

# Neighbourhood Character Working Group

## Terms of Reference

### PURPOSE OF WORKING GROUP

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Character Working Group is to propose, consider and review regulations and policies that respect neighbourhood character, protect heritage and reduce the impacts of development in the District's Single Family Dwelling Zones. The working group will engage the community and make recommendations to Council regarding the creation of new bylaws and policies and / or the amendment of existing bylaws and policies.

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

On February 23, 2015, Council voted unanimously to formally recognize new development and redevelopment impacts on neighbourhood character as an issue in the District of West Vancouver.

In Single Family Dwelling Zones, issues associated with neighbourhood character relate to the compatibility of new and renovated single unit residential dwellings with the historic housing stock. New home size, siting, design, massing, grading and landscaping are raised as issues in this regard.

### 3.0 DUTIES

#### 3.1 Work Plan

After an orientation session, the working group will review these terms of reference and prepare an initial work plan consistent with the duties described below.

#### 3.2 Review

The working group will review existing information regarding neighbourhood character in West Vancouver and options for education, awareness, policy and regulation targeted at mitigating the impacts of development on existing neighbourhoods. Information sources include:

- the District of West Vancouver's Official Community Plan as amended;
- the District of West Vancouver's Zoning Bylaw, as amended;
- the District of West Vancouver's Interim Tree Bylaw, as amended;
- recent and relevant community demographic trends, housing and real estate trends, development industry practices and design standards;

- best practices for developers (as related to site preparation, site development and property maintenance) from other jurisdictions and relevant organizations;
- other relevant documents as appropriate.

### 3.3 Engage

The working group will identify and then engage the wider community and stakeholders on potential options for the preservation of neighbourhood character, including exploring issues related to massing and house size. Possible option identification and engagement should enable the working group to consider the best approach to neighbourhood character preservation, including building bulk mitigation measures.

### 3.4 Recommend

On the basis of its review of relevant information and the findings of its engagement program, the working group will make recommendations to Council regarding:

- the amendment of relevant District policies, bylaws and practices;
- communication, public awareness and education;
- any other matters (as necessary or appropriate) that the working group determines are of significance related to neighbourhood character and building bulk in West Vancouver.

### 3.5 Progress Report

At relevant and timely intervals during its term, the working group will prepare a progress report (an interim report) to Council and review its terms of reference with the Community Engagement Committee to identify any modifications in tasks and completion dates that may be indicated.

### 3.6 Final Report

Upon completion of its assignment, the working group will submit a report of its findings and recommendations to Council. The working group will be responsible for the preparation of a report detailing any steps recommended to address the issue. Following review by the working group, the report will be submitted to Council.

The working group's function is advisory to Council, and the working group's role ends upon submission of its final report to Council. The working group has no continuing advocacy role concerning their findings and recommendations.

## 4.0 COMPOSITION

The working group will consist of:

- the Chief Administrative Officer, as an ex-officio member;
- one member of Council as Council liaison;
- one member of staff as Staff Liaison; and,
- a minimum of eight and maximum of ten citizen members reflecting a diversity of backgrounds. Members will be appointed on the basis of their ability to:
  - listen with an open mind
  - think critically
  - build consensus
  - work towards realistic solutions to the challenges of the issue
  - advance the work of the working group in an unbiased way
  - represent the interests and desires of the community instead of personal interests

The working group shall select a Chair and a Vice Chair from among its citizen members.

The role of the Council member is to:

- act as a liaison between Council and the working group;
- provide status reports to Council and solicit, where appropriate, Council's views on the issues and items being discussed and considered by the group.

The role of the citizen members is to:

- represent the broad views and interests of West Vancouver citizens;
- contribute their expertise and experience to the working group process;
- attend and participate in working group meetings and any other consultation events as determined and scheduled by the working group.

The role of the staff liaison is to assist the working group with facilitation and project management including:

- obtaining information, facilitating contact with District departments, and arranging for professional advice as required;
- supporting the Chair and working group members in promoting effective group functioning;
- directing the support function for the working group regarding scheduling working group meetings; preparing agendas; taking notes at meetings; maintaining working group records; posting agendas, notes, reference material, progress reports on the District's website as well as any other material the working group wishes to be made public.

## **5.0 GENERAL TERMS AND CODE OF CONDUCT**

1. **Decorum and Debate:** Working Group members must devote the necessary time and effort to prepare for meetings, arrive at meetings on time, provide feedback in keeping with the working group mandate, and be respectful of others' thoughts and opinions.
2. **Authority and Reporting:** The working group and its members will not represent themselves as having any authority beyond that delegated in the Terms of Reference (ToR) approved by the Community Engagement Committee.
3. **Media / Social Media:** Members of the working group are not permitted to speak to the media or post to any social media platform as representatives of the working group unless authorized to do so by the Director of Community Relations & Communications.
4. **Working group members must strive to convey the public interest and remember that they represent the District of West Vancouver; this means that they must be consistent with the District's position on specific issues.**
5. **Professionalism:** Working group members who engage in activities regarding the District of West Vancouver or working group initiatives / projects and promotions are expected to maintain a respectful, constructive, professional tone that maintains the brand consistency of the District of West Vancouver.
6. **Confidentiality:** All new working group members are required to sign a copy of the "Volunteer Services Confidentiality Agreement" as part as their general orientation.
7. **West Vancouver Residency Requirement:** all working group volunteers must reside in the District of West Vancouver. In the event that a working group member's primary place of residence changes to another municipality during the term of an appointment, the member must notify the Chair and Staff Liaison regarding change of address.

Depending on the length of appointment term remaining, the working group member may be asked to step down, thus creating a vacancy. Vacancies will be filled through advertisement placed in local newspapers, social media and on the website; applications received will be reviewed by the Community Engagement Committee.

## **6.0 TERM**

The term of the working group is twelve (12) months or until the working group completes its work, whichever is earlier.

## **7.0 MEETING SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURE**

### **7.1 Meeting Schedule**

The working group shall create a schedule of meetings that will be posted publicly.

The working group shall follow the meeting framework as set out in the Working Group Guidelines, as determined by the Community Engagement Committee.

### **7.2 General Procedure**

The working group shall follow the procedures as set out in the Working Group Guidelines, as determined by the Community Engagement Committee.

### **7.3 Participating in meetings remotely**

If the Chair requires, a working group meeting may be conducted by means of electronic or other technology when one, and no more than two, members are unable to attend in person.

The Chair must not participate electronically.

## **8.0 COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION STRATEGY**

The working group shall consult with stakeholders and the community as generally described in Section 3.3 above. The working group will rely on the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) for support and advice on community engagement. The District will assist in the preparation of a supporting communications and engagement plan.

## **9.0 SUB-GROUPS**

A basic principle guiding the operation of working groups is flexibility (meetings, discussions, and compiling/evaluating information) and the freedom to establish sub-groups for specific tasks within the working group's mandate. The working group may establish sub-groups as set out in the Working Group Guidelines.

## **10.0 DECISION MAKING APPROACH/FORMULATING RECOMMENDATIONS**

The working group will build toward consensus in formulating and evaluating alternatives, and in making recommendations. Unanimity is not required, nor is voting. In conducting their work, the working group shall maintain:

- a clear view of their purpose and Terms of Reference;
- a focused, task-oriented, and time-sensitive approach;

- accountability by each member for the effectiveness of the group as a whole;
- a flexible process inclusive of all interests in the community.

## **11.0 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Conflict of Interest: Section 11 (Conflict of Interest) of the General Council Committees Policy applies to all working group members.

A conflict of interest exists if a working group member is a director, member or employee of an organization seeking to benefit from the District or if the working group member has a direct or indirect pecuniary (financial) interest in the outcome of working group deliberations. Working group members who have a conflict of interest with a topic being discussed must declare that they have a conflict of interest, describe the nature of the conflict and leave the room prior to any discussions and must refrain from voting thereon.

Working group members are not permitted to directly or indirectly benefit from their participation on the working group during their tenure.

Where an actual or potential conflict of interest exists, the working group member shall explain its nature to the group and the Chair shall submit the matter to the CEC for consideration.

## **12.0 SUPPORT/PROFESSIONAL SERVICES UTILIZED**

The Staff Liaison will arrange for professional and consulting advice as necessary subject to budgetary constraints.

## **13.0 BUDGET**

The working group shall have a reasonable use of miscellaneous services such as clerical services, photocopying, paper supplies, meeting areas, appropriate refreshments, and other requirements such as the advertising of engagement events. These are provided primarily through the Staff Liaison and the applicable District Division. Any funds beyond this must be approved through the budget request process.