

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

April 22, 2010

Mayor Robertson and Councillors
City of Vancouver
453 West 12 Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

Re: Committee Meeting April 22, 2010 - Heritage Density Bank Update

Please accept this as our comments on the above information report from staff.

We remind Council members of **your pre-election commitment that you "oppose the transfer of density from the downtown Heritage Density Bank onto landing sites outside of the currently-approved areas, into communities across the City"**. We repeat our request that you honour your pre-election commitments.

However, we note that the report that was approved by Council on July 28, 2010 included Recommendation C:

*" THAT, the Director of Planning be instructed to report back by November 2009 on the following, in consultation with stakeholders:
i) establishing targets to land density outside of the Central Area; and
ii) investigate further ways to land density."*

We were very disappointed that Council approved this staff recommendation. We support an effective heritage program that includes some density transfers, but we share the general concerns that this tool be managed in such a way that it is sustainable.

We requested to be included as a stakeholder for any further consultations, however, we have not been included in any consultation process to date and neither has the public in general.

We note that the April 22, 2010 staff report states that:

"Density Bank – Creation of New "Landing" Capacity

During the past 12 months the City proceeded on a number of planning initiatives that have resulted or are expected to result in increases to the capacity to achieve public benefits including the landing of density from the density bank.

Examples include:

- *In April 2009, three million square feet of new development potential was achieved in the downtown core through the approval of the Downtown Capacity and Corridor Review;*
- *In November 2009, Council approved the Northeast False Creek Policy which includes a target of landing a minimum of 10% of residential floor space from the density bank (equivalent to 400,000 sq. ft.);*
- *In January 2010, additional capacity of approximately one million square feet was created through the Historic Area Height Review and the Downtown View Corridors study;*

• The Central Broadway Planning program has now commenced and it will be reviewing opportunities for increased density transfers in the Broadway C-3A area; and

• Scoping of a work program to establish targets for landing density outside of the Central Area has now been initiated."

We note that the Downtown Capacity Review has identified that there is enough capacity to absorb the excess density from the Heritage Density Bank in downtown and the currently approved areas for landing density. There does not appear to be any justification for expanding landing sites for Transfer of Density as proposed in the last two bullets as highlighted.

Much of the C-3A zone is outside of the Central Broadway area (Burrard St. to Main St.) which allows landing of density from the Heritage Density Bank. C-3A extends 2 block west of Arbutus St. and 2 blocks east of Main St. This is not justified nor supported.

The last bullet contemplates other areas to land from the Heritage Density bank to neighbourhoods across the City. Although heritage density transfers where the heritage asset and the landing site are within the same neighbourhood may be justified and supported, we oppose transfers from downtown to lower density neighbourhoods as this will encourage excessive heritage incentives at the expense of community amenities and affordability. Transfer of density is a complex city-wide issue that deserves public consultation and community oversight.

Again we request that the public be included as stakeholders in discussions and consultation on this important matter.

Regards,

Ned Jacobs
On behalf of the Steering Committee
Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

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