

From: "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>
To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
Date: 5/30/2023 9:36:10 AM
Subject: SRA Bylaw - background

Good morning Mayor and Council,

In follow up to recent questions regarding the SRA Bylaw, I am writing to share the following additional background regarding the Bylaw, its purpose and history. This information may be germane to your consideration of SRO Update, 2023 Low-Income Housing Survey and Proposed SRA By-law Amendments (RTS 15563) which is on the Regular Meeting agenda for today.

Policy Context

- Beginning in the 1970s, the City acquired a number of SROs in partnership with CMHC and BC Housing in an effort to secure a portion of the stock as low-income housing.
- In October 1989, Council resolved that the City adopt the objective of maintaining, upgrading, and increasing the existing stock of core-need housing in the Downtown."
- In 1991, Council first adopted its policy of one-for-one replacement of SRO rooms in the Downtown South with self-contained social housing.
- The City's SRO Replacement Policy has been reinforced through various strategies and plans, including the DTES Housing Plan (2005), the Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2012-2021), and the DTES Plan (2014).

SRA By-law

- In 1997, Council requested the Province amend the Vancouver Charter to enable the City to regulate change in the low-income housing stock as SROs were being lost to conversion to backpacker hostels and redevelopment (primarily in the Downtown South).
- The Province granted the request and in 2003, the Single Room Accommodation By-law was enacted by Council.
- The SRA by-law regulates the conversion and demolition of SRAs, which includes all rooms less than 250 square feet in both private and non-market housing located within the downtown core boundary.
- SRA building owners that want to alter, convert, or demolish rooms must apply for an SRA conversion or demolition permit.
- The By-law has enabled staff to work with owners on their conversions/demolitions plans and negotiate to:
 - Maintain affordability and enhance the livability of SRAs (like adding bathrooms or cooking facilities. We also provide capital grants to non-profits for this purpose)
 - Ensure existing tenants are supported through the required TRP
 - Replace SRA units on a one-for-one basis.
- A SRA permit can be approved outright, approved with conditions (e.g, the fee or securing affordability in a new unit), or refused.
- The depth of demand for low-income housing in our city means that existing SROs continue to play a critical role even as new housing is built elsewhere.
- Without the SRA By-law, the majority of the SRO stock located in prime real estate areas would now be lost to demolition or conversion to commercial hotels or condos.
- Without the continued ability to manage the rate of change in the SRA designated stock, homelessness will increase significantly.

Please don't hesitate to let Sandra know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Best,

Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Snw̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.