



# Corporate *NO: R131*

# Report *COUNCIL DATE: June 4, 2001*

<b>REGULAR COUNCIL</b>			
<b>TO:</b>	<b>Mayor &amp; Council</b>	<b>DATE:</b>	<b>May 22, 2001</b>
<b>FROM:</b>	<b>General Manager, Planning &amp; Development</b>	<b>FILE:</b>	<b>0021-004</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Status of City Actions Related to Assisting the Owners of Leaky Condominiums</b>		

## RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council receive this report as information.

## BACKGROUND

At its April 30, 2001 Regular meeting, Council requested a report from staff on the City's program related to building permit fee reductions and other assistance being provided to the owners of leaky condominiums.

## DISCUSSION

Leaky condominiums continue to be a significant and on-going issue in Surrey and within the Region. The following is a summary of the elements of the City's assistance, to date, with respect to this important matter.

### Building Science and Wall Designs

The engineering and architectural community and construction industry have responded to the "leaky condo" crisis with a new generation of wall system designs and a renewed emphasis on quality control. Building Division staff have kept pace with these changes, with key staff attending a variety of courses and training sessions including completion of the four modules of the Engineers' and Architects' Building Envelope Education Program.

The City's Zoning By-law has been amended to better accommodate the new wall and rain-screen designs. The

new generation of rain-screen walls are thicker than traditional exterior walls. The density provisions of the Zoning By-law have been revised to encourage the new rain screen wall designs by exempting the additional wall thickness from the floor area calculations. The method of calculating the floor area density was revised to remove the "penalty" the new wall designs would have caused as a result of the additional thickness.

### Provision of Technical Information and Advice

Building Division staff receive many inquiries concerning building envelope repairs. Inquiries include such topics as the City's grant program to offset the fees associated with building permits for envelope repairs and the Homeowner Protection Office requirements for licensing of repair contractors.

To assist the owners of leaky condos, each building permit application for repairs to the building envelope is dealt with on a priority basis. Staff also assist Strata Councils and contractors through the provision of information and advice related to building envelope remediation projects.

### Grant Program for Reimbursement of Building Permit Fees

In early 2000, Council approved a Grant Program to reimburse the owners of leaky condos the full amount of the building permit fees associated with building permits issued for building envelope repair work. To date, this has been applied to 16 separate projects in the City. The grants have ranged from \$200 to \$42,000. The total value of grants issued by the City to date under this Program is approximately \$135,000. It is expected that grants under this Program will continue to be issued over the next few years.

### GVRD Fees for Disposal of Construction Waste

Council, during early 2000, recommended that the GVRD consider waiving or reducing tipping fees for construction wastes generated from the repairs to leaky condos. The issue was considered by the GVRD Solid Waste Board. The Board concluded that this waste should be dealt with in the same manner as other recyclable construction materials to promote continued reduction in the waste stream directed to the Region's landfills. As such, the Board was not prepared to approve a reduction in the tipping fees for such waste.

## **SUMMARY**

Leaky condominiums continue to be a significant issue in Surrey and within the Region.

In response to this situation, the City of Surrey has:

- revised the Zoning By-law to encourage the use of new wall/rain-screen designs;
- implemented a grant program to reimburse the building permit fees associated with building envelope remediation projects; and
- implemented a training program for key Building Division staff with respect to advances in building envelope technology so as to be able to provide advice and assistance in a timely manner.

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