



BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

Date: September 14, 2018

Prepared For: Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister

Title: Social Housing Segregated Entrances

Issue: Separating entrances for occupants of market units and tenants of the social housing units has recently been highlighted in the media. Some community groups see this as a form of income segregation, while others refer to pragmatic considerations.

Briefing: Minister's Council on September 27, 2018

SUMMARY:

- **The Province does not have a policy regarding separate access in buildings it develops or finances.**
- **Media has periodically highlighted a number of privately developed examples in Vancouver that have not been funded by the Province.**
- **The City of Vancouver approves development proposals on a case-by-case basis, including consideration of separate entrances and other amenities in buildings with a mix of market and non-market housing.**

BACKGROUND:

Major development proposals in Vancouver (City) are submitted to the City for review. In exchange for re-zoning or high density housing proposals, the City may require a certain amount of space be dedicated to below-market rental or social housing. In the past, the City has approved separated entrances for social housing, such as in the Woodward's Building. The use of separate entrances is determined by a number of environmental and operational factors that are a normal part of the building design concept such as lot size and land use. In many cases, multiple entrances are needed for residents' safety and convenience and to mitigate increasing construction costs due to large grade or elevation changes in lots.

Operationally, many multi-entrance buildings are run by separate legal entities. To effectively serve the needs of their client group, a non-profit organization operating an affordable housing component within a market development may need more up-front support in a lobby than a strata organization operating the market component. Sharing a large lobby with costly finishing and services would mean additional shared costs for the non-profit operator, who may have other priorities such as affordability and security systems.

Typically, mixed-use buildings combine social housing with strata properties. Stratas operate on a democratic basis with each residential unit/lot typically getting one vote on decisions like expenditures, monthly strata fees and bylaws; common expenses for running the building and any amenities are shared among all the strata unit owners. The separation of entrances and other amenities can facilitate the independent operation of the two components and decisions appropriate for the two groups. The below market portion is subdivided from the market component of the building with title transferred to the City as an "air space parcel".

The City of Vancouver has been assessing development applications it receives on an individual basis. The City states it takes into consideration the long-term management of the social housing units by independent non-profit housing operators, as well as listens to feedback on preferences from social housing tenants.



Although the City of Vancouver does not track the number of multi-use buildings with separate entrances, many examples of buildings with separate entrances exist in Vancouver as well as other cities like Seattle, London, and New York. The State of New York Inclusionary Housing Program (the State) allows subsidies to developers if they provide affordable housing either in the same building or in proximity off-site. The State has banned the so-called “poor doors” since 2015 after public sentiment, as well as the mayor of New York, opposed subsidizing developments with separate entrances. In order to avoid the requirement for shared common entrances, some developments subsequently proposed separate buildings for the market and below market units.

While not a new issue, media periodically run stories about separate entrances for social housing in Vancouver. Stories in The Globe and Mail and CBC have recently focussed on a private 30-story development in the West End of Vancouver that planned for separate entrances and playgrounds. After community consultation, opposition to separate playgrounds resulted in changes to the design plan to integrate this amenity into one larger play space, but the entries remained separated.

DISCUSSION:

The Province and BC Housing do not support the requirement for separate access for occupants in mixed use buildings it develops or funds. However, when uses are not compatible within a mixed use commercial/residential building, separate entrances may be necessary (i.e. housing above the Vancouver community courts).

The issue of separate entrances for social housing renters often turns into a broader discussion of income/class segregation in society and the stigma associated with social housing. Some developers feel that it can be more difficult to sell properties without separate entrances due to concerns by potential purchasers about low-income renters, subsidizing non-market units and other factors. The City of Vancouver agree to separate entrances for the social housing included as part of the Woodward building redevelopment and was subject public criticism over the issue.

The Vancouver newspaper, The Georgia Straight, ran a story on separate entrances in November 2017 and polled readers on this issue. In August 2018, 57 percent of readers polled did not support separate entrances, while 28 percent supported them. The remaining 16 percent felt that it depended on the project or were unsure. The poll ran in conjunction with a story about the 30-story development proposal in the West End where neighbors had expressed their displeasure with the entire project to city council.

With the advent of rental zoning, we could begin to see more proposals for buildings with separate entrances dedicated rental and homeowner portions. Separate entrances may also become a growing issue with other local governments as more mixed use buildings are built and it becomes more necessary to separate entries and amenities.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- None

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BRIEFING NOTE FOR INFORMATION

Date: September 14, 2018

Prepared For: Honourable Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Title: Five Year Review of the Auditor General for Local Government (AGLG) Update

Issue: Provides an update on the status of the review of the Office of the AGLG and the AGLG Act.

Briefing: Minister's Council on September 27, 2018

SUMMARY:

- **The five-year review of the Office of the AGLG and AGLG Act was initiated in 2018 as per the requirements of the AGLG Act.**
- **MAH, in partnership with the AGLG Working Group, has retained an independent consultant, Kelly Daniels, to conduct the review. To date, Mr. Daniels has conducted approximately 20 interviews with the majority of identified stakeholders and has sent out surveys to all local governments for response.**
- **Draft findings and recommendations are anticipated to be complete by the end of October,**^{s.13}
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BACKGROUND:

The Office of the AGLG has been in place for five years. Section 29 of the AGLG Act requires that the minister responsible initiate a review of the Act and the Office after the Act has been in force for five years (by April 2018).

In December 2017, Minister Selina Robinson initiated the review by approving the scope and approach of the review which entails a thorough review of the Act, engagement with stakeholders and a review of AGLG documents such as published audits, service plans and audit planning documents. This approach also included retaining an independent consultant to conduct the review.

A six-person working group was established in April, 2018 that consists of:

- three members of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing;
- president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM);
- one UBCM staff member; and
- one representative of the Local Government Management Association.

The Working Group is responsible for overseeing the work of the consultant, and reviewing the consultant's final report and recommendations.

DISCUSSION:

On July 23, 2018, Kelly Daniels, former CAO of the Capital Regional District and Regional District of Nanaimo was retained to conduct the review. Mr. Daniels was retained through a competitive process with the support of the Working Group. To date, Mr. Daniels has completed approximately 20 stakeholder interviews with representatives from the Ministry, the Audit Council, the AGLG Office, UBCM and the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.



On September 17, 2018, surveys were sent to all local governments to seek their feedback on the value of the AGLG Office to their organization, and to determine if local governments that have received a performance audit by the AGLG Office are implementing the AGLG's recommendations. Surveys are anticipated to be complete by early October.

In mid-October, Mr. Daniels will present the preliminary findings from the review to the Working Group for discussion, and will develop draft recommendations by the end of October. A draft report with findings and recommendations will be submitted to the Working Group for review in early November. s.13

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Review Timing

Task	Timing
Consultant (Kelly Daniels) retained	July 23 rd
Consultant conducts stakeholder interviews	August and September
Surveys sent to local governments for response	September 17 th – October 5 th
Consultant presents preliminary findings to the Working Group	Mid-October
Consultant prepares draft report with recommendations	End of October
Consultant submits draft report to the Working Group	Early November

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FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- None

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