

NO: R247

COUNCIL DATE: December 20, 2021

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: December 16, 2021**

FROM: Acting General Manager, Planning & Development **FILE: 3900-20-18020 (OCP)**
General Manager, Engineering **XC: 6520-20 (South Campbell Heights)**

SUBJECT: Comments on Proposed Metro 2040 Regional Growth Strategy Amendment for the Area Corresponding with the Stage 1 South Campbell Heights Land Use Plan

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development and Engineering Departments recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Endorse staff's comments as outlined in the report; and
3. Instruct the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to Metro Vancouver before January 7, 2022.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to provide information to Council on staff comments in support of Surrey's proposed Regional Growth Strategy ("RGS") amendment for the area corresponding with the Stage 1 South Campbell Heights Plan (the "Plan"). Comments must be submitted to Metro Vancouver within the 30-day consultation period, ending January 7, 2022.

BACKGROUND

On July 30, 2021, the City submitted a request to Metro Vancouver to amend Metro 2040: Shaping our Future ("Metro 2040" or "RGS") for the area corresponding with the Revised Stage 1 South Campbell Heights Land Use Plan.

The requested amendment included: the redesignation of regionally designated "Rural" lands (within a Special Study Area) to "Mixed Employment" (160.8 ha), "Conservation and Recreation" (55.5 ha) and "Agricultural" (12.1 ha); extension of the Urban Containment Boundary by 223.7 hectares; and redesignation of "Mixed Employment" lands within the Urban Containment Boundary to "Conservation and Recreation" (13.4 ha).

The proposed amendment responds to recent industrial and employment land capacity studies which indicate that the regional demand for employment land continues to outpace supply. In the absence of additional land to meet current demand, the region is anticipated to absorb all effective supply of vacant employment land between 2028 and 2035. The proposed Plan helps address this shortage by providing over 160 hectares of new employment land.

In addition to proposed employment land, the Plan includes an expansion of the RGS “Conservation and Recreation” designation intended to protect significant ecological assets including the Little Campbell River and its associated riparian areas and the critical recharge areas of the Brookwood Aquifer.

At its October 29, 2021 regular meeting, the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board of Directors (“MVRD Board”) adopted the following resolution:

That the MVRD Board:

- a) initiate the regional growth strategy amendment process for the City of Surrey’s requested regional land use designation amendments for the South Campbell Heights area, including extension of the Urban Containment Boundary and removal of the Special Study Area overlay;*
- b) give first, second, and third readings to “Metro Vancouver Regional District Regional Growth Strategy Amendment Bylaw No. 1322, 2021”;*
- c) direct staff to notify and seek comment from affected local governments as per section 6.4.2 of Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future; and*
- d) direct staff to notify and seek comment from local First Nations on the proposed Metro 2040 amendment.*

Since then, Metro Vancouver staff have referred the South Campbell Heights RGS proposal to MVRD Board members, including 21 Municipalities, one Electoral Area and one treaty First Nation. Metro Vancouver staff have also referred the proposal for comment from non-member land based First Nations.

As required by both the Local Government Act and Metro 2040, the amendment process requires a minimum 30-day notification period to allow all affected local governments and members of the public to provide comment. Written comments are to be provided to Metro Vancouver by January 7, 2022.

DISCUSSION

Following from the above noted MVRD Board resolution, City staff have initiated the preparation for additional environmental, drainage, and archaeological studies. These studies are intended to provide more detailed analysis and address updates to Federal and Provincial regulatory requirements, as well as best management practices. These studies are expected to be completed as part of the Stage 2 Plan process. Staff have also continued consultation with land based First Nations.

First Nations Consultation

City staff are involved in consultation with First Nation representatives. Discussions are ongoing with regards to the pending environmental, drainage and archaeological studies. Staff from the Planning & Development and Engineering Departments met with the Kwantlen First Nation staff on August 9, 2021, and with Semiahmoo First Nation and representatives on November 1, December 1, and December 15, 2021. The next meeting is scheduled for December 22, 2021. Bi-weekly meetings between City staff and Semiahmoo First Nation are planned to resume beginning January 5, 2022.

These meetings have provided City staff with a better understanding of expectations for the development of the Plan, including the need for additional scopes of work outlined below. Additional bi-weekly meetings with the Semiahmoo First Nation are scheduled to continue. A referral was also provided to Semiahmoo First Nation and Kwantlen First Nation regarding the scope of the environmental study update, with additional follow-up expected. The feedback that will be received from Semiahmoo and Kwantlen First Nation will be incorporated into the additional study that will commence shortly.

Traditional Use Study

Through the above-mentioned consultation with the Semiahmoo First Nation, staff have identified the need for a Traditional Use Study (“TUS”) for the Plan and surrounding area. A TUS for the area will be led by Semiahmoo First Nation and will use cultural data that has been compiled by the Semiahmoo First Nation, as well as potentially other First Nations in British Columbia, in addition to interviews with Semiahmoo First Nation elders and representatives. It will include an account of existing and potential archaeological sites, as well as areas of traditional cultural and spiritual use.

It is anticipated that a specialized consultant with knowledge and experience in First Nations archeology and history will be required. The consultant would establish a methodology for the study in coordination with the Semiahmoo First Nation. The study will include support for staff and consultant time, including those within Semiahmoo First Nation, to undertake research and develop supporting databases, mapping, and other work as necessary.

The completed TUS will be used to inform an update to the existing Archaeological Study, as well as a review of potential land uses and polices related to new development in the Plan Area.

Staff have started preparations for the TUS, in coordination with Semiahmoo First Nation representatives. Semiahmoo First Nation staff will provide feedback to City staff on the scope of work for this study by December 20, 2021 for staff to make any necessary adjustments for the meeting scheduled for December 22, 2021; it is expected that the TUS will commence in Q1 of 2022.

Archaeological Study Update

An update to the 2015 Archeological Overview Assessment is going to be undertaken, based on recent changes to the Heritage Act. The update will build off the TUS to update and provide recommendation for the protection of historical, cultural, scientific, and educational values, with a focus on land based First Nations.

The update is expected to supplement a desktop assessment of several variables (e.g., known archaeological sites, traditional land and cultural use, or environmental variables) and established guidelines for future site-specific archaeological review. It will include and consider Preliminary Field Reconnaissance studies to consider and review archaeological potential.

The result of this process will inform the potential inclusion of Archaeological Impact Assessment (“AIA”) requirements and guidelines for new development. This would require archaeologist assessment for site specific development through a Development Permit process as part of future development. AIAs may include requirements for subsurface investigations, artifact collections, and other activities, similar to permitting processes required in Crescent Beach.

Staff have started preparations for the archaeological study update. It is expected that the archaeological study will commence in 2022, based on the findings of the TUS.

Environmental Assessment

The original environmental assessment for the Plan Area was completed in 2015. Since that time, changes have occurred to applicable Provincial and Federal environmental regulations. The environmental update will consider these regulation changes, with a focus on riparian area and wetland classifications, as well as of species at risk assessments.

Riparian/Wetland Assessment Update

The Provincial Riparian Areas Regulation has been replaced with the Riparian Areas Protection Regulation (“RAPR”), and the Water Act has been replaced by the Water Sustainability Act (“WSA”). Federally, the Fisheries Act has been updated with a new definition of fish habitat.

In addition to a review of the changes in regulations, wetlands in the Plan Area will need to be to be assessed to determine if they are considered classified by the WSA and/or RAPR. All streams will be reviewed and classified by stream type and stream classification consistent with the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resources Operations and Rural Development regulations and Surrey’s Streamside Protection Bylaw.

Species at Risk Assessment Update

A detailed survey and Species at Risk (“SAR”) review will be included in the environmental assessment to ensure alignment with the Federal Species at Risk Act (“SARA”). This is expected to address environmental concerns including the protection of SARA critical habitat. The SAR update is expected to produce supplemental Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit Area guidelines for the City’s Sensitive Ecosystem Development Permit process. These will align with threat abatement and critical habitat destruction avoidance requirements of applicable Province and Federal regulations.

Staff have started preparations for the environmental assessment. It is expected that the environmental assessment will commence in Q1 of 2022 and be completed in Q3 of 2022. A stakeholder meeting is scheduled for January 13, 2022 to provide information on the terms of reference for the planned study update.

Drainage and Integrated Stormwater Management Study

A detailed hydrogeological assessment is currently underway by an engineering consultant. An upcoming Integrated Stormwater Management Plan (“ISMP”) will be based upon this assessment, as well as the recommendations of the existing Little Campbell River Integrated Stormwater Scoping Study to make sure that there is sufficient recharge of the aquifer and appropriate protection is implemented for the Little Campbell River. Drainage infrastructure design will be based on the City’s latest Design Criteria. The overarching objectives of the ISMP is to provide direction on initial rainfall capture, groundwater recharge, rainfall detention and safe overland conveyance.

As ground water resources affect water quantity and quality of the Little Campbell River, consultation with Semiahmoo First Nation regarding traditional use, and food sovereignty for persistent Indigenous practices will form part of the drainage study. The Request for Proposals and ISMP studies which are to be completed in 2022 have been provided to Semiahmoo First Nation for feedback.

It is expected that the drainage and integrated stormwater management study assessment will be completed by the end of 2022.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

This work supports the objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to the Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods, Ecosystems, and Infrastructure. Specifically, this work supports the following Desired Outcomes (“DO”) and Strategic Directions (“SD”):

- Economy DO4: Surrey’s economy is diversified with a mix of service, industrial, agricultural and innovation-based businesses;
- Innovation SD10: Support the development and growth of key sectors including health technology, clean technology, advanced manufacturing, agri-innovation and the creative economy;
- Natural Areas, Biodiversity and Urban Forest DO1: Parks, natural areas, urban forests and habitat corridors are interconnected throughout Surrey and the region, creating healthy places for people and wildlife;
- Water, Air and Soil DO8: Surrey has a clean and adequate supply of groundwater;
- Water, Air and Soil SD7: Ensure water quality and base water levels are maintained in Surrey’s river systems; and
- Green Infrastructure DO11: Surrey’s Green Infrastructure Network is an essential and integrated component of the City’s infrastructure, providing essential ecosystem services as well as places for recreation, conservation, and rejuvenation.

CONCLUSION

In July 2021, the City submitted a request to the Metro Vancouver Board to amend the RGS for the area included in the Plan. As required by the Local Government Act, the amendment process requires a minimum 30-day notification period to allow all affected local governments, including the City of Surrey to provide comment.

The City continues to support its proposed amend to the RGS. Staff are currently in consultation with First Nation representatives and are coordinating to undertake updates to environmental, archaeological, traditional use and drainage studies, which will be completed in 2022.

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council instruct the City Clerk to forward a copy of this report and Council resolution in support of Surrey's Plan RGS amendment proposal to Metro Vancouver before January 7, 2022.

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