

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Increasing affordable, accessible housing

WHAT ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

Housing is an integral part of a socially sustainable community, touching on health, the economy, and the environment. In fact, the World Health Organization calls it a key social determinant of health. Good housing provides a foundation for healthy communities, offering stability that enables people to work, play, get educated, form relationships, nurture children and to participate as citizens.

A range of housing types that can accommodate people of different ages, life stages, incomes and abilities is a fundamental element of a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable community. As Prince George grows and its residents age, the city's role will be to ensure that its housing supply matches those needs.

WHY IS THIS ACTION IMPORTANT?

Inadequate, unaffordable or unsuitable housing can present challenges for achieving healthy, sustainable communities. Like many other communities, Prince George is facing a housing challenge due to a number of factors:

- An aging population and an aging housing stock can make access to and getting around in the home hard for people with mobility limitations.
- Sales prices for single-family homes have risen significantly, making it difficult for young

families to afford this traditional home.

- Low-income renters have difficulty finding adequate, affordable housing. We have seen a net loss of 145 rental units between 2001 and 2006.
- Like elsewhere, homelessness has become a sad reality in Prince George. Caused by a myriad of factors, affordable, adequate housing is often a critical step in addressing this serious issue.

WHAT MYPG GOALS ARE WE MEETING?

- Offering **accessible, affordable and safe housing** for all, and eliminating homelessness.
- An **equitable community**, where people of all backgrounds can meet their needs and improve their quality of life.
- A **safe community**, creating an environment where all citizens feel safe.

HOW CAN THE CITY IMPLEMENT THIS ACTION?

The city can influence the supply and nature of the housing stock through its land use policies and also measures aimed at addressing affordability, adequacy and accessibility. At the same, the city will continue to call on senior levels of government to play an important role in funding affordable and supportive housing.



OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN

September 2010 – Priority Directions

CITY IMPLEMENTATION CONT'D...

The OCP will include measures designed to:

- (a) support development of a full range of housing types and tenures so that people of all ages, income levels and abilities have housing choices throughout the community;
- (b) support the development of new affordable housing along the continuum and to preserve existing affordable housing;
- (c) support maintenance, repairs and energy upgrades in the city's rental stock as it ages;
- (d) incorporate visitable or adaptable features in new housing;
- (e) encourage rehabilitation of existing housing to accommodate people with mobility challenges and to enable seniors to age in place; and
- (f) work with partners to eliminate homelessness.

Some important examples include:

- a housing needs assessment and an affordable housing strategy with clear priorities to guide future City actions;
- pilot/demonstration projects that illustrate new affordable housing forms or tenures;
- partnerships with community groups and senior levels of government to facilitate new non-market affordable housing;
- a standards of maintenance bylaw to enforce basic levels of maintenance for rental accommodation;
- permitting non-market and special needs housing to be located in all residential areas, subject to siting criteria; and
- voluntary or mandatory guidelines for visitable housing.

HOW WILL THIS AFFECT ME?

Communities that provide a diverse range of housing ensure that the average worker can afford to live there, that students can find suitable and affordable housing options in locations that meet their needs, that seniors can continue to live at home in small, well maintained units close to services, and that the homeless and low income residents are housed in decent affordable housing. Over time, residents may expect to see more diverse forms of housing and this may mean small changes to their neighbourhood.

Share your thoughts and ideas.

Well developed policy directions will help Prince George meet its goals for a healthy future for all citizens.

- Would you add anything to this policy direction?
- Would you change or remove anything?

Contact us at mypg@city.pg.bc.ca



For more information: Long Range Planning
City of Prince George, mypg@city.pg.bc.ca, (250) 561-7731

