

REPORT
Regular Council Meeting
1983 January 04

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF BURNABY

HOUSING COMMITTEE

HIS WORSHIP, THE MAYOR
AND MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

Madam/Gentlemen:

REPORT OF THE HOUSING COMMITTEE

RE: RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD ENVIRONMENT STUDY

RECOMMENDATION:

1. THAT this report be received for information.

R E P O R T

This report outlines the progress which has been made on the Residential Neighbourhood Environment Study. It focuses on the issue of residential compaction (the increasing of housing densities or opportunities) in Burnaby's lower density neighbourhoods. The report provides an overview of the basic strategy for compaction being considered by the Planning and Building Inspection Department. It will also be forwarded to Council for information.

A. The Need for Residential Compaction

The Municipality is considering residential compaction for the following reasons:

1. Create Additional Ground Oriented Housing Opportunities

The residential Growth Management Study for Burnaby analyzed household characteristics/trends in relation to the potential supply of ground oriented housing, given existing Municipal policies. The study concluded that there would be shortfall in supply of 3200 ground oriented units by the year 2001. Compaction is one possible means of providing the required ground oriented housing opportunities. It will also increase the variety of housing types that are available, thereby accommodating a wider range of population groups in the Municipality.

2. Stabilize and Improve Neighbourhood Environments

Several neighbourhoods in Burnaby are experiencing considerable pressure to change. Many neighbourhoods demonstrate the need for environmental improvement. Compaction is considered a positive influence which could be used to stabilize and improve neighbourhoods.

3. Optimal Use of Service Infrastructure

Excess capacity in schools, parks and other services presently exists in certain neighbourhoods. Compaction has the potential of more efficiently utilizing the existing Municipal infrastructure and of avoiding the often costly burden of providing additional neighbourhood services in one area while excess capacity exists in another area. In addition it has the potential of making fuller utilization of the existing housing stock in areas of declining population.

: - Agenda 1983 January 04

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REPORT
 Regular Council Meeting
 1983 January 04

- 2 -

4. More Efficient Use of Land

Burnaby has a limited supply of land. The process of Municipal improvement and growth demand constant review of and adjustment to those land uses. Compaction increases the number of housing units on an area of land and can result in more efficient use of the Municipal land resource. More intense use of residential land may serve to maintain or increase the relative affordability of housing units.

B. The Residential Neighbourhood Environment Approach to Compaction

The Residential Neighbourhood Environment Study approaches residential compaction as a means to create better living environments for Burnaby residents. The main thrust is one of stabilization and improvement. The goal is one of providing neighbourhood environments which grow with the residents and meet the needs of those residents over time. In this light residential compaction is viewed as a vehicle to assist in achieving this goal.

C. Municipal Residential Framework

When considering a change in policy to accommodate residential compaction it is important to keep the Municipal residential framework in mind. The residential framework provides overall guidance for Municipal policy generation in the form of a goal contained in the Residential Growth Management Study and approved by Council on 1981 June 22. That goal is

"To create and maintain identifiable and stable residential neighbourhoods which collectively offer a range of living environments within the Municipality in a variety of appropriate locations".

The message of this goal in relation to residential compaction is one of creating and maintaining a range of housing types or opportunities and living environments. The implication is one of pursuing different compaction actions in different neighbourhoods in order to assure that the action is suited to the area and that its application does not improperly compromise and detract from the balance of residential opportunity available in Burnaby.

Through compaction the variety and supply of housing opportunities can be increased on a neighbourhood and Municipal basis.

D. Part I of the Residential Neighbourhood Environment Study: Neighbourhood Profiles

The neighbourhood profiles analyzed the various forces, trends and conditions present in Burnaby's neighbourhoods. The study identified those neighbourhoods which are experiencing pressures for change and those which require environmental improvement. In relation to residential compaction the study provides the background information to identify neighbourhoods which are capable of absorbing additional housing units without destroying the quality of the living environment. Neighbourhoods where compaction would serve to stabilize and/or improve the area can be identified as a result of this work.

E. Part II of the Residential Neighbourhood Environment Study:
Residential Opinions

The survey sampled residents' opinions of their neighbourhoods. Generally a high level of satisfaction was expressed with Burnaby's neighbourhoods. There was a reluctance to support any substantial neighbourhood change, such as the introduction of higher density housing. There was support for secondary suites and for compatible duplexes. To a lesser degree residents supported small lot development.

An exception to the residents' reluctance to change was the positive response toward having senior citizens' housing in their area "even if it were located across the street from their house". The intent of introducing seniors' housing is to provide opportunities for older people to move from their single family homes into reduced maintenance homes within their neighbourhood and near their friends.

In relation to residential compaction the resident opinion survey indicates that secondary suites, properly scaled duplexes and small lot development would be received favourably by Burnaby residents if they were sensitively applied. The introduction of seniors accommodation into neighbourhoods complements the compaction work by making more ground-oriented single family housing opportunities available in established neighbourhoods.

F. Residential Compaction Strategy

The various inputs and influences discussed in the first part of this report form a set of parameters for residential compaction discussions. These parameters translate into the following compaction strategy, under consideration by the Planning & Building Inspection Department.

1. Compaction in designated neighbourhoods utilizing
 - a) secondary suites
 - b) compatible scale duplexes
 - c) small lot development in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood.
2. Introduction of limited seniors oriented housing alternatives into designated neighbourhoods and located appropriately near services.
3. Pursue small scale multiple in-fill housing alternatives such as zero lot line and townhouses in accordance with the design qualities suggested by residents in the opinion survey for future site specific application.

This compaction strategy has the following benefits to the Municipality:

1. provides opportunities for additional ground oriented housing units as required;
2. maintains diversity of neighbourhood housing opportunities in the Municipality;
3. focuses on compaction actions (forms and qualities) which residents are more receptive to.

REPORT
Regular Council Meeting
1983 January 04

- 4 -

4. utilizes available service infrastructure capacity - avoids major public expense which could result from the need to upgrade services and facilities in areas without excess capacity;
5. moves toward a major Special Need Housing goal to accommodate aging residents in their neighbourhood when they no longer require/desire their single family home;
6. stabilizes and improves neighbourhood environments where required.

G. Work Program for the Residential Compaction Review

The residential compaction strategy outlined in this report is presented for information. It represents a working draft for staff discussion prior to the preparation of the neighbourhood designations.

It is anticipated that a report proposing neighbourhood designations for residential compaction will be ready for consideration by the Housing Committee and Council early in 1983.

Once the neighbourhood designation phase is complete the preparation of implementation guidelines and by-law regulations will begin. It is at this point that the survey of compaction regulations from other jurisdictions will be utilized in study process.

The attached APPENDIX II illustrates the major influences on the process of generating our compaction strategy and will result in the designation of neighbourhoods for residential compaction.

Respectfully submitted.

Alderman V.V. Stusiak
Chairman

Alderman D.P. Drummond
Member

Alderman A.H. Emmott
Member

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