

Affordable Housing



Shaping
Our Future



Regional Growth Strategy

The **Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)** includes policies aimed at supporting affordable housing within locations that are accessible to schools, services, leisure activities and retail. These policies encourage housing options in the region for seniors, youth, those with special needs, those with moderate or low incomes, and the homeless.

Fast Facts

Growth Management & Housing Supply

The growth management policies in the RGS are intended to increase the supply and choice of housing located in designated growth centres. Focusing the supply of housing in locations that encourage walkability within mixed use neighbourhoods creates efficiencies in the provision of both housing and transportation.

Housing for People at Risk

People who rely solely on income or disability assistance have the least housing choice. The maximum shelter allowance for a single person is \$375 and for a household of four people \$700. Comparatively, the average rent of a one bedroom unit is about \$614 and for a two bedroom unit \$750. About 5.6% of the region's population is estimated to be on income assistance.ⁱ

Selection for Low Income Families with Children

Finding affordable rental housing with two or more bedrooms close to schools and services is very difficult for families with children. Households with young children are generally viewed as poorer prospective tenants for market rental housing than individuals or couples without children, and often have to rely on substandard housing. Currently there are long wait lists for the 326 non-market family housing units in the region.ⁱ

Rising Housing Costs for Homeowners

Housing prices in the region have increased faster than income for many homeowners, forcing families to cut back on expenditures in recreation, education, nutrition and uninsured health services in order to meet rising mortgage costs. Increased housing costs also aggravate urban sprawl by forcing families to seek cheaper housing in more remote locations with longer commutes.ⁱ

Facilitate the Provision of Affordable Housing



Appropriate Adequate Attainable Adaptable

Benefits

- Improving the standard and choice of housing located near transit, shops, social networks and support services for low income households.
- Resolving health and safety related issues for individuals and families who reside in substandard housing in either rural or urban areas.
- Providing housing options for low income workers who currently cannot afford conventional housing in the region.
- Ensuring that people can continue to live within their community as they age and have easy access to supportive services.
- Increasing the amount of income available for other necessities or leisure activities as less money is required for rent or mortgage payments and transportation (when housing locations reduce the need to use private vehicles).

Social Equity
Health & Safety
Economic Prosperity

ⁱ City Spaces. Housing Needs Overview for the Regional District of Nanaimo, 2009.

ⁱⁱ Vancouver Island Health Authority. Live, Work and Play: A review of environmental determinants of health in the Vancouver Island Health Authority, 2008