

From: [PlanningAlias](#)
To: [Cramer, Jacob](#); [Gothard, Nancy](#)
Subject: FW: Comments for Public Hearing Regarding City of Courtenay Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 3141, 2024
Date: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 10:22:48 AM

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 19, 2024 10:05 AM
To: PlanningAlias <planning@courtenay.ca>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Comments for Public Hearing Regarding City of Courtenay Official Community Plan Amendment Bylaw No. 3141, 2024

Dear Council Members,

We are writing to express our strong opposition to the proposed redesignation of the end of 11th Street to an Urban Corridor. While we understand this hearing is primarily about the bylaw, it's crucial to consider the broader implications, including a 104-unit apartment complex this bylaw would pave the way for. We believe this decision will fundamentally change the character of Courtenay and absolutely will change our neighborhood, and ask that you consider our concerns.

The proposed development vastly exceeds what was ever communicated to us and represents a complete reversal of the city's previous stance. In fact, we understand that the expectation will be that new zoning will be written to accommodate whatever project is feasible. These current plans seem to be limited only by what the environment can handle without the building sinking into the river.

As owners of a property directly adjacent to the future development site, we believe this project will have severe impacts on our community, environment, and our home's tranquility.

Unique Character of Beckensell Avenue

Beckensell Avenue is a quiet, very unique avenue located along the popular Riverway walking path and backing onto the Courtenay River. This river is home to an incredible array of wildlife, including bald eagles, herons, salmon, seals, beavers, otters, and even sea lions. The city's commitment to the environment has been praised, notably in a CBC podcast for efforts to restore an industrial area to an estuary just meters away. Developing this land contradicts these values and risks disrupting this vibrant ecosystem, impacting Courtenay's charm and reputation.

The street currently has a total of 6 houses. If this bylaw sets in motion the expected development, there will be 104 units on the same area of land as the 3 homes next to it. It's almost impossible to imagine the traffic, noise, and general disruption this will bring to this neighborhood and downtown.

11th Street, though currently overgrown, provides public access to the river. During the summer, locals use this route for a refreshing dip. We believe there are better uses for this land that could make this access more visible and serve the community and visitors and provide continued public access to the river.

Local Legacy

The properties in question were previously owned by the well-known Laver family with deep roots in Courtenay. The residents of Beckensell Avenue are some of the longest-term residents in the city. We purchased our home from Mr. Woodenson, who spent 35 years beautifying it and considered it a life's work. We continued his passion, maintaining and enhancing the property. Mr. Woodenson even expressed happiness that his home had passed to a family who loved it as much as he did.

Two years ago, we agreed to purchase two adjacent lots from Mike Laver. At that time, the city informed us that only a small building could be constructed on the land, which suited our plans. We considered a small house or café with a dog park for the many people walking their dogs along the Riverway. Unfortunately, Mr. Laver passed away while documents were being finalized, and then the property became unavailable for over a year before being relisted and despite our best efforts to find the funds, our financial circumstances prevented us from purchasing before it was sold to a developer.

Impact on Our Home and Lives

Redesignating this land to an Urban Corridor and the subsequent development will have a devastating impact on our home and enjoyment of our yard. A 104-unit rental apartment complex towering over the large garden we have carefully been cultivating, intruding on our privacy, and disrupting the peaceful environment is heartbreaking. We have invested more time and money into our yard than one of our full-time jobs, creating a haven for family, international students, and other guests such as incoming new Ukrainian residents during 2022. As the house ages, we have recently begun making significant investments into renovations as well. Visitors and boaters & tube-floaters on the river regularly comment on the tranquility and charm and history of this special neighborhood and our yard in particular. We predict those comments will shift to expressions of regret when construction begins.

We have long term plans to continue our investment in this property, envisioning another generation of care. With news of the development, we feel defeated. The construction noise will be difficult to live next to, and the resulting building will reduce sunlight, compromise privacy, and forever diminish the peacefulness we have cherished and invested so much into.

Community Impact and Alternatives

Beckensell Avenue is central to Courtenay and rich in character. It provides quiet public access to a beautiful riverside full of wildlife and recreational opportunities. The community deserves a greater say in the future of this property, which will dramatically change Courtenay, impact traffic, and block river access. We believe the newly planned

community meeting is a good step, and we hope that this is promoted and various possible uses and positive/negative impacts will be discussed openly.

We believe a park would be a more suitable use for this land. Has the city considered swapping this land for another publicly owned plot that does not jeopardize the environment, access to the river, and unique legacy of this street. While developing high-density housing is tempting on this beautiful quiet site, we can look to other great cities that have resisted such temptation and benefited from preserving green spaces. Imagine if the City of Vancouver had decided to develop Stanley Park 150 years ago?

Conclusion

We understand the city's support for high-density housing and the provincial efforts to address the housing crisis. However, this development will have long-term impacts on Courtenay's direction. Balancing housing needs with preserving our community's character, history, environment, and wildlife is crucial.

Thank you for considering our concerns. We urge you to defer the application for the OCP Amendment Bylaw No. 3141 explore alternatives that align with our community's values.

Sincerely,

Nicole and Rian Bowden

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[REDACTED]

