

To Mayor and Council

April 4, 2019

My children grew up in Burnaby. They went to school in Burnaby. They went to university in Burnaby.

They cannot buy a home in Burnaby.

Of the kids, now young adults, that I knew as my kids were growing up, I guess that 1% of them can afford to buy a house in Burnaby. So they are buying further out. With your new initiative, I would say that Burnaby does not want them.

Now, at a time when we need affordable housing; market housing and rental housing, you rush through council an initiative to super-size houses. Your excuse that this is a way to get more rental housing quickly.

I was at the public hearing. You received 12 letters; 6 from one address, 5077 Belleville Ave. (see the included photo), 2 from another address, 1 from no address, my letter and 2 others. 6 people spoke up. Me against the initiative and 5 people who want the super-sizing – all of these for me and mine. Not a single new rental suite. By the look of the information on property assessment records, it looks like some of the people, who spoke up, have already finished their crawl spaces.

You have done harm. You have denied the citizens of Burnaby the opportunity for public consultation. Now, to put basement suites in duplexes you will seek public input. For single family homes you have put the builder's first, not the needs or the wishes of the citizens of Burnaby. Politics you say. Lack of integrity I say.

What you have just done is shameful. You have rushed through council a huge change to single family residential bylaws. You have rushed this change into being – why – to please a few builders in exchange for their support in the election.

This is politics but this absolute lack of integrity and lack of regard for the citizens of this city is shameful.

Now please do 4 things.

1. Track what you have done. See how many new suites you get from this initiative.
2. Set-up once a year inspections - to see that the people who do put suites in their cellars – are in fact only putting in 1 suite in their super-size cellars.
3. For new builds reduce the allowable lot coverage 'footprint', for new homes. (this to encourage subdivision and densification)
4. While you are in the business of 'Super-sizing' houses so that the crawl space is more useable, please allow all areas under the roof to be finished. Many people who have unfinished areas under the roof will find areas more useful finished than unfinished. This means decks as well as crawl spaces. This to be fair to people who have unfinished decks under the roof. Your initiative is short sighted and bad for the city but at least be fair. All for the same reasons. Finished areas under the roof are more useful than unfinished area. The structure is all there.

I include a couple of pictures

Now you think that I am making an argument in favor of what you have just done.

I am not.

For new builds I am asking that you make an immediate change to make the allowable footprint smaller. Then yes, allow houses to be finished - all areas under the roof. A text amendment please and rush this through council to offset the damage that you have done.

The initiative that you have just imposed on our city just makes big houses bigger. I say no to this as we do not need big, bigger and super-size houses. We need densification.

We need houses for young families.

I would love to be crowded by a couple of smaller houses filled by young families. I do not like the big fat houses that are being build all over our city. None of them for the young people who grew up in this city. I do not want to see our young families moving out of Burnaby or being crowded into multiple suites in your 'super-size' cellars.

You have done what you have done. It is not what this city needs at least it is not what this city needs if we want to bring young families back to Burnaby, including our kids who grew up here.

I care about the many low income people who need housing and I care about the young people who are not low income who need homes too. The latter seem to be the forgotten ones.

I want to see an end to our great rush to build housing for deep-pocket immigrants and off-shore owners. I want to see housing, single family housing, built and available for young families, local people. Super-sizing is the wrong way forward.

We, the citizen of Burnaby have been denied our opportunity for public consultation on this change.

What you have done is wrong. How you have done this is an abuse of the trust that we have put in you to run our city.

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People with Super-size cellars will either want the space for themselves – they do not want to live with the sounds and smells that come with a rental suite or the others will be wanting to make as much money as they can and they will be putting in multiple suites in their super-size cellars.

I do not want to see our young families moving out of Burnaby to own their own homes or being crowded into multiple basement suites in your 'super-size' cellars in order to stay in Burnaby.

This is not best for my City.

Leslie Zenger

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