

5

Coquitlam

For Committee

March 5, 2010

Our File: 08-3360-20/08 014000 RZ/1

Doc #: 854749.v3

To: City Manager

From: General Manager Planning and Development

Subject: **Housing Choices Policy Review for the Austin Heights and Maillardville Neighbourhood Plan Updates – Status Report**

For: **Land Use and Economic Development Standing Committee**

Recommendation:

That the Committee receives the status report dated March 5, 2010 from the General Manager Planning and Development regarding Housing Choices as part of the Austin Heights and Maillardville Neighbourhood Plan Updates.

Report Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the progress made on the housing choices component of the Austin Heights and Maillardville Neighbourhood Plan processes that are currently underway.

Executive Summary:

Small-scale housing choice options in established low density residential areas are currently under consideration as part of the Austin Heights and Maillardville neighbourhood planning processes. The housing choices work has included extensive public consultation aimed at identifying options that are compatible with the specific neighbourhood conditions in Austin Heights and Maillardville.

Housing choices will also be a component of future neighbourhood plan processes in Coquitlam's Southwest Area and is separate from the interim housing choices process that was adopted by Council on November 16, 2009. The interim process provides housing choice opportunities for applicants in areas currently designated "Neighbourhood Attached Residential" on an interim basis until neighbourhood specific policies and guidelines can be adopted. (The areas designated "Neighbourhood Attached Residential" for Maillardville and Austin Heights are shown on Attachment 1).



Executive Summary: cont'd/

The Housing Choices Policy Review is consistent with both the 2006 Corporate Strategic Plan and the Citywide Official Community Plan goals to support a growing and changing population by strengthening established neighbourhoods.

Background:

The intent to explore opportunities for small-scale housing choice options in established low density residential areas was outlined in the Southwest Coquitlam Area Plan, adopted by Council in July 2009. The specifics of how to incorporate compatible housing choices was to be considered as part of each neighbourhood plan. This approach recognizes that each neighbourhood is unique and a 'one-size fits all' methodology would not address neighbourhood character.

For the Austin Heights and Maillardville neighbourhood plans currently underway, one component of this work is to consider neighbourhood-specific land use policy and design direction for new small-scale housing choices. Key elements of the related public consultation process included:

- Housing Choices Site Tour - with the Public Advisory Groups (PAG) for Austin Heights and Maillardville of selected small scale residential developments in Burnaby, Vancouver and North Vancouver (March 28th and November 7, 2009 respectively);
- One Housing Choices Lecture - with neighbourhood residents and property/business owners (November 18, 2009), which was attended by over 80 people; and
- Two Housing Choice Design Workshops - for each neighbourhood with neighbourhood residents and property/businesses owners (November 21, 2009), which was attended by a total of approximately 70 people.

The Housing Choices Lecture event involved a presentation/illustration of possible housing types, urban design considerations for neighbourhood fit, and a question and answer period. The goal of the two housing choice workshops was to understand the level of acceptance for each small-scale housing type in the established low density residential areas in each neighbourhood. To achieve this goal, three questions were discussed at the Workshops:

- What aspects of your neighbourhood are valued?

Background: cont'd/

- Which housing types are suitable/not suitable in your neighbourhood?
- Which sites or areas are appropriate for each housing type?

Discussions with the workshop participants resulted in a significant level of consensus within the represented neighbourhoods. While some priorities and housing type preferences were shared by both neighbourhoods, there were also some differences that emerged:

Findings Common to Both Neighbourhoods

- A four (4) unit attached Housing Choice option was acceptable only on a limited basis where lots were of a sufficient size to accommodate this housing form (i.e. minimum lot area, lot depth and where no accessible lane is present, minimum lot width).
- Row housing was not supported as part of the Housing Choices designation, yet was viewed as an appropriate housing form that should be applied and encouraged under a separate land use designation (i.e. Townhouse) in appropriate locations instead of throughout low-density neighbourhoods.
- Urban design priorities include the need for improved streetscapes and associated municipal infrastructure, preservation and enhancement of landscapes (particularly trees), safeguarding distant southern views, securing privacy and providing usable outdoor space.

Austin Heights

- The predominant character of Austin Heights is defined by larger houses on larger lots and therefore, attached housing types would be a more representative housing form in terms of massing for the area. Another characteristic identified for the neighbourhood was the sense of green it projected through mature landscaping on both private and public lands.
- There was a high degree of acceptance for laneway housing, coach housing, and attached two and three unit multiplexes.
- A three (3) unit attached housing type was acceptable only when the form of development reflected characteristics of a single family home and where lots were big enough. Three "side-by-side" units on a lot were not supported.

Background: cont'd/

Maillardville

- Maillardville has a fine-grained street network with typically smaller houses on modest sized lots. Therefore, smaller detached housing types would be a more representative housing form for the area.
- There was a high degree acceptance for laneway housing, coach housing, detached two and three unit multiplexes and narrow-lot one and two unit housing forms.
- Cluster housing that required lot consolidation for larger projects was not supported by participants in the Housing Choices designation.
- Encourage preservation of heritage and character homes and reference to the area's history in new development is an important consideration for Housing Choices in Maillardville.

Attachment 2 provides summaries of the two Housing Choices workshops. The complete results have been compiled into two summary documents titled "Urban Design and Housing Choices Design Workshop Summary". Also included with the summary documents are the public meeting/workshops PowerPoint presentations illustrating the range of potential sensitive, infill housing examples. Copies of these summaries for each neighbourhood are available in the Maillardville Neighbourhood Plan Update binders in the Councilor's office and at the City Clerks front desk.

Financial Considerations:

There are no financial considerations at this time associated with the Maillardville Neighbourhood Plan Update process.

Next Steps:

The next steps in the Housing Choices Policy Review process will be to:

- further refine the design and regulatory aspects for preferred housing options in each neighbourhood;
- get feedback from the respective neighbourhood planning PAGs;
- present the findings for each neighbourhood as part of the material shown at the next Public Open Houses. It is anticipated that the Public Open Houses for Austin Heights and Maillardville will be held in early and late April 2010, respectively; and

Next Steps: cont'd/

- conduct a small-builders workshop in late Spring to obtain feedback about proposed Housing Choices options from local builders, as well as other builders in Metro Vancouver that are currently developing these infill housing forms.

Based on the input received from these events, staff will continue working with the PAGs and the public in refining location opportunities, policy and possible zoning provisions and design guidelines for both the Austin Heights and Maillardville Neighbourhood planning processes through the Summer 2010 for Council's consideration and further public comment. Ultimately these Housing Choices options would be incorporated into the two neighbourhood plans which are targeted for completion by year end.

Staff will continue to provide Council with updates on the planning process at key milestones.



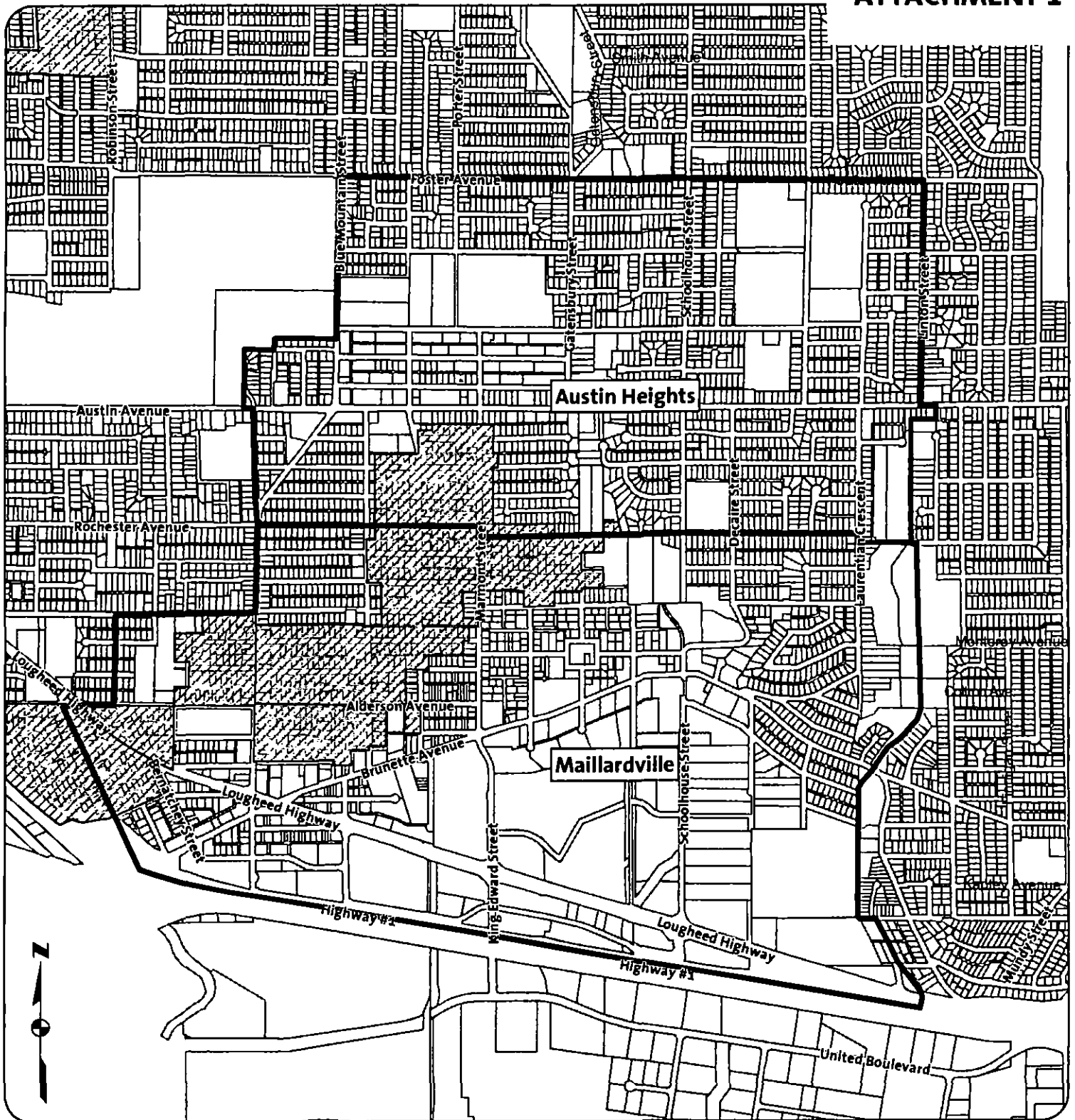
J.L. McIntyre, MCIP

RN/ms

This report was prepared by Russell Nelson, Planner 2 and reviewed by Lynn Guilbault, Senior Planner and Rob Innes, Manager Community Planning.



Attachments:

1. Map of Austin Heights and Maillardville Neighbourhood Boundaries and existing "Attached Neighbourhood Residential" land use designated areas.
2. Summary of Austin Heights Workshop comments.
3. Summary of Maillardville Workshop comments.



**Proposed Austin Heights + Maillardville Neighbourhood Boundaries
and Existing "Attached Neighbourhood Residential" Land Use Designated Areas**

LEGEND

-  Proposed Neighbourhood Plans
-  Parcels

-  Neighbourhood Attached Residential

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS - AUSTIN HEIGHTS WORKSHOP - NOVEMBER 21, 2009

Group Summaries

Group No. 1

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Privacy provided by large front, side and rear yards
2. Improve streetscape character: sidewalks, street trees, underground wiring, opportunities for boulevard planting, traffic calming
3. Improve laneways for walking and access/ short cuts, security issues important and dealing with ditches to allow better access to rear yards and parking

Preferred housing choice types:

1. Laneway houses/coach houses in rear yards along laneways
2. Duplexes (that emulate single family buildings)
3. Multiple conversion dwellings
4. Row houses in very few locations with specific characteristics - larger lots adjacent to institutional uses (churches, parks, ravines) with as few adjacencies to single family dwellings/lots as possible.

Group No. 2

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Retain sense of green in the neighbourhood for character and environmental values: urban forest, natural areas, tree clusters, fruit trees, ravines
2. Add better streetscape character: sidewalks, street trees, housing appropriate to character
3. Add more social opportunities

4. Better connectivity

Note: Look forward to change to neighbourhood as an opportunity to improve its quality and character.

Preferred housing choice types:

1. Duplexes (noting that secondary suites are permitted and so will continue to be built)
2. Narrow lot houses
3. Laneway and coach houses in rear yards

Note: Rowhouses and housing clusters with good design could be supported in select, appropriate locations.

Group No. 3

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Landscape especially large trees within yards
2. Streetscape character including street trees and boulevards noting that overhead wires are a constraint
3. Views and view protection

Note: Privacy and safety/security are also key considerations.

Preferred housing choice types:

1. Coach and laneway housing
2. Multiple conversions up to four units
3. Smaller houses and subdivisions of large lots to permit smaller fee simple houses

Note: All types are acceptable except rowhouses. Rowhouses might be acceptable backing onto commercial along arterials.

Group No. 4

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Maintaining the green space and openness of the feel of Austin Heights
2. Building 'in' to the existing houses (including 1960s homes) through upgrading and encouraging multiple conversions
3. Denser fabric such as row houses etc. should be kept close to major arterial and close to services (buses, shopping etc.)

Preferred housing choice types:

1. Multiple conversion development – this will help to keep the feel of the single family character
2. Coach house and laneway housing – depending on access solutions although front access could be OK
3. Four houses on deeper lots



Summary of Preferred Housing Choices

- high degree of consensus
- high degree of acceptance of some new Housing Choices in the neighbourhood
- smaller HC types generally preferred
- emphasis on small units that could be knit into existing single family fabric
- low acceptance of redevelopment projects, lot consolidation for larger projects
- very limited acceptance of rowhousing

Summary of Urban Design Priorities

- high degree of consensus
- wide ranging desire for improved streetscape/municipal infrastructure in terms of sidewalks, curbs, boulevards, street trees, improved laneways
- preservation of privacy, outdoor space between dwellings
- preservation of existing landscape, trees, sense of greenness of neighbourhood
- preservation of distant views primarily to the south

SUMMARY OF COMMENTS - MAILLARDVILLE WORKSHOP - NOVEMBER 21, 2009

Group Summaries

Group No. 1

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Preservation of Heritage legacy (meaning up to early modern, 1960s)
2. Improved streetscape, public realm; lot sizes as existing
3. Views

Preferred infill housing types:

1. All housing types acceptable except rowhousing (rowhousing might be acceptable adjacent to Brunette Avenue and south of Brunette)

Group No. 2

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Views
2. Sense of green and landscape
3. Safety both with respect to urban issues and wildlife
4. Character of neighbourhood – accept mixed character and don't force a false character

Preferred infill housing types:

1. Laneway and coach house infill
2. Narrow or small lots – up to 33' frontage
3. Rowhouses on selected sites only with good design, rowhouses better on hill than fourplexes
4. Fourplexes on selected sites only with good

design

Note: Secondary suites should be continued and made easier to get approvals for.

Group No. 3

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Views and view protection
2. Streetscapes and landscapes especially mature trees
3. Privacy

Preferred infill housing types:

1. Coach and laneway houses
2. Narrow houses but small ones
3. Multiple conversions

Group No. 4

Priorities among urban design issues:

1. Privacy and security
2. Parking issues really need to be tackled
3. Landscaping to help with issues of density (privacy, screening of parking, sustainability – plant trees)

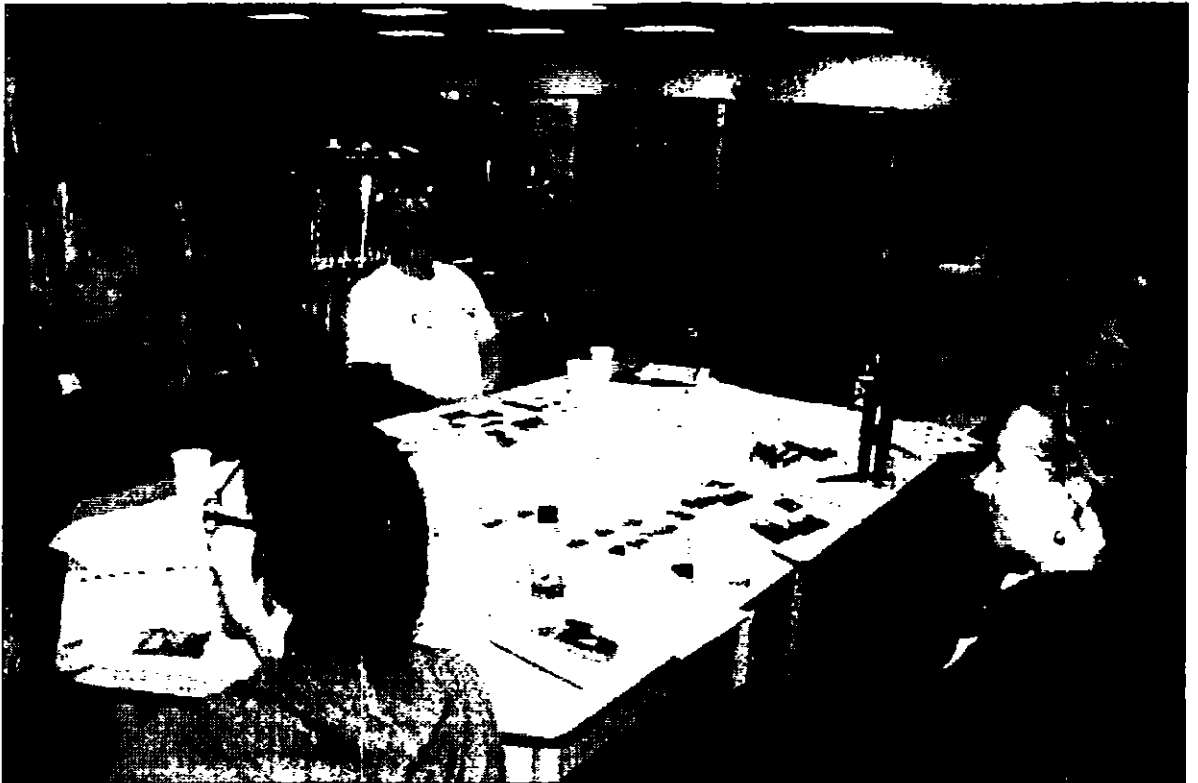
Overall comment: Make sure design guidelines encourage good contemporary and character buildings with good quality architecture.

Preferred infill housing types:

1. Coach house (deals well with topography in Maillardville)

Urban Design + Housing Choices
Maillardville Design Workshop Summary

2. Narrow lots – great idea, good for affordability
3. Duplexes – change the limits to allow more of them (remove 75 meters apart criteria)



Summary of Preferred Housing Choices

- high degree of consensus
- high degree of acceptance of some new Housing Choices in the neighbourhood
- smaller housing choice types generally preferred with emphasis on small units that could be knit into existing single family fabric
- low acceptance of redevelopment projects involving lot consolidation for larger projects
- low interest in rowhousing

Summary of Urban Design Priorities

- protection of neighbourhood character and remaining heritage and older character homes were key themes
- wide ranging desire for improved streetscape/municipal infrastructure in terms of sidewalks, curbs, boulevards, street trees, improved laneways
- preservation of privacy, outdoor space between dwellings
- preservation of existing landscape, trees, sense of greenness of neighbourhood
- preservation of distant views primarily to the south