

City of Richmond Council Meeting - Monday July 10, 2023

Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition Delegation - Non-Agenda Item

This submission is presented on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition (RPRC). We are a *'coalition of Richmond individuals and agencies working together to reduce poverty and the impacts of poverty with research, projects and public education.'* Through our community work, the RPRC advocates for improvements to public policy in Richmond.

Members of the RPRC include local non-profit organizations that collectively represent thousands of low-income Richmond residents such as seniors, people with disabilities, newcomers, families, people with health challenges, BIPOC, LGBTQ2S people, and other vulnerable residents.

They are: Richmond Food Bank Society, Richmond Centre for Disability, Richmond Women's Resource Centre, Family Services of Greater Vancouver-Richmond, Richmond Family Place, Richmond Mental Health Consumers & Friends Society, Richmond Addictions Services Society, Richmond Cares Richmond Gives, Kehila Society of Richmond, Gilmore Park United Church, Richmond Presbyterian Church, and Heart of Richmond AIDS Society.

We are speaking to you tonight specifically about our research that shows the City's current policy with regards to Low End Market Rentals or LEMR is not meeting the needs of the people it is meant to serve.

You will recall one year ago, on July 11, 2022, the RPRC made a similar delegation to City Council. You can find our submission on our website at <https://www.richmondprc.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/RPRC-Delegation-re-non-market-housing-July-11-2022.pdf>

At that point we advised Council that we had studied the City's policies and strategies on affordable housing and urged you to undertake the following three initiatives to increase non-market rental supply, and to provide yearly progress reports on each initiative to the public:

1. Actively pursue and secure federal, provincial, and any other accepted sources of funding to develop non-market housing and shelters using City-owned land,
2. Order a full LEMR (Low End Market Rental) Review, and develop a LEMR Housing Registry and wait list for all LEMR units, AND
3. Reduce the number of Richmond residents on the BC Housing wait list by 50% within five years (2027) by using rental tenure zoning and innovative partnerships to build sufficient housing for Richmond residents on the waitlist.

We are back one year later to ask what has happened to the City Council referral to staff. You already know that in recent months, we met with each and every one of you on Council regarding our recommendations. We focused on discussing the LEMR program as it is the foundation of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy.

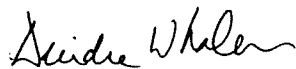
From our conversations with Mayor & Councillors we believe the LEMR program and policies can be vastly improved with the following changes. The City must:

- recognize that Richmond taxpayers deserve to know how this program works,
- acknowledge that the City has responsibilities after LEMR units are built,
- have ongoing oversight and accountability for the LEMR program units,
- establish a LEMR registry for every unit that is transparent and accessible,
- establish one easily accessible waitlist for all LEMR units,
- mandate information sharing from developers and operators on the use of LEMR units,
- publish an annual LEMR report including number of units/ rents/ income thresholds

Publicly funded housing is a sign of a civil society and our municipal government is the first stop sign along the way. City Council approved the LEMR policy. City Council can amend it to make it transparent, accessible and equitable for taxpayers and everyone who needs non-market housing,

Some of our members wish to tell you about their experiences. We understand the whole delegation has five minutes. We will make it brief.

Sincerely,



Deirdre Whalen
President, RPRC