



## City of Richmond Council Meeting - July 11, 2022

### Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition Delegation - Non Agenda Item

This submission is presented on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition (RPRC), a charitable non-profit society comprised of Richmond residents and local service organizations working together to reduce the effects of poverty with research, projects, and public education. In doing so, the RPRC advocates for improvements to public policy and proposes ideas for new policy.

RPRC member organizations include the Richmond Centre for Disability, Richmond Food Bank, Richmond Family Place, Richmond Women's Resource Centre, Family Services of Greater Vancouver-Richmond, Kehila Society of Richmond, Richmond Addiction Services, Gilmore Park United Church, Heart of Richmond AIDS Society, Richmond Presbyterian Church, and Richmond Mental Health Consumer & Friends Society.

Together, our member organizations represent thousands of Richmond residents who receive services and resources from them. Recipients of services include seniors, low-income families and single parent families, people with disabilities, people with health challenges, newcomers, BIPOC and LGBTQ2S people, and other underserved and vulnerable residents.

All our member organizations report that the crucial need for non-market housing overloads their own capacities to respond effectively. Richmond residents on low-incomes are spending their food budgets on rent. As clients they are becoming increasingly distressed and the need for vital services and resources are stretched to the limit.

The RPRC acknowledges that there are limits to what a municipal government can do to improve access to non-market rental housing. However, we do believe each level of government has a duty to maximize electors' abilities to find secure, dignified, and appropriate housing .

After a year of reviewing the City of Richmond's Affordable Housing Strategy, researching best practices, and speaking with city staff and councillors and people with lived experience, the RPRC has identified realistic strategies and actions that are within the City's scope to solve.

Following, is a précis of our findings:

- Over the past thirty years, 94% of Richmond new builds have been condos, townhouses and single family dwellings and only 6% have been purpose-built rentals,<sup>1</sup> and
- The last non-market rental developments were built over five years ago,<sup>2</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> City of Richmond Housing Needs Report November 2021

<sup>2</sup> City of Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy 2017-2027

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- The City approves an average of 375 ground-oriented housing demolitions per year,<sup>3</sup> and
- The City's 1:1 rental replacement policy<sup>4</sup> does not count ground-oriented housing demolitions as losses in rental housing in the City's figures, and
- The City's rental relocation policy does not have the same tenant protections as other Metro cities<sup>5</sup> and,
- 33.6% of renter households are in 'core' housing need<sup>6</sup>, meaning more than 50% of household income is spent on rent, and
- The rental vacancy rate in Richmond is 1.1%<sup>7</sup> and the City's rental relocation policy has little force or function when there is nothing for low income families and individuals to rent, and
- The demolition of Minoru Gardens will result in the displacement of another 130 low-income rental families,<sup>8</sup> and
- The City has little accountability for the LEMR<sup>9</sup> program, and LEMR suites are not easy for renters to understand and access.

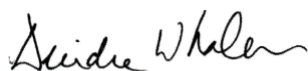
Therefore, considering the foregoing:

The Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition (RPRC) delegation urges Richmond City Council to undertake the following three initiatives to increase non-market rental supply, and to provide yearly progress reports on each initiative to the public:

1. Actively pursue and secure federal, provincial, and any other accepted sources of funding to develop non-market housing and shelters using City-owned land,
2. Order a full LEMR (Low End Market Rental) Review, and develop a LEMR Housing Registry and wait list for all LEMR units, AND
3. Reduce the number of Richmond residents on the BC Housing wait list by 50% within five years (2027) by using rental tenure zoning and innovative partnerships to build sufficient housing for Richmond residents on the waitlist.

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter. I will take questions, if any.

Deirdre Whalen



President, RPRC

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<sup>3</sup> Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book 2019 (375 demolitions are a 5-year average from 2013-2018)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/planning0551568.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/tenreloassist57852.PDF>

<sup>6</sup> Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book 2019 (33.6% were in core need in 2016)

<sup>7</sup> Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book 2019 (2018 average figure)

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.richmond-news.com/opinion/letters-wrong-time-to-demolish-homes-3125723>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.richmond.ca/shared/assets/info5159495.pdf>