

## Dragnea, Irina

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**From:** Karen Sawatzky  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 26, 2018 1:24 PM  
**To:** Public Hearing  
**Subject:** Re Item 3 for public hearing June 26: REZONING: 1837-1857 East 11th Avenue and 2631-2685 Victoria Drive

Dear Mayor and Council,

I wish to express my strong support for the rezoning of 1837-1857 East 11th Avenue and 2631-2685 Victoria drive to allow for an 11-storey building containing 57 net new secured rental units, along with about 60 strata titled units.

I am a renter in Grandview-Woodland and I support this application because it contributes a substantial number of net new secure rental units to a neighbourhood that desperately needs them and where very little new secure rental housing has been built over the past few decades. This lack of new rental housing has resulted in poor and deteriorating choices for renters - they can either live in an old purpose-built rental building, of which there are far too few, but which at least offer some degree of security - or they can live in a suite in a house or a rented condo, both of which are less secure than the purpose-built rental option. In the last few decades, many people searching for affordable homeownership options have moved from the Westside of the city to the Eastside, and in the process have converted existing rented houses and suites to owner-occupied housing, resulting in a loss of those units and a diminishment of the rental stock. This is one of the reasons why we need more purpose-built rental.

I also support this application because of its location. While some will say this building is too large and doesn't fit with the existing scale of the neighbourhood, this location is 2 blocks from a SkyTrain station and the intersection of two major bus routes, including the 99B express to UBC and the future SkyTrain to Arbutus (and hopefully UBC). As the housing options are now, far too few people are in a position to reap the benefits of such convenient transit access - the type of transit access that allows people to live without cars, thereby reducing their household overhead expenses and reducing pollution and congestion for the rest of us. This location absolutely needs more housing so that more people can benefit from the transit that's there now and the additional transit capacity that will be added in the future. Rental housing should be part of that expanded housing capacity.

Further, I believe that replacing detached houses with rental and multi-family is by far the best - the most efficient, the most sustainable and the most fair - way to increase our rental stock. Since council agrees that our rental vacancy rate is terrible and must be increased, the key question is how to do that. Are you going to force all the new rental housing we need to be built on the existing RM-4 footprint? If so, that will result in the maximum amount of displacement of tenants who live in existing RM-4 zones. Those zones and buildings in them are already providing many more homes than the equivalent space in RS and RT zones (or the detached houses in existing RM zones like these ones). I believe that instead we must expand the areas where purpose-built rental can be built by upzoning existing RS zones and detached houses, as this proposal does. I do realize that there are tenants in these houses that will be affected and displaced (and note the application of the city's tenant relocation policies). As a renter myself, it is always painful to see proposals that will require existing renters to move - especially knowing that they are unlikely to be able to afford new rents, and that this could also happen to me. Please note as well that while some who oppose this type of development will argue that rented suites in houses provide affordable housing, this is not always or necessarily the case. Basement and other types of suites in houses can be just as expensive as any other type of housing - the rents charged depend on the length of tenancy, as well as factors such as the whims and financial circumstances of the landlord. Unfortunately, because of the way our city has already been zoned and built and because of various historic government policies (and policy failures from a renter's perspective), a significant amount of our rental stock is in this type of insecure housing. We need to move away from this towards more secure options. We must increase our vacancy rate because its unhealthy level and the competition among tenants it necessitates

is what is driving displacement of lower-income renters and providing (some) landlords with the conditions that allow them to rapidly increase rents between tenancies and to engage in all kinds of discriminatory and unethical practices. Given that most of the city's land base is already developed, you as elected officials must make difficult choices about how, where and to whose benefit redevelopment occurs.

Given the difficult set of choices you face, converting detached houses that provide only insecure and not necessarily affordable housing to secure, long-term purpose-built rental that will contribute to increasing the vacancy rate is the fairest, most effective and most sustainable course. Please approve this application for rezoning.

best,  
Karen Sawatzky

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