

Vancouver's Social Housing Initiative

November 27, 2025

VANCOUVER PLAN
Implementation
2050



CITY OF
VANCOUVER

Vancouver
Plan

Agenda

- 1 Overview
- 2 Relaxation for Social Housing
- 3 Social Housing Rezoning Policy
- 4 Engagement
- 5 Conclusion



Overview

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Project Objectives



Make non-profit projects “shovel-ready” to unlock funding

- Zoning needs to be in place to meet senior government funding program construction deadlines



Delivering on City, Provincial and Federal Housing Commitments

- 10-year municipal housing targets, Provincial Housing Targets Order



Needed affordable homes in complete and diverse neighbourhoods

- Respond to urgent housing needs by enabling social housing in all neighbourhoods near transit, employment opportunities and daily needs



Streamline processing and simplify regulations

- Moving toward city-wide streamlined process for majority of housing projects to meet housing supply and affordability targets

Overview

Project Timeline



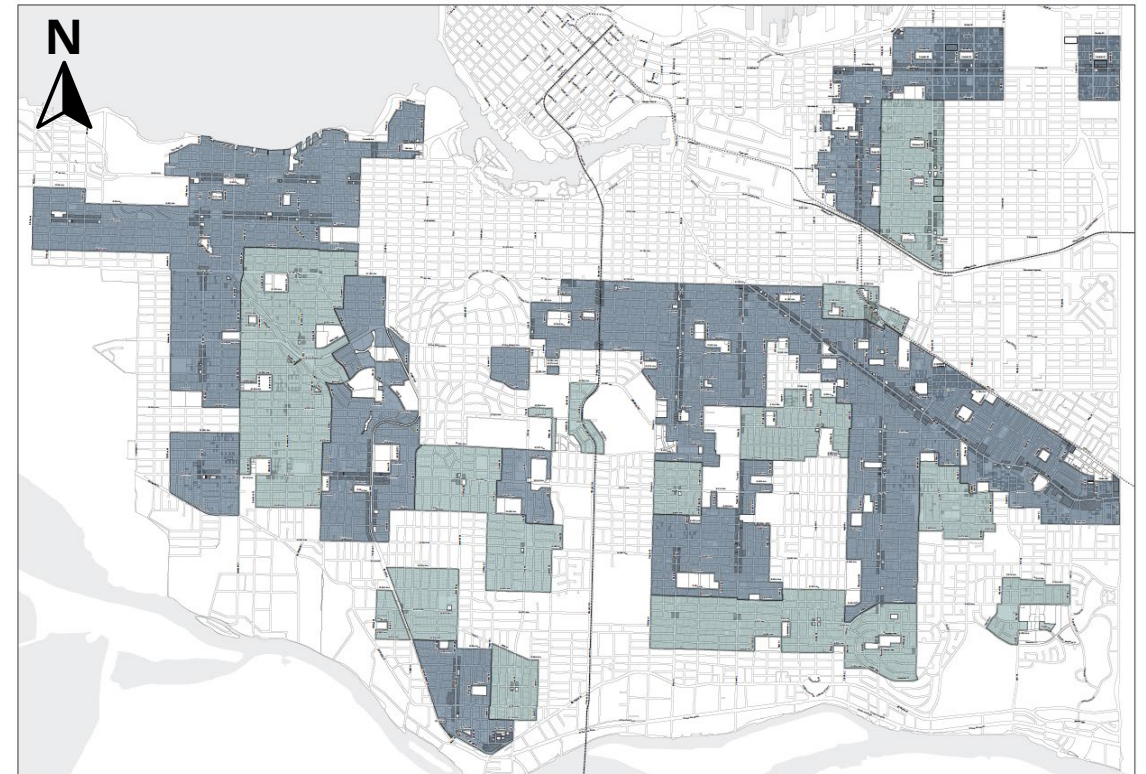
Project Description: Relaxation for Social Housing

Recommendation A:

Amend the Zoning & Development By-law to:

- Add a new relaxation and associated regulations to enable low- and high-rise social housing projects to proceed under a Development Permit
- Add a new map schedule to define where the new relaxation applies

Social Housing Initiative Areas



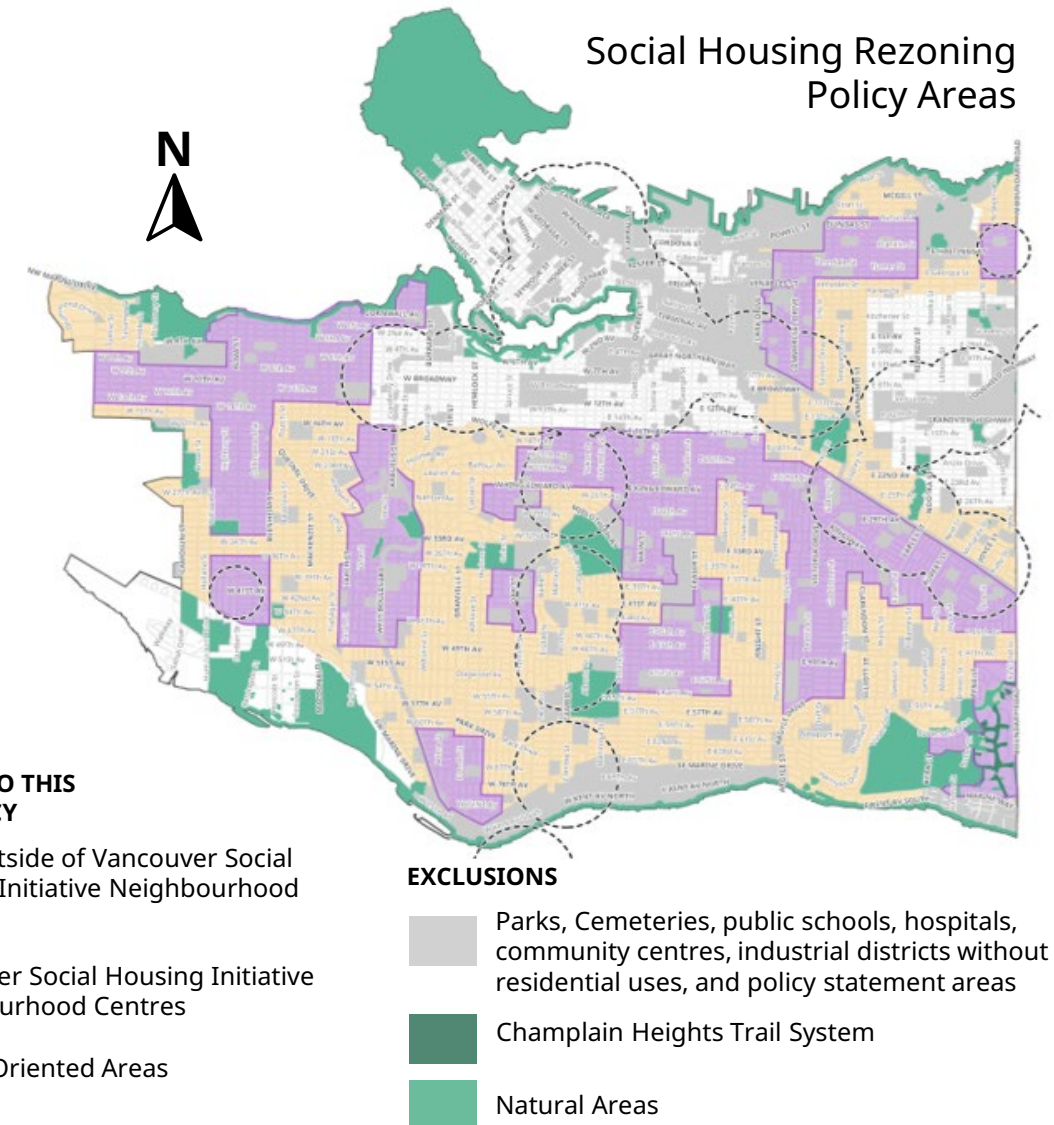
- A: low-rise social housing buildings up to 23 m in height (~6 storeys)
- B: High- and low-rise social housing buildings up to 66 m (~20 storeys)
- C: Low-rise social housing building with required ground-floor non-residential space
- D: High- and low-rise social housing buildings with required ground-floor non-residential space

Overview

Project Description: Social Housing Rezoning Policy

Recommendation B, C and D:

- Approve a new Social Housing Rezoning to replace the existing Interim Rezoning Policy
- Amend the First Shaughnessy Heritage Conservation Area ODP and Design Guidelines to enable consideration of social housing through rezoning on non-heritage designated properties
- Amend other policies to align with new Social Housing Rezoning Policy



Overview

Policy Context



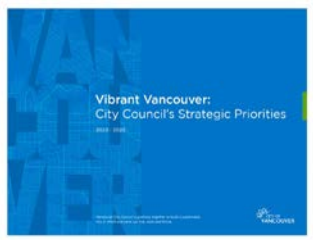
Vancouver Plan (2022)

- Equitable Housing prioritizes most needed housing
- Complete Neighbourhoods provide diverse choices
- Aligning and streamlining city building rules



Housing Vancouver 10-Year Targets and 3-Year Action Plan (2024)

- 10-year housing targets: 83,000 net new homes overall, including:
 - 1,500 supportive and 8,500 non-profit and co-op homes

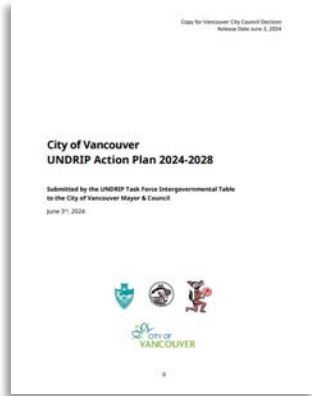


Council's Strategic Priorities 2023-2026 and Motion

- Leverage City-owned property to add substantially more market and non-market housing
- Reduce barriers for non-market housing, enable additional height and density and direct to Development Permit process

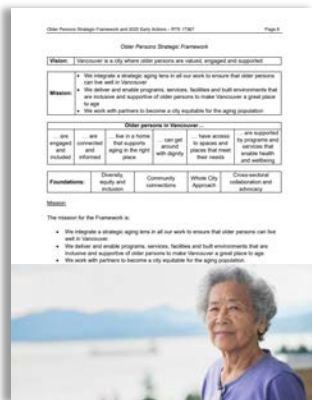
Overview

Additional Policy Context



UNDRIP Action Plan 2024-2028 (2024)

- Prioritize housing for Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh members in the City with a range of housing options
- Facilitate Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh projects and prioritize or fast-track Nation-led affordable housing developments

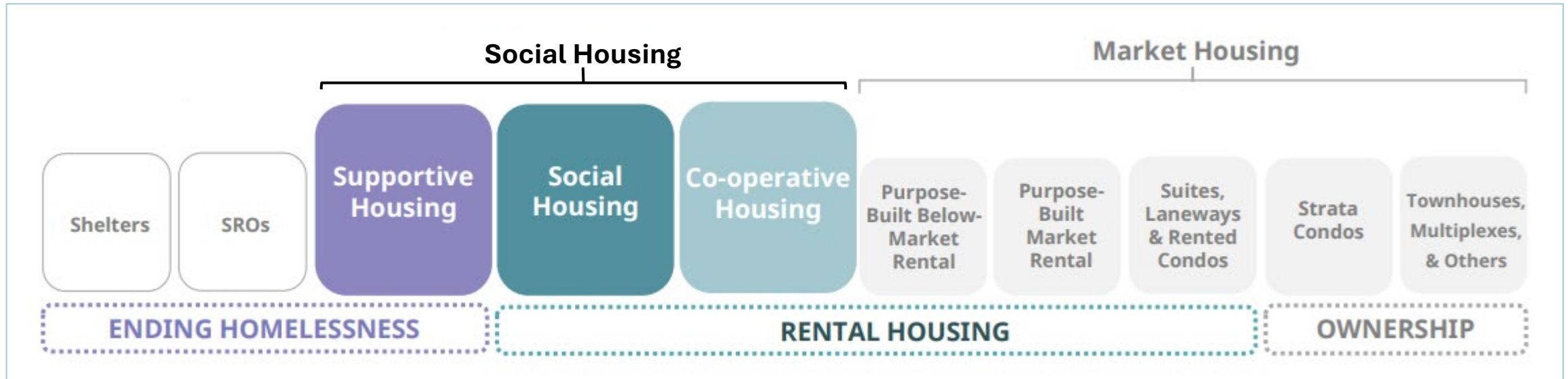


Older Persons Strategic Framework and 2025 Early Actions (2024)

- Streamline development of seniors social housing in neighbourhoods throughout the city

Overview

What is Social Housing?



Kwayatsut (2465 Fraser St)



The Aster (349 E 6th Ave)



North Arm Co-op (3510 Fraser St)



Mi Casa (870 E 8th Ave)

Overview

Social Housing Requirements



Non-profit or government/public ownership

- Affordability mandate at construction and at redevelopment
- Community programming and supports tailored to residents



Minimum 30% of units rented at or below Housing Income Limits (HILs)

- Minimum level set so projects can be built as funding requirements and economic conditions change
- Senior government funding deepens affordability – 64% of units since 2017 rented at or below HILs, including 30% at shelter-level



Secured for 60 years or the life of the building as social housing

- Building mixed-income communities for a diversity of people
- Security of tenure for residents

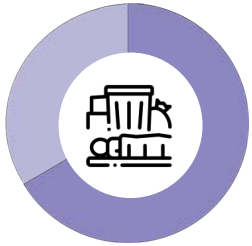
Relaxation for Social Housing

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Relaxation for Social Housing

Existing context and need

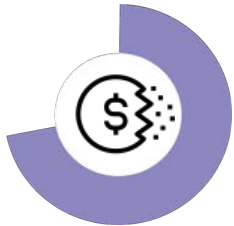


2,715 people homeless in Vancouver

- **2/3** in need of housing with direct supports
- **1/3** in need of shelter rate housing



6,340 households on BC Housing waitlist for social housing, up **48%** in the past 5 years



73% of low-income renter households spend over 30% of income on housing, including:

- **20,195** renting seniors; and
- **8,280** lone parent households



From 2014-2023:

119% increase in price of an eastside condo

67% increase in city-wide average rent vs. only a **45%** increase in median incomes

Relaxation for Social Housing

Existing context and need

589 existing social housing buildings.

32,106 existing social housing units.

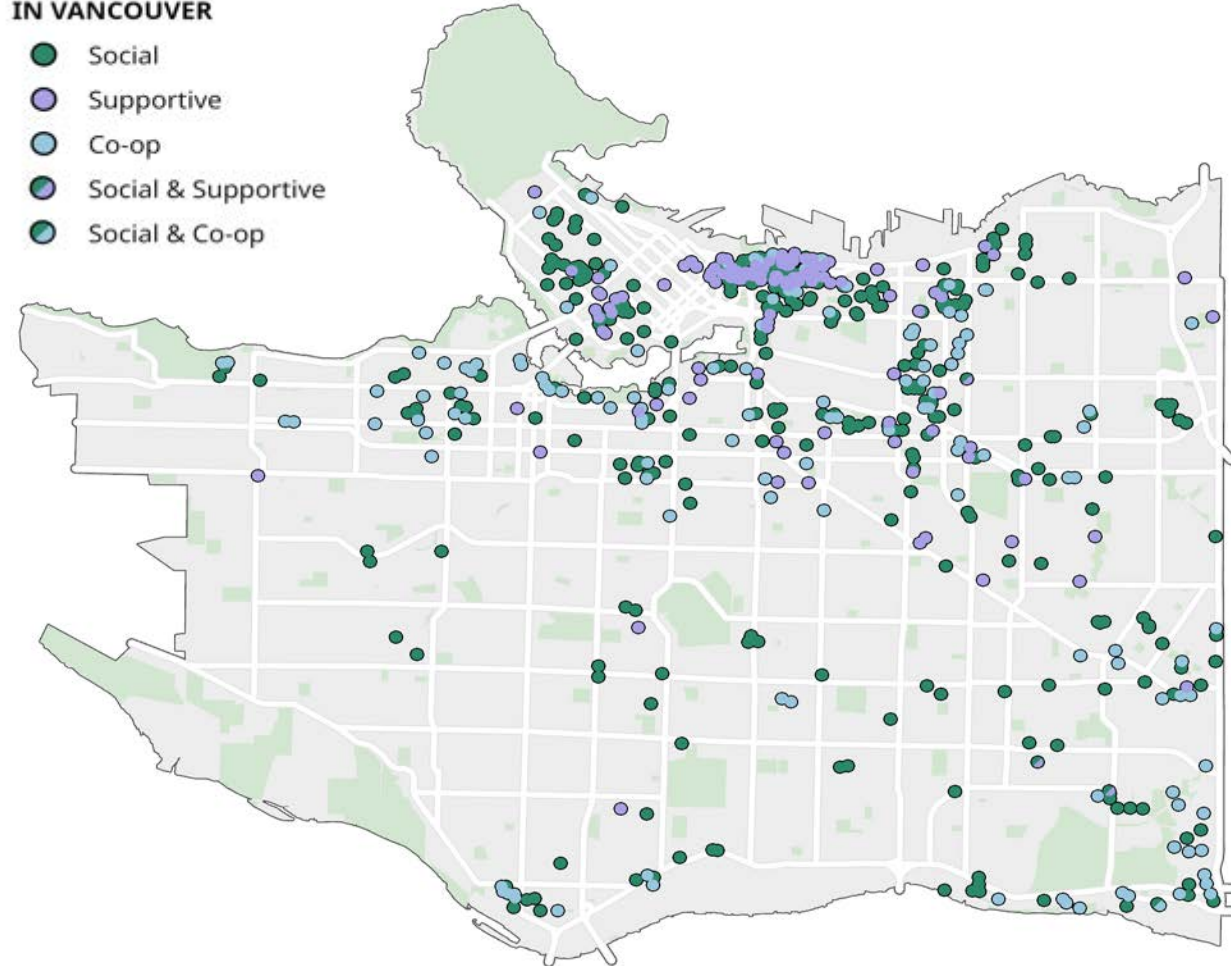
Housing Targets Order Guidance:

7,894 units renting at/below HILs.

583 supportive units.

NON-MARKET HOUSING IN VANCOUVER

- Social
- Supportive
- Co-op
- Social & Supportive
- Social & Co-op



Relaxation for Social Housing

Challenges building social housing

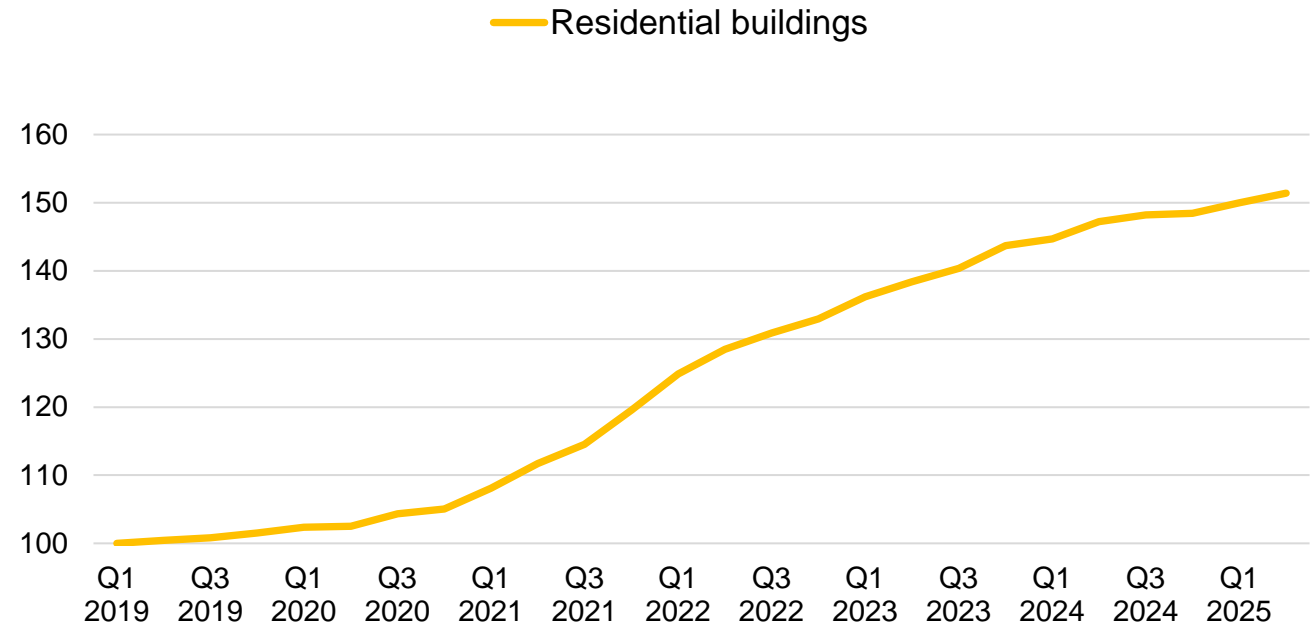
Challenges for all new housing:

- High construction costs
- Low labour availability
- Trade and economic instability

Additional challenges for social housing:

- Affordability mandate
- Complex funding environment
- Diverse needs of existing & future tenants

Construction Cost Index, Vancouver CMA



Source: Statistics Canada
(Q1 2019 = 100)

Relaxation for Social Housing

Opportunities for building social housing

All levels of government aligned to increase & speed up social housing delivery



Source: BC Indigenous Housing Society

1766 Frances Street

- 81 units
- Passive house
- Urban indigenous singles & families
- Daycare
- Community Garden



Source: Soroptimist International of Vancouver

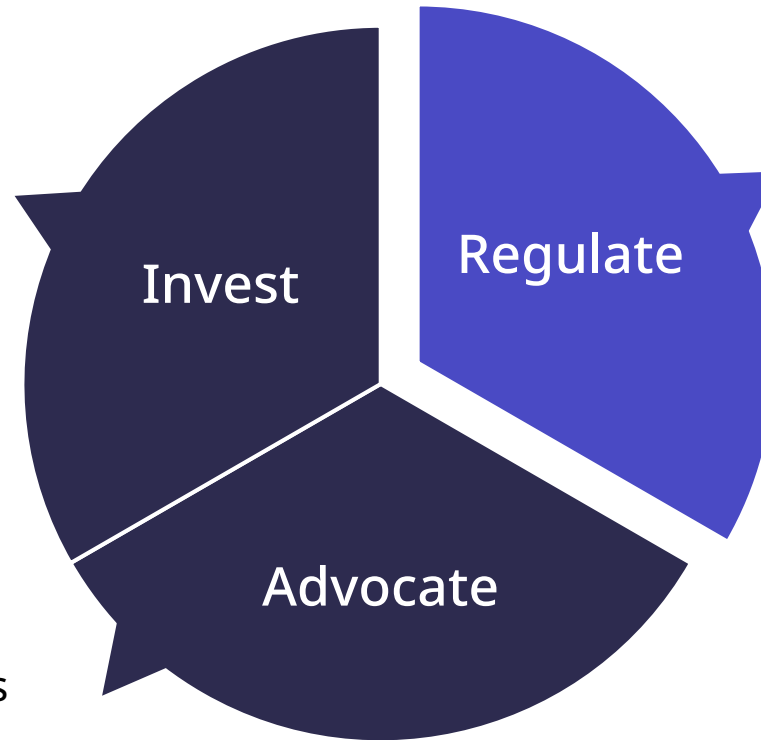
550 W. 13 Street

- 135 units
- Women & families
- Flex space & shared working spaces

Relaxation for Social Housing

Using municipal tools to address challenges

- Leveraging city land
- Capital grants
- Non-market housing operator
- Direct service (homelessness/renters)



- Identify local needs & investment opportunities
- Input to senior government policies & programs

Proposal advances:

- ✓ Prioritizing & expediting social housing projects
- ✓ Regulation & policy to enable social housing development

+ sets Vancouver projects up for funding partnerships

- BCH Community Housing Fund requires construction start within 2 years
- Build Canda Homes prioritizes projects that can start construction within 12 months

Relaxation for Social Housing

How Social Housing is approved now

Rezoning for social housing through:

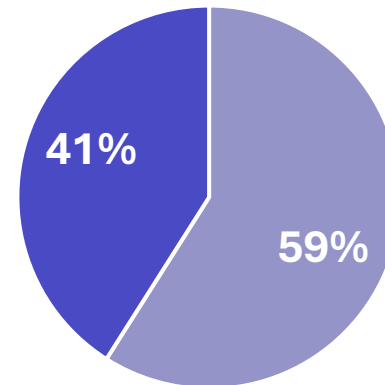
- Local Area & Station Area Plans
- Rezoning Policies e.g. TOA RZ Policy

Limited Development Permit pathway for social housing:

- RM-3A & RM-4 districts allow up to 3.00 FSR & 6 storey apartments
 - 2,426 parcels city-wide

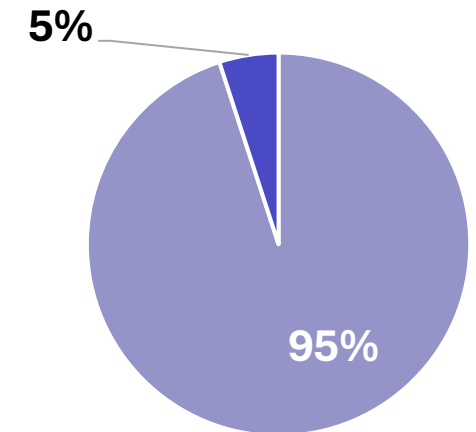
Housing approvals outside of downtown since 2017 by tenure and stream*

Condo & townhouse



- Approved through Rezoning
- Approved through Development Permit

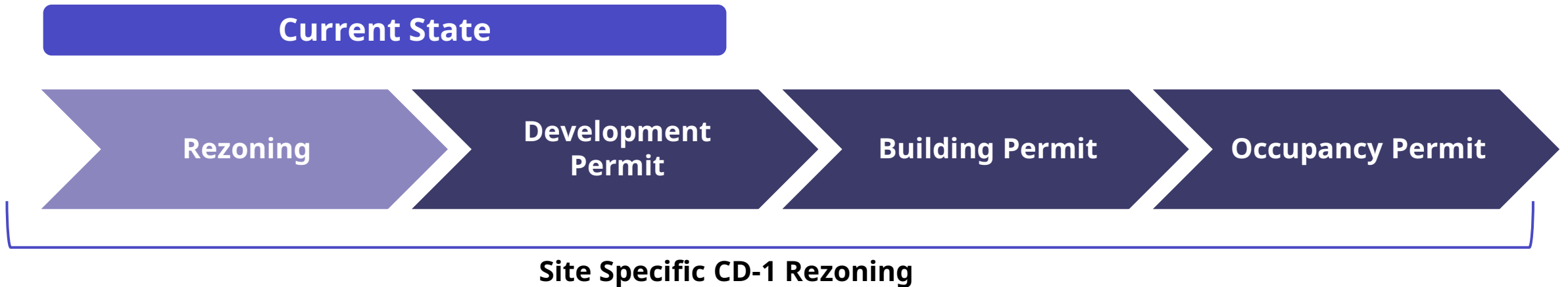
Social Housing



- Approved through Rezoning
- Approved through Development Permit

Relaxation for Social Housing

Streamlining process for delivering social housing

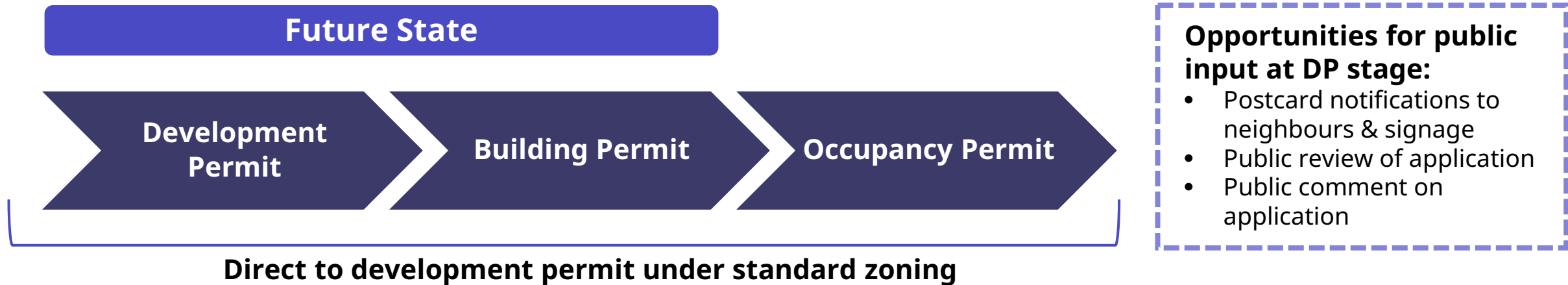


Challenges for non-profits:

- 12-15+ months rezoning process not aligned with senior government funding timelines
- Time & money spent on pre-development work
- Uncertainty of success = challenges in securing donors, planning for existing tenants & portfolio planning

Relaxation for Social Housing

Streamlining process for delivering social housing



Benefits for non-profits and community:

- Certainty allows for fundraising, planning & advantage in competitive funding processes
- Shortened timelines = affordable homes built faster
- More government money spent on building projects & deepening affordability

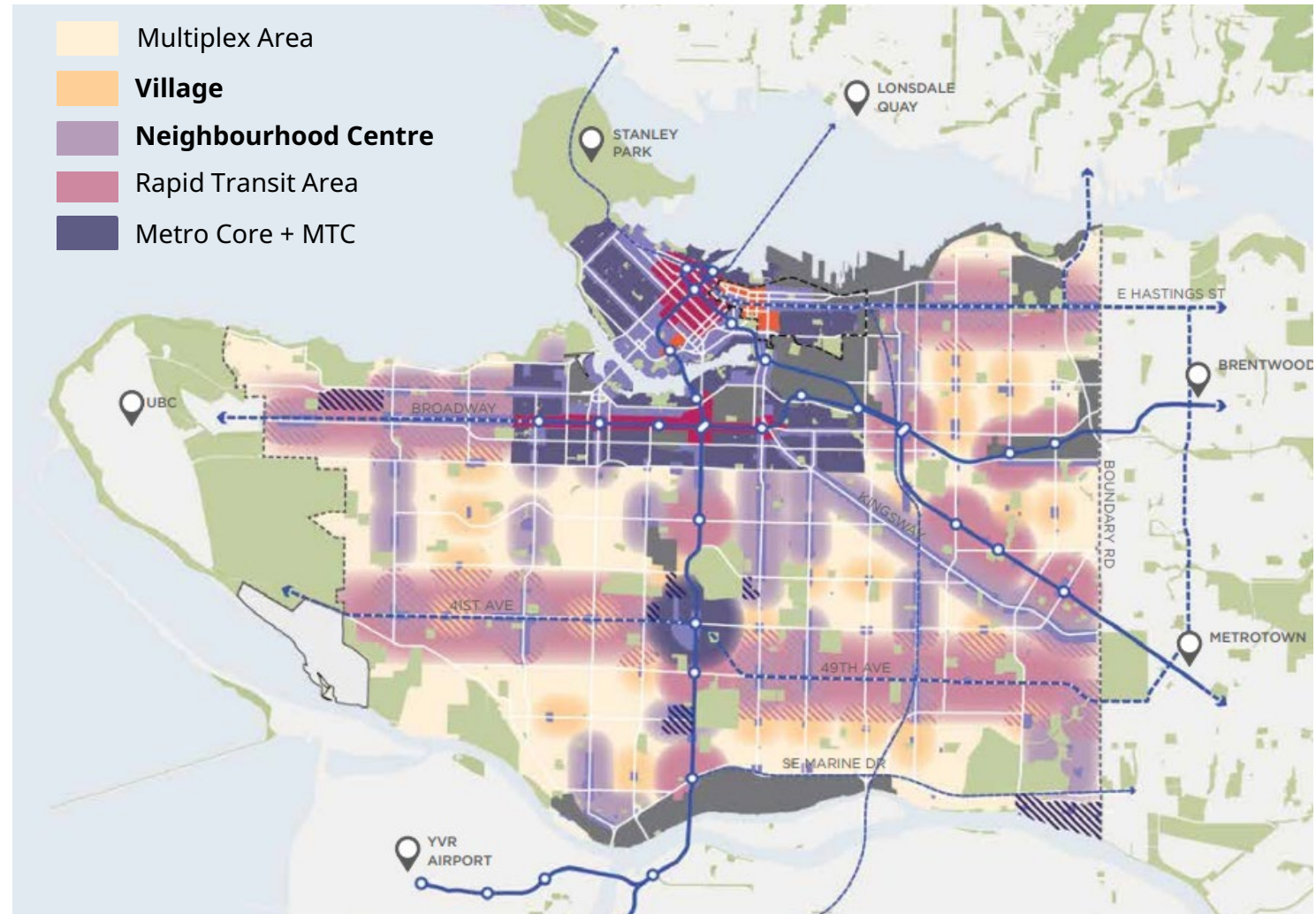
Relaxation for Social Housing

Implementing Vancouver Plan 30 year land use strategy

Vancouver Plan guides growth in an intentional way to support complete neighbourhoods and work toward affordable housing and climate goals.

Housing Vision:

Vancouver has an equitable housing system that prioritizes housing for those who need it most.

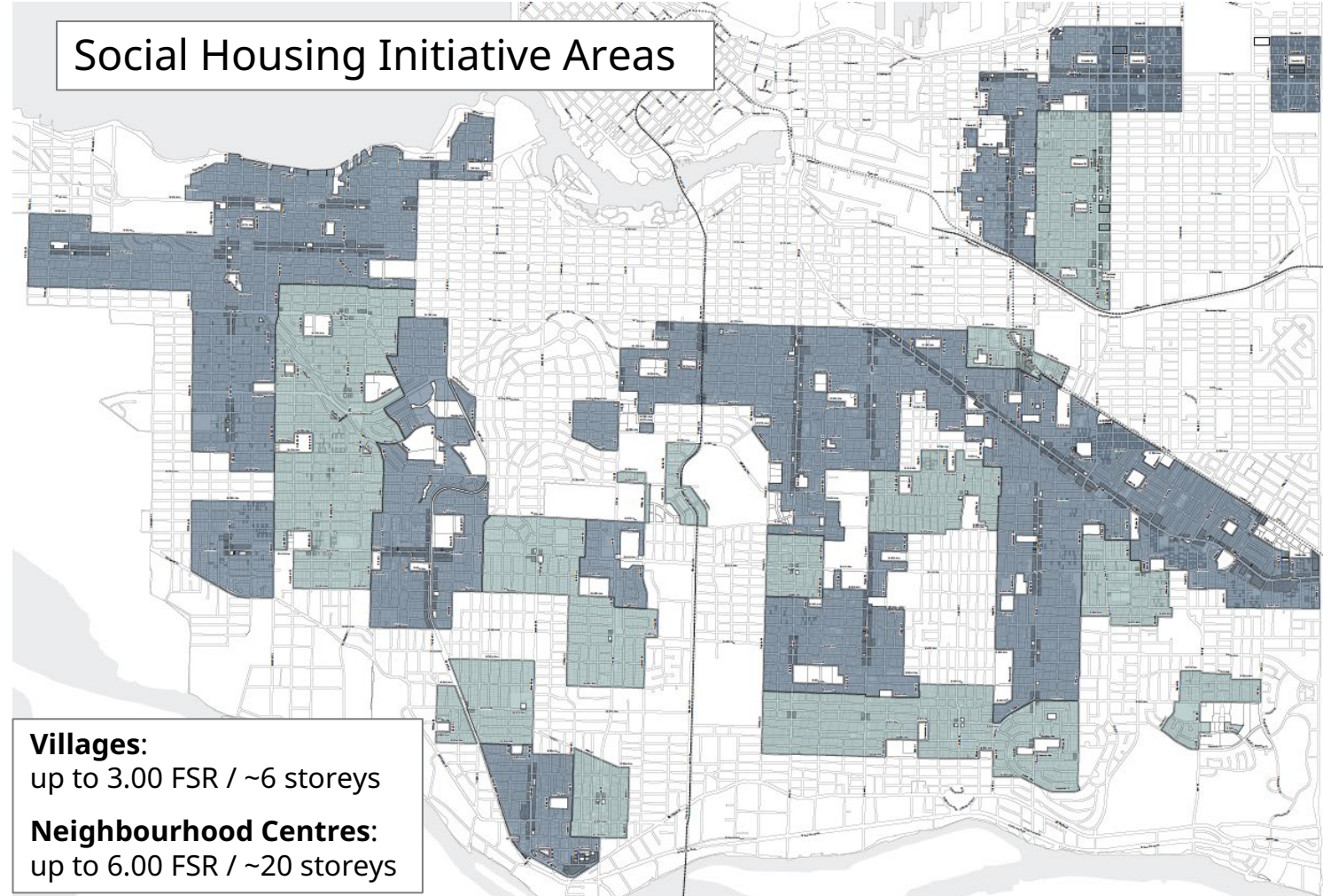


Relaxation for Social Housing Villages and Neighbourhood Centres

Proposal would allow social housing through a Development Permit in **Villages** and **Neighbourhood Centres**.

Areas identified for apartment & tower forms under Vancouver Plan to:

- Add housing choice & affordability
- Increase employment opportunities
- Provide more amenities & services
- Build transit-oriented communities

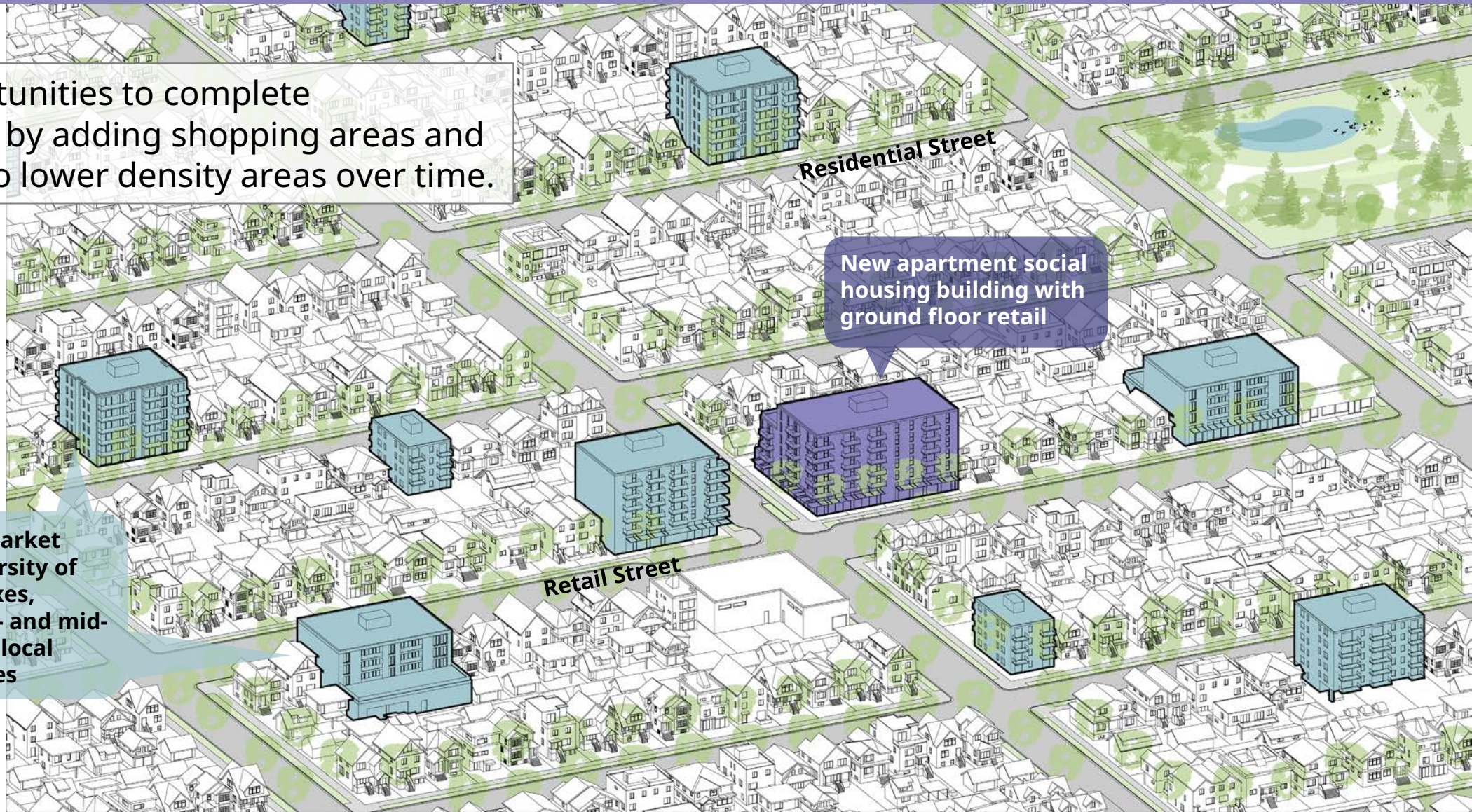


Relaxation for Social Housing

Future State: Villages

Villages: opportunities to complete neighbourhoods by adding shopping areas and housing choice to lower density areas over time.

Over time new market housing in a diversity of forms – multiplexes, townhouses, low- and mid-rise apartment + local shops and services

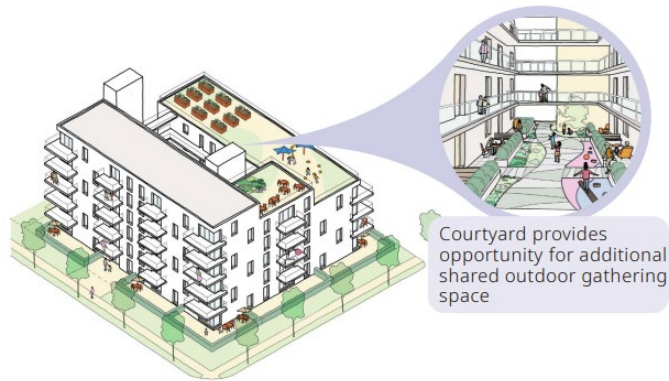


Relaxation for Social Housing

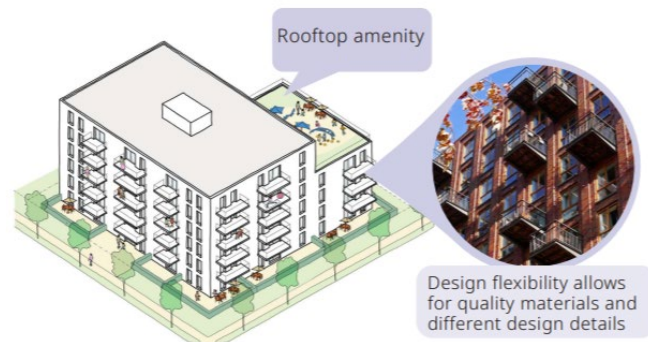
Future State: Villages

Villages apartment forms enabled under standard district schedules.

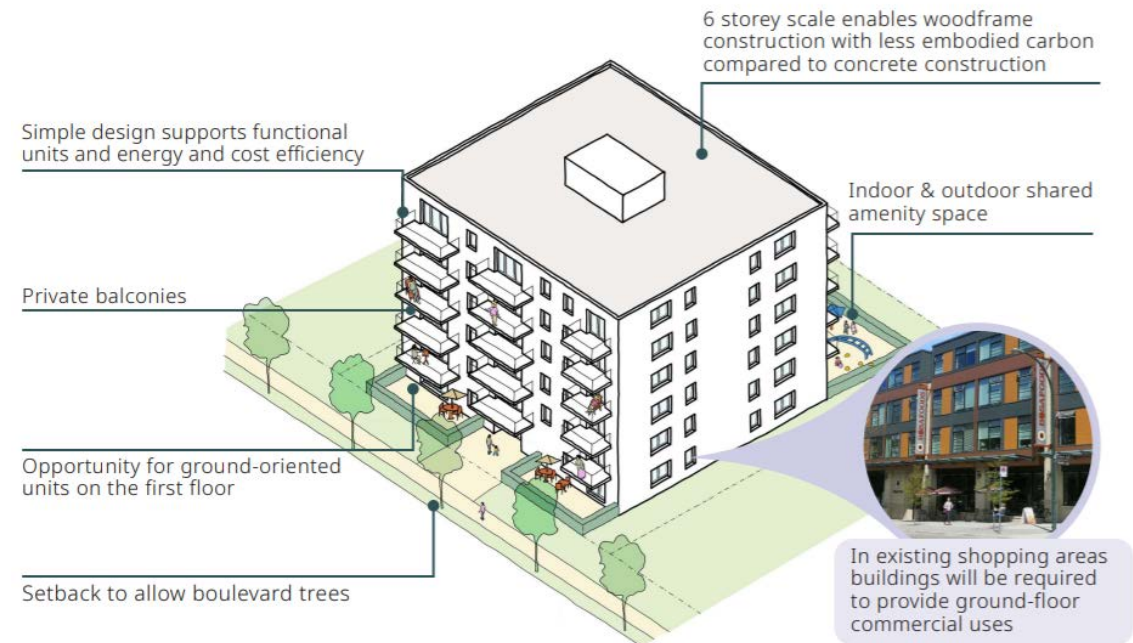
Example: Courtyard Building on a Corner Site



Example: Building on a Corner Site



Example: Typical 6 Storey Apartment



Relaxation for Social Housing

Future State: Neighbourhood Centres



New tower social housing building with ground floor retail & rooftop amenity

Over time new market housing in a diversity of forms – multiplexes, townhouses, low-, mid- & high-rise apartments + local shops and services

Neighbourhood Centres: opportunities to evolve over time to provide more housing choice and employment opportunities around existing shopping streets and transit corridors

Relaxation for Social Housing

Future State: Neighbourhood Centres

Neighbourhood Centres tower forms enabled under standard district schedules.

Design choice and flexibility

Maintain maximum densities (FSR) but provide more generous height

- Flexibility to address different site conditions
- Opportunities for on-site public open space and landscaping
- Standard sites anticipated at 16-17 storeys
- Larger, unique and on-arterial sites anticipated at 20 storeys



Relaxation for Social Housing

Economic testing and anticipated uptake

Economic Testing

- Social housing does not generate land lift due to affordability requirements
- Projects require government funding, donations, and/or equity brought by the non-profit

Social housing construction type	Estimated per unit total cost	Estimated per unit equity gap
6 Storey Wood frame	\$400,000	\$95,000
Concrete Tower	\$460,000	\$155,000

**Estimates based in part on assumptions and current economic conditions which are subject to change in the future.*

Anticipated Uptake

- ~10 projects city-wide per year (mix of 6 storey and tower forms)



Fraserview Towers Co-op
(2833 E Kent Ave N.)



Railyard & Aaron Webster Co-op
(95 E 1st Ave)

Social Housing Rezoning Policy

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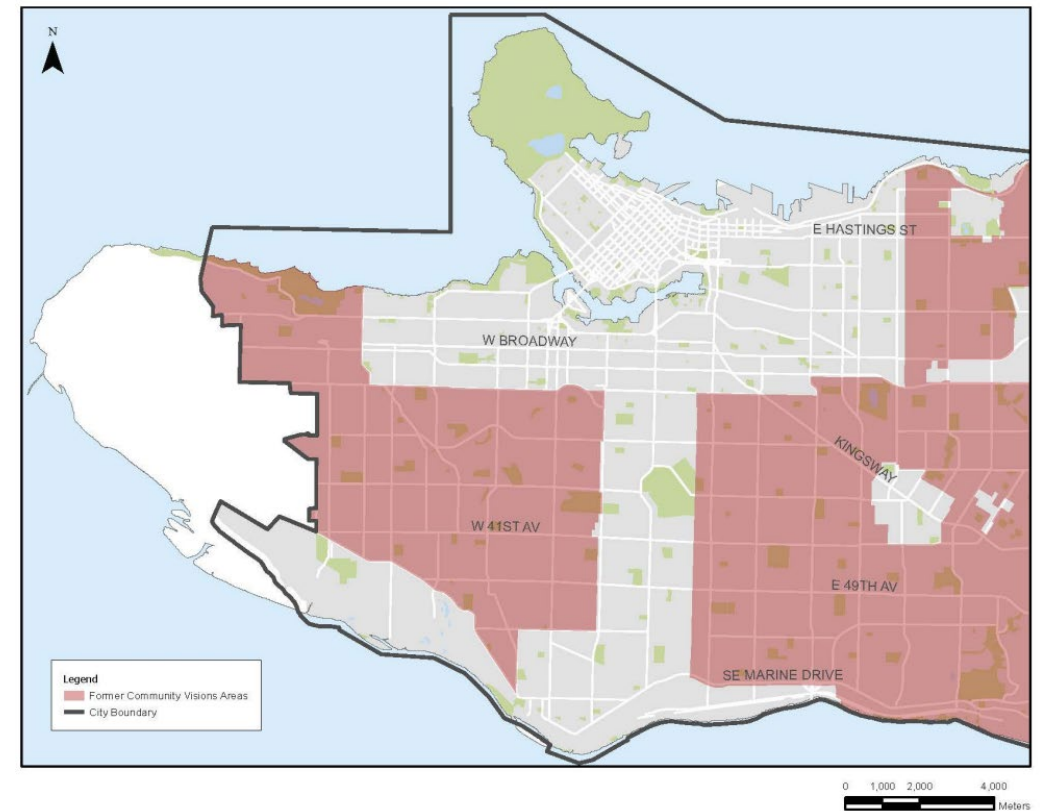


Social Housing Rezoning Policy

Current opportunities for social housing

Social housing currently enabled through rezoning in most areas outside of downtown

Areas where rezoning for Social Housing may be considered under existing IRP in Former Community Visions Areas



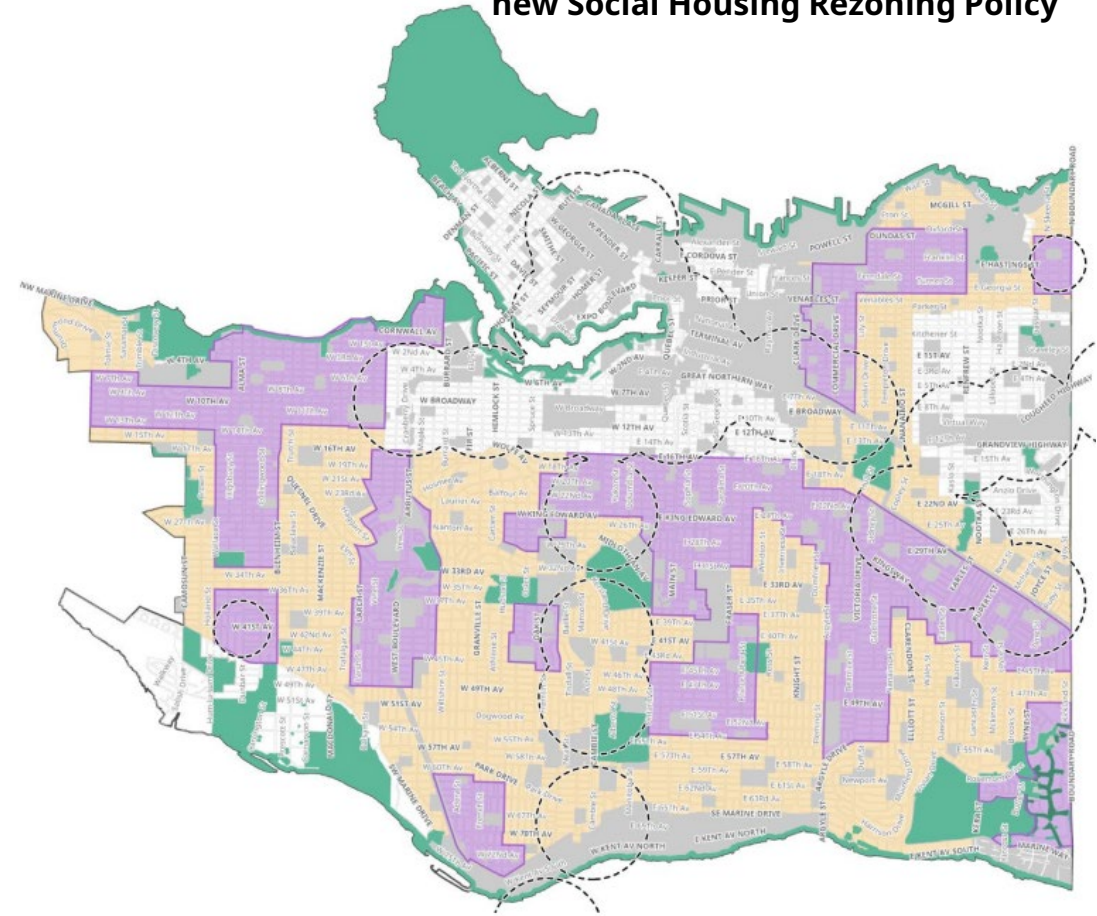
Social Housing Rezoning Policy

Aligning rezoning opportunities with Vancouver Plan

Social Housing Rezoning Policy replaces IRP with detailed guidance aligned with Vancouver Plan

- Flexibility for MST and Urban Indigenous projects
- Opportunities for childcare and cultural facilities
- First Shaughnessy & Champlain Heights require rezoning to address unique neighbourhood characteristics
- Protection of Natural Areas & Champlain Heights Trails

Areas where rezoning for Social Housing may be considered under new Social Housing Rezoning Policy



Social Housing Rezoning Policy

Aligning rezoning opportunities with Vancouver Plan

Social Housing Rezoning Policy replaces IRP with detailed guidance aligned with Vancouver Plan

Heights & densities:

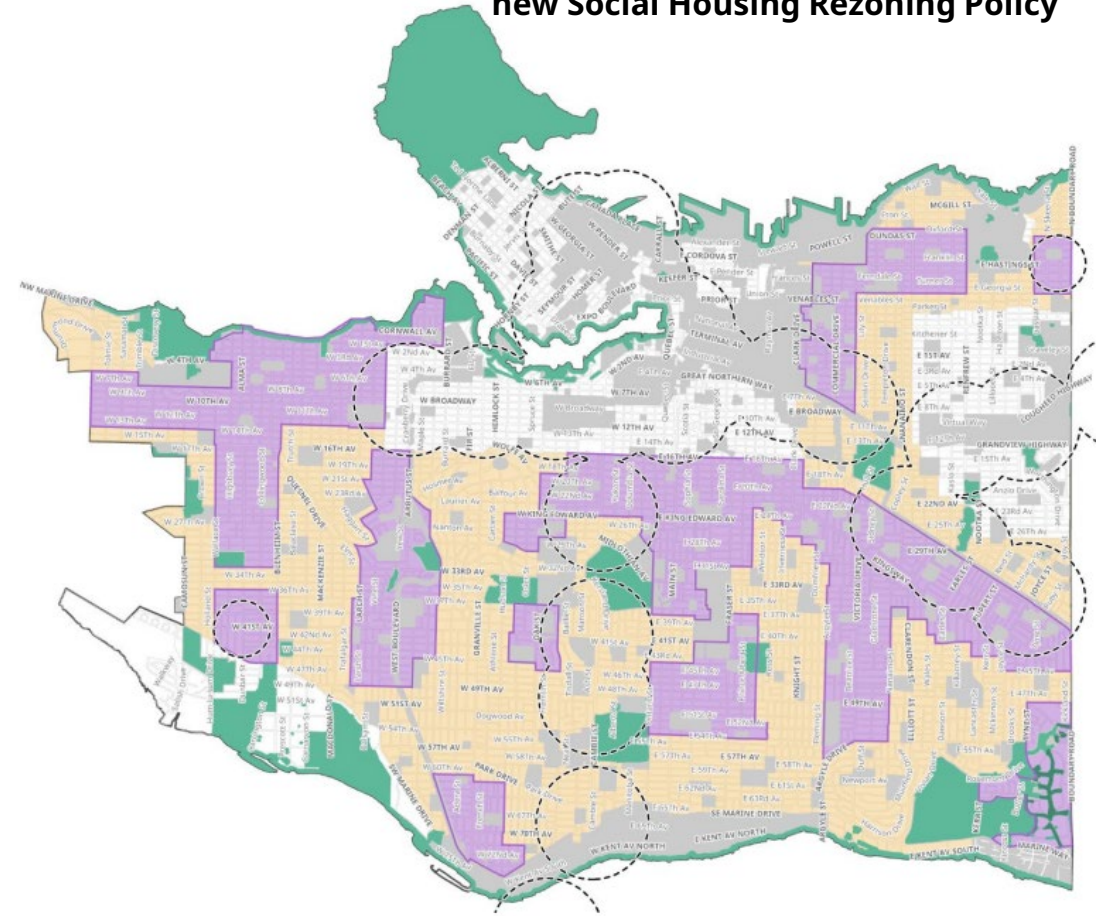
- Generally up to 6 storeys
- Generally up to 20 storeys*

Greater heights/densities considered for TOA sites, 8,000 m² + sites & Indigenous sites

Exclusions:

- Parks, institutional and public sites (e.g. public schools, community centres)
- Champlain Heights trails
- Natural areas

Areas where rezoning for Social Housing may be considered under new Social Housing Rezoning Policy



Social Housing Rezoning Policy

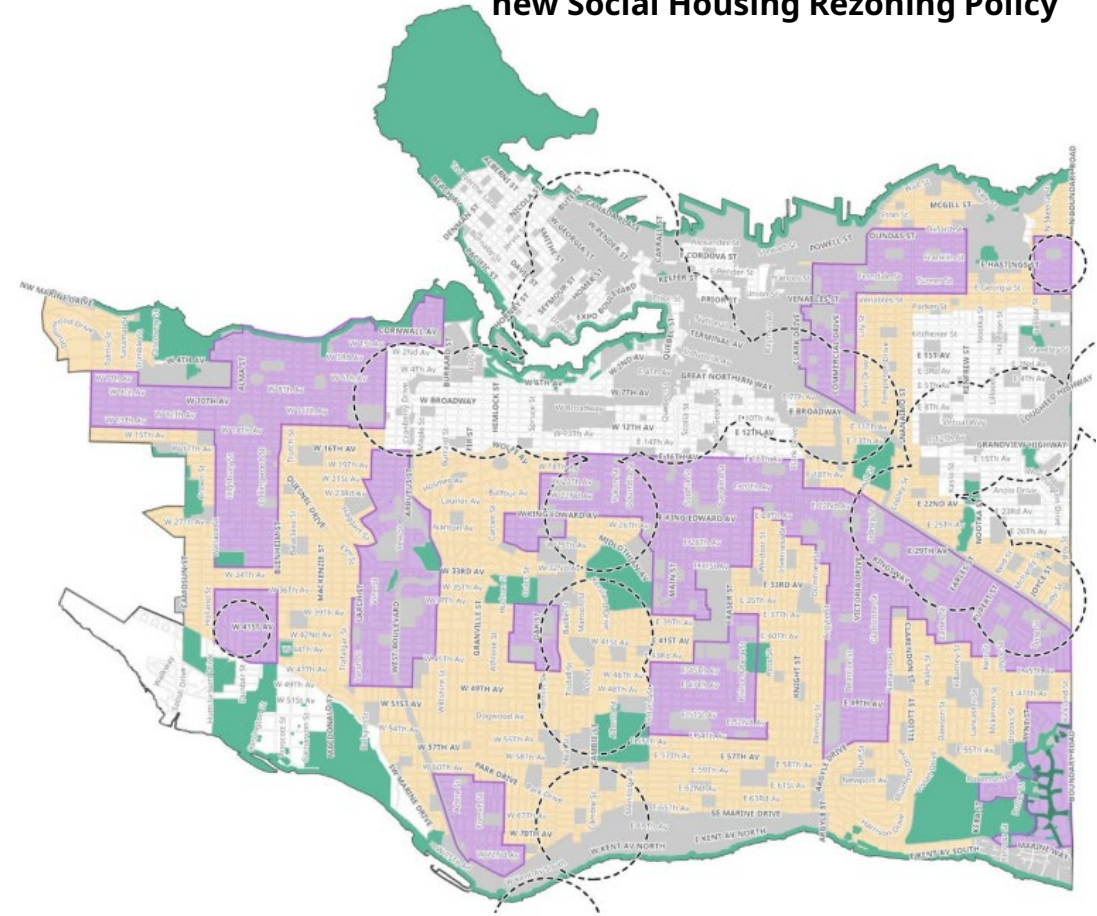
Aligning rezoning opportunities with Vancouver Plan

Social Housing Rezoning Policy replaces IRP with detailed guidance aligned with Vancouver Plan

Consideration of market housing to help with social housing viability, provided:

- Non-profit or government ownership maintained
- Net new increase in social housing
- Site large enough for multiple buildings
- Pro forma review required to maximize social housing and/or secure additional public benefits

Areas where rezoning for Social Housing may be considered under new Social Housing Rezoning Policy



Engagement

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Engagement Overview of Process

Phase 1 Engagement

Sept 18 – Oct 24, 2024



**5 in-person
information sessions**

299 attendees



**3 virtual information
sessions**

154 attendees



**5 stakeholder
meetings**

140 attendees



**Online + paper
comment forms**

968 forms received



**37 emailed comments
26 written letters**



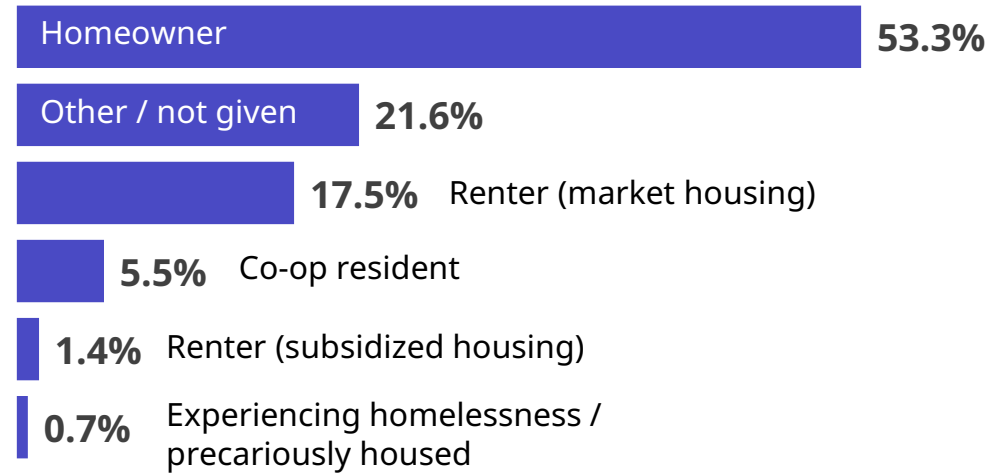
**SYC website, social
media + video**

223,579 visits

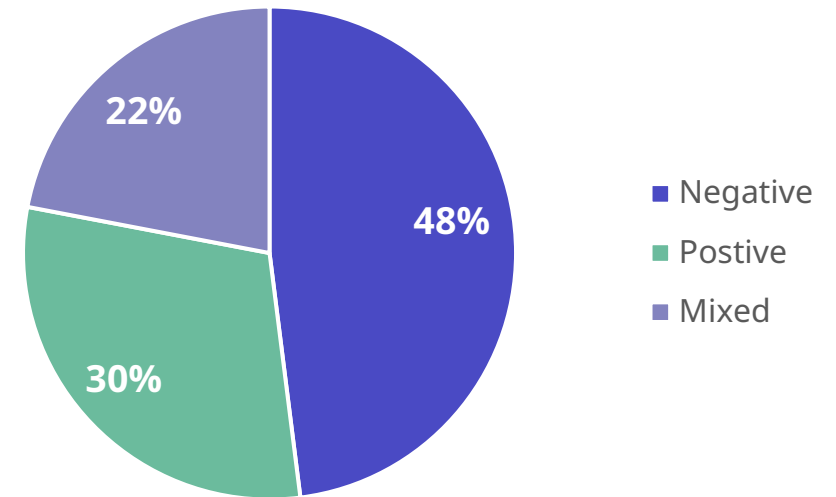
Engagement

Who we heard from and overall feedback

Feedback sources by tenure (Phase 2, n=767)



Overall feedback (Phases 1 & 2, n=901)



- Phase 1 feedback was generally more positive (60%)
- Phase 2 feedback was generally more negative (57%)
- Mixed feedback was comparable between both Phases (22% and 30%)

Engagement

What we heard

Tower heights

Concerns about towers increasing density and negatively impacting neighbourhood character. Support for towers to maximize new homes and deliver other amenities (e.g. childcare).

Affordability and safety

Concerns that minimum 30% of units renting at or below HILs is too low to meet needs but also concerns that supportive/shelter rate housing is associated with substance use and crime.

Community input

Concerns that removing rezoning process erodes community input and democracy, fears that neighbours will no longer know what is happening in their neighbourhood.

Infrastructure

Support for social housing but concern that infrastructure is not sufficient to support population growth.

Engagement

How feedback was addressed

Tower heights

Balanced approach to neighbourhood change and viability of social housing.

- Reduced Neighbourhood Centres to focus towers ~400m around existing transit and service hubs + design guidelines (setbacks, landscaping, solar access)

Affordability and safety

- Minimum requirements intended to enable projects as economics & funding change; deeper affordability with partnerships – 64% of units renting at/below HILs
- Majority of social housing is mixed-income; operations management plan for supportive housing projects

Community input

- Engagement on by-law and policy changes ahead of Council decision
- Development Permit notification, public review & public comment

Infrastructure

- New projects provide on-site infrastructure upgrades & amenity space for residents; moderate anticipated volume of projects (~10/year)
- City-wide infrastructure upgrades through Capital Plan

Conclusion

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Conclusion

Summary of proposal and objectives

Report recommends amendments to Zoning & Development By-law and other associated by-laws and policies to:

1. Permit non-profit, co-operative and government-owned social housing projects to be built under a simplified development permit process across the city; and
2. Allow consideration of large and unique social housing proposals under a new Social Housing Rezoning Policy

Proposal works toward multiple objectives:

- Make social housing projects “shovel ready” to unlock funding
- Deliver on City, Provincial and Federal housing targets and commitments
- Streamline processing and simplify regulations to deliver affordable homes faster for less cost
- Implement Vancouver Plan land use strategy, equitable housing and complete communities