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Vancouver City Council passes motion to prioritize supportive housing renewal and regional equity

VANCOUVER, BC – Today, Vancouver City Council passed Mayor Ken Sim’s motion to temporarily pause net-new supportive housing investments in the city, shifting the focus to renewing aging, deteriorating stock, transitioning temporary modular housing into permanent homes, and advocating for a fairer regional approach to housing those in need.

“For too long, Vancouver has shouldered more than its fair share of the region’s supportive housing, yet conditions in the Downtown Eastside continue to deteriorate,” said Mayor Ken Sim. “The current system isn’t working—not for our most vulnerable residents, not for the communities supporting them, and not for the city as a whole. We fully support well-run supportive housing. This motion is about making sure supportive housing works for those who need it most while ensuring better outcomes for everyone.”

Vancouver represents just 25% of the regional population but is home to over 77% of Metro Vancouver’s supportive housing and more than 67% of its shelter spaces. This imbalance has placed a strain on local resources while leaving too many people in inadequate housing. Many of the city’s single-room occupancy (SRO) buildings are in severe disrepair, with broken elevators, infestations, and fire hazards.

The motion directs the City to prioritize replacing unliveable SROs, converting modular housing into permanent units, and expanding the STEP (Supporting Tenants, Enabling Pathways) program, which helps individuals in supportive housing transition into social or rental housing. By creating more movement within the system, the City can ensure that supportive housing is available for those who need it most.

“This is about delivering real, lasting change,” added Mayor Sim. “By fixing unsafe buildings, replacing temporary solutions with permanent homes, and ensuring every municipality does its fair share, we’re making Vancouver’s supportive housing system work better—for both residents and the city as a whole.”

The temporary pause does not apply to housing for seniors, women and families, youth aging out of care, healthcare-related housing, or social housing with occasional supports. It also does not impact in-progress projects, applications submitted within six months of the motion’s passage, or initiatives replacing existing units.

To ensure accountability, City staff have been directed to deliver a biannual report tracking regional progress on supportive housing development and homelessness, reinforcing Vancouver’s commitment to meaningful, long-term solutions.

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