

Revised EcoDensity Initial Actions

May 2008

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I. INTRODUCTION AND LIST OF ACTIONS

This document is an appendix to a report to City Council on the Revised EcoDensity Charter and Revised Initial Actions. The Revised Charter is in Appendix A and the Revised Actions are here in Appendix B.

The November 2007 draft EcoDensity Initial Actions have been revised here in response to comments during the extensive public discussion that followed their November release. This includes public discussion both leading up to, and during, the Special Council Meetings over seven nights that concluded in April. (More details on the public process are provided in the main Council Report.)

In the following pages, the Actions have been re-grouped, re-numbered, re-written and in many cases re-named, compared to the November 2007 draft Actions. The list below is a table of contents of the new Actions in this document. The table on the next page provides a cross-reference of current Action numbers and names compared to the November 2007 version.

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In the following pages, each Action starts on a new page and each page is organized as follows:

- Previous Draft Action from November 2007 report
- What we've heard (November 2007 - April 2008 public consultation)
- Revised Action
- Discussion

CROSS-REFERENCE: ACTION NAMES AND NUMBERS, PREVIOUS VERSUS NEW

Old #	PREVIOUS Action Name (November 2007)	New #	REVISED Action Name (May 2008)
1	Greener buildings (4 storeys and over)	A-1	Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings
2	Greater Sustainability for Large Site developments	A-2	Rezoning Policy for Greener Larger Sites
3	Incentives for green design	C-10	Removal of Barriers to Green Building Approaches
4	EcoDensity demonstration in lower density areas	C-2	Interim EcoDensity Rezoning Policy
5	New green single family zone	B-3	Greener RS-5 Character Design Guidelines
6	EcoDensity leadership on City land	C-3	EcoDensity Leadership on City Land
7	Priority to applications with green leadership	C-11	Priority to Applications with Green Leadership
8	More options for secondary suites within buildings	C-6	More Options for Rental Secondary Suites
9	New options for backyard laneway infill housing	C-5	Issues and Options for Backyard/ Laneway Housing
10	New options for arterial mid-rise housing	C-4	New Types of Arterial Mid-Rise Buildings
11	Leftover lots	C-9	Leftover Lots in Older Apartment Zones
12	Increased building height or density in Gastown, Hastings, and Chinatown Districts	B-1	Historic Precinct Height Study
13	Enabling district energy	C-1	<i>An "Eco" CityPlan</i>
14	Amenity tools	C-7	Public Amenity and Public Benefit Cost Recovery and Funding Tools
15	Density increase flexibility	C-8	Discretionary Density Increase for Public Benefits
16	Community gathering places	B-2	Community Gathering Places in Each Neighbourhood
17	Plan for the longer term	C-1	<i>An "Eco" CityPlan</i>
18	Amenity strategies for the longer term	C-1	<i>An "Eco" CityPlan</i>
19	Measurement tools	C-12	Accountability for EcoDensity Follow-Through
20	Panel	C-12	Accountability for EcoDensity Follow-Through
21	Progress report structure	C-12	Accountability for EcoDensity Follow-Through

II. REVISED ECODENSITY INITIAL ACTIONS

Part A: New Policy

ACTION A-1: Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings

Previous Draft Action 1 (November 2007)

Greener buildings (4 storeys and over)

Achieve a new green standard in rezonings, effective immediately, by requiring at least LEED™ Silver equivalency for rezonings for buildings to which LEED™ may be applied (i.e., larger than 600 square meters; typically, these buildings are 4 storeys and over) with an emphasis on the City priorities (e.g., energy efficiency); and consult with the development industry about moving to LEED™ Gold equivalency or better at an appropriate time.

What we've heard:

- The City should require greener performance, not bonus for it.
- This adds a green requirement but no corresponding density.
- The City shouldn't use LEED™ as the green standard because it is not performance based, and gives points for things that are too easily earned and perhaps not always environmental priorities.
- The City should strive for higher standards than LEED™ Silver (either immediately or over time).
- Despite its weaknesses, LEED™ as an existing system can be a useful tool for the City, is understood in the building community and is most easily implementable immediately. LEED™ as a system is under review nationally and being improved.
- Rezonings for buildings smaller than LEED™ should have a similar standard (ie the BuiltGreen™ BC system).
- Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRAs) are similar to rezonings and often include significant new buildings, and should be included.
- Heritage buildings should be exempt from LEED™ because it may conflict with heritage aspirations and does not properly acknowledge the embodied energy and materials in existing buildings.
- Seek greener performance for all buildings, not just rezonings.

Revised Action A-1 (May 2008)

Rezoning Policy for Greener Buildings

That it be Council Policy that all rezonings for buildings that meet the minimum requirements to participate in the LEED™ for New Construction (NC) program, be required to establish designs that would achieve a minimum equivalent of LEED™ Silver, with a minimum of 3 optimize energy performance points, 1 water efficiency point and 1 storm water point. Buildings that are not eligible to participate in LEED™ NC due to form of development shall achieve BuiltGreen BC Gold™ with a score of Energuide 80, or an equivalent achievement in green design. The City will negotiate an equivalent green standard for buildings that are ineligible to participate in either LEED™ or BuiltGreen™ BC. The application of this policy shall emphasize approaches that use green design practices to reduce energy need before the

application of green energy technologies.

This policy also applies to Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRAs) where density is being increased. As with rezonings, HRAs often have both heritage aspects and new development aspects. For heritage components in either HRAs or rezonings, the LEED™ equivalency requirement will not directly apply, however reasonable design efforts shall be made to improve green performance where appropriate while respecting heritage aspirations and promoting heritage retention.

This policy will apply to any new applications for rezoning or HRA received after May 13, 2008.

Staff shall undertake consultation and education with the development industry, and report back to Council with recommendations, with the intent of raising the LEED™ and BuiltGreen BC equivalency requirements in this policy to LEED™ Gold and BuiltGreen BC Platinum on January 1st, 2010, with continued efforts to move to a more performance-based approach for green buildings policy.

Discussion

In the EcoDensity public consultations, the majority of commentators told the staff team they would like to see green performance required, not bonused for. This Action puts this into effect by requiring rezonings and Heritage Revitalization Agreements (HRAs) to have higher green standards than buildings that do not go through rezoning. No corresponding increase in density is negotiated in return for this performance, and increases in density through the rezoning would be subject to all usual public benefits and Community Amenity Contribution (CAC) discussions.

Staff are also working on the Green Building Strategy to apply new requirements to all types of buildings (with or without a rezoning), including single family, through Vancouver's Building By-Law. However this work is not currently anticipated to result in a green requirement as high as this policy for rezoning would require. Thus this policy is based on the principle that where a rezoning is requested, it is reasonable for Council to require a higher standard.

Over time, green standards and requirements will increase for all buildings. It will be important to raise requirements for buildings requiring rezonings and those that do not, in somewhat of a "lock-step" manner, to ensure a disincentive to rezone is not inadvertently created through too great a difference between the requirements. It is staff's recommendation that rezoning green standards continue to be higher than non-rezoning green standards, however that the gap between be kept workable and strategic.

At present, using green building rating systems such as LEED™ and BuiltGreen BC that are now easily available, although imperfect, represents an immediate start and a significant increase in green building requirements over the status quo. It is noted that these systems are constantly being undated and improved to address many recognized weaknesses. In the meantime, to make sure that this interim policy reflects City priorities around energy, water and storm water improvements, this Action specifies LEED™ points that must be met instead of earning rating points for less important green features. Thus it balances flexibility with

clear minimal expectations for key environmental aspects, addressing one main weaknesses of LEED™.

Because green requirements are continually becoming more feasible, staff will also examine, in consultation with the building industry, increasing the rezoning standard. The development industry has suggested waiting to raise to LEED™ Gold equivalent to 2012 to provide more learning time for the industry. Staff believe two years of notice (2010) is sufficient to allow industry members to prepare and educate themselves.

It is recognised that the intent is to move to a performance-based, rather than a checklist-based, approach as rapidly as possible. If by 2010 a performance based goal is seen as a feasible alternative to raising the standard to LEED™ Gold, such an option will be presented to Council for consideration.

The evolving Green Building Strategy and this new rezoning policy take the City along the path toward its commitment to carbon neutrality for all new buildings by 2030. Staff investigations suggest that this policy would make Vancouver the first North American city to establish a policy for LEED™ for privately owned buildings as high as Silver, and note that the required points for energy, water and storm water further improve the performance beyond “base Silver”.

This Action does not enable additional rezonings over-and-above those already considerable under existing policy. This Action assumes that rezoning applications follow the EcoDensity Charter and all other existing City policies and requirements (land use, urban design, public amenities and public benefits) - with the addition of the higher level green building requirements.

ACTION A-2: Rezoning Policy for Greener Larger Sites

Previous Draft Action 2 (November 2007)

Greater sustainability for Large Site developments

Where planning policy or rezonings are undertaken for Large Sites or significant changes to existing CD-1 zones, allow consideration of development beyond the density and/or scale set out in Community Vision Directions or other area policies when the proposal shows exemplary leadership in environmental performance while also addressing affordability, and community amenities.

What we've heard:

- The City should require greener performance, not bonus for it. Public benefits should still be achieved on large sites.
- Which sites does this Action apply to? Can a developer assemble any lots to create a "large site"?
- The Action should not override existing Visions.
- Others felt these large sites were the best opportunity to consider more density beyond the Visions.
- Input from the community must be part of any resulting large site rezoning process.
- What is meant by "exemplary leadership in environmental performance"?
- Large sites do provide more opportunities to deliver green design and technology features.

Revised Action A-2 (May 2008)

Rezoning Policy for Greener Larger Sites

That it be Council Policy for all rezonings that involve land two acres or more, in addition to the minimum requirements for Greener Buildings in Action A-1, that the City will require the following:

- A business case analysis will be required by a qualified green energy consultant at the discretion of the City to explore the viability of campus or district energy systems. If the business case is viable a system will be required.
- Overall site design shall consider and where appropriate incorporate layout and orientation approaches that reduce energy needs, facilitate passive energy solutions, incorporate urban agricultural opportunities, and replicate natural systems where feasible.
- A Sustainable Transportation Demand Management Strategy will be required that includes the requisite infrastructure where appropriate to prioritize sustainable transportation modes. This includes walking, cycling, public transit and goods movement over automobile use, and facilitates the incorporation of low carbon vehicles (e.g., electric vehicles).
- A sustainable rainwater management plan that utilizes sustainable strategies that allow for infiltration, retention, treatment and utilization of rainwater where applicable and appropriate on site.
- A solid waste diversion strategy that provides space, infrastructure and a plan to divert organics and recyclables from the waste stream, and where possible minimizes the vehicle trips required for collection.

- With sites accommodating housing, a range of unit types and tenures will be considered and negotiated to enhance the affordability that the market can provide, while providing in accordance with Council policy, opportunities for the development of non-market housing to be funded through senior government housing programs.

These above components are requirements, and are not compensated with bonus density. In addition, usual City policies and aspirations will apply for land use, urban design, and/or other public amenities and benefits, as appropriate for the specific site.

This policy applies to both residential and non-residential rezonings including commercial, industrial, and institutional.

Appropriate heights and densities are determined through the site-specific rezoning planning process, with public consultation, and options are related to the type of land use, size of site, urban design, neighbourhood context, etc.

Many of the planning policies across the City identify sites of this size ("special sites," "large sites," CD-1s"), most of which do not have specifically prescribed densities or heights for these sites, but rather provide direction on land use or rezoning process and expect height and density to be determined at rezoning. However, in the Oakridge Langara Policy Statement and the Riley Park-South Cambie Vision, there are sites (4 sites and 3 sites, respectively) for which the Plan or Vision specifies site-specific heights or densities. (Sites are listed in table below). It is the intent of this policy that these heights/densities will be used as the base case option when an actual site planning/rezoning process occurs. Additional options with increased densities and corresponding heights beyond the Plan or Vision may also be created and assessed through the rezoning review and planning process that accompanies rezonings of this scale. Considerable public engagement, including early dialogue prior to preparation of alternative options, will be included.

This policy will apply to all new rezoning applications initiated after May 13, 2008, unless a policy statement for the site was approved by Council before that date as part of a rezoning policy program. Where such a policy statement has been approved, staff shall negotiate reasonable green performance improvements compatible with the policy statement in the rezoning stage that respect the intent of this policy. Where a policy process is underway, but there is as yet no approved policy statement, staff shall use discretion as to the extent to which conformity with the above shall be required, depending on the advancement of the process.

The greener site requirements will be re-evaluated, and updated at regular intervals to reflect market evolution, advancements in technology, and progressive City targets that move toward goals such as carbon neutral new construction.

Discussion

As a companion to Action A-1, this Action raises the green requirement for larger sites that come through the City rezoning process. The City has learned much about sustainability options in the context of its larger site developments over generations, and the intent of this policy is to ensure that learning continues to build. Larger sites provide the opportunity for greater green performance requirements than smaller sites or individual buildings.

This Action is not intended to enable new site assembly nor favour additional rezonings beyond those sites that would be considered for rezoning under existing City policy. Most often sites over 2 acres that are considered for rezoning are existing assembled, underdeveloped sites. They are usually old CD-1 zoned sites with older social housing projects, or former or existing institutions, or older shopping malls.

For the larger residential sites in the over 2 acre category, this Action complements and reinforces established City policies and practice to use the potential of large redevelopment sites to achieve comprehensive new communities that are sustainable environmentally, socially, economically, and culturally. The new communities created on larger sites should provide a full range of services and amenities, be socially inclusive, and enrich the larger neighbourhoods of which they are part of as well as the city as a whole.

The new Policy above acknowledges two areas of the City where a local policy (Vision or Plan) identifies heights and/or densities for specific sites covered in this Action, and explains how these heights/densities will be used as a base case in developing options for these sites.

Sometimes there has been confusion about whether heights/densities in other sections of Community Visions would apply to these larger site rezonings. Visions have two ways of discussing height and/or density:

- One, for Visions in areas where there are larger sites, there are Vision directions that speak specifically to these sites. Most Visions use these directions to provide general guidance on land use or rezoning process for these sites. As noted above, only one Vision and one Plan speaks to specific densities and or heights for these sites.
- Second, there are other sections of the Visions that provide directions on a variety of more typical or generic locations for height and density in the community, such as around parks or schools, around transit stations, near shopping areas, or generally throughout the community, etc. It has been the consistent interpretation that these general height or density directions do not apply to the larger sites identified separately in the Visions. Thus the new policy above has not had to address these circumstances.

The rezoning process for this size of site typically includes significant public engagement, and all rezonings must include formal Public Hearings and be individually approved by City Council.

**Oakridge Langara Policy Statement and Riley Park/South Cambie Vision:
 Sites over 2 acres with specified site-specific densities and/or heights**
 (These will be used in a site specific rezoning process as a base case scenario. Other sites over 2 acres are identified in other Visions, but do not have site-specific policy on density/height)

Site	Size	Details on Density/Height
Oakridge Langara Policy Statement (1995)		
Former B.C. Transit site, W. 41st	6.1 ha 15 ac.	30 ft. for most of site; 40 ft. along 41 st Ave. frontage; 50 ft. strip north of 41 st Ave. frontage; mix of townhouses, low-rise and mid-rise to 1.0 FSR (gross)
Langara Gardens site, 57 th & Cambie	8.51 ha 21 ac.	40 ft. for most of site; 30 ft. adjacent to single family areas; mix of townhouses & low-rise as infill to 1.0 FSR (gross)
Pearson Centre, 57 th & Cambie, 650 W. 57 th	8.1 ha 20 ac.	40 ft. for most of site; 30 ft. adjacent to single family areas; mix of townhouses and low-rise to overall site-density 1.0 FSR (gross) with 0.6 FSR max residential (max 0.6 FSR institutional)
Dogwood Lodge, 57 th & Cambie, 500 W. 57 th	2.43 ha 6 ac.	40 ft. for most of site; 30 ft. adjacent to single family areas; mix of townhouses and low-rise to overall site-density 1.0 FSR (gross) with 0.6 FSR max residential (max 0.6 FSR institutional)
Riley Park/South Cambie Vision (2005)		
RCMP Fairmont Complex, 37th and Heather	8.5 ha 21 ac. 3 parcels	Up to 4 storeys with lower heights for transition where appropriate
Balfour Block, 18th and Laurel	1 ha 2.5 ac.	Up to 3 storeys, about 35 ft.
Little Mountain Housing Project, 5299 Main	6.1 ha 15 ac.	Not taller than 4 storeys

II. REVISED ECODENSITY INITIAL ACTIONS

Part B: Directions to Include in Existing Work

ACTION B-1: Historic Precinct Height Study

Previous Draft Action 12 (November 2007)

Increased building height or density in Gastown, Hastings, and Chinatown districts
In order to support heritage projects, provide replacement housing, and meet environmental goals, consider policies to relax building height restrictions or density on signature or other suitable sites in the Gastown, Hastings and Chinatown districts; to be considered both in districts with existing policy or under new policy development.

This Action was added by City Council.

What we've heard:

- This action threatens the area's historic character and should be removed.
- Low-income rental housing is needed.
- Increased height or density could help to revitalize the area and create public benefits in the area.
- Heritage and neighbourhood character must be respected.
- Increased height and density can be built while still respecting the area's scale.
- The downtown area, including the DTES, is already high density. These areas need more amenities and other services in order to become more sustainable.
- The community must be consulted regarding how this action is implemented.

Revised Action B-1 (May 2008)

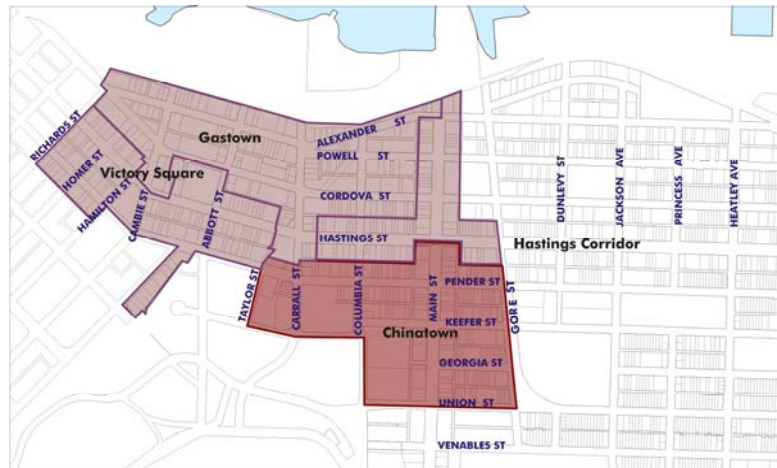
Historic Precinct Height Study

Staff be directed to include consideration of policies for additional density and corresponding height in suitable locations in Gastown, Hastings, Chinatown, and Victory Square, as part of the Historic Precinct Height Study ("the Study"). The intent of this direction is to support heritage conservation projects, to provide replacement low-income housing, and/or to support other public benefits and amenities. Suitable, carefully considered locations, densities and heights will be determined through careful analysis and extensive public consultation to ensure the appropriate scale in the historic areas is maintained, while also being consistent with the City's housing objectives for the area.

The Study, currently being undertaken by staff, will identify options for where additional height and density beyond existing zoning could be considered for projects that provide for public benefits. This direction is consistent with the objectives and boundary of the Study.

The map below shows the boundary for the Study and implementation of this Action.

Historic Precinct Height Study & Action B-1 Boundary



This Action does not contemplate site-specific rezoning applications or “spot-zoning” prior to the completion of the Study. Rather, the intent is to provide direction as to the scope of the Study in the context of comprehensive policy development with associated public consultation.

If rezonings result from this Action, the intent is that they be required to meet at least those green requirements in Action A-1 (and A-2 if sites are close to two acres or more in size).

Discussion

The historic precinct of Vancouver is a distinct neighbourhood with well-established physical characteristics including building forms, architectural expression, materials, streetscape, and public spaces. These characteristics contribute to the rich texture of the historic neighbourhood, creating a unique sense of place. This area is also the home of a well-established low-income community.

There has been considerable debate and disagreement around this proposed action, and its implications to the historic scale of the neighbourhood and the future of the low-income community. Although staff believe that the important goal of maintaining and respecting the historic scale and pattern should shape policy decisions in the community, there may be potential for carefully considered locations in Gastown, Hastings, Chinatown, and Victory Square to be redeveloped with more density and corresponding height than allowed under current zoning, without compromising this goal.

New development potential (additional building density and height) created from this Action could be leveraged to provide negotiated public benefits for the area such as heritage conservation, neighbourhood needs and amenities, and replacement low-income housing.

There will be extensive opportunities for the public to be involved in the Historic Precinct Height Study and any Council decisions. The Study includes an external urban design consultancy to provide advice on different urban design scenarios, from which staff will develop viable and sensitive options, identifying public benefits that can be achieved. Options will be presented for community discussion and advice.

ACTION B-2: Community Gathering Places in Each Neighbourhood

Previous Draft Action 16 (November 2007)

Community gathering places

Pursue the achievement of a neighbourhood plaza or community gathering place in each planning area within Neighbourhood Centres and Area Planning programs, through various tools in keeping with EcoDensity commitments.

This Action was added by City Council.

What we've heard:

- In the future, the city will have more density and less automobile use, so public gathering places will be more important than ever.
- These places should be identified and designed with local community involvement.
- The City should look to maximise all public open spaces including plazas, but also green streets and seawalls.
- Community gathering places are also locations where people could get access to local food in their own communities (e.g., farmers' markets).
- The City should concentrate on maintaining its indoor public spaces (e.g., community centres), rather than outdoor spaces.

Revised Action B-2 (May 2008)

Community Gathering Places in Each Neighbourhood

Staff be directed in various work programs and initiatives as opportunities allow, to pursue the achievement of a significant community gathering place, outdoor or/and indoor, that are strategically located and designed in each neighbourhood, as part of planning programs such as Neighbourhood Centres, Area Planning, and Major Projects. Such places may vary in form or type by neighbourhood as defined through neighbourhood consultation, providing flexible, adaptable space for meeting, respite and relaxation, celebration, information-sharing, and community-based social, cultural, and/or environmental initiatives.

Discussion

Within existing work, City staff can help achieve gathering places as part of area planning programs. Opportunities to achieve these spaces could come, for example, through rezoning negotiations for community amenities; building design; park design and use; use and design of publicly-owned space; and/or through the City's Capital Plan. In some neighbourhoods this might come in the form of a plaza or outdoor space (which as some have pointed out, could facilitate other important sustainable community uses such as farmers markets or community gardens), while in others it could be an in-door community or social facility or other unique space. The intent is to be flexible and inclusive of community perspectives on what kind of space would be of greatest value. This work would be coordinated with the City's Social Facilities Plan and Cultural Facilities Plan, as well as work in other City departments and boards.

ACTION B-3: Greener RS-5 Character Design Guidelines

Previous Draft Action 5 (November 2007)

New green single family zone

Pursue the development of a new single family zone to replace RS-5 that offers a discretionary density increase similar to that in the current RS-5 zone, where there is strong green building performance.

This Action was added by City Council.

What we've heard:

- Greener building performance should be a Building By-law requirement, not bonused with additional density.
- Questions about how larger single-detached houses would be better for the environment.
- Concerns that character guidelines should be retained for RS-5 areas. The RS-5 zone to provide design control for single family houses was adopted after people in each of the areas requested it, and then voted on it; it should not be dismantled without similar process.
- Flexibility in single family zoning to achieve greener design is a good idea.
- Existing heritage or character houses could be threatened with demolition if density is no longer conditional upon aesthetics but rather green performance.
- There is some confusion as to why this Action applies only to RS-5 and not other zones with character-based design guidelines.

Revised Action B-3 (May 2008)

Greener RS-5 Character Design Guidelines

Staff be directed to include in the Green Building Strategy (GBS), a review of the RS-5 guidelines (and over time, other character-based guidelines) relative to ecological design performance, to support the directions and goals of the GBS, while also respecting local neighbourhood character aspirations of the guidelines. Staff will consult with affected communities on any proposed changes to design guidelines.

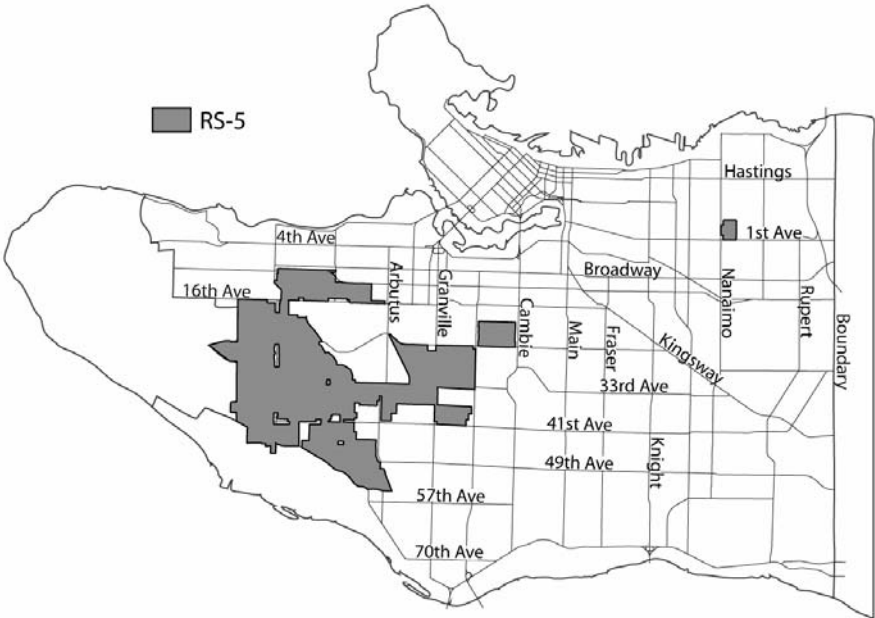
Discussion

RS-5 is a single family zone, which also allows a secondary suite. RS-5 permits additional discretionary single family floor space, above other single family areas, where guidelines that encourage designs that are compatible with existing neighbouring houses have been met.

The map below identifies RS-5 zones in the City. RS-5 zoned areas were selected based on community requests and surveys.

Through the separate but related Green Building Strategy, the City already plans to increase the level of green performance required in all one and two family dwellings throughout the City, including RS-5 areas. This Action would affect that intended work.

RS-5 Zones in Vancouver



II. REVISED ECODENSITY INITIAL ACTIONS

Part C: Authorizations For Next Steps Toward Action Implementation

ACTION C-1: An "Eco" *CityPlan*

Note: The revised Action C-1 merges Actions 13, 17, and 18 from the previous November 2007 draft. The previous Actions are listed first. The revised Action is on the next page.

Previous Draft Action 13 (November 2007)

Enabling District Energy

Develop a City-wide renewable energy strategy, including district energy systems, and evaluate specific regulatory and implementation opportunities through consultation and research projects using existing operating budget and contributions by other stakeholders.

What we've heard:

- This is a good idea. Do more research and learn from other places.
- This action could be merged with Action 17 and others into a more comprehensive plan.
- Work with property owners, including City organizations, to achieve more wide-spread District Energy opportunities.
- Explore multiple, diverse strategies to achieve District Energy.
- Combine this with requirements to build green.
- There are some concerns about cost.

Previous Draft Action 17 (November 2007)

Plan for the longer term

Develop a program that will provide a city-wide context for determining where and how to make land use changes beyond existing plans and policies, in order to further improve sustainability, affordability, and livability - the program to start with mapping the city's existing development pattern and plans, as a base for broad public discussion of additional opportunities and options.

What we've heard:

- This is the most important action, the "big comprehensive task", and it should be number one.
- It should respect, and ideally be based on, *CityPlan* and the many Community Visions.
- It should include both city-wide and neighbourhood-scaled consultation.
- Many other initial actions (e.g., district energy strategy, amenity strategy) could be considered parts of this comprehensive plan, along with many other sustainable city-building elements (e.g., transportation, urban agriculture, housing diversity etc.)
- The planned location of buildings into a pattern that reduces emissions is as important as the design of the buildings themselves. The City should locate housing, workplaces and recreation to promote walking, bicycling, and transit.
- Develop this Plan in coordination with the update of the Regional growth and affordability strategies.

Previous Draft Action 18 (November 2007)

Amenity strategies for the longer term

Develop a program, involving all City departments, for a comprehensive amenity strategy review, starting with documenting existing standards, delivery mechanisms, capacities, and plans, and using this as a base to evaluate and develop new strategies, with public input.

What we've heard:

- A higher amenity standard is needed to support densification, including artist spaces, heritage, seniors' facilities, etc.
- The amenity value of existing spaces such as schools must be rethought and broadened.
- Be sure to account for the amenity needs of children living in higher density housing.
- Provide the amenities first, then the density.
- Affordable housing is needed.
- More emphasis on transportation services is needed.
- The City needs to properly fund the green components of amenities.

Revised Action C-1 (May 2008)

An "Eco" CityPlan

Staff be directed to report back to Council on a proposed work program and resource needs to develop a new city-wide plan, that builds on and respects *CityPlan* and the many Community Visions, rather than replacing them, to form an approved physical direction that will manage change and density across the city to meet the commitments of the EcoDensity Charter.

The work program, at a minimum, should consider approaches and techniques as follows:

Dialogue and consultation

Engage, educate, and learn from the public at city-wide and neighbourhood scales, in all steps of this work, to promote neighbourhood voice and ownership in keeping with the Charter.

Shared city-wide responsibility

Form solutions that balance neighbourhood ownership with neighbourhood responsibility toward the city-wide goals of EcoDensity. The intent is to promote an "eco-city" of "eco-neighbourhoods."

Identify the "Status Quo"

Identify and build on existing density and population potential under existing policy and zoning; existing density-to-amenity ratios and relationships (e.g., which neighbourhoods are better served with existing amenity-to-population than others); existing neighbourhoods where key affordability goals are being achieved; etc.

Goal setting and measurement

Set goals and measurements of success around key "eco city" indicators, on a city-wide and neighbourhood scale, such as: greenhouse gas emissions per capita; reductions in carbon and ecological footprints; energy use and costs; mitigation and preparation for climate change;

mode split and distances traveled; retention of existing and creation of new affordable housing; range of incomes and ages living in the city; adequacy of amenities; etc

International best practices

Identify and evaluate approaches, tools, and best practices from other cities and countries in neighbourhood patterns, densification, design, district energy, land use, etc. that can help to achieve the desired goals on city-wide and neighbourhood scales.

Create and evaluate scenarios

Identify conditions that could impact Vancouver in the future, to imagine what might be very different than traditional projections could suggest (e.g., rising sea levels, rising energy prices, etc)

Physical plan development

Develop and evaluate plan options to physically describe more sustainable growth at various scales, addressing both city-wide needs and neighbourhood specifics, that build on existing density and population potential under zoning and policy. Evaluate options to assess how well they would meet the agreed goals and measurements discussed above.

Layers of strategies/plans

Include multiple new "layers" of strategies, including links to other new City initiatives, that support density, design, and land use and are necessary for a lower-footprint city pattern -- including layers on transportation, district energy, new amenity and services approaches, social development issues, urban agriculture and local food access, affordability and Housing Actions Plans, etc. The Regional context must also be considered.

Follow-up, monitor, adapt

Use the goals and measurements developed as part of this work to monitor progress and discuss and adapt as needed.

Discussion

CityPlan is now over ten years old and many Community Visions have been prepared and approved since then (the last will be considered by Council later this year). Although they considered many issues, these policy documents did not present a precise physical vision to answer the question, "What exactly will the City look like in the decades to come?"

This same question has been asked many times since the EcoDensity work program was launched. Although it was not the original intention of this work program to answer such a question with the creation of a physical Plan (the intended deliverables were a high-level charter, and new tools and actions), it has become clear throughout the community dialogue that the ability to answer this question in Plan-form over time, is critical. Such a Plan exercise at a city-wide context would provide a way to identify and assess scenarios, options, and issues for the future growth of the City, in keeping with the Charter commitments.

Council approval of this Action would mean that staff will report back on a proposal for a program for long-term plan development. This would be an extensive, complex city-wide program that would require considerable resources and public involvement.

Staff have already collected many ideas for this Plan development from the public dialogue thus far.

Certain previous EcoDensity actions are suggested to be combined in this action as “layers” of the Plan and part of a series of coordinated strategies. Former Action 13 relating to a new district energy strategy would represent a key layer of the Plan. Former Action 18, related to the development of a broad amenity strategy for the City, would similarly represent a significant layer of the Plan. Many other issues would have their own layers, with every aspect of sustainable city-building represented.

ACTION C-2: Interim EcoDensity Rezoning Policy

Previous Draft Action 4 (November 2007)

EcoDensity demonstration in lower density areas

Encourage projects that demonstrate an exceptional level of leadership in innovative green design and sustainable practices, by adopting in principle the concept of an Interim EcoDensity Rezoning Policy, that would allow projects that meet specified green criteria to be considered for site-specific rezoning in advance of area planning. Projects would conform to Vision Directions about type, location, and scale.

The specific Rezoning Policy would need to be reported back to Council for approval.

What we've heard:

- The intent and significance of this action is unclear as written.
- Community Visions should be respected, and community consultation included in next steps.
- Support by many for the "freeing up" of housing types contemplated by Visions but awaiting further planning study.
- These housing types represent both supply and more affordable types, and could help with the city's affordability.
- The terms need to be defined - e.g., "demonstrate," "innovative green design," "specified green criteria."
- It is a good idea to show real EcoDensity project examples.
- The projects should also showcase design, livability, and affordability.
- Projects may be premature until EcoDensity is more established.

Revised Action C-2 (May 2008)

Interim EcoDensity Rezoning Policy

Staff be directed to report back to Council, after appropriate public consultation, with a proposed Interim EcoDensity Rezoning Policy. This policy will be connected to Community Vision housing choice outcomes, and would allow housing types and locations contemplated in Community Visions (as "approved" or "uncertain" in community surveys, but not "unsupported" types) to be considered for site specific rezonings, in advance of area-wide planning, if the project meets specified criteria. The program to create this proposed policy would represent a form of the further planning study called for in the various Visions, and will include consideration of the following at a minimum:

- The specific green requirements that would apply, including consideration of energy, water, storm water, and urban agriculture, at least to the standard established in Action A-1.
- How affordability requirements can be reasonably incorporated into projects of these scales through types, tenures, unit sizes, finishes, suites, etc.
- A public amenities approach for the policy, including the consideration of potential in-block "micro-amenities."
- Heritage retention impacts and how to address them.
- Design and character of the new housing.

- Specific clarity on types and locations of housing identified in various Visions that will be subject to this Policy.
- Potential approaches to distribution of projects across the city, including monitoring approaches.

Any developer contributions realized through these rezonings are intended to go toward community amenities.

The Policy will replace the current Housing Demonstration Policy. The Policy will be Interim until further policy is developed through Vision implementation and/or further EcoDensity planning.

Once a Rezoning Policy is in place, as with all rezonings, notifications and a Public Hearing will be required before Council can approve a specific rezoning application under the Policy.

Discussion

Through the *CityPlan* Community Visions process across the city's mostly single family areas over the past 10 years, every community identified new housing types (e.g., suites, duplexes, four-and six-plexes, rowhouses, courtyard rowhouses, and/or low rise apartments) for a range of ages and household types in the community.

Each Vision is unique in its combination of resulting housing types and locations. Each Vision includes housing types and locations in three categories based on the results of the community surveys. This Policy applies to the first two categories.

- Those that were supported/approved: Majority agreement in both the general survey (50%) and random survey (55-58% depending on the sample size and possible survey margin of error).
- Those that were labeled "uncertain": More "agree" than "disagree" votes in both general and random surveys, but less than majority agreement in one or both surveys (this includes cases where there was majority agreement in the general or random survey, but not both). The "uncertain" category is described in the Visions as still on the table for consideration.
- Those which are not supported: disagree votes outnumber agree votes in both surveys. These will not be part of this Action.

An observation of the Visions approach since the program began, is that, as crafted, development of both supported and uncertain housing types cannot proceed until "further planning study" is completed - primarily through the Neighbourhood Centres Program. These work programs are time consuming and staff-resource-intensive, thus there are many housing types across the city that remain "frozen" awaiting such work, often for as long as a decade or more.

To date, the one housing type specifically identified in some of the Visions that has since been implemented by City Council across the city is legal secondary suites. However, the only way any of the other housing types can be realized is either through the very limited Housing Demonstration Policy, which permits only one "demonstration" project per neighbourhood, with no clear definition of "neighbourhood"; or through the detailed planning in the Neighbourhood Centres Program as noted above. The Centres Program has been successfully completed in the first Centre around Knight and Kingsway, and new courtyard rowhouses and

small lot duplexes are being built there. The second Centres Program is underway at Norquay in the Kingsway-Nanaimo area.

In all the Visions together, there are 18 Centres identified, as well as some housing types and locations outside Centres. Based on the current delivery approach, this means a long wait until most communities will actually see the housing types supported or listed as uncertain in their Visions.

The purpose of the proposed Interim EcoDensity Rezoning Policy is to allow this housing to begin to be considered on a site-by-site basis, to facilitate more short term housing choice and strategic density forms that were generally supported by the various communities. The Policy will determine standards for its green performance, affordability, and other public amenities and benefits. It will also set locational parameters for where incremental change in the lower density areas of the city should be focused. A balance will need to be struck between recognizing the affordability inherent in the existing housing stock, and providing new housing types and choices through redevelopment.

These projects can begin to show what EcoDensity developments can look like at different scales and in different neighbourhood contexts, in accordance with the housing types that were generally supported in existing community policy. At the same time, other Community Vision implementation continues on a range of topics, from transportation to park improvements, through the staff implementation teams working with local implementation committees.

ACTION C-3: EcoDensity Leadership on City Land

Previous Draft Action 6 (November 2007)

EcoDensity leadership on City land

To show City leadership and to improve understanding of, and generate interest in, emerging sustainability practices, develop a proposal to use City land for one or more EcoDensity demonstrations, at potentially varying scales and that could include a variety of EcoDensity and related features, such as deep green design, renewable energy sources, alternative parking standards, affordable housing, and urban agriculture.

What we've heard:

- This is a good idea. The City should lead by example. These represent the best opportunities for "pure" EcoDensity demonstration projects.
- Demonstrate a broad interpretation of EcoDensity - including livability, affordability, amenities, urban agriculture, etc., in addition to green design.
- Ideally the learning from these projects should be replicable within the marketplace.
- This process must include community input.
- Use City land for other purposes, such as social housing, parks, open space.

Revised Action C-3 (May 2008)

EcoDensity Leadership on City Land

Staff be directed to report back to Council on a strategy to show strong leadership in translating the EcoDensity Charter commitments into market-replicable projects on City-owned land, to test, improve understanding of, and generate interest in, emerging sustainability, affordability and livability practices. Included in the strategy will be evaluation of City-owned assets and options to use City land for one or more EcoDensity demonstrations, at varying scales. EcoDensity features to be explored include cutting-edge performance-based green design (e.g., carbon-neutral or better), renewable energy sources/energy production opportunities, sustainable transportation demand management, innovative affordability approaches, alternative parking standards and designs, and urban agriculture.

Discussion

During the public process, we heard many suggestions for using City-owned land to demonstrate EcoDensity commitments. A demonstration project could occur on one or more sites, and at varying scales, and would demonstrate practices that are cutting edge, yet could become replicable by the development industry.

Upon Council approval of this concept, staff will develop a more detailed proposal, including identification of environmental and other performance criteria; suitable location(s) and scale(s) of development; options for selecting design (e.g., idea or design competitions); and a process for selecting developer(s) (e.g., issue an RFP for an industry-built project on the subject site).

The Property Endowment Fund would make available a site, or sites (either currently-held or acquired for this purpose). The site(s) could be made available at market value (based on current zoning), but the additional revenue arising from rezoning the site could fund the features that demonstrate EcoDensity.

ACTION C-4: New Types of Arterial Mid-Rise Buildings

Previous Draft Action 10 (November 2007)

New options for arterial mid-rise housing

Develop options to create new models of mid-rise arterial housing rather than the current 4-storey model in order to provide more housing close to shops, services, and transit including a review of the C-2 and C-2 related zones.

What we've heard:

- Uncertainty around how mid-rise is defined (how many storeys?).
- Worry about whether approval of this Action would result in immediate zoning change without further consultation - where would this zoning be allowed and who would decide?
- This is a good idea, with multiple benefits.
- Encourage good, creative, green design.
- Support for a mix of uses (residential, commercial/retail) in this form.
- Locate near transit nodes and along arterial corridors (such as Broadway).

Revised Action C-4 (May 2008)

New Types of Arterial Mid-rise Buildings

Staff be directed to report back to Council with an Issues Paper and Best Practices Guide for arterial mid-rises (greater than 4 storeys), that would provide information on different forms of arterial mid-rise housing, to assist in future planning. Preparing this guide would include profiles of existing Vancouver, national and International projects showing varying heights, forms, and designs, and would provide commentary on what works best, where and why, including issues of:

- Compatibility with adjacent buildings and adjacent residential areas
- Shadowing and sunlight (public sidewalks, urban agriculture)
- Design options
- Opportunities for provision of amenities and/or affordable housing
- Urban design impacts, including relation to arterial street widths
- Energy use and green building performance
- Development economics/feasibility

The work would also include stakeholder and public consultation.

Staff further be directed to prepare bylaws for Council consideration to update the C-2C, C-2C1, C-2B, and any other similar arterial mixed use zones that were not previously updated when changes were made to the C-2 zone. (C-2 zones were changed to respond to early Community Visions that called for improved design of mixed use development.)

Discussion

The public process generated ideas that denser mid-rise housing could work on some arterial streets, especially in support of local shopping areas. Current arterial zoning for housing above shops is for development of four stories (in the various C-2 zones). In a few locations in the city (e.g., Broadway-Main-Kingsway area; Arbutus area near 12th and Arbutus), new

forms of housing have been built, illustrating a different model of development in the 6-8 storey range.

This Action is intended to provide a better assessment of what additional mid-rise options might work along the City's arterial streets -- how and where -- as considerations for future planning programs. In particular, it is seen as a key input into the broader work in Action C-1, the development of a new "Eco" *CityPlan*, as arterial densification may represent a key opportunity within that Plan, and mid-rise forms may be seen as more acceptable than higher building types outside of "special" areas. Increasing some existing areas to the 6-8 storey range may also provide opportunities to develop purpose-built rental housing and other forms of affordable housing, as well as address neighbourhood amenity needs.

This Action concentrates on the 6-8 storey form because there is very little zoning for this in the City and it could be a useful new model for broader use. The City already has zoning for 4-storey forms which are being built under C zones (mixed use, housing above shops) along arterials.

The main C zone (C-2) was altered several years ago in response to early Community Visions, but there are other C zones that still need to be updated (e.g., C-2C1).

For housing types of less than 4 storeys, the City also already has zoning for courtyard rowhouses (RM-1), first developed and applied as part of the Kingsway-Knight neighbourhood centre. Forms higher than 6-8 storeys are also prevalent, mostly in the downtown and West End.

ACTION C-5: Issues and Options for Backyard/Laneway Housing

Previous Draft Action 9 (November 2007)

New options for backyard laneway infill housing

Develop options to create a new type of lane-oriented infill, involving features such as implementation on 33' lots without loss of existing houses; low scale forms; green performance; and rental tenure and seek neighbourhood sub-areas around the city to pilot this housing form.

What we've heard:

- Much enthusiasm for this housing opportunity, and, from many people, the desire to get on with it quickly; a preferred form of density.
- People would like to build this is their own backyard -- for themselves; parents; caregivers; or adult children.
- This is a key opportunity for new affordable rental housing and would make the primary house more affordable as well with a "mortgage-helper".
- Worry about whether approval of this Action would result in immediate zoning change without further consultation - where would this zoning be allowed and who would decide?
- Concern that this could undermine heritage retention - allowing more density on single family lots may take away the density incentive that has been used for heritage retention.
- Require green performance in the laneway housing and in the original structure.
- Height, privacy for neighbours, and shadowing must be addressed.
- Space and sunlight for urban agriculture are important.
- This idea could help improve the mix of income levels in single family areas.
- Do not allow strata titling so that rental stock is enhanced.
- Allow strata titling so that homeowners can get financing to build them.
- Questions about how to deal with parking if laneway housing replaces garage/parking space(s). Should this housing be located specifically near transit?
- Laneway housing should contribute to local amenities.
- Laneways may need to be designed to become more attractive public spaces.
- Sponsor a design competition to showcase different architectural possibilities.

Revised Action C-5 (May 2008)

Issues and Options for Backyard/Laneway Housing

Staff be directed to report back to Council with an issues and options paper on laneway housing, following appropriate additional public consultation, to address the following aspects:

- Opportunities and issues for different lot sizes.
- Building By-Law requirements which address fire and life safety, and their impact on what lot sizes such housing could be built on.
- Location options - based on considerations such as lot size, Community Visions, volunteer pilot areas, and relation to Action C-1 for long-term planning.
- Potential requirements and feasibility relative to retention of the existing house.

- Relation to and impacts on existing heritage retention tools.
- Design issues, e.g., form/scale, neighbourliness and character, on-site natural functions (e.g., water infiltration), and the reasonable level of green design for this building type.
- Impacts on open space and sunlight for urban agriculture opportunities, both on-site and neighbouring sites.
- Parking requirement options and impacts.
- Infrastructure needs and impacts; utility and servicing issues.
- Tenure options: rental or strata or both?
- Opportunities for amenity provision (eg “micro-amenities”).
- Nature and design of potential “green” lanes.

Discussion

EcoDensity consultations have found significant community interest in laneway infill, variously referenced as coach houses, carriage houses, laneway houses, garage-apartments and granny flats. This is a form of “hidden” density as it doesn’t change the nature and character of blocks from the sidewalk. Laneway housing supports EcoDensity objectives by using land efficiently and contributing to neighbourhood housing diversity and affordability. It could also assist in retention of existing housing while adding new affordable units.

Current City regulations already allow one type of laneway housing. These are zones in which lane houses are placed over garages, in order to provide the required parking. They are generally on larger lots (50 ft or more) in areas zoned to have duplexes, conversions, and other similar development in addition to laneway housing. Although the main house is often retained, both the main house and the laneway house are part of a site redevelopment by small scale developers, with units in both buildings sold through strata titling. This zoning is very suitable for, and successful in, some parts of the city and could possibly be expanded to other locations.

However, the type of laneway housing that many people described in the public process is different in several key ways, with characteristics such as: built by homeowners as additions on their own lots (including on 33-foot lots with existing houses that may not meet all the side yard width required to address emergency access and fire safety); low-scale and minimizing shading of their neighbours’ yards (e.g., with a reduced parking requirement so that dwellings are not built above garages); green in performance; and perhaps required to be rental instead of strata. These are topics that would be among those reviewed in this further work.

ACTION C-6: More Options for Rental Secondary Suites

Previous Draft Action 8 (November 2007)

More options for secondary suites within buildings

Develop options to require, allow and/or encourage secondary suites in buildings at all scales, from single family and duplex and row houses to apartments in order to increase the density of housing units within current housing forms, as well as create lower-cost rental housing.

What we've heard:

- More options for secondary suites is a good idea to help address affordability, both through additional affordable rental units, and mortgage helpers for the primary home.
- Consider implications for community amenities, services, and infrastructure, including parking.
- The quality of living spaces should be ensured.
- Do not allow strata titling - keep suites as rental.
- This Action should be used to help retain character and heritage houses.
- Seek good architectural and green design in the buildings.
- The City should not require, but rather should encourage, houses to contain a suite or be suite-ready.

Revised Action C-6 (May 2008)

More Options for Rental Secondary Suites

Staff be directed to report back to Council with proposed by-law amendments, or with issues and options papers, to provide more options for rental secondary suites in the following possible ways:

(a) In single family zones where one suite is already permitted:

- Enabling basements that can accommodate suites to be built as part of new house construction on all sizes of lots in single family zoning schedules.
- Requiring new single-family houses to be 'suite ready' - i.e., required to provide the necessary wiring, plumbing, and other code requirements when the house is constructed, to make it less costly to install a suite in future.

(b) In zones where secondary suites are not currently permitted (e.g., duplex, townhouse, apartment)

- Permitting suites in these types of housing; and considering whether to also include 'suite ready' requirements.

As part of the work listed above, the aspects that would need to be considered include the following:

- Implications to the retention of existing houses (issues of cost, character, retention and re-use, etc.) and approaches that could facilitate retention.
- Livability aspects such as space, light, and sound separation.
- Parking incentives and impacts.
- Adequacy of utilities and infrastructure.

Consultation with the public and home builders and developers will be part of the work.

Discussion

More options for suites were a frequently raised idea in the public process. Suites are a form of 'invisible' density in terms of their impact on the physical character and appearance of a neighbourhood. Yet, they have significant environmental and affordability benefits.

Single-family houses across the city are currently allowed to include one secondary suite, and less stringent regulations have been adopted to make it easier to accommodate suites in existing houses. However, the City could do more to enable the creation of rental suites in a variety of housing types.

ACTION C-7: Public Amenity and Public Benefit Cost Recovery and Funding Tools

Previous Draft Action 14 (November 2007)

Amenity tools

Pursue additional policy tools for obtaining public benefits through development and for providing public benefits in order to ensure that growth is accompanied with adequate community amenities.

What we've heard:

- Reasonable and timely provision of amenities is necessary for EcoDensity to be successful.
- Community groups wish greater say in how amenities are selected.
- Inclusionary zoning requirements could be used to achieve affordable housing (e.g., market rental, affordable ownership, non-market housing) when new, market units are built.
- Density alone will not be able to fund all of the amenities a neighbourhood or the City needs. Other tools will be necessary. The City should consider bond issues, the City's Capital Plan, and partnerships with the Province and the School Board to provide amenities (e.g., cost sharing, space-sharing).
- The City must be careful to ensure that achieving better environmental performance does not come at the expense of community amenities.
- Existing amenities, e.g., parks, schools, should be used more efficiently.
- Amenities should be located in neighbourhoods that accept growth.
- It is important that all areas still get sufficient amenities, not just those where density more easily provides them.
- Amenities should not be delivered years after the growth has arrived; the City should front-end the provision of amenities.
- Compared to other places, the City already recovers a large share of costs from development and should be careful not to compromise the feasibility and affordability of new housing projects.

Revised Action C-7 (May 2008)

Public Amenity and Public Benefit Cost Recovery and Funding Tools

Staff be directed to report back to Council with analysis of additional financial tools and methods, reflecting national and international best practices and innovation, for providing appropriate levels of amenity to support density, and the achievement of various additional public benefits in a timely way. This evaluation should include, among other ideas, bond issues, tax-increment financing, neighbourhood improvement bylaws, additional amenity bonusing, new taxation tools, new government partnership approaches, new use of city-owned land, and new or innovative joint use of facilities with others (e.g., School Board, Province, private users).

This review would also consider how to expand and improve existing tools such as community amenity contributions (CACs), transfer of density, maximising the capacity of existing amenities, and the City's Capital Planning and the Property Endowment Fund.

Staff will conduct additional community consultation on these tools before reporting back to Council.

Discussion

One of the most frequently heard messages from the public was that density requires adequate community amenities to meet community needs, and that density should not be exchanged for environmental standards which the City could otherwise require developers to provide.

Community amenities include child care, parks, community centres, neighbourhood houses, cultural venues and uses, seniors' facilities, public art, greenways and bike routes, community gardening opportunities, protection of local heritage, and off-site habitat restoration (e.g., streams). In addition to amenities, the City often seeks to achieve, through redevelopment, other public benefits that may not be considered as traditional "amenities." Examples include social housing and affordable housing and city-serving facilities and services. These often involve and require funding from other levels of government e.g., social and supportive housing.

The City already has various policies for meeting the amenity needs for growth (e.g., Financing Growth policies) which include, among other tools, a requirement for all developments to pay a per square foot Development Cost Levy. However, additional tools may be needed to address growing amenity and benefit needs, particularly as costs for amenity construction increase, and potential new demands on the density amenity system materialize with new Provincial initiatives. In all Financing Growth policy work, staff consider the economic impact of any new tools on economic feasibility and housing affordability.

ACTION C-8: Discretionary Density Increase for Public Benefits

Previous Draft Action 15 (November 2007)

Density increase flexibility

Pursue mechanisms to allow an additional discretionary increase in density for highly green projects of up to 10% without rezoning in Central Area districts where there is currently a similar provision for 10% transfer of heritage density, where the additional value is used for major public benefits. The City will seek a Charter amendment if necessary.

This Action was added by City Council.

What we've heard:

- Require green, don't bonus it. This Action should be supported by regulation or policy changes requiring green performance.
- There is currently a 10% discretionary heritage transfer approach in place. How does this Action relate to this, and will it put it in jeopardy? Consider heritage implications, including on the Heritage Density Bank.
- This Action and its intents need to be clarified.

Revised Action C-8 (May 2008)

Discretionary Density Increase for Public Benefits

Staff be directed to report back to Council on by-law amendments that would allow the Director of Planning to consider up to 10% additional discretionary density for development projects in the Downtown and Central Broadway areas, without a rezoning, where urban design, form, and architecture are deemed appropriate. Such discretionary density will be used to fund public benefits (such as community centres, parks, affordable housing, libraries, social facilities, etc.). The City will seek a Charter amendment if necessary. Staff will consult further with stakeholders on implementation options for this Action.

This 10% discretionary density would be in addition to, and potentially cumulative with (subject to constraints based on urban design analysis), existing discretion for density increases for heritage density transfer in areas where transfer of heritage density are currently allowed.

A range of questions would need to be answered in creating this tool including:

- Since some sites would not be able to accommodate a potentially cumulative 20% additional discretionary density from an appropriate urban design perspective, how would the City make the choice of whether the bonus would be for heritage or public benefits bonus, or some of each? How would the spending of the accumulated funds be determined?
- What would the impacts be on the Heritage Density Bank?
- As this provides density potential without a rezoning, should development permit applications that take advantage of it be required to adhere to a level of green performance determined as part of this work? (e.g., as in Action A-1, or a customised standard?)
- Is a Charter amendment necessary?

Discussion

The City currently allows developments in the Downtown District and Central Broadway C-3A District to include up to 10% additional discretionary density that they purchase from the Heritage Density Bank, without needing a site-specific rezoning, subject to discretionary urban design review by the Director of Planning or Development Permit Board. To be approved, the additional density must be able to be accommodated within an acceptable building form and height that is consistent with the zoning, guidelines and policy. This tool supports conservation of heritage buildings on other sites that have received bonus floor space to compensate for heritage retention and rehabilitation, and need a place to “land” the density.

This Action contemplates allowing up to an additional 10% cumulative discretionary density to be considered, still without a rezoning, in return for funding that would be applied to public benefits. The intention of this Action is that a development could use both this and the 10% heritage transfer, subject to acceptable built form evaluation.

The heritage community has requested that the first 10% additional density on any given site always be from heritage density, so that the density bank tool is not affected by this new tool. Another option is to allow discretion by staff on how the density is achieved, so as to ensure there isn't a disincentive with those developers who do not wish to engage in the density bank “economy” by purchasing from heritage density holders. Council will need to provide direction on this issue as part of the further work on this Action.

ACTION C-9: Leftover Lots in Older Apartment Zones

Previous Draft Action 11 (November 2007)

Leftover lots

Develop ways for small sites in existing multi-family medium density areas to be built to the permissible FSR, by considering barriers such as minimum lot size, set back requirements, and parking regulations.

This Action was added by City Council.

What we've heard:

- Uncertainty as to what this action entails.
- Questions about parking and parking relaxations.
- Use these spaces for community amenities or environmental features instead of development sites.
- Concern that this type of action could be a disincentive to assembly of sites.
- These lots often have character houses, heritage houses and/or affordable rental suites which could be threatened by this Action.
- The design of new structures must fit within the existing neighbourhood.

Revised Action C-9 (May 2008)

Note: Should Council choose to authorize this Action, the wording provided would be sufficient to direct staff. However, it is the staff recommendation that this Action not be authorized for reasons listed in the Discussion section below.

Leftover Lots in Older Apartment Zones

Staff be directed to report back to Council with options for policy direction for small sites in existing multi-family medium density areas, considering approaches that could enable development for greater densities on such sites through techniques such as reducing parking requirements. In making such recommendations, staff will consider the benefits and potential impacts (e.g., number of such lots, parking spillover, livability) and how they could be addressed. Alternative uses for such sites that further EcoDensity goals (i.e., use for amenity or public uses) will also be considered. Consultation with the community and consideration of feedback will be part of this evaluation.

Discussion

Some lots in apartment-zoned areas are "left over" because they were not developed as apartments, and as a result are now unable to consolidate with neighbouring sites and redevelop. These lots are too small to meet their full apartment-zone densities, due to City requirements such as set backs and parking. Currently, Planning staff work to achieve as much density as possible on leftover lots while still meeting livability objectives regarding views, overlook and shadowing. For example, in the RM-4 low rise apartment district, the maximum allowed density is 1.45 floor space ratio (FSR). Lots that have a 33- or 50- foot frontage are typically able to achieve 1.1 or 1.3 FSR respectively, but cannot accommodate

the full density that larger sites achieve without negative massing impacts on adjacent sites. Staff believe that, for the most part, the City's present regulations do not stand in the way of suitable developments on these sites; however, off-street parking requirements warrant a re-examination. Staff estimate that reduced parking requirements (i.e., require fewer parking spaces overall, allow more small-car spaces, or require payment-in-lieu whenever Vancouver by-laws allow) may enable the provision of additional housing units on these leftover lots.

Staff estimate that the amount of additional density achievable through this Action is likely to be small, given the small number of affected sites and the limited additional density they can provide. As a result, this Action may warrant a lower priority than others.

Community members raised several concerns during EcoDensity consultation regarding the potential impacts of this Action. As a result, the revised Action includes consideration of:

- Whether parking standards for leftover lots could be reduced without undue spillover impacts onto street parking;
- How to reduce automobile use and parking spillover (e.g., car sharing, bicycle facilities), including the possible application of new powers currently being considered by the Provincial Legislature to allow Vancouver to reduce off-street parking in exchange for greener transportation measures (e.g., design or in-lieu funds to support walking or cycling);
- How to achieve livability in the design of leftover lots, including landscaping;
- Whether this Action would discourage the assembly of small sites for densification; and,
- Whether there are better uses for such sites (eg community amenity)
- How to protect character/heritage buildings and existing rental units on leftover lots.

ACTION C-10: Removal of Barriers to Green Building Approaches

Previous Draft Action 3 (November 2007)

Incentives for Green Design

To encourage design considerations that improve green performance in the short term, investigate potential energy performance incentives through floor space exclusions that directly relate to green design and technologies, in advance of more detailed strategies through the Green Building Strategy.

What've we've heard:

- Achieve green design through a mix of requirements (regulations and standards) and incentives.
- Require green design through regulations and standards, not through incentives or "bonusing".
- Retain incentives for other benefits (amenities, heritage), not green design.
- Removal of disincentives is more appropriate, as most agreed that developers shouldn't be "punished" for choosing a greener design approach.

Revised Action C-10 (May 2008)

Removal of Barriers to Green Building Approaches

Staff be directed to report back to Council with proposed by-law amendments, after stakeholder consultation, to remove or mitigate existing disincentives to greener building design practices, including:

- FSR exemption for above-grade mechanical space for hydronic heating and cooling systems;
- FSR exemptions relating to wall thickness where improved insulation is achieved;
- FSR exemptions for larger balconies where they contribute to energy performance and occupant comfort;
- Discretionary minor height relaxations for roof mounted renewable energy infrastructure or appropriate access to green roofs;
- Amending side yard and overhang requirements to allow for greater application of fixed external shading devices.

Additional disincentives will continue to be considered in the context of the evolving Green Building Strategy. Existing financial disincentives to building more sustainable buildings may also be considered (e.g., cost of solar shading panels, renewable energy, improved ventilation) through financial analysis of the implications of reducing all or a portion of building permit fees in the corresponding amount.

All incentives will be re-evaluated, and updated at regular intervals to reflect market evolution, advancements in technology and progressive City targets that move towards goals such as carbon neutral new construction.

Discussion

Many who participated in the public consultation believed that there should be a combination of requirements and the removal of barriers to enable green design. Many felt that the City should not offer any incentives to gain better green design, but some saw merit in removing disincentives to green design that is in addition to required green features. Relatively few people suggested that additional density should be used to create an incentive to achieve additional green features.

An example that has been suggested is to exclude space for 'green' mechanical equipment from a developer's floor space calculations. This would encourage the developer to provide the equipment necessary for more efficient heating systems (e.g., radiant heat powered by a central boiler) and would help make the building ready for future connection district energy.

As an example, energy-efficient radiant heating requires a boiler room, while less-efficient electric baseboard heating does not. Boiler rooms take up more space, and "compete with" sellable space in the building from a developer's perspective, which is a disincentive to building them. This Action would remove this disincentive by excluding (i.e., not counting) the extra floor space in the development calculations.

This is similar to what the City does in zoning by-laws already by excluding amenity areas, such as day care, recreation facilities, and meeting rooms in apartment buildings. Energy-related exemptions have also been piloted in Southeast False Creek.

ACTION C-11: Priority to Applications with Green Leadership

Previous Draft Action 7 (November 2007)

Priority to applications with green leadership

To encourage the development industry to build at an exemplary level of green, investigate the creation of a prioritised application review system for ultra-green projects to be implemented post-2010.

What we've heard:

- Reward "green" developers to encourage leadership. Demand an exemplary green standard.
- Some fear of abuse and misuse.
- Heritage community worried that they lose their existing priority.
- Development industry worried that it would push others to the back of the line. Would prefer a parallel green project stream that doesn't drain resources from the regular approval stream.
- Uncertainty about what "ultra green" means.

Revised Action C-11 (May 2008)

Priority to Applications with Green Leadership ("Green Means Go")

Staff be directed to report back to Council on the implementation of a Green Project Priority System, to be implemented by January 1, 2010, where established commitments to do green projects of the highest standard join heritage projects and social housing projects as projects worthy of "front-of-the-line" status in staff review. Issues to consider include:

- Level of green aspiration, reflecting substantially higher-than-regular business practices to ensure feasible project numbers and a strong incentive (recognizing that as of 2010, Action A-1 requires all rezoning projects to be LEED™ Gold equivalent).
- Method of ensuring follow-through on performance after projects have been prioritized.
- Whether existing City priorities of heritage projects and social housing should be prioritized before Green projects.
- Impact on all other private and public projects and priorities.
- Method of periodic reviewing the priority system to ensure such projects remain substantially beyond business-as-usual, as practices improve over time.

Staff are also directed to continue investigations on the viability of a Green Building Parallel Program, which would put Green projects into a separate track of application review based on separate staff resources, if funding for such resources could be confirmed on a sustainable basis.

Consultation with industry stakeholders and "green" experts will be part of this work.

Discussion

The City may be able to spur on superior green performance and learning in new development by providing prioritised service, especially in light of the additional complexity of such projects. This does not represent a “streamlined” process as complexities may still lead to delays as knowledge grows in both the private and public sector, but it would represent “front of the line” service.

A “Green means Go” system could give priority to green projects over other projects, but would not reduce the level of oversight applied to application review. For practical reasons, green priority system would not commence until 2010 at the soonest.

Issues for staff consideration include minimum green criteria, staffing implications, and how prioritisation will work vis-à-vis other projects that have already been given priority by City Council (i.e., social and rental housing, heritage, cultural projects).

To ensure a strong incentive for projects that powerfully advance learning in green design, while also avoiding a system where too many projects are prioritized, the green standard for this system should be substantially higher than the LEED™ Gold requirement that would be in place for rezonings as per Action A-1 by 2010. Staff will consider whether LEED™ Platinum would be a sufficient standard for this voluntary incentive, or whether a more performance-based, standard such as net-zero or carbon neutral would be more appropriate. Investigations would be included into whether evolving global thinking around aspirations such as “living buildings” would make such a target feasible by 2010.

ACTION C-12: Accountability for EcoDensity Follow-Through

Note: The revised Action C-12 merges Actions 19, 20 and 21 from the previous November 2007 draft. The previous Actions are listed first. The revised Action is on the next page.

Previous Draft Action 19 (November 2007)

Measurement tools

Continue to investigate and develop tools to measure ecological footprint performance at various scales and contexts, and indicators to assess and report on Vancouver's progress.

What we've heard:

- Partner with other cities, universities etc to develop this further.
- Use measurement tools along with enforceable regulations.
- Include targets, with timelines and benchmarks, to evaluate achievements.
- Clarify what is being measured - not necessarily ecological footprint, as carbon footprint may be more achievable in the short-term - and with what methodology.
- Keep costs low in implementing this.

Previous Draft Action 20 (November 2007)

Panel

Set up a Panel of advisors comprised of Vancouverites including academics, builders, interest groups, and residents from across the city, to provide advice as needed to further the goals of EcoDensity.

What we've heard:

- Ensure broad, diverse representation on the panel. Residents in particular need to have a strong voice.
- Panel needs to be open and transparent, with business being accessible to the public.
- Panel should have a clear mandate and be non-partisan.
- Concerns over need/value of "another city committee".
- Some concern that panel would be weighted in favour of densification.

Previous Draft Action 21 (November 2007)

Progress report structure

Prepare a structure to assess progress and success in meeting the commitments of the EcoDensity Charter, which may include an occasional EcoDensity 'summit' and a report card prepared at arms-length.

What we've heard:

- Reporting structure needs to be open, transparent, and readily accessible to the public.
- Clarify who and what "arms-length" means.
- Incorporate EcoDensity reporting into a broader sustainability report for the city as a whole.
- Keep costs down.

Revised Action C-12 (May 2008)

Accountability for EcoDensity Follow-Through

New footprint measurement tools

Staff be directed, in the context of Action C-1 and other applicable actions, to seek out and work with partners to continue to investigate and develop tools to measure carbon and ecological footprint performance at various scales and contexts, and indicators to assess and report on Vancouver's progress.

An EcoDensity "Think Tank"

Staff be directed to report back for Council consideration on a proposed mandate/role, membership, and appointment approach, including resource needs, for an EcoDensity limited-term "Think Tank" charged with providing advice to staff and Council in the development and implementation of EcoDensity initiatives. This volunteer-based group should include expertise in various aspects of sustainable city-building, as well as representation from the City's Vision Implementation committees.

Included in this Group's responsibilities will be the arms-length publishing, on a bi-annual basis at a minimum, of an EcoDensity Progress Report Card (related to the goals and measurements noted in Action C-1) assessing status of EcoDensity action and levels of adherence to Charter commitments. This might include the convening of events or summits to facilitate discussion and learning.

Discussion

Measuring improvements in sustainability performance at the small scale is not straightforward. City staff have been working with consultants and academics to better develop tools that would be most relevant to Vancouver's context. This work needs to continue.

Ecological footprinting is more complex, and difficult, than carbon footprinting, which focuses simply on Greenhouse Gas emissions. It is proposed that both tools be further developed, but that in the shorter term, carbon footprinting be utilized extensively as a measure of success at various scales.

Establishing a "Think Tank" (a term suggested by many in the community as having less of a formal structure or "bureaucratic" approach than the City's usual committee structure), could facilitate the continued contribution of many of the committed and knowledgeable individuals who have educated and advised the process thus far.

Regular evaluation of the EcoDensity Initiative's progress will help maintain an ongoing pressure on the City to meet the commitments of the Charter and complete the various actions, and will allow for learning and improvement as implementation moves forward. The "Think Tank" could play a key role in reporting on progress.

III. RELATED WORK UNDERWAY

The draft EcoDensity Charter has focussed on the contribution of density, design, and land use to environmental sustainability, affordability, and livability. In doing so, the draft Charter also commits EcoDensity to align with the many other City initiatives that are working toward environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability from many different directions and departments. Indeed, as EcoDensity and sustainability permeate the City organization, it has generated momentum for many of these related initiatives. Many ideas that people put forward during the EcoDensity public consultation have been captured for future EcoDensity work or forwarded to other departments.

EcoDensity work aligns with the following corporate initiatives or previous decisions:

- **Affordable Housing:** The City now allows secondary suites in all single family neighbourhoods; considers rezonings for social housing in advance of neighbourhood plans; adopted rate of change regulations to manage the loss of the older purpose built rental stock; buys sites or provides capital grants for social housing; and is working with Metro Vancouver on its proposed Affordable Housing Strategy, which recommends comprehensive policy frameworks for housing in each municipality.
- **Climate Change Action Plan:** Vancouver has adopted very aggressive greenhouse gas reduction targets for 2012, 2020, and 2050. Vancouver was among the first signatories of the BC Climate Action Charter, pledging a cooperative approach between local and Provincial governments on climate change, and committing local governments to carbon-neutral operations by 2012.
 - The Community Climate Change Action Plan provides a blueprint of how business, industry, residents and institutions can work together to cut down on energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.
 - Vancouver's Corporate Climate Change Action Plan sets an ambitious goal of reducing its own greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent of its 1990 levels by 2010 by targeting its operations within Civic Facilities, Corporate Fleet, Street/Park Lighting and Traffic Control Signals, Corporate Waste Reduction and Landfill Gas Recovery, and Corporate Demand-Side Management.
- **Economic Sustainability:** The City has an Industrial Lands Strategy to protect needed industrial land, and is finalizing the Metro Core Jobs and Economy Land Use Plan to ensure adequate land supply for future job growth and economic activity in the Metro Core. The City has adopted Guiding Principles for Economic Development in Vancouver. The Vancouver Economic Development Commission has been working on a business climate strategy and set up a Blue Ribbon Council for Vancouver's Business Climate (BRC). The City also recently approved a new Arts and Culture Plan which informs the City's role in the creative economy as well as enhancing livability.
- **Food Security:** To further a just and sustainable food system, the City recently adopted the Vancouver Food Charter. The Charter sets out Vancouver's commitment to the development of a coordinated municipal food policy, and engages the community in conversations and actions for food security. As part of the Green Building Strategy, Urban

Agriculture Guidelines have been developed which will provide direction for urban agriculture to be incorporated as part of the amenity package in new developments.

- **Green Buildings:** The Green Building Strategy, presently underway, will ensure that all new buildings offer better environmental and health performance. This strategy will include mandatory and optional strategies to achieve greener “baseline” building performance. New green Building Code standards will be brought forward for Council’s consideration. The City has also resolved to achieve carbon neutrality in all new buildings by 2030. As well, all new civic buildings greater than 500 square meters (including retrofits) are required by City policy to achieve LEED™ Gold certification.
- **Heritage:** The City works with the Heritage Commission to conserve and protect existing places of significance which advance cultural sustainability, sense of place, and the ecological sustainability of existing buildings and materials.
- **Landfill Gas Recovery:** The landfill gas recovery program captures harmful greenhouse gas emissions and utilizes them to generate heat and power. The program continues to be a model within the region. The landfill is currently taking part in a pilot to look at new ways to utilize the gas and additional markets that could be developed for it;
- **New Sustainable Community Models:**
 - Southeast False Creek (SEFC): Consisting of both City-owned and privately-owned lands, SEFC is being developed as a community that incorporates principles of energy-efficient design and demonstrates a model sustainable community. The development includes a network of paths and streets designed for pedestrians, cyclists and transit; building design for efficient use of energy resources and water; parks and open space that meet ecological objectives; projects with advanced environmental technologies, such as renewable energy supplies, water management, green building design and urban agriculture. Construction of a Neighbourhood Energy Utility in SEFC is also underway. By producing heat in a community energy centre, using heat pump technology to capture heat energy from the sewer system and distributing it through a system of hot water pipes to individual buildings, the related greenhouse gas emissions for this development will be reduced by over 50 per cent.
 - East Fraserlands (EFL): The East Fraserlands is the former site of a mill and made up of 53 hectares of industrial land south of Marine Way and east of Kerr Street to Boundary Road. The East Fraserlands Official Development Plan (ODP), approved in November 2006, sets the physical and policy foundation for the transformation of the area into a mixed-use, sustainable, and complete community. The ODP provides for a diversity of housing types, a commercial centre, and a wide array of public amenities and benefits, including affordable housing, schools, a community centre, parks, and daycare facilities. It also incorporates some of the most current green technologies and approaches, such as the use of a neighbourhood energy utility, an integrated rainwater management plan, a green building strategy, and innovative ecological strategies for fish and wildlife habitat enhancement. As well, the plan encourages the exploration of unconventional parking strategies and road design to enhance the sustainability and livability of the community.

- **Parks:** The Park Board creates and maintains Vancouver's public green spaces and promotes the protection of our natural environment. It provides facilities that support wellness and bring people together. The first of the five strategic directions in Park's 2005-2010 Strategic Plan "Greening the Park Board" is for the development of sustainable policies and practices that achieve environmental objectives while meeting the needs of the community in the development and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities as well as Park Board's corporate practices.
- **Social Infrastructure and Social Development Plans:** The City has initiated a Social Infrastructure Plan to guide investment and location decisions for social infrastructure throughout the city. It will be a key component in building social sustainability and developing complete communities. An overarching Social Development Plan is also underway which will provide a framework for wide-ranging social policy and social sustainability in Vancouver.
- **Transportation:** The Province and Region are preparing a new long-range region-wide Transportation Plan. The City and TransLink are working to improve rapid transit service (e.g., Canada Line, Millennium extension, new Rapid Bus routes) and are examining a bike sharing program. The City continues to upgrade walking and biking infrastructure. It has also recently reduced certain parking requirements and has encouraged co-op cars in some developments. The City is also pursuing *Vancouver Charter* amendments that would allow consideration of ecological sustainability in determining off-street parking requirements as well as the mandatory requirement of unbundled parking. The City will also be updating the Vancouver Transportation Plan, in coordination with EcoDensity work.
- **Waste and Recycling:** The City has a user pay system for garbage collection which provides an incentive to reduce waste; collects recyclable materials and yard trimmings separately; makes available low cost compost bins; supports a demonstration garden and composting facility, and has recently implemented a demonstration project to compost fruit and vegetable waste from a major grocery store chain in cooperation with Metro Vancouver.