

MOTION

4. Recalibrating the Housing Vancouver Strategy post COVID-19

At the Council meeting on May 12, 2020, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on City Finance and Services meeting on May 13, 2020, in order to hear from speakers. Subsequently, due to time constraints, the motion was deferred to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on May 27, 2020 to hear from speakers, and for the Committee to engage in debate and decision.

Submitted by: Councillor Hardwick

WHEREAS

1. The City of Vancouver needs to make the right decisions going forward to create the housing we need in the period following the COVID-19 pandemic;
2. The [Housing Vancouver Strategy](#) (HVS) was passed by the previous City Council in 2017¹;
3. The Housing Vancouver Strategy's [goal is 72,000 new homes across Vancouver in the next 10 years](#) (between 2018 and 2027)²;
4. Population growth has been consistent at approximately 1% per annum over the past 20 years according to Statistics Canada [census](#) data. Based on this historical trend, a similar growth rate for the coming decade would amount to a population increase of around 66,000. In the City of Vancouver, the average household size is [2.2](#) individuals per dwelling unit (or "home")³;
5. The target of 72,000 new homes across Vancouver in the next 10 years multiplied by 2.2 would mean a population increase of 158,400 - more than twice the historical rate. A projected historical rate of population growth would imply instead a need for roughly 30,000 new housing units over the coming decade;
6. Population growth has generally come through immigration as opposed to domestic migration. While the federal government has increased immigration targets by around 20 percent since 2017, there is evidence that immigration will slow in upcoming years due to the pandemic. Even the increased rate of immigration, though, could not justify the large disparity between historical rates of population growth and the HVS targets;
7. Demand for different housing types may shift as a result of the post-pandemic realities. In order to plan effectively, it will be necessary to obtain more detailed data regarding the pipeline of development that has been underway since the approval of the Housing Vancouver Strategy; and

¹ <https://council.vancouver.ca/20171128/documents/rr1.pdf>

² <https://vancouver.ca/people-programs/housing-vancouver-strategy.aspx>

³ <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2016/dp-pd/prof/details/page.cfm?Lang=E&Geo1=CSD&Geo2=PR&Code2=01&SearchType=Begins&SearchPR=01&TABID=1&B1=All&type=0&Code1=5915022&SearchText=vancouver>

8. A revised and more accurate understanding of demographic needs and demand will assist in properly planning for the post COVID-19 reality. Setting excessively high targets will pressure the City of Vancouver to grant significant amounts of density at a low price, in an attempt to induce housing construction approaching the HVS targets. This will cost the City of Vancouver potential revenue, and will mean that the City abandons its commitment to having growth pay for itself.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to revisit the Housing Vancouver Strategy targets to align with historical and projected population growth based on census data.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to provide annual historical data since 2000 on the number of units approved through rezoning, the breakdown of housing types that have been approved, housing starts and net housing completions, and estimated zoned capacity for the City of Vancouver.
- C. THAT Council direct staff to confirm that annual targets provide only a rough estimate for growth, and not a strict requirement - i.e. targets do not need to be met every year.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to clarify whether the Vancouver Housing Strategy targets refer to net housing completions or gross housing completions.
- E. THAT Council direct staff to provide detailed inventory data through the [Open Data Portal](#)⁴ of housing starts, development projects anticipated in the pipeline (including form and type of units), and existing zoned capacity (disaggregated by local area) to inform this work.
- F. THAT Council direct staff to report back on the above for Council consideration by the Council meeting, June 9, 2020.

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⁴ <https://opendata.vancouver.ca/pages/home/>