



Item .....  
Meeting .....2012 February 06

COUNCIL REPORT

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**TO:** CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2012 February 01  
**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 49500 20  
**Reference:** REZ #11-24  
**SUBJECT:** REZONING REFERENCE #11-24  
6634 & 6638 DOW AVENUE  
RESPONSE TO PUBLIC HEARING ISSUES

**PURPOSE:** To respond to issues raised at the Public Hearing for Rezoning Reference #11-24.

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** a copy of this report be sent to the applicant and to individuals who spoke at, or submitted correspondence to the Public Hearing for Rezoning Reference #11-24.

**REPORT**

**1.0 BACKGROUND**

On 2011 September 20, a Public Hearing was held for Rezoning Reference #11-24. The subject rezoning application proposes a high-rise apartment tower with street-fronting townhouse development in accordance with the Metrotown Town Centre Development Plan (see attached Sketch #1 and #2), for properties located at 6634 and 6638 Dow Avenue.

At the Public Hearing, individuals from the surrounding community raised a number of issues. The issues raised took the form of presentations and written correspondence, and generally included concerns regarding traffic congestion, appropriate building form, crime, privacy, property values, views, consistency with the City's Social Sustainability Strategy, compatibility with adjacent school use and displacement of tenants of the current apartment building on the subject site. As requested by Council at the Public Hearing, this report provides a staff response to the issues raised.

**ISSUES RAISED**

*Issue #1 – Building form and density: Concerns were raised regarding the relationship of the proposed tower to the surrounding low-rise neighbourhood and the adjacent school.*

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*Response:*

The Council-adopted Metrotown Town Centre Development Plan (1977) designates the sites along Beresford Street, adjacent the BC Parkway, for higher density development. Under the Plan, recent development applications (Rezoning References #08-05, #10-39 and #11-22) have utilized the RM5s zoning district as a guideline for use and density purposes. The high-rise proposal for the subject site is fully in accordance with Council-adopted plans and policies for use of the RM5s zoning district as a guideline.

In terms of the tower's relationship to the surrounding neighbourhood, it is noted that high-rise to low-rise relationships are well established in the region and very common in the City's Town Centre areas. It is also noted that the proposed development provides a townhouse podium component, which continues the low-rise relationship to the street that is evident to the south and west in this area.

With respect to the relationship of the proposed development to the adjacent Maywood Community School, it is noted that much of the school's activity areas are oriented to the interior of the site, toward Imperial Street. For this reason, there is no significant concern with overlook onto the school or with loss of privacy for the residents of the proposed apartment building. Based on the distance of the proposed tower from the outdoor "active" part of the school, which is estimated to be a minimum of 95 m. (312 ft.) (see attached Sketch #3), from a site planning perspective<sup>1</sup>, the school and the proposed apartment development are considered to be compatible. Also, it is worth noting that, given the location of the subject tower to the northwest of the school, the school site itself will not be affected by building shadows. Staff have met with representatives of the Burnaby School District #41, who were satisfied that the proposed development is indeed compatible with the school in terms of its siting and orientation to Dow Avenue.

One of the specific concerns raised in relation to Maywood Community School involved the school's capacity and its ability to accept future growth. When looking at the overall school needs for Metrotown, it is noted that the City and School District have been active partners in preparing and implementing a comprehensive plan for the provision of Public School Facilities for Burnaby. Planning for school needs is set within an overall context of a relatively stable total school age population demographic that has been in decline in Burnaby for a number of years. A high of 29,700 students were recorded in 1970, compared with 23,670 students in 2010. No net increase to Burnaby's school population is anticipated prior to 2020. The relative stability of Burnaby's student age population has meant that the City and School District have not had significant challenges in meeting school needs. Further, the City's continued growth and development have assisted in maintaining school enrollment and thus avoiding any necessity for school closures.

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<sup>1</sup> Transportation-related issues are discussed on Pages 3 and 4.

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School enrollment projections continue to indicate that the proposed development within Metrotown generally (including the subject site) will not have any significant impact on the need for public school sites or facilities within the Town Centre. The School District has advised that the Metrotown area and surrounding neighbourhoods are well-served by a number of elementary school sites that are currently under capacity or have the opportunity to be readily expanded by the School District to meet any need for future school expansion. Burnaby's secondary school population in the Southwest quadrant is also well-served by the Burnaby South Secondary School, Moscrop Secondary School and the new Burnaby Central Secondary School.

Given that the proposed development positively relates to the surrounding community, including the adjacent Maywood Community School, and in light of its consistency with the objectives of the Metrotown Town Centre Development Plan, staff continue to support the subject development proposal.

**Issue #2 – Traffic Congestion:** Concerns were raised regarding the proposed development's traffic impacts on the surrounding neighbourhood, including on Maywood Community School.

*Response:*

In response to the various transportation-related concerns raised at the Public Hearing for the proposed development, the applicant commissioned IBI Group to pursue more targeted transportation impact studies. With respect to traffic and congestion impacts, the two studies indicate that the site is expected to "...have minimal impact on the performance of the study area intersections...". It is noted that the current primary access to the school site is relatively poor, as it is one-way right in/right out from Imperial Street, which necessitates exiting via the lane. Studies also suggest that, with the new proposed connections to Dow Avenue (Beresford Street extension and southern lane), much of the existing school-related traffic will be better accommodated, thereby alleviating a currently prevalent illegal left (eastbound) turn movement at the intersection of the lane with Imperial Street.

The traffic studies identified two significant off-site improvements to ensure background traffic and that which is generated by the subject proposed development, is appropriately managed (see attached Sketch #4). The first is the improvement of the Beresford Street/Willingdon Avenue intersection by either restricting east/west movements or by its signalization. As a result of the need to improve this intersection, the developer will be required to signalize it as required servicing in connection with the subject rezoning application. The other off-site improvement recommended by the traffic studies includes Dow Avenue's extension to Central Boulevard. This would greatly enhance the local road network's permeability, thereby providing greater options and less reliance on a select number of intersections (the rear lane at Imperial Street, Dow Avenue/Imperial Street, Beresford Street/Willingdon Avenue). Staff are generally supportive of this road connection, but note that it is not indicated in any Council-approved Plan. As such, the developer would be required to provide an approved road design and financial contribution for its future construction, should such a road connection be approved by Council

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and indicated in an amendment to the Metrotown Town Centre Development Plan (with construction and use of funds to be advanced either by the City or in conjunction with future development). With these and other minor servicing requirements, the traffic studies conclude that "...the addition of the site traffic to the existing and future background traffic and the rerouting of the school traffic may be accommodated at the adjacent intersections within very acceptable levels of service."

The transportation impact study also examined whether the proposed off-street parking is sufficient to support the development. It concluded that the required parking standard is adequate, and thus notes that this development will not add parking demand on nearby local streets. It also noted that, given the site's Town Centre location, and the transportation demand management initiatives required by the City (free transit passes for 15% of the units for two years, improved pedestrian facilities and double the bike parking in particular), a relatively favourable mode split for walking, cycling and transit may be achieved.

Staff have reviewed the transportation impact study and concur with its findings. It is believed that the transportation infrastructural improvements achieved in connection with the proposed redevelopment, namely the intersection improvements at Beresford Street and Willingdon Avenue and the eventual extension of Dow Avenue to Central Boulevard, in connection with the new accesses provided by the development at Beresford Street and the new southern lane, offset the added demand placed upon the local transportation network. From a transportation viewpoint, the net effect of the proposed redevelopment on the local network does not raise undue concern and thus remains supportable.

**Issue #3 – Rental Displacement:** Comments were received relating to how the tenants of the current apartment building on the subject property will be treated as development proceeds. Questions surrounding rental replacement on the subject site were also raised.

*Response:*

In response to the foregoing issue, the developer has been accommodating in working with staff toward a package for residents of the 17-unit apartment building proposed to be demolished. While rental replacement is not being provided for in the subject proposal, a tenant relocation/incentive program is being recommended. This generally includes:

- rents will remain at current levels;
- original deposit plus interest will be returned within 10 days of vacating the suite;
- moving expenses equal to one months' rent;
- an additional cash payment equal to two months' rent; and,
- the developer will provide a minimum of four months' notice.

This package exceeds the minimum requirements of the Residential Tenancy Act, and will assist the existing tenants with their relocation efforts.

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In terms of rental units on the subject site, it is noted that up to 20% of the building's 253 units is anticipated to be rental (strata)<sup>2</sup>. While not purpose-built, these units will nonetheless help to increase the future supply of units available for rental housing. It should also be noted that \$6,049,364 will be taken as a cash contribution in lieu of a physical amenity on the subject site. As per the City's Community Benefit Policy, 20% of the total deposited in the account (\$1,209,873) would be allocated to the affordable/special needs housing sub-account, leaving the remainder of \$4,839,491 available for the provision of other community amenities, including housing, at some point in the future. The housing fund is intended to be used broadly in the City to support provision of non-market and affordable housing units through leveraging partnerships with other levels of government and non-profit housing providers.

Overall, the response of the developer in terms of providing assistance to the existing residents of 6634 Dow Avenue in their relocation is considered appropriate. Together, the provision of strata rental units on the subject site and the opportunities born of the City's housing fund supported by density bonusing provide for an adequate response to such housing demand in Town Centre and other areas.

**Issue #5 – Increased Crime:** A suggestion was made that crime would increase as a result of the proposed development.

*Response:*

There is no evidence to suggest that a residential development such as that proposed leads to higher crime rates. The RCMP have not expressed a concern about the proposed development, or others similar to it, in terms of it being a catalyst for crime. The design of the proposed development, its site layout and landscaping, have been influenced by Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles. Public and private spaces are adequately delineated; sightlines are well maintained; the site and its immediate environs are well-lit; and most importantly, there are eyes on the street – the development is related to the street in terms of active ground floor uses in the tower (activity areas and lobby space) and by the provision of ground-oriented townhouses along Dow Avenue. Given the foregoing, staff believe the proposed development will have a positive, not negative, impact on crime in the area.

**Issue #6 – Views, privacy and land values for neighbouring properties:** Concerns that neighbouring properties would lose views and privacy, and that land values would be negatively impacted were noted.

*Response:*

With respect to views, it is noted that established views in this area are of the North Shore mountains and of the Strait of Juan De Fuca, Gulf Islands and Vancouver Island to the south. The proposed development does not appreciably impact any of these established views held by

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<sup>2</sup> Based on regional strata rental rates.

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the existing surrounding low-rise developments or by the closest high-rise towers to the north on Bonsor Avenue.

In terms of privacy, it is noted that most of the surrounding low-rise developments do not have useable outdoor areas that will be significantly impacted by overlook from the tower. Moreover, given that much of the site's density takes the form of a relatively slim tower, impacts on indoor privacy are considerably less than if the site were to develop at a lower density, with a much bulkier building involving a higher site coverage and lesser setbacks (typical of low-rise developments).

As regards property values, recent experience in the City's four Town Centres suggests that property values of potential redevelopment sites rise, not fall, with nearby redevelopment. This is particularly relevant in that the properties surrounding the subject site all have multiple family residential potential, either by way of prevailing RM3 zoning or RM5s rezoning for the properties to the northwest across Dow Avenue.

In light of the foregoing, staff do not believe the subject development will have negative impacts on views, privacy or property values.

**Issue #7 – Conflicts with Social Sustainability Strategy:** A concern was raised that the proposed development conflicts with the City's Social Sustainability Strategy.

*Response:*

Many aspect of the Social Sustainability Strategy are intended to help inform land use decisions. It is worth noting that the proposed development meets the objectives of the Social Sustainability Strategy on a number of levels. It:

- Provides a high-density residential alternative in a high-amenity mixed-use Town Centre context that is well-served by transit which of itself provides numerous environmental and social sustainability benefits (Strategic Priorities #1 – Meeting Basic Needs, #5 – Enhancing Neighbourhoods and #6 – Getting Around).
- Contributes \$6,049,364 in amenity bonus funds, which could be used for a wide range of amenities, such as affordable housing, improvements to recreation centres and childcare facilities (Strategic Priority #1 – Meeting Basic Needs).
- Provides 12 units adaptable for persons with disabilities, as well as 12 related handicap parking stalls (Strategic Priority #1 – Meeting Basic Needs).
- Adds to the neighbourhood's identity through distinctive architecture and landscaping, public art, and activated streets, all of which are key principles in placemaking and neighbourhood enhancement (Strategic Priority #5 – Enhancing Neighbourhoods).

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- Provides for new, efficient, safe and barrier free connections to and throughout this part of the neighbourhood, which includes Maywood Community School (Strategic Priority #6 – Getting Around).
- Makes this part of the neighbourhood safer by having incorporated CPTED principles into the site's design, as well as by putting more eyes on the street with its street orientation (Strategic Priority #7 – Protecting Our Community).

Overall, the proposed development provides for a meaningful contribution toward the advancement of the objectives of the Social Sustainability Strategy.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the proposed high-rise apartment and townhouse development, with full underground parking, is in line with the adopted Metrotown Town Centre Development Plan and related transportation plans, and is consistent with established Council policy (including the Social Sustainability Strategy) governing the development of the subject site. The transportation assessments revealed that the proposed development would have negligible impacts on adjacent roads in terms of traffic, off-street parking supply is adequate, and the transportation improvements (signalization of the Beresford Street/Willingdon Avenue intersection and future connection of Dow Avenue to Central Boulevard) gained from the proposed development would significantly improve the system locally. From an integration viewpoint, the proposed development's form and density was noted as being compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood given its Town Centre context, and that the schools in Metrotown are well equipped to accommodate growth as planned. It was also shown that the proposed development will not negatively impact the views, values or privacy of neighbouring properties; nor will it contribute to increased crime in the neighbourhood. Finally, the developer has agreed to provide a tenant relocation package that should assist current residents in finding suitable accommodations once construction proceeds.

Given the foregoing, staff remain supportive of the subject rezoning application.

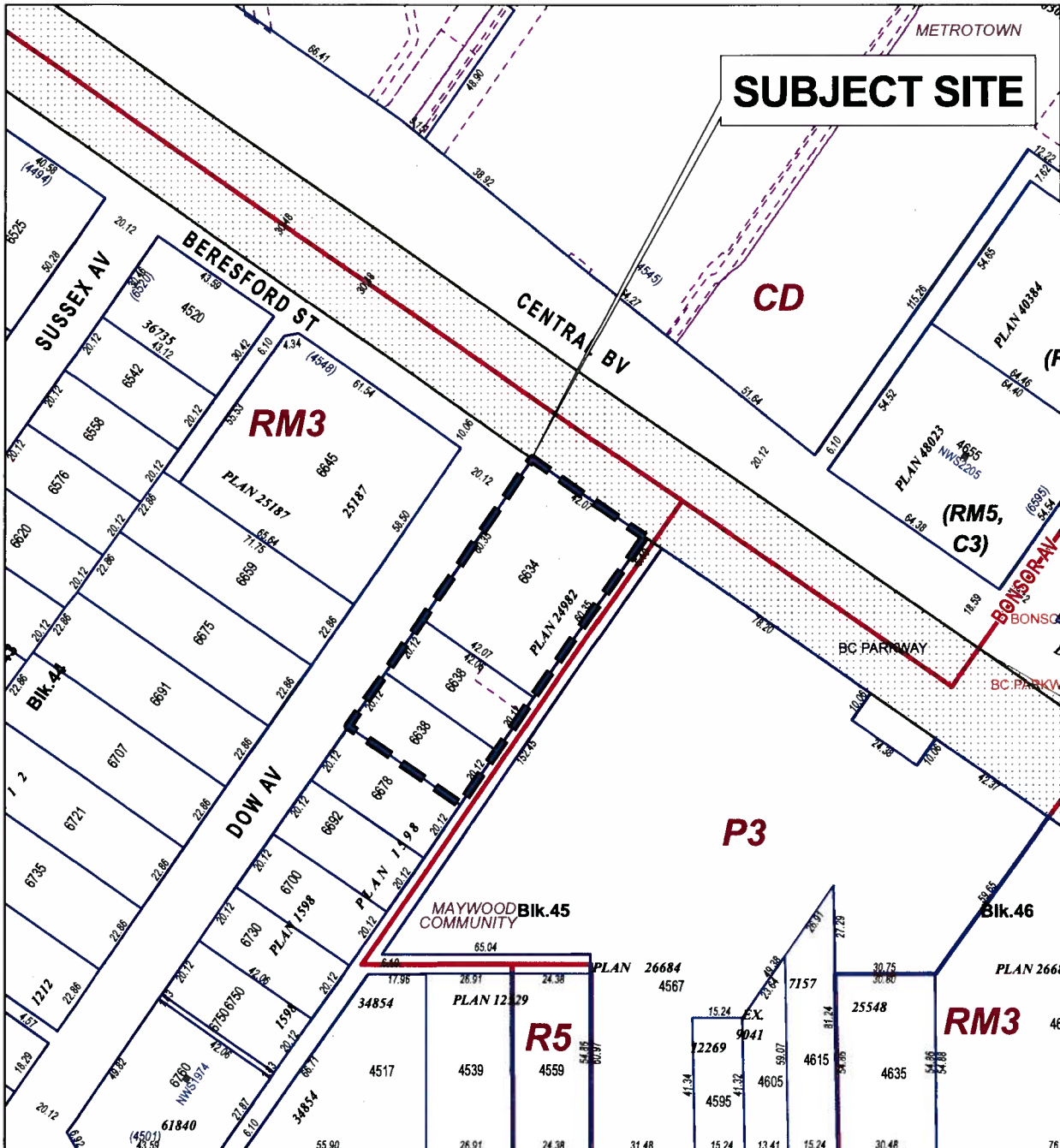


B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

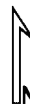
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#### *Attachments*

cc: City Clerk  
Director Engineering



PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT



DATE:  
MAY 13 2011

SCALE:  
1:2,000

DRAWN BY:  
DJ

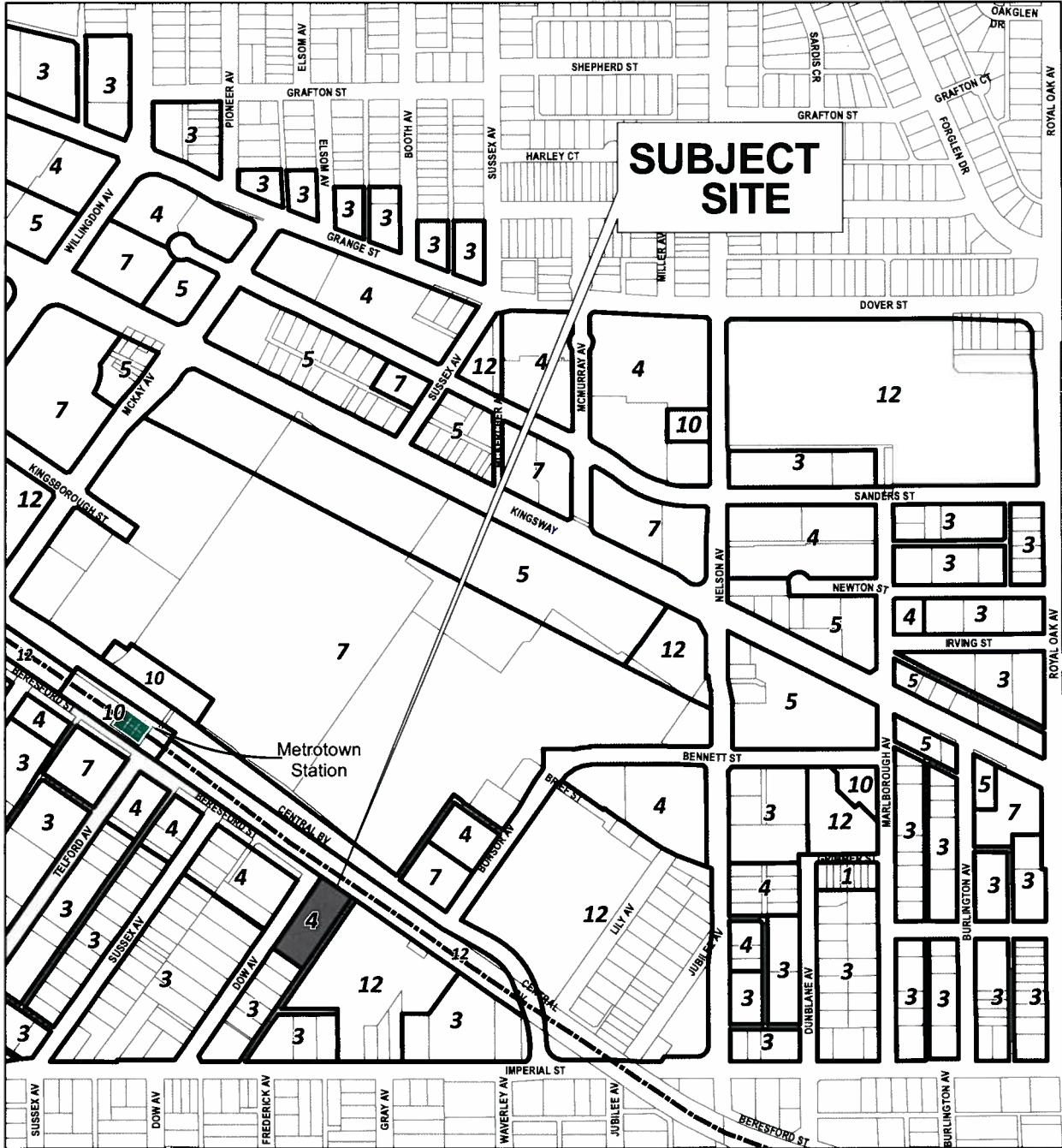
 Subject Site

REZONING REFERENCE #11 -- 24

6634 AND 6638 DOW AVENUE

Sketch #1





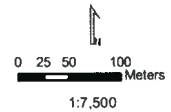
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|--|--------------------------------------|
| 1 Single and Two Family Residential          | 7 High Density Mixed Use             |
| 2 Low Density Multiple Family Residential    | 10 Institutional                     |
| 3 Medium Density Multiple Family Residential | 12 Park and Public Use/Public School |
| 4 High Density Multiple Family Residential   |                                      |
| 5 Commercial                                 |                                      |
| 6 Medium Density Mixed Use                   |                                      |



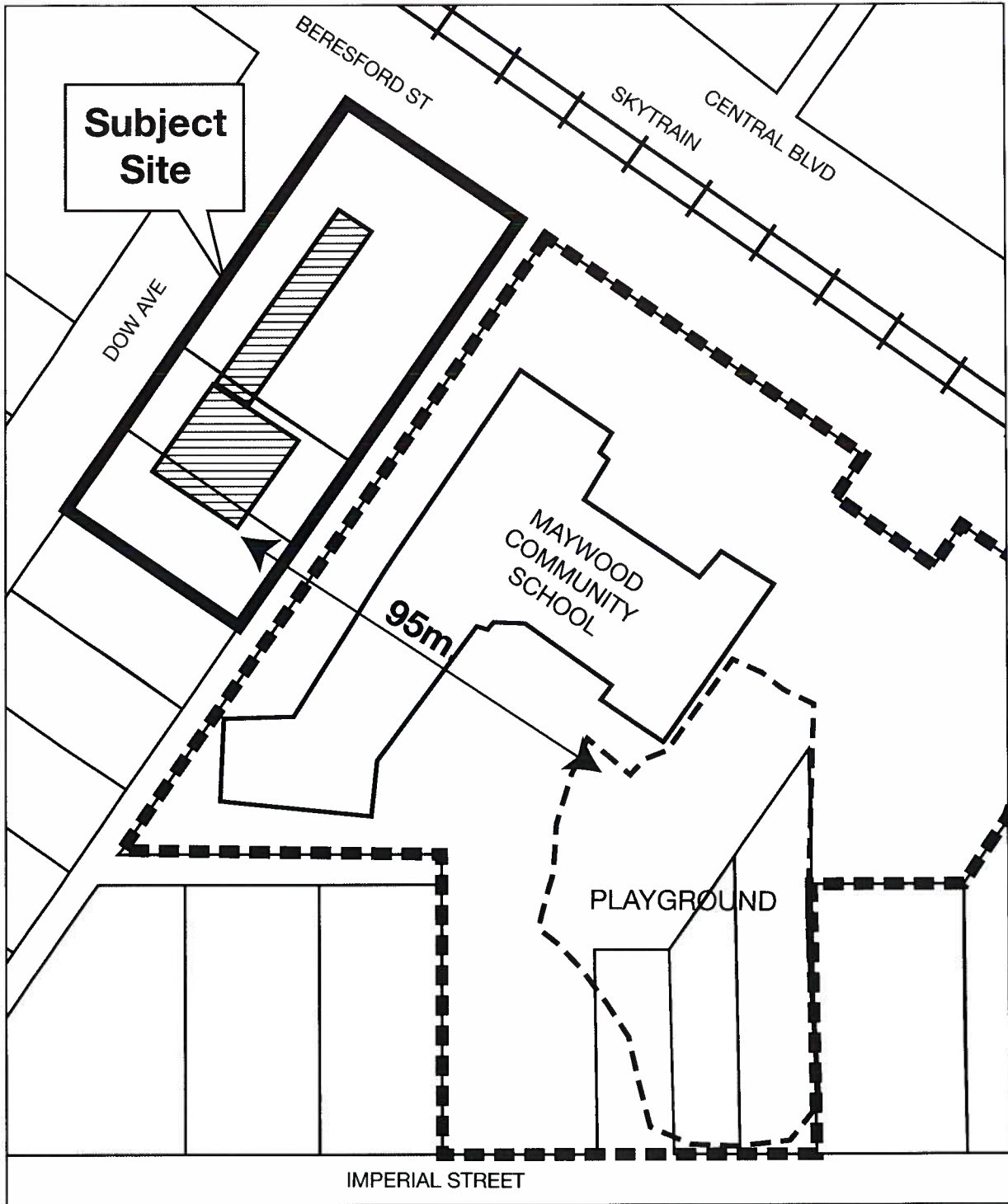
Planning and Building Dept

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## Metrotown Plan



Sketch #2



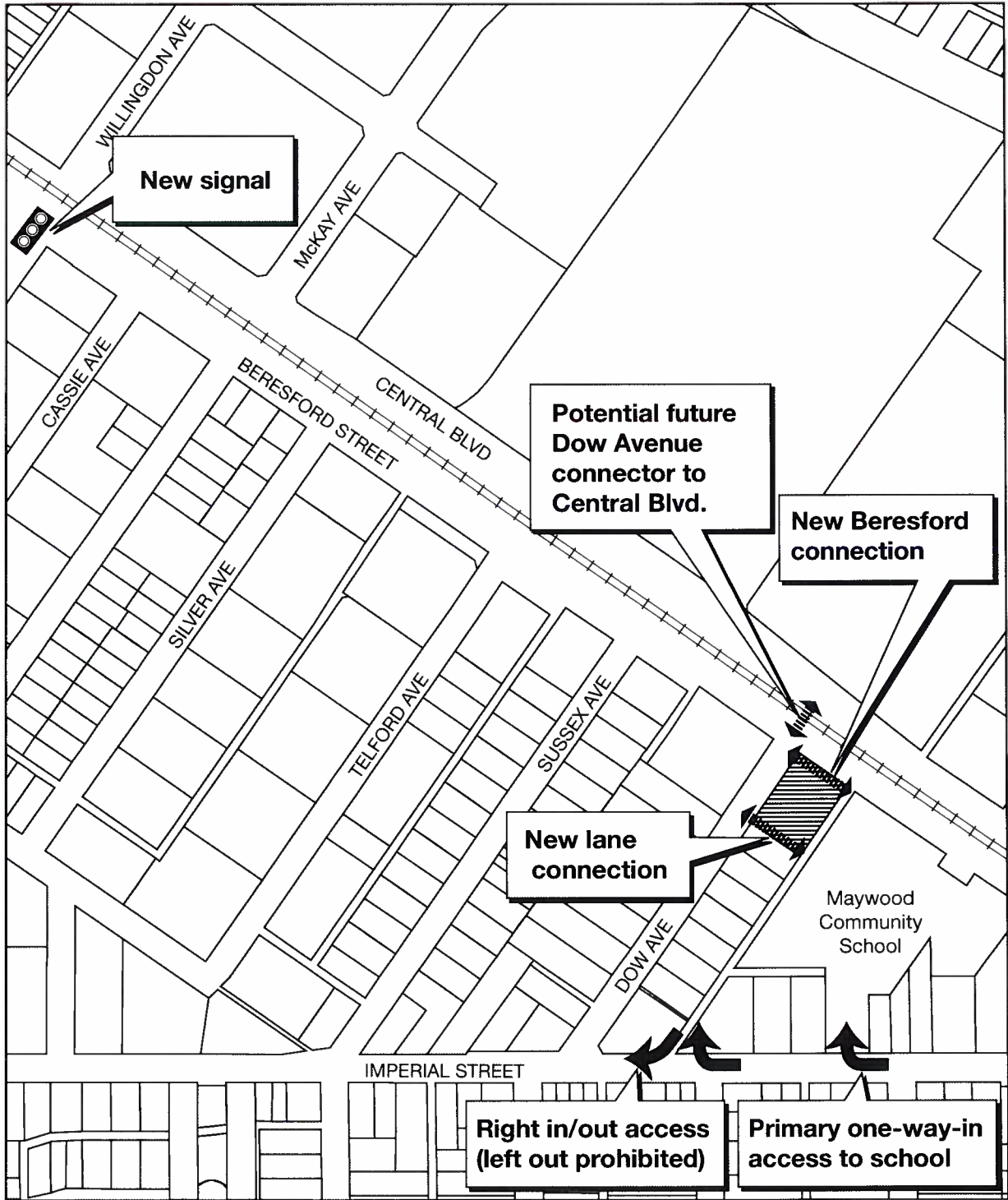
**RZ 11-24**  
**Relationship to Maywood Community School**

-  Proposed development footprint
-  Current school boundary



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**Sketch 3**



**RZ 11-24  
Transportation**



Subject Site



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