

NO: R048

COUNCIL DATE: March 8, 2021

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## REGULAR COUNCIL

TO: **Mayor & Council**

DATE: **March 4, 2021**

FROM: **General Manager, Planning & Development**

FILE: **3900-20-18020**

SUBJECT: **Surrey Official Community Plan – 2021 Minor Amendments**

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## RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Receive this report for information;
2. Amend *Surrey Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2013, No. 18020*, as documented in Appendix “I” of this report; and
3. Authorize the City Clerk to bring forward the necessary amending bylaws for the required readings and to set a date for the related public hearing.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to obtain Council approval of the minor amendments, mainly including density and separation, to *Surrey Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2013, No. 18020* (“OCP”) as documented in Appendix “I” of this report.

## BACKGROUND

The OCP is a high-level policy document used to guide the growth and evolution of Surrey over the course of a 40-year time frame. While major reviews of the OCP are conducted every five years, OCP amendments that are minor in nature are typically provided annually to ensure the document remains relevant and current.

## DISCUSSION

The OCP amendments proposed in this report include minor text adjustments to the Urban and Commercial Designations, as well as Form and Character Development Permit Guidelines pertaining to building separation distances for low-rise and medium-rise buildings, and to high-rise building floor plate maximums. The following sections describe the proposed OCP amendments noted above. Appendix “I” provides the specific amendment details.

## **Updating Density Threshold for Urban Designation**

The OCP's Urban Designation is intended to support a wide range of housing forms in low and medium density residential neighbourhoods including detached, semi-detached houses and ground-oriented townhouses and row houses. Over the past decade, the lack of affordable housing has resulted in changes to market demand for urban housing forms. For example, more families are looking for townhouses rather than single-family houses because they are a more affordable housing option.

The current Urban Designation allows up to 37 units per hectare (15 units per acre), which facilitates a low-density townhouse form; however, the development industry is seeing a demand for townhouses with densities up to 49 units per hectare (20 units per acre). While this is a higher density than currently permitted in the OCP Urban Designation, this unit density allows for smaller, more affordable units to be worked into the site plan while still retaining a form and character that is consistent with urban neighbourhoods.

To remain responsive to changes in the development industry and to reduce the number of OCP amendments, it is proposed that, subject to neighbourhood compatibility, the Urban Designation density be amended to allow for an increase to 49 units per hectare (20 units per acre) in exchange for provision of sufficient community amenities. The requirement for amenity provision and neighbourhood compatibility is consistent with other Designations that allow for these kinds of density increases.

## **Updating Density Threshold for Commercial Designation Adjacent to Frequent Transit Networks**

Several sections in the OCP include policies that support increased densities in areas that benefit from existing and proposed frequent and rapid transit. On June 29, 2020 through Corporate Report No. R102; 2020, Council approved OCP Amendments to the Urban and Multiple Residential Designations to provide allowances for increased density for sites abutting the Frequent Transit Network ("FTN"). This included an update the Urban Designation to provide allowance for sites abutting FTN corridors to develop up to 72 units per hectare (30 units per acre) and the Multiple Residential Designation to provide allowance for sites abutting FTN corridors to develop up to 2.0 FAR.

To be consistent with this intent to support density along frequent and rapid transit, it is proposed that the Commercial Designation be amended for sites abutting the FTN, and for those sites identified in Secondary Plan Areas, to provide allowances for densities of up to 2.0 FAR.

## **Commercial Designation with Residential Interfaces**

The Commercial Designation in the OCP permits multi-unit residential uses in a mixed-use development provided that the ground floor uses be *exclusively* commercial; however, requiring the ground floor to be exclusively commercial can be an issue on sites that have deep floorplates and sites that abut adjacent residential uses. Neighbourhood feedback shows that residents prefer that commercial units to be located along a main road and would prefer that other uses be considered at the back of the commercial site in instances where there is a residential interface.

Staff propose additional criteria in the OCP to better respond to concerns from residents that abut commercial re-development sites. It is proposed that for these commercial buildings, the ground floor units that are away from a main street frontage and are adjacent to residential uses be

permitted to allow residential supportive uses (such as indoor amenity spaces or parking) along the building side with the residential interface.

### **Refinements to Form and Character Development Permit Guidelines**

In order to provide development permit guidelines that are responsive to the development industry, amendments are proposed to address low- and medium-rise building separation distances and high-rise building floor plate maximums.

#### Maximum Floor Plate Size

Maximum floor plate limitations are included within the Form and Character Development Permit Guidelines to ensure that adequate light and view protection are considered when a new tower is proposed in an area with multiple high-rises. When the current Guidelines were written in 2013, the tallest residential towers anticipated for Surrey were approximately 30 storeys, which supports the current maximum 600 sq. m floor plate. In some areas, particularly within City Centre, taller towers have been supported and these require larger structure and elevator cores. This necessitates an increase in the overall floor plate size that still is considered compact but will accommodate the functional needs of the building.

Currently, the max floor plate size is capped at 600 sq. m, regardless of high-rise height. To continue to support efficient floor plates for a wide range of building heights, the following amendments are proposed to the high-rise floor plate maximum sizes:

Currently	Purposed
600 sq. m for all building heights	600 sq. m for buildings up to 30 storeys
600 sq. m for all building heights	650 sq. m for buildings between 31-40 storeys
600 sq. m for all building heights	700 sq. m for buildings 41-50 storeys
600 sq. m for all building heights	750 sq. m for buildings taller than 51 storeys

#### Minimum Building Separation Distances

The minimum building separation requirements in the OCP Development Permit Guidelines are intended to ensure livability on multi-family development sites by ensuring there is adequate separation between buildings to encourage light filtration, adequate airflow around the buildings, and to protect privacy and views. Currently, there are only building separation minimums for high-rise towers, with no minimums for low and medium rise buildings.

Since Surrey is seeing an increase in low- and medium-rise multi-family building construction, it is prudent to introduce minimum building separation guidelines for these forms of multi-family development as well. It is proposed that the OCP be amended to introduce a minimum low- and medium-rise building separation depending on the location and orientation of each building to the other.

It is proposed that low-rise building separation distance be a minimum of:

- 6 metres between a building side and another building side;
- 12 metres between a building side and building front;
- 20 metres between a building front and another building front when one of the buildings is 50 m wide; and
- 24 metres between a building front and another building front when one of the buildings is more than 50 m wide.

It is proposed that mid-rise tower separation distance be a minimum of:

- 20 metres from building corner to building corner; and
- 30 metres from building face-to-building face.

These various minimum distances address different unit relationships with larger separations required when primary faces of dwellings are facing each other and lesser distances when secondary faces or sides of units are adjacent to each other.

## **SUSTAINABILITY CONSIDERATIONS**

The work of this review supports the objectives of the City's Sustainability Charter 2.0. In particular, this work relates to Sustainability Charter 2.0 theme of Inclusion, Built Environment and Neighbourhoods, Ecosystems, Health and Wellness, and Infrastructure. Specifically, this project supports the following Desired Outcomes ("DO") and Strategic Directions ("SD"):

- Housing DO14: Supports are available to enable all people to live as independently as possible in the community.
- Age-Friendly Community SD13: Ensure a range of free, safe and engaging spaces and activities are available for youth and seniors in all communities and at different times of day.
- Neighbourhoods and Urban Design DO6: Land is used efficiently and sensitively, and development minimizes the impacts on the natural environment, viewscape, agricultural land and urban wildlife.
- Neighbourhoods and Urban Design DO8: The built environment enhances quality of life, happiness and well-being.
- Buildings and Sites DO15: All new buildings, public places and outdoor spaces are welcoming, safe and universally accessible.
- Buildings and Sites SD15: Provide greater multi-family housing choice and options for affordability and accessibility.
- Natural Areas, Biodiversity and Urban Forest DO3: All development enhances or minimizes the impacts on Surrey's lush tree canopy and natural environment and avoids encroachment into natural areas, habitat features and parks.
- Wellness and Recreation SD6: Provide opportunities for all residents, especially children, to interact with green spaces and trees.
- All Infrastructure DO4: Ecosystems and natural assets are an essential part of the community's infrastructure system.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the above discussion, to ensure Surrey's OCP remains up to-date, it is recommended that Council approve the proposed OCP amendments and instruct the City Clerk to bring forward the necessary amending bylaws for the required readings and to set a date for the related public hearing.

*Original signed by,*  
Jean Lamontagne  
General Manager, Planning & Development

PH/CS/ss

Appendix "I" Proposed Amendments to *Surrey Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2013, No. 18020*  
Appendix "II" Track Changes Version of Proposed OCP Amendments

Surrey Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2013, No. 18020

The following proposed amendments to PlanSurrey 2013: Official Community Plan are presented and highlighted in the order the sections appear in the document:

**Land Uses and Densities Section**

1. Page 45, Urban Designation, Densities, by deleting the first bullet, and replacing it with a new first bullet as follows:

"Subject to neighbourhood compatibility (see Figure 8), densities within the URBAN designation support up to 37 units per hectare (15 units per acre) for development taking place within established or existing residential neighbourhoods, which may be increased to 49 units per hectare (20 units per acre) in exchange for provision of sufficient community amenities in accordance with approved City Council and Department policies."

2. Page 49, Commercial Designation, Preamble, as follows:
  - (a) Second paragraph, by adding the words "with noted exceptions," before the words "are exclusively commercial."
  - (b) By adding at the end of the second paragraph the following:

"Exceptions to ground-level commercial apply only to those areas of the building located away from street frontages; these areas may support residential uses by accommodating indoor amenities or parking (for example) but specifically are not to include dwelling units."

3. Page 49, Commercial Designation, Densities, after the first bullet, by adding in a new bullet as follows:

"Referencing Figure 9, densities within the COMMERCIAL designation may range up to 2.0 FAR for sites abutting a Frequent Transit Network, and, where specifically noted, in approved Secondary Plan Areas (Figure 4)."

**Implementation: Development Permit Areas and Guidelines (Form and Character)**

4. Page 329, DP1.1 Common Guidelines, Building Form, Building Massing, by deleting Guideline "131.a" and replacing it with two new Guidelines as follows:

- (a) "131.a **LOW RISE FORMS:** Optimize views, light and air for units in low rise buildings by providing minimum separations between buildings to achieve the following: 1) between a building side and another building side – minimum of 6 m; 2) between a building side and a building front – minimum of 12 m; 3) between a building front and another building front – minimum of 20 m when one of the buildings is 50 m wide or less; and 4) a minimum of 24 m wide when one of the buildings is more than 50 m wide."; and
- (b) "131.b **MID RISE FORMS:** Tower separations from corner-to-corner should be a minimum of 20 m and from face-to-face a minimum of 30 m."

5. Page 330, DP1.1 Common Guidelines, Building Form, Building Massing, by deleting Guideline "134" and replacing it with a new Guideline "134" as follows:

"134. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Scale residential floors relative to tower height with high-rise floor plates at a: 1) maximum of 600 sq. m for buildings up to 30 storeys; 2) maximum of 650 sq. m for buildings between 31-40 storeys; 3) maximum 700 sq. m for buildings 41 – 50 storeys; and 4) maximum 750 sq. m for buildings 51 storeys and higher."

## Urban

The URBAN designation is intended to support low and medium density residential neighbourhoods. Residential uses within this designation may include a range of forms such as detached and semi-detached houses as well as ground-oriented attached housing including townhouses and row houses.

Other complementary uses included in this land use designation are public facilities, places of worship, small-scale daycare facilities, schools, live-work units and small-scale neighbourhood-serving shops.

### DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR URBAN:

#### Densities:

- ⇒ Subject to neighbourhood compatibility (see Figure 8), densities within the URBAN designation support up to 37 units per hectare (15 units per acre) for development taking place within established or existing residential neighbourhoods, which may be increased to 49 units per hectare (20 units per acre) in exchange for provision of sufficient community amenities in accordance with approved City Council and Department policies. and subject to neighbourhood compatibility (see Figure 8)
- ⇒ Referencing Figure 9, densities within the URBAN designation may range up to 72 units per hectare (30 units per acre) in FTDAs, Urban Centres and sites abutting a Frequent Transit Network and, where specifically noted, in approved Secondary Plan Areas (Figure 4).

#### Development Permits:

- ⇒ Commercial, multiple unit residential and mixed-use developments within this designation are subject to the issuance of a Development Permit, in accordance with DP1 of the Implementation Section of this OCP.

BL 18423  
BL 18787  
BL 20008  
BL 20109  
BL 20292



*Example of Urban Designation: smaller and narrower single family lots with smaller front yard setbacks and direct access to the street from the front door*

# Commercial

The COMMERCIAL designation is intended to support major commercial developments, including neighbourhood-serving and city-serving retail and office developments. Lands within the COMMERCIAL designation are typically located in neighbourhood centres, along major roads, or in areas adjacent to TOWN CENTRE and CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT designations.

Primary uses within the COMMERCIAL designation are retail and stand-alone office uses including institutional offices. Multi-unit residential uses may also be permitted in mixed-use development provided that ground-level uses, **with noted exceptions**, are exclusively commercial.

**Exceptions to ground-level commercial apply only to those areas of the building located away from street frontages; these areas may support residential uses by accommodating indoor amenities or parking (for example) but specifically are not to include dwelling units.**

Limited light industrial uses may be permitted within this designation but these developments are subject to being compatible with adjacent land uses. Public facilities are also permitted uses within the COMMERCIAL designation.

## DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS FOR COMMERCIAL:

### Densities:

- ⇒ Densities within the COMMERCIAL designation may range up to 1.5 FAR, subject to an appropriate interface (see Figure 10) with adjacent residential areas
- ⇒ Referencing Figure 9, densities within the COMMERCIAL designation may range up to 2.0 FAR for sites abutting a Frequent Transit Network and, where specifically noted, in approved Secondary Plan Areas (Figure 4)
- ⇒ Referencing Figure 9, densities within the COMMERCIAL designation may range up to 2.5 FAR in Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDA) and in Urban Centres, provided a minimum of 0.5 FAR is used for commercial purposes
- ⇒ Additional bonus densities may be granted in select areas in exchange for the provision of sufficient community amenities in accordance with approved City Council and Department policies

### Development Permits:

- ⇒ Commercial, multiple unit residential, mixed-use and industrial developments within this designation are subject to the issuance of a Development Permit, in accordance with DP1 of the Implementation Section of this OCP.

BL 18787

BL 20292



Example of Commercial Designation:  
Ground-level commercial uses with upper-storey multiple residential development.

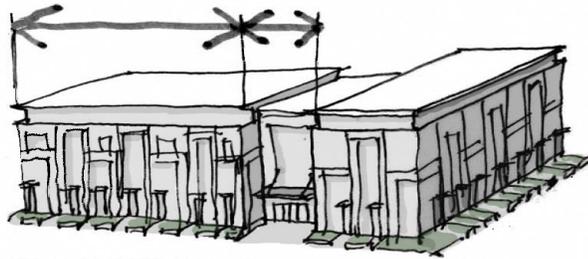
# DP1.1 COMMON GUIDELINES

## BUILDING FORM

### Building Massing (cont.)

Within a development the following elements shall be considered in the Building Form:

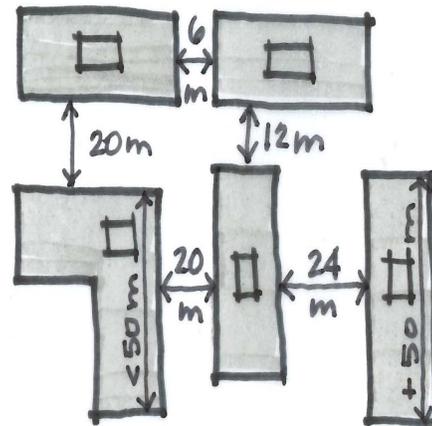
- 126. **DUPLEXES:** Design and scale duplexes as two separate distinct forms and split the front entrances to face one on each separate street.
- 127. **TOWNHOUSE:** Scale townhouse buildings with multiple units to a maximum footprint of 600 sq. m or six units.
- 128. **RESIDENTIAL:** Articulate larger roof forms by varying height and using dormers.
- 129. **MULTIPLE/MIXED/COMMERCIAL:** Visually scale down the length of the podium massing to 50 m by stepping down the roof forms and indenting the facade. (illustr.)



- 130. **MULTIPLE/MIXED/COMMERCIAL:** Step back portions of the upper storeys for buildings higher than 3 storeys. The lower storeys should maintain street enclosure. Where townhouses are incorporated into the base of the building, express the 2 storey form in the lower tower floors. (illustr.)
- 131. **RETAIL and COMMERCIAL:** Provide an enclosed service corridor at the rear of multi-tenant buildings to avoid the need for an outdoor walkway, particularly where visible to the public realm or adjacent to residential uses.

~~131.a **MID-RISE FORMS:** Tower separations from corner-to-corner and face-to-face have no minimum distance.~~

- 131.a **LOW RISE FORMS:** Optimize views, light and air for units in low rise buildings by providing minimum separations between buildings to achieve the following: 1) between a building side and another building side—minimum of 6 m; 2) between a building side and a building front—minimum of 12 m; 3) between a building front and another building front—minimum of 20 m when one of the buildings is 50 m wide or less; and 4) a minimum of 24 m wide when one of the buildings is more than 50 m wide. (illustr.)



- 131.b **MID RISE FORMS:** Tower separations from corner-to-corner should be a minimum of 20 m and from face-to-face a minimum of 30 m.
- 132. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Cluster high-rise towers with the highest forms in the core and taper out to lower forms at the outside of the cluster.
- 133. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Minimize the east-west dimension width to 28 m for shadowing.

BL 19364  
BL 20292

# DP1.1 COMMON GUIDELINES

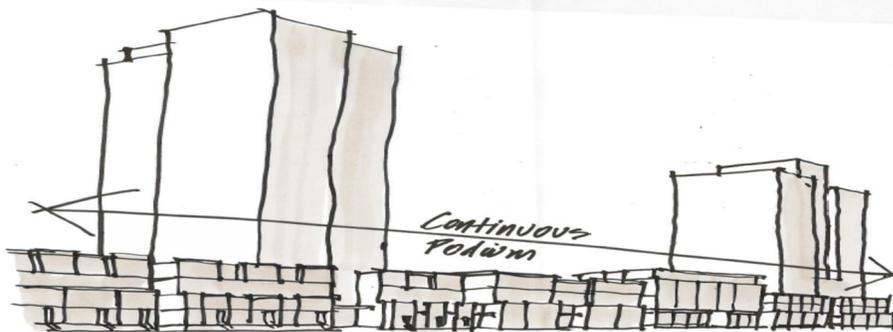
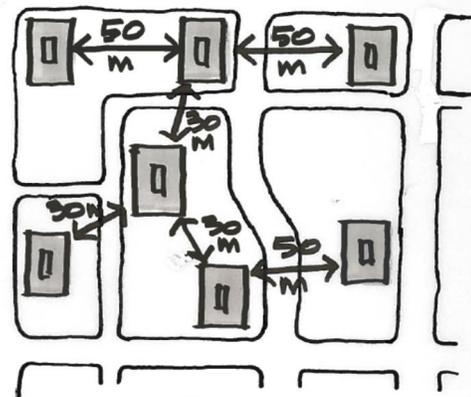
BL 19364  
BL 20292

## BUILDING FORM

### Building Massing (cont.)

Within a development the following elements shall be considered in the Building Form:

- ~~134. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Scale down floors as the height increases with high rise floor plates at maximum of 600 sq. m.~~
- 134. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Scale residential floors relative to tower height with high-rise floor plates at a: 1) maximum of 600 sq. m for buildings up to 30 storeys; 2) maximum of 650 sq. m for buildings between 31—40 storeys; 3) maximum 700 sq. m for buildings 41—50 storeys; 4) and maximum 750 sq. m for buildings 51 storeys and higher.
- 135. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Set tower orthogonal to the street for the majority of sites.
- 135.a **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Tower separation is a minimum of 30 m from corner-to-corner and a minimum of 50 m from face-to-face. (illustr.)
- 136. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Locate towers to allow views through from surrounding sites and from within the site for multi-tower sites.
- 137. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Incorporate features which reduce the impacts of wind (e.g. balconies and articulation on tower forms which capture and slow the wind at upper levels).
- 138. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Reinforce street enclosure by setting towers close to the street with approximately 4 m set back from the podium face and integrating the tower as it meets the podium form.
- 139. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Form tower tops into an expression of the roof function (e.g. roof gardens).
- 140. **HIGH RISE FORMS:** Create a 4-6 storey podium as a base to the higher tower forms and reinforce street enclosure. (illustr.)



- 141. **INDUSTRIAL and BUSINESS:** Locate buildings on sites to allow views through from upland residential areas and to screen views of any outdoor storage areas.
- 142. **INDUSTRIAL and BUSINESS:** Express the different functions of the building (e.g. entrances, second floor office areas, and warehouses) as distinct forms by varying the parapet heights and by stepping forms rather than using an arbitrary application of building variations.
- 143. **INDUSTRIAL and BUSINESS:** Ancillary or secondary buildings should be designed to the same architectural level as the principal building.