

Case 22816 – Westerwald Street Survey Review

This survey was the major early engagement activity for this project. In late April 2021, HRM mailed 362 survey packages to residents in Fairview near Westerwald Street. The packages included a cover letter, fact sheet and the survey. The survey package is attached to this write up. Over the following months, 19 surveys were returned, a response rate of 5%.

This write-up is a high-level summary. It is an overview of common themes and attempts to capture the general tone of the surveys. It provides an overview of specific concerns and a tally of surveys by support or opposition to the project.

Survey Questions

1. What concerns do you have about allowing townhouses and more apartment buildings near Westerwald Street? What concerns do you have about ground floor commercial?
2. What benefits do you think allowing townhouses and more apartment buildings could bring to the area? What types of ground floor commercial uses might be appropriate?
3. Please tell us what you think of the newer apartment buildings built in the area. How have these buildings changed the look and feel of the area? How do they fit with nearby residential streets?
4. Are there any small changes you would like to see near Westerwald Street?
5. Is there anything else we should know about your neighbourhood?

Results

Traffic

The most common concern about new development is increased traffic, particularly at the corner of Westerwald and Dutch Village Road. Survey respondents described this as a dangerous intersection and are concerned it cannot handle extra traffic. Westerwald Street already moves traffic from Melrose Avenue and School Avenue.

“Westerwald cannot handle more traffic entering the intersection at Dutch Village Road and Sunnybrae Avenue.”

“It will make the area too congested. The street cannot accommodate all that extra traffic.”

Displacement of Residents

People are concerned that new buildings will evict current residents, who will not be able to afford the new buildings. People are worried that new buildings have high rents and are not affordable for people who live in Fairview.

“We’d be priced out of our neighbourhood.”

“What will happen to those families living in rented spaces now who will be displaced?”

Rising Rents

People are worried that new buildings are causing rents to rise and pressuring landlords into selling properties for development. The concerns about displacement and rising rents are closely connected. Many respondents who were mixed about the development would be more supportive of affordable housing or mixed-income housing.

"If not already, affordable housing should be considered when planning these new developments."

Parking

People are concerned that new development mean more people parking on Westerwald Street. Several surveys stated more cars are parking on street since a new, six-storey building was developed at the corner of Dutch Village and Westerwald Street.

"The newer building on the corner of Westerwald however, has led to a very large increase in the number street-parked cars."

Community Feel/ Aesthetics

There are a variety of concerns about larger buildings in the neighbourhood, including shade, wind and the overall look and feel of the buildings. Reactions to newer multi-unit buildings in the area were mixed – some people felt they 'cleaned-up' the area, while others felt they were too large and bulky.

"[Newer buildings] do not fit the residential look"

"The new builds are certainly gentrifying the area, but I am not concerned by this. The densification it brings is necessary."

"The apartment buildings at the bottom of Rosedale are too close to Dutch Village road and is a safety hazard."

"I dislike the newer apartment buildings in the area as they have created a 'wind tunnel' effect when walking down Westerwald."

"I believe the newer apartment buildings on Dutch Village rd and Joseph Howe have been a net benefit so far and fit into Fairview well. We needed some new construction as many residences along Dutch Village looked quite dated."

Support/ Opposition

The survey did not explicitly ask if people supported townhouse or multi-unit buildings. But some people clearly stated their support or opposition. Other responses were mixed. Some of the mixed and opposed responses could be described as *"might support with conditions"*. For example, some residents might support multi-unit housing if the units were affordable.

Support: 1 (5%)

Opposition: 9 (47%)

Mixed Response: 9 (47%)

Total Surveys: 19

"The proposal as presented does not concern me."

"Townhouses and apartments could bring value to the neighborhood as long as the company was responsible with the types of tenancies they allow."

"I have no real problem with a new apartment building or townhouses being built as long as they are AFFORDABLE."

"I am against the proposed addition of adding townhouses and mid rise apartment as it will displace the current residents who will not have the income to continue living in this area."

"Very much against this. There are so many apartment buildings already."