

October 1, 2012

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

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

Re: Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability (MTF) - Final Report Oct. 2, 2012

We are requesting that the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability (MTF) - Final Report to Council Oct. 2, 2012 be accepted **for information only** and that **Council NOT approve any of the recommendations**. A more comprehensive and meaningful consultation process is required.

Supporting Groups or individuals:

Arbutus Ridge Community Association
Arbutus Ridge/Kerrisdale/Shahghnessy CityPlan Vision Impl. Committee (ARKS), Jim Hall, Chair **
ARKS Vision Housing Sub-Committee, Katherine Reichert, Chair **
Downtown Eastside - Carnegie Community Action Project
Dunbar, Linda MacAdam **
False Creek Residents Association
Grandview Process Advisory and Civic Engagement Group (PACE), Bruce McDonald **
Grandview Heritage Group, Jak King **
Grandview Woodlands, Tom Durrie **
Grandview Woodlands, Petronella Vander Valk **
Kitsilano Arbutus Residents. Association (KARA)
Kitsilano Point Residents. Association, Lynn Kent **
Marpole Oakridge Area Council Society, Gundrun Langolf **
Mount Pleasant Implementation Committee (MPIC), Grace Mackenzie **
Norquay, Joseph Jones **
North West Point Grey Home Owners. Association
Residents Association Mount Pleasant (RAMP)
Riley Park / South Cambie CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee (RPSC), Allan Buium, Chair **
Riley Park / South Cambie CityPlan Vision Implementation Committee (RPSC), Ned Jacobs **
Shaughnessy Heights Property Owners Association (SHPOA)
Shannon Mews Neighbours Association (SMNA), John Brimacombe **
Upper Kitsilano Residents Association
Victoria Park Group . Gail Mountain **
Victoria Fraserview Killarney CityPlan Committee (VFK), George Grant **
West End, Randy Helten**
West Kitsilano Residents Association
West Point Grey CityPlan Vision Community Liaison Group (WPG-CLG)

** Signed as an individual only (insufficient time to consult with full group)

cc - Summary attachment

Summary attachment:

Three working days since the report was made public is not enough time for the general public or Councillors to consider the sweeping recommendations in the staff report. The recommendations include broad policy changes for the City of Vancouver affecting land use, zoning, density, civic finances, and much more. The Task Force and mainstream media have so far completely failed to provide the public a satisfactory analysis of the recommendations and their implications. Please see the attached summary for details.

<http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20121002/documents/rr2.pdf>

We state at the outset that we support efforts to make Vancouver more affordable to live in, including affordable rentals. But it is not acceptable for Council to approve the MTF recommendations first, and then later go out to consult with the public after the policies are already adopted with directions to staff. Consultation should occur before, not after, adopting the recommendations.

We have many concerns about an unsatisfactory process the Task Force portrays as "consultation." The interim report released in June did not have much detail about what was proposed and cannot be a basis for consultation on the final report. As one example of poor consultation practice, the "SFU Carbon Talks" was in fact strongly biased and appears designed to manufacture the appearance of consent. The Task Force report refers to surveys by a firm named Place Speak as "consultation," but there are many privacy and security issues that make using a private company for the city's consultation process very problematic. Place Speak should not be relied upon as a representation of public opinion.

The MTF recommendations are mostly the implementation of Sam Sullivan's EcoDensity initiative, which Mayor Gregor Robertson and the Vision Council criticized and promised to address before and after their election win in 2008. EcoDensity was strongly opposed by the public. At the Heritage Hall neighbourhood event December 10, 2008 Mayor Robertson acknowledged that EcoDensity was not a good idea and praised the neighbourhoods for their effective opposition. But the Mayor's Task Force recommendations are in reality the implementation of EcoDensity. (See video of Mayor) <http://nsvancouver.ca/about-us/history/>



<http://youtu.be/VdpOAPgGHmQ>

Both the MTF Priority Actions for Immediate Implementation and the Additional Actions for Implementation will have broad impacts across the city. None of the Task Force recommendations should be approved because there has not been meaningful broad public discussion or demonstrated majority public support.

The MTF recommendations disregards CityPlan which was an award-winning process that invested millions of dollars of tax-payers' money and years of community volunteer involvement. To abandon CityPlan without meaningful public discussion or support would be a violation of the public trust. CityPlan Visions are no longer on the City's new website. The Community Visions and Local Area Plans should not be disregarded. Vancouver has been renowned for participatory planning, but the MTF shows how the city is replacing participatory planning with top-down development-oriented policies that override the community.

Some of the MTF recommendations and our concerns are as follows.

- **MTF overrides existing neighbourhood plans without any legitimate public process.**
- **MTF undermines the current Community Plan processes** in the West End, Grandview and Marpole by imposing MTF recommendations without a public process such as Action 1 and the "Thin Streets" concept.

Specific Example:

MTF Action 1: Implement an Interim Rezoning Policy that increases affordable housing choices across Vancouver's neighbourhoods

1.1 Affordability -

We question that the recommendations will provide affordability. There is no economic analysis provided to show how the proposals would be affordable.

1.2 Form of Development/Location

Subject to urban design performance (including consideration of shadow analysis, view impacts, frontage length, building massing, setbacks, etc.) and demonstration of a degree of community support, projects that would be considered are:

- Within approximately **100 metres of an arterial street (i.e. 1.5 blocks)**, ground-oriented forms up to a maximum of 3.5 storeys, which is generally sufficient height to include small house/duplexes, traditional row houses, stacked townhouses and courtyard row houses.
- **Fronting on arterials** that are well served by transit and within close proximity (i.e. a five minute walk or **500 metres**) of identified neighbourhood centres and local shopping areas, mid-rise forms up to a **maximum of 6 storeys**

We object most to this proposal. This action is effectively an upzoning without any public consultation or public hearing for this broad reaching policy that will transform Vancouver's neighbourhoods and override existing community plans and processes. This affects all arterials for 3.5 storeys back for 100 m each side and 6 storeys within 500 m of centres, not just in existing commercial zones. This affects most of the city. These kinds of decisions should be determined by the neighbourhoods if they support this form of development and if so where it should go. This should not be imposed.

General Concerns:

- These proposed actions have not been thought through to consider all the points of view and the many unintended consequences.
- There is a lack of due process, public consultation, transparency, accountability and financial analysis.
- The Mayor's Task force is mostly composed of appointed development industry-related individuals, some of whom may have a conflict of interest as they could benefit from the recommendations.
- The MTF recommendations override existing community plans and undermines the community plans currently in process.
- The "Thin Streets" proposal to build on city street and utility servicing right of ways is problematic.

We request that the Mayor's Task Force on Housing Affordability (MTF) - Final Report to Council Oct. 2, 2012 be accepted **for information only** and that **Council NOT approve any of the recommendations at this time. A more comprehensive and meaningful consultation process is required.**