

**Delegation to Richmond City Council May 23, 2017**

**Re: Affordable housing Strategy Update**

My name is De Whalen and I am here to speak on behalf of the Richmond Poverty Response Committee. You will have already received our formal report and recommendations that were sent in on April 23, 2017.

I will reiterate that on Richmond the City's website it notes 47% of Richmond renters spend more than 30% of their income on shelter, 30% being the definition of 'affordable.' In addition, Richmond's vacancy rate is 0.9% (some say 0.3%) and 1 in 5 of all Metro households are in core housing need. Knowing that almost ½ of our renters are in unaffordable housing and vacancies are almost non-existent, it should be clear that the City of Richmond has a responsibility to do more to ensure people have affordable housing.

I attended the City's Planning committee meeting last week and was heartened to hear that some concerns were being recommended, such as moving the magic number from 80 units to 60. However, we do agree with Council that recommendations in the staff report do not do far enough.

The Richmond PRC still recommends that the number of affordable units per development be increased to 20%. We still recommend that townhouses be included in the definition of built affordable units.

Various Council members made the following observations and the Richmond PRC agrees with them.

We agree it should be a priority that affordable units are built close to transit hubs.

We agree that amenity space for non-profit services should be added to the demands that the City makes to developers in exchange for density.

We agree that there is a dire need to accelerate the number of units built per year. At present the target is 150 units per year. At this rate we will never catch up with the need.

Finally, and in light of the recent Council decision on house sizes on ALR, we agree that cash in lieu calculations should be increased considerably and that revenue is put into the affordable housing reserve fund. These funds should be used to build purpose-built affordable rental housing.

Thank You

De Whalen,

Chair, Richmond PRC

[www.richmondprc.org](http://www.richmondprc.org)