

**THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF WEST VANCOUVER
PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
COUNCIL CHAMBER, MUNICIPAL HALL
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2024**

Committee Members: R. Hollingsworth (Chair), R. Brown, L. Burger, D. Hawreluk, D. Milliken, S. Nicholls, M. Vaughan, C. Yao; and Councillor Thompson attended the meeting in the Council Chamber, Municipal Hall. Absent: H. Wood.

Staff: H. Dallas, Senior Manager, Legislative Services/Corporate Officer; J. Bailey, Director, Planning & Development Services (Staff Representative); D. Hawkins, Senior Manager, Community Planning & Sustainability; M. McGuire, Senior Manager, Current Planning & Urban Design; and J. Kuzmich, Planning Clerk (Committee Clerk) attended the meeting in the Council Chamber, Municipal Hall.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 a.m.

2. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the October 23, 2024 Planning Committee meeting agenda be approved as circulated.

CARRIED

With the consent of Committee members, the Chair varied the agenda to consider Item 4 immediately prior to Item 3.

REPORTS / ITEMS

4. Higher-Level Objectives: Economic Viability and Ensuring Planning Directions Achieve Intended Outcomes

Staff recalled that the Committee had requested a higher-level discussion regarding methods for achieving the objectives of planning initiatives in response to Committee concerns at the previous meeting that the ongoing Ambleside Local Area Plan may not achieve actual outcomes.

S. Nicholls left at 10:34 a.m. and returned at 10:38 a.m.

Committee members compared West Vancouver planning practices (including development negotiations, zoning frameworks and municipal approval processes) with those of other municipalities and cities. Members expressed concern for the District's methods of prescriptive planning and pattern of downsizing development proposals in the review process.

Members identified density and flexibility as the two key components for enabling redevelopment, in terms of achieving both the viability and variety of new buildings.

Members further discussed the conditions needed to allow developers to achieve Local Area Plan objectives including creating more flexible regulations and utilizing site specific (versus blanket) zoning to create “anchor development sites” such as the Fresh St. Market lot.

Members debated the level of density that prompts financially viable development including a Floor Area Ratio of 3-5 and a height up to 15 storeys and noted broader concerns that current Local Area Plan ideas of adding a single storey to existing development rights (in some instances) will not achieve anything.

Members noted equity concerns in spot zoning, with a path forward being to identify primary development sites and/or blocks where more height and density is allowed, and secondary sites and/or blocks where lower-rise redevelopment is enabled through strategies like parking and amenity relaxations.

Members commented on the form and character of Ambleside in the context of redevelopment and revitalization highlighting the uniqueness of Ambleside’s south-facing geography and public waterfront and commented in support of a variety of building typology including pockets of higher density with low-density strategies to promote Ambleside’s strengths and bring more life to the commercial areas.

Members elaborated on the strategy of “anchor sites” as a form of balance where said “anchor sites” serve as catalysts and focal points, and areas of lower-rise redevelopment and assembly may be better enabled to highlight Ambleside’s character and location. The overall effect would be variety and more meaningful revitalization, better pedestrian flows from the waterfront, and places people would want to live and shop.

Committee members provided suggestions on how the Ambleside Local Area Plan Commercial Areas can support revitalization by:

- Zoning for retail and commercial at the ground level, and providing more flexible options for uses above street-level;
- Enabling community use and public benefits through redevelopment;
- Addressing the lack of hotels in West Vancouver;
- Having a Local Area Plan that invites creative responses from owners and architects;
- Exploring opportunities to encourage missing business types to come work in West Vancouver; and
- Encouraging design that connects the waterfront and Marine Drive.

Members noted external factors that make redevelopment difficult in West Vancouver and Ambleside such as:

- Competition with new centers and redeveloping malls in Metro Vancouver;

- Market conditions and regulations that communicate that West Vancouver is not open to new ideas and development;
- Transportation planning involving several levels of government; and
- Land ownership in Ambleside consisting of small, individually owned parcels that limit willingness of developer and owner to buy and sell.

Members commented on parking considerations related to redevelopment and suggested the Local Area Plan consider varying parking strategies to adequately accommodate required parking while not requiring prohibitively expensive underground parking for all sites in order to encourage low rise infill development in specific areas.

Members commented on Grosvenor as an example of redevelopment that was adopted with a smaller footprint than was originally proposed, garnered negative public feedback, but ultimately led to regeneration of that area.

Members reasserted that redevelopment is the means to revitalization and discussed the risks of policy that does not fulfill its objectives (i.e. revitalization of Ambleside's commercial areas). Members noted concern that the Local Area Plan might be another wasted opportunity.

Members commented on the cyclical nature and prevalence of public opposition regarding new development proposals, and the current outcome of existing, older buildings that are not easy to operate within and do not have strong historic value.

Councillor Thompson commented that public pushback to development typically focuses on traffic concerns, specifically regional transportation considerations including congestion related to bridges and highway infrastructure.

Members commented that it is not an easy situation and that there will not be a single or simple answer, and that the Committee would like to see and discuss a more enabling plan at a future meeting. Members recommended enabling heights and densities, but not to the intensity of neighboring centers such as Brentwood or downtown Vancouver.

It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the Planning Committee recommend that Council direct staff to:

1. Encourage redevelopment as a core tenet of the Local Area Plan;
2. Explore potential height and Floor Area Ratio increases and varied parking strategies in some locations; and
3. Refer a draft plan back to the Planning Committee.

CARRIED

It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the discussion regarding Higher-Level Objectives: Economic Viability and Ensuring Planning Directions Achieve Intended Outcomes be received for information.

CARRIED

3. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

Committee members queried on procedure regarding minute adoption and staff responded.

It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the adoption of the September 25, 2024 Planning Committee meeting minutes be deferred until the next Planning Committee meeting scheduled for November 20, 2024.

CARRIED

REPORTS / ITEMS

4. Higher-Level Objectives: Economic Viability and Ensuring Planning Directions Achieve Intended Outcomes

This item was considered immediately prior to Item 3.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Councillor Thompson acknowledged a member of the Youth Advisory Committee.

6. NEXT MEETING

Chair queried discussing future meeting times and staff responded.

It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the next Planning Committee meeting be scheduled for November 20, 2024 at 10:30 a.m. and held in-person in the Council Chamber, Municipal Hall.

CARRIED

7. ADJOURNMENT

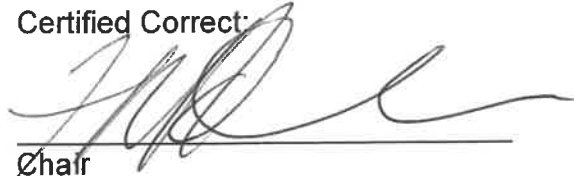
It was Moved and Seconded:

THAT the October 23, 2024 Planning Committee meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

Certified Correct:


Chair


Committee Clerk