



MEDIA RELEASE

STIR program controversy: Legal framework flawed, program must be scrapped says West End Neighbours

(Vancouver, Nov. 15, 2011) West End Neighbours (WEN) has identified concerns with the legal framework of the controversial Short Term Incentives for Rental (STIR) housing program and calls upon the City of Vancouver to discontinue the program.

In examining the STIR program and its legal basis, it is WEN's contention that:

1. The *Vancouver Charter* does not give the City of Vancouver the authority to waive Development Cost Levies (DCL's) for *market* rental housing.
2. The City of Vancouver has improperly delegated Council's legislative authority by granting the City Manager the discretion to determine the affordability of for-profit affordable rental housing development proposals in the manner that it has done.
3. The definition of "affordable" under the by-law is too vague and uncertain to be enforceable.

WEN considers that its position is legally supportable. Based on these conclusions, WEN requests that the City of Vancouver cancel the STIR program, and refrain from creating similar incentive packages that would provide additional development projects with inappropriate DCL waivers and other benefits. The incentives offered are resulting in deficiencies estimated at a minimum of \$20,000 per rental unit that must be made up by other taxpayers. The benefitting projects are damaging livability and neighbourhood character to create market rental housing - public money and City Council's discretionary zoning powers should not be used in this way.

"The legal framework of STIR looks flawed and Development Cost Levies for these developments appear to be waived without proper authority. The program is creating expensive market housing rather than helping to address the housing affordability challenge, so it's time for the City to scrap this program," said Emanuel Pereira, a resident of the West End.

The City of Vancouver has been provided a copy of this release and the background paper *West End Neighbours Challenges Short Term Incentives for Rentals (STIR)*. This paper is available at www.WestEndNeighbours.ca.

WEN is accepting media inquiries on this topic.

West End Neighbours (WEN) is a network of thousands of residents calling for a new comprehensive plan to ensure the future livability of the West End and a halt to spot rezonings.

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