



## Implementation of Neighbourhood Character Working Group's recommendations

Council is considering regulations to implement the Neighbourhood Character Working Group's (NCWG) recommendations to protect and enhance West Vancouver neighbourhoods. Amendments to the *Official Community Plan* and *Zoning Bylaw* will be considered at a Public Hearing on July 27, 2021 at 6 p.m.

Public Hearing Notice: [https://westvancouver.ca/sites/default/files/dwv/public-notices/2021/jul/2021\\_07\\_27\\_NOTICE\\_OF\\_PUBLIC\\_HEARING\\_WEB.pdf](https://westvancouver.ca/sites/default/files/dwv/public-notices/2021/jul/2021_07_27_NOTICE_OF_PUBLIC_HEARING_WEB.pdf)

### What was the process that led to these proposed changes?

The District of West Vancouver established the citizen-led NCWG in 2018 with the purpose:

*“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 typically met bi-weekly and, over the course of 26 months, convened over 75 times including regular meetings, educational workshops and community outreach. Its westvancouverITE project webpage generated 4,600 visits and, in total across its engagement phases, the working group completed 13 outreach events—including four industry-specific meetings—reaching 175 participants, collected 475 surveys, and received comment forms providing 5,250 individual question responses.

Building on its terms of reference, the working group identified 35 recommendations organized into six categories:

1. Reduce actual building size;
2. Encourage suites and coach houses;
3. Limit visual impact of buildings as seen from the street;
4. Encourage landscaping;
5. Simplify process; and
6. Encourage neighbour consideration.

The NCWG presented these recommendations to Council in December 2020, and Council directed staff to bring forward implementing regulations. In response, staff has proposed amendments to the *Official Community Plan*, *Zoning Bylaw*, and other relevant bylaws, including streamlined processing and updated coach house development permit guidelines. Associated deliverables such as educational best practices materials and website updates will be prepared following Council consideration of these regulations.

### **What is the purpose of this document and how do I learn more?**

Frequently asked questions summarizing the proposed amendments follow. Please note that this summary is provided for convenience only and references the proposed bylaws as considered at the June 28, 2021 Council meeting and linked below. In the case of any inconsistencies between this summary and the proposed bylaws, the proposed bylaws will govern.

- Memo to Council dated June 24, 2021 with updated Zoning Bylaw amendment: <https://westvancouver.ca/sites/default/files/dwv/council-agendas/2021/jun/28/21jun28-5b.pdf>
- Report to Council dated June 10, 2021: <https://westvancouver.ca/sites/default/files/dwv/council-agendas/2021/jun/28/21jun28-5.pdf>
- Neighbourhood Character Working Group: Final Report considered December 7, 2020: <https://westvancouver.ca/sites/default/files/dwv/council-agendas/2020/dec/07/20dec07-5.pdf>

### **When would these bylaws be effective?**

In order to continue to support owners and applicants to prepare for any changes that may impact future building proposals, the effective date for the *Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, and Fees and Charges Bylaw* amendments is proposed to be January 31, 2022. Other proposed bylaw amendments would be effective upon adoption.

### **What are the proposed changes to the Official Community Plan to enhance neighbourhood character and encourage coach houses?**

- Require neighbourhood character consideration as part of development permit, rezoning and variance applications;
- Expand existing policy direction to explicitly consider atypical site configurations (e.g. panhandle lots);
- Streamline approval for one-storey without basement, zoning compliant coach houses by removing the development permit requirement, and clarify that a development permit is required for all other coach houses; and
- Clarify and strengthen the existing coach house design guidelines.

The effective date of these changes would be January 31, 2022.

### **What are the proposed changes to the Zoning Bylaw?**

The proposed amendments are summarized below. They are grouped to address floor area, coach houses and suites, building massing, and site modification and landscaping. Bylaw provision numbers are noted beneath each topic for reference. The effective date of these changes would be January 31, 2022.

**What changes to floor area are proposed to reduce building size, increase housing diversity, and protect homeowners?**

<p><b>Floor Area Ratio (FAR)*</b></p> <p>Floor area: 202.06 - 205.06, 207.06 - 210.06</p>	<p>Reduce FAR alongside coach house or suite floor area exclusion</p> <p>Set maximum density as 0.30 FAR for lots greater than 681.3 m<sup>2</sup> (7,333 ft<sup>2</sup>).</p> <p>For smaller lots, maintain maximum density of 0.50 FAR for lots less than 408.8 m<sup>2</sup> (4,400 ft<sup>2</sup>) and set maximum floor area as 206.2 m<sup>2</sup> (2,220 ft<sup>2</sup>) for lots between 408.8 m<sup>2</sup> (4,400 ft<sup>2</sup>) and 681.3 m<sup>2</sup> (7,333 ft<sup>2</sup>).</p>
<p><b>Coach house or suite exclusion*</b></p> <p>Exclusion: 130.08</p> <p>Existing homes: 130.08</p>	<p>Encourage housing diversity</p> <p>Introduce a floor area exclusion for a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• coach house of 0.10 FAR up to 74.3 m<sup>2</sup> (800 ft<sup>2</sup>); <i>or</i></li> <li>• suite that abuts the house, but is outside of the building footprint for improved liveability, of 0.05 FAR up to 46.5 m<sup>2</sup> (500 ft<sup>2</sup>).</li> </ul> <p>Refer to <i>Suite</i> and <i>Coach house</i> sections below for related regulations.</p> <p>Discourage demolitions by extending the above exclusion to existing homes built prior to 1976, that are in compliance with current floor area maximums, and that do not further increase floor area under the current bylaw (i.e. the coach house or suite floor area exclusion applies to a lot meeting these criteria with an existing house constructed to the current FAR).</p>
<p><b>Maximum floor area*</b></p> <p>Floor area: 202.06 - 205.06, 207.06 - 210.06</p>	<p>Limit new homes that are out-of-scale with the neighbourhood by expanding the existing lot consolidation restriction alongside a reduced subdivision threshold.</p> <p>Set maximum floor area for each RS zone to 150% of the buildable floor area of a site area equal to the minimum lot size for the zone based on current standards (refer to <i>Subdivision</i> example below).</p> <p>Delete 130.18 <i>Lot Consolidations</i> as redundant.</p>
<p><b>Subdivision*</b></p> <p>Site area: 202.03 - 205.03, 207.03 - 210.03</p>	<p>Align subdivision standards with maximum floor area for each zone</p> <p>Reduce minimum lot size by 12.5%</p> <p><i>For example, the <u>existing</u> RS3 minimum lot size is 1,115 m<sup>2</sup> (12,002 ft<sup>2</sup>) which allows 390.3 m<sup>2</sup> (4,201 ft<sup>2</sup>) floor area at 0.35 FAR. The <u>new</u> maximum floor area is 150% of this amount or 585.4 m<sup>2</sup> (6,301 ft<sup>2</sup>). A 12.5% reduction in RS3 minimum lot size is 975.6 m<sup>2</sup> (10,501 ft<sup>2</sup>) which allows 292.7 m<sup>2</sup> (3,150 ft<sup>2</sup>) floor area at 0.30 FAR. This enables a lot that would otherwise be</i></p>

*impacted by the maximum floor area to be subdivided into two lots (i.e.  $2 \times 292.7 \text{ m}^2 (3,150 \text{ ft}^2) = 585.4 \text{ m}^2 (6,301 \text{ ft}^2)$ ).*

Site width and depth:  
202.04 - 205.04,  
207.04 - 210.04

Reduce minimum lot width 25% in RS zones, with the exception of a 12.5% reduction in minimum lot width in RS5 and RS9 zones.

Delete 120.26 *Minimum building site conditions for new lots* and amend 120.25 *Site width* to improve consideration of irregular lots.

**Floor Area Application**

Apply regulations as intended to existing neighbourhoods District-wide by defining specific zones for RS-zoned lands within the *Future Neighbourhood Development Permit Area*

Eagle Island and Future Neighbourhoods:  
206.01,  
211.01 - 214.01

Exclude and/or re-zone undeveloped lands already subject to area planning to RS2-UL, RS3-UL, RS8-UL and RS10-UL (e.g. from RS2 to RS2-UL).

Amendments above marked with an asterisk (\*) do not apply to RS6 (Eagle Island) where coach houses are not permitted, and to RS1, RS8, RS2-UL, RS3-UL, RS8-UL, and RS10-UL zones.

**What other changes are proposed to expand the opportunities for coach houses and suites?**

**Accessory building**

Limit total exclusion and increase flexibility of excluded accessory building area

Exclusion:  
130.08

Allow 41.0 m<sup>2</sup> (441 ft<sup>2</sup>) combined exclusion for a garage, carport, coach house, workshop and/or shed, instead of the current exclusions defined by use. This flexibility aligns with reductions in minimum parking requirements previously adopted as part of Council's climate emergency response.

Separation:  
130.01

Define minimum building separation as 4.5m (14.8 ft) from a home, 3.0m (9.8 ft) from a coach house, and 1.2m (3.9 ft) from another accessory building.

**Suite**

Align regulations and define criteria for suite floor area exclusion

Remove restrictions:  
130.05

Remove maximum floor area permitted within a suite to align with the BC Building Code, and allow both a suite and a coach house on a lot.

Floor area exclusion:  
130.05

Allow suite with a maximum floor area of 46.5 m<sup>2</sup> (501 ft<sup>2</sup>) within a separate building abutting to and without interconnection with the home (refer to *Coach house or suite exclusion* above).



**Coach house**

Improve existing coach house regulations

<p>Building area: 130.051</p>	<p>Limit floor area of a building containing a coach house to 148.6 m<sup>2</sup> (1,600 ft<sup>2</sup>) inclusive of other uses in the building (e.g. garage) and floor area excluded from calculation (e.g. accessory building, coach house, and basement). A minimum of 30% of the living space must be on the main floor, and the maximum garage area is 20.5 m<sup>2</sup> (220.7 ft<sup>2</sup>).</p>
<p>Siting: 130.051</p>	<p>Clarify setback to rear site line, and require a minimum 6.0 m<sup>2</sup> (65.6 ft<sup>2</sup>) of private outdoor space.</p>
<p>Upper storey: 130.051</p>	<p>Allow the upper storey floor area to be up to 60% of the main floor of the building (including garage or other uses) for a coach house with a pitched roof and 50% for a coach house with any other roof form. Limit the combined width of dormers to 50% of a building face and 30% of the perimeter.</p>
<p>Management: 130.051</p>	<p>Extend property manager regulations currently applied to suites to coach houses.</p>

**What other changes are proposed to reduce the apparent size of homes?**

**Basement**

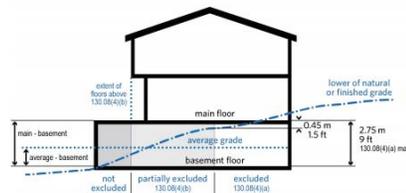
Limit visible basements

Fully excluded portion:  
130.08

Reduce maximum basement exposure to 0.45m (1.5 ft) and introduce a maximum basement with a height of 2.75m (9.0 ft).

Partially excluded portion:  
130.08

Amend the existing calculation so that the floor area exclusion for an overheight basement cannot exceed that applied to a basement with a height of 2.75m (9.0 ft).



**Semi-enclosed spaces**

Count spaces that contribute to the perceived size of homes

Covered:  
130.08

Continue to count covered, upper storey decks that are more than 1.2m (4.0 ft) from the building, and count covered spaces located on any storey that are enclosed on more than 60% of the perimeter.

Overheight:  
130.08

Extend existing double-counting of interior spaces that exceed 4.4m (14.4 ft) height to apply to overheight, exterior covered spaces.



Uncovered:  
130.08

Count courtyards enclosed on more than 85% of the perimeter.

**Building Height**

Reduce the perceived size of homes

Average Grade:  
120.17

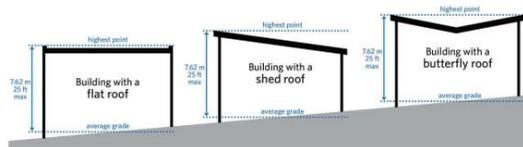
Define average grade and its calculation methodology as follows. The natural and finished grade is identified at the endpoint of each wall section along the perimeter, and the lower is used for the average grade calculation. Applied to the entire perimeter of a building or structure, the result is a single *average grade* calculation (not a separate *natural grade* and *finished grade* for the building or structure under the current bylaw). Improve liveability of basements by allowing 15% of the perimeter up to 5.0m (16.4 ft) to be calculated only based on the natural grade.

Planters:  
110.00 grade, finished

Increase the minimum planter dimension considered as finished grade to 1.8m (5.9 ft).

Roof:  
120.19

Limit the height of butterfly and shed roofs to the height permitted for flat roofs.



Highest Building Face:  
130.10

Amend highest building face envelope calculation to require existing 33% exclusion to be contiguous, and limit eave projection adjacent to a street to 1.2 m (3.9 ft).



**What other changes are proposed to limit site modification and to improve landscaping?**

**Site Design**

Soften modifications of natural grade and contribute to the landscaped character of neighbourhoods

Retaining Walls: 120.22	Reduce the steepness of slopes created with retaining walls to a maximum grade line of 50% from a front or flanking side site line, and to a maximum grade line of 75% from other site lines.
Excavations: 120.22	Require a minimum setback of 1.2m (3.9 ft) from the front or rear site lines for an excavated retaining wall, and increase the minimum separation between excavated retaining walls to 1.2m (3.9 ft).
Fences: 130.17	Limit fence height adjacent to a street to 1.8m (5.9 ft), and clarify existing bylaw maximum for the combined height of a fence and retaining wall.
Landscaping: 130.16	Limit impermeable and un-vegetated permeable surfaces to that required for a pedestrian sidewalk and driveway to a maximum of 50% of the yard, and apply this limit to all yards adjacent to a street. Any additional impermeable and un-vegetated permeable surfaces must be turf blocks and be no more than the area of vegetated, permeable surfaces elsewhere on the site.  Reduce the existing maximum security (equal to the cost of the landscaping) to \$25,000 to remove disincentive to high-quality landscaping.

**Parking**

Garage orientation: 120.27	Lessen the prominence of garages  Reduce minimum setback by 3.0m (9.8 ft) from the front site line for garages where vehicle access is oriented perpendicular to the street.
-------------------------------	--



Underground: 141.03	Align maximum exposure for an underground parking structure located within a required yard with the 0.45m (1.5 ft) basement limit.
------------------------	--

**What are the proposed changes to other bylaws?**

**BOULEVARD BYLAW** effective upon adoption

- Repeal the existing *Encroachment Bylaw* due to overlap and contradictions with the *Boulevard Bylaw*, and incorporate relevant provisions into the amended *Boulevard Bylaw*;
- Improve traffic safety by allowing for the removal or liming of trees in the boulevard that obstruct sightlines;
- Require landscaping in front of a fence or retaining wall adjacent to a street;

- Clarify that the design of boulevard parking should not appear as an extension of the property, and require non-landscaped area of the boulevard to be landscaped if a parking pad is permitted;
- Clarify that landscape plans submitted with permit applications must include the boulevard; and
- Apply *Boulevard Design Plan Review* fee to all sites in alignment with the proposed *Fees and Charges Bylaw* amendment.

**SOIL REMOVAL, DEPOSIT, BLASTING AND ROCK-BREAKING BYLAW** effective upon adoption

- Consolidate the existing *Soil Removal and Deposit Regulation Bylaw* and the existing *Blasting Bylaw*;
- Clarify survey requirements, and require only a single rock removal permit for a house, coach house, garage, driveway and parking;
- Simplify rock volume calculations to be based on lot size rather than building footprint, and set the new volume limits as 400 m<sup>3</sup> (523 yd<sup>3</sup>) for lots less than 885 m<sup>2</sup> (9,526 ft<sup>2</sup>) and 600 m<sup>3</sup> (785 yd<sup>3</sup>) for larger lots;
- Clarify length of a *Blasting Permit* to be 10 working days for lots less than 885 m<sup>2</sup> (9,526 ft<sup>2</sup>) and 15 working days for larger lots; and
- Limit the quantity of rock that can be removed via splitting to 45 m<sup>3</sup> (59 yd<sup>3</sup>) and the length of a *Rock-breaking Permit* to 15 days.

**BUSINESS LICENSE BYLAW, BYLAW NOTICE ENFORCEMENT BYLAW and MUNICIPAL TICKET INFORMATION SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION BYLAW** effective upon adoption

- Clarify licencing requirements and fees for coach houses and suites in alignment with the proposed *Fees and Charges Bylaw* amendment; and
- Add penalties for failure to license a coach house or suite, and for failure to identify, authorize or provide a property Managers contact information for a coach house or suite.

**FEES AND CHARGES BYLAW** effective January 31, 2022

- Consolidate existing coach house fees to a single fee for a development permit delegated to the *Director of Planning and Development Services* (i.e. for a one-storey plus basement, two-storey, or any coach house requiring a zoning variance);
- Increase fee for a coach house requiring Council consideration; and
- Align bylaw with the proposed *Soil Removal, Deposit, Blasting and Rock-breaking Bylaw* with related fee updates limited to an additional fee for rock removal that exceeds the volume limits.