Attachment 2 - *Phase 2*

Pathways Overview and

Pathway 1 Cooling

Assessment Details

Vulnerable Buildings Assessment Project Update

ATTACHMENT 2 - PHASE 2 PATHWAYS OVERVIEW AND PATHWAY 1 COOLING ASSESSMENT DETAILS

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Contents

1 Vulnerable Buildings Project Summary

1.1 Purpose and Approach

The Vulnerable Buildings Assessment project aims to identify purpose built rental buildings in New Westminster that are at risk of overheating in the summer, with a particular focus on the intersection with high social vulnerability. Social vulnerability refers to renter occupants that may be more affected by extreme heat due to social or demographic factors such as age, immigrant status, or living alone, which can influence their ability to prepare for and respond to heat-related impacts.

The project aims to inform program design to facilitate and/or incentivize both active and passive cooling measure installation, resulting in strengthening climate change resilience for residents, improving building energy efficiency and reducing carbon emissions. The project focuses on purpose built rental buildings due to the large number of aging rental buildings within the City that are not designed to handle extreme heat, limited support available for rental building retrofits, and recognizing tenants have limited agency over their living conditions.

The Vulnerable Building Assessment project is being delivered through 3 phases:

- **Phase 1 (COMPLETE) - Local Research and Data Collection**: Understand available incentives, create GIS maps that integrate rental buildings, surface temperature and key social indicators to identify the intersection between at risk buildings and the building occupants, identify implementation partners and provide necessary support, characterize the buildings, and design communication packages to appropriately engage with identified buildings.
- **Phase 2 - Pilot Rental Building Cooling Program Design and Implementation (we are here)**: Design and deploy pilot programs to evaluate and identify resources needed to facilitate cooling in rental buildings.
- **Phase 3 - Rental Building Cooling Program Design**: Develop a comprehensive implementation program to enable cooling interventions within rental buildings citywide.

1.2 Recommended Pathways Overview

In December 2025, staff presented a Vulnerable Buildings Assessment Project Update – Phase one Outcomes and Upcoming Tasks[1] report to Council detailing the outcomes of

[1] Vulnerable Buildings Project Update – Phase One Outcomes and Upcoming Task - https://pub-newwestcity.escribemeetings.com/FileStream.ashx?DocumentId=23973

Phase 1 and presented three pathways to address the risk of overheating within rental buildings in New Westminster.

The outcomes of Phase 1 highlighted the need for a comprehensive approach to address both building-level and occupant-level heat risks and gaps in support. Based on the learnings, the following three pathways were recommended to Council and was subsequently endorsed:

1) **Pathway 1 – Amplify RARA**[2]: 70% of rental buildings in the City are exposed to high summer temperatures, only those above 3 storeys with central mechanical systems are eligible for the Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator (RARA) program, which primarily targets energy efficiency/GHG emissions reduction. Staff will continue to promote and encourage participation in RARA for eligible buildings. Staff recommend to offer a cooling assessment pilot program that will fund cooling assessments for 10 rental buildings to ensure cooling interventions are identified and evaluated within the RARA program.
2) **Pathway 2 – Fill the Program Eligibility Gap**: At least 22% of the City's rental buildings are not eligible for any existing incentive programs despite being located in high heat zones and, in some cases, housing socially vulnerable residents. Pathway 2 will therefore focus on designing and implementing a city-led pilot program for rental buildings that are ineligible for existing programs.
3) **Pathway 3 – Direct Tenant Support**: Many renter occupants have limited cooling solutions and may face barriers to maintaining safe indoor temperatures during extreme heat events. In response, this pathway will seek to offer low-barrier, occupant-focused tailored solutions and incentives to help rental building occupants mitigate overheating risk. As of February 2026, staff are working on contracting a consultant to conduct market research of tenant focused programs and provide recommendations for the City to consider when designing a relevant program for tenants.

2 Pathway One Overview and Project Plan

The prominent retrofit program available for retrofitting rental buildings with energy efficient and low carbon solutions is RARA. Pathway 1 focuses on leveraging this program to facilitate City-funded cooling assessments for a sample of eligible rental buildings in New Westminster. This approach allows the City to leverage incentives and funding through RARA to offer holistic assessments that enable energy efficiency and low carbon solutions, while ensuring optimal thermal indoor comfort is maintained.

[2] More information about the program can be found in Attachment 1

Table 1 provides an overview of the approach to undertake Pathway 1:

Steps	Tasks	Timeline
1) Pilot program launch	• Draft the agreement, detailing the scope of work and roles and responsibilities • Work with the RARA program administrators for review and finalize the agreement • Design communication packages to advertise the City-funded cooling assessment opportunity along with the RARA program • Distribute communication packages and launch the program	Spring 2026
2) Pilot program delivery	• Work with RARA program administrators to deliver the cooling assessment pilot, including attending site visits as capacity allows, collaborating on promotion, reviewing building data etc.	Spring 2026 – Q2 2027
3) Analysis and reporting	• Review outcome reports provided by the program administrators • Conduct analysis on pilot results and develop recommendations for the City to consider when designing a cooling strategy	Q3 2027

Table 1: Pathway 1 Project Plan

2.1 Cooling Assessment Details

This section outlines the steps taken to complete a cooling assessment. The City-funded cooling assessment will be integrated within the current RARA program approach to identify cooling opportunities, which includes a building site visit and document review such as log books and utility bills.

- During a site visit (either coinciding with the Opportunity Assessment stage of RARA or standalone), program administrators will complete a walk-through of mechanical rooms, common areas, the roof, building exterior and assess one sample suite to determine retrofit opportunities for energy efficiency and lower GHG emissions. Additionally, electricity consumption data is gathered to help build a business case for the selected retrofit opportunity in the feasibility study stage.

- As part of the cooling assessment, other factors are simultaneously reviewed such as building surface exposure to direct sunlight, building envelope thermal performance to sufficiently dissipate heat outdoors, presence of high heat generating equipment within the building, and the lack of sufficient ventilation or cooling capabilities. Furthermore, log books are reviewed to gather information on tenant complaints on overheating.