

## **COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION**

*For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting of City Council on July 23, 2025*

### **7. Streamlining the Provision of Duplex and Multiplex Housing in R1-1 Zoning**

Submitted by: Councillor Maloney

#### **WHEREAS**

1. Vancouver is a provincial and national leader in enabling laneway homes, multiplexes, and other types of small-scale multi-unit housing that support a greater diversity of housing types, offered at a wider array of price points, within existing neighbourhoods;
2. Significant construction-cost escalations and broad economic uncertainty are challenging Vancouver homebuilders to cost-effectively deliver the city's needed housing;
3. The single-family detached home is the most expensive and least climate-adapted housing form, but it enjoys a considerable advantage over duplexes, multiplexes, and other types of multifamily housing with respect to permit approval time and simplicity of permit requirements;
4. A proposed multiplex in R1-1 development currently requires separate reviews for the Development Permit and Building Permit. This can easily add three to six months of additional approval time when compared to a single-family detached home or a simple laneway home;
5. Development Permits are time-consuming for both staff and applicants. Some applicants report that assessment decisions can at times feel subjective and/or arbitrary when compared to Outright zoning rules;
6. Vancouver's R1-1 zoning does not currently allow a new multiplex on a lot without a lane, or on a lot that is shorter than 30.4 metres in length or smaller than 306 square metres in area;
7. The city requires builders who wish to develop multiplex housing on unusually shaped lots, double-fronting arterial lots, and/or lots with lane easements to pursue a time-consuming application process via the Board of Variance;
8. Builders report that the city's six-strata-unit cap and minimum subdivision lot sizes make the development of multiplexes on estate<sup>1</sup> sized R1-1 lots economically unfeasible in many instances. While the city provides exclusions for bike parking, builders report that in practice, they do not always improve project feasibility;
9. Allowing greater flexibility in the types of lots on which gentle-density housing can be built will enable homeowners and small- and medium-sized homebuilders to more readily develop such housing;

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<sup>1</sup> Vancouver Subdivision Bylaw, Schedule A, Table 1, includes large lot categories C (50' min frontage) through G (150' min frontage) as compared to lot category A that allows subdivision down to 30' frontage.

10. The City of Burnaby currently allows multiplexes with higher floor space ratio than those in Vancouver.. Burnaby's regulations allow four floors (three above grade) and 50% site coverage, with no limit on floor space ratio;
11. Given the high cost of land, current regulations that require proposed multiplexes to meet 1.0 floor space ratio significantly constrain the financial viability of many such projects. An allowance for higher density, or higher unit counts per site, would open up additional locations to multifamily housing; and
12. The City is planning a periodic review of its R1-1 zoning.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council direct staff as part of its forthcoming review of R1-1 zoning, to:

THAT Council explore and report back on the feasibility and implications of amending R1-1 zoning to:

- i. Expedite multiplex permitting by simplifying the approval process. This could be done through a combined Development Permit / Building Permit process, or Outright zoning (similar to what is used for single-family detached homes and laneway homes) on R1-1 residential projects with a frontage of 100 feet or less;
- ii. Allow multiplexes on lots that are smaller than current minimum size thresholds, or on lots without lane access;
- iii. Enable multiplex development on large lots by allowing subdivision and/or higher unit counts to achieve appropriately sized multiplex units, potentially via amendments to the Subdivision By-law (No. 5208);
- iv. Consider granting the Director of Planning discretion in a wider range of situations for multiplexes proposed on non-conforming, small, or unusual lots;
- v. Remove "half storey" massing requirements for upper floors on duplexes to allow for smaller-footprint buildings with more green space;
- vi. Allow bicycle parking exclusions to scale with lot sizes; and
- vii. Consider altering Vancouver's R1-1 zoning to be at least as permissive as the City of Burnaby's equivalent zoning, the R1 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing District.

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