Corridor Growth - Brownfield Renewal Strategy – Plan Framework Approval

ISSUE
Council approval of the proposed Brownfield Renewal Strategy - Plan Framework (Plan Framework) is required to guide the next phase of the Brownfield Renewal Strategy project and is a prerequisite for Administration to request release of approved Green Municipal Funds from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

RECOMMENDATION
That the Standing Policy Committee on Planning, Development and Community Services recommend to Council that:

1. The proposed Plan Framework arising from the Brownfield Renewal Strategy be approved; and

2. The report be forwarded to the Saskatoon Environmental Advisory Committee (SEAC) for information.

BACKGROUND
As a subproject of the Growth Plan to Half a Million, which includes the Bus Rapid Transit system and Corridor Growth initiative, the Brownfield Renewal Strategy (Strategy) is funded through the Public Transit Infrastructure Fund (PTIF). City Council approved direction and funding model of the Strategy at its meeting held on June 26, 2017.

At is meeting held on August 28, 2017, City Council approved award of environmental consulting services to Dillon Consulting (Dillon) to align with eligibility requirements of external funding programs, such as the PTIF and Green Municipal Fund. On August 7, 2018, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities announced approval of Saskatoon’s Green Municipal Fund application, which covers up to 50% of eligible costs of the Dillon contract. A condition of the funding is to have a brownfield plan framework approved by City Council.

DISCUSSION/ ANALYSIS
A brownfield is defined as a site or property that is abandoned, vacant, derelict or underutilized that may have actual or perceived contamination. This definition is adapted from the one used by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and is consistent with the definition historically used by the City of Saskatoon (City).

The overall goal of the Strategy is to reduce the number of brownfields by increasing development potential within targeted areas of the city. This will reduce the amount of pollution within the city, improve community cohesion and aesthetics as well as promote infill development.
Key components of work completed to date have focused on gaining a better understanding of the brownfield landscape along the proposed Bus Rapid Transit corridors, their redevelopment potential and the opportunities and options for a brownfield framework. This information is presented in the following deliverables:

1. Brownfield Inventory and Targeted Assessments;
2. Brownfield Redevelopment Potential Scoring Tool; and

Details regarding the deliverables are available in Appendix 1 – Dillon Consulting Deliverable Overview.

**Stakeholder Engagement**

Between March 2018 and March 2019, the Brownfield Renewal Strategy team participated in a number of engagement events, in conjunction with Plan for Growth and Corridor Planning projects. A brief summary of the feedback received from engagement is available within Appendix 2 - Engagement Summary. The feedback influenced the Plan Framework objectives and components.

**Proposed Plan Framework**

The proposed objectives of the Plan Framework are to:

1) demonstrate leadership in brownfield renewal;
2) provide and maintain educational materials about brownfields in order to assist in identifying and addressing potential concerns;
3) reduce the incremental environmental barriers to infill development that relate to brownfields;
4) establish an incentive program to encourage remediation and redevelopment of brownfield sites;
5) align brownfield incentives with existing infill policies and programs; and
6) establish criteria to allow for interim use of brownfield sites.

Components of the Plan Framework are described in the table below. It includes various policies, programs and actions that can be further evaluated, developed and implemented as part of the overall Strategy.

Preliminary actions will include proposed brownfield policy language within the Official Community Plan, the provision of up-to-date brownfield information to the public and the creation of a brownfield inventory for tracking purposes. Other components will be developed in a way they can be targeted to areas that have been identified as a priority for development.
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<th>Proposed Component</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Official Community Plan</td>
<td>The Administration will draft brownfield provisions for the Official Community Plan for City Council’s consideration. This will embed support for brownfield redevelopment into the foundational policy document for the City.</td>
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| Brownfield Program | A Brownfield Program will be developed to include, at a minimum:  
• Upkeep and expansion of the brownfield inventory for use as monitoring or performance indicator of potential future brownfield programs;  
• Creation of a new brownfield guidance document and provision of online brownfield resource information; and  
• Continued membership with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Leadership in Brownfield Renewal program.  
Education and awareness will be the foundation of the Plan Framework. Materials created will be general in nature and will apply to development of brownfields at any location. |
| Incentives | Establishing criteria that may allow for financial assistance in the form of tax abatements, study grants, and tax increment financing for brownfield sites within select corridor planning implementation areas.  
This component could be implemented for specific priority sites or areas, initially according to areas targeted by the Corridor Planning Program, with the opportunity to expand to other key redevelopment areas in the future. |
| Environmental Assistance | Contaminated soil disposal can be cost prohibitive for brownfield redevelopment. Some contaminated materials are transported long distances to licensed facilities, as there are limited local options. The City could evaluate a solution to this problem in order to alleviate these costs by potentially partnering with industry to commission a local soil disposal/treatment facility. |
| Community Stewardship and Recognition | This could include the creation of a community stewardship and recognition policy intended to motivate good stewardship from brownfield owners, operators and managers. The policy may outline guidelines for brownfield site management, and include a recognition program for successful projects. This could provide an opportunity to showcase the benefits of redeveloping brownfields. |
Opportunity Seeking

An internal process could be considered where the Administration may seek out and evaluate brownfield redevelopment opportunities. This may include developing an assessment matrix the City utilizes to determine if certain brownfields should be purchased, remediated, or redeveloped to further the goals of the Growth Plan. The combination of this aspect along with improved internal information may lead to the identification of further brownfield redevelopment areas or zones in which the Plan Framework could expand. This may also provide the ability to pilot certain components of the Plan Framework as catalyst sites for redevelopment. This component could initially focus on corridor areas, and then expand accordingly.

Interim Use

This would allow for temporary use of brownfield sites for a defined period of time. Amendments to the Zoning Bylaw would be required in this instance to permit certain land uses on an interim basis while development opportunities shift. This could initially be applied within the corridor study area or perhaps focus on priority implementation areas.

Financial Implications

The City received funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities for two separate Green Municipal Fund programs: Brownfield Plan and Brownfield Feasibility Study. The Brownfield Plan portion covered the completion of the Brownfield Renewal Strategy and Incentive Program Recommendations Report, brownfield inventory and scoring tool as well as general project advisory work done by Dillon Consulting. Prior to these funds being released, a plan framework must be approved by City Council.

The Brownfield Feasibility Study portion covers the completion of the soil assessments and the ensuing soil management plans. City Council approval is not required for the release of the $56,600. Administration will proceed with the funding release request in the summer of 2019.

Work associated with the Brownfield Renewal Strategy is funded by Capital Project 2541 – Growth Plan to Half a Million.

NEXT STEPS

With City Council approval, the Plan Framework components will be further evaluated to determine business, operations, and policy implications. The Administration will prepare a subsequent report with detailed options for each of the Plan Framework components with recommended levels of support for each. Approximate timing of this report will be fall 2019. Staffing needs for implementation of the Plan will be determined based upon the components approved and the level of investment desired by City Council.

APPENDICES

1. Dillon Consulting Deliverable Overview
2. Engagement Summary
Report Approval

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