Mountain Doodles



Counterfactual Kitsilano

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Much of the apartment areas in Vancouver were downzoned in the 1970s. Kitsilano was the flashpoint of the anti-tower movement of the time and we walk through the history behind a quirk in its streetscape to discuss the anti-tower backlash and the political movements that emerged from it. These led led to downzonings across the city and ushered in a new development regime in Vancouver. We outline plausible alternative scenarios of what could have been in Kitsilano without the downzonings, as well as with continued proactive upzoning to accommodate growing demand.

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There are fun little mysteries all over Vancouver. Like how come Maple Street disappears between 6th and 7th Ave in Kitsilano? And why don't we have enough housing where people want to live?

As it turns out, these two particular mysteries are connected!

To figure out why, we have to travel back in time to the 1960s and 70s.

First, to ground the discussion, here's what Maple Street looks like now between 6th and 7th Ave. It stops, then starts up again on the other side.



Figure 1: Aerial view of Maple Street between 6th and 7th Ave, courtesy of Google Maps

To explain the break in Maple Street, we begin our story a couple of decades prior. In 1956, Vancouver modernized its zoning bylaw (Bylaw 3575), enabling the rise of apartment towers across the West End. After studies and further consideration of demand for apartment towers, the formerly low-rise RM-3 schedule was upzoned in 1961 to enable their spread elsewhere across the City (Bylaw 3926, s.8). So it was that towers began showing up in places like Fairview, Kerrisdale, and Kitsilano. In an attempt to learn lessons from West End development, the new RM-3 schedule encouraged a slim "tower in a park" form, lifting maximum heights and providing extra floor space in relation to lot size for underground parking, large lots, and small building footprints.

The rise of apartment towers provoked a backlash. The first flashpoint came with the proposal of a ten storey tower in the RM-3 zone across from Kitsilano Beach on the 2200 block of Cornwall. Protesters mobilized, drawing heavily from the community of former hippies and the hippie-adjacent, gradually settling into careers in the area. Protesters were clear they sought to prevent Kitsilano from becoming like the West End. Developer Ben Wosk was not especially engaged in the

project and backed off in exchange for the City providing him density elsewhere *and* forbidding anyone else from building towers close to the beach. So the RM-3A zone (Bylaw 4625) was established in June of 1972, while the historically dominant Non-Partisan Association (NPA) still controlled the Council, all in an intent to a) mollify the protesters, b) protect the beach environment, and c) safeguard the deal with the developer.

The protesters would not be mollified.

The election in December of 1972 brought further expansion of the anti-tower backlash. NPA Mayor Tom Campbell, himself a developer, declined to run again, and his initial replacement, Bill Street, would also drop out over ties to development, vacating the political field. Only two former NPA aldermen ran for re-election, with Marianne Linnell the sole candidate to win a seat. A centrist party of reformist professionals, TEAM (The Electors' Action Movement), was best positioned to pick up former NPA supporters, especially given a left divided between COPE (Committee Of Progressive Electors) and municipal candidates from the NDP.



Aldermanic candidates speak up

NDP

Peter Dent

A recent employee of the Vancouver Inner City Project, he has worked with several community organizations including the Vancouver and District Public Housing Tenants Association, and the Riley Park Information Centre. Peter has served on the executives of the Vancouver Tenants Council and C.C.C.D.

Tony Gargrave

A lawyer and former MLA re-elected for four consecutive terms, he has a tremendous amount of political experience.

He ran for mayor in 1970 under the NDP banner.

He is a member of the Canadian Legion and the Vancouver Bar Association.

Amy Dalgleish

The former provincial treasurer of the B.C. New Democratic Party, she has been politically active for many years. She is also a member of the Unitarian Church of Vancouver and the B.C. Civil Liberties Association. Amy is known for her recent work fighting for senior citizens affected by apartment conversions.

Cliff Andstein

An economics teacher, he is a member of the B.C. Government Employees' Union. Cliff's primary concerns are with transportation and planning. He was involved in the Four Seasons campaign and an active member of the committee which stopped the building of a high-rise on Cornwall Ave.

Bob Douglas

An engineer, he has a long record of community involvement.

He is president of the West End Community Council and has been active in the C.C.C.D., SPEC, Vancouver Tenants' Council, and the Elms Credit Union.

Bob is best remembered for first drawing the Four Seasons issue to public attention by camping out on the property.

Tamak Dhanji

He is an accountant, has been active with the NDP since 1967. During the last provincial election he was the Official Agent for Alex MacDonald, Attorney-General.

Paul Sabatino

A lawyer, he was an aldermanic candidate in the 1970 civic election and a candidate in the 1972 provincial election. Paul is a member of the B.C. Bar Association and the Vancouver Bar Association.

Al Peterson

A founding member of the New Democratic Party, he has been an active representative of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union for six years.

John Stanton

As a labor lawyer John Stanton has fought for miners, fishermen, longshoremen, and transit workers.

For six years he served as a director of the B.C. Parent-Teacher Federation. He also served on the Board of Directors of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association for six years, including two as president.

Fred Miller

A researcher, he has been an active member of SPEC and the Grandview Community Centre.

Fred's primary concern is with housing.

NDP POLICY

The NDP's entry into civic politics means that Vancouver voters will have an opportunity to vote for candidates that stand for a definite program — candidates that will fight for this program at city hall.

In a complex urban centre like Vancouver many fundamental problems transcend the narrow limits of civic jurisdiction. To effect fundamental changes in this city will require a party which has a program that can be implemented on more than one level of government. An NDP council working with fellow party members in Victoria is the only party able to effect these changes.

Vancouver city politics over the past few years have been the "politics of confrontation." All over the city, citizens in local neighborhoods have organized to fight "city hall." An NPA dominated city council, nine out of 11 of whose present members live in Kerrisdale, has shown itself a willing friend to property developers who want to carve up this city to maximize profits. Only through massive public protest have a number of developers suffered temporary setbacks.

Several parties have put forward solutions to this outrage. Yet only the NDP program gets at the root of the problem. Only the NDP is prepared to restructure the city democratically so that local neighborhoods and communities will have the power through neighborhood councils to determine the development of their local area.

Our goal is to shift the responsibility for local decisions to people in local neighborhoods. We see the basic decision-making bodies as community councils, elected to represent natural neighbourhood areas including approximately 10,000 people. To these community councils would go the power (now at city hall) over local zoning traffic, health and social services; both parks and schools would be reorganized to ensure local community control. Each community would elect an alderman to represent the area on city-wide decisions. Our program, in short, would bring power back to the people in local neighborhoods where it belongs.

Vancouver needs a fast, fare-free public transit system before our traffic problems reach the point of no return. It is time to recognize that a public service directed towards meeting social needs should be financed out of general tax revenues. Right now, an $18 million tax in the form of fares is implosed on the one third of the local population which is forced to rely on an inadequate bus system — the poor, the aged, the unemployed, and the handicapped. We pay this tax at the same time as we are providing massive subsidies to private automobile transportation.

The Vancouver NDP feels that public money should go to public, not private transportation. The cost? The interest earned by investing funds equivalent to the cost of the third crossing or a heavy rapid transit system, would be sufficient to finance a fare-free expanded bus system.

The NDP is opposed to give-aways to developers. These give-aways mean that tenants and small property owners have paid a disproportionately hither percentage of civic taxes.

The NDP would take the windfall profits out of rezoning through special taxed which would allow all the people of Vancouver to benefit from rezoning rather than just the promoters. Industrial and commercial properties would bear their fair share of the tax load.

NPA

Marianne Linnell

As an alderman for 10 years I have tried to serve the people of Vancouver to the best of my ability.

Issues that I have either initiated or actively fought for are:

1. Keeping the taxes as low as possible.

2. Providing more housing, i.e. Stanley and New Fountain Hotels, Oppenheimer Lodge, West End Senior Citizens, etc.

3. Air and noise pollution by laws.

4. Park-and-Ride — Bus Lanes Only and other aids to transportation.

5. Health care including new emergency annex, Pine Street Clinic — Original director B.E.A.C.H. Centre.

6. Involvement of citizens such as in Britannia, West End Community Centre planning.

Charlie Jaggs

Long record of community involvement. President of PNE, continent's sixth-largest fair, the past three years. Currently chairman of $800,000 campaign for new rehabilitation workshop for handicapped. Distinguished career as business executive. Would devote full time to aldermanic duties. Priorities:

More city-backed "day-care" centres, assisting working mothers; greater attention to people problems, including drug abuse, juvenile crime; expand low-cost housing programs for senior citizens; more park-and-ride rapid transit systems; redevelopment of False Creek with senior government cost-sharing; job training and retraining programs; enforcement of pollution control by-laws; co-operation with senior governments.

Patrick Graham

First, no apologies for past mistakes. I wasn't there! I am accountable when elected.

I endorse all the "motherhood" issues, but am concerned with the cost to the taxpayer to creating a utopia.

Vancouver's growth must meet its citizens' needs, not profit the few. We need healthy not cancerous growth.

Improved public transport, free for pensioners, is a priority.

Low income housing, located throughout the city to avoid ghettoization of the poor and aged is needed.

Senior governments must accept their responsibilities to urban, not just rural, populations. Improved intra-municipal relationships are necessary.

Anti-pollution measures must be enforced.

James Tepoorten

I believe that the biggest problem facing our city is transportation, and that it is a must that we select people who are willing and capable of making some immediate decisions so that positive steps can be taken now to solve this problem.

Every year we delay, costs the taxpayer more and more money. We know the projected growth figures for Vancouver and as long as the "Westers Tilt" continues our city will grow faster than any other and will make the movement of people in and out of our area the most important job for our council.

Warnett Kennedy

I suggest public floggings of TEAM planners who would squeeze people like toothpaste around Fraser Valley foodbelts . . . I want a beautifully compact twin city on the North Shore to halt urban dribble . . . to stop a Fourth Crossing, but to build a third. Also I want a "frictionless hardware" system of regional transit. False Creek should be renamed "Swan Lake" until we get better ideas. Shannon will become an After-Care Hospital. We need a better outlet of public nagging by citizens. Finally, give me the head of the Very Reverend Dean. Herbert O'Driscoll, on a mirrored platter.

Graeme Waymark

City Council needs a chartered accountant to implement recommendations of existing Royal Commission reports on municipal taxation, and to press for greater sharing of civic expenses by senior governments.

Property taxes should not be increased, and must not be the major source of revenue for the city.

Building development permits must not be considered until affected citizens have reported to council.

Senior citizens must have better bus service, exemption from some taxes, and improved accommodation at reasonable rates.

Tod Manrell

Costs are increasing — the cost of operating Vancouver is increasing, in line with the demand for improved services such as transportation, social services, police protection, fire protection, and education.

The taxpayer is already over burdened with property taxes.

Property taxes are the major source of revenue allowed by senior governments. Vancouver must receive a more equitable share of senior government funds or a commitment from the senior governments to accept their municipal responsibilities.

The man who has the capacity and the administrative know-how to develop solutions to these problems is Tod Manrell. If you care about Vancouver, elect a responsive alderman.

Russell Fraser

A 38-year-old family man, businessowner, professional engineer; a responsible citizen willing to serve and ready to accept the responsibility of public office believing that an alderman's duty is to make the physical city a great place for people to live.

Important civic issues like transit, electoral reform, planning, land use, regional co-ordination, access to waterfront will affect all our lives and in our drive for a greater city, I pledge to serve the interests of Vancouver citizens.

I stand for commitment, I stand for prosperity tax reform, I stand for electoral reform. Vote Fraser Dec. 13.

Helen Boyce

Stands on a proven record of service to her city, which includes 1966 to 1969 on city planning commission and 1968 to 1972 on park board, continuously as chairman of community affairs and currently vice-chairman.

She has succeeded in saving Kerrisdale works yard for parkland; Old Shaughnessy for botanical gardens; Langara for golf; has actively opposed the Four Seasons' development, and is now opposing the Shannon development. She believes developers must fit into the city's pattern and not set the pattern for the city. For her proven concern, "make your choice Helen Boyce".

Ed Sweeney

In my six years as an alderman, I have dedicated myself to serving Vancouver and her citizens, on a 24-hour per-day basis.

I define our priorities as follows: (1) Holding the line on taxation in accordance with our ability to "pay as we go"; (2) beefing up our police force to make our city safe for all her citizens; (3) practical solution to our transit problems; (4) develop False Creek for park and recreation; (5) develop downtown waterfront to complement city profile; (6) respond to needs of electors, not political parties; (7) keep Vancouver beautiful for enjoyment of all.

COPE

Jacques Khouri

Vancouver is entering a new era.

During this decade, decisions will be made that no alderman with a developer mentality can hope to understand. Only someone free from vested interests and with a grasp of future urban problems can be entrusted with civic office.

I am an urban land economist by training and journalist by experience. I'm a volunteer with the Crisis Centre and chairman of the West Broadway Citizens' Committee.

I know people. I know the city.

I'd like to work with you and for you on council. Together, we can make Vancouver a city for all people.

Sol Jackson

Community planner. Main aim, involving people in planning decisions. Candidacy approved by Canadian Union of Public Employees, Local 396. Member of Planning Institute of B.C., Prentz Institute Board, Citizens' Co-ordinating Committee for Public Transit Executive.

I support the COPE program, and I will work to: keep Vancouver growth to human scale; give people a decisive say in developments; prepare a Vancouver general plan which considers social and environment factors; improve quality of life for all, including the East End; disperse public housing on leased land; block the high-rises; make city council responsive to the people — not the developers.

Vote for COPE candidates.

James Cork

I have been involved in community organizations for years representing homeowners and tenants in negotiations with all levels of government. However in many cases at city hall, cut and dried plans were already in existence, and the hearing reduced to a mere formality.

I pledge:— (1.) To eliminate the humbug from decision making at city hall. (2.) to work towards equalization of assessments between residential and business property, thus relieving home-owners and tenants of the unequal tax burden; (3.) to urge additional city jurisdiction of PNE and alleviation of traffic and parking problems.

Sam Vint

Included in COPE's long-range program for the development and beautification of the city is the need to establish landscaped industrial parks as a means to encourage secondary industries to locate in Vancouver and the Lower Mainland.

Manufacturing plants to process our natural resources will provide jobs for our people faced with a growing line of unemployed. Taxes accrued from these plants will assist in lowering the homeowners' tax burden.

I strongly urge the citizens of Vancouver to study COPE's program, the program that puts their interest first, then help us implement it by electing COPE candidates.

Bruce Yorke

Vancouver born, life-long resident, father of three; Lord Byng High, BA from UBC, postgraduate scholarship Washington, MIT; member, Association of Professional Economists, Institute of Accredited Public Accountants; secretary of Vancouver Tenants Council; chairman of Citizens' Committee for Public Transit; personally supported by Gen. McNaughton in fight against costly Columbia River treaty; led "hamburgers" in defeat of third crossing; fought year-round for tenants, pensioners' rent freeze, improved bus service, against Kitsilano waterfront high-rises. Program: Cut homeowner taxes, business tax on ability to pay basis, if equal ward aldermen, "people's interests first — end the developers' control of city council."

Margaret Chunn

I will demand a change in the tax structure to relieve the home owner and small businessman with a $4,000 exemption on homes assessed at $20,000 or less; by a graduated business tax; by a reassessment of large business and commercial concerns, and I will press for action from the provincial government to remove the education tax from the home owner.

COPE candidates are involved in the movements of the people on a year-round basis not just at election time. Elect the COPE slate for strong, vigorous action on the ward system, rapid transit, housing, tenant rights, the right of recall, False Creek, downtown development and other problems facing our City.

Les Copan

I've been a longshoreman in Vancouver for 19 years and I am a member of the longshoremen's union and of the board of directors of the B.C. Civil Liberties Association.

My concern is the growth of the Port of Vancouver. For years we've been losing business to Seattle because of inadequate facilities.

We need more container facilities in our port. The Vancouver Port Authority should be reorganized and the power of decision placed in the hands of the municipalities involved, with representation from labor and business.

Public access should be provided to the waterfront and strict controls enforced against pollution.

Wallace Kisch

West End resident, 35 years old, executive member Vancouver Tenants Council.

As Canadians we believe in the democratic process. But we are not receiving our fair share of representation in civic affairs.

Were we asked to vote on the Four Seasons and third crossing developments? These were defeated only because public-spirited persons forced these issues to the public.

I believe in the democratic process. I have tried to prove this by my actions as well as my words.

I ask for your vote because, as an alderman, I will be able to provide equal representation on city council.

Cliff Worthington

As a builder and carpenter all my life — 30 years of it in Vancouver — I want to see Vancouver grow. As a union official and member of a building trades union I naturally want to see construction go ahead.

But until now the development of Vancouver has been unplanned and carried out only to suit the wishes of developers. Citizen views have been ignored and zoning and other by-laws shredded and broken by the NPA-dominated council.

COPE stand for planned development in which citizens have the decisive say. That is what I will fight for as an alderman.

Harry Rankin

Born in Vancouver 52 years ago, I have lived in Mount Pleasant and Grandview all my life. I have now served three terms on council.

I have tried to the best of my ability to put the interest of citizens before any other issue. As far as I'm concerned, people come before developers.

The people of Vancouver want a city planned for their needs with good neighborhoods to live in. They want fast, cheap public transit, more parks and open spaces. For such proposals I have fought and will continue to fight in the following two years if elected.

TEAM

V. Setty Pendakur

A professional engineer-planner, now a consultant to the federal government, with a positive Plan for Vancouver.

(1) Hold the line on taxes, eliminate give-aways (Block 42-52, Bentall 5); (2) Revitalize downtown by plazas and sidewalk cafes; (3) Provide cheap and efficient buses and rapid transit; (4) full citizen participation, night council meetings and no back room secret deals (Birks Property); (5) Freeze development where necessary (West End); (6) Make developers pay 50% of the increase in land value due to zoning changes, use the money for a land bank.

Walter Hardwick

Alderman 1969-1972. In metropolitan Vancouver: transit must be expanded so housing can be built in a way that people can be welcomed without declaring our mountains or our flood-plain farm lands. Within Vancouver city creation of new housing in the False Creek basin will permit preservation of our established residential neighborhoods.

As an experienced alderman and urban geographer I will continue to provide effective leadership in civic development and transportation. I intend to promote efficient use of public monies and personnel, and I will keep a watchful eye on matters of interest to all citizens.

Don Bellamy

Being that I am Vancouver-born and have been actively involved in public service for most of my adult life, I feel obliged to offer further service to the city and its citizens.

The issues have been pounded to death by the many hopefuls trying for the same office as there is little need to repeat them here.

People priorities are what I have will spend much of my time on. I intend to take positive steps to come to grips with the juvenile crime problem, which has reached epidemic proportions due to an extreme approach to the problem.

Geoffrey Massey

Geoffrey Massey, age 48. Architect practising in Vancouver for the last 20 years. Organizations: Community Arts Council, C.P.A.C., A.I.B.C., X-Kalay Foundation.

I will work for people-oriented development of Vancouver's downtown waterfront. Radical improvement in all aspects of our transportation network. Citizen's involvement in all stages of new development. Reorganization of the processes of city government.

Darlene Marzari

My professional experience has been helping citizen groups to voice their concerns at city hall. As social planning co-ordinator, I have worked with health, education, welfare and recreation to make them more responsive to local neighborhoods. I have pressed for community control of federal funds—$6 million last year — that have been poured into Vancouver for OFY and LIP projects.

I have served as director or member of several agency boards and at two levels of government. This has given me knowledge of the bureaucracy existing in large organizations. My priority on council will be making these bureaucracies responsive and responsible.

Dr. William Gibson

Physician; married with three children.

Has served as president of the following: Canadian Mental Health Association; Save our Parklands Association; Vancouver Botanical Gardens Association; and UBC Alumni.

His chief concerns: Pollution — of beaches, Fraser River and by noise. Preservation of saturation of West End with skyscrapers. Light rapid transit at once. Reform of electoral machinery. Night meetings of council, in neighborhoods by rotation.

Stands for a city for people not parasites and a better parks budget.

Jack Volrich

As president of TEAM, I have been closely concerned with the affairs of our city. As spokesman for the Arbutus Homeowners we have succeeded in establishing an important example in community planning for all of Vancouver.

As past president of a service club, as a director of the B.C. Sports Federation, and as one who has been active in senior citizens' housing, I have made a fair contribution to the well-being and progress of our community.

The important thing now is to elect a strong majority to work with Art Phillips in front. Radical improvement in all aspects of our transportation network. Citizen's involvement in all stages of new development. Reorganization of the processes of city government.

Fritz Bowers

As professor of electrical engineering at UBC, I can tackle complicated technical problems.

As school trustee since 1969 and as board chairman, I met and helped people in every part of our city, and could get a better deal for our schools from the provincial government.

As a Vancouverite since 1948, I worry about increasing taxes, traffic, noise and pollution.

Vancouver is developing fast, but is it going in the right direction? A TEAM Council will put the interests of the citizens first.

Help me keep Vancouver a good place to live in.

Alexander Stusiak

Born B.C., raised in Vancouver. Married, two children. East side resident who teaches English to New Canadians.

Active civic affairs 10 years. President Grandview-Woodland Area Council, director, Family Service Agency.

My prime concerns are quality of life in Vancouver and I will work for an effective noise by-law; citizen participation in community planning; and bring effective council representation to 220,000 east side residents. We must have immediate improvement of existing transportation.

Taxation, transportation, peaceful neighborhoods and Vancouver's social issues concern all of us, young or old, east side or west side. Al Stusiak believes in one Vancouver and will work full time for Vancouver.

Michael Harcourt

Married; graduate of Winston Churchill secondary school and UBC, B.A., LL.B.; lawyer. Founder and first Director Lawyer Program in Canada; director of the Legal Aid Society of British Columbia; founded and worked with many grass roots citizens' organizations. Resident of Kitsilano.

Major priorities are area representation and citizen's accessibility to city hall, better bus system and an early start on rapid transit system, quiet neighborhoods and a downtown that all will enjoy.

THE INDEPENDENTS

Stanley Czapiewski

This election decides who will govern our lives for years to come. Elect a person who will give his best effort to our city.

If elected I will be a full-time alderman. I will support a ward system, public low rental housing, rapid transit, public vote on major projects, help improve clean air laws, stop real estate speculators from buying up our valuable land, establish a town council to see what ideas the young people of our city can put forward.

Vancouver is my city; I want the best for it and I will fight to get the best.

Albert Herd

Born and educated in Vancouver. Truck operator 15 years. Apartment operator. I want to work for the following:

Alleviate truck and traffic congestion in the city. Council should stress the importance to the provincial government of providing more money for construction of truck routes for the use of large commercial trucks and trailers. As Vancouver is a seaport this problem will compound in volume each year, unless steps are taken immediately to rectify this problem.

More police protection, and co-operation with surrounding police forces, to work together for a solution to the problems faced by each and every citizen.

Walter Einarson

Homeowners, if you want active representation in city hall, then vote for a homeowner who is willing to work for you. One who has had university training in geology, economics and political science; married and has two children. One who is concerned about senior citizens, youth, hospitals, schools and big developments.

What is our platform? There are many issues involved in running a city like Vancouver. Are you satisfied to let political groups and civil servants make all the decisions for you?

Have a voice in City Hall. Vote wisely: Vote independent, Vote Walter Einarson.

George Brekalo

Age 41. Built successful business by intelligent planning and hard work. Brings this formula to city hall. A watchdog on city purse strings.

(1) Provide low rent accommodation for elderly; (2) proposes tax freeze on homeowners, with city projects to be financed by alternate methods, i.e. hotel tax, fairer taxation of big business. (3) halt indiscriminate building of high rises which benefit only real estate developers and mar beauty of city; (4) relieve downtown traffic congestion, provide free bus transportation during rush hours on four major routes; (5) develop False Creek to include marina, theatre, beautiful place which will pay for itself, access to public.

Robert Mantelli

Age 37, independent, he is running for alderman in the coming civic election.

He asks for a more human government which should act according to common people's needs rather than realtors and developers.

By sending him to city hall you will fight for cleaner beaches, beautiful parks, rapid transit, tenants' rights, rental controls, speeding up of False Creek Development, community control of the police force.

It is quite clear that Mantelli is inviting you — citizens of Vancouver — to get your city back in your hands by sending him, and people like him, to city hall.

Carol K. Young

I'm fighting for things that make Vancouver a happier place to live, and improved communications with city hall. I want a Vancouver Science's market to help keep food costs down. I want False Creek to become a beautiful marine park for all citizens to enjoy. I want 24-hour child care centres to help parents who work nights. I want large supermarkets to install public washrooms. I want to see a citizens advice bureau established. Everyone says you need a voice at city hall. I say you need an ear at city hall. I intend to be that ear.

Tom Alsbury

I am my own man. I am independent. Recent exposures indicate a need of alder-

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Figure 2: Vancouver Aldermanic Candidate Statements as printed in the Vancouver Sun for the December 1972 election

Candidate statements printed in The Vancouver Sun (Dec 9, 1972, p. 49) widely highlight anger against developers. They also point toward how TEAM's biggest promise was support for preserving quiet residential neighbourhoods and more community consultation. Meanwhile some of the biggest anti-tower protest organizers (e.g. Bruce Yorke) ran for COPE. The new council would see a TEAM majority, and immediately proceeded with efforts to slow down a variety of developments (many ultimately quixotic insofar as developers already had building permits in hand).

The first rezoning priority for the TEAM council was the West End itself, which they immediately downzoned after they took office in January of 1973 (Bylaw 4683), setting up a new RM-4A zone. Shortly thereafter this would be shifted again to WED. Meanwhile, uphill from the beach in Kitsilano, the protest coalitions found new targets in a private apartment tower proposed to replace seven houses (many subdivided) on the 2400 block of W. 3rd Avenue, and another tower proposed by the Shalom branch of the Royal Canadian Legion as non-profit senior's housing on W. 7th and Maple. TEAM obliged the protesters in February of 1974 by downzoning all of Kitsilano's remaining RM-3 districts to match them to the new RM-3A district first created for the beach area (Bylaw 4757).

The protesters would not be mollified.



Figure 3: Protesters against what would be the last mid-rise in Kitsilano to be built on the 2400 block of W. 3rd Avenue (photo by David Ley)

The immediate problem was that both the proposed towers being protested effectively already had their permissions in hand. For the W. 3rd tower, this meant they were able to ignore the protesters, replacing the seven old houses with 64 new units constructed at the Carriage House. For the W.

7th Senior's Housing project, things became more dicey. The big issue was the Canadian Legion's attempt to get public funding to assist in the project.

The W. 7th project (often referred to by cross-street as 2229 Maple St) had already been the subject of contentious City Council meetings starting in 1973. It was one of the first proposals subject to the new Urban Design Panel set in place as part of more discretionary planning advocated by TEAM and their new planner, Ray Spaxman. The Design Panel argued the tower risked reducing public amenity since it was out of character with surrounding three-story buildings. The Technical Planning Board did not believe this was an actionable reason for them to reject the application given the project fit with the RM-3 zoning still in place at the time, so they referred the project to Council. Activist groups including the Kitsilano Citizen's Committee and the West Broadway Citizen's Committee strenuously opposed approval, and succeeded in delaying the Council vote. The Technical Planning Board, meanwhile, noted in their appended technical report that this was precisely where their old apartment studies suggested new apartment towers should go. (Aug 28, 1973 Council Minutes, p. 67 for Technical Report)

As Council reconvened on Sep 11, 1973, they received a large petition indicating seniors' support of the project from the Golden Age Club of Vancouver. Nevertheless, Council remained split, with Alderman Hardwick ultimately putting forward a motion to approve the tower, joined by half of TEAM and the sole NPA alderman (Linnell), evenly balanced against the other half of TEAM and the sole COPE alderman (Rankin). Though it was voted down, Alderman Linnell also put forward a motion to hear more about the possibility discussed of shutting down Maple Street to support the site. (Sep 11, 1973 Council Minutes). Alderman Linnell would purportedly criticize her fellow alderman for "talking a lot about housing, but doing little" over the matter (The Province, Sep 19, 1973, p. 27). Once again, Council deferred the decision to the next meeting. There Hardwick brought the mayor, Art Phillips, on board to finally pass a motion enabling the Technical Planning Board to approve the tower as an allowed use under RM-3. (Sep 18, 1973 Council Minutes).

The protesters would not be mollified.

Under the West Broadway Citizen's Committee, they took their protests to the CMHC, then a funding partner for the project, bringing along 45 senior citizens opposed to the project. More consequentially, they also took their protests to the Province, where special appointed advisor on housing, Michael Audain, agreed to work with them on reducing the height of the building (Vancouver Sun, Mar 8, 1974, p. 7). Under Jacques Khouri, the WBCC would also return to City Council to object, once again, to the Legion's minor request to change the funding under which the project had initially obtained a sales agreement for a portion of the land (from the Elderly Citizen's Housing Act to the National Housing Act, see Mar 12, 1974 Council Minutes).

For their part, the Royal Canadian Legion argued that protesters were ill-informed, and that building a tower on the site provided room for them to comfortably house seniors while also providing a variety of ground level amenities, including "gardens, a picnic area, a putting green, and a checkerboard square" (Vancouver Sun, Oct 24, 1973, p. 52). Under the FSR constraints on RM-3, it would also appear they simply could not fit all of the 100 units they had proposed into a low-rise building on the site. The Province eventually stepped in offering a grant to cover one-third of the project's costs, lowering its ultimate asking rents, in exchange for switching to a low-rise on an expanded site able to accommodate the proposed units. How would the site be expanded?

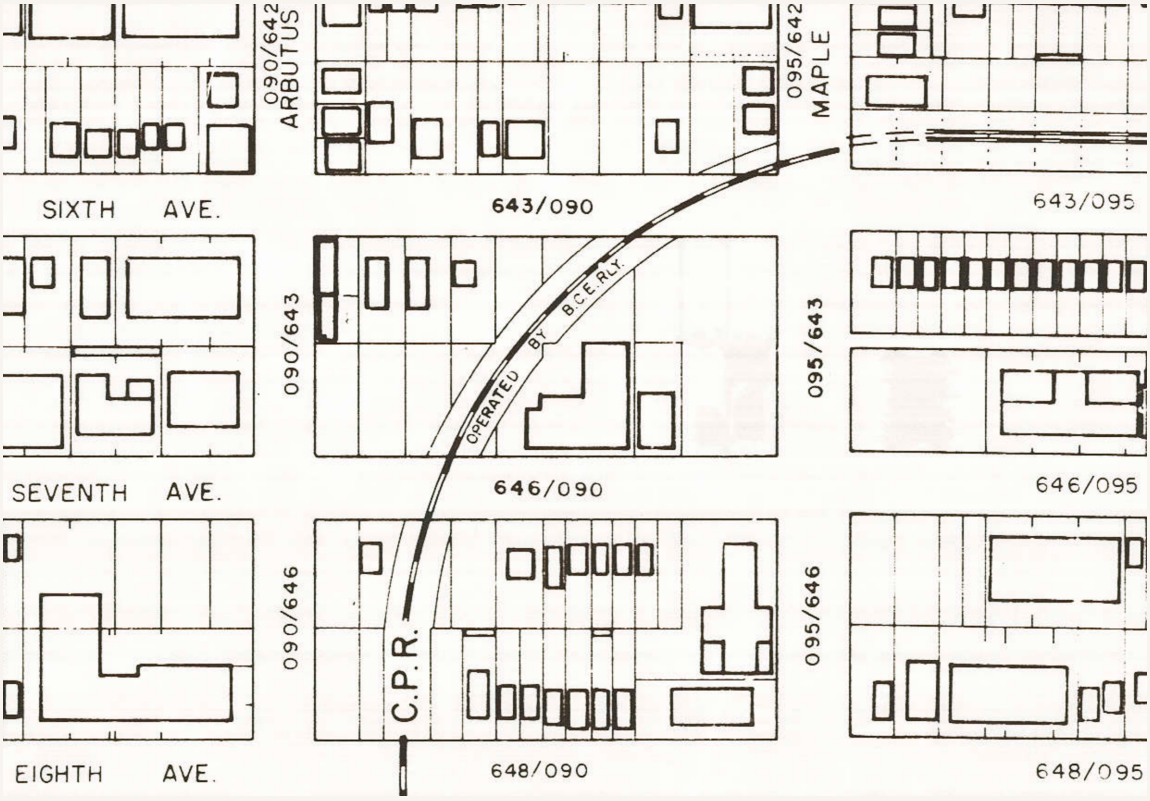


Figure 4: Excerpt of East Kitsilano Building Outlines Map from 1974, Vancouver Archives https://searcharchives.vancouver.ca/kitsilano-east-half-building-outlines

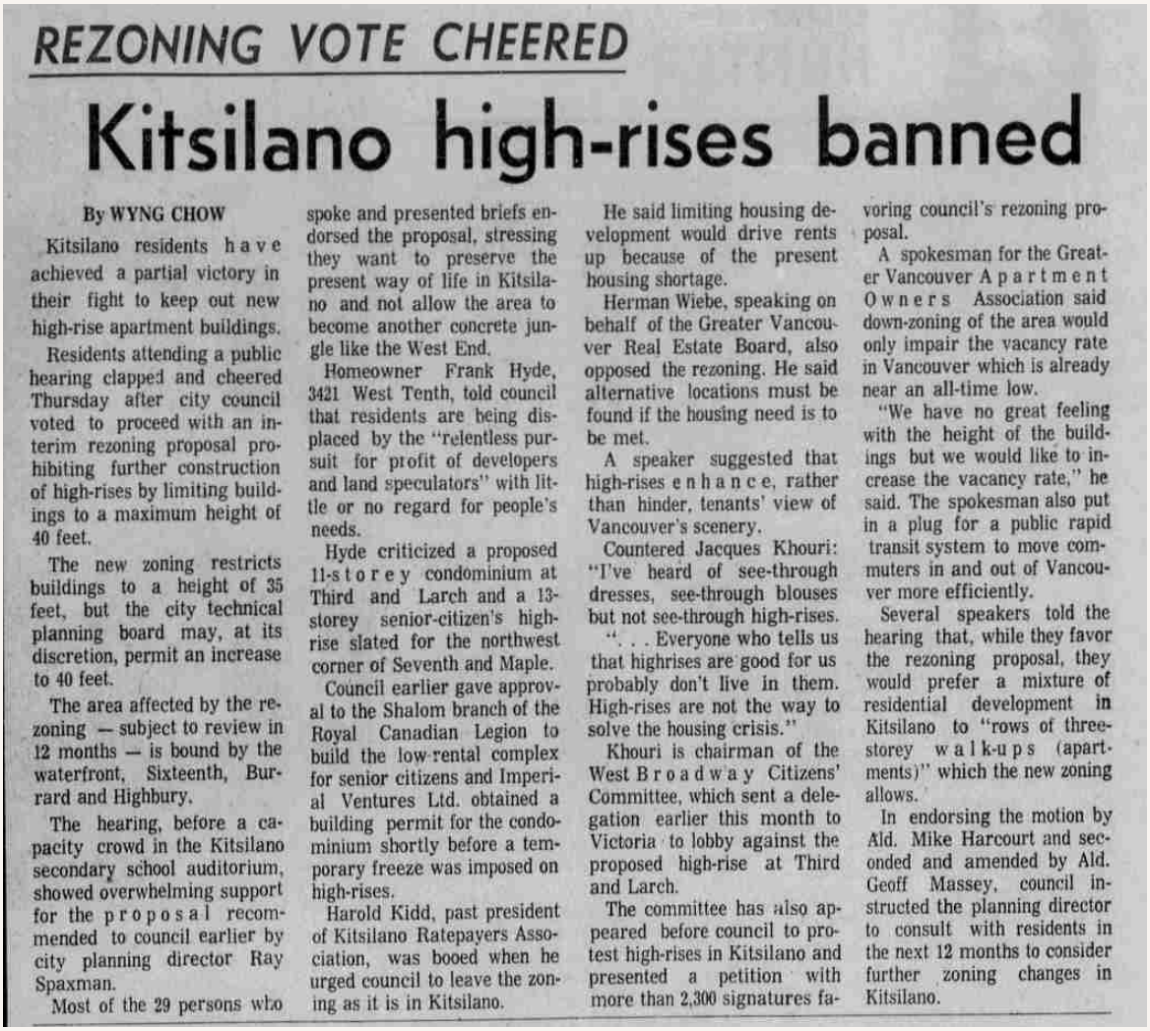
A convenient City of Vancouver Building Outlines Map from 1974 highlights the empty lot at the NW corner of 7th and Maple. The developer returned to City Council and was able to acquire the adjoining portion of Maple Street to expand the site. The City sold the Canadian Royal Legion Shalom Branch the land for $1 in 1974. The site expansion, in turn, enabled the Legion to fit in 102 units. However, nearly all of the outdoor amenities initially proposed would be lost to the bargain, leaving only a small courtyard remaining for the new low-rise design (May 7, 1974 Council Minutes)

So that's why Maple Street disappears between 6th and 7th.

The big Kitsilano downzoning in response to the towers proposed at 3rd and 7th also helps explain why we don't have enough housing where people want to live. The downzoning meant lost floor space in a very direct sense. Where FSR bonusing for towers could reach approximately 1.85 under RM-3, the low-rise forms allowed under RM-3A could only get up to an FSR of 1.45, and they would have to cover nearly the entire lot to do it. While they were ultimately still able to get to all of the units they wanted in the low-rise form, The Royal Canadian Legion's experience actually demonstrates the impact of the downzoning. After all, they needed both provincial support and a sweetheart land deal from the City in order to make the switch from a high-rise with 100 units to a low-rise with 102 units. And they still lost all of the ground-level amenities they had initially

planned.

Kitsilano's activists had an ideological opposition to towers that combined aesthetic objections with the belief they were bad for families, inappropriate for seniors, and too expensive. They didn't want Kitsilano "to become another concrete jungle like the West End." They worried about views; "I've heard of see-through dresses [and] see-through blouses, but not see-through high-rises." They suggested that towers were unlivable; "Everyone who tells us that high-rises are good for us probably doesn't live in them." And they received pushback, especially on affordability, with speakers opposed to downzoning noting "limiting housing development would drive rents up because of the present shortage." As the Vancouver Apartment Owners Association representative argued, "downzoning of the area would only impair the vacancy rate in Vancouver which is already near an all-time low" (Vancouver Sun, Feb 1, 1974, p. 29).



REZONING VOTE CHEERED

Kitsilano high-rises banned

By WYNG CHOW

Kitsilano residents have achieved a partial victory in their fight to keep out new high-rise apartment buildings.

Residents attending a public hearing clapped and cheered Thursday after city council voted to proceed with an interim rezoning proposal prohibiting further construction of high-rises by limiting buildings to a maximum height of 40 feet.

The new zoning restricts buildings to a height of 35 feet, but the city technical planning board may, at its discretion, permit an increase to 40 feet.

The area affected by the rezoning — subject to review in 12 months — is bound by the waterfront, Sixteenth, Burrard and Highbury.

The hearing, before a capacity crowd in the Kitsilano secondary school auditorium, showed overwhelming support for the proposal recommended to council earlier by city planning director Ray Spaxman.

Most of the 29 persons who spoke and presented briefs endorsed the proposal, stressing they want to preserve the present way of life in Kitsilano and not allow the area to become another concrete jungle like the West End.

Homeowner Frank Hyde, 3421 West Tenth, told council that residents are being displaced by the "relentless pursuit for profit of developers and land speculators" with little or no regard for people's needs.

Hyde criticized a proposed 11-storey condominium at Third and Larch and a 13-storey senior-citizen's high-rise slated for the northwest corner of Seventh and Maple.

Council earlier gave approval to the Shalom branch of the Royal Canadian Legion to build the low-rental complex for senior citizens and Imperial Ventures Ltd. obtained a building permit for the condominium shortly before a temporary freeze was imposed on high-rises.

Harold Kidd, past president of Kitsilano Ratepayers Association, was booed when he urged council to leave the zoning as it is in Kitsilano.

He said limiting housing development would drive rents up because of the present housing shortage.

Herman Wiebe, speaking on behalf of the Greater Vancouver Real Estate Board, also opposed the rezoning. He said alternative locations must be found if the housing need is to be met.

A speaker suggested that high-rises enhance, rather than hinder, tenants' view of Vancouver's scenery.

Countered Jacques Khouri: "I've heard of see-through dresses, see-through blouses but not see-through high-rises.

". . . Everyone who tells us that highrises are good for us probably don't live in them. High-rises are not the way to solve the housing crisis."

Khouri is chairman of the West Broadway Citizens' Committee, which sent a delegation earlier this month to Victoria to lobby against the proposed high-rise at Third and Larch.

The committee has also appeared before council to protest high-rises in Kitsilano and presented a petition with more than 2,300 signatures favoring council's rezoning proposal.

A spokesman for the Greater Vancouver Apartment Owners Association said down-zoning of the area would only impair the vacancy rate in Vancouver which is already near an all-time low.

"We have no great feeling with the height of the buildings but we would like to increase the vacancy rate," he said. The spokesman also put in a plug for a public rapid transit system to move commuters in and out of Vancouver more efficiently.

Several speakers told the hearing that, while they favor the rezoning proposal, they would prefer a mixture of residential development in Kitsilano to "rows of three-storey walk-ups (apartments)" which the new zoning allows.

In endorsing the motion by Ald. Mike Harcourt and seconded and amended by Ald. Geoff Massey, council instructed the planning director to consult with residents in the next 12 months to consider further zoning changes in Kitsilano.

Figure 5: Kitsilano high-rises banned, coverage with commentary in Vancouver Sun in Feb 1, 1974, p. 29

The vacancy rates, already near zero, had little room to get worse through the 1970s, but they did their best.

Another big concern with the downzoning was its effect on government assisted housing. The delays for the Maple Crest seniors' project foreshadowed further problems down the road. By Jan 1976, a Status Report on Government Assisted Housing Council made it clear that, "the prime causes of delay in securing approval for government assisted housing in Vancouver centred about rezoning and funding applications. An acute shortage of appropriately zoned land at prices acceptable to senior governments led many government assisted housing sponsors in Vancouver into the difficult situation of having to attempt to secure and upzone low density land before funding approval was

granted." Oops. In March of 1976 Bylaw 4951 rolled out new RM-3B and RM-3A-1 schedules for Kitsilano's former RM-3A "apartment areas" that added in density bonusing for "senior citizen housing, handicapped housing, or units for individuals or families of low and average income," bumping the maximum FSR back up to 1.9. However, this bonusing remained a conditional use rather than outright, subject to approval by the Director of Planning, as with much subsequent zoning. (See also reference in Criterion 9 & 10 of the 1977 Kitsilano Plan) This conditional rule remaind purely hypothetical, no non-market housing getting anywhere close to 1.9 FSR was built in Kitsilano as a result of this.

The activists and allied politicians of the early 1970s left behind a legacy of contentious community consultation and persistent housing shortage, continuing to plague Vancouver today. The shortage was clearly perceivable, but at best met with a kind of magical thinking that either more clever subdivision of groovy old houses or the right mix of low-rise infill cooperatives could solve the issue. At worst, the shortage was redirected into attacks on developers and questions about how to enable the *right kind* of people to elbow their way into high demand neighbourhoods they wouldn't otherwise be able to afford. The intentions were often (if not always) good, but when mixed together with magical thinking and market skepticism, they ultimately paved our way to the housing hell we find ourselves in today.

As a sidenote, many of the players involved in the Kitsilano downzoning and dealing over the Maple Crest Senior's Housing on 7th would ultimately go on to become developers and realtors themselves. Jacques Khouri from the WBCC would develop several cooperatives and specialize in heritage properties as a realtor. Michael Audain, brokering the deal for the Province, would go on to form Polygon Homes.

Counterfactual Kitsilano

Looking back 50 years, one may wonder what would have happened without the tower backlash and downzoning. Or even more ambitiously, what if Kitsilano had continued to upzone in response to demonstrable demand for apartments? After all, developers were starting to max out all the floor space they could get in new construction prior to the downzonings.

Let's first have a look what what the Kitsilano parcels that used to be zoned RM-3 in 1963 look like now. Mid- to High-Rise towers are denoted in dark green, Low-Rise in light green, remaining Single-Detached in yellow, Townhouses in orange, Non-Market housing in blue, and a few Institutional uses, like the Point Grey Private Hospital, in purple. Of note, some of what gets classed as Mid-Rise here is actually Low-Rise, but set against a steep hillside, boosting its profile.

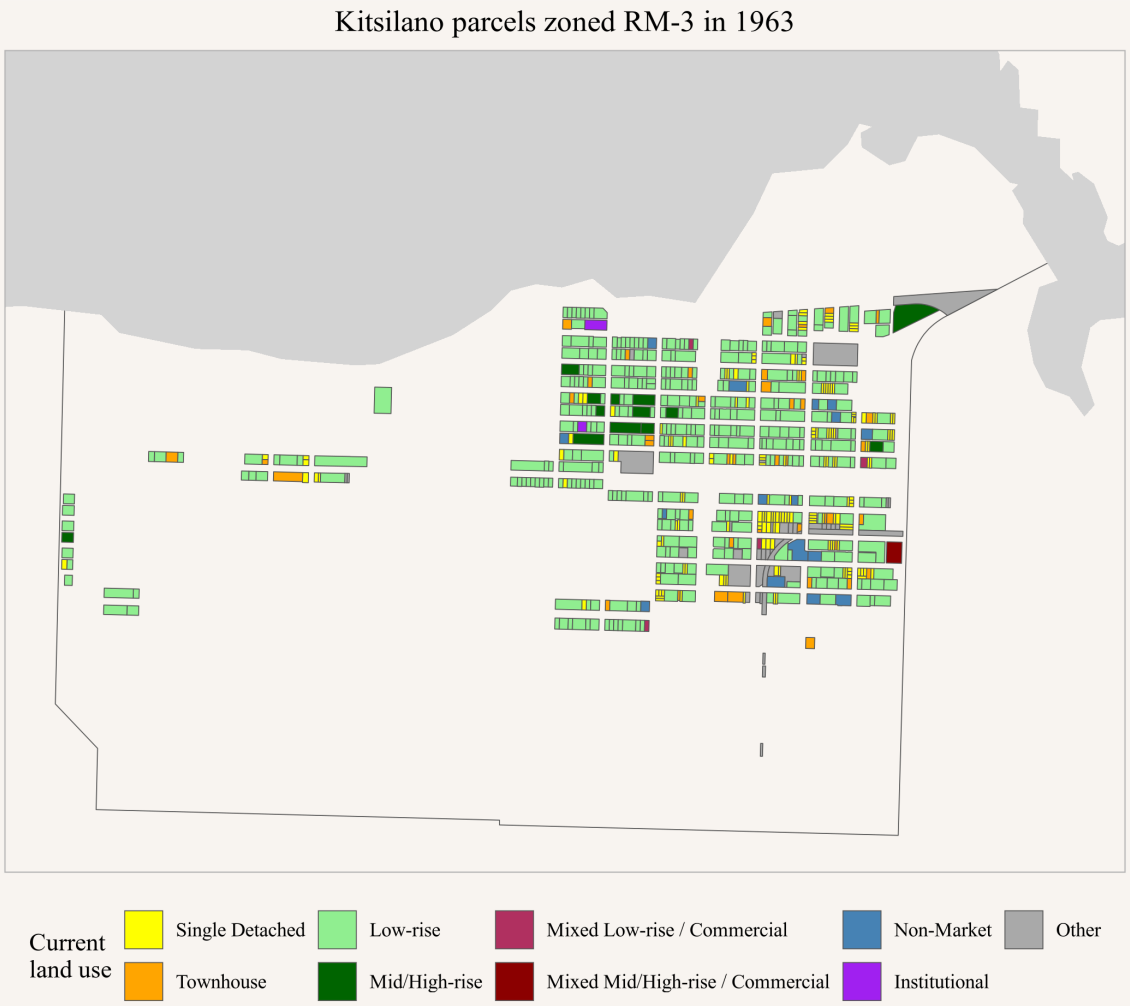


Figure 6: Current land use for parcels zoned RM-3 in 1963

Most of the old RM-3 zone is in the light green of low-rise apartments, with some townhouse forms and single family mixed in. But we can see a scattering of the mid/high-rise that made it in before the downzoning. You can see nine of these towers by playing around with Google Maps.



Figure 7: Aerial view of Northeast Kitsilano highlighting the few towers constructed, courtesy of Google Maps

We can check on this directly by exploring when those homes got built.

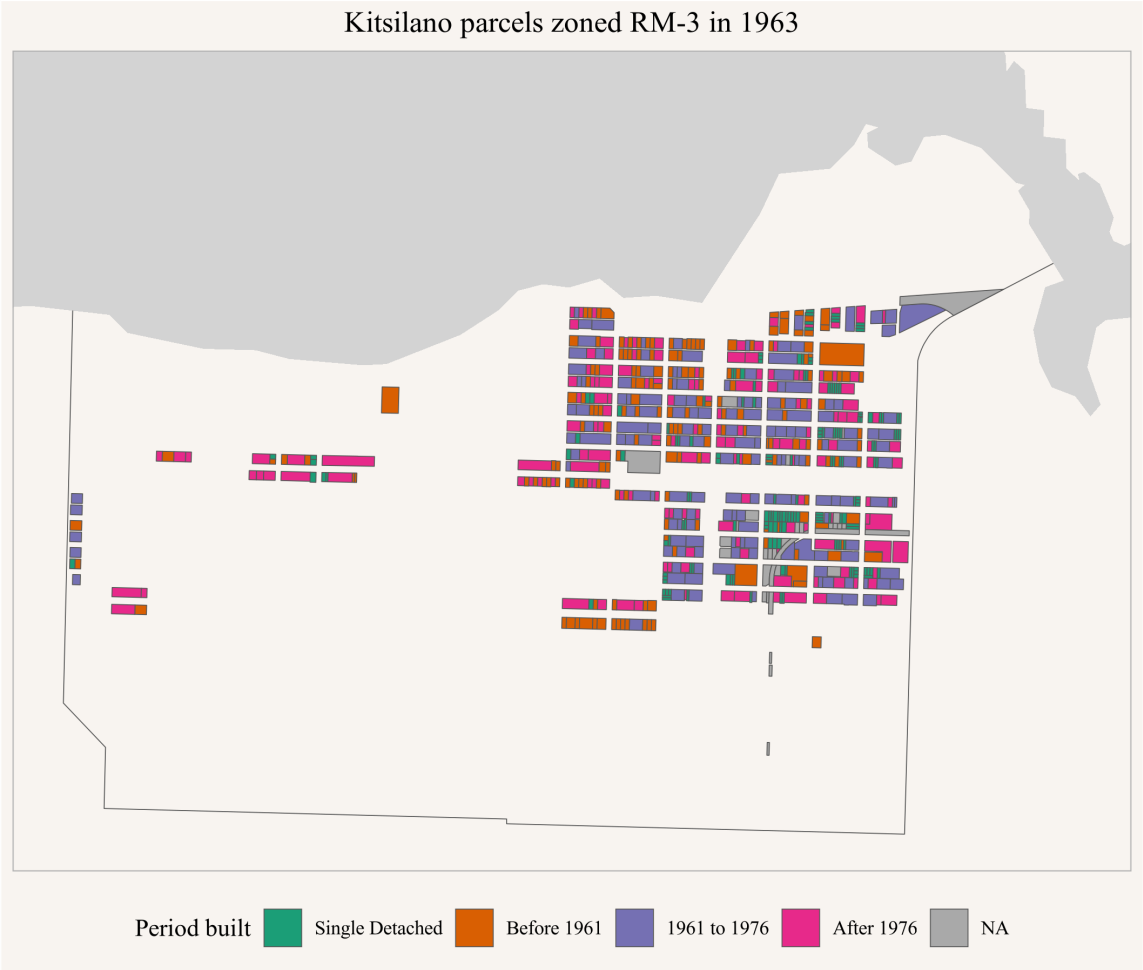


Figure 8: Period build for parcels zoned RM-3 in 1963

All of the true High-Rises in Kitsilano were built in that window between 1961 and 1976 before the downzoning completed. Of note, many of the Low-Rises were also built during this era, prior to developers fully embracing the feasibility of the tower form toward the end of the era. We also looked around the scattering of non-market housing built after 1976, much of it in the non-equity cooperative model, and couldn't find any examples of projects getting up to the density promised by a conditional return to FSR of 1.9. Looks like that was more of a paper promise than anything actually made real, but we're happy to stand corrected!

More broadly, from 1976 until 1988, the old RM-3 lots of Kitsilano remained in a state of downzoned flux, shifting into various subcategories (RM-3B, RM-3A1), with a few converting to Commercial C zoning, until the rest were all placed into the RM-4 category under effectively the same downzoned height cap and FSR limit. There they would remain until the last couple of years when the Broadway Plan hit town.

Here's what zoning looks like now.

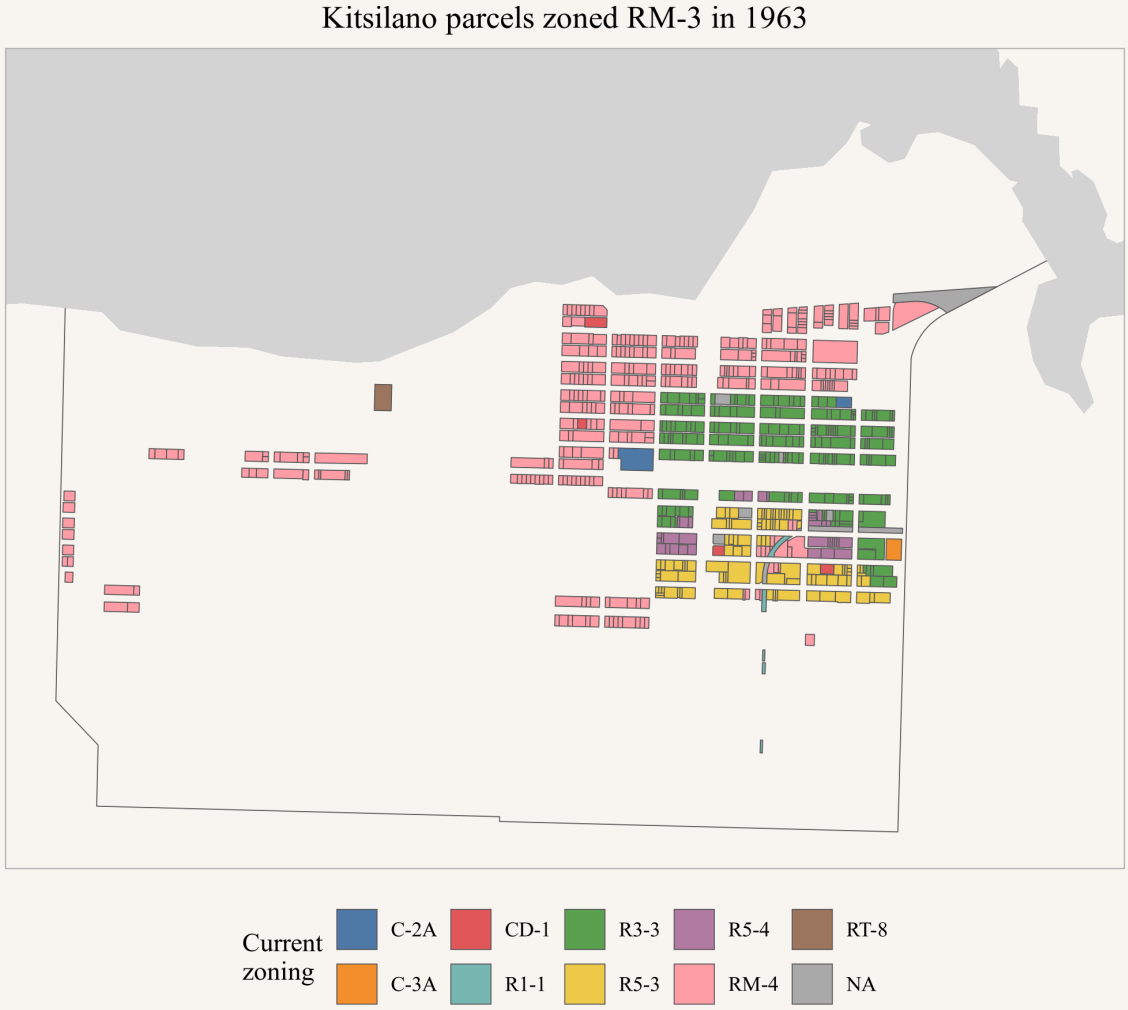


Figure 9: Current zoning for parcels zoned RM-3 in 1963

We are making room for towers again, thanks to the Broadway Plan. A good chunk of RM-4 was recently upzoned to R3-3 and R5-3/4. One pocket got downzoned to RT-8, and the R1-1 is just the zoning inherited by the Arbutus Greenway parcels that got caught in the middle.

The R3-3 and R5-3/4 change is too fresh to have resulted in any new buildings, but they do reverse the 1970s downzoning in the areas where they apply and allow for higher densities than even the original RM-3, although with restrictions and with a different form. R3-3 allows buildings up to 1.6 to 2.7 FSR, depending on site characteristics. In R5-3/4 the maximum available FSR goes up to 6.8 under some conditions, including secured market rental tenure and 20% inclusionary zoning

requirement.

What could have been?

This allows us to ask some simple questions. The 1974 downzoning that moved RM-3 to RM-3A basically removed 0.4 FSR. Since developers were already maxing out allowed floor space before the downzonings it's reasonable to assume that anything that got re-developed after 1976 would have had roughly 0.4 more FSR. Running the numbers that's 773,000ft² of foregone floorspace, or roughly 869 homes at an average of 800ft² and 90% floorspace efficiency. We could've been housing a lot more people in Kitsilano.

At the same time, if more floorspace had been available under RM-3 code, developers might have developed parcels that otherwise remained undeveloped, for example the single family or townhouse portions, resulting in more homes yet again.

At the base of the towers foregone, there would also be more land left over. This could have gone toward all the kinds of amenities initially planned for Maple Crest Senior's Housing. More broadly, permeable surfaces aid with managing run-off water, landscaped trees help with climate adaptation and increase livability, and open outdoor meeting spaces enable a greater variety of neighbourly interactions - especially valuable during pandemic times.

Moreover, the land left open during initial tower development would still be available for later redevelopment if it became feasible, without the risk of displacement currently faced by tenants of low-rise apartments taking up much more of their lot. Indeed, we've seen multiple examples of just this kind of tower infill on old RM-3 zoning code lots built out to towers, adding low-risk responsive resiliency to the housing system.

To take things further, planners working to update zoning in response to demand in the 1960s might have been allowed to continue to do so through the 1970s. Kitsilano, demonstrating high demand, might have quickly gone the way of the West End. The very same West End, in fact, that a Canadian Institute of Planners jury named the best neighbourhood in Canada in 2015. Go figure.

Upshot

There are cool stories behind lots of the built environment we see around us, and some of them also help explain broader patterns, like Vancouver's housing shortage. The tower backlash and downzonings of the 1970s had real effects, exacerbating housing shortages in places people wanted to live. They channelled development into a new regime (von Bergmann and Lauster 2023) of stronger restrictions, spot rezoning, and discretionary approvals, often tied to heritage protection. Locally they also challenged the provision of social housing, making it harder to navigate approvals and get funding from higher levels of government. Regionally they drove many people out into the suburbs, until in many places development there, too, was shut down.

Exploring the downzoning and associated counterfactuals also highlights trade-offs between lot coverage and height. The RM-3 zoning code of the time placed a high value on land and open space, strongly encouraging developers to low lot coverage tower forms, with underground parkade contained within the footprint of the building, yielding large unbuilt space with maximum flexibility how to use it, then and in the future.

Many Kitsilano activists hated towers and the thought of becoming like the West End more than they valued open space on the Legion site. Potential residents of the Legion building faced a different trade-off, trading living on lower floors in a blockier form with fewer outside walls against living on higher floors with more light and private outdoor amenities. For the City of Vancouver, the trade-off in giving away public land (the former streetway) for $1 to satisfy the aesthetic interests of Kitsilano activists is certainly interesting.

In that sense, the trade-off for City Council was also temporal: trading away future possibilities to avoid present hassles. Hassling was very much the chief weapon of irate (but not especially representative) anti-tower activists. Lost future possibilities include the many opportunities provided by open land. But also, infill tower opportunities could have enabled the Legion to house more seniors and expand their mission. And that block of Maple street could have been turned into a public park. Or a small community centre, or any range of uses benefiting the public. Planning should mean more than focusing on the loudest voiced preferences of people in the room at the moment. It should also encompass and account for the full range of opportunities being left to people in the future.

As usual, the code for this post is available on GitHub for anyone to reproduce or adapt for their own purposes.

References

von Bergmann, Jens, and Nathan Lauster. 2023. *A Brief History of Vancouver Planning & Development Regimes*. https://doodles.mountainmath.ca/posts/2023-02-06-a-brief-history-of-vancouver-planning-development-regimes/.