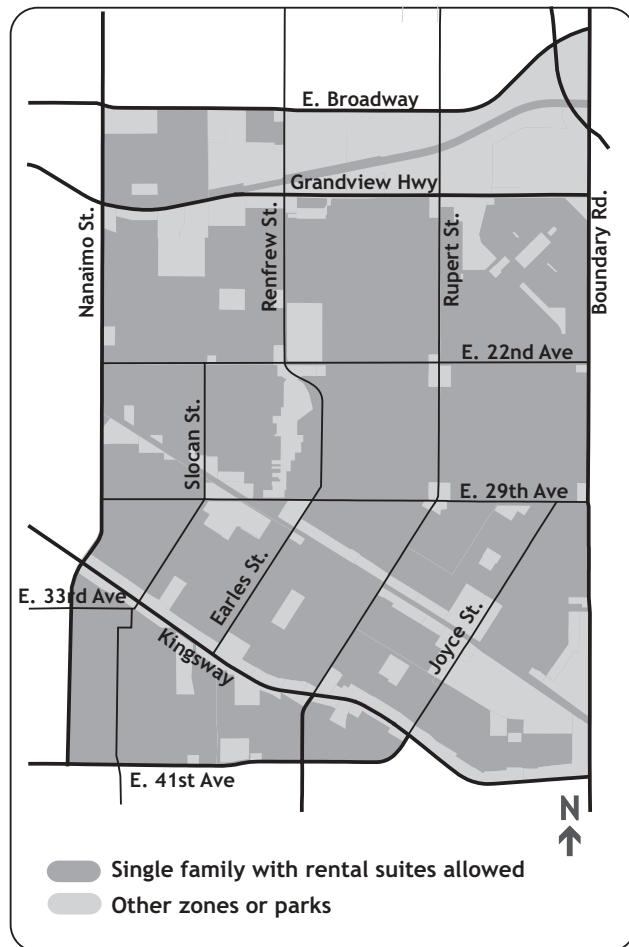




Existing Residential Areas

Renfrew-Collingwood has a mix of residential neighbourhoods. Higher density townhouses and mid-rise apartments are clustered around the Joyce SkyTrain station. Nanaimo Station has some medium density apartments nearby and there are new rowhouse developments on old motel sites on Kingsway near Norquay Park. Apartments above stores are starting to be developed in commercial areas. However, most of the community is made up of neighbourhoods of single family homes.

The Vision identifies aspects of housing which should be maintained or improved in the future while also supporting some initiatives to help accommodate the existing population as their housing needs change over time.



Rental Suites Enforcement

Vision participants expressed concern that enforcement of the suites by-laws appears inconsistent and ineffective. Action is usually taken only in response to a complaint. Vision participants saw some merit to this approach since most suites peacefully co-exist with neighbours. However, they felt that there should be more effective resolution of complaints when suites create impacts like local parking problems, excessive noise, or poor upkeep.

Participants were also concerned about new homes which are designed to easily accommodate two suites in areas where only a single suite is permitted. Many of these homes get their permits and are constructed as single family homes to avoid the additional requirements imposed on a development with a suite. After the final City inspection, minor changes are made to make the suites operational and they are rented.

Since rental suites were originally permitted, relatively few owners had made their suites legal by taking out a City permit. City Council changed regulations in March 2004 to reduce the hurdles required to legalize a suite. Future enforcement will focus on safety and standards of maintenance issues as well as the closure of multiple suites (one-family dwellings with two or more secondary suites). Enforcement will continue to be triggered by a complaint.

11 Single Family Houses and Rental Suites

Residents of Renfrew-Collingwood value their single family neighbourhoods. Many were attracted to the area by the combination of housing and neighbourhood which met their needs. Vision participants wanted to maintain the single family character of much of the community.

Vancouver's Zoning By-law determines what land uses and building characteristics are permitted on each lot in the city. At the start of the Vision process the single family area of Renfrew-Collingwood was zoned either RS-1 or RS-1S. This was based on community consultation that occurred about 15 years ago. Both zones had the same regulations for house size and position on the lot. Both zones permitted any house to have a family suite, that is, a suite occupied by relatives or home support such as a nanny or senior's caregiver. However, only the RS-1S zone allowed houses to have a rental suite.

11.1 Maintain Most Single Family Areas

Approved

In order to retain the basic character of Renfrew-Collingwood, most of the area that is now single family (including areas permitting rental suites) should be kept that way (exceptions would only be considered where the community supports new housing choices as described in Directions 15.1-16.6, 18.1, 19.1, 19.2, or 20.1).

Percent agree 76%/74%

11.2 Improve Enforcement

Approved

The City should improve enforcement procedures to solve complaints generated by rental suites such as parking problems, poor maintenance of the dwelling or yard, and noise. New homes suspected of being designed to include two or more rental suites should be regularly inspected to ensure they are complying with the Zoning By-law.

Percent agree 71%/73%

People's Ideas...

- need mandatory review of each suite's safety (without penalty if it is safe)
- generate options to allow existing suites to be brought up to code
- ensure suites pay their fair share of costs for City facilities and services
- enforce clean-up and repair of rundown houses and illegal suites
- avoid making duplexes into fourplexes because of poor enforcement against illegal suites

Vision participants felt that rental suites in single family homes are an appealing form of housing which should be permitted in more areas of the community. On March 9, 2004 City Council changed the zoning to allow one rental suite per 'single family dwelling' in all single family zoning districts in the city.

11.3 Rental Suites in More Areas

Approved

Houses with a rental suite should be permitted in more areas of Renfrew-Collingwood than now, in order to provide 'mortgage helpers' and affordable housing, but only if the suites:

- are rental rather than strata-titled
- have an on-site parking space for tenant use
- pay their fair share of costs for services (garbage, schools, water, etc.)
- are provided with adequate community facilities (parks, schools, etc.) and services for the additional population.

Percent agree 54%/60%



Typical single family streetscape

People's Ideas...

- attractive to first households, extended families (separate dwellings for grandparents and family but still close by), and seniors
- adds housing option to community
- offers more privacy than an apartment
- allow suites in all areas provided they are legal and meet requirements
- seems new single family houses are too large, add suites to make them more useful
- encourage good use of space and soundproofing between upstairs/downstairs

12 Design of New Single Family Houses

New houses frequently replace older ones. Currently the single family zoning in Renfrew-Collingwood controls the height, yard sizes, total floorspace, and garage size of new houses. Tree removal is also regulated. However, present by-laws do not control the visual appearance, character, or landscaping of new homes.

The City has some single family zones (RS-5, 6, and 7) that include some level of design review for new houses and their landscaping. Under a program which lasted several years, when a neighbourhood group demonstrated there was sufficient community interest, the City undertook detailed surveys to determine whether there was support for zoning that included design review. Now about a third of the single family areas in Vancouver have zoning with some form of design review. Although no sub-areas of Renfrew-Collingwood expressed interest in the program at that time, participants felt residents should be offered the choice of whether to pursue design review.

12.1 Design Review for New Single Family Houses

Approved

The design of new single family houses should be improved through putting in place one of the design review zones that the City has already developed, if there is sufficient support within a sub-area of the community.

Percent agree 65%/64%

People's Ideas...

- require new single family houses to have more attractive architectural designs
- reflect character houses in the area, design new houses that are less boxy
- design homes to suit topography and with more character features like porches
- do not allow identical houses to be built one beside the other
- require new single family houses to have better landscaping
- prefer the scale and massing of new houses to 'fit' in the scale and character of its surroundings
- encourage attractive colors, pitched roofs, porches and entries; not necessarily 'traditional', could be a mix of styles

Design Review in Single Family Zones

The RS-1 zone which covers the single family areas of Renfrew-Collingwood only control the uses, size, and placement of the building, with no controls on design at all. The RS-6 and RS-7S single family zones include regulations on some basic design aspects such as limiting some types of exterior building materials or requiring trim around windows. They also have some basic guidelines for landscaping. The RS-5 single family zone provides the option of no design review or full design review. Full design review is based on design guidelines that address style or character, massing, entry design, materials, details, and landscaping. Projects agreeing to design review get to build slightly more floorspace than a non-design review project. A permit for a design review project takes longer to approve and has a higher processing fee.

The City's Tree Bylaw controls the removal of larger trees (over 8" in diameter) in all single family zones. For new development, removal is only permitted under certain conditions. Owners of existing houses may obtain a permit to remove one tree a year. In both cases, replacement trees are required.

More Planning and Consultation Before Changes

Vision Direction 12.1 requires a rezoning. Given community support for design review, residents of smaller neighbourhoods would need to approach and work with the Planning Department to initiate the process leading to rezoning. Additional community involvement and surveys would be required before City Council considers a new zoning with design guidelines.



New house: example with no design review



New house: example with full design review



Older character house

13 Retaining Heritage and Character Buildings

Renfrew-Collingwood changed significantly in the 1940s when rapid growth occurred during and after World War II. By the end of the 1950s most residential and industrial areas were developed. Since 1986, over 1,800 new single family homes have been constructed in Renfrew-Collingwood. This represents 22% of all the single family lots in the community, which is also the average rate of redevelopment experienced in single family areas for the City as a whole. In Renfrew-Collingwood, about 31% of the single family dwellings were constructed prior to 1950, a lower proportion than in the neighbouring community of Hastings-Sunrise (51%). The Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR) lists pre-1940 buildings that have particular historical or architectural significance. Their owners can take advantage of some zoning relaxations which may make it easier to keep and renovate them. Renfrew-Collingwood has 18 buildings on the VHR.

Vision participants discussed what preserving character and heritage might mean in Renfrew-Collingwood.



Vancouver Heritage Register listed building

13.1 Retain Buildings on the Vancouver Heritage Register (VHR)

Approved

For structures listed in the Vancouver Heritage Register, the City should encourage retention by implementing additional incentives which are suitable in areas like Renfrew-Collingwood.

Percent agree 61%/65%

People's Ideas...

- relax current zoning requirements
- allow density 'banking' and transferring in single family areas
- provide tax breaks and small grants

13.2 Retaining Character Buildings

Approved

In order to encourage retention of 'character' buildings not on the Vancouver Heritage Register, there should be incentives to renovate and disincentives to demolish.

Percent agree 61%/65%

People's Ideas...

- identify and save some post-war buildings; heritage and character do not end in 1940
- keep existing schools, they are landmarks and memories
- encourage more authentic heritage colours, fences and steeped roofs (e.g. 'True Colours' program)
- provide a bonus for recycling building materials
- provide incentives for renovation that keeps character (i.e. additional density, transfer of density, tax breaks, and small grants)

14 Changes in CD-1 Zones

Some developments in Renfrew-Collingwood are on large parcels zoned CD-1, or Comprehensive Development. CD-1s are 'tailor-made' zonings used by the City where standard zoning isn't suitable for the proposed uses or building design. Since the '80s CD-1 regulations have included a lot of detailed requirements, but earlier CD-1 regulations were often quite vague and general. In addition, older CD-1 sites are often built to densities lower than those common today. Across the city, these older parcels are being redeveloped to higher densities. Examples include Arbutus Gardens (at Arbutus and 33rd) and Champlain Mall.

The City has generally required changes to developments on CD-1 sites to undergo a rezoning process, culminating in a public hearing. However, in some cases, redevelopments on older CD-1 sites were treated as a change in regulations which did not require a rezoning. While decisions on these sites have included community consultation, Vision participants felt residents' interests would be better protected, and the City's powers over the development would be greater, if all significant changes to a CD-1 zone were treated as a rezoning.

Note: CD-1 zoning has also been used in two innovative ways in Renfrew-Collingwood. First, along the original SkyTrain line, CD-1s were enacted to permit dwellings which would help shield nearby homes from noise and over-look impacts from the guideway. Second, CD-1 zoning was put in place north of Grandview Highway to encourage the daylighting or improvement of Still Creek.

14.1 Process for CD-1 Zoned Sites Anywhere in Renfrew-Collingwood

Approved

When anything other than a small change is proposed to a development on a site zoned CD-1 — whether in its buildings or uses — the City should undertake a rezoning process in order to ensure appropriate community consultation and to provide the City with the ability to deny or impose conditions on the proposed development.

Percent agree 63%/61%



CD-1 Zoning: Collingwood Village

CD-1 Zones

