

# Report to Council



**Date:** December 4, 2023  
**To:** Mayor & Council  
**From:** City Manager  
**Subject:** North End Plan – Neighbourhood Concept Plan Next Steps  
**Department:** Policy & Planning

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## **Recommendation:**

That Council direct Staff to develop a Preferred Concept and draft plan for the North End neighbourhood based on Concept 3 with modifications as outlined in the report dated December 4, 2023.

## **Purpose:**

To receive the Phase 3 North End Plan public engagement results and to advance the development of a Preferred Concept for the Plan.

## **Background:**

The North End Plan (NEP) is intended to guide and manage the evolution of the North End neighbourhood. The NEP will identify the land use mix, housing approach, transportation network improvements, new parks and public spaces, municipal utilities 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 NEP will provide high-level guidance for the redevelopment of the Mill Site, which formally includes both the old Tolko lumber mill and the adjacent BC Tree Fruits site. Detailed guidance for the redevelopment of the Mill Site is being addressed through the Mill Site Area Redevelopment Plan (ARP), which is being led by the landowners.

The NEP process is currently in Phase 3. In this phase Staff used the Plan's Vision & Objectives to develop a series of three neighbourhood concept plans for the North End neighbourhood (see Attachment A). Staff introduced these concept plans to Council on July 24, 2023 and proceeded to conduct public engagement to receive feedback on the concepts.

## **Discussion**

### *Public Engagement*

Details on the public engagement process and results can be found in the report included as Attachment B. Key themes from the public engagement are summarized in the table below.

Figure 1. Public Engagement Key Themes

<p><b>Parks &amp; Green Spaces</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong desire for maximizing park and green spaces in the neighbourhood, with greatest support for the following:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A continuous waterfront park and pathway from Knox Mountain Park through to downtown;</li> <li>○ The introduction of park and green features on both Kingsway and Okanagan Blvd.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Housing</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General support for additional neighbourhood growth and housing, including townhousing and low-rise apartments at strategic locations, particularly on the periphery of existing residential areas, and along major corridors</li> <li>• General support for a mix of housing—including affordable housing—to serve families and individuals of all life stages and income levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Transportation &amp; Traffic</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns regarding potential traffic congestion, parking, and pedestrian safety</li> <li>• Calls for improved transit service and better neighbourhood connectivity through improved cycling infrastructure and multi-use pathways</li> <li>• Requests for traffic calming measures and enhanced parking solutions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shopping &amp; Amenities</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A need for additional shopping options, particularly groceries and incorporating small independent stores that match the local character</li> <li>• Support for expanding craft industry in the neighbourhood</li> </ul>
<p><b>Neighbourhood School</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High demand for a neighbourhood school, especially with the influx of new housing and families</li> <li>• Preference for a school location adjacent to Walrod Park over the Mill Site</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mill Site</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enthusiasm for a community hub at the Mill Site with shops, services and community facilities as well as recreation and entertainment opportunities</li> <li>• Desire for generous public space in the Mill Site, including a substantial waterfront park and public lake access that is open and welcoming to all</li> <li>• Some concerns that the site may be dominated exclusively by housing and amenities that serve only the few</li> </ul>

*Council Feedback*

With public engagement completed, Staff are now able to start developing a Preferred Concept to guide the creation of a draft North End Plan. This process will involve drawing from and considering aspects of each of the concepts, focusing on four key themes:

- Housing;
- Parks and Public Space;
- Shops, Services and Employment; and
- Transportation.

Details of the concepts can be found in Attachment C.

*Housing*

The NEP Vision & Objectives speak strongly to the need for greater availability, variety and affordability of housing—including housing that meets the needs of all residents across the housing spectrum. The NEP concepts share some common features in responding to these objectives (see Attachment C). Where the concepts differ is mainly in terms of where neighbourhood growth is focused:

- **Concept 1** signals a more conservative approach to neighbourhood growth, with most new housing located on and around the Mill Site and minimal change proposed for existing neighbourhoods.

- **Concept 2** invites more neighbourhood growth into established residential areas, *focused around existing and proposed neighbourhood parks*.
- **Concept 3** introduces more neighbourhood growth into existing residential areas *focused more towards the western and southern edges of the neighbourhood* and smaller scale change in the centre of the neighbourhood.

### *Parks & Public Spaces*

The Vision & Objectives for the NEP strongly supports the introduction of added parks and public space—as well as improved connectivity of park space. The NEP concepts share some common features in responding to these objectives (see Attachment C). Where the concept plans differ on parks and public space is in where and how these are incorporated in the neighbourhood.

- **Concept 1** proposes a *more modest addition of new parks* outside of the Mill Site, reflecting the minimal change to those existing neighbourhoods. This is consistent with the approach to focusing investment in parks in conjunction with the amount of new development proposed.
- In **Concept 2**, parks additions *are mainly aligned on an east-west orientation through the centre of the neighbourhood* following the layout of new housing and development. East-west connectivity is highlighted by the parks corridor that runs from an *expanded Walrod Park* to the east, through the Okanagan Boulevard Greenway to the Mill Site waterfront park, and continuing on to the western tip of Manhattan Pt.
- In **Concept 3**, parks connectivity shifts from an east-west orientation to one *that maximizes parks connectivity* throughout the neighbourhood. Neighbourhood parks connectivity is highlighted by the *cross-wise parks-on-streets on Okanagan Boulevard and Kingsway that connect four prominent park areas*; and the expanded waterfront parks on Manhattan Pt that are connected to Tugboat Beach and on to Downtown.

### *Shops, Services & Employment*

The need for additional shops, services and employment opportunities in the North End figures prominently in the Vision & Objectives for the Plan, and is also connected to the amount of new housing signaled in the concept plans. The introduction of shops, services and employment opportunities makes it easier for people to satisfy their day-to-day needs—including work—near where they live, taking pressure off the transportation system. There are certain commonalities across the concepts when it comes to introducing new shops, services and employment opportunities in the neighbourhood (See Attachment C). Where the concepts differ is in the variety of services and employment that are prioritized.

- **Concept 1** most strongly maintains the existing employment lands context by *preserving the greatest amount of existing industrial lands* and maximizing the amount of industrial services and jobs those lands provide.
- **Concept 2** provides a *balance of different employment and service types*, moving beyond a focus on industrial services and jobs and incorporating more craft industry, office, and light-industrial mixed-use opportunities.
- **Concept 3** reprioritizes employment uses towards *office and craft industry* and sees the most amount of change in the neighbourhood's industrial lands.

### Transportation

Road access to and from the North End is limited to the south via intersections along Clement Ave. There is some capability to widen and improve existing roads and intersections to increase traffic flow and capacity in the area; however, there are limits on how much vehicle capacity can be increased. Because of this, future travel demand in the North End cannot be accommodated by increasing vehicle capacity alone. Minimizing the need for trips in and out of the neighbourhood by way of introducing more shops, services and employment opportunities will help (see section above). Even then, however, a significant shift towards more efficient forms of transportation, including walking, biking, and transit, will be increasingly necessary as neighbourhood growth proceeds.

As a response to this issue, the North End Plan concepts propose improvements to infrastructure for all forms of transportation—but with an emphasis on active transportation and transit. Ultimately, failure to facilitate the shift toward these forms of transportation will limit the livability and growth potential of the neighbourhood.

Facilitating the behavior and mode shift desired, and to the greatest extent possible, has been determined to require largely the same approach to transportation infrastructure in all concepts. It is for this reason that the transportation infrastructure improvements proposed in the concepts are largely the same across all three. A summary of the transportation infrastructure improvements proposed in the NEP concepts is included in Attachment C.

### Staff Recommendation

In consideration of public feedback in addition to preliminary technical analysis—including a preliminary funding strategy review—Staff have developed a recommended direction to guide the development of the preferred concept. This recommendation, outlined in Figure 2, draws heavily from Concept 3, with some elements included from other concepts. This recommended approach is subject to further technical analysis that will occur in Phase 4 of the NEP process, including a detailed Transportation Assessment, an industrial and employment lands study, and a thorough funding strategy review.

Figure 2. Staff Recommendation Summary

	Recommended Concept*	Recommended Modifications & Rationale
<b>Housing</b>	3 (Focus more growth to western and southern edges of neighbourhood)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where support is shown for houseplexes in the NE residential area, support instead all ground-oriented infill housing up to and including townhouses, in support of the new school site and expanded and improved Walrod Park</li> </ul>
<b>Parks &amp; Public Space</b>	1 & 3 (Maximize connectivity to four prominent parks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify a school site adjacent to an expanded Walrod Park (as outlined in Concept 2).</li> <li>Preserve Jack Brow Park as a neighbourhood park in an area with increased housing density (as in both Concept 1 &amp; 2)</li> <li>Explore funding options for waterfront park acquisition</li> <li>Explore a green/parks connection from Jack Brow Park to the Manhattan Point waterfront park (similar to that in Concept 1) to maximize parks connectivity</li> <li>Explore options and funding opportunities to extend improvements and naturalization of Brandt’s Creek east of Richter Street to achieve an improved green/wildlife corridor adjacent the Rail Trail and expanded craft industrial area.</li> </ul>

<b>Shops, Services &amp; Employment</b>	3 (Emphasize more office and craft industry employment)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore opportunities to include a neighbourhood commercial node in the NE residential area (as in Concept 2) made more viable due to the addition of the school, activity hub and the additional housing opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Transportation</b>	N/A (Transportation directions similar for all concepts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Full urbanization of streets in NE residential area and Manhattan Pt (traffic calming measures kept in designated areas)</li> </ul>

*\*The rationale for the recommended approaches, including how the approaches satisfy the Vision & Objectives for the Plan, may be found in the Concept Plans document included as Attachment A.*

**Council Priorities**

The proposed direction for the Preferred Concept advances Council Priorities in multiple ways listed below.

Affordable Housing

1. *Acquire city owned land to build affordable housing.*
2. *Increase number of rental units with below market rents.*

Homelessness

1. *Advocate for purpose-built permanent shelter with 'wrap-around' supports and graduated housing options.*

Transportation

1. *Improve transit service including expanding the transit pass program.*
2. *Improve traffic flow and capacity on major road networks.*

Climate & Environment

1. *Include 'Climate Lens' in decision making to assess mitigation and adaptation.*
2. *Increase urban tree canopy.*

**Next Steps**

Should Council endorse the recommendation outlined in this report, Staff will begin work on the preferred concept for the North End neighbourhood and a draft Plan. These efforts will balance feedback to date and continued technical analysis, but will also include review of new legislation proposed by the Government of British Columbia, including Bills 44 and 47 which speak to the development of small-scale multi-unit housing and transit-oriented development respectively. Staff are in the initial stages of reviewing the legislation and awaiting further guidance from the Government of British Columbia before considering impacts on the North End Plan.

The preferred concept together with a draft plan will then be brought back to Council and the public for review in Q1 2024. This will lead to the refinement of the preferred concept which will ultimately act as the basis for the final plan to be considered by Council later in 2024.

**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  
Communications  
Climate Action & Environmental Stewardship  
Cultural Services  
Office of the City Clerk

**Existing Policy:**

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

**Attachments:**

[Attachment A: North End Plan Concept Plans](#)

Attachment B: North End Plan Phase 3 Engagement Summary Report

Attachment C: North End Plan Neighbourhood Concept Plans Summary of Features

Submitted by: A. Thibeault, Planner Specialist

**Approved for inclusion:**



D. Noble-Brandt, Dept. Manager of Policy and Planning