
Grasswood Mixed Use Node Market Impact Study Summary Report

Recommendation

That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to City Council that the information be received.

Topic and Purpose

The purpose of this report is to report on how the Grasswood Mixed Use Node Market Impact Study fits with the Growth Plan.

Report Highlights

1. The Grasswood Mixed Use Node Market Impact Study Summary Report (Grasswood Report) recommended denser, urban-style development in the Grasswood Mixed Use Node (Grasswood Node) located along Highway 11, south of the city, in the Rural Municipality of Corman Park.
2. The Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan) focuses on proactively managing change associated with growth within the city.

Strategic Goal

This report supports the City of Saskatoon's (City) Strategic Goal of Sustainable Growth through collaborative planning with regional partners, stakeholders, and rights holders.

Background

During the past several years, growth pressures inside and outside the city have become more intense. Much work has been done in the city and beyond into the region to alleviate these pressures and be better prepared for growth and development through many planning initiatives. Projects such as the Growth Plan with a city focus, the Grasswood Report with a local rural municipality focus, and the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth Regional Plan (Regional Plan) with a broad regional focus all contribute to managing and balancing growth interests for the city and its regional partners.

City Council, at its Regular Business Meeting held on December 17, 2018, considered comments by Brent Penner, Executive Director of the Downtown Business Improvement District regarding the Grasswood Report and resolved:

1. "That the Administration be directed to consider the recommendations of the Grasswood Mixed Use Node Market Impact Study Summary Report (Grasswood Report) during the development of the South East Concept Plan and the Saskatoon North Partnership for Growth bylaws;
2. That the Administration be directed to add the five Business Improvement Districts as stakeholders; and

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3. That the Administration report back on how the Grasswood Mixed Use Node Market Impact Study fits with the Growth Plan”.

Through negotiations done as part of the 2015 boundary alteration process, the City and the Rural Municipality of Corman Park (RM) committed to considering a joint approach to development in the Grasswood Mixed Use Node (Grasswood Node) located along the Highway 11 corridor and Grasswood Road, just south of the city. The Grasswood Node is also within the Corman Park-Saskatoon Planning District (Planning District), an area jointly managed by the two municipalities. Before proceeding with a joint approach to development, the municipalities determined a market impact study could provide fact-based information on the size and types of development that could be supported in this area without negatively impacting existing or planned development in the City or the RM. The Grasswood Mixed Use Node Market Impact Study Summary Report was finalized in 2018.

Report

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The Grasswood Node comprises approximately 2,100 acres of land. Portions of this land are already developed and include primarily commercial development surrounding the intersection of Highway 11 and Grasswood Road, reserve land of English River First Nation, and the Greenbryre Estates residential and golf course community. The rest of the Grasswood Node, including land holdings of Cowessess First Nation, is largely undeveloped.

A fundamental objective of the Grasswood Study was to identify the amount and type of development (i.e. commercial, residential, and institutional) needed to support growth. The key qualifier of this objective was to also ensure the viability of the region’s existing markets in Saskatoon and the RM is not compromised. Both municipalities recognized the development pressure in the area and the need to balance the economic interests of both municipalities. The long standing relationship between the two municipalities is built on this mutual understanding.

Existing or future development in this area is not intended to compete with development in city limits, but rather provide a hybrid mix of land uses that could provide opportunities for somewhat denser development that would not traditionally be seen in a rural municipality. The potential for more intense development was acknowledged during previous boundary alteration negotiations between the two municipalities, and is consistent with the principles of the Regional Plan, which emphasize the importance of development opportunities for all partners in the region.

As a requirement of the Regional Plan, more detailed land use planning will be done for the Grasswood Node as part of the South East Concept Plan. The South East Concept Plan, is the next level of detailed planning needed in this area to further refine land use and servicing needs to facilitate development. The recommendations of the Grasswood Report will be considered during the development of this plan, as well as during the preparation of the Regional Plan bylaws.

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The Growth Plan

The Growth Plan's focus is planning for sustainable growth and moving around, primarily within Saskatoon city limits to a population of a half a million. The Growth Plan calls for a shift toward a balance of suburban growth and infill growth and between modes of transportation.

The core Growth Plan themes comprise corridor growth, and a reconfigured transit network oriented around Bus Rapid Transit. Supporting initiatives include the Active Transportation Plan, the Employment Areas Study, and Financing Growth.

The scope of these themes and initiatives is generally less applicable to a rural development context. Consideration of development on the periphery, in particular those areas to the south of Saskatoon, outside city limits, was not in the plan's scope. As a result, the Growth Plan and supporting initiatives do not identify future transit or active transportation linkages to these areas. Further, the Growth Plan does not include any analysis or any conclusions about growth that may occur in rural areas and the implications on city growth objectives this may have.

The Growth Plan does not specifically inform the Grasswood Study or vice versa as each project was done to meet a specific jurisdictional need. However, as the development and implementation of the Growth Plan and Regional Plan have proceeded, efforts have been made and will continue to be made to integrate information of common interest through regular communication within the City Administration and between the City and its regional partners.

Options to the Recommendation

There are no options to the recommendation.

Public and/or Stakeholder Involvement

Public engagement will be done during the development of the South East Concept Plan. Additional opportunities for engagement will be available during the development of the Regional Plan bylaws. Business organizations such as the Business Improvement Districts will be invited to participate in any engagement opportunities.

Financial Implications

There are no immediate financial implications as a result of this report. The City has committed budget as part of Capital Project No. 2605 Regional Plan Implementation to begin work on the South East Concept Plan; proceeding with the project is subject to RM budget approval. Implementing the South East Concept Plan recommendations, including any potential servicing strategy, will require separate financial consideration. Plans and funding sources will be identified in future reports related to that project.

Other Considerations/Implications

There are no policy, financial, environmental, privacy, or CPTED implications or considerations. A communication plan is not required at this time.

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Due Date for Follow-up and/or Project Completion

The recommendations outlined in Grasswood Study will be further considered during the Regional Plan bylaws, expected to be completed in 2019, and the future South East Concept Plan.

Public Notice

Public Notice pursuant to Section 3 of Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice Policy, is not required.

Report Approval

Written by: Dana Kripki, Senior Planner, Regional Partnerships
Reviewed by: Lesley Anderson, Director of Planning and Development Division
Approved by: Lynne Lacroix, General Manager, Community Services Department

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