

Housing Workshop Summary

Marpole Community Plan Phase II

On February 28, 2013, the City held a Housing Workshop to receive further feedback on emerging housing strategies that will become part of the Marpole Community Plan.

The Housing Workshop focused on a number of themes in relation to Marpole:

1. Homelessness and Supportive Housing
2. Social Housing
3. Market Rental Housing
4. Secondary Suites, Laneway Houses and Rented Condos
5. Affordable homeownership

Over 60 participants attended the workshop. Participants were divided into 6 discussion tables, one of which was conducted in Chinese. Discussions at each table were facilitated by City staff and recorded by a note-taker. The following section highlights the key ideas* from these discussions.

*This summary is our best attempt to capture the key ideas and messages (comments which were brought up several times) from the workshop. All comments shared at the workshop were recorded and will be considered, along with this summary, in the development of the Marpole Community Plan.



Marpole Housing Workshop Summary February 28, 2013, City of Vancouver

Key Ideas

Homelessness and Supportive Housing

- Provide more mental health supports and services.
- Support for shelters and supportive housing in Marpole. Some concerns that safety. Some unsure about need (i.e. homeless count is very low) and if taxpayers should be responsible for funding such projects.
- Consider locating shelters on the fringe of the industrial area in Marpole. This area is also close to transit, parks, shopping areas, and allows for employment opportunities with local businesses.
- Increase supportive housing by converting existing hotel rooms (e.g. Fraser Arms) and locating housing in or around the industrial area in Marpole.
- Distribute shelters and supportive housing across the City (including Marpole) to give homeless the choice/range of options.
- Supportive housing needs to be accessible to youth, those with disabilities and seniors.
- Use city-owned sites more intensively (e.g. supportive housing project at Dunbar and 16th Ave. should have had more units).

Rental Housing – Social Housing (Non-Market Rental)

- Prioritize social housing for families with young children, followed by seniors and youth.
- Include people with accessibility needs (e.g. design for “visit-ability” - give people who currently or in the future use wheelchairs or special equipment, the ability to visit friends living in apartments).
- Consider different types of social housing models: e.g. integrated /mixed social housing with market housing; shared/co-housing with common kitchen; a range of unit sizes suitable for families, young people and seniors; and social housing mixed with retail, community centre or other amenities.
- Provide financial assistance (e.g. grants, retrofit incentive programs, lease renewals) to help co-ops that are struggling to pay for building maintenance upgrades and expiring operating agreements.
- Provide incentives (grants, city provision of land, community amenity contributions, parking reductions) to offset the cost of new housing developments and to secure low rental rates.

Rental Housing – Market Rental Housing (Purpose Built Rental)

- Some wanted to see existing stock preserved while others wanted to see a mix of preservation/renewal and new development.
- Provide low interest grants, and access to green landlord and loan fund programs so property owners can afford to do upgrades and still keep rents low.

- Build smaller units to keep rents low.
- Need to acknowledge that the “Rate of Change” policy is a burden on owners because it doesn’t allow them to redevelop, and therefore acquire the finances, to do major building upgrades. Currently rents are too low to allow landlords to do major renovations.
- Increase allowable density to incentivize renewal of existing stock.
- Build rental around major transit services.

Rental Housing – Secondary Rental (Secondary Suites, Laneway Houses and Condos)

- Consider impacts of parking on neighbourhood as secondary rental become popular.
- Need to allow for more secondary suites and garden suites are good options for singles, families with children and seniors to meet future needs.

Ownership Housing

- Backyards are not necessary as long as adequate green space nearby (e.g. park or shared courtyard).
- Provide more affordable ownership options: variety of housing types and sizes so people can afford to own e.g. row houses, stacked town house/condos, duplex with infill (these also have the advantage of being fee-simple).
- Consider consolidating single family lots for row houses.
- Allow more lock-off suites in multifamily buildings (e.g. row houses, condos, duplex).
- Consider subdivision of single-family lots to improve affordability.

Comments on Emerging Land Use Directions for Marpole Community Plan

- Apartment area south of W 70th Ave. is run-down. Need incentives/tools to improve condition of older rental stock, while retaining affordability. Concern that some redevelopment of Rate of Change Area will drive rental prices up and low-income residents out of the neighbourhood.
- East of Cambie – allow developments higher than 4 storeys and develop a good transition between 32 storeys and 4 storeys.
- To make Oak liveable need to tame speed and volume (e.g. boulevard and/or more pedestrian crossings).
- Either extend proposed commercial at Oak and W 67th Ave. further east-west, or drop it all together and focus commercial on Granville.
- Revitalize the south end of Hudson Street (e.g. supporting local economy by adding more commercial, better pedestrian connectivity, bikeway and greenway initiatives in this area).

- Add more commercial and amenities to main arterials (e.g. employment, services, shops). Improve public realm too (e.g. wider sidewalks, greater set-back from the street, and street trees).
- Density along transit corridors is okay, but would like to see more drastic contrast between heights on the corridor vs. height in residential area so areas of single family housing can be retained.
- Extend density along W 67th Ave. to connect Granville to Oak Street. Include a bikeway on this street.
- Divert trucks off W 70th Ave. to make the street more pedestrian friendly.

Who attended the workshop?

An evaluation form, which was distributed at the end of the workshop, included some demographic questions. These questions allowed us to get a better idea of who attended the workshop. Here a summary of this data:

- Gender: about 50% male, 50% female
- Age: wide range of ages, with largest number of participants between 55 - 64 yrs.
- Tenure: slightly more participants who were home-owner versus renters
- Residents: more than half the participants had lived in Marpole for more than 15 years; nearly half had lived in Marpole less than 5 years. Almost no participants had lived in Marpole between 6 and 15 years.