



West Point Grey Residents Association
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November 26, 2021

City of Vancouver

Dear City Staff and Council,

Re: Jericho Lands Conceptual Site Plan Options

The West Point Grey Residents Association (WPGRA) is taken aback by recently released concepts for Jericho Lands redevelopment.

We believe both the built form of the project and the engagement process itself are gravely flawed. **We strongly encourage City Staff and elected representatives to place a pause on the approval process until such time as major questions are answered and issues raised herein are addressed and further objective public consultation is carried out.**

The West Point Grey Community Vision was approved by Council in 2010 and was to last for 30 years. It recognized that Jericho was going to be developed, but had specific directions that the Jericho Lands were to be planned in conjunction with the local West Point Grey community, under a similar process as the Community Vision. This never happened.

However, in 2016, the WPGRA surveyed the residents of West Point Grey regarding the Jericho Lands development. The findings were also consistent with the City's own surveys at the start of the planning process in 2019.

To our knowledge, there is no basis in public consultation undertaken to date for the density and scale of development being proposed. On the contrary, as per our prior attached letter to Mayor and Council (dated June 22, 2021), summaries of consultation undertaken -- both by the City and by WPGRA -- make clear that there is a general preference for ground-oriented forms of development, and very little in the way of public support for high-rise forms extending beyond 12-14 storeys (please refer to links of our prior letter and accompanying documentation for details).

For example, in the WPGRA Jericho Survey, and confirmed by the city's own consultation, the community showed some support for the scale of development for the Arbutus Walk Lands at 12th and Arbutus, but no support for Oakridge-style development. However, City staff and the applicant have proposed an Oakridge Town Centre scale of development on the Jericho Lands regardless.

We understand and accept that the scale and density of development at Jericho will go well beyond that of most of the established neighbourhood. However, we also believe that it is reasonable to anticipate that the topography of the site is able to accommodate a significant increase in scale and density without rising above the surrounding neighbourhood at the existing higher elevation to the south, overwhelming the natural landscape of Point Grey, or undermining cherished public views from Trimble Park. Transitions at the edges of the site should be well setback and consistent with the existing scale of the community, so that increased height is near the centre of the site at the lower elevation.

New development at Jericho should be carefully integrated into the broader West Point Grey neighbourhood, in such a way as to reinforce and sustain existing West 10th shopping districts, schools and community amenities, -- including established cultural and recreational facilities at Aberthau – rather than replace or detract from them.

In contrast, the current proposals are planned as a new separate Oakridge Town Centre-style "transit oriented" neighbourhood, when a subway extension to UBC is not a regional priority to 2050. All of the broader West Point Grey neighbourhood transportation would be entirely overwhelmed and congested with this scale of development that is unsustainable and unjustified as it is well outside the city centre without the necessary infrastructure.

There was no community consultation throughout the planning process on this scale of development, including the Phase 1 report in summer 2021, and not even with the City's Jericho Working Group who only became aware of the proposals a week before they were disclosed to the public. The entire process has been completely flawed.

The project conceptual plans are being rushed through the approval process even before the few weeks allowed for public comments. The plans were already considered by the Urban Design Panel on November 3, 2021. This is a major part of the approval process and a breach of trust for the City to have failed to provide any notice so the community or Working Group could provide input or attend the meeting.

We would appreciate your earliest response to concerns raised herein and request an immediate pause on the project approval process until these issues are addressed. See, for example, the following Appendix A outlining further perspectives on the scale and sustainability of proposed Conceptual Site Plan Options, as well as the process leading to them.

Yours truly,
West Point Grey Residents Association Board of Directors

Reference:

WPGRA Jericho Letter to Council 2021-06-22

<https://wpgra.files.wordpress.com/2021/11/wpgra-jericho-letter-to-council-2021-06-22-.pdf>

WPGRA Jericho Survey Results

<https://wpgra.files.wordpress.com/2021/04/jericho-survey-results-posted-summary-report-march-13-2020-final.pdf>

City's Phase 1 Public Engagement Summary

<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/jericho-lands-phase-1-public-engagement-summary.pdf>

Attachment - Appendix A

Appendix A

WPGRA Further Perspectives on Jericho Planning Process and Conceptual Site-Plan Options:

Process

Residents not Against Development

The residents of WPG are not against development. We understand and accept that the scale and density of development at Jericho will go well beyond that of the established neighbourhood.

Site Plan did not Evolve in a Healthy Way

The proposed Conceptual Site-Plan Options did not evolve in a healthy way from meaningful public engagement and consultation, but in a way that appears to be divorced from it, as evidenced by the obvious disconnect between scale and form of proposed Options and the balance of related public feedback.

Residents Asked for Arbutus Walk but got Oakridge

In the WPGRA Jericho Survey, and confirmed by the city's own consultation, the community showed some support for the scale of development for the Arbutus Walk Lands at 12th and Arbutus, but no support for Oakridge-style development. However, City staff and the applicant have proposed an Oakridge Town Centre scale of development on the Jericho Lands regardless.

More than Doubling the Population

Frankly, we are not able to find precedent anywhere in the world where a community was asked to more than double its population and then given only a few weeks' notice to provide their comments. While the process schedule has since been extended by a few more weeks, in response to community requests, this remains inadequate.

No Hint of the Density

There was no hint of scale or density in the Jericho Lands draft Emerging Ideas, adopted by City Council in June of this year, but it is difficult to imagine that these concepts were not already well advanced.

None of the public meetings or the speaker series in the initial stages dealt with the density issues at all.

Members of Working Group Surprised

Even the City's Jericho Lands Working Group was kept in the dark until the last minute. They were only shown the all-important form of development in an "optional meeting" just the week before it was presented to the public.

City Staff Wanted to Avoid Controversy

In a recent November 4, 2021 meeting with the WPGRA, City staff said they did not discuss density with the Jericho Lands Working Group or the community until now because they didn't want to inflame the conversations by mentioning the density.

Failure to Mention Density Earlier is Problematic

We understand that the conversations would have been difficult, but those conversations will ultimately need to take place if the enormous divide between Conceptual Site-Plan Options and the balance of related public feedback is to be bridged.

Urban Design Panel

We also learned at that meeting with staff that the night before (November 3, 2021) the Jericho Lands project conceptual plans were considered by Urban Design Panel. This is a public meeting, but - again, as noted above – as far as we know, City staff failed to notify the Jericho Working Group or the community in advance, so they could join the meeting and/or provide written input. Again, this is a major part of the approval process and a breach of trust for the City to not advise the Working Group.

UDP Agenda: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/udp-agenda-2021-11-03.pdf>

See the info about the UDP here:

<https://vancouver.ca/your-government/urban-design-panel.aspx>

Conceptual Site-Plan Options

Density and Built Form

Without Precedent

The density and built form are not only out of context with the neighbourhood, **they** are also without precedent for Vancouver.

Larger Site Requires Lower FSR

While we understand that other developments, such as the Heather Lands, have been given a gross area density of 2.5 FSR, these other developments are much smaller sites and still in the planning stages. Generally, the larger the area of the project, the smaller the gross density should be, due to more streets, parks and open space requirements.

Uncertain Impacts so Can't be Considered Precedents

There is no way to tell what kinds of impacts these other projects in the planning stages are going to have on Vancouver once they are built out. Therefore, it is not reasonable to consider these examples as precedents, since they are still in the planning process.

Jericho Proposed Density is 5 Times That of New York City

The population density proposed for Jericho is 50,000 per square kilometer. For comparison, the density of New York City is 10,000 per sq km - though, of course, this difference has to be adjusted for the larger area of the city. However, it's worth noting that the density of Conceptual Site-Plan Options for Jericho go well beyond that of a comparable neighbourhoods in the most dense municipality in the US. For example, the New York suburb of Guttenberg, New Jersey is a four block wide section of urban land, roughly the same width but longer than Jericho, and dominated by three high rise towers. But the proposed Jericho Development is **twice** the density of Guttenberg – and Jericho is also twice the density as Vancouver's West End (~25,000 per square kilometer).

Sustainability

Towers are not Sustainable

Again, as much as Vancouver is arguably more sustainable than New York, in many respects, it's worth noting that as part of New York City's plan to address climate change, former Mayor Bill DeBlasio campaigned for a ban on "classic glass and steel skyscrapers that have contributed so much to global warming," adding that "they have no place in our city or our Earth anymore." So, in view of proposed concepts for Jericho, the question is whether adding concrete makes a highrise "green"?

<https://nypost.com/2019/04/22/de-blasio-glass-skyscrapers-have-no-place-on-our-earth/>

Subway Embodied Carbon not Sustainable

And, with proposed density at Jericho now central to potential options for a Broadway Subway extension, is sufficient consideration being given to recent findings that construction of underground rail generates 27 times the effective carbon emissions associated with equivalent surface rail construction?

<https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/infrastructure/2020/05/tunnelling-creates-vastly-more-ghg-than-surface-rail-u-of-t>

To our knowledge, and despite Vancouver's declaration of a Climate Emergency, we are not aware that these issues have been addressed through the Jericho Lands planning process.

Community Planning

Jericho as Separate Neighbourhood Rather than Part of WPG

Planning Jericho Lands as a new separate Oakridge Town Centre-style neighbourhood rather than as part of West Point Grey contravenes the West Point Grey Community Vision, approved by Council in 2010 for 30 years;

Overwhelms the Broader Area

The scale of development is so huge it will completely overwhelm the broader area;

Undermines the 10th Ave Shopping District

Jericho should not undermine the viability of established shopping districts in the neighbourhood such as W. 10th Avenue, including West Point Grey Village, which serves the broader surrounding neighbourhood;

Inadequate Transitions

Inadequate transitions and setbacks at the edges of the site to fit into the surrounding neighbourhood

Traffic

Cars Regardless of Transit

The density will cause traffic congestion from cars regardless of the level of transit serving these many expensive market units (even "affordable" units will have at least one vehicle per household, especially for families);

Parking an Issue for the Neighbourhood

Lack of onsite parking that will become a parking problem for the neighbourhood;

UBC Extension not a Regional Priority

Overloading transit would be an issue with no subway extension to UBC as it is not a regional priority to 2050, yet the site is being planned as if it is transit oriented for a subway that likely will not be built in the foreseeable future, if ever.

Views

From Neighbouring Areas

Huge impacts on views both across the site, neighbourhood, and from the beach;

From Trimble Park

No view protection from Trimble Park at the southwest area of the site;

Amenities and Community Services

Huge Population Increase More Than Doubles Amenity Demand

Lack of community amenities to service this huge population that is proposed to be increased by 2.4 times from the current 13,000 population to 31,000, that would require commensurate increases in elementary schools, Lord Byng High School, Jericho Hill Community Centre replacement and expansion for growth onsite, daycare, seniors care, library, etc.;

Environmental and Sustainability Problems

Surface Water Concerns

Lack of permeable surfaces, impacts on groundwater due to construction, changed drainage to Jericho Park wetlands;

Groundwater Concerns

Site disturbance could alter groundwater flows and cause serious damage to Jericho Park;

Jericho Park and Beaches

Impacts on Jericho Park and the beaches from 18,000 new residents;

Concrete Towers and Subway not Sustainable

There will be impacts from embodied carbon from the proposed concrete towers and potential subway extension that the proposed transit-oriented development would be dependent on, even though it is not a regional priority to 2050 and beyond. WPG would get all the density and none of the transit.