

1. The City of Vancouver prohibits apartment buildings on more than 75% of the city's residential land via zoning. Do you support entirely or significantly eliminating the ban on apartment buildings in residential areas of the City of Vancouver?

I wholeheartedly support this and have been campaigning for precisely this for several years now. Today, cities throughout North America are waking up to the adverse effects of these decades old decisions.

From displacement to unaffordability to the erasure of marginalized communities, much of what we've experienced in Vancouver is common to all cities that implemented zoning schemes such as our outdated model.

It's time to modernize our approach to urban planning and create a truly inclusive city.

2. Will you commit to enacting policies to increase the rental vacancy rate in Vancouver to at least 3%? If so, which policies would you enact?

Rental vacancy rate is the most meaningful metric to target when approaching rental affordability. Because 3-5% is widely regarded as a "healthy" rental vacancy rate, allowing for tenant choice and landlord competitiveness, 3% should be the minimum we aim to achieve. Vancouver's current rental vacancy rate sits at below 1% (.9%, if I recall correctly).

Rental vacancy increases come from a two-pronged approach:

- 1) Protecting existing supply of rentals, either from demolition, conversion to condo, or from short term uses such as AirBnB
- 2) Tilting the scales in favour of building affordable purpose built rentals instead of condominiums.

The City has already done some good work on #1, although some of those policies could be backstopped as we begin to see how they work (or don't) when implemented.



Vancouver Co-Housing

On #2, my platform calls for the City to fast track and incentivize the construction of housing with “community benefit,” like purpose built rental, land trust (or other speculation-proof housing), co-ops & co-housing, seniors and social housing, heritage building retention, and more. Using tools like density bonusing or CAC subsidies to encourage the creation of rental homes is well within the City’s purview and should be our first order of business.

3. Currently, development of purpose-built rental buildings is concentrated along arterial roads, which have significantly higher levels of air pollution than non-arterials. What policies do you support to ensure renters have a healthy living environment?

While it’s important to support arterials and transportation corridors with development of all types - from commercial to residential - we should also look at revitalizing all our neighbourhoods - not just busy arterials.



Le Marché St. George cornerstore in the Riley Park neighbourhood

Taking a "Four Floors and Corner Stores" approach to neighbourhood planning means returning opportunities for small, family-owned businesses to grow within our communities, supported by "Missing Middle" housing forms that blend in with neighbourhood character. Housing such as three-plexes, four-plexes, co-ops, and low-rise apartment buildings. This is how we built thriving, character-rich neighbourhoods such as Mount Pleasant and Strathcona and it's what we have to get back to if we want our city to thrive again.

4. It can take several years for the City of Vancouver to approve new construction, including purpose built rentals. What are your views on how we can more quickly approve and build needed rental housing?

As I mentioned previously, a key part of my platform is the prioritization and incentivization of housing with "community benefit." Affordable rental housing fits this definition. Pre-zoning much of the city for purpose built rental and offering significant density bonusing (i.e. 1.5 FSR extra) for projects that meet a predefined "community benefit criteria" would expedite and incentivize the creation of rental homes.

We can also streamline our building code and design panel processes, getting back to fundamentals versus forcing home builders to adhere to dated, specious minutiae. Gabled roofs, for instance, are an aesthetic preference of some, not a safety concern nor an objectively held view on what makes buildings integrate well with their neighbourhood.

The City should also move to digital filing of building plans, with an initial, instant automated parse for completion removing a staff step and saving turnaround time. We've all seen the photos of rolls of architectural plans holding their authors' place in line to file with the City. This is not a 21st century method. Often, when plans are reviewed by a City staff member, the applicant must then wait weeks or months to re-submit - further delaying approvals.



Architectural drawings in line at the City's permit office (taken from twitter)

5. The City of Vancouver announced their new housing strategy, “Making Room” earlier this year. One component of the strategy was to allow duplex housing and possibly other forms of housing in areas currently zoned for single family detached housing. Do you support this strategy? What would you change?

I support "Making Room." Ultimately, the allowable FSR on any given lot was not increased, so this merely provides another way for single lot owners to utilize their property and won't appreciably increase property values, or spur speculation. Developers don't build duplexes.

I would like to see the City go further, allowing everything up to low-rise apartment buildings throughout the City.

6. Do you support reducing or eliminating parking requirements for new residential construction located near frequent transit?

Santa Monica, Buffalo, Mexico City and numerous other municipalities have dropped their minimum parking requirements entirely. Much of our City is already located near high frequency transit. Not to mention the fact that automated electric vehicles will dramatically reduce parking requirements in the future.

