

Staff Responses to Questions from Council regarding 4575 Granville Street

The following is a transcription of what staff read out during the public hearing for the rezoning application at 4575 Granville Street

Transcription from June 13, 2019

At the end of the public hearing on Tuesday, Council said they would send questions to staff through emails. By 6pm today, we have received 7 questions.

Q: The first question is related to funding for the hospice.

Staff response: Staff would like to introduce Kristen Farquharson, Interim Director, City Centre, Older Adult and End of Life Care of Vancouver Coastal Health. She is here to address questions related to hospice funding and other related issues.

Q: There was a question about the value of the hospice property – whether the value of the hospice land is the same or “close to” the value of other properties in the area.

Staff response: The hospice property is of the same value as other RS-5 zoned sites in the area.

Q: The third question is about the location of other hospices in the City of Vancouver:

- Are they located near playgrounds?
- Are they located in areas similar to this hospice with more or less the same amount of noise?
- And are there parking issues?

Staff response: Hospices are located in a variety of neighbourhoods, both high and low density, with a diversity of adjacencies.

Cottage Hospice is located in the Burrard View Park, in a residential neighbourhood, with park uses and a playground adjacent. The facility has designated parking and staff are not aware of street parking issues in the area.

May's Place is located at 333 Powell Street, in Japantown, in the Downtown Eastside. The hospice is in a four-storey building [staff correction: three storey building] and is surrounded by other low to mid-rise buildings. In this location, Powell Street is a one-way street carrying west bound traffic into the City Centre. No parking issue is known to staff at this facility.

St. John Hospice is located on the UBC campus, adjacent to a condominium tower with designated surface parking.

Q: The next question is “how did the hospice come to locate in the neighbourhood? How long has the hospice resided in this area?”

Staff response: The hospice applied for a Development Permit in 2011 and purpose-built the facility, as a Community Care Facility. Although the hospice is a permitted use under the RS-5 zoning, additional building depth relaxation and reduced front yard were granted, making that development permit application conditional.

Q: “Was there any consultation with the neighbourhood as part of the development permit application and if so, the result of the notification”.

Staff response: There was a notification as part of the original development permit process. At that time, staff received comments from the neighbouring residents expressing concerns about the proposed use, i.e. a hospice, not a house, traffic around the area, parking and the lane usage by the hospice.

Q: The next question is whether there could be other sources of noise in the neighbourhood, be it construction of a single family house, or road work in the area, that could impact the hospice?

Staff response: This is certainly a possibility.

Granville Street is a main arterial with excellent access to transit, and through our current rental housing policies, was identified as an area appropriate for growth. As such, it is anticipated to see more changes in the future.

It is also foreseeable that there will be other homes built nearby and possibly directly adjacent to the hospice. For example, as has been noted by speakers, should the next door site be redeveloped, it would allow for a house of approximately 12,000 sq. ft. in size.

In terms of construction time, the construction time for a small low-density project like the one before Council today is comparable to that of a large single-family home in the area, typically about 18 months.

Q: The last question was whether there is any way the applicant may allow access to the playground located on site to families visiting the hospice?

Staff response: Staff will leave the answer of this question to the applicant.

Transcription from June 20, 2019

Since last Thursday’s public hearing on this application, staff have received many questions from Council. We will provide a brief response to all of them

Q: The first question is, “what is the difference in estimated construction time between the proposed townhouse project and a 12,000 sq. ft. house allowed under current zoning?”

Staff response: Were the owner to pursue a Development Permit application, the construction period would be virtually the same between what is proposed in this rezoning and what is permitted to be built today under RS-5 zoning.

Q: The next question is, “will the proposed townhouse project block the sight line to the north?”

Staff response: By providing a wide courtyard in the middle of the site the project minimizes any impacts on views to the north and creates more views than a stand-alone house would built under current zoning.

Q: The next question is “will the project retain trees on site?”

Staff response: There are no by-law trees on site and no City trees impacted by the development. There are 7 neighbouring trees, to the north, which are all being retained and the applicant is proposing 16 new trees on site.

Q: The next question is concerning the definition of a “quiet zone”?

Staff response: The area of “Quiet Zone” is located at the southern edge of the subject site. It is conceived as “quiet” through strategies to relocate the parking-ramp and children’s playground to the north, as well as by limiting the balconies facing directly on the hospice. The southern edge of the site is also where there will be a very substantial landscape buffer that will discourage people from physically accessing that area.

Q: The next question is “what does “privacy screening” on balconies mean?”

Staff response: Privacy screening means a 6-ft. tall, visually impermeable barrier. These would mean some substantial planters and plants to obscure direct views to the hospice. The preference is for planting rather than solid walls for screening as solid-walls can add bulk to the building and impact any views to the north.

Q: The next question is “will the rooftop patio enable people having parties and overlook the Hospice?”

Staff response: The top roof decks are accessed directly from the master bedrooms and staff conditions of approval have focused on minimizing direct exposure to the hospice. This would be achieved through orienting balconies so their outlooks do not directly face the hospice and privacy screening on balconies through substantial planting.

Q: There was a question asking if the City’s Seniors Advisory Committee was opposed to this project?

Staff response: As is typical with rezoning applications staff do not present to the Seniors Advisory Committee but instead, rezoning applications are generally presented to any Zoning & Development related committees. Staff were made aware that the hospice put this item on the agenda to seek advice on how to stop this rezoning application. That took place May 2018. No planning staff were notified or invited. From the meeting minutes, which are published online, there was a discussion regarding the rezoning application but there was no resolution or action.

Q: There are questions related to a listing advertising units proposed in this application for sale by one particular real estate agent when the rezoning conditions require all units to be secured as rental.

Staff response: Staff want to thank the public for bringing this to our attention. We have investigated this and found out this realtor has pulled information directly from the City's rezoning applications website, and has actually done this to multiple rezoning applications in addition to this one, to create inaccurate condo pre-sale websites. The most troubling inaccuracy is that this rezoning application is coming in under the AHC policy and proposing market rental, secured by a Housing Agreement enacted by by-law for the greater of 60 years and the life of the building, and it is not possible to stratify these rental units and sell them as condo. Please see condition 4 in Appendix B for more information. To confirm, these units cannot be sold and should never have been marketed for sale. We understand that the applicant was not aware of the realtor's website.

Many of the applications this realtor has targeted are instream rezoning applications that are still under review while there is ongoing public consultation process. Staff believe that this practice could constitute "deceptive dealing" which may be found to be professional misconduct by the Office of the Superintendent of Real Estate who regulates such listings. This has significant impact on the City's regulatory work and our relationship with the public.

Staff have reported this individual and his practice to the Office of the Superintendent of Real Estate created by the province. The Office has notified us that they will review the information we have provided and take appropriate disciplinary action under the *Real Estate Development Marketing Act (REDMA)*.

Q: The next question is regarding the off-leash dog park in Burrardview Park which is adjacent to St. James Hospice, "what is the space between the area of the off-leash dog park and the hospice? And were there any issues/ consultation with hospice when this off leash area was created?"

Staff response: There is an off-leash dog area located at Burrard View Park that was established as a pilot program around 2005. Parks Board staff hosted an open house in January 2019 proposing a change in designation from pilot to a permanent off-leash dog area. The Bloom Group Cottage Hospice (formerly called St. James Cottage Hospice) is located 75 ft. from the off-leash area in Burrard View Park. Staff reached out to the hospice prior to the open house and there were no concerns voiced for the proposed change from pilot to a permanent off-leash area.

Q: The next question is, "when the Vancouver Hospice Society applied to be a long term care society did they voice any concerns about future construction, loud noise, or increased density in the area?"

Staff response: While this may be a question to the hospice, from the regulatory perspective, all areas throughout the City have potential for future development.

An applicant who makes an application to change the land use on one site cannot request that no further development occur in the surrounding area.

- Q: The next question is “is there anything staff can do to recapture some of the increased value from the rezoning for the public as the site will likely have a higher value because there are more units on site?”

Staff response: The City captures a portion of land lift on new rezonings to pay for amenities (through CACs). In late 2017, staff amended CAC policy so that smaller developments, like this project, which do not create enough land lift were exempted from proforma evaluation. This was done to simplify and streamline the CAC process for secured market rental projects, such as this application, that comply with the City’s *Secured Market Rental Housing Policy (2012)* and *Rental Incentive Guidelines (2017)*, and from staff knowledge and experience, do not generate any offer of CAC based on project economics. The public benefit accruing from these units is their contribution to the City’s long-term rental housing stock.

- Q: The next question asked for details for another AHC Policy rezoning application on Granville Street.

Staff response: There is another rezoning application at 4750 Granville Street that was recently submitted. It proposes to rezone from RS-5 to CD-1 to allow for a four-storey rental apartment.

- Q: “Is it possible to require as a condition of approval that a Good Neighbour Agreement is signed between the Vancouver Hospice Society and the owners of 4575 Granville Street for the duration of construction?”

Staff response: Yes, it is possible. Council can instruct staff to initiate and facilitate the discussion between the applicant and the hospice. A Good Neighbour Agreement which will set up communication protocol and issue resolution process during the construction would definitely help. This agreement, in conjunction with a condition of approval which requires a construction mitigation plan, would be good mechanism to put in place to minimize disruption to the hospice operation.

- Q: “Can the signing of a Good Neighbour Agreement be required with the residents of the townhouses?”

Staff response: Staff have not seen such an agreement for a residential townhouse development and would advise against putting this as a condition.

- Q: The next two questions are regarding traffic. The first is, will traffic congestion in the lane increase due to the parking ramp?

Staff response: Taken together, the low vehicle volumes, the fact that nearly all traffic is expected to route towards Connaught Drive, and an increased effective lane width, gives staff a high degree of confidence that lane congestion will not be an issue for the site, or its neighbors.

Q: The second transportation question is “what measures can be put in place to ensure the lane is not blocked?”

Staff response: As part of this application, the lane will be repaved which will remove a large hedge which currently encroaches into the lane. This will improve the lane and provide two-way flow along the rear of the site. In terms of construction considerations, ambulances and paramedics would always have the ability to access the site from Granville Street or from the south end of the lane if preferred. Staff would not support a construction traffic plan that involves blocking access to a development.

Q: The next question asks if the social planning department is opposed to this project?

Staff response: Arts, Culture and Community Services (ACCS) concurred on the report for this rezoning application. ACCS staff support the application and the provision of rental housing for families, the design solutions to mitigate impacts on the hospice (e.g. reduction of top floor massing, orientation of balconies, etc.). As well as the applicant’s offer to provide short term rental for families of patients at the hospice.