

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee on Policy and Strategic Priorities meeting on
November 26, 2025*

4. Right of First Refusal: Building Pathways to Affordable Non-Market Housing

Submitted by: Councillor Sean Orr

WHEREAS

1. Rents in Vancouver are rising faster than wages, pushing residents out of the city. Existing affordable market rental buildings are being sold off and redeveloped, or otherwise lost, displacing long-term tenants and driving average rents up;
2. Market housing is not meeting the needs of low and moderate income residents, with the most recent census showing that market rate housing is out of the reach of 71% of the population;
3. Publicly owned, permanently affordable, non-profit, social, and co-operative housing offers long-term stability and affordability for tenants;
4. Tenants have the right to housing stability, dignity, and agency in decisions affecting their homes, but they currently lack powers to formally collectively bargain, and face practical barriers and no institutional support to purchase the buildings in communities they love and call home;
5. Other cities including [Montreal, Quebec](#) and [Washington, DC](#) have implemented Right of First Refusal and Tenant Opportunity to Purchase policies to protect housing and create more non-profit and social housing, including programs that empower tenants, non-profits, and cities to protect rental housing that goes up for sale for public benefit;
6. Tenant Opportunity to Purchase programs can empower tenants to remain in their housing by extending a right of first refusal to tenants, strengthening communities and preventing displacement;
7. Tools to protect existing non-profit land use for affordable and social housing can ensure lasting public benefit, and empower Vancouver to protect and deliver more affordable housing for people over the long term;
8. Tools to transform market housing into publicly-owned social housing or tenant-owned co-operative housing is a pathway to more affordable housing options and meeting Vancouver's housing goals;
9. Programs to aid and support tenants in the co-purchase and ownership of existing housing as co-operatives can enhance tenant rights, protect affordable

housing stock from redevelopment, and make it more affordable to produce social housing;

10. Vancouver's Draft Official Development Plan (ODP) calls to address speculation, significantly increase the supply of social and supportive housing, work with indigenous partners to support Indigenous housing models, and become a city for renters that mitigates displacement; and
11. Vancouver should lead the world in pathways to affordable housing including a Public Land Strategy that includes a robust Right of First Refusal policy.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council directs staff to return with recommendations on a Public Land Strategy to strengthen the City's ability to secure and retain land for public benefit to preserve and expand the long-term use of land for affordable housing and other essential non-profit community purposes. This strategy will use regulatory, financial, and legal tools to prevent the loss of social, cultural, and public-serving land vulnerable to speculative redevelopment. Including, but not limited to:

- A. Identification of zoning and land use mechanisms to secure land for permanent affordable housing, including social housing-exclusive zoning districts, incentives tied to long-term non-market use covenants, and other legal tools to restrict conversion to market use.
- B. Recommendations on establishing a Tenant Opportunity to Purchase policy to give tenants the ability to turn their rental buildings into co-operatives.
- C. Recommendations on establishing a city-wide right of first refusal for the City, non-profit housing providers, Indigenous governments, and other public bodies for use as affordable non-market housing.
- D. Recommendations on establishing a right of first refusal for non-profit housing providers, Indigenous governments, and public bodies to purchase properties currently used for social housing, faith-based services, community centres, and other non-profit functions to ensure continuity of public-serving use.
- E. Development of City-supported financial instruments such as low-interest loans, land leases, land trusts, equity partnerships, or acquisition funds to enable tenant collectives and non-profit co-operatives to purchase their buildings with the goal of growing community-owned affordable housing.
- F. Recommendations on pathways to more affordable non-market housing with the City's current authority, and places where legislative change or partnerships with senior governments or other public bodies would make that work more successful.