



October 10, 2017

Mayor & Council  
City of Victoria

**RE: Temporary Use Permit Application No. 00003 for 3020 Douglas Street/540 Burnside Road East.**

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the Burnside Gorge Community Association (BGCA) Board of Directors, I am writing in regards to Cool Aid's application for a Temporary Use Permit for 3020 Douglas Street / 540 Burnside Road East. We ask that Mayor & Council delay the hearing and decision for the Temporary Use Permit so that we can ensure the fair and just consideration of neighbourhood interests alongside the needs of homeless citizens.

To date, the information that residents and the BGCA have received from the Cool Aid Society with regards to 3020 Douglas Street is incomplete and unclear. We believe that a delay of the issuance of this Temporary Use Permit is essential for the City to respect its commitment to Civic Engagement, namely "timely and meaningful" efforts to inform and consult with citizens. Additionally, through our Land Use Committee meetings neighbours have expressed deep concerns about the "temporary" nature of this facility, that the facility will not, in fact, be temporary and also the continued concentration of service in Burnside Gorge, a community that already has a shockingly disproportionate number of supportive and low/no barrier housing units.

The BGCA has been a reliable supporter of social programs in Victoria for many decades and we are fully aware of the commitments of the City of Victoria and the Province to house a marginalized population with a high level of complex needs. However, the intense concentration of these facilities in our neighbourhood has created a critical situation for the Burnside Gorge community. As you are aware from our letter to Ministry officials dated October 3, 2017, (attached for your reference) we have requested a moratorium on all new supportive/low-barrier facilities in the Burnside Gorge community as well as a review of the critical situation that has been created in the neighbourhood. We cannot endorse or accept any further supportive housing in the Burnside Gorge community until we have commitments from both municipal and provincial levels of government as well as direct service providers to address existing community impacts and mitigate future impacts.

Given all of our concerns, we feel that issuance of a Temporary Use Permit at this time would be irresponsible on the part of the City and grievous to the well-being of the Burnside Gorge community. Thank you in advance for honouring our request.

Respectfully,

Avery Stetski  
President



October 3, 2017

To: Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs & Housing  
Honourable Judy Darcy, Minister of Mental Health & Addictions  
Rob Fleming, MLA Victoria-Swan Lake  
Shayne Ramsay, CEO, BC Housing

**RE: Request for moratorium on development of emergency homeless shelter in Burnside Gorge, Victoria**

On behalf of the Burnside Gorge Community Association Board of Directors, I am writing to emphatically request that BC Housing immediately cease work on the planned homeless shelter at 2915 Douglas Street in Victoria, BC. We are also requesting a moratorium on the development or operations of any new supportive housing in Burnside Gorge.

The Burnside Gorge Community Association is responsible for advocating in the best interest of our community and ensuring a representative voice for all of those we serve. Our community includes almost 6000 residents and over 1400 businesses. As a direct consequence of current provincial policies that intended to address the crises of homelessness and escalating mental health and addictions issues, our small neighbourhood is currently experiencing critical social problems at a scale not seen in the past decade. The planned homeless shelter at 2915 Douglas Street is a direct threat to our community's well-being and would be a serious mistake.

The Burnside Gorge neighbourhood is already saturated with supported facilities such as emergency shelters, low/no barrier housing, residential treatment facilities, and a long history of low-income single resident occupancy conversions. Burnside Gorge comprises just 7% of the City of Victoria's population, but we have 77% of the shelter units in the City. We have 36% of all supportive housing units in Victoria, most of these added in the past six years.

The concentration of marginalized and vulnerable populations has put tremendous strain on businesses and residents across the neighbourhood as there are steadily mounting levels of crime, drug dealing, open drug use, and entrenchment of transient encampments in doorways and boulevards. For residents and businesses within a few hundred metres of the existing Rock Bay Landing shelter, as well as the planned new shelter, the situation is having significant social, economic and mental health impacts.

The Province's decision to concentrate homeless shelters and supportive housing in Burnside Gorge is a failure not only to our community but also the people you are attempting to serve. Placing housing and shelter units for high-needs, high-risk individuals in one neighbourhood actually creates conditions that are counter-productive to success, undermining both the intent and delivery of services. Individuals cannot and do not integrate into the community at large. We urge the Province to immediately adopt a regional approach to addressing the complex social issues we are seeing in our neighbourhood.

As a respected social service provider with decades of experience, the BGCA is committed to working with all parties to develop a solution to what has become an intolerable situation in a Victoria neighbourhood. We respectfully request that you, as the Ministers with the mandates to work with all stakeholders on the means to effectively address homelessness and mental health and addictions, take the following actions:

1. Immediately cease all work and plans to develop a homeless shelter at 2915 Douglas Street, or any other location in Burnside Gorge;
2. Establish a moratorium on the purchase or development of any new units of shelter and/or supportive housing anywhere within the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood boundaries. This moratorium would allow for a total review of the critical situation developing in the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood due to current provincial policies.
3. At the earliest possible time, arrange for senior leaders within your Ministries and BC Housing to meet with the Burnside Gorge Community Association executive and board of directors to develop concrete strategies to resolve issues that result from the existing concentration of shelters and low/no barrier supportive housing in our neighbourhood;

Given the gravity of this situation, we look forward to your reply as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact me at 250-386-6163 or by email at [astetski@telus.net](mailto:astetski@telus.net).

Regards,



Avery Stetski  
Chair

CC: Honourable Shane Simpson, Minister of Social Development & Poverty Reduction  
City of Victoria Mayor & Council  
CRD Board of Directors