

Downtown Eastside Housing Implementation – Amendments to the FC 1 District in the Zoning and Development By-law and the Downtown Eastside/Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan (DEOD ODP) By-law to Accelerate SRO Replacement and Increase Social Housing - Oppose

Date Received	Time Created	Subject	Position	Content	Author Name	Neighborhood	Attachment
2025-12-10	16:38	Downtown Eastside Housing Implementation – Amendments to the FC 1 District in the Zoning and Development By-law and the Downtown Eastside/Oppenheimer District Official Development Plan (DEOD ODP) By-law to Accelerate SRO Replacement and Increase Social Housing	Oppose	Please confirm receipt of my attached letter, and that you will forward a copy the the Mayor and Councillors. Thank you, Bing Ho	Bing Ho	Kerrisdale	APPENDIX A

Bing Ho



To: Mayor Sim and Council Members
Date: December 9, 2025
Re: Proposed DEOD Zoning Changes

My name is Bing Ho. I was one of the founding partners of a Vancouver law firm that has advised on many major real estate developments in the City. After toiling ten years at that firm, I moved to Asia in 2000 to manage a major office of what was then the world's largest global law firm. More relevantly, I am proud to say that I lived in poverty for the first 16 years of my life in an SRO on the edges of Chinatown in Edmonton, and survived.

After retiring and returning home to Vancouver in 2015, I became seriously involved in DTES housing issues. I applaud the work done in the Report under consideration, but believe it should have given more consideration to three topics: community, change, and collaboration.

1. Community

Not having much, but needing a lot, my family and our SRO neighbours supported one another in ways that transformed our decrepit, dilapidated building into a living, loving community. And that is why I was drawn to the wonderful work of the SRO Collaborative, an amazing organization dedicated not to the mere erection of buildings, but to the creation of real homes—small, socially-integrated communities where tenants care for each other, their buildings, and the land on which they stand.

When you hear from SRO-Collaborative workers and tenants, I urge you to listen with open minds and hearts, and reconsider aspects of the rezoning plan that will jeopardize the tight-knit communities that have taken years to build. I hope:

- that you will remove the SROs from the density policy;
- that you will establish and enforce policies for ensuring that when tenants are forced to move, their communities will be kept intact;
- that you will reconsider the push to build colossal towers, and appreciate that communities of care can only be fostered in much smaller, human-scale buildings; and
- that you will prioritize the creation of desperately-needed social housing for low-income DEOD residents with scant options elsewhere — and de-prioritize the creation of market housing for higher-income non-DEOD residents who have many options outside the DEOD.

2. Changes

Changes are clearly needed in the DEOD, but change just for the sake of change is counterproductive. According to UBC Professor Kamizaki's research, current zoning — which requires at least 60% social housing in new developments — has kept average assessed land values in the DEOD around \$1.5 million lower than in the rest of the DTES, and resulted in 2,250 non-market housing units built or underway, double the number in the rest of the DTES.

The social housing units actually delivered exceed original projections, but a huge shortfall remains. Staff say that more than 10,000 new units of shelter-rate housing must be built in order to replace dilapidated SROs and house the homeless.

Common sense and experience tell us that typical property owners will hold out for the higher prices that for-profit developers of 32-storey towers will be able and willing to pay for their property. Contrary to the Report's unconvincing economic analysis, the inevitable price escalation will make it impossible for non-profit developers to compete. Current zoning purposefully and successfully kept land prices low enough to enable non-profits to build substantial amounts of low-cost housing. Why change that now? As Ronald Reagan famously said: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

3. Collaboration

I understand that the SRO-Collaborative presented an alternative SRO replacement proposal to some city councillors that elicited positive and open-minded interest. In contrast to the 32-storey towers of concrete boxes the Report envisions, the proposal calls for 12-storey buildings to be built in short order on 25-foot lots — using mass timber and innovative modular technologies — that will be stewarded and cared for by tenants supporting each other in real and life-giving communities.

My Requests

I respectfully ask Council to postpone passage of the rezoning plan and give more time for City, Provincial and Federal officials to:

- gain a much deeper understanding of the rezoning's impact and the community's needs and hopes than reflected in the Report;
- undertake serious evaluations of the "25-footer" alternative; and
- collaborate more closely with each other, industry, non-profit housing providers, and affected community groups.

And Mayor Sim, I would like to make a special request of you. I don't know your relationship with former mayors Campbell or Robertson, but can't help thinking that having all three of you on the housing stage, at this critical time, represents a unique and historic opportunity. When the Three Tenors started singing together, they made a big splash around the world, and recorded the best-selling classical album of all time. If you three mayors start working together to solve the housing crisis, you will make a big splash right here in our great city, gain the gratitude of all Vancouverites, and sell a lot of cool posters to boot. Say yes?!

Sincerely, respectfully, and with thanks,
Bing Ho

