

**REPORT TO HOSPITALS AND HOUSING COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MARCH 02, 2022**

SUBJECT **Regional Housing Affordability Strategy Status Report**

ISSUE SUMMARY

A Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) Status Report is being provided to update the Capital Regional District (CRD) Board on data related to the five performance measures outlined in the 2018 RHAS.

BACKGROUND

Originally approved in 2001, the RHAS was updated in 2007 and has provided the framework for addressing housing affordability challenges and supporting a collaborative regional approach for the creation of a healthy, sustainable housing system. The RHAS was updated in 2018 to reflect the CRD's evolving role and identify ways to better respond to changing housing market conditions and new developments in government housing programs and policies. A Regional Housing Advisory Committee (RHAC) provides advice to the CRD with respect to the RHAS.

The RHAS outlines key goals, with underlining objectives and strategies that the CRD and its partners might consider in supporting a broad-based effort to impact homelessness and improve housing affordability. Five performance measures are identified in the RHAS:

1. Number of net new units within the affordability target areas
2. Number of renter households in core housing need
3. Reduction in the number of individuals who are chronically homeless
4. Individuals experience shorter episodes of homelessness
5. Number of new units built within acceptable proximity to transit routes

The RHAS Status Report (Appendix A) provides updated data, where available, related to the five performance measures outlined in the 2018 RHAS. Monitoring trends helps the CRD and its partners address issues in the market and helps gauge the effectiveness of actions to impact homelessness and improve housing affordability in the region.

Development of the Status Report involved engagement with a range of partners, including the CRD's Regional and Strategic Planning Division to obtain updated data reported through the Regional Growth Strategy, BC Housing and the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness with respect to data related to homelessness. At its September 23, 2021 meeting, the RHAC was provided opportunity to give input on the draft report, as well as input for consideration in development of future reports.

The Status Report uses available data to report on performance measures. Limitations to available data, including age of data and timing of the data in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, may affect interpretation. Data sources include Statistics Canada Census, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Housing Market Information Portal, CRD Building Permit Database, BC Transit data, BC Housing shelter use data, and Point-in-Time Homeless Counts. The

Government of Canada has begun to release 2021 Census Data which included population and dwelling counts in February 2022. Moving forward, the 2021 Census Data releases relating to housing will include type of dwelling in April 2022, income in July 2022, housing in September 2022, as well as mobility and migration in October 2022. These releases will allow for updated information related to the RHAS five performance measures. In addition, in the coming months, the Province of British Columbia is expected to release new information related to homelessness, allowing for updated information on chronic and episodic homelessness.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Hospitals and Housing Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board: That the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy Status Report be received for information.

Alternative 2

That the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy Status Report be referred back to staff for additional information based on Hospitals and Housing Committee direction.

IMPLICATIONS

Alignment with Existing Plans & Strategies

The RHAS Status Report provides updated data related to the five performance measures outlined in the 2018 RHAS. The Status Report aligns with indicators reported in the 2020 Regional Growth Strategy Indicator Report, including core housing need and vacancy rate by rental price quartile.

Social Implications

The capital region, like many communities across Canada and around the world, continues to experience challenges related to escalating cost of housing, affordability and homelessness. The population of the region is expected to continue to grow from an estimated 425,000 in 2021, to an estimated 478,500 in 2038¹, adding housing pressure in the region. This Status Report suggests a continued trend of low vacancies in the lower price quartiles and high rates of core housing needs for renters. At the same time, as of March 31, 2020, there were 12,957 subsidized housing units in the Growth Management Planning Area (GMPA), representing an increase of 1,046 units over the previous year.

In the GMPA, between 2012 – 2015, the region saw as much as 43% of growth in net new dwelling units within 400m of frequent transit. In the period of 2016 – 2020, 33% of growth in net new dwelling units was within 400m of frequent transit. The CRD Housing and Transportation cost study found that annual automobile purchase, maintenance and insurance had the greatest impact on household transportation expenditures, thus locating new units in areas amenable to active travel has the potential to lower overall combined housing and transportation costs.

The 2020 Greater Victoria Point-in-Time homeless survey estimated 1,523 individuals experiencing homelessness in the region, compared to 1,525 in 2018². 2020 survey results

¹ [bylawno-4328.pdf \(crd.bc.ca\)](#)

² 2018: [2018-pit-count---community-report---final---july-19.pdf \(crd.bc.ca\)](#); 2020: [crd-pit-count-2020-community-report-2020-07-31.pdf](#)

showed higher numbers of unsheltered individuals (270, as compared to 158 in 2018) and higher numbers of people couch surfing (145, as compared to 95 in 2018). While the 2020 Point-in-Time homeless survey did not indicate a higher number of people experiencing homelessness than in 2018, the survey took place prior to the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Status Report notes small increases in the percentages of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness between 2018 and 2020, and decrease in the average length of shelter stay between 2019/20 and 2020/21.

CONCLUSION

The RHAS Status Report provides updated data related to the five performance measures outlined in the 2018 RHAS. Updated data indicates the capital region continues to experience challenges related to housing affordability and homelessness, including high demand for rental housing, high percentages of people experiencing chronic homelessness and lower percentages of growth in net new dwelling units within 400m of frequent transit.

RECOMMENDATION

The Hospitals and Housing Committee recommends to the Capital Regional District Board:
That the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy Status Report be received for information.

Submitted by:	Don Elliott, BA, MUP, Senior Manager, Regional Housing
Concurrence:	Kevin Lorette, P. Eng., MBA, General Manager, Planning & Protective Services
Concurrence:	Robert Lapham, MCIP, RPP, Chief Administrative Officer

ATTACHMENT

Appendix A: Regional Housing Affordability Strategy Status Report