

A HOUSING ACTION PLAN FOR WEST VANCOUVER

Supporting Housing Diversity and Affordability



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Geri Boyle, Manager of Community Planning

Stephen Mikicich, Sr. Community Planner

Claudia Freire, Planning Analyst

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1.0 OVERVIEW

A Housing Action Plan provides a local government framework for developing and implementing strategies to address defined housing issues in the community. West Vancouver's Housing Action Plan builds on the work undertaken during the 2004 Official Community Plan (OCP) update and the 2007-2008 Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing. The Plan will be used to:

- continue the 'dialogue' on housing issues and opportunities in the community;
- clarify West Vancouver's goals for housing diversity and affordability; and
- identify possible local government actions to address these goals and establish priorities for the District.

The Housing Action Plan outlines the existing policy framework for housing in West Vancouver, the key housing 'gaps' based on population and demographic trends and the Community Dialogue discussions, and the District's current practices related to housing. Finally, it recommends five actions for moving forward on housing issues, as follows:

1. Continue established practices for supporting development of seniors' and rental housing, accessible/adaptable housing units, and variations in unit size in new developments;
2. Consider coach houses following an informed community discussion;
3. Identify, consider and engage the community in a discussion of opportunities to retain and add purpose-built rental housing;
4. Strengthen OCP Policies on housing diversity to provide a framework for consideration of innovative housing proposals; and
5. Monitor and report annually on the Housing Action Plan.

2.0 THE POLICY CONTEXT FOR HOUSING IN WEST VANCOUVER

2.1 Official Community Plan

West Vancouver residents recognize the challenges of managing future change and meeting emerging housing needs, while preserving the highly valued character of West Vancouver's existing neighbourhoods.

During West Vancouver's Official Community Plan (OCP) review process (2001-2004), residents identified 'housing' as the most important issue for the community. Key concerns included limited housing choice and affordability – particularly for seniors, young adults, and young families. Differing ideas about the underlying issues and how they should be addressed emerged from the OCP review discussion. Consequently, the OCP includes focused and limited policies related to housing choice and affordability; and affirmed the need for more work to understand housing issues and potential actions.

The OCP is founded on eight planning principles for building a sustainable community. Principle #3 is to: *“provide for a diversity of housing types to accommodate a balanced and diverse population in terms of age, ability, income, and household type.”* Key OCP housing policies are as follows:

- Policy H 1 Engage in further dialogue at both a community and local neighbourhood level to develop a full understanding of community trends, desires and related housing needs and potential policies for addressing them.*
- Policy H 3 (This policy) recognizes that opportunities occur in limited site-specific situations where a housing need may be addressed in a manner that is consistent with the Principles of the OCP. This Plan specifies that applications for such site-specific zoning or OCP amendments within a single-family area should apply in limited circumstances and be subject to Council's Public Involvement Policy and defined criteria.*
- Policy H 6 Encourage a variety of housing types in the future neighbourhoods in the Upper Lands.*

Policy H8 Support the provision of adaptable design in a variety of housing forms.

- *Consider establishment of adaptable design guidelines.*
- *Consider encouraging adaptable design through floor area bonuses.*

Policy H 9 Support the provision of rental housing.

- *Do not support conversion of rental apartments to strata in buildings greater than four units.*
- *Explore mechanisms for recognizing secondary suites.*
- *Consider amenity zoning (bonuses) for rental housing.*

Policy H 10 Support the provision of greater housing options for the District's growing senior population.

- *Examine the potential role of secondary suites in providing additional housing options for seniors.*
- *Support the development of home service and assistance programs to allow seniors to remain in their existing homes and neighbourhoods.*
- *Support the creation of new senior housing in areas with convenient access to services and transit.*

To improve community understanding about housing issues and possible actions, the District undertook two initiatives: (1) the preparation of a series of background reports on demographic and housing trends in West Vancouver, now entitled "Facts and Stats: Our Community by the Numbers"; and (2) a comprehensive public engagement program, called the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing.

2.2 The 'Community Dialogue'

The Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing was developed and implemented by District staff and a citizens' working group, and was undertaken over 15 months during 2007-2008. This was a process involving hundreds of West Vancouver residents talking to each other about the future of their neighbourhoods, and issues related to housing choice and affordability. The Community Dialogue provided a forum for engaging the community in developing its own policy directions for housing and neighbourhood character.

Through this process, the District heard that more diverse housing options are needed for:

- Older residents wishing to downsize into smaller, more manageable housing that will allow them to age in place in their own neighbourhoods;
- Younger families and young adults wishing to establish themselves in the community;
- Lower income residents wishing to find more affordable housing options, including rental housing;
- People requiring accessible/adaptable housing, with special features to accommodate their unique requirements; and
- People requiring assisted living and other support to remain in the community.



While not official District policy, the final report and recommendations of the Community Dialogue Working Group (September 2008) provided direction for subsequent District housing initiatives, and new development projects including:

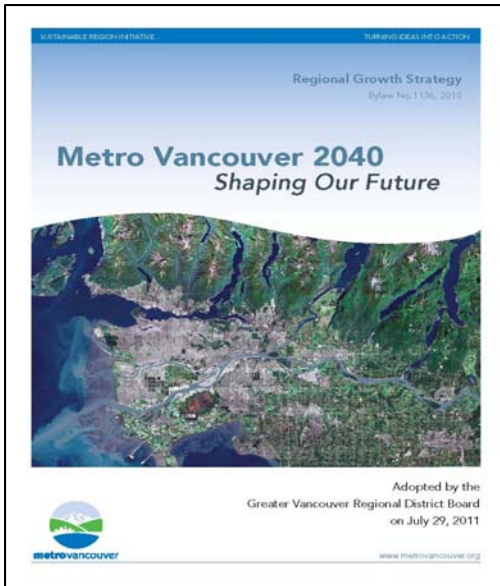
- the examination of possible new ground-oriented housing prototypes through a District-led Housing Pilot Program (per new OCP Policy H 4.1¹);
- the legalization of secondary suites;
- designation of an ‘infill housing’ block at 21st Street and Esquimalt Avenue; and
- the Rodgers Creek development.

Six of the Working Group’s recommendations pertain specifically to housing choice and affordability:

#	Recommendation
3.1	Amend the OCP, as may be required, to enable consideration of new housing types to meet the current and future needs of West Vancouver residents.
3.2	Develop an implementation program for allowing secondary suites, which would: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ identify issues around suites; ▪ recommend a process and criteria for legalizing suites; and ▪ provide for amendments to zoning and other bylaws to allow secondary suites.
3.3	Develop policies and criteria to determine under which conditions ‘infill’ housing would be suitable.
3.4	Consider a demonstration program to enable introduction of new housing types on a limited basis, in advance of new housing policies and regulatory tools being formally adopted. This process would enable ideas and concepts for new housing types to be explored through a community planning and design process that would include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ study of various housing types and tenures using examples from other communities ▪ community design workshops ▪ possible ‘pilot projects’
3.5	Develop a strategy to increase the supply of a range of relatively more affordable market and non-market housing alternative
3.6	Examine opportunities for using surplus District-owned lands to address identified housing gaps in the community, particularly limited housing choice and affordability

¹ OCP Policy H 4.1 was adopted in July 2010.

2.3 Metro Vancouver’s Regional Growth Strategy



Concurrent with West Vancouver’s efforts to address local housing issues, Metro Vancouver and its member municipalities have increasingly examined what roles they can play to address housing diversity and affordability challenges, both today and in the future. This work evolved into a specific strategy in the new Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)²:

“Provide diverse and affordable housing choices”. (RGS Strategy 4.1)

Metro Vancouver’s Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) articulates the respective roles of all four levels of government (i.e., federal, provincial, regional, and municipal) in providing diverse and affordable housing choices within local communities. Federal and Provincial governments and their agencies are called upon to:

- Stimulate private sector investment in rental housing;
- Provide capital funding for low and moderate income housing; and
- Provide capital and operating funding for the development of supportive and transitional housing units.

The RGS identifies a diverse mix of housing types as a fundamental component of ‘complete communities’. This would include a mix of housing types and tenures that respond to an aging population, changing family and household characteristics, and the full range of household incomes and needs across the region.

Under RGS Strategy 4.1, member municipalities are required to prepare and implement a Housing Action Plan, which is to:

- assess local housing market conditions;

² Metro Vancouver’s Regional Growth Strategy was adopted by the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board on July 29, 2011.

- identify housing priorities;
- identify possible implementation measures to address local housing issues within the jurisdiction and financial capability of the municipality;
- identify possible actions to encourage the supply of new rental housing and where appropriate mitigate or limit the loss of the existing rental housing stock; and
- identify opportunities to participate with other levels of government to secure additional affordable housing to meet housing needs across the affordable housing continuum.

West Vancouver's Housing Action Plan builds on the work undertaken during the 2004 OCP update and the Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing, and will be used to:

- continue the 'dialogue' on housing issues and opportunities in the community;
- clarify West Vancouver's goals for housing diversity and affordability; and
- identify possible local government actions to address these goals and establish priorities for the District.

3.0 UNDERSTANDING WEST VANCOUVER

Prior to the 1950s, most homes built in West Vancouver were single-detached dwellings, which reflected a community largely comprised of traditional families living in a low-density, suburban context. Since that time, West Vancouver's population profile has become more diverse, and is characterized by a greater proportion of seniors, and a trend towards smaller household size.

An informed discussion on housing issues and opportunities in West Vancouver requires a thorough understanding of how the community has changed, and how it will continue to change based on key population and housing trends. This section provides a summary of these trends from the following sources:

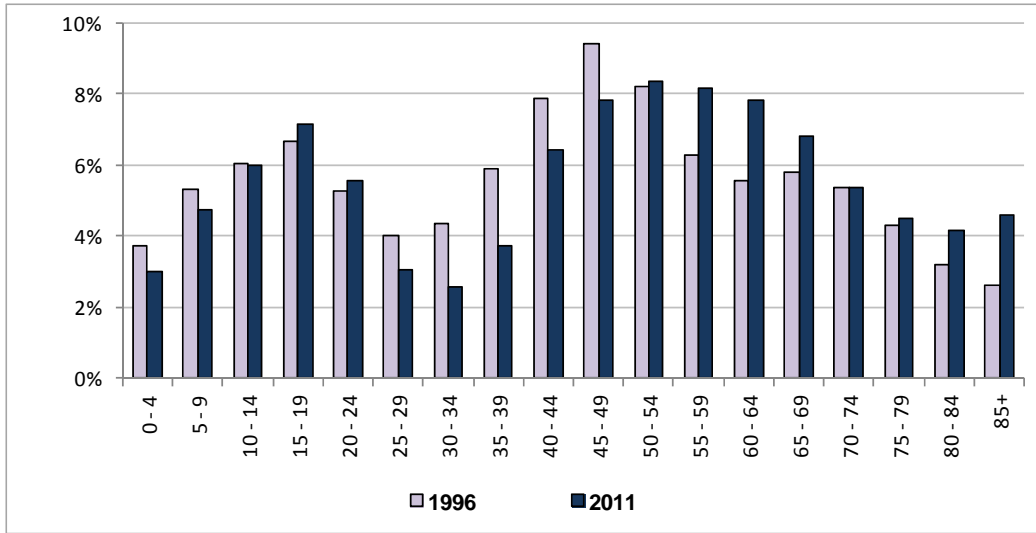
- "Facts and Stats: Our Community by the Numbers", a comprehensive demographic profile of West Vancouver;
- Metro Vancouver's "Housing Data Book" and "Regional Growth Strategy"; and
- "Metro Vancouver's Purpose Built Rental Housing: Inventory and Risk Analysis" (Coriolis Consulting Corp., April 2012).

3.1 Population

Compared to several decades ago, West Vancouver has a greater proportion of older residents, and a smaller proportion of young and middle age adults. This is also reflected in the median³ age of West Vancouver residents. In 2006, the median age was 48 and in 2011 the median age was 50; in contrast to Metro Vancouver with a median age of 40 in both 2006 and 2011.

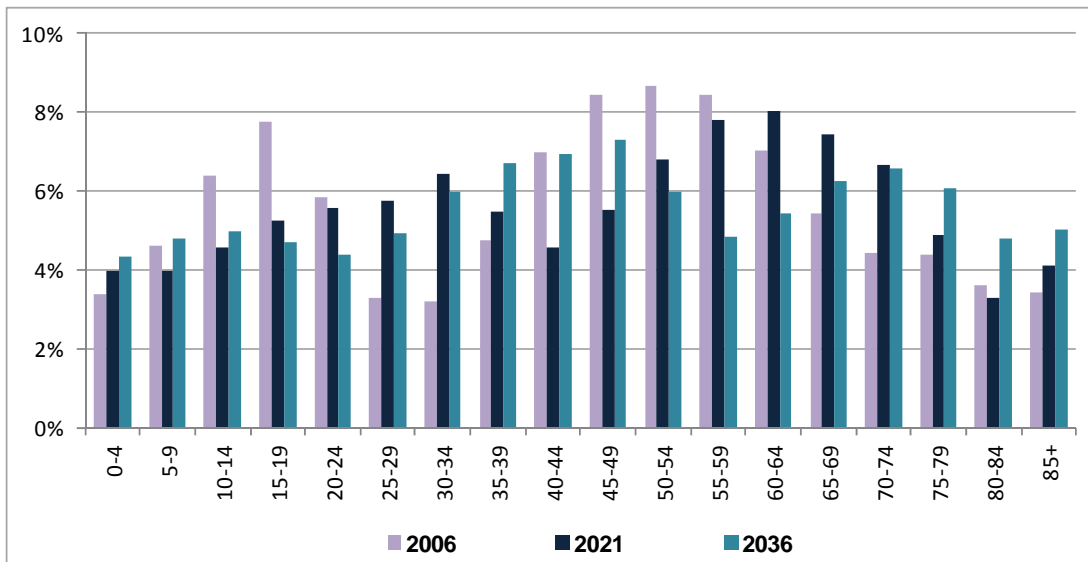
³ Median age is the point at which half the population is over that age and half is below.

Population Age Distribution in West Vancouver in 1996 and 2011



Census data also tells us that, as of 2011, 25% of West Vancouver residents (10,865 people) were age 65 or older, compared to 13% in Metro Vancouver.

Projected Population Age Distribution in the West Vancouver Local Health Area⁴



⁴ The West Vancouver Local Health Area (WVLHA) includes Bowen Island, Lions Bay and Capilano 5 First Nations Reserve. West Vancouver Municipality represents approximately 85% of the total WVLHA population.

Population projections for the West Vancouver Local Health Area show the following trends over the period 2006 to 2036:

- a decline in the proportion of youth age 10-24
- an increase in the proportion of young adults age 25-39
- a decline in the proportion of middle age adults age 45-64
- continued increase in the proportion of seniors age 65+

The growing proportion of older residents in the community has significant implications for health and social services, recreation, transportation planning, and housing. Access to well-located, low-maintenance, and adaptable/accessible housing that is convenient to community support networks is important to the overall well being and quality of life for many of these residents.

3.2 Housing Mix

In the 1950's, West Vancouver emerged from a seaside community of summer homes to a growing, residential community characterized by single-detached houses interspersed with parks and schools. During this period of growth, family size and composition were changing; and an 'urbanization' trend occurring in Vancouver and surrounding communities. These trends influenced the 1958 OCP policy to allow high-rise apartments in a 50 acre area surrounding the Ambleside commercial centre.

The apartment zoning came into effect in 1959, and close to 1200 new apartment units were built in the 1960's. This period also saw a significant increase in the number of single detached houses.

In the 1970's, apartment construction slowed, but approximately 700 units were added during this decade. This was partly due to a reduction in available development sites as well as the cessation of some key federal government rental incentive programs. At the same time, population shifts were occurring, such as decreasing family and household size and shifts in age distribution to fewer school age children and an increasing number of seniors.

Over the last two decades, there has been some change to the distribution of housing by type in West Vancouver. In 1991, the housing mix was 65% single-

detached, 7% duplex/townhouse and 28% apartments; in 2011, the distribution changed to 58% single detached, 13% duplex/townhouse⁵ and 29% apartments. Nevertheless, the basic housing choice has been between a detached house on its own fee simple lot or an apartment in a multi-family building. There are few options in between, particularly ground-oriented housing alternatives.

West Vancouver Housing by Structure Type, 1991, 2001, 2006, 2011

	1991	2001	2006	2011
All dwellings	15,130	16,340	16,840	17,075
Single-detached house	9,905	10,290	9,725 ⁵	9,840
Duplex or house with suite	770	990	1,905 ⁵	1,935
Townhouse	235	395	330	360
Apartment, less than five storeys	1,020	1,325	1,430	1,495
Apartment, five or more storeys	3,205	3,340	3,445	3,445

3.3 The Housing Continuum

The housing continuum is a concept used to describe and categorize different types of housing and related services. On the non-market end of the continuum are emergency services and transitional housing, which often require the most public funding, moving towards supportive and subsidized housing options in the middle of the continuum, and then towards independent housing options, where housing is provided by the private market. The continuum implicitly suggests that residents should have the opportunity to move across the continuum and find the housing that is most appropriate and best suited to their needs and circumstances.

Increasing the supply and diversity at the higher affordable market end of the continuum plays an important role in relieving pressure on low cost rental and subsidized housing, and contributes to overall housing diversity in a community.

⁵ This change is due in part to changes in Statistics Canada classifications of dwellings. For the 2006 Census, the Structural Type of Dwelling variable was clarified to better identify hard-to-find dwellings such as basement apartments. As a result, structures that may have been classified in previous censuses as a single-detached house because there was no outside sign of a second dwelling unit within the building are more likely to be classified as a duplex in the 2006 and 2011 Census.



In West Vancouver, the housing continuum is represented by:

- 518 non-market seniors-specific units and 32 other non-market housing units (2012 West Vancouver inventory);
- 1,900 purpose-built rental apartments;
- An estimated 1,828 units in the secondary rental market⁶; and
- Based on 2006 Census data, owner occupancy of:
 - 91% of the 9,725 single-detached housing units;
 - 78% of 2,235 ground-oriented multi-family housing units (houses with suites, duplexes and townhouses); and
 - 48% of 4,875 apartments

⁶ The 'secondary' rental market comprises various types of housing that were not specifically built for rental purposes but are being rented out. There are approximately 1,828 secondary rental units in West Vancouver, including: ±926 single-detached houses, ±189 strata units (2009 estimate), and 724 secondary suites (approved as of November 5, 2012).

3.4 Rental Housing

Rental housing in West Vancouver consists of purpose-built rental apartments (the primary rental market) and a secondary rental market comprised of single-detached houses, suites in houses, and rented strata units. This purpose-built rental housing was largely the outcome of a significant rezoning in Ambleside (1959), and federal government incentive programs (1960s-1970s) to support construction of rental housing.



West Vancouver Existing Purpose Built Rental Inventory by Age of Construction

1949 or Older		1950-1959		1960-1969		1970-1979		2007	
Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units	Buildings	Units
1	12	1	4	27	1149	6	699	1	16

In 2011, Metro Vancouver commissioned Coriolis Consulting Corp. to compile an inventory of purpose-built rental housing in the region; and to identify what portion of the rental stock may be at risk⁷ for loss through demolition and redevelopment in six municipalities: Richmond, Surrey, New Westminster, North Vancouver City, North Vancouver District, and West Vancouver. Study findings for West Vancouver indicate that 17% of the total rental stock (309 units in four buildings) is considered currently at risk of loss through redevelopment. This compares to 1.7% (150 units) in New Westminister, 8% (451 units) in Surrey, 23% (1,533 units) in the City of North Vancouver, and 48% (1,078 units) in Richmond⁸.

In general, the study found that land values for development sites in West Vancouver are high, which creates redevelopment pressure on the existing

⁷ 'At risk' in the absence of municipal policies to protect this stock.

⁸ Source: "Metro Vancouver Purpose-Built Rental Housing: Inventory and Risk Analysis", Coriolis Consulting Corp., April 2012.

rental housing stock. However, existing rental buildings are generally built to maximum allowable densities which makes the existing buildings valuable, and redevelopment less attractive. The four West Vancouver apartment properties considered currently at risk in West Vancouver are characterized as follows:

- Waterfront rental buildings – the value of waterfront development sites in West Vancouver is very high and the land value exceeds the value of the potential income stream from these rental buildings.
- Rental buildings that are not fully utilizing permitted density will be increasingly at risk if land values for development sites increase at a faster rate than rental building values (as has been the trend).

3.5 Mobility

Data on local population mobility provides insight into whether housing needs in the community are being met through the available housing options, in terms of type, size, and cost. Between 1996 and 2001:

- 79% of younger (age 15-34) and 86% of older (age 55+) residents moving from West Vancouver to elsewhere on the North Shore and Vancouver moved into attached multi-unit housing;
- 70% of residents age 65+ who moved within West Vancouver moved into multi-unit housing.

This suggests that the availability of multi-unit housing such as duplexes, townhouses, and apartments plays a significant role in determining whether young adults and seniors can be accommodated in the community, or must leave to find the right type of housing elsewhere.

3.6 Housing Affordability

Housing affordability⁹ is a measure of the cost of housing and the ability for households to meet these costs. According to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), housing is affordable if costs do not exceed 30% of a household's gross income.

⁹ Market options are considered “affordable” relative to the typical cost of housing in the community in which they are located.

The discussion of housing affordability in Metro Vancouver municipalities is a challenging one. Given the region’s growing attractiveness as a place to live, a highly constrained supply of land available for development, and high land values in places like West Vancouver, housing is simply not affordable for many residents, particularly in comparison to other Canadian cities.

For West Vancouver, the question is: What can be done to improve relative affordability? Part of the answer lies in increasing the supply and diversity of housing options available along the housing continuum, based on type, size and tenure of housing.

“Core Need” Households

Households in “core need”, as defined by CMHC, occupy housing that is considered inadequate in terms of condition or size, or costs more than 30% of household income; and they are not able to find an affordable alternative.

West Vancouver Households in Core Need, 2006

All Households in Core Need in West Vancouver (DWV)		Renter Households in Core Need		Owner Households in Core Need	
Number	% of Total 15,490 Households in DWV	Number	% of all Renter Households	Number	% of All Owner Households
1,950	13%	1,005	30%	945	8%

Source: Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2011

West Vancouver Households in Core Need and Spending at Least Half (INALH)¹⁰, 2006

All Households in INALH in West Vancouver (DWV)		Renter Households in INALH		Owner Households in INALH	
Number	% of total 15,490 Households in DWV	Number	% of all Renter Households	Number	% of All Owner Households
1,035	7%	585	17%	450	4%

Source: Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2011

According to 2006 Census data, approximately half of the West Vancouver households in core need are seniors’ households (65+ years). Further, 53% of households in core need (1,035 households) are considered to have extremely

¹⁰ INALH refers to households in core need who are also spending at least half of household income on shelter (INALH)

dire housing circumstances because they are spending at least half of household income on shelter; this group is considered to be at risk of homelessness by Metro Vancouver.

Housing Costs

Rental housing costs in West Vancouver are high compared to regional averages, and vacancy rates are among the lowest in Metro Vancouver. The vacancy rate in West Vancouver in 2011 was 0.2% and average monthly rents were \$1,478 (for all bedroom types). This compares to 1.4% and \$1,027 respectively in Metro Vancouver (CMHC, 2011).

Housing sale prices and construction costs have escalated across the region in recent years. This trend has been particularly pronounced in West Vancouver where the median sale price of a single-detached house was \$1,780,000 for the year 2011.

Income Levels and Housing Costs

In 2006, West Vancouver's average household income of \$155,071 was more than twice the regional average of \$73,258. The median household income was \$76,893 compared to \$55,231 for Metro Vancouver. At the same time,

- one in five West Vancouver households has an annual income less than \$30,000 (compared to one in four households in Metro Vancouver);
- 51% of seniors earn less than \$30,000 per year; and
- 12% (or 1,510) of families are lone parent families (2011 Census): 79% of these are lone female parents earning half the income of their male counterparts.
- 1,950 or 13% of households in West Vancouver are in "core need " of housing

West Vancouver's high income levels are consistent with its comparatively high rate of home ownership (77% of homes in West Vancouver are owned compared to 65% in the region); and the lower proportion of owners spending 30% or more of household income on housing payments (24% in West Vancouver compared to 27% in the region). However, there is a disparity between income levels and housing costs among West Vancouver tenant

households, 55% of whom spend more than 30% of their household income on rent.

3.7 Summary: Key Housing Challenges

Housing that is appropriate for people of all ages and incomes is an essential component of complete and sustainable communities. Some of the key challenges that the Housing Action Plan for West Vancouver needs to address in order to support housing diversity and affordability in the future include:

1. Addressing Core Housing Need

Most West Vancouver residents are considered well-housed. Nevertheless, Metro Vancouver 2006 data identifies 1,950 households or 13% of all West Vancouver households as being in core need; and approximately half of these are considered to be at risk of homelessness.

Direct provision of housing for core need households is beyond local government resources and is a responsibility rightly vested with the Federal and Provincial Governments. Nevertheless, West Vancouver can play a role in advocating for affordable housing for its most vulnerable households.

2. Housing for Seniors

While many West Vancouver seniors have had to leave West Vancouver to find housing more suitable to their needs, most seniors would like to remain in their community of many years. In order to do so, they need more appropriate housing options to support aging-in-place, and to adapt to changes in their mobility and overall well-being. Appropriate, affordable housing for seniors would include:

- smaller, more manageable housing units
- adaptable design/accessibility features
- rental housing options
- housing that is well-located, in proximity to family, friends, and community services and amenities

- access to in-house or community-based services to support independent living

3. *Housing for Younger and Middle-Aged Households*

Past housing initiatives in West Vancouver have been focused on the needs of seniors, and related objectives for accessible / adaptable housing. However, if West Vancouver is to achieve a more balanced social mix, it needs to provide the right size and right type of housing for all residents, including: young adults and young families wishing to establish in the community, middle-aged households with or without children, and 'empty-nesters' looking to downsize. Providing a range of affordable, ground-oriented market housing types is central to achieving this.

4. *Aging of the Purpose-Built Rental Housing Stock*

Retaining West Vancouver's aging stock of purpose-built rental apartments is critical, as only one purpose-built non-seniors' rental apartment building (16 units) has been constructed since 1979. The addition of new primary and secondary rental units will be necessary for maintaining a healthy supply of rental housing to support housing choice and relative affordability.

5. *Providing New Housing Opportunities in Existing Neighbourhoods*

A fundamental challenge for West Vancouver is: How to provide more diverse housing options for residents wishing to remain in their neighbourhoods as their housing needs change over time, while preserving the valued characteristics of those neighbourhoods? This will require a thoughtful examination of various ground-oriented 'infill' housing types.

4.0 FROM POLICY TO RECENT ACTIONS

West Vancouver has played a direct role in supporting development of seniors' and rental housing, securing accessible/adaptable housing units, and broadening housing choice through variations in unit size and housing tenure. These actions are described in the following Sections 4.1 through 4.4, both in terms of policy and outcomes.

4.1 Seniors' Housing

Policy H 10 Support the provision of greater housing options for the District's growing senior population.

The District of West Vancouver has supported the creation of seniors' housing opportunities through: land acquisition, site assembly, and long-term lease of District-owned lands. Examples include the following:

- Amblevue Place Housing Cooperative (606-14th Street) – 42 units built in 1987 with a 60 year land lease from West Vancouver
- Kiwanis Manor at Kiwanis Garden Village (959-21st Street) – 76 rental units built in 2003 with West Vancouver providing some of the land, and waiving \$505,835 in municipal development cost charges
- Hollyburn House (2095 Marine Drive) – 66 rental units built in 1987 with West Vancouver selling part of the site solely for the purpose of seniors housing
- Kiwanis (900 block – 21st Street) – the District waived \$818,533 in municipal development cost charges to facilitate two new rental buildings with a net increase of ± 90 units on the Kiwanis site in 2011
- The Westerleigh (725-22nd Street) – 126 rental units (under construction) with a 125 year land lease from West Vancouver

A range of market and non-market housing options exist in West Vancouver for meeting the specific needs of seniors, in terms of housing type, location, services and amenities. These include the following:

Market and Non-Market Housing Options for Seniors

	Project	Units	Type
Independent Living (Non-Market)	Ambleview Place	42	Housing Co-op
	Capilano Towers	72	Subsidized Rental
	Kiwanis	167	“
	Klahanee Park Lodge	56	“
	Lions Libby Lodge	45	“
	Sunnyside Manor	60	“
	Total	442	
Independent Living (Market)	Amica Condominiums	14	Strata
	Lincoln Gardens	56	“
	Tudor Gardens	33	“
	Total	103	
Supportive Housing and Assisted Living (Non-Market and Market)	Kiwanis	76	Subsidized Rental
	Amica at West Vancouver	112	Market Rental
	Hollyburn House	66	Market Rental
	Total	254	

Residential Care Facilities

Facility	Beds
Capilano Care Centre	217
Hollyburn House	36
Inglewood Care Centre	235
West Vancouver Care Centre	75
Total	563

4.2 Accessible / Adaptable Housing

Policy H8 Support the provision of adaptable design in a variety of housing forms.

One quarter of West Vancouver’s population is over 65 years of age, and 15% of the population experiences a physical or health issue which limits their daily activities. A range of housing options that includes adaptable housing, rental, seniors’ specific, and affordable units is essential for ensuring that the overall housing stock supports an age-friendly community.

In addition to seniors’ specific housing, the District has secured adaptable design features (beyond those required by the BC Building Code) in new multi-unit housing developments. Since 2002, this has resulted in 520 new housing

units¹¹, all of which meet the City of Vancouver’s universal accessibility standards, and 430 of which meet the City of North Vancouver’s adaptable design guidelines (either Level 1 or Level 2).

Project	Total Units	# of Adaptable / Accessible Units
2436 Haywood Avenue	9	9
Kiwanis (2105-2165 Haywood Avenue)	141	141
Westerleigh (725 – 22 nd Street)	126	126
2388 – 2396 Marine Drive	15	15
1891 Marine Drive	10	2
6390 Bay Street	16	16
Amica at West Vancouver (659 Clyde Avenue)	112	20
Amica Seniors (605 Clyde Avenue)	14	14
Kiwanis Manor (959 – 21 st Street)	76	76
Water’s Edge (540, 612 and 626 Clyde Avenue)	95	90 (universal) 5 (Level 2)
Dundarave Landing (25 th Street & Marine Drive)	24	6
Evelyn Drive (bounded by Park Royal North, Taylor Way and Keith Road)	349	20% of apartments to be Level 2

4.3 Rental Housing

Policy H 9 Support the provision of rental housing.

- *Do not support conversion of rental apartments to strata in buildings greater than four units.*
- *Explore mechanisms for recognizing secondary suites.*
- *Consider amenity zoning (bonuses) for rental housing.*

Most local governments do not have the financial capability to directly support the development of purpose-built rental housing. However, West Vancouver has utilized the development approval process for larger residential and mixed-use projects to secure a number of new rental housing units; and has enacted measures to protect existing ‘primary’ rental units from

¹¹ This total does not include the Evelyn Drive development (not constructed yet).

being converted to strata ownership, and to increase the supply of 'secondary' rental units. These actions are described below.

4.3.1 Strata Conversion Policy (1990)

Council is the approving authority for conversion of rental housing to strata. Under section 242(6) of the Strata Property Act, Council must consider a number of factors in reviewing an application for conversion of a previously occupied rental building to strata title, including the priority of rental accommodation over privately owned housing in the community. Where the benefits of privately owned housing or other factors outweigh the potential loss of rental units, it would be reasonable for Council to approve a conversion.

In 1990, the District of West Vancouver adopted a Strata Conversion Policy, which is to "not approve future applications for conversion of existing rental apartments, greater than fourplexes, to non-rental ownership." This policy enables Council to evaluate potential benefits of strata conversion on a case-by-case basis where the loss of rental units is relatively small, while maintaining a clear policy position on larger buildings which represent more significant losses. No purpose-built rental apartment buildings have been converted to strata-titled ownership since the Strata Conversion Policy was adopted in 1990.

Buildings of four units or less were specifically excluded from the policy, because the 1990 Planning and Land Use Committee of West Vancouver Council considered the apartment conversion issue to be quantitatively and qualitatively different from that of duplexes. Duplex units, albeit small in number, fill a fairly significant need for existing residents who wish to move out of single-detached houses and find alternate forms of housing (regardless of tenure type). However, in 2004, Council did not approve the proposed strata conversion of a duplex, citing concerns over the potential loss of rental housing.

While the Strata Conversion Policy does not address the need for additional rental housing or the potential loss of rental housing through demolition and redevelopment, it has so far prevented conversion of existing rental units to strata ownership.

4.3.2 New Primary Rental Units

Since the OCP was adopted in 2004, new rental housing has been secured as a community benefit in major development projects. These include:

- Dundarave Landing (Marine Drive and 25th Street) – 4 *townhouse units to be rental for a period of 10 years from issuance of occupancy permit (built 2007)*.
- Water's Edge (425 – 6th Street) – 16 *rental apartment units in perpetuity, in a stand-alone building (built 2007)*.
- Evelyn Drive (Keith Road and Taylor Way) – 30 *rental apartment units in perpetuity (not constructed yet)*.

4.3.3 Secondary Suites Program (2010)

Secondary suites play a key role in the rental housing market, in the absence of new purpose-built rental accommodation. During the Community Dialogue, there was strong public support for the legalization of secondary suites as a means of improving housing choice and affordability in West Vancouver's neighbourhoods, without changing the established 'single-detached' character.

Under the District's Secondary Suites Program, which went into effect on March 1st, 2010, property owners are able to legalize an existing suite or construct a new suite. A 'secondary suite' is a separate residential unit within a house (usually in the basement); maximum size is the lesser of 968 sq.ft. or 40% of the floor area of the house. In March 2011, the program was expanded to allow for secondary suites in non-owner occupied homes.

Implementation of the secondary suites program has been highly successful. As of November 5, 2012, the District has received a total of 859 applications for legal suites, comprised of: 95 new suites and 764 pre-existing suites. 724 suites have been approved to date. While legalization of existing suites does not increase the rental housing supply; as a result of the legalization process, there is greater assurance of the quality and safety of these units, which is a key objective of this program.

4.4 Housing Diversity

OCP Principle #3: “Provide for a diversity of housing types to accommodate a balanced and diverse population in terms of age, ability, income, and household type.”

4.4.1 New and Redeveloping Neighbourhoods

Rodgers Creek Area of the Upper Lands – The zoning for Rodgers Creek provides for a maximum 736 housing units, with a diversity of housing types to be provided as follows:

- No more than 120 single-family and two-family dwelling units;
- At least 100 cluster or townhouse dwelling units;
- 30% of apartments to be less than 93 m² in size; and
- Apartment units with adaptable design elements are to be included

Clyde Avenue Area east of Taylor Way – Under Official Community Plan Policy BF-D 3, a density bonus of up to 0.25 Floor Area Ratio (FAR) may be considered for proposals that provide seniors’ care services, rental accommodations or assisted and congregate care housing. Two projects have been developed under this policy:

- *Amica at West Vancouver* – a seniors market rental supportive housing development of 112 units; and
- *Water’s Edge* – which included 16 rental apartment units in perpetuity in a stand-alone building

Evelyn Drive Area – The Evelyn Drive area is centrally located, with Park Royal Shopping Centre to the south, and Taylor Way to the east. The Evelyn Drive Plan and subsequent rezoning to CD1 was undertaken under Official Community Plan Policy H3. This policy provides *“that opportunities occur in limited site specific situations where a housing need may be addressed in a manner that is consistent with the Principles of the OCP. This Plan specifies that applications for such site-specific zoning or OCP amendments within a single-family area should apply in limited circumstances and be subject to Council’s Public Involvement Policy and defined criteria.”*

The CD1 zoning of the Evelyn Drive Area provides for 56 single-family lots to be redeveloped into 349 housing units, of which at least 210 must be apartments, and 53 must be cluster housing. Further, apartments must have an average size of 93 m², and at least 10% of all apartments must be less than 70 m² in size. Cluster housing units must have an average size of 140 m². In addition, the project will provide for 30 rental units in perpetuity.

4.4.2 Housing Pilot Program

The Community Dialogue confirmed public interest in trying out new ideas through a limited number of 'pilot projects'. From a housing perspective, this meant an exploration of potential new housing prototypes that would meet community demand for improved housing choice and affordability, and be designed to 'fit' with the established character of West Vancouver neighbourhoods.

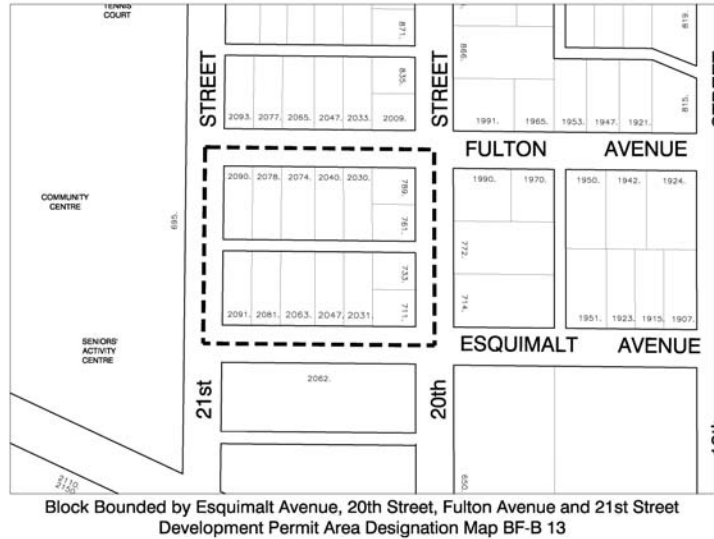
A citizens' working group was appointed by Council in 2009, and charged with the task of developing the objectives for the Housing Pilot Program, and undertaking a 'pilot project' selection process. In December 2009, Council selected two of four proposals recommended by the working group and staff to proceed as pilot projects in 2010. Both of the selected proposals were put forward by property owners wishing to downsize to a smaller house on their own property. One of these projects has since been withdrawn by the property owner; while the other property owner has yet to finalize a development application.

The Housing Pilot Program has not realized a completed project due, in large part, to uncertainty for participating property owners with regard to: servicing and other construction costs, expectations around the cost of 'downsizing', and general uncertainty inherent in the development approval process.

The possibility of future pilot projects should be considered on a case-by-case basis, including whether it may be more feasible to pursue new housing prototypes on surplus District-owned lands, rather than on private property.

4.4.3 Infill Housing Block

On July 4, 2011, Council amended the OCP to establish an 'infill' housing designation (future land use) for the 2000-block Esquimalt Avenue (north side) and Fulton Avenue (south side). This block was also designated a Development Permit Area with corresponding form and character guidelines.



Under OCP Policy BF-B13, Council may consider applications for rezoning of individual properties in this block to enable development of ground-oriented infill housing, not exceeding a density of 0.61 Floor Area Ratio (FAR). Infill housing types may include smaller single-family dwellings, coach houses, duplexes, triplexes and combinations thereof.

The first rezoning in this block, approved in tandem with the OCP amendment, is for a mix of duplexes and coach houses (nine units total) on an assembled site of three existing lots on Esquimalt Avenue. This project, known as "Hollyburn Mews" is under construction as of November 2012. A second rezoning application in this block (for a duplex and coach house) has been received and is currently being reviewed by staff.



Rendering of Proposed Coach Houses at "Hollyburn Mews"

While Policy BF-B13 only applies to this single block, development proposals for individual properties will provide opportunities to: consider various types of infill housing; regulate form and character of new development to ensure 'fit' within a mixed context of single-detached and multi-unit housing; and further engage the public in a discussion of possible new housing prototypes.

5.0 MOVING FORWARD

West Vancouver has jurisdiction over land use and development within its boundaries, and can implement policy objectives for greater housing diversity through the development approval process. On the larger issue of housing affordability, the District can support the efforts of senior government agencies and non-profit organizations through its land use and development policies, and its approval authority. However, direct provision of housing for core need households is beyond local government resources and is a responsibility rightly vested under the Federal and Provincial Governments.

Action 1: Continue established practices for supporting development of seniors' and rental housing, accessible/adaptable housing units, and variations in unit size in new developments

The District of West Vancouver has a long tradition of addressing housing issues in West Vancouver by supporting development of seniors' and rental housing, securing accessible/adaptable housing units, and broadening housing choice through variations in unit size and housing tenure in development projects. It is recommended that these practices be continued as new opportunities arise.

Action 2: Consider coach houses following an informed community discussion

District staff receive regular enquiries from residents of all areas of West Vancouver wishing to build a 'coach house' on their properties. The common reasons provided by residents are that a coach house would provide them the opportunity to:

- downsize into a smaller housing unit on their own property;
- provide self-contained accommodation for an elderly parent, adult child or on-site caregiver;
- design a custom housing unit for a family member with special needs (e.g., limited mobility); or
- create a detached secondary suite to maintain the privacy of the main dwelling unit.

It is anticipated that a small number of coach houses could be realized in West Vancouver through development proposals in the ‘infill housing block’ (2000-block Esquimalt/Fulton Avenues) and possible pilot projects. In June 2012, Council authorized a broader examination of coach house potential, partly in response to ongoing community interest in this type of housing. This work will include:

- A discussion paper on policy and regulations in other jurisdictions and on lessons learned from the experience of these other jurisdictions – both in Metro Vancouver and communities further afield;
- Community engagement on coach houses; and
- If the engagement program confirms broad public interest in coach houses in West Vancouver, draft policies and regulations would be prepared for Council and community review.

It is anticipated that the discussion paper will be presented to Council in December 2012; followed by community engagement through Spring 2013. Some of the key questions to be considered as part of the coach house examination are:

- What housing gaps could this type of housing fulfill?
- Should coach houses be rental only or should we allow for stratification?
- What would be an appropriate size(s) of unit?
- What are the design considerations?
- What are the potential ‘neighbour’ impacts and how might they be mitigated?
- Should coach houses be allowed...District-wide? Only in certain areas? Or, only under certain conditions?

Action 3: Identify, consider and engage the community in a discussion of opportunities to retain and add purpose-built rental housing

Much of West Vancouver’s purpose-built rental housing stock is now 40 to 50 years old, and may become vulnerable to loss through redevelopment. Council has taken measures to prevent conversion of rental units to strata¹²,

¹² 1990 Strata Conversion Policy

but any of these properties could still be redeveloped under existing zoning. Council has no legal authority to prevent demolition of a rental apartment building, or to require that a redeveloped property remain rental.

An in-depth analysis of West Vancouver's purpose-built rental housing stock is warranted, and a report to Council is expected in early 2013. This work will:

- Describe West Vancouver's inventory;
- Review the Metro Vancouver study on the vulnerability of purpose-built rental housing in the region; and
- Identify policy options for retaining the existing rental stock and encouraging development of new purpose-built rental housing.

<p><i>Action 4: Strengthen OCP policies on housing diversity to provide a framework for consideration of innovative housing proposals</i></p>
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The housing policies in the 2004 OCP are focused and limited, in the absence of a comprehensive understanding of housing issues in the community, and residents' support for various actions to address these. The subsequent 2007-2008 Community Dialogue on Neighbourhood Character and Housing has provided greater depth to the community's understanding of housing issues and options in West Vancouver.

The District would like to encourage innovative housing proposals that meet defined housing gaps in the community and are sensitive to established neighbourhood character. To provide the necessary framework for considering such proposals, the OCP will need to be amended to clarify and strengthen policies on housing diversity. This policy work would be informed by the findings of the Community Dialogue, along with the District's past experience in supporting development of seniors', rental, and accessible/adaptable housing, and new initiatives related to coach houses and purpose-built rental housing.

Action 5: Monitor and report annually on the Housing Action Plan

To maintain awareness of housing issues in West Vancouver and progress being made to improve housing choice and affordability, an annual monitoring report is to be provided. This would provide the basis for any updates of the Housing Action Plan.

Towards this end, staff resources will continue to be allocated to the North Shore Advisory Committee on Disability Issues (ACDI), and to information-gathering and information-sharing (i.e., continuing the 'dialogue' on housing).