

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on May 21, 2025

2. Reducing Home Demolition Waste in Vancouver

Submitted by: Councillor Kirby-Yung and Councillor Dominato

WHEREAS

1. Residential construction and demolition waste is a growing issue in Vancouver and the region;
2. In response to the issue, Metro Vancouver through the initiative of its Zero Waste Committee and staff have been engaging with companies working to provide alternatives to demolition, and are supporting and partnering together with the Government of Canada Research and Knowledge Initiative and the sector on a Home Demolition Waste Prevention Forum that will take place in early June that will bring together government and industry to discuss alternatives to residential demolition;
3. Alternatives to residential demolition that adds to landfills include options such as home relocation, home repurposing, and home deconstruction;
4. Regulations regarding home demolition fall within the jurisdiction of local governments;
5. Currently in Vancouver, the Green Demolition By-law regulates the Re-use and Recycling of Building Materials from Residential Buildings and stipulates that:
 - a. (3.1) No person may cause, permit or allow the demolition of a residential building constructed in whole or in part before 1950 without a demolition permit.
 - b. (3.2) Every demolition permit authorizing demolition of a residential building constructed in whole or in part before 1950 must include a green demolition condition, imposed by the Chief Building Official, requiring that the building be subject to demolition resulting in the reuse or recycling of not less than 75% of all building materials, by weight, excluding hazardous materials.
 - c. (3.3) Every demolition permit authorizing demolition of a character residential building constructed in whole or in part before 1950 must include a green demolition condition, imposed by the Chief Building Official, requiring that the character residential building be subject to demolition resulting in the reuse or recycling of not less than 90% of all building materials, by weight, excluding hazardous materials.
 - d. (3.4) In addition to the applicable green demolition condition imposed under section 3.2 or 3.3 above, every demolition permit authorizing demolition of a residential building constructed in whole or in part before 1910, or demolition of a heritage listed residential building constructed in whole or in part before 1950, must include an additional green demolition

condition, imposed by the Chief Building Official, requiring that the residential building be subject to demolition by means of deconstruction, resulting in the salvage of at least three tonnes of wood.

There is no similar reuse or recycling requirement in Vancouver for post 1950 residential homes;

6. From 2016 to 2021 Metro Vancouver was the fastest growing metro area in Canada welcoming 179,000 new residents -- a 7.3% population increase. This growth which is expected to continue, Provincial Transit Oriented Development regulations, and City of Vancouver planning initiatives supporting densification in order to deliver needed new multi-family homes, puts pressure on our housing supply and has the unintended consequence of generating huge amounts of material and embodied carbon waste due to the demolition of oftentimes single family homes;
7. Sadly, Metro Vancouver is one of the demolition capitals of the world on a per capita basis. Currently more than 2,700 single family homes on average are demolished across Metro Vancouver every year. The average 2,000 sq ft wood framed building contains 65,000 KG of embodied carbon³ and 100,000 KG of raw materials;
8. Thirty-three percent of our local landfills are full of construction and demolition waste. There are responsible and sustainable alternatives to home demolition including relocation and deconstruction. Reducing and recycling more home waste would support sustainability, as well as enable the ability to extend landfill life to support regional waste management needs for longer.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to report back in Fall 2025 on opportunities to implement strategies to reduce home demolition waste in Vancouver through educational initiatives such as but not limited to: the provision of information materials, resources such as Building Removal Assessment checklists, and information sessions for the development and construction sectors.
- B. THAT following the implementation of any strategies to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of reducing home demolition waste, Council direct staff to report back on the response to such measures.
- C. THAT recognizing Council's priority direction to streamline development and permitting approvals to expedite new housing and not to add to the time for delivering new homes, that Council affirms that any future updates to the Green Demolition By-law that regulates the Re-use and Recycling of Building Materials from Residential Buildings to apply to homes built post 1950 be considered at a future date should the educational measures not yield positive results, as well as any additional initiatives to promote responsible alternatives to demolition such as the requirement for a Responsible Building Removal Assessment, Early Green Removal Permits, Refundable Demolition Deposits, Density Bonus for

Relocated or Fully Deconstructed Homes and a Streamlined Building Move-On Permit Process.

* * * * *