

DISTRICT OF
**NORTH
VANCOUVER**



Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy



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Table of Contents

- 1| INTRODUCTION..... 3
 - Intent of this strategy 3
 - Public and stakeholder consultation 4
- 2 | FOCUS FOR THIS RENTAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY 5
 - Low and moderate income households 5
 - Target resident households 6
- 3 | ESTIMATED RENTAL DEMAND 8
- 4| LEVEL OF AFFORDABILITY 9
- 5| KEY RENTAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS 10
 - GOAL 1: Expand the supply and diversity of housing..... 10
 - GOAL 2: Expand the supply of new rental and affordable housing..... 11
 - GOAL 3: Encourage the maintenance and retention of existing affordable rental..... 12
 - GOAL 4: Enable the replacement of existing rental housing with conditions 12
 - GOAL 5: Minimize Impacts to Tenants..... 13
 - GOAL 6: Partner with other agencies to help deliver affordable housing..... 14
- 6| IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY..... 15



1 | INTRODUCTION

As guided by the North Vancouver District's Official Community Plan (OCP), increasing housing choices to meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages and incomes is a key objective for this community.

While important strides have been made to increase the type and tenure of housing through revitalization and mixed use redevelopment of designated town and village centres, a more focused strategy is needed to address the needs of low and moderate income households in their efforts to find affordable housing choices.

Intent of this Strategy

The District has an opportunity to promote retention of existing rental, and the expansion of the affordable rental housing inventory through the implementation of the OCP and other relevant bylaws and policies, and the administration of the land development application and review process. Realization of affordable housing objectives will require collaboration and partnerships with senior government agencies, non-profit housing providers, and other community stakeholders.

This Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy has been developed with the input of District residents, non-profit housing providers, housing agencies, and development industry representatives. Goals, policies and implementation measures in this strategy are intended to guide the community, developers, Council and staff towards the provision of housing choices for low to moderate income households in the District.

This strategy also supplements and provides additional detail to inform existing housing policies in the Official Community Plan (OCP), centres implementation plans, and other relevant Council policies.



Public and Stakeholder Engagement

This Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy has been shaped by housing research, data from OCP-related forums on housing, a series of workshops with Council, online and in-person public surveys, and stakeholder feedback. This process is illustrated in Figure 1.

In February - March 2016, the District hosted a number of workshops with non-profit organizations, housing providers/agencies, and development industry representatives to gather feedback on the draft strategy. Approximately 45 participants, representing 32 organizations, attended these workshops.

In May 2016, the District retained NRG Research Group to conduct statically valid telephone and onsite interviews with home owners and renters in the District. A total of 689 residents provided input through these surveys. An additional 83 residents submitted responses through an online survey posted on the District's website.

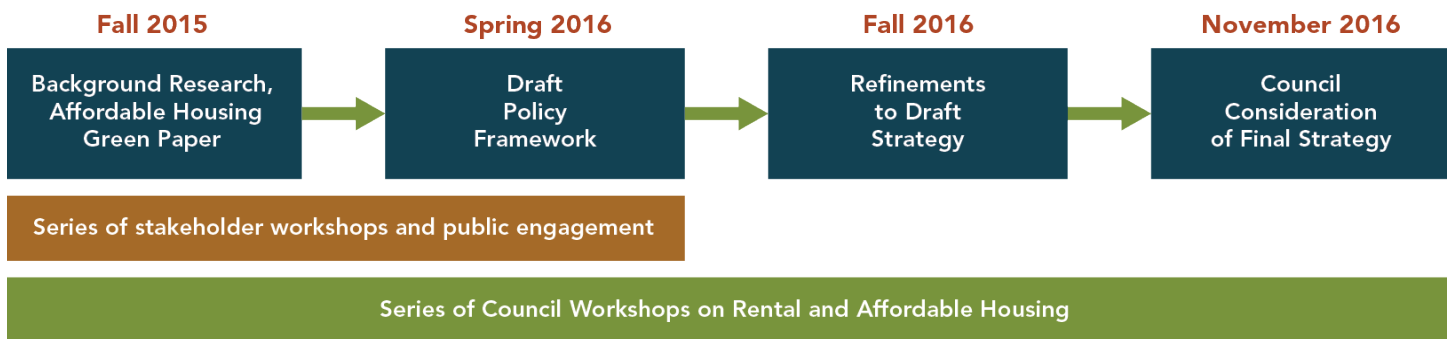


Figure 1. Planning and engagement process to develop the strategy

2 | FOCUS FOR THIS STRATEGY

Low and moderate income households

A healthy community has a diverse spectrum of housing types to accommodate the housing needs of residents of all ages, incomes, abilities and household sizes. Figure 2 illustrates the continuum of housing in the District from non-market housing for vulnerable and low income populations to market housing for higher income households.

- 1. Focus on the needs of low and low to moderate income earning households that are most likely to face challenges in finding appropriate and affordable housing.**

These households are largely renters earning an estimated 30 - 50% and 50 - 80%, respectively, of the District's median rental household income. This area of focus roughly coincides with the social housing, low end market rental and market rental housing segments of the District's housing continuum.

Non-Market Housing			Market Housing			
Emergency Shelters & Transitional Housing	Supportive Housing	Social and Co-op Housing	Low End Market Rental	Market Rental Housing	Entry Level Market Ownership	Market Home Ownership

Figure 2. Housing continuum in the District

The above focus aligns with OCP direction to develop a rental and affordable housing strategy to address the housing needs of low to moderate income earning households. It is also consistent with and helps support key goals in the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy.

Target resident households

Ensuring an intergenerational mix of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities is important to the ongoing health and vibrancy of our community.

2. Consider the housing needs of lower income families as a key area of focus.

3. Seek to address the housing needs of lower income seniors, students, persons with disabilities and vulnerable populations at risk of being homeless, as well.

There is an on-going need for more affordable and rental housing choices for the following types of residents.

Families



Housing is needed for families that cannot afford home ownership and need additional space for children and/or extended family members. In 2011, an estimated 1,520 District households were living in core need and spending at least half of their income on housing, and approximately 860 (56%) of these were family households. In the absence of more affordable housing choices, many of these families may be forced to leave the District.

Young Adults and Students



Demographic trends for the District show a declining number of young adults aged 20 - 40 years, and identified as the 'missing generation' in the OCP. At the same time, local business operators report challenges in attracting and retaining qualified employees given the high land values on the North Shore. Affordable housing choices are needed to ensure that young adults receiving education, entering the work force and starting to raise families can continue to live and thrive in the District.

Seniors



Seniors are projected to comprise the largest proportion of the District's population in the coming decades. While the majority of seniors over 55 years own their current home and expect to be owning a home for the next 10 years, some lower income seniors are looking for low maintenance and affordable rental housing choices close to transit and other community amenities and services.

Persons with Disabilities



Persons living with cognitive and/or mobility disabilities are faced with tough challenges in finding affordable, barrier free housing. Some older purpose built rental units present limited options for persons with disabilities and an increased supply of affordable accessible designed units is needed.

Vulnerable persons at risk of homelessness



While the numbers of homeless people have, in recent years, remained relatively constant; social service providers across the North Shore report a growing number of vulnerable populations at risk of homelessness and waitlists for social and non-market housing continue to grow.

3 | ESTIMATED RENTAL DEMAND

The OCP (2011) anticipates capacity for approximately 10,000 net new units in the District by 2030.

As guided by the Metro Vancouver housing demand estimates in the Regional Growth Strategy (Metro 2040) and the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, the District has established an estimated 10 year demand for affordable housing.

4. The 10 year (2016 – 2026) estimated demand for affordable rental units in the District is 600 -1,000 units.

These affordable rental units are intended to form part of, and not in addition to, the anticipated 10,000 net new units.



4 | LEVEL OF AFFORDABILITY

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) generally considers housing to be “affordable” when a household spends no more than 30% of their gross household income on shelter costs (rent, mortgage payments, property taxes, strata fees, and heating costs). CMHC has also established a set of recognized and regularly updated affordability levels that are derived from the CHMC annual rental market survey.

5. Establish rental thresholds for new affordable rental units at the time of rezoning and through a signed Housing Agreement.

6. Use the established CMHC Affordability Criteria, as updated on an annual basis, to guide the determination of affordability levels.

7. Include provisions in the Housing Agreement to the effect that existing and potential renters are income tested to ensure that affordable units are provided to low and low-moderate income earners.



Calculations of actual rents must refer to annually updated CMHC Market Rental reports.

Stats Canada census provides median household income (MHI) data every 5 years. MHI calculations may be adjusted by the annual rate of inflation to reflect incremental changes to income in the interim years.

5 | KEY RENTAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS

This section establishes key goals and corresponding policies to guide the rental and affordable housing in the District.

GOAL 1: Expand the supply and diversity of housing

As we move towards 2030, the majority (75 – 90%) of new housing is anticipated to be added in key growth centres, while preserving the neighbourhood character and lower density of established neighbourhoods. Increased supply of housing in centres will add diverse multi-family housing choices (type, tenure, unit sizes etc.) for District residents, and encourage competitive pricing for homes.

- 8. Continue to encourage diversity and increase the supply of housing in town and village centres in accordance with OCP and centre implementation plan policies.**



GOAL 2: Expand the supply of new rental and affordable housing

Following a 30 - 40 year period of little change in the inventory of rental housing, some renewed interest in developing new purpose built market rental is emerging. Low interest rates, higher rental returns, municipal incentives and other factors have contributed to making the market rental housing more attractive to some developers. Municipal policy, partnerships and negotiated approaches at rezoning are needed to increase the supply of affordable rental housing that the market will not ordinarily provide. Locating affordable rental in centres that are within walking distance to frequent transit provides alternate transportation choices and helps ease the transportation costs and financial burden for renters.

- 9. Expand the supply of rental and affordable housing in a manner that is consistent with the OCP, and enables low and moderate income households to access transit and community services, retail and employment within walking distance from their homes.**
- 10. Encourage development applicants to demonstrate how the proposed project will support rental and affordable housing in the District, where feasible.**
- 11. Ensure that new rental includes a range of units, (i.e. number of bedrooms) to suit the needs of families and other households.**
- 12. Negotiate for rental and affordable units, land (typically for larger projects), a cash-in-lieu contribution (typically for smaller projects) towards affordable housing, or some combination thereof, at the time of rezoning, and on a case-by-case.**
- 13. Consider opportunities for density/height bonus zoning, on a case-by-case basis, to facilitate provision of affordable housing.**
- 14. Consider opportunities, on a case-by-case basis, to incentivise rental and affordable housing with parking reductions in key centres and along the frequent transit network, and in consideration of applicable centres plans and transportation policies.**
- 15. Continue to apply the strata rental protection policy recognizing that strata rental provides an important source of market rental housing.**

Key Goals - continued

GOAL 3: Encourage the maintenance and retention of existing affordable rental

Existing, older purpose built rental housing makes an important contribution to the affordable rental inventory in the District, and provides a key source of more affordable housing for low to moderate income families and other households. Progressive maintenance and restoration of these buildings is necessary to extend their service life and to ensure their functionality and liveability for residents.

16. Encourage the maintenance of purpose built rental to the end of its economic life, and ensure the appropriate enforcement of the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw in consideration of other applicable policies.

17. Prioritize the maintenance, restoration and retention of purpose built rental subject to an objective assessment of the building condition, and in consideration of applicable centres plans objectives and policies.

GOAL 4: Enable the replacement of existing rental housing with conditions

It is recognized that even with ongoing and regular maintenance, by 40 - 50 years of age, several major mechanical components of residential buildings may need to be replaced outright. Higher maintenance costs associated with this work may be reflected in higher rents and/or sub-standard living conditions if maintenance is deferred. On a case-by-case basis, the condition of an existing rental building may warrant redevelopment.

18. Consider the replacement of existing rental, on a case-by-case basis, and subject to negotiation of the replacement rental units reflecting the number of bedrooms and affordability of original units, or some combination thereof, to meet the affordable housing needs of families and other households.



GOAL 5: Minimizing Impacts to Tenants

Potential demolition of older multi-family rental buildings has raised concerns for displaced renters who may face significant challenges in finding suitable affordable housing in a low vacancy rate climate.

A Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy outlines procedures to assist current tenants in finding alternative and affordable accommodation. Such procedures may include providing advanced notice to tenants, assistance with relocation, moving cost allowance, right of first refusal in the new building, long term tenant bonus, and/ or other measures.

19. Work with land owners and developers to explore a phased approach to development to minimize impacts to existing tenants, where feasible.

20. Apply a Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy to encourage development proponents to offer assistance to tenants in their search for new housing.



Key Goals - continued

GOAL 6: Partner with other agencies to help deliver affordable housing

Addressing the affordable housing needs of lower and low to moderate income households will require partnership and collaboration with diverse community partners. Efficiencies can be realized when affordable housing is constructed as part of a market housing or mixed use development project. The day-to-day operation of affordable housing units and provision of services to tenants, as needed, is often managed by non-profit housing providers. Capital grants or other financing from Provincial and Federal governments can strengthen the economic feasibility of an affordable housing project. Strategic use of District owned lands, which may involve a long-term lease, can help leverage senior government funding.

21. Seek opportunities to partner with community stakeholders and senior government towards achieving affordable housing goals.

22. Explore opportunities to utilize District owned land subject to consideration of, but not limited to: proximity to frequent transit network; access to community services and employment; availability of external funding and partnerships; alignment with OCP, centres implementation plans and other applicable municipal policies.

23. Derive value from individual District owned lots for affordable housing in a manner that is consistent with Council policies.



6 | IMPLEMENTATION OF THIS STRATEGY

Successful implementation of rental and affordable housing in the District will require regular data collection and monitoring to ensure alignment with changing community needs. A reporting framework will provide a consistent and comprehensive means of tracking important housing metrics, and may be used to inform future adjustments, as may be needed, for Council’s consideration. Implications to the existing funding levels will be considered with the long-term funding strategy.

26. Establish a reporting framework to routinely monitor appropriate affordable housing metrics, not limited to the number of units and bedrooms, and level of affordability of existing and new affordable units, by project and by area.

27. Report on these metrics for each applicable residential development application and on a consolidated, annual basis and compare to projected demand estimates.

28. Consider the allocation of Community Amenity Contribution funds for affordable housing, on a case-by-case basis, and subject to consideration of the District’s long-term funding strategy.

