

Tools and Ideas

RS-5, RS-6 and RS-7 Zoning

CityPlan

Riley Park/South Cambie **RPSC**

History of RS-5 and RS-6

Beginning in the 1980's, there was growing concern among residents in various areas of the City over the size and design of new houses. City Council and the Planning Department responded to these concerns over the impact of new houses on the livability and privacy of adjacent older houses, by modifying the RS-1 regulations to reduce above-ground building size.

In the early 1990's, City Council directed planners to respond to further concerns raised by residents of the South Shaughnessy/Granville area regarding the design and landscaping of new houses, which often showed little respect for the character of existing surrounding houses. This resulted in the creation of two new zones, RS-5 and RS-6 (see below for descriptions).

In response to requests from many other single-family areas for design and landscaping guidelines for new houses, City Council directed the Planning Department to conduct the Interim Zoning Program, offering RS-5 and RS-6 zoning to any residential area expressing an interest in rezoning. In all 16 separate areas were reviewed. This program was complete by the end of 1998. Several communities have used the opportunity to review their single-family zoning. New RS-5 zones were approved in Dunbar/Southlands, West Kerrisdale, Mackenzie Heights, South Shaughnessy, Clinton Park area of Hastings Sunrise, and in Douglas Park in RPSC.

Some facts about RS-5 and RS-6 Zoning

RS-5 zoning encourages new houses and additions to be compatible with surrounding houses and landscaping

by offering a floor area incentive to owners.

Most recently about 40% of applications for new houses in RS-5 areas have applied for this increase in floor area and provided compatible designs and landscaping. 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.

While RS-5 and RS-6 zoning has addressed residents concerns about the design character and landscaping of new houses, this zoning costs more to administer. For comparison, an RS-1/RS-1S application that doesn't require relaxations, can receive a permit in 4-5 weeks. A comparable permit that is seeking the floorspace incentive for design character under RS-5 would take 8 to 10 weeks to process. One under RS-6 would usually take 4 to 5 weeks.

Permit fees are also higher for RS-5 and RS-6 development applications, reflecting the increased administrative costs. Permit fees for an RS-1/RS-1S house are usually \$750, for an RS-6 house \$910, provided there are no relaxations of regulations. For an RS-5 house requesting an increase in floorspace the fees are \$1640.

RS-5/RS-6 Zoning in RPSC

Residents and community groups in RPSC were provided an opportunity to have their single-family zoning reviewed through the Interim Zoning Program. There was expressed interest 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. However through the Visioning Program, property owners can revisit this question. If there is significant enough support in the community, a review of the current RS-1/RS-1S zoning could be one of the adopted Vision directions. The timing for the review would depend on staff availability and the priority that the community placed on reviewing their zoning relative to their other Vision directions.

RS-7S Zoning in RPSC

RS-7S zoning was adopted for RPSC in 2000. It replaced RS-2 and RS-1A zoning, in RPSC and in other parts of the city which had this zoning (e.g., Grandview-Woodlands and Kitsilano). 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.

Development permits in the RS-7S zone take 4-5 weeks to process (similar to RS-1/RS-1S and RS-6 permits). Permit fees are the same as for RS-6 permits (\$910).