COUNCIL REPORT

Executive Committee

Report No. PDS 020-2018

Date: February 13, 2018
File No: 6430-20

To: Mayor and Council
From: Ryan Beaudry, Planner
Subject: Urban Infill Study - Stage 1 Summary

RECOMMENDATION

1. THAT Council receive the Urban Infill Study Stage 1 findings for information; and

2. THAT Council direct staff to proceed with the preparation of Stage 2 concepts and options, including community engagement.

REPORT CONCURRENCE

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<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Manager</td>
<td>City Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The General Manager concurs with the recommendation of this report.</td>
<td>The City Manager concurs with the recommendation of this report.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

PURPOSE

Stage 1 of the Urban Infill Study is complete and staff are seeking direction from Council to proceed to Stage 2. This report describes the Urban Infill Study process and summarizes Stage 1 results.

SUMMARY OF THE ISSUE

Staff have completed Stage 1 of a three-stage Urban Infill Study. The purpose of the study is to clarify the City’s objectives and intent for the Urban 3-Infill land use designation in the Official Community Plan (OCP), which applies to approximately 5,600 lots in existing neighbourhoods surrounding Abbotsford’s urban core. The OCP provides general direction for redevelopment within this land use, however more detailed zoning regulations and guidelines are needed to provide clarity.

Stage 1 of the Urban Infill Study was completed between November 2017 and January 2018 and consisted of data collection and analysis of existing conditions. Key findings from Stage 1 are included in this report and Stages 2 and 3 will follow this report at Council’s direction.

The Urban Infill Study is scheduled to be complete by July 2018. If Council directs staff to
proceed to Stage 2, immediate tasks will include preparation of concepts and options, testing of options, and community engagement.

BACKGROUND

The Urban Infill Study is based on earlier work completed as part of the 2016 Official Community Plan. It stems from the OCP urban structure map, Urban 3–Infill land use designation and associated policies (see Attachment A).

OCP Urban Structure

The OCP establishes a framework for growth management, called an ‘urban structure’, which is based on a hierarchy of mixed-use centres connected by transit and surrounded by urban and infill areas. Infill areas are defined in the OCP as:

existing neighbourhoods, which will retain their character while increasing residential density through gentle infill of primarily ground oriented single detached and duplex buildings, as well as accessory units such as secondary suites and detached units.

OCP Urban 3 – Infill Land Use Designation

The OCP contains a land use called Urban 3-Infill, which is intended to enable infill development in existing neighbourhoods in the form of single detached dwellings, ground-oriented duplexes and accessory units.

OCP Housing Policies

OCP Policy 2.1 promotes housing diversity and choice and supports infill opportunities within the Urban 3-Infill land use designation through single lot redevelopment, subject to criteria in the infill guidelines. The infill guidelines provide direction for land use regulation and rezoning applications, including minimum lot size, maximum density and number of accessory units.

OCP Policy 2.2 promotes housing affordability and supports mixed housing options, including small single detached dwellings:

Support mixed affordable housing options such as small homes and accessory units including secondary suites and detached units where appropriate, which can serve as mortgage helpers for owners while providing affordable options for renters or extended family members.

Council Request for Interim Approach

On January 8, 2018, in response to infill developments proposed in advance of completion of the Urban Infill Study, Council passed a resolution to defer rezoning applications until staff bring forward interim options on February 19, 2018. A separate staff report, PDS 021-2018, summarizes this issue and provides interim options and recommendations for Council’s consideration.
DISCUSSION

Urban Infill Study

Building on the OCP, Stage 1 of the Urban Infill Study analyzed approximately 5,600 lots in the Urban 3-Infill land use designation. This work was intended to ensure that options prepared in Stage 2, and zoning regulations and guidelines prepared in Stage 3, are context-specific, responding to existing conditions and issues in existing neighbourhoods. This work is timely as property owners have recently demonstrated significant interest in infill development, including rebuilds, subdivision of large lots into smaller lots, and the addition of accessory units.

The Urban Infill Study commenced November 2017 and is scheduled for completion by July 2018. The planning process consists of three stages of work, detailed below:

Stage 1 (Background): November 2017 to February 2018
Stage 1 included data collection, analysis of existing conditions within the study area (approximately 5,600 lots), and compilation of a summary package (see Attachments B-E).

Stage 2 (Options): February to April 2018
With Council’s direction, Stage 2 will begin in late-February and include preparing and testing options, and community engagement. Preferred options will be presented to Council at the conclusion of Stage 2.

Stage 3 (Regulations): April to July 2018
Stage 3 is scheduled to begin in April and include preparing infill zoning regulations and guidelines. Regulations could address issues such as lot size and width, house size and height, parking, density, setbacks and other aspects of infill development.

Stage 1 Summary

Data Collection
Stage 1 began with background research for the study area, focusing on approximately 5,600 lots within the Urban 3-Infill land use designation. The location of the study area is shown in Attachment B and the data included:

- Lot widths and areas
- House size and age
- Assessed values (land, buildings and ratio of land value to building value)
- Accessory dwellings
- Location of infrastructure servicing (water, sewer, drainage)
- Street character
- Zoning
Analysis

Using the data listed above, staff conducted an analysis of the study area. The 5,600 lots were first reviewed in aggregate and later separated into groups for further analysis. Staff identified four broad categories based on general characteristics. Maps and representative photos showing the extent and character of the four areas are included in Attachment C. The four categories represent a snapshot of neighbourhood character in late-2017 and include:

1. areas that were built in the 1970s-80s and are relatively stable, with minimal infill occurring (43% of study area)
2. areas that were built in the 1950s-60s and are in transition, with a mix of rebuilds and renovations occurring (35% of study area)
3. areas that were built in the 1960s-70s and are redeveloping, predominantly through rebuilds (18% of study area)
4. areas that contain existing narrow lots (approximately 12m wide) and houses built in the 1970s-80s (4% of study area)

Key Findings

Overall, the neighbourhoods in the study area are changing. None of the existing neighbourhoods designated Urban 3-Infill in the OCP are completely static and all of the neighbourhoods are experiencing some redevelopment. However, the degree of change varies across the study area and can be attributed to a combination of factors, described below and summarized in Attachments D and E.

1. Large lots

The study area consists predominantly of large lots, many of which have potential for construction of large new houses using existing zoning, or subdivision to multiple smaller lots if rezoned. A conventional new single detached lot in Abbotsford is approximately 500 m² (5,400 ft²) or smaller, while 98% of study area lots are larger than this size. For example, 35% of study area lots are 800-950 m² (8,600-10,200 ft²) or larger.

The incidence of the largest lots (greater than 800 m²) varies across the study area with some neighbourhoods, such as those immediately east of Historic Downtown, having a much higher proportion of large lots than others.

2. Wide lots

The study area contains a significant proportion of wide lots that have potential for subdivision to multiple smaller lots if rezoned. A conventional new single detached lot in Abbotsford is approximately 12-13 metres (39-43 feet) wide, while over 50% of study area lots have widths of 20-22 metres (66-72 feet) or more. About 25% of study area lots have widths greater than 24 metres.
3. **Smaller homes**

Compared to the average size of new houses built in the study area in the last decade (4,000 ft²), the study area contains relatively small houses. Over 75% of existing houses in the study area are 3,000 ft² or smaller, and 25% of existing houses are smaller than 2,000 ft². For comparison, the average of the ten largest houses built in the last decade in the study area is 6,500 ft².

4. **Older homes**

Over 75% of houses in the study area are more than 40 years old, and about 33% of houses are more than 50 years old. Housing vintage varies across the study area, with a greater concentration of older homes in neighbourhoods such as Alexander, where approximately 75% of houses are more than 50 years old.

5. **Land value**

Land value that is high relative to building value can be an indicator of infill potential. In 2017, the average property in the study area was assessed at approximately $570,000, consisting of 78% land value ($443,000) and 22% building value ($128,000). These numbers represent a land to building ratio of approximately 3.5x, compared to a ratio of 1.0 that is typical for new homes on conventional-sized lots. Some neighbourhoods within the study area have relatively high ratios, such as Alexander, where over 50% of properties have ratios of 6.0 and higher. In comparison, the neighbourhoods west and north of Clearbrook have almost no properties with ratios higher than 6.0, suggesting greater stability.

**Summary**

Given the large and wide lots, relatively small and older houses, and high land values within the study area, there is potential for these neighbourhoods to continue to see change. Although change is happening across the infill area, the findings show that neighbourhoods exhibit unique local conditions, which influence the rate and type of change. Additional work in Stages 2 and 3 of the Urban Infill Study will inform zoning regulations and guidelines that the City could use to influence and guide this change.

**Next Steps**

If Council directs staff to proceed to Stage 2, immediate tasks will include preparing and testing options, and community engagement. The refinement of preferred options into zoning regulations and guidelines would follow in Stage 3. Regulations could address issues such as lot size and width, house size and height, parking, density, setbacks and other aspects of infill development. The Urban Infill Study is scheduled to be complete by July 2018.

**FINANCIAL PLAN IMPLICATION**

Staff do not anticipate financial plan implications as the work will be completed with existing staff resources.

**Rajat Sharma**

Rajat Sharma  
General Manager, Finance and Corporate Services  
Signed 2/8/2018 6:35 PM
IMPACTS ON COUNCIL POLICIES, STRATEGIC PLAN AND/OR COUNCIL DIRECTION

The Urban Infill Study is based on earlier work completed as part of the 2016 Official Community Plan. It stems from the OCP urban structure map, Urban 3-Infill land use designation and associated policies (see Attachment A).

Council’s 2015-2018 Strategic Plan identifies four cornerstones: vibrant economy, complete community, fiscal discipline and organizational alignment. The Urban Infill Study is consistent with the complete community cornerstone, as it supports housing diversity, choice and affordability within the Urban 3-Infill land use designation.

SUBSTANTIATION OF RECOMMENDATION

The Urban Infill Study is intended to clarify the City’s objectives and intent for the Urban 3-Infill land use designation in the 2016 Official Community Plan. This work will advance and implement the current OCP direction and guidelines for infill development.

Ryan Beaudry
Ryan Beaudry
Planner
Signed 2/8/2018 10:37 AM

Mark Neill
Mark Neill
Director, Community Planning
Signed 2/8/2018 2:54 PM

Siri Bertelsen
Siri Bertelsen
General Manager, Planning and Development Services
Signed 2/9/2018 10:09 AM

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment A - OCP Context
Attachment B - Study Area
Attachment C - Neighbourhood Overview (2)
Attachment D - Key Findings
Attachment E - Stage 1 Summary
ATTACHMENT A

OCP CONTEXT

• Urban structure

• Urban 3-Infill land use designation

• Infill guidelines

• Housing policies 2.1 and 2.2

• Land use map
Urban Structure

Land use and growth management are among the most powerful policy tools at the disposal of local governments to direct growth and shape development. As such, land use and growth management policies are integral to achieving a community’s vision and goals. The policies in this section are designed to help bring the Big Ideas to life.

The overall structure for the urban area is defined by a hierarchy of mixed use centres, anchored by ground oriented multifamily; low, mid, and high rise housing; and connected by the primary transit corridor that intensifies over time, as shown in Figure II.1.

**Figure II.1: Urban Structure**

Infill Areas

These are existing neighbourhoods, which will retain their character while increasing residential density through gentle infill of primarily ground oriented single detached and duplex buildings, as well as accessory units such as secondary suites and detached units.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Purpose and Description</th>
<th>Building Type and Height</th>
<th>Uses</th>
<th>Density (min and max)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban 3 – Infill</td>
<td>• Enable infill residential with density increases near City and Urban Centres and the Primary Transit Corridor in Figure II.1</td>
<td>Single detached dwellings, with some ground oriented duplexes and large sites (1 ha or greater) may incorporate ground oriented buildings up to 3 storeys</td>
<td>Residential with accessory units</td>
<td>refer to “infill guidelines” following this table</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Infill Guidelines

Within the ‘Urban 3 – Infill’ land use designation, infill redevelopment is supported based on the following minimum lot areas. The same criteria provided above for accessory units also apply in the ‘Urban 3 – Infill’ designation.

*Table II.2: Urban 3 – Infill density*

**SINGLE DETACHED**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illustration</th>
<th>Minimum lot area</th>
<th>Accessory unit</th>
<th>FSR guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>600m²</td>
<td>2 additional units: secondary suite (1 or 2) <strong>AND</strong> detached suite (1 only, 55m² maximum)</td>
<td>0.45 (not including the detached unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>400m² (300m² with 9m minimum frontage when lane access)</td>
<td>1 additional unit: secondary suite <strong>OR</strong> detached unit (55m² maximum)</td>
<td>0.55 (not including the detached unit)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image3" alt="Image" /></td>
<td>200m²</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>0.65</td>
</tr>
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</table>
## DUPLEX

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Minimum lot area</th>
<th>Accessory unit</th>
<th>FSR guide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 attached units on 1 lot</td>
<td>800m²</td>
<td>1 additional unit per attached unit: secondary suite</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 attached units on 1 lot</td>
<td>400m²</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 attached units on 2 lots</td>
<td>200m²</td>
<td>no</td>
<td>0.65</td>
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</table>
Policies

The policies in this Chapter apply across the city and Neighbourhood Plans for particular areas of the city will consider them in more detail. In addition, some neighbourhoods already have specific character and policies for those areas are included below. Additional policies relating to the City Centre are in Chapter 1.

HOUSING

2.1 Housing Diversity
Support diverse housing types for a variety of household sizes, incomes, tenures, and preferences, ranging from single detached homes and townhomes, to low, mid, and high rise residences, and distribute them across the city. Specific policies in this Plan include:

- Secondary suites in all single detached dwellings, subject to the criteria listed in Part II of this Plan.
- Infill opportunities through single lot redevelopment, subject to the criteria listed in Part II of this Plan.

2.2 Housing Affordability
Support mixed affordable housing options such as small homes and accessory units including secondary suites and detached units where appropriate, which can serve as mortgage helpers for owners while providing affordable options for renters or extended family members.
STUDY AREA

- Urban-3 Infill land use designation (approximately 5,600 lots)
Neighbourhood Character Overview

~5,600 lots reviewed based on:

- Lot size & width
- House size & age
- Street character
- Assessed value
- Infrastructure servicing
- Other attributes
Neighbourhood Character Overview

- Relatively stable
- Minimal infill occurring
- 1970s - 1980s

~2,375 lots (43% of study area)
Neighbourhood Character Overview

- Transitioning
- Mix of rebuilds and renovations
- 1950s - 1960s

~1,950 lots (35% of study area)
Neighbourhood Character Overview

- Redeveloping
- Predominantly rebuilds
- 1960s - 1970s

~1,025 lots (18% of study area)
Neighbourhood Character Overview

- Existing narrow lots (~12m)
- 1 and 2 storey homes
- 1970s - 1980s

~225 lots (4% of study area)

- Oriole Crescent
- Century Crescent
- Shore Crescent
NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER KEY FINDINGS
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

Large lots

Conventional new single detached lot

Number of lots

Area (m²)

<500  0%
500-650  2%
650-800  37%
800-950  18%
950-1200  12%
1200-1700  4%
>1700  1%

nearly all lots

13,000 ft²
10,200 ft²
8,600 ft²
7,000 ft²
Neighbourhood Comparison

Lot size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (m²)</th>
<th>Number of houses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-650</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
<td>30.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650-800</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
<td>48.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>800-950</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>950-1200</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1200-1700</td>
<td>1.8%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;1700</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area (m²)</th>
<th>Number of houses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;500</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500-650</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>650-800</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>800-950</td>
<td>22.1%</td>
<td>24.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>950-1200</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
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<td>1200-1700</td>
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<td>1.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>&gt;1700</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

- Large lots
- Wide lots

### Conventional new single detached lot

- Over half of lots
  - 40%: 66 ft
  - 27%: 72.5 ft
  - 10%: 79 ft
  - 23%: >24 ft

### Number of lots by width (m)

- <20: 2000
- 20-22: 1750
- 22-24: 1500
- >24: 1000

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Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

- Large lots
- Wide lots

### Conventional new single detached lot

- Over half of lots
  - 40%: 66 ft
  - 27%: 72.5 ft
  - 10%: 79 ft
  - 23%: >24 ft

### Number of lots by width (m)

- <20: 2000
- 20-22: 1750
- 22-24: 1500
- >24: 1000
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

- Large lots
- Wide lots
- Smaller homes

Over 3/4 of houses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size (ft²)</th>
<th>Number of houses</th>
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<td>&lt;1,000</td>
<td>1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1,000-2,000</td>
<td>23%</td>
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<td>2,000-3,000</td>
<td>61%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3,000-4,000</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>4,000-5,000</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;5,000</td>
<td>2%</td>
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Avg. new house (since 2010)

Avg. of 10 largest
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

Large lots
+ Wide lots
+ Smaller homes
+ Older homes

Over 3/4 of houses

Number of houses

Age of houses (years old)

3% 7% 21% 48% 9% 3% 4% 4%

<10 10-20 30-40 3000 2000 1500 1000 500 0

>70 60-70 50-60 40-50
Neighbourhood Comparison

Housing vintage

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<td>40.0%</td>
<td>3.7%</td>
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<td>10.2%</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

Large lots
+ Wide lots
+ Smaller homes
+ Older homes
+ High land value

Ratio of average land to building ~3.5x

Assessed Value

Land
$443,306

Building
$127,544

Total
$570,849

Neighbourhood
Character
Key Findings

Large lots
+ Wide lots
+ Smaller homes
+ Older homes
+ High land value
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

- Large lots
- Wide lots
- Smaller homes
- Older homes
- High land value

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<td>4-6</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>12%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td>4%</td>
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</table>
Neighbourhood Comparison

Assessed values

<table>
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<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Number of houses</th>
<th>Assessed values</th>
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<td>0-2</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>61.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>28.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Ratio</th>
<th>Number of houses</th>
<th>more than 1/2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-4</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>17.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;10</td>
<td></td>
<td>28.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Neighbourhood Character Key Findings

Large lots
+ Wide lots
+ Smaller homes
+ Older homes
+ High land value

Neighbourhood change
1. Study area is changing
   - no neighbourhoods are completely static

2. Degree of change varies by neighbourhood
   - depends on the combination of many factors

3. Change is likely to continue
   - can be influenced by City regulations