

From: [Jonah Ross](#)
To: [Bill Brown](#)
Subject: FW: Bylaw 3142 (Small Scale Family)
Date: June-21-24 1:10:00 PM

Copy of correspondence forwarded to:
Bill, Director of Development Services

From: Graeme Hill [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, June 20, 2024 12:37 PM
To: Council <Council@esquimalt.ca>
Subject: Bylaw 3142 (Small Scale Family)

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Good day!

Short version: endorse the change *but it doesn't go far enough.*

Long version: the purpose of the bylaw amendment cannot simply be to comply with provincial direction. This council was elected in no small part on promises of housing reform, and deep concerns about housing affordability. Despite increased housing starts, our population continues to grow faster than our housing supply and vacancy rates stuck at around 1.5%. Rental rates in the Victoria/Esquimalt CMA increase an average of 41% on tenant turnover, the highest rate in Canada. Hopefully none of this is new information, but it's the basic context we operate in.

The new provincial mandate may help, slightly, by increasing minimum density in single family lots. However, it does nothing to address the reality that Esquimalt's multi-family lots are already amongst the lowest density in the region through excessive restrictions on square footage. With huge setbacks in all directions, a floor area ratio starting 0.4 and lot coverage as restricted to as little as .25, our multi-family lots are practically custom-designed to ensure small, low quality apartments on large, underutilized lots.

Any developer who found themselves in possession of a half acre zoned multi family in June of 2024 ought to be begging the city to rezone into single family lots. Instead of being allowed to build eight 950 sq feet apartments, they could have sixteen or more 2000+ square foot townhomes. This is a huge improvement, which comes from being permitted to build 3 stores and not have to cede living space to driveways, parking lots

and unused front lawns.

Simply put: Esquimalt must implement the provincial mandate while rationalizing multi-family zoning. The current change means current single family lots will provide more living space and higher effective density than our multi-family lots. This is utterly counterproductive.

I propose that in addition to the changes specified in Bylaw 3142, RM 1 through 3 should be collapsed into a single multi-family category, effectively identical to the new RSM-2 category, but with no limitation on number of dwellings and a slightly increased minimum dwelling unit size of 430 sq ft (40 sq m). This allows multi-family lots to fulfill their function of providing additional density over areas traditionally zoned single-family use, ensures massing in line with new minimums (rather than below them), and immediately limits

The council should also resolve to identify what changes to RM-4 zones would be required to ensure appropriate density and dwelling quality.

This change should be instituted as soon as practicable, ideally at the same time as the currently proposed changes in Bylaw 3142. Anyone who opposes the adoption of this measure should be required to justify why existing multi-family zoning should be smaller, less dense and lower quality than the absolute minimums required by the province.

I invite this email to be read at the meeting, and hope to attend myself.

-Graeme