

COUNCIL REPORT

M&C No.	2019-247
Report Date	September 30, 2019
Meeting Date	October 07, 2019
Service Area	Growth and Community Development Services

His Worship Mayor Don Darling and Members of Common Council

SUBJECT: Central Peninsula Secondary Plan Public Presentation

OPEN OR CLOSED SESSION

This matter is to be discussed in open session of Common Council.

AUTHORIZATION

Primary Authors	Commissioner/Dept. Head	City Manager
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RECOMMENDATION

That Common Council:

1. Receive and file the attached recommendation and report from the Neighbourhood Action Team related to the Central Peninsula Secondary Plan.
2. Whereas the Neighbourhood Action Team confirm the content of the draft Central Peninsula Secondary Plan is consistent with the direction, input and vision assembled since 2017, therefore the Neighbourhood Action Team recommends that Common Council initiate the legislative adoption process for the Central Peninsula Secondary Plan at their regular meeting on October 7, 2019; and initiate the adoption process as prescribed by the Community Planning Act for the consideration of the attached Central Peninsula Secondary Plan and related amendments to the Municipal Plan.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central Peninsula is experiencing a renaissance. There is increasing excitement around living, working, and investing in the City's core. Capturing this momentum is pivotal to the growth and prosperity of the City. The Central Peninsula Secondary Plan (the Plan) is a mechanism to harness that potential and create long term, sustainable growth and improved quality of life for the

residents of Saint John. Delivery of the plan was identified by Common Council as part of its Council's priorities for 2016-2020.

The Plan has undergone further review and revisions to address public feedback since the preliminary draft was released in May 2018 and is prepared for Council adoption. The Plan is an important milestone in the implementation of the City's municipal plan, Plan SJ, and is positioned to unlock substantial growth potential in the City's core. The Plan is accompanied by amendments to Plan SJ and will direct amendments to the Zoning and Heritage By-laws. These amendments will guide development, improve quality of life, and spur growth in the City's core over the next 30 years. This suite of documents will remove barriers for infill development and enable focus on the neighbourhoods and important corridors of the Central Peninsula.

This report initiates the legislative adoption process by opening the 30 day public comment period. Additional opportunities for public and Council input will occur throughout the adoption process including: the Planning Advisory Committee meeting on November 26, and the Public Hearing currently planned for December 9. During the 30 day comment period which ends November 6, the public is encouraged to submit their feedback to the Clerk's office. All materials will be available to the public on the City's website.

PREVIOUS RESOLUTION

On October 3, 2016, Common Council initiated the project planning for the Neighbourhood Planning process for the Central Peninsula, with the project launch held in 2017.

Throughout 2017-2019, Common Council and Growth Committee received various project updates on the plan, including community engagement results.

On June 17, 2019, Common Council received and filed a project update for the Central Peninsula Secondary Plan, which included a formal adoption timeline and the allocation of the \$500,000 Neighbourhood Plan Capital Fund.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

As a priority related to a Vibrant, Safe City and Growth and Prosperity, focusing strategic investment in the City's core will accelerate urban growth, reduced urban sprawl, and encourage a more compact, livable, and fiscally sustainable community.

REPORT

Council initiated the Central Peninsula Secondary Plan (the Plan) in 2017 to action a key directive in Plan SJ's smart growth strategy. Plan SJ emphasizes a planned approach toward community and economic development by reinvesting

in the urban core, reducing urban sprawl and encouraging more compact, complete, attractive, and financially sustainable neighbourhoods. The Plan upholds the principles of smart growth and is expected to unlock growth potential in the City's centre.

Plan Process

The Plan came together over five phases between May 2017 and August 2019. The key components of the phased work plan included:

- Phase 1: initiating Dialogue

A high profile Public Launch, held May 24, 2017 marked the formal beginning of the Taking Shape plan process and the work of the Neighbourhood Action Team. Meetings with a Project Steering Committee, a Stakeholder Working Group, the Neighbourhood Action Team and initial stakeholder interviews supported the successful launch of the project.

- Phase 2: Urban Analysis

Significant research and analysis of the urban structure and existing neighbourhood conditions of the Central Peninsula supported the preparation of preliminary concepts and draft policy direction. These preliminary concepts were used to facilitate an intensive community engagement, the Central Peninsula Summit, held July 6th to 8th, 2017.

- Phase 3: Visioning and Secondary Plan Directions

Building off the Central Peninsula Summit, direction for heritage and urban design were drafted while concepts were revised and refined culminating in an overall vision for the Central Peninsula. The vision and policy direction of the Plan were tested and confirmed through the Public Open House on November 23, 2017. Stakeholder, developer, and property owner engagement continued throughout Phase 3.

- Phase 4: Plan Development

Building off the research and community and stakeholder engagement, a draft plan was completed and presented to the public, City Committees, and Council between the months of May and July, 2018. A Stakeholder Summit was held on June 21, 2018 to test the action focused components of the Plan. Substantial feedback was received throughout this engagement period, leading to important and informed improvements and revisions to the Plan.

- Phase 5: Final Plan

This is the current and final phase of the process. It involved thorough review by stakeholders including the NAT, City Departments and the City's Solicitor's Office. A public information session was held on August 27, 2019 to update the public on the development of the Plan. The Plan will be presented to the public via Council through a month long public presentation period, review by the Planning Advisory Committee and the Heritage Board, and a public hearing over

the next several months and is scheduled to be approved by Council in early 2020.

Community Engagement

Unique and creative engagement styles helped reach over 1100 people during the formative public engagement held between May and October 2017. Digital platforms like the “Taking Shape Saint John” website generated 500 comments from 165 followers. More grassroots and involved engagement like pecha kucha community-led presentations and pop-up engagements at public events generated more than 2000 comments. Face-to-face interviews with developers, stakeholders, consultants, property owners, youth, and priority neighbourhood groups added to the substantial total of data collected. The feedback was used to determine the community’s visions and goals, to create a list of priority action items, and to direct policy ensuring the Plan is truly representative of the community it serves.

Throughout the planning process, engagement summary reports were prepared and presented to Council and key stakeholders. These “What We Heard” reports summarized feedback received at three separate stages of the Plan process. This allowed the public to follow the development and progress of the Plan while also seeing the emergence of priority themes. Some of the key themes heard included increased public access to the waterfront; enhanced approaches to litter and waste; increased greening; and, infilling of vacant lots and addressing derelict buildings.

Current Momentum

The Plan continues to generate substantial excitement throughout the Central Peninsula. Staff and stakeholders have taken ownership of the action components of the Plan, equating to tangible results. Some of these tangible improvements that are linked to this broader momentum include:

- Review and revision of the Urban Development Incentives Program to support delivery of the Plan;
- Completion of a Residential Market Study, an important tool for investors;
- Alignment of the City’s capital budget, Long Term Financial Plan and external funding applications to support delivery of the City’s growth objectives, and key priorities of this Plan;
- Fundy Quay site preparations, seawall funding and Call for Expressions of Interest for a major redevelopment to action one of the key big moves of the Plan;
- Major street re-construction in key corridors;
- Improved investor confidence with notable gains in residential and commercial development in key corridors identified in the Plan;
- Upgrades to the Saint John City Market;
- An augmentation of festival and events;
- The introduction of a night market along South Market Street;

- Continued effort towards major catalytic projects, including the proposal for a new school and development of Fundy Quay and
- Approval of the capital priorities of the Plan including investment in Rainbow Park, community beautification, City market upgrades and improvements and design work to support the Fundy Quay Seawall refurbishment.

It is exceptional that the community is living the Plan previous to it being adopted by Council. This can be attributed to robust and ongoing engagement efforts and the action-focus of the Plan. This signifies the important legacy of the Plan and the connection to the community it serves. Confidence is building in the Central Peninsula and the Plan will continue to support and build upon the vibrancy and momentum generated by the community.

Next Steps

Council approved the first phase of Heritage By-law amendments that permit more flexibility for investment in the City's heritage areas on September 24, 2019. Phase 2 Heritage amendments pertaining to infill development will be presented concurrently with the Zoning By-law amendments associated with the Plan. The proposed timeline considers inclusion of necessary steps to ensure the documents are fully operational by adoption; facilitating a seamless transition to implementation.

- **Council Decision Point #1 – Initiate Adoption** – Council is being asked to consider initiating the adoption process for the Plan and associated Municipal Plan amendments. This will initiate a 30 day public comment period as required under the *Community Planning Act*. This will be the first of three opportunities within the legislative adoption process for the public to provide commentary in an official capacity.
- **Council Decision Point #2 – Referral to Planning Advisory Committee** – Council will review the feedback received from the 30 day comment period. Council will be given the opportunity to refer the Plan and associated Municipal Plan and Zoning By-law amendments to the Planning Advisory Committee and schedule the Public Hearing. A Public Hearing date will also be set for the Heritage Bylaw Amendments as required under the *Heritage Conservation Act*.
- **Planning Advisory Committee Meeting** — At a special meeting date, the Planning Advisory Committee will consider the Plan and associated Municipal Plan and Zoning By-Law amendments, and make a recommendation to Council. This will be the second of three opportunities within the legislative adoption process for the public to provide commentary in an official capacity. The Planning Advisory Committee Meeting is planned for November 26, 2019.

- **Council Decision Point #3 – Public Hearing, First and Second Reading –** Council will hold the Public Hearing and, following the public feedback process, will proceed with first and second reading of the Plan, and Municipal Plan, Zoning, and Heritage By-law amendments. This will be the third and final opportunity within the legislative adoption process for the public to provide commentary on the Plan’s adoption. It is anticipated the Public Hearing will occur December 9.
- **Council Decision Point #4 – Third Reading –** Concluding the adoption process, Council will consider Third Reading of the Plan. Once Third Reading is complete, the Plan will be registered and become legally binding. It is anticipated Third Reading will occur in January 2020.

SERVICE AND FINANCIAL OUTCOMES

The funding to support the Central Peninsula Neighbourhood Plan was contributed by key partners including the City of Saint John, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Province of New Brunswick and Uptown Saint John. Neighbourhood planning provides a framework for enhanced service, building community capacity, and encouraging re-investment in targeted neighbourhoods. Capital funding has been allocated to the implementation of the Central Peninsula Plan which will be used to leverage private investment in key areas as directed by the plan.

INPUT FROM OTHER SERVICE AREAS AND STAKEHOLDERS

The Central Peninsula Secondary Plan is reflective of substantial input from the community and stakeholders. The Neighbourhood Action Team has been pivotal in the development and vetting of the Plan. Their insight and connection to the community will inform the ongoing engagement and carry the suite of documents through to implementation. Members of the Neighborhood Action Team include:

- Kay Gillis (Chair)
- Melissa Wakefield (Vice-Chair);
- Anne McShane;
- Andrew Miller;
- Ben Appleby;
- Councillor Donna Reardon;
- Councillor David Hickey;
- Jeff Roach;
- Nancy Tissington; and
- Milad Pirayegar.

A Project Steering Committee including representatives from Transportation and Environment Services, Parks and Recreation, Finance, Risk Management,

Develop SJ, and Growth and Community Development Services guided the development of the Plan. The review of the Draft Plan was vetted and recommended for approval through the Neighbourhood Action Team.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Recommendation Letter from the Neighbourhood Action Team
2. Draft Central Peninsula Secondary Plan
3. What We Heard Engagement Report Summary