

POTTINGER BIRD

COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Community Engagement Summary
Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment & Development Permit Application
100 Braid Street, New Westminster
Wesgroup Properties
10.14.2020

*Prepared by Pottinger Bird Community Relations
1488 – 1130 West Pender Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 4A4*

Background:

Wesgroup Properties (“Wesgroup”), in collaboration with Chris Dikeakos Architects Inc (“CDA”), has applied to the City of New Westminster (“The City”) to amend text for the Comprehensive Development zoning (CD-67) zoning district that was adopted for 100 Braid Street on November 21, 2016.

The site is currently zoned for 20-storey market condominium. This means that a 20 storey condo building can be developed on the site today (and does not require further community consultation or Council approval). This use is outright and would be subject to Development Permit approval by the City.

The proposal seeks to convert the 20-storey market condominium building into a 34-storey secured rental building that would deliver 423 homes and approximately 4,300 sq.ft. of art gallery and studio space at discounted rates. Wesgroup is also pursuing a private partnership with Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (“CMHC”) to secure 96 of the 423 units at affordable rates. With regard to the application, the term “affordability” is defined by CMHC as “30% of 70% of CMHC median household income.” It is also important to note, that the affordable housing component of the proposal is not a City of New Westminster policy requirement, rather, it is an added benefit that is being pursued through a voluntary, private sector partnership with CMHC. Without this partnership, the plan will revert back to the previous program under the existing zoning of 20-storeys of market condominium residential.

The application has been made under the City’s *Secured Market Rental Housing Policy (2017)*, which allows Council to consider additional density on this site through a rezoning in order to facilitate the creation of secured (long-term) market rental units. The zoning text amendments that are being proposed include:

- Increase the net residential density on the subject property from 18,817.5 square metres (202,550 sq. ft.) (4.3 FSR) to 28,456.6 square metres (306,304 sq.ft.) (6.51 FSR);
- Increase the maximum building height from 65 metres (213.25 ft.) to 118 metres (390.42 ft.); and
- Decrease the off-street parking requirements to a ratio of 0.81 stalls per unit and 0.651 visitor stalls per unit.

As the owners of the property located at 100 Braid Street, early and frequent communication with tenants, the neighbourhood and wider community stakeholders has been a key priority of Wesgroup’s rezoning application process. As a result, Wesgroup engaged Pottinger Bird Community Relations to commence an early engagement and consultation program in May of 2020 with immediate neighbours, and community stakeholders to discuss Wesgroup’s intentions to redevelop the property. The following report provides a high level summary of Wesgroup’s community outreach and engagement to date.

Tenant Engagement:

Wesgroup became the new owners of 100 Braid Street in 2015 with the vision and intention to develop new housing and a school at this location. In May 2016, Urban Academy and Wesgroup received rezoning approval from the City for the development of a 20-storey market condo building and a 60,000 sq.ft. school and art gallery/studio space. As part of this process, a portion of the site was subdivided and sold to the Urban Academy School, which is operational today.

Wesgroup inherited four commercial tenants when they purchased the property. An official letter from Wesgroup to all commercial tenants was delivered upon sale completion in 2015. This letter introduced Wesgroup as the new owners of the site and invited tenants to meet the team to discuss future redevelopment intentions, timelines for demolition and relocation support. As part of this process, each tenant was presented with a mutual agreement to end their tenancy as of November 30, 2020.

Neighbour Engagement:

Letters to Immediate Neighbours

In May 2020, Wesgroup reached out to neighbours via a written letter to residents of Rousseau Street (21 homes shown in blue) and commercial neighbours (5 buildings shown in green), with an invitation to meet and discuss the proposal. One inquiry was received from a neighbour as a result, who generally offered positive input on the land use change; no in person meetings were requested. See delivery map below.



Letter to Immediate Neighbours

A copy of the letter that was distributed to neighbours is attached as Appendix A.

Applicant Website

While Wesgroup has been limited in their ability to engage in the traditional forms of public engagement (large scale, in person public information sessions) due to the social distancing protocols surrounding COVID-19, the applicant team voluntarily created a community website detailing up to date and accurate

information about the proposal and the approval process. The website was launched on September 2, 2020.

Site Sign

As required by the City, a sign was erected on the site on September 3, 2020 to inform neighbours of the rezoning application. See site sign below.



Broader Stakeholder Engagement:

Wesgroup is committed to an open and transparent community consultation process. As well as immediate neighbours, Wesgroup has invited local community organizations and not-for-profits to participate in the rezoning process through continued dialogue on the application.

The following stakeholders have been engaged and invited to provide feedback on the proposal for 100 Braid Street:

- Immediate Residential and Commercial Neighbours,
- Sapperton Residents' Association,
- Sapperton Business Association,
- New Westminster Chamber of Commerce,
- Urban Academy School,
- Royal Columbian Hospital,

- Richard McBride Elementary School,
- Yes in New West,
- Douglas College Commerce and Business Association (student-led, located in New West), and
- Individual stakeholders as identified through the consultation process.

Note: a description of each organization invited to participate in the consultation process can be found in Appendix B.

Key Themes: Stakeholder Input

Stakeholders that have provided feedback to date include:

- Immediate Residential and Commercial Neighbours,
- Commercial Tenants,
- Sapperton Residents' Association,
- New Westminster Chamber of Commerce,
- Urban Academy School, and
- Douglas College Commerce and Business Association.

Below is a summary of key themes identified through engagement process that will inform the planning process.

Housing Diversity and Choice

- Appropriate location for secured rental housing and added density, given the site's location in close proximity to employment, amenities and transit, including Braid Skytrain Station.
- It was noted that there is a lack of affordable rental housing in New Westminster; support was expressed for the inclusion of below market housing as a more affordable to market rent.
- Given the housing crisis, support was expressed for the proposal to convert condo to secured rental housing.
- More family oriented homes, 3 bedrooms in particular, are in high demand for families with children.
- Support for inclusion of smaller, more affordable homes for couples and singles.

Permeability and Pedestrian Safety

- Careful consideration should be given to pedestrian and vehicle safety given the site's shared property line with Urban Academy School.

Traffic Management and Impact Mitigation

- Some concerns were expressed (predominately from the Sapperton Residents Association*) as relating to increased traffic congestion and on street parking associated with this development.
- Ensure that a plan is in place to mitigate impacts associated with construction, including parking for trades and Urban Academy school.

Densification and General Growth

- It was articulated that some residents have concerns about densification of the Sapperton neighbourhood, given the number of development applications that are currently being

considered. It was also acknowledged that population growth is expected in the area considering the presence of rapid transit.

Resident + Public Amenities

- The building amenities that are being proposed will help residents to reduce their variable and fixed expenses by taking advantage of the onsite gym and recreational facilities.
- Interest and support for the replacement of art gallery and production space was expressed.
- Having more rental and affordable housing will support business community, including business retention and attraction.
- Would like to see the heritage of 100 Braid Street preserved.
- Wesgroup was recognized by some as a thoughtful, community minded developer.

Next Steps:

Feedback from residents and local stakeholder groups has been very encouraging at this stage. Wesgroup will continue to engage with neighbours and community stakeholders throughout the application process to improve the proposal based on community input, where possible.

May 22, 2020

RE: Future development at 100 Braid Street, New Westminster

Dear Neighbour,

We hope that you and your families are healthy and well.

We are writing to introduce ourselves and our company, Wesgroup Properties. Wesgroup is a local family owned and operated real estate development company with a proven history of innovation and award-winning design. Wesgroup has been recognized for their good social conscience, entrepreneurial spirit, long-sightedness, quality product and architectural excellence.

Wesgroup is exploring options to redevelop 100 Braid Street. As you may be aware, Wesgroup undertook a rezoning process for this site in 2015 and received approval from the City of New Westminster for the development of a 20-storey market condo building. In response to local city policies reflecting housing pressures, Wesgroup is considering opportunities to undertake a secondary rezoning process to allow for a density increase to permit the development of secured rental housing with commercial at grade.

As with all our projects, Wesgroup is committed to each and every community we build in and strive to gain an understanding of our neighbours' individual priorities and concerns through an open and transparent process. With this in mind, your opinion is valued, and we wish to open a dialogue with you. Prior to any public engagement, we would appreciate the opportunity to sit down with you to share our preliminary ideas and hear your initial feedback.

We wish to emphasize that we are in the early stages of developing our proposal. If you are interested in learning more, please get in touch with Virginia Bird, Community Relations, at 604-619-0837 to schedule a time. While we won't be holding meetings in person given the rapidly changing landscape around COVID-19, please don't hesitate to reach out for a phone call. We are here and we would be pleased to connect with you.

On behalf of Wesgroup, we wish you continued good health

Best Regards,

Dean Johnson
Director, Development
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Appendix B:

Overview of Community Stakeholders invited to comment on the application for 100 Braid Street
10.09.2020

- **Sapperton Residents' Association:** a group of neighbours interested in making and keeping the neighbourhood safe, crime-free, peaceful and attractive.
- **Sapperton Business Association:** an association of commercial property owners and tenants within the Sapperton area who work in partnership with the City to create thriving, competitive, and safe business areas that attract shoppers, diners, tourists, and new businesses.
- **New Westminster Chamber of Commerce:** a non-partisan business organization that exists to meet the needs of the business community in New Westminster.
- **Urban Academy School:** a private school in Sapperton (adjacent to the 100 Braid site) for K-12 students.
- **Royal Columbian Hospital:** one of three regional hospitals in the Fraser Health with nearly 40,000 *staff*, medical *staff* and volunteers.
- **Richard McBride Elementary School:** a K-5 public school located in Sapperton which currently serves approximately 415 students with a staff of over 50 educators and support personnel.
- **Yes in New West:** a coalition of New Westminster residents dedicated to enhancing the community through affordable housing.
- **Douglas Commerce and Business Association:** a team of student volunteers at Douglas College who are passionate about getting students engaged and involved in community issues, including housing. The DCBA operates out of New Westminster and represents over 3500 students across 35 different business-related programs.