



CITY OF VANCOUVER

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: June 9, 2006
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TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: Director of City Plans in consultation with the Director of Current Planning and the General Manager of Engineering Services

SUBJECT: Future Area Planning Programs

RECOMMENDATION

- A. THAT, subject to a detailed report back on work plans, priorities, and possible resourcing from other departments, Council approve in principle the following allocation of the CityPlans Division's five area planning teams:
- i) Neighbourhood Centres Planning - 2 teams,
 - ii) Canada Line Station Area Planning - 1 team,
 - iii) New Local Area Plans - 1 team,
 - iv) Planning Area Response Team - 1 team, plus
 - v) a temporary Shopping Area Initiative using an existing staff resource from the Current Planning Division.

GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS

Should the Future Area Planning Programs outlined in this report proceed, the Planning Department has the required staff and public process funding to undertake any combination of programs. However, depending on the types of programs Council wishes to pursue, there are staffing implications for other Departments, such as Engineering and Social Planning. This will result in additional funding requirements for 2007 and beyond or the need to

reprioritize other work in these departments. In recognition of competing demands and to mitigate potential budget impacts, the City Manager therefore RECOMMENDS the following:

- B. THAT, based on Council's advice on its preferred Area Planning Program mix, staff report back with details on resource requests from other departments and options to mitigate resource implications.

COUNCIL POLICY

In 1995, Council approved the Vancouver CityPlan. CityPlan includes several directions that further the City's sustainability objectives at the neighbourhood level: increasing housing variety; creating and enhancing neighbourhood centres; enhancing distinctive neighbourhood character; providing accessible community-based services; encouraging accessibility through the location of land uses, and supporting walking, biking, and transit.

Public involvement has long been a key component of the City's approach to community planning, which Council has reaffirmed through various programs, including CityPlan, Community Visions, Neighbourhood Centres Planning, and the Public Involvement Review. These programs continue to create new ways of reaching out to people and encouraging participation of all who are interested or affected.

SUMMARY AND PURPOSE

This report provides Council with information on outstanding requests for City funded area planning services, the availability of staff teams, and seeks Council direction on priorities for future area planning team assignments.

The City Plans Division has regular full time staffing for 5 area planning teams (each composed of a Planner and Planning Assistant). One program has recently concluded, freeing up a staff team for reassignment in 2006. The remaining four teams will finish Council approved programs in 2007. After considering existing CityPlan/Community Vision priorities, planning needs in areas with older plans, and furthering the City's sustainability objectives by taking advantage of opportunities for increased housing density and choice across the city, staff recommend the following team assignments:

Neighbourhood Centre Planning (2 Teams) to implement approved Community Visions directions to increase housing choice and improve shopping areas in neighbourhoods. Planning for the Knight and Kingsway centre is complete; Norquay Village (Nanaimo and Kingsway) is underway. Fifteen additional centres have been identified in Visions, with the possibility for two more when the last Vision in West point Grey is completed in 2007. Two teams would plan these centres over a ten year period. Both teams would start midway through 2007 after completing current assignments.

Station Area Plans (1 Team) will be required for the Canada Line stations at Marine Drive, 49th, 41st, and King Edward. These plans would implement Vision directions for neighbourhood centres at 41st and King Edward, while exploring opportunities for redevelopment at Marine and 49th. This team would plan the four station areas over about six years, starting in mid 2007. Because there are two station areas in Oakridge (49th and 41st) the scope of the work would be expanded to conduct both station area plans and a local area plan for the broader Oakridge area in a single program. Upon completion of Canada Line Station Area Planning, staff will report to Council seeking direction on reassignment of this team.

New Local Area Plans (1 Team) for the non-Vision local areas in the city. All have existing plans but they are twenty or more years old and most do not cover the range of CityPlan topics. The communities, which include Mt. Pleasant, Grandview-Woodlands, the West End, Fairview, and Marpole, face numerous pressing issues. One team would start New Local Area Planning later in 2006. If Council reassigned the Station Area Planning team when it completes its work in six years, all communities would have plans in about 10 years.

Planning Area Response Team (1 Team) that would both respond to demands for planning generated by specific proposals and participate in programs initiated by other agencies. A staff team is currently assigned to the East Vancouver Port Lands (EVPL) where the City, Community, and Port are working to develop a plan for port uses and the relationship with adjacent neighbourhoods. One team would continue to address similar emergent projects.

In addition, staff have developed a strategy for addressing shopping area issues in non-Vision communities which would not otherwise receive attention for several years. Topics to be addressed would include public realm, parking, and, in some areas, land use and street level issues. The Shopping Area Initiative would be carried out using existing resources, assisted by consultants. It would start in late 2006 for a period of about five years.

Council has already approved the public process funding for all five area planning teams. For each program approved in principle by Council, staff will develop a more detailed work plan, schedule, and recommended sequencing for Council consideration this fall.

BACKGROUND

The City Plans Division of the Planning Department responds to Council priorities and community needs through a variety of area planning programs. Regular full time area planning staff are organized into five two person planning teams. Their current assignments, which will all be completed over the next 12 months, are:

Community Visions

From 1996 to 2006, staff worked with communities to develop Community Visions in the largely single-family areas of the city. For program purposes, 13 predominantly single-family communities were consolidated into 9 Community vision areas. Eight Community Visions have been adopted by Council and are now being implemented. The final vision, West Point Grey, is underway. Two Area Planning teams were assigned to the program which delivered the same 18 month public process in two communities at the same time. Regular full time staff were supplemented by an additional, temporary Planning Assistant in each community process. One team is now available for reassignment. The second team will come available in mid-2007 with the completion of the West Point Grey Vision.

Neighbourhood Centre Planning

A key element of adopted Community Visions is the creation and enhancement of "Neighbourhood Centres" which combine increased housing variety with improvements to local shopping streets. In 2004 and 2005, Council adopted Public Realm plans and new zoning schedules for the first Neighbourhood Centre at Knight and Kingsway. In November, 2005, Council approved a program for in the second centre, Norquay Village (Kingsway and Nanaimo). The Norquay team will complete this plan in 2007.

Rapid Transit Planning

In 2004, Council created the City's Rapid Transit Office to plan for the integration of the Canada Line within Vancouver. The Office includes an Area Planning team seconded from the City Plans Division. The focus of this team's planning work has been on system alignment, station location and design, and integration of station entrances with adjacent properties. The bulk of this 'Station Precinct' work focuses on transportation issues and is expected to be completed by early 2007, when the team will be available for reassignment.

Planning Area Response Team

Historically, there have been zoning reviews and area studies necessitated by Council's response to major issues and opportunities. Recent work has included Millennium Line station area plans in the Grandview Industrial Area, the plan developed in response to the Home Depot proposal at Broadway and Arbutus, and the current East Vancouver Port Lands (EVPL) planning program which was generated by the strong community opposition to the Lafarge Concrete Plant proposal. The EVPL process is expected to produce a plan by the end of this year. Key topic areas include Port land uses, building heights and views and dealing with noise impacts from port and rail operations on adjacent residents.

The five area planning teams will complete existing work programs in the next 12 months and will be available for reassignment.

DISCUSSION

There are numerous community demands and Council initiatives competing for limited area planning resources. These include implementing neighbourhood centres and adding new housing in Vision communities, articulating housing and employment opportunities around Canada Line Stations, revitalizing outdated plans in non-Vision communities and responding to issues or opportunities in smaller geographic areas. A recommended allocation of existing area planning teams to meet these demands over the coming decade is proposed. Staff base this allocation on the following criteria:

1. Provide service to all communities in a reasonable period.

Every community in the city has identified planning needs, ranging from areas with out-of-date community plans to the newer Vision communities that are ready to plan Neighbourhood Centres and new housing types. The proposed allocation of the area planning teams provides planning services in all of these areas within 10 years, about the same time it took to complete the nine Community Vision areas of the city.

2. Maximize efficiencies by running programs concurrently.

The Vision program has demonstrated the substantial benefits gained in time and resources from running parallel processes at the same time, including: sharing research and analysis; developing outreach materials; preparing for and delivering larger events; and producing translated materials. Based on this experience, staff recommend that two Neighbourhood Centre programs and eventually two New Local Area Planning programs be run concurrently. Some efficiencies will also be gained by planning the 41st and 49th station areas together.

3. Take advantage of opportunities for more sustainable development through increased housing density and choice in neighbourhoods.

More housing diversity improves sustainability by: reducing sprawl; making it easier and faster to access jobs, shops, services, and transit; increasing people's choice of housing, especially for young families and the elderly; and generally improving affordability by increasing housing supply. Approved Community Vision directions for Neighbourhood Centres would support at least an additional 16,500 units of housing. Canada Line Station Areas will also provide opportunities for increased housing choice and employment. As such, staff recommend three of the five teams be dedicated to implementing housing opportunities through Neighbourhood Centres and Station Area Planning.

4. Provide flexibility to respond to externally initiated projects.

Initiatives such as the Broadway/Arbutus Zoning Study and the EVPL Program arise on an irregular basis and require an experienced staff response to ensure City and neighbourhood interests are recognized and pursued.

Based on these criteria staff recommend Council approve in principle the following assignment of City Plan's five area planning teams. Based on Council's direction, staff will report back with details on planning programs and area priorities.

Neighbourhood Centres (two teams)

The key products of the Neighbourhood Centres Program are Housing Area and Public Realm Plans for each centre, developed in consultation with the community through working groups, open houses, and a survey. The Public Realm Plan is implemented through improvements to the shopping area with Capital Plan funding and cost-sharing with partners such as TransLink and ICBC. The Housing Plan is implemented through Council adoption of new zoning schedules.

The first centre was Knight and Kingsway. The Plan was completed in July 2004, with subsequent approval of the new RT-10 and RM-1 zoning schedules in October, 2005. The widely supported rezoning of a single family area added the capacity for an additional 800 units of new types of ground oriented housing (in addition to over 370 units on the King Edward Village site). Improvements to the streets, sidewalks, and public art are being completed over the next year.

Planning for the second centre, Norquay Village (Nanaimo and Kingsway), is underway. Staff estimate potential for about 600 additional units of ground oriented housing, based on successful rezoning to the new RT-10 and RM-1 zoning schedules. Over 250 additional apartment units were also approved in the recent Eldorado Hotel rezoning. The program will also address planning for the three acre, City-owned 2400 Motel site.

In addition to Knight/Kingsway and Norquay Village, fifteen neighbourhood centres have been approved in Community Visions, with the possible addition of one or two more, once the final Vision is completed in West Point Grey in 2007 (see the map in Appendix A). Staff estimate that approved Vision housing directions would provide capacity for an additional 16,500 units of higher density ground oriented housing.

Neighbourhood Centres provide a mix of higher density and medium density housing which helps fulfil the City's commitment to the Livable Region Strategic Plan and matches the strong regional demand for ground oriented housing. Staff will report back on a strategy for planning the remaining centres starting in 2007. Staff estimate that two teams could plan these centres in about ten years.

Canada Line Station Area Planning (one team)

There are nine Canada Line stations in Vancouver, all underground except for Marine Drive which will be elevated. The Detailed Design Phase for stations is underway and includes public open houses and reviews by the City's Urban Design Panel and Development Permit Board. Concurrently, the City's Rapid Transit Office is undertaking a 'Precinct Review' for each station, which focuses on transportation and connectivity including pick-up and drop-off areas, neighbourhood parking, pedestrian and bike access, and integration of entrances within private development.

As with the Expo and Millennium Lines, the next step will be to plan the areas surrounding Canada Line stations. The focus of Station Area Planning for the four southern stations (Marine Drive, 49th, 41st, and King Edward) will be land use planning within a five minute walk (500 metres) of each station. Station Area Plans will identify opportunities for increased housing variety, employment, services, and public amenities. These plans will build upon existing policies along the corridor such as the Riley Park South Cambie Community Vision, Oakridge Langara Policy Statement, and the City's strategy to provide increased employment opportunities at rapid transit stations.

Some private sector funding may be available for portions of the station area plans, as has been the case with the current Oakridge Shopping Centre Rezoning cost recovery planning program. There is also potential for cost recovery at the Marine Drive Station, where ICBC has expressed interest in redeveloping their large site adjacent to the station.

Because a large portion of Oakridge falls within the station areas around 41st and 49th, staff recommend that planning for these stations be combined into a slightly expanded process which would produce two station area plans plus a plan for the remainder of the Oakridge local area. This would eliminate the need for New Local Area Planning in Oakridge. Station Area Planning at 41st and at King Edward would also substitute for Neighbourhood Centre Planning at these locations.

Staff recommend that the area planning team seconded to the Rapid Transit Office be assigned to Station Area planning when they complete their current work in mid-2007. Preliminary scoping indicates that all four station areas would be planned in about six years, at which time the Council of the day can conclude where to reassign the team. Options might include completing the New Local Area Planning program or reconsidering development opportunities near Expo Line stations west of Collingwood Village.

It should be noted that planning for the Downtown Canada Line stations will generally involve site specific 'Precinct Plans' which focus on entrance integration. A major exception will be the recently approved comprehensive Central Waterfront Hub and Rail Lands Study. The Olympic Village Station (2nd & Cambie) has the potential for new zoning and transit-oriented development on this city-owned site. At the Broadway and Cambie Station, station area planning can be undertaken in the next few years as part of planning for the civic precinct redevelopment and future extension of the Millennium Line. The Planning Department, in

conjunction with Real Estate Services, will develop a response to the specific and unique needs of these stations when redevelopment is more imminent.

New Local Area Plans (one team)

There are nine non-Vision local areas in the city. All have had previous planning but many plans are twenty to twenty-five years old, leading to:

- limited awareness of the plans among community members,
- uncertainty about whether plan directions remain valid, and
- the emergence of new community issues and circumstances.

Most of these outdated plans focussed on land use and did not include the broader range of Directions addressed in CityPlan.

The areas include the West End, Grandview-Woodlands, Fairview, Mount Pleasant, Kitsilano, Marpole, and the residential areas of the Downtown. Each community faces a range of pressing issues and several have made repeated requests to staff and Council for early planning attention. In response, the Planning Department hosted two workshops in the spring of 2005. Representatives from community groups articulated issues and concluded that there was a clear need for broad community planning in these communities.

Each of these communities is unique. There are substantial differences in their major land uses, housing types, amenity levels, average household incomes, etc. In addition, each community contains distinct subareas that will require unique planning responses. As a result, the Vision's 'one size fits all' approach will not work.

The new process would combine features of Community Visions and the old Local Area Planning processes. It would address issues ranging from community-wide concerns about traffic, safety, and street level issues to subarea plans relating to changes in land use, shopping area issues, and improvements to the public realm. Staff estimate a two person team and a process lasting about 30 months would be required to develop a plan with enough detail to effectively guide future community change on the topics included in CityPlan and the Central Area Plan.

In some non-Vision areas, homelessness, poverty, youth at risk, and other social issues will require broad community discussion to develop positive, community based responses/actions. In these local areas, additional resources would be required to supplement the area planning team. Possible sources for outside funding for this assistance and/or linkages to other departments, boards, or agencies would be explored and reported to Council.

Most areas seeking New Local Area Planning also contain large stocks of affordable rental housing, especially apartments. The Housing Centre has been charged with conducting a major study to recommend effective responses to the threat to this stock posed by redevelopment. Linkages between New Local Area Planning and the Housing Centre initiative will continue to be explored in the next five months as more detailed proposals are developed.

Two non-Vision communities will be more effectively planned through other processes. As outlined above, the station area planning process for the 49th and 41st Canada Line Stations should be combined and enhanced to provide local area planning for Oakridge. Southlands is a small area with a narrow range of land uses and issues. Its representatives at the workshops

did not believe their plan requires immediate updating, and consequently, Southlands should have its plan reviewed in a more concise process at a future date.

To plan the seven remaining non-Vision communities, one team would require approximately sixteen years. If the Station Area Planning team was assigned to New Local Area Plans after completing the station area plans, this time would be reduced to 10 - 12 years.

Planning Area Response Team (one team)

The final team would continue to be assigned to important but unexpected area planning studies. These demands for service generally arise from either a proposal which sparks significant community debate or an opportunity to participate in a process that is initiated by an outside body or agency. In either case, there is a need for an experienced team which is:

- familiar with City policies and departmental responsibilities,
- capable of analyzing complex issues on short notice,
- experienced in scoping successful processes, and
- able to carry out those processes within tight time and budget constraints.

Recent programs addressed by this team include the Broadway/Arbutus Policy Review and the ongoing East Vancouver Port Lands program, the Still Creek Management Plan and the Broadway/Commercial Transit Village Project. The Burrard Slopes Area zoning review remains an outstanding work item for this team. Typically, these have been one year projects that include public consultation, along with planning research and analysis.

Zoning reviews and area studies generally focus on protecting the livability of Vancouver neighbourhoods and the provision of jobs and services for residents, reflecting policies of CityPlan, the Central Area Plan, Transportation Plan, and Industrial Lands Strategy.

Based on past experience, other unanticipated opportunities and issues will arise in the coming years. In order to respond and participate in these initiatives, staff recommend that one area planning team continue to be assigned to this work at the direction of Council.

Shopping Area Initiative

There are twenty local shopping areas in non-Vision communities. The spring workshop and the Mayor's Business Improvement Area Forum identified several shopping areas, including some in the West End and Downtown, requesting assistance to address their issues. A Shopping Area Initiative is recommended to respond to these demands in non-Vision communities which would not receive Local Area Planning for some time.

The Initiative would focus on public realm, pedestrian safety, and parking. In some areas, limited zoning changes would be considered, along with responses to street level/safety issues. Implementation would primarily be through existing City processes and programs or actions coordinated by the BIA or business association.

The process would focus on business/property owners and, wherever possible, make use of existing groups (BIAs or business associations) to link to merchants and act as steering committees. There would also be opportunities for input and comment from surrounding residents.

Because of the small geographic area and narrow range of issues associated with the Shopping Area Initiative, a two person area planning team is not required. It is recommended that the initiative be carried out with a staff resource from the Current Planning Division, along with limited consultant assistance (using existing funds). The initiative would be linked to the Planning Area Response Team in order to allow some sharing of the Planning Assistant resource. The initiative would be undertaken over a 5 year period which would cover the shopping areas with the greatest needs in communities which are lower priorities for New Local Area Planning.

Area Planning Team Assignments Summary

In summary, staff recommend the following allocation of CityPlans' five area planning teams:

- **Neighbourhood Centres** - 2 Teams to plan 15-17 centres over 10-11 years, starting in mid 2007;
- **Canada Line Station Area Plans** - 1 Team to plan 4 station areas over 6 years, starting in mid 2007;
- **New Local Area Plans** - 1 Team to plan 7 local areas over 10-11 years starting in 2006;
- **Planning Area Response Team** - ongoing;
- **Shopping Area Initiative** - using a planning resource from Current Planning and the Planning Area Response Team, with consultant assistance, for about five years.

These assignments are shown in chart form in Appendix B.

Fit with the Capital Planning Process

The Public Realm Plans produced through the Neighbourhood Centres and Station Area Planning Programs, as well as some of the Shopping Area Initiatives, will require capital funds for implementation. The 2006 - 2008 Capital Plan includes funding for the Norquay Village Public Realm Plan which is currently being developed. Cost sharing for implementation will also be pursued with partners such as TransLink and ICBC, as was the case for Knight and Kingsway.

The recommended future assignment of area planning teams would produce two Neighbourhood Centre Public Realm Plans, a Station Area Plan, and significant parts of a New Local Area Plan by the end of 2008. Capital requirements to implement these plans would become part of the 2009 - 2011 Capital Plan approval process. Allowances will also be needed for additional plans that will be completed during the 2009 - 2011 Capital Plan cycle.

In the case of the Shopping Area Initiatives, the funding for any public realm improvements will likely need to be linked to timing of street improvements that the City is planning anyway. It will also make use of Local Improvement or Local Initiative programs.

Capital Plans beyond 2011 will need to reflect the capital needs of area programs, particularly Neighbourhood Centres, which are scheduled for completion by 2017.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The five area planning teams and their public process funding are included in the City's base operating budget.

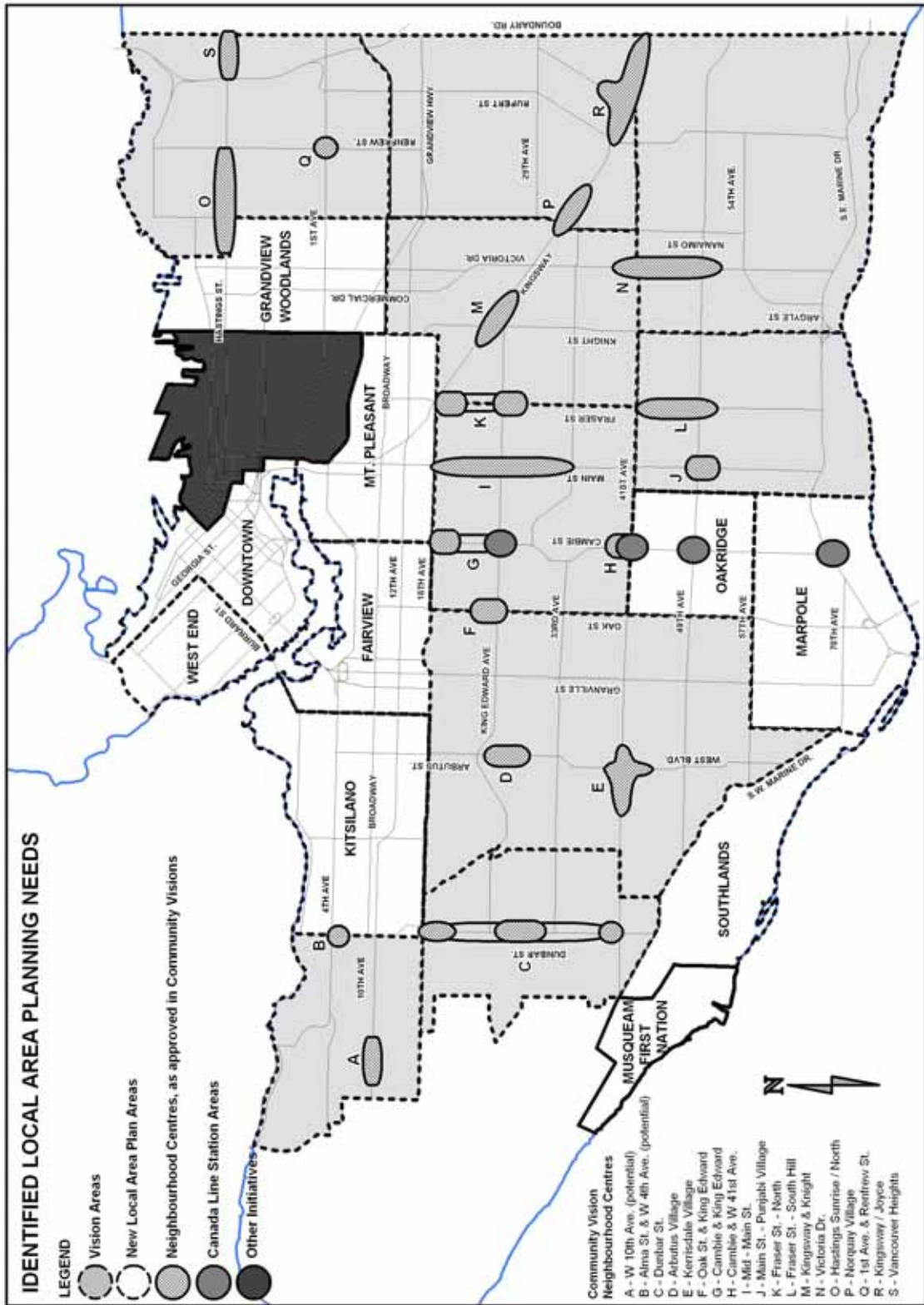
Depending on Council priorities for future area planning programs, additional staff resources may be required from other departments, starting in 2007. Neighbourhood Centres and Station Area Plans require significant involvement from Engineering Services, for both planning and implementation of the public realm component of the programs. For New Local Area Plans, it is anticipated that an additional staff resource may be required to address the pressing social issues being faced in some of the communities.

Costs for additional staff resources from other departments will be the subject of detailed report back on the work program and priorities for each initiative Council approves in principle in this report, and subject to budget review. Staff will also explore partnership opportunities, particularly with regard to social issues, prior to a report back to Council this fall.

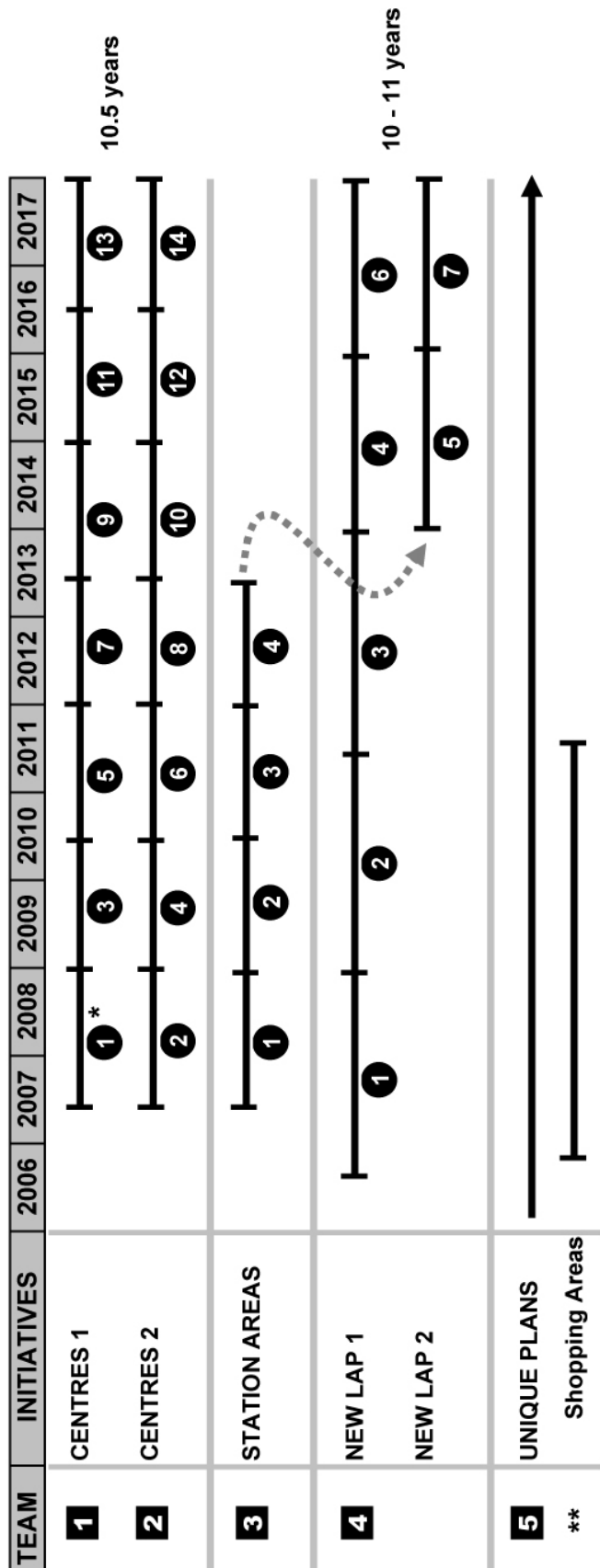
CONCLUSION

City Plans' five regular full time area planning teams will all be available for new assignments over the next twelve months. This report recommends a deployment of those teams over the next decade to plan for Neighbourhood Centres, Canada Line Station Areas, New Local Area Plans, as well as Area Programs. For each program supported by Council, staff will report back in the fall on a detailed work plan/public process which includes any supporting staff requirements from other City departments plus a recommended priority order for planning the respective areas or communities.

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Proposed Utilization of Area Planning Teams



* **1** Numbers represent Neighbourhood Centres, Local Areas, and Station Areas requiring planning - the ordering within an initiative will be reported back to Council.

** Shopping Area initiative would not be a full team, it would have a limited duration.