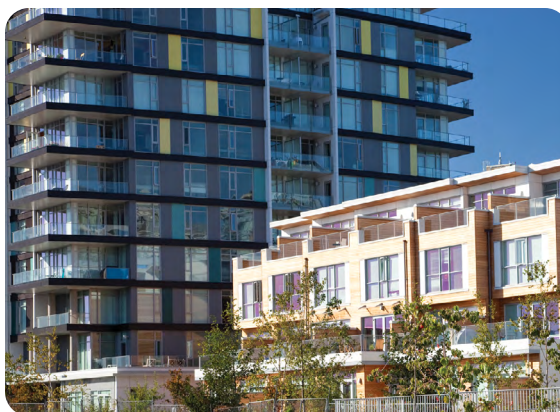


# Housing and Homelessness

# 13



## GOALS

- 13 (A) All residents have access to appropriate, secure, affordable housing.
- 13 (B) A wide range of housing types, tenures and prices gives residents choices.

## OVERVIEW

Housing is a basic human need. All people deserve access to housing that is safe, stable and affordable and that supports personal and public health. The availability of a diversity of housing types across the housing spectrum (Figure 16) that can accommodate people of different ages, incomes, household structures, and physical and social needs is one of the fundamental elements of creating and maintaining a healthy, inclusive and more sustainable community. The principle of social integration, both across the city and within neighbourhoods, underlies Victoria's approach. This plan sets the direction for Victoria's approach to housing and homelessness, with additional policies, priorities and tools to be elaborated through the Comprehensive Housing Strategy.

As a built-out city with little remaining undeveloped land, and with commitments to accommodate a share of the region's population growth, the outward expansion of Victoria's housing stock is limited, making it necessary to create more compact built environments. These compact built environments will be focused in the Urban Core, Town Centres and Urban Villages and in close proximity to transit. Victoria is forecast to need an additional 13,500 apartment units and an additional 2,700 ground-oriented housing units over the next 30 years. Land capacity analysis prepared for this plan indicates that there is just enough capacity available under existing zoning to meet this demand. Of the total housing stock, Victoria has the highest proportion of apartment units in the region at 63%, and the lowest proportion of ground-oriented dwellings at 36%, figures that are expected to remain consistent over the next 30 years. Designating additional housing capacity, primarily for apartment units and attached ground-oriented housing, is necessary to ensure that developable capacity is sufficient to meet forecast demand and maintain a healthy housing market.

The high cost of rental housing and home ownership makes housing affordability a challenge for many people. Over the last decade, Victoria has ranked among the most expensive places to buy housing in Canada. According to the 2006 census, 60% of all Victoria households are renters, considerably higher than the regional average of 34% and twice the provincial average (30%). Very little purpose-built rental housing is being constructed, vacancy rates are low and much of the rental housing stock was built before 1981 and will need to be updated or replaced within the term of this plan. As the region's rental housing centre, Victoria has a higher proportion of young adults in their twenties and thirties, many of whom leave the city for more affordable and diverse housing types as they enter the family formation stage of the lifecycle. Over the next 30 years, Victoria must diversify its housing stock to accommodate a growing and aging population and an expanded workforce.

The high cost of housing, combined with unstable or inadequate income and life circumstances has resulted in some people and households becoming homeless or at-risk-of homelessness. The 2007 Homeless Needs Survey estimated approximately 1,250 people who were homeless or unstably housed throughout the Capital Region, likely an under-reporting. In addition to those who are living on the street or in emergency shelters, there are also many households living in insecure or inadequate housing, or who are spending more than 30 percent of their income on housing. In 2006, nearly one in every two renter households and one in every four owner households were considered to be in **core housing need**, with some groups, such as aboriginal households and lone-parent families, having higher than average rates. Need for supportive and subsidized non-market rental units for families, seniors and people with disabilities exceeds supply in Victoria.

Many of the roles and responsibilities for housing and homelessness lie outside the powers and capacity of municipal governments. As a result, many of the plan's policies commit the City of Victoria to work in partnership with senior levels of government, the health authority, the private sector and community organizations to respond to the city's breadth of housing issues. The plan takes a comprehensive approach to increasing the supply, affordability and range of housing options, with a focus on land use management policies and practices that enable greater housing affordability across the housing spectrum. The plan supports diversifying the range of housing types available in neighbourhoods and across the city to accommodate a greater range of age groups and household needs. Policies in this section encourage the City to take a multi-pronged approach with other partners to address housing insecurity and homelessness, as well as to increase the supply of crisis, transitional, supported and non-market rental housing. Finally, the plan encourages upgrades and regeneration of the housing stock to meet future housing needs.

## BROAD OBJECTIVES

The housing and homelessness policies of this plan collectively address five broad objectives:

- 13 (a) That housing development that responds to future demand is facilitated through land use policies and practices.
- 13 (b) That housing affordability is enabled for housing types across the housing spectrum, particularly for people in core housing need.
- 13 (c) That the existing supply of rental housing is expanded through regeneration.
- 13 (d) That a wide range of housing choice is available within neighbourhoods to support a diverse, inclusive and multigenerational community.
- 13 (e) That partnerships enable stable housing with appropriate support services.

**Figure 16: The Housing Spectrum**

The plan policies encourage a range of different types of housing and support services across the city and within every neighbourhood to meet the needs of residents at different life stages and circumstances, and to facilitate [aging in place](#). This diversity of housing and services is illustrated by the housing spectrum. Households or individuals may require different types of housing over the course of their lives, based on their individual circumstances, preferences, needs and supports.

The spectrum is not meant to imply a step-by-step progression from one type of housing to another; rather, an individual or household may move from place to place along the spectrum over the course of their lives.

	Non-Market Housing			Market Housing		
Types of Housing	Emergency Shelters	Transitional Housing	Supported Housing	Non-Market Rental Housing	Market Rental Housing	Home Ownership
Examples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ overnight shelter</li> <li>▫ crash beds/ safe beds</li> <li>▫ short-term stay shelter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ low barrier housing</li> <li>▫ supportive housing</li> <li>▫ transition house</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ group homes</li> <li>▫ long-term residential care (public and non-profit)</li> <li>▫ assisted living (public and non-profit)</li> <li>▫ supported housing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ social housing</li> <li>▫ co-operatives</li> <li>▫ rent geared to income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ market rental</li> <li>▫ boarding houses</li> <li>▫ assisted living (private)</li> <li>▫ long-term residential care (private)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▫ strata</li> <li>▫ fee simple</li> <li>▫ co-housing</li> </ul>

## HOUSING SUPPLY FOR FUTURE NEED

- 13.1 Seek to accommodate population growth in the strategic locations, as identified in Map 2, including an additional 10,000 residents in the Urban Core; 8,000 residents in and within close walking distance of Town Centres and Large Urban Villages, and 2,000 in Small Urban Villages and the remainder of residential areas in the city [SEE SECTION 6 – LAND MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT].
- 13.2 Update and maintain a Comprehensive Housing Strategy that advances the objectives of this plan and that:
- 13.2.1 Assesses and identifies the range of housing needs and housing mix suited to the community's projected population and future housing demand, including the housing and support needs of identifiable population sub-groups, where appropriate;

- 13.2.2 Identifies short- and long-term strategic housing priorities;
- 13.2.3 Researches and develops additional tools and approaches to address strategic priorities, such as regulations, innovative financing, partnerships and incentives for private and non-profit sectors;
- 13.2.4 Identifies implementation actions and timelines; and,
- 13.2.5 Outlines a monitoring and evaluation strategy.

## HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN GENERAL

- 13.3 Focus the City's efforts and resources on housing options that help people move beyond temporary shelter or housing to more permanent housing, greater self-reliance, and stable employment or income.
- 13.4 Consider all available tools to encourage more affordable housing across the housing spectrum in Figure 16.
- 13.5 Encourage new housing initiatives that partner with other levels of government, agencies, private industry, community organizations and individuals to maximize shared expertise and resources and to help achieve new affordable housing initiatives.
- 13.6 Work with the Capital Regional District, its member municipalities and other partners to improve regional housing affordability and increase housing supply and diversity across the region through funding contributions and the implementation of regional plans and initiatives.
- 13.7 Advocate to senior levels of government to retain and expand targeted housing assistance programs and support services for people in core need, such as seniors; urban aboriginal people, low-income singles, people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness; for households with children; and, for people with special needs.
- 13.8 Continue to communicate and provide information to residents regarding provincial and federal housing-related programs.

## HOUSING DIVERSITY

- 13.9 Support a range of housing types, forms and tenures across the city and within neighbourhoods to meet the needs of residents at different life stages, and to facilitate aging in place. [SEE SECTION 15 – COMMUNITY WELL-BEING]
- 13.10 Encourage a mix of residents, including households with children, by increasing opportunities for innovative forms of ground-oriented multi-unit residential housing.
- 13.11 Encourage partnerships that address the need for affordable non-market and market housing suitable for households with children.
- 13.12 Work with senior governments, the health authority, the private sector, and non-profit organizations to anticipate and plan for a range of housing, facilities and support services to meet the needs of residents as they age.

- 13.13 Support the provision of a range of seniors housing and innovative care options across the city and within neighbourhoods, such as **shared accommodation**, **assisted living** and residential complex care facilities.
- 13.14 Support the integration of community care facilities and group residences across the city.
- 13.15 Where possible, locate new seniors' housing, transitional housing and non-market rental housing within close proximity to the Urban Core, Town Centres and Large Urban Villages as shown in Map 2, to enable easy access to services and facilities necessary for daily living.
- 13.16 Provide a range of housing choice for persons with mobility challenges by developing voluntary guidelines for enhanced adaptable housing to provide a higher standard of adaptability and accessibility for all housing types.
- 13.17 Secure commitments to market and non-market residential dwelling units in designated heritage properties through the review and approval of heritage revitalization agreements and housing agreements.
- 13.18 Continue to develop incentives to support the rehabilitation and conversion of designated commercial, institutional and industrial designated heritage buildings to residential or residential mixed uses [SEE ALSO SECTION 14 – ECONOMY].

## TRANSITIONAL, SUPPORTED AND NON-MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

- 13.19 Advocate for senior government assistance to support a range of transitional and supported housing options, with an emphasis on the delivery of support services and establishing units directed towards specific groups in core need.
- 13.20 Continue to work in partnership with all levels of government, public agencies, crown corporations, organizations and the private sector to identify and leverage properties for the provision of non-market housing, including innovative approaches to blend non-market housing with other housing types and uses.
- 13.21 Encourage new transitional and supported housing units to support the nutritional health of residents by providing self-contained kitchen facilities or access to regular meal services.
- 13.22 Encourage flexible design features in new emergency shelters and transitional housing to adapt to the changing shelter and housing needs of residents.

## MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

- 13.23 Support the retention of existing rental units in buildings of four units or more by considering higher density redevelopment proposals on these sites only if, as a voluntary amenity:
  - 13.23.1 The same number of rental self-contained dwelling units is maintained on-site, and the general rent level identified, through a housing agreement; or,
  - 13.23.2 An equivalent cash in-lieu contribution is made to the City's Housing Fund.
- 13.24 Support the regeneration or redevelopment of older ground-oriented rental and cooperative housing developments by considering higher density redevelopment proposals on these sites if the same number, size, and tenure of units is maintained on-site, and the general rent level identified.
- 13.25 For buildings with four units or more, conversions of rental units to stratified units are generally not supported when the vacancy rate as provided by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for Greater Victoria is at 4% or lower for a period of two consecutive years.
- 13.26 For strata-title conversion applications for buildings with four rental units or more, continue to support relocation and housing security for tenants through development of a Tenant Plan as detailed in the City's Residential Strata Titling Policy.
- 13.27 During consideration of rezoning applications for new strata-title developments of four units or more, continue to promote housing agreements and covenants that ensure opportunity for use of all units as rental units within strata bylaws.
- 13.28 Develop strategies to support the ongoing upgrade and regeneration of the city's rental housing stock, including strategies to address tenant housing security, as part the review and update of the City's Comprehensive Housing Strategy.
- 13.29 Encourage senior governments to continue programs to assist landlords with residential upgrades and rehabilitation to upgrade the existing rental housing stock.
- 13.30 Advocate to senior levels of government to review taxation-related barriers and disincentives and establish programs to promote and facilitate the development of new private sector rental units.
- 13.31 Continue to maintain policies and regulations that increase rental housing choice such as residential secondary suites, garden suites and forms of shared accommodation.

## OWNERSHIP HOUSING

- 13.32 Support increased affordable home ownership through policies and regulations that permit additional, on-site residential rental units in primary structures or in accessory buildings, in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw.
- 13.33 Explore opportunities for self-contained **lock-off suites** in multi-residential and mixed-use developments.
- 13.34 Promote a diversity of housing types to create more home ownership options consistent with the guidelines in Figure 8.
- 13.35 Work with a range of partners, including senior levels of government and the private sector, to support and pilot innovative approaches that facilitate more affordable home ownership housing.

## ADDRESSING HOMELESSNESS

- 13.36 Develop a **Housing First** approach through the review and update of the City's Comprehensive Housing Strategy that supports the efforts of public, private and non-profit agencies to break the cycle of mental illness, substance abuse and homelessness.
- 13.37 Continue to work with coordinated community and regional efforts to end homelessness and enable stable housing with support services for people who are homeless or at-risk-of-homelessness, within the limits of the City's mandate and resources.
- 13.38 Continue to advocate to all senior levels of government and public agencies in favour of integrated services, other supports and housing for people who are homeless or at-risk-of-homelessness.
- 13.39 Work with senior governments, the health authority, the private sector and community organizations to provide access to essential services and facilities that meet people's basic needs, including those necessary to maintain public and personal health, such as emergency shelters, drop-in centres, public toilets, drinking water, and food services.