

Hello Councillors and Mayor Helps,

I'm writing to implore you to support this rezoning application, OCP amendment, and development permit for 225 Russel Street. This kind of supportive housing is critical for people to be able to actually get back on their feet, and having a personal bathroom, kitchen, and lock on your door is a level of basic dignity I think every human is entitled to. We need more facilities like this, and concentrating them in the downtown core as many would have us do is the worst way to go about it.

I used to know a woman who was sleeping rough in Victoria (who is thankfully now housed, though outside of our city) who told me that she would never go into the shelters because they felt unsafe to her. For her, being outside in Beacon Hill Park or parks in Oak Bay seemed safer than inside around other people; a facility like this would have helped her significantly.

The implication to those saying "not in this neighbourhood" seems to be that new supportive housing should go in areas where there already is a lot of supportive housing and shelters. I do not think that this is the best approach, and I think it comes not from a place of caring about people in our city. This approach also places a disproportionate burden on the communities of Harris Green, North Park, and the downtown. Harris Green and Downtown it should be noted have the highest growth of children of any neighbourhoods in the city as a percentage of their population, and as such I think can be said to be becoming the most family-oriented residential neighbourhoods in the city. I cannot see demands to concentrate all the social services and social housing in Victoria in a couple neighbourhoods as anything but an attempt to insulate richer suburbs from the worst effects of the housing crisis.

I'm asking you to support this project in Vic West, we need more permanent supportive housing in Victoria, and we need it today.

Thank you for your time,
Max Thomson, downtown resident.

[REDACTED]

From: Joan Eaton [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, June 19, 2022 4:01 PM
To: Public Hearings
Subject: 225 Russell Street

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

I am strongly opposed to the rezoning application for 225 Russell Street. I own the property at 217 Russell Street and am negatively impacted by the changes on our street since BC Housing purchased 225 Russell Street next door. I have written numerous letters to David Eby, Grace Lore, Laurel Collins, John Horgan, and Lisa Helps. Only Mayor Helps has ever bothered to reply to my letters, but still the blight on our formerly quiet street persists. All of my neighbours who have written thoughtful and articulate letters have also been unable to change the minds of those in power who foisted this nightmare upon us, so I have zero hope that yet another letter from me will change anything. However, I do want to formally submit the following requests.

I am requesting that there not be a glassed in walkway on the south side of the building as shown in the proposal. This would look directly into my back yard, removing any shred of privacy on my deck and in my garden. It's bad enough that I can no longer sit in my front courtyard without hearing people struggling with mental illness yelling in the street, loud arguments and fights, cars continually pulling into my driveway to turn around to park in front of the shelter, or being subjected to reeking pot fumes. Please do not allow my back yard, and that of my neighbour, to be visible from the shelter and further violate our privacy and enjoyment of our property.

I am also requesting that there be 24 hour security for the new supportive housing complex, as there currently exists for the shelter. The only good thing about being right next door is that the security guards regularly walk past our house. We need that continued security, day and night.

I also wish to bring to Council's attention the fact that our home is now impossible to sell for anywhere near market value. Although the appraised value and the property taxes have increased, it will never fetch the price it would have prior to April 2021. The house, which was listed for sale last year in the middle of a housing feeding frenzy and had dozens of inquiries, managed to attract only one low offer which was withdrawn after a day. It is unsellable because no one wants to live next door to a warehouse of people with untreated mental illness and addictions. I certainly don't but I have no choice.

Joan Eaton
217 Russell St.

Hello Mayor and Council,

I wanted to write a letter in support of the rezoning application for 225 Russell Street to be discussed at the June 23 COTW meeting.

Prior to our current home, my wife and I lived in an apartment building on Humboldt Street, immediately next door to a supportive housing unit managed by Pacifica Housing (Camas Gardens - 950 Humboldt St). I wanted to stress that during our time there, we had absolutely no issues with the residents of the supportive housing building. In fact, I don't think we even realized that it was a supportive housing building until a few months into our stay there. I truly feel a lot of these fears are overblown, and the effect on immediate neighbours will be negligible.

Additionally, some of the concerns many of us hear on a regular basis is that there are a large amount of individuals experiencing homelessness, and they are often localized in specific areas near the downtown core. This is exactly the type of support that would help remedy that situation and would provide homes to some of those individuals. We can't be complaining about too many people experiencing homelessness, then complain about buildings being proposed to house them.

I very much hope that you will vote in favour of this rezoning, and help some people find a new home and stability in their life.

Kind regards,
Mark Stephenson
303-1500 Elford Street, Victoria BC