

## **Canada Community Building Fund**

### **Township of Langley Responses to the Qualitative Questions**

**June 13, 2025**

**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.**

- Human occupation and housing development of the Langley area date back several millennia to a period when First Nations people, now known as the Sto:lo, populated the area.
- The Hudson's Bay Company established Fort Langley at Derby in 1827 to supply its interior posts and started the first farms in the Milner valley.
- Early immigrant homesteaders increased over time and small service centres emerged in Aldergrove and Murrayville. The Township of Langley was incorporated as a municipality in 1873.
- Proximity to Vancouver has brought strong housing development pressure to the Township of Langley, beginning with the construction of the Fraser Highway in the 1920s and the Patullo Bridge in 1937. Rapid population growth began in the 1960s after construction of the Port Mann Bridge and the Trans Canada Highway.
- In 1973, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) was established and designated approximately 75% of the Township as such, limiting the areas for urban development.
- The Township adopted its first Official Community Plan in 1979, designating urban growth areas that are not in the ALR. The average housing density was largely suburban at 4 to 6 units per acre (upa) for communities such as Brookswood-Fernridge, Murrayville, Walnut Grove, and Willoughby.
- In 1998, the Willoughby Community Plan (WCP) was adopted by Council with an overall density of 6 upa which was predominantly single-family. Subsequent amendments to the WCP were made to meet changing market conditions, consumer preferences, and policy decisions by senior level of governments. The current built density is at 25 upa, providing a wide range of housing choices, including single-family, rowhouse/townhouse, small-scale, multi-unit housing, low rise apartments (4 to 6 storeys) and mid-rise apartments (20+ storeys). It is anticipated that the overall density will continue to rise, as the Township develops transit-orient areas along the 200 Street corridor to support Bus Rapid Transit that is being planned by TransLink. The future density would likely be in the range of 80 to 100 upa in Willoughby.
- Key long-term housing challenges include (1) rising costs to provide necessary infrastructure such as water, sewer, storm detention and parks/amenities; and (2) lack of investments in schools and hospitals to match population growth.

**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 Township's 2013 [Official Community Plan](#) contains 11 policies specific to housing, under the objectives to encourage a diversity of affordable housing options in each community and to address special needs housing in particular.
- In 2020 the Township completed a [Housing Needs Report](#) (HNR), supplemented by an update in 2024. The 2020 HNR informed a 2021 [Housing Action Plan](#) that identifies four priority areas (Diversify housing types; Catalyze rental housing; Support vulnerable residents; and Monitor trends and emerging priorities), accompanied by a total of 21 actions to address the needs identified in the HNR.

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

- As elsewhere, population growth is a key driver for housing demand, with the Township growing faster than the Metro Vancouver region (25% between 2006 and 2016, compared to 16% in Metro Vancouver).
- BC Stats projects approximately 40% growth in the number of households in the Township between 2021 and 2041.
- In 2016, the Township had a higher proportion of children and youth compared to the regional average. However, the demography has been shifting with an aging population. The Township anticipates a much higher demand for studio and one-bedroom units for new residents than in the past.

**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?**

- Between 2006 and 2016, unemployment rates in the Township were lower in the Township than Metro Vancouver as a region. However, immigrant households (19% of the Township's population) are over-represented among households experiencing core housing need (35%), which could reflect employment barriers.
- 7% of workers in the Township are employed in accommodation and food services, which can be vulnerable to tourism trends. Another 3% of workers are employed in the agriculture sector, including temporary seasonal farm workers whose housing options are affected by policies from higher levels of government, including those related to the ALR.

**5) Please describe the housing needs and challenges of priority populations in your community, specifically for the 13 groups identified by CMHC:**

**a. women and their children fleeing domestic violence**

By 2016, women and children fleeing domestic violence were served by 22 temporary emergency units in the Township. Second-stage housing units for

medium-term residency have been identified as a gap, though an estimated 7 units are in now development.

**b. women-led households (especially single mothers)**

The Township has not analyzed data specific to local women-led households but has identified that affordability challenges are particularly acute for lone-parent family households in the Township, with 26% of these experiencing core housing need and their 2019 median household incomes approximately half that of families consisting of couples with children. Affordable average rent for these families in 2019 was \$1,000/month, two thirds of the average rent for even a one-bedroom apartment in 2021.

**c. seniors 65+**

The share of the Township's population that is comprised of seniors is growing. Seniors who are interested in downsizing have limited options in the Township, particularly for housing that can accommodate mobility limitations. The largest share of the households experiencing core housing need were led by seniors (at 29%), with higher rates among renters in particular. The Township has identified a need for more rental options targeted to seniors.

**d. young adults aged 18-29**

Young adults have been identified as needing targeted affordable housing options in the Township, particularly for youth aging out of foster care. Youth represent a higher share of those experiencing homelessness in the Township compared to the region. Young adults may prefer smaller self-contained units such as studio or lock-off apartments or may be interested in congregate housing options.

**e. Indigenous peoples**

Indigenous households in the Township are more likely to be experiencing core housing need (14% of Indigenous households), and this proportion has been growing. Compared to the population that identifies as Indigenous (4% of the Township's population in 2016), Indigenous individuals have been consistently and dramatically overrepresented in the Homeless Counts at 34%.

Representatives from Indigenous organizations in the Township have identified a need for more affordable, culturally appropriate and diverse housing options with support services. These may include multi-generational housing forms, and culturally appropriate substance-use healing centres which are absent in the Township.

**f. people with physical health or mobility challenges**

In 2016, the largest share (60%) of the households experiencing core housing need contained at least one person with an activity limitation, representing 29% of renters with activity limitations. The Township needs more affordable and accessible housing options for those with mobility limitations, particularly those who depend on Canada Pension Plan or Persons with Disabilities supports.

**g. people with developmental disabilities**

The Township has not analyzed data on the housing needs of local people with development disabilities. However, it has heard that adults with development disabilities have few housing options in the Township and struggle with transportation. In 2016 a home sharing program was reported as supporting 100 individuals with rental opportunities.

**h. people dealing with mental health and addiction issues**

The Township has not analyzed data on the housing needs of local people with mental health or addiction issues. However, those with substance use or mental health challenges in the Township have been identified as having complex needs requiring a higher level of service accompanying housing opportunities.

**i. veterans**

The Township does not have data on the housing needs and challenges of local veterans.

**j. 2SLGBTQIA+**

The Township does not have data on the housing needs and challenges of local individuals who identify as 2SLGBTQIA+.

**k. racialized groups**

Specific racialized groups that have been identified as having specific needs in the Township include Indigenous households and visible minority immigrants, both addressed elsewhere here. The Township has not analyzed data on the housing needs of other local racialized groups.

**l. recent immigrants (including refugees)**

Approximately 5% of the Township's households in core housing need in 2016 were headed by a recent immigrant. Immigrant households in general are more likely to be in core housing need in the Township, particularly renters, affecting 38% of recent immigrant households. Engagement has identified a challenge for recent immigrant households in finding appropriate housing due to larger household family sizes (4.3 persons per household compared to 2.9 for all households in the Township).

**m. people experiencing homelessness**

The number of people experiencing homelessness appears to be growing in the Township, particularly for individuals under the age of 25. Youth aging out of care and women and children feeling violence have been identified as particularly vulnerable. The Township is committed to a "housing first" approach but has a lack of any emergency shelter space. The Township has 49 units (Creek Stone) of supportive long-term housing by 2019, and another 46 units (Glover Road) in 2020. More affordable rental options are needed for the range of households at risk of homelessness. Options also need to be located walking distance from services and amenities or well-served by transit.

- 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.**

Engagement for the Township's 2020 HNR built on engagement done a few years earlier in developing a Social Sustainability Strategy, which included an online survey and stakeholder workshops reaching over 1,500 residents and stakeholders and 58 local organizations. The HNR engagement process was developed with equity, inclusion and accessibility in mind; groups that were engaged in these processes included youth, Indigenous, and individuals who were formerly homeless, with a particular focus on community members who were struggling to meet their housing needs independently or through available market options. Participants included representatives from 14 non-profit organizations, plus the development and real estate industries. The focus group on homelessness and housing insecurity was conducted with people with lived experience, hosted and supported by a familiar community organization. Additional interviews were conducted with seven organizations and institutions.

- 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.).**

Problems identified through the community engagement activities focused on factors affecting availability of affordable housing options in general, including a lack of affordable units (although housing in the Township is more affordable than the rest of the region); a lack of housing diversity, with a high prevalence of single-family homes; and barriers to alternative housing arrangements, such as densification of single-family neighbourhoods (at the time). Again, the lack of affordable rental units, options for multi-generational living, and culturally appropriate healing resources have been cited as contributing factors particularly for Indigenous individuals and households.

- 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 Township does not have any emergency shelter space within its borders and relies on neighbouring communities for this service. The nearest shelter is located in the City of Langley and receives annual funding support from the Township of Langley. The Emergency Weather Shelter turned people away 76 times during the 2024/25 winter season (2022/23: 40, 2023/24: 108). For the 2025/26 winter season the EWR is reducing mats from 15 down to 10 due to space constraints and will further increase the need for additional shelter space.

**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.**

- Students, as well as those paying more than 100% of their income towards housing, were not included in the measure of core housing need in the Township. With two post-secondary institutions in the Langley area, neither of which provides housing for all its students, there is a need for more, smaller, affordable housing options that are close to each campus or well-served by transit.
- Farm operators employing temporary foreign workers in the Township are encouraged to provide housing for their workers, as there are rarely housing options accessible to farm sites without use of a personal vehicle; however, these farms must work within the provincial restrictions on the ALR.
- The Township has not analyzed data on the housing needs of local those living in congregate housing.

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

According to the CMHC, average rents were \$1,566 in 2019 and increased to \$2,160 in 2024, a 38% increase. However, official data on rentals is poor, as only primary market rentals are recorded by CMHC, while most rental units in the Township are in the secondary market such as secondary suites. Zumper.com reports an average rent for all housing types of \$2,350 in 2024, about 9% higher than CMHC's numbers. This source reports that average rents have decreased by 14% in the past year. The Township has 884 purpose-built rental units, 40% of which were built in the last five years. This may have influenced the decrease in average rates.

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

The vacancy rate for the primary rental market is reported by CMHC to be 3.4% for 2024, down dramatically from a high of 6.2% in 2019, but higher than all years since then (which reached a low at 0.5% in 2022). However, again, this may not reflect the secondary market, which supplies most of the rental units in the Township.

The theory that an increased supply of rental units has led to decreased average rents is supported by this coinciding increase in the vacancy rate.

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

Most of the households experiencing core housing need in the Township are owners rather than renters, but this reflects the high homeownership rates in the Township; renters are far more likely to be in core housing need (25%) than owners (8%). The

proportion of owners and renters in core housing need has been steady since 2006, although the numbers of households in each group have grown dramatically - by 26% for the former and 51% for the latter.

**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 2020 a total of 70 non-market units were built and in 2024 a total 98 units of low-moderate income were added. There is no record of losing affordable housing units over the last five years. New development is focused in greenfield areas and there is minimal redevelopment pressure on older housing stock.

**14) Please describe available affordable and community housing options and needs/gaps currently in your community.**

In 2019 the Township shared approximately 1,100 non-market or community housing units with the City of Langley. It is estimated that the Township's share of these represents 1% of its housing supply, much lower than the 3.5% seen across the rest of Metro Vancouver.

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

Of the 1,070 units shared with the City of Langley, close to 700 of these specifically serve low-income or frail seniors. The Township does not have data on the types of services provided by these facilities.

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

The Township does not provide a rent supplement or other assistance program, though it does provide exemption from certain development fees for new construction of non-market rental units.

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

Yes, the Township would benefit from greater supports, particularly for those experiencing homelessness and those with disabilities, who are the most overrepresented among those experiencing core housing need.

**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?**

Recent amendments to the Local Government Act and Vancouver Charter have introduced significant changes to how municipalities must plan for housing. Municipalities are now required to align their Official Community Plans (OCPs) and zoning bylaws with the targets identified in their Housing Needs Reports (HNRs). Priority populations are identified as per the seven classes of housing needs in the HNRs. Housing policy and pre-zoning measure will be implemented for the seven classes of housing needs which are: affordable housing; rental housing; special needs housing; seniors' housing; family housing; shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing for individuals at risk of homelessness; and housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit or other alternative forms of transportation.

Recent legislative changes have introduced Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) provisions giving the Township to allocate a percentage of new housing units to be dedicated to special needs and affordable housing. Preparation of an IZ zone is underway and will be utilized to achieve housing need targets identified in the HNR.

- 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 housing targets provided in the HNR identify the total number of housing units required to address housing needs. Adopting the housing needs targets into the OCPs in conjunction with pre-zoning will ensure that housing is built in areas most in need. As required by legislation, updates to OCPs and Zoning Bylaws are to be completed by the end of 2025. Planning efforts will follow best practices approaches to land use planning and will coordinate the adoption of appropriate land use designations along with identification and need for adequate urban infrastructure (i.e., water, drainage, sewer), and amenities such as parks, recreation and cultural services and amenities. The HNRs are required to be updated every five years and the HNR targets serve to establish a benchmark whereby future development can be monitored, measured and reviewed and updated with respect to the effectiveness of the associated housing policies.

- 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: i) Public Transit ii) Water/Wastewater Systems iii) Roads and Bridges iv) Schools, Parks, Community or Recreational Centres v) Broadband Service and Access vi) Climate Risks/Impacts**

There are many challenges to be addressed to align population growth with the provision of infrastructure. Transportation systems and the alignment of inter-governmental development goals, timelines and funding have implications for the densification of key transit corridors. SkyTrain and Bus Rapid Transit are two key transportation infrastructure projects that will support high-density residential growth in the Township. The residential intensification of transit corridors comes with a need for an increase in urban amenities such as schools, parks, and community centres. Residential intensification and the increase in impermeable surface area coupled with climate impacts requires enhanced drainage infrastructure such as detention ponds, and adequate greenspaces for accommodation.

Recent legislative changes have introduced small-scale multi-unit housing to future and existing single-family neighbourhoods across the Township. In some areas development will be limited by existing water servicing capacity and sewage connections.