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Update on Making Room in Vancouver Rezoning Initiative

By Bob Bracken

In my News Bulletin Fall 2018, I outlined the City of Vancouver initiative to increase the supply & affordability of housing for both renters & buyers in most Vancouver's residential neighbourhoods. Called **"Making Room Housing Program"** the City proposed dramatic re-zoning proposals to increase density & supply in most Vancouver's residential neighbourhoods. These initiatives included:

- Amendments to most RS (single family) areas to allow the construction of (strata titled) two family dwellings, two family dwellings with secondary suites, & Principal dwellings with lock-off units in a two family dwelling.
- Re-zoning the current RT-7 & RT-8 districts in Kitsilano to RT-5 to allow for laneway houses, secondary suites within duplexes, & to permit infill dwellings on sites already containing a one family dwelling. This is for families, downsizing seniors & others who seek "right sized" housing that falls between single family houses & higher density dwellings in larger condo buildings.
- Re-zoning the existing RT-10 & RT-10N zones to maintain the existing "small house/duplex" option while allowing additional laneway houses, secondary suites within duplexes, & additional infill options.

I applauded these initiatives as being bold and ambitious, directly tackling the problem of housing affordability & offering the prospect of neighbourhood revitalization as new housing stock replaced old, & as younger families added new blood & energy to whole blocks that currently house empty nesters & seniors. I also cautioned that the politics around this was still uncertain, awaiting outcome of the October 21 City elections.

The then City Council, in a very lengthy public hearing on Sept 19, 2018, approved the amendments to the RS zones, but deferred the proposals for the RT Zones to a later date, to be addressed by the incoming Council after the October election.

In mid-November, the New Council instructed staff to report back with wording of a bylaw to reverse the effects of those changes. On December 4, 2018, Council approved a staff recommendation to rescind the motion from the earlier Council re amendments to RT zones in Kitsilano & Kensington-Cedar Cottage. Kitsilano & Kensington-Cedar Cottage will be included in future planning for low-density neighbourhoods as part of the Making Room initiative.

On December 19, 2018, Council voted to allow duplex to remain as a use in RS zones as a trial housing option over the next year, with some modifications to the proposals approved on September 19, 2018.

It appears to be 2 steps forward, 1.5 steps back on this, although in fairness, the proposed changes are dramatic, & this Council will have to oversee & be accountable for the outcomes over their mandate. What remains to be seen if bureaucratic inertia & political micro-management will completely stifle any real changes. Fingers crossed.

Please consider Bob a resource if you have questions regarding Vancouver Real Estate. Please contact Bob Bracken at

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