

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: HOUSING CHOICES PROGRAM UPDATE

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled “Housing Choices Program Update” dated January 10, 2024, be received for information.

REPORT

The Planning and Development Committee, at its meeting held on January 10, 2024, received and adopted the attached report providing an update on the Housing Choices program and next steps following recent provincial legislation changes on small-scale multi-unit housing.

On behalf of the Planning and
Development Committee,

Mayor Mike Hurley
Chair

Councillor Pietro Calendino
Vice Chair

TO: PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE (PDC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
SUBJECT: **HOUSING CHOICES PROGRAM UPDATE**
PURPOSE: To provide an update on the Housing Choices program and next steps following recent provincial legislation changes on small-scale multi-unit housing.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “Housing Choices Program Update” dated January 10, 2024, be received for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update on the Housing Choices program and the recent provincial legislation that requires municipalities to increase permitted density in single- and two-family neighbourhoods. A new work program is laid out to implement this legislation.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

The Housing Choices program generally aligns with the following Council adopted plans, reports and policies:

- *Corporate Strategic Plan (2022)*;
- *Official Community Plan (1998)*;
- *HOME: Burnaby’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2021)*;
- *Burnaby’s Housing Needs Report (2021)*; and
- *Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing Final Report (2019)*.

2.0 BACKGROUND

The Housing Choices program was launched in February 2022 to introduce more housing variety to Burnaby’s single and two family neighbourhoods. Implementation was designed in phases to incorporate public consultation and infrastructure planning before making changes to the City’s regulatory framework. The phases were set out as follows:

- **Phase 1a (2023):**
 - Laneway homes and suites in semi-detached homes on properties with lanes.

- **Phase 1b (2024):**
 - Laneway homes and suites in semi-detached homes on all single and two-family properties; and
 - Additional forms of housing for 3-4 units on all single- and two-family properties.

- **Phase 2 (2025):**
 - Higher density forms of small-scale housing in conjunction with the Official Community Plan update.

In November 2023, the Province passed new legislation on small-scale multi-unit housing (Bill 44-2023 – Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023). This legislation and accompanying regulations require the City to permit the following minimum number of housing units on properties zoned for single or two family housing:

- 3 units on residential lots with an area less than 280m² (3,014 sq.ft.)
- 4 units on residential lots with an area greater than 280m² (3,014 sq.ft.)
- 6 units on residential lots with an area greater than 280m² (3,014 sq.ft.) and near bus stops with frequent service.

A second piece of legislation (Bill 47-2023 – Housing Statutes (Transit-Oriented Areas) Amendment Act, 2023), mandates higher residential densities in transit-oriented areas, which include residential properties within 800 m of a SkyTrain station and 400 m of a bus exchange. These mandated changes will supersede the existing Housing Choices program and schedule. The following sections provide an update on the Housing Choices program and outline the anticipated transition to a new work program to implement the provincial legislation by the June 30, 2024 deadline.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

3.1 Housing Choices Program Update

3.1.1 Phase 1a

Phase 1a of the Housing Choices program is now complete. The City began accepting building permit applications for laneway homes and suites in semi-detached homes on September 18, 2023.

Table 1 provides a summary of the building permit applications for laneway homes and suites in semi-detached homes, as of December 15, 2023. The first laneway home in Burnaby has been framed and is anticipated for completion in early 2024.

Phase 1a Housing Types	APPLICATION STATUS (to December 15, 2023)		
	Pre-Application Review	Building Permit Review	Building Permit Issued
Laneway Homes	30	28	4
Suites in Semi-Detached Homes	6	4	0

Since the launch of Phase 1a, staff have been monitoring the application process to determine if any changes are needed to better support residents in constructing small-scale housing. Proposed improvements are being reviewed in the context of the new housing legislation. Additional details will be provided in a forthcoming Zoning Bylaw Amendment Report.

During consultation on Phase 1a, many residents expressed interest in having access to a design library to assist with the development process. This would provide public access to house plans that meet Burnaby’s Zoning Bylaw regulations and design best practices. It is anticipated that designs in the library will be sourced from three streams;

- an open call to designers to submit designs;
- provincial and federal pre-reviewed designs; and
- pre-approved designs that have been through the City’s permitting process.

The proposed approach for the design library is provided in **Attachment 1**. This work will start in the spring with the open call for designs.

3.1.2 Phase 1b

Work on Phase 1b began in July 2023, with the launch of a public survey to determine the level of interest in additional small-scale housing. The survey received 1,143 responses, with representation from every residential neighbourhood in the City. Key messages received from the survey are as follows:

- There was strong support for permitting 3-4 units on all single and two family lots in Burnaby (74%+). Proposed housing types included single-family homes with two suites, triplexes, fourplexes, cottage courts (3-4 detached units), and duplex laneway homes. There was a preference for row triplexes and row fourplexes over stacked units.
- Respondents supported units with 3 or more bedrooms across all housing types (support for 3+ bedrooms ranged from 73%-83% depending on the housing type).

- Respondents supported heights of 3 storeys or more across all housing types (support for 3+ storeys ranged from 61%-72% depending on the housing type).
- There was strong support for permitting up to 6-unit multiplexes on single and two family properties with easy access to other transport options (SkyTrain, bus, carshare, bikeshare) (73% on single family lots; 82% on two family lots).
- There was some support for permitting stratification (53%) and subdivision (57%) of single and two family properties.
- There was strong support for introducing opportunities for local shops (82%) in single and two family neighbourhoods.
- Concerns were expressed around lack of parking, affordability, and the importance of planning for infrastructure and amenities to accompany any increase in density.

Additional information and results from the survey are summarized in a What We Heard Report, provided in **Attachment 2**.

These results are consistent with earlier surveys and indicate continued support for increasing the density and variety of housing in Burnaby’s single and two family neighbourhoods.

3.1.3 Next Steps for the Housing Choices Program

The Housing Choices program was designed to gather input and determine the types of density and housing forms suitable for Burnaby’s neighbourhoods. Given that density and housing forms have now been provincially prescribed, the remaining work for Phase 1b and Phase 2 of Housing Choices will be discontinued and a new work program to implement the provincial legislation will be pursued.

3.2 New Work Program

3.2.1 Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing

Staff are conducting an analysis of the R-District Simplification work program as part of the broader Burnaby Zoning Bylaw review process. R-District Simplification will introduce zoning regulations for small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) to all single and two family lots in accordance with the new provincial requirements, as outlined in the Council report titled “Local Government Act Update – Provincial Homes for People Action Plan”, dated December 11, 2023.

The R-District Simplification amendment to implement new SSMUH legislation will be advanced for Committee and Council approval prior to the June 30, 2024 deadline mandated by the Province.

The proposed schedule for R-District Simplification is as follows:

Jan/Feb 2024	Prepare draft zoning amendments and complete technical review
Feb/Mar 2024	Launch public information campaign on proposed changes
March 2024	Seek Council approval on the proposed SSMUH zoning amendments
May 2024	Adopt amendments to implement provincial SSMUH legislation

3.2.2 Transit-Oriented Areas

The scope of work originally outlined for Phase 2 of Housing Choices, encouraging higher density forms of missing middle housing, is being advanced in concert with the Burnaby 2050 Official Community Plan (OCP) and neighbourhood plan advancements for approval in 2025.

While ongoing work and public consultation on the OCP will continue into 2024 and 2025 to address missing middle housing forms, in order to accommodate the legislative changes relating to transit-oriented areas (TOAs), an interim amendment to the current OCP will be required by the Province to designate remaining TOAs by June 30, 2024. Similar to the SSMUH, interim amendments to the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw are also anticipated to accommodate TOA provisions in the new legislation.

Further interim zoning amendments may be required to obtain alignment and coordination with the Burnaby 2050 OCP review process and mandated provincial legislation requirements prior to the final OCP and Zoning Bylaw updates that are scheduled to be completed in 2025. As noted, broader consultation on the OCP and Zoning Bylaw updates will be ongoing throughout 2024 and 2025 on the future of the City and how we best accommodate required land use changes mandated by the Province.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

An overview of Housing Choices Phase 1b engagement is provided in *Section 3.1.2* and summarized in a What We Heard Report, provided in Attachment 2.

The new legislative changes will be communicated widely to the public, including in the 2024 Utility Tax brochure and on the City’s website. Future communications and engagement on missing middle housing forms will be carried out as part of the broader OCP and Zoning Bylaw review and update processes, as described in *Section 3.2*.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Financial impacts to the City resulting from the legislative changes are anticipated. City staff have begun to identify financial opportunities and challenges resulting from the legislative changes, including identifying requirements to comprehensively update the City’s Development Cost Charges (DCC) framework and review how best to establish and utilize the new Amenity Cost Charges (ACC) authority to ensure required infrastructure and amenities remain funded through development.

Respectfully submitted,

Ed Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development

ATTACHMENTS

- Attachment 1 – Housing Choices Design Library Program Outline
- Attachment 2 – Housing Choices Phase 1b What We Heard Report

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Sarah Crawford, Planner 2, and reviewed by Andrew Macaulay, Planner 2, Lily Ford, Planner 3, Wendy Tse, Director Community Planning and Johannes Schumann, Director Neighbourhood Planning and Urban Design.