

NO: **R155**

COUNCIL DATE: **July 22, 2013**

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **July 22, 2013**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning and Development
General Manager, Parks, Recreation & Culture**

FILE: **6520-20 (Surrey City
Centre)**

SUBJECT: **Surrey City Centre Plan Update – Additional Parks, an Expanded Area Covered
by the Mixed Use Designation and Refinements to the Road Network**

RECOMMENDATION

The Planning and Development Department and the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department recommend that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Approve the revised Surrey City Centre Land Use Plan that is attached to this report as Appendix I, which includes:
 - (a) three additional neighbourhood parks;
 - (b) the expansion of the Mixed Use 5.5 FAR designation around the civic core; and
 - (c) minor refinements to the City Centre Road Network; and

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval of amendments to the City Centre Land Use Plan, including additional park and plaza space, extension of the mixed-use area adjacent to the civic core, and minor refinements to the finer-grained road network.

BACKGROUND

During its Regular meeting on July 25, 2011 Council considered Corporate Report No. R151, titled "City Centre Plan Stage 2 Status Update" and approved the recommendations in the report related to an updated Land Use and Density Concept, a new Building Heights Concept, updated neighbourhood park areas, a Road Network Plan Concept and Green Lanes. The report also indicated that work was underway on a City Centre Community Building Strategy.

During its Regular meeting on May 28, 2012, Council considered Corporate Report No. 114, titled "City Centre Plan Update-Community Building Strategy". This report provided information on the outcome of a community consultation process and introduced the "PARKit!" program as a tool to activate public spaces through the installation of a temporary mini- urban parks and food carts.

DISCUSSION

The urban environment in Surrey City Centre is continuing to take shape through new public and private sector development. As population and employment increases, City staff continue to develop strategies to support the evolution of City Centre as a downtown that is attractive, safe, vibrant and successful. It is anticipated that the existing City Centre population of 27,671 will more than double by 2033 to approximately 68,000 people and that the number of jobs will increase from 23,584 to 32,000 over the next 10 years.

This report proposes refinements to the City Centre Plan including the addition of parks and plaza spaces in areas that are currently deficient in public open space, the expansion of the high-density mixed use designation around the civic core and minor adjustments to the road network concept. This work is documented in more detail in the following sections of this report.

Neighbourhood Parks

With increased residential densities, the need for parks and open space is especially important to ensure a livable urban setting. Studies show that urban parks within easy walking distance of residences improve physical and psychological health, encourage a sense of community, and make neighbourhoods more attractive places to live and work.

Staff conducted an analysis of the current City Centre Land Use Plan to ensure that all future residential areas are located within 400 metres of a neighbourhood park, which is in alignment with the Parks, Recreation & Culture 10-Year Strategic Plan and the Green Network Study. This analysis identified three areas that were deficient in neighbourhood parks: one in the north-westerly area, one in the central area, and the third in the south-easterly area of the Plan. These areas are highlighted in Appendix II attached to this report.

As such, additional parks are proposed at three locations as illustrated in Appendix III and as described in the following sections.

Park 1 - "Bolivar Ravine Park"

A new park is proposed in the north-westerly section of the plan area. It is labelled as "Park 1" in the map attached as Appendix III. The land to the east of Park 1 is designated for future high rise development at a floor area ratio (FAR) of 5.5 and with low to mid-rise development at an FAR of 2.5 to the west.

This park is envisioned as a natural and passive area alongside the Bolivar Creek ravine. This location will provide habitat conservation for the sensitive ravine ecosystem and riparian area. It also presents an opportunity to provide a public interface of pathways and viewing areas with the unique ravine ecology. A pedestrian bridge across the ravine will provide a more direct connection between northwest City Centre and the Gateway SkyTrain Station, thereby improving walkability in the neighbourhood.

Park 2 - "West Village Park"

Another park is proposed at the intersection of 133 Street and 103 Avenue (specifically 10347 and 10357 - 133 Street) that is illustrated as "Park 2" on the map attached as Appendix III. The properties needed for this park are in the process of being purchased by the City. This park is

proposed for the heart of a high density residential neighbourhood where new development is currently under construction. The residential densities in this area just west of the civic core range from Low to Mid Rise at an FAR of 2.5 to Mid to High Rise with an FAR of 3.5 and High Rise with an FAR of 5.5.

This park is a neighbourhood mini-park and will provide a contemporary plaza space with an opportunity for amenities such as a playground, sports court and passive seating areas. It has also been identified as a potential site for a future district energy facility. Such a facility in this location could complement the park through its architectural design and the incorporation of public art. This district energy opportunity will be investigated further through a feasibility study in conjunction with the park master planning process.

The site immediately to the north of this future park contains a large Sequoia tree that is identified as a heritage tree on the City's Heritage Register. It is anticipated that this tree will be protected during development of the adjacent site and perhaps be incorporated into the park.

Park 3 - "South Junction Park"

"Park 3" as illustrated in Appendix III is proposed for the area north of 96 Avenue, between 136A Street and 137 Street. The properties at 9671, 9677 and 9687 - 137 Street have already been purchased by the City and make up approximately 25% of this future park site.

The park, located across the street from Surrey Memorial Hospital, will provide an important north-south green connection between the hospital and the King George Skytrain Station. This southerly part of City Centre is emerging as a "medical precinct" with many medical-related uses and care facilities. Future office and residential densities in this area are planned at an FAR of 3.5.

The health benefits of green space, especially for people in long term care or recovering from illness, make this park an important green space within the medical precinct, with opportunity for amenities that cater to seniors, long-term patients, those undergoing rehabilitation, and area medical and office staff. Amenities in this park may include an exercise circuit with a focus on physical rehabilitation, a walking loop and passive seating areas with display gardens.

Funding Park Amenities

Development Cost Charges (DCCs) collected in City Centre support the acquisition of the park lands identified in the Land Use Plan but do not provide the funding required to construct the full range of amenities envisioned in these parks.

As part of the next stage of the Surrey City Centre Plan Update, a comprehensive financial strategy is being developed with the goal of creating a specific set of development-related fees, for parks, fire and police protection and library materials, similar to those levied in Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) areas throughout the City.

Currently, staff requests that new developments in City Centre provide a voluntary contribution to mitigate the impact of new development on existing parks and recreation facilities in City Centre. This voluntary contribution is negotiated on a case-by-case basis and will continue while the NCP amenity contribution calculations are being finalized.

Urban Plaza Space

The proposed addition of park space discussed in this report will satisfy the goal of providing neighbourhood parks within reasonable walking distance of all residential areas in the City Centre; however, the City's target of providing 0.6 hectares (1.5 acres) of neighbourhood park on City-owned lands for every 1,000 people within City Centre will not be fully satisfied. To address the shortfall, the City will upon publically accessible urban plaza spaces and civic squares on private property constructed as part of developments in City Centre.

These urban plazas and civic squares are intended to be more "urban" in nature incorporating a substantial amount of hard-surfacing and more urban features such as seating, fountains, rain gardens and public art.

Currently, the provision of plaza spaces is negotiated with developers by staff on a case-by-case basis through the development application and design review and approval process. As part of the Stage 2 component of the City Centre Plan staff is developing a comprehensive policy that will address not only the provision of public open space on private property, but that will also address the criteria associated with these public open spaces and the broader issue of indoor and outdoor amenity spaces and related compensation.

City Developed Plazas

Two City-owned public plazas are identified on the City Centre Land Use Plan as illustrated on the attached Appendix IV.

A large civic plaza is under construction at the New City Hall location. It is intended to provide a gathering place for key civic activities and celebrations, and is designed to accommodate up to 5,000 people. As redevelopment of adjacent blocks proceeds, this plaza space will be extended southward to connect with the plaza space at the north end of the Central City development at 102 Street and will form a large, continuous pedestrian spine in the heart of City Centre.

A second public plaza is planned for 108 Avenue and King George Boulevard, at the historic Whalley's Corner. Although this plaza will be smaller than the Civic Plaza, it will be located at a prominent location, providing an excellent gateway into City Centre.

Minor Refinements to the Road Network

Connectivity and walkability between public spaces and residential areas is a key factor in creating a vibrant and livable downtown. During its Regular meeting on July 25, 2011, Council approved a revised City Centre Basic Road Network Plan as well as a Green Lanes policy as means to supplement and support a finer grained road network in City Centre to promote pedestrian friendliness and neighbourhood connectivity (Corporate Report No. R151).

As a result of recent development applications and the proposed parks as referenced previously in this report, minor road alignment adjustments need to be made to the road network as illustrated in the updated Surrey City Centre Land Use Plan that is attached to this report as Appendix I.

Staff is also reviewing City Centre road design standards to improve cycling and pedestrian amenity areas within the boulevards of streets including plantings, bike racks, benches and beautification. Staff will provide a full report to Council on these road standards later in 2013.

Changes to Land Use Designations Adjacent to the Civic Core

Commercial land uses such as shops and restaurants at the ground floor of buildings provide vibrancy and activity along a street. By combining retail space with office, institutional and residential uses, walking and transit use are encouraged by virtue of the more vibrant environment along the street.

The City Centre Land Use Plan includes a "Mixed Use" designation that permits commercial, office, institutional, and residential development either on the same development site, or within the same building. Currently the Plan allows "Mixed-Uses" around each of the SkyTrain stations, and along most of 104 Avenue, and along King George Boulevard.

Over the past few years, the City has received requests to allow ground-floor commercial uses within residential towers on sites within the areas covered by the "Mixed Use 7.5 FAR" designation in the "Civic Core". Specifically, several development applications in this area are proposing commercial uses at the ground/street level.

To create a consistent street frontage across from the Civic Core, it is proposed that the Land Use Plan be amended to change the "High Rise 5.5 FAR" designation to a "Mixed Use 5.5 FAR" designation along portions of University Drive and 104 Avenue as illustrated on Appendix V attached to this report.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

The City Centre Plan amendments as recommended in this report will assist in the achieving the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter; more particularly, the following Charter scope action items:

- EC9 – Improve the Quality of Design in New Development and Redevelopment;
- EN9 – Sustainable Land Use Planning and Development Practices; and
- EN13 - Enhance the Public Realm.

CONCLUSION

This report describes proposed changes to the City Centre Land Use Plan that include adding several neighbourhood parks in areas that are deficient in parkland, extending the Mixed Use designation to a larger area adjacent to the civic core and minor adjustments to road alignments to improve walkability in City Centre.

Staff is continuing to develop and implement strategies to build a successful and vibrant City Centre area. Next steps include developing policies to secure urban plaza space through the development process and revising road standards to promote better cycling and walkability standards. It is anticipated that staff will report back to Council on the revised road standards and an urban plaza strategy later this year.

Based on the above discussion it is recommended that Council:

- Approve the revised Surrey City Centre Land Use Plan that is attached to this report as Appendix I, which includes:
 - three additional neighbourhood parks;
 - the expansion of the Mixed Use 5.5 FAR designation around the civic core; and
 - minor refinements to the City Centre Road Network; and

Original signed by
Jean Lamontagne
General Manager,
Planning and Development

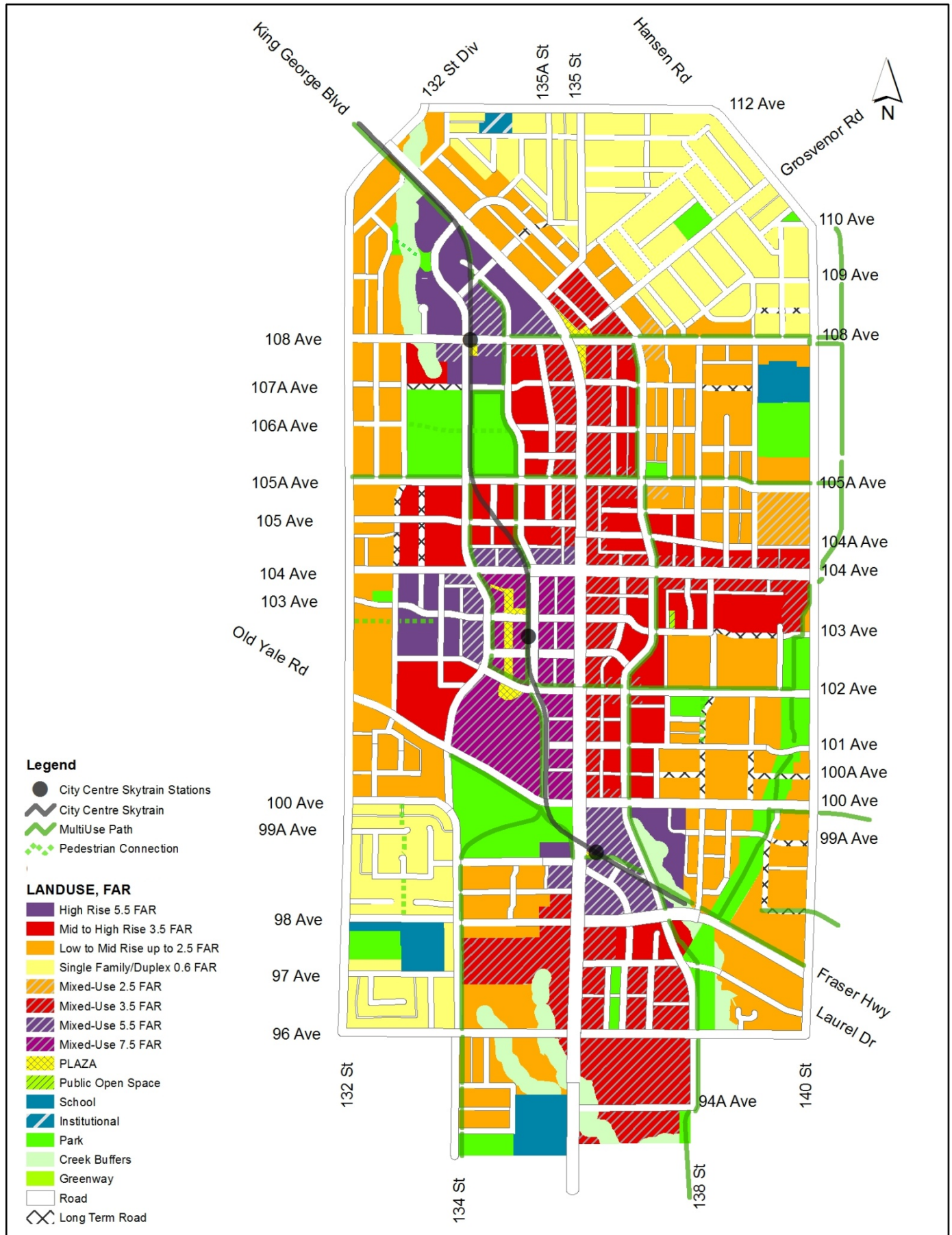
Original signed by
Laurie Cavan
General Manager
Parks, Recreation & Culture

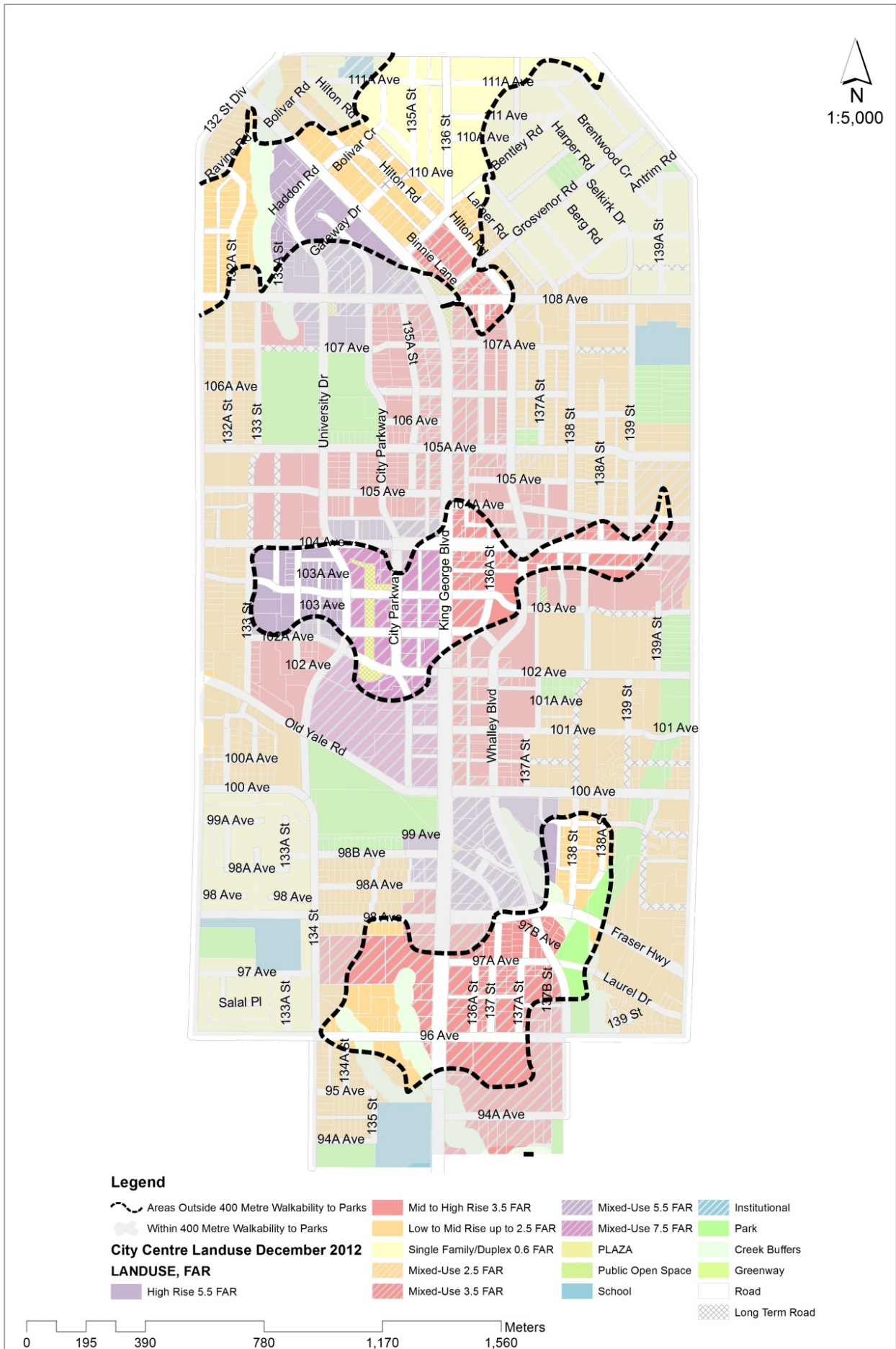
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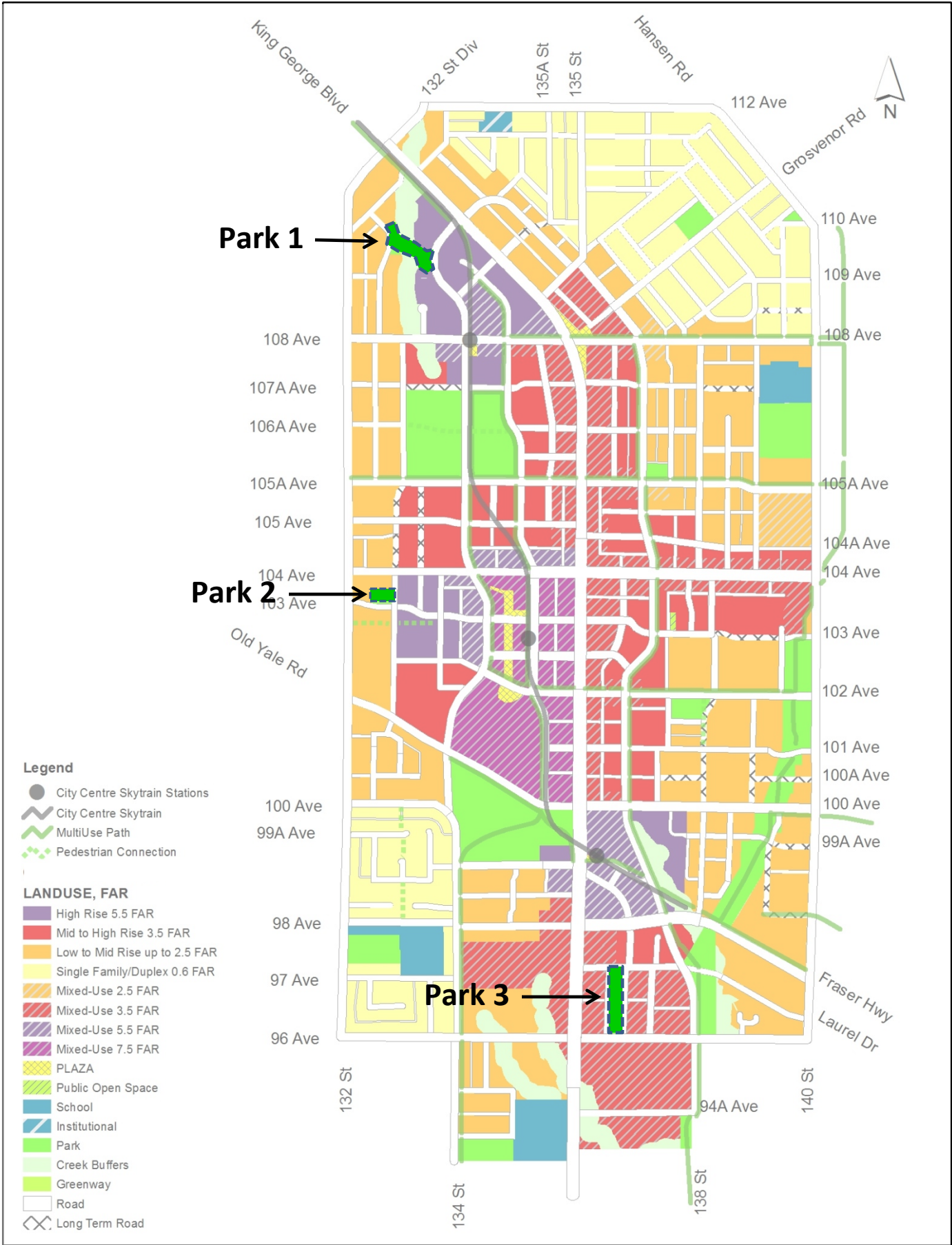
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| Appendix I | Revised Surrey City Centre Land Use Plan |
| Appendix II | Surrey City Centre Park Walkshed Analysis |
| Appendix III | Proposed New Park Locations in Surrey City Centre |
| Appendix IV | Plaza Locations in Surrey City Centre |
| Appendix V | Proposed Changes to "5.5 FAR Designation" Adjacent to Civic Core |

Surrey City Centre Land Use Plan- July 2013

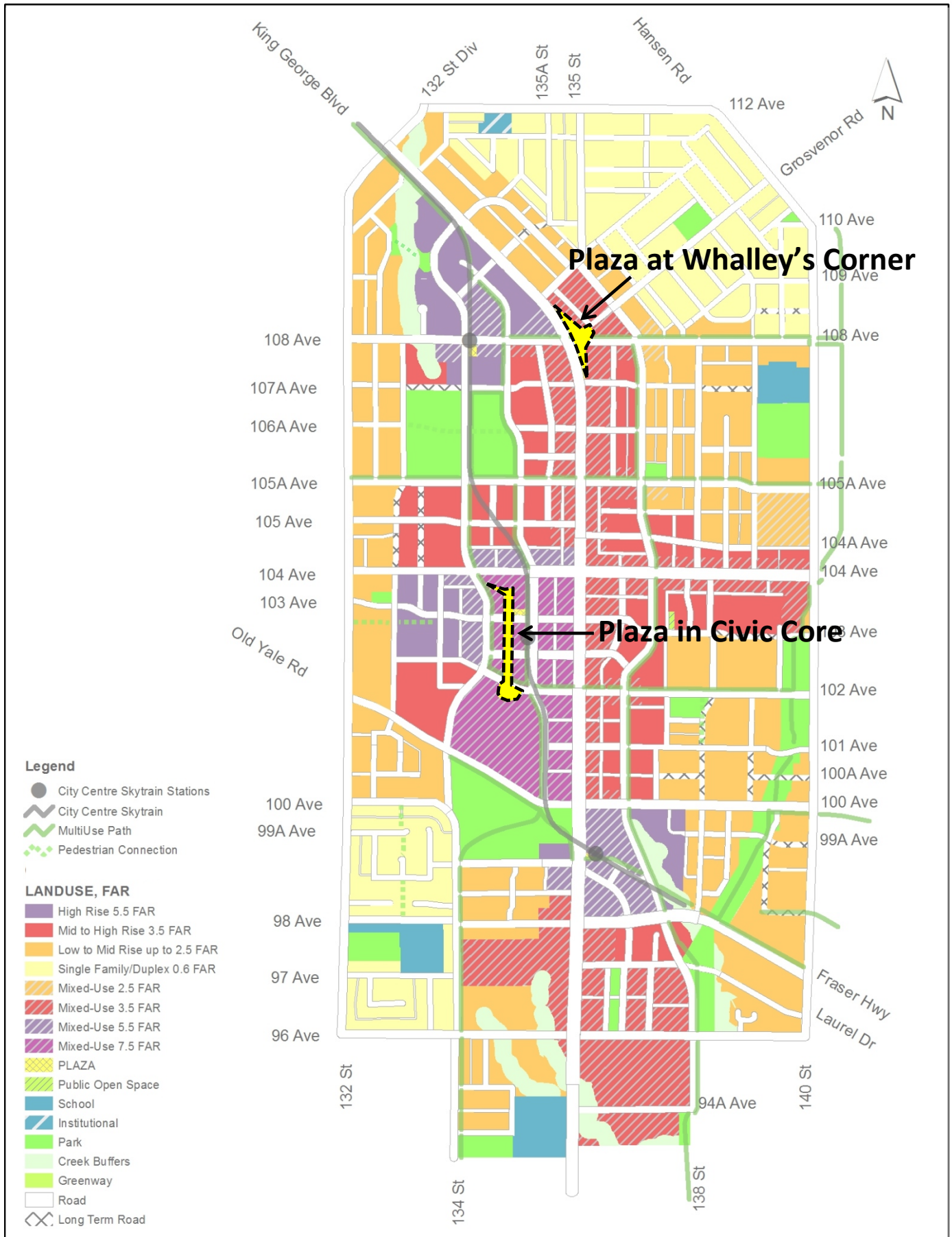




Proposed New Park Locations in Surrey City Centre



Plaza Locations in Surrey City Centre



Proposed Changes to "High-Rise 5.5 FAR" Designation

