

Basements in Single-Family Areas

June 19, 2009

At the Public Hearing held on June 16, 2009, Council approved zoning changes to enable full-size basements and more livable basement suites in all single family areas. By-law enactment is scheduled for July 7, 2009. Council also approved a recommendation to monitor the development impacts of the zoning changes and report to the public every six months.

Summary of Approved Zoning Changes

Part 1: More Functional Basements

- a) Permit a house with a basement provided that:
 - total floor area is 0.70 FSR or less;
 - above grade floor area is 0.45 FSR or less, if an above grade formula permits less;
 - the area of any floor is not more than 25% of lot area; and
 - the basement is not larger than the first storey.
- b) For houses where the existing above grade floor area is larger, permit a basement provided that:
 - total floor area is 0.75 FSR or less after the basement is added;
 - existing above grade floor area is 0.50 FSR or less (above grade floor area cannot be increased);
 - the area of any floor is not more than 25% of lot area; and
 - the basement is not larger than the first storey.
- c) Basement regulations are added to the zoning as an option. This means that houses can still be built as they are today.

Part 2: More Livable Basements

- a) Allow basements to be built two feet higher out of the ground:
 - Outright basement height is increased from 4 feet to 6 feet in RS-1/3/3A/5/6.
- b) Increase building height in RS-1 by one foot:
 - Outright building height is increased in the RS-1 zone from 30 feet to 31 feet. The building envelope is increased by one foot.

NOTES:

1. An existing one-storey bungalow may add a second storey, subject to the provisions in Part 1(a). Above grade floor area cannot exceed 0.45 FSR (or less, if an above grade formula permits less).
2. For existing two-storey houses, Part 1(b) permits a full basement if above grade floor area is larger than the amount permitted in Part 1(a). However, above grade floor area cannot be increased. For example, if above grade is 0.47 FSR, it cannot be increased to 0.50 FSR.

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