CEDAR COTTAGE MC-1/WELWYN STREET PLANNING POLICIES

Adopted by City Council April 25, 1996
Acknowledgements

Planning Department staff wish to acknowledge the major contribution of the Core Working Group in producing these policies. They provided their time and energy over numerous nights and several weekends. Their experience, insights, ideas and intimate knowledge of the study area, and the neighbourhood, were invaluable to the content of the policies. The members of the Core Group are:

  Ken Baker
  Hoss Budde
  Tom Chavez
  Don James
  Brian McGibney
  Ron Rennie
  Siobhan Ryan
  Pat Sita
  Dana Weber
  Harvey Wright

Staff also wish to thank those members of the public who attended public events, completed the surveys and offered their comments and suggestions. Finally, thanks go to other City staff in Engineering Services, the Housing Centre, Real Estate Services, Social Planning Department, and the Park Board who assisted with information and review.
# CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction ................................................................. 1
  1.1 Application and Intent .................................................. 1
  1.2 The Study Area Boundaries ........................................... 1
  1.3 How This Document is Organized ................................... 1

2.0 Existing Situation .......................................................... 2
  2.1 Area History .............................................................. 2
  2.2 1995 Land Use, Context and Population ......................... 3
  2.3 1995 Zoning ............................................................... 4

3.0 A View of the Future ....................................................... 5
  3.1 MC-1 Area .................................................................... 5
  3.2 Welwyn Street (RS-2 Area) ............................................ 5

4.0 Policy Directions ............................................................ 7
  4.1 Industrial Use - MC-1 Area ............................................ 7
  4.2 Retail, Service and Office Uses - MC-1 Area ................... 9
  4.3 Residential Use .......................................................... 10
  4.4 Residential Affordability ............................................. 13
  4.5 Live/Work Use ............................................................ 14
  4.6 Community Services and Facilities ............................... 15
  4.7 Parks and Open Space ................................................ 17
  4.8 Built-Form and Character ............................................ 18
  4.9 Movement and Streetscape .......................................... 23
  4.10 Parking .................................................................... 27
1.0 Introduction

1.1 Application and Intent
In May 1995, City Council initiated a planning program to review the future of the MC-1/Welwyn Street area. On April 25, 1996 Council approved the policies in this document. Once adopted by Council, these planning policies are intended to guide amendments to the MC-1 zoning and development of MC-1 guidelines, improvements to streets and public facilities and adoption of a Development Cost Levy (DCL) By-law. They also provide a policy framework for reviewing the future of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) site and adjacent sites on Welwyn Street.

1.2 The Study Area Boundaries
The boundaries of the MC-1/Welwyn Street study area include all of the land zoned MC-1, and some adjacent sites on Welwyn Street zoned RS-2.

1.3 How This Document is Organized
The document is organized by topic sections. The goals are stated at the beginning of each section. Facts are provided as a context for the policies. Finally, most topics contain further directions under “Other Ideas.” These are additional items that are outside the authority of the City. These may be pursued by community members and organizations.
2.0 Existing Situation

2.1 Area History
Originally the centre of the thriving Cedar Cottage neighbourhood at the turn of the century, the area had a diverse collection of retail, service and recreational uses. “Cedar Cottage Road” (now Commercial Street) was adjacent to the first station on the inter-urban line to New Westminster and the terminus of the Commercial Drive streetcar. At its peak around 1910, Commercial street was home to a movie theatre and an amusement park in addition to the traditional services such as a bank, grocer and drugstore. With the coming of the World War I development slowed, although the area continued to be the heart of Cedar Cottage. However, with the increasing popularity of the private motorcar, other competing commercial areas on Kingsway and Commercial Drive emerged in the 1920s and became dominant after World War II. After the removal of the inter-urban and streetcar systems in the 1950s, the area gradually evolved into an industrial one, although a number of commercial and residential buildings dating from its heyday remained.

A planning study in the mid-1970s confirmed the mixed use nature of the area and rezoned it from industrial and commercial zoning to MC-1 to allow a broader range of uses, including residential, to help “maintain the traditional character of the street and strengthen the economic viability of development.” As part of this study, one adjacent block of Welwyn Street, containing the BC Tel and GVRD sites, was rezoned from industrial to residential (RS-2). In the past 20 years, only three small mixed residential and commercial buildings and two small industrial buildings were constructed under the MC-1 zoning.

In 1990, the MC-1 area was one of ten industrial areas across the city that Council designated as “let-go”, to be reviewed to determine future land use directions. In 1995, Council instructed staff to begin the MC-1/Welwyn Street Planning Study, recognizing, as part of the terms of reference, that this area was and would remain mixed residential, commercial and industrial in nature.
1995 Land Use, Context and Population

The study area is approximately 4.8 ha. (11.9 ac.) in size. It is located within Cedar Cottage, one of the City's oldest neighbourhoods bounded roughly by Broadway, Kingsway, Knight and Nanaimo Streets. Within these boundaries there are 14,000 residents living primarily in single-family and duplex housing. The MC-1/Welwyn study area is generally surrounded by single-family houses. Within the study area, there are several major ownerships including two vacant sites owned by the GVRD, a BC Tel works yard and a City works yard. The remainder of the area has a mix of large and small manufacturers such as Custom Plastics and Larrivee Guitars, wholesale distributors such as BC Fluorescent and Britannia Food Equipment, and services such as Universal Heating and Mainland Elevators. There are only two retail uses currently operating in the area.

The area is a significant employment centre for this part of the city with over 600 full and part-time jobs. In addition, approximately 60 residential units exist in both historic and more recent mixed-use buildings, accommodating about 75 residents, including about 15 artists who live and work in the area.
2.3 1995 Zoning

MC-1
Most of the area is zoned MC-1 (Figure 3) which permits mixed-use buildings incorporating residential, commercial and industrial uses, or single purpose commercial or industrial buildings. However, residential and retail uses are not permitted in the Stainsbury Triangle. The maximum allowable density for residential, commercial or industrial use is 1.5 FSR. Mixed-use buildings are permitted up to an overall maximum density of 2.5 FSR. The maximum building height is 12.2 m (40 ft). Front setbacks are not required. All uses are conditional, and there are no guidelines.

RS-2
One block face in the study area is RS-1, a residential one- and two-family zone. Maximum density is 0.60 FSR for one- or two-family dwellings. On the GVRD site, the small lot sizes would permit seven single-family houses. Multi-family dwellings up to 0.75 FSR can occur on large lots such as the BC Tel site. Maximum height is 21/2 storeys or 10.7 m (35 ft.).
3.0 A View of the Future

3.1 MC-1 Area
The MC-1 area, and Commercial Street in particular holds a unique opportunity. The slow pace of redevelopment has preserved some of the area's history. An intimate pedestrian environment is created by the scale of buildings close to the sidewalk and the street trees. Varied uses including manufacturing of guitars, furniture, clothes and ironworks contribute to the area's unique appeal. The artists who work out of their living spaces add another dimension that offers opportunities for continuing and enhancing the area's eclectic reputation. These varied physical elements and diverse land uses define the area today, and should be a major part of its future.

The future vision for the area is to continue its long history of mixed residential, commercial and industrial uses and buildings. Streetscape improvements will help to enhance the pedestrian environment and address safety and comfort issues for pedestrians and vehicles. Aspects of the area's rich commercial and industrial history will be recalled where appropriate to contribute to its current character.

The blend of uses, and the older and contemporary buildings, will continue to contribute to the area’s unique flavour. The planned improvements build on these attributes, and will help to provide some of the interest and activity of its colourful past. This in turn will increasingly make the area a focus for the immediate neighbourhood and surrounding community.

3.2 Welwyn Street (RS-2 Area)
This area contains the vacant GVRD site, the BC Tel service yard and three single-family houses. The size of these sites and their unusual context - facing the rear of the single-family homes located on Maxwell Street and the industrial edge on the lane, create a design challenge and an opportunity. The policies keep two options open for further discussion: low density family housing such as rowhouses, or single family houses. In either case, the new housing will incorporate landscaped front yards and front porches, to help create a residential streetscape. Planned street improvements will help to reinforce this residential image. Comprehensive site and building design should help address the impacts along the Commercial Street lane and buffer future residents from industrial activity. These initiatives will create a transition between the existing houses and the mixed-use industrial MC-1 area, and help knit these diverse neighbourhoods together.
Concept Plan

Mix of activities along Commercial Street: working, living

New housing compatible with industrial

New buildings respect scale of old buildings

Commercial Street trees kept and sidewalk problem solved

Innovative low-rise family housing or single-family

"Greening" of Welwyn streetscape and possible mid-block link

"Gateway" to the area: safer crossing with signal, feature building and planting

More people living in the area will help provide 24-hour safety and security

Residential added to Stainsbury Triangle land use mix

"Heart" of the area as 20th Avenue/Commercial Street: parkettes, traffic calming

Traffic calming on 22nd Avenue, near school

All buildings contribute to pedestrian interest and comfort
4.0 Policy Directions

4.1 Industrial Use - MC-1 Area

Goal
Existing industrial uses should be able to stay if they desire, and new industrial uses should be able to locate here.

Facts
• Industrial uses are manufacturing, wholesale, communication and utility, and transportation and storage uses as defined in the Zoning and Development By-law. MC-1 zoning permits industrial uses up to 1.5 FSR, limited to the first and second floors.

• There are 45 individual firms in the area. By occupied floor space these can be categorized as manufacturing (50 percent), wholesale (19 percent) and service (29 percent) uses. Twenty industrial firms employ 370 out of a total of 640 employees in the area.

• Firms locate here because of the central location, ease of access and affordable rents. Many are long-term tenants and the majority of existing businesses wish to remain in the area. Eighty percent of businesses surveyed plan to stay for at least 5 years and approximately 50 percent plan to stay for the long term (10 to 20 years).

Policies

4.1.1 Allow existing industrial uses to stay as legal conforming uses.

4.1.2 Continue to allow all of the currently permitted industrial uses.

4.1.3 Expand the range of permitted industrial uses to include Dairy Products Manufacturing, Lumber and Building Materials Establishment, and Brewing or Distilling.

4.1.4 Continue to permit industrial uses to a maximum of 1.5 FSR.

4.1.5 Eliminate current unnecessary restrictions:
- Make industrial uses outright except for those that may raise compatibility concerns.
- Allow industrial space to be located anywhere in the building.

4.1.6 Ensure the design of new non-industrial development respects the existing industrial uses as much as possible (see policies 4.8.1.16 and 4.8.1.17).

4.1.7 Ensure the design and operation of new industrial development:
- can meet the acoustics standards of the "active" (industrial) category of the Noise Bylaw, and
- is compatible with residential uses and enhances pedestrian interest as much as
possible by requiring significant new development (i.e., above .75 FSR) to respond to guidelines (see policies in section 4.8.1).

4.1.8 Clarify in the guidelines that this will remain a working industrial and residential area, so that new residents and businesses have realistic expectations about noise and odours, to help reduce compatibility conflicts.

Other Ideas

4.1.9 Establish an informal neighbourhood improvement group that landowners, business operators and residents can use to communicate, organize area events, solve mutual problems and maximize mutual benefits. A Business Improvement Area (BIA) may evolve from this informal group to work toward enhancing the business opportunities in the area.

4.1.10 Investigate the use of plaques denoting that this is an industrial area.
4.2 Retail, Service and Office Uses - MC-1 Area

Goal
• Local-serving retail, services and offices should continue to be located in the area.

Facts
• “Retail” includes uses that sell or rent goods. “Service” includes a wide range of uses that offer services to the public, e.g., restaurants, business schools, repair shops, laundromats and barber shops; “Office” includes financial, institutional and health care offices, as well as general office space.

• MC-1 zoning permits retail uses up to 1,000 m² per development on Commercial Street, but not in the Stainsbury Triangle. Service and office uses are permitted up to 1.5 FSR on the first and second storeys anywhere in the zone. Non-residential (retail, service or industrial) uses are required at grade.

• Retail uses have gradually migrated out of the area and currently make up only about 1 percent of the non-residential floor space. Based on a retail study, the area is at a competitive disadvantage for attracting new retail and service uses (including restaurants) because of its proximity to well established retail areas on Kingsway and Commercial Drive. Thus, a maximum of two to three new retail and service stores could be expected to locate in the study area over the next several years. These would likely be destination and city-serving uses. There are also opportunities for manufacturing and wholesale uses to open related accessory retail outlets.

Policies

4.2.1 Increase the retail floorspace to a maximum of 1,300 m². Continue to allow service and office uses to a maximum 1.5 FSR, as now.

4.2.2 Permit retail uses in the Stainsbury Triangle.

4.2.3 Eliminate current unnecessary restrictions:
- Allow service and office uses to be located anywhere in the building.
- Make retail, service, and office uses outright except for those whose potential impacts necessitate conditional status.
- Ensure that zoning regulations do not prevent retail components of manufacturing businesses from occurring.

4.2.4 Continue to require non-residential (usually retail, service, office) uses on-street at grade throughout the MC-1 area, except allow all residential development on the north side of Stainsbury Avenue across from the single-family houses on the south side.

4.2.5 Require retail, service and office development to enhance pedestrian interest by requiring significant new developments (above .75 FSR) to meet guidelines (see section 4.8.1).

Other Ideas

4.2.6 Encourage owners of existing businesses to open retail components.
4.3 Residential Use

4.3.1 Residential Use - MC-1 Area

Goal
- Continue to allow housing to be located in the area with consideration for the viability of industrial uses.

Facts
- There were a total of 4,800 units of housing in the overall Cedar Cottage local area in 1990: 42 percent were single-family, 27 percent “up and down” duplex (including secondary suites), 24 percent apartment units and 6 percent rowhousing and side-by-side duplexes. The MC-1 area has approximately 60 dwelling units, primarily in apartment form.

- The current MC-1 zoning has the potential for about 480 additional housing units at 1.5 FSR. If the zoning were amended to allow residential units in the Stainsbury Triangle at 1.5 FSR, a further 215 units are possible for a total of 695. Based on the current MC-1 zoning, the housing types most likely to be built are one- and two-bedroom apartment units above commercial space.

- Analysis of current supply and future housing demand for the overall Cedar Cottage local area indicates that there is a need for affordable rental housing and ground-oriented housing for empty nesters and families with young children. These housing needs are apparent in other Vancouver neighbourhoods as well. Housing geared to lone-parent families is also needed, based on a higher percentage of lone-parent families in Cedar Cottage.

- Land value analysis of various mixed-use and all-residential projects has indicated that increasing the residential density would increase land values and negatively affect the viability of industrial uses.

Policies

4.3.1.1 Continue to permit residential uses up to a maximum of 1.5 FSR.

4.3.1.2 Permit residential use in the Stainsbury Triangle up to 1.5 FSR.

4.3.1.3 Permit all-residential developments on the north side of Stainsbury Avenue only.

4.3.1.4 Keep residential as a conditional use to ensure design which is livable, compatible with industrial uses, and enhances the pedestrian environment (see policies in section 4.8.1).

4.3.1.5 Incorporate some features of ground oriented housing in new multi-family housing:
- provide unit open space including courtyards, decks, patios or balconies and maximize the size of these spaces as far as possible;
- allow for courtyard schemes with individual unit access; and
- allow for large single-storey units, e.g., for seniors.
4.3.2 Residential Use - Welwyn Street Area

Goal
- Family suitable, ground-oriented residential should be located in this area.

Facts
- For housing needs in Cedar Cottage, see Section 4.3.1; for built form and character, see section 4.8.2.
- Currently the Welwyn Street sites are zoned RS-2. On the GVRD site, this would permit seven single-family homes (FSR .60). On the BC Tel site, a multi-family development with a maximum FSR of .75 could be built-likely with 30 to 35 units.
- BC Tel is likely to continue to occupy their site for the foreseeable future. However, development on the GVRD site would be a precedent for their site, should they decide to move.
- Housing options which have been explored for the Welwyn block are shown in the accompanying illustrations. They include various forms of low-density, ground-oriented housing as well as single-family.
- The City of Vancouver Housing Centre is interested in the GVRD site as an opportunity for a demonstration housing project, as called for in CityPlan. The Real Estate Division is currently pursuing purchase of the site. Such a project will require research, design, public review, and a rezoning process culminating in a formal Public Hearing at which City Council would decide whether or not to approve the rezoning. The process would take about a year. If a rezoning is not approved, the City would sell the site for single-family development.

Policies

4.3.2.1 Continue to pursue City purchase of the GVRD site. Instruct the Housing Centre to initiate a process to pursue a demonstration housing project on the site, including consultation as appropriate, leading to a rezoning application. Options A, B, or C, illustrated on p. 12, would all be appropriate.

4.3.2.2 If a courtyard rowhouse, pavilion or other form that involves underground parking is pursued, consider including workshop space at the rear to respond to the adjacent industrial uses.

4.3.2.3 If a rezoning for demonstration housing is not approved, rezoned the site RS-6S (i.e., a new single-family zone with design regulation and permitting secondary suites).

4.3.2.4 Maintain the RS-2 zoning on the BC Tel site for now. However, if the GVRD site is redeveloped, entertain an owner-initiated rezoning application for development of a similar use, density and form of development for these sites. Note that under any future rezoning, the development should front onto 22nd Avenue as a requirement. Front entries may also be included facing Welwyn Street, if desired.

4.3.2.5 Maintain the RS-2 zoning for the three sites at the south end of the block, fronting on East 22nd Avenue. However, if the GVRD site is rezoned, support an owner-initiated rezoning application for development of a similar use,
A) Traditional Rowhouses
-2 1/2 storey, front doors on street, parking at rear.
-14 units, 1.0-1.2 FSR

B) Courtyard Rowhouses
-2 1/2 storey, front doors on street, parking at rear.
-14 to 28 units, 1.0-1.2 FSR

C) "Pavilions"
-2 1/2 storey, front doors on street and in courtyard, underground parking
-14 to 35 units, 1.0-1.2 FSR

D) Single Family Houses
-2 1/2 storey, front doors on street, parking at rear
-7 units, 0.6 FSR
4.4 Residential Affordability

Goal
- Some affordable residential units should be kept, and/or new ones built.

Facts
- In 1995, the housing unit price range in the northeast sector of Vancouver was from $135,000 for new condominiums to $475,000 for new single-family. Existing single-family houses were priced between $270,000 to $320,000. Average monthly apartment rental rates ranged from $556 for a one-bedroom, to $844 for a three-bedroom.

- On a city-wide basis up to 40 percent of all condominium units are rented.

- It is estimated that up to 30 of the 60 existing units could be lost over the next 5 to 10 years as the MC-1 area redevelops.

- In 1991, 27 percent of the households of Kensington-Cedar Cottage spent more than 30 percent of the household income to rent suitable housing; these households are termed “core need”.

- There are several current affordable housing programs offered through BCHMC: Non-profit Housing - affordable homes for low and moderate income renters. Homeless/At-Risk Housing - self-contained housing for urban singles with social problems; New Options for Home Ownership - construction loans and partial mortgage guarantees to encourage non-profit housing groups to develop limited-equity housing; and, Public/Partnership Initiatives - CMHC grants and mortgage insurance to encourage public/private partnerships in housing. The City of Vancouver can offer assistance through land lease write-downs for non-market housing, housing agreements with developers to provide subsidized or rental units and a SHORT process for development approvals of non-market housing.

Policies

4.4.1 Allow additional residential space at grade in the rear up to 0.3 FSR (i.e. to a total residential component of 1.8 FSR), provided the additional space is non-market and/or guaranteed rental.

4.4.2 Beyond 4.4.1, consider site specific rezonings to increase the 1.5 FSR maximum residential component for affordable housing projects, provided that:
- there is a housing agreement with the City;
- any increase in the land value beyond the normal profit allowed in the City’s standard housing bonus process is converted into improved affordability;
- the uses at grade and the form of development conform to the policies, regulations, and guidelines.

4.4.3 Consider allocating a portion of DCLs to replacement housing.

4.4.4 For the Welwyn Street GVRD site, ensure that any increase in land value is recovered in increased affordability of units.

4.4.5 When the City works yard relocates, consider an affordable housing component for this site.

Other Ideas

4.4.6 Request the GVRD to consider an affordable housing component on their Commercial Street site.

4.4.7 Make potential affordable housing partners (such as churches, non-profit housing societies, artist groups and others) aware of the opportunities available in the MC-1 area.
4.5 Live/Work Use

Goal
• Live/work use should be accommodated in this area.

Facts
• There are an estimated 15 artists living and working in the MC-1 area in apartments and storefronts.

• MC-1 zoning permits living and working in the same unit as artist live/work studios (ALWS), and as a “homecraft”. Homecraft is restricted to no employees, no sales, and no noxious impacts. ALWS permit a wide range of visual arts, performance arts, creative writing, and crafts. Units are restricted to two residents, and only residents can work there. However, it is difficult to ensure that the artistic work activity continues over time, and these units may become primarily residential in nature.

• ALWS in industrial areas (including MC-1) are currently limited to rental tenure, in existing buildings, and to a maximum of 1.0 FSR. New condominium ALWS are not permitted.

• Where new condominium ALWS have been approved, they offer a different type of unit that has been marketed successfully. However, they have generally not been priced lower than normal condominiums.

• The City is currently reviewing where and under what circumstances other types of live/work will be permitted in the future.

Policies

4.5.1 Permit new strata-titled ALWS:
- up to 1.5 FSR (i.e. total combined ALWS and residential not to exceed 1.5 FSR).
- non-market and guaranteed rental ALWS to be considered for the same density increases as proposed in policy 4.4.1 for residential uses.

4.5.2 Permit ALWS on street at grade only where residential use is permitted at grade.

Other Ideas

4.5.3 Developers could consider alternate live/work arrangements featuring workshop space in the development, but separate from the individual units.
4.6 Community Services and Facilities

Goal
- New demands for community facilities and services (community centre, daycare, schools, etc.) should be met.

Facts
- The nature of anticipated development in the MC-1 area is not generally attractive for families with school-aged children. Overall, the school space demand arising from the new development in the area is expected to be modest. However, in other areas of Vancouver this housing form has attracted families with pre-school children (0-5 years). Therefore, the need for a larger number of daycare spaces is projected. Commercial and industrial space also contribute to daycare demand.

Daycare and School-Aged Childcare
- In the Cedar Cottage local area, there is currently a shortfall of 25 pre-school, 12 toddler and 12 infant spaces. DCLs can fund daycare (including land acquisition, building construction and equipment purchase) within a DCL area.
  - It is estimated that the new residential units in combination with the new commercial and industrial space in the MC-1 area would generate a need for between 20 and 30 additional childcare spaces in 25 years. The exact number would depend on the mix of uses and the outcome of land use decisions on Welwyn Street.

Public Schools
- The Vancouver School Board anticipates that the projected 10 to 15 school-aged children that would live in the area after the 25 year build-out period, could be accommodated in area schools.

Community Centre and other Facilities
- The Trout Lake Community Centre includes an ice rink, fitness centre, racquet courts, gymnasium and related facilities. Its last alteration occurred in 1977 and the community is seeking funds in the 1997 Capital Plan for expansion to increase the size of the multi-purpose space and upgrade the gym.
  - The Community Centre space demands from new population in the study area is estimated at a further 185 square metres at the 25-year build-out. DCLs cannot be spent on community centres.
  - The community has a long-standing desire to have an indoor swimming pool in Cedar Cottage. The Park Board position is that the indoor aquatic needs of Cedar Cottage are met by Renfrew, Britannia Templeton and Kensington pools.
  - The Cedar Cottage Neighbourhood House offers a wide range of neighbourhood services such as childcare, youth programs, ESL and families at risk. It is at capacity and currently looking at options to deal with the physical limitations of its facility.
  - In general, the Vancouver Public Library considers the area well served by libraries with the Kensington storefront, the new Renfrew library and Britannia all within 3 km of the MC-1 area.
Policies

4.6.1 Consider allocating DCLs for daycare needs arising from the increased population in the study area.

4.6.2 Consider future Capital Plans for Community Centre needs.

4.6.3 Improve convenience and safety of access to community facilities, schools, and parks through pursuing related policies (see policies under Section 4.9).

Other Ideas

4.6.4 Plan for the needs of different cultural/language groups as far as possible in the provision of facilities and services.

4.6.5 Review the possible use of schools as locations to expand community centre and neighbourhood house activities by requesting discussions occur between the Park Board, School Board and Neighbourhood House executive.

4.6.6 Request any amenity space excluded from FSR to be available for community use.
4.7 Parks and Open Space

Goal
• Public open space/park should be provided in sufficient size and type to enhance overall area amenity.

Facts
• Cedar Cottage has 2.5 ha (6.3 ac.) of park per 1,000 people which is well in excess of the Park Board standard of 1.1 ha (2.75 ac.) of park per 1,000 people. The area is within two blocks of John Hendry Park (both a neighbourhood and city-wide park) and Clark Park, the two largest parks in Cedar Cottage. The addition of 1,000 new residents in the study area will not reduce park service significantly.

• Opportunities for smaller casual public spaces could occur during streetscape improvements and redevelopment of sites in the area.

• While DCLs may legally be spent on acquisition of land for park space and on park development, they are not needed for this purpose.

Policies
4.7.1 Provide small open spaces suitable for casual socializing as part of proposed local street improvements, or by negotiating the use of portions of large development sites.

Other Ideas
4.7.2 Request the Park Board to work with area residents to address park and open space issues in the broader neighbourhood, assess what open space activities are not being met now, and work toward developing opportunities for better utilization of existing space in the neighbourhood (e.g., in parks, school grounds, etc.).

4.7.3 Explore other ideas for providing green space and interesting public space such as planted traffic circles, using local art as an open space focus or to enhance appearance of traffic management measures, checker/chess boards in passive park areas and community gardens.
4.8 Built-Form and Character

4.8.1 MC-1 Area

Goals
- Generally, buildings should not exceed the currently allowed 4 storeys and 2.5 FSR overall maximum.
- The physical character ("sense of place") should be enhanced.
- The form and design of development should assist with compatibility and livability of the mix of uses within the area, and between the area and its surroundings.

Facts
- Buildings along Commercial Street are diverse in use, style, materials and colours. However, they also have important patterns of similarity in form, scale and massing. The street facades are located at the front property line, without setback, and range from 7.6m. to 9m. (25-30 ft.) in height. Any higher portions are set back. The buildings are on parcels between 10m. and 20m. (33 and 66 ft.) wide. Only 7 of 39 ownerships along the street are larger.

- A number of older buildings remain. They tend to have very simple massing, but maintain a pedestrian-friendly character in a number of ways. The buildings are broken down into a rhythm of smaller bays (~5m.). There are large windows at the ground level. Even when the windows have been screened on the inside, the pedestrian interest is more than with solid blank walls. Substantial window mullions and trim add to interest. Insert front doors and windows allow pedestrians to move out of the flow.

- Among the more recent buildings, some have successfully maintained the scale and some of the pedestrian interest of the older examples, even when industrial in use. Others have extensive areas of blank wall, some with parking and/or access located in the front.

- Buildings in the Stainsbury Triangle (fronting on the Victoria Diversion and Stainsbury Avenue) are generally one- to two-storey, and nondescript. They tend to be large frontages designed with little pedestrian interest. A number have parking located in front.

Policies

Form, Scale and Siting

4.8.1.1 Maintain the current 4-storey height limit, but permit small increases [from 12.2 m (40 ft.) to 13.8 m (45 ft.)] to allow for noncombustible construction, roof design features, and response to sloped sites.

4.8.1.2 Maintain the current overall 2.5 FSR maximum, with limits for separate uses as set out in the policies on uses.
4.8.1.3 Design the 4th floor to visually recede to that compatibility with the prevailing scale of the street is maintained. Examples of how to achieve this are:
- emphasis on 3rd floor cornice;
- change to lighter, more transparent material or expression, and/or
- setback of 4th floor facade from main facade plane.

4.8.1.4 Design the building in a rhythm of bays to relate to the traditional scale of buildings (e.g., a typical 20.1m [66 ft.] wide building has 4 bays.) At ground level, the bays should be designed so that they can be infilled with different treatments, depending on the use.

4.8.1.5 On sites with larger frontages (e.g., more than 30.2m [99 ft.]), in addition to the rhythm of bays noted above, express the development as a series of smaller buildings. This can be done through articulation, colour, and/or massing change.

4.8.1.6 Generally, place buildings at the front property line. Within this framework, parts of the store frontages, doors etc. can be inset. Modest front setbacks may be appropriate where bay windows are to be located on upper storeys, or where residential use is being located at grade and space for steps or patio is desired. Setbacks should be configured and sized to achieve transition to neighbouring building faces.

4.8.1.7 Do not require a rear setback at the first level. An exception would be when this level contains uses that have window exposure to the lane, in which case a modest setback should be provided to create a transition, allow entries, landscaping, etc. Provide a minimum 4.6m (15 ft.) setback on the 2nd level and 3 floors, and minimum 6.1m (20 ft.) on the 4th floor to achieve better relationship to development across the lane.
Character and Pedestrian Interest

4.8.1.8 Within the framework of the above guidelines on form, scale, and siting, encourage diversity in building expression, materials, and colours.

4.8.1.9 Encourage development at some key locations to respond to specific opportunities:

(a) on the southeast corner of Commercial Street and Victoria Diversion, some form of landmark or focal element to “announce” the presence of the area to passers-by; and

(b) on the four corners of the Commercial and 20th/Stainsbury crossroads, development should take advantage of the planned “parkettes” (see Section 4.9) through window location, outdoor seating, etc.

4.8.1.10 Design buildings with “permeability” at grade to enhance pedestrian interest:

(a) Primary pedestrian entries to all uses should be from the street. Where residential uses is located at grade, individual unit entrances at grade are an option, but not a requirement.

(b) For retail, service or office uses:
- maximize transparency through high transom, low sill window designs as well as openable windows where appropriate; and
- design so that space can be leased to retail in future, even if current tenants are service or office.

(c) For industrial uses:
- allow transparency to view industrial processes where possible, and
- where transparency cannot be used for pedestrian interest, use other means such as expressed vertical elements, vines, murals, detailing, etc. Avoid long stretches of blank wall.

(d) For residential uses, where located at grade:
- design the entries, front setbacks, and windows to achieve pedestrian interest, unit identity, as well as needed privacy and territorial definition.

4.8.1.11 Provide canopies or awnings where appropriate to the use, i.e., over main entries, residential unit entries, and retail frontages. Using a uniform canopy or awning design across the entire length of a large building is inappropriate to the diversity desired: tenants should be able to vary it to suit themselves.
Where provided, canopies or awnings should be deep enough and close enough to the ground to provide shelter.

4.8.1.12 Canopies or awnings need not be provided for service, office, or industrial uses. However, the building design should anticipate and provide a location for a future canopy or awning.

4.8.1.13 Encourage the use of vines to soften blank building walls throughout the area.

4.8.1.14 Do not locate parking and loading spaces in front of new buildings. Access to parking and loading should be from the lane rather than the street (except for Porter Street, which is the only secondary access for some sites on Commercial Street).

4.8.1.15 Treat vehicle entrances, parking ramps, service areas and garbage areas to minimize impacts on neighbours through enclosure, screening, good quality finishes, sensitive lighting, and landscaping.

Livability and Compatibility

4.8.1.16 Use screening, landscaping, window placement, and setbacks to ensure new residential development adapts to existing industrial uses.

4.8.1.17 Ensure new residential development meets acoustic standards, noting that the MC-1 area is in the “Active” category of the Noise By-law, and businesses in the area are permitted to generate noise appropriate to an industrial area.

4.8.1.18 In addition to the policies noted above, use normal City livability standards for residential in mixed-use developments, such as:

- light and ventilation, e.g., courtyard standards and angles of daylight;
- privacy, e.g., orientation of windows and balconies;
- safety and security, e.g., territorial definition, separate entrance for residential and non-residential use, surveillance opportunities;
- circulation, e.g., adequate corridor width, elevating; and
- open space, e.g., balcony, deck or patio for each unit.
4.8.2 Welwyn Street

Goals
- Generally, buildings should be ground-oriented residential, a maximum of 2½ storeys (plus basement), and within a range of 0.6 to 1.2 FSR.
- Development on these sites should consider their context, and provide a sensitive transition between the MC-1 and RS-2 areas.

Facts
- For discussion of the forms of residential development under consideration, see Section 4.3.2.
- The Welwyn block faces the rear of single-family houses located on Maxwell Street, with their garages and driveways. The 3400/3500 block Welwyn, to the north, is a conventional single-family block, with houses facing Welwyn on both sides.
- The architectural style of houses in the area is varied. There are some Craftsman style houses remaining from before 1920, some in close to original condition and others heavily altered. They are mixed with a considerable number of later houses, including different versions of “Vancouver Specials” from decades since World War II.
- There is a significant slope from the Maxwell Street east to Welwyn and then to Commercial. Many of the houses on Maxwell have views from their second storey eastward over the current Commercial Street development. However, the four-storey development permitted on Commercial will obstruct at least the lower levels of that view:
  - On the GVRD site, there is about a one-storey drop from Welwyn to the lane.

Policies

4.8.2.1 Incorporate landscaped front yards, individual unit entries, front porches, and other traditional features of single-family houses.

4.8.2.2 Break the development down, visually or physically, into smaller “house size” segments.

4.8.2.3 Explore various ways of limiting impacts from commercial/industrial uses on Commercial Street for Welwyn residential uses, e.g., garages and back yards; tucking the parking level and workshop space into the slope; reducing the front yard to move dwellings closer to Welwyn Street.

4.8.2.4 Generally pursue traditional architectural style (pitched roofs, wood trim around window, bay windows, dormers). Incorporate diversity in the architectural treatment, rather than making all the dwelling units uniform in appearance.

4.8.2.5 Locate vehicle access from the lane.

Other Ideas

4.8.2.6 Investigate mural art for BC Tel's blank wall.
4.9 Movement and Streetscape

Goals
- Pedestrians and cyclists should enjoy greater safety, comfort and interest. While adequate vehicle access should be provided, speeding and shortcutting should be discouraged.
- The physical character (“sense of place”) should be enhanced.

Facts
- The City has a policy to consider the needs of pedestrians, bicycles and transit ahead of the automobile in making transportation decisions.

Pedestrian and Vehicular Movement
- For residents in the area and west of it, the most direct pedestrian routes to John Hendry Park cross the Victoria Diversion at 18th Avenue and Commercial Street.

- There are vehicle and pedestrian safety concerns at three intersections due to speed and marginal sight lines: Commercial Street and 18th Avenue/Victoria Diversion, Commercial/20th Avenue and Commercial/22nd Avenue. The 24-hour volumes on 18th and 20th Avenues are slightly higher than is typical for local streets at 1100 and 1200 vehicles per day (vpd). The 24-hour volume on 22nd Avenue is 2700 vpd, which means it is functioning as a collector street. However, a license plate trace found almost all traffic on 22nd Avenue is locally generated by people living, working or doing business within the area.

- Future development in the area will add to traffic volumes and will likely require a pedestrian signal at the intersection of Commercial/18th and the Diversion and, over time, upgrading of the pedestrian signal at Victoria Drive and 22nd Avenue to operate as a vehicle-actuated signal.

Streetscape and Pedestrian Environment
- The study area and vicinity lacks continuous sidewalks and adequate lighting. Some streets in the area have no trees or curbs.

- Commercial Street has mature Little Leaf Lindens (Tilia euchlora) planted during the 1970s Neighbourhood Improvement Program. They are healthy, but have heaved the sidewalk. In some areas, sidewalk drainage backs up into some buildings.

- The northerly block of Commercial Street has wide (approximately 4.0 m) sidewalks; and the southerly block has narrower sidewalks with landscaped boulevards.

- 3600/3700 block Welwyn street has a wider than normal residential curb-to-curb width (11.0 m), and no sidewalk. Houses on Maxwell Street have their driveways and garages backing onto the west side of Welwyn street. The curbing of the street was done in 1983 under a local improvement, with the Maxwell and Welwyn Street land owners paying a portion of the costs.

- The pedestrian environment on the Victoria Diversion suffers from heavy, fast traffic, lack of building enclosure, and the impacts of the elevated Skytrain guideway.

Policies

4.9.1 Give priority to the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and persons with physical disabilities when designing intersection improvements.
4.9.2 Save the existing Linden trees on Commercial Street. Pursue a combination of root pruning, root barriers, and creation of green areas around the base of the trees to improve their health and redirect root growth.

4.9.3 Develop a streetscape improvement plan for Commercial Street. Include rebuilding the sidewalks, appropriate landscaping and seating; bike racks and special treatment at the key places (intersections with Victoria Diversion, 20th/Stainsbury, and 22nd) (see policy 4.9.5). Recognize the eccentric, eclectic, somewhat rough-hewn quality of the area in the streetscape design. Incorporate locally-produced art, artifacts, or products where possible.

4.9.4 Improve lighting for pedestrians on Commercial Street: ideas include lighting building faces, lower level lights (i.e., under tree canopy) added to existing poles.

4.9.5 Implement the following intersection improvements after consultation with area owners, business operators and residents about impacts on access and safety concerns.- improve the intersection at Commercial Street and Victoria Diversion, by altering the alignment of Commercial Street to meet the Diversion at approximately a right angle. As a separate improvement, provide a pedestrian-activated crossing signal.
- Modify the intersection of Stansbury Avenue and Commercial Street so that Stansbury meets Commercial Street at a right angle, and the alignment with 20th Avenue becomes more offset.
- add corner bulges on the northeast and northwest corners of 22nd Avenue and Commercial Street to reduce traffic speed and make the school crossing safer.

4.9.6 In addition to these intersection improvements, review the feasibility of mid-block pedestrian connections on Commercial Street to increase pedestrian convenient and further "calm" traffic.

4.9.7 Consider a symbolic name change for Commercial Street to its historical name "Cedar Cottage Road" (The official legal street name would remain Commercial Street.)
Other Street and Lanes

4.9.8 Pursue curbing and trees along currently unfinished portions of streets: 18th, 20th, Stainsbury. Incorporate more diversity in tree type, including flowering trees, where opportunities exist throughout the area.

4.9.9 Improve the Victoria Diversion through planting trees of sufficient scale to reduce the sense of openness, and consider keeping curbside parking during rush hours to encourage traffic to slow down.

4.9.10 Improve Welwyn Street through introduction of sidewalks, trees and landscaping on the east side, in conjunction with redevelopment there. Consider moving the east curb to provide more pedestrian space.

4.9.11 Review the condition of lanes in the area. Determine which ones have adequate width and could be paved, and which ones should receive better maintenance (i.e., patching).

4.9.12 Review the feasibility of creating a “mews” behind the Victoria Diversion by widening the existing lane to allow pedestrian and vehicular access and street addresses. This may also require widening of the lane at the southern end of Porter Street.

4.9.13 Continue working with area residents on unresolved traffic management issues. Monitor traffic impacts as the area redevelops, and determine, in consultation with the community, what traffic management measures are appropriate to reinforce the intended roles of the streets.

4.9.14 As part of the detailed design and building form review for the Welwyn Street GVRD site, consider the feasibility of creating a pedestrian route/greenway through the BC Tel and GVRD site, providing a safe and secure connection from 21st Avenue to Commercial Street.

4.9.15 Consider various funding mechanisms including Capital Plan, Local Improvement initiatives and DCLs, to pay for tree and sidewalk restoration and other streetscape improvements.
Other Ideas

4.9.16 Request local artists to work with owners and the Cultural Affairs Office to explore ways to display their work in the area (display window, wall murals). Explore the use of vacant spaces as temporary gallery spaces and engage the Commercial Street artist community in street, “gallery” displays, etc., to help increase street activity.

4.9.17 Explore the use of vacant sites as locations for weekend art or antique sales and displays, farmer’s market, etc., as interim uses.

4.9.18 Revive the Commercial Street art fair, or organize a street festival, possibly as part of the Illuminares Lantern Festival and offer area tours.

4.9.19 In conjunction with lane improvements, request businesses to use the lanes for service deliveries, rather than Commercial Street.

4.9.20 Encourage the Cedar Cottage neighbourhood to initiate a local greenway linking the area to John Hendry and MacInnis Park.

4.9.21 Establish a “Block Watch” program to facilitate mutual awareness of safety and security issues and co-operation between businesses and residents in the area. As part of this program additional traffic enforcement should be requested where warranted.

4.9.22 Investigate improving the appearance of the skytrain guideway through landscaping, murals, or other public art. Consider whether development of inexpensive workshop space is feasible under the guideway.

4.9.23 Encourage local resources, (e.g., artists, ironworks, other manufacturers, Lord Selkirk children) to become involved in the Streetscape Plan, with activities that capture the area’s unique blend of history and current working industrial character.

4.9.24 Improve bus stops by requesting City Engineering to add shelters, benches and garbage receptacles where required.

4.9.25 Provide bike racks on Commercial Street through the City cost-shared bike rack program.
4.10 Parking

Goal
• Parking should be adequate to provide for residents, workers, customers and visitors.

Facts
• The shortage of on-street parking is primarily a daytime problem. There are portions of Commercial Street where time-limited parking regulations are in effect during the day.

• Many of the buildings pre-date current parking standards and contribute to the shortage of one-street spaces. New uses in these buildings cannot meet parking requirements yet are often desirable because they add to activity and employment in the area. Existing buildings which are changing uses can be allowed parking relaxations of two spaces.

Policies
4.10.1 Conduct a parking review to assess the use of on-street parking and other area parking issues and make suggestions for revised parking regulations or other solutions. Involve the landowners, business owners and residents in this review and the generation of solutions.

4.10.2 Ensure there is adequate off-street parking in new developments by requiring provision of parking and loading in accordance with bylaw standards.

4.10.3 As part of the parking review in 4.10.1., consider permitting parking relaxation beyond the two spaces allowed currently for existing buildings changing uses.

Other Ideas
4.10.4 Encourage area businesses to promote employee trip reduction to help the on-street parking problem. This would most likely include organized car-pooling among local businesses, but could also include programs such as priority parking for carpoolers, flexible work hours, etc.

4.10.5 Encourage area businesses to implement shared off-street parking for visitors and/or employees.