



REPORT TO COUNCIL

STANDING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON POLICY AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

A meeting of the Standing Committee of Council on Policy and Strategic Priorities was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 9:33 am, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall. This Council meeting was convened in person and via electronic means as authorized under the Part 14 of the *Procedure By-law*.

PRESENT: Councillor Peter Meiszner, Chair
Mayor Ken Sim
Councillor Rebecca Bligh
Councillor Lisa Dominato, Vice-Chair
Councillor Pete Fry
Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung
Councillor Mike Klassen
Councillor Brian Montague
Councillor Lenny Zhou

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Tina Penney, Deputy City Clerk
Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies
Rowena Choi, Meeting Coordinator

WELCOME

The Chair acknowledged we are on the unceded homelands of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh People. We thank them for having cared for this land and look forward to working with them in partnership as we continue to build this great city together.

The Chair also recognized the immense contributions of the City of Vancouver's staff who work hard every day to help make our city an incredible place to live, work, and play.

MATTERS ADOPTED ON CONSENT

None.

REPORTS

1. **Potential to Update the Vancouver Building Bylaw to Enable Single Egress Stairs February 14, 2025**

The General Manager of Development, Buildings and Licensing provided a presentation and along with staff from Development, Buildings and Licensing, Vancouver Fire Rescue Services and Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, responded to questions.

The Committee heard from seven speakers who spoke in opposition to the report recommendations.

MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Klassen

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

THAT Council direct Planning to further explore and expand on this report from the Chief Building Official and undertake further due diligence in consultation with the building and architectural sector who work in the small and low-rise building space to further explore the housing flexibility and liveability benefits single egress building designs could provide, and review any related and upcoming studies and literature on single egress stair buildings, and report back to Council in Fall 2025 with further information for Council's consideration;

FURTHER THAT Council affirms its overarching goal of harmonization with the BC Building Code and request that staff's report back and recommendations seek to limit any beneficial proposed additions to the Vancouver Building By-law in order to not add undue cost and complexity to opening up additional housing options in Vancouver.

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Klassen

THAT in the first paragraph, the words "and Building staff in consultation with the Fire Chief," be added after the word "Planning."

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 10538)

The amendment having carried unanimously, the motion as amended was put and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 10539)

FINAL MOTION AS APPROVED

THAT Council direct Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability staff and Development, Buildings and Licensing staff in consultation with the Fire Chief to further explore and expand on this report from the Chief Building Official and undertake further due diligence in consultation with the building and architectural sector who work in the small and low-rise building space to further explore the housing flexibility and liveability benefits single egress building designs could provide, and review any related and upcoming studies and

literature on single egress stair buildings, and report back to Council in Fall 2025 with further information for Council's consideration;

FURTHER THAT Council affirms its overarching goal of harmonization with the *BC Building Code* and request that staff's report back and recommendations seek to limit any beneficial proposed additions to the *Vancouver Building By-law* in order to not add undue cost and complexity to opening up additional housing options in Vancouver.

**2. Contract Award for Construction Services for Permanent Plazas
January 26, 2025**

The General Manager of Engineering Services along with the Associate Director of Street Activities from Engineering Services, responded to questions.

MOVED by Councillor Kirby-Yung
SECONDED by Councillor Dominato

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

- A. THAT Council authorize City staff to negotiate an agreement for Construction Services for Permanent Plazas with Jacob Bros. Construction Inc. for an estimated total contract value of \$8,773,550.00 over the approximate one (1) year term (the "Agreement"), which will be funded through a combination of the Gathering Places and Green Infrastructure Renewal programs, Climate Emergency Action Dedicated Funding - Transit Priority Corridor, Climate Emergency – E-Bike Share, and Public Realm Electrification capital programs.
- B. THAT Council delegate its authority to execute the Agreement to the City's Director of Legal Services, Chief Procurement Officer, and General Manager of Engineering.
- C. THAT no legal rights or obligations will be created by Council's approval of A and B above unless and until the City executes and delivers the Agreement.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 10540)

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTIONS

1. Consultation with the Ministry of Housing and BC Housing at a Public Meeting

The Committee heard from six speakers who spoke in support of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Dominato

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Council unanimously approved a plan to acquire 105 SROs with support from the provincial and federal governments;^[1]
2. 15 months ago, Council unanimously approved a motion to UPLIFT the Downtown Eastside, which committed to updating the DTES Area Plan to deliver “a greater number of housing including market rental, social and supportive housing units in the DEOD to meet the needs of residents”, options to create more below-market commercial spaces and a direction to harmonize the city’s definition of supportive and social housing with the provinces definition, more opportunities to provide housing choices;^[2]
3. A proposed freeze (“freeze”) discussed recently at the Save Our Streets Forum appears to contradict those goals and suspend net new supportive housing construction indefinitely, which will decrease the supply of housing available to Vancouverites once projects currently underway are complete;
4. Less supportive housing for low-income Vancouverites will likely increase homelessness, mental health illness, addictions, and crime;
5. The Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, with support from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, have been working with the City to acquire new supportive housing units; and
6. This freeze discourages new investment in housing in the city.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT Council direct City staff to invite a delegation from the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs (“GoBC”) and/or the CEO of BC Housing and BC Housing staff to a meeting of Council, with considerations to go In-Camera as necessary, to discuss implications of a freeze on net new supportive housing on or before February 26, 2025;

FURTHER THAT staff work with GoBC and BC Housing to determine how many supportive housing units would need to be built in Vancouver and across Metro Vancouver to end chronic homelessness and in which municipalities those units are needed and report back to Council.

amended

^[1] <https://council.vancouver.ca/20201007/documents/pspc1a.pdf>.

^[2] <https://council.vancouver.ca/20231129/documents/pspcA4.pdf>

AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Dominato

THAT in the first paragraph, the words “on or before February 26, 2025,” be removed.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 10541)
(Councillor Klassen abstaining from the vote)

The amendment having carried unanimously, the motion as amended was put and LOST (Vote No. 10542) with Councillors Kirby-Yung, Klassen, Meiszner, Montague, Zhou and Mayor Sim opposed.

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At 11:51 am, during debate and discussion on Members’ Motion 1. “Consultation with the Ministry of Housing and BC Housing at a Public Meeting,” it was

*MOVED by Councillor Klassen
SECONDED by Councillor Zhou*

THAT per section 2.8 (a) of the Procedure By-law, the Committee extend the meeting past noon in order to complete Members’ Motion 2. “Bringing Back The Block Party: Supporting Davie Village and Vancouver Pride Celebrations.”

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY**

Subsequently, following the conclusion of Members’ Motion 1, and prior to introducing Members’ Motion 2. “Bringing Back The Block Party: Supporting Davie Village and Vancouver Pride Celebrations,” Chair Meiszner relinquished the Chair to Vice-Chair Dominato.

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2. Bringing Back The Block Party: Supporting Davie Village and Vancouver Pride Celebrations

The Committee heard from three speakers who spoke in support of the motion.

MOVED by Councillor Meiszner
SECONDED by Councillor Kirby-Yung

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Davie Village is widely considered to be the heart of Metro Vancouver’s 2SLGBTQIA+ community and is known nationwide as an inclusive, vibrant and caring neighbourhood of residents, shops, and services;

2. The community is the centre of the Vancouver Pride Parade, which started in 1978 as a protest march, ahead of the city's first officially permitted parade in 1981;
3. The Vancouver Pride Parade and Festival is one of the city's most highly anticipated events, attracting over 100,000 attendees, and generating millions in economic impact;
4. The *Davie Street Promenade (previously Davie Street Block Party)* was regularly held by the Vancouver Pride Society for many years in the village, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic; It was last hosted in 2019;
5. It included a full street closure of Davie Street from Burrard Street to Jarvis Street for Pride weekend, and featured performance stages supporting a diversity of talent from the queer community, local community merchants, entertainment, licensed areas for alcohol consumption, and more;
6. A group of leading community organizations including the Vancouver Pride Society, Qmunity, West End BIA and local small businesses have formed a working group to return the *Davie Street Block Party* to the West End in 2025 on Pride weekend; and
7. The working group is seeking city and council support to bring back the *Davie Street Block Party* in 2025, with proceeds going to the Vancouver Pride Society and Qmunity, to support their vital initiatives and work in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT Council direct staff to seek to work with the West End BIA, Vancouver Pride Society and Qmunity, as well as relevant stakeholders such as TransLink and the Vancouver Police, to initiate a full street closure of Davie Street from Burrard to Jarvis Streets on Saturday and Sunday of Pride weekend in 2025, to host the *Davie Street Block Party*, with the intention to continue the street closure for Pride weekend in 2026 if successful, and report back to council on discussions with stakeholders by end of Q1 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY (Vote No. 10543)

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Following the vote on Members' Motion 2. "Bringing Back The Block Party: Supporting Davie Village and Vancouver Pride Celebrations," Chair Meiszner resumed the role of Chair.

The Committee recessed at 12:23 pm and reconvened at 1:19 pm.

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3. Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Investments in Vancouver to Prioritize Replacing Existing Stock and Promoting Regional Equity

The Committee heard from six speakers who spoke in support of the motion, 67 speakers who spoke in opposition to the motion and two speakers who spoke to other aspects of the motion.

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During the hearing of speakers, the Chair reminded and cautioned speakers to keep comments germane and respectful to the motion being considered per section 7.8 of the Procedure By-law.

Subsequently, at 4:51 pm, while continuing to hear from speakers, it was

*MOVED by Councillor Montague
SECONDED by Councillor Zhou*

THAT per section 2.8 (b) of the Procedure By-law, the Committee extend the meeting past 5 pm in order to complete the business.

amended

*AMENDMENT MOVED by Councillor Bligh
SECONDED by Councillor Fry*

THAT the following be added:

FURTHER THAT the Committee take a 15-minute recess following the conclusion of hearing from speakers for Members' Motion 3. "Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Investments in Vancouver to Prioritize Replacing Existing Stock and Promoting Regional Equity," before continuing with the business.

**CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND
BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY**

The amendment having carried unanimously, the motion as amended to extend the meeting past 5 pm per section 2.8 of the Procedure By-law was put and CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY AND BY THE REQUIRED MAJORITY.

The Committee recessed at 5:27 pm and reconvened at 5:43 pm.

At 6:17 pm, during debate, Chair Meiszner relinquished the Chair to Vice-Chair Dominato in order to provide comments and resumed the Chair once done.

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MOVED by Mayor Sim
SECONDED by Councillor Montague

THAT the Committee recommend to Council

WHEREAS

1. Vancouver has long taken a leadership role in providing supportive housing, recognizing that safe, stable, and dignified housing is a fundamental necessity for individuals facing homelessness, mental health challenges, and substance use disorders;
2. Despite representing only 25% of the regional population, Vancouver is home to over 77% of the region's supportive housing and more than 67% of its shelter spaces, pointing to a significant resource gap regionally for people wishing to remain in their home communities and be able to access local support services;
3. Vancouver's current low-income housing stock includes aging Single Room Occupancy (SRO) buildings which are rapidly deteriorating and often failing to meet basic standards of safety and dignity;
4. Many of the city's SROs (those with and those without direct supportive services) are plagued by hazardous conditions such as broken elevators, unsanitary environments, garbage accumulation, and infestations, leaving residents in unlivable circumstances that compromise their well-being, signaling an urgent need to replace aging, unlivable SRO units with new supportive housing;
5. For the purposes of this motion, supportive housing refers specifically to low barrier supportive housing for individuals experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and with severe mental health challenges and/or substance use disorders, including 24/7 on-site support services. For clarity, this motion does not refer to Social Housing where occasional supports are provided to ensure households maintain their tenancies;
6. Although there is no firm estimate of how many SRO buildings in the city currently fail to meet the basic standards of safety and dignity, the number is known to be significant and threatens to push even more people into homelessness. For example, VFRS reported 326 structure fires in SRO buildings last year, and the DTES figures prominently among the six neighbourhoods in the city at the highest risk in an earthquake;
7. The Province has recognized that Vancouver cannot address these crises alone and has committed to a comprehensive response plan for the DTES, including investments in mental health and addiction recovery services. In 2022, Premier Eby stated: "The crisis in the Downtown Eastside is well beyond what the city of Vancouver can take on, on their own;"
8. Supportive housing is meant to provide stability, care, and a path forward, and although Vancouver continues to invest in supportive housing, there is an urgent

need for other municipalities to step up and share in the responsibility of providing housing and care for those in need across the region;

9. In addition to an urgent need to replace the city's aging SRO and supportive housing stock, there is a parallel need to replace the city's Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) units with permanent, quality, purpose-built supportive housing, to ensure safe, dignified living conditions for Vancouver's most vulnerable residents;
10. A more balanced, regional approach to supportive housing would allow individuals experiencing homelessness to access stable housing in their own communities, closer to family, cultural connections, and local services, rather than being displaced to Vancouver; and
11. By prioritizing the replacement of unsafe, unfit, or temporary housing in Vancouver with dignified, livable homes, and by urging a fairer regional approach, Vancouver can ensure that those suffering the most receive the safe, stable housing they desperately need.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. That Council direct staff to temporarily pause any City contributions of land or funding for homelessness response supportive housing developments—except for projects focused on replacing existing SRO buildings or TMH projects—until progress is made in increasing the supply of homelessness response supportive housing across the region;

FURTHER THAT this temporary pause does not encompass nor impact:

- Any City-supported supportive housing projects currently in-stream or that have already received funding confirmation from senior government or the City;
 - Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) projects associated with the delivery of Road to Recovery continuum or health-care related housing or residentially based health care such as complex care housing or long-term care;
 - Future proposed supportive housing projects that represent a replacement of existing supportive housing projects, including any density added to existing supportive Housing sites;
 - Supportive housing for seniors, women and families, and youth ageing out of care;
 - Social Housing where occasional supports are provided to ensure households maintain their tenancies; and
 - Any applications received by the City within 6 months of passage of this motion.
- B. THAT Council confirm for the provincial and federal government that its priorities for new homelessness response supportive housing investments in Vancouver are to accelerate the replacement of unlivable SROs, and temporary modular

housing, until meaningful progress is made in increasing supportive housing stock across the region;

FURTHER THAT Council request the Mayor write a letter to the provincial and federal governments urging them to increase investments in mental health care, addiction recovery, to address the root causes of homelessness and suffering.

- C. THAT Council direct staff to work with BC Housing to enhance and accelerate the STEP (Supporting Tenants, Enabling Pathways) program to support people who are in Supportive Housing but are able to live independently to transition into Social or rental housing so as to enable those Supportive Housing units to be assigned to people experiencing homelessness who are in need of that Supportive Housing.
- D. THAT Council direct staff to report every two years on homelessness and supportive housing development across the region, ensuring accountability and progress, and offer support to the Province in working with other municipalities to expand regional supportive housing options.

CARRIED (Vote No. 10544)
(Councillors Bligh, Dominato and Fry opposed)

The Committee adjourned at 6:22 pm.

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**COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
STANDING COMMITTEE OF COUNCIL ON
POLICY AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

FEBRUARY 26, 2025

A meeting of the Council of the City of Vancouver was held on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, at 6:22 pm, in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, City Hall, following the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting, to consider the recommendations and actions of the Committee.

PRESENT: Mayor Sim
Councillor Rebecca Bligh
Councillor Lisa Dominato
Councillor Pete Fry
Councillor Sarah Kirby-Yung
Councillor Peter Meiszner
Councillor Brian Montague
Councillor Mike Klassen
Councillor Lenny Zhou

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE: Paul Mochrie, City Manager

CITY CLERK'S OFFICE: Tina Penney, Deputy City Clerk
Kevin Burris, Manager, Civic Agencies
Rowena Choi, Meeting Coordinator

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Report of Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities
Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Council considered the report containing the recommendations and actions taken by the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities. Its items of business included:

Reports:

1. Potential to Update the Vancouver Building Bylaw to Enable Single Egress Stairs
2. Contract Award for Construction Services for Permanent Plazas

Council Members' Motions:

1. Consultation with the Ministry of Housing and BC Housing at a Public Meeting
2. Bringing Back The Block Party: Supporting Davie Village and Vancouver Pride Celebrations
3. Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Investments in Vancouver to Prioritize Replacing Existing Stock and Promoting Regional Equity

MOVED by Councillor Montague
SECONDED by Councillor Meiszner

THAT the recommendations and actions taken by the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities at its meeting of February 26, 2025, as contained in Reports 1 and 2 and Council Members' Motion 1 through 3, be approved.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

URGENT BUSINESS

None.

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by Councillor Montague
SECONDED by Councillor Meiszner

THAT the meeting be adjourned.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Council adjourned at 6:25 pm.

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