

Recommendations: Achieving the Vision

Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character & Housing

Completing the Community Dialogue

The *Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing Working Group* has guided a year-long consultation process with the residents of West Vancouver on issues related to housing choice and affordability, and neighbourhood character. This has provided a public forum for identifying and discussing fundamental issues facing our community. The Working Group completed this process in July 2008, and presented its final report to Council in September 2008. This newsletter provides a brief overview of the Working Group's recommendations and outlines opportunities for further public input.

Themes

Two major themes emerged during the Community Dialogue:

1. Residents acknowledge that the community "needs to change to effectively stay the same", and that "doing nothing" is no longer an option. Through the Dialogue, we gained the understanding that we have to make some changes to the structure of our community if we are to protect what we value, and if we hope to remain in the community as our own needs change over time.
2. A majority of West Vancouver residents would like to see thoughtful and effective actions undertaken by Council to address real community concerns over housing choice and affordability, and the changing character of West Vancouver's established neighbourhoods.



Residents also shared with us the following goals:

- To protect the distinctive characteristics that have made West Vancouver such a unique community.
- To respect nature by minimizing landform alteration, preserving natural site features, and enhancing opportunities for enjoyment of nature.
- To plan for new housing types to meet the community's changing needs, but in forms that respect the established scale and character of West Vancouver neighbourhoods.
- To create more opportunities to downsize to smaller housing units, including modest gardens and outdoor space.

IN THIS ISSUE:

Completing the 'Dialogue' . . . 1
Thank You West Vancouver Residents! 2
Working Group Recommendations 3
Tell Us What You Think 4
The Process 4

The Working Group Report presents 20 recommendations pertaining to District policies, regulations, and processes, and District leadership in achieving a sustainable community.

District staff will be reporting back to Council later this year with recommendations for prioritizing the directions in the Working Group report, for inclusion in the District's 2009 staff work program.

View the Working Group's report at: westvancouver.ca/communitydialogue



This is the third and final newsletter on West Vancouver's Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing.

The Personal Stories

Throughout the Community Dialogue, residents shared their personal stories. The Working Group heard about the desires and struggles of individual residents wanting to maintain their homes and neighbourhoods, and remain in the community as their needs change, over the long term.

While each story was unique, similar messages were heard over and over. Three of these narratives are retold in this newsletter using fictionalized characters. Taken together, these stories illustrate some of the key housing challenges in West Vancouver.

Katherine

Katherine is a recently widowed senior on a fixed income. While she has been able to find a condominium for sale close to transit and other services, she would not have any money remaining from the sale of her house to supplement her income. She will have to leave her community of 35 years to find more affordable housing.



Working Group Recommendations

The Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing has concluded with a plan for action. This 'plan' is outlined in a series of 20 recommendations; the key recommendations are briefly summarized below:

- **Revise District policies, regulations, and processes to *achieve the sustainable community that is envisioned in the OCP***
- **Enhance and protect neighbourhood character by:**
 - Articulating the character of distinct neighbourhoods in key District policies
 - Conserving our heritage
 - Encouraging 'designing with nature'
 - Making construction more 'neighbour friendly'
- **Increase housing choice and improve housing affordability by:**
 - Amending key District policies to recognize alternate housing types
 - Exploring new housing types - through a series of targeted 'pilot projects'
 - Developing an affordable housing strategy
 - Legitimizing secondary suites in single-family dwellings
 - Encouraging environmentally sustainable housing and landscape design
- **Ensure the livability of new and established neighbourhoods through:**
 - The creation of additional village service nodes
 - Opportunities for reducing reliance on the private automobile
- **Ensure that the 'Dialogue' continues through the use of community workshops and other public engagement tools**



Working Group Members:

Christine Banham, Chair
Andy Krawczyk, Vice Chair
Susan Anderson
David Crilly
Jacqueline Gijssen
Freda Pagani
Barbara Pettit
Beverley Pitman
Keith Pople

Council Liaison:
Councillor John Clark

Staff Liaison:
Stephen Mikicich, Sr. Community Planner
Leanne Sexsmith, Community Planner

Thank You West Vancouver Residents!

On behalf of the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing Working Group, I would like to extend our sincere gratitude to all West Vancouver residents who participated in the Community Dialogue.

Your participation has made the Community Dialogue a successful forum for meaningful community input. It has raised the public's confidence that engaged citizens can be heard and that this can lead to real action on issues that matter to you.

We challenged you with questions, and listened to what you had to say about housing and neighbourhood character issues. Many of you took the time to learn about the issues, to reflect on your own views, and to share your thoughts with us, whether through a questionnaire or the more detailed survey, by posting a comment on the online forum, or by talking about the issues with friends, family and neighbours. Many of you gave up your evenings and weekends to attend Community Dialogue events, such as the public forum in January, and the workshops in March, where we collectively rolled-up our sleeves to work out possible solutions.

We believe that the Working Group's final report has been fully informed by the input we have received from you, and that it represents the voice of West Vancouver citizens. We have urged Council to take action, and we believe that the demonstrated participation of West Vancouver residents such as you is the key force that is leading to thoughtful and meaningful action on housing and neighbourhood character issues.

The implementation of the Working Group's recommendations is now up to District Council and staff. We encourage you to stay engaged in the public process, and hope that you will continue to participate in future public discussions on these issues, and provide your thoughtful input on implementing solutions to housing and neighbourhood character issues.

Sincerely yours,

*Christine Banham, Chair
Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character & Housing
Working Group*



The Personal Stories *Arthur & Grace*

Now in their late 50s, Arthur & Grace are looking to their future housing needs. They realize that they will need some flexibility to accommodate Arthur's mom over the short term, and possibly their adult daughter when she moves back to West Vancouver in a couple of years. While they have the financial means to afford a large new single-family house, they would prefer to live in a smaller low-maintenance house, with detached accommodation for family members and possibly a care-giver in the future. They would still like to have a garden and backyard, as do most West Van residents, but on a smaller, more manageable scale that is appropriate to their stage in life.

The Personal Stories *Sandra*

Sandra is a disabled adult whose parents have reached the age when they can no longer drive to North Vancouver to visit her in the group home in which she lives. They would like to see her established in a group home in West Vancouver where they can visit easily and know that she will be competent in this new environment for the rest of her life.

The Process

PHASE I

Beginning the Dialogue: Information and Ideas

✓ Completed: December 2007

PHASE II

Exploring Ideas and Options: Community Workshops

✓ Completed: March 2008

PHASE III

Making Choices: Confirming Future Directions

✓ Completed: July 2008

PHASE IV

Recommendations: Achieving the Community Vision for Neighbourhood Character and Housing

✓ Completed: September 2008

NEXT STEPS

1. Opportunities for further public input
2. Further action by District Council and staff



Tell the District of West Vancouver What You Think!

The Working Group's Final Report and Recommendations are available for further public review at:

- District of West Vancouver Planning Department
Municipal Hall, 3rd Floor, 750 17th Street
- West Vancouver Memorial Library - Reference Section
1950 Marine Drive
- online at westvancouver.ca/communitydialogue

If you would like to provide your input on the Working Group's recommendations, or any aspect of the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing to District Council and staff, please:

1. Send your written comments to: **District of West Vancouver**
Planning Department
3rd Floor - 750 17th Street
West Vancouver BC V7V 3T3
2. Send an email to: communitydialogue@westvancouver.ca
3. Post your comments on the online discussion forum by going to westvancouver.ca/forums (and follow the instructions)
4. Call the Planning Department at 604-925-7055 for more information

The following resources were saved by printing on locally-sourced 100% recycled post-consumer content paper:

Trees	Water	Energy	Solid Waste	Greenhouse Gases
10.35 fully grown	4,396 gallons	7,330,400 BTU	486 lbs	958 lbs

Community Dialogue

on Neighbourhood Character and Housing