

FACT SHEET

UNITE HERE Local 40 Campaign to Put Affordability First through the “Affordable Housing Now!” campaign

Vancouver workers, tenants, students, seniors, and families need homes they can afford. Yet City Hall is prioritizing new hotel development at the same time residents are being priced out and displaced.

Recent tourism and hotel data undercut the argument that Vancouver urgently needs more hotel rooms. During the FIFA World Cup, hotel bookings fell, occupancy dropped to levels not seen since the pandemic, and thousands of previously reserved rooms were canceled.

The World Cup did not prove Vancouver has a hotel room shortage. It showed that the real emergency is affordability.

KEY FACTS

Vancouver’s housing crisis is severe and ongoing. Working people are struggling to afford rent. Tenants are facing displacement. Students, seniors, and families are being priced out. Affordable housing remains out of reach for many residents.

City Hall is approving hotels faster than affordable housing. Over the past eighteen months, Vancouver City Council has approved nearly 3,000 hotel rooms — 16 percent more hotel rooms than affordable non-market housing units. When housing is the city’s biggest challenge, affordable homes — not hotels — should be the priority.

Some hotel proposals would replace existing rental housing. Several hotel proposals would displace existing rental housing, including buildings at 75 East 8th Avenue, known as Myron Manor, and 148 East 6th Avenue. Vancouver should not displace renters to build more hotel rooms.

The World Cup hotel room “crisis” did not materialize. For years, hotel developers and their allies at City Hall argued Vancouver needed to rush hotel development because of the FIFA World Cup. But the predicted hotel shortage never materialized. Recent booking data showed:

- Vancouver-area hotel bookings for June were down 20 percent.
- Average hotel occupancy during Vancouver’s seven World Cup match days was reportedly 57.4 percent.
- Thousands of FIFA-related hotel room reservations were canceled.
- Hotel workers say this has been the worst summer since the pandemic, with empty rooms meaning workers were not called in to work.

Hotel projects are getting special treatment. While affordable housing continues to lag behind city targets, hotel developers are receiving special incentives that reduce their financial contributions toward public benefits. Some hotel projects are also securing fast-tracked city approvals that allow them to bypass public hearings.

The “more hotels” argument is being used to justify developer incentives. City Hall has advanced policy changes and approvals that benefit hotel developers while residents continue to face an affordability emergency. Public policy should not function as a hotel giveaway.

Vancouver residents disagree with City Hall’s priorities. Recent Stratcom polling found Vancouver voters favor prioritizing affordable housing over more hotel development by a 3-to-1 margin. The public understands what the city’s real crisis is.

City Council is moving hotel approvals before the election. Major hotel and land-use decisions are moving forward during the July Council period, ahead of the October municipal election and the August–September Council recess. Voters deserve the chance to weigh in before Council locks in major land-use decisions.

WHAT LOCAL 40 IS CALLING FOR

UNITE HERE Local 40 is calling on Vancouver City Council to:

- 1. Pause major hotel approvals until after the October election.**
Voters deserve the chance to weigh in before Council locks in major land-use decisions.
- 2. Stop using the World Cup as an excuse for hotel giveaways.**
Recent occupancy and cancellation data show Vancouver is not facing the hotel room crisis developers claimed.
- 3. Prioritize affordable, social, co-op, and non-market housing.**
Public policy should focus on keeping residents, tenants, workers, and families in Vancouver.
- 4. Protect tenants from displacement.**
City Hall should not advance development decisions that worsen housing insecurity.
- 5. Hold developers accountable.**
Any major development decision should deliver clear, enforceable public benefits for Vancouver residents.

WHO WE ARE

Affordable Housing Now! is a campaign of hospitality workers, tenants, students, community organizations and residents who believe the people who make Vancouver work should be able to afford to live here.