Community Acceptance of Non-Market Housing

BC HOUSING
RESEARCH CENTRE

Guide 1
Building Partnerships with Local Government

The local government development approval process can be complex and time-consuming. Often the approval processes vary throughout the province, so non-profit housing providers are encouraged to source relevant information for the particular community they are working in. For rezoning applications, local politicians (mayors and councils/boards) are the ultimate decision makers while local government staff offer advice on planning approvals.

This guide summarizes:

› Importance of understanding the role of local governments in the community acceptance of non-market housing.

› How local governments set and communicate local housing objectives.

› Strategies to gain local government support for non-market housing proposals.

› How non-market housing supporters can demonstrate community acceptance to local governments.

Apple Valley, Kelowna

Importance of Understanding the Role of Local Governments in the Community Acceptance of Non-Market Housing

Local governments (municipalities and regional districts) play a critical role in the delivery of housing. Without their support and approvals as needed, a proposed non-market housing project might not move forward or could be slowed down.

Local governments have two different roles when it comes to non-market housing development:
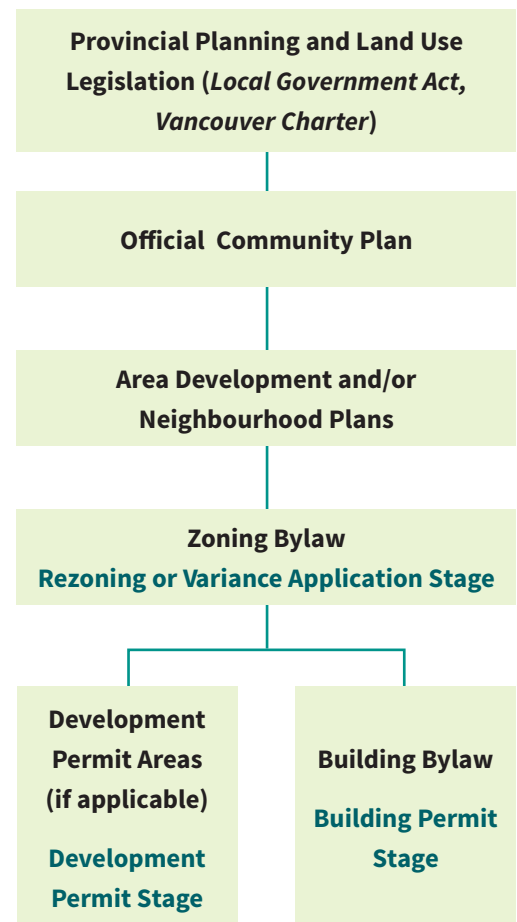
1) **Land use planning regulator:** As governed by the *Local Government Act* (or the *Vancouver Charter*), local governments are regulators of land use planning. In this role, they are a neutral actor enforcing the land use planning regulations. (The *Local Government Act* can be found here: http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/document/id/lc/statreg/r15001_14).

2) **Partner in non-market housing development:** In some cases, local governments may choose to be a partner in a non-market housing development. Local governments may be involved in the oversight of non-market housing through housing agreements. They may donate, sell, or lease land to non-profit housing providers or provide capital grants. Larger local governments often have a dedicated housing planner or even a corporation responsible for these functions.

Non-profit housing providers need to show local government that the community is accepting of their proposed non-market housing, as local governments have an obligation to their constituents. Demonstrating community acceptance and community engagement helps local governments make informed decisions about approvals for the development of proposed non-market housing. Generating community acceptance through engagement also helps non-profit housing providers develop non-market housing that fits in with the community and, therefore, more likely to be approved by local governments.

High-level Overview of Planning Legislation in British Columbia

Provincial Planning and Land Use Legislation (*Local Government Act, Vancouver Charter*)

Official Community Plan

Area Development and/or Neighbourhood Plans

Zoning Bylaw
Rezoning or Variance Application Stage

Development Permit Areas (if applicable)
Development Permit Stage

Building Bylaw
Building Permit Stage

Note: Language may vary by local government. There is other legislation that will also impact planning (e.g. building codes).

TIP: **When developing non-market housing, local governments have different requirements for community engagement.**

Non-profit housing providers must consider what is required as a good neighbour and what the local government requests. This may differ by community. The *Local Government Act* establishes a minimum standard for community engagement as housing projects go through the development process. Some municipalities, such as the City of Vancouver, have very extensive consultation requirements, varying depending on what stage in the development process a project starts at (e.g. whether rezoning required or not).

Policies and programs provided at other levels of government:

› Federally, Canada's National Housing Strategy released in 2018 outlines plans of the current government. This 10-year strategy recognizes that 1.7 million Canadians still don't have a home that meets their basic needs. The strategy will focus on the most vulnerable Canadians first. For more information, visit www.placetocallhome.ca.

› The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation functions as Canada's national housing agency. For more information about CMHC's role and mandate, visit https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/about-cmhc/cmhcs-story.

› The B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing is responsible for policy development and overseeing provincial funding and legislation related to housing. Its 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability in British Columbia, released in 2018, outlines the ongoing initiatives, available here: https://news.gov.bc.ca/factsheets/bc-government-addressing-housing-affordability-challenges.

› In British Columbia, BC Housing is responsible for developing, managing and administering a wide range of subsidized housing options across the province on behalf of the B.C. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, including programs for Indigenous housing. For more information about BC Housing's role and mandate, visit https://www.bchousing.org/about/our-organization.

TIP: Helpful resource

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities has developed a guide to help municipalities across Canada take leadership in improving housing affordability and choice, available here: https://www.homelesshub.ca/resource/housing-my-backyard-municipal-guide-responding-nimby

Lilac Terrace, Sparwood

How Local Governments Set and Communicate Local Housing Objectives

There are several tools local governments use to set and communicate their housing objectives. Development staff such as community planners, engineers, and building officials can be a valuable resource for your next project, providing support such as design input and critical information on a community's housing needs. This section was developed with information adapted from the Government of British Columbia, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing website, with additional sources noted in the bibliography.

Official Community Plans (OCP)

What are they?

An Official Community Plan (OCP) describes the long-term vision of the community. The plan guides the decisions of elected officials and local government staff. OCPs are developed in consultation with community stakeholders.

Usually an OCP outlines how specific areas of the community will be used. For example:

› Residential, commercial, agricultural or industrial uses
› Schools
› Roads
› Sensitive environmental areas
› Parks
› Infrastructure and services (e.g. water and sewer)

What are they used for?

Most local governments have an OCP, and in such cases all bylaws enacted or works undertaken must be consistent with the plan. The OCP does not commit the local government to proceed with any works or projects that are mentioned in the plan. An OCP includes housing policies, for example, housing affordability, rental housing and special needs housing. The OCP may also provide guidance on matters affecting housing affordability, such as public transportation or access to employment.

TIP: More about OCPs

For more information about OCPs, including content, effects, required statements, and optional policy statements, please see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/local-government-planning/official-community-plans.

TIP: Development Permit Areas

It is important to identify whether an OCP designates any Development Permit Areas (DPAs) that apply to the proposed site. DPAs identify locations that need special treatment for certain purposes including the protection of development from hazards, they establish objectives for form and character in specified circumstances, or revitalization of a commercial use area. Within a DPA, a non-profit housing provider or property owner must obtain a development permit before subdividing land or constructing or altering a building. DPA guidelines may require additional technical assessments (such as geotechnical studies or species at risk assessments) to determine whether the proposed development is suitable for the site and meets community character.

You can determine whether any DPAs apply to your site by reviewing the OCP or accessing the local government's online mapping. DPA implementing guidelines may be located in the OCP or in the zoning bylaw. If you're unsure, contact the local government's planning department. For more information, please see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/land-use-regulation/development-permit-areas.

TIP: Sample Housing Policies in OCPs

For sample housing policies in OCPs from communities of various sizes around B.C., please see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-official-community-plans?keyword=official&keyword=community&keyword=plan.

Pleasantvale, Kelowna

Area Development/Neighbourhood Plans/Local Design Guidelines

What are they?

Acting as an appendix to the OCP, Area Development/Neighbourhood Plans are designed to outline more area specific detail on the design objectives and planning policies of a given area or neighbourhood (the name is often dependent on the size of the study area). These plans are sometimes created in larger local governments to discuss in detail the aspirations and distinctions of individual areas or neighbourhoods.

What are they used for?

The Area Development/Neighbourhood Plan can provide information on both local government and resident aspirations for a neighbourhood. These plans include detail on supported future densities, design aspirations, building types and specific location criteria.

TIP: Check OCPs and area development/neighbourhood plans to determine future land uses

Pay special attention to the future uses and densities (number of units per hectare or m²) and/or housing size and structural types (townhouses, apartments, etc.) supported by the OCP (and Area Development/Neighbourhood Plan if there is one) and compare those to the intention of your development proposal prior to site acquisition. Councils and boards are unlikely to support a project, including any necessary rezoning application, unless it broadly aligns with these plans.

TIP: Know your local/neighbourhood design guidelines

Local governments may have design guidelines for housing that applies at the community level or for specific neighbour-hoods. Be sure to check for these guidelines to see if the proposed housing project aligns. Adjustments to the design may be needed to gain and demonstrate community acceptance or variances may need to be sought. For example, the City of Victoria has neighbourhoood design guidelines see here: https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/residents/planning-development/documents-publications.html.

Zoning Bylaws

What are they?

Zoning implements the planning and land use visions expressed in OCPs and Regional Growth Strategies (RGS). Zoning bylaws (sometimes referred to as Land Use Bylaw) may divide the whole or part of an area into zones, name each zone and establish the boundaries of those zones. They regulate how land, buildings and structures may be used, as well as density, siting, size, height, setbacks, and dimensions of buildings. Since 2018, local governments can also zone for residential tenure.

A rezoning is required when a proposed development would not meet the criteria identified within the zoning bylaw. Rezoning is common, especially when a site is proposed for development with significantly more density or a different use than the current use. For more information visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/zoning-for-housing.

What are they used for?

Local governments use zoning bylaws to regulate new development and redevelopment on a parcel of land, and they are the primary legal tool used by local governments to ensure adherence to OCP policies.

TIP: Check Zoning Bylaws

If you are looking to purchase a site, consider whether it is zoned for the intended use along with density, tenure, siting, size, height, and dimensions that your future development would require. If the proposed housing is not supported under current zoning, determine whether a rezoning is likely to be supported by engaging a planning consultant and/or arranging a meeting with a planner at the local government prior to site acquisition. Rezoning is often a lengthy and contentious process, involving public meetings, formal project notifications to the community and stakeholders, a recommendation by the planning department and a decision by the council/board. Acquiring a site that is already zoned to meet your development needs or requires only a minor variance (such as a small reduction in parking or a slightly reduced setback from a lot line), will likely save time in the approval process.

TIP: Affordable housing may qualify for bonus density

Local governments can exchange additional density for amenities or affordable housing by including density bonus provisions in their zoning bylaw. Local governments may also develop density bonus policies.

In areas in which the local government has permitted density bonuses, a land owner can choose to either: develop to the permitted base density with no additional contribution required; or build additional bonus density or floor space in exchange for a contribution back to the local government.

Contributions can be: a specific number of affordable housing units; a developer-provided amenity (e.g. energy-efficient building features that reduce costs for occupants); or funding that the local government can use towards amenities or affordable or special needs housing.

Where the contribution is for affordable housing units, a local government may seek to secure them for the long term with a housing agreement.

For more information and examples visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/zoning-for-housing.

TIP: Local governments may seek a housing agreement to secure affordable and special needs housing for the long term

Housing Agreements are voluntary contractual arrangements between land owners and local governments. The usefulness of this tool is its ability to go beyond zoning powers in order to secure affordable and special needs housing for the long term.

The conditions set out in these agreements are specific to a proposed development and may be for a prescribed period of time, or in perpetuity. Housing Agreements can include various restrictions on the proposed development, including:

- the characteristics of persons who may occupy the units (e.g. seniors)
- the tenure of the occupants of the units (e.g. rental);
- limitations on the amount of rent that can be charged;
- administration and management of the units; and
- in a condominium development, re-sale price controls.

Housing agreements cannot vary the use or density defined in the applicable zoning bylaw. The land owner, and its successors must comply with the agreement or risk a Court challenge. Typical practice is that no building permit is issued until notice of the agreement is filed.

Typically, in exchange for the restrictions cited above, the property is provided with a density bonus, relaxation of parking requirements, or some other benefit to the owner. Local governments sometimes use both a housing agreement and Land Title Act s. 219 covenant to ensure housing affordability over time.

For more information visit: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/governments/local-governments/planning-land-use/land-use-regulation/land-use-agreements.

TIP: What are regional growth strategies?

A regional growth strategy (RGS) is a local government strategic plan to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy. It also makes efficient use of public facilities, land and other resources. An RGS provides general guidance on a region's growth, change and development over a minimum 20-year time frame.

A regional growth strategy works to align long-range planning direction for regional district and municipal policies, plans and projects. It is also intended to provide a framework for regional cooperation with the Province and with First Nations.

Housing is a key focus for regional growth strategies. The Local Government Act requires an RGS to work towards "adequate, affordable and appropriate housing" and include housing-related actions to meet the needs of the region's residents over the longer term. There are currently ten regional districts within the three high-growth areas of the province with completed regional growth strategies.

For more information and for examples see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-and-regional-growth-strategies.

Apple Valley, Kelowna

Housing Needs Reports

What are they?

As of April 2019, all local governments are required to collect data, analyze trends and present reports that describe current and anticipated housing needs in their communities. The first reports are required by April 2022, and subsequent reports every five years thereafter.

For more information on the provincial requirements and support for local governments, please see: https://www2. gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-needs-reports.

What they are used for?

Housing Needs Reports are a means for local governments, the Province, and other partners to better understand current and future local housing needs. Such reports identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply by collecting and analyzing quantitative and qualitative information about local demographics, economics, housing stock, and other factors.

A housing needs report is critical to developing a housing strategy or action plan. To help ensure that local policies, plans and development decisions that relate to housing are based on recent evidence, a local government is required to consider its most recent housing needs report when developing an OCP or RGS.

Housing needs reports provide evidence about housing needs in the community demographic information of those experiencing housing affordability challenges. Non-profit housing providers can use these reports to:

1. Identify potential client groups for proposed non-market housing.

2. Ensure the project is meeting the needs of the community and demonstrate alignment with local priorities.

Housing Plans and Strategies

What are they?

A housing strategy or action plan outlines how a local government will respond to its community's unique housing needs. It typically addresses the full range of housing options including: social housing, rental housing and home ownership.

What are they used for?

This type of document has no specific requirements for form or content. Sometimes it is used as a supplement to an OCP or RGS.

Strategies include:

› Actions to support social housing

› Targets for creating or preserving affordable housing to meet future demand

› Affordable market housing policies

TIP: Sample housing strategies

For sample housing strategies and action plans from communities of various sizes around BC, please see: https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-strategies-and-action-plans?keyword=housing&keyword=plan.

Strategies to Gain Local Government Support for Non-Market Housing Proposals

This section outlines strategies to gain and maintain acceptance for non-market housing proposals from local government, including elected officials.

Ensure operational management issues are addressed

Understand local context

Work with community

Strategies to Gain Local Government Support

Demonstrate need

Identify local champions to support project

Be strategic with the selection (if possible)

Engage professional consultation

Understand Local Context

› Review local government policy documents and strategies (e.g. OCPs, housing plans/strategies, etc) to identify local housing needs, policies, directions and strategies.

› Attend local council/board meetings as an observer. Understand how a council/board meeting is conducted and who you might need to speak to in the process of promoting your project.

› Task a staff member with keeping the organization informed of council/board decisions on non-market housing developments, policy reviews related to non-market housing, and opportunities to be involved in advocating for, or against matters affecting the delivery of non-market housing in the community.

› Some organizations such as the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Urban Development Institute, and Homelessness Services Association of BC actively follow and report to members on changes impacting their interests and will advocate on behalf of their members.

› Encourage council/board representatives to discuss housing issues on a regional level. Develop a strong working relationship with your regional district as well as your municipality and stay informed on policy changes related to housing at the regional level that will affect your organization's work.

Demonstrate Need

› Have early conversations with senior local government planning/housing/development staff prior to site acquisition and discuss what the perceived and actual housing needs are within a neighbourhood and community. Review any housing plans, studies, and housing needs reports prior to the meeting. Consider revising your development proposal (in terms of number of units, type of housing, target resident group, etc.), based on the information obtained from this background review. If you feel that what you are proposing is supported by the local government's policy and quantitative needs, be prepared to defend this evidence to staff, councils/boards, and the community.

› Take time to inform decision makers about the need for, and public benefit of, non-market housing in their community. Make the effort to have your voice heard. This may require phone calls, letters and individual meetings with elected representatives.

› Be prepared with facts and figures to demonstrate the need for the non-market housing you are proposing.

TIP: Free published sources of housing related data

BC Housing has published a document that directs project sponsors and other stakeholders to free online data sources to assist in developing housing need and demand studies. These data sources can help identify and demonstrate need for non-market housing in communities. Go to the website for more information: https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/tools-for-developing-social-housing/housing-need-and-demand-data&sortType=sortByDate.

Data to inform housing needs reports in B.C. can also be found at: https://catalogue.data.gov.bc.ca/group/housing-needs-reports.

Engage Professional Consultants

› Engage a professional team of consultants. While this seems like an expensive solution, it can be helpful in navigating the development process. Professionals who understand the planning, engagement, engineering, and architectural aspects of the development will help the process run more smoothly and can help mitigate opposition.

› Professional consultants can provide helpful insight about the expectations of the local government. If there are design guidelines in place that apply to the proposed site, these should be followed carefully. These are often dealt with at the development permit stage. Design specifications can increase the development cost and should be factored into the pro forma. Examples may include specifications on building materials, roofing, entrance features and landscaping.

Be Strategic with Site Selection

› Take the time to find a suitable site where local government is supportive of the type of non-market housing being proposed. Set up a meeting with a senior planner or director prior to acquiring a site to determine whether the site is likely to be supported for the use and density. The planner can raise any issues or concerns such as potential misalignment with the OCP or Neighbourhood Plan, potential need for amendments to OCP, Neighbourhood Plan or zoning bylaws, and provide insight on estimated approval timelines and costs (application fees, development cost charges, etc.). The planner can also provide insight into the level of community consultation expected or required and give background on other comparable proposals e.g. decision timeframes, lessons learned, and approval or rejection, and on what grounds.

› You can usually determine whether you are within any development permit areas by referring to the local OCP or online mapping, or you can consult a local government planner. Note that you may be subject to none, one, or several overlapping development permit areas and each has different requirements - some relate to environmentally or culturally sensitive areas and require technical studies while others deal with building design through form and character and require attention on the part of your planner and architect.

TIP: Check in with local government representatives

If you're unsure of what types of approvals would be required for your development, ask. For larger scale projects (multi-unit developments with several units), set up a meeting with a senior planner at the local government. For smaller scale projects, visit the front counter of the local planning department.

› Take the time to define your site selection criteria. For example, it is important to understand what your client group needs are in terms of location (e.g. close to transportation, close to medical services, schools, and other support services). Knowing your clients' needs and having clear site selection criteria can help demonstrate to local governments why the proposed site has been selected and is the most suitable.

› If in the position to select a site, consider setting up an external site review committee, consisting of non-market housing stakeholders, to review potential site locations for suitability, prior to selecting a site.

TIP: Local government administration and politicians

There are two separate and distinct branches of local government: the administrative (i.e. development and housing staff) and political (i.e. mayor and council/ boards). Don't assume just because you have the support of one that you have the support of the other.

› If in a position to select a site, consider what approvals must be navigated, the estimated timeframes, and likelihood of success prior to preparing your pro forma budget. While the cost of purchasing this site might be higher, the costs associated with rezoning may outweigh the initial additional investment. It takes time to approve a rezoning application or major variance, which will require additional technical studies, planning analyses, meetings with staff, application coordination, and public

hearings. Timing will vary by local government. For a better understanding of the potential costs associated with obtaining these types of approvals, consult an experienced local planning consultant or talk to other non-profits with experience on similar projects in the local government. Beyond the time involved in OCP amendments and rezoning, public hearings can be contentious and an opportunity for opposition to organize and directly voice opinions to local elected representatives.

› Developers of non-market housing should avoid an over-concentration of non-market housing in any one neighbourhood. While this may occur because land prices are more affordable in particular areas, it has the long-term effect of stigmatizing the area and disenfranchising residents of that neighbourhood.

Identify Local Champions to Support Project

› Local champions could be the local government planner, elected official, Indigenous leaders, or a well-positioned resident (such as a president of a rate payer group or chamber of commerce). Local champions can assist with communicating with the local government and generating community engagement.

› Take time to understand the makeup of any local government advisory groups and the decision-making body. If you're unsure of the referral process, ask your point of contact at the local government. Larger scale projects generally require more background reports. However, many projects will require review and approval by several agencies and authorities involved at both the provincial and local level including the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of the Environment, and ultimately the local councils and boards. First Nations and Indigenous organizations may also be consulted with or notified, either through a formal or informal process.

› Get to know the staff member who will be reviewing your proposal by trying to maintain a consistent, single point of contact between your organization and the local government. Oftentimes, the local government will assign a file manager, someone who is senior enough to be knowledgeable and provide sound advice, such as a senior planner, and preferably someone with experience working with non-profits in the past. If a file manager isn't assigned, find a point-person that is knowledgeable and can be your go-to for the project. Your organization should likewise provide a point-person to attend all meetings and communicate with the local government related to the development.

› Once you have submitted your development application, request the opportunity to meet with the appropriate municipal committee about housing, if there is one. Obtain input and feedback from the committee on your proposal and if possible, insights into the housing situation and level of community resistance.

› Some local governments will allow you to give a presentation to councils and boards or meet with them prior to submitting the formal application, or before the hearing and/or meeting to inform them about the project, especially if viewed as contentious. Take advantage of this opportunity. If this is not possible, try to set up individual meetings with the council/board representatives and invite them personally with a letter and email to your public engagement. Consider offering a tour for senior development staff and council/board representatives of a similar existing facility prior to, or soon after submitting your application. This can help respond to questions, address concerns, and reduce misconceptions.

› Develop a council/board presentation that is clear, concise and supported by facts. Look in previous minutes to see what types of questions were asked during similar presentations.

TIP: Ask to be prioritized

When approvals or variances are required, ask the local government staff representative assigned to your proposed non-market housing project to prioritize your applications. If this is possible, time saved from fast tracking your applications can translate to reduced development costs.

› Keep your local advocates and champions such as councils and boards, senior local government planners, Indigenous leaders, and community groups informed about upcoming housing conferences sponsored by, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Homelessness Services Association of BC, and other local, provincial, and national organizations. Encourage them to attend events. Consider presenting at and/or sponsoring conferences that local elected officials and planners will be attending, such as the Annual Conference, hosted by the Planning Institute of British Columbia.

TIP: Benefits of public meetings

Holding open houses and/or information sessions, even if they are not required by the local government, can be a useful tool to get a sense of neighbour concerns, so these concerns are not expressed for the first time to local government. This gives non-profit housing providers the opportunity to hear concerns and devise strategies.

Work With the Community

› Generate community support of your development through engagement to understand community concerns prior to finalizing your development proposal. It is vital to effectively communicate with residents and explain how you are addressing their concerns.

› As a recommended practice, non-profit housing providers proposing non-market housing near a school (within 400m) should meet with school administrators and potentially the parent advisory committee before a development is proposed. This will allow the school board to ensure that the school can accommodate any increase in student enrollment and anticipate any extra space or other resources required. This will also be an opportunity to answer any questions they may have about the development. Having the school's stakeholders on-side rather than opposing the proposed non-market housing can help with a rezoning application.

› Consider meeting with other non-profit housing providers who have been both successful and unsuccessful in implementing non-market housing in the area. They can provide insights into the level of support and/or concerns of the community, challenges faced in dealing with local government, and the costs and timelines associated with obtaining approvals and decisions.

TIP: Timing of public engagement

It is important to consult local government prior to making your proposal public. Work with experienced senior local government staff to provide a proposal that the local government can support prior to formal, project specific discussions with the community. This ideally should occur prior to site acquisition and site design. Bringing the public into the design process too early or too late both present unique challenges. Don't give the public a blank slate that will open the door to unrealistic expectations, but don't bring them in after a final plan is determined as they may feel disengaged from the process and lack trust in your organization. For more information, refer to Guide 3 – Gaining and Maintaining Community Acceptance.

Case Study · Community stakeholders working together to address homelessness

The City of Kelowna's Journey Home Task Force supports the development of a long-term strategy to address homelessness. The Task Force includes local government staff from various departments and residents with lived experience of homelessness and a variety of housing sector representatives including the RCMP, local non-profit housing providers, Indigenous organizations, regional health authority and provincial Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction representatives, and BC Housing. To learn more, visit https://www.kelowna.ca/city-hall/council/committees/journey-home-task-force.

> Keep track of how the community acceptance was gained for past projects, and source any relevant statistics if possible (i.e. crime rates, complaints).

> The chances of a successful approval are generally better if your organization already has a strong track record of managing similar housing developments. If this isn't the case, consider partnering with an experienced, reputable non-profit housing provider that can offer insight into the community, either as an active partner or an advisor.

Ensure Operational Management Issues are Clearly Addressed

> Before the proposal is formally submitted, ensure operational and management issues are clearly addressed. This is especially important for supportive and transitional housing, where staffing and support are critical components. Anticipate frequently asked questions from staff, councils and boards relating to the management of the building (i.e. what types of supports will be available to residents and who neighbours can contact should they have any questions or concerns.) While you should do your best to steer the focus of inquiries to the use and not the user, staff and councils and boards will have general questions that need to be appropriately addressed. A well-managed project gains community support and helps to pave the way for future projects.

> Create an operational management plan to anticipate questions related to operations and ensure consistent messaging in response to questions and concerns raised. An operational management plan includes topics such as: how the building will be managed, staffing, how management will work with neighbours (e.g. will there be a CAC), resident selection, etc.

Case Study

If new to the community, partner with local and trusted organizations

In 2011, Coast Mental Health opened Timber Grove, a 52-unit supportive housing development in Surrey for people who were experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness. While Coast Mental Health already operated similar developments in Vancouver, this was their first development in Surrey. Coast Mental Health partnered with Fraser Health which provided support services. This helped achieve community buy-in as neighbours were pleased to hear that residents would receive additional supports from an organization they already knew and trusted. For more information on the project, visit https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/community-acceptance/bk-case-study-timber-grove.
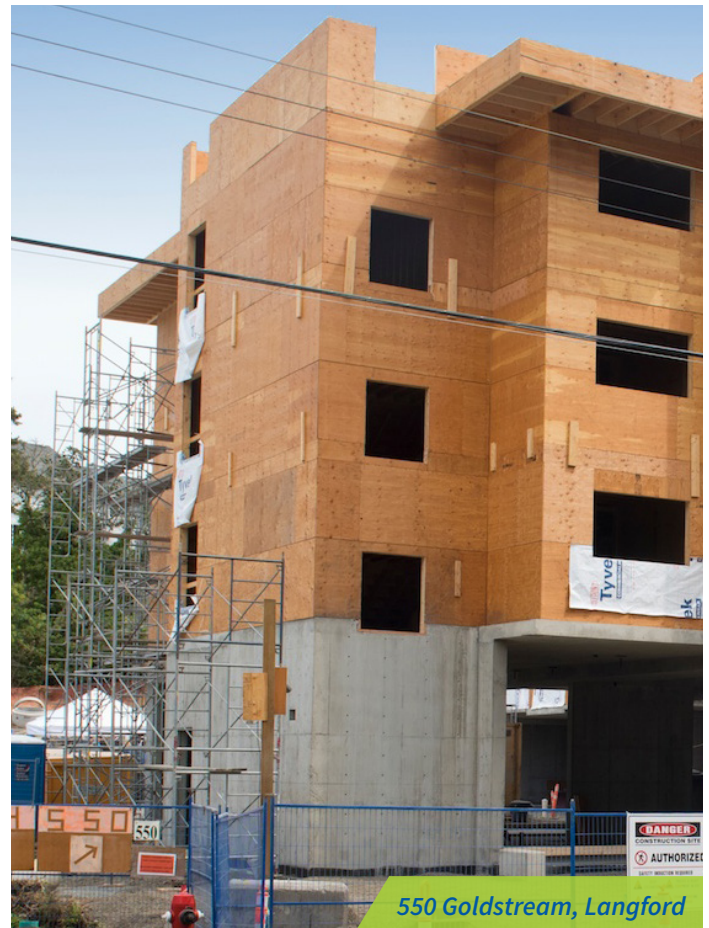
550 Goldstream, Langford

How Non-Market Housing Supporters Can Demonstrate Community Acceptance to Local Governments

Whether there is a proposed non-market housing project in development or not, non-profit housing providers and other supporters of non-market housing can take actions to help shape local government policies and build local support to set the tone for community acceptance of non-market housing. Here are some initiatives supporters can utilize:

Ki-low-na, Kelowna

> **Volunteer** as members of local government social planning or housing advisory committees. These committee members can be valuable advocates for projects and vital sources of information on local housing issues and policy changes.

> **Participate** in OCP, Regional Growth Strategy, and Housing Plan updates and review processes as a stakeholder. Get in touch with the local planning director to see how you can be involved.

> **Write** letters to council/board representatives to encourage the local government to adopt policies that support additional non-market housing.

> **Support** non-profit housing providers' proposals by offering resources and recommendations, speaking at public hearings, writing support letters, attending or contributing to community meetings/workshops, and a variety of other ways.

> **Organize** a tour of existing developments for staff, council/board representatives and advisory committees as part of an education program to raise awareness of the quality and type of housing, and the benefits to residents. Consider organizing this tour through a professional network such as the Urban Development Institute or Planning Institute of British Columbia. Many people are unaware of the non-market housing developments that already exist in their community and how well integrated and successful they are.

> **Join** and be involved in the BC Non-Profit Housing Association, Homelessness Services Association of BC and other groups dedicated to advocating for and representing non-market housing and homelessness service providers.

How Was This Toolkit Developed?

This Toolkit was developed in collaboration with BC Housing's Research Centre and Dillon Consulting Limited using a variety of methods, including:

› **One-on-one interviews** with representatives from four neighbourhood groups

› **Focus groups** with four stakeholder groups: non-profit housing providers, local government representatives, community organizations, and Advisory Group members

› **Case studies** from throughout the province

› **Literature review** of relevant case studies and toolkits

› **Meetings with BC Housing** staff and **Advisory Group** members

The information in this Toolkit relies on all the sources identified in this section. Where specific sections of other reports were quoted or copied with some slight adaptations, the original reports are cited. However, most components of this guide can be linked back to several pieces of literature, case studies, and primary consultation results, as well the original toolkit. Components of the Toolkit that are not specifically cited are pulled from a combination of these sources. Please see the bibliography on the next page for a listing of reports reviewed as part of the literature review to inform this Toolkit.

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For more information about the toolkit and organizations consulted, please see the introductory guide here https:// www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/community-acceptance.

Who Helped Develop This Toolkit?

Non-profit housing providers
- Affordable Housing Advisory Association
- BC Society of Transition Houses
- Coast Mental Health
- Greater Victoria Housing Society
- Island Crisis Care Society
- Ki-Low-Na Friendship Society
- Metro Vancouver Housing
- MPA Society
- New Chelsea Society
- Our Place Society
- PHS Community Services Society
- RainCity Housing
- Salvation Army Maple Ridge
- Sanford Housing Society

Local Governments
- City of Kamloops
- City of Kelowna
- City of New Westminster
- City of Richmond
- City of Victoria
- District of North Vancouver
- District of West Vancouver
- Fraser Valley Regional District
- City of Vancouver

Community Organizations
- Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness
- Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness
- Pivot Legal Society
- Surrey Homelessness and Housing Taskforce
- Together Against Poverty Society
- United Way Central and Northern Island
- Vancity Impact Real Estate Division
- Vancouver Coastal Health
- YWCA Metro Vancouver

BC Housing would especially like to thank Advisory Group members on behalf of:
- BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
- BC Non-Profit Housing Association
- Homelessness Services Association of BC
- Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation

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More Information:

BC Housing's Research Centre works in collaboration with housing sector partners to foster excellence in residential construction and find innovative solutions for affordable housing in British Columbia. Sharing leading-edge research, advances in building science, and new technologies encourages best practice. The Research Centre identifies and bridges research gaps to address homelessness, housing affordability, social housing challenges and the needs of distinct populations. Mobilizing knowledge and research expertise helps improve the quality of housing and leads to innovation and adoption of new construction techniques, Building Code changes, and enhanced education and training programs. Learn more about the Research Centre at www.bchousing.org.
Sign up to receive the latest news and updates at www.bchousing.org/subscribe.

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To find more about building community acceptance, visit our website: **www.bchousing.org**

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