



Community Builders...

Building Communities

July 20, 2021

Mayor Lisa Helps and Council
1 Centennial Square
City of Victoria
Victoria, BC V8X 2W7

Dear Mayor and Council,

Re: E.1 Village and Corridor Planning Phase 1 Summary, Draft Directions and Next Steps

The Victoria Residential Builders Association supports increasing housing density to promote missing middle housing supply and more affordability. However, VRBA does not support charging Community Amenities and other costly “objectives” in exchange for “bonus density.”

The City of Victoria’s review document says: “Bonus density is intended to support the advancement of plan objectives, including in the Official Community Plan and local area plans and as guided by the City’s Inclusionary Housing and Community Amenity Policy.”

This bonus density policy undermines housing affordability and is contrary to the recommendations of the new provincial report on housing called “Opening Doors.”

https://engage.gov.bc.ca/app/uploads/sites/588/2021/06/Opening-Doors_BC-Expert-Panel_Final-Report_Jun16.pdf The report says on page 39:

“Zoning-based charges (CACs) discourage proactive zoning for more homes

CACs are negotiated in exchange for rezoning property to accommodate more homes. As a result, local governments that proactively increase zoned capacity or update zoning codes to better reflect anticipated growth and community priorities (as outlined in regional growth strategies and official community plans) lose that revenue opportunity. Indeed, local governments can generate CAC revenue by keeping zoning below levels that make redevelopment possible and selling additional ‘air rights’ through the zoning powers they have been delegated. Consequently, the additional costs, time, and uncertainty associated with the rezoning process—including their negative impacts on housing supply—persist.”

The report recommends phasing out CAC’s. If good planning dictates communities can accommodate higher density, that density should be established without CAC’s adding to the cost of housing. Removing CAC’s and other costly obstructions will also create more transparency and clarity for builders in terms of establishing land value and permit efficiency.

With respect to transparency, our last letter to council on deconstructing homes was not posted on the agenda. Please post this letter as correspondence to enable the public to review all of the input.

Thank you for considering our concerns and feel free to contact me for more information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Casey Edge".

Casey Edge
Executive Director