

**From:** [cityclerk](#)  
**To:**  
**Subject:** FW: TUP 3rd Avenue - Letter to Mayor and Council  
**Date:** Friday, April 19, 2024 1:03:53 PM

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**From:** Mia Reimers [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, April 18, 2024 9:16 PM  
**To:** Mayor and Council <[mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca)>  
**Subject:** TUP 3rd Avenue - Letter to Mayor and Council

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Dear Mayor and Council,

I wanted to write a letter to be included in the Agenda for Monday's council meeting, but unfortunately missed the deadline. I've read all my neighbours' letters and would like to add a few of my own thoughts.

The letter I wrote to BC Housing on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, on which you were cc'd (below), expressed the same view of most of my neighbours – that I cannot support the Temporary Use Permit for the proposed housing at 397 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue, while the encampment still exists and is spreading throughout Lower Patricia Boulevard unimpeded. I tried to keep that letter focused on what was happening down on Lower Patricia and why it makes no sense to locate housing to assist vulnerable people and their addictions, immediately next to a dangerous encampment where drugs are ever-present and some are ready to exploit the vulnerabilities of others.

Now that I have read the concerns and fears of my neighbours, much of what they have said resonate with me and mirror what I have experienced. Particularly, that:

- the presence of the encampment and the toxic smoke, theft and violence that it brings to the Millar Addition has physical and mental health consequences for us, too. These detrimental effects are not being addressed, or even acknowledged

- living in our neighbourhood means being ever-vigilant. Every choice we make

in our lives (when to do yard-work, considering investing in renovations, putting up Christmas decorations etc.) is made with the cloud of the encampment over us (this is often literal – clouds of smoke). This is exhausting and draining. I have written to you before that I dread spring and summer. Some weeks I have phoned ambulance, bylaws, police or the fire department between 3-5 times

-People in the encampment are deforesting the escarpment and Patricia Boulevard. This has accelerated over the past year. The birch trees on Patricia Boulevard have been stripped of their bark. Since they are already old, they are dry and dying. Last year I asked a woman who was stripping birch what she was doing it for. She confirmed it was to light fires. Many trees have been cut down. Surely there are environmental impacts, not the least of which is dead trees being a fire accelerant

-Fire. The encampment poses a HUGE risk of fire to Lower AND to Upper Patricia. There are always fires burning down there, and structures are burned down all the time. If it continues, it is only a matter of time until neighbouring houses or businesses are burned down. Let's hope it is not with fatalities

-No other neighbourhood in the City deals with what we deal with. The Millar Addition requires its own town hall or advisory committee to the City

The issue of the Temporary Use Permit cannot be dealt with in isolation from all these other pressing issues.

As I expressed in my letter to BC Housing, the proposed temporary housing and the unchecked encampment cannot co-exist. I urge Mayor and Council to not pass the Temporary Use Permit, until such time that there has been serious consultation with the residents of the Millar Addition and neighbouring businesses, the fires and fire risk has been mitigated, and a detailed and coordinated plan with BC Housing has been created to bring the encampment to its end.

The number and strength of our letters demonstrates that the residents of Millar Addition are engaged and can be partners in finding solutions, and

together, we can do better for all the residents of Prince George.

Sincerely,

Mia Reimers

[REDACTED]

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Mia Reimers [REDACTED]

**Subject:** 3rd Avenue Temporary Housing Project

**Date:** April 2, 2024 at 7:12:52 PM PDT

**To:** [communityrelations@bchousing.org](mailto:communityrelations@bchousing.org), [baillie@bchousing.org](mailto:baillie@bchousing.org),  
[rchow@bchousing.org](mailto:rchow@bchousing.org), [athompson@bchousing.org](mailto:athompson@bchousing.org)

**Cc:** [Deanna.Wasnik@princegeorge.ca](mailto:Deanna.Wasnik@princegeorge.ca), [Kali.Holahan@princegeorge.ca](mailto:Kali.Holahan@princegeorge.ca),  
[mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca](mailto:mayorandcouncil@princegeorge.ca), [HOUS.minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:HOUS.minister@gov.bc.ca)

Good Evening Ms. Baillie, Ms. Chow and Ms. Thompson,

I attended the Community information session for 397 3<sup>rd</sup> Avenue Prince George on March 12<sup>th</sup>. Thank you for putting this session and the March 19<sup>th</sup> one on.

As I live on Patricia Boulevard, above the encampment and proposed temporary homes, I have a great interest in developments in the Lower Patricia area.

I anticipated being in support of the project for it to provide services and support to the unhoused residents of the encampment, and, most importantly, to address the encampment which has posed many safety and other challenges to my neighbourhood, the Millar Addition. I think I naively thought that BC Housing and the City of Prince George ("City") were going to present a coordinated proactive plan to use the temporary homes to start to phase out the encampment. In the question period, I was dismayed to hear that there was no direct coordination, except for the hope that encampment residents would seek temporary housing there, and that they would receive priority, but the encampment, as it is, would remain.

I no longer am in support of the project. Undoubtedly, though, it will go ahead. So, since BC Housing wants to be a “good neighbour” and keep the lines of communication open, I thought I would write to you with my concerns regarding the close co-existence of the unchecked encampment and your temporary housing project.

I use the word ‘unchecked’ above deliberately. This winter I was in communication with City’s Bylaw services about the encampment spreading along Lower Patricia Boulevard towards Second Avenue, asking them to enforce the bylaws as the City had recently passed an amendment to the Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw setting out the area for overnight camping. I include part of the email I received from Charlotte Peters, Manager of Bylaw Services on January 8, 2024:

“In terms of the growth you are seeing in the Lower Patricia Encampment, we are unfortunately still bound by the court decision. The decision does not define the exact area. Although the area where people can camp is defined in the Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw the decision trumps the bylaw and therefore it is expanding. The area of expansion is also city property.”

I do not agree with the City’s interpretation of *Prince George (City) v. Stewart* or *Prince George (City) v. Johnny*. However, you should be aware that if unhoused persons erect shelters along the perimeter fence enclosing the temporary housing site, Bylaw Services will not remove them, as it is on City property. I think this will seriously jeopardize the success of the project.

Because BC Housing’s proposed temporary housing project is located adjacent to the encampment, and because it is spreading, as Ms. Peters acknowledges, I think this is going to pose a significant hurdle to those vulnerable people who want to get help to eventually find stable housing. At a March 11, 2024 City Council meeting, the RCMP reported that:

“For us, Moccasin Flats is the busiest 300 metres we have in town and it will be for some time,” said RCMP Insp. Darin Rappel.

“We escort BC Ambulance in (mostly for overdose cases) for their safety and that’s also true of Prince George Fire Rescue. We are in there multiple times a day. It’s a vulnerable population (of 35 residents) and they are at risk of being robbed and beaten and assaulted. In turn, many of these victims are victimizers themselves, it’s a bit of hierarchy. There’s always somebody bigger and meaner than you around the corner and sooner or later you will be the victim.”

“There’s a significantly high rate of violence and an equally high rate of non-cooperation when we speak to the victims down there.”

Source: <https://www.princegeorgecitizen.com/local-news/crime-report-shows-lower-mainland-gangs-making-city-more-violent-8430751> March 12, 2024

I would note that the population of the encampment surges far above 35 people during the summer months.

When the City embarked on its centralizing campaign, which resulted in amendment to its bylaw, many unhoused people were in opposition to it because of the unsafe conditions in Moccasin Flats. As the above news excerpt shows, the conditions have worsened. I have concerns that the culture of criminality and open access to drugs in the spreading encampment is going to dissuade some vulnerable people from applying for the temporary housing in the first place. I am also concerned that those who enter your residences will fail in their endeavors to be free from their addictions since drugs and temptation are close at hand. Your website talks about finding success in a “caring community.” But, the fact is, is that there are elements in the encampment that

just want to profit from other people's misery and addictions. I question to City's identification of this site as the appropriate site.

Without a coordinated plan, an unintended consequence of the project may be a swelling of encampment residents and more violence, which, has a corollary effect on my neighbourhood. This project, and the other housing projects slated to open in the future will not, in and of themselves, solve the issue of the encampment. So far, neither the City nor BC Housing has communicated any concrete plan to move those of the encampment residents into temporary or permanent residences, should they not go voluntarily.

An additional concern is that with the current conditions, the non-profit housing operator you find will not be able to hire the staff necessary to always staff the site with 3 people. Workers generally do not want to work near violent places.

I find it profoundly disappointing that the only role of the City in the project (as identified in the power point slide on March 12<sup>th</sup>) is to put forward the site, lease it to BC Housing and provide site servicing. As mentioned, I would have liked to see in the presentation some thought as to how the project could start to address this dangerous spreading encampment. After all, the words "Homeless *Encampment Action* Response" are in the title of the program funding it.

I would like to close this letter with two suggestions.

One of the conditions for the program agreement could be for residents to declare that they have brought all their belongings with them and identify the place in the encampment where they had previously resided. Then, either BC Housing, or the City, should they become involved, could clean that particular area of that resident's discarded belongings. This would help clean up the encampment and be a visible reminder to its residents that other people are moving on to take advantage of the housing that is available.

Many of the encampment residents also have dogs. So, my other suggestion is that they should be allowed to have their pets in the temporary housing. Not allowing pets will only result in people refusing to leave the encampment.

Thanks in advance for considering my concerns and suggestions in this email. As the project develops, please continue to host other information sessions.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Mia Reimers

