

Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas Local Implementation Case Studies

Urban Centres and FTDA Implementation Best Practice Case Study

Topic: Transit-Oriented (Re)Development in the 22nd Street Station Area FTDA

Centre/FTDA: 22nd Street Frequent Transit Development Area

Municipality: City of New Westminster

The 22nd Street Station area is one of the region's newest FTDA's. Today it's a low-density residential neighbourhood at an important and complex transportation crossroads of the region. The City of New Westminster is now working with the neighbourhood to reimagine it as a transit-oriented, mixed-use, multi-modal, and multi-family community with new amenities that create a sense of "heart."

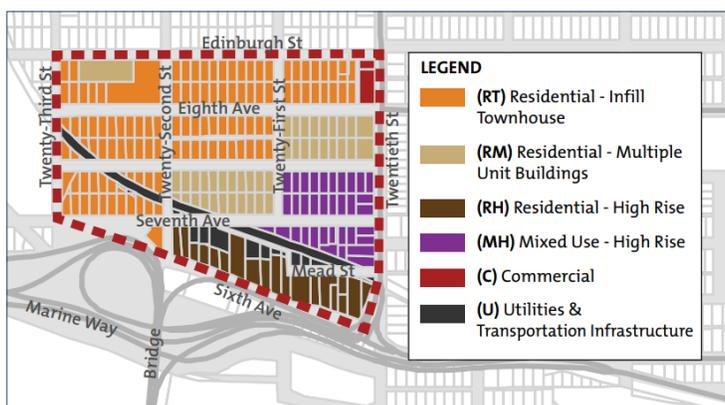


Through the review of the New Westminster Official Community Plan (OCP) which was adopted in October 2017, the City of New Westminster identified the area around 22nd Street Station as a new Frequent Transit Development Area (FTDA) - an area to accommodate new growth. The City of New Westminster is now embarking on a master planning process for the 22nd Street Station FTDA.

22nd Street Station is an important regional transportation hub for motor vehicles, transit, pedestrians, and bikes. The station connects Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster and Surrey via the SkyTrain's Expo Line as well as North Delta, Richmond and Langley via various regional bus routes. The BC Parkway multi-use path provides pedestrian and cyclist access to the station. The area is also where the Queensborough Bridge meets Marine Way and Stewardson Way. While the Station is a busy and important regional transportation exchange, the area around the Station has remained a low-density residential neighbourhood despite having rapid transit service since 1985. This is in part because the identified imperative to address the existing transportation challenges inherent to the

area before adding the complexity of high-density mixed-use development and new construction. Although it is a good place for growth, the underlying transportation network needed to be enhanced first.

Through the OCP review process the community identified other challenges with the neighbourhood. Residents said the area had no "heart" – no sense of a central gathering place. The area is almost entirely residential and



Area that will be covered by the Master Plan and proposed land use designations.

residents must leave the neighbourhood to access shopping and services. But the primary concern was traffic—volumes, noise, and safety are major issues according to the area residents. Despite these challenges, many residents agreed that the area was a good place for growth and came to support the idea of designating the area as an FTDA.

The City of New Westminster identified a number of lessons in working with the community to add new density to this Frequent Transit Development Area.

Lessons Learned – Engagement

- **Keep messages clear and simple:** In engaging the neighbourhood in the OCP Review process it was important to distinguish between the following two messages:
 - Accommodating growth
 - Increasing housing choice
- **Track participation:** City staff kept detailed records of the demographics of each person who engaged with the OCP Review process and measured it against the census profile for the neighbourhood. When this revealed that participation skewed towards an older audience, Council directed staff to target younger residents—specifically those under 40.
- **Engage all generations through partnerships:** Staff integrated engagement activities into the already established “Beer Friday” community-run program to create an opportunity for millennial voices to be heard. Staff integrated engagement activities into the already established “Beer Friday” program to create an opportunity for millennial voices to be heard. This event sold out in under 3 hours and incidentally helped to launch the “Yes New West” YIMBY advocacy group which now helps to balance the anti-change voices.
- **Start with why:** City staff used “Speed Dating-style” drop-in engagement events where participants circulated quickly through a variety of stations on different topics. This helped staff to understand the “why” behind comments from residents.
- **Seed leadership broadly:** The OCP Review process included an Advisory Group made up of representatives from each neighbourhood. The Advisory Group participated in walking tours and served as a sounding board to test all the City’s OCP Review workshop materials. The Advisory Group also served as informal advocates for the process within their own communities, helping to disseminate information. In some cases they even led workshops and events.
- **Support for change varies by distance to the Station:** Staff observed that residents closest to the SkyTrain station were very supportive of redeveloping the neighbourhood because traffic and noise had become so problematic where they lived. Residents living just on the edges of the neighbourhood were supportive of



redevelopment because of the anticipated new amenities redevelopment would bring. Those in the middle however, were least supportive of the redevelopment because they anticipated not receiving the immediate benefits or biggest upzoning (property value) benefits but they would be negatively impacted by the construction activities associated with redevelopment.

Lessons Learned – Community Planning and Urban Design

- **Phase redevelopment among FTDA and Urban Centres:** Rather than opening every Urban Centre and FTDA up for development all at once, the City of New Westminster decided to take a phased approach among the different FTDA and Urban Centres, directing developers to one area at a time. Signalling to developers where to prioritize development activity allowed staff to focus on one community at a time, making better use of limited staff capacity. This approach was necessary in the case of 22nd Street Station because the City needed to wait until they had the capacity to address the transportation complexity of the site before contemplating redevelopment applications. Until that happened, staff directed developers to focus in New Westminster Regional City Centre, Sapperton FTDA, and Braid FTDA.
- **Integrate facilities into new neighbourhoods:** The City of New Westminster expects to work closely with TransLink to develop a Facility Integration Plan to help address some of the current access challenges and to make sure that the new development complements the SkyTrain station and bus loop rather than blocking access.
- **Prioritize active transportation:** FTDA are envisioned to be areas where walking, biking, and transit are the main modes of transportation for most trips. To support this mode shift, New Westminster is focusing on upgrading safety, comfort, and connectivity of the active transportation facilities in the area. This will include enhancing BC Parkway connectivity through a partnership with the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure.
- **Provide alternatives to car-ownership:** Recognizing that even regular transit-users need to drive sometimes, the City of New Westminster will negotiate with carshare organizations to expand carshare “home zones” to include the 22nd Street Station. This will help support a more multi-modal lifestyle for the residents of the FTDA and reduce the need for parking spaces.
- **Plan for changing transportation technologies:** The advent of shared, autonomous, and electric vehicles will change how people access this busy transit hub, increasing the number of people being dropped off



near the station. Planning for designated taxi, ridehailing, and Kiss-and-Ride zones will help avoid congestion and idling cars blocking buses that are trying to enter and exit the bus loop.

- **Use consolidation requirements to avoid potential site challenges:** Staff have identified potentially problematic site configurations such as multi-family buildings fronting onto a busy bridge on-ramp. In these cases, the City has imposed consolidation requirements obliging developers to consolidate a number of parcels to allow for better resident access to their buildings once built.
- **Mitigate for noise impacts:** As a busy transportation crossroads, traffic noise is a serious health concern for residents and future residents. In recognition of this, concrete towers as opposed to wood frame construction will be required in areas closest to transportation routes and SkyTrain guideways.
- **Consider external influencers:** Through the OCP Review process staff heard that the community would like better access to shopping opportunities in Burnaby. Rapid growth in Burnaby would also be likely to spill over into the neighbourhood in the form of traffic. These influencers will be built into the FTDA Master Plan.

Contact information

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