



February 20, 2019

Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
One Centennial Square
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

Re: Development Process Improvements – Facilitated Meeting

Dear Mayor and Council,

As a partner in community building, UDI Capital Region is highly aware of the importance of creating good relationships with neighbours when planning projects. Collaboration is key - it is imperative that voices are heard and concerns are addressed where possible.

On June 14, 2018 Council requested that *staff report back to Council with a proposed amendment to the CALUC process that requires an initial meeting between the developer, the community, and city staff. The meeting would be facilitated by a neutral, third party facilitator with experience in bringing together disparate and diverse points of view. As well, that staff report back to Council on the appropriate threshold for requiring such a meeting to ensure that this is not an added, unnecessary step for most developments. Criteria might include a rezoning that increases density a certain percentage over the existing zoning or changes to the OCP.*

The development industry acknowledges that communication and outreach to the community in the initial stages of a development are beneficial for all parties involved – however, we do not support an added facilitated meeting. Informal meetings are already often held by developers with the neighbours surrounding their projects, prior to the initial CALUC meetings.

UDI has some concerns around the request to this facilitated meeting.

- 1) *Who are the facilitators – what qualifications would they need to have – who would select the facilitators?* It would be important that the facilitator not only be skilled at moderating dialogue and bringing diverse points of view together, but also to understand real estate economics and city planning principles. As well, it would be essential that the moderator have detailed knowledge of the City's Official Community Plan and Neighbourhood Plans to educate those who deviate from these policies. The person hiring the consultants should have the qualifications to do so, by also being knowledgeable of the development process and city policies and bylaws.

- 2) *What would the threshold be and who would set it?* Setting thresholds for these meetings to be deemed necessary would be a difficult task as no two projects are the same. Their complexities and nuances all vary depending on the scope of the development. How would those thresholds be determined? Determining the threshold for staff or council would in both instances add more time to municipal process causing applications to be delayed further.

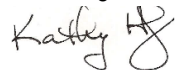
- 3) *Adding yet another layer of procedure to an already lengthy process.* Adding a facilitated meeting to some developments simply adds another cumbersome layer to an already lengthy process. You will find that some of the bigger developers already consult with neighbourhood groups prior to the official process starting, by holding informal open houses.

While this facilitated meeting is not meant to add burdensome steps to the development process it inadvertently will increase processing time of applications. To avoid another step, perhaps staff could simply attend the initial CALUC meeting and provide fact-based information related to policies, regulations and technical requirements for complex applications and/or OCP Amendments. Adding time to the process adds money to the cost of a project which in turn adds increased costs to the end user. In a time when affordability is top of mind, finding ways to lessen the processing time of application would help bring down costs which would result in lowering the cost of units/homes.

We ask that Council not move forward with the addition of a facilitated meeting. UDI does not believe that adding a facilitated meeting would help the development process, as it would just add to an already lengthy process. We suggest having staff attend the initial CALUC meeting to answer questions and provide guidance on policy.

UDI welcomes the opportunity of further collaboration and future engagement with staff, Mayor and Council members.

Kind Regards,



Kathy Hogan – Executive Director
(on behalf of the UDI Capital Region Board of Directors)