

August 21, 2014

2348 East 5th Avenue,
Vancouver, BC V5N 1N1

City of Vancouver
453 W 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Attention: Mr. Brian Jackson, Director of Planning

Re: Vancouver Sun, August 20, 2014 - Barbara Yaffe: Townhomes an affordable alternative in Vancouver

Dear Sir,

In relation to the above captioned article you are on record as implying that townhouse development is acceptable by the community of the Nanaimo Street Sub-area as defined by the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.

“Jackson, who calls townhouse development “gentle densification,” says the city experienced less pushback from two other neighbourhoods where townhouse development is planned — on Nanaimo Street and along Kingsway. Townhouses also are being earmarked for streets near the Cambie Corridor. Many will be priced at less than \$1 million, he says.”

I don't know how you are getting this impression. The folks in the Garden Park neighbourhood are deeply opposed to such development and do not view it as “gentle densification”. Last summer the community group, “Friends of Garden Park” presented to the City a petition with over 317 signatures plus an additional 129 online signatures through Change.org. Of the hundreds of people we spoke to in the neighbourhood, four supported the city's proposals for this neighbourhood (two of whom were Vancouver city planners) and a small handful of people were undecided. The petition stated:

“The Friends of Garden Park do not support:

- *6 storey mixed-use apartment zoning on East 2nd and Nanaimo Street*
- *4 storey apartment/stacked townhome zoning in the 2300 blocks of East 2nd and 3rd Avenues*
- *3 - 4 storey townhome development on the 2200 or 2300 blocks of Grandview*
- *4 storey stacked apartment or townhouse zoning along 1st Avenue”*

The Planning Department's report to Council on September 25, 2013, reflected our neighbourhood's concern. Therefore it is disturbing that you be referenced as inferring that townhouses are acceptable to our neighbourhood. An excerpt from the report reads:

“The impact of townhouse and stacked townhouse building forms in the currently single family Nanaimo street area (particularly around Garden Park and Nelson Elementary) was noted as the number 2 issue of community concern after the Broadway and Commercial Transit Oriented Community”

The existing area plan speaks specifically to the subject of townhouses. The suggested guideline is to limit townhouse development to areas zoned RT-2 and to prevent “clustering” by further limiting townhouse development to one per block face. Your predecessor stated then that he felt that the clustering guideline was not equitable. The record states his opinion supporting the existing townhouse

guideline, which limited townhouse developments to situations where renovation was not feasible, as being more suitable to achieving the objectives of the area plan [G-W 1979 – Council Report, May 31, 1979, Pg 3].

A range of Community Vision statements and Community Plans from across the city universally shows that single-family housing is preferred and widely sought after. Some of these community plans include:

- West Point Grey Community Vision (2010)
- Arbutus Ridge-Kerrisdale-Shaughnessy Community Vision (2005)
- Hastings-Sunrise Community Vision (2004)
- Kensington-Cedar Cottage Community Vision (1998)
- Renfrew-Collingwood Community Vision (1995)
- Victoria-Fraserview-Killarney Community Vision (1995)

In the preparation of these community plans the views of the community were solicited and respected by the City. I ask you why should our neighbourhood be treated with less respect?

The proposed zoning change is offensive to us as it seeks to convert zoning from single-family residential homes (RS) in favour of multi-family development (RM), completely skipping over the next logical increment of two-family zoning (RT).

The Friends of Garden Park is a group of concerned residents that cares about the character of the neighbourhood. We have expressed support for increased density in an organic manner:

- *We support the draft Community Plan's key land use to allow 'gentle' forms of densification via laneway houses, coach houses and secondary suites.*
- *We want to see this standard applied to the Garden Park area, including on 1st Avenue, Nanaimo Street, and the 2200 and 2300 blocks of Grandview.*
- *We believe new development should follow the existing design guidelines to retain the heritage character of the neighbourhood.*

The reason for our opposition is that most of us in the Garden Park neighbourhood live in and own the very homes that you are so keen on rezoning. We do not consider our homes to be investment properties nor do we view our neighbourhood as a commodity for speculative development. Many of us have young families, care for elders, and in some cases do both. Others have envisioned a future where they age in place in a neighbourhood that is their home.

What you and your staff are proposing affects our lives directly and very deeply. We are asking that you heed to our concerns and publicly state that the rezoning proposal that would bring townhouses and apartment buildings to the Garden Park Neighbourhood has been removed as a consideration from the Grandview-Woodland community planning process.

Yours truly,

Philip Hill