

THE CITY OF VICTORIA



OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

March 31, 2022

Honourable David Eby  
Attorney General & Minister Responsible for Housing  
Room 232 Parliament Buildings  
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4  
[AG.Minister@gov.bc.ca](mailto:AG.Minister@gov.bc.ca)

Dear Minister Eby,

On behalf of all Victorians, I would like to start by thanking you for your continued commitment to address the housing crisis in our province through the *Homes for BC* plan and for the concrete steps taken to improve housing affordability and security.

As you know, over 61% of people in Victoria rent their homes, (more than double the provincial average) and this number continues to increase as home ownership becomes increasingly out of reach even for those with higher incomes. We applaud recent amendments to the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) that guard against illegal renovations. At the same time, within our jurisdiction, and following the lead of other municipalities, we have implemented a Tenant Assistance Policy (TAP). This helps mitigate the impacts of displacement at the time of redevelopment by providing guidelines for developers and property owners to support tenants facing eviction as a result of major renovations or redevelopment. The TAP and Guidelines are intended to augment the Provincial RTA and address challenges unique to Victoria.

Much of the rental stock in Victoria was built in the 1960s and 1970s, and while these buildings are beginning to show their age, they are a critical component of the city's affordable rental housing supply. When the owners of these older buildings choose to make capital improvements that require eviction or redevelop their property, tenants are displaced and face the prospect of a highly competitive rental market where the cost of rent is significantly higher, or they are forced to uproot their lives and relocate to a more affordable area far from work, childcare, school, and established social connections. Any displacement of existing tenants, especially vulnerable households or those in need of additional assistance, is a serious challenge.

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*“The City of Victoria recognizes the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations in whose traditional territories we live and work “Hay swx qa”*



Renters in Victoria require more protection to ensure affordability and prevent more households from being in core housing need or worse – nearly half the renters in Victoria already spend over 30% of their income on rent and utilities, and nearly a quarter spend more than 50.

Here's our conundrum: Currently, due to existing Provincial legislation, Victoria's TAP is only applicable to rezoning applications that seek to redevelop or demolish any building that results in the loss of occupied rental units. While Council encourages that the policy be used as best practice guidance by all applicants seeking building permits or development permits to renovate or redevelop residential rental units, we do not currently have the authority to require it.

I'm writing to request that the Provincial Government undertake the necessary changes to the local government legislation that would allow municipal governments to have the authority to require tenant protections, such as the application of the City's Tenant Assistance Policy, at the issuance of building permits and development permits where tenant relocation is required.

We sincerely appreciate your office's continued commitments and efforts to working together to address the housing affordability crisis and hope that we can count on your support to help us address challenges for tenants in Victoria.

Sincerely,

Lisa Helps,  
Mayor of Victoria