

# Downtown Zoning Changes

## October Engagement Summary

November 28, 2017

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### Engagement Snapshot:

A second Downtown Zoning Changes workshop was held on the evening of October 25, 2017 at the Howe Sound Inn and Brewing to engage downtown stakeholders and community members on proposed downtown zoning changes. Approximately 40 community members attended the event and participated in break out group discussions on the four key topics:

- 1) Employment Space
- 2) Setbacks
- 3) Cash-in-lieu Parking Regulations
- 4) Cleveland Character Preservation

Following the workshop, the posters, information handouts and presentation from the workshop were made available on the project webpage; an additional comment period for submissions was available up until November 10, 2017.

### Comments:

A summary of the comments heard and recorded at the workshop, as well as additional comments received is presented here.

### Employment Space:

- Concern that this is being imposed on current land owners. Idea that the employment space should be incorporated into the Oceanfront development which is owned by the District. Staff clarified that the Oceanfront Phased Development Agreement/Sub Area Plan/Zoning has secured a set amount of employment space but that this is not enough to meet projected demand.
- Desire to have street life and activation. Question is how to achieve a nice balance; currently there is no minimum requirement for employment space and the market is delivering a wide range of employment space amount.
- The Market is the best demand analysis. If there is a market, someone will build employment space; don't force people to build it, particularly developers who only have experience doing residential development. Statement that 15 years from now will see empty retail and expensive housing.

- Were rental rates examined as part of the decision criteria for determining amount of employment space? Do demand forecasting with pricing/rent. Elasticity of pricing is very important. Do elasticity testing. Also determine the price for sale to determine what the market will bare when trying to sell. There is a huge discrepancy between price to sell residential and commercial. This analysis should be done.
- Use zoning to separate uses. Don't build mixed use buildings.
- Desire to see commercial space in downtown. Don't want Squamish to be a bedroom community.
- Question on whether mixing residential and commercial uses works. Don't jam it into the same box.
- Don't create useless commercial space. What types of businesses are viable? See lots of second hand stores and dollar stores, don't need more of this type of business.
- Idea to apply the minimum 20% employment space District wide so that other projects outside downtown also provide employment space in a more equitable way.
- Concerns that the District map that was released with the notification doesn't match the map from this workshop. Staff clarified that the changes to the map were in relation to the Cleveland Character proposals only, to include larger properties fronting Cleveland in this character discussion.
- Concerns that Building Code could create challenges for mixed residential and employment/commercial developments. The Artisan building given as an example that the work-live units don't meet code for some business types which has become challenging to rent out these spaces.
- Although the employment space proposal is flexible, buildings must be built to code; therefore the location of the employment space needs to be planned and decided upon early on in the process.
- Support for the concept of employment space being flexible and able to be located on any floor. Concept for flexibility was based on public consultation feedback.
- Concerns around public access to commercial spaces that may pass through residential spaces. May be a concern for stratas.

## Setbacks:

- Cyclists may not take Pemberton if a traffic light is installed at the Pemberton/Loggers Lane intersection.
- Question on why two bike lanes (one on each side of the street) are needed.
- A barrier is needed between the bike lanes and sidewalks.

- Any infrastructure needs to be design to be safe for children.
- Implement the setbacks sooner than later.
- Support for sidewalks and street trees.
- Support for dis-incentivizing vehicular transportation.

## Cash-in-lieu Parking Regulations:

- Question on parking on Loggers Lane.
- What is the potential location of a District owned parkade or parking garage?
- Car shares could be a solution to mitigate parking variances/reductions.
- Provide parking incentives for car share programs.
- Parking should be provided on property, against cash-in-lieu buyout option.
- Increase residential parking requirements for new developments.
- Quantify demand for parking, now and in the future.
- Do on-street permit parking for residents.
- A parking structure could go on the current Helping Hands site.
- Commercial parking spaces should be provided by the developer.
- Need more enforcement of current parking regulations.
- The cash-in-lieu rate of \$15,000 per stall is too low.

## Cleveland Character Preservation:

- Concerns regarding the proposed change in setbacks and inconsistent setbacks as development occurs.
- Why not look at multiple levels? Create elevated areas above roads for pedestrians to travel, this would preserve roads and parking below. Other cities create tramways, or create elevated space above service infrastructure and put additional pedestrian space on upper levels. New York public parkway, the Highline, given as example.
- Some of the street lighting downtown is too harsh at night (LED). Consider not only the daytime character of downtown, but what it is like at night. Desire to draw people downtown in the evening and at night.
- Support for regulating character through Floor Area Ratio (FAR).
- Support for upper storey step back concept.

- If lots are assembled and consolidated, how will FAR be handled? Will the assembled larger lots still be subject to the smaller FAR? Staff clarified that yes, the FAR would be applied to the total lot size of the assembled lots.
- Concern that the map at the workshop is different than the map that was sent out with the public notification. Staff clarified that the map has changed; the colour code for larger properties along Cleveland was changed from orange to blue, to reflect that the Cleveland Character proposals would apply to these larger lots as well as the original smaller Cleveland lots. Two properties at the corner of Cleveland and Pemberton were changed from pink to green to apply the Cleveland Character proposals as well.
- Perhaps have height restrictions ending at some point? Desire to see the Cleveland Character proposals end south of Victoria Street as height may not be a concern due to the large public spaces along Cleveland between Victoria and Main Streets. Staff clarified that the Draft Downtown Neighbourhood Plan consistently drew a boundary for the Cleveland Commercial land use designation at Main Street, and that the August Jack motel site is large and warrants consideration of the Cleveland Character proposals. Comment that a big building around park could be a good thing and that it is not so bad to have more density at the southern end of Cleveland to support the high street shops and businesses.
- Questions about future development of vacant lots at Main and Cleveland, as well as former PacWest site; are they going to follow these proposed regulations? Staff clarified that the southwest vacant site has an approved development that is currently at the building permit stage, called "The Main". The PacWest site is the subject of an active rezoning application; as part the rezoning process, staff are hoping to achieve development that reflects some of the goals of the Cleveland Character proposals, such as small shops with narrow frontages, stepping back of upper storeys from Cleveland, and a density that is aligned with the FAR proposal.
- Participated in the previous downtown charrette and smart growth on the ground processes. The determination coming out of these downtown plans is that we should not go over 3 or 4 stories downtown because of our important viewscape. How have these ideas been incorporated into the new proposals? Staff spoke to the different situation we are now in with rising land values, and higher demand for residential, and that the aim is to achieve a balance between encouraging redevelopment and preserving those viewscales and other community values.
- Comment that the real challenge is that we have approved some 6 storey buildings, and that now we have to deal with this. Further comment that we shouldn't be listening to people with self-interest as their priority, that decisions should be based on the public good.

- Concern that the word character may denote heritage and that this could create confusion that we are trying to preserve heritage buildings downtown.
- Question on the old Interfor site (now called Waterfront Landing) on the height of the proposed buildings? Staff responded that the heights are between 12m to 25m (4 to 8 storeys). Original plan was much higher right? Staff responded that the height was up to 40m (12 storeys). Question on whether it is sunlight or views of the Chief that we want to protect?
- What is the character we intend to have on Loggers Lane? Staff responded that this is a tough question, as the vision for Loggers Lane is currently under development, and it is a challenging area due to the narrow width of Loggers Lane, and its designation as a truck route. There is no easy solution or clear design.
- Have we considered a connection to the highway and towards Valleycliffe? Staff responded that this has been considered and discussed the connection options being proposed as part of the Waterfront Landing development and as part of the Scott Crescent development.
- Will the Sirocco development block the views of the Chief from Cleveland? Staff responded that it will depend on where you are standing. View protection priority was given to the street corners (Winnipeg and Victoria) for this development. Opinion that we are giving views to the people who can pay for it.
- Interest in the idea of live work spaces and creating development and a built environment that will attract further rec tech companies such as Arcteryx, Lululemon, etc.
- Comment that at a point when the town is changing and we have an opportunity to address problems, it is a miss to not address Loggers Lane and to leave it as a utility corridor. Desire to figure out a better circulation path through the downtown core, and that Loggers Lane should be used for this. Opinion that the current circulation path into downtown is strange. Staff responded that the District is working on a comprehensive downtown transportation/circulation plan, and that we are currently completing a study of traffic modes downtown. After this study, we will have a better idea of capacity and future demand to determine what our needs will be. Comment that we don't want dumpsters on Loggers Lane, and what is the solution for this? Question on whether Loggers Lane could be commercial store frontage as this is the most beautiful part of Squamish, next to water, and has a lot of potential. Opinion that we are at a stage now when everything is changing and that maybe Loggers Lane could be addressed.
- Comment that having a bike route on both Loggers Lane and 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue would be redundant.