
TO: CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2006 August 11

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

SUBJECT: **RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED AT PUBLIC HEARING FOR PROPOSED FIRE HALL #7 (3151 GILMORE DIVERSION)**

PURPOSE: To respond to the issues raised at the Public Hearing of 2006 July 25 concerning Rezoning #05-21.

RECOMMENDATION:

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to those individuals who either made a presentation or provided correspondence to the Public Hearing held on 2006 July 25 concerning Rezoning #05-21.

REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Public Hearing for Rezoning #05-21 was held on 2006 July 25. This purpose of the proposed rezoning bylaw amendment is to permit the construction of a new Fire Station (#7) on a net .72 acre site centred on 3151 Gilmore Diversion and involving adjacent unopened and redundant sections of the Norfolk Avenue and Carleton Avenue rights-of-way (see **attached Sketch 1**).

At the Public Hearing, nineteen form letters and one item of correspondence were received expressing concerns with the proposed rezoning. As well, two speakers from neighbouring properties made presentations indicating their opposition to the proposed rezoning. One letter of support was submitted, along with a suggestion concerning the placement of the advance warning signals.

Following termination of the Public Hearing, Council adopted a motion requesting that staff prepare a report to Council on the addressing the issues raised. This report is provided in response to that directive.

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2.0 BACKGROUND

The proposed plan proposes a two storey fire station fronting on Gilmore Diversion with one level of underground parking. The fire station will provide a strong street edge running parallel to Gilmore Diversion, with the apparatus bay located on the west side of the building. Primary fire vehicle access will be provided from Gilmore Diversion at Dominion Street at the north end of the site, with the principal egress to be provided via Gilmore Diversion about 50 metres north of the Canada Way/Gilmore Diversion intersection with provision for both northbound and southbound movements.

A new paved north-south lane will be constructed within the retained 8.5m wide western portion of the Carleton Avenue road allowance adjacent to the site from Dominion Street south to the existing east-west lane between Dominion Street and Norfolk Street. A public pedestrian walkway with lighting will be built within the closed portion of the Carleton Avenue road allowance to allow a pedestrian linkage from Norfolk Street north to the lane.

3.0 ISSUES RAISED

A number of concerns and issues with respect to the proposed Fire Station were raised at the Public Hearing as follows:

- 3.1 *Locational Considerations* - Why was this site selected? Were other sites considered? Could an alternative site be considered, or alternatively could an existing fire station be upgraded instead? Why was this location considered before a rezoning was approved?

In April 2002, the City commissioned a comprehensive study to recommend a staged fire station improvement program that would identify the locations and numbers of any additional fire stations to address deficiencies in existing emergency response coverage and facilities. In the first phase of the study, the consultants looked at both existing and projected demographic and development elements for the City to define patterns of risk from low to high as to potential loss of life and property. The study also reviewed data from incident records to determine average response times for arriving units and developed a computer model of the existing and proposed street network to compare capabilities of existing and alternative fire station sites.

As a result of this phase one work, three deficiency areas in the City were identified – the most critical being in the BCIT/Burnaby Hospital area. This under served area had the highest risk element and as well depended on excess service demands being placed on the coverage zones of the nearest Fire Stations at Metrotown and Hastings. The option of upgrading either of these halls would

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not address the serious coverage deficiency and response time needs identified in the study.

Phase 2 of the consultant's work was to assess potential fire hall locations and to develop recommendations for the preferred sites. In the BCIT/Burnaby Hospital area, three potential sites were assessed within the identified target area. Of these, the subject site emerged as the clearly preferred location in terms of response time capabilities, site access and egress ease and flexibility, site availability and area integration. One of the other sites was discounted given access and egress difficulties, lack of multi-directional responses and site availability issues. The other site was considered inferior because of soil stability and contamination problems, restricted access and its location at the northern edge of the target area further away from the hospital and BCIT facilities.

In terms of the timing of the rezoning proposal following, rather than before, designation of the site, there is a need for the specifics of the proposal to be available at the time of the Public Hearing. The design was developed using an iterative approach to ensure that the various elements and considerations can be appropriately addressed. The rezoning proposal before Council represents the best, specific solution for this site that needed to be developed and presented prior to the initiation of a rezoning proposal.

In summary, the site selected represents the culmination of thorough review and assessment process to ensure that the emergency facilities needs of the City are addressed in a thorough and strategic manner. The building of a modern fire station is a major investment for the City that will provide life saving services for decades to come. The functional and operational considerations that relate to candidate sites are essential considerations, as is its ability to be a "good neighbour".

3.2 *Change of Neighbourhood from Residential to Industrial*

The delegation stated a concern that the nature of the neighbourhood will be changed from residential to industrial, particularly since the trees are to be removed exposing the area to the M5 industrial area across Gilmore Diversion.

The current land use designation for the property at 3151 Gilmore in the associated Community Plan is for "Institutional" (P5 Guidelines) (see **attached Sketch 2**). The proposed rezoning under consideration is for CD (Comprehensive Development) using the P2 Institutional zone for administration and assembly uses that serve the municipality. While it is acknowledged that the proposed development of these lands will involve the removal of the second growth

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deciduous trees and thereby change its current nature, so too would a seniors' residential development or other institutional use.

As was described at the Public Hearing, the excavation of the site and the placement of the building will result in a significant portion of the structure not being visible at grade level on Norfolk Street adjacent to the existing apartment building (see **attached Sketch 3**). This fact combined with the substantial hedging and other plant material along the edge of the new lane way and at the end of the Norfolk cul-de-sac will result in non-obtrusive building mass and form from the vantage point of the general neighbourhood to the west. The new lighted and landscaped walkway from Norfolk north to the improved lane will also add a new positive element to the neighbourhood.

The qualitative aspects of the design of the proposed station have taken into account given its prominent location on Gilmore Diversion and the proximity to the residential neighbourhood to the west. The use of brick and glass elements along with a green roof on the building and the substantial hedging screening along the western perimeter are intended to help the integration with the surrounding area.

Apart from the obvious life and property safety benefits from having a fire station in close proximity, they are often viewed as a positive element in a residential neighbourhood as a place of interest, particularly for young children, a safe refuge and a source of extra eyes offering an extra level of surveillance in the area.

In summary, the proposed rezoning for this P2 Institutional use maintains the general institutional theme for the site and does not introduce an industrial change to the neighbourhood. In addition, the orientation of the fire hall use is to the Gilmore Diversion frontage with the combination of the green roof for the fire bay structure, the hedge screening and the grade difference between the site and the Norfolk Street residential uses provide an appropriate edge to the neighbourhood.

3.3 *Increased Traffic on Norfolk Street*

A concern was expressed that an allowance for a future driveway for the Fire Station onto Norfolk Street will increase traffic and be a safety concern for the safety of pedestrians, especially senior and children.

The development plan proposed in the rezoning, in fact, does not make any provision for fire station access/egress to or from Norfolk Street.

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3.4 *Loss of Treed Area and Effect of the Fire Hall on the Environment*

It was indicated by the delegation that many residents invested in this area because of the presence of the trees on the subject site and that the removal of the trees will be a detriment to the bird population.

As indicated above, the subject site is designated for institutional development and is not designated as a park site. Therefore, it is inevitable that there will be a loss of trees through the development process. As part of the preparatory work on the rezoning, the City engaged the services of ECL Envirowest to undertake a raptor survey of the site to assess the possible presence of raptor species. As a result of the work, no nesting sites were observed and it was noted that this is an already disturbed and small fragmented site.

The City Arborist was also requested to examine the site to determine whether there were any significant trees worthy of retention. This area has second growth cottonwood and alder with a significant amount of invasive species present (i.e. ivy and Himalayan blackberry). The arborist advised that there were no individual or groupings of trees worthy of specific retention.

The landscape plan for the fire station makes provision for a dense cedar hedge along the perimeter retaining wall for screening purposes. In addition, along the western edge of the site there will be extensive plantings with a combination of western red cedar and vine maple specimen trees providing supplemental screening. The Gilmore Diversion frontage has provision for a partial double row of street trees along with building edge landscaping.

In terms of the fire hall itself, it should be noted that the design incorporates energy efficient materials and mechanical systems. The consultants have also incorporated additional conservation and building technologies with the intent of reaching a silver level certification under the LEED guidelines. As a component of its storm water management solution, the fire hall incorporates a “green roof” that will also be a softening element of the overall landscaping treatment.

3.5 *Noise Concerns*

A concern was raised that Fire Stations are exempt from the Burnaby Noise Bylaw and that noise from building operations, lights, engines and sirens leaving the bays will be a neighbourhood disturbance.

While safety considerations must be paramount in leaving the hall, the fire department does attempt to use discretion in the use of sirens when entering the street system. The City has a number of fire stations in proximity to residential

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areas (e.g. #3 in Metrotown, #5 on Hastings Street at Carleton Avenue, #2 on Edmonds Street at just south of Canada Way, and #4 on Duthie Street south of Monticeto Avenue). In each instance, the Fire Department does its best to adopt a “good neighbour” approach. Typically, the Chief and the Deputy Chief are accessible to representatives of the surrounding areas to address any specific issues that arise. In addition, the senior officer at the respective halls is also available for the same purpose.

It should be noted that while this fire station is to be built with three bays, it is intended that for the next five to ten year period, only one truck would operate out the hall. Surplus/backup vehicles may be stored in one or more of the extra bays in the interim.

Typically, at the beginning of each shift change (8 a. m. and 6 p.m.), the vehicle will be backed out to the driveway area at the rear of the site for start up and a system check. This is a mandated requirement under the Motor Vehicle Act. Other outside activities are (e.g. truck washing or hose maintenance) will be done during day time periods with little or no associated noise. The fact that the driveway is about 12 feet below the adjacent lane area and contained by a concrete retaining wall will assist in mitigating surface noise.

Emergency vehicles currently use Canada Way and Gilmore Diversion on a regular basis and there will be a needed increase in the use of sirens. While safety considerations must be paramount in leaving the hall, the fire department does use discretion in the use of sirens when entering the street system depending on the prevailing traffic situation.

The Fire Chief has indicated his willingness to meet with any representatives of the neighbourhood to establish a point of contact and to discuss and explore any possible arrangements to assist the department’s good neighbourhood practices.

3.6 Location of Flashing Warning Signals

A submission was made by a citizen who supported the rezoning proposal, but requested that particular consideration be given to the placement of the flashing warning signals that are to be associated with the exit driveway from the hall given the existence of curves in the road.

As part of its overall design, the Fire Hall will have wireless radio interconnection to the existing traffic signals at Manor Street and Canada Way for fire pre-emption activation. As such, there will be an ability to stop southbound and northbound traffic at those points. In addition, for southbound traffic, there will be a flashing amber and red light with a stop bar about 50 metres north of the exit

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driveway. For the northbound traffic, there will be a similar warning and stop signal with stop bar on the pavement in the vicinity of the driveway/median exit. This recognizes that the Canada Way/Gilmore Diversion intersection is about 50 metres to the south of the exit point which will also be pre-empted for the exiting fire crews. The specifics of the actual design will be reviewed by the Engineering department who will take into account the observations of the writer with respect to sight lines and overall safety.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The proposed location of the #7 Fire Station on the subject site is in response to a comprehensive review of the City's overall emergency fire response services and the identified need for a station in the BCIT/Burnaby Hospital area. Within the identified target area, the subject site was determined to be the significantly superior location based on the evaluation criteria.

This report provides a response to the various issues raised at the Public Hearing associated with the rezoning of the fire hall site and demonstrates a deliberate effort to best integrate the hall within its surrounding land use context. It further indicates a willingness of the Fire Department to do its best to ensure "good neighbourhood" practices to the extent possible and to have an ongoing dialogue with representatives of the local neighbourhood towards this end.

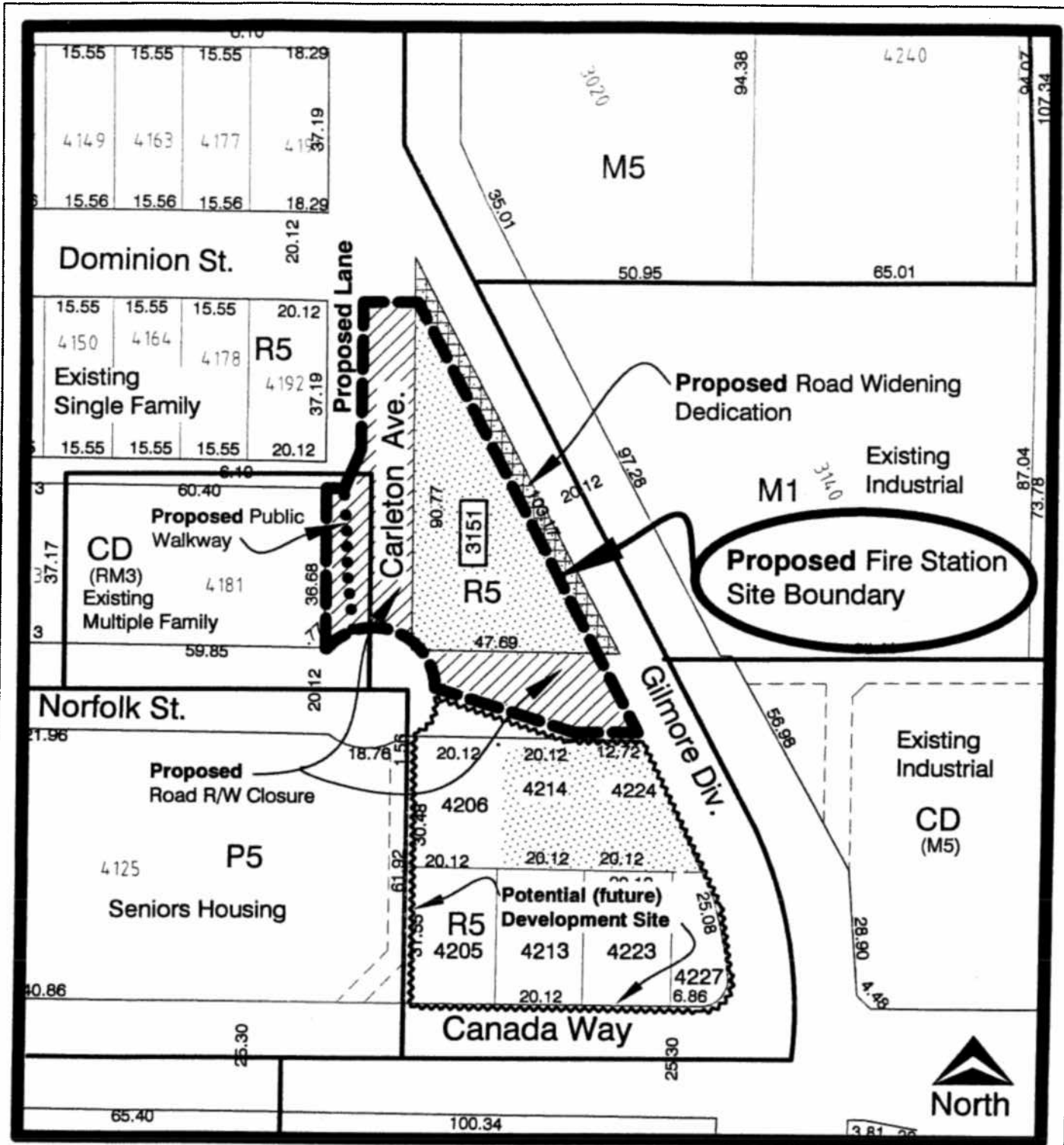
It is recommended that a copy of this report be forwarded to those individuals who either made submissions or presentations at the Public Hearing of 2006 July 25 concerning Rezoning #05-21.



J.S. Belhouse
DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING

JSB/tn/sa

cc: Fire Chief
Director Engineering
Assistant Chief Building Inspector – Project Management/Administration



Planning and Building Department

Scale: 1 = 1500

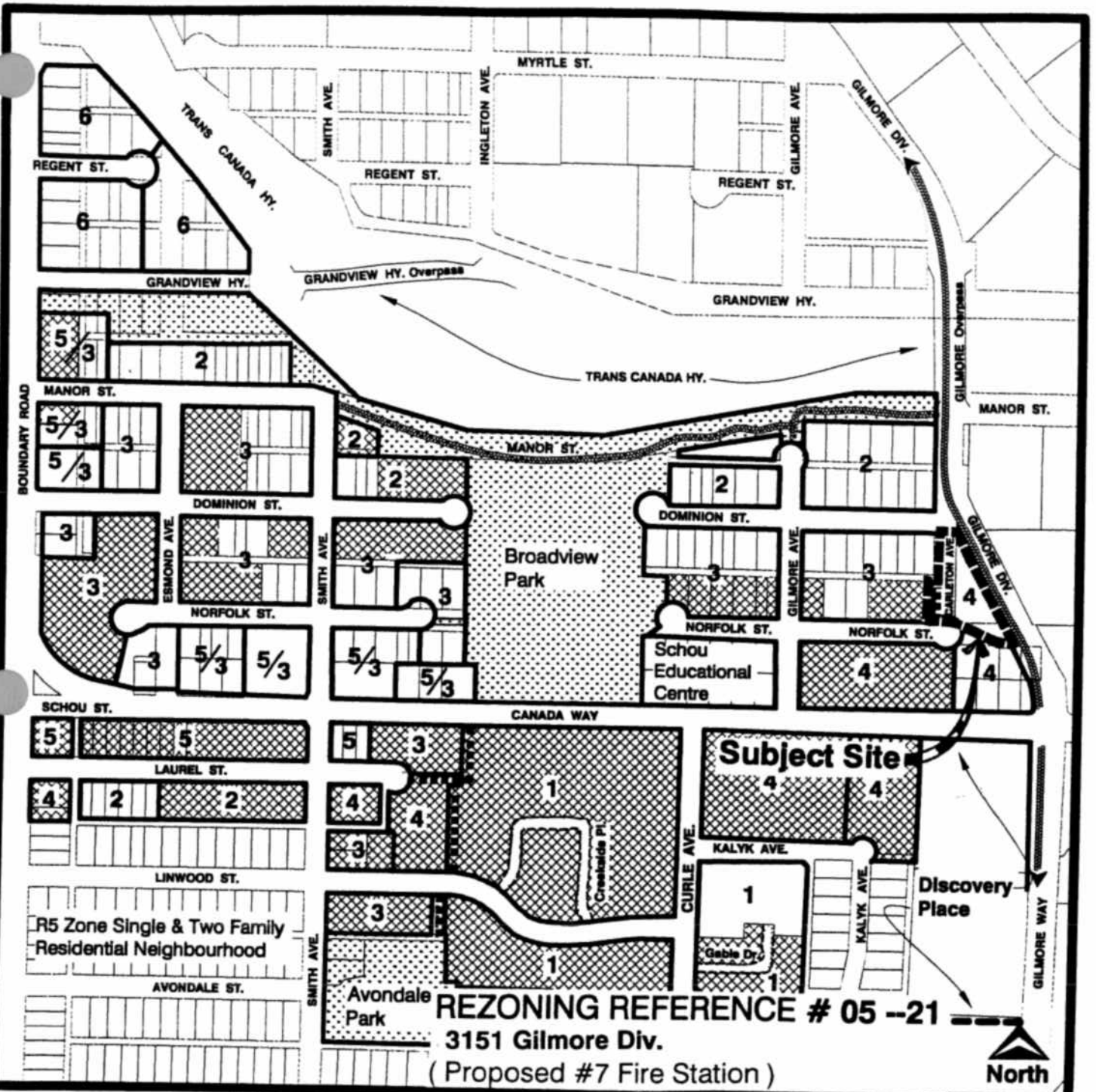
Drawn By: J.P.C.

Date: June 2006

REZONING REFERENCE # 05 --21
3151 Gilmore Div.
 (Proposed #7 Fire Station)



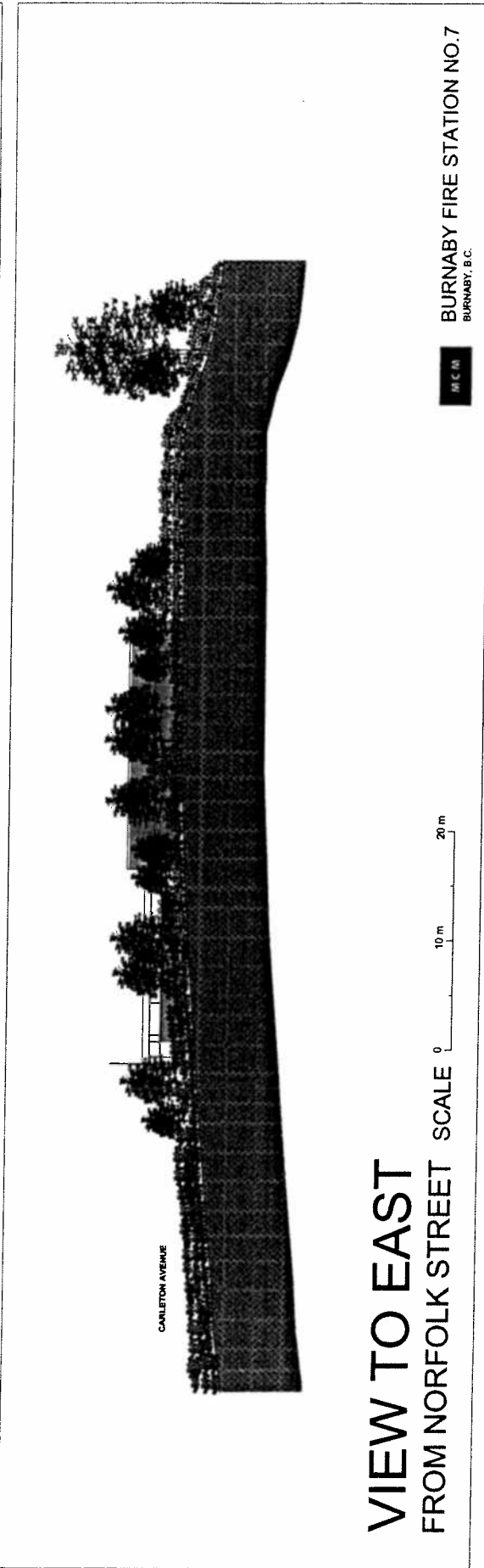
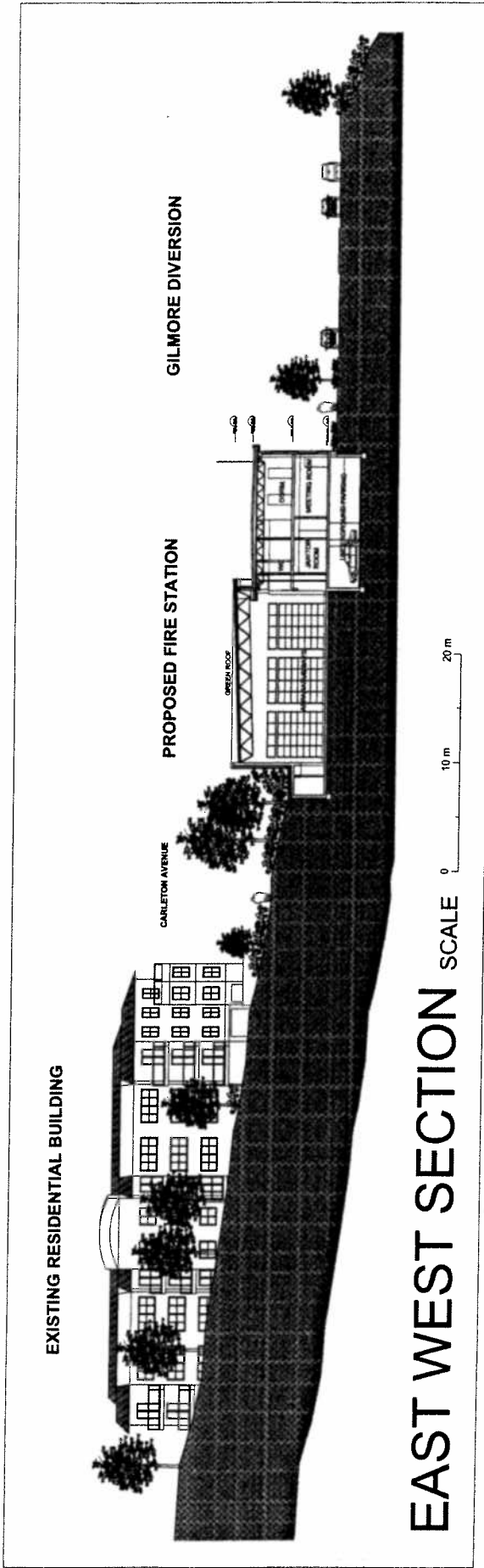
Sketch # 1



City of Burnaby Planning and Building Department

Updated to: January 2006
 Reference date June 1971

Community Plan Eight



BURNABY FIRE STATION NO.7
BURNABY, B.C.

SKETCH 3