

**News release**  
For immediate release



August 24, 2021



Saanich's Housing Strategy focuses on increasing the supply, affordability and diversity of housing options to accommodate a broad range of housing needs.

### **Council approves Housing Strategy to increase housing options in Saanich**

**Saanich, BC** – Saanich Council approved a comprehensive, 10-year Housing Strategy at its August 23 meeting. The Housing Strategy provides clear direction and actions to continue to increase the supply, affordability and diversity of housing options in Saanich to accommodate a broad range of housing needs.

It's no secret that many residents struggle to find housing options that are affordable and suitable to their needs. Approval of the Housing Strategy identifies immediate priorities and outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing housing issues, complementing the significant work currently underway.

The Housing Strategy was developed through a 13 month process, with the core content of the Strategy generated by the Saanich Housing Task Force, which was comprised of individuals with a diverse range of qualifications and experiences.

The Housing Strategy supports and aligns with the Official Community Plan and the Regional Growth Strategy. The vast majority of new housing will be constructed within the Urban Containment Boundary in close proximity to existing centers, villages and designated corridors, supporting broader Saanich goals of addressing climate change, preserving the natural environment and building walkable and healthy communities.

The strategy focuses on seven main objectives. These are to:

- Increase affordable and supportive housing;
- Promote and protect rental housing;

- Support housing diversity and increase supply;
- Reduce barriers to housing development;
- Strengthen partnerships;
- Enhance community engagement; and
- Understand housing demand and address land speculation.

A prioritization process identified the top 12 priority actions based on their impact on addressing housing challenges. Currently, of the 73 actions identified in the Housing Strategy, eight are already underway, and many of the top 12 actions will be initiated within the next year. The strategy builds on existing initiatives while ensuring actions are interconnected so the critical issues of housing affordability, diversity and supply are addressed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Input from stakeholders, residents, and experts was critical to the development of the strategy. Of the 1,544 responses from the most recent public survey, almost two-thirds of respondents supported or strongly supported the recommendations that informed the Housing Strategy.

Progress on the 10-year framework will be monitored and shared publically through an Annual Housing Strategy Report.

#### **Quotes:**

“Saanich is working on a number of fronts to address the supply and affordability of housing. This is one of them. The Housing Strategy provides a clear foundation to move forward with concrete actions that will improve housing opportunities and address the urgent need to better match the housing supply with the needs of our residents,” said Mayor Fred Haynes. “The strategy is vital to ensuring a healthy housing supply for our community. Additional work is focused on improving the efficiencies and timeliness of our development approval processes.”

#### **Quick facts:**

- The Housing Strategy is a 10-year framework that represents a comprehensive approach to achieving a healthy housing supply for Saanich and includes:
  - six guiding principles
  - seven focus areas
  - 22 strategies
  - 73 actions
- The [Saanich Housing Task Force](#), comprised of 18 individuals with a range of qualifications and experience met 13 times over six months to develop core content for the Housing Strategy.
- The strategy focuses on seven main objectives. These are to:
  - Increase affordable and supportive housing;
  - Promote and protect rental housing;
  - Support housing diversity and increase supply;
  - Reduce barriers to housing development;
  - Strengthen partnerships;
  - Enhance community engagement; and
  - Understand housing demand and address land speculation.
- The [Saanich Housing Needs Report](#) (November 2020) provided key information to inform development of the Housing Strategy.
- Saanich recently completed Phase 1 of the [Development Process Review](#) and 15 recommendations are being implemented to further improve the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of Saanich's development review process.

- Residents are encouraged to visit [www.saanich.ca/housing](http://www.saanich.ca/housing) to find more information on the Housing Strategy and to sign up to receive updates and opportunities for participation.

-30-

**Media contact:**

Erika Schade  
Communications Manager  
250-812-0952  
[erika.schade@saanich.ca](mailto:erika.schade@saanich.ca)