

22nd Street Draft Big Moves and Strategies – What We Heard

November 2024

Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES.....	2
KEY FINDINGS AND THEMES.....	3
SURVEY RESULTS	3
IN-PERSON DROP-IN ENGAGEMENT EVENT	7
ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING	8
URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE LIASON MEETING	8
APPENDIX - VERBATIM COMMENTS	10

INTRODUCTION

The City launched a visioning process to imagine the future of the neighbourhood around the 22nd Street SkyTrain Station in spring 2023. In the fall of 2024, the City identified eight Big Moves as the foundation of a Vision for the area. These Big Moves and strategy highlights were drafted after integrating input, priorities, and feedback from the community with ideas surfaced in the Ideas Challenge, and other more technical considerations.

This document describes the results of a community survey, an in-person drop-in event, outreach to previously engaged groups, and presentations in the fall of 2024 which solicited feedback on the Big Moves and strategy highlights. Responses are generally themed, presented in no particular order, and comments have been summarized such that they are not attributed to any one individual. Verbatim comments are listed at the end of this report.

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Public engagement on the Big Moves and strategy highlights for the 22nd Street Station Area Vision involved the following:

- A community survey was posted online on the City's Be Heard New West website from September 10th to September 30th. 83 responses were received.
- An in-person drop-in event was held at Connaught Heights Pentecostal Assembly on September 24th from 6-8pm. 50 participants attended the event.
- Previously engaged groups were contacted with the update and consultation opportunities. Stemming from this, staff were invited to present at a Local Immigrant Partnership meeting.
- Staff presented to and facilitated discussions with the City's Advisory Planning Commission (APC) and the Urban Development Institute's (UDI) New Westminster liaison committee.

The survey and drop-in engagement event were advertised through social media, online newspapers, Citypage Online, and to the Connaught Heights, West End, and Queensborough Residents Associations. Paper surveys were also shared at the library and the Welcome Centre at New Westminster Secondary School.

KEY FINDINGS AND THEMES

- Survey respondents predominantly felt the Big Moves and strategy highlights were heading in a positive direction (70%), and most respondents felt that each of the Big Moves integrated community input well.
- Respondents expressed desire for certain services and amenities deemed needed to maintain and enhance livability; like grocery stores, recreation facilities, and schools.
- Several respondents remain concerned about balancing the transition to sustainable transportation modes with the continued need for vehicle use. Several respondents expressed concern about current and anticipated vehicle traffic congestion.
- When asked to rank top amenity priorities from a list of 6 priorities, survey respondents ranked improved transit first, then affordable rental housing, and improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure (e.g. better sidewalks and bike lanes), more outdoor spaces for recreation and gathering (e.g. parks and plazas), services (e.g. not-for-profit child care) and lastly indoor places for recreation and gathering (e.g. a Neighbourhood House).
- Attendees to the drop-in engagement event provided largely supportive comments, expressing a desire for the planning process to proceed more quickly, interest in ensuring growth comes with more indoor and outdoor amenities, and for careful consideration of changes to the transportation network.

SURVEY RESULTS

1. How well do you think Big Move 1: Transit Village integrates community input?

	Count	%
Integrates community input well	47	57%
Integrates community input somewhat well	16	19%
Neutral or unsure	13	16%
Does not integrate community input well	5	6%
Does not integrate community input at all	2	2%

2. What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input? (Optional)

Summary of themes:

- Concern about overcrowding and scale of growth
- Desire for adequate school capacity

- Concern that topography may limit active transportation
- Desire for more community engagement with people living in the area

3. How well do you think Big Move 2: Housing Capacity and Choice integrates the community’s input into what’s required by the new Provincial regulations?

	Count	%
Integrates community input well	45	54%
Integrates community input somewhat well	15	18%
Neutral or unsure	13	16%
Does not integrate community input well	6	7%
Does not integrate community input at all	4	5%

4. What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input? (Optional)

Summary of themes:

- Concern about proposed density being too high
- Concern about loss of heritage assets in the neighbourhood
- Desire to simplify redevelopment process

5. How well do you think Big Move 3: Streets for People works towards reducing car dependence for future residents of this neighbourhood?

	Count	%
Works well	37	45%
Works somewhat well	18	22%
Neutral or unsure	10	12%
Does not work well	7	9%
Does not work at all	10	12%

6. What would you like to see changed to better meet this goal? (OPTIONAL)

Summary of themes:

- Concern that biking and walking is not an option for many, especially seniors
- Desire to improve connections and reduce congestion in and out of the neighbourhood specifically related to Queensborough Bridge, Stewardson Way, and Tenth Ave
- Concern that growth will bring more vehicle traffic congestion
- Desire for Seventh Avenue to be for people and transit, not cars
- Desire for transit improvements

7. How well do you think Big Move 4: Green Networks integrates community input?

	Count	%
Integrates community input well	44	53%
Integrates community input somewhat well	19	23%
Neutral or unsure	9	11%
Does not integrate community input well	8	7%
Does not integrate community input at all	5	6%

8. What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input? (Optional)

Summary of themes:

- Desire for more playgrounds and outdoor recreation space
- Concern that park expansion and road greening could slow development by adding cost or burden
- Concern about community safety and misuse of public green spaces

9. Would you like to learn more about Coast Salish Cultural Contributions to the Vision?

This was an informational question and did not solicit community responses.

10. How well do you think Big Move 6: Social Connections integrates community input?

	Count	%
Integrates community input well	40	48%
Integrates community input somewhat well	17	21%
Neutral or unsure	14	17%
Does not integrate community input well	5	6%
Does not integrate community input at all	7	8%

11. What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input? (Optional)

Summary of themes:

- Desire for more school capacity
- Desire for more indoor and outdoor recreational spaces, library services

- Concern about asking for too many amenities from development, which could impact its viability
- Concern about infrastructure capacity, especially electrical

12. How well do you think Bold Move 7: Climate-Friendly Buildings integrates community input and the Ideas Challenge submissions?

	Count	%
Integrates community input well	42	51%
Integrates community input somewhat well	16	19%
Neutral or unsure	12	14%
Does not integrate community input well	4	5%
Does not integrate community input at all	9	11%

13. What would you like to see changed to better integrate community input (Optional)?

Summary of themes:

- Concern over seismic vulnerability
- Concern about availability of electric power
- Suggestion for cost-effective solutions, and concern about increased construction costs

14. Which of these [amenities] are your top priorities? Please rank them from 1 (highest priority) to 6 (lowest priority). Note that lowest number indicates the highest ranking.

Options	Average Rank (1-6)
Improved transit (e.g. frequency, connectivity, and amenities)	2.99
Affordable rental housing	3.66
Improved pedestrian and cycling infrastructure (e.g. better sidewalks and bike lanes)	3.30
More outdoor places for recreation and gathering (e.g. parks and plazas)	3.57
Services (e.g. not-for-profit child care)	3.89
Indoor places for recreation and gathering (e.g. a Neighbourhood House)	4.04

15. After learning about and considering the Big Moves and strategy highlights, what is your overall impression of the emerging Vision?

	Count	%
I think it's heading in a positive direction	57	70%
I'm not sure	6	8%
I have concerns	18	22%

16. If you would like to share more about what you like or are concerned about, please share here:

Summary of themes:

- Concern about neighbourhood change from quiet single detached to busy higher density
- Concern about traffic congestion on Seventh Avenue, Twentieth Street and Queensborough bridge
- Concern about length of planning process, delaying housing projects
- Desire for more recreation facilities
- Desire for more schools
- Desire for housing affordable to households with a range of incomes
- Desire to ensure provision of a grocery store
- Suggestion for pedestrian overpass at the intersection of Twentieth Street and Seventh Ave
- Desire to be more people-oriented and less car-centric
- Concern about infrastructure, construction, and maintenance costs to property owners

IN-PERSON DROP-IN ENGAGEMENT EVENT

The drop-in in-person engagement event was held in a church in Connaught Heights. Information boards were posted at the event, and attendees were invited to review these, and ask questions or provide comments on the boards or to staff in attendance.

Feedback from attendees was predominantly positive. The following themes emerged:

- Support for concepts being proposed, desire for planning process to be faster
- Some concern about scale of change coming to the neighbourhood, construction impacts to current residents
- Interest in increasing housing supply to meet need, especially those of young people
- Interest in advancing housing affordability

- Desire to address traffic challenges, congestion before and on the Queensborough Bridge, and to carefully consider changes to the transportation network
- Support for neighbourhood house concept and interest in an even larger facility
- Support for significant park expansion and acquisition
- Interest in seeing successful commercial area to enable residents to meet daily needs in the neighbourhood

ADVISORY PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Staff brought a report and summary presentation for discussion to the September 17, 2024 Advisory Planning Commission meeting. Commission members discussed the “Big Moves” and strategy highlights, asked many questions, and expressed support for the emerging vision. Minutes from the meeting can be found at <https://pub-newwestcity.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=19601>.

Key points made by Commissioners are summarized below:

- Create a vibrant retail area with a grocery store but also additional diversity in types of retail spaces, and ensure the ground floor is occupied by businesses that rely on foot traffic rather than office uses that are better suited to second-floor spaces;
- Ensure new schools are planned for, and that capacity is set based on projected rather than current population levels;
- Encourage design of buildings that provide affordability rather than luxury – for both commercial and residential uses;
- Work with TransLink to expand and increase public transit options in the area and address overcrowding on buses;
- Improve existing parks, expand these, and create more park spaces;
- Ensure there is a diversity of housing affordability levels provided in the vision area; and
- Consider the needs of unhoused populations, and ensure these are addressed in the vision.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE LIASON MEETING

Staff presented to UDI’s New Westminster Liaison Committee meeting on October 23, 2024. Questions and comments included:

- Support for the efforts to ensure livability;
- Desire to ensure that fees, charges and amenity expectations are calibrated to retain development potential;

- Caution that enabling higher density reduces opportunity for ground-oriented forms; and
- Support for incentives-based green building approaches.

APPENDIX - VERBATIM COMMENTS

The following is a record of the feedback received from those who responded using the City's Be Heard New West site and online survey. The comments are organized by the questions asked.

Please note: All of the feedback below is printed as received. Comments are unedited as to spelling, grammar, use of contractions, etc. Two of the comments below, as indicated with an asterisk, have had inappropriate content or language removed due to violations of the Be Heard New West Moderation Policy (<https://www.beheardnewwest.ca/moderation>).

Full Community Survey Comments

1. Big Move 1: Transit Village integrates community input - What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input?

- Enhanced access to transit and a better station doesn't mean renovating this area as a city. This is the suburbs and we chose to live here not in a city space.
- How about addressing the main problem affecting every area....too many people on too little land.
- This idea doesn't seem realistic. The area has incredibly steep hills making it difficult to walk and it is quite "out of the way". Nothing about this plan would be more appealing to businesses compared to nearby shopping centers without more parking.
- With a big project like this why are there no schools in the plan? Schools are busting at the seams and no thought or plans to expand more. Lousy planning, should be mandated
- More engagement with the affect people living in the proposed area with the pros and cons. The facilitators are focused on the pie in the sky solution instead of having a balanced view since they are employed by the city. A third party neutral facilitator
- cutting taxes in New Westminster

2. Big Move 2: Housing Capacity and Choice - What would you like to see changed to better integrate community input?

- The input provided was that the cul-de-sac (very end bloc) of Edinburgh and Dublin should be made into high density - I dont see that in the plan
- To increase density you need to increase ease to build. Let the market decide what to build and get out of the way. We don't need to pander to special

interests. Worry about the success of the development first, special interests second.

- Less density
- Everyone I have talked to here is sorry to see the heritage leave the neighborhood. Is there anything being done to address that?
- Schools and better road planning
- More engagement with the affect people living in the proposed area with the pros and cons. The facilitators are focused on the pie in the sky solution instead of having a balanced view since they are employed by the city. A third party neutral facilitator
- Keep this area as houses and not high density. We chose to live in the suburbs and New West is pushing us out with this plan. I don't want to live in a high density area. I want quiet and a big yard.
- the decision made regarding the brutal traffic on 20th street.

3. Big Move 3: Streets for People - What would you like to see changed to better meet this goal?

- Society is structured that people drive or transit to work. Biking and walking is not an option for most.
- Some people MUST drive and these people are also likely to need this type of community and social living. They are NOT going to ride bikes, and this is going to increase as population is aging,. It is not fair to people to just dictate no cars, no parking
- This plan is crazy, the street is on the side of a hill in a small corner of new west. You have to reduce the red tape and just let them build. People are not going to be hanging out like this is a destination.
- New West is a commuter center for many surrounding suburbs. It will be difficult and impractical to implement barriers to vehicle access. It is challenging enough as it currently stands.
- cutting taxes
- Acknowledge more cars on the road than ever!
- It doesn't take into account the household around the area and how many of them are car dependent. Will the city be working with translink to reduce car dependence? What is the percentage of reduction are we looking at?
- Too car oriented. Even 7th Avenue will remain open to general traffic. It should be open only for people and transit.
- Dont see anything specific that will limit traffic other than a hope people will transit and walk more. Where are the parking restrictions for high density? What

are the improvements to the bridge or the interchanges? It is not very clear
Needs specific

- You can not get around with the idea of reducing car dependence by reducing the number of locations where cars can get in or out.
- I agree less car reliance for residents is important, the major issues with traffic are people commuting through the neighborhood. Not the residents. Queensborough bridge, 10th and Stewardson connections need to be improved or nothing will improve
- The biggest hinderance to traffic in this area is the Queensborough Bridge. Can we get moving on that? Like priority #1
- Not reality. Our transit system does not meet the needs of people today and way too slow at making moves to improve. People will always need their vehicles.
- Take time to consider residents who have physical challenges, cannot ride a bike, cannot walk far, car dependent and who does not wish to engage in car-share.

4. Big Move 4: Green Networks - What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input?

- more playgrounds and outdoor recreation space for in this area is desperately needed
- The reality is that homeless, drug users take over such green spaces and instead of being a welcoming environment, ends up being a problem. How to make such areas actually safe for intended users is critical.
- This plan is too ambitious and will slow the development. Agree that some park space will be nice for the increased density, but making all the roads green will just hurt livability. Stay out of the way as much as possible!
- you either have more land used for housing or more low value green spaces, not both.
- No impressed with any planning, feel you missed the mark completely
- More engagement with the affect people living in the proposed area with the pros and cons. The facilitators are focused on the pie in the sky solution instead of having a balanced view since they are employed by the city. A third party neutral facilitator
- Our home is on your map for renovation and we were never consulted!!!!!!!!!!!!
Your website is not good enough and this survey is not good enough to evaluate residents preferences. We live here so we don't have to be near high density!!!
- Seems the "boss" folk have it all figured out.*
- waste of taxpayers money (diverting \$\$ from more pressing needs).

5. Big Move 6: Social Connections - What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input?

- more outdoor recreation & sport space in this neighborhood is desperately needed
- There should be more of the gathering spaces, new library branch. Potentially, a new middle school.
- Maybe change Columbia Street. Get the voices of the people that have called DL home for forty plus years.
- Where is a rec centre, new gym space or community policing priorities that were discussed? There will be more revenue with density to make this happen
- Schools. The school in the neighborhood is WAY too small to accommodate even a small increase in population. I understand that's the ministry's responsibility but you guys need to get on this now. They move even slower than you do.
- This is not what my neighbours want.
- Way over reaching. Just insure you have the necessary infrastructure (schools and a community centre if deemed necessary). Dont over reach. Stay out of the way!
- you need all new city works infrastructure to be able to accommodate all the new living residences you are planning. The present infrastructures cannot supply the needed electricity now. Hydro has stated that it will never be able to supply the homes.
- toally a not needed project / rewarding developers , not taxpayers.
- This is where you guys get a big fat F if I were to give a letter grade. From the beginning you have sent a bunch of jr employees come to these info events and they themselves have no information to give.*
- Where will the school be built? How will existing schools accommodate increased demand? How long after the housing is complete will governments begin to consider the idea of meeting the overwhelming need of student space?

6. Bold Move 7: Climate-Friendly Buildings - What would you like to see changed to better reflect community input?

- No mention of seismic vulnerability and design integration for seismic resilience. No mention of senior's housing such as cohousing.
- all subject to availability of power - already building cannot proceed to be built because there is no electricity capacity to support new building needs. So nice to say but how to deliver? What capacity can New West build out to support this?

- While this is a good initiative, it should be integrated into other initiatives. Buildings should be constructed using the most cost effective and durable materials. If there is an area to install carbon reductions, that is a bonus.
- This is not what residents want in this neighbourhood.
- Cost effective solutions. Some of these ideas seem quite costly to implement. How much will the price of these units be if the developers have to add all these bells and whistles. Prices are already high. Please propose ideas which will reduce constructio
- Leave well enough alone. The city of New Westminster is the hub of traffic in the lower mainland. Seven square miles and the only way to build is up.
- This is going to slow down development. Nothing about this should be any different than any other buildings in the city. It is over the top. Take a page from Burnaby and just let them build.
- As I stated before, BC Hydro has said that with the current infrastructure, it can not supply the suggested number of new homes with the required electricity. You had better look at other options for heat and light.
- fo much emphasis on climate.
- In the end the big developers will do what they please

7. If you would like to share more about what you like or are concerned about, please share here:

- Keep up the good work!
- Need more information regarding 20th Street commercial space plans/ideas and addressing the traffic congestion not only along 20th Street but also congestion evening rush hour on Seventh Avenue to access Queensborough Bridge.
- Shops & services from chains rather than small or independent businesses (money goes elsewhere; non-descript general feel instead of creating a unique place). Spaces too grand for human-size displacement, too much to parking & cars.
- Any improvements in this area is welcome but there is a glaring gap in this plan where outdoor/indoor sport is not considered. 'Recreation' is not equivalent to 'sport' venues and facilities and this is essential to a growing community.
- I like that the transportation and parks moves maintain the quiet livability of the neighbourhood while increasing housing density.
- The consultation process has been ongoing for decades, with no visible progress. The word generational and the phrase "long term" have been used suggesting a lack of short term progress. Burnaby has made great progress why not New West? Lack of detail.

- I am concerned about the implementation of infrastructure & it holding up affordable rental housing projects from moving forward
- This plan doesn't value the single family home and those of us who have chosen to live here. We should be able to stay in our quiet family friendly neighbourhood without development encroaching on our homes. Urbanize the core, not here!
- Only concern to get it approved fast enough
- More thought should be given to car traffic, who is going to use bike paths at night and in the winter? Also some of the green ideas seem costly, the initial construction cost and maintenance of green roofs are quite high. This will increase unit prices
- Not being a resident in the neighbourhood my biggest concern is how the 20th St traffic flow will be impacted in both directions since the Queensborough off and on ramp is a true bottleneck that needs improvement
- I would like to see more reassurance that amenities such as grocery stores will be in the village. You seem to stress daycare a lot but that is for a small percentage of families, everybody needs groceries. To be a 15 minute city, it will be essential
- Can we get an overpass for pedestrians at the intersection of 20th street and 7th ave to connect this development to Grimston park
- Easy enough to verbalize, a whole different thing to actually deliver. Especially concerned about electricity
- Overall, the strategy shall be even more people oriented and less carcentric. Building massing represented well.
- The City of New Westminster has become, like most areas. too large for its survival. Those of us born and raised in this city have fond memories of when the city was family oriented. Now, not so much as the population continues to strangle the city
- New west should cause the minimum disturbance to the project possible. Make sure you have roads, plumbing, electric, parking, a school if you need it, a community centre if the population warrants it and then get out of the way. No special interests!
- glad to see a plan to utilize space around this very central skytrain would love to see improved access to queensborough and more 'streets for people' and transit connections between this 22nd street station area and queensborough
- It looks like a nice dream, but it lacks the pla reality that the city does not and will not have the needed infrastructure for generations to come..
- I am still concerned about "affordable" housing. We tent to use the word affordable as code for social housing, but it's not only lowincome families who are feeling the crunch. "Affordable" has to apply to any family with a household income under \$100K.

- resulting in increased taxes , while benefiting mainly developers.
- Emphasis should be on good affordable housing, not just more housing (i.e., more affordable housing and less investment housing)
- Looks great. My concern is how long it's taken to get to this point and how long it's actually going to be before construction actually starts. Please fast track this as the improvements are much needed in the area
- I loathe the death of an old neighborhood but understand the need for change. I have serious doubts this will be achieved in a way that keeps any character of the current neighborhood or has all the services residents will need.
- When designing transit and green spaces, please remember to balance the needs for vehicle traffic and parking near small businesses with more environmentally friendly priorities. Cars will be with for a while yet!
- "Affordable housing" is such a broad and ambiguous term, and it does not give us any assurance. Give us concrete figures projected for truly affordable housing for low & median income household, i.e. 1BR (550-700 sqft) \$900-\$1100/month.
- The people living here won't know what hit them. The incomers will drive many away. But in a generation or two, no-one will remember anything of what was.
- Poor lack of planning when it comes to neighborhood input. Don't appreciate having Stonehaus involved at all, they have been relentless about spreading urgency to sell when this area is a long way off. Bunch of con men trying to trick people into selling
- Traffic is a nightmare around this area... Carpooling and bike lanes do NOT address this issue. Yes less people are using vehicles but there are more people than ever so it is net positive for vehicles on the road!
- Vehicle traffic is always a major concern when adding density to a neighbourhood. The city plans to increase the population of Connaught heights by 30k homes. If you reduce vehicle use by 50%, that will still result in a huge amount of vehicles in area
- More transit and faster transit is always great for the community and the economy
- Use continuous sidewalks!
- We would like to see more detailed plan and timeline for OCP adoption
- We want to make sure this OCP can be adopted and changes happen in this community!
- Schools are critical. The existing model of building housing and then schools is broken. It would be better to have schools that are under capacity compared to overwhelming the existing system. The provincial government must make this a priority.

- More engagement with the affect people living in the proposed area with the pros and cons. The facilitators are focused on the pie in the sky solution instead of having a balanced view since they are employed by the city. A third party neutral facilitator
- Traffic has always been a serious and never ending battle. As an Elder and a long time resident of Connaught Heights, we have always suffered from isolation, limited access to stores and ever increasing congestion and dangerous intersections (8th /20)
- I strongly believe the project should evolve the area east of 20th street. The transition from high density to medium density should be over a greater area to take advantage of transit. Stopping at20th street is WRONG. 40yrs of failed planning continues.
- Please proceed as quickly as possible to I
- As I see it there could be a challenge balancing the housing legislation and how the city handles overarching pressure from the Province. Housing legislation should not interfere with the need for context and municipality specific housing development.
- The Draft plan looks fantastic! However, I have concerns about traffic congestion on 20th Street. As a Queensborough resident, I'd like to know how the city can work with the Province to improve traffic flow on 20th St leading into Queensborough.