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June 27, 2018

Mayor Gregor Robertson and Council
City of Vancouver
453 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Dear Mayor and Council:

***Re: Amendments to the Chinatown HA-1 and HA-1A Districts Schedule,
Design Guidelines and Policies***

The Urban Development Institute (UDI) remains troubled by the City's haphazard approach to the *Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan* and the rushed proposal to amend it and the *Chinatown HA-1 and HA-1A Districts Schedule*. If implemented, *the changes will create a* negative precedent for civic planning and other established area plans throughout the City. We respectfully request that Council not move forward with staff's recommendations as proposed.

The *Chinatown Neighbourhood Plan* that was approved in October 2012, following more than ten years of community consultation and engagement with all stakeholders, resulted in a balanced *Plan* which preserves heritage while allowing economic growth for merchants and more housing to accommodate the residential growth occurring in our City and region. Now, with less than 100 days until the municipal election period, it is now poised to fundamentally change, with little meaningful consultation with the local small businesses and landowners.

If approved, the changes will undermine the certainty and integrity of the City's planning processes and could call into question recently approved plans like the Cambie Corridor and False Creek Flats and future area plans under development like the Broadway Corridor. In Chinatown, our members purchased land and followed the rules established by Council under the approved *Neighbourhood Plan*, but now, projects in conformance have been halted and today, what is, in effect, a downzoning is now being recommended by Staff. With this precedent in mind, with what certainty should our members acquire land? What impetus do our members have to go through extensive planning processes, if they can be reversed without adequate consultation and due process? To that end, what is stopping the City from fundamentally changing the rules on the newly approved Cambie Corridor or any other approved plan? If these amendments in Chinatown proceed as proposed, it will set a dangerous precedent where uncertainty in purchasing and planning around area plans will adversely affect the development industry's ability to deliver housing.

Council also just approved an *Affordable Housing Delivery and Financial Strategy* because "Vancouver is in the midst of a housing crisis, with serious impacts on residents and the city's health, diversity, and vibrancy." However, this proposal for Chinatown will result in fewer housing options (including social housing units) being built, in an area walking distance to downtown Vancouver and two SkyTrain stations. This is incredibly inconsistent with the purported goals of addressing our housing crisis.

These changes are also being proposed without an informed economic development lens. We recommend that before any further substantial decisions are made, at a minimum, the Coriolis Report from 2015 be updated with today's statistics. This is critical given the current work on the *City Core 2050* initiative.

The recommendation to amend the *Chinatown HA-1 and HA-1A Districts Schedule* and the *Rezoning Policy*, are substantive and will have impacts beyond Chinatown to other area plans. We ask that this Council reject them, or at least, because of the proximity to the municipal election, defer this report to the incoming Council. This pause would allow for a more adequate consultation with all stakeholders, including businesses and landowners, and properly assess the economic impact of what is being proposed. The potential impacts of not doing as much, we believe, are too great.

Yours sincerely,



Anne McMullin
President and CEO

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