

# NEIGHBOURHOOD CHARACTER

## Working Group

December 2020

*west vancouver*





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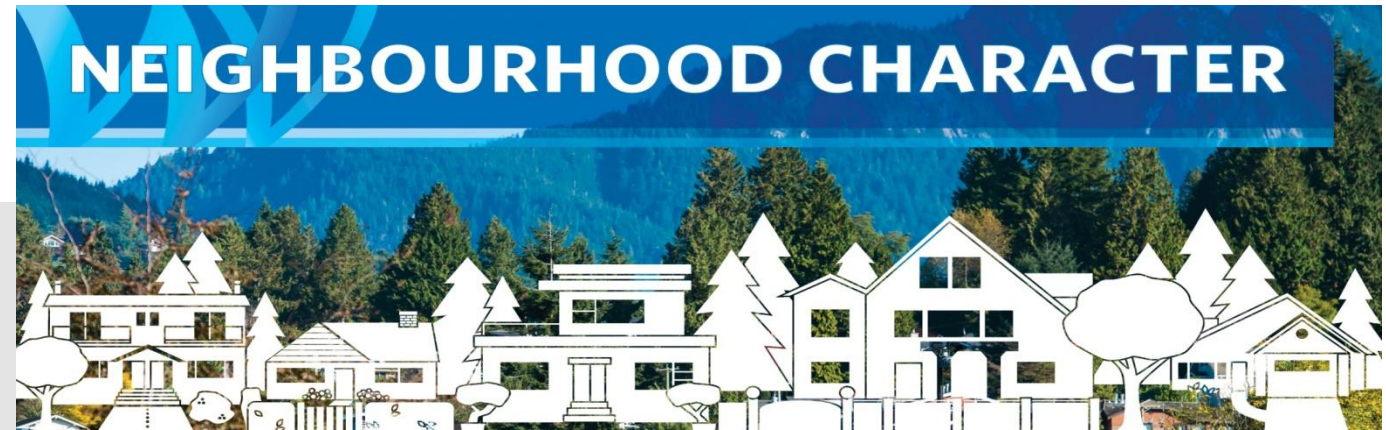
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# NCWG Purpose



Recommend changes to West Vancouver regulations, guidelines and policies to protect and enhance neighbourhood character & protect heritage for the benefit of the residents. Mandate is for single family neighbourhoods.

- 9 citizens, 2 staff, 1 councillor
- Meetings every 1-2 weeks Sept 2018 – Oct 2020
- Several rounds of public engagement (and refinements)

# Presentation Outline

1. **What is Neighbourhood Character?**
2. **According to the OCP: “ A sense of place and its distinct aspects that cause a specific area to be familiar to the people associated with it and recognizable from other areas.”**
3. **The look and feel of an area; qualities that make one neighbourhood distinct from another; a range of physical components including the built environment, architectural style, street width and layout, vegetation, fence height and style...**

# Presentation Outline

## Approach

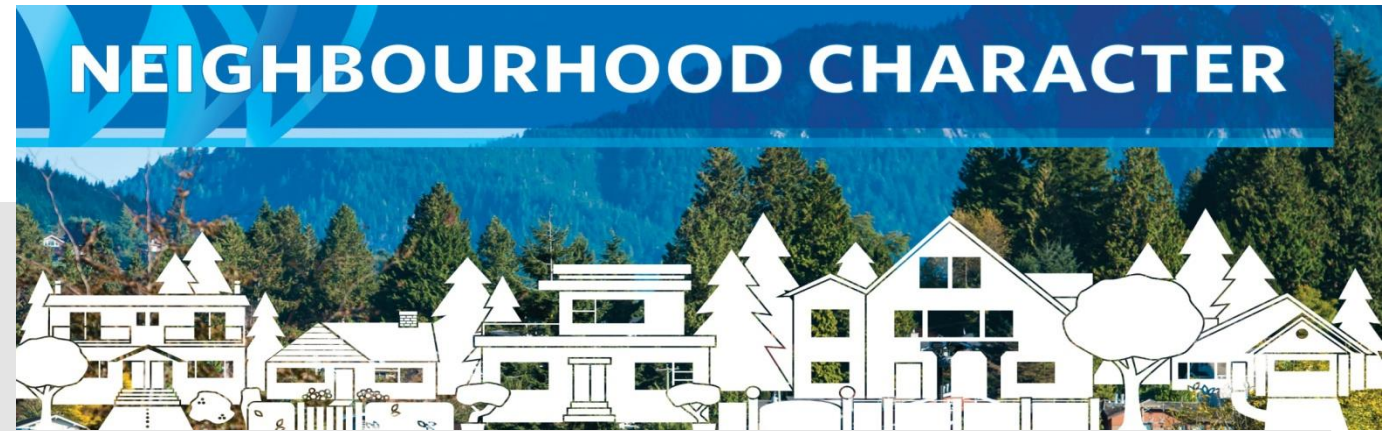
- **tour of neighbourhoods**
- **presentations on different neighbourhoods**
- **identification of problems and solutions**
- **engagement, feedback and refinements**
- **final report: July 27, 2021**

# Presentation Outline

## Assumptions

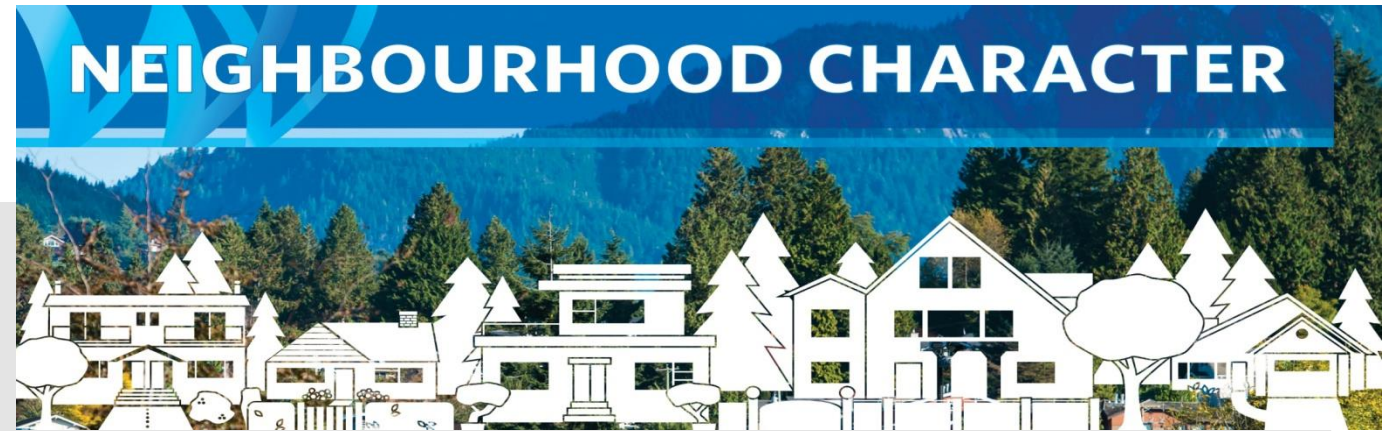
- **importance of property values**
- **tastes and styles change and can not be legally regulated**
- **concern for the impact of climate change**
- **municipal and provincial regulations**

# OCP References



- **2.1.8 Ensure that new single-family dwellings respect neighbourhood character by:**
  - a) Reviewing regulations controlling the scale of new single-family dwellings; and
  - b) Applying and updating built-form guidelines, as relevant, in regards to neighbourhood context and character, streetscape and natural features.
- **From the “OCP alignment with Metro 2040 Strategies”:**
  - ... encourage a diverse range of housing options respecting neighbourhood character by controlling the scale of new single-family dwellings ...

# NCWG Approach



**Identified and validated the “problems”**

**Developed a set of Draft Recommendations covering 4 topics:**

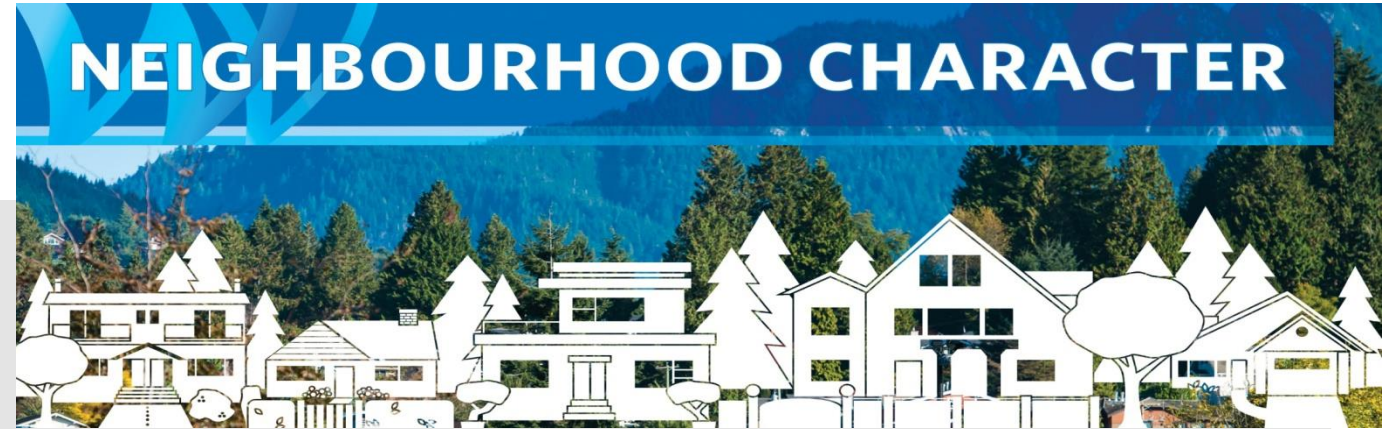
- Building size
- Landscaping
- Neighbour consideration
- Housing diversity

**Recommendations should be “achievable, implementable and legislatable”.**



# Draft Recommendations

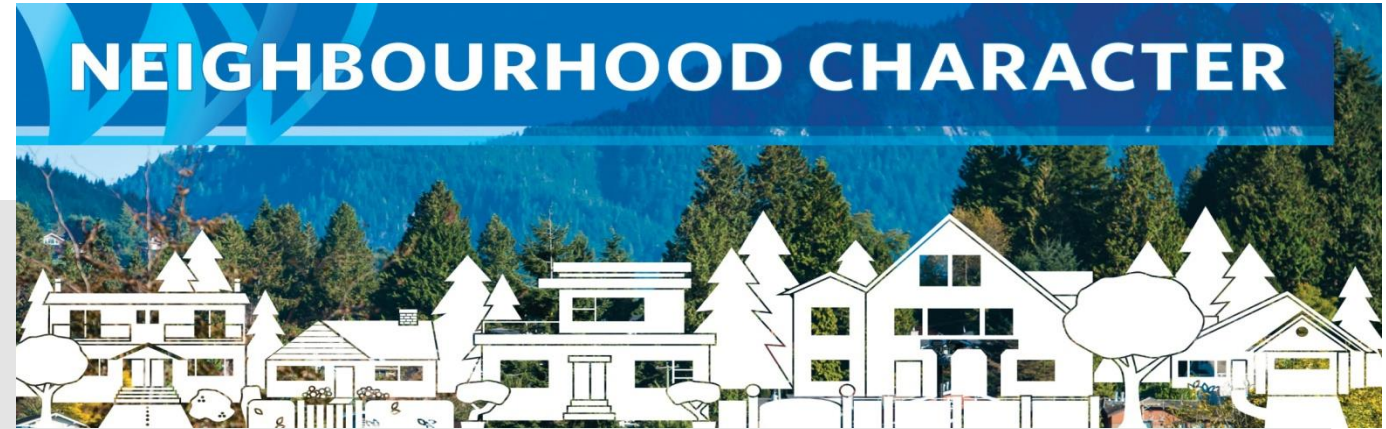
## Initial Validation



- **NCWG met with stakeholder groups, staff and council (Jan – Feb)**
- **We integrated the feedback (Apr – May)**
  - More emphasis on reducing visible size
  - More emphasis on diversity of housing types (suites, coach houses)
  - Fine-tuning for practicality, legality, logistics

# Draft Recommendations

## Major Public Engagement



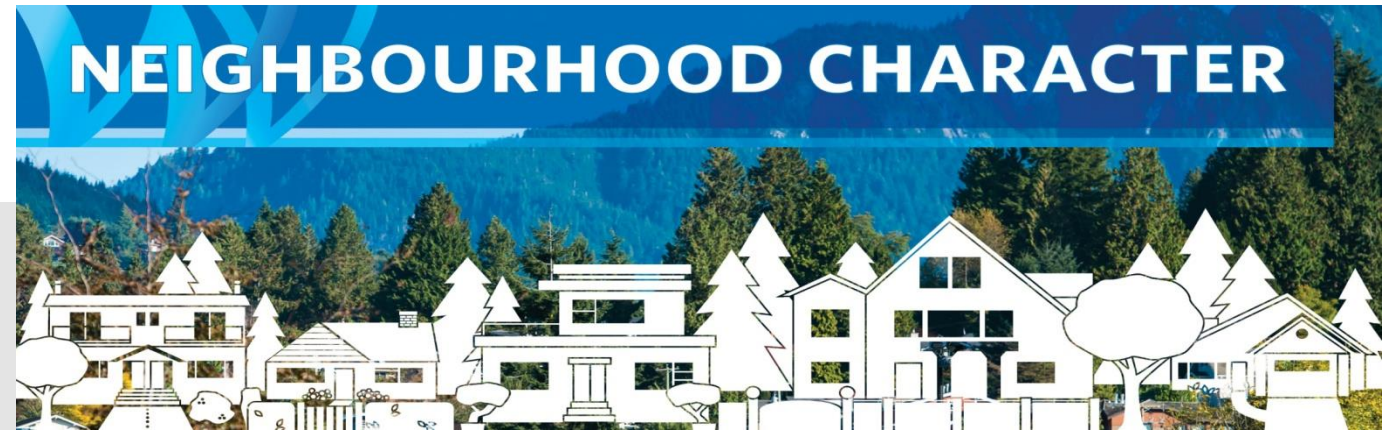
- **Major round of Public Engagement over the summer (July – Sept, 2020)**
  - Draft report published
  - Survey/questionnaire (westvancouverite, NS News)
  - Videos highlighting and explaining major recommendations
  - Live interactive webinars
- **Refinements & Clarifications (October, 2020)**



# Final Recommendations

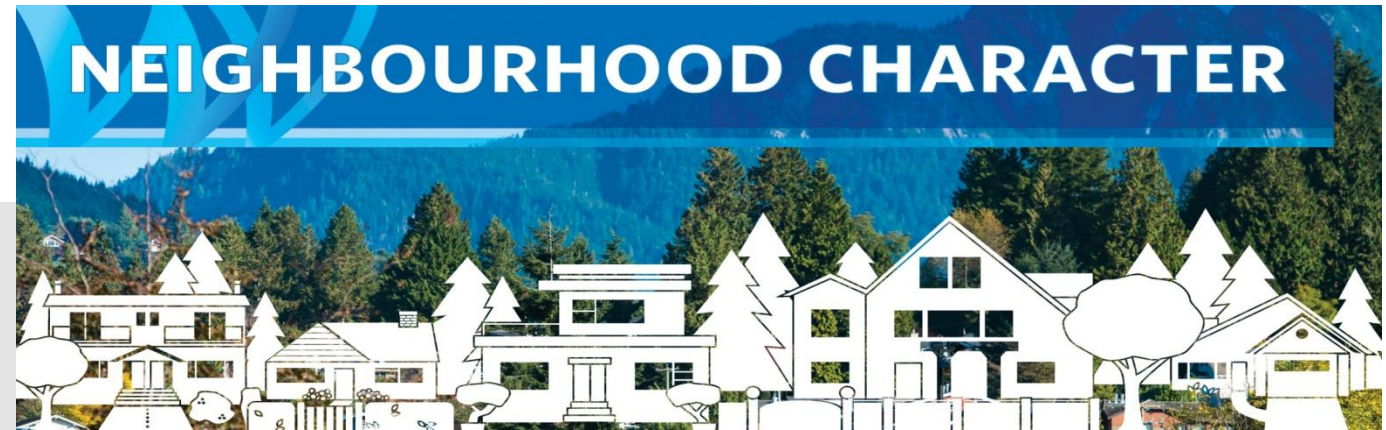
## Principles

- *Maintain and enhance Neighbourhood Character to support quality of life and retain property values*



# Final Recommendations

## Principles & Goals

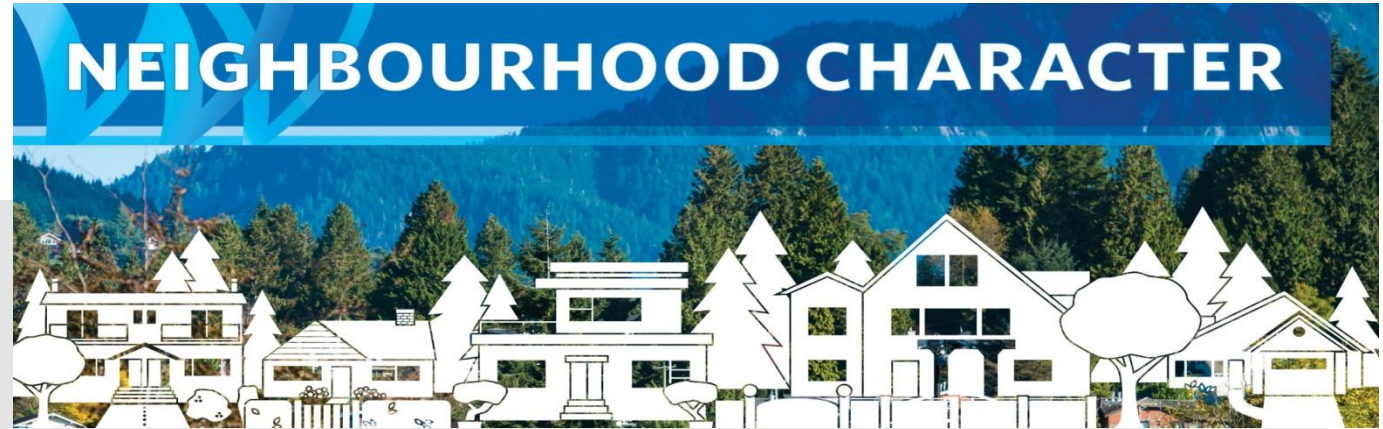


- *Maintain and enhance Neighbourhood Character to support quality of life and retain property values*
- Size houses appropriately for their lots (and generally encourage smaller houses)
- Focus on greenery
- Encourage housing diversity while retaining a detached-house feel to neighbourhoods

*A combination of small changes that collectively will enhance neighbourhood character.*



# Final Recommendations

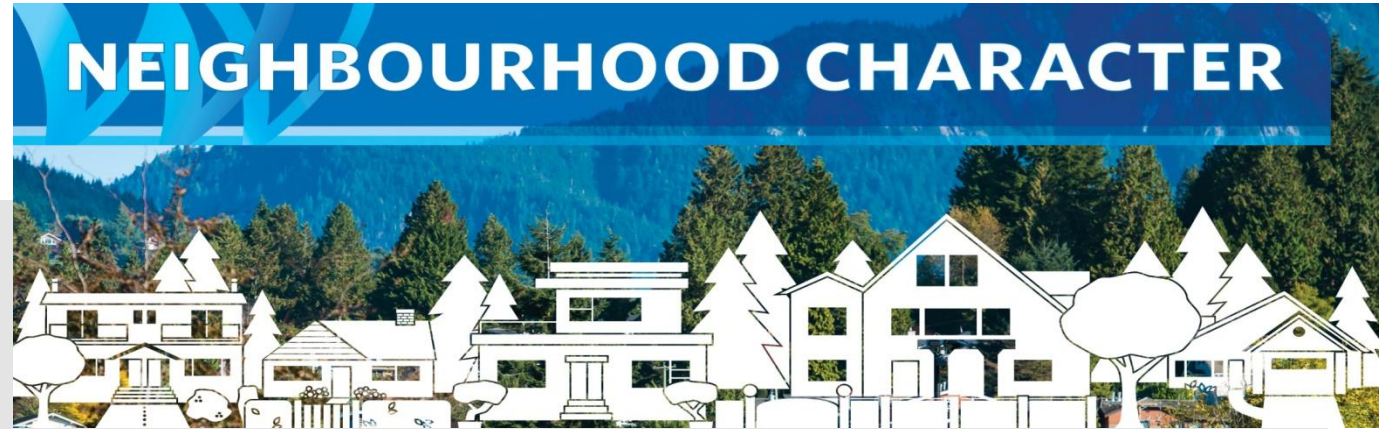


## Summary

- **Encourage smaller homes and smaller lots**
  - Reduce FAR from .35 to .30 and/or FAR exemptions
  - Easier subdivision of large lots where appropriate to neighbourhood character
- **Enable & encourage housing diversity** (suites, coach houses)
  - Density bonus: 500 sq. ft. for suite and 800 sq. ft. for coach house
  - Easier, more predictable process

*While maintaining a detached-house, single-family “feel” and encouraging smaller houses.*

# Final Recommendations

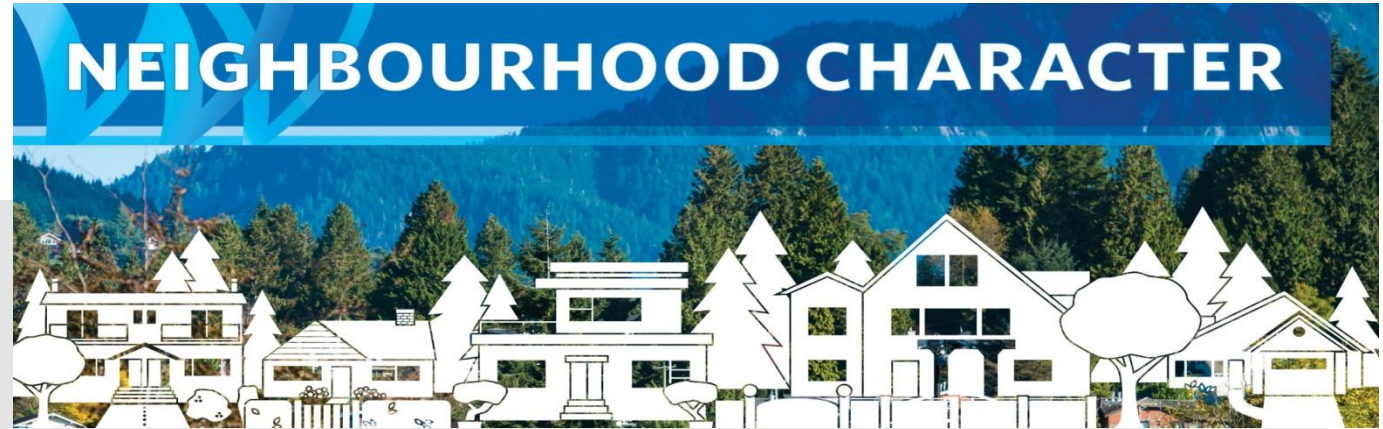


## Summary

- **Smaller-appearing houses**
  - Partially shield basements from the street view; should not present as three stories
  - Minor changes to HBF, roof heights, semi-enclosed spaces; encourage articulation
- **Encourage more green landscaping and less hardscapes**
  - Limit hard surfaces
  - Attention to boulevards
- **Encourage more consideration & communication with neighbours**

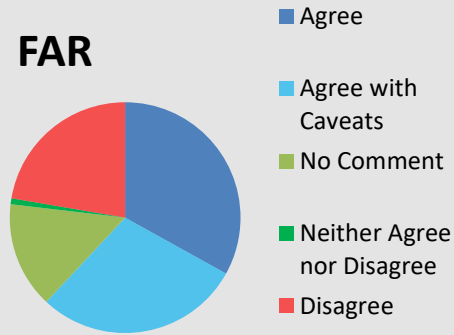


# Final Recommendations

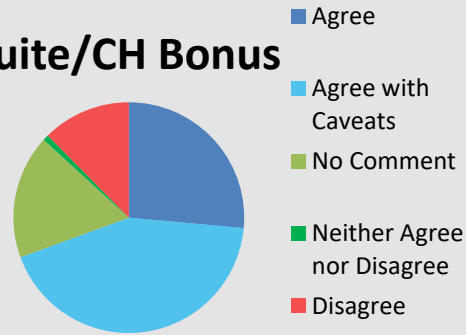


## Engagement Summary

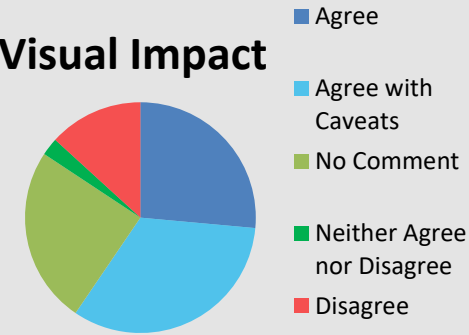
### FAR



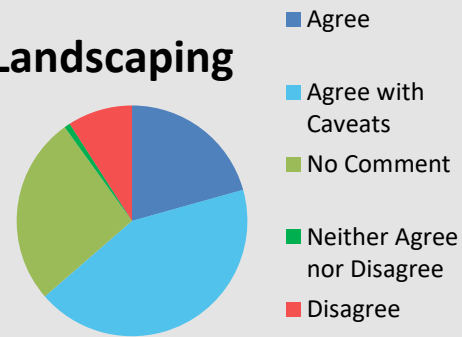
### Suite/CH Bonus



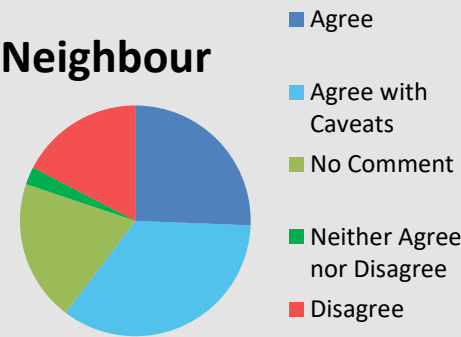
### Visual Impact



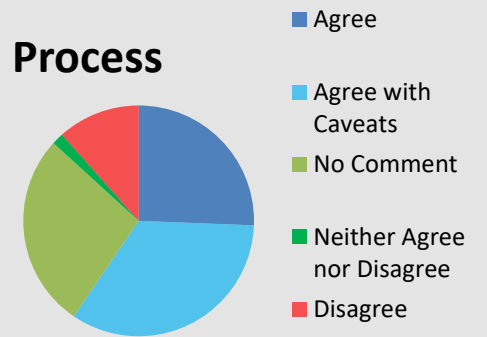
### Landscaping



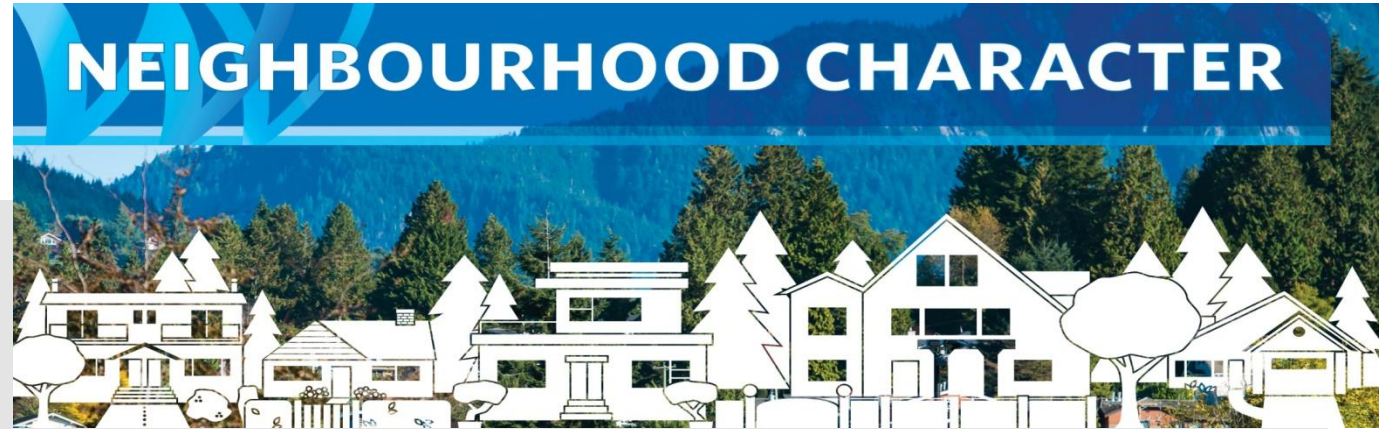
### Neighbour



### Process



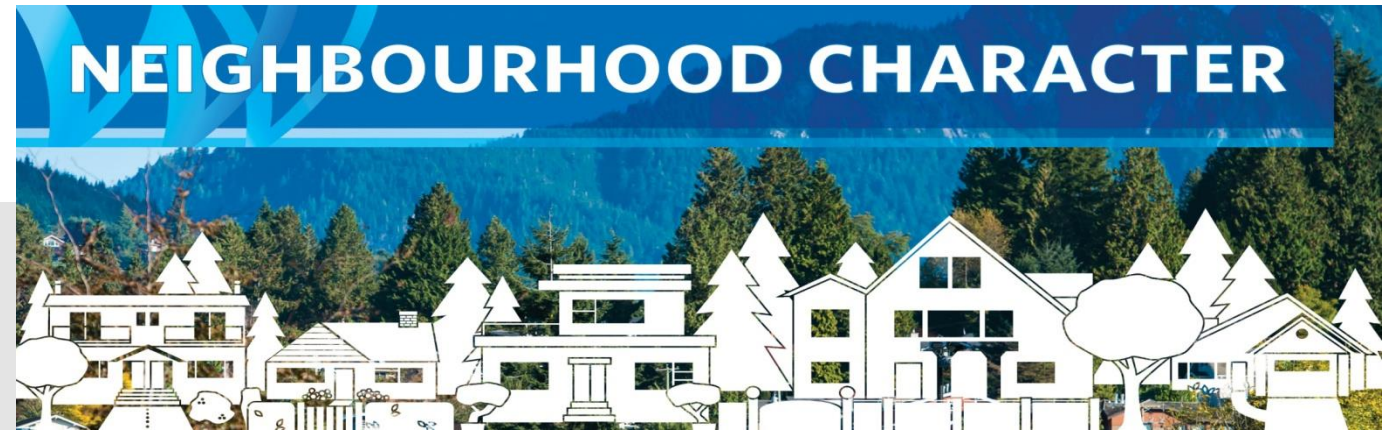
# Final Recommendations



## Strengthen OCP

- **2.1.8 Ensure that new single-family dwellings respect neighbourhood character by:**
  - a) Reviewing regulations controlling the scale of new single-family dwellings; and
  - b) Applying and updating built-form guidelines, as relevant, in regards to neighbourhood context and character, streetscape and natural features.
  - c) Requiring all Development Permit applications, rezoning applications, and variance applications to include a section demonstrating how the proposed project respects or enhances existing neighbourhood character.**

# Next Steps



- **Council receive the “Neighbourhood Character Working Group Recommendations”**
- **Staff report back in Q1 2021 with implementing policies and guidelines according to the Working Group recommendations**



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# Thank You!

