

Attachment 1

Strategic Direction, Policy and Initiatives to Protect Rental Properties and Tenants

Strategic Direction

Council Strategic Priorities Plan: 2023-2026

The *Council Strategic Plan: 2023-2026*, under the Homes and Housing Options focus area, includes the following key objectives:

- Implement policies and procedures to further support the delivery and maintenance of homes that meet our community's diverse needs.

The Homes and Housing Options focus area also includes the following key objective:

- *Policy Alignment:* Update housing policy to protect existing rental housing and maximize delivery of new housing that meets identified needs.

Official Community Plan (2017)

The *Official Community Plan* includes the following goal:

- New Westminster's neighbourhoods are great places to live and have diverse housing choices that meet the needs of the community.

The *Official Community Plan* includes the following policy under Section 8, Housing:

- Policy 8.2 - Facilitate access to affordable and non-market housing for low-to moderate-income households.

Specifically, this project aligns with Actions 8.2b and 8.2c

- Action 8.2b - The City should continue to implement the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Affordable Housing Strategy (2010)

The *Affordable Housing Strategy* (2010) contains the following two goals:

1. To preserve and enhance New Westminster's stock of safe, appropriate and affordable rental housing.

Specifically, the AHS identified a strategic direction as follows:

Strategic Direction # 2: Limit the loss of existing affordable rental housing.

Tenant Protection Policies and Initiatives

Negotiated Tenant Protection at Redevelopment (2022)

- At time of rezoning, the City has been negotiating added tenant protection measures to ensure that existing tenants do not become unhoused as a result of redevelopment. This includes negotiating provisions for temporary accommodation during the redevelopment and for their return to the new rental unit under comparable terms of the existing tenancy agreement.

Addressing Renovictions (2017)

- City actions to address renovictions since 2017 include:
 - a motion to UBCM to urge the provincial government to amend the Residential Tenancy Act (RTA);
 - a Renovictions Action Plan (2018) that outlines City actions to respond to renovictions (information on tenant' rights and responsibilities, working with/supporting tenants, partnering with the Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre (TRAC) and the New West Tenants Union (NWTU) and more); and,
 - the 2019 Business Regulations and Licensing Amendment Bylaw (Part 6) to deter owners of purpose built rental buildings from evicting tenants for renovations where eviction is not essential to permit the work to proceed.
- The City's 2019 Business Regulations and Licensing Amendment Bylaw (Part 6) was repealed after the Province introduced new legislation on July 1, 2019 that amended the RTA for the purpose of addressing renovictions by requiring landlords to apply for dispute resolution to obtain an Order to End Tenancy and an Order of Possession of the units prior to displacing tenants.
- While the new RTA legislation appears to be effective in stopping renovictions, it does not provide for tenant relocation or have provisions to control rent upon return to the unit. Both of those protections were including in the City's Part 6 regulations but now no longer exist. As such, staff continue to be proactive in sending information to tenants on their rights and responsibilities under the RTA when they become aware of potential misinformation or concerns raised by tenants.
- The City also created a staff position, Tenant Support Coordinator, as part of the Integrated Services Team.

New Westminster Rent Bank Program (2017)

- Provides low-cost loans to residents who are at risk of eviction or disconnection of essential utilities due to a temporary or unexpected financial crisis. City has contributed \$35K/year since the inception in 2017 to support the rent bank.

Tenant Relocation Policy (2015)

- Applies to rezoning applications and Heritage Revitalization Agreements which involve the demolition of 6 or more purpose-built market rental housing units and offers additional compensation, as well as assistance, to tenants beyond what is provided for under the Residential Tenancy Act.

Tenant Displacement Policy (2011)

- Applies when tenant displacement is due to City action on a property with serious life-safety, fire, policing or community concerns. The policy outlines procedural guidelines, recognizing that tenants in these properties often need a greater level of assistance in finding alternate housing that is safe, appropriate and affordable.

Rental Protection Policies and Initiatives

Draft Rental Replacement Policy (2019)

- Interim policy to ensure that redevelopment of older purpose-built market rental buildings does not lead to loss of affordable rental housing thereby displacing existing tenants. Includes provision to add to the supply of rental and below-market rental in New Westminster.

The draft policy applies to all existing purpose-built market rental housing sites where redevelopment will remove more than 6 rental units. Applicants seeking rezoning are expected to provide 100% of the secure market rental units including 10% of total units secured as below-market rental units.

Rental Tenure Zoning (2018)

- The Province enacted rental tenure zoning authority in July 2018. It empowers local governments to apply this zoning to protect rental units in existing or future apartment buildings. The zoning restricts the form of tenure (i.e. occupancy of the unit) to rental only, so residential units with this zoning cannot be occupied by the owner. The units can be sold, but must remain as rental.

In January 2019, New Westminster City Council adopted Zoning Amendment Bylaw No. 8078, 2019, making it the first municipality in the province to apply the newly granted residential tenure zoning powers to some of its existing rental housing stock. It was applied to six stratified rental buildings and 12 City-owned properties to protect 250 households whose tenancies were not adequately protected with any of the other existing legislative tools found in the Local Government Act and the Community Charter.

Secure Market Rental (2017)

- Directs the implementation of a number of financial incentives and bylaw relaxations that are targeted towards the retention and renewal of the existing purpose-built market rental housing stock and the creation of new rental housing stock.

Moratorium on Strata Conversion (1970)

- In 1978, City Council placed a moratorium on the conversion of rental units to strata title units. This has been in place for more than 40 years, and remains an effective means for protecting existing rental stock.