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Density a focus for City of North Vancouver OCP meetings

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City of North Vancouver Photograph by: file, North Shore News

As the target date for the City of North Vancouver to pass its new official community plan draws nearer, the city is ratcheting up public outreach on a few specific issues.

At a cost of \$60,000, council will hold three extra town hall meetings targeting the draft OCP's slated density increases for Lower Lonsdale, Central Lonsdale and single-family neighbourhoods. Residents in the prescribed areas will receive direct mail invitations to attend the meetings to make sure they understand what's being proposed and have an opportunity to comment before potential changes are made to the OCP's final draft.

If passed as-is, the new OCP will allow more highdensity towers in Lower and Central Lonsdale, and the document will specify that single-family homeowners can apply to build both a coach house and secondary suite on their properties.

The motion first came from Coun. Pam Bookham last week, but it only narrowly passed after a debate about whether adding the extra meetings would produce any more meaningful input on what has already been the widest reaching public process in the city's history. Dissenters also argued that the OCP spans hundreds of pages and topics - not just the ones Bookham wanted more attention on.

But density being a perpetually contentious issue, Bookham argued it deserved more attention before the city approves the document "Many people are suggesting that what we don't need are more towers but perhaps what we do need are six-storey

buildings that can accommodate a similar amount of density. Why not find out what people in Lower Lonsdale are thinking about that?" she said.

The city netted one of the widest turnouts it has had for a CityShaping OCP meeting recently when it did a direct mail invitation to residents living below Third Street in Moodyville where the OCP foresees a change from single-family home to low-rise townhouses.

When it came time to approve the budget and set the dates for the extra townhall meetings, the motion passed 7-0. "There's been more (public input) than I've seen than on any other issue I've seen in my 20-odd years at city, however, I have been persuaded that it's public input. .. And I think that's important. And if people want some more time or to hear more information or they want to hear more presentation from staff, I think we need to do that," said Mayor Darrell Mussatto before voting for Bookham's motion.

The town hall meetings are scheduled for April 3 for Central Lonsdale, April 15 for Lower Lonsdale and April 22 for the issues of coach houses and secondary suites in single-family homes.

City staff are aiming to hold a public hearing on the final draft of the OCP before council breaks for the month of August.

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