



POWER DYNAMICS

IN NEGOTIATING MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN SUBURBAN MUNICIPALITIES

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CAPSTONE RESEARCH PROJECT

MASTER OF CITY PLANNING

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Executive Summary

Metro Vancouver has recently been experiencing a significant housing boom, with new residential and mixed-use towers being built continuously throughout the city. This phenomenon has extended into the suburban municipalities of the region, with historical small-town communities experiencing significant development pressures. In response to these pressures, this research examines the power dynamics between municipal planners and developers when approving new multi-residential residential developments in small suburban municipalities. In doing so, this research explores the relationship between the public sector and private sector when negotiating new developments and what factors have been most crucial in ensuring that what is approved will be in the public's best interest. With rapid new development occurring throughout the region, it is important to understand how new developments are approved, ensuring that they are done so with the community's interests in mind.

This research was conducted primarily as a content analysis of planning reports for recently approved multi-family developments in three small-sized Metro Vancouver municipalities. The content analysis used planning reports submitted to City Council prior to their final approval. Additional research incorporated interviews with planning staff and developers of the same projects to add additional detail to the data. This content analysis and interview data showed that while negotiations occurred between planning staff and the developer, they were most effective when planning policy provided clear direction as to what is appropriate for the project site. With the clarity provided through a clear direction outlined in the Official Community Plans and other policies, planners and developers were able to discuss the finer details of the proposals. These policies were also determined to be the best tools to ensure that the interest of the public is maintained when considering all new developments. Ultimately, I recommend that policies be updated frequently to ensure that they are in line with the public's interest, which will ensure that projects proposed are provided with a framework in which to comply.

FIGURE 1 |
The West End of downtown Vancouver looking north.



Introduction

The Metro Vancouver region is currently experiencing a boom in development, with foreign investment driving development to a fever pace and housing prices through the roof and creating a housing bubble unlike any other in the country. As a result, the city has experienced high market housing and rental rates while development continues to appear throughout the city. This is how it has been portrayed in the media

(St. Denis, 2018). Many news outlets have chronicled the regions growing housing crisis over the years, which has dominated the conversations on affordability, housing and development.

While it is common to read news reports of new developments occurring in the downtown Vancouver peninsula with gleaming glass towers contrasting against the waterfront, high development activity has been occurring across the region as a whole. In particular, this research was inspired by this very phenomenon in the City of Port Moody, where the city has recently seen a refreshed boom in development. This middle-ring suburb municipality of Metro Vancouver has historically been growing in the shadows of its neighbours, Coquitlam and Burnaby. It has maintained a relatively ‘small-town’ charm despite its central location within the region. However, due to the recent addition of the Evergreen Line Skytrain extension through the city, Port Moody is now experiencing significant new development pressures, particularly in residential

Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Growth Strategy

- Urban Centres
 - Frequent Transit Development Areas
 - Urban Containment Boundary
 - Sewerage Extension Areas
 - Rural within Sewerage Area
 - Special Study Area
 - Road Centerline
- Metro 2040 Land Use Designations**
- Agricultural
 - Conservation & Recreation
 - Industrial
 - Mixed Employment
 - Rural
 - General Urban

FIGURE 2 |
Map of Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Growth Strategy.

development, with many new projects of varying sizes being proposed throughout the city (Connolly, 2018). In fact, this sudden spurt in development potential has found some people asking whether Port Moody is losing its unique character (Harney, 2017).

While this research was inspired by the conditions occurring in Port Moody, this phenomenon is not exclusive to this one municipality. Many other municipalities in the region are experiencing similar pressures. Many argue that this development boom is spurred in part by the real estate bubble surrounding the region. While the City of Vancouver has seen significant new development, as seen in rapidly redeveloped areas such as Coal Harbour and Yaletown, suburb municipalities in the region have also been experiencing significant growth.

Inspired by this trend across the region, I have developed the following research questions that will inform this research process:

- 1. How do historically low-growth municipalities manage public interests amid high development pressures? How do municipalities and developers determine what is in the public interest?*
- 2. What design elements are pursued in new residential developments and how are they negotiated? How do high development pressures and the desire to maintain a “small-city” character affect these negotiations?*

Through an examination of municipal planning reports for nine recently approved residential projects, I will explore how municipal planning staff have managed new development applications. In this exploration, I will examine how staff and other public sector groups negotiate with the applicant or developer to ensure that the proposed development meets the requirements of the policies that restrict it. Furthermore, I will examine how the public interest has been managed as part of the development approval process, noting how the public interest has been determined or acknowledged in these planning reports. This research will further incorporate interview data with planning staff and developer representatives to show how the development negotiations occurred. With this data, I will show how policy tools should be considered the most effective tool in ensuring the public interest is maintained throughout negotiations with new development projects.

To do this, my research project has been broken up into several sections. First, I will discuss the methods chosen to conduct this research. These methods include a content analysis of planning reports for recently approved residential developments as well as interviews with planning staff and developers of the same projects.

Following this, I will discuss the existing literature on the topic, highlighting discourse that has occurred regarding the concept of the public interest, the role of negotiation in development planning, and the effect of high-development pressure. After providing some context into the current conditions in Metro Vancouver, including details on the various projects chosen, I will present my research findings. These findings will help to support my recommendations which I have included at the end of this report.



Methods

The research for this project was collected and analysed over the course of six months, between October 2018 and March 2019. The methods for collecting and analyzing this data consisted of two key methods that were used with the intention of providing complementary information to one another. The primary method of analysis for this research consisted of a content analysis of recent residential development proposals in suburb municipalities of Metro Vancouver. This was then supplemented by interviews with both developers and municipal planning staff, in order to bring out additional nuances of the development process not seen in the examined documents. Additional policy documents were incorporated into the research where additional context was required, however, most of the

FIGURE 3 | ABOVE
The City of White Rock

FIGURE 4 | BELOW
The City of New Westminster

findings and discussion stem from the analysis of the planning reports and from the interviews conducted.

Content Selection

The content analysis examined multi-family residential projects across three suburban municipalities. This research focused on suburb municipalities facing significant development pressures amidst a desire to retain a ‘small town’ feel. The idea of the ‘small town’ feel came from media exposure to the rapid growth of some of the smaller regional municipalities in Metro Vancouver. From this idea, I chose to look at smaller suburb municipalities of the region, where ‘small town’ ideologies may continue to be present, that are experiencing significant growth and potentially high development pressures. Within these municipalities, I decided to look at multi-family residential developments that fit within a set of parameters created.

To begin this content analysis, I needed to

determine the projects to examine. In order to do this, I first needed to identify the cities of these projects. I was able to identify the selected cities using the following set of criteria, which helped to narrow down the selection of cities to a final three.

1.Population:

Since I was looking at ‘small town’ environments experiencing a certain level of high development pressure, and the developments within those municipalities, I chose to limit the possible options to municipalities of less than 100,000 residents. A lower limit was found to be too restrictive, as many of the smallest municipalities had not yet experienced the high development pressure of their larger neighbours. Small municipalities under 10,000 residents were not considered as it was unlikely that these municipalities would have significant multi-family development proposals. The population of the municipality was determined by the official count in the 2016 census.

Looking at the population of municipalities in Metro Vancouver, 10 municipalities were determined to be potential options for this research: Pitt Meadows, White Rock, Langley City, Port Moody, West Vancouver,

the City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver, Port Coquitlam, New Westminster and Maple Ridge. Of these potential case cities, three were selected through a more in-depth assessment, incorporating the development selection rubric to finalize the list.

2.Location within the region:

I looked at each potential city’s approximate location within the metropolitan region, including its distance from Downtown Vancouver. Because I was looking at the small suburb municipalities holding onto the ‘small town’ sentiment, I chose to look at cities that were not immediately adjacent to the City of Vancouver. Cities located further from the centre of the region were considered.

All three North Shore municipalities – the City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver and the District of West Vancouver – were removed from consideration due to their close proximity to Vancouver. While it was noted that they are fairly isolated from the rest of the region by the Burrard Inlet, it was felt that they were too close in proximity to Downtown Vancouver and would exhibit more ‘big city’ qualities than other

municipalities on this list.

The final selection of municipalities was chosen using the remaining criteria below. These criteria did not impose strict restrictions to determine the final choice, but rather provided additional context so that the most appropriate cities would be identified.

3. Population growth:

The relative growth in population between 2011 and 2016 was another element that influenced the selection of the cities. Population growth was determined to be one way to indicate growth in a city, which can translate loosely into additional development in a city. While I did not restrict my selection of cities to a specific rate of growth, it was helpful to indicate which cities were likely to have the most development occurring within their boundaries.

4.Development growth:

Indicators of development growth include the number of projects approved, started and completed within the city. This project is focusing solely on residential development growth.

5.Regional connections:

Another indicator of potential high development pressure was the road and transportation connections of the selected city. These connections included highway and regional road connections across municipal boundaries, as well as bus and rapid transit connections to the greater region. I looked at the connectivity of the selected city, noting whether they had any Skytrain stations or major transit hubs. Additionally, I noted whether there were significant highway or regional road connections.

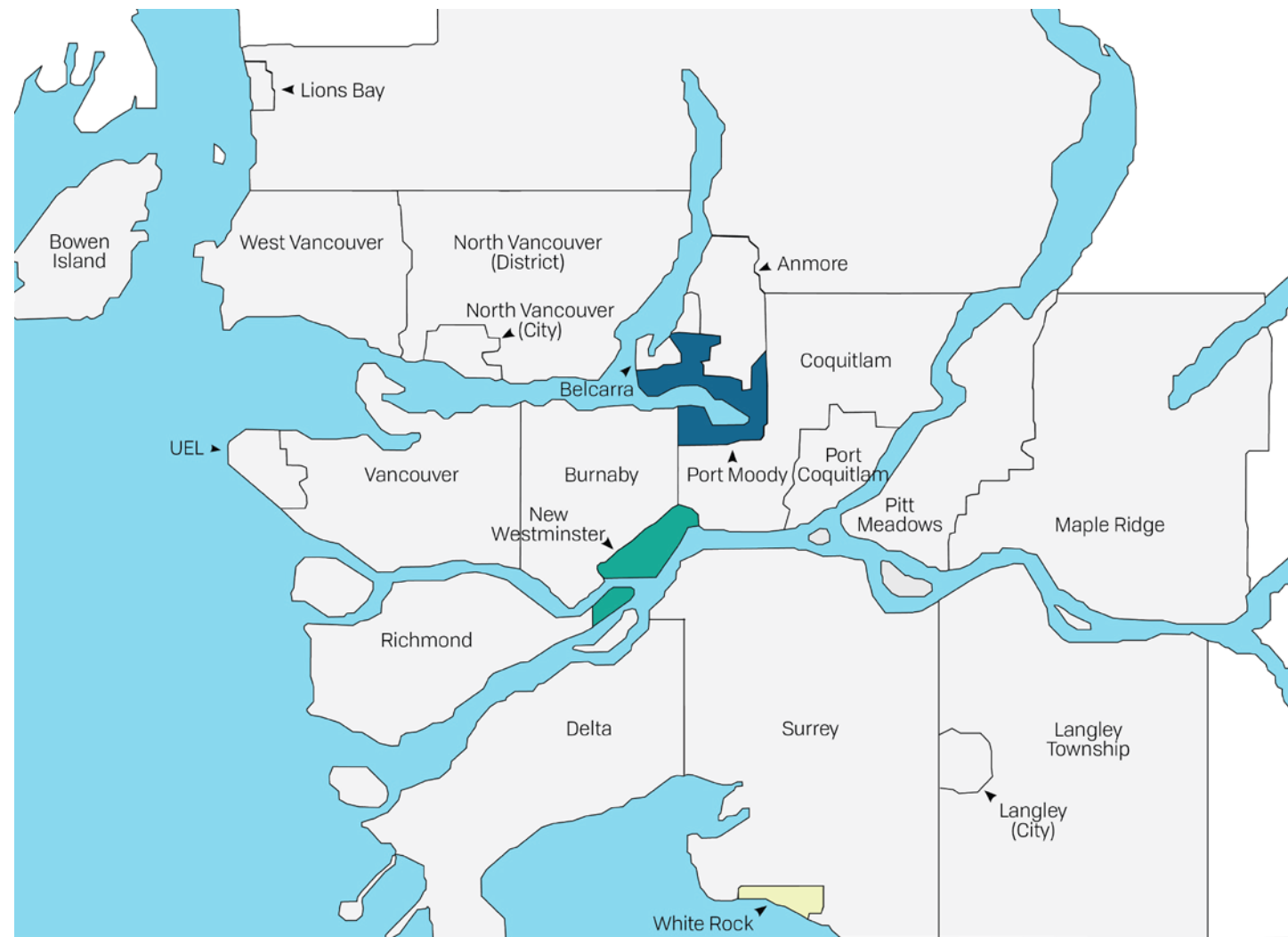
6.Additional information:

To determine the final selection of cities, I considered primarily the above criteria but also took into consideration any additional indicators, including intercity development pressures.

Ultimately, Port Moody, New Westminister and White Rock were determined to be ideal cities for examination. Port Moody, although it has seen limited population growth in recent years, was chosen because it was home to two new rapid transit (Skytrain) stations, better linking it to the greater region. Since then, Port

Moody has seen an increase in infill development applications particularly in areas near the new transit centres (Connolly, 2018). Connected to the region by a variety of regional roads, it does not have a major highway running through the city but is in proximity to Highway 1 which passes through Burnaby and

FIGURE 5 |
Map of Metro Vancouver with Selected Cities.



Coquitlam. The lack of major highway posits a more ‘small town’ environment than one along a major road network. New Westminster saw the highest population growth between 2011 and 2016 at a rate of 9.76%, followed by Maple Ridge at 8.16%. New Westminster, however, is home to five Skytrain stations, two bridges crossing the Fraser River and is immediately adjacent to Highway 1. While having a noticeably

larger population and arguably a more urbanized built form than other options considered, the historically semi-rural neighbourhood of Queensborough was identified as an area in New Westminster that fits the conditions considered in this research. Maple Ridge was removed from consideration as much of the growth in the municipality was determined to be single-family detached housing, which is outside the scope of this research. White Rock was chosen as the third option, as it is seeing increased infill development spurred on by the growth of nearby South Surrey. Its distance from Vancouver and relative isolation from the rest of the region provide a unique perspective to this research. Pitt Meadows and Port Coquitlam, while growing, were not determined to have significant multi-family developments fitting the outlined criteria.

Within each of these three cities, three development proposals were chosen in order to bring a variety of viewpoints and details into the analysis. These projects were selected using the following criteria:

1.Date of Approval:

Since I was looking at high development pressures, I sought out projects that were recently

approved by City Council and have gone through the development application process recently. By doing this, I was able to restrict my selection of approved projects to specific time periods and could better identify the effect of development pressure on the process. The selected projects were the most recently approved projects that fit within the other criteria and had publicly available planning reports. I did not consider projects that were approved prior to 2016.

2.Development Uses:

This research sought to look at multi-family residential development. As a result, I chose projects that were primarily residential only projects. Only one project chosen contained additional uses and it was selected because the commercial space was determined to be minimal and the project’s residential approval process outweighed the presence of the commercial space.

3.Building Type:

In looking solely at multi-family residential projects, I sought projects that fit the multi-family designation. As a result, I did not consider greenfield projects that proposed single-family only residences.

4. Project Scale:

Due to the limited timeframe of this project, I chose to focus on smaller development proposals, and ignore any multi-block residential projects. This was quite easy to do as most large-scale projects propose a mix of uses, including residential and commercial. However, residential only projects were limited to 300 units and a single-city block. Multi-parcel projects were

considered as it was determined that these types of projects could be quite common. Small projects of only a handful of units were also not considered. This was because smaller multi-family projects can be developed within the constraints of the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Zoning Bylaw. As a result, it was determined that these projects would not have many discussions in terms of negotiations between planning staff and the developer.

Using this criteria, nine total developments were chosen to be examined, as outlined in Table 1.

TABLE 1 | Selected Projects with Application Details.

City	Date of Approval	Development Uses	Building Type	Project Scale
3131 & 3137 St John's Street, Port Moody	January 23, 2018	Residential - Rental	6-storey apartment building	142-units in 1 building
64-74 Seaview Drive, Port Moody	February 13, 2018	Residential - Market	3-storey townhouses	28 units over 4 buildings
3010-3042, 3009-3029, and 3037-3113 St George Street, Port Moody	February 13, 2018	Residential - Market	Two 6-storey apartment buildings, 3-storey townhouses	282-units across multiple buildings.
728-734 Ewen Avenue, New Westminster	January 29, 2018	Residential - Market	3-storey townhouses	37 total units
1102-1122 Salter Street, New Westminster	November 6, 2017	Residential - Market	Ground oriented townhouses and duplex	78 total units
1002-1020 Auckland Street, New Westminster	December 4, 2017	Residential - Market	6-storey apartment building and 13 townhouse units	88 total units
14825 Thrift Avenue, White Rock	June 12, 2017	Residential - Market	10-storey apartment building	25 units in 1 building
1456 Johnston Road, White Rock	September 17, 2018	Mixed-use - Rental residential	6-storey mixed used with 5-storey residential	29 units in 1 building.
15241 Thrift Ave, White Rock	July 24, 2017	Residential - Market	14-storey apartment building	88 units in 1 building

Content Analysis

With the projects determined, I was able to continue with the content analysis. This analysis was conducted using the final planning reports presented to council during the third and final reading prior to the issuance of the development permit. Both the City of Port Moody and the City of New Westminster planning departments provided detailed staff reports as part of the consolidated package of materials for final review at the council meeting where third reading is scheduled to occur. The City of White Rock, however, does not provide detailed staff reports as part of the council package for third reading. The most recent and relevant staff report found is instead provided to the Land Use and Planning Committee meeting for the applicable project. Land Use Committee agendas for the projects in the City of Port Moody and New Westminster were examined to ensure the reliability of the findings. It was determined that the Land Use Committee Reports and the final Council Reports provided similar information, with the final Council report incorporating information raised post-Land Use Committee. As a result, the final planning reports for projects in the City of Port Moody and the City of New Westminster were used. For the City

of White Rock, where this information was unavailable, further information was provided through the interview stage of the research.

To address the questions of this research project, the documents were manually coded in various ways. Overall, this coding was divided into three different groups. The first group of codes addressed the applicable policies outlined in the documents and the level of compliance of each project. The documents were coded to identify where a planning or development policy was cited explicitly in the report. Statements where a policy was implicitly referenced were also identified. From these identified statements, the appropriate policy was identified, and the level of compliance was assessed. Most statements' compliance was determined to be one of the following: not compliant, compliant, and compliant after amendments. Additionally, this level of coding also identified further restrictions placed on the development, either through enacted policy or policy to be enacted as a result of development negotiations.

The second grouping of codes identified the different groups involved in the development application process and any conversations regarding the project in question. These were identified early on as being divided

into the public sector and the private sector. While on the private side, there was typically only the developer and affiliated design firms, the public side included the different levels of government and their offices along with the general public. This group of codes also identified, as much as can be determined, the role and position that each group or individual took during the overall negotiation.

The final grouping of codes identified the particular elements of the developments' design that were discussed in the planning reports. These design elements were first identified whenever they were addressed in the documents. Following this, these elements were broken down into categories and recoded to ensure accuracy. This grouping of codes had overlap between the various categories of design elements as the same project detail addressed in the documents was found to speak to more than one category. Furthermore, this last grouping of codes was linked back to the other two groupings to identify which design elements or categories were addressed by the public or private sector, as well as how the policy tools were incorporated into the discussions of the project's design.

Interviews

To complement the observations and analysis made through this content analysis, I conducted interviews with two parties, city planners and representatives from development companies. These interviews were constructed to provide a more nuanced understanding of the development process, particularly the negotiations that occurred between the developer and the municipality. By conducting interviews with developers, I had hoped to hear how their projects initially took shape, gain a better understanding of the motivations behind design elements in the proposal and better understand their level of willingness to collaborate with the municipality. I had also hoped to hear from municipal staff regarding further details on how they assessed a development project, what contributed to their assessment and their level of willingness to collaborate with the developer. Ultimately, I sought to understand how these collaborations, or potentially lack thereof, played out and how the development was shaped as a result, which was not always evident in the content analysis. The interviews provided the developers and municipalities the opportunities to give their perspective of the application process and provide their

insight on how development negotiations work between the city and the developer

In order to obtain the desired information in these interviews, I decided to interview both city officials and developers. City officials, particularly staff in the planning department, were chosen as an interview group as they would be able to speak to the city's motivations behind various decisions and comments regarding a development proposal. As such, planning staff associated with the various projects were chosen as the primary contact to speak on those projects. Developers of the chosen projects were also chosen to provide insight into decisions made throughout the development application process. Specific people or roles within the company were not specified. However, I sought to speak with someone acting as project manager or similar, as they would most likely be able to speak to the various elements of the project, including the design changes made and the negotiations with the city.

I conducted four interviews from 12 initial requests. Five planners were contacted to speak about the nine projects. This was possible as a single planner was able to talk about multiple projects, as they were the primary planners for the given projects. Of the

five requests to planning, three responded positively to the request and were interviewed, while the other two have moved on from their positions and were not able to be further contacted. The remaining seven requests were for developers. Similar to planning staff, some developers were owners of multiple projects and were therefore able to be contacted regarding multiple projects. Of these seven requests, only one agreed to be interviewed.

The interviews were constructed as semi-structured interviews, where a set of questions were kept ensuring that certain details were addressed. The semi-structured nature of the interview allowed the conversation to deviate from the listed questions in order to obtain clarity and allowed the interviewee to elaborate on specific questions or details as they saw fit. These questions, catered to municipal planners and developers, are attached as Appendices A and B. These questions maintained the flow and direction of the interview, while clarifying questions were used to more closely examine specific elements of the project, both physically and process-wise.

The interviews were coded using the same coding framework as the documents above.



Literature Review

The literature review sets the context of the project within the larger body of knowledge to date. This review focused on key elements of my research questions, specifically the concept of ‘the public interest’ and the notion of development negotiations, which are being discussed in this research in an environment with high development pressures. As such, I have first outlined high development pressures as noted by Peter Larkham and how this situates the research being conducted in this project. From here, I looked at the concept of ‘the public interest’, which is commonly discussed in planning discourse and is often regarded as a key motivating factor in many planning decisions. For this reason, it was important to understand what ‘the public interest’ is and why it is so important to the field of planning. To do this, I looked at earlier definitions and understandings of the concept – including any potential

FIGURE 6 |
Public Engagement Initiative in the City of Vancouver.

confusion – and discussed how they have allowed us to understand the concept of ‘the public interest’ today. I further looked at discussions on how development negotiations have occurred in the past, paying particular attention to residential development negotiations. In this section of the review, I sought to better understand how development negotiations have been presented in literature, and whether this knowledge could still be applied to the present day. The literature review allowed me to identify how these key points might affect each other in a theorized way, which will be further examined in the original research.

I have framed my research questions in relation to the idea of high development pressure. As such, it is important that we understand the effects high development pressure may have on development. Peter Larkham (1990) presents a detailed discussion on how development pressures may be accurately defined and measured. In his article, it becomes immediately apparent that the idea of development pressures

operates on several assumptions, some of which cannot be accurately quantified. Additionally, once a definition of development pressure has been determined, it can often be difficult to provide measurements for this pressure. As Larkham notes, the measurement can be used with an index of planning applications in a given period or a given area, or even a given population. Such indicators are up to the discretion of the research and there is not a standardized formula for calculation. Larkham does note that the concept of development pressure is very useful highlights a relationship between developers and local policy that is not always discussed. He further states that this interface is often where the citizen is most affected, which adds to its importance (Larkham, 1990). Do to the complexity of measuring and assessing high development pressures, this research simply acknowledges the presence of these pressures on the selected projects and instead focuses on the importance of the public interest and negotiations in the development process.

The Public Interest

Before we are able to accurately discuss the concept of the public interest, it is important to

acknowledge what we mean when we are talking about the 'public'. Only after we reach consensus on our understanding of the public can we begin to unravel the discussion of what the public interest is and its importance in the planning process.

Who is the public? This was the first question that needed to be answered. The basic definition of 'public' defines it as a "the people as a whole" or "a group of people having common interests or characteristics" (Merriam Webster, 2018). This definition identifies the public as a collective group, but also identifies that the public can be organized into groups with similar common characteristics or interests. For example, the public may be the citizens of a given municipality or neighbourhood, which shows a collective whole while also depicting a group of people who share the common characteristic of calling the given place their home.

This simple definition is significant when discussing the 'public interest.' However, it is important to further identify specifically who might be considered 'the public.' Here, we are presented with multiple different possibilities of who the public might be. This is because the public includes multiple different layers, including both the public community and the government

(Safdie, 1988; Verhage & Needham, 1997). Both can be considered to be the public but function differently in their roles as the public. The public community consists of the overall individuals in the community; the people as a whole. As a result, they share commonality in their share occupation of place but there is evidence of differences and diversity within this public. The governmental layers of the public include the federal/state/provincial or even local governments who, in the North American context, are elected to represent the public community on an administrative level. As representatives, they are meant to act in the public's interest throughout all processes, including the planning and development process. Both layers of the public act with the public interest in mind although, as evidenced below, the public interest is not always universally agreed upon.

So, what is the public interest? "The public interest has long been a fundamental concept in city planning" (Friedmann, Nisbett & Gans, 1973, p.10) and dates back even to the ancient republics of Greece and Rome, as noted by the term *res publica*, meaning 'the public thing' (Alexander, 2002; Friedmann, Nisbet & Gans, 1973). Much of what has historically consisted

planning practice has revolved around the notion of providing the goods and services to the public and in the interest of the public (Friedmann, Nisbett & Gans, 1973). As Friedmann points out, however, the idea of public interest has not always been well received. This is largely in part because the idea of the public interest, while a long-standing notion in planning practice, has always been difficult to define; "people agree on its significance but dispute its meaning and content" (Grant, 2005, p.48). Although there have been many positions on what the 'public interest' is, there has always been significant debate on the matter and the existing literature remains in consensus at the inconclusively of all of these possible interpretations. As a result, the public interest remains an ever present and prominent concept in today's planning practice, with many planners using the concept as a way of legitimizing their decisions, despite having little to concretely define it as a concept (Grant, 2005). The existence of an actual public interest is still debated to this day (Alexander, 2002).

The public interest is should not be confused with the public good, which also frequents planning literature. Not unlike the public interest, the public good can be considered as something shared or held in

common. Similar to the public interest, it is something that is difficult to define. However, the two are not the same. Friedmann, when discussing the public interest, argues that the public good, unique from the public interest, is something difficult to define but something that society requires to function. It is connected to the moral foundation of a community (Friedmann, Nisbet & Gans, 1973). On the other hand, one definition of the public interest considers it to be a “utilitarian notion arrived at quite simply by the summation of individual interests” (Friedmann, Nisbet & Gans, 1973).

In simple terms, the public interest could be considered to be something that pertains to the welfare or well-being of the general public. In American law practice, the definition of public interest is notably quite similar, being “anything affecting the rights, health, or finances of the public at large” (West’s Encyclopedia of American Law, 2008). These definitions provide a basic level understanding of the public interest being something that affects the general public. This complements Gans and Friedmann’s notion of the public interest as something that provides goods and services to the public and in the interest of the public.

Any definition of the public interest does not

adequately acknowledge what it means to be in the public interest. In some cases, the definition of what is in the public interest might be too vague, while other cases show the definition as being too narrow. Benditt presents a position for the public interest as argued previously by Barry and suggests that what is in the public interest is only what everyone can agree upon and nothing else (Benditt, 1973). For example, if everyone agreed that medical services were a basic human right, then that would be considered in the public interest. However, if everyone agreed that medical services were a basic human right but only some agreed that the mental health should be included in medical services, then only the former statement would be considered in the public interest. Because of the specificity of what should be considered in the public interest, with unanimous consensus being required, very few things can be considered in the public interest. Even then, it is most likely to be a vague statement that is agreed upon, rather than specific actionable items. Indeed, James Simmie argues that there in fact, no such thing as a singular public interest but rather there are a number of different and competing interests (Moroni, 2004).

Utilitarianism is a commonly noted framework

for the public interest in planning and has had significant impact on public policy (Campbell & Marshall, 2002, p.175). The framework of utilitarianism can be described simply as the ‘sum of the self-defined interests’ (Campbell & Marshall, 2002). In other words, utilitarianism is the sum of all individual interests to make up the public interest. In theory, the individual stands at the centre of utilitarianism. However, in practice, there is a balance between the public and private interests that much be achieved, with the “individual’s pursuit of private pleasure is consonant with the collective good as represented by general welfare” (Campbell & Marshall, 2002, p.175). As a result, it often falls upon governments to enact decisions in the public interest, as they ideally are acting on behalf of the greater public (Grant, 2005). Overall, the most popular consensus among planning literature is that a balance between the individual interest and the collective interest must be established. Determining this balance remains up for debate.

In the 1970s, Friedmann argued that the idea of the public interest had fallen on bad times. This was in part because of the idea that what was perceived to be in the public interest was in fact not at all. Instead,

it was argued that many things done under the guise of being in the public interest were actually done in the interest of the private party (Friedmann, Nisbet and Gans, 1973). Friedmann himself goes so far as to argue that even the public policy of zoning was not, in fact, created in the public interest but rather by economic elites who wanted to control land use and prevent the introduction of anything they deemed undesirable (Friedmann, Nisbet & Gans, 1973). As a result, the public interest in the context of professional planning practice has had to rebuild its own image and understanding. Today, it is still used to justify the decisions of planners, although the debate surrounding it still continues. This debate continues to change since, as Grant notes, “our conceptualization of the public interest is inevitably framed by a particular space and time” (Grant, 2005, p.48).

The public interest is a concept widely discussed, especially in the practice of planning. Ultimately, it is a concept that is difficult to define, making it something difficult to obtain. However, the public interest is a crucial concept to professional planning practice. This research examines the public interest and acknowledges the potential conflicting understandings of this concept

in planning practice. The findings have reflected this conflict in various reports, noting how different publics may have varying opinions.

Negotiations in Planning Practice.

Planning professionals often refer to the public interest as a means of justifying their decisions to the general populace. This can be commonly seen throughout the planning practice, including development planning. Often the public interest may be used to argue a specific position for allowing or rejecting a certain proposal, and the potential negotiations that ensue. These negotiations are an important aspect of this research project, as the project specifically examines the negotiation process between planning staff and developers in residential multi-family development application. In particular, the research aims to understand what it is that is most negotiated, and how and why they are negotiated. Past literature has discussed negotiations in development, highlighting that the most critical and valuable state for developers in the entire development process is the pre-development stage (Kosavinta, Krairit & Khang, 2017), where many of these negotiations take place.

These negotiations typically revolve around money or financial constraints. Negotiations for the housing development process typically take place between the public and private actors regarding the financing of certain elements of the project (Verhage & Needham, 1997). Verhage and Needham argue that the outcomes of negotiations between the development and municipality come down to three things: how much money will something cost, whose money is it and who decides what to do with that money?

The level of policy enforcement can also be a significant factor in how negotiations occur in the development process, even when talking about the financing of a project. Many local governments maintain impact or development fees to manage the public costs the development in the municipality. However, many local governments are also finding it increasingly hard to manage costs and are thus resorting to creating additional financial agreements with developers to move a project forward, which are often called exactions (Weschler & Mushkatel, 1987).

In the past, municipalities have enforced strict codes to manage development. These codes are enforced in legislation, which has allowed the municipalities to

dictate what happens in a given community. Legislation often outlines land use and similar details, but some scholars note that there is still considerable room to negotiate specific details regarding a project (Weschler & Mushkatel, 1987).

New developments and governments are adopting more flexible codes and zones to allow for innovative planning and design. Such innovation, brought about by the removal of strict codes on development, requires increased cooperation between both the public and private sectors (Ben-Joseph, 2004). This is where negotiations can often occur, as both players are meeting on seemingly equal footing.

Equal footing at the negotiation table is not necessarily the case, however. In their discussion of privately-owned public space in New York, Yoon and Srinivasan note that the privately-owned public spaces are created through a collaboration between the public and private sectors. This negotiation between the two sectors occurs as a result of density bonusing incentives to contribute to the public good (Yoon and Srinivasan, 2015). Density bonusing is an increasing common policy that grants additional density in exchange for something else, either financially or design wise, that the

municipality has determined to be in the public interest.

Yoon and Srinivasan have noted that this negotiation of public space and density bonusing may not actually be as equitable as first imagined. Indeed, Weschler and Mushkatel note that the use of exactions has caused a blurring of the line “between what is voluntary action on the part of developers and what is governmentally mandated” (Weschler & Mushkatel, 1987, p.63). This can be seen in contrast to the form-based codes discussed by Ben-Joseph, where the codes are negotiated between the developer and government without significant governmental mandates.

Overall, negotiations between developer and government occur in the development process in several different ways, throughout which it can be argued that the level of power a municipality has over the developer depends largely on the policy framework in which they are set. This research has taken explored the negotiations that have occurred between developer and government and how that has affected the overall approved development.

FIGURE 7 |
Map of the Metro Vancouver Municipalities.



Context

The Regional Context

The metropolitan region of Vancouver (Metro Vancouver) is located on the south-west coast of mainland British Columbia. The region sits at the mouth of the Fraser River and is bordered to the north by the North Shore mountains and to the south by the Canada-US border. The Fraser River valley extends east into the BC mountain ranges. The region consists of 21 municipalities, one electoral area, and one Treaty First Nation. It is the third largest metropolitan region in the country, after Toronto and Montreal (Statistics Canada, 2017B).

The region is often perceived as a very desirable place to live, which is reflected in the continued growth of the region. The region expects continued growth of over 35,000 residents annually, surpassing three million people by 2031 (Metro Vancouver, 2017). The region has seen immense development activity over the past decade. The activity has continued to grow since the

economic downturn of the late 2000s. By 2016, the region saw annual housing starts exceeding 25,000 annually (Housing Data Book, 2019). The following year, 21,000 units were completed. These figures indicate a high rate of residential growth in the region which is predicted to continue based on the current trend of growth.

Despite this housing growth, the region is experiencing a significant housing crisis, spurred on by a significantly overpriced housing market. The region estimates that approximately 45% of all renters are paying more than the affordability threshold, which is 30% of the household income (Metro Vancouver, 2016). As a result, Metro Vancouver's regional Growth Strategy has been designed with these conditions in mind, pointing to a need for additional affordable and appropriate housing for new and/or aging residents.

The Port Moody Context

The City of Port Moody is a 'middle ring' suburb municipality of Metro Vancouver, approximately 20 kilometers from downtown Vancouver. It is a port community located at the eastern end of the Burrard Inlet, and was intended as the original terminus of the Canadian National Railway. Today, the Port of Vancouver maintains some port activities in the municipality. Port Moody is often grouped together with its neighboring municipalities, Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam. These three cities are known together as the Tri-Cities.

In 2016, Port Moody's population was ~30,000, and saw only a 1.6% growth from 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2017A). The city has seen steady redevelopment over the years, to accommodate this growth. Recently, the regional rapid transit, the Skytrain, has connected Port Moody with the rest of the region with two stations inside the city limits. Since the opening of these two new stations, development interest has increased in the city, particularly around these two transit stations. The municipality does not have any provincial highways running through it anymore, as Provincial Highway 7A was decommissioned in 2006.

The New Westminster Context

The City of New Westminster is one of the oldest incorporated municipalities in British Columbia. It was chosen as the original capital of British Columbia in 1865. However, the capital was relocated shortly thereafter. New Westminster was established due to its strategic location as a hillside settlement on the north side of the Fraser River. New Westminster is often considered to be the geographic centre of Metro Vancouver and is often associated with nearby Burnaby.

New Westminster is the most populous of the three selected municipalities with over 70,000 residents as of 2016, which is an increase of 9.76% from 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2017A). The city is extremely connected by road and transit to the rest of Metro Vancouver, with five Skytrain stations, two significant crossings of the Fraser River, and is immediately adjacent to Hwy 1. Its location between Vancouver and the rapidly growing City of Surrey has contributed to New Westminster's significant development. Much of this large-scale development is occurring in the form of mixed-use towers in the downtown and uptown neighbourhoods of the city. However, residential areas are also experiencing infill growth. In

particular, the historically semi-rural neighbourhood of Queensborough is seeing significant development in the form of low-rise multi-family residential projects.

The White Rock Context

The City of White Rock is located on the southern edge of the region, approximately 30 kilometres from downtown Vancouver. Historically quite isolated from the rest of the urban areas to the north, the City of White Rock is today often associated with South Surrey, a neighbourhood in the City of Surrey that completely surrounds the City of White Rock. White Rock and South Surrey are disconnected from the rest of Metro Vancouver by means of the Agricultural Land Reserve, which allocated specific land towards agricultural land uses. The land use designation is placed on lands that separate this area from the rest of the region. Limited bus and road connections prevent White Rock and South Surrey from benefitting from the same Transit Oriented Development pressures seen in New Westminster and Port Moody.

The City of White Rock has a population of 19,000 residents, with a population growth of 3.2% from 2011 (Statistic Canada, 2017B). The city is small in

area. Being a fully built out municipality, White Rock has no opportunity for growth beyond infill development. Continued growth from South Surrey continues to put pressure on development in White Rock. As a result, the city therefore is seeing areas that were previously single family being converted to multifamily.

The Selected Projects

3131-3137 St John's Street, Port Moody

Approved in 2018, the project on St John's Street in central Port Moody, is a 6-storey residential only apartment building with a total of 142 units. The project, here on known as the St Johns project, has been designated as a rental property for the next 20 years, after which it can be stratified and sold at market rates. The St Johns project is located along the city's busiest main road and was previously designated for mixed-use development before being approved for an OCP amendment and rezoning.

64-74 Seaview Drive, Port Moody

Approved in 2018, this project is a 4-building, 28-unit townhouse development on the western side of Port Moody. The project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project, here on known as the Seaview project, is located at the intersection of Seaview Drive, a semi-isolated single-family street, and Clarke Road, a busy arterial road nicknamed 'Snake Hill' for its winding right-of-way and steep incline. The Seaview project is located on the hillside and utilizes the hill's slope in its design.

3010-3042, 3009-3029, and 3037-3113 St George Street, Port Moody

Approved in 2018, the project at 3010-3042, 3009-3029, and 3037-3113 St George Street, is a multi-parcel redevelopment project that takes up the majority of the 3000 block of St George Street in Port Moody. The project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project, here on known as the St George project, features two, six-storey buildings on the north side of St George Street for 179 total units. The south side of the street features two separate parcels of townhouse units. The three parcels are connected by Dallas Creek, which runs through the project, crossing St George mid-block and continuing north towards the Burrard Inlet. As part of the project, Dallas Creek has been heavily re-naturalized. The area around the Creek will be dedicated back to the city as park and greenway space.

1002-1020 Auckland Street, New Westminster

Approved in 2017, the project at 1002-1020 Auckland Street is an 88-unit mixed form building, incorporating both townhouse units and apartment units into a single site. The project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project,

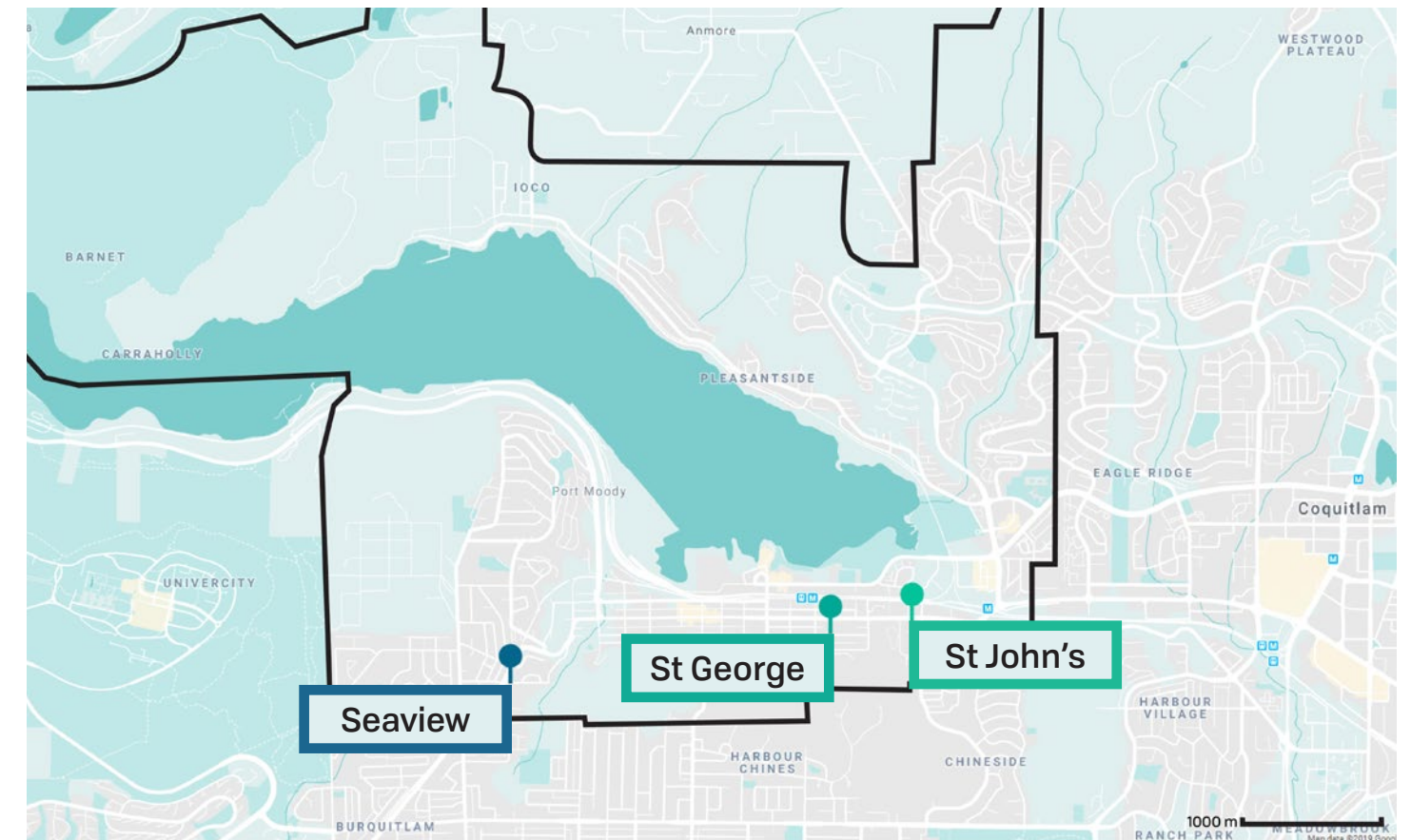
here on known as the Auckland project, utilizes the slope of the hill to maximize the area of the parking structure, which is in turn hidden by the 13 townhouse units on the lower side of the street. A six-storey apartment building with the remaining 75 units is located on the high side of the street on top of the proposed parking structure. This project is located on the mainland of New Westminister, while the remaining two projects examined are

located within the Lulu Island neighbourhood of Queensborough.

728-734 Ewen Avenue, New Westminister

Approved in 2017, 728-734 Ewen Avenue is a 37-unit townhouse development along Ewen Avenue, the main street of the Queensborough neighbourhood of New Westminister. The project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project, here on known as the Ewen project, is located adjacent to 746 Ewen Avenue, which has also been rezoned

FIGURE 8 |
Map of Port Moody with Selected Projects



to allow for future townhouse development. The two projects are closely intertwined and incorporate many shared features, including emergency access and side circulation.

1102-1122 Salter Street, New Westminister

Approved in 2017, the project at 1102-1122 Salter Street is a 78-unit multi-family residential project,

FIGURE 9 |
Map of New Westminister with Selected Projects

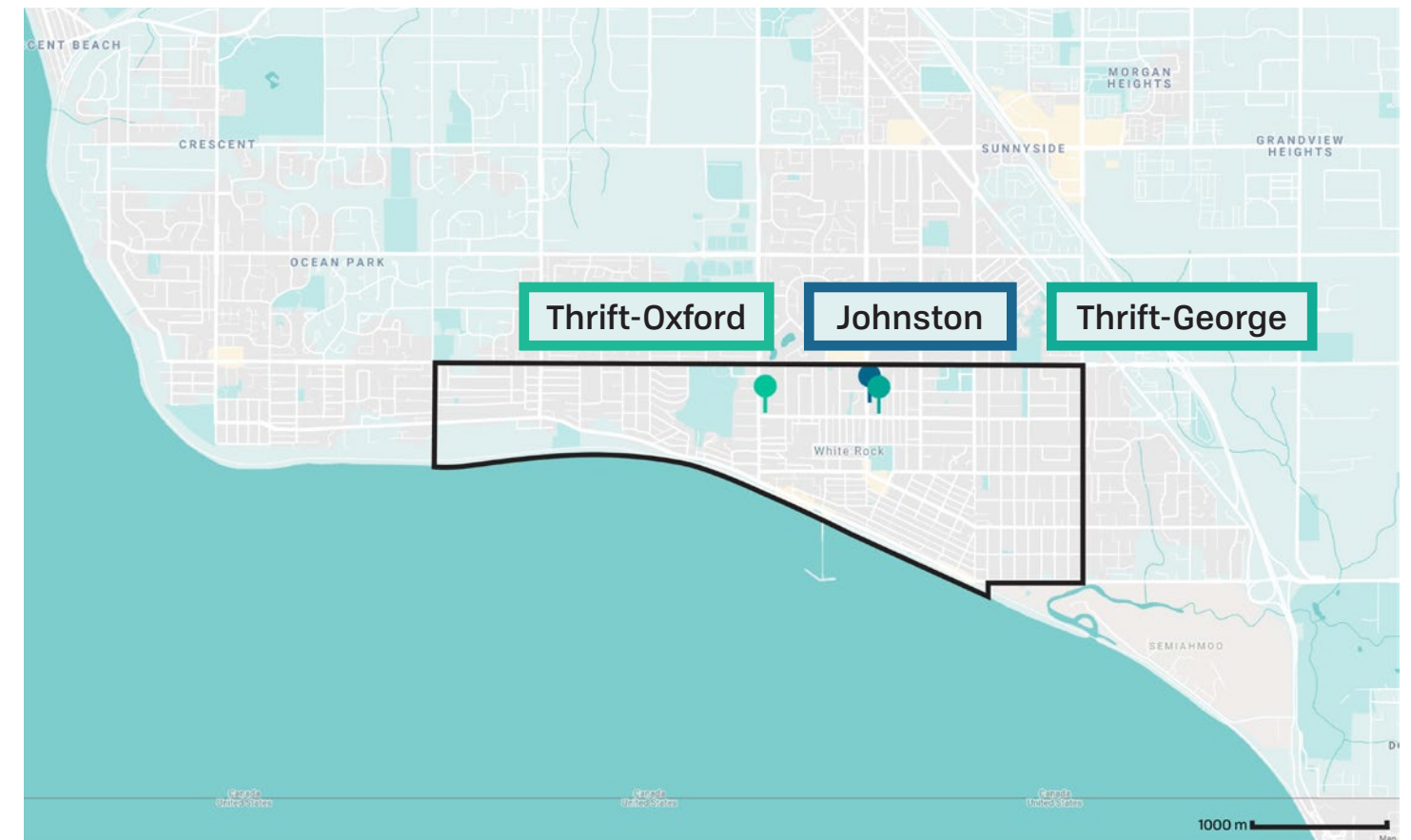


located in the Queensborough neighbourhood of New Westminister. The project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project, here on known as the Salter project, includes 18-units in duplex buildings, 14 rowhouses, 10 compact lot homes and 36 townhouses. This is the only project to include residential units that are considered 'single-family' in form, particularly the compact lot homes. Due to the multi-family nature of the other forms proposed in the project and its existing land-use designation, it is still included in this analysis.

1456 Johnston Road, White Rock

The project at 1456 Johnston Road is a six-storey mixed-use development in the heart of White Rock's Town Centre. The project, here on known as the Johnston project, includes ground level commercial, which is proposed at the developer's future office space, and five storeys of residential. The project is noteworthy for its inclusion of 12 units allocated for rental in

FIGURE 10 |
Map of White Rock with Selected Projects



perpetuity, while the remaining units will remain as rental for the first 10 years. The project also incorporates a unique parking strategy to try and mitigate the significant reduction of available parking by sharing visitor stalls between the residential and commercial units. This site was originally approved for a two storey mixed-use development as part of the development application for the adjacent Avra building.

15241 Thrift Avenue, White Rock

The project at 15241 Thrift Avenue is located just off Johnston Road, White Rock's main street. The

project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project, here on known as the Thrift-George project (due to its proximity to George Street), is an 88-unit, 14-storey residential only tower. The project is the tallest proposed project examined in this research. A previous 14 storey project was previously approved on the site as part of the development application for the adjacent Saltaire building, which has since been completed.

14825 Thrift Avenue, White Rock

The project at 14825 Thrift Avenue is located along Thrift Avenue, in a primarily residential neighbourhood. The project is intended to be developed as market rate fee simple units. The project, here on known as the Thrift-Oxford project (due to its proximity to Oxford Street), is a 10-storey residential only building. Despite being one of the taller buildings assessed in this research, this project has the lowest unit count at only 25 total units.

Relevant Policies and Documents

An Official Community Plan is an adopted bylaw in a municipality that helps guide decision-making across all departments, but most directly in terms of planning and development. Guided by provincial legislation and a vision for the future of the community, a municipality may adopt an OCP that includes certain statements including the approximate location, amount and type of future residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, agricultural, recreation and public land uses (City of Port Moody, 2014). An OCP will also include policies regarding housing, and may additionally include regulations on environmental protection, form and character objectives, and more (City of Port Moody, 2014).

As the overarching city-wide policy for BC municipalities, community plans provide a vision for what the municipalities strive for moving into the future. With this vision in mind, communities create strategies and other guidelines that will help them achieve the overall vision for the city. These guidelines are often included directly into the community plan as a section of the policy, although some may be presented separately as appendices to the OCP. These guidelines include

specific land use designations, development permit areas and area specific plans, or neighbourhood plans.

Within the OCP, municipalities provide general directions into the city's proposed land use, often creating land use designations that future developments must follow. Cities adopt their own land use designations and development permit areas based on the assessed needs and demands of the community. The land use designations have specific parameters that a development must follow to be permitted on the designated site. These designations only indicate a desired direction. For example, a land-use designation may indicate a specific residential area is to be designated single-family residential, while the area around main street might be designated as mixed-use. As a result, future developments know what the intended build out of the neighbourhood is and can proposed project accordingly. The OCP can be amended to allow for changes to land use, including to allow for a development to be approved. In these cases, a property owner must make an application to amend the property's land use designation. This application can often be submitted concurrently with the development application, as seen in the chosen projects for this research.

Municipalities are also authorized to create designated areas to regulate development in the area for various reasons including the maintenance of a certain form and character of an area, the protection of environmental features such as water bodies and watercourse, the protection of development from hazardous conditions, and the promotion of energy and water conservation. These Development Permit Areas are unique to the local municipality based on the needs and concerns of the community. For example, Port Moody has adopted a Development Permit Area for their heritage neighbourhood in order to maintain the prominent heritage buildings in the area and ensure that new development matches this heritage character. Alternatively, New Westminster has adopted a Development Permit Areas for the Fraser River Floodplain as the entire neighbourhood of Queensborough in located on the floodplain and subject to flooding hazards. Because of this permit area, certain regulations must be met in all new developments.

The OCP provides guidelines for the entire municipality. However, specific areas or neighbourhoods may need more comprehensive guidelines because of their unique context. In this scenario, neighbourhood

or area plans are created to ensure the additional guidelines are provided. These guidelines, as a result, are more context specific as they consider the unique situation of the given neighbourhood and are able to provide specific details to the neighbourhood's growth rather than general broad strokes. Depending on the size of the municipality and the scale of the plan, area plans can be found as part of the OCP documents, or as a supplemental document to the City-wide plan. In New West, the Queensborough neighbourhood, being isolated from the rest of the city, has its own neighbourhood plan to address the unique concerns of the local community.

The Queensborough neighbourhood is currently experiencing significant redevelopment as the neighbourhood moves from a historically semi-rural and large lot single family neighbourhood to a more compact form residential neighbourhood. Given its unique context located on the flood plains of Lulu Island rather than the north shore of the Fraser River, New Westminster has developed a neighbourhood specific plan for Queensborough, called the Queensborough Community Plan. The QCP, is a supplementary document to New Westminster's

OCP and was created to help direct future growth and development in the Queensborough community. Two of the projects examined, are located in Queensborough and are therefore subject to the policies outlined in the Queensborough Community Plan. It should be noted, however, that the Queensborough Community Plan acts as the Official Community Plan for the Queensborough neighbourhood.

Findings

The purpose of this research project was to examine the development application process from the perspectives of both the public sector municipal planning staff and the private sector developer. Through this research, where I investigated planning reports of recently approved development applications, I intended to outline the relationship between the public and private sector in negotiating all elements of the proposed project. Through the analysis of these planning reports, I explored the importance of the public interest and development pressures on the negotiations and eventual approval of the applications. This analysis came through a thorough manual coding of the planning reports and of the interviews with planning staff and developers that supplemented this document analysis.

Overall, I coded the planning reports of nine projects across three municipalities in Metro Vancouver. I interviewed three city planners and one development representative, and subsequently coded those interviews. This coding identified key findings that are presented

below. These findings provided a variety of insights into the negotiations that occurred while approving development permits for residential projects.

What Policies Have Influenced the Proposed Project?

The findings of this research have been analysed and have been divided into key themes. To determine these themes, I divided my findings according to the research questions posed at the outset of this project. Since the first question focused on the importance of the public interest during the development process, I will discuss how the 'public interest' is addressed in the planning reports and in the interviews conducted. These findings have been divided into three parts: municipally determined public interest, developer interest, and developer-municipal relation. Prior to this, however, I will discuss the municipal policies that were highlighted in the reports and interviews of this research, and how they have impacted the overall negotiations of the

proposed projects. These municipal policies, which act as regulatory tools and dictate the type of development that should occur in a given area, are crucial in understanding how the 'public interest' is discussed between developer and municipality.

In coding these planning reports, I found that they referenced two key policy documents to determine whether the proposed development complied with city policies, the Official Community Plan (OCP) and the Zoning Bylaw. As the overarching development plan for each city, the OCP was frequently referenced in the planning reports, particularly in terms of land use designation. The Zoning Bylaw was referenced frequently in the reports due to its significance as a fine-grained implementation tool for proposed development to follow. Both policy documents were further referenced by all interviewees.

As the overarching development framework for the municipality, the OCP provides the municipality with a general set of guidelines for future development. Within this framework, I found that the most referenced aspect of the plan was the specific land use designation that was overlaid onto each project site. This research focused on multi-family residential developments, which

mean that for the proposed developments to be allowed on their sites, the land use designation in the OCP would have to allow multi-family residential development.

In many cases, this land use designation required amending to allow for the project to move forward with development approval.

The development permit areas, unique to each city and affecting each site differently, were referenced significantly as projects were generally required to comply with the restrictions set out within the policies of these development permit areas. For example, Port Moody maintains a development permit area for environmentally sensitive areas due to the significant presence of steep inclines, creeks, and other watersheds. New Westminster's Queensborough neighbourhood, on the other hand, maintains a development permit area for Flood Hazards as the neighbourhood is located entirely on a flood plain of the Fraser River. While these permit areas are unique to their given municipality, they play a significant role in what development may occur in the neighbourhood.

The ability to comply with the OCP is presented in the findings below, with specific detail given to the OCP land use designation and the development permit

areas. Additional policies unique to a given city's OCP were also addressed by planning staff for some of the projects and have also been presented in the findings below.

Of the nine projects examined across the three cities, five of the proposed projects met the OCP land use designation for their site. The remaining four projects required an amendment to the OCP to change the given site's land use designation to allow for multi-family residential development.

All three Port Moody projects required a land use amendment to accommodate the change in land use. Two of these projects further required the amendment to accommodate the increased density of the proposal. The St John's project required a land use amendment to change the land use, as the site in question required a mix of uses rather than the proposed residential-only building. The density of this project was determined to meet the requirements of the OCP and was not presented as an issue by planning staff. The St George and Seaview projects, however, both proposed a change in density that would need to be amended in the OCP. The site of the St George project, while appropriately designated for multi-family residential

development, only permitted a building form up to three storeys. The six-storey apartment buildings in the proposal would therefore exceed the allotted density. The site of the Seaview project was designated as being single-family low-density. The proposed project, being multi-family medium-density, required a land use amendment to accommodate the change in land use and density.

Only one of the White Rock proposals required a land use amendment to move forward with the application process. Two of the proposals, the Thrift-George and the Johnston projects, had been previously approved as part of two separate, multi-phase proposals. The current proposals of both the Thrift-George and Johnston projects proposed changes to the already approved development application, therefore requiring them to submit a brand-new development application. The Thrift-George project, while continuing to meet the density of requirements of the OCP, proposed a scale that was not reflective of the OCP's guidelines. As a result, planning staff required a land use amendment to proceed with the development application. The Johnston project proposed significant changes from its previous approval, with the development being changed

from a two-storey mixed-use building to a six-storey mixed-use building. However, unlike the Thrift-George development, this project's new proposal continued to meet the requirements set out by the OCP and did not require a land use amendment. The Thrift-Oxford project site was previously amended to allow for multi-unit, medium-density housing. While the project was significantly adjusted throughout the development application process, the final proposal complied with the OCP land use designation assigned to the site and did not need the OCP to be amended.

Unlike Port Moody and White Rock, all three projects in New Westminster were reported in their planning reports as complying with the Official Community Plan. Because of this, they did not require any land use amendments. It is unclear, however, whether these project sites were previously amended prior to the development application process, rather than concurrently, which was seen with the White Rock and Port Moody projects. I was unable to discuss these projects with New Westminster planning staff to examine how this existing compliance came into play with the development proposals.

While some projects required an OCP

amendment to adjust the land use designation of the project's site, I found no issues of compliance with the applicable development permit areas. While this is to be expected, since projects must technically comply with the OCP to be approved for a development permit, it is worth noting that all projects complied with the conditions of their respective development permit areas. Development permit area guidelines regarding the Form and Character, including Development Permit Areas 1, 2 and 3 in Port Moody, may have some subjectivity depending on how prescriptive the language of the policy is. Additional guidelines, particularly regarding environmental concerns and hazards may have more rigid parameters and can therefore be more accurately enforced.

Additional OCP regulations were also addressed in individual projects. Similar to the designated permit areas, these OCP regulations were specific to the given city, although there were similarities in the types of regulations that were referenced in the planning reports and interviews. This can be attributed to the fact that this project looks at a specific type of development, specifically multi-family

The St Johns project review references the

OCP's housing policies, noting that the project respects "the provision of rental housing that can accommodate the needs of seniors to age in place and families" (City of Port Moody, 2014) as it provides five 3-bedroom units. As noted previously, the St George project review references a policy under the neighbourhood plan areas chapter to develop a program for the future daylighting of key drainages in Moody Centre. This program has not yet been developed and cannot be referenced in OCP. However, the enhancements to Dallas Creek as proposed in the project incorporate OCP policies pertaining to the environmental concerns.

The Queensborough Community Plan includes a policy called the Advance Street Plan. This policy discusses four street plan that suggests future proposed rights-of-way in Queensborough that will be dedicated back to the city as the neighbourhood develops. The Ewen project is affected by the Advance Street Plan policy, which identifies the southern edge of this property as a proposed right-of-way. As a result, the southern edge of the project site will be dedicated back to the city to create a new lane, off which the project will have vehicular access.

White Rock's OCP includes details on the view

impacts of new developments. This was noted as a significant consideration for new development projects in the municipality and is something that is carefully considered (Interview, Planner 1).

In all cases, the OCP provided specific regulations on land use for each of the project sites. Additionally, many of the proposals were subject to development permit areas and other regulations. As noted, just under half of the projects did not comply with the initial land use designation of their site.

A significant portion of the reports discussed the specific aspects of the OCP mentioned above, including land use designation, neighbourhood plans and development permit areas. The OCP has the ability to become fairly specific, by adding elements such as the development permit areas, which further restrict the type of development that can occur. While these policies provided a general understanding of what can occur on a given site, the OCP usually only provided policy on a more performative scale, dictating more the character, use and relationship between buildings rather than the prescriptive elements of form. These prescriptive elements of the developments form were more often addressed by the Zoning Bylaw of the given municipality,

which is the other key policy document addressed by these planning reports.

Many of the projects analysed in the research were noted for requiring OCP amendments to change the land use designation of the site. Similarly, many of the projects were reported as requiring a rezoning permit to move the development forward. Rezoning, as mentioned earlier, changes the zone of the given parcel to allow for a specific type of development. Some projects examined required rezoning to change the designated zoning from a single-family zone to a multi-family zone. This was the case in the Seaview project, which was formerly four individual single-family lots. This project was therefore consolidated into a single lot and rezoned from single-family to multi-family. Rezoning can be straightforward, with the lot being rezoned to an existing zone, as was the case with the Seaview project. However, many projects were found to not comply with the prescriptions of any zone under the Bylaw and would therefore require several variance requests to be compliant. For this reason, comprehensive development zones have been introduced.

Some analysed were noted as requiring a rezoning to allow for the proposed development.

However, due to the innovative nature of the project, they did not fit within a specific existing zone and thus required the site-specific zones known as Comprehensive Development Zones. These CD zones created site specific restrictions, which in turn permitted development that might normally not be approved under a conventional zone. While conventional zoning codes can be circumvented through the application of variances, this can become increasingly difficult if a project does not comply with several elements of the most closely relatable zone. This was noted as being a more viable in more built up municipalities or neighbourhoods, as the specific site context often limited what could be developed (Interview, Planner 1). While Port Moody, New Westminister and White Rock are all smaller municipalities, they have all been built out considerably and are limited in their ability to accommodate greenfield development.

Of the nine projects analysed, eight of them employed a comprehensive development zone. The Port Moody and White Rock projects requested a rezoning to the respective CD zones in conjunction with the OCP amendment and development permit. The two CD projects in New Westminister received rezoning prior

to the currently development application process. As a result, the projects were reported as already complying to the CD zone assigned to each other sites.

The Ewen project in New Westminister was determined to be the only project analysed that did not employ a Comprehensive Development zone. Instead the project used the existing Queensborough Townhouse District zoning (RT-3). The report concluded that the proposed project satisfied the use and density allowed in the zone, however, it did require variances to be approved. These variances would allow the proposed tandem parking spaces. Additionally, as some of the separation requirements set out by the Zoning Bylaw were not met by the proposed project, a variance would be required to allow the project to move forward. The variances requested, as noted in the report, would continue to comply with the required building separations outlined in the BC Building Code, which cannot be varied.

As most of the projects have been proposed to rezone to a Comprehensive Development zone, most of the zoning restrictions have been tailored to allow for the proposed development and restrict the construction of something drastically different. For example, the CD-67

zone of the St Johns project allowed for a maximum unit count of 142, allowing the 142-unit project to move ahead, but restricting potential changes to increase this proposed density.

Many zoning bylaws, however, maintained certain standards that all zones follow and meet. Parking requirements were a common concern among staff, and the zoning bylaws generally set in place a minimum standard that was to be complied with regardless of zoning. The Johnston project, for example, while requesting a CD zoning amendment, did not comply with the basic parking requirement outlined in the bylaws general policies. Because of this, the project was reported as requiring a parking variance, which the developer agreed to offset by paying an additional Community Amenity Contribution worth the equivalent of the lost parking spaces. Additionally, the applicant proposed alternative transit demand management strategies to further offset this variance. The St Johns project similarly did not meet Port Moody's standards of parking, resulting in the applicant also proposing to offset the reduction of parking by implementing addition transit demand management strategies. The St George project required a parking relaxation; however, this

reduction was noted as being supported by staff due to the project's proximity to rapid transit. It is also noted that the project will allow on-street parking opportunities to increase as the project reduces the number of access driveways along St George Street significantly. As a result, this project did not need to propose alternative management strategies to mitigate this reduction.

Other projects proposed surplus parking, as is the case with the Seaview project. The applicant proposed to provide two spaces per unit, which was more than the required parking as outlined by the zoning bylaw. This was noted as being the applicant's choice rather than a mandated requirement by staff, as the developer felt it was important to provide ample off-street parking (Interview, Planner 2). Staff however noted that the project was close to bus and rapid transit options, allowing for potentially reduced parking if desired.

The remaining projects did not note significant issues with parking. The three New West projects were noted as satisfying all bylaw requirements. In White Rock, the Thrift-George project report minimally discussed issues with the zoning bylaw owing to several concerns being addressed at the OCP level. The Thrift-

Oxford project report noted that the project's reduction in size allows for the required dedication to parking to be reduced. As a result, the entire underground parking structure was reduced, allowing for additional tree retention surrounding the proposed building. Additional elements of the zoning bylaw were noted. However, these were typically reported as facts and were not discussed extensively.

Additional conditions on the development were typically found in the form of covenants or easements, which were registered to the parcel's land title. Depending on the development, these varied in their function and scope. Most common easements and covenants dealt with the allocation of land for a specific purpose or additional restrictions on use of the future development. For example, a housing agreement may be registered to regulate specific conditions on the type of housing in a given development.

Housing Agreement covenants were addressed in four of the 9 projects, notably the St Johns and Johnston rental projects. These two projects had housing agreements that specifically addressed the provision of rental housing that each project proposes. The St Johns project's Housing Agreement, as noted

in the report, stipulated that the entirety of the project is to be rental for a period of 20 years, preventing it from being stratified and sold at market rates until the completion of the 20-year period. The Johnston project had a similar Housing Agreement. The report noted that the project is to maintain 12 rental units in perpetuity for the lifetime of the building, with the remaining 17 units being stratified and secured as rental for a tenure of 10 years, after which they may be sold without restrictions. These terms were outlined in the project's housing agreement covenant, ensuring the provision of rental housing as negotiated.

The Seaview and St George project reports in Port Moody discussed Housing Agreement covenants, noting that the agreement for both projects would include a restriction that would "prevent future strata corporations from enacting bylaws or regulations which would prevent owners from renting their units" (City of Port Moody, 2018). This ensured that all units, despite being stratified, will have the possibility of being rented, which increases the potential rental stock in the city. Additionally, the St. George project Housing Agreement notes the establishment of parameters for the affordable housing units for persons with special needs, to be

maintained by a local non-profit.

It should be noted that none of the New Westminster projects reports explicitly addressed the provision of a Housing Agreement.

Additional easements and covenants were introduced in some reports. Five of the projects contained easements and covenants that provide additional conditions to the approved document. The Johnston project, notable for its request for a significant parking variance, included a parking covenant that will enforce the provision of the five shared visitor/office spaces. Additionally, the Transit Demand Management (TDM) Strategies proposed by the applicant have also been included in a registered covenant, specifically the provision of one two-zone transit pass for each of the 12 permanent rental units in the building.

A similar TDM covenant was reported to be negotiated for the St Johns project in Port Moody, which outlined the provision of the various transit demand management strategies that were proposed for the project including a pre-loaded \$100 transit pass and a \$50 car share program credit for initial renters. Car share was also provided in the building in lieu of a reduced parking variance. The provision of the parking space for

the car share program was not explicitly stated as being included in the restrictive covenant for the St Johns project. The report for the St George project, however, explicitly stated that the provision of a car space as part of the project is to be registered on covenant.

Access easements were also addressed in the reports for the St George and Ewen Projects. An access easement had been registered on title for the St George project if the lot adjacent to Parcel 2 of the project ends up being redeveloped in the future. The future development would share vehicular access with the St George project to reduce the number of driveways along St George Street, particularly near Dallas Creek. The Ewen project report discussed the provision of an emergency access easement, where the projects at 728-734 Ewen and 746 Ewen share access for emergency vehicles. Additionally, the two projects, which have been designed and proposed concurrently were reported to maintain a joint access easement for the shared open space between the two development projects. This joint access easement ensured that the open space is shared and accessed equally between all residents of the two projects.

The first level of coding the project identified

the policies in place that are more utilized in the development permitting process. The Official Community Plans for each community was often the source of much discussion in each planning report analyzed in this research, with policies regarding land use, development and the environment assisting in determining an appropriate development for each site in question.

Additional policies were addressed in the documents analysed and are listed below:

- The BC Building Code was referenced once in the Ewen project, noting that the project complies with the requirements of the code. Additionally, the Building Code was referenced in relation to parking requirements in for the White Rock project.
- Port Moody's Council Strategic Plan was referenced once in the St Johns proposal, noting that the project maintains consistency with the plan's vision for creating a livable, vibrant, sustainable, orderly, and coordinated community.
- Both the Auckland and Salter projects referenced New Westminster's Family Friendly Housing Policy, which requires that 30% of units be two and three-bedroom units and 10% of the

total units be three-bedroom units. Both projects are noted to comply with this policy.

- White Rock's Policy 511 outlined the city's regulations on density bonus payments and community amenity contributions and is referenced in both the Johnston and Thrift-George projects as they both require amenity contributions as part of the proposal.

What Influences the Negotiations between Planning Staff and Developer?

In coding the documents and interviews, and in line with my research questions, the groups involved in the development application process were divided into two sectors: the public sector and the private sector. The document analysis and interview analysis identified several groups in each sector, which had various impact on the development application process. Despite their varying levels of involvement in the process, there were three primary negotiators in the overall process: the municipal planning staff, city council, and the applicant/developer.

The reports analyzed in this research were written by the planning staff in each of the municipalities

chosen. For this reason, much of the comments made throughout the reports reflect staff's professional opinion and expertise. However, other players were also identified, and their comments presented in the report. The most common public actors, in addition to planning staff, were city council, the land use and planning committees, and the advisory design panels.

Because much of research presents a biased perspective towards other city planning staff – owing to the fact that I have coded planning reports and most of my interviews were with planning staff – much of the conversation regarding the public interest was biased in favour of the municipality. Additional discussion with the development sector would better incorporate their perspectives on the matter. However, despite the limitations of the research, the documents and interviews provided key details regarding the idea of the public interest in these negotiations.

Through the document analysis, I found that planning staff supported their arguments by acknowledging the applicable policy. As mentioned above, the most common of these policies were the OCP and the Zoning Bylaw. The fact that planning staff used policy to support their position regarding the various

aspects of a given project is perhaps unsurprising – since planning staff are accountable to the public and would likely need to support all decisions – however, it is important to note. The developer interest was not as explicitly discussed as these reports were written by planning staff. The developer interest was presented primarily in the project they proposed along with the amendments or variances requested. For example, with the St George project, the developer requested an amendment to allow the 6-storey building height, arguing that the density was required in order for the project to be viable for the developer.

The document analysis presented a planning heavy perspective. While the interviews

TABLE 2 |
Actors Referenced in the Collected Data

Public Actors	Private Actors
<i>Planning Staff</i>	<i>Applicant/Developer</i>
<i>City Council</i>	<i>Project Architect</i>
<i>Advisory Design Panel</i>	<i>Project Landscape Architect</i>
<i>Land Use and Planning Committee**</i>	<i>Project Traffic Consultants</i>
<i>Neighbourhood Associations</i>	<i>Other Private Consultants</i>
<i>General Public</i>	

***known as the Community Planning Advisory Committee (CPAC) in Port Moody*

conducted also present a similarly biased perspective, they present a more intimate depiction of the planning process in negotiating several elements of the proposed projects.

Table 2 shows the various groups on both the public and private sector sides of the conversation. In coding my document analysis, I found that the public sector groups were presented as having a cohesive perspective, with the Advisory Design Panel, Land Use Committees and Planning Staff all maintaining a similar perspective on the analysed projects. The City Council perspective was not examined much in the planning reports as these reports were written for council consideration leading up to its final approval. Instead, these nuances between the various groups within the public sector were brought up in the interviews conducted with planning staff and developers.

The first detail that was revealed through the coding of the interviews was how the various public groups were presented. The interviews with planning staff presented staff's perspective on a given project, noting their concerns over various elements of the project. For example, in one project staff recommended a scale back of the proposal and did not support the existing scale of the project. However, despite staff's position on the proposal, the developer chose to take the decision to council regardless and it was ultimately approved by Council (Interview, Planner 1). In this instance, while staff and council are both groups acting on the side of the public sector, and arguably in the public interest, their opinions differed regarding whether this project should be approved or not.

The interviews also revealed that the public sometimes had a different opinion than that of the planning staff and council, while other times did not find any concern with the proposed project. This was particular evident from the developer's perspective where, in one instance, the height of the development was a concern and the developer noted that "planning [staff] was more conservative because they knew that the height had previously been an issue for council"

(Interview, Developer 1). However, the developers of the same project found that the public did not find significant concern over the height of the building and thought instead that it was a logical scale for its location in the city. While staff did eventually support the increase in height, the potential council concern over the building height brought about a back-and-forth negotiation between planning staff and the developer regarding the potential benefits of the proposed increase. In another instance, the public did not find any concern over the project. In fact, the neighbourhood was seen to be in support of the project. In conversation with the lead planner, I found that this was likely in part because the neighbouring owner adjacent to the project saw the proposed development as an opportunity for future redevelopment of the area, and therefore an opportunity for residents to cash in on their aging homes (Interview, Planner 2). The immediately affected public, those living adjacent to the property, saw an individual benefit to the project and therefore agreed with it.

The key element raised in the interviews was how important policy and regulations was in negotiating the final approved development proposal. This was especially important for the public sector but

was also important for the developer as it allowed them to have a certain standard to refer to when preparing their development proposal (Interview, Developer 1). Interviewees noted that the process was made more efficient and effective thanks to the policy and regulations put in place to support the decision making of planning staff (Interviews, Planner 2 & Developer 1). Specifically, the design guidelines, the OCP and the Zoning Bylaw were referenced by the Planners interviewed to support the positions made by planning staff. These policies also help to justify decision made to the general public. For example, the project height was noted as a concern in several of the projects, noting related concerns over the loss of views and an inappropriate scale for the neighbourhood. While some of these height concerns were regarding projects that requesting an increase in approved height, thus requiring an OCP amendment or variance, some of these projects already complied with the existing policy. As a result, the concerns from the public could be addressed by noting that the existing policy already allowed for the proposed development. A project's early compliance with the policies ensures that less criticism is drawn from the city staff, city council and the general public (Interview, Planner 1).

Sometimes policies were not available to support the positions of planning staff. As a result, their recommendations were presented more in good favour to the developer rather than a requirement. In this instance, developers could take the recommendation under consideration, but as it was not a requirement set out in policy, it was unclear whether staff would be able to enforce their position. One interviewee remarked that city staff recommended a direction based on an OCP policy to improve the environmental conditions of surrounding environments. The recommendation related to adding additional land to the proposal in order to ensure these improvements, which was a recommendation in good faith and not something that could be enforced explicitly. As the interviewee notes, "if we didn't move forward, we would have been compliant with the OCP" (Interview, Developer 1). This was made as a recommendation and not a required change and, while the recommendation was seen as way of supporting OCP policies, the recommendation itself was not something that could be enforced. As a result, it was up to the developer to determined if they should choose to take staff's recommendation.

The lack of policy tools was raised by another

interviewee, who noted that a proposed development spurred discussion within the city as to whether the neighbourhood should receive an updated neighbourhood plan to address potential future infill. It was revealed that certain areas required future policy development before future development proposals could be fielded. This was because staff did not want to approve projects in the area on a piece meal basis but wanted to have a cohesive vision for the neighbourhood so that they can better assess future proposals. As a result, planning staff noted their desire to create additional neighbourhood plan policies before additional developments in this area can be approved (Interview, Planner 2). In other instances, staff utilized a net benefit model to determine whether the proposal has a positive benefit for the community (Interview, Planner 3). This was noted as being especially significant in cases where the project underwent a collaborative effort to negotiate specific elements of the design and where policy offered some room for interpretation.

How are Design Elements Negotiated?

While the first research question focused

primarily on the significance of development done in the 'public interest', the second research question focused on the negotiations of specific design elements during the development application process. Specifically, this question desired to better understand how negotiations were made throughout the application process, which can be closely analysed and addressed when looking at the specific elements of the design. Because of this, I have presented these findings below, having divided them up into five key design categories: form, character, materials, landscape, and environmental. These categories were determined through the coding process, which first identified where specific design elements were discussed in the reports and interviews and then divided them into logical groupings.

The first design category, form, dealt with the physical shape and structure of the building. It includes elements that are typically detailed in the Zoning Bylaw, including building height, site coverage, floor area/space ratio (FAR/FSR), and massing. This theme was commonly addressed in each of the reports, as it was the theme most directly tied to Zoning Bylaw and OCP compliance. The projects that required an amendment to the Zoning or OCP designation often discussed the

form of the building in their reports. However, as noted above, many of the prescriptive elements outlined in the Zoning Bylaw were incorporated into new CD zones. On the other hand, policies outlined in the OCP that affected the buildings form were addressed by staff in their review of the project. Form was also commented on by various public actors, either commending the specific elements of the form or drawing concern for an element of the form. Most notably, the form was discussed during the Advisory Design Panel review and Land Use Committee review.

The character of the buildings was discussed in lesser detail, and was often discussed in tandem with additional categories, particularly with materials or form. Discussions surrounding the building's character often addressed whether the project fit in with the surrounding environment. In the case of the Ewen project, the project was proposed in tandem with the adjacent 746 Ewen project. As a result, the two projects have been designed to look like a single project, while also incorporating heritage characters of a restored heritage building on the property of 746 Ewen Avenue. In White Rock, the Johnston project was noted for not maintaining a pedestrian-oriented character as they

did not step back the building in the higher storeys. The form, in this case, contributed to the proposed building not meeting character standards as set out in the OCP and other policy.

Similar to character, discussions surrounding the building's material often occur in conjunction with another design theme, typically character. In almost every mention of materials in the reports, it had been associated with either character or form. For example, the St Johns project reported the use of materials to break up the horizontal scale of the building, addressing issues in form and character through the use of materials.

The fourth design category addressed by these projects was landscape. Landscape, as I've defined it for the purpose of this research, includes the hardscaping and soft scaping of all outdoor areas on the project site. This can include the public access driveways, as noted in the Seaview, Ewen and Salter projects. Additionally, it can also include the provision of outdoor amenity space, as seen in the Ewen, St George, St Johns and Thrift-George projects.

The environment category is not a specific design element but rather the external environmental

factors that play a significant role in the ultimate design of the project. This theme is most present in the discussion surrounding the St George development, where Dallas Creek bisects the project. As a result, several environmental considerations must be incorporated into the design, including potential flooding and stormwater management. However, the project's landscape design also incorporated the most notable feature of the project, the extensive daylighting of the previously culverted creek. Along with this daylighting, a significant no build zone and greenway have been proposed which affects reduces the buildable area of the site and affects the eventual design of the buildings themselves. This is noted, as the primary motivation for increasing the height of the proposed apartment buildings to six storeys was to accommodate the financial loss incurred from the loss in allowable buildable area of the original project site.

These design categories were well noted in all planning reports. Form was most often addressed as it was most closely related to issues of compliance, including OCP land use and restrictions of the Zoning Bylaw. As revealed in the interviews, primary concerns regarding the project revolved around the form, and projects that were not support by staff were generally

more than the prescribed form established in policy. There were additional concerns relating to the materials and character of the building, raised during Advisory Design Panel, Land Use Committee and public review. However, these concerns were more subjective and could be interpreted much more liberally. Developers addressed character and material concerns by changing colours and materials of concerns and ensured that the character could be deemed appropriate for the neighbourhood. There changes were typically cosmetic and did not affect the overall form of the proposal. Landscape elements were noted in the planning reports but were not noted as having significant concern. Many projects were noted for their provision of good public or amenity space. There were also discussions in some projects reports to improve the public amenities provided, however these were limited and did not result in any significant changes. The environmental category was found to be closely tied to policy tools, specifically the designated permit areas and design guidelines of the OCP. As a result, these elements were generally compliant, though interview data showed that environmental design elements, while quite rigid, offered some leverage in terms of other design aspects of the

proposals (Interview. Developer 1).

The findings of this research project identified key themes that were presented above. These findings first presented the policies that were noted as important in each of the planning reports and how they affected the overall development application process. The findings showed the importance of policy tools throughout the application process, but they also became an important tool in discussing the public interest. The public interest was also presented in these findings, noting what the municipal and developer demands were in each planning scenario and how these affected the process. These particular details of the negotiation process were further presented. Overall, these findings came to certain conclusions that will be discussed in the following section.

Discussion & Recommendations

The results addressed in the previous section presented the various discussions that have occurred throughout the development process, as noted in the multiple development application reports and interviews with staff and developers. The findings showed the applicable policy that was referenced in the documents and interviews, and then proceeded to note how these policies influenced discussions between the public and private sectors. Additionally, the findings also showed how design elements were addressed in the planning documents and the negotiations that resulted from these elements. These results helped to answer the research questions, which first sought to understand how the public interest has been determined and negotiated in relation to the proposed development. The second question on the other hand examined how the specific elements of the proposals were negotiated.

In presenting these findings, several things were made evident. First, the development application process was made more effective through the proper

use of applicable regulations and policies. Without these policies, both the public sector and private sector would not have had a frame of reference to negotiated within. Second, the public interest, which was implicitly presented in the findings, was best reflected during the approval process through the use of these applicable policies. Where policies were not available to support the idea of the public interest, planning staff and council were seen to act in the interest of the overall public. However, it should also be acknowledged that despite these efforts, there were still conflicting interests at play throughout the process, not only between the public and private sector but also within the public sector itself. Additionally, while policy was the strongest negotiation tool available to both planners and developers, it was also very important to have strong collaboration between the two sectors to innovate new solutions when changes were required.

I spent considerable time examining the planning reports and assessing their acknowledgment

of applicable policy in the documents and interviews. It became apparent early in the coding of the documents that planning staff's primary tool for justifying their decisions was the applicable planning policy and regulations. As noted by Weschler & Mushkatel, historically, municipalities have enforced strict codes to manage development, which has allowed them to dictate what occurs in the municipality (1987). The level of restriction has not been established by this research, however it was evident through the findings that clear policy is important in the negotiation of development proposals. Through the findings, it was evident that all positions made by planning staff in their reports were supported by some sort of policy. This was further emphasized through these interviews, where all interviewees emphasized having good policy to support decision making. This was shown not only from the planning perspective, but also from the developer perspective, who found the availability and clarity of certain standards to be helpful in knowing what was permitted. Lack of policy, which sometimes translated into lack of clear parameters for development, made it hard to determine whether a proposal was appropriate.

The previous literature on the public interest

noted that the public interest was widely acknowledged as being important to planning practice but lacking a clear definition of what it is. Jill Grant noted that the public interest is subject to the specific time and place, implying that the public interest can change across locations and times, thus making it even harder to define (2005). However, the discourse on the public interest discussed also discussed that there may even be multiple public interests at a given time, including the collective public interest, the individual interests of the public, and various interests in between. This was reflected in the research conducted, as it was noted that the individual interest of the public did not always reflect that of the collective or of city planning staff or council, who in theory are acting on behalf of the public. The research revealed that it is not always clear what is in the public interest, as the collective interest can conflict with the alternative interests across the various publics. Ultimately, it was evident that effective policy tools were the best mechanism for ensuring that the public interest is acknowledged and advocated for. In this sense, amendments to the OCP and other policies should be thoroughly vetted by the various level of government as well as by a diverse selection of the public. This would

ensure that the concerns and interests of the public are reflected in the policy that is adopted.

Another key element that was presented in the findings was the importance of collaboration between the public and private sector throughout the process. The findings noted how negotiations between the two sectors occurred. Conventionally, the city would identify their areas of concerns for the proposed project, which the developer would then respond to with revisions. However, as evidenced in the findings, the variance requested may sometimes be quite significant which would require an innovative solution to address. In this case, rather than a back and forth between the developer and planning staff, a close collaboration would often be more effective in determining the best solution to the issue at hand. This collaboration, as noted in the findings, can often benefit from the goodwill of both city planning staff and developer.

Throughout this research, my findings have shown that policy has been the most effective tool for both planning staff and developer when navigating the development process. Policy, most particularly the Official Community Plans, Secondary Plans and Zoning Bylaws, has provided both applicant and reviewer

the framework to understand the direction of the city and how the proposed development may or may not fit within this direction. As a result, I would argue that positive negotiations can only occur if a clear vision and policy framework is put in place which applicant and reviewer are able to use as a foundation as they argue their positions on how the development fits within the city's future vision.

The findings showed that many of the projects required an OCP amendment to move forward with the development application. Because this research dealt solely with approved projects, it was unclear as to the rate at which OCP amendments for specific projects might occur. However, because the OCP is intended to be a guiding document, it is likely that the policy was not intended to be amended on a piecemeal basis. However, the findings have shown that OCP amendments are more common than might be recommended. In this sense, I would recommend that the OCP be updated regularly to incorporate the changes that are being seen with the proposed developments and the changing context over time. Land use designations should clearly represent the city's vision and should be well justified in how each area's land use designation is determined. This

would limit the amount of piecemeal amendments that occur as the appropriate land use designation is already stated. Should it be noted that several amendments are being requested, the plan should be reviewed and updated prior to addressing these proposals to ensure that the integrity of the plan is maintained.

Similarly, it was noted in the reports and by interviewees, that Comprehensive Development zones have become more common practice as it can incorporate the unique conditions of the given site and allow for more innovative designs. However, it removes the authority that the Zoning Bylaw has, which is intended to regulate the form and function of specific developments. The Zoning Bylaw should therefore be updated to reflect these conditions. As was noted in the literature, more commonly are municipalities and other levels of government adopting flexible, form-based codes and zones to allow for innovative planning and design. With updated zones and codes to reflect this shift towards form-based thinking, municipalities regain the enforceability of the Zoning Bylaw while allowing for innovation to occur, where design negotiations can occur within the framework of the existing Bylaw.

It was noted throughout this research that much

of the data collected maintains a relative bias in favour of the municipality and planning staff, owing to the fact that planning staff had produced the reports analysed. Similarly, the interviews conducted were also conducted primarily with planning staff as developers were not available for interviews. As a result, there is a limited perspective into the developer's side of the negotiation process. I lastly recommend that further research be conducted to explore how developers address the concerns from planning staff during the development application process. This additional research will provide the added perspective from the developer's point of view.

Limitations of this research

This research examined the planning reports of nine recently approved development applications. All nine of the applications were multi-family residential developments, although one also has a commercial mixed-use component as well. The research also interviewed three municipal planners and one developer to complement the findings of the content analysis. Through this analysis, I was able to come to the conclusions and recommendations as noted above. These conclusions were based on the available

data collected through this project. There were a few limitations to this project that were identified throughout the project, relating primarily to the scope of the project. An expanded scope would introduce further research possibilities. Additionally, future research could also examine the implementation and practice of the recommendations stated in this report.

The examined reports and their respective projects were found in the three selected cities, Port Moody, New Westminster and White Rock, as determined by the selection criteria outlined in the Methods section. As I sought to look at cities with high development pressure while also trying to maintain a 'small-town' feel or similar, I looked at fast-growing small suburban cities of Metro Vancouver. As a result, I did not look at projects in major development areas such as Vancouver, Surrey and Burnaby. Similarly, as I was looking at multi-family projects, areas with significant single-family developments were also not considered. As a result, the project maintains a fairly limited scope based on the selected cities and projects.

Furthermore, my research focused on the planning process at the municipal level and did not overly examine regional and provincial policies

unless they directly affected the projects examined. For example, as the St George project involved creek improvements to a creek with a basin crossing municipal boundaries, regional policies through Metro Vancouver were involved. Aside from these considerations, the relationship between municipal level planning and regional or provincial level planning has not been explored in this project. Future research should consider the planning implications across the 21 municipalities, one electoral area and Treaty First Nation as an entire region and how these relationships affect the municipal planning policies in place.

As noted in the findings, I examined planning reports written by municipal planning staff. Additionally, I was fortunate to interview three municipal planners. Conversely, I was only able to interview one developer. As such, my results provided more insight into the municipal planning side of the negotiations and did not shed much light on the developer side of the negotiations. Because of this, it wasn't clear whether changes were being driven more by planning staff or by the developers. Future research should consider additional interviews with both planners and developers to further examine this relationship.

Conclusion

This research began because I was inspired by the sudden boom in development approvals occurring in the City of Port Moody. Upon closer examination, I found that the City of Port Moody, being a smaller suburban municipality of the Metro Vancouver region, was currently grappling with its 'small-town' identity while trying to accommodate the boom of housing growth that was being seen not only within its boundaries but across the entire region. As a result, I decided to look at new multi-family residential developments in small suburban municipalities. From here, I was brought to my two research questions, which sought to first understand how historically low-growth municipalities determine what is to be in the public interest and ensure that new developments are indeed within the public's interest, despite the external pressures of the development boom in the region. I further sought to understand how certain design elements are pursued in these residential developments and the negotiations that occur because of these elements. Ultimately, I

wanted to understand the power dynamic that occurs between the city and developer during the development application process and how certain design elements, policy tools, and the concept of the public interest have influenced the overall negotiations.

Since I have a personal connection to the region, I have heard firsthand accounts of how people thought that developers had too much free rein in the region. In conversations, I often heard people make mention of cities being in the hands of the developer rather than the city having the upper hand. Indeed, upon completing my initial research, I half expected to find that the developer dominated the conversation and negotiations. The results revealed that the city retained much of the power, while the developer still had considerable room to negotiate. These negotiations, however, were made possible because of the policies and regulations that were set in place prior to the application process.

The results of this research highlighted key points that were addressed through my coding of

the planning report documents and interviews. Both the literature and research analysis showed a clear connection between policy regulations and the ability to negotiate. As a result, the results detailed the ways in which the examined projects complied with the various applicable policies, including the Official Community Plans and the Zoning Bylaws. Compliance with policies was acknowledged by planning staff and was ensured due to the clarity of the regulatory framework. When a project did not comply, however, it was noted that negotiations between the developer and the city would ensue to ensure that the requested variance still maintained the vision and direction of the city and did not go against the public's will.

The research also found that the public interest, which is discussed thoroughly in planning literature, was hard to define. As a result, while the city planning staff may have recommended a certain direction based on the policies and regulations, common opinion from the public could often be completely different from planning's initial position. Similarly, planning staff may make a recommendation based on their expertise, which is then overruled by the final council decision, who may have a different perspective and understanding of the

public interest than planning staff. The results of this research reinforced the planning literature on the topic, which ultimately argued that the concept of the public interest in planning is determined by the given time and place but can also be defined by different understandings of the public, leading to a variety of public interests at a given time.

While the public interest was not plainly defined through the results of this research, the lack of the definition reinforced the recommendation that city policies be kept updated and relevant in order to ensure that there is a clear existing framework in which both the public and private sector can negotiate future projects. Future research should investigate how the Official Community Plans can be improved to ensure that piecemeal amendments are not made the norm, while proactive form-based codes and zones should be further investigated to replace the increasing prominence of project-specific and reactive Comprehensive Development zones.

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FIGURE 1: The West End of downtown Vancouver looking north.

Source: Wikimedia Commons. https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/4c/Vancouver_west_end.jpg

FIGURE 2: Map of Metro Vancouver 2040 Regional Growth Strategy.

Source: Metro Vancouver Regional Planning. <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/PlanningPublications/Parcel-basedLandUseDesignationMapPoster.pdf>

FIGURE 3: The City of White Rock

Source: South Rock Buzz. http://southrockbuzz.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/cropped-IMG_5500.jpg

FIGURE 4: The City of New Westminster

Source: Jon Benjamin Photography. <https://jonbenjamin.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/NWest-Aerial-Gallery-006-2400-35.jpg>

FIGURE 5: Map of Metro Vancouver with Selected Cities.

Adapted from: Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GVRD_West_Vancouver.svg

FIGURE 6: Public Engagement Initiative in the City of Vancouver.

Source: City of Vancouver. <https://vancouver.ca/images/cov/feature/community-engagement-paul-krueger-facebook.jpg>

FIGURE 7: Map of the Metro Vancouver Municipalities.

Adapted from: Wikimedia Commons. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:GVRD_West_Vancouver.svg

FIGURE 8: Map of Port Moody with Selected Projects

Source: Snazzy Maps

FIGURE 9: Map of New Westminster with Selected Projects

Source: Snazzy Maps

FIGURE 10: Map of White Rock with Selected Projects

Source: Snazzy Maps

Appendix A: Municipal Planners Interview Schedule

Interviews will be conducted as semi-structured interviews. Probing/clarifying questions will be added as needed.

Introductory Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your position with the City?
3. Please briefly describe the development proposal(s).
4. How many submissions of this proposal were submitted prior to receiving approval?

Specific Questions

5. What were the city's primary concerns with the proposal(s) upon its first submission.
 - a. What aspects were the most contentious?
6. How were these issues addressed by the developer(s)?
7. How did city policies and design guidelines help inform the design of the development(s)?
8. What limitations did you encounter when addressing issues in the design?
9. Can you describe the city's relationship with the developer(s) throughout this process?

Ending Questions

10. What elements of the process were the most beneficial for the city?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't already discussed?

Appendix B: Private Developers Interview Schedule

Interviews will be conducted as semi-structured interviews. Probing/clarifying questions will be added as needed.

Introductory Questions

1. What is your name?
2. What is your position with your Company?
3. Please briefly describe the development proposal(s).
4. How many submissions of this proposal were submitted prior to receiving approval?

Specific Questions

5. Please describe the process of designing this development?
 - a. Could you provide details on specific aspects of the design, including density, parking, massing, overall uses, and public spaces, etc.?
6. What limitations did you encounter during the design phase, which required you to adjust the original design?
7. Were there specific aspects of the design that were particularly contentious with the city/public?
8. How did the design of other developments in the region influence your design?
9. Can you describe your company's relationship with the city throughout this process?

Concluding Questions

10. What elements of the process were the most beneficial for the developer?
11. Is there anything else you would like to share that we haven't already discussed?