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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"

"Singh, Sandra" <Sandra.Singh@vancouver.ca>

"Chungath, Gracen" <Gracen.Chungath@vancouver.ca>

Date: 8/17/2020 3:20:08 PM

Subject: Public Summary of update on TRP Implementation August 2020 - RTS 13741

Attachments: ACCS - AGM - Memo (Mayor and Council) Public Summary of update on TRP Implementation August 2020 (2020-08-14).pdf

Dear Mayor and Council,

Further to the memo sent on August 5th regarding implementation of the City's Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy, attached is a summary document intended for a public audience. Council may share this memo as desired. As reference in the memo, staff are preparing the related Administrative Bulletin to post online early in September.

Should you have any questions, please contact Gracen Chungath, Acting GM of ACCS at gracen.chungath@vancouver.ca.

Best,
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.

MEMORANDUM

August 14, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office
Celine Mauboules, Acting Managing Director Affordable Housing Programs and Homelessness Services
Gil Kelley, General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability
Dan Garrison, Assistant Director, Housing Policy and Regulation

FROM: Gracen Chungath
Acting General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Summary of August 5, 2020 update to Mayor and Council on Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy Implementation (should Council wish to share this information publicly) RTS 13741

Staff recently updated Mayor and Council on the City's Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy, focusing on the implementation of projects under the 2015 Tenant Relocation Policy and emerging challenges of the 2019 Policy. The key points are summarized below:

- Redevelopment and renewal of Vancouver's existing rental housing, some of which is the city's most affordable, plays an important role in ensuring tenants have access to safe and suitable homes. This however can displace and stress renters, especially those with low incomes and individuals with other barriers to accessing appropriate housing.
- The Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy (TRPP) was established with the following goals:
 - To protect tenants from displacement from Vancouver or into homelessness;

- To support tenants via compensation and assistance in searching for new housing; and
- To support the need for new rental housing delivery.

2019 Policy

- An updated TRPP was approved in June 2019 in response to the increasing challenges faced by renters relocating in Vancouver, including lack of affordability and an extremely low vacancy rate.
- The policy was expanded to include secondary rental, a policy for non-market housing, and guidance for co-ops. Compensation and supports for tenants were significantly increased over the 2015 policy, and with an increased focus on low-income tenants and vulnerable tenants facing other housing barriers, including requirements to secure permanent housing options for these tenants.
- The new policy also requires increased communication through mandatory tenant meetings, ensuring both parties know their rights and responsibilities, along with standardized forms and a needs assessment survey to identify vulnerable tenants and ensure provision of enhanced assistance to those who need it most. Staff are also set to launch a new online platform for the tenant survey to ensure tenant privacy is maintained.
- While the new policy provides greater clarity and enhanced protection, ultimately tenants are still being displaced into an ever shifting market most often with significantly higher rents.
- Over the last year, an increasing number of tenants are requesting assistance in finding alternate accommodation, in particular for units renting at or below the CMHC average area rents (as required under the 2015 Policy). The ability to find affordable options is proving to be challenging for applicants (and Tenant Relocation Specialists), and staff are playing an increasingly significant role in working with applicants, tenants, and their advocates, to find amicable solutions.

2015 Policy

- The 2015 policy left room for flexibility and discretion when assessing whether an applicant had met the intent of the policy, particularly for alternate accommodation. This created some challenges so in response, staff developed criteria to provide applicants and tenants greater clarity on implementation.

The main issues can be summarized as follows:

1. *What constitutes good faith on the part of the applicant in assisting with finding alternate accommodation?*
 - A good faith option is understood to be listing of available unit, verified by the applicant to be legitimate and still available at the time it is received
2. *What constitutes a comparable unit type?*
 - A comparable unit is reflective of the tenant's current situation, i.e. based on unit type, not unit size or building typology

3. *How is low-income defined and assessed?*

- Low-income is understood to be as defined by the 2019 TRP Policy

4. *For low-income, long-term tenants, do offers within 10% of a tenant's current rent have to be within the same neighbourhood as well?*

- The applicant must provide 3 options, one of these options is required to be in tenant's current neighbourhood and one within 10% of current rent. This option is not required to do both.

Staff are finalizing a more detailed Administrative Bulletin, which we anticipate will be available online in early September, likely under the 'renter rights and relocation assistance due to redevelopment' section.

Ongoing work with the Province to Strengthen Renter Protections

- A critical gap includes evictions due to renovations being completed with building permits only - which do not require a TRP. In 2018, the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) issued guidelines to clarify that in order to end tenancies for renovations, the renovations or repairs must be so extensive that they require the unit to be vacant in order for them to take place, and the only way to achieve this must be by ending the tenancy. There are gaps in the RTB process for contesting evictions, since this is done on a case-by case basis based on arbitration after permits have been issued. This means that tenants do not have clarity on the status of their tenancies until very late in the process.
- In its final report (2018), the Province's Rental Housing Task Force called for changes to the Residential Tenancy Act that would end these types of evictions for minor renovations. Long-term, systemic changes are needed to address this issue while also ensuring needed upgrades to existing rental housing are possible.

Staff will continue to monitor all 2015 and 2019 TRPs to ensure applicants are aware of their TRP obligations, and that tenants are aware of both the requirements and the limitations of the policy.

If Council has any questions about the content of this memo please contact me (August 5 – 31) via gracen.chungath@vancouver.ca.



Gracen Chungath
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