

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 2. Reducing Barriers and Deepening Affordability for Non-Profit, Co-op and Social Housing in Every Neighbourhood

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

#### WHEREAS

1. An increasing number of residents in Vancouver are struggling to find stable, secure housing at a rate that is affordable for local incomes. Renters, including seniors, people with disabilities, single parent (often female-led) households, youth, and Indigenous communities are particularly squeezed by this housing crisis, and are in even greater need of being able to access secure, affordable housing;
2. In addition, the need for accessible and adaptable rental housing for seniors and people with disabilities, at prices that are affordable to middle and low-income residents, is significant and will increase even further over the next two decades;
3. Vancouver's housing market has seen significant increases in land values and housing costs, pricing a growing number of residents out of the housing market. The escalation of home prices has also led to significant displacement, particularly of renters, and low and middle-income residents;
4. Complete, walkable communities rely on essential workers such as health care workers and grocery store clerks, who should have the opportunity to work near their jobs, rather than having to commute long distances to get to their jobs. Research suggests that mixed-income communities have better outcomes for all residents (not just low-income residents) because of a greater access to services;
5. The *Housing Vancouver Strategy (2018-2027)* includes a target of 12,000 new social, supportive and coop homes by 2027. As of Q4 2020, the City has approved new development applications to meet 47% of this target. The City is also committed to partnering with urban Indigenous organizations to deliver culturally appropriate housing developments. The high number of households in Vancouver paying over 30% of their income in rent indicates that more non-profit, co-op, and social housing is needed;
6. The City's definition of social housing in the Zoning and Development By-law requires the housing be owned and operated on a not-for-profit basis by non-profit housing societies, co-op, or government agencies. And that at a minimum 30% of the units are occupied by households with incomes below Housing Income Limits set out by the Province. Many new developments rely on mixed-income housing models, with a mix of affordability levels to cover costs, typically with affordability deepening over time or deepening through access to senior government funding;

7. The Community Housing sector, made up of non-profit and co-op housing providers, is an important partner in the provision of affordable non-market housing across Vancouver, and the sector's capacity in Vancouver has grown significantly over recent years;
8. Housing created in partnership with the community housing sector is "speculation free" housing because of the requirement through the CRA to maximize affordability, and because of the ability to place covenants on non-profit buildings that prevent sale for profit;
9. City staff analysis has demonstrated that half of recent social housing developments have required rezoning through a public hearing process, compared to less than a third of market condominium development. Single detached homes do not require a public hearing, even when a new detached home is significantly larger and more expensive than the one it is replacing. The added time and cost of requiring a public hearing impacts what type of housing gets built, and it is currently not aligned with what type of housing is most needed;
10. Rezoning for a non-profit typically takes a year or longer, and can add approximately \$400,000-\$800,000 onto the cost of a project, as well as requiring significant municipal staff time. This results in rents that are higher at occupancy and/or means that limited capital subsidies from senior levels of government get expended more quickly, meaning less housing overall. Reducing the cost, time and risk required to build non-profit and coop housing will result in savings for residents and deeper affordability in the new housing created;
11. We are in a window of strong alignment between Federal and Provincial governments in terms of developing affordable and non-profit housing. Some of these senior government funding programs require approved zoning for eligibility. Having appropriate municipal zoning in place allows non-profit and co-op housing providers to access this senior government funding much more easily, speeding up timelines and achieving deeper levels of affordability;
12. Major redevelopments still include opportunities for public engagement. Even when they don't require a public hearing, the Development Permit process includes public notification and opportunities for comment, and could still require a Development Permit Hearing process, providing residents an opportunity to address the Development Permit Board in a public meeting;
13. There are currently about 526 non-profit and government owned housing properties in Vancouver, serving 26,000 households. 107 of those properties are in the RM-3A, RM-4 and RM-4N zoning districts;
14. Vancouver's Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy, updated by Council in 2019, outlines specific protections for tenants in the case of a redevelopment for non-profit social housing. These protections are more stringent than for for-profit market development, and include:

- a) Ensuring permanent rehousing options that limit disruption to residents;
  - b) The alternative accommodation option provided must be affordable based on income; and
  - c) Support with relocation and consideration of special circumstances;
15. At Public Hearing on April 20, 2021, Council unanimously approved recommendations to allow development of up to six storeys in the RM-3A and the RM-4 and RM-4N zoning districts where 100% of the residential floor area is developed as social housing, or social housing in conjunction with a child day care facility; and
16. At the above Public Hearing, numerous local experts in non-profit and co-op housing expressed a need for Council to be more ambitious in terms of both height and FSR to give non-profit housing providers the flexibility to optimize the number and affordability of new homes possible on each site. In response, City legal and planning staff outlined that significant amendments at the Public Hearing stage are not ideal, and that if Council wanted to be more ambitious in this regard, a preferable route would be through a separate Council motion.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to bring forward recommendations for Council to consider referring to Public Hearing that would allow development of up to 12 storeys (with a corresponding increase in FSR) in the RM-3A and the RM-4 and RM-4N zoning districts where 100% of the residential floor area is developed as social housing, or social housing in conjunction with a child day care facility.
- B. THAT Council direct staff to report back with considerations and recommendations to allow additional height and FSR in other zoning districts (including RS, RT, RM, and mixed commercial-residential zones) where 100% of the residential floor area is developed as social housing, or social housing in conjunction with a child day care facility, and any corresponding improvements in the TRPP that staff would recommend. Consideration should be given, but not limited, to:
  - i. Options that could be incorporated as part of current work on the Secured Rental Policy, including additional height and density specifically for social housing in new standard rental district schedules intended to streamline future site-specific rezonings in RS and RT zoned areas, with a report back to Council targeted in Q3 2021; and
  - ii. Options, including City-initiated zoning changes, that would enable more social housing projects to proceed without a rezoning, that could be delivered as part of longer-term work through the Vancouver Plan, as well as through the Broadway Plan.

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