



Memo to Council

Date: May 23, 2023

Subject: Supporting Affordable Rental Housing Action – Motion Served by Councillor Amy Lubik and Councillor Samantha Agtarap

Motion Served

Notice of the following motion was provided at the May 9, 2023 Regular Council meeting:

THAT staff report back on the status of rental replacement, renter protection/displacement, and rental only zoning policies and bylaws laid out in the 2022 Affordable Housing Action Plan and the 2020 Affordable Housing Task Force Report for consideration of strengthening and supporting progress;

AND THAT staff be directed to reach to our MP and MLAs offices and non-profit housing providers to identify and preserve existing rental stock.

AND THAT the City of Richmond and New West staff be invited to present to council about their experiences with rental only zoning.

Background

The lower mainland and Port Moody are only getting more expensive, and we continue to face a housing crisis on top of an economic downturn. [A new 2022](#) study by a coalition of affordable housing groups showed that “*One in five Canadian renters face an affordable housing crisis, spending more than half their income on shelter costs,*”

According to the [Port Moody Housing Needs Assessment](#) Report, “*rental prices are increasing while stock of purpose-built rentals is decreasing.*” As the population regionally has grown [and/or demographics have shifted] and homeownership and rental prices have increased, the total number of units available to rent has decreased. This creates pressure on the rental stock, gives fewer options to renters, and is likely one of many contributors to the tightening rental vacancy rate in Port Moody.”

Market rental, is an important piece of the puzzle, however market rentals are also often beyond the reach for many renters, especially renters in lower income brackets and those with bigger families. An important component, particularly for seniors, those with disabilities, and low-income members of our community, are older more affordable rental stock, either purpose built or older by age. Across the region, many of these [are being lost to redevelopment](#).

In 2020, [the Port Moody Affordable Housing Task Force](#) put forward a series of recommendations to protect renters and rentals, including some cited in the Burnaby Mayor's Task Force on Housing, lauded as best in Canada. These included:

- Strengthening our tenant relocation and first-right-of-refusal policies;
- Strengthening our tenant displacement support policies; and
- Strengthening rental replacement, including rentals that are affordable by age, not designation.

The [Affordable Housing Action Plan](#) also highlighted the following:

- Expediting the creation of non-market housing built and funded by senior governments and non-profit housing partners (as recommended in the BC NPHA 2022 pledge); and
- Exploring a rental retrofit pilot program to encourage renewal of existing purpose-built rental.

The goal of this report is to request staff present the current progress of these projects to council to explore if there are ways to support and strengthen the work.

With the further goal of protecting rentals, there is now a [rental protection fund](#) through the Province of BC. By working with our MP and MLA's office, as well as organizations such as the BC NPHA and CHF BC, the city could help identify and secure affordable housing in perpetuity that may otherwise be lost. This is at cost to the city but could improve collaboration.

Lastly, Rental-Only zoning has only been available in BC for a short amount of time; however, it offers promise to ensuring housing tenure affordability and diversity, as well as preservation of rental stock. New Westminster and Richmond have had experience implemented rental only zoning. Inviting staff to present would provide council and staff an opportunity to learn and ask questions.

These recommendations are intended to strengthen protections for some of the most marginalized community members in the city and providing more security and stability, which is [intricately tied to well-being](#).

Council Strategic Priorities

- Prioritize transit-oriented development and diverse and equitable housing options
- Implement best practices that result in growth that is consistent with community needs
- Facilitate community well-being through programs and long-term planning

Council Options

The following options are available for Council consideration:

1. Receive for information.
2. Refer to staff for a report back on the feasibility of the proposed motion considering budget, alignment with Council's Strategic Priorities, and work plan implications, including but not limited to operational capacity, policy, legality, etc.
3. Other.