

OPEN LETTER From HousingReset ([HousingReset.ca](https://housingreset.ca))

February 25, 2026

To: City of Vancouver Mayor Sim and Councillors

Re: City of Vancouver Official Development Plan (ODP)

2026-02-03 Report: <https://council.vancouver.ca/20260203/documents/rr1.pdf>

The undersigned are Metro Vancouver region-based urbanists, urban planners, architects, and UBC/SFU academics, most with decades of experience, some with a background in development, who have joined together to broaden the search for enduring housing solutions. Previous letters can be found at [HousingReset.ca](https://housingreset.ca).

Since we recognize the importance of citywide and regional planning, we are writing to voice a few of our major concerns and strong **opposition** to the City of Vancouver Official Development Plan (ODP) as proposed. We urge Council to refer this back to staff for reconsideration through a meaningful public participatory process, before adoption.

The ODP is based on the very flawed Vancouver Plan Urban Growth Strategy that was approved in 2022 by the previous council without meaningful public participation. It continues to rely on the same flawed principles of primarily promoting more supply entitlements that inflate land values, and displace thousands of residents, without addressing the fundamental lack of affordable housing. This is doing more harm than good for the public interest.

The following outlines a few of our many concerns.

1. Questionable Population and Unit Projection Methodology

One of the main issues is that there has been a major shift of how the Vancouver ODP and Regional Context Statement calculate population and unit growth projections.

Typically, the regional growth projections for Vancouver are used to determine the number of units required to meet that growth over a given period in the ODP, in this case to 2050. Metro Vancouver is responsible for regional projections and BC Stats does both provincial and regional projections based on data from StatsCan Census and federal immigration estimates, among other data sources. Metro Vancouver works with both the province and member municipalities in determining regional and municipal projections. For example see: <https://metrovancover.org/boards/RegionalPlanning/RPL-2025-09-11-OT.pdf>

However, it is unclear why **a real estate firm's advice, Rennie**, is included in the ODP report as Appendix G. **This is highly unusual**. These real-estate firm projections are adopted as the City's official projections that are substantially higher than the regional projections for the City of Vancouver.

Rather than a traditional approach of using regional population as allocated to the City, population additions have been determined by the capacity of the existing and new housing stock to accommodate people.

Basically, build it and they will come. So the tail is wagging the dog, with the development pipeline dictating the expected population growth. This pipeline of already approved projects, and not considering much of the high zoned capacity, does not adjust for the reduction in immigration and the severe economic downturn cycle with ballooning existing supply of new units that are not being absorbed.

There is a great deal of uncertainty related to population projections at present given that they are strongly influenced by immigration levels and intra- and inter provincial migration. The ODP does not address how, for example, a significant downward shift in population growth would impact Plan content. Current regional projections show a decrease of population for 2026 before resuming to typical average growth of about 1% per year. But again, it is highly uncertain how long this economic growth correction will last.

2. Excessive Development Without Affordability

The Rennie growth analysis as shown in Appendix G of the Council report, shows that while just using the development already approved and in the pipeline, the whole growth projected to 2050 could be built out by 2034.

This would suggest that no additional development is needed to be approved beyond what is already in the pipeline, making the further development in the ODP unnecessary. However, most of what is in the development pipeline is small expensive units in large towers, not what is actually needed.

The City's needs assessment clarifies that the largest needs are for housing that is affordable to average and low wage worker incomes, especially larger units for families, but what is planned will not meet these needs. The ODP should address planning mechanisms to actually deliver housing that is economically accessible to mid and lower-income households in our City.

Instead, the City is creating far over capacity of market development beyond what is required for realistic population growth. This ODP would result in massive land inflation, speculation, and demolition of more existing affordable housing than it would build, displacing thousands of people.

3. Inadequate Infrastructure, Parks, Recreation, Schools and Amenities

The ODP includes almost no increased infrastructure, parks, recreation, schools and amenities for the massive increase in projected population growth, or any additional funding resources to support it. This will particularly affect many neighbourhoods that are already underserved yet are slated for massive growth under the ODP.

For example, the School Board is being forced by the Province to reduce the number of schools in Vancouver and won't plan for population growth until children are actually registered and on wait lists. Even then, as we are seeing with the Olympic Village that has been completed for over 15 years without a school, the province is just not providing the resources to support this growth.

The Park Board is chronically underfunded to meet current needs and there is nothing in this plan for upgrades of existing or proposed future expansion to meet the increased growth.

4. Loss of Participatory Planning, Neighbourhood Context, and Transparent Approvals Process

All of the existing community, neighbourhood and area plans are headed for major revision or elimination altogether. Every area-wide or community plan will be amended to state that the ODP is the guiding policy document, making them effectively irrelevant.

Instead of these community plan directions, they will be replaced with a limited number of housing typologies that are mostly apartments in towers of varying heights and a few areas left over of multiplexes.

Gone will be any of the heritage or character retention zones that incentivized multifamily conversions and infill. Or carefully planned ground oriented family housing that suits a specific local context.

Any rezoning, whether for a single lot or whole neighbourhood area wide, that is consistent with the new ODP will not require a public hearing going forward. Less to no public involvement in the future of their neighbourhood. No consideration of local context or livability. Fortunes made, neighbourhoods ruined.

This is the new world of one-size-fits-all zoning based on a limited choice of basic building form typologies.

Most development will be processed almost exclusively by unaccountable staff, exercising discretion, out of the public eye (and Council's), and with fewer written records. It is even staff discretion as to if there will be a development sign on the property so the surrounding community knows there is an application in process.

Such an approach provides opportunity for mistakes, favouritism, and even corruption.

.5. Excessive Literal Implementation of Provincial Mandates

The City of Vancouver cannot solely blame the BC zoning bills for this one-size-fits-all approach; the Vancouver Plan already promoted this strategy. The City is now implementing the BC zoning bills very literally and even surpassing the minimum requirements of the legislation.

The City could instead be joining other municipalities in requesting a judicial review of the BC jurisdictional overreach, lack of due process or procedural fairness, lack of resources for infrastructure and amenities for the provincial mandates, and the impractical one-size-fits-all approach throughout the province.

The City need not wait on the Province and could instead be taking the lead to properly plan with meaningful community involvement for the future of the city and defending the public interest now.

It is our understanding that the Province is having to be lenient with the previously imposed June 2026 deadline for OCP / ODP adoption so there is no need for Council to rush this through well in advance.

In conclusion, we urge the City to withdraw the Official Development Plan (ODP) and refer it back to staff for reconsideration through a democratic participatory planning process that prioritizes planning for a livable affordable city of neighbourhoods with a truly sustainable future. The Vancouver Official Development Plan should have pervasive public participation that is reflected in this plan's final development, before adoption.

Signed: (In alphabetical order on two pages below)

Larry Beasley, CM, FCIP, Former Co-chief Planner of Vancouver, author Vancouverism

Lance Berelowitz, AA Dipl, RPP, MCIP, Principal, Urban Forum Associates, Planning | Urban Design | Communications

Patrick Condon, Professor Emeritus UBC School of Landscape and Architecture, author Broken City. Former head city planner.

Frank Ducote, Principal, Frank Ducote Urban Design, former Senior Urban Designer, City of Vancouver

Michael Geller, FCIP, RPP, MLAI, Ret Architect AIBC, urban planner, real estate consultant, developer and Adjunct Professor, SFU.

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Signers Continued next page.

Signers Continued:

Sandy James, former City of Vancouver City Planner, Managing Director Walk Metro Vancouver

David Ley, OC, FRSC, PhD, Urban Geographer, Professor Emeritus UBC, author Housing Booms in Gateway Cities

Mike Mangan, Barrister & Solicitor (Ret.), who worked with the real estate industry for many years, authored The Condominium Manual and taught at UBC for 25 years.

Darlene Marzari, first a Social Planner at City of Vancouver, fought the Freeway to save Chinatown/Gastown/ waterfront, City of Vancouver Councillor, BC Minister of Municipal Affairs, and established the Liveable Region Strategic Plan (1990)

Bill McCreery, former registered architect AIBC & AAA, helped create North & South False Creek & thousands of units of developer, public & social housing in BC, Alberta & UK, developed several Vancouver residential projects

Sean McEwen, Retired Architect AIBC, FRAIC. Affordable housing advocate

Graham McGarva, FRAIC, Retired Architect AIBC, M.A.

Elizabeth Murphy, private sector project manager, and senior property development officer, formerly with the City of Vancouver's housing and properties department, BC Housing and BC Buildings Corp

Brian Palmquist, Award winning architect and author, AIBC MRAIC BEP CP LEED AP

Tom Phipps, Retired Senior Planner City of Vancouver (33 years)

Mary Pynenburg MRAIC (Retired) MCIP (Retired) Former Director of Planning City of New Westminster, Former Director of Planning and Development City of Kelowna, former Director of Design / Development CP Hotels

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David Wong, Architect, AIBC; formerly with Engineering & Planning Dept. City of Vancouver

Elvin Wyly, Urban Geographer, Housing Researcher

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