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City of Vancouver
453 W. 12th Ave
Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

September 23, 2013

Dear Mayor & Council:

Re: Heritage Amenity Bank and Transfer of Density Report

Heritage Vancouver would like to congratulate the City of Vancouver's Heritage staff for the recommendations for the Heritage Amenity Bank and Transfer of Density program. We fully support the report, including all of the following recommendations:

1. Expand use of the Transfer of Density tool to areas beyond the City's Central Area
2. Extend the C3A area which is eligible to receive up to 10% transfer through Development Permit Board Approval
3. Direct staff to give higher priority to heritage amenity when allocating public benefits in rezoning applications, until such time as the Heritage Amenity Bank balance reach equilibrium
4. On a one-time and immediate basis, apply \$4.8 million of unallocated public benefit contributions to a reduction of the Heritage Amenity Bank
5. Institute an annual review of the absorption target and the effectiveness of the proposed measures, and bring forward to Council for consideration further policy recommendations to bring the density bank into balance, including the possible use of unallocated CACs to address absorption target shortfall

We are pleased to see that this report is supported by the General Manager of Planning & Development Services and we urge council to give their full support to it as well.

The Heritage Amenity Bank and the Transfer of Density has been a very effective tool in conserving Vancouver's Heritage buildings and consequently Heritage Vancouver has been requesting the reinstatement of the bank for a number of years. This has been a long-standing issue, as the Density Bank has been frozen and unavailable as a heritage conservation incentive since 2007. A great deal of bonus density was generated at that time to assist in the economic stimulation of Gastown, Chinatown, Victory Square Hastings Street.

While we note that these recommendations will be effective in facilitating the process of returning the Heritage Amenity Bank to more reasonable levels, there is still much more that needs to be done to absorb the large amounts of density created under the Heritage Building Rehabilitation Program. Until this existing density is absorbed, the Heritage Amenity Bank will not be fully functional. As this is the most important tool that the City has to provide heritage conservation incentives, it is imperative that the outstanding bonus density be absorbed as quickly as possible. Further measures may be necessary to deal more aggressively with this issue, and we urge Council and staff to ensure that this situation is closely monitored, and remains a high priority.

We applaud these recommendations as a bold new direction, and urge Council's support for their implementation. On behalf of our membership, we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janet Leduc". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Janet Leduc, Executive Director
Heritage Vancouver Society

Cc Penny Ballem, City Manager
Brian Jackson, General Manager, Planning and Development
Marco D'Agostini, Senior Planner, Heritage Group
Vancouver Heritage Commissioners