



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 [REDACTED] or by email at [REDACTED]

Regards,



Avery Stetski  
Chair

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



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

## Lacey Maxwell

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**From:** Kathy Stinson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** October 12, 2017 3:49 PM  
**To:** Lisa Helps (Mayor); Victoria Mayor and Council  
**Cc:** Malcolm McNaughton; Heidi Hartman; Avery Stetski [REDACTED]; Deane Strongitharm [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** 3020 Douglas Temporary Use Permit / BGCA

Dear Mayor and Council.

The letter concerning Cool Aid's request for a temporary use permit (TUP) for 3020 Douglas Street (Tally Ho), from the Burnside Gorge Community Association, dated October 10, 2017, has come to my attention today. I want to take this opportunity to address some of its points.

Cool Aid has been busy consulting and informing the community of the intended uses of this property. We have been up front with our neighbours and the BGCA and responsive to the feedback we have received.

- Notwithstanding that we were advised by City staff that procedurally no CALUC meeting was required, an informal meeting was held with the BGCA land use committee on June 13<sup>th</sup>. Not a lot of feedback was received at this meeting.
- An open house was held for neighbours at the Tally Ho on June 26 with 23 people signing in. Some design changes were made based on the feedback, most specifically the addition of a fence near the back of the building as well as additional landscaping.
- Cool Aid has participated in two meetings with the near neighbours at the Burnside Gorge Community Centre on August 2<sup>nd</sup> and September 7<sup>th</sup>. At the latter meeting we were advised that the neighbours were 'resigned' to the temporary use being proposed for the Tally Ho and that their main concern was in knowing about the long term plan for the redevelopment of the site.
- Cool Aid made a commitment to start the process on the future redevelopment of the property quickly with the neighbours and the BGCA; indeed we had scheduled our first Information / Visioning session for Nov 8<sup>th</sup> and this information has already been shared and positively acknowledged by the near neighbours primary contact. This date will now have to be rescheduled to accommodate a CALUC meeting as quickly as possible.
- A complete information package on the proposed temporary uses of this site (the same one available through the City of Victoria's web site) was shared with immediate neighbours August 3<sup>rd</sup> with an acknowledgement that it was received.

In Cool Aid's opinion, the solution to many of the challenges in the neighbourhood are additional low income and supportive housing as this provides a first step towards rehabilitation for people who are experiencing homelessness in Burnside Gorge.

Sincerely,

Kathy Stinson CPA, CMA, CIHCM  
Chief Executive Officer



Victoria Cool Aid Society

██████████  
101-749 Pandora Avenue  
Victoria, BC V8W 1N9

[www.CoolAid.org](http://www.CoolAid.org)

*Together we will end homelessness.*

Victoria Cool Aid Society acknowledges the Lekwungen and W̱SÁNEĆ peoples of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations, on whose traditional territories we build homes, lives, and community. HÍSW̱ḴE.

November 10, 2017

Mayor & Council  
#1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC

Dear Mayor and Council:

**CALUC Community Meeting Temporary Use Permit Application for 3020 Douglas Street**

On November 8, 2017, the Burnside Gorge Land Use Committee (BGLUC) hosted a CALUC community meeting that was advertised to discuss a proposal for a 3 year Temporary Use Permit for transitional housing in a T-1 - limited Transient Accommodation zoning.

Kathy Stenson with the Victoria Cool Aid Society and City Spaces jointly presented.

The proposal is for redeveloping the site by renovating an existing building for 52 units of transitional housing. There would be no shelter beds or supervised injection site at this location. Screening and fencing proposed along Burnside Road to provide separation to adjacent residential neighbours.

Plan is for a 2 phase redevelopment of the site with planning from fall 2017 to spring 2018. Construction scheduled for 2019 to 2020. Work is now ongoing to prepare the facility for opening. Meetings to be held with community to determine what the commercial component could be. The new Burnside Gorge LAP indicates this locations use as General Employment. Majority of attendees were concerned that the facility use will be changed to accommodate a more transient high need population.

Residents are frustrated and angry that 3020 Douglas (former Tally Ho) was purchased prior to any consultation or involvement with the Burnside Gorge Community. BC Housing was asked for more background information on the decision and funding process particularly in light of the property being purchased at double the assessed value.

Business / commercial property owner adjacent to the existing facilities on Douglas are losing tenants / business due to the transient population issues.

There was no community impact report done on placing this facility in Burnside Gorge. There has been no study done to determine what is the concentration threshold. Multiple comments highlighted the problems in the neighbourhood from the concentration of existing supported housing facilities. Multiple comments on the lack of support from agencies in addressing problems occurring outside the existing facilities and affecting neighbouring residents. Response was that it may be possible to pay facility residents to pick up needles, garbage, clean up graffiti in the surrounding community.

Of the 41 residents attending the majority were not in favour of this proposal. The opposition was directed to the addition of more transitional and supported housing units to an already overstretched neighbourhood and to the problem with existing areas where Cool Aid facilities are located particularly Rock Bay Landing and Cedar Grove.

There is anger and strong resistance to any further transitional or supportive housing in Burnside Gorge due to the over saturation of these facilities in the neighbourhood.

Respectfully,

*Avery Stetski*

Avery Stetski  
Land Use Committee Chair  
Burnside Gorge Community Association

cc: Sustainable Planning and Community Development Department  
Kathy Stinson,- Victoria Cool Aid Society

**Pamela Martin**

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**From:** karen field [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 15, 2017 10:54 AM  
**To:** Public Hearings  
**Subject:** Temporary Use Permit Application No. 00003

I do not support a Temporary use Permit for the land known as 3020 Douglas Street, in Development Permit Area 16: General Form and Character, for purposes of temporarily changing the use of the existing building from motel to transitional housing.

Shelters/ Transitional, "Supportive" Housing Burnside Gorge Area Victoria BC

I do not support any further development/rezoning/permitting etc. for more temporary, transient, supportive, low barrier, no barrier accommodation, shelters in the Gorge area of Victoria BC. This area already has a high concentration of these style of facilities and seems to have become a convenient dumping ground for the government and poverty industry to use. Instead of serving families these facilities seem to primarily serve a marginalized problem group of people who are not willing or able to integrate into the community.

Concentrating facilities, especially those that primarily do not serve families, in one area because it is convenient for government and poverty industry organizations, at the expense of the community, is not an effective step in reducing homelessness and the problems associated with homelessness. Convenience (e.g. use of former hotels) should not be one of the prime considerations for location of such facilities. In fact, concentrating such facilities in one area seems to perpetuate problems by trapping people in a cycle of homelessness and associated problems. EG: providing "one stop" convenient access point for buying and selling illegal drugs and enabling criminal activities.

These increased problems get offloaded to the community residents and businesses to deal with as the organizations operating these facilities have no influence outside of the facilities. Residents and businesses shoulder the ongoing responsibility of dealing with problems by having to protect family and property through installation of security cameras, alarms, and fencing etc. The community is overburdened.

(I don't think this information should be news to anyone being addressed in this email.)

Respectfully submitted