

AGENDA ITEM NO: 7-H-2

MEETING DATE: May 3, 2010

STAFF REPORT – COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: OCP Amendment – Downtown Land Use and Development Plan DATE: April 27, 2010

DEPARTMENT: Municipal Development OCP00016 PREPARED BY: Karen Stanton / mp

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

In fulfillment of the OCP's local area plan recommendations, the City initiated a planning process for the downtown in 2006, resulting in the adoption of the Downtown Neighbourhoods Strategic Plan. To translate the concepts into detailed land use designations and planning standards/typologies, the City moved the process into a second phase that focuses on technical analysis and final public consultation. The attached OCP Amendment and Downtown Land Use and Development Plan completed that process. Their adoption will launch the long-term transformation of the downtown into a vibrant and sustainable centre – for healthy living and strong economic growth.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

That the attached Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw 2010, No. 3696, which incorporates the Downtown Land Use and Development Plan and associated text changes into the OCP, be given Introduction and First Reading; and further, that a Public Hearing be called for May 17, 2010. (OCP00016)



Ian Crane
Director of Development

3. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:

Supports recommendation.



Peter Monteith
Chief Administrative Officer

STAFF REPORT ON REZONING APPLICATION OCP00016

PREPARED BY: Peter Li and Karen Stanton **DATE:** April 27, 2010
POSITION: Policy Planner and Manager
of Development Services **DEPARTMENT:** Municipal Development

1. DEFINITION OF ISSUE:

In July 2008 the draft Downtown Land Use and Development Plan was presented to the public. Since then, City staff and the consultants (HB Lanarc) have conducted further technical studies, incorporated public input, developed policies and mapped out an implementation strategy. The new plan charts a long-term course for the growth and transformation of the downtown as a civic and economic centre, as well as a healthy-living community.

2. BACKGROUND:

2.1 The Official Community Plan and Downtown Planning

The 1998 OCP, the 2007 Downtown Strategic Plan, and the 2010 Downtown Land Use and Development Plan rest on a foundation of sustainable development principles, recognizing the importance of balancing economic growth, equitably distributed resources and services, and enhancements to built and natural environments at every neighbourhood level.

OCP Neighbourhood Development Objectives

The Downtown Plans have been developed in accordance with OCP neighbourhood development objectives, involving a highly participative process for identifying a mix of attractive design choices for residential densification, commercial and mixed-use development, as well as implementation strategies to ensure an attractive, vibrant downtown that is pedestrian friendly and offers a full range of commercial and public amenities.

Official Community Plan Land Use designations

At adoption and up until 2007, the 1998 OCP land use designations for the downtown area remained unchanged from previous plans (1983 and 1990). Medium and high density development apartments were identified as appropriate for broad areas of the core and the areas surrounding it, while low density areas in outlying areas were deemed appropriate for built-forms ranging from single family detached homes to multi-family townhomes.

With the downtown expected to grow by 13,000 people or 8,000 dwellings over the next 30 years, and in light of public concerns about densification, the Downtown Neighbourhoods Strategic Plan was initiated in 2006 to provide greater clarity for residents, property owners, businesses, developers, and potential investors to clearly define where and how growth is expected to occur.

2.2 Downtown Neighbourhoods Strategic Plan (adopted 2007)

The Strategic Plan addresses issues affecting revitalization of the downtown core and surrounding neighbourhoods, clearly recognizing that the social, economic, and physical health of the downtown and surrounding neighbourhoods depends not only on economic incentives and beautification but also on the ability to successfully address major social issues (e.g. affordable housing, mental health and addictions, crime / public safety)¹.

Based on land economic / market analysis, the Plan acknowledges:

- Development will occur as market forces dictate.
- Increasing densities closest to the core will best support commercial revitalization.
- Greenways and parks are essential components for neighbourhood livability, particularly in areas of increasing densification.

An exhaustive analysis of the density recommendations for each neighbourhood demonstrates the City's long term growth objectives can be met, while still maintaining a large land base for low density residential development:

Dwelling type	% of total dwellings (2007)	% of total dwellings (2037)	% of total land base (2007)	% of total land base (2037)
Single Family	25	13	66	47
Townhouse	14	13	13	22
Apartment	61	72	18	27

Source: Downtown Neighbourhood Growth Scenarios Report, February 2008

Public engagement throughout Plan Development

The Strategic Plan was developed using an extensive public engagement process, involving a total of 423 participants at four public meetings / workshops, a design charrette open house, and a public meeting / presentation, as well as work with over 100 students from Central Elementary and Chilliwack Secondary Schools.

¹ A number of projects have been initiated since 2006 to address these issues, and a "Healthier Community Strategic Action Plan" is currently underway, in coordination with Council committees on Housing, Public Safety, and Health and community health and service providers to address gaps.

3. FACTORS:

3.1 Downtown Land Use and Development Plan

The Downtown Land Use and Development Plan builds on the previous Strategic Plan's vision for the downtown and provides details for day-to-day decision making with regards to land use, building and site design, neighbourhood design, roads, and public space improvements. This section describes the Downtown Land Use and Development Plan's content, the process used to develop the plan, the OCP amendments required to adopt the plan, and general comments on implementation.

3.2 Plan Content

Throughout the plan extensive graphics and concise standards are used to illustrate the public vision and development intentions for the next 30 years. The new plan provides clarity and certainty to both the citizens and the development industry, and it aims to stoke public passion for the downtown – as a place to live, work, recreate, invest and grow

The Plan includes the following components and features:

Detailed Land Use Plan

- Provides greater definition with respect to appropriate built forms and key design considerations for commercial, residential and mixed uses for different areas.
- Adds mixed-use community corners within walking distance of all residences.
- Proposes corridor development to support transit development over long term.
- Identifies areas appropriate for high rise development and density bonus.

Housing Typologies

- Examples of attractive, accessible, street-facing designs for detached and semi-detached housing are provided based on standard downtown lot sizes.

A Mobility Framework

- Designs for multi-modal designations within road right of ways are provided.

A Parks and Open Space Framework

- This identifies areas requiring additional parks and public green space, for which a long-term strategy will need to be developed. The plan envisions some park acquisition as well as an increase in green space within public rights of way to enhance downtown livability and encourage walking and cycling.

Objectives and Policies: outline the strategies for achieving the land use vision.

Land Use and Economic Development: to create opportunities to live, work and recreate in the downtown, attract residents from other parts of the city and tourists to the downtown, during the day and evening; to reinforce downtown's role as the cultural, social and commercial heart of the city.

Access and Mobility: to encourage mobility choice – prioritize walking, cycling, transit use that is safe, convenient, and accessible; encourage development to support non-automobile travel; restore grid connectivity; balance parking with goals for compact development, alternative transportation and an attractive urban landscape.

Housing, Community and Culture: to provide diverse and appropriately designed housing types to meet the needs of a growing downtown population, meeting the challenges posed by the aging trend, an increasing number of families in high density environments, provide for affordable housing; encourage heritage preservation.

Public Realm, Parks and Open Space: to ensure an equitable, geographic distribution of parks space; improve the visual and physical connectivity of existing park areas; encourage new development to contribute additional green space onsite; improve public safety in public realm; and maintain views of surrounding landscape in key public places.

3.3 Public Process

Working from data collected during the development of the Strategic Plan, and with input from City Staff, preliminary plan concepts and components were developed for public review at an Open House in October 2008. The presentation (boards and slide show) were also posted on the City's website.

Approximately 100 people attended and 47 surveys were completed, indicating strong support for the Plan, including:

- The creation of small neighborhood-serving commercial uses, where feasible.
- The following housing types presented: "Cottage cluster," "Mixed Cluster," "Traditional Row Houses" and "Stacked Townhouse/ Apartment".
- Streetscape enhancements, and where necessary, widening of the public right of way to enhance pedestrian, bicycle and transit circulation.
- The retention of enhancement of private landscaping and green space as an important consideration of the Plan.

The Consultants and City Staff subsequently conducted further technical analysis, incorporated public input, developed policies and mapped out an implementation strategy for a final draft of the plan, presented on April 14, 2010 at a public open

house, and on the city website. Over 100 people attended the Open House and 20 surveys and/or letters were received in response. The following table illustrates the extent of interest and information dissemination generated on the project's web pages:

Downtown Land Use and Development Plan Webpage	Number of Hits
Downtown Land Use Plan homepage	377
Open House Display Boards	214
Final Draft of Plan	508
Open House advertisement	456

3.4 Comments on Final Plan

Four staff members and the consultant were at the open house to talk to attendees about the Plan and answer questions. General comments reinforced public concern regarding the pace of revitalization ("can't happen soon enough"), redevelopment of sites (including the Safeway site and Empress Hotel); social issues affecting the downtown core and surrounding neighbourhoods; and preservation of heritage buildings.

Feedback forms indicate support for:

- Density – increases the number of people shopping, more eyes on the street
- Orderly development
- Greenways - for bicycles; parks and open space make the city more attractive
- Streets that support walking, biking, driving, public transport
- Low Density designation to support retention of Heritage Walk area
- Well-defined areas for mixed use (ground floor commercial/ apartments above)
- Spadina Boulevard improvements
- Attractive housing designs that face the street

Feedback forms indicate concerns that:

- Changes can't happen fast enough, there is no time line for implementation
- There should be more green spaces, including for elderly people (e.g. wheelchair high raised flower beds)
- There should be buildings no higher than four stories to retain mountain views
- Current and future land use and development decision making should be consistent with the plan, not with developers interests
- Acquisition / allocation of park space is unclear on the plan

Suggested areas for improvement included:

- Pedestrian precinct Yale / Wellington
- Allow two-way traffic on Wellington (Yale to Main)
- Regulation of landlords / owners of empty buildings
- Provision for a parking building close to the Landing
- Encouraging developers to retain or support the strong historical values of Chilliwack – either keeping building facades or building new heritage looking houses and buildings
- Projects should be prioritized in the plan

3.5 Plan Implementation

The Downtown Land Use and Development Plan provide a long-term vision for the plan area that supports the City's long-term growth strategy and OCP objectives. It is intended to be used in conjunction with other strategic endeavours, which will be developed in the coming months and years by the City and community partners to address social issues, affordable housing, economic development, public parks and open space planning, infrastructure improvements, cultural development, and new zoning standards. Such initiatives will help to set the stage for higher density development (in select locations, subject to public process) and commercial revitalization, as market forces (demands) dictate.

The role of the City, CEPCO, the development industry, downtown residents and property owners is outlined in the Plan's Implementation section, along with specific actions to be taken in the short to medium term. Regular monitoring and reporting is recommended for Council and public information (via reports and webpage updates) and feedback.

3.6 Amendments to the OCP

The proposed amendments to the OCP include:

- a. The incorporation of the Downtown Land Use and Development Plan into the OCP as Appendix D, replacing the concept plan (Downtown Neighbourhoods Strategic Plan) that is now in effect.
- b. Associated Amendments to Text and Maps
These amendments include changes to Figure 3 (overall city map) and Figure 3A (map designations for Chilliwack proper). There are also a number of text changes that establish the regulatory powers of the Downtown Land Use and Development Plan and direct readers' attention to it on the future development and planning of the downtown.

The proposed amendments aim to minimize changes to the OCP document. A comprehensive examination and consolidation of the OCP will take place when the official OCP review begins, which will start in the near future and may last for two years.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS & SUBSTANTIATION:**

Recommendation:

That OCP Bylaw Amendment Bylaw 2010, No.3696, be given Introduction and First Reading; and further, that a Public Hearing be called for May 17, 2010. (OCP00016)

Substantiation:

The downtown plays an important role in the City's overall growth strategy and densification policy. The Downtown Land Use and Development Plan fulfils the OCP's Neighbourhood Development Policy 2, Section 4.1.1, which calls for the adoption of a local area plan for the downtown. Extensive public consultation has occurred during the development of this plan, and comments and suggestions provided by the public will be addressed through plan implementation, additional policy development, supportive strategies, zone amendments, responses to development enquiries and review of land use applications.

Attachments:

OCP Bylaw Amendment Bylaw No. 3696

