

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed April 9, 2021

City launching surveys regarding rental housing and short-term rentals

Summary

The City is seeking feedback from residents and property owners on proposed bylaw changes affecting the use of homes as short-term rentals. The City is also providing an opportunity for renters and landlords to share their experience finding and maintaining homes for rent.

Housing Affordability was among the top three concerns for community members who participated in the first phase of engagement for the City's REIMAGINE NANAIMO strategic policy review completed in January 2021. Consistent with recognizing this concern, the surveys are part of ongoing implementation of the City's 2018 Affordable Housing Strategy recommendations and the recently completed 2021 Health and Housing Action Plan. Both these documents support ensuring accessible and affordable market rentals for Nanaimo residents.

The Affordable Housing Strategy specifically provides direction to address short-term rentals (STRs) that include the use of online accommodation platforms. The purpose of the review is to ensure that: potential negative impacts of short-term rentals (STRs) on long-term rental housing supply are managed; STR accommodation operators are good neighbours; and that there is equity relating to regulation and licensing among STR operators and other accommodation businesses including hotels and motels. The intent of the review is to find the right balance that protects affordable housing and neighbourhoods while still providing opportunities to support the economy and allow a range of short and long-term accommodation within the City.

The proposed bylaw changes have been drafted based on feedback received from prior community engagement conducted in 2019. The proposed changes include; allowing short-term rentals in all zones; allowing short-term rental of an entire home provided the short-term rental operator lives in the home the majority of the year; requiring a business license for short-term rental accommodation and providing an explanatory guide and operator declaration form for short-term rental operator requirements. In addition to the opportunity to provide feedback to the proposed bylaw changes affecting short-term rentals, the City is also conducting surveys to understand existing rental needs, challenges and opportunities in Nanaimo from the perspective of both renters as well as landlords and property managers.

The surveys are available online on the City's public engagement website [Get Involved Nanaimo](#) until May 12, 2021. Hard copies will be provided to known market rental apartment buildings and can also be provided upon request.

Strategic Link: Livability: Implement the Affordable Housing Strategy and REIMAGINE NANAIMO Themes: How We Live and How We Care

Key Points

- The City of Nanaimo is seeking feedback on draft changes to zoning and business bylaws related to regulating the short-term rental of homes. This feedback will be provided to Council along with the recommended bylaw changes.
- The City also wants to provide renters and landlords an opportunity to share their experience finding and maintaining rental housing. This feedback will be used to inform City staff and Council of the challenges and opportunities related to rental housing in Nanaimo.
- Homelessness and Housing Affordability were among the top two concerns heard from community members who participated in the first phase of engagement for the City's REIMAGINE NANAIMO strategic policy review.
- The surveys will be open until May 12, 2021 and can be submitted online through getinvolvednanaimo.ca or via hard copy.

Quotes

"I encourage all residents to complete the surveys, which will help the City protect rental housing and advance the goals of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy and the Health and Housing Action Plan."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

Quick Facts

- As of May 2020, there were approximately 520 short-term rentals in Nanaimo, listed on all accommodation platforms, the majority of which were for entire home rentals.
- Nanaimo's rental vacancy rate of 1% is well below the 5% threshold indicator of a healthy rental housing market.
- Over 55% of phase one REIMAGINE NANAIMO survey participants identified affordable housing as a top social priority.

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