

# Past Planning

**CityPlan**

**Riley Park/South Cambie RPSC**

Planning has played an important role in the development of Riley Park/South Cambie. The neighbourhood has a long development history. Changes continue to take place as the nature of retailing changes and demand for housing grows. Through policy implemented in the form of land use regulation and zoning control, development has been oriented towards addressing the needs of the population and the strategic goals of the City.

## Neighbourhood Improvement Program

The Riley Park area was identified in 1974 as a high priority inner-city neighbourhood in need of the Neighbourhood Improvement Program (NIP) funded by the Federal, Provincial, and City governments. A grant of roughly \$2 million was invested in the neighbourhood. City Planning staff were hired and located in the neighbourhood, and a process of citizen's involvement was initiated. The NIP provided investments for improvements to open space, public utilities and social/recreational facilities while conserving valuable existing social and physical patterns. It also provided for participation by local residents in the decisions leading to this investment.

## Interim Zoning Program and RS-5S Zoning

In 1996, in response to requests from many single-family areas for design and landscaping guidelines for new houses, City Council directed the Planning Department to conduct the Interim Zoning Program. This program offered RS-/RS-5S and RS-6 zoning to any residential area expressing an interest in rezoning.

RS-/RS-5S zoning encourages new houses and additions to be compatible with surrounding houses and landscaping by offering a floor area incentive to owners. RS-6 zoning does not attempt to ensure new houses are similar in design to surrounding homes, but provides a list of selected external design features to establish a minimum standard of design quality and a greater variety of design. RS-6 zoning also comes with design guidelines for landscape design.

Residents and community groups in RPSC were provided an opportunity to have their single-family zoning reviewed through this program. There was expressed interest and support from the Douglas Park area, which subsequently was rezoned to RS-5S. Other parts of the neighbourhood zoned RS-1 or RS-1S did not express interest so the zoning was not reviewed.

## RS-7S Zoning in RPSC

RS-7S zoning was adopted for RPSC in 2000, replacing the RS-2 and RS-1A zoning. RS-7S zoning essentially permits the same uses as the previous RS-2 and RS-1A zoning but differs from RS-2 and RS-1A in three important ways:

- the regulations which govern the siting and height of buildings were made similar to other RS-1S, RS-5S and RS-6 zoning. Front yards are now averaged with neighbouring buildings, building depths are a maximum of 40% of lot depth, and the maximum height is 35 feet
- new external design regulations were incorporated from the RS-6 zoning, and
- new landscape guidelines were added from the RS-6 zoning.

## Secondary Suites in all Residential Area

In March 2004, Council adopted significant changes to secondary suites regulations. In response to concerns over closure of approximately 2,200 "phase-out suites" and a relatively low number of suites that had been legalized, the following changes were approved and will lead to subsequent amendments to various bylaws:

- Allow secondary suites as a conditional use in all areas of the city which allow single-family dwellings.
- Change zoning and building regulations to minimize the hurdles faced when legalizing the suite.
- Focus enforcement on fire, life-safety, health and maintenance standards, as well as on the closure of multiple suites.

Due to relaxed building standards and to ensure that secondary suites remain an affordable form of rental housing, suites cannot be strata-titled.

The proposed new building standards contain, among others:

- The requirement for sprinklers in existing houses has been eliminated. Instead, hard-wired interconnected smoke alarms are required. In new construction, sprinklers have to be installed.
- The minimum ceiling height for a secondary suite in existing basements has been reduced to 1.98 m, or 6'6" (from previously 2.08 m, or 6'10").
- All new construction has to be "suite-ready", including electrical service sufficient to handle the main dwelling and the suite. This will also apply to homes that do not include a finished suite at the point of construction.

It is important to note that with the new regulations, not all suites are automatically legal. Property owners still require the necessary permits. For more information on building standards and legalizing a suite, please contact the Permits and Licenses Secondary Suite Program at 604-873-7945.

## C-2 Zoning Review

The C-2 Zoning Review was conducted in 2000 as a City-wide review of C-2 zoning, addressing issues relating to massing (heights, setbacks, density, articulation) and some architectural aspects of mixed use and all-commercial development.

C-2 zoning covers about 1500 parcels along arterials throughout the city. In 1989, in response to a housing shortage, Council approved a zoning change that increased the permitted residential density by two and a half times, making 4 storey mixed use residential/commercial projects economically viable. Since the zoning changed, about 3000 housing units were built. However there were numerous complaints from the public, particularly from the residents of single-family houses and duplexes located behind C-2 in most cases. As well, four completed Community Visions contain Directions to improve mixed use development in C-2 zones.

As a result of the review, the C-2 zoning was amended. The changes are summarized as follows.

- Larger rear setbacks and lower height on the rear of the site, together with landscape screening, will reduce overlooking of neighbours' yards, and enhance the appearance at the lane.
- A 0.6m (2 ft.) front setback will allow better building massing and more sidewalk space. A 2.4m (8 ft.) setback at the fourth storey will reduce the apparent scale of the buildings on the street.
- Increased height to a maximum of 13.8m (45 ft.) on the front of the

site, allowing a proper ceiling height for the commercial level, making it more viable

- A density reduction is proposed, based on what it is feasible to accommodate within the recommended heights and setbacks. Current maximum density for all uses combined is 3.0 FSR, including 2.5 FSR for residential. (However, average densities actually achieved by developments are 2.68 FSR and 2.15 FSR respectively.) The proposed zoning calls for 2.5 FSR overall, and 1.75 to 2.15 FSR residential. The higher residential figure would be achievable by projects that choose to put residential use at the rear of the ground level. The lower figure would apply to projects that limit residential to the upper 3 storeys.

## Mountain View Cemetery

Mountain View Cemetery is one of the oldest cemeteries in the Vancouver metropolitan area. It was opened in 1887. The original site was bounded on the east by Fraser St., on the south by 37th Ave., on the north by 33rd Ave., and on the west by a row of tall trees, which now stand well within the present boundaries of the site. The Cemetery has expanded over time and is currently bounded by Fraser St., to the west, 31st Ave., to the north, Prince Edward St. to the east, and 41st Ave., to the south.

The City of Vancouver owns and operates the cemetery. Mountain View Cemetery is made up of 106 acres of land with approximately 92,000 grave sites and 145,000 interred remains. Since 1986, the cemetery has been essentially closed, with no more plots available for public sale.

In 1995, Council made the decision to investigate the potential for re-opening the sale of new burial sites. A Vision Plan was developed that indicated that there was both potential for new burial places and community interest in revitalizing the

cemetery.

In 2000, the City created the Mountain View Cemetery Master Plan to help take the cemetery into the future and better serve the needs of the City and its residents. The plan aims to respond to changing public needs by offering more memorialization options and services.

By making more efficient use of the land, the cemetery will re-open for business, fulfilling public demand for local memorialization options, and becoming operationally self-sufficient

The Master Plan also examines Mountain View Cemetery's potential as a treasured, public open space.

The Master Plan was prepared with considerable public and stakeholder input. Thoughts, advice and guidance were provided through public open houses, and a citizens' advisory group who worked closely with City staff.

The Master Plan is currently in its initial implementation phase, and the City will continue to consult the public throughout the implementation to ensure that Mountain View will serve the needs of our residents and be a valuable community resource into the future.

For more information, please see <http://www.city.vancouver.bc.ca/com/msvcs/NONMARKETOPERATIONS/MOUNTAINVIEW/mountainview.htm>