

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING

1978 OCTOBER 31 1978
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SUBJECT: METROTOWN PUBLIC LAND ASSEMBLY AND DEVELOPMENT AREA

RECOMMENDATIONS:

It is recommended:

1. THAT Council approve in principle the alternate public land assembly strategy for the Burnaby Metrotown area as outlined in this report that incorporates the following:
 - a) The preparation of a Community Plan on a priority basis for Council's consideration for the area bounded by Kingsway, Willingdon Avenue, Beresford Street and Silver Avenue (Area 14) reflecting the concept of a low density office park development.
 - b) The inclusion within the Community Plan of two priority Municipal acquisition sites of approximately two to three acres each for the purposes as outlined in this report.
 - c) The authorization of staff to investigate more fully the possible use of the triangular portion of Central Park bounded by Kingsway, Patterson Avenue and the B. C. Hydro right-of-way for public uses complementary to Central Park and adjacent Metrotown development.
 - d) The consideration by Council of the possible acquisition on an individual basis of other properties within Area 14, but outside of the two designated assembly areas which are deemed attractive in terms of price and strategic location.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Council, at its meeting of 1978 February 20, approved in principle the proposed development concept as outlined in the report, Burnaby Metrotown, A Development Plan. Concurrent with that approval, Council endorsed the concept of a Municipal Public land assembly program as an implementation action in the area. Staff in considering the details of such a land assembly program are of the opinion that an alternative approach would be more appropriate. Accordingly, the purpose of this report is to present an alternate public land assembly program to that contained in the Metrotown concept plan for the consideration and approval of Council.

BACKGROUND

The area designated in the concept plan for public assembly and development is situated immediately west of the proposed core area and bounded by Willingdon Avenue, Kingsway, Silver Avenue and Beresford Street -- an area of some 18.3 acres. The proposed Public Assembly and Development Area is itemized as sub-area 14 in the accompanying Figure.



Metrotown Sub-areas

1	Core	8	Residential
2	Secondary Mixed-Use	9	Residential
3	Secondary Mixed-Use	10	Residential
4	B.C. Telephone Office Development	11	Residential/Mixed-Use
5	Residential/School Site	12	Central Park
6	Residential	13	Bonsor Park/School Site
7	Residential	14	Public Assembly and Development

The underlying purpose of the proposed land assembly program was essentially two fold. One objective was to acquire a centralized site adjacent to the core for public related uses while the second was to enable the pre-assembly of properties centrally located within the Metrotown area in order to facilitate the decentralization of senior government facilities to the town centre. With respect to the first objective, approximately two-thirds of the 18.3 acres were earmarked for future civic related uses, the details of which would be specified as development in Metrotown progressed. This approach would afford the Municipality maximum flexibility in developing the public assembly area and as well accommodating possible special facilities (eg. convention centre, regional auditorium, in-town college extension) that might require a site in Metrotown at some time in the future.

REVIEW OF LAND ASSEMBLY PROGRAM

While the land assembly program as proposed provides the Municipality with the greatest range of options, upon the completion of the assembly, more detailed consideration of this program has led staff to identify certain implementation drawbacks associated with an extended land assembly approach. More specifically, these concerns are as follows:

1. Given a gradual land assembly program in an area of this size comprised of 116 privately-owned lots, it is very conceivable that even after a period of say, ten years, the Municipal ownership pattern could still be dispersed. As a result the objective of pre-assembling sites to assist implementation in the short and medium term could be frustrated.
2. The designation of an extensive area within Metrotown under existing private ownership as a public land assembly area would preclude the private sector initiating consolidation and development proposals. Such a situation may unnecessarily diminish opportunities for the private sector to participate in the development of Metrotown.
3. The Land Agent has advised that in 1978 values, the estimated cost of acquiring the entire 18.3 acres would be approximately \$8.6 million. A reduced land assembly area excluding approximately 5.5 acres along the Kingsway frontage would be in the order of \$4.6 million. The cost-effectiveness of the assembly program when gauged against the above two factors would suggest that an alternate approach that still meets the land assembly objectives should be considered.

ALTERNATE LAND ASSEMBLY STRATEGY

In view of the above consideration, staff have prepared a revised land assembly strategy that both accommodates the major objectives of the assembly concept and at the same time responds to the concerns that have been outlined. The alternate strategy that has been prepared incorporates the following:

1. The Municipal pre-assembly of two development parcels approximately 2 to 3 acres each. One parcel would be utilized to facilitate the site assembly process for development proposals consistent with guidelines developed for Area 14. This initiative, if undertaken by the Municipality on a priority basis would be regarded as a positive implementation action in assisting complementary development in the Metrotown area. For example, the Federal Department of Public Works has indicated that the availability of a pre-consolidated site in an appropriate location would greatly assist their decentralization efforts to a Regional Town Centre. Under such an arrangement it is envisaged that at the time of the disposal of the pre-assembled site, the Municipality would receive prevailing market value.

The second land assembly would be directed at consolidating an appropriately situated site within Area 14 for future civic uses. This site upon consolidation could accommodate either a singular use (eg. library facility) or a combination of more intensely developed civic uses that would be determined as Metrotown develops.

2. Apart from the above two sites, the remainder of Area 14 would be considered appropriate for private consolidation and development on the basis of a community plan to be prepared and adopted for the area. One of the objectives of the Community Plan would be to specify the two priority Municipal assembly sites.

The Community Plan would be based on the concept of developing Area 14 as a low density office park area supplemented with supporting facilities required by an office area (eg. restaurants, athletic clubs, etc.). It is felt that this form of development would best complement the surrounding Metrotown land use concept.

3. In the area designated for private consolidation and development, it is envisaged that the Municipality could also participate in the assembly process but on a lower priority basis. The Municipality could, over an extended period assist private assembly by acquiring certain properties that may become available for purchase and which are considered attractive in terms of price and strategic location.

4. With respect to future public uses and facilities that could not be accommodated within the 2 to 3 acre public assembly site previously discussed, it is considered that these could be located, at their time of need, in any appropriate site within Metrotown rather than within one centralized area as was previously proposed. These facilities could either be located as single uses or incorporated within larger scale mixed-use projects on a joint private/public development basis.

5. A major disadvantage to this alternate approach, as compared to the previously proposed assembly program, is the loss of a large publically-owned and pre-consolidated site that could accommodate special regional scaled facilities that might require a Regional Town Centre site sometime in the future (eg. convention centre, conservatory, planetarium, science museum etc.). In order to provide for this possibility in the future, staff believe that an effort should be made to delineate the triangular portion of Central Park, bounded by Kingsway, Patterson Avenue and the B. C. Hydro right-of-way, as a reserve site for this purpose. The terms of reference for such an undertaking would have to ensure the compatibility of any development both with the Metrotown concept and the more natural character of Central Park south of the Hydro right-of-way. This concept is an extension of the position that was put forward on Page 70 of the Metrotown report as follows:

The triangular portion of the park bounded by Kingsway, Patterson and the B.C. Hydro right-of-way which is a high profile area adjacent to the proposed Light Rapid Transit alignment and to Kingsway at a key Metrotown entry point is proposed to be developed for higher intensity urban park use. The playing field uses presently located on the site would be relocated as redevelopment of this park area was imminent.

Future study will indicate the exact type of specialized facility of most benefit to the overall community and suited to this specific location.

In summary, staff are of the opinion that the alternate land assembly approach as outlined meets the original objectives of acquiring a centralized site adjacent to the core for public related uses and the pre-assembly of a site that would facilitate decentralization of the town centre in a manner that offers the following advantages over the original assembly concept:

1. The Municipal assembly of the two more concentrated sites on a priority basis would lead to a much earlier consolidation thereby assisting the Municipality's implementation efforts.
2. The diminished public land assembly area combined with the introduction of an office park concept for the majority of Area 14 would provide for less costly Municipal acquisition and land holding costs.
3. Private consolidation and development will be possible in Area 14 upon adoption of a Community Plan for the area.
4. The participation of the Municipality in the purchase of sites outside of the two concentrated sites, even though on a lower priority basis will, in the long term, assist in the consolidation process.
5. The possible use of the triangular portion of Central Park bounded by Kingsway, Patterson, and the B. C. Hydro right-of-way for public uses complementary to the park and adjacent Metrotown development would not necessitate the acquisition of additional sites in Area 14 for that purpose.


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cc: Parks and Recreation Administrator
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