

MetroBooming – Mission Statement

With Vancouver, BC being touted as one of the most unaffordable cities in the world, it presents the question: What made Vancouver so unaffordable?

This wasn't always the case, with Vancouver housing prices even taking a [dip in 1982](#). However, with Vancouver's population growing by almost 60% between 1981 and 2021, the mismatch between supply and demand has caused Vancouver's housing market to skyrocket. One particular culprit for Vancouver's unaffordability is its zoning policies – especially those that favor single family homes.

As a result, on [October 17, 2023](#), the City of Vancouver implemented a new [Residential Inclusive Zone \(R1-1\)](#), which rezoned 9 residential zones (RS) originally intended for single family dwellings into the new zoning designation R1-1. The R1-1 zone allows multiplex units up to a maximum of 6 dwelling units and 8 rental dwelling units, depending on the size of the site. With this change, areas previously restricted to single family homes are now eligible to be redeveloped into 'missing middle' housing.

The missing middle refers to the lack of medium-density housing in neighbourhoods, particularly in North American cities. In these cities, residential areas are either strictly single-family homes, or high-density condominiums and apartments. However, with the introduction of the new R1-1 zone, permits for medium-density housing such as multiplexes and townhouses can now be granted in areas previously restricted to single family dwellings, increasing the supply of housing. This is a massive change, considering that around half of Vancouver's land area was previously set aside for single-family homes.

With MetroBooming, users are able to visualize Vancouver's urban expansion from the past and have a glimpse into Vancouver's future by assessing the potential of R1-1. By focusing on specific census tracts, our app enables users to see how neighborhoods developed differently over time. By combining a 3D visualization of Vancouver's development with population and dwelling census characteristics, users can gain a better understanding of the root cause of Vancouver's unaffordability. Moreover, users can simulate the benefits of the new R1-1 zoning by exploring a range of scenarios within the app. This innovative tool allows users to visualize and compare potential outcomes, from the best-case scenario where the number of new housing units is maximized, to scenarios where the status quo remains unchanged.

By visualizing Vancouver's expansion over time, and presenting the future implications of R1-1, MetroBooming gives a unique perspective into Vancouver's development from the past and into future. With this unique lens into urban development, planners and

policymakers alike will gain a better understanding of Vancouver's housing crisis, helping them to inspire new ways to promote affordable housing.