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From: Public Hearings
To: Victoria Mayor and Council
Subject: RE: Letter from the Rockland Neighbourhood Association

From: Susan Evans [REDACTED]
Sent: July 14, 2022 3:40 PM
To: Victoria Mayor and Council <mayorandcouncil@victoria.ca>
Cc: RNA Board [REDACTED]
Subject: Letter from the Rockland Neighbourhood Association

Dear Mayor and Council:

Victoria is in a housing crisis - no one can dispute the need for more diverse housing options. It is a global problem, and we appreciate the efforts of the council and city staff to address it here in our community.

If passed, the proposed Missing Middle bylaws may change the face of Victoria, in part by accelerating the incremental demise of urban green space. Small builders and supporters highlight the consultation the City has been doing over the past year. However, these consultations were based on general principles, lacking details regarding height, site coverage, and setback requirements.

It is only very recently that the details have emerged and been made public. Even then, they have continued to change. One such example is regarding height restrictions: initially, City staff advised that corner townhomes could be built up to 10.5 meters, while houseplexes in the middle of blocks would be limited to 8 meters. A fact sheet posted by the City in July 2022 states that a houseplex could now also be built to 10.5 meters, an increase of over 25%, which was certainly not part of the consultation process. The difference between an 8-meter high houseplex and a 10.5-meter high houseplex is massive, especially in the middle of a residential block of single-story houses, sitting just 1.5 meters from its neighbours' property lines. Such drastic change deserves meaningful consultation based on facts.

Even well-intended political land-use decisions can result in undesirable societal outcomes. And one day of public hearings, on the heels of a long weekend in the middle of the summer, cannot be considered meaningful consultation to formulate a vision for long-term spatial planning.

The Rockland Neighbourhood Association urges you to hold more extensive public consultations based on the details of the proposed bylaws and facts sheet, which have only recently been made public. September would allow Victoria residents the time to return from summer vacation. This monumental decision related to land use is a critical issue and should not be forced through due to an upcoming election.

Thank you for your consideration.

Rockland Neighbourhood Association