

THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER

**Meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission
Held at City Hall, 141 West 14th Street, North Vancouver, B.C.
in Conference Room A on Thursday, February 27th, 2014**

MINUTES

Present: J. Jensen (Chair)
D. Farley
A. Jamieson
D. Marshall
P. McCann
B. Phillips
M. Robinson
B. Watt
Councillor Buchanan

Staff: S. Smith, Planner 2, Community Development
N. LaMontagne, Manager, Long Range and Community Planning,
Community Development
S. Kimm-Jones, Committee Clerk

Absent: M. Rahbar
C. Sacre
Councillor Bell

A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

1. Draft Official Community Plan Discussion

The Commission continued their discussion from the January 8th APC meeting.

Key discussion areas carried over from the January 8th meeting were: the East 3rd Street area, two suites in Single Family areas, density bonus policy, special study areas and process.

S. Smith asked if anything should be added to the list of questions, and “Moodyville” was added.

Staff asked the Commission to consider if they felt that the OCP was moving in the right direction. And, to identify any specific aspects that need further development or change.

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- It has been worked on for over a year and a half; the document is ready.

- Sometimes there are competing objectives within the draft OCP e.g. green space vs density.
- I would like to know about the metrics to measure success. **A:** This will be discussed at the March 12th meeting.
- Make it readable for the public. It is a very professional document but you have to understand planning to understand it. It might need translating for citizens.
- Will visuals be added to it later on? **A:** Yes; there is a long way to go with the document. It will be challenging to put good and accurate illustrations into the OCP.
- You should change the waterfront photo; it is inappropriate to have a photo taken by a private company.
- Maybe Mid-Lonsdale or the waterfront could be a special study area, so that people know the City is working on the best possible solutions. **Staff:** Special Study Areas are usually a big land use discussion that will not be resolved in time. The waterfront land use is set. We need some kind of mechanism to identify the need for a finer grain closer look at areas of change.
- Where is the growth going? That is where it is now; what is extra and where is the height going? One 100-storey building or 100 one-storey buildings?
- There should be a basic primer on “what is zoning”, “what is a development permit”?
- It is hard to read the heights on the map in the OCP. **Staff:** There will be questions later on, on how to publish it.
- **Staff:** There have been a couple of items that have caused concern due to confusion: Harry Jerome and density bonus caps. There should be illustrations for the more complex sites, the same as the other illustrations for housing types. We should privilege it in our budget.
- I compliment you on capping the density bonus. It is clearly misunderstood by community members. Some of the density caps are 63%. **A:** We looked at past performance. The caps are a combination of what we were getting in the past. It was Council direction to try to introduce clarity for people.
- It is important to give some context with height. Just because we may be changing the OCP we will not see massive amounts of density happening overnight. There is density that has never been realized.
- It might be worthwhile putting in a section talking about the OCP being realized over a period of time; that it will progress slowly over time. **Staff:** It is in at the beginning, but we could add more references. We have interesting data that shows the trends over time.
- People do not realize that there was more growth from the 60’s to the 70’s than from 2000 to 2010.
- **Staff:** There is a lot of capacity in the wood frame buildings; we want to see some renewal of that building stock but it will be slow.

Revisiting East 3rd Street / Moodyville

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- The plan is good. **Staff:** Residents in the area are supportive of change and voted for East 3rd over other areas. In choosing to pursue it we looked at turning it into a bit more of a high street. It is not just driven by the Low Level Road and grain terminal.
- It is a high volume traffic route.

- The plan should create a micro community, not just repeat what is there.
- The interface is very important.
- It will have lots of traffic, busy port activity. I initially thought “why would you put more people there”, but if we leave it as it is, we are not doing the area a service. If we improve the area to make a liveable walkable community, the market will decide.
- **Staff:** We wanted 1.0 FSR because that results in ground-oriented development; an FSR of 1.2 can be stacked town houses, but is less accessible.
- Has there been talk of mixed use backing on to the substation? **Staff:** We are leaving the options open; it could be just commercial. There is usually a lot of market research that goes into a development; we wanted to leave it flexible. There is enough density to do buffering on the site. If the density was lower, it would be hard to have the economics to get that level of buffering.
- Developers will make the decision. **Staff:** We want to protect the liveability of people for the long term.
- The technology of the substation may not be required in 15 years.
- Will it be a development permit area? **Staff:** Yes.
- There was talk about moving commercial north-south rather than east-west. **Staff:** Retail would lose visibility off West 3rd Street..
- The density should be ground oriented.
- The four blocks around Ridgeway annex school could be duplex-zoned.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Commission is supportive of the idea of creating a micro community in the East 3rd area that is ground oriented.

The Commission has some concerns about residential potentially being included in the Mixed Use by the Hydro substation on the north side of east 3rd Street,

The Commission is supportive of potentially extending Mixed Use on 3rd Street one block east of the current proposed zone.

Carried Unanimously.

Revisiting RS 1 zoned properties to have both coach house and accessory suite

While this item does not require a change to the OCP to enable it, it is included in the Draft OCP for discussion and input.

There is no increase in floor area provided but it could result in more people. The FSR would remain the same; if the house is built out to the limit you could not add a coach house so no increase in overall built area. The proposal expands the amount of ground-oriented, rental housing stock distributed throughout the city. There would be development permit guidelines for form, character and requirements for parking etc. There are existing guidelines to build coach houses.

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- I am in support of it.

- The big driver is the area of affordability. This will allow it to happen; and facilitates a much more sustainable community.
- I support it. I wish it could be encouraged; 990 sq. ft. is too small for most families. The term could be “family housing”; it is not “single family”. **Staff:** It is a dated term.
- There was a discussion about basement storage under garages. **A:** It was passed by Council.
- It is not reliant on the OCP; what about Ottawa Gardens? **Staff:** It is a Heritage Conservation Area and has its own guidelines.

Councillor Buchanan left the meeting at 7:15 p.m.

- How significant a change is it? **Staff:** Housing Development Permit Areas could streamline the approval process and would give more control over the design and character.
- **Staff:** The guidelines will be based on input from the public. They can be updated more frequently than the Official Community Plan.
- It makes sense to have guidelines for single family homes as there are so many of them.
- I am surprised at the lack of development permits. It would work very well administratively.
- How can parking be mitigated? We are all waiting for TransLink. **Staff:** This is not addressed specifically in the Draft OCP specifically. The suites will not be large; current zoning is for one parking spot per unit. Many people do not use their off-street parking. We thought about permitting it only along transit routes, but that felt discriminatory.

B. Phillips left the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

- It seems to be a tragedy to not go ahead with it because of parking. Move forward and deal with the parking. Do not lose affordability and allowing people to age in place. Car ownership is going down in some areas.
- Does staff have an idea of uptake? **Staff:** We estimate a 30% uptake over the next 20 years.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Commission supports the concept of allowing both an accessory in-house secondary suite and an accessory secondary suite in coach house form in RS-1 zoned properties.

Carried Unanimously

The land Use Map

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- Any thought to extending density around the hospital?
- The map should indicate what is along the foreshore (shown in grey) which is Port buildings; people might relate to it better. Put grey blocks to indicate the buildings and train tracks. **Staff:** It would have to be fairly simple, but would be good to acknowledge it.

Transportation

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- There seems to be an emphasis on density as opposed to additional road capacity along Marine Drive and East 3rd Street? **Staff:** There is a 100 foot Right of Way along Marine Drive to East 3rd Street with additional building setbacks, all to allow for rapid transit, bike lanes etc. No major land use changes are planned for Marine Drive; it supports the concept. The City is a Regional City Centre. We are consistent with TransLink's plans.
- What about transit for Harbourside? **A:** It has its own process, which is underway.
- There should be a discussion on what the function of Lonsdale Avenue is; is it a people street? What about trolleys up Lonsdale? What about moving buses from it? St. George's Avenue has a lot of traffic now.
- What about an increased City population who have to commute? **Staff:** This is a chance to get the job to resident ratio right. The City is tied with Vancouver in terms of shortest trip length to work.
- Bus linkage to downtown is very good. **Staff:** Most trips are not commute trips.

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT The Commission supports the transportation policy as described in the draft Official Community Plan;

AND recommends that the Draft Official Community Plan look at Lonsdale Avenue as a special character study examining its arterial status.

Carried Unanimously

Density Bonus Caps

One of the goals of establishing density bonus caps is to reduce the number of OCP amendments and provide a level of certainty and clarity. The density bonus policy will be located in the Zoning Bylaw and can be amended over time.

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- How does the Affordable Housing Fund work? **A:** Typically the City finds a partner such as a non-profit housing group. City-owned lands could be used with money from the fund.
- Are density bonus transfers included? **A:** Yes.
- There should be a significant public benefit.
- I tried to compare the densities to other municipalities; they seem high. **A:** The numbers line up with projects on the ground today. There are not many sites left.
- Residential Level 5 bothers me. As far as affordability is concerned, it would be better to have a policy that says retain those buildings. People can add a fourth storey to a wood frame building and add sprinklers. There can be conflict between renters and condo owners. **A:** It is a challenge. The buildings are aging and deteriorating. They could redevelop without rental. The City needs an incentive to retain the rental units. We have done density bonus or transfer. The

intent is to have a number that is economical. What is a decent six storey building? Investigate other incentives; the goal is to improve the quality of rental stock.

- Most of the existing wooden frame rental buildings are going to be flattened; it is not worth renovating them.
- I am in favour of bonussing, but am not in favour of allocating all the bonussing for those categories. The rental policy is strongly privileged. What about targets for bonussing? Allocation is done in a haphazard way. The City should have long range targets for bonussing; it would help inform Council how to allocate bonuses.
- You should put a history of the past bonuses; show how you came up with the numbers e.g. the bonussing workshop. Show comparisons to other town centres.
- The combination of density transfer and caps make it appear that there is no limit. Where does it stop?

It was regularly moved and seconded

THAT the Commission recommends that staff consider describing an overall long term allocation of density between the categories for which Density bonuses shall be awarded:

AND THAT an explanation of the history and analysis of past projects that informed the suggested density bonus levels be included; and

THAT comparisons to other town centres in the region be included;

THAT language focussing on the retention of Residential Level 5 properties be added;

AND that some discussion of the impact of density transfers on the system be included.

Carried unanimously

There was discussion on the re-development of Harry Jerome; the City should make sure they have a market for their project. It was agreed that development projects could not be phased in the City's favour.

D. Marshall and D. Farley left the meeting at 9:00 p.m.

Special Study Areas

Staff explained Special Study Areas as areas for which no land use change has been proposed but which could be changed over the life of the new OCP.

Right Direction

Comments and Questions from the APC included, but were not limited to:

- The objectives should be measurable. Make all the passive objectives active. There is also some repetition which could be deleted. **Staff:** We need to have highlights in

the OCP that are measurable for each chapter. Indicators can be discussed at the March 12th meeting of the Planning Commission.

- There is no mention of view corridors in the draft OCP.

It was agreed that a motion to consider whether the draft is headed in the right direction would be made at the March 12th Commission meeting when more members were present.

Staff outlined the timeline for future events: four Town Hall meetings are planned for on March 6th (General review), April 3rd (Central Lonsdale review), April 15th (Two accessory suites in RS-1) and April 22nd (Lower Lonsdale review). The hope is to present a draft bylaw to Council in Mid May for a Public Hearing in June. After review by Metro Vancouver, the OCP would be adopted in September.

2. Other Business

None.

M. Robinson left the meeting at 9:28 p.m.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Advisory Planning Commission will be held on Wednesday, March 12th, 2014.

Chair

