

# Frequently Asked Questions

*Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment*

June 23, 2023



## Frequently Asked Questions – Blairmore Sector Plan Amendment

### General Questions

Q: What is a Sector Plan?

A: A Sector Plan provides long range planning for broad areas (typically 6-10 neighbourhoods with a combined population of 50,000-80,000). A Sector Plan provides more specific planning direction than the city-wide Official Community Plan, but less specific planning direction than a neighbourhood-level Concept Plan.

Q: Where is the Blairmore Sector located?

A: The Blairmore Sector is located on the far west side of Saskatoon, comprising approximately 3000 hectares (7000 acres) of land. The Sector includes the Blairmore Urban Centre and the Kensington neighbourhood, but predominantly consists of undeveloped land.

Q: What is the difference between the Blairmore Urban Centre and the Blairmore Sector?

A: An urban centre (formerly referred to as a suburban centre) is a type of neighbourhood that provides a mixture of residential, institutional, and community uses. Most sectors in Saskatoon contain an urban centre that serves its needs. The urban centre that serves the Blairmore Sector is the Blairmore Urban Centre.

Q: Why is the Blairmore Sector Plan being amended?

A: Sector Plans are periodically amended to adapt to changes over the many decades of their development. The previous iteration of the Blairmore Sector Plan was approved in 2011. Specific reasons for the Blairmore Sector Plan amendment include:

- Changing the sector boundary to remove areas outside city limits and add areas in the southwest parts of the city that are not included in any Sector Plan,
- Responding to new policy directions that the City has approved since 2011. These include the Green Infrastructure Strategy, the Active Transportation Plan, Bus Rapid Transit along 22<sup>nd</sup> Street West and the new Official Community Plan,
- Adapting to changing market needs. This includes an identified need for more commercial lands on the west side of the city.

Q: What are the timelines for development in the Blairmore Sector?

A: The Blairmore Urban Centre has been essentially completed, while Kensington is approximately half built-out. The timelines for new development are heavily dependent on market demand and availability of servicing, but can be roughly expected to begin as follows:

- Phase I (located north of Kensington, to be known as Elk Point): ~5 years,
- Phase II (located west of the Blairmore Urban Centre): ~20 years,
- Phase III (located west of Kensington, to be developed as two neighbourhoods): ~35 years,
- Phase IV (located west of the West Swale): 50+ years,
- The TBD phase (located west of Montgomery Place, to be developed as light industrial and/or business park) does not have firm timelines; however, it will likely be 20+ years away.

Q: Are any changes proposed for the existing Kensington neighbourhood or Blairmore Urban Centre?

A: No direct changes are proposed for these areas. Both areas already have approved Concept Plans, which guide their development.

## Natural Areas

Q: What are the plans for the Richard St. Barbe Baker Afforestation Area (RSBBAA) and George Genereux Urban Regional Park (GGURP)?

A: The Sector Plan proposes conserving these afforestation areas. Only improvements that conserve the natural and cultural heritage resources, or enhance the recreational and educational use of the areas, will be allowed. Future guiding plans completed by the City will determine the specific allowable uses within the afforestation areas. These future plans will include separate engagement opportunities, including the current [pilot Natural Area Management Plan](#) for RSBBAA.

Q: The Natural Area Screening made recommendations for the Blairmore Sector. Are these recommendations being included in the Sector Plan?

A: The Sector Plan includes policies to support the recommendations to conserve the afforestation areas, and to minimize construction of stormwater facilities within wetland complexes (some alterations may be necessary, but stormwater ponds will be required to be naturalized). Recommendations related to actions in the RSBBAA (controlling weeds and invasives, creating a buffer around the RSBBAA wetland, and prohibiting motorized vehicles) are too site-specific to be implemented through a Sector Plan. However, the Sector Plan advises strong consideration for these three recommendations when future plans for RSBBAA are pursued. As noted above, separate engagement opportunities will be provided for these future plans.

Q: What will be the relationship between existing wetlands and the stormwater plan for the Sector?

A: Existing wetlands in the Blairmore Sector are to be conserved or naturalized, wherever possible. As such, naturalized wetlands will be incorporated into the stormwater system. Wherever stormwater enters wetlands, a forebay will be required to allow for the filtration of sediment. Since most of the Blairmore Sector naturally slopes towards the West Swale, it is likely the swale will play a role in the stormwater plan. However, more study will be required before any Concept Plan in the vicinity of the West Swale is approved. In addition to required hydrogeological and ecological studies, the Sector Plan identifies that alterations to the West Swale must be minimized and will only be permitted to the extent necessary to make the stormwater system functional.

## Industrial Employment Area

Q: Why is light industrial being proposed west of Montgomery Place?

A: The presence of the CN Chappell Yards to the south, the CP rail line to the north, and a provincial highway further to the west makes this area less desirable for residential development. Federal guidelines recommend that new residential development be setback 300 metres from rail yards, which would limit the feasibility of a new residential development at this location. At the same time, access to a rail yard and provincial highways is beneficial to industrial development. Additionally, the Montgomery Place Local Area Plan (LAP) states “it is an objective of the LAP Committee that the [Future Urban Development] west of Chappell Drive be developed as light industrial or as a business park.”

Q: How will the City ensure that light industrial development does not negatively impact the surrounding area?

A: The Sector Plan requires that any Concept Plan for the industrial employment area must include a buffering strategy, which may include park space, landscaping, sound attenuation berms, and/or other buffering methods or tools for areas the abut existing residential areas. Additionally, existing City bylaws, including the Property Maintenance and Nuisance Abatement Bylaw and the Zoning Bylaw, do not allow for nuisances to emanate beyond the boundaries of a property, including areas zoned for light industrial or business park. Any plans to develop this area will require a Concept Plan, which would include an engagement opportunity.

Q: The Land Use map shows a “Potential Business Park or Light Industrial” immediately west of Montgomery Place. Why is the option being given?

A: While a business park may provide additional buffering between light industrial and existing residential, we do not currently have information to show that there is a market desire for a business park in this area – especially considering the long timeframe (20+ years) before this area is expected to be developed. In the absence of a business park market study, we have left both options open. In either case, the aforementioned buffering strategy would be required.

## Transportation

Q: What is the future of Chappell Drive?

A: The Sector Plan proposes that Chappell Drive be closed and the access road to the CN Chappell Yards be moved further to the west, in alignment with a Montgomery Place LAP recommendation.

Q: Can 11<sup>th</sup> Street West handle traffic associated with the proposed industrial employment area?

A: Any plans for development of the industrial employment area will require a traffic impact assessment, which will include 11<sup>th</sup> Street West.

Q: Are there plans to provide better pedestrian and cyclist connections between the afforestation areas and the rest of the City?

A: Yes. In alignment with the City’s Active Transportation Plan, the Blairmore Sector Plan proposes a multi-use pathway connecting Dundonald Avenue to Valley Road and the RSBBA. Cycling infrastructure extending along Highway 7 from the Blairmore Urban Centre is proposed to reach the two afforestation areas. A multi-use pathway linking future neighbourhoods with the GGURP is also proposed.