

Summary of Rental Issues Discussed in New Westminster City Hall: 2022-2026

The following report was put together on September 20th 2026 by volunteers at the New Westminster Tenants Union. This document is intended to provide renter education and a more accessible way of understanding how rental issues are being discussed in New West city council.

City Hall meetings were filtered by searching their meeting minutes for keywords related to rental issues (see Appendix a). Only city hall meetings with the current council were reviewed, starting in fall of 2022, until present. Council workshops were not reviewed except for in instances where more context was required. Meetings were watched and summarized by volunteers, and grouped in this document by issue.

Context is sometimes provided to the summaries in italics. You can view the video recording of the meeting by clicking on the link at the top of each summary. Councillors and the Mayor are referred to by their last names.

If you have questions about this report please send them to nwtenantsunion@gmail.com

Affordable Housing

Tenant Relocation Policy

In November 2023, the Provincial Government introduced changes to the housing legislation. Under the new Legislation, municipalities are required to allow development of taller buildings within a certain radius of skytrain stations. This means many 3 story rental buildings with long term tenants paying low rent can suddenly be developed into 8 or 20 story buildings depending on how close they are to a skytrain station. This means many low income tenants could be evicted and have to find new housing if their building is sold and demolished to build a taller tower. The city of Burnaby created a Tenant Assistance Policy in 2020 that had some of the strongest renter protections in Canada at the time, requiring things like developers to offer tenants equivalent units at the same rent when the project is complete, and to cover the extra rent for tenants living elsewhere while the building is being constructed. The Tenant Relocation Policy is New Westminster making a similar policy inspired by Burnaby.

June 10 2024 – (Item [8.1a](#))



Campbell and Nakagawa introduced the motion.

Updating tenant protections using Burnaby's policy as a template, greater protections for those displaced by development. (specifically include laneway suites, basements, which fall through the cracks of existing tenants). Nakagawa points to the efficiency of existing New West policies and New West's tradition of protecting tenants.

Henderson speaks in support. Mentions that New West's renoviction policy is a standard in Canada.

Fontaine introduces an amendment, striking and replacing to focus on:

Emphasis on "evidence-based policy" and data on how the policy will impact tenants and private property owners. Effectively says Burnaby shouldn't necessarily be considered an example and greater study is needed of other municipalities before supporting this policy.

Campbell's response to the amendment is to note that the policy is not intended to protect private property owners, so the amendment is changing the policy.

Nakagawa agrees with Campbell and highlights that Fontaine could have looked this up beforehand.

Fontaine retorts that staff should be deciding the best model, not councillors. Emphasizes that it's important to consider landlords as they will help develop more units in the future.

Johnstone agrees with Campbell and Nakagawa in not supporting the amendment, but notes that they will certainly hear from property owners on the policy as well, even if they don't center them.

The amendment is defeated with the Johnstone and councillors Campbell, Nakagawa, and Henderson opposed.

Focusing on the motion itself, Fontaine expresses disappointment at the failure of the amendment. He nonetheless expresses his support for the motion because he thinks it "better than nothing", with the implication being that it would pass with or without him.

Henderson speaks to the voice of tenants unions in support of the motion and in support of Burnaby's model specifically.

Johnstone compares with certain Albertan municipalities with minimal tenant protections and is resolute in his support for tenant protections.

Motion passes unanimously

September 09 2024 - ([Item 3.5](#))

Council receives update from staff about creating a Tenant Relocation Policy based on Burnaby's. Staff recommends that council directs them to update New West's tenant relocation



policy using Burnaby as a model to increase support for tenants displaced by redevelopment, and that staff pause work related to the homelessness needs assessment in order to prioritize work on updating TRP.

No discussion, adopted on consent.

March 24 2025 - ([Item 4.2](#))

Conversation about if the Tenant Relocation Policy can realistically ask for suite size equivalency or if that would cause problems.

2:30 - Henderson asks city staff about if it's possible for the TRP to impact how buildings would be constructed or if they would have to use another kind of bylaw to ensure renters could have the same unit sizes if relocated

Staff explained that if you are building a building, basically all the unit sizes need to match up or it becomes very expensive and complicated to build. They said the city does have minimum sizes for rental units, but that these are likely to be smaller than in older buildings. Staff said part of the reason for the existing limits was to try and keep rental prices lower and incentivise development

Henderson motioned " THAT the principles outlined in the Proposed Principles to Update the City's Tenant Relocation Policy Section of the March 24, 2025 report titled "Tenant Relocation Policy – Engagement and Policy Update" be used as a basis for the update to the City's Tenant Relocation Policy; and THAT staff report back with an analysis on opportunities and consequences of including larger floor space standards in rental units as part of the Tenant Relocation Policy.

2:32 Henderson gave the example to staff of exploring the option that if a tenant was in an 800 square foot 2 bedroom, could they have the option of being put in an 800 square foot 3 bedroom if it was difficult to find a 2 bedroom that big

2:33:35: Campbell wants to add third bullet that staff report back on an analysis for higher compensation for seniors and people living with disabilities. Cites that its harder for these groups of people to find places that meet their needs. Also highlighted importance of coordinator to support seniors and people with disabilities, and that coordinator should know how to do that.

2:37:03: Fontaine proposes amending this amendment to read "low income residents including seniors and people with disabilities", wants to broaden category so that no one gets missed (gave example of youth)

2:38:56: McEvoy wants to include impact on people when they take payout, very concerned about people taking payouts and losing out long term, hard to resist large sum of money even

though its not in people's long term interest because the rent will never be that low again. Concerned about payouts becoming default, without protecting affordability of housing. Votes against amendment on principle of not wanting to support buyouts as an option. Counsellor Campbell agrees that this is a good point, but votes with amendment. Staff says they'll look into it.

2:42: Johnstone talks about how they'll probably need a legal review to see what they are legally allowed to do. Noted importance of making sure people have the support they need in relocation and that people's needs might vary.

2:43: Fontaine motions: wanted changed "THAT staff report back with an analysis on opportunities and consequences of including larger floor space standards in rental units as part of the Tenant Relocation Policy." be changed to to "THAT staff be directed, where possible, to incorporate a comparable equivalent strategy in the Tenant Relocation Policy moving forward.". Says analysis doesn't need to be done, that tenant should get equivalent unit, and can be flexible but that should happen.

McEvoy - Feels this amendment is too vague to direct a policy. Requests more clarity

Henderson - Explains that what heard from director of planning that whatever size the units are going to be the whole building has to be that size, wants to know consequences, worried about the market rental prices will shoot up. Acknowledges it would be helpful for folks moving back into building but could be bad for new renters moving into the community. Suggested getting to compromise

McEvoy - again emphasizes that amendment doesn't specify anything and has no meaning, needs to include larger floor space standards

Fontaine - says he thinks its clear

Campbell - Should include staff reporting back, don't want to leave this up to staff

Johnstone - also thinks more information would be useful

2:52: Campbell - Asks if they need to add amendment to add consideration for relocating pets

Staff: Yes we've included pet friendly being part of unit equivalency

McEvoy: Want to acknowledge that poor people and renters should not be the ones who have to pay the cost for there being more housing. Also highlighted people should be able to continue to live in New West if they want to. Developers making profit should be the ones picking up the tab, and renters should be protected from predatory payout offers



Fontaine: Will support main motion, highlights that this policy will slow down development and redevelopment, which might be good for people concerned about New West getting too dense. Has question about how many people have used the Burnaby bylaw, Johnstone said 700 tenants right now.

Johnstone: Burnaby doesn't think this has slowed down development, but might make some properties less attractive for development, but pushes it to places where people are not going to be displaced. Tenant protections needed in context of TOD.

3:03 *Carried Unanimously*

December 1 2025 - [Item 4.12](#)

Staff have come back with information on potential impacts of same suite size requirements on this policy

Centered around choosing option A or B of this staff document

<https://pub-newwestcity.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=23954>

They seem to like option A more but see it as potentially less realistic (developers simply won't build units that big), vote for option B with worry of creating a poison pill

Nakagawa led. First a discussion of Burnaby's policy and the lessons that staff can learn from a Tyee article on the process, specifically that the bonds and funding of Burnaby's had problems for expiry dates.

On the point of floorplan and size, within 5% with at least the same number of bedrooms (e.g. having a 1 bedroom that is 900 square foot will likely end up being a 2 bedroom). Tenants not preferring their unit is a trade off cause a likely equal amount of tenants will prefer their new unit. Staff do highlight that there are special considerations cause if someone lives in an old 3 bedroom it is very unlikely that they can get a new unit within 5%, but staff expects that to be rare. Nakagawa highlights the importance of rent control here but sees that is beyond their control.

McEvoy highlights the importance of a pet provision. Also wants to hear from tenant groups

Fontaine supports it but highlights that new units have heinous floorplans and that people won't want to come back.

Option B passes unanimously

Our City Our Homes

In November 2023, the Provincial Government introduced changes to the housing



legislation. Under the new Legislation, municipalities are required to update their Official Community Plan by December 31, 2025. This includes things like creating Transit Oriented Development Zones where developers can build much taller buildings than they've been allowed to previously, within a certain distance of skytrain stations.

July 07 2025 - (Item [5.6](#)) - Implementation of Housing Legislation and Housing Accelerator Fund Initiatives – Next Steps

The housing accelerator fund is a grant the city received of \$11.4 million dollars. In receiving the grant, New Westminster has committed to implementing the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan that includes seven initiatives with set deadlines. Staff is asking council if they can have the workshops for city council on this issue in the summer, and the public hearing for these changes to the Official Community Plan in September so that they can meet the grant deadlines, as going over the deadlines could jeopardize the city's access to this funding.

Fontaine wants adjustment on dates in report. Opposed to timeline, doesn't think workshops should be in summer, doesn't think times of year allow enough notice to public for public hearing. Staff highlighted reason for September 15th public hearing is they are applying for housing accelerator funding, have applied for extension but that hasn't been approved yet. So timeline is currently quick to try and meet this deadline. The funder considers each day late the city is in applying for the funding as a mark against the application. Fontaine puts forward amendment to propose extending timeline for this process by two weeks. Motivation is feel public don't get enough notice and doing things over the summer and when school starts doesn't facilitate public engagement.

Nakagawa highlights that jeopardizing funding is a significant reason to not extend this timeline.

Johnstone agrees and adds that September public hearings are not unusual, and that the city is already behind on timelines that it has committed to the federal government to meeting, so want to demonstrate to federal government that they are serious about securing this 11.4 million dollars in funding. Also highlighted being worried about meeting provincial housing construction timelines and running out of time to deal with other obstacles that could come up in this process.

Fontaine reiterates he wants more time for public hearing, and states he doesn't think the federal government will care if the project takes longer.

December 15 2025 - (Item [4.9](#))

Agenda item was To request that Council give first and second readings to the bylaws that would implement the Provincial housing legislation and a component of the Affordable Housing Accelerator initiative under the Housing Accelerator Fund.



Had to pass this legislation to meet provincial requirements, *passed unanimously* (minus Henderson and Minhas who recused)

January 26 2026 - (Item [6.1](#))

To enable Transit Oriented Development Areas to support higher residential and mixed-use development near SkyTrain stations, integrate the City's Interim Housing Needs Report into the OCP, and make minor administrative changes.

Recommendation

THAT Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 7925, 2017, Amendment Bylaw No. 8522, 2025 be given third reading.

Fontaine asks further questions about if this legislation has to go through and what would happen if they voted no, staff highlighted that the province would implement the same laws instead.

Nakagawa asked if there is a definition of affordability of housing in this legislation. Staff highlighted bylaw is about getting deeply affordable housing built by non profits. Nakagawa discussed the circumstances of this legislation not being ideal, but at least they can use it as a way of building more affordable housing.

Campbell discussed wanting New West to have control over how this gets implemented (want a “made in new west” solution) if they have to implement it, and not wanting to give the province a reason to come in and take control away from the city.

Fontaine highlighted that we are a very dense city, and the frustration around not having more funding for infrastructure. Also said that being dense has not made housing more affordable. Said he wants to vote no and make province come and overrule the city because he does not think we should be building more density without infrastructure.

Johnstone highlighted that staff did a good job figuring out how to make this provincial legislation work for a New West context, but he also hears the infrastructure concerns as well. Highlighted that knowing where areas are going to be denser over time allows the city to start building more infrastructure in those areas, and that these processes happen together, not one before the other. Johnstone talks about the city needing infrastructure money, money for schools, and money for affordable housing, and that the market is not going to make more affordable housing, the government has to build it. Talked about New West designing the changes they have to make to make it easier to build more affordable housing in the city. Described a problem that is being eliminated, where the city can't rezone for affordable housing



until the housing provider can't get funding, and the housing provider can't get funding until the area is rezoned, so changing these zoning laws fixes this.

McEvoy says the status quo is not working for affordable housing, and things need to change. Said he feels letting province override the city is irresponsible, and that the city needs to try and find the best solution they can within these limitations.

Third reading carried, with Councilor Fontaine opposed (Henderson and Minhas recused and can not vote).

February 23rd 2025 - Item [8.2](#)

Continuing process of voting in Jan 26 item, *carried with Fontaine Opposed (Henderson and Minhas recused and can not vote)*

March 9 2025 - [Item 4.6](#)

To confirm direction on the implementation of Regional Planning and Transit Oriented Development Area extensions within the Official Community Plan.

- Recommendation

1. *THAT an Official Community Plan Bylaw amendment bylaw be drafted to implement the Transit Oriented Development Area extensions by designating properties "Residential – Mid Rise" and "Residential – Limited Mid Rise" based on Attachment 2 of the report titled "Our City, Our Homes: Implementation of Transit Oriented Development Area Extensions and Regional Planning" dated March 9, 2026.*
2. *THAT an Official Community Plan amendment bylaw be drafted to amend the Frequent Transit Development Areas as show in Attachment 6 of the report titled "Our City, Our Homes: Implementation of Transit Oriented Development Area Extensions and Regional Planning" dated March 9, 2026.*
3. *THAT an Official Community Plan Bylaw amendment be drafted to integrate the new Regional Context Statement as shown in Attachment 4 of the report titled "Our City, Our Homes: Implementation of Transit Oriented Development Area Extensions and Regional Planning" dated March 9, 2026.*
4. *THAT an Official Community Plan Bylaw amendment be drafted to implement the climate and Queensborough Community Plan updates described in the report titled "Our City, Our Homes: Implementation of Transit Oriented Development Area Extensions and Regional Planning" dated March 9, 2026.*

Fontaine clarifies that city staff will be providing council with a memo about how density changes could effect school board. *Carried unanimously.*

May 11 2026 - [Item 5.4](#)

Requesting first and second readings of March 9th item.

Campbell and Minhas recused. *Carried unanimously.*

Building or Maintaining below market units

February 10 2025 ([Item 8.2](#))

All councillors vote in favor of Bylaw 8502 - To update zoning regulations to allow below- and/ or non-market rental housing projects of up to six stories to forego rezoning if they meet specific criteria.

Passed unanimously.

Our City Our Homes: Affordable Townhouse Construction

January 26 2026 - (Item [6.2](#))

To enable townhouses to be developed on approximately 900 properties, and to allow non-profit affordable housing projects of up to six storeys to be considered on townhouse designated sites.

AND

To pre-zone approximately 570 properties to speed up the approval of townhouses, and to update regulations for townhouse developments, including changes to the minimum site area, building height, and density, and allowing secondary suites.

McEvoy talks about townhouses as a way of creating family friendly affordable neighbourhoods for renters in New West while meeting these density requirements. Talks about how density is needed in a thoughtful way, but we don't want the province to impose it on the city.

Henderson had questions for staff on how they landed on where townhouses should be built. Staff said they started looking at places outside of transit oriented development areas, and that are not on major roads as people have requested, and what streets might be viable to put townhouses on. More discussion about technical choices in townhouse construction.

Nakagawa asked more technical questions about townhouse legislation and construction around zoning. Staff talked about this program aiming to offer more variety of housing options

for people living in New West. Nakagawa states that townhouses are not about increasing deep affordability but are about increasing housing choice.

Minhas asked a rhetorical question about how many highschoools are currently planned to be built in the city, Johnstone requested he not ask rhetorical questions to staff as that is not their job to engage in political debate. Asked how many affordable units are planned with these townhouses, staff replied that if this bylaw is approved, this would designate 900 properties to be developed into townhouses. Staff said they can't say how many would be affordable units as that would depend on the market and who ends up building on these properties. Minhas asked how much building townhouses would cost the city infrastructure wise and how much provincial funding is currently covering that. Staff said they don't have that information and would need to report back to council. Minhas asked why growth is being planned before infrastructure is put in place. Staff replied this question is partially political so cannot answer that, but that generally the way infrastructure funding works is that the official community plan is changed to identify where there can be more density and then funding is given for more infrastructure to be built.

Fontaine asks how much of bylaw to build more townhouses is driven by province and how much is by the city. Staff says this is from council direction to find more opportunities to build townhouses, but it helps meet provincial housing targets. Fontaine says he will not support this because he feels the city does not have the infrastructure to become more dense, and that he thinks these lots will be bought by large corporations and rented at rate that is not affordable for most people. Also does not feel it offers choices because the housing is too expensive, and that it will increase the property taxes of people who currently own houses on these lots.

Henderson identified that townhouses will only be built if people decide to, it is not required by changing this zoning. Stated she feels this is about choice, but its for people who are later on in life and raising kids and have more financial stability.

Minhas talks about how he supports building more housing but doesn't feel the infrastructure can support it. Stated he feels increasing density has not increased affordability. Stated he feels density development should be slower and the province/federal government should provide funding for infrastructure.

Carried with Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

Affordable Housing Development Approval Policy Work Plan

December 1 2025 - (Item [4.6](#))

Henderson has questions for city staff about how process for approving affordable housing could be further streamlined, was under impression it was already very streamlined. Staff



agreed process was very streamlined and this would put that process into policy which make it clearer for applicants and future staff who weren't part of developing the policy. Partially also there is some pressure to change policies to better fit with BC Housing processes.

No further discussion, *passed unanimously.*

Royal Towers Redevelopment

June 23 2025 ([Item 5.8](#))

To provide Council with information as to the initial development concept for 140 Sixth Street (Royal Towers), and to request Council's endorsement of the application review process towards creation of appropriate Housing Agreement and Zoning Amendment Bylaws be endorsed.

- Recommendation
THAT the "Application Review Process" towards creation of appropriate Housing Agreement and Zoning Amendment Bylaws for redevelopment of 140 Sixth Street and as outlined in this report, be endorsed.

Fontaine proposes amendment "future rezoning reports and staff reports pertaining to significant new developments, always include a section titled school district 40 input" in order to help the city understand the impacts of development on the school district's capacity early in on projects. Concerned that there will not be enough spaces in school for kids in new building.

Nakagawa stated it felt like this is redundant because they already have a section assessing population growth, but want to know what staff thinks because she hears a lot of issues around timing on projects like this.

Staff: Applicant has asked for an accelerated plan, so replacement rental housing would be built first, and then longer term the larger tower. Recommended sharing preliminary reports with school district rather than applications by buildings.

Johnstone: There is already a process in place in the city for navigating this, if rezoning for a building was going to fundamentally change the population density in an area of the city, it would mean they have to do an OCP amendment, which involves going to the school district to make sure everything works. Argued that adding this will increase bureaucracy around the rezoning process unnecessarily, and that the city should not be duplicating things they're doing.

Johnstone provided separate recommendation for the bill but did not put it forward in a motion.

Fontaine withdrew initial motion and said he supported Johnstone's amendment.

Fontaine said he does not consider consulting the school board to be extra bureaucracy, argued this could be part of advocacy with province.

Henderson suggested conversation with how to consult school board, would be good to workshop with them to see what they need rather than being prescriptive around involving them in this process without consulting them first. Everyone agreed to this.

McEvoy highlighted Royal Towers and NWTU haven't been consulted. Staff: has instructions to update tenant assistance policy, intention is tenant relocation package from developer needs to align with these policies. There would be an external tenant coordinator through Lookout Housing Society. Intention is to make a policy that applies to all tenants, and not have it so individual tenant relocation packages were negotiable by tenants or landlords. Talked about how Royal Towers is in a bit of a weird place because the tenant relocation policy is still being worked on and hasn't been voted in as a bylaw yet, but they are trying to use the principles of it to guide how they set requirements for the development of this site. McEvoy stated that there needs to be more consultation with the Royal Towers Tenants Union and the NWTU. Staff said they could consult NWTU as part of the policy development [Note: we did have input, partially because we took the initiative to set up meetings with city staff]

Fontaine: How much money would the city have from this project to develop things like parks and other amenities if they did not consider affordable housing as an amenity. Staff did not have this information at this time. Fontaine states that he wants to know how much money the city is spending on building affordable housing, which he stated should be the provinces job, and that this is taking money away from building public amenities.

Fontaine asked when the downtown and queens park residents associations get consulted. Johnstone clarified and staff clarified this project is in Brow of the Hill, so that is the association that would be consulted. Fontaine asked if they could consult queens park resident's association because it's close to the border of the neighbourhoods, staff said that would be easy to do.

McEvoy: Is approving this going to work with the developer's timeline, don't want to stop this project because feel it's valuable. Staff: The developer wanted this accelerated timeline so it could get BC Housing funding, so it's aligned with what they want to do.

Motion Called, *carried unanimously.*

August 25 2025 ([Item 5.8](#))

To provide Council with an update regarding the current status of the rezoning application at 140 Sixth Street, request Council's endorsement of the proposed application review process towards creation of appropriate Housing Agreement and Zoning Amendment Bylaws, and to request that



Council direct staff to prepare a letter of support to Lookout Housing and Health Society in support of any future application(s) for senior government funding contributions to the proposed affordable housing at 140 Sixth Street. Passed on consent agenda.

June 22 2026 ([Item 5.12](#))

Councilor McEvoy argued that housing is a huge issue for people in New West and the option to use some of this money to help build more affordable housing should not be taken off the table.

Johnstone made the point that the Royal Towers project is securing existing affordable units long term, not creating additional affordable housing. Johnstone also stated the city's Affordable Housing Fund provides very small amounts of money to housing projects compared to higher government, as a way to get more housing built in New West.

Johnstone and Henderson made points about how funding is currently being allocated to building amenities downtown, and how even if some of the 11.6 million went to affordable housing, a lot of the funding would still go towards amenities.

Fontaine removed from consent (items on the consent agenda are automatically passed without debate, removing from consent means a councillor wants to either discuss and potentially change the motion before it is voted on, or opposes the motion entirely). Proposed adding to the motion to dedicate density funding towards non-housing infrastructure projects in the downtown area, arguing municipalities should not be building housing and that it is the job of the provincial and federal government, and that the downtown needs more infrastructure.

Nakagawa suggested amending this addition, proposing staff look at what infrastructure projects can be funded in part or entirely by this funding in both downtown and brow of the hill. Nakagawa highlighted that Royal Towers is in the brow of the hill neighbourhood and both neighbourhoods need more public amenities.

Fontaine challenged this amendment as a point of order, suggesting that the point of it was to make sure the density funding didn't get used to build more housing. Johnstone stated that the point of order was not valid as the original intent, looking at using the funding for infrastructure/amenity projects, was still present in the new wording.

Council voted with Community First and Nakagawa agreeing the new wording is fine and NWP voting against.

Campbell asked if density bonus was also for infrastructure, staff clarified that the developer has to pay for necessary infrastructure like sidewalks, and this specific funding was for things like amenities (eg. pools, libraries).

Fontaine argued that this money should not be used to build more housing, it should be used to build public amenities like parks, and that the wording should ban this funding from going into the affordable housing fund.

McEvoy argued that it is important for the municipality to be able to fund housing and for that discussion to not be taken off the table. Reiterated that funding should be used in Brow of the Hill.

Minhas shared support for Fontaine's motion. Said Fontaine was saying it doesn't matter what neighbourhood the funding goes to, just that it doesn't go to more affordable housing because the Royal Towers project is already building affordable housing.

Johnstone spoke in favor of amendment, added that there are rules already at the city about how density funding gets spent and there will be future opportunities to talk about how the money gets allocated. Made the point that this project is building affordable housing but it's replacing existing units of affordable housing and securing them long term, which is important but doesn't increase number of affordable units available.

Amendment was approved with Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

Henderson: Last meeting council discussed prioritizing a downtown community center, so council has already set downtown infrastructure as a priority. Highlighted that New West has been getting billions of dollars in infrastructure funding from the provincial and federal government and has a high success rate with getting grants approved.

Fontaine: Restated thinks amenities are more important for municipality to focus on than affordable housing, and province should be funding housing not municipality. Stated he is fine with Brow of the Hill being included in amenity development.

McEvoy: In favor of motion

Johnstone: Royal Towers residents are living in unsecured affordable housing, wants to continue to make sure new development is not displacing renters or making people homeless due to redevelopment. Highlighted that there is DCC funding earmarked for park development and other infrastructure. Stated city does not primarily fund affordable housing, but does have fund to support some projects. Gave example of 6th and Agnes, where provincial and federal government are contributing 30 million versus the city's 0.5 million. Highlighted that Affordable Housing Fund allows city to contribute up to 0.5 million to large scale affordable housing projects to incentivize provincial and federal government to build affordable housing in the city. Stated that even if the city wanted to it would be very difficult to put all of the 11.6 million in density funding to affordable housing because of the way the affordable housing funding works.

All councillors voted to approve the motion.

1923 and 1927 Marine Way

July 8 2024 - ([Item 6.18](#))

To rezone 1923 & 1927 Marine Way to enable development of an affordable housing building containing approximately 90 residential rental units. This bylaw is on the agenda for THREE READINGS.

Here is the project description, it's housing for youth and mothers:

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2025HMA0072-000844>

Fontaine begins with questions for staff on the proposed bylaw, specifically how this project will impact future efforts to put maximum density around the skytrain. Planning director finds this project “will not fetter” council decisions in the future. Fontaine’s basic logic is that this project shouldn’t be approved because it would create “orphan” properties around it, and this would inhibit later affordable housing which could hypothetically be at a greater height. Notably, the planning director notes that given provincial legislation the council cannot actually vote against this for reasons of density.

Minhas references specific “orphan properties” downtown which are not handled by developers, and worries this will also cause that problem.

Carried with Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

Columbia Square

May 24 2024 ([Item 3.8](#))

This is the redevelopment application for Columbia Square. The application currently does not require building an affordable housing in Columbia Square, but the report proposes using density money the city will get from allowing this to be built to build affordable housing elsewhere in the city. Specifically whether to rubber stamp the developers at this stage so they can create a master plan. Not yet at the stage of actually rezoning Columbia square for redevelopment. Nonetheless, opponents are already stipulating the rezoning should be approved with the requirement of affordable housing.

Topic introduced by Henderson, paraphrased: ‘Didn’t support then, won’t support now’. Henderson prefers to have affordable housing mixed in to large projects to avoid segmentation

Motion is carried with Nakagawa and Henderson opposed. McEvoy absent from meeting.

October 21 2024 ([Item 3.3](#))

Discussing the Columbia Square development.

Nakagawa, Campbell, Johnston, Henderson, McEvoy reiterate the previous concerns about a lack of affordable housing within the development itself. Key to the developers pitch on this is using density funding to build affordable housing elsewhere. Lots of debate and discussion on how to operationalize this in amendments.

Minhas is opposed to further development downtown given existing construction and density and lack of amenities.

Fontaine is adamant that there are not sufficient amenities and infrastructure, regularly comparing the new development to the entire municipality of Revelstoke. Fontaine argues affordable housing is a provincial responsibility, and tries to add amendments to this effect.

Eventually the conversation turns to the rentals within the development, which would be about 20% of the units. The developer guarantees 20% of those units (about 4% of total development) would be market rate. To be clear, this is not below market rate.

There's continued on-the-go negotiations between the planning team and developer as the council meeting continues with other things. Seemingly, the developer is operating on a funding deadline and now offers that the 4% of units which were allocated as market rentals can now be affordable rentals.

Henderson finds it untrustworthy that the developer had previously argued affordable units were not feasible, and now they are.

McEvoy, Fontaine, Minhas all express concern about the process of negotiating mid council meeting.

McEvoy tries to solve this by adding a special meeting as a follow up, which Fontaine opposes, but they ultimately do.

October 28 2024 ([Item 3.1](#))

Special meeting follow up to the 21st

The conversation continues much in the same way as the previous discussions. Unanimous amendments are introduced to alter the wording on the density funding for affordable housing, and to add stronger wording about the inclusion of a school in the development. *Fontaine and Minhas ultimately oppose the motion to approve this stage of the development/planning project.*

January 27 2025 – ([Item 4.8](#))

Columbia Square development and how it can be used to create more affordable housing.

Motion: To request Council to authorize the Mayor and Legislative Services to execute a Section 219 Covenant between the City and Edgar Properties to secure the provision of affordable housing at 88 Tenth Street (Columbia Square), which was identified as an additional condition by Council during their deliberations at Third Reading.

- *Recommendation*
THAT the Mayor and Corporate Officer be authorized to execute the Section 219 Covenant between the City and Edgar Properties to secure provision of affordable housing through redevelopment of the site at 88 Tenth St (Columbia Square) on behalf of the City.

Fontaine introduces this noting he is supporting this staff recommendation for the Mayor and corporate officer to make a covenant between the city and developer for making affordable housing. Fontaine reiterates that he isn't in support of the overarching plan, just that they are getting some affordable housing.

McEvoy contextualises the discussion with noting the affordable housing being built with funds from the developer in addition to these being built in the development.

Fontaine contextualises the discussion by again arguing the province should be building this and that the funds should go to community amenities.

Passes unanimously.

912 Queens Avenue and 129 - 137 Tenth Street

July 07 2025 - ([Item 5.11](#))

Johnstone pulled this from consent agenda because staff told them they have an amendment. Staff update was that developer withdrew application and will be applying again, so they want council to consider the conditions the city would like to put on the new application, which are the following:

“THAT any subsequent development application for 912 Queens Avenue and 129-137 Tenth Street be required to: (1) also include 124 McInnes Street; (2) provide community benefits

including but, depending on the scale of any future development proposal, not necessarily limited to, affordable rental housing units; and, (3) include a tenant assistance package that applies to tenants of all subject properties, including all former and/or current residents of 912 Queens Avenue and 124 McInnes Street, consistent with the City's endorsed policy and/or policy provisions for tenant assistance, including providing a legal right of first refusal to equivalent new units at the rents the tenants were charged at the time they vacate(d) their units, plus increases in rent permitted through the Residential Tenancy Act."

Fontaine wanted to know if anyone is living in these buildings in regards to the tenant assistance package, staff said there is one tenant still living in one of the buildings. Fontaine wanted to know if the tenant protections were applied to people who had left the buildings, even if they moved out of province. Staff said yes, as the way this played out the landlord encouraged all their tenants to leave, but the city doesn't want that to result in them forgoing their rights. Fontaine asked if this meant someone who had moved to Edmonton would get a cash payout. Staff said the terms of the TRP haven't been set yet so we don't know yet what the exact rules will be.

Motion carried unanimously.

807-823 Sangster Place and 39 East Eighth Avenue

March 9th 2026 - Vote to defer conversation about this until next council meeting, unanimously carried.

March 30 2026 ([Item 4.7](#))

Staff explain that they are suggesting rejection of this application because the application is incomplete (the developer didn't submit everything the city asked for, and/or submitted a lot of things late), so it doesn't give them time to do the analysis of the project and draft the bylaws needed to rezone for the project before June 2026. This is important because provincial law changed around how cities can require developers to pay for amenities when increasing the population density in a city by building a bigger building. Staff explain that if the project is not rejected at this stage, when developing bylaws for rezoning they would not have legal tools to require the developer to pay for infrastructure and amenities in the city as a condition on building here. If the application is rejected, the developer can reapply in 6 months and the new provincial laws around paying for infrastructure would apply, which would solve that problem but slow down the project. Staff also explained that they have been telling the developer what they needed to submit since 2022.

Councilor Henderson, McEvoy, and Nakagawa expressed wanting the project to go through to help meet housing development targets, but understanding from staff explanation that there might not be a feasible workaround.

Minhas asked if some delegates could speak, Johnstone explained that they cannot legally have delegations for this kind of meeting. Minhas asked why this project has to be rezoned for 6 stories when he's seen other buildings in the area that are six stories. City staff explained that those buildings are likely in parts of the city that already are zoned for 6 stories, and that this project requires changing the official community plan because its in an area not zoned for buildings that big, which is why council is voting on it. Minhas asked why there were no drawings of the building in this report, and council explained that they were bringing the application to council earlier than usual because there was a problem that prevents the city from getting to the later stage of development, when they submit reports with illustrations of what the building will look like.

Minhas asked what would happen if the developer submitted a proposal where they said they would pay for amenities and infrastructure, suggesting this would solve the June 30th deadline. City staff explained this would not solve the June 30th deadline as the deadline is about the change in legal ways cities have of making contracts with developers. City staff explained after June 30th they're not legally allowed to negotiate with the developer like Minhas has just proposed, and instead have to use the new provincial process, so this does not solve the problem.

Campbell asked what the limiting factor was on not meeting the June 30th deadline, staff explained that even if they got a completed application from the developer today with all the information they needed, there are rules about how they have to do consultation with the community and different stakeholders, and how much time they have to allocate to doing that so that people have time to respond, and there is not physically enough time between March and June to meet those requirements.

Johnstone asked about what consultation looks like. Staff said staff make a report, they have to consult first nations government, the school district, and anyone involved in building out the city. Also give the applicants 30 days to respond and give time to follow up with questions, then take feedback and analyze it, so they can incorporate it into bylaw creation.

Henderson asked if the project was rentals instead of condos if that would change anything about the application, Staff said no that would not change anything. Explained that an official community plan amendment is needed because the project was adding much more density to the area than the city had planned for, so it requires an extensive process to replan and consult with all of the stakeholders in the community.



Johnstone: Usually we would just give a project more time, but because this is an OCP amendment and there is a June 30th deadline we do not have time. Stated its unfortunate because its a project with potential, but its not going to work.

Minhas asked if the project were rentals instead of condos could they just change the OCP. Staff explained that would be taking a big risk because staff would not have any time to analyze what that would mean for the community to add that much more density, and they wouldn't be able to make sure the developer is contributing to amenities and infrastructure in the community to support that kind of growth. Minhas asked if the city could ask the developer to make more of their development inclusionary housing. Staff said if council approves the application tonight instead of rejecting it like staff is suggesting, the city will not be able to negotiate with the developer to help pay for the increased density it would be bringing to the area, and this could result in the developer not providing any density funding.

Campbell asked if it was 100% rental if this would be considered an amenity. Staff highlighted that adding this much density to this area is a big deal, that's why it needs an OCP amendment. Stated that the city has not been given the information it needs from the developer to determine what would be enough benefits to the city to approve this kind of density. Stated there is no work around for the June 30th deadline.

Council voted for application to be rejected with councilor Minhas opposed.

Accelerating Building Rental Stock

April 22 2024 - ([Item 4.6](#))

Development project at 51 Elliot Street, large tower being proposed, would need rezoning.

Campbell named importance of preserving walkway beside building that provides park access, and potentially making it wider.

Fontaine asked staff about why there was not a section in this report about the impact of a new building on the number of students attending Qayqayt Elementary. Staff replied this was because this development does not require an amendment to the official community plan for that area, so this tower fits within the expected amount of density increase the city has planned for over the next few years, and the school board helped create the official community plan. Fontaine also asked about the size of trees that would be removed for the development. Fontaine asked about inclusionary housing and why this development didn't meet the city's requirements. Staff replied that the development process was started with the city before there was a new bylaw about inclusionary housing requirements, but that staff worked with the developer to get some inclusionary housing included, including larger deeply subsidized family housing units which are often hard to get, as well as a non profit childcare facility. 2.5% of all

units in the building are below market, and 2.0% of all units are deeply affordable (30% of renters income, if they make below a certain amount a year), for a total of 4.5% (seven below-market and six non-market rental residential units). Staff added that these units are much more deeply subsidized than usual, so there are fewer affordable units, but they are more affordable. Fontaine asked about parking requirements, staff replied that the development is in a TOD zone and provincial legislation means that cities are no longer allowed to require buildings in TOD zones have parking.

Vote was to rezone area to allow tower to be built, carried with councilors Fontaine and Minhas opposed. [Note: Unclear where motivation was outlined, Fontaine mentioned not wanting more density in downtown, but did not fully elaborate as it was not in a part of the meeting where councilors can explain their motivations]

January 9 2023 - [\(Item 6.1a\)](#)

In November 2022, Minhas and Fontaine put forward motion to “remove red tape” to make it easier to get housing developments (ie. lanehouses) “pre-approved”, arguing this would increase access to affordable housing in New Westminster. Suggested staff come up with 15 pre-approved lanehouse designs to fit various kinds of standard sized lots. Also suggested council should be able to do this with four and six story apartment and condo units. Suggested building housing design bank, with preapproved designs.

Henderson expressed interest but identified this would be difficult to implement in New West because we don’t have any standardized lot sizes, and our city is old enough that we don’t know about the soil composition and other things that would affect structures under existing buildings, and there are heritage requirements already set out in bylaw. Also identified that if the city was pre-approving designs they would want to make them universally accessible and as energy efficient as possible to meet the other city mandates, and wasn’t sure if a lot people would want to build those kinds of homes. Identified that this project would likely require a full time staff person to implement and would want to know what the staff would have to be taken away from to work on this. Would want these questions to be answered before trying to start this kind of project over other ways of streamlining housing development in the city.

McEvoy suggested this should be explored more by the housing task force so it can be considered as part of the broader city housing plan, then brought back to council.

Fontaine stated this project should be implemented right away and staff can identify challenges once they start working on it, so referring it to the housing task force might slow it down or make it not happen.



McEvoy replied the issue is if this goes through right away, it will likely slow down or halt other affordable housing work.

Council voted to refer the motion to the housing task force with Minhas and Fontaine opposed.

Summary: Fontaine introduced idea of creating a preapproved housing designs “bank” to streamline housing development, Henderson stated this might not work in New West because we don’t have standard lots in the way other cities do, McEvoy suggested moving this to the housing committee to look into it more and see if it works with the city’s other affordable housing strategies, Fontaine and Minhas opposed this as he wanted the housing bank to be implemented ASAP. The remainder of council voted to talk about this more in housing committee.

April 24 2023 - ([Item 8.7](#))

Minhas proposes a public hearing should be held for the rezoning of 810 Agnes street and 815-821 Victoria Street. This would add 352 market rental housing units to New West when built.

Nakagawa (not running again) said she did not think there should be a public hearing as feedback has been gathered from the community for the last few years on this project through other methods, that public hearings are not a great tool for gathering public opinion, and that this would slow down the development of the project and delay people access to this housing.

Campbell also felt the engagement has already been extensive, so that this particular project doesn’t need a public hearing and does not want the project to be delayed, especially because it will have amenities for the downtown core.

Fontaine agreed with Nakagawa and Campbell, did not want to add a public hearing and slow down the project.

Everyone voted to approve the project without having a public hearing.

June 12 2023 - ([Item 5.6](#))

To provide Council with an update on housing development in 2021 and 2022, and outline progress towards meeting the targets in the Housing Needs Report.



- *Recommendation:*
THAT Council endorse the updated housing unit targets (2021-2031) outlined in this report, and direct staff to report annually on progress towards achieving these goals.

Henderson and Nakagawa expressed excitement that the city has been meeting targets for building more affordable and supportive housing.

Fontaine asked the question of if we should be meeting these targets, stating that cities on the “naughty” list who haven’t met these targets have gotten additional funding from the province.

Johnstone said this was presented on at a Mayor’s meeting. Stated New West was on a list of every municipality. Minister said they are still working on deciding what the sticks and carrots are for being on this list, and Minister said it was important to recognize the work municipalities are doing and reward doing the right thing.

Fontaine expressed concern about putting more density in low density areas and not focusing density around transit areas.

Staff: UBCM has been tasked to work with municipalities, and that infrastructure issues are across all cities and this is being considered.

April 8 2024 - ([Item 6.2](#))

Unanimous approval of allowing building of more rental units on two sites (145-209 East Columbia Street, and 1032 and 1036 St Andrews Street, item 6.2)

April 7 2025 ([Item 4.6](#))

Unanimous approval to include affordable housing units in requirements for 65 first street redevelopment, “Bylaw No. 8504, 2025, to secure 30 below-market rental residential units”

March 09 2026 ([Item 4.4](#))

Unanimous approval (passed on consent agenda) on *Housing Agreement Bylaw No. 8532, 2026, to require that all residential units at 430 Ninth Street be secured as rental housing.*

Transitional Housing

May 8 2023 - ([Item 4.8](#))

Rezoning Application for Conversion to Supportive Housing at 422 Sixth Street; Purpose Society bought a building and wants to set up transitional housing in it.



To provide preliminary information on a Rezoning Application to permit Supportive Housing on the second and third storeys of the existing building at 422 Sixth Street; to outline the application review process for endorsement; and to direct staff to work with the applicant towards preparation of the suitable rezoning bylaw.

- *Recommendation:*

THAT Council direct staff to work with the applicant to prepare a rezoning bylaw for the subject property suitable for consideration of First, Second and Third Readings.

THAT Council direct staff to proceed with processing the proposed rezoning of the subject property as outlined in the “Application Review Process” section of this report.

THAT Council endorse in principle that no Public Hearing be held for this application in accordance with the Local Government Act.

Fontaine had questions for about ability to open windows in the building and legality of this for residency. Stated concerns about converting commercial spaces into housing and if the standards for doing so are lower than purpose built housing. Staff pointed out that this building is already zoned for housing units on the floors they are converting, and that the application is for converting them to transitional housing. Fontaine then states concerns that converting too many office spaces into housing will mean there's no office spaces later on for businesses when business are doing better. Staff replied the bottom floors are still going to be business spaces. Then stated concerns that purpose does not have to pay the same kinds of property taxes if this goes through, and stated concerns about if this were to happen across more buildings eventually it would cause tax problems. Also wanted to know if there will be public consultation, staff affirmed this is already set up. Fontaine also asked if people living in this housing would be from New West, staff said they don't have that information but can ask Purpose. Fontaine then asked if there was a way for City to require new west people to be prioritized, staff replied this is already the policy of shelters, although where people are from can be complex.

McEvoy -> $\frac{2}{3}$ of homeless folks in new west had their last home address in new west

Carried unanimously.

Cooling

Fontaine's Air Conditioner Motion

June 12 2023 ([Item 8.1d](#))



Fontaine submits a motion to use city climate funding to buy low income residents air conditioners, from electrical utility. Also that they establish an energy bursary.

States importance of access to air conditioning, and that some people can't get to cooling centers. Stated had hoped province would set up a provincial air con program, but there's a delay so city should fill the gap.

Nakagawa: Stated did not feel this was the right tool, as there are many leases that ban air conditioners and many units where you can't set up an air conditioner. Stated NWTU informed her that renters are being told they're not allowed air cons (this is true we did tell her that). Felt this is downloading costs from landlords to the city. But also said open to idea of discussing this, but need it to be costed. Working on motion that also addresses this.

Fontaine: Expressed frustration with costing argument, argued this should be implemented quickly. Fontaine said if a landlord bans air conditioners he would go talk to them personally.

Johnstone: Can support this on the face of it, stated means testing cost relief on utility bills is a good idea and they should look at that more. Stated that under the income limits Fontaine suggested 96,000 households in New West would qualify, so at 1000 each, the program would not be close to covered by taking 500,000 from the climate action fund (instead need 9.5 million dollars), which is about 15% of the electrical utility's budget. Said that this isn't doable, especially if some people can't use air conditioners in their units anyway, but would like to explore other options with council

McEvoy: Suggested referring this to the electric utility. Said costing is important, wants to know if we can resolve air con bans, and if older buildings can handle electric load. Stated feels its reasonable to request information, don't want to see idea die.

Fontaine: Does not support motion to refer, does not want to delay. Argued people already have air conditioners so it wouldn't cost 9.5 million dollars. Argued could just use more of the climate action fund, and thats what the fund is for. Argued if it was delayed it would go into bureaucracy timelines and wouldn't come back to council. [Note, the report came back to council in the next meeting]

Nakagawa: wants to know timing of next electrical commission meeting (June 20th), ask if it could be discussed in the June 20th meeting

McEvoy: Asked to put a date on the discussion

Carried to refer with Minhas and Fontaine opposed

June 26th 2023 - ([Item 9.1](#))

Utility committee came back with a recommendation. Staff provided summary, said more research would be needed to figure out costs and how to figure out who needs air conditioning, who is most vulnerable, how it would be distributed etc. Identified where they can accelerate existing heat protections workplan and what budget increases would be needed. Said they needed some time to communicate this to the utility commission and to walk city council through these proposed changes, and that they could get that done by the July 10th meeting

Staff outlined what is already being done, public education on how to cool apartments and homes in low cost or no cost ways. Have longer term plans but don't have staff/funding to do them quickly. One project is looking at retrofitting 3 story walkups to help with cooling, to do this would have to take a staff member away from working on e-transportation initiatives to lower emissions

Fontaine: Question about what he's being asked to endorse. Staff said it's to endorse the accelerated heat plan they've laid out, that they will go back to the utility with the amount it would cost to seek their input, and that they bring all of that back to council at the July 10th meeting. Asked why they aren't talking about the 500 dollar thing he suggested.

Johnstone: discussion was held on the different parts, commission wasn't sure about how they would pay for this. Looked at work that was already going on, especially with Fraser Health and how that's going. Committee identified that giving out air conditioners wasn't the best way to use resources, but need more information to figure out what is the best approach.

Minhas: Said he agreed with what Johnstone summarized about that meeting. Minhas claimed he didn't vote for this motion. Johnstone said that would have to be taken up with the notetaker, he remembered everyone voting for it but was willing to be corrected. [Note: Staff who were at that meeting seemed to think he voted for it too...not sure what the deal is there?]

Staff clarified that this has led to a new motion for more funding to buy air conditioners for seniors and get more staff for distributing

Fontaine said this was ok but he wished the original motion had been supported

McEvoy: Can we make cooling a right for people, and is it possible to create an obligation for property owners to check in on their tenants during heat waves. Also wanted to clarify issue of pets for people, that they can take pets to cooling centers. Known factor in disaster management, people will not leave pets to take care of themselves, so this is important.

Johnstone: Recognizing what city staff has already done, want to move forward in increasing this work. Would like to have conversation about what resources are needed to also manage long term climate concerns so that short term needs aren't at the cost of long term goals

Carried no opposition

July 10 2023 ([Item 4.1](#))

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with the recommendations to approve and proceed with the 2023 accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the one-time budget request of \$268,000 funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund; and to seek Council approval to align the 2023 accelerated Heat Plan response workplan with the BC Hydro portable air conditioner program.

- *Recommendation:
THAT Council approve the accelerated Heat Plan response workplan and the \$268,000 one-time budget increase to be funded from the Climate levy, collected from electric utility bills, in the Climate Action Reserve Fund; and*

THAT Council direct staff to implement Scenario 3 – Align the City's accelerated heat response workplan with BC Hydro's program.

Campbell: cooling spaces should accommodate pets, want heat plan to move forward as quickly as possible

Fontaine: Concern that people being accepted into city's program to have air conditioners paid for will not have an offset to additional utility costs. Staff confirmed covering utility costs is not on the table right now, but that they are going to talk to BC hydro about the program they are putting in over the next three years to get a better idea what their portable air conditioner program is going to cover. Fontaine said worried that people will say no to the air conditioner if they know they can't afford the utility bill of using it. Fontaine asked staff about particularities of how province is communicating with New West about the BC Hydro Air Conditioner program. Fontaine asked about if people will have to get doctors notes to qualify for air conditioners, Staff said at a city level no, that people who are vulnerable will be identified through local non profits who are already working with them like the Seniors Services Society and Home Health, who already have identified a lot of vulnerable people who need air conditioners. City confirms access will probably be faster than through BC Hydro.

Nakagawa: Supports recommendation of report to do both, feels report looks good. Also stated need to prevent air conditioner bans by landlords. Stated need for neighbours and building managers to also support vulnerable tenants.

Henderson: Likes plan, acknowledges this has been in development since 2021. Likes option 3 to allow city to target vulnerable populations before BC Hydro Plan comes in.

Johnstone: States he feels city staff is doing good work, and community is working well together. Identified New West as a high risk community, so its good to go beyond what province is doing.



Fontaine: Does not feel motion goes far enough, but states he will support it because he feels it is better than nothing.

Carried unanimously.

September 11 2023 ([Item 5.2](#))

To seek Council direction to forward service enhancement requests required to deliver an accelerated climate action workplan, for the 2024 and 2025 Operating budget deliberation. The cost of the service enhancements will be offset by revenue collected through the Climate Action Levy.

- *Recommendation:*
THAT Council direct staff to forward the service enhancement requests, as outlined in Attachment 1 of this report, for the 2024 and 2025 Operating budget deliberation. These service enhancements would be offset by Climate Action revenues.

THAT Council direct staff to pursue steps required to use Climate Action Levy to offset Climate Action Team operating costs.

Fontaine pulls report from consent agenda, says he has an issue with the amount of money it would cost to hire staff (~600,000 per year) to run some of these heat protection programs, including building retrofitting. Feels this should be part of the budget meetings in the fall. [Clarifying note: Programs are both for heat protection/cooling initiatives, and climate initiatives like lowering city emissions]

Johnstone clarifies that this motion is to include these considerations in the budget meetings in the fall, not to approve the positions right now.

Campbell states support for hiring of full time staff for these issues rather than continuing with contract workers, feels projects need full time staff to be accomplished properly.

Johnstone states support for including this in budget discussion, stated need to make functional changes to how city works to be able to make climate targets and achieve goals set by city (including cooling programs).

Fontaine says he wants it to be clearer how these staff will be accomplishing these goals and that should have been in the report.

Johnstone highlights that this was outlined in the report before this one, agrees there could be an issue with not having directed specific people to specific tasks, and that this could be ongoing work.

Motion carried with Fontaine and Minhas opposed.

Henderson and Nakagawa's Cooling Motion

August 28, 2023 - ([Item 8.1a](#))

Cooling bylaw that would require landlords to keep at least one room below 26 degrees celsius. "that requires rental units to have cooling equipment, or passive means, that prevents at least one room of the unit from exceeding the standard recommendation of 26 C (79 F);

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the City write a letter to the Minister of Housing to request clarification and confirmation that these upgrades would not trigger legal renovations or the Above Guideline Rent Increase permissible by the Province.

Nakagawa explains motion initially was brought forward by cities to ask province to put these laws in place but they have not, so now cities need to do something. Highlighted that tenants fundamentally have the right to livable housing. Discussed how giving people air conditioners doesn't work because they might not be functional in space or landlords can ban air conditioners. Highlight that different options can be used to achieve cooling and it would be the landlords responsibility to figure out how to do so. Also highlighted cannot just be a cool room in the building as some renters can't leave their units easily.

Henderson repeated people deserve livable housing, and feels this is about equity for renters. Highlighted importance of keeping seniors cool at night. Stated cities already regulate heating so should regulate cooling as well. Stated landlords should be responsible for figuring out these costs as they are running a business, and this is a business expense. Included recommendations from NTWU to make sure that doing things like installing heat pumps could not trigger renovations.

Fontaine sent amendment suggesting province provide direct or indirect incentives to landlords to support retrofitting buildings. Also included that the estimated costs to landlords of implementing this bylaw and being required to cool their buildings be determined and brought to council. Also included that bc tenants organizations and the landlord association of bc be consulted before implementing any pilot project. Motivation: Thinks council should think of unintended consequences, and that there should be a 360 consultation to make sure that they hear from everyone, including landlords. Also had question to fire department, concerns about over usage of air conditioners in older buildings and what the electrical fire risk is. Fire department said breakers should trip if system gets overloaded, and they were looking into retrofitting people's oven sockets so you could swap an air conditioner instead when needed to take the electrical load of the oven out of the grid (still looking into this). Stated electrician has to check load on system as part of the process of retrofitting buildings. Fontaine expressed



concern about this “all being on landlords” and that landlords will pass on costs to renters when renters move out and new people move in, and the rent goes up. Also highlighted that thought they should check with the province first to see if bylaw could trigger renovations.

Campbell did not support amendment, felt original motion centered tenants, and that this is the important part of the motion, adding things about landlords takes it off track.

McEvoy pointed out that the province has already said that people can put in air conditioners unless it's specifically banned in their tenancy agreement, so this bylaw would only be impacting buildings where air conditioners have been banned, and that sometimes they are banned for aesthetic reasons rather than practical ones.

Henderson reiterated centering tenants. Pointed out retrofitting programs already exist, and this would also impact construction of new buildings. Cited this motion as a feasibility study of what it would take to put this bylaw in place. Stated that building needs are so different that it wouldn't be helpful to figure out variations in cost because it would be wildly different for every building. Didn't support amendments centering landlords, wanted to keep focus on tenants. Fontaine said this was about knowing how much things cost and having the full information. Concerned that landlords would say “this is too expensive I'm done being a landlord”. Did not feel existing retrofitting programs would cover cost of these kinds of upgrades.

Amendment defeated, Fontaine and Minhas for, Henderson, McEvoy, Nakagawa, Campbell opposed.

Campbell highlighted importance of speed to try and get this done for next summer. Wanted to also bring this forward to lower mainland government association to get province to put in cooling protections, want to push it forward to province repeatedly.

Fontaine suggested another amendment, saying that staff doesn't explore this bylaw until they've confirmed with the province it wouldn't trigger renovations.

Nakagawa: If the province says it would trigger renovations then we would then have to find a way to work around that, it's not a project we would drop, so the work staff will do needs to be done no matter what.

Fontaine: Doesn't think that the bylaw should go through if it could trigger renovations, doesn't believe there could be a work around for that.

Amendment defeated, Fontaine and Minhas for, Henderson, McEvoy, Nakagawa, Campbell opposed.

Fontaine: Will support the motion, but does not think it is a good motion without the amendments he suggested.

McEvoy: Actually short timeline to work on this based on how provincial government works, so want to submit the least complicated version of this motion.

Johnstone: New West has been a leader in protecting renters when RTB does not. Providing incentives for landlords to provide cooling has taken us as far as it can. People who own housing and earn money from it, have a responsibility to make that housing safe.

Motion carried, no opposition.

July 8 2024 - (Item 6.14)

Discussion around cooling work the city has been doing, and to discuss further developing a cooling policy for rental units

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on work staff has undertaken to help the public meet their cooling needs during extreme heat events, and to seek Council direction regarding the motion to develop a cooling policy for rental units.

- *Recommendation:*
 1. **THAT** Council direct staff to advance the Vulnerable Building Stock Assessment, and bring forward to Council recommendations that arise from that work, related to cooling existing residential buildings; and
 2. **THAT** Council direct staff to write a letter to the Ministry overseeing the Existing Building Renewal Strategy advocating that this work be prioritized, and that senior government funding sources be identified to support rapid implementation of new cooling requirements, in light of the related impacts of heat waves and wildfire smoke on vulnerable residents.

Introduced by Nakagawa. Originally has two recommendations regarding staff being directed to advance assessments and reports on the subject for both the council and the provincial government. Nakagawa adds a third recommendation on staff bring forward a strategy for creating a bylaw. Focusing on older buildings as de facto affordable housing, but requires solutions.

Fontaine supports the two original staff recommendations but is in opposition to the added recommendation to avoid overextending staff. Sees the volatility of provincial politics (imminent election) being a reason not to do the third recommendation as the province might do this instead of the municipality.

Campbell speaks in support of all three recommendations, noting they cannot wait.

Fontaine proposes an amendment that the third recommendation must wait for a dialogue with the province. Amendment fails with Nakagawa, Campbell, and Johnstone in opposition, Fontaine and Minhas in favour.

Fontaine then puts forward a motion to sever.

The recommendations are then voted on 1 by 1. *First two original ones are unanimous. Last one has Fontaine and Minhas opposed.*

January 13 2025 – ([Item 4.5](#))

Very brief follow up on July 8th report

Nakagawa introduces this. Henderson thanks her and thanks staff for their work.

Fontaine and Johnstone are also pleased that this is making progress.

Carried unanimously.

May 12 2025 - ([Item 4.2](#))

Cooling Legislation to prevent landlords from banning the use of air conditioners.

This report: 1) presents bylaw amendments necessary to implement a requirement to allow cooling equipment in existing rental buildings, for Council's consideration of first, second, and third readings; and 2) seeks Council endorsement for including the resource enhancement necessary to implement this and other tenant-related enforcement and life-safety work, in the 2026 Budget process for Council's consideration.

- *Recommendation*

1. *THAT City of New Westminster Business Regulations and Licensing (Rental Units) Bylaw No. 6926, 2004, Amendment Bylaw No. 8525, 2025, City of New Westminster Bylaw Notice Enforcement Bylaw No. 7318, 2009, Amendment Bylaw No. 8526, 2025, and City of New Westminster Municipal Ticket Information Bylaw No. 8077, 2019, Amendment Bylaw No. 8527, 2025 each be given first, second, and third readings.*
2. *THAT an operating budget enhancement for three regular full-time positions to support tenant-related enforcement, support and life-safety work be included for consideration as part of the 2026 Budget process.*

Nakagawa introduces this, framing it as a human rights issue regarding the safety of person. Support based in being proactive in defending tenants who don't know they can ask things of the city.

Henderson and Nakagawa ensure that the planning team working on this see it as a larger part of working with tenants



Fontaine frames himself in support, highlighting his previous proposal for the city to fund low-income residents in buying an air conditioner and paying power bills (\$500x2? Around 2:50 in the video). He highlights that the council voted against this plan. He then argues that property taxes have been raised too high recently and that the motion's recommendation that the city add three full-time positions for tenant-related enforcement should only be approved if it can be at the reduction of other city staff positions.

Johnstone, Nakagawa and Campbell speak in opposition to Fontaine's logic.

Fontaine severs the motion, so the part on cooling specifically is unanimous with Fontaine and Minhas voting against the creation of the three full time staff positions.

June 23 2025 ([Item 3.1](#))

No public comments

Fontaine amends the motion with Minhas seconding to ask staff to investigate if they can expand the recommendation that the province be mandated to put air conditioning in school portables.

Nakagawa highlights that, while this is nice in theory, it is a strange shoehorn when the motion is about impeding landlords from banning air conditioning, so forcing air conditioning in other situations is different. Suggests a letter to the province.

Johnston and Campbell agree and Henderson highlights that while the original bylaw was about mandating a cool room, that didn't make progress so it's weird to change.

Amendment and motion pass unanimously.

March 30 2026 ([Item 4.5](#))

Next steps on cooling bylaw plan

Nakagawa introduces it again. Here's where we are adding the one cool room as a responsibility of the landlord. Also highlighted is staffing of the renters office. Henderson and Johnston speak in unison.

No further discussion, passes unanimously.

April 27 2026 ([Item 4.5](#))

Procedural concerns around cooling bylaw

Nakagawa once again introduces this. Asks staff to do assessment on Medical Health Officer's recommendations. Doesn't want to slow anything down and wants to keep the momentum going.

Fontaine agrees with Nakagawa, highlights the MHO recommendation that the bylaw includes the afternoon and starts in April instead of May. He instructs staff to look into this and staff says this would be something for 2027 at the earliest.

February 23 2026 - ([Item 4.6](#))

To seek endorsement to launch a City-funded cooling assessment pilot program within the Rental Apartment Retrofit Accelerator (RARA) program for up to ten eligible rental buildings over a one year pilot as part of pathway one of the Vulnerable Buildings Assessment (VBA) project.

Passed on consent agenda with no discussion.

Renter Protections and Services

May 29 2023 - ([Item 5.3](#))

Renewing Rent Bank Funding

Fontaine highlighted that he supports rent banks but thinks they should be paid for by the province rather than the city. Fontaine states that he thinks municipalities should be funding programs like May Day and not rent banks, and says he doesn't support the city using limited property tax dollars for this program.

The city currently provides 35,000 dollars of funding to this program.

City staff pointed out that the province does fund the rent bank, and that the city pays a small portion of the funding. Province currently provides 85,000 dollars of funding.

Fontaine then identified that the rent bank also offers referrals and supports to connect to other support services in the community, stated he felt this was a huge scope and that other non-profits in the community already offer this. Staff identified this was because when people apply and don't qualify for a loan, the staff at the rent bank try and find other ways of them offsetting costs to avoid homelessness. Staff stated these services are essential, recognizing not everyone who applies will get a loan, but everyone who applies will be provided with some level of assistance.



McEvoy stated that he agrees that higher levels of government do need to step in. Made an argument that rent banks are part of the housing first philosophy, so it saves the municipality money long term to keep people from becoming homeless. Highlighted the precarity that most renters are in, people are often one cheque away from being homeless, so rent banks are really helpful as a safety net for these folks when a catastrophe happens.

Johnstone is in support of continuing to fund, characterized as uploading rather than downloading, that the city shamed the province into funding the program by taking it on first at a municipal level. Highlighted how successful it was and that other cities have followed suit. Supports city to continue to take a role in the project.

Funding approval carried.

Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program

July 8 2024 - ([Item 8.1e](#))

This is brought forward by Campbell who is not running again.

Motion for council to write a letter to the province asking for an expansion/redesign of the Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters program, so that seniors' rents are 30% of their income and rent ceilings are adjusted

Fontaine asks if they can just call the Premier, or if anyone has done any advocacy for this program in advance to writing a letter, focusing on the Mayor.

Unanimous approval.

September 29 2025 - ([Item 6.1](#))

Funding for SHINE program, prevention of homelessness for seniors, motion put forward by Henderson

Deferred to the following meeting

October 6 2025 - ([Item 4.6](#))

Continuing SHINE program funding discussion from Henderson's motion

Henderson highlights the success of the program already, calls for continued support. Campbell speaks in approval. The motion is really just about writing a letter of support and advocating for the program.



Appendix A.

Keywords used to identify council meetings:

Renter	Home
Rental	Homeless
Tenant	Homelessness
Rent	Pest
Landlord	Cooling
Housing	Temperature
Density	Livable
Landowner	Relocation
Affordable (as in affordable housing)	Eviction
Affordability	Demoviction
Market (as in market housing)	Renoviction
Shelter	