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TO: MAYOR & EACH
COUNCILLOR
FROM: A/CITY CLERK

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RE: Lot size policy review, Garry Street

8060-20-7373
Xref 8060-20-7372

I have already sent in my questionnaire, but was encouraged to send in some written comments after the public meeting Tuesday night.

I am for the proposed rezoning for a number of reasons. Firstly, I would like to see the neighbourhood redeveloped to upgrade some of the existing homes that are now in poor repair. I believe with the current lot size, the economic numbers are not feasible for redevelopment because lots of this size will warrant a large new home to be built, and there is already plenty of inventory and better lot choices along less-busy streets in the 'monds and 'dales, etc. in central Richmond.

Secondly, I have seen our busy street get even busier with the addition of McMath school. Quite frankly, redevelopment gives me some compensation for the negative effects of the extra traffic, garbage and noise.

I have heard that there is a strong and vocal opposition to this redevelopment to the north of Garry Street in the Windjammer Dr. neighbourhood. I take exception to the fact that these people may voice a strong opposition simply because their traffic access points empty onto the road I live on. Every day the residents along Garry Street have to live with the traffic created by the windjammer area. This is an area that boasts higher density than we are proposing, does not have



sufficient off-street parking for their own residents, and also does not have any of the Garry Street traffic driving through their neighbourhood. They are completely isolated from the effects of increased traffic along Garry Street with the exception that it may take them longer to access Garry Street during peak hours. Arguably, a minor complaint.

My largest concern is the traffic along Garry Street. This was an issue that as a resident, and having now met many of my neighbours during this process, I was going to broach once the rezoning was dealt with; however realizing now that it is the single largest concern that opponents of the rezoning are using as their weapon I will make my concerns known now.

The bottom line is that Garry Street is already a busy street. Busier than I remember when I bought 6 years ago, and I'm sure busier than others that had bought before me. I believe the rezoning on Garry Street will act, and is acting like a lightning rod for peoples already-existing antipathy for the current traffic situation. I believe the current traffic situation and the increases that have already been seen on Garry Street must be separated from a singular look at the traffic increases that build-out of the current rezoning on Garry Street would account for.

The traffic experts from the City of Richmond have stated that their estimates project an increase in traffic flow of 5% from a full build-out of Garry Street, and 4% from a full build-out of the Dunfell area during peak hours. This is a paltry increase. I can give you numerous examples of one-time traffic flow situations that would completely eclipse these numbers. I understand that one-time events, annual events, and the like are probably not considered statistical representations of traffic flow, but the following events regularly occur on a weekly or monthly basis and should be taken into account to mitigate a negative opinion of the extra 9% (4% + 5%) traffic along Garry Street as a result of the rezoning. For example, every Wednesday night the Church has bingo night.

Their parking lot is full, and over 20 cars regularly park on the street. The Church also has funerals on a regular basis, usually midday, and usually not more than once every 2-3 weeks. The church also holds craft fairs twice yearly, and weddings every month or two, more commonly in the summer. McMath now has night school, and depending on how many courses and when they are scheduled traffic along Garry Street sees a large increase. Organized sports are played in the McMath fields, some with sufficient draws on the weekends to use-up all the parking on-site and necessitate parking on the road. The Garry Lane townhouses have also increased traffic on the road. Kids attending McMath drive, generally speaking, fast along Garry Street. Ambulances & fire trucks regularly (at least weekly) run up Garry Street from Railway with their sirens running to attend to Lions Manor emergencies.

I want to make it clear that I am not necessarily against living on a road with a School, or a Church, or a few townhouses. I am a person who lives in a community and all these institutions are part of the community I live in. What I am particularly frustrated with are two things: One, that a community (Windjammer area) that currently has higher densities than we are proposing, does not have sufficient off-street parking for their own cars, and does not have any of the increased traffic from a Garry Street rezoning running through their property could have any negative effect on our application.

Secondly, that traffic along Garry Street is a problem, and will become worse over time with or without a Garry Street rezoning. The extra traffic will be the proverbial drop in the bucket. This is an even more powerful argument when coupled with the following realizations: The School Board could unilaterally decide to double the number of high School classes at McMath without any public consultation dramatically increasing traffic. Individual people could unilaterally decide to use Garry Street as a connector between #1 and Railway without public consultation, increasing traffic dramatically (incidentally, I know many people in the village area and in Westwind that have confessed to doing

just this – and it will only get worse once the Packer Lands are developed). The Church could unilaterally decide to double the number of bingo nights without any public consultation dramatically increasing traffic.

Additional families that would move to the newly created lots will defacto live along Garry street, and with the traffic on Garry Street and will therefore have a greater vested interest over those that are “visitors to the street”, coming for bingo, night school, etc. and, it could be argued, drive slower along their own street. I know I do.

As I stated earlier I think that the increased traffic along Garry Street should be treated as a separate issue from the rezoning. Yes, traffic will increase as a direct result of the rezoning; however, the negative sentiments residents now have towards traffic on Garry Street are real and are a result of all of the above factors I have mentioned, not just the rezoning. Whether or not the rezoning of Garry Street is successful, I will still look for solutions to traffic along Garry Street, because I feel it is already a problem. Fortunately though, one that has some solutions. I think that if any efforts are taken to improve traffic flow and safety along Garry Street it should be targeted at the real problem.

I have a few suggestions for solutions to the traffic problems along Garry Street. I see two distinct problems with the traffic: too fast and too much volume. Ironically, there is not a speed issue when the volume is high, and vice versa. Obviously changes in the road must be made to address both these issues.

The most dramatic and obvious is to cut the road off in the middle. Directly across from the Church makes the most sense to me. Fire access from east to west would still be afforded (with some delay) through the church parking lot accesses. There are certainly sufficient precedents: both Woodward and Maple roads were cut off in the middle. They are similar roads, connecting to two main roads on each end. This would obviously be most contentious, but also yield the


most complete solution. As an anecdotal note, I am making this suggestion as a person who would be on the east side of such a blocked road, eliminating my direct access to Steveston village.

Another solution involves more traffic calming measures: raised crossings, a roundabout at the intersection of Garry Street and Windward Gate, reduced speed limits, speed enforcement, and more signage. This would make Garry Street a "slow street" and would have numerous multiple benefits. The raised crossings and roundabout would stop kids and others from racing down the street late at night, eliminating the long straight-of-way that now exists. A slow street would also cause those that use the street as a connector between Railway and #1 to use an alternate route. Because these measures would be in effect 24-7 we would see the benefits not only during the week, but also on the weekends and during the night (a favorite time for 80kph runs).

This said, I know there have been calls for a full signal at Garry & #1 and similar at Railway & Garry. I think this would be a bad idea. Anything that eases traffic flow will *increase* traffic flow.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Pfortmueller