

AFFORDABILITY AND CHOICE TODAY (A•C•T) REGULATORY REFORM PROJECT

**Project to Encourage Triplex and Quadruplex Housing
City of Nanaimo, British Columbia**

Prepared for:

**Federation of Canadian Municipalities
Canadian Home Builders' Association
Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**

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FOREWORD

The project documented in this case study received funding assistance under the Affordability and Choice Today (A•C•T) Program. A•C•T is a joint initiative, managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Home Builders' Association, and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, together with the funding agency, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The A•C•T Program is administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

A•C•T, which was launched in January, 1990, was designed to foster changes to planning and building regulations and residential development approval procedures in order to improve housing affordability, choice and quality.

Through A•C•T, grants are awarded to municipalities, private and non-profit builders and developers, planners and architects to undertake innovative regulatory reform initiatives in municipalities across Canada. Three types of projects are awarded grants under the A•C•T Program: Demonstration Projects, Streamlined Approval Process Projects, and Case Studies (of existing initiatives).

- *Demonstration Projects* involve the construction of innovative Housing that demonstrates how modifications to planning and construction regulations can improve affordability, choice and quality.

- *Streamlined Approval Process Projects* involve development of the method or approach that reduces the time and effort needed to obtain approvals for housing projects.
- *Case Study* grants are awarded for the documentation of existing regulatory reform initiatives.

Change and innovation require the participation of all the players in the housing sector. A•C•T provides a unique opportunity for groups at the local level to work together to identify housing concerns, reach consensus on potential solutions, and implement action. Consequently, a key component of A•C•T-sponsored projects is the participation and cooperation of various players in the housing sector in all phases of each project, from development to realization.

All projects awarded a grant under the A•C•T Program are documented as case studies in order to share information on the initiatives and the benefits of regulatory reform with other Canadian communities. Each case study discusses the regulatory reform initiative, its goals and the lessons learned. Where appropriate, the cost savings resulting from modifications in various planning, development, and construction regulations are calculated and reported.

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PROJECT OVERVIEW

The late 1980s were boom times for the City of Nanaimo on the east coast of Vancouver Island. In ten short years, the town doubled in size. But most of the new housing, especially in the north end, was large single family homes. Opportunities for the growing numbers of lower to moderate income seniors, empty nesters and first time buyers were few indeed.

In response, the City of Nanaimo got together with the Nanaimo Home Builders' Association, Nanaimo Chapter of the Vancouver Island Architects Association, and community representatives. They decided that well-designed triplex and quadruplex projects could provide an alternative form of housing that would fit in with traditional neighbourhoods.

The group applied for an A•C•T grant—initially for a joint demonstration project and regulatory reform initiative. They planned to prepare concept designs for several triplex and quadruplex buildings; build one of them in a high profile area, and use the experience to promote and achieve regulatory reform.

Unfortunately, the proposed development ran into opposition from residents, and the demonstration portion of the A•C•T project was cancelled. But the terms of reference were redefined, and the project went ahead as a regulatory reform initiative.

The new objectives were: to bring stakeholders in the housing sector together to design three innovative triplex and quadruplex housing forms; to prepare design guidelines for the development of attractive, affordable, triplex and quadruplex housing, and to adopt appropriate changes to the Official Community Plan, Zoning Bylaw, Subdivision Guidelines and Multi Family Development Permit Guidelines.

To accomplish this, the project consultants organized a mini design Charrette. They invited a small group of architects and city staff to develop initial concepts, which were then refined after input from the project team and other citizen and industry representatives.

From the Charrette's discussions, concept designs and illustrations, the consultants developed a draft Guideline for Innovative Triplex and Quadruplex Development.

The project went on hold for a while, as the City went through a complete updating and revision of its Official Community Plan (OCP). The concepts of mixed housing forms in neighbourhoods, improved choice, adaptability and affordability were part of those discussions. The new plan sets target densities for neighbourhoods at 15 units per hectare.

Once the OCP was approved in 1996, City staff began the process of finalizing the Guidelines, and drafting amendments to the plan and to the zoning bylaws to allow triplex and quadruplex developments in single family neighbourhoods.

A public Open House was held on the proposed amendments in May 1997. The Official Community Plan amendment and Guidelines were adopted by Council in September 1997. A new Residential Triplex and Quadruplex Zone (RM-2) was added to the zoning bylaw in February 1998.

In addition, the neighbourhood planning process is being used to educate residents and politicians on the new housing form.

The Nanaimo Society of Habitat for Humanity has tentative plans to build a triplex as its next affordable housing project. Planning staff are very supportive of this idea.

The concepts are also being circulated to other municipalities, in an informal way. Anyone who requests a copy of Nanaimo's award winning plan and supporting documents also receives the policy statements and guidelines.

1.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1.1 Incentive for the Project

In 1991/92, the City of Nanaimo was preparing a Housing Policy for incorporation into the Official Community Plan. This was partly in response to British Columbia's amendments to the Municipal Act, which required all municipalities to include affordable housing policies in their plans.

During the research for its Housing Policy, the City identified several trends which suggested a growing need for smaller homes on easier care lots.

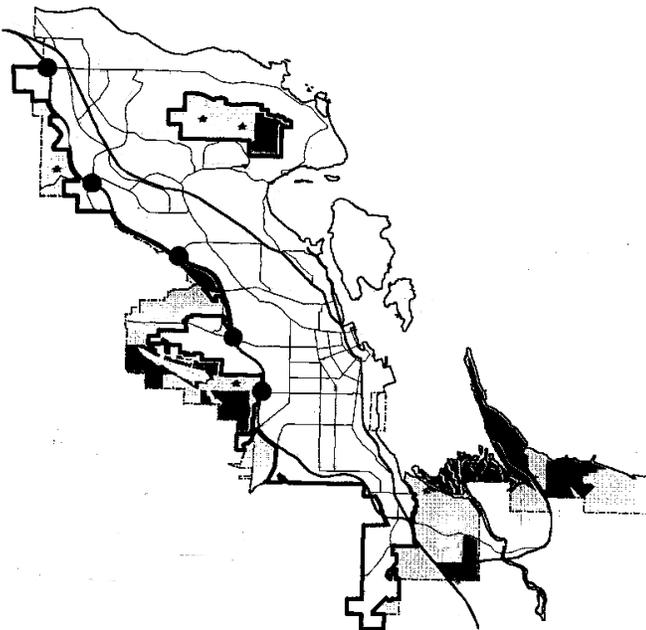
The most important trend was the aging of the population. Research showed that the number of seniors would increase and pre-

retirees aged 45 - 65 would have a major impact on Nanaimo's housing market (increasing by 57% and almost 100% respectively between 1991 and 2001).

In addition, opportunities for low and moderate income households (including seniors, pre-retirees and first time buyers) to purchase or rent in Nanaimo were being limited – particularly in the northern area.

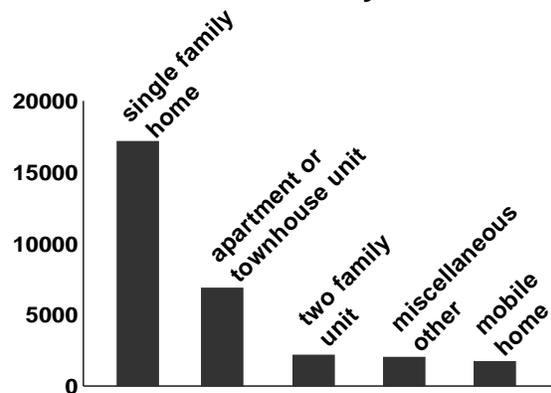
Median house prices had increased by between 65% and 97% between 1987 and 1991. Apartment condominiums had increased by 132%; townhouse condominiums had increased by 153%.

Finally, most of the new residential development was taking place in the north area of the City, in the form of large single family homes. Few affordable homes were planned or being built.



The City of Nanaimo, B.C., on Vancouver Island

**Housing Stock by Type of Unit - 1991
City of Nanaimo**



Data source: Statistics Canada 1991 census

Triplex and quadruplex developments were identified as an important part of the solution to this market imbalance. However, there were some problems. Existing examples of low density multi-family housing in Nanaimo had created some public animosity towards duplex, triplex and quadruplex development. Also, existing Official Plan policies, zoning, subdivision and development design guidelines posed some impediments to these housing forms.

1.2 Formulation of Project Objectives, Strategies and Mobilization of Resources

In 1992, this City of Nanaimo set up a project team with local politicians and staff, the Nanaimo Home Builders' Association, the Vancouver Island Architects' Association and a citizens' advisory group. Their objective was to try to facilitate development of appropriate triplex and quadruplex projects.

The City brought its expertise in planning and housing issues. It was willing to donate significant staff time and resources to increasing the opportunities for affordable housing. It also had a building lot in a newly developing north end neighbourhood of single family homes. The lot might be appropriate for a small multi-family demonstration project.

The Nanaimo Home Builders' Association wanted to explore alternative housing options that could open up new markets, and meet real needs. Local architects also saw the project as a chance to encourage and showcase innovative design for affordable homes. And the community advisory groups wanted to make sure new housing was appropriate and met real community needs.

The projects team's initial plan called for five strategies:

- to design a prototype triplex which would be compatible with existing and future single family neighbourhoods;
- to draft Design Guidelines to facilitate new triplex and quadruplex development in select areas;
- to adopt the Guidelines and make appropriate amendments to the Official Community Plan and City zoning bylaw;
- to build an example of the prototype triplex on a high-visibility site provided by the City, and
- to use the built triplex to promote and gain community acceptance of this affordable housing form, through high visibility, fact sheets, media reports and an open house.

The Nanaimo Home Builders' Association suggested that it could build the triplex as its 1993 show home project. That way, its network of companies would donate some of the materials and labour. And it could work with Malaspina College's construction program, giving students practical experience, at virtually no cost to the project.

The City would contribute staff time, provide land at cost, and absorb the rezoning costs. The community would be involved through representatives of three citizen advisory committees.

Other project team members would donate their time and skills as in-kind contributions. However, several obstacles arose which

resulted in changes to these plans. The first and biggest problem was neighbourhood opposition.

The City's first step had been to initiate a rezoning process for the site to low density multi-family use. The application was designed both to permit the building of the demonstration triplex and to alert adjacent residents that multi-family development was expected on the site.

Adjacent residents were not happy. Criticisms centred on traffic, parking and the appropriateness of "lower cost" housing in a neighbourhood of high end homes. Positions hardened, and opposition peaked at a public Open House.



View from the north slope of Nanaimo, overlooking the Strait of Georgia.

Photo courtesy City of Nanaimo

“I was very supportive to begin with,” says Keith Story, then president of the Nanaimo Home Builders’ Association. “It would have been a nice looking building, which was certainly not out of place in the neighbourhood.”

But the zoning for that area did not allow such a triplex project. And when the project group held the public meeting required for the rezoning, people said: “No, it wasn’t supposed to be there. We don’t want it.” Instead of generating public support and good will, Storey says, the project was becoming a public irritant. “I didn’t want to be involved in shoving something down people’s throats.”

Both the Home Builders’ Association and the Architects’ Association scaled back their participation, and the project group cancelled its plans to actually construct a triplex building.¹

This was a major blow, with a serious impact on the A•C•T project’s momentum. Despite these challenges, the Nanaimo representatives remain committed to their fundamental goal— facilitating triplex and quadruplex development. In consultation with the A•C•T program management committee,

they decided to concentrate on the successful completion of three objectives leading to regulatory reform.

The three objectives pursued after June of 1993 were:

- to bring stakeholders in the housing sector together to produce three concept designs for innovative triplex and quadruplex housing forms;
- to prepare design guidelines for the development of affordable, well designed, triplex and quadruplex housing, and
- to adopt appropriate changes to the Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw.

In the meantime, the City endorsed a new Housing Policy (July 1993), and embarked on its “Plan Nanaimo” Official Community Plan review project (adopted July 1996).

1.3 Project Methodology

The project team used part of the A•C•T program funds to hire consultants. The consultants’ role was to undertake the design concept, site planning, design guidelines and promotion. In the summer of 1993, a request for proposals was sent to Vancouver Island consultants and advertised in Nanaimo and Victoria newspapers. The contract was awarded to two Vancouver- area firms.

¹ The city site was still undeveloped at the time this report was prepared.

In September of 1993, after the demonstration project had already been cancelled, the consultants met with representatives of the City of Nanaimo Council, planning and building department staff, Housing Advisory Subcommittee, Nanaimo Affordable Housing Society, Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, Urban Development Institute (Nanaimo Chapter), and the Nanaimo and Area Branch of the Vancouver Island Architects' Association.

The group identified the social planning and design objectives they would like architects to consider in designing innovative triplex and quadruplex housing forms. These included:

- marketability
 - empty nesters
 - retirees
 - first time buyers
- adaptability/flexibility
- low maintenance
- integration into neighbourhood
- useable outdoor space
- environmentally sensitive materials

Those principles were then used to guide the discussions of a “mini Charrette” held in the summer of 1994. Two Nanaimo architects and one from Vancouver, together with City planners, spent a morning discussing how

triplex and quadruplex developments could best be developed on three actual single-family-home-sized sites:

- a mid-block lot with a lane;
- a mid-block lot without a lane, and
- a corner lot.

Drawing on their quite varied outlooks and expertise, the group members discussed needs, options, and community “fit”, and produced design concepts. At lunch, they were joined by the A•C•T project team, for a critique of the morning’s work. Then, they spent the afternoon revising concepts and preparing illustrative sketches.

Over the next few months, the project consultants expanded on these results, producing a model titled “Innovative Housing for Neighbourhoods: Triplex and Quadruplex Infill Design Guidelines”. Drafts were refined through comments by project team members.²

Then, the emphasis shifted to the mechanics of regulatory reform. There was involvement from the City of Nanaimo, including City Council and the departments of planning and development and corporate

² This report is available from the Canadian Housing Information Centre at 700 Montreal Road, Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P7. Tel: (613) 748-2367. Toll-free 1-800-668-2642. Fax: (613) 748-4069

services. In addition, the five-citizen housing sub-committee of the social planning advisory committee was consulted.

Citizen reaction to triplex-type development was also assessed during public consultation for the City's Official Community Plan Review. In the spring of 1995, people were asked to participate in the planning process by completing "workbooks" with a series of questions.

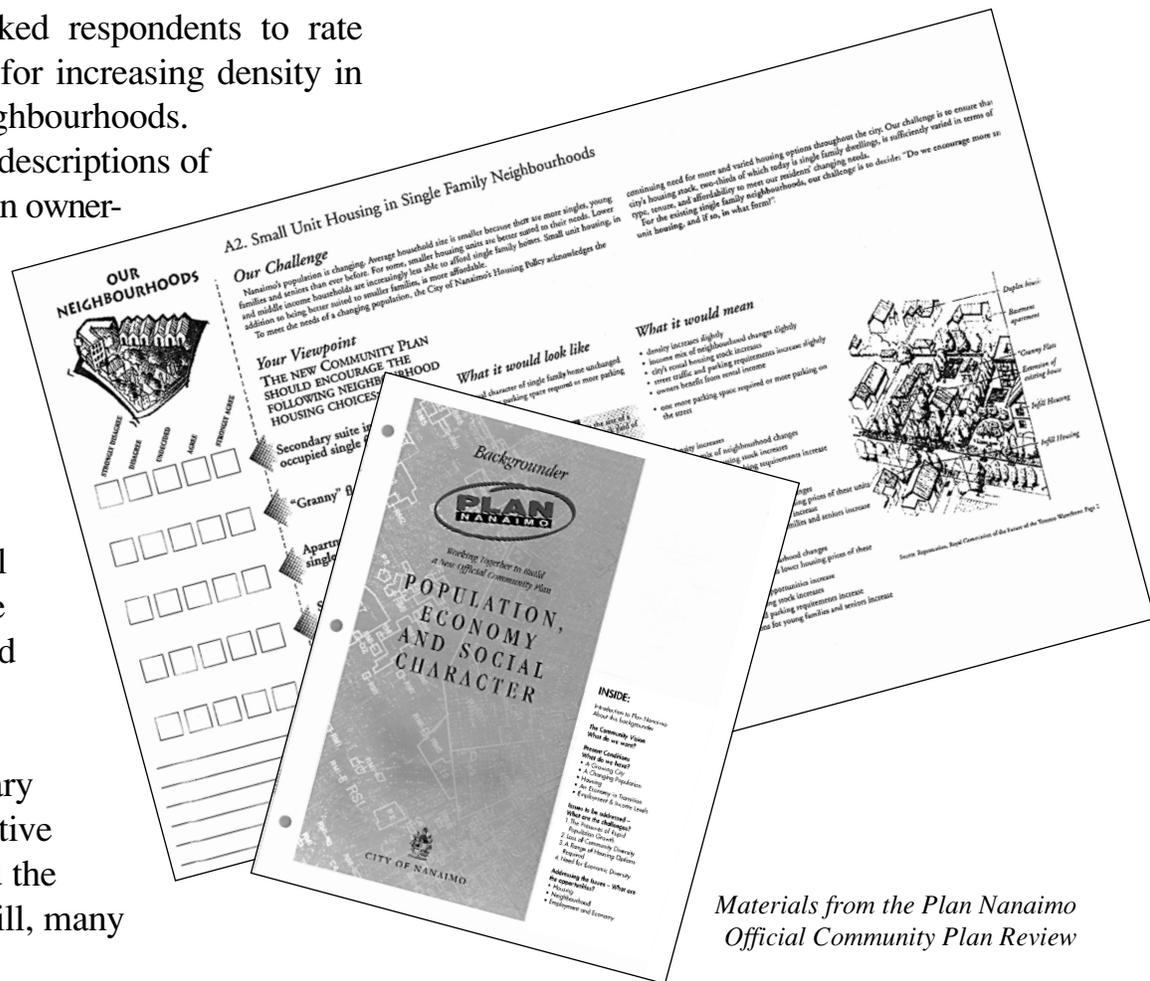
One question asked respondents to rate different options for increasing density in single family neighbourhoods.

They were given descriptions of secondary suites in owner-occupied homes, granny flats, existing homes converted to apartments, large lots subdivided into two or three small lots, or innovative duplex, triplex and fourplex projects.

Of these, secondary suites and innovative "plexes" received the most support. (Still, many

respondents wanted their neighbourhoods to remain unchanged, with new housing and services to occur in new neighbourhoods.)

Nanaimo's new Official Community Plan was adopted in the summer of 1996. The plan's first goal was to build complete viable communities which increase housing choice, both in affordability and in form, while respecting existing communities.



Materials from the Plan Nanaimo Official Community Plan Review

More specific policies on triplex and quadruplex development had to come later. The plan contained a provision that amendments would be considered twice a year. Zoning amendments would only be considered after the new OCP had been adopted.

In May of 1997, the A•C•T project coordinator formally initiated the plan amendment process to add policy on triplex and quadruplex housing forms, and to attach the design guidelines as part of the Official Community Plan.

A public Open House was held at the end of May to seek comments on the draft guidelines and zoning regulations. All members of Nanaimo City Council, plus the Urban Development Institute (Nanaimo Chapter), Vancouver Island Real Estate Board, Nanaimo Home Builders Association, Neighbourhood Network, and 23 neighbourhood associations were invited to attend. However, attendance was very poor—perhaps partly because there was no specific project under discussion.

Although City staff were initially disappointed, they decided this apparent apathy probably indicated general support for the ideas. As one member put it, “people certainly show up at meetings if they disagree with what is proposed.”

The Official Community Plan amendment and Guidelines were adopted by Council in September 1997. They detailed policies governing triplex and quadruplex development in areas designated as Neighbourhoods.

A new Residential Triplex and Quadruplex Zone (RM-2) was added to the zoning bylaw in February 1998. It applies in all areas previously zoned for duplex developments, plus those zoned for townhouses and small apartments.

2.0 PROJECT RESULTS

2.1 Prototype Designs

The mini Charrette produced sketches of concept designs for triplex and quadruplex housing for three specific but typical lots.

The target was to produce units that could sell for approximately \$72,000 to \$117,000—

comparable to the price of a condominium apartment or townhome. The price of an average single family home in Nanaimo at that time was \$147,500.

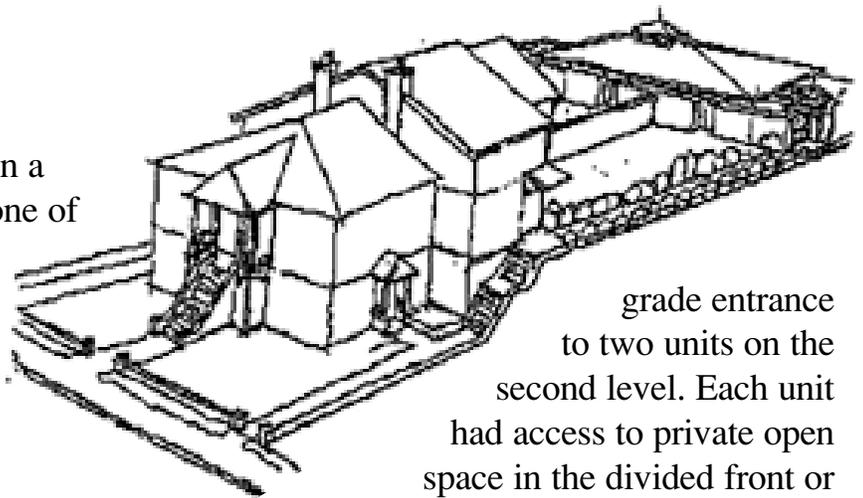
The main concepts are summarized below.³

Quadruplex on Sloped Lot

This 20.11 m x 43.43 m site was in a grid-style subdivision, typical of one of Nanaimo's older areas. The land sloped up to the lane at the rear of the lot.

The Charrette participants designed a quadruplex for this lot. The building took advantage of the sloped site, using different levels and roof lines to add interest to the structure. Exterior stairs also created separate unit identity.

All units had a private entrance at the front or side elevation. The sloped lot allowed



grade entrance to two units on the second level. Each unit had access to private open space in the divided front or back yards, and patios and/or balconies were incorporated into the design.

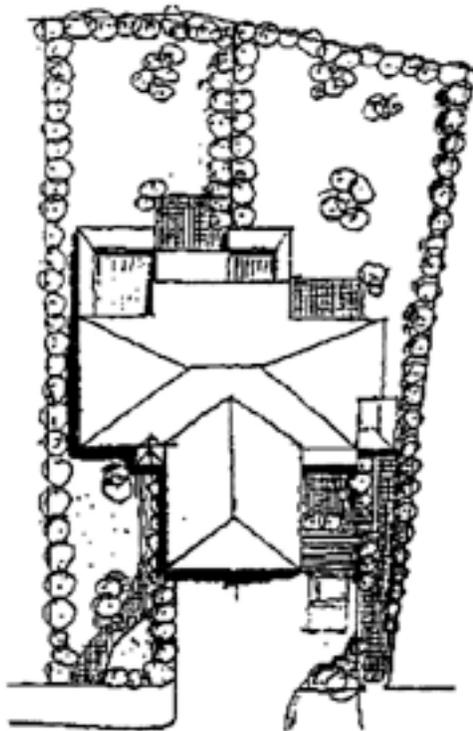
Parking was provided in a four-car garage accessed from the back lane. Two additional stalls were designed, alongside the garage.

³ These concept designs are found in “Innovative Housing for Neighbourhoods: Triples and Quadruplex Infill Design Guidelines”, City of Nanaimo, available from CHIC (see note 1).

Triplex on Mid-Block Lot

This site was an internal (mid block) lot with 16 m frontage and no laneway. The prototype offered a fairly traditional design, designed to fit into the surrounding neighbourhood style.

There were two units on the ground floor with their own back yards, and one on the

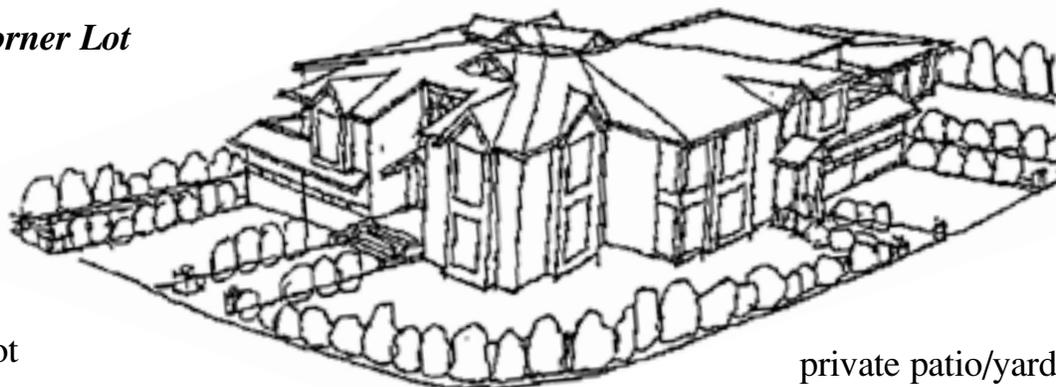


second level with a roof deck. A two-car garage and tandem parking space provided for parking.

All three units had their own front entrances, facing the street.

Quadruplex on Corner Lot

The third site also was used to explore design options for a quadruplex. This site was a corner lot with no lane.



private patio/yard or above-ground balcony.

Essentially, it was treated somewhat like two attached duplexes, each facing one of the principal streets. Two private entrances and a driveway with two car garage were recommended for each street frontage. Again, each unit had its own

Articulated roof treatments, staggered walls, bays, trim details, walkways, lighting and landscaping defined the separate units, and made sure the building would be attractive on both streets.

2.2 Official Community Plan

The OCP policies on neighbourhoods encourage our triplex and quadruplex development through both general and specific policies.

For example, the target density for neighbourhoods is set at 15 units per hectare (six units per acre). Average density is calculated on lands designated “neighbourhood” within approximately a 250-metre radius of the site. This should allow occasional triplex and quadruplex buildings in single family neighbourhoods.

The plan specifically calls for “a scattered small block pattern” of land use, rather than large areas of single housing form and/or density.

Quadruplexes are only encouraged on lots with lane access or on corner lots. On lands

fronting on specific roads identified in the plan, rezoning for triplexes, quadruplexes, townhouses or apartments may be considered where development would enhance the appearance of the streetscape, as long as it is consistent with the Design Guidelines, and doesn’t route traffic through surrounding residential areas. In these locations, floor area ratio may be up to 0.45, and other density limitations will not apply.

2.3 Triplex and Quadruplex Infill Design Guidelines

The Guidelines adopted in September 1997 outline design considerations and principles, based on and illustrated by the prototype design concepts produced at the A•C•T project’s mini Charrette.

Minimum lot width for a triplex, for example, is set at 16 m at the lot frontage. Minimum area is 600 m².

Public discussion groups consider new OCP during Plan Nanaimo review. Photo courtesy City of Nanaimo.

Each unit should have a private entrance on the front or side elevation, individually landscaped and lighted. Two units should be at grade.

The document gives more details on providing parking, respecting the character of the existing neighbourhood, relating to the street, landscaping, and providing suitable housing for the city’s changing population. Design elements should reflect the neighbouring homes in terms of building facades, roof pitches (a slope steeper than 6:12 is encouraged), architectural era and colours.

The guidelines recommend making the second floor smaller than the first floor, in order to avoid side wall massing (the “canyon” effect). Other guidelines address the need to create a visual transition to neighbouring buildings, and to define frontage character.

They also call for the use of landscaping and design to create attractive individual open space in front, back and side yards, as well as balconies and roof gardens.

2.4 Zoning

The residential triplex and quadruplex zone (RM-2) was passed in February 1998. It is intended to provide for the development of small scale multiple family residential buildings that are compatible with the scale or enhance the

architectural style of single family residential development in the area. It replaced a previous zoning, already applied on more than 100 lots, which allowed duplex forms.

Subsection 7.2.3 sets the maximum floor area ratio for a triplex (including portions of the building used for parking) at 0.55. For quadruplex the maximum is 0.65.

Maximum lot coverage is 42% of the lot area for a triplex, and 48% for a quadruplex. Minimum lot sizes are as follows:

	<u>Internal</u>	<u>with lane</u>
Minimum lot size:	600.00 m ²	873.72 m ²
Minimum frontage:	16.00 m	20.11 m
Minimum depth:	34.32 m	43.43 m

Ground level units must have at least 18.6 m² of private outdoor space, and above-ground units must have at least 13.9 m².

The section of the zoning bylaw dealing with the RM-2 zone is reproduced in Appendix A.

2.5 Public Education

The City is promoting this housing form through the community planning process. Staff are using neighbourhood planning meetings to explain and give illustrations of the concept. Although this will take some

time, it has the best potential for overcoming opposition, says Sharon Fletcher, manager of Strategic Planning.

“We think this is the most positive way to provide information about this type of housing in a community that is protecting its single family neighbourhoods from other types of multiple housing development.”

Still, the best promotional device will be a completed, attractive and working project, she says. A good project would help residents and politicians to visualize the kind of buildings possible under the guidelines.

Although there have been some tentative proposals, only one shows any real potential. One big reason for this is the slow housing market.

“Nanaimo’s housing market has been very slow over the past couple of years,” she says. In that kind of market, few people are willing to take a risk on “innovative” projects.

But the need is still there. Kate Lowe, member of the Chase River Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee, says residents often assume “affordable” housing brings undesirable people.

“They are not building for pedophiles or axe murderers,” she says. “It might be a single mum who’s a nurse and wants to live near

the hospital. A lot of seniors living on fixed incomes might be eligible for those triplexes—and other people who want to own their own home in a single family neighbourhood but can’t quite afford it.”

2.6 Lessons Learned

As discussed above, the objectives of this project were changed during its six year life span. The biggest change was the decision not to proceed with the demonstration project. But the regulatory reform went ahead. If these changes had been in place, it would probably have been much easier to get the initial proposal approved.

Felicity Adams was the city’s planner involved in the project at its early stages. She is now a consultant with the firm City Spaces Consulting Ltd., which has recently completed a major project on citizen involvement for the British Columbia government. She identified these lessons for building team and community support:

- 1) As the project sponsor, identify examples of projects that were successful other A•C•T projects could be a resource. Explore why these were successful, how the proponents handled any controversial aspects, and what lessons could be learned.
- 2) With project partners, work through scenarios of possible community

reactions, such as a confrontation at a public meeting, and role play ways to handle difficult situations. Use external resources to assist with this if needed.

- 3) Develop a sheet of FAQs (answers to Frequently Asked Questions) for use by project partners.
- 4) Develop leadership within the project group so that one person is ready to talk to the media and to handle difficult questions knowledgeably and comfortably.
- 5) Utilize locally known groups or individuals to present the project.

Keith Story was the Nanaimo Home Builders' Association representative to the original project team. He has three main recommendations:

- 1) Include specific requirements for innovative housing types when new areas are being planned. Then, councillors and residents have a chance to comment during the planning process, and everybody knows in advance what is going to be built.
- 2) If you are dealing with an infill project, build community support as early as possible. Try to bring some actual people who would want to live in the completed project – in this case, single

mothers, widows and people with handicaps—to the first public meeting.

- 3) If the community is actively opposed and negative positions have hardened, don't force a project through. You may do long term damage to the acceptability of the innovative concepts you are trying to promote.

Sharon Fletcher was the planner in charge of getting the regulatory reform accepted. She adds a few more recommendations:

- 1) Try to avoid changing personnel in the middle of a project. Change makes it extremely difficult to keep progressing properly.
- 2) Avoid having to juggle competing priorities. This specific project probably should not have been begun until after the large-scale review of Nanaimo's overall Official Community Plan had been completed. The City did not have enough resources to maintain the momentum for this project while planning staff were so busy with the main review.
- 3) The political climate is also important. The environment for adoption of these regulations was not in place until the housing policies of the new Official Community Plan had been accepted: that created a context within which to develop this type of housing form.

3.0 DESCRIPTION OF COMMUNITY AND KEY PLAYERS

Nanaimo is a waterfront community on Vancouver Island. In 1993, the community consisted of approximately 60,000 people. With a building boom in the late 1980s, it had doubled its size in 10 years. As a result, there was a protective attitude towards the character of existing communities, and a reaction against change and new innovations.

At the same time, almost 15 per cent of all families were headed by lone parents. A similar percentage of residents were 65 years or older – and that percentage was expected to increase by 57 per cent between 1991 and 2011. During the same period, the number of people aged 45 to 64 was expected to double.

The north end of the city was experiencing most of the new residential development. Since it was almost all in the form of large single-family homes, there were limited opportunities for low and moderate income households, including seniors, pre-retirees and first time buyers, to purchase or rent in this area.

3.1 The City of Nanaimo

The City initiated the development of the A•C•T project proposal. It offered to provide a site for a demonstration project, based on cost recovery once the project

was complete. The department of planning and development would pursue rezoning of the site, and provide staff services for the entire project, including regulatory reform aspects.

As the project changed, and particularly after the demonstration project aspect was dropped, the City's leadership became even more critical.

City staff, particularly in the planning department, devoted a significant amount of time to the Charrette, guidelines and amendment of regulations.

3.2 Industry

The Nanaimo Home Builders' Association initially proposed to build the project as its 1993 "Show Home". It had begun conversations with its own members and with the organizers of the residential construction program at Malaspina College.

However, when the rezoning application ran into significant community opposition, the association decided it could not ignore the public judgment. Instead of generating good will and encouraging innovation, the project threatened to produce serious resentment in the community. So the association withdrew its support.

After the demonstration portion of the project was dropped, the Home Builders' Association was only involved in an advisory/review function. Other groups, including the Urban Development Institute (Nanaimo) and the Nanaimo Real Estate Board, filled similar roles—participating in meetings and reviewing drafts.

3.3 Architects

A representative of the Vancouver Island Architects' Association served on the original project team. The design Charrette involved Richard Hulbert of R. Hulbert and Associates Ltd. of Vancouver, and the Nanaimo architects Jerry Ellins and David Spearing. All of these firms had worked for the City before, and had a reputation for high quality design, sensitive to individual and community needs.

3.4 Community

The project team included a representative from the housing sub committee of the Social Planning Advisory Committee. This is a five-member citizen committee. In addition, the North Nanaimo Residents Advisory Committee (12 residents) and other community groups worked with the project team in various capacities.

3.5 Consultants

The project team hired Aplin and Martin Consultants Ltd. (engineers, planners, landscape architects and surveyors) and Elbe Locke Walls Architects Ltd. to supervise the project. Both were Vancouver area firms, with solid credentials in housing and planning.

4.0 IMPACT ON AFFORDABILITY, CHOICE AND QUALITY

4.1 New regulatory structure widens housing options

The new regulations for triplex and quadruplex development allow for a new form of non-intrusive, marketable, affordable housing which will meet identified housing needs.

Specific policies are included in Nanaimo's new Official Community Plan—a plan which is well protected by a highly motivated, well informed public and Council.

New guidelines and zoning allow these triplexes and quadruplexes to be built in areas already zoned for duplex-type forms (more than 100 lots in the city). Since they allow for a more compact form with higher density than is permitted for townhouses or small walkup apartments, they may also be useful for redeveloping smaller lots in areas with that zoning.

4.2 Triplex/quadruplex forms offer increased affordability

The concept designs produced during the Charrette and incorporated into Nanaimo's new regulations were aimed at producing small housing units that could sell for between 50 and 75% of the price of an average single family detached house. Ron Caldwell, chairman of the 'Habitat for Humanity' (Nanaimo Society), says this small multi-family form is attractive

because of the cost of land in Nanaimo. The Society currently has plans to build a triplex as its next project. The project will be strata title (condominium ownership), and they hope to have it completed by June 1999.

City staff are supportive of the initiative, and would like to see more.

4.3 Community and Council members are being educated about housing options

Politicians and residents have been exposed to concept designs and ideas of how to introduce low density multiple housing options. Ideas are being discussed further during open house and "kitchen table" meetings for the neighbourhoods planning process.

4.4 Ideas are being transferred to other municipalities

Plan Nanaimo, as an award-winning Official Community Planning process,⁴ was widely distributed. Municipal representatives from across Canada heard about its innovative features. Those who request copies of the plan and associated documents get exposed to the triplex/quadruplex policies.

⁴ Plan Nanaimo received the Award of Excellence in 1997 from the Planning Institute of British Columbia. It was also a finalist for the 1997 Institute of Public Administration of Canada Award for Innovative Management.

APPENDIX A—ZONING BYLAW 4000.207

Nanaimo City Council passed its new residential triplex and quadruplex zone (RM-2, reproduced below) in February of 1998. It is intended to provide for the development of small scale multiple family residential buildings that

are compatible with the scale or enhance the architectural style of single family residential development in a specific area. It replaces a previous zoning, already applied on more than 100 lots, which allowed duplex forms.

7.2 RESIDENTIAL TRIPLEX AND QUADRUPLEX ZONE - (RM-2) (4000.207; 1998-Feb- 02)

This zone provides for the development of small scale multiple family residential dwellings that are compatible with the scale or enhance the architectural style of single family residential development in the area.

7.2.1. PERMITTED USES (4000.075; 1995-Jan-23) (4000.178; 1998-Feb-02)

Bed and Breakfast, subject to Part 5
Boarding or Lodging, subject to Part 5
Duplexes
Triplexes
Quadruplexes
Single-family dwellings, subject to Subsections:

- 6.1.2. Condition of Use;
- 6.1.3. Density;
- 6.1.6. Yard Requirements;
- 6.1.7. Height of Buildings;
- 6.1.8. Height of Fences; and
- 6.1.9. Off-Street Parking

7.2.2. CONDITIONS OF USE

7.2.2.1. No storage or refuse receptacle areas shall be permitted in a front yard setback.

7.2.2.2. Where the use of a lot is triplex or quadruplex, the maximum gross floor area of each storey above the first storey shall not exceed 80% of the gross floor area of the first storey.

7.2.2.3. Quadruplexes shall only be permitted on corner lots or lots which abut a lane.

7.2.3. DENSITY

7.2.3.1. Not more than four dwelling units shall be permitted per lot.

7.2.3.2. Not more than two principal buildings shall be permitted on a lot.

7.2.3.3. The maximum floor area ratio of a triplex shall not exceed 0.55.

a) For the purpose of this subsection, the floor area ratio calculation shall include portions of the building used for parking purposes.

7.2.3.4. The maximum floor area ratio of a quadruplex shall not exceed 0.65.

a) For the purpose of this subsection, the floor area ratio calculation shall include portions of the building used for parking purposes.

7.2.4. LOT AREA

7.2.4.1. The minimum lot area shall not be less than 600 square metres (6,459 square feet) serviced by a community water system, a community sanitary sewer system, and a storm drainage system.

7.2.4.2. Notwithstanding Subsection 7.2.4.1., the minimum lot area for a corner lot shall not be less than 693 square metres (7,459 square feet) serviced by a community water system, a community sanitary sewer system, and a storm drainage system.

7.2.4.3. Notwithstanding Subsection 7.2.4.1., the minimum lot area for a lot abutting a lane shall not be less than 873.72 square metres (9,405 square feet) serviced by a community water system, a community sanitary sewer system, and a storm drainage system.

7.2.4.4. Notwithstanding Subsections 7.2.4.1. - 7.2.4.3., where a lot abuts a watercourse identified in Schedule G the required leave strip shall not be included in the calculation of minimum lot area.

7.2.5. LOT COVERAGE

7.2.5.1. The maximum lot coverage shall not exceed 40% of the lot area.

7.2.5.2. Notwithstanding Subsection 7.2.5.1., where the use of the lot is a triplex, the maximum lot coverage shall not exceed 42% of the lot area.

7.2.5.3. Notwithstanding Subsection 7.2.5.1., where the use of the lot is a quadruplex, the maximum lot coverage shall not exceed 48% of the lot area.

7.2.6. LOT DIMENSIONS

7.2.6.1. Notwithstanding Subsection 5.17.2., the minimum lot frontage shall be 16 metres (52.49 feet), or 20.11 metres (66 feet) where the lot is abutting a lane.

7.2.6.2. Notwithstanding Subsection 5.17.4., the minimum lot depth shall be 34.32 metres (112.6 feet) or 33 metres (108 feet) where the lot is a corner lot, or 43.43 metres (142.5 feet) where the lot is abutting a lane.

7.2.7. YARD REQUIREMENTS

- 7.2.7.1. A front yard of not less than 6 metres (19.69 feet) shall be provided.
- 7.2.7.2. Side yards of not less than 1.5 metres (4.92 feet) for each side yard shall be provided. In the case of a corner lot, the side yard adjoining the flanking street shall not be less than 3 metres (9.84 feet).
 - a) Notwithstanding Subsection 7.2.7.2., where the use of the lot is a triplex or quadruplex the side yard setback shall not be less than 2.4 metres (7.87 feet) where the entrance way faces the side yard.
- 7.2.7.3. A rear yard of not less than 6 metres (19.69 feet) shall be provided for a principal building. A rear yard of not less than 3 metres (9.84 feet) shall be provided for an accessory building.
- 7.2.7.4. Notwithstanding Subsections 5.4.2. and 5.4.3., where the use of the lot is a triplex or quadruplex the maximum projection into a required front yard or rear yard for open decks and steps shall be 3 metres (9.84 feet).
- 7.2.7.5. Notwithstanding Subsections 7.2.7.1. to 7.2.7.4., general regulations in Part 5 for the siting of buildings in proximity to watercourses and major roads will also apply.

7.2.8. HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS

- 7.2.8.1. The height of a principal building shall not exceed 7.75 metres (25.43 feet) nor three stories.
- 7.2.8.2. The height of an accessory building shall not exceed 4.5 metres (14.76 feet).
- 7.2.8.3. Notwithstanding Part 4, height shall be measured vertically from the average natural grade level recorded at the outermost corners of the building or the curb level, whichever is greater, as determined by survey to the highest part of the roof surface of a flat roof, the deck line of a mansard roof, and the mean level between the eaves and ridge of a gable, hip or gambrel of a sloped roof.
- 7.2.8.4. Where the use of the lot is triplex or quadruplex, dormers shall not be subject to the height requirements of this section.

7.2.9. HEIGHT OF FENCES

- 7.2.9.1. The height of a fence shall not exceed 1.2 metres (3.94 feet) in a front yard.
- 7.2.9.2. The height of a fence shall not exceed 1.8 metres (5.90 feet) in any side or rear yard, except where a side or rear yard abuts a lane, in which case the height of a fence shall not exceed 2.4 metres (7.87 feet).
- 7.2.9.3. In the case of a corner lot, the height of a fence shall not exceed 1.8 metres (5.9 feet) along the side adjoining the flanking street. (4000.075; 1995-Jan-23)
- 7.2.9.4. Notwithstanding Subsections 7.2.9.1. to 7.2.9.3., fence heights are subject to the general provisions set out in Part 3, "Visibility at Intersections", "Fence Heights", and "Height Exemptions".

7.2.10. PRIVATE OUTDOOR SPACE

7.2.10.1. Where use of a lot is a triplex or quadruplex, private outdoor space shall be provided for each dwelling unit as follows:

a) Ground level dwelling units shall be provided no less than 18.6 square metres (200 square feet) of private outdoor space with a minimum depth of 3.65 metres (12 feet).

b) Above ground level dwelling units shall be provided no less than 13.9 square metres (150 square feet) of private outdoor space with a minimum depth of 2.43 metres (8 feet).

7.2.11. OFF-STREET PARKING

7.2.11.1. Off-street parking shall be provided and maintained in accordance with the Off-Street Parking Regulations in Part 13 of this Bylaw.

7.2.12. SCREENING AND LANDSCAPING

7.2.12.1. All mechanical, electrical or other service equipment located outside or on the roof of a building shall be screened from adjacent properties and streets by ornamental structures, landscaping, or other means.

7.2.12.2. All outdoor storage and refuse receptacle areas shall be screened in accordance with Part 14 of this Bylaw.

7.2.12.3. Where an RM-2 Zone abuts a highway, or abuts or is across a highway from an RS, A, C, MA, I or P Zone, screening and landscaping shall be provided in accordance with the requirements of Part 14 of this Bylaw.