



URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE- OKANAGAN CHAPTER

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City of Kelowna
1435 Water Street
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Attention: Doug Gilchrist, City of Kelowna

Subject: ModelCity

Over the past year we have become increasingly concerned with the City of Kelowna's use of its new ModelCity system to help guide the City's land use decisions, while at the same time providing minimal transparency about how the system actually functions. This lack of transparency prevents those who are directly impacted by this system from gaining a clear understanding of how it works, which creates an asymmetry of knowledge between the municipality and the development community. This asymmetry of knowledge prevents all forms of analysis and critical assessment of this system by any party outside of the municipality itself, including those most impacted by the results.

We have recently heard of development projects that have been assessed by the ModelCity system and subsequently turned down, in part because of the ModelCity assessment results. A system that carries as much weight as this new ModelCity system carries should be open and transparent, in line with our democratic norms and the City's own openness to public and stakeholder engagement.

We are all well aware of the ever growing power and influence of technology in our everyday lives. As new technological tools are developed and utilized in both the public and private realms, it is crucial to ensure that the key stakeholders and members of the public continue to have a voice when it comes to the way these tools are shaped and the impact that they have.

As such, we are asking the City of Kelowna for the opportunity to allow our Kelowna Liaison and Technical Issues Committees to examine the inner workings of the ModelCity system. Specifically, we are asking the City of Kelowna to provide the documents that detail all of the inputs that are inserted into the ModelCity system as well as how they are manipulated and factored into creating the map that the system comes out with. This information will allow us to conduct a technical review of the system and determine if there is a need to provide scrutiny that could help improve the way the system works. Our purpose in understanding how the model functions is to ensure that there is enough, and the correct, data going into the model to ensure a reliable outcome. We would also appreciate the opportunity to engage with the City on what happens after the model provides an output.

We believe that it is important to establish a positive precedent with this issue since it is likely that further technological tools will be created in the future that may have further impacts on how the City

of Kelowna assesses development applications. In order for us to continue to provide meaningful feedback, we believe that it is important for us to become a part of these discussions as well so that we can continue to work in partnership to build strong communities.

We look forward to further discussions with you on this important matter.

Sincerely,

URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OKANAGAN CHAPTER

Per:

Jennifer Dixon, Executive Director of UDI Okanagan

Luke Turri, Chair of UDI Okanagan