

# Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

January 6, 2009

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

Dear Mayor and Councillors:

Re: A City of Neighbourhoods

Thank you for attending our Heritage Hall event on December 9, 2008. We were pleased and encouraged by the exchange that took place and the comments you addressed to our group – an auspicious start for a dialogue leading to a positive neighbourhood-based planning process.

We are also encouraged by the clear commitment to change that Vision and COPE have signaled through responses to the NSV candidates' questionnaire prior to the election. These include:

- Supporting neighbourhood based planning
- Improving the CityPlan Vision process
- Engaging in objective and meaningful public consultation processes
- Reconsidering the EcoDensity Charter and Initial Actions
- Recommending to the Provincial Government to reinstate third party appeals
- Implementing the Community Climate Change Action Plan including sustainable transportation and traffic solutions
- Protecting existing purpose-built rental buildings
- Providing incentives to retain existing buildings and protect their embodied energy, affordability, and character
- Opposing transfer of density from the downtown Heritage Density Bank onto landing sites outside currently-approved areas (which are the downtown area and Broadway Corridor) into communities across the City
- Opposing density bonusing within municipal jurisdictions to fund provincial responsibilities, including schools and transit
- Carrying out civic political party finance and disclosure reform

Beyond the above points arising from our questionnaire, we recognize and support the campaign commitments you made to end homelessness in all neighbourhoods.

We hope to meet with you soon to discuss how together we can best begin to address these matters, some of which we feel require prompt attention.

**A Need for New Direction** – Staff are presently moving forward based on directions from the previous Council and this continues to breed lack of confidence and trust in our relationship with the City. Therefore, please consider the following actions:

- 1.) **Withdraw the EcoDensity Charter and Initial Actions.** Staff have recently brought forward EcoDensity Initial Actions that were passed by the previous Council without due consideration of issues raised by the neighbourhoods. Not only is EcoDensity being used to affect existing policy, it is undermining public planning processes that were developed through CityPlan. Research conducted under the EcoDensity Initiative will of course remain a valuable resource for information, not policy.
- 2.) **Change the Implementation of Laneway Housing and Other Actions** - EcoDensity is not required for Laneway Housing, Green Building initiatives, or other proposed changes. Decisions relating to if, where and how new initiatives proceed should be considered on their own merits and implemented through local area planning and the CityPlan Community Vision process. Genuine individual neighbourhood involvement and support must be achieved before directions are given to staff to revise local zoning and development bylaws.
- 3.) **Suspend the existing Vision Implementation Review** as it is a poor use of time and resources, seems to be designed to justify the marginalization of Vision Implementation Committees and does not include the Neighbourhood Centres Program. Half of the six staff allocated to CityPlan Vision Implementation have been reallocated to a program review over the following year. This reduces the ability of implementation committees to function at a time when many planning initiatives will affect our neighbourhoods. A better use of staff resources would be to directly address the issues raised by our Discussion Paper of November 18, 2008 (copy attached),
- 4.) **Integrate the Neighbourhood Centres Program with the CityPlan Vision Implementation Process** - Engage the neighbourhoods to improve Vision Implementation by addressing our Discussion Paper. In particular, the emphasis should be on integrating the Neighbourhood Centres Program with CityPlan Vision Implementation processes. "Large sites" and "special sites" should be included in this process.
- 5.) **Discontinue the Norquay Neighbourhood Centre Plan and reengage the community in a new planning process.** The restarted neighbourhood centre planning initiative for Norquay appears to be taking an approach that is not substantially different from the one that was broadly rejected by the community last year. Indeed, the process is more severely flawed because it would discontinue resident surveys, impeding Council's ability to assess levels of support. With Main Street and East Hastings to follow, it is essential that public confidence be restored through a credible process that actually implements Community Vision Directions

Thank you for considering our concerns as set out above. We look forward to working with you on these matters and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you soon.

Regards,

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

Group contact email: [nsvancouver@hotmail.com](mailto:nsvancouver@hotmail.com)

Partial List of the NSV Network:

- Arbutus Ridge Concerned Citizens Association
- Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shaugnessy CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee
- Britannia Neighbours in Action
- Citywide Housing Coalition
- Douglas Park Residents Association
- Dunbar Residents' Association
- Friends of Southlands Society
- Grandview Woodland Area Council
- Hastings Park Conservancy Society
- Hastings Sunrise CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee – Eric Harms
- Kensington Cedar Cottage CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee – Peter Eller, Chair
- Kitsilano Arbutus Residents' Association
- Kitsilano Point Residents' Association
- Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society
- Norquay Neighbours – Joseph Jones
- North West Point Grey Home Owners' Association
- Reinstate Third Party Appeals
- Renfrew Collingwood CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee – Robert Allen, Chair
- Riley Park / South Cambie CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee
- Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association
- South Hill Initiative for Neighbourhood Engagement (SHINE)
- Southwest Marine Drive Ratepayers' Association
- Upper Kitsilano Residents Association
- Victoria Park Group – Gail Mountain
- West Kitsilano Residents Association
- West Point Grey CityPlan Vision Community Liaison Group

Note: The names above are of group Chairs or liaisons, as individuals only, that form part of the NSV Network.