

MEMORANDUM

May 10, 2022

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Dan Garrison, Assistant Director, Housing Policy and Regulation

FROM: Theresa O'Donnell
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Housing Needs Report Consideration for Downtown Eastside Policy
Amendments to Increase Social Housing and Encourage Heritage Conservation

RTS #: 14429

The purpose of this memo is to provide Council with key considerations from the recently received Housing Needs Report, as it relates to the proposed Downtown Eastside (DTES) Policy Amendments to Increase Social Housing and Encourage Heritage Conservation report.

Housing Needs Report Requirements

In response to increasing concerns about housing costs and their impacts on residents across British Columbia, the BC Provincial government introduced a new Housing Needs Report requirement for all BC municipalities. At least once every 5 years, municipal councils must receive a report including data and analysis on current and anticipated housing needs. According to the legislation, Council must consider the most recent housing needs report, and the housing information on which the report is based, when developing a development plan, or when amending a development plan in relation to housing policies of the Council respecting affordable housing, rental housing and special needs housing.

On April 27th, 2022, Council resolved at a public meeting to receive the Housing Needs Reports that had been prepared by staff. The document includes data and analysis from the most recent 2016 Census on the housing situation of Vancouver residents and a preliminary accounting of current and future housing need. A revised Housing Needs Report will be brought forward to Council in 2023 with updated data from the 2021 Census, which is being released by Statistics Canada over the course of 2022.

At the time of writing the DTES Policy Amendments to Increase Social Housing and Encourage Heritage Conservation report, staff were working on the first Housing Needs Report. The Housing Needs Report uses similar data as the DTES community planning process and this information was considered in the policy changes being proposed. As per provincial legislation, Council must also consider the Housing Needs Report alongside the amendments proposed in the DTES report.

Key Considerations from the Housing Needs Report

The policy changes being considered by Council in the DTES report are well supported by the data and findings within the Housing Needs Report. Increasing the amount of social housing allowable under zoning, and creating greater flexibility under rezoning policy for social housing will help meet the housing needs of low-income households, people experiencing or at risk of experiencing homelessness, and those living in inadequate housing such as Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels.

Key findings from the Housing Needs Report include:

- Vancouver's Housing Needs Report identifies approximately 77,000 households experiencing housing need due to unaffordable, unsuitable, or inadequate housing as reported in 2016 Census data, plus approximately 2,000 individuals experiencing homelessness and 7,000 people living in Single-Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels.
- Housing needs in Vancouver are diverse, with needs identified across the full range of household types, incomes, and occupations. Housing affordability pressures impact many households, but fall disproportionately on equity-denied groups - including residents who are from Indigenous and racialized communities, seniors, single-parent households, and 2S/LGBTQIA+ - facing increased risk of housing insecurity, displacement, and homelessness.
- While Vancouver is experiencing income growth overall, almost 19% of Vancouver residents fell below the Statistics Canada low-income line in 2016. Even as median household incomes have increased over time, many households have very low incomes relative to key expenditures like housing, and face intersecting challenges. With rising housing costs, many of these households are experiencing a heightened risk of housing insecurity and may be at risk of or experiencing homelessness.
- Based on the most recent data from the Low Income Housing Survey (2019) and the Homeless Count (2020), there are over 7,000 tenants living in 6,681 SROs in need of replacement, as well as at least 2,095 residents who are experiencing

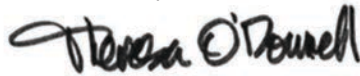
homelessness; 547 without any shelter and 1,548 living in shelters. As the homeless count is known to be underestimated, a 20% supplement was added for the purpose of the needs assessment.

- Single-income households like single parents and single persons typically have lower incomes, particularly if they are renters. Over 80% of both lone-parents and lone-persons without kids make less than \$80,000. Among single renters, close to 70% earned less than \$50,000, compared to 48% for single owners.
- Recent data indicates that a much smaller proportion of the purpose-built rental stock is affordable to lower incomes in Vancouver. As of October 2021, only 17% of the purpose-built market rental stock was affordable to the bottom 40% of the renter household income distribution in Vancouver.
- With ownership costs out of reach for a vast majority of Vancouverites and market rental rates increasing by 45% in the past 10 years, the need for greater supply of more affordable non-market housing, including social, supportive, and co-op housing, has increased over time.

For more detailed information and data on housing needs, see the full Housing Needs Report, found here: <https://vancouver.ca/files/cov/pds-housing-policy-housing-needs-report.pdf>.

If you have any questions, please contact Theresa O'Donnell.

Sincerely,



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