

## COUNCIL MEMBER MOTION

### 2. Slowing the loss of the last low income SROs in Vancouver

Submitted by: Councillor Swanson

#### WHEREAS

1. Single Room Occupancy Hotels are designated under the Single Room Accommodation By-Law (2003) which was enacted to discourage speculative investment and slow the loss of affordability in this critical low-income housing stock, 94% of which are located in the DTES;
2. Currently 180 SRO rooms in the DTES (The Avalon, St. Elmo, Pacific, and Arno) are offered for sale and are at risk of being gentrified by a new owner who may push existing low income residents out;
3. The city has already lost the affordability of hundreds of SRO units for low income people because new owner/investors gradually get rid of low income tenants, upgrade slightly, and increase rents by hundreds of dollars a month;
4. As the last rental home option before homelessness for many low-income Vancouverites, the loss of affordable SRO units through room and building closures and through increasing rents, is contributing to the inability of the City and partners to catch up with and reduce homelessness in Vancouver and the DTES;
5. The City's SRO Revitalization Action Plan and Housing Vancouver (2017) called for "a specific category in the Residential Tenancy Act for SRA-designated properties by tying rent increases to the room as opposed to the tenant in an effort to slow rent increases and tenant displacement (<https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/sro-revitalization-action-plan.pdf> page 28);
6. By regulating rent changes, landlords would still be able to increase rent by the allowable amount every year and would still be able to apply under section 23 of the RTA regulations ([http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws\\_new/document/ID/freeside/10\\_477\\_2003](http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/10_477_2003)) for rent increases over the allowable amount due to unexpected costs; and
7. The province has not yet implemented the City's recommendation and it is more urgent than ever.

#### THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT City Council, through the Mayor and staff, urgently ask the provincial government to tie rent increases to the rooms, not the tenancy in SRO designated properties, in an effort to discourage speculative

investment, slow rent increases, and discourage displacement of very low income tenants into homelessness.

- B. THAT staff investigate alternate ways to meet the goals in A, such as using business licences and/or amendments to the SRA bylaw that the City Council could implement under their existing Vancouver Charter authority and report back by Q2, 2020.

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