

British Columbia News

Province supporting communities to plan for housing

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/21647>

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Victoria - The Province is investing \$1.7 million to help communities collect and analyze data on their housing needs so governments can deliver the right kind of homes for people in B.C.

The data will inform housing needs reports, which will identify community housing needs, such as affordable housing, rental housing, seniors' housing, as well as housing for people at risk of homelessness, families and people with special needs. The reports will also help local governments support local economic growth by assessing future employment-housing needs.

“Housing needs reports are a way to gather important information as we partner with local governments to create the right housing for people in communities of all sizes around the province,” said Selina Robinson, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. “The wave of enthusiasm and interest in applying for this grant tells us that local governments are eager to collect this information to help them build vibrant, thriving communities.”

In 2018, the Province announced a \$5 million investment over three years (2019-21) to help local governments collect and analyze data about their communities. The data is then combined with provincial data about household income and demographics to complete a housing needs report. The reports will help inform council decisions about development proposals and help determine what kind of housing is needed in neighbourhoods. Thirty-one applications were approved for this year's funding allocation. The fund is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

“This program is strengthening the data available on the housing supply in communities and its alignment with the current and projected needs of our residents,” said Maja Tait, mayor of Sooke and UBCM president. “Better data brings greater certainty about the types of homes that are most needed now and in coming years as demographics and populations change. I appreciate the provincial government's continuing support to improve housing data in B.C.”

Many of the successful applicants submitted proposals that include engagement with First Nations, neighbouring communities, housing providers and other stakeholders to gain a better understanding of the housing needs for their community.

Since 2019, several local governments have completed their housing needs reports, including the District of Sooke, the Village of McBride, the Village of Harrison Hot Springs and the Town of Sidney, while many others are underway. Completed reports are presented to local councils and made available online to anyone seeking information on local housing needs.

“The grant program enabled a detailed study that provides important data on demographics and the immediate and longer-term housing needs specific to our community,” said Cliff McNeil-Smith, mayor of Sidney. “As we now embark on a comprehensive Official Community Plan review, the report and its recommendations are a solid basis for developing targeted policies to address the ongoing housing challenges.”

Delivering affordable housing is a shared commitment between government and the BC Green Party Caucus, and is part of the Confidence and Supply Agreement.

Quotes:

Aaron Stone, board chair, Cowichan Valley Regional District –

<https://news.gov.bc.ca/releases/2020MAH0033-000338>

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“Building on the establishment of our own affordable housing service, this grant will allow us to strengthen our community planning and our engagement with the development community. We appreciate this support to help ensure our investments are creating the right housing mix to serve our diverse and rapidly growing region.”

Sean Bujtas, deputy mayor, Terrace –

“The City of Terrace greatly appreciates the financial support to complete a housing-needs assessment. With the economic activity and the impacts of LNG and other resource projects in the northwest, housing pressure on residents in our community is significant. Funding for this assessment will allow us to move forward and address those challenges.”

Quick Facts:

- Under new requirements, local governments must produce their first housing needs report by April 2022 and every five years after that.
- Housing needs reports are another tool to help the Province work with local governments and other partners to build 114,000 new affordable homes around B.C. by 2028.
- In the first two intakes of the Housing Needs Reports Program, over \$3 million in grants have been approved, supporting 101 municipalities and 18 regional districts with funding to help develop their Housing Needs Reports.

Learn More:

To see Housing Needs Reports requirements and supporting data and guidance, visit:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-needs-reports>

For application information on provincial funding administered by UBCM, visit:

<https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/housing-needs-report-program.html>

For a snapshot of progress on B.C.’s 10-year housing plan, visit: <https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/>

A backgrounder follows.

Media Contacts

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Backgrounders

B.C. municipalities receiving grants for housing needs reports

Fifty municipalities and nine regional districts are receiving grants to develop a housing needs report, following the second intake of applications that closed Nov. 29, 2019.

Applications for regional housing needs report projects may involve a combination of municipalities and regional district electoral areas. This is reflected in some of the grants listed below.

- Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District: \$80,104.40
 - includes all electoral areas
- Abbotsford: \$70,000

- Burnaby: \$70,000
- Canal Flats: \$15,000
- Capital Regional District: \$150,000
 - includes Juan de Fuca electoral area, Salt Spring Island Local Trust Area (of Islands Trust), Central Saanich, North Saanich, Esquimalt, Metchosin, Highlands, Langford, Colwood, Saanich and Victoria
- Chase: \$15,000
- Cowichan Valley Regional District: \$150,000
 - includes all electoral areas and North Cowichan, Duncan, Ladysmith, and Lake Cowichan
- Elkford: \$15,000
- Fernie: \$20,000
- Fraser Valley Regional District: \$120,000
 - includes all electoral areas
- Granisle: \$15,000
- Hope: \$20,000
- Invermere: \$15,000
- Kent: \$20,000
- Kimberley: \$20,000
- Langley (City): \$30,000
- Mackenzie: \$9,875
- Maple Ridge: \$50,000
- New Westminster: \$50,000
- Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District: \$140,000
 - includes all electoral areas as well as Penticton, Keremeos and Summerland
- Peace River Regional District: \$140,000
 - includes all electoral areas and Dawson Creek, Pouce Coupe, Chetwynd and Hudson's Hope
- Port Moody: \$30,000
- Powell River: \$80,000
 - includes qathet Regional District electoral areas (A, B, C, D) and Tla'amin First Nation
- Sparwood: \$15,000
- Stewart: \$15,000
- Surrey: \$70,000
- Taylor: \$15,000
- Terrace and Regional District Kitimat-Stikine: \$50,000
 - includes electoral areas C and E
- Thompson-Nicola Regional District: \$150,000
 - includes nine electoral areas (A, B, E, I, J, L, M, N, P), Merritt, Cache Creek, Clinton, Logan Lake, Clearwater and Sun Peaks
- West Vancouver: \$30,000
- Zeballos: \$14,548