

What Seems Possible at 1600 Delta?

In company with Harry Christie, an elder at First Presbyterian Church, New Westminster, and an employee of the City of Burnaby Engineering Department for over 35 years, I had a meeting with Zeralynne Modequillo and Margaret Manifold of the Planning and Building Department at the city on August 31, 2010. We reviewed what might be possible by way of expansion on the Brentwood Presbyterian site and explored other possibilities within the City of Burnaby for church development.

The following are the key points in our conversation:

- Our current property, if subdivided and sold, would probably yield 3 city building lots, worth between \$600 - \$800,000 each (16.46 frontage each) – estimated value of the property alone, then, is \$2 million.
- The current zoning is P1 – Neighbourhood Institution District (conditions attached) – uses permitted are places of public worship, child care facilities, a dwelling for the minister or caretaker (provided the dwelling is on the same lot as the institution), and accessory buildings and uses – this zoning is designed for institutions that serve a residential neighbourhood, so buildings and parking suitable for a regional church are not envisioned
- The height of the building cannot exceed 2 storeys (which we are at already)
- The front yard must be 24.61ft from the lot line, the side yard must be 14.76ft from the lot line, and the back yard must be 29.53ft from the lot line (we are nonconforming here) – we could expand the current building 14' towards the west and 11' towards the south – expansion towards the north would likely reduce available parking – any parking we might realize by buying back the manse (even if that is possible) would be restricted by the 24.61ft. set back
- Maximum coverage is 40% of the lot area – we do have space to expand – but whether that expansion can meet the growing needs of BTPC for both space and parking is a serious question
- We need one parking spot for every 9 sq metres in the main assembly area and one parking spot for every 19 sq metres in other areas (halls, meeting rooms, class rooms, and gyms) – we have plenty of parking for current space and use – but new builds would bring the new parking regulations into play – the only way would be underground parking at \$40,000 a space
- There is no more P1 space in the Official Community Plan set aside for church use in Burnaby – very unlikely that a request for a variance to allow for a church would be approved, since neighbourhood use also includes community centres, schools, etc. – no new church use has been approved in the last 10 years

The Nature of the Neighbourhoods of North West Burnaby

If we consider the Brentwood congregation as the Presbyterian presence in North West Burnaby – Brentwood (7,565), Willingdon Heights (10,035), Burnaby Heights (7,210), Capital Hill (5,655), and Parkcrest-Aubrey (6,825) (from the Burrard Inlet to Lougheed and from Boundary to Springer) - then we are serving a population of 37,290 according to the city documents based on the 2006 census data. The ethnic origins of the population are very mixed, something that is true of the membership of the Brentwood congregation as well. Significant population growth is taking place in the immediate vicinity of the church as a large concentration of high-rise apartments and townhouses is being built around Brentwood Town Centre.

The Character of Brentwood Presbyterian Church

Brentwood Presbyterian Church is a multi-ethnic, inter-cultural congregation that has served the neighbourhoods of North West Burnaby described briefly above for the past 48 years. We own our land and have over \$225,000 that we are willing to invest in renewing our future as a vibrant and vital centre for mission and ministry. We see ourselves as a neighbourhood church growing to 100-150 members over the next decade. We invite people to get centred in Jesus Christ in worship and learning, to enjoy community with Jesus Christ in fellowship, and to experience the compassion of Jesus Christ in service. Taken together, these activities nourish people to flourish in the grace of Jesus Christ.