



Strategic Priority 6:

Housing and Caring for Delta

What we are trying to achieve: OBJECTIVES

- Increase affordable, supportive and transitional housing options in Delta.
- Improve access to services for vulnerable community members experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Delta.
- Promote a culture of caring in Delta and raise awareness about the root causes of homelessness in the community.

A table of actions for each strategic priority can be found on page 69.

Why it is important:

Canadian municipalities have been faced with a housing affordability and homelessness crisis for decades now. We live in one of the most unaffordable regions in the world. According to the National Bank of Canada, in 2021, housing affordability in Canada worsened substantially in the last three decades. We are also seeing an increase in unhoused individuals in Metro Vancouver. While historically, unhoused individuals were predominantly older, single men, the face of homelessness is changing now and more families, youth, seniors and women experience homelessness. Not all homelessness is visible. Youth experience hidden homelessness more than any other population group. Affordability is a factor for families in poverty. Over 1.7 million households in Canada are in core housing need. Members of racialized communities, Indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, women, new immigrants and youth and older adults are disproportionately represented in households in core housing need. The pandemic has exacerbated precarious housing situations for many vulnerable population groups.

While there are various effective actions that municipalities can take to improve housing supply, affordability, and address the roots of homelessness, these solutions will require robust cross-sectoral partnerships between public, private and not-for-profit players.



Housing and Caring for Delta

A SOCIAL Action Plan for Delta

Delta HOUSING Action Plan



Homelessness

- **Homelessness:** People become unhoused for various reasons, including losing their home due to eviction or losing a job; fleeing domestic violence; or exiting institutional care, such as foster care, hospital or incarceration.

- **Temporary Winter Shelters** operate 24/7 during cold weather and have been very effective in moving people off the streets and/or encampments quickly. Delta does not have a temporary winter shelter.

- The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) program is a provincially funded initiative that supports community-based services to provide additional temporary emergency shelter spaces during periods of extreme winter weather which threaten the health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness. It is activated from November 1 and March 31 of each year and typically the shelter is open from 9pm to 7am. **Delta has two EWS sites - one in South Delta and another one in North Delta.**

- **Permanent Shelters:** Year-round shelters operate 24/7 and are designed to meet the emergency housing needs of individuals and families. Professional case managers work one-on-one with guests to support service access and set goals to help them move from the shelter into more permanent housing. **There are no permanent shelters in Delta.**



Temporary Shelters



Permanent Shelters



Transitional Housing

- **Transitional housing** is an intermediary step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing. It provides supportive but temporary accommodation that seeks to address the gap between homelessness and permanent home and usually includes common areas and supports and supervision on site. **There is one Transition House in Delta for women fleeing violence.**

- **Supportive housing** is permanent housing in purpose-built/scattered sites with ongoing supports for people who are not able to live independently, i.e. senior assisted living, supportive housing for people facing mental health/substance use challenges. **For example, in Delta, KinVillage provides seniors' supportive housing and publicly-subsidized assisted living to aging adults, which includes health and hospitality services.**

- **Social or Subsidized housing** requires capital grants or ongoing government subsidies to improve access to affordable housing for low-income households. It is usually developed in partnerships between various levels of government and not-for-profit housing providers.



Supportive Housing



Social Housing



Purpose Built Rental



Other Types of Housing

- **The purpose-built rental market**, also known as the primary rental market and includes occupied rental units in purpose-built rental buildings of three units or more.

- **Secondary Market Rental:** The secondary rental market consists of rented condominiums, subsidized rental units, rented row houses and rental units with structures with fewer than three units.

- **Affordable Home Ownership:** BC Housing through the Housing Hub program, is responsible for the delivery of the Affordable Home Ownership Program (AHOP) for eligible home buyers (middle income households, using BC Housing's low interest interim construction financing/equity contributions).

- **Market Home Ownership:** Housing that is available on the private market, not limited to any specific income level and, does not receive public subsidy or other incentives.

Housing and Caring for Delta

What we know: LOCAL CONTEXT

Homelessness Count: The 2020 Homelessness Count showed a small decrease from 19 residents experiencing homelessness in 2017 to 17 in 2020; however, the point-in-time counts generally underestimate the number of homeless people since they do not include the 'hidden homeless' (e.g. couch-surfing youth). It is probably, therefore, that this number does not adequately represent the true number of homeless in Delta, and experts suggest this number should be multiplied by three to four which translates into estimated 50-70 homeless in Delta.

At-risk of homelessness: Poverty and homelessness are strongly associated. Low income residents and families are at the highest risk of homelessness. Statistics Canada estimates that one in ten residents in Delta were considered low-income (Low-Income Measure After Tax is 9.7% in Delta compared to 15.5% for the province).

Current housing situation: The Delta Housing Needs Assessment provided a critical overview of the housing stock in Delta. Only two out of 10 Delta homes are rental households (7,575); 77% of Delta rental stock is secondary market⁴⁷. A number of subsidized rental units has dropped from 906 in 2011 to 795 in 2016. There were a total of 129 households on BC Housing waitlists in 2011, and 230 households on waitlists in 2019; this represents a 78% increase in the demand for the specialized forms of housing administered by BC Housing. The demand for co-operative housing in Delta was high in both the Housing Survey and the community workshops, and discussions with stakeholders revealed there were long waitlists and limited availabilities.

Households in core housing need in Delta: The Delta Housing Needs Assessment identified that 7% or 1,905 owner households were within core housing need, compared with 11% in the region. Of the 7,140 renter households, 30% (2,140 households) were identified as being within core housing need in Delta, compared to 31% in the region (Census 2016).

Core Housing Need

According to Census Canada, "A household is said to be in 'core housing need' if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards AND it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards)."

Homelessness

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness defines homelessness as, "The situation of an individual or family without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, stressful and distressing."

Housing and Caring for Delta

What we can build on: DELTA'S ASSETS

Strong community advocacy: Delta has many strong community voices. Delta Housing Be Mine Society (DHBMS) has been a strong advocate for housing for adults with varying abilities; the current focus is people with intellectual disabilities. The purpose of the society is to create affordable, inclusive, and supportive housing options for these citizens. The Delta Seniors Table also voiced housing affordability as one of the key challenges for seniors.

City's Housing Action Plan: Since 2019, the City has been developing a Housing Action Plan to help address Delta's current and future housing needs and developed a Delta Housing Needs Assessment. This plan will include strategies to increase housing affordability in Delta. The final report is expected in November 2021. Many of the strategies aim to increase affordability in Delta.

Azure Place - A Transition House for women and children fleeing violence opened in 2017. It provides a safe home environment for women and their families who need a short-term place to stay during a time of crisis in their lives.

Extreme Weather Shelters: There are two EWR sites in Delta. The South Delta EWR site is operated in Ladner in partnership between Ladner United Church and Options Community Services. It had a nine bed-capacity prior to the pandemic; reduced to five beds in 2020-2021 to comply with public health orders. Between November 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, over 430 guest visits were registered at Delta's extreme weather shelter during the 120 nights the shelter was open (36 nights at or over capacity). The North Delta EWR site was opened in December 2021 and it is a partnership between Phoenix Society and New Hope Church.

The Mobile Outreach Team is operated by Options Community Services and provides supports to individuals who experience homelessness in Delta. Services include emergency food supply, harm reduction supplies, linkage to other resources, and housing search support.

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (2014) estimated that every \$10 invested towards housing and support of chronically homeless individuals results in savings of \$21.72 related to health care, social support, housing and the involvement in the justice system.



Housing and Caring for Delta

What we heard: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

Increased affordability pressures: Various factors impact affordability in Delta, including limited rental and affordable housing stock, aging housing stock, aging population, and a significant gap between housing prices and household incomes.

Purpose-built Rental: Recognizing that 77% of Delta rental stock is secondary market and rental rates within the secondary market (housing that is not purpose-built for rental) maybe higher than those observed in the primary rental market, policies which support an increased supply of purpose-built affordable rental units may help to improve housing affordability in the City.

Supportive Housing: The 2020 Delta Housing Needs Assessment identified limited housing options for people with intellectual and physical disabilities as a major inclusion barrier for Delta citizens. The 2018 Delta Housing Need and Demand Study, conducted by Delta Housing Be Mine Society (DHBMS), estimated that at least 413 people with intellectual disabilities living in Delta will need housing within the next ten years. Parents of people with intellectual disabilities voiced serious concerns over the lack of housing options. Shelter rates (\$375) for BC Persons with Disabilities (PWD) Designation are significantly below market rates, and the lack of affordable and inclusive rental housing in the region puts further pressure on people with intellectual disabilities.

City's limited capacities: Delta's capacity to advance affordable housing initiatives is limited by jurisdiction, as well as staffing and other resources.

Gaps to support unhoused individuals in Delta: There is no supportive/transitional housing for unhoused individuals in Delta (with exception of Azure place that provides temporary housing for women fleeing violence); up until recently there was only one temporary Extreme Weather Shelter in Delta and only one service provider, funded by BC Housing, that provides ad hoc Mobile Outreach supports to unhoused individuals in Delta.

Myths and stigma around homelessness: Homelessness is becoming more visible in Delta and there is increasing public awareness about the issue. However, the root causes and contributing factors to homelessness are often not well understood by the general public, and the resulting stigma can prevent people from seeking help. Debunking myths about and understanding causes of homelessness will help reduce stigma, break stereotypes and build a more caring and emphatic Delta.

Delta Housing Action Plan (2021) identifies 8 key strategies:

1. Promote priority housing types through a comprehensive incentives package
2. Explore ways to increase land availability for priority housing
3. Introduce tenant relocation and rental stock protection policies
4. Pilot pre-zoning in select areas near town centres
5. Create opportunities for gentle density
6. Increase the number of accessible units in Delta
7. Strengthen partnerships and advocacy
8. Pilot inclusionary zoning

KinVillage

Phase 1 Project

The current KinVillage operates 310 affordable rental units for seniors, including 68 in assisted living and 100 in residential care, as well as a community centre.

KinVillage is proposing the construction of a new six-storey (four-storeys for a portion of the building) purpose-built seniors' affordable rental apartment building. The proposed

152-unit development is being funded and financed through BC Housing's Community Housing Fund.

Through the Community Housing Fund, a capital grant and on-going subsidies will allow for a mix of 20% subsidized, 50% rent geared to income, and 30% moderate income housing units, all while ensuring that existing residents do not face displacement or increased monthly rent payments.

