

File No.: 04-1000-20-2017-488

January 17, 2018

s.22(1)

Dear s.22(1)

**Re: Request for Access to Records under the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (the "Act")**

I am responding to your request of November 30, 2017 for:

**Copies of all documents including emails, memos, briefing notes, PowerPoint presentations, manuals, and Q&A's containing the words "Thinkpol" or "ThinkPol" or "thinkpol.ca" from September 1, 2017 to November 30, 2017 to or from Mayor Robertson, Kaye Krishna, Janice MacKenzie and Jessie Adcock.**

All responsive records are attached. Some information in the records has been severed, (blacked out), under s.13(1), s.14, s.15(1)(l) and s.22(1) of the Act. You can read or download these sections here:

[http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws\\_new/document/ID/freeside/96165\\_00](http://www.bclaws.ca/EPLibraries/bclaws_new/document/ID/freeside/96165_00)

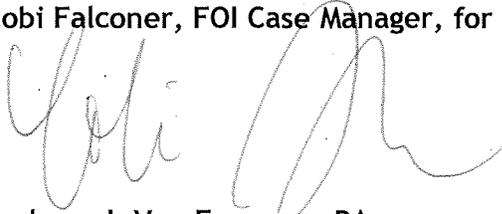
Under section 52 of the Act you may ask the Information & Privacy Commissioner to review any matter related to the City's response to your request. The Act allows you 30 business days from the date you receive this notice to request a review by writing to: Office of the Information & Privacy Commissioner, [info@oipc.bc.ca](mailto:info@oipc.bc.ca) or by phoning 250-387-5629.

If you request a review, please provide the Commissioner's office with: 1) the request number assigned to your request (#04-1000-20-2017-488); 2) a copy of this letter; 3) a copy of your original request for information sent to the City of Vancouver; and 4) detailed reasons or grounds on which you are seeking the review.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Freedom of Information Office at [foi@vancouver.ca](mailto:foi@vancouver.ca) if you have any questions.

Yours truly,

**Cobi Falconer, FOI Case Manager, for**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cobi Falconer', written over the typed name.

**Barbara J. Van Fraassen, BA  
Director, Access to Information & Privacy**

*Barbara.vanfraassen@vancouver.ca  
453 W. 12th Avenue Vancouver BC V5Y 1V4  
Phone: 604.873.7999  
Fax: 604.873.7419*

Encl.

:kt

From: ["Sandhu, Jag" <Jag.Sandhu@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Jag.Sandhu@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Krishna, Kaye"](#)

Date: 10/27/2017 3:05:55 PM

Subject: Daily Media Summary - October 27

### **Bob Mackin - Adopt a Catch Basin Campaign**

What is the budget for the Adopt A Catch Basin campaign and what is the value of Invoke Media's contract? Is it the only supplier contracted?

The Invoke Digital was contracted for \$75,000 to build the open source platform. The software developer was chosen through the City's standard contract bidding process. Invoke Digital offered the best quote for the assets required. To date, the Adopt a Catch Basin campaign has cost: \$4456.50. Here's the breakdown of costs:

- Video: \$2205
- Printed promotional materials: \$308
- Facebook digital advertisement: \$400
- Print material design: \$1,543.50

### **Bob Mackin - Burrard Bridge Lights**

- who is the lighting provider for the Burrard Bridge and how much is that contract worth?
- The lighting subcontractor for Graham Infrastructure is Ross Morrison Electrical. I am confirming whether we are able to share the contract value related to the electrical work, or whether the bid numbers must be retained as they could harm the commercial interests of the contractors. However, I can confirm that the total bid by Graham was \$15.925m plus GST, which was made public at the time of award.

### **Naoibh O'Connor - Vancouver Courier - Arbutus Greenway Design Jam**

Reporter asked questions about the upcoming Arbutus Greenway Design Jam, who would be participating in the Design Jam, and the future of the Arbutus Greenway.

[Lon LaClaire did interview.](#)

### **Martin MacMahon - News 1130 - Trans-Mountain Pipeline case**

Journalist asked if the judge in the TM expansion review case had set a date and time when they would share their decision.

[Staff informed the journalist that the judge had not announced a date.](#)

### **Sandra Hermiston - CTV - Winter prep**

know the weather is not very "wintery", but we're working on a winter preparedness story to run in later November. We were wondering if there was anyone at the city we could talk to about managing winter weather conditions and preparing your home/family etc. Last year, we had a very cold winter and people were left to scramble at the last minute to find salt etc....we'd like to do a story in later November that would help people become more prepared. Would someone be available for an interview on this subject?

[Setting up a segment at National Yard to share tips for people to prepare for winter - both rain \(flooding\) and snow. They will also attend the Nov 9 snow show and likely show their segment that evening.](#)

### **Amy Chen - ThinkPol - Parking**

Reporter had additional questions regarding the City-owned parking lot located at 10th Avenue. [The City-owned parking lot at 10th avenue is monitored by EasyPark after 6pm on weekdays.](#)

There is free two-hour parking until 6pm for citizens conducting business at City Hall. After that, it becomes a public pay parking lot enforced by EasyPark. If someone has an issue with an EasyPark ticket they've received, the dispute process is listed at the back of a ticket. In addition to the 10th Avenue parking lot, there is free two-hour parking at City Hall for those conducting City business. There is also free two-hour street parking on surrounding streets close to City Hall.

### **Mia Sheldon - CBC National - Regent/Balmoral**

I am with The National on CBC and we are researching a possible piece on the buildings the Sahotas own in downtown Vancouver (The Balmoral, The Regent) which are the subject of a civil suit. I understand the Balmoral was evacuated this past summer and repairs were supposed to begin. Requesting an update.

[Kaye Krishna spoke with reporter.](#)

### **Chris Waara - CBC - Trees and leaves**

What is the most common deciduous tree in Vancouver?

Which tree produces the most leaves?

How many of the 145,000 plus trees are deciduous?

How many cleaning trucks do you have for leaf pick up?

Where are all the leaves taken?

What happens to them?

Can you tell me the total amount in tonnes or volume of all the leaves that are being picked up?

Is there a bylaw about keeping your sidewalk clean from leaves, just like with

How many kilometres or lane kilometres are cleaners of leaves?

Some people say that this fall is more colourful than ever before, so I'm wondering if the city has planted more colourful trees lately, so that the foliage is prettier

[The City and Park Board provided the following information:](#)

- The most common street trees are maples (25% of all street trees) and cherries (just over 20% of street trees).
- Kwanza cherries make up 20 % of Vancouver's street trees.
- We recently estimated that there are 280,000 trees in the city of which 25% (67,000) are conifers and 75% (213,000) are deciduous.
- The larger the tree, the more leaves it will produce. Some of our biggest street trees include Red Oaks (great examples on King Ed heading south); Tulip Trees (turn bright yellow with nice examples at West 10th and Alma); Maples; Ash trees (brilliant variety of colours - with lots of different colours currently showing at Nanaimo at East 19th)
- In terms of selecting trees for colour, the Park Board's Urban Forestry staff does tend to plan its street planting with diversity of colour in mind. Along Main St. north of 33rd is a good example.
- In the fall the City collects leaves on a series of weekends to help residents recycle the leaves that are collected from their property, boulevard and sidewalk. Starting in mid-November, City crews also coordinate a city-wide street cleaning and leaf removal program to remove fallen leaves from City streets. This Saturday and Sunday is the first "extra leaf collection weekend" of the year. Extra leaves that do not fit in residents Green Bin should be put in paper yard waste bags or store-bought bins and set out by 7 am Saturday, October 28 for pick up. For more info, go to [vancouver.ca/leaves](http://vancouver.ca/leaves)
- With the majority of our tree canopy now bare, City crews will begin to sweep and clear leaves from streets starting November 14. Residents are asked to do their part by following all temporary "no stopping" signs that will be posted the day in advance of

cleaning activities.

- If temporary “no parking” signs are posted, residents are required to move their vehicle(s) to another spot before 7 am on the date indicated. It is very important that vehicles are moved as it allows our crews to do a much better job of clearing all of the leaves from the street. Vehicles that are not moved will be ticketed and may be towed to a nearby location. Vehicles with a SPARC permit will be returned to the same location once the street cleaning is completed.
- Crews will initially focus on streets with higher volumes of leaves and may need to do one or two passes with the sweeper.
- The leaf collection fleet includes 64 staff and 56 pieces of equipment.
  - 16 sweepers
  - 4 loaders
  - 8 dump trucks with trailers
  - 8 tow trucks
  - 12 pickup trucks
  - 8 cars
- Collected leaves are turned into nutrient-rich compost at the Vancouver Landfill. This compost can be purchased by residential gardeners, commercial landscapers and municipal park boards. Leaves and other yard trimmings can also be dropped off for composting at the Vancouver South Transfer Station located at 377 West Kent Ave North and at the Vancouver Landfill located at 5400 72nd Street in Delta.
- An average of 5,000 tonnes of leaves are collected each year from 1400 km of city streets as part of our street cleaning and leaf removal program.

### **Bob Mackin - Breaker - Adopt a catch basin**

Is the \$75,000 the threshold for an open, competitive bidding process? Was this ever publicly advertised? Could you send me the RFP PDF? Who were the other bidders that responded? If this was done less-formally, who were the other bidders that staff contacted?

Also, why was this work outsourced, when Vancouver city hall has the largest communications departments of any civic government in Canada?

#### **Cost**

Digital: Invoke Digital was contracted for \$75,000 to build the open source platform. This work went to a supplier as our IT/Digital branch did not have the capacity. The software developer was chosen through the City’s standard contract bidding process. Invoke Digital, the winning bid, offered the best quote for the assets required.

#### **Awareness Campaign**

To date, the Adopt a Catch Basin campaign has cost: \$4456.50. Here’s the breakdown of costs:

- Video: \$2,205
- Printed promotional materials: \$308
- Facebook digital advertisement: \$400
- Print material design: \$1,543.50

#### **RFP Process**

The award to Invoke was conducted following the Corporate Procurement Policy. Three vendors were selected off a prequalification list and asked to produce bids (Invoke Digital, Powershifter Inc. and Work at Play). Invoke Digital was contracted for \$75,000 as the lowest bidder to build the open source platform for the Adopt-a-Catch-Basin Program. The list of prequalified vendors was generated through the following public procurement competitions.

Request for Applications (RFA)

- PS20140241 (where Invoke Digital was prequalified)
- PS20160595 (where Powershifter and Work at Play were prequalified)

## Communications Department

The City of Vancouver faces the challenges of a growing city, including increased pressure on housing affordability, and managing increased service demand to address mental health and addiction issues. The City continues to reprioritize resources and transform operations to deliver on key priorities and service requirements. This translates to a higher demand on communications, engagement, design, translation and media services resulting in the need to look for outside support on some projects to allow communications staff to focus on and support key public policy initiatives. Last year, the graphic design team completed 459 projects (2012 to 2016 66% increase) and 3,663 media inquiries/responses of which 1770 were interviews (2012 to 2016 46% increase). Source: 2017 Service Plan.

Key public policy initiatives supported by the communications department:

- Annual Capital Plan and Operating Budget consultation and budget book design as well as participating budgeting.
- Empty Homes Tax
- Modular Homes
- Homelessness strategy
- Response to the Opioid crisis
- Short-term rentals
- Major infrastructure projects such as Burrard Street, Southwest Marine Drive, Point Grey Road and South False Creek Seaside Greenway
- Major community plans such as Grandview Woodlands, Cambie Corridor, Britannia, Joyce Collingwood
- Renewable City Strategy
- Transportation 2040
- Healthy City Strategy
- Housing Vancouver Strategy
- Arbutus Greenway
- Empty Homes Tax
- Accessibility and representation strategies
- Sport hosting
- Pop-up City Hall
- Marijuana regulatory framework
- Liquor Policy
- City of Reconciliation
- SRO Taskforce
- Public realm cleanliness and litter pickup programs (illegal dumping, cigarette butt pilot)
- Garbage and recycling programs
- Green infrastructure (integrated rainwater management)
- Millennium Line Broadway Extension (Broadway Subway)/Broadway Transit Planning
- Northeast False Creek Area Plan/Viaducts Replacement
- Rail Corridor Strategy
- Parking strategy (including West End Parking Plan)
- VIVA Vancouver/Public Space Strategy
- Neighbourhood Energy Strategy
- False Creek Water Quality
- 10th Avenue Corridor
- Cycling and pedestrian spot improvements
- Family Housing Design Guidelines
- Character Homes Zoning Review
- Chinatown Revitalization

- City Hall Campus Plan
- Doors Open Vancouver
- The new St Paul's Hospital
- Resilient City Strategy
- Social Infrastructure Plan

Given the project-based nature of work done by the Communications (and Engagement ) Department to support on key public policy initiatives listed above, the department adjusts staffing levels and will bring in temporary staff for projects that come up throughout the year that may last only a few months and others that can last for two years. Of the current staffing complement almost one third is short-term assignments.

Further to your suggestion about comparative civic communications staffing, in 2016, the Corporate Communications department benchmarked itself against five comparative cities in three different countries (Toronto, Montreal, Calgary, Melbourne and Auckland) and found similarities in terms of organizational structure, dedicated functions and comparable levels of staffing. This information was provided in confidence and we encourage you to reach out to those cities to test your assertions.

#### **Ivy Ng - Ming Tao - Marijuana dispensary**

I'm writing in regards to the marijuana dispensary on 138 E. Pender St. As I understand, their application to obtain permission from the City has been refused on April 12, 2017. An appeal on that decision was originally dated on Sept 6, 2017 but then later adjourned to Nov 15, 2017.

Could you please confirm the information above is correct?

Since the dispensary is now operating without permission, how much fine/tickets have been issued by the City as penalty so far? What is the next step the City will take in case of appeal refusal?

A total of 31 tickets were issued in 2016, and 29 issued in 2017. As an injunction has been filed, we are no longer ticketing at this time. Staff also confirmed the above information is correct.

#### **Park Board media calls yesterday**

#### **Francesca -BCIT - Glow in the Garden i**

Journalist wanted to interview someone about Glow in the Garden.

Van Dusen business lead Ema Tanaka did the interview.



Hi Lisa,

Thanks for your email. I was really busy today at work and didn't have a chance to reply.

I hope you don't mind but my preference is not to do an interview regarding the tweet. If you have specific questions about the short term rentals issue, I'd be happy to connect you with our media team who can organize to discuss with you.

Thank you very much for taking the time to offer me an opportunity to comment.

Warmly,  
Jessie :)

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 4, 2017, at 7:34 PM, Lisa Tanh [s.22\(1\)](#) wrote:

Hi Jessie,

Thank you for getting back to me.

I completely understand and hope you have a nice weekend with your family.

I look forward to speaking with you on Monday.

On Sat, Nov 4, 2017 at 7:21 PM Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

Hi Lisa,

Thanks for your email. I will reply back on Monday if that's ok. With my family right now so a bit difficult to process the tweet fully.

Thanks very much in advance for your patience.

Jessie

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 4, 2017, at 5:12 PM, Lisa Tanh [s.22\(1\)](#) wrote:

Hi Jessie,

My name is Lisa and I am a writer for ThinkPol.

I am emailing because I saw that a Twitter user, VISTRO, accused you for using an official Twitter account for "partisan work." With that said, I was hoping to speak with you to learn about how this makes you feel and how you respond to such allegations as a CTO for the city.

If you have some time in the next few days, I would love to meet in-person or chat via phone (it would take no more than 10 mins. of you time).

Please let me know - thank you.

Best,

Lisa Tanh

s.22(1)

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s.22(1)

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Lisa Tanh

s.22(1)

From: ["Kendall-Craden, Rena" <Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Krishna, Kaye" <Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca)

Date: 11/14/2017 3:25:57 PM

Subject: FW: Krishna's report to the Council on short term rentals, Airbnb-commissioned report done by her former lobbying company show similarities | ThinkPol

Hi Kaye: please review the comments

•ÉHÇDÀÉI

RKC

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From: "[Adcock, Jessie](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)" <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)>  
To: "[Kendall-Craden, Rena](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)" <[Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)>  
"[Lambert, Ellie](mailto:Ellie.Lambert@vancouver.ca)" <[Ellie.Lambert@vancouver.ca](mailto:Ellie.Lambert@vancouver.ca)>  
Date: 11/6/2017 6:35:20 PM  
Subject: Fwd: Interview

FYI, my reply

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Adcock, Jessie" <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)>  
Date: November 6, 2017 at 6:34:54 PM PST  
To: Lisa Tanh s.22(1)  
Subject: Re: Interview

Hi Lisa,

Thanks for your email. I was really busy today at work and didn't have a chance to reply.

I hope you don't mind but my preference is not to do an interview regarding the tweet. If you have specific questions about the short term rentals issue, I'd be happy to connect you with our media team who can organize to discuss with you.

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If you have some time in the next few days, I would love to meet in-person or chat via phone (it would take no more than 10 mins. of you time).

Please let me know - thank you.

Best,

Lisa Tanh

[• EGGFD](#)

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Best,

Lisa Tanh

[• EGGFD](#)



Apologies, I have just been assigned a follow-up story regarding the short term rentals issue. Is it still possible to connect me with the media team to ask a few questions?

Please let me know - thank you.

On Mon, Nov 6, 2017 at 6:34 PM, Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:  
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s.22(1)

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Lisa Tanh

s.22(1)

From: "Lisa Tanh" [s.22\(1\)](mailto:s.22(1)@vancouver.ca)  
To: "Adcock, Jessie" <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)>  
Date: 11/7/2017 1:36:22 PM  
Subject: Re: Interview

Amazing - thank you!

On Tue, Nov 7, 2017 at 1:33 PM, Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

Thanks for understanding Lisa. I appreciate it.

If you end up working on a story on women in tech, I'd be happy to help for sure.

Take Care,

Jessie

**Jessie Adcock**

Chief Technology Officer | Technology Services

City of Vancouver

[453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue](#), Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4

Office: [604.871.6868](tel:604.871.6868) Mobile: [604.649.8631](tel:604.649.8631)

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**From:** Lisa Tanh [mailto:[s.22\(1\)](mailto:s.22(1)@vancouver.ca)]  
**Sent:** November-07-17 12:39 PM  
**To:** Adcock, Jessie  
**Subject:** Re: Interview

Hi Jessie,

No worries at all - these things happen.

I understand your preference to not do an interview re the tweet and appreciate you letting me know. I am not working on a follow-up story re the short-term rentals issue, but if I end up working on something new involving your expertise, may I reach out to you in the future (i.e. Canadian women in tech)?

Please let me know - thank you :)

On Mon, Nov 6, 2017 at 6:34 PM, Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

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Lisa Tanh

• ECGFD

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To: "[Kendall-Craden, Rena](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)" <[Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)>  
Date: 11/6/2017 6:28:51 PM  
Subject: Re: Interview

Understood. Thanks so much. I will forward you a copy of my reply.

You guys rock :)

Jessie

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 6, 2017, at 6:20 PM, Kendall-Craden, Rena <[Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

s.13(1)

Rena Kendall-Craden

On Nov 6, 2017, at 6:07 PM, Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

Thanks Rena - appreciate it.

s.13(1)

Appreciate the guidance.

Jessie

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 6, 2017, at 5:24 PM, Kendall-Craden, Rena <[Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

Hi Jessie. Sorry we didn't get back to you or her today. We were getting things squared with 311.

s.13(1)

RKC

Rena Kendall-Craden

On Nov 6, 2017, at 4:52 PM, Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

s.13(1)

**Jessie Adcock**

Chief Technology Officer | Technology Services  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4  
Office: 604.871.6868 Mobile: 604.649.8631

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**From:** Kendall-Craden, Rena  
**Sent:** November-06-17 12:41 PM  
**To:** Adcock, Jessie  
**Subject:** RE: Interview

Jessie: working on some help with this. RKC

---

**From:** Adcock, Jessie  
**Sent:** Monday, November 06, 2017 9:52 AM  
**To:** Kendall-Craden, Rena  
**Subject:** FW: Interview

Further to my last email – got this request also – told her I would reply today.

s.13(1)

**Jessie Adcock**

Chief Technology Officer | Technology Services  
City of Vancouver  
453 West 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Vancouver, BC V5Y 1V4  
Office: 604.871.6868 Mobile: 604.649.8631

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**From:** Adcock, Jessie  
**Sent:** November-04-17 7:35 PM  
**To:** Lisa Tanh  
**Subject:** Re: Interview

Thanks Lisa :)

Sent from my iPhone

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Hi Jessie,

Thank you for getting back to me.

I completely understand and hope you have a nice weekend with your family.

I look forward to speaking with you on Monday.

On Sat, Nov 4, 2017 at 7:21 PM Adcock, Jessie <[Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca](mailto:Jessie.Adcock@vancouver.ca)> wrote:

Hi Lisa,

Thanks for your email. I will reply back on Monday if that's ok. With my family right now so a bit difficult to process the tweet fully.

Thanks very much in advance for your patience.

Jessie

Sent from my iPhone

On Nov 4, 2017, at 5:12 PM, Lisa Tanh [s.22\(1\)](#) wrote:

Hi Jessie,

My name is Lisa and I am a writer for ThinkPol.

I am emailing because I saw that a Twitter user, VISTRO, accused you for using an official Twitter account for "partisan work." With that said, I was hoping to speak with you to learn about how this makes you feel and how you respond to such allegations as a CTO for the city.

If you have some time in the next few days, I would love to meet in-person or chat via phone (it would take no more than 10 mins. of you time).

Please let me know - thank you.

Best,

Lisa Tanh

[s.22\(1\)](#)

--

Best,

Lisa Tanh

[s.22\(1\)](#)

From: "Couper, Sara" <Sara.Couper@vancouver.ca>  
To: "Krishna, Kaye" <Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca>  
Date: 11/8/2017 2:06:59 PM  
Subject: RE: Interview

Oh, check your email. I sent you a written response – I was just going to send her written responses to save you some time. 😊

Sara Couper | Communications Manager  
Corporate Communications | City of Vancouver  
c. 604-362-5032  
[sara.couper@vancouver.ca](mailto:sara.couper@vancouver.ca)

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**From:** Krishna, Kaye  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 08, 2017 2:02 PM  
**To:** Lisa Tanh  
**Cc:** Media; Couper, Sara  
**Subject:** RE: Interview

Hi Lisa – Apologies I've been in meetings all day. It is always best to cc our media team so they can help track someone down in order to get you a timely response.



15 minutes in between meetings around 2:30 – could that work?

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**From:** Lisa Tanh s.22(1)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, November 8, 2017 1:40 PM  
**To:** Krishna, Kaye  
**Subject:** Re: Interview

Hi Kaye,

I just tried calling but was told you were in a meeting.

I wanted to note that this article will be published this evening, so that you have an opportunity to comment (can be short).

Please let me know if this is possible – I feel it is important for the public to hear your side of the story.

On Wed, Nov 8, 2017 at 9:13 AM, Lisa Tanh s.22(1) wrote:  
Hi Kaye,

My name is Lisa and I am a writer for ThinkPol.

I am emailing because I am writing a follow-up story about short-term rental operations in the city and discovered the attached allegation from the Twitter account VISTRO. With that said, I was hoping you had a few minutes for a quick phone chat to hear your side of the story, and of course, anything else you would like the public to know.

Please let me know if this is possible and the best time to reach you. Thank you - I would greatly appreciate it.

Best,

Lisa Tanh

s.22(1)

--  
Best,

Lisa Tanh

s.22(1)

From: "[Kendall-Craden, Rena](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)" <[Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca](mailto:Rena.Kendall-Craden@vancouver.ca)>

To: "[Krishna, Kaye](mailto:Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca)" <[Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca](mailto:Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca)>

Date: 11/14/2017 3:43:26 PM

Subject: RE: Krishna's report to the Council on short term rentals, Airbnb-commissioned report done by her former lobbying company show similarities | ThinkPol

s.13(1)

-----Original Message-----

From: Krishna, Kaye

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:33 PM

To: Kendall-Craden, Rena

Cc: Couper, Sara

Subject: RE: Krishna's report to the Council on short term rentals, Airbnb-commissioned report done by her former lobbying company show similarities | ThinkPol

Thanks. Sara was aware that I spoke with Lisa Tanh from ThinkPol last Wednesday, who submitted a few questions, including one about the conflict.

s.13(1)

Thanks,  
Kaye

KAYE KRISHNA | General Manager  
Development, Buildings, & Licensing  
(O) 604.873.7160 | (M) s.15(1)(l)

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-----Original Message-----

From: Kendall-Craden, Rena

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 2:13 PM

To: Krishna, Kaye

Cc: Couper, Sara

Subject: RE: Krishna's report to the Council on short term rentals, Airbnb-commissioned report done by her former lobbying company show similarities | ThinkPol

s.13(1)

• EHQFD

Krishna told ThinkPol that VISTRO is “making accusations and drawing connections that are false.”  
I didn’t know you spoke to them?

-----Original Message-----

From: Krishna, Kaye

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:47 PM

To: Couper, Sara; Kendall-Craden, Rena

Cc: Holm, Kathryn

Subject: FW: Krishna’s report to the Council on short term rentals, Airbnb-commissioned report done by her former lobbying company show similarities | ThinkPol

• EHQFD

KAYE KRISHNA | General Manager  
Development, Buildings, & Licensing  
(O) 604.873.7160 | (M) • EHQFD

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-----Original Message-----

From: Kaye Matheny [mailto:• EHQFD]

Sent: Tuesday, November 14, 2017 1:37 PM

To: Krishna, Kaye

Subject: Krishna’s report to the Council on short term rentals, Airbnb-commissioned report done by her former lobbying company show similarities | ThinkPol

<https://thinkpol.ca/2017/11/13/krishnas-report-to-the-council-on-short-term-rentals-airbnb-commissioned-report-done-by-her-former-lobbying-company-show-similarities/>

Sent from my iPhone

From: "[Holm, Kathryn](mailto:Kathryn.Holm@vancouver.ca)" <Kathryn.Holm@vancouver.ca>

To: "[Krishna, Kaye](mailto:Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca)" <Kaye.Krishna@vancouver.ca>

Date: 11/28/2017 4:28:18 PM

Subject: RE: TODAY'S HEADLINES- UPDATED (Tuesday, November 28th, 2017)

Priceless!

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**From:** Krishna, Kaye

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2017 3:33 PM

**To:** Holm, Kathryn

**Subject:** FW: TODAY'S HEADLINES- UPDATED (Tuesday, November 28th, 2017)

The best:

"I haven't thought about it," he said in an email. "Too busy with modular housing, OD crisis (just got a paper in Lancet! Invited commentary out in January) and cannabis rules for province as co-chair of JCCP. Like that line from Casablanca, 'Will I see you tonight?' Bogart answered, 'I don't plan that far ahead.' Not even sure what to have for dinner. I better take something out of the freezer. I will have a better idea at the end of the year."



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**From:** Hamilton, Desiree

**Sent:** Tuesday, November 28, 2017 2:34 PM

**Subject:** TODAY'S HEADLINES- UPDATED (Tuesday, November 28th, 2017)

## Today's Headlines- Updated Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017

### Planning & Development:

[Former city planner Ann McAfee](#) CBC Early Edition (Audio)

### Licensing:

[Airbnbs and Short Term Rentals – More Than Just Strata Bylaws At Play](#)- Real Estate Law Blog

[Head of neighbourhood coalition opposing Vancouver housing strategy accused of running illegal Airbnb](#)- Thinkpol



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**We must go all-in to solve B.C.'s housing crisis**

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### Airbnbs and Short Term Rentals – More Than Just Strata Bylaws At Play

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## Á City targets property speculators, wealthy homeowners

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Ecologists at Stanley Park call on public to build nest boxes, help save tree swallows

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### City invites public to share solutions to single-use waste items at Cambie and West Broadway pop-up

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From: "Johnson, Amanda" <Amanda.Johnson@vancouver.ca>  
To: "Krishna, Kaye"  
Date: 11/15/2017 8:51:02 AM  
Subject: Social media scan, November 15, 2017

Good morning! Here's today's scan.

A reminder: please **contact me first** if you want to respond to anything, or need clarification on any of the posts in this email.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

- Short-term rental regulations driving discussion

#### Overview of social convos from Sysomos (includes top tweets)

- [Morning snapshot for today](#)
- [Yesterday afternoon and overnight snapshot](#)

#### Blogs and videos

<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: Bright Nights in Stanley Park Christmas 2017</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: Gas prices set to drop in Vancouver this week</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: Loblaw will close 22 unprofitable stores by the end of 2018</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: Vancouver Airbnbs to require licences, after new bylaw passes</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: Vancouver's Marine Gateway wins international award for smart urban design</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: VPD seek further public help almost a year after two Stanley Park attacks</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Daily Hive Vancouver: Wind and rain warning issued for Metro Vancouver</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Kitsilano.ca: Move Your Car! Fall Street Leaf Cleaning Begins in Kitsilano on November 14th</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Kitsilano.ca: Vancouver Council Approves Regulations on Airbnb and Short-term Rentals</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Narcity: 9 Places You Can Get \$1 Oysters Every Day Of The Week In Vancouver</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Price Tags: Pedestrians and Vancouver's Active Transportation Update</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Airbnb and Expedia opt to stay in Vancouver under the restrictive rules</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Ales Fraser Bridge, the longest cable-stayed bridge in the world when it opened in 1986.</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: BC Almanac Podcast: Tom Davidoff on Vancouver's new short-term rental regulations</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Bike theft in Vancouver drops 30% thanks to new app. Will other Canadian cities catch on?</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Liberals drop pledge to waive GST for new rental-housing construction</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Mobility in Vancouver?</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: MurderedByWords - Tenants get into AirBnB debate in my building</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Question: If someone built half a city's worth of houses and only sold them at a cheap price to people and/or citizens who needed them how would that affect the current housing market?</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: There's sheet metal hanging from a building on Robson St and nothing is being done about it</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: They really need a solution for the Hastings / Cassiar intersection.</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Turning mansion to seniors home will cost Vancouver jobs, says Radler</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver approves a \$49 annual license for Airbnb hosts</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver city council considers expanding bike share system</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver considers handing Cambie Bridge lane over to cyclists</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver office tower sells out at \$2,000 per square foot</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver police issue warning about high-risk sex offender and say another one is arrested on warrant</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver readies official apology for past discrimination against Chinese residents</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Reddit Vancouver: Vancouver real estate board threatens ThinkPol with lawsuit to protect foreign buyer privacy</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Spacing Vancouver: Vancouver 2.0</a>
<a href="#">Link</a>	<a href="#">Spacing Vancouver: Video Vancouver: Boxes   Let's Unlock Cities</a>

#### Facebook

<b>Our posts</b>
<a href="#">Link</a> Our post about extra shelter spaces reached 1,823, 3 reactions, 3 shares
<a href="#">Link</a> Our post about leaf collection reached 1,820, 5 reactions, 1 share
<a href="#">Link</a> Our video about housing reached 15,916, 6.3k views, 58 reactions, 4 shares, 28 comments
<a href="#">Link</a> Our post about the Awards of Excellence reached 1,115, 1 reaction, 1 share
<b>Mentions of our page by others</b>
<a href="#">Link</a> Envol Strategies mentioned us in a post about recruitment
<a href="#">Link</a> Women in Sport BC mentioned us in a post about the Athlete of the Year Awards
<a href="#">Link</a> The Tourism Industry Association of BC mentioned us in a post about short-term rental regulations passing
<a href="#">Link</a> Megaphone mentioned us in a post about overdose prevention
<a href="#">Link</a> Andrew Shopland mentioned us in a post about the Mo'Bikes app

#### LinkedIn

- N/A

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**Today's Headlines**  
**Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**City Services:**

[City of Vancouver's "grate" contest adopts, names catch basins and curbs floods](#) Times Colonist, CBC News

**Housing:**

['Not enough focus on the demand side' Supply alone won't fix Vancouver housing crisis, says chief planner](#) Vancouver Sun (front page below fold), The Province

[Vancouver Foreign Buyer Ban? City May Limit Housing Market To Local Residents](#) Huffington Post

[Rental costs trend upwards](#) The Province

[Protesters block driveway, delay modular housing project on Vancouver's south side](#) Globe and Mail

[Vancouver, Toronto rental markets face rising rents, extremely low vacancy, survey](#) Globe and Mail

[Vancouver to tackle "fierce" speculation by foreign buyers and local investors](#) Thinkpol

**Transportation:**

[New southbound bike lane planned for Cambie Street Bridge](#) Urban YVR

**Yesterday's Headlines- Updated**  
**Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

**City Services:**

[Vancouver Bidders' Project requests \\$75K for cart sharing pilot](#) News 1130

**Housing:**

[B.C. cities have some of the highest rents and lowest vacancy rates in Canada](#) CBC News

[Vancouver City Council to vote on housing strategy to increase density](#) News 1130, Global News/CKNW

[Vancouver's rental crush eases slightly](#) Metro News

[Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy provides faint hope for those 'squeezed out'](#) Vancouver Courier

[Vancouver's plan: More housing, less speculation](#) Metro News

[Here are the flaws in Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy: expert](#) Buzzbuzz News

[Overcoming the cost of regulatory paralysis](#) (Opinion) Vancouver Sun

[One bedroom vacancy rates rise downtown, West End](#) Vancouver Courier

[City of Vancouver responds to the "poor door effect"](#) Roundhouse Radio

**Sustainability:**

[City of Vancouver abandons natural gas ban under new FortisBC agreement](#) Daily Hive

**City of Vancouver's "grate" contest adopts, names catch basins and curbs floods**

The Canadian Press  
November 29, 2017 05:16 AM

VANCOUVER — In hopes of injecting a little fun into the mucky but vital job of maintaining catch basins, the City of Vancouver launched a contest encouraging residents to "adopt" a catch basin.

Now the public has a chance to decide which of the more than 1,000 contest participants has come up with the most creative name for their chosen "adoptee."

Catch basins capture surface water from roads, parking lots and highways and direct it to the main storm water system but during Vancouver's rainy autumn weather, leaves or other debris can clog the grates to those basins, sometimes causing significant flooding.

Vancouver's contest to adopt a basin and give it a "grate" name has produced monikers ranging from The Grates of Wrath, to Grate Expectations and, of course, Draino McDrainface.

Residents can now vote online for their favourite name and the winner will receive a \$200 dollar gift card for rain gear.

Although the naming contest has ended, a news release from the City of Vancouver says there are 45,000 adoptable catch basins across the city that residents can find online, adopt, name and keep clear to help neighbourhood roadways remain flood-free.

[www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/city-of-vancouver-s-grate-contest-adopts-names-catch-basins-and-curbs-floods-1.23107458](http://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/city-of-vancouver-s-grate-contest-adopts-names-catch-basins-and-curbs-floods-1.23107458)

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**Vancouver Foreign Buyer Ban? City May Limit Housing Market To Local Residents**

City council will vote on a host of housing measures on Wednesday.

11/29/2017 08:07 EST | Updated 2 hours ago

Julie Gordon

A Seabus commuter vessel with condo towers in the background in Vancouver, B.C., Tuesday, July 11, 2017. The city of Vancouver is considering restricting ownership of housing to local residents.

VANCOUVER, Nov 28 (Reuters) — The city of Vancouver is considering restricting ownership of housing to local residents, among other strategies, as it looks to cool a hot real estate market that it says is fueled by foreign and local speculation.

A foreign buyer ban is just one of numerous supply and demand measures outlined in Vancouver's new 10-year housing strategy, which was announced late last week and presented to city council on Tuesday. Council will vote on it on Wednesday.

Even if passed, as expected, many of the measures being considered will need the support of federal and provincial governments, particularly those around taxation.

Watch Vancouver house prices are unaffordable for the middle class

"There is a perfect storm in Vancouver," Gil Kelley, Vancouver's General Manager of Planning, told council on Tuesday, pointing to the "excessive supply of global capital" flowing into the city, along with builders targeting investors, low interest rates, and favorable tax policies.

Vancouver, long Canada's most expensive housing market, has already made numerous moves to try to curb the crisis, including imposing an empty home tax and restricting short-term rentals.

Home prices on Vancouver's upscale west side jumped 57 percent in the last three years, sending the typical price — including condos, townhouses and detached homes — to \$1.4 million, according to the local real estate board. In the Greater Vancouver region, the typical home now costs \$1 million, 12.5 times the region's median household income of \$79,930, putting home ownership out of reach of many residents.

Rents have also jumped in recent years, with the vacancy rate hovering below 1 percent, the city said.

The lack of affordable housing is putting strain on local businesses, with restaurants, retailers, and even the city itself struggling to find enough workers.

To address the crunch, Vancouver is considering new strategies including imposing a speculation tax, an increase to the luxury tax, and the possibility of "restricting property ownership by non-permanent residents."

It is also planning to rezone neighborhoods across the city to a low for denser housing, including more townhomes and low-rise condos, in areas traditionally dominated by detached homes.

It is the latest jurisdiction to consider restricting foreign investment in housing, following in the footsteps of Australia and New Zealand.

British Columbia last year imposed a 15-percent tax on foreign buyers in the Vancouver area, which has helped cool the market for expensive detached homes, though demand for condos has exploded.

[www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/11/29/vancouver-foreign-buyer-ban-city-may-limit-housing-market-to-local-residents\\_a\\_23291509/](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/11/29/vancouver-foreign-buyer-ban-city-may-limit-housing-market-to-local-residents_a_23291509/)

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**B.C. cities have some of the highest rents and lowest vacancy rates in Canada**

The findings were published in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual report

By Michelle Ghoussoub, [CBC News](#) Posted Nov 28, 2017 5:54 AM PT Last Updated Nov 28, 2017 5:54 AM PT

According to the report, Kelowna, Abbotsford-Mission, Victoria and Vancouver all have less than one per cent vacancy, (Darryl Dyck/The Canadian Press)

B.C. has some of the lowest vacancy rates and highest rents in Canada, according to a new report this morning from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The study found that B.C. is home to four of the five lowest vacancy rates in the country — Kelowna, Abbotsford-Mission, Victoria and Vancouver.

All four areas have vacancy rates of less than one per cent.

Kelowna had the biggest average rent increase at 8.6 per cent, followed by Victoria at 8.2 per cent and Vancouver at 6.2 per cent.

At an average of \$1,552 per month, Vancouver remained the most expensive area to rent a two-bedroom apartment, with Toronto following at \$1,404 per month.

However the highest average rental condominium rent was in Toronto at \$2,301 per month, followed by Vancouver at \$1,874 per month.

The report also found that for the third consecutive year, average rents in Vancouver increased faster than the provincially-capped rate of 3.7 per cent.

The B.C. Residential Tenancy Branch imposes rent guidelines, but when a unit turns over to a new tenant, the landlord is free to set a new rent amount at the market level.

The report isn't all bad news for renters. It says the supply of purpose-built rental units being approved is increasing, though many won't be occupied for years to come.

[www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-cities-have-some-of-the-highest-rents-and-lowest-vacancy-rates-in-canada-1.4422343](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-cities-have-some-of-the-highest-rents-and-lowest-vacancy-rates-in-canada-1.4422343)

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**Vancouver City Council to vote on housing strategy to increase density**

by [Jonathon Brown](#)

Posted Nov 28, 2017 11:12 pm PST

Last Updated Nov 29, 2017 at 6:57 am PST

Vancouver City Hall (Photo credit: Dustin Godfrey for NEWS 1130)

Vancouver City Council will vote on the strategy to build 72,000 new units over the next decade

The strategy will look at rezoning neighbourhoods to make room for more dense housing

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) — The City of Vancouver is about to decide on a proposal to make it cheaper to live here.

On Wednesday, Vancouver City Council will vote on the strategy to build 72,000 new units over the next decade.

[Councillor Kerry Jang](#) says that could mean more townhouses, mid- and high-rise apartments in high-transit areas.

He says they will be looking at different models to ensure that housing is made for people to live in, and not be a commodity.

"My wife and I tried buying a place in Hong Kong, only to be told we weren't Hong Kong residents, and we were out of luck," he says. "I think local people buying housing as a commodity is an issue. So that's all fine, but so long as that housing is here, let somebody live in it, don't just keep it empty and flip it."

He says the 10-year plan would need more staff to work out a budget.

Jang says the strategy will look at rezoning neighbourhoods to make room for more dense housing, with everything from more townhouses, low-rise condos, and mid-rise apartments where you typically see traditional detached homes.

"Trying to find the right housing for different types of income bands, and how they spend their money on housing, it's not just about paying rent anymore, but sometimes they share with people, and there's even inter-generational living."

The report also plans to build more affordable housing, with a studio costing around \$950 to \$1,600 for a two-bedroom apartment.

There are many people scheduled to speak at city council before the report is voted on.

[www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-city-council-vote-housing-strategy-planning-increase-density/](http://www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-city-council-vote-housing-strategy-planning-increase-density/)

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## Vancouver's rental crush eases slightly

CMHC's annual rent survey shows rent increases and vacancy rates eased slightly for Vancouver. But rents shot up in some suburbs.

By Jen St Denis Metro Published on Tue Nov 28 2017

Vancouver's rental vacancy rate eased slightly in 2017, and rent increases eased their rapid clip compared to 2016.

Despite the slightly improved conditions, Vancouver still has the highest rents in the country, with the average one-bedroom apartment now costing \$1,326, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual rental market survey.

Gil Kelley, Vancouver's chief planner, called the uptick in the vacancy rate — from 0.8 to 0.9 per cent — “an encouraging sign.”

“We're not sure what that's all due to, we have produced more rental housing for one thing,” Kelley said. “We’l see how increasing rental housing affects that number in the next year or two.”

Between 2015 and 2016, [Metro Vancouver renters experienced the highest rent increases ever recorded](#), increasing evictions and a dispiriting search for a new place with vacancy rates falling to 0.7 per cent.

Rent increases usually track the province's allowable rent increase cap, which was four per cent in 2017. But in 2016, Metro Vancouver rents increased by 6.4 per cent. This year they increased by six per cent.

In the City of Vancouver, rent rates increased by seven per cent in 2016, that slowed to 4.9 per cent in 2017. This year, rents increased the most in North Burnaby (10.3 per cent), Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody (11.1 per cent) and New Westminster (9 per cent).

Kelley said it was possible that the city's new empty homes tax and restrictions on short term rental are also having an impact on the rental market, noting that the vacancy rate in the West End and Downtown went up significantly, from 0.6 per cent in 2016 to 1.2 per cent in 2017. However, it's too early to tell for sure and the city will continue to track the rental market, he said.

The city has said it may reconsider the empty homes tax if the rental vacancy rate improves. But that may not necessarily be the best measure of the health of Vancouver's rental market, said Eric Bond, a CMHC analyst.

“Historically, the vacancy rate in Vancouver has never been above 2.7 per cent, in contrast with other cities like Montreal, where the vacancy rate is usually four per cent,” Bond said.

“Both markets just function differently. What we'd more be looking for in terms of an equilibrium is the pace of increase of average rent to be in line with the provincially allowable rent increase.”

Dan Garrison, a housing planner with the City of Vancouver, said the city considers a healthy vacancy rate to be between three and five per cent. A vacancy rate of two per cent would be a signal that the market is heading out of “a crisis situation.”

[www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/vancouver-s-rental-crush-eases-slightly.html](http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/vancouver-s-rental-crush-eases-slightly.html)

## Vancouver, Toronto rental markets face rising rents, extremely low vacancy: survey

The downtown skyline is seen in in Vancouver in 2015. The city's rental prices rank among the highest in Canada.

DARRYL DYCK/The Globe and Mail

[Frances Rula](#)

VANCOUVER

Special to The Globe and Mail

12 hours ago November 28, 2017

B.C. has among the tightest rental markets in the country, with smaller cities increasingly facing vacancy rates that are at or near zero, while rents are rising faster than the national average.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.'s annual rental market survey, released on Tuesday, shows the cost of rental apartments in Vancouver and Toronto remains the highest in the country, with a two-bedroom unit in a private rental building priced at an average of \$1,550 in Vancouver and \$1,400 in Toronto. An investor-owned condo cost an average of \$2,300 for Toronto and almost \$1,900 in Vancouver. Vacancy rates are less than 1 per cent in those two large metro areas.

But places such as Squamish, Nelson, Kelowna, Abbotsford, Campbell River and Penticton are seeing vacancy rates even lower than the 0.9 per cent in Vancouver.

In Squamish, a onetime mill town about an hour from downtown Vancouver, the vacancy rate was zero and average rent for a two-bedroom unit jumped 22.2 per cent to \$1,161 in October from a year ago. In Nelson, vacancy was also zero and rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by 7.5 per cent. And Kelowna saw its two-bedroom apartments increase by 8.6 per cent to \$1,151.

The one pinpoint of light for observers was that vacancy rates improved slightly in some parts of the Lower Mainland and rate increases over the past year were not as high as the previous one. The average rent increases were still higher than the year's provincial cap on allowable increases for tenants who stay in the same units.

“I did not expect the vacancy rate to actually improve. I was expecting it to be worse,” said David Hutniak, the chief executive of Landlord BC, a lobby group.

The statistics on those jumps come as local, provincial and federal governments are struggling to grapple with what many have called an out-of-control housing problem in hot spots around the country.

This week, Vancouver city council is debating a comprehensive new housing strategy that envisions incentives and tactics for reducing land speculation and increasing the stock of low-cost rentals. The city also just approved its second batch of temporary housing for homeless people, in spite of some community opposition.

City staff are exploring whether Vancouver could create rental-only zones, which they say could have a significant impact on land prices — and eventually rents. The city is already moving steadily toward the first application of its new regulations and taxes for vacant homes and short-term rentals.

Victoria, where the vacancy rate is lower than in Vancouver, is also looking at restrictions on short-term vacation rentals.

The province has promised to introduce new measures to deal with speculation and investment in housing, after having already promised to fund 2,000 units of temporary housing throughout B.C.

And the federal government just announced a 10-year housing plan a couple of weeks ago, with promises to create 100,000 new low-cost homes. However, the situation remains anxiety-producing for Vancouver's many renters.

“We are in a house with a good relationship with our landlord, but it doesn't stop the concern,” said Claire Beveridge, a 31-year-old digital-marketing consultant.

She and her partner pay \$1,000 a month for the main floor of a house near Vancouver's Commercial Drive. But they worry about the future, especially since the property next door was sold and high-end townhouses are now under construction there.

When they scan the Craigslist ads, they see rents for units the same size as their current apartment ranging from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

That kind of gap between older apartments with long-term tenants, whose rent increases are capped at inflationary rates by the province, and newer units or ones that have just come on to the market means that recent arrivals in Vancouver end up paying much higher prices than the statistical average.

As well, it means tenants who have been in apartments a long time are reluctant to move.

Housing observers see hope in some of the new measures being rolled out.

Mr. Hutniak said a lot of new rental construction is in the pipeline. As well, he noted that the city's new policies on empty homes and short-term vacation rentals haven't come into effect yet.

Those could help alleviate the tight market, eventually, in the municipalities that are taking action, including Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster and the City of North Vancouver.

But that won't come fast.

“We're in a big rental-housing hole,” Vancouver housing-statistics analyst Jens von Bergmann said. “It's going to take a lot of digging to get out.

Comparing markets

Here's a look at rental markets (census metropolitan areas) across Canada for a two-bedroom apartment.

### Vancouver

Average rent \$1,552

Change from last year 6.2 per cent

Vacancy rate 0.9 per cent

Kelowna, B.C.

Average rent \$1,151

Change from last year 8.6

Vacancy rate 0.2

Calgary

Average rent \$1,247

Change from last year -1

Vacancy rate 6.3

Toronto

Average rent \$1,404

Change from last year 4.2

Vacancy rate 1

Ottawa

Average rent \$1,232

Change from last year 2

Vacancy rate 1.7

Montreal

Average rent \$782

Change from last year 2.1

Vacancy rate 2.8

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.

[www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-rental-market-remains-strained-survey/article37122063/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-rental-market-remains-strained-survey/article37122063/)

## Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy provides faint hope for those 'squeezed out'

Strategy is long in length, long overdue and a long way off

[Allen Garr](#) / Vancouver Courier

November 28, 2017 04:55 PM

Consideration of the city's 10-year housing strategy coincided with a CMHC report indicating Vancouver boasts the dubious distinction of having the country's lowest vacancy rate and highest rental rate for a two-bedroom apartment. Photo Dan Toulgoet

As Vancouver city council met Tuesday to consider passage of their 10-year housing strategy, they could not have expected worse news to once again make clear how dire the situation is.

Tuesday morning CMHC issued a report confirming Vancouver's dubious status. No city has a lower rental vacancy rate in Canada; no city has a higher rental rate for a two-bedroom apartment.

One other grim statistic was introduced as well by a CMHC analyst on CBC radio. For the past three years, rents in Vancouver have exceeded the provincial allowable levels (two per cent plus inflation), including this year where average rents bumped up 5.7 per cent.

If that weren't enough, there is the issue of homelessness. In his inaugural address in 2008, to much applause, Mayor Gregor Robertson had this to say: “It is our council's single most important priority in this term of office.”

Quibble over whether he meant “street homelessness” or just plain homelessness, but almost a decade later, at a “sustainability community breakfast” called by Metro Vancouver this week, people sipping their coffee and munching on their muffins would be told that “Lower Mainland homelessness is increasing four times faster than population growth.”

Vision Vancouver and Mayor Robertson are not solely culpable for the housing affordability crisis in which we find ourselves. And it would be unfair to say this administration has done nothing; there are the recent regulations to control and diminish the phenomenon of short-term rentals and the recently approved empty homes tax.

Other levels of government — provincial and federal — were, like Vancouver, benefiting mightily from the real estate windfall that drove prices up and out of reach. While houses and other dwelling units became commodities taking up space in investment portfolios, they did little or nothing to stop the money machine.

It meant, as former city planner Ann McAlee explained on morning radio, “there was a bigger audience competing for homes in Vancouver.”

She also pointed out that nothing was more damaging than the decision by Ottawa, back in the day when Jean Chretien was prime minister and Paul Martin was his deficit-cutting minister of finance, to withdraw from investing in affordable housing.

That was then, and even now with Trudeau the Younger at the helm saying he is back in the housing business, no significant money will be put towards that purpose until, or even if, he is re-elected in 2019.

The provincial Liberals' refusal to act, preferring to lard their treasury with millions in land transfer taxes until it was far too late to avert the tsunami of foreign cash, was in no small part the reason Christy Clark and her government got the boot.

But Robertson does not come off squeaky clean by allowing current zoning regulations to stand for his three terms in office.

Jake Fry, owner of Smallworks, the builder of laneway houses and a member of the mayor's advisory panel on the new policy, had this to say about the real estate gold rush that has taken place: “Affluence in this respect has resulted in a type of housing poverty.”

His solution — and one being taken up, finally, in this housing report — is that instead of allowing monster houses to replace those older, smaller homes, put more housing units on each property and, by doing that, disperse the land value and improve affordability.

There are, however, many other proposals in the couple of hundred pages being put forward by city staff for councillors to consider on the road to affordability.

It is a sign of the extreme desperation, the need to do anything that would aid the whole spectrum of Vancouverites now feeling they are being squeezed out — no matter how faint that hope may be — that this plan has received such widespread support.

In a news release last weekend, it was clear that everyone — from landlords of conventional rental units, tenant advocates and administrators for the most marginalized to supporters of co-op housing and with this plan has received such widespread support. — is willing to give this plan a shot.

That said, it will take years, if not decades, to get us out of a dilemma that has had decades to fully overwhelm us.

[www.vancourier.com/opinion/vancouver-s-10-year-housing-strategy-provides-faint-hope-for-those-squeezed-out-1.23107230](http://www.vancourier.com/opinion/vancouver-s-10-year-housing-strategy-provides-faint-hope-for-those-squeezed-out-1.23107230)

## Protestors block driveway, delay modular housing project on Vancouver's south side

Rosa Liu, left, with a group of concerned residents and parents, protests against temporary modular housing in the Marpole neighbourhood on Tuesday. Some residents say they were blindsided by how fast the project moved and argued a public hearing should have been held.

Rafal Gerszak/The Globe and Mail

[Andrea Vito](#)

VANCOUVER

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

13 hours ago November 28, 2017

One day after the City of Vancouver approved a contentious temporary modular housing development on the city's south side, a handful of protesters blocked driveway entrances to the property, forcing the delay of planned site preparations.

The 78-unit development in the Marpole neighbourhood has been billed as a quick and affordable way to house some of the city's most vulnerable people. But some residents of the area say they were blindsided by the speed at which the project moved and argued that a public hearing should have been held.

(A recent bylaw change removed the requirement for temporary modular housing to go before a public hearing as long as the land does not require rezoning.)

On Tuesday, a handful of people held signs with slogans such as “Return my public hearing right” and “We want a say.”

Ann Mukai was among those at the proposed site, currently an empty lot owned by the development company Onni. It is located in a quiet residential area across from an elementary school and a small secondary school.

Ms. Mukai, whose three young children attend the elementary school, said her concern is that there is a requirement for a percentage of the tenants to fall into what is known as “service level 3,” a category that includes people with extensive criminal histories and are at high-risk to reoffend, and people who “can create security problems through aggressive and intimidating behaviour,” according to a city document.

The Sept. 25 document notes that “the housing provider will be expected to house a minimum of 20 per cent of the most vulnerable homeless individuals who will fit into the service level 3 category.”

“If people are homeless, if they've hit a rough patch, I get it. I have an aunt who's almost there,” Ms. Mukai said. “But if you're going to put service-level-3 people there across from elementary school kids ... it's not cool. Incidents that happen will be critical to little kids.”

Gil Kelley, the city's general manager of planning, urban design and sustainability, on Tuesday said he granted temporary approval to the five-year development with residents' specific concerns about tenancing and community engagement in mind.

Conditions newly added to the development permit include a community advisory committee composed of community and parent advisory council members and a condition that the building operator consider best practices and local factors when tenancing, Mr. Kelley said.

He declined to comment further on a specific tenant mix.

“I want to leave that up to the process to determine how that will work,” Mr. Kelley said.

“People certainly have a right to housing. This program is broad; it includes a number of sites throughout the city.

“What we've asked is, in that work, that the operator take care in terms of making a good fit with this neighbourhood and taking into account the local considerations.”

Also at the site on Tuesday was Alex Morrison, a nearby resident who walks past the site daily on his way to and from school at Langara. He held a sign in support of the project.

“I always see these signs, and the protesters out here,” Mr. Morrison said.

"I never saw anybody saying 'We support it,' so I just thought I'd take half an hour, come out here and show anybody who does care that there are people who support this."

Mr. Morrison said he trusts the vetting process and is troubled by his neighbours' attempts to keep certain people out.

"Diversity is ideal," he said. "We should have anybody who wants to live there, who needs a place, to live there. We should have more [developments] I like that, frankly."

The Marpole development is part of a \$66-million commitment from the B.C. government toward building a total of 600 temporary modular housing units in Vancouver.

Metro Vancouver's latest homeless count, released late September, found that 3,605 people in the region do not have homes, up from 2,777 during the last count three years ago. Of those, 2,138 were in the City of Vancouver.

[www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/protestors-block-driveaway-delay-modular-housing-project-on-vancouvers-south-side/article37121988/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/protestors-block-driveaway-delay-modular-housing-project-on-vancouvers-south-side/article37121988/)

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## Vancouver Binnners' Project requests \$75K for cart sharing pilot

by [Lacie Kretzel](#)  
Posted Nov 28, 2017 5:32 pm PST  
An estimated 3,000 full-time binnners currently operate in Vancouver

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) – Vancouver's bottle and can collectors could soon have new equipment to help them lug their haul to recycling depots as a local group asks the city for a grant to test out the first cart sharing program.

[The Binnners' Project](#) wants \$75,000 from the City of Vancouver to pilot the program. Similar to bike share programs, binnners could borrow a cart for several hours, with a nominal deposit. Right now, binnners use everything from shopping carts to wagons and pile them high in order to collect enough during the day.

Project director Anna Godefroy says their prototypes hold twice the amount of a normal shopping cart and are desperately needed.

"Their limitation is often the transportation of materials so if they have a more efficient cart then they can bring more cans and bottles and we can divert more of those from landfills," Godefroy said.

Although there is no official count, Godefroy estimates there are around 3,000 full-time binnners in Vancouver. She said a cart sharing program would also reduce crime, as many binnners steal shopping carts from retail outlets.

The carts would also be outfitted with a trailer hitch so binnners could attach it to their bicycles.

The pilot, dubbed the Universal Cart Pilot could start in early 2018, and Godefroy hopes the full program could roll out by early 2019 and will include up to 40 carts at two stations over the next three years.

The stations would likely be located at bottle depots, including the United We Can on Industrial Avenue and another in the Downtown Eastside.

A city report presented to council today recommends councillors approve the new grant.

Council approved an initial grant of \$69,800 in November 2016 to the Binnners' Project. The group also raised money from other sponsorships and grants.

The Binnners' Project is a group of waste-pickers and support staff dedicated to improving economic opportunities and reducing stigma of binnners.

[www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-binnners-project-requests-75k-cart-sharing-pilot/](http://www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-binnners-project-requests-75k-cart-sharing-pilot/)

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## 'Not enough focus on the demand side': Supply alone won't fix Vancouver housing crisis, says chief planner

By [Dan Fumano](#)  
Published on November 28, 2017 | Last Updated November 28, 2017 6:34 PM

As Vancouver real estate has soared out of reach of most locals in recent years, some high-profile figures have attested the only way to solve the problem is correcting the city's housing supply shortage. Others have argued for interventions on the demand side. The debate has, at times, become heated.

On Tuesday, Vancouver's chief planner staked out a position, saying the city can't build its way out of its housing crisis by focusing solely on increasing supply — it's crucial, he said, to address demand.

Gil Kelley, Vancouver's general manager of planning, presented council Tuesday with the city's new 10-year housing strategy, which he described as part of a "major turning point in the city's development."

Kelley said that San Francisco, the city where he previously worked — and one of the only housing markets in North America more expensive than Vancouver — had faced a "supply shortage."

But in Vancouver, he said, "the same conditions are not driving the housing affordability crisis."

"In fact, we've actually been creating a large supply of housing as opposed to San Francisco, for the past decade or more, it's just that supply has been targeted at the high-end and for investors, and leaving out many of the folks that live here in Vancouver and want to work and raise families," said Kelley, who was appointed as Vancouver's top planner in August 2016.

"In fact," Kelley continued in a statement breaking from the real estate industry's reigning orthodoxy, Vancouver has "produced more than our population growth would demand on its own." Adding housing supply alone won't improve affordability, he said, in a city with a "very extreme level of speculative investment in real estate, primarily in high-end condominiums."

The new housing strategy raises the idea of exploring demand-side solutions with senior governments, including restricting foreign ownership of property. Vancouver, Kelley said, has been hit by "a perfect storm."

Outside council chambers, Kelley told Postmedia that Vancouver's housing market has been struck by a combination of low interest rates, favourable federal tax policies, and "the ease of moving capital around, whether that's locally or internationally — and a lot of it is international in Vancouver's case."

"Those forces combined and have escalated to the point where we need a different set of controls on the demand side that we've never had," Kelley said. "I think there has not been enough focus on the demand side. And I don't blame that on Vancouver, I think in most cities that's been the case."

"I don't know if it's been a deliberate focus, but the effect of city policy over the last year, over the past decade, really, has been to focus on rezoning areas, and incentivizing new housing development, and creating vibrant urban neighbourhoods. There's nothing wrong with that, except that, in the current global investment market, without other controls on the demand side, it's not enough."

Asked how much of a shift from the past this viewpoint represents, Kelley said "I think it's quite significant."

"My predecessors had the task of producing housing and increasing density in a way that would increase the vitality and livability of neighbourhoods and housing options. And I think this affordability crisis would have surprised all of them, the extent of it," he said. "So I'm coming in with a slightly different perspective, which is that we've got to tackle all sides of this question."

It's a significant shift, too, from what some locals have said for years, including prominent voices from the real estate and development industry, the largest sector of B.C.'s economy.

[vancouverun.com/news/local-news/not-enough-focus-on-the-demand-side-supply-alone-wont-fix-vancouver-housing-crisis-says-chief-planner](http://vancouverun.com/news/local-news/not-enough-focus-on-the-demand-side-supply-alone-wont-fix-vancouver-housing-crisis-says-chief-planner)

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## Vancouver's plan: More housing, less speculation

City sets itself a nearly impossible task

Jennifer Gauthier / For Metro

July 20, 2017. Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and Chief Planner Gil Kelley hold a press conference outside of 4028 Quesnel Drive on options to densify single-family neighbourhoods that have been losing population.

By Jen St Denis Metro Published on Tue Nov 28 2017

Can Vancouver densify its single-family neighbourhoods without setting off a wave of speculation that will kill any chance of making housing more affordable?

That was the question on several city councilor's minds on Tuesday as city planning staff laid out more details of a revamped housing strategy.

"Even in areas we haven't rezoned, there has been massive speculation," observed NPA Coun. George Affleck, describing areas like the Broadway corridor, where a subway extension has been planned and Renfrew Street.

The new plan, which was first introduced back in March, promises more affordable housing will be included in new developments, increased densification in single-family neighbourhoods and faster processing times for building.

The city has been criticized for waiting too long to rethink its housing plans, following a property price spike that began in 2015 and has upended any relation between regional incomes and home prices. While the detached home market flattened following the introduction of a 15 per cent foreign buyer tax, global and local investment has simply flowed in to the Metro Vancouver condo market.

Gil Kelley, the city's chief planner, said the city believes it can dampen speculation. But don't expect land prices to drop. "We're not going to roll back the prices that have been baked in," Kelley said, "but we hope to curb future price increases that are purely speculative in nature."

How does the city hope to stop the runaway train that is the Vancouver real estate market? There are things the city has the power to do right now.

"Wherever we start a new plan that might result in up-zoning, that will come with some limitations on development without providing a lot of affordable housing," Kelley said.

City of Vancouver

A slide from city staff's presentation to council showing the disconnect between housing costs and incomes.

"We will consider the land values at the start of the process as opposed to a lot of the speculative gains over the two years or so it might take to do the process."

The city also hopes senior levels of government will agree to allow rental-only zoning; put in place a tax on property flipping; increase the property transfer tax on luxury properties; and reform income tax and capital gains tax to "close loopholes."

In single-family neighbourhoods, where population gains have been modest or negative over the past 15 years, the city wants to allow low-rises and townhomes near schools and community centres — but it also wants them to include housing affordable to different bands of income.

David Hutniak, CEO of Landlord BC, said rental-only zoning could help temper land value costs.

When it comes to single-family lots, where lower-density building is planned, "the greater the density the greater the likelihood the numbers will work," Hutniak wrote in an email to Metro. "So the task will be finding that balance."

"The land value/cost is pretty much the driver of the entire current housing crisis."

[www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/the-plan-more-housing-less-speculation.html](http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/the-plan-more-housing-less-speculation.html)

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## Here are the flaws in Vancouver's 10-year housing strategy: expert

By [Kerrisa Wilson](#) Nov 28, 2017  
Photo [Nick Watkins/Flickr](#)

Last week, the City of Vancouver released its 10-year plan to tackle the city's housing affordability crisis, but one organization says the strategy is missing key details.

According to Generation Squeeze, the strategy is a comprehensive plan that they applaud, however, it has its shortcomings with respect to housing targets and wealth inequities.

"Any adequate housing strategy, whether it's at the municipal level or the national level, needs to engage directly with the wealth inequalities that are playing out along generational lines right now as a result of rising home prices," Dr. Paul Kershaw, UBC professor and Generation Squeeze founder, tells BuzzBuzzNews.

The non-profit organization describes itself as leading a national campaign lobbying on behalf of Canadians in their 40s and younger addressing the growing squeeze that group is facing in the marketplace.

Kershaw says Vancouver's 60-plus page proposal fully embraces the principle of homes first, investments second, and provides a multi-prong approach to rein in home prices relative to what younger people earn. However, the plan contains weak spots that need to be recognized.

Over the next decade, the City plans on building 72,000 housing units, with two-thirds of this total available for renters. But after reading the targets, Kershaw doesn't believe this is sufficient.

"Do we know that the 72,000 units are going to be enough to add back the kind of competition we need to see in the housing market so that it will help to actually cool down housing prices?" says Kershaw.

The City's report does not provide rationale as to how it came up with the targets and Kershaw worries the plan does not sufficiently address the amount of supply needed to help put downward pressure on prices.

He also adds that 72,000 units isn't a bold enough number.

In 2016 and 2017, Kershaw says there were 11,000 housing starts per year on average, significantly more than the roughly 7,000 units the current strategy would bring to the market over the next decade. Furthermore, the City details how many new units will be allocated for social housing, rentals and ownership, but doesn't mention the price of these units — information Kershaw says needs to be included.

"One of the worries that we have is that what is said to be affordable for those income ranges still tends to be pretty darn expensive," he says.

Using the City's numbers from the report, Kershaw says if a below market rent for a three-bedroom home is \$2,000 a month, then a typical household income to cover that cost would need to be \$80,000 — well above the median household income in Vancouver of \$67,000.

"The plan to some degree is not even imagining that a typical earning household could afford a three-bedroom apartment to rent in the city," says Kershaw.

To the UBC professor, the most critical downfall of the strategy is that it doesn't address housing wealth inequities head-on. Skyrocketing prices have squeezed many residents out of the market, while benefiting a new group of people Kershaw refers to as "lottery winners."

Kershaw says the plan lacks an acknowledgement of generational and wealth inequities, along with the taxation solutions needed to correct them.

"We should establish in BC and Ontario, working groups that look into taxing real estate wealth fairly, with a focus on how do we address these lottery winnings?" says Kershaw.

<http://news.buzzbuzzhome.com/2017/11/flaws-vancouver-housing-strategy.html>

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## New southbound bike lane planned for Cambie Street Bridge

By [Peter Meiszner](#)  
November 29, 2017

Current conditions on the Cambie Street bridge mean cyclists and pedestrians share the east sidewalk, with a high potential for collisions. Credit: City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver is planning to turn a southbound lane on the Cambie Street bridge into a protected bike lane, similar to the Dunsmuir viaduct.

The city is calling the cycling improvements "interim," and says further improvements will be considered in the future.

There will be no changes to the northbound lanes heading into downtown, but drivers will lose one lane of traffic heading south.

The eastbound protected bike lane on Nelson Street will be extended to continue southbound on the bridge, and will be separated by concrete barriers.

Cyclists using the new southbound lane will travel down the off-ramp to West 6th Avenue — the lane will not continue past this point.

The separated bike lane will continue southbound down the off-ramp to West 6th Avenue. Credit: City of Vancouver

The number of cyclists on the Cambie Street has increased steadily since 2010. Approximately 38,000 cyclists crossed the bridge in June 2010 — seven years later, that number nearly doubled to 71,000.

Most cyclists use the shared pedestrian-cycling path on the east side of the bridge, which is prone to conflicts.

Construction is anticipated to start in early 2018. For more information, visit [vancouver.ca/cambiebridge](http://vancouver.ca/cambiebridge)

[urbanvrv.com/cambie-street-bike-lane](http://urbanvrv.com/cambie-street-bike-lane)

## Overcoming the cost of regulatory paralysis

Vancouver Sun  
29 Nov 2017

"Time is money" is a phrase you might hear when the boss is complaining about your productivity (or the lack of it). In that instance, you might understand it to mean "Let's not be standing around when we could be doing something productive."

But in economic theory, the same aphorism might be a reminder that it's just as expensive to let your money stand around when it could be out earning a return. In that sense, people talk about the "time value of money" — and it's a factor that is making Metro Vancouver's housing affordability crisis a great deal worse.

The problem is the high cost of developing new homes in our hyperinflated market. Some of those costs are now structural and unavoidable. Obviously — and especially in Vancouver proper, where the average home price now tops \$1.4 million — land prices are outlandish. Absent a (potentially catastrophic) collapse, that's just the way it is. Material and construction costs are also beyond the control of developers or regulators. The only way government can intervene to counteract those expense items would be to subsidize their purchase — an expensive and controversial option that can also push prices even higher.

Apart from land, labour and materials, there are other factors inflating home prices, including regulation and regulatory delay. A recent Fraser Institute red-tape report pointed out that permits and fees add an average of \$52,000 to every new home in Surrey and \$78,000 per home in Vancouver. No one likes those costs, but many reasonable people are also unwilling to give developers free rein to knock down the house next door and build whatever they want, however they want, whenever they want, without regard to environmental, social or design impact on the neighbourhood. Again, it's a controversial option.

But in addressing regulatory delay, we could make huge gains, or forestall large future losses. There is a time value to money, regardless of whether developers are using their own (in which case there is an "opportunity cost" of letting it stand around too long) or they are borrowing it from the bank. Interest or opportunity costs can be staggering, especially for large-project developers who might tie up tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars and then be forced to wait an average from six months, in Richmond, to two years or more, in Vancouver, for permission to proceed.

Regulatory delays distort the market in two ways. First, opportunity or interest costs get added to the bottom line — and those can be considerable. Second, and sometimes worse, long waits for development permits, building permits, rezonings and every imaginable kind of inspection prevent developers from meeting housing demand in a timely way — and we all know what happens when a product is in limited supply: the price goes up. And once it rises, every other homeowner becomes invested in the new price; it's a train that doesn't back up.

Now, notwithstanding the Fraser Institute's suggestion that we should roll back regulation across the region — a move that could turn Vancouver into Houston and let the flood waters invade where they may — we are never going to remove regulatory delays completely. Development is complicated. And the more dense, safe, sustainable — and desirable — the city, the greater the complications.

But that doesn't mean that current delays are acceptable. We need an intervention. First, every city needs to be trying much harder to speed and harmonize their processes. No one in any municipality should be caught sending applicants away with a shrug and a tired "that's just the way things work around here" rationalization.

Second, the provincial government, which campaigned on a promise to tackle housing affordability, could help clear the regulatory logjam. In addition to investing in low-income housing — a necessary, blunt and expensive intervention — the province could create and empower regulatory "swat teams," as they have in the past to help municipalities adapt quickly to new building codes. These teams could help process the backlog of development applications, large and small, stemming the cost of delay and clearing the way for new applications — and new construction that will help meet demand.

We have an untenable problem, a potential intervention, and a real need to act quickly. Time, after all, is money.

[vancouver.sun.com/opinion/op-ed/opinion-overcoming-the-cost-of-regulatory-paralysis](http://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/op-ed/opinion-overcoming-the-cost-of-regulatory-paralysis)

## Rental costs trend upwards

City is Canada's priciest as experts say conditions may be worse

The Province  
29 Nov 2017

MATT ROBINSON AND TIFFANY CRAWFORD [mrobinson@postmedia.com](mailto:mrobinson@postmedia.com) [tcrawford@postmedia.com](mailto:tcrawford@postmedia.com)

NICK PROCAYLO/PNGA new report found that rental rates in Vancouver surged 6.2 per cent over the last year. The city also has one of the lowest purpose-built rental vacancy rates (0.9 per cent).

Metro Vancouver has the highest rental housing prices in Canada and other cities in B.C. are catching up, according to a new Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. report, produced in a year that saw rental vacancy rates plummet across the country.

But some experts say Vancouver's actual rental market conditions may be even worse for prospective tenants than the 2017 Rental Market Survey makes out, and online listings seem to support such a take.

The survey, released Tuesday, found rental rates in Vancouver surged 6.2 per cent over the last year. In Kelowna, rates jumped a whopping 8.6 per cent — the highest increase in the country — and Victoria was not far behind with an 8.1-per-cent hike.

In the City of Vancouver alone, the average monthly rent paid for a purpose-built, two-bedroom apartment is now \$1,860, according to the report, and asking prices for similar empty units are around \$2,100. One-bedroom places rent for \$1,325, and similar vacant units are listed for an average of nearly \$1,450, it found.

Andrew Sakamoto at the Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre believed those numbers seemed a little low compared to what is being seen on the broader rental market in the city. He put the average for one-bedroom apartments closer to \$2,000, based on anecdotal reports.

That figure is spot-on with rent trends posted at Padmapper, an apartment-hunting website. This month, average asking rates for long-term, one-bedroom apartment rentals in the city are \$1,994, according to the site. Just nine of 165 one-bedroom apartments listed are for \$1,450 or less.

That same trend holds for longterm, two-bedroom rental apartments, which now advertise for an average of \$3,100, according to Padmapper. Just 12 of the 178 such apartments listed on the service are priced at \$2,100 or less, and 22 are listed at \$5,000 or more.

Eric Bond, a principal market analyst with the CMHC, helped explain some of the gap.

The rental market survey, conducted by telephone interviews and site visits during the first two weeks of October, targets only purpose-built rental apartments. When looking specifically at rental condominium apartments, the average prices CMHC found were closer to \$1,700 for a one-bedroom and \$2,400 for a two-bedroom apartment.

But that still seems low for the likes of Liam McClure, a tenant advocate with the Vancouver Tenants Union. "I'm inclined to think the higher figures are more accurate because (they address) exclusively listings that are on the market right now that are available for you to go out and rent," McClure said in an interview.

Tom Davidoff, an associate professor at the University of B.C.'s Sauder School of Business, said he didn't think the CMHC's numbers sounded "too far off," particularly once furnished rentals were factored out of online listings. But he did say growth in rents on Craigslist have seemed to have outpaced the growth in CMHC figures.

Craigslist shows several prospective tenants have posted want ads during the past month or so for housing at rates that exceed the CMHC's vacant apartment asking prices. They include listings from workers, students, seniors and others. And a search through the first page of listings for Vancouver apartments shows the vast majority of one- and two-bedroom units are priced higher than any of the CMHC's averages.

The CMHC report found that Vancouver also has one of the lowest purpose-built rental vacancy rates (0.9 per cent). Kelowna and Abbotsford-Mission are both at 0.2 per cent, and Victoria is 0.6 per cent, it found.

The average rent across Canada for a two-bedroom apartment is \$989, according to the CMHC report. The lowest rents are in Trois-Rivières, Saguenay and Sherbrooke.

## One bedroom vacancy rates rise downtown, West End

Three-bedroom apartments see biggest jump in vacancies

[Mike Howell](#) / Vancouver Courier

November 28, 2017 04:53 PM

Vacancy rates for rental housing in downtown, English Bay and the West End have climbed over last year, according to a rental survey released Tuesday by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Photo: Dan Toulgoet

A report released Tuesday by the federal government's housing arm provided some positive news for renters looking for a one-bedroom apartment in downtown, English Bay and the West End: vacancy rates have inched above the one per cent mark over last year.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rental survey showed average vacancy rates for a one-bedroom in the English Bay area climbed from 0.8 per cent in October 2016 to 1.2 per cent this October. The increases were more significant in the West End (0.5 per cent in 2016 to 1.2 per cent this year) and downtown (0.4 per cent to 1.3 per cent).

Gil Kelley, the city's director of planning, said the data suggests the addition of more rental housing across the city and policies such as the empty homes tax, which was implemented to encourage landlords to rent unused space, might have something to do with the increases.

"It is a hopeful sign that we're seeing a bit more room to breathe in the rental housing market," said Kelley, noting the city will have to monitor the vacancy rate over time as it relates to city housing policies to accurately determine whether they are having a direct effect on supply.

Vacancy rates for two-bedroom apartments in English Bay and downtown held fairly steady over last year — at just over one per cent — but plummeted in the West End/Stanley Park area from 1.5 to 0.2 per cent.

The biggest gain in available apartments for rent was for three bedrooms. Last year, the data showed a zero per cent vacancy rate for the family-sized places in the West End/Stanley Park area. That jumped to 7.7 per cent this year. English Bay also went from zero to 6.9 per cent; there was no data available for downtown three bedrooms.

While vacancy rates have increased, the average rent for a one-bedroom in West End/Stanley Park shot up from \$1,366 last year to \$1,386 this year, and \$1,434 to \$1,520 downtown. English Bay saw a decrease from \$1,441 to \$1,436 per month for a one-bedroom place.

The average rent for a three-bedroom place in the West End/Stanley Park was \$3,150, and \$2,723 in English Bay. Two-bedroom places in all three areas cost an average of \$2,186 per month, an increase of nine dollars over last October.

When examining all of Vancouver, average monthly rents for a one-bedroom apartment were highest in the University Endowment Lands (\$1,700) and lowest in Marpole, at \$978 per month. Average rent for a one-bedroom across the city was \$1,326 per month. For a two-bedroom, it was \$1,860 and three-bedroom, \$2,313.

Vision Vancouver Council member Tim Stevenson, who lives in the West End, believes the empty homes tax and the recently approved short-term rental rules — which the city warned more than a year ago would soon be in place — sent a strong message to landlords about the need to free up long-term rental accommodations.

Stevenson said the city's aggressive agenda to approve more rental housing across Vancouver has also helped in slowly creating more supply of rental homes. A report on the city's new housing strategy that went before city council Tuesday said 7,030 rental units have been built in the city since 2010.

"I think we're going in the right direction and this is the first indication," said Stevenson of the city's housing policies.

The housing corporation's report said rising rents, low financing costs, growing interest from institutional investors and municipal incentive programs for developers stimulated supply of new units in the rental market.

Though new rental homes are more expensive to rent, the report said "new units allow renters who desire newer-condition suites to move, freeing up additional supply at other price points."

As a region, Metro Vancouver's vacancy rate is still below one per cent at 0.9, and the average rent for a one-bedroom is \$1,223 per month. Those figures are based on calculations from data collected in October from the "Census Metropolitan Area," which stretches from Vancouver to Langley and includes White Rock, Maple Ridge and the North Shore.

The housing corporation conducts the rental market survey the first two weeks of every October. The survey is conducted by a combination of telephone interviews and site visits, and information is obtained from the owner, manager, or building superintendent.

The city's proposed housing strategy, which will likely get council approval Wednesday, calls for the construction of almost 50,000 rental homes over the next 10 years. Rental zones and projects that would tie a person's income to cost of rent are other initiatives in the strategy.

[www.vancourier.com/news/one-bedroom-vacancy-rates-rise-downtown-west-end-1.23107225](http://www.vancourier.com/news/one-bedroom-vacancy-rates-rise-downtown-west-end-1.23107225)

## City of Vancouver responds to the "poor door effect"

November 28, 2017

Yesterday the City of Vancouver approved the controversial Marpole modular Housing project.

On November 6th, 200 protesters, made up mostly of parents, descended on the intersection of West 54th and Heather, just across the street from three neighborhood schools; Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Ideal Mini School.

Protesters slammed the City for poor communication and undercutting the public consultation process when it planned to build 78 temporary modular homes in the neighborhood to serve the city's homeless population this winter.

Today Gil Kelley, General Manager of Planning, says the community members aren't against the homeless as the Mayor, Gregor Robertson, appeared to suggest in former remarks.

"In my conversation with the community, they're very keen to come forward and say they do not want to be vilified as being anti-homeless and they believe their neighborhood, like all neighborhoods around the city, has to do its part"

Vancouver City Councilor, Melissa De Genova, says the backlash from the community came from years of Vision Vancouver's poor consultation process.

"People are fed up with Vision Vancouver's non-consultations. I do believe that if there was a wholesome and true consultation that we could use that feedback and work with the community to make sure we find a solution."

De Genova slammed Mayor Gregor Robertson for his broken election promise of better consultation.

"The Mayor apologized in the last election and he promised more consultation. He promised he would speak to people"

### Kelly Address the "poor door effect"

During today's press conference, Kelly addressed what he calls the "poor door effect" and says the City will be looking at this as they go forward with more affordable housing projects.

"We're going to be looking at those kinds of design rules going forward to make sure that this is housing for everyone going forward here at all levels of income," Kelley adds. "We just want to make sure that affordable housing for low and moderate income people isn't stigmatized."

[roundhouseradio.com/2017/11/28/city-vancouver-responds-poor-door-effect/](http://roundhouseradio.com/2017/11/28/city-vancouver-responds-poor-door-effect/)

## City of Vancouver abandons natural gas ban under new FortisBC agreement

Kenneth Chan Nov 28, 2017 6:48 pm

The City of Vancouver's plan to ban businesses and residents from using natural gas is effectively cancelled following an agreement with FortisBC that will do the opposite.

The municipal government and the utility company have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue the use of natural gas in Vancouver and collaborate on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This reverses a [City Council-approved policy last year to ban all use of natural gas within city limits by 2050](#) as part of its "Renewable City Strategy".

Instead, both parties will now work towards increasing investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy. The goal will be to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 80% below 2007 levels before 2050 and increase the use of renewable natural gas in the process.

"At FortisBC, we put our customers first, and we are pleased to continue providing them with affordable, natural gas in the City of Vancouver," said Roger Dall'Antonia, executive vice president customer service and technology at FortisBC.

"We understand that Vancouver residents want to shrink their environmental footprints, without impacting affordability. That's why we're working together to seek out new opportunities for Vancouverites to save energy, and reduce their costs."

This includes specific initiatives such as the City creating a Low Carbon Energy Systems Policy that will support private investment in highly efficient and low carbon building energy systems.

Amendments will be made to the City of Vancouver's building energy policies and bylaws to align it with the BC Energy Step Code, the new provincial standard.

An effort will be made to increase natural gas as a transportation fuel source, as natural gas is seen as a cost-effective option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Currently, nearly half of Metro Vancouver's greenhouse gas emissions is from transportation.

FortisBC will also work to develop a supply of renewable natural gas at the municipal government-owned Vancouver Landfill in Delta.

There will be programs to encourage energy efficiency and conservation for new buildings and incentives to upgrade old and inefficient natural gas furnaces.

This follows the controversy last year when it was revealed that City Council had approved a ban. Critics said a reduction in natural gas users would increase the cost of maintaining natural gas infrastructure, and these costs would be passed on to a smaller pool of customers.

Furthermore, hospitals and schools depend on natural gas for heating, and a dependency on electricity would raise costs for taxpayers.

Restaurants also depend on natural gas for high-heat and searing, and there is no alternative.

For an average homeowner, if they were forced to use electricity instead of gas, it would cost three times more — approximately \$1,500 per year, which does not include the cost of replacing furnaces and water heaters. Currently, 56% of the energy used by homes is natural gas.

The municipal government previously said its now-abandoned policy aligns with the BC Energy Step Code, but FortisBC countered the assertion, saying the policy to reduce emissions between 50 to 70% in rezoned buildings would eliminate the usage of natural gas for space and water heating in new buildings.

FortisBC also stated that the City's previous requirement for everyone to switch to renewable natural gas would require the utility to source many more non-existent large landfills at a very high cost.

[dailyhive.com/vancouver/city-of-vancouver-fortis-natural-gas-agreement-november-2017](http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/city-of-vancouver-fortis-natural-gas-agreement-november-2017)

## Vancouver to tackle "fierce" speculation by foreign buyers and local investors

November 29, 2017

By [Lisa Tarr](#)

The practice of purchasing property to turn a profit was a main concern for several city councilors during the Housing Vancouver Strategy presentation.

Speculative investment, the purchase of property based on anticipated price growth, has the biggest impact on housing costs in the city, according to Dan Garrison, a senior planner for the City of Vancouver. Some councillors feel this problem isn't adequately addressed in the Housing Vancouver Strategy.

"There is significant evidence of speculative investment in our housing market that is driving housing costs," Garrison said.

Many people in the market buying a home as an investment

Gil Kelley, general manager, planning, urban design and sustainability for the City of Vancouver, said a lot of it has to do with excessive amounts of local and global capital from small and large investors looking to shelter their money and grow their equity.

"Vancouver is a very attractive city [as] a safe harbour for both B.C. residents and foreign investors," Kelley said. "That coupled with low interest rates make for a pretty fierce speculative demand."

Mayor Gregor Robertson asked senior planner Garrison what the top priority should be in terms of asking the federal and provincial governments to curb speculation.

"A lot of speculative interests is driven by high value that's associated with strata [and] condominium developments," Garrison said. "When you are able to shift areas of the city through zoning to be for rental, you do remove that speculative value or that feeling investments in stratas or condominiums are going to go up." Councillor, Melissa De Genova, said she feels the rental only zoning is an "advertising campaign."

"I'm not necessarily sure that this rental only zoning is going to be more affordable," De Genova said. "We've seen from Rental 100 that the rents are too high. We've seen line-ups at the door for public hearings where people have told us they can't afford these units."

Kelley said the strategy will add up to a major reset in more than just housing policy.

"We'll have sort of a new table set decades going forward in terms of city building in Vancouver," Kelley said.

<http://thinkpot.ca/2017/11/29/vancouver-to-tackle-fierce-speculation-by-foreign-buyers-and-local-investors/>

**Today's Headlines**  
**Wednesday, November 29<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

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[City of Vancouver's "grate" contest adopts, names catch basins and curbs floods](#) Times Colonist, CBC News

**Housing:**

['Not enough focus on the demand side' Supply alone won't fix Vancouver housing crisis, says chief planner](#) Vancouver Sun (front page below fold), The Province

[Vancouver Foreign Buyer Ban? City May Limit Housing Market To Local Residents](#) Huffington Post

[Rental costs trend upwards](#) The Province

[Protesters block driveway, delay modular housing project on Vancouver's south side](#) Globe and Mail

[Vancouver, Toronto rental markets face rising rents, extremely low vacancy, survey](#) Globe and Mail

[Vancouver to tackle "fierce" speculation by foreign buyers and local investors](#) Thinkpol

**Transportation:**

[New southbound bike lane planned for Cambie Street Bridge](#) Urban YVR

**Yesterday's Headlines- Updated**  
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[Vancouver Bimmers' Project requests \\$75K for cart sharing pilot](#) News 1130

**Housing:**

[B.C. cities have some of the highest rents and lowest vacancy rates in Canada](#) CBC News

[Vancouver City Council to vote on housing strategy to increase density](#) News 1130, Global News/CKNW

[Vancouver's rental crush eases slightly](#) Metro News

[Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy provides faint hope for those 'squeezed out'](#) Vancouver Courier

[Vancouver's plan: More housing, less speculation](#) Metro News

[Here are the flaws in Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy, expert](#) Buzzbuzz News

[Overcoming the cost of regulatory paralysis](#) (Opinion) Vancouver Sun

[One bedroom vacancy rates rise downtown, West End](#) Vancouver Courier

[City of Vancouver responds to the "poor door effect"](#) Roundhouse Radio

**Sustainability:**

[City of Vancouver abandons natural gas ban under new FortisBC agreement](#) Daily Hive

**City of Vancouver's "grate" contest adopts, names catch basins and curbs floods**

The Canadian Press  
November 29, 2017 05:16 AM

VANCOUVER — In hopes of injecting a little fun into the mucky but vital job of maintaining catch basins, the City of Vancouver launched a contest encouraging residents to "adopt" a catch basin.

Now the public has a chance to decide which of the more than 1,000 contest participants has come up with the most creative name for their chosen "adoptee."

Catch basins capture surface water from roads, parking lots and highways and direct it to the main storm water system but during Vancouver's rainy autumn weather, leaves or other debris can clog the grates to those basins, sometimes causing significant flooding.

Vancouver's contest to adopt a basin and give it a "grate" name has produced monikers ranging from The Grates of Wrath, to Grate Expectations and, of course, Draino McDrainface.

Residents can now vote online for their favourite name and the winner will receive a \$200 dollar gift card for rain gear.

Although the naming contest has ended, a news release from the City of Vancouver says there are 45,000 adoptable catch basins across the city that residents can find online, adopt, name and keep clear to help neighbourhood roadways remain flood-free.

[www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/city-of-vancouver-s-grate-contest-adopts-names-catch-basins-and-curbs-floods-1.23107458](http://www.timescolonist.com/entertainment/city-of-vancouver-s-grate-contest-adopts-names-catch-basins-and-curbs-floods-1.23107458)

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**Vancouver Foreign Buyer Ban? City May Limit Housing Market To Local Residents**

City council will vote on a host of housing measures on Wednesday.

11/29/2017 08:07 EST | Updated 2 hours ago

Julie Gordon

A Seabus commuter vessel with condo towers in the background in Vancouver, B.C., Tuesday, July 11, 2017. The city of Vancouver is considering restricting ownership of housing to local residents.

VANCOUVER, Nov 28 (Reuters) — The city of Vancouver is considering restricting ownership of housing to local residents, among other strategies, as it looks to cool a hot real estate market that it says is fueled by foreign and local speculation.

A foreign buyer ban is just one of numerous supply and demand measures outlined in Vancouver's new 10-year housing strategy, which was announced late last week and presented to city council on Tuesday. Council will vote on it on Wednesday.

Even if passed, as expected, many of the measures being considered will need the support of federal and provincial governments, particularly those around taxation.

Watch Vancouver house prices are unaffordable for the middle class

"There is a perfect storm in Vancouver," Gil Kelley, Vancouver's General Manager of Planning, told council on Tuesday, pointing to the "excessive supply of global capital" flowing into the city, along with builders targeting investors, low interest rates, and favorable tax policies.

Vancouver, long Canada's most expensive housing market, has already made numerous moves to try to curb the crisis, including imposing an empty home tax and restricting short-term rentals.

Home prices on Vancouver's upscale west side jumped 57 percent in the last three years, sending the typical price — including condos, townhouses and detached homes — to \$1.4 million, according to the local real estate board. In the Greater Vancouver region, the typical home now costs \$1 million, 12.5 times the region's median household income of \$79,930, putting home ownership out of reach of many residents.

Rents have also jumped in recent years, with the vacancy rate hovering below 1 percent, the city said.

The lack of affordable housing is putting strain on local businesses, with restaurants, retailers, and even the city itself struggling to find enough workers.

To address the crunch, Vancouver is considering new strategies including imposing a speculation tax, an increase to the luxury tax, and the possibility of "restricting property ownership by non-permanent residents."

It is also planning to rezone neighborhoods across the city to a low for denser housing, including more townhomes and low-rise condos, in areas traditionally dominated by detached homes.

It is the latest jurisdiction to consider restricting foreign investment in housing, following in the footsteps of Australia and New Zealand.

British Columbia last year imposed a 15-percent tax on foreign buyers in the Vancouver area, which has helped cool the market for expensive detached homes, though demand for condos has exploded.

[www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/11/29/vancouver-foreign-buyer-ban-city-may-limit-housing-market-to-local-residents\\_a\\_23291509/](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2017/11/29/vancouver-foreign-buyer-ban-city-may-limit-housing-market-to-local-residents_a_23291509/)

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**B.C. cities have some of the highest rents and lowest vacancy rates in Canada**

The findings were published in the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual report

By Michelle Ghoussoub, [CBC News](#) Posted Nov 28, 2017 5:54 AM PT Last Updated Nov 28, 2017 5:54 AM PT

According to the report, Kelowna, Abbotsford-Mission, Victoria and Vancouver all have less than one per cent vacancy, (Darryl Dyck/The Canadian Press)

B.C. has some of the lowest vacancy rates and highest rents in Canada, according to a new report this morning from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The study found that B.C. is home to four of the five lowest vacancy rates in the country — Kelowna, Abbotsford-Mission, Victoria and Vancouver.

All four areas have vacancy rates of less than one per cent.

Kelowna had the biggest average rent increase at 8.6 per cent, followed by Victoria at 8.2 per cent and Vancouver at 6.2 per cent.

At an average of \$1,552 per month, Vancouver remained the most expensive area to rent a two-bedroom apartment, with Toronto following at \$1,404 per month.

However the highest average rental condominium rent was in Toronto at \$2,301 per month, followed by Vancouver at \$1,874 per month.

The report also found that for the third consecutive year, average rents in Vancouver increased faster than the provincially-capped rate of 3.7 per cent.

The B.C. Residential Tenancy Branch imposes rent guidelines, but when a unit turns over to a new tenant, the landlord is free to set a new rent amount at the market level.

The report isn't all bad news for renters. It says the supply of purpose-built rental units being approved is increasing, though many won't be occupied for years to come.

[www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-cities-have-some-of-the-highest-rents-and-lowest-vacancy-rates-in-canada-1.4422343](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/b-c-cities-have-some-of-the-highest-rents-and-lowest-vacancy-rates-in-canada-1.4422343)

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**Vancouver City Council to vote on housing strategy to increase density**

by [Jonathon Brown](#)

Posted Nov 28, 2017 11:12 pm PST

Last Updated Nov 29, 2017 at 6:57 am PST

Vancouver City Hall (Photo credit: Dustin Godfrey for NEWS 1130)

Vancouver City Council will vote on the strategy to build 72,000 new units over the next decade

The strategy will look at rezoning neighbourhoods to make room for more dense housing

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) — The City of Vancouver is about to decide on a proposal to make it cheaper to live here.

On Wednesday, Vancouver City Council will vote on the strategy to build 72,000 new units over the next decade.

[Councillor Kerry Tang](#) says that could mean more townhouses, mid- and high-rise apartments in high-transit areas.

He says they will be looking at different models to ensure that housing is made for people to live in, and not be a commodity.

"My wife and I tried buying a place in Hong Kong, only to be told we weren't Hong Kong residents, and we were out of luck," he says. "I think local people buying housing as a commodity is an issue. So that's all fine, but so long as that housing is here, let somebody live in it, don't just keep it empty and flip it."

He says the 10-year plan would need more staff to work out a budget.

Tang says the strategy will look at rezoning neighbourhoods to make room for more dense housing, with everything from more townhouses, low-rise condos, and mid-rise apartments where you typically see traditional detached homes.

"Trying to find the right housing for different types of income bands, and how they spend their money on housing, it's not just about paying rent anymore, but sometimes they share with people, and there's even inter-generational living."

The report also plans to build more affordable housing, with a studio costing around \$950 to \$1,600 for a two-bedroom apartment.

There are many people scheduled to speak at city council before the report is voted on.

[www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-city-council-vote-housing-strategy-planning-increase-density/](http://www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-city-council-vote-housing-strategy-planning-increase-density/)

## Vancouver's rental crush eases slightly

CMHC's annual rent survey shows rent increases and vacancy rates eased slightly for Vancouver. But rents shot up in some suburbs.

By Jen St Denis Metro Published on Tue Nov 28 2017

Vancouver's rental vacancy rate eased slightly in 2017, and rent increases eased their rapid clip compared to 2016.

Despite the slightly improved conditions, Vancouver still has the highest rents in the country, with the average one-bedroom apartment now costing \$1,326, according to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's annual rental market survey.

Gil Kelley, Vancouver's chief planner, called the uptick in the vacancy rate — from 0.8 to 0.9 per cent — “an encouraging sign.”

“We're not sure what that's all due to, we have produced more rental housing for one thing,” Kelley said. “We’l see how increasing rental housing affects that number in the next year or two.”

Between 2015 and 2016, [Metro Vancouver renters experienced the highest rent increases ever recorded](#), increasing evictions and a dispiriting search for a new place with vacancy rates falling to 0.7 per cent.

Rent increases usually track the province's allowable rent increase cap, which was four per cent in 2017. But in 2016, Metro Vancouver rents increased by 6.4 per cent. This year they increased by six per cent.

In the City of Vancouver, rent rates increased by seven per cent in 2016, that slowed to 4.9 per cent in 2017. This year, rents increased the most in North Burnaby (10.3 per cent), Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam and Port Moody (11.1 per cent) and New Westminster (9 per cent).

Kelley said it was possible that the city's new empty homes tax and restrictions on short term rental are also having an impact on the rental market, noting that the vacancy rate in the West End and Downtown went up significantly, from 0.6 per cent in 2016 to 1.2 per cent in 2017. However, it's too early to tell for sure and the city will continue to track the rental market, he said.

The city has said it may reconsider the empty homes tax if the rental vacancy rate improves. But that may not necessarily be the best measure of the health of Vancouver's rental market, said Eric Bond, a CMHC analyst.

“Historically, the vacancy rate in Vancouver has never been above 2.7 per cent, in contrast with other cities like Montreal, where the vacancy rate is usually four per cent,” Bond said.

“Both markets just function differently. What we'd more be looking for in terms of an equilibrium is the pace of increase of average rent to be in line with the provincially allowable rent increase.”

Dan Garrison, a housing planner with the City of Vancouver, said the city considers a healthy vacancy rate to be between three and five per cent. A vacancy rate of two per cent would be a signal that the market is heading out of “a crisis situation.”

[www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/vancouver-s-rental-crush-eases-slightly.html](http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/vancouver-s-rental-crush-eases-slightly.html)

## Vancouver, Toronto rental markets face rising rents, extremely low vacancy: survey

The downtown skyline is seen in in Vancouver in 2015. The city's rental prices rank among the highest in Canada.

DARRYL DYCK/The Globe and Mail

[Frances Rula](#)

VANCOUVER

Special to The Globe and Mail

12 hours ago November 28, 2017

B.C. has among the tightest rental markets in the country, with smaller cities increasingly facing vacancy rates that are at or near zero, while rents are rising faster than the national average.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.'s annual rental market survey, released on Tuesday, shows the cost of rental apartments in Vancouver and Toronto remains the highest in the country, with a two-bedroom unit in a private rental building priced at an average of \$1,550 in Vancouver and \$1,400 in Toronto. An investor-owned condo cost an average of \$2,300 for Toronto and almost \$1,900 in Vancouver. Vacancy rates are less than 1 per cent in those two large metro areas.

But places such as Squamish, Nelson, Kelowna, Abbotsford, Campbell River and Penticton are seeing vacancy rates even lower than the 0.9 per cent in Vancouver.

In Squamish, a onetime mill town about an hour from downtown Vancouver, the vacancy rate was zero and average rent for a two-bedroom unit jumped 22.2 per cent to \$1,161 in October from a year ago. In Nelson, vacancy was also zero and rent for a two-bedroom apartment increased by 7.5 per cent. And Kelowna saw its two-bedroom apartments increase by 8.6 per cent to \$1,151.

The one pinpoint of light for observers was that vacancy rates improved slightly in some parts of the Lower Mainland and rate increases over the past year were not as high as the previous one. The average rent increases were still higher than the year's provincial cap on allowable increases for tenants who stay in the same units.

“I did not expect the vacancy rate to actually improve. I was expecting it to be worse,” said David Hutniak, the chief executive of Landlord BC, a lobby group.

The statistics on those jumps come as local, provincial and federal governments are struggling to grapple with what many have called an out-of-control housing problem in hot spots around the country.

This week, Vancouver city council is debating a comprehensive new housing strategy that envisions incentives and tactics for reducing land speculation and increasing the stock of low-cost rentals. The city also just approved its second batch of temporary housing for homeless people, in spite of some community opposition.

City staff are exploring whether Vancouver could create rental-only zones, which they say could have a significant impact on land prices — and eventually rents. The city is already moving steadily toward the first application of its new regulations and taxes for vacant homes and short-term rentals.

Victoria, where the vacancy rate is lower than in Vancouver, is also looking at restrictions on short-term vacation rentals.

The province has promised to introduce new measures to deal with speculation and investment in housing, after having already promised to fund 2,000 units of temporary housing throughout B.C.

And the federal government just announced a 10-year housing plan a couple of weeks ago, with promises to create 100,000 new low-cost homes. However, the situation remains anxiety-producing for Vancouver's many renters.

“We are in a house with a good relationship with our landlord, but it doesn't stop the concern,” said Claire Beveridge, a 31-year-old digital-marketing consultant.

She and her partner pay \$1,000 a month for the main floor of a house near Vancouver's Commercial Drive. But they worry about the future, especially since the property next door was sold and high-end townhouses are now under construction there.

When they scan the Craigslist ads, they see rents for units the same size as their current apartment ranging from \$2,000 to \$2,500.

That kind of gap between older apartments with long-term tenants, whose rent increases are capped at inflationary rates by the province, and newer units or ones that have just come on to the market means that recent arrivals in Vancouver end up paying much higher prices than the statistical average.

As well, it means tenants who have been in apartments a long time are reluctant to move.

Housing observers see hope in some of the new measures being rolled out. Mr. Hutniak said a lot of new rental construction is in the pipeline. As well, he noted that the city's new policies on empty homes and short-term vacation rentals haven't come into effect yet.

Those could help alleviate the tight market, eventually, in the municipalities that are taking action, including Vancouver, Victoria, New Westminster and the City of North Vancouver.

But that won't come fast.

“We're in a big rental-housing hole,” Vancouver housing-statistics analyst Jens von Bergmann said. “It's going to take a lot of digging to get out.

Comparing markets

Here's a look at rental markets (census metropolitan areas) across Canada for a two-bedroom apartment.

### Vancouver

Average rent \$1,552

Change from last year 6.2 per cent

Vacancy rate 0.9 per cent

Kelowna, B.C.

Average rent \$1,151

Change from last year 8.6

Vacancy rate 0.2

Calgary

Average rent \$1,247

Change from last year -1

Vacancy rate 6.3

Toronto

Average rent \$1,404

Change from last year 4.2

Vacancy rate 1

Ottawa

Average rent \$1,232

Change from last year 2

Vacancy rate 1.7

Montreal

Average rent \$782

Change from last year 2.1

Vacancy rate 2.8

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp.

[www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-rental-market-remains-strained-survey/article37122063/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/bc-rental-market-remains-strained-survey/article37122063/)

## Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy provides faint hope for those 'squeezed out'

Strategy is long in length, long overdue and a long way off

[Allen Garr](#) / Vancouver Courier

November 28, 2017 04:55 PM

Consideration of the city's 10-year housing strategy coincided with a CMHC report indicating Vancouver boasts the dubious distinction of having the country's lowest vacancy rate and highest rental rate for a two-bedroom apartment. Photo Dan Toulgoet

As Vancouver city council met Tuesday to consider passage of their 10-year housing strategy, they could not have expected worse news to once again make clear how dire the situation is.

Tuesday morning CMHC issued a report confirming Vancouver's dubious status. No city has a lower rental vacancy rate in Canada; no city has a higher rental rate for a two-bedroom apartment.

One other grim statistic was introduced as well by a CMHC analyst on CBC radio: For the past three years, rents in Vancouver have exceeded the provincial allowable levels (two per cent plus inflation), including this year where average rents bumped up 5.7 per cent.

If that weren't enough, there is the issue of homelessness. In his inaugural address in 2008, to much applause, Mayor Gregor Robertson had this to say: “It is our council's single most important priority in this term of office.”

Quibble over whether he meant “street homelessness” or just plain homelessness, but almost a decade later, at a “sustainability community breakfast” called by Metro Vancouver this week, people sipping their coffee and munching on their muffins would be told that “Lower Mainland homelessness is increasing four times faster than population growth.”

Vision Vancouver and Mayor Robertson are not solely culpable for the housing affordability crisis in which we find ourselves. And it would be unfair to say this administration has done nothing; there are the recent regulations to control and diminish the phenomenon of short-term rentals and the recently approved empty homes tax.

Other levels of government — provincial and federal — were, like Vancouver, benefiting mightily from the real estate windfall that drove prices up and out of reach. While houses and other dwelling units became commodities taking up space in investment portfolios, they did little or nothing to stop the money machine.

It meant, as former city planner Ann McAlee explained on morning radio, “there was a bigger audience competing for homes in Vancouver.”

She also pointed out that nothing was more damaging than the decision by Ottawa, back in the day when Jean Chretien was prime minister and Paul Martin was his deficit-cutting minister of finance, to withdraw from investing in affordable housing.

That was then, and even now with Trudeau the Younger at the helm saying he is back in the housing business, no significant money will be put towards that purpose until, or even if, he is re-elected in 2019.

The provincial Liberals' refusal to act, preferring to lard their treasury with millions in land transfer taxes until it was far too late to avert the tsunami of foreign cash, was in no small part the reason Christy Clark and her government got the boot.

But Robertson does not come off squeaky clean by allowing current zoning regulations to stand for his three terms in office.

Jake Fry, owner of Smallworks, the builder of laneway houses and a member of the mayor's advisory panel on the new policy, had this to say about the real estate gold rush that has taken place: “Affluence in this respect has resulted in a type of housing poverty.”

His solution — and one being taken up, finally, in this housing report — is that instead of allowing monster houses to replace those older, smaller homes, put more housing units on each property and, by doing that, disperse the land value and improve affordability.

There are, however, many other proposals in the couple of hundred pages being put forward by city staff for councillors to consider on the road to affordability.

It is a sign of the extreme desperation, the need to do anything that would aid the whole spectrum of Vancouverites now feeling they are being squeezed out — no matter how faint that hope may be — that this plan has received such widespread support.

In a news release last weekend, it was clear that everyone — from landlords of conventional rental units, tenant advocates and administrators for the most marginalized to supporters of co-op housing and with this plan has received such widespread support. — is willing to give this plan a shot.

That said, it will take years, if not decades, to get us out of a dilemma that has had decades to fully overwhelm us.

[www.vancourier.com/opinion/vancouver-s-10-year-housing-strategy-provides-faint-hope-for-those-squeezed-out-1.23107230](http://www.vancourier.com/opinion/vancouver-s-10-year-housing-strategy-provides-faint-hope-for-those-squeezed-out-1.23107230)

## Protestors block driveway, delay modular housing project on Vancouver's south side

Rosa Liu, left, with a group of concerned residents and parents, protests against temporary modular housing in the Marpole neighbourhood on Tuesday. Some residents say they were blindsided by how fast the project moved and argued a public hearing should have been held.

Rafal Gerszak/The Globe and Mail

[Andrea Vito](#)

VANCOUVER

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

13 hours ago November 28, 2017

One day after the City of Vancouver approved a contentious temporary modular housing development on the city's south side, a handful of protesters blocked driveway entrances to the property, forcing the delay of planned site preparations.

The 78-unit development in the Marpole neighbourhood has been billed as a quick and affordable way to house some of the city's most vulnerable people. But some residents of the area say they were blindsided by the speed at which the project moved and argued that a public hearing should have been held.

(A recent bylaw change removed the requirement for temporary modular housing to go before a public hearing as long as the land does not require rezoning.)

On Tuesday, a handful of people held signs with slogans such as “Return my public hearing right” and “We want a say.”

Ann Mukai was among those at the proposed site, currently an empty lot owned by the development company Onni. It is located in a quiet residential area across from an elementary school and a small secondary school.

Ms. Mukai, whose three young children attend the elementary school, said her concern is that there is a requirement for a percentage of the tenants to fall into what is known as “service level 3,” a category that includes people with extensive criminal histories and are at high-risk to reoffend, and people who “can create security problems through aggressive and intimidating behaviour,” according to a city document.

The Sept. 25 document notes that “the housing provider will be expected to house a minimum of 20 per cent of the most vulnerable homeless individuals who will fit into the service level 3 category.”

“If people are homeless, if they've hit a rough patch, I get it. I have an aunt who's almost there,” Ms. Mukai said. “But if you're going to put service-level-3 people there across from elementary school kids ... it's not cool. Incidents that happen will be critical to little kids.”

Gil Kelley, the city's general manager of planning, urban design and sustainability, on Tuesday said he granted temporary approval to the five-year development with residents' specific concerns about tenancing and community engagement in mind.

Conditions newly added to the development permit include a community advisory committee composed of community and parent advisory council members and a condition that the building operator consider best practices and local factors when tenancing, Mr. Kelley said.

He declined to comment further on a specific tenant mix.

“I want to leave that up to the process to determine how that will work,” Mr. Kelley said.

“People certainly have a right to housing. This program is broad; it includes a number of sites throughout the city.

“What we've asked is, in that work, that the operator take care in terms of making a good fit with this neighbourhood and taking into account the local considerations.”

Also at the site on Tuesday was Alex Morrison, a nearby resident who walks past the site daily on his way to and from school at Langara. He held a sign in support of the project.

“I always see these signs, and the protesters out here,” Mr. Morrison said.

"I never saw anybody saying 'We support it,' so I just thought I'd take half an hour, come out here and show anybody who does care that there are people who support this."

Mr. Morrison said he trusts the vetting process and is troubled by his neighbours' attempts to keep certain people out.

"Diversity is ideal," he said. "We should have anybody who wants to live there, who needs a place, to live there. We should have more [developments] I like that, frankly."

The Marpole development is part of a \$66-million commitment from the B.C. government toward building a total of 600 temporary modular housing units in Vancouver.

Metro Vancouver's latest homeless count, released late September, found that 3,605 people in the region do not have homes, up from 2,777 during the last count three years ago. Of those, 2,138 were in the City of Vancouver.

[www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/protestors-block-driveaway-delay-modular-housing-project-on-vancouvers-south-side/article37121988/](http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/protestors-block-driveaway-delay-modular-housing-project-on-vancouvers-south-side/article37121988/)

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## Vancouver Binnners' Project requests \$75K for cart sharing pilot

by [Lacia Kretzel](#)

Posted Nov 28, 2017 5:32 pm PST

An estimated 3,000 full-time binnners currently operate in Vancouver.

VANCOUVER (NEWS 1130) — Vancouver's bottle and can collectors could soon have new equipment to help them lug their haul to recycling depots as a local group asks the city for a grant to test out the first cart sharing program.

[The Binnners' Project](#) wants \$75,000 from the City of Vancouver to pilot the program. Similar to bike share programs, binnners could borrow a cart for several hours, with a nominal deposit. Right now, binnners use everything from shopping carts to wagons and pile them high in order to collect enough during the day.

Project director Anna Godefroy says their prototypes hold twice the amount of a normal shopping cart and are desperately needed.

"Their limitation is often the transportation of materials so if they have a more efficient cart then they can bring more cans and bottles and we can divert more of those from landfills," Godefroy said.

Although there is no official count, Godefroy estimates there are around 3,000 full-time binnners in Vancouver. She said a cart sharing program would also reduce crime, as many binnners steal shopping carts from retail outlets.

The carts would also be outfitted with a trailer hitch so binnners could attach it to their bicycles.

The pilot, dubbed the Universal Cart Pilot could start in early 2018, and Godefroy hopes the full program could roll out by early 2019 and will include up to 40 carts at two stations over the next three years.

The stations would likely be located at bottle depots, including the United We Can on Industrial Avenue and another in the Downtown Eastside.

A city report presented to council today recommends councillors approve the new grant.

Council approved an initial grant of \$69,800 in November 2016 to the Binnners' Project. The group also raised money from other sponsorships and grants.

The Binnners' Project is a group of waste-pickers and support staff dedicated to improving economic opportunities and reducing stigma of binnners.

[www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-binnners-project-requests-75k-cart-sharing-pilot/](http://www.news1130.com/2017/11/28/vancouver-binnners-project-requests-75k-cart-sharing-pilot/)

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## 'Not enough focus on the demand side': Supply alone won't fix Vancouver housing crisis, says chief planner

[Dan Fumano](#)

Published on November 28, 2017 | Last Updated November 28, 2017 6:34 PM

As Vancouver real estate has soared out of reach of most locals in recent years, some high-profile figures have attested the only way to solve the problem is correcting the city's housing supply shortage. Others have argued for interventions on the demand side. The debate has, at times, become heated.

On Tuesday, Vancouver's chief planner staked out a position, saying the city can't build its way out of its housing crisis by focusing solely on increasing supply — it's crucial, he said, to address demand.

Gil Kelley, Vancouver's general manager of planning, presented council Tuesday with the city's new 10-year housing strategy, which he described as part of a "major turning point in the city's development."

Kelley said that San Francisco, the city where he previously worked — and one of the only housing markets in North America more expensive than Vancouver — had faced a "supply shortage."

But in Vancouver, he said, "the same conditions are not driving the housing affordability crisis."

"In fact, we've actually been creating a large supply of housing as opposed to San Francisco, for the past decade or more, it's just that supply has been targeted at the high-end and for investors, and leaving out many of the folks that live here in Vancouver and want to work and raise families," said Kelley, who was appointed as Vancouver's top planner in August 2016.

"In fact," Kelley continued in a statement breaking from the real estate industry's reigning orthodoxy, Vancouver has "produced more than our population growth would demand on its own."

Adding housing supply alone won't improve affordability, he said, in a city with a "very extreme level of speculative investment in real estate, primarily in high-end condominiums."

The new housing strategy raises the idea of exploring demand-side solutions with senior governments, including restricting foreign ownership of property.

Vancouver, Kelley said, has been hit by "a perfect storm."

Outside council chambers, Kelley told Postmedia that Vancouver's housing market has been struck by a combination of low interest rates, favourable federal tax policies, and "the ease of moving capital around, whether that's locally or internationally — and a lot of it is international in Vancouver's case."

"Those forces combined and have escalated to the point where we need a different set of controls on the demand side that we've never had," Kelley said. "I think there has not been enough focus on the demand side. And I don't blame that on Vancouver, I think in most cities that's been the case."

"I don't know if it's been a deliberate focus, but the effect of city policy over the last year, over the past decade, really, has been to focus on rezoning areas, and incentivizing new housing development, and creating vibrant urban neighbourhoods. There's nothing wrong with that, except that, in the current global investment market, without other controls on the demand side, it's not enough."

Asked how much of a shift from the past this viewpoint represents, Kelley said "I think it's quite significant."

"My predecessors had the task of producing housing and increasing density in a way that would increase the vitality and livability of neighbourhoods and housing options. And I think this affordability crisis would have surprised all of them, the extent of it," he said. "So I'm coming in with a slightly different perspective, which is that we've got to tackle all sides of this question."

It's a significant shift, too, from what some locals have said for years, including prominent voices from the real estate and development industry, the largest sector of B.C.'s economy.

[vancouverun.com/news/local-news/not-enough-focus-on-the-demand-side-supply-alone-wont-fix-vancouver-housing-crisis-says-chief-planner](http://vancouverun.com/news/local-news/not-enough-focus-on-the-demand-side-supply-alone-wont-fix-vancouver-housing-crisis-says-chief-planner)

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## Vancouver's plan: More housing, less speculation

City sets itself a nearly impossible task

Jennifer Gauthier / For Metro

July 20, 2017. Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson and Chief Planner Gil Kelley hold a press conference outside of 4028 Quesnel Drive on options to densify single-family neighbourhoods that have been losing population.

By Jen St Denis Metro Published on Tue Nov 28 2017

Can Vancouver densify its single-family neighbourhoods without setting off a wave of speculation that will kill any chance of making housing more affordable?

That was the question on several city councilor's minds on Tuesday as city planning staff laid out more details of a revamped housing strategy.

"Even in areas we haven't rezoned, there has been massive speculation," observed NPA Coun. George Affleck, describing areas like the Broadway corridor, where a subway extension has been planned and Renfrew Street.

The new plan, which was first introduced back in March, promises more affordable housing will be included in new developments, increased densification in single-family neighbourhoods and faster processing times for building.

The city has been criticized for waiting too long to rethink its housing plans, following a property price spike that began in 2015 and has upended any relation between regional incomes and home prices. While the detached home market flattened following the introduction of a 15 per cent foreign buyer tax, global and local investment has simply flowed in to the Metro Vancouver condo market.

Gil Kelley, the city's chief planner, said the city believes it can dampen speculation. But don't expect land prices to drop. "We're not going to roll back the prices that have been baked in," Kelley said, "but we hope to curb future price increases that are purely speculative in nature."

How does the city hope to stop the runaway train that is the Vancouver real estate market? There are things the city has the power to do right now.

"Wherever we start a new plan that might result in up-zoning, that will come with some limitations on development without providing a lot of affordable housing," Kelley said.

City of Vancouver

A slide from city staff's presentation to council showing the disconnect between housing costs and incomes.

"We will consider the land values at the start of the process as opposed to a lot of the speculative gains over the two years or so it might take to do the process."

The city also hopes senior levels of government will agree to allow rental-only zoning; put in place a tax on property flipping; increase the property transfer tax on luxury properties; and reform income tax and capital gains tax to "close loopholes."

In single-family neighbourhoods, where population gains have been modest or negative over the past 15 years, the city wants to allow low-rises and townhomes near schools and community centres — but it also wants them to include housing affordable to different bands of income.

David Hutniak, CEO of Landlord BC, said rental-only zoning could help temper land value costs.

When it comes to single-family lots, where lower-density building is planned, "the greater the density the greater the likelihood the numbers will work," Hutniak wrote in an email to Metro. "So the task will be finding that balance."

"The land value/cost is pretty much the driver of the entire current housing crisis."

[www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/the-plan-more-housing-less-speculation.html](http://www.metronews.ca/news/vancouver/2017/11/28/the-plan-more-housing-less-speculation.html)

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## Here are the flaws in Vancouver's 10 year housing strategy: expert

[Kerrisa Wilson](#) Nov 28, 2017

Photo [Nick Watkins/Flickr](#)

Last week, the City of Vancouver released its 10-year plan to tackle the city's housing affordability crisis, but one organization says the strategy is missing key details.

According to Generation Squeeze, the strategy is a comprehensive plan that they applaud, however, it has its shortcomings with respect to housing targets and wealth inequities.

"Any adequate housing strategy, whether it's at the municipal level or the national level, needs to engage directly with the wealth inequalities that are playing out along generational lines right now as a result of rising home prices," Dr. Paul Kershaw, UBC professor and Generation Squeeze founder, tells BuzzBuzzNews.

The non-profit organization describes itself as leading a national campaign lobbying on behalf of Canadians in their 40s and younger addressing the growing squeeze that group is facing in the marketplace.

Kershaw says Vancouver's 60-plus page proposal fully embraces the principle of homes first, investments second, and provides a multi-prong approach to rein in home prices relative to what younger people earn. However, the plan contains weak spots that need to be recognized.

Over the next decade, the City plans on building 72,000 housing units, with two-thirds of this total available for renters. But after reading the targets, Kershaw doesn't believe this is sufficient.

"Do we know that the 72,000 units are going to be enough to add back the kind of competition we need to see in the housing market so that it will help to actually cool down housing prices?" says Kershaw.

The City's report does not provide rationale as to how it came up with the targets and Kershaw worries the plan does not sufficiently address the amount of supply needed to help put downward pressure on prices.

He also adds that 72,000 units isn't a bold enough number.

In 2016 and 2017, Kershaw says there were 11,000 housing starts per year on average, significantly more than the roughly 7,000 units the current strategy would bring to the market over the next decade.

Furthermore, the City details how many new units will be allocated for social housing, rentals and ownership, but doesn't mention the price of these units — information Kershaw says needs to be included.

"One of the worries that we have is that what is said to be affordable for those income ranges still tends to be pretty darn expensive," he says.

Using the City's numbers from the report, Kershaw says if a below market rent for a three-bedroom home is \$2,000 a month, then a typical household income to cover that cost would need to be \$80,000 — well above the median household income in Vancouver of \$67,000.

"The plan to some degree is not even imagining that a typical earning household could afford a three-bedroom apartment to rent in the city," says Kershaw.

To the UBC professor, the most critical downfall of the strategy is that it doesn't address housing wealth inequities head-on. Skyrocketing prices have squeezed many residents out of the market, while benefiting a new group of people Kershaw refers to as "lottery winners."

Kershaw says the plan lacks an acknowledgement of generational and wealth inequities, along with the taxation solutions needed to correct them.

"We should establish in BC and Ontario, working groups that look into taxing real estate wealth fairly, with a focus on how do we address these lottery winnings?" says Kershaw.

<http://news.buzzbuzzhome.com/2017/11/flaws-vancouver-housing-strategy.html>

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## New southbound bike lane planned for Cambie Street Bridge

By [Peter Meiszner](#)

November 29, 2017

Current conditions on the Cambie Street bridge mean cyclists and pedestrians share the east sidewalk, with a high potential for collisions. Credit: City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver is planning to turn a southbound lane on the Cambie Street bridge into a protected bike lane, similar to the Dunsmuir viaduct.

The city is calling the cycling improvements "interim," and says further improvements will be considered in the future.

There will be no changes to the northbound lanes heading into downtown, but drivers will lose one lane of traffic heading south.

The eastbound protected bike lane on Nelson Street will be extended to continue southbound on the bridge, and will be separated by concrete barriers.

Cyclists using the new southbound lane will travel down the off-ramp to West 6th Avenue — the lane will not continue past this point.

The separated bike lane will continue southbound down the off-ramp to West 6th Avenue. Credit: City of Vancouver

The number of cyclists on the Cambie Street has increased steadily since 2010. Approximately 38,000 cyclists crossed the bridge in June 2010 — seven years later, that number nearly doubled to 71,000.

Most cyclists use the shared pedestrian-cycling path on the east side of the bridge, which is prone to conflicts.

Construction is anticipated to start in early 2018. For more information, visit [vancouver.ca/cambiebridge](http://vancouver.ca/cambiebridge)

[urbanvr.com/cambie-street-bike-lane](http://urbanvr.com/cambie-street-bike-lane)

## Overcoming the cost of regulatory paralysis

Vancouver Sun  
29 Nov 2017

"Time is money" is a phrase you might hear when the boss is complaining about your productivity (or the lack of it). In that instance, you might understand it to mean "Let's not be standing around when we could be doing something productive."

But in economic theory, the same aphorism might be a reminder that it's just as expensive to let your money stand around when it could be out earning a return. In that sense, people talk about the "time value of money" — and it's a factor that is making Metro Vancouver's housing affordability crisis a great deal worse.

The problem is the high cost of developing new homes in our hyperinflated market. Some of those costs are now structural and unavoidable. Obviously — and especially in Vancouver proper, where the average home price now tops \$1.4 million — land prices are outlandish. Absent a (potentially catastrophic) collapse, that's just the way it is. Material and construction costs are also beyond the control of developers or regulators. The only way government can intervene to counteract those expense items would be to subsidize their purchase — an expensive and controversial option that can also push prices even higher.

Apart from land, labour and materials, there are other factors inflating home prices, including regulation and regulatory delay. A recent Fraser Institute red-tape report pointed out that permits and fees add an average of \$52,000 to every new home in Surrey and \$78,000 per home in Vancouver. No one likes those costs, but many reasonable people are also unwilling to give developers free rein to knock down the house next door and build whatever they want, however they want, whenever they want, without regard to environmental, social or design impact on the neighbourhood. Again, it's a controversial option.

But in addressing regulatory delay, we could make huge gains, or forestall large future losses. There is a time value to money, regardless of whether developers are using their own (in which case there is an "opportunity cost" of letting it stand around too long) or they are borrowing it from the bank. Interest or opportunity costs can be staggering, especially for large-project developers who might tie up tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars and then be forced to wait an average from six months, in Richmond, to two years or more, in Vancouver, for permission to proceed.

Regulatory delays distort the market in two ways. First, opportunity or interest costs get added to the bottom line — and those can be considerable. Second, and sometimes worse, long waits for development permits, building permits, rezonings and every imaginable kind of inspection prevent developers from meeting housing demand in a timely way — and we all know what happens when a product is in limited supply: the price goes up. And once it rises, every other homeowner becomes invested in the new price; it's a train that doesn't back up.

Now, notwithstanding the Fraser Institute's suggestion that we should roll back regulation across the region — a move that could turn Vancouver into Houston and let the flood waters invade where they may — we are never going to remove regulatory delays completely. Development is complicated. And the more dense, safe, sustainable — and desirable — the city, the greater the complications.

But that doesn't mean that current delays are acceptable. We need an intervention. First, every city needs to be trying much harder to speed and harmonize their processes. No one in any municipality should be caught sending applicants away with a shrug and a tired "that's just the way things work around here" rationalization.

Second, the provincial government, which campaigned on a promise to tackle housing affordability, could help clear the regulatory logjam. In addition to investing in low-income housing — a necessary, blunt and expensive intervention — the province could create and empower regulatory "swat teams," as they have in the past to help municipalities adapt quickly to new building codes. These teams could help process the backlog of development applications, large and small, stemming the cost of delay and clearing the way for new applications — and new construction that will help meet demand.

We have an untenable problem, a potential intervention, and a real need to act quickly. Time, after all, is money.

[vancouver.sun.com/opinion/oped/opinion-overcoming-the-cost-of-regulatory-paralysis](http://vancouver.sun.com/opinion/oped/opinion-overcoming-the-cost-of-regulatory-paralysis)

## Rental costs trend upwards

City is Canada's priciest as experts say conditions may be worse

The Province  
29 Nov 2017

MATT ROBINSON AND TIFFANY CRAWFORD [mrobinson@postmedia.com](mailto:mrobinson@postmedia.com) [tcrawford@postmedia.com](mailto:tcrawford@postmedia.com)

NICK PROCAYLO/PNGA new report found that rental rates in Vancouver surged 6.2 per cent over the last year. The city also has one of the lowest purpose-built rental vacancy rates (0.9 per cent).

Metro Vancouver has the highest rental housing prices in Canada and other cities in B.C. are catching up, according to a new Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. report, produced in a year that saw rental vacancy rates plummet across the country.

But some experts say Vancouver's actual rental market conditions may be even worse for prospective tenants than the 2017 Rental Market Survey makes out, and online listings seem to support such a take.

The survey, released Tuesday, found rental rates in Vancouver surged 6.2 per cent over the last year. In Kelowna, rates jumped a whopping 8.6 per cent — the highest increase in the country — and Victoria was not far behind with an 8.1-per-cent hike.

In the City of Vancouver alone, the average monthly rent paid for a purpose-built, two-bedroom apartment is now \$1,860, according to the report, and asking prices for similar empty units are around \$2,100. One-bedroom places rent for \$1,325, and similar vacant units are listed for an average of nearly \$1,450, it found.

Andrew Sakamoto at the Tenant Resource and Advisory Centre believed those numbers seemed a little low compared to what is being seen on the broader rental market in the city. He put the average for one-bedroom apartments closer to \$2,000, based on anecdotal reports.

That figure is spot-on with rent trends posted at Padmapper, an apartment-hunting website. This month, average asking rates for long-term, one-bedroom apartment rentals in the city are \$1,994, according to the site. Just nine of 165 one-bedroom apartments listed are for \$1,450 or less.

That same trend holds for longterm, two-bedroom rental apartments, which now advertise for an average of \$3,100, according to Padmapper. Just 12 of the 178 such apartments listed on the service are priced at \$2,100 or less, and 22 are listed at \$5,000 or more.

Eric Bond, a principal market analyst with the CMHC, helped explain some of the gap.

The rental market survey, conducted by telephone interviews and site visits during the first two weeks of October, targets only purpose-built rental apartments. When looking specifically at rental condominium apartments, the average prices CMHC found were closer to \$1,700 for a one-bedroom and \$2,400 for a two-bedroom apartment.

But that still seems low for the likes of Liam McClure, a tenant advocate with the Vancouver Tenants Union. "I'm inclined to think the higher figures are more accurate because (they address) exclusively listings that are on the market right now that are available for you to go out and rent," McClure said in an interview.

Tom Davidoff, an associate professor at the University of B.C.'s Sauder School of Business, said he didn't think the CMHC's numbers sounded "too far off," particularly once furnished rentals were factored out of online listings. But he did say growth in rents on Craigslist have seemed to have outpaced the growth in CMHC figures.

Craigslist shows several prospective tenants have posted want ads during the past month or so for housing at rates that exceed the CMHC's vacant apartment asking prices. They include listings from workers, students, seniors and others. And a search through the first page of listings for Vancouver apartments shows the vast majority of one- and two-bedroom units are priced higher than any of the CMHC's averages.

The CMHC report found that Vancouver also has one of the lowest purpose-built rental vacancy rates (0.9 per cent). Kelowna and Abbotsford-Mission are both at 0.2 per cent, and Victoria is 0.6 per cent, it found.

The average rent across Canada for a two-bedroom apartment is \$989, according to the CMHC report. The lowest rents are in Trois-Rivières, Saguenay and Sherbrooke.

## One bedroom vacancy rates rise downtown, West End

Three-bedroom apartments see biggest jump in vacancies

[Mike Howell](#) / Vancouver Courier

November 28, 2017 04:53 PM

Vacancy rates for rental housing in downtown, English Bay and the West End have climbed over last year, according to a rental survey released Tuesday by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Photo Dan Toulgoet

A report released Tuesday by the federal government's housing arm provided some positive news for renters looking for a one-bedroom apartment in downtown, English Bay and the West End: vacancy rates have inched above the one per cent mark over last year.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's rental survey showed average vacancy rates for a one-bedroom in the English Bay area climbed from 0.8 per cent in October 2016 to 1.2 per cent this October. The increases were more significant in the West End (0.5 per cent in 2016 to 1.2 per cent this year) and downtown (0.4 per cent to 1.3 per cent).

Gil Kelley, the city's director of planning, said the data suggests the addition of more rental housing across the city and policies such as the empty homes tax, which was implemented to encourage landlords to rent unused space, might have something to do with the increases.

"It is a hopeful sign that we're seeing a bit more room to breathe in the rental housing market," said Kelley, noting the city will have to monitor the vacancy rate over time as it relates to city housing policies to accurately determine whether they are having a direct effect on supply.

Vacancy rates for two-bedroom apartments in English Bay and downtown held fairly steady over last year — at just over one per cent — but plummeted in the West End/Stanley Park area from 1.5 to 0.2 per cent.

The biggest gain in available apartments for rent was for three bedrooms. Last year, the data showed a zero per cent vacancy rate for the family-sized places in the West End/Stanley Park area. That jumped to 7.7 per cent this year. English Bay also went from zero to 6.9 per cent; there was no data available for downtown three bedrooms.

While vacancy rates have increased, the average rent for a one-bedroom in West End/Stanley Park shot up from \$1,366 last year to \$1,386 this year, and \$1,434 to \$1,520 downtown. English Bay saw a decrease from \$1,441 to \$1,436 per month for a one-bedroom place.

The average rent for a three-bedroom place in the West End/Stanley Park was \$3,150, and \$2,723 in English Bay. Two-bedroom places in all three areas cost an average of \$2,186 per month, an increase of nine dollars over last October.

When examining all of Vancouver, average monthly rents for a one-bedroom apartment were highest in the University Endowment Lands (\$1,700) and lowest in Marpole, at \$978 per month. Average rent for a one-bedroom across the city was \$1,326 per month. For a two-bedroom, it was \$1,860 and three-bedroom, \$2,313.

Vision Vancouver Councilor Tim Stevenson, who lives in the West End, believes the empty homes tax and the recently approved short-term rental rules — which the city warned more than a year ago would soon be in place — sent a strong message to landlords about the need to free up long-term rental accommodations.

Stevenson said the city's aggressive agenda to approve more rental housing across Vancouver has also helped in slowly creating more supply of rental homes. A report on the city's new housing strategy that went before city council Tuesday said 7,030 rental units have been built in the city since 2010.

"I think we're going in the right direction and this is the first indication," said Stevenson of the city's housing policies.

The housing corporation's report said rising rents, low financing costs, growing interest from institutional investors and municipal incentive programs for developers stimulated supply of new units in the rental market.

Though new rental homes are more expensive to rent, the report said "new units allow renters who desire newer-condition suites to move, freeing up additional supply at other price points."

As a region, Metro Vancouver's vacancy rate is still below one per cent at 0.9, and the average rent for a one-bedroom is \$1,223 per month. Those figures are based on calculations from data collected in October from the "Census Metropolitan Area," which stretches from Vancouver to Langley and includes White Rock, Maple Ridge and the North Shore.

The housing corporation conducts the rental market survey the first two weeks of every October. The survey is conducted by a combination of telephone interviews and site visits, and information is obtained from the owner, manager, or building superintendent.

The city's proposed housing strategy, which will likely get council approval Wednesday, calls for the construction of almost 50,000 rental homes over the next 10 years. Rental zones and projects that would tie a person's income to cost of rent are other initiatives in the strategy.

[www.vancourier.com/news/one-bedroom-vacancy-rates-rise-downtown-west-end-1.23107225](http://www.vancourier.com/news/one-bedroom-vacancy-rates-rise-downtown-west-end-1.23107225)

## City of Vancouver responds to the "poor door effect"

November 28, 2017

Yesterday the City of Vancouver approved the controversial Marpole modular Housing project.

On November 6th, 200 protesters, made up mostly of parents, descended on the intersection of West 54th and Heather, just across the street from three neighborhood schools; Sir Winston Churchill, Sir Wilfrid Laurier and Ideal Mini School.

Protesters slammed the City for poor communication and undercutting the public consultation process when it planned to build 78 temporary modular homes in the neighborhood to serve the city's homeless population this winter.

Today Gil Kelley, General Manager of Planning, says the community members aren't against the homeless as the Mayor, Gregor Robertson, appeared to suggest in former remarks.

"In my conversation with the community, they're very keen to come forward and say they do not want to be vilified as being anti-homeless and they believe their neighborhood, like all neighborhoods around the city, has to do its part"

Vancouver City Councilor, Melissa De Genova, says the backlash from the community came from years of Vision Vancouver's poor consultation process.

"People are fed up with Vision Vancouver's non-consultations. I do believe that if there was a wholesome and true consultation that we could use that feedback and work with the community to make sure we find a solution."

De Genova slammed Mayor Gregor Robertson for his broken election promise of better consultation.

"The Mayor apologized in the last election and he promised more consultation. He promised he would speak to people"

### Kelly Address the "poor door effect"

During today's press conference, Kelly addressed what he calls the "poor door effect" and says the City will be looking at this as they go forward with more affordable housing projects.

"We're going to be looking at those kinds of design rules going forward to make sure that this is housing for everyone going forward here at all levels of income," Kelley adds. "We just want to make sure that affordable housing for low and moderate people isn't stigmatized."

[roundhouseradio.com/2017/11/28/city-vancouver-responds-poor-door-effect/](http://roundhouseradio.com/2017/11/28/city-vancouver-responds-poor-door-effect/)

## City of Vancouver abandons natural gas ban under new FortisBC agreement

Kenneth Chan Nov 28, 2017 6:48 pm

The City of Vancouver's plan to ban businesses and residents from using natural gas is effectively cancelled following an agreement with FortisBC that will do the opposite.

The municipal government and the utility company have signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to continue the use of natural gas in Vancouver and collaborate on reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

This reverses a [City Council-approved policy last year to ban all use of natural gas within city limits by 2050](#) as part of its "Renewable City Strategy".

Instead, both parties will now work towards increasing investment in energy efficiency and renewable energy. The goal will be to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to at least 80% below 2007 levels before 2050 and increase the use of renewable natural gas in the process.

"At FortisBC, we put our customers first, and we are pleased to continue providing them with affordable, natural gas in the City of Vancouver," said Roger Da l'Antonia, executive vice president customer service and technology at FortisBC.

"We understand that Vancouver residents want to shrink their environmental footprints, without impacting affordability. That's why we're working together to seek out new opportunities for Vancouverites to save energy, and reduce their costs."

This includes specific initiatives such as the City creating a Low Carbon Energy Systems Policy that will support private investment in highly efficient and low carbon building energy systems.

Amendments will be made to the City of Vancouver's building energy policies and bylaws to align it with the BC Energy Step Code, the new provincial standard.

An effort will be made to increase natural gas as a transportation fuel source, as natural gas is seen as a cost-effective option to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation. Currently, nearly half of Metro Vancouver's greenhouse gas emissions is from transportation.

FortisBC will also work to develop a supply of renewable natural gas at the municipal government-owned Vancouver Landfill in Delta.

There will be programs to encourage energy efficiency and conservation for new buildings and incentives to upgrade old and inefficient natural gas furnaces.

This follows the controversy last year when it was revealed that City Council had approved a ban. Critics said a reduction in natural gas users would increase the cost of maintaining natural gas infrastructure, and these costs would be passed on to a smaller pool of customers.

Furthermore, hospitals and schools depend on natural gas for heating, and a dependency on electricity would raise costs for taxpayers.

Restaurants also depend on natural gas for high-heat and searing, and there is no alternative.

For an average homeowner, if they were forced to use electricity instead of gas, it would cost three times more — approximately \$1,500 per year, which does not include the cost of replacing furnaces and water heaters. Currently, 56% of the energy used by homes is natural gas.

The municipal government previously said its now-abandoned policy aligns with the BC Energy Step Code, but FortisBC countered the assertion, saying the policy to reduce emissions between 50 to 70% in rezoned buildings would eliminate the usage of natural gas for space and water heating in new buildings.

FortisBC also stated that the City's previous requirement for everyone to switch to renewable natural gas would require the utility to source many more non-existent large landfills at a very high cost.

[dailyhive.com/vancouver/city-of-vancouver-fortis-natural-gas-agreement-november-2017](http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/city-of-vancouver-fortis-natural-gas-agreement-november-2017)

## Vancouver to tackle "fierce" speculation by foreign buyers and local investors

November 29, 2017

By [Lisa Tarr](#)

The practice of purchasing property to turn a profit was a main concern for several city councilors during the Housing Vancouver Strategy presentation.

Speculative investment, the purchase of property based on anticipated price growth, has the biggest impact on housing costs in the city, according to Dan Garrison, a senior planner for the City of Vancouver. Some councillors feel this problem isn't adequately addressed in the Housing Vancouver Strategy.

"There is significant evidence of speculative investment in our housing market that is driving housing costs," Garrison said.

Many people in the market buying a home as an investment

Gil Kelley, general manager, planning, urban design and sustainability for the City of Vancouver, said a lot of it has to do with excessive amounts of local and global capital from small and large investors looking to shelter their money and grow their equity.

"Vancouver is a very attractive city [as] a safe harbour for both B.C. residents and foreign investors," Kelley said. "That coupled with low interest rates make for a pretty fierce speculative demand."

Mayor Gregor Robertson asked senior planner Garrison what the top priority should be in terms of asking the federal and provincial governments to curb speculation.

"A lot of speculative interests is driven by high value that's associated with strata [and] condominium developments," Garrison said. "When you are able to shift areas of the city through zoning to be for rental, you do remove that speculative value or that feeling investments in stratas or condominiums are going to go up." Councillor, Melissa De Genova, said she feels the rental only zoning is an "advertising campaign."

"I'm not necessarily sure that this rental only zoning is going to be more affordable," De Genova said. "We've seen from Rental 100 that the rents are too high. We've seen line-ups at the door for public hearings where people have told us they can't afford these units."

Kelley said the strategy will add up to a major reset in more than just housing policy.

"We'll have sort of a new table set decades going forward in terms of city building in Vancouver," Kelley said.

<http://thinkpot.ca/2017/11/29/vancouver-to-tackle-fierce-speculation-by-foreign-buyers-and-local-investors/>

From: ["Hamilton, Desiree" <Desiree.Hamilton@vancouver.ca>](mailto:Desiree.Hamilton@vancouver.ca)

To: ["Adcock, Jessie"](#)

Date: 11/21/2017 2:49:49 PM

Subject: TODAY'S HEADLINES- UPDATED (Tuesday, November 21st, 2017)

## **Today's Headline- Updated Tuesday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2017**

### **City Services:**

[Flooding in buildings, with more stormy weather ahead](#)- News 1130

### **Community Services:**

[Orpheum celebrates 90 years of cutting a rug in Vancouver](#)- Vancouver Courier

[9 things you didn't know you could do with a Vancouver Public Library card](#)- Daily Hive

### **Economy:**

['Co-working' expected to boom in Vancouver](#)- Vancouver Sun

[Domestic productions in B.C. shrink amid TV boom](#)- Business in Vancouver

[Facebook to open new major downtown Vancouver office on Burrard Street](#)- Daily Hive

### **Housing:**

[1 in 4 Vancouver Westside home sales appear to be flips](#)- Thinkpol

### **Public Safety:**

[Fentanyl forum focuses on youth](#)- Vancouver Courier

### **Transportation:**

[Washington state governor calls for high-speed rail to Vancouver](#)- Vancouver Sun

## **Yesterday's Headlines- Updated Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

## Housing:

[Increasing supply in a housing bubble linked to a bigger crash](#) - Thinkpol

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## Washington state governor calls for high-speed rail to Vancouver

[Rob Shaw](#)

Published on: November 21, 2017 | Last Updated: November 21, 2017 1:17 PM

VICTORIA — Washington state Gov. Jay Inslee says it's time to seriously consider a high-speed rail link between Seattle and Vancouver.

Inslee told MLAs at the B.C. legislature Tuesday his state will soon release the results of a \$1-million study into a rail line that would cut transportation time between the two cities from three hours to one. Inslee's office began the cost-benefit analysis earlier this year of the "ultra high-speed" rail line with trains at speeds of up to 400 km/h.

"I'm excited about the prospect of a train that can reduce the travel time from Seattle to Vancouver, B.C., from three hours to less than one," Inslee said in his speech.

"We are good enough to do this. It is time for us to start serious efforts in doing this not just for the economic reasons but for some day having essentially a subway series between NHL franchises."

The governor expanded on the project's next steps during a subsequent press conference, admitting one major hurdle will be costs expected to be in the billions of dollars.

"The first question is, is there a demand for this kind of service? I think what this study is going to show is very much there is a great demand for it. Which frankly is not too surprising when you look across the world at the success of these high speed corridors. We look at envy in Asia and Europe for what is available to metropolitan areas.

"The second question is potential financing. We're going to look at this report in detail but we've been advised it will show this is something that could be self-sustaining in a sense from an operational perspective.

"There are a thousand questions about how to do the exact financing, those are questions we'll have to grapple with. But I will just tell you I'm bullish about this corridor between British Columbia and the state of Washington. I believe we should have nothing but optimism about our growth potential. And growth potential will be accelerated to the extent we can travel in an hour rather than three hours in safety and comfort.

"It's hard for me to believe that our tremendous province and state that is so forward looking and so technologically advanced would not have growth that would be well suited for this type of transportation infrastructure."

Premier John Horgan said he's flagged two concerns already, which include the curvy rail line alignment from the U.S. border and the potential slow-down caused by customs.

"The biggest challenge as it has been on increasing Harbour Air traffic between Seattle and Vancouver is Canadian Border Services. I've discussed with the prime minister as recently as last

week, when it comes to the [nerd bird \(direct float plane links between Seattle and downtown Vancouver\)](#) and getting our air travel more seamless. If we're going to have high speed rail we're going to need to have border checks and customs activity done along the way, because if we stop for an extended period of time we're defeating the purpose," said Horgan.

"We'll have more questions than answers I think in early December but the good news is the connections between the two jurisdictions will be strengthened as a result of the discussion and if we can get this going in the short period of time it will benefit us all in the long term."

Inslee's speech at the legislature was the first time since 1984 that a governor of Washington State has visited the B.C. legislature.

The governor also used the opportunity address fears of U.S. President Donald Trump's impact on the relationship between the United States and Canada.

"I want to assure this assembly no matter who is in the White House it won't affect Washington State's relationship with Canada or British Columbia," he told MLAs in the legislature. "It cannot stop us from moving forward on climate change ... It cannot stop our businesses from inventing new and creative solutions."

Inslee later took a direct shot at Trump and his conduct, when speaking to media.

"The divisiveness and the conflict and the just inane tweeting has created a sense of anxiety and concern," said Inslee.

"And I think it's very important to not let that prevent us from going about our lives and enjoying ourselves and going about our relationships and travelling as much as we want to ... we cannot be daunted by this particular president.

"I don't want people in British Columbia for one second to think about not travelling to Washington state because they are concerned about the president of the United States. Maybe as a show of defiance you ought to come twice as often, how is that?"

Inslee said climate change and environmental protection remain the defining issue for both countries, and cited the growing risk of large wildfires and flooding and risks for his state and the province.

"Today I'm here in the hopes that together we will usher in a new era, one that moves past polluting fossil fuels and embraces a clean energy future," he said. "If we are remembered for anything 100 years from now, this is what we'll be judged on. And it's time for us to rise to that challenge."

[vancouversun.com/news/politics/washington-state-governor-calls-for-high-speed-rail-to-vancouver](http://vancouversun.com/news/politics/washington-state-governor-calls-for-high-speed-rail-to-vancouver)

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## **'Co-working' expected to boom in Vancouver**

Evan Duggan

Published on: November 21, 2017 | Last Updated: November 21, 2017 12:01 PM PST

The top two floors of the Hudson Bay store at Georgia and Granville in Vancouver will be converted into short-term office rental space by WeWork, as part of that company's deal with the Bay for space in several major cities. Arlen Redekop / PNG

The New York-based co-working company WeWork is continuing to search for more space in Vancouver.

“We’re really excited about Vancouver and have been keeping an eye on it for some time,” said WeWork’s general manager for the Northwest region, Gina Phillips. “There is a movement toward the growth of the Vancouver tech ecosystem and emerging startup environment.”

WeWork’s efforts here will likely accelerate the transformation of swaths of Vancouver’s traditional office space into the short-term rentals popular with startups, freelancers and satellite branches of international tech firms, local experts say.

WeWork members from Seattle, Phillip’s home-base, and elsewhere have been asking about co-working space in Vancouver, she told Postmedia in a Nov. 10 interview.

“It’s clear that the demand is there,” she said. “We really want to get more integrated into the business community. The commercial vacancy rate is very low in Vancouver and we’re out there looking for great locations and fully anticipate growing our footprint in a big and impactful way.”

Phillips declined to share specifics about their Vancouver expansion plans, but did say they are looking at a “number” of buildings.

“We’re looking for buildings that are easy to get to, easy to commute to from different parts of the city and beyond,” Phillips said. “We’re looking for amenities within the building and that are an easy walking distance.”

WeWork now has six floors at Bentall II and six floors at Bentall Centre III, Phillips said.

The company is also taking over the top two floors of the downtown Hudson Bay’s Company store and converting it to co-working space. That move is part of the much larger deal HBC struck to sell Lord & Taylor’s flagship store in New York to WeWork.

That deal will see HBC operate the Fifth Avenue store until the end of 2018. After that, the store will convert into WeWork’s new headquarters, and a smaller Lord & Taylor store, according to media reports. It also means WeWork will take over space in Bay locations in Toronto, Frankfurt and Vancouver.

WeWork declined to say when it expects to be operating its Vancouver Bay space.

The large spaces and high ceilings of the Vancouver Bay building are exactly what firms and individuals seeking co-working space want, said Maury Dubuque, Colliers International’s managing director in Vancouver.

He said tech firms, startups and self-employed people want much shorter leases and more flexibility. Most traditional office leases range from five to 10 years, while most co-working companies offer month-to-month memberships.

“There is absolutely a critical mass of tech-related small businesses and startups in this city, and their businesses are very organic. Traditional real estate is certainly not,” Dubuque said in an interview.

“Institutional owners or owners of large office buildings, they want big tenants for long terms and WeWork caters to the needs of those who have some need for flexibility,” he said.

He said the cost and delays in completing construction and tenant improvement work in Vancouver is increasing, and it is becoming debilitating for traditional office landlords to adapt.

“Spending between \$100 and \$200 a square foot to fit out new office space with a process that takes six to nine months is not realistic,” he said. “It’s not a great solution for smaller businesses when they can go to a WeWork or Spaces and set up an office in 24 hours.”

Cresa Tenant Advisory Services recently completed a report on Vancouver’s co-working situation.

They found that co-working space accounts for 1.2 per cent of the total inventory of downtown Vancouver and surrounding areas, or just under 268,000 square feet across 17 locations.

The two floors of WeWork space at HBC will add about 108,000 sq. ft., pushing the share of co-working space up to 1.7 per cent of the downtown inventory, said Ross Moore, a Cresa senior vice-president.

The five largest co-working space operators are: WeWork, Regus’ Spaces, The Profile, Hive, Suite Genius and IQ Office suites, he said.

“Our belief is within the next decade, flexible workplace offerings will account for 20 per cent of total downtown office space, or approximately four million square feet,” he told Postmedia.

[vancouver.sun.com/business/commercial-real-estate/co-working-expected-to-boom-in-vancouver](http://vancouver.sun.com/business/commercial-real-estate/co-working-expected-to-boom-in-vancouver)

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## **Flooding in buildings, with more stormy weather ahead**

by [Kurtis Doering](#)

Posted Nov 21, 2017 10:19 am PST

Last Updated Nov 21, 2017 at 11:52 am PST

(Source: Twitter @mvpplumbing)

Photos show a parking garage with about a foot of water in it

Rainfall warning issued across the South Coast

LOWER MAINLAND (NEWS 1130) – Are you sick of the rain yet? Well, tough luck — two or three more days of it is now expected across the Lower Mainland.

Rainfall warnings are blanketing Metro Vancouver, the Fraser Valley, and the Howe Sound.

Some buildings across the region have already seen flooding.

[MVP Plumbing](#) out of Surrey has tweeted out photos of a parking garage with about a foot of water in it near Still Creek in Burnaby.

John Pothier with the company says there was so much water, their pumps couldn't keep up. And that's just one property.

"[It's been] very busy. Lots of calls of flooding, backed sewer drains, storm drainage — things like that," he tells us.

"A lot of calls come out of the City of Vancouver — pretty much anywhere! People have a lot of old clay drainage pipe still in their ground. A lot of it has collapsed and doesn't function anymore," he tells us.

Pothier adds the wait is sometimes two or three weeks to respond to calls. He notes says a lot of problems can be prevented with annual maintenance.

[www.news1130.com/2017/11/21/flooding-buildings-stormy-weather-ahead/](http://www.news1130.com/2017/11/21/flooding-buildings-stormy-weather-ahead/)

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## **Domestic productions in B.C. shrink amid TV boom**

Canadian producers seek new partnerships as Netflix cuts into local resources

By Tyler Orton | Nov. 21, 2017, 11:30 a.m.

A Netflix science-fiction TV series filming in downtown Vancouver \u8194 \u8194 Chung Chow

Is there such a thing as too much business for show business?

The B.C. film industry generated \$2.6 billion in production money spent in the province during the 2016-17 fiscal year. It's an industry record, according to Creative BC, the provincial agency that promotes the province's film and TV sector.

B.C. crews are working non-stop. And converting old warehouses into studio space has become a cottage industry for some.

But Creative BC's tax administration data reveals this is coming at a cost to smaller, independent producers specializing in quintessentially Canadian content.

As big TV and film productions like *Deadpool* and *A Series of Unfortunate Events* set up shop in Vancouver, domestic productions in the last fiscal year sank to 12% from 18% of production activity year-over-year.

"We have on the one hand an unprecedented level of production taking place in this country, especially in B.C. ... especially on the service side," Reynolds Mastin, president and CEO of the Canadian Media Producers Association, told a gathering of industry insiders at the November 9 Mediacon Summit in Vancouver.

On the other hand, domestic TV producers are being pressed to find a financier to offset growing

production budgets or lock down a U.S. network to broadcast the show before a traditional Canadian broadcaster will commit, according to Mastin.

He said this has resulted in a reduction in the number of domestic TV shows commissioned by Canadian broadcasters.

“We have a little less money to work with but we’re still making investments,” Susan Makela, director of strategic planning for Bell Media Inc.’s independent production team, told the panel following Mastin’s remarks.

Streaming services like Netflix (Nasdaq:NFLX) have been fragmenting audiences, which is eating away at the revenue streams of traditional broadcasters, Makela said.

She said that while growing budgets of TV shows have had the added benefit of drawing more international attention to Canadian shows, they have also reduced the amount of money available for separate projects.

“As shows get more expensive, it’s just not going to work where Bell Media takes on more risk without seeing any benefit from that,” she said, adding that foreign co-productions are becoming more enticing for broadcasters.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Media Fund (CMF) relies on a percentage of revenues from traditional broadcasters to help fund Canadian content like Vikings, Orphan Black and Kim’s Convenience.

As streaming services like Netflix eat away at the revenues of traditional broadcasters, the CMF will have to find ways to fill in those funding gaps.

“I don’t know mathematically how we can support as many projects as we have in the past with [less money],” Nathalie Clermont, the CMF’s director of program management, told the Mediacon audience.

Federal Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly announced in September that Ottawa’s new Creative Canada framework will require a \$500 million investment from Netflix to create a new production company to invest “in original production in Canada” over five years.

Mastin, who was briefed by the government on the deal, said there has been a lot of misunderstanding about the Netflix deal.

“It is not something that was a substitute or intended to be a substitute for regulating Netflix or for taxing Netflix,” he said.

“[Ottawa is saying] if you want to operate in this country and you want to hire people directly as a company, you have to make certain commitments to Canada. And those commitments were \$100 million a year for the next five years, plus \$25 million for talent development – emerging talent development – with a particular focus on francophone Quebec.”

Canada serves as one of Netflix’s biggest markets for audiences and one of its largest production centres, according to Creative BC vice-president Robert Wong.

“They have a vested interest in being established here in Canada as a production entity,” he said at Mediacon, adding that it’s possible the Netflix Canada production house would be an incorporated company and a taxable entity in this country, but without any sort of bricks-and-mortar presence.

And Mastin said it’s likely Netflix will continue to co-produce projects in Canada, “but there are no guarantees.”

Meanwhile, producers are concerned the “lion’s share of the money might end up in in-house production rather than through independent producers and working with broadcasters,” he said. The domestic industry needs to “double down, triple down, quadruple down on development” of new content and provide creative teams enough time to properly develop before cameras roll, according to Mastin.

[www.biv.com/article/2017/11/domestic-productions-bc-shrink-amid-tv-boom/](http://www.biv.com/article/2017/11/domestic-productions-bc-shrink-amid-tv-boom/)

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## **Orpheum celebrates 90 years of cutting a rug in Vancouver**

Birthday party slated for Nov. 24 will include silent films, vaudeville acts, live music and more

John Kurucz / Vancouver Courier  
November 21, 2017 07:00 AM

Low ticket sales just wouldn’t do in Ivan Ackery’s world.

The principal manager of the Orpheum back when it was a movie theatre, Ackery worried about a 1940s-era film about cattle rustling that wasn’t putting bums in seats.

Naturally, Ackery paraded a milk cow down Granville Street during the afternoon rush hour, complete with signs hanging off each side of the bovine that read, “There’s a great show playing at the Orpheum and that’s no bull!”

Ackery was fined \$15 by the city but claimed he got \$1,000 worth of free advertising out of it. Having rubbed shoulders with Princess Margaret, Marilyn Monroe and Frank Sinatra, Ackery firmly believed in the number-one rule of entertainment: the show must go on.

That mantra still rules the day at the Granville Street institution as the Orpheum celebrates 90 years in downtown with a Nov. 24 period-specific celebration. The evening-long birthday party will include silent films, vaudeville acts, live music and a performance by Vancouver Symphony Orchestra maestro Bramwell Tovey.

One month earlier, the same venue played host to American metal band Mastodon.

“You can come here and you can see the symphony... but then you can come a day later and Alice in Chains is here,” said Rob Haynes, chair of the Vancouver Civic Theatres Board. “That’s what we are. We present everything.”

The Orpheum has been a bit of everything since opening in 1927. At that time it was known as the “Picture Palace,” and hosted films and vaudeville acts until it operated almost exclusively as a Famous Players movie theatre after 1969. It faced demolition in 1973 and was purchased a year later by the city, along with money from the province and feds. It’s since been designated a National Heritage Site.

Renovations in the late 1970s moved the Orpheum into the area it primarily serves today — live music. The venue hosts about 150 performances per year, on top of TV, film and commercial work. MacGyver and The X Files have filmed there, along with a music video for crooner Michael Bublé. Given that diversity, controversy has come calling on more than a few occasions, though Haynes says no act has ever been banned from performing.

“There are definitely topics occasionally that are over the top,” he said. “But you can’t legislate that. You have to be very careful.”

The guts of the venue includes 2,672 theatre seats, along with 16 wheelchair accessible spaces and a Wurlitzer pipe organ that can re-create musical sounds and percussive elements. Purchased for \$45,000 in the 1920s and now worth millions, the organ can even mimic cow sounds, bird calls and just about anything else.

Massive baffles were installed above the stage and along the roof in 1977 to ensure sound bounces in all directions: towards the crowd, the performers and the symphony conductor.

Speaking of the roof, the artwork along the cabled, dome ceiling isn’t what most perceive it to be. Far be it a biblical scene — the characters depicted are actually family members of architects, decorators and restoration experts tasked with breathing new life into the place in the late ’70s.

The venue’s namesake, Orpheus, a mythological Greek figure of profound musical skill, is also on the roof playing a lute-like instrument called a lyre.

Photo Dan Toulgoet

“Orpheus had the power of music: he could move trees, he could move mountains, he could tame wild animals,” Haynes said. “The belief is that he was the god of music. And as long as Orpheus is in this building, we will always be able to attract people with the music.”

Orpheus isn’t the only otherworldly being said to inhabit the Orpheum. Depending on who you talk to — and who you believe — the Orpheum is home to somewhere between three and six ghosts. The most commonly reported apparition is an attendant in the downstairs men’s washroom. A floating ball of light has been seen near the stage, and is thought to be the spirit of an acrobat who fell to his death in the venue’s early days. The dress circle is apparently home to a well-dressed woman who gives a standing ovation to a phantom performance and then disappears.

“Are they really real? One never knows,” Haynes said. “But I think there are one or two ghosts around here.”

The 90th birthday shindig runs from 6:30 to 10 p.m. on Fri., Nov. 24. Tickets cost \$19.27 and are available online [HERE](#).

[www.vancourier.com/entertainment/orpheum-celebrates-90-years-of-cutting-a-rug-in-vancouver-1.23099789](http://www.vancourier.com/entertainment/orpheum-celebrates-90-years-of-cutting-a-rug-in-vancouver-1.23099789)

## Fentanyl forum focuses on youth

Upcoming event will be held at Britannia Secondary Nov. 28  
John Kurucz / Vancouver Courier

November 21, 2017 01:53 PM

The Vancouver Police Department is concerned about the increased use of fentanyl amongst young people. A forum about fentanyl and naloxone is being held at Britannia secondary school on Nov. 28.

“Dear Parents and Caregivers, we need your help.”

Those two lines are the beginning of a prescient letter issued in late June by Vancouver Police Department Chief Adam Palmer. It’s addressed to the thousands of parents and countless others who have kids in the Vancouver School District.

In the letter, Palmer is asking for attentiveness and open dialogue around fentanyl.

“We are starting to see an increase in fentanyl use and overdoses in our youth, and we are very concerned,” Palmer wrote. “Fentanyl can be 40 to 50 times more toxic than heroin. Many teens seem to feel invincible and believe terrible things only happen to other people, which can make it a challenge for them to hear the safety message we’re trying to share.”

That dialogue continues Nov. 28, when the VPD, Vancouver School District and Vancouver Coastal Health host a fentanyl and naloxone FAQ at Britannia Secondary.

Aimed at both parents and students, the meeting will include guest speakers, learning stations and a question-and-answer period. The guest speakers from Vancouver Coastal Health include medical health officer Dr. Reka Gustafson, Sally Kupp, a clinical educator in illicit drug overdose response and prevention, and Jen Donovan, who works in youth addictions services. They’ll be joined by a VPD spokesperson and Art Steinmann, who manages the district’s SACY (School Age Children and Youth) Substance Use Health Promotion initiative.

The three learning stations will be centred around specific themes: How to Talk with Your Kids or Friends; Tools for Overdose Response; and Prevention and Role Modeling

“The opioid poisoning epidemic is impacting our community; the number of deaths is not abating,” Steinmann told the Courier in an email. “Like others in the community, many VSB students, parents and staff have questions and seek accurate information. Being able to discuss key issues and hear current information are important ways to ease anxiety and equip people to take effective action.” Next week’s forum is the third instalment in a series that began in June. Those forums were precipitated by police approaching the district in November 2016, says VPD spokesperson Const. Jason Doucette. Two more will likely be scheduled within the first few months of 2018.

“The goal of these forums is education and [to] encourage open discussions between students and their parents,” Doucette said in an email. “The speakers talk about the inherent dangers of drug use, the unreliability of the stereotypical drug user, and the attendees are provided with several available resources.”

Updated statistics released by the BC Coroners Service on Nov. 9 point to 1,103 overdose deaths

as of Sept. 30. Fentanyl has been detected in 10 deaths across B.C. this year among the 10-to-18 age group. Twelve died in the same demographic last year, compared to two in 2015.

More than 80 per cent of all of this year's illicit drug overdose deaths (914) had fentanyl detected, an increase of 147 per cent over the same period in 2016.

The Nov. 28 forum runs from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at Britannia Secondary School. Doors open at 6 p.m

[www.vancourier.com/news/fentanyl-forum-focuses-on-youth-1.23100911](http://www.vancourier.com/news/fentanyl-forum-focuses-on-youth-1.23100911)

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## **Facebook to open new major downtown Vancouver office on Burrard Street**

Kenneth Chan Nov 21, 2017 12:21 pm 3,332

Social media giant Facebook will be opening a new major corporate office in a highly centralized area in downtown Vancouver's business district.

A source who wished anonymity told Daily Hive that Facebook will occupy a significant space at Waterfront Centre office tower at 200 Burrard Street – the southeast corner of Burrard Street and Canada Place Way.

Exterior of the Cadillac Fairview office tower at 200 Burrard Street. (Google Maps Streetview)  
It will take up two entire floors – the fourth and fifth floors – of the 21-storey tower, says the source. Each floor plate in the building is roughly 18,000 sq. ft. in size, giving the Facebook office a total floor area of about 36,000 sq. ft.

Construction and move-in dates will be phased in for each floor.

When asked for further details, a spokesperson with Facebook says the new Vancouver office may not happen until later in 2018. It is unclear how many people the new office could employ and the type of positions it will hold.

In 2013, Facebook opened a 20,000-sq-ft office at [1555 West Pender Street in Coal Harbour](#) for the purpose of training recent software engineering graduates for potential full-time employment. This office employed approximately 150 people at its peak.

Other Facebook offices in Canada are located in Ottawa, Montreal, and Toronto, which employs about 75 people in a 20,000-sq-ft space.

Daily Hive also reached out to Cadillac Fairview, the owner of the Waterfront Centre complex, but they were unable to comment.

Vancouver's tech industry is rapidly expanding; significant job growth in the tech industry is pushing the demand for office space in the city. According to a [recent CBRE report](#), over 50% of the prospective tenants looking for office space are in the tech industry.

Demand is so high that downtown Vancouver now has the second lowest office vacancy for a city

centre area in North America.

Earlier this month, Amazon announced it had finalized the lease to an entire new 150,000 sq. ft. office building being built at the corner of Dunsmuir and Homer streets.

[dailyhive.com/vancouver/facebook-vancouver-office-200-burrard-street](http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/facebook-vancouver-office-200-burrard-street)

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## **9 things you didn't know you could do with a Vancouver Public Library card**

Harleen Khangura Nov 21, 2017 1:51 pm 126

Thought your Vancouver Public Library card is only good for books and DVDs? Then you've most likely been missing out on the wealth of free resources that the library has to offer.

From musical instruments to video games, the VPL library card is a wonderful tool for anyone with a keen interest in arts, literature, and culture.

Not to mention—it's all free!

Check out our list of some of the most exciting, lesser-known uses of your VPL library card.

### **1) Geek out on video games and graphic novels**

Giant Super Mario statue and Nintendo logo/Shutterstock

If books are not your cup of tea, then no need to panic. The VPL has an extensive library of [video games](#) and [comic books](#) offering popular games such as Minecraft, Star Wars, Destiny, Super Mario Bros, as well as the NHL and FIFA series. On the graphic novel side, there's a surprisingly large collection, which includes Marvel, DC Comics, Japanese manga, and other styles from around the world.

### **2) Binge on great reads from your couch**

If you prefer eBooks and audiobooks, there are great options for downloading a variety titles directly to your computer and mobile devices. Check out VPL's digital library of [eBooks](#) and [audiobooks](#), or simply search the library catalogue for specific digital versions of your favourite reads.

You can also download eBooks on your personal eBook reader, use the [OverDrive App](#) to read on mobile devices, or even view eBooks directly on your web browsers with the browser-based reader.

### **3) Become a producer at the Inspiration Lab**

Terry McBride Recording Studio at Central Library / Vancouver Public Library

VPL's new [Inspiration Lab](#) makes producing video or audio content within reach. The Inspiration Lab allows people to book a [recording studio](#), [digitization station](#), or [creation station](#) to record/edit audio and video as well as edit images. Each studio or station offers different equipment and software for varying needs.

### **4) Go back to school (for free) with Lynda**

[Lynda](#) is considered to be one of the best platforms for online learning in the world. It presents users with a comprehensive selection of more than 5000 online courses and video tutorials on a wide

range of topics, covering everything from graphic/visual design and photography to web development and business software.

### **5) Return to band camp with free musical instruments**

If you long to learn a musical instrument, but don't want to pay an arm and a leg to purchase one, here's another thrifty option. The [Sun Life Financial Musical Instrument Lending Library](#) offers a medley of musical instruments to choose from. VPL's website also provides video links on how to care for the instrument, as well as resource guides for learning how to play your borrowed musical treasures.

### **6) Visit 27+ attractions, including the Vancouver Art Gallery and Science World**

Goh Ballet/Vancouver Inspiration Pass

Perhaps one of the most exciting and lesser-known programs at the VPL is the [Inspiration Pass](#). You can place a pass on hold (note: expect an understandably long wait) and attend a variety of arts, culture, and recreational programs over a two-week loan period.

The program involves [27 partner venues](#) and includes the majority of major museums, heritage sites, cultural centres, fitness and recreational centres in Vancouver. Our top picks: the Vancouver Art Gallery, Goh Ballet, Science World, VPB Ice Rinks, the Museum of Vancouver and more.

### **7) Stream critically-acclaimed films without paying for Netflix**

If you are a fan of internationally acclaimed, classic filmmakers such as John Cassavetes or Akira Kurosawa, check out Criterion Collection and IndieFlix on VPL's website. [Criterion Collection](#) serves a smorgasbord of classic and contemporary cinema from all across the world, such as Alfred Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1940) and the more recently released, Kristen Stewart starring film, *Personal Shopper* (2016). [IndieFlix](#) also offers a varied selection of independent films, classic TV, documentaries, and shorts.

### **8) Get smarter with classical music and live concerts**

Girl listening to music/Shutterstock

These two resources are real treats for music buffs, particularly those who enjoy classical music, folk, jazz, Chinese music, and world music. The [Naxos Music Library](#) boasts a complete selection of recordings of Naxos, Dacapo, and Marco Polo as well as selected recordings of hundreds of other popular labels, such as Sony Classical, Warner Classics, Decca, and much more.

If you're interested in watching classical concerts, operas, documentaries, ballets, and master classes, sign onto [Medici.tv](#). There, you can catch some of the most esteemed events and festivals live on the channel, including performances by the London Symphony Orchestra and the Opéra National de Paris.

### **9) Read (almost) every major news publication worldwide**

For VPL cardholders, [Zinio \(RB Digital Magazines\)](#) and [PressReader](#) pretty much render magazine and newspaper subscriptions unnecessary. Zinio's catalogue includes most magazines that one can think of, including *The Economist*, *Vanity Fair*, *Rolling Stone*, *The New Yorker*, *Men's Journal*, *Cosmopolitan*, and *Vogue*.

The best part? Users can access as many magazines and for however long they want, so there is no stress about returning magazines on a specific due date. You can also access PressReader for free, which offers digital versions of thousands of newspapers and magazines.

[dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-public-library-card-benefits](https://dailyhive.com/vancouver/vancouver-public-library-card-benefits)

## 1 in 4 Vancouver Westside home sales appear to be flips

November 21, 2017

By ThinkPol Staff

More than a quarter of homes currently listed for sale in Vancouver's most expensive neighbourhood appear to be attempts at flipping by speculators.

After receiving a tip off from an industry insider, ThinkPol analyzed all 525 currently available MLS listings for single family homes in Vancouver's Westside and found that 143, or 27%, were bought within the last three years.

ThinkPol used data from BC Assessment[1] to find out the data when a property was last sold.

The top 25 apparent speculators are attempting to gain more than 50% annualized return on investments from the flipping, our data shows.

One of the homes currently being flipped was bought last month, and 17 were bought this year. The industry insider who tipped us off also sent us what they claim to be a random sample of data showing ownership information.

Based on land titles searches conducted through Land Title and Survey Authority of BC, ThinkPol has independently verified the ownership information provided by the industry insider.

As our source did not provide their raw dataset, ThinkPol is not able to independently verify the randomness of the sample.

The industry insider claimed that they are providing ThinkPol the data to expose rampant international speculation in the Vancouver's real estate market.

"The realtors are going after you because there will be riots if people find out what's really going on in my industry," they said. "The general public has no idea how badly they're being screwed over by my industry, and my industry wants to silence you before you wake the people up."

Our source warned us to be vigilant.

"Please be very careful," they said. "Greed's tentacles spread far, wide and deep."

We reached out to BC's Finance Minister Carole James and Housing Minister Selina Robinson for comment two days ago, but have yet to hear back from either.

[thinkpol.ca/2017/11/21/1-in-4-vancouver-westside-home-sales-appear-to-be-flips/](http://thinkpol.ca/2017/11/21/1-in-4-vancouver-westside-home-sales-appear-to-be-flips/)

November 20, 2017

By ThinkPol Staff

The BC government has promised to tackle the housing affordability crisis in Metro Vancouver by “aggressively” increasing supply.

A new study coming out of Princeton suggests that the NDP government may want to reconsider that strategy.

In Economic Consequences of Housing Speculation, researchers link increased supply to a more severe crash when the bubble bursts[1].

“We need to make sure we’re sensitive as we address demand side but be aggressive on the supply side,” Premier John Horgan assured Vancouver’s developer community at an Urban Development Institute (UDI) luncheon last week.

But Zhenyu Gao, Michael Sockin, Wei Xiong found that “housing speculation, anchored, in part, on extrapolation of past housing price changes, led not only to greater price increases and more housing construction during the boom in 2004 to 2006, but also to more severe economic downturns during the subsequent bust in 2007 to 2009.”

“New housing supply stimulated by speculation during the boom period could have led to a supply overhang problem during the bust, which resulted in a contraction in construction-sector activity,” the authors state.

“Supply overhang can both exacerbate the subsequent housing price bust and reduce demand

for new housing, leading to a large decline in construction activity during the recession,” they add.

The trio’s findings are in line with research done by the US National Bureau of Economic Research.

Arrested Development: Theory and Evidence of Supply-Side Speculation in the Housing Market[2] identifies “mechanisms driving the house price boom by emphasizing speculation among developers on the supply-side of the market.”

“Many of the largest price increases occurred in cities that were able to build new houses quickly,” Authors Charles G. Nathanson and Eric Zwick conclude. “This fact poses a problem for theories that stress inelastic housing supply as the sole source of house price booms. But it sits well with our theory, which instead emphasizes speculation.”

Housing activists have long maintained that housing affordability in the lower mainland needs to be addressed on the demand side.

The housing advocating group Housing Action for Local Taxpayers (HALT) lamented that the NDP government, especially Housing Minister Selina Robinson, is focusing all energies on increasing supply without taking any action to curtail speculation-driven demand.

“Any demand side action, on speculation, tax reforms and addressing financial crime, in real estate will have to come from Ministry of Finance and office of Attorney General,” HALT told ThinkPol in a statement.

[thinkpol.ca/2017/11/20/increasing-supply-in-a-housing-bubble-linked-to-a-bigger-crash/](http://thinkpol.ca/2017/11/20/increasing-supply-in-a-housing-bubble-linked-to-a-bigger-crash/)

**Today's Headlines- Updated**  
**Tuesday, November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

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[Former city planner Ann McAfee](#) **CBC** Early Edition (Audio)

**Licensing:**

[Airbnbs and Short Term Rentals](#) [More Than Just Strata Bylaws At Play](#) **Real Estate Law Blog**

[Head of neighbourhood coalition opposing Vancouver housing strategy accused of running illegal Airbnb](#) **Thinkpol**

**Election:**

[Louie, De Genova, Deal to seek re election in 2018](#) **Vancouver Courier**

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[Marpole housing complex for homeless to open in February](#) **Vancouver Courier, Westender**

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[Metro Vancouver rental vacancy rate remains under 1%](#); **CMHC** **Business in Vancouver**

[Vancouver considers restricting foreign investors in housing market](#) **Reuters, Financial Post**

**Parks and Recreation:**

[Building nests for tree swallows in Stanley Park](#) **CBC** Early Edition (Audio)

[Ecologists at Stanley Park call on public to build nest boxes, help save tree swallows](#) **CBC News**

**Sustainability:**

[City invites public to share solutions to single use waste items at Cambie and West Broadway pop up](#) **Georgia Straight**

**Marpole housing complex for homeless to open in February**

Protest group delivered 5,000-name petition to city hall against 78-unit complex

[Mike Howell](#) / **Vancouver Courier**

November 28, 2017 10 08 AM

A 78-unit temporary modular housing complex to house homeless people is expected to open in February. The complex will be built at West 59th Avenue and Heather Street in Marpole. Photo courtesy City of Vancouver.

Mayor Gregor Robertson has stated publicly for weeks that a controversial proposal to allow the construction of a 78-unit modular housing complex in Marpole for homeless people will be built — and that promise was confirmed Monday by the city's director of planning.

The city announced in a news release that Gil Kelley gave "conditional approval" for Horizon North's development permit to proceed with the project on property owned by developer Onni Group at West 59th Avenue and Heather Street.

Those conditions include

An operations management plan for the complex.

The creation of a community advisory committee, which will include parent advisory council members and other residents. The committee must meet prior to an occupancy permit being issued, likely in early February.

A community meeting must also be held prior to the complex opening and attendees will include the Vancouver school board, B.C. Housing and Community Builders, the non-profit that will manage the complex.

Tenants will be chosen in accordance with "affordable/supportive housing tenancing best practices" and take into consideration the neighbourhood and adjacent schools.

Prior to the news release being issued, Kelley sent a letter addressed to "members of the Marpole community" explaining his decision. He prefaced it by noting he met with parent advisory council representatives, community leaders, the Vancouver School Board and project sponsors. He added that he also read numerous letters and summary comments from four open houses regarding the project.

Over the past month, hundreds of Marpole residents held several protests opposing the complex, which they argued was too close to three schools and worried a mix of tenants with mental health and addiction issues would put students in danger.

"I've taken this decision very seriously and taken into consideration everything I've heard from the above community members and stakeholders," Kelley said. "I've also looked at the city's overall need to support and house our most vulnerable residents, especially in light of the increasing number of homeless residents on our streets. After taking a holistic assessment, I have decided to issue the development permit."

He concluded his letter by saying, "I think we will all be proud of this effort."

The Courier contacted a representative of the recently formed "Right Idea, Wrong Location" organization that has led protests and delivered a petition to city hall with more than 5,000 names opposing the project.

The complex will be across the street from Ideal Mini School and Sir Wilfrid Laurier elementary school. Sir Winston Churchill secondary is two blocks north of the site at West 59th Avenue and Heather Street. Residents interviewed at two protests told the Courier they were not against housing projects for homeless people, but didn't want such a project in a neighbourhood with three schools.

"Our group will not be commenting at this time," said Long Trak, a spokesperson for the group. "We will be holding a press conference later this week in which we will respond to this latest news. We will update you regarding the day, time and location."

Meanwhile, a group called "Marpole students for modular housing" plans to hold a "new neighbour welcoming rally" Dec. 5 outside the property on Heather Street. A message on the group's Facebook page indicates 60 people will attend, with another 328 interested.

"The purpose of this event is to create connections, exchange stories and, most of all, to show that we are ready to welcome those who will be moving into the modular housing!" the message said.

Onni Group agreed to have the housing remain on the property for at least five years before it proceeds with a 2,700-unit residential development, which will include 654 social housing units, with 114 of those connected to health and counselling services for tenants.

The modular project will be split into two buildings of 39 units each. Julie Roberts, executive director of Community Builders, told the Courier earlier this month that tenants will be a mix of people from shelters and the street.

Tenants will be 45 or older and many will have physical, medical and other disabilities. At least 14 of the units will be wheelchair accessible. Staff will be on site around the clock. Roberts said some tenants will likely have addiction and mental health issues.

"We use a tenant intake process that takes into consideration peoples' housing history, their mental health issues, their substance abuse issues, their physical issues," Roberts said. "So, it is in fact possible that people will have at this time or in the past had issues around that."

<http://www.vancouver.com/news/marpole-housing-complex-for-homeless-to-open-in-february-1.23106360>

**We must go all in to solve B.C.'s housing crisis**

Western Investor editor Frank O'Brien suggests some radical ideas to deliver affordable homes in B.C.'s pricey Lower Mainland

[Frank O'Brien](#) **Western Investor**

November 28, 2017

B.C.'s Lower Mainland now has more than 70 homeless camps, and if it is to avoid the tent-city explosion being seen from Los Angeles to Seattle it must take radical steps to address housing affordability.

Due to a wider safety net and greater acceptance of government intervention, B.C. can move quicker than its U.S. neighbours to turn the housing crisis around.

It will require a degree of political courage and public and industry co-operation we have never seen before.

Here are some ideas to reduce the cost of housing and rising homelessness if we go all-in on a solution.

Senior governments should buy non-fertile acres of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) close to the urban edge by leveraging low-cost government financing. The ALR covers 150,000 acres in Metro Vancouver but only 50 per cent is being farmed and nearly 30,000 acres have no agricultural potential, according to a 2016 Vancity study. A potential housing solution is for senior governments to buy 1,000 acres of non-arable ALR land and extend transit to the sites. B.C.'s largest public-employee pension fund is already among the largest owners of modular home parks in the province. By removing the land value, modular home parks or co-op apartments could be built on the ALR acres, providing low-cost housing for thousands.

Rental housing should be encouraged to mix with industrial development in Vancouver, starting with the False Creek Flats, by offering industrial developers tax breaks based on the number of new rental apartments stacked above the often one-storey projects.

Higher-density rental zoning should be mandated in Vancouver neighbourhoods near transit stops. For instance, Vancouver's Commercial SkyTrain station, built 30 years ago, currently has only one-storey retail and no high-density housing. Renfrew and Rupert stations, and some other transit stations in Burnaby, also have potential for higher-density housing.

Delay Vancouver's new zero-emission bylaw and B.C.'s new Energy Step Code until the housing crisis eases. These new codes add thousands of dollars to the cost of all new homes while having zero effect on global greenhouse gas emissions, which they are meant to address.

Rezoned 25 per cent of single-family neighbourhoods in larger urban areas for higher-density housing, with a provision that half the new homes created be market rentals.

Scrap Vancouver's new bylaw that allows stratifying laneway houses on single-family lots. This bylaw increases lot values for house owners without delivering lower-cost homes.

Scrap Vancouver's moratorium on the demolition of older rental buildings, provided they are replaced by market rentals with a hefty percentage of social housing included.

Finally, elect the gutsy, visionary leadership willing to make housing affordability a priority. It's not too late.

[www.westerninvestor.com/news/opinion/we-must-go-all-in-to-solve-b-c-s-housing-crisis-1.23106350](http://www.westerninvestor.com/news/opinion/we-must-go-all-in-to-solve-b-c-s-housing-crisis-1.23106350)

**Louie, De Genova, Deal to seek re election in 2018**

Vision's Andrea Reimer, NPA's George Affleck won't seek another term

[Mike Howell](#) / **Vancouver Courier**

November 28, 2017 10 02 AM

The next civic election isn't until 2018, but city councillors Raymond Louie, Melissa De Genova and Heather Deal say they will run again. Photo Dan Toulgoet

Andrea Reimer is out, now George Affleck is too.

Both [city councillors](#) recently [announced](#) they are done with city hall and will not seek re-election in 2018.

So who will be the next member of council to say thanks for the memories and not bother to seek another term?

Let's start with who's in.

Mayor Gregor Robertson has repeatedly said he will seek a fourth term as mayor. That's what people around him tell me, too. Of course, one year is a long time and stuff can happen. But, for now, he's in. And by in, I assume that means foregoing a nomination race.

Vision Vancouver hasn't held a nomination race for mayor since 2008 when Robertson beat current councillor Raymond Louie and former park board commissioner Al De Genova to become the party's candidate.

Yes, you read that right — De Genova, who is father to anti-Vision campaigner NPA Coun. Melissa De Genova. Al had a chance to become the leader of Vision but finished a distant third. Now wouldn't that have been weird and interesting had he won.

Anyway, that's history.

Here's a bit more...

Louie has been on council since he was first elected in 2002 as a member of COPE. Led by mayoral candidate Larry Campbell, COPE won a landslide that year and for a short time looked like they might repeat in 2005.

But only a few years after being elected, the COPE administration imploded. Campbell, Louie and fellow COPEers Tim Stevenson and Jim Green had enough of what Campbell described as "wild-eyed revolutionaries" and formed their own political gang.

It began as The Friends of Larry Campbell and morphed into Vision Vancouver by the time the 2005 civic election rolled around. Campbell decided not to run again and turned over the party's leadership to Green, who lost to Sam Sullivan and the NPA.

During that campaign, I remember Campbell and Green touting Louie as a future mayor of Vancouver. Then along came Robertson in 2008. Pundits and some insiders have pointed to Louie and Reimer as logical successors to Robertson.

But with Reimer not seeking re-election, that leaves Louie. In an email I last week, he told me that yes he will run next year to retain his seat on council. Vision Coun. Heather Deal confirmed the same.

Stevenson?

"I'm surprised at how early both Andrea and George have declared their intentions," he said in an email. "A year out? Why? Not sure what purpose it serves. I'm not going to put my mind to it for a while yet. There's a number of issues I want to see firmly in place."

Vision Coun. Kerry Jang?

"I haven't thought about it," he said in an email. "Too busy with modular housing, OD crisis (just got a paper in Lancelot! Invited commentary out in January) and cannabis rules for province as co-chair of JCCP. Like that line from Casablanca, 'Will I see you tonight?' Bogart answered, 'I don't plan that far ahead.' Not even sure what to have for dinner. I better take something out of the freezer. I will have a better idea at the end of the year."

As for the NPA, rookie councillor Hector Bremner said he will likely run in 2018.

De Genova told me over the phone last week she's in, but I have yet to hear from Elizabeth Ball. Green Party Coun. Adriane Carr said she's "st ill keen" and will run in 2018.

Regardless of who runs, there will be some seats to fill. Jean Swanson, who ran as an independent and placed second in the Oct. 14 byelection, said she is considering a run. So is Judy Graves of OneCity, who finished fourth in the race.

Vision's Diego Cardona, who placed fifth, is also a likely candidate for 2018.

Keep in mind though, that some or all of these people will have to compete in nomination races.

Interestingly, the 2018 campaign will be the first where no union or corporate donations will be allowed. In theory, the new legislation should give candidates belonging to small-sized parties a better chance at the polls.

As to who will battle Robertson for mayor, the NPA has yet to find a winner in three election cycles.

More on that challenge between now and October 2018.

<http://www.vancouver.com/opinion/louie-de-genova-deal-to-seek-re-election-in-2018-1.23106338>

**Airbnbs and Short Term Rentals** [More Than Just Strata Bylaws At Play](#)

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By [Chad Travis](#) and Aman Sara on November 27th, 2017

Thinking of purchasing a strata lot to rent out on the short-term market? If so, you may wish to familiarize yourself with the app applicable rental restrictions.

The popularity of short-term rentals such as Airbnb continues to soar, making them an increasingly attractive revenue stream for potential property investors.

In [HighStreet Accommodations Ltd v. The Owners, Strata Plan BCS2478](#), 2017 BCSC 1039, the B.C. Supreme Court tackled the application of rental restriction bylaws to strata lots being used for short-term accommodation.

In 2012, HighStreet entered into a tenancy agreement with the owner of a strata lot in the defendant strata corporation (the "Strata"). Soon after, the Strata passed a bylaw prohibiting owners and tenants from allowing a unit to be occupied under a lease, sublease, contract, licence or any commercial arrangement for periods of less than 180 days. HighStreet, being a "hospitality and corporate housing company" that leases properties from residential strata lot owners in order to rent them out as furnished accommodation to its clients, sued the Strata and its property manager to challenge the application of the bylaw to its corporate rental arrangements.

HighStreet attempted to rely on section 143(1)(a) of the [Strata Property Act](#) ("SPA") which grandfathered pre-existing tenancy agreements from new rental restrictions until the end of their tenancy term. Specifically, HighStreet argued that the grandfathering provision of the SPA only had two (2) requirements: (i) there be a rental restriction bylaw, and (ii) there existed a continuing tenancy relationship that pre-dated the rental restriction bylaw.

The Strata countered that the provision did not apply because HighStreet was not a tenant "occupying" the strata lot; its clients occupied the strata lot by virtue of a license with HighStreet which was terminable by HighStreet at any time. The Court agreed with the Strata's interpretation of the SPA, and concluded that the grandfathering language of the SPA was intentionally phrased to apply to strata lots where the tenant occupied the strata lot when the bylaw was passed (and did not extend to occupancy of units arising outside of a lease or sublease).

It's worth noting that the SPA contemplates additional exemptions to rental restriction bylaws for certain stratified buildings which were marketed for sale after December 31, 2009, but those exemptions did not apply in the HighStreet decision.

Most Metro-Vancouver municipalities are still in the process of developing regulations for short-term rentals, such as Airbnb (see [inks here](#) and [here](#)). Once enacted, strata owners and purchasers will need to comply with the municipal regulations as well as the strata bylaws applicable to their building. The HighStreet decision demonstrates that under the SPA short-term rentals are not afforded the same level of protection as tenancy agreements, and in some circumstances will be subject to prohibition by newly-enacted strata bylaws.

[www.canadianrealestatelawblog.com/2017/11/airbnbs-and-short-term-rentals-more-than-just-strata-bylaws-at-play/?utm\\_source=Mondaq&utm\\_medium=syndication&utm\\_campaign=View-Original](#)

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## City targets property speculators, wealthy homeowners

Joannah Connolly / [REW](#)  
November 28, 2017 11:30 AM

City of Vancouver proposes flipping tax as well as higher transfer taxes on luxury home sales.

Council is proposing new measures to "stabilize land values" and "level the playing field" by increasing taxation on property speculators and those who sell high-priced homes, the City of Vancouver announced Nov. 27.

As part of the Housing Vancouver strategy, council officials are recommending a series of measures "designed to curb ongoing speculation of land value and to remove barriers for developing affordable rental and social housing."

### The proposals include:

Implementing a requirement that developments contribute toward affordable housing and public amenities in the area. The city said, "These rates will be set prior to the launch of new community planning programs, such as station areas, to help mitigate speculative behaviour and reduce the overall cost of new housing."

Implementing a speculation or flipping tax.

Increasing provincial Property Transfer Tax on "luxury" properties.

Reviewing and reforming federal and provincial tax regulations, encompassing income taxes and capital gains taxes, and closing loopholes.

Details of the proposed home-value thresholds for taxation and specifics on federal and provincial tax reform proposals are not yet available. The city said the full proposal document would be tabled before council in early 2018.

"Our Housing Vancouver strategy focuses on ensuring housing is for homes first, not just treated as a commodity," said Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson.

"We need to level the playing field to make housing more affordable for residents in Vancouver – supply alone is not going to solve our challenges. It's time to create new tools that help the city to curb the negative impacts of real estate speculation and get more affordable housing built throughout the city."

Gil Kelley, the city's general manager of planning, added, "The effects of speculation have caused significant consequences for housing in Vancouver, and has hindered many of our attempts to build affordable rental housing as the high cost of land makes projects unviable. We want people to stay, live, and build a future in Vancouver. Our new Housing Vancouver strategy ensures that future housing developments across the city will provide the right homes for our residents, not investors."

The city also said it would work to create more secured rental housing, including "exploring the use of Rental Only Zones, to help keep housing available for people and families that live and work in Vancouver." The city added, "The ability to do this will depend on legislation from the provincial government."

Anne McMullin, president and CEO of the [Urban Development Institute](#), said, "On the additional new housing taxes proposed by the City of Vancouver, these may appeal to some voters but will not address affordability, given the housing supply shortage has yet to be tackled in any meaningful way beyond reports and strategies."

She added, "We need clarity on their call for review of applicable federal and provincial income taxes and capital gains taxes. If they're going after those who didn't pay their taxes on real estate sales on non-principal residences or investment properties, we support that approach. But if they're proposing homeowners start paying capital gains taxes on their principal residences, that impacts people's equity, children's inheritances and retirement plans for those who lack public sector pensions; and we would expect homeowners to be fully engaged on this proposed overhaul of our tax system."

The news follows [last week's release](#) of the Housing Vancouver strategy, which sets out ambitious goals to build 72,000 new homes over the next 10 years, many of those rentals and many family-sized, with widespread densification of single-family neighbourhoods.

This story first appeared in the Courier's sister publication REW. Read that story [here](#).

[www.vancourier.com/news/city-targets-property-speculators-wealthy-homeowners-1.23106451](#)

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## Ecologists at Stanley Park call on public to build nest boxes, help save tree swallows

Boxes will be placed in the park's lakes and lagoons in the spring  
By Clare Hennig, [CBC News](#) | Posted Nov 28, 2017 9:27 AM PT | Last Updated Nov 28, 2017 9:27 AM PT

Kathleen Stormont with the Stanley Park Ecology Society holds one of the completed nest boxes. (Margaret Gallagher/CBC)

Some bird populations in Metro Vancouver are at risk of disappearing and a local ecology group in Stanley Park is asking the public to step in and help save them.

The Stanley Park Ecology Society is holding a nest box building workshop on Tuesday as part of a Giving Tuesday initiative to encourage people to give time or money.

The nest boxes house the park's tree swallows, a species under threat because of declining habitats and food sources.

"We are asking Vancouverites to come and help us build these nest boxes that we put up in the park in the spring," said Kathleen Stormont, fundraising and communications specialist with the society.

"A tree swallow is pretty small – you'll see them swooping over Lost Lagoon in the summertime, really acrobatic. I'd say they are about the size of a flying mouse," says Kathleen Stormont. (Michael Schmidt/Stanley Park Ecology Society)

The population of tree swallows across North America has declined steeply in the past few decades. On British Columbia's coastline, Stormont said, the number of tree swallows has decreased 86 per cent since 1970.

"Their habitats are declining, their food supplies are disappearing and we do have a population in the park here that we can support," she said.

Tree swallows normally raise chicks in hollow trees but are facing fewer and fewer nesting options in Stanley Park.

"Hollow trees are usually rotten trees and they pose safety hazards here in the park so the Park Board does take them down," Stormont explained.

Tools and materials will be provided at the nest box building workshop. (Margaret Gallagher/CBC)

The man-made boxes mimic their natural habitat, with a small entrance hole to prevent larger predators from entering and weather-proof edges to keep the inside warm and dry.

"We need help building these nest boxes, we are not carpenters ourselves," Stormont said. "We are an ecology and biology society so we've invited the public to come and build the nest boxes to support habitat for the birds."

Ecologists and biologists don't use waders to place the nest poles on poles above the water. (Michael Schmidt/Stanley Park Ecology Society)

The nest boxes will be attached to long aluminum poles and then placed in the middle of Lost Lagoon and Beaver Lake in the spring, when the tree swallows migrate back to the park.

The [Nest Box Building Workshop](#) will be held in Stanley Park at Nature House on Lost Lagoon, starting at 7 p.m. PT on Tuesday, Nov. 28.

[www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/stanley-park-tree-swallows-nest-boxes-1.4422803](#)

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## Metro Vancouver rental vacancy rate remains under 1%: CMHC

By Emma Crawford Hampel | Nov. 28, 2017, 10:23 a.m.

Shutterstock

Despite record construction across Metro Vancouver over the past year, the area's apartment rental vacancy rate remains below 1%, according to a Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation report released November 28.

The vacancy rate was 0.9% across the Vancouver Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in October. The rate varied by home type; bachelor suites had the lowest vacancy at 0.8%, followed by one-bedroom apartments (0.9%), two-bedroom units (1%) and suites with three or more bedrooms (1.6%).

Strong employment and increasing interprovincial migration have boosted rental demand across the region. Also keeping rental vacancy rates low are the increasing costs of buying into the market, according to the CMHC.

"Current renters looking to purchase their first property, typically an apartment condominium, face two growing barriers: rising carrying costs and rising required down payments," the report said.

"Carrying costs had been relatively flat since 2007 as modest price growth was offset by falling mortgage rates; however, since the second half of 2015, prices have grown quickly."

Average rent increases across the region

Rents across the Vancouver CMA increased faster than the provincially allowable increase rate for the third consecutive year, meaning prospective tenants have faced higher rents than established renters. In 2017, the average rent increased 5.9%, compared with the provincially allowable rise of 3.7%. The average rent – including for both new and current tenants – increased from \$1,223 last year to \$1,297 in October 2017.

<https://www.biv.com/article/2017/11/metro-vancouver-rental-vacancy-rate-remains-under/>

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## Head of neighbourhood coalition opposing Vancouver housing strategy accused of running illegal Airbnb

November 28, 2017

By ThinkPol Staff

The head of a coalition of Vancouver neighbourhood groups opposing City of Vancouver's recently unveiled housing strategy stands accused of running an illegal Airbnb operation.

The City of Vancouver's Housing Vancouver report<sup>[1]</sup> outlines a strategy for densifying more affluent low-density neighbourhoods like Kerrisdale to add 72,000 housing units.

This includes the addition of as many 12,000 low-income units, and 24,000 new rental units including 4,000 laneway homes.

Housing Vancouver also sets a target 36,000 additional affordable condos, townhouses and coach houses for first-time homebuyers, families, and downsizing seniors.

Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods, which represents 27 individual residents' groups, opposes the City of Vancouver's plan on the grounds that "focus on additional supply through up zoning has proven to be one of the primary contributors to increased land inflation and undermines our shared objective of improving housing affordability."<sup>[2]</sup>

But critics are questioning the credibility of Dorothy Barkley, the co-chair of the coalition, after it emerged that Barkley turned one of her suites into an illegal Airbnb hotel last year<sup>[3]</sup>.

"The Coalition of Vancouver Neighbourhoods has consistently lobbied against change, and I suspect its constituents are older homeowners who do not directly feel the bite of the housing crisis," Vancouverite Alec Smecher told ThinkPol. "I'm sure many of these people worked hard to reach financial security, but I think they're blind, sometimes willfully, to the unprecedented hardships that less-fortunate and younger Vancouverites are facing."

Critics argue that Barkley's letter to the Mayor and Council of Vancouver is especially hypocritical.

"Retaining current rental stock receives relatively little attention, despite being the most affordable option for residents," the letter authored by Barkley and the other co-chair Larry Bengt reads. "Retaining character houses by encouraging secondary suites that can provide additional rental housing and mortgage helper income will have less impact on land inflation than demolition and new larger developments."

If Barkley really cared about increasing the rental stock by encouraging secondary suites, she should not have turned her own secondary suite into an illegal Airbnb hotel, critics point out.

"I rent, and have been forced to move several times in the last years," Smecher added. "I'm fortunate to be well employed and weathered the stress and cost, but consider the recent news story about two senior women living in a borrowed van in North Vancouver."

"As prices increase and units are taken off the rental market, I'm not the kind of person who is being ejected from the bottom; they are," Smecher said. "Homeowners like Ms. Barkley are playing an active role."

Smecher feels that the City of Vancouver's housing strategy should've been introduced much earlier.

"The City of Vancouver, like all levels of government, is now trying to catch up after years of indefensible neglect," Smecher said. "The time to have solved the housing crisis was proactively, when there was credible evidence that a combination of factors were creating a monster: Airbnb, foreign capital, failed industry self-regulation, criminality, and inflationary financial policy."

"Tackling this would have required political risk-taking and it was probably easier to wait," Smecher added. "Now the housing crisis literally has a death toll associated with it. While all levels of government are finally turning activist, it's cold comfort to those who

are homeless, or left their home city for greener pastures, or stayed and suffered."

Barkley's Airbnb listing boasts of "Private entrance to a charming upstairs suite in a heritage Craftsman house in Vancouver's vibrant & eclectic Commercial Drive. It is a short walk to over 100 restaurants & a mix of shops, while the Vancouver East Cultural Centre and its live theatre is but steps away."

Smecher feels that Vancouver homeowners ought to be more sensitive to the plight of the city's underhoused.

Smecher feels that Vancouver homeowners ought to be more sensitive to the plight of the city's underhoused. "I attended the hearings at City Hall and heard many home-owners saying the same thing – they'd like someone to do something about the crisis, but only if it doesn't affect their side gig," Smecher said. "They spoke with horror about the personal financial catastrophe that would follow any Airbnb regulation. Those homeowners need to understand that they're staring into the maelstrom that the rest of us already live in, as we try to raise our kids, live our lives, and build our communities."

All short-term rentals in entire homes/apartments are currently banned in Vancouver<sup>[4]</sup>.

Even under the new regulations coming into force next April, Airbnb units in secondary suites will remain illegal.

Dorothy Barkley told ThinkPol that she only started offering her upstairs suite on Airbnb after her four children left for university, and that she continues to rent out her basement suite to long-term tenants.

Barkley insists that she is unable to offer the suite to long term as she needs to keep it available for when her children come to visit.

Barkley added that as a retiree without a pension, she needs the Airbnb income to afford her home and offer the basement suite to long-term tenants.

<https://thinkpol.ca/2017/11/28/head-of-neighbourhood-coalition-opposing-vancouver-housing-strategy-accused-of-running-illegal-airbnb/>

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## City invites public to share solutions to single use waste items at Cambie and West Broadway pop up

by [Lucy Lau](#) on November 28th, 2017 at 12:18 PM

A large bin overflowing with 1,300 coffee cups—the same number thrown into the trash every five minutes—sits in a temporary space that will hear public input about disposable products. City of Vancouver

The City of Vancouver has launched a pop-up engagement site at 511 West Broadway, where it's encouraging the public to have their say in how single-use items such as hot and cold beverage cups can be reduced.

Featuring a large bin overflowing with 1,300 empty coffee cups—the same number thrown into the trash every five minutes—the temporary space is operated by city staff who will be available to hear suggestions that will, ideally, lessen the disposable cups, bags, and takeaway containers sent to the landfill. Citizens may also learn about waste-reduction solutions that officials are considering following consultations with both individuals, nonprofits, and businesses.

According to a report [released](#) as part of the city's Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy in September, 2.6 million plastic-coated paper cups and two million plastic shopping bags are sent to the landfill every week in Vancouver. At the moment, plastic-coated cups are only accepted in residential recycling streams and select Recycle B.C. facilities. Shopping bags must be taken to the appropriate depots and drop-off boxes.

Other throwaway products that pose a challenge to the civic waste stream include Styrofoam and take-out containers. Such items pose a threat to the environment and cost taxpayers \$2.5 million a year to remove.

Since the Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy's launch in June, organizations such as the Binner's Project have proposed ideas like [implementing a recycling deposit on coffee cups](#), which would encourage people to dispose of them properly while creating an additional source of income for the city's binners. Other solutions that have been offered on social media include adding charges to single-use items and only offering single-use products crafted from biodegradable materials. The city maintains that the strategies it adopts must consider the everyday operations of food and restaurant businesses, many of which depend on take-out cups and containers.

Vancouver city staff are expected to present recommendations to council in early 2018. The region has a goal of becoming a zero waste community by 2040. The Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy Pop-up Engagement Space is open until November 29, from December 1 to 3, and from December 4 to 7. For full hours and additional information, click [here](#).

<https://www.straight.com/ife/1000936/city-invites-public-share-solutions-single-use-waste-items-cambie-and-west-broadway-pop>

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#### Vancouver considers restricting foreign investors in housing market

Julie Gordon  
3 Min Read

VANCOUVER (Reuters) - The city of Vancouver is considering restricting ownership of housing to local residents, among other strategies, as it looks to cool a hot real estate market that it says is fueled by foreign and local speculation.

FILE PHOTO The downtown of Vancouver, British Columbia is pictured at sunset July 31, 2013. REUTERS/Andy Clark

A foreign buyer ban is just one of numerous supply and demand measures outlined in Vancouver's new 10-year housing strategy, which was announced late last week and presented to city council on Tuesday. Council will vote on it on Wednesday.

Even if passed, as expected, many of the measures being considered will need the support of federal and provincial governments, particularly those around taxation.

"There is a perfect storm in Vancouver," Gil Kelley, Vancouver's General Manager of Planning, told council on Tuesday, pointing to the "excessive supply of global capital" flowing into the city, along with builders targeting investors, low interest rates, and favorable tax policies.

Vancouver, long Canada's most expensive housing market, has already made numerous moves to try to curb the crisis, including imposing an empty home tax and restricting short-term rentals.

Home prices on Vancouver's upscale westside jumped 57 percent in the last three years, sending the typical price - including condos, townhouses and detached homes - to C\$1.4 million (\$1.1 million), according to the local real estate board.

In the Greater Vancouver region, the typical home now costs C\$1 million, 12.5 times the region's median household income of C\$79,930, putting home ownership out of reach of many residents.

Rents have also jumped in recent years, with the vacancy rate hovering below 1 percent, the city said.

The lack of affordable housing is putting strain on local businesses, with restaurants, retailers, and even the city itself struggling to find enough workers. To address the crunch, Vancouver is considering new strategies including imposing a speculation tax, an increase to the luxury tax, and the possibility of "restricting property ownership by non-permanent residents."

It is also planning to rezone neighborhoods across the city to a low for denser housing, including more townhomes and low-rise condos, in areas traditionally dominated by detached homes.

It is the latest jurisdiction to consider restricting foreign investment in housing, following in the footsteps of Australia and New Zealand.

British Columbia last year imposed a 15-percent tax on foreign buyers in the Vancouver area, which has helped cool the market for expensive detached homes, though demand for condos has exploded.

[ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN1DS2OO-OCATP](http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN1DS2OO-OCATP)

Today's Headlines - Updated  
Monday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017

City Services:

[Strong November storm brings heavy snowfall, rain and strong winds to B.C.](#) Global News/CKNW

[Vancouver set to see continued rain right through the week](#) Daily Hive

Planning & Development:

[Major office tower proposed for West Pender Street in downtown Vancouver](#) Daily Hive

Licensing:

[Airbnb: Who's covering it?](#) Canadian Underwriter

Economy:

[How would winning the Amazon bid change Vancouver?](#) Georgia Straight

[Vancouver's luxury market potential tempts hobblers](#) Business in Vancouver

Housing:

[Modular housing would benefit downtown Vancouver, says Business Improvement Association](#) CBC News

[Vancouver's Rental Bastilles: From mouldy co-ops to month's basement](#) Global News

[What the B.C. government should do about the housing crisis](#) (Opinion) Vancouver Courier

[Modular housing would benefit downtown, says BIS](#) CBC Early Edition (Audio)

Parks and Recreation:

[Vancouver Park Board approves new \\$16 million, 8-hectare park](#) Daily Hive

Public Safety:

[Party bus infirmary deemed accidental by Vancouver fire investigators](#) CBC News

Transportation:

[Transit fares are changing and TransLink wants you to decide how](#) Vancouver Sun, The Province, Metro News, CTV News, Global/CKNW, Georgia Straight, Roundhouse Radio, Daily Hive

Yesterday's Headlines - Updated  
Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Licensing:

[Airbnb neighbour damages your property? Insurance won't help, Thinkpol](#)

How would winning the Amazon bid change Vancouver?

posted on November 20th, 2017 at 9:45 AM

While the tech giant's presence may mean more highly-paid jobs, it could also present challenges for existing companies and the housing market.

Where big Silicon Valley business goes, prosperity follows—at least, that's what big Silicon Valley business tells us.

Ever since it became known that Vancouver was courting Amazon to build its second North American headquarters in the city, myriad questions arose around how the major tech firm might affect our city. When the B.C. government chipped in \$50,000 to help with the City of Vancouver's bid in September, the questions became much more pressing.

Just what would it really be like for an American megacorporation like Amazon to colonize a relatively boutique tech centre like Vancouver?

Political, social, and economic impacts

If Amazon brought a major new facility to Vancouver, it would revolutionize the city's tech sector overnight, turning it from just another major world tech city into one of the most important tech hubs in North America. Laborers and tech-sector experts would feel its effects immediately. That said, it would affect a lot more than job prospects. Its effects would be felt through every corner of the local economy, and from there impact the city's politics and even culture.

It's difficult for anyone to make a snap judgement about the likely overall impact of such a fundamental change. One concern is that Vancouver is by no means an aviation-friendly city, with a distant airport and sprawling city structure, cities like Los Angeles will be immediately more capable of handling the huge influx in air traffic Amazon can bring.

Local politicians have also expressed concern about the potential problems that such an enormous addition would have on the city's already stressed residential housing market. "Where in this city, or even in this region, do we have the capacity to put that many people?" asked Vancouver city councillor Adriane Carr.

"Putting demand on housing is only going to increase the vacancy rate and escalate the prices."

Vancouver is built on its tech scene and Amazon is tech

Because of both demographics and tax incentive programs, Vancouver has long been an attractive home for tech companies and startups of all kinds. The city has prospered right along with its tech scene, and the city's basic appeal to creative workers have furnished the city with the talent needed to expand even further. Amazon represents the ultimate fulfillment of that potential, one of the biggest tech-sector employers in the world coming to bring guaranteed business for an indefinite period of time.

Vancouver is a city built on its tech scene, and Amazon's new office could greatly reinforce that foundation. At the same time, past inflows of high-paying jobs certainly have not corrected wider issues, like cost of living. The issue isn't simply to bring in high-paying jobs, but to bring in prosperity via high-paying jobs, and the two don't always necessarily go hand-in-hand.

Richard Cheung, a CPA and CFO at TIO Networks in Vancouver, knows how fundamentally new sources of high-paying work can change any community in which they operate. "Whenever a city can attract a strong established brand like Amazon," Cheung says, "it will absolutely transform the economic and physical landscape of the region."

"The creation of up to 50,000 high-paying jobs attracting mostly tech-savvy workers... will have enormous economic benefits for local businesses and our entire province." Just as examples, Cheung cited increased numbers of hotels stays, air travel and restaurant trips as possible marginal benefits to the rest of the city.

Being a CPA, Cheung knows how even mild infusions of capital and business can have wide-ranging effects in a delicate municipal ecosystem like Vancouver. On the surface, it's a good thing that Amazon might bring thousands of new highly paid jobs, immediately raising the ratio of wages to cost of living that has long plagued the city's reputation—but we need to be mindful of the long-term consequences.

Properly for some, higher prices for all

In a city where local residents make up only a portion of home owners and landowners, even a few thousand people with newly enormous salaries could seriously skew the market by bringing a high purchasing power to areas that are still in the process of developing. If Vancouver does manage to attract Amazon, the city will undergo extremely rapid change for both residents and existing companies. You need a CPA to help navigate that space.

Cheung noted that although the effects of HQ2 could easily be very positive, "we should be aware that the higher salaries and influx of people will push up... housing costs (rental or ownership) in an already expensive city."

It's important to remember that Vancouver is still just one outside player in a tough, inherently American game, and chances are still good that Amazon will leave the city untouched.

With or without Amazon, Vancouverites should think seriously about getting help to secure their financial future. It might look like a thriving, stable metropolis, but a major shakeup to the city's order could be just a corporate press release away.

[www.straight.com/file/996396/how-would-winning-amazon-bid-change-vancouver](http://www.straight.com/file/996396/how-would-winning-amazon-bid-change-vancouver)

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Modular housing would benefit downtown Vancouver, says Business Improvement Association

Charles Gauthier says that modular housing would improve the look of the neighbourhood and help business.

By Christine Coulter, CBC Posted Nov 20, 2017 11:59 AM PT Last Updated Nov 20, 2017 11:59 AM PT

A man sleeps in the doorway of an unrented store on Robson Street in downtown Vancouver. (David Horemans/CBC)

The president of the downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association says that modular housing in the city's downtown core would help improve the area for both businesses and those seeking shelter.

"I suspect that we're going to have some of these modular units in close proximity to our member businesses so we have to play a role in educating and informing them about the positive aspects of doing this," said Charles Gauthier, president and CEO of the [Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association](#).

"We don't want to be part of the NIMBY movement."

The [city of Vancouver plans to build 600 modular housing units](#) with the provincial government committing \$65 million towards the project.

Traps and a tent provide shelter in Cathedral Square in downtown Vancouver. (David Horemans/CBC)

According to the latest [Metro Vancouver homeless count](#), the area's homeless population has jumped 30 per cent since 2014.

And Gauthier says that getting those people into housing could be beneficial for nearby businesses.

"It makes a difference. It gets people who are living in the doorways and the alcoves and other location throughout the downtown area and connecting them with people who are offering them services and meals, course living, treatment."

Gauthier also makes the case that money will be saved on policing, street clean up and hospital visits if more people have shelter.

"We need to tackle this aggressively and that's why we felt it was important to add our voice to this discussion and debate and modular units can be built quite quickly," he said.

And while Gauthier says concerns around drugs use and discarded needles are legitimate, it's more important to look at the positives that providing housing and treatment provide, such as reduced visible homelessness and less panhandling.

"You start to see a change in what the neighbourhood looks like."

[www.ctc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/modular-housing-would-benefit-downtown-vancouver-says-business-improvement-association-1.4410503](http://www.ctc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/modular-housing-would-benefit-downtown-vancouver-says-business-improvement-association-1.4410503)

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Airbnb: Who's covering it?

November 20, 2017 by Jason Conant, On the Editor

With Vancouver City Council voting to approve new regulations for short-term rentals, including Airbnb, and Toronto considering the move, the question remains: who is insuring these rentals?

Siefan Tischler, product and underwriting manager at Vancouver-based Square One Insurance Services, told Canadian Underwriter last week that his company offers coverage for short-term rentals, including home contents, liability and loss of rental income.

Samantha Lapedus, manager of communications with Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company, said on Monday that the insurer offers a product to cover short-term rentals. The Short-Term Rental Insurance product, launched this past spring, covers homeowners and condominiums for rental periods 30 days or less and seasonal homeowners property for rental periods 60 days or less.

(Vancouver is legalizing rentals of less than 30 days in principal residences in the city; secondary suites, laneway homes and investment properties can only be rented short-term by a principal resident, which may include a long-term renter.)

Wawanesa's policy covers theft and attempted theft caused by tenants and their guests; damage caused by tenant vandalism; theft or damage to tenant's property up to \$1,500; and fair rental value.

Canada's largest P&C insurer, Intact Financial Corporation, does not offer a "specific product for this type of occupancy," a spokesperson for the insurer told Canadian Underwriter. "We understand short-term rentals are gaining popularity and we're following this closely," the spokesperson added.

Starting Feb. 1, Aviva Canada announced insurance coverage for homesharing across the country. The insurer's coverage includes an add-on to an existing Aviva Canada homeowner policy or standalone coverage for a secondary income property rented to short-term guests year-round (such as a cottage or house/condo).

Vancouver's regulations were brought forward by city staff last June to address the more than 6,000 illegal short-term rentals currently operating in the city. The city estimates that at least 70-80% of existing listings will be able to operate legally as of April 2018, when the regulations come into effect. At least 1,000 of the currently illegal rentals are not principal residences and would not be supported as short-term rentals under the new regulations.

[www.canadianunderwriter.ca/insurance/airbnb-whos-covering-100412398/](http://www.canadianunderwriter.ca/insurance/airbnb-whos-covering-100412398/)

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Transit fares are changing and TransLink wants you to decide how

[Susan Lazaruk](#)

Published on November 20, 2017 | Last Updated November 20, 2017 12:16 PM PST

You could be paying for transit by the kilometre travelled under new changes TransLink is considering for next spring. B/C Ernst / PNG

You could be paying for transit by the kilometre travelled under new changes TransLink is considering for next spring.

One option would be to have fares priced by kilometre on rapid transit with a flat fare on buses, and the other would be to have fares based on distance travelled across the system, TransLink said in a news release launching a third phase of its fare review.

TransLink said in earlier surveys, two-thirds of respondents opted for distance-based pricing.

TransLink is also asking for ideas on discounts for frequent users, such as a pre-paid pass or paying-as-you-go with a fare cap, an idea that received "strong support" from the 40,000 previous respondents, it said.

Customers can provide feedback until Dec. 8 through an online survey.

"The information we gather through public consultation, combined with our technical analysis, will help us arrive at a final recommendation for potential changes to the fare structure in Phase 4 next year," according to the release.

"We want to know how customers feel about the options so we can respond with a transit fare structure that better meets the public's needs," said Geoff Cross, policy and planning vice-president.

More later.

[vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/transit-fares-are-changing-and-translink-wants-you-to-decide-how](http://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/transit-fares-are-changing-and-translink-wants-you-to-decide-how)

### Party bus inferno deemed accidental by Vancouver fire investigators

'When I heard him in a panic I realized something was serious,' said manager of limo bus service

[CBC News](#) Posted Nov 20, 2017 11 27 AM PT Last Updated Nov 20, 2017 11 58 AM PT

Officials said the fire started in the back of the bus and spread to the front. (Tyler Roxy/Twitter)

Investigators say a fire that [engulfed a party bus](#) in downtown Vancouver on Saturday night was accidental but that the cause remains unclear.

Around 10 p.m. PT the driver had dropped off some passengers along Granville Street when he smelled smoke and pulled over.

The empty bus was parked with its engine running when it caught fire soon after.  
 "The fire has been determined accidental (vs. malicious/suspicious). Any further cause determination will be done by their insurance company if they so choose," Jonathan Gormick of Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services wrote in an email to CBC.

The stunned driver called his boss as witnesses leaving nearby theatres began to gather.

"He was panicking himself. When he called me the police and fire departments were there. I didn't understand at first what he was trying to tell me. Then when I heard him in a panic I realized something was serious," explained Silver Star Limo manager Amit Kang.

Po ice and 19 firefighters were needed to put out the flames but not before it gutted the party bus and also damaged a nearby tree and store awning.

The driver of this bus was in a panic after noticing smoke coming from the rear of the vehicle. Nobody was hurt in the fire on Granville Street Nov. 19. (Gian-Paolo Mendoza/CBC)

"They did have a challenge with shutting off the engine to the bus. It was left running. They had no way of shutting of the engine as the cab was burnt, so they had to manually just choke off the air filter," said Battalion Chief John Zacharuk, with Vancouver Fire Rescue Services.

Silver Star Limousines released a statement saying it was thankful there were no injuries. Staff said the company is insured and safety inspections were up to date.

"It still shocking. The main thing is everybody is safe," said Kang.

[www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/party-bus-fire-downtown-vancouver-accident-1.4410565](http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/party-bus-fire-downtown-vancouver-accident-1.4410565)

### Vancouver's luxury market potential tempts hoteliers

Marriott floats idea of opening a Ritz-Carlton and a W hotel in Vancouver  
 By Glen Korstrom | Nov. 20, 2017, 9 a.m.

Marriott Canada president Don Cleary in a lounge at the company's 188-room Douglas Autograph Collection hotel at the Parq development | Glen Korstrom

Marriott International Inc. (Nasdaq:MAR) is letting hotel owners know that it is interested in opening several new luxury hotels in Vancouver even though the company just opened two luxury hotels in the city's downtown core.

The world's largest hotel company owns 30 different hotel brands and several of its top brands would be a great fit for Vancouver, according to Marriott Canada president Don Cleary.

"We're still looking to grow," he told Business in Vancouver in a lounge at the company's month-old, 188-room Douglas Autograph Collection hotel at the Parq development.

"Vancouver is a good hotel market. This can support quality luxury hotels. So for me, W, Ritz-Carlton and St. Regis would be three brands we'd love to bring to the market."

Marriott, however, might have difficulty bringing the St. Regis brand to the region because a local company owns and operates the 65-room St. Regis Hotel at 602 Dunsmuir Street.

General manager Jeremy Roncoroni told BIV that the hotel's owner also owns the St. Regis brand for the Lower Mainland because it has operated the Dunsmuir Street St. Regis hotel since 1913. He added that representatives of the global St. Regis brand lost in court many years ago when it tried to strip the hotel of its name.

Ritz-Carlton representatives have long been interested in opening a hotel in the region.

In 2007, Vancouver's Holborn Group planned to bring the Ritz-Carlton to Vancouver by locating it in the Arthur Erickson-designed building that is now Holborn's Trump International Hotel & Tower Vancouver. The global economic downturn sank the Holborn-Ritz-Carlton partnership and caused a multi-year delay in getting a brand for that project.

W Hotels and Resorts representatives have not previously floated the idea in public of opening a property in Vancouver, but it could be a wise move, according to hotel industry analysts.

Not only have Metro Vancouver hotels been increasingly filling their properties with guests, but they have also been able to charge higher average room rates, said CBRE Hotels director David Ferguson.

"The performance growth in the hotel sector in Metro Vancouver overall has been fantastic," Ferguson told BIV.

"I've been here since 1991, and I haven't seen three years in a row with this kind of growth."

Metro Vancouver hotels had an average occupancy rate of 76% in 2015. That rose to 79% in 2016 and is expected to be at that level again in 2017. Ferguson predicts that number will rise to 80% next year.

"A lot of the performance improvement the last three years can be attributed to room-rate growth," he said.

"The room-rate growth demonstrates that there is a willingness to pay more to stay in Vancouver. If you historically stayed in a three-diamond hotel and expected to pay \$150 a night, three years later, you might be paying \$185 a night for a three-star room."

Someone paying an average of \$250 per night for a luxury hotel three years ago is likely paying more than \$400 per night today, he said.

Marriott's eagerness to expand its luxury-hotel presence in Vancouver follows the chain opening its Douglas hotel and an adjoining 329-room JW Marriott hotel on October 23.

It now has about 225 hotels across Canada thanks to 35 new hotels opening in 2017.

Growth has also come from consolidation.

Maryland-based Marriott added 38 Canadian hotels in April 2015, when it bought B.C.-based Delta Hotels and Resorts from the British Columbia Investment Management Corp.

The company then executed its US\$13 billion mega-merger with Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide in 2016, and, with 1.1 million hotel rooms, passed Hilton Worldwide's (NYSE:HLT) approximately 773,000 hotel rooms to become the globe's largest hotelier.

That pact also added 75 Canadian hotels to Marriott's fold.

About 75% of the Canadian hotels that carry Marriott brands are franchised, meaning that the owner of the hotel either manages the property or has a third-party do that management.

The hotels that Marriott manages tend to be larger hotels and properties that have owners who do not have expertise in management.

In Metro Vancouver, those hotels are the new Douglas and JW Marriott hotels as well as the Westin Bayshore, Delta Vancouver Downtown Suites and the Marriott Vancouver Pinnacle Downtown.

[www.biv.com/article/2017/11/vancouver-luxury-market-potential-tempts-hotelier/](http://www.biv.com/article/2017/11/vancouver-luxury-market-potential-tempts-hotelier/)

### Vancouver's Rental Realities: From mouldy co-op to mom's basement

By John O'Dowd and Jon McComb CKNW

Vancouver's Rental Reality is a week-long original series looking at housing in Vancouver from the renter's perspective. From renters locked out of the property ladder to the fish landlords, 'renovictions' and cramped living quarters, we look at how renters say the city is pushing them away.

Laura MacCormac, her partner Chris Caron and their two young children had high hopes of finding a home their family could afford to rent in Metro Vancouver. It didn't work out that way.

The four are currently living in Laura's mother's basement.

Laura's son Mikey celebrating his first birthday with his sister Lily in the living room of the family's co-op in 2016. One week prior they had their home inspected for mould, but say their co-op and property manager took no action. Supplied

Their situation is all too familiar for many young families living in the city. In April 2016, while living in a two-bedroom co-op in Port Moody, the couple noticed the smell of mould. But they didn't realize how bad it was until the family started getting sick.

"We started asking questions and trying to get someone to do something about it," MacCormac said.

"It just wasn't happening, and it was getting worse and worse."

The couple reached out to Health Canada for assistance and even took their case to City Hall, Laura said.

"We tried. We tried everything, every level of government, everything we could think of, Fraser Health, everything. And nobody would help us," she said. "My son was always sick. I was always sick."

Feeling like they had no other option but to move out, the couple took MacCormac's mother up on an offer to move the family to her basement while they looked for a new place.

Laura and Chris' bedroom in her mother's basement.

It was only after they left the co-op that they realized how bad the situation in their old home was. "We had a mould inspection done and it was so bad you needed a full suit and respirator to go in there. We shouldn't have been living there."

Almost 20 months later, they are still living in the basement but are very grateful to MacCormac's mother.

Laura's son Mikey with his grandmother.

"If we didn't have her, God knows where we would be right now. Our family would probably be split apart because [Laura's daughter] would have to stay with her dad and we would have to move further out of the Fraser Valley," Caron said. But now, they just want their own place.

After coming to terms with the fact that a three-bedroom home is not financially possible, the couple has shifted their search to something smaller.

But with demand so high, MacCormac feels their situation is not attractive to landlords.

"No one wants to rent a two-bedroom to us because there are so many other people they could rent to with less people. There's four of us."

Currently, in a position to save some money, the family has looked into buying a small condo. But here too they have run into yet more roadblocks, MacCormac said.

"We only qualify for a mortgage of \$380,000, even though our combined income is \$100,000," she said.

"That's all we qualify for. And there's really nowhere safe that I've seen, anywhere in the vicinity of Port Moody and Coquitlam, that we could actually move into, that we could actually afford."

Laura with daughter Lily. She says she'd consider leaving Metro Vancouver, but doing so would mean losing shared custody of her daughter.

Fearing that MacCormac could lose custody of her daughter if they decide to move further out of town, they feel that they are stuck.

"The worst part about it is, if we do leave town, I won't have custody of my daughter anymore. Because her dad and I share her 50-50. And if I leave, she's going to stay with her dad," she said.

"So we're waiting for something to happen. We're hoping for some type of change or just something, that's all we can really do."

Lily and Mikey. Laura says she's shocked no action was taken on the mould in their unit, especially considering the age of their kids.

When asked what they felt was wrong with Vancouver's current housing market, MacCormac said she feels that the international economy has too much control over the local market, and that it is too easy for anyone to move to Vancouver and buy here.

They are also concerned that bringing large multinational companies such as Amazon to Vancouver is only going to make the situation worse, MacCormac said.

"If this is actually a crisis there should be some kind of drastic, decisive measure that comes with it, right?"

"I just don't see it happening, and I don't understand why it's being called a 'crisis' if nobody can acknowledge it that way."

The first painting Chris ever made for Laura. She says she had to throw it out because of mould.

MacCormac feels that a solution would be to freeze everything. If you're not from Vancouver, you shouldn't be able to move here right now.

"We need a breather," she said. "We need to fix the situation or what's going to happen is the people that are really doing all the work are going to leave."

[globalnews.ca/news/3868479/vancouver-rental-realities-mouldy-co-op-moms-basement/](http://globalnews.ca/news/3868479/vancouver-rental-realities-mouldy-co-op-moms-basement/)

### Strong November storm brings heavy snowfall, rain and strong winds to B.C.

By [Amy Judd](#) Online News Producer Global News

Mon. Nov. 20 Parts of Burnaby were flooded overnight as a strong and powerful storm swept through the south coast.

The rainfall warning has now ended for Metro Vancouver after a wet and stormy weekend.

The rain at sea level was good news for the local ski hills however, with the North Shore mountains receiving between 30 and 40 centimetres this weekend.

Other areas of the province also received a lot of snowfall between Saturday and Monday morning.

Here's a summary from Environment Canada of accumulations in centimetres

Terrace Airport 70  
 Legate Creek Weather station 59  
 Kitimat area 50 to 60  
 Stewart area 30  
 Smithers area 20 to 30  
 Pine Pass 36  
 Chetwynd Airport 21  
 Fort St. John Airport 15  
 73 Mile Weather station 18  
 Dawson Creek area 18  
 Callaghan Valley 53  
 Whistler Sliding Centre 45  
 Whistler 15

In other areas, where the precipitation fell as rain, some areas of the province received a lot of rainfall between Saturday and Monday morning.

Here's a summary from Environment Canada of accumulations in millimetres

West Vancouver 80  
 Vancouver Harbour Centre 74  
 Coquitlam area 74

Mission area 71  
Pit Meadows area 50 to 60  
Maple Ridge Area 54  
Pit Meadows Airport 51  
Eagle Ridge Highway station 43  
Point Atkinson 43  
South Vancouver and Richmond area 30 to 40  
Hope Airport 43  
Agassiz 43  
Port Mellon 104  
Squamish 87  
Qualicum Beach 43  
Comox 36  
Powell River 23  
Port Alberni area 100 to 115  
Woss Camp 97  
Fanny Island 81  
Port Hardy Airport 72  
Herbert Island 60  
Cathedral Point 125  
Bella Bella area 92  
Be la Coola area 60

**Global BC meteorologist Mark Madryga says there will be a break for the weather Monday but the next storm will roll in quickly Tuesday morning.**

"This one will invade from the southwest and will have very mild air with it," he says. "There will be snow at first for the North Shore Mountains early [Tuesday] but then quickly turning to heavy rain."

[globalnews.ca/news/3870288/strong-november-storm-brings-heavy-snowfall-rain-and-strong-winds-to-b-c/](http://globalnews.ca/news/3870288/strong-november-storm-brings-heavy-snowfall-rain-and-strong-winds-to-b-c/)

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**What the B.C. government should do about the housing crisis**

[Michael Geller](#) / Vancouver Courier

November 20, 2017 01:24 PM

Columnist Michael Geller says Premier John Horgan should do what Liberal leadership candidate Mike DeJong said he'd do if elected — legislate faster municipal permitting times for those seeking to build new homes, while offering more funding to planning departments to fix a "logjam" of 120,000 existing housing applications in and around Vancouver. Photo Dan Toulgoet

Two weeks ago, I wrote about the audible gasps and expressions of shock heard throughout a packed downtown hotel ballroom during an Urban Development Institute (UDI) luncheon [talk on escalating housing prices](#) around the region. Last week, I returned to another packed downtown hotel ballroom for another UDI luncheon talk. However, this time, there were no audible gasps or expressions of shock.

The guest speakers were two very important people in the lives of the developers, bankers and real estate professionals gathered in the room: Minister Selina Robinson, responsible for housing, municipal affairs and TransLink, and Premier John Horgan.

While I am a UDI member and even served as president 30 years ago, I decided to forgo the glazed salmon and dessert to join the many journalists and reporters at a media table where we were served water. Prior to the speeches, there was considerable speculation as to what might be announced, especially since Premier Horgan had earlier met with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Given the development community's increasing exasperation with excessive delays in obtaining municipal approvals, I whispered to Postmedia's Joanne Lee-Young that if there was going to be any announcement, it would likely be a provincial strategy to reduce approval times. I was wrong.

As Lee-Young subsequently wrote in the Vancouver Sun, Horgan described the luncheon as the development industry's first chance to "kick the tires" and "see his government as being willing to work together with municipalities and developers." As to how Ottawa and B.C. might get involved with addressing the housing crisis in Metro Vancouver, "there were more questions than answers." That was it.

As we left the room disappointed with the speeches, I announced I would devote this column to outlining what Robinson and the Premier should have told the audience.

Since both acknowledged the province's need to help developers and municipalities streamline project approval processes, they could have echoed a recent announcement by Liberal leadership candidate Mike DeJong. If elected, he promises to legislate faster municipal permitting times for those seeking to build new homes, while offering more funding to planning departments to fix a "logjam" of 120,000 existing housing applications in and around Vancouver.

Alternatively, since the Premier told the crowd he did not want to be too heavy-handed with municipalities, he could have stolen a page from Todd Stone's campaign book. Stone recently announced he would help with housing affordability by giving municipalities funding to clear planning delays.

If there isn't enough space to accommodate more planners and plan checkers, one of my colleagues suggested they could be set up in temporary modular offices on parking lots. In fact, city hall may not need to hire more planners. Instead, they could allow qualified "certified professionals" knowledgeable about zoning and building bylaws to sort through the backlog of projects and determine which are worthy of proceeding.

Another major UDI concern is the uncertainty and excessive costs related to "voluntary" community amenity contributions. I say voluntary since it is not entirely clear whether municipalities have the legal authority to demand cash and other benefits from developers seeking rezonings.

Initially, these payments were extracted whenever a developer wanted to rezone for new condos. However, now they are being requested for purpose-built rental projects, too, thus inhibiting supply.

I have a solution.

In March 2014, the B.C. government completed a report titled Community Amenities Contributions: Balancing Community Planning, Public Benefits and Housing Affordability. It contains many excellent recommendations, but now sits on a shelf gathering dust.

I urge Premier Horgan and Robinson to read it, and agree to make the necessary administrative and legislative changes to end what has become a most uncertain and oftentimes unsavoury approach to financing growth.

Finally, Horgan should terminate the province's universal homeowner grant program that gives money to wealthy homeowners in Castlegar or Prince George living in luxurious \$1.6 million houses. He should also end the universal property tax deferral program, which offers extremely low-interest loans to people like me, regardless of income or assets. Keep the program, but target it to those in need.

Money saved from these two programs could be redirected to non-profit organizations desperately seeking funds to build affordable homes for low-income households.

[www.vancourier.com/opinion/what-the-b-c-government-should-do-about-the-housing-crisis-1.23099572](http://www.vancourier.com/opinion/what-the-b-c-government-should-do-about-the-housing-crisis-1.23099572)

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**Major office tower proposed for West Pender Street in downtown Vancouver**

Kenneth Chan Nov 20, 2017 12:15 pm 166

A proposed office tower project at the southeast corner of West Pender Street and Thurlow Street could be one of the largest office space additions in the city during the coming office tower boom.

The City of Vancouver has received a development application from local architectural firm Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership, on behalf of developer and landowner Bentall Kennedy, to redevelop the large 30,900 sq. ft. site at 1090 West Pender Street into a 33-storey office tower with 562,135 sq. ft. of space.

Its office plates will be relatively large, making it suitable for large companies and tech firms.

There will also be 7,863 sq. ft. of space on the ground floor for restaurants and retail.

The site — directly across the street from the Marriott Pinnacle Hotel — is currently occupied by an 11-storey office building built in 1971.

An existing 11-storey office building at the development site at 1090 West Pender Street will be demolished for the new 33-storey office tower. (Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership / Bentall Kennedy)

The proposed site at 1090 West Pender Street in downtown Vancouver. (City of Vancouver)

The project will have a high floor space ratio (FSR) density of 17.5 FSR, and to support the office workers there will be 432 vehicle parking stalls over seven underground levels accessed from the laneway.

According to the architect's design rationale, several rooftop garden spaces will provide "a variety of experiences for building occupants including views, access to nature, daylight, fresh air, and social interactive accessible useable space."

The third floor will have tenant patios with shade, a native garden, fire bowl, and flexible and social seating area. Artistic rendering of the proposed tower at 1090 West Pender Street in downtown Vancouver. (Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership / Bentall Kennedy)

Further up on the fourth floor, there will be another tenant patio, with an amenity deck. This space will include a pleasure garden, flexible and moveable seating, urban agriculture, and an outdoor kitchen for gatherings.

Towards the top of the tower, an amenity deck on the 31st floor will boast "outstanding views" of the harbour, the North Shore mountains, and the city. This major amenity space is envisioned with lounge-like banquet bar tables, fire bowls, BBQ area, and areas for quiet contemplation.

A green roof featuring a fescue grass mix is proposed for the tower's rooftop. Artistic rendering of the proposed tower at 1090 West Pender Street in downtown Vancouver. (Musson Cattell Mackey Partnership / Bentall Kennedy)

On the exterior of the tower, there will be stone paving "inspired by Burrard Inlet" from the lobby to the street edge.

Evenleigh Street will be animated with cafe bar seating, a widened sidewalk, and recessed building setback. Bollards will be installed to help define the expanded pedestrian realm.

The exterior ground plane of the building, including the canopy base, will have nighttime lighting.

The development application is the next step for the project, after [City Council approved a rezoning application in 2015](#).

Vancouver is currently experiencing an extreme office space shortage, with an office vacancy in downtown of just 5% — half of what it was in early-2016. The city's office vacancy rate is now the second lowest in North America, just behind Toronto.

Much of the office space absorption is from significant job growth in the tech industry. According to a [recent CBRE report](#), over half of the tenants currently looking for office space are in the tech industry.

There will be little new additional office supply until after 2020, when the first towers of the office boom are completed. This includes [Vancouver Centre II \(371,000 sq. ft.\)](#), Bosa Waterfront Centre (355,000 sq. ft.), 401 West Georgia Street (150,000 sq. ft. for Amazon), [400 West Georgia Street](#) (367,000 sq. ft.), [1133 Melville Street](#) (550,000 sq. ft.), and the Canada Post redevelopment (471,000 sq. ft.). Construction has begun on some of these projects while others are at varying stages of the approval process.

[dailyhive.com/vancouver/1090-west-pender-street-vancouver-bentall-kennedy-office-tower](http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/1090-west-pender-street-vancouver-bentall-kennedy-office-tower)

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**Vancouver Park Board approves new \$16 million Jericho Pier**

Kenneth Chan Nov 20, 2017 11:30 am 231

A new and improved concrete pier structure will replace Jericho Pier's existing deteriorating wooden structure.

Earlier this month, Vancouver Park Board commissioners unanimously approved the [\\$16-million pier project at Jericho Beach](#) next to the Jericho Sailing Centre.

The existing 1977-built structure will be demolished for a new and longer structure built out of concrete and steel for greater durability.

Its height will be 2.5 metres higher than the existing pier to account for rising sea levels and storm surges, and the deck will be wider to accommodate more people and special events.

The proposed new Jericho Pier at Jericho Beach in Vancouver. (City of Vancouver)

The height of the proposed new concrete and steel structure versus the existing wooden structure. (City of Vancouver)

An area covered with boulders and beach sand at the foot of the pier will be turned into an entry plaza to create more flexible public space. Granite steps at the western edge of the entry plaza will maintain the pier's direct water access and provide a connection between Locarno Beach to the west and Jericho Beach to the east.

Artistic rendering of the accessible floating dock as part of the new Jericho Pier design. (City of Vancouver)

There will be an accessible floating dock on the east side of the pier for emergency marine vessels and sailors with disabilities on the east side of the pier. This dock will have a berthing capacity for up to 15 sailboats for the Disabled Sailing Association's adaptive sailing program.

Other "universal access" design elements include accessible gangways, wide concrete floats, hoist lifts, and a parking area for wheelchairs and scooters.

Artistic rendering of the habitat enhancement as part of the proposed new Jericho Pier project. (City of Vancouver)

Ample seating at both the pier and entry plaza will allow locals and tourists to take in the views of Burrard Inlet and English.

A new accessible public washroom facility is planned for the entry plaza as the nearest washrooms are currently on the upper floor of the Jericho Sailing Centre.

Recreational fishing and crabbing opportunities will be retained in the new design.

With the approval, the municipal government will commence the detailed design process sometime next year. The government will fund half of the construction cost, with the sailing association fundraising the remainder.

If funding is secured as scheduled, construction could begin in 2020 for a completion in 2021.

Jericho Pier is a popular location in the city for not only recreational fishing and crabbing but also panoramic views of Burrard Inlet, the North Shore mountains, and the downtown Vancouver skyline.

[dailyhive.com/vancouver/jericho-pier-approved-vancouver-park-board-november-2017](http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/jericho-pier-approved-vancouver-park-board-november-2017)

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**Vancouver set to see continued rain right through the week**

DH Vancouver Staff Nov 20, 2017 9:51 am 494

Damn, Vancouver. You really know how to live up to your reputation for rain sometimes.

Yes, after rain throughout the weekend, it looks like Mother Nature will pick up right where she left off last week and bring us showers for the next five days.

According to [Environment Canada](#), there will be a sneak peek of the sun on Monday, but this will ultimately develop into more clouds and rain for the rest of the week.

And while BC's mountains are currently receiving a [fresh blanket of snow](#), it doesn't look like any of the white stuff will hit us here in the city.

While daytime temperatures will hover around the low double digits, temperatures at night will cool down quite a bit, hovering just a few degrees above 0 on certain nights.

So grab your Gore-Tex and unwrap your umbrellas — it looks like we're in for one wet week.

<http://dailyhive.com/vancouver/rain-forecast-vancouver-week>

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**Airbnb neighbour damages your property? Insurance won't help**

November 18, 2017

By [Lisa Tahn](#)

A freehold property owner in Vancouver says home insurance companies do not cover damage incurred by neighbouring Airbnb operators.

Last week, Shane Richardson, a freehold property owner in Vancouver renewed his home insurance with Wawanesa, one of the largest property and casualty insurers in Canada. Wawanesa operates all over Canada and within California and Oregon in the United States.

Richardson said in the case that a neighbour and Airbnb operator incurs damage to their home that ends up spreading to their neighbours' homes, their insurance company will not cover damages and vice versa.

Richardson said the activity that incurs damage does not have to be illegal. "If something catches fire and that fire hops houses and burns half the block down, we all have to make a claim on our own insurance – even though it's no fault of our own," Richardson said.

Alternatively, individuals faced with this issue can personally sue their neighbour.

"The burden goes on the neighbours to go after that person personally or subject themselves to a higher rate class and higher risk class with their insurance company," Richardson said.

Wawanesa advised Richardson to not personally sue and to not involve the company because it would affect his rating.

"I think that's unreasonable for the city to knowingly be putting its constituents in that position," Richardson said.

Following Richardson learning about this issue, he took to Twitter to share his experience and inform the public. The tweet now has 46 retweets and 62 likes and has created a discussion on how a neighbour's activity affects an individual's home insurance and if the city in Richardson's jurisdiction can be sued.

"The point I was trying to get across on social media is that the City of Vancouver is causing a disservice to us local residents and taxpayers," Richardson said.

"They're not enforcing the existing laws."

Wawanesa could not be reached for a comment.

[thinkpot.ca/2017/11/18/airbnb-neighbour-damages-your-property-insurance-wont-help/](http://thinkpot.ca/2017/11/18/airbnb-neighbour-damages-your-property-insurance-wont-help/)