

## **A future for Fraser Mills site?**

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The historic Fraser Mills site is one step closer to re-birth as a residential, commercial, recreational – and maybe even educational – destination in Coquitlam.

City councillors gave a preliminary nod of approval at Monday night's committee of the whole meeting to the Beedie Group's plans to revamp the 83.4-acre site with mixed-used development that could welcome a BCIT campus.

Council will vote on the first reading of an OCP bylaw amendment and consider the terms of reference for the preparation of a neighbourhood plan, both required for the development application to advance, at an upcoming meeting.

The proposed OCP amendments to go before council are as follows:

- a seventh neighbourhood village centre (the others are elsewhere in Coquitlam) that applies only to Fraser Mills be added;
- the current land-use designation of industrial be changed to "waterfront village centre";
- the waterfront industrial land and hazardous lands policies be amended to allow for a "waterfront village centre;"
- and a new section be added to the Southwest Coquitlam Town Centre Area Plan setting out planning principles, land use and densities that will apply to the development; for instance, a public pier must be built on the river and linked to the waterfront public trail system on site, if possible, and a minimum of 16 acres of publicly accessible space must be provided.

The neighbourhood plan terms of reference include a comprehensive public consultation process; a site analysis of geotechnical, environmental, drainage and other issues that could influence the planning process; an analysis of the impact to adjacent lands; infrastructure plans, including roads; guidelines for the form and character of all developments on site; and the use of "leading edge" sustainability practices.

The neighbourhood plan, to be prepared by the Beedie Group, will take approximately one year to complete after council's approval of the terms of reference. Some elements of the plan would then form part of a second OCP amending bylaw for the site, followed by a rezoning application process.

The proposed development would have 3,700 housing units low-rise apartments, 263 townhouses and 12 towers of 18 to 30 storeys each. Environmental components could include daylighting a portion of Como Creek and the use of geothermal heating. The BCIT campus, estimated at 63,000 to 100,000 square feet, would focus on trades training and environment and sustainability programs.

The Beedie Group purchased 56 acres of the former Fraser Mills site in 2004 for \$12.75 million and later increased its holdings to 82.4 acres. Its original plans for development were nixed by council in December 2005 due to concerns of loss of business space and industrial land with water access. In January, council asked that the Beedie Group revisit its plans.

At Monday's committee meeting, councillors voted 6-1 to forward the OCP bylaw amendment to a future city council meeting, with Coun. Brent Asmundson opposed and Coun. Fin Donnelly absent.

The OCP amendment bylaw is slated for public hearing Feb. 21.