



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. What is density bonusing?**

**A.** The *Local Government Act* allows municipalities in British Columbia to permit density bonuses in their zoning in exchange for the provision of amenities or affordable housing. This means that in designated zones, a developer can build to higher density if a community amenity contribution is provided to the municipality. The density bonus zone sets out the type and value of amenities expected in return for the bonus density. Landowners and developers of sites with density bonus zoning have the choice to develop at the base density and make no amenity contribution or make the required contribution and develop at the higher bonus density.

**Q. Where is the City considering allowing bonus density?**

**A.** The density bonus zoning system is designed to allow additional density in exchange for community amenities in two types of areas (see maps at end):

- 1. Areas of the City where the density allowed under current zoning is lower than the densities allowed in the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*.** For example, there are single family areas in Queensborough that are designated for townhouse or low rise apartment development in the OCP. Density bonus zoning would allow single family redevelopment with no amenity contribution and would permit townhouse or low rise apartment development if an amenity contribution were provided.
- 2. Areas of the City where current zoning already matches OCP designations but where the maximum density in the zone is low or unachievable.** For example, many of the City's neighbourhood commercial centres (e.g. Sapperton, Twelfth Street) allow low-rise mixed-use development with one storey of commercial space at grade and two storeys of residential above. The densities allowed in these zones are low compared to zones in locations with similar characteristics like the City of North Vancouver where low-rise mixed-use zoning allows four storey buildings. New Westminster is considering allowing developers to build three storey buildings with no amenity contribution and granting bonus density for four storey buildings if an amenity contribution is provided.

**Q. What community amenities would the City get in exchange for bonus density?**

**A.** Community amenities are anything from which the community can benefit (e.g., green space, childcare, waterfront access, affordable housing, public art, etc.). Developers who want to build projects that take advantage of the density bonusing system will make a cash contribution to the City. These cash contributions will be used to build community amenities. Density bonusing revenues will be allocated in the following way: 30% towards affordable

housing, 10% towards child care, and 60% towards general amenities (i.e., civic facilities, park space, public art, etc.).

**Q. Who decides what amenities the City should build?**

- A. Amenities to be provided through density bonusing will be determined based on the amount and type of amenities needed to serve population growth expected in New Westminster over the next 15-20 years. Staff will review capital projects to determine their eligibility for density bonusing funding in accordance with the Council endorsed *Guidelines for Staff Evaluation of Density Bonusing Projects*.

Density bonus funds will pay for amenities that serve the entire community (e.g. library expansion, recreation and arts facilities) and amenities that serve smaller geographic areas (e.g. greenways and neighbourhood parks, childcare spaces).

**Q. Why is New Westminster considering a density bonus system?**

- A. New Westminster's *Official Community Plan* sets a vision for the City to grow from approximately 60,000 people in 2008 to 84,000 people by 2021. The OCP identifies areas where redevelopment at higher densities will be allowed in order to provide more housing to accommodate this population growth.

The City will see benefits from growth in the form of housing renewal, more purchasing power to support neighbourhood commercial centres, and reduced per capita costs of municipal service delivery. However growth means more people using City infrastructure and community amenities, and therefore demands for expansion and improvement.

New Westminster would like to use density bonus zoning to obtain financial contributions from developers that are allowed to build larger projects and use these financial contributions to fund community amenity investments to address the impacts of growth.

**Q. When will density bonus zoning be implemented?**

- A. The density bonusing system will be implemented in two phases. Phase 1 includes all eligible townhouse and low-rise residential apartment zones, and Phase 2 includes all eligible mixed-use low-rise and high rise apartment zones. It is anticipated that Phase 1 will be fully implemented by January 2009. Further technical work is necessary before Phase 2 can be implemented.

**Q. I still have questions about density bonusing, who can I call?**

- A. For more information about this initiative, contact Lil Ronalds, Planner at 604.527.4653 or [lronalds@newwestcity.ca](mailto:lronalds@newwestcity.ca).