

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

**News conference: Tuesday, Feb. 19 at 1 p.m.
at Vancouver city hall (south side)**

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver expects that hundreds of residents will sign up to speak at city council's special meeting Feb. 26 to demand that the city withdraw its proposed EcoDensity Charter.

More than 26 community organizations from every neighbourhood across the city have come together to form an ad hoc coalition to oppose the city's plan to densify neighbourhoods without plans to ensure adequate safeguards or amenities.

Coalition members, representing widely diverse political interests, will be at the meeting to blast council with the shortcomings of the EcoDensity plan;

- community consultations have been woefully inadequate;
- proposed actions run roughshod over Community Visions
- density bonuses will be given to developers when instead greener building standards could be required in city building codes;
- higher buildings in Gastown, Chinatown and Hastings threaten heritage districts;
- transit and amenities are integrated with increased densities;
- embodied energy of existing buildings is not adequately accommodated;
- more density doesn't ensure new housing is affordable or liveable.

"Community-based density can be part of the solution to make Vancouver more sustainable," Mel Lehan said, "but density must not take priority over other city objectives such as affordability and livability."

Responding to criticisms of EcoDensity, Brent Toderian, director of planning, said last week that he is going to recommend that council delay a vote on EcoDensity to give staff time to make modifications.

"The city is hearing how flawed the policy is," Lehan said. "The reaction has been so negative, they know they have to make changes. But we don't think short-term tinkering can fix it." The coalition is calling on the city to:

1. withdraw the charter and initial actions
2. engage communities in an open, democratic, and extended process to devise effective strategies for managing growth;
3. create a comprehensive and balanced plan for an environmentally, economically, socially, and culturally sustainable city.

For more information, call Mel Lehan at 604 731 0599.

See attached leaflet for full statement by Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver with complete list of the 26 organizations that have endorsed it.