



Council Member Motion

For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of January 5, 2023

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** December 1, 2022
From: Councillor Thompson and Councillor Loughton
Subject: Near-term Measures to Encourage More Housing and Affordability

BACKGROUND

The shortage of rental suites and other homes, and high rents and housing costs, amounts to a housing crisis and needs to be addressed. Availability and affordability are required in Victoria and throughout the region. The City has a number of initiatives in various stages of design and implementation that eventually will help provide more new housing and/or affordability (e.g. Rapid Deployment of Affordable Housing Initiative, Villages and Corridors Planning, and Missing Middle). The Premier of BC has also announced that the provincial government will be enabling more new housing, although these initiatives may take time to be implemented and provide results.

Other measures can be taken by the City, which can be separate from and independent of the above initiatives, and complement them. In some cases, existing buildings and land can be better used to provide more housing, housing diversity and choice - expanding the continuum of housing options, and generating less waste and GHG emissions than the teardown-build cycle.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council:

1. direct staff to report to Council the implications of, and with recommendations for, amending the House Conversion Regulations in order to encourage more units in a wider range of houses. The report should address and consider innovations, but not be limited to:
 - a. relaxing or removing the restrictions related to year of construction of houses and lot dimensions, the restrictions on changes, the unit maximums, the minimum floor areas, and the storey maximums;
 - b. adding garden suites;
 - c. enhancing communications to the public about the availability of house conversions.
2. direct staff to report to Council the implications of, and with recommendations for, bylaw amendments to permit three suites (suites includes garden suites and tiny homes as appropriate) in the City's current detached dwelling and duplex zones, to permit suites in

existing small-lot properties, and to allow for additions to buildings in cases where units are secured rental.

3. direct staff to report to council the implications of, and with recommendations for, bylaw amendments and other policies that remove minimum parking requirements for most or all Victoria homes and lots, and to advise on expanding adoption of transit passes for tenants, car share, bike/mobility scooter parking, maximum parking requirements and other transportation demand measures, and providing more disabled parking spaces for apartment buildings and streets.
4. formally endorses the Calls to Action of the fourteen non-profit housing providers that make up the Vancouver Island Housing Leadership Network (VIHLN) and requests that the Mayor write to the other municipalities in the Region to encourage them to endorse and implement the Calls.
5. advocate, along with other municipalities and the UBCM, to the provincial government to introduce an amendment to the Local Government Act that would phase out the grandfathering of year-round short-term rentals in existing units and buildings.
6. direct staff to consider the timing and priority of the above initiatives in light of workload demands, other initiatives currently underway, and the goal of accelerating housing availability and affordability.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Thompson



Councillor Loughton

News and Events



22 September - Vancouver Island non-profit housing providers issue calls to action in advance of municipal elections

Victoria, BC – Fourteen non-profit housing providers from Vancouver Island released a list of calls to action for local governments and candidates for office today in Victoria. The organizations, together under the banner of the Vancouver Island Housing Leadership Network (VIHLN), oversee over 6,000 housing units across Vancouver Island with over 1,000 more in pre-development or under construction.

"The housing crisis in British Columbia is dire, and we're in the middle of some very important local elections," said Corinne Saad, Executive Director of Gorge View Society. "Municipalities must be active participants in facilitating the construction of purpose-built affordable and supportive housing and retention of that affordability, while working with non-profits to ensure the right level of support is accessible to all where and when they need it."

The six calls to action include:

1. **Establish a 'Housing Centre'** - establish a separate Housing Centre with elevated status within each municipality to facilitate and accelerate the approval of affordable and supportive housing proposals and promote an affordable housing lens through all departments' decisions and policies.
2. **Unlock land** - unlock access to municipal land, improving the financial viability of developing new housing.
3. **Implement financial exemptions** - commit to exemptions for non-profit developers for property taxes, development cost charges (DCCs), and municipal improvement obligations.
4. **Accelerate processes** - adopt and expand on the example of the City of Victoria in approving an accelerated process for new affordable housing projects consistent with the Official Community Plan.
5. **Promote collaboration** - promote municipal collaboration with our organizations and health authorities to ensure the right level of support is available to individuals in crisis when they need it.
6. **Access collective expertise** - consider the VIHLN as a resource as councillors endeavour to understand the complex challenges and barriers exacerbating the current situation to effectively

advocate at the provincial and federal levels for the change our communities desperately need.

We're calling on all candidates for municipal office to consider these calls to action in their platforms, and all voters to press their candidates to endorse these actions," added Carolina Ibarra, CEO of Pacifica Housing. "We need everyone to work together to be successful – this issue is far too important to get lost in the usual fray of local politics."