



Fairfield Gentle Density Survey Engagement Summary

Draft Fairfield Neighbourhood Plan
September 2018

In collaboration with City staff, the Gentle Density Steering Committee undertook a Gentle Density Survey, open from July 27, 2018 through August 19, 2018. The purpose of the survey was to explore levels of support for various housing types in certain areas and lot types within the Traditional Residential parts of Fairfield. During the engagement period, community members could also stop in at a storefront in Cook Street Village to get more information on Gentle Density and provide input.

Based on 303 survey responses and conversations with nearly 400 people who visited the storefront, public feedback indicated:

- Broad support for the goals of allowing for a greater diversity of ground-oriented infill housing to meet future housing needs, increase housing choice and provide flexibility
- General support for a broader range of housing types, including those with more density (e.g. larger houseplexes) near Cook Street Village and along Fairfield Road
- Mixed support for townhouse forms that are either stacked, in more than one row and/or including a courtyard, with approximately half of respondents supportive of these types on certain lots (e.g. larger lots, corner or laneway lots, near Cook Street Village and along Fairfield Road). Those in support saw them as attractive, attainable options for families who want to stay or live in Fairfield, as part of the housing mix; others were concerned about retention of open space, lot coverage and character
- Concern for the provision of housing which is affordable to current residents, future families and moderate-income households, and/or rental tenure
- Concern for respecting the neighbourhood's character through context-sensitive design and scale of buildings, maintenance of green space and tree planting, and encouraging retention and adaptation of existing buildings
- Concern for providing parking on-site and/or reducing impacts to on-street parking, balanced by concern for green space, with some wanting a forward-looking policies which consider future demand, transportation demand management, and efforts to encourage more sustainable mode split



Quantifiable Results at a Glance

Levels of support for various housing types: *Percent indicating strongly support or support (by location)*

Dark grey = question not asked
Light grey = support less than 50%
Blue = 50% to 59%
Lighter green = 60% to 69%
Darker green = 70%+

	Near Cook St Village & along FF Rd (%)	Other residential areas		
		Standard Lot* (%)	Large lot** (%)	Corner, laneway, double frontage lot (%)
Detached house only	40.1	50.0	43.1	45.3
House with suite or garden suite	76.1	76.3	69.0	72.8
Existing house with suite & garden suite	74.6	71.8	72.3	74.7
Existing house with 2 suites	78.1	79.5	74.4	77.0
Duplex	78.3	75.3	75.2	74.4
Duplex with basement suites	73.3	70.3	73.1	73.2
Duplex with garden suite(s)	73.4	65.8	69.7	67.8
House conversion (generally 3-6 units)	74.4	63.7	77.1	73.8
New Houseplex	66.2	55.4	64.2	67.6
Larger Houseplex (generally 6+ units)	54.2	37.3	50.4	49.0
Townhouses - single row	66.0	52.4	60.9	57.9
Townhouses - stacked	50.4	N/A	46.0	46.4
Townhouses - courtyard / 2 rows	54.1	N/A	N/A	51.4
Small 3-storey apartment buildings	54.0	N/A	43.9	44.6

* Standard lot = 50' wide, approx. 6,000 sq. ft.

** Large lot = over 7,000 or 7,200 sq. ft., either wider than 50' or exceptionally deep lot

Importance of Parking and Open Space on site

	Extremely important	Important	Neutral	Somewhat unimportant	Extremely unimportant
All needed parking be provided on-site?	36%	25%	12%	17%	10%
Open space be retained on-site?	53%	32%	8%	6%	1%

Demographics

Age	
Under 20	0%
Under 40	23%
40-59	39%
60+	38%
Gender	
Female	51%
Male	40%

Tenure	
Owners	78%
Renters	22%
Residence	
Live in Fairfield	78%
Live in Gonzales	7%

Gentle Density Survey: Comments

Near Cook Street Village and Along Fairfield Road (194 responses)

Themes and # times they occur

Theme	#	Summary
General	45	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many general comments in support, support with caveats, some in opposition; often with other specific comments • Mix of housing = lively and eclectic neighbourhood • Consider climate change, sustainable transportation, listen to youth, plan for future, need diverse housing / detached housing near centre of city is not viable • Bought into Fairfield for what it is (socially and density), spent \$ buying and renovating. Some density ok but current proposals go too far. • Will ruin charm • Stable neighbourhood makes people happy; density causes fights to break out between neighbours
Affordability	40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle density does not meet housing need or provide affordable units • Don't need to make room for all who want to live here; need affordable units • Support it if it adds affordable housing • Concern for commodifying housing, gentrification, benefiting owners and/or developers, displacement of existing working poor, seniors, fixed incomes • Need affordable rentals • Limit parking to support affordable rentals • Need more density to address needs • Suites favour affluent owner over rights of renter (city does not inspect) • Rental suites with absentee landlord cause bylaw issues, not enough enforcement • Would oppose larger developments unless they have affordable component • Fairfield not suitable for affordability, or market can't provide it (public sector needs to) • Emphasize increasing rental stock • Supportive housing should be in plan • 25 year vision should provide opportunities for affordable housing – not likely to happen with overhead on development of many small lots • Mix and address different income levels • New development appeals to new residents with money, not needs of current owners and renters • Use incentives to support cooperatives, social housing and group homes • Single-detached homes not affordable to most families • Limiting growth to single-detached will enrich current owners, protect investment – what about others? • Very hard to find rental housing with more than 1 or 2 bedrooms • Make denser housing attractive for long-term residency – e.g. soundproofing (this is why people choose detached housing)
Parking	37	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off street parking needed for 2 or more units • On street parking is one solution but makes roads dangerous • Not space for parking on a single property • Impacts of parking on green space, trees, adjacent property • Garden suites don't leave room for parking • Proximity to downtown = less driving • Gentle density will lead to congestion • Driving is a nightmare • Mitigate increase traffic and parking (doesn't say how)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in condo building from seniors to all ages on FF Road meant more 2-car households, parking on side streets • On-site parking for each unit • On-site parking for visitors, tradespeople • Acceptable if there is enough street parking • Consider one-way streets to add on-street parking • Need better transportation options – denser neighbourhood = healthier • Paid street parking or park on your property • Some of street parking should be specified • Don't spill out onto streets • Consider supporting multi-modal transportation through planning guidelines
Locational	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove area between Chapman and May east of Linden • Remove area between Chapman and May • Fairfield Road and CSV different – FF Road more appropriate for density such as apts, townhouses in two rows (vs. keep it lower density) • Add medium-density west of Cook Street • Put 4-6 storeys on Cook St., keep charm of lower-density areas (comment like Annex in Toronto) • Southgate should include thoughtful gentle density and multi-modal/pedestrian friendly design • Allow gentle density in all areas • Put gentle density only on main streets (ex: bus routes) but not local streets • City should grow outwards to avoid congestion
Character/ Design	27	<p>Prefer traditional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shafer is a good example • Setbacks consistent with present • Size/massing next to neighbours • Greenspace • New should look like houses in neighbourhood • Architecture siting and landscape important (as in video) • Respond to context • Don't like apartment look at Moss and May • Some gentle density, but keep unique character • Roof shape • Larger new builds should be sensitive to context • Control design, size of single-detached houses • Gentle density will ruin charm near village <p>Traditional and modern can mix; variety of styles already exist; avoid faux heritage (one comment)</p>
Greenspace, trees	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children need place to play • Family friendly = some green space • Trees – climate change, aesthetics, ecology, stormwater, character of neighbourhood • Concern that density or parking will reduce trees
Higher density/ apartments	22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow taller apartment buildings (several) • Need more housing near downtown, we are capital city not small town • Gentle density preferable to taller apartment buildings to maintain character (several) • Allow gentle density single-detached to 6-plex, but not apartments, we have too many

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow apartment bldgs in traditional residential areas to be more equitable, and encourage gentle density in areas that are already dense to protect these area • Allow more density west of Cook Street • Gentle density should replace apartment capacity and targets in OCP
Retention	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prefer conversions • Don't allow more density than what's already there if a teardown • Protect heritage houses; HCAs • Tourism, uniqueness, "charm" • Conversions • Incentivize conversions and garden suites over teardowns • Avoid large-scale developments (single lot preferred) • Don't tear down, convert • Pressure or incentivize conversion to higher density
Family friendly	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add gentle density; single detached increasingly unaffordable to most families • 3br, 2 ba affordable units • Townhouses • Affordable apartment buildings • Housing capacity not keeping pace • Retiring couples need attractive options to downsize • Area is attractive to live in – limiting to single-detached houses will protect investments of owners, what about others? • Less tiny units; gentle density results in smaller units, but we need to keep young families and provide options for downsizing. • Need density to preserve Fairfield as a family neighbourhood • All options serve different life stages • Very hard to find rental housing with more than 1 or 2 bedrooms
Housing types	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like townhouses (mention that this form is attractive to families) • Row houses to 3 storeys don't take away from quaint feel • Houseplex of 6 units too big • Apartments needed • No double row townhouses • Row townhouses & houses with more suites • Townhouses, unlike houseplexes, are required to have a greater level of sound insulation (verify) • Single detached houses increasingly unaffordable, limiting to this form will benefit current owners but not support future families, those seeking to downsize, and will not maintain a family neighbourhood
Services	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger developments contribute to services • Bylaw enforcement needed (noise, garbage) if density added • Gentle density will lead to congestion of services • Focus on schools, underground utilities
Process	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gentle density results in small units; we need to keep young families and provide options for downsizing. Feel many support this view but being drowned out by strident voices opposing all development • Asking same questions – hoping to get different answers from those who aren't tired of process? • Believe process is biased either towards developers or to NIMBY's • Term gentle density is a "sham"

Other Residential Areas (151 responses)

Themes and # times they occur (Note: Comparison of frequency may not relate directly to frequencies in the earlier table, as fewer comments were submitted to later questions in the survey)

Theme	#	Summary
Parking	33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some concerns are very general (“parking!”) • Some are concerned that enough parking be provided on-site; others want parking policies that encourage alternative modes or account for future changes • Some are concerned about loss of greenspace • Some want more efficient use of on-street parking (e.g. charge for it); others concerned that there is not enough or that residential only needs stronger enforcement • Some concerned about traffic congestion
Character and Design	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns that new housing address compatibility of character, setbacks, massing, etc. • some want traditional character in new build; others see diverse character as positive • some want to avoid large modern single detached homes
Housing type	30	<p>Varied comments about which housing types may or may not fit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some see all types fitting, meeting needs • Some see denser types as not fitting or not fitting everywhere (e.g. larger lots, lots with 2 frontages or laneways), impacting greenspace, etc. • Those who support for townhouses often mention preference for this type as family-friendly housing • Some want to see policies achieve a mix of housing types • Small number believe neighbourhood should be single-detached only, this is what they bought into, that it is desirable to maintain it as expensive • Some want additional housing types: co-ops, shared living
Affordability	29	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerns for affordability of new housing, availability of rental housing, displacement of residents • Some see gentle density as preferable to single-detached houses only, in meeting future needs for young families • Others see gentle density as too favourable to current homeowners and upper-middle-income buyers, gentrifying neighbourhood • Some desire greater density and more affordability (apartments) • Some desire more affordability and retention of older housing stock (e.g. conversion), protecting renters • Some support gentle density only if it includes rental and/or affordable housing • Some would like incentives for current homeowners to add suites; others see gentle density as too financially beneficial to homeowners • A few see affordability or attainable housing as undesirable in Fairfield, or that it can’t be provided by the market
General comments (support/oppose)	29	<p>Various comments in support of or in opposition to policies, or indicating general preferences.</p> <p>Issues such as general concerns about density, environmental footprint, meeting housing needs, community/knowing neighbours.</p>
Greenspace	24	<p>General concern for preserving greenspace, trees; strengthen tree preservation; don’t fill lots with development; don’t pave over backyards; consider ecological benefits of trees; address stormwater</p> <p>Few comments that large lots are better used to accommodate more housing</p>

Higher density / apartments	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need more apartments to provide for affordability or meet housing need (various comments about location and size) • Apartments on Fairfield Road (more than gentle density) but not near Cook Street Village • Gentle density should be used to transition from higher to lower density residential • Gentle density should replace the opportunity to build apartments anywhere • Gentle density is preferable to apartments in Trad Res areas • Apartments should be spread more throughout the neighbourhood for greater equity • More housing is suitable near downtown
Location	12	<p>Variety of locational comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add apartments in Traditional Residential areas to more equitably distribute (and possibly limit urban residential areas to adding gentle density to balance/protect) • See Cook Street Village and Fairfield Road as different <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Support more than gentle density on Fairfield Road, or more intensive gentle density (apartments, townhouses in 2 rows); or ○ sees lower density as appropriate east of Moss Street • Some see most gentle density types confined to CSV and Fairfield Road • Some see streets like May and Moss (e.g. collectors) as appropriate for more gentle density, with lower scale on local streets • One comment (email) sees area from Moss Street west as appropriate for houseplexes, and east of Moss Street appropriate for lower-density forms, due to existing character of larger homes in the west • Some want gentle density throughout the neighbourhood or city • Some want transitions between higher density (urban residential) and lower density • Two comments that gentle density belongs in other neighbourhoods or on the westshore
Retention of existing	10	<p>Concern for loss of historic character or homes</p> <p>Support/preference for conversions</p> <p>Some see diversity of periods/design as positive; retain heritage homes and add modern homes</p> <p>Concern for tourism, uniqueness</p>
Height/massing	7	<p>Some concerned about size of new development, impacts on neighbours</p> <p>Some want 4 storeys or more</p> <p>Some want to avoid 4+ storeys</p> <p>Some see 3 storeys as appropriate or needed; others as too much; others as not enough</p>
Process	7	<p>Varying concerns about different groups having too much influence or not enough: renters; families; homeowners; developers</p>
Need for family housing	6	<p>See affordability, size of units, unit type (e.g. townhouse), presence of greenspace</p>
Services and amenities	3	<p>Desire for new development to contribute to infrastructure, amenities</p> <p>Concern that existing services (sewer, hospital, schools) are not adequate</p> <p>Some concern that bylaws be enforced (noise, garbage collection)</p>
Green building	2	<p>Support for green building/sustainability requirements</p>