

Phase II: Exploring Ideas and Options

Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character & Housing

An Update on the Community Dialogue

During Phase I of the Community Dialogue, residents were encouraged to explore neighbourhood character and housing issues, and to reflect on future needs and changes occurring in the community. Specifically, we asked residents what they value in their neighbourhoods, and what they would preserve or change. We also asked about their current housing, and if it met their long-term needs.

What We've Heard So Far

The online Community Forum has enabled people from both sides of an issue to share their thoughts, and engage in constructive debate. Common concerns expressed by forum users and those responding to the Community Dialogue questionnaire include:

- Limited housing choice and affordability
- The need for more types of housing
- Loss of mature trees and landscaping
- Very large new houses replacing more modest ones
- Excessive rock blasting and site alteration
- Neighbourhood disruption from construction activity
- Traffic and parking issues
- View preservation
- Potential economic losses from increased building restrictions

Suitability of Housing Type: Most respondents indicated that their present housing type is suitable for their current needs (96%). However, they are less certain that it will be suitable five years from now (76%) or 10 years from now (57%).

More Varied Housing in Established Neighbourhoods: Respondents indicated a desire for smaller detached houses on smaller, low-maintenance lots, and attached single-level units of modest size.

Community Survey: The District's 2007 Community Survey was based on a sample of 800 residents, which is substantially larger than in previous surveys. Based on suggestions made by the Working Group, it included questions on housing and neighbourhood character.

- 81% are concerned about future housing affordability
- 80% are concerned about future housing choices in the community
- 75% support secondary suites
- 68% are concerned that the character of their neighbourhoods is changing
- 54% support tightening restrictions on house size

Based on input from the above sources, we presented our preliminary findings to Council in December 2007.

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The Dialogue is an opportunity to:

- learn more about demographic trends, and future housing needs in the community
- share your ideas on what makes West Vancouver a special place and what you value most about your own neighbourhood
- share your ideas and opinions on possible new housing types



Community Dialogue

on Neighbourhood Character and Housing



The Process

PHASE I

Beginning the Dialogue: Information and Ideas (Completed)

Activities:

- Launched westvancouver.ca/communitydialogue to provide residents with online access to background information, related articles and news clippings, notices of upcoming meetings and special events, and an online questionnaire for direct public input
- Created an online Community Forum for public discussion and debate
- Mailed the first Community Dialogue newsletter to all West Vancouver households in September
- Included specific questions on housing in the District's Community Survey
- Hosted a two-day "Neighbourhoods Fair" in October, attended by over 400 people
- Made presentations to community organizations
- Installed information displays throughout the community

PHASE II

Exploring Ideas and Options: Community Workshops (December 2007 - March 2008)

Phase II will provide opportunities for more in-depth discussion of housing issues and opportunities in West Vancouver. The 'kick-off' event was "Changes and Choices: The West Vancouver Housing Dilemma", a public forum on January 30th, moderated by Ray Spaxman. The session included five panelists, who shared their views on housing issues and neighbourhoods from both local and regional perspectives.

The Working Group is hosting two all-day workshops in early March for more in-depth discussion of neighbourhood character and housing issues, and possible new housing types.

PHASE III

Making Choices: Confirming Future Directions (April - May 2008)

A community survey focused on housing and neighbourhood character will provide an opportunity to gauge public opinion on the key issues, opportunities, and directions coming out of the workshops.

PHASE IV

Recommendations: Achieving the Community Vision for Neighbourhood Character and Housing (June - July 2008)

The Working Group and District staff will review public input from all phases of the Community Dialogue, along with the workshop and survey findings, and will report to Council with recommendations for possible District actions.

Strong Turnout for Public Forum on Housing

On January 30th, the Working Group hosted a public forum titled, "Changes and Choices: The West Vancouver Housing Dilemma." The event was held at the Kay Meek Centre and, despite inclement weather, was attended by over 170 people. This was an opportunity to learn more about current and future population trends in West Vancouver, and the challenges for providing new housing types in our community. The forum was moderated by Ray Spaxman, renowned urban planning consultant, architect, and former Planning Director for the City of Vancouver.

Guest panelists included:

- Judy Whyte - North Shore realtor; member of Community Housing Action Committee
- Cheeying Ho - Executive Director, SmartGrowthBC
- Gordon Price - Director, SFU City Program, former City of Vancouver Councillor
- Harold Kalke - President, Kalico Developments
- Karl Gustavson - Karl Gustavson Architect Inc.

A video of the Forum can be viewed at westvancouver.ca/communitydialogue.

Community Workshops

Workshop #1: Neighbourhood Character
Saturday, March 8th from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Workshop #2: Housing Issues and Options
Saturday, March 15th from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Two workshops will be held at the West Vancouver Lawn Bowling Club, located at 650 - 20th Street. These events are free of charge (and include a light lunch). However, as space may be limited, pre-registration is required. Please contact the Planning Department at 604-925-7055 for more information or to register.



The sessions will be hosted by the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing Working Group. You will be able to view a series of information displays, hear short presentations, and engage in small group exercises. The objectives are to:

- generate discussion on neighbourhood character and housing issues
- develop ideas for enhancing our neighbourhoods and addressing character issues
- identify possible new housing types to best serve our community's longer-term needs

The following resources were saved by printing on 50% recycled and 25% post-consumer content paper:

Trees	Water	Energy	Solid Waste	Greenhouse Gases
2.23 fully grown	3,592 litres	1,582,700 BTU	105 lbs	207 lbs

How to Get Involved



Tell Us What You Think!

The Community Dialogue is about people talking to people. By people talking to people, everyone can learn more about housing and neighbourhood character issues in our community, and can contribute ideas that will shape future housing options and enhance our neighbourhoods. To this end, the Working Group and District staff have developed a number of opportunities for you to get involved, during each phase of the Dialogue:

- Visit westvancouver.ca/communitydialogue for more information, notices of upcoming events, Working Group meeting dates, and project updates
- Voice your opinions through the online Community Forum
- Participate in the March workshops (see page 3 for details)
- Read our newsletters
- Learn from our information displays at District facilities and community events and...
- Share your thoughts in a public survey in May



Join The Online Community Forum

The District's website and online Community Forum enable West Vancouver residents to engage in the Community Dialogue from the convenience of their own homes – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. This is particularly important for people that are not able to attend public meetings, workshops, or view public information displays.

The online forum provides an opportunity to engage in discussion and debate on neighbourhood character and housing issues by posting a reply to a discussion topic, and reading the comments of other forum users. To date, posted comments have been viewed over 4,000 times.

To learn more about the online forum, visit westvancouver.ca/forums.

Contact Information

If you have any questions about the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing, or would like to register for the March workshops, please contact the West Vancouver Planning Department at 604-925-7055 or send an email to: communitydialogue@westvancouver.ca.



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