

WHAT WE HEARD

Vancouver's Social Housing Initiative

Engagement Summary

August 2025



Acknowledgement

The City of Vancouver is on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples. Each Nation has distinct histories and distinct traditional territories which fully or partially encompass the City.

These lands have been stewarded by xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Peoples since time immemorial, and their unique and inherent relations, history, Title and rights in these territories remain intact. The City of Vancouver endeavours to strengthen its future as a City of Reconciliation by working collaboratively with the Nations.

Learn More

There are a number of resources available to learn more about the historical and current relationship the xʷməθkʷə́yəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations have with the land now known as the City of Vancouver. Their websites contain information about their histories, cultures, governance, and ways of affirming their continuity on these lands:



Musqueam Indian Band: www.musqueam.bc.ca



Squamish Nation: www.squamish.net



Tsleil-Waututh Nation: www.twnation.ca

Please visit the City of Vancouver website to learn more about the designation as a City of Reconciliation, the City of Vancouver's United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) Strategy, the City's UNDRIP Action Plan, and the City of Vancouver's First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers.

[Read the City of Reconciliation webpage here](#)

[Read the City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Strategy here](#)

[Read the City of Vancouver's UNDRIP Action Plan here](#)

[Read First Peoples: A Guide for Newcomers here](#)

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1. Introduction

Project Overview

Making Vancouver more inclusive and equitable is a key priority of Vancouver Plan, the city's long-term land-use strategy. Vancouver's Social Housing Initiative works toward addressing the critical need for affordable housing by simplifying and changing zoning regulations to allow for mixed-income social, supportive, and co-operative housing to be built without a rezoning in all Vancouver neighbourhoods.

Taking direction from Vancouver Plan's approved land use vision, this initiative would permit non-profit and government organizations to build social housing buildings from 6 to 20 storeys in some locations, depending on neighbourhood type, with a focus on areas close to transit and commercial centres.

New buildings will have the opportunity to include local-serving retail and childcare alongside social housing.

The proposed changes would allow social housing projects to be built faster with less cost, prioritizing the development of affordable housing for people who need them most and working toward maintaining diversity in the city.

Visit the [project website](#) for more information.



Timeline

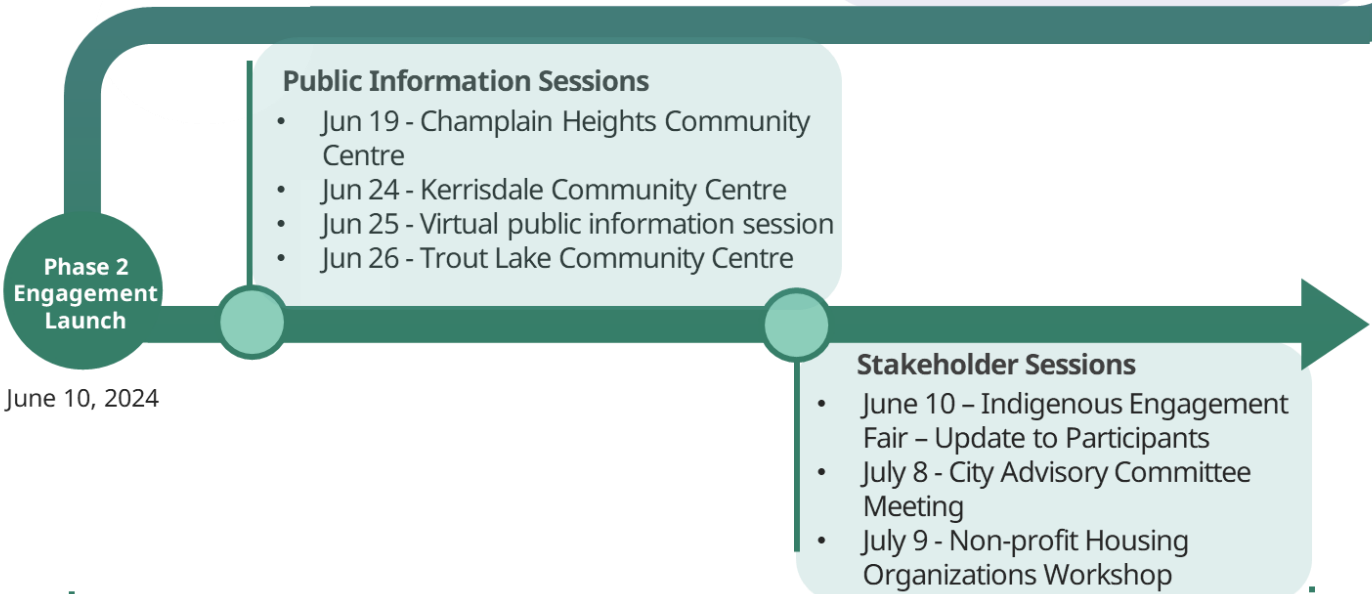


2. Engagement Process

This report summarizes key findings from the second phase of engagement process, which took place from June 10 to July 8, 2025. Input was gathered through in-person and virtual public information sessions, an online comment form, and targeted stakeholder workshops. The first phase of engagement ran from September to October 2024, a summary of what was heard from that phase can be found in [this report](#).

A virtual Q&A and a comment form were available on ShapeYourCity website through out Sept 18-Oct 24, 2024

Phase 1 Engagement, 2024



Phase 2 Engagement, 2025

A virtual Q&A and a comment form were available on ShapeYourCity website through out June 10-July 8, 2025

2. Engagement Process

Engagement Activities

From June 10 to July 8, 2025, staff carried out a series of outreach and consultation activities to present and collect feedback on the revised proposal that incorporated feedback from the first round of engagement. The combined activities generated approximately 93,400 engagement touch points with both the public and key stakeholders.

Event/Platform	# of Touchpoints
3 In-person Info Sessions	219 Attendees
Online Info Session	39 Attendees
City Advisory Committee	9 Attendees
Non-profit Workshop	49 Attendees
Shape Your City Website	4,700+ Visitors
Online Comment Form and Q&A	671 Forms Received 3 Questions Received
Paper Comment Forms	54 Forms Received
Written letters	26 Letters Received
Email threads to Housing Policy and staff inbox	13 Email Threads
Social media impressions	87,648 views
Total	93,400+ touch points



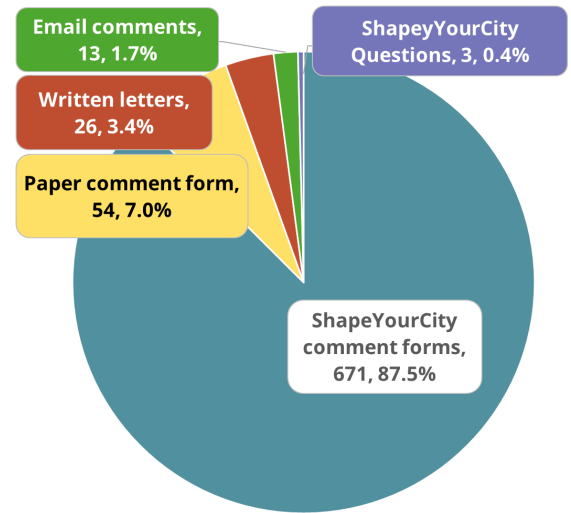
3. What We Heard

Staff received a total of **767** direct comments on the initiative from the public:

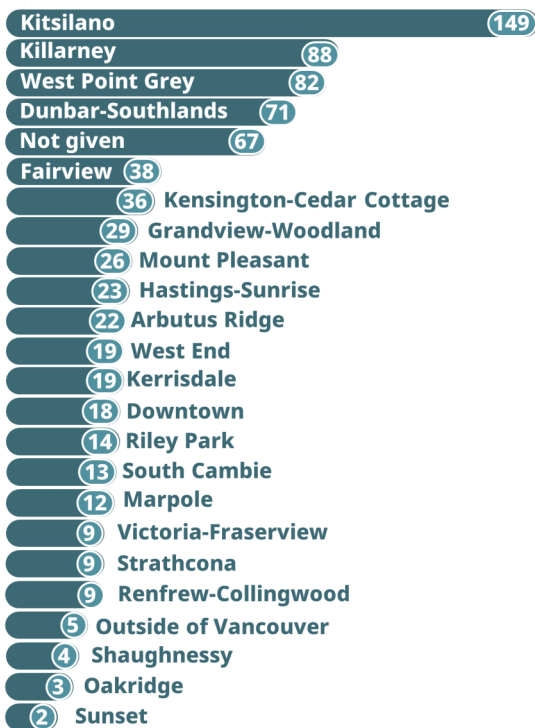
- 671 from the ShapeYourCity page comment form
- 54 paper comment forms
- 26 written letters
- 13 emailed comments
- 3 questions from ShapeYourCity Q&A session

Staff reviewed and sorted the comments based on how supportive they were and what common themes came up. This helped us understand how people feel about the initiative and what issues or ideas matter most to them.

Feedback Count, by sources (n=767)



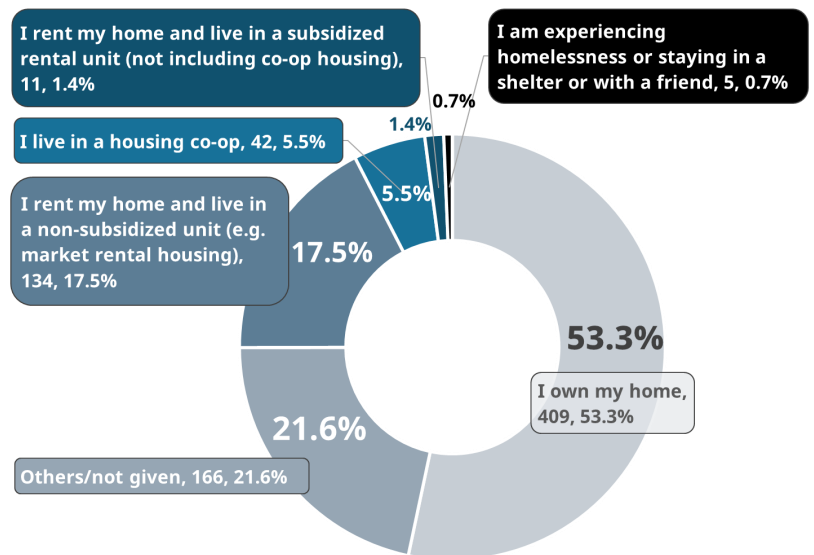
Feedback by neighbourhood (n=767)



The comment form included two optional questions where participants could share which neighbourhood they live in and what their current housing situation is.

The neighbourhoods we heard from most often were **Kitsilano, Killarney, West Point Grey**, and **Dunbar-Southlands**.

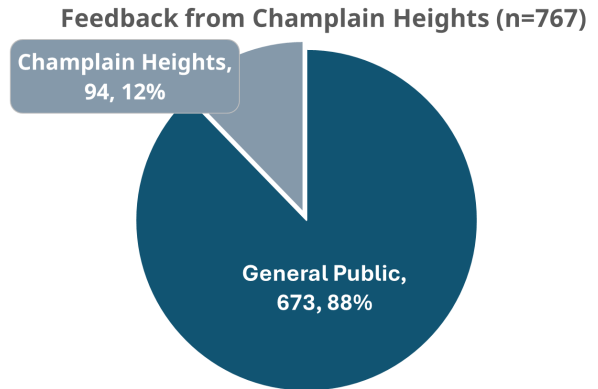
Feedback by tenure (n=767)



Just over half of the respondents (53.3 per cent) said they own their homes. The next largest group were renters in market (non-subsidized) housing at 17 per cent, followed by co-op residents at 6 per cent. A smaller number, about 1.4 per cent, live in subsidized rental housing, and 1 per cent said they are experiencing homelessness or are in unstable housing situations.

A Note on Champlain Heights

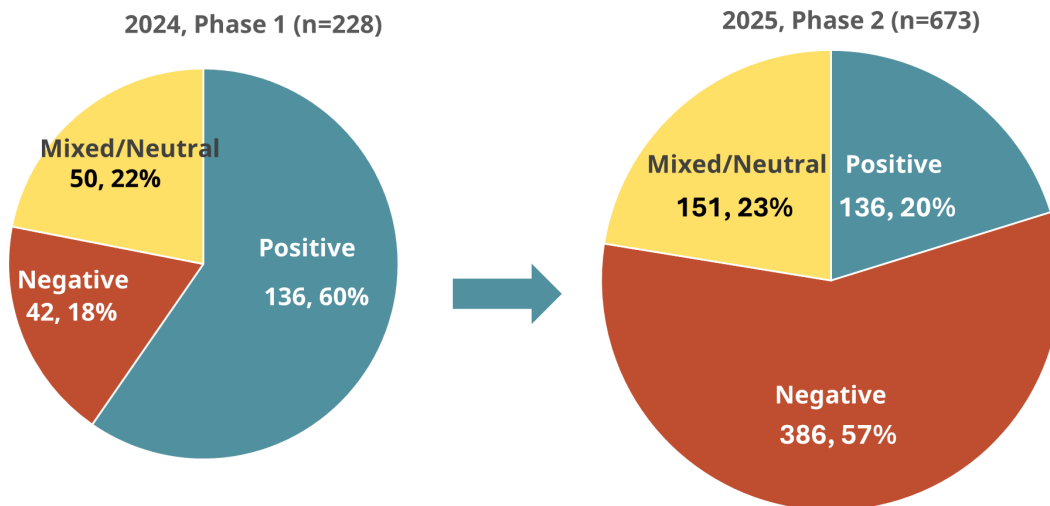
We received a significant number of comments from people living in the Champlain Heights neighbourhood, many of which were specific to that area. Because of this, we've provided a separate section on [page 18](#) that focuses just on that feedback.



How do people feel about the initiative?

Overall, 20 per cent of the public comments received were positive and supportive. 23 per cent were mixed, expressing some concerns but not opposing the initiative. 57 per cent were opposed to the initiative. Compared to the level of support observed during phase one of engagement, there was a notable increase in negative sentiment during phase two.

Changes in level of support from general public comments



Public feedback submitted through the comment form was largely negative. Concerns were raised about the citywide scope of the proposal, the high-density tower forms, the capacity of existing infrastructure, and safety issues.

In contrast, non-profit housing providers expressed strong support, highlighting that the initiative could improve project timelines, enhance financial feasibility, and accelerate the delivery of social housing. The controversy around the tower form was also recognized, but many stated that the proposed maximum density is practical and needed.

Other stakeholders, such as City Advisory Committees, were generally supportive but also raised important concerns, including school capacity, importance of accessible transportation, tenant protections, and special housing needs for seniors.

Key Feedback Themes

Comments were grouped into the following three categories and analyzed for more detailed themes:

- I. Comments on proposed density, scope & overall approach*
- II. Comments on anticipated impacts*
- III. Comments on engagement process & others*

I. Comments on proposed density, scope & overall approach

1) Opposition to towers, but supportive/neutral of 6-storeys:

Many people expressed strong concerns about the revised proposal that allows buildings up to 20 storeys tall. The idea of adding more tall towers raised a number of issues, including:

- A belief that towers are less suitable for families, seniors, and children.
- Concerns that tall buildings don't fit the look and feel of existing neighbourhoods or the city as a whole.
- Worries that towers make it harder to build a sense of community.
- A feeling that towers may not be the right kind of housing for delivering social or affordable housing.
- Concerns that tall buildings could block views and cast shadows on nearby parks.
- A preference to keep towers only in areas that already have high-density

In contrast, many people were more open to 6-storey buildings. This mid-rise form was seen as a better fit for most neighbourhoods, and there was strong support for allowing 6-storey buildings citywide through city-initiated rezoning.

Quotes

"I don't wish to see high towers throughout Vancouver neighbourhoods. 18-20 storeys is too tall. I don't think towers are a good idea for any sort of housing."
- Home owner from Kitsilano

"20 story towers on side streets and placed randomly are out of context with many predominantly single family neighbourhoods. I fully support supportive housing in all neighbourhoods on a smaller scale (up to 6 stories) and in more of the 'town centre' locations."
- Home owner from West Point Grey

"I think a 6 story walkup doesn't change a neighbourhood in the way that a 20 story tower might, and tend to think provide better quality of life as well. But I would include literally everywhere in Vancouver that isn't already zoned for higher density in an intermediate density zoning."
- Renter from Shaughnessy

2) Mixed attitudes on citywide city-initiated rezoning approach:

People shared mixed opinions about the city's plan to enable social housing to be built with a development permit and without a rezoning across Vancouver:

- Some supported the idea of spreading social housing throughout the city. They felt this would improve access, create more mixed-income neighbourhoods, and help avoid concentrating low-income housing in just one area.
- Others were not in favour of a one-size-fits-all approach. They felt social housing should be built in areas where support services already exist, like transit, healthcare, and community programs. Some also worried that allowing tall buildings everywhere could change the character of existing neighbourhoods. Instead, they preferred a more local, neighbourhood-by-neighbourhood planning process.



Co-op Housing - Fraserview Towers Co-op

Quotes

'I live in the DTES in co-op housing. I believe that the extremely high concentration of supportive and social housing in the neighbourhood is one of the reasons that this area is very dysfunctional. I feel that spreading out this type of housing throughout the city is healthy and necessary to take the pressure off the DTES. This will also help people be able to live all over the city.'
- Renter from Strathcona

'While I strongly support the goal of increasing access to social and supportive housing, I am alarmed at the pace, scope, and lack of nuance in the City's approach. The blanket rezoning of all Neighbourhood Centres—including the sweeping inclusion of areas such as West Kitsilano and Kits Point—to allow 20-storey towers marks a dramatic shift in planning policy.'
- Home owner from Kitsilano

'No i do not think social housing should be built in all neighborhoods. Putting tax payer subsidized housing in areas many doctors cannot afford to live is a poor use of the funds. Housing should be built in areas where the land is cheaper and the demographics are more suitable for those moving in. It should be approved in small scales in certain areas and grown from there, not this shotgun blast approach of opening up the whole city at once.'
- Home owner from West Point Grey

3) Mixed attitudes about the affordability & social housing definition:

Most people agree that Vancouver needs more affordable housing, but there are different opinions about what's causing the problem and how to fix it. Some common concerns include:

- The proposed model is still not affordable for many
- There's confusion and frustration about what "social housing" really means, especially since up to 70% of the units could be rented at market or near-market rates.
- Some are skeptical that only non-profits will be building this housing. They worry private developers might take part and not offer rents that are truly affordable.
- Others are concerned that existing affordable units could be replaced with more expensive ones through this initiative.

Quotes

'With only 30% affordable rents, how does this differ from the market-driven high-rise model already adopted for the Broadway Plan and other parts of the city? How can that be called social housing? The city is at risk of over-building units that most people cannot afford while simultaneously removing what remains of the affordable rental stock.'

- Resident from Riley Park

'Most of the housing units proposed will be at market rates, and based on the neighbourhoods proposed, particularly, the westside of Vancouver, they will be priced at levels well above what first time and young home buyers can afford. The developers are the only entity in this transaction that will make an adequate RoR.'

- Home owner from Dunbar-Southlands



Social Housing - 111 Princess Ave

'The proposal acknowledges the urgent need for housing, but it falls short of meaningfully addressing the needs of Vancouver's lowest-income residents. The heavy reliance on "near-market" rents with 70% of units potentially unaffordable to most people in core housing need raises serious concerns. Without stronger commitments to deep affordability models this initiative risks perpetuating inequity under the banner of social housing.'

- Renter from Downtown

4) Public input opportunity concerns:

Many expressed concern that there will be fewer opportunities for public input in the future. Key points include:

- People want neighbourhoods to have more say, especially when it comes to tall buildings and social housing projects.
- Many prefer a community-based planning process that involves local voices.
- There's concern that changes are happening too quickly.
- Some feel that developers have too much influence over the plans.

'It will destroy the city's character (and likely only line the pockets of developers as per usual) rather than achieve the goal of generating more social housing that is thoughtfully designed as an integral part of a community -setting it up for success.'
- Unknown address

Quotes

'Democracy should never be sacrificed for efficiency. Real input should be sought and seriously considered for all decisions that shape our city. Social and urban planning needs to be properly done, along with real community consultation.'

- Home owner from Arbutus Ridge

'I realize that social housing is needed but our democratic society needs to have its democratic processes retained, not eroded, such as with this proposal. Rezoning applications and community feedback, which is actually taken into consideration!, should still be employed. We pay our taxes, so should have some say in the makeup of the neighborhoods.'

- Home owner from Hasting-Sunrise

5) Policy details:

People shared ideas about specific locations, building designs, how housing is managed, and housing for certain groups. Some common points were:

- They want First Shaughnessy to be added back into the city's rezoning plans.
- There's a need for more dedicated housing for seniors, students, people with mental health challenges, and those requiring treatment for addictions.

I would like them to focus on senior and family housing. I would like a focus on hospitalization for people with addiction and mental health issues.
- Home owner from Killarney

I'd like for the team and the city council to reconsider Shaughnessy as a neighbourhood for social housing. It has been removed from the proposal despite the fact that there are opportunities for densification in the area, which is in a central part of the city.

- Renter from South Cambie

I think that there should be special consideration for age groups, especially those of gen Z and millennials, gen alpha, who do not have the support of their parents for their housing.

- Renter from West End

II. Comments on anticipated impacts

1) The proposal helps to address housing needs:

Supporters say the proposal would help to:

- Speed up the process of building social housing
- Make it easier for non-profits to get funding and overcome obstacles
- Deliver more social housing, which is seen as urgently needed
- Increase the overall housing affordability in the city
- Help build healthy, mixed-income neighbourhoods where people from different backgrounds can live together



Social Housing - Vancouver Masonic Centre

Quotes

'YES! So happy to see ACTUAL affordable housing solutions instead of only densification. Really happy to hear about the co-ops.'
- Home owner from Grandview-Woodland

'People with low to moderate incomes are being pushed out of the city. We need more housing, particularly housing that is affordable to lower income people - healthcare workers, transit workers, hospitality workers, seniors, etc. We need more housing but much of the new housing currently being built isn't affordable to most in our city. This initiative gives housing that is more affordable a fighting chance by speeding up the process and reducing costs - something the non-profit housing industry has said is needed in order to access funding.'
- Renter from Mount Pleasant

'Yes, there is an immediate need for social housing in Vancouver. People who need housing the most will have shorter wait times and access to a safe place to live. Housing is a human right and this proposal is a tiny step in the right direction. Neighbourhoods should be for people from all socio-economic backgrounds.'
- Renter from Renfrew-Collingwood

2) Infrastructure concerns:

- Many people are worried that the city's current infrastructure, like schools, hospitals, parks, transit, and utilities, won't be able to handle the proposed growth.
- They want to see a clear plan showing how this new housing fits with the city's existing transit and development strategies.

'Has there been a serious discussion of how the City and Metro would upgrade the services infrastructure should you get clusters of 20 stories here and there? For example, how would this plan dovetail with translink service provision? As far I can see, there is no recognition of logistics and systems planning in the current tower bonanza near Arbutus station.'

- Home owner from West Point Grey

Quotes

'In addition to addressing housing needs, the livability of and attractiveness and cohesion of neighbourhood resources (schools, shops, libraries, pools, community centres) that offer more than the mere living space are as important. High rises randomly inserted across the city will degrade the desirability of Vancouver for residents and tourists.'

- Resident from Kitsilano

'So many aspects are overlooked and not considered in this proposal - infrastructure, roads, schools, small businesses, neighbourhoods - it is not a long term solution, but will cause terrible headaches forever.'

- Resident from Dunbar-Southlands

3) Ecological concerns:

- Ecological concerns mainly focused on the Champlain Heights area.
- People worry that new development there could harm local plants and wildlife, and that tall towers produce more carbon dioxide emissions, making them less environmentally friendly and less sustainable.

Maybe it will address some of the housing needs, but it will not improve the sight lines of a pretty beautiful green belt that we have here, will not necessarily fit into the community since the infrastructure is not there (stores, etc), and it will destroy the home for the many species of birds, insects and small native animals that we have in our forests.

- Co-op resident from Killarney

Vancouver City is known for sustaining its natural beauty alongside tall buildings. Thus, preserving natural resources like roadside old trees, greenways, parks, natural habitat of birds and small mammals needs to be taken into account. Similarly, installation of 'birds safe glasses/windows' in new high-rise buildings as one of the guidelines would minimize window collision which is significantly increasing, according to various researchers.

- Renter from Kerrisdale

4) Redevelopment & displacement concerns:

- Concerns were raised that the proposal might lead to big redevelopment projects that could force current residents to move, causing stress and financial difficulties.
- Many people want the City to focus on protecting the affordable housing that already exists instead of redeveloping it.

Quotes

'NO! it displaces all those who are in affordable housing in those neighborhoods, including many families with young children, many single parent homes, essentially DEHOUSING many, many people who have lived in their homes for decades and have no say over the demolition of the buildings in which they live. Many of the people who live in these areas are low-income renters.'
- Renter from Fairview

'This housing development may lead to the displacement of many current tenants of residential buildings that will not be able to be accommodated with the majority of market place rentals thereafter being adopted and raising the overall cost of housing across the board.'
- Renter from Kitsilano

'What we need is maintaining older homes and B-quality housing stock. (I live in an old Vancouver special and rent out half my house, at half the cost of the "affordable" rent rates developers boast for new build.)'
- Home owner from Mount Pleasant

5) Concerns around safety, substance use and crime

- Some people expressed worries about social housing and safety, including concerns about substance use and crime. They felt that social housing might not fit well with nearby communities and should not be built close to schools, parks, or other residential areas.
- They also worried that placing social housing in the wrong spots could create negative feelings about certain neighbourhoods or lead to segregation.

'Please do not bring in social housing to communities where you have young families with lots of schools and parks and bring in drugs, needles and crime.'
- Renter from West Point Grey

'Absolutely not. Supportive housing does not need to be in the most expensive areas of Vancouver where hardworking tax payers want to feel safe. It should only be in the outskirts where land is cheaper and less damage can be done. It should not be in busy walkable neighbourhoods.'
- Home owner from Kitsilano

'Social housing corners in neighborhoods become really sad - people smoking all the time outside, often people strung out on drugs, garbage collects and things get abandoned. They become the roughest parts of neighbourhoods which is really sad. I'm supportive of social housing but when it makes neighbourhoods scary, smell bad, look bad it's really sad.'
- Home owner from Mount Pleasant

6) Operational concerns:

- People don't believe that only non-profits will be allowed to build under this initiative; they worry that developers might take part and won't provide truly affordable housing.
- People don't trust that developers will build or properly maintain affordable housing units.
- Some existing social housing buildings are badly managed, so there are worries about how future projects will be run.
- Many believe that governments should take more responsibility by developing social housing on land owned by the city.

'The bad name attached to social housing exists because between the city and the province, buildings are mismanaged - that reputation is why the slur of Not in My Neighbourhood no longer carries any weight because it's often entirely justified.'
- Home owner from Killarney

Quotes

'No. The idea of getting developers to pay for social housing by offering increased density has failed time and time again. The only systems that have actually provided stable long term social housing is where governments have used public land and paid for the construction costs. See examples in Vienna , Sweden, post war UK etc.'
- Resident from Dunbar-Southlands

'Attempts to get the private market to provide social housing are fraught with difficulty and deception. The private sector has one objective (understandably) and that is to make profit. Take social housing back to the public sector and find publicly-owned land and senior government funding to get true social housing.'
- Renter from Marpole

7) Financial viability concerns:

People questioned whether social housing projects can be affordable and successful, even with this new plan.

- Building costs are still very high.
- There isn't enough steady funding for housing and the necessary support services.
- Some believe public money might be better used in other ways.

'No. It is simply too expensive to construct new social housing units, especially in a new/concrete tower form - even with free land! The city should consider selling more high profile locations/development sites and constructing low rise affordable housing elsewhere in the city.'
- Home owner from Dunbar-Southlands

'No, we need to incentivize private entities to build affordable housing. Acquiring nonprofit or government entities to own the affordable housing aspect will not make this work at a larger scale. The proformas don't work for normal rental buildings without non-market options so how do you expect the proformas to work for nonprofit builds.'
- Home owner from Arbutus Ridge

'No, not well thought through. The city and province do not have the money to support the infrastructure that corresponds to developing these projects.'
- Resident from Kerrisdale

III. Comments on engagement process & others

- Dissatisfaction with the engagement process, criticizing the format, how the events were promoted, the timeline, staff involvement, and the materials provided. There is also distrust that the feedback collected will actually be used.
- Some expressed a desire for better promotion of the events (for example, through mailouts), a longer engagement period, and more opportunities for participatory, community-driven consultation for this initiative.
- Comments expressing general dissatisfaction and lack of support for various planning projects and city planning overall. The Broadway Plan and the recent Council motion to pause supportive housing were the most commonly mentioned concerns.



Co-op Housing - Railyard and Aaron Webster Co-op

Quotes

'There has been little public consultation throughout this process, with most meetings (including the forthcoming ones) held at times when most families are having dinner. Staff at previous open houses took no notes and generally knew little about the proposals. A much more comprehensive effort is needed.'

- Home owner from Dunbar-Southlands

'Sadly, you have completely - and obviously deliberately - prevented communities and their occupants from participating in the planning process except for a brief period of time in the summer when many people were away on vacation. This is arrogant, especially since you are also planning to allow rezonings without any public process.'

- Home owner from Kitsilano

'That this has not been well-publicized and most of the residents are likely unaware that this is being considered. It's also unnecessary and out of line with Mayor Sim's recent pause on net new supportive housing.'

- Resident from Kerrisdale

Findings from Champlain Heights

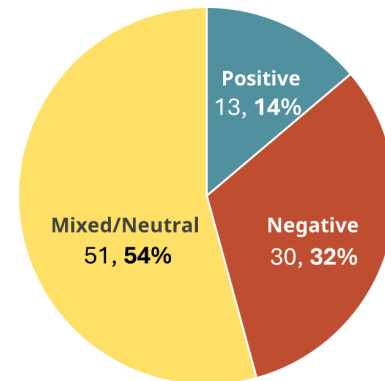
How do people feel about the initiative

Staff received 94 pieces of feedback (37 paper comment forms, 32 SYC comment forms and 25 written letters) from Champlain Heights with area-specific comments. Most of the feedback was mixed/neutral, or negative, with a minority in support.

Key themes that emerged from the comments are as follows:

- **Ecological concerns:** Residents are mostly concerned about potential negative impacts on Champlain Heights trail system, biodiversity, and natural green space. Residents passionately highlight the ecological importance of Champlain Heights.
- **Removing Champlain Heights from proposed scope or committing to protect the trail systems:** Many comments called for removing Champlain Heights from the city-initiated rezoning social housing map and designating it as parkland. Some suggested creating a low-density buffer zone near the trails to protect the trees. Residents also expect the city to provide a clear, written commitment to safeguard the trail system.
- **Opposition to towers:** There is a concern that the construction of towers will lead to further strain on existing infrastructure, such as community amenities, schools, roads, transit, and utilities, and ultimately erode the sense of community.
- **Minor support:** People support making it easier to build social housing, but they also want the City to do more to protect the Champlain Heights trail network.

Level of support from Champlain Heights
(n=94)



Quotes

'I would like the team to reconsider including parts of the Champlain Heights trail network in their development plans. These are sacred places in our community, and redeveloping them would be a huge loss.'

'No, because Champlain height community is at capacity and adding additional capacity and high-rise tower to the community will harm the community and the current residents. Go build your housing project somewhere else.'

'The Champlain Heights Trails should be protected lands and not developed on. This should officially be recognized as a park and removed from the current proposed zoning map for social housing. It is one of the last pieces of park space in Vancouver with it's own ecosystem and should not be disrupted for the sake of development.'

'I'm very concerned that the city is so short sighted to even consider destroying or reducing our urban forest trail system in Champlain Heights. This trail system is peaceful oasis for humans and an important habitat for the city's wildlife. Also the trail system contributes to our city's resilience against climate change. Please reconsider the destruction of the sacred land before its too late.'

City Advisory Committee Workshop

On July 8th, the project team hosted a virtual workshop for City Advisory Committees, inviting representatives from all committees to attend to learn about the revised proposal and provide feedback. A total of nine representatives attended, including members from the Racial and Ethno-Cultural Equity Advisory Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee, Older Persons and Elders Advisory Committee, Persons with Disabilities Advisory Committee and Accessibility Committee, and 2SLGBTQ+ Advisory Committee.

A summary of what was heard is summarized below:

Affordability and Tenants Relocation Policy for Non-Market Housing:

- Participants recognized that affordable housing is still badly needed in the city. Right now, the rules around affordability aren't meeting the needs of low-income seniors. They also agreed it's important for social housing to be located near transit, amenities, and essential services.
- In addition, they felt that more people need to understand the Tenant Protection and Relocation Policy, especially when it comes to non-market housing.

Building and operational requirements for accessible units:

- Participants felt more accessible homes are needed for people with disabilities. There also needs to be clearer information about what these homes should include, like layout, storage space, minimum size, and how many should be built.

Ways to enhance social cohesion interactions.

- Participants said that for tower projects, it's important to find ways to reduce social isolation. They suggested this could be

done through well-designed shared spaces, thoughtful building and unit layouts, and by offering community programs and events that help people connect.

Special needs for seniors housing

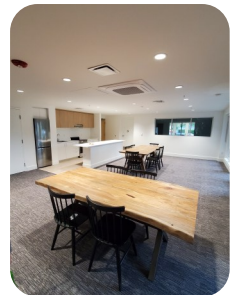
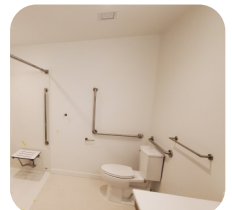
- Beyond individual buildings there is a need to plan cities to be accommodating for seniors, especially as neighbourhoods change over time e.g. preserving meaningful placemaking elements like trees, street names, or heritage features.
- Allow for flexibility in unit mix requirements for dedicated seniors' housing projects to better meet their specific needs.
- Transportation accessibility should be considered in social housing design. Housing should support a range of transportation options, including walking, biking, mobility scooters, public transit, and cars, to reduce mobility challenges for seniors and their caregivers.
- Consider proximity of housing to transit, amenities and seniors-facing services.

Infrastructure needs and coordination with VSB & Park Board

- Planning should account for the need for schools and community centres, especially as more families move into social housing. The Planning Department should coordinate with the Vancouver School Board and Park Board to address these needs and keep the public informed.

Information transparency

- There is a need for clearer, publicly accessible data on non-market housing in the city, including information on current sites, locations, operators, and project status.



Social Housing - Timbre & Harmony

Non-Profit Housing Sector Workshop

On July 9, 2025, the project team hosted a virtual workshop with members of the non-profit housing sector. The session was attended by 49 participants representing over 30 non-profit housing organizations and development consultants who work with them. A summary of key feedback is provided below.

Overall support for the initiative

- Participants expressed support for the plan, saying they believe the changes could make it easier to fund projects and help remove obstacles to building affordable housing in Vancouver. They also pointed out that this initiative is urgent to meet construction deadlines tied to government funding and to give Vancouver's social housing projects a better chance when applying for money.

Density clarification and height envelop approach

- Staff explained the rules about how much of a property can face the street and how dense buildings can be, based on the new district schedule guidelines. Attendees supported the idea of allowing buildings to be taller within a flexible "height envelope" so there's room for things like rooftop mechanical equipment and to adjust for different site challenges, like sloped land or oddly shaped lots.
- Staff also described how the target building size (called Floor Space Ratio, or FSR) is set under the new plan, and how there may be some flexibility when reviewing exceptions. Participants warned that a complicated and time-consuming process for exceptions could slow down the goal of making it easier to build social housing.

- Some participants expressed the need for increased density and height to allow for innovative projects such as Mass Timber and to incorporate other non-residential uses in projects.

Cost exemptions and funding opportunities for non-profit housing providers

- Non-profit housing providers confirmed need and support for waiving Community Amenity Contributions (CACs) and exempting Development Cost Levies (DCLs) for social housing projects as a way to help reduce costs. It was noted that the City also offers modest funding through programs such as the Community Housing Incentive Program (CHIP).

Tower form affordability and controversy

- Participants acknowledged the controversy surrounding tower forms and expressed interest in the City's income mix requirements, but stated that the proposed density is practical and needed for project viability.
- Staff clarified the current requirement of a minimum of 30% of units below HILs rates and shared experience from previous projects, where affordability and a broader income mix increased over time.

4. Next Steps

Feedback collected during this phase of engagement will be used to refine the final proposal before being brought to City Council for consideration at a Public Hearing.

To stay up to date with the project and receive notice when the Public Hearing date has been set, visit the project website: shapeyourcity.ca/social-housing and sign up for the project listserv.

