

Attachment 5

Summary of Community Feedback

Overall Summary of Community Feedback

Introduction

The City of New Westminster is bundling three separate, but closely related, projects into one review and consultation process in the interest of moving quickly to meet current and near-future funding deadlines, as well as respond more readily to urgent needs in the community.

1. Potential city-wide bylaw amendments to allow more rapid response on projects meeting specific criteria and addressing an identified emergency or crisis.
2. Non-market housing on City-owned land at 350-366 Fenton Street in Queensborough.
3. Supportive housing on Province-owned land at 60-68 Sixth Street in Downtown.

The City hosted four different virtual information sessions to present the three proposed projects, address questions and hear from community members. Attendance (excluding staff and project partners) across the four sessions was as follows.

- October 5, 2021 (Presentation on all three projects) – 9 participants
- October 19, 2021 (Focus on 60-68 Sixth Street) – 26 participants
- October 20, 2021 (Focus on 250-366 Fenton Street) – 12 participants
- October 21, 2021 (Presentation on all three projects) – 10 participants

The community was also able to provide their feedback on the proposed projects by:

- Completing an online Comment Form on Be Heard New West;
- Submitting comments via BC Housing's Let's Talk webpage for 60-68 6th Street;
- Emailing their comments to City staff;
- Requesting a phone or in-person meeting with City staff; or
- Mail a letter to City Hall.

City staff has summarized the feedback received through Be Heard New West, phone calls or correspondence submitted directly to City staff, as well as the comments provided during the Virtual Information Sessions. The primary comments expressed relate to the following:

City-wide Crisis Response Bylaw Amendments

- **Rapid response to community needs** – Comments in support of bylaws that would enable the City to respond more readily in the future to emergency or time-sensitive needs, with set criteria. A comment was also made that the criteria should be expanded.
- **Bundling of projects** – Comments were made that the city-wide bylaws seemed to be over shadowed by the individual projects.
- **Non-support** – Comments were made in non-support of these amendments, citing leaving the current process as-is and providing housing for specific users.

60-68 Sixth Street

- **Unfair burden on neighbours and neighbourhood** – Concerns were raised that this development would be an unfair burden on those who live in close proximity to the development with respect to litter and crime. Comments were made that the Downtown neighbourhood already has a high concentration of services and housing for vulnerable populations and this project would exacerbate nuisance activities. Other comments were received from nearby residents in support of the building.
- **Adjacent uses** – Concerns were raised regarding the adjacency to a cannabis store, liquor stores, daycare, schools and existing shelters/transition housing.
- **Affordable housing in the community** – Comments were made in support of this development which responds to the region's housing crisis and a need to increase the amount of affordable housing in the city. Some comments expressed that housing is a human right and should be treated as a priority in the community.
- **Property Value** – Concerns were raised that the proposed project would have a negative effect on nearby property values.
- **City residents should make the final decision on the project** – Some comments suggested that a referendum among residents should be used to determine if this project is approved to move forward.
- **Tenant Agreements/Conduct** – concerns were raised regarding tenant behaviours (in and outside the units/building) and how the operator could enforce the tenant agreements.

350-366 Fenton Street

- **Size/density of the development in relation to the surrounding neighbourhood**– Issues were raised about the overall size and height of the building compared to the surrounding single detached dwellings. Other residents stated the benefits of this project outweigh concerns about the size and fit of the building.

- **Proposed location of the development within the city** – Some residents questioned the appropriateness of this location citing a lack of services and transit as opposed to elsewhere in the city (e.g. on the mainland). Other residents expressed support.
- **Affordable housing in the community** – Comments were made in support of this development which responds to the region's housing crisis and a need to increase the amount of affordable housing in the city.
- **Existing infrastructure** – Comments were made that the current infrastructure on Fenton street is inadequate (street lighting, uncovered ditches, localized flooding from blocked culverts, lack of sidewalks). Requests were made for the City to cover the ditches, complete sidewalks and raise street lighting for the entire length of the block.
- **Pedestrian Safety** – Concerns were raised that the street is narrow and in poor condition and sidewalks should be provided to better access transit.
- **Traffic and parking impacts** – Issues were raised about potential impacts to on-street parking. Issues were also raised related to increased traffic volumes in the area.
- **Soil/Settling issues** - Concerns were raised regarding pile driving and potential ground settlement from during construction activities.
- **Increased demand for schools** – Questions were raised regarding the impact of the proposed new units on demand for schools especially given the number of family-friendly units.
- **Property Value** – Concerns were raised that the proposed project would have a negative effect on property values nearby.
- **City residents should make the final decision on the project** – Some comments suggested that a referendum among residents should be used to determine if this project is approved to move forward.