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'More bang for our buck'; New development could be pilot project for higher density in the city

Janaya Fuller Evans. **Burnaby Now**. Burnaby, B.C.: Nov 3, 2010. pg. 3

Abstract (Summary)

The highrise would be part of the city's proposed changes to its density initiative, the Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy, which would add a suffix 's' zoning to the RM3, RM4 and RM5 districts. Through the policy, developers are required to give a portion of space onsite or at other developments for nonprofits, or to make a financial contribution to the city in lieu of space.

Full Text (611 words)

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A large scale development on Beresford Street near Metrotown could be the next step to increasing density and public spaces in Burnaby.

The highrise development would include a 46-storey residential tower and a four-storey commercial podium on Beresford Street, and a five-storey townhouse on Telford Avenue.

The developer, Intracorp Lands Ltd., had previously proposed a 28-storey apartment highrise with a one-storey commercial base on the property.

The highrise would be part of the city's proposed changes to its density initiative, the Community Benefit Bonus Density Policy, which would add a suffix 's' zoning to the RM3, RM4 and RM5 districts.

"It's more bang for our buck," said Coun. Colleen Jordan at Monday night's council meeting, regarding the changes, adding it would mean more money and space for the city's nonprofits.

The project would spread over three current properties - 6451, 6475 and 6479 Telford Ave., including one owned by the city.

It also includes a great incentive for city council; a public plaza along Beresford Street, to be managed by the property owner, and increased commercial space.

"It's a very exciting proposal," Coun. Sav Dhaliwal said. "It opens up the south side of the mall area."

However, he disagreed with the idea that this would be a pilot project for the new higher density zoning, as once the zoning's in place, it would not be rescinded.

Coun. Pietro Calendino also took issue with some of the wording in the report, reminding council that Metrotown isn't the only town centre in Burnaby, and all four town centres should be developed to potential.

The plaza could be used for public events, parades and celebrations, Mayor Derek Corrigan said, and would include an art walk.

It would open up the area from the Bonsor Recreation Complex to Central Park, he added.

"It's much more walker-friendly," he said. "Intracorp made this a very appealing project for the city."

The new amendments to the community benefit bonus density policy are intended to bring Burnaby in line with other cities as far as density planning goes.

"It would increase density in our town centres," Jordan said.

The zoning would allow for increased density in Burnaby's four town centres to a maximum floor area ratio, in this case 5:0, as opposed to 2:6 under the current bylaws.

The increased density would also mean an increase to community benefit contributions. Through the policy, developers

are required to give a portion of space onsite or at other developments for nonprofits, or to make a financial contribution to the city in lieu of space.

Currently, the cash-in-lieu contribution account only has \$187,000 in it, according to Jordan, which is not enough to put towards any large capital projects.

In the past, funding has been put towards land and property for affordable and nonmarket units of housing and office space.

"Staff feel this is a definite advancement of the community plan," she said.

However, not everyone was happy about the decrease in parking spots at such developments.

Coun. Sav Dhaliwal spoke out against the proposed reduction of parking stalls to 1:1 per unit. That aspect of the initiative is intended to decrease vehicle traffic in areas easily accessed by transit, on foot or by bicycle.

"I do support reduced parking," he said. "I'm concerned with the reduction of visitors' parking."

Despite the concern, Dhaliwal voted along with council, unanimously passing the two motions - one regarding the Metrotown development specifically, and the other regarding the amendments to the policy.

Rezoning for the Beresford Street development, and the amendments to the zoning bylaw, are set for public hearing on Tuesday, Nov. 23.

Credit: Janaya Fuller Evans; Burnaby Now

[Illustration]

Photo: SAV DHALIWAL: Councillor; Caption:

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