

L003 : East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment



Corporate NO: L003

Report COUNCIL DATE: March 4, 2002

REGULAR COUNCIL – LAND USE			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	February 27, 2002
FROM:	General Manager, Planning & Development	FILE:	6520-20
SUBJECT:	East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment		

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Approve the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2) as documented in Appendix III as the basis for guiding future development in the area;
2. Instruct staff to bring forward amendments to the Official Community Plan and East Panorama Ridge Local Area Plan concurrently with rezoning applications, based on the land use designations in the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2); and
3. Instruct staff to complete, in a timely manner, the acquisition of a portion of the property at 5400 - 148 Street for park purposes, as generally illustrated in the Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2).

INTENT

The intent of this report is to provide information about and obtain Council approval for, an amendment (Option 2) to the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan.

DISCUSSION

Background

In spring and early summer of 2000, the Planning and Development Department undertook a planning process for the East Panorama Ridge area (Appendix I), including extensive public consultation that resulted in the development of a draft land use concept plan for the area. On July 24, 2000, Council approved the draft concept plan known as East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan (Option 1A). The plan provided for the future redesignation of approximately 15.3 ha (38 acres) of the area lands from Suburban to Business Park, thereby increasing the industrial-designated lands in East Panorama Ridge from 32.7 ha (81 acres) to 48.1 ha (119 acres) (Appendix II). The plan also recognized the need for a reasonable interface with the adjacent residential neighbourhood to the west. This was to be accomplished, in part, through the restriction of vehicular access between the industrial and residential area and establishment of specific design controls and landscape buffer requirements, for the new developments in the East Panorama Ridge business area.

Subsequent to Council's adoption of the Concept Plan, City staff completed a public tender process for the sale of the City-owned lands in the area. As a result of input during this process, a number of issues were identified, with respect to the Concept Plan, that initiated a further review of the Plan. The issues included:

- Consideration for the possible expansion of the Excellent Ice Arena;
- Completion of a detailed technical feasibility study of the proposed internal road network to address topographical constraints;
- Identification of possible business park sites based on the final internal road design;
- The need for boundary adjustments to and possible expansion of, Bob Rutledge Park; and
- Possible elimination of the Landscape Buffer along Highway 10 adjacent to the industrial/business park uses.

On this basis, staff initiated a review and Concept Plan Amendment process in accordance with the procedures adopted by Council for amending Neighbourhood Concept Plans. The results of the Concept Plan Amendment Process, including the results of the public consultation component and implementation initiatives, are discussed in the remainder of this report.

Concept Plan Amendment Issues

Excellent Ice Arena Expansion

The owner of the Excellent Ice Arena (Lark Group), which currently leases land from the City at 15000- 54A Avenue (location illustrated as "Ice Rink" on Appendix I), has recently requested that the City lease additional land to for the arena to allow for future expansion of the facility to the west. The area that was identified to accommodate the expansion is approximately 0.43 ha (1.07 acres). The expansion, if consummated, will result in increasing the amount of recreational facilities in the area and allow improvement to the internal road network. Negotiations are continuing with the arena owners and a report on this matter will be forwarded to Council in due course.

Internal Road Network Adjustments

A detailed feasibility analysis of the proposed internal road network has been completed to

address topographical constraints in the area and the technical requirements in relation to street design and site access. The following minor changes to the internal road network of the Concept Plan are proposed:

- The proposed extension of 54A Avenue, west of the ice arena, has been adjusted to address the steep topography at this location. The new road alignment will encroach slightly on the north-easterly corner of Bob Rutledge Park.
- An emergency access to serve the future business park area was previously shown on Highway 10, but has been relocated between 54A Avenue and 148 Street, following a more detailed review of topography and the proposed road layout. The previous location was less desirable from a technical point of view and more costly due to the elevation of properties fronting Highway 10. The proposed location will utilize an existing gravel driveway and will function also as a pedestrian access to the park. The access will be permanently gated to restrict access only to emergency personnel and equipment and, therefore, will not result in increased traffic on 148 Street and the neighbourhood to the west. Additional details on this matter are provided below.
- The location for the future road (Panorama Drive), that extends south from 54A Avenue, has been shifted to the east to allow for a better configuration of lots for business park development and provide improved access to future industrial business park sites to the south. The proposed road will be located on what is presently the ice arena parking lot and will be achieved as part of the arena expansion proposal through of a property exchange.

Bob Rutledge Park Adjustment/Expansion

The proposed alignment for the extension of 54A Avenue will result in a minor encroachment on the northeast corner of the park. Additionally, a further adjustment is proposed along the easterly boundary of the park to allow for the creation of more functional business park sites, immediately east of the park on the south side of 54A Avenue. Based on these adjustments, approximately 0.55 ha (1.4 acres) of land, previously shown as part of the park, is proposed to be redesignated to accommodate 54A Avenue and for future business park use. This adjustment will not impact the existing tennis courts located at the southeast corner of the park.

To offset this loss of park space along the easterly boundary of the park, it is proposed that the City acquire, for park purposes, the northerly 0.8 ha (2 acres) of the property located at 5400-148 Street, on the south side of the existing park site and consolidate this site with the existing park. The proposed park acquisition will result in a net increase in total open space in the area of approximately 0.25 Ha (0.62 Acres). The land proposed for acquisition also contains substantial vegetation of considerable value and will enhance passive recreational opportunities in the area and provide a better park resource for neighbourhood residents.

Redesignation of 5400- 148 Street

This property is located immediately south of the existing park and was previously identified for Suburban residential development. However, as noted above, the northerly portion of this property is proposed to be acquired for a southerly expansion of Bob Rutledge Park. The remaining southerly portion of the site is physically isolated from the future park area by a significant break in topography and cannot be accessed from the north. As a result, the southerly portion of the site is proposed to be redesignated to Business Park use and will be accessed and developed in coordination with the adjacent parcels to the south and east.

A landscape buffer is proposed to be established along the westerly boundary of this site, as a condition of development to Business Park uses, to protect the adjacent Suburban designated property to the west.

Elimination of Landscape Buffer along Highway 10

The current Concept Plan for the area includes a 15 metre (50 foot) landscape buffer along Highway 10. While landscape buffers along highways are necessary to provide noise and visual protection for adjacent residential uses, they are not typically as critical for commercial or industrial uses. Further, businesses often rely on visual exposure to adjacent highways to attract customers. The need for a landscape buffer along Highway 10 is further mitigated by the fact that strict design controls will be imposed on future business park developments in this area at the development review stage. The Zoning By-law requires buildings to be setback 7.5 m (25 ft.) from Highway No. 10 and prescribes, as a minimum, a 3 m (10 ft.) wide landscaped strip, including ground cover and trees, along all boundaries of the site. In addition, business park development along Highway No. 10 will be subject to a Development Permit and, thus, will have to comply with design guidelines adopted by Council under the Official Community Plan. These guidelines will ensure a site and building design that is sensitive to surrounding development and provide an appropriate landscaped interface along the Highway. On this basis, the specific requirement for a landscape buffer along Highway 10 has been eliminated.

February 7, 2002 Open House

The proposed amendments to the East Panorama Concept Plan (Option 2) were presented for public review at an Open House held on February 7, 2002. Detailed information on the proposed amendments was made available to the public prior to the meeting. Notices of the Open House were included in the local newspaper and distributed by direct mail to the owners of lots in the surrounding area and to the East Panorama Ridge Ratepayers Association. Approximately 50 people attended the Open House. Attendees were able to view display boards that illustrated the proposed amendments and were provided with information packages on the proposed changes and the Concept Plan amendment process.

Survey questionnaires were distributed to attendees of the Open House and were also made available for pickup at City Hall during the week following the Open House. Fifteen completed questionnaires were submitted to the Planning AND Development Department.

The following is a summary of the primary areas of comments and concerns raised by the attendees and survey respondents, regarding the proposed amendments, together with the Planning and Development Department response to each in italics:

- Business Park Uses:

A few residents expressed opposition to the expansion of industrial business park uses, approved previously by Council (Option 1A). Concerns raised included the following:

- The existing Official Community Plan should be respected;
- Suburban residential development is more appropriate for the area;
- A larger residential buffer zone is needed between residential areas and industry;
- Industrial warehouses will destroy the residential character of the area.

In July 2000 Council endorsed the East Panorama Concept Plan as a basis for guiding future development in the are, and instructed staff to bring forward development applications and Local Area and Official Community Plan amendments, based on this plan. The approved plan proposed a sensitive interface with the adjacent residential neighbourhood to the west through completion of residential lots on the east side of 148 Street, restriction of vehicular access between the industrial and residential area and establishment of specific building design controls and landscape buffer requirements along the interface boundary. The amended plan (Option 2) maintains these requirements in accordance with the previous Concept Plan approved by Council.

- Transportation:

Several residents are opposed to the relocation of the emergency access connection from Highway No. 10 to 148 Street. Some of the reasons identified include concerns about the potential for this access to become a full road in the future and the impact of emergency vehicle traffic on the neighbourhood.

The concerns regarding the need to separate future business park traffic from residential traffic, west of 148 Street, were addressed previously through the establishment of strict vehicular traffic restrictions between the industrial and residential area. These access restrictions remain in place and are not affected by the proposed amendments. There are no plans to remove these restrictions by creating a through-road at the location of the emergency access. The proposed amendment is intended to address safety issues and the need for emergency vehicle access to the area.

The Engineering Department has reviewed the possible alternative locations for the emergency access for future business park sites in the area, in consultation with the Fire Department. The following issues were considered in the review of the proposed emergency access location on 148 Street versus the previous location shown on Highway No. 10:

- *The 148 Street location will provide the most direct route to the geographic centre of the business park;*
- *The 148 St. location has much better access grades, will be wholly within a City right-of-way, will function also as a park/pedestrian access route and will contain City services/utilities;*
- *The Fire Department has raised concerns about the ability of large fire vehicles to negotiate the steeper access from Highway No. 10; and*
- *The Highway No. 10 access would be located on private property, which could limit the ability for full-time accessibility as an emergency route, due to concerns about security for private industrial properties and the need for access restrictions and security fencing on these sites.*

As a result, the Engineering Department has concluded that the proposed location for the emergency access off 148 Street is the most desirable from the perspective of long-term accessibility, security, safety and overall cost. The proposed emergency access will be permanently gated with barriers that are impassable to vehicular traffic and may be utilized only by pedestrians or, very infrequently, by emergency vehicles. As such, the proposed location of this restricted access is not expected to impact the adjacent neighbourhood.

- Open Space/Buffers:

Most residents indicated support for the proposed park acquisition (northerly portion of 5400-

148 Street). However, several residents raised concern about the proposed park adjustment, including the loss of trees along the easterly park boundary, increased proximity and visual intrusion of industrial development east of the park and the need for buffering (landscaping/fencing) along the easterly boundary of the park. Several residents requested that the park acquisition should occur before the road and industrial lands east of the park are developed to ensure no net loss of parkland in the short term. Concerns were also raised that the proposed park access on 54A Avenue will promote undesirable activities in the park, and provide opportunities for crime in the residential neighbourhood west of the park.

The City Landscape Architect reviewed the trees located along the easterly park edge that will be impacted by the adjustment to the park boundary. The results indicated that the majority of the vegetation within this area (deciduous species) is not significant and would likely be impacted by adjacent road and industrial development, even without the proposed adjustment and, thus, would be lost. By contrast, the proposed park acquisition to the south includes substantial vegetation of high quality and value that can be retained over the longer term.

To address the issue of the visual intrusion of future business park uses adjacent to the park, a 6 m (20 foot) landscaped buffer, including perimeter landscaping and fencing, will be required on the adjacent business park site as part of the Development Permit requirement for this site.

With respect to the partial acquisition of 5400- 148 Street for park, the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department identified this acquisition in the Parks Acquisition Master Plan, as a top priority (Priority A) and funding has been allocated from the parkland acquisition program. In accordance with this priority, the City will make an effort to acquire the property in a timely manner. However, the actual timing of the proposed park property will be dependent on the on-going discussions with the owner regarding this partial acquisition. Should 54A Avenue road construction and business park site development occur prior to the park acquisition, actions will be taken to ensure no impact to park users in the short term.

In terms of safety and security in the area, the increased park space and implementation of the business park plan will eliminate undesirable activities, such as motorbikes, on the previously vacant lands and, therefore, enhance the overall quality of the neighbourhood. It is also noted that a City by-law, which stipulates that parks are closed from dusk until dawn, regulates park use and enforcement procedures are followed when necessary.

Implementation of the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan

Amendments to the Official Community Plan and East Panorama Local Area Plan are required to implement the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2). However, the specific details of the plan amendments (final lot dimensions and road locations) are not known at this time and will be determined at the development application stage. Therefore, it is recommended that, instead of introducing a by-law to amend the Official Community Plan at this time, Council should instruct staff to bring forward Official Community Plan and Local Area Plan amendments, concurrently with rezoning applications to be processed, based on the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2).

CONCLUSION

Since the adoption of the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan (Option 1A), a further detailed review of the plan area has been completed. As a result of this review, amendments to the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan (Option 2) are considered necessary to address some technical issues related to road location and topography and opportunities related to the expansion of the existing ice arena, reassessment of landscape buffer requirements for non-residential uses along Highway 10, expansion of Bill Rutledge Park and creation of parcels suitable for business park

development.

A public consultation process has been completed and minor adjustments to the plan have been completed to address issues of concern raised by the public, including the requirement for landscape buffering between the new park boundary and adjacent business park development.

It is recommended that Council approve the East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2) and that staff be authorized to bring forward the necessary Official Community Plan and Local Area Plan amendments, concurrently with future rezoning applications, based on the Amended Concept Plan.

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RCA/kms/saw

Attachments

Appendix I Context and Existing Development Plan

Appendix II Approved East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan (Option 1A)

Appendix III Proposed East Panorama Ridge Concept Plan Amendment (Option 2)

Appendix IV February 7, 2002 Public Open House Results

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