



Catholic Diocese of Victoria
Office of the Bishop

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April 10, 2018

Mayor Barbara Desjardins
and Council
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, BC V9A 3P1

Dear Mayor Desjardins and Council,

RE: HOUSING THE POOR AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE CRD

There are numerous poor on Vancouver Island and particularly in the Capital Regional District (CRD). The poor include the mentally ill, the physically disabled, Indigenous people, persons with addictions, persons who are unable to compete in our contemporary economic system, and those who feel disenfranchised from our community.

Homelessness is the most visible expression of poverty here in the CRD. More than anything, including education, social status, ethnicity, ability or disability, birthplace, personal talents and ambition, the problem requires a redistribution of income. A way forward may be to ensure that all municipal and regional services are delivered equally and impartially to all regardless of income, status, location or circumstances. A periodic review may then be implemented to ensure service is provided to all with preference to none: that too is social justice.

Municipalities are subject to many aspects of provincial legislation including the Local Government Act (LGA). The LGA (Sections 482 and 483) provide the opportunity for bonus density zoning as a means of achieving affordable housing in the municipality. Creating sustainable community, densification and infill are policy objectives in every Official Community Plan (OCP) in the CRD. Densification must be tempered with good city planning to achieve environmentally responsible development and to ensure the careful and proper redevelopment of a scarce and diminishing resource: residentially zoned land in the Urban Containment Boundary. We encourage you to work with your developers and community investors. Look for opportunities to implement true bonus density zoning to achieve sustainable community. While this does provide for the construction of attainable housing, such housing responds more to the lower middle class. The poor can't afford this 'affordable housing' because it is still 'too expensive' and beyond their means to pay for it.

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Article 25.1) acknowledges housing as a basic human right:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT		
For Information:		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> CAO	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mayor/Council	
<input type="checkbox"/> Bill		
RECEIVED: APR 13 2018		
Referred:		
<input type="checkbox"/> For Action	<input type="checkbox"/> For Response	<input type="checkbox"/> COTW
<input type="checkbox"/> For Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Council Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> IC



Canada announced the National Housing Strategy (NHS) on November 29, 2017. While the Federal Government has not legislated housing as a basic human right, Prime Minister Trudeau did acknowledge, "Housing rights are human rights. Everyone deserves a safe and affordable place to call home." The NHS is a huge step forward in recognizing this basic human right for all Canadians; \$40 billion dollars over 10 years for new housing units, and for the repair and renewal of existing housing stock and for the reduction of home shelter use by 50%. There is opportunity in this strategy and we encourage you to identify affordable housing projects in your municipality that qualify for federal funding.

If you have intentions of looking after the poor, to address the problem of poverty in your communities, you will need some authority over income distribution. We encourage you to work with British Columbia, through the Union of B.C. Municipalities (UBCM), to draft policy resolutions which provide more legislative tools and authority to municipalities so they can do more in their efforts to achieve social justice and affordable housing for all the people in their communities. We acknowledge the UBCM Housing Strategy recommendations released on February 1, 2018 and in particular recommendation 1.7 which asks the province to provide local governments with the authority to create zoning for affordable rental housing.

Please consider the following initiatives as part of your program this year to empower the local governments to provide social justice and house the poor:

1. Declare 2019 the year of **Social Justice and Housing the Poor** in your municipality and in the CRD. This will provide a focus for your work at the municipal council tables.
2. Work with your developers and community investors to find opportunities to implement true bonus density zoning and/or to participate in the National Housing Strategy.
3. Workshop with your staff to identify policy resolutions for the UBCM Convention in Whistler this fall; all in aid of providing social justice to all of your citizens.
4. On occasion, undertake an informal audit of your service delivery to ensure you are giving service to all with preference to none.

I appreciate that you have taken the time to read this letter, and the efforts of the government and the municipalities in striving to work together to build a better future for British Columbians.

In Communion,

Most Reverend Bishop Gary Gordon
Bishop of Victoria

Members of the Capital Region Social Justice Action Committee:

Roland Wauthy	Colwood	Rick Sousa	Saanich
Margaret Varga	Esquimalt	Andrew Conradi	Saanich
Patti-Anne Kay	North Saanich	Sid Jorna	Sooke
Joe Calenda	Oak Bay	Mary Warner	Sooke
Frances White	Saanich	Christine O'Leary	Victoria
Yvonne Hsieh	Saanich	Fr. Rolf Hasenack OP	Victoria