



FALSE CREEK
RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

I am here this afternoon, on behalf of the False Creek Residents Association and its members in Crosstown, to speak about the DTES Planning process.

The City intended a process to ensure that the lives of low income people would be improved, a process that would ensure the inclusion of vulnerable peoples and that would inform the implementation of the City's housing plan.

While we totally endorse those objectives, in our opinion the strategies that were devised to achieve those ends have had the unintended results of alienating many people from the process, and creating a divisive and destructive forum.

The management of the process was put in the joint hands of a Charitable Foundation that has no accountability to the community, and a neighbourhood association that was dominated at the time by a well-known activist cell. As a result, many felt both bullied and harassed. For the first year and a half, the Strathcona Residents Association refused participation because of these concerns. Most of the LAPP was taken up attempting to resolve internal

disputes. You have the submission from Scott Clark, Executive Director of the Aboriginal organization, ALIVE. This documents a history of violence, harassment and intimidation. You have the submission from Pete Fry of the SRA, again documenting the dysfunction of the existing committee and urging a more inclusive process.

Those of us who were excluded from the main process joined forces to participate, in the Inner City Neighbourhood Coalition. You have a substantive submission from our group's coordinator Judy McGuire, plus her covering letter which speak to the flawed process.

After 2 years of work, we have an Emerging Directions document that lacks substantial support from any of the diverse factions.

The map refers to Downtown Eastside Communities, however, there are no toll gates or borders. My building for example, is on the northwest corner of the boundary at Keefer. What happens across the street is of critical interest to me.

The co-Chair of the FCRA, Patsy McMillan, lives on the southeast corner of the Thornton Park border. For those older members of council, these bizarre twists and turns will no doubt remind you of Gracie's finger.

My point is, although Vancouver may be a collective of neighbourhoods, each of us is a full citizen of the whole city. Lines on the map may or may not determine how we live our lives.

The timelines of the planning process must be extended to ensure that local DTES plans are integrated into the entire city, that we do not continue past practice of governments at all levels, to isolate social problems in one corner of town, that we do not set one standard of behaviour for middle class neighbourhoods, and another for low income neighbourhoods.

The challenge is to support and nurture communities while ensuring a high quality of life across the whole of Vancouver.

We totally oppose the notion of a “Rental Only” zone. This idea has been discredited throughout North America. Similarly the requirement for 60% social housing is highly discriminatory, putting an added burden on this area to absorb increasing numbers of high needs individuals who often come here direct from federal and provincial correctional institutions.

Like the Grandview Woodlands plan where towers suddenly emerged, this notion of an all rental zone and the requirement for 60% social housing has not been subject to any broad based scrutiny. I have made many attempts

to engage the Housing Centre to determine whether there is any empirical basis for this recommendation. So far, they have not been able to produce any research. On the contrary, Best Practice indicates that integrated models are most successful at creating livable communities.

That said, I want to commend Planning staff for untiring efforts at attempting to pull together a meaningful process. Senior Planner Tom Wanklin has made every effort to hear from the broader community. Although we remain hopeful that he can integrate the input from the broader community into a plan that has more buy-in, we recognize that there is a vocal self-appointed poverty caucus that is pushing in the opposite direction.

Any resolution will take time.

Our association urges council to disband the current LAPP, extend the time frame, and develop a process that better reflects the aspirations of all.