

Canada Community-Building Fund Requirements

Housing Needs Assessment for Municipalities

- 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 Langford is a rapidly growing community that has been transitioning from a primarily suburban municipality to a vibrant urban destination in the heart of the capital region. With a population increase of nearly 60% over the past two census periods, Langford continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in Canada. The City has encouraged this rapid growth by streamlining approval processes and being open to opportunities to develop large parcels of land for a variety of purposes.

The construction and continual upgrades of major arteries such as the Trans-Canada Highway, Westshore Parkway, Sooke Road, and Veterans Memorial Parkway have enhanced access to Victoria and other parts of the region, making Langford a popular destination for families to live.

Langford's rapid population growth is largely driven by people searching for more affordable housing options than are available in the core municipalities of the Capital Regional District, while still being in relatively close proximity to other regional destinations. In addition, Langford has significantly expanded local and regional serving commercial hubs, industrial employment lands, and parks and recreation facilities since incorporation. These measures have improved access to local jobs, services, and amenities, which reduces the need for residents to travel to other parts of the region to meet their needs, and offers a lifestyle that is a draw for new residents.

As with other communities in the region, long-term housing challenges include: affordability, high construction costs, lack of funding from senior levels of government for new non-market housing projects, and lack of municipally owned land.

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

Langford is currently updating the Official Community Plan (OCP), which will be considered by Council in May 2025 and adopted well in advance of the legislated deadline of December 31, 2025. The proposed OCP has a section dedicated to housing called "Emphasizing Housing Action". This section incorporates the findings of the Interim Housing Needs Report and further outlines the challenges which have made renting and homeownership increasingly unaffordable, placing pressure on residents and limiting options for many. The desired outcomes within the OCP ensure that Langford will offer a diverse range of housing choices that meet the needs of all residents, prioritize the key areas of housing need, and focus new housing in areas that are well-connected to transportation options, services, and amenities.

The City can and does support housing need through its Affordable Housing Program, Attainable Housing Program, grants to the not-for-profit housing sector, tax exemptions, and activation of City owned land.

The City also supports affordable housing through the strategic development and application of land use bylaws and decisions. Lastly, the City can pursue Provincial and Federal grants, such as the Housing Accelerator Fund, to support the development of affordable housing. The City will continue to pursue these initiatives to help address the housing affordability crisis that so many residents are facing.

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

Langford has experienced massive population growth. Between 2016 and 2021, the population increased by 31.8%, adding over 11,000 residents. During this period, more than 5,000 new housing units were built, accounting for nearly one-third of the Capital Regional District's total housing supply.

The demand continues to outpace supply despite the high increase in housing units being built. In 2024, there were 2,493 units under construction – the most units ever recorded since incorporation. Langford has taken steps to address the demand for housing by updating the OCP to include the five- and 20-year housing needs required by the Province and by outlining where high-density housing should be located in the City, specifically in the downtown core and other key transit-supported, mixed-use areas.

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?

The City of Langford's workforce is diverse, with significant representation in sectors such as trades and transport, sales and service, business, finance, administration, and health. However, certain industries, including retail, hospitality, and agriculture, often employ workers in seasonal or temporary positions. This reliance on less predictable employment can lead to fluctuating housing demand, as workers may seek more stable housing arrangements during peak employment periods.

Langford has increased its housing supply by constructing over 5,000 new units between 2016 and 2021; however this fast pace of growth challenges the capacity of local trades and suppliers, and may contribute to higher prices when materials and labour can't be sourced locally.

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.

Like many communities, Langford faces housing challenges for the 13 groups identified by CMHC, and continues to seek innovative solutions and opportunities to address these housing needs. The primary challenges are generally focused on the lack of government funding and lack of suitable lands within the City's ownership. The City pursues both City-led and partnership-driven applications to access funding from Provincial and Federal grant programs, such as the Housing Accelerator Fund and Indigenous Housing Fund, with the intention of using these grants to either acquire lands or pursue partnerships to develop the few available lands currently owned by the City for housing to serve these groups. Unfortunately, the majority of these applications have not been successful in recent years. With increasing land and construction costs, it is becoming more difficult for Langford to purchase land for affordable housing, and as a mid-sized community with limited resources, it is not within our means to fund construction projects without partnerships and funding from senior levels of government.

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.

A comprehensive and inclusive public engagement strategy was launched in June 2024. The initiative, “Let’s Plan Langford, Together”, aims to shape the work of the City by actively involving residents and community members.

The engagement strategy is designed to be inclusive, accessible, and purposeful to ensure diverse community participation. The City ensures that all priority populations have an opportunity to participate by way of specific outreach, as appropriate to the particular project. The engagement efforts consider a broad spectrum of the community, including community organizations, advocacy groups, and individuals from priority populations.

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.).

Langford exists within the context of a closely connected region of 13 municipalities, all of which have witnessed a significant rise in housing costs and lack of affordable rental and home ownership options. The median rent doubled between 2008 and 2018, making it increasingly difficult for low- and moderate-income individuals to secure stable housing. As of 2020, there were 102 families on BC Housing’s waitlist seeking non-market housing in Langford. The rental vacancy rate has increased from 1.5% to approximately 4.3% over the last few years, however this is primarily due to the completion of a significant number of new purpose-built rental buildings, which add housing at higher rents than existing rental stock.

The West Shore region has limited emergency shelter options. The absence of these facilities forces individuals experiencing homelessness to seek shelter in public spaces.

Other factors including mental health and substance use issues occur within the region, which may further contribute to the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. The City lacks adequate services in the region to properly support individuals who struggle to maintain safe, secure, and affordable housing.

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.

The City has a lack of temporary and emergency relief resources available for individuals experiencing homelessness. The Salvation Army Office Connection Point Church and Resource Centre in the City is one of the only resource centres in the City of Langford. The Centre provides four main resources which provide counselling, emergency food hampers, back-to-school initiatives and free food fridge in their lobby. In addition, the Goldstream Food Bank in Langford helps individuals gain access to food.

During emergency weather events (extreme heat and cold), the Province initiates their protocol to ensure community centres, gymnasiums and/or auditoriums are opened.

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.

The City of Langford does not have data on housing for students or temporary foreign workers. Students often rent in secondary suites or shared accommodations which are less secure and can be removed from the market when homeowners sell or require the space for their own needs. Generally, students have low to no income, which causes financial stress due to high rents.

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

Over the past 10 years the average rent in the City of Langford has increased by approximately 51%, which has been influenced by variety of factors. The City is one of the fast-growing municipalities in British Columbia and Canada. While supply has increased substantially through rapid construction of thousands of new units, demand continues to be strong from people seeking this more affordable area of the desirable Capital Region. In addition to increasing demand, average rental prices have increased over the last 10 years as the majority of Langford's purpose-built rental stock has been constructed within this timeframe, and newer rental units demand a higher rent than older units.

Other economic factors include general inflation and rising construction costs, which require developers to charge higher rents to ensure they can obtain financing and cover their costs. Additionally, high interest rates have made mortgages more expensive which has potentially made people who wish to transition to homeownership stay in the rental market longer due to the challenges of saving for a downpayment and qualifying for a mortgage, further increasing the pressure on the rental stock.

Additionally, when tenants leave their rental unit, the owner/property manager has an opportunity to adjust the rent price for the next tenant. This often results in a greater increase than can be applied to an ongoing tenant, as Provincial legislation ties maximum rent increases to the tenant, and not to the rental unit.

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

As of October 2024, Langford's vacancy rate is 4.3%, which is an increase from an average of 1.6% between 2014 to 2024. Generally, the increase in demand for new housing coupled with streamlined approvals for new housing development has increased the supply of housing options in Langford. The completion of a significant number of new purpose-built rental buildings, along with the challenges of affording the higher level of rent associated with new construction may be contributing to this increase in the vacancy rate over the last year.

As the City continues to develop, while following Council's strategic plan and implementing the policies of updated Official Community Plan, Langford strives to maintain a balanced rental market. Staff will continue to follow the data and address the needs of housing to ensure the City can continue to have a healthy vacancy rate, that both supports renters and encourages the development of additional purpose-built rental buildings.

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

As of 2016, approximately 11% of Langford households were in core housing need with 5% in extreme core housing need. In 2016, households with a primary household maintainer between 15 and 24 are more

likely to be in Core Housing Need (29%), the highest proportional need across all age groups. This is to be expected, as this age group is most likely to be in school and/or working in lower paid jobs. Within this age group, key areas of concern are households headed by young adults who are likely to be facing other vulnerabilities, like being in precarious employment, lacking family supports (e.g., youth aging out of care), and other factors that contribute to housing vulnerability.

Among household types, lone parent households are most likely to be in Core Housing Need (34%), followed by one-person renter households (17%). Lone-parent renters likely face challenges finding affordable and rental housing of a suitable size (i.e., with two or more bedrooms to accommodate their children).

Total core housing need decreased from 12% to 10.7% between the 2016 and 2021 census periods. Owner-occupied households in core housing need have stayed relatively stable at 5%, over that timeframe while renter households in core housing need decreased from 27% to 21%.

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.

According to BC Housing data, since 2016, 620 units have been built in Langford under a variety of affordable housing programs. Of note, the data does not give specific criteria on rents (shelter rate, rent geared to income, new market, etc).

Due to the partial redevelopment of a mobile home park, approximately 32 affordable mobile homes will be removed or relocated out of this property.

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?

All affordable housing units that are using public funds are required to be built to accessible standards. The City has a few buildings designed for seniors, including one for assisted living.

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

The City does not provide rent supplements for households. There is a rent bank available in the region through the Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria.

The City's Attainable Home Ownership program, which requires developers to enter into an agreement to provide a minimum of 5% of the units at below-market purpose prices to qualified buyers meeting certain income, residency, and other related criteria. It also offers a downpayment assistance grant to certain qualified buyers.

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

Similar to most municipalities, Langford needs supportive housing units with wrap-around supports to support people with disabilities and expand the ability of both current and new residents to age in place within the community.

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?**

Langford is currently updating the Official Community Plan (OCP), which will be considered by Council in May 2025. This proposed OCP integrates the results of Langford's Interim HNR, including the 5- and 20-year housing targets and policies to support and enable new housing to address the key areas of housing need. It also includes a commitment to create a more specific housing strategy to further identify actions that the City can take to improve housing choice, identify and remove additional barriers to housing in key areas of need, integrate housing for larger households in higher density growth areas, and implement other measures to achieve the desired outcomes and policies of the OCP.

Provincial housing legislation points to the need for Langford to accommodate regional growth expectations. For Langford, the 20-year housing need is projected to be nearly 17,000 new homes, which will add approximately 42,000 new residents to Langford's 2024 population of just over 58,000.

As Langford plans for its next phase of growth, the Housing Needs Report identifies key priorities. New homes must include both rental and ownership options in a variety of sizes to serve residents of all ages, abilities, and life stages.

- 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 HNR will assist the plans and policies of the City by providing an understanding of current and projected data. Analyzing demographic trends, income levels, housing supply, and population growth collected through the HNR helps guide plans and policies that are completed or currently under development such as the OCP, Active Transportation and Transportation Master Plan and the Urban Forest Management Plan.

- 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.**

Similar to other communities, increased population puts stress on all types of infrastructure. Infrastructure planning is critical to support the scale and diversity of projected housing growth outlined in the HNR for Langford as well as other municipalities in the Capital Region, as many of these services are administered and coordinated at the regional level. Gaps in infrastructure such as transportation networks, utilities and services (including water, wastewater, energy, among others) could constrain future development or reduce livability. If there is not enough capacity in the service and utility systems, then growth cannot happen without significant upgrades which come with significant costs.

Public transit is handled by BC Transit, and there is increasing demand for, and frustration with, the lack of convenient and reliable access to public transit. Langford will not achieve our goals for mode-shift, reducing reliance on cars, and achieving the many associated public benefits, without significant investment to increase both the coverage and frequency of public transit options.

Langford's rapid growth has contributed greatly to the region's housing supply, however supporting community amenities and supports, including parks, childcare, schools, health care, etc has not kept pace to meet the needs of the growing population. Continued growth without investment from senior levels of government in these areas is very problematic and is a top concern for the City and our residents, as we are already lagging well behind the needs of the community in these areas.

Much of Langford's development has historically extended outward into greenfield lands. While this has resulted in the creation of a significant amount of new housing, the economic, health, and environmental costs of outward expansion are increasing. The additional development enabled through the updated OCP to guide Langford's next phase of growth must focus on development that occurs in ways that utilize existing infrastructure, is located in already built-up areas as much as possible, that positively contributes to the tax base and financial positioning of the City, and that supports many other public interest goals. Ensuring that physical and social infrastructure is in place to support this growth will be a key component in determining whether this growth can reasonably occur, and how successfully that growth will contribute to the livability of the city.

Link to current Housing Needs Report: [Housing Needs Report \(2020\) - Interim Updated 2024](#)