

(Final version)

Grandview-Woodland Area Council  
c/o Britannia Community Centre  
1661 Napier Street  
Vancouver  
BC V5L 4X4

Saturday 2 March 2013

Dear Mayor and Council:

The Directors of Grandview-Woodland Area Council (commonly known as GWAC), the main community association of Grandview-Woodland, sent Mayor and Council [a letter](#) on 5 July 2012 about the future of the viaducts and the management of traffic in Strathcona, sharing concerns voiced by the Strathcona Residents' Association (SRA) on 13 June (<http://strathcona-residents.org/viaducts/letter-from-the-chair>). The Directors of GWAC are writing again to Mayor and Council to share concerns that the SRA has expressed in its 26 February letter to the Mayor (<http://strathcona-residents.org/viaducts/2013-statement-on-viaducts-removal-and-Prior-Street-calming>).

### **Mayor's Press Release Said Neighbourhood Concerns Must Be Addressed**

On 24 July 2012, the Mayor issued a press release ([www.mayorofvancouver.ca/easterncore](http://www.mayorofvancouver.ca/easterncore)) that included the following paragraph (italics ours):

“The future of the Eastern Core and the viaducts is a major decision for the city, and it will impact how we grow and connect communities like Chinatown, Strathcona, and Grandview Woodlands,” said Mayor Robertson. “It is a key decision and it cannot be rushed – *we need to take the time hear neighbourhood concerns and ensure they are addressed before we make a decision.*”

### **SRA / GWAC Neighbourhood Concerns Not Addressed**

The SRA is saying in its recent letter that its neighbourhood concerns (about Prior/Venables) have not been addressed. Here is an excerpt from the SRA letter to the Mayor:

The community's concern over the proposal resulted in a number of grass-roots protests over the summer, and culminated in your very specific recommendations that staff come back with a plan that addressed our concerns.

You can imagine our surprise then, when at a well-attended community meeting on February 6th, some six months after your directives were given, that staff presented the exact same plan for removing the Viaducts and maintaining Prior / Venables as the major east west connector.

Please note that GWAC also expressed concerns about Prior / Venables in its July 2012 letter, stating that

The Grandview-Woodland Area Council shares the concerns of the Strathcona Residents' Association and the community of Strathcona about the long-term problem of unacceptable traffic volumes on Prior and Venables Streets, created with the building of the Georgia and Dunsmuir viaducts in the 1970's.

Joining our voice with that of Strathcona residents, we request the City of Vancouver expand the Viaducts study area to include the neighbouring communities of Strathcona and Grandview-Woodland.

We ask also that the City take immediate action to reduce traffic volumes on Prior and Venables Streets to acceptable levels for residential streets.

We propose a number of measures: re-instate parking on Prior Street, re-direct traffic from the viaducts through the False Creek Flats, install the (award-winning) proposal for the Venables-Prior Greenway, and plant trees on Venables from Clark Drive to Commercial Drive.

## **No Meaningful Eastern Core Strategy Consultation from October 2011 or from July 2012**

GWAC would ask Mayor and Council: What has happened to the Eastern Core Strategy?

Council decided in July 2011 to launch the Eastern Core strategy (see documents etc at [www.vancouver.ca/viaducts](http://www.vancouver.ca/viaducts)). The idea of the Eastern Core strategy was to consider the impact of retention/removal of the viaducts (for example, on traffic flows) on surrounding neighbourhoods such as southeast and northeast False Creek, Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside, Strathcona, Grandview-Woodland, and Mount Pleasant — i.e., the “Eastern Core.”

The Eastern Core strategy process was quite active for a few months with various multi-stakeholder meetings and the re:CONNECT ideas competition (<http://former.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/reconnect>). GWAC’s Venables Greenway project was entered in that competition.

Then in the late fall, after the winners of the re:CONNECT competition were announced (the Venables Greenway was a [co-winner](#) in its category), the multi-stakeholder meetings abruptly stopped. A meeting scheduled for 6 December 2011 was cancelled and never rescheduled.

For six months, the neighbourhoods heard nothing from Eastern Core planners until a stakeholder meeting on 24 May 2012 at which staff presented a proposal for removing the viaducts, and then in June 2012 the City held a public survey and three open houses about the same proposal. In the very last week of Council meetings in July 2012, staff were going to report on the findings from the survey and open houses, but pressure from the SRA about traffic on Prior / Venables led to staff providing information to Council, instead of a report (see <http://former.vancouver.ca/ctyclerk/cclerk/20120724/regu20120724ag.htm>).

GWAC is unaware of any attempts since July 2012 to organize stakeholder meetings in Grandview-Woodland and Eastern Core neighbourhoods of the kind seen in the Fall of 2011 as part of the Eastern Core Strategy. While GWAC appreciates that Kirsten Robinson, Devan Fitch, and Lon LaClaire came to speak at its October 2012 meeting, and that Don Klimchuk spoke at its February 2013 meeting, these interactions are no substitute for the solicitation of opinions that were seen in the Fall 2011 Eastern Core Strategy stakeholder meetings.

So, there was an abrupt jump from (1) steady consultation via regular multi-stakeholder meetings about the viaducts and the Eastern Core coupled together to (2) the suspension of the multi-stakeholder meetings, a decoupling of the viaducts from the Eastern Core, and the City announcing after six months of silence a vision for the future of the viaducts, and then seeking feedback on that vision through open houses and a survey, but not meaningful consultation. The vision of the viaducts was never presented at multi-stakeholder meetings, which is where the SRA’s and GWAC’s concerns about traffic on Prior / Venables would almost certainly have been raised.

## **GWAC Wants Restoration of Meaningful Eastern Core Strategy Consultation**

GWAC would like to see the recoupling of planning about the future of viaducts with the Eastern Core Strategy process seen in the Fall of 2011. Staff should bring back either a single report about the viaducts and Eastern Core, or separate but cross-indexed reports about the viaducts and Eastern Core, that make clear the implications of what’s planned for the viaducts on the Eastern Core.

## **GWAC Wants Traffic Concerns Addressed about the Malkin Connector and Venables / Prior**

Considerable traffic already cuts through Grandview-Woodland, particularly along East 1st Avenue, which is essentially a highway dividing the neighbourhood. The volumes of traffic cutting through Grandview-Woodland’s side streets is also a concern. Traffic reduction in Grandview-Woodland and other Vancouver neighbourhoods is desirable for reasons of livability, health, safety, environmental concerns, and “greenest city” aspirations.

The Mayor’s July 2012 press release also listed five measures as “among his priorities.” One of those measures was:

Pursuing the Malkin connector to divert traffic, including heavy industrial, off residential streets of Strathcona and Grandview Woodlands and onto designated routes.

The Malkin connector, which had been a relatively minor planning item in Eastern Core Strategy consultation before July 2012, suddenly became an important item as a result of the Mayor’s press release. There has been no consultation in Grandview-Woodland about the Malkin connector, and this raises concerns for people in Grandview-Woodland. GWAC would like to see these concerns addressed before a decision is made about the viaducts.

GWAC would also like to see the staff address the concerns about Venables / Prior that it and the SRA raised in June / July of last year and again in 2013.

Sincerely,

The Directors of Grandview-Woodland Area Council (GWAC)

[www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac)

Cc: Strathcona Residents' Association;  
Brian Jackson, Director of Planning;  
Jerry Dobrovoly, Director of Transportation;  
Karis Hiebert, Central Area Planning;  
Kirsten Robinson, Central Area Planning;  
Devan Fitch, Strategic Transportation Branch;  
Lon LaClaire, Strategic Transportation Branch

(This letter can be found on the GWAC website at [www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/articles%20and%20media/13-03-02GWAC\\_Viaducts.pdf](http://www.vcn.bc.ca/gwac/articles%20and%20media/13-03-02GWAC_Viaducts.pdf))