

REPORT

Planning and Development

To: Advisory Planning Commission **Date:** May 21, 2024
From: Dilys Huang, Development Planner **File:** REZ00198
Item #: [Report Number]
Subject: **Official Community Plan Amendment, Rezoning, and Development Variance Permit: 1135 Salter Street**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Advisory Planning Commission provide a motion of support or non-support for the proposed Official Community Plan amendment, rezoning, and Development Variance Permit applications.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides information to the Advisory Planning Commission regarding the Official Community Plan amendment, rezoning, and Development Variance Permit applications that have been received for 1135 Salter Street.

The proposed development comprises 45 townhouse units organized into eight buildings with an overall floor space ratio of 0.793. The development includes 91 parking spaces, and approximately 10% of the site area is proposed as dedicated park space.

Community engagement on this project has been initiated since September 2022, and the urban design aspects of this proposal have been reviewed by the New Westminster Design Panel.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the proposal to the Advisory Planning Commission for its consideration in making a motion of support or non-support for this application.

2.0 PROPOSAL

2.1 Overview

The proposal consists of a 45 unit ground-oriented townhouse development organized into eight separate buildings along a central drive aisle with an overall floor space ratio of 0.793 (net after land dedications). Seven of the proposed buildings would orient toward future roadways as identified in the Official Community Plan's Advance Street Plan (refer to subsection 4.2 below), while Building 8 would face a proposed public park.

The applicant is proposing approximately 957.62 sq.m. (10,307.7 sq.ft.) of the subject property (equivalent to approximately 10% of the gross site area) for parkland. This parkspace would be located at the south end of the site along Salter Street. In addition to a few smaller seating areas, a privately-owned central common amenity space is proposed between Buildings 3 and 4.

The development proposes a total of 91 parking spaces, consisting of 50 standard spaces allowing vehicles to park side by side in garages, 32 tandem garage spaces (35% of total spaces or 43% of required spaces) for the narrower units in Buildings 1 through 4, and nine (9) surface visitor spaces. All of the resident stalls and some of the visitor stalls would include energized level 2 outlets for EV charging. A total of 90 long term bicycle storage spaces and six (6) short term bicycle spaces for visitors would also be provided.

Vehicular access would be from two access points – one from a new proposed north-south road dedication along the east property line off of Salter Street and the other, from the future Basran Avenue road dedication at the north end of the site. Internal pedestrian pathways, including some mid-block connections allowing for public access, are also proposed.

Due to flood hazard considerations, the applicant is proposing external stairs to access electrical rooms on the sides of Buildings 3, 6, and 8. These currently project into a couple of the required building separation distances and the side yard setback, which would be facilitated through a Development Variance Permit.

The applicant's land use rationale and architectural and landscape drawings are attached as Appendices A and B.

2.2 Project Statistics

A summary of the project statistics is included below:

	Permitted/Required under RT-3	Proposed
Site Details		
Site Area (Gross)	--	9,348.33 sq. m. (100,625 sq. ft.)
Site Area (Net)	--	5,824.87 sq. m. (62,698.37 sq. ft.)
Site Coverage	40%	37.12%
Floor Space Ratio	0.8	0.793
Units	--	45
2-Bed (33%)	79 sq. m. (850 sq. ft.) <i>(*excluding flood control area)</i>	89.9 sq. m. – 95.51 sq. m. (967.68 sq. ft. – 1,028.06 sq. ft.)
3-Bed (67%)	79 sq. m. (850 sq. ft.)*	95.96 sq. m. – 118.83 sq. m. (1,032.9 sq. ft. – 1,279.08 sq. ft.)
Building Height	10.7 m. (35 ft.)	9.76 m. (32.02 ft.)
Building Setbacks		
Front (North)	3.05 m. (10 ft.)	3.05 m. (10 ft.)
Rear (South)	4.57 m. (15 ft.)	4.57 m. (15 ft.)
Side	4.57 m. (15 ft.)	4.57 m. (15 ft.) (with 1.55 m. (5.09 ft.) setback for Bldg. 8 electrical room access stair projection)
Distance Between Buildings		
Between Two Side Walls	4.27 m. (14 ft.)	4.27 m. (14 ft.) (with 1.24 m. (4.07 ft.) building separation distance for Bldgs. 2 & 3 and Bldgs. 6 & 7)
Between Front and Rear	10.97 m. (35.99 ft.)	11.31 m. (37.11 ft.)
Parking (Vehicle)		
Residential	66	82 (including 32 tandem spaces)
Visitor	9	9
Parking (Bicycle)		
Long Term	68	90
Short Term	6	6

* Note: *grey highlighted text* indicates proposed variances

* Evaluation of zoning requirements based on 2019 bylaw that was in effect at the time of application submission

3.0 POLICY AND REGULATIONS

3.1 Queensborough Community Plan

Land Use Designation

The subject property is currently designated “(RL) Residential – Low Density” in the Queensborough Community Plan (QCP). As this land use designation envisions low density residential uses such as single detached dwellings and duplexes, the site would need to be redesignated to “(RM) Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings” to allow for townhouses. The “Parks, Open Space and Community Facilities” designation is proposed for the parkspace portion of the site.

Development Permit Area

As the site is not currently located in a form and character development permit area (DPA), an amendment to the QCP map would be required to include the site as part of the Ewen Avenue Multi-Family DPA. Besides encouraging best practices for promoting water and energy conservation and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, this DPA also establishes guidelines for the form and character of multi-family residential development, such as this proposed townhouse project. The proposed development would also need to comply with the Flood Hazard DPA guidelines.

The Development Permit Area guidelines can be accessed via the following links:

- [Ewen Avenue Multi-Family DPA](#)
- [Flood Hazard DPA](#)

A copy of the draft Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw is attached as Appendix C.

3.2 Zoning Bylaw

The subject site is currently zoned “Queensborough Neighbourhood Residential Dwelling Districts (RQ-1)” and the intent of this district is to allow single detached dwellings in the Queensborough neighbourhood. Since the RQ-1 district does not allow for townhouses, the development portion of the site would be rezoned to “Queensborough Townhouse Districts (RT-3)” to facilitate the proposed development. The parkspace portion of the site is proposed to be rezoned to “Parks Districts (P-10)”. A copy of the draft Zoning Amendment Bylaw is attached as Appendix D.

3.3 Variance Policy

The proposed variances would be subject to the City’s *Policy Approach to Considering Requests for Variances*, endorsed by Council in 2008. This is a policy-based approach for the consideration of variance applications. The approach involves evaluating a

variance against a set of questions for the purposes of clarifying the benefits and necessity of the variance. The evaluation criteria questions are included in Appendix E.

3.4. Family-Friendly Housing Policy

Per the City’s Family-Friendly Housing Policy, the development would be required to provide a minimum of 30% two and three bedroom units, of which at least 10% of the overall number of units would need to contain three bedrooms or more. In the current proposal, all of the proposed units would contain two bedrooms (33%) or three bedrooms (67%), exceeding the minimum requirements.

4.0 BACKGROUND

4.1 Site Characteristics and Context

The subject site is located midway between Gifford and Jardine Streets with frontage on Salter Street in the Queensborough neighbourhood. It is situated within a neighbourhood block of 14 properties ranging in size and land use. This block of properties is also captured within the Advance Street Plan Area #2 of the Queensborough Community Plan (see subsection 4.2 below). The currently vacant property has an approximate gross area of 9,348.33 sq. m. (100,625 sq. ft.).

Surrounding uses include mixed-use commercial/residential and townhouse developments on lands designated “(ML) Mixed Use – Low Rise” and “(RM) Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings” to the north, single detached dwellings to the east, single detached and duplex dwellings across Salter Street to the south, and a farm property (not part of the Agricultural Land Reserve) designated “(RL) Residential – Low Density” to the west.

The site is subject to floodplain constraints on the amount of floor space at grade and the use of that floor space. No habitable floor space is allowed below the flood construction level of 3.53 m. (11.58 ft.) Geodetic Survey of Canada (GSC). The underside of the floor system for habitable space must be at or above this level. A site context map is provided as Figure 1.



Figure 1. Site Context Map

4.2 Advance Street Plan

The subject property is identified as being within Advance Street Plan (ASP) Area #2 (Figure 2). The ASP is intended to guide future development where there are large parcels that could potentially be subdivided and/or where there are whole blocks made up of larger parcels where development decisions remain to be made such as in the case of this proposal. The plan also provides a degree of certainty for landowners and developers regarding the future development of the community, including a general understanding of future road dedication and off-site servicing requirements.

ASP Area #2 was created with the understanding that the properties located within this neighbourhood block would be redeveloped in accordance with current Queensborough Community Plan land use designations. Based on the ASP, the properties to the east and the property to the west were anticipated to be redeveloped to low density residential uses, such as single detached dwellings and duplexes.

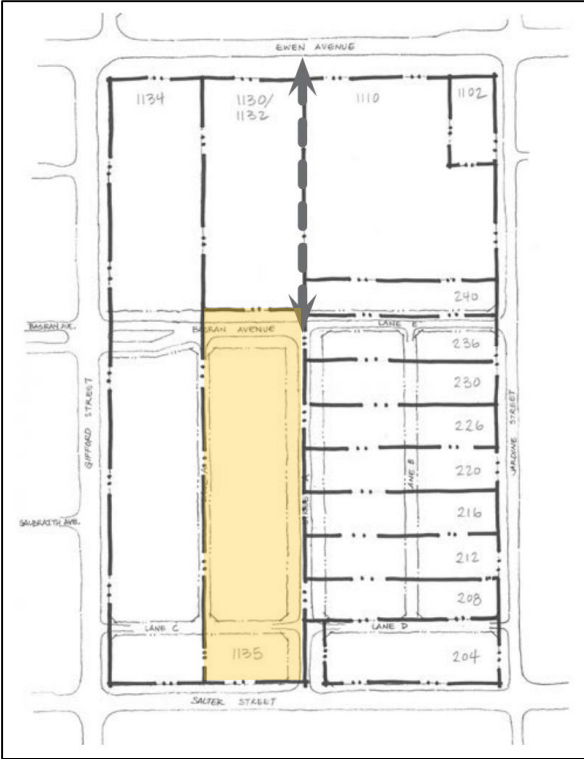


Figure 2. Advance Street Plan Area #2 (existing property lines shown in heavy black, while future property lines shown in light black – subject site is highlighted).

5.0 DISCUSSION

5.1 Official Community Plan Amendment

During the earlier two-stage Pre-Application Review process for this project, staff presented the Official Community Plan (OCP) amendment and proposal to the Land Use and Planning Committee (LUPC) in January and June 2019. At these meetings, the LUPC members were in favour of further consideration of the proposed OCP amendment and proposed townhouse development.

Through the proposed OCP amendment, the proposal would:

- Provide a significant area for public parkspace as an amenity;
- Provide more affordable ground-oriented housing options compared to other building forms such as single-detached dwellings; and
- Provide additional “missing middle” housing units.

5.2 Relationship with Adjacent Sites

As part of site configuration, the proposed development has taken the Advance Street Plan into consideration. The majority of proposed dwelling units would orient toward the

future north-south road to the east and toward a future lane anticipated along the existing abutting property to the west. The proposed units within Building 8 would front onto the proposed park area to the south.

In order to provide a finer grain publicly-accessible pedestrian network and connectivity to the future public parkspace, public statutory rights-of-way are proposed for the on-site pedestrian pathways that run along the western and southern perimeters of the site and the east-west mid-block connection adjacent to the central amenity space.

5.3 Land for Park Purposes

The proposed development includes approximately 957.62 sq. m. (10,307.7 sq. ft.) of land (around 10% of the gross site) for park purposes. This land portion will be subdivided from the rest of the property and transferred to the City. As part of the amenity, the applicant will also be contributing \$175,000 toward construction of the future “pocket” park. This parkspace will be designed and constructed by the City’s Parks and Open Space Planning Division.

5.4 Open Space and Trees

In addition to the land for park purposes, a primary common amenity area consisting of seating and children’s play structures is proposed between Buildings 3 and 4. A few smaller areas with seating are proposed to be interspersed through the development near the site entrances and between buildings. Open space for individual dwelling units is provided through private patios and balconies.

As part of the development, three replacement trees are required per Tree Protection and Regulation Bylaw requirements. The project proposes 46 new trees for the site, which have been reviewed by City arborist staff.

5.5 Proposed Variances

Tandem Parking

The Zoning Bylaw (section 140.53) requires direct access to be provided to all parking spaces associated within a residential development; however, tandem parking spaces can only be accessed from a drive aisle through another parking space. As the proposal includes 32 tandem parking spaces in four of the buildings, a Development Variance Permit is required to facilitate the tandem parking configuration. Staff generally considers this variance to be reasonable given that:

- The unique land attributes of Queensborough, due to its location within the floodplain, limit the ability to provide underground parking for townhouse projects; and
- The proportion of tandem spaces proposed is less than 50%, which is the maximum staff considers reasonable.

Building Separation and Side Setback

The applicant is proposing external stairs for electrical room access on the sides of Buildings 3, 6, and 8. These currently project into a couple of the required building separation distances and the westerly side yard setback. Since electrical equipment should not be located below the flood construction level in accordance with the Flood Hazard Development Permit Area guidelines and the proposed projections are limited only to these staircases, staff generally considers this variance to be reasonable.

5.6 Site Servicing and Off-Site Improvements

The proposal has been reviewed by the City’s Engineering Services Department regarding required site servicing and off-site improvements. The attached Engineering Servicing Memo (Appendix F) outlines the improvements that would be required to facilitate the proposed development. Such improvements would be provided in accordance with City standards, as determined by the Director of Engineering.

6.0 PUBLIC AND COMMITTEE CONSULTATION

6.1 Applicant-Led Consultation

Applicant-led public consultation included an online survey, virtual open house, and project website, and residents within 100 m. (328 ft.) of the project site were notified of opportunities to submit feedback. Three community members attended the open house and two survey responses were received. Survey feedback was mostly related to:

- Support for new townhouses and more housing; and
- Mix of support and neutral feedback in terms of building design, tandem parking, and direct unit accesses.

A summary of the consultation process and all received feedback is included as Appendix G.

6.2 Official Community Plan Amendment *Local Government Act* Consultation

Sections 475 and 476 of the *Local Government Act* provide requirements for consultation prior to consideration of an Official Community Plan amendment. Following direction from Council, staff submitted a request for written comments to the Board of Education and local First Nations, who were also subsequently advised of this Advisory Planning Commission meeting. Feedback received to date is summarized below. This feedback has been provided to the applicant for consideration.

Kwantlen First Nation recommended that an archaeological assessment be completed as part of the rezoning process. Musqueam Indian Band noted that without a formal study to indicate otherwise, they consider all development to have the potential to impact heritage resources. Squamish Nation recommended that the applicant engage a consultant to provide an archeological assessment.

Staff note that at this time, the City does not have a requirement for archaeological monitoring to take place on these types of development projects; however, staff have identified this topic as requiring further study, and intend to develop a more robust policy on archeological assessments in partnership with local First Nations and Council. In the interim, the applicant has indicated that they will voluntarily retain an archaeological consultant to assess the site.

Squamish Nation also recommended that the project consider implementation of climate resilient standards, that building designs anticipate future climate impacts, and that buildings be designed to net zero carbon emissions and the highest sustainability standards. The applicant has provided a summary of the sustainability measures that are proposed in response to these comments (Appendix H).

6.3 New Westminster Design Panel

The project was presented to the New Westminster Design Panel (NWDP) on December 13, 2022. A copy of the meeting minutes is included as Appendix I. While some NWDP members did not express support for the proposal, the applicant has subsequently worked with staff to make revisions to the project in response to the Panel’s comments.

Some of the key changes include:

- Redesigning the central amenity space and play area between Buildings 3 and 4, and accommodating an additional common seating area between Buildings 5 and 6 by relocating one of the visitor parking spaces;
- Revising the architectural expression of the proposed buildings for better consistency with the Development Permit Area guidelines. The use of additional colour has been proposed, including for the elevations that are oriented toward the central drive aisle;
- Adjusting the species and quantity of proposed on-site trees to reduce potential conflict and maintenance issues in the future.

A copy of the NWDP report can be access via the following link (Item 4.2):

<https://pub-newwestcity.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=daed2b7b-30c0-4b57-bff0-d19a0bfc4c53&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=12&Tab=attachments>

6.4 Advisory Planning Commission

Consideration by the Advisory Planning Commission is required for this project since an Official Community Plan amendment is proposed. The meeting has been advertised by:

- Mailing postcards to all owners and occupants within 100 m. (328 ft.) of the site. A total of 176 postcards were distributed;
- Sending letters to the Queensborough Residents’ Association, New Westminster School District, and local First Nations; and

- Posting information on the Be Heard New West project page and on the City’s website.

The applicant has also installed a development information sign on the site more than 14 days prior to this meeting.

7.0 INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

The City has a project-based team approach for reviewing development applications. A staff-led project team was assigned to review this project and consists of staff from various departments, including Engineering (Servicing and Transportation), Fire, Electrical, Parks and Recreation, and Planning and Development (Building, Planning, and Trees).

8.0 APPLICATION REVIEW PROCESS

The application is progressing through the City’s development review process. The following steps have been completed to date:

1. Preliminary Report to Council (May 9, 2022);
2. Applicant-Led Public Open House (September 22, 2022);
3. Review by the New Westminster Design Panel (December 13, 2022);
4. Review by the Advisory Planning Commission (**WE ARE HERE**);

Next steps include:

5. Council consideration of First and Second Readings of proposed Amendment Bylaws and issuance of notice for Development Variance Permit;
6. Public Hearing and Council consideration of Third Reading of proposed Amendment Bylaws;
7. Applicant addresses adoption requirements;
8. Council consideration of adoption of Amendment Bylaws and issuance of Development Variance Permit.

9.0 LAND USE QUESTION FOR ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION

The Advisory Planning Commission is being asked to review the Official Community Plan amendment application for this project, and provide feedback related to the following:

- Does the Advisory Planning Commission support consideration of a townhouse proposal aligned with the “(RM) Residential – Multiple Unit Buildings” land use designation at this location?

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Project Summary and Land Use Rationale
Appendix B: Architectural and Landscape Drawings
Appendix C: Draft Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 8454, 2024
Appendix D: Draft Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8455, 2024
Appendix E: Evaluation Criteria Questions for Considering Variance Requests
Appendix F: Engineering Services Memo
Appendix G: Applicant-Led Consultation Summary Report
Appendix H: Summary of Proposed Sustainability Measures
Appendix I: New Westminster Design Panel December 13, 2022 Meeting Minutes

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