

REPORT

Planning and Development

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: July 7, 2025

From: Jackie Teed, Director,
Planning and Development
File: 13.2610.01-2025
#2724248

Item #: 2025-214

Subject: **Our City, Our Homes: Implementation of Housing Legislation and Housing Accelerator Fund Initiatives – Next Steps**

RECOMMENDATION

1. *THAT staff proceed with Option A in the Structuring Materials Section of this report, that would reforward the omnibus report for consideration.*
 2. *THAT staff proceed with the Option 1 revised timeline option included in the Revised Timelines Section of this report.*
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PURPOSE

To seek direction from Council regarding revised timelines as relates to conflict/perceived-conflict of interest, intergovernmental requirements and funding commitments.

SUMMARY

To implement the Provincial Housing legislation and Housing Accelerator Fund grant commitments, staff included a report on the June 2, 2025 Regular Council Workshop. The item did not proceed as quorum was lost due to Council members' declarations of conflict/perceived-conflict of interest. Given this work is under provincial and funding deadlines, this outcome has resulted in a number of challenges, about which staff is seeking Council direction on the approach to structuring the work, and on timelines for proceeding with the work.

BACKGROUND

Housing Accelerator Fund

In February 2024, the City was selected as a recipient a grant in the amount of \$11.4 from the Housing Accelerator Fund. In receiving the grant, New Westminster has committed to implementing the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan that includes seven initiatives with set deadlines. The upcoming HAF deadlines that are dependent of the outcome of the June 2, 2025 report include:

- September 15, 2025 – Townhouse Program adoption deadline
- December 31, 2025 – Affordable Housing Accelerator adoption deadline

Provincial Housing Legislation

In November 2023, the Provincial Government introduced changes to the housing legislation. Under the new Legislation, municipalities are required to update their OCP by December 31, 2025. The update would align the OCP with the Transit Oriented Development Area and Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing legislation, and incorporate the findings of the 2024-2044 Interim Housing Needs Report. This includes ensuring that the Land Use Designation Map can accommodate 27,523 new housing units by 2044 to meet the 20 year total housing need identified in the Housing Needs Report.

Metro Vancouver Referral Process

As a member municipality of the Metro Vancouver region, the City must include a Regional Context Statement in the OCP, which demonstrates how the City is working to achieve regional goals established in the Regional Growth Strategy. The current Regional Growth Strategy (Metro 2050) was adopted in February 2022, after the most recent update to the City's OCP. Legislation requires the City to create a new Regional Context Statement to align the OCP with Metro 2050. Due to the new Regional Context Statement, the OCP Amendment Bylaw must be referred to Metro Vancouver for consideration. Before the City can adopt the OCP amendment bylaw, it must be accepted by the Metro Vancouver Board of Directors.

This process can take a maximum of 120 days. City staff have been working closely with Metro Vancouver staff on the new Regional Context Statement, to ensure this process advances as smoothly as possible, and that all opportunities to reduce the referral timeline are exercised.

DISCUSSION

To implement the Provincial Housing legislation and Housing Accelerator Fund grant commitments, staff included a report on the June 2, 2025 Regular Council Workshop. The item did not proceed as quorum was lost due to Council members' declarations of conflict/perceived-conflict of interest. This report includes two approaches to re-forwarding the materials to Council for consideration. Given this work is under tight

provincial and funding deadlines, this report includes two approaches for a revised timeline for proceeding with the work. These approaches are described in the following sections.

Structuring Materials

Staff has identified two approaches to structuring the work for the purpose of Council's consideration, which are outlined below:

- A. Option A (***staff recommend this option***) – Staff would include the same report from June 2, 2025 on the agenda for an upcoming Regular Council Workshop.

Staff recommends this approach as it would avoid the issues identified below, in Option B.

- B. Option B – Staff would divide the discussion into completely separate reports and include these on the agenda for an upcoming Regular Council Workshop. Four reports would be created, one for each of the west, east, and downtown quadrants of the city, and one for other general city-wide changes, including the minor changes proposed for Queensborough.

The areas covered by each of the reports would not match the City's official neighbourhood boundaries, given the technical requirements for breaking the bylaws apart. (See Attachment 1 for a Quadrant Map).

Staff does not recommend this approach, as it could potentially result in significant technical implementation issues and confusing outcomes, such as up to four distinct OCP amendment bylaws, each with a separate public hearing with multiple notices and public hearings; and, different regulations for each quadrant.

Timelines

Staff has identified two approaches for the timing of work for the purpose of Council's consideration, which are outline below.

In both timeline scenarios, with the additional time now available, the City would undertake a communications campaign to inform and answer questions from the public over the summer months, toward addressing issues related to proceeding with meetings in the summer months. The campaign would focus on enhancing transparency by providing information and answering community questions regarding the work. A variety of methods would be incorporated, including social media posts.

For this Official Community Plan (OCP) update and related Zoning Bylaw amendments, postcards are not required to be mailed to owners and occupants because of the large number of properties affected. However, as this work is being undertaken under a tight timeline, staff recommend advertising the public hearing by sending a postcard as ad

mail throughout the city. While this is not typical practice for City notifications, it is consistent with the approach taken for advertising the Our City Our Homes public consultation period undertaken leading to the adoption of the current OCP in 2017.

1. **Option 1 (staff recommend this option)** – This option would focus on getting to adoption as quickly as possible given the Housing Accelerator Fund and provincial legislation deadlines.

If this option were selected, staff would need to work to identify the best approach to setting a public hearing date in mid-September 2025, as the currently available meeting is scheduled to occur in Queensborough, the neighbourhood least affected by the update work. This could include rescheduling the Queensborough Council meeting to a different day so that the public hearing could be held at City Hall, or scheduling an alternative new public hearing date (e.g. Tuesday, September 16).

- a. July 14 – Council Workshop
- b. August 25 – consideration of first and second readings
- c. On or around September 15 – public hearing/consideration of third reading
- d. 120 day referral process to Metro Vancouver
- e. January 19, 2026 – consideration of adoption

Pros	Cons
Minimizes days over deadlines	Requires rescheduling the Council meeting in Queensborough to another date, or adding a public hearing on an alternate date
Public Hearing takes place in fall, outside of summer months	Council policy direction discussion and public hearing notice take place in summer months
Reduces risk to HAF funding, including by scheduling third reading by the current September 15 HAF deadline	--
Earlier ability for development applications to be received and processed under new regulations	--
Allows for additional time for the City to run a public information campaign, and answer questions from the public, given the delay resulting from Council determining the best approach to considering the material	--

2. Option 2 – This option would not involve meetings or a public hearing notice in the summer months, but would increase the time by which deadlines are missed.
 - a. Sept 8 – Closed and Regular Council Workshops
 - b. Sept 29 – consideration of first and second readings
 - c. October 20 – public hearing and consideration of third reading;
 - d. 120 day referral process to Metro Vancouver
 - e. February 24, 2026 – consideration of adoption

Pros	Cons
Council policy direction discussion and public hearing take place in fall months, as does public hearing	More days over deadlines
Council meeting in Queensborough proceeds as scheduled	Increases risk to HAF funding, challenges from Province
Allows for additional time for the City to run a public information campaign, and answer questions from the public, given the delay resulting from Council determining the best approach to considering the material	Additional delay to development applications being processed under new regulations

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City was a recipient of an \$11.4 million grant from the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The delay in advancing the housing initiatives will mean that the HAF deadlines would not be met, and may put this grant at risk. CMHC will look at factors such how many days the deadlines were missed by, whether there is an overall pattern, and whether the delay means new housing units that were meant to be “accelerated” by the grant are not delivered as quickly.

A formal application has been submitted to CMHC to modify the Housing Accelerator Fund Contribution Agreement by extending project deadlines. However, the City will need to advance with next steps without knowing the outcome of the review of the extension application by CMHC.

OPTIONS

The following options are available for Council’s consideration:

1. That staff proceed with the Option A in the Structuring Materials Section of this report, that would reforward the omnibus reports for consideration.
2. That staff proceed with the Option B in the Structuring Materials Section of this report, that would forward separate reports for each quadrant (west, east, and Downtown, and other general changes for consideration).

3. That staff proceed with the Option 1 revised timeline option included in the Revised Timelines Section of this report.
4. That staff proceed with the Option 2 revised timeline option included in the Revised Timelines Section of this report.
5. That Council provide staff with alternative direction.

Staff recommends Options 1 and 3.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Map of Quadrants

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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This report was reviewed by:

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This report was approved by:

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