

Former Middle School Master Planning Project

Preliminary Background Report Prepared for the Village of Fruitvale

Prepared by CitySpaces Consulting | January 2020



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Introduction

Project Context

The Village of Fruitvale has made first steps in revitalizing a long vacant property on Columbia Gardens Road, the former Beaver Valley Middle School. The municipality acquired the site in January 2019 with the intention of repurposing the property in a way that will meet the current and future needs of the community.



As the next step, the Village of Fruitvale has

initiated a master planning process to explore opportunities for redevelopment that are reflective of the local and regional community's needs. The objective of the project is to bring lasting benefits to the Village through a phased development plan that is implementable and financially viable.

The Background Report

This background report provides an overview of the community's profile of needs and trends, as well as a preliminary assessment of issues and opportunities related to the project site. The community profile draws from quantitative data sources from Statistics Canada, BC Stats, and other recent reports published by Selkirk College and Columbia Basin RDI.

The report is also supplemented by insights gained from qualitative interviews with project stakeholders and community informants from Lower Columbia Affordable Housing Society (LCAHS), Family Support Institute of BC (FSIBC) Lower Columbia Initiatives Council (LCIC), Regional District of Kootenay Boundary (RDKB), local real estate and development professionals, day care providers, and local business and industry managers.

Project site information is based on the Village of Fruitvale and RDKB online mapping systems, as well as technical drawings and studies provided by the Village of Fruitvale. For the purpose of this preliminary study, no additional technical reports were conducted. Further feasibility and design work would involve architectural site planning and an assessment of the servicing requirements to determine project costs and implementation options for the future Master Plan.

Community Profile

The Village of Fruitvale is located within the Regional District of Kootenay-Boundary in the southeast corner of British Columbia. The Village is at the eastern edge of RDKB, with Regional District of Central Kootenay further east. The municipal area encompasses 595 acres and is home to 2,005 residents (BC Stats, 2018).

Fruitvale is part of a wider regional economy in the Lower Columbia Basin, which also includes neighbouring towns such as Montrose (1,041), Trail (8,068), Warfield (1,714), Rossland (3,983), Castlegar (8,367), and Nelson (11,439).

Summary of Key Findings

Demographics

- Average age of 45.5 years
- Average household size of 2.3 persons
- Relatively stable population size with an annual decline of 0.3% per year
- Aging population with 24% of the current population over the age of 65 and another 31% of population entering retirement age within 20 years

Economy and Migration Trends

- Local economy supported by small-scale commercial retail opportunities, health services, government and administration, utility maintenance, and regional industry employment
- Well-located to absorb regional population growth due to proximity to Trail

Existing Housing Stock

- Homes primarily single detached dwellings
- 68% of housing stock built before 1980; 12% of private dwellings in need of major repairs
- Declining vacancy rate with no new rental supply under construction
- No vacant seniors housing in the area: 2 year waitlist for independent and supported living;
 no assisted living options available

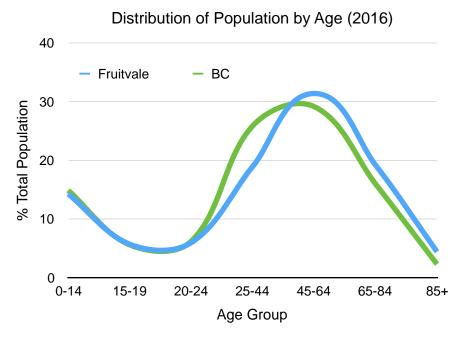
Opportunities for New Development

- Housing choice and diversity
- Affordable rental housing
- Seniors-appropriate housing services
- Inclusive semi-independent housing for persons with disabilities
- Child care facility for infant and multi-age families

Demographics & Economic Features

The Village of Fruitvale's population is relatively static, with an annual average rate of decline of approximately -0.3% since 2011. The community's age distribution as of the latest 2016 Census shows a relatively older population base than the rest of British Columbia; 24% of the Fruitvale's population is age 65+, compared to an average of 18% in BC.

The 45-64 working age group in Fruitvale (31%) is slightly higher the BC average (29%). In contrast, there is a lower proportion of young adults in the 25-44 age range in Fruitvale (19%) compared to the rest of the province (26%).



Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016

However, based on anecdotal interviews and community observations, much of inter- and intraprovincial migrants to Fruitvale are young couples or families returning to their hometown for employment reasons or to settle down and build a family closer to aging parents.

General patterns of migration can also be inferred by the rate and type of mobility. Between 2011 and 2016, 80% of the population remained at their current residence (non-movers); 9% moved from one residence to another within Fruitvale; and 7% moved into Fruitvale, over half of which were migrating from other communities within British Columbia. This indicates a fairly stable resident community and limited activity in the housing market. Of the total population, 78% of Fruitvale's community are owners and 22% are tenants of rental housing.

Economic Opportunities and Migration

Fruitvale is mainly a residential area for employees working in various industries in and around the region. The local economic base is primarily supported by employment opportunities in:

- Lumber production: ATCO Wood Products (60 employees)
- Smelting and refining: Teck Trail Operations (1,450 employees)
- Health services: Interior Health Authority (800 employees)
- School District No. 20 (650 employees)
- Local and regional government services
- Waste management and remediation
- Local retail, commercial, and financial services
- Utility service and maintenance: Fortis BC, Telus

A 2019 report shows that the regional Columbia Basin labour force is growing at a rate of 45 people per year, which includes larger industry centres such as Nelson, Trail, and Castlegar. However, based on population trends in Fruitvale, the labour growth has not resulted in significant working age population growth in the Village itself.

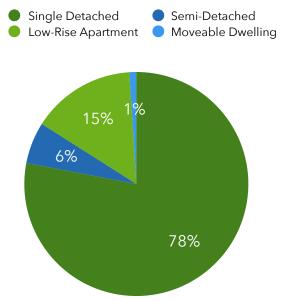
The largest employer in the area, Teck Trail Operations, has not indicated any immediate plans to expand and grow the employee base, and has suggested that additions to the workforce will primarily see replacement-driven employment as aging employees retire over time. However, according to the Local Columbia Initiatives Corporation and i4C Innovation Centre, there is a regional economic ambition to develop a tech-driven circular economy for industries throughout the Lower Columbia area, which may result in some future industry growth. While it is difficult to forecast how these economic initiatives will impact population growth in Fruitvale specifically, there is a distinct desire to attract investment and growth in local industries.

Lastly, the West Kootenays can anticipate up to 250 new immigrants over the next two years through the *Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot Program*, which seeks to improve local economic needs and development through economic immigration of skilled foreign workers. Settlement patterns will likely be driven by affordability, proximity to services, and ease of commute to the job site. As a full-service family-friendly bedroom community close to Trail, Rossland, and Castlegar, Fruitvale is well-located to welcome a growing workforce in the region.

Current Housing Stock

Fruitvale's current housing stock comprises primarily single detached homes, making up 78% of housing units in the Village. In addition, 15% are low-rise apartment units, and 6% are semi-detached housing units.

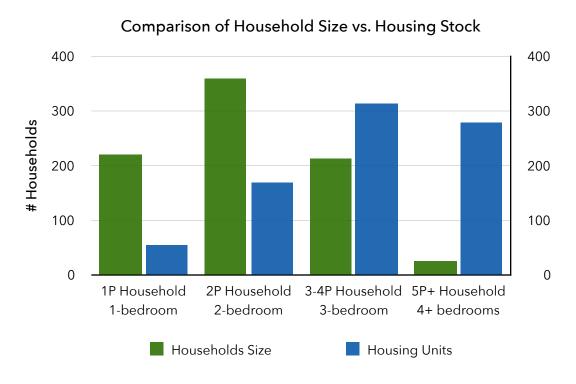
2016 Census data shows only 1% of the housing stock as mobile homes. This would not include the mobile homes at the Tamarac Manufactured Home Park located just to the southeast of the Village within the RDKB area.



Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016

Suitability

Housing suitability is defined as whether a private household is living in suitable accommodations according to the National Occupancy standard; that is, whether the dwelling has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of the resident household. Fruitvale is not experiencing overcrowding based on these standards. Instead, many 1- and 2-person households are likely being housed in Fruitvale's supply of larger 3- and 4+ bedroom homes.



Source: Statistics Canada Census 2016

In Fruitvale, it is common scenario for older couples and seniors to be living in large family homes, even after their adult children have moved out. This is partially due to the limited housing choice with few suitable downsizing options to consider within the community. Similarly, young first-time buyers moving out of their parents' homes, moving back to Fruitvale after spending time elsewhere, or moving into the community for the first time have a limited selection of entry-level homes of a suitable size and price-point.

Seniors-appropriate housing is a significant housing gap in the Village of Fruitvale. Without desirable downsizing options, the housing stock will continue to over-house small households without enough turnover to house young and growing families in need of larger homes. Mountain Side Village is a seniors residence facility that opened in Fruitvale in 2009, offering independent seniors housing and supportive living. As of 2019, the residences are at full capacity, with a waitlist of over 2 years.

As the population ages over the next 20 years, a wider range of seniors housing and supported living services will be required, including more assisted living and residential care facilities, accessible and adaptable homes, and low-income housing. By facilitating the transition of elderly seniors who wish to downsize into more age-appropriate homes within the community, Fruitvale's housing stock will be better able to provide for all households in the ownership market.

Affordability

If a household spends over 30% of income on shelter costs, their housing situation is considered unaffordable and the household is considered in core housing need. The 2016 census revealed that 24% of renters and 16% of homeowners in Fruitvale were not living in affordable homes relative to their incomes. Average numbers across B.C. are 43% for renting households and 21% for owner households.

Fruitvale's household income ranges widely. Based on income statistics from 2016 tax-filer data obtained through Statistics Canada, Fruitvale's median household income was \$73,495. However, approximately 30% of households earned over \$100,000 while 27% of households earned under \$40,000 (Statistics Canada, 2017). Based on data presented in the 2018 Community Profile Report for Fruitvale, residential property values primarily fall within the range of \$100,000 - \$500,000, with a median residential sale price of \$252,600. Newer custom homes and large lot properties account for higher price points.

To gain a better understanding of what this means for Fruitvale residents, this report highlights a few different profiles and determines what price points would be considered affordable based on tax-filer median income data for that demographic group. The next page shows some of these profiles.

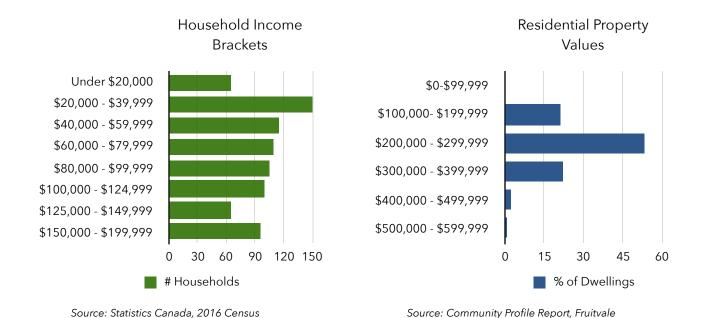


Table: Calculated Affordability Levels based on Income Data

HOUSEHOLD PROFILE	MEDIAN INCOME	AFFORDABLE MONTHLY RENT	AFFORDABLE HOME PURCHASE PRICE
Young Single Person	\$39,590	\$990	\$85,164 @ 5% down
Single-Income Parent with Kids	\$46,000	\$1,150	\$103,718 @ 5% down
Dual-Income Family	\$120,350	\$3,009	\$330,525 @ 5% down \$348,887 @ 10% down
Senior Couple over Age 65	\$63,140	\$1,579	\$296,408 @ 50% down
Single Low-Income Senior	\$27,660	\$692	\$226,914 @ 80% down

Data Source: Statistics Canada, Income Statistics, Tax-filer Data, Annual Estimates for Median Income Census Families and Individuals, 2017

Affordable Monthly Rent Assumptions:

- Calculated based on 30% of income
- Rent affordability is calculated based on income only. If someone were asset rich and sells a
 mortgage-free home to put toward retirement spending, rent affordability could be recalculated

Affordable Home Purchase Assumptions:

- 5.19% (5 year fixed rate), 0.32 GDS, 5 year amortization period ¹
- \$150/month utilities and heating, \$170/month property tax
- 50% and 80% down payment scenarios assume the buyer is an existing homeowner who wishes to sell and purchase another more age-appropriate home

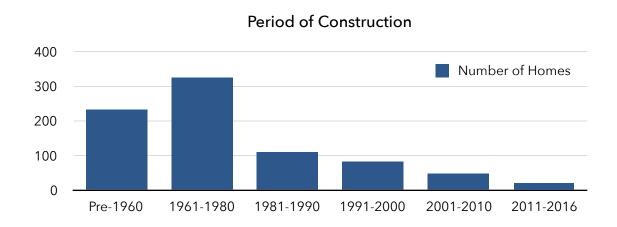
¹ Bank of Canada interest rate for conventional 5-year mortgage was 5.19% in January 2020

The calculated affordable home purchase prices show that affordable homeownership is a challenge for single-income households. For low-income residents and newcomers, rental units are also in short supply, with only a couple of active listings available online and a limited number of apartment units in the community. The only online advertisement for apartment rental vacancies in Fruitvale during the time of this study were posted at \$720/month for a one-bedroom unit, and \$820/month for a two-bedroom unit. In particular, low-income seniors and persons with disabilities on income assistance do not currently have any rental options within the community of Fruitvale. From 2015 to 2017, the Trail, Warfield, and Fruitvale area shared a dramatic drop in vacancy rate from 12% to 3%. Although 3% is often considered a balanced vacancy rate, the downward trend indicates that the availability of suitable rental housing is on the decline.

With plans for economic growth and attracting skilled immigrants to the area, affordable rental housing demand will increase. Newcomers and temporary workers both rely on rental housing, which acts as both a short-term housing solutions as well as a stepping stone to home ownership. Large employers in the area have found that new employees moving in to the area have trouble finding suitable and affordable rental housing upon arrival. Without increasing appropriate rental supply to accommodate future needs, rental rates will become more unaffordable over time.

Adequacy

As of 2016, 12% of private dwellings in the Village of Fruitvale are in need of major repairs. Relative to other municipalities, this is one of the highest percentages in the West Kootenay region. This correlates strongly to an aging housing stock in the Village of Fruitvale, with 68% of current homes built before 1980.



Between 2014-2018, only 21 new homes were registered as new housing units, excluding 3 mobile homes. In addition, only 6 demolition permits were obtained through the Village. This suggests that there is little replacement and redevelopment of an aging housing stock.

Housing Priorities

Based on demographic shifts, regional economic drivers, local real estate and industry knowledge, and characteristics of the current housing stock in Fruitvale, the following priorities have been identified as the most prominent housing needs over the next two decades.

Housing Diversity

While older homes account for the more affordable segment of the ownership market, newer homes bring sale prices up to the \$350,000 - \$400,000 range. Local realtors and home builders suggest the ownership market supply gap is currently newer homes that fall within the \$300,000 - \$320,000 price range. Local builders have not been able to deliver this price point for new single detached and duplex developments, citing infrastructure costs and development charges as barriers for small-scale projects. Moving forward, there is a desire to explore multi-plex and row house development in response to this price point gap to provide more diversity in housing choice for prospective buyers.

Affordable Rental Homes

Home-ownership may not be attainable for low- and single-income households, newcomers, and temporary workers looking for a place to call home. Affordable rental tenure can be a stepping-stone to homeownership for young adults, fills the need for temporary workforce housing, and provides long-term housing for low to moderate income workers and disabled persons. Maintaining a healthy stock of rental tenure housing provides flexibility to meet changing housing needs as the community demographics shifts and grows over time. There are many ways to build rental housing into the community, and through a variety of housing forms. For example, apartment rentals, rental townhomes, and secondary suites are some common options that could be considered in Fruitvale.

Seniors Housing and Spectrum of Care

As the population ages, the demand increases for seniors-appropriate housing, as well as a spectrum of care. Until suitable housing options are made available in this community, seniors will either elect to move out of the community or have no choice but to continue living in large single-detached homes. While some homeowners may choose to age-in-place, preferring to remain in their family homes for as long as possible, others may wish to downsize to housing alternatives such as adaptable or accessible single-level apartment homes, or seniors residences that offer a range of independent supported living options, assisted living, and higher-level residential care. As demonstrated by the waitlist at Mountain Side Village, there is an increasing demand for more seniors housing that is not currently being met. Further research needs to be done to confirm the level of affordability that needs to be achieved to house the aging demographic, and how much non-market and subsidized seniors housing will be needed to accommodate low-income seniors.

Inclusive Housing for Semi-Independent Living

The Family Support Institute of British Columbia has identified a regional demand for accessible and affordable semi-independent living options that can accommodate adults with disabilities. Current housing options include Group Homes and Home Share programs, but there is a growing demand for integrated community living and inclusive housing in the form of semi-independent housing in the area. Further exploration of how inclusive housing can be included in future development and plans should involve the FSIBC, the Kootenay Society for Community Living, BC Housing, and prospective residents and their families.

Child Care Needs

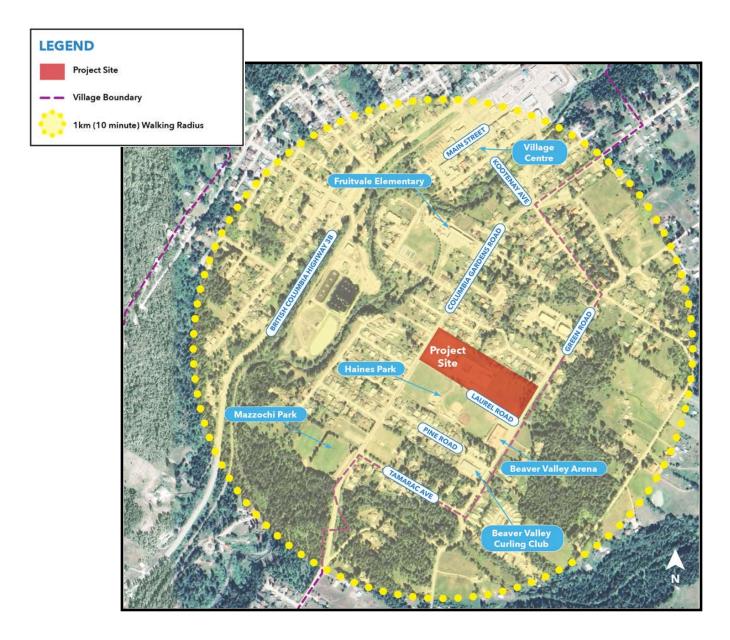
The Village of Fruitvale's current childcare needs are primarily served by the Beaver Valley Nursery School and the Sunningdale Children's Centre in Trail, which are both operating at or close to full capacity. After school care at Fruitvale Elementary is also at full capacity, serving parents of school aged children requiring extended-hours care. Alternative and un-licensed child care services are available to residents through an online network of individuals offering nanny and in-home services.

The Village of Fruitvale has expressed a strong desire to provide a daycare centre in tandem with more affordable housing for young families. Consultation with current care providers reveals that while demands for pre-school programs are well served, Fruitvale families do not have adequate access to infant-toddler care. Furthermore, families with multiple children do not have access to multi-age group daycare services. Future consideration of childcare facilities should include consultation with young families, existing care providers, and the Ministry of Children and Family Development.

Project Site and Policy Framework

Location

The project site is located at 1800 Columbia Gardens Road and 1795 Green Road. Together these parcels total approximately 9.6 acres (3.9 ha). Despite being at the fringe and eastern edge of the Village boundaries, the site is adjacent to Haines Park and the Beaver Valley Arena, and is within a 10 minute walking distance (0.8 - 1.0 km) to the Fruitvale Elementary School, the Village Centre, the Beaver Valley Curling Club, and Mazzochi Park. The site is serviced by public transit, with BC Transit Glenmerry Fruitvale Route bus stops both Columbia Gardens Road and Green Road. Overall, the site location is well suited for redevelopment based on its proximity to existing services.



Land Use

Per the Village of Fruitvale Official Community Plan (OCP), the project site is in the Mixed Single Family and Multiple Family Priority Growth Area. More specifically, the 2011 OCP designates the southeast portion of the project site as Residential Multiple Family, and the northwest portion as Institutional, reflecting the former land use as a middle school.

Adjacent land uses include Parks and Recreation to the south, RDKB residential land use to the east, and Single and Two Family Housing to the north and west. The existing neighbourhood form and character is predominantly residential in nature, surrounded by primarily low density detached residential homes. Low-rise apartment housing can be found nearby on Redwood Drive, approximately 250m northeast of the project site.

Existing Zoning Bylaw

	Zoning	Permitted Uses	Overview of Requirements
1795 Green Road	RM2 - Medium Density Multiple Housing Purpose: Primarily medium density apartments and compatible secondary uses on serviced urban lots.	Primary Uses: Apartment housing Boarding and lodging houses Congregate housing Four dwelling housing Group home, major Multiple dwelling housing Secondary Uses: Care centres Home occupation Utility services, minor impact	 Max. FSR 1.0, up to 1.3 with density bonus provisions FSR may increase by a maximum of 0.2 (by proportion of underground parking spaces) FSR may increase by 0.1 if Housing Agreement is provided Max. Site Coverage 40% for buildings 60% for all buildings, parking areas and roads Max. Height 12.4m or 3 storeys 16.5m or 4 storeys with density bonusing provisions 4.5m for accessory buildings Lot Size Min. width: 30.0m Min. depth: 35.0m Min. area: 1400m2

	Zoning	Permitted Uses	Overview of Requirements
Columbia Gardens Road	RMU - Residential Mixed Use Purpose: Primarily low to medium density residential mixeduse developments Limited commercial, institutional, office and service uses	 Primary Uses: Apartment housing Row housing (stacked or not) Duplex housing Multi-plexus (3 or 4 units) Congregate care housing Public and private education services Convenience retail stores Government services Minor home occupations Personal service shops Professional, financial and office support services Public libraries and cultural exhibits Religious assembly Public park Secondary Uses: Care centres Neighbourhood pubs (<100 occupants) Boarding and lodging houses Child care services Group homes Health service Hotels (small inns) Household repair services Indoor participant recreation services Home occupations (major) Private clubs / club house Residential sales centre 	 Max. FAR 1.0, up to 1.3 with density bonus provisions FSR may increase by a maximum of 0.2 (by proportion of underground parking spaces) FSR may increase by 0.1 if Housing Agreement is provided Max. Site Coverage 50% for buildings 75% for all buildings, parking areas and roads Max. Height 12.4m or 3 storeys 16.5m or 4 storeys with density bonusing provisions 4.5m for accessory buildings

Applicable Development Permits

The project site falls within the boundaries of the following development permit areas per the Official Community Plan. Development applications will require the following approvals:

- Multiple Family Development Permit
- Hazardous Conditions Development Permit
- Greenhouse Gas Reduction Development Permit

Site Analysis

Potential Issues

Abatement and Demolition of the Existing Building

The most prominent feature on the project site is the existing building, which was formerly used as the Beaver Valley Middle School. The Hazmat Report was completed by Peak Environmental Ltd. in 2018, where hazardous and regulated materials were mapped on the site. The primary concern is the large amount of asbestos-containing material throughout the building, as well as some materials with PCB, mercury, lead-based paint applications, other lead applications, and mould. Is it clear that a significant amount of abatement work will be required prior to demolition. A detailed cost estimate will need to be obtained through additional quote requests.

Stormwater Run-off

As shown in *Schedule K: Hazardous Conditions Development Permit Area* of the OCP, a portion of the southeast lot features a challenging area requiring additional review prior to development. Based on a preliminary review, this area coincides with an open drain for stormwater runoff that feeds from a culvert that collects from the ditches on the other side of Green Road. Future development would require further detailed survey of the ditch and open drain system, an environmental assessment and classification of the ditch, and civil engineering to determine an appropriate stormwater management plan for the project site.

Topographic Challenges and Steep Slopes

The northeast side of the site also features a steep slope at over 30% grade leading up to the adjacent subdivision to the north. This feature limits the potential to extend or connect Muir Street to a new east-west connection.

Opportunities

East-West Road Connection

This site is adjacent to a 6m lane and Laurel Road, which terminates part-way down the site. The unpaved lane is currently being used to access the Beaver Valley Arena from Columbia Gardens Road. Future development would allow for a formal east-west road connection to facilitate better vehicle and pedestrian connections from the Village Centre to the Arena.

North-South Pedestrian Trail Connection

While a road connection and development potential on the northeast portion of the site is limited, there is opportunity to consider a stepped pedestrian pathway that could wind down from Muir Street along the contour lines to the park through a new north-south connection. The current trail system could also be improved with additional design features and landscaping.

Amenity Co-location Benefits

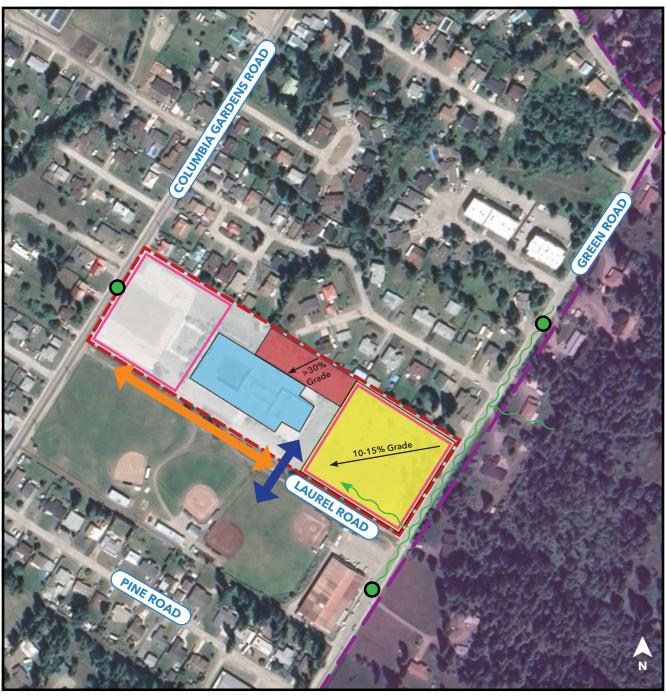
Proximity to Haines Park and the Arena create opportunities for amenity co-location benefits. Whether it's a childcare facility or a small coffee house, future services could draw from current traffic attracted by the existing hub of recreation services. Furthermore, future development can be designed to maximize the potential for south-facing views into the park, providing plenty of natural sunlight.

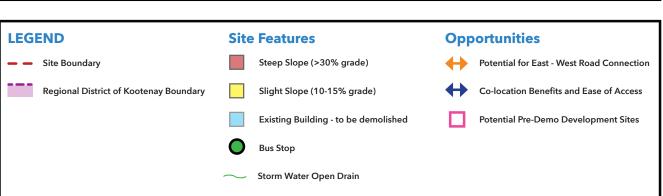
Mixed Use Development

The RMU mixed-use zoning provides a unique opportunity in Fruitvale to integrate different housing types and other service and retail uses on the same site. The size of the site is large enough to accommodate multiple development sites over time, supporting a phased development approach.

Pre-Demolition Early Development Sites

With a phased master plan, there are two areas of opportunity where pre-demolition development could potentially occur. This includes the areas adjacent to the two existing roads. Based on more detailed studies of road and servicing design in the upcoming design phase, a preferred early development site may be identified. The phasing plan could also be influenced by opportunities for funding and eligible project types.





Infrastructure Connections and Capacity

Water System

The project site is located within the Beaver Valley Water District, managed and maintained by the RDKB. Preliminary consultation indicated the water capacity for this system was designed to service population growth over the next 25 years, and therefore there are no high-level capacity concerns at this time. However, a concept plan will need to be reviewed by the RDKB to determine whether specific distribution pipes need to be upsized, replaced, or added to the system to support the density and housing types proposed.

There are also two existing fire hydrants, one on Columbia Gardens and another on the northwest part of the site. Future hydrant locations will need to be determined once a concept plan is in place.

Sanitary Sewer System

An existing sewer main runs along Columbia Gardens Road. Additional connections to the sewer main will likely provide a gravity system underneath the road. Development on this site could trigger a sewer main upgrade to accommodate increased flows in this catchment area. An engineering consultant will be retained in the next phase of planning to determine the scope of work required to facilitate future development on this site. Furthermore, infrastructure cost estimates will be obtained to inform the master planning process and phasing strategy proposed.

Stormwater Management

As discussed, classification of the ditches along Green Road and the open drain toward the school building is yet to be determined. Further study and modelling may be required to determine the most appropriate stormwater management system for the master plan.





Next Steps

This Preliminary Background Report represents a summary of the first stage of the overall master planning process. Upcoming stages include facilitated workshops, plan development, review and refinement, and Council endorsement of the final proposed master plan. Once endorsed by Council and admitted into bylaw, the master plan will guide land use and phasing strategies for Village-led development as well as market-led development project proposals.





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