



# COALITION OF VANCOUVER NEIGHBOURHOODS

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## **Why Isn't City Council Prioritizing Public Participation in Civic Process?**

The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods has written to Mayor Gregor Robertson and Vancouver City Council asking them to reconsider the City's recent decision to schedule vitally important public hearings during inconvenient daytime work hours.

These scheduled hearings include significant and controversial rezonings for the massive \$1.5 billion Oakridge Centre Mall project, for Southland's Casa Mia, as well as contested spot rezoning proposals in Kitsilano and other neighbourhoods.

The Coalition notes that public hearings held during traditional working hours severely limit the ability of most citizens to attend, imposing barriers to public access to City decision-making that are inconsistent with the recent publication of the Mayor's Engaged City Task Force Report. In particular, these hearings fail to meet any of the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2)'s core values that were included in the Task Force's recommendations.

Mayor Robertson himself stated on January 30 this year that "I've heard the concerns people have raised over how City Hall engages with residents. There's no question we can do better." However, such ideals appear to have been ignored almost entirely by the actions of Council in scheduling these hearings. Public access, input, and influence are priorities officially accepted by Council. These should be honoured and fulfilled.

The Coalition understands that evening and weekend hearings are inconvenient for Councillors and City staff but notes that this is the people's business and the people's convenience too. We eagerly await the Mayor and City Councillors' response to our letter.

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