



## REFERRAL REPORT

Report Date: September 22, 2020  
Contact: Michael Naylor  
Contact No.: 604.871.6269  
RTS No.: 14041  
VanRIMS No.: 08-2000-20  
Meeting Date: October 6, 2020

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Amendment to the Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan  
By-law for 1580 Vernon Drive

### **RECOMMENDATION**

THAT the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability be instructed to make application to bring forward a by-law to amend the Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan By-law, generally in accordance with Appendix A, to temporarily change the designation of the lands located at 1580 Vernon Drive [*PID 007-074-654, Lot A Block 59 District Lot 264A and 2037 Plan 18874; and Lots B and C Block 59 District Lot 264A Plan 18874, PIDs 007-074-671 and 007-074-697 respectively*] from Industrial to General Urban;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary By-law generally in accordance with Appendix A for consideration at the Public Hearing.

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

The City has continued to take action to increase the delivery of the “right” supply of housing to address the housing crisis. This has included using all available tools to deliver housing, particularly for the most marginalized, and to be as efficient as possible in addressing specific housing needs and opportunities when they arise. Council has taken a number of steps to take advantage of senior government funding to address the critical needs of people experiencing homelessness through the development of temporary modular supportive housing, on a time-limited basis, across the city and on private land. A number of these agreements with private land owners are expiring, and staff are seeking viable locations to relocate these buildings and construct new supportive housing.

The City-owned site at 1580 Vernon Drive has been identified as a potentially viable site for temporary modular supportive housing; however the site is currently designated for Industrial

use in the City's Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan. Residential uses are not permitted on lands that are not designated for General Urban use under the Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan. Therefore, this report seeks to amend the designation for this site on a temporary basis for up to 10 years in order to enable the site to be used for temporary modular housing (TMH).

### ***COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS***

Council policies that are relevant to this matter include:

- Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan (2013)
- Metro Vancouver's 2040 Shaping Our Future Regional Growth Strategy (2011)
- Housing Vancouver Strategy (2017)
- Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2012-2021)
- Homeless Action Plan (1995)
- Healthy City Strategy 2014-2025 (2014)
- Zoning and Development By-law Amendment to Delegate Discretionary Relaxation Powers to Expedite the Delivery of Low Cost Housing for Persons Receiving Assistance – RTS No. 12141 (September 2017)
- Temporary Modular Housing Design Guidelines (2017).

### ***REPORT***

#### ***Background/Context***

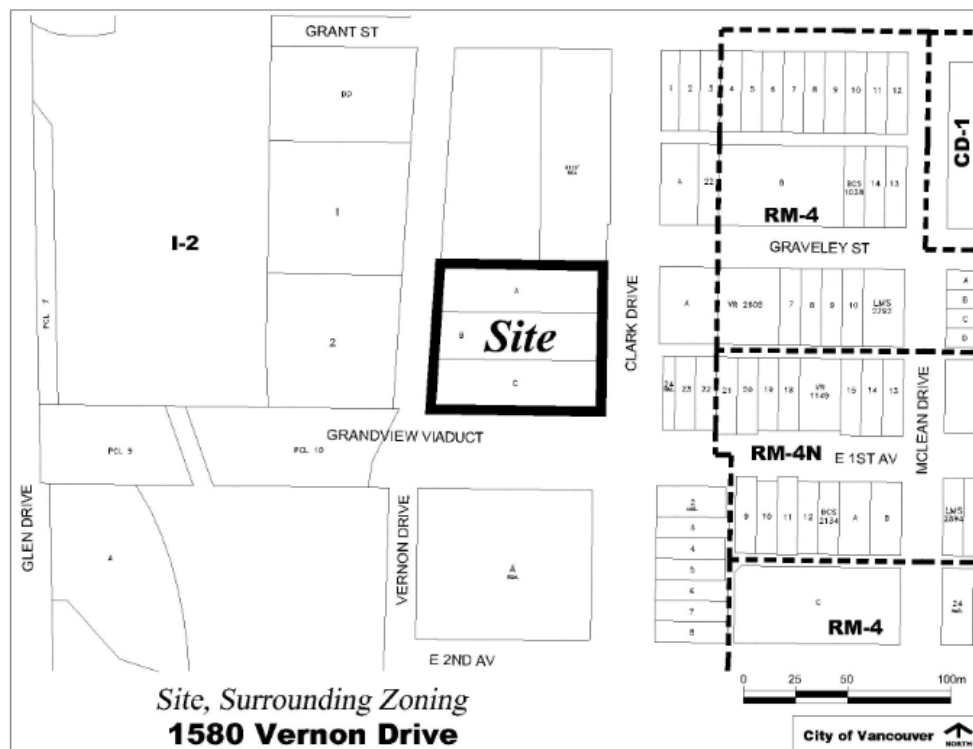
The Regional Context Statement Official Development Plan ("RCS ODP") is a Council approved plan and by-law that outlines Vancouver's high level, regional land use commitments to Metro Vancouver. The RCS ODP is a policy tool that demonstrates how Vancouver's policies and plans work towards achieving the goals and strategies set out in the Regional Growth Strategy. The RCS ODP designates urban lands under one of three categories: Industrial, Mixed Employment or General Urban. The RCS ODP then requires land use planning tools, such as the Zoning and Development By-law, to be consistent with the designations in the RCS ODP. Lands that are designated as Industrial in the RCS ODP are generally also zoned as industrial. Residential uses are generally only permitted on lands that are designated as General Urban in the RCS ODP.

The Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy permits a municipality to make amendments to the RCS ODP for a site up to a combined maximum of one hectare. The process involves consultation with Metro Vancouver, and as Official Development Plans are adopted by Council through by-law, they can only be amended by by-law following a public hearing.

Generally, temporary supportive modular housing is social housing constructed using demountable structures which are not permanently affixed to the land. TMH buildings are, time-limited on any site, up to a five-year period subject to extension for up to a further five years as regulated in the Zoning and Development By-law. Approval of TMH buildings through the development permit process has been delegated to the Director of Planning under the Zoning and Development Bylaw and is permitted in most zoning districts in the city.

Since 2017, the City of Vancouver, BC Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) have partnered to deliver over 650 new supportive homes via temporary modular housing on 11 sites. Adding these supportive homes was critical to slow the growth of homelessness while continuing to work to build permanent social and supportive housing in continuation of these efforts. The City-owned site at 1580 Vernon Drive, zoned I-2 (Industrial) and designated as Industrial in the RCS ODP, has been identified as a potential site for a temporary modular housing (TMH) project. The three-lot parcel at 1580 Vernon Drive has an aggregate land area of approximately 60,810 sq. ft. (0.565 ha), and is currently vacant and underutilised (see Figures 1 and 2).

**Figure 1: Location Map**



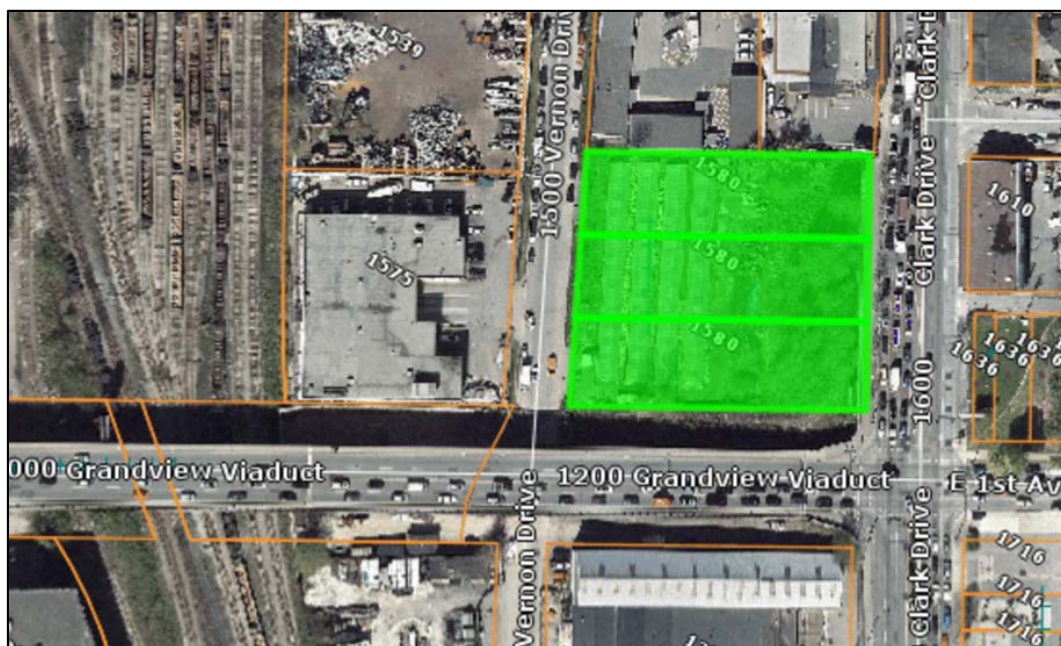
Homelessness in the City of Vancouver is on the rise and shelter providers are experiencing significant pressure from high occupancy rates and the unmet needs of people with complex mental and physical health concerns. While shelters provide an important emergency response, they are typically congregate settings and intended to be for interim use only. They are not an alternative to housing – the long term solution to homelessness. There remains a high need for more supportive housing to transition people experiencing homelessness or who are precariously housed into stable, long-term housing with appropriate support services. Looking ahead to the recovery from COVID-19, the City and senior government funding partners such as BC Housing and CMHC, may face an even steeper challenge to house not only those experiencing homelessness today, but also those whose housing stability may be negatively impacted by the pandemic.

City staff and senior government funding partners are actively working on relocation solutions for existing temporary modular buildings which have licenses with near-term expiry dates. Underused City-owned sites provide a unique opportunity to enable the ongoing provision of this critical housing supply.

As the owner of the existing TMH buildings, BC Housing are ultimately responsible for the relocation of each TMH building prior to the licence expiry date or coordinating licence extensions with both City and private land owners, in partnership with key City departments including Art, Culture and Community Services (ACCS), Real Estate Services and the Vancouver Affordable Housing Agency (VAHA). It is anticipated that the City will continue to have a vested interest in maintaining the TMH buildings while there is a need and opportunity to retain this valuable stock of supportive housing.

The Housing Vancouver Strategy identifies the need for supportive housing that is aligned with people's income levels and sets a development target of 4,100 new supportive homes by 2027. As of 2019, or three years into the Strategy, approximately 16% of the 10-year supportive housing target (664 units) has been delivered, all of which are temporary modular housing. Should the recommendations in this report be supported by Council, the ability to achieve additional supportive homes through a TMH project, under a future development permit approval would be enabled.

**Figure 2: Aerial of 1580 Vernon Drive**



### ***Strategic Analysis***

This report proposes the RCS ODP land use designation for the 60,810 sq. ft. (0.565 ha) site at 1580 Vernon Drive be re-designated from Industrial to General Urban, to allow consideration of a temporary modular supportive housing project through the development permit process.

Staff's preliminary review indicates the site could accommodate up to two TMH buildings with an approximate total unit yield of 98 self-contained studio homes. If Council approves the RCS ODP amendment, confirmation on site design, floor area and unit count would occur at a future date when a development permit application is submitted.

Staff have assessed the proposed use of the site for TMH against the provisions of the RCS ODP and determined the recommended amendment falls within the provisions to permit minor adjustments to the land area calculations associated with the General Urban designation. The proposed changes to the RCS ODP to designate 1580 Vernon Drive for General Urban use on a temporary basis, is consistent with the flexibility provisions set out in Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy and embedded in the Regional Context Statement ODP. The municipality may re-designate land from one regional land use designation to another only if the aggregate area of all proximate sites so re-designated does not exceed one hectare under section 6.2.7(a) of Metro Vancouver's 2040 Shaping Our Future Regional Growth Strategy.

In this instance, the RCS ODP amendment from Industrial to General Urban will not be permanent so that it is consistent with the RCS land use designation and the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy. The conversion back to the Industrial designation would be triggered when the land ceases to be used for TMH, with the site added back into the Industrial land reserve when it is re-designated. Further, since the existing I-2 zoning will remain in place for 1580 Vernon Drive, the future development potential for this site will be in accordance with the I-2 District Schedule once the TMH buildings are removed. For that reason, the temporary duration of the RCS ODP amendment has been aligned with the City's temporary modular housing policies, which typically restrict a TMH building on any site, to a maximum of 10 years.

Discussions about this amendment have been initiated with Metro Vancouver and, as required, Metro Vancouver will be formally advised about this amendment, subsequent to and dependent upon approval by Council of the recommendations outlined in this report.

Proposals for temporary modular supportive housing projects are generally considered under the Director of Planning's delegated authority (section 3.2.10 of the Zoning and Development By-law), through a development permit process which has standardized procedures for notification, public consultation, and assessment against Council adopted policies and guidelines.

A development permit application is required to be made to use the site for TMH buildings. This application would proceed through the development permit process, however a development permit cannot be issued if the proposed use is contrary to or at variance with the provisions of an Official Development Plan. The City's RCS ODP would preclude the development of TMH if the land use designation was not amended to General Urban, as residential uses are not permitted in areas designated within the ODP for Industrial or Mixed Employment uses.

### ***Public Input***

The public hearing required for Council to consider the proposed RCS ODP amendment, provides an opportunity for the public to provide input directly to Council. Should Council approve this ODP By-law amendment, a Development Permit application could be considered under the Director of Planning's delegated authority (section 3.2.10 of the Zoning and Development By-law), The decision on the development permit will be based on feedback from the local area along with a staff review through a rigorous and well-established process

involving community notification and consultation, and assessment against Council adopted policies and applicable guidelines. It is through the development permit process, that the local neighbourhood will be informed of the proposal and provided with an opportunity to review the drawings and comment on the merits of the proposed development.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

This site at 1580 Vernon Drive is subject to City-wide DCLs and City-wide Utilities DCLs but would be exempt from all DCLs if developed as social housing. No CAC or other contribution is anticipated from the temporary ODP amendment.

### **CONCLUSION**

The City-owned site at 1580 Vernon Drive is currently vacant. Given the City's homelessness crisis, this site could accommodate a TMH project to address critical supportive housing needs in our community. The goal of the amendment proposed herein is to remove the hurdle that presently exists in the RCS ODP that would otherwise allow this site to be considered for TMH. Further, the proposed amendment falls within the flexibility provisions outlined under the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy.

Providing supportive housing to the most marginalized in our City is a critical action to address the homelessness crisis. This report recommends a temporary amendment to the City's RCS ODP to facilitate consideration of a TMH project on a City-owned site currently designated for Industrial use under the RCS ODP. If approved, this action will enable consideration of a development permit application at 1580 Vernon Drive.

\* \* \* \* \*

