

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ'S)

These are frequently asked questions and their answers. These questions were raised by residents at their workshop on February 11, 2021 and/or Task Force members at their meeting of 2021 March 1,

THEME 1 Create Livable Neighbourhoods

1. What opportunities are available for future engagement?

The next opportunity for engagement on housing actions will be the draft of *HOME: Burnaby's Housing + Homelessness Strategy*, which is anticipated later this spring. Please visit <https://www.burnaby.ca/yourvoice-housing> for updates and to access the survey, once available.

2. Can we build more 'missing middle' housing and worker housing?

The City recognizes the need to diversify the types of housing available in Burnaby, including "missing middle housing" types, such as duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, rowhomes and low-rise apartments. The HOME Strategy has actions to increase housing choices for residents, including a neighbourhood infill program that starts with small scale infill options, such as laneway housing and suites in duplexes, and medium scale infill options and infill housing in transition areas in later phases. Worker housing will also be considered as part of this work, as well as through other initiatives, including through actions to create more affordable rental options.

3. Are there any specific policy directions and timeline for implementation of laneway housing?

Laneway housing has been identified as a priority implementation action from the HOME Strategy. The HOME Strategy is anticipated to go to Council for approval this summer, following consultation with the public. In preparation for laneway homes, staff have begun researching other municipal laneway housing programs and reviewing internal policies and procedures to ensure the creation of a laneway housing program that best suits Burnaby residents. The timeline for early engagement on laneway housing is anticipated for fall 2021.

4. How will densification be handled to ensure neighbourhood livability, infrastructure, mobility and amenity needs are met?

The City recognizes the importance of overall neighbourhood livability for residents and that densification could potentially impact this if not considered thoughtfully. *HOME: Burnaby's Housing + Homelessness Strategy* has a goal of creating inclusive and livable neighbourhoods, which includes consideration of mobility and accessibility, access to amenities and services, design of units, buildings and public spaces, as well as ensuring the required infrastructure and services are planned or in place to accommodate the community in the long term. In addition to the HOME Strategy, the planning for additional homes in Burnaby will be part of the larger update of the *Official Community Plan*, which sets the long-term vision for the City, as well as other strategic plans, such as the Transportation Plan, and other policies and initiatives.

5. What lessons can be learned from our neighbouring cities like Vancouver and Coquitlam?

The City works closely with neighbouring municipalities and other municipalities in Metro Vancouver and across the province to learn lessons on different housing initiatives. While the City of Vancouver is a close neighbour, it does have different municipal powers granted through the *Vancouver Charter*. As such, some of

the initiatives that Vancouver can take on are not available to Burnaby and other municipalities in British Columbia, such as Vancouver's Empty Homes Tax. The City is in monthly contact with other housing departments in Metro Vancouver and will often reach out to learn from other municipalities in terms of their process in creating new housing policy, their engagement strategies with the public, and a review of implementation best practices.

6. Will the City be educating the public about affordable housing and homelessness to gain community acceptance?

Yes, one of the barriers to new affordable housing and homelessness developments is often the perceived negative impacts associated with this type of housing. This has prompted BC Housing to create a series of publications on Community Acceptance of Non-Market Housing, which can be found here: <https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/community-acceptance>. One of the actions in the draft *HOME: Burnaby's Housing + Homelessness Strategy* is to educate Burnaby residents about different housing forms, including affordable housing and homelessness. The City will be using resources, such as the BC Housing documents along with other best practice information, to help educate the public and dispel myths about affordable housing and homelessness projects.

THEME 2 Invest in Housing Partnerships

7. How many modular units have been built? Are there more modular units coming?

The City currently has 52 supportive modular units at 3986 Norland Avenue, which opened in October 2019, on a City-owned site. For this project, the City provided approximately \$3.96 million from the Community Benefit Bonus Affordable Housing Reserve to offset the land lease and permit fees, while operating funding was provided by BC Housing. There is currently a development application to add an additional 43 units to the site.

In addition, the City recently applied for Rapid Housing Initiative funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to develop much-needed housing for individuals and households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness on three City-owned sites. Unfortunately, the three City-owned sites were not selected for funding.

8. What is the City's status with regards to building a portfolio approach?

The Mayor's Task Force recommended that the City use a portfolio approach for the city lands program for non-market housing, which would allow a non-profit organization to own and/or operate multiple housing sites to gain better economies of scale and to potentially leverage these assets to deliver greater affordability across the buildings. Based on this recommendation, the City released four sites under a single Request for Proposals to offer a portfolio opportunity to the community housing sector. Through this process, two sites were granted to Catalyst Community Development Society and two sites were granted to a partnership between M'akola Housing Society and Vancouver Native Housing Society. These sites are currently awaiting news of their funding application with BC Housing, which is anticipated to be announced in mid-May. The City will continue to identify additional City-owned lands appropriate for non-market housing development and offer it under a portfolio approach, subject to Council direction.

9. In terms of affordable housing, are there any actions that can be achieved by the City on its own as opposed to partnerships? How is the City working with the development industry to achieve affordable housing?

Affordable housing projects are most successful when all levels of government and non-profits come together in partnership. Without such partnerships, there are limited opportunities for the City to deliver truly affordable housing on its own. The City is open to new models of affordable housing delivery, especially with the community housing sector.

In terms of working with the development industry to achieve affordable housing, the City's Rental Use Zoning Policy, which was approved by Council in March 2020, requires developers to provide a percentage of units at 20% below market median rents in the City, as determined by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. This Policy strongly encourages the development sector to partner with non-profits and other levels of government to deepen the affordability of these units, which some have successfully done.

10. How is the City raising more awareness of the issue of homelessness with the Provincial and Federal Governments?

The City is actively speaking to the provincial and federal governments about housing needs in Burnaby, particularly on the issue of homelessness. This includes using City-owned lands to respond to funding calls from these other levels of government to ensure non-market housing is available for homeless residents and those at risk of homelessness. The City is also a strong advocate for better support services for those at risk of housing insecurity, including funding of the Burnaby Rent Bank, which provides zero interest loans to people who face housing challenges due to unforeseen financial challenges.

11. Is homelessness getting worse in Burnaby and across the region?

Homelessness is not a new issue in Burnaby. The 2020 Metro Vancouver Homeless Count indicated an 80% increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Burnaby between 2017 and 2020, however all of the increase was seen in the sheltered population. This is reflective of the City's improved response to homelessness and its collaboration with BC Housing and community partners to open Burnaby's first 24/7 shelter. The COVID 19 pandemic has increased unsheltered homelessness as shelters throughout the region have had to reduce their capacities and it became more difficult for people without homes to stay with friends or family. The pandemic has also increased the number of people at risk of becoming homeless due to financial hardship. The City worked with BC Housing to open a 40 room Emergency Response Centre on City land and community partners pursued the opening of a 25 bed temporary overnight winter shelter at a local church. To continue the City's efforts, the HOME Strategy is an action plan on both housing and homelessness initiatives.

THEME 3 Support Rental Housing and Tenants

12. How many people have accessed the Burnaby Rent Bank?

As of the end of February 2021, the Burnaby Rent Bank had received 140 inquiries and 63 pre-assessment applications. Of those inquiries and pre-assessments, 12 loans totaling over \$16,000 has been granted. In December 2020, Purpose Society was successful in securing funding from BC Rent Bank to transition the temporary Burnaby Rent Bank into a permanent service. To ensure the sustainability of this service to Burnaby renters, the City will be providing \$105,000 over a three year period (\$35,000 each year) to assist with the administrative costs of operating a rent bank. The City will also provide a one-time contribution of \$40,000 to support the establishment of the permanent Rent Bank.

13. When and how will the Tenant Assistance Policy be assessed?

The City has committed to assess the updated Tenant Assistance Policy, adopted by Council in March 2020, after two years of implementation. Recognizing the length of time required to fully implement the Tenant Assistance Policy (from rezoning to occupancy of the replacement building), the first assessment may still capture many projects in progress. The City will assess all aspects of the Policy, including recommendations for changes, subject to Council approval, as well as data on the number of tenants assisted, and the types of assistance provided, through the Policy.

14. What's happening with Short Term Rentals?

Burnaby adopted a Short-Term Rental Policy in 2020 with a framework for regulating short-term rentals through the following key components:

- Short-term rentals are limited to primary residences and can only be offered by resident owners.
- Short-term rentals can only be rented out a specific number of nights per year.
- The number of guests per booking is limited to six related people or four unrelated people.
- A business licence is required.
- Short-term rental activity will be monitored and regulations actively enforced.

City Council is now considering bylaws to set out the regulation and enforcement program for Short-Term Rentals. If adopted by Council, the process and requirements for obtaining a Short-Term Rental licence will be available, and the enforcement and compliance program will begin.

15. What can the City do with regards to vacant homes?

Currently, municipalities in British Columbia, other than the City of Vancouver, do not have the ability to implement measures to regulate vacant homes, such as through an empty homes tax. In lieu of this ability, the City collects and analyses data from the provincial Speculation and Vacancy Tax to understand housing trends on vacant homes in Burnaby. In 2020, approximately 645 or 0.6% of 104,632 residential property owners in Burnaby were not exempt and had to pay the provincial Speculation and Vacancy Tax.

16. What is the City doing to encourage landlords to maintain their rental units?

The City does not have a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw to require landlords to maintain their properties currently. That is an action in the draft HOME Strategy to ensure better protections for tenants moving forward. In lieu of this, the updated Tenant Assistance Policy does require landlords seeking to redevelop their properties through rezoning to maintain their buildings for their residents. In addition, the provincial *Residential Tenancy Act* further requires landlords to maintain their rental properties in a state that is suitable for occupancy and that they must meet housing, safety and building standards required by law.

THEME 4 Promote Innovative Housing Policy and Build Capacity

17. When will we be welcoming the first residents into new homes resulting from the Task Force's work?

Housing projects take time, but the City is making headway on multiple fronts, including the Emergency Response Centre with BC Housing, which offers a temporary home for homeless individuals. As for longer term housing options, the City recently approved two rezoning applications that are the first to apply the City's Rental Use Zoning Policy and will provide below-market housing for many City residents. In recognition

that housing projects take time often because of the need for rezoning, the City is committed to reviewing the Zoning Bylaw to simplify the approvals process and allow more types of housing to be built in the City without the need for rezoning.

18. Does the City produce a report on the number of sites and units in-stream for non-market housing?

Yes, the City produces a market and non-market rental summary report every six months, which is shared with the Planning and Development Committee and Council. This report can be found here: <https://pub-burnaby.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=51184>

19. Is a policy being presented to Council to review land value capture?

One of the actions from the draft HOME: Burnaby's Housing + Homelessness Strategy is to commission a study on different ways to increase funding for non-market housing, including the use of land value capture. Once this study is completed, it will be presented to Council for further direction.

20. What are the City's policies to encourage accessible housing?

Through the City's Housing Needs Report, accessible housing is a known housing need in Burnaby due to an aging population and for individuals with mobility needs. The City has an adaptable units policy that applies to multi-family developments and seniors-oriented housing. For multi-family developments, 20% of single-level units (e.g., apartments) must be adaptable. For housing that is purpose-built for seniors, 100% of the single-level units must be adaptable. Through the HOME Strategy, the City will have actions to create housing for diverse needs, including exploring including the concept of "visitability" in ground-oriented housing and reviewing the City's adaptable units policy.