

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

2. Unlocking Shaughnessy: Building Affordable Housing Options for All of Us

Submitted by: Councillor Boyle

WHEREAS

1. We are in a housing crisis. In order to see tangible improvements, local governments need to use every tool at their disposal, and to ensure that every neighbourhood is welcoming their fair share of residents at all income levels;
2. Shaughnessy has an important history of multi-family housing, especially during and after World War II, when many older, large homes became multi-family housing, helping to ease the housing crisis while all resources were directed to Canada's war effort.¹ One of the best ways to preserve older buildings is to ensure that they remain useful to more people, by making it legal to convert large older homes into multi-family housing again, alongside adding infill housing and new more affordable rental and family sized housing;
3. Despite extraordinary demand to live in Vancouver's central neighbourhoods, Shaughnessy's population has been in decline over the last 50 years, from 10,370 in 1971 to 8,204 as of 2021, a 20.9% decline. During this same time period the population of the City of Vancouver grew by 55.4%, and Metro Vancouver grew by 157%. Pushing population growth outside of Shaughnessy has put added pressure on more affordable neighbourhoods across Vancouver, leading to higher housing costs and displacement from Vancouver;
4. While Shaughnessy has the highest median household income of Vancouver neighbourhoods, the lower 80% of income earners are significantly under-represented. Not having housing for middle- and moderate-income households makes it difficult to create complete communities, and means many households will have to commute from farther away;
5. Building complete, walkable communities is an important part of Vancouver's Climate Emergency Action Plan. By building climate resilient housing, in communities where residents can walk or roll to more of their daily needs, and where neighbours have a chance to get to know one another and build stronger social connections, we not only reduce carbon pollution, but we make Vancouver safer and healthier for current and future residents;

¹ Wade, Jill. "Houses for All: The Struggle for Social Housing in Vancouver, 1919-50" Available at: <https://books.google.ca/books?id=z-5PwY6CkGgC&pg=PA208&lpg=PA208&dq=order+200+war+housing+canada&source=bl&ots=BSCWm5XxzB&sig=5q2xCh9rjwYIjd3FAg1XLSCiRAc&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjXiMelytDWAhWmxVQKHQ89CiA4ChDoAQggMAE#v=snippet&q=Shaughnessy&f=false>

6. Shaughnessy has one of the highest rates of tree canopy coverage in the city. A recent Metro Vancouver report “Social Equity Spatial Analysis Case Studies” outlined the need for more equitable access to the benefits trees provide.² These benefits include reduced air pollution, cooler temperatures during heat waves, and improved mental and physical health. However, growth in Vancouver is often focused in areas with much lower tree canopy. Enabling more households to live in neighbourhoods with good tree canopy would help address the existing inequity;
7. Shaughnessy has some of the best transit access in Canada. Most homes are located only a 5-10 minute bike ride or 10-30 minute walk from the upcoming South Granville SkyTrain Station. Even today, frequent buses on Granville get Shaughnessy residents downtown in about 15 minutes, and this bus route has extra capacity meaning new residents won’t cause overcrowding. Vancouver and TransLink are about to invest in transit priority measures that will get residents there even faster. Adding new homes close to SkyTrain and frequent transit is a priority for this Council;
8. It is possible to protect heritage, while also understanding it as a public good that should be accessible to more people. In a popular video about *The Heritage Dilemma* produced by CBC Vancouver, urban planner and videographer Uytae Lee outlines that Shaughnessy was originally created “as a mansion district for Vancouver’s elites” and that “it should be concerning when our heritage policies end up creating exclusive neighbourhoods that actively try to prevent people from living in them or even visiting them.” But the video also articulates that “there is a real value in preserving heritage when it is accessible for people to experience and interact with themselves.”³
9. Vancouver’s West End is an excellent local example of balancing heritage protection with housing, climate and equity priorities. The West End also used to be a mansion district, but now includes an eclectic mix of architectural styles and residents across a wide income range. As Lee articulates in *The Heritage Dilemma*, “The West End, and neighbourhoods like it, remind us that there can be a nuanced approach to heritage protection. It doesn’t have to be an all-or-nothing dilemma between protecting everything or saving nothing. It can be messier than that. And given how messy our heritage is, I think that’s okay.”⁴
10. Historically land use policies have been used as a means of exclusion. In 2020, Vancouver City Council unanimously approved a motion from Councillor Kirby-Yung focused on “Discriminatory Covenants, Language and Encumbrances on Vancouver Land Titles”. The motion sought to address this

² “Social Equity Spatial Analysis Case Studies”, prepared for Metro Vancouver, February 2023. Available at: https://metrovancover.org/boards/RegionalPlanning/RPL_2023-Mar-10_AGE.pdf, p 20.

³ “The Heritage Dilemma”, produced by Uytae Lee and CBC Vancouver. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re_mShtG0-4

⁴ “The Heritage Dilemma”, produced by Uytae Lee and CBC Vancouver. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Re_mShtG0-4

history of excluding populations along lines of social difference, affirming the City's commitment to "inclusive community that supports the values of equity, justice, and well-being for all, and to ensuring we learn from the past and remain proactive in preventing incidents of discrimination". Land use policy that continues to function in ways that exclude residents from a neighbourhood due to social differences of class as well as race is a continuation of these historic harms;⁵

11. CMHC recently estimated that British Columbia's housing supply gap for 2030 has increased markedly, with 560,000 more homes needed than the current rate that we are building as of 2022.⁶ The supply gap is growing much faster than BC's municipalities are addressing it. Vancouver's own housing needs assessment found a current and future need for 136,000 homes over the following 10 years.⁷ The Provincial government's *Housing Supply Act* has set housing targets based on need that the City of Vancouver has committed to meeting or exceeding;
12. Vancouver's long time practice of building new rental housing where there is already a concentration of rental housing has created a high level of stress and uncertainty for renters and led to significant displacement. We can minimize eviction and displacement, while adding new housing options for all incomes, by building where there are the fewest number of current renters. Shaughnessy has the lowest density of rented dwellings in Vancouver. In 2016, Shaughnessy had 1.7 rented dwellings per hectare compared to 124.9 in the West End;
13. The City of Vancouver strives to be a welcoming, healthy and sustainable city, but exclusionary zoning, which bans affordable housing in some neighbourhoods, makes existing inequality and unaffordability worse in all neighbourhoods. Unlocking Shaughnessy and building affordable housing options here and across Vancouver makes a better city for all of us.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT Council direct staff to report back by Q4 2024 with a plan and timeline to bring forward policies and recommended amendments for consideration at public hearing to add badly needed housing, shops and services in Shaughnessy, as defined in the City of Vancouver's local planning area boundaries, with a specific focus on rental housing and family sized housing options, with bonus density available to support non-profit, co-op, co-housing, and mixed income rental housing. And that the plan and timeline be implementable during this term of Council;

⁵ "Discriminatory Covenants, Language and Encumbrances on Vancouver Land Titles." City of Vancouver motion from Councillor Kirby-Yung. February, 2020. Available at: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20200225/documents/motionb13.pdf>

⁶ "Estimating how much housing we'll need by 2030", CMHC. Available at: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/blog/2023/estimating-how-much-housing-we-need-by-2030>

⁷ "City of Vancouver Housing Needs Report, April 2022". Available at: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/pds-housing-policy-housing-needs-report.pdf>

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to consider the need to balance existing heritage protections with the City's housing, climate and equity objectives, with the objective of enabling Shaughnessy's population density to reach at least the city average by 2050, and include those considerations as part of the Q4 2024 report;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to consider options for funding infrastructure upgrades related to an increase in housing options, including addressing sewer capacity, as well as the City's obligation to replace combined sewers, and include those recommendations as part of the Q4 2024 report.

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