

June 12, 2018

Mayor & Council
#1 Centennial Square
Victoria, BC

Re: Rezoning Application for 210 Gorge Road East

Dear Mayor and Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Burnside Gorge Community Association (BGCA) in regards to a pending rezoning application for 210 Gorge Road East. It is the feeling of our Board and Land Use Committee that approval of this application as it stands would set an undesirable precedent for the City. We request that council and staff refuse to advance this application until several critical factors are addressed and corrected.

Our primary reasons for opposing the proposal at 210 Gorge Road East are:

1. The six storey proposed building exceeds the Local Area Plan (LAP) which allows four storeys. Higher storeys are allowed when a project provides **exceptional local-serving commercial uses**, a requirement this proposal does not meet.
2. An FSR of 1.9, above the allowed 1.2, and setback easements on three sides of the site.
3. Increasing the number of supported units from 21 to 32 when there is a clear message from community members that they have lost confidence & trust in the operator to avoid or minimize negative impacts to surrounding neighbours. At this time there is also a lack of formal accountability to the neighbourhood (and City) if the project is poorly managed.

Burnside Gorge residents and City Staff spent considerable time and resources over the past two years developing an exciting and insightful Local Area Plan (LAP) that had engaged and encouraged our community with specific zoning policies that would result in a vibrant neighbourhood. As stated in the LAP, “the purpose of the Burnside Gorge Neighbourhood Plan is to create a vision for the neighbourhood and provide detailed policy guidance and an implementation strategy”. In the past, our community has had unwanted developments approved with site specific, anomalous zoning based on a high-level OCP. The new LAP was viewed as a positive step forward, moving away from inconsistent zoning practices. Communities throughout Victoria must be assured that zoning policies are enforceable and supported with the new LAPs.

Council’s decision on November 23, 2017 to require Cool Aid’s Tally Ho development to conform to the LAP represented an acknowledgement of the policy guidance set by the local area planning processes. BGCA requests that Council also look to the LAP for guidance with this project as well given the potential neighbourhood impacts are no less significant.

The proponent has asserted that their development and financing plans preceded the formal adoption of the LAP. However, the LAP has been publicly available since March 2016 which seems like adequate time for additional engagement on the part of the proponent to address community concerns about adherence to the LAP, the size of the building, small suite size, and so forth.

BGCA believes the long-term negative repercussions of this development far outweigh the benefits of slightly increasing the stock of low income rental and supportive housing. We request that, at a minimum, Council direct the proponent to bring forward a proposal that better aligns with the Burnside Gorge LAP.

Through our Land Use Committee, our Board continues to actively participate in implementing the long term planning based on the new LAP and look forward to support from council and City staff to achieve our goals of positive growth in Burnside Gorge.

Respectfully,



Avery Stetski
President

cc: Sustainable Planning and Community Development Department