

Delivering Affordable Housing: Challenges and Opportunities

BCUMC HOUSING GAPS SURVEY RESULTS

**BC
Urban
Mayors'
Caucus**

Marianne Alto
Co-Chair, and Mayor of Victoria

Urban communities in BC exist on Indigenous lands and territories.

The City of Victoria is located on the territory of the Songhees First Nation and the Xwsepsum First Nation.

We honour and thank the Nations, Elders, Land Stewards, and Knowledge Keepers on whose land we work and serve.

AGENDA

- What is the BCUMC?
- What we observed, and what we asked
- Survey
- Results
 - *Projects on hold*
 - *Housing waitlists*
 - *Homelessness costs*
 - *Housing targets and needs*
- Conclusion
- Next steps

WHAT IS THE BC URBAN MAYORS' CAUCUS?

- Informal, non-partisan collective of Mayors
- 16 communities
- Open to mayors in municipalities with 80,000 people



Collaboration



Communication



Research

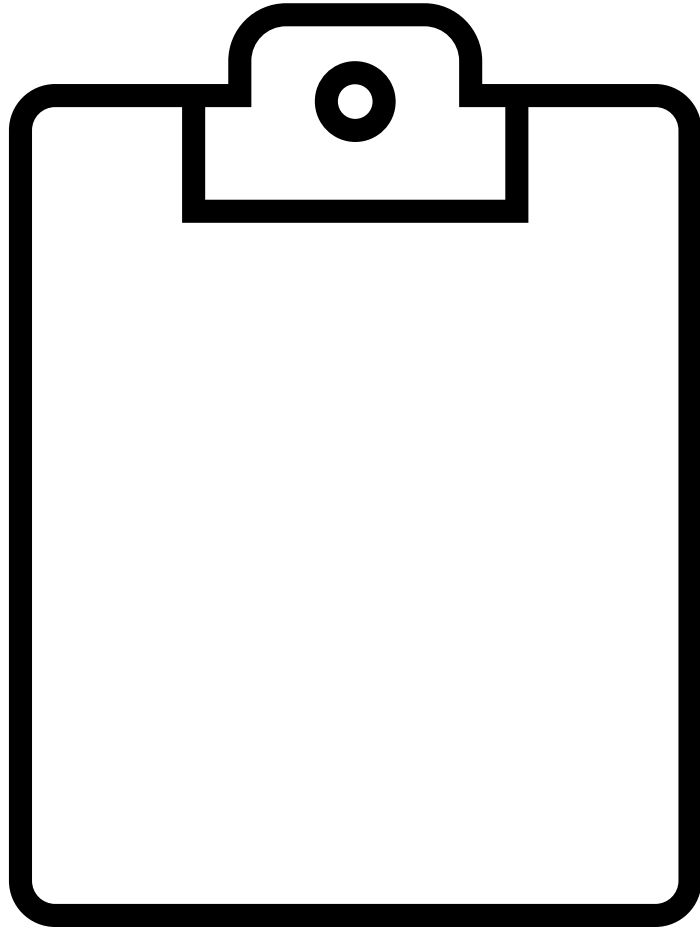


Advocacy

WHAT IS THE SCOPE OF THE DELAYS IN SUPPORTIVE HOUSING PROJECTS AFFECTING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS?

- An analysis of needs and costs
- Project delays —————> increased homelessness —————> increased \$





SURVEY WITH UBCM AND DATA ASSEMBLY

- January 2025 - March 2025
- BCUMC Member Cities
- 14 responses, plus public data from 16 members

SURVEY RESULTS

① “Does your municipality currently have housing projects on-hold due to lack of provincial funding?”

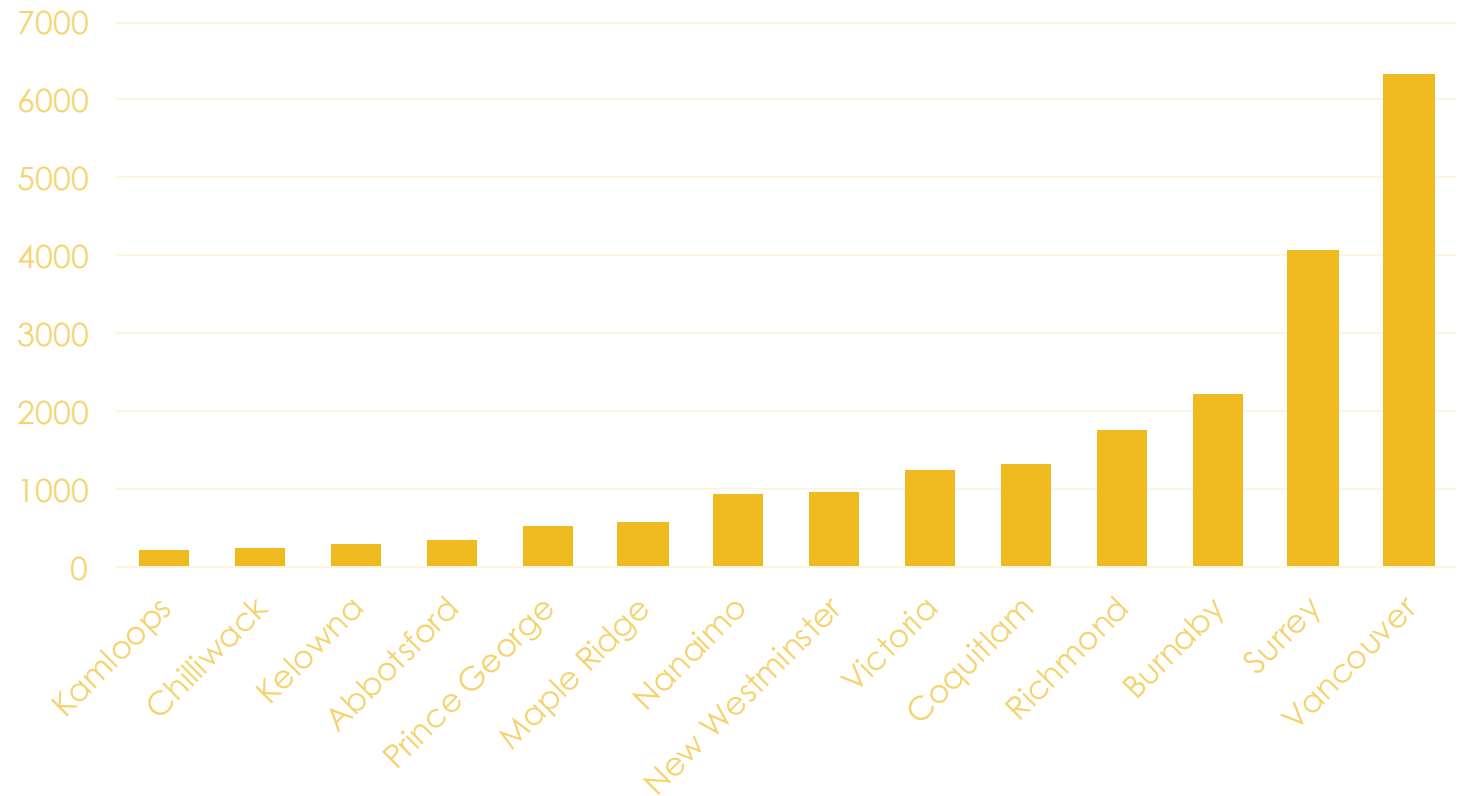
- 6 respondents (43%) responded yes*: Coquitlam, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Richmond, Vancouver, Victoria
- Approximately 3,313 units on hold in 29 projects
- Vancouver accounts for close to half of the units on hold
- Project delivery identified as another obstruction beyond funding

*or otherwise indicated projects were awaiting funding

SURVEY RESULTS

② “How many households are on the BC Housing social housing waitlist for your municipality?”

Approximately
21,000 households
are on the waitlist
in the 14
respondent
municipalities



SURVEY RESULTS

3 Costs incurred to address homelessness

Percentage of respondents indicating “yes”:

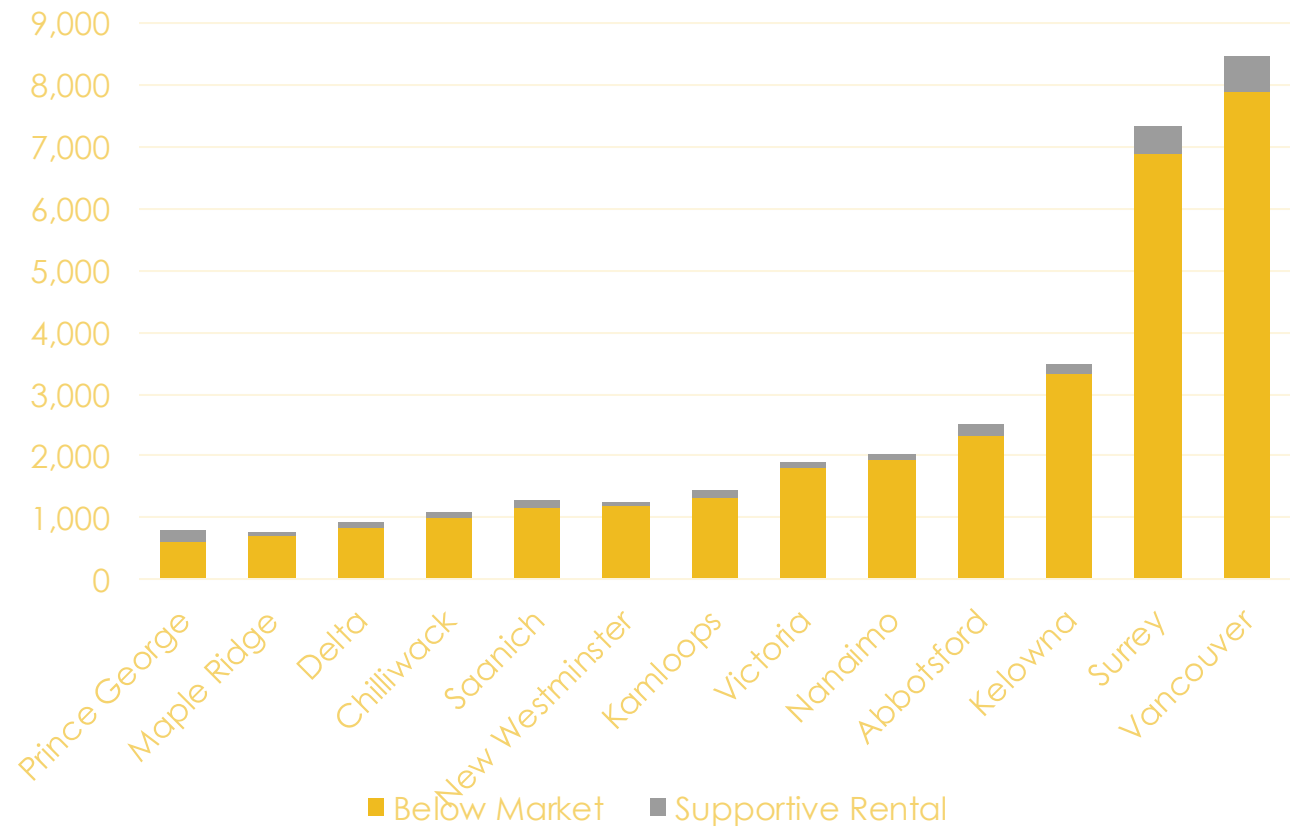
Cost Category:	Shelter or Housing Provision	Policing	Fire	Other
Costs Incurred?	100%	93%	100%	100%
Data Collected?	86%	50%	57%	86%

DATA COLLECTION

PROVINCIAL HOUSING TARGETS

Across all 13 included municipalities, total targets are:

- 30,974 below market units
- 2,374 supportive rental units



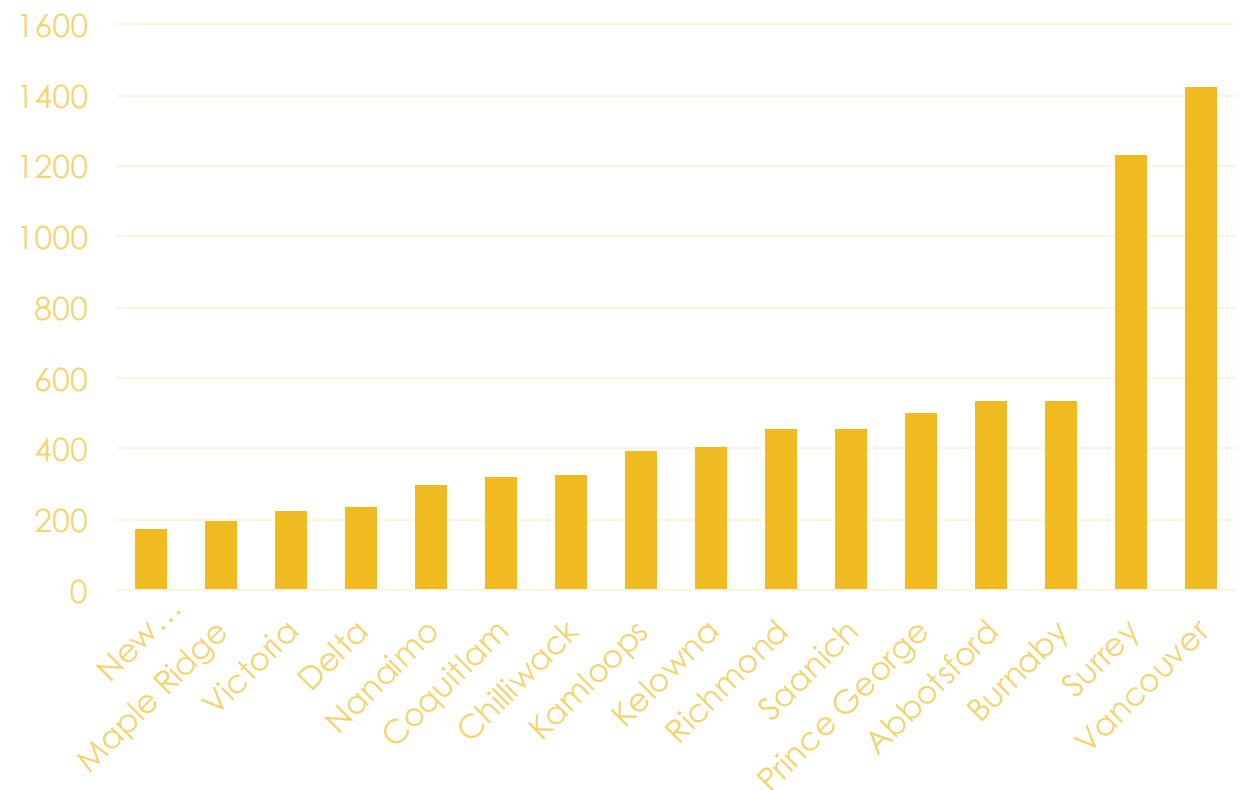
DATA COLLECTION

MUNICIPAL HOUSING NEED PROJECTIONS

Across all 16 municipalities, local government-directed analysis shows that more units are needed to address homelessness:

- 7,475 in 5 years
- 14,9995 in 20 years

Compared with provincial data that only targets 2,374 units



CONCLUSIONS

- Provincial delays impact supportive housing numbers
- Waitlists for social housing are significant and growing
- Local governments are incurring considerable expenses to address homelessness in the meantime
- Need is significant, and inconsistent between provincial predictions and local predictions



NEXT STEPS



Advocacy areas

1. Provincial acceleration of ongoing housing projects, including dedicated teams and renewed funding
2. Bridge supportive funding for homelessness services while housing is under construction, including shelter funds, decampment resources, sanitation resources, etc. with more action under HEART and HEARTH
3. Resources and collaborative partnerships to support local government data collection
4. Establishment of shelter-specific goals



THANK YOU

Marianne Alto

BCUMC Co-Chair | Mayor of Victoria

www.BCUrbanMayorsCaucus.ca





CHARTING UBCM 2025 THE COURSE





Building a Sustainable Workforce

The Whistler Housing Journey and Lessons for BC

The Genesis of a Necessity: The Challenge



Economic success has created housing pressure points.

The Whistler Model in Action

Building, Managing, and Sustaining Whistler's housing needs.



A New Horizon: BC's Housing Legislation & Whistler's Future



Adapting the Model: Lessons Learned

- A unique definition of community context.
- Transferable Principles & Adaptations.
- The Key Takeaway.



Conclusion: Building Livable, Sustainable Communities for All People



Questions & Comments





CHARTING UBCM 2025 THE COURSE





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Building Creston's Future

Town Of Creston
Municipal Housing Corporation



The Creston Housing Context

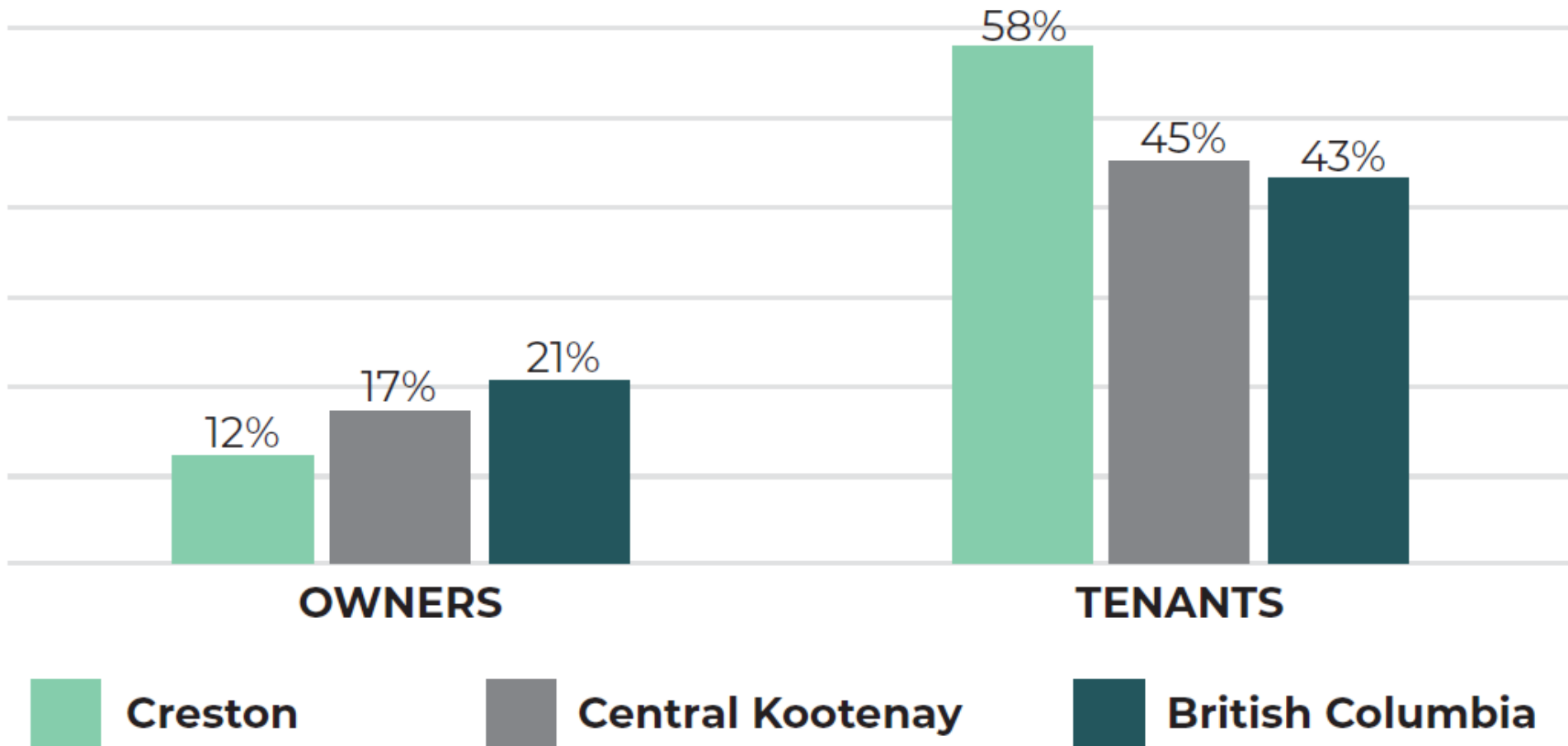
Affordability Challenges



- Population growth of ~ 10% between 2020 – 2025
- Housing increases outpace income growth
 - **90% plus increases in housing costs over past decade**
 - 26% - 30% increase in average income over same period
- Rental rates surged 19.8% between 2015 and 2020
- 17% of all households currently reside in unaffordable housing (spending more than 30% gross income)
- Only 4.3% of all housing in Creston is non-market housing

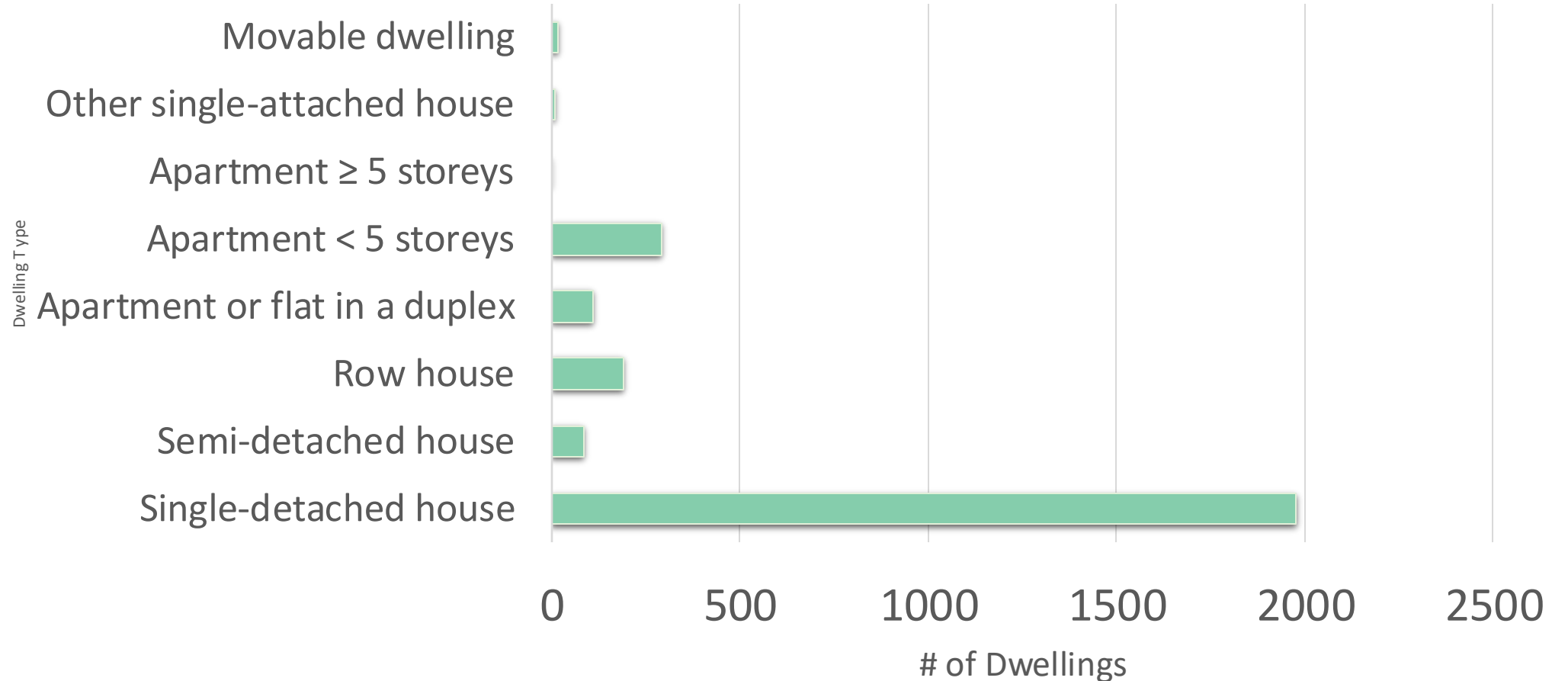
The Creston Housing Context

Percentage of residents in unaffordable housing



The Creston Housing Context

Private Dwelling – Structure Type



The Creston Housing Context

Current Policies and History

Crestbrook Gardens (2013)

- Partnership with BC Housing for 24 units

Utility Fees reduced 50% for secondary suites

Official Community Plan (2024 amended)

- promotes increased density and smaller homes

Housing Needs Assessment (2020/2025)

Residential Revitalization Tax Exemption (2021 / 2025)



RESIDENTIAL
REVITALIZATION
TAX EXEMPTION

- New zoning bylaw (2022)
 - Increased density / smaller lots
 - Decreased frontage requirements
- Rental Standards bylaw (2022)
- Engaged the Community (2022)
- Affordable Housing & Development Committee (2022)
- Creston Housing Action Plan (2023)

The Creston Housing Context

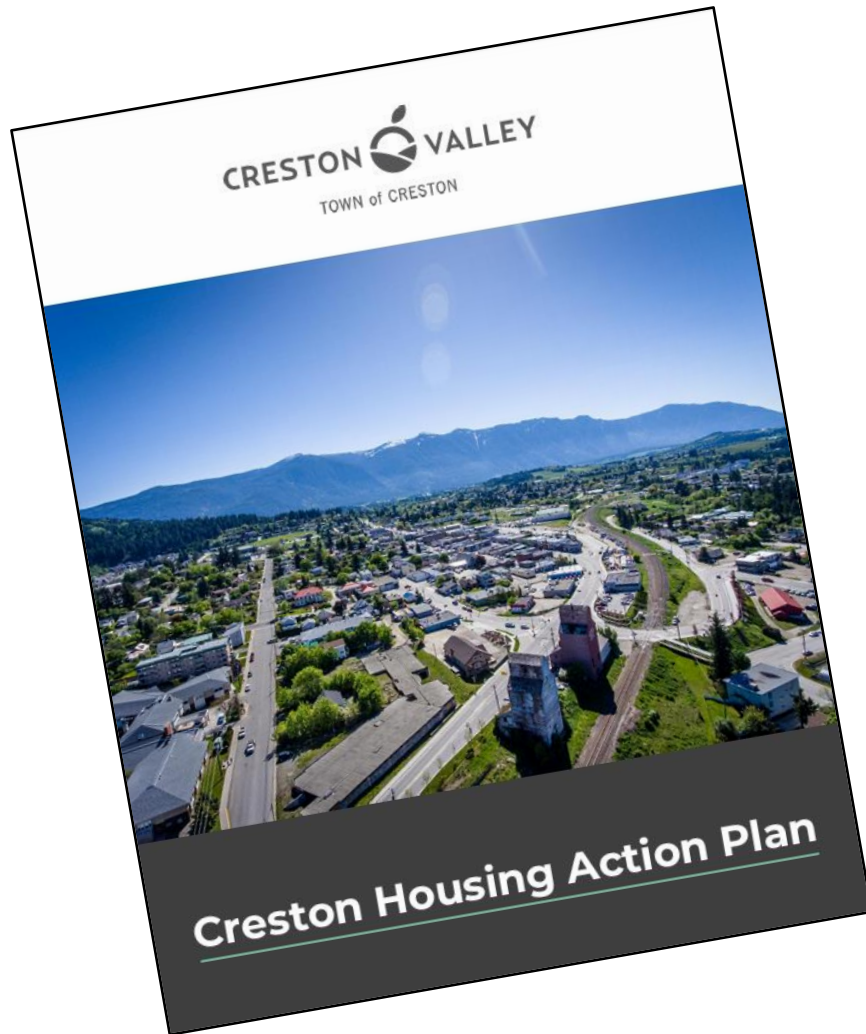
Supply and Demand Gap



- Avg. size of new residential units built in Creston over past two years – 2515 sq. ft
- No significant residential developments in past 13 years - no new apartment buildings for decades
- Vast majority of housing in Creston is detached single family homes – most expensive – less accessible to lower income households
- 63 new units are required annually – only 26 new units added (average)
- Low rental vacancy rate – estimated below 1%

The Housing Context

What we have done



Creston Housing Action Plan (2023)

- Council appointed advisory committee on affordable housing
- 19 policy recommendations

Key Finding

**Lack of developers in Creston –
barrier to increasing housing**

“Governments help by subsidizing housing costs for low-income Canadians. But achieving housing affordability for everyone in Canada will be done with increasing supply in the rental and homeownership market, and having this supply respond more quickly to greater demand.”

Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation,
“Canada’s Housing Supply Shortage: Restoring Affordability by 2030”

Local Government Challenges

Limited
Financial
Resources

Limited
available land
inventory

Balancing
multiple
priorities

Local political
considerations

Little profit
associated with
costs

Limited staff
capacity

Lack of technical
experience in
direct delivery

Legislative
Limitations

Creston had many competing priorities with limited staff capacity, financial resources and experience in housing delivery.

Our Path Forward



**Establish a municipal-owned housing corporation
for the direct delivery of new housing units in
Creston.**



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Our Path Forward

Why Incorporate a Housing Corporation?

- To undertake business ventures for the benefit of the local government and community
- To provide services to residents
- To limit liability of the local government
- Community Charter (Sec. 185) Provides authority to local government to incorporate a business

Our Path Forward

Council's Mandate for Municipal Housing Corporation



Facilitate the
development
of housing

Invest in the
delivery of
attainable
housing



Accessible and
diverse **rental**
and ownership
units

Our Path Forward

Attainable vs Affordable

- “Affordable Housing” – CMHC defines as housing that costs no more than 30% of gross household income
 - Subjective term that depends on household income.
 - Government “Affordable Housing” programs generally focus on low-income households only – not more broadly to a community housing costs
- **Attainable housing** considers a broader spectrum of income brackets and the inability to secure housing that meet overall needs. (Creston Housing Action Plan, 2023).

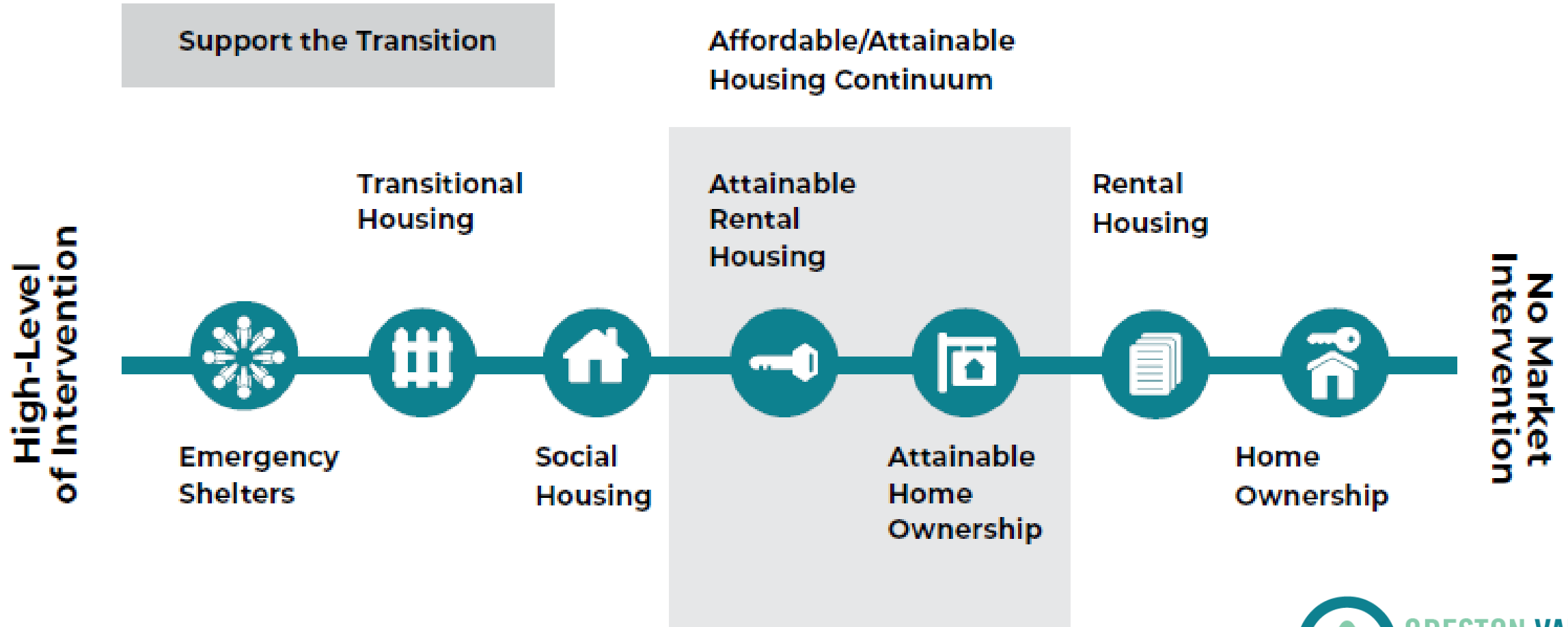
Our Path Forward

Defining Attainable in the Local Context

- Attainable Housing is when a household spends less than 30% of gross income on acceptable shelter
 - *Costs will differ between housing types*
 - *Household incomes vary what is attainable*

Our Path Forward

Affordable vs Attainable



Organizational Goals

**What Will Be
Built In The
First 5 Years?**



50-60
Rental Units



12-20
Price-Restricted Home
Ownership Units

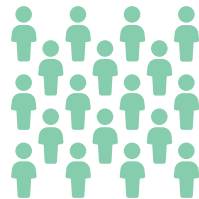
Organizational Goals



**Targeted
Tenants**



**Local
Businesses**



**Local
Residents**

**Who will
benefit?**

Funding Sources



Town Funding

Primary financial backer of the organization in short-term –

Growing Communities Fund



Government Funding

Continuous active pursuit of gov't funding to lower cost of operating.



Direct Revenue

Revenues from administrative and management fees for the properties and programs.



Philanthropy

Active pursuit of donations can achieve 5% of revenues as in other housing corporations

Maintaining the Corporation

- Requirements of Local Government Corporation
 - Annual General Meetings & Annual Information Meeting
 - Filing of Annual Reports to the Province
 - Maintaining Records
 - Audited Financial Statements
 - Procurement
 - Conflicts of Interest
 - Corporation liable for property tax



Funding Opportunities





Lessons Along the Way

- **Have a project to give purpose to corporation**
 - Immediate focus for Board of Directors
 - Our first project is a 110 space childcare facility (provincial grant) with 42 residential units (private borrowing) – Planned start for spring 2026
- **Sustainable vs Profitable**
 - Design for sustainability (Finance for 40 to 50 years)
 - ROI not attractive for private developers + long term risks
- **More Independent Directors than Elected Officials on the Board**
 - More business less political



Lessons Along the Way

- **Property Transfer Tax**
 - Property transfer tax applies when transferring land from municipality to the municipal housing corporation (or to a non-profit)
- **Legal Counsel**
 - Not within typical staff capacity
 - Application filing, Articles of Incorporation, Process
- **Local Government Staff Capacity**
 - Good outcomes requires hard work – something else may have to give

Lessons Along the Way

- **Federal / Provincial Grant Funding**

- Don't wait for grants or you may never build – we are still waiting
- Plan for sustainability through financing and actively pursue additional funding
- CMHC provides programs for loans with as little as 5% equity
- Your goal is providing housing quickly





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**Questions at the
End of Session**

