



**Council Member Motion**  
**For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of June 22, 2017**

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**Date:** June 15, 2017

**From:** Councillor Madoff, Councillor Isitt and Councillor Loveday

**Subject:** Affordable Rental Housing Retention Policy

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**Background:**

A cornerstone of sound affordable housing policy is ensuring policies and programs are in place to encourage the retention and refurbishment of the existing supply of affordable units.

A substantial share of the affordable rental housing supply in the City of Victoria is provided in 4-storey wood-framed apartment buildings that were built in the 1960s and 1970s, in the context of supportive federal taxation policies aimed at encouraging the expansion of purpose-built rental housing. Due to changing economic conditions and escalation in land values, we are now faced with the prospect that this housing may be lost, to make way for more costly housing options, including high-end rental and market strata units. Recent years have witnessed tenants in the City of Victoria displaced through the process of “demo-viction,” as existing affordable units were demolished, resulting in more costly housing.

While the City of Victoria’s Residential Strata Titling Policy (attached) mandates that no applications to convert existing rental housing into strata units will be accepted when the rental apartment vacancy rate falls below 4%, there is no equivalent regulatory mechanism or City policy to prevent the loss of affordable rental housing to high-end rental housing.

It is therefore recommended that Council adopt the proposed Affordable Rental Housing Retention Policy, introducing a time-limited moratorium on the demolition of existing residential rental buildings with more than four dwelling units, pending development of policy to retain, restore and sustain this essential component of the city’s housing continuum. This policy work includes several initiatives currently underway as well as emerging policy priorities, including:

- Rental Housing Retention Review;
- Standards of Rental Housing Maintenance Bylaw;
- No net loss of affordable units in new developments;
- Incentive Program to Retain Affordable Rental Housing;
- Investigation of increased protection for tenants.

This policy work includes identifying opportunities to maximize incentives for property owners to maintain and renovate this housing supply – identifying mechanisms that encourage owners to renew this housing and make the refurbished units available at affordable rent levels.

**Recommendation:**

That Council adopt the following policy:

***Affordable Rental Housing Retention Policy***

When the rental apartment vacancy rate as provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation falls below 4% for Metro Victoria, no applications to demolish existing residential rental buildings containing more than four rental dwelling units shall be accepted, until such time as the following policy work has been completed and received by Council:

- (1) Completion of the Rental Housing Retention Review;
- (2) Adoption of a Standards of Rental Housing Maintenance Bylaw;
- (3) Adoption of a policy to ensure no net loss of affordable units with at least an equivalent number of units at the same rental price in new developments;
- (4) Progress toward development of a Rental Housing Incentive Program;
- (5) Investigation of increased municipal protections for tenants facing displacement due to renovations/demolitions, including priority for housing at comparable rents in refurbished/new units and increased compensation from landlords for displacement.

The rental apartment vacancy rate shall be calculated in accordance with the provisions of the Residential Strata Titling Policy.


Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Madoff



Councillor Isitt



Councillor Loveday

Attachment.

City of Victoria Residential Strata Titling Policy, 1997