CITY OF VANCOUVER

MAYOR KENNEDY STEWART

For immediate release

Mayor Stewart announces plan to help build homes in Vancouver the middle-class can afford

Mayor's Making HOME program to give households earning $80,000-a-year the ability to own a home in single-detached neighbourboods

Vancouver, BC; September 14, 2020 - Today, Mayor Kennedy Stewart announced plans to introduce a revolutionary new housing program called Making HOME (Housing Options for Middle-Income Earners) which would allow middle-income households in Vancouver to once again own a home in single-detached zoned neighbourboods across the city.

"Not too long ago, people from across the country and around the world could come to Vancouver, work hard and build a middle-class life," said Mayor Kennedy Stewart. "For the first time in a generation, we're going to make middle-class home ownership in Vancouver a reality again."

Making HOME is a pilot project which would allow homeowners to create up to four market homes on a standard lot, provided up to two additional homes are set aside to be permanently affordable to middle-income households.

"Right now, almost 60 percent of residential neighbourhoods are reserved for homes that only the top 2.5 percent of income earners can afford," said Mayor Stewart. "Imagine a city where instead of building one big house for those with significant means, we build small-scale, multi-family homes affordable to households earning $80,000-a-year."

Making HOME is aimed at homeowners looking to downsize, but who don't want to leave the neighbourhood they love. Owners could convert or redevelop their large, single-detached house into multiple homes, keep one for themselves or other family members, and sell the remaining homes – some of which are guaranteed to be permanently available only to middle-income earners. And over time, Vancouver would build an inventory of homes not subject to ever-rising property values and harmful speculation.

"This policy addresses social, economic and environmental equity, and it allows Vancouverites to make better use of our existing land base, says Stewart. "The Making HOME program would be perfect for a wide range of families – from seniors and artists to young professionals and healthcare workers."

“This housing program will allow people who want to build homes together to create their own small community in the neighbourhood they grew up in – instead of being forced to move out of the city.”

On Wednesday, Mayor Stewart will introduce Making HOME which will direct staff to develop a rapid-start pilot project that:

- Allows up to four market strata units on a single property, provided up to two additional below-market strata units are also included that are permanently affordable for the City’s middle-income households.

- Includes incentives to encourage deeper affordability by relaxing parking requirements, design, floor space ratio, and other city regulations;

- Explores the feasibility of including market and below-market rental options;

- Restricts new builds to approximately the same height as a residential home and includes provisions for the retention/renewal of trees on private property, and excludes properties for which development would result in the loss of current rental units or homes with heritage designation;

- Allows up to 100 individual pilot projects to encourage innovation in housing form and ownership models, spread across all RS and RT neighbourhoods;

- Has proposed pilot project guidelines developed by staff for Council’s consideration by Q2 2021, with a goal of launching the pilot project intake by Q3 2021.

“We know that tens of thousands of residents are looking for better options to create vibrant communities and stay in Vancouver, but these kinds of homes simply don’t exist for middle-income households,” said Stewart, “I urge all members of Council to support this flexible program, so we can add more housing choices across Vancouver, relieve pressure on the existing rental market, and unlock homeownership for a new generation of residents.”

QUOTES:

Darrell Mussato, Executive Director Small Housing BC.

"By permitting this kind of land use efficiency for existing homeowners, the City would be enabling a practical mechanism that not only delivers housing supply, but it also delivers affordable home ownership.”

“This proposal would create not only permanently affordable home ownership but would also do so in a manner that preserves and reinvigorates existing neighbourhoods, while directly benefiting the families that are the fabric of those neighbourhoods.”

Marianne Amodio, Marianne Amodio and Harley Grusko Architects Inc.

“These ideas and principles are not new, but in fact are a return to the way we used to do things. We can see this by simply walking around our most storied neighbourhoods: Mount Pleasant near City Hall, Strathcona, and Kitsilano.”

“This is the right way to add homes and families, by paying rigourous attention to the creation of community. This plan can help us create a greater sense of community, a greater sense of place, and a greater sense of belonging. These kinds of homes help us walk more, see each other more, and make our carbon footprint smaller.”

Ron Rapp, CEO Homebuilders Association Vancouver

“HAVAN is very pleased to see and support the introduction of the Making Home program which is a win, win, win program for housing affordability, for providing opportunity to the “missing middle” cohort, and to provide affordable housing choices and opportunity within the City.”

“This program will help to fill a huge gap in the housing continuum and create additional housing within the fabric of existing homes without disrupting the scale and streetscape of those neighbourhoods.”

Neil Moody, CEO Canadian Home Builders’ Association of BC

"We applaud the introduction of the revolutionary Making HOME pilot program that will allow up to four market homes on a standard single lot.”

“This project takes direct aim at some of the housing and affordability issues for Vancouverites who work and want to live in the City and for those who want to stay in their neighborhoods. This zoning flexibility could offer a model for other municipalities in BC to follow and be a game changer for affordability and supply."

IMAGES:

Example small-scale multi-family house design:



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