



STAFF REPORT TO COUNCIL

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DATE: October 3, 2022

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning & Development

SUBJECT: Land Area at base of Cranbrook Hill and between 18th Avenue and Ferry Avenue (“Ginter’s Meadow”)

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council DIRECTS Administration to include consideration of the request to remove the proposed Massey Drive and Foothills Boulevard road extensions and designate “Ginter’s Meadow” from 18th Avenue to Ferry Avenue as Parks and Open Space, as part of the review and renewal of the Official Community Plan in 2023.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an overview of *City of Prince George Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011*, and of the process to amend the bylaw as it relates to the resolution of Council passed at the August 15, 2022 Regular Meeting of Council.

BACKGROUND:

Regular Meeting of Council – August 15, 2022

At the August 15, 2022 Regular Meeting of Council, Ginter’s Green Forever appeared as a delegation to discuss the area commonly referred to as “Ginter’s Meadow”, and requested that this area be designated as parkland and to amend the Official Community Plan by removing the projected road extensions of Massey Drive and Foothills Boulevard.

Following the delegation presentation and discussion, Council unanimously resolved:

“That Council DIRECTS Administration to prepare a report to Council regarding information on the process to remove the proposed Massey Drive and Foothills Boulevard road extensions and designate “Ginter’s Meadow” from 18th Avenue to Ferry Avenue as parkland within the “City of Prince George Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011”.

DISCUSSION:

City of Prince George Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011

The Official Community Plan (OCP) establishes a framework for planning and land use in the City of Prince George. The OCP gains its “official” status once Council has adopted it through enactment of a bylaw. The OCP applies to all areas within the City of Prince George jurisdictional boundaries and includes statements and map designations for

residential, commercial, community facility, industrial, agricultural, recreational, and utility land uses, and comprises contextual information, objectives, and policies.

As a critical planning tool, Council, staff and citizens use the OCP to help make decisions on things such as where we locate housing, what our transportation priorities are, which lands we protect from development, how we protect development from hazards, and how we provide services for more sustainable development over the next 15 years.

The OCP is a statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management within the City. Although the OCP does not commit or authorize a municipality to proceed with any project specified in the OCP, and does not have an immediate effect on property rights (i.e. existing zoning regulations continue to apply unless a separate zoning bylaw amendment is adopted), the OCP can have consequences that may increase the regulatory burden of developing a property (e.g., designation of development permit areas) and may assist decision makers to determine what is in the public interest.

The *Local Government Act* stipulates that all bylaws enacted or works undertaken by Council must be consistent with the OCP once it is adopted. An OCP, however, is not intended to be a static document, but should adapt to new trends within society and respond to changing circumstances. As such, following appropriate public consultation and careful consideration by Council, policies and land use designations in an OCP may be revised by an amending bylaw pursuant to provisions outlined within the *Local Government Act*.

The policies, schedules and maps in an OCP are not intended to function as a zoning map. Instead the OCP includes present and long term designation schedules and maps. The Zoning Bylaw and zoning maps, in contrast, permit, regulate and limit land use, density, buildings and other matters, and include significantly greater detail.

Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011 – Schedule B-6: Future Land Use

The area of lands located at the base of Cranbrook Hill between 18th Avenue and Ferry Avenue are designated as road dedication, Parks and Open Space, and Rural Resource.

Road Dedication

Road dedication areas are intended for existing and/or future road infrastructure (i.e. roads, boulevards, sidewalks) and for public and/or private utilities to be located within. The road dedication through this area includes surface infrastructure (i.e. open ditches, storm pond, hydro) and buried infrastructure (water, sanitary sewer, storm, fibre optics).

Parks and Open Space

The Parks and Open Space designation encompasses a broad range of areas that may include public land held for a special use, protected environmental areas and buffer strips (OCP Policy 8.6.12). Parks and Open Space areas should be acquired and developed in locations generally indicated in Schedule B-9: Parks and Trails (OCP Policy 8.6.4), and where possible should be maintained in a naturalized state to support natural habitat values and reduce operational budgets (OCP Policy 8.6.3).

Rural Resource

The Rural Resource designation includes areas used for agriculture, forestry, and resource extraction activities that are important in the long-term health of the regional economy. It also encompasses natural open spaces, environmentally sensitive areas, and natural hazard areas in which development is restricted or prohibited. The Rural Resource designation is intended to protect resource lands that are valuable in the long term (OCP Objective 8.3.25).

Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011 – Schedule B-10: 15 Year Road Network and Map 3: 100 Year Major Road Network

Schedule B-10: 15 Year Road Network reflects both the existing and planned future road links expected to be required to accommodate the city growth and development within the next 15 years. The projected road links are based on transportation modeling and a Transportation Network Planning Study that occurred at the time the OCP was produced in 2011. The actual road network improvements will depend on how closely city growth matches the projections used in the model. The road links are classified into:

- Provincial Highways (MoTI jurisdiction): intended to connect Prince George to other regions of the province and beyond.
- Arterial Roads: intended for the movement of large volumes of people and goods between different areas of the city;
- Major and Minor Collector Roads: intended for the movement of people and goods between local roads and the arterial road network, while providing some degree of access to adjacent properties; and
- Local Roads: intended primarily to provide access to adjacent properties.

Major road links which are expected to be required beyond the 15 year horizon are shown in the Map 3 – 100 Year Major Road Network, which is generally taken from the Major Street Network Plan for Prince George.

The extension of Massey Drive and Foothills Boulevard are noted on Schedule B-10 and Map 3, and are classified as arterial roads.

Amending an Official Community Plan

Since the OCP is not a static document, it can be amended with an amending bylaw. The amending bylaw addresses the contents of the OCP (i.e. wording, maps, and schedules) and is presented to Council with recommendations for consideration respecting the readings of the amending bylaw, public consultation, and may involve some technical reporting. An amendment to an OCP is a public process which means a public hearing is held prior to 3rd Reading of the amending bylaw. The sequence of steps for adopting an amendment to the OCP are detailed below.

Sequence of Adoption for the Official Community Plan

Pursuant to the *Local Government Act*, *City of Prince George Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011* was adopted by considering the Financial Plan, Solid Waste Management Plan and Strategic Framework. Therefore, any amending bylaws to the Official Community Plan must also consider these plans.

Section 477 of the *Local Government Act* identifies the adoption procedures for the development, repeal or amendment to the Official Community Plan bylaw. This sets in motion the following sequence which identifies the *Local Government Act* requirements and the City's own procedures:

1. After a bylaw has been given first reading the following must occur:
 - a. Consideration of the plan in conjunction with the current Financial Plan;
 - b. Consideration of the plan in conjunction with the current Regional District Solid Waste Management Plan;
 - c. Management Plan;
 - d. Consideration of any other plan and policies that the local government considers relevant (i.e. Strategic Framework for a Sustainable Prince George);
 - e. Referral to the Agricultural Land Commission if the Plan applies to Agricultural Land Reserve land (not applicable to these applications);
 - f. Second Reading;
 - g. Public notice of the Public Hearing; and
 - h. Public Hearing.
2. Third Reading of the bylaw
3. Final Reading and Adoption of the bylaw

The *Local Government Act* requires that each reading of the OCP bylaw must receive an affirmative vote of a majority of all Council members. The adoption procedures found in Section 477 of the *Local Government Act* are required, and should any changes occur to the bylaw, the sequence of steps would be repeated.

Amendments to the OCP can take several months to process, depending on the complexity of the amendment and the forms of public engagement conducted.

Renewal of Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 8383, 2011

Administration notes the OCP is due for renewal. An implementation roadmap for the 2023 OCP renewal process is intended to be presented to Council before the end of this year. The OCP renewal process will involve extensive public engagement and consultation to ensure as many of our residents who wish to share their thoughts and vision for our growing community can be heard. Some general topics that we will be looking for feedback on include land development, social development, economy, and the environment. The primary objective of the OCP Update Project is to renew and align the OCP with current land use planning and infrastructure considerations to meet the needs of a growing City.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

The renewal of the OCP is identified within the 2022-2024 Strategic Plan under City Government and Infrastructure focus area. As a general rule, an OCP is reviewed annually and revised every 5–10 years. The current OCP was adopted in 2011 and is due for review and renewal.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

This report is in response to a Council resolution passed at the Regular Meeting of Council on August 15, 2022. This report provides Council with an overview of the function and purpose of an OCP, and identifies the land use designations and projected road network for the area located at the base of Cranbrook Hill between 18th Avenue and Ferry Avenue. The report also confirms an OCP can be amended through an amending bylaw, and that the current OCP is due for review and renewal in 2023.

The request to remove the proposed Massey Drive and Foothills Boulevard road extensions and designate “Ginter’s Meadow” from 18th Avenue to Ferry Avenue as Parks and Open Space, is recommended to be considered as part of the review and renewal of the Official Community Plan in 2023.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik
Director of Planning & Development

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting date: October 3, 2022