

09/19/2022

RESOLUTION NO. _____

A RESOLUTION relating to affordable housing for people with low and very low income; declaring the existence of an emergency pursuant to RCW 84.52.105 and VMC 2.12020; and directing staff to develop an affordable housing financing plan to be presented to Council.

WHEREAS, in April 2016, Council declared the existence of an emergency with respect to the availability of affordable housing and placed a ballot proposition on a 2016 ballot authorized by RCW 84.52.105 to impose additional regular property tax levies to finance affordable housing for households with very low income; and

WHEREAS, a majority of the voters of the taxing district voted on the ballot proposition to authorize the levy to create the Affordable Housing Fund administered by the City to support the acquisition, construction, and rehabilitation of affordable housing for families with very low income along with the provision of rental assistance and housing services the period commencing in 2017 and continuing through 2023; and

WHEREAS, in order for Council to place a ballot proposition on an upcoming ballot regarding replacing the levy upon its expiration in 2023, RCW 84.52.105 requires a declaration of the existence of an emergency with respect to the availability of housing that is affordable to households with low and very low income; and

WHEREAS, this declaration would allow the City to put forward a ballot proposition, which if approved, would replace the regular property tax levy to fund affordable housing for low and very low income households; and

WHEREAS, if approved, this regular property tax levy to fund affordable housing for low and very low-income households would not apply towards the existing property tax levy cap; and

WHEREAS, a healthy community is one in which the basic needs of all members are met, including access to safe, affordable homes; and

WHEREAS, supporting safe, affordable housing and services for households with low and very low-income is a commitment the City Council has made to meet the needs of Vancouver residents; and

WHEREAS, Clark County currently has a lower than two percent vacancy rate for all rental units according to the Washington State Apartment Market Report conducted by the University of Washington; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Census data indicates that there are 13,905 renter households with very low-income in Vancouver that face a high housing cost burden, representing 39.7 percent of all renters; and

WHEREAS, U.S. Census data estimates that there are 6,670 homeowners with very low-income in Vancouver that are cost burdened by housing costs, approximately 17.7 percent of homeowners; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 Homeless Point-in-Time count, required by HUD, found 625 people homeless and living unsheltered in Clark County, an increase of 21 percent from 2020, the last year for which data was available; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 Point-in-Time count found an additional 572 people were homeless and living in temporary shelters in Clark County, an increase of 83 percent due to a substantial increase in shelter beds; and

WHEREAS, the 2022 Point-in-Time count found that 27 percent of people experiencing homelessness were people of color, while people of color make up only 14 percent of Clark County's population; and

WHEREAS, the State of Washington reports that 1,454 children enrolled in the Evergreen and Vancouver school districts (approximately 3.2 percent) are experiencing homelessness and living in motels, shelters, or on the streets, resulting in adverse childhood experiences that have profound and long-lasting negative consequences; and

WHEREAS, the demand for subsidized housing has increased to the point that the Vancouver Housing Authority has had to close many of the rent restricted waitlists since the number of applications received exceeds ability to assist existing waiting households for several years. They have also adopted preferences on the Section 8 waitlist that limits availability to the most in-need households; and

WHEREAS, household incomes are not keeping pace with Vancouver's housing costs, with average apartment rent increased 28 percent between 2017 to 2022 according to The Columbian while median household income increased by only 4 percent according to U.S. Census data; and

WHEREAS, the national rental database WalletHub indicates that Vancouver is experiencing the fourth highest year-over-year rent increases in the nation; and

WHEREAS, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, many residents have experienced loss of income leading to an increased risk of experiencing homelessness, and construction costs and delays have created a greater strain on the rental market; and

WHEREAS, workers whose only affordable housing options are far from employment centers face long commutes with associated pollution, congestion, and transportation expenses; and

WHEREAS, Washington Center for Real Estate Research at the University of Washington shows Clark County's annual median resale price for single-family homes is \$541,100 in Q1 2022, a 21 percent increase from the median resale price in Q1 2021 of \$446,900; and

WHEREAS, in 2022, a group of affordable housing developers and practitioners from Vancouver convened to review Affordable Housing Fund outcomes and current market conditions and recommended that City Council ask voters to renew the Affordable Housing Fund levy to continue assisting in the delivery of affordable housing; and

WHEREAS, as a condition of receiving federal funding for low and very low-income housing, the City of Vancouver administers an affordable housing program with citizen participation, including preparation of five-year strategic plans, performance measures and outcomes, and annual action plans; and

WHEREAS, RCW 84.52.105 authorizes a city to impose regular property tax levies to finance affordable housing for households with low and very low income when specifically authorized to do so by a majority of the voters of the taxing district voting on a ballot proposition authorizing the levy; and

WHEREAS, RCW 35.21.685 authorizes a city to assist in the development or preservation of publicly or privately owned housing for persons with low income by providing loans or grants of

general municipal funds to the owners or developers of the housing, including loans or grants to finance the acquisition, construction or rehabilitation of affordable housing, and to provide rental assistance and other supportive services to people with low income.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY OF VANCOUVER:

Section 1. The recitals set forth above are adopted as findings supporting the action of the City Council in adopting this resolution.

Section 2. Findings. The City Council makes the following findings and declares as follows:

A. Affordable housing for low and very low-income households, including people experiencing homelessness, people with special needs, families, and seniors, often requires a commitment of City funds for development or preservation, or other forms of assistance.

B. “Very low-income household” means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose income is at or below fifty percent (50%) of the median income, as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with adjustments for household size, for the county where the taxing district is located. Fifty percent of the median income is \$53,250 for a four-person household in Vancouver according to 2022 income limits from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

C. “Low-income household” means a single person, family, or unrelated persons living together whose income is at or below eighty percent (80%) of the median income, as determined by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), with adjustments for household size, for the county where the taxing district is located. Eighty percent of the median income is \$77,350 for a four-person household in Vancouver according to 2022 income limits from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

D. The limited availability of affordable housing for low and very low-income households within the City of Vancouver constitutes a “natural or human caused” civil emergency within the meaning provided by Section 2.12.020 VMC. An emergency therefore exists with respect to the availability of housing that is affordable to households with low and very low income in the City of Vancouver.

Section 3. Emergency Orders Authorized. Effective upon execution of this declaration of emergency the Vancouver City Manager shall exercise authority through issuance of Executive Orders and through use and direction of City personnel, services, and equipment and additional acts necessary to the management of this emergency.

Section 4. Administrative and Financing Plan. The City Housing Programs or designee shall prepare an Affordable Housing Fund Administrative Plan (“Plan”). The Plan shall cover the period commencing in 2024 with an annual review; shall specify the plan for use of potential funds raised under a levy authorized by RCW 84.52.105; and shall be consistent with the locally adopted comprehensive housing affordability strategy, required under the Cranston-Gonzalez national affordable housing act (42 U.S.C. Sec. 12701, et seq.), as amended, pursuant to RCW 84.52.105.

Section 5. Severability. If any section, sentence, clause or phrase of this resolution should be held to be invalid or unconstitutional by a court of competent jurisdiction, such invalidity or unconstitutionality shall not affect the validity or constitutionality of any other section, sentence, clause or phrase of this resolution.

ADOPTED at regular session of the Council of the City of Vancouver, this 19th day of
September 2022.

Anne McEnerny-Ogle, Mayor

Attest:

Natasha Ramras, City Clerk
Approved as to form:

Jonathan Young, City Attorney