



# POLICIES AND GUIDELINES FOR THE UPGRADE OF ROOMS DESIGNATED UNDER THE SINGLE ROOM ACCOMMODATION (SRA) BY-LAW (NO. 8733)

*Adopted by City Council on March 15, 2014*

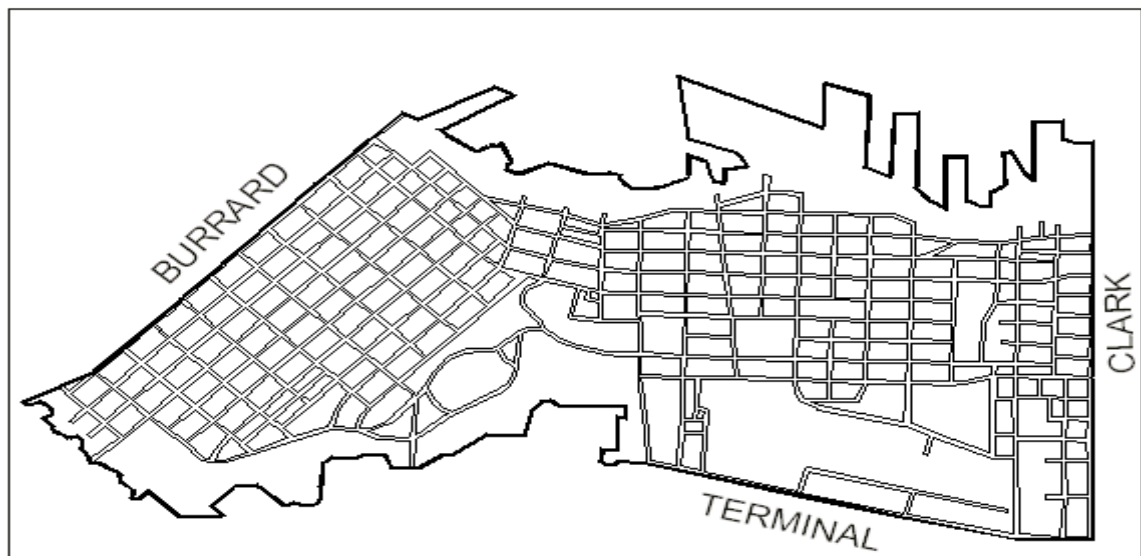
## 1 Intent

The intent of these guidelines is to provide flexibility to improve livability in rooms designated under the SRA By-law, while minimizing unit loss and maintaining affordability. This helps achieve the City's housing objectives of ending homelessness and improving the existing stock for low-income singles.

## 2 Application and Intent

These policies and guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the SRA By-law (No. 8733) that applies to Vancouver's downtown core - the area bounded on the north by Burrard Inlet, on the west by Burrard Street, on the south by False Creek and on the east by Clark Drive as shown in Figure 1 below. That the By-law applies to the downtown core is recommended for two reasons: first, the City maintains an inventory of the SRA stock in this area (the biannual Survey of Low-Income Housing in the Downtown Core done by the Housing Centre); and secondly, the area contains the majority of the city's SRA stock.

**Figure 1: Map of the Downtown Core**



The policies and guidelines for the upgrade of rooms designated under the SRA By-law are applicable to SRA Permit and development permit applications. Applicants should also refer to the Vancouver Building By-law. An SRA Permit must be approved prior to the issuance of a development permit.

SRA permits can either be approved by Council or for the following applications, Council delegates approving authority to the Chief Housing Officer:

- (a) the applicant is a provider of social housing;
- (b) the conversion or demolition consists of upgrading a designated room to add bathroom and cooking facilities;
- (c) the designated room will be used as social housing after the conversion or demolition; and
- (d) the upgraded designated room is secured as social housing through a Housing Agreement

As a condition of Development Permit for an upgraded SRA room, the registered owner shall execute a Housing Agreement which must be registered against the title of the property prior to issuance of the Development Permit to secure rents.

An upgraded SRA room includes the addition of a private bathroom and cooking facilities to an existing room intended for single occupancy. Upgraded SRA rooms should not be larger than 250 square feet and will continue to be designated under the SRA By-law.

In considering applications, Council or the Chief Housing Officer will consider the existing SRO rents, as well as the number of new social housing units that have been built in the area.

### 3 General Design Considerations

An application for an upgraded SRA room is a conditional use and requires approval by the Director of Planning or Development Permit Board. In the consideration to allow this use, livability and affordability will be primary goals. These policies and guidelines delineate a set of principles for livability, which include light and ventilation, privacy, amenity space, as well as affordability.

#### 3.1 Light and Ventilation

Natural day light and well ventilated spaces are essential to occupant comfort and well-being. The provision of good day lighting and proper ventilation is an especially important design consideration due to the small size of designated SRA rooms. Maximum exposure to daylight and ventilation and fresh air for upgraded SRA rooms is encouraged.

#### 3.2 Noise

Improved sound separation between existing rooms to improve livability is encouraged.

### 4 Guidelines Pertaining to Regulations

#### 4.1 Internal Design and Facilities

##### 4.1.1 Living/Sleeping Space

Due to small room size, the principal living area will likely also serve as the main sleeping area. As a result, consideration should be given to ensure the thoughtful design of this area so that it may accommodate a multitude of different functions.

- (a) The sleeping area may be located in a wall recess away from the main living area, but the space must remain contiguous with the main living area and not be enclosed.
- (b) A sleeping area located in the main living area must include built-in hide-a-beds and fold-down kitchen tables that consider day and night uses of the space.

#### 4.1.2 Bathroom

Consideration should be given to the overall design of the unit with regard to privacy, sight lines and the direction of the door swing.

- (a) A complete bathroom must be provided which is equipped with a wash-basin, toilet, and a shower and/or bath.
- (b) Bathrooms must be physically separated from the remainder of the room by partitions and a door to ensure privacy and to isolate noise and odours.

#### 4.1.3 Cooking Facilities

The ability to cook is an essential component of livability. Each upgraded SRA room must include cooking facilities such as a sink, ample counter space for food preparation, a cook top and a modestly-sized refrigerator with freezer.

- (a) The fridge and freezer combination must be a minimum 12 cubic foot unit with a footprint of 24" x 24" and bulk food storage options.

### 4.2 Flexibility for Future Unit Reconfiguration

Considerations should be given to the consolidation of building services (i.e., electrical, plumbing, etc.) in order to allow the potential combining of upgraded rooms (conversion to one or two bedrooms) to address future housing need in the area.

### 4.3 Storage, Outdoor and Amenity Space

#### 4.3.1 In Suite Storage Space

Considerations should be given to storage space for upgraded SRA rooms, with preference for in-suite open and closed shelving units in addition to the consideration of accessible and secure storage lockers located outside of the unit.

#### 4.3.2 Amenity Space

Upgraded SRA rooms should include amenity space throughout the building includes things such as lounge space, common meeting rooms, etc.

## 5 Affordability

Targets for affordability will be considered for permit approval. Targets for affordability are as follows:

- (a) 1/3 at the shelter component of income assistance (currently \$375).
- (b) 1/3 at no more than the average SRO rent (as defined by the biennial Survey of Low-Income Housing - currently \$450).
- (c) 1/3 above average SRO rents.

As a condition of the SRA permit, Council or the Chief Housing Officer may require a housing agreement to secure rents.