

mayor@burnaby.ca

January 12, 2018

Dear Mayor Corrigan and Councillors,

It seems that agreement exists among many segments of society that there is a crisis in the Metro Vancouver housing supply and demand relationship resulting in sky high un-affordable pricing. The supply of condos, basement suites and lane-way housing have not met the demand for the rental or ownership markets. Current market prices are the evidence. It may be time to consider changing our current land use policy by reassessing the 19th century model of one home on one city lot. The vast majority of the residential properties in the region still carry this density designation.

I bring to your attention the fact that many of the original property survey lot configurations were done in the late 19th century at a time when plenty of undeveloped land was available, the world population was much smaller and this part of the world was relatively unknown. The concept of lot size was suitable for the times. Now, 135 years later in the 21st century, in this admired and globally popular part of the world, we need to re-think and consider updating this model of one single family home on each of these historically sized lots. We have developed the available Metro Vancouver land base and even condemned some of our valuable food productive land supply to residential or industrial use. The current land values are destroying our cohesive sense of community with the affluent displacing the not so affluent. Increasing numbers of residents are forced to travel to communities they cannot afford to live in for their employment. This not only limits social integration and harmony within a community but also reduces productivity. Stress, increased traffic congestion and environmental concerns result from the current situation.

A concept that would help address this situation is to increase density by shedding the model of a single residential unit per city lot and instituting a policy that would permit duplex housing units on our smaller 30 ft lots, increasing the density to 4-plex at 45 ft and 6-plex at the 60 ft level. Renters or purchasers would be provided the opportunity to choose an affordable appropriately sized dwelling unit to meet their needs. Potential home builders could avoid the current situation wherein the property value obligates construction of a home that is beyond their actual needs. Instead, ownership and square footage could be divided among multiple satisfied owners in a residential environment. A land owner would not be denied the opportunity to build a single family home but at the same time a land owner would also not be denied the opportunity to choose a multiple ownership construction model.

This more efficient use of the land would benefit purchasers and renters by offering them increased choice when seeking appropriately located accommodation based on their needs and financial capabilities. It would improve societal integration and community cohesion by providing more accommodation over a wider price range in our different communities. Reduced travelling for employment would prove beneficial for productivity and the environment. When desired, the architecture of these units could be designed to fit in with existing neighbourhood characters or could be designed with a more modern approach that would take advantage of newer technologies such as solar. Below ground parking can reduce street parking pressures.

We are facing a crisis that, from all projections, will only get worse as the inflow of new residents continues. The times have changed and we are not finding the needed solutions by continuing to follow the outdated 19th century model of land use. What seems to be lacking is the foresight and capability to

Referred to:

Planning and Development Committee (2018.01.30)

successfully address this situation at the civic level. Possibly the NIMBY influence deters the advancement of change. With your oversight and direction, residents would have improved opportunities to purchase or rent a suitably sized and located home. My hope is that your government, who is charged with oversight of local zoning and building regulations will acknowledge this deteriorating situation, and adopt an appropriate land use policy, reflective of the 21st century requirements of Burnaby residents. This could go a long way in resolving the rental and home ownership affordability crisis. It would help reduce commuter caused traffic congestion. It would encourage an integrated cohesive community and would have a positive impact on the environment.

Your consideration of this suggestion in your deliberations is appreciated.

Sincerely,
George Struk

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of George Struk.A black rectangular redaction box covering contact information.

c.c
Honourable John Horgan, Premier
Province of British Columbia
premier@gov.bc.ca

Honourable Selina Robinson,
Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing
mah.minister@gov.bc.ca