

General Purposes Committee

June 1st, 2026

Councillor Hobbs

Motion

Whereas:

Provincial Bill 44 (small-scale multi-unit housing) required all local governments with a population greater than 5,000 people to rezone all single-family and duplex zoned properties to allow 3 to 6 units per lot depending on lot size and proximity to frequent transit;

The City of Richmond, through the long-standing Arterial Road Land Use Policy and the recent updates to the Official Community Plan, encouraged lot consolidation and higher density residential development along designated Arterial Roads, for townhouses and low-rise apartments;

The provincially required small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) zoning reduces the incentive to consolidate designated Arterial Road properties for higher density townhouses or low-rise apartments, thereby losing an opportunity to provide for greater housing supply near transit, commercial and community facilities;

Therefore be it resolved, that a letter be written from the Mayor to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs and Kelly Greene, Minister of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness, requesting that Richmond be exempted from SSMUH zoning for properties along a designated Arterial Road where higher density residential uses are permitted through an Area Plan or Official Community Plan.

Rationale

A consequence of Bill 44, the City's Arterial Road Policy was rendered moot. Now, small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) can be developed on arterial roads, with no rezoning. One significant problem is that SSMUH developments provide for less density than townhouse developments. As SSMUH developments begin to appear, it will make it more difficult to assemble properties for townhouse developments along arterial roads since contiguous properties will become interspersed with increasing SSMUH properties. Also, there will be a corresponding increase in the number of driveways on arterial roads.

The point of the letter is to ask for consideration for an exemption in relation to the Arterial Road Policy since this policy provides for greater density than SSMUH, as per Bill 44. Decreasing density was not a goal of Bill 44 and requesting reconsideration, specifically in relation to the Arterial Road Policy, can be augmented with quantifiable data to support the policy's success.