

HOUSING RESET ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

MARCH 2017



**HOUSING
VANCOUVER**



CONTENTS

1.0 / SUMMARY

- 4 Creative Advisories
- 6 Workshops & Groups
- 9 Re:Address Week
- 9 National Stakeholders
- 10 Learning From Our Partners
- 11 Developing the Housing Reset Engagement Strategy

2.0 / ENGAGING PARTNERS: LOCAL

- 13 Mayor's External Advisory Committee
- 14 Creative Advisories
- 18 Re: Address Week
- 25 UBC Partnership
- 26 City of Vancouver Development & Permit Process Expert Advisory Group
- 27 Focus Groups
- 28 SRO Task Force
- 29 Urban Development Institute & City of Vancouver Liaison Policy Committee
- 30 Missing Middle Research and Workshop

3.0 / ENGAGING PARTNERS: NATIONAL

- 32 Federal, Provincial & Municipal Housing Supply Working Group
- 33 National Housing Strategy Submission

4.0 / ENGAGING PARTNERS: GLOBAL

- 34 Re:Address Summit
- 35 Shaping Futures

1.0 / SUMMARY

The City has convened many conversations and consultations to deepen our understanding of peoples’ experiences and learn national and international best practices to address housing affordability.

1.1 / CREATIVE ADVISORIES

Creative Advisories have studied and reported on many dimensions of the housing system. These include:

EVIDENCE-BASED RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS

Purpose and Goals

Identify challenges impeding work to find lasting solutions to homelessness

Types of People/Groups

Professionals and community members specializing in housing, healthcare, and services for individuals who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness, including representatives from health and addictions services and supportive housing providers.

ACCELERATING NON-PROFIT/ CITY PARTNERSHIPS

Purpose and Goals

Examine current Non-Profit/City Partnership models for existing strengths and opportunities to improve as well as collaborate on potential new partnership avenues to accelerate the delivery of non-market housing in Vancouver.

Types of People/Groups

Local affordable non-profits, advocacy/research organizations, and government representatives

THE ECONOMY AND HOUSING FOR YOUNG WORKERS

Purpose and Goals

Better understand and identify opportunities to address the squeeze on young households and middle-income families resulting from the rapid rise of housing costs for both rental and ownership housing.

Types of People/Groups

Representatives from local organizations serving young people and families, academic experts, and young workers.

STRATEGIC INVESTMENT IN RENTAL HOUSING

Purpose and Goals

Explore opportunities for new partnerships to drive investments in Vancouver’s rental housing supply, ranging from reinvestment in the City’s existing housing and strategies for driving new supply, with an emphasis on affordability and ensuring protections for renters.

Types of People/Groups

Development and rental market professionals, tenant representatives and advocates, regional, provincial, and federal government staff working on rental housing reinvestment issues.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING INNOVATION AND DESIGN

Purpose and Goals

Identifying and consulting on how the City can better become a facilitator in providing affordable housing solutions through design.

Types of People/Groups

Local professionals in the fields of design, architecture, urban issues, and public engagement.

1.2 / WORKSHOPS & GROUPS

Specific Workshops and Expert and Community Groups have been convened These include:

MAYOR’S EXPERT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Mayor’s Affordable Housing Advisory Committee is comprised of local architects, academics, and non-profit housing operators. The group is convened by the Mayor from time to time to discuss housing trends and policies in the city, and to seek input on how the City can best address affordability challenges in Vancouver. The committee has met four times to date.

MISSING MIDDLE WORKSHOP

One-time convening of local experts, stakeholders, and City staff to focus in on opportunities and challenges relevant to the ‘Missing Middle’ – both the moderate-income young people and families currently under-served by Vancouver’s housing market, and the ‘missing’ housing forms that could better serve the needs of this group.

DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY GROUP

The Development Advisory Group (DAG) was convened to bring together a group of experts to provide City Council and staff with advice on ways to expedite the City of Vancouver’s development process, with the overarching objective of improving the permitting and development process.

SRO TASK FORCE

The SRO Task Force was convened to address ongoing challenges that are facing this critical stock of affordable housing. This diverse Task Force engaged with stakeholders including tenants and owners to determine the challenges and opportunities to improve livability and address a range of issues in SROs.

SHAPING FUTURES: HOUSING POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

Shaping Futures is an international knowledge exchange and knowledge building project whose aim is to provide a forum for dialogue on housing policies for the 21st century. Shaping Futures brings together experts from Australia, Canada and the UK to identify ways to support new strategies to deliver affordable housing.

LOCAL RESIDENT FOCUS GROUPS

The City of Vancouver, with Cause + Affect, has been conducting online Public Market Research to inform the development of storytelling and messaging concepts that resonate with the public and connect the City of Vancouver housing policy to people’s lives at a community and personal level.

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Convening between City leadership and the Urban developments.

INSTITUTE & CITY OF VANCOUVER LIAISON POLICY COMMITTEE

Development Institute Vancouver Liaison Committee to discuss key policy issues and opportunities relevant to Vancouver’s development community.





1.3 / RE:ADDRESS WEEK

The Re:Address conference and co-occurring week of events convened a critical, international, and solutions-based discussion among housing experts from global cities that are experiencing housing crises like Vancouver, residents, academics, non-profits, and other stakeholders. It convened external global and local expertise with 35 speakers representing Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, San Francisco, New York, Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Glasgow, Vienna, Melbourne, Sydney, and Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland). Re:Address included 14 events; 8 of which were free for the public.

Re:Address was also supported by a partnership with the University of British Columbia, both through a Re:Address Conference Advisory Committee and the Vancouver Housing Lab.

1.4 / NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS

National Stakeholders Have Been Engaged

FEDERAL/PROVINCIAL/MUNICIPAL HOUSING SUPPLY WORKING GROUP

In November 2016, City of Vancouver leadership and staff participated in a series of discussions hosted by the federal Ministry of Social Infrastructure focused on challenges and opportunities for expanding housing supply in Canada's cities experiencing serious housing affordability issues. Participants in these discussions included federal and provincial housing staff, as well as staff from the Cities of Vancouver and Toronto.

NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY SUBMISSION

The City of Vancouver drafted a comprehensive submission to the federal government National Housing Strategy, submitted in early November after the Re:Address conference. Its recommendations are informed by ongoing discussions with local and international partners on the housing challenges facing big cities and their residents.



1.5 / LEARNING FROM OUR PARTNERS: THE HOUSING RESET ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Housing Strategy Housing Reset is built on a platform of deep, sustained engagement with our local, national, and global partners. This engagement is critical to ensuring that the Housing Vancouver 2026 Strategy reflects the needs, goals, and aspirations of the City’s diverse communities, as well as the knowledge and experience of housing leaders across Canada and around the world.

The Housing Reset has also seen Vancouver join a growing network of global cities working to learn, share, and address the global challenges of urban growth, affordability, and sustainability. This work has revealed the linkages between Vancouver’s challenges and those of cities across Canada, North America, and the rest of the world – and underscored the importance of collaboration and learning to inform our solutions.

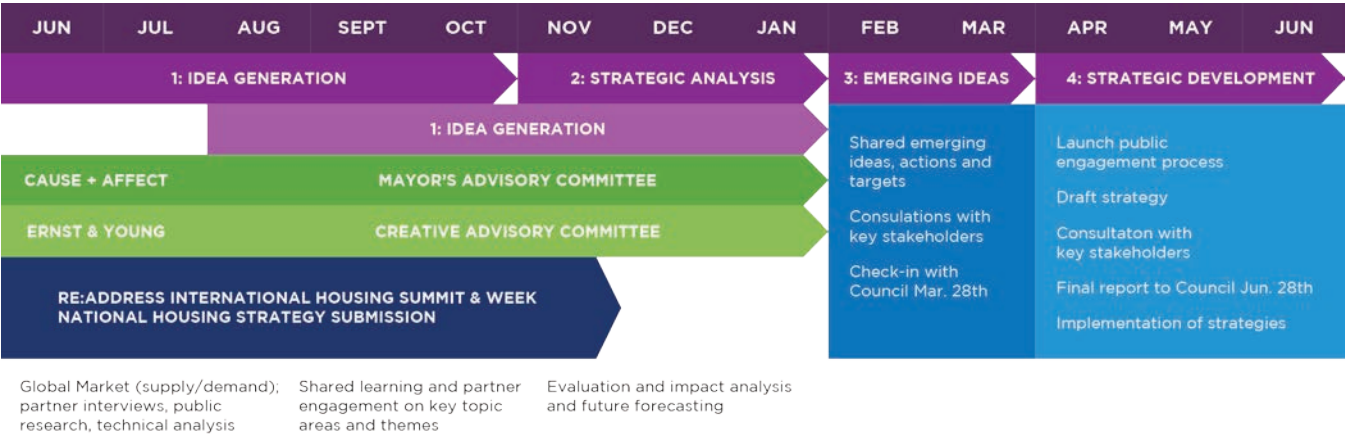
This report lays out the Housing Reset engagement process to date, highlighting what we heard and learned from the local, national, and global partners who are shaping the emerging policy directions for the City’s revised affordable housing strategy.

1.6 / DEVELOPING THE HOUSING RESET ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The process of developing an engagement strategy for the Vancouver Housing Reset began with a simple question – if the goal is an ambitious, inclusive, and visionary housing strategy for all Vancouverites, who ought to be at the table?

This question became the foundation for a multi-phase stakeholder engagement process, which emphasized deep conversations with key practitioners, thinkers, and leaders from Vancouver and across the globe. The bulk of these conversations took place over the 6-month period from July 2016 to February 2017.

Across these engagement platforms, partners were encouraged to hone in on the critical housing challenges facing Vancouverites across the income spectrum. Even more importantly, they were pushed to bring ‘big ideas’ to the table – ambitious, even radical solutions to help keep Vancouver affordable, inclusive, and sustainable for the next 10 years and beyond. These reset ‘big ideas’ are the seeds of the emerging directions for Housing Vancouver.





2.0 / ENGAGING PARTNERS: LOCAL

2.1 / MAYOR’S EXTERNAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Mayor’s Affordable Housing Advisory Committee is comprised of local architects, academics, and non-profit housing operators. The group is convened by the Mayor from time to time to discuss housing trends and policies in the city, and to seek input on how the City can best address affordability challenges in Vancouver.

What We Heard

- › City needs to be clearer on how much housing is being produced and for who.
- › Stronger partnership with non-profit sector and alignment within organization is needed.
- › City can do a lot but cannot solve the affordability crisis on its own.
- › City needs to rethink single family neighbourhoods, and how so much land mass has such a small amount of the population.
- › Focusing on home ownership costs overlooks the people really struggling on lower incomes.
- › City could do a lot to enable affordability just by streamlining permitting and regulations.
- › The impact of housing costs on different generations needs to be discussed as we plan for the future of the city.

How We Heard it

- › 4 meetings with the Mayor and staff
- › 18 members
- › Membership:
 - › Janice Abbott, CEO, Atira Women’s Resource
 - › Thom Armstrong, Executive Director, Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada
 - › Andy Broderick, VP Impact Market Development, VanCity
 - › Robert Brown, CEO, Catalyst Community Developments
 - › Tom Davidoff, Associate Professor, Sauder School of Business, UBC
 - › Michelle Fortin, Executive Director, Watari
 - › Jake Fry, President, Smallworks
 - › Carla Guerrero, Principal and Strategic Advisor, Purpose Driven
 - › Jillian Glover, This City Life
 - › Sarah Goodman, Founder and CEO, Treetop Strategy
 - › Joshua Gordon, Assistant Professor, School of Public Policy, SFU
 - › Kishone Roy, CEO, BC Non-Profit Housing Association
 - › Margot Young, Professor, Allard School of Law, UBC
 - › James Tod, JTA Development Consultants
 - › Mark Sheih, Take Root
 - › Marianne Amodio, Maastudio

2.2 / CREATIVE ADVISORIES

Central to the Housing Reset engagement process were five Creative Advisory (CA) groups, made up of community members and housing practitioners who were selected to participate based on their experience and perspectives across five broad themes.

From July 2016 to February 2017, over fifty Creative Advisory members participated in ten individual workshops and two large-group plenary sessions facilitated by Housing Policy and Projects staff. These sessions explored solutions to housing challenges across the housing continuum. The knowledge gained from community members with lived-experience and housing experts will directly influence the Reset process and Housing Vancouver.

EVIDENCED-BASED RESPONSES TO HOMELESSNESS

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

The Evidence-Based Responses to Homelessness CA identified a key challenge impeding work to find lasting solutions to homelessness: the lack of institutional coordination and integration between government and supporting organizations. This lack of integration is causing system failures that contribute to the increase in complex chronic issues in the City’s homeless population. Significant gaps in data also make tracking and setting targets very difficult.

Opportunities:

To address these issues the CA identified several opportunities to better integrate the many actors involved in solutions to homelessness. These include strategic engagement between the community and the institutions working to deliver services and supports, as well as expanding capacity for collecting and analyzing data. The CA also pressed the City to build a new strategy that integrates prevention, intervention, and community engagement.

How We Heard it

- › 12 members
- › 2 workshops as an individual advisory
- › 2 workshops with all CA members

ACCELERATING NON-PROFIT/CITY PARTNERSHIPS

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

The Accelerating Non-Profit/City Partnerships CA identified several challenges for their work providing affordable housing to the City’s most vulnerable residents. First is ongoing uncertainty about the future of the existing non-market housing stock, both due to the reinvestment needs of aging housing and the upcoming expiration of federal operating agreements. Another challenge is the ongoing need for funding strategies to deepen affordability. Finally, non-profit partners called for ongoing engagement with the City and better alignment between municipal policy and processes.

Opportunities:

Non-profit partners are critical to the City’s long-term strategy for creating and maintaining affordable housing for low- and moderate-income residents. There is a clear opportunity to building and fostering strong, lasting City-level partnerships between non-profits, and facilitating non-profit relationships with other levels of government. The careful redevelopment of existing social housing assets is also required to broaden affordability and secure the social housing stock.

How We Heard it

- › 10 members
- › 3 workshops as an individual group
- › 2 workshops with all CA members

THE ECONOMY AND HOUSING FOR YOUNG WORKERS

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

The Economy and Housing for Young Workers CA honed in on the squeeze on young households and middle-income families resulting from the rapid rise of housing costs for both rental and ownership housing. . The rising cost of living in Vancouver has economic impacts as well, with impacts on local employers’ ability to recruit and retain key workers. There is an urgent necessity to define the “missing middle” demographically to ensure young people can work and live in Vancouver to avoid the negative consequences their departure would have on the vibrancy and economic vitality of the city. It is also important to engage young people and families in the municipal policymaking process.

Opportunities:

Authentic engagement strategies for young people are required. There is also a need to diversify housing options to allow different forms and tenures by encouraging new types of development. There may also be an opportunity for employers to contribute to housing their workers through providing housing, an in-kind contribution, or some form of a housing allowance.

How We Heard it

- › 10 members
- › 1 workshop as an individual advisory
- › 2 workshops with all CA members

STRATEGIC INVESTMENTS IN RENTAL HOUSING

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

Vancouver’s existing rental housing represents some of the most affordable housing in the City, with a substantial proportion renting at or below new social housing rents. However, this housing is aging, and has seen relatively little investment in recent decades. At the same time, an extremely low vacancy rate in purpose-built rental housing has led to rising rents, with the average rent increasing 6.4% in 2016 (for Metro Vancouver); well above the standard allowable increase. Capital and energy improvements to the existing rental stock are essential to protect the existing stock for future generations. However, maintaining affordability is also key to keeping this housing accessible to the City’s most vulnerable residents.

Opportunities:

The Strategic Reinvestments in Rental Housing CA identified several opportunities to encourage renewals and redevelopment of existing rental. A more predictable development permit and zoning process could facilitate rental housing improvements and redevelopment, along with incentives delivered in partnership with private and government partners. There may also be opportunities to engage with the Province on changes to the Residential Tenancy Act that could encourage improvements without excessive rent increases on tenants

How We Heard it

- › 12 members
- › 3 workshops as an individual CA
- › One-on-one participant interviews were also conducted
- › 2 workshops with all CA members

AFFORDABLE HOUSING INNOVATION AND DESIGN GROUP

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

The number one challenge identified by the Affordable Housing Innovation and Design CA was a need for greater flexibility in zoning and design regulations to support innovative green and affordable projects. The group also pointed to poor integration between existing and new affordable housing policies and green initiatives making green building (such as Passive House) difficult to build at scale in Vancouver.

Opportunities:

Vancouver can become an innovator by promoting and showcasing innovative green and affordable design ideas through pilot projects and design competitions. The Sustainability group is already planning this through the Zero Buildings Policy for Rezoning, a pillar of which is to set up a Centre for Excellence in green building design.

This CA also recommended a prioritized processing stream for affordable and innovative projects.

As Vancouver takes on becoming a city of Reconciliation there exists an opportunity for the Aboriginal architecture and design to play a major role in this goal. Becoming a city of reconciliation could include developing aboriginal design guidelines for new builds.

How We Heard it

- › 10 members
- › 2 workshops as an individual CA
- › 2 workshops with all CA members

2.3 / RE:ADDRESS WEEK

At the outset of the Reset process it was clear that Vancouver needed to expand beyond an insular discussion on housing given that Vancouver now clearly operates in a global housing system. Re:Address convened a critical, international, and solutions-based discussion among housing experts from global cities that are experiencing housing crises like Vancouver, residents, academics, non-profits, and other stakeholders. It was the most significant and diverse discussion on housing affordability in Canada and convened a wealth of external global and local expertise with 35 speakers representing Vancouver, Calgary, Winnipeg, Toronto, San Francisco, New York, Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Glasgow, Vienna, Melbourne, Sydney, and Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland). Re:Address included 14 events; 8 of which were free for the public.

The goal of convening a dialogue was met in person at the event series with multiple sell-outs and rich on-site debate. The goal was met online where in a very short period of time the #readdresshousing was able to “own” the online discussion on housing in Metro Vancouver and even extended to national levels, cementing its place alongside hashtags like #vanpoli. It met its goal of convening conversations through overwhelming media attention. Close to 60 different media sources including written articles, radio and television segments over three weeks surrounding the event brought a number of different issues to Metro Vancouver citizens and dramatically shifted the negative and blame-centric narrative to one of ideas and solutions

Re:Address was established as a key housing platform for the City of Vancouver and was invaluable in shaping the Reset and in sparking an ongoing legacy of discussion. It informed the City’s submission to the National Housing Strategy and is an ongoing source of inspiration and solutions that will be implemented with the Reset and Housing Vancouver. In addition, it solidified new and ongoing networks both locally between a range of housing actors, and also internationally between leading cities and housing thought leaders.



What We Heard

- Vancouver isn't alone and, as part of a global city network, we can apply global lessons to develop local solutions.*
- › When it comes to housing affordability, we were struck by how many shared issues global cities are facing, how we are considering similar solutions, and can share learning and expertise to address housing affordability in urban contexts.
 - › The unaffordability Vancouver is experiencing looks and feels the same, has the same causes and the same negative effect on our residents and communities as other cities.
 - › Cities are facing the brunt of housing challenges and yet do not have all the tools, nor the necessary authority or sufficient financial capacity to address them. It is dangerous to think cities can solve the affordability problem alone.
 - › The City of Vancouver committed to launching a global network of like-minded cities that are struggling with the same issues, with already much interest from San Francisco, New York, Sydney, and London.
 - › Vancouver used its learnings from the Re:Address summit to inform its submission to the National Housing Strategy after learning from local and international perspectives.
 - › A new housing strategy for Vancouver must include a strong implementation plan for becoming the city we want to be, including clear roles for governments, the not-for-profit and private market sectors.
 - › Inclusionary policies and recapture of planning values seem to be ubiquitous across the globe.

- We need to rethink our housing system if we are to maintain options for the next generation of households and families and remain a competitive and prosperous city and region.*
- › We need to better understand the impact of the lack of affordable housing on our economy and the social fabric of our city.
 - › We have a renewed understanding of how across global cities, housing systems are a fundamental contributor and driver of the economy.
 - › We are failing the next generation by not providing affordability - the hyper- commodification of ownership housing is pricing out the next generation from the housing market and needs a stronger regulatory response from government.
 - › Generational equity is becoming a key focus for Vancouver's younger generations and we should find ways to support young people in the current housing market.
 - › We need to develop a different way of measuring affordability and housing stress that takes into account other costs of living – e.g. SCAR Index for Vancouver (Shelter Cost Affordability Ratio)
 - › Cities like ours must find affordable housing solutions for the “missing middle” and engage the younger generations to ensure their voices are heard as well as through methods/processes that reflect their realities
 - › Widespread attempts at land use transformation with broad appreciation that the current proportion of single family land is unsustainable.

- A long-term funding commitment and investment into housing affordability from all levels of government is needed.*
- › We need a National Housing Strategy that provides a long-term, sustainable investment framework in affordable housing and where investment is focused on cities and communities in most housing need
 - › Government investment should be made in line with their revenue raising powers, i.e. Cities seem to have the least ability to raise revenue
 - › Three-levels of government should be better aligned so housing isn't a jurisdictional quagmire
 - › Cities around the world are advocating for a greater role for cities and more tools to affect change
- Support is essential for non-profit partner innovation and growth.*
- › A really big part of the solution to market failure in other countries was the robust and sizeable interventions from the non-profit sector, supported through beneficial tax treatment and improved access to investment and financing
 - › Support the growth and transformation of the non-profit sector by working with them to optimize their assets, scale-up and grow their affordable housing supply, as well as to maintain and renew their existing portfolios
 - › Vancouver should look for ways to increase subsidized housing options, particularly with respect to inclusionary zoning and modular housing

How We Heard It

Re:Address Week

- › Over 1,000 people took part
- › 35 speakers from around the world
- › 83 earned media placements
 - › 49 print/online, 12 television, 22 radio
- › 821 users and 1300 tweets in 2 weeks made #readdresshousing a trending topic in Canada
 - › CoV Twitter channel drove 40.5 million views of #readdress housing
- › 7,070 website views
- › 190 Active Slido users

Public Events

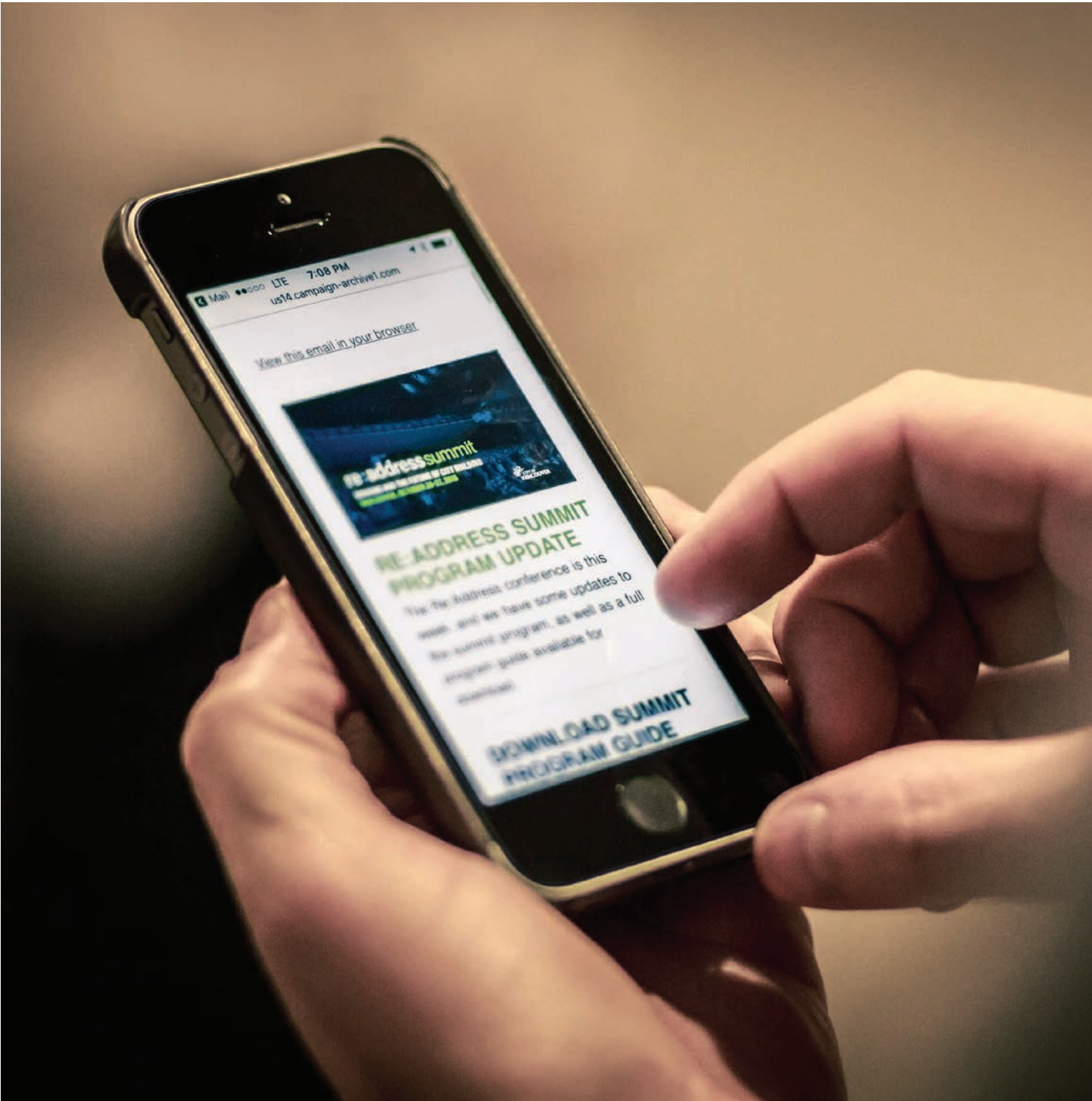
- › Walking Tours: 37 participants
- › Right to Adequate Housing: 90 participants
- › Renters, Real Estate, and Economic Resiliency in Vancouver: 140 participants
- › Millennial Activate: 122 participants
- › The Sublime and Ridiculous: ~170 participants
- › Innovative Housing Design and Construction: Part 1: The ‘Hows and Whys’ of Modular Housing: 110 Participants
- › Innovative Housing Design and Construction: Part 2: The Future of Affordable, Sustainable Design: 110 Participants

Partner Events

- › Non-Profit Housing Summit: Business Transformation: 33 participants
- › Regional Housing Summit: 27 participants

Re:Address Summit

- › 391 local and international delegates
 - › Housing practitioners, public, academics, housing experts, non-profits, developers, City of Vancouver and regional staff, provincial and federal representatives
 - › 25 speakers from cities throughout North America, Europe, and Oceania
- › 3 Keynote Addresses
 - › Dr. Kurt Puchinger, Housing Construction and Urban Renewal, City of Vienna
 - › Vicki Been, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Housing Preservation and Development
 - › Dr. Nathanael Lauster, University of British Columbia, author of: The Death and Life of the Single Family House: Lessons from Vancouver on Building a Livable City of the Future
- › 3 Panel Discussions
 - › Mayor’s City Leaders Panel: Civic Practice, Global Significance
 - › Indigenous Insights for Connection in a Global City: Housing, Design, and Reconciliation Panel
 - › The Economy Story within a Housing Context
- › 1 Short Talks Session featuring 6 participants
 - › Future Forward: Short Talks on the Future of Housing Affordability





**2.4 / UBC PARTNERSHIP:
CONFERENCE ADVISORY
COMMITTEE AND VANCOUVER
HOUSING LAB**

At the start of the Reset the City entered a partnership with UBC, facilitated by the Allard School of Law’s Professor Margot Young to plan Re:Address and initiate the Vancouver Housing Lab. This interdisciplinary committee was comprised of faculty from Architecture, Business, Engineering, Law, and Urban Planning. For cross-institution representation a representative from SFU’s Urban Studies program also sat on the committee. This group met regularly with Housing Policy and Projects staff to explore potential themes, speakers, and the priorities for Re:Address.

In addition to this voluntary committee, the City hired a cross-disciplinary team of students from the aforementioned departments. This team spent the summer working with Housing Policy and Projects staff to undertake thematic and logistical planning for Re:Address while gaining experience working in municipal government to enrich their studies. This team collaborated with Professor Young to submit a successful application for a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Connections Grant (\$30,000) to fund Re:Address and the Vancouver Housing Lab.

As a legacy of this partnership the City and UBC are initiating the Vancouver Housing Lab. The Housing Lab is a new program which will pair graduate students with the City to conduct cutting-edge research in the housing field. This initiative will cement an ongoing legacy of cross-institutional knowledge exchange to ensure UBC’s research expertise can be disseminated to achieve positive societal outcomes.

What We Heard

The conference should be international in scope given that Vancouver’s housing system is nested within a larger global housing market. Other global cities are experiencing similar crises and we must share best practices and data. The conference should also have representation from a broad spectrum of local stakeholders and the public.

The United Nation’s Right to Adequate Housing enshrines everyone’s right to adequate shelter, services, and infrastructure. These laws should be assessed against the new Strategy given that Canada is a signatory creating opportunities for Vancouver to be a leading global city.

Cross-institutional cooperation can help achieve positive societal outcomes by encouraging collaboration among leaders and the exchange of knowledge. This will result in mutual benefits for the City and UBC.

How We Heard It

- › 1 Interdisciplinary Conference Planning Team (5 graduate students)
- › 4 Conference Advisory Committee meetings
- › Ongoing collaboration with the Allard School of Law through professor Margot Young
- › 1 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Connections Grant (\$30,000)

2.5 / CITY OF VANCOUVER: DEVELOPMENT AND PERMIT PROCESS EXPERT ADVISORY GROUP

The Development Advisory Group (DAG) was convened to bring together a group of experts to provide City Council and staff with advice on ways to expedite the City of Vancouver’s development process, with the overarching objective of improving the permitting and development process.

What We Heard

Together with the City of Vancouver, the DAG proposed many recommendations that span the organization to address policy collision and expedite the delivery of housing. These recommendations include but are not limited to balancing CoV priorities and streamlining policies in general planning and development, the development process, customer service, staff & capacity building, technology, housing policy, heritage policy, sustainability, community benefits & infrastructure, the Vancouver Building Bylaw, the Landscape and Tree Bylaw, signage, and parking, loading & access.

How We Heard It

The DAG is comprised of:

- › Advisory Groups
 - › Urban Design Panel
 - › Heritage Committee
 - › First Shaughnessy Panel
 - › Chinatown Planning Committee
 - › Gastown Planning Committee
 - › Development Permit Board Advisory Panel
- › Council Committees
 - › Board of Variance
 - › Persons with Disabilities
 - › Seniors
 - › Bicycle
- › Other
 - › Residents Associations
 - › Business Improvement Associations
 - › Vancouver Economic Commission
 - › Board of Parks and Recreation
- › The DAG met at four meetings:
 - › Key issues and opportunities
 - › Development process workshop
 - › Policy and regulation discussion
 - › Validate and prioritize recommendations

2.6 / FOCUS GROUPS

The City of Vancouver, with Cause + Affect, has been conducting online Public Market Research to inform the development of storytelling and messaging concepts that resonate with the public and connect the City of Vancouver housing policy to people’s lives at a community and personal level. The objectives of this research are:

- › To understand Vancouverites experience with housing today, what their needs are, aspirations for home ownership in Vancouver and ways of coping with the current housing challenges;
- › To deeply explore Vancouverites’ opinions and beliefs about a range of topics related to housing in Vancouver today and in the future;
- › To explore response to storytelling/messaging concepts; understand what underlying drivers and concepts the public engages with most that will drive support for the City’s strategy;

The perspectives and learnings of this research will inform the direction of the Reset and be presented to the public through a series of videos.

What We Heard

As the city, community and housing challenges shift, people across the housing continuum are unified by feelings of uncertainty - from finding viable housing (secure, affordable, fit with circumstances) to making rent payments alongside increasing cost of living, to buying a ‘home’ and children’s ability to cope further down the road.

People are struggling to stay within communities and a city they love deeply and there is palpable concern for the viability of neighbourhoods’ soul and character. Many people feel a paralysis or feeling of being stuck due to uncertainty in the housing sector affecting both renters and owners.

Participants understood that the challenges this city faces are the result of complex sources with no simple solutions but they’re eager for all levels of government to rise to the challenge.

How We Heard It

- › How many participants?
 - › 24 Participated in the 2 day online discussions of those 24 – 16 have taken part in longer term engagement.
- › 3 virtual discussion rooms based on the themes of:
 - › Rapid Change
 - › Fighting to stay
 - › Paralysis & feeling “stuck”
 - › Erosion of confidence and optimism
 - › No Simple Solutions
 - › Governments rising to the challenge

2.7 / SRO TASK FORCE

The SRO Task Force was convened to address ongoing challenges that are facing this critical stock of affordable housing. This diverse Task Force engaged with stakeholders including tenants and owners to determine the challenges and opportunities to improve livability and address a range of issues in SROs. This group was invaluable in facilitating and maintaining a dialogue between tenants, owners, and the City to explore solutions to the challenges facing this form of housing.

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

Single Room Occupancy (SRO) hotels are a vital part of Vancouver’s housing stock, often the last resort before homelessness for individuals on limited or fixed incomes. However, there are continued concerns about compromised livability and deteriorating conditions in the SRO stock, corrupt management practices, tension between investment and loss of affordability, and a lack of health and social supports for many SRO tenants.

Opportunities:

The Task Force and focus group members identified a number of opportunities to improve building condition, affordability and supports for SRO tenants, including developing a private SRO disposition and reinvestment strategy in partnership with senior levels of government, initiating a review of Provincial and municipal regulatory and legal tools, reinstating an SRO management training course for private owners and landlords, developing an internal and external data collection system to better analyze the SRO building stock and inform policies decisions, improving tenant access to information, and supporting implementation of initiatives that increase tenant access to supports and employment.

How We Heard It

- › 24 members of Task Force
- › 3 meetings
- › Additional 6 workshops facilitated by City of Vancouver staff, engaging 144 participants:
 - › Advocates: 10 participants
 - › SRO Tenants: 45 participants
 - › Private SRO Owners: 40 participants
 - › SRO Tenants (Women only): 25 participants
 - › SRO Tenants (Chinese women only): 8 participants
 - › SRO Workers/Staff: 16 participants

2.8 / URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE & CITY OF VANCOUVER LIAISON POLICY COMMITTEE

On December 6th, 2016 City of Vancouver General Managers, including Chief Planner Gil Kelley, GM of Development Services, Business, and Licensing Kaye Krishna, GM for Engineering Services Jerry Dobrovolny, and GM of Community Services Kathleen Llewellyn-Thomas convened with the Urban Development Institute Vancouver Liaison Committee to discuss key policy issues and opportunities from Vancouver’s development community. Staff presented on the Housing Reset process to date and key themes and priorities, including affordable housing projects and housing aimed at serving young people and families - the “Missing Middle.”

What We Heard

Gaps and Issues Identified:

City policies and processes may be impacting the ability of private developers to deliver new, badly needed housing supply. Processing times and uncertainty in CAC negotiations were flagged as particular concerns, as well as potential impacts of the new Empty Homes Tax on development applications.

Opportunities:

Expanding the use of pre-zoning as part of comprehensive community plans could provide a significant opportunity to reduce processing times and complexity for development applicants. Fixed CACs and density bonusing were also held up as preferable to negotiated CACs.

UDI members strongly concurred with the City focus on the need for expanded housing options for the “Missing Middle,” and noted the key role of private market housing to expand new supply.

How We Heard It

- › 1 meeting of the UDI Vancouver Liaison Committee

2.9 / MISSING MIDDLE:
RESEARCH AND WORKSHOP

The concept of the “Missing Middle” emerged out of discussions across the Housing Reset Creative Advisory Groups as a key theme with implications across the continuum of housing needs. The “Missing Middle” typically refers to gaps in the types of housing available in large cities for young people and families, such as medium to high density ground oriented developments like townhouses, row houses, and other similar variations. In the context of the Housing Reset, the City has also focused on the people who could stand to gain from a greater diversity of housing forms, including their housing and affordability needs.

What We Heard

- › Security, affordability, and equity for households who rent.
- › Homeownership out of reach for families.
- › A growing inter-generational wealth gap.
- › Poorly aligned and targeted land use policies
- › Affordability and security across all tenure types
- › Rethinking land use and zoning
- › Making the market work for everyone
- › Creating the foundations for a city-wide plan.
- › Challenges in Designing Affordable Housing
- › Make developing and designing missing middle affordable housing easier for everyone.

How We Heard It

- › January 31st Missing Middle Workshop
 - › Attended by 19 partners and stakeholders
 - › 14 City of Vancouver Staff from departments like planning, social policy, and housing.
 - › Presentations from partners were heard, as well as presentations from the City were provided.
 - › Breakout groups discussed questions specific to missing middle concepts and reported back.
 - › Notes and summaries were recorded and sent to workshop participants
- › Creative Advisories
 - › Strategic Investment Rental, Affordable housing Design and Innovation, and the Economy and Housing for Young Workers – were the 3 creative advisories which had their discussions focused on concepts of the Missing Middle.



3.0 / ENGAGING PARTNERS: NATIONAL

3.1 / FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL & MUNICIPAL HOUSING SUPPLY WORKING GROUP

In November 2016, City of Vancouver leadership and staff participated in a series of discussions hosted by the federal Ministry of Social Infrastructure focused on challenges and opportunities for expanding housing supply in Canada’s cities experiencing serious housing affordability issues. Participants in these discussions included federal and provincial housing staff, as well as staff from the Cities of Vancouver and Toronto.

What We Heard

As part of the F/P/M discussions, City of Vancouver staff advanced several policy issues and options for consideration by senior government, which were also included in the City’s National Housing Strategy submission.

Among these issues were the current imbalance in tax treatment between rental and ownership housing, with far fewer tax incentives available for development of new rental housing or renovation of existing rental.

Vancouver staff also presented on the City’s rental incentive programs and new tax on empty homes, and provided evidence that reasonable development charges and amenity contributions have little to no impact on housing supply. Staff noted that federal incentives and programs could help to broaden and scale the impact of existing municipal programs and direct public and private investment into affordable housing.

How We Heard it

- › 10 Housing Supply Working Group Sessions

3.2 / NATIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY SUBMISSION

The City of Vancouver drafted a comprehensive submission to the federal government National Housing Strategy, submitted in early November after the Re:Address conference. The City’s National Housing Strategy submission calls for renewed cooperation between all levels of government and new, increased investment in housing for people across the income spectrum, including shelters and supportive housing, social housing, affordable rental housing, and affordable home ownership. Its recommendations are based on a desire to see a better functioning housing system that ensures access to stable, affordable, and decent housing across the spectrum of housing types and needs.

What We Heard

- › Canada’s future is being shaped by the global movement of money and people.
- › Affordable housing has long been recognized as critical to the health and social well-being of Canadians.
- › Canada’s housing system is severely imbalanced, with far-reaching economic consequences.
- › Successful urbanization requires strong economies, social and cultural diversity, sustainable neighbourhoods, and sufficient infrastructure.

Recommendations:

- › A commitment to long-term investment in the supply of affordable rental homes in Canadian cities;
- › A commitment to closing the gap between housing prices and local incomes by correcting imbalances in the Canadian housing system;
- › A commitment to prioritizing the housing needs of Indigenous residents, and particularly youth, both in urban and remote environments
- › A commitment to ending homelessness by addressing systemic and structural drivers;
- › A commitment to a ‘New Deal’ for cities as key partners in implementation

How We Heard it

- › Re:Address
- › Shaping Futures
- › Internal and external consultation
- › Habitat III: United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development in Quito
- › The New Urban Agenda
- › Missing Middle research and workshops
- › Creative Advisories
- › Mayor’s Thought Leaders Committee on Housing

4.0 / ENGAGING PARTNERS: GLOBAL

4.1 / RE:ADDRESS SUMMIT

The Re:Address Summit occurred during Re:Address Week and was the main platform for the City to convene leaders and experts from global cities that are facing similar housing crises to Vancouver. Representatives attended from San Francisco, New York, Toronto, Edinburgh, Amsterdam, Glasgow, Vienna, Melbourne, Sydney, and Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland). The City continues to collaborate with these delegates and their colleagues in the development of the Reset in areas ranging from housing economics and affordable housing development, to green buildings policy, and much more. These partnerships will endure through an international housing network currently under development.

For more information on Re:Address see ‘Re:Address Week’ in the Public section.

4.2 / SHAPING FUTURES: HOUSING POLICY IN THE 21ST CENTURY

The City is a member of Shaping Futures, which is an international knowledge exchange and knowledge building project whose aim is to provide a forum for dialogue on housing policies for the 21st century. Shaping Futures brings together experts from Australia, Canada and the UK. The partners in the project range from housing and urban academics, to housing practitioners, to local and regional governments to foundations.

What We Heard

Housing systems in Scotland, Canada, the US, and Australia have been under major pressure in recent decades due to multiple factors including the departure of senior governments from the housing sector and the government sanctioned international commodification of housing. Social housing has declined while costs have skyrocketed.

- › New financial models are needed to address housing affordability.
- › Can we make better use of assets, including land and existing stock, to support new housing policies and delivery?
- › There are major policy opportunities to support the private rented sector that need to be explored.

How We Heard it

- › Meetings during Re:Address
- › Multiple tele-conferences
- › Consultation events in Toronto, Halifax, Sydney, London, and Glasgow
- › Several working papers:
 - › The Housing Story Scotland;
 - › Issues and Challenges for Global Cities: A Vancouver Perspective;
 - › Modern Institutions and Governance Working Group Reports (2)
 - › The Private Rented Sector: Problems, Prospects, and Policies, David Hulchanski
 - › Shaping Policies for Pressured City Markets, Duncan MacLennan
 - › Understanding Housing in the Economy and Improving the Cases for Housing Policies, Duncan MacLennan

