1   Project Overview

1.1   Introduction

At its meeting on February 9, 2015, Council considered a staff report regarding the next steps in the Great Near Campus Neighbourhoods (GNCN) Strategy. Council passed a resolution that included the following direction:

> *That, on the recommendation of the Managing Director, Planning and City Planner, the following actions be taken with respect to housing concerns in North London … the Civic Administration* **BE DIRECTED** *to prepare a Terms of Reference, in consultation with community stakeholders, for a review of the Great Near Campus Neighbourhood Strategy, focusing on the identification of next steps and actions to implement the Strategy and the successes and challenges in the Near Campus Neighbourhoods area.*

These Terms of Reference were first distributed in draft form to community stakeholders on March 17, 2015, and were discussed at a Public Information Meeting on April 1, 2015. Feedback received from the public has been incorporated into these Terms of Reference. The focus of these Terms of Reference is to set out the process to review the GNCN Strategy, confirm the vision for the GNCN, and develop a new Implementation Plan to achieve the vision established for the neighbourhood.

1.2   History

The GNCN Strategy was implemented in 2008 after significant internal review and public consultation. It included 10 strategic initiatives intended to "cumulatively create great near-campus neighbourhoods by closing the gap between the collective vision for our near campus neighbourhoods and the current state of affairs in these neighbourhoods." The ten strategies were:

1. Welcome students as a vital part of our community
2. Provide for safe housing
3. Offer a higher level of public service to the community
4. Align expectations
5. Protect residential amenity
6. Provide alternatives to balance the mix
7. Create great places and spaces in our neighbourhoods
8. Invest in infrastructure
9. Level the playing field for landlords
10. Provide for affordable housing

The GNCN Strategy also included initiatives to achieve each strategy and an implementation plan to ensure clear understanding of the role for each partner in the GNCN Strategy, create a timeline for the implementation of the various initiatives, and establish what resources would be required to achieve the GNCN Strategy objectives. Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments were passed in 2012 to implement some aspects of the strategic initiatives. Given that several years have passed since the strategy was first implemented, it is appropriate to review the strategy and its implementation measures to assess how well the strategy has achieved its objectives. Further, a review is important to determine whether any changes or additions are needed to the GNCN Strategy to realize the best possible future for the GNCN. This review will analyze and update the GNCN Strategy to ensure it is still the best approach to achieve the goals and vision for the GNCN. The desired outcome of this review is an updated strategy (referred to herein as the GNCN Strategy-2.0) that appropriately responds to current planning issues facing the GNCN.

1.3 Purpose

The GNCN has been the subject of numerous planning studies and reports since the mid-1980s and continues to be a focal point of land use and other planning related discussions today. A thorough review of the GNCN took place from 2007-2012. It included the 2008 GNCN Strategy and 2012 amendments to the City of London Official Plan and Zoning By-law No. Z-1.

The purpose of the GNCN Strategy-2.0 is to examine the changing planning and neighbourhood contexts, review the effectiveness of the GNCN Strategy and other initiatives that have been implemented, establish a new collective vision for the GNCN, and determine what policies or processes are appropriate to close the gaps between current conditions and the collective vision for the GNCN. It should be noted that some of the policies and Zoning By-law Amendments arising from the strategy have been in place for less than three years.

1.4 Objectives

Objectives of the GNCN Strategy-2.0 include:

- Establish a new vision and goals for the GNCN;
- Evaluate the success of the 2008 GNCN Strategy and Implementation Plan, and the 2012 amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law;
- Analyze and evaluate changing trends in the GNCN since adoption of the Strategy;
- Develop new strategies and/or initiatives to close the gaps between the current vision and policies;

- Maintain working relationships between all partners in the GNCN, which includes the City of London, Western University, Fanshawe College, Police and Fire Services, and community members. Ensure there is collaboration in addressing the GNCN planning challenges; and
- Prepare and Implement any necessary revisions to the strategy, which may include amendments to City policies and procedures, and actions by other partners in the GNCN.

2 Planning Context

Through the planning work done for the GNCN, area specific policies were created in 2012 and added to the Official Plan. These policies were also implemented through updated zoning provisions. Below is a summary of the current planning context for the GNCN Strategy.

2.1 Official Plan Policies

The GNCN are subject to special provisions in the current Official Plan that have been incorporated into The London Plan. These include specific policies for consideration whenever redevelopment is proposed, especially as it relates to intensification. Specific goals and vision are also provided that apply to all lands within the GNCN.

In the 2012 Official Plan Amendment a new vision was established for the GNCN. The intent of all subsequent policies was to close the gap and make the vision reality. The primary focus of this review is to determine to what level the vision is being realized. The vision states that:

Near-Campus Neighbourhoods will:

   i)   *be diverse and inclusive from many different perspectives;*
   ii)   *be occupied by a balanced mix of long-term and short-term residents;*
   iii)   *provide for a strong sense of social connectedness amongst neighbours;*
   iv)   *exude vibrancy, culture, creativity, interest and dynamism;*
   v)   *be planned to protect residential amenity and character;*
   vi)   *offer a strong sense of identity;*
   vii)   *engender respect for the neighbourhood and all those that live in it;*
   viii)   *provide for reasonable quiet enjoyment of private property;*
   ix)   *provide for reasonable entertainment, expression and diverse activities on private property;*
   x)   *cherish, conserve and protect heritage resources;*
   xi)   *provide for safe, varied, and affordable housing opportunities;*

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> xii)   *help to recruit the best and brightest students, staff and faculty;*
> xiii)   *allow residents to enjoy unique culture, entertainment and recreation opportunities relating to higher education institutions*
> (Section 5.3.13.3)

Official Plan policies intended to achieve the vision above include direction for where to locate intensification, special considerations for minor variance and consent applications, new policies to protect the character of established neighbourhoods designated "Low Density Residential", policies for the protection of cultural heritage resources, and new urban design polices.

Through previous public engagement conducted as part of *ReThink London,* some residents have indicated a concern with the matter described in point ii) of the vision for the GNCN quoted above. The policy states that the GNCN will *"be occupied by a balanced mix of long-term and short-term residents."* Comments received to date indicate that in some neighbourhoods the balance has tipped towards a higher proportion of short-term residents, resulting in less stability in the affected neighbourhoods. Long-term residents have been displaced both for social and economic reasons. Measures to maintain the balance and achieve the other aspects of the vision for the GNCN will be considered in the GNCN Strategy-2.0. Other areas of concern with the GNCN vision will be determined through consultation with GNCN stakeholders.

2.2 Zoning Provisions

With the 2012 amendment to the Official Plan was an update to Zoning By-law No. Z-1 to implement the new policies. Specific updates to the Zoning By-law were:

- Addition of a three bedroom per unit maximum to various dwelling types within the GNCN including apartment building, converted dwelling, duplex dwelling, fourplex dwelling, semi-detached dwelling, stacked townhouse, street townhouse, townhouse, and triplex dwelling;
- Removal of the exception for a 3.0m interior side setback, to strengthen the criteria for establishment of mutual driveways;
- Include access driveways, aisles, driveways, and parking spaces in the calculation of "Parking Area Coverage"; and
- Establishing minimum landscaped area requirement.

The effectiveness of the 2012 zoning amendments will be considered in the policy review and preparations of the GNCN Strategy-2.0.

2.3 Other Implementation Tools & Considerations

While the amendments to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law were significant components of the original GNCN Strategy, other initiatives were also essential to the overall success of the strategy. These initiatives undertaken by the City of London or other partners in the GNCN that will also be reviewed for their effectiveness on achieving the GNCN vision include:

- Prohibition on secondary suites in the GNCN (proposed)
- Rental unit licensing by-law
- Housing mediation service
- Proactive by-law enforcement
- Development of new on-campus housing
- Encouraging Intensification on major roads in the GNCN

3   Work Plan

These Terms of Reference establish a work plan that will set the direction for the GNCN Strategy-2.0. The proposed work plan includes three phases.

3.1 Phase One – Review Current Conditions & Background Information

An understanding of the current conditions in the GNCN is essential to evaluating the effectiveness of the GNCN Strategy. The focus of Phase One will be to review the current state of affairs in the GNCN and review what success has been made to date. This will be achieved by quantifying neighbourhood changes as much as possible. Tasks to be completed in Phase One include:

- Consult with community stakeholders during the preparation of Terms of Reference to ensure that community values and goals are included in the work plan;
- Review existing policies and initiatives;
- Review existing neighbourhood conditions and demographic data;
- Review changes to neighbourhood conditions since 2008 and 2012 initiatives were implemented. Re-examine measures included in the original GNCN Strategy to find out what changes have resulted. These may include:
    - o tenant and owner occupied dwellings,
    - o number and nature of by-law complaints,
    - o infill and intensification development, and
    - o balance between short and long-term residents;
- Consider the gaps identified in 2008 between the GNCN vision and reality, and review where progress has been made;

- Review by-law enforcement issues;
- Review of other municipal approaches to near campus neighbourhoods planning and best practices; and
- Review recent Ontario Municipal Board/Court decisions related to near campus neighbourhoods across Ontario.

3.2 Phase Two – Review 2008 GNCN Strategy & Establish a New Vision and Goals

Pending the outcome of Phase 1, the second phase will include a detailed analysis of the original GNCN Strategy and the preparation of a vision and goals for the new strategy. It will also include research and discussion regarding various approaches and strategies that could be implemented to close the gaps between the vision and current conditions. Two Public Information Meetings are proposed in Phase Two to provide opportunities for community input through this phase of the review process. Tasks to be completed in Phase Two include:

- Hold a Community Meeting to review the findings from Phase One, and develop the vision for the GNCN;
- Review new trends in the GNCN and determine if new strategies/initiatives are required. Some recent issues for consideration may include:
    - *Shift* and rapid transit development,
    - Dwelling Unit and Lodging House definitions,
    - New initiatives included in The London Plan;
- Review the current GNCN Strategy (10 Strategies and supporting initiatives). Assess successes of the strategy, and identify gaps and opportunities for new strategies to address them, based on the vision established in Phase One,
    - Table to be prepared listing each strategy and initiative, the method of implementation, observed outcomes, and a rating of the level of success;
- Review roles of the community partners;
- Identify other potential strategies and practices not included in GNCN Strategy and discuss possibility of implementing them in the GNCN Strategy-2.0, as a result of the Phase One findings, updated vision statement, and identified issues to be addressed;
- Determine what Strategies/Initiatives should be maintained, eliminated, or added in the GNCN Strategy-2.0; and
- Hold a second Community Meeting to review the Phase II findings to set the framework for the revised Strategy and Implementation Plan.

3.3 Phase Three – Prepare the GNCN Strategy-2.0

The information gained through Phases One and Two will be used to determine what new policies or procedures are needed to achieve the vision for the GNCN. The following tasks will be completed in Phase Three:

- Identify short, medium, and long term objectives to be achieved through the strategy update;
- Review options for implementation of new ideas described in Phases One & Two;
- Prepare a Draft GNCN Strategy-2.0 for consultation with community stakeholders. The draft strategy may include:
    - A new vision for the GNCN,
    - New and/or updated strategies and implementation measures,
    - Identification of roles and responsibilities,
    - Potential Zoning By-law amendments to refine definitions and regulations in the GNCN,
    - Changes to By-law Enforcement policies and protocols,
    - Identification of potential intensification areas,
    - Identification of potential secondary plan areas, and
    - Other matters arising from Phase I and Phase II findings and directions;
- Hold a Community Meeting to present the draft GNCN Strategy-2.0 and receive comments;
- Prepare the final GNCN Strategy-2.0; and
- Attend a Public Participation Meeting at a Planning and Environment Committee meeting to approve the GNCN Strategy-2.0.

4 Consultation

A key component in the preparation of the GNCN Strategy-2.0 is the submission of ideas, suggestions, and feedback from stakeholders and partners in the GNCN. To ensure that there are sufficient opportunities for community input, these Terms of Reference also includes a public consultation component. Identified stakeholders who will be asked to participate in the GNCN Strategy-2.0 include:

- City of London;
- Western University;
- Fanshawe College;
- London Police Service;
- London Fire Department;
- Resident groups, including ratepayer and community associations; and

- All residents of the GNCN.

The study process for the GNCN Strategy-2.0 will include the following opportunities for public consultation.

1. Public Information Meeting to receive comments about the preliminary draft Terms of Reference prepared by staff,
2. Public Participation Meeting before the Planning and Environment Committee to approve the Terms of Reference,
3. Public Information Meeting during Phase Two to report on the outcomes of Phase One and prepare a vision for the GNCN,
4. Public Information Meeting during Phase Two to confirm the GNCN vision and discuss possible strategies to achieve desired changes in the neighbourhoods,
5. Individual meetings with stakeholders as required in Phase Three to discuss issues with the GNCN Strategy,
6. Public Information Meeting following The preparation of the Draft Strategy-2.0 to receive community feedback, and
7. Public Participation Meeting before the Planning and Environment Committee to review final GNCN Strategy-2.0 for adoption.

In addition to the public meetings listed above, other meetings may also be coordinated with specific stakeholders in the GNCN at other times throughout the process. Written comments are also welcomed by planning staff to be submitted at any time during the study process.

5 Timeline

The completion of the Great Near Campus Neighbourhoods Strategy review and the adoption of the GNCN Strategy-2.0 is intended to be a thorough process that addresses a wide variety of issues in the Great Near Campus Neighbourhoods. The proposed timeline for the completion of each proposed phase in the work plan is below:

- Approval of the Terms of Reference by Planning and Environment Committee – May 19, 2015
- Completion of Phase One – October, 2015
- Completion of Phase Two – December, 2015
- Completion of Draft GNCN Strategy-2.0 (Phase Three) – January/February, 2016
- Adoption of GNCN Strategy-2.0 (Phase Three) – February/March, 2016