priority is addressed is listed below the priority in bullets.

Affordable Housing

1. *Acquire city owned land to build affordable housing.*
 - Acquiring city owned land for affordable housing projects is a priority for the Mill Site and in the North End more broadly
2. *Increase number of rental units with below market rents*
 - Pursuing opportunities for below-market housing (including below-market rental) is a priority for the Mill Site and the North End more broadly

Homelessness

1. *Advocate for purpose-built permanent shelter with 'wrap-around' supports and graduated housing options.*
 - Partnering to deliver purpose-built shelter space with 'wrap-around' supports is a priority in the neighbourhood concept plans

Transportation

1. *Explore alternative modes of transportation between UBCO/YLW and downtown.*
 - The Okanagan Rail Trail that terminates in the North End represents a potential corridor to facilitate an alternative transportation connection between UBCO/YLW and downtown
2. *Improve transit service including expanding the transit pass program.*
 - The North End Plan proposes improving transit service in the neighbourhood as development advances
3. *Improve traffic flow and capacity on major road networks (e.g. Lakeshore Road)*
 - The North End Plan proposes interventions to improve traffic flow on major road networks in numerous ways, including:
 - Road improvements on both major and local roads
 - Improved active transportation infrastructure and transit service to promote mode shift away from cars and towards alternative modes to ease congestion

Climate & Environment

1. *Include 'Climate Lens' in decision making to assess mitigation and adaptation*
 - A climate lens has been actively applied to the NEP concept plans
2. *Increase urban tree canopy (e.g. tree-lined medians)*
 - Urban tree canopy is being increased through the expansion of park space, parks on streets and naturalized riparian areas

Next Steps & Public Engagement

The next step is for Staff to launch public engagement to generate community awareness and elicit feedback on the concepts. The approach to engagement will include the following:

- Public workshops to present the concepts and receive public feedback;
- A community survey to gather input on different components of the concepts;
- Engagement with the Community Liaison Committee (CLC);
- Meetings with community partners; and
- Engagement with First Nations.

The public would be informed of available opportunities using a variety of tactics, including media and social media advertising, community signage and updates to our *Get Involved* site.

Feedback received through engagement will be summarized in a report that will be brought back to Council. A workshop will also be held at that time to give Council an opportunity to give feedback on the concepts. Ultimately, Staff would use the feedback elicited from the public, community partners and Council, in conjunction with a technical review, to develop a preferred concept for the North End neighbourhood. The preferred concept may reflect one of the concept plans or may include aspects from multiple concept plans.

Figure 3. NEP Process Next Steps



Conclusion:

Staff have used the NEP Objectives and prioritized community needs list to develop a series of three draft neighbourhood concept plans for the North End. The concept plans are outlined in this report (and attachments) and are ready for public review and feedback. A public engagement approach has been prepared to elicit feedback through a variety of outreach tactics. Staff will summarize public feedback in a report and present the summary to Council with the goal to further refine the concepts in a workshop format. Staff will then use the feedback elicited from the public, community partners and Council, in conjunction with a technical review, to develop a preferred concept for the North End. The preferred concept will then be brought back to Council and the public for review.

The North End Plan, in conjunction with the Mill Site ARP, is an important opportunity to shape the growth and evolution of a vital part of our community. This area of the city symbolizes an opportunity of future-forward planning to ensure that housing, community amenities, parks and established industry uses are thoughtfully considered for the long-term. While the concepts presented include high-level direction for the Mill Site, detailed site plans for the Mill Site will be delivered through the Mill Site ARP in a forthcoming update.

Internal Circulation:

Parks & Buildings Planning; Transportation Engineering; Utilities Planning; Real Estate Services; Partnerships Office; Capital Planning & Asset Management; Infrastructure; Development Engineering; Development Planning; Active Living & Culture; Community Communications; Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship; Cultural Services

Existing Policy:

Official Community Plan: Policy 5.8.3. North End Industrial Lands.

Attachments:

Attachment A: North End Plan Vision & Objectives

Attachment B: North End Neighbourhood Illustrative Concepts

Attachment C: North End Neighbourhood Descriptions

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Approved for inclusion:



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