

**FIRCREST NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION’S STATEMENT RE:  
PROPOSED SEPA THRESHOLD CHANGES**

*The Fircrest Neighborhood Association met on June 6, 2023, to discuss the proposal to adopt loosened state environmental regulations for new residential developments.*

The Fircrest Neighborhood Association understands the need for increased housing in the City of Vancouver and recognizes that these changes would increase the construction of single- and multi-family housing projects.

However, one role of government is to balance competing goals, and the goals that are supported by the SEPA process are important.

The State Environmental Policy Act known as SEPA has been around since 1971. The SEPA process helps cities analyze the environmental impacts of proposed construction projects while (1) protecting environmental impacts on floodplains, wetlands, trees, archeology and water and (2) mitigating impacts from traffic and surface run-off. These issues can affect other residents in the area.

The SEPA process acts as a safeguard, providing another “**pair of eyes**” to ensure our environmental and archeological treasures are preserved. SEPA offers an explicit “**guideline**” for environmental protection as well as providing an important process to appeal decisions. Changing the thresholds, especially the multi-family housing threshold from 20 units to 200, increases the probability that environmental and archeological issues will be overlooked, resulting in damages in the very areas that SEPA is intending to protect. It is also very concerning that there would be **no opportunity to appeal decisions in order to address SEPA-related concerns**.

The memo presented by the City Manager states that developments under 200 units rarely have issues arise through the SEPA process, but “rarely” indicates that there have in fact been instances when the SEPA process has discovered problems and led to mitigation measures.

The Fircrest Neighborhood Association (FNA) has consistently advocated for the environment and supported Vancouver’s rich culture of caring for the natural resources around us. The City of Vancouver has shown time and time again the value it places on green spaces and the environment. Loosening the state environmental regulations tilts the balance too much toward development and away from protecting the environment. It would be sad and concerning to see the City of Vancouver shift away from its own principles of environmental sustainability and the value it places on “parks, green spaces, and other natural systems” (December, 2022 Climate Action Framework).

Votes in favor - 14

+ 2 who had to leave the meeting early before all the revising/editing was done.

Votes opposed - 0

+1 who had to leave the meeting early before all revising/editing was done.

Reasons for opposition: Concerns about limited housing in the city and the resulting high cost of housing

Abstained - 0

**From:** [Don Steinke](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Cc:** [Cathryn Chudy](#); [Heidi Cody WCA](#)  
**Subject:** Written comment re Warehouse ordinance  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 25, 2023 11:24:44 AM

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the City of Vancouver. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Vancouver Planning Commission

I hope to provide the following public comment at your meeting today, July 25, 2023

Hello, my name is Don Steinke. I'd like to discuss resource adequacy. That's a common term in the field of electric energy. Will we have enough energy and will we have enough transmission. The answer is a triple NO.

No, we don't have enough energy, and No we don't have enough transmission, and No we can't even count on existing resources because the law requires us to phase out polluting resources such as the gas plant at Terminal 5.

Suggestions:

1. Consider adding a requirement that the roofs of all new warehouses (both small and large) be solar ready.
2. If possible, require new warehouses to have solar plus batteries and be net zero energy by 2030. The Inflation Reduction Act is providing huge incentives for solar and batteries between 2026 and 2032.
3. Require that all heating systems be heat-pumps.
4. Require the fleets to comply with the advanced Clean Fleets rule of California, within one year of California's requirement.
5. Make the facility transit friendly and bike friendly. Consider some e-cargo bikes.
6. Use traffic impact fees to reduce congestion and improve safety for the bike/ped/transit sector.
7. Require landscaping equipment to be battery electric.
8. Forbid truck idling. Provide compatible electricity for refrigerated trucks and crew-cab HVAC.
9. If gasoline or diesel fueling stations are included, require financial assurances up to \$50 million, in the event of a leak from a underground storage tank. The Federal requirement (\$1 million) is not adequate.

**From:** [Cathryn Chudy](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#)  
**Subject:** Citizen Communication  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 25, 2023 12:03:56 PM  
**Attachments:** [2023-07-25 City of Vancouver Planning Commission Public Comments.pdf](#)

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Please accept these comments for the July 25th meeting re: Proposed Warehouse Code Amendments

Thank you,

Cathryn Chudy

Vancouver resident

To: City of Vancouver Planning Commission and Staff  
Public Comments/July 25, 2025/Cathryn Chudy  
Re: Proposed Warehouse Code Amendments

I really appreciate the work of City staff reflected in the materials that are included in the presentation and Memo for the Warehouse Code Amendment process.

I am glad to see the thoughtful consideration of measures to minimize potential negative impacts on our community, and ensure that permitted large warehouses will not just provide economic benefit for Vancouver (job creation and tax revenue) but also address transportation infrastructure issues as well as align with climate and equity goals and priorities.

The listing of “fixes” to identified issues, addressing predictable impacts, and especially those relating to Climate Action Policy/Energy, are listed in the Memo and outlined in the slide presentation. I see these as a listing that is minimum and that can be strengthened.

The illustration on p.20 is more detailed and thorough, than what is listed in both the Memo (pp. 9-10) and slide presentation pages (pp. 22-24) and should be considered as additions for potential proposed code amendments .

Onsite renewable energy will require permitting that specifies that the warehouses be rooftop solar ready, so I would like to see this included explicitly in the code amendments, as well as many of the energy use and emissions reduction features that are seen in the p. 20 illustration.

The impacts that come with this size facility must be balanced with as many mitigation measures as possible built into the permitting and approval process, in order to ensure that our community has the protections it needs and that the alignment with our climate and equity policies is as strong as possible.

Much appreciation for your careful consideration of the Proposed Warehouse Code Amendments and public feedback on this.

Cathryn Chudy  
Vancouver WA resident

**From:** [Don Steinke](#)  
**To:** [Planning Commission](#); [Eiken, Chad](#); [Person, Mark](#)  
**Cc:** [Snodgrass, Bryan](#)  
**Subject:** Don Steinke's revised comments, on warehouse ordinances  
**Date:** Tuesday, July 25, 2023 8:24:43 PM

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**CAUTION:** This email originated from outside of the City of Vancouver. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hello, my name is Don Steinke.

Great presentations today.

Here are my revised comments [in blue](#) regarding warehouses.

I'd like to discuss resource adequacy regarding warehouses. Resource adequacy is a common term in the field of electric energy. Will we have enough energy and will we have enough transmission. The answer is a triple NO.

No, we don't have enough energy, and No we don't have enough transmission, and No we can't even count on existing resources because the law requires us to phase out polluting resources such as the gas plant at Terminal 5.

Here are some suggestions to consider for your warehouse ordinances.

1. Consider adding a requirement that the roofs of all new warehouses be solar ready. That's for both small and large warehouses. [That's more than orientation. It means the roof needs to be strong enough and the conduit in place before sheetrock is installed.](#)
2. Going beyond that, require new warehouses to actually have solar plus batteries and be net zero energy by 2030. The Inflation Reduction Act is providing huge incentives for solar and batteries between 2026 and 2032. [Your suggestion to require that 75% of the on-site energy consumption be renewable could increase demand for electricity from Clark PUD's fossil fuel power plant. The law requires them to phase it out by 2045, but we can and must phase it out sooner.](#)
3. Require that all heating systems be heat-pumps. [District heating with ground-source heat-pumps is ideal for large projects. Kudos to Melissa Von Borstel for bringing it up.](#)
4. Require the fleets to comply with the Advanced Clean Fleets rule of California, within one year of California's required schedule.
5. Make the roads near the project safe for pedestrians and bikes. Consider e-cargo bikes instead of trucks where appropriate.
6. Use traffic impact fees to improve mobility and safety for the bike/ped/transit sector.
7. Require landscaping equipment to be electric.
8. Forbid truck idling. Provide compatible electricity for refrigerated

trucks and crew-cab cooling and heating.

9. If gasoline or diesel fueling stations are included, require financial assurances up to \$50 million, in the event of a leak from an underground storage tank. The Federal requirement of \$1 million is not adequate.

10. Instead of lawns, plant native trees.

11. Ban diesel trucks built before 2010. (California has done that.)

12. Regarding building color, consider solar windows. They exist. I believe they're made in Germany.

13. Regarding proximity to SR 500 – the Orchards Intersection is one of the most congested in the County

14. <sup>re</sup> Brian Snodgrass's presentation on other developments. The conversation about trips generated seems to be business as usual, BUT, the Climate Amendment to the GMA requires we reduce per-capita vehicle miles travelled.