

City, province work on plan for shared home ownership

The province will meet the call of Vancouver councillors and amend the city's charter to pave the way for a shared home ownership scheme, says B.C.'s housing minister.

Last month, councillors approved a staff idea to help working residents of moderate means purchase discounted homes that would be co-owned by the city. Many jurisdictions around the world already have such programs, but changes to the Vancouver Charter would be required before the city could test the concept.

Rich Coleman, the province's housing minister, said staff are already working on the legislative change and could have it ready by next spring.

The DNV has already done something like this! Why then the need for legislative changes? - cjk

Charter amendments to enable restricted market, second mortgage or shared ownership models stood among the main barriers to the idea. Staff are still working out the details of the pilot program, but their working model would have the city grant density to a developer for a given site in exchange for an ownership stake in units.

Coleman was in southeast Vancouver on Wednesday at a joint news conference with Harjit Sajjan, the federal defence minister, Mayor Gregor Robertson, Mukhtar Latif, the city's chief housing officer, and Thom Armstrong, executive director of the Co-operative Housing Federation of B.C. All spoke on plans to build 358 units of rental and co-op housing in Killarney and Kensington Cedar Cottage.

More than half the homes will be for families, nearly one-third will go to seniors, and rents will be — on average — nearly 25 per cent below market. About 80 per cent of the \$110 million funding for the project comes in the form of a construction loan from the B.C. government. Victoria, Ottawa, non-profit operators and an investment fund are topping that up with a combined \$20 million in equity. Vancouver is providing 99-year leases on land for the four sites.

Calgary, Toronto and Whistler are just some of the Canadian municipalities with shared ownership schemes. The way the programs work varies by jurisdiction, and some let buyers build equity through market appreciation.