

# Regional Affordable Housing Strategy

Bowen Island Presentation  
September 17, 2007



**METRO  
VANCOUVER**

# Overview

- ▶ Provide an overview of the proposed Draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategy
- ▶ Respond to questions

## About the Strategy

*Housing affordability is a significant regional priority*

The proposed Regional Affordable Housing Strategy is about:

- ▶ Achieving a high quality of life for everyone
- ▶ Building complete and livable communities
- ▶ Promoting long-term sustainability by ensuring that there is an adequate supply of affordable housing to respond to the full range of incomes and needs across the region

# Key Focus of the Strategy

A key focus of the Strategy is to:

- ▶ Create a coordinated approach to housing affordability and homelessness across Metro Vancouver
- ▶ Complement and support the actions of others
- ▶ Draw attention to the needs that exist and signal the importance to senior levels of government

# About Housing Affordability

We know that:

- Housing markets are regional in nature
- The majority of households are doing well
- Maintaining a healthy housing supply is essential to long-term affordability

# About Housing Affordability

We also know that

- Rental vacancy rates are less than 1%
- There has been only limited new rental housing construction
- A significant number of renters are facing affordability challenges
- Ownership is moving out of the reach of some households

# About Homelessness

We also know that

- Access to affordable housing, adequate incomes and appropriate supports is key to solving homelessness
- At the time of the last count there were more than 2,100 individuals living on the streets or staying in emergency shelters

# Key Areas of Focus for the Strategy

## GOAL 1

Increase the supply and diversity of modest cost housing

## GOAL 2

Eliminate homelessness across the region

## GOAL 3

Meet the needs of low income renters

# Goal 1: Increase the supply and diversity of modest cost housing

## Strategies

- ▶ Increase the supply of affordable housing at key points along the continuum including:
  - Entry-level ownership;
  - Low end of market rental housing;
  - Non-market housing; and,
  - Emergency and transitional/supportive housing
  
- ▶ Identify partnership opportunities to allow low income families and individuals to advance along the housing continuum

# Goal 1: Increase the supply and diversity of modest cost housing

## Key Actions

- ▶ As part of the Regional Growth Strategy, set targets for affordable housing
- ▶ Require that municipalities develop Housing Action Plans
- ▶ Help build public awareness and support for increased housing diversity
- ▶ Identify regionally-owned land suitable for affordable housing

# Goal 2: Eliminate homelessness across the Region

## Strategies

- ▶ Enhance the continuum of housing and supports for those who are homeless
- ▶ Improve the affordability of rental accommodation for low income renters as a means of preventing economic eviction and homelessness

## Goal 2: Eliminate homelessness across the Region

### Key Actions:

- ▶ Provide on-going support for the Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness
- ▶ Build awareness and support for the need for emergency and transitional housing across the region
- ▶ Advocate for changes in the level of assistance provided through Provincial rent assistance and income support programs to prevent homelessness

# Goal 3: Meet the needs of low income renters

## Strategies

- ▶ Expand the supply of affordable rental housing
- ▶ Maintain the viability of the existing rental housing stock

## Goal 3: Meet the needs of low income renters

### Key Actions

- ▶ Explore opportunities to take advantage of the expertise and resources within GVHC
- ▶ Waive regional development cost charges to improve affordability
- ▶ Advocate for senior government funding to support the creation of new affordable housing supply for low income families and seniors
- ▶ Advocate for Federal tax changes to encourage new rental housing production

## The Current Process

- ▶ The Draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategy has been released for public consultation
- ▶ Public consultation meeting is being held this Thursday, September 20<sup>th</sup>, 2007 to discuss directions set out in the Strategy.
- ▶ Written submissions will be received until October 12<sup>th</sup>
- ▶ Feedback received through the consultation process will help to guide and shape the final Strategy expected to go to the Housing Committee and Board later this fall.

# Concluding Comments

- ▶ We recognize that it will take each of us, in all of our communities, working together to ensure that there is an adequate supply of housing to respond to the full range of incomes and needs across the region.
- ▶ We appreciate the effort and leadership which Bowen Island Council has demonstrated.