

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

### 4. Modernizing the City's View Protection Guidelines to Unlock New Housing and Economic Opportunities

Submitted by: Councillor Meiszner

#### WHEREAS

1. In a speech to the Greater Vancouver Board of Trade in January 2023, Mayor Sim noted that the City's view cones policy would be reviewed by his administration, given its impacts on the viability and the potential supply of new housing and job spaces in the central areas of the city, all of which are well served by public transit. Mayor Sim also noted that height restrictions due to building shadowing considerations on public parks, plazas, intersections, and retail streets would also be reviewed;
2. The downtown peninsula has limited land available for development due to its geographic boundaries. Although the City seeks to protect Vancouver's spectacular ocean and mountain views, it also promotes density in the downtown area to reduce urban sprawl in alignment with sustainability goals;
3. The City of Vancouver View Protection Guidelines, containing 26 protected view corridors, date from 1989. These protected view corridors have served since that time to determine the site location and design of buildings;
4. Every view corridor in the city – also called view cones – has a set of elements that define it. For example, the “View Extent” defines how far and wide a view corridor is while the “View Origin” establishes the view point that an average person (i.e., 5'6” tall) would have of the corridor;
5. The City has a *Higher Buildings Policy* which was adopted by City Council on May 6, 1997, and subsequently amended on February 1, 2011, November 20, 2013, June 25, 2014, February 13, 2018, and most recently on July 11, 2018. In accordance with the City's View Protection Guidelines, higher buildings that do not impact the protected view corridors are considered;
6. Public benefits are the amenities a city needs such as day care facilities, affordable housing, parks, cultural facilities, and historic building restoration. Benefit capacity is a function of additional density – as approved by Council through a rezoning – from which the City derives public benefits; and
7. The City of Vancouver is currently facing an unprecedented housing crisis, resulting in soaring house prices, an acute shortage of affordable rental units, and a significant increase in homelessness, all of which exacerbate social inequality, result in serious consequences for the well-being and quality of life of Vancouver residents, and all the while hindering economic growth, attracting talented individuals, and affecting the city's overall sustainability and liveability.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to initiate a review of the City's View Protection Guidelines to determine the amount of additional housing, job space, and public benefits that could potentially be built on sites currently impacted by view cone restrictions if various view cones deemed to be obsolete and/or no longer functionally relevant were to be eliminated, and for staff to report back on preliminary assumptions and scope of work by Q4 2023, to be followed by a full report by the end of Q2 2024;

FURTHER THAT the review and report back include a comprehensive list of all enforced framed and panoramic views and/or view cones in the city.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to initiate a review of framed views that can be eliminated to unlock additional housing and job space over the immediate short term and report back by Q4 2023;

FURTHER THAT staff's report back in Q4 2023 will specifically seek Council's endorsement of the specific framed views to be eliminated, prior to bringing forward the necessary bylaw changes.

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