

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver (NSV)

January 23, 2014

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

Dear Mayor Robertson and Councillors,

Re: West End Zoning Amendments Public Hearing January 23, 2014

Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver is opposed to approval of the currently proposed zoning amendments of the West End.

<http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20140123/phea20140123ag.htm>

The West End Neighbours (WEN) have listed many issues related to both process and product of this rezoning and clearly the community have not been given adequate information, analysis and opportunity for informed input for these zoning schedules to come forward at this time.

Some of the issues raised by WEN are listed in Appendix A attached.

These zoning schedules are complex legal documents. Each zone that is proposed for rezoning should have its own public hearing rather than trying to push them through together like this, which is taking a page out of the federal government's playbook by passing one 'omnibus' zoning all at once.

Further it is unreasonable to expect a neighbourhood that is already very dense to take on this much when it will negatively impact their livability and put further pressure on the more affordable older rental housing stock. The population of the West End is 80% renters and this rezoning puts them at risk. The West End has about 30% of the city's purpose-built rentals, the most of any neighbourhood.

Please refer this back for further work and meaningful involvement with the West End community.

Sincerely,

On behalf of the Steering Committee
Neighbourhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver

Website: nsvancouver.ca

Group contact email: info@nsvancouver.ca

APPENDIX A

Some examples of concerns raised by the West End Neighbours include the following.

Examples of a few of the items that are lined up for approval by Council through this Public Hearing:

- **Lower Davie Street** is proposed to have increases in permitted tower height **up to 20 storeys**, and an increase in floor space ratio from the current 2.5 up to 7.0 FSR.
- Along **Lower Robson**, increases are proposed to permit towers of **20 to 30 storeys** and density of 7.0 to 8.5 FSR.
- Along **Lower Davie and Lower Robson**, the City is proposing a **reduction in the minimum required distance between towers** (from the current 400 down to 79 feet), and residents could see up to three towers per block similar to the new buildings at Bidwell/Davie and Comox/Broughton.
- **Laneway buildings** will be permitted **up to six storeys** in height along certain lanes in the West End.
- New **residential uses will be prohibited in Davie Village and on Denman Street**, meaning mixed-use buildings will not be possible.
- If these zoning changes are approved, there will be **impacts on water/mountain/sky views, shadowing, and the character of the neighbourhood** for several blocks around. Major construction also involves considerable disruptions to the neighbourhood. WEN believes that affected neighbours have not been meaningfully consulted about these changes or directly notified about the Public Hearing.
- **Once these zoning changes are approved**, major projects in these zones will be able to go ahead **without another public hearing**. Development permits can be issued by internal procedure at the City, without any obligation to listen to the public.

West End Neighbours emphasizes their view that:

- The West End Community Plan **was not the product of a meaningful public engagement exercise**.
- Residents **have not had a fair chance** to digest the many and complex proposals - and the City has not done an adequate job of educating residents, or even of answering questions following the release of the Plan.
- **Insufficient rationale was provided** for the West End needing to absorb 10,000 more residents.
- The City **failed to adequately explore or evaluate** with our community the variety of options for housing these theoretical future residents.
- The **Plan is imposing what the vast majority of residents did NOT want**. Most residents surveyed by the City indicated they did not want new buildings exceeding 11 storeys in height. But the Plan, and the proposed zoning changes, propose that almost all new dwelling units be provided in buildings exceeding 11 storeys. (Refer to page 55 of [this consultation document](#) - page 56 of the pdf. See also responses to Question 3b in this [consultation summary](#) which indicates "Scale and Building Character" were a key concern for residents).

Map of Existing Rental Buildings in the City of Vancouver

