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**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"

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

"Kelley, Gil" <Gil.Kelley@vancouver.ca>

**Date:** 7/8/2019 4:39:07 PM

**Subject:** Memo - Summer Engagement Events - Existing Housing Options and Regulations in RS Zones

**Attachments:** Memo to Mayor and Council - Summer Engagement Events - Existing Housing ....pdf

Greetings Mayor and Council,

The attached memo describes small scale engagement "pop-up" events that are being held over the summer to seek input on two topics related to housing options currently available in low-density areas. The topics include:

1. **Duplex** - In December 2018, Council voted to retain duplex as a trial housing option in RS zones. During the trial period staff committed to doing further engagement on duplex in addition to monthly reporting.
2. **Basements in New Houses** - Deeper basements were not expected or anticipated when full basements were enabled through changes to the zoning regulations in 2009, but most new houses are being built with deeper basements. The engagement on this topic informs people about a range of concerns related to the construction of deeper basements and the need to adjust the regulations to limit the impacts.

Should you have any questions, please contact Gil Kelley at 604.873.7456/ [Gil.Kelley@vancouver.ca](mailto:Gil.Kelley@vancouver.ca).

Best,  
Sadhu

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Pronouns: he, him, his



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

## MEMORANDUM

July 8, 2019

TO: Mayor and Council

CC: Sadhu Johnston, City Manager  
Paul Mochrie, Deputy City Manager  
Lynda Graves, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Rena Kendall-Craden, Civic Engagement and Communications Director  
Katrina Leckovic, City Clerk  
Neil Monckton, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Alvin Singh, Communications Director, Mayor's Office  
Anita Zaenker, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Susan Haid, Deputy Director, Long Range and Strategic Planning, Planning Urban Design and Sustainability  
Neil Hrushowy, Assistant Director – Planning Urban Design and Sustainability  
Andrea Law, Director – Development Services, Development, Business Services and Licensing

FROM: Gil Kelley  
General Manager, Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Summer Engagement Events: Existing Housing Options and Regulations in RS Zones

This memo is to inform Council about upcoming small scale engagement opportunities happening over the summer months in order to seek input about the housing options now available in RS zones. These engagement events will also raise awareness about the upcoming City-wide Plan beginning in the fall. The summer "pop-up" engagement opportunities would be included as part of neighbourhood events and markets or provided at public venues like parks, community centres and outside grocery stores. The in-person engagement at the pop-up events would be supplemented by a Talk Vancouver on-line survey.

The two topics to be included in the summer engagement are:

1. **Duplex in RS Zones** As part of the Council decision in December 2018 to continue with duplex as a trial housing option, staff committed to discussing duplex further with residents and monitoring duplex applications with monthly reports. The summer engagement provides an opportunity to share what is happening with duplex so far in RS zones and gauge general public response to duplex as an option in RS Zones.

2. **Impacts of Deep Basements in New House Construction** – In February 2019, staff initiated a review of secondary suites in new houses as an action of the Housing Vancouver Strategy. The current regulations for houses have been in place since 2009 when major changes were made to increase floor area from 0.6 to 0.7 and allow for full basements to better enable basement suites. Staff are evaluating whether the changes met the intended objectives. The evaluation completed to date has identified concerns with the growing trend to construct deeper basements

The regulations combined with a market demand for higher ceilings and modern house designs with the main level of the house closer to grade are resulting in basements that are built deeper into the ground (often 6 to 9 ft. below grade). A number of issues have been identified with deep basements including impacts to the livability of suites in deep basements and a range of environmental issues including increased embodied energy and greenhouse gas emissions associated with the use of more concrete, reduced ability to retain trees on site, hydrological impacts, pumping of groundwater and plumbing connections to the sewer system. Staff recently shared the issues and implications of deeper basement construction at a workshop with local small home builders and designers. The workshop attendees agreed with the issues identified and supported the need for regulation changes to address the issues.

The public engagement events over the summer will share the issues identified to date with respect to deeper basement and ask people whether they think these issues are important. The feedback on the issues will be used to repair the existing RS regulations to address the problems and unintended consequences of the current regulations in order to achieve better outcomes for new house construction and more livable secondary suites.



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