

MOTION

11. Enabling the Next Generation of Vancouver Specials (Member's Motion B.8)

At the Council meeting on July 19, 2022, Council referred the following motion to the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on July 20, 2022, in order to hear from speakers, followed by debate and decision.

Submitted by: Councillor Wiebe

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver currently has a housing affordability and climate crisis;
2. Buildings are a significant contributor to the climate crisis, as buildings and construction account for 39% of global energy-related carbon dioxide emissions and 21% of total GHG emissions in BC as per the 2020 CleanBC Climate Change Accountability Report;
3. The CMHC 2022 Housing Supply Report highlighted the need for Vancouver to innovate and diversify new housing to provide adequate new supply that is affordable to a wider range of households, in terms of built-form, location/geography and tenure;
4. The Vancouver Heritage Foundation states that "The Vancouver Special is the only house style that developed in Greater Vancouver from 1965-85, found nowhere else. They were a response to a City of Vancouver by-law change to address the need for more housing. As a result, the design of the Special maximized the square footage of a home on the narrow lots of the city at a low cost. This made them very widespread. The plans were particularly popular with multi-generational households";
5. The Vancouver Special Competition of 1985 highlighted the benefits of the original "Vancouver Special" including short permit times (2 to 3 days), simplified labour needs, standardized local materials, and shorter building timelines which benefited tenants and small builders;
6. A catalogue of next generation Vancouver Special houses could be created with pre-approved building forms that allow for an expedited permitting and construction process – a repeatable house that meets net zero energy and universal design standards, is constructed with wood and modular prefabrication by way of social employment and local procurement and operates with 100% renewable sources of energy; and
7. A pilot version of a next generation Vancouver Special could be designed by City of Vancouver architects and designers for a backyard mini modular Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), which BC Housing refers to as all forms of additional units on residential (or even commercial/industrial) properties which could be scaled up.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff to report back on a pathway for an expedited building permit and construction process for a new generation of Vancouver Specials (repeatable building forms) from a modular Tiny Home (ADU) to a multifamily building that would deliver diverse spaces for multigenerational living as easy as a single family home to tackle the climate and affordability crisis head-on.

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https://urbanarium.org/sites/default/files/archive-items/The%20Vancouver%20Special%20Competition%20%28small_0.pdf [urbanarium.org]