



The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Lindsay Chase, Director of Planning
Date: April 20, 2023
Subject: Tenant Assistance Policy
File: 2140-50 • Rental Housing

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Council adopt the Tenant Assistance Policy (Attachment A).
2. That Council direct that the Tenant Assistance Policy come into effect six weeks after adoption (estimated to be June 12, 2023), and that applications received before this date are not required to comply with the policy.
3. That Council direct Staff to report back in 2025 with a two-year review of the Tenant Assistance Policy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Report is to:

- Provide Council with background information and analysis regarding the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy; and,
- Seek Council's adoption of the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy.

BACKGROUND

Developing a Tenant Assistance Policy is one of the Top 12 priority actions in the Saanich Housing Strategy (2021) (Action 2.3.B) and an initiative in Saanich Council's 2019 - 2023 Strategic Plan (Initiative 2-12). The purpose of the policy is to help mitigate the potential impacts of residential tenant displacement resulting from major renovations or redevelopment of rental buildings. In the Housing Strategy, this action sits side by side with other actions aimed at promoting and protecting rental housing in the District of Saanich.

This Report provides Council with background and analysis regarding tenant displacement and a proposed Tenant Assistance Policy intended to guide Council's decision making in cases where rezoning applications involve displacement of residential tenants.

DISCUSSION

According to the 2021 Census, 31% (14,775) of the District of Saanich households are renters. It can be estimated that around 20% to 30% of renter households live in purpose-built rental

units, with the remainder in the secondary rental market (privately-owned and rented condominiums, houses, and suites). Purpose-built rental housing stock represents some of the District of Saanich’s most affordable housing, with over 80% of buildings (representing 4200+ units) built in 1990 or before, during the era of Federal funding programs. As seen in Figure 1, these buildings are distributed between just under 100 individual properties (and includes rental buildings designated for seniors independent and assisted living).

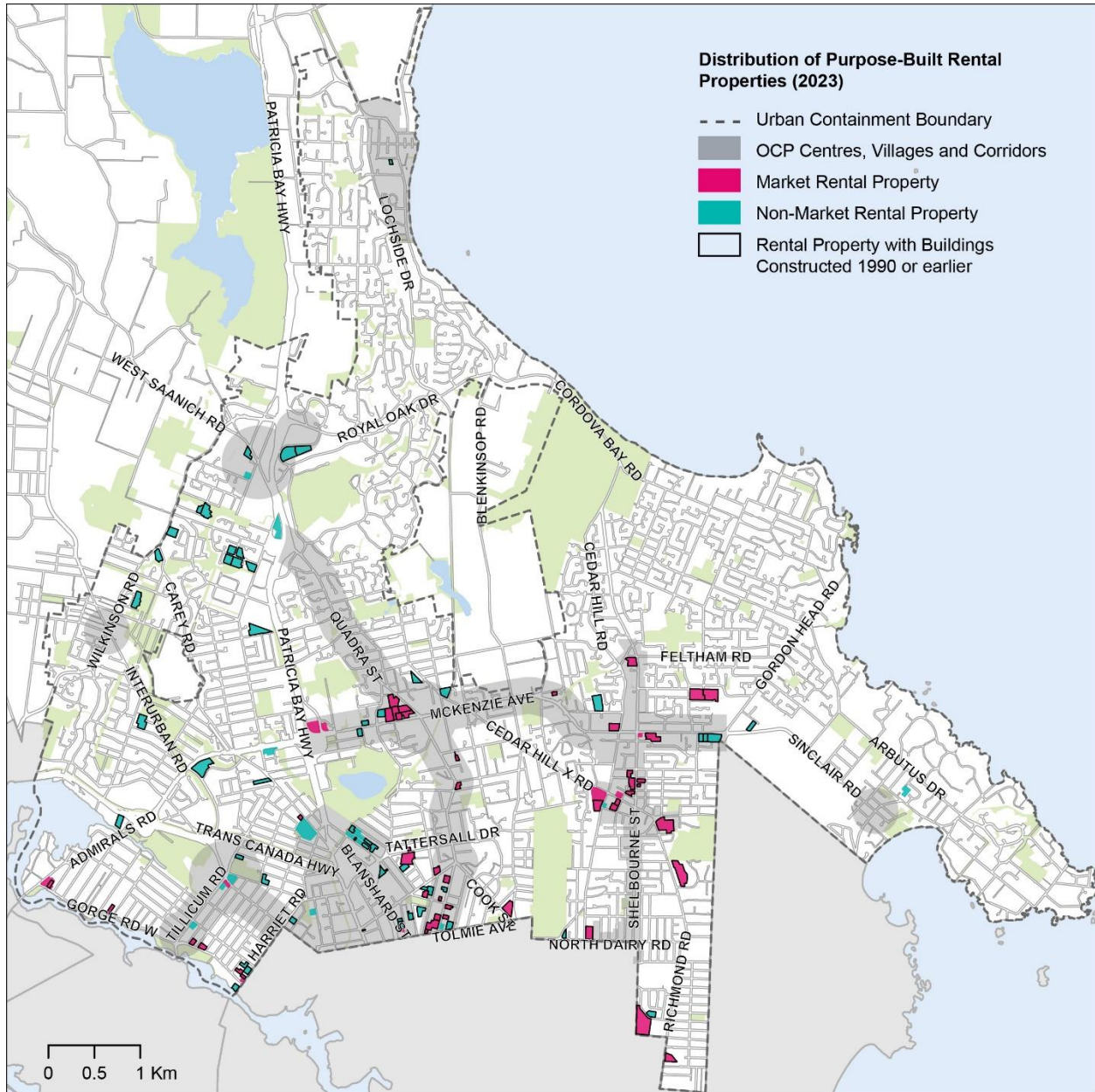


Figure 1. Distribution of purpose-built rental properties constructed 1990 or earlier

The Housing Strategy strongly encourages re-investment in aging rental housing stock, primarily through retrofits and renovations, but also recognizing that replacement may sometimes be necessary. With time, development related displacement of tenants within some of these buildings become increasingly likely. Units in older, purpose-built rental buildings generally provide rent levels at the low end of market rates (see Figure 2), making the transition

to a tight rental market with rapidly increasing average rents challenging for tenants who have to relocate. By adopting a Tenant Assistance Policy, the District of Saanich can leverage the rezoning process to demand that stronger protection for these tenants are provided by applicants.

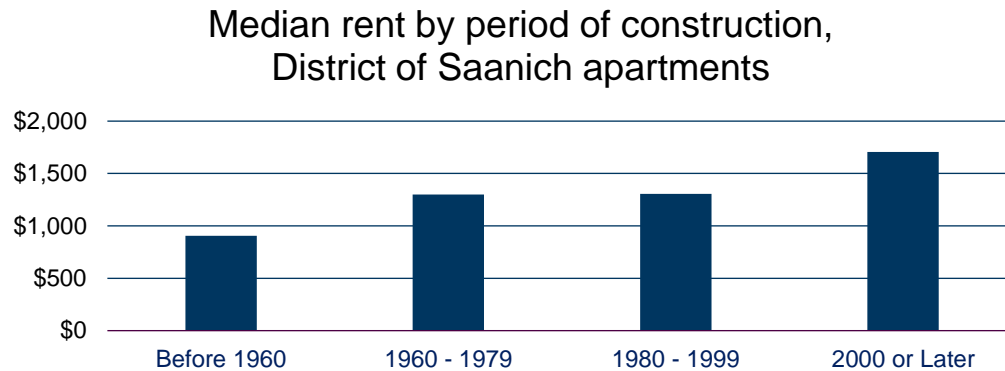


Figure 2. Median rent by period of construction, primary market apartments, District of Saanich (CMHC, 2021)

The British Columbia *Residential Tenancy Act* regulates the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants. As per *Residential Tenancy Act* Section 49(6)(a), a landlord has the right to end a tenancy for the purpose of demolition of a rental unit. *Residential Tenancy Act* Section 49.2 was introduced in 2021 to address so-called “renovictions”. It allows landlords to end tenancies to renovate or repair rental units only if the proposed renovations/repairs are substantial enough to require the unit to be vacated. With these 2021 changes, landlords must now apply to the Residential Tenancy Branch for an Order of Possession whereby an arbitrator determines if vacancy is necessary.

According to the *Residential Tenancy Act*, all necessary permits (such as building, demolition and plumbing permits) granted by the local government need to be in place before notice to vacate for the purposes of demolition or renovations is served. The notice period is four months, and tenants are entitled to one month’s rent compensation. Additionally, for buildings containing five or more rental units, tenants who are given notice to vacate for renovations/repairs have Right of First Refusal after the work is complete. The *Residential Tenancy Act* does not regulate the rent level offered upon return. With demolitions, Right of First Refusal is not required by the *Residential Tenancy Act*.

The proposed Tenant Assistance Policy is intended to augment the requirements of the *Residential Tenancy Act* by requiring property owners to provide additional financial and administrative supports for tenants who are being evicted for demolition or renovation. Under the policy, additional financial compensation would be required to help tenants face the financial burdens of moving and paying higher market rents. They would also be eligible for Right of First Refusal in the case of demolition.

In developing the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy, Staff undertook the following:

- Jurisdictional review of best practices;
- Stakeholder consultation; and
- Analysis of TAP components.

Jurisdictional review

Staff conducted a comprehensive jurisdictional scan to draw on best practice and lessons learned from other BC municipalities where tenant assistance programs are in place. Table 1 below illustrates the different applications and expectations of comparable policies. The jurisdictions studied are relevant to the District of Saanich due to characteristics such as their location or development context.

Table 1: Jurisdictional review of tenant assistance/relocation policies as applicable for market sector projects

TAP Component	City of Victoria	Town of Sidney	City of North Vancouver	Burnaby*	City of Vancouver
Application types triggering the policy	Rezoning, and as best practice with other applications	Rezoning, and as best practice with other applications	Rezoning	Rezoning	Rezoning and Development Permit
Qualifying buildings	Any building where occupied rental units need to be permanently vacated	Any Purpose-Built rental building where occupied units need to be permanently vacated	Any building or combination of buildings where 5 or more occupied rental units need to be permanently vacated	Purpose-Built rental buildings with min. 5 units, and secondary market rental buildings less than 5 units being consolidated into the above	Purpose-Built market rental; non-profit housing and co-ops; secondary rental stock where two or more lots are consolidated to build new multiple dwelling
Eligible tenants, at time of application	All tenancies active for a minimum of 1 year	-	All active tenancies	All active tenancies	All tenancies active for a minimum of 1 year
Tenant Relocation Coordinator requirement	To be hired or appointed by applicant	-	Third party to be designated by applicant	To be designated by applicant, third party is encouraged	Primary point of contact to be assigned by applicant
Requirements regarding communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Relocation Assistance	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Right of First Refusal (ROFR)	Yes, at 20% below market	Yes, within 10% of tenant's current rent	Yes, particulars to be negotiated	Yes, at tenant's current rent	Yes, at 20% below market
Moving Expenses Covered by Applicant	Yes, either by hiring a moving company, or providing lump sum based on unit size	Yes, either by hiring a moving company, or providing lump sum based on unit size	Yes, by providing lump sum based on unit size	Yes, either by hiring a moving company, or providing lump sum based on unit size	Yes, either by hiring a moving company, or providing lump sum based on unit size
Rent Compensation	Based on length of tenancy and current rent, or CMHC average if higher	Based on length of tenancy and current rent	4 months x current rent. Plus, for tenancies of 5+ years, additional \$25 per month of tenancy	Various options intended to cover difference between interim housing and return to new building	Based on length of tenancy and current rent
Consideration of tenants requiring additional assistance	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Follow-up report requirement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
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*Burnaby's Rental Use Zoning Policy requires that all rental units lost are replaced with comparable size units for returning tenants. Tenants are offered help finding alternative housing in the interim with any cost difference covered by the rezoning applicant.

The comparisons revealed many commonalities as well as nuanced differences. Interviews were conducted with local government staff to provide further insight into their policy development and outcomes.

Of note, the qualifying buildings vary between the policies studied. However, most focus on development applications that involve purpose-built rental buildings in the market sector. It is also important to note that, depending on the volume of qualifying applications, some local governments have assigned one or more full-time staff the role of managing the implementation of tenant assistance programs.

For some compensation amounts, such as Right of First Refusal rent, a range of benefit levels are observed across jurisdictions. This is largely based on development potential and the ability of some projects to afford higher benefit amounts for tenants.

Stakeholder Consultation

Following the jurisdictional review, consultation with key stakeholders was undertaken to help staff shape a policy suitable to the current local context. Three stakeholder focus groups were facilitated:

- Renters and community representatives;
- Market housing organizations; and
- Non-market housing organizations.

A summary of the stakeholder engagement can be seen in Attachment B. The discussions helped frame the Tenant Assistance Policy with respect to policy scope, tenant eligibility, and details regarding the required supports.

Key takeaways from the stakeholder engagement include:

- Non-market housing representatives emphasized that their organizations already prioritize successful relocation of tenants when needed, and that imposing Tenant Assistance Policy requirements would not add any benefit. On the contrary, an additional administrative requirement from the District of Saanich would likely slow down processes and add to costs. Notably, these organizations also work together within a network of non-profit housing providers to find new homes for tenants as needed. It was suggested that this sector is exempt from the Tenant Assistance Policy or receive modified requirements.
- It was suggested both by market housing representatives and renters that the Tenant Assistance Policy should apply projects involving both primary and secondary rental units. However, it was also suggested by representatives in the market housing focus group that there may be benefits to narrowing policy scope if Staff capacity is limited so as not to slow down application processes.
- Across all three focus groups, there was agreement that a Tenant Assistance Policy is one part of a bigger puzzle and that addressing the shortage of rental housing requires working with market and non-market providers to enable more rental housing in the District of Saanich and to fill gaps in type of supply.

- We heard from District of Saanich renters that all tenants are vulnerable to displacement in today's challenging market. However, participants in all three groups favoured an approach that consider individual needs and recognized that certain segments of the population are likely to face disproportionate difficulties if displaced (e.g. young adults, low-income seniors, Indigenous people, newcomers, people of colour, those with physical or mental disabilities, large families, single parents, and tenants on low/fixed income).
- The market housing sector stressed the importance of evaluating the policy regularly, as conditions in the rental market change.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion considerations were part of the guiding principles for developing the Housing Strategy. Prioritizing rental housing and protection for District of Saanich renters is in line with the aim to provide safe, secure, welcoming, and affordable housing for both current and future residents and foster a healthy mix of housing.

Developing the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy included targeted engagement with both District of Saanich renters and representatives from organizations serving renters in market and the non-market housing sectors. Together with the engagement consultant, Staff made a conscious effort to invite a diverse group of renters and facilitate the conversation in an inclusive manner. Staff were careful to ensure that the renter group included those with disabilities, recent immigrants, seniors, those on low/fixed incomes, people of colour, and representation from different family types and household sizes. What Staff heard through discussion with this group and the others, including discussions specifically regarding how the Tenant Assistance Policy can respond to issues related to inequity, is directly reflected in the proposed policy and implementation measures.

Focus Area 6: Enhance Community Engagement establishes diversity, equity, and inclusion as a fundamental part of addressing housing needs and implementing Housing Strategy initiatives. Through the Tenant Assistance Policy engagement process, many new connections were made with local organizations who serve equity-deserving populations. These will continue to strengthen community engagement throughout the implementation of Housing Strategy actions going forward.

PROPOSED TENANT ASSISTANCE POLICY

Based on the research and engagement undertaken, a proposed Tenant Assistance Policy has been developed (see Attachment A). The discussion below provides some of the rationale behind each element of the proposed policy and the specific support and compensation requirements. Where appropriate, the proposed District of Saanich Tenant Assistance Policy is aligned with the City of Victoria Tenant Assistance Policy to provide consistency for rezoning applicants. Should Council adopt the Tenant Assistance Policy, the description below outlines how each element would apply.

Policy Coverage

The decision to grant a rezoning is at Council's discretion, and consequently the District of Saanich Council may refuse to grant a rezoning based on a consideration such as impacts on existing rental housing units and the tenants that occupy them. By endorsing the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy, Council would set the expectation that qualifying rezoning applications need to comply with the policy. The Tenant Assistance Policy can also be used as a best practice reference for other applications (such as Development Permits, Demolition

Permits) that would result in displacement of tenants and where applicants can meet the Tenant Assistance Policy voluntarily.

The proposed Tenant Assistance Policy would apply only with rezonings resulting in five or more tenant-occupied residential units being vacated (including lot consolidations with a total of five or more tenants). This would allow Staff to focus efforts on applications affecting tenants in aging purpose-built rental buildings that are increasingly likely to be pursued for renovations or redevelopment.

Policy Exemptions

The proposed Tenant Assistance Policy exempts non-market housing providers. As Staff heard during the Non-Market Housing focus group, these organizations already have tenant relocation and assistance policies in place, and fulfilling the requirements of the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy would be onerous and costly. This exemption is in line with the direction of the Housing Strategy to support the non-market housing sector as a key provider of affordable housing in Saanich.

The proposed policy requests that non-market housing organizations include with their rezoning applications a description of how they are addressing tenant relocation, which typically is a current practice.

Submission Requirements

In order to demonstrate compliance with Tenant Assistance Policy, applicants would be required to make two submissions as part of the rezoning process.

Firstly, a Tenant Assistance Plan would be required with the rezoning application package. The applicant would share the Tenant Assistance Plan with tenants after Council has granted the rezoning and as such it functions as a commitment to providing the supports listed in the Tenant Assistance Policy.

Secondly, a Tenant Relocation Status Report would be required at the time of application for Building Permit or Demolition Permit (as applicable). As no notices to end tenancy can be served before the necessary permits are in place, it would not be expected that all tenants are relocated at that stage. However, the Report would provide an update to District of Saanich Staff regarding relocation outcomes and remaining needs.

Templates would be provided by the District of Saanich for both these submissions.

Eligible tenants

All tenancies active at the time of rezoning application would be eligible for the supports in the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy. Using the application date as the point of reference assumes that potential tenants moving in after that date would do so understanding that the property is in the process of rezoning, and the applicant would be required to disclose this to new tenants.

This is consistent with several of the policies studied in the jurisdictional review, with City of Victoria being one exception. While the City of Victoria Policy stipulates on paper that tenancies of a year or longer are eligible, City of Victoria Staff and market housing representatives confirmed that applicants are often asked to extend eligibility to all tenants in practice. Treating all current tenants the same with regards to eligibility was also favoured by the renters focus group.

Relocation Coordinator

The proposed Policy requires that the applicant designate a Tenant Relocation Coordinator in advance of the rezoning application submission. This person would be responsible for implementing the Tenant Assistance Plan and act as the key point of contact for tenants throughout the process. This person can be someone internal to the applicant's organization or from a third-party agency.

Communication with Tenants

The proposed Policy emphasizes the importance of timely and clear communication between the applicant and tenants to give tenants adequate lead time to navigate the relocation process and consider their options. The proposed Policy clearly outlines what is expected of the applicant when communicating with tenants. A template letter to be used at the outset of the rezoning process would be provided by the District of Saanich. A tenant info sheet developed by the District of Saanich would also be required to be distributed by the applicant, containing resources relevant to tenants who are at the risk of displacement

Eviction can cause considerable stress for tenants and miscommunication regarding timelines and expectations can make the situation worse. Through stakeholder consultation, staff heard from both renters and market housing representatives that some of the challenges associated with relocation can potentially be alleviated by means of clear, early communication and capacity building among both tenants and applicants. Renters expressed a desire to have helpful information available in one place, and market housing representatives suggested that the District of Saanich could help them by providing resources such as contacts for finding subsidized housing. The tenant info sheet is intended to provide this, in tandem with information to be provided on the District of Saanich website.

Relocation Assistance

Through the Tenant Assistance Plan, the applicant would commit to dialogue with tenants to find out the specific needs of each household when searching for future rental housing. This would include determining what type of unit each household is looking for (e.g. size, rent level, pets, accessibility, location). The Tenant Relocation Coordinator would be the person responsible for undertaking this dialogue and coordinating these needs.

This approach puts an emphasis on working with each household based on their individual needs recognizing that tenants will have varying degrees of ability to navigate relocation. Needs may range from tenants preferring to find alternative housing without any assistance, to others needing help with finding prospective units as well as additional steps on the road to securing a tenancy agreement.

There was agreement among all stakeholder groups as well as local government Staff interviewed as part of the jurisdictional review that finding future accommodation for tenants is the biggest challenge among the elements of tenant assistance today. While several of the precedent policies specify that a minimum number of possible rental options be offered to each tenant, Staff heard strong support from all stakeholders for an approach that focuses efforts where they are most needed and that does not make assumptions regarding what is most important to tenants needing to relocate.

Right of First Refusal

The proposed Policy requires that all eligible tenants be offered a Right of First Refusal to return to a new or renovated rental suite at the subject site when the development/renovation is completed. The applicant would be required to offer a comparable unit (in terms of number of bedrooms and level of accessibility) at a rent level 20% below current market rents. Income

testing may be used to confirm that returning households require that below-market rent level, otherwise market rent will be offered.

While providing a Right of First Refusal is a requirement in all precedent policies studied, the expected rent level varies. 20% below market is consistent with City of Victoria's current Policy and was found to strike a balance between what renters and applicants currently believe to be reasonable within the local context. Market housing representatives also spoke in favour of keeping specifics such as this consistent to the City of Victoria's Policy for ease of use. While the City of Victoria's Policy does not mention income testing, Staff found agreement among stakeholders that support should be distributed according to need (both generally, and specifically regarding rent discounts with Right of First Refusal).

Moving Expenses and Assistance

The proposed Tenant Assistance Policy requires the applicant to cover the cost of moving for all eligible tenants either by providing a lump-sum payment or by hiring an insured moving company to handle the move. The lump sum would be geared to unit size, as specified in the proposed Policy.

This approach is consistent with all the precedent policies studied. Individuals in the renters focus group pointed out that having the applicant arrange and pay for moving is likely important to many tenants such as those without family in the area. Representatives in the market housing group mentioned that moving assistance is an example of a policy element that is likely to be welcomed by most tenants even some that may require little support with relocation otherwise.

Rent Compensation

Under the proposed Policy, all eligible tenants would be entitled to rent compensation beyond what the *Residential Tenancy Act* requires. The amount of compensation would be a factor of length of tenancy and current rent (or the CMHC average rent for comparable units in the District of Saanich if that is higher).

This is consistent with most precedent policies. The intent is to mitigate the financial burden of transitioning into a rental market that has seen rapid recent rent increases. Statistically, units in older buildings rent for well below average rents and long-term tenants are often paying rents that are significantly below comparable vacant units. The gap is generally in direct proportion to length of tenancy.

Market housing representatives spoke in favour of factoring in length of tenure rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

Tenants in Need of Additional Assistance

The proposed policy also addresses the fact that some tenants may require additional support beyond what is previously listed. This section includes a non-exhaustive list of the types of supports that may be needed (e.g. language support, support to those with disabilities, connecting with non-profits), and establishes that the applicant should inquire about additional needs and commit to meeting them within reason.

Variations of this was seen in most comparable policies acknowledging a wide variety of different life circumstances and a spectrum of resilience among people affected by displacement. Stakeholders in all three focus groups shared experiences highlighting diverse needs and abilities that may affect the types of support that would be most helpful. Through the

proposed policy, it is emphasized that applicants must be open to a variety of additional needs and responsible for trying to meet them.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

In order to have all necessary administrative forms and procedures ready, Staff recommend that the Tenant Assistance Policy come into effect six weeks after Council adoption (estimated June 12, 2023), and that rezoning applications received before that date are not required to comply with the Policy. Preparations will include updating the District website with clear information for applicants and tenants who will be impacted by the Tenant Assistance Policy.

Once in place, the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy would require that qualifying applications include a Tenant Assistance Plan with the rezoning application. The Tenant Assistance Plan would be referred to Housing Division Staff for review. Applicants would then work with Housing Staff to finalize the Tenant Assistance Plan prior to a Council decision, to ensure that the Tenant Assistance Plan meets the Policy requirements. After Council's approval of the rezoning application, the applicant would be responsible for implementing the Tenant Assistance Plan. Together with application for the Building Permit(s) or Demolition Permit(s) that would result in vacating the rental suites in question, the applicant would submit the Tenant Relocation Status Report for Housing staff to review.

Staff recommend that a review of the Tenant Assistance Policy be conducted after two years. Should immediate changes be required in the near term, Staff will bring those to Council before the two-year term is up.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council endorse the recommendations as outlined in the Staff report.
2. That Council endorse the recommendations as outlined in the Staff report with changes.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications in implementing a Tenant Assistance Policy.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

Receiving and reviewing the Tenant Assistance Plan, proposed to be required with qualifying applications, would be handled within the Planning Department and involve Administrative Staff, the Project Manager, and Housing Division Staff. Receiving the Tenant Relocation Status Report (to be submitted with Building/Demolition Permit applications) would also involve Building Inspection Division staff in the Building, Bylaw, Licensing and Legal Services Department who would refer to Planning (Housing Division) for review.

Staff within the Planning Department would also work together with Communications Division Staff in Corporate Services on outward facing messaging for applicants and tenants in preparation for policy implementation.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Developing a Tenant Assistance Policy is consistent with initiative 2-12 in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan.

CONCLUSION

As per direction in the Saanich Housing Strategy and the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, Staff have developed a proposed Tenant Assistance Policy for Council's consideration. The proposed Policy is intended to provide clear direction for property owners and developers regarding support for current residential tenants who are being permanently displaced through redevelopment or renovations. If adopted, the policy would help Council evaluate applicants commitments towards tenant assistance as a key part of development proposals.

Similar policies are in place in many jurisdictions within the region, and across British Columbia and Canada. A comprehensive jurisdictional review was undertaken to gain knowledge regarding best practices and lessons learned and understand what is appropriate within the Saanich context.

Additionally, Staff engaged with stakeholders through three focus groups:

- Saanich renters and community representatives
- Market housing organizations
- Non-market housing organizations.

The proposed Tenant Assistance Policy would apply to all rezoning applications which would result in the permanent displacement of five or more tenant households. Furthermore, the Policy is recommended to be used as best practice with any application that involves displacement of tenants, such as applications for Development Permits and Demolition Permits.

Rezoning applicants in the non-market housing sector would be exempt from the proposed policy. However, these applicants would be asked to describe how they are addressing tenant displacement when making rezoning applications to the District of Saanich.

A Tenant Assistance Plan would be required to be submitted at the time of rezoning. The Tenant Assistance Plan would hold applicants accountable for providing assistance and compensation to eligible tenants and helping to reduce the burden of eviction and relocation. The proposed Policy outlines expectations with regards to communication with tenants, relocation assistance, Right of First Refusal, moving expenses, rent compensation, and support for tenants needing additional assistance. A Tenant Relocation Status Report would also be required to be submitted at the time of application for a Development Permit or Demolition Permit (as applicable).

Staff recommend that Council adopt the proposed Tenant Assistance Policy to be brought into effect six weeks after adoption (estimated to be June 12, 2023), and that applications received before that date are not required to comply. Staff also recommend that Council direct Staff to report back with a two-year review of the Tenant Assistance Policy before year end 2025.

Prepared by:



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Reviewed by:



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Reviewed by:



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Approved by:



Lindsay Chase
Director of Planning

ABM/jsp

Attachments: Attachment A: Proposed Tenant Assistance Policy
Attachment B: Engagement Summary

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning

Brent Reems, Chief Administrative Officer

COUNCIL POLICY

NAME: TENANT ASSISTANCE POLICY	
ISSUED:	INDEX REFERENCE:
AMENDED:	COUNCIL REFERENCE:

1) PURPOSE

The purpose of the Tenant Assistance Policy is to mitigate negative impacts on residential tenants being displaced as a consequence of substantial renovations or redevelopment of their current homes.

The British Columbia Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) regulates the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants by law. Saanich's Tenant Assistance Policy serves to augment the RTA by requiring property owners to offer additional support to eligible tenants being displaced.

2) POLICY COVERAGE

2.1. Applicability

This policy applies to all rezoning applications that would result in a minimum of five residential rental units being permanently vacated due to demolition or substantial renovations. This includes rental units both in the primary and the secondary rental market.

Additionally, the policy serves as best practice guidelines for any other applications which may result in the loss of residential rental units, such as applications for Development Permits and Demolition Permits that are not part of a rezoning application.

2.2. Eligible tenants

All tenancies active when the rezoning application is submitted are eligible under this policy. Support will be provided per rental unit and distributed to those named in the tenancy agreement.

Tenants who move into a rental unit on the property after the submission date of the rezoning application are not eligible. It is vital that incoming tenants are made aware that the property is in the process of rezoning.

3) TENANT ASSISTANCE IN MARKET HOUSING DEVELOPMENTS

3.1. Tenant Assistance Plan

Market housing projects meeting eligibility described in Section 2.1 must submit a Tenant Assistance Plan as part of their rezoning application. The Tenant Assistance Plan must include the following elements:

3.1.1. Tenant Relocation Coordinator

A Tenant Relocation Coordinator shall be hired or appointed by the applicant in the pre-application stage. The Tenant Relocation Coordinator will act as the contact person for

eligible tenants throughout the application process and coordinate the implementation of the Tenant Assistance Plan post approval. They will be available to tenants at regular business hours, and their contact information will be provided directly to tenants and posted in conspicuous places within the building(s).

3.1.2. Communication with Tenants

All tenants shall be kept informed of the development process and their rights as per this policy. The Tenant Assistance Plan must include a section on communications, and must confirm the applicant's commitment to providing the following communication to all eligible tenants as a minimum:

- A letter outlining the development plans and expected timelines, the extent of the Tenant Assistance Policy, and the role of the Tenant Relocation Coordinator
- Ongoing updates to tenants in writing throughout the redevelopment process to notify of key milestones
- A copy of the "Resources for Tenants" info sheet, as provided by the District of Saanich
- A copy of the Tenant Assistance Plan, post application approval
- Opportunities for each household to meet with the Tenant Relocation Coordinator to discuss relocation needs (see 3.1.3 Relocation Assistance and 3.1.7 Additional Assistance)

Reasonable efforts should be taken to ensure that any tenants requesting support in a language other than English are provided with information in their preferred language.

3.1.3. Relocation Assistance

The Tenant Relocation Coordinator shall assist eligible tenants with the search and securing of alternative rental housing, unless otherwise indicated by the tenant. It is expected that the Tenant Relocation Coordinator make all reasonable efforts to:

- Through dialogue with the tenant household, identify what type of rental unit would be suitable with regards to number of bedrooms, rent level, location, accessibility, and other needs.
- Utilize their expertise and network to find a suitable vacant rental unit that meets those needs.
- Assist the tenant in the process of securing a suitable unit (for example by writing or reviewing applications, arranging showings, providing references, etc.).

Applicants are not expected to provide relocation assistance in cases where tenants prefer to relocate outside of the Capital Regional District, nor to tenants who are looking to purchase a home.

Where possible, applicants are encouraged to implement a phased renovation or redevelopment process whereby residents can be relocated in stages to other units on the site without ending tenancies.

3.1.4. Right of First Refusal

Where applicable, eligible tenants shall be offered the Right of First Refusal for a comparable rental unit in the new or renovated building(s), i.e., a unit with the same number of bedrooms and the same degree of accessibility. Said unit shall be offered to the eligible tenant at a rent level 20% below starting market rent levels, with the following considerations:

- The landlord may use income testing to verify that the 20% discount on market rates is necessary for the rent to be affordable for the returning tenant.
- If market rate for the comparable unit is less than 30% of the household's before-tax income, Right of First Refusal can be offered at market rate.
- If a tenant's current rent is higher than the proposed 20% below market rent level, the Right of First Refusal can be offered at the tenant's current rent.

3.1.5. Moving Expenses and Assistance

All eligible tenants will receive moving assistance at the cost of the applicant. One of two options shall be provided at the discretion of the applicant:

- 1) An insured moving company may be hired by the applicant, with all arrangements and costs covered by the applicant for moves within the Capital Regional District; or
- 2) Flat rate compensation may be provided to the tenant in an amount equal to one month's rent, at the Saanich Primary Rental Market average rent level for units of the same size (number of bedrooms) (see Table 2). This is in addition to any compensation payable under 3.1.6.

When a tenant is exercising the Right of First Refusal (Section 3.1.4), moving assistance as per the above must also be provided for the move to the new or renovated unit.

3.1.6. Rent Compensation

Eligible tenants shall receive rent compensation in the form of a lump sum payment, free rent, or a combination of both, at the discretion of the applicant. When the compensation is in the form of a payment, the payment shall be provided to the tenant no later than at the time of the Notice to End Tenancy.

The applicant is strongly encouraged to consult tenants about their preferred form of compensation in cases where a lump sum payment may affect their eligibility for programs based on taxable income, such as BC Housing's Rental Assistance Program (RAP), Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER), Income Assistance, Disability Assistance, etc.

Compensation will be based on the tenant's rent level and the length of tenancy at the time when the rezoning application is submitted, as per Table 1 below.

Length of tenancy	Compensation equivalent to (using rent level)
Up to 5 years	3 months' rent
5-9 years	4 months' rent
10-19 years	5 months' rent
20+ years	6 months' rent

Table 1: Compensation Based on Length of Tenancy

The rent level refers to the higher of:

- 1) The tenant's current rent at time of rezoning application; or
- 2) The Primary Rental Market average rent for units of the same size (number of bedrooms) within the District of Saanich, as per the most recently published statistics on the CMHC Housing Market Information Portal.

Unit size	CMHC Average rent
Bachelor	1,114
1 bedroom	1,299
2 bedroom	1,665
3 bedroom +	1,994

Source: CMHC Rental Market Survey

Table 2: Primary Rental Market Average Rents, Saanich, October 2022¹

3.1.7. Additional Assistance

There may be eligible tenants who require additional assistance with finding a new rental unit and/or moving beyond what is specified in sections 3.1.3 and 3.1.5. Examples include (but are not limited to) elderly tenants, tenants on low or fixed incomes, and people with physical or mental disabilities.

The applicant is expected to identify tenants in need of additional assistance and make reasonable efforts to meet those needs. The Tenant Assistance Plan must note the number of tenants who may require additional assistance, and a summary of the types of supports that will be provided. In the case where additional needs emerge later in the process, reasonable assistance shall not be denied.

Examples of additional assistance that may be required include:

- Connecting with health organizations or non-profit services
- Help obtaining social housing or rent supplements
- Additional help with packing or moving
- Arranging travel to and assistance at apartment showings
- Additional or alternative means of communication regarding the relocation process

¹ Table 2 is for reference only. Applicants should consult the CMHC Housing Market Information Portal (Full View) for the most recently published average rents for Saanich DM.

- Language support

3.2. Tenant Relocation Status Report

A Tenant Relocation Status Report shall be completed and submitted to the Planning Department before the issuance of any building permits pertaining to the site.

The Report must include the following information:

- A list of eligible tenants by unit number in original building(s)
- A summary of the financial compensation given to each tenant household
- A summary of the relocation status of each tenant household
- An indication of how many tenants are intending to exercise the Right of First Refusal, if applicable.

4) EXEMPTION FOR NON-MARKET HOUSING APPLICANTS

Non-market housing providers are exempt from the Tenant Assistance Policy. The District recognizes that non-market housing providers typically have established tenant relocation and assistance policies and/or practices in place.

Non-market housing applicants meeting the criteria outlined in Section 2.1 are requested to submit an overview of the relocation assistance provided to eligible tenants as part of their rezoning application. Section 3 should be considered as best practice guidance for the submission.

5) VACANT UNITS

The District may request additional information from the applicant in some cases where a rezoning application involves vacant rental units. The Tenant Assistance Policy may be applied retroactively, if tenants are found to have been evicted prematurely (for example, a notice to end tenancy for demolition was served without proper permits and approvals in place).

6) FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

This policy recognizes that for the Tenant Assistance Plan to operate effectively, the applicant will need to collect and use tenants' personal information. Some personal information may also be disclosed to select District Staff. Therefore, the development and implementation of the Tenant Assistance Plan, as well as the Tenant Relocation Status Report, must comply with the following privacy requirements contained in the Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

- Personal information can only be collected, used, and disclosed for the purposes described in this policy.
- Personal information must always be protected from unauthorized collection, use, access, and disclosure.
- Tenants must be made aware that:
 - providing their personal information is voluntary, and that non-disclosure does not prevent them from participating in the Tenant Assistance Plan.

- tenants have the right to know how their personal information is being used.
 - tenants have the right to access their personal information and to request corrections of it where applicable.
- Tenants will not be asked to provide any personal information that is not necessary to assist them under the Tenant Assistance Plan.
- Tenants' personal information will not be retained longer than is necessary to assist them under the Tenant Assistance Plan.
- Tenant Assistance Plans should not be forwarded to anyone, City staff or otherwise, not directly involved in the completion, participation in, or evaluation of the plan.

DISTRICT OF SAANICH TENANT ASSISTANCE POLICY

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

Prepared by:



January 27, 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The District of Saanich lies within the territories of the ləkʷəŋən peoples represented by the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations and the W̱SÁNEĆ peoples represented by the Tsartlip, Pauquachin, Tsawout, Tseycum and Malahat Nations. The First Peoples have been here since time immemorial and their history in this area is long and rich.

MODUS Planning, Design & Engagement is located on the unceded and occupied lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̍əm, Skwxwú7mesh and sə́lilwətaʔt Nations.

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1. BACKGROUND

The District of Saanich is developing a new Tenant Assistance Policy (TAP) as a priority action within the *Housing Strategy* Focus Area 2: Promote and Protect Rental Housing. The purpose of a TAP is to help mitigate potential negative socio-economic impacts when redevelopment or substantial renovation of rental buildings occurs. The Policy will require support for existing tenants as part of the application process and will work alongside several other actions aimed at preserving and adding to Saanich's rental housing stock.

As part of the policy development, the District of Saanich sought feedback from impacted stakeholder groups, including non-market housing organizations, renters and community representatives, and market housing organizations. This engagement process aimed to:

- **Inform stakeholders** on the Tenant Assistance Policy and related processes.
- **Evaluate the needs and concerns** of a diverse group of renters, housing providers, developers, property managers and landlords.
- **Build relationships** with key stakeholders throughout the implementation of the *Housing Strategy*.

Stakeholder comments on the Policy's criteria, its requirements and implementation will inform the final Policy, for Council consideration in the first quarter of 2023 (tentatively).

This report includes an overview of the engagement process and a summary of what we heard throughout. It is not meant to be a complete report of conversations, but rather a summary of the key themes that emerged.

2. WHAT WE DID

Through December 2022, we hosted three virtual focus groups via Zoom. The focus groups brought together representatives and individuals of similar stakeholder types for discussion. These included:

- Non-market housing organizations, from 2:00 – 4:00 pm on December 14th
- Renters and community representatives, from 6:30 – 8:30 pm on December 15th
- Market housing organizations, from 9:00 – 10:30 am on December 22nd

All sessions began with a welcome and group introduction, followed by a background presentation on the Tenant Assistance Policy by District of Saanich staff. Group discussions were broken into three topics, covering Policy and eligibility criteria, Policy supports (its requirements), and Policy success (its implementation). For each stakeholder group, we developed targeted discussion questions that aimed to address varying group needs and concerns.

To encourage open, honest feedback and to protect privacy, the sessions were not recorded although all comments were captured on a virtual facilitation board (see Appendices B-D). The facilitation board was circulated post-event for participants to make any corrections or add further comments.

3. WHO WE HEARD FROM

To reach a diverse audience of Saanich renters and community representatives, along with non-market and market housing organizations, we developed a potential stakeholder list. The list was populated through a mix of desktop research and existing District relationships. Outreach was conducted through email and phone, with an emphasis on leveraging organizational relationships. For the renter and community representative focus group, an honorarium of \$25/hour was offered as an expression of gratitude for renters' sharing their time and experience.

To maintain privacy and low-barrier engagement, we did not ask any targeted demographic questions. Rather, each session began with an open-ended icebreaker for participants to self-identify their relationship to renting / rental properties and tenant assistance. The list below summarizes who we engaged with through the focus groups. A total of 19 people participated in the engagement sessions.

- **Non-market housing organizations** – Five representatives across provincial, regional, and local housing developers and providers. These included the Greater Victoria Housing Society, Co-operative Housing Federation of BC, BC Non-profit Housing Association, and Beacon Community Services.
- **Renters & community representatives** – A group of seven Saanich renters and a SCAN representative, bringing diverse perspectives across ages, incomes, abilities, length of residency in Saanich and Canada (including long-term residents and immigrants) as well as varying household sizes and rental types, with most living in older, affordable purpose-built rental buildings.
- **Market housing organizations** – Six representatives across regional and local housing developers, consultants, and advocacy groups, as well as property managers and landlords. These included Cascadia Architects, Landlord BC, Groupe Denux, Aryze Developments, and Devon Properties.

4. WHAT WE HEARD

This section includes a summary of what we heard through stakeholder engagement. The summary is organized by focus group and discussion question. Where possible, stakeholder comments are grouped into key themes. A complete copy of the session notes can be found in Appendices A-C.

4.1. NON-MARKET HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS

POLICY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Q: How does your organization currently approach tenant assistance? What have you seen elsewhere?

Non-market housing organizations shared their established procedures and existing practices, these included:

- Detailed re-housing plans for how tenants will be relocated
- Dedicated relocation staff to support tenants in navigating relocation based on their needs and preferences
- Covering the cost of moving expenses
- Maintaining affordable rent prices, at 80% market rate or less
- Phasing renovations and relocation
- Working with other non-profits to share resources and help to re-house tenants

Participants also referenced familiarity with tenant relocation practices under the City of Vancouver Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy and the City of Victoria's Tenant Assistance Policy.

Q: What would be the potential risks and benefits of a Policy that applies to the non-market housing sector in Saanich?

Non-market housing organizations shared several risks associated with the Policy applying to the non-profit sector. The risks related to:

- **Existing practices.** The group expressed that tenant assistance is already provided through internal non-profit practices.
- **Administrative burden.** The group suggested the Policy would add an administrative burden on the sector, particularly for smaller non-profits with less staff capacity. In addition, there was a question if meeting the TAP requirements would take the place of, or be in an addition to, the application required for renovations or repairs under the BC Residential Tenancy Act.
- **Financial viability.** We heard concerns that requiring financial compensation is not reasonable for non-market housing developers, given their existing relocation efforts. Participants noted that providing financial compensation would make it increasingly challenging to maintain affordable rental rates, particularly for tenants who receive Income Assistance. Participants noted it is unfair to expect non-profits to pay additional months' rent, especially if they are providing full relocation and rehousing services. Participants noted the City of Victoria's TAP allows flexibility for non-profits regarding financial compensation. However, one participant shared that they had experienced challenges in being granted this flexibility.

We did not hear any benefits of applying a Tenant Assistance Policy to the non-market housing sector.

Q: Any there any other thoughts on the qualifying criteria you would like to share?

We heard a request to exclude the non-market housing sector as it already practices tenant assistance that meets or exceeds the proposed Saanich TAP.

POLICY SUPPORTS

Q: What policy supports do you think are reasonable and important to be provided by the market housing sector vs. the non-market housing sector?

Through discussion, non-market housing organizations raised considerations related to:

- **Current practices.** The group shared an example of how tenant relocation is currently supported through non-profit redevelopment (i.e., Nigel Valley). The group indicated that regulating ROFR at 20% below market rate (i.e., the requirement in Victoria's TAP) is feasible for non-profit developers, although there is concern these rates may still be unaffordable for some tenants. We heard it is already challenging for non-profits to meet current rental rates for tenants with fixed income.
- **Scale of operations.** We heard it is important to consider an applicants' access to resources and that ability to meet Policy requirements may vary by the scale of the organization. For example, a small-scale landlord carrying out renovations will have less ability to support tenants compared to a larger corporation, and for-profit developers may have more capacity to support tenant relocation within their portfolios than non-profit organizations.
- **Development support.** We heard a need for the District to work with, rather than against, non-market and market developers, and to address concerns about the potential cost burden and additional steps in the approval process created by a TAP.

Q: What would be the biggest challenges for your organization (or sector) when it comes to meeting these types of requirements?

Participants shared challenges related to the **additional cost** of meeting the Policy requirements. The group suggested that:

- The administrative burden from an additional regulatory process and the requirement for financial compensation (e.g., 4 months' rent) would add delays to redevelopment and likely add to the cost of housing.
- Non-market organizations are currently supporting tenants through redevelopment and major redevelopments; however smaller non-profits would not be able to fulfill the suggested Policy financial requirements.
- It is already difficult to finance non-profit development (including operating and utility costs) with highly subsidized rents.

Q: What types of supports would have the greatest impact for the renters that you serve in Saanich?

We heard the greatest impact of the Policy for renters in Saanich would be having established tenant relocation guidelines and a tenant assistance program that applies to for-profit development during the rezoning process before occupancy permits are granted.

Participants stressed that the TAP should be seen as one approach to supporting tenants within a larger housing system. In addition to the Policy, there is a need to increase the general rental housing stock across the region, including co-ops and non-profit housing.

Q: Are there population groups that face more challenges in finding affordable, adequate rental housing?

Non-market housing organizations identified the following vulnerable tenant populations:

- Youth
- Seniors
- Indigenous peoples
- People of colour
- Newcomers
- Tenants with disabilities
- Tenants with mental health challenges
- Single-parent households
- Large households with four or more children

Q: Do you have any ideas for how to identify and support renters who may need additional support, beyond the basic policy requirements?

Participants raised the difficulty in identifying individuals living with mental health challenges. The group also shared that supporting vulnerable tenants could include:

- **Education and awareness.** It was suggested there is a need to improve tenant awareness of existing programs and supports (e.g., BC Housing Registry), and improve education and training for service providers who work with tenants with mental health challenges.
- **Partnerships.** We heard that collaboration and partnerships across non-profit organizations may help to improve tenant relocation and sharing of resources.

POLICY SUCCESS

Q: How do you see the TAP impacting the work your organization (or sector) is already doing?

We heard the TAP would negatively impact the work the non-market housing sector is already doing. Participants also provided suggestions to support non-market housing in general. Concerns and suggestions included:

- **Delays in the redevelopment process.** It was suggested that delays to redevelopment would impact rent rates. We heard concerns about the cost implications if Policy requirements would need to be met before development approval.
- **Financial viability.** Participants shared concerns that meeting the Policy would impact the financial viability of non-profit housing development, particularly given the current high cost of land in Saanich. Participants suggested a Community Amenity Contribution or Development Cost Charge requirement towards non-market housing may help the sector to manage costs related to the Tenant Assistance Policy.

Q: What additional resources may be needed from the District in order to meet the Policy expectations?

The group suggested the District could provide the following resources to support non-market housing organizations to meet Policy requirements:

- **Staffing.** Participants referenced the City of Vancouver’s Renter Office as a means of providing additional capacity to support tenants through relocation.
- **Funding.** It was suggested that increased funding would be needed for non-profits to take on the additional workload associated with required tenant relocation support.

Q: What is reasonable to expect of non-market housing developers in terms of proving that the policy has been met?

Non-market housing organizations raised the following considerations and concerns related to the Policy implementation:

- **Final report.** We heard concerns that requiring a final tenant assistance report prior to occupancy permits will delay the process and increase costs.
- **Policy monitoring and review.** The group raised questions about how the District will measure the impact of the TAP, and the challenges associated with conducting tenant follow-up without breaching the Privacy Act.

Q: What does success look like for this policy from the non-market housing perspective?

Participants defined success as:

- Building in flexibility for, or excluding, the non-profit sector from the Saanich Tenant Assistance Policy.
- Non-market housing developers can continue to provide affordable rent rates.

Beyond the TAP, we heard ideas for how the District can support affordable non-market rental properties. These included:

- Pre-zoning across the District to support higher density for rental development without a rezoning application, like in Vancouver.
- Implementing policies to prioritize non-profit development, similar to Burnaby.
- Streamlining rezoning approval processes for non-market development, like in Colwood.

- Equal support of non-market housing development across jurisdictions in BC.
- Allowing more flexibility in building typologies (e.g., modular housing).
- Addressing the financialization of housing and lack of rental stock.
- Providing funding to the non-market sector.

4.2. RENTERS & COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES

POLICY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Q: What aspects of the policy criteria are most important to you and why?

We heard support for the Policy and the importance of **protecting a diversity of Saanich tenants**, particularly as the District continues to grow. Participants shared that:

- All tenants, regardless of the length of tenancy and rental types, should be included under the Policy and eligibility criteria.
- Saanich tenants experience housing insecurity.
- Tenants who identify as disabled experience challenges in finding accessible housing.
- Long-term tenants are feeling forced out of their homes when neighbouring units are renovated.

POLICY SUPPORTS

Q: Which policy supports are the most important to you and why?

We heard about the benefit of providing a range of supports to meet a range of tenant needs. Tenants and community representatives commented on the following supports:

- **Relocation coordinator.** Participants most often identified a relocation coordinator as the most important policy requirement. Tenants shared that finding affordable housing that meets their needs is challenging, particularly for newcomers or those with unique housing needs. We heard that a relocation coordinator could help to alleviate some of the time, energy, and stress of relocation in supporting tenants through the process. It was suggested this role would help to coordinate viewings and applications, negotiate costs, and liaise with BC Housing for supportive housing. We also heard a concern about the capacity of a coordinator to be able to take on this workload.
- **Communication plan.** We heard that clear, written requirements can help to manage tenant expectations and to ensure all parties are on the same page. It was suggested that communication from the developer should include the timeline and plan for redevelopment.
- **Financial compensation & moving expenses.** We heard that covering moving expenses is important to many tenants, particularly those without family in the area. Participants also suggested that financial compensation may be more important to younger tenants than other Policy requirements, like relocation support or the Right of First Refusal.

- **Right of First Refusal.** Renters and community representatives suggested the ROFR may be most important for long-term tenants with ties to the neighbourhood such as their medical services and social connections. There was support for the ROFR in the event tenants are displaced because of renovations.

Q: If you have any previous experience with tenant assistance, what worked well? What didn't?

Tenants and community representatives did not have any experience with formal tenant assistance and shared challenges related to finding affordable rental housing in Saanich. These included:

- The time and energy needed to find new rental housing.
- The lack of rental housing options.
- The high cost of rental housing in Saanich.
- A lack of resources to support the rental process, particularly for newcomers.

Q: Are there population groups that face more challenges in finding affordable, adequate rental housing? What types of support would have the greatest impact for these renters in Saanich?

The group suggested that **most renters are vulnerable** and raised the challenge of using income to define vulnerability. Renters and community representatives identified the following vulnerable tenant populations:

- Youth and students
- Seniors
- Families
- Indigenous peoples
- People of colour
- Newcomers
- Long-term tenants with ties to the community
- Persons with disabilities
- Individuals living with mental health challenges
- Individuals with low or very low income
- Individuals on fixed incomes
- Victims of abuse

It was suggested that the ability to support tenants aging in place would have a great impact to vulnerable tenants.

POLICY SUCCESS

Q: What additional resources or materials do you think the District can provide that would help tenants through this process?

We heard that additional **communication materials** from the District would be helpful through this process. Suggestions included:

- Clear and accessible communication to tenants on the Policy requirements, tenant rights and supporting resources. It will be important that these resources are simple and translated when appropriate.
- Early and accessible communication from developers that are standardized by the District. Communication should outline the redevelopment process and description, including the timeline and opportunities for engagement (ideally before the rezoning application is submitted). We heard a reference to the City of Victoria's *Tenant Assistance Policy Guide* that outlines a process for property owners when submitting a Tenant Assistance Plan and provides supporting documents (e.g., instructions for applicants, sample letters to tenants, etc.).
- Communication and resources may be provided through centralized support (e.g., one webpage or phone line) with responses to frequently asked questions for tenants, as well as in-person or via social media. This could also be linked to other initiatives within the *Housing Strategy*.

Q: What does success look like for this policy from your perspective?

Participants defined success as:

- Ensuring everyone has a place to call home.
- Protecting tenants from the financialization of housing.
- Engaging with renters through all stages of policy development, including implementation and evaluation, and conducting follow-up interviews to monitor policy success (i.e., how they experienced the process, where they are relocated, etc.).
- Promoting strong, socially connected neighbourhoods where residents live nearby the services and amenities they access regularly. Additional suggestions beyond the TAP included development requirements for supportive housing and community supports like childcare through methods such as Community Amenity Contributions.

4.3. MARKET HOUSING ORGANIZATIONS

POLICY AND ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Q: What are some of the opportunities and challenges of the Policy applying to secondary rentals?

Market housing organizations shared the following opportunity of the Policy applying to secondary rentals:

- **Level playing field.** We heard that including secondary rentals would ensure all development is treated the same in Saanich.

The group shared the following challenges:

- **Additional workload.** Participants shared concerns that applying the Policy to secondary rental housing would create an increased workload for both the District and the sector. It was noted that there are efficiencies of scale, and the process should be streamlined for both the applicant and the District to avoid additional delays and cost implications.

Q: What do you think about encouraging voluntary Policy compliance with applications that do not require rezoning?

We did not hear any comments or concerns about encouraging voluntary Policy compliance for applications that do not require rezoning.

Q: Are there any other thoughts on the qualifying criteria you would like to share?

The market housing group provided several considerations related to the Policy's qualifying criteria. These included:

- **Tenant eligibility.** It was suggested that an income-based approach to tenant eligibility may tailor the program to tenants' financial needs rather than to the length of tenancy. Participants noted the length of tenancy does not necessarily equate to vulnerability and that a needs-based approach would help to place greater focus on more vulnerable tenants.
- **Policy triggers.** There was concern the Policy may disincentive new construction in the District. It was suggested that a greater attention be placed on supporting tenants in the case of major renovations.
- **Policy flexibility.** We heard there is an opportunity to adjust the Policy depending on the current vacancy rate across Saanich. For instance, the regulation could be relaxed when there is a high vacancy.

POLICY SUPPORTS

Q: What might be some of the biggest challenges for your business when it comes to meeting the requirements of a Tenant Assistance Policy?

Market housing organizations raised many challenges to meeting the TAP requirements. These included:

- **Relocation coordination.** The group shared that it is difficult to support individual tenant needs and manage tenant expectations through the process of finding new housing. Participants noted concerns about a Policy that places too strong a requirement on relocation coordination as a responsibility of the developer, and expressed financial compensation is an easier support to provide. It was also suggested the District could develop standardized information sheets for tenants to navigate the subsidized housing process.
- **Right of First Refusal.** In the group's experience, there is often little uptake of the ROFR through redevelopment as tenants most often only move once. We heard concerns that the ROFR is challenging to meet given it adds uncertainty to the process and can impact the financial viability of projects. Participants raised the need for additional clarity regarding the requirement for the ROFR returning rental rates. In other words, whether the Policy would require affordable rates based on individual income or standard rates that are subsidized and/or below market. We also heard a comment for BC Housing to support relocating tenants to non-market housing, so to lessen the developers' expense associated with the ROFR.

- **Tenant eligibility.** The group raised challenges with instances where tenants are forced to relocate more than once due to redevelopment or major renovations at multiple locations and subsequently qualify for tenant assistance more than once (e.g., as can occur with the Victoria Tenant Assistance Policy). They suggested adding a clause to prevent this (e.g., the City of Burnaby’s policy).
- **Vulnerable tenant support.** We heard that there are greater challenges in finding housing for those living with mental health challenges, compared to those who qualify as priority groups within BC Housing (e.g., older adults and those with disabilities). We also heard there is little available rental stock for tenants with unique housing needs, like accessible or subsidized units, and there is a need for advocacy to create demand for new units.
- **Financial viability.** Participants raised concerns about the current cost of land, and that a TAP could create more barriers for development in Saanich. We also heard the TAP could discourage landlords from renting their properties during a rezoning process based on when tenant eligibility starts (i.e., one year before application, etc.). We heard that other jurisdictions have faced uncertainty with interpreting and respecting tenant eligibility.
- **Financial compensation.** Market housing organizations suggested financial compensation is easier to guarantee than relocation. We also heard support for a Policy that factors compensation based on tenant income and length of tenure. In some cases, tenants may not need or seek financial support for relocation but could still benefit from compensation such as moving expenses. Consideration for different types of compensation may help to address these instances.

POLICY SUCCESS

Q: How might the District help to support your business and the market housing sector to meet the Policy requirements?

We heard the District may help to support market housing organizations to meet the TAP requirements by way of:

- **Clear communication.** The District should clearly communicate the Policy requirements to Council and tenants to help to manage expectations. Participants also suggested that resources to support tenants navigate the relocation process would be helpful.
- **Provincial coordination.** The District could support for-profit developers by way of Provincial coordination, such as advocating through the Union of British Columbia Municipalities or working with BC Housing to support tenants in securing subsidized housing. It was suggested that a stronger link is needed between municipal policy and Provincial efforts through BC Housing, and that this type of sustained support would be more impactful for some tenants than short-term financial compensation.
- **Policy updates.** Participants suggested the Policy be reviewed on a regular basis to adjust as needed.

Q: How might the District follow up to ensure that the requirements are being met?

The market housing group shared there would be **no issues** in meeting Policy reporting requirements.

Q: Beyond the TAP, how can the District protect existing affordable rental stock in Saanich?

The group questioned the value of **protecting Saanich's existing affordable rental stock**. Rather than a focus on protecting existing rental, participants suggested a **need for continued development of purpose-built rental housing**. Participants noted:

- The aging rental stock in Saanich presents issues related to energy efficiency and seismic standards, particularly in preparation for the risk of natural disasters.
- It is difficult to conduct needed maintenance and upgrades in occupied buildings.
- In places like Victoria, there are many long-term tenants with protected rents who would be unable to find comparable rental rates if they were forced to move.
- A TAP may push development into unoccupied, greenfield sites in other parts of the region.
- There is a need for a mix of the scale of development and flexible site density.
- A focus on Community Amenity Contributions may help to support tenants being displaced while encouraging new developments and meeting sustainability and affordability goals.

APPENDIX A: NON-MARKET HOUSING SESSION NOTES

POLICY CRITERIA

When should the Policy apply?

WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

- types of rental the policy will apply to
- types of development applications the policy will apply to
- which tenants on site are eligible for support



1 How does your organization **currently approach** tenant assistance? What approaches have you seen elsewhere?

2 What would be the potential **risks and benefits** of a Policy that applies to the non-market housing sector in Saanich?

3 Are there any **other thoughts** on the qualifying criteria you would like to share?



POLICY SUPPORTS

What are the policy requirements?

WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

- communication plan
- support in finding new housing
- special consideration for vulnerable tenant support



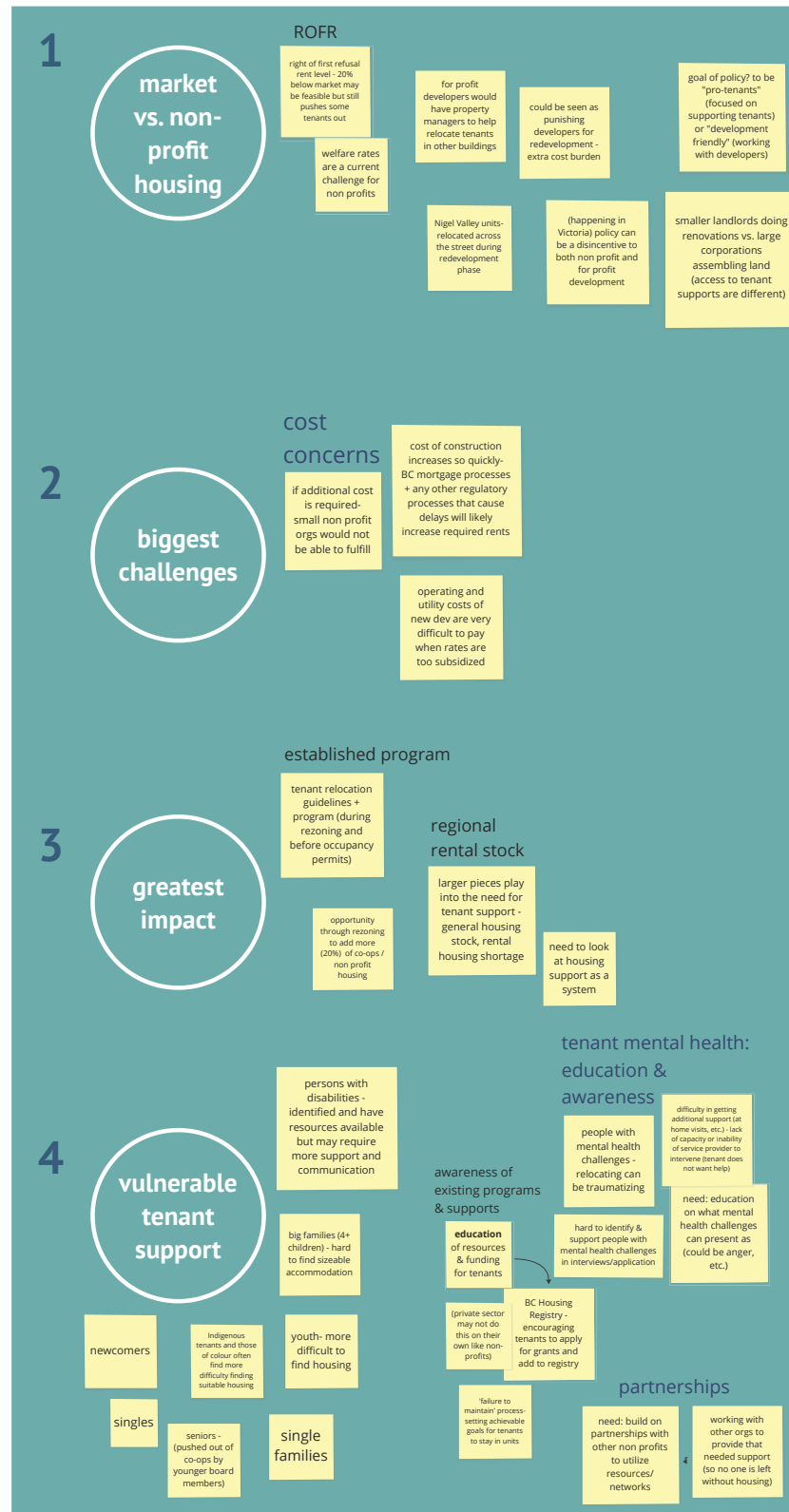
1 What policy supports do you think are reasonable and important to be provided by the **market housing sector versus the non-market** housing sector?

2 What would be the **biggest challenges** for your organization (or sector) when it comes to meeting these types of requirements? For example, partnerships, communication, staff capacity, reliable funding, etc.

3 What types of supports would have the **greatest impact** for the renters that you serve in Saanich?

4 Are there **population groups that face more challenges** in finding affordable, adequate rental housing?

Do you have any ideas for how to **identify and support renters** who may need additional support, beyond the basic policy requirements? (In market and non-market housing)



POLICY SUCCESS

How do we ensure the Policy is useful?

WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

- Tenant Assistance Plan & final report
- supporting resources
- policy monitoring and review

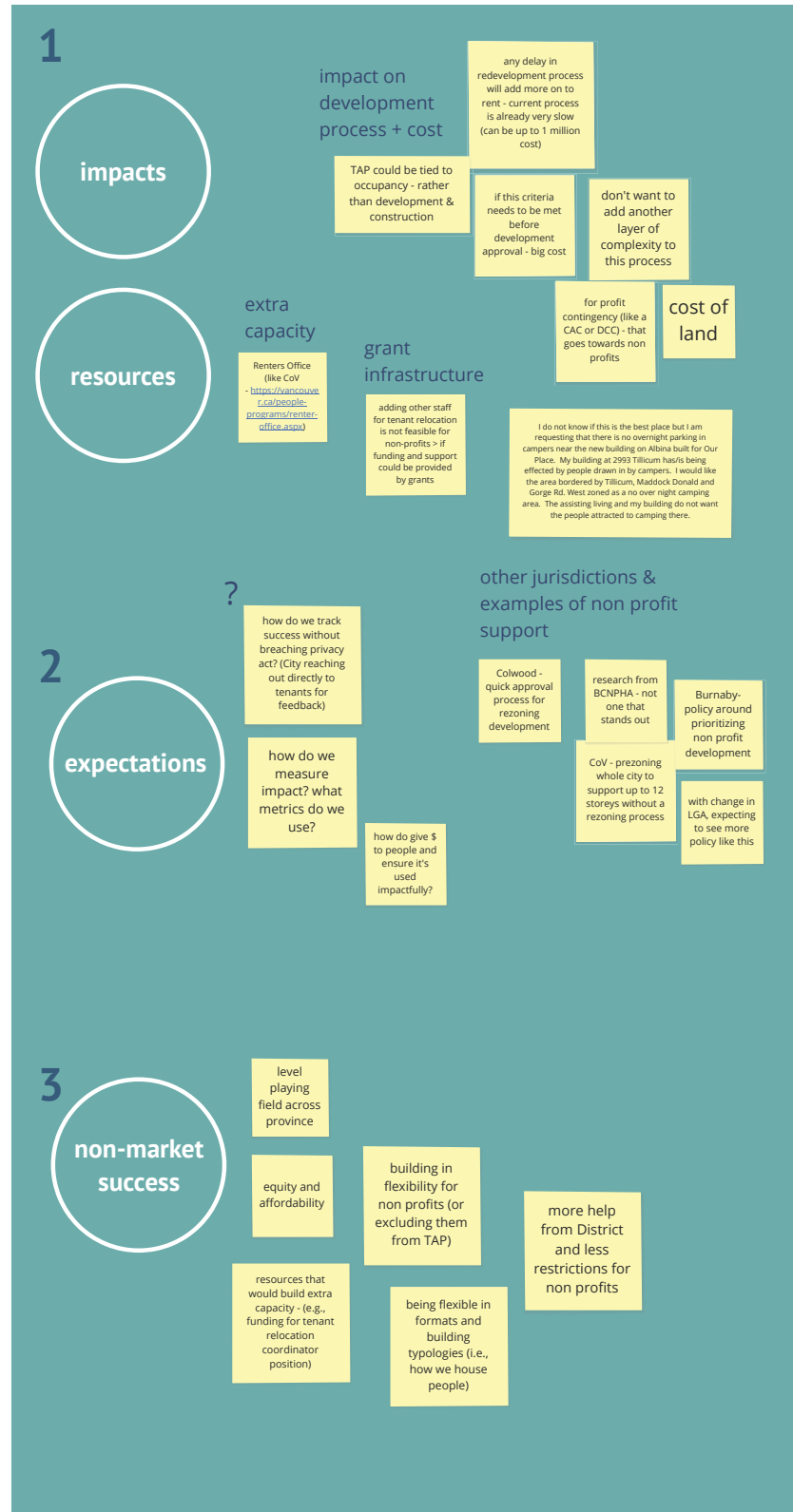


1 How do you see the TAP **impacting** the work your organization (or sector) is already doing?

What **additional resources** may be needed from the District in order to meet the Policy expectations? For example, templates, guides and forms, etc.

2 What is **reasonable to expect** of non-market housing developers in terms of proving that the policy has been met?

3 What does **success** look like for this policy from the non-market housing perspective?



APPENDIX B: RENTERS AND COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVES' SESSION NOTES

POLICY CRITERIA

When should the Policy apply?

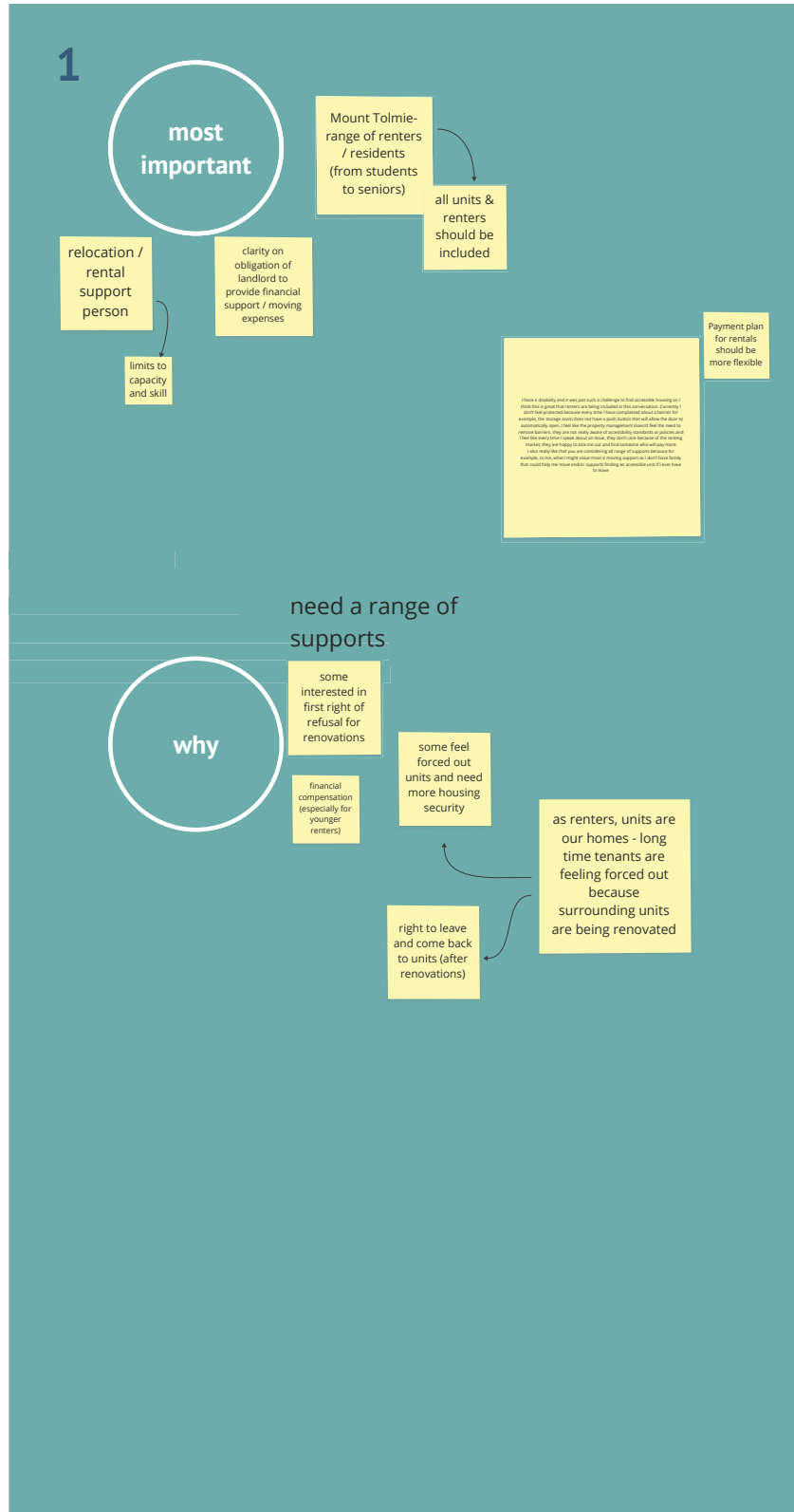
WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

- types of rental the policy will apply to
- types of development applications the policy will apply to
- which tenants on site are eligible for support



1

What aspects of the policy criteria are **most important** to you and **why**?



POLICY SUPPORTS

What are the policy requirements?

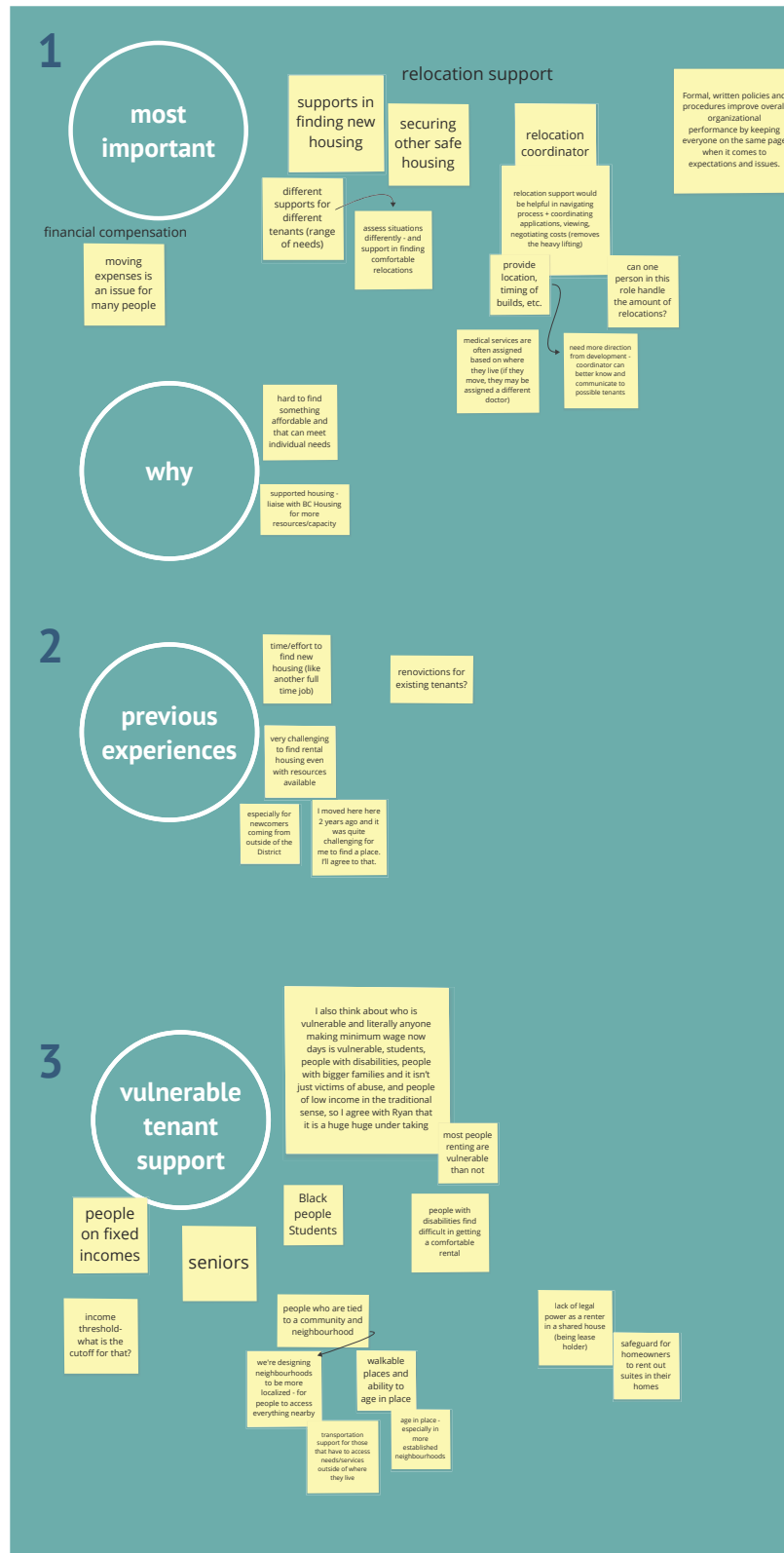
WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

- communication plan
- support in finding new housing
- special consideration for vulnerable tenant support



- 1 Which policy supports are the **most important** to you and **why**?
- 2 If you have any **previous experience** with tenant assistance, **what worked well? What didn't?**
- 3 Are there **population groups that face more challenges** in finding affordable, adequate rental housing?

What types of supports would have the **greatest impact** for these renters in Saanich?



POLICY SUCCESS

How do we ensure the Policy is useful?

WHAT THIS INCLUDES...

- Tenant Assistance Plan & final report
- supporting resources
- policy monitoring and review



1

What **additional resources** or materials do you think the District can provide that would help tenants through this process?

2

What does **success** look like for this policy from your perspective?



APPENDIX C: MARKET HOUSING SESSION NOTES

POLICY CRITERIA

WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

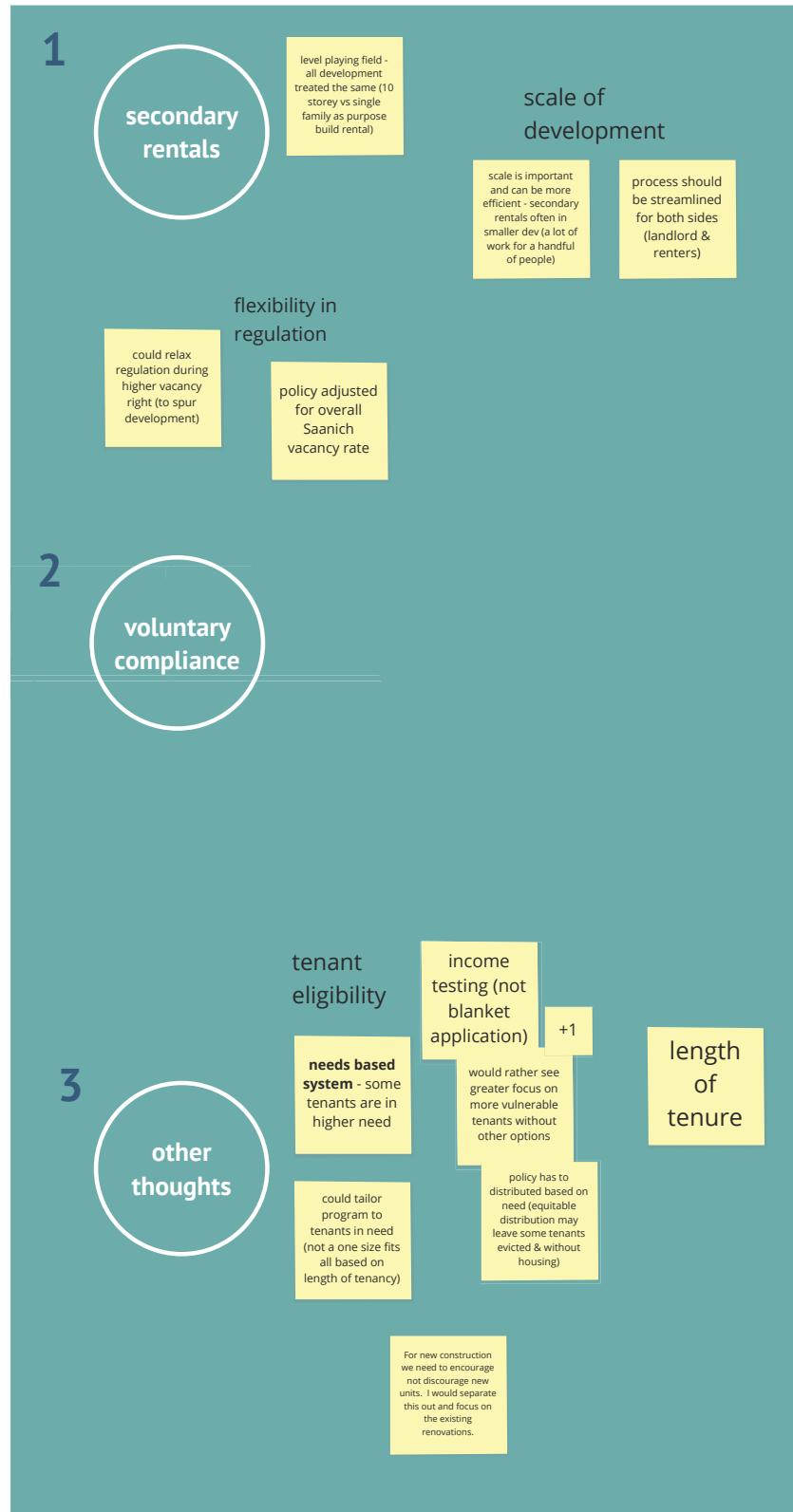
- types of rental the Policy will apply to
- types of development applications the Policy will apply to
- which tenants on site are eligible for support



1 What are some of the **opportunities and challenges** of the Policy applying to **secondary rentals**?

2 What do you think about encouraging **voluntary Policy compliance** with applications that do not require rezoning?
For example, Development Permits

3 Are there any **other thoughts** on the qualifying criteria you would like to share?



POLICY SUPPORTS & SUCCESS

WHAT THIS TOPIC INCLUDES...

- communication plan
- support in finding new housing & financial compensation
- special consideration for vulnerable tenant support



1 What might be some of the **biggest challenges** for your business when it comes to meeting the requirements of a Tenant Assistance Policy?

2 How might the **District help to support** your business / the sector to meet the Policy requirements?

3 How might the District **follow up** to ensure that the requirements are being met?

4 Beyond the TAP, how can the District **protect existing affordable rental stock** in Saanich?

