

OVERVIEW

Since West Vancouver's inception as a municipality in 1912, the community has strived to create, enhance and preserve quality residential neighbourhoods. The Municipality has evolved from a collection of small waterfront settlements to a highly attractive and diverse community. For much of its early development single-family dwellings were the predominant housing type. Beginning in the mid 1950s, the community accommodated a greater diversity of housing, and for the last half century, duplexes, townhouses and apartments accounted for more than half of the new housing units being constructed annually. Much of this change can be directly attributed to the 1958 rezoning of 50 acres to create the Ambleside Apartment Zone. Today, while almost 90% of the "developed" land area is single family, over 40% of the housing is multi-family.

Envision, the 1991 report of a Council appointed resident committee called the Long Range Planning Task Force on West Vancouver's Future, remarked that the community's past pattern of residential development "...has suited us well to date. However, our needs are changing significantly and we have run out of manoeuvring room!" The report also suggested that "increased variety of housing must be encouraged, particularly within existing neighbourhoods".

More recently, in the Official Community Plan review process, residents identified housing as the most important issue. The key concerns include housing affordability and the limited housing choices, particularly for seniors, young adults and young families. Residents suggested that varied housing forms are essential to continue to meet the community's needs, particularly as the population is aging. Residents also emphasized the importance of maintaining the character of established neighbourhoods.

During the community discussions, many questions were raised about the trends we face, the impact on housing policy and the degree to which we should, or may wish to accommodate changing circumstances. Managing future change while preserving the highly valued character of West Vancouver's existing residential neighbourhoods presents unique challenges. It is clear that a community-wide dialogue is needed to better define the nature and significance of current housing trends, assumptions respecting changing needs and demands, and possible approaches to addressing these issues. It is intended that the dialogue would promote both community wide and local neighbourhood discussion.

This section describes key housing issues currently facing the community, the challenges these issues raise, and policies for addressing housing needs.

CONTEXT

Most residents identify strongly with the single-family origins of the community. West Vancouver neighbourhoods range from lower density, 10,000 – 20,000 sq. ft. lots at 1.5 – 2.5 dwellings per acre, in British Properties, Altamont and lower Caulfeild to 4,000 – 6,000 sq. ft. lots and 6.0 dwellings per acre in Ambleside and Dundarave. Some neighbourhoods, such as Caulfeild Plateau, Horseshoe Bay and parts of lower Ambleside include higher density duplexes and townhouses and significant numbers of unauthorized secondary suites.

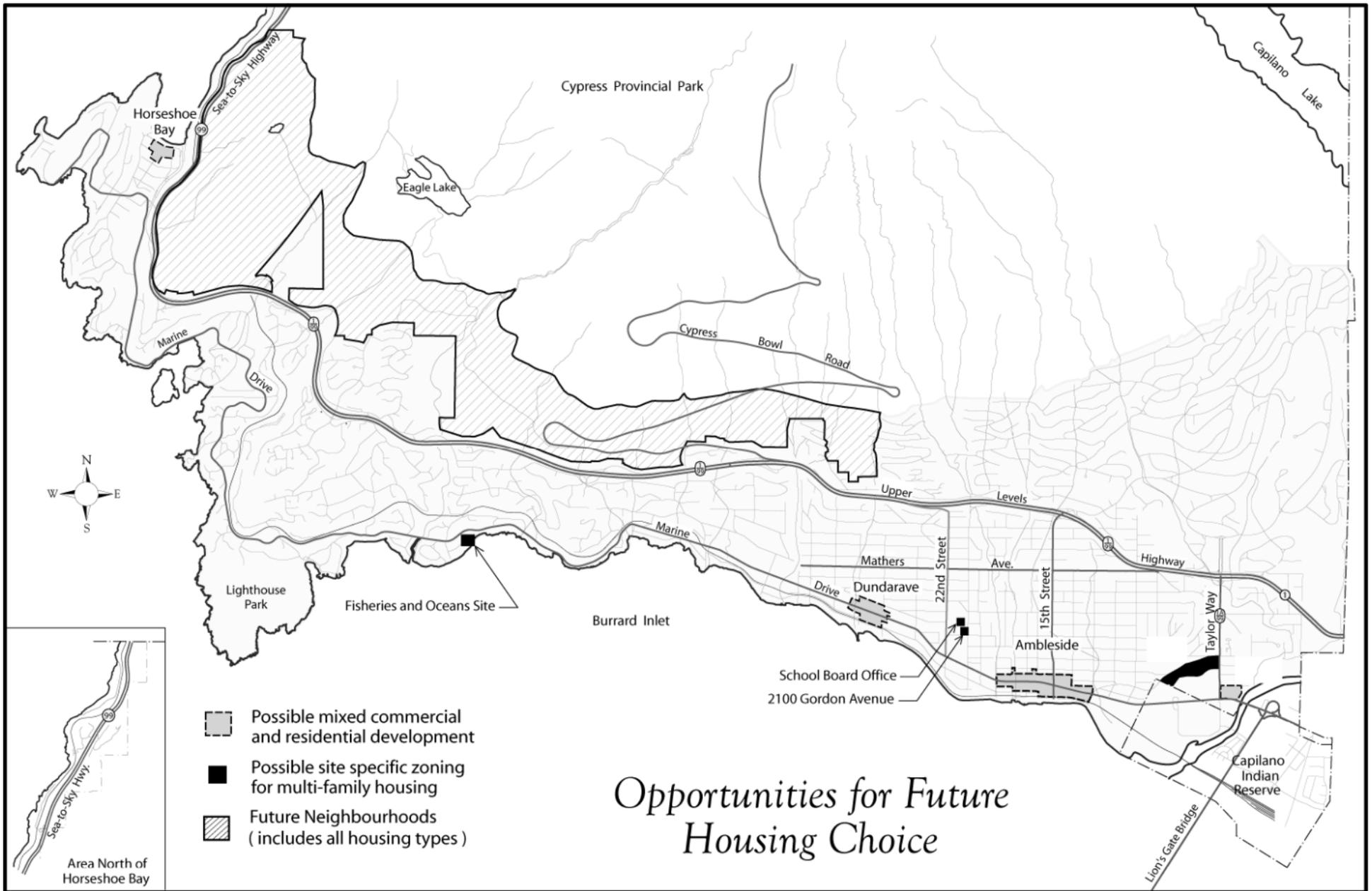
West Vancouver's highest density housing is centred in and around the commercial areas of Ambleside, Dundarave and Park Royal. The greatest concentration of dwelling units in these areas, the 50-acre Ambleside Apartment Zone, has about 80 units per acre. It helps support the local commercial area and provides its residents with convenient access to community services and amenities. Above the Upper

Levels Highway, the Panorama / Folkestone Way and Deer Ridge areas have a concentration of townhouses and apartment buildings but limited access to services. Other multiple family developments are located in pockets throughout the Municipality, such as Spuraway in Cedardale, the Dale townhouses adjacent to Marine Drive in Caulfeild, and the proposed Sunset Highlands townhouses at Ansell Place.

In addition to this Housing Section:

- ❑ The Context Section presents data regarding population characteristics, population projections, land use and housing types; and,
- ❑ The Built Form & Neighbourhood Character Section sets out policies and mechanisms aimed at addressing building design, landscaping, and streetscape character related to housing.





Opportunities for Future Housing Choice

ADDRESSING HOUSING NEEDS AND DEMANDS

HOUSING DEMAND AND CHOICE:

Demand for Single Family Homes. West Vancouver's close proximity to downtown Vancouver, south facing slopes with panoramic views, attractive neighbourhoods, excellent schools, and beautiful parks create a magnificent community and high demand for housing of all types. Notwithstanding a growing need for alternative forms, the demand for single family homes is expected to remain, both in new neighbourhoods above the Upper Levels and through redevelopment within existing neighbourhoods. The older homes will continue to be gradually renovated or replaced, typically with larger, more expensive dwellings.

Demand for Smaller Homes and Multi-Family Housing. Changing lifestyles (activities outside the home, travel, dual working couples, older singles) and an aging population are creating increased demand for smaller homes that are more affordable, more energy-efficient and that require less maintenance than detached single-family houses on large lots. There is also high demand for conveniently located smaller ground oriented units in locations close to commercial centres and community services. Young adults also seek a range of non-single family options, including apartments and suites.

Housing for Young Families. Meeting the housing needs of younger families has become increasingly difficult to achieve, given the high cost of land in West Vancouver. The limited availability of smaller lots and suites also impacts housing affordability. In addition, the degree to which older residents can move to other homes affects the turnover of homes to younger families.

Housing for Seniors. West Vancouver seniors occupy a large proportion of its apartments, duplexes and townhouses. The growing proportion of seniors in the population as a whole is increasing the demand for multiple family housing that is designed and located to foster independent living. Many seniors will eventually seek housing with lower maintenance requirements, features that enhance mobility and access, and which is located in areas with relatively flat topography close to shopping, transit and other services. Many seniors also wish to downsize for financial reasons.

Recent changes to provincial care facility policies are expected to play a role in increasing demand for purpose-built seniors' housing. Eligibility criteria for care facilities have been tightened and only residents with the most complex health needs are likely to be admitted to provincial facilities in the future. Many people who previously qualified for admission will need supportive housing and assisted living. These housing options typically offer residents a private room with personal support services (e.g. meals, housekeeping, 24 hour emergency response) and design features that facilitate independent living in an apartment style or group home setting.

Market Rental Housing. Although the home ownership rate is high compared to other municipalities, market rental housing plays an important role in contributing to housing affordability and choice in West Vancouver. In 2001, 27% of all dwelling units were rented (Census data), including units in rental apartment buildings and rental of strata title apartments, duplexes, detached single-family homes, and registered in-law suites. (Note:

The Census data also includes some of the unauthorized secondary suites.)

Vacancy rates are low despite the community's relatively high rents. West Vancouver's rental housing policy prevents the conversion of rental apartment buildings to strata, but it does not address the need for additional rental housing or the potential loss of rental housing through demolition and redevelopment of older apartment buildings. Additional strategies and sources of rental housing, such as secondary suites and rental incentive zoning, shall be explored.

Non-Market Housing. For many people with low incomes, market housing alternatives remain out of reach. Non-market housing, is typically developed and operated by a government agency or non-profit society. Access to such housing is central to ensuring an adequate standard of living and quality of life for people with limited means.

In 2001 there were 1200 seniors in the West Vancouver Local Health Area on income assistance. West Vancouver has only 420 non-market seniors' housing

units and 32 non-market family housing units provided through service clubs and government programs such as Kiwanis, Klahanie, and the Lions' Libby Lodge.

High land costs, a lack of publicly owned land and cutbacks to government housing programs limit opportunities to provide additional non-market housing. In the past, the Municipality has supported opportunities for non-market housing by facilitating land assemblies, rezoning, and partnerships with non-profit agencies. It will continue to work with provincial and non-profit housing suppliers in the future to address local needs.

Adaptable Housing. Adaptable housing addresses special needs (mobility, hearing, vision, etc.), and supports independent living for persons with physical disabilities. The provision of adaptable housing is an increasingly important component of comprehensive community housing strategies. Such housing encourages liveable residences for a wider range of persons through consideration of how adaptable design elements could be easily and inexpensively incorporated in the future.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY:

For most of its history, West Vancouver was a community that welcomed and could accommodate people of various means and at various stages in their lives. Now, for every type of dwelling, West Vancouver has the highest housing cost of all municipalities in the Lower Mainland. This is a product of our attractiveness as a community and the resulting high land costs. Other factors include the quality and complexity of construction, the costs of developing on difficult terrain, and the limited number of smaller homes or lots.

When the term "affordability" is used in this Plan, it refers to the extent of the range of home prices that exist and the choices that are available to buyers in various circumstances. All other characteristics being equal, a 2,000 sq. ft. house or townhouse costs less than a 6,000 sq. ft. house, and a 900 sq. ft. apartment less than one of 2,000 sq. ft. Each of these choices, when built, contributes to or detracts from the range of housing affordability in West Vancouver.

For many rising housing costs reduces our diversity and diminishes the richness of the community. A number of possible strategies for addressing the issue of affordability were suggested during community discussions. Some are readily achievable such as providing more opportunities for small lot detached single-family homes, townhouses and apartments in new neighbourhoods above the Upper Levels, encouraging housing above commercial developments and taking advantage of limited opportunities for rezoning that might arise in existing communities that may be acceptable to area residents. The Plan also recognizes that the normal housing turnover in the community results in older housing stock being available as a more affordable

alternative to new homes. This is further assisted if alternatives exist for single-family home owners desiring to downsize.

Residents also suggested that the District explore other opportunities such as allowing coach houses or cottages and secondary suites as opportunities to increase housing choice while serving as mortgage helpers for homeowners. Consideration of the issues we face and the opportunities for meeting the challenges should be part of future housing discussions in the community.

THE CHALLENGE OF CHANGE:

The age of the community is increasing, the apartment, townhouse and duplex areas close to neighbourhood centres have been largely built out and the cost of moving into the community creates a challenge. So while our needs may be becoming more diverse, our ability to meet these needs is perhaps more restricted than in the past.

The Upper Lands will accommodate some of the demand through planned growth policies allowing a mix of units within more compact and complete neighbourhoods. The Squamish Nation may also consider provisions for non-reserve housing on portions of its lands.

Community discussions in the preparation of this Plan revealed significant interest in exploring housing opportunities but no consensus on the actual nature of

the issues or what directions the community may be willing to move in addressing them. As a consequence, this Plan provides focused and limited opportunities for residential redevelopment in existing neighbourhoods; and the concerns expressed in 2004 became the basis for a comprehensive and community-wide dialogue on housing that took place in 2007-2008.

The Plan recognizes certain potential opportunities for new housing development within specific areas or on individual sites as set out in Policy H3. In addition, site specific zoning amendments may be possible in limited circumstances for other sites that present unique opportunities and that meet the conditions set out in Policy H3. Following is an overview of the community-wide dialogue on housing that took place in 2007-2008.

THE COMMUNITY DIALOGUE ON NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER AND HOUSING

Since 2005, the District has prepared and updated a series of 15 reports on demographics and population trends, known as 'West Vancouver Facts and Stats' – to provide the basis for an informed discussion of housing issues in the community.

During 2007, the concept of a housing dialogue evolved into a broader dialogue on neighbourhood character and housing – recognizing that the ability to introduce new housing opportunities in West Vancouver was tied to community acceptance of some kind of change to single-family neighbourhoods. This broader focus also enabled the exploration of related issues, such as the impacts of new single-family house construction in established neighbourhoods, and the loss of natural features and built heritage through site alteration and demolition.

The Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing was a process of 'people talking to people' about the future of their neighbourhoods, and issues related to housing choice and affordability. Led by a Council-appointed Working Group of West Vancouver residents, the 'Community Dialogue' provided a year-long forum for engaging the community in developing its own policy directions for housing and neighbourhood character.

The Community Dialogue confirmed community support for taking proactive steps in implementing the Plan's vision for a sustainable community – through policy and regulatory tools, to enable the provision of new housing types and stronger measures to protect the character of West Vancouver's distinctive neighbourhoods; and through 'pilot projects', to demonstrate and evaluate new housing types.

MEETING WEST VANCOUVER'S HOUSING NEEDS:

The Plan's policies, summarized below, will serve to meet the community's housing needs for at least the next five years. These policies are outlined in more detail in the Housing Policies section of the Plan and are illustrated in the Opportunities for Housing Choice Map.

- Encourage mixed commercial and residential developments in the Ambleside, Dunderave and Horseshoe Bay commercial centres, and consider mixed uses in local commercial areas. The plan anticipates residential units of varied size, and tenure with densities typically between 1.0 and 1.75 FAR. (Policy H 5)
- Development of Future Neighbourhoods in the Upper Lands at a density of up to 2.5 units/gross acre with at least 40% of the new units expected to be non single-family. (Policy UL 3)
- Consider the redevelopment of the Evelyn Drive area with multi-family housing at a density up to 1.0 FAR. (Policy H 2)
- Encourage redevelopment of Clyde Avenue east of Taylor Way for mixed residential and commercial uses at a density up to 1.75. (Policy BF-D 4)

HOUSING & CLIMATE CHANGE:

Community greenhouse gas emissions data from 2007 reveals that we need to concentrate our climate action efforts on improving the energy efficiency of our existing and renovated houses for the following reasons:

- More than 53% of West Vancouver's climate changing, greenhouse gas emissions originate from heating our homes
- More than 80% of the homes that will be here in 2050 are already built.

While the District is eager to put forward energy efficiency targets for buildings, we recognize that the Provincial Building Code remains the overriding legislative framework governing the development industry. In lieu of energy performance standards, the District is committed to doing as much as possible to educate and empower our home owners to improve the energy performance of their houses.

HOUSING OBJECTIVES

The Plan recognizes that West Vancouver is a community of distinct neighbourhoods. Housing Policies work toward meeting the community's housing needs within this framework, and are based on the following objectives:

- **Sense of Community:** Foster community connectedness and strengthen a sense of belonging, identity, activity and interaction.
- **Harmony/Character:** Develop in harmony with the landscape, surrounding uses and desired neighbourhood character; preserve and enhance the character of residential neighbourhoods; where required, provide sensitive transitions in form and density between existing and new development.
- **Choice:** Encourage a variety of housing types, forms, tenures, sizes and densities that meet diverse needs.
- **Compact Communities:** Consistent with other objectives, concentrate development in commercial and neighbourhood centres to contribute to their vitality, encourage walking and cycling, support transit use, offer convenient access to services and amenities, make more efficient use of infrastructure and resources, and preserve green space.
- **Accessibility/Adaptability:** Support accessible and adaptable housing to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities or other special needs.
- **Affordability:** Support non-market housing to meet the needs of people with lower incomes; provide a wider range of housing options to increase relative affordability of market housing.

The District recognizes that, with clear jurisdiction for growth management, land use, urban form and location of buildings, we can have an even greater influence on total energy use associated with buildings than by regulating building construction methods only.

See also:
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
(Implementation/Future
Reviews)

HOUSING POLICIES

EXISTING NEIGHBOURHOODS

Policy H 1

Engage in further dialogue at both a community and local neighbourhood level to develop a full understanding of community trends, desires and related housing needs and potential policies for addressing them.

The dialogue should attempt to accomplish at least the following:

- A community-wide understanding of the issues, the assumptions underlying them and potential objectives, including those regarding demographics, housing, schools and neighbourhood character.
- An understanding of the possibilities and an exploration of the options for addressing the issues identified.
- Definition of community objectives and priorities, and short and long-term strategies for meeting them.

Policy H 2

The Evelyn Drive Planning Area, as shown on Map BF-B12, is located immediately north of Park Royal Shopping Centre, south of Keith Road and west of Taylor Way. It is 20.78 acres in size including road right-of-way. At October 2006 the area was composed of 65 lots and, with one exception, zoned for single family housing.

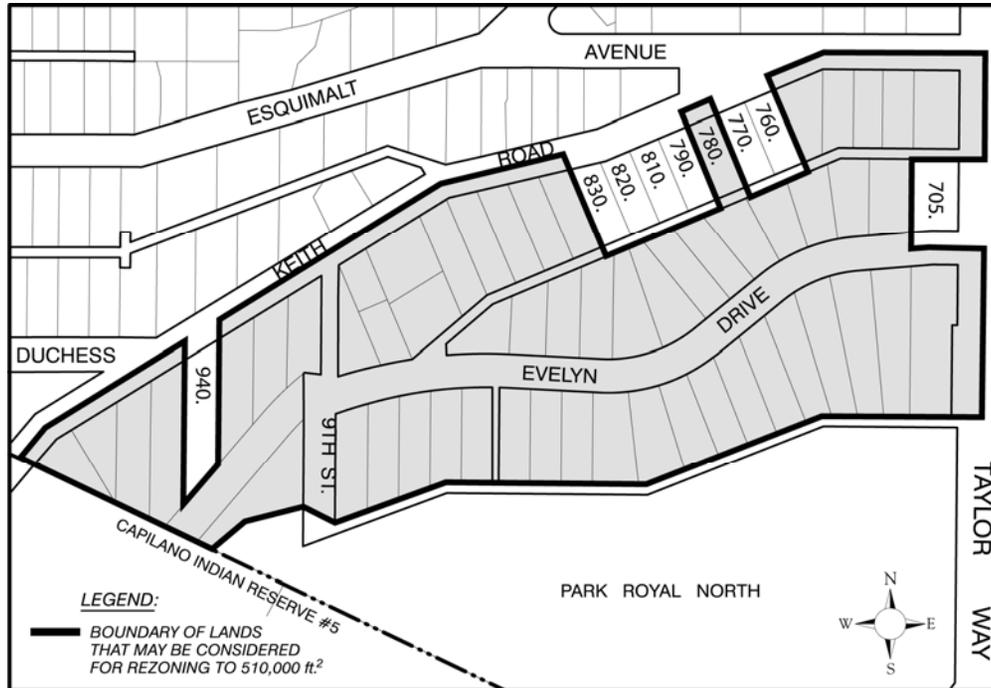
The Planning Area may be rezoned to permit redevelopment to single-family, two-family, cluster housing and apartment buildings compatible with and providing a sensitive transition to the adjacent low-density single-family neighbourhood to the north. The new neighbourhood will be characterized by a diversity of housing including variety in housing types, built form

- Discussion at a community or local neighbourhood level, as may be appropriate to the issue or strategy.
- Identification of principles, priorities and processes to help guide subsequent local discussions, including principles of good governance, stewardship and sustainability.
- The detailed terms of reference and process description will be put before Council for endorsement prior to commencing such a dialogue.

and dwelling sizes, and will include rental housing and accessible housing. While most of the lots in the Planning Area will be redeveloped, several existing single-family homes will remain and will contribute to the diversity of housing. Key to redevelopment will be at least one new road connection to Keith Road and additional public walkways linking the neighbourhood to the larger community of West Vancouver.

A zoning amendment is necessary to implement this policy. The lands shown shaded on the map below may be considered for rezoning to provide for

approximately 510,000 sq. ft. of housing and up to 350 dwelling units. Applications may be considered for rezoning of 940 Keith Road and 705 Evelyn Drive for Two-family housing.



Policy H 3

Policy H 3 recognizes that opportunities occur in limited site-specific situations where a housing need may be addressed in a manner that is consistent with the Principles of the OCP. This Plan specifies that applications for such site specific zoning or OCP amendments within a single family area should apply in limited circumstances and be subject to Council's Public Involvement Policy and defined criteria.

- Sites proposed for rezoning will also be subject to a preliminary review in a report to Council to assess how they meet the criteria, to determine their suitability for further consideration, and to provide an opportunity for initial public comment.
- Sites considered for rezoning should present unique opportunities and conditions for alternate zoning. Examples of such unique sites include the 2100 Block of Gordon Avenue (approved 2003), the School Board Offices site on 21st Street, the Fisheries and Oceans site on the north side of Marine Drive and the Wetmore Motors Site. Two larger areas where rezoning of multiple properties may be considered are the Evelyn Drive Area and Clyde Avenue East of Taylor Way. Any other sites to be considered should meet similar conditions or criteria, namely:
 - development would have minimal impact on established areas in terms of access, traffic, parking, and obstruction of views;
 - the site would provide a degree of physical separation (e.g. a road, green belt, alternate use, or change in natural grade) from the surrounding neighbourhood.
- Appropriate housing types on such sites may include smaller townhouse units, low-rise multiple family housing, supportive housing, rental housing, or housing that meets adaptable design guidelines.
- Housing intended for people with special accessibility needs, including certain forms of seniors' housing, should be located on relatively flat sites, close to transit, services and amenities.
- The required Community Plan amendment will include a designation to require a development permit review to ensure that siting, design and building forms contribute to desired neighbourhood character.

Policy H 4

- **Single family zoned properties on the north side of Bruce Street and south side of Bay Street east of Nelson Avenue in Horseshoe Bay may be considered for rezoning to a duplex zone.**
- **Lot 13 of District Lot 775 Plan 4595 may be considered for low-density multiple family uses such as duplex, triplex, or townhouse use without further amendment to this Plan.**

Policy H 4.1

Allow for the examination of new housing prototypes in Existing Neighbourhoods through a District of West Vancouver led housing pilot program which:

- (a) would allow for new housing prototypes consistent with the community's desire for improved housing choice, for housing that is sympathetic to a site's natural features and minimizes site alteration, and for housing designed to fit with established neighbourhood character;
- (b) would involve the selection of project(s) by Council following a formal open selection process;
- (c) would include a formal evaluation of projects upon completion of construction to understand the effectiveness of a project in meeting community objectives and to inform the development of policies, regulations and processes related to housing and neighbourhood character;
- (d) may include projects which require a rezoning, development permit, and/or variance permit, in which case the approval process provided for in the Local Government Act shall apply and no amendment of this Official Community Plan shall be required; and
- (e) provide opportunities for public involvement including, but not limited to, access to project information, site tours upon completion, and participation in the evaluation process.

Policy H 4.2

Provide for rental coach houses as a detached form of secondary suite in all residential zones where secondary suites are a permitted use.

Policy H 4.2.1

Consider rental coach houses as a detached form of secondary suite in other residential zones, subject to site-specific rezoning and a development permit under Development Permit Area BF-B 3.1.

Policy H 4.2.2

Consider ownership coach houses on properties designated in the Official Community Plan for future infill housing development, subject to rezoning and a development permit for infill housing.

Policy H 4.2.3

Consider ownership coach houses as an incentive for conservation of properties listed on the Community Heritage Register, subject to a Heritage Revitalization Agreement and municipal heritage designation.

See also
LOCAL ECONOMY

COMMERCIAL AREAS

Policy H 5

Encourage mixed commercial and residential developments in the Ambleside, Dundarave and Horseshoe Bay commercial centres, and consider mixed uses in local commercial areas.

- Ensure the representation of residents, property owners, and neighbourhood organizations in formulating plans and policies for mixed use development in these areas.
- Consider “amenity” bonuses where appropriate (for example projects which provide unique community benefit, involve adaptive reuse of existing structures, or which incorporate sustainable design.)

FUTURE NEIGHBOURHOODS

See also
UPPER LANDS

Policy H 6

Encourage a variety of housing types in the future neighbourhoods in the Upper Lands.

COMMUNITY WIDE POLICIES

Policy H 7

Support the provision of non-market housing.

- Explore opportunities for providing non-market housing when evaluating development applications and facilitating land assemblies, and consider working with senior levels of government, public/private partnerships, administrative assistance, and the use of amenity zoning in private developments.
- Ensure that existing non-market housing is supported.

Policy H 8

Support the provision of adaptable design in a variety of housing forms.

- Consider establishment of adaptable design guidelines.
- Consider encouraging adaptable design through floor area bonuses.

Policy H 9

Support the provision of rental housing.

- Do not support conversion of rental apartments to strata in buildings greater than four units.
- Support the continued legalization of existing unauthorized secondary suites, and the construction of new legal suites as a means of providing quality and safe rental units.
- Consider amenity zoning (bonuses) for rental housing.

Policy H 10**Support the provision of greater housing options for the District's growing senior population.**

- Examine the potential role of secondary suites in providing additional housing options for seniors.
- Support the development of home service and assistance programs to allow seniors to remain in their existing homes and neighbourhoods.
- Support the creation of new senior housing in areas with convenient access to services and transit.

Policy H 11**Undertake a review of Development Cost Charges (DCCs).**

- Review equity of DCCs recovery costs among different housing types and consistency with objectives for housing variety.
- Explore ways in which DCC rates can reflect the financial benefits of compact, land efficient development patterns (e.g. by relating charges to buildable area rather than solely on the number of units.)
- Consider better ways to predict and isolate the real costs associated with land development practices, and incorporate this into Municipal infrastructure financing structures.

*See also:
FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK; and
FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION
(Implementation/Future
Reviews)*

Policy H 12**Encourage more energy efficient buildings that help to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions.**

- Support and encourage West Vancouver home owners to evaluate their homes' energy consumption (e.g. conduct a "Home Energy Audit"), and to investigate ways in which consumption (and home heating costs) can be reduced (e.g. "Home Energy Retrofits").
- While minimum home energy performance requirements are set by the BC Building Code, Council will consider home energy performance when considering development applications (development permits, re-zonings, and development variance permits)
- In the spirit of innovation and leadership, the District will collaborate with other levels of government, utilities, and non-government organizations to:
 - Raise awareness of the importance of energy to all aspects of West Vancouver's social, economic, and environmental well-being;
 - Explore tools to affect energy performance requirements of residential buildings;
 - Demonstrate sustainable community planning techniques; renewable energy tools and technologies; and building energy efficiency best practices, all of which contribute to conserving energy and reducing our greenhouse gas emissions; and
 - Continue to participate in programs and projects that enable municipalities to advance energy efficiency, energy conservation and emissions reduction measures such as: Fraser Basin Council's Community Action on Energy & Emissions Program; Pembina Institute's Municipal Green Building Leaders Project; and the Canadian Home Builders Association's BuiltGreen Municipal Toolkit Project

- Continue to include, in the disposition of surplus municipal lands, green building and energy efficiency requirements as a condition of sale.
 - Work with residents to build community-wide appreciation and support for climate change mitigation and adaptation.
 - Work with utilities and green building / technology specialists to support education and capacity building opportunities for our community's building industry.
 - Explore alternative funding models so as to support home energy retrofits in the community.
 - Monitor the effects of home energy audits and home energy retrofits on our community GHGs
- Articulate the link between transportation and land use planning and their collective impact on a community's energy consumption and GHG emissions. Use neighbourhood design and land use planning approaches that reduce costs and environmental impacts, while maintaining community livability. Examples include: creating a range of housing opportunities and choices; supporting walkable neighbourhoods; mixing land uses; preserving the natural environment and open spaces; providing a variety of transportation alternatives; directing controlled development in existing commercial centres; taking advantage of compact building design.

Policy H 13

"The Housing Action Plan, (adopted February 2013) outlines the existing policy framework for housing in West Vancouver, identifies the key housing gaps based on population and demographic trends, and an extensive community dialogue. The Housing Action Plan identifies actions for addressing the community's housing issues; specifically to:

- Continue established practices for supporting development of seniors' and rental housing, accessible/adaptive housing units and variations in unit size in new developments;
- Consider coach houses as an infill housing option in established residential areas following an informed community discussion;
- Identify, consider and engage the community in a discussion of opportunities to retain and add purpose-built rental housing;
- Work to strengthen Official Community Plan policies on housing diversity to provide a framework for the consideration of innovative housing proposals; and
- Monitor and report annually on the Housing Action Plan."