

REPORT

Climate Action, Planning and Development

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: August 28, 2023

From: Serena Trachta, Acting Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development
File: REZ00215
DP000919
DVP00694

Item #: 2023-542

Subject: **Rezoning, Development Permit, and Development Variance Permit Application: 317-319 Howes St – Preliminary Report**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council direct staff to work with the applicant to prepare a plan of development for the subject properties suitable for consideration of First and Second Readings, as outlined in the “Application Review Process” section of this report.

PURPOSE

To provide preliminary information on a 26-unit townhouse development proposal on the subject sites; to seek Council direction to work with the applicant towards a suitable plan of development; and to seek Council direction to review the rezoning application as outlined within this report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rezoning, Development Variance Permit, and Development Permit applications have been received to allow the development of a 26-unit townhouse development at 317 and 319 Howes Street. The development would replace two existing single detached dwellings and would have an approximate overall Floor Space Ratio (FSR) of 0.80. The townhouse units would be divided between four separate buildings; all units would be family-friendly with three bedrooms each.

Vehicular access would be taken from Howes Street. As Howes Street is classified as a highway under Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) jurisdiction, the access and boulevard design will need to be approved by MoTI.

BACKGROUND

Site Characteristics and Context

The proposed development site consists of two single-detached lots at 317 and 319 Howes Street, with a combined area of approximately 4,685.73 sq. m. (50,436.74 sq. ft.). The development site is located approximately 50 metres (164 feet) southeast of the Highway 91A interchange. Howes Street is identified as a Provincial Highway under Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) jurisdiction. To the north of the site are two vacant, provincially owned parcels (321 and 323 Howes Street). To the east and south is a fully developed townhouse project located at 935 Ewen Avenue. To the west is a vacant preloaded site at 1005 Ewen Avenue, which is undergoing rezoning for a mixed-use townhouse and commercial development. Further detail on site characteristics and context is provided in Attachment 1.

Figure 1: Site Context Map



Preliminary Application Review

A Preliminary Application Review (PAR) for this project was submitted on March 14, 2019. Staff presented the PAR to the Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) on August 26, 2019. The LUPC directed staff to work with the applicant on the massing and orientation, privacy and noise mitigation, site and amenity space design in order to ensure these meet design guidelines and best practices. The minutes for this meeting are available on the City’s website:

https://www.newwestcity.ca/database/files/library/LUPC_2019_Aug_26_Minutes.pdf

POLICY AND REGULATIONS

The site is designated Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings (RM) in the Queensborough Community Plan (QCP) which would support consideration of townhouse development. The subject sites are currently zoned Queensborough Neighbourhood Residential Dwelling Districts (RQ-1), which does not allow for townhouses. Therefore, the applicant is proposing to rezone the site to the Queensborough Townhouse Districts (RT-3A) to facilitate the proposed development.

The development would also be subject to the Family-Friendly Housing Policy, which requires development applications with 10 or more residential units to provide 30% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% of the total units three bedrooms or more. The applicant has proposed all three bedroom units, exceeding the Family-Friendly Housing Policy requirements.

A summary of relevant policy and regulations is included in Attachment 2.

PROJECT PROPOSAL

The proposal consists of a 26-unit townhouse development organized into four separate buildings, three of which would contain seven units, and one with five units. The preliminary proposed gross building area is approximately 5,110 sq. m. (55,000 sq. ft.) with an approximate FSR of 0.80. Net unit sizes range from approximately 130 to 170 sq. m. (1,400 to 1,800 sq. ft.).

All buildings are proposed to be three storeys with attached garages located on the ground level. All of the units would contain three bedrooms on the third level above the flood construction level (FCL). The proposed development would include an outdoor common amenity area of approximately 275 sq. m. (2,950 sq. ft.) that would be located along the north property line.

Vehicular access is proposed from Howes Street. 52 resident parking spaces located under townhouse units and seven visitor spaces are proposed, exceeding Zoning Bylaw requirements. 22 of the resident parking spaces would be in a tandem configuration, requiring a Development Variance Permit (see Parking section below). 52 long-term bike parking spaces are proposed, along with six short-term spaces.

Select project renderings are included in Attachment 3.

DISCUSSION

Overall Evaluation

Design

Staff consider the form and density to be generally consistent with the Ewen Avenue Multi-Family Development Permit Area (DPA) guidelines. Further work will be required on the development’s architectural expression and building massing. Staff will work with the applicant towards a design that more closely meets design expectations of the DPA guidelines.

Trees

The development in proposing the removal of approximately 70 trees which meet the minimum threshold for protection under the City’s Tree Bylaw, as well as another approximately 20 trees below the protected threshold. The City Arborist has requested more information from the applicant’s arborist regarding the potential for tree retention on site. A robust tree replacement plan from the applicant’s arborist will be required, with appropriate tree placement and soil volumes to ensure their long-term viability.

Parking

A Development Variance Permit will be required for tandem parking spaces, scooter charging requirements, and minimum access aisle width for long-term bicycle parking. Staff have indicated that they would support consideration of these variances. Further work is needed on the short-term bike parking design to meet Zoning Bylaw requirements.

Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

The proposal is located within 800 metres of a Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MoTI) controlled access highway (Highway 91A). As part of the application, a design referral package for the proposed project would be forward to MoTI for response. As Howes Street is classified as a highway under MoTI jurisdiction, MoTI will need to review and approve the access design and boulevard configuration before Council can approve a rezoning application.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial considerations will be evaluated as part of the application review process and any relevant details will be included in the comprehensive report.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The City has a project-based team approach for reviewing development applications, which facilitates interdepartmental review, providing comments to the applicant throughout the development review process. This project-based team includes staff from Engineering, Climate Action, Planning and Development, Parks and Recreation, Electrical, and Fire Departments.

APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

Below is an overall outline of the development review process for this project.

1. Preliminary Report to Council (August 28, 2023) **(WE ARE HERE)**;
2. Interdepartmental staff review towards a suitable plan of development (ongoing);
3. Applicant-led public consultation, including dissemination of information through the Queensborough Residents Association;
4. Comprehensive Report to Council and Council Consideration of Public Hearing Not Held;
5. Council consideration of First, Second and Third Readings of the Rezoning Bylaw following issuance of Notice of Public Hearing Not Held;
6. Completion of adoption requirements;
7. Approvals or approvals in principle by relevant external agencies (i.e. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure);
8. Council consideration of adoption of Zoning Amendment Bylaw and consideration of Development Variance Permit;
9. Issuance of the Development Permit by the Director of Climate Action, Planning and Development.

As the proposal is consistent with the Official Community Plan, the application would not be forwarded the Advisory Planning Commission for review and comment.

OPTIONS

1. That Council direct staff to work with the applicant to prepare a plan of development for the subject properties suitable for consideration of First and Second Readings, as outlined in the “Application Review Process” section of this report.
2. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommend Option 1.

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Site Characteristics and Context
- Attachment 2 – Policy and Regulations Summary
- Attachment 3 – Select Project Renderings

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:
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This report was reviewed by:
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