



## REFERRAL REPORT

Report Date: November 10, 2025  
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Meeting Date: December 9, 2025

TO: Vancouver City Council

FROM: General Manager of Development, Buildings & Licensing, and  
General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Demolition Permitting Optimization

### ***RECOMMENDATION TO REFER***

THAT the General Manager of Development Building and Licensing and the General Manager of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability be instructed to bring forward the by-law amendments as described below and that the amendments 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 Zoning and Development By-law amendment, in accordance with the recommendations set out below, for consideration at the Public Hearing.

### ***RECOMMENDATION FOR PUBLIC HEARING***

THAT Council approve, in principle, the application to amend the Zoning and Development By-law to update sections 4.8.1 and 10.14 to allow for improvements to the demolition permit process, generally in accordance with Appendix A;

FURTHER THAT the Director of Legal Services be instructed to bring forward for enactment the amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law, generally in accordance with Appendix A.

### ***REPORT SUMMARY***

Staff recommend changes to Sections 4.8.1 and 10.14 of the Zoning and Development By-law that will streamline the development approval process by enabling earlier demolition for eligible residential rental accommodations while preserving protections for Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan (RHS ODP) areas and rental protections under the Tenant Relocation and

Protection Policy (TRPP). The resulting faster permitting process will reduce project holding costs for projects that satisfy the City's tenant relocation policies and are outside of rental housing stock protected areas. Additionally, for projects in the R1-1 district that are not residential rental accommodation, the proposed changes address a current regulatory inability to allow demolition of vacated buildings to prevent them from becoming nuisances or public hazards.

### **COUNCIL AUTHORITY/PREVIOUS DECISIONS**

- Zoning and Development By-law (ZDBL) (sections 4 and 10 include demolition provisions)
- Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan (RHS ODP) (2018)
- City-wide Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP) (2015, 2019)
- Enhanced TRPP (Broadway Plan (2022), Rupert and Renfrew Station Area Plan (2025), Transit-oriented Areas (TOAs) Rezoning Policy (2024))

### **CITY MANAGER'S/GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS**

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

### **REPORT**

#### **Background/Context**

The **Zoning and Development By-law** limits demolition of residential rental accommodation and buildings in the R1-1 district until a demolition development permit is issued, which requires other related permits to be issued / issuable to limit the loss of existing rental housing and ensure protections for existing tenants before replacement housing is ready to be constructed. Section 10.14.2 states that:

*Except as set out in section 10.14.3, where development necessitates the demolition of existing residential rental accommodation, no development permit will be issued for the demolition unless and until a development permit for the new development has been issued, and the **development permit for the new development will not be issued unless and until all building permits for the new development and a building permit for the demolition are issuable***

The **Residential Tenancy Act** provides protection for all tenants in the Province and sets permit issuance as the time landlords can serve notice to end tenancy:

*(6) A landlord may end a tenancy in respect of a rental unit if the landlord **has all the necessary permits and approvals required by law**, and intends in good faith, to do any of the following:*

*(a) demolish the rental unit;*

The City's current demolition permit regulations don't differentiate between projects that have existing tenants in rental accommodation and those that do not. There is an administrative inefficiency for permit processing with staff needing to cross-check between multiple permit review groups to confirm 'simultaneous issuance' of the Demolition Building and Development Permit (the Demolition Permit) along with related Development Permits and Building Permits when the building is known to be vacant and satisfies the City's Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy. This may delay construction work, resulting in increased carrying costs and therefore increased housing costs. In addition, properties that are vacant may present theft, vandalism, and fire risks.

Delay in issuing demolition permits constrains the overall project development timeline and thereby reduces the time available for 'deconstruction' - a relatively more methodical approach to demolition. The deconstruction approach is preferred since benefits include salvaging materials intact for reuse and recycling. Current regulations incentivize deconstruction through an "early" permit option. However, uptake has been minimal: only 0.3% of demolition permits since 2016 were issued for early deconstruction.

### **Strategic Analysis**

#### **Regulatory Framework – Sites Including Residential Rental Accommodation:**

The proposed amendments to the ZDBL would allow of the Director of Planning to vary the requirement for 'simultaneous issuance' prior to demolition permit approval on residential rental accommodation<sup>1</sup> projects where RHS ODP and TRPP do not apply (noting that renters are also protected by the Residential Tenancy Act), and a Development Permit for the new building is in stream. In these cases, the proposed amendment will allow for demolition permits to be issued earlier.

In instances where the RHS ODP or TRPP apply, the Demolition Permit may be released sooner than is currently possible, but only at the discretion of the Director of Planning (DOP) after consideration of Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy requirements, dependent on the stage in permitting process and RHS ODP applicability. This will ensure tenants are protected and landowners are not permitted to demolish their buildings prior to satisfying all TRPP obligations, while still allowing some flexibility (for example, as per the TRPP, all tenants have been compensated and are no longer in the building).

The DOP's authority to release the Demolition Permit when RHS ODP or TRPP apply would follow this procedure:

- Where RHS ODP applies, a demolition permit will not be issued until after the Development Permit is issued, and the Building Permit Stage 1 fees are paid.

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<sup>1</sup> Residential Rental Accommodation is defined in the ZDBL and generally means a unit or a building that is being occupied or has been previously occupied by a tenant on a landlord tenant basis, and includes primary and secondary rental units. The full definition can be found here: <https://bylaws.vancouver.ca/zoning/zoning-by-law-section-2.pdf>

- Where the TRPP applies, and when there are tenants in the building, a demolition permit will not be issued until after the development permit is issued, and the building permit is issuable.

#### Regulatory Framework – Sites not Including Residential Rental Accommodation:

For non-residential rental accommodation in the R1-1 district, the proposed changes to ZDBL section 10.14.4 will be generally consistent with demolition regulations for non-residential rental accommodation in RT zones (duplexes and multiple dwelling).

#### Housing Priorities:

The proposed changes to the ZDBL will enable greater flexibility in releasing the demolition permit at an appropriate stage throughout the approvals process, while ensuring that tenant and rental housing protections are not compromised. No change is proposed to existing policies, including the TRPP and RHS ODP. However, for projects where the TRPP does not apply, existing tenants are still protected under the RTA. For tenants with only RTA protections, the proposed changes to the ZDBL could mean that a Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) notice to end tenancy could be issued earlier in the development permitting process, before the building permit is issuable.

#### Process Improvements:

The proposed changes to the ZDBL will streamline staff coordination for demolition permit approvals, support more efficient and sustainable demolition practices, and reduce carrying costs for applicants by enabling DOP discretion to release the Demolition Permit before a Building Permit is issued, where TRPP and RHS ODP apply, and all requirements are satisfied.

Staff anticipate that reducing wait times for eligible demolition permits may offer opportunities for more builders to voluntarily incorporate deconstruction practices into their demolition projects. Green Demolition By-law requirements will continue to be administered through a deposit and refund process based on recycling receipts, which does not impact permit timing.

#### ***Financial***

There are no financial implications.

#### ***Environmental***

Staff anticipate that reducing wait times for some demolition permits may encourage more builders to voluntarily incorporate deconstruction salvage practices. Staff will monitor permit data to assess if there is a related increase in salvaged building materials that are reused and recycled (for projects subject to the Green Demolition By-law).

***Legal***

If the Recommendations in this report are approved and the proposed ZDBL amendments enacted, non-rental residential accommodation in the R1-1 district may be able to obtain a demolition permit prior to submission of a new development permit or building permit application. Rental residential accommodation in all districts will be required to have a development permit issued and a building permit issuable for the proposed new development prior to issuance of a demolition permit, but the DOP may vary all or part of this requirement as described in this report if they are satisfied that the City's tenant protections in the RHS ODP and the TRPP are satisfied.

***CONCLUSION***

The proposed changes to the Zoning and Development By-Law will enable staff to issue eligible demolition permits sooner while also ensuring that the RHS ODP and TRPP remain a priority. The changes will result in improved administrative efficiency, resulting in expedited project timelines, a reduction in the number of vacant buildings that may become a hazard to public safety, and support for the voluntary incorporation of deconstruction practices into developers' demolition projects.

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**APPENDIX A**

**DRAFT By-law to amend the Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575  
to vary the pre-conditions for obtaining a demolition development permit**

*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 of the Zoning and Development By-law No. 3575.

2. In section 4.8.1(g), in the paragraph after subsection (iii), Council strikes out “R1-1 or First Shaughnessy districts” and replaces it with “First Shaughnessy district”.

3. Council strikes section 10.14.2 and replaces it with the following:

“10.14.2 Except as set out in section 10.14.3, where the proposed demolition includes the demolition of existing residential rental accommodation, no development permit will be issued for the demolition unless and until:

- (a) a development permit for the new development has been issued; and
- (b) all building permits for the new development are issuable.”

4. After section 10.14.3, Council adds a new section 10.14.4 as follows and renumbers sections 10.14.4 through 10.14.8 as 10.14.5 through 10.14.9:

“10.14.4 The Director of Planning may vary the requirements:

- (a) in sections 10.14.2(a) and 10.14.2(b) above if:
  - (i) the site is not subject to the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan,
  - (ii) an application has been submitted that complies with the requirements of sections 4.1.2(b), 4.1.3 and 4.1.4, and
  - (iii) the Director of Planning considers all applicable Council policies and guidelines and, in the opinion of the Director of Planning, no tenant protections are warranted; and
- (b) in section 10.14.2(b) above if:
  - (i) the site is subject to the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan, and
  - (ii) the Director of Planning considers all applicable Council policies and guidelines.”

5. In renumbered section 10.14.5, Council:
- (a) strikes out “10.14.6, 10.14.7 and 10.14.8” and replaces it with “10.14.7, 10.14.8 and 10.14.9”;
  - (b) in section (b), strikes out “R1-1 or First Shaughnessy districts” and replaces it with “First Shaughnessy district”;
  - (c) strikes out “, and the development permit for the new development will not be issued unless and until” and replaces it with “and”; and
  - (d) strikes out “and a building permit for the demolition”.
6. In renumbered section 10.14.6, Council:
- (a) strikes out “10.14.6 and 10.14.7” and replaces it with “10.14.7 and 10.14.8”; and
  - (b) strikes out “10.14.4” and replaces it with “10.14.5”.
7. In renumbered sections 10.14.7 and 10.14.8, Council strikes out “10.14.4 and 10.14.5” and replaces it with “10.14.5 and 10.14.6”.
8. In renumbered section 10.14.9, Council:
- (a) strikes out “R1-1 or First Shaughnessy districts” and replaces it with “First Shaughnessy district”; and
  - (b) strikes out “10.14.4” and replaces it with “10.14.5”.
9. This by-law is to come into force and take effect on the date of its enactment.

ENACTED by Council this                      day of                      , 2026

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Mayor

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City Clerk

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## APPENDIX B

### SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ZONING AND DEVELOPMENT BY-LAW CHANGES

*Note: Amendments will be prepared generally in accordance with the provisions listed below. Should there be any discrepancy between this summary and the draft amending by-laws, the draft amending by-law prevails. This appendix is a summary of proposed amendments, prepared for convenience.*

**Table 1: Summary of By-law Amendments to the Zoning and Development By-law**

Section	Section number	Description of Amendment	Rationale
Section 4	4.8.1(g)	<p>4.8.1 A person who complies in all other respects with this by-law, the Parking By-law, other City by-laws, any official development plan, and any development permit, to the extent any of them apply to that person's site, need not obtain a development permit for the following development and uses:</p> <p>...</p> <p>(g) the demolition of any building, except for a building:</p> <p>(i) used for residential rental accommodation,</p> <p>(ii) listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Remove residential accommodation in the R1-1 district schedule from the exemption that allows demolition by deconstruction without a development permit.</li> </ul>



		<p>(iii) used for residential accommodation in the R1-1 or First Shaughnessy districts,</p> <p>except that this section 4.8.1(g) does not apply to any building that is residential rental accommodation subject to the provisions of section 10.14.3, subject to a demolition order, subject to demolition as a condition of subdivision approval, or used for residential accommodation in the <del>R1-1 or First Shaughnessy districts</del>, not listed on the Vancouver Heritage Register, and for which a building permit has been issued to demolish by deconstruction;</p>	
Section 10	10.14.2	<p>10.14.2 Except as set out in section 10.14.3, where <del>development necessitates the proposed demolition includes</del> the demolition of existing residential rental accommodation, no development permit will be issued for the demolition unless and until:</p> <p>(a) a development permit for the new development has been issued; <del>and the development permit for the new development will not be issued unless</del> and</p> <p>(b) <del>until</del> all building permits for the new development <del>and a building permit for the demolition</del> are issuable.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and building permit requirements are maintained but restrictions on sequencing are removed.</li> <li>• Allow discretion to be applied to either (a) and (b) or only (b) in new variance described in section 10.14.4 below.</li> </ul>
Section 10	new	<p><u>10.14.4 The Director of Planning may vary the requirements:</u></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow Director of Planning to vary requirements for development permit to be issued and building permit to be issuable</li> </ul>

		<p>(a) <u>in sections 10.14.2(a) and 10.14.2(b) above if:</u></p> <p>(i) <u>the site is not subject to the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan,</u></p> <p>(ii) <u>an application has been submitted that complies with the requirements of sections 4.1.2(b), 4.1.3 and 4.1.4, and</u></p> <p>(iii) <u>the Director of Planning considers all applicable Council policies and guidelines and, in the opinion of the Director of Planning, no tenant protections are warranted, and</u></p> <p>(b) <u>in section 10.14.2(b) above if:</u></p> <p>(i) <u>the site is subject to the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan, and</u></p> <p>(ii) <u>the Director of Planning considers all applicable Council policies and guidelines.</u></p>	<p>before a permit for demolition is issued for a residential rental accommodation where the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan and Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy does not apply and a development permit application for the new building has been submitted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow Director of Planning to vary requirement for building permit to be issuable before a permit for demolition is issued for a residential rental accommodation where the Rental Housing Stock Official Development Plan and Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy apply.</li> </ul>
Section 10	10.14.4	<p>10.14.<del>54</del> Except as set out in sections 10.14.<del>76</del>, 10.14.<del>87</del> and 10.14.<del>98</del>, where development necessitates the demolition of:</p> <p>(a) a building listed on the Heritage Register; or</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update section numbers to reflect the newly added section and the resulting renumbering.</li> <li>• Remove the requirement to have a development permit issued and a building permit issuable before a development</li> </ul>

		<p>(b) a residential building located in the <del>R1-1 or</del> First Shaughnessy districts,</p> <p>no development permit will be issued for the demolition unless the Director of Planning is satisfied that all applicable Council policies and guidelines have been met, and until a development permit for the new development has been issued; <del>and the development permit for the new development will not be issued unless</del> and <del>until</del> all building permits for the new development <del>and a building permit for the demolition</del> are issuable.</p>	<p>permit for demolition is issued for a residential building in R1-1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development and building permit requirements are maintained but restrictions on sequencing are removed.</li> <li>• Aligns R1-1 demolition regulations for non-rental residential with RT zones.</li> </ul>
Section 10	10.14.8	<p>10.14.<del>98</del> A building that is a single detached house, single detached house with secondary suite, or duplex located in the <del>R1-1 or</del> First Shaughnessy districts, which is not listed on the Heritage Register, and for which a building permit has been issued to demolish by deconstruction, is exempt from the provisions of section 10.14.<del>54</del>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove R1-1 from the exemption to the requirement to have a development permit issued and a building permit issuable before a development permit for demolition is issued when a building is being demolished by deconstruction.</li> </ul>
Section 10	10.14.5; 10.14.6; 10.14.7; 10.14.8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update section numbers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Update section numbers to reflect the newly added section and the resulting renumbering.</li> </ul>