

REPORT TO: Council
REPORT FROM: Community Planning and Sustainability
PRESENTED: April 11, 2023
SUBJECT: 2023 District of Squamish Housing Needs Report

FOR: Committee of the Whole

Recommendation:

That the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council approve the following resolutions:

THAT Council receive the 2023 District of Squamish Housing Needs Report from Community Planning dated April 11, 2023 for information.

1. Objective:

To present the 2023 District of Squamish Housing Needs Report to Council for information.

2. Background:

Division 22 of the *Local Government Act* requires a local government to prepare a housing needs report. The Division outlines how the reports must be prepared, prescribes the collection of housing information and the content of the report and when and how the report must be received. Local governments are required to complete the reports every five years. The District completed the previous [District of Squamish Community Housing Needs Assessment](#) in July 2018. The 2018 housing needs assessment satisfied the requirement to have a report in place by April 2022, but was not prepared in accordance with the legislation, as it was completed prior to the legislation coming into effect in 2019. Staff have retained City Spaces Consulting to complete an updated report as required by the legislation.

3. Project Information:

In 2022, the District retained City Spaces Consulting to complete a Housing Needs Report in accordance with provincial legislation. This will be the District's first housing needs report that has been prepared as per the legislation and builds on previous studies and engagement initiatives related to housing completed in Squamish over the past ten years. The report is intended to provide an understanding of current and anticipated housing needs in Squamish.

Report Findings

Key findings identified in the report are included in the Executive Summary and are outlined below.

- The annual growth rate in Squamish is close to three times the provincial average. The high growth population projection for Squamish could see approximately 24,000 new residents by 2036.
- By 2031, 6,840 additional housing units will be needed to maintain income and housing diversity.

- 43% of these units will need to be 3+ bedrooms.
- 24% will need to serve households earning less than \$45,000 per year.

	Income Group					Total
	Very Low <\$19,999	Low \$20,000- \$44,999	Moderate \$45,000- \$69,999	Average \$70,000- \$104,999	High >\$105,000	
Monthly Affordable Housing Cost	\$500	\$1,125	\$1,750	\$2,625	>\$2,625	-
1-Bedroom	270	580	375	240	100	1,565 (23%)
2-Bedroom	100	425	480	550	770	2,325 (34%)
3+ Bedroom	40	110	185	330	530	1,195 (17%)
4+ Bedroom	20	95	210	340	1,090	1,755 (26%)
Total	430 (6%)	1,210 (18%)	1,250 (18%)	1,460 (21%)	2,490 (36%)	6,840

Figure 1. Housing Unit Needs Estimates 2021-2031 District of Squamish

- Households earning more than \$150,000 per year have doubled from 10% in 2016 to 21% in 2021.
- There is a need for larger, ground oriented family-friendly affordable rental units. Rental vacancy rates remain below 1% and renter households have limited choice.
- The proportion of renters living in overcrowded or unaffordable housing has increased over the last five years.
- Housing costs exceed what most low- and moderate-income households can afford. As of January 2023, 25% of households spend more than 30% of their income on housing.
 - Average apartment - \$581,728 (January 2023)
 - Average 1-bedroom purpose-built rental unit - \$1,421 (October 2022).
- There is a growing need for seniors housing with varying levels of supports including assisted living and long-term care options. There are limited seniors housing options in the community; Westwinds has waitlists in place.
- There is a lack of new townhouse development in Squamish. Apart from the Garibaldi Springs development, there has been very limited new townhouse construction in recent years.
- Housing is needed with higher levels of supports for complex mental health and substance use challenges.
- The proportion of households in core housing need declined between 2016 and 2021, from 7.2% to 6.4%, meaning fewer people are living in core housing need. A household is said to be in ‘core housing need’ if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy,

affordability or suitability measurements and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three housing standards)The need for non-market housing remains. As of March 2022, 84 applicants are on BC Housing’s waitlist for non-market housing.

Projected Housing Needs vs. Historical Housing Creation

The Housing Needs Report projects that 6,840 additional housing units will be required by 2031 to maintain income and housing diversity. Distributed evenly, 685 units will need to be completed each year between 2021 and 2031. Of these, 367 units per year will need to have three or more bedrooms and 205 units per year will need to serve households earning less than \$45,000 per year (low- and very low-income groups).

According to census figures, between 2016 and 2021, an average of 386 dwelling units were created each year.

Current Zoning Capacity

As context for understanding the projected housing needs outlined in the Housing Needs Assessment, staff have completed a high-level review of dwelling units currently permitted under existing zoning on a number of greenfield and brownfield properties which have been the subject of development applications in recent years. These numbers are presented in Table 1. While properties included in Table 1 have adopted zoning that allows for residential development, these properties are in a variety of stages; construction of these units will span years, with many units not expected in the eight-year timeframe of the Housing Unit Needs Estimates.

Area	Apartment	Townhouse	Duplex	Detached
Downtown/Oceanfront/Waterfront	3160	634		
Brennan Park Area	159	107		
University Area	463	114		
Northyards	270	50		
Brackendale	36	95		35
Tantalus Road Area	37	300		
Loggers East Plan Area	247	44	20	
Total	4372	1344	20	35

Table 1. Permitted Dwelling Units by zoning for Greenfield and Brownfield Properties

A number of lands within the Growth Management Boundary are not included in Table 1. These lands represent potential residential development opportunities that could contribute to Squamish housing stock; however, for these properties there is either uncertainty about expected unit numbers that would be created, or a significant contribution of units from this supply is not expected within the eight-year timeframe addressed by the Housing Needs Assessment. Examples of lands not included in Table 1 are outlined below:

- 40480 Tantalus Road
- 37947 Cleveland Avenue (August Jack)

- Ross Road residential development associated with Cheekeye Fan Mitigation
- North Crumpit
- Gateway Mixed Use Development between Bailey Street and Buckley Avenue
- Residential development supported in the Loggers East Neighbourhood Plan that has not completed rezoning
- Newport Ridge (40 ha parcel east of Garibaldi Springs)
- Galbraith log sort lands along Mamquam Blind Channel on Oceanfront Peninsula
- Parcel A (24 ha parcel north of Quest University)

In addition, Table 1 does not account for existing infill opportunities throughout the community. Examples include the development of secondary suites and accessory dwelling units under current zoning on all RS-1 and RS-2 land, and the redevelopment of single-family homes to duplex homes on all RS-2 properties, which are extensive to the west of Highway 99. Table 1 also does not account for infill opportunities that may be supported through neighbourhood planning processes for existing areas of the community. Finally, Table 1 does not account for potential multi family units that could be established on developed commercial properties where current zoning permits apartments above retail space; examples include numerous properties in downtown Squamish with C-4 zoning that are currently only built as single-story retail space.

4. **Implications:**

a. **Budget:**

No immediate impact on budget.

b. **Organizational Impact:**

No immediate organizational impact.

c. **Policy:**

The Housing Needs Report aligns with a number of existing objectives and policies in Section 12 Diverse + Affordable Housing of the OCP. However, some of these policies may need to be revisited or strengthened in order to meet the housing needs identified in the report.

d. **Bylaws:**

District of Squamish Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 2500, 2017

District of Squamish Zoning Bylaw No. 2200, 2011

5. **Strategic Plan**

Housing Affordability and Diversity

The Housing Needs Report is specifically aligned with the Strategic Plan of housing affordability and diversity. The report provides a quantified approach to understand the current housing needs within Squamish and outlines needs for dwelling units by bedroom numbers needed in

the next eight years; and breaks down those units by the costs at which would they be affordable to community members.

6. Engagement:

CitySpaces staff conducted stakeholder engagement as part of the process to develop the Housing Needs Assessment Report. These activities are outlined below.

- A virtual focus group was held with non-profit organizations and community societies in November 2022. Attendees included staff from the Squamish Community Housing Society, the Squamish Senior Living Society, BC Housing, Howe Sound Women’s Centre, Sea to Sky Community Services Society, and Squamish Helping Hands Society.
- Two additional virtual interviews were conducted with staff from Hi’yám̓ ta Skwxwú7mesh Housing Society and staff from the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District.
- A virtual meeting was conducted in February 2023 with developers and builders about the current market conditions, housing gaps and related issues.

7. Next Implementation Steps:

Should Council receive the Housing Needs Report, Staff will publish the report on the District of Squamish website, as required by the legislation. Needs Assessment results will be considered in Neighbourhood Planning context and may eventually require the development of a Housing Strategy.

8. Attachments:

1. District of Squamish Housing Needs Report

9. Alternatives to Staff Recommendation:

THAT the Committee of the Whole direct Staff to bring the District of Squamish Housing Needs Report back to a future Committee of the Whole meeting.

10. Staff Review

Prepared By:

Bryan Daly, Planner
Matt Gunn, Planner

Reviewed By:

Jonas Velaniskis, Director of Community Planning
Robin Arthurs, General Manager of Corporate Services
Rolland Russell, Acting General Manager of Financial Services

CAO Recommendation:

That the recommendation of the Community Planning Department be approved.

Linda Glenday, CAO