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What is the Civic Block?

The Civic Block stretches from Clement to Queensway and Water to Ellis. It is home to important government services (i.e. Court House and City Hall) and community facilities (Kelowna Community Theatre and Memorial Arena). The high concentration of publicly owned lands makes the area unique and the ‘civic heart’ of downtown.

Why do we need a plan for the Civic Block?

The Civic Block area is in transition. The RCMP offices are relocating to Clement, Interior Health is building new offices on Ellis and the Kelowna Community Theatre and Memorial Arena buildings are reaching the end of their optimal lifespans. With so much activity and opportunity, we need to ensure these lands are developed in a thoughtful way that supports the Downtown and Cultural Plans and sets a course for development over the next 20 years.

How is this different from the Downtown Plan?

The study area of the Civic Block Plan falls within the boundaries of the Downtown Plan. The Civic Block Plan will help realize the vision set in the Downtown Plan by providing a greater level of detail and direction for future development of civic lands and public space within the study area.

How does the Civic Block Plan align with the Cultural Plan?

The Cultural Plan enhances the impact and presence of art and culture in Kelowna. Through the Civic Block Plan, we can start to realize some of the goals set out in the Cultural Plan for this area of downtown.

How is the community involved in the process?

We are following our established process for engaging affected stakeholders and the community in the development of the plan. Through face-to-face meetings and workshops, the groups most affected have been directly involved in the creation of the design principles and draft concepts. The community-at-large also has the opportunity to get involved through a drop-in session, online engagement and an upcoming open house.

What do we hope to achieve through the plan?

The City is looking to build on the vision of the Downtown Plan by developing a strategy that guides the development of a mixed-use high-density area with cultural and civic uses and other complementary uses that support a more complete downtown community.

How will the improvements be funded?

The addition of market residential and commercial uses in the area as well as opportunities for mixed-use partnerships are included in the Civic Block concept plan to help fund improvements while enhancing activity in the area. Any improvements in civic or cultural facilities in the area will represent major investments for Kelowna and will need to be added to our [10-year Capital Plan](#) or [20-Year Servicing Plan](#).

What are the timelines for implementation?

Most developments will be implemented in the long term over the next 20 years as the cultural facilities proposed in the Civic Block concept plan (i.e. performing arts centre) are not in the current [10-year Capital Plan](#). The Police Services site on Doyle is the only major city site that will be up for development in the near term (5 to 8 years) as the current building will be demolished once the RCMP relocate to their new facilities on Clement.

Why are ‘mixed uses’ included in the Civic Block concept plan?

‘Mixed use’ is a term used to describe locations in a land use plan where more than one type of use (i.e. residential, commercial and civic) is supported. One of the functions of the Civic Block Plan is to consider how the civic and cultural improvements such as the performing arts centre and the public plaza can be funded. As a result, options to incorporate market residential and commercial uses with civic uses are included in the concept plan as a way to attract private sector investment.

What are mixed-use partnership sites?

The Civic Block concept plan includes options to allow for mixed use on several sites. These sites integrate residential and commercial uses with civic or cultural uses within a single building built by the private sector. In these situations, the land would likely be leased long-term by the City (similar to the Innovation Centre), ensuring that the City of Kelowna has long-term control of the property.

What is ‘market use’?

In terms of the Civic Block Plan, ‘market use’ is used to describe properties where the City will maintain ownership of the land but the private sector will develop because of the opportunity to sell units or rent space to generate a return on the investment.

How did you decide where to incorporate residential and commercial uses?

We selected the Kelowna Community Theatre and the Police Services sites because they have great potential to generate revenue due to the size of the parcels and proximity to the waterfront, 2) they will be ready for development in the next several years making it possible to advance the resulting recommendations in the Civic Block plan and 3) they are not in the Community Trust boundaries which prohibits residential and commercial uses. See [Facilities Planning Assumptions](#) for more information about this location.

What is proposed for the Police Services (RCMP) site?

The Police Services site on Doyle one of the key sites in the Civic Block Plan. Once the RCMP relocate to new offices on Clement, the current Police Services building will be demolished making this space available for development in the near term (5 to 8 years.) Local stakeholders and the community-at-large have expressed interest in reserving this location for market residential and commercial uses as a way to increase activity and support the extension of the Artwalk and the proposed public plaza adjacent to the site. Market uses at this location will lessen the burden on taxpayers and ensure the site does not remain vacant once demolished. See [Facilities Planning Assumptions](#) for more information about this location.

What is proposed for the Kelowna Community Theatre site?

The Kelowna Community Theatre is also a key site in the Civic Block Plan because the building is reaching the end of its usable life in the next 10 years and as a result, the site could be one of the first to be redeveloped in the area. Arts and culture groups and the community-at-large have expressed an interest in developing a performing arts centre at this location. A residential development is also being considered as part of this site to help generate revenue to fund the performing arts centre and other improvements in the plan. See [Facilities Planning Assumptions](#) for more information about this location.

What is proposed for the Okanagan Heritage and other museums?

Members of the community are supportive of the idea of consolidating our museums and moving them to a different location within the Civic Block. This improvement will make the museums more convenient for visitors and provide the museums with a venue that allows for higher profile exhibitions. This improvement also allows for an affordable housing development to be considered for the site north of Queensway. See [Facilities Planning Assumptions](#) for more information about this location.

What is proposed for the Memorial Arena site?

The Memorial Arena is expected to reach the end of its usable life in the next ten to 20 years. Through the community engagement activities, most members of the community supported the idea of dedicating this site to a civic use such as a community centre or future consolidated museum and building up arena space in other parts of the city where the need is greater. See [Facilities Planning Assumptions](#) for more information about this location.

Will the Civic Block Plan affect the Community Trust?

The portion of the plan area that includes City Hall, Memorial Arena and a portion of the Okanagan Heritage Museum site are within the Community Trust Lands. All developments proposed for Community Trust lands within the Civic Block align with requirements of the trust and no changes are expected.

How are building heights in the area affected?

The Downtown Plan set a goal to step down the building heights toward the water in order to maintain views and reduce shadows with a maximum of 26 storeys on Ellis Street. With this as a guideline, the Civic Block concept plan includes options for residential developments at key locations that increase the current [permissible building heights](#) from six to approximately ten to 13 storeys. Higher density developments on these sites will greatly increase the potential revenue that can be generated to help fund the civic improvements in the plan. If the options are supported, the City will need to amend the building heights in the Downtown Plan.

How is parking in the area affected?

Most of the developments proposed in the Civic Block concept could meet parking requirements in the downtown. The only development that may require any significant reduction in parking requirements is the proposal for a residential building north of Queensway on the Okanagan Heritage Museum site. This site would be a prime candidate for reduced parking requirements based on the access to transit and walking distance to downtown amenities. See [Parking In Study Area](#) for more information.