

Progress Report

March 12, 2012



Introducing the Task Force

Co-chaired by Vancouver Mayor **Gregor Robertson**, and former provincial cabinet minister and property developer, **Olga Ilich**, the Task Force membership is drawn from a number of organizations relevant to the housing sector including: architects, designers, builders, private, non-profit and public sector property developers, non-profit associations, apartment owners, and academics.

- **Alan Boniface:** Dialog Consulting Architects
- **John D'Eathe:** Real Estate Counselor
- **Nathan Edelson:** 42 Street Consulting
- **Leonard George:** Tsleil-Waututh Nation
- **Marg Gordon:** BC Apartment Owners and Managers Association
- **Mark Guslits:** Mark Guslits & Associates Inc
- **Colleen Hardwick (Nystedt):** New City Ventures
- **Howard Johnson:** Baptist Housing
- **Michael Lewis:** Canadian Centre for Community Renewal
- **Raymond Louie:** City Council
- **Eric Martin:** Bosa Development Corp
- **Geoff Meggs:** City Council
- **Karen O'Shannacery:** Lookout Society
- **Al Poettcker:** UBC Properties Trust
- **Peter Simpson:** Greater Vancouver Home Builders Assoc.
- **Bradford Tone:** Tone Management

Task Force Working Groups

Working groups are examining issues in these four areas with the goal of expediting and expanding affordable housing starts:

Flows

The wide range of City processes required before approvals are given to construction of affordable housing, including rezoning, development permits, building permits, and procurement of partners.

Form

Design flexibility, optimizing asset value, and understanding the barriers to affordability in the current building code and City policies and how they could be altered to improve affordability.

Finance

Ensuring long-term affordability, investigating the use of City assets (particularly land), innovative financing vehicles, delivery models and ownership (tenure) arrangements for affordable housing.

Partnerships

Effective taxation policies and incentives by senior governments, legislation needed to enable a variety of ownership (tenure) models, optimizing support for renters, optimal use of social housing and non-profit assets, promoting new partnerships to advance affordable housing.

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Task Force Roundtables

Building Form and Design

A roundtable on building form and design, led by local developer and architect **Michael Geller**, is identifying design and building code requirements that are adding costs to the provision of quality affordable housing, as well as design changes that could increase the supply of affordable housing in Vancouver.

Academic Round Table

A round table of distinguished academics, led by UBC School of Architecture Adjunct Professor **Erick Villagomez**, is studying the conditions that make it difficult to build affordable housing in Vancouver, as well as international best practices for improving housing affordability.

Both the Working Groups and the Roundtables will report back to the Task Force and have their findings incorporated into the final report.

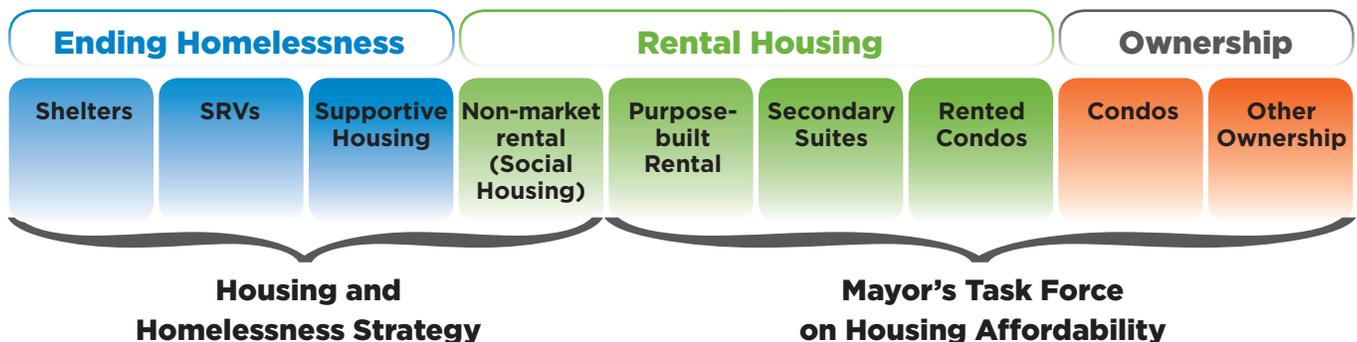
Focus

The Task Force is focussing its efforts on addressing affordability for low to middle income households in Vancouver including:

- lower-income singles and couples with critical needs for suitable rental accommodation;
- singles and couples struggling to buy their first home;
- families with children who want to live in the city rather than have to move to more suburban locations; and
- empty-nesters and seniors wishing to downsize without having to leave their neighbourhood

The committee discussed the housing challenges faced by households with an income of less than \$21,500, something which remains a critical public policy challenge for all levels of government. However it noted that the City, along with other non-profit and government partners, is already strongly committed to action in this area through recommendations adopted by Council in its Housing and Homelessness Strategy.

Low to middle income = individual household income of \$21,500 to combined household income of \$86,500 per year



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Quick-Start Actions

The Task Force has developed a list of Quick Start Actions for the City, in the lead-up to the June delivery of its Report on Housing Affordability.

The Task Force is recommending that the City immediately take action on these straight-forward policies and initiatives that will put Vancouver on the path to a more creative, yet focussed approach to creating and maintaining housing affordability in Vancouver.

Fast Track Applications

Fast track applications to build affordable rental or owned housing for those with low to middle incomes through an inter-departmental City staff team with the ability to ensure these applications jump the queue.

Use Inclusionary Zoning

Use the Cambie Corridor as a model for the application of inclusionary zoning to fast track the development of affordable rental housing through:

- rapid development of a practical implementation strategy for the inclusionary zoning related to rental housing in place on the Corridor; and
- development of a standardized approach on the corridor, with an expedited processing time, for the delivery of Community Amenity Contributions (CACs).

The City's Cambie Corridor land-use plan has opened new areas of the City for rapid transit-oriented development, which in turn has spurred a significant amount of development interest. The Task Force has identified the above issues as critical in advancing affordable rental housing in Vancouver and specifically on the Cambie Corridor.

Leverage City Assets

Explore the viability of using city-owned land to leverage partnerships, including non-profit and co-ops, for the creation of affordable rental housing.

Wield Influence

Use the broad and influential membership of the Task Force to advocate with the:

- federal government of the need for enhanced tax incentives and financing mechanisms for the construction of new rental housing and the protection and rehabilitation of existing rental housing; and
- provincial government of the need to streamline approval processes for the delivery of fee-simple row housing.

In turning its attention to the senior levels of government, the Task Force recognizes their important role in enabling, through a number of mechanisms beyond direct funding, the protection of existing rental housing as well as the creation of new rental housing and diversifying the range of housing options in the City.

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What's Next?

A public engagement program will be launched in the coming weeks to solicit ideas and direction from the public on affordable housing issues in Vancouver.

The Task Force will continue its deliberations and will hear from stakeholders and the wider public before submitting its final report at the end of June 2012. Any recommended policy changes are subject to City Council approval.

For More Information

See <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/housing/about.htm> or call **311**