

Housing and Homelessness

13



RELATED 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

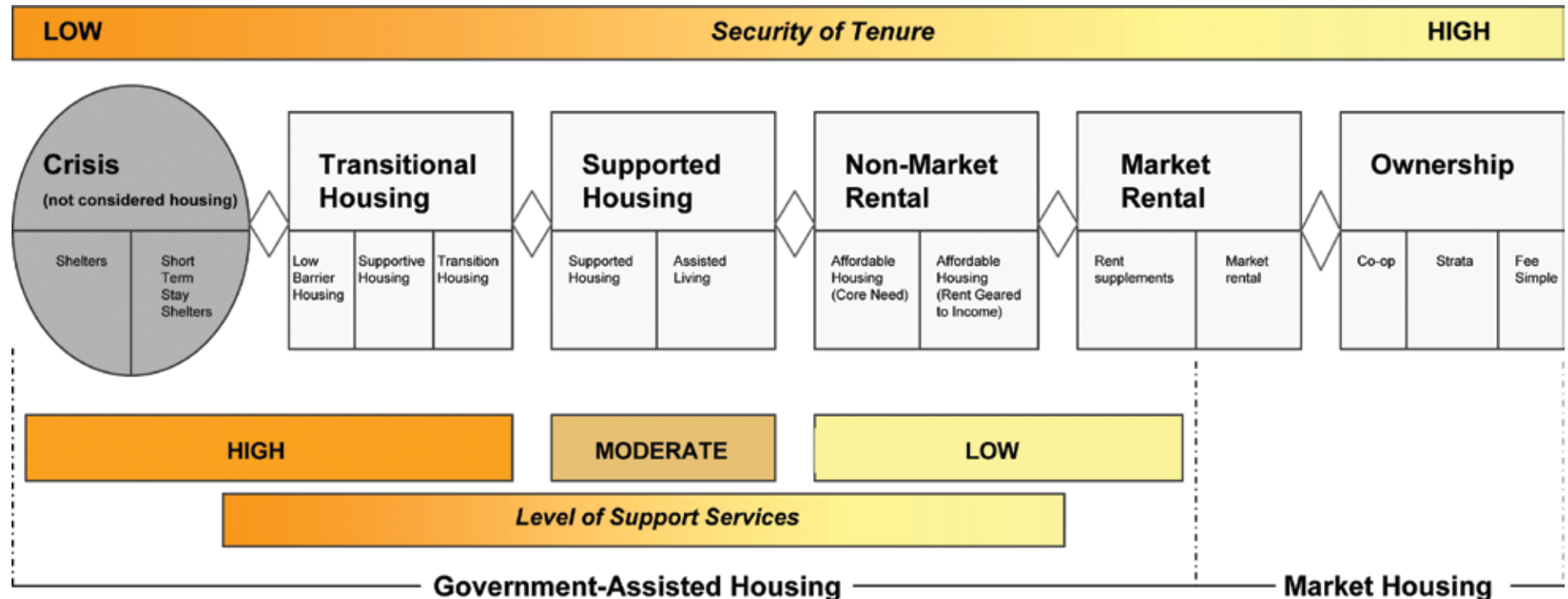
Housing is a basic human need. All citizens deserve access to housing that is safe, stable and affordable and that supports personal and public health. Housing choice and affordability are keys to creating a community in which citizens at all income levels, age groups and household types have access to a range of housing opportunities, across the [housing continuum](#) shown in Figure 15. [Housing affordability](#) means that housing costs are within a household's financial means. This is different from the term [affordable housing](#) which has become another term for subsidized, non-market or social housing. City regulations and policies can influence affordability to some degree through general housing supply and mix of dwelling unit types permitted. In contrast, the City's involvement in affordable housing, delivered predominantly by the non-profit sector, is limited and highly targeted to initiatives carried out with other partners.

Of the total housing stock, Victoria has the highest proportion of apartment units in the region at 63%, and lowest proportion of ground-oriented dwellings at 36%, figures that are expected to remain consistent over the next 30 years. Unlike many other cities of its size, approximately two thirds of Victoria households are renters 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 stages 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. Victoria is forecast to need designated housing capacity to meet demand for an additional 13,500 apartment units and an additional 2,700 ground oriented housing units, over the next 30 years. Zoned land capacity analysis prepared for this plan indicates that there is sufficient zoned capacity in 2011 to just match this demand. Designating additional housing capacity, primarily for apartment units and attached ground-oriented housing, is necessary to ensure that developable capacity is more than sufficient to meet forecast demand.

High rental and ownership housing costs in Victoria make housing affordability a challenge for people of many different income levels. Over the last decade, Victoria has ranked among the most expensive places to buy a house in Canada. In 2010, 46% of households spent at least 30% of their pre-tax income on rent, of which 22% spent more than 50% on rent. There are considerable waitlists for BC Housing's supportive and subsidized non-market rental units for families, seniors and people with disabilities in Victoria. Approximately 1,500 people are living without a home in the region, the majority in Victoria, and need access to adequate housing with support services.

Given the range and complexity of housing issues in Victoria, the plan takes a comprehensive approach to increasing the supply, affordability and range of housing choice, focusing on land use management policies and practices to facilitate greater housing affordability across the housing continuum. 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 support the City working in partnership with others to increase the supply of crisis, transitional, supported and non-market rental housing. Finally, the plan encourages the renewal and adaptation of the housing stock to meet future housing needs.

Figure 15: The Housing Continuum



BROAD OBJECTIVES

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

- 13 (a) That land use policies and practices support meeting the City's forecast need for new housing to 2041.
- 13 (b) That housing affordability for all types of housing is facilitated with a focus on increasing the amount of core need and rental housing stock throughout the city, including adequate rental housing for households with children.
- 13 (c) That a wide range of housing choice within neighbourhoods supports a diverse, inclusive and multigenerational community.
- 13 (d) That partnerships enable stable housing with appropriate services.
- 13 (e) That the existing housing stock is preserved through upgrades and adaptation.

HOUSING SUPPLY FOR FUTURE NEED

- 13.1 Seek to expand the housing supply to meet the 30 year forecast demand for 13,500 additional apartment units and 2,700 additional ground oriented housing units, by designating additional capacity for housing development to accommodate an additional 10,000 residents in the Urban Core, 8,000 residents in Town Centres and Large Urban Villages, and 2,000 residents in Small Urban Villages, Urban Residential and Traditional Residential areas, as identified on Map 1.
- 13.2 Give consideration to the allocation of additional housing capacity to meet forecast housing demand to Town Centres, Urban Villages, and residential areas through phased local area planning as identified on Map 2.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN GENERAL

- 13.3 Focus the City's efforts and resources on housing options that help people move beyond temporary shelter to more permanent housing, greater self-reliance, and stable employment.
- 13.4 Encourage new housing initiatives to leverage and partner with other levels of government, agencies, private industry, community organizations and individuals to maximize shared expertise and resources.
- 13.5 Consider all available tools to encourage more housing affordability across the housing continuum.

- 13.6 Update and maintain a Comprehensive Housing Strategy to identify housing affordability priorities, targets, and tools such as regulations, innovative financing, partnerships and incentives for private and non-profit sectors.
- 13.7 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 the implementation of regional plans and initiatives.
- 13.8 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, the homeless or persons at risk of homelessness; for families with children; and for people with special needs.

TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTED HOUSING

- 13.9 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.

NON-MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

- 13.10 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.

MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

- 13.11 Encourage the retention of existing rental units in buildings of four units or more by considering higher density redevelopment proposals on these sites only if:
 - 13.11.1 The same number of affordable rental units are maintained on-site through a housing agreement; or,
 - 13.11.2 An equivalent cash in-lieu contribution is made to the City's Housing Fund.
- 13.12 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.

- 13.13 For strata-title conversion applications for buildings with four rental units or more, continue to support relocation and housing security to tenants through development of a Tenant Plan as detailed in the Residential Strata Titling Policy.
- 13.14 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.
- 13.15 Increase rental housing choice and provide more avenues for rental affordability by enabling the development of residential secondary suites, garden suites and forms of [shared accommodation](#).
- 13.16 Review the Zoning Bylaw and other regulations to consider self-contained [“lock-off” suites](#) in multi-residential and mixed-use developments.

MARKET OWNERSHIP HOUSING

- 13.17 Support increased home ownership affordability through policies and regulations that permit additional, on-site residential rental units in primary structure or in accessory buildings, in accordance with the Zoning Bylaw.
- 13.18 Increase housing choice and provide more avenues for home ownership affordability by supporting multi-unit developments, the creation of small residential lots, street-oriented fee simple row-houses and other innovative housing forms consistent with the guidelines in Figure 7.

HOUSING DIVERSITY

- 13.19 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 facilitate [aging in place](#).
- 13.20 Encourage a mix of residents, including families with children, by increasing opportunities for innovative forms of ground-oriented multi-unit residential housing through housing policy and a review of the Zoning Bylaw and other regulations as appropriate.
- 13.21 Where possible, locate new seniors housing, transitional housing and non-market rental housing within close proximity to town centres and large urban villages as shown in Map 1, to enable easy access to services and facilities necessary for daily living.

- 13.22 Work with the health authority, the private sector, and non-profit organizations to provide a range of seniors-oriented housing, facilities and support services to ensure a continuum of care.
- 13.23 Support the integration Community Care Facilities and Group Residences throughout the city.
- 13.24 Provide a range of housing choice for persons with mobility challenges by:
 - 13.24.1 Giving consideration to options for encouraging adaptable multi-unit housing; and,
 - 13.24.2 Developing voluntary guidelines for enhanced adaptable housing to provide a higher standard of adaptability and accessibility for all housing types.

STABLE HOUSING WITH SUPPORT SERVICES

- 13.25 Address the interconnected issues of homelessness, addictions and mental health by developing a [Housing First](#) approach through the review and update of the City's Comprehensive Housing Strategy that supports the efforts of government, BC Housing, the health authority, and community social service, homelessness and housing organizations.
- 13.26 Continue to work in partnership to provide wide-ranging support to coordinated community and regional efforts to end homelessness and enable stable housing with support services for residents, within the limits of the City's mandate and resources.
- 13.27 Continue to advocate in favour of integrated services, other supports and housing for citizens who are homeless or at-risk-of-homelessness to all senior levels of government and public agencies.
- 13.28 Work with senior government, the health authority and private sector and community organizations to assist people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, in having access to facilities that enable them to meet basic needs, including those necessary maintain public and personal health, such as public toilets, drinking water, shelter spaces.

UPGRADES AND ADAPTATION OF THE HOUSING STOCK

- 13.29 Develop strategies to support the ongoing renewal of the existing housing stock as part the review and update of the City's Comprehensive Housing Strategy.
- 13.30 Encourage senior governments to continue programs to assist landlords and homeowners with residential rehabilitation, including energy retrofits.
- 13.31 Secure commitments to market and non-market multiple dwelling units in designated heritage properties through the review and approval of heritage revitalization agreements and housing agreements.
- 13.32 Continue and develop incentives to support the adaptive reuse and conversion of designated commercial, institutional and/or industrial heritage buildings to residential or residential mixed uses, and consider the expansion of programs from the Downtown to the whole Urban Core, Town Centres and Urban Villages.
- 13.33 Support the renovation and redevelopment of older ground-oriented housing developments including family-oriented, seniors-oriented, cooperative and publicly-owned housing, by considering higher density redevelopment proposals on these sites, if the same number of units with same number of bedrooms and tenure are maintained on-site.
- 13.34 Encourage flexible design features in new emergency shelters and transitional housing to adapt to the changing shelter and housing needs of residents.