

Housing Strategy for the Town of Gibsons

In 2020, the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, and Sunshine Coast Regional District (SCRD) partnered to undertake a regional housing needs assessment and completed the Sunshine Coast Housing Needs Report (HNR). While communities across the Coast differ in their housing needs and character, ranging from smaller rural areas to denser urban nodes, there are significant connections between communities to access services, travel for work, and meet other everyday needs. These local governments took a regional approach to the HNR to improve understanding of connections between communities related to housing, and to provide for efficiencies in data collection. A region-wide approach also positions the HNR to be used as foundational information for future iterations of a possible regional growth strategy and complementary official community plans (OCPs).

Following the completion of the HNR, an Implementation Framework was developed as a companion to the HNR. The Implementation Framework offers policy recommendations and implementation tools for the Town of Gibsons, District of Sechelt, and SCRCD to consider as ways of addressing identified needs identified in the HNR. Specifically, these actions are intended to provide a path forward for the partners in the project over the next five to ten years, building on needs identified in the HNR, senior government investments in housing, and the role of local government in addressing housing supply and affordability. This Strategy provides more detail on the Implementation Framework, with a deeper dive into the impacts, timelines, and costs required to implement each Town of Gibsons policy recommendation identified in that document.



While reviewing the housing strategy in the tables that follow, the following definitions of impacts, timelines, and costs are to be considered.

Impacts

- **Low Impact:** Likely to take time for long-term impact or only have a minimal impact on addressing housing needs in Gibsons.
- **Moderate Impact:** Likely to address housing needs meaningfully, keeping pace with both existing and new emerging needs.
- **High Impact:** Likely to have long and deep impacts in affordability issues and address both long existing and new emerging housing demands.

Timelines

- **Short:** 1-2 years
- **Medium:** 2-4 years
- **Long:** 4+ years
- **Ongoing:** Continuous monitoring by staff or ongoing program

Costs

- **\$:** Partial staff time, one time plan, policy development
- **\$\$:** Smaller capital works, ongoing programs
- **\$\$\$:** Bigger one-time projects, long-term staff increases or time commitments



Goal #1: Facilitate Priority Housing Development through Plans, Regulations, and Approvals

	Recommendation	Current Practice	Impacts	Timeline	Cost and Effort
1.1	Consider using housing agreements as a condition of rezoning to a developer to secure rental and non-market housing units for priority groups long-term.	Has been used for multi-family development projects including Soames Place and Maplewood	Moderate, depending on development demand.	Ongoing	\$\$ Ongoing staff monitoring and development of housing agreement(s).
1.2	Consider using policies or inclusionary zoning to integrate universal, accessible, or adaptable design into new developments.		Low impact on housing affordability, but moderate impacts on long-term accessibility measures within the Town.	Short (1-2 years)	\$ One time staff effort to develop policy for new adaptable units in multi-family housing.
1.3	For new secondary suites and/or garden suites, consider using Section 219 Covenants to require units to be used for long-term rental for a set period of time.		Moderate impact, for ensuring that new secondary suites remain rental and increasing the stock of secondary rental housing.	Short (1-2 years)	\$\$ One time staff effort to develop policy; ongoing staff monitoring of program.
1.4	Consider allowing both secondary suites and garden suites in residential zones where they can be supported by servicing, defining affordability levels where units are incentivized (see Recommendation #9)	Garden Suite program currently under review and can consider this.	Moderate impact, because this development would take place over a longer time period.	Short (1-2 years)	\$ One-time staff policy development.



1.5	Expand pre-zoning for infill density in the Davis Road-Poplar Lane corridor to more areas close to the town centre, with restrictions on short term rentals.	Pre-zoning used for new RM-7 zone (2020) – could look to further expand this zone. Short-term rental bylaw currently under review.	Low to moderate, and long-term impacts as infill gets built out.	Short (1-2 years)	\$ One time policy expansion
1.6	Consider using inclusionary zoning to require a minimum of units in new developments outside the town centre to be affordable rental or attainable homeownership units, secured through housing agreements and restricted to buyers approved by an affordable housing agency.	Not yet – would need to secure a housing operator through an agreement or work with the developer for ongoing monitoring of units.	Moderate, depending on level and scale of new developments.	Medium (2-4 years)	\$\$ Staff resources to implement policy change and monitor new developments; consulting support in developing new policy.
1.7	Expand the use of density bonusing beyond the Live-Work and CDA-2 zones to other zones near the town centre to secure non-market and low-end of market rental units for target groups like seniors, singles, families, and workforce housing.	Density bonus used in Live-Work zone (2018) and in new Mixed-Use Gateway zone (2020) – could take a step further to secure housing for target groups	Moderate, particularly if requiring developers to contribute low-end of market rental housing to strengthen availability of that stock	Medium (2-4 years)	\$\$ Staff resources to revise zoning and monitor new developments in target area; consulting support in developing new policy.
1.8	Identify and/or pre-zone sites for future shelter, supportive, and/or rental developments.	Not yet – could consider reviewing Public Assembly zones that are underutilized.	Moderate to high for specific desired housing types.	Long (4+ years)	\$\$ Would require staff effort initially, but likely longer-term staff time, engagement program, and partnership development



Goal #2: Investing and Incentivizing Priority Unit Types

	Recommendation	Current Practice	Impacts	Timeline	Cost and Effort
2.1	Incentivize the development of secondary suites, garden suites, and lock-off suites, requiring long-term rentals and affordability where incentives are applied.	Secondary Suite Program expanded to more housing types and lock-off suites introduced in 2020. Garden Suite program under review.	Low to moderate impact, as this development would take place over time; would increase available stock of market rental.	Short (1-2 years)	\$ One time staff effort to determine appropriate balance of incentives and develop policy
2.2	Consider regular, established contributions to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund that are not directly linked to the development market.	CAC Policy update	Moderate to high over time, as the reserve grows, Council can provide further direction for expenditure of the AHRF.	Short (1-2 years).	\$\$ Work is already underway; ne-time staff effort to develop policy with consultant support.
2.3	Continue to offer development incentives, like DCC reimbursement and tax exemptions, to priority projects.	Funding and future funding commitments from the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund provided to support Franklin Rd and Shaw Rd projects	Low to moderate impact for better communicating existing non-market incentives.	Short term (1-2 years)	\$ One time staff review of existing policies and work done with non-profits.
2.4	Inventory all existing or new development incentives and develop a Developers' Incentives Package, which clearly communicates expectations, timing, and priority project types to promote uptake.		Moderate to high impact for incentivizing new non-market units, but senior government funding and local non-profit capacity will continue to drive development	Short to medium term (~2 years)	\$\$ Staff time for development of ongoing incentive program; possible strategic consultant services to support development of priority and high impact incentives.



2.5	Expand the use of density bonusing beyond the Live-Work and CDA-2 zones to other zones near the town centre to secure more contributions to the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund.	New MUG zone (2020) uses density bonus provision for CAC contribution, which could include a contribution to the AHRF.	Moderate to high over time, as developer contributions strengthen AHRF.	Medium (2-4 years)	\$ One-time staff effort to appropriately consult and develop policy development, building on OCP review
2.6	Consider establishing a regional housing service that dovetails with municipal reserve funds to fund regional initiatives (e.g., permanent, part-time position to convene an ongoing regional housing forum).		High impact, with potential for regional reserve that can contribute to land acquisition and capital costs; this item represents a strong potential to develop a more 'made on the Coast' approach that could reduce reliance on senior government funding.	Long (4 years+)	\$\$\$ High level of coordination between local governments, long-term timeframe, strong communications requirements, engagement with non-profit stakeholders, and likely consultant involvement.



Goal #3: Convening Partnerships, Advocating for Housing Needs, and Educating Communities to Support Priority Housing

	Recommendation	Current Practice	Impacts	Timeline	Cost and Effort
3.1	Continue partnering with BC Housing and the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society and consider new partnerships, such as with industry to build workforce housing.	Partnered with SCAHS for Shaw Rd and Franklin Rd projects; partnered with BCH for Supportive Housing on School Rd	High, with the potential to support households experiencing housing hardship in Gibsons (e.g. Shaw Road).	Ongoing	\$\$ Ongoing staff time; asset contributions or leases on a case-by case basis
3.2	Explore partnership opportunities to expand shelter and short-term supportive housing for individuals experiencing homelessness; increase the number of beds in the existing seasonal shelter and expand it to year-round use.	Currently under review.	Moderate; with supportive housing now open in Gibsons this should be monitored, and other housing supports (e.g., scattered site) should be seen as opportunities to continue to address this problem in Gibsons.	Ongoing	\$ Ongoing staff monitoring until tangible project opportunity arises.
3.3	Engage with BC Housing, municipalities, Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw, and developers to discuss opportunities for emergency, supportive, rental, and attainable homeownership housing projects, including BC Housing's Affordable Homeownership Program.		Moderate; engaging with developers around AHOP provides an opportunity for alternative tenure (affordable ownership) and adds diversity of housing options to the Town's stock.	Ongoing	\$ Ongoing staff and Council communications



3.4	Advocate to senior levels of government, funders, and industry for needed housing and supports, such as workforce housing, homelessness supports, and options for youth transitioning out of care and women and children fleeing unsafe situations.		High if successful	Ongoing	\$ Ongoing staff and Council communications
3.5	Consider partnering with the SCRD, District of Sechelt, and shíshálh/Skwwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw to create a permanent, part-time cross-governmental position for convening housing interests across the Coast, which expands on the development to provide a forum that brings sectors together for identifying, addressing, and monitoring housing needs and liaising with community members.		Moderate to high	Short-term (1-2 years)	\$\$ Permanent new staff position.

Goal #4: Supporting Social Equity

	Recommendation	Current Practice	Impacts	Timeline	Cost and Effort
4.1	Use the foundation provided in We Envision to use a social equity lens when creating or amending plans, policies, initiatives, and processes related to housing development.	Social Equity lens to be used in the OCP update	Moderate to high, over the long-term	Long-term (4+ years) and ongoing	\$\$ Ongoing staff and partner consideration of equity lens in policy development.

