HOUSINGRESET.CA
Advancing affordability through bold policy

Website: Housingreset.ca Email: info@HousingReset.ca

A gathering of Vancouver based urbanists – planners, architects, and academics

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Press Release

Vancouver's Official Development Plan (ODP) can be repealed

Some ask if the ODP can be amended, or repealed and replaced, and the answer is:
YES!

*On August 30, 2026, we publicly released our open letter to all three levels of government on "**New Directions for Prioritizing Middle-Income Secure Affordable Housing**", to rethink how we can achieve true housing affordability through a new planning approach.*

We believe that the Official Development Plan (ODP) needs to be reconsidered, to set new directions for housing affordability. But some wrongly claim this is now impossible because of provincial legislation or legal implications.

Can the City repeal and replace the Vancouver Official Development Plan (ODP)?

Yes,

- *Provincial legislation only requires that the City have an ODP, not that it adopt the current version of the ODP. City council can amend the current ODP, or repeal and replace it, all in coordination with regional planning and the Regional Context Statement.*
- *The Vancouver Charter gives land-use authority to the City and protects the City from being sued over City initiated rezoning, either upzoning or downzoning. The City is not required to compensate an owner for downzoning their property, unless a zoning bylaw restricts the use of land to a public use.*

What about the provincial legislation that requires transit-oriented development (TOD) in the ODP?

- *Most of the main plans in the ODP were initially approved or formulated by the City before the provincial legislation was proposed. In many cases, the City's policies exceeded the provincial density requirements. Examples include, the Vancouver Plan that the ODP is largely based on, as well as the Broadway Plan, Jericho Lands Plan, Cambie Corridor, and Rupert Renfrew Area Plan. Similarly, the City's Villages Plan remains in the ODP and goes beyond the provincial legislation.*
- *However, in response to the provincial legislation, the City upzoned even further, beyond the provincial requirements, when in some areas they could have actually downzoned.*
- *Further, the provincial legislation allows exemptions for infrastructure, geotechnical, heritage, and local neighbourhood context, none of which the City has applied. For example, the Rupert Renfrew Plan area has a huge regional sewer line upgrade requirement before the plan's development is broadly feasible. On those grounds alone the area plan could be amended or reversed.*
- *The City has interpreted the TOD guidelines very literally as circles around transit stations, when in fact the city is built on grids. The circles are not properly planned or based on local context.*
- *The population and unit projections are also not based on transparent or publicly verified data and as such, need to be reconsidered.*

The claim that "the Province made us do it" is not actually correct. The ODP can legitimately be revised or repealed and replaced. Simply put, ***the claims that the city's hands are tied due to provincial legislation, or for legal reasons, are misleading and inaccurate.***

A new ODP could be planned through meaningful public participation in neighbourhood-based community planning that could have a very different outcome and be provincially compliant. Where specific exceptions need to be made, the City can also approach the Province for alternatives as may be required. While we support more development, the fact that there is significant unsold and unrented inventory, and developers going into receivership, it indicates clearly that a new approach is essential.

As it stands, many aspects of the ODP are not based on legitimate planning principles. Anyone can draw circles on a map and call it a plan. This is not the kind of city planning that will result in the long term success or the affordability that the city needs, as proposed in our previous letter suggesting fourteen prioritized directions. We hope these answers give a clearer view of what is possible for the ODP and adds to the public discussion.

Signers next page.

The following people, part of the spontaneous and fluid "Housing Reset" group in Vancouver, are working together to generate and refine the list of ideas from our last letter, and now further clarified in this press release, as a public service to our community:

-***Larry Beasley**, CM, RPP, FCIP – urbanist, teacher, former Vancouver co-director of planning, and author of "Vancouverism" and other books*

-***Lance Berelowitz,** AA Dipl RPP MCIP - Principal Urban Forum Associates*

-***Patrick Condon** – professor emeritus, UBC, and author of "Broken City" and other books*

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

-***Michael Geller**, RPP, FCIP, MLAI – retired architect AIBC*

-***Penny Gurstein**, PhD – professor emeritus, SCARP, and founding director, Housing Research Collaborative, UBC*

-***Scot Hein** – retired architect (Canada/US) and urban designer for Vancouver*

-***Norman Hotson** – Retired Architect AIBC, FRAIC, RCA, Hon PIBC*

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

-***David Ley**, PhD, OC, FRSC – professor emeritus of geography, UBC*

- ***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.*

- ***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 R. McEwen** – retired architect AIBC and affordable housing advocate*

-***Elizabeth Murphy** – project manager, formerly in housing and properties for the City of Vancouver, BC Housing and BC Buildings Corp*

-***Brian Palmquist**, MRAIC BEP CP LEED AP – architect AIBC, author of "City Conversations" blog and "An Architect's Guide to Construction"*

-***Robert Renger**, BES, MCP – planner and retired senior development planner for Burnaby*

-***Sara Stevens**, PhD – Associate Professor UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture, Chair of Urban Design, Co-founder of Architects Against Housing Alienation*

-***Erick Villagomez** – urban designer, lecturer, UBC SCARP, and Editor-in-Chief of Spacing Vancouver*

-***Arny Wise**, RPP, MCIP – retired city planner*

-***Elvin Wyly**, PhD – professor of urban geography, UBC*

***-Andy Yan**, FCIP, RPP, GISP – director of City Program and professor, Urban Studies, SFU*