



**URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE – PACIFIC REGION**  
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July 28, 2017

Mayor Richard Stewart and Council  
City of Coquitlam  
3000 Guildford Way  
Coquitlam, BC V3B 7N2

Dear Mayor and Council:

***Re: Austin Heights Neighbourhood Centre Density and Height Review***

The Urban Development Institute (UDI) would like to thank Coquitlam staff for consulting with the development industry regarding the *Austin Heights Neighbourhood Centre Density and Height Review* through our Liaison Committee with the City and more directly with our members with landholdings in the area. UDI is supportive of staff's recommendations to lift the moratorium on high-rise development in the Neighbourhood Centre as well as their work with industry, stakeholders and local residents.

We would like Council to understand that UDI does not normally endorse down-zonings because of the increased risks to the industry as a whole. For project proponents, down-zonings can be problematic because financial commitments to lenders and land vendors are made early in the development process and adjustments become increasingly difficult to make at later stages. Projects may have to be cancelled, deferred, or prices increased - all of which continues to hinder affordability in our region.

While we recognize that some density is being lost relative to the 2011 *Austin Heights Neighbourhood Plan (AHNP)*, we believe what is being proposed is balanced and will be more palatable to the local community, especially with the urban design enhancements.

UDI was involved in the development of the 2011 *AHNP* and was supportive of it. At our Coquitlam Liaison Committee, members expressed disappointment when the moratorium was put in place. We were pleased when Coquitlam agreed to move forward with the *Austin Heights Neighbourhood Centre Density and Height Review*. Although the neighbourhood is not adjacent to the Evergreen Line Extension, it is still an important growth area that is receiving a Frequent Transit Network level of service.

Staff have conducted a thorough review of the issues and had a consultation process, so it is now time to lift the moratorium after six years. We have one recommendation. UDI does not take issue with the proposal to including Austin Heights in the *Citywide Density Bonusing Program*. We recognize that local governments prefer the flexibility of municipal-

wide programs, but we suggest that some funding from the *Citywide Program* flow to Austin Heights – especially with the growth that they will be accepting.

We would be pleased to participate in the next steps of the implementation process – the *Austin Heights Servicing Assessment* and the *Commercial Tenant Relocation Policy*. The latter *Policy* is particularly important to the industry because it may have broader implications for other areas of the City.

UDI asks that Council now approve the proposed changes to the *Austin Height Neighbourhood Plan* (and the *Zoning Amendment Bylaw*) as outlined in the June 30<sup>th</sup> staff report, so the moratorium on high-rise projects in the Neighbourhood Centre can be lifted. We look forward to working with the City on future plans and policies that bring balanced and sustainable growth to Coquitlam.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne McMullin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anne McMullin  
President and CEO