

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

July 25, 2009

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

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

Re: Committee Meeting July 28, 2009 - Transfer of Density (ToD) Program and Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program (HBRP) Review

The above item has been added to the agenda as a late report. We remind Council of our letter sent to you on June 10, 2009 (copy below) updating you on our concerns previously raised and emphasizing **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 and oppose this option. The issues we raised in our letter dated September 22, 2008 still apply (copy also below).

However, we note that the report coming to Council includes 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 strongly encourage you to NOT approve C (i). We request to be included as a stakeholder for any further consultations. We note that although we had sent you correspondence in June, we were not given a copy of this report in advance as a stakeholder and we hope this will be rectified. 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.

Of the three projects proposed to go forward in the report, we support the London Hotel 22,000 sq. ft., and Helmcken street houses 4,000 sq. ft., however **we have concerns about the York Theatre's 90,000 – 120,000 sq. ft. as proposed.** The York would generate over half of the new allowable annual density of 200,000 sq. ft. per year. Although we support restoring the York in principle, **the way this is being calculated (120,000 sq. ft. is about a 20 storey tower) is excessive for the value of the project, and is therefore neither reasonable nor sustainable.** We are also concerned about the precedent the York would set. This public amenity should be bought by the Property Endowment Fund and held until such time as adequate funding can be provided from senior governments.

We are concerned that this item is being rushed through in the middle of the summer holiday season and we would appreciate if in the future we would be notified ahead as a stakeholder on this issue.

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

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