



REFERRAL REPORT

Report Date: October 21, 2025
Contact: Celine Mauboules
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Meeting Date: November 4, 2025

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability and General Manager of Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Zoning and Development By-law Amendment to Extend the Term of Development Permits for Temporary Modular Housing

RECOMMENDATION TO REFER

THAT the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability be instructed to bring forward the amendments as described below and that the application be referred to Public Hearing together with the recommendations set out below;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to prepare the necessary by-laws, in accordance with the recommendations set out below, for consideration at the Public Hearing.

RECOMMENDATION AT PUBLIC HEARING

- A. THAT Council approve, in principle, the application to amend the Zoning and Development By-law to permit the term of development permits for Temporary Modular Housing to be a maximum of 20 years, generally as presented in Appendix A;
- B. FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment an amendment to the Zoning and Development By-law generally in accordance with Appendix A.

Purpose and Executive Summary

This report seeks Council's approval to amend the Zoning and Development By-law (ZDBL) to extend the term of development permits for temporary modular housing (TMH). Under current zoning, a development permit for TMH is limited to a maximum of five years and can be extended for up to an additional five years (for a maximum of ten years) by the Director of Planning. Under the amendment, staff are proposing to extend the term of the development permit to a maximum of 20 years to extend the use of existing sites pending redevelopment.

Council Authority/Previous Decisions

- January 2017: Council enacted amendments to the [ZDBL](#) to include the definition and associated regulations for TMH, including the time-limited nature of the development permits specifically a maximum of five years with the option to extend for an additional five years.
- September 2017: Council approved an amendment to the general regulations of the [ZDBL](#) to delegate the discretionary relaxation powers to the Director of Planning or the Development Permit Board to expedite the delivery of low cost housing for persons receiving assistance.

City Manager's Comments

The City Manager concurs with the foregoing recommendations.

Context and Background

Zoning and Development By-law

In December 2016, Council approved amendments to the ZDBL to allow for the expedited delivery of TMH to provide housing for individuals experiencing homelessness. The changes took advantage of vacant or underutilized lands on a temporary basis while plans for permanent redevelopment were underway. Under current zoning, a development permit for TMH is limited to a maximum of five years and can be extended for up to an additional five years (for a maximum of ten years) by the Director of Planning.

Temporary Modular Housing Program

In 2017, the City opened its first TMH building on City-owned land at 220 Terminal Avenue as a pilot project. The City and BC Housing entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide the creation of 600 temporary modular supportive housing units for Vancouver residents who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

TMH units are self-contained with private bathroom and cooking facilities; they rent at the shelter component of income assistance and tenants are provided with 24/7 supports. Under the terms of the MOU, BC Housing was responsible for capital funding and operating subsidies as well as the relocation of tenants and removal of the TMH buildings at the end of the licence term. The City provided land to support the developments and led public engagement activities. Two TMH projects were delivered on privately-owned sites.

Existing Temporary Modular Housing

There are currently 618 TMH units on 10 sites in Vancouver (refer to Appendix B for details); eight sites (442 units) are on City-owned land and two (176 units) are located on privately-owned sites. While deployed for a temporary use, TMH buildings were designed and constructed to be as 'permanent' as any other new buildings. Buildings are operated by non-profit housing providers who support tenants on site, and through referrals to community services.

Delivery of Permanent Supportive Housing

While TMH is a critical part of the City's strategy to address the needs of residents experiencing homelessness, the delivery of permanent supportive housing has continued to be a key City priority under the City's Housing Vancouver Strategy. Since 2017, a total of 512 new permanent supportive housing units across 9 projects have been completed, under construction, or approved as demonstrated in figure 1. Of these, four projects with 386 units are part of the Permanent Supportive Housing Initiative.

Figure 1: Permanent Supportive Housing Units, 2017 – Present

	Approved	Under Construction	Completed	Total
# Projects	3	3	3	9
# Units	168	150	194	512

Discussion

When Council approved the maximum 10-year permitted timeframe for TMH, it was understood that the permanent development of each of the City-owned sites would generally be ready to commence construction within this timeframe, and TMH buildings would to be relocated to other sites in Vancouver or elsewhere in the province.

Since 2017, three TMH buildings (The Beach, Larwill Place, and Aneki Housing for Women) have been relocated to make way for permanent development of the site. The remaining eight sites with TMH buildings (including the City-owned and operated TMH at 220 Terminal Avenue) are not anticipated to be ready for development before the maximum 10-year permitted timeframe is reached. There are two other sites on privately-owned land that could potentially extend beyond the current 10-year maximum, depending on agreement with the owners and BC Housing (see Appendix B for the complete list and status of each TMH site).

While the permanent supportive housing delivered in Vancouver since 2017 generally aligns with the number of temporary supportive housing delivered through TMH, some of the sites with existing TMH buildings are not ready for permanent redevelopment and homelessness continues to grow in Vancouver. Furthermore, relocation of both tenants and buildings has proven challenging due to the long notice periods (12-24 months) required by BC Housing to relocate to storage or to another site, the high costs associated with relocation, and the lack of other available City sites that could support relocation of buildings within Vancouver. Therefore, the Province (through BC Housing) has requested extending the permitted time frames for TMH to maximize the use of existing sites prior to their relocation, without impacting the permanent development plans of each site.

Proposed Regulatory Changes

To facilitate BC Housing's request, staff are proposing amendments to the ZDBL to extend the development permit length for TMH sites from a maximum of 10 years to 20 years. Staff considered extending the development permit length for 10 years with the option to extend for an additional 10 years by the Director of Planning but determined that this process would pose redundancies as the specific time frame for each site can be managed through the license agreement.

Should Council approve the proposed ZDBL amendments, applicants will be required to apply

for a development permit extension for each site to extend to the new maximum permitted time frame. As a condition of development permit approval, applicants would need to include a “comfort letter” from a geotechnical or structural engineer confirming condition of the existing TMH on-site, and the buildings will be subject to an inspection overseen by the City’s Chief Building Official. Amendments to the Building By-law are not required to enable the development permit extension.

Industrial Land

Two sites with existing TMH buildings (1580 and 1582 Vernon Dr., 1131 Franklin St.) and a third site currently under planning review (1325-1333 E. Georgia St.) have relied on the “municipal flexibility clause” in the Regional Growth Strategy, which allows housing on sites that were previously designated for industrial or employment only development. This clause allows municipalities to make small adjustments to Regional Land Use Designations without the approval of Metro Vancouver, provided that the sum of the adjustments does not exceed 2% of the lands in the designation.

The City has notified Metro Vancouver of the proposed changes to the ZDBL given the associated impact on available land for industrial development. The clause has never been used to facilitate private development applications and staff recommend that it continue to be reserved for critical situations such as enabling TMH to address homelessness.

Licence Agreements

Each TMH building has a licence agreement with the Provincial Rental Housing Corporation (PRHC) that stipulates the length of time the TMH can operate on each site. The licence agreement for each site can be extended as agreed upon by the parties, provided the timeframe does not exceed the length of the development permit.

If the recommended amendment to the ZDBL is approved, it will extend the maximum permitted term that sites can be used for TMH under zoning; but the license agreements will continue to govern the specific timeframes for each site. On City-owned sites, the City will retain control over the timeframe for each TMH building through its license agreements with PRHC. Should Council approve the amendments to the ZDBL, staff will bring forward extensions to the Licences for Council consideration where applicable.

Public Input

Public Notification – An advertisement for the proposed amendments to the ZDBL was published in the Digital Classifieds section of the *Vancouver is Awesome* website. The notice remained online from September 2 to September 16, providing the public with an opportunity to review and engage with the proposed changes through Shape Your City (shapeyourcity.ca). TMH operators were notified of the proposed changes via email and included informational posters for operators to share with their tenants by posting them in high traffic areas of their buildings.

Question and Answer Period – A question and answer period was held on the Shape Your City website. Four questions were submitted by the public during this time, and staff responded to each question on the website within two business days.

Advisory Committees – Staff met with the Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee on September 22, 2025 and the Rental Advisory Committee on September 24, 2025. Staff provided both committees with information on the proposed amendments and gathered feedback from committee members. Detailed feedback from these committees can be found in Appendix C.

Figure 1: Overview of Notification and Engagement



Public Response and Comments – Public input is collected via online questions and comment forms. A total of 72 submissions were received. The Shape Your City page was visited 491 times over the 2-week engagement period.

A summary of feedback is provided below and in Appendix C.

Generally, comments of support fell within the following areas:

- Addressing the Homelessness Crisis: TMH is a critical response to homelessness in the city and TMH provides safe, secure and affordable housing to those at risk of homelessness and is needed right now.
- Addressing the Mental Health and Addictions Crisis: TMH provides essential supports to tenants with mental health and substance use challenges.
- Expanding the TMH Program: TMH should be expanded to more sites across the city to address the housing and homelessness crisis.
- Community Building and Minimizing Tenant Impact: Tenants in TMH have built positive communities. Moving these buildings would disrupt and force many tenants into crisis and eventual homelessness.

Generally, comments of concern fell within the following areas:

- Extension of Development Permits: Twenty years is an inappropriate timeframe as TMH was not built for the purpose of long-term housing.
- Neighbourhood Impact: TMH has caused higher occurrences of street disorder, littering, and graffiti near existing TMH Sites. There are perceived safety concerns around TMH sites including an increased rate of outdoor drug use and stolen/damaged property. TMH should not be in proximity to elementary schools.
- Better Use of Land: TMH is not the highest and best use of City land and the City should find better uses for the land or develop permanent housing on the sites.

Response to Public Comments:

- **Extension of Development Permits:** As part of the application to extend the development permit, a letter of comfort will be required confirming the existing building condition. The Chief Building Officer also complete site inspections at time of permit extension to confirm life and safety requirements are being maintained.
- **Neighbourhood Impact:** TMH buildings are managed by experienced non-profit housing operators in accordance with an Operations Management Plan to ensure the site is managed safely and responsibly. Measures include 24/7 onsite staff, emergency procedure protocols, a 24/7 number the public can call with concerns, and daily garbage clean-up and needle sweeps in the area surrounding the building.
- **Better Use of Land:** TMH is temporary in nature and does not interfere with long-term redevelopment timelines for each site.

Financial Implications

Consistent with Council policies, all social housing projects, including TMH, are expected to be self-sustaining and not require operating subsidies, property tax exemptions, and/or financial guarantees from the City.

Legal Implications

If the Recommendation in this report is adopted, Council will amend the ZDBL to extend the maximum term for TMH development permits from 10 years to 20 years. This change is authorized by Part XXVIII of the Vancouver Charter.

Conclusion

This report seeks Council's approval to amend the ZDBL to extend the maximum term of a development permit length for temporary modular housing to 20 years. Given the continued need for supportive housing and challenges associated with relocation, the proposed amendment will maximize the use of existing sites pending redevelopment. The report recommends that the amendment be referred to Public Hearing together with the draft By-law as generally shown in Appendix A, with a recommendation that the amendment approved, subject to the Public Hearing.

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APPENDIX A

DRAFT By-law to amend the Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575 regarding Temporary Modular Housing

Note: An amending by-law will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below, subject to change and refinement prior to posting.

1. This by-law amends the indicated provisions or schedules of the Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575.
2. Council strikes section 11.3.4.3, which reads:

“11.3.4.3 A development permit for temporary modular housing must be limited in time to a maximum of 5 years, unless otherwise extended in writing for up to an additional 5 years by the Director of Planning.”, and replaces it with:

“11.3.4.3 A development permit for temporary modular housing must be limited in time to a maximum of 20 years, but any development permit issued for a period of less than 20 years can be extended by the Director of Planning so that its term does not exceed 20 years in total.”.
3. A decision by a court that any part of this by-law is illegal, void, or unenforceable severs that part from this by-law, and is not to affect the balance of this by-law.
4. This by-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.

ENACTED by Council this _____ day of _____, 2026

_____ Mayor

_____ City Clerk

APPENDIX B TMH PROGRAM TIMELINES

BUILDINGS CURRENTLY OPERATING:

Address + Name + Zoning	Rooms	DP Expiry (10 yr)	City License Expiry
220 Terminal Avenue (FC-2)	40	Feb. 2027	N/A (City-Owned Building)
Chartrand Place 1131 Franklin St (M-2)	39	Feb. 2028	Feb. 2028
Sarah Ross House 4480 Kaslo (CD-1)	52	Mar. 2028	Mar. 2028
Margaret Mitchell Place 2132 Ash St (M-2)	52	Apr. 2028	Mar. 2028
Nora Hendrix Place 258 Union St (M-1)	52	Jan. 2029	Oct. 2028
Hummingbird Place 265 W 1st Ave (M-2)	52	Jan. 2029	Nov. 2028
Naomi Place 3598 Copley St (CD-1)	58	Sept. 2029	Sept. 2029
Álewem 1580 & 1582 Vernon Dr (I-2)	98	Feb. 2031	Feb. 2026, plus option to extend to Feb. 2031
Reiderman Residence 7430 & 7460 Heather St (CD-1)	77	Oct. 2027	N/A (Private Land)
New Beginnings 5077 & 5095 Heather St (CD-1)	98	Jan. 2029	N/A (Private Land)

BUILDINGS RELOCATED:

Address + Name	Rooms	DP Issued	Relocation Date
The Beach 137 E. 37th Ave	46	Jun. 2018	Nov. 2021
Larwill Place 610 and 620 Cambie	98	Aug. 2019	Feb. 2024
Aneki Housing for Women 525 Powell	39	Dec. 2018	Sept. 2025

APPENDIX C PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY

1. List of Public Notification, Advisory Committee Engagement, and Public Responses

	Date	Results
Public Notification		
Vancouver is Awesome	September 2 - September 16, 2025	
Advisory Committees		
Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee	September 22, 2025	
Renters Advisory Committee	September 24, 2025	
Public Response and Comments – Shape Your City Vancouver (Shapeyourcity.ca)		
Website engagement	September 2 - September 16, 2025	- Total website visits: 624 - Aware visitors: 491 - Informed visitors: 138 - Engaged visitors: 68
Surveys completed		68 Survey's completed: 49: Support 17: Opposed 1 Mixed
Online question and answers		4

Note: All reported numbers above are approximate.

* The Shape Your City platform allows staff to capture more nuanced levels of engagement associated with the rezoning application, categorized as:

- **Aware:** Number of unique visitors to the application webpage that viewed only the main page.
- **Informed:** Visitors who viewed documents or the video/photo gallery associated with the application; informed participants are a subset of aware participants.
- **Engaged:** Visitors that submitted a comment form or asked a question; engaged participants are a subset of informed and aware participants.

2. Analysis of All Comments Received:

Below is an analysis of all public feedback by topic. Generally, comments of support fell within the following areas:

- **Addressing the Homelessness Crisis:** TMH is a critical response to homelessness in the City and provides safe, secure and affordable housing to those at risk of homelessness, and is needed right now.
- **Addressing the Mental Health and Addictions Crisis:** TMH provides essential supports to tenants with mental health and substance use issues.
- **Expanding the TMH Program:** TMH should be expanded to more sites across the City in order to address the housing and homelessness crisis.

- **Community Building and Minimizing Tenant Impact:** Tenants in TMH have built positive communities. Moving these buildings would disrupt and force many tenants into crisis and eventual homelessness.

Generally, comments of concern fell within the following areas:

- **Extension of Development Permits:** Twenty years is an inappropriate timeframe as TMH was not built for the purpose of long-term housing.
- **Neighbourhood Impact:** TMH has caused higher occurrences of street disorder, littering, and graffiti near existing TMH Sites. There are perceived safety concerns around TMH sites including an increased rate of outdoor drug use and stolen/damaged property. TMH should not be in proximity to elementary schools.
- **Better Use of Land:** TMH is not the highest and best use of City land and the City should find better uses for the land or develop permanent housing on the sites.

The following miscellaneous comments were received from the public on topics that were not ranked as highly as above.

General comments of support:

- Extending TMH development permits indefinitely.
- TMH saves the City and Province money by housing those that are at risk of homelessness and providing them with health supports.

General comments of concern:

- There is no enforcement around these sites. There is loitering, loud music, and open drug use.
- Constant disorder around TMH sites, disassembled bikes; unconscious people on the steps and in front of the nearby businesses; tents on the grass; garbage; small fires;
- TMH sites have been infiltrated by drug dealers.
- East Vancouver Residents should not be forced to take on the load of supportive housing and temporary modular housing.

3. **Advisory Committee Feedback and Comments**

1. On September 22, 2025 City staff met with the Urban Indigenous Peoples Advisory Committee. Staff provided a presentation and responded to questions and comments. Following discussion, the Committee agreed by consensus to the following motion:

THAT the Urban Indigenous Peoples' Advisory Committee supports, in principle, the Vancouver City staff presentation on the proposed Zoning and Development By-law amendments and Development Permit (DP) term extension for Temporary Modular Housing (TMH), as presented at its meeting on September 22, 2025, provided the following considerations are addressed:

1. Prioritizing of safety and wellness within TMH communities, with particular attention to preventing and proactively responding to the risks associated with human trafficking;
2. Strengthening access to mental health and substance use supports within and nearby TMH sites, including Indigenous-led and trauma- and violence-informed services;

3. Advancing Indigenous-specific housing solutions, with an emphasis on housing designed by and for Indigenous Peoples, including women, girls, and Two-Spirit Peoples;
4. Implementing a long-term evaluation and accountability framework that incorporates Indigenous-specific indicators and outcomes, developed in partnership with Indigenous TMH residents, Elders, Knowledge Holders, housing providers, and community organizations; and
5. Ensuring ongoing engagement with TMH residents, particularly Indigenous Peoples, to guide future improvements and policy decisions related to modular and permanent housing solutions.

APPROVED BY CONSENSUS

2. On September 24, 2025 City staff met with the Renters Advisory Committee. Staff provided a presentation and responded to questions and comments. Following discussion, the Committee agreed by consensus to the following motion:

MOVED BY Scott Robinson
SECONDED by Kawa Ada

THAT the Renters Advisory Committee supports the staff proposal to extend the development permit for temporary modular housing to a maximum of 20 years as presented to the committee on September 24, 2025.

CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY