

HAF Action Plan Summary – Richmond, BC

Explanatory Notes:

- *The following summary is a high-level overview of the approved Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan.*
- *Local governments are expected to follow statutory processes and procedures when considering and adopting bylaws and policies, including public notification and input processes. HAF recipients have committed to follow regulatory requirements and to actively pursue the relevant council or other approvals needed to advance these initiatives.*
- *HAF recipients are also required to complete and regularly update a Housing Needs Assessment Report.*

Initiative 1: Enhanced Fast Track Program – Rental and Affordable Housing

Expediting planning reviews for rental and affordable housing.

- An Enhanced Fast Track program with dedicated staff will accelerate rezoning and development permit application reviews for developments that include 100% rental or below-market housing (*implementation in 2024*).

Initiative 2: Housing Priorities Grant Program

Implementing a grant program to encourage development of high-demand housing types: non-market, below market, co-operative, co-housing, and affordable ownership.

- Richmond will explore various funding streams including covering the costs associated with development application fees for below market rental housing, affordable housing capital contributions, and home improvement grants for non-profits (*design in 2024, program launch in 2025*).

Initiative 3: Affordable Housing Non-Profit Partnership Program

Formalizing existing and new practices for affordable housing partnerships into an established program with dedicated staff (*implementation in 2024 and 2025*).

- Richmond will establish and nurture partnerships with non-profit housing providers, make connections to development consultants and other organizations with expertise in affordable housing, and expedite development approvals.
- The City will also consider land and/or capital contributions and liaise with other orders of government on potential project funding.

Initiative 4: Rental Tenure & Density Increases - Spires Road Area Pilot

Leveraging lessons learned from a pilot project to facilitate rental housing supply.

- In 2022, a bylaw was introduced to promote rental housing and increase density in a specific portion of the City Centre (in and around Spires Road).
- This initiative will identify options to expand these changes to other parts of the City Centre and/or incorporate key findings into Richmond's community plan (*implementation in 2024*).

Initiative 5: Parking Requirement Reductions

Transforming parking policies to reduce development costs and support sustainable transportation options.

- In 2022, Richmond reduced parking requirements for rental and affordable housing projects.
- A comprehensive review will consider additional policy changes such as parking maximums, deeper reductions for rental and/or affordable housing, reduced parking requirements in high-density areas, near transit, and for missing middle housing, and re-purposing parking structures for affordable housing (*policy decision in 2024, one-year review in 2025*).

Initiative 6: Explore Pre-Zoning Options for Missing Middle Housing

As-of-right zoning changes to facilitate smaller-scale affordable housing projects and address the demand for missing middle housing.

- The City will develop and implement a policy to pre-zone for gentle density and for affordable housing projects of a certain scale (*implementation in 2024, one-year review in 2025*).

Initiative 7: Permitting Optimization Project

Reducing approval times by optimizing and digitizing the permitting process.

- New technology will improve the customer experience and support end-to-end modernization including digital submission, review/approval, and issuance.
- Richmond will expand the online portal in a phased approach: rezoning and single-family homes (*implementation in 2024*), followed by multi-unit housing (*2025*) and commercial and subdivision applications (*2026*).

Initiative 8: Automated Plan Review Project

Leveraging AI and intelligent software to accelerate approvals.

- Software that integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Building Information Modelling (BIM) systems will be deployed to enable automated plan review (*full roll-out in 2025*).