

# **Interim report to Council to address rental, social and affordable housing issues**

**Prepared by the Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force**  
September 2020

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## Message to Council

The 2016 Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy (RAHS) report outlined six goals and a series of linked recommendations to address District housing challenges. Using the most recent data available to assess progress in meeting the goals of the original report, the Task Force has expanded on and begun to clarify the original recommendations.

However, given the current state of housing in the District and the pressing need for action, the Task Force has also identified several priority actions that can be acted on immediately to effect positive change. These are actions that would either have a short-term beneficial impact on the District's housing issues or require a long lead time to bring stakeholders on board. This Interim Report begins by listing those actions with the intent of highlighting them for Council's attention.

The remainder of the report is an interim review of the work of the Task Force to date—including a "Where we are now" overview, an update on the original goals and recommendations, and a brief summary of next steps.

## Recommendations for immediate action

1. **Staff Resources:** Establish one or more high-ranking positions responsible for rental, social and affordable housing with a mandate to animate and coordinate the actions and recommendation raised in this Report. [All Goals]
2. **Lands and process:**
  - a. Source lands for rental, social and affordable housing. Consider District lands. [Goals 1 & 2]
  - b. Speed up development approvals for rental, social and affordable housing. [Goals 1, 2 & 4]
3. **Funding & partners:**
  - a. Access federal and provincial funding to support rental, social and affordable housing. Advocate for increased supply-side financing for the District but also for reduced demand for District financial housing support, for example by asking the Province to require post-secondary institutions to provide housing solutions for their international students. [Goal 6]
  - b. Partner with Indigenous groups and non-profits for delivery of rental, social and affordable housing. [Goal 6]
  - c. Allocate a percentage of community amenity contributions received as cash-in-lieu on every rezoning directly to a housing reserve fund. Create a process by which such monies can be used to increase available funds for rental, social and affordable housing (such as by providing development cost charge waivers, tax exemptions or other measures). [Goal 2]

- d. Be prepared with rental, social and affordable housing project and infrastructure plans to take advantage of new funding from the Federal government due to the Pandemic. [Goals 2, 3 &4]

**4. Regulations:**

- a. Conduct a technical analysis on implementing rental-only zoning within the next four to six months. [Goals 2, 3 & 4]
- b. Lobby the provincial government for changes to the *Residential Tenancy Act* to accommodate the important differences between secondary suites and purpose-built rental buildings to encourage an increase in secondary suite rentals. The RSTA regulations discourage secondary suites. [Goals 1 & 6]

**5. Tenant impacts:**

- a. Create a policy to minimize impact on tenants that are evicted or relocated and lobby the Province for more power to enforce tenant protection. [Goal 5, See also Appendix A]
- b. Partner with developers to create measures to accommodate people in need of housing where development has ceased. If land is going to remain empty due to the economy or delayed permitting processes, allow temporary modular, container or tiny homes to be located on the site to house people who might otherwise be homeless. [Goals 2, 4 & 6]

Signed with the names of the Task Force members.

**Members:** Kelly Bond  
Keith Collyer  
Bruce Crowe  
Ian Cullis  
Hesam Deihimi  
Phil Dupasquier  
Katherine Fagerlund  
Heather Fowler  
Derek Holloway  
Ellison Malin  
Michael Sadler

## Where we are now

This report builds on the work of the District of North Vancouver's 2016 Rental and Affordable Housing (RAH) Strategy. Using the most recent data available, the Task Force has assessed the District's progress over the past three years in increasing housing choices to meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages and incomes. Our examination reveals that little progress has been made and that the goals and recommendations outlined in the RAH Strategy continue to be as relevant as ever. In addition to updating the RAH Strategy with new data, this report revisits and expands on the original recommendations to Council.

### A synopsis of the current situation

British Columbia's housing crisis affects all communities and all families. Skyrocketing costs over the past decade have made it challenging to find affordable accommodation across the entire housing spectrum, with low- and middle-income earners the hardest hit. This is at odds with the objectives outlined in the District of North Vancouver's 2011 Official Community Plan (OCP), which had as a central objective the goal of increasing housing choices to meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages and incomes.

Almost 10 years have passed since the 2011 OCP and the situation has deteriorated:

- According to the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, the benchmark price for a typical dwelling in North Vancouver rose 65.8% over the past 10 years. This has had spillover effects on the rental market, with median two-bedroom rents increasing 50% from 2011 to 2019.
- Statistics suggest that, although the District's population is growing, the net increase in the number of households is predominantly in the upper income brackets at the expense of those earning less than \$100,000.
- From 2011 to 2016, the number of renter households in the District increased by 15%<sup>1</sup>, or 860 households. Meanwhile, from 2011 to December 31, 2019, only 490 net new multi-family residential market and non-market rental units were approved for occupancy permit.
- For the past 10 years, the District has for the most part had a vacancy rate below 1.0%, making it extremely difficult for people to find rental housing and likely contributing to higher rental rates. However, in the last two years the vacancy rate has climbed to 1.7% (2018) and 2.6% (2019).<sup>2</sup> For comparison, a healthy vacancy rate is between 2% to 3%.<sup>3</sup>
- At least four<sup>4</sup> demovictions in the past few years have had tremendous impact on some of the District's most vulnerable households and reduced available housing types. For instance, the actual number of rental bedrooms available was reduced by 34<sup>5</sup> after the four demovictions.

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<sup>1</sup> Number of households by tenure type (Source: Statistics Canada Census 2011 and 2016).

<sup>2</sup> CMHC. "Vacancy rates by bedroom type, North Vancouver DM." <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmip-pimh/en/TableMapChart/Table?TableId=2.1.31.3&GeographyId=2410&GeographyTypeId=3&DisplayAs=Table&GeographyName=Vancouver#TableMapChart/241017/5/North%20Vancouver%20DM> (accessed June 9, 2020)

<sup>3</sup> Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book 2019. "Average Purpose Built Apartment Vacancy Rate" <http://www.metrovancouver.org/services/regional-planning/data-statistics/housing-data-book/Pages/default.aspx> (accessed April 23, 2020).

<sup>4</sup> Canyon Springs; Mountain Court Phase 1; Emery Village; Maplewood Plaza

It is clear that what was a challenging situation in 2016 when the RAH Strategy was developed has become more complex and acute. The District needs an affordable and sustainable supply of housing options and, in particular, more options for renters that are compatible with the lower and middle ranges of actual working incomes for resident households.

### Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force update

In August 2019, the District formed the Rental, Social and Affordable Housing Task Force to report on the significant challenges of housing diversity and availability in North Vancouver. The Task Force's mandate was to explore and identify innovative local government housing solutions in regard to, but not limited to:

- retention and maintenance of rental buildings, social housing and affordable housing such as older strata buildings;
- the housing continuum;
- tenant relocation policies;
- providing housing diversity;
- housing definitions; and,
- partnerships.

The Task Force was also requested to make recommendations to Council for action on the above-noted and related issues.

Eleven individuals representing a diversity of interests were selected by Council from those who volunteered to serve on the Task Force. They generally included:

- one person who is currently renting;
- one person currently living in social housing;
- one person currently living in a co-op; [unable to find volunteer](#)
- one senior;
- one student;
- one representative of people with disabilities; [unable to find volunteer](#)
- one owner of a unit in an existing older strata building;
- one representative from the not-for-profit housing sector;
- one representative from BC Housing;
- one representative from the development/construction sector with experience in rental, social and affordable housing; and,
- two representatives from the community at large.

The group met once in August 2019 and at least twice monthly from September 2019 through March 2020 to analyze recommendations from the 2016 RAH Strategy, meet with housing experts and citizens, and review recent data to understand how housing issues have developed over the past three years. A database of researched articles was collected on the DNV "Basecamp" software. (In-person Task Force meetings were interrupted by the District's COVID-19 restrictions, but three teleconference meetings have been held in June.) The position of chair has been changed every three months.

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<sup>5</sup> DNV Nov.28, 2019 staff memo, file: 13.6410.01/000.000

Main Topics discussed thus far:

August 7, 2019	Task Force member Introductions
September 11, 2019	Motion to use previous RAHS report, Chair elected for 3 months
September 25, 2019	Facilitator workshop
October 9, 2019	Task Force discussed update plans for RAHS
October 23, 2019	Rick Danyluk, Manager of Financial Services – Presentation on funding, incomplete
November 2, 2019	Sarah Bermel- Tour of River Woods Housing Co-Op in Parkgate
November 6, 2019	Raymond Kan and James Stiver, Metro Vancouver – Transit Oriented Affordable Housing (TOAH) Study
November 6, 2019	Mayor Mike Little
November 20, 2019	Michael Hartford, Section Manager, Development Planning, DNV
November 20, 2019	Dan Milburn, DNV General Manager Planning Properties and Permits, and CAC's
December 2, 2019	Task Force delegation presented to Council
December 18, 2019	Michael Sadler, First Nations Director from BC Housing discussed Programs
January 9, 2020	Task Force discussed updates for RAHS Goals 3 to 6
January 23, 2020	Hesam Deihimi, Developer, presented Land Development Economics
February 6, 2020	Discussed Affordability for RAHS updated introduction
February 20, 2020	Robyn Adamache and Andrew Middleton, from CMHC
February 20, 2020	Ian Cullis discussed not-for-profits, and Targeted OCP Review
February 21, 2020	Naomi Brunemeyer, BC Housing Regional Director of Development
March 5, 2020	Dan Milburn DNV G.M. discussed RTRAP; Reviewed Facilitator list outstanding

Through their own diverse experience and collaborative work, the Task Force has identified a series of actions that Council must take to ensure the District has a healthy mix of housing diversity and availability to meet the needs of its population.

### **Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy review**

As guided by the North Vancouver District's 2011 Official Community Plan (OCP), a key objective for the District of North Vancouver is to increase housing choices to meet the diverse needs of residents of all ages and incomes.

In 2016, the [Rental and Affordable Housing \(RAH\) Strategy](#) was developed with the input of District residents, non-profit housing providers, housing agencies and development industry representatives to advise on the implementation of the housing policies in the OCP. Goals, policies and implementation measures outlined in the RAH Strategy were intended to:

- guide the community, developers, Council and staff to increase the type and tenure of housing through revitalization and the mixed-use redevelopment of designated town and village centres, and
- place greater priority on addressing the needs of low- and moderate-income households to secure affordable housing choices.

Unfortunately, the RAH Strategy does not appear to have influenced development as it was intended to. Below, we summarize each of the RAH Strategy’s areas of focus and provide an update on how the issue has evolved over the past three years.

### Target households

As outlined in the existing RAH Strategy, a healthy community has a diverse range of housing types to accommodate the needs of residents of all ages, incomes, abilities and household sizes. The RAH Strategy focused on housing choices for low- and moderate-income households, including populations that are particularly vulnerable. These households are largely renters earning an estimated 30%-50% and 50%-80%, respectively, of the District’s median rental household income. They include families, young adults and students, seniors, persons with disabilities and persons at risk of homelessness.

Amongst this demographic, a particular concern for this Task Force has been those who have been demovicted from existing “affordable” rental housing, as well as single-parent families. In the current market, it is exceedingly difficult for these populations to find two- or three-bedroom housing that is affordable while absorbing the costs of raising one or more children. The National Occupancy Standard, as established by CMHC, states that there needs to be at least one bedroom per cohabitating adult couple; per unattached household member 18 years of age and over; per same-sex pair of children under 18; per additional boy or girl, unless there are two opposite sex children under 5 years of age, in which case they can share a bedroom.<sup>6</sup>

The focus of the RAH Strategy and this report overlaps with the social housing, low-end market rental and market rental housing segments of the District’s housing continuum as shown in the figure below.

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

<sup>6</sup> CMHC “National Occupancy Standards.”

[https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions\\_EN.html#\\_Suitable\\_dwelling](https://cmhc.beyond2020.com/HiCODefinitions_EN.html#_Suitable_dwelling) (accessed June 9, 2020)

Figure 1: Housing continuum (Source: District of North Vancouver Rental and Affordable Housing Strategy, 2016)

## Affordability

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) generally considers housing to be “affordable” when a household spends no more than 30% of its 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. However, regional context is key in evaluating affordability. Given that the District’s median income is relatively high, this skews the measure of affordability for those with lower incomes.

The rising value of land and housing has impacted affordability. According to the Real Estate Board of Greater Vancouver, the benchmark pricing for a typical dwelling in North Vancouver has risen 65.8% over the past 10 years and 45.9% over the past five years. When values increase, landlords also tend to raise rental rates and we have seen this throughout the rental market, most acutely in the lower end of the rental market. This has put significant pressure on housing costs for the community’s lower- and middle-income households. With rising rental prices, the required income needed to sustain a household in the District’s rental market also rises, exacerbating barriers.

The data bears this out.

In 2016 (the most current year for which Statistics Canada data is available), the percentage of renter-occupied households that spent more than 30% of their income on housing was more than double that of owner-occupied households (44% versus 22%).<sup>7</sup>

Looking deeper, Figure 2 shows the increase in median monthly rent in the District between 2011 and 2019 and the resulting rise in minimum required household income for these properties to be considered affordable. (Please note that the data in this table are provided by CMHC. Recent searches on Craigslist in the spring of 2020 suggest much higher monthly rental rates.) In 2016, the median household income of renter households of *all sizes* in the District in 2016 was \$41,504 before taxes.<sup>8</sup> Reviewing the Figure 2 data against that income, only a bachelor apartment would have been considered affordable for the median renter household in the District in 2016.

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<sup>7</sup> Housing Affordability Definitions: A Brief Overview and Scenario. PowerPoint Presentation prepared for Council by Natasha Letchford and Brett Dwyer, February 11, 2019.

<sup>8</sup> This compares to the median household income of District home owners of \$88,220 (CMHC Annual Report, adapted from Statistics Canada (2016 Census of Canada)).

Year	Median Monthly Rent				Year	Required Annual Income Before Tax			
	Housing Type					Housing Type			
	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom		Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3+ Bedroom
2011	\$ 855	\$ 1,020	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,470	2011	\$ 34,200	\$ 40,800	\$ 48,000	\$ 58,800
2012	\$ 885	\$ 1,066	\$ 1,200	\$ 1,625	2012	\$ 35,400	\$ 42,640	\$ 48,000	\$ 65,000
2013	\$ 900	\$ 1,110	\$ 1,300	\$ 1,635	2013	\$ 36,000	\$ 44,400	\$ 52,000	\$ 65,400
2014	\$ 923	\$ 1,130	\$ 1,350	\$ 1,625	2014	\$ 36,920	\$ 45,200	\$ 54,000	\$ 65,000
2015	\$ 950	\$ 1,175	\$ 1,361	\$ 1,690	2015	\$ 38,000	\$ 47,000	\$ 54,440	\$ 67,600
2016	\$ 991	\$ 1,223	\$ 1,375	\$ 1,870	2016	\$ 39,640	\$ 48,920	\$ 55,000	\$ 74,800
2017	\$ 1,045	\$ 1,296	\$ 1,690	\$ 1,709	2017	\$ 41,800	\$ 51,840	\$ 67,600	\$ 68,360
2018	\$ 1,143	\$ 1,451	\$ 1,775	\$ 1,835	2018	\$ 45,720	\$ 58,040	\$ 71,000	\$ 73,400
2019	\$ 1,248	\$ 1,538	\$ 2,000	\$ 1,931	2019	\$ 49,920	\$ 61,520	\$ 80,000	\$ 77,240

Figure 2: Median monthly rent in the District's primary rental market by bedroom count, and minimum required household income according to CMHC definitions of affordability, 2011-2019. (Source: CMHC Annual Report 2011-2019)

Rising land values and consequent rises in rents, and negative new rental housing starts could be expected to push some lower- and moderate-income earning families out of the District. This impact would appear to be supported by changes in the distribution of income categories in the District shown in Figure 3, illustrating that while there was a net gain in the number of District households, there was a significant loss of households at all income levels below \$100,000 per annum.

Household Income Category	2011 (Before Tax)		2016 (Before Tax)		Difference
<b>Total Number of Households</b>	30,550		31,120		570
Under \$20,000	2,680	46%	1,995	38%	(685)
\$20,000 to \$39,999	3,640		3,210		(430)
\$40,000 to \$59,999	3,865		3,360		(505)
\$60,000 to \$79,999	3,750		3,340		(410)
\$80,000 to \$99,999	3,310	54%	3,070	62%	(240)
Over \$100,000	13,310		16,145		2835

Figure 3: Analysis of changes in District income categories, 2011-2016. (Source: CMHC Annual Report 2011-2019)

To improve housing affordability, the recommendations in the RAH Strategy are as relevant today as they were in 2016:

1. Establish rental thresholds for new affordable rental units at the time of rezoning and through a signed Housing Agreement.
2. Use the established CMHC Affordability Criteria, as updated on an annual basis, to guide the determination of affordability levels.
3. 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.

### Rental demand and the housing continuum

In 2011, the OCP anticipated capacity for approximately 10,000 net new units in the District by 2030, with these units spanning the housing continuum to include everything from non-market subsidized housing through to ownership. Since 2011, we have seen an increase in units on the market ownership

side of the housing continuum, but less progress in areas that address the housing needs of the vulnerable sectors of our population.

Figure 4 below illustrates the District’s estimate of the net increase in housing units across the housing spectrum that would be needed to meet the change in demand from 2011 to 2030 based on population projections using census data. As guided by the Metro Vancouver housing demand estimates in the Regional Growth Strategy (Metro 2040) and the RAH Strategy, the District established an estimated 10-year demand (2016-2026) for affordable housing of 600-1,000 rental units.

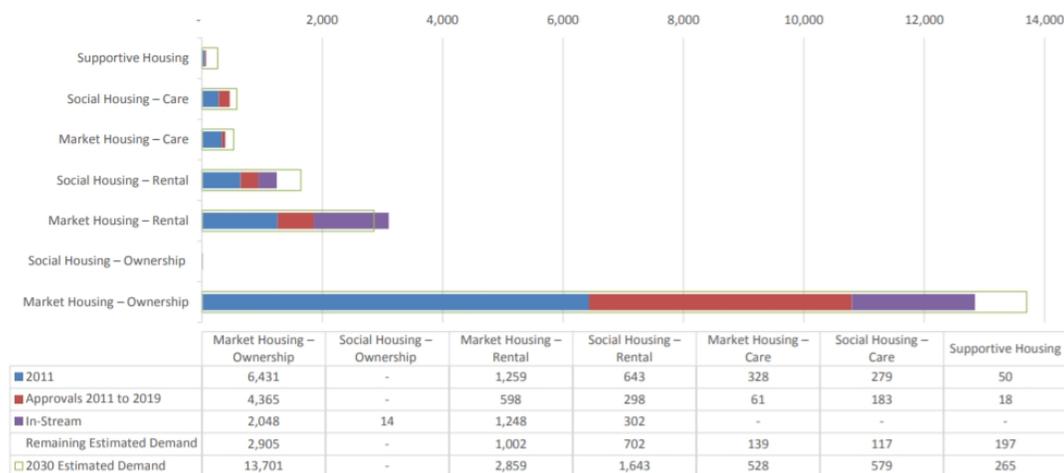


Figure 4: The District’s housing continuum showing the number of units of each type in 2011, the estimated demand for each type of unit in 2030, and the number of units that would be needed between 2011 and 2030 to address this estimated demand (Source: District of North Vancouver, 2018)

As illustrated in Figure 5, between 2011 and 2018, the District approved market and non-market rental units that address a portion of the estimated housing demand. (This information represents the best

numbers available to date. The District is continually working on new and better ways to track units, so these numbers will continue to be updated.)

**Figure 24. Status of Multi-family Housing (2011, Approvals 2011-2019, In-Stream Applications, and 2030 Estimated Demand)**



Approvals 2011 to 2019 includes:

- rezoning applications approved after OCP adoption (2011),
- rezoning applications approved before OCP adoption (2011), but occupied after OCP adoption (2011), and
- Development Permits approved after OCP adoption (2011).

In-Stream (as of July 15, 2020) includes:

- rezoning applications at the Preliminary stage of application review,
- rezoning applications after the Preliminary stage of application review, but before the Detailed stage of application review, and
- rezoning applications at the Detailed stage of application review,

Remaining Estimated Demand = the 2011 count plus Approvals after OCP adoption (2011) to 2019, subtracted from the Estimated Demand.

The number of In-Stream applications for Market Housing – Rental, if approved would result in an exceedance of the estimated demand by approximately 246 units.

Source: District of North Vancouver

Figure 5: Number of units approved in the District between 2011 and 2018 (Source: District of North Vancouver, 2019).

Reviewing Figure 3 data regarding household income against the assessment of housing demand in Figure 4, the Task Force strongly believes that the housing demand model and the consequent focus on new development needs to be reconsidered. As shown in the graph, progress has been made in adding units across several housing categories, but there is an observable lack of progress in the area of non-market rental. Given District’s income demographics (including the noticeable loss of households in the low- to moderate-income brackets), we see the need for more housing choices, particularly in subsidized rental, co-op and co-housing.

New units are also being developed in the District as local First Nations expand the housing stock on their lands. However, these plans are not co-ordinated with District plans. As an example, Through the Tseil-Waututh Nation’s Takaya developments, 1,089 units (as of February 2020) have been built in the Ravens Wood community over the past 25 years. The Nation is currently developing a 500-unit project

that when complete will bring the total number of units to 1,550.<sup>9</sup> These are both purpose-built rentals and lease hold property, and units are priced at market for non-band members. The Squamish Nation also has extensive land on the North Shore and has recently created a housing society to address the Nation's need for affordable and supportive housing for its members.

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<sup>9</sup> Takaya Developments. <https://twnation.ca/about/our-businesses/takaya-developments/> (accessed April 23, 2020).

## **Rental, social and affordable housing goals**

The 2016 RAH Strategy outlined six goals to support rental and affordable housing, along with a series of recommendations to help the District achieve these goals. Given that little progress has been made over the past three years to ensure an accessible and diverse mix of housing types, the Task Force believes that the RAH Strategy's goals are as relevant as ever. However, we have expanded upon the list of recommendations to reflect the many areas where significant action is needed.

We believe it is crucially important that Council address these goals through the lens of sustainability. The OCP included ambitious greenhouse gas emissions targets and in July 2019, Council declared a climate emergency. The ongoing climate crisis, the potential for natural disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis, and other profoundly disruptive events point to the need to shift away from short-term decisions focused on the immediate bottom line. The Task Force believes it is essential that housing is considered within this broader context. For example, although the initial upfront investment to build units that meet high sustainability standards may seem higher than using conventional building design, the reduced long-term operating costs and reduced emissions and carbon footprint associated with green buildings must be taken into account.

### **GOAL 1: Expand the supply and diversity of housing**

The RAH Strategy mimicked the objectives of the 2011 OCP in predicting that growth towards 2030 would see the majority (75%–90%) of new housing planned by the District added in key growth centres, while preserving the neighbourhood character and lower density of established neighbourhoods. The anticipation was that increased supply of housing in centres would add diverse multi-family housing choices (in terms of type, tenure, unit sizes, etc.) for District residents, and theoretically encourage competitive pricing for homes.

The District must expand the supply and diversity of housing to meet the diverse needs of its diverse residents. There are many innovative practices the District can adopt – from encouraging tiny homes and coach houses to supporting co-housing initiatives to helping seniors retrofit their homes into smaller rentable spaces. Our most vulnerable populations must not be overlooked, particularly single-parent families, the disabled and low-income earners.

### **Recommendations to Council:**

1. Continue to increase diverse housing opportunities in town and village centres in accordance with OCP and centre implementation plan policies.
  - a. Focus on transit routes where parking requirements may be reduced to deliver housing
  - b. Explore inefficient uses of land (District-owned, public and private) in areas appropriate for gentle densification, such as two- or three-storey townhomes, suites and duplexes.
  - c. Create town centre specific housing action plans that include more affordable rental and co-op options, to ensure the town centre concept is achieving its desired effect of reduced car use.
2. Explore new building methods and revise building codes to accommodate potential alternatives for construction, such as pre-fab and 3D printing as well as tall wood-frame buildings using cross-laminated timber.

3. Create bylaws to support new types of housing that could be added into the District's diverse housing landscape.
  - a. Consider policies to support tiny homes, modular housing and container housing, as well as policies to support a party wall ownership model.
4. Support co-op housing platforms and projects and introduce co-housing as an option. These can include student and senior co-housing, as well as single-parent co-ops.
5. Recognize the risk of creating an economically divided North Vancouver and ensure affordable options are placed throughout the municipality.
  - a. Explore the option of minor densification in single-family neighbourhoods, such as tiny homes, coach houses and basement suites.
6. Encourage greater acceptance of supportive housing for homeless populations.
7. Create emergency housing and plan for emergencies with community centres and schools. Consider using these facilities as homeless shelters.
8. Consider the environmental impacts and benefits of amenities with net zero requirements.
9. Encourage more duplex/triplex living.
10. To recognize the value and importance of pets in our lives, create a pet-friendly policies to ensure the availability of pet-friendly rental accommodations.
11. Be a leader in providing more than the basic requirements in building for persons with disabilities.

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

The RAH Strategy spoke with optimism about a perceived renewed interest in new purpose-built market rental. The report suggested that some developers were taking advantage of low interest rates, higher rental returns, municipal incentives and other factors to develop market rental housing.

Despite the good intentions and optimism expressed in the original Goal 2 that we would see an expanded supply of new rental and affordable housing, the supply of affordable rental housing in the District has decreased. However, there is some potential good news. Renewed interests from senior levels of government in funding the construction of new affordable and rental housing via various programs (sponsored by BC Housing, Housing Hub and CMHC in partnership with non-profit and for-profit developers) for the purpose of delivering below market and market rental units offers some hope for progress.

### **Recommendations to Council:**

1. 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.
2. Use incentives to encourage development applicants to demonstrate how their proposed project will support rental and affordable housing in the District.

3. Ensure that new rental includes a range of units (i.e., number of bedrooms) to suit the needs of families and other households by requiring that a minimum percentage of units in new developments (35%-45%) be two or three bedrooms.
4. Review district parking policy for opportunities to increase affordability of housing.
5. Continue to apply the strata rental protection policy, recognizing that strata rental provides an important source of market rental housing.
6. Reconsider policies – such as the flexible framework for Lynn Valley – that are in conflict with meeting the town centre housing targets.
7. Shorten the approval process for rental, social and affordable housing projects by previewing projects to Council for input and by pre-zoning in some areas.
8. Require developers to provide rent subsidies for existing tenants during the construction period.
9. Compare new rental developments by number of bedrooms replaced and by square footage.
10. Provide density bonusing for rental and below market rental developments of between 0.5 to 1.2 for rental and below market rental applications.
11. Explore the inclusion of rental caps at the time of rezoning for applications that receive density bonusing, CAC exemption and expedited approval process.
12. Explore opportunities for redeveloping properties along main transit corridors, such as those having bus service at 15-minute intervals for most of the day, and/or within walking distance to town centres for rental-only zoning.

### **GOAL 3: Support and facilitate the maintenance and retention of existing affordable rental**

As stated in the RAH Strategy, 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 needed to extend their service life and to ensure their functionality and liveability for residents.

Another important consideration is that maintaining an existing building or upgrading it to meet new energy-efficiency targets can have less of an environmental impact than demolishing the building and constructing a new structure on the site.

#### **Recommendations to Council:**

1. Enable the appropriate enforcement of the Standards of Maintenance Bylaw in consideration of other applicable policies.
  - a. Review the Bylaw and update as necessary relative to acceptability and enforceability.
  - b. When revising the Bylaw, consider social, environmental and monetary impacts in that order.

- c. Retain/designate qualified personnel to monitor Bylaw compliance. Explore partnerships with other north shore municipalities to share staff. This could include retaining, designating or training District staff or using a specialist consultant.
2. Prioritize the maintenance, restoration and retention of purpose-built multi-unit rental buildings in consideration of applicable town centre plans, objectives and policies.
  - a. Create a registry/matrix of existing purpose-built multi-unit rental buildings and populate with relevant information (e.g., # of units of each type, age, Facility Condition Index (FCI) or equivalent).
  - b. Prioritize retention of existing purpose-built multi-unit rental outside of OCP centres. This is in consideration that OCP centres are suitable for redevelopment to fit with the overall vision for that centre and such properties have largely already been absorbed for redevelopment purposes.
3. Create a framework that will facilitate the maintenance, restoration and retention of purpose-built multi-unit rental buildings.
  - a. Explore partnerships to help support maintenance and retention (e.g., Landlord BC, residential tenancy branch).
  - b. Establish policies/practices to implement partnership support in maintaining existing purpose-built rental stock.
  - c. Streamline/prioritize building permits for renovation of existing purpose-built rental stock
4. Establish incentives for landlords/owners to retain existing purpose-built rental stock. These could include penalties, fees or financial incentives (e.g., taxes, carbon off-sets). Also consider financial contributions to repairs (e.g., VHF Heritage Energy Retrofit Grant).
  - a. Consider maintenance and retention policies that would include other types of rental stock, such as secondary suites.
5. Create a body that assists elderly homeowners in ways that may reduce the demand to build more seniors homes.
  - a. Provide assistance for retrofits to add accessibility aides, such as grab bars, ramps and chair lifts – so seniors can age in place.
  - b. Explore options for allowing the subdivision of homes to accommodate other senior

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

The RAH Strategy recognized that even with ongoing and regular maintenance, once a residential building is 50 or 60 years old, several major mechanical components 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.

### Recommendation to Council:

1. Review all applications for the replacement of existing rental on a case-by-case basis to determine if there are any aspects of the application that offer the District leverage to negotiate benefits to the stock of affordable rental housing with particular reference to accommodating existing tenants and diversifying the types of units. Consideration should be given to the replacement of units to reflect 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: Minimize impacts to tenants

The RAH Strategy noted that the demolition of older multi-family rental buildings has raised concerns for displaced renters who may face significant challenges finding suitable affordable housing in a low vacancy rate climate. This concern had not been adequately addressed.

The District needs a *revised* Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy that outlines procedures that go beyond provincial legislation in the *Residential Tenancy Act* to help current tenants find alternative and affordable accommodation. The revised policy should include the requirement that developers/landlords must to provide advance notice to tenants, assistance with relocation (including swing housing or rental top-up), a moving cost allowance, right of first refusal in the new building, and a long-term tenant bonus.

### Recommendations to Council:

1. Work with land owners and developers to explore a phased approach to development where feasible and to minimize impacts to existing tenants.
2. Create a revised Residential Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy that ensures tenants are provided with adequate compensation for their demoviction and relocation costs, as well as with acceptable temporary (or permanent) new housing.
3. Adopt revisions to the Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy as indicated in Appendix 1. The revisions address many gaps in the existing policy and brings it in line with current standards elsewhere in Metro Vancouver.
4. Appoint an outside consultant or staff person (perhaps same person as in our priority measures) to manage the relocation process, doing so by the use of standardized forms and procedures to make sure the process is accountable and fair to all tenants.

### GOAL 6: Partner with other stakeholders 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.

**Recommendations to Council:**

1. Seek opportunities to partner with community stakeholders (including First Nations, school boards, churches, private agencies and senior government) towards achieving affordable housing goals.
2. Explore opportunities to use District-owned land to build affordable housing.
3. Leverage District-owned lots for affordable housing in a manner that is consistent with the OCP.

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## **Implementing this strategy and its recommendations**

Successfully expanding rental, social and affordable housing options 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 way to track important housing metrics and can inform future adjustments. Implications to the existing funding levels will be considered with the long-term funding strategy.

### **Recommendations to Council:**

1. 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.
2. Track metrics, including number of partnerships, number of units and bedrooms built due to partnerships and dollars leveraged.
3. Track the number of people being demovicted as part of the standardized relocation forms that developers must submit as part of the redevelopment process.
4. Report on these metrics for each applicable residential development application and on a consolidated annual basis and compare to projected demand estimates.
5. 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.

## Next steps

The Task Force's research, discussion and analysis has identified other areas for exploration in the next phase of its work. These include:

- Developing a list of key indicators of data that can be tracked and monitored.
- Reviewing parking requirements and other barriers that are preventing higher take-up of coach house and secondary suite rentals.
- Exploring ways to develop sensitive infills on single-family lots, converting larger homes into two or more units or joining two houses together to create four to six units.
- Reviewing legislation that encourages fee simple row houses.
- Rethinking traditional land use – such as using cul-de-sacs as possible sites for multi-family housing.

Over the next period of its work, the Task Force will explore the following issues under each aspect of its mandate:

- **Retention and maintenance of rental buildings, social housing and affordable housing such as older strata units**
  - Determine accurate accounting of building so far to move ahead
  - Explore existing inventory and its status
  - Request/develop Council feedback plan
  - Offer incentives to landowners to retain and maintain their current properties
  - Develop an aging-in-place program so seniors can live longer in their homes
  - Create green demonstration plans
  - Explore rezoning residential bylaws to allow for senior co-op housing
  - Require the District to carefully review each rezoning if demolition of affordable rental required
- **The housing continuum**
  - Identify and review existing audits to determine where we are now
  - Analyze and revise existing continuum to suit current needs
  - Find out what CNV/DWV are planning for housing development to see how this impacts the needs of the District and reflects in our existing appropriation to the housing
  - Carefully review the Whistler Housing Authority Model to see if it can work in our District
  - Review whether Council can apply permissive tax exemption to purpose-built rental to achieve affordability
  - Create/develop a rent-to-own policy
  - Explore options and ideas for reducing the barrier of high land costs
  - Identify incentives that are working in other jurisdictions for fixing or improving existing housing
- **Tenant relocation policies**
  - Discuss biases, hopes and needs
  - Revise existing RTRAP to formulate a solvent policy driven by fair standards which are enforceable.
- **Provide housing diversity**

- Review rental housing index
- Evaluate rental & affordable housing breakdown *in regard to specific income brackets* for lower-income populations, seniors, students, disabled and other vulnerable populations

Continue to explore implementing creative housing examples such as modular, tilt wall and container housing

- Allow seniors to subdivide their properties/homes for income and to accommodate other seniors' housing needs.
  - Provide information on building secondary suites to homeowners wishing to renovate/build
  - Develop a guide for infill and subdivision of existing stock of house suites (Ontario)
  - Explore possibility of community Land Trusts
  - Formulate a policy for below-market or rent geared to income rental, % required for all applications going forward
  - Recommend DNV complete the housing data needs report by Q4 2020 - Q2 2021
- **Housing definitions**
    - Define for older rentals what is meant by objective, end of economic life and standard of maintenance
    - Study house-sharing concept (including bylaws) to work with the province on the *Residential Tenancy Act*
  - **Partnerships**
    - Invite presentations from First Nations
    - Create (CAPU) student initiative to work with and represent youth
    - Compile lists of available grants and non-profit providers
    - Partner with for-profit and corporate partners to develop strategies that benefit businesses and people (Airbnb)
    - Short-list non-profit partners and form memorandums of understandings with housing societies, churches and charities
    - Work with the provincial government to get BC Assessment to reconsider taxes
    - Advocate to federal and provincial government partners
    - Include community groups in our discussions, as they can provide valuable input into what works and what is needed in the area should be included in relevant ways