

RIENS Stakeholder Meeting #1

The first stakeholder meeting for the RIENS study was held on April 6, 2016 at the Rockway Community Centre Heriatge Room from 6:30 - 8:30. The meeting participants consisted of City Plannig staff, Meridian staff (consultants) and 11 stakeholders who had expressed interest in participating in these meetings. The members are primarily residents who live in the affected areas and it includes two planning consultants. The stakeholder meeting was organized by topics that helped guide the discussion. The meeting notes have been compiled under the same topics that were discussed in the stakeholder meeting.

Introductions

To begin the meeting, the study team asked stakeholders to describe why they were interested in becoming a stakeholder. The following answers were provided:

- Concern for community and how development may impact the overall look and feel of the area.
- Supportive of intensification that occurs in the 'right way'.
- Being involved in this process means taking action in developing an appropriate process.
- Desire to be proactive and engaged in a study that may have an impact on how development in older neighbourhoods is approved in the future.
- Preservation of community heritage features.
- Intensification should enhance the area where it is happening and provide a positive impact.

Meridian provided a brief background and introduction to the study purpose, study area and deliverables.

RIENS Study Purpose

No questions or comments were raised.

RIENS Study Area (questions from the group)

Will the recommendations for this study be expanded to apply City-wide?

The RIENS study area includes the Central neighbourhoods and the Vanier community and, as such, recommendations will only be for these areas. It will be up to Council to determine whether to study other areas beyond the defined RIENS study area in the future.

What about underutilized properties, such as properties that were previously used for industrial-related activity?

The RIENS study focus is on low-rise residential lands in the study area, but the study will make recommendations on how the City could approach interface areas. The interface areas, for example, are streets where there are residential dwellings on one side and previous industrial buildings on the other. Interface areas could include streets that are zoned for low-rise residential dwellings that abut a street that allows for higher density dwellings. How development is assessed in these situations will be part of the RIENS study analysis. Interface areas also include properties on main streets that back onto low density residential properties.

Process and Deliverables

No questions or comments were raised.

Possible Areas to Explore

| No questions or comments were raised-.

Area of Interest #1: Zoning Rules

The study team provided a brief description of what the zoning by-law is, how it controls development and described how each zone standard impacts how a lot is developed (from the presentation table). The meeting was opened up to a general discussion that included real life examples of what stakeholders see as working and what is could be improved. Below are the questions and general comments that were made.

Question(s) from the group:

In some areas, there are live/work units that are pretty close to the sidewalk. How does this happen?

In some areas, such as mixed-use corridors, there is a reduced or no requirement for setback. This type of corridor is zoned differently than low-rise residential areas and is not included in the RIENS study, however the study would provide recommendations on how to deal with the interface behind such areas and low density residential areas.

Are minimum parking requirements part of the study?

The scope of the RIENS does not include an evaluation of the number of required parking spaces per dwelling unit. This will be part of the comprehensive update to the Zoning By-law (CRoZBy project). The RIENS will address rules around driveways and garages.

General comment(s):

- Notification process for committee of adjustment should be improved. Notices are not clear and the content can be confusing.
- Desire to have more rules that govern the building height, type of materials, style (specific emphasis on heritage), and landscaping to be reflective of what exists on the street where development is proposed.
- Suggestion that more rules for development to blend with existing streetscape is important, particularly as a way to ensure that development resembles surrounding character and is appropriate.
- Suggestion that more rules may deter poor development.
- Real life example was provided where standards such as depth of dwelling and garage rules in the zoning by-law could have made a residential development more appropriate in terms of streetscape and the experience of local neighbours.
- Real life examples were provided of a positive experience that some stakeholders had in working with a developer of a residential property to request changes to the development to reflect their neighbourhood character.
- Experience where FSI (floor space index) was manipulated for a development that created a negative impact on community because it regulates how much building can be on a property but not location of the building.
- Real life examples of newer development that fits in with surrounding character were provided.
- Interest in building line and front yard setbacks to ensure location of houses is uniform along street.
- The public process for development applications is very important to stakeholders.
- Consideration for standards in relation to the hierarchy of roads in the City, specifically with parking requirements for developers.
- Interest in seeing better cohesion between departments in the approvals process. Concern about coverage requirement as it relates to snow storage.

Area of Interest #2: Zoning Permissions

The study team provided a description of the types of uses that are permitted in each residential zone that is in the RIENS study area. The following comments were made (see below).

General comment(s):

- There are a wide variety of uses that are permitted and many of the zones seem open.
- Suggestion that semis may not need driveways or could have a shared driveway to look more like single-detached dwellings.

- Concern for types of houses (reference to rooming/boarding houses) that are permitted and public safety.
- Interest in adding lanes (and lane-based housing) to the RIENS study discussion.

Area of Interest #3: Planning Process

The study team provided examples of other municipalities (two in Ontario and one in Alberta) of ways that residential intensification can be managed. The following questions and comments were made (see below).

Question(s):

Will demographics and building activity information be reviewed during this process?

City staff has provided the study team with information on building activity in the area.

This will be a consideration in the RIENS study and will be discussed at future meetings.

How do Cultural Heritage Landscapes fit in to the RIENS study?

Cultural Heritage Landscapes have not yet been covered in our research, but the study team will look further into this and the impact that this may have.

General comment(s):

- Interest in learning more about the City of Ottawa's approach to regulating character.