

Present:

Councillor Nagra, Chair
Councillor Patton, Vice-Chair
Councillor Guerra
Ted Dawson
Nathan Hildebrand
Charan Sethi

Agency Representative:

Jeff Fisher, Urban Development
Institute (UDI)

Staff Present:

J. Arason, Acting General Manager, Planning
and Development
S. Low, Manager, Area Planning &
Development – South
R. Dube, Manager, Building Division
S. Lau, Manager, Land Development
P. Klassen, Community Planning Manager
K. Lassonde, Associate Planner
L. Blake, Administrative Assistant

Regrets:

Diana Dilworth, Homebuilders Association
Vancouver (HAVAN)
Jay Chadha, Homebuilders Association
Vancouver (HAVAN)

A. ADOPTIONS

1. Adoption of the Agenda

It was Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by T. Dawson
That the Development Advisory Committee
meeting agenda of March 1, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

2. Adoption of the February 1, 2022 Meeting Minutes

It was Moved by Councillor Patton
Seconded by C. Sethi
That the minutes of the Development
Advisory Committee meeting held February 1, 2022, be adopted.
Carried

B. DELEGATIONS

This section had no items to consider.

C. NEW BUSINESS

1. New Acting General Manager, Planning & Development

Staff advised that Jeff Arason will start his rotation as Acting General Manager,
Planning & Development.

2. City Centre Central Business District Commercial Requirements

Jeff Arason, Acting General Manager, Planning & Development, and Patrick Klassen, Community Planning Manager, provided a presentation regarding City Centre Central Business District commercial requirements and highlighted the following information:

- City Centre has been designated as the region's second metropolitan centre. The City Centre Plan (CCP) was approved by Council in 2017 with the vision to be a high-density, mixed-use, transit-oriented metropolitan centre south of the Fraser River. This vision is aligned with Metro 2040. Among the guiding principles of the CCP are to encourage office use and employment, as well as high density and employment areas around the three City Centre SkyTrain stations, with the highest concentration around Surrey Central Station.
- A vibrant downtown core is a place where people live, work and play and should include:
 - Office and commercial employment to bring energy during the day.
 - Residential population to support businesses and enliven public spaces outside of work hours.
 - Recreation and entertainment for residents, workers, and visitors.
 - Excellent transit service providing a connection to the rest of the region.
- While City Centre has experienced immense success in condo development and some success in retail and commercial development, there has been little to no uptake in office space development. City Centre's strategic importance requires policy strengthening in the following areas:
 - Ensure key transit served areas are protected for office;
 - Control land price inflation to improve viability for office;
 - Support incremental growth of office to capture existing demand and build critical mass; and
 - Create a vibrant office ecosystem, including amenities and entertainment.

- Proposed updates to the CCP are a market-based approach that reflects the realities of the City Centre office market, builds on City Centre's advantages and does not stifle development. The proposed updates identify two core office areas, supporting office areas and an Entertainment and Cultural District.

Core Office Areas

- Central Business District (CBD) Core: focused around Centre Block and Central City, this area is within the City's control or an existing interim use. The Blackwood development master plan includes spec office space.
- Health and Technology District: focused around Surrey Memorial Hospital, this area includes future UBC academic facilities, as well as a master planned Lark Group development.

Supporting Office Areas

Outside of the proposed core areas are supporting office areas, including the CBD Shoulder, with increased employment space requirements, and encourages office, commercial and cultural uses within podiums. This supporting area will build critical office space mass. Floor Area Ratio (FAR) reductions could be provided for the provision of amenities such as childcare, fitness, dining, entertainment, cultural facilities and hotel space. In addition, there can be the conveyance of land and/or air space parcels or improvements for civic purposes. Mixed-use developments will also be encouraged near key transit locations that provide a minimum of two-floors of office and commercial space for small scale, ancillary office space that will contribute to the overall office inventory.

Entertainment and Cultural District

To support the office ecosystem, the update includes a proposed Entertainment and Cultural District (ECD) that will encourage the development of dining, entertainment and cultural spaces to support office growth and improve the marketability of commercial space.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Arason and Mr. Klassen provided the following information:

- The Fleetwood Stage One Plan will articulate office and mixed-use developments to encourage vibrancy around Surrey-Langley SkyTrain stations. The CBD will be the main mechanism to attract large office employers, compared to smaller office employers who require podium office space.
- The current office space market in City Centre is high demand and low vacancy. The Economic Development Office receives many leads seeking office space, but since inventory is so low, the city often loses these opportunities.

- The proposed CCP updates are intended to strengthen office development policies that can be implemented immediately. There is an existing, approved City Centre Neighbourhood Context Plan and applicants can still bring forward development applications.
- The Five-Year Capital Plan includes funding for BC's largest contemporary Interactive Art Museum. If the proposed location in City Centre moves forward, it would be a major catalyst for the area.
- Staff consulted with estate agents, office tenants, employees and developers regarding what would encourage employers to relocate or expand their businesses and what is needed to keep employees happy. This feedback was incorporated into the proposed policy adjustment.

The Committee noted the following comments:

- The City is on the right path, creating jobs where workers live. Mixed-use developments that include employment and residential spaces contribute to the walkability of the city and help attract businesses.
- The City has led by example in the development of City Centre, for example by relocating City Hall to the area.
- There is a challenge to accommodate businesses that want to relocate to Surrey now.
- Staff should consult with a full range of age groups regarding what they would like to see in the Culture and Entertainment District.

3. City of Surrey Inspections Process

Remi Dube, Manager, Building Division, provided the following presentation regarding the City of Surrey inspections process:

- Inspection services and field reviews help ensure work is permitted and constructed in accordance with accepted plans, applicable codes and with the required professional supervision and oversight. Surrey averages over 1100 inspections per week, with a total of 57,230 inspections completed in 2021 and a 78% pass rate. Customer service satisfaction surveys indicate an 83% satisfaction rate.
- In addition to electrical, plumbing and building inspections, the City also does tree and landscape inspections, engineering inspections such as land development works and services, site servicing, boulevards and soil depositions, and business license inspections. The City also does non-permitted inspections as necessary.

- Staff have implemented mobile digital inspection tools and communication. Inspection results have increased readability, are automatically emailed to the applicant, provide enhanced access to information in near real time and enable historical analysis of performance. The online inspection schedule is published daily and allows for easier communication between the inspector and applicant, for example, if the inspector is behind schedule or is likely unable to attend a site that day.
- Educational material is also available, including the "Know Before You Build" video campaign and bulletins, and the City's website is continuously updated. In addition, the City hosted a Small Builders Forum to better educate small builders on how to best work with trades so they can pass inspections. Staff also work one-on-one with applicants as necessary to help them better understand the inspection process, the flow and how to avoid common mistakes.
- The Electrical Contractor Performance Monitoring program is a data-driven initiative to lower the rate of inspections for high-performing contractors. Contractors with a 95% or higher pass rate may not require a rough inspection; however, a final inspection will always be conducted. This program has resulted in a 32% improvement in inspection processing capabilities and allows for the reinvestment of staff time for contractor education, coaching and increased safety.

N. Hildebrand left the meeting at 6:56 p.m.

- Staff have identified the following actions to further improve the inspection process:
 - Expand the use of Performance Based Monitoring Program, starting in plumbing;
 - Update and consolidate the permit application experience and inspection requests into a simple, modern online portal;
 - Improve the inspection submission, preventing the submission of new inspection requests when requirements are outstanding;
 - Continue education efforts, focusing on key deficiencies;
 - Update the Inspector App for increased access to key documents;
 - Website review for increased usability; and
 - Constant staff recruitment to maintain adequate staffing levels.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Dube provided the following information:

- Staff will focus on addressing permits that have not been closed out and continuing to educate small or one-time builders. It has been suggested that a tool be implemented to help applicants track their application status.
- Staff are encouraging builders to register for online services, as that allows them to receive automated emails if an inspection is deferred. While automation helps communication, issues can arise if an inspector is directed to other issues, such as unpermitted work inspections or a higher priority project like supportive housing developments.

The Committee commended staff for their work to improve the inspection process so far; however, it was suggested that the inspection window should be further reduced to a couple of hours, instead of morning and afternoon time blocks.

4. South Campbell Heights Update

Jeff Arason, Acting General Manager, Planning & Development, advised that the City's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) amendment for the South Campbell Heights Land Use Plan was approved by the Metro Vancouver Regional District Board at its February 25, 2022, meeting. It is anticipated that an update will be provided to Council at the March 28, 2022, Regular Council – Public Hearing meeting, including Final Adoption of the Official Community Plan amendment for the urban containment boundary adjustment, implementation of the required studies for the Integrated Storm Water Management Plan and outstanding work to be completed with Metro Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr. Arason advised that staff will be meeting with Metro Vancouver staff to confirm that there are no further Metro Vancouver requirements for the urban containment boundary application, as well as any outstanding conditions for the regional context statement application. The urban containment boundary adjustment will be reflected in Metro 2050 immediately as Metro 2050 has not yet received first reading.

The Committee noted that the amendments to the South Campbell Heights Land Use Plan will provide jobs in the city that will support its growth.

D. OUTSTANDING BUSINESS

This section had no items to consider.

E. ITEMS REFERRED BY COUNCIL

This section had no items to consider.

F. CORRESPONDENCE

This section had no items to consider.

G. INFORMATION ITEMS

This section had no items to consider.

H. OTHER BUSINESS

1. Comments on the Market

- The market continues to perform well and there continues to be a lack of inventory. Housing supply has been a long-term issue and the current system is unsustainable.
- There will be a major influx of immigrants and international students in the near future when immigration reopens.
- Any improvements to permit processing time would be beneficial, as even a slight delay can result in higher construction and product costs.
- Office development projects will bring jobs to Surrey and help support growth.

2. Future Agenda Items

The Committee requested a presentation regarding the release of security money.

I. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Development Advisory Committee is scheduled for April 5, 2022.

J. ADJOURNMENT

It was

meeting be adjourned.

Moved by Councillor Guerra
Seconded by T. Dawson
That the Development Advisory Committee

Carried

The meeting adjourned at 7:34 p.m.

Jennifer Ficocelli, City Clerk

Councillor Nagra, Chair