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## NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Municipal Affairs

### **Province supports communities to assess housing needs**

VICTORIA – Six B.C. communities will benefit from provincial funding that supports local governments to report on their community housing needs so they can deliver more diverse and affordable homes.

“Now more than ever, people need safe and affordable housing,” said Josie Osborne, Minister of Municipal Affairs. “Local governments and First Nations know their communities best, and they are essential partners in addressing the housing crisis. This funding enables them to determine specifically the kind of homes people in their regions need, so they can use this information to support their planning and decision-making. Understanding the specific housing needs in communities is part of working together to continue to build and support healthy and resilient communities throughout B.C., now and into the future.”

In 2018, the Province committed \$5 million over three years (2019-21) under the Housing Needs Report Program to help local governments and modern Treaty Nations collect and analyze housing-related data from their communities. The data includes population, household income, significant economic sectors and current and anticipated housing units. Funding recipients are from the fourth intake of the program, which is administered by the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM).

“The lack of affordable housing and the need for additional supportive housing options are common to many B.C. communities, but the specific needs vary considerably from one place to the next,” said Brian Frenkel, president, UBCM. “The Housing Needs Report Program is designed to strengthen the data available to inform local decision-making to ensure that new developments, whether market-based or supportive, address the needs of communities today and tomorrow. I am very pleased to see the funding that is being delivered to these communities and its potential to bring local housing needs into greater focus.”

Under the housing needs report legislation, all local governments must produce their first housing needs report by April 2022 and every five years after. Housing needs reports assist communities to better understand their current and future housing needs, and provide stakeholders, developers and other agencies with access to better information for making housing investment decisions.

The communities receiving grants totalling nearly \$185,000 are:

- Nanaimo (\$50,000);
- Radium Hot Springs (\$15,000);
- Strathcona Regional District, including four electoral areas (\$60,000);
- Tumbler Ridge (\$14,563);

- Valemount (\$15,000); and
- West Kelowna (\$30,000).

Completed reports are formally received by local councils and boards and made available online to anyone seeking information about local housing needs. Local governments are required to consider their most recent housing needs report when developing new official community plans or regional growth strategies.

#### **Quotes:**

##### **Leonard Krog, mayor, City of Nanaimo –**

“On behalf of Nanaimo City Council, we are pleased to be receiving provincial support to update our housing needs assessment, which will help us to better understand the impact of the pandemic on our community and to enable a more resilient recovery.”

##### **Brad Unger, chair, Strathcona Regional District –**

“Housing is one of the most central determinants of the health and well-being of communities, and updating housing data is a crucial first step to ensure local governments can respond effectively. This much-appreciated funding will enable the Strathcona Regional District to update housing data in all four of our electoral areas, improving our understanding and supporting our ongoing efforts to address housing concerns throughout the region.”

##### **Clara Reinhardt, mayor, Village of Radium Hot Springs –**

“The Village of Radium Hot Springs is eager to move forward with the housing needs assessment with this funding. There have been marked changes in the housing market over the last 18 months, and we are eager to have the most current information to assist us with making decisions in the future.”

#### **Quick Facts:**

- More than 90% of local governments have successfully applied for housing needs report grants or developed housing needs reports without provincial funding.
- Since the Housing Needs Report Program started, 144 local governments and seven modern Treaty Nations have received funding to help them assess their communities’ housing needs.
- Housing needs reports are another tool to help the Province work with local governments and other partners to build 114,000 new affordable homes throughout B.C. by 2028.
- Successful applicants receive 50% of the grant funding once approved and the remaining 50% when they complete their final reporting to UBCM.

#### **Learn More:**

Housing needs reports requirements and supporting data and guidance:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/housing-tenancy/local-governments-and-housing/policy-and-planning-tools-for-housing/housing-needs-reports>

For application information on provincial funding administered by UBCM, visit:

<https://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/housing-needs-report-program.html>

See examples of completed housing needs reports: [http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/8-13\\_HNR.pdf](http://news.gov.bc.ca/files/8-13_HNR.pdf)

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