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Mayor and Council
City of Victoria
1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC

August 3, 2021

Dear Mayor and Council,

This letter is to provide feedback on the proposed neighbourhood boundary changes that Council has requested that staff explore. The proposed boundary change that would impact North Park is to move the current boundary with Fernwood from Cook Street to the east by one block, with Chambers Street forming the new boundary. The NPNA is neither opposed nor supportive of this boundary change.

The City, as well as both NPNA and Fernwood Community Association (FCA), have completed a limited amount of public engagement on this topic. When the boundary change was first proposed, the immediate feedback from many Fernwood residents who live in the impacted block between Cook St and Chambers St was strong opposition. Through several community meetings, the City's short survey/engagement, and emails that we have received, the majority of the feedback has been in opposition to the move. However, it is important to note that many North Park residents strongly support the move, primarily due to the desire for North Park Village to "officially" be entirely within North Park, rather than split between two neighbourhoods.

Based on this feedback, the NPNA does not wish to pursue a boundary change if it is opposed by our closest neighbours in Fernwood. However, we would like to take this opportunity to emphasize our desire to be involved and consulted in developments and planning activities that impact North Park Village, regardless of which side of Cook St it occurs on. We would also like to note that the implications of the strong negative reaction from Fernwood residents indicates a clear disparity between the perception of Fernwood and North Park. Despite their geographic closeness, Fernwood is considered a "desirable" neighbourhood, while the underlying assumption of some feedback is that North Park is not a desirable place to live. We disagree with this sentiment but feel that it is an indication of a "have" and "have not" dynamic, and hope that the City recognizes the need for investment in North Park.

We hope that Council takes resident feedback into consideration on this decision, and that regardless of the outcome, staff and Council understand that the NPNA is highly invested in North Park Village.

Sincerely,

Eleni Gibson, NPNA Land Use Planning Advisor
On behalf of the NPNA Board