

Shape Your Future Victoria



Housing and Homelessness

Definition and description

Housing means not only shelter but also a home to individuals, groups or families. Housing types range from single-detached homes, townhouses or apartments. When someone in a household is an owner or renter of housing, he or she has tenure. Anyone with insecure tenure is at risk of **homelessness**; a person without tenure is homeless.

Housing can be market or non-market and owned or rented. Non-market housing is a term for co-operative housing or housing that is non-profit or government funded and/or assisted housing. Assisted housing is linked to support services to assist vulnerable citizens who need to stabilize their lives and re-connect to their community. They may be low or medium income seniors, families or individuals, or people with mental illnesses and addictions, women fleeing violence and those who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Why is this topic important?

Housing contributes to sustainable, healthy and liveable communities through security of tenure and acceptable places to live - a basic need and universal right.¹ **Acceptable housing**² means that it meets public health and safety standards, and is also **affordable**.

Canada Housing and Mortgage Company defines **affordable housing** as costing less than 30 percent of total household income before tax; those that pay more than 30 percent do not have affordable housing.

¹ United Nations *Charter of Positive Rights*

² Canada Housing and Mortgage Company

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

Ideas and Options for the Future

June 25 and 26 - Topic Insert



Public Input on Housing and Homelessness

Proposed Goal 1 From Public Input <i>Address the Gaps in Affordable Housing</i>	
Direction: <i>Populations Needs</i>	Direction: <i>Incentives and Tools</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved affordability. • Growth with minimal displacement. • Newcomers end up living further away, need suitable and affordable for a full range of people. • Affordable for the wages people earn here (especially for families). • Dedicated housing for low income workers. • More affordable housing opportunities for people who work downtown. • Make affordable housing downtown that is targeted to under-40s – to reduce noise conflicts • Identify options for making it more affordable to buy first homes, and therefore keep students/young in Victoria past their renting days • Affordable housing for university students • Cheaper homestay fees for international student • Seniors cannot afford rents on pensions that are not increasing. Also, they are not eligible for assisted living without being in poor health. • Some seniors will not seek out housing subsidy due to sense of pride/ shame. • More rental stock that is affordable for lower middle class and poor families; also to assist female seniors leaving abusive relationships, seniors on the edge of homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incentives to build affordable housing. • Fast track development applications that have affordable housing. • Municipal tax breaks to encourage new rental construction. • Inclusionary zoning to build new affordable units • Increase secondary suites, relax some regulations • Tie incentives for secondary suites to commitment to keep suite rent affordable. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Relax parking requirements for rental housing. • Remove barriers and protect incentives for family and mixed income housing. • City-run housing society. • Public private partnerships. • Allow people to contribute to housing until enough money is saved to place a down payment on their unit (like in Chile). • Use tools for affordable housing in development. • Development cost charges for (truly) affordable housing. • Work with developers and City to make a % of affordable housing a mandatory component of all new development projects. • Maintain developer contributions to City of Victoria Housing Trust Fund.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Housing Affordability:	<i>All residents have access to appropriate, secure, affordable housing.</i>

Public Input on Housing and Homelessness

Proposed Goal 2 From Public Input <i>Improve the Housing Mix</i>	
Direction: <i>Housing Options</i>	Direction: <i>Integrated Housing</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing of all types for all needs. • More diverse housing stock. • Co-op housing. • More rental housing. • More low-income housing. • Support the development of housing for low income households throughout the city, especially for families in the non-downtown areas. • Extend downtown boundary to increase amount of housing within walking distance. • Knowledge based live/work zone in Rock Bay. • Live/work zones in every neighbourhood. • Live/work in upper storey spaces of Old Town heritage buildings. • Protect low-density neighbourhoods. • Always allow secondary suites, to make it possible to build small out buildings that can be used for people to live. Or lane housing and in street housing as ways to find more places to build. • Encourage more rental apartments • Universally allow in-law suites and carriage houses. • City should be clear what about it wants and provide faster service for desired outcomes (e.g. fast track rental housing). • Municipal housing corporation which buys and develops land at cost with a rent to own focus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Socially integrated housing. • A socially heterogeneous city with a mix of housing types, incomes, lifestyles. • Affordable housing across the income spectrum and lifecycle stages. • Make development heterogeneous and viable for different types of occupants – housing types, tenure; mixed use. • Policy to encourage inclusive neighbourhoods (housing suitable for a variety of ages and incomes). • Much more integrated housing - combine New Horizons, James Bay Community Project and five floors of seniors housing on the James Bay Community Project site • Develop integrated housing (disabled & non-disabled) • Have accessible housing standards for the disabled in all housing: co-ops and co-housing opportunities • Build more co-op community, shared housing with disabled and non-disabled to live side by side. • City should continue to support the Crime Free Multi Housing program - it is an excellent support for landlords and our tenants really benefit.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
Housing Diversity:	<i>A wide range of housing types, tenures and prices gives residents choices.</i>

Public Input on Housing and Homelessness

Proposed Goal 3 From Public Input <i>Address the Underlying Causes of Homelessness</i>	
Direction: <i>Personal Well-Being</i>	Direction: <i>Partnership</i>
Ideas and Examples	Ideas and Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address / reduce homelessness. • Focus on vulnerable individuals and ensure a range of services is available to them. Increase funding for support resources and outreach workers. • Sense of security. • More shelters. • Explore safe, respectful, dignified tent city. • Legalize and support permanent tent city and develop squatters' rights as innovative housing options for homeless people. • Could have had a designated camping tent city spot in empty lot in Rock Bay. • Create more public facilities available to the homeless, i.e. kitchens, gyms, washrooms etc. • Need zoning in neighbourhoods to permit uses for services that are similar to the Downtown Service Providers. • Lots of seniors who are living in poverty and need to have their basic needs met (e.g. shelter). • Seniors coming into seniors centres with mental health issues (e.g. dementia, addiction). • Broadens the definition of homelessness to include couch surfing. Proactively seek out youth in need. • Seek to address underlying causes of youth homelessness. Focus on prevention and life skills. • Makes health services more accessible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City to advocate for reinstatement of mental health services. • Also advocate for New Deal for Cities, changed transfer fund formulas. • Amalgamation: greater funding for homelessness. • Victoria to lead other municipalities to attract senior government funding. • Don't deviate/stray – have a commitment to issues that bridges councils, becomes multi-year. • City as leader in bringing partners together. • Changing service delivery - opportunity for City to take a leadership role. • Collaboration doesn't need less money – it means better services. • Stay focused on key issues: continuity for moving forward; track changes (how we are doing); be proactive. • Larger faith communities (Hindu, Muslim, Jewish) as part of partnership. • Downtown Service Providers and business community working on street issues.

Related Victoria Sustainability Framework Subthemes and Goals	
<i>Health, Care, Wellness and Harm Reduction:</i>	<i>Victorians are healthy and have a network of health related amenities, facilities and programs to promote wellness and meet the needs of all levels of mental and physical care.</i>

Existing Policies on Housing and Homelessness

Victoria Sustainability Framework (2010)		
Housing Affordability:	<i>All residents have access to appropriate, secure, affordable housing.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work regionally to seek senior government assistance to support affordable housing options Encourage home ownership for individuals with low or moderate incomes to promote neighbourhood and personal stability, by supporting innovative housing strategies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of non-market housing as the Downtown Core Area grows, working with provincial, regional, non-profit and industry partners and with targeted investments from the Victoria Housing Trust Fund, a reserve fund established by the City in 2004 to subsidize the development of affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Comprehensive Housing Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When considering an application to rezone to a higher density any existing residential property having more than four rental units, to welcome, as a voluntary amenity, either the contribution of an equivalent number of affordable replacement rental units on-site or a cash in-lieu contribution to the City's Affordable Housing Trust Fund. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Examine relaxation of regulatory controls to permit smaller lots, conversion, reduced parking and other creative approaches to providing affordable housing 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secondary Suites Policy

Existing Policies on Housing and Homelessness

Victoria Sustainability Framework (2010)		
Housing Diversity:	<i>A wide range of housing types, tenures and prices gives residents choices.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By means of neighbourhood plans, zoning and senior government housing programs, sustain a mix of housing types to meet the changing demands of the population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the Zoning Regulation Bylaw to permit self-contained secondary suites with separate hallway access in multi-residential and mixed-use developments where appropriate. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By means of subdivision and zoning regulations, facilitate small lot development of single family housing within residential neighbourhoods. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the development of small residential dwelling units in the 30 to 40 square-metre range in multi-residential and mixed-use developments. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the conversion rate, and continue pursuing measures to balance the conversion of existing affordable rental stock with the need for condominium tenure and development. 		

Existing Policies on Housing and Homelessness

Victoria Sustainability Framework (2010)		
Health, Care, Wellness and Harm Reduction:	<i>Victorians are healthy and have a network of health related amenities, facilities and programs to promote wellness and meet the needs of all levels of mental and physical care.</i>	
Official Community Plan (1995)	Downtown Core Area Plan (draft 2010)	Other Plans / Policies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate and support community organizations and agencies working to improve housing resources or working to provide housing services in Victoria. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to support the work of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. Review the need for new community services and facilities on an ongoing basis, as part of the monitoring strategy for the Downtown Core Area Plan. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to work with community partners to secure emergency shelter for homeless people through the Greater Victoria Extreme Weather Protocol. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with regional partners and senior levels of government to explore establishing secure funding that will permit Our Place and other social service providers to provide round-the-clock, seven-day-a-week service to the street community as appropriate. 	