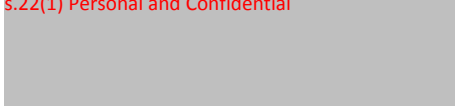




URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE – PACIFIC REGION

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GREATER VANCOUVER HOME BUILDERS' ASSOCIATION

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September 19, 2017

Mayor Gregor Robertson and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: *Heritage Density Bank Update and Zoning Amendments to Support Heritage Conservation & Character Home Retention Incentives and New Housing Choices in RS Zones*

The Urban Development Institute (UDI) and Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association (GVHBA) have been participating on the City's heritage policy review through the *Heritage Action Plan (HAP)* Public Advisory Committee. We would like to thank staff for allowing us to participate on the Committee, and for meeting with industry representatives on June 22nd and September 13th about two reports that are going to Public Hearing tonight (items 7 and 8 on the agenda) regarding the Heritage Density Bank and Character Homes. UDI and GVHBA are generally supportive of the recommendations in both reports, but we would like to provide some additional comments.

Heritage Density Bank Update and Zoning Amendments to Support Heritage Conservation Report

Staff rightly point out in their report that little density is available for purchase from the Heritage Density Bank. This is making it difficult for project proponents going through a development permit process to seek discretionary density increases. As such, UDI is very supportive of staff's recommendation "... to allow increases to the permitted floor area up to a maximum of 10 percent to be available through amenity shares for heritage conservation," through development permit applications.

However, what is being proposed is a temporary solution to a larger problem with the Heritage Density Bank that needs to be addressed. Heritage revitalization is an important economic development tool for the City that has added vibrancy to several Vancouver neighbourhoods such as Gastown. We need to retool the Heritage Density Bank and/or develop other incentives, so this work can continue. UDI understands from staff that a more comprehensive solution will be developed through the ongoing work on the *Heritage Action Plan*. We request that this work be done as soon as possible – ideally with a report to

Council by early 2018. We would be pleased to work with the City as this process moves forward.

Introducing Character Home Retention Incentives and New Housing Choices in RS Zones (Single-family) – Proposed Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law Report

Also on September 19th, a report on new incentives to encourage the retention of pre-1940 character homes in single-family districts will be going to Public Hearing. We are generally supportive of the changes. The proposals would allow more units in single-family zones, with some steps being taken to speed up the processing of these incentives by granting the Director of Planning additional discretion.

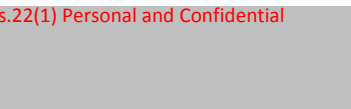
However, there are still 15,000 pre-1940 homes in Vancouver, and staff estimate that 12,000 of them would meet the definition of a "character home". Potentially having this many homes go through a detailed discretionary process could further exacerbate already stretched staff resources. We are concerned that the already lengthy development approval delays that builders and developers face in Vancouver may get longer. Having stated this, we are pleased that there will be a monitoring program in place, and if problems arise, we encourage that staff can reengage with Council quickly.

We also suggest that the City consider, where appropriate, opportunities to increase the supply of housing units through the redevelopment of some of the 12,000 homes noted above and through future expansion of the program to include non-character homes. This could substantially increase the supply of housing throughout Vancouver and allow different forms of development in single-family zones. We continue to recommend this approach through the *Housing Vancouver Strategy*.

We would like to thank City staff again for involving us in the *HAP* process and for meeting with industry representatives. UDI and GVHBA are generally supportive of the policies in the two reports, and we look forward to working with the City as the *Heritage Action Plan* is developed.

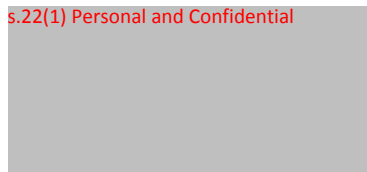
Yours truly,

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Anne McMullin
President & CEO
Urban Development Institute

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Bob de Wit
CEO
Greater Vancouver Home Builders' Association

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