

## 2300-block Charles St. (South) /Kitchener St. (North) SYNOPSIS OF OCTOBER 2019 ENGAGEMENT

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### BACKGROUND

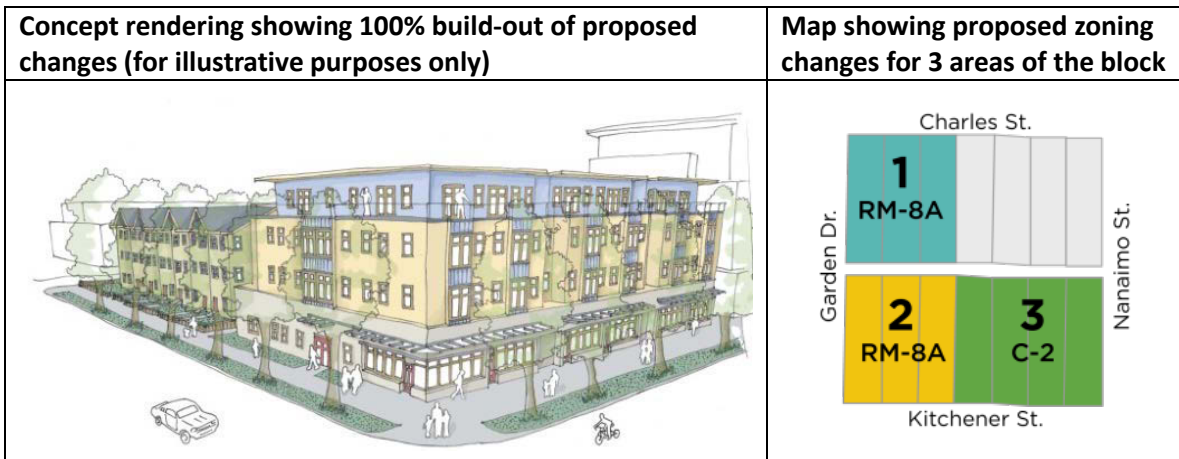
On Wednesday, October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2019, City staff held an Open House to discuss proposed land use changes for 10 lots on the 2300-block Charles Street (south side) & Kitchener Street (north side). The open house was a follow-up to the earlier community engagement process held in November and December 2018.

A total of 28 residents participated in the event. A feedback form was available at the open house, and was also hand delivered with an information package to approximately 200 residences in the surrounding area. 32 responses were received from residents living inside the notification area, and an additional 16 were received from people living outside of the notification area.

### OVERVIEW OF RECOMMENDED APPROACH

As part of the Open House event, staff shared a recommended series of land-use changes for the block. These had been refined from a larger set of options that had been explored during the previous engagement session.

- **Areas 1 & 2: RM-8A** – Residential street townhouse – up to 3-storeys, and up to 1.2 FSR
- **Area 3: C-2** – Mixed-use – up to 4-storeys with ground-floor retail/commercial uses



Participants were invited to share their thoughts on a set of two recommended land use changes:

- Rezoning six lots (Areas 1 and 2) from RT-5 (duplex) to RM-8A (residential townhouse)
- Rezoning four lots (Area 3) from RT-5/RT-5N to C-2 (4-storey mixed use apartment)

*NOTE: The four lots in grey (north east corner of the 2300-block) were not under review as part of this process; they are subject to a separate, privately-initiated rezoning process.*

Below are results from the feedback received on the recommended changes.

## **RESULTS**

### **Question 1. Level of Support for Recommended Land-use Changes**

The responses indicate that roughly 60% of residents within the notification boundary are “supportive” or “somewhat supportive” of the recommended changes. When residents from outside of the notification area are included, the level of support is increased (albeit marginally).

	<b>Opposed</b>	<b>Somewhat Opposed</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Somewhat Support</b>	<b>Support</b>
Inside Notification Area (n=32)	11 (34.4%)	2 (6.3%)	0 (0%)	2 (6.3%)	17 (53%)
Total Responses (n=48)	15 (31.3%)	2 (4.2%)	2 (4.2%)	4 (8.3%)	25 (52%)

### **Question 2. Additional Comments Regarding Recommended Land-use Changes**

Participants were able to provide additional feedback about the recommended land-use changes. The following summarizes the general themes that emerged in commentary.

#### **Housing**

- Support for more housing choices (i.e. ‘missing middle’ and multi-family housing) that would provide more opportunities for people with a variety of incomes (i.e. young professionals, singles, young families) to move into the area, as well as housing that would be affordable for people with lower incomes;
- Support for rental housing, and recognition that it supports goals of affordability;
- Mixed opinion on whether or not additional density and height is appropriate for the area. Where several comments indicated support for the recommended land use option, others indicated that they felt no change is necessary;
- Some respondents indicated support for additional housing options along Nanaimo St. but not on residential streets;

#### **Proposed 6-storey rezoning at 2336-2366 Charles Street (NE section of the 2300-block)**

- A number of participants noted concerns about the proposed rezoning at 2336-2366 Charles (the four lots on the NE corner of the block are covered by a separate site-specific rezoning policy allowing consideration for a building up to six-storeys in height). Comments related to the height/scale of the building, its transition to the surrounding neighbourhood, potential impacts on character, the affordability of the proposed development, traffic and safety concerns, and the rezoning process

### Transportation

- Support for the addition of retail to support a more walkable community;
- Concerns noted around potential impact of the changes on the availability of street parking (*Note: new housing proposed would locate parking on-site or underground*);
- Concerns about additional traffic having congestion and safety implications for children attending nearby Lord Nelson elementary school.

### Lord Nelson School

- Concerns that the elementary school is already at capacity, and that residents will have to send their children to schools that are further away than Lord Nelson.

### Local Economy

- A number of respondents indicated support for creating additional retail space, with some noting the importance of affordable retail space in this area. Others expressed mixed opinions about additional shops and services in the study area (see Question 3).

### Neighbourhood Character

- There were mixed opinions about additional housing options on the 2300-block;
- Residents who indicated support for the recommended land-use change noted that the addition of townhouses and an apartment building would soften the transition from the potential 6-storey building at the NE corner of Charles St. & Nanaimo St. into the rest of the neighbourhood;
- Other respondents expressed concerns about the potential loss of the existing neighbourhood character and liveability.

### Consistency with the Grandview-Woodland Plan

- Some residents indicated uncertainty about how this aspect of community plan implementation work aligns with the original Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.

### **Question 3. Suggestions for Additional Shops and Services on the 2300-block**

Respondents were invited to share the types of shops and services that they felt would be useful in the commercial area.

Type of Commercial	In notification area	Outside of notification Area
Restaurant, pub, or café	13	9
Food retail, grocery, green grocer, bakery, butcher	12	6
Retail (incl. clothing, artisanal shops)	7	8
Professional services, banks, etc	6	3
Offices	3	1
Community services – childcare, NGO space	2	1
Health and wellness	2	1
Other	2	

Additional comments noted support for independent (non-chain) stores, and live/work opportunities.

Respondents provided additional commentary on the proposed addition of commercial space on the block. Some noted that they supported the move for following reasons:

- The possibility of creating a future high street in the Nanaimo area
- Opportunities to improve the overall walkability of the area

Where residents did not support commercial space in this area, reasons included:

- Suggestion that adequate retail exists on Nanaimo & Charles, Hastings St, and Commercial Drive
- Concern that additional cafes and restaurants would reduce available parking. (*Note:* some residents who were in support of the commercial space suggested that there needed to be adequate parking)

**Question 4. Support for Recommendation #2: Exploring Additional Land-use Changes from Kitchener St. to E 1<sup>st</sup> Ave**

During the previous engagement work in 2018, some residents had suggested that land-use changes on the west side of Nanaimo need to be undertaken “more equitably” between Kitchener Street and Graveley (n=7). While this is outside of the scope of the present process, residents were invited to indicate their level of support for further work in this regard – with the caveat that it would need to take place at some future point. A total of 53% of residents inside the notification area, and 55% of all respondents indicated they support or somewhat support additional planning work in this regard.



	Opposed	Somewhat Opposed	Neutral	Somewhat Support	Support
Inside Notification Area (n=32)	9 (28%)	2 (6.3%)	4 (12.5%)	3 (9.4%)	14 (43.8%)
Total Responses (n=46)	11.5 (25%)	4 (8.7%)	5 (10.9%)	3 (6.5%)	22.5 (48.9%)

**Question 5. Additional comments regarding Recommendation #2.**

Participants were able to provide additional comments about Recommendation #2. Where comments were provided, the following themes were noted.

**Geography of change**

- Further consideration of land-use changes should be considered for both east and west sides of Nanaimo, holistically, to achieve balance and to avoid block-by-block or site-specific land-use changes

**Housing and retail uses**

- Support for more housing, (including affordable rental housing, as well as family-housing)
- Some respondents noted support for additional retail uses on Nanaimo St.

**Building height and form**

- Respondents expressed mixed opinions on building height. Some noted that 3-storey buildings were acceptable in the area, but felt that 6-storeys was not appropriate. Others felt that buildings up to 6-storeys were acceptable (Note: the engagement process did not include any specific discussion about the nature of land-use changes in this area)
- Some respondents felt that their response to this was dependent on the outcome of the proposed 6-storey rezoning on the NE corner of Charles St. and Nanaimo St.