

THE 127 SOCIETY FOR HOUSING

1050 Expo Boulevard Project



July 7, 2009

Dear Friends

We last wrote to you concerning the Expo Boulevard project in October of last year. At that time we were filled with enthusiasm as the project appeared to be developing on schedule (almost!) and construction costs were falling dramatically. However we couldn't have known how quickly the worldwide economy would deteriorate and the impact that it would have on our province. Add

to that, a provincial election in the Spring, with promises on housing made and unkept, and it can be appreciated the difficulties that we are facing in the development of our project.

Moreover, you will have read conflicting reports in the media on the Government's resolve to proceed with the original twelve affordable housing projects outlined in the 2007 agreement between the Province and the City. Prior to the election, announcements were made in Victoria that six of the projects would be fast-tracked and that \$172M would be allocated for those, yet no evidence has been shown of starts on any of these. Blame has been placed on the City, unjustifiably, for delays in the permitting process.

Housing Minister Rich Coleman said that the other six sites were "nowhere near being ready for this year" and implied that one site would be too expensive to develop. Communications with BC Housing have been poor and we have had difficulty in establishing where our project stands in relation to the overall schedule. We know that there are extraordinary costs related to our site because of the difficult foundations and the proximity of the sewer line, pumping station, and Cambie Street Bridge. Our design is some 40 % complete and could move ahead quickly with the appropriate budget approvals. However there is absolutely no indication that Government funding will be made available in the near future for the completion of project development and construction on our site.

Should the Expo Boulevard site not be approved by BC Housing for construction, we need to look for other options to meet the 127 Society's commitment to help provide affordable housing in the south downtown core as soon as possible. We are meeting with City staff to see if other sites could be available for development either separately or jointly with the St James Society. We are also in discussion with elected officials to put pressure on the Government to meet their advertised goals.

We hope that our next newsletter will contain more hopeful news.

With kind regards,

Hilda Gregory (President)

Graham Rawlings (Vice-President)