

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

APPLICATION SUMMARY

Dream Development Ltd. applied to amend the Willows Neighbourhood Concept Plan (Concept Plan). The proposed amendments are primarily to the western portion of the neighbourhood and provide for a reconfiguration of development sites and streets, increased residential density, the introduction of fee-simple residential lot development, the addition of municipal parks, an expanded boundary of the Willows Neighbourhood, and introduce additional commercial land uses.

The application also includes amendments to Bylaw No 9700, Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2020 (OCP) Land Use Map, a minor OCP text amendment, amendments to the Direct Control District 4 (DCD4) regulations contained in Bylaw No. 8770, Zoning Bylaw 2009 (Zoning Bylaw), and a Zoning Bylaw map amendment.

RECOMMENDATION

That a copy of this report be submitted to City Council recommending that at the time of the Public Hearing, City Council consider Administration's recommendation that proposed amendments to the Willows Neighbourhood Concept Plan, Bylaw No. 9700, the Official Community Plan, 2020 and Bylaw No. 8770, Zoning Bylaw, 2009, as outlined in this report, be approved.

BACKGROUND

In 2003, the OCP was amended to incorporate objectives and policies for golf course communities. Golf course communities integrate residential development with an operating golf course, providing low to medium density residential development which is accessory to a golf course and associated commercial development.

The original development of the Willows was proposed as a unique neighbourhood, providing a lower density residential development surrounded by a privately-owned and operated golf course with associated commercial uses. When the Concept Plan was approved in 2003, the neighbourhood was required to be developed as condominiums to ensure the low-density development did not cause an undue financial risk to the City of Saskatoon (City) for increased costs of services.

DISCUSSION

Proposed Amendments

Proposed Amendments to the Willows Neighbourhood Concept Plan

Dream Development Ltd. is proposing an amendment to the existing Concept Plan which will redesign primarily the western portion of the neighbourhood (see Appendix 1). Detailed information on the proposed changes are provided in the Willows Neighbourhood Concept Plan Amendment Report (see Appendix 2) and include the following:

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

- 1) Remove the requirement that all residential development be incorporated as part of a condominium and provide for one-unit dwellings to be developed on fee-simple lots;
- 2) Reconfigure the golf course to an 18-hole course;
- 3) Land use changes to include:
 - Provisions for a hotel/spa and limited commercial uses on a commercial site and neighbourhood node located west of, and adjacent to, Cartwright Street;
 - Provision for municipal reserve parcels;
 - Accommodate an increase in the number of dwelling units and density within the neighbourhood while still maintaining a density below the standard for Saskatoon neighbourhoods by reconfiguring the westerly portion of the neighbourhood and providing for medium density multiple-unit dwellings in this area;
- 4) Inclusion of an additional 7.4 hectare (18.3 acres) development area adjacent to Cartwright Street referred to as the “North Development Area”;
- 5) Provision for access to the western residential area of the Willows from Cartwright Street, including access onto Lorne Avenue;
- 6) Provision for access onto Highway 219 (Lorne Avenue) with southbound left-in and northbound right-out turns;
- 7) Additional local roads developed as public right of way; and
- 8) Inclusion of signalized intersections at Cartwright Street & Lorne Avenue and Cartwright Street & Clarence Avenue.

A comparison between the current Concept Plan and the proposed changes is included in Appendix 3.

The existing Concept Plan was approved for an estimated population of 1,557 residents and the proposed amendments would increase the population of the neighbourhood to an estimated 2,557 residents (580 from the redesigned westerly portion of the neighbourhood and 420 from the inclusion of the North Development Area). A comparison between the current concept plan and the proposed changes is included (see Appendix 3). The proposed changes result in a population change from 1,557 to 2,557.

Proposed Amendments to the Official Community Plan

Section G 3.2(2)(d) of the OCP states “Golf course communities may include low to medium density residential development and a mix of commercial development regularly associated with, and of a scale appropriate to, the daily operations of a golf course and the daily needs of golf course community residents”. Dream Development Ltd. is proposing the OCP be amended to permit expanded forms of commercial development including those uses that are complementary to and of a scale appropriate to the operations of a golf course and the golf course community. The proposed amendment would provide for the inclusion of commercial uses beyond the existing permitted accessory commercial uses within the DCD4, and which may serve beyond the daily

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

operations of a golf course or daily needs of the community. The amendment would provide for such uses as a hotel (with accessory uses), retail, office, personal service trades and other small scale uses within golf course communities.

The inclusion of the North Development Area within the Willows will also require an amendment to the OCP Land Use Map to redesignating this additional land from CP-Saskatoon Planning District to Direct Control District (see Appendix 4).

Proposed Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw

Proposed changes to the Concept Plan will require amendments to Section 13.4 Direct Control District 4 (DCD4) of the Zoning Bylaw, which regulates all development within the Willows Neighbourhood (see Appendix 5). Proposed changes include:

- 1) Reducing the minimum lot width for one-unit dwellings located on sites designated as 'one-unit dwelling' from 18 metres to 15 metres;
- 2) Reducing the maximum allowable dwelling units per acre for sites designated as 'low density multiple unit dwelling' from 17 dwelling units per acre to 12 dwelling units per acre;
- 3) Provision for a 3-metre rear yard setback for sites designated as 'low density' and 'medium density' multiple unit dwellings;
- 4) Provision for limited commercial uses on sites designated as 'neighbourhood node', including retail stores, bakeries, restaurants, photography studios, pharmacies, personal service trades, small animal grooming, art galleries, offices and office buildings, and medical clinics with a maximum size restriction of 279 m² per use with a maximum total gross floor area of 929 m² for all commercial uses combined and associated development standards;
- 5) Clarifying an existing regulation for retail uses, in conjunction with the golf course clubhouse, which restricts all retail uses to a maximum combined total gross floor area of 929 m²;
- 6) Clarifying an existing regulation for retail uses in conjunction with the golf course club house which restricts single retail uses to a maximum of 279 m²;
- 7) Provision for a limited commercial use on sites designated as 'commercial', including hotels and accessory uses such as a spa, and associated development standards; and
- 8) Clarifying an existing regulation for the types of residential uses permitted within a dwelling group on sites designated as 'low density' and 'medium density' multiple unit dwellings.

The inclusion of the North Development Area within the Willows will also require the site to be rezoned from D – Agricultural 1 District (from the Corman Park - Saskatoon Planning District Zoning Bylaw which was in place when the property was brought into the city) to DCD4 (see Appendix 5).

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

Policy Review

The OCP includes policies for golf course communities, with the objective of providing residents a desirable alternative type of neighbourhood while integrating residential development with an operating golf course. The intention of a golf course community is to provide for low to medium density residential development accessory to a golf course and associated commercial development. The key policy sections which support the proposed amendment include:

- Section G 3.2(2)(a):
Golf course communities like the Willows must include a maintained active golf course.

The amendments as proposed continue to ensure the focus of the neighbourhood is around a maintained golf course and associated commercial development.
- Section G 3.2(2)(b) & (c):
Neighbourhoods designed as golf course communities should be individually designed for local conditions and regulated through a Direct Control District.

The amendments as proposed restrict the uses, size and location of proposed land uses in conjunction with a direct control district. Proposed changes to residential land uses and densities align with these policies by continuing to maintaining low and medium density development. Proposed changes continue to provide for a low gross per acre density, below that of required densities for neighbourhoods referenced in the OCP.
- Section G 3.2.(2)(d):
The proposed amendment requires a change to this policy, which requires commercial development be regularly associated with and of a scale appropriate to the daily operations of a golf course and the daily needs of golf course community residents. The proposed amendment includes a commercial land use (hotel) which would be considered outside of the scope of this policy.
Administration carefully reviewed this policy in consideration of the proposed amendment and determined while a hotel is of a scale appropriate to and complementary to the land use of a golf course, it is not regularly associated with the daily operations of one. The inclusion of this specific land use would be regulated under a direct control district, limiting its size and location.
- Section G 3.2(2)(e):
The proposed amendment includes provision for fee simple lots as opposed to requiring all development being the responsibility of a Bare Land Condominium Association (as required under the previous Concept Plan approval). The OCP supports the development of City-owned and maintained services in golf course communities. As part of the review of this application, Administration evaluated the costs of servicing for the proposed area (Phase 2 amendment area only) in comparison to expected tax revenues. The proposed densities and land use plan for the Phase 2 amendment area would not significantly differ from any other areas of Saskatoon; it has been determined there would be no undue financial risk to the City for increased costs of services based on the proposal.

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

Under *The Planning and Development Act, 2007* (PDA), City Council may consider amending a planning bylaw on the basis of a report from its Administration or upon request from a third party, such as the applicant Dream Development Ltd. Under the authority of the PDA, it is common for an applicant to seek an amendment to either the Zoning Bylaw, OCP, or both to accommodate a development proposal if the existing policies and / or regulations do not align. Changes to policies or regulations must be carefully considered by City Council, to determine if they are in alignment with the City's vision and goals.

Since the adoption of the OCP in June 2020, City Council has approved two land use map amendments requested by developers and two text amendments prepared by Planning and Development.

- Section F 2.2(4) & Section G 1.2:
The proposed land use 'Neighbourhood Node' is intended to offer a mix of residential and limited commercial development and would create a walkable shopping experience for both residents of the neighbourhood and visitors. The proposed commercial uses are complementary in type and scale to the permitted commercial accessory uses that currently exist within the DCD4 and also include uses which are not generally developed as part of a golf clubhouse (i.e. small animal grooming, bakery, art gallery, etc.).

Under OCP policies related to City Growth and Community Focal Points (Section G 1.2), Community Focal Points are designated areas where people and activities come together for commercial, recreational, cultural, residential, or other purposes. These areas should be varying in scale, density and diversity of land uses while remaining sensitive to local conditions. The proposed land use 'Neighbourhood Node' is strategically placed within the Willows neighbourhood to achieve a focal point within the community at the smallest scale of Neighbourhood Node. The node integrates commercial uses into a residential setting along a collector roadway (Cartwright Street) with enhanced landscaping provisions to minimize land use conflicts with nearby residential properties.

Technical Review of Proposal

As part of the Concept Plan amendment application process, this application was circulated to civic divisions and external agencies for review. Comments compiled during this review were submitted to the applicant for response and all items have been appropriately addressed. Outline of required work and any financial implications are included (see Appendix 6).

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Notification and consultation were conducted with area residents and the general public, including the following:

1. The application was placed on the Engage Page in December 2020 and has been updated throughout the review. The Engage Page contained information

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

- on the proposed development, processes, public information meetings and developer contact information.
2. Notice of two online public information meetings mailed to all registered property owners of the Willows. Email notification was also provided to residents who had provided email addresses.
 3. Meetings with eight small community groups to hear additional concerns and comments, and to answer questions related to the application through on-line Teams meetings.
 4. Phone calls and email correspondence with residents.
 5. Notice of dates of Municipal Planning Commission and Public Hearing at City Council mailed to all registered property owners of the Willows.

The two online public information meetings were held on January 26, 2021, from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm and June 23, 2021 from 7:00 pm to 8:30 pm via a Microsoft Teams Live event. Participants were able to submit questions and comments for City staff and the applicant, Dream Development Ltd., through an online chat feature. In addition, recordings of the meetings and a copy of the presentations have been included on the Engage Page.

Since the proposed amendments were first introduced to the public in December 2020, Administration has received a high volume of correspondence from residents of the Willows. Residents communicated through a variety of methods including phone calls, emails, letters, resident-led surveys, smaller virtual group meetings with residents and real time chat during two Teams Live information meetings in which residents were able to submit typed questions. Detailed information on the communication and engagement process is included (see Appendix 7).

Email feedback and questions were received from 116 separate email addresses. In addition, over 490 letters were received opposing the application, including seven position papers opposing the proposal, provided on behalf of condominium associations within the Willows. In some cases, residents have duplicated their expression of opposition through various forms of communications.

Several key themes emerged throughout the consultation process. The concerns brought forward by residents in all methods of communication were consistent throughout the entire consultation period and the common concerns were related to the following:

- 1) No changes wanted from the existing plan;
- 2) Concern over scale of the changes (too much of a deviation from the approved 2003 Concept Plan);
- 3) Concerns related to the hotel and spa (traffic, location, impact on views and property values);
- 4) Concerns related to transportation / traffic (impact on neighbourhood, capacity of existing infrastructure);

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

- 5) Concerns related to the addition of commercial uses in the Neighbourhood Node;
- 6) Concerns related to the reduction in the size of the golf course;
- 7) Concerns related to the amendment process/shortcomings of the online consultation process/developer trust;
- 8) Concerns over increased residential density;
- 9) Concerns related to introduction of fee-simple development;
- 10) Concerns over loss of green space, specifically the loss of golf course green space;
- 11) Concerns related to the impact on existing properties and property values; and
- 12) Concerns related to the impact on the red barn and the existing tree canopy.

A limited number of communications were received from residents who were in support of the proposal. Members from the general public, who were not residents of the neighbourhood, also expressed support of the application.

The engagement process resulted in changes being made to the proposal by the applicant, however, throughout the process, the vast majority of feedback remained in opposition to the proposal.

Administration provided Dream Development Ltd. feedback received following the initial public information meeting held virtually on January 26, 2021, and Dream Development Ltd. made several revisions to their proposal including:

1. 13 metre (45') lot minimum was replaced with 15 metre (50') lot minimum for one-unit dwellings.
2. The southern half of the Mixed-Use development site was replaced with Neighbourhood Node (a mix of commercial and residential adjacent to the outdoor amenity area).
3. The northern half of the Mixed-Use development site was replaced with Medium Density Multiple Unit Residential (consistent with existing medium density residential development in the Willows).
4. Proposed location of commercial development was restricted to the Neighbourhood Node.
5. Total floor area for all commercial units combined was restricted to a maximum of 929m² (10,000ft²).
6. Individual commercial units were restricted to a maximum of 279m² (3,000ft²).
7. The proposed property lines for the commercial site (proposed hotel) were adjusted to reduce the site area and increase the distance between the existing residential and the commercial site.
8. The treed area between the residential condominium, and commercial property remaining with the Willows Golf Inc., as a buffer.
9. Right-out only intersection at Lorne Avenue was proposed as a right-out, left-in intersection; and

Concept Plan Amendment Application – Willows Neighbourhood

10. Additional landscaping requirements under the DCD4 zoning district for the commercial development site and the neighbourhood node.

These changes were taken back out to the community for further feedback in a second public information meeting held virtually on June 23, 2021. Following this meeting, residents continued to express their dissatisfaction with the proposal. Dream Development Ltd. made the following additional revisions:

- The hotel/spa commercial location was moved from Block 19 (east of Cartwright Street) to the north half of Block 18, (now located west of Cartwright Street);
- Medium Density Multiple Dwelling location was moved from the north half of Block 18 (west of Cartwright Street) to Block 19 (now located east of Cartwright Street); and
- Block 19 was reduced in size to no longer include the tree bluff area.

The Concept Plan amendment from Dream Development Ltd. with the final changes was posted on the Engage Page in August 2021. An email with the final changes was also sent to residents who had provided their email address.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is required for consideration of this matter, pursuant to Section 11(a) of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy.

Once this application has been considered by the Municipal Planning Commission, it will be advertised in accordance with Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy and a date for a public hearing will be set. A notice will be placed in The StarPhoenix two weeks prior to the public hearing.

APPENDICES

1. Location Map
2. Willows Neighbourhood Concept Plan Amendment Report
3. Willows Neighbourhood Concept Plan Comparison Map
4. Proposed OCP Amendments with Location Plan
5. Zoning Bylaw Amendments with Location Plan
6. Technical Review of Proposal
7. Engagement Summary

REPORT APPROVAL

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