

Neighbourhood Character Working Group

Draft Terms of Reference

PURPOSE OF WORKING GROUP

The purpose of the Neighbourhood Character Working Group is to propose, consider and review regulations and policies to enhance neighbourhood character 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 12 individuals:

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

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.

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.

7.2 General Procedure

- Working group meetings are open and constructive and are conducted in a spirit of good faith.
- The working group will rely upon the Community Engagement Committee (CEC) for support or advice on procedure and community engagement. Working groups will not hold any closed sessions.
- Working group meetings are conducted in a spirit of good faith and respect, so as to foster a free flow of ideas and encourage the unconstrained development of options;
- The public and press shall similarly exercise good faith and respect, mindful that the proceedings are a “work in progress,” and not a forum for lobbying or decisions;
- Public and/or press may attend working group meetings as observers;
- Working groups may receive delegations and presentations, and may call for public input from time to time;
- The Chair will provide opportunity for members of the public to ask questions and offer points of information, generally at the end of meetings; there will be no lobbying or speeches;
- Electronic recording of a working group’s discussions, decisions or activities may occur with the working group’s permission;
- Should anyone disrupt or impede a working group meeting, the Chair may expel that person from the meeting.

8.0 COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION STRATEGY

The working group shall consult with stakeholders and the community as generally described in Section 3.3 above. The District will assist in the preparation of a supporting communications 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 required to review or address specific tasks or issues as they arise.

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

Working group members shall advise of personal conflicts of interest – for example, situations where a member:

- has a direct or indirect interest in the deliberations, pecuniary or otherwise;
- is involved in a matter contravening Council's Conflict of Interest guidelines

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. A budget of \$40,000 has been requested to support this working group.