



CITY OF VANCOUVER

POLICY REPORT
DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING

Date: December 8, 2004
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TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Current Planning, in consultation with the General Manager Park Board, General Manager of Engineering Services, Director of Housing Centre and Director of Social Planning.

SUBJECT: East Fraserlands - Policy Statement

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT the document entitled "East Fraserlands: DRAFT Policy Statement" (attached as Appendix A) be adopted as the guiding policy for future planning and development on the site, beginning with the preparation of an Official Development Plan.
- B. THAT Council endorse the principles for development phasing and the process for determining and implementing public amenities contained within this report, to be required as a condition of Rezoning, as negotiated at the Official Development Plan stage.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to seek a commitment from Translink to initiate transit service to East Fraserlands at the earliest possible stage of development, within the context of the Vancouver Area Transit Plan.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the forgoing.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The City Manager RECOMMENDS approval of the forgoing.

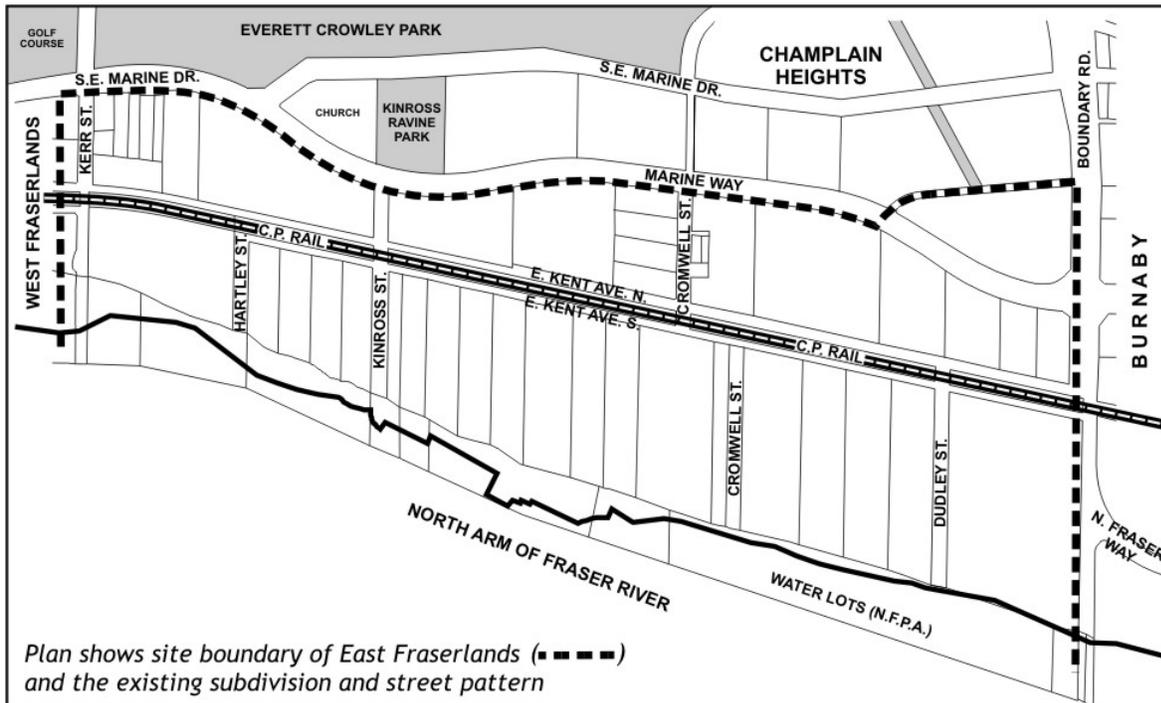
COUNCIL POLICY

- Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan, 2000
- CityPlan, approved May 1995
- Victoria Fraserview-Killarney Community Vision, approved January 2002
- East Fraserlands Planning Program, approved May 28 2002
- Industrial Lands Policies: Fraserview, approved March 1995

PURPOSE AND SUMMARY

This report conveys to Council a Draft Policy Statement for East Fraserlands. The Policy Statement establishes broad principles and objectives to guide the planning and development of East Fraserlands to create a sustainable mixed-use neighbourhood comprising a range of housing opportunities, commercial and employment opportunities, community facilities, parks, schools and recreational activities. The Policy Statement sets the framework for more detailed planning and analysis at the next stage of work - the preparation of an Official Development Plan (ODP).

This report summarises the key principles contained within the Policy Statement in terms of the 'Vision', urban structure, land use issues, parks and community facilities, transportation, and building form. The report puts forward for Council's consideration three guiding principles relating to the phasing and implementation of public amenities within the project, which will inform further work on the amenity package at the next stage of planning. It also seeks Council direction to staff to seek a commitment from Translink to initiate transit service in East Fraserlands at the earliest possible stage of development. Finally, the report includes comments from the East Fraserlands Sub-Committee of the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney Visions Program, as well as ParkLane Homes, the project proponents representing the largest landowners in East Fraserlands.



BACKGROUND

Site Description

East Fraserlands is located in the southeast corner of the city on the Fraser River, between Kerr Street and Boundary Road, and south of Marine Way. The site comprises 51 hectares (126 acres) of land currently zoned for industrial use.

A Canadian Pacific Rail corridor bisects the site into north and south sections. The land south of the rail corridor was in use by the Canadian White Pine Sawmill until its closure in 2001, and is now owned by ParkLane Homes. The City of Vancouver is the major land owner north of the tracks. The City lands were originally acquired to create an industrial park although these uses were never established. The parcels are now covered with scrub growth. In addition, several small parcels, comprising 9 acres (3.64 ha) in total, are privately owned and are either vacant or have industrial uses.

Summary of Planning Process To Date

When West Fraserlands was planned on the industrial lands to the west of Kerr Street in the 1980s, the possibility was discussed that the new residential development could expand to the east if the sawmill use left the area. However, not wanting to displace a viable industrial use, the City kept the industrial zoning in place for the lands east of Kerr, including the vacant City-owned parcels.

The 1995 Industrial Lands Policies stated that the land uses for the area would be re-evaluated if the sawmill use ceased. Further, the CityPlan Vision for Victoria-Killarney/Fraserview (VFK) (January 2002) concluded that if the sawmill closed, the City “should initiate a major study of future uses of this area which should include consideration of a range of housing options including rowhouses, townhouses and apartments along with required park space, waterfront walkways, schools and other public facilities and services required for the future population”.

In 2001, the landowners approached the City about considering other land use options. In May 2002, at the outset of a planning program for East Fraserlands, City Council directed staff to:

- Discuss future development possibilities with the landowners;
- Consult with those who wish to comment on the future of the site;
- Assess what forms of development could be acceptable; and
- Report back to City Council with a Policy Statement for the area.

At the request of the owners, much of the early planning work focussed on plan-related elements such as development density, required land dedications, amenity provision, building heights and land use allocation. These issues were of critical importance to the business decisions and agreements between the original landowners, Weyerhaeuser and the City, and the prospective purchasers, ParkLane Homes. Preliminary site plans were presented to the local community at Open Houses in Summer 2002 and Fall 2003. Feedback obtained from these consultations indicated that less focus on the site planning work and more emphasis on the preparation of a Policy Statement to establish a series of general objectives and principles for East Fraserlands, would be beneficial.

Accordingly, City Staff prepared a draft Policy Statement for the site in consultation with the East Fraserlands Sub-Committee of the VFK CityPlan Committee and ParkLane Homes. The draft document was presented to the wider community at two Open Houses and a Community

Workshop in October 2004 at which the community's input was sought (Appendix B provides a summary of the public discussion and feedback received). The community input from this process has informed the final draft of the Policy Statement so that where possible issues and concerns raised have been addressed within the document.

The Policy Statement addresses questions of land use, transportation, development density, urban design and community amenities, and provides general direction on resolving these questions in the more detailed ODP and Rezoning stages of planning - recognising that critical choices and trade-offs will have to be made at those stages. The Policy Statement is therefore intended to be flexible enough to accommodate a variety of detailed plans and options to be refined and evaluated during future planning work and community consultations. However, it must also be sufficiently robust to establish clear principles for the creation of a successful, sustainable and viable new community.

DISCUSSION

Policy Statement: Summary of Key Principles

This section summarises key principles established within the Policy Statement. In cases where a proposed policy direction or principle is of concern to the local community, these are summarised and the reasons for staff's policy recommendations outlined under the heading *Community Concerns*.

The Vision

The vision for East Fraserlands is to create a complete and 'walkable' community which will provide opportunities for its residents to live, work, learn, shop and play locally. The Policy Statement sets the framework for a self-sustaining new neighbourhood with varied housing options and a rich mixture of supporting facilities including commercial and retail activities, community facilities, parks, schools, recreational opportunities and natural elements.

At the heart of the vision is the desire to recycle a large area of brownfield land close to the metropolitan core in an efficient and sustainable way. The objective is to remediate the damage done by the site's industrial past and to create a new neighbourhood which takes full advantage of the natural place-making opportunities afforded by the south-facing riverfront setting.

By establishing a series of strategic principles informed by sustainable community planning, the Policy Statement embraces the challenge of creating a new neighbourhood of the city which respects its neighbours; encourages walking, cycling and transit while restraining use of the car; promotes environmental, social and economic sustainability; and inspires quality in the design of buildings and the public realm.

Urban Structure Principles

The Policy Statement embodies a number of guiding principles for the physical structure of the new neighbourhood at East Fraserlands. A broad concept diagram is included within the Policy Statement to illustrate how these strategic principles could be implemented. The key principles relating to urban structure can be summarised as follows:

- a. Locate areas for new housing across the site, providing for a range of unit types.

- b. Provide a centrally located neighbourhood centre as the focus for community life which includes shops and services arranged on a north-south High Street, nearby community facilities, and activities on the riverfront.
- c. Organise residential density across the site to reinforce the neighbourhood centre, reduce building heights towards the river (consistent with West Fraserlands) and avoid negative impacts on adjacent neighbourhoods and public views.
- d. Establish a fine grained movement network which encourages transit access and pedestrian / cycle permeability, whilst discouraging short-cutting by cars.
- e. Augment the three existing access points into the site from Marine Way by introducing new signals as appropriate to facilitate access and pedestrian movement.
- f. Provide public access to the entire riverfront by way of a riverfront walkway.
- g. Locate parks primarily along the riverfront to maximise their recreational appeal.

Industrial Land Use Policies

- a. Heavy industries that are incompatible with adjacent residential development should not re-establish on the site.
- b. Some small-scale light industrial and artisan-like uses which are compatible with residential uses should be considered to add diversity and provide jobs.

Community Concerns 1. - Retention of Industrial land use: A small number of local residents have suggested that the site should remain in industrial use to provide jobs and reduce impacts on the surrounding community.

Staff believe that a new residential community, rather than an industrial area, is the most appropriate future for the site for the following reasons:

- The 1995 Industrial Lands Strategy stated that the use of the site should be re-evaluated if the sawmill closed. It also concluded that the rezoning of industrial lands could be considered based upon CityPlan or other City-initiated planning processes.
- There is not a strong demand for river-based industry in this location; nor does this location strongly reinforce other economic functions in Vancouver.
- The City of Vancouver Regional Context Statement (2000) seeks to further the regional objective of achieving a compact metropolitan region by accommodating population growth in 'growth concentration areas' which include the City of Vancouver.
- The 2002 Community Vision for VFK identified significant demand for new housing in the area resulting from the changing needs of existing residents as they age as well as in-migration. This is consistent with strong demand elsewhere within the city and region.
- With regard to East Fraserlands, the VFK CityPlan Vision concluded that a major study of future uses should be undertaken to examine the potential for a new residential community to be established on the site. This conclusion was supported by 79% of the Visions survey respondents.
- The site is suitable and desirable for residential development, with existing housing to the north and west, the amenity provided by the riverfront, and adjacent employment opportunities in Burnaby.

Residential Land Use Policies

- a. New housing should be provided to accommodate a target maximum population of 10,000 in order to use the site in an efficient way and provide a critical mass of

people to support transit and on-site public and commercial services. The population target will be refined at the ODP stage to assess its impact on existing neighbourhoods in terms of traffic and local facilities.

- b. Early planning work suggests that average net densities of 2.0 FSR north of the rail tracks and 1.5 FSR south of the tracks may be feasible. The exact densities will be recommended at the ODP stage with regard to factors such as built form and massing, views, traffic generation, open space provision, housing unit mix and population.
- c. A variety of housing types will be provided to meet a broad range of needs. A minimum of 25% of total units should be suitable for families, with a target to increase this to 35%, subject to demographic and economic analysis at the ODP stage.
- d. 20% of residential units should be non-market tenure, of which two thirds should be for families.
- e. Opportunities to provide housing for people on middle incomes should be explored.

Community Concerns 2. - Residential density and population: Some local residents are concerned over the proposed density of the new neighbourhood and the impact of an additional 10,000 people in the area, especially in terms of increased traffic and strain on existing community facilities. These residents are also concerned that a population increase above that number would be beyond neighbourhood tolerances. It should also be noted that some respondents were comfortable with the proposed densities so long as sufficient amenities are provided to meet the needs of the new population.

Staff believe that there is a strategic planning imperative to make efficient use of a brownfield site which is, within a regional perspective, close to the metropolitan core. Staff consider that the site should be developed at somewhat higher densities than the neighbouring communities in order to help to address the demand for new housing arising from existing City of Vancouver residents and to reduce pressure for urban sprawl in the region. Staff believe that the densities proposed within the Policy Statement will meet these aims, while also:

- providing a critical mass of population to support transit, local shopping and services,
- preserving and increasing the amenity of existing local residents; and
- achieving a high standard of livability within the new neighbourhood.

Staff also acknowledge the concerns of local residents over the impact of the new population on the road network and existing community services. With respect to traffic generation, the Policy Statement identifies as a priority that the community must be planned to encourage transit use, walking and cycling, rather than use of the car. Staff will continue to work with Translink to seek to ensure that local transit services are implemented at the earliest possible stage of development to provide a viable alternative to car travel and are seeking Council's support in achieving this objective (see Recommendation C). Staff will also ensure that a strategy is developed at the ODP and Rezoning stages to adequately mitigate any off-site traffic impacts arising from the development.

With respect to the impact on existing community services, a detailed assessment of the amenity needs of the new population will be carried out at the ODP stage and a strategy developed to ensure that these needs are met by the development.

In addition to the above, the Director of the Housing Centre comments as follows: "The Director of the Housing Centre is not comfortable with the concept of a target maximum population of 10,000. The terminology of a 'maximum target' is ambiguous or contradictory as it should either be a maximum or a target, but not both. Further, the end state population of

a new community such as East Fraserlands is the consequence of overall massing, resultant number of residential units developed and the type of units created on the site, such as one-, two-, or three-bedrooms. The City has ultimate control of all three elements, but not the actual number of people who live in the neighbourhood. Inasmuch as the analysis has not been done on the built form or the resultant demographic projections, the Director of the Housing Centre believes that establishment of a maximum population at this time is premature. Establishment of a target of 10,000 people would allow staff to carry out the necessary massing studies and population projections at the ODP stage, and would allow for a population outcome above or below the recommended target."

Community Concerns 3. - Proportion/definition of family housing: The East Fraserlands Sub-Committee has suggested that the proportion of family units should be increased to a minimum of 35%. The Sub-Committee has also expressed concern that the City's current definition of family housing (i.e. units of two bedrooms or more within eight storeys of the ground) does not ensure the provision of housing which is genuinely suitable for families and that it should be reviewed in its application to East Fraserlands.

In response to the community's concern staff have established a target of 35% family housing within the Policy Statement whilst maintaining 25% as the minimum level acceptable. The precise level of family housing to be provided will be determined at the ODP stage following demographic and economic analysis. In addition, staff will review the definition of family housing during the course of the ODP preparation and report back to Council.

Community Concerns 4. - Proportion of non-market housing: Some members of the East Fraserlands Sub-Committee have suggested that the proportion of non-market housing should be increased to 25%. Other members of the local community have commented that it should not be higher than 20%.

The proponents have expressed concern that an increase in the non-market housing requirement would have significant implications on the economics of the project.

The Directors of Planning and the Housing Centre are sympathetic to both the interests of community residents and the development proponent. In this case staff recommend that the non-market housing requirement should remain at 20% as experience shows that new community development outside of the Central Area is less capable of achieving City standards than the Central Area and therefore setting higher standards could be very onerous for both the publicly and privately-owned lands in East Fraserlands. In addition, staff are concerned that it may not be possible to deliver more than 20% non-market housing at East Fraserlands due to lack of funding from senior levels of government.

Commercial Land Use Policies

- a. Incorporate commercial uses (retail, services etc) which provide primarily for the daily needs of nearby residents, rather than being destination-oriented and serving a wide area.
- b. The total commercial floorspace should be between 100,000-200,000 sqft (9,290 - 18,580 sqm), including a mid-size foodstore, and should be oriented towards a neighbourhood 'High Street', rather than Marine Way. The appropriate size of the commercial area will be determined at the ODP stage based on further analysis of economics, urban design and traffic generation.

- c. The commercial 'High Street' should be located centrally within the community so as to maximise pedestrian access, and should be integrated with residential development, community facilities and the waterfront.

Community Concerns 5. - Location of the High Street: A small number of residents suggested that the High Street commercial centre should be located further to the west in order to better serve the residents of West Fraserlands.

Staff have examined a number of potential locations for the High Street where rail crossings appear achievable. Staff believe that the proposed location, which has been moved further west than previously envisaged in response to Council and community concerns, is preferable as it would be within walking distance of the majority of the new, higher density community and would meet the riverfront at a point where active uses desired by Council and the public would not conflict with ecologically sensitive foreshore areas. The alternative locations to the west perform less well for the following reasons:

1. At Kerr Street the slope acts against a walkable and accessible neighbourhood centre and the objective of increasing development densities around the High Street would conflict with the need to safeguard the amenity of existing adjacent residents and create a gradual transition between the West and East Fraserlands.
2. At Kinross Street the High Street would limit the opportunities for the creation of a greenway leading south across the site from Kinross Ravine. In addition, the limited space between Marine Way and the rail tracks restricts the High Street concept in this location.

Other factors counting against both of these alternatives include:

- Conflict between active waterfront uses and ecologically sensitive foreshore areas.
- Impact of taller buildings in the neighbourhood centre on views from Everett Crowley Park.
- Land ownership patterns present obstacles to the critical phasing objective of establishing the High Street early in the development process.

Institutional Land Use Policies

- a. Consider the incorporation of institutional land uses such as churches, care homes, private schools and sports clubs, subject to appropriate siting criteria.

Parks and Community Facilities Policies

Fraser River Foreshore

- a. Provide a continuous riverfront recreational path connecting Kerr Street Pier with Burnaby's Foreshore Path.
- b. Strike a balance between protecting/enhancing the ecological productivity of the shoreline and providing opportunities for recreation.

Parks and Open Space

- a. The amount of park space to be provided is to be determined at the ODP stage after a needs assessment has been completed. The level of service desired by the Park Board

and the local community is the neighbourhood park standard of 2.75 acres per 1,000 residents.

- b. Parks and open space should provide for a range of active and passive recreational activities suitable for all ages and cultural groups.
- c. The open space system should be designed to incorporate watercourses which deliver benefits including stormwater management, habitat creation and scenic improvement.

Community Concerns 6. - Park Space: Local residents are concerned that adequate park space is provided to serve the new community. Residents are also concerned that the land area of the proposed waterfront walkway should not be included within the calculation of park space.

City and Park Board staff acknowledge and share the desire of local residents to ensure that sufficient park space is provided to meet the needs of new residents. At the ODP stage, staff will work with the local community and the proponents to achieve the best possible quality and quantity of park provision.

With respect to the calculation of park space, staff consider that the land areas that should be included is best determined at the ODP stage, when:

- a site plan has been prepared which helps to make the necessary judgements;
- the amenity needs assessment has been completed;
- comparisons can be more effectively drawn with other major projects in the city; and
- there is greater clarity over the other elements of the amenity package.

Community Facilities

- a. Provision of community facilities should occur concurrently with the residential development they are intended to serve.
- b. A needs assessment will be carried out at the ODP stage to determine the required level of provision for community services and facilities including recreational and social support facilities, public schools, childcare, etc.
- c. Indoor recreational space must be provided to meet the needs of new residents. The level of service desired by the Park Board and local community is 1.2 sq.ft. per new resident for community centre space; an additional 1.09 sq.ft. per new resident is typically provided for facilities such as pools and rinks.
- d. In order to facilitate greater efficiencies in the use of land, energy, resources and funding the co-location of community facilities (e.g. schools) should be investigated, without restricting the delivery of civic amenities.

Transportation and Circulation Policies

Circulation network

- a. Provide a network throughout the site which accommodates all modes of movement but emphasizes pedestrians, bicycles and transit ahead of private vehicles.
- b. A Transportation Study will be required as part of the ODP that evaluates: the suitability of the proposed road network for serving the new community; the traffic impacts on the adjacent road network; and the mitigation measures which will be required to address any impacts.
- c. The public realm should be fully accessible using Universal Design principles.

Transit

- a. Ensure that the street network allows for the extension of transit to serve East Fraserlands with a variety of possible mode options including neighbourhood shuttle, conventional bus, rapid bus, light rail and street car.
- b. City staff should engage Translink to periodically review transit service to ensure that service improvements come on stream at the same time as new developments are occupied.

Parking

- a. Parking requirements for East Fraserlands should be based on a realistic assessment of the site's needs and opportunities to reduce parking demand at the ODP phase.

Building Form Policies

Building Massing and Height

- a. Taller buildings should be located and designed to fit in well with the desired neighbourhood character; visually mark the neighbourhood centre; and carefully consider view and shadowing impacts.

Community Concerns 7. - Building heights: Some local residents have expressed the concern that new buildings should not be taller than existing buildings in the area as they could have a detrimental impact on views, the character of the area and the amenity of existing residential properties.

Staff recognise the concerns of local residents with respect to building heights in terms of potential impacts on views and the character of the area. Further work is required at the ODP stage to determine the appropriate location for taller buildings and appropriate building heights. The Policy Statement establishes a number of principles to guide this more detailed work, including:

- Careful consideration must be given to the impacts of new buildings on views from public spaces, such as Everett Crowley Park.
- The height of new buildings will be planned with due consideration to impacts on adjacent existing residential properties in terms of overshadowing, view blockage, overlooking, etc.
- Taller buildings will be required to fit with the existing and new neighbourhood character in terms of building form and massing.

Green Buildings and Green Infrastructure

- a. New buildings in East Fraserlands will adhere to Green Building Strategies that the City has in place at the time of development. If standards are not available for a particular type of development, a specific strategy for East Fraserlands will be developed.
- b. East Fraserlands should pursue opportunities for green infrastructure wherever possible to ensure site-scale sustainability opportunities are capitalised upon.

Neighbourhood Character

- a. Building forms should create a varied but distinct neighbourhood character which respects and connects to the adjacent neighbourhoods, with a fine grained urban form and a public realm which is attractive, active and safe.

- b. Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles will be applied to all development in East Fraserlands.

Views

- a. A view analysis should be carried out at the ODP phase which identifies potential impacts of new buildings on the surrounding neighbourhood. The analysis should address both public and private views, with the objectives of preserving key views from public spaces and of providing for an equitable sharing of view opportunities amongst private developments.

Implementation and Phasing of Public Amenities

A fundamental element of the vision for East Fraserlands is that the new community should be locally and adequately served by public amenities and commercial services such as parks, schools, recreation facilities, childcare, shops, etc; and that these facilities should be provided concurrently with the arrival of the new population.

When rezoning land for redevelopment, the City requires that developers provide Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) in the form of in-kind contributions or cash payments which help finance public amenities that the City builds. Typically for large sites over two acres and for sites changing from industrial to residential use (both of which apply to East Fraserlands), the City requires that the CACs be in the form of a negotiated package of amenities which the developers are responsible for providing and turning over for public use.

The type and amount of amenities provided through negotiated amenity packages vary considerably from project to project. There are general levels of service sought by the City, but amenity amounts are not fixed in over-arching policies. Rather, they are dependent on how well served an area already is in relation to demands created by redevelopment, and by the ability to finance desired amenities through private and public means. For East Fraserlands, a community needs assessment will be undertaken to inform negotiations at the ODP phase.

The East Fraserlands site is currently under the ownership of a number of different parties. The location of public amenities will not be evenly spread across these different land ownerships due to the desire to concentrate facilities around the neighbourhood centre and parks along the riverfront. Given that the land is unlikely to be consolidated under a single ownership, it is important to establish the principle that, as far possible, the obligation to provide public amenities will be shared equitably amongst landowners based on their share of the development potential determined at the ODP and Rezoning stages.

In light of these considerations, staff propose that the strategy for determining and securing a public amenity package for East Fraserlands should be based on the following principles:

1. A public amenities package is to be negotiated for East Fraserlands between the City and the landowners based on normal City policy expectations for amenities, the findings of a community needs assessment at the ODP stage and in the context of the financial realities of the East Fraserlands site. The strategy to provide public amenities should consider both the private contributions of the developers and any possible public contributions that could be made, such as through Development Cost Levies and Capital Plan sources.
2. The obligation to provide public amenities will be shared as equitably as possible amongst all owners of East Fraserlands property based on an owner's share of the development potential determined in the ODP and Rezoning stages. The sharing arrangements are to be included in the ODP phasing strategy.
3. A phasing strategy is to be included within the ODP which identifies development sub-areas and sets criteria for the sequence under which they will be developed. For each sub-area, the proportional share of development capacity should be specified together with a list of infrastructure and public amenities that are to be provided within or beyond the sub-area and details of the required timing of provision.

Recommendation B seeks Council's endorsement of the above principles for the phasing and implementation of public amenities to guide further work at the ODP phase.

COMMENTS FROM THE VFK EAST FRASERLANDS SUB-COMMITTEE

"In the summer of 2003 the Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney CityPlan Committee learned that a policy paper on development of the East Fraserlands was to go before the City's Planning and Environment Committee in July, and that open houses for consultation with the community were already scheduled. The VFK Committee made presentations to City Council about specific concerns with the proposed development, and about a very limited consultation process. Presenters asked that the development process be slowed down and the open houses delayed, to enhance community participation and input. Council agreed, and the consultation process was improved. An East Fraserlands sub-committee of the VFK CityPlan Committee was formed.

The EFL Sub-committee has had many meetings since July 2003 with City staff and the proponent, and has participated in a number of open houses and community meetings. The Sub-committee is made up of area residents, many from southern Champlain Heights and the West Fraserlands, and of representatives from local community groups including the Killarney Community Centre, Champlain Heights Community Centre, the Everett Crowley Park Committee, and South Vancouver Neighbourhood House. The committee's mandate has remained consistent throughout the process: to promote and work toward a complete and sustainable residential community in the East Fraserlands, one that best meets the needs of new residents as well as the existing VFK community, especially the residents of West Fraserlands."

PROPONENT'S COMMENTS

"Background

Under the Industrial Land Strategy Report of 1995, the City concluded that the future of Weyerhaeuser's White Pine Mill property would be reviewed if and when the mill ceased operations. Up until the closure of the mill in 2001, East Fraserlands (EFL) was the missing link in completing the redevelopment of this section of Vancouver's Fraser River waterfront. Given the existing residential neighbourhoods that border EFL, it calls into question the appropriateness of re-establishing industrial uses on the property. The VFK Community Vision document recognizes the incompatibility of these uses and supports a mixed-use neighbourhood on East Fraserlands. In early 2002, Weyerhaeuser approached the City to explore the possibilities of rezoning the property from an industrial land use. Council approved the East Fraserlands Planning Program in May 2002.

In December of 2003, Parklane purchased the property from Weyerhaeuser and in February of this year began a complete re-evaluation of the project to address concerns that had been raised at last fall's public meetings and at the February workshop with Council.

In our early meetings with the community group it became clear that they were not comfortable with the "fast track" planning process that the previous owners had established for the project. ParkLane supported the communities wish to slow down the planning process. As the largest single landowner in the community, ParkLane wanted to send a clear message that they were listening to what the community had to say and would continue to listen to their concerns and aspirations throughout the projected twenty-year life of the development.

ParkLane supported a planning process that went back to first principles, one that incorporated the communities concerns and aspirations; the City's planning objectives; and ParkLane's desire to plan, build and deliver a mixed-use neighbourhood to the citizens of Vancouver, and more importantly to the local community, that will set a new standard.

Economics

The community has high expectations with regards to amenities and infrastructure associated with the development. Dealing with the relationships between population/density, amenities, and land economics has been at the heart of discussions between City staff, the community, and the Proponents over the last two years. This balance is critical to the success of the project. West Fraserlands, for example, is often referred to as a neighbourhood that does not work well. There is a widely held belief among VFK residents that West Fraserlands is not well served with amenities; no transit, no school, no community center, etc. One of the main reasons for this is West Fraserlands does not have a large enough population to support the mix of amenities and infrastructure needed to make a vibrant and sustainable community.

For EFL to reach it's full potential of becoming a healthy and sustainable place to live, work, learn, and play it requires enough critical mass to sustain the types of public amenities and infrastructure that are so lacking in neighborhoods such as West Fraserlands.

The City's economic analysis of the project concluded that East Fraserlands will not generate downtown land values and therefore will not support major project amenity and infrastructure standards. With downtown projects reaching densities of 5.0 FSR and greater, the land economics can support the full compliment of amenities. However, given the more suburban nature of the neighbourhood adjacent to EFL, these higher densities are inappropriate. Early planning work has indicated densities of 1.5 to 2.0 FSR (less than half of downtown projects) are achievable on this site. While these densities may be appropriate for EFL, the project struggles to be economically viable.

Amenity Funding

Preliminary planning work completed to date has located the majority of public parks and other community amenities such as schools, community centre, and daycare facilities on ParkLane's property. This greatly reduces the developable land area thereby having a negative economic impact on the remaining property's ability to generate the necessary economic returns to finance all the amenities. One of the fundamental business decisions made by Parklane when purchasing the land was the agreement among senior staff that all the DCLs generated from the development would be funneled back into the project to off set the cost of on-site amenities and infrastructure requirements. This is critical to the success of the project.

The land economics of this development indicates that it cannot support the level of amenities being demanded by the local community. To address the disparity between these two competing realities a public amenity funding agreement will need to be entered into between the City, the other landowners, and Parklane to arrive at an equitable cost sharing arrangement. The funding agreement will need to incorporate the reinvestment of all DCLs as well as other funding mechanisms to cover the shortfall.

Conclusion

City staff has worked very hard with the community and ParkLane to assemble a Policy Statement that some have described as one of the best the City has authored. The document lays out a clear vision for East Fraserlands while identifying those issues that require further in depth study during the next phase of planning. The correct mixture of neighbourhood retail, parks, shoreline walk, community center, schools, day care facilities and the correct range of housing forms are the variables that will be closely examined to ensure that East Fraserlands, as a neighbourhood, meets the goals and aspirations of all the stakeholders.

ParkLane's team is looking forward to working with Council, the community and City staff during the ODP phase to create an exciting, vibrant and sustainable mixed-use waterfront neighbourhood."

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The program, resource and financial implications of developing an Official Development Plan will be addressed in a separate program report to follow.

CONCLUSION

The attached Policy Statement has been prepared following a planning process involving City staff, a sub-committee of the VFK Visions program, the local community and landowners. Adoption of the recommended Policy Statement would provide general guidance for further planning of a sustainable mixed use neighbourhood at East Fraserlands. The next stage of planning would be the preparation of an ODP for the site, through a continued public process which would begin with a series of detailed studies relating to demographics, housing unit types and densities, traffic and transportation, community amenity needs, the retail strategy, views and site planning work.

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SUMMARY OF PUBLIC PROCESS AND FEEDBACK

Consultation Process

Public consultation on the East Fraserlands Policy Statement was held in October 2004 with three events hosted by the City. Open Houses were held on October 16th at Killarney Community Centre, and October 18th at Champlain Mall. The third event, a Community Workshop, was held on October 24th at Killarney Community Centre.

The events were publicised by the following means:

- Flyers were delivered to 9,200 households and businesses in VFK (Killarney) mail route;
- 205 residents on the East Fraserlands mail list were sent letters;
- 10 active community groups were sent letters;
- 4 Chinese community organizations were notified;
- Ads in the Courier, the local Chinese papers (Ming Pao and Sing Tao) and the two Indo-Canadian papers (the Link and the Voice);
- Posters at the community centres (Champlain and Killarney), the library at Champlain Mall and at local park's billboards;
- Email notification to list from previous events;
- The East Fraserlands website; and
- The Public Workshop was also promoted at the first two open houses.

During the public process over 250 copies of the Policy Statement and 287 comment sheets were distributed. 47 comment sheets were returned and detailed notes were obtained from the Community Workshop.

Community Feedback

Community feedback was received in the form of returned comment sheets and notes taken by City staff at the Community Workshop. The following provides a summary of the feedback received, structured by the questions asked on the comment sheets:

1. Vision for East Fraserlands

Support

The majority of respondents supported the vision for a new waterfront community that has sufficient park space, provides a commercial 'High Street' that includes a grocery store, and has schools and a community recreation facility within walking distance of most units.

Many respondents were pleased that new community amenities, such as shops, services, schools and recreation facilities, would be made available through the development of the East Fraserlands to service existing residents.

Non-support

Those who did not support the policy statement vision identified increased vehicle traffic, lack of public transit, strain on existing Victoria-Fraserview/Killarney facilities and services, desire for more green space and concern about the impact of 10,000 new residents as their main reasons.

2. Land Uses

2a. Do you have any comments about the policies on residential use?

The majority of respondents supported a residential future for the East Fraserlands, but that other uses such as shops and services, and open space must be incorporated into the plan.

While most respondents supported residential development on the East Fraserlands, some expressed concern about the proposed density, suggesting that buildings should be low or medium density.

A few respondents expressed a desire to retain industrial use of the East Fraserlands.

2b. Do you have any comments about the policies on household income and mix?

Respondents generally supported policies for a mixed income community, however some expressed a need to ensure a balanced community and not to provide more low-income units than other major projects.

Several respondents also expressed a desire to incorporate affordable housing options, both market and non-market (i.e. co-ops, subsidized housing, etc) in the plan.

2c. Do you have any comments about the policies on residential density?

While some respondents supported the proposed density, the majority commented that the density is too high for the area citing concerns about increased traffic, overcrowding, building heights, neighbourhood character, and a need for adequate services.

2d. Do you have any comments on commercial land use?

The majority of respondents supported the concept of a retail 'High Street' anchored by a grocery store, commenting that the West Fraserlands are currently underserved. Residents were also interested in other retail opportunities such as a drug store, hardware store, waterfront pub, coffee shops, and other small independent retail shops.

Some respondents emphasised their desire for local serving retail for residents of East and West Fraserlands only, and that "big box" stores should not be allowed. A small number of respondents suggested that the proposed 'High Street' could be located further to the west than shown on the concept diagram in order to better serve the residents of West Fraserlands.

2e. Do you have any comments about the policies on institutional and/or industrial land use?

Several respondents commented that industrial use was no longer desirable for the East Fraserlands, however there was some support for artists studios and some light industrial activity.

Private schools and seniors facilities were supported by some respondents.

3. Parks and Community Facilities

3a. Do you have any comments about the policies on parks and open space, including the foreshore?

Respondents showed strong support for the development of a riverfront walkway to connect to West Fraserlands and Burnaby. Some respondents commented on their desire to see the river's edge restored to a more natural condition to provide fish and wildlife habitat.

Park area and programming continues to be a key concern of respondents, many would like to ensure that East Fraserlands has ample open space to serve future residents. Park programming opportunities for sports fields, community gardens, naturalized areas and off-lease dog parks were mentioned by some respondents.

Respondents commented on the need for a community centre to service the needs of residents from both East and West Fraserlands. Some also advocated for a pool, ice rink, library space and full size gym to ensure that residents of East Fraserlands do not burden existing community services.

3b. Do you have any comments on the policies on community facilities and services?

Community Indoor Recreation Facility

Respondents confirmed the need for a community facility in East Fraserlands to serve the needs of East and West Fraserlands residents and to reduce impacts on existing facilities (Killarney and Champlain Community Centres). Most supported shared use of community and school facilities as long as adequate services and programs can be provided.

Schools

Respondents commented that there must be sufficient elementary and secondary school provision and expressed concern about locating an elementary school next to a secondary school.

Respondents expressed mixed feelings about the existing school site in West Fraserlands, some would like the site to become park and others support development of a school on that site.

4. Transportation and Circulation

4a. Do you have comments about the policies on traffic?

Respondents expressed concern about additional traffic in VFK, particularly on Marine Drive, Marine Way and Kerr Street. Many also expressed concern about the number of entrances/exits to the site.

Many respondents emphasised the importance of public transit in reducing traffic on existing streets in VFK.

4b. Do you have any comments about the policies on transit?

Respondents felt that good public transit service for residents of both East and West Fraserlands is critical. Many commented on the need for north-south transit connections to skytrain stations at Metrotown and Joyce Station, as well as more frequent bus service along Southeast Marine.

Some respondents also commented on the opportunity for transit along the existing CPR line.

5. Building Form

5a. Do you have any comments about the policies on building form?

Of those who commented on policies on Building Form, the main concerns related to building heights; most felt that high rises should be limited to (12-14-18) storeys.