

MOTION ON NOTICE

3. **Every Neighbourhood for Everyone: Permitting Temporary Modular Housing and Low-Income Housing as an Option in RS and RT Zones**

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. The abundance of people impacted by homelessness in Vancouver represents a humanitarian crisis which the City of Vancouver is morally obligated to address;
2. On Wednesday, June 12, 2019, City of Vancouver staff released the 2019 homelessness count, which counted 2,223 Vancouverites who identified as homeless, the highest number since the City began tracking. This figure is a two per cent increase from 2018, representing the fourth straight year the number of individuals impacted by homelessness has grown;
3. These numbers express a slower growth rate of homelessness than in previous years, demonstrating that the actions taken by the City, including the provision of temporary modular housing complexes, are having a positive, though inadequate impact;
4. Homelessness disproportionately impacts systemically marginalized communities including: Indigenous peoples (39%), Individuals with mental health conditions (44%), or those with physical disabilities (38%). 81% of respondents who identified as homeless stated that they had lived in the city of Vancouver before they became homeless;
5. As of July 2017, there were 4,789 individuals waitlisted for social housing in the City of Vancouver.¹ Also as of July 2017, there was a 43% decrease in private SRO rooms affordable to those on Provincial assistance since 2007;
6. The BC NDP rolled out its Rapid Response to Homelessness Program in 2017, pledging \$291 million to build 2,000 modular housing units province wide, 600 of which were built in Vancouver, and an additional \$170 million to operate them. In the 2019 budget, the province announced another \$76 million to build an additional 200 modular units in BC;
7. In 2017, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau committed to cutting homelessness in half in a 10 year time frame;
8. On July 28, 2011, Council endorsed the Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2012-2021 which includes strategic directions to create more affordable housing, including housing that is affordable for low and moderate income households. The Strategy strives to increase the variety of affordable housing options across the entire housing continuum. (Policy Report dated October 25, 2016, entitled

¹ Housing Vancouver Update Presentation to City Council, July 25, 2017.

“Temporary Modular Housing Definition and Regulations: Proposed Amendments to Existing City-Owned CD-1 Sites, and Design Guidelines”);

9. In 2011, Vancouver City Council passed the Motion, *Modular Housing*, which directed the City Manager to undertake an expression of interest to ascertain the range of possible ties and partnerships available to pursue an initiative involving modular housing option, using city and private resources as an enabler, to address unmet housing need while sufficient permanent housing stock is being built;
10. In September 2016, City staff developed a three year shelter and housing demand and supply plan to better understand when and where the pressures will be experienced over the next three years as a result of the need to address the increasing number of individuals experiencing street homelessness. Temporary Modular Housing is included in the three year plan because it provides an opportunity to create more deeply affordable homes quickly and cost effectively;
11. On December 4, 2018, Vancouver City Council passed a *Motion Calling for 600 More Units of Modular Housing in 2019*, where by City Council directed staff to find sites for 600 more modular housing units;
12. Temporary Modular Housing targets low and moderate income households who have a need for transitional accommodation, and provide residence with a number of supports, such as life skills training as well as health and social services;
13. After a year of operations, many of the fears community members had about Temporary Modular Housing sites have subsided;
14. Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) is currently permitted in CD-1 districts, targeting vacant or under-utilized sites pending development. Under current Vancouver zoning by-laws, the land options for the provision of modular housing is extremely limited, and is quickly diminishing, as the need for additional TMH and the relocation of current TMH becomes necessary;
15. The current limitation of Temporary Modular Housing being solely single occupancy units has the unintentional impacts of prioritizing individuals while excluding low-income families, mothers and youth. There is a significant need to expand modular housing to include family-sized units, to meet the needs of these residents of our city;
16. Some areas of Vancouver remain predominated RS and RT zones, resulting in high housing prices and very limited land options for temporary modular housing under current by-laws;
17. Where zoning by-laws are overly restrictive and segregate uses unnecessarily, they can act as impediments to healthy urban development;
18. Amending Vancouver’s zoning by-laws to permit modular housing on RS and RT zones would provide the necessary options to meet the growing demand for

modular housing and will significantly impact the unprecedented levels of homeless in the city of Vancouver;

19. Those experiencing homelessness come from every neighbourhood of our city, and so housing for homeless and low-income residents should be available in every neighbourhood of our city;
20. Vancouver City Council is considering launching a City-wide Planning Process, where prior, City Council has expressed key goals and objectives to guide a City-wide planning effort, which includes:
 - a. Maintaining Vancouver as a diverse and inclusive community;
 - b. Increasing and protecting housing supply that is locally affordable;
 - c. Enhancing social well-being;
 - d. Planning for complete neighbourhoods, exploring new housing types and densities.
21. What is needed is permanent affordable housing, across the city. Modular housing is a relatively inexpensive option and can be built more quickly than traditional construction projects. Given the urgency of homelessness, temporary modular housing is needed too;
22. Homeless is not restricted by municipal or territorial boundaries and requires a joint approach, across jurisdictional lines, to successfully address all causes of homelessness and to provide the necessary services to immediately confront this humanitarian crisis.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to:
 - i. Explore and report back on opportunities to deliver Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) buildings for homeless residents, on RS and RT zoned parcels on private and City owned land that could accommodate the footprint, access to services and/or transit, timing of future uses, and site conditions by Q4 2019;
 - ii. If opportunities exist then the report back should identify policy tools that may be required to advance delivering TMH on RS or RT zones, including but not limited to, changes to the *Vancouver Charter* to enable Director of Planning authority to relax for “low cost housing for persons receiving assistance” in RS and RT areas, and/or new rezoning policies to enable the same.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to continue to explore, through the City-wide Plan as well as through implementation of Housing Vancouver and the Affordable Housing Delivery and Financial Strategy, additional possibilities for creating permanent homes for low and moderate income families and individuals in all neighbourhoods of the city, including:
 - i. The City of Vancouver (through the Property Endowment Fund or Vancouver Affordable Housing Endowment Fund) purchasing RS/RT

- properties to use for Temporary Modular Housing, with potential future use for permanent secure rental and non-market housing options;
 - ii. Consideration of the development of an Affordable Housing Land Acquisition Strategy, which would include a study into annual affordable housing land needs; estimated land costs; location selection criteria, and an Affordable Housing Funding Strategy including recommended levels of funding from taxation and new development;
 - iii. Exploring existing and emerging possibilities for family-sized modular housing units, in partnership with BC Housing and the Provincial Government;
 - iv. Exploring through the City-wide Plan the potential for pre-approving social and non-market housing projects in all parts of the city to make the development of affordable housing faster and less risky;
 - v. Exploring expanded partnerships with non-profit housing providers in the creation and operation of non-market housing;
 - vi. Ensuring that the important work to develop a comprehensive and representative City-wide Plan, doesn't delay the urgent work required to address the humanitarian crisis which is homelessness and the immediate need to provide housing for low and moderate income families and individuals in all neighbourhoods of the city.
- C. THAT Council direct the Mayor to continue to advocate to the Provincial Government and the Federal Government for adequate funding and resources to support a collaborative effort to immediately address homelessness within the region.

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