

PlanningAlias

From: Angela Gilbert
Sent: Monday, November 29, 2021 8:32 AM
To: PlanningAlias; CouncilAlias
Subject: 3040 Kilpatrick Proposal - The Missing Middle
Attachments: Letter for public hearing 3040 Kilpatrick.pdf

Please find attached a letter touching on some of the points I want to address at the public hearing, but will unlikely have enough time to cover within the five minute time limit.

Thank you for taking the time. I do recognize that this file and correspondence, including my own, regarding it has taken time, and I appreciate it.

Angela Gilbert

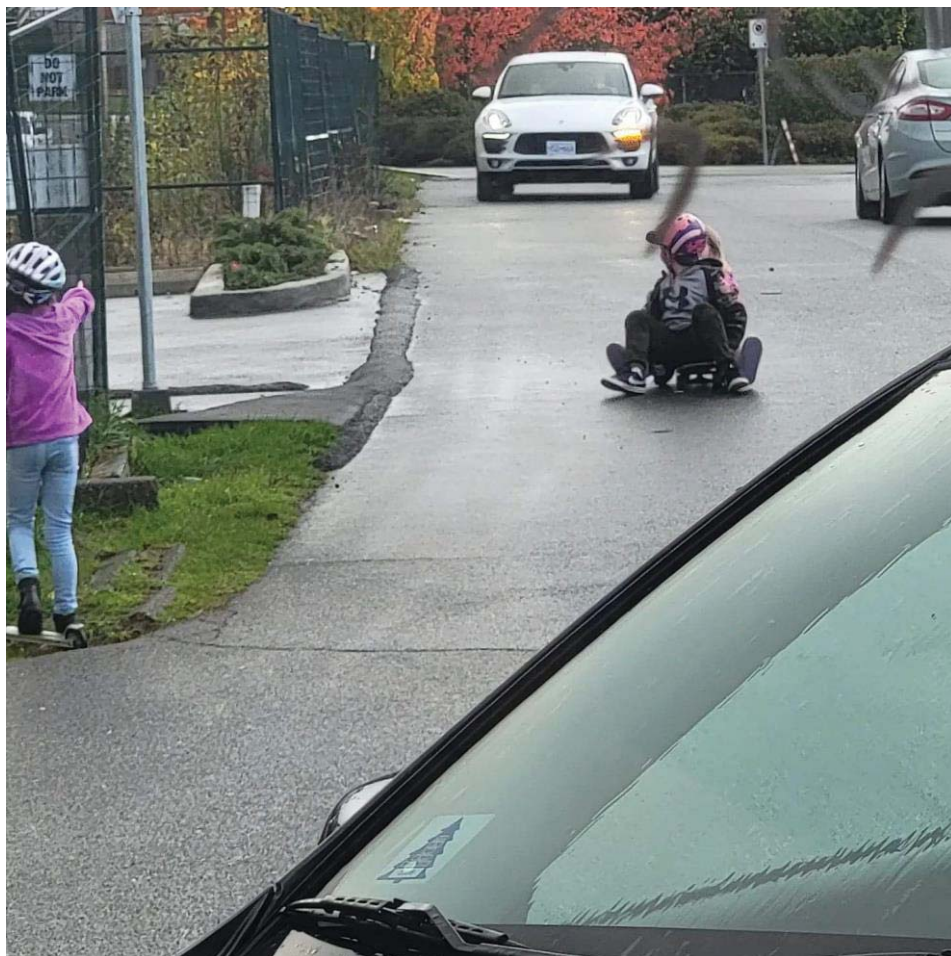
221 / 211 – 3030 Kilpatrick Ave. Courtenay

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: 3040 Kilpatrick Ave proposal and the “missing middle”.

This proposal is a significant change from a small single-story coffee shop in one corner of the lot to a 5-story residential tower requiring “wobble room” for setbacks. I understand that municipalities are trying to address the “missing middle” and densify, and didn’t oppose the first two phases of this project because I agree that housing is needed.

However, buildings to the maximum height allowance is not addressing the missing middle. Instead, it’s creating one. Addressing the missing middle should see developments between single-family homes and maximum height / density buildings. This proposal is a maximum height and density building. Addressing the missing middle should see more variety of housing, not housing that is all the same. A mix of single-family homes, apartment buildings of various heights and density, row houses, patio homes, and work / lives like those that we live and work in at 3030 is the missing middle. Addressing the missing middle should see well-planned communities that mix residences and businesses in a complementary way that works for both. It should result in walkable neighbourhoods with green space. Neighbourhoods where people live because they want to, because they are nice, well-planned communities; Communities that people want to stay in long term, not ones that are transitional for people until they can find or afford something better.



1. This is where children from Newport play.

What we're seeing though, is single-family homes and apartment buildings pushed to the maximum allowable height and setbacks or even to variances beyond the maximum, with very little in between. Green space is being traded for roof top common spaces, parking is being traded for density, and small businesses are not being considered and integrated into the plan. In the developments proposed or recently built in Courtenay, the middle, between high density apartment / condo blocks and single-family homes, is often still missing. It's just on a slightly different scale than in larger cities where the maximum height is higher, and perhaps maximum height restriction changes will be next.

In the case of this specific project, all parties agree that this proposal will impact our businesses at 3030. There is no debate about that.

A commercial space would draw the public closer. A residential tower will block us from view and keep the public farther away, reducing exposure for the businesses at 3030 and for the commercial spaces on the ground floor of building 2 in the proponent's own development. There has been no willingness to change the type of residential building, or to have a commercial element. It's just another tower to the limit of allowable height that maximizes density and minimizes green space and amenities. These units are not social or affordable housing, and are not particularly suited to families, seniors, or anyone with mobility issues.

It's been very frustrating to see this get to this stage without a single change to address the concerns expressed by neighbours.

The question then becomes, as the development team put it, whether this project is worth the impact on the small businesses at 3030. These are small businesses, not big corporations, and believe me, we would rather be focusing on our work than pleading our case to you, but we have to. Our business, our livelihood, is being backed into a corner, figuratively and literally by this proposal.

With this proposal, 3030 will keep all of the financial obligations and disadvantages of a commercial area, but will lose the existing exposure and the potential gained exposure of development under the current zoning. We will lose the professional "feel" of being in a commercial area, closed in behind and below this tower. Any impact on our business will be felt, and we are genuinely worried about surviving construction.

It is council's prerogative to change zoning if it believes it's in the best interest of the community. The reality of that is that it changes the rules to the benefit of some and detriment of others though. You may not want to be, but you really are picking winners and losers. If this goes forward, we have a lot to lose. It's our livelihood, our sole family income, how we put food on the table and pay our bills. It's our future retirement.

We bought our property knowing that the lot at 3040 was commercially zoned. So did the developer. We never thought for a moment that the zoning would ever be changed to block businesses behind a residential tower. You are deciding whether a developer from Port Moody gets to change the rules at the expense of Courtenay small businesses. Whether his gains will be our loss. This is not a matter of NIMBY, anti-development complaints. The concerns of those at 3030 are real, legitimate concerns about the viability of our businesses if this rezoning is allowed.

Developments like the work / lives at 3030 are the missing middle, and this proposal is putting us at real risk.

For the city, 41 units is a small percentage of those being discussed by council in the last month. The first two phases supplied 132 units of housing. We did not object to those, though in the staff report from September 2017 shows that staff were concerned at that time about the density of those units. Here is an excerpt from that report:

Staff support the proposed commercial and residential uses but have concerns with the proposed scale and density of the development in this location. Increased density near major commercial areas is encouraged, but the proposed development has one of the highest residential densities in Courtenay in an area where access to schools, playgrounds, active park space and civic amenities are quite limited. The proposed development will also add density at a location on Kilpatrick with poor sightlines due to the existing grade and curvature of the road. The site itself is quite tight and the applicants are seeking relaxations to maximum building height, parking ratios, parking stall widths, parking aisle widths, and building setbacks in order to accommodate the proposed density and given the shape of the development site.

Whatever happens, Council and the planning department will go on to the next project, and the developer will move on. Those of us living and working in the neighbourhood will be living with the decision and its impacts on our homes and businesses forever. For us, it's personal, it's emotional and it matters.

If you decide to go ahead with this proposal, I hope you will help us survive construction by attaching a stipulation to the permit that the developer can't park anything or store anything on the north driveway during construction so that it can maintain two-way traffic as much as possible. The construction phase is the scariest part for us and we simply can't rely on a promise to try not to block access without any way to enforce it. Customers don't like driving through a construction zone. Since the neighbouring businesses had to mark all of their parking and mark the curb line between us and them as a fire line to prevent, first construction workers for phases one and two of Newport, and then its residents from taking all of their parking, customers can't avoid the construction by parking elsewhere for a few minutes, and they shouldn't have to.

I would also like to see the entrance to the north driveway widened, as the developer re-did the sidewalk near completion of phase two and cars can't enter and leave at the same time, they have to wait, causing congestion on the road.

The planning department should look at accessibility issues and see what can be done. People from Newport with mobility issues requiring wheelchairs or walkers use the north driveway to access Kilpatrick as the sidewalk from the development has a significant number of stairs. They won't be able to safely do so with the current proposal. If the parkade entrance was on the south driveway, rather than the north, perhaps a sidewalk could have been added for these people to use on the north side between the building and the driveway.



2. People requiring wheelchairs and walkers use the north driveway. The sidewalk at Newport to access Kilpatrick has a lot of stairs. The proposal would have the parkade exit / entrance to their left and they would no longer be able to (relatively) safely use this driveway to walk on. This photo also shows the short distance between entrance to the existing Newport surface parking lot, which will remain, and the road. Adding the other entrance / exit where people have to turn left to exit just above it is likely to cause accidents when a large building limits visibility, and will certainly cause congestion at the street due to the narrow opening of the driveway where cars entering have to wait for cars leaving.

I hope that council can help us with these things if this goes ahead. My first choice would be for the lot to remain commercial, which would benefit surrounding businesses instead of harming them, or a smaller scale mix of commercial and residential, but if this is going to go ahead as is, dealing with these issues would help increase the chances that our business will survive construction.

My apologies for writing yet again, but I know I will not be able to cover all points within the 5 minute limit at the public hearing.

Thank you for taking the time.

Angela Gilbert