

City Council Members

Thank you for the opportunity to address you today. My name is Harry Range and I live with my wife at 7112 Bow Crescent. I currently have no intentions of modifying our current home so I speak to you more as a member of the community of Bowness, and in particular, my neighbours in the High Hazard Flood Risk area on and near Bow Crescent.

I do not support the proposed land use bylaw being proposed for this area. I view the proposed building restrictions as an overreach of City's authority and responsibility. The City should not make decisions on behalf of property owners as to the sorts of risks they are prepared to endure in this regard. I also do not agree with the footprint expansion restriction on new builds or replacement builds that are being proposed.

Regarding the footprint issue.

In the big scheme of flood events the very small total acreage that larger house footprints could add to the total area under water is infinitesimally small. I do not know if the city has actually done any mathematics on this but I have done a very quick analysis which suggests that if everyone (extremely unlikely) in the high hazard flood fringe added 1000 ft² to their footprint it would only raise the water level by 5mm which is basically unmeasurable. Everyone that lives in this area has done so knowing full well that rivers can flood and all my neighbours are prepared to accept that potential event. The homeowners will either get what insurance they can to cover damage events or they will willingly self insure. This is not the City's responsibility.

Telling owners who bought river front property, or near river property, and paid accordingly for that land value, that they now cannot replace their 60 year old 1200 square foot bungalow with a newer, larger, safer, home is simply not fair and completely unnecessary. The City is actually not protecting anyone by proposing this. I do understand that the city is potentially going to allow vacant lots to still be built upon with side boundary restrictions. Firstly I agree that they should be allowed to do so. But then, how does the city justify allowing an empty lot owner to build almost any size of footprint with minor restriction, and not allow very old, needing to be replaced homes, in some cases already vacant, with a similar footprint. There is no equity in this approach.

Regarding living spaces below the 100 year flood level.

What risk is it to build a lower level of a home, below the 100 year flood level, be it a walk out or a basement, that contains a living room, an office, a bar, etc. Would people in such a space not know the water is rising ? Would they not already know a flood in the area is imminent? Would they not see the water coming in the cracks of the doors and windows and then simply go upstairs and evacuate the area. Even if they were sleeping in a basement bedroom and the water rose enough to get them wet while sleeping, would they not wake up and get out fast. Of course they would.

We already live in such a “nanny state” and now the City is proposing to make it even worse. Let people make their own decisions on the risk they are prepared to take.

The City should be providing what they already do in so far as safety standards, building codes, types of dwellings, and the provision of services, and emergency services and leave these other risks to the people that have already prepared to accept them.

Reducing risk to human life is definitely something worth striving for but this proposal does not accomplish that. The best solution for this problem is upstream mitigation.

Please take this back and undertake to do more consultation and collaboration with the affected community members. This will result in a more common sense and practical solution. Thank you.