

Date: November 28, 2024

To: **Mayor and Council**

Name and title: Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

Subject: Civic Core District Concept Plan Options

Applicant: City of Prince George

Location: Civic Core District

Attachment(s): Civic Core District Plan Map
Civic Core District Plan Option 1
Civic Core District Plan Option 2
Staff Report to Council dated November 27, 2023 titled, “Civic Core District Plan – Consultation Summary”
Civic Core District Presentation

Recommendation(s):

That Council RECEIVES FOR INFORMATION the report dated November 28, 2024, from the Director of Planning and Development titled, “Civic Core District Concept Plan Options”.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with concept plan options for the Civic Core District Plan Area (“Plan Area”).

Background:

The Plan Area is comprised of a cluster of city-owned parcels bound by Patricia Boulevard (south), 6th Avenue (north), Canada Games Plaza (west), and City Hall/Veterans Plaza (east). The Plan Area includes several existing civic facilities (i.e. Public Library, Conference and Civic Centre, Two Rivers Art Gallery, Canfor Leisure Pool, City Hall, and Kopar Memorial Arena), as well as a large area of vacant land where the previous Four Seasons Leisure Pool and Fire Hall #1 were once located. The Plan Area was also extended to include the Knights Inn property as the City acquired this property.

Administration conducted public engagement in 2023 to collect feedback from the community on the potential uses for the Plan Area.

On December 18, 2023 Council considered the public engagement/consultation summary (see attached Staff Report to Council dated November 27, 2023) which revealed three (3) key facility types:

1. Mixed-use residential (i.e. housing units above ground floor commercial)
2. Performing arts centre
3. Ice arena

Council passed the following resolution on December 18, 2023:

That Council DIRECTS Administration to procure consultant services to prepare conceptual options and site designs(s) for the Civic Core District Plan area that includes community consultation results and previously identified priorities including arts, culture and arena uses.

This report has been prepared in response to this resolution.

Strategic Priorities:

A plan for the Civic Core District aligns with Council's Strategic Priorities to maximize the quality of life for all residents to create a vibrant civic core, and build a strong, resilient and diverse economy for Prince George. This plan also is consistent with the Smart Growth on the Ground principles to identify and pursue development opportunities that support a vibrant and sustainable downtown. Furthermore, the plan also reinforces the goals of myPG to enhance clear identity and pride to foster a proud community and a strong downtown core.

Discussion:

Following Council's December 18th, 2023 resolution, Administration obtained consultant services to prepare concept plans for the Plan Area.

The purpose of the concept plan is to establish a vision for the Plan Area that reflects existing strategic policy documents, establishes locations for specific uses (i.e. mixed-use residential, performing arts centre, and ice arena), and compliments the existing uses occurring both within, and adjacent to, the Plan Area.

Administration requested the footprint areas for the ice arena and performing arts centre be shown at a maximum extent. The intent is to show that both uses can be accommodated within the Plan Area on a larger scale which would significantly change the landscape, and user experience, of the downtown. Each use can be scaled down from what is shown on the proposed concept plans.

Two (2) conceptual plan options have been prepared for Council's consideration. The concept plans include the mixed-use residential, performing arts centre, and ice arena uses, along with a few other uses, including mixed-use hotel, flex-space, parks and open space, and indicators of pedestrian connectivity between civic buildings.

The flex space is additional space that could accommodate a variety of users for different types of events that may be in conjunction with, or separate from, the uses occurring in the larger buildings. The indicators of pedestrian connectivity could be ground level and/or above ground level (i.e. sky walk infrastructure).

Civic Core District Plan Option 1 and Option 2 are attached to this report and a summary of their key components are noted below:

Civic Core District Plan – Option 1

- The performing arts centre is located on the site of the previous Fire Hall #1
- The ice arena is located on the site of the previous Four Seasons Pool
- Mixed-use residential is on a portion of the site currently occupied by Kopar Memorial Arena
- Mixed-use hotel is on the site currently occupied by Knights Inn
- Flex-space connects the Conference and Civic Centre and ice arena (pedestrian connection still available).
- Parks and open space is located between the performing arts centre and mixed-use residential

Civic Core District Plan – Option 2

- The performing arts centre and mixed-use residential is located on the site of the previous Four Seasons Pool
- The ice arena is located on the site currently occupied by Kopar Memorial Arena
- Mixed-use hotel is on the site currently occupied by Knights Inn
- Flex-space (not shown) could connect the Conference and Civic Centre in similar fashion as shown on Civic Core District Plan – Option 1

It is important to note the proposed options are visions for the Plan Area and would require further technical review with regards to parking, servicing, site-design, etc.

Next Steps:

Administration has prepared the following options for Council's consideration and direction regarding next steps for the Civic Core District Plan process.

Option 1: Council identifies the preferred option and directs Administration to procure consultant services to prepare detailed site design, servicing feasibility studies (i.e. sanitary sewer, water and storm), parking and pedestrian analysis and renderings.

Option 2: Council directs Administration to prepare another conceptual plan as determined by Council with direction on use, location and preferred size of buildings for the Civic Core District Plan.

Option 3: Defer the decision of the Civic Core District Plan to another meeting date that is determined by Council.

Option 4: Council receives the staff report to Council, and does not direct any further action on the Civic Core District Plan.

Financial Implications:

The Civic Core District Plan will incur financial implications from detailed site design to construction. Administration anticipates that costs associated with consultant services to prepare detailed site design, servicing feasibility studies and renderings could be covered with the existing operating budget. However, the overall construction of the new civic buildings will incur significant financial implications to the capital budget.

Summary and conclusion:

As directed by Council on December 18, 2023, Administration has brought forward concept plans for the Civic Core District. Administration is seeking Council's direction on the next step to take with Civic Core District Plan which would be informed by Council's decision on one (1) of the four (4) options provided in this report.

Respectfully Submitted:

Deanna Wasnik, Director of Planning and Development

Prepared by: Mandy Jones, Manager of Development Services

Approved:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2024/12/16