



Victoria Montessori Preschool  
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October 17th, 2017

Dear Ms. Helps and Council

My name is Ivana Tunklova, and I am the Montessori teacher and the owner of Victoria Montessori Preschool and Childcare, the childcare centre which was located in the Annex adjacent to Vic West Elementary School, at 750 Front St.

On May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 we were informed by the School District that we had to vacate our beloved Annex to make room for the overflow from the Vic West Elementary School (due to the Supreme Court's decision).

We had been at our location for 14 years, and had cared for over 400 children. We were proud to service our neighbourhood of Vic West with high quality childcare. Our facility employed, and still employs five excellent, highly qualified teachers.

As you have probably heard, and read in our e-mails, we fought very hard to try to convince the School District to give us a transition year as we were fully enrolled. We had 30 families, that is 30 children, who were relying on us, depended on us - as on such short notice there was no way that these families would have been able to find care.

We were determined, and the School District found a classroom for us, not ideal (Rockheights Middle School), but we were thrilled that we had space for our families, even though the space is only available to us until June 2018.

We decided that we did not want our families, their children and our teachers to go through this very stressful situation again. Children need consistency and stability, and so do the parents and teachers.

We searched for a suitable place to either purchase or lease. We all know how difficult this task is - leases start at \$7,000.00/mth for the size we need to accommodate our families. On top of that we have to create a play area.

We did not despair, and a lovely property came up on the market - a house on Skinner St. (323 Skinner St.), very close to the Vic West Elementary School - an ideal location for parents dropping off their older children at Vic West Elementary and walking or biking with their toddlers to Skinner St. Also, the house is in close proximity to trails for nature walks, and Banfield Park.

The purchase of the house on Skinner St. was thoroughly thought out and researched. It is on the corner of Skinner and Mary St. Only 2 neighbours are adjacent to the property. It is easily accessible. There is space for parking on Mary Street and Raynor Avenue, both are not designated "Residential Parking Only".

The house presents a reasonably easy conversion into a two-storey house. This conversion would involve lifting and adding to the house. The footprint of the house will not change. This will preserve all trees and green canopy. The preservation of trees is part of the green features contained within the development of the property. There is a plum tree, and raised vegetable beds will be installed. Additional green features are: installation of one EV station and bike racks, installation of solar panels, hardy planks on the exterior, energy efficient windows, vinyl flooring with renewable cork backing, low VOC paint, water efficient plumbing fixtures and toilets.

At the Community Meeting on August 22, neighbours voiced concern in regards to traffic and noise level. We have assured the neighbours that the pick ups and drop offs are very quick, between five and ten minutes, and that parking on the street can be shared by the whole community. Also, pick ups are staggered between 8am and 8:30am, and drop offs between 3pm and 5pm; and let us not forget that we are a neighbourhood/community Montessori Childcare Centre which means that more than half of our families walk or bike.

As for the noise level, a Montessori School is not a loud school, and after 5pm, on weekends and during holidays the building is completely quite.

#### **Parking patterns observed during a two week period in September 2017.**

Parking patterns were observed from Monday to Friday during the following hours: from 8-8:30am which is the drop off period, and between 3pm and 5pm which is the pick up period. During these periods there were always at least 10 parking spots available on Mary Street. We also observed parking patterns on Raynor Avenue, specifically the two blocks between Catherine Street and Russell Street during the same drop off and pick up period. Raynor Avenue has multiple parking availabilities.

Victoria Montessori will have an enrolment of 32 children. As we are a neighbourhood childcare facility at least 40% of our families will be arriving by foot or bicycle. This has been the average for the last 14 years. This leaves approximately 20 families who will be arriving by car, staggered during a 30 minute period at drop off. These drop offs do not last more than 10 minutes. Pick ups are staggered between 3pm and 5pm, and also do not last more than 10 minutes.

In regards to parking for our 4 teachers, one parking spot is available on the property, and 3 cars can park in front of the building. A parking variance is requested.

Both Mary Street and Raynor Avenue are not designated "Residential Parking Only", therefore parking can be shared with the community.

The Vic West Community Plan that was just drafted outlines plans to change Land Use: more support for commercial uses at intersection of major roads, converting single detached houses to commercial or mixed use, maintaining green space therefore allowing for building multi unit houses up to three stories along Skinner St., connecting the Craigflower Village by adding small commercial businesses. But most importantly, one of the goals in the Neighbourhood Plan (Chapter 13, Point 2.2) is to "create more childcare options to support families with children living in Vic West. To support daycares as a use throughout the neighbourhood ... and to consider reduced parking requirements where requested."

A Montessori Childcare Centre fits right into this plan, a plan which was based on community input. We will create more childcare spaces/options - full time spaces, part time spaces and future infant/toddler spaces. Also, we will be creating additional employment opportunities.

The Neighbourhood Plan talks about "Neighbourhood Well-Being", fostering a safe community, an inclusive community. What better solution than adding a Montessori Childcare Centre. A centre completely devoted to nurturing children in their most important formative years - the early years - so that they can develop into healthy, resilient, caring, kind and well-educated citizens.

The City can not do it on its own, and needs the help of private individuals to take on the social responsibility. Our city is growing very rapidly, and we already have a shortage of childcare spaces. This is an opportunity to allow us to create a beautiful, quality childcare centre that will serve the Vic West neighbourhood for many years to come

Victoria Montessori will strengthen the community by bringing families together and supporting them.

We are including many support letters, and on behalf of all the wonderful children and families, that we so lovingly care for, we hope that you can help us to realize this very important project.

Sincerely,

Ivana Tunklova and her wonderful Montessori staff