



Corporate Report

NO: R153

COUNCIL DATE: July 28, 2008

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council DATE: July 28, 2008
FROM: General Manager, Planning and Development FILE: 8630-01
SUBJECT: Proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the City of Surrey and TransLink Regarding the Newton Town Centre Land Use, Urban Design and Transit Study

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report as information; and
2. Authorize the Mayor to sign, on behalf of the City of Surrey, the Memorandum of Understanding attached as Appendix I to this report, between the City of Surrey and the South Coast Transportation Authority ("TransLink") to undertake a joint Land Use, Urban Design and Transit Study in the Newton Centre area.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to advise Council about the contents of a proposed Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") that has been drafted by staff of the City and TransLink, regarding a joint land use planning, urban design and transit study for the Newton Town Centre area, and to seek Council authorization for the Mayor to sign the MOU on behalf of the City of Surrey.

BACKGROUND

The Newton Town Centre Plan (the "Plan") was adopted by Council in 1990. It covers an area bounded by 76 Avenue, 68 Avenue, King George Highway and 138 Street, as illustrated on the map attached as Appendix II. The Plan proposed a range of civic, recreational, library, transit, and retail, commercial and high-density residential uses. While a number of civic and recreational facilities have been built in the Town Centre, and there has been significant commercial and residential development in the area north

of 72 Avenue, key sections of the Plan have not yet been implemented, particularly in the area south of 72 Avenue.

Recently, concerns have been expressed around issues of public safety and the image of the area, focused around the Newton Transit Exchange on 72 Avenue and 137 Street. On June 16, 2008, Council received Corporate Report No. R101 which described a coordinated set of ongoing efforts by the City, the RCMP, the Coast Mountain Bus Company, other landowners and stakeholders to improve the image of the Newton Town Centre, and the perception and reality of public safety in the area. These efforts are specific and focused on the immediate time frame.

While these efforts are an important part of the efforts to support the vibrancy of the Newton Town Centre, the future success of the Town Centre as a liveable and sustainable place is dependent on achieving a "critical mass" of residents, public amenities and facilities and expanding commerce.

TransLink has recently acquired a 2-hectare (4.9 acre) property within the Newton Town Centre Plan area, as shown on the map included as Appendix III, with the intention of relocating the transit exchange to this site. The site is located along King George Highway and the BC Hydro Railway Right-of-Way, and will provide a key transit interchange location to connect directly to the proposed Bus Rapid that is planned for the King George Highway corridor. The new TransLink site is large enough to accommodate an integrated Transit Interchange, with land remaining for other uses. Under its new mandate, regarding transit-supportive real estate development, TransLink wishes to develop the "excess" lands on its site to achieve land uses and densities that support transit ridership, and which provide a return on public investment that can be reinvested in further transit improvements.

It is also an interest of the City that the current transit exchange not just be relocated to a new location, but that this new Interchange be the catalyst for mixed-use development at transit-supportive densities that will provide vitality and activity in this area.

City Staff has held a series of meetings with TransLink staff over the past few months, with a goal of developing a set of shared objectives for the future of the Newton Town Centre, and to discuss partnering on a joint land use, transportation, transit and urban design project for the area.

DISCUSSION

The Proposed Study Area

The proposed study area for the joint City and TransLink Study is a triangular area of approximately 20 hectares (50 acres) bounded by 72 Avenue, the BC Hydro Railway and 138 Street, as shown on the map attached as Appendix II. The area contains a cluster of City-owned community and recreational facilities, including the Newton Wave Pool, the Newton Community Hall, the Newton Recreation Centre and Arena, the Surrey Public Library (Newton Branch) and Library Administration Building, and the Newton Seniors' Centre. The City also has additional land holdings in the area that have the potential to contribute to a vibrant, mixed-use urban centre.

Several privately owned commercial properties, as well as the former Fire Hall No. 10 are also in the study area (Appendix II).

The Proposed Study

The attached MOU sets out goals and objectives to develop a land use, urban design and transit plan for the development of a transit-oriented, mixed use urban centre at transit-supportive densities, that fully integrates new and enhanced transit facilities into a high quality and sustainable urban centre.

Specific objectives include:

- Improved transit service and facilities serving the residents of Surrey and Newton through increased frequency, quality, reliability, safety and convenience of service;
- Increased transit ridership levels and share of trips, through the concentration of high density employment and residential development, service and civic amenities in proximity to a new, relocated Newton Transit Interchange;
- Mixed-use urban development, including residential, commercial (office and retail), civic, recreational and community service uses that provide a "complete" urban neighbourhood;
- Improved urban design and streetscapes, with a focus on a high-quality pedestrian experience, creating identity and "place making," and the full integration of transit facilities into a high-quality urban environment;
- Improved perception and reality of public safety within the Town Centre area, and particularly in and around transit facilities, building on recent initiatives by the City, the RCMP and Coast Mountain Bus Company;
- Land uses and densities within the study area that support TransLink's capital investment in land and transit improvements that will serve as a catalyst for private sector redevelopment;
- Improved integration of transit, road, cycling and pedestrian networks within and connecting beyond the study area, including bike lanes and off-street greenways; and
- Enhanced environmental performance achieved through reduced vehicle dependency and greenhouse gas emissions, increased energy efficiency and green development features.

As the means to achieving these goals and objectives, the MOU sets out an agreement between the City and TransLink to jointly commission, fund and manage a land use, transportation, transit and urban design study, including a public consultation process. With the approval of this MOU, the detailed Terms of Reference for the study will be developed and presented to Council in September 2008.

CONCLUSION

City staff has drafted an MOU in collaboration with TransLink staff that establishes a working relationship between the City and TransLink, with the goal of developing a safe, liveable, sustainable, transit-oriented, high-density, mixed-use urban centre in the Newton Town Centre area.

Based on the above discussion, it is recommended that Council authorize the Mayor to sign the MOU between the City of Surrey and TransLink to undertake a joint Land Use, Urban Design and Transit Study in the Newton Centre area.

Jean Lamontagne
General Manager
Planning and Development

DL/kms/saw

Attachments:

Appendix I	Memorandum of Understanding
Appendix II	Newton Town Centre Plan showing the proposed Study Area
Appendix III	TransLink Property

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

Between

THE CITY OF SURREY

And

**SOUTH COAST BRITISH COLUMBIA TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY
("TransLink")**

Regarding

THE NEWTON TOWN CENTRE URBAN DESIGN AND TRANSIT PLANNING STUDY

July 2008

WHEREAS:

1. The City of Surrey and TransLink are committed to the delivery of increased transit services and high quality transit facilities to the residents of Surrey;
2. Increased transit service leads to, and is in turn enhanced by, increased transit ridership levels;
3. Transit ridership increases are supported by the development of employment and residential neighbourhoods at transit-supportive densities close to transit facilities - particularly those served by high-frequency transit;
4. High-density, transit-oriented, mixed-use development contributes to safer, more vibrant, liveable and sustainable urban neighbourhoods;
5. Public investments in transit infrastructure increase the value of surrounding private lands and commercial enterprises and serve as a catalyst for further private sector development;
6. Returns on significant public investments in transit infrastructure can be realized through the public acquisition and development of lands around transit facilities at densities that support transit ridership and allow reinvestment in further transit system enhancements;
7. TransLink's "South of the Fraser" plans, Transport 2040 Plan and the Provincial Transit Plan call for significant transit enhancements in Surrey;
8. TransLink and the City of Surrey have significant land holdings with development potential in the Newton Town Centre area immediately around the Newton Transit Exchange;
9. The City of Surrey has an interest in immediate improvements to the current situation in the vicinity of the Newton Transit Exchange; and
10. The City of Surrey and TransLink share the objective of the redevelopment of the area in the vicinity of the transit exchange as a safe, vibrant, high quality, high-density, mixed use, transit and pedestrian-oriented urban neighbourhood:

The City of Surrey and TransLink agree to collaborate in a joint urban design and transit planning study for the Newton Town Centre area that meets the goals and objectives set out in this Memorandum of Understanding.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) is to ensure a documented, clear, and common understanding between the City of Surrey and TransLink as to general goals and objectives, project scope, roles and responsibilities, management, funding and timing for the Newton Town Centre land Use, Urban Design and Transit Planning Study (the Project). It is understood that the details of the Project will be developed through a Terms of Reference to be submitted for approval to Surrey City Council and TransLink in September of 2008.

GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

The goal of the Project is to produce a land use and transportation plan that will guide the development of a mixed-use, high-density, transit-oriented Newton Town Centre, fully integrating new and enhanced transit facilities into a high quality and sustainable urban centre.

Specific objectives include:

- Improved transit service and facilities serving the residents of Surrey, and of Newton in particular, through increased frequency, quality, reliability, safety and convenience of service;
- Increased transit ridership levels and share of trips, through the concentration of high-density employment and residential development, service and civic amenities in proximity to a new, relocated Newton Transit Interchange;
- Mixed-use urban development, including residential, commercial (office and retail), civic, recreational and community service uses that provide a “complete” urban neighbourhood;
- Improved urban design and streetscapes, with a focus on a high-quality pedestrian experience, creating identity and “place making,” and on the full integration of transit facilities into a high-quality urban environment;
- Improved perception and reality of public safety within the Town Centre area, and particularly in and around transit facilities, building on recent initiatives by the City, the RCMP and Coast Mountain Bus Company;
- Land uses and densities within the Study Area that support TransLink’s capital investment in land and transit improvements and that serve as a catalyst for private sector redevelopment;
- Improved integration of transit, road, cycling and pedestrian networks within and connecting beyond the Study Area, including bike lanes and off-street greenways; and
- Enhanced environmental performance achieved through reduced vehicle dependency and greenhouse gas emissions, increased energy efficiency and green development features.

STUDY AREA

The Project Study Area is approximately 20 ha. in size and is bounded by the BC Hydro Railway on the west and south, 138th Street on the east, and 72nd Avenue on the north (see Map 1). The Study Area includes the current and proposed locations for the Newton Transit Exchange, future Bus Rapid Transit station and a number of civic facilities including the Newton Wave Pool, the Newton Library and Library Administration Centre, Newton Seniors Centre, Newton Recreation Centre and Community Hall and former Fire Hall #10. The Study Area also includes a number of private properties, notably several shopping centres and an office building, along with the key “gateway” intersection of King George Highway and 72nd Avenue.

MAP 1: STUDY AREA



PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The Project will be jointly commissioned and managed by TransLink and the City. A Consultant will be retained, whose work will be directed by a Steering Committee made up of senior staff of the City and TransLink, and guided by a Technical Advisory Committee including key representatives from each organization. The scope, budget, tasks and requirements of the consulting contract, along with the membership and working relationships of the Steering and Technical Advisory Committees will be developed in a Terms of Reference presented to City Council and TransLink for approval in September 2008.

DRAFT – For Discussion Purposes Only

All recommendations, reports and plans developed through the Study will be subject to approval by Surrey City Council and TransLink.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

A public consultation process for the Project will be developed as part of the Terms of Reference. Stakeholders, including land owners, business interests, facility users, agencies and authorities, local neighbourhood residents and the public at large will be consulted at key points in the planning process. Recommendations that result in Official Community Plan or Zoning Bylaw amendments will be subject to all statutory requirements related to public consultation as set out in the *Local Government Act* and the *Community Charter*.

PROJECT FUNDING

The City of Surrey and TransLink will share funding for the Project equally. A Project budget agreed upon by both parties will be developed as part of the Terms of Reference, and proposals will be sought from Consultants qualified to do the work through the City of Surrey's Request for Proposals (RFP) process.

PROJECT TIMING

A detailed schedule for the Project, including a timeline for completion of the Project and key milestones with target dates will be developed as part of the Terms of Reference. It is expected that the Project will be completed by July of 2009.

PUBLIC COMMUNICATIONS

The parties to this MOU agree that:

- Any public communication related to the Project will be reviewed and agreed to by each party before being made public; and
- Public comment on aspects of the Project will be referred to the partner most directly responsible for that aspect for a response.

Dated this _____ day of _____, 2008.

Signed on behalf of the City of Surrey by:

Dianne L. Watts
Mayor

*Signed on behalf of the South Coast
British Columbia Transportation Authority (TransLink):*

[NAME]
[POSITION]

