

Staff Report to Council

Planning & Development

FILE: 6480-20-2021

REPORT DATE: February 23, 2022

MEETING DATE: March 01, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Anne Berry, Director of Planning and Development

SUBJECT: City of Maple Ridge Official Community Plan Referral – Lougheed Transit Corridor Area Plan and Development Permit Area Guidelines

CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER REVIEW/APPROVAL:



RECOMMENDATION(S):

THAT Council:

- A. Direct Staff to send to the City of Maple Ridge a response in support of their proposed Official Community Plan amendments as outlined in the Staff Report dated February 23, 2022; OR
- B. Other.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the report is to forward Council an Official Community Plan amendment referral from the City of Maple Ridge regarding the Lougheed Transit Corridor. The proposed amendment incorporates a new local area plan and development permit area guidelines for the Corridor.

☐ Information Report

☐ Decision Report

☒ Direction Report

DISCUSSION

Background:

The City of Maple Ridge has granted first reading to an Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment bylaw that would incorporate a new land use plan and development permit area guidelines for the Lougheed Transit Corridor.

The Lougheed Transit Corridor Area Plan (see figure 1) encompasses land adjacent to and between Lougheed Highway and Dewdney Trunk Road from the Pitt Meadows / Maple Ridge municipal boundary west to 221st Street to the east. In the current Maple Ridge OCP, parcels along the Lougheed Highway are designated “Commercial” and “Urban Residential,” which support a suburban landscape that includes single-family neighbourhoods, shopping centres and car dealerships.

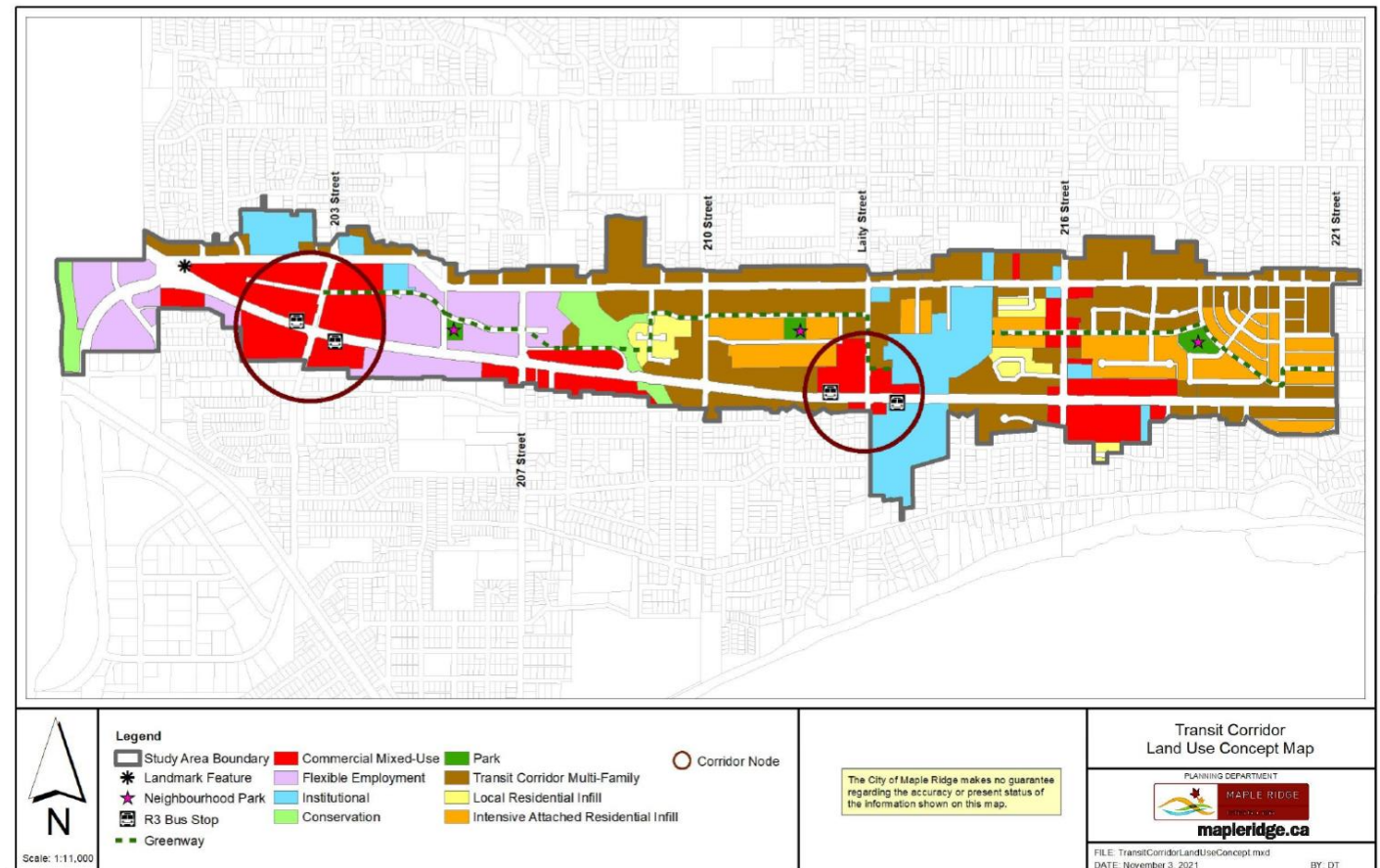


Figure 1: Proposed Lougheed Transit Corridor Land Use Map

The proposed land use plan indicates that the area that borders Pitt Meadows will continue to be an employment area. This is consistent with historical uses, such as big-box stores and car dealerships. This reflects land uses and land use designations in the Pitt Meadows OCP, indicating that areas adjacent to Maple Ridge on the Lougheed Highway are developed and designated for highway commercial uses. Maple Ridge has also indicated a conservation area along the Katzie Slough next to the municipal boundary (behind Canadian Tire).

The draft development permit area guidelines strive to promote built form and landscaping that enhances the pedestrian experience and public spaces. Mixed-use nodes are proposed at Dewdney Trunk Road and Lougheed Highway and the intersection of Lougheed Highway and Laity Street, close to the Ridge-Meadows Hospital. These nodes are intended to create an urban village that offers employment opportunities and multi-family housing.

Key aspects of the proposed Maple Ridge OCP amendment include:

- Introduction of mixed-use buildings at transit nodes (intersection of Dewdney Trunk Road and Lougheed Highway and Lougheed Highway and Laity Street);
- Increase in residential density;
- Land allocated for employment uses, including light industrial, business park, warehousing and distribution;
- Greater density overall, encouraging multi-storey buildings;
- Improved connectivity for transit users, pedestrians and cyclists; and
- New park space and central greenway.

The area plan is based on six guiding principles developed from input through the public consultation process. These six principles are:

1. Rapid-transit stops are mixed-use employment hubs;
2. Mobility choice is enhanced;
3. New built environment is designed at a human scale;
4. Neighbourhoods are safe, diverse, and inclusive;
5. Housing for the needs of the many; and
6. Green spaces connect people and nature.

Relevant Policy, Bylaw or Legislation:

Section 475 of the *Local Government Act* requires that the municipality provide opportunities it considers appropriate for consultation with persons, organizations and authorities and specifically considers that for any municipality that is adjacent to the area covered by the plan.

Analysis:

The Lougheed Highway differs significantly between Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge in terms of the highway design and the land uses. In Pitt Meadows, most of the Lougheed Highway is located within the Agricultural Land Reserve, where development is limited. Residential and commercial development is located east of Harris Road, including commercial retail nodes on Harris Road and near Golden Ears Bridge. Driveway access is minimal through Pitt Meadows, so the highway's traffic can move relatively quickly with few traffic lights within the municipality's boundaries.

In Maple Ridge, the Lougheed Highway is interrupted by more frequent traffic lights and driveways that serve the many commercial businesses and residential areas located along the entire highway length. These more frequent driveways and traffic lights slow the traffic in Maple Ridge significantly compared to the relatively uninterrupted road in Pitt Meadows.

Recent updates to the City of Maple Ridge's Strategic Transportation Plan indicate that while 68% of the vehicle trips are within Maple Ridge, a large portion of all trips travel west of the City, requiring travel through Maple Ridge West and then through Pitt Meadows. Data also reveals

that congestion is increasing in Maple Ridge, with more car trips and limited travel occurring with active modes relative to other municipalities in the region.

Maple Ridge will continue to act as a trip generator and a draw for traffic through Pitt Meadows along the Lougheed Highway and other routes such as Old Dewdney Trunk Road, significantly impacting Pitt Meadows' traffic patterns. Moreover, this effect is anticipated to continue to increase in the coming years: according to Metro Vancouver, Maple Ridge's population will continue to grow by another 40,000 residents by the year 2050.

In this context, locating higher density development and encouraging walkable urban design along the Lougheed Highway is supportable for the following reasons:

- Concentrating density along transit routes means that more people will choose to take transit, and fewer people will choose to drive private cars, thereby mitigating the traffic impact of population growth.
- Increasing ridership numbers will help to ensure continuing transit improvements along the Lougheed Highway that will also benefit Pitt Meadows residents.
- Including a mix of land uses will, in time, encourage and support people to work in the community they live in. In addition, this shift will reduce the number of overall vehicle trips outside of the municipality.

The City of Maple Ridge has identified the Lougheed Highway in their Town Centre and to the west as a Major Transit Growth Corridor (parts of the Lougheed Highway outside of the ALR have also been identified as such) in the draft *Metro 2050* and in Translink's *Transport 2050*. These are areas that have been identified for long-term transit investment. In the context of the Lougheed Highway, transit investment is currently underway in the form of an express bus service (RapidBus) in a dedicated lane; the future could see the construction of light rail or another emerging transit form.

Maple Ridge staff also recommended that they partner with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, TransLink, and the City of Pitt Meadows, to undertake a Lougheed Highway study to determine the ultimate road design and road width to accommodate a dedicated transit lane.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT

- ☒ Principled Governance ☐ Balanced Economic Prosperity ☐ Corporate Excellence
☐ Community Spirit & Wellbeing ☐ Transportation & Infrastructure Initiatives
☐ Not Applicable
-

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- ☒ None ☐ Budget Previously Approved ☐ Referral to Business Planning
☐ Other
-

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

☒ Inform ☐ Consult ☐ Involve ☐ Collaborate ☐ Empower

The public will be informed of Maple Ridge's Official Community Plan Bylaw amendment referral by way of this report.

KATZIE FIRST NATION CONSIDERATIONS

Referral ☐ Yes ☒ No

SIGN-OFFS

Written by:

Dana Parr,
Planner II

Reviewed by:

Alex Wallace,
Manager of Community Development

Approved by:

Anne Berry,
Director of Planning and Development

ATTACHMENT(S):

- A. Letter from Amelia Bowden, Planner 2, City of Maple Ridge, dated January 21, 2021
- B. City of Maple Ridge Staff Report – First Reading, Official Community Plan Amending Bylaw No. 7781-2021 Loughheed Transit Corridor Area Plan and Development Permit Area Guidelines
- C. Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 7781-2021
- D. Loughheed Transit Corridor Area Plan
- E. Loughheed Transit Corridor Development Permit Area Guidelines