

IMPLEMENTATION NOTE

DATE: March 13, 2025

FROM: Sandra Singh, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Margaret Wittgens, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services
Josh White, General Manager, Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability

SUBJECT: Implementation of the Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Motion

PURPOSE

This Implementation Note provides an overview of staff's approach to the implementation of the ["Temporarily Pausing Net-New Supportive Housing Investments in Vancouver to Prioritize Replacing Existing Stock and Promoting Regional Equity"](#) motion approved February 26, 2025.

BACKGROUND

There are currently almost 8,000 supportive housing units in Vancouver, including permanent supportive housing, Temporary Modular Housing, SROs operated as supportive housing, and former hotels purchased and repurposed as supportive housing.

The Motion's Resolution A directs staff to temporarily focus City contributions of land and funding for new homelessness response supportive housing developments on projects focused on replacing existing SRO buildings or TMH projects until progress is made in increasing the supply of homelessness response supportive housing across the region. Resolution A also includes a list of types of projects that the temporary focus will not encompass.

Resolution B confirms for senior government that Council's priorities for senior government investments in new homelessness response supportive housing in Vancouver are to accelerate the replacement of SROs and TMH and asks that the Mayor write a letter to senior government urging them to increase investments in mental health care and addiction recovery.

Resolution C directs staff to work with BC Housing to enhance and accelerate the STEP (Supporting Tenants, Enabling Pathways) program, and Resolution D outlines report back requirements staff to provide updates on supportive housing development.

Staff have received queries about operationalization of the motion and, through this memo, are articulating the planned implementation approach to ensure clarity for Council, staff, senior government partners, community partners, and community stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

Delivery of Supportive Housing within context of the Motion's Directions

Scope of Motion's Directions

As an implementation parameter for the temporary pause/focus, the approved motion defined homelessness response supportive housing as “low barrier supportive housing for individuals experiencing, or at risk of, homelessness and with severe mental health challenges and/or substance use disorders, including 24/7 on-site support services”. The motion clarified that this definition does not refer to social housing where occasional supports are provided to ensure households maintain their tenancies.

The resolution further carves out the following types of supportive housing projects or scenarios from the temporary pause, enabling City investments and delivery of such projects to proceed without the direct connection to SRO or TMH replacement:

- Projects in-stream or that have already received funding confirmation from senior government or the City.
- Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) projects associated with the delivery of Road to Recovery continuum or health-care related housing or residentially based health care such as complex care housing or long-term care.
- Future proposed supportive housing projects that represent a replacement of existing supportive housing projects, including any density added to existing supportive housing sites.
- Supportive housing for seniors, women and families, and youth aging out of care;
- Social housing where occasional supports are provided to ensure households maintain their tenancies.
- Applications received by the City within six months of passage of this motion.

City Land and Funding

The City has a long-established partnership with senior governments to deliver supportive housing. Historically, the City's contribution has provided City-owned sites or grants to non-profits, while senior government has provided capital funding and ongoing operating subsidies.

As per the Council resolution, until the pause/focus period is ended, staff will limit consideration of any new projects delivering homelessness response supportive housing units for City funding or land to projects that are explicitly linked to replacement of existing SRO units with self-contained social/supportive housing or replacement of existing Temporary Modular Housing with permanent supportive housing.

The carveout in the motion “applications received by the City within six months of passage of this motion” is interpreted as funding applications or applications to partner in the delivery of supportive housing such as applications to the CHIP program or responses to RFPs for City-land projects.

Senior Government Funding Priorities

As per the motion, staff will confirm for senior government that Council's priorities for new homelessness response supportive housing investments in Vancouver are to accelerate the replacement of temporary modular housing and SROs until the pause is ended. Staff interpret that the carveouts outlined in Resolution A also apply to Resolution B.

To support this work, staff will seek to discuss with senior government how supportive housing investments in Vancouver could be focussed on SRO and TMH replacement. For example, should the Province wish to build new supportive housing in partnership with a non-profit, staff can seek to identify SRO replacement options or potential TMH replacement options to be associated with that new building.

However, to be clear, where there is no City contribution of land or funding, senior government will ultimately decide whether to adhere to that preference or pursue delivery of new homelessness response supportive housing that is not associated with SRO or TMH replacement.

Regulatory Role and Function

To confirm, the motion's directions are focused on investment/funding priorities and does not include changes to land use policy or regulation. Accordingly, supportive housing applications brought forward through the regulatory process by non-profits or BC Housing that do not include City land or funding will be processed in the same way as before the motion was passed.

Enhancing and Accelerating STEP (Supporting Tenants, Enabling Pathways)

The motion also directs staff to work with BC Housing to enhance and accelerate the STEP program. Initiated as a pilot in 2018, STEP is a partnership between BC Housing, the City, Vancouver Coastal Health, and the Streethome Foundation. STEP supports people who are ready to and choose to move from supportive housing into more independent housing, in turn freeing up units in this important housing stock that can be backfilled by people experiencing homelessness and who need access to support services. In its first two years, 88 clients were supported to transition from supportive to independent housing. Since 2020, an additional 76 clients were moved for a total of 151 individuals securing independent housing to date.

The most significant challenge for the program has been finding affordable housing that people can move into. To support the creation of STEP units, the City has historically committed some units within each turn-key social housing project secured from private developers as STEP units. Staff will continue identify City-owned units to support STEP and work with BC Housing and non-profit housing providers to secure additional units. In addition, staff are working in response to the Uplifting the DTES motion to identify opportunities to secure deeply affordable housing across the City, through a wide range of programs.

NEXT STEPS

Staff will move forward with instream and potential new supportive housing projects as outlined above. Specific information about how staff will implement the various provisions is found in Appendix B. Staff will also seek to work with BC Housing to monitor supportive housing developments across the Metro region and report to Council biennially on progress being made to expand homelessness response supportive housing and mental health supports and services across the region.

APPENDIX A

City-Owned SROs and Replacement Planning

The City's priority is to replace existing SROs with self-contained social housing.

The City owns 12 SROs: two are closed (Regent, Ross Annex) and one (Balmoral) has recently been demolished to enable redevelopment. The full list of City-owned SROs is included below.

Building Name	Address	Status	# Rooms
Alexander Residence	58 Alexander St	Open	30
The Gresham	716 Smithe St	Open	41
Central Residence	42 E Cordova St	Open	65
Granville Residence	1261 Granville St	Open	83
New Portland Hotel	20 W Hastings St	Open	86
Hugh Bird Residence	420 E Cordova	Open	64
The Yale	1306 Granville St	Open	43
Veterans Memorial Manor	310 Alexander St	Open	133
Ross-Aoki House	313 Alexander St	Open	24
Phoenix Apartments/Ross Annex	514 Alexander	Closed	20
Regent	160 E Hastings	Closed	153
Balmoral	159 E Hastings	Demolished	165

Staff are reviewing the City's portfolio of SROs and developing a replacement strategy for each building, including redevelopment or off-site replacement and divestment.

Through the SRO Intergovernmental Investment Strategy working group, BC Housing has also conducted building condition assessments and profiles for conversion/redevelopment of 20 of their own SRO buildings. Near-term BC Housing SRO replacement projects include the conversion of Carl Rooms (BC Housing owned) and the Regent Hotel (City owned) to self-contained units, as well as the redevelopment of the Balmoral Hotel (City-owned) to social housing.

The Balmoral redevelopment is currently anticipated to provide 115 units - mix of studio to 3 bedrooms - with rent rates in the range of 50% shelter, 25% HILs, 25% LEM.

Temporary Modular Housing Projects in City of Vancouver

Currently, there are 11 TMH projects with approximately 700 units operating in Vancouver. The full list of projects is below.

Building Name	Address	# Units
álewem	1580, 1582 Vernon Drive	98
Naomi Place	3598 Copley Street	58
Nora Hendrix Plan	258 Union Street	52
Hummingbird Place	265 West 1st Avenue	52
New Beginnings	5077 and 5095 Heather Street	98
Margaret Mitchell Place	2132 Ash Street	52

Sarah Ross House	4480 Kaslo Street	52
Aneki Housing for Women	525 Powell Street	39
Chartrand Place	1131 Franklin Street	39
Reiderman Residence	7430 and 7460 Heather Street	77
220 Terminal	220 Terminal Avenue	40

Near-term development on TMH sites include 525 Powell which includes a proposed 10-story mixed-used building with 158 social housing units, a 7000 sq ft Community Economic Hub, and retail space. BC Housing and the operator are in the process of relocating the existing TMH tenants to comparable accommodation in order to make way for the new development.

APPENDIX B

Projects Not Encompassed by the Temporary Pause on Net New Supportive Housing

Resolution exception	Status and Approach to Implementation
<p>Projects in-stream or that have already received funding confirmation from senior government or the City.</p>	<p>There are 437 supportive housing units in the pipeline including 78 units under construction (2 projects) and 359 units approved (6 projects) for 8 total projects. The City is providing land or capital (CHIP grants) contributions to seven of these projects (408 units). All 8 projects are listed below.</p> <p><u>Approved:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1925 SE Marine Dr - 72 units ○ 2518-2540 Grandview Highway – 64 units ○ 2086-2098 W 7th and 2091 W 8th Ave - 64 ○ 1406-1410 E King Edward Ave -54 units ○ 2930 Renfrew St - 76 units • Other Government/Private/Non-Profit Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 325-1333 E Georgia - 29 units <p><u>Under Construction:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 1015 E Hastings (375 Glen Dr) - 25 units • City Capital Grant and Other Government/Private/Non-Profit Land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 52-92 E Hastings St (425 Columbia) - 53 units
<p>Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) projects associated with the delivery of Road to Recovery continuum or health-care related housing or residentially based health care such as complex care housing or long-term care</p>	<p>No change from existing practices.</p> <p>Vancouver Coastal Health is in the process of implementing phase 2 of their Complex Care Initiative. The City will be reporting to Council on a potential City-owned site for deployment.</p>
<p>Future proposed supportive housing projects that represent a replacement of existing supportive housing projects, including any density added to existing supportive Housing sites.</p>	<p>Staff will consider redevelopment of City-owned sites as opportunities for senior government funding become available.</p> <p>Any project seeking to redevelop an existing homelessness response supportive housing project fits this exception, including any additional units delivered through added density.</p>
<p>Supportive housing for seniors, women and families, and youth aging out of care;</p>	<p>No change from existing practices.</p> <p>Staff will continue to work with partners to develop supportive housing that meets the needs of prioritized and equity denied communities.</p>

<p>Social housing where occasional supports are provided to ensure households maintain their tenancies.</p>	<p>No change from existing practices.</p> <p>There are a number of social housing projects on City land in various stages of development with non-profit delivery partners. While these projects are intended for households and individuals that can live independently, the City's non-profit delivery partners provide occasional supports to tenants.</p>
<p>Applications received by the City within 6 months of passage of this motion.</p>	<p>Effective August 26, 2025, until the pause/focus period is ended, staff will not accept new grant applications for supportive housing unless they align with the motion.</p>