

Marpole Community Plan Bulletin: Draft Plan Frequently Heard Questions

During the consultation on the Draft Marpole Community Plan, staff were concerned that there was inaccurate information circulating in the community regarding various aspects of the draft plan. As a result, staff have prepared this Bulletin addressing *Frequently Heard Questions* that seeks to clarify misconceptions and provide accurate information on the draft Plan.

If my property is rezoned to “Townhouse” will the City (or a Developer) force me out of my house to build new townhouses?

No. A homeowner does not need to sell their house and move if they don't want to. They can remain in their single family house regardless of the zoning. Staying, or selling and moving are all options for the homeowner - just as they are today. Revised zoning only increases choices and every property owner retains their rights to not redevelop or to redevelop as the current zoning permits.

I was planning to build a new house, but my property is being rezoned “Townhouse.” Can I still build a single family house?

Yes, a single family house can still be built in a “Townhouse” zone. The proposed zoning creates the *opportunity* to build an additional type of housing - townhouses - but doesn't require them to be built.

I was planning to build a new house, but my property is being recommended for “4-storey Apartment”. Can I still build a single family house?

Yes, in the areas marked “4-storey Apartment,” single family houses will still be permitted.

Will adding duplexes, rowhouses or townhouses to my street change the character of the neighbourhood? Will the current “family surroundings” become more like a downtown neighbourhood?

Duplexes have many of the same features as a single family house - they are the same height and width, and have individual front doors facing the street. Rowhouses and townhouses are also of a similar height with individual front doors, though the street appearance is different. Duplexes and rowhouses/townhouses have been successfully

integrated into a number of single family neighbourhoods without changing the sense of place.

Most importantly, both duplexes and townhouses are forms of housing large enough to accommodate families - and this means that housing options for families will be expanded in the neighbourhood.

Will the Plan replace existing duplexes with townhouses?

The proposed Plan does not introduce new policy that allows for a change of use from duplex to townhouse. The existing duplex area in Marpole already allows townhouses. The proposed Plan allows for a greater townhouse density, in select areas only.

Will rezoning to multi-family (i.e. townhouse) immediately increase property taxes and the assessed value of the land, even though the lot still contains a single family home?

The amount of property taxes paid by individual properties is based on the City budget, the proportion of property taxes to be paid by individual property 'classes' (e.g. residential, business, major industrial), and the assessed value of the individual property (provided by BC Assessment). Implementation of the Marpole Community Plan may affect the assessed value of individual properties IF the value of the property is increased by an amount GREATER THAN the City average.

The assessed value of your property is determined by looking at factors such as present use, location, original cost, rental or revenue value, and other circumstances affecting the value of the land.

However, while the Plan may result in a modest increase to the value of your property, BC Assessment has a tool to address the taxation impacts on homeowners - Section 19(8) of the *BC Assessment Act*. This section of the *Assessment Act* allows certain residential land to be assessed at less than market value where the owner qualifies (lived there for over 10 years) and provided the property has potential for development for a more valuable use than its current use (which would be the case for the rezonings proposed in the draft Plan).

If the property qualifies for assessment relief under section 19(8), it will be valued based on its current use. The value will be established using sales of comparable properties with no development potential. The value of your property will be determined each year and may change if the market values of the comparable properties change.

When property taxes increase, will rents increase and affect renters too?

Property taxes and other costs can be passed along to renters as part of the monthly rental costs. However, under the BC provincial *Residential Tenancy Act*, a landlord is limited in his/her ability to increase rents on an annual basis. In 2013, the annual allowable increase in rental rates cannot exceed 3.8%.

Under the draft Marpole Community Plan, the existing zoning in rental apartment areas will be retained, and only a limited amount of change will be allowed. This is intended as a strategic move to protect this important stock of affordable housing, while recognizing there is a need for some renewal. The aim is to limit the impact on renters.

Why do we need these changes? Can't we put new residential developments in industrial areas? There are already many developments occurring in Marpole, including two large sites in the South Vancouver Industrial Area (SVIA).

Sites in the SVIA are zoned for industrial use – and residential uses are NOT permitted under current zoning. Industrial lands provide important job space in Vancouver, and the Marpole Community Plan does not propose residential growth in the SVIA in order to maintain its role in the local economy.

Once a property is zoned multi-family, will City Hall be able to further increase its density without consultation?

No. Zoning schedules are very specific in the type of building that is permitted, and include regulations that limit site development including use, height, and density.

Under the *Vancouver Charter*, increasing density beyond what is permitted under the ascribed zoning to a particular parcel requires a “rezoning”. The *Charter* also requires public consultation for a rezoning process.

Will on-street parking be lost with these new townhouse zones?

No. Current parking regulations require one off-street parking stall for a single family lot with a secondary suite and a laneway house. New duplex and row/townhouse zoning will require one off-street stall for each principle dwelling. If people use their off-street parking stalls as they should, there could actually be fewer cars parked on the street.

How will the Plan impact housing affordability?

Housing affordability is a critical issue in Vancouver and in the Marpole neighbourhood. Currently, the average single family house price in Marpole is over \$1 million and home prices are increasing throughout the city. Single-family homeownership in Marpole is no longer an affordable option for a typical Vancouverite. This Plan provides some options that will improve housing affordability and provide new options for home ownership that fit with the character of the area (e.g. townhouses that are three stories or less and do not require large-scale land assembly).

What is a rezoning?

A rezoning is a legal change to the Zoning and Development Bylaw to permit an alternate type of development. Rezoning is either initiated by the City following a change in policy for an area, or through a rezoning application submitted by a developer for a specific site.

During the rezoning process, input is gathered from City staff, the public and advisory groups. Notification is sent to all affected property owners to further inform them of the application.

Open houses are held in the community to provide information about the application, and get the opinions of surrounding property owners and residents.

Before a rezoning application is approved, it is referred to a public hearing, which is a special meeting of Council. Members of the community can speak at public hearings and share their opinions on the rezoning with Council.

What kind of “rezoning” is proposed for Marpole?

The Marpole Community Plan is proposing two different types of rezoning: City-initiated rezoning and Developer-initiated rezoning.

City-initiated rezoning would introduce a new zone to Marpole which would allow rownhouses and townhouses in designated areas. City-initiated rezoning would change the existing zoning of properties located in these areas. This can be referred to as “prezoning.”

Developer-initiated rezoning would occur in accordance with rezoning policies contained within the community plan. Rezoning policies outline the kind of buildings that may be allowed on a property. They do not change the existing zoning of a property but create the opportunity for zoning to be changed through individual

applications. Each individual application would, in turn, require public notification and a public hearing.

Rezoning policies are also used in the Cambie Corridor Plan, as well as on city-wide housing initiatives including *Rental100 : Secured Market Rental Housing Policy* and the *Interim Rezoning Policy for Affordable Housing*.

Will increased densities in Marpole increase crime?

There is no documented relationship between higher densities and increased crime. Crime is typically the result of inactive spaces where illegal activities can thrive. The Marpole Community Plan seeks to activate many of those spaces with redevelopment, incorporating crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) techniques, and increasing 'eyes on the street', particularly near parks and public spaces.

This Plan identifies a significant increase in our population. Why isn't there a plan to build the infrastructure and amenities (schools, parks, community facilities etc.) required to support this new growth?

Actually, the proposed Plan does include a plan to build the infrastructure and amenities required to support new growth. An extensive and comprehensive Public Benefits Strategy is a part of the proposed Plan. This Strategy provides a key roadmap for balancing future growth with additional park space and improvements, new community facilities, social housing, childcare, public realm improvements, infrastructure upgrades, etc.

In particular, the proposed Plan also includes directions for upgrading existing park spaces, and expanding green space through greenways, mini parks, increased access to the Fraser River, and a large park space at the foot of Cambie Street close to the Fraser River.

The Marpole-Oakridge Community Centre and Marpole Library have also been identified for renewal, and funding has been allocated for a new facility.

The Vancouver Board of Education recognizes Marpole and the adjacent Cambie Corridor as areas of potential growth. VBE staff are working with City of Vancouver staff to monitor population growth and determine the potential timing for expanded school facilities serving the Marpole area. David Lloyd George Elementary is a supported seismic project and its capacity will be assessed prior to renewal. Laurier Annex has also been identified in the 2013/2014 Five Year Capital Plan to expand its capacity to a full size elementary school to meet the anticipated population growth in the southern portion of the Marpole area. Timing of funding approval is at the discretion of the BC Ministry of Education. Currently, Shannon Park Annex (located at 1454 W. 62nd Avenue) is being leased by Vancouver Hebrew Academy. The current term

lease will expire on July 31, 2015. The Annex has a capacity of 120 student spaces. As the Marpole area builds out over time, VBE has the ability to end the lease with the Vancouver Hebrew Academy and reclaim the facility to address local enrolment demand.

There are many other amenities proposed, and those are outlined in the Public Benefits Strategy.