



HOUSING ACTION PLAN

March, 2016

DRAFT

Endorsed: XXXXXX, 2016



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CONTEXT + CITY OF NORTH VANCOUVER'S LEADERSHIP ON HOUSING

Housing is one of the most critical elements to achieving livability in the City of North Vancouver and in the region. Accessing affordable and suitable housing has always been an issue for low-income households and persons with special needs, and increasingly difficult for moderate-income households who are challenged to afford the average market rental and homeownership prices in the City of North Vancouver.

While challenges exist, the City of North Vancouver has made significant commitments to addressing local housing issues through demonstrating leadership for decades. The City of North Vancouver has been an early adopter of new and innovative tools as they become available to municipalities. Such tools include adopting a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw in the late 1970s in an effort to preserve the existing rental housing stock and to ensure basic standards of safety, condition and livability. Also in the late 70s, the City implemented strata control measures to mitigate the conversion and loss of rental units, which has positively contributed to preserving rental housing in the City of North Vancouver.

Other innovative tools adopted more than 20 years ago include establishing a Housing Reserve Fund, permitting secondary suites, encouraging small unit sizes in multi-unit residential development projects, adaptable design policy to facilitate accessible living, and providing city-owned land to make affordable housing projects viable.

More recent tools introduced in the City of North Vancouver include permitting coach houses as accessory units on single detached lots, providing opportunity for new rental housing and low-density infill development in mature neighbourhoods. Another recent tool includes adopting a tenant displacement policy

to assist renters facing eviction due to potential redevelopment. The recently updated Official Community Plan provides a land use framework that includes increased density along major corridors, providing opportunity to create more housing options for both renters and homeowners.

The City of North Vancouver has achieved commendable milestones on housing policy. While these milestones have created positive outcomes on addressing local housing issues, the housing needs and affordability challenges have never been so serious as it is today. Housing prices are increasing at unprecedented rates. Rents are also increasing, with vacancy rates hovering close to 0%. The City's constrained land area intensifies the complexity of increasing supply. As a regional issue, limited affordable and suitable housing affects a range of households and circumstances, and greatly impacts the most vulnerable residents of the community.

VISION

The Housing Action Plan will provide a framework from which the city can work with developers, non-profit organizations and other levels of government to address housing needs and gaps, towards creating an inclusive and affordable community that all residents can call "home".

While the region's rapidly rising housing costs have placed pressures on all households, the following groups have been identified as experiencing the greatest challenges finding affordable and suitable housing in the City of North Vancouver:

- » Low Income Families;
- » Seniors;
- » At-Risk Youth and Young Adults;
- » Moderate Income Earners; and,
- » Persons Experiencing Homelessness and At-Risk of Homelessness.

Key housing gaps in the City of North Vancouver include a limited supply of family-friendly housing, affordable and accessible age-friendly housing, purpose built rental housing, low-end of market rental housing and supportive non-market housing. Compounding the housing gaps are issues related to expiring operating agreements in the non-profit housing sector, the combined increasing costs of housing and transportation, as well as a limited and constrained land base in the City to accommodate new housing development. Given the increasing number and complexity of housing issues, now is the time for the City to explore new tools to address the growing affordability challenge. The City can, yet again, be an early adopter of innovative housing policies and showcase cutting-edge best practices to the region and elsewhere.

It is within this context that the City is committed to maintaining and improving the existing housing stock, as well as finding new opportunities to increase purpose-built rental and non-market housing. Providing a diversity of affordable, accessible and suitable housing makes a significant contribution to creating an inclusive and affordable community that all residents can call 'home'.

PROPOSED HOUSING ACTIONS AT-A-GLANCE

The Housing Action Plan represents the final stage of a process that examined critical housing indicators, best practices research and innovative housing policy, and stakeholder consultation. The Housing Action Plan provides a framework to guide decisions and make actions on addressing local housing issues and gaps along the housing continuum, from non-market to market housing.

Categorized by policy, regulatory and land/capital and financial actions, the Housing Action Plan aligns eight key goals, has 14 "big moves", and 60+ specific actions. ►



POLICY ACTIONS			
	Objective	Action	Components / Specific actions
Family-Friendly Housing	To increase the number of family friendly units within new multi-unit residential development projects	Prepare a Family Friendly Housing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Amend the Zoning Bylaw to require a minimum percentage of three or more bedroom units in all new multi-unit residential development. b. Update the Sustainability Checklist to reflect the Zoning Bylaw change, and include additional design considerations for family-friendly housing, including encouraging ground-oriented units. c. Monitor absorption rates of family-friendly housing units and adjust policy if and when required.
Density Bonus and Secured Low-End of Market Rental	To secure low end of market rental units in new multi unit residential development projects	Update the Density Bonus Policy to Require Securing a Minimum of 10% of Units Dedicated as Low-End of Market Rental	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update the Density Bonus and Community Benefits Policy to permit a 1.0 FSR density bonus to eligible rental housing projects in exchange for a required minimum of 10 percent of units secured as low-end of market rental. b. 100% purpose-built rental projects on sites with no existing rental housing are not required to provide low-end of market units, although it is encouraged. c. Prepare a Housing Agreement template. d. Update Density Bonus and Community Benefits Policy to include a cash in-lieu contribution option e. Explore potential tax exemptions for projects that provide low-end of market rental projects.
Housing on the Frequent Transit Network	To Encourage the Development of and Reduce Construction Costs for Purpose-Built Rental Housing and Non-Market Housing within Close Proximity to the Frequent Transit Network	Prepare a parking reduction policy for purpose-Built rental and non-market housing within 400 metres of the frequent transit network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Roll out a Reduced Parking Policy and Regulations pilot project for either a purpose-built rental housing project (25% parking reduction) or non-market housing project (75% parking reduction) for sites located within 400 metres of the Frequent Transit Network. For purpose-built rental and non-market housing located within 400 metres of the Seabus, parking may be reduced by 100% with the exception of visitor parking and loading where required. Evaluate outcomes including parking utilization rates. b. Prepare a Policy to Reduce Parking Requirements for purpose-built rental housing (25%) and non-market housing (75%) located within 400 metres of the Frequent Transit Network, and rental and non-market housing (100%) located within 400 metres of the Seabus. c. Update the Zoning Bylaw to reduce parking requirements for purpose-built rental housing (25%) and non-market housing (75%) located within 400 metres of the Frequent Transit Network, and rental and non-market housing (100%) located within 400 metres of the Seabus. d. Continue to monitor parking utilization rates and adjust policy and regulations if and when required.

POLICY ACTIONS			
	Objective	Action	Components / Specific actions
Non-Profit Housing Regeneration	To Support Non-Profit Housing Societies Efforts to Remain Viable Upon Expiry of Their Operating Agreements and to Preserve and enhance the Existing Non-Market Housing Supply	Create A Land Use Service Framework To Support Non-Profit Housing Societies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Initiate targeted outreach to non-profit housing societies in the City of North Vancouver and neighbouring municipalities to foster relationship building, share information and identify opportunities to collaborate. b. Provide non-profit housing societies in the City with high-level development potential analysis. c. Connect non-profit housing societies with funding opportunities, such as feasibility study grants (CMHC) and Captailize Housing Initiatives Grant housing initiatives grants (City of North Vancouver). d. Prepare a Non-Profit Housing Regeneration Policy. e. Update the Zoning Bylaw to include a definition of Social Enterprise, and explore Accessory Uses for non-profits in all zones, with size restrictions in residential zones. f. Where appropriate, provide incentives to encourage mixed-use non-profit housing projects that include social enterprises or other revenue generating uses.

REGULATORY ACTIONS			
	Objective	Action	Components / Specific actions
Rental Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw	To preserve the existing rental supply and improve livability of existing rental and social housing	Explore a Rental Housing Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Explore a Rental Housing Revitalization Tax Exemption Bylaw (as suggested below). b. Prepare a Rental Housing Revitalization Tax Exemption Certificate template.
Fee Simple Townhouses	To make townhouses more affordable and encourage movement of moderate-income households up the housing continuum and to alleviate pressure on the rental supply	Update city regulations to permit and encourage fee simple townhouses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Create templates for Party Wall Agreements and Service Easement Agreements for townhouse development projects. b. Explore areas in the City to pre-zone for fee simple townhouses, starting with the Duplex Special Study Area.
Flexible Configurations of Accessory Units on Residential Level 1 Lots	To intensify single detached lots while retaining neighbourhood scale and character	Update City Regulations To Encourage Intensification Of Residential Level 1 Lots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Update the owner occupancy requirement for secondary suites, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » For Residential Level 1 Lots with one accessory unit, eliminate the owner occupancy requirement; or » For Residential Level 1 Lots with two accessory units, require owner occupancy whereby the owner may reside in either the principal dwelling unit or one of the accessory units. b. Prepare illustrations to visually communicate flexible configurations of two accessory units on Residential Level 1 Lots, including parking. c. Consult with private sector developers, stakeholders, and the public to discuss the proposed flexible configuration options.

REGULATORY ACTIONS			
	Objective	Action	Components / Specific actions
Housing for Multi-Generational and Extended Households	To Increase Housing Options for Multi-Generational and Extended Households	Provide a Regulatory and Design Framework to Support Housing for Multi-Generational and Extended Household	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Engage with architects, builders and the public to brainstorm potential designs and configurations for multi-generational / extended household housing, both detached and multi-unit forms. b. Engage with stakeholders to identify culturally appropriate multi-generational housing forms and regulatory mechanisms that can support such forms. c. Review the Zoning Bylaw to identify potential modifications to support housing for multi-generational and extended households.
Explore Repurposing Bungalow	To intensify single detached lots while retaining neighbourhood scale and character; and to reduce demolition waste and to bolster the existing coach house initiative	Explore the Opportunity to Repurpose Bungalows and Small Character Homes as Coach Houses and, if feasible, Create an Incentive Program to Encourage Such Repurposing Projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Undertake a figure-ground analysis to determine typical lot size, floor area and lot coverage of old bungalow and small character homes (i.e. pre 1940s, war time homes ['41 to 47'], mid-century, etc). b. Undertake a feasibility study to determine viability of relocating typical bungalow and small character homes to the rear of a lot and repurpose as "coach houses", with the requirement to infill with one, two or three units (depending on lot size). Feasibility study to focus on repurposing economics. c. Explore the BC Building Code to identify potential code triggers for relocating old bungalow and small character homes to the rear of a lot. d. If feasible, identify incentives for property owners to repurpose older bungalow and small character homes, such as Heritage Revitalization Agreements. e. If feasible, roll out repurposing bungalow and small character homes program with incentives to property owners.

LAND, CAPITAL AND FINANCIAL ACTIONS

	Objective	Action	Components / Specific actions
City-Owned Land	To secure and lease land for potential affordable housing projects	Provide City-owned Land to Affordable Housing Projects	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provide city-owned lands suitable for affordable housing or consider affordable housing as an aspect of future discussions for the following potential sites: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> » Alder Street Lands. » East 1st Street Lands. » Harry Jerome. » Casano Street sites. » Unused or underutilized rights of ways. Engage with the non-profit sector to identify potential projects appropriate for a select city-owned site. Prepare a feasibility study and business plan. Undertake concept planning, program development, working drawings, community consultation, and other planning processes (i.e. rezoning) if required. Facilitate project tendering, construction and occupancy.
Partnerships	To foster relationship building with organizations of various sectors to collectively facilitate and implement the initiatives of the Housing Action Plan	Facilitate and Support Partnerships with Various Levels of Government, Regional Organizations and Non-profit Organizations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Create a partnership agreement with neighbouring North Shore municipalities (District of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver) to identify projects of mutual interest. Continue to partner with various organizations including the private sector, senior levels of government, the region and community based agencies to support the creation of affordable, rental and special needs housing in the community.
North Shore Rent Bank	To prevent renters from economic evictions and homelessness	Explore Creating a North Shore Rent Bank	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare a Rent Bank Business Plan. Identify community partners (i.e. District of North Vancouver, District of West Vancouver). Identify funding partners (i.e. United Way, Vancity, other Financial Lenders) and a non-profit organization to administer the Rent Bank program. Establish eligibility requirements. Roll out Rent Bank Program through pilot project, evaluate outcomes, and consider extending the program with adjustments if required.
Advocacy	To generate investment in affordable housing from senior levels of government.	Advocate to Senior Levels of Government to Invest in Affordable Housing in North Vancouver and Region	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Prepare letters to local Member of Parliament advocating for a National Housing Strategy. Participate or support the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' efforts to address housing affordability issues at a national level.

LAND, CAPITAL AND FINANCIAL ACTIONS			
	Objective	Action	Components / Specific actions
Existing Housing Tools	To ensure existing housing tools are utilized to their fullest potential.	Update Existing Housing Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Review permitting process for Accessory Dwelling Units in duplexes to identify potential improvements and cost-efficiencies. b. Update the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund, including exploring the opportunity to invest a minimum amount of the fund into social bonds/stocks as a means to grow the fund c. Reduce the one-unit and two-unit residential use minimum lot size in the Zoning Bylaw. d. Explore the implementation of VisitAbility for ground-oriented housing forms. e. Update the City's Social Plan (as suggested below). f. Update the City's Standards of Maintenance Bylaw. g. Widely promote BC Housing's Rental Assistance Program (RAP), Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) and the Home Adaptations for Independence Program (HAFI) through the City's communication channels, and the integrate program with the HAP family-friendly action.

