

NO: R071

COUNCIL DATE: April 11, 2022

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: Mayor & Council **DATE: April 7, 2022**

FROM: Acting General Manager, Planning & Development **FILE: 6520-20 (City Centre)**
General Manager, Engineering
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture

SUBJECT: Initiation of Background Studies for the Scott Road Corridor and South Westminster Neighbourhood Concept Plan Update

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development, Engineering, and Parks, Recreation, & Culture Departments recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report for information; and
2. Authorize staff to commence a planning review along the Scott Road Corridor, including all preliminary planning and background studies to support secondary land use plan processes, as described in this report and documented in Appendix "I".

INTENT

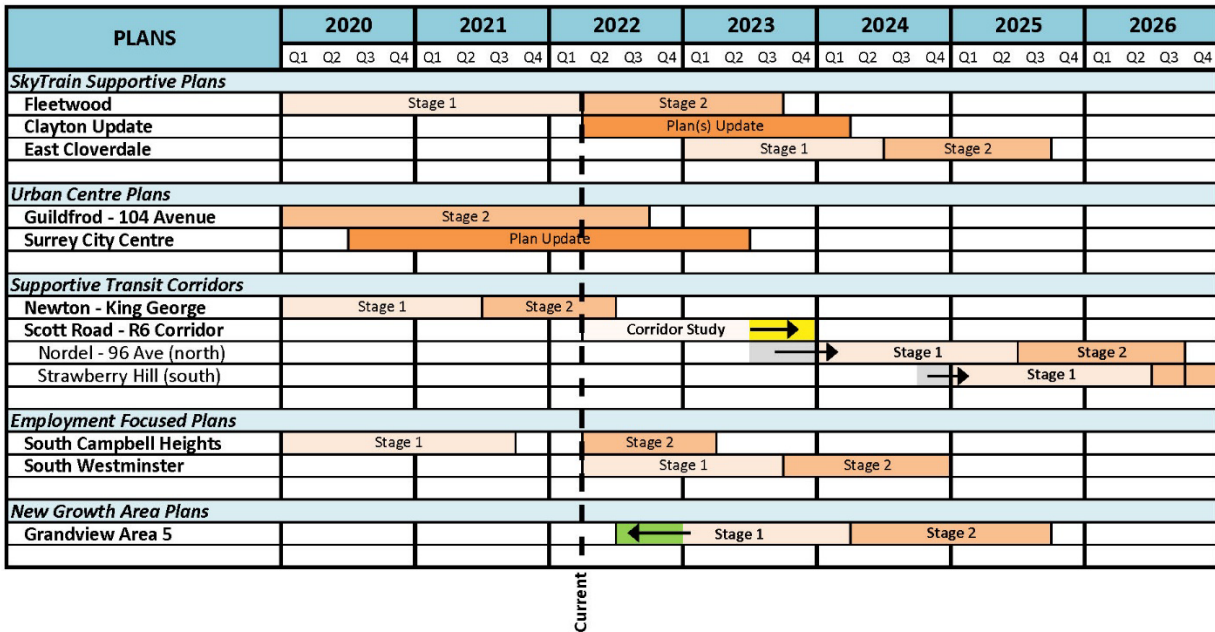
The intent of this report is to seek Council authorization to initiate a planning review of the Scott Road - 72 Avenue Corridor (the "Corridor"), including an update to the existing South Westminster Neighbourhood Concept Plan ("NCP"), as illustrated in Appendix "I". This work will form the basis for the development of transit supportive secondary land use plans along the planned R6 RapidBus Corridor.

BACKGROUND

Neighbourhood Concept Plan Scheduling Update

On March 28, 2022, Council endorsed the current land use planning work program as part of Corporate Report No. R061; 2022, attached as Appendix "II". The report provided an update on current planning work underway, as well as proposed future land use plans for consideration, including the South Westminster NCP and the Corridor plan detailed within this report.

As part of consideration of the above noted report, Council requested that staff consider refinements to the proposed land use planning work program to advance the initiation of the Grandview Area 5 NCP. Staff will now advance consideration for Grandview Area 5 NCP to Q3, 2022. To accommodate this, the timeline for planning work along the Corridor has been extended. Similarly, the initiation of new NCP planning work along the Corridor has been moved from Q3 of 2023 to Q1 of 2024, following the Corridor study. The timeline for the South Westminster NCP update remains unchanged. The following chart provides an updated timeline of the work program.



The proposed initiation and scheduling of the South Westminster NCP and the Corridor plan, as detailed in this report, has considered these overall work plan adjustments.

Scott Road-72 Avenue Corridor

The Corridor is part of TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network (“FTN”) and is designated as such within Surrey’s Official Community Plan (“OCP”). The FTN is a network of major corridors throughout Metro Vancouver where transit service runs at least every 15 minutes in both directions throughout the day and into the evening, every day of the week. The Corridor is currently serviced by several bus routes, including the 319 (Scott Road/72 Avenue), which is the FTN service route. The 319 is the busiest bus route south of the Fraser River and service on this route will be upgraded to the planned R6 RapidBus route detailed below.

The OCP outlines objectives and policies to encourage transit-oriented development along FTN corridors, including the intent to undertake transit-supportive secondary land use plans. The intent focuses on creating compact, complete urban neighbourhoods with higher density mixed uses that align with and support frequent transit service. This helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by supporting active and public transportation choices and relieves congestion on busy streets by reducing reliance on the automobile.

Currently, development along most of the Corridor takes place without the framework of a secondary land use plan. The existing South Westminster NCP, at the north of the Corridor's extent, was approved in 2003 and requires updating to reflect current market conditions and changes in servicing needs. Despite this, the Corridor is subject to ongoing population, employment, and institutional growth. This growth, along with the existing FTN designation and the OCP's supportive policies, emphasize the need for a land use planning review along the Corridor. This will support continued growth in areas that will directly benefit from the extension of transportation infrastructure, including the planned R6 RapidBus which is scheduled to begin service in 2023.

RapidBus, Major Transit Network, and Major Transit Growth Corridors

In 2019, TransLink established the RapidBus program as a replacement for the B-Line service. The RapidBus program includes increased service levels (especially during peak periods), upgraded stops with real-time passenger information, and transit priority measures to improve speed and reliability. There are currently five RapidBus lines across Metro Vancouver. In Surrey, the 96 B-line was rebranded as the R1 – King George Boulevard/104 Avenue RapidBus which, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, was the second busiest bus route in Surrey and 12th busiest in the region. The R6 RapidBus will be the sixth RapidBus line in the region.

RapidBus will help build ridership and lay the foundation for future rapid transit. The Corridor has been identified for future rapid transit, as part of the Major Transit Network ("MTN"). The MTN is included in TransLink's updated Regional Transportation Strategy ("Transport 2050") which is part of the Reliable and Fast Transit Network concept. To support the MTN, Metro Vancouver's draft Regional Growth Strategy ("Metro 2050") has identified several corridors throughout the region as Major Transit Growth Corridors to support and encourage transit-oriented development along the MTN.

DISCUSSION

To support the planned R6 RapidBus service, and ongoing population and employment growth, land use planning for the Corridor will commence immediately, pending Council endorsement of this report. The proposed planning area for the Corridor is approximately 11.3 km long and extends from the existing Scott Road SkyTrain Station south to 72 Avenue, then east along 72 Avenue to Newton Town Centre, as illustrated in Appendix "I".

The Corridor already contains a diverse mix of employment and residential uses within several established neighbourhoods, as well as business park and industrial uses within the South Westminster area. The Corridor also includes a range of sensitive environmental areas, including Robson, Cougar, Delta and Scott Creeks, as well as several lowland drainage systems and the Fraser River waterfront within South Westminster.

Background Studies

The initial planning phase will involve the preparation of various background studies and analytics, as is typical with all City land use planning processes. This planning stage will provide the context and analysis necessary to develop and update detailed land use plans strategically and efficiently along the Corridor.

The following background studies will be initiated to support land use planning along the Corridor:

Market Assessment

A market assessment of the Corridor will include a review of land availability, development opportunity and projected absorption rates. The assessment will provide analysis of market demand for residential and commercial/employment land uses along the Corridor, with a focus on areas adjacent to future RapidBus stops. It will also provide an assessment of conditions to maximize Community Amenity Contributions.

Environmental Study

An environmental study will include an assessment and inventory of riparian, aquatic and terrestrial habitats along the Corridor, as well as vegetation and significant tree survey assessments. The study will consider and incorporate the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and species at risk. This will advise staff on areas of environmental sensitivity that should be considered in land use planning. Given the unique environmental and drainage considerations, a separate environmental study may be undertaken for the South Westminster Plan Area.

Heritage Review

A heritage review of the South Westminster Plan Area will be completed, with a focus on the Fraser River waterfront. This will include an Indigenous cultural heritage review. The outcomes of this study will inform the development of the South Westminster NCP.

Lot Consolidation Review

Many of the lots created in the South Westminster area were done in the early 1900's and are smaller lots originally intended for residential uses. These small and fragmented lots with varied lot ownership can present challenges for consolidation and redevelopment. This is particularly the case in the South Westminster area where pre-loading and raising lot elevations are a key consideration for development. A lot consolidation review will identify areas with development challenges for further consideration within planning processes. It will also inform related work regarding pre-loading lots to achieve Flood Construction Levels ("FCL") within the South Westminster Plan Area.

Flood Risk Assessment

Portions of the Corridor within the South Westminster Plan Area are prone to flooding, which has implications on potential long-term development. A flood risk assessment will identify specific at-risk areas, as well as potential mitigation strategies for consideration within the land use planning process. A review of the FCL within the South Westminster Plan Area will also be undertaken to ensure current policy aligns with long-term flood risk associated with sea level rise, Fraser River freshet and seasonal weather events.

Road Elevation Study

This study is specific to the South Westminster Plan Area where frequent road flooding results in reoccurring issues, including access and mobility limitations, building interface issues, and emergency services response. A road elevation study will examine the feasibility and challenges associated with raising existing roads in the area, as well as the elevation of planned roads associated with secondary planning. The study will examine the interfaces between road elevations and adjacent property elevations (both constructed and planned), as well as geotechnical and civil engineering considerations related to the impacts of road raising on existing underground utilities.

Growth and Demographic Review

An assessment of existing population and demographics will be derived from 2021 Census data for consideration in land use planning and public engagement. This information, along with the City's building model, will also be used to develop preliminary population and employment forecasts for utility servicing and community amenity considerations.

Case Study Review

Staff will undertake a case study review of developments around the world with similar conditions as the South Westminster Plan Area, with particular focus on public/private interfaces and transitions, as well as innovative approaches to drainage servicing/drainage corridors, etc.

Future Land Use Planning

The development of new and updated land use plans is required along the Corridor. The existing South Westminster NCP is out of date and requires updating. New land use plans will need to be established for the Scott Road portions of the Corridor, as well as potentially the area around Kwantlen Polytechnic University along 72 Avenue. A General Land Use Plan ("GLUP") will be developed initially to inform and guide currently unplanned areas of the Corridor. Staff will also coordinate with the City of Delta to ensure the alignment of long-term plans and priorities including but not limited to the City of Delta's Mayor's Housing Task Force for Scott Road Recommendations Report.

South Westminster NCP

The South Westminster NCP was approved by Council in 2003. It presented a vision intended to transform under-utilized industrial areas into business districts, public spaces, and special residential communities. The plan area extends from the Scott Road SkyTrain Station to the Surrey Fraser Docks (Port of Vancouver) and is bordered by the Fraser River to the West, King George Boulevard to the North, and 96 Avenue in the South (see Appendix "I").

Despite some success, the plan has not realized its vision of intensified industrial uses or comprehensive transit-oriented development. The plan area faces several development constraints that were not fully considered within the 2003 plan, including adverse geotechnical conditions, increasing flood levels and risk, site contamination, and small lot consolidation challenges.

An update of the plan will ensure that current challenges and development conditions are considered, and that transit-oriented development principles are incorporated around the Scott Road SkyTrain Station and along the alignment of the planned R6 RapidBus and future MTN corridor. Further transportation analysis will be conducted with the plan update to assess current conditions and support road network planning. Increased network granularity is anticipated to support higher densities and promote active transportation. This will be done in conjunction with the commitments made with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, as part of the Pattullo Bridge Replacement Project agreement.

Scott Road - 72 Avenue General Land Use Plan

Except for the South Westminster and Newton Town Centre areas, there are no secondary land use plans guiding growth along the Corridor. A new GLUP will be developed for the remainder of the Corridor. Drawing from background studies, a review of land use plans in the City of Delta, and preliminary planning and engagement, it will present an overall vision and general land uses for the Corridor. It will also identify future plan areas for the development of a series of NCPs along the Corridor, which will guide more detailed neighbourhood planning in the future.

Potential areas for future NCP consideration include:

- 96 Avenue (96 Avenue and 120 Street);
- Nordel (Nordel Way and 120 Street);
- 80 Avenue (80 Avenue and 120 Street);
- Strawberry Hill (72 Avenue and 120 Street); and
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University (72 Avenue and 126 Street).

Estimated Timeline

The development and update of these land use plans will involve a comprehensive strategy and phased approach supported by technical and engineering studies. Consultation will include residents as well as stakeholders, including businesses, industry groups and associations, Community Associations, utility agencies, and intergovernmental organizations such as TransLink, Metro Vancouver, City of Delta, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, First Nations, and the Port of Vancouver.

Subject to the approval of this report, staff will immediately begin background studies. The South Westminster NCP update and Scott Road - 72 Avenue GLUP planning processes will also initiate concurrently, supported by the background studies.

The Scott Road – 72 Avenue GLUP will be structured into a single phase which will include background studies, technical analysis, and public consultation. It will commence immediately and completed by Q4 of 2023. The development of NCPs along Scott Road and 72 Avenue will follow Council approval of the Scott Road – 72 Avenue GLUP. This will enable the efficient allocation of staff and consultant resources and the efficient preparation and implementation of a series of public and stakeholder engagement processes.

The South Westminster NCP update will be structured into the following two stages:

- Stage 1 (winter 2022 – winter 2023): Background studies, land use, transportation, drainage, and parks and open space concepts, along with a preliminary servicing strategy. A draft (Stage 1) plan will be brought forward for Council consideration prior to Stage 2 work commencing.
- Stage 2 (spring 2023 – summer 2024): Engineering servicing strategies, design guidelines, financial strategy, and the development of supportive policies. A final (Stage 2) plan is anticipated for Council consideration in summer 2024.

Staff will report to Council on the progress of the above-noted planning processes at key planning milestones.

Consideration of Rezoning Applications During Plan Processes

Staff will continue to receive and process development applications within these plan areas (see Appendix “I”) provided that any such application is consistent with approved secondary land use plans or the OCP. Applications that propose amendments to approved secondary land use plans or the OCP can advance concurrently with planning work, and not proceed to final approval until the completion of planning work as outlined within this report.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The work proposed as part of the Scott Road Corridor Planning Review supports the objectives of the City’s Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this plan update supports the Sustainability Charter 2.0 themes of Built Environment and Neighbourhoods, Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods, Ecosystems, and Infrastructure. Specifically, this plan supports the following Desired Outcomes (“DO”):

- Neighbourhoods and Urban Design DO2: Surrey is well-connected within the City and to the rest of the region by fast and efficient public transit and active all-ages-and-abilities transportation infrastructure;
- Neighbourhoods and Urban Design DO4: Surrey’s neighbourhoods are safe, accessible, well-connected, walkable and bike friendly;
- Jobs and Skills Training DO1: Diverse and meaningful employment and business opportunities are available close to where people live, and provide incomes that can support a high quality of life;
- Economy DO6: Efficient land use and well-managed transportation infrastructure are in place to attract businesses and support a thriving economy;
- Water, Air and Soil DO11: Surrey’s Green Infrastructure Network is an essential and integrated component of the City’s infrastructure, providing essential ecosystem services as well as places for recreation, conservation and rejuvenation; and
- Energy and Climate DO6: The City anticipates changing weather patterns and sea level rise as a result of climate change, and implements appropriate infrastructure, land use planning and emergency response solutions that will be resilient over the long term.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion it is recommended that Council authorize staff to commence a planning review along the Scott Road Corridor, including all preliminary planning and background studies to support secondary land use plan processes as described in this report and documented in Appendix "I".

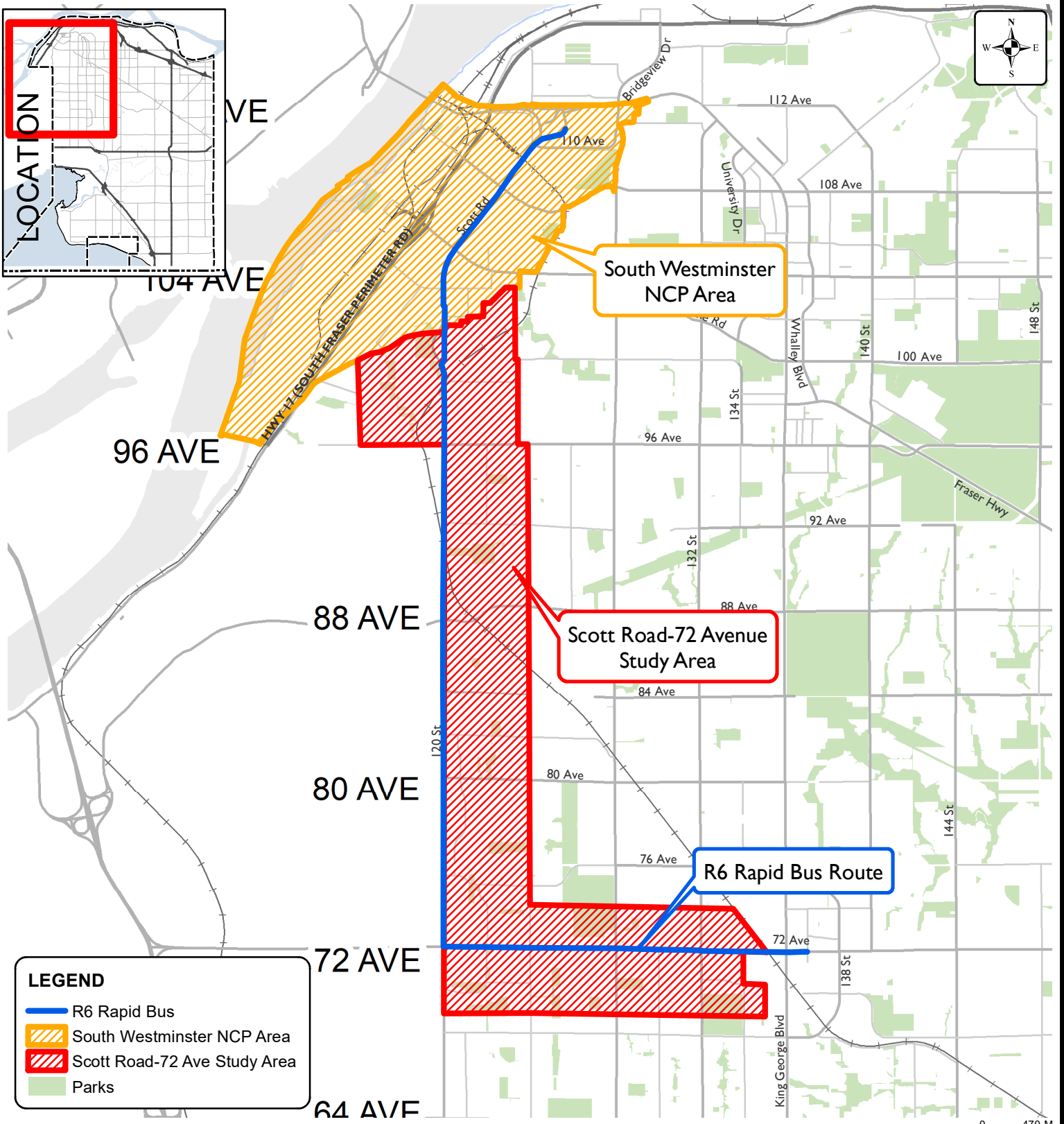
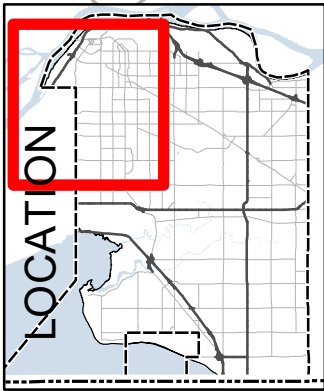
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Appendix "I" – Map of R6 RapidBus Corridor – Planning Areas



Produced by GIS Section: 07-Apr-2022

Scale: 1:50,000 0 470 M



Scott Road-72 Avenue Study Area and South Westminster NCP Area

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT

The data provided is compiled from various sources and IS NOT warranted as to its accuracy or sufficiency by the City of Surrey. This information is provided for information and convenience purposes only. Lot sizes, Legal descriptions and encumbrances must be confirmed at the Land Title Office.