



9th September 2013

Brian Jackson
General Manager, Planning and Development
Vancouver City Hall

Dear Mr. Jackson:

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.” – Jane Jacobs

Further to the conversations between you, your staff, Directors of the Grandview-Woodland Area Council (GWAC), and other residents of Grandview-Woodland, this letter is our response to your public statements that the processes leading to a new **Grandview-Woodland Community Plan** need to be and will be re-set.

GWAC, which has taken a prominent leadership role in the discussions on the Plan – with hundreds of residents attending our meetings and more than a thousand signing petitions of support for our position -- agrees with you that what might be called the first phase of the Community Plan process was seriously flawed. This letter includes specific recommendations that we believe are of vital importance to ensure that a new Grandview-Woodland Community Plan is achieved in a way that will encourage the greatest level of community support.

We note that this letter discusses process issues only and does not refer to specific program, land-use or zoning proposals outlined in the *“Emerging Directions”* document.

1. Community Plan Management

Recommendation 1.1: That there be established a Joint Management Group to manage the development of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan; that the Joint Management Group be comprised of an equal number of participants chosen (a) by City Planning, and (b) by the Grandview-Woodland community at large; and that the chair, with vote, be a Planner.

GWAC believes that the primary failure of the Community Plan process to date has been the lack of coordination between the Planners and the community at large in regard to land-use policies and suggested rezoning policies. We note that no specific mention of land-use or rezoning options were made during any of the workshops and open houses prior to the publication of the *“Emerging Directions”* document on 1st June 2013.

GWAC believes that this failure was structural and will be avoided in the future by the implementation of a Joint Management Group, in which the community and the Planners jointly manage the process of developing the Community Plan. GWAC notes that a switch from a top-down process to one that is more balanced and consciously designed to ensure bottom-up community participation was a feature of the highly-successful Vancouver planning of the 1970s through the 1990s including City Plan and Community Visions. We believe those successes need to be replicated in the GW Community Plan of 2012-2014.

Responsibilities of the Joint Management Group shall be as outlined in the revised Table 2 of the Terms of Reference (TOR) described below.

Recommendation 1.2: That community-led Working Groups for Community Amenities, Low-Income Housing, and Community Engagement (and possibly other areas) be established, funded and resourced sufficiently to undertake detailed research and policy option development.

We note that Section 8.1 of the TOR specifically discusses the uses and purposes of Working Groups. However, we further note that no Working Groups were created during the first phase of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan process. GWAC believes this was a significant mistake, and we recommend the creation of community-led Working Groups to undertake detailed research and policy option development that will be fed into the Community Plan process.

These Working Groups must include two groups -- Community Amenities and Low-Income Housing -- which were barely discussed in the first phase. We also believe there is value in establishing Working Groups for Arts & Culture, Heritage, Transportation, Land Use & Zoning, Parks and Recreation, and Local Economy.

In addition, a further Working Group must be established specifically to engage in outreach to those sections of the Grandview-Woodland population (including but not limited to youth, Chinese, Vietnamese, First Nations, and renters) who have not yet been able to engage in the process to a useful degree. This particular Working Group would take over and supplement the responsibilities of the PACE Group.

GWAC further recommends that these Working Groups be funded and resourced sufficiently to properly undertake their tasks.

Recommendation 1.3: That the community have a genuine opportunity to state their approval (or disapproval) of the Final Draft Community Plan before it is submitted to City Council for Final Approval; and that the Joint Management Group determine the method and format of such community approval.

Recommendation 1.4: That at least one mail drop addressed to all households in Grandview-Woodland be undertaken, giving information on all Community Plan recommendations, with sufficient lead time to allow for community participation in Community Approval (see 1.3 above)

GWAC believes it is imperative that some form of Community Approval process be included within the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan after the Final Community Plan is drafted and prior to the

submission of the Final Community Plan to City Council for Final Approval. We recommend that the Joint Management Group discuss and finalize these arrangements.

Those discussions notwithstanding, we strongly recommend that these arrangements include at least one full household mail drop. We note that the second bullet point of Section 7 of the TOR (Civic Engagement Participation) calls for the use of “*new tools and technologies to support broader general awareness,*” and the third bullet point in the same section requires the “*provision of clear information*”. These implementation of these sections have clearly not worked because a significant percentage of the Grandview-Woodland population is still unaware of the Community Plan process or is aware of it only through media stories reporting on controversies.

A final full household mail drop will ensure that the entire community has an opportunity to read and comment on the Final Plan before it is submitted to City Council for Final Approval.

Recommendation 1.5: That Table 2 of the Terms of Reference be re-drafted.

In order to build in Recommendations 1.1 through 1.4, we recommend that Table 2 of the TOR (“General Roles and Responsibilities”) be redrafted as follows:

	Manage Process	Process Advice	Outreach	Issues & Opportunities	Drafting Policy Options	Policy Testing	Drafting Plan	Plan Approval
Joint Management Group	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community			✓			✓		✓
Working Groups		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
City/Regional			✓					
Developers		✓	✓					
City Staff	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
City Council								✓

2. Process Components

GWAC believes that the first phase of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan process failed to properly explore a number of possible process components that could increase both the quality of the Community Plan and its acceptance by the community. In this section we discuss a number of components that we believe should be included in the re-set process.

Recommendation 2.1: That policy suggestions be developed and framed with a clear description and rationale of the problem to be solved, and with multiple option solutions rather than with no-choice single plans.

GWAC believes that certain important aspects of policies included in the “*Emerging Directions*” documents did not include an understandable rationale for their inclusion. The level of additional density required, for example, was not explained and neither background statistics nor other justifications were advanced. These important matters need to be fully unpacked and explained in everyday language.

GWAC also notes that section 8.2.2. of the TOR states that the Community will “select preferred options”, and that Community Stakeholders and City/Regional Stakeholders review “policy options”. However, the “*Emerging Directions*” document contains no such options but, rather, suggests single (no choice) policies. GWAC is certain that the addition of multiple options will significantly enhance the debate over solutions.

Recommendation 2.2: That each sub-area of Grandview-Woodland be treated individually for programming and policy development (including land-use and zoning policies) to improve local involvement and control.

Recommendation 2.3: That tools such as the PlanIt kit be included in policy development for the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan.

GWAC has been made aware of the PlanIt kit used for local planning in certain areas of the United States. Information about the PlanIt kit can be found at <http://www.fastcoexist.com/1681625/connecting-citizens-to-their-government-by-turning-it-into-a-game>. GWAC believes that tools such as PlanIt will increase the involvement of certain population segments that have been less engaged than others in the Community Plan process to date.

Recommendation 2.4: GWAC recommends that the individual sub-area plans created through workshops and similar programs as determined by the Joint Management Group be integrated in a final formal charrette.

Recommendation 2.5: That land-use and zoning policies be brought in incrementally throughout the timeframe of the Community Plan only as required by *actual* density and other requirements.

3. Schedule Considerations

Recommendation 3.1: GWAC recommends that there be a twelve-month extension from 1st October 2013, with City Council approval in October 2014.

Section 6.2 of the TOR suggests an 18–21 month schedule for the completion of the Grandview-Woodland Community Plan. GWAC notes that you and your staff have already indicated that an extension to this schedule will be required. In earlier correspondence we suggested an extension of six months, meaning that City Council approval would take place in July 2014. However, we note your own statements that a period longer than six months will be necessary to meet the new process requirements.

Recommendation 3.2: GWAC recommends that the “spot-rezoning freeze” discussed in Section 6.2.2. of the TOR be extended to the new date of approval of the Community Plan by City Council; and, further, that no developments based on the rezoning proposals defined in the “*Emerging Directions*” document be excluded from this extension of the “spot rezoning freeze”.

GWAC is concerned that certain developers may balk at a further extension of the Community Plan schedule; and some may attempt to move forward on construction of major projects outside of current zoning allowances. GWAC recommends that section 6.2.2. of the TOR be strengthened to ensure that any rezoning suggested in the “*Emerging Directions*” document not be implemented through spot rezoning until and unless such rezoning is included in the Final Approval of the Community Plan.

GWAC is pleased to forward you these recommendations, which, we anticipate, you will include as part of your Report to City Council on September 25th, 2013.

Yours sincerely

Jak King, President

On behalf of the Board of Directors of the Grandview-Woodland Area Council.
604 253-6232

cc: Mayor Gregor Robertson
Clr. George Affleck
Clr. Elizabeth Ball
Clr. Adriane Carr
Clr. Heather Deal
Clr. Kerry Jang
Clr. Raymond Louie
Clr. Geoff Meggs
Clr. Andrea Reimer
Clr. Tim Stevenson
Clr. Tony Tang
Dr. Penny Ballem