

NO: R178

COUNCIL DATE: July 25, 2016

REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **July 20, 2016**

FROM: **General Manager, Engineering**

FILE: **0510-20 (SFU)**

SUBJECT: **Simon Fraser University City Centre Development**

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Engineering Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

BACKGROUND

Simon Fraser University (SFU) has been a key partner and catalyst in the transformation of the emerging central downtown area in City Centre. With the new KPU Civic Plaza campus to open in 2017, an Academic Precinct is emerging, one of the key elements that sets Surrey City Centre apart from other Regional City Centres in Metro.

SFU have outgrown their current home in the base of the Central City Tower and Mall and a planning process has been undertaken in partnership with the City to define the principles for a larger Academic Precinct. In addition, a partnership between TransLink, the City and SFU has resulted in a plan to reconfigure the Surrey Central Bus Exchange.

More recently, SFU have applied for Federal funding to construct the next phase of their Surrey Campus. The timelines of this funding are very short and will require a concerted effort.

Central Downtown Area and Surrey Central Bus Exchange

The central downtown area is envisioned as having the highest densities in the heart of the downtown with a vibrant civic, educational, entertainment and cultural focus. This area is a compact, highly walkable area less than a square kilometre in size where a critical mass of activity will facilitate major economic, cultural, and institutional exchange.

Unfortunately, the Surrey Central Bus Exchange sits in a prime location at the heart of the central downtown area and was designed in a manner that undermines this vision. The island configuration for the bus exchange is functional for bus users, but impenetrable for other users, as it is mostly fenced and turns its back to the surrounding environment. Land ownership of the major parcels in this area is generally with the City and SFU, as noted in the accompanying Appendix "I".

TransLink, in partnership with the City and SFU, have developed a plan to reconfigure the Surrey Central Bus Exchange from an off-street transit exchange to an urban style on-street transit couplet, as shown in Appendix “II”. The buses will utilize a new extension of 102A Avenue on the site of the current exchange for drop off and 103 Avenue for pick up. The proposed design will accommodate the increased pedestrian flows, better integrate transit service into City Centre’s urban form and improve the urban design, rather than segregating transit service. This is key to achieving the vision for the central downtown area, as well as facilitating the redevelopment of the Centre Block (102 Avenue to 103 Avenue between University Drive and City Parkway), removing a major physical and visual barrier and allowing for new pedestrian connections, a high quality public realm, and off-site bus layover.

Academic Precinct Planning

Subsequent to the Surrey Central Bus Exchange Process, SFU and the City have continued planning for an Academic Precinct. The process has been broad enough to include other public post-secondary institutions, recognizing that Kwantlen Polytechnic University will also have a significant presence with their KPU Civic Plaza campus. KPU currently plans to deliver professional studies, upper-level business courses and post-graduate credentials.

The following principles have been developed to guide the planning for the Academic Precinct within the central downtown area:

1. The City supports the expansion of public post-secondary academic institutions in City Centre.
2. The intent is to further the vision of the central downtown area as having the highest densities in the heart of the downtown with a vibrant civic, educational, entertainment and cultural focus, where a critical mass of activity will facilitate major economic, cultural, and institutional exchange.
3. The City is not fixed on a particular strategy for delivering academic space, and is open to different types of buildings and tenure.
4. Stakeholders will work to identify an Academic Precinct:
 - a. Partners will look to best practices in creating City Centre academic precincts;
 - b. Identifying a precinct does not preclude academic expansion in other areas; rather it identifies the central downtown area as the heart of where the expansion would take place, the boundaries of which may evolve over time;
 - c. Identifying a precinct also does not preclude public or private sector actors from locating in the Academic Precinct with mixed uses beyond academic. The City would seek to encourage uses that are complementary to the Academic Precinct; and
 - d. Partners will leverage the advantages of a precinct with a concentrated academic presence; it could be branded with signage, banners, etc., and the City would work with academic institutions on branding and identity.

SFU has established an institutional presence in City Centre and has significant expansion plans within Surrey City Centre pursuant to an agreement with the Province. There are a number of additional Academic Precinct principles that are specific to SFU:

1. Parties will work together for the “timely delivery” of project elements to meet all stakeholder needs.
2. Parties will work together to identify opportunities for shared amenities/facilities.

3. Parties will work together to support and integrate all transportation modes: transit (LRT, bus and SkyTrain), walking, cycling, and vehicle use, generally in accordance with City of Surrey plans and policies.
4. Parties agree to work together to support the timely implementation of the Surrey Central Exchange Concept Plan.

New SFU Building

SFU have applied for Federal funding to construct a new academic building that supports SFU's Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering Program. The building would be located at the northwest corner of 102A Avenue and University Drive and consist of approximately 155,000 square feet over five floors. The main floor would include a café and 400 seat theatre which could be available for community use weekday evenings and weekends, with upper floors providing research labs, innovation space, and offices (Appendix "III").

SFU is seeking to acquire City property on 103 Avenue and the lane south between our properties and their site.

The Federal funding program requires matching funding from the Province, which we understand has been committed to. There is no official date for announcing which projects were successful in receiving funding, though SFU expect to hear in early June. The Federal deadline for substantial completion of funded projects is April 30, 2018, less than two years away.

The April 30, 2018 deadline for building completion presents a number of challenges, and work has begun on various parallel work streams. A Development Permit Application has been submitted and staff are working hard to achieve the very ambitious timeline.

Property Consolidation

Realty Services will be bringing forward a separate Corporate Report regarding the 4 City-owned lots which are the current site of the Library's surface parking lot. To facilitate the new SFU building, the City is proposing to sell 4 City-owned parcels and a portion of an adjacent lane. In addition, there will be road dedication prior to sale of the City properties.

Next Steps

We will work with SFU staff on the following initiatives:

- Complete the sale of City lands for consolidation with SFU lands; and
- Work with SFU to advance their Development Application for the new Energy and Environmental Energy Building.

SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS

SFU are a key stakeholder and will be an active partner in the development and success of City Centre. The scope of their role – education provider, research and innovation hub, and catalyst for re-development, touches on many themes in the Sustainability Charter, particularly Built Environment and Neighbourhoods, Economic Prosperity and Livelihoods, Education and Culture, and Infrastructure. Specifically, the MOU with SFU supports the following Desired Outcomes:

- Neighbourhoods and Urban Design DO 3: The City Centre is a dynamic, attractive and complete metropolitan area and important international destination, and is one of North America's most livable and desirable downtowns;
- Jobs and Skills Training DO2: Quality education, training and skills development programs are available in the city, which help to create a highly skilled workforce;
- Learning DO6: Surrey is a provider of advanced education, producing cutting-edge research and cultivating leaders in innovative practices; and
- Transportation DO11: An integrated and multi-modal transportation network offers affordable, convenient, accessible and safe transportation choices within the community and to regional destinations.

CONCLUSION

Based on the above, the Engineering Department recommends that Council receive this report as information.

Fraser Smith, P.Eng., MBA
General Manager, Engineering

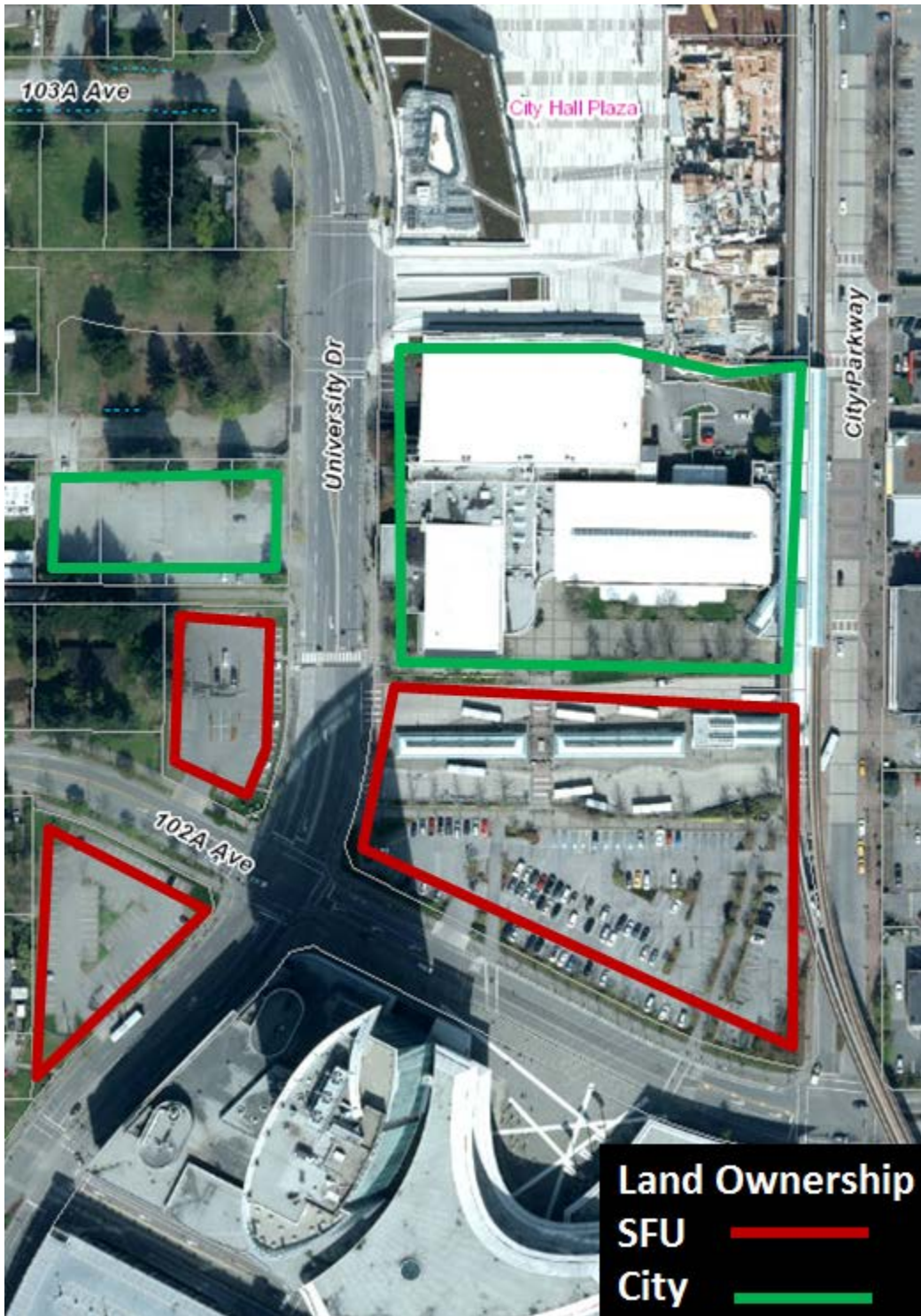
FS/JB/DB/clr

Appendix "I" – Land Ownership

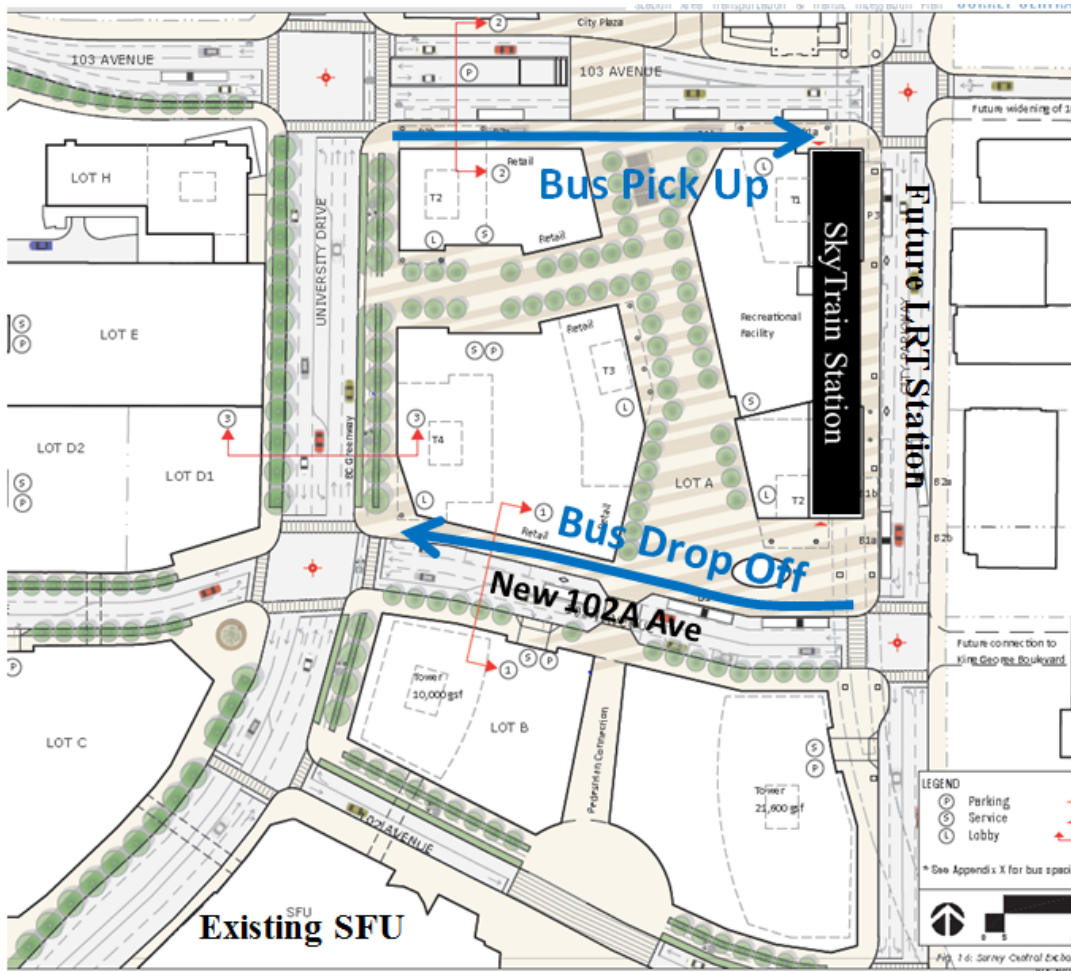
Appendix "II" – Surrey Central Exchange Plan and Hypothetical Civic Core Redevelopment Scenario

Appendix "III" - SFU Engineering Building Application

Current Land Ownership



Surrey Central Exchange Plan



Reconfigured Bus Exchange

SFU Engineering Building Application

