

CITY OF COQUITLAM

Policy & Procedure

Policy name:

TENANT RELOCATION POLICY

Tenant Relocation and Assistance Strategy

Council Adoption Date: November 22, 2021

Purpose

This document applies to property developers acquiring existing rental housing sites in Coquitlam (multifamily, co-op, non-market) with minimum of five units with the intent of redeveloping them.

Applications to redevelop sites containing existing purpose-built rental housing in Coquitlam are required to follow Policy 1.4 of the City's Housing Affordability Strategy (HAS) in addition to the statutory requirements set out under the Residential Tenancy Act. HAS policy 1.4 (page 22 of the Housing Affordability Strategy) requires property owners intending to redevelop a site with existing rental housing to prepare a "Tenant Relocation and Assistance Strategy." This Policy provides further detail and clarity on the City's expectations for preparing that strategy.

The redevelopment of mobile home parks is also subject to policy guidelines, with additional expectations for financial compensation for individual mobile homes. The Mobile Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy can be found on the Coquitlam's website. The redevelopment of mobile home parks is governed by the [B.C. Provincial Manufactured Home Park Tenancy Act](#).

FOR TENANTS

All tenants should understand their rights under the British Columbia Residential Tenancy Act. British Columbia's Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) regulates all tenancies in residential units across the province. It is essential for both landlords and tenants to understand their rights and responsibilities under the RTA.

The Tenant Relocation Policy does not replace requirements set out in the RTA. Instead, this policy is intended to supplement the RTA to support Eligible Tenants impacted by redevelopment. For more information on the RTA, please refer to the [Residential Tenancy Branch's website](#). Additional tenant resources may also be found at the Tenant Resource & Advisory Centre (www.tenants.bc.ca).

Definitions

Applicant: Owner(s) of purpose-built rental properties with five or more units with the intent to redevelop the property.

Eligible Tenant: Tenant households permanently residing in the purpose-built rental property with five or more units under application for redevelopment are eligible for financial compensation, assistance and right of first refusal, if such tenants occupied a unit prior to the Applicant submitting a Development Permit or Rezoning application to the City. Tenancies starting on or after the Submission Date are governed solely by the RTA.

Tenant Relocation Coordinator: A staff person employed or retained by the Applicant who is responsible for coordinating tenant assistance. This person should have the following skills and experience:

- Knowledge of the rental housing market;
- Knowledge of Provincial housing programs; and
- May have experience working with people who are vulnerable or who may have complex needs.

Submission Date: The date upon which the Applicant submits a full Development Permit or Rezoning application (whichever is first) to the City. The Applicant is required to submit the details of the proposed Tenant Relocation and Assistance Strategy to the City on the Submission Date. Further guidance on the required submissions required at key points in the development application are provided in the addendum below.

Policy Components

1. Early Notification and Communication

- a. Applicants are expected to hold a Tenant Information meeting to inform all existing tenants of plans for redevelopment, as soon as possible (i.e., at the pre-application stage).

During the Tenant Information meeting, it is important that any communications are clear that this is **not a formal notice to vacate**, but rather an early effort to make tenants aware of planned changes, the anticipated timing of such changes, and the efforts that will be undertaken by applicants to assist tenants and provide compensation.

- b. Applicants must provide all tenants with a copy of the Coquitlam Renter Information package. Applicants must also provide updates to tenants as the process progresses, including when the application submission is made and when the subject application for redevelopment is considered at Council meetings and Public Hearings.
- c. Written evidence (letters, notices posted, emails, meeting minutes) of the above must be provided to the City within two weeks of the pre-application submission date.

2. Financial Compensation

- a. Compensation: Applicants are expected to offer a compensation program for existing tenants following the minimum requirements below. The length of tenure, which determines the amount of financial compensation, ends at the Submission Date.

Resident Tenure In Years	Number of Months Paid Rent *
0-5 years	3 months
6-10 years	4 months
11-15 years	6 months
16-20 years	8 months
20 or more years	10 months

* "Number of months Paid Rent" may consist either of payment to the tenant of the equivalent monthly rents or continued tenancy within the rental unit at no cost for the equivalent number of months."

- b. Moving assistance is to be provided on a dwelling unit basis. A flat rate payout, based on existing bedroom type, of \$750 for studio or one-bedroom units, \$1,000 for two-bedroom or larger units, is to be provided. Applicants, with the agreement of the tenant, may also consider assisting those with more complex needs, by directly booking with an insured moving company.
- c. Non-profit applicants redeveloping new non-market rental housing are exempt from this formal schedule and may propose a financial compensation schedule that meets Council's expectations, is appropriate for the needs of their tenants and positions non-profits for low-cost loan programs and other government subsidies and funding opportunities.

3. Assistance Finding Alternative Housing Options

- a. Applicants will be required to assist existing residents to find alternative housing options by:
 - i. Identifying one person as a Tenant Relocation Coordinator to assist tenants as described in this policy and be the primary contact with the City on tenant-related matters;
 - ii. Providing sufficient and regularly scheduled staff time at an on-site office (or by phone or video conference as appropriate) in order to better work with and understand the individual needs of tenants; and
 - iii. Identifying at least three (3) rental listings/options that best suit the needs of residents seeking new accommodation, based on rental availability.
- b. Applicants are also encouraged to:
 - i. Phase new construction in such a way as to retain some of the existing units in order to provide an interim housing solution for tenants, and to minimize the number of tenants seeking alternative rental housing at any one time;
 - ii. Provide reference letters as appropriate;
 - iii. Provide service in language(s) preferred by tenants; and
 - iv. Link tenants to BC Housing programs where appropriate.

4. Right of First Refusal

- a. Applicants are encouraged to create new rental units to replace the existing units and are encouraged to utilize incentives in the HAS to create these new units. If the Applicant creates new rental units through the HAS incentives, all Eligible Tenants are required to be offered a Right of First Refusal to move into the new replacement units.
- b. Where an Applicant utilizes HAS incentives to create below-market or non-market units, these units are to be offered to returning Eligible Tenants who meet income eligibility for this below market rent. Applicants may take advantage of the City's MOU with BC Housing for the management of these units.
- c. If the number of returning Eligible Tenants (Right of First Refusal) exceed requirements under the HAS, the 25% below-market rental rates would only be required for the initial tenancy.
- d. If new rental units are created, an Applicant is required to contact Eligible Tenants six months prior to expected occupancy of the new building to offer the opportunity to return to the building. The Applicant will provide a letter to tenants with information

about unit types, expected rent ranges in the newly-built building and the corresponding income eligibility requirements.

- e. Non-profit Applicants redeveloping new non-market rental housing may develop a Right of First Refusal proposal that meets Council's expectations, is appropriate for the needs of their tenants and positions non-profits for low-cost loan programs and other government subsidies and funding opportunities.

Addendum: Tenant Relocation and Assistance Strategy Checklist

The Applicant is required to provide the following in order to ensure that the Tenant Relocation Policy is being followed during the application process:

- **Within two weeks of pre-application submission**
Written documentation (letters, notices posted, emails, meeting minutes) that existing tenants have received the Renter Information package and been notified of the Applicant's plans and the application for redevelopment.
- **At time of application submission**
 - A Proposed Tenant Relocation and Assistance Strategy must be submitted to the City, including:
 - Assessment of existing rental housing including number of units, unit size and bedroom-mix, unit rent levels; and occupancy/vacancy figures;
 - Financial compensation program; and
 - Proposed Right of First Refusal letter/form.
- **Prior to First Reading of a Rezoning Bylaw**
 - Signed documentation indicating that the Tenant Relocation and Assistance Strategy has been communicated with existing residents;
 - Report about existing residents including, as available:
 - Assessment of residents' needs;
 - Information about how needs are proposed to be met;
 - Communication summary - number and nature of communication with residents (i.e., one-on-one meetings, phone calls, emails, newsletters, large group meetings);
 - The plan to date of each resident/household for relocation;
 - Take up of Right of First Refusal option and signed letters from residents indicating interest in this option; and
 - Financial compensation payments made to date, and signed documentation from residents indicating receipt.
- **Prior to Fourth and Final Reading of a Rezoning Bylaw or Development Permit issuance**
 - Tenant Relocation and Assistance Report must be submitted and include:
 - Communication summary;
 - Number of tenants interested in exercising their First Right of Refusal;
 - Outcomes of searches for alternate housing options; and
 - A summary of financial compensation provided to residents.
 - It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that all eligible tenants receive their payments regardless of when they choose to relocate.
- **Prior to occupancy**
 - The applicant will show through documentation that residents who had signed on for First Right of Refusal had been contacted.