

10 Key issues Speaking Statements on Bayview Roundhouse Developments

People for Sensible Rezoning



Issue: Overstepping Previously Approved Zoning Limits

Supporting Point: The new rezoning application significantly deviates from prior agreements, effectively undermining the promises made to the community.

Rationale: The Roundhouse Bayview proposal is not just another development project; it represents a promise, a pact made with the community. Over 15 years ago, the City approved a rezoning amendment, one that was sought out by Focus Equities. In return for this amendment, the developers agreed to refurbish the Roundhouse and the surrounding heritage properties. However, years later, the Roundhouse remains untouched. Now, the same developer returns, not with fulfilled promises, but with a request to more than double the previously agreed-upon zoning density. The current proposal suggests constructing 9 buildings, a steep increase from the formerly approved 5. It's not just about numbers; it's about the trust the community places in both developers and the City. By allowing such drastic changes to previously approved plans without holding developers accountable for prior commitments, we risk eroding public trust and setting a dangerous precedent for future rezoning requests.

Issue: Disruption of Local Aesthetics

Supporting Point: The proposed rezoning will drastically change Victoria's skyline.

Rationale: Victoria isn't just another city; it's a testament to history, culture, and a unique blend of serenity and vibrancy. Tourists flock from all corners of the world, not to see skyscrapers but to immerse themselves in the city's downtown historical charm. By drastically altering the skyline and making it resemble Vancouver, we risk not only losing our unique identity but also the very essence that draws people here. It's not just about preserving a view; it's about safeguarding the soul of Victoria.

Issue: Overburdening Infrastructure

Supporting Point: The rezoning contradicts the Victoria West Neighbourhood Plan.

Rationale: Urban planning is a delicate balance of development and preservation. The Victoria West Neighbourhood Plan, developed with years of thought, consultation, and foresight, maps out a vision for the community's future. This proposal, with its surge in density, threatens to disrupt this vision. Songhees pathways, parks, and roads are more than just infrastructure; they're community lifelines. Overburdening them risks reducing their utility, creating congestion, and diminishing the quality of life for every resident.

Issue: Neglect of Heritage

Supporting Point: The proposal undermines the significance of the Roundhouse and other heritage properties.

Rationale: Our heritage sites are more than bricks and mortar; they are chronicles of our past, standing testament to our city's history and progress. The Roundhouse, among others, stands as a reminder of times gone by. But this proposal threatens to relegate it to a mere backdrop, overshadowed by towering new structures. The unanimous opposition from the Heritage Advisory Panel isn't just a bureaucratic objection; it's a clarion call to protect the very heart of our city's history.

Issue: Disregard for Public Opinion

Supporting Point: Growing voices among Victoria's voting and tax-paying residents have begun consistently opposing this project.

Rationale: The true mark of a democratic society is its responsiveness to the voices of its people. Of late, and citizens in Victoria have become truly aware of what this project entails, despite efforts to prevent that, more and more of them have begun to truly voice their concerns and opposition to this project. To move forward without heeding these concerns isn't just an oversight; it's a profound dismissal of the very people the City pledges to serve. For democracy to thrive, public sentiment must not only be heard but genuinely considered.

Issue: Ignoring Expert Advice

Supporting Point: The City Council overlooked recommendations to reduce the density.

Rationale: In every field, there are those with expertise, experience, and a deep understanding of the intricacies involved. The City Planning Staff, with their vast knowledge of urban planning, have raised red flags about the project's density. Their recommendations aren't arbitrary; they're grounded in data, foresight, and a commitment to the city's welfare. Overlooking such informed advice not only risks the project's success but also the long-term well-being of our community.

Issue: Ambiguity in Site Remediation

Supporting Point: The contamination and remediation plans for the site remain unclear.

Rationale: Safety isn't a luxury; it's a right. Every resident deserves the assurance that the ground beneath them, the air around them, is free from contamination. But with this proposal, such assurance is shrouded in uncertainty. Clear, transparent plans for site remediation aren't just bureaucratic necessities; they're foundational for community trust. Without them, we risk not only potential environmental hazards but also the erosion of public confidence.

Issue: Uncertain Retail Success

Supporting Point: Doubts persist about the retail viability within the Roundhouse, even if the proposed buildings are constructed.

Rationale: The promise of bustling retail spaces, thriving businesses, and vibrant community hubs is tantalizing. But the shadow of doubt cast by experts like Collier Strategy and Consulting gives pause. A project's economic feasibility isn't just about construction; it's about creating spaces that resonate with the community, that are sustainable and vibrant. Ignoring expert concerns risks creating ghostly retail spaces, devoid of life and community spirit amidst a tangle of skyscrapers.

Issue: Due Diligence Concerns

Supporting Point: The City has not thoroughly vetted the developer.

Rationale: Trust is a two-way street. As residents place their trust in the City to make informed decisions, they expect the City to exercise due diligence in its dealings. A comprehensive examination of the developer isn't just a formality; it's a critical step to ensure the project's integrity, viability, and alignment with community values. That due diligence has been called for repeatedly and been ignored. Without it, we're navigating uncharted waters without a compass, risking both the project's success and public trust.

Issue: Violation of Prior Agreements

Supporting Point: The proposal contradicts the first rezoning amendment from over 15 years ago.

Rationale: Promises are the bedrock of trust. Years ago, a pact was made with the community—a promise of development in harmony with preservation. Today, that promise is in jeopardy. Deviating from prior commitments isn't just a change in plans; it's a breach of trust, a signal that agreements can be easily discarded. Upholding past promises isn't just about honoring a contract; it's about preserving the very fabric of community trust.