



CITY OF
CHILLIWACK

British Columbia Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs
PO Box 9838 Stn Prov Govt
Victoria BC V8W9T1

May 13, 2025

File No: 2400-20
Planning Department

Attention: Brian Bedford, Executive Director, Local Government Infrastructure & Finance
Jessica Brooks, Executive Director, Planning & Land Use Management

Delivered Via Email: PLUM@gov.bc.ca

Dear Mr. Bedford and Ms. Brooks:

**Re: Canada Community-Building Fund Requirements:
Housing Needs Assessments for Municipalities**

Thank you for your letter dated March 17, 2025, regarding the reporting requirements for federal funding under the Canada Community-Building Fund.

We have attached the questionnaire for your review and consideration and our current Housing Needs Report can be found at <http://www.chilliwack.com/housingneeds/>.

Should you require any additional information, please feel free to contact the undersigned at villeneuve@chilliwack.com or 604.793.2779.

Sincerely,

Gillian Villeneuve, BGS
Director of Planning

GV/dp

Encls.

Canada Community Building Fund: Qualitative Questionnaire

- 1. Please provide a brief history of how housing in the community has been shaped by forces such as employment growth and economic development, transportation, and migration. Please include any long-term housing challenges the community has faced.**

The City of Chilliwack has historically been a rural community with the economy based primarily on the agricultural sector. With two thirds of the land within the municipal boundaries being within the protected Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) (approximately 25,900 hectares), agricultural continues to be a major driver of the Chilliwack economy. Based on the Chilliwack Agricultural Area Plan (AAP), as of 2012, the agricultural sector supported over 4,500 jobs and generated more than \$600 million in economic activity within more than 800 farms. The result of the agricultural nature of the City is that housing has traditionally been accommodated within single family homes spread throughout the entire City. As the economy has slowly started to diversify with an increase in retail, healthcare and social assistance and construction jobs (12% each), and population has increased to approximately 107,800 people, the need for densification and more variety in housing types has come to the forefront. As a result, construction of townhouses and apartments have been increasing within the last 10 years; however, the majority of residents in Chilliwack (58%) still reside in single detached dwellings.

In addition to the agricultural industry, Chilliwack was home to a Canadian Air Force base for a number of years which was a large employer for the community and guided housing need and development for a number of years. In 1997, the Chilliwack Air Force Base closed, which resulted in a shift in the character of the community, a loss of a major employer and a large area of Chilliwack became available for alternative uses. Although at the time, the loss of the Air Force Base was considered detrimental to the City, a number of high quality planned residential communities were constructed, including the Garrison Crossing, River's Edge and Webster Landing areas, which have increased housing supply and the variety of housing type available for residents.

In addition to economic considerations as outlined above, as Chilliwack is and has always been an agriculturally based community, residents have always been heavily reliant on cars as the primary mode of transportation. The reliance on vehicles has allowed for the continued construction of single detached dwellings as the primary housing type as well as the distribution of housing throughout the community, leading to a lack of densified urban areas. This car oriented development pattern has also led to the need for substantial parking infrastructure within residential neighbourhoods (i.e. larger roads, provision of unenclosed on site parking spaces, large parkades for apartment developments, etc.) which all impact the nature of housing in the community. As the City has grown and densification of the urban corridor has increased, the opportunity to promote the use of alternative forms of transportation has increased; however, due to lack of funding from the Provincial government for transit expansion, public transit as a primary mode of transportation is currently not a preferred option for many Chilliwack residents.

Migration has also had an impact on housing within the community especially within the last 10 years as population growth within Chilliwack has shifted from local births to migration from other communities within British Columbia. Based on the most recent census information, migration has been responsible for 50% of the population growth between 2016 - 2021 with the trend expected to continue into the future. With the shift in demographics to include people coming into the City from other urban areas, a shift in housing expectations has occurred, with people more open to alternative forms of housing including townhouse and apartment units, which are more prevalent in the communities which they had previously resided.

In addition, the influx of new residents to Chilliwack, which has been historically a more affordable market than the Metro Vancouver area, has led to affordability concerns for lifelong residents within the community as voiced by stakeholders during the 2020 Housing Needs Report engagement process. As the population of the community has increased, the housing supply has not been able to keep pace with the ever growing population and associated housing demand. As a result, the cost of home ownership and rental rates have increased. More recently, this has resulted in a shift towards the construction of more multi-family units (townhouses and apartments) as well as construction of more purpose built rental apartment buildings. Although a number of new residential developments have been constructed within the City within the last 10 years, there is still a shortfall of supply leading to broad affordability concerns. The increase in migration has also shifted the expectation of residents for the provision of amenities within the community including the provision of parks, community centres, transit, commercial centres, etc. As a result, not only has there is there a shift in the built form of housing being constructed but also a change in resident desire for the overall make up and character of the community, moving towards an urbanized rather than rural/agricultural focus.

The issues outlined above, as well as a number of other considerations, have resulted in various long term housing challenges within Chilliwack. These include provision of affordable housing options, creating a spectrum of housing types to meet the needs of residents of various age groups, household compositions, mobility considerations, income levels, etc. Further, while preservation of agricultural land supports a major economic driver within the City, development within the ALR is limited and priority focus for development of housing must occur within the established urban growth boundary.

2. Please detail the existing municipal housing policy and regulatory context, including approved housing strategies, action plans and policies within Official Community Plans (OCPs).

The City has a number of policy documents, plans and bylaws which promote and/or regulate housing within the community. A list of all these documents has been provided below, with a brief summary of the content of the policy or plan.

- **2040 Official Community Plan (OCP)**

- The OCP includes multiple policy statements related to housing, specifically found under the overarching goal of Building Healthy Attractive Communities. These policies focus on supporting the creation of rental developments and other affordable housing options (i.e.

- secondary suites, coach houses, etc.), identifying areas for densification through neighbourhood planning processes, encouraging high quality development through the form and character Development Permit process, discouraging conversion of existing residential stock to condominium units during times of low vacancy rates, and addressing specific seniors housing needs which has increased in significance as the population has aged.
- The OCP also includes a number of residential land use designations as well as a land use map which clearly details the future vision for residential development within the City. These designations guide densification into areas which have access to amenities, such as parks, commercial centres, schools, hospitals, etc. in order to ensure that the City grows in a manner to support the needs of future residents. These designations also include options for density bonusing should specific amenities, such as affordable housing, be provided within a development.
- **Chilliwack Neighbourhood Plans**
 - Chilliwack Proper and Fairfield Island Neighbourhoods Plan
 - This neighbourhood plan has specific policy statements to support the development of a diverse range of housing types to address affordability and family needs through a policy framework which emphasizes the creation of secondary suites, coach houses and townhouses as rental options, providing opportunities to pursue low-rise apartment development, and promote the provision of housing design elements to support aging in place.
 - Downtown Land Use and Development Plan
 - This plan was created to facilitate revitalization of Downtown Chilliwack with a focus of creating a mix of housing types as well as the community amenities which are necessary to support the intended densification. Policies within this plan focus on increasing affordable, rental and special needs housing within the downtown area in close proximity to urban infrastructure, community amenities and supports. The plan also encourages prioritizing development proposals that address housing gaps as well as providing density bonusing where developments achieve the social and environmental goals as outlined within the plan.
 - Sardis Neighbourhood Plan
 - Policies within this plan relate to the creation of complete communities which provide housing options to suit the needs of a diverse population including variations in age, ability, and income. As a result, specific policies support higher density development as well as the creation of a mix of unit sizes, housing types and tenures. Density bonusing is also highlighted as a means to obtain affordable housing units.
 - South Vedder Neighbourhood Plan
 - This plan includes policies related to the provision of housing options to suit the needs of a diverse population including variations in age, ability, and income. As a result, specific policies support apartment and mixed use developments as well as the creation of a mix of unit sizes, housing types and tenures. Density bonusing

is also highlighted as a means to obtain affordable housing units. The plan also speaks to identifying and reducing barriers to the construction of new market rental housing where possible.

- Yarrow Neighbourhood Plan
 - As the Yarrow neighbourhood is constrained by a number of technical considerations including floodplain and lack of municipal services, policies within this plan seek to limit residential development to single detached dwellings to limit densification and ensure growth is geared to the existing conditions.
- **Chilliwack Homelessness Action Plan**
 - This plan aims to prevent and reduce homelessness through comprehensive community response. Key goals include implementing the Housing First approach and increasing the supply of affordable housing. The plan emphasizes coordination among local agencies and leveraging funding from senior governments. Overall, the plan seeks to ensure safe, affordable, and appropriate housing for all.
- **Chilliwack Poverty Reduction Plan**
 - This plan aims to address key challenges such as affordable housing, food insecurity, and employment barriers. The plan emphasizes community engagement with feedback collected through surveys and consultations. The plan also includes initiatives to support vulnerable populations and improve access to essential services. Overall, it seeks to build a healthier and more inclusive community.
- **Chilliwack Healthier Community Strategic Action Plan**
 - This plan seeks to develop and implement projects related poverty reduction, homelessness prevention, strengthening services and supports and improve access to substance use prevention and treatment services through a coordinated approach utilizing the knowledge and expertise of local stakeholders within the community.
- **2024-2028 Reaching Home Community Plan**
 - This plan is part of the federally funded Reaching Home program, administered by the City of Chilliwack. This plan focuses on preventing and reducing homelessness through effective resource allocation and enhanced approaches. Key elements include developing a Coordinated Access system by 2025, establishing a Community Advisory Board, and managing funds for local projects. The plan emphasizes community engagement, investment planning and collaboration with various stakeholders. Overall, the plan seeks to create a sustainable and inclusive strategy to address homelessness in Chilliwack.
- **Heritage Strategic Action Plan**
 - In 2022, the City adopted the Heritage Strategic Action Plan which identified a number of policy actions which relate to the importance of heritage in our community as well as to possible measures which can be taken to preserve heritage resources. Although the principal purpose of the plan does not relate to housing, as a number of the heritage sites in Chilliwack are residential, policies in relation to heritage designation and preservation

promote the retention of certain existing single detached dwellings within the community.

- **Housing Needs of Aging Adults Study**

- This study was completed in 2020 as a means to review the needs of the aging population within Chilliwack and identify any assets and/or gaps within the existing housing market as it relates to seniors needs with a specific focus availability, affordability and accessibility. As a result of the quantitative review of available data and qualitative information gathered through focus groups and interviews with key informants, community meetings and a community wide survey, a number of policy recommendations were drafted to address existing housing gaps which impact the seniors population. These policies include advocating to the federal government for increased funds, promoting construction of adaptable housing units, creation of a policy to address the replacement of purpose-built rentals which are lost to redevelopment and tenant relocation, explore options to encourage independent living housing and/or a campus of care within central areas close to amenities, and work with the non-profit sector to help identify underutilized sites throughout the City.

- **Secondary Suite Study and Policy**

- In 2018, the City conducted a review of municipal regulations as they relate to secondary suites as a means to address housing affordability, vacancy rates and increase rental options for residents throughout the community. As a result of the study recommendations, a Secondary Suite Policy was created which includes policy acknowledging the importance of secondary suites as an affordable housing option within the community which supports renters as well as assisting future home owners in their mortgage payments. The policy includes statements related to enforcement of illegal or existing non-compliant suites, permissions for suites to be located in all single detached dwellings in the City, and provision of municipal services.

- **Infill Development Policy**

- This policy includes guidelines related to redevelopment and densification of existing residential areas in order to ensure new development respect the character and context of the surrounding area while providing additional, much needed housing for the community. The policy includes provisions related to building siting and orientation, provision of parking and amenity space, and consolidation of adjoining lots to create more comprehensive development.

- **Supportive Housing Assistance Policy**

- This policy established an objective process within predefined criteria to ensure the equitable distribution of limited financial resources to offset the development cost of suitable, not for profit, supportive housing initiative within the City of Chilliwack by way of waiving all application fees.

- **Development Cost Charges Waiver for Eligible Developments Bylaw**

- This bylaw permits eligible not for profit rental housing developments the opportunity to be granted a 100% waiver of development cost charges as a means to support the creation of affordable housing.

In addition to the various plans, bylaws and policies listed above, the City of Chilliwack Zoning Bylaw and Land Development Bylaw provide the site-by-site parameters which guide housing construction including siting, density, parking provisions as well as various servicing requirements. All of these factors have a significant impact on the construction of housing within the City.

3. How have population changes in your community impacted your housing market?

Chilliwack has an estimated population of 107,800 people as of 2024, including First Nations communities within City boundaries. The last 5 years have seen steady growth, adding approximately 8,400 residents over this period at a rate of 8.5%. Chilliwack's population is projected to continue growing, with a population of 132,000 being reached between 2035 (at 2.0% per year) and 2040 (at 1.5% per year). This growth puts pressure on the housing market as property owners, developers, builders and City officials work to approve and construct dwelling units for new and existing residents. This growth has been matched with City approval of 2,784 new residential units between 2020-2024.

In addition to population growth, the demographics within Chilliwack have changed to include an aging population as well as identifying that the principal driver of population growth has shifted from births to migration. These shifts have led to an increase in the demand for varied housing types. In particular, as the aging population has a desire to "age in place" but can no longer maintain a single detached dwelling, demand for multi-family units in general, and smaller more affordable apartment units has increased. In addition, the need for seniors housing including all levels of care has increased across the spectrum. Although the City has a number of seniors housing facilities, as the population continues to age, the demand for these housing options will continue to outpace supply within Chilliwack.

The increase in migration into Chilliwack from other cities within BC has also led to a shift in the demand for housing. In this instance, the impact of migration relates not just to the supply of housing, which has been triggered through population growth, but also an increase in demand for associated amenities such as parks, trails, bike routes, community centres, transit, etc. As Chilliwack has shifted from a small, predominately agricultural community, to a more urban environment, the need for the associated amenities has increased thereby causing additional stress on the existing municipal infrastructure and programs. As such, in this instance, it is important to note that housing is not simply about constructing additional units but also improving the overall functioning of the City to ensure current and future residents have access to all the supports and amenities necessary to live productive and happy lives in Chilliwack.

4. How have employment and labour conditions (e.g., prevalence of precarious employment, temporary or seasonal workforces, reliance on less predictable sectors such as natural resources, agriculture, tourism, etc.) in your community impacted housing supply and demand?

As mentioned previously, a large part of Chilliwack's economy is driven by the agricultural industry; however, more recently there has been a shift towards the retail, construction and healthcare and social assistance sectors. This shift is likely due in part from the population growth attributed to migration into the City from other BC municipalities by people outside of the agricultural sector. In addition, as population increases overall, a broader employment base is needed to support the community. This shift towards the retail, construction and healthcare and social assistance has been reflected in the 2021 census data.

When looking at the agricultural industry specifically, a large portion of the agricultural businesses are locally owned and operated which results in the need for the housing to support these operations to be located on the farms. This has led to a reliance on single detached dwellings as the principal form of housing as well as a generally decentralized community. As farms have expanded over time, the incorporation of seasonal or temporary farm workers has led to the creation of on site farm worker housing as a solution to the lack of affordable housing options within the City. As such, in general terms, the agricultural domination of the Chilliwack economy has led to a decentralization of housing for those persons directly employed by this industry.

Another shift which has recently been acknowledged within Chilliwack is a notable growth (from 5% in 2016 to 10% in 2021) in people who work from home as per census data. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and changes to working conditions, there has been an increase in opportunities to work remotely in a number of professions. This shift in employment may play a role in the increased population growth generated by migration. Although in comparison with other Metro Vancouver municipalities Chilliwack housing costs are lower, housing prices are rising far faster than local incomes meaning that long time residents are now struggling to afford to rent or own in the City. As noted in the 2020 Housing Needs Report, 59% of renters and 45% of home owners surveyed noted affordability was a major housing challenge in Chilliwack.

5. Please describe the housing needs and challenges of priority populations in your community, specifically for the 13 groups identified by CMHC: women and their children fleeing domestic violence; women-led households (especially single mothers); seniors 65+; young adults aged 18-29; Indigenous peoples; people with physical health or mobility challenges; people with developmental disabilities; people dealing with mental health and addiction issues; veterans; 2SLGBTQIA+; racialized groups; recent immigrants (including refugees); and people experiencing homelessness.

A list of the housing needs and challenges for each of the 13 groups identified by CHMC is provided below.

Women and their children fleeing domestic violence

- Needs:
 - Safe, affordable housing options that offer security and support services.
- Challenges:
 - Limited transitional housing and emergency shelters, often resulting in the need to relocate to less familiar areas, further disrupting their lives.
 - In a very competitive housing market, women often face the challenge of needing childcare while they attend numerous housing viewings, and even then, acceptance is not guaranteed.

Women-led households (especially single mothers)

- Needs:
 - Affordable housing with access to childcare and employment opportunities.
- Challenges:
 - High rental costs and a competitive market make it difficult for single mothers to find suitable housing that meets their financial means.

Seniors 65+

- Needs:
 - Accessible, affordable housing close to healthcare and social services that can range from low to high barrier depending on needs. The demand for complex care is rising, but with a growing aging population, there is insufficient accessible and well-staffed facilities to meet these needs.
 - Senior specific shelters with complex care supports that go above and beyond what other community health partners are able to provide (e.g., catheter care, incontinence, assistance with discharge planning and follow-up care in shelter).
- Challenges:
 - Rising costs and limited affordable options often lead to isolation and reliance on family support. Additionally, seniors are often at risk of losing long-term rental homes to developers, forcing them into a pricier rental market which they often cannot afford due to fixed incomes.
 - Canada Pension Plan (CPP) and Old Age Security (OAS) benefits are often insufficient to meet the rising cost of living, particularly for seniors who are renting or managing ongoing health issues. Many low-income seniors rely solely on these fixed incomes, which are not adequate to cover basic needs such as housing, food, transportation, and medical expenses. As a result, seniors are increasingly vulnerable to housing instability, poverty, and barriers in accessing necessary care and support services. This financial gap is especially pronounced in communities with limited affordable housing and support options tailored to older adults. Seniors who use substances are often unable to access appropriate care for chronic health conditions, as some health care staff are reluctant to provide services within shelters or supportive housing settings due to perceived safety concerns.

Young adults aged 18-29

- Needs:
 - Affordable rental options and support for first-time renters.
- Challenges:
 - Rising rental costs.
 - Lack of suitable housing in safe neighbourhoods that appeal to younger populations.
 - Lack of safe spaces for young adults to enjoy for free.

Indigenous peoples

- Needs:
 - Culturally appropriate housing that reflects Indigenous values and traditions.
- Challenges:
 - Systemic barriers and limited financial resources make accessing housing difficult.
 - Discrimination in the rental market.

People with physical health or mobility challenges

- Needs:
 - Accessible housing that accommodates mobility needs, with features like ramps and wider doorways.
- Challenges:
 - High costs of retrofitting homes and limited supply of accessible units.

People with developmental disabilities

- Needs:
 - Person-centered housing solutions that prioritize inclusion, independence, and long-term stability.
 - Supportive housing environments that provide life skills training and community integration.
- Challenges:
 - Shortage of specialized housing options which can leave individuals without the necessary support for independent living.
 - Limited availability of supported or semi-independent living options, which are essential for individuals who require assistance with daily living but do not need institutional care.
 - Long waitlists for publicly funded housing programs or group homes.
 - Barriers in the private rental market, including discrimination, lack of awareness among landlords, and insufficient supports to maintain tenancies.
 - Fragmented service coordination, making it difficult for individuals and families to navigate housing, health, and social services systems.

People dealing with mental health and addiction issues

- Needs:
 - Affordable housing options that are accessible regardless of income or current health status.
 - Supportive housing that includes on-site or mobile mental health and substance use services.
 - Low-barrier housing that accommodates harm reduction and does not require abstinence.
 - Safe and stable environments that promote recovery and reduce risk of relapse.
 - Culturally safe and trauma-informed housing options.
 - Transitional housing with flexible supports to enable long-term stability.
 - Access to coordinated case management to navigate housing and health systems.
 - Alignment with Housing First principles, which prioritize immediate access to housing without preconditions, and provide individualized supports to sustain tenancy and well-being.
- Challenges:
 - Shortage of affordable housing, especially units that are safe and appropriate for individuals with complex needs.
 - Limited availability of supportive housing, particularly with integrated mental health and substance use services.
 - Strict program eligibility criteria, including abstinence requirements, that exclude many who are actively using substances.
 - Stigma and discrimination from landlords and neighbours.
 - Lack of harm reduction-based housing options, despite evidence that many individuals benefit from low-barrier, non-judgmental environments.
 - Fragmented systems, resulting in poor coordination between housing, health, and social services.
 - Insufficient discharge planning from hospitals, treatment centres, or corrections, often leading to homelessness or unsafe living situations.
 - Inadequate income supports, such as disability or social assistance, that do not keep pace with housing costs.
 - Waitlists for housing and services, leaving individuals in precarious or unsafe situations for extended periods.
 - Lack of culturally appropriate and trauma-informed housing, particularly for Indigenous and marginalized populations.

Veterans

- Needs:
 - Affordable housing and supportive services addressing their unique needs.
- Challenges:
 - Issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and social reintegration can make it difficult for veterans to secure stable housing.

2SLGBTQIA+

- Needs:
 - Safe, inclusive housing environments.
 - Shelters for gender diverse youth that are run by community members.
 - More specific 2SLGBTQIA+ services.
- Challenges:
 - Discrimination and stigma make it hard to find housing and increases homelessness risk.
 - Gender diverse youth are disproportionately affected by mental health and substance use issues, with fewer resources available to them.

Racialized groups

- Needs:
 - Affordable housing and equitable access to housing markets.
- Challenges:
 - Systemic racism and discrimination limit their opportunities to secure quality housing.

Recent immigrants (including refugees)

- Needs:
 - Affordable housing.
 - Translation and resource navigation assistance.
- Challenges:
 - Language barriers.
 - Unfamiliarity with the local housing market.
 - Recent immigrants often have larger families and need larger apartments/homes but these 3+ bedroom units are scarce and more expensive.

People experiencing homelessness

- Needs:
 - Immediate access to safe, low-barrier shelter with basic necessities and connection to services.
 - Affordable and stable permanent housing options for individuals and families.
 - Supportive housing with wraparound services (i.e., mental health, substance use, life skills, income support, etc.).
 - Housing that follows Housing First principles, offering immediate placement without preconditions.
 - Culturally appropriate housing, especially for Indigenous individuals and other marginalized groups.
 - Trauma-informed environments that promote dignity, choice and safety.
 - Transitional housing for people leaving institutions (e.g., hospitals, corrections, treatment).
 - Youth-specific housing with age-appropriate supports.
 - Family-oriented housing that allows parents to stay with children.
 - Accessible housing for people with physical or developmental disabilities.

- Challenges:
 - Lack of affordable housing supply, especially units for low-income households.
 - Insufficient shelter space, particularly during extreme weather or for specific groups (e.g., women, youth, couples, people with pets, etc.).
 - Long waitlists for supportive or subsidized housing.
 - Barriers to accessing housing, including ID requirements, past evictions, or credit history.
 - Discrimination from landlords, especially against people on income assistance or with complex needs.
 - Limited access to harm reduction-based and low-barrier housing options.
 - Underfunded outreach and case management services to help individuals transition from homelessness.
 - Lack of coordination between systems, such as health, justice and housing sectors.
 - Gaps in culturally safe and trauma-informed housing services, particularly for Indigenous and racialized individuals.

6. How has your community engaged with priority populations? Please provide an overview of the methodology and assumptions used to conduct engagement with priority groups. Please provide a description of who was engaged, the type of engagement that took place, and the nature of the engagement (e.g. interviews, consultations). If a private individual has been engaged, please anonymize and remove any identifying features from the narrative.

The following outlines a number of existing committees, stakeholder organizations, and teams that engage with various priority populations and work collaboratively to achieve the City's housing goals and support at risk populations within Chilliwack. In addition to these groups, the City strives to work with peers and individuals with lived and living experience and collaborate with Indigenous partners and Elders.

- **Chilliwack Healthier Community (CHC)** is a multi-sectoral network of organizations working collaboratively to improve the overall health and well-being of Chilliwack residents through collective impact, information sharing, and coordinated action.
 - CHC leads several focused teams, including:
 - **Steering Committee** – provides oversight to CHC to address the goals and objectives of Chilliwack's Healthier Community Strategic Action Plan and other initiatives supported by CHC. The committee has two main functions: Organizational Structure and Measurement and Monitoring. The work is focused on CHC's guiding principles of mental wellness, healthy aging, cultural safety and humility, trauma-informed and evidence-based practice. The committee's members are from the City of Chilliwack, Chilliwack Community Services, Chilliwack Division of Family Practice, Downtown Chilliwack Community Market Society, Fraser Health, Ministry of Child and Family Development, and Stó:lō Service Agency.

- **Chilliwack Food Council** – works to ensure equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and culturally appropriate access to food in Chilliwack in the short, medium and long term.
 - **Healthy Aging Task Team** – supports older adults in Chilliwack by increasing awareness of existing services and supports, and developing solutions to identified gaps and emerging issues.
 - Senior resources created by the team to help seniors understand the supports available to them.
 - Senior's Expo designed to engage the local seniors population and provide access to information and service providers within the community.
 - **Housing First Task Team** – collective of front-line service providers who offer shelter spaces, low-barrier housing, low-income housing, and services for individuals either experiencing or at imminent risk of homelessness. The team identifies challenges and supports the development of solutions in real-time to ensure full wrap-around services for these individuals.
 - Hosting an information fair to share resources and programs for priority populations.
 - **Opening Doors Task Team** – welcomes opportunities for service providers and community members to learn and share about the history of First Nations, Metis and Inuit people, and Truth and Reconciliation work. This builds a community of belonging, positive relationships and partnerships, and increases engagement with all communities in a culturally safe way.
 - Creates resources for Indigenous community members.
 - Hosts events/training opportunities that support the team's goals and objectives.
 - **Poverty Reduction Task Team** – engages in strategies to address poverty in Chilliwack through data collection and the promotion of poverty reduction programs in the community. Their goals include leading in the development of a multi-sectoral community-based plan, and supporting the implementation of local strategic initiatives to reduce poverty.
 - **Sexuality and Gender Equity Collaborative** – creates and promotes education and awareness opportunities for service providers to ensure that individuals of all sexualities and genders are served equitably.
- **Reaching Home Community Advisory Board** – Reaching Home is a federal homelessness strategy that provides funding to communities to support local solutions to homelessness. The Community Advisory Board (CAB) guides funding priorities, reviews proposals, and makes recommendations to ensure investments align with community needs and strategies.
 - **Community Safety Governance Committee (CSGC) (Committee of Council)** – provides strategic oversight and coordination of community safety initiatives in Chilliwack. Comprised of senior leaders from local government, police, health, education, and social service sectors, the committee works collaboratively to identify priorities, align efforts, and support the implementation of the Chilliwack Community Safety Plan.

- **Public Safety Advisory Committee (PSAC) (Committee of Council)** – committee that provides guidance and recommendations to Council on matters related to public safety and protective services. This includes policing, fire services, emergency preparedness, crime prevention, and community well-being. The committee brings together representatives from law enforcement, fire, health, social services, and the broader community to support a coordinated approach to community safety.
- **Chilliwack Community Action Team** – is a collaborative group of local partners working to address the overdose crisis through prevention, harm reduction, and community-driven strategies.
- **Situation Table** – is a multi-agency team that meets regularly to provide rapid, coordinated support to individuals at high risk of harm, aiming to reduce crisis situations through early intervention and collaboration.
- **Shop Talk Table** – engaging with front-line staff on a bi-weekly basis to provide wrap-around supports for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- **Multiple monthly meetings with Fraser Health:**
 - Vulnerable Populations meeting.
 - Complex Care meetings.

The following section lists specific projects related to engagement with priority population within Chilliwack. The information details the project and engagement process.

- **Point in Time Count**

The 2024 Chilliwack Point-in-Time (PiT) Count was conducted to provide a snapshot of homelessness in the community, combining survey responses with physical enumeration. It captured data on each individual's demographic, housing history, health needs, income sources, and service use. The count was carried out in collaboration with local service providers, Indigenous partners, and individuals with lived experience, ensuring a trauma-informed and culturally safe approach. Findings from the count will inform local planning, support funding applications, and contribute to the development of a Coordinated Access System in Chilliwack.

Engagement Process – Target Audience

- Community partners formed the planning committee and carried out the count with City support.
- Service providers connected with people experiencing homelessness in Chilliwack of all ages.

Through the Point in Time count, we were able to gather qualitative and quantitative data which reflected challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness.

- **Fraser Health Peer Team**

Our local Fraser Health Peer team engaged with priority populations through various methodologies and assumptions to ensure inclusive and effective outreach for 2SLGBTQIA+ and Gender-Expansive Youth.

Methodology**Data Collection and Analysis:**

- Statistics Gathering: tracked participation rates, demographics, and service utilization of outreach services monthly.
- Focus groups: separate focus groups were conducted with youth and their parents to gather diverse perspectives in a safe space.

Assumptions:

- 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive youth face unique housing and social challenges, necessitating sensitive and inclusive outreach.

Engagement Process**Target Audience**

- Youth Participation: targeted 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive youth from diverse backgrounds.
- Parental Involvement: engaged parents to understand their perspectives on housing and support needs.

Type of Engagement:

- Focus Groups: regular sessions allowed youth to express their experiences and needs related to housing and support systems.
- Parent Consultations: separate sessions with parents provided a comprehensive view of the issues.

Nature of Engagement:

- Interactive Discussions: focus groups fostered open dialogue, encouraging honesty and reducing stigma.

Through these engagement strategies, quantitative and qualitative data reflecting the housing needs and challenges of 2SLGBTQIA+ and gender-expansive youth was gathered. By prioritizing inclusivity, confidentiality, and constructive dialogue, a supportive environment that addresses their unique challenges and empowers their voices in discussions about housing and support services was created.

7. Please describe local factors that are believed to contribute to homelessness in your community (e.g., the closing of a mental health facility, high numbers of refugee claimants, etc.).

Local factors contributing to homelessness in Chilliwack include:

- **Lack of Access to Mental Health and Substance Use Treatment:** Chilliwack lacks local detox and recovery treatment facilities, with long waitlists and insufficient transportation support to reach programs in other communities.
- **Lack of Complex Care Housing:** many individuals with complex needs, such as medical care, substance use, or mental health issues, struggle to maintain housing without support. They often require care beyond what emergency shelters and supportive housing can provide.
- **Lack of Community Resources:** there is a shortage of supportive housing options, mental health services, drop-in centres, affordable housing, and access to addiction and mental health treatment services.
- **High Rates of Substance Use:** high rates of substance use and dense populations with mental health challenges, combined with a lack of accessible treatment options, exacerbate the risk of homelessness.
- **Economic Struggles and Rising Housing Prices:** rising cost of housing has outpaced wage growth, making it difficult for individuals and families to afford rent. Economic instability and low wages further compound the problem, leading to homelessness.
- **Limited Access to Resources Compared to Larger Cities:** Chilliwack lacks the extensive resources and services available in larger urban centers, including fewer shelters, limited healthcare services, and diversified support systems for various demographics.
- **Lack of Nighttime Outreach Services:** absence of nighttime outreach services leaves individuals vulnerable during the night, increasing the risk of danger, exploitation, and homelessness.

8. Please identify temporary and emergency relief resources available for individuals experiencing homelessness in your community (e.g., number of shelter beds, resource centres, transitional beds available). If possible, please indicate whether capacity levels are commensurate with need.

- **Shelter Beds**

Currently, there are a total of 247 shelter beds catering to various demographics in Chilliwack:

- **Salvation Army:** 46 beds for adults aged 19+, and 20 beds for women aged 19+.
- **Ruth and Naomi's Mission:** 120 beds for adults aged 19+.
- **Cyrus Centre:** 9 beds for youth.
- **Ann Davis Transition Society:** 22 beds for women aged 19+.
- **Lookout Health & Housing Society (Wellness Centre):** 30 beds for adults aged 19+.

Additionally, a new supportive housing and shelter project is set to open in 2025, which will provide 42 additional shelter beds, including 18 beds with complex care. This development will also offer 49 units of supportive housing.

- **Transitional Beds**

For transitional housing, Chilliwack offers:

- **Cyrus Centre (Switchback):** 16 beds exclusively for youth.

- **Chilliwack Community Services (The Village):** 11 beds for youth and 22 beds for adults aged 19+.

For women's transitional housing, Chilliwack offers:

- **Ann Davis Transition Society:** 12 beds for adult women and women with children, who are victims of domestic violence.
 - **Xolhemet Society – Wilma's Transition Society:** 18 beds for adult women with or without children and Elders who have experience interpersonal violence.
 - **Xolhemet Society – Wilma's Transition Society (Second Stage Housing):** 5 units for women with or without children as they transition away from interpersonal violence.
- **Resource Centres**
 - **Lookout Society (The Wellness Centre):** serves as a daytime drop-in centre that provides a culturally safe, trauma-informed space with wrap-around supports for individuals experiencing homelessness.
 - **Chilliwack Youth Health Centre:** serves as a daytime drop-in centre that provides integrated health and wellness services to youth and young adults (aged 12-26).

9. Some groups, including students, those in congregate housing, and temporary foreign workers, may be excluded from publicly available core housing need data sources. Communities are encouraged to use this section to describe the housing needs of these respective populations to ensure that all groups are represented in their HNR.

Student Housing

The University of the Fraser Valley (UFV) is the primary post secondary education institution within the City which drives the need for student housing, although the primary campus for UFV is within the City of Abbotsford. Based on the 2018 University of the Fraser Valley Abbotsford and Chilliwack Campuses: Student Housing Market and Demand Analysis, the majority of housing demand is related to the Abbotsford campus. The study found that the low vacancy rate and high cost of rental housing in the Fraser Valley is putting pressure of students resulting in 70% of UFV Chilliwack students living in a family home or owned property. Although the study was conducted in 2018, as housing costs have continued to increase and vacancy rates remain low, the pressure on students to remain within family homes has continued. The study also found that the provision of student housing on campus helps to address the need for affordable and suitable housing for students. For example, at the time the study was completed, SFU Burnaby could house 10% of the student body on site, and UBC Okanagan provided 20%. As the Chilliwack campus of UFV does not have any student housing, there is an opportunity as the campus expands and more programs are offered, for housing to support incoming students to be constructed.

Congregate Care

In 2020, the City completed the Housing Needs of Aging Adults Study to review the existing housing supply for the seniors population in Chilliwack to identify any assets and gaps, including a review of independent living, assisted living, congregate care and residential care facilities.

Extensive consultation with the seniors population in Chilliwack was completed as part of the study including community meetings, focus groups with housing/service providers and seniors, key informant interviews and a community wide survey. This qualitative data was paired with extensive quantitative data to ensure a thorough and representative depiction of the existing supply and future demand of housing for seniors was captured within the study. As a result, the study findings identified the key issues for senior housing relate to overall affordability, tenure, access to subsidies, provision of facilities across the care spectrum to allow seniors to stay within the community as their needs change, and transportation supports.

Temporary Foreign Worker Housing

As Chilliwack is an agricultural community, a number of larger commercial agricultural operations employ temporary farm workers on either an annual or seasonal basis. Due to the nature of the work, these operations often provide on site housing consistent with the standards for temporary farm workers housing. Although this housing meets the needs of the individual employee, similar to housing for immigrants, the provision of housing for families is not addressed. In addition, temporary foreign workers may experience language barriers and affordability concerns which can also exacerbate the ability to find suitable housing that meets their needs.

10. How have average rents changed over time in your community? What factors (economic, social, national, local, etc.) have influenced these changes?

The median rent within the City of Chilliwack continues to rise. Based on CMHC data, median monthly rent rose from \$700 to \$890 between 2014-2019 which constitutes a 27% increase, and further rose from \$890 to \$1,250 between 2019-2024 (40% increase). This data demonstrates a 79% increase in monthly rent over 10 years, consistent with home sale prices which have risen significantly, in Chilliwack and across the Province, since 2014.

The reasons behind increasing home prices are numerous. Global trends may have influenced demand for BC real estate, such as international monetary policy, speculation in real estate, a shift towards the perceived safety of real estate following the stock market crash in 2008, and other trends. Locally, unaffordability in Vancouver and surrounding communities pushed households towards Chilliwack and other Fraser Valley communities in search of relatively cheaper housing, increasing demand and prices locally. This population growth through migration is demonstrated in the 2021 census data which shows 50% of population growth within Chilliwack was caused by migration as opposed to birth rate, which had previously been the largest contributor to growth.

11. How have vacancy rates changed over time? What factors have influenced this change?

Vacancy rates within Chilliwack have continued to remain very low. Based on CMHC data, vacancy rates decreased from 3.1% to 1.4% between 2014-2019, and further decreased to 1.2%

between 2019-2024. The most significant reduction occurred in 2015, which aligns with the start of significant increases to house prices in 2014 and 2015.

Similar to above, global trends may have influenced demand for BC real estate, such as international monetary policy, speculation in real estate, and a shift towards the perceived safety of real estate following the stock market crash in 2008. Locally, high housing cost in Metro Vancouver and surrounding communities pushed households towards Chilliwack and other Fraser Valley communities in search of relatively cheaper housing, increasing demand and prices locally.

12. How have trends in core housing need changed over time between both tenant and owner-occupied households?

The proportion of households in core housing need has decreased between 2011-2021 for both owner and renter households. Based on Census data, between 2011-2021, the percentage of households in core housing need decreased from 33% to 25% for renters, and from 5% to 4% for owners. Between 2016-2021, the percentage decreased from 30% to 25% for renters, and from 5% to 4% for owners.

13. In the last five years, how many affordable units for low and very low-income households have been built, and how many have been lost? If data is not available, please describe how the loss of affordable housing units may have impacted your community.

In the last five years, 81 supportive housing units and 146 affordable housing units (227 total) have been constructed, all secured as affordable or supportive units through housing agreements. It should be noted that the 227 units does not include shelter spaces. In the last five years, the City has issued Building Permits for 133 additional affordable housing units, which have yet to be constructed. These approvals demonstrate the City's continued commitment to support development proposals which will provide affordable housing across the housing spectrum for residents in the community.

14. Please describe available affordable and community housing options and needs/gaps currently in your community. Examples can include:

a. Are any of these affordable housing units accessible or specifically designed for seniors, including long-term care and assisted living?

The following affordable housing development are available within Chilliwack.

Affordable Housing:

- **Chilliwack Community Services (The Paramount):** 57 units for seniors and 13 of these units are accessible.
- **Mamele'awt Qweesome Housing Society (The Waterstone):** 80 units for singles, families and seniors and 5 of these units are accessible.

Seniors Assisted Living/Long-Term Care:

- **Auburn Seniors Residence:** offers independent and assisted living in 28 studio suites.
- **The Cascades:** offers publicly funded and private pay suites for assisted living, long term care beds and hospice service through Fraser Health placements. This location has 106 rooms.
- **Crystal Ridge Manor:** offers independent and assisted living in 22 units.
- **Stó:lō Nation:** 15 assisted living units.
- **Valleyhaven Retirement Community:** 91 beds offering 24-hour nursing care for seniors. 80 of these beds are government subsidized and the remaining are private pay beds.
- **Waverly Seniors Village:** 53 long-term care beds and 66 suites for independent and assisted living.
- **The Emerald at Elim Village:** 109 assisted living units.

A number of key areas of local need were identified in the Housing Needs Report including provision of affordable housing specifically for individuals living alone or single parent households, lack of rental housing, provision of housing for people with physical or intellectual disabilities, lack of adequate supportive housing units to support the growing population/need, and creation of additional shelter beds.

b. Does your municipality provide rent supplements or other assistance programs that deepen affordability for households?

The City specifically aids residents through the federally funded Reaching Home Prevention and Diversion program as described previously. In addition, the following supports are available to residents within Chilliwack:

- **BC Housing** – Supported Rent Supplement Program (SRSP), Homeless Prevention Program (HPP), Homeless Outreach Program (HOP), Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER), Canada BC Housing Benefit (CBCHB), Independent Living BC (ILBC), Rental Assistance Program (RAP)
- **Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (MSDPR)** – emergency needs assistance, eviction or utility disconnection prevention, and hardship assistance.
- **Mennonite Central Committee BC (MCC)** – Fraser Valley Rent Assistance Program

c. Is your community in need of supportive housing units with wrap-around supports, such as for those with disabilities?

Although there are existing programs and facilities, additional supportive housing units with wrap-around supports, particularly those with complex care needs are necessary to accommodate the growing need within Chilliwack. Currently, two of the existing supportive housing modular buildings with high supports lack elevators, which highlights the need for more accessible units. Additionally, many shelters and supportive housing providers are seeing an increase in individuals with complex care needs and are struggling to assist them due to a lack of accessibility, capacity and expertise. Therefore, there is a significant demand for supportive housing and shelters that can effectively assist individuals with complex care needs in Chilliwack.

15. This final section aims to determine how your community anticipates using the results and findings captured in the HNR to inform long-term planning, as well as concrete actions that can address identified needs. Please use the following questions to describe how those linkages will be made.

- a. How will this HNR inform your OCP, housing policies and/or actions going forward? For example, if the HNR identifies specific needs in your community across the housing spectrum – such as housing needed for priority populations, units for large households in denser form factors, more diverse structural types such as missing middle housing, or more affordable and higher-density housing near transit – how could actions and changes in policy and planning help address those needs?**

The existing Official Community Plan (OCP) land use designations accommodates the housing need for 20-year as calculated in the 2024 interim Housing Needs Report (HNR), which includes the added permissions of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH). As the OCP will be updated every 5 years in compliance with Provincial legislation and housing policies are subsequently reviewed, with the first update slated for the end of this year, land use plans will continue to be evaluated to ensure that future housing needs can be accommodated.

As part of the OCP update, the City has engaged in a financial analysis to determine the feasibility of creating defined density bonusing designed to obtain additional 3+ bedroom units in apartments, to facilitate the construction of more housing for families who are seeking rental options or greater affordability. As a shortage of 3+ bedroom units was identified as a shortfall within the housing supply of Chilliwack in the HNR, this is one example of how policy and approaches to housing in Chilliwack is already being impacted.

It is also likely that within the updated OCP, policy direction related to densification of urban areas, support for affordable housing projects and/or supportive housing initiatives, encouragement of mixed-use development in key areas, provision of a wide variety of

housing types and tenures and support for vulnerable populations will be integrated into the plan as recommended by the HNR conclusions.

In addition to the policy review mentioned above, anticipated updates to administrative processes and policies will streamline processes and reduce application timelines, enabling housing developments to be approved for construction in a timely manner. The City has already undertaken a number of process and policy updates in the past 5 years and will continue established practice to maximize efficiency in application review processes.

The City also continues to support the development of non-market rental housing and supportive housing through expedited review processes and waiving application fees and Development Cost Charges in accordance with the Supportive Housing Assistance Policy and the Development Cost Charges Waiver for Eligible Developments Bylaw.

b. How will data collected through the HNR help direct those plans and policies as they aim to improve housing locally and regionally, and how will this intersect with major development patterns, growth management strategies, as well as master plans and capital plans that guide infrastructure investments?

The 20-year housing need calculated through the HNR supports plans and policies to focus growth within in urban areas while protecting and maintaining hillside, rural and agricultural areas. Specific housing structure types and demographics requiring additional support identified in the HNR reinforces existing OCP plans and policies to meet current and future housing needs through providing diverse housing forms, encouraging rental and other forms of affordable housing, and address housing needs of certain population groups (e.g., seniors, people with low incomes). Demographics identified in the HNR that were not accounted for in the current OCP plans and policies will be considered for future plan updates as the OCP undergoes a more frequent update cycle, as mandated by the Province.

The City continues to work with the Fraser Valley Regional District to implement the Regional Growth Strategy, ensuring alignment with the Official Community Plan update. As master plans and capital plans are updated in the future, the 20-year housing need and OCP plans and policies will continue to be used to guide infrastructure investment decisions. OCP plans and policies, with the support of the Regional Growth Strategy, are critical to ensuring that the City's housing needs are met in a financially and environmentally sustainable way, where development happens primarily within the Urban Growth Boundaries.

c. Based on the findings of this HNR, and particularly the projected housing needs, please describe any infrastructure gaps that may potentially limit the ability of your community to support forecasted growth unless they are addressed, or that could facilitate more complete and resilient communities. This can relate

to any type of enabling infrastructure needed for housing, including fixed and non-fixed assets, as well as social, community or natural infrastructure. Communities are encouraged to illustrate how infrastructure gaps impact their housing systems and growth. Examples of types of enabling infrastructure may include:

It should be noted that, due to Chilliwack's unique geography with multiple First Nations reserves located within City boundaries, closing certain infrastructure gaps (e.g., road connections, etc.) between various parts of the City require coordination and collaboration with local First Nations, and as such, are not entirely within the City's control. The City maintains a partnership with local First Nations, where housing supply built on First Nations land is available to non-Indigenous residents and the City provides infrastructure and amenities that are integrated into the broader community. As such, housing needs of the local First Nations communities within City boundaries were included into the City's 5- and 20-year calculations.

As part of the HNR, public engagement was completed including consultation with community members, local housing stakeholder and neighbouring First Nations. These participants identified the following infrastructure gaps to support the development additional housing:

- Additional parks, green space, amenities, shop, and services close to homes.
- More road infrastructure to support growing community.
- Increase tertiary care and mental health housing supports, as well as additional emergency shelters and transitional housing (e.g. modular housing, etc.) to support those at-risk for homelessness or experiencing homelessness.
- Invest in more community amenities to support the health of all residents (e.g. playgrounds, bike paths, improved access to public transit, accessibility, and sidewalk snow removal in the winter).
- Evaluate and improve existing support service facilities for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Other identified infrastructure gaps include:

- Additional land for new schools and expansions to existing schools. The City continues to work collaboratively with the School District #33 to identify and update current and future needs for schools and other associated community facilities.
- Additional land for new or expanded health care facilities. Ongoing collaboration with Fraser Health continues to facilitate health care facility development projects.
- Transit improvements including increased bus frequency and additional routes which connect the City from within and improve connections to jobs and resources (such as health facilities) outside of the City.
- Improved or upgraded sanitary sewer and water infrastructure in the Chilliwack Proper neighbourhood to enable more small-scale housing within the urban areas.
- Upgrades to and expansion of recreational and cultural facilities, as outlined in the City's Parks, Recreation and Culture Master Plan.

- Additional emergency services and infrastructure (e.g., fire stations, etc.) to ensure emergency response resources are commensurate with the population of the City.
- Ongoing maintenance and expansion of flood protection infrastructure to protect development within the floodplain areas.