



URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE – PACIFIC REGION

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November 27, 2017

Mayor Richard Stewart and Council
City of Coquitlam
3000 Guildford Way
Coquitlam, BC V3B 7N2

Dear Mayor and Council:

Re: Housing Affordability Strategy Implementation Bylaw Updates

The Urban Development Institute (UDI) has long supported Council's objective to improve housing affordability in Coquitlam. UDI and its membership were involved in the development of the *Housing Affordability Strategy (HAS)* that was adopted in December 2015.

We would like to thank staff for consulting with UDI on some of the proposed Official Community Plan and Rezoning amendments on September 8, 2017. However, this discussion occurred early in the process and did not include the details proposed in the staff Report; nor was there any further UDI consultation.

We recommend that the Report and recommendations be deferred until our members have an opportunity to discuss them in detail with City staff. Given the scope and potential implications of the proposed changes, UDI believes it would be beneficial for further review to take place in order to refine the policy so it achieves the objectives of Council without any unintended consequences.

We have circulated the proposed strategy to our members. They've responded by identifying areas that require further clarity, including the following issues:

- Several terms are not clearly defined.
 - The terms, "Value" (policies 1.2.7 and 1.2.8), "Third Party Housing Partner", and "Market Rent" need more clarity.
- Although this is not part of the *HAS*, UDI members highlighted previous projects where staff required completion of rental units as a condition to occupy the market strata units. This requirement has the potential to discourage developers from building rental.
- The Strategy identifies 3-bedroom units as a Priority Unit Type. To make the building of these units more viable, it is recommended that:
 - The City clarify the permissibility of Borrowed Light Bedrooms as the allowance of these in units would reduce their cost and size (please see the attached article on the issue).
- UDI members are concerned the approach being adopted for the proposed additional increase of 0.5 FAR of density may discourage its use.

- We recommend the City ensure that any incentives or requirements related to accessible or adaptable housing meet the requirements of the *Building Act*.
- Although the parking requirements along the Evergreen Line have been reduced, we hope that Council will consider reducing them further – if not now, than in the future.
- There is a requirement that for the affordable rental units, developers establish partnerships with non-profits. This may discourage developers from building these units (as well as rental units) because of delays and added complexity to projects. We recommend that there be more flexibility to allow developers to own and operate the affordable rental units. City requirements could be enforced through Housing Agreements.

Appended to this letter is a memo prepared by Nic Paoella from Marcon Developments Ltd., a UDI Board Member and a member of the Coquitlam Liaison Committee. It includes more details on the aforementioned issues and recommendations that we hope the City will consider.

We would like to thank City staff again for involving us early on in the development of the proposed HAS Bylaw updates. UDI is supportive of the intent of these policies but given the details revealed in the staff Report, we recommend that further discussions take place with the industry before Council continues forward with implementing the proposals. UDI looks forward to working with the City as the *Housing Affordability Strategy* continues to be implemented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anne McMullin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Anne McMullin
President and CEO