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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
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Subject: Emergent Issue Note: Townhouse Development (PDS)

Hello Mayor and Council,

PDS staff have identified that an issue around townhouse development is emergent in the media and gaining interest across outlets. In response, staff have prepared a brief package with key messages, key facts and relevant Q&As that may be helpful to you in media interviews or conversations with interest holders and constituents.

Issue in brief

On August 26, the [Vancouver Sun](#) published an article in which members of the development industry claimed that it is becoming difficult to build townhouses in Vancouver as the City is focusing on multiplexes. The article also implied that townhouses provide 3- and 4-bedroom options for families while multiplexes do not, which is inaccurate.

The story has since been picked up by multiple outlets, reinforcing misconceptions about the City's approach to townhouses and multiplexes.

Communications approach in brief

The reporter did not contact the City for information or data before publishing the article. The City has proactively reached out to the Vancouver Sun, CKNW and MSN to provide factual data on townhouse approvals and multiplex unit sizes.

Josh White, GM of Planning, Urban Design and Sustainability, will also be interviewed on CKNW on August 28 to clarify the City's position and share the data directly with the public.

Key messages

- Both townhouses and multiplexes are important "missing middle" housing types.
- Multiplexes provide family-sized units and are often more cost effective, as they do not require underground parking.
- From a bedroom count analysis done in April 2024, 99% of multiplexes had 2+ bedrooms and 82% of multiplex units were 3- or 4-bedroom homes.
- Of townhouses approved in 2024, 80% of townhouse units had 2+ bedrooms, and 57% were 3-bedroom homes.

Key facts

- As of April 2025: 370 multiplex applications have been approved, providing over 1,500 units.
- Townhouse approvals have increased significantly since introducing pre-zoning in 2019.
- From 2010-2018, prior to pre-zoning for townhouses, the City approved an average of 150 townhouse units per year.
- From 2019-2024, after introducing pre-zoning for townhouses such as the RM-8A zoning in Cambie, we approved an average of 400 townhouse projects per year.

Questions & Answers

Q: Is the City discouraging townhouses?

A: No. Townhouses are an important part of Vancouver's housing continuum, and the City has taken deliberate steps to enable more of them. Since introducing pre-zoning for townhouses (such as the RM-8A zone in Cambie), approvals have nearly tripled compared to the years before. From 2019–2024, the City approved an average of 400 townhouse units per year — up from 150 per year between 2010–2018.

Q: Why aren't there as many townhouses?

A: There are many factors that influence townhouse supply, including market interest. In general, townhouses are more expensive to build, making them more expensive per unit than multiplexes. Families are increasingly looking at multiplexes as a more cost-effective way to get a 3- or 4-bedroom home.

Q: What is the City doing to ensure housing remains affordable for families?

A: The City is focused on enabling a variety of housing types, including multiplexes, townhouses, and apartments, to meet the needs of families at different income levels. Multiplex zoning opens up thousands of lots across the city for more family-sized units, while townhouse and apartment zoning continues in growth areas. This combination helps create more choice, supply, and affordability for families.

Related links

- [Vancouver Sun article](#)
- [CKNW interview](#)
- [MSN article \(syndicated from Vancouver Sun\)](#)

Given this is an evolving issue, we will provide a follow up note if context or messaging requires updates. If you have any questions about the above, please reach out to Maria at maria.pontikis@vancouver.ca. You can also refer media inquiries to media@vancouver.ca.

Thank you,
Sandra

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