

**Schedule 1 to the Minutes of the  
Council Meeting for Public  
Hearings held on Monday, July  
15, 2013.**

City of Richmond Public Hearing July 15, 2013  
Council Chambers, Richmond City Hall

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Thank you for the opportunity to speak this evening. I want to talk about the continued lack of affordable rental housing in Richmond. Other cities have policies to encourage the development of purpose-built rental housing. I had thought that the Richmond Affordable Housing Strategy had policies that would do just that. But the topic of this public hearing appears to refute it all.

Not everyone wants to buy real estate and for some people it can really tie you down. Besides that, not everyone can afford market housing. People that work in the service industry often fill jobs that don't pay that well. If you can rent close to work, you can walk or bus there and make a living. If not, you quit and find a job close to where you can afford to live.

A sustained lack of rental housing can cause important repercussions in a community. Essential jobs are left unfilled, the working class moves away and the elite are left with no one to serve them. If other cities can create complete communities for people in all walks of life, the City of Richmond should encourage innovative ways to create more rental housing for ordinary people.

Renters are typically young adults, professionals just starting out, lone parent families, newcomers to the city, low to mid-income families and seniors on a pension. The vast majority of renters have a regular income and they receive no government housing subsidies.

Housing subsidies are only for families and they top out at a yearly household income of \$35,500. That means if you can raise a family on \$2,800 per month you could qualify for a few hundred bucks. But rents here are so high there is still a gap families have to fill somehow. The lack of affordable purpose-built rental housing means that people who need to live here to work pay a high proportion of their income on rent and can never save enough to purchase their own home.

Although, to see all the pricey towers springing up here, you'd think there is an unending supply of people that want to buy a piece of Richmond. I have a list of recent housing developments and the number of units they provide, below. I've broken them into two groups, market ownership and purpose-built rental. The numbers come directly from developers' promotional websites.

Market Ownership:

Parc Riviera (1100 units)

River Green (458 units)

Quintet (306 units)

Saffron (296 units)

Monet (135 units)

The Gardens (150 units)

Centro (166 units)

Kiwanis Towers (335 units)

Remy (107 units)

Cressey (229 units)

Total of **3282** market purchase units

Purpose Built Rental:

Remy (81 units for seniors)

Kiwanis Towers (296 units for seniors)  
KFC (130 units for subsidized supportive housing)  
Cressey (15 units for subsidized low-income families)

Total of **522** affordable purpose built rental units

This does not include the high-end market rental units at Imperial Landing, Riverport and above Broadmoor Mall. So only about 16% of the units being built are affordable rental. And 84% of the units being built are for market purchase. This is in light of a poverty rate ranging from 20% to 26% depending on whom you talk to. This is in light of over 1500 people a week needing to use the Food Bank, a third of them children. This is in light of the proposals here tonight to “amend/remove the requirement for onsite affordable housing.”

How is the City going to catch up with the need for affordable housing? How will the City ensure we have complete and vibrant neighbourhoods, with varying ages, ethnicities and income levels? That was what the Affordable Housing Strategy was supposed to do. I fear that if Council accepts these proposals to remove onsite rental units, we will end up with rental ghettos and that all of the developers’ obligations to provide affordable housing will be lumped into one zone.

I would like to hear from Planning and from Council that my fears are unjustified. I’d like to hear that the City has great plans to not only build affordable rental housing now, but also keep up with the increasing demand for affordable housing in the future. Please enlighten me!

Thank you,

De Whalen