

Monica Dhawan

From: Skye Gypsy Stegenga [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, May 24, 2019 3:36 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council; fernwoodlanduse@gmail.com
Subject: Proposed development

Hi there

I'm sorry to say that the 155 units being proposed for Fernwood will be a disaster for George Jay elementary. This school has already doubled its population in only 5 years . We went from 250 kids 5 years ago to 500 currently and 600 in September 2019.

Even with the recent boundary review, there is no way that this proposed development will be sustainable for George Jay elementary school, which is in absolute crisis from the complications of overcrowding. Please rethink this.

The school board really needs to buy back Blanshard Elementary, which was sold only a few years ago. We dont have enough space or the support for the 500 kids we have now, let alone the 600 in September. The new development would create a huge burden on a school that already has twice the victoria average for students living in poverty and children and families who face multiple barriers. We are in crisis with the complications of overcrowding.

Another option would be to put Victor School back into the proposed catchment changes. This means that the new development might be possible in terms of having enough classroom space for the children who will live there. Victor was taken out of the boundary review prematurely.

The only way this development will not put a cataclysmic burden on George Jay is if Blanshard school is purchased by the school board and if Victor school has its own catchment.

As a George Jay parent and advocate i hope you will seriously consider this issue.

Thanks
Skye

From: Christine Condon [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, May 27, 2019 1:14 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Cc: Christine Culham [REDACTED]; Paul Kitson [REDACTED]; John Reilly [REDACTED]; Stephen Henderson [REDACTED]
Subject: Community Meeting June 6, 2019 - Development for property 1211 Gladstone Avenue

Please find our Referral Response relating to the above mentioned community Meeting to be held on June 5, 2019.

Trusting all is in order.

Regards,

Christine Condon

Snr. Admin Secretary
Capital Regional District
Real Estate Services,
250 360 3176
[REDACTED]



CRD Staff Referral Response Form

Referral No.: 1211 Gladstone Ave Meeting June 5 2019 DevelopmentPermitApplication

	Interests Unaffected	Approval recommended for reasons outlined	Approval recommended subject to conditions	Approval <i>not</i> recommended due to reasons outlined	Comments
Executive Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Finance & Technology	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Integrated Water Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Legislative Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Parks & Environmental Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Planning & Protective Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>The CRHC has partnered with the City of Victoria, School District, and BC Housing to support the redevelopment of the existing Caledonia property by committing to land swaps to facilitate this development. BC Housing has also committed \$100,000 per unit through the Building BC Community Housing Fund to support this redevelopment project.</p> <p>Housing affordability is at near crisis level in the capital region and lack of access to substantially affordable housing contributes to hardship for both low and moderate income households and threatens the ongoing economic viability of the region as workers are unable find housing affordable to their commensurate salaries. Over the next 20 years, the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy outlines the need for the development of nearly 10,000 housing units affordable to very low and low income households. The CRHC is the largest provider of housing affordable to this income demographic. Land is very difficult to secure</p>

CRD Staff Referral Response Form

					<p>for these purposes, and this opportunity to create a substantial affordable development will not only help move the region closer to achieving its affordable housing targets, it will also help contribute to the economic and social well-being of individuals and households with children.</p>
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Monica Dhawan

From: Catherine Minvielle <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Monday, June 03, 2019 6:12 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: 1211 Gladstone Ave Proposal

Hi

I am sorry I am unable to attend the meeting on June 5. I am writing to confirm my approval of the proposed development as outlined in the meeting notice.

Best Regards
Catherine Minvielle
102-1252 Pandora Avenue

June 3, 2019

To: the Mayor and City Council of Victoria, BC
Re: the Proposed Development at 1211 Gladstone Ave.

Dear Madams and Sirs,

As an affected property owner, I have received an invitation to a community meeting regarding the subject development. Since I will be unable to attend, I thought I should register my concerns about this development to you directly. They are, specifically as below:

1. Project efficacy – For a very long time now, situating large numbers of low income people into large housing projects has proven to be a social failure. The evidence seems to confirm that those residents integrate less successfully into the surrounding community. Large low cost housing projects tend to emphasize social segregation and enforce a quasi-institutional stigma that creates impediments to community cohesion. As a consequence no one is happy and neighbourhood disruptions are not uncommon. I would think very carefully before I put my name to a document enabling a rezoning of this size and scale.
2. Project impact – The developer proposes to shoehorn a significantly greater number of people into an already congested, small scale heritage neighbourhood. This development proposal effectively doubles the density currently available to them. I don't know what the projections are per unit, but my guess would be ~4/unit, for a total population of well over 600 people. This is going to increase substantially the load on all the resources and infrastructure in a crowded and congested area and growing tourist destination.

If I read the document correctly, the developer currently has access to the creation of 78 residential units, for a local population increase of ~312. Surely this is sufficient to provide for a profitable development and a successful low-cost housing initiative for Victoria while posing rather less of a threat to the well-being and livability of the rest of the neighbourhood. Please do not approve this rezoning application in its current form.

Thank you for your kind attention to this letter.

Yours sincerely

Maureen Milburn
Property owner: 2117 Sayward Street

140 Andrew Place, Salt Spring Island, V81X3

Monica Dhawan

From: Scott [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 04, 2019 10:26 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council; fernwoodlanduse@gmail.com
Subject: Proposed Development 1211 Gladstone Ave

I am writing in response to the proposed CRD Housing development adjacent to Victoria High School at 1211 Gladstone Avenue.

I have many concerns with the proposal, including the following:

Development Size

The proposal is speaking of a development up to five stories in height with housing for 155 units. A quick lookup of social housing in Victoria seems to yield nothing of this sort of size (total units) in the capital region currently.

A five-story building in the proposed location will significantly take away from the current residential appearance of the area - and be bringing the sprawl of downtown firmly into Fernwood – an area dominated by 2-story older homes.

The physical size of the proposed development is not in keeping with the look of the many two-story homes in the immediate area.

Traffic

The proposed location has narrow residential streets all around it. Current residential parking available on these streets is very limited (but necessary) for the current residents. Adding higher density housing will bring additional traffic strain to an area that does not need additional vehicle traffic.

We want our children to be safe riding a bike to school. We want the residential parking to remain as it is. The additional traffic created by these housing will not improve the current situation – it will make it worse.

Economic Diversity

Within 2km of the proposed site are many housing facilities providing short and long-term housing for low income people through organizations such as BC Housing, CRD, Pacifica, Kiwanis, Cool Aid Society and Our Place. Some of the housing locations cater to the lowest income people in the entire capital region.

Adding more low-income housing to this geographic location is only centralizing and consolidating people of low incomes to a specific location in the Greater Victoria area.

I recognize a need for affordable housing in the region. However, I oppose consolidating low income housing into such a geographically close area.

Impact on George Jay Elementary

My wife Skye Stegenga has cited concerns regarding the impact of such a development on George Jay Elementary in an email sent last week.

She has primarily cited concerns related to enrollment numbers already being greater than what the school can support. I too share her concerns in this regard. Adding higher density housing on top of this current situation will only make things worse for an already challenged school.

In addition to the concerns of school population, the socioeconomic mix of George Jay currently includes a high ratio of children who come from low income homes.

Adding 80 additional units of social housing for low income people will likely result in a greater number of students at the school coming from homes with low incomes.

The school has enough challenges already. It is reckless to add more challenges for the administration and faculty.

Closing

I recognize a need for affordable housing in the capital region.

There are many high-level problems associated with the proposed location and development.

I am opposed to the proposed development.

Thank you,

Scott Fox

1617 Camosun Street

Monica Dhawan

From: Alice Whitehead <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, June 07, 2019 7:30 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council; fernwoodlanduse@gmail.com
Subject: proposed development for 1211 Gladstone Ave.

Hello,

I was not able to attend the community meeting on June 5. I hope it is not too late for questions and input.

In a Village Vibe article about the proposed development, it says that it will be built under the new BC Building Energy Step Code and will be designed to achieve Step 3, which is not described as ambitious on the Energy Step Code website. Is that "not" a typo? If not, I am surprised that this council would not be ambitious in this matter. Can you clarify for me?

I think it is important for the stability and continuity of our neighbourhood that there be some proportion of one-bedroom and/or studio units so that all ages can live there and so that parents can stay in the community after their children move out. Is this currently in the plan?

Thank you,
Alice Whitehead
13-1241 Balmoral Rd.

Lucas De Amaral

From: Ann Jacob [REDACTED]
Sent: June 8, 2019 3:21 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: Fernwood project

Hi - I love affordable housing and low income housing options to be developed in Victoria but putting in 150 units next to the highschool in Fernwood creates significant issues in our neighborhood.. I was not able to attend the meeting that you offered and am sorry about that.

There is no way that Chambers St can take the traffic that this 150 unit will bring. Chambers is already a maze of cars and bikes and walkers that is often very complicated to navigate and with traffic jamming many times during the day already - it would be a nightmare without serious planning that includes the neighboring roads and situations.

We live on Denman St. - which is already a major over busy detour route through Fernwood because of the many road stoppages in place already. People speed on Denman, roaring through including trucks/ taxis / school buses/ cars - and they aren't local traffic - they are weaving to get through the Fernwood maze over here. -- Yes the department in charge of Denman St Planning to slow traffic is thinking of how to improve our block but truly this new Project Development will require that the various departments work together. We were told they had no ability to discuss anything other than our one Block on Denman - meaning we were being asked to discuss the effects of one block without taking into account the larger neighborhood effects including no mention of the Development Project scheduled to be built next to the highschool nor other plans in this area of Fernwood. One of the biggest problems of our times is individual project planning without taking in the whole and the long term effects. We have to include the impacts on the whole neighborhood. If the department working of reshaping Denman St. tell us they aren't qualified or responsible for the block next to us then really there is no honest discussion happening. Please work together as a city with your planning departments and let neighborhoods take into account the larger area. Personally there is no need to pave Denman for example - that money could be better spent on low income housing or opening up the roads in the neighborhood not only so Denman gets less traffic (we are already a speeding traffic zone) but so the neighboring streets take up some of the extra traffic and we can all get out without hitting each other or feeling like we live in the middle of a huge city. There are often no parking spots available by the Fernwood community Centre park (already over parked) - so where does a mother with three little kids park when she wants to get her kids into nature already?

We need to make plans that are more global - or at least including more of neighborhoods. To accommodate the extra traffic and to quiet Denman you need to look at how cars will exit and enter the proposed Development also, etc.

Chambers to Bay St. opened up would be one partial possibility. Opening Pembroke to Fernwood has been suggested (possibly only one way traffic)- and obviously the kids around the highschool will be dodging more cars which is important to recognize and protect and consider in the routing, - - etc.

Please Shut down the plans for Denman St. repaving and slowing down until you have a plan for the neighborhood that takes the whole of the area into considerations -

I don't know who to send this too besides you folks - I don't know how to reach the Denman St. Planners or the Development Project folks or who to talk to . . thanks for sharing or letting me know where I could go to share this - - or at least adding this to the topics next meeting with the public - I apologize that again I will be unable to attend as I will be out of town.

Thanks for all you do - including listening to the neighborhood.
Ann Jacob
1281 Denman St.

Lucas De Amaral

From: Dorothy Field [REDACTED]
Sent: June 21, 2019 11:31 AM
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: [REDACTED] Victoria Mayor and Council
proposing a joint meeting of School District 61, City of Victoria and CRHC
Categories: Planning, Awaiting Staff Response

To the City of Victoria Mayor and Council, and School District 61:

Last night I attended the meeting at Vic High regarding Vic High's seismic Upgrade. On June 5, I attended the meeting at the Fernwood CC gym regarding the affordable housing development in the lands west of Vic High. Having been at both, I've experienced two silos, the School District unable to speak about the development and the CRHC unable to speak about the seismic upgrade. I along with many at both meetings, am fairly frustrated. What is clear is that the two are so intertwined that they can't be looked at separately and yet, to date we have not been able to talk with any depth about their impacts.

Last night the suggestion was made that the city, the school district, and the CRHC hold a joint meeting so that we as a community can try to understand whether this is a fait accompli and if not, where there is room for adjustment.

At the June 5th meeting, we were told that the 155 units is not negotiable. Last night, it seems there are now to be 156 units. Even within the city, there seem to be several silos, this new development, the Wellburn's development, and the St. Andrew's development, and little acknowledgment of the cumulative effects for Fernwood and North Park.

In the fact sheet "Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the Future Use of the Land at Victoria High", it states that the process cannot be delayed.

As I have already written, neither audience spoke against affordable housing nor against the seismic upgrade. At both meetings, it became clear that our objections are to the scale -- five stories! and the impacts on traffic as well as the impacts on already at-capacity schools.

At both meetings, the issue of such a large number of marginalized families plunked together not far from Victoria's inner city was raised.

This model has not been entirely successful in other cities in the past.
What makes this proposal any different?

I fear that this "consultation" is only for show given the apparently non-negotiables already established and the very tight time line.

All of us at both meetings spoke out of our love for our neighbourhoods and our city. Times change and we all need to adapt, but imposing such a large development against the wishes of communities and with little opportunity for real input leads to cynicism and lack of trust.

I hope you prove me wrong.

Yours sincerely,

Dorothy Field
1560 Gladstone Avenue
Victoria

Lucas De Amaral

From: Skye Gypsy Stegenga [REDACTED]
Sent: July 5, 2019 10:16 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: Caledonia Project

I am writing again to let you know about the community opposition to the Caledonia Project. Although I realize that affordable housing was on the platform for the mayor and council I have to trust that you will be responsive to the community's voice.

At the land use meeting in early June it was obvious that Fernwood does not want the Caledonia Project.

The scale of the project is undesirable. This is a residential neighbourhood. Nearby there are apartment buildings that are three stories tall. This fits into the neighbourhood and is as tall as the new buildings should be. The 154 units must not be passed during the rezoning application.

The local school is in crisis from overcrowding. This year we lost our music room, our Parent Resource Room and our Strong Start room. Although the catchment review has been passed, the results will be negligible as the development in our neighbourhood is already booming. Any successes in redistribution of children to other elementary schools will be shortlived as development continues. The school agrees a new elementary school is necessary but does not think it will be possible for at least 5 years. We were not even given a portable as our school expanded. 154 units of affordable housing will likely bring 60 to 100 new kids to George Jay. This is totally irresponsible planning and unfair to all the children who are already suffering from the complications of overcrowding.

Although affordable housing has the benefit of raising families out of poverty, it still is a way of housing the poorest of our population. George Jay already has double the Victoria average of children living in poverty. Adding another hundred low income children is a burden on what is already becoming an inner city school.

A high density building like the Caledonia Project is an unnecessary and unwanted development. Why build something that is likely to become "the projects"? It is far preferable to build co-op types townhouses throughout the CRD. Spreading low income families throughout the CRD is better for the families, the schools and the neighbourhood.

The traffic report presented by the CRD did not demonstrate the effect of exiting vehicles on Grant Street. This street is already narrow and difficult to navigate during Vic High drop offs and pick ups. The increased traffic on Grant, Camosun and Fernwood is another reason that high density development is unwanted in our neighbourhood.

I think it was clear that Fernwood residents support low income housing but not at the density proposed. We are hoping that mayor and council will be responsive to the progressive constituency who are pleased to welcome affordable housing to the neighbourhood at a lower density. Three stories in enough.

Sincerely

Skye Stegenga

Heather McIntyre

From: Joanne Murray [REDACTED]
Sent: August 13, 2019 11:05 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Cc: Leanne Taylor; Michael Hill
Subject: Demoviction in Fernwood

Dear Mayor and Council

Re: the proposal by the CRHC to build a 155-unit public housing complex on the grounds of Vic High.

There is a human - and environmental - cost to demoviction.

The 18 townhouse units to be torn down at the present Caledonia complex include 3 bedroom and 4 bedroom units affordable for low income families. All units have well-loved patios which help to create and maintain community.

Being told by your landlord that you must move, that your home will be destroyed and landfilled, that you will be directed to alternative housing outside your community and neighbourhood has real emotional cost. Our neighbours' distress is our distress.

In 2012 there was an estimated cost to repair all units at \$120,000 a unit. These are basically 'leaky condos' and the units have extensive black mould. For the last 10 years CRHC has been aware of this problem and it has not been dealt with. CRHC has described this situation as "deferred maintenance".

I would say that a complex that had to be extensively rebuilt after 10 years (and wasn't) and needs to be demolished after a 26 year life span, is poorly designed, poorly built, and badly maintained.

Continuing to rent to tenants - some with compromised immune systems and health concerns - after discovering black mould is very disturbing.

Fernwood residents are rightly concerned about the proposed project of 155 units - given the track record for 18 units. This may be unfair but it is certainly understandable.

The CRHC Tenant Relocation Plan includes assistance in moving costs, assistance in finding alternative accommodations and first right of refusal. Things are not going well. Tenants have retained 2 lawyers from TAPS to encourage CRHC to live up to their stated commitments.

In group meetings with tenants CRHC has told them they must not talk to anyone about current or previous problems with their tenancy - especially media. They have also been advised to not attend Neighbourhood Landuse meetings dealing with the project. I hope you find this as offensive as I do.

There is also no appetite by these tenants to relocate to the proposed new Caledonia units - what is being offered having greatly reduced square footage and lacking amenities like private patios and other casual interactive spaces.

This proposal would be the largest built in Fernwood since the iconic Victoria High School was built in 1912. In 60 years Vic High will still be beautiful - and more useful and graceful - seismically sound, and even more engaged with the surrounding community.

And this proposed development?

155 units, built using the least expensive materials possible, operated by a perennially cash-strapped entity, and subject to day-and-night wear-and-tear? Still standing? Or demolished decades before?

Sincerely,

Lucas De Amaral

From: Kate Berniaz [REDACTED]
Sent: November 19, 2019 4:39 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council; [REDACTED]
Subject: Support for Vic High land swap

Categories: Awaiting Staff Response

Hello,

I am writing to support the Vic High land swap and the development of new affordable housing in Fernwood. Building more family housing is absolutely necessary and this land swap facilitates it.

Still, we have two concerns: school overcrowding and traffic/parking.

Our children attend George Jay. Already the school is under stress with overcrowding. Though the new catchment boundaries are supposed to relieve this, the school growth projections do not include all the development growth that is coming to downtown Victoria. This growth will also impact Central and Vic High. I don't think we should restrict housing development but the school district should plan for these new residents.

With this development, concerns have been raised about increased vehicle traffic in the neighbourhood. I see two simple solutions to this: add traffic calming and diversions to Chambers (prioritize this street because of the high foot and cycle traffic from the 3 schools) and only provide minimal vehicle parking. Fernwood is a very walkable and bikeable neighbourhood and has access to transit. The number of alternatives to vehicles makes it easier to live without a car. As well, reducing the vehicle parking as part of the development will be cheaper to build, which is a benefit when building affordable housing.

Again, we support the development. With it we would like to see improvements to school capacity in the surrounding schools, reduced vehicle parking on site and aggressive traffic calming in Chambers and through the neighbourhood.

Thank you,
Kate Berniaz

Lucas De Amaral

From: Development Services email inquiries
Sent: November 19, 2019 8:22 AM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: FW: Property Vic High and Chambers

Categories: Awaiting Staff Response

Dear Mayor, Council and the City of Victoria.

I live in Springridge Housing Co-op at 1275 Pembroke Street and have many concerns about the development in our neighbourhood directly behind us. Members here are attending to the consultation process but there has not been an opening to discussing a development scenario which is reduced in scale which could address many of the issues of the neighbourhood and balance the many needs involved and be of benefit to the whole.

Could we please open up that possibility and have our concerns recognized?

I appreciate your tending to this and many of the development issues.

Thank you
Sincerely,
Leia Mango

Lucas De Amaral

From: Brianna Day [REDACTED]
Sent: November 27, 2019 1:16 PM
To: Lisa Helps (Mayor); Marianne Alto (Councillor); Sharmarke Dubow (Councillor); Ben Isitt (Councillor); Jeremy Loveday (Councillor); Sarah Potts (Councillor); Charlayne Thornton-Joe (Councillor); Geoff Young (Councillor)
Cc: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Subject: Your role in fernwood/caledonia
Categories: Awaiting Staff Response

Dear mayor and councilors,

You may, by now, be familiar with my name as I have been in touch on and off for a while now. You will also be receiving some cc e-mails that partner with this one, but are directed to other groups involved.

From my limited interaction with a few of you, you seem to feel like city council has little to do with crowding at our inner city schools which is resulting in the loss of many programs, resources and amenities that are vital to our population.

I want to challenge that, and request some follow up information and commitments from you. You as a council continue to push through large developments, all focused on our city centre. I am all for affordable housing, but it should not all be shouldered by one or two neighbourhoods (or by one school catchment). The transit system, crowded roads, bike lane instalment and the following confusion, are all evidence of infrastructure not keeping pace with population growth due to increased living spaces.

In light of the land swap being voted for, I request:

- a community investment plan from you. What will the city do to keep fernwood safe, welcoming, and well resourced? If you insist on building more density here, where does childcare come from? Social programs? Catchment school space? George Jay is still "making do" instead of thriving. It is amazing what staff and admin have accomplished, but they are still far from equipped to provide all students with the care they need to get quality education.
- plans for traffic, bike and pedestrian safety especially down a single lane road that leads to an elementary school (I am aware some of this is in the works as we speak)
- a commitment to the new tax revenue staying in the neighbourhood. Invest it in the students who have lost land that was left vacant (new track and field? Parking lots/sidewalks?). Invest it in the new families moving in who are low income and need assistance to live and work in this market.
- an agreement in writing to keep the 3 green spaces that the city is getting out of the land swap

Finally, I request that the city of Victoria find ways to get hard on surrounding municipalities when it comes to densification. Our tax dollars can't sustain the city centre for everyone around us when they don't want to pull their weight. Our schools can't sustain the population growth that is paired with densification in our catchment. I believe, at its heart, this issue extends to amalgamation. What are the next steps with that after the previous vote?

Thanks for your attention in this matter. I look forward to hearing from you in regards to these concerns. If at all possible, I would love to be in contact with someone before December 20th. I can be reached at this e-mail, or by phone at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,
Brianna Day

To: the Victoria Council

I am writing in support of the Caledonia subsidized housing project.

I moved to Victoria as a single mother 2 years ago after living in Halifax for close to 20 years. Before i moved, having done my homework, I was well aware that housing would be the biggest obstacle to my being able to stay in Victoria. As both my mother and sister live here, it nonetheless seemed like a good idea for both myself and my daughter to give Victoria a go.

I managed to find an apartment in Fernwood shortly before I arrived. It was a little expensive for me, using up easily 50% of my income but it was worth it to be able to start a nice home for my family. After one year, I was informed that the owner's son was moving in and that I had to look for other housing. That began a very stressful 3 months. Luckily, I found another apartment, again in Fernwood. That second home is even more expensive than the 1st one. I am very fortunate in that I can afford a high rent (\$2000/month) if I am very careful with my budget and make smart decisions like not owning a car. Still, living in a city with such a low vacancy rate makes me feel as though I can never truly know how long I will be able to stay in a house and truly make it a home for my daughter. Whereas in Halifax I felt that landlords and tenants were mostly on equal footing, here the lack of housing clearly skews the power dynamic to favour the landlord population.

However, as I walk around Victoria and see the shocking level of homelessness and under-housed families, I know that I am fortunate and will always find a way to provide decent housing for my daughter. So this letter is not really about me.

Perhaps it is because I am a relative newcomer to this city that people still ask me what I think of Victoria. I have come to dread that question. Of course, Victoria has a lot to offer: abundant green spaces, walkable communities, temperate climate. However, compared to Halifax a city with far less money, Victoria sometimes seems cruel in its disregard for the poor and struggling, and far more comfortable than it should be with its alarming level of inequality.

I am well aware that many of my neighbours in Fernwood have been pushing to stop or at least diminish the scope of the projected Caledonia affordable housing plan. Some of these neighbours are my friends. I know these are good people. Still, I am saddened by a perspective that seems to prioritize the desires of those who already have decent housing over the needs of those who are in dire need of any kind of safe and health promoting shelter; something that I consider to be a basic human right.

I hope one day to become a homeowner in Fernwood. Were that to happen, I am confident that I would be supportive of any project that provides greater and especially more affordable housing opportunities in my neighbourhood to those woefully underserved. If that means slightly higher traffic on Chambers street or less green space per student at Vic high so be it. For me to take another stance on this issue could only mean that my moral compass has been distorted. It would also mean that my understanding of self interest has been ridiculously narrowed to an extremely small time frame. A community is a complex and symbiotic ecosystem. If some members are deprived of basic needs, we all suffer. At first morally. Eventually materially as well. Like a chain, a community is only as strong as its weakest member.

I take heart when I see the city councillors working and fighting hard to redress the blatant inequalities in Victoria. I can see that it must be hard to balance the interests of the few who speak loudly with the many who are largely voiceless. I am hopeful you will take in account those who are silent when deciding whether the disenfranchised should also have a shot at a meaningful life.

I leave you with a quote of someone far more eloquent than I:

“The ache for home lives in all of us. The safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned.” - Maya Angelou

Wishing you the very best,

Claire Hodge

Heather McIntyre

From: Todd Litman [REDACTED]
Sent: October 21, 2019 9:28 PM
To: 'District 61 School Board'; Victoria Mayor and Council
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Caledonia Project

Dear District 61 School Board and Victoria City Council,

I am writing to support the proposed [Caledonia Project](#).

Victoria has a severe shortage of moderate-priced housing. The Caledonia Project will provide 155 badly needed affordable homes in an excellent location. This type of development provides significant benefits to residents and communities. Compared with living in suburban areas, residents of compact, walkable urban neighborhoods:

- Spend 10-30% [less money on transportation](#).
- Spend less time [driving and delayed by congestion](#).
- Consume less energy and produce [20-50% lower pollution emissions](#).
- Have substantially lower [traffic casualty rates](#).
- Are [healthier](#) and [live longer](#).
- Have greater [economic mobility](#) (chance that children born in lower-income households become economically successful as adults).
- Require [less land](#) for roads and parking, which reduces stormwater management costs and heat island effects, and preserves open space (farmland and habitat).
- Reduce costs of providing roads, parking facilities and [public services](#).

Some [critics](#) argue that the Caledonia Project will reduce greenspace, harm the community, and be unfair to Victoria High students. These arguments are incomplete.

Compact developments, such as the Caledonia project, minimize per capita land consumption, both directly, because townhouses and apartments use little land per household, and indirectly by reducing automobile ownership and travel, which reduces the amount of land that must be paved for roads and parking facilities. The figure below illustrates this effect: a typical household living car-free in a townhouse or apartment only uses about 680 square feet (sf) of land, compared with an estimated 6,200 sf if they occupy a suburban house and owns two cars, including land used for housing, roads and parking facilities. As a result, the Caledonia project displaces far less greenspace than if those households living in suburban, automobile-dependent areas.

[Impervious Surface Area Per Household](#)



It is also incomplete to argue that this project is unfair to students. Although, Victoria High has less greenspace per student than most other schools, it does have two major sports fields, plus gardens and lawns, and additional parks nearby. There is no evidence that students there are disadvantaged by inadequate greenspace. On the other hand, students, particularly those from lower-income households, are much better off if they can live in walkable urban neighborhoods within convenient walking distance of their schools. This increases their [physical activity and fitness](#), their ability to participate in school activities, and their [economic mobility](#) (chance that a child born in a lower-income will become more economically successful as an adult).

During the last century, school site size requirements have increased, resulting in [school sprawl](#), since only urban-fringe locations have sufficient land. Although students at urban-fringe schools may have larger sports facilities they are less likely to walk and bicycle to school. In recent years, transportation engineers and school planners have started to advocate for [more flexible requirements](#) and creative designs that result in smaller, more centrally-located schools within walking distances of students' homes.

The Caledonia Project is a win-win opportunity. The School District will benefit from additional revenue, future residents will benefit from affordable housing in a walkable urban neighborhood, and students who live there will particularly benefit from their proximity to our excellent local schools.

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Cities for Everyone is an independent community organization that supports more affordable housing and transportation in order to provide security, mobility and opportunity for people with all incomes and abilities.

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Todd Litman [REDACTED]

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