



# Corporate *NO: L004*

# Report *COUNCIL DATE: November 5, 2001*

<b>REGULAR COUNCIL</b>			
<b>TO:</b>	<b>Mayor &amp; Council</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>October 30, 2001</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>General Manager, Planning &amp; Development</b>	<b>FILE:</b>	<b>0665-002</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Proposed Amendments to the RF-12 Zone</b>		

## RECOMMENDATION

The Planning & Development Department recommends that Council:

1. Approve the proposed amendments to the draft Single Family Residential (12) Zone (RF-12) as described in Appendix II;
2. Authorize the City Clerk to introduce an amendment By-law to the Surrey Zoning By-law, 1993, No. 12000 to incorporate amendments to the "Single Family Residential (12) Zone (RF-12)" and other related text amendments as documented in Appendix III; and
3. Authorize staff to bring forward consequential amendments to other City By-laws prior to final adoption of the RF-12 Zone.

## INTENT

The intent of this report is to obtain Council approval for proposed amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone so that the zone better accommodates recent development trends respecting small lot developments.

## BACKGROUND

On January 17, 2000, Council endorsed the draft RF-9, RF-12, RF-SD and RM-19 Zones to accommodate various types of small lot residential developments. At the same time, Council adopted a policy to guide development under these zones. The draft standard zones

were intended to ensure a consistent approach to addressing applications proposing the creation of small lots. However, to formally incorporate each proposed zone into the Zoning By-law, a site within the City must be rezoned to each zone, which would be initiated by an application for development in each zone.

To date, no development projects have been rezoned to any of the new small lot zones. However, since Council adopted the text for the draft small lot zones, numerous small lot developments have been approved by Council using site-specific Comprehensive Development (CD) Zones based on the new small lot zones. Developers have been reluctant to use the draft small lot zones previously endorsed by Council on the basis that they are considered too restrictive and do not offer sufficient flexibility to accommodate housing types that are marketable.

The on-going use of CD Zones for small lot developments results in an inconsistent application of customized standards, inefficient use of staff resources, and lengthy negotiations with individual developers. Furthermore, the lack of established minimum standards for small lot developments results in uncertainty for developers and the public.

A review of the draft standard zones for various types of small lot developments was conducted with a view to addressing the concerns identified above.

## DISCUSSION

### Review of Existing Small Lot CD Zones

Staff conducted a review of CD Zones for small lot projects approved by Council since the adoption of the draft small lot zones to identify the range of zoning provisions allowed under recently adopted small lot projects. The review indicated that the vast majority of approved small lot developments are based on the draft RF-12 Zone (Appendix I). As such, this review has been focussed on the draft RF-12 Zone.

The review involved the following:

1. Research on existing small lot zones in Surrey and zoning standards in other jurisdictions;
2. Consultation with representatives of the development industry and residential house designers; and
3. Examination of recently constructed small lot developments to verify the effectiveness of the regulations.

While all previous small lot projects were considered in developing the revised standards, some specific developments vary substantially from the standard due to unique circumstances and conditions and were not considered relevant to the development of revised standard zoning provisions. The amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone proposed in this report capture the majority of small lot projects (approximately 75% of existing small lot CD Zones).

### Major Revisions to the Draft RF-12 Zone

The review of existing “small lot” CD Zones identified the following key attributes:

1. *Density and Maximum Floor Area*: A key area of departure between the draft RF-12 Zone and approved CD Zones relates to the maximum allowable density (floor area ratio and maximum house size) on the lot which tends to be higher in the CD zones than is proposed under the RF-12 zone. Residential developers have advised that the public are looking for larger homes on small lots. It is also recognized that small lot housing continues to evolve, and a greater amount of flexibility in density is appropriate to accommodate

housing trends. Amendments proposed to the RF-12 zone in relation to density and maximum floor area include the following:

- An increase in the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) from 0.55 to 0.70; and
- An increase in the maximum floor area from 220 sq. m (2,400 sq.ft.) to 260 sq. m (2,800sq. ft.).

2. *Lot Coverage and Building Setbacks:* As a consequence of allowing an increased house size, a corresponding increase to the lot coverage and reduced building setbacks (front, rear, and side) are needed to maximize rear yard open space. Minor adjustments in these areas are proposed as follows:

- An increase in the maximum lot coverage from 45% to 50%;
- An increase in the maximum allowable encroachment for a veranda into the front yard from 1.0 m (3 ft.) to 2.0 m (6 ft.);
- A reduction in the minimum flanking street sideyard setback from 3.0 m (10 ft.) to 2.4 m (8 ft.);
- A reduction in the minimum rear yard setback for an attached garage at the rear of the lot from 6 m (20 ft.) to 1 m (3 ft.); and
- A reduction in the minimum building separation for accessory buildings from a principal building from 6.0 m (20 ft.) to 5.0 m (16 ft.).

3. *Subdivision and Vehicular Access Restrictions:* The review also indicated that greater flexibility is needed in terms of required lot sizes and dimensions, and vehicular access options to accommodate a broader variety of small lot types. Generally, smaller lot sizes are becoming the norm. Currently certain types of front-access and wide-shallow small lot developments presently cannot be accommodated under the draft RF-12 Zone. The following amendments are proposed to address subdivision and vehicular access issues:

- A reduction in the minimum lot size from 360 sq.m (4,000 sq. ft.) to 320 sq. m (3,445);
- A reduction in the minimum lot depth from 25 m (82 ft.) to 22 m (72 ft.); and
- A reduction from 14.4 m (47 ft.) to 13.4 m (44 ft.) in the minimum lot width that can be accessed from the front street to a double-garage.

4. *Other Amendments:* To address specific concerns identified in previous small lot developments and resolve minor technical issues, a variety of other amendments to the draft RF-12 zone are proposed. These include:

- Elimination of “boarders and lodgers” as a permitted use;
- Introduction of upper-storey massing restrictions similar to the Single Family Residential (RF) zone (upper storey cannot exceed 80% of first floor area);
- Reduction in the front-yard landscaping provision for cul-de-sac lots from 50% to 30%;
- Prohibition of three-car garages;
- Elimination of the provision for one side yard to be reduced to 0 m (0 ft.); and
- Establishment of a maximum garage size and required driveway widths and materials.

A detailed summary of proposed amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone and a revised RF-12 Zone schedule are provided as Appendices II and III.

#### Input from Development Industry

The proposed amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone were discussed with several developers and residential house designers actively involved in small lot developments. The majority of comments received were incorporated into the final proposal. In addition, the proposed amendments were presented for comment at the September 27, 2001 Development Advisory Committee (DAC) meeting. Based on feedback to date, the development industry appears to generally support the proposed modifications to the draft RF-12 Zone.

## Outstanding Issues

Although the majority of issues raised by the residential development community were resolved and incorporated into the proposed amendments (Appendix II), total agreement was not reached on a few issues. These issues are discussed below:

- Front Yard Setback (Garage): Some developers have requested a reduced front yard setback for a front-access garage from 6.0 m (20 ft.) to 5.5 m (18 ft.). Although some previous CD Zones permit a 5.5 m (18 ft.) front setback for the garage, recent experience indicates that this is not a sufficient standard to accommodate driveway parking, and results in vehicles encroaching on the public sidewalk. A setback reduction may be justified in cases where a sidewalk is not required along the fronting street (i.e., due to road classification requirements, etc.) or where a modified road or sidewalk design may be accommodated. Given the site-specific nature of this issue, it should be logically addressed as part of each individual development application through the Development Variance Permit process.
- Rear Yard Setback (Principal Building): The modified RF-12 Zone, as proposed, allows a reduction in the rear yard setback for principal buildings from 7.5 m (25 feet) to 6.0 m (20 feet) for up to 50% of the building width. A further reduction has been requested by the residential development industry to enable 100% of the building to be setback at 6.0 m (20 ft.) from the rear property line. The review of previous small lot developments did not support this request, as the majority of projects to date have been satisfactorily accommodated under the present requirements. A key concern from the perspective of the Planning and Development Department related to this request is the impact on rear yard open space. Reductions to side and front yard setbacks have been incorporated in the proposed revisions to enable a larger dwelling to be constructed. A smaller rear yard will negatively affect the amount of functional outdoor space available on each lot and, therefore, is not recommended to ensure that a reasonable amount of outdoor recreational space is available on each small lot.
- Minimum Lot Width for Front Access Lot: The modified RF-12 Zone proposes a reduction from 14.4 m (47 ft.) to 13.4 m (44 feet) in the minimum lot width necessary to allow a front-accessed double garage on the lot. This provision is intended to minimize the dominance of garage doors on the streetscape, and is based on the underlying design principle that where front-accessed garages are proposed, the garage should constitute not more than 50% of the lot frontage.

Some developers have requested a further reduction in the minimum lot width requirement for front-accessed double garages from 13.4 m (44 ft.) to 12.2 m (40 feet). The resulting house designs would violate the 50% garage to lot frontage principle documented above and, as such, is not supported. The minimum lot width requirement of 13.4 m (44 feet) represents the narrowest lot width that can satisfy the said principle.

## Implementation

Subject to Council approval of the proposed amendments, a by-law to amend the Zoning By-law will be introduced to incorporate the amendments to the RF-12 Zone as documented in Appendix III.

Consequential amendments to other City By-laws, including the Subdivision By-law, Building By-law and Development Cost Charge By-law, will be needed to incorporate the new RF-12 Zone. These amendments will be brought forward for Council adoption separately prior to final adoption of the new RF-12 Zone.

## **CONCLUSION**

Amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone are proposed to adjust the zone to reflect recent practice respecting small lot developments in the City. These adjustments will reduce the administrative and staff costs associated with the on-going use of CD Zones and will respond to the request of the development industry for greater flexibility in developing small lot developments.

The proposed amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone are generally consistent with compact housing trends in other lower mainland municipalities. With the proposed amendments incorporated, the RF-12 zone will accommodate the majority of small lot developments.

A majority of the issues identified by the development industry have been incorporated into the new standard. Therefore, it is recommended that amendments to the draft RF-12 Zone be approved by Council and that the City Clerk be authorized to introduce a by-law to amend the Surrey Zoning By-law accordingly.

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Appendix I. Previously Endorsed Draft RF-12 Zone

Appendix II. Summary of Proposed Amendments to Draft RF-12 Zone

Appendix III. Proposed Zoning By-law Amendment and Amended RF-12 Zone

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