



**REGULAR COUNCIL FOR WORKSHOP  
AGENDA**

**Monday, October 21, 2024, 3:00 p.m.**

**Meeting held in Council Chamber**

**Second Floor, City Hall**

**We recognize and respect that New Westminster is on the unceded and unsurrendered land of the Halkomelem speaking peoples. We acknowledge that colonialism has made invisible their histories and connections to the land. As a City, we are learning and building relationships with the people whose lands we are on.**

**LIVE WEBCAST:** Please note City Council Meetings, Public Hearings, Council Workshops and some Special City Council Meetings are streamed online and are accessible through the City’s website at <http://www.newwestcity.ca/council>

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**Pages**

**1. CALL TO ORDER AND LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

The Mayor will open the meeting and provide a land acknowledgement.

**2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

As circulated or as amended (urgent/time sensitive matters only)

**3. PRESENTATIONS**

**3.1 Family Friendly Housing Policy Update**

**a. Presentation** **3**

**b. Report** **16**

To seek Council endorsement for the proposed update to the Family Friendly Housing Policy; to request that Council forward the required Zoning Bylaw amendment for consideration; and to request Council endorsement for no Public Hearing to be held following circulation of notice in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

**Recommendation:**

1. **THAT** Council endorse the proposed Family Friendly Housing Policy included as Attachment 1;
2. **THAT** Council forward Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No.8486, 2024 to the November 4, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council for consideration of First, Second and Third Readings; and
3. **THAT** no Public Hearing be held, in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

**3.2 Provincial 'Growing Communities Fund': Allocation of Remaining Funds to Support New Investments in Recreation Related Amenities**

**a. Report**

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The purpose of this report is to seek further clarification from Council regarding the January 8, 2024 resolution regarding the use of funds for recreation investments as set aside in the city's Growing Communities Fund Reserve, and furthermore to confirm Council's expectations around processes to be used to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve.

**Recommendation:**

1. **THAT** Council provide further clarification regarding the January 8, 2024 resolution regarding the use of funds for recreation investments as set aside in the city's Growing Communities Fund Reserve; and
2. **THAT** Council confirm its expectations around processes to be used to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve.

**4. ADJOURNMENT**

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# Family Friendly Housing Policy Update

Lynn Roxburgh, Manager of Housing and Land Use Planning

Anji Rana, Housing Planner

# Overview

- Background
- What We Heard
- Feasibility Study Findings
- Proposed Policy
- Recommendations

# Background

## Current Family-Friendly Policy (2016)

The Family-Friendly Housing Policy was adopted in 2016 and applies to new multi-unit residential projects with 10 units or more.



### **OWNERSHIP PROJECTS**

Currently required to have **30% two- and three-bedroom units**, with 10% being three-bedrooms or more.

### **RENTAL PROJECTS**

Currently required to have **25% two- and three-bedroom units**, with 5% being three-bedrooms or more.

# Background

## Policy Outcomes from 2016 - 2021

- Slight increase in percentage of three bedroom plus units.
- No change in percentage of two bedroom plus units.
- New West ranked last out of the 22 Metro Vancouver municipalities in regards to the proportion of units being 3+ bedrooms.

# Background

## Municipal Scan

- Six other Metro Vancouver municipalities have similar policies, regulations, or design guidelines aimed at promoting family friendly units.
- City of Vancouver and City of White Rock require a minimum of 35% of two- and three-bedroom units.
- City of Richmond requires minimum of 40% of two-bedroom units in market rental projects.

# What We Heard

## Urban Development Institute Consultation

- Consider implementing family friendly unit sizes as a guideline rather than a regulation.
- Include incentives to encourage two- and three-bedroom units, including lock-off suites.
- Consider incentivizing family friendly amenity spaces and allow for floor area exclusions.

# What We Heard

## Public Consultation and Focus Groups

- More and larger in-unit storage to accommodate strollers and seasonal items.
- Play areas, green spaces, rooftop patios, and outdoor environments for families and children.
- Intergenerational living options for aging parents and families.
- Efficient space design to maximize useable floor areas.

# Feasibility Study Findings

- Increased family-friendly unit requirements would not significantly impact financial feasibility of projects.
- Introducing minimum unit sizes would not significantly impact financial feasibility of market rental projects.
- Rental projects are challenging to finance in the current development market, regardless of unit mix and size.

# Proposed Policy Unit Mix Requirements

	Current Policy (2016)	Proposed Policy (2024)
Ownership	30% minimum two- and three- or more bedrooms, with at least 10% of three- or more bedrooms.	40% minimum two- and three- or more bedrooms, with at least 15% of three- or more bedrooms.
Rental	25% minimum two- and three- or more bedrooms, with at least 5% of three- or more bedrooms.	30% minimum two- and three- bedrooms, with at least 10% of three- or more bedrooms.
		<u>2026</u> - 35% minimum two- and three- bedrooms, with at least 10% of three- or more bedrooms.

# Proposed Policy

## Minimum Unit Size Requirements

- Proposed unit sizes are aligned with what is currently being delivered in the market.
- Unit sizes are the same as those required by the City of Burnaby.

Tenure	Family-Friendly Unit Type	
	2-Bedrooms	3-Bedrooms
Ownership	753.5 square feet (70 square metres)	904.2 square feet (84 square metres)
Rental	699.7 square feet (65 square metres)	861.1 square feet (80 square metres)

# Proposed Policy Design Guidelines

**Entrance and Storage:** Encourage design of unit entrances to accommodate the spatial needs of households with children, providing storage space and space for movement.

**Bedrooms:** Encourage bedroom design that prioritizes functionality, comfort, and privacy in order to enhance the quality of life for caregivers, children and teenagers.

**Common Amenity Spaces:** Encourage the design of indoor and outdoor common amenity spaces that allow families to play, celebrate, and connect with their neighbours, while also meeting families' functional needs.

# Proposed Policy

## Policy Exemption

Government or non-profit owned and operated projects are excluded from these requirements as they will generally have unit mixes and sizes specific to the needs of those they serve. This includes:

- Affordable (e.g. below-market or non-market) housing projects;
- Supportive housing projects; and/or
- Transitional housing projects.

# Recommendation

THAT Council endorse the Family Friendly Housing Policy.

THAT Council forward Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No.8486, 2024 to the November 4, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council for consideration of First, Second and Third Readings.

THAT no Public Hearing be held, in accordance with the Local Government Act.

# REPORT

## *Planning and Development*

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council  
**Date:** October 21, 2024

**From:** Jackie Teed, Director  
Planning and Development  
**File:** Doc#2536876

**Item #:** 2024-575

**Subject:** **Family Friendly Housing Policy Update**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **THAT** Council endorse the proposed Family Friendly Housing Policy included as Attachment 1;
  2. **THAT** Council forward Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No.8486, 2024 to the November 4, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council for consideration of First, Second and Third Readings; and
  3. **THAT** no Public Hearing be held, in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.
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### **PURPOSE**

To seek Council endorsement for the proposed update to the Family Friendly Housing Policy; to request that Council forward the required Zoning Bylaw amendment for consideration; and to request Council endorsement for no Public Hearing to be held following circulation of notice in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.

### **SUMMARY**

In 2016, the Family Friendly Housing Policy and regulations were implemented for all multi-unit residential projects with 10 units or more, including townhouses and apartment buildings. This includes design guidelines, and required minimum percentages of two- and three-bedroom units in new multi-unit ownership and rental

projects that were implemented through a Zoning Bylaw amendment. The intention of the Policy was to grow New Westminster’s stock of housing appropriate to households with children.

Staff are proposing amendments to the Policy and related changes to the Zoning Bylaw to increase minimum unit mix requirements, introduce minimum unit size requirements, and include additional family friendly design guidelines.

**BACKGROUND**

**Family Friendly Housing Policy**

The current [Family Friendly Housing Policy](#) and related Zoning Bylaw regulations came into effect in 2016, requiring a minimum percentage of three-bedroom units in new multi-unit residential projects with more than 10 units, including townhouses and apartment buildings. Market ownership projects are currently required to include a minimum of 30% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% being three-bedrooms or more. Rental projects are currently required to include a minimum of 25% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 5% being three-bedrooms or more. These requirements were generally aligned with the market’s ability to deliver family friendly units at that time. The Policy includes design guidelines for bedrooms, and encourages family friendly units on lower storeys.

In May 2024, Council endorsed the Family Friendly Housing Policy update work plan to assess the feasibility and impact of increasing minimum family friendly unit mixes, introducing minimum unit size requirements, and exploring additional design guidelines.

**Need for Family Friendly Housing**

Families face availability, affordability and suitability challenges in the affordable rental, market rental, and ownership parts of the housing continuum. The City identifies that there are few rental units big enough for households with children in the private market and few vacancies (0.8% vacancy rate for three plus bedrooms). In a survey conducted in the preparation of the City’s current Policy, 50.7% of New Westminster parents reported their current housing situation ‘somewhat’ or ‘did not’ meet their family’s needs.

**Housing Target Order**

In August 2024, the Province issued a Housing Target Order for New Westminster. The Order is a legislative change with the goal of addressing the housing crisis. The City is required to approve the occupancy of 4,432 net new units over five years from August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2029. Accompanying guidelines specify how the units should be allocated by bedroom count, specifying 832 two-bedroom units and 1,176 three or more bedroom units be delivered over the five-year period.

**ANALYSIS**

**Policy Implementation Findings**

Analysis of Census 2016 to 2021 data (which generally aligns with the timeline of the Family Friendly Housing Policy) found:

- A slight increase in the percentage of three bedroom plus units in apartment buildings with less than five storeys (6.0% to 7.2%) and in apartment buildings with five or more storeys (6.2% to 6.3%).
- No change in the percentage of two-bedroom units in apartment buildings with fewer than five storeys (40.9% to 40.9%) and a marginal decrease in apartment buildings with five or more storeys (52.3% to 47.6%).
- Of units containing three or more bedrooms, 59.6% were townhouses, either a townhouse project or as a townhouse-style unit at the base of a multi-unit residential building, with 33.7% of townhouse units having two bedrooms.
- As of 2021, nearly half (46.1%) of the City's child and youth population (0-14 years) lived in apartment buildings, the highest rate out of 22 Metro Vancouver municipalities. Further, the City has the highest percentage of dwelling units as apartment buildings (69.5%) in the region.
- The City ranked last out of 22 Metro Vancouver municipalities with regards to the proportion of ground-oriented units and three or more bedroom units in the total housing stock, including single detached dwellings.

Since implementation of the current policy and regulations did not include regulatory requirements for family friendly units to be primarily located in lower storeys, buildings have generally continued to be designed with two- and three-bedroom units located in each storey, as it is most effective to construct a consistent floorplate.

### **Municipal Scan**

Since the implementation of New Westminster's Family Friendly Housing Policy, six other Metro Vancouver municipalities have adopted similar policies, while others have regulations or design guidelines aimed at promoting family friendly units or design. Of these, the City of Vancouver and the City of White Rock require higher mandatory minimum percentages (i.e. 35%) of two- and three-bedroom units in multi-unit strata projects than New Westminster's current requirements. The City of Richmond requires a minimum of 40% of units with two or more bedrooms in market rental projects. More information of the municipal scan is available in Attachment 2.

### **Economic Analysis**

To determine the ability of multi-unit ownership and rental developments to provide family-oriented units, the City retained an economic consultant to undertake a feasibility study, which concluded that:

- ***Increased family-friendly unit requirements would not significantly impact financial feasibility of projects.*** Increased two- and three-bedroom unit mix ratios have only a marginal impact on financial feasibility. Increasing family-friendly unit requirements is unlikely to be the primary factor deterring a

development, and could help increase the number of multi-bedroom units available in the city, should surrounding market conditions improve.

- **Introducing minimum unit sizes would not impact financial feasibility of rental projects.** Projects generally deliver units larger than the proposed minimums, and therefore should be readily achievable.
- **Rental projects are challenging to finance in the current development market, regardless of unit mix and size.** Current market conditions (e.g. high interest rates, construction costs) are making residential development financing challenging, however conditions are particularly unfavourable for market rental projects of all scales.

**DISCUSSION**

**Proposed Policy Update**

Zoning Bylaw Amendments

Based on the ongoing need for family friendly housing, research findings, target order and ensuring livability of families with children, staff consider it reasonable to amend the Zoning Bylaw to increase family-friendly unit requirements for both ownership and market rental projects, with a phased approach to market rental requirements, as follows:

- Ownership projects with 10 units or more be required to have a minimum of 40% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 15% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms.
- Market rental projects with 10 units or more be required to have a minimum of 30% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms.
- Effective November 1, 2026, market rental projects with 10 units or more be required to include a minimum of 35% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms.

The proposed amendment would also require the following minimum unit sizes for new multi-unit development projects. The proposed unit sizes are aligned with current construction trends in New Westminster and would ensure there is no future reduction in unit sizes being delivered. Additionally, the unit sizes are the same as those required by the City of Burnaby.

Building Tenure	Family Friendly Unit Type	
	2-Bedrooms	3-Bedrooms
Ownership	753.5 square feet (70 square metres)	904.2 square feet (84 square metres)
Rental	699.7 square feet (65 square metres)	861.1 square feet (80 square metres)

Policy Design Guidelines

The proposed Family Friendly Housing Policy included in Attachment 1 includes additional design guidelines intended to encourage features that will optimize livability. The design guidelines continue to encourage locating family friendly units on lower storeys, where the price per square foot is typically less than upper storeys (commonly referred to as penthouse units) of the building where views may increase unit prices. This is kept as a guideline given the impact to cost of construction that could result from requiring more family-friendly units be built in lower stories, as this would likely result in different floorplate between lower and higher storeys. Staff will continue to monitor this issue should the new policy and regulations be approved by Council.

**CONSULTATION SUMMARY**

**Community Consultation and Focus Groups**

A project Be Heard page was launched to provide information about the initiative. A total of 19 community responses were received on the discussion forum. Two focus groups were held with Kids New West. The feedback received supported delivery of more family friendly units given the limited availability of two and three plus bedroom units in New Westminster. Participants also voiced concerns about the lack of family friendly features in buildings (e.g. common amenity spaces, bedroom and unit sizes, storage, and attainability).

**Urban Development Institute (UDI)**

The City and consultant team presented to New Westminster’s UDI Liaison Committee to share feasibility study findings and gather input on the draft policy. Key feedback included:

- Consider implementing family friendly unit sizes as a guideline rather than a regulation.  
*Given the unit sizes proposed are smaller than those typically provided, staff recommends including these as a regulatory requirement.*
- Include incentives to encourage the inclusion of two- and three bedroom units in new residential development, including allowing accessory lock-off suites.  
*Given the City would be unable to enforce that units with lock-off suits be purchased and/or rented by families, rather than by investors intending to offer them as two separate units, staff recommends not including lock-off suites in the family-friendly regulations.*

More information regarding consultation is available in Attachment 3.

**NEXT STEPS**

The next steps for this policy, and related Zoning Bylaw amendment, include:

- 1. Council consideration of endorsement of the Family Friendly Housing Policy (**WE ARE HERE**);
- 2. Council consideration of First, Second and Third Readings of Family Friendly Housing Zoning Amendment Bylaw (November 4, 2024);
- 3. Referral of Zoning Amendment Bylaw to the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (November 5, 2024); and
- 4. Council consideration of adoption of the Family Friendly Zoning Amendment Bylaw (November 18, 2024).

**Public Hearing Not Held**

Staff recommends that Council a Public Hearing not be held as the proposed Zoning Bylaw amendment bylaw is:

- Consistent with the Official Community Plan (OCP), per provincially legislated requirements;
- Generally consistent with and/or exceeds City policy and/or Council Strategic Priorities; and,
- Responds to consultation feedback, to the satisfaction of the Director of Planning and Development.

**Monitoring Program**

Staff will monitor the family friendly housing program through tracking the number of family friendly units delivered in ownership and rental housing projects and the overall success of implementing design guidelines. In particular, staff will focus on achieving units on lower floors and consider whether this should be made a requirement in the future (e.g. excluding family friendly units delivered in penthouse units counting towards minimum unit mix requirements).

Although the study concluded that that the impacts of this policy on development viability would be minimal, staff will continue to monitor any unanticipated impacts.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The City was awarded an \$11.4 million grant from the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) program, established by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This program provides financial support that enables the City to advance initiatives aimed at improving the housing approval process, increasing housing supply, and expanding housing choice. The Family Friendly Housing Policy update was an initiative identified in the City’s HAF application. The project costs will be offset by this funding.

**OPTIONS**

The following options are presented for Council’s consideration:

- 1. That Council endorse the proposed Family Friendly Housing Policy included as Attachment 1.
- 2. That Council forward Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No. 8486, 2024 to the November 4, 2024 Regular Meeting of Council for consideration of First, Second, and Third Readings.
- 3. That no Public Hearing be held, in accordance with the *Local Government Act*.
- 4. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Options 1, 2 and 3.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- Attachment 1: Family Friendly Housing Policy and Design Guidelines
- Attachment 2: Municipal Scan Findings
- Attachment 3: Summary of Engagement Findings
- Attachment 4: Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No. 8486, 2024

**APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:  
 Anji Rana, Housing Planner  
 Jessica Glover, Senior Housing Planner  
 Wendee Lang, Senior Development Planner

This report was reviewed by:  
 Lynn Roxburgh, Manager, Housing and Land Use Planning  
 Demian Rueter, Manager, Development Planning

This report was approved by:  
 Jackie Teed, Director, Planning and Development  
 Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer

## Attachment 1

# *Family Friendly Housing Policy and Design Guidelines*

# **ATT 1 - Family Friendly Housing Policy Update.docx**

**Creating Housing Options for Households with Children in New  
Westminster**

**November 2024**

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## Executive Summary

Family friendly housing is residential housing specifically designed to meet the needs of households with children. This type of housing is typically larger with multiple bedrooms and features that support the well-being, development and safety of children, and functional needs of families. Since the Policy’s implementation, a large portion of the city’s family friendly units being developed are townhouses and single detached dwellings, which are increasingly becoming too expensive. As a result, more families are seeking less expensive units, such as in multi-unit rental and condo buildings.

To ensure families are considered in the design of these multi-unit buildings, the City requires the following for developments comprising of 10 units or more:

- Ownership projects are required to include a minimum of 40% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 15% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms,
- Rental projects are required to include a minimum of 30% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms.

All new multi-unit development projects are required to comply with minimum unit size requirements as specified below:

Tenure	Family Friendly Unit Type	
	2-Bedrooms	3-Bedrooms
Ownership	753.5 square feet (70 square metres)	904.2 square feet (84 square metres)
Rental	699.7 square feet (65 square metres)	861.1 square feet (80 square metres)

A feasibility analysis conducted by the City confirmed that the minimum unit mix and size requirements outlined above are unlikely to deter development activity and will help increase the number of larger units available in the city.

Family friendly design guidelines are provided to encourage consideration of family functionality (e.g. bedroom layout, storage, common amenity). These design guidelines are applied in addition to any of the applicable Development Permit Area Design Guidelines contained in the *Official Community Plan (OCP)*.

Affordable (e.g. below-market or non-market), supportive and/or transitional rental housing projects that are government or non-profit owned and operated are excluded from these requirements as they will generally have unit mixes and sizes specific to the needs of those they serve.

## Introduction

### Purpose

The Family Friendly Housing Policy was developed to ensure the development of diverse housing types are created that meet the needs of families with children. This Policy promotes a balance of unit mix and sizes through regulatory measures, ensuring that apartment developments include sufficient homes for families. The Policy is further supported by a set of design guidelines that serve as a companion to the regulatory measures, offering strategies to guide the successful implementation of family friendly housing.

### Background

Housing choice supports diverse and intergenerational neighbourhoods by encouraging a variety of tenures and unit sizes that meet the needs of different ages, family types, incomes and abilities; a key goal of *New Westminster's Official Community Plan (OCP) (2017)*. As family dynamics change through different life stages, such as wishing to grow or accommodate children, the need for family friendly housing becomes critical. Unfortunately, the supply of family friendly units in New Westminster has not kept on pace with demand, posing challenges for households with children.

New Westminster's Family Friendly Housing Policy and Zoning Regulations were initially adopted in 2016 and reviewed in 2024 to align with evolving community needs, changing economic conditions and new Provincial housing legislation. The 2024 review identified an ongoing lack of housing for households with children, resulting in the City increasing requirements for two- and three-bedroom units in multi-unit residential developments. The updated policy includes more comprehensive unit design guidelines and building best practices intended to provide resources for creating socially connected, multi-unit residential developments. Though targeted to families needs, the regulations, policy and guidelines will also increase housing choices for other household arrangements, such as multi-generational families and individuals seeking shared living agreements.

### What is Family Friendly Housing, and Why is it Important?

Family friendly housing is residential housing specifically designed to meet the needs of households with children. This type of housing is typically larger with multiple bedrooms and design features (i.e. indoor and outdoor amenity spaces) that support the well-being, development and safety of children, and functional needs of families.

As denser housing forms become more common, they should be designed to support community well-being, connections and inclusion for everyone, including households with children. Families are an important part of the community and housing that is functional should be provided so families can find suitable housing in New Westminster.

# Family Friendly Housing Zoning Bylaw Requirements

Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No.8486, 2024 came into effect on November 18, 2024. After this date, development applications (i.e. Rezoning, Heritage Revitalization Agreements, Development Permits and Building Permits) for multi-unit developments must conform to the regulations below.

## Minimum Percentage of Family Friendly Units

- Ownership projects with 10 units or more are required to include a minimum of 40% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 15% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms,
- Rental projects with 10 units or more are required to include a minimum of 30% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms.

Ownership and rental projects may increase the percentage of three- or more bedroom units with a corresponding decrease in two-bedroom units and be considered compliant with the regulations.

## Two-year Transition Period for Rental Projects

Effective November 18, 2026, multi-unit rental projects will be required to include a minimum of 35% two- and three-bedroom units, with at least 10% of total units containing three- or more bedrooms.

## Minimum Unit Size of Family Friendly Units

All new multi-unit development projects must comply with the below minimum unit size requirements:

Tenure	Family Friendly Unit Type	
	2-Bedrooms	3-Bedrooms
Ownership	753.5 square feet (70 square metres)	904.2 square feet (84 square metres)
Rental	699.7 square feet (65 square metres)	861.1 square feet (80 square metres)

## In-Stream Projects

Projects that were in-stream at the time of adoption of Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8486, 2024 will not be required to comply with the 2024 Policy requirements. An in-stream application is defined as an existing Rezoning, Heritage Revitalization Agreement, Development Permit or Building Permit application in which application fees were paid prior to adoption of the Bylaw.

Projects that are in-stream under a Master Planning process are required to comply with the 2024 Policy requirements.

# Family Friendly Housing Policy Special Considerations

## Housing Attainability

For ownership housing projects, two- and three-bedroom units are encouraged to be located on lower storeys, where the price per square foot is typically less than upper storeys (commonly referred to as penthouse units) of the building where views may increase unit prices.

## Development Variance Permit Considerations

The family friendly housing Zoning Bylaw regulations (i.e. minimum bedroom and unit size requirements) may be varied for the below project types, provided that a sufficient rationale is given:

1. Projects that address other Council Strategic Priorities. The provided rationale should clearly indicate why the regulations preclude delivery of the project.
2. Heritage Revitalization Agreement projects. The provided rationale should clearly indicate why the regulations preclude delivery of the project and detail alternative community benefits to be provided.

## Existing Multi-Unit Residential Buildings

Existing multi-unit residential buildings, constructed prior to the effective date of these regulations, are not required to retroactively comply with regulations and guidelines. Where units are proposed to be added to existing multi-unit residential buildings the regulations below apply.

- Only the new units are required to comply with these regulations.
- The regulations apply when units are proposed through conversion of additional floor space or through reallocation of existing floor space.
- Projects proposing fewer than 10 additional units are exempt from these regulations, until more than 10 units are proposed through cumulative applications.

## Policy Exemptions

The following projects will not be required to comply with family friendly housing guidelines or Zoning Bylaw regulations:

1. Ground-oriented infill and townhouse projects, due to their inherent compliance with bedroom composition requirements.
2. Projects proposing fewer than 10 residential units, to prevent barriers to infill development.
3. Projects proposing to add fewer than 10 residential units to existing multi-unit residential development.
4. Affordable (e.g. below-market or non-market rental), supportive and/or transitional housing projects that are government or non-profit owned and operated, to enable those projects to tailor units to the needs of those they serve.

# Family Friendly Design Guidelines

## How to Use the Design Guidelines

The Family Friendly Design Guidelines are intended to serve as a resource in the development of residential and mixed-use multi-unit buildings. Created to support the current and evolving needs of households with children, the guidelines draw widely on best practice research and community consultation, and are complementary to the Development Permit Area (DPA) Design Guidelines contained in the OCP. Project designers are encouraged to consider these guidelines and integrate them into residential and mixed-use multi-unit projects as feasible, while still meeting zoning requirements for family friendly units.

Design guidelines were also sought from *Building Social Connections Policy and Design Toolkit* (2024), a project co-led by the Hey Neighbour Collective and Happy Cities. The project focused on multi-unit building designs and programming strategies to inform inclusive, 'sociable' housing policies at the municipal level. The initiative involved collaboration with Simon Fraser University and six Metro Vancouver jurisdictions, including New Westminster. The City encourages use of the Toolkit to inform the design of new multi-unit housing projects.

## Guiding Principles

These design guidelines are intended to offer design best practices in support of comfort, functionality and livability through the following design principles:

- Consider the functional needs of households with children in building and unit design;
- Explore integration of creative storage solutions in building and unit design; and
- Consider how to support the needs of children of all ages through design of common amenity spaces.

## Entrance and Storage

Intent: Encourage design of unit entrances that accommodate the spatial needs of households with children, providing storage space and space for movement.

- a. Explore entryway design that allows for movement of people and large items, such as strollers and toys and wheelchairs.
- b. Study how to provide efficient storage solutions that can house seasonal items.
- c. Consider use of durable materials in unit design.

## Bedrooms

Intent: Encourage bedroom design that prioritizes functionality, comfort, and privacy in order to enhance the quality of life for caregivers, children and teenagers.

- a. Locate bedroom doors so that they are able to open a full 90 degrees when the room is furnished.

- b. Allow full access to the foot of the bed and at least one other side (excluding the head of the bed), except for the smallest bedroom in units with three or more bedrooms, which must allow full access to at least one side of the bed (excluding the foot and the head of the bed).
- c. Provide sufficient room for storage of clothes and avoid conflict between access to clothes storage and the placement of beds.
- d. Provide a window directly to outside, except for the smallest bedroom in units with three or more bedrooms, which must have indirect natural light from at least two sources (e.g. glass wall, light tube or well), one of which may be the doorway.
  - i. Where inboard bedrooms are proposed, a clear rationale should be provided that demonstrates how the proposed light sources allow for sufficient natural light infiltration into the bedroom.
- e. Avoid designs that locate beds under upper-storey functional windows.
- f. At least one bedroom should be large enough to accommodate a standard queen-sized bed while meeting the general bedroom guidelines above. All other bedrooms should be large enough to accommodate a standard single bed while meeting the general bedroom guidelines above.
- g. In units with three or more bedrooms, the smallest bedroom must be no smaller than 70 square feet (6.5 square metres) with no dimension smaller than 7 feet (2.1 metres).

## Common Amenity Spaces

Intent: Encourage the design of indoor and outdoor common amenity spaces that allow families to play, celebrate, and connect with their neighbours, while also meeting families' functional needs.

- a. Strive to provide well-used indoor and outdoor shared common amenity spaces with natural light access, to help supplement private space.
- b. Consider providing multi-purpose spaces suitable for hosting celebrations and programs (e.g. birthday parties, storytelling), and how adjacent storage areas can support this goal.
- c. Strive to reduce opportunities for conflict when considering the siting of common amenity spaces in relation to dwelling units.
- d. Explore how buildings can accommodate out-of-town visitors for families, such as in guest suites.
- e. Consider opportunities for shade (e.g. structures and trees), as well as seating that allow for more comfortable use during the summer, especially on rooftop amenity areas.
- f. Consider including toddler-, child- and youth-friendly amenities, such as play structures and access to nature (e.g. shared garden beds), in common amenity spaces.
- g. Consider how children and other pedestrians will access amenities, keeping travel paths separate from vehicle circulation routes and loading areas.
- h. Consider the storage needs of families, and study how the building could accommodate out-of-suite storage for larger seasonal items or sports gear.
- i. Consider the long-term maintenance costs of building amenities, and their impact of housing attainability.

Additional Zoning Bylaw floor area exemptions to support the delivery of common amenity areas are included in the *New Westminster Zoning Bylaw No.6680, 2001*.

## Resources

- Hey Neighbour Collective and Happy Cities (2024) Building Social Connections Policy and Design Toolkit
- City of Toronto (2020) Planning for Children in Vertical Communities
- City of North Vancouver (2015) Active Design Guidelines
- City of Vancouver (2022, 3rd edition) High-Density Housing for Families with Children Guidelines
- City of Vancouver (2017) HEY NEIGHBOUR! Exploring sociability in multi-unit buildings across Vancouver
- City of Victoria (2024) Advisory Design Guidelines for Family Friendly Buildings + Spaces

## Context of Family Friendly Housing in the City

### Family Friendly Housing Supply

Analysis of Census 2016 to 2021 data (which generally aligns with the timeline of the Family Friendly Housing Policy adoption) found:

- There was a slight increase in the percentage of three-bedroom plus units in apartment buildings with less than five storeys (6.0% to 7.2%) and in apartment buildings with five or more storeys (6.2% to 6.3%).
- There was no change in the percentage of two-bedroom units in apartment buildings with less than five storeys (40.9% to 40.9%) and a decrease in apartment buildings with five or more storeys (52.3% to 47.6%).
- A total of 59.6% of three-bedroom units or more were created as townhouses, either in a townhouse project or as a townhouse-style unit at the base of a multi-unit residential building, with 33.7% of townhome units having two bedrooms.

A large portion of the city's family friendly units being created or provided are townhouses and single detached dwellings, which are largely out of reach for most families. As a result, more families are electing to live in more attainable units, such as in apartment buildings. As of 2021, nearly half (46.1%) of the city's child and youth population (0 – 14 years) lived in apartment buildings, the highest rate out of the 22 Metro Vancouver municipalities. Further, the city has the highest percentage of dwelling units as apartment buildings (69.5%) in the region. The City ranked last out of 22 Metro Vancouver municipalities with regards to the proportion of ground-oriented units and three or more bedroom units in the total housing stock.

### Proportion of Ground-Oriented Units in the Housing Stock (2021)

New Westminister: 30.5%

Metro Vancouver: 58.6%

### Proportion of Three or More Bedroom Units in the Housing Stock (2021)

New Westminister: 26.2%

Metro Vancouver: 47.8%

### Family Friendly Housing Needs

In 2024, the Province of British Columbia issued a Housing Target Order for New Westminister. The Housing Target Order encourages the City to meet targets related to housing units distributed based on number of bedrooms, rental, below market and supportive units over five years from August 1, 2024 to July 31, 2029. Housing bedroom targets include 832 two-bedroom units and 1,176 three-bedroom units.

The City further identified in 2023 that there are few rental units large enough for families in the market, with a 0.8% vacancy rate for three-bedroom or more units, well below a typical healthy vacancy rate of between 3 - 4%.

### Family Friendly Housing Community Consultation

Prior to adopting the Family Friendly Policy in 2016, the City conducted extensive community consultation alongside the Society for Children and Youth of BC (SCY) as they developed a *Child*

*and Youth Friendly Community Strategy, 2016.* Given the close association between the two initiatives, a decision was made in 2014 to complete the policies in tandem, with SCY taking the lead on the Strategy and the City taking the lead on the Policy. During this time, 840 parents, youth, and children were consulted, including:

- 320 parents who completed a survey;
- 156 children (6 to 12 years) who completed a school-based assignment or survey;
- 228 youth (13 to 17 years) who completed a survey; and
- 136 parents, children, and youth who completed a “dotmocracy” exercise on Family Day.

Participants were asked a number of questions, including “if their current housing situation met their family’s needs.” Participants also commented on housing as part of other questions, including about the family, child and youth friendliness of their neighbourhood and the city, and what they would like to see done to improve the city for families, children and youth. Of the 320 parents who completed the survey, 50.7% reported that their current housing situation somewhat (36.4%) or did not (14.3%) meet their family’s needs.

In 2024, additional community consultation continued to highlight support for the delivery of more family friendly units, given the limited availability of two and three plus bedroom units in New Westminster. Community members also shared concerns about the lack of family-friendly building features and designs, such as common amenity spaces and outdoor spaces. Two focus group sessions with local community organizations that provide services for families and children further reiterated the need for family friendly housing and building design features.

# Family Friendly Housing Policy Research

## Family Friendly Housing Feasibility Study

In 2014, the City retained a consultant through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to undertake a Family Friendly Housing Feasibility Study, which led to the successful launch of the program in 2016.

In 2024, the City retained an economic consultant to undertake an updated Family Friendly Housing Feasibility Study to reflect current market conditions and community needs. The City and consultant team presented to the Urban Development Institute (UDI) to highlight the findings of the feasibility study and shared policy considerations. Based on feedback from UDI and follow-up consultation, the consultant team revised and finalized the feasibility study.

The feasibility study concluded:

- Minimum family friendly unit mix requirements are unlikely to deter development activity and could help increase the number of larger units available in the city.
- Increasing the City's current minimum family friendly unit requirements should not deter development activity as its impact on financial feasibility is negligible.
- The introduction of minimum unit sizes does not impact financial feasibility negatively and may be a favourable solution to adding family friendly units to developments.
- Current market conditions (e.g. high interest rates and hard costs) are challenging to both ownership and rental projects. However, ownership development models perform better than rental scenarios. The availability of low interest government financing for rental projects could improve rental project viability.

## Family Friendly Housing Literature Review

At the time of the Policy's adoption in 2016, the City conducted a comprehensive literature review of academic journals, municipal documentation and relevant studies. In total, 68 municipalities were studied, with an emphasis on Canada. Other countries included Australia, Britain, Ireland, New Zealand, and the United States.

In 2024, the City completed a further literature review of Metro Vancouver municipalities that have adopted a Family Friendly Housing Policy since 2016. The City of Vancouver and City of White Rock family friendly policies both require higher mandatory percentages (i.e. 35%) of two- and three-bedroom units in multi-unit strata projects than in New Westminister. The City of Richmond requires a minimum of 40% of units with two or more bedrooms in purpose-built market rental projects. A number of additional municipalities across Canada regulate the number of bedrooms per unit and common amenity space.

Attachment 2  
*Municipal Scan Findings*

## **FAMILY FRIENDLY HOUSING POLICIES IN METRO VANCOUVER**

### **Summary of Findings**

- Six municipalities have Family Friendly Housing Policies: City of North Vancouver, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Richmond, City of Vancouver, White Rock.
- The City of Vancouver and the City of White Rock require higher mandatory minimum of percentages (i.e. 35%) of two-and three-bedroom units in multi-unit strata projects than New Westminster.
- The City of Richmond requires a minimum of 40% of units with two or more bedrooms in market rental projects.
- A number of additional municipalities have regulations or guidelines regarding bedrooms per unit and amenity space.
- Burnaby does not regulate the number of two or three bedrooms, but the Zoning Bylaw does regulate the maximum percentage of small units (studios and junior one bedrooms) by not letting the percentage exceed more than 50%.
- Coquitlam has language in the OCP that encourages family friendly design in multi-unit housing that may attract people who traditionally would seek a single detached dwelling. Such features may include: an area to garden, play, or enjoy the outdoors; direct access to grade; workshop space; and larger units. The City is also exploring encouraging a targeted 10% minimum three-bedroom units in projects under rezoning.
- Langley City has a Townhome & Plex-Home Best Practices Guide that includes a focus on amenity spaces. It encourages consideration of open spaces that promote community building and social interaction, with an emphasis on providing family friendly spaces, including playgrounds.
- Langley Township's Zoning Bylaw requirements for multi-family housing developments of four or more units to provide a child friendly amenity area. Additionally, it has a Child Friendly Amenity Areas brochure that has mandatory minimum size requirements for play spaces and recommended design guidelines for these amenity areas. The Township is in the process to adopt a policy that will require 10% of units in any building of six storeys or less to have at least three-bedrooms. Buildings of seven storeys or more will be required to have 5% 3-bedroom units.
- North Vancouver District's Official Community Plan encourages the provision of family oriented multi-family housing in the Town Centre area.
- Surrey's OCP encourages the development of affordable family rental housing (2 and 3 bedroom units), particularly in Surrey City Centre, Town Centre, and locations close to frequent transit. Additionally, the Child and Youth Friendly Strategy contains a series of recommended related to unit mix policy development for family friendly housing, design guidelines for play areas in multi-family housing, and units in multi-family housing.

## Attachment 3

### *Summary of Engagement Findings*

## **SUMMARY OF ENGAGEMENT FINDINGS**

### **Urban Development Institute (UDI) Consultation**

In May 2024, the City retained an economic consultant to undertake a Family Friendly Housing Feasibility Study to reflect current market conditions and community needs. The City and consultant team presented to the New Westminster Urban Development Institute (UDI) Liaison Committee in July 2024 to highlight the findings of the draft feasibility study, share policy considerations and gain additional insights and considerations that should be explored when testing the financial viability of building family friendly units in the City.

The following feedback was received from UDI in regards to the feasibility analysis and policy considerations:

- Adjust the feasibility analysis to account for higher construction and parking costs considering current economic conditions, as well as absorption costs of larger units and implications of having to hold family friendly units for longer periods of time.
- Current Zoning Bylaw parking ratios and those utilized in feasibility analysis are higher than what the market is demanding; typically family friendly units will demand parking whereas the smaller units (studios and one-bedrooms) do not.
- Reconsider mandate of minimum family friendly unit sizes in analysis and potentially include unit sizes as a guideline rather than a regulation in the Policy. Additionally, consider rethinking minimum unit sizes for smaller units as part of policy work.
- Explore incentives that will further encourage the inclusion of two- and three-bedroom units in new residential developments, such as allowing two-bedroom plus lock-off suites to count towards three-bedroom requirements.
- Consider incentivizing family friendly amenity spaces (e.g. childcare spaces, playgrounds) and allow for floor area exclusions (e.g. elevator shaft sizes, amenity areas).

Input received during the UDI consultation meeting assisted in amending the feasibility analysis and informed the draft Policy development. The draft Policy was circulated to UDI for further input and feedback in August 2024. UDI members continued to express hesitation regarding the proposed minimum unit size requirements. The City informed UDI members that, as demonstrated by the feasibility analysis, the proposed minimum unit sizes would not negatively impact financial feasibility. Additionally, the analysis demonstrated that the market is already delivering units larger than what is being proposed as the minimum unit sizes and is in line with neighbouring municipal practices, such as the City of Burnaby.

## Community and Focus Group Consultation

Prior to adopting the current Family Friendly Policy in 2016, the City conducted extensive community consultation alongside the Society for Children and Youth of BC (SCY) as it developed a *Child and Youth Friendly Community Strategy*, published in 2016. Given the close association between the two initiatives, a decision was made in 2014 to complete the policies in tandem, with SCY taking the lead on the Strategy and the City taking the lead on the Policy. Participants commented on housing during consultation, including about the family, child and youth friendliness of their neighbourhood and the city.

Participants were asked a number of questions, including “if their current housing situation met their family’s needs.” Of the 320 parents who completed the survey, 50.7% reported that their current housing situation somewhat (36.4%) or did not (14.3%) meet their family’s needs.

In 2024, the City conducted additional community consultation through the project page on Be Heard New West from May to June 2024 and received 19 responses to the discussion forum. Community participants continued to highlight concern regarding the limited availability of family friendly units and the lack of family friendly building features and designs, such as common amenity spaces. The following key themes were heard from the community in regards to building features and amenities:

- *Communal and Outdoor Spaces*: Support for play areas, green spaces, rooftop patios, and outdoor environments for families and children to gather and play.
- *Bedrooms and Unit Sizes*: Concerns of sizes of small bedroom sizes and requests to increase minimum unit mix requirements, particularly for families with multiple children.
- *Storage*: Requests for more and larger in-unit storage for families with children, specifically to accommodate for strollers and seasonal items. Some also suggested the need for bike storage.
- *Attainability*: Desires for more attainable units for families and concerns of quality; ensuring that lower-cost units still meet family friendly standards.

Focus group meetings with Kids New West group, a committee formed of local community organizations that provide services for families and children, was held in July 2024 and September 2024. The group further reiterated the need heard by the community in regards to family friendly housing and building design features. Additional feedback received from the focus group included:

- Consider intergenerational living options for aging parents and families (e.g. lock-off units).
- Require third bedrooms to have windows or other methods for letting light in.
- Consider efficient space design to maximize useable floor areas.

- Consider design guidelines that encourage healthy built environments; seating, accessibility, safety for children, and visibility.
- Create amenity spaces that allow for families to congregate.
- Centrally positioned children's play areas in areas that offer visibility and independence.

Community participants, both through the Be Heard web page and focus groups, raised concerns of school capacity, the availability of child care spaces and the need to accommodate for the growing children and youth population within schools. The City will continue to communicate and work with the School District and other community organizations to identify the impacts to schools and work towards solutions to accommodate overall anticipated future growth.

## Attachment 4

### *Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing) No. 8486, 2024*

**CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF NEW WESTMINSTER**  
**Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing Policy) No. 8486, 2024**

A Bylaw to amend Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001

WHEREAS:

The Council has adopted a zoning bylaw under Part 14 of the *Local Government Act*, and wishes to amend the bylaw.

The Council of the Corporation of the City of New Westminster in open meeting assembled ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

**Citation**

1. This bylaw may be cited as “Zoning Amendment Bylaw (Family Friendly Housing Policy) No. 8486, 2024”.

**Amendments**

2. Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001 is amended as follows:

- a) Add section 120.44.2 with the following definition:

“**COMMON AMENITY AREA** means a non-commercial indoor area provided in conjunction with a *multiple dwelling* use and specifically designed for use by all residents living on-site for cultural, social and recreational activities and includes residential lobbies.”

- b) Delete and replace Section 120.82 a) with:

“The floor space located below the *height datum* or the natural grade of the site used for automobile parking, vehicular access, manoeuvring aisles, *residential storage space*, *bicycle storage facility*, elevators or stairs;”

- c) Delete and replace Section 120.82 g) with:

“*Common amenity areas* up to 5% of *gross floor area*;”

- d) Add Section 120.82 j) with:

“The floor area of rooftop access structures, considered only to be open or enclosed stairways or elevators, at the roof level only, if they provide access to common outdoor amenity areas.”

- e) Add Section 120.159.2.1.1 with:

“**RESIDENTIAL STORAGE SPACE** means floor area within a *multiple dwelling* building, used to store personal items such as recreation equipment, tires, barbecues, suitcases, miscellaneous household articles, and similar items, but does not include a *bicycle locker*.”

- f) Delete and replace Section 190.21.2 with:

“With the exception of *multiple dwellings* in which all dwelling units are *secured rental residential units*, all *multiple dwellings* that have been subdivided under the Strata Property Act shall include a minimum 40% two-bedroom and three-bedroom *dwelling units*, and at least 15% of the total *dwelling units* shall have three bedrooms or more.”

- g) Delete and replace Section 190.21.3 with:

“All *multiple dwellings* in which all *dwelling units* are *secured rental residential units* shall include a minimum of 30% two-bedroom and three-bedroom *dwelling units*, and at least 10% of the total *dwelling units* shall have three bedrooms or more, except that on November 18, 2026 all *multiple dwellings* that are *secured rental residential units* shall include a minimum of 35% two-bedroom and three-bedroom *dwelling units*, and at least 10% of total *dwelling units* shall have three bedrooms or more.”

- h) Add Section 190.21.4.2 with:

“Notwithstanding sections 190.21.2 to 190.21.3, the following developments are not required to comply with Family Friendly Housing requirements:

1. Ground-oriented infill and townhouse projects;
2. Projects proposing fewer than 10 *dwelling units*;
3. Projects proposing to add fewer than 10 *dwelling units* to an existing *multiple dwelling*; and,
4. Affordable (e.g., below-market or non-market *secured rental residential units*), *supportive housing* and/or *transitional housing* projects that are government or non-profit owned and operated.”

- i) Add Section 190.21.4.3 with:

“Existing *multiple dwelling* buildings constructed prior to the effective date of the Family Friendly Housing Policy shall not be required to retroactively comply with section 190.21.2 or 190.21.3.”

- j) Add Section 190.21.4.4. with:

“Where more than 10 cumulative *dwelling units* are proposed to be added to an existing *multiple dwelling* building, through a singular or successive (multiple) cumulative applications and regardless of whether new units are created through the conversion of existing floor space or addition of new floor space, only the newly proposed units shall be required to comply with section 190.21.2 or 190.21.3.”

- k) Delete and replace Section 190.25 a) with:

“Each *dwelling unit* containing one bedroom shall have a minimum floor area of 46.45 square metres (500 square feet) except that in an elderly citizens' home this floor area may be reduced to not less than 41.81 square metres (450 square feet) conditional upon satisfactory communal recreational space being provided within a building, or portion of a building, on the same site having a floor area of not less than 4.65 square metres (50 square feet) for each *dwelling unit*,”

- l) Add Section 190.25 f) with:

“Each *dwelling unit* containing two bedrooms shall have a minimum floor area of 70 square metres (753.5 square feet) except that for *secured rental residential units* containing two bedrooms this floor area may be reduced to 65 square metres (699.7 square feet);”

- m) Add Section 190.25 g) with:

“Each *dwelling unit* containing three bedrooms or more shall have a minimum floor area of 84 square metres (904.2 square feet) except that for *secured rental residential units* containing three bedrooms or more this floor area may be reduced to 80 square metres (861.1 square feet);”

- n) Add Section 190.25 h) with:

“Affordable (e.g., below- market or non-market *secured rental residential units*), *supportive housing* and/or *transitional housing* projects that are government or non-profit owned and operated, are not required to comply with sections 190.25 f) and/or g).”

### **Consequential Amendments**

3. Zoning Bylaw No. 6680, 2001 is further amended by making such consequential changes as are required to give effect to the amendments particularized in this bylaw, including changes to the format, numbering and table of contents.

Public Hearing not held, notice published \_\_\_\_\_ and  
\_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

GIVEN FIRST READING this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

GIVEN SECOND READING this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

GIVEN THIRD READING this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

ADOPTED and the Seal of the Corporation of the City of New Westminster affixed  
this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 2024.

\_\_\_\_\_  
PATRICK JOHNSTONE, MAYOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
HANIEH BERG, CORPORATE OFFICER

# REPORT

## ***Parks and Recreation Department and Finance Department***

**To:** Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council      **Date:** October 21, 2024

**From:** Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation      **File:** 05.1035.10-2024  
Shehzad Somji, Director of Finance      #2583866

**Item #:** 2024-592

**Subject: Provincial 'Growing Communities Fund': Allocation of Remaining Funds to Support New Investments in Recreation Related Amenities**

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### **RECOMMENDATION**

1. **THAT** Council provide further clarification regarding the January 8, 2024 resolution regarding the use of funds for recreation investments as set aside in the city's Growing Communities Fund Reserve; and
2. **THAT** Council confirm its expectations around processes to be used to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve.

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this report is to seek further clarification from Council regarding the January 8, 2024 resolution regarding the use of funds for recreation investments as set aside in the city's Growing Communities Fund Reserve, and furthermore to confirm Council's expectations around processes to be used to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve.

**SUMMARY**

On January 8, 2024, Council passed the following motions pertaining to the use of unallocated funds within the city’s Growing Communities Fund Reserve:

***THAT** the balance of funds remaining in the Growing Communities Fund Reserve be allocated to support new investments in recreation related amenities.*

***THAT** these new recreational amenities be prioritized in neighbourhoods that lack equitable access to sports and recreational facilities.*

In consideration of these resolutions, a number of questions have arisen and staff are seeking further clarification from Council. Specific to the first resolution:

***THAT** the balance of funds remaining in the Growing Communities Fund Reserve be allocated to support new investments in recreation related amenities,*

staff have the following clarifying questions:

- 1. What scope of projects does Council consider to be eligible within the category of “recreation related amenities”?
- 2. What does Council consider to be “new investment”?
- 3. Taking into account the above question #2, what approaches should be considered to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve?

**BACKGROUND**

In February of 2023, the Provincial government announced the creation of the Growing Communities Fund (GCF), to support the delivery of infrastructure projects necessary to support community growth. On November 27, 2023 Council adopted the Growing Communities Fund Reserve Fund Bylaw No. 8415, 2023 which created a statutory reserve to hold the proceeds of the Growing Communities Fund grant. The City of New Westminster received \$15.8 million from the Provincial GCF in March 2023. Of the \$15.8 million, \$12.4 million has been allocated against infrastructure projects included in the 2024-2028 capital program leaving an unallocated reserve fund balance of \$3.4 million.

On January 8, 2024, Council passed the following motions pertaining to the use of unallocated funds within the city’s GCF Reserve:

***THAT** the balance of funds remaining in the Growing Communities Fund Reserve be allocated to support new investments in recreation related amenities.*

***THAT*** these new recreational amenities be prioritized in neighbourhoods that lack equitable access to sports and recreational facilities.

Subsequent to Council’s January 8, 2024 resolution, the City has received correspondence from the recently established New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition (NWASC) proposing a series of sport equipment and infrastructure projects to be funded by the unallocated GCF proceeds (see Attachment A). City staff have also met with representatives of the New Westminster Amateur Sport Coalition for introductory purposes and to discuss Council’s January 8 resolution regarding investment in recreation related amenities.

**DISCUSSION**

In the course of considering the requests from the NWASC within the context of Council’s resolution, a number of questions pertaining to the January 8 Council resolutions have arisen and staff are seeking further clarification from Council.

Council Resolution:

***THAT*** the balance of funds remaining in the Growing Communities Fund Reserve be allocated to support new investments in recreation related amenities.

Clarifying Questions of Council:

- 1. What scope of projects does Council consider to be eligible within the category of “recreation related amenities”?**

Factor(s) to consider:

- a) The terms of the Provincial Growing Communities Fund, as incorporated into the city’s Growing Communities Fund Reserve Fund Bylaw identify eligible uses of the fund to include park additions/maintenance/upgrades including washrooms/meeting space and other amenities; and recreation related amenities. Council’s above resolution narrows this scope to solely recreation related amenities. While there are no specific industry standards that definitively distinguish between *park amenities* versus *recreation amenities*, the following distinction is generally understood amongst Parks and Recreation professionals:

*Recreation Amenities:* These are facilities or features designed specifically for recreational activities. They can be found in various settings, including parks, gyms, community centers, and sports complexes. Examples include sports fields, playgrounds, swimming pools, and fitness equipment.

*Park Amenities:* These are features specifically within a park or public open space that enhance the park experience. While many park amenities are recreational, they also include elements that promote relaxation, enjoyment of nature, and may provide environmental and ecological benefits. Examples include picnic areas, walking trails, restrooms, benches, and landscaping, gardens and natural areas.

In brief, all park amenities may be considered recreation amenities, but not all recreation amenities are necessarily park amenities.

## 2. What does Council consider to be “new investment”?

Factor(s) to consider:

- a) As described on the Provincial Government’s website, Growing Communities Fund grants support the delivery of infrastructure projects necessary to enable community growth. Grant funding is incremental to currently planned infrastructure and amenity projects. The purpose of the Growing Communities Fund is to assist communities in addressing their unique infrastructure and amenity demands. <sup>1</sup> Eligible capital and planning projects are defined by the Provincial Growing Communities Fund program and include both recreation and park infrastructure and amenities.
- b) A definitive distinction between projects that represent renewal and/or improvement of existing infrastructure (e.g. refurbishment and expansion of an existing community centre) versus projects that represent an addition to a city’s inventory of infrastructure (e.g. construction of an additional playground) is not provided in the GCF program guidelines. It is therefore assumed that communities have the liberty to apply GCF funding in a manner that best supports growth in their jurisdictions, be it through renewal and/or improvement of existing infrastructure, or by increasing the supply or capacity of infrastructure.
- c) Council has adopted the 2024-2028 five year financial plan and will be considering the 2025-2029 financial plan in the coming weeks.
  - Should the City’s GCF reserve be applied to qualifying recreation investments that currently exist within 2024-2028 capital program, or should candidate projects only be considered if they are incremental to the current five year capital program?
  - Should the funds be used to “top-up” a given planned capital project budget in order to expand a project’s scope?

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<sup>1</sup> [See Growing Communities Fund description.](#)

- Should the funds be used accelerate the timeline for delivery of a currently planned capital project?

**3. Taking into account the above question #2 that seeks clarification on a definition of “new investment”, what approaches should be considered to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve?**

Factor(s) to consider:

- a) The current five year parks and recreation capital program has been developed to align with infrastructure capital maintenance requirements, Council’s strategic priorities and Seven Bold Step for Climate Action, and recommendations arising from the current Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Plan and other endorsed departmental plans and strategies.
- b) The Parks and Recreation Department has recently concluded an extensive community engagement process as part of the work to update the department’s comprehensive plan. All identifiable groups with an interest in parks and recreation as well as community residents were provided opportunity to participate in a variety of engagement opportunities. The new Parks and Recreation Plan is scheduled to be completed in mid-2025 and considered for adoption by Council before the end of that year.
- c) GCF funding is expected to be expended within five years of receipt (2028).
- d) While the New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition has taken the initiative to propose to the City how the GCF funding might best support the needs of its member organizations, are there other interest groups that should be invited into a process to further identify candidate projects?
- e) There are likely departmental work plan implications for 2025 associated with potential processes used to identify additional GCF funded candidate projects.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The City has received \$15.8 million from the Provincial Growing Communities Fund of which Council has resolved that the current unallocated balance of \$3.4 million be applied towards new investments in recreation related amenities.

Pending Council providing the requested clarification as outlined in this report, there may be staff resourcing and financial implications associated with identifying candidate

projects for the available funding. Further information in this regard will be forthcoming as required.

**INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON**

This report has been jointly prepared by the Parks and Recreation and Finance Departments.

**OPTIONS**

- 1. That Council provide further clarification regarding the January 8, 2024 resolution regarding the use of funds for recreation investments as set aside in the city’s Growing Communities Fund Reserve.
- 2. That Council confirm its expectations around processes to be used to identify candidate projects to be funded from the Growing Communities Fund Reserve.
- 3. Provide other direction to staff.

Options #1 and #2 are recommended.

**CONCLUSION**

Clarification around Council’s January 8, 2024 resolutions regarding the use of the Growing Communities Fund Reserve will assist with identifying and evaluating candidate recreation projects to be funded from the GCF reserve.

**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment A – Correspondence from New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition (September 27, 2024)

**APPROVALS**

This report was prepared by:

Dean Gibson, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Shehzad Somji, Director of Finance

This report was approved by:

Lisa Spitale, CAO

## Attachment A

Correspondence from New Westminister Amateur  
Sports Coalition (September 27, 2024)

Sept. 27, 2024

Ms. Lisa Spitale,  
City Manager  
City of New Westminster

Dear Ms. Spitale,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition. We are a newly formed body representing (thus far) eight amateur sports and recreation organizations – all based in New Westminster – with combined registrations totaling nearly 2,800 participants.

In particular, we are focusing at this time on potential funding that could, in the short term, significantly benefit all our groups. I am referring to the residual (unallocated) funding that the city received in 2023 through the provincial government's Growing Communities Fund (GCF).

New Westminster's share of the GCF was \$15.85 million, of which \$2.95 million (we believe) remains unallocated. On Jan. 8, 2024, city council members approved a motion to set these unallocated funds aside "to support new investments in recreation-related amenities."

The New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition (NWASC) was formed to unify the voice of the community's sports and recreation groups. Each member organization upholds its own mission, vision and values, but together we aim to improve our programs through improved coordination and cooperation.

The NWASC strives to provide cohesive solutions to challenges facing facility users by pooling resources, sharing equipment, coordinating schedules and avoiding competition for limited resources. As a unified entity, we aim to enhance transparency and communication with our participants and with key stakeholders within the City of New Westminster.

In addition, we recognize the financial and spatial limitations faced by our clubs and the City of New Westminster, which affect the availability of services for our members. Our goal is to help deliver a standard of service competitive with neighbouring communities by building key relationships, support networks and by influencing city policy-makers.

Members of the New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition include (registrations bracketed):

- New Westminster Soccer Club (1,200)
- New Westminster Salmonbellies Minor Lacrosse Association (600)
- New Westminster Baseball Association (Under-12) (290)
- Royal City Hyacks Football Club (250)
- New Westminster Diamondsides Baseball (13-Plus) (200)
- New Westminster Minor Softball Association (Under-20) (150)
- New Westminster Minor Ball Hockey Association
- New Westminster Adult Pickleball (80)

With respect to the usage of the GCF, our members have compiled a list of minor and major projects that would significantly benefit the quality of our programming. Some of these projects may, or may not, be part of the city's capital plans for parks and recreation.

As you might expect, the overall cost of our projects greatly exceeds the remnant amount in the GCF. That said, our group would greatly appreciate that the city considers using the funds in one of two ways in the short term:

1. By funding a series of minor projects up to the limit of \$2.95 million; or
2. By using the available funding as a "down payment" on one or two major projects either included or not included in the current five-year capital budget for parks.

Please see the attached "Critical Requests" list. Note that the costs accompanying each project is a "guesstimate" only. If our concept for usage of the remaining GCF funds is approved, we would be most anxious to meet with city officials to begin the planning process.

Thank you again for your assistance in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me at any time with any question you might have.

Sincerely,

Duane Geddes  
 New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition

778-688-7344

### Critical Requests

New Westminster Amateur Sports Coalition   Critical Requests		
Request No.	Category	Est. Cost
<b>1) New Westminster Soccer Club</b>		
i. Two New Lit Turf Fields in the City (One committed by the 5-year Capital Plan)	Infrastructure	5,000,000
ii. Lighting and Turf at Mercer North	Infrastructure	3,000,000
iii. Lighting at Hume, Mercer North, Queens Park South to extend field usage (est. \$350,000 per field)	Infrastructure	1,050,000
v. Construction of a Clubhouse	Infrastructure	1,000,000
v. Lockboxes at Hume and Saperton with concrete barriers to deter theft	Storage	30,000
<b>2) Minor Lacrosse</b>		
i. Resurface Grimston Lacrosse Box	Infrastructure	500,000
ii. Resurface Moody Park Lacrosse Box	Infrastructure	500,000
<b>3) New Westminster Baseball Association (Under-12)</b>		
i. Upgrading Storage at Justin Morneau Field	Storage	15,000
ii. Replacing Tarps with Metal Roof at Batting Cages	Infrastructure	[ ]
iii. Revitalize the surface at Justin Morneau Field	Infrastructure	[ ]
v. Rebuild the backstop at Moody Park 1	Infrastructure	100,000
v. Build a pathway from 10th street to Moody Park 1	Accessibility	5,000
vi. New gate at Queens Park 3	Accessibility	400
<b>4) Diamondsides Baseball (12+)</b>		
i. Queens Park 2 infrastructure improvement	Infrastructure	65,000
ii. Queens Park 2 storage improvement with washroom addition	Storage	200,000
iii. Queens Park 2 Pathway to the diamond from Queens and First	Accessibility	5,000
v. Queens Park 2 - Rebuild the bleachers	Infrastructure	25,000
v. Queens Park 2 - Scoreboard	Other	15,000
vi. Queens Park Stadium - Indoor Batting Cage	Infrastructure	600,000
<b>5) New Westminster Minor Softball Association (U20)</b>		
i. Renovation of Temptations Concession Stand	Infrastructure	100,000
<b>Summary of Critical Requests</b>		<b>12,210,400</b>

