



Marpole has its say

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BY VANCOUVER SUN APRIL 3, 2014

Marpole residents were generally supportive of a new community plan presented to Vancouver council Wednesday, with some reservations.

The new plan was a revamped option after council last year backed off some elements of the proposed community plan after neighbours complained the city was trying to unnecessarily shove density on them. More than two dozen speakers addressed council, which was scheduled to vote on the plan later Wednesday night.

"I'm a Marpole resident and I'm in favour of the revised plan," said Albert Leung.

"I can't ask for a better process than what I've seen." Nevertheless, Leung noted, densification will bring more traffic and congested arterial roads.

The neighbourhood of 24,000, which spans the south side of Vancouver between Angus Drive and Ontario Street and from 57th Avenue south to the Fraser River, is undergoing massive change.

On the east, for example, it is pressured by the twin Cambie corridor developments of Oakridge and Marine Gateway, which will each add more than 4,000 people.

Under the earlier revision, city planners wanted to change the zoning for a large area of single-family residential dwellings between the two developments to allow multiple units. Residents vehemently opposed the idea, and their opposition became a rallying point for city neighbourhoods.

However, the new draft plan minimizes change to existing single-family areas, with 85 per cent of single-family zoned areas unchanged. Growth will be focused near major streets, transit, shops and services, and townhomes will be built in some single-family areas.

The draft plan, which still includes apartment buildings, has four key themes: enabling growth while respecting neighbourhood character, housing affordability, transportation improvements, and new and improved community amenities including plazas, wider sidewalks, planting, benches and bike racks.

It would encourage a wider variety of housing options, such as townhouses for families with children, and new rental housing. By 2041, there would be 1,085 new social housing units, 835 rental units, and 6,800 market homes. Other improvements would include improved pedestrian and cycling routes, improvements to five parks, and three new parks including a 10-acre sanctuary along the Fraser River.

There would be upgrades to the library, community centre, Marpole Place Neighbourhood House and

Marpole Oakridge Family Place, as well 478 new child care spaces.

Mike Burdick of the Marpole Residents' Coalition said he'd recommend approval of most aspects of the new plan. "It deals with the single-family rezoning (and) we appreciate it."

However, Burdick said that increased traffic is a big deal with residents and that the affordable housing issue needs to be properly addressed.

He said the plan still includes highrises, but that "they're broken up. There won't be a wall of buildings.

However, Don Larsen, the founder of CRAB Park on Burrard Inlet 25 years ago, said he didn't support the new plan. Marpole will see "increased traffic volume, pressure on the few existing social services and amenities, and likely more crime," he said.

"The only real amenity we're getting is a 10-acre park."

Sandra McPeake said co-operatives should also be encouraged "for local working people like myself."

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