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City reins in density bonusing

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The City of North Vancouver has revamped the process it uses when horse trading with developers.

Council voted Monday night to adopt a new density bonusing policy that applies a formula for the amount of extra residential space developers can build in exchange for things that the community benefits from but developers wouldn't pursue on their own.

That typically means affordable housing units, employment generating space, community amenity space, market rental units or rescuing heritage buildings from destruction.

The formula is based on the zoning and land-use of the property in question and which part of the city it is in. There is now an emphasis on the city receiving cash, 20 per cent of which will be set aside for affordable housing, on par with the extra value being created for the developer.

The new policy also puts a hard cap on how much extra density can be negotiated for. The old method, in which staff negotiated with applicants on a case-by-case basis behind closed doors was criticized by the public, council and developers alike as lacking clarity and transparency.

The updated policy had unanimous support from council, although Coun. Rod Clark said he still disagrees with allowing more density in exchange for employment generating space.

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