



Corporate Report

NO: L007

COUNCIL DATE: June 26, 2007

REGULAR COUNCIL – LAND USE

TO: **Mayor & Council** DATE: **June 21, 2007**
FROM: **Acting General Manager, Planning and Development** FILE: **7907-0048-00**
SUBJECT: **Crescent Park Annex Property Owners Association -
Delegation to Council-In-Committee, April 30, 2007**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Receive this report as information;
2. Authorize staff to proceed with Option B, as documented in this report; and
3. Instruct the City Clerk to send a copy of this report and the related Council resolution to the representatives of the Crescent Park Annex Property Owners Association that appeared before Council.

INTENT

The purpose of this report is to review the merits and implications of the proposal by the Crescent Park Annex Property Owners Association (the "Association") for a City-initiated rezoning in the Crescent Park Annex area, and to provide recommendations for Council's consideration.

POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

The Crescent Park Annex area, as identified by the Association, is primarily the area between 22 Avenue and 24 Avenue and 124 Street and 128 Street, as shown on the map attached as Appendix I. This proposed rezoning from RF to a CD zone is intended to prevent the further subdivision of the large lots in the area to smaller lots, which is permitted under the existing RF zoning. Many of the existing lots in the area are more than 2,000 square metres (one-half acre) in size. A few lots at the west end of the Crescent Park Annex area were subdivided in the past to smaller lots under the existing

RF Zone. The Association, through the new CD Zone, proposes to eliminate any further encroachment by the RF-sized lots into the area.

The Crescent Park Annex area is designated Urban in the Official Community Plan (the "OCP"). This designation provides for a residential density of up to 37 units per hectare (15 units per acre), but also provides for a diversity of housing in keeping with the OCP policy to "provide a range of choices in the type, tenure and cost of housing". As such, the Urban designation of the OCP allows a wide spectrum of densities and building forms ranging from townhouses, small lot single family subdivisions, regular single family subdivisions to half-acre lots under the RH (Half-Acre Residential) Zone, and half-acre gross density lots under the RH-G (Half-Acre Gross Residential) Zone, or a CD Zone based on these lot sizes. The suitability of any of these residential building forms and densities depends on its location relative to the town centre or neighbourhood centre, and the specific site attributes and context of each development site. In the context of the Crescent Park Annex area, it is reasonable to expect that, based on the Urban Designation and the surrounding single-family subdivision, a similar single family subdivision could be supported. However, due to the unique character of the area, a lower density development to achieve greater opportunity for environmental preservation and tree protection may be considered, as well.

BACKGROUND

On April 30, 2007, Council-in-Committee received a delegation from the Association. In their presentation to Council, the delegation expressed concern about the impact that the approval of a subdivision, as proposed under application No. 7907-0048-00, currently under consideration by the Approving Officer, would have on the character of their area. The subdivision plan proposed under this application is shown in Appendix II. The delegation submitted a 232-signature petition opposing the approval of this application and requested Council to consider an area-wide rezoning of their neighbourhood to preserve its existing character.

In their presentation, the Association provided Council with background on their previous request to rezone the area. In 1999, the City received a petition from residents in the Crescent Park Annex area to rezone residential properties in the same area from "Single Family Residential Zone (RF)" to "Half-Acre Residential Zone (RH)", in order to maintain the existing character of the area. The rezoning request came as a result of area residents' opposition to two applications (Application Nos. 7998-0075-00 and 7999-0227-00) that each proposed to subdivide large lots in their neighbourhood to smaller lots under the RF Zone that was in place on all lots in the neighbourhood. (The location of the two subdivisions is shown in Appendix I).

On February 5, 2001, Council considered Corporate Report No. L003, regarding the request. Three options were presented in that report, as follows:

1. **Council-initiated area rezoning of all properties in the Crescent Park Annex area** - This option would be at the City's cost, would eliminate the possibility of further subdivision in the area without a rezoning application process and could be against the wishes of some of the owners of property in the area affected by the rezoning.

2. **Council-initiated rezoning of properties only with the consent of the owners** - This option would be at the City's cost, could result in pockets of existing RF-zoned properties in the area where future conflicts might arise when those owners apply for subdivision of the larger lots to smaller lots; however, it would not force rezoning of a lot against the wishes of the owner of the lot.
3. **Council would entertain a collective rezoning application of lots by those owners who want to rezone their properties as a group** - This option would be at the owners' expense, might result in pockets of existing RF zoned properties in the area remaining with the potential for future subdivision of these lots without the need for a rezoning process and which may lead to neighbourhood concern; however, this process would not rezone any lot against the wishes of the owner of the lot.

Council endorsed Option 3, as it did not require a petition, but would follow the normal procedure available to individuals or groups of individuals (to whom the rezoning would apply), who wish to make an application subject to the regular fees and procedures for rezoning. The area residents did not proceed with any rezoning at that time.

The two subdivisions were subsequently approved under the existing RF zoning.

Since that time, Council has proceeded with a City-initiated rezoning of the St. Helen's Park area, pursuant to a request by area residents wishing to preserve the character of that neighbourhood and following an extensive petition and neighbourhood consultation process. Generally, the rezoning reduced the size and height of houses permitted on lots in the St. Helen's Park area.

DISCUSSION

Crescent Park Annex Area

The Crescent Park Annex area encompasses properties bounded by 22 Avenue and 24 Avenue, between 124 Street and 128 Street (Appendix I). The petition submitted by the Association, in respect to Subdivision Application No. 7907-0048-00, also included responses from the owners of a number of the large properties on the south side of 22 Avenue, between 124 and 128 Streets. The Crescent Park School Annex is located at the north-west corner of this block of land.

The area is designated Urban in the OCP. There are 143 properties in the area north of 22 Avenue and 13 large lot properties south of 22 Avenue, for a total of 156 properties in the area that the Association is representing. Most of the 156 properties in the area are zoned RF, except for seven lots which are zoned Duplex Residential (RM-D) and two lots which have a Comprehensive Development Zone (CD) that allows a higher maximum floor area than is allowed in the RF Zone.

North, west and south of the area are urban single family residential subdivisions, zoned RF and designated Urban in the OCP. East of 128 Street is a Suburban-designated

residential area, including properties zoned Half-Acre Residential (RH), Half-Acre Residential Gross Density (RH-G) and One-Acre Residential (RA).

Most of the properties in the area are much larger than the lots usually associated with the RF Zone. Of the 156 properties in the Crescent Park Annex area, 130 properties, if consolidated with adjacent properties, have potential for subdivision under the existing RF Zone. A pattern of smaller RF lots was established in the northwest corner of the area as a result of the approval of two subdivision applications a number of years ago (Application Nos. 7998-0075-00 and 7999-0227-00).

The comparison of existing lot sizes with the RF Zone is as follows:

- The existing lots for the most part range in area from about 1,752 square metres (18,859 square feet or somewhat under one-half acre) to 2,241 square metres (24,122 square feet, i.e., slightly more than one-half acre). There are three much larger lots in the area, one of which contains the Crescent Park School Annex. The other two lots front 124 Street and are part of Subdivision Application No. 7907-0048-00, to which the Association is objecting. A majority of the lots in the subject area range in width from about 24 metres (79 feet) to 27 metres (88 feet) and range in depth from about 73 metres (239 feet) to 83 metres (272 feet).
- The RF Zone permits lots as small as 15 metres (50 feet) wide by 28 metres (90 feet) deep and with a minimum area of 560 square metres (6,000 square feet).

There have been a number of new homes constructed on the larger lots in the neighbourhood and a number of the existing homes have been upgraded and renovated. There is a mature tree cover at the back of the properties that has been in existence for many years. This interconnected tree corridor provides habitat for various birds and mammals. If roads are to be introduced into this area to provide for subdivision of the area into RF-sized lots, consistent with the Area Concept Plan (see Appendix III), the resulting road pattern would require the removal of significant tree cover and substantially alter the character of the area.

Experience of other Municipalities

At the June 11, 2007 Council-In-Committee Meeting, Council received a further request from home owners in the Royal Heights area to initiate a down-zoning process for their area to reduce the size and height of houses in the same manner as in the St. Helens Park area. Council referred the matter back to staff for a report. At that time, Council also asked staff to survey other municipalities in the Lower Mainland and across Canada to determine whether other municipalities have received such requests and, if so, how they have been handled.

Staff have surveyed all GVRD municipalities, as well as a number of other Canadian cities. As well, staff have followed up on the recent articles regarding similar work being done in a number of American cities. The results of this initial research is summarized in Appendix IV of this report, "Overview of other Cities with regard to Requests for Neighbourhood Downzoning".

In staff's research of other municipalities, the only municipalities we have discovered, to date, which have established policies or procedures for addressing requests for neighbourhood down zonings are Burnaby and Delta. The processes are documented in Appendix IV.

Options for Consideration

Option A: Council could advise the property owners who wish to down-zone their properties that they may collectively submit a rezoning application for Council's consideration, but that Council would not consider the rezoning of any property where the property owner does not voluntarily agree to participate in such rezoning

This Option is basically the same as the decision made by Council in 2001.

The down-zoning of properties by the City against the wishes of the owners of some of the lots could cause uncertainty on the part of prospective developers and investors in relation to the value of their investments in land in the City of Surrey and may cause some investors to redirect investment dollars to other municipalities or cities where they feel more certainty regarding the value of their investment. This consequence would be contrary to the broader interests of the City. This Option, therefore, attempts to maintain certainty in the uses and densities conferred by the Zoning By-law, while allowing property owners who are willing to proceed with rezoning to be accommodated.

The down side to this option is that unless a significant majority of the owners of lots volunteer to participate in this "owner-initiated down-zoning" the objective of the Association to maintain the existing character of the area may not be fully achieved. Furthermore, the Approving Officer would be faced with sorting out potential conflicts between those who have down-zoned their properties and others who wish to subdivide their lots.

Option B: Council could advise the Association to undertake a process to determine the preferred zoning regulations for the neighbourhood and the level of neighbourhood support for area-wide rezoning to the preferred zoning regulations, which would provide Council with more information upon which to base a decision regarding whether to proceed with such a rezoning.

As the 232-signature petition submitted by the Association is more an expression of opposition to the current subdivision application than an expression of interest in down zoning, before any decision is made, a process should be undertaken to more clearly establish the level of support by property owners in the area for such a rezoning. A similar process was conducted in St. Helens Park area, prior to Council considering the rezoning of that area. A possible consultation process is described later in this report. The exact boundaries of the rezoning area may be fine-tuned and confirmed as a result of this public consultation process. Approval of this Option would not commit Council to rezoning the area, but rather it would provide Council with more certain information about the level of support in the community for a rezoning and a better understanding of the proposed zoning regulations.

In order to determine what level of support would constitute a clear majority, it is suggested that a support of at least 75% of the land owners representing at least 75% of the land area within the petition area be a condition for consideration of a City-initiated down-zoning.

Proposed Neighbourhood Consultation Process

The public consultation process to which Option B refers, would consist of the following steps, which is similar to the process that was followed for the City-initiated area-wide rezoning of the St. Helens Park area in South Westminster in 2005/2006. The Association representatives have indicated general agreement with this process.

1. The Association would canvass the neighbourhood to determine what provisions should be included in a new CD Zone. This would include attempting to obtain consensus from the community on the provisions of a new CD zone, including lot size, building setbacks, maximum house size, and whether accessory uses such as coach houses would be acceptable to the neighbourhood. This canvassing process would also help to establish the boundaries of the area that would be covered by the proposed CD Zone.
2. Staff would work with the Association to prepare draft provisions of the CD Zone.
3. The Association would hold neighbourhood meetings to gauge the level of support for the CD Zone and to receive comments on the draft provisions. Staff would attend the meeting as a resource to answer any technical questions about the draft zoning provisions and respond to any questions about the rezoning process.
4. Staff would send a survey by registered mail to all owners whose properties would potentially be rezoned through this process. The mail out would contain information on the detailed provisions of the draft CD Zone. This survey would determine the extent of support and opposition by owners whose properties would be directly involved in the rezoning.
5. Staff would report back to Council on the results of the process and survey and provide recommendations for Council's consideration as to whether to proceed with the introduction of a rezoning by-law for first and second readings and the required public hearing.

Status of the Subdivision Application No. 7907-0048-00 (See Appendix I)

This subdivision application was received on February 19, 2007 and has been undergoing a review by staff. The application proposes to subdivide five existing parcels into 14 lots under the RF Zone. Nine of the 14 lots would have access from a cul-de-sac off 22 Avenue. (see Appendix II). Since the proposed subdivision site does not require rezoning, nor a development variance permit, the subdivision application falls under the jurisdiction of the Approving Officer. Council's consideration and approval are not required. The Approving Officer approved two similar subdivision applications in the

block to the immediate north of this application (i.e., involving the subdivision of several large suburban lots into smaller RF-sized urban lots) in 1999 (Application Nos. 7998-0075-00 and 7999-0227-00).

On May 16, 2007, staff and the Approving Officer met with the applicant and reviewed the rezoning proposal by the Association. The applicant has expressed his desire to proceed with the subdivision application independent of the Association's proposal. The reasons stated are as follows:

1. The site is already zoned RF and the application was made prior to the Association's proposal.
2. Two of the properties involved in the subdivision application are much larger parcels than the approximately 2,000 square metre typical lots in the area.
3. The proposed subdivision is located on the western end of the Crescent Park Annex area. The area north of 23 Avenue has been subdivided into RF lots as a result of two subdivisions that occurred a few years ago. The area south of 22 Avenue consists of existing lots that are approximately 850 square metres in area. As such the lots that are proposed are relatively consistent with some of the adjacent development in the area.

The Association representatives have expressed concern that the proposed subdivision, under Application No. 7907-0048-00, will detract from the character of their neighbourhood, will disrupt the mature tree cover that exists along the rear lot lines of the properties being subdivided and will disrupt the water table, which would affect the survival of the remaining trees. Therefore, they request that the subdivision not be approved and that the City rezone all properties within their area to an appropriate custom-made CD Zone, including the properties that are covered by the current Application No. 7907-0048-00.

Under the provisions of the *Land Title Act*, R.S.B.C. 1996, c. 250, as amended, in considering the merits of a subdivision application, the Approving Officer "may hear from all persons who, in the approving officer's opinion, are affected by the subdivision . . . and may refuse the subdivision plan if the approving officer considers that the anticipated development of the subdivision would injuriously affect the established amenities of adjoining or reasonably adjacent properties, . . . or that the deposit of the plan is against public interest". The Approving Officer will continue to process the application under the rules and legislation by which he is bound. If Council specifically instructs staff and the Association to include the subdivision site in the area to be considered for rezoning, the Approving Officer will hold the current subdivision application in abeyance until Council has made a decision regarding the proposed rezoning for the area.

Given that the subdivision application was received by the City before the Association's delegation to Council and prior to Council making any decision with respect to the process for consideration of the proposed down-zoning, and considering that changing the rules mid-stream in the process of application review would send a negative signal to the development industry, unless Council has instructed staff that the subdivision site is

to be included in the area to be considered for rezoning, the Approving Officer intends to make a decision on the subdivision of the properties covered by Application No. 7907-0048-00 under its current RF zoning. The Approving Officer will still consult the adjacent property owners, particularly those adjoining the subdivision site, to mitigate any impact the proposed subdivision may have under the current zoning or under the possible CD zoning the Association is seeking, and the proposed subdivision layout will be adjusted to reflect an appropriate interface with the adjacent area.

CONCLUSION

The intent of the residents of the Crescent Park Annex area and the Association to maintain the existing character of their neighbourhood as a source of neighbourhood pride and identity is appreciated. The Association requested Council to undertake a City-initiated rezoning of all properties in the area. However, down-zoning of properties has serious implications (i.e., loss of the rights to use and develop properties, which may possibly result in loss of property value) and should not be undertaken spuriously.

Based on the discussion in this report, it is recommended that Council authorize staff to proceed on the basis of Option B. With respect to the current in-stream subdivision application, the Approving Officer will consider the application based on the current RF Zone and in accordance with the Provincial rules and legislations, and will consult adjacent, potentially affected property owners to mitigate any negative impact the proposed subdivision may have on the adjacent properties.

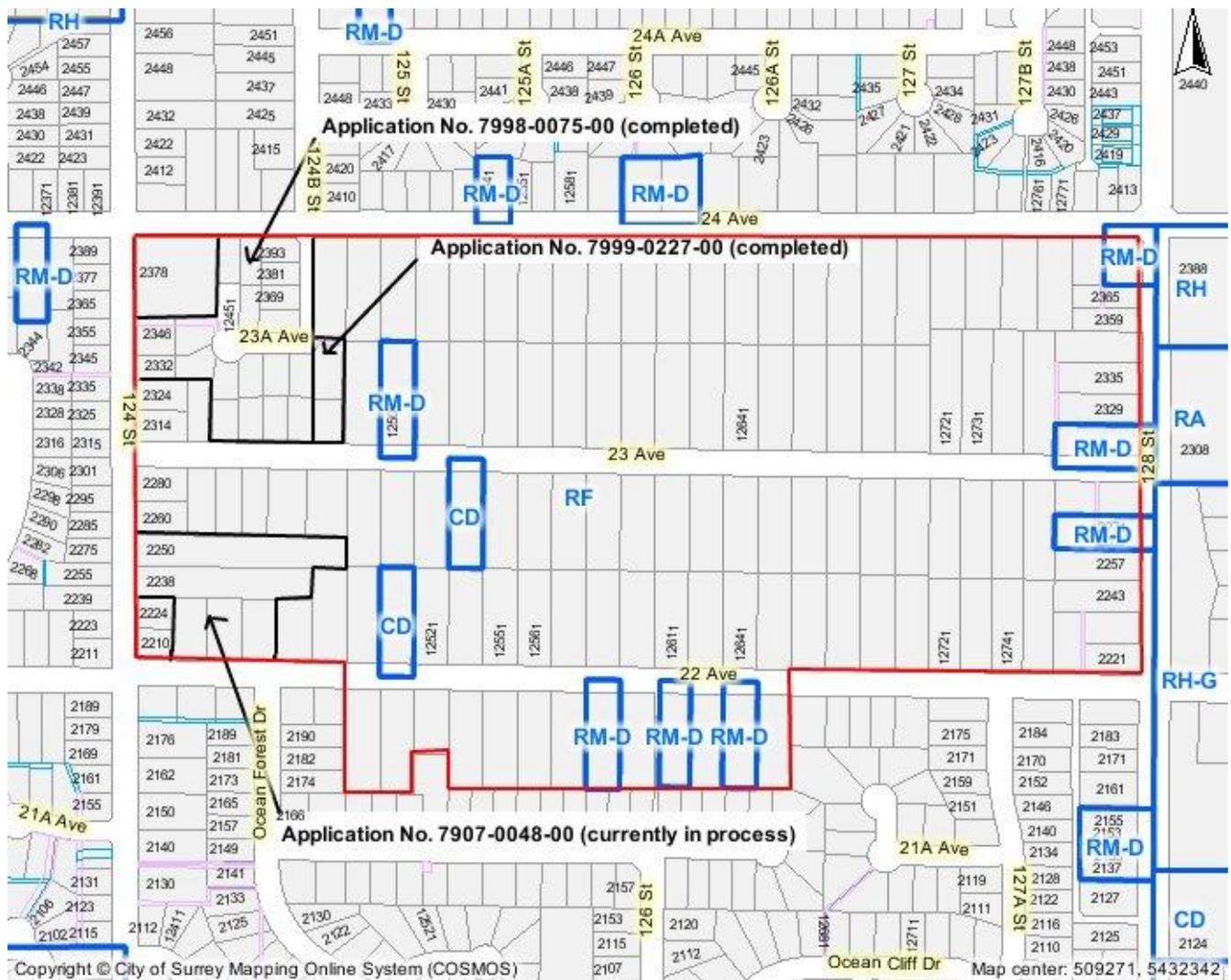
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BP/kms/saw

Attachments:

- Appendix I Map - Area Boundaries and Existing Zoning and Completed and Current Applications
- Appendix II Proposed Subdivision Layout - Application No. 7907-0048-00
- Appendix III Aerial Photo and Road Pattern (Area Concept Plan)
- Appendix IV Overview of Other Cities with Regard to Requests for Neighbourhood Down zoning

Crescent Park Annex Area Area Boundaries, Existing Zoning and Completed & Current Applications



Overview of other Cities with regard to Requests for Neighbourhood Downzoning

It has been a general trend in North American cities that in neighbourhoods built in the 1940's through to the 1960's houses were generally not built to the scale permitted in the zoning by-law. A growing trend with newer developments has been building to the maximum lot coverage, density and height allowances under the zone. This has in turn lead to the redevelopment of houses in older subdivision at generally larger heights and floor areas.

In the late 1990's Surrey and a number of other municipalities responded to the concern over large houses in infill areas by placing a maximum allowable floor area cap on houses in the RF zone, in addition to the previous regulations on maximum building height and maximum floor area ratio (FAR).

Approaches taken by other cities include introduction of single family design guidelines, development of infill policy, initiation of area rezoning, general amendments to zoning by-laws, and community planning processes for the specific area. The various municipal responses have been summarized in Table 1, while a brief description of each municipality's approach is provided below.

Lower Mainland

Surrey staff have contacted all GVRD municipalities as well as Abbotsford. Most municipalities have not received downzoning requests.

- Burnaby
In 1995, the City of Burnaby approved an Area Rezoning Policy in order to respond to requests from residents who were concerned about the size, shape and height of new houses being built in older, established single family neighbourhoods. There was specific concern regarding new houses that blocked scenic views. An area rezoning process was developed to allow for an area rezoning. Specific zones (R10 and R11) were created which capped building size, reduced building height, and reduced massing for single family uses, and the following process was adopted:
 - o Residents in a neighbourhood indicate interest in pursuing an area rezoning to down-zone their properties and submit a request, accompanied by an initial petition that shows neighbourhood support for the down-zone;
 - o City staff review the request and if supportable, (fits in with context of City's overall plan etc.), then staff prepare a brochure that describes the proposal and also a questionnaire. These are mailed out to the defined area of the petition (as well as to residents within 100-metres of the boundary);
 - o The questionnaire is collected by the Planning Department, in order to gauge formal support for the proposal;
 - o A public information meeting is held in order to provide opportunity for property owners to learn more about the proposal and to assist in the completion of questionnaires;
 - o In order to continue the area rezoning process a majority of residents need to support the proposal. A majority is calculated as follows:
 - a) In cases where at least 50% of all the properties (property owners/residents) in a defined area have indicated that they support an area rezoning; or
 - b) In cases where the response rate is less, at least 70% of those who responded support

- o the area rezoning, and at least 50% of the property owners have responded
- o If a majority support is achieved, then staff prepare a report to Council and move project on to a Public Hearing process; and
- o Development application fees for a neighbourhood initiated area rezoning are waived

- Coquitlam

Coquitlam introduced city-wide zoning by-law amendments to address building articulation and floor plate issues. While the city has received requests for downzoning, it has not supported any area downzoning. Recently the city has received such a request from one resident, and Staff have asked that he provide a petition so they can gauge the level of support for this request.

- Delta

In June 2004 Delta adopted a Neighbourhood Area Petition and Rezoning Guide as a means to assist any interested neighbourhoods in initiate an are down-zoning. Main requirements listed in the guide include:

- o Receipt of petition indicating support, signed by 75% of property owners
- o The area under consideration is contiguous, containing a minimum of 10 properties;
- o comprising at least both sides of a street for the distance of a block;
- o Staff will review the petition for completeness and validity and notify Council of the request.
- o Council supports further consideration of the request, the rezoning is processed in the same
- o manner as a development application
- o Public notice signs will be erected by the municipality on properties at opposite extremities of the
- o petition area; and
- o Development application fees for a neighbourhood initiated area rezoning are waived

- Langley

In the City of Langley, complaints about newer developments in mature neighbourhoods were mainly centred on the issue of building height. In response to residents concerns the City of Langley approved amendments to the RS1 Single Family Residential Zone and the RS2 Estate Residential Zones to restrict the maximum building height from 10 to 9 metres.

- Richmond

While Richmond has not entertained downzoning they have undertaken the following to help preserve neighbourhood character:

- o In 1989, the City of Richmond amended their zoning by-law to address rezoning to smaller lot sizes in established neighbourhoods. Specifically, a requirement to do a Lot Size Study was included in the Zoning and Development By-law. As a result, rezoning applications in defined areas of the city require rezoning applicants for smaller single family lots to do a lot size study which to address interface with the existing houses in the neighbourhood. This process involves the city the sending out of public information meeting invitations along with a brochure and survey intended to determine what size lot is preferred by residents. The results from the survey are used by city staff to determine lot size options for the area.
- o In terms of zoning, Richmond uses a sliding scale for FAR on single family lots is used in an attempt to limit house size. The zoning basically allows 0.55 FAR over a certain lot area (depending on zone) and then 0.3 FAR applied to the balance of the lot area. The

city is currently working with a consulting firm to help rewrite their zoning bylaw and try and address some of these concerns as part of this process.

- Vancouver

In the early 1990's, the City of Vancouver received complaints from residents in the Kitsalino area with regard to new development being out of character with the existing craftsman style homes that were predominantly built before the 1940's. The redevelopment led to six nights of Public Hearing debates on the issue. Initially residents wanted the city to down-zone the area. However, the city initiated a community planning process to help define the character in the Kitsalino area.

The process resulted in the establishment of design guidelines which work in conjunction with the zoning by-law. Where the by-law used to allow an outright floor space ratio (FSR) of 0.60, the amendment in essence made the 0.60 FSR conditional, rather than outright. The change provided an incentive to reach the maximum if the house design followed the design guidelines.

- West Vancouver

Throughout the 1980's and 1990's West Vancouver adopted by-laws to implement floor area ratios, restrict heights and shapes, and other matters that reduce the development potential on lots. Regardless of the changes in by-laws, from time to time, planning staff indicate that have received complaints from residents with regard to preserving neighbourhood character in the context of new development. In these cases, residents have generally not been able to show substantial support for changes to further restrict development potential.

Other Canadian Cities

- Calgary

The City of Calgary has had many informal requests for down-zoning as a response to larger homes being built in older neighbourhoods. Staff indicate that in these cases the residents are advised that this direction is not consistent with the City's municipal development plan would not be supported by the City. For single family developments in some older parts of the City, Calgary has developed a set of Infill Guidelines to address the fit of an application to re-develop within the existing community.

- Toronto

The City of Toronto has also received complaints from residents regarding the construction of larger homes in older, established neighbourhoods, but has not developed a formal policy to address the issue. The city is currently undergoing a harmonization and consolidation of the zoning by-law across the amalgamated city. The general objective of this exercise is to maintain the status quo of the underlying zoning in areas identified in the Official Plan as stable residential areas.

In terms of policies that address interface issues of larger homes being built in older neighbourhoods, the City uses "Replacement Housing Guidelines." The former City of North York (now part of the amalgamated City of Toronto) developed these guidelines to deal with this issue, and these have now been incorporated into Toronto's Consolidated Urban Design Guidelines. Compliance with these guidelines, however, is voluntary.

Toronto also uses Heritage Conservation District Designations under the *Ontario Heritage Act* to preserve the character of neighbourhoods that have heritage attributes, and in Ontario these designations could have the effect of limiting redevelopment

- Winnipeg
Winnipeg has not dealt with and does not have a policy relating to downzoning requests. They are currently working on developing infill policies that could emphasize the larger Winnipeg Plan and provide design guidelines to help address the type of issues of greatest concern to established neighbourhood (size/shadows, traffic generation, privacy, landscaping, etc) and establish processes for public consultation on infill projects.

The following Table contains a summary of responses from the Canadian Cities from which we have received replies to date. Staff will continue to document responses and will advise council of further information as received.

Table 1 Summary of Responses from Canadian Cities

CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES	RESPONSE				
	Initiated Area Down-Zoning	Introduced Design Guidelines for SF Development	Initiated Neighbourhood Planning Process for the Specific Area	Developed Infill Policy to deal with interface	Introduced Amendments to SF Zone (cap house size, reduce lot coverage, height, etc.)
Abbotsford					✓
Burnaby	✓				✓
Calgary				✓	
Coquitlam		✓			✓
Delta	✓	✓**			✓
Kelowna*					
Langley					✓
Maple Ridge				✓	under review
Oak Bay					✓
Pitt Meadows*					
North Vancouver		✓			
Port Coquitlam*					
Regina*					
Richmond		✓		✓	under review
Surrey		✓	✓	✓	✓
Toronto		✓			
Vancouver		✓	✓		✓
West Vancouver		under review			✓
Winnipeg				under review	under review

* Municipality has not received requests for reduced house size, height etc. to preserve neighbourhood character

** For North Delta only

Cities in the United States

A recent article in the Vancouver Sun reported that Seattle, Washington is also receiving complaints from residents arising from larger homes being built in older, established neighbourhoods. Specifically, the article indicated that new rules to limit house sizes are being proposed in Seattle as well as Austin , Texas, Marin County, California, Queens, New York, and Chevy Chase, Maryland.

Further investigation by Surrey planning staff found that zoning by-law amendments to restrict house size and density are the main tool these municipalities are using to respond to the larger house issue. For example, in Austin, Texas, changes to their single family zones include reduced building heights from 35 ft. to 32 ft., introduction of a maximum floor area ratio (FAR), and side wall articulation requirements. This is similar to amendments which Surrey has already made city-wide to its RF zones.

The town of Chevy Chase recently received zoning authority a year ago. Prior to this, Montgomery County regulated the town's zoning ordinances. Staff examining ways to introduce a credit system to floor area ratio calculations. For example, if an owner builds a house below the maximum permitted FAR, the developer would receive some kind of credit. This concept of receiving "credit for lower FAR" idea is still in the exploratory stages.

Seattle and Bellevue are in the process of examining the existing policies for development in established single family residential areas. Specifically, staff in Seattle is examining building height maximums, which currently allows for a three-storey house. In addition, they are looking at their current FAR calculation, however no amendments have been proposed. City Council in Bellevue approved a study of larger homes and other liveability issues after getting a growing number of complaints from residents about the same issue.