

Policy

Rental Development Relief Program

Time-limited Program effective February 2, 2026, through December 15, 2027

Approved by Council December 10, 2025



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1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Supporting Development Viability

In 2024, Staff began developing strategies to support development viability amid increasingly challenging market conditions. These factors include rising construction costs, limited labour availability, constrained access to financing, trade and economic instability, and slower immigration growth. Through collaboration with industry partners, Staff identified practical and responsive solutions that were approved by Council on June 17, 2025. The Rental Housing Relief Program is part of these ongoing strategies to support development viability.

Need for Rental Housing

Vancouver continues to face a tight rental market, with low vacancy rates that have averaged just one percent over the past 35 years, and market rents that far exceed what an average household income can afford. These trends reflect a persistent shortage of rental housing, driven by decades of limited new construction and demand from a population increasingly priced out of home ownership. Sustaining a robust pipeline of new rental housing is essential to address this longstanding shortfall and meet the needs of households seeking suitable and affordable homes.

Progress Towards Housing Vancouver and Provincial Targets

On September 26, 2023, the Province issued a Housing Targets Order to the City of Vancouver, which includes a minimum 28,900 net new units to be completed within a five-year period (2023-2028). As part of the Order, the Province established guidance that called for 72 per cent of the targeted units to be rental (primary and secondary rental combined) of which 38 per cent are to rent at or below market rents. Given that the Provincial targets measure completions, staff have introduced approaches to accelerate the permitting and construction of new housing.

On June 25, 2024, Council approved updated 10-year housing targets under the Housing Vancouver Strategy for a total 83,000 net new approved housing units to meet population growth, existing housing needs, and new Provincial requirements. Over 40 per cent (35,500) of the total target is for new purpose-built rental housing, including 5,500 below-market rental units.

2 INTENT

To support the continued delivery of urgently needed below-market rental housing, this two-year, time-limited, relief program aims to improve the viability of eligible participating mid- and high-rise rental projects through permanently reduced affordability requirements and opportunities for modest additional height and density. This program is specifically intended to support proposed projects with below-market rental unit requirements that are currently facing financial challenges which put them at risk of not proceeding to construction.

3 ELIGIBILITY

Eligible projects must meet all of the following parameters:

- (a) The development is subject to a community plan and/or city-wide policy which has a below-market rental requirement, including the Moderate Income Rental Housing Pilot Program (MIRHPP)*.
- (b) The development may be permitted at a mid-rise or high-rise scale (nine storeys or higher) per the applicable community plan and/or city-wide policy.
- (c) The development is seeking, or has an approved, rezoning to a CD-1.
- (d) The subject site contains fewer than 10 existing primary purpose-built rental units.
- (e) The development has yet to obtain an issued building permit (BP Stage 1), *except projects that obtain an issued building permit (BP Stage 1) between December 15, 2025 to March 20, 2026 will be considered.*
- (f) The subject site is smaller than 8,000 m² (1.98 acres).

**Projects that are proposing below market rental units as part of a CAC negotiation are not eligible under this Program.*

4 QUALIFICATIONS

In addition to meeting the eligibility parameters outlined in Section 3 above, applicants must meet both of the following deadlines:

- Obtain Council approval of new or amended housing agreement terms and/or Council approval in principle of a new or amended CD-1 by-law, as applicable, by December 15, 2027; and
- Obtain a Stage 1 Building Permit within 24 months of Council approval.

Please see Section 5 for more details about relaxations and Section 6 for more details about the application process.

5 RELAXATIONS AND INCENTIVES

5.1 Below Market Rental Rate Adjustments

Maximum starting rents and rents upon turnover for the below market rental units may be increased from rates at least 20 per cent below the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) city-wide average rents by unit type, to rates equal to the city-wide average rents by unit type for the previous calendar year, as published in the CMHC’s annual Rental Market Report, provided the timelines set out in Section 4 above are met. Below-market rental affordability requirements will not be relaxed for units allocated to returning tenants exercising their right of first refusal under the [Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy](#).

Failure to meet the timeline to advance to construction per Section 4 will result in the affordability adjustments made under this program being voided. Affordability requirements will revert back to the original below-market rental policy requirements

5.2 Development Cost Levy (DCL) Waiver

Projects meeting the affordability requirements under this Program will be eligible for a Class A waiver of City-wide and Area specific DCLs for the residential floor area.

5.3 Height, Density, and Use Relaxations

Increases to maximum building height and density and adjusted use requirements may be considered as follows:

Table 1: Height, Density, and Use Relaxations

Area	Applicable sub-areas	Additional height, density, and other relaxation ¹
Broadway Plan	“Centres” as outlined in the Broadway Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Building height should not exceed the maximum building height stated in the Plan. Supportable density will be determined based on urban design performance and the Plan’s built form policies.²
	“Centres” as outlined in the Broadway Plan, except for Uptown/Cambie North Areas A and C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Where the Plan policies require a minimum of <u>three levels</u> of non-residential uses (i.e. job space) above the ground floor, relaxations to the minimum non-residential space requirements will be considered. A minimum of <u>one level</u> of non-residential space above the ground floor should still be provided, or <u>no net loss</u>

Area	Applicable sub-areas	Additional height, density, and other relaxation ¹
	<p>“Residential Areas” as outlined in the Broadway Plan</p>	<p>of existing commercial space on site, whichever is greater.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building height should not exceed the maximum building height stated in the Plan. • Generally, additional density should not exceed 0.5 FSR. • Supportable density will be determined based on urban design performance and the Plan’s built form policies.² • In some cases, additional density greater than 0.5 FSR may be considered, but this will typically be reserved for smaller (down to 30 m [99 ft.] frontage) or irregular sites where the Plan’s envisioned built form outcomes can still be achieved with increased density.³
Community plan areas, outside Broadway Plan	TOA – Tier 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building height should not exceed a maximum of 26 storeys • Generally, density should not exceed 7.0 FSR based on urban design performance.² • Density above 7.0 FSR will typically be reserved for small (down to 30 m [99 ft.] frontage) or irregular sites.³
	TOA – Tier 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building height should not exceed a maximum of 15 storeys.⁴ • Supportable density will be determined based on urban design performance.²

Notes:

1. Applications proposing relaxations that exceed the parameters set out in this table will not be considered by this program and will be processed through a non-compliant rezoning application.
2. See the following links to urban design guidelines used to respond to site-specific conditions:
 - [City-wide Design and Development Guidelines](#)
 - [Broadway Plan](#) – Chapter 11: Built Form and Site Design (only applicable to developments in the Broadway Plan area)
 - [Solar Access Guidelines](#)
 - [Residential Tower Floor Plates Bulletin](#)

6 APPLICATION PROCESS

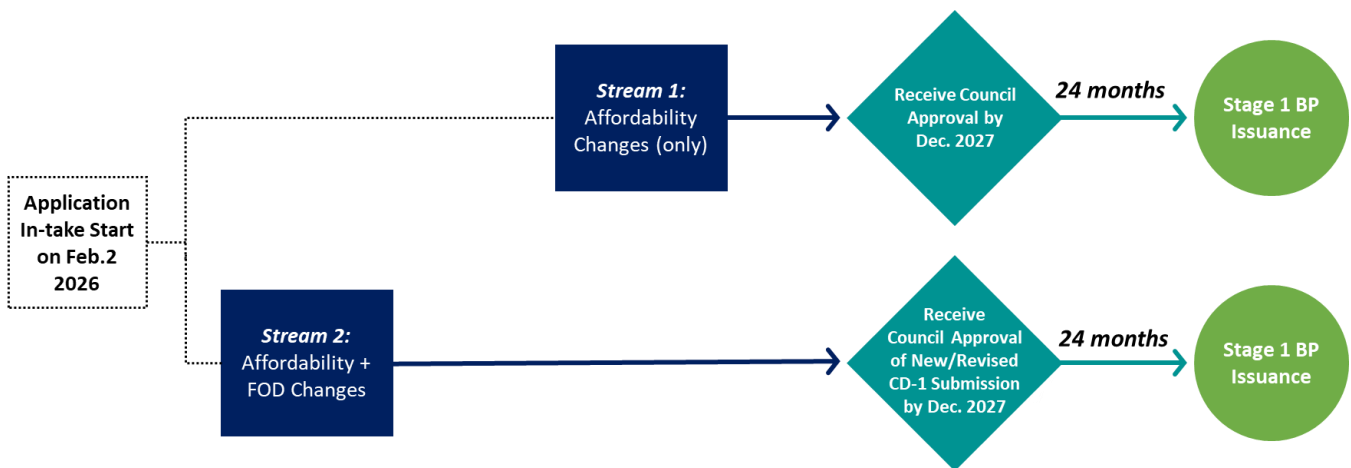
6.1 Application Intake – Two Streams

Application intake will begin on February 2, 2026 and consist of two processing streams:

Stream 1: Involves applications requesting adjustments to affordability requirements only. This expedited stream will require conditions approved by Council and registered in Housing Agreements. These applications do not require further form of development or pro forma review.

Stream 2: Involves applications requesting changes to the form of development (e.g., additional height and density) or uses as outlined in 5.3. Applications under this stream may also request adjustments to affordability levels. These applications will not require further pro forma review, but will undergo a more detailed review process, which may include revisions or resubmission of CD-1 rezoning applications, depending on the proposed scale of changes to the form of development.

Diagram: Application Intake Streams



6.2 Submission Requirements

6.2.1 Existing rezoning applications:

6.2.1.1 Stream 1:

- A complete Rental Development Relief Program application form/checklist signed by the applicant acknowledging program eligibility parameters and timelines.

6.2.1.2 Stream 2:

- A complete Rental Development Relief Program application form/checklist signed by the applicant acknowledging program eligibility parameters and timelines.
- Confirm application resubmission requirements with Rezoning staff and provide a complete resubmission at the time of application intake.
- Confirm Rezoning Revision fee with Rezoning staff.

6.2.2 New rezoning applications (Stream 1 or 2)*

- A complete Rental Development Relief Program application form/checklist signed by the applicant acknowledging program eligibility parameters and timelines.
- Submission of all requirements per CD-1 Rezoning Guide.
- Confirm New CD-1 fee with Rezoning staff.

**Applicants must confirm that program approval and construction deadlines will be met as part of the application submission process*

7 CAC EXEMPTION

Applications for rezoning under this Policy may be exempt from payments and/or provision of amenities pursuant to the City's Community Amenity Contributions Policy for Rezoning. However, this Policy does not pre-empt Council decisions on potential exemptions from future Financing Growth tools, including the upcoming Amenity Cost Charge (ACC) By-law. There will be no proforma review if all the criteria are met in Section 4.