

# MINUTES

## Development Advisory Committee

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File: **360-20 (DAC)**  
Date: **May 28, 2015**  
Time: **2:30 p.m.**  
Location: **Planning Room 1,  
Surrey City Hall**

**Members:**

Clarence Arychuk  
Tim Bontkes  
Gordon Cameron  
Ted Dawson  
Jeff Fisher  
Dwight Heintz  
Roger Jawanda  
Gopal Sahota  
Mark Sakai  
Jas Sandhu  
Charan Sethi  
Kyle Wright

**City Staff:**

Jeff Arason  
Jaime Boan  
Robert Cooke  
Nicholas Lai  
Jean Lamontagne  
Sam Lau  
Don Luymes  
Judith Robertson  
Fay Keng Wong

**Guests:**

Meg Holden, SFU

**Regrets:**

Councillor Bruce Hayne  
Kevin Shoemaker

**1. Previous Minutes**

The notes of the February 26, 2015 meeting were accepted as distributed.

**2. New Development Project Engineer (Sam Lau, Manager, Land Development)**

- Sam Lau introduced the City's new Development Project Engineer, Robert Cooke. He deals mainly with the residential application process. Robert can be contacted by e-mail at [Robert.Cooke@surrey.ca](mailto:Robert.Cooke@surrey.ca) or by phone at 604-591-4407.

**3. Nicholas Lai Retirement (Nicholas Lai, Manager, Area Planning & Development – South Division)**

- Nicholas Lai announced that he will be retiring in mid-September 2015.

**4. Getting to Ground Breaking (G2G) Research Project (Meg Holden, SFU)**

- Meg Holden, Associate Professor, Urban Studies and Geography, at Simon Fraser University (SFU), presented the Year 1 review and Year 2 preview of the G2G Research Project. A copy of her presentation is attached.
- The Year 1 report was released in December 2014 and is particularly focused on townhouse development. The Year 2 study will focus on woodframe apartments, best practices in amenities, and public consultation.
- By 2041, the Metro Vancouver region will need nearly half a million homes to house more than 1 million new residents. Our current regional population is growing at a rate of 3,000 new residents per month.
- Most of Metro Vancouver is urbanized, as shown in the dark grey areas on the map in the presentation. Surrey still has some greenfield areas.

- “All the easy land is gone.” Only 9% of land is open and undeveloped.
- The purpose of the G2G Research Project is to examine the residential building approval process from the perspectives of municipalities and home builders; and to compare differences, document similarities, and identify best practices among municipalities and home builders in the approval process.
- An expected outcome from the G2G Research Project is aligning understanding amongst municipalities and home builders about good practice in building approval processes, which will lead to better working relationships in the public interest. Another expected outcome is identifying ways to reduce unnecessary time and cost in residential approvals without sacrificing quality outcomes.
- 15 municipalities, 38 home builders (more than 50% of townhouse builders), GVHBA and UDI working groups, and Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Advisory Committee participated in the G2G Research Project.
- The G2G Research Project identified the following best practices in residential development approvals: accessible and complete information, pre-application meetings, predictable fees and charges, complete applications, concurrent processing, file champions and coordinated teams, better public engagement, municipal staff empowerment, effective partnership, and policy clarity.
- Feedback from Year 1, which focused on townhouses, was that the effort was good. There was wide participation, rich data was collected, and respectful balance was achieved. The G2G Research Project demonstrates good potential value as a communication tool between builders and municipalities, and is a starting point for municipal-builders forums to improve practice. The following were identified as areas to improve: shorten the survey, ensure the most knowledgeable staff complete it, establish a clearer sense of value for municipalities and builders, more detail is needed to apply best practices in new contexts, and improve release and follow-up events for dialogue and implementation.
- Year 2 will focus on the scenario of a 4-storey wood frame apartment building on a half-acre lot with 60 units and 1 level of underground parking. This study will look at the range of types and levels of on-site amenities, and examples of innovative strategies that municipalities and builders have used to add valuable amenities for higher density living to make it more livable.
- Year 2 Timeline.
  - January to June: Project review and reflection, Year 2 survey development.
  - June to July: Survey of municipalities and home builders.
  - August to September: Possible follow-up interviews on best practices.
  - November: Release of Year 2 project results.
- A copy of the Year 1 report is attached.

**5. Riparian Area By-law (Jeff Arason, Manager, Utilities)**

- Jeff Arason provided an update on the Riparian Area By-law.
- Engineering is updating its 10 year servicing plan in the next few months. To determine if there will be a need for a DCC adjustment, Jeff Arason will seek feedback at the October DAC and report to Council shortly after. The effective date would be March 2016.
- In July 2004, the Provincial Government enacted the Riparian Areas Regulation (RAR). The RAR calls on Local Governments to endorse and develop protocols in an effort to protect

the features, functions and conditions that are vital in the natural maintenance of stream health and productivity by March 31, 2006.

- Until recently, the development setback determination method used by the City was based on the joint Federal/Provincial Government document entitled “Land Development Guidelines for the Protection of Aquatic Habitat.” This was the setback standard for the City since the early 1990’s as applied by the provincial Ministry of Environment, Lands and Parks (now Ministry of Environment) and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). This setback methodology was also effective in addressing geotechnical concerns, hazardous trees, wildlife corridors, most floodplain concerns and drainage rights-of-way issues.
- The City had also utilized an Environmental Review Committee (ERC) process that the City developed with DFO. In this process, staff were able to meet with developers, their consultants and DFO staff to establish appropriate development setbacks relaxations for any given development application taking into consideration the local environmental features of the site. This process was considered adequate to meet the obligations established by RAR.
- With recent changes to the Federal Fisheries Act and subsequent staff reductions at the DFO, the City’s ERC was dissolved in March 2013. In the absence of an ERC, the City has since been relying upon an “interim” procedure in which Qualified Environmental Professionals (QEPs) recommend appropriate development setbacks from watercourses through Detailed RAR Assessments which determine the development setback to meet the basic requirements of the Provincial RAR.
- In July 2014, Council adopted a Biodiversity Conservation Strategy (BCS) and authorized staff to prepare a Terms of Reference for a potential Surrey Riparian Area By-law including a program of consultation with key stakeholders.
- The Provincial RAR was designed to protect only fish habitat and not larger ecosystem values such as forest stand integrity, ecosystem values, Federal species at risk, wildlife passage, beaver management or other public amenities such as public access and park trails. Other development issues such as floodplains, slope stability or drainage maintenance requirements are not considered under RAR. A developer may be able to meet the setbacks for RAR only to find out later through the approval process that other considerations such as geotechnical or those associated with floodplains may require greater setbacks. This has led to inefficiencies during the development process and frustration for some in the development community.
- Development of a Surrey specific Riparian Area By-law would replace the interim process and allow for the coordination of all riparian environmental and legislated requirements in one review process, which will provide efficiencies for staff, consultants and developers while protecting the riparian areas appropriately and ultimately providing the greatest community benefit.
- The “one-stop” approach of a Riparian Area By-law will help to ensure that potential developers and their consultants have a clear understanding of the considerations when looking at development near a stream within the City. This includes clear guidelines on the environmental and legislated riparian area setback considerations that are to be evaluated, and how they are to be calculated in order to determine the ultimate riparian area setback. This approach will facilitate the development process with developers knowing up-front the land that needs to be set aside before significant planning has occurred while being sensitive to environmental and community values. It could also be used to help inform the

City's advanced planning initiatives such as Neighbourhood Concept Plans (NCPs), Local Area Plans (LAPs) and Integrated Stormwater Management Plans (ISMPs).

- The City has retained a consultant to assist in developing a Riparian Area By-law. What has worked in other municipalities' by-laws is being looked at and considered.
- The next step is to culminate the significant ideas/best practices and have a workshop with the environmental community and the development community. A date has not been set, yet, but an e-mail will be sent out to the DAC inviting developers to participate. City staff will then follow-up with the City's Environmental Sustainability Advisory Committee. Originally targeting for July but may be deferred to September to make sure we get things right.

**Comments:**

- Jeff Fisher asked if the Riparian Area By-law will become more or less flexible. Jeff Arason responded that it will have similar outcomes as the previous review process.
- Gopal Sahota asked if Class B and C streams will be taken into consideration, will there be re-routing, and will there be grandfathering? Some people buy an acreage of land to hand down to their grandchildren and the Riparian Area By-law may or may not be detrimental to this. Jeff Arason responded, yes, all the watercourses will be looked at, re-routing will still be considered, and what was effective in grandfathering will be looked at. The Riparian Area By-law is not meant to significantly change the way things were when the ERC process was active.
- Ted Dawson commented that it is great that the City will have a Riparian Area By-law. When will it be enacted? Jeff Arason responded that the intent was July, but an implementation date has not been set, yet.
- Jeff Fisher asked if the proposed By-law will have minimum or maximum requirements. Jeff Arason responded that there will probably be a scenario where the By-law will likely have thresholds to meet but with options to reduce to an established minimum.
- Tim Bontkes commented that a lot of work on this issue has been done in the Township of Langley. Tim Bontkes likes the idea of a Riparian Area By-law but there should be flexibility. There are some areas where watercourses are unexpected and the decision is made by the municipal official rather than based on the science. Also, NCP requirements do not always work. There are some issues with that process. Tim Bontkes likes the idea of a workshop. There are some obvious practices that do not work in the Township of Langley. Jeff Arason responded that is why the July target date is unlikely, so more time can be spent to look into the best practices of other municipalities.
- Clarence Arychuk commented that it would be interesting to have an independent legal review/opinion (other than the City's solicitors) when land is being secured/acquired. Jeff Fisher suggested Peter Kenward, who is a UDI Director and also a lawyer whose focus is on land use and the environment.
- Jeff Fisher asked if watercourses have been mapped to show where they are. Jeff Arason responded that the City has mapped watercourses where they know they exist but there will always be watercourses that come up that we are not aware of. The watercourses are mapped through Sensitive Habitat Inventory Mapping (SHIM).
- Dwight Heintz commented that there is sometimes discrepancy between science and opinion. It would be good to have a mechanism where there will be an independent opinion.

## 6. Off-Street Parking in Single Family Zones (Don Luymes, Manager, Community Planning)

- Don Luymes presented on policy options for parking requirements on single family lots. A copy of his presentation is attached.
- The issue of off-street parking in single family zones was brought to the Transportation & Infrastructure Committee by various citizen groups, and the Committee asked City staff to look into the issue and consult with DAC. Don Luymes and Jaime Boan have been working on policy options.
- Most single family lots have 3 or more on-site parking spaces, located in a garage and outside on a driveway or parking pad. For some, this is not sufficient because sometimes tenants are told by their landlords that they are not allowed to park in tandem parking spaces or, in other cases, residents use the garage as storage space. As a result, cars park on the street. Setback and other zoning regulations are used to retain landscaping, tree canopy, natural drainage and useable yard space. Some single family lots pave their entire front yard, which affects drainage. Adequacy of parking becomes an issue in the RF-9C zone, especially along arterial roads; where multiple unauthorised secondary suites are present; and on cul-de-sacs where on-street parking for visitors is limited.
- As a result, recent changes have been made to lane accessed small lots:
  - New RF-10 Zone with a larger lot and more usable garage: width increased from 5.7 m (19') to 6.1 m (20'), and area increased from 37 m<sup>2</sup> (400 ft<sup>2</sup>) to 39 m<sup>2</sup> (420 ft<sup>2</sup>).
  - Larger RF-10 lot also allows for a wider parking pad: side setback to garage increased from 2.8 m (9') to 3.0 m (9'10").
  - New "Type IV" RF-10 lot creates a greater lot depth of 36 m (118'), allowing for 4 parking spaces and adequate storage area for garbage and recycling carts.
  - Council is not supporting new applications for coach house lots.
- **Policy Options:**
  - **All single family zones – increase (and simplify) the number of required parking spaces.** Increase the number of required parking spaces for single family dwellings from 2 spaces to 3 spaces, and eliminate the additional parking space required for secondary suites. Existing lots would be grandfathered and secondary suites would not to be permitted on existing lots unless the lot had 3 on-site parking spaces. At present, single family lots are required to have a minimum of 2 parking spaces and a secondary suite must have 1 additional parking space for a minimum total of 3 on-site parking spaces. The change would mean newly created lots would have a minimum of 3 parking spaces whether or not a secondary suite was intended at the time.
  - **RF Zone – modify driveway and outdoor parking restrictions.** Permit a parking pad in driveway configuration. Increase the number of cars and trucks permitted to park on a driveway within the front or side yard from 2 to 3. Loss of front yard area for trees and landscaping. Reduced permeable area for drainage. Reduced on-street parking with widened driveway (Option 1b). Modify side setbacks to permit parking pad beside the garage. Effects on house design and adjacent property. On a cul-de-sac where there is restricted on-street parking, increase the number of vehicles permitted to park outdoors from 2 to 4.
  - **RF-12 Zone - increase setback for lane served attached garage.** Existing 1.0 m (3 ft) setback for attached garage does not allow for a third parking space and allows for extensive double-height floor area. A lot of these residents park a third car right up against the garage, horizontally, protruding into the lane. Proposed 6.0 m (20 ft)

- setback from lane. Possibly push the garage into the house (Don may consult with house designers, etc. to see if this would work).
- **RF-10 & RF-9 Zones - eliminate Type II lots.** The narrower, 7.9 m (26 ft) wide, Type II lot does not allow for a third parking space. These are not common.
- **Policy Considerations.** Accommodating more on-site parking should be considered in the context of a range of City and community values including:
  - **Maximizing on-street parking** - limiting driveway curb cuts.
  - **Drainage** - providing for porous yard area and natural drainage.
  - **Sustainability** - retaining a tree canopy on larger lots throughout the city for shade and wildlife.
  - **Liveability** - maintaining front yard landscaping for neighbourhood attractiveness.
  - **Reduction of unauthorized suites** - discouraging multiple secondary suites by preventing an overabundance of on-site parking.
- **Recommendations:**
  - **All single family lots** – increase the number of required on-site parking spaces from 2 to 3 (indoor and outdoor).
  - **RF Zone standard & cul-de-sac lot** – Consider permitting up to 60% (up from 33%) front yard paved and increase outdoor parking spaces from 2 to 4 total (including boat and trailer parking) with approved porous pavement (or approved alternative drainage Best Management Practice), screening and no loss of curbside parking.
  - **RF-12 Zone front accessed lot** – Consider permitting up to 65% front yard (up from approximately 40%) paved and increase outdoor parking spaces from 2 to 3 total with approved porous pavement (or approved alternative drainage Best Management Practice), screening and no loss of curbside parking.
  - **RF-12 Zone lane accessed lot** – consider increased setback for garage after consultation with DAC.
  - **RF-10 and RF-9 Zones** – eliminate Type II lots; eliminate 10% lot width / size reduction.

**Comments:**

- Tim Bontkes asked if an extra stall can be added without losing on-street parking. It can become really ugly. In East Clayton, the parking problem always stems from the fact that there is an arterial road along residential, which reduces on-street parking, so the residents' guests park in the neighbourhood rather than on the street. RF-12 is fine as is.
- Roger Jawanda commented that where the rear yard setback is 7.5 m, if you have a 20 m deep lot, it does not work. Sometimes there is a 16 m width. The garage takes up most of the main floor. Need 12 ft to 14 ft for the kitchen. Rear yard setback is squeezing it in.
- Gopal Sahota asked if there are stats in East Clayton about how many cars there are in different types of single family residential zones. If the numbers are high enough, they could support bringing increased transit to East Clayton. We are probably providing sufficient parking on-site. Jaime Boan responded that Engineering did a survey. The number of cars per single family residential lot was relatively low, something like 3.4. Don Luymes commented that there are too many houses with both a coach house and an illegal secondary suite.
- Jeff Fisher suggested piloting the policy options in a couple of areas to see if they work. He also asked about the status of the tandem parking. Jaime Boan responded that the issue of

parking requirements on single family lots arose from the tandem parking issue. The tandem parking proposals were approved by Council.

- Dwight Heintz commented that if you do not have a basement, junk goes to the garage.
- Roger Jawanda commented that we should go back to what was previously permitted in the Zoning By-law where it was up to the builder. Do not eliminate Type II from the RF-10 and RF-9 Zones. Judith Robertson responded that the Zoning provisions were changed to address the new building code but variances are permitted. If the RF Zone is 1.2 m, it would be no different than the RF-12 Zone. If it is 36 m deep, it could fit.
- Roger Jawanda asked, between the 2 driveways, is there any opportunity to get the third car out or to increase the driveway width between the 2 driveways? Driveways are usually paired, the letdown of the curb. Otherwise, have to get approval. Maybe increase from 6 m to 7 m. It is easier. Don Luymes responded that at the design stage, the applicant decides the driveway pair width anyway.
- Ted Dawson asked if the City would consider residential parking permits. Jaime Boan responded that there is some appetite from some residents but the concern is primarily related to secondary suites. Issuing residential parking permits would not create any more parking, thus is not expected to resolve this type of issue. They are most effective near universities/colleges, hospitals, commercial areas, etc.
- Clarence Arychuk commented that the increased setback for a lane served attached garage in the RF-12 Zone for a 13.4 m wide lot is not there where there is basement parking. Width is needed on the downhill flatlines. A longer deeper driveway is probably a better situation. The Hampstead Heath development in South Surrey is an example of a shared driveway.
- Roger Jawanda commented that there should be more variety in parking form on single family lots. Mix them up more (some front-loading, some not) rather than focusing on having lanes. There are NCPs like Orchard Grove where there are only lanes. Maybe have a little more variety. Lanes are a problem. Garbage trucks have to weave through parked cars. Jaime Boan responded that Surrey restricts parking in lanes on garbage days.
- Roger Jawanda commented that there should be a closer off-set. Paired driveways and extending curbed driveways. For RF-10 and RF-9 zones, keep the 7.9 m width only if the lot has a depth of 35 m.

## 7. Comments on the Market (All Members)

- Ted Dawson. The market is very active right now. Dawson + Sawyer has a couple of projects in Surrey right now and things are going quickly. Now it seems a bit more widespread.
- Kyle Wright. Mosaic has one project that has tandem parking in Surrey. Prices are going up for the first time since 2007. In Clayton Heights, units are selling close to a five figure increase more than before. Something as simple as open riser stairs, which differentiates the project from other developments, makes a difference.
- Dwight Heintz. The phone has been ringing pretty consistently since after the election. There is not a lot of land available and what is available is pricey.
- Clarence Arychuk. Work has been fairly busy. In 2014, WSP acquired Focus, which had previously acquired Hunter Laird Engineering Ltd.

- Gopal Sahota. Re-sales up 20.5% from May 2014. Listings are down 20%, so it is a strong seller's market. Hard to find listings. Vancouver's issue of non-affordability has been prominent in the media and has brought attention to the Fraser Valley market.
- Roger Jawanda. Same.
- Tim Bontkes. Single family is doing very well in Langley and Surrey. Lots sell instantly. There is plenty of price appreciation for houses.
- Gordon Cameron. There is always demand for lots. The better builders are quite fussy now in how they can accommodate parking in terms of lot depth/size. Surrey is on the right track. One of the major challenges is RF-9 lots. If you do not get the parking right from the beginning, it has a major impact on the rest of the phasing. The market is really strong right now.
- Charan Sethi. Tien Sher does not have any product in Surrey right now. Watching City Centre.
- Jeff Fisher. UDI has an event on June 18<sup>th</sup>, Fraser Valley Forecast Lunch, which will provide a market update on the Fraser Valley. Mayors of the Fraser Valley will be speaking at UDI's October 18<sup>th</sup> event.

**8. Scheduled Meeting – June 25, 2015**

- The meeting adjourned at 4:05 p.m.