

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RESIDE VANCOUVER

An Anti-Displacement Plan

thread
community planning



Photo by Thread Community Planning

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“I think everyone knows about gentrification... I think even in the poor community, that word is understood. That means you’re getting rid of us.”

— Carol, local advocate & resident

Cities are places of opportunity – to find a job, make a home, get an education, build a family, be a part of a community – and places to prosper. Vancouver has been that place of opportunity for many people over time. However, with each new wave of people migrating to the area, there is a tension over who is able to seize those opportunities and who is excluded, over who is displaced and who can remain.

This pattern goes back hundreds of years to when colonists arrived in the area and displaced and excluded indigenous populations, such as the Chinook and Cowlitz Nations. Today, as in-migration and growing public and private investment in Vancouver shape the city, some are positively impacted by these changes, but others are not. Vancouver, as a dynamic and changing city, faces a choice: perpetuate this inequality or intervene to mitigate it.

This report offers recommendations as to how the City can help to stabilize vulnerable communities—such as renters, people with lower incomes, and people of color—and support them as they move towards financial self-sufficiency over time. Included are stories of community members who love their homes, neighborhoods, and community, but fear they will lose them because of increased housing costs. Also included are the experiences of those who have seen this fear become a reality. As more people are drawn to Vancouver in the future, it is important that the City learn from these community experiences and from best practices, and work toward more equitable outcomes for its residents.

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Report Goals

GOAL 1

Provide policymakers and planners with an understanding of the needs of vulnerable community members, and demonstrate how the City can mitigate displacement and exclusion associated with population growth and accompanying public and private investment.

GOAL 2

Provide options that the City and local stakeholders can utilize to ensure that development projects support and uplift the most vulnerable communities to displacement, so that residents struggling with cost of living increases are able to stay in their neighborhoods and enjoy the benefits of new public investments.



Mural in central Vancouver. Photo by Thread Community Planning

Findings

Through best practices research and a robust community engagement process, Thread Community Planning (Thread) constructed a strategic framework to meet the goals of this report. This framework is comprised of four broad anti-displacement strategies of which the individual recommendations provided are categorized. Thread tailored recommendations to be context-sensitive to Vancouver by engaging with local residents, advocacy groups, service providers, and policy experts. Thread also developed and applied an equity lens to all recommendations to ensure that those most vulnerable to displacement were prioritized. This iterative and inclusive process allowed Thread to produce impactful, equitable, and contextual recommendations.

The four broad strategies include:

PEOPLE

Extend legal protections for renters and expand programs aimed at helping people remain in place or to better afford a move if they face displacement.

PRESERVATION

Preserve the existing stock of affordable housing to secure the availability of housing options for residents of lower economic means.

PRODUCTION

Produce context-sensitive affordable housing that includes community members vulnerable to displacement in meaningful ways through all stages of development so these new projects address their needs.

PROSPERITY

Catalyze and support long-term economic prosperity efforts for un(der)employed residents by ensuring that existing workforce and economic development programs are accessible as well as providing new pathways to prosperity for workers and local small business owners.

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Recommendations

Through a synthesis of the community engagement results, case study analysis, and best practices research, Thread has developed two ‘recommendation packages’ that each include 8-10 individual recommendations. Each package provides individual recommendations that address the four broad strategies – people, preservation, production, and prosperity. The purpose of these packages is to provide the City with sets of recommendations with different impact levels and expected barriers to success that also encompass an array of community needs.

Aspirational Package

High-impact programs and policies that do not currently exist in Vancouver, but could address unmet community needs. These recommendations likely face more significant barriers to successful implementation.

- Community Investment Trusts
- “Qualified” Local Small Businesses in Public Procurements
- Joint-Labor Management and Job Training Partnerships
- Right of First Refusal
- Manufactured Dwelling Parking Zoning
- Anti-Displacement Impact Assessments
- Rental Registration Program

Capturing Momentum Package

Provides options to expand or improve existing policies and programs to better align them with community needs. These recommendations likely face less significant barriers to successful implementation.

- Tenant Protection Enhancements
- Affordable Housing Fund
- Land Acquisition and Management Strategy
- Community Land Trusts
- Multifamily Tax Exemption
- Emergency Rental Assistance Program
- Expand Fourth Plain Forward’s Recommendations Citywide
- Utilization of Existing Job Training Services
- Fund Fourth Plain Forward
- Energy Conservation and Utilities Assistance

Conclusion

The purpose of this report is to provide policymakers with an understanding of the housing and economic development needs of the communities situated in central Vancouver. Doing so illustrates the need for an anti-displacement plan, and how implementing such a plan can benefit residents.

This report shares community stories, connects those stories to observable trends that are occurring in the area, provides recommendation packages to address the needs of community members, explains potential barriers to successful implementation, and identifies potential partnerships that could be utilized in order to implement recommendations effectively and equitably.

The City of Vancouver has an opportunity to implement anti-displacement strategies in advance of public investments and market changes that often trigger widespread involuntary displacement of vulnerable residents. Frequently, anti-displacement plans are created after significant displacement has already occurred. While it is clear that some displacement is already occurring in central Vancouver, the City has the ability to implement policies and programs to address and mitigate displacement on a larger scale, particularly as future planned developments are implemented over the next decade. By addressing this issue thoroughly, Vancouver can set a positive example for other cities both regionally and nationally.



An intersection in central Vancouver. Photo by Thread Community Planning