

## COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

*For consideration at the Standing Committee meeting on City Finance and Services meeting on  
May 20, 2026*

### **3. Managing and Mitigating Development Pressure on Existing Small Business, Arts, and Non-Profit Uses**

Submitted by: Councillor Fry

#### WHEREAS

1. Vancouver is experiencing significant redevelopment pressure in many neighbourhoods, because of residential growth objectives, provincial housing legislation, and federally supported efforts to accelerate housing supply;
2. Accelerated housing approval processes supported through the federal Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) and Provincial legislation, including Housing Supply Act (Bill 43), Housing Needs Reports & Zoning Consistency (Bill 44), and Transit Oriented Areas (Bill 47) are intended to increase housing delivery by reducing development barriers, accelerating permit times, and encouraging increased density. But these processes also intensify speculative pressure on land values, commercial property taxes, and rents that are increasingly disconnected from existing uses and local-serving activities;
3. Independent local businesses, arts and cultural spaces, and non-profit organizations typically have limited capacity to absorb the financial impacts, cost increases, and potential displacement catalyzed by development pressures based on property assessments and future development potential that are disconnected from current use;
4. In response to displacement: The City of Vancouver offers “resource guides” through the Commercial Tenant Assistance Program (CTAP)<sup>1</sup> to support relocation planning and decision making for tenants, to help small business to navigate the commercial real estate market and negotiate lease terms;
5. In response to property assessments: Council has supported targeted, time-limited pilot measures, including tax relief, like the 2026 Development Potential Relief Program By-law <sup>2</sup> to mitigate these pressures, providing valuable insight into both the need for such tools and the administrative and policy limitations of relying on year-to-year programs;
6. Financial pressures and displacement of existing commercial and community uses can undermine neighbourhood economic diversity, cultural vitality, local services, and public confidence in growth-related change. Many other cities similarly responding to these challenges have piloted solutions including:

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<sup>1</sup> City of Vancouver | Commercial Tenant Assistance Program  
<https://vancouver.ca/doing-business/commercial-tenant-assistance-program.aspx>

<sup>2</sup> City of Vancouver | 2026 Property Taxation: Development Potential Relief Program By-law report  
<https://council.vancouver.ca/20260505/documents/r2.pdf>

- a. **PME MTL, Montreal’s business support network**<sup>3</sup>  
Petites et Moyennes Entreprises (Small and Medium-sized Enterprises) Montreal, provides support for businesses and social economy enterprises through loans, grants, financing, and coaching at a local neighbourhood level. Programs includes targeted programs for vacancy reduction, placemaking, and renovation and relocation costs. They have a mandate to revitalize commercial streets, stimulate neighbourhood economies, and to provide capital to offset operating cost pressure;
  - b. **Toronto’s “No Net Loss” of Employment & Cultural Space policies**<sup>4</sup>  
Direct investment for business and Main Streets funding including commercial space rehabilitation grants, corridor and BIA funding support and construction mitigation grants, noting: *a balance between residential and job growth is essential to a prosperous economic future for Toronto. The retention of affordable, cultural space Downtown is important to maintain and enhance the creative clusters that help position Toronto as a leading and globally competitive creative capital;*
  - c. **Seattle’s Integrated Anti-Displacement Framework and Office of Economic Development**<sup>5</sup>  
Using data-driven planning, monitoring and evaluation Seattle provides financial support for commercial tenants, corridor level support, and anti displacement strategies. The OED’s Seattle Restored directly partners with small businesses to transform vacant storefronts into vibrant community spaces;
  - d. **San Francisco’s Legacy Business & Cultural District Protections**<sup>6</sup>  
Provides direct grants, marketing, and assistance to qualified legacy businesses including Business Stabilization Grants, Rent Stabilization Grants, and planning. The Cultural Districts program is a place-making and place-keeping program that preserves, strengthens and promotes cultural communities with resources including funding and programming; and
  - e. New York’s various Commercial Tenant Assistance Programs.
7. The *Vancouver Charter* confers significant and applicable land-use and development regulation powers, including: the authority to regulate use, density, siting, and conditions of development; the ability to impose conditions through rezoning, development permits, and CD-1 bylaws; the authority to set municipal property tax rates, permissive exemptions, and the authority to provide tax relief

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<sup>3</sup> City of Montreal | PME MTL  
<https://pmemtl.com/en/>

<sup>4</sup> City of Toronto | Employment & Cultural Space  
<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2017/pg/bgrd/backgroundfile-106336.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> City of Seattle | Seattle’s Integrated Anti-Displacement Framework  
<https://www.seattle.gov/economic-development>, <https://seattlerestored.org/>

<sup>6</sup> City of San Francisco | Legacy Business & Cultural District Protections  
<https://www.sf.gov/legacy-business-program>

for defined classes of property.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

- A. THAT Council direct staff to assess and report back on how development pressures on existing small business, arts, and non-profit uses may intersect with accelerated housing delivery, including commitments made under the Housing Accelerator Fund and Provincial housing legislation, with a focus on identifying unintended impacts that could undermine neighbourhood resilience, local-serving services, or public support for growth;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back on options for more durable, permanent approaches—beyond short-term or pilot programs—to mitigate development-related pressures on existing small business, arts, and non-profit uses, drawing on lessons learned from the Development Potential Relief Program and related initiatives.

- B. THAT Council direct staff to explore an integrated policy framework that considers coordinated use of:
- development-potential tax relief or alternative assessment approaches;
  - zoning, land-use, or regulatory tools that support continuity of existing small business, arts, and non-profit uses where appropriate;
  - commercial tenant transition or mitigation measures in redevelopment situations;
  - models of financial assistance including grants, loans, or permissive tax exemptions; and
  - draws upon other cities' examples including but not limited to Montreal's PME MTL; Toronto's Employment & Cultural Space policies; Seattle's Integrated Anti Displacement Framework; San Francisco's Legacy Business & Cultural District Protections; New York's various Commercial Tenant Assistance Programs.

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to evaluate commercial anti-displacement measures alongside policy principles that could guide a more consistent approach across land-use and redevelopment contexts;

AND FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to report back to Council with findings and options, including considerations related to equity impacts, economic diversity, administrative feasibility, and alignment with the City's housing, growth, and economic-development objectives.

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