

Revitalization Community Development Strategy

RECOMMENDATION

That the March 7, 2022, Community Services report CS00562, be received for information.

Report Purpose

Information only

Community and Public Services Committee is being informed of community prioritization of potential capital projects within the Balwin/Belvedere Revitalization area.

Previous Council/Committee Action

At the April 14, 2021, Community and Public Services Committee meeting the following motion passed:

1. That Administration provide a report in First Quarter 2022 on progress of the Balwin/Belvedere revitalization community development strategy and proposed capital project scoping.

Executive Summary

- Following City Council's approval of Inglewood and Balwin/Belvedere for the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program, revitalization strategies were developed with community representatives in both areas and implementation began in late 2019.
- Each strategy includes planning for capital investments to meet the community's revitalization goals, including safety, beautification, creating gathering spaces and enhancing recreation opportunities.
- Council's approval included \$13.4 million in capital funding within the 2019-2022 budget cycle for planning, design and delivery, with delivery focused in Inglewood.
- It also included the provision of a dedicated City Revitalization Coordinator and \$180,000 in program funding for each area in each year of revitalization. This funding supports community-driven and community-led initiatives, activities and events that align with the Revitalization Strategy.

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- When implementation of the strategies began, neighbourhood renewal was already underway in Inglewood, and the capital funding allocated for the two new revitalization areas was allocated mostly to Inglewood where leverage and construction opportunities were immediate.
- Five smaller projects in Balwin/Belvedere have passed Checkpoint 1 of the Project Develop and Delivery Model. Others are being further developed for consideration within the 2023-2026 capital budget cycle.
- Results of a review of Neighbourhood Revitalization, including any recommendations for program changes, will be provided to Council in fall 2022.

REPORT

In 2018, City Council approved Balwin/Belvedere and Inglewood as the next two revitalization neighbourhoods. The Balwin/Belvedere and Inglewood revitalization areas are supported by two full-time employees and annual program funding of \$360,000. Program funding is accessed by community through an online grant application process. Funding approval requires applicants to match City funding through a combination of funds, volunteer support, and in-kind donations for upto \$20,000.

The approved 2019-2022 Capital Budget included \$13.4 million for potential capital projects that would be leveraged with other City projects in the area. The majority of capital funding allocated for 2019-2022 was to be spent in Inglewood as there were more immediate leverage opportunities with Inglewood and 124th Street renewals (Attachment 1). Alignment opportunities in Balwin and Belvedere were more complex and allowed for more time for implementation. As a result, the majority of delivery in those neighbourhoods is planned for 2023-2026.

Community leaders in both areas worked with Administration to engage residents, local businesses and local organizations to:

- strengthen social capital and consider opportunities to animate their neighbourhoods through revitalization program funding, including for activities and events
- look at opportunities to leverage revitalization capital funding to enhance neighbourhood priorities such as safety, security, community connection and neighbourhood aesthetics

Revitalization Operating Program Funding

Revitalization strategies were developed with community representatives and implementation began in late 2019. Each strategy includes planning for capital investments to meet the community's revitalization goals, including safety, beautification, creating gathering spaces and enhancing recreation opportunities. Residents, the Fort Road Business Improvement Area Association, local businesses, and non-profit organizations have led projects and initiatives throughout 2020 and 2021 that strengthen neighbourhood leadership and support the four revitalization goals.

In 2021, approximately \$73,300 of the available program funding was spent. This reflects the typical spending pattern in a new revitalization area and the impact of COVID-19 on the ability to advance the revitalization strategies. Typically, expenditures are small in the early stages of implementation when the community is identifying priorities and creating action plans for

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subsequent years. In addition, the pandemic has hindered progress by limiting in-person interaction. Community stakeholders continue to adjust to the effects of the pandemic and, in spite of challenges, have successfully undertaken initiatives to address neighbourhood goals (Attachment 2). Administration anticipates that unspent program funds from 2021 will be required in subsequent years to build on the momentum gained through increased community leadership and empowerment. Accordingly, a carryforward of these unspent operating funds will be requested through the Operating Financial Update - December 31, 2021 report currently scheduled for the March 14, 2022, City Council meeting.

Revitalization Capital Funding

The current capital profile of \$13.4 million for Inglewood and Balwin/Belvedere includes planning and design funding to advance Balwin/Belvedere projects to Checkpoint 3 to be in a position to request appropriate funding for delivery as part of the 2023-2026 capital budget submission. Capital project scoping and cost estimate work will be completed by the third quarter of 2022.

Selection of Balwin/Belvedere as a revitalization area considered the potential to leverage revitalization capital investments with concurrent capital projects (Attachment 3). Administration will continue to work internally and with community stakeholders to explore enhancements to the Fort Road - 66 Street intersection, 132 Avenue Renewal and Business Improvement Area Alley Renewal.

Administration and the community-led capital project team have identified other potential capital investments. The community team carried out public engagement and prioritized the potential projects presented in the Community Capital Investment Priorities report (Attachment 4). Proposed projects include neighbourhood park amenity enhancements, pedestrian safety enhancements and beautification along 127 Avenue in Balwin, the Fort Road and 66 Street intersection, and 66 Street from 128 to 130 Avenue.

Evaluation

Administration is currently completing a strategic review of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program to identify opportunities for improvement such as cash flow that better aligns with the phases of the initiative and whether changes to program funding policy and procedure are warranted to increase equity for revitalization neighbourhoods.

Budget/Financial Implications

Administration will present the Operating Financial Update - December 31, 2021 report to City Council on March 14, 2022, which will include requests for carry-forward of unspent 2021 operating budget into future years to complete previously approved project work. As part of that report, Administration is anticipating to request carryforward of the remaining 2021 revitalization program operating funds into 2022.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Through the development of the Balwin/Belvedere Revitalization Strategy in 2019, residents, community organizations, business owners, and stakeholders provided their perspectives how to best mobilize and support community to identify strengths, issues, and priorities to create and

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implement a strategy that builds more vibrant, inclusive, healthy, safe, and attractive neighbourhoods. The community's insights were summarized in a What We Heard Report (Attachment 5). This engagement identified social connection as the primary mechanism to achieve the area's vision and goals for the revitalization.

Engagement in 2020 and 2021 focused on identifying and prioritizing potential capital investments. In order to meet COVID-19 pandemic health regulations, engagement mostly occurred through digital tools including online surveys and workbooks. The community-recommended projects are currently being assessed through the Project Development and Delivery Model. Additional public engagement opportunities on specific projects will be conducted over the course of 2022 for input in the concept and design phases of the approved projects. Public engagement planning will explore the opportunity to coordinate with the public engagement for the northeast district planning.

GBA+

The model used to select neighbourhoods for revitalization uses a combination of the Social Vulnerability Index score and opportunities to leverage current or planned capital investments to enhance neighbourhood liveability, safety, beautification and vibrancy. One objective of this program is to increase equity between communities by providing additional resources to enhance physical, social, recreational, and local economic opportunities. Having revitalization in a neighbourhood results in increased equity for the neighbourhood by reducing barriers to civic engagement through capacity strengthening opportunities including having community members lead committees and manage events, connect with subject matter experts from multiple departments and attend City Council meetings.

Resources and funding is meant to benefit the neighbourhood as a whole. Administration makes every effort to reflect the demographics of the neighbourhood, though some City processes and program structures do create barriers to participation for some. Some individuals, organizations, and businesses do not have the time or capacity to participate on committees or engagement sessions or go through the application process for funding, creating some inequity in the community. This effect has been compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic which has resulted in changes to individual, organizational, and business priorities.

Administration recently initiated a strategic program review which will identify additional opportunities to increase equity of access to program funding and the ability to undertake community led construction and parkland development projects. Through the strategic program review, Administration, community partners, and other stakeholders will work together to identify ways that current program policies and procedures could be improved to further enhance the equity-building impacts of the Neighbourhood Revitalization Program and work together to mitigate barriers to participation (Attachment 6).

ATTACHMENTS

1. Revitalization Capital Budget 2019 - 2022 Allocations
2. Balwin/Belvedere Community-Led Initiatives to Expand and Mobilize Neighbourhood Leadership in 2020 and 2021

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3. Potential Opportunities to Leverage Concurrent Capital Projects
4. Community Capital Investment Priorities
5. What We Heard Report: Neighbourhood Revitalization - Balwin and Belvedere
6. GBA+ Reporting