

Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment

ISSUE

Sector Plans are periodically reviewed to ensure they remain consistent with the overall vision of the City of Saskatoon, as well as respond to changing market conditions. The Blairmore Sector Plan was previously approved in 2011. Since this time, the City of Saskatoon has introduced Bylaw No. 9700, Official Community Plan, 2020, and other policy documents, necessitating an amendment. The amended Blairmore Sector Plan is a comprehensive report outlining high-level strategies for land use, open space, servicing, environmental considerations, mobility and phasing.

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 the proposed Blairmore Sector Plan, as outlined in this report, be approved.

BACKGROUND

Sector Plans provide a development framework for future growth and are based on policies contained within [Bylaw No. 9700, Official Community Plan, 2020](#). They typically encompass an area that could include 6 to 10 residential neighbourhoods and their supporting amenities. They outline the location, size and phasing of future neighbourhoods, employment areas, parks and significant natural areas, as well as high-level servicing, transportation and utility plans for the area. *The Planning and Development Act, 2007*, requires that sector plans and any amendments be adopted by City Council.

The current Blairmore Sector Plan (Plan) was approved by City Council on March 7, 2011. Since that time, the City of Saskatoon has adopted Bylaw No. 9700, Official Community Plan, 2020, and the P4G District Official Community Plan was created and endorsed. A variety of other City of Saskatoon (City) policies, bylaws and plans have been created or amended and new development pressures have been experienced in the Blairmore Sector (Sector).

Proposed amendments will ensure alignment with current City policies, plans and bylaws, while also aligning the Sector boundary with the current city boundary and the P4G District Official Community Plan. Further, the southwest area of the city is one of the last remaining greenfield areas within city limits that has not been included in a Sector Plan. Due to the small size of this area, as well as its adjacency and connection to the Sector, it has been incorporated into the Plan, allowing for a comprehensive plan for this entire area.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Location

The Sector is located on the far west side of Saskatoon, comprising 2,935 hectares (7,252 acres) of land. It includes the existing Blairmore Urban Centre and the Kensington neighbourhood, but predominantly consists of undeveloped land.

Vision and Land Use Principles

The Plan provides a vision for how the Sector will develop into a series of interconnected, human-scale neighbourhoods which feature a variety of housing forms and a mixture of land uses, along with employment areas, a vibrant mixed-use commercial area and a comprehensively planned industrial area.

The vision for the Sector will be achieved through the embodiment of the following land use planning principles:

1. Support sustainable and compact community development including mixed-use, transportation options and transit supportive development;
2. Support the development of regional employment and retail businesses;
3. Conserve and integrate nature and environmental sustainability;
4. Promote an inclusive process that supports design excellence and reflects Indigenous places and spaces; and
5. Support designs that reduce opportunities for crime and improve residents' feelings of safety.

Land Use

The Plan includes direction for future residential neighbourhoods and employment areas that will be constructed over the course of several decades. At full build-out, the Sector is projected to accommodate approximately 77,586 residents and 21,289 jobs.

Much of the Sector is intended for residential neighbourhood development. To provide new commercial opportunities, an expansion of the Urban Centre is proposed west of the current Blairmore Urban Centre. A mixed-use Corridor Growth Area and a transit village are proposed along 22nd Street West to coincide with a future extension of the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) network. A district village is planned for the west side of the future Elk Point neighbourhood.

Light industrial and potentially a business park are proposed west of Montgomery Place, in alignment with the [Montgomery Place Local Area Plan](#) (LAP). A buffering strategy will be required for any development where light industrial or business park may interface with residential.

Natural Areas

A Natural Area Screening was performed, which included a desktop study of the entire area, as well as field studies of the Richard St. Barbe Baker and George Genereux Urban Regional Park afforestation areas with direction to conserve both. The Sector includes six wetland complexes; most notably, the West Swale complex. Conservation or naturalization is proposed for the wetlands, wherever possible.

Mobility and Transportation

The Plan includes the introduction of a future extension of the BRT, further out 22nd Street West, to be constructed as the Sector builds out. Two future BRT stations are proposed beyond the currently planned western terminus of the red line.

In addition to upgrades to the existing road network, new arterial and collector roads to serve the transportation needs of future neighbourhoods will be required. It is proposed that the access road to the CN Chappell Yards be moved further west, in alignment with the Montgomery Place LAP.

A pedestrian and cyclist network is proposed, following the guidance of the [Active Transportation Plan](#).

Servicing

Stormwater infrastructure will use a natural systems approach, utilizing the natural functions of existing wetlands for stormwater management. To allow for settlement and filtration, forebays will be required wherever stormwater enters existing wetlands. As the low point in the Sector, the West Swale is expected to play a role in stormwater management. The Plan includes a requirement for hydrogeological and ecological field studies, to be led or directed by the City, prior to the approval of any Concept Plan, which includes the swale as part of its stormwater plan. If the swale is included in a stormwater plan, an outlet pipe will be required to carry excess water out of the wetland complex during sustained periods of high precipitation, as the area has been prone to flooding during wet years.

Development west of Neault Road will necessitate a new lift station and force main to direct sanitary sewage away from the Sector to the Wastewater Treatment Plant. Water distribution will rely on a combination of connections to existing water infrastructure, a new connection to the Water Treatment Plant along 22nd Street West and a future water reservoir to service the later stages of development.

Phasing

After the substantial completion of the Kensington neighbourhood, development will progress to the northeast portion in the future Elk Point neighbourhood. The next phases will be developed between Neault Road and the West Swale, progressing south to north. Areas west of the West Swale will be the last residential neighbourhoods in the Sector to be developed. The proposed light industrial and/or business park will be developed no earlier than the time at which future neighbourhoods to the north have been serviced.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

To provide servicing and access for future city growth, the Sector will require incremental investment in infrastructure over the course of its development. Many of the infrastructure costs are funded through prepaid service rates imposed on development to cover the cost of direct and off-site services, as allowed under the *Planning and Development Act, 2007*. Other necessary infrastructure may be partially funded or unfunded; therefore, Administration will work to identify and secure funding sources which would typically include changes to prepaid service rates, special assessments, developer contributions and senior government funding. In principle, infrastructure which has a direct benefit to a Sector, rather than a more general city-wide benefit, is to be funded through the development of the Sector.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Triple Bottom Line Implications

A Triple Bottom Line review was completed. A variety of environmental, social and economic impacts and opportunities were identified. Key implications include:

Environmental

- The Plan formally proposes conservation of the two afforestation areas.
- Existing wetlands are to be conserved or naturalized, wherever possible.
- Natural Area Screenings will be required to be completed for future Concept Plans. Completed hydrogeological and ecological field studies are required for the entirety of the West Swale.
- Forebays will be required where stormwater enters existing wetlands.
- Greenfield development will replace much of the existing conditions in the Sector. Most of these areas have already been impacted by decades of agricultural activities.
- The Plan is supportive of the City's transportation mode share goals. A future extension of the BRT network, surrounded by a dense, mixed-use Corridor Growth Area, will be included. An active transportation network will provide pedestrian and cyclist connections throughout.

Social

- The Plan supports a diversity of housing sizes, types and ownership tenures. Future Concept Plans are encouraged to include provisions for affordable housing and are required to identify locations of residential care homes.
- Direction is provided for the creation of parks, schools and community facilities in future neighbourhoods.

Economic

- The Sector is expected to support upwards of 21,289 jobs at full build-out.

COMMUNICATIONS AND ENGAGEMENT

Through the City's Engage Page, a stakeholder engagement initiative was held during the summer of 2022. This focused on obtaining feedback from utility providers, adjacent community associations, neighbouring municipalities, environmental and recreation groups and other interested parties. This stakeholder engagement resulted in 37 questionnaire responses and two emails.

A public engagement initiative was held during the summer of 2023, through the City's Engage Page, and focused on the general public and landowners. The public engagement resulted in 70 questionnaire responses and 6 emails or phone calls. Stakeholders were given an opportunity to request meetings with City staff, which led to meetings with two separate landowners. Feedback from the stakeholder and public engagement initiatives was incorporated into the Plan. A summary of the engagement findings is included within Appendix 1, pages 9 to 11.

An Indigenous engagement initiative was held in late 2023, focusing on all First Nations with Urban Reserves or Land Holdings in the City or near the Sector, as well as multiple First Nations and Métis organizations who represent interests of Indigenous peoples in the area. Indigenous engagement resulted in two requests for project updates during key milestones.

Multiple rounds of internal engagement were held throughout the process to ensure the Plan was consistent with policies and goals of various City departments. Final endorsement of the Plan was received from Directors (or designates) from the following departments: Community Standards, Construction and Design, Finance, Indigenous Initiatives, Parks, Planning and Development, Recreation and Community Development, Saskatoon Light and Power, Saskatoon Transit, Saskatoon Water, Sustainability, Technical Services, Transportation and Water and Waste Operations.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Policy No. C01-021, Public Notice requires public notice for sector plans. Once this application has been considered by the Municipal Planning Commission, it will be advertised and a date for a Public Hearing will be set. A notice will be placed in The StarPhoenix at least seven days prior to the Public Hearing.

NEXT STEPS

The Plan was presented to Meewasin's Board of Directors for approval on June 14, 2024. After it is considered by the Municipal Planning Commission, the Plan will be forwarded to a Public Hearing for City Council consideration.

Sector Plans are future-oriented, preliminary planning studies. No specific timeframe for development is applied to them. If approved by City Council, the policies outlined in the Plan will guide future development in the Sector. Landowners in identified areas can begin to develop Concept Plans and the City can prepare budget and work plans based on the submission of future Concept Plans.

APPENDICES

1. Blairmore Sector Plan

REPORT APPROVAL

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SP/2024/PD/PDCS/Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment/gs