



District of Wells

Meeting Date	May 29, 2017
Report Date:	May 24, 2017
Memo to:	Mayor and Council
From:	Andrew Young, Chief Administrative Officer
Subject:	District of Wells Zoning and Tree Protection Bylaw - proposed building width amendments

Purpose/Issue:

To seek Council consideration of proposed building width amendments to the District of Wells Zoning and Tree Protection Bylaw No. 26, 2000 (the Zoning Bylaw).

Background:

In recent years the District of Wells has received inquiries from local property owners, as well as potential property purchasers, about opportunities to construct narrow residential buildings on existing lots located in the Wells townsite. It should be noted that many of the existing lots in Wells consist of long narrow properties that were created in Wells' early years.

Under the current provisions of the District of Wells Zoning Bylaw the minimum building width is:

- 6.5 metres (21.32 feet) in the Wells Commercial District (CW), Commercial (RC), Residential 1 (R1), Residential 2 (R2), and Residential 3 (R3) zoning schedules;
- 4.27 metres (14 feet) in the Residential 1A (R1A) zoning schedule.

It has been suggested that the minimum building width provisions in the Zoning Bylaw may be preventing property owners from developing or placing more affordable forms of housing on some of these properties, and as a consequence there has been reduced interest in these properties as well as fewer opportunities to create additional affordable housing options in Wells.

The proposed bylaw attached to this report, if adopted, would:

- Eliminate the minimum building width restrictions that currently exist in the zoning schedules listed above; and
- Accommodate a wider range of manufactured housing options in each of the zoning schedules listed above.

The proposed bylaw, if adopted, may:

- help stimulate greater interest in developing the existing lots in Wells (including the long narrow lots) and increase the number of housing units in Wells and over

- time reduce the existing shortage of housing; and
- provide for additional opportunities and options to develop or place new forms of housing in the community.

Provided this development takes place then the District can expect its tax base to increase.

It should be noted that many properties in Wells, including many that are subject to the zoning schedules listed above, are located within the District's "1930's Mining Town Development Permit Area" (DPA) pursuant to the District's Official Community Plan Historical Theme Preservation Policies (Section 3.2). However, it should also be noted that those policies and their accompanying permit area guidelines can – in their current form – only be applied to commercial, industrial or multi-family residential development in the area; and not to low density residential developments (e.g. single family residential) (as per Section 488 Local Government Act). This means that owners or developers of low density housing in the "1930's Mining Town Development Permit Area" are subject to BC Building Code regulations but not the District's DPA design controls. In the future if Council and the community so desires, the District could regulate the appearance of all forms of development (new and changes to old) in the townsite through the establishment of an Heritage Conservation Area (HCA). Staff do not suggest establishing an HCA at this time.

Budget, Policy, Staffing:

None

Legal Considerations:

None

Recommendation/s:

That Council:

1. Receives the report from the Chief Administrative Officer regarding proposed building width amendments to the District of Wells Zoning and Tree Protection Bylaw No. 26, 2000;
2. Gives First and Second Reading to "District of Wells Zoning and Tree Protection Bylaw No. 26, 2000, Amending Bylaw No. 152, 2017" and forward the bylaw to a Public Hearing; OR
3. Directs staff to take no further action regarding this proposal.

Andrew Young, MCIP, RPP
Chief Administrative Officer