

**REPORT TO HOSPITALS AND HOUSING COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JULY 06, 2022**

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**SUBJECT**     **Capital Region Housing Corporation Operational Update No. 2, 2022**

**ISSUE SUMMARY**

To provide the Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) Board with a quarterly update on operations, Tenant Engagement (TE), the Routine Capital Plan 2020 – 2024 and performance in the areas of turnover, vacancy and move-ins up to and including June 10, 2022.

**BACKGROUND**

The CRHC is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Capital Regional District (CRD) with the mandate to develop and manage affordable housing to meet the needs of individuals and families residing within the capital region. In working to fulfill its mandate, the CRHC owns and operates 50 properties totalling 1,893 units of housing providing homes to more than 3,500 residents of the capital region with low to moderate incomes. In addition, CRHC manages a further four properties totalling 114 units on behalf of third parties.

**DISCUSSION**

*Operations Update*

The 2,007 units of housing across 54 properties that are currently managed by CRHC are supported by the work of approximately 52 full-time equivalencies (FTE) and three auxiliary staff. Staffing continues to require attention due to unanticipated absences, lateral movement as well as four retirements. CRHC is working with Human Resources to improve recruitment efforts and to maximize our ability to get the best candidates for the important work that is done working with vulnerable tenants. Throughout Q2, CRHC has continued to contract out common area cleaning as a way to have site staff concentrate on work that interfaces directly with tenants. This was done in an effort to ensure customer service standards are maintained.

*Tenant Engagement*

The 'Seedling' distribution - hundreds of seedlings went out to 40 households, one complex that created a collective together as well as to our Independent Living Housing Society (ILHS) partner that supports more complex tenancies at Westview.

The Spring Newsletter focused on spring cleaning. This was in coordination with work TE is doing with tenants that struggle with excess belongings (hoarding). It has been difficult for some tenants with the lockdowns to keep their spaces orderly, especially with the annual inspections suspended. This meant the regular check in by staff was not there to provide motivation to stay on top of it. In response, staff are working to develop internal protocols for how to assist tenants. The tenancies that are currently being managed are showing signs of notable improvement.

Preparation is underway for possible summer ‘heat events’. Staff have attended some emergency planning meetings hosted by CRD and are working on gathering information and resources for tenants. Air conditioning units have been purchased to create two ‘cool rooms’ at Ashlar Manor and Leblond Place. TE will work with the communities to understand the efficacy of this approach and will work to roll this out in other communities in coming years as resources permit.

The team continues to support the many challenging tenancies, which often requires collaborative communication with multiple agencies. There has been success working with partners to rapidly rehouse a number of tenants and families. However, the main focus is to work with tenants to support tenants in adopting behaviours that better contribute to successful tenancies in a multi-family environment. Where eviction prevention was not successful, the team has made every effort to connect the vacating tenant with ideas of how to access housing, supports or subsidies.

*Housing Registry Waitlist Statistics*

**Table 1: BC Housing Registry Waitlist Statistics**

Category	April 2022	May 2022	As at June 10, 2022
Total Registry Rent Geared to Income Units (Capital Regional Area)	3,813	3,814	3,814
Applicants			
Family	819	808	813
Seniors	1,078	1,086	1,079
Persons with Disabilities	592	586	585
Wheelchair Modified	135	135	138
Singles	171	171	178
Total	2,795	2,786	2,793

The BC Housing Housing Registry (Registry) helps housing providers manage applicant lists and eliminate duplication among providers. The statics provided above are for the CRD only with the highest representation of need in Victoria (46%), Saanich (18%), Langford (9%), Esquimalt (6%), Salt Spring Island (4%) and Colwood (3%). The registry requires applicants to renew their applications every six months to remain active. This process can account for slight fluctuations in the numbers however overall the number of applicants in Q2 remains fairly steady.

*Vacancy*

**Table 2: Vacancy Rate – Units Operating More than 12 Months**

Year	Period	# Units Vacant	# Days Vacant	Average Days Vacant
2022	Jan - March 10	68	3,382	49
2022	April – June 30	35	1,967	56

As of June 30, there are 35 units reported vacant across CRHC’s units which have all been in operation for more than 12 months. These vacancies total 1,967 days for an average of 56 days vacant. 546 of the days are attributed to the six final units at the Regional Housing First Program (RHFP) buildings that require renting. If excluded, the average days vacant would be 49 days. Staff continue to focus on turnover of units to 30 days or less. However, as most units require capital work to occur in them, the turnover time continues to be impacted by WorkSafe protocols that allow one work group in the unit at a time. Currently, wait times for scheduling works means a unit is vacant for a minimum of 45 days.

*Turnover*

**Table 3: Q2 Turnover Rate – All Units**

Year	Period	# Turnovers Operating More Than 12 Months	# Turnovers Operating Less Than 12 Months	Total
2022	January 1-March 10	24	1	25
2022	April – June 30	57	0	57

Turnover of units has increased from Q1, as expected. The reasons for higher turnovers is partly due to improved weather, which allows individuals to make life choices about jobs and movement. Additionally, Hockley House which has been in operation for more than 12 months, saw the end to its initial 12 month term lease. This has allowed people to move without penalty. Portfolio representation of the 57 units that turned over is: RHFP – 56% (19% are first time occupancy of new units), Umbrella Operating Agreement (UOA) – 37%, No Operating Agreement (NOA) & Investment in Housing Innovation (IHI) - 7%.

*Rent-Up*

Staff have been turning their attention to the new 58 unit building, 2782 *Spencer* which is expected to be handed over at the end of October 2022. Staff are actively working to follow up with those households who had previously expressed an interest in applying to CRHC-operated housing to determine their suitability and continued intent in pursuing a tenancy. CRHC has also established a waitlist of other individuals who have expressed interest in the other units within the building.

*Routine Capital Plan*

The updated Five-Year Routine Capital Plan has a budget of \$3.86 million (M) in 2022. Typically capital spending is its highest in Q3, with Q1 having the lowest spending due to inclement weather management, lower number of move outs and the focus to begin annual inspections. Q2 spending is progressing as expected with Requests for Proposals (RFP) and Invitations to Tenders (ITT) being prepared for posting or in the review process for award.

Capital spending as of May 31, 2022 was \$646,283 across the five portfolios. A playground RFP was recently awarded totalling \$250K and there is \$1.5M of budgeted work being processed for posting. Examples of work underway include re-roofing, fencing, exterior painting & decking. In total, at the end of Q2, there is a total of \$2.4M in routine capital works underway. Although the capacity among contractors and their labour forces are tight, staff continue to hear that there is interest in CRHC’s work. Additional examples of work underway include waste and recycling management, pest control and window washing. As part of ongoing work, staff continue to test the marketplace when existing contracts expire or are up for renewal. This process enables the corporation to continue to seek best value while also maintaining relationships with a broad array of contractors.

Staff continue to address unit turnovers and as annual inspections wrap up, they will look for opportunities to approve and assign requested upgrades in occupied units.

**CONCLUSION**

Through Q2 2022, CRHC has been actively recruiting, interviewing and onboarding staff as offers are accepted. The work in communities continues to be supported by contracted cleaning services to support the ongoing delivery of high levels of service. Management for various contracted services are all being addressed through appropriate procurement processes to ensure the contracts are updated regularly and that CRHC staff can continue to test the

marketplace seeking the most qualified contractors identified through a fair and competitive process.

Staff continue to successfully re-rent units and are continuing to focus on efforts to decrease the average number of days vacant. This will improve if turnovers occur at units that have previously had upgrades at them or if WorkSafe requirements relax over the summer allowing more than one contractor in the unit at a time.

**RECOMMENDATION**

There is no recommendation. This report is for information only.

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