



Victoria Housing Strategy Draft Action Items April 2019

The Victoria Housing Strategy is the City's roadmap to improved housing affordability. The strategy focuses on four themes:

1. **Focus on Renters:** Improve affordability and stability for people who rent
 2. **Create New Supply:** Encourage more new appropriate and affordable housing supply in Victoria
 3. **More Housing Choice:** Create more housing options
 4. **Track, Improve and Innovate:** Improve our processes, try new and innovative ideas, and track our progress to ensure we achieve our housing goals
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1. **Focus on Renters:** Improve affordability and stability for people who rent:

- Explore additional incentives and regulations to preserve existing rental housing stock, ensure capital improvements are completed, protect tenancies, and prevent renoventions.
- Explore the development of grant programs to encourage garden suites and accessible secondary suites**
- Incentivize development of rental housing and look for further opportunities to expedite and simplify development processes for affordable rental housing**
- Create a new dedicated staff position to support tenant and rental housing related work including support for tenant assistance plan review, guidance through the redevelopment process, information and referral to residents, and support and advice to housing policy staff.**
- Continue to implement rental-only zoning and engage with the community to explore other opportunities created through the new Residential Rental Tenure Zoning authority**
- Review the Short-Term Rental policy and proactive enforcement efforts and consider opportunities for directing program revenue to affordable housing
- Consider creating a Citywide policy to use housing agreements to reduce housing barriers such as age restrictions, pets, and rentals in strata buildings
- Revisit the City's Rental Replacement Policy to ensure it is meeting the City's updated housing priorities

**Strategic Plan item: Council has identified this as a priority for the City's Strategic Plan (2019-2022)

Victoria Housing Strategy Draft Action Items April 2019

2. **Create New Supply:** Encourage more new appropriate and affordable housing supply in Victoria:

- Explore using existing city-owned properties or acquiring new land for affordable housing**
- Update the City's house conversion regulations to encourage more house conversions and consider affordability in house conversions Citywide**
- Review the Victoria Housing Reserve Fund guidelines after each intake date to ensure best value for the fund so that more affordable housing can be supported
- Consider pre-zoning areas of the City for increased density with provisions for purpose-built rental and affordable housing
- Consider how to bring together charitable, faith based and non-profit organizations and developers to increase development capacity, foster partnerships and support the creation of community-focused development in Victoria
- Consider further zoning and regulatory changes to increase the supply of secondary suites, including allowing multiple secondary suites on properties or allowing secondary suites on developments where they are not currently permitted in zoning, such as in duplexes or townhouses
- Explore opportunities to develop density bonus provisions for rental housing in commercial zones

Victoria Housing Strategy Draft Action Items April 2019

3. More Housing Choice: Create more housing options:

- Consider the development of a Family Housing Policy that includes existing programs and develop new policy to incentivize and mandate the creation of two and three bedroom units in Victoria**
- Develop a strategy for creating new types of ground-oriented housing that fit well within neighbourhoods to help increase housing choice, affordability and the achievement of citywide livability and sustainability goal**
- Review the Garden Suite Policy and Guidelines to improve development process, reduce costs, encourage family-sized suites, and allow development of garden suites on properties with secondary suites and on duplexes**
- Encourage barrier-free housing and universal design in new developments**
- Explore the use of city-owned sites for temporary modular housing and streamline development processes so they can be operational as soon as possible
- Explore intergenerational housing options to improve access to housing and social inclusion across generations, including developing partnerships and piloting a project matching seniors with extra bedrooms with eligible lodgers**
- Develop policy to increase the supply of “missing middle” housing forms, including duplexes, houseplexes, townhouses, row houses, lock-off suites, courtyard apartments, live/work units, and new ground-oriented housing forms among others**
- Identify opportunities for affordable housing in all neighbourhood plans**
- Evaluate the potential of a municipal role in developing and operating affordable home ownership units; explore rent-to own schemes
- Explore how to facilitate, incent, and support collaborative housing forms including co-op housing, and evaluate the city's role in the development of these types of housing**
- Launch a garden suite design competition. Winners of the competition could see their plans utilized as pre-approved plan options for potential garden suite developers
- Review the City's standard minimum unit size to work towards striking the right balance between supply, affordability, and livability

Victoria Housing Strategy Draft Action Items April 2019

4. **Track, Improve and Innovate:** Improve our processes, try new and innovative ideas, and track our progress to ensure we achieve our housing goals:
- Create a working group of key housing stakeholders to meet quarterly to review progress on Housing Strategy items, and flag new items for consideration
 - Conduct an analysis of the City's total spending on housing and homelessness to provide advice on how to best utilize resources and achieve positive and measurable outcomes
 - Revisit fee waivers, reductions and tax exemptions for affordable housing developments, and explore alternative funding mechanisms to ensure the City's services are adequately funded while improving affordability and viability of non-market projects**
 - Explore how the City of Victoria could permit tiny homes while still maintaining safety and livability for residents**
 - Prioritize the development of data collection processes and a streamlined reporting approach to assist the City in making informed policy decisions, and so that housing statistics, outcomes, and policies, are publicly available and accessible
 - Track and measure the creation of affordable housing units, reporting regularly on progress**
 - Improve information available for the development community through the City's website to provide information on relevant policy, procedures, regulations, and incentive programs
 - Review the Garden Suite Policy and Guidelines to improve development process, reduce costs, encourage family-sized suites, and allow development of garden suites on properties with secondary suites and on duplexes**
 - Strengthen City's housing policy alignment and advocacy with senior levels of government, including exploring the creation of a cross-governmental working group
 - Create a municipal housing service to acquire land and enter into partnerships for the purposes of providing affordable (de-commodified) housing
 - Explore the potential of creating a "Victoria Housing Corporation"
 - Create a task force of indigenous stakeholders to develop more inclusive housing policy that considers the needs and voices of indigenous citizens
 - Explore forming a City-led homeless outreach team, including partnering with other levels of government for funding and training support to play a more direct role in solving homelessness in Victoria
 - Consider developing a team to promote informed awareness and acceptance of affordable housing projects and housing/social initiatives in the community

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Victoria Housing Strategy Draft Action Items April 2019

- Launch a free quarterly educational series open to the public on housing issues and innovative housing solutions
- Regularly evaluate the City's bonus density policy and the number of units being created as a result of it
- Consider creating more transparency on new residential development, including information about the developer, estimated occupancy, number of units, and number of affordable units or value of amenity contributions committed
- Create a small-scale housing ambassador position to guide homeowners through the Secondary and Garden Suite process from planning to occupancy
- Explore opportunities and develop a plan for applying for grants to fund City and community housing initiatives, including acquire land for affordable housing**
- Consider ways to integrate and align the City's housing policy with the City's Climate Leadership Plan
- Consider transportation needs, planning, and cost when developing housing policy. Align housing policies with GoVictoria, the City's transportation policy
- Explore opportunities and zoning changes to facilitate transitional tiny home communities for individuals experiencing homelessness

Got a question about one of our housing actions, or have a new idea you don't see here? You can reach our housing team at housing@victoria.ca

We encourage you to participate in the many discussions related to housing taking place at the City. Stay connected and learn more at: victoria.ca/housing

Email us at engage@victoria.ca to receive updates on opportunities to share your input.

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