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Subject: [EXTERNAL] Feedback on Temporary Use Permit for 502 Columbia Street
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Dear Council

I am writing today to provide feedback on the proposed Temporary Use Permit for 502 Columbia Street.

I have several points I want to make with regards to this notice first.

The first is the radius of which this notice was served to residents on Columbia Street. I am a tax paying owner who lives in the condo high rise complex located at 668 Columbia Street (The Trapp Holbrook Building), two blocks to the west of the address of the proposed change. I did not receive any notification regarding this proposal in my post box, neither did any of the neighbours in my building that I spoke with. The only reason I heard of this proposed permit change was from a friend of mine who lives in the 500 block of Columbia street who received a notice in his Canada Post box. This change in permit if successful will profoundly change Columbia street and the effects of this change will be felt several blocks in all directions of 502 Columbia Street. I understand this notice may have been printed in the local papers, but I, like many of my neighbours, do not read the local papers on a regular basis. A change in the purpose of an anchor building such as the former Army and Navy building should have been distributed to every residential tower on Columbia street. The methodology you asked for feedback will leave many residents who will be affected by this change with no real opportunity to provide feedback as they were not aware of the proposed change.

Second the language used in this notice calls this shelter an Emergency Response Shelter. This notice should have been clearly worded for what the intended purpose of this facility is, a "Homeless Shelter".

Thirdly, a three year change in permit usage although not permanent is not a "temporary" change. Temporary implies a short duration three years is a substantial period of time and during which this shelter could greatly change the entire direction, feel and demographic of Columbia Street. This is not a minor request being made and in my opinion Council should have canvassed a much wider area for feedback than what they did with a much clearer message.

Feedback on the actual request:

I see first hand on a daily basis the realities of Columbia Street and the ramifications of Council's decisions as I have a dog and walk him 3 times a day every day on Columbia Street (at approximately 4 am, mid day and around 8 pm).

Hyak Square and Columbia Street, especially in the warmer months, have attracted a large group of homeless that have made this area their regular residence. I regularly see homeless people urinating, defecating, consuming alcohol, using marijuana, and using harder drugs via needles and crack pipes all in plain sight of passerby's. This summer I saw a homeless man drop his pants in Hyak square, straddle the public water fountain and wash his anal area. This is disgusting and completely unacceptable.

There are many times I do not feel it is safe for my wife to walk alone on Columbia Street and quite frankly there are times I do not feel it is safe for me to walk alone on Columbia Street. Yet I rarely if ever see foot patrols by police in this area. My understanding is Council does not want the homeless to feel oppressed by the police. As a person who has chosen to be an owner of a home on Columbia Street and who pays Council's salary this is an unacceptable situation. Council needs to serve the people who are law abiding and pay their taxes.

In addition to being a frequent walker of the neighbourhood, I am also on the Strata council in my building and I know the realities of the crimes that the homeless and drug users bring to this neighbourhood. For a period of several weeks this summer on a near daily basis criminal(s) scaled the public stairs located near Front and Mackenzie Street climbing past fencing and onto the roof of the Paramount followed by climbing onto the common property and breaking into the Trapp Building. On a near daily basis cars and storage lockers were broken into and bicycles were stolen. Additionally, there was thousands of dollars of damage done to several of the building's doors and locks. Even after the break in's slowed via the roof of the Trapp building the break in's continue to happen via the garage door facing Front Street, most recently last week. My understanding is the plan for this proposal is to have the homeless residents access 502 Columbia Street via Front Street. Meaning there will be a frequent stream of homeless clients walking past the Trapp Building's garage door on Front street and the stairwell that was used to break into the building. I do not see how this will lead to anything but an increase in break in's and thefts in the Trapp Building and surrounding residential towers. Once again, why was our building and other buildings

in this neighbourhood not given a formal notice in the mail?

If Council allows this 3 year homeless shelter permit to pass I believe it will increase the open air drug use, increase the break and enters and the overall crime level in this neighbourhood. I do not see many businesses wanting to open new ventures on Columbia Street and any pre-existing business will likely look to move to more desirable and safe neighbourhoods. Similarly, I also believe the shelter will make the neighbourhood completely family unfriendly, making it a marginalized neighbourhood during the day and a dangerous neighbourhood at night.

Columbia street and the "Original Downtown" area of 502 Columbia Street is on the precipice of becoming the new Downtown Eastside, filled with crime, drugs and a magnet for the Lower Mainland's homeless. I see this 3 year "Temporary" permit application as being the watershed moment for the direction of Columbia Street. I understand Council wants to assist with the homeless problem, and I am not opposed to opening a homeless shelter, but not at this location and not at the expense of the entire neighbourhood's safety and economic future.

I am strongly opposed to this proposal. Council needs to start serving residents that live in this neighbourhood, pay taxes, financially invest in its future and want a safe neighbourhood to live in. If this proposal goes through I will seriously consider voting with my feet and look at discontinuing to call New West my home.

Thank you

Dennis HALLIGAN