

**From:** "Mochrie, Paul" <Paul.Mochrie@vancouver.ca>  
**To:** "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"  
**Date:** 7/19/2023 3:00:47 PM  
**Subject:** CMHC Study - response and key messages for Council

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Dear Mayor and Council.

Last week, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) released the findings of a research project led by CMHC and Stats Canada titled "[Approval delays linked with lower housing affordability](#)". It attributes high housing costs in Vancouver and Toronto entirely to regulatory factors, directly relating housing costs with permit approval times.

- It is important to note that the CMHC report did not consider any other factors influencing the cost of housing, including the substantial increase in housing demand in densely populated and rapidly growing areas such as Vancouver and Toronto, which greatly impacts affordability and the balance between supply and demand.
- While the study is deeply flawed, the City of Vancouver recognizes that streamlining land use regulations and development approvals are important components to meeting steadily increasing demands for housing supply across the region, but it is just one piece of the puzzle. The City is working hard to do its part but we cannot do it alone. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with senior levels of government to get housing built faster.

Please refer any media inquiries to [media@vancouver.ca](mailto:media@vancouver.ca). If you are approached for comment by media or constituents, below are some key messages.

Best,  
Paul

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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

**Key Messages:**

- The City of Vancouver recognizes that streamlining land use regulations and development approvals are important components to meeting steadily increasing demands for housing supply across the region, but it is just one piece of the puzzle.
- Building enough housing to meet demand is still a challenge for a number of reasons, including stubbornly high inflation, supply chain and labor shortages that have caused a number of projects to stall as financing becomes more difficult. This is particularly challenging for much needed social housing projects that require additional senior government funding in order to proceed.
- It is important to note that the CMHC report did not consider the substantial increase in housing demand in densely populated and rapidly growing areas such as Vancouver and Toronto, which greatly impacts affordability and the balance between supply and demand.
- The City is working hard to do its part but we cannot do it alone. We look forward to continuing to work collaboratively with senior levels of government to get housing built faster.
- We are excited to see new federal initiatives like the Housing Accelerator Fund which works with municipalities to increase supply. However, much more is needed to address the challenges that lay ahead, such as funding for growth related costs, including infrastructure and community amenities that are critical for city living
- The City has taken steps to improve its permitting process, including making all permit applications available to be applied for and processed electronically through electronic plan review (ePlan) and reducing wait times for permits for simple renovations to under two weeks. Additionally, plans for houses, duplexes and laneways can now be checked by staff in as little as 2.5 weeks.
- To help make it easier to build new housing across Vancouver, the City initiated a [permit improvement program](#), which includes launching [PRET and eComply](#) later this summer and early 2024, respectively. These two new digital tools will reduce staff manual review time and provide residents and businesses with confidence that their application is compliant and complete.
- City staff will also be bringing a report to council next week that will refer to Public Hearing a rezoning of 50% of the City to enable the development of missing middle housing and reduce the number of lower-density zones from nine Residential Single Family zones down to one Residential Inclusive zone that will allow 4-6 units per lot.
- To help address affordability, the City initiated the Below Market Rental Housing Optimization Program to streamline the process, improve financial viability of projects, and increase the number of below-market rental homes built
- Additional steps to improve permitting and land use regulations:
  - Exploring options to simplify and align existing regulations across all low-density (RS) zones by removing 17 design and administrative requirements so housing can be built faster.
  - Streamlining engineering review requirements in all development permit (DP) applications, including removing 20 per cent of conditions and moving an additional 25 per cent to risk-based review.
  - Proposing shifting rainwater management requirements from the development permit application process to the plumbing permit for new complex buildings in Vancouver so that applicants begin work on their projects sooner.
  - Providing in-person permitting info sessions at the Development and Building Services Centre for applicants to meet with staff about their specific project.

- These changes will improve certainty for applicants by clarifying rules and enhancing certainty regarding what can be built, and create more capacity in the permitting system to handle permits of various types, including new multiplexes