

MINUTES OF THE ADVISORY DESIGN PANEL MEETING HELD ON February 12th, 2026 AT THE DISTRICT OF NORTH VANCOUVER

(Virtual Meeting – Microsoft Teams)

ATTENDING: Mr. Jay Boyce, Architect
Mr. Rasool Ghodoosi, Landscape Architect
Mr. John Gilmour, Development Industry Representative
Mr. Robert Greene, Visual Art Specialist
Mr. Koosha Kheradmandnia, Professional Engineer
Ms. Vanessa Konn, Architect
Mr. Tieg Martin, Building Industry
Mr. David Parke, Accessibility Representative

REGRETS: Sgt Kevin Bracewell, RCMP Crime Prevention

STAFF: Mr. Jon Maselli (Staff Liaison), Development Planner
Mr. Alfonso Tejada, Urban Design Planner
Mr. Daniel Broderick, Development Planner
Ms. Tamsin Guppy, Development Planner
Ms. Dorin Vaez Mahdavi, Planning Assistant

1. PANEL WELCOME

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Mr. Gilmour. Mr. Gilmour conducted attendance and confirmed quorum.

2. ADMINISTRATION

The minutes of the Advisory Design Panel meeting held on January 8th, 2026 were reviewed. No amendments were requested. A motion to adopt the minutes was moved by Mr. Greene, seconded by Mr. Parke, and carried unanimously.

3. STAFF ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Maselli, Development Planner, introduced himself as the acting Staff Liaison while Ms. Cheong is away. He outlined that the process for the annual ADP Awards has begun and projects that achieved occupancy in 2025 will be considered. The date of the awards ceremony is to be determined and will be held in conjunction with the Heritage Advisory Committee's awards. A list of eligible projects will be presented to the Panel members at the next meeting.

Mr. Gilmour asked whether recognizing individual project features - like landscape work or unique site connections - will become a formally accepted approach, noting that last year no full project awards were given.

Ms. Guppy explained that while the goal is always to evaluate and award projects holistically across all design criteria, some years don't produce strong full-project candidates. In those cases, the Panel may still highlight specific elements to support designers and continue educating Council and the community about the value of good design.

Mr. Maselli noted that the Panel is currently down one landscape architect and one architect and two members have been nominated by the British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects (BCSLA) and the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC). Staff are hoping to bring these nominations to Council for approval in advance of the next meeting.

4. NEW BUSINESS

- a.) Zoning Bylaw Rewrite (No Address)** – The District is preparing a comprehensive update to the Zoning Bylaw to replace the existing 1965 Bylaw. This project will modernize and streamline regulations, and align with District plans, policies, and initiatives. Staff are coming back to ADP with an update to the draft Zoning Bylaw.

Ms. Guppy thanked the Panel members and noted that a draft version of the new Zoning Bylaw has been circulated to the design and development communities, as well as other interest holders, for testing and refinement.

Ms. Guppy further noted that the purpose of the evening's presentation was to provide the Panel with an overview of the bylaw rewrite, seek input on key provisions, and invite feedback during both the meeting and through subsequent written correspondence.

Ms. Guppy then introduced Mr. Broderick, a planner in the Development Planning department, to deliver the formal presentation.

Mr. Broderick delivered a slide presentation and spoke to the following topics:

- An informational webpage is available online which includes a high-level overview of project updates and is updated periodically.
- Under provincial legislation, zoning regulates land use, density, and building form through tools such as setbacks, height, and building coverage. The project is focused solely on the Zoning Bylaw itself, Form and Character Development Permit Areas are not within scope.
- This is the first comprehensive modernization of the entire zoning bylaw since 1965. The existing bylaw will be retired and replaced with an entirely new bylaw. The project is targeting a Council decision by spring/summer 2026, with a June adoption goal driven in part by the provincial deadline for implementing small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) under Bill 25.
- The new bylaw will apply across all properties in the District. Each existing zone will be replaced with a new zone that shares the same intent but is modernized and aligned

with the Official Community Plan (OCP). The zoning map will remain substantively unchanged; the District is not pre-zoning or upzoning land through this process.

Mr. Broderick described the consolidation of zones across several categories:

- Five existing park zones plus a cemetery zone are being simplified into two zones: a Parks and Outdoor Recreation zone (for active parks) and a Natural Parkland zone (for conservation-oriented forested parkland). A new Special Purpose Tourism and Recreation zone is also being created for existing major tourist sites (Grouse Mountain, Mount Seymour, and Capilano Suspension Bridge).
- Nineteen existing single-family residential zones are being consolidated into two detached residential zones (R1 and R2) and a new R3 Residential Houseplex zone for areas subject to SSMUH requirements. Outdated multi-family zones (RL, RM, RH) are being replaced with modernized shelf-ready multi-family zones that reflect current comprehensive development zone practices.
- Multiple commercial zones are being simplified, with many properties transitioning to the C2 General Commercial zone. A new shelf-ready Core Commercial (C1) zone is being introduced for higher-density town centres where mixed-use commercial/residential development is anticipated.
- The concept of shelf-ready zones for multi-family residential and core commercial uses was presented. These standardized zones are designed to match OCP designations and provide a consistent set of requirements (setbacks, heights, landscaping, etc.) to streamline the rezoning process for applicants and staff. A mechanism has been included in the draft bylaw to allow limited modifications to these zones to address site-specific circumstances.

Mr. Broderick highlighted specific provisions to the Panel:

- Minimum and maximum front yard setbacks are proposed in commercial zones. Minimum setbacks provide space for frontage zones, while maximum setbacks prevent surface parking from dominating the front of commercial properties.
- Building coverage regulations are being maintained or tightened. A maximum tower floor plate regulation of 800 square metres is being introduced for higher density tower development zones, codifying what has been previously addressed through Form and Character Development Permit Area guidelines.
- A landscape area requirement is being introduced, defined as soil-based permeable portions of a lot with a minimum soil depth of 3 feet.
- A floor area exemption of 4 square metres per fully accessible (enhanced) dwelling unit is proposed.
- Accessible parking provisions are included in the updated parking regulations.

- A general regulation provides additional height allowance and an FSR exemption for developments using mass timber construction.

Ms. Guppy provided additional context on how the provincial SSMUH requirements interact with the Zoning Bylaw rewrite. She explained that Bill 25 permits multiplexes on single-family lots inside the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB), subject to caveats related to lot size, natural hazards, and transit proximity.

Ms. Guppy noted that three new residential zones align with SSMUH requirements: R1 for areas outside the UCB, R2 for areas inside the boundary where SSMUH does not apply, and R3 for SSMUH areas.

Ms. Guppy explained that parking regulations are being restructured. New parking rates are being introduced for below-market and rental housing. Loading requirements are being updated to reflect modern truck sizes and delivery practices.

Mr. Broderick shared information about the project timeline:

- A Council workshop was held earlier in the week.
- The refined draft bylaw is expected to be published online by March 2026.
- The team is targeting an April Council date for bylaw introduction, with a June adoption deadline to meet provincial legislation requirements.

Mr. Broderick then asked Panel members to share their questions and comments.

The Chair opened the floor for questions from the Panel. The Panel discussed their questions with staff:

- **Q:** Is the 800 sq. m. for the tower floorplate a minimum or a maximum?
A: A maximum, subject to feedback and potentially varied through a Development Variance Permit process.
 Mr. Tejada raised concerns that an 800 sq. m. floorplate is too large when balconies are included and this encourages oversized tower footprints. He noted that the Panel has previously worked with 750 sq. m. floor plates (approximately 25 m x 25 m). He recommended defining a clear maximum building envelope inclusive of balconies to maintain better control over tower proportions.
 Mrs. Guppy explained that the proposed maximum is not meant to replace design guidelines but to set an upper limit that helps prevent tower designs from drifting too far beyond the District's intentions.
 Mr. Tejada emphasized the need for clearer setback requirements for towers, noting that current commercial setback standards don't translate well to mixed-use high-rises and that more defined tower setbacks would improve streetscape quality.

- **Q:** What is the difference between the two C2 Zones that were shown?
A: Mr. Broderick explained that the new Zoning Bylaw will include a single updated C2 zone, which will function as the standard general commercial zone intended for four-storey development with one required storey of commercial space.
- **Q:** Considering the maximum and minimum setbacks, what type of requirements will there be to provide parking (potentially underground) for commercial developments?
A: Parking access for commercial or mixed-use projects should come from side streets or lanes rather than the front, emphasizing a move away from older designs with front-facing surface parking. The bylaw's parking section will remain similar to current requirements, with updated rates reflecting Town Centre conditions and transit access, and that parking will continue to be calculated based on units or floor area depending on the type of development.
- **Q:** Regarding the accessibility floor area exemption, what is driving the 4 sq. m. and is that per dwelling unit?
A: It is per fully accessible unit or enhanced unit as stated in the accessible design guidelines. Accessible units typically require about 40–50 extra square feet for wider circulation areas, and the bylaw changes aim to ease this added cost while recognizing these units often command higher prices due to their larger size.
- **Q:** Could the remaining 30% lot coverage for townhome sites be used to add an additional dwelling unit, such as a suite for parents, that is separate from the main townhome but still part of the overall development?
A: The table was meant to show how building footprint, hard surfaces, and landscaped space should be balanced. We removed the old “site coverage” metric to reduce confusion and ensure every site preserves meaningful green space while still accommodating necessary site elements.
- **Q:** Does the District have the adaptable requirements as well or is it just the accessible that apply to developments?
A: Accessibility requirements are mandatory for apartments but optional for townhouses. An apartment building might have 95% be adaptable and 5% be fully enhanced accessible. While a townhouse may have 100% adaptable units.
- **Q:** Regarding the minimum 3 ft. noted for landscape area, could someone provide that through a parkade?
A: We require at least three feet of soil in some areas so real planting can occur. Not all rooftop surfaces over a parkade will count as landscaped area—shallow soil can support grass, but deeper zones are needed for shrubs and small trees to meet biodiversity goals. There could be a combination of factors such as building planters on portions of a parkade.
- **Q:** It is mentioned that “what is planted is not regulated”. Is there a bylaw or another guideline that provides directions on achieving biodiversity, climate resilience, etc.?

A: That is a good question for the Panel. The Zoning Bylaw sets the basic framework, but the development permit guidelines are what really shape design. We use District-wide design guidelines and neighborhood-specific guidelines, and when applications come forward, they'll be reviewed against the specific guidelines that apply to that area.

- **Q:** How are the parks and open spaces transitioning from the previous zones to the new zones?

A: We're not changing the amount of park space, just reorganizing the categories. The five existing park types really fall into two groups: active parks for recreation, and forested parks focused on conservation. Active parks can draw people from beyond the neighborhood, so we're grouping them together rather than splitting them into multiple labels. The conservation-focused parks form the second category, signaling that activities like new sports fields should be directed to the active-park category instead.

- **Q:** Regarding the Natural Parkland, what are the zoning regulations that concern the ecological protection and might differ from other categories?

A: The Natural Parkland zone was created about 20 years ago and applied to greenbelts and some forested parks, while older parks remained in the original 1965 PRO zone. Grouse Mountain and Mount Seymour are still zoned PRO even though they're primarily forest, so we're grouping those under Natural Parkland. The major mountain resorts are being pulled out into a separate tourist zone to better reflect their use, protect the surrounding natural areas, and clearly define where buildings, ski runs, trails, and untouched forest are allowed.

- **Q:** Could you provide some information about the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB) and how the SSMUH will be applied in different new zones?

A: The UCB follows the edge of the forest, marking where development can occur. Properties above that line (like those on Indian Arm) are outside the boundary and were originally recreational cabin lots. They can replace existing houses, but they can't subdivide or grow in number. The intent is that all future growth happens inside the containment boundary, not in the forested areas above it.

The province's small-scale multi-unit housing rules only apply inside the UCB. They allow multiplexes on single-family lots, with conditions related to lot size, hazards, and transit. We're proposing to exclude much of the forest-edge area because of evacuation concerns. For the six-unit allowance tied to frequent transit, the province's mapping also captures large single-family lots along the escarpment, which creates some odd outcomes. It's a provincial mandate, and we're still working through how it will apply locally.

Additionally, we have tried to lift the basements out of the ground and change how we calculate the FSR. All the regulations will be the same whether you are outside the UCB area with a house and a suite, inside UCB with a house suite coach house, or in the SSMUH area of multiplex.

- **Q:** Could an area currently considered as park outside of the UCB be rezoned to a special purpose?

A: No. We can only rezone in accordance with the OCP and therefore the OCP would need to be amended as well. The tourism zones that that are being considered apply to three key tourist sites: Mount Seymour, Grouse Mountain and Capilano Suspension Bridge. An applicant can apply for a rezoning, however, it is less likely to be approved if it is not compliant with the OCP.

- **Q:** Regarding what is being done in West Vancouver above the Highway (Cypress Village) would that be outside the UCB?
A: Staff recommend having that discussion with the District of West Vancouver, noting that this topic is outside of the scope of the ADP discussion.
- **Q:** How much faster would an application be processed?
A: It should be faster but whether the change would be rapid or not is hard to tell. For 30 years, shelf-ready zones have not been used and staff have instead created custom CD zones for each application. That has resulted in many negotiations with applicants, so we have created shelf-ready zones that are more aligned with the OCP and can be modified to some extent. Over time, it will be helpful for the developers to know what the expectations are within each zone and it can result in a more streamlined process. Moreover, we are reviewing which rules can be handled through variances rather than rezoning, since use and density can't be varied but many other conditions can. The goal is to simplify the bylaw so fewer projects need full rezonings.
- **Q:** Is there still a procedure for density bonusing?
A: We are currently updating the bylaw and we are not upzoning or pre-zoning lands. For instance, if your lot is zoned single-family but it is located in a Town Centre and it is designated for a high-rise in the OCP, it will still be zoned single family in the new Zoning Bylaw and you would still need to go through a rezoning process. Part of the reason for that is that we have some tools to acquire roads at the Building Permit stage but no tools to acquire parkland at that stage. Therefore, we still look to the rezoning process for items like parkland or road dedications.
- **Q:** There are criticisms about the design of multiplexes in the Greater Vancouver area. Would the multiplexes be reviewed by the Panel when they come in?
A: No, they will not be going through a design review. We're not applying Development Permit Areas to them. We have about 20,000 single-family lots, and only around 100 redevelop each year, so even if some became multiplexes, the change would be very gradual. After 10 years of allowing coach houses, we've only seen about 30 applications, which is a small percentage. Therefore, we may not see a big shift. Additionally, the House/Suite/Coach House regulations and the Houseplex regulations in terms of height, building coverage, and massing are very similar.
- **Q:** Will you change the parking regulations regarding the number of parking spaces, sizes, and arrangements required?
A: Yes, to some extent. We're separating parking rates from transportation demand management (TDM) requirements. TDM will become its own bylaw, while the zoning

bylaw will set parking based on whether a site is in a frequent-transit area or a suburban area. We're also adding lower parking rates for rental and below market housing and updating loading requirements to reflect modern delivery and truck sizes so we can reduce conflicts on local roads.

- **Q:** It would be great to see some more accessible parking throughout the District. There are more buildings and less parking spaces and I hear that from wheelchair users that there are not many accessible parking spots. (Mostly regarding the on-street parking spaces.)

A: It is not part of zoning, but it is part of the Transportation team's work on curbside management. Ms. Guppy said they will raise this concern with the manager of the transportation team.

- **Q:** Another item that needs attention is the drop-off zones for people with disabilities.

A: That has become a key issue for us in planning and for the District's transportation engineers. Unfortunately, I will say it's a real balancing act. Sometimes the ideal lobby location doesn't align with the safest spot for drop-off, so the drop-off may need to shift. But having a safe, convenient pick-up/drop-off area is essential, so it has to be planned early.

- **Q:** Could you explain how the number of 4 sq. m. was determined for the enhanced units?

A: It was done by comparing a standard unit with an enhanced unit and finding an estimate by allowing for a larger washroom, a wider doorway, etc. The units were about 30 to 50 sq. ft. larger when they were fully enhanced. However, we are open to suggestions. (The Panel member responded that they believe the number should be larger.)

No further clarification questions were raised, and the Chair invited Mr. Tejada to share his comments.

Mr. Tejada, Urban Design Planner, offered the following observations and comments for the Panel's consideration:

- Mr. Tejada noted that he was particularly interested in clarifying tower setbacks and tower footprints. He explained that defining a clear tower envelope is essential, so future towers stay within consistent boundaries.
- He added that aligning site planning, setbacks, and built-form guidelines will help standardize tower design, especially since the old zoning had many variations.
- Mr. Tejada thanked staff working on this project and concluded by noting that he wants to study the details further, because translating all the old rules into the new zoning framework is complex.

- Ms. Guppy clarified that the Zoning Bylaw is a living document and while staff's goal is to create a good framework, future changes such as climate change, economic shifts, and immigration, may have an impact on the Zoning Bylaw and amendments may be required.

The Chair thanked staff and invited comments from the Panel. He clarified that no votes will be required and Panel members will only share their comments, which will then be considered by staff.

Summary of Panel Commentary:

The Panel provided extensive comments and observations summarized as below:

- It was noted that as more multiplexes are built in the District, it is important to have landscape requirements. The massing in the urban areas will grow and more thoughtful landscaping requirements can soften these edges and the massing of developments. The landscape should not be an accessory, and it should be a tool to achieve the character of North Vancouver.
- Regarding the naming of the residential zones, it was suggested that the naming for the detached and multi-family residential zones be separated and not follow the same numbers. This will leave space for the future in case something needs to be added to the detached residential zone and there will be numbers to be added.
- One major issue with SSMUH is how it affects existing housing. It was discussed that the rules do not give enough flexibility for existing homes. It works if you're rebuilding, but many longtime residents who want to add a small coach house can't do it because their current homes exceed GFA. This effectively forces demolition and it was suggested the District consider allowances, like other municipalities do, so people can adapt older homes without tearing them down.
 - Staff response: There are changes proposed that might help. All existing exemptions are being folded into total FSR, meaning things like old garage space can now be converted into livable area. A 500-sq.-ft. bonus is also being considered for adding a second building, such as a coach house. Recalculating basements (many of which are currently exempt) will leave some homeowners with more usable floor area than before. It was noted that 95% of our lots do not have an open lane, therefore, building a coach house without tearing down the main house is only feasible for a limited number of properties.
- It was brought up that the 4 sq. m. allowance for accessible design is quite small. While the accessible-design policy differs from the building code, but a deeper review of actual plan impacts would be beneficial, since many developers build to minimum dimensions. Any extra space the District can offer would help encourage more accessible and adaptable units, and it is unlikely that people would misuse that allowance because it serves a very specific purpose. It was also noted that current design guidelines only

require accessible access to one bedroom within an enhanced unit, which was identified as inadequate by both staff and Panel members.

- It was suggested that regarding the tower footprint of 800 sq. m. and considering the incentive to create more adaptable units, the number might be limiting. This is especially the case because the step code and seismic requirements are developed in silos and without mutual coordination, and these changes shrink unit sizes and make it harder to design livable two and three-bedroom units. The District will need to revisit tower footprint assumptions to ensure future buildings remain functional and family-friendly.
 - Staff Response: One possible solution is to not include that regulation in the Zoning Bylaw at this time and to continue using the design guideline requirements and the rezoning process to provide some protection.

- A comment was raised regarding the Polygon project that was reviewed before Christmas with no access to the parkade on Lynn Valley Road, and how the engineering team responded to the concern with the parkade.
 - Staff Response: That case is quite complicated as they have two parcels that are tucked behind another parcel which they do not own. If the applicant owned the corner parcel as well, the access would be much simpler. However, regarding the Zoning Bylaw, zoning is separate from engineering requirements and we are working with them on the parking regulations.

- Regarding mixed-use sites, it was asked whether a developer could opt out of the ground-floor commercial requirement when the location clearly is not suitable for retail. For instance, the site on Lower Capilano Road just north of the Shell gas station where cars are stored with fences around the site.
 - Staff Response: No. Mixed-use sites will not be able to opt out of providing commercial space. In core commercial areas, they may even be required to provide two storeys of commercial, though upper-floor commercial can include offices, childcare, institutional uses, or studios. While commercial use doesn't drive project economics, the District urgently needs more of it: vacancy rates have sat around 1% for years, and light-industrial vacancy is only about 2%. With an estimated need for 3 to 4 million additional square feet of commercial space over the next 25 years, expanding the supply is essential for supporting local businesses.

- It was asked whether it would be possible to coordinate, harmonize, and intentionally align bylaws with other municipalities to reduce complexity in Greater Vancouver.
 - Staff Response: Yes, we are working towards that. For SSMUH, the Province has a handbook, but for other items such as definitions, we have looked into the North Shore communities, other Metro Vancouver municipalities, North American industry standards, etc. and where possible, we are trying to match terms with other municipalities, especially with the City of North Vancouver.

- It was asked whether staff have studied new trends in zoning, for example using form-based zoning instead of traditional land use-based zoning in highly urban areas to create a better quality public realm and urban design.
 - Staff response: We have looked into form-based and performance-based zoning. Home-based businesses have been allowed in the District for approximately 30 years as a successful example of performance-based regulation, permitting any business as long as it does not create noise, smell, or visual impacts. However, pure form-based zoning presents challenges in the District due to topography, and Council tends to prefer traditional zoning. While the District is pushing forward, progress will likely be incremental to balance innovation with community comfort. Additionally, it was noted that there are issues that cannot be fixed with zoning alone. For example, the car lots on Marine Drive have been zoned for four storeys for many years but have not redeveloped due to market forces and other external factors.
- There was support for constraining development areas with attention to natural disaster risks and infrastructure costs.
- There was support for artificial turf not being accepted as landscape area.
- There was a suggestion for the District to consider a formula that gives partial credit for extensive green roofs. This would encourage flexibility and creativity, and would reward use of extensive green roofs without discouraging planting at grade.
- There was a suggestion to consider providing additional height allowances for developments that are committed to using mass timber in commercial zones.
 - Staff Response: We have a general regulation for mass timber that allows extra height and an FSR exemption.
- There was a suggestion to allow trading off embodied carbon savings against operational carbon savings to address the concerns regarding envelope thicknesses encroaching into usable space. There should be a formula that allows a net carbon footprint reduction over the design lifespan of the building, however it is achieved.
- It was suggested that the District review the floor area exemption for accessible units and conduct a more detailed, evidence-based calculation of the space required for a unit to be properly accessible. Multiple panelists recommended requiring developers to demonstrate functional accessibility on their plans, rather than relying solely on checklist-based compliance.

The Panel generally supported the proposed Zoning Bylaw and provided several comments and recommendations on different sections of the bylaw. No formal consensus items were recorded given the informational nature of the presentation. Staff thanked the Panel for their feedback and confirmed that written submissions would also be welcomed in the coming days as the draft

bylaw is refined for publication. No further comments were raised; therefore, the meeting was adjourned.

5. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:00 p.m.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next ADP meeting will be held on April 9, 2026.

Signed on behalf of Vice Chair Tieg Martin

Chair



Jon Maselli (Staff Liaison)

April 9, 2026

Date