

AFFORDABLE HOUSING PLAN

PROPOSED BY – COUNCILLOR CAVENS

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DESCRIPTION OF INITIATIVE

This initiative aims to update and document Esquimalt's non-market housing incentives program and develop a comprehensive action plan to attract funding for affordable housing. By leveraging Provincial, Federal, and private resources, the goal is to increase the supply of below-market rental and supportive housing units in alignment with recently set housing targets. The initiative will describe policy tools to be used by Development Services staff to encourage non-market housing in new developments and establish a strategic plan to secure additional support from higher levels of government and non-profit housing providers.

BACKGROUND

A project called “Non-Market Housing Incentives and Targets Program” is included in the Council Priorities Plan and is currently scheduled to be re-assessed by Council in 2024.

BC has recently set new housing targets, showing that Esquimalt is ahead of others in meeting market housing needs for the next 5-20 years. However, the targets also include [non-binding guidelines](#) for affordable housing, with a goal of 267 affordable rental units and 16 supportive housing units. Meeting these affordable housing targets will be more challenging.

Although Council often hears about the difficulties faced by middle- and lower-income residents in Esquimalt, the recently released [Housing Needs Assessment Tool](#) provides specific 5- and 20-year targets for households in severe housing need and at risk of homelessness to help mitigate the effects of the housing market on vulnerable households.

Esquimalt cannot fund the construction of these units alone, so it is essential to leverage Provincial, Federal, and private funding. While we have had some success in securing below-market units through density increase requests from developers, the results have been inconsistent and, at the current pace, unlikely to meet the targets—or the broader need—for below-market housing.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- An updated non-market housing incentives program or policy that outlines the tools available to development services staff for encouraging or requiring non-market housing

in new market developments. This should include projected uptake and expected units over the next 5 years.

- An action plan to attract funding from Provincial and Federal governments and non-profit housing providers to support non-market housing in Esquimalt. This should include an analysis of the Township's plans and regulations to ensure Esquimalt is attractive to non-profit housing providers, as well as a strategy for council to lobby for increased support from other levels of government.

ANTICIPATED SCOPE

To be determined – outline was activities/deliverables/work is likely to be required to achieve the desired objective