
ENGAGEMENT SUMMARY

City of Castlegar Housing Strategy



MAY 2021

ENGAGEMENT SNAPSHOT

The City of Castlegar is developing a Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy will provide direction on how to address the housing needs of the community to ensure safe, affordable, and appropriate housing is made available to all residents of Castlegar. Community members and key actors were invited to share their experiences, ideas, and priorities for the future.



344

Online surveys completed



28

Participants in three virtual workshops



3

Meetings with the Housing Advisory Committee



15

Interviews with organizations + people with lived experience

VISION:

Respondents want a future with affordable homes for all.



OUR TOP TAKEAWAYS: A few core ideas summarized from all the feedback received...

- **There is a housing shortage across many different types of housing.** There is a severe lack of adequate and affordable housing in Castlegar for low-income residents, students, seniors, people with disabilities, and people experiencing mental health challenges. The rental market is in dire straits, and there is a lack of “starter homes” to buy.
- **Many people, especially renters, are experiencing housing instability.**
- **There is a need for greater supply and diversity of housing.** There is high support for low-rise, multi-unit buildings, townhomes, laneway homes, and small detached homes.
- **There is a need for greater coordination, resources, and leadership.**
- **It can be difficult to develop housing.** Enabling greater housing diversity and finding creative solutions to lower development barriers for different types of housing will be key.
- **There is significant stigma and discrimination,** specifically with communities experiencing poverty, mental health issues, and racism. There is a misconception that the emergency shelter and other services draw people from other communities, and that all renters cause damage to housing.
- **Housing isn't just about shelter.** Housing is key to stability, wellness, and mental health. Location and transportation are key factors in appropriate housing so people can access amenities and services.

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INTRODUCTION

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The City of Castlegar is developing a Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy will provide direction on how to address the housing needs of the community across all segments of the housing wheel and to ensure safe, affordable, and appropriate housing is made available to all residents of Castlegar.

The Housing Strategy is informed by the Housing Needs Assessment (2018) and subsequent Housing Workshops (2019-2020) and supported by the Housing Advisory Committee.

The scope of the work includes conducting interviews, hosting a series of workshops and an online survey with community members and integrating their feedback into the Housing Strategy. The Strategy will address housing needs across the housing wheel, while strengthening existing and fostering new relationships in the community.

ENGAGEMENT PURPOSE

The purpose of the engagement is to ground the development of the City of Castlegar's Housing Strategy in local knowledge, the needs of the community, and to learn from residents' lived experiences with housing, and from housing and service providers in the area.

Through engagement, we sought to:

- Cultivate relationships between the City, organizations providing and supporting housing, and Castlegar residents;
- Learn from the lived experience and expertise of the Housing Advisory Committee;
- Learn from other members of the community through engagement events;
- Understand the top priorities and issues in each segment of the housing wheel;
- Identify the opportunities and challenges for strategies and actions in each segment of the housing wheel; and
- Inform potential strategies and actions for the Housing Strategy.

WHAT WE DID

ENGAGEMENT

Engagement took place from January to May 2021, and consisted of the following activities:

- Eight interviews with key actors (January-February)
- Three workshops (March-April)
 - Student housing: 10 participants
 - Subsidized and supportive housing: 8 participants
 - Market rental and ownership housing: 10 participants
- Seven interviews on emergency and transitional housing with housing and service provider staff, people with lived experience, and the RCMP (May)
- 344 responses to an online survey (March 8 to April 2)
- Two responses to a phone line (March to April)
- Three meetings with the 14-member Housing Advisory Committee

To review and provide feedback on the draft Housing Strategy, we will be hosting the following:

- One meeting with the Housing Advisory Committee
- Close the Loop event to present our engagement findings and how they influenced the Housing Strategy

PROMOTION

Engagement was promoted through:

- Direct outreach to local stakeholders, including members of the Housing Advisory Committee, local housing and community service providers, renters, landlords, tenants, students, seniors and people with lived experience of homelessness.
- Postcards distributed to residents across the City.
- Posters advertising the phone line and other engagement methods delivered to the following locations:
 - Castlegar and District Community Services Society;
 - Castlegar Community Harvest Food Bank, who also made copies available in the lunches they distribute;
 - Kootenay IRIS (Increasing Recreation Involving Seniors);
 - Freedom Quest Youth Services;
 - Kootenay Family Place;
 - Columbia Basin Literacy Alliance;
 - Circle of Indigenous Nations Society (COINS); and
 - The public library.
- A news release and subsequent article in Castlegar News.
- Social media posts on the City of Castlegar’s Facebook page.
- The City of Castlegar website.



HONORARIA + REMOVING BARRIERS

We asked participants at the invitation stage if they required assistance to address any barriers to participation. To address economic barriers to participating, we provided honoraria to all participants in workshops as well as interviewees on emergency and transitional housing. Honoraria was in the form of a gift card or donation to an organization (participant’s choice).

WHAT WE HEARD

What we heard from each engagement method is outlined below, including:

- Key actor interviews
- Workshops
- Interviews on emergency and transitional housing
- Online survey
- Phone line and email feedback

KEY ACTOR INTERVIEWS

Eight interviews were conducted with the following nine key actors to inform the development of the Engagement Strategy and the Housing Strategy.

- Elaine Pura, Habitat for Humanity
- James MacKay, West Kootenay Landlords Society
- Kady Hunter, Interior Health Authority
- Kristein Johnson, Castlegar and District Community Services Society
- Dan Shields, Senior Citizen Association Branch 46
- Kerry Clarke, Vice President, College Services, CFO, Selkirk College
- Leah Lychowyd, Counsellor for Indigenous Students, Selkirk College
- Maggie Keczan, Strategic Communications and Public Relations, Selkirk College
- Simon Laurie, Castlegar Realty

We were unfortunately unable to conduct an interview with Kris Salikin, the Executive Director of the Circle of Indigenous Communities Society, due to lack of organizational capacity for external engagement and the need to prioritize supporting Indigenous communities during the pandemic.

The interviews shed light on barriers for building and accessing housing, current services, and opportunities to reduce barriers and provide housing. They also provided insight on the housing needs and concerns of Castlegar community members and key actors, as well as strategies for conducting engagement with different communities in Castlegar. Interview questions can be found in Appendix A.

STRENGTHS OF CASTLEGAR

- **City support:** The City's interest in partnering with housing providers and their dedication.
- **Homeless prevention program:** Homeless prevention program and the emergency shelter, as it allows a place for people to be during the day even if they don't have a bed in the shelter.

BARRIERS FOR ACCESSING HOUSING

- **Not enough housing:** In general, there is not enough housing.
- **Lack of inventory for market housing:** For market housing, there is an overall lack of inventory (across home styles). There is a lack of vacant land for ownership housing, and a low supply of rental housing.
- **Need for supportive services:** There is a particular need for supportive housing and housing-supportive services, including for seniors, for mental health and substance use clients, and for other people who need additional support. Some landlords are reluctant to rent to people with mental health issues and people who use drugs because of stigma and fear.
- **Low-income families, students, and seniors:** There is low availability of suitable and affordable housing for low-income families, students, and seniors.
- **Transportation:** Transportation costs, poor and infrequent public transit service, and high rate of energy poverty add to the affordability challenge.
- **Student housing:** There is a definite need for student housing of all types (e.g., dorm-style, family units) in Castlegar. International and Indigenous students face particular barriers to housing, primarily due to racism on behalf of landlords, and lack of local networks for securing housing.
- **Technology access:** Access or familiarity with technology (e.g., navigating the Castlegar Rentals Facebook page, access to a phone, filling out online applications) is another barrier to finding housing.

BARRIERS FOR BUILDING HOUSING

- **Land, costs, and timing:** Challenges for housing development include lack of developable parcels of land due to the geography of Castlegar, increasing costs for development, and timing to approve development.
- **Teams for non-market housing:** It can be a challenge to get project teams together for applications for affordable housing when funding isn't guaranteed.
- **Organizational capacity:** Organizational capacity, including internal systems and operational (rather than capital) funding can also be a challenge.

CURRENT SERVICES

- **Castlegar and District Community Services Society:** Provides a temporary homeless outreach program, support for people looking for housing (this process doesn't have ongoing funding), and case managers to talk to people about housing in the winter shelter.

- **Interior Health:** Helps inform people of housing options and assists people with applications for housing and government support, provides supports to people in housing, and can meet with landlords to support clients. If units were available, they could work with landlords and clients to secure housing. Also working on building primary care networks, which can hopefully allow more people to stay in their homes as they age.
- **Selkirk College:** operates a 100-room student residence in Castlegar, providing dorm-style rooms for \$550 to \$650 per month, including utilities and access to common spaces. They are awaiting approval to develop 112 additional units of student housing in Castlegar and 36 in Nelson, which are anticipated to be built by September 2022. Selkirk College also provides a home share program primarily for first-year students, which provides housing and food for \$850/month.

OPPORTUNITIES TO REDUCE BARRIERS OR PROVIDE SERVICES

- **Zoning and development process:** Official Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendments to have land that is zoned appropriately for development and streamlining the development process by making expectations clear and communication quick.
- **Castlegar and District Community Services Society:** would love to have housing outreach and funding to support people while they are in housing. Have a lot of capacity but don't have funding to run additional programs.
- **Interior Health:** Looking into hiring additional community social workers and integrating them into different community services, or they may be able to offer a nurse or an outreach worker to work directly in a housing complex.
- **Landlords:** Castlegar could better support landlords to provide affordable housing by eliminating restrictive bylaws, particularly the requirement to live in the house that has a rental unit they are renting. Providing tax incentives for landlords and relief for utility bills in secondary suites would also be helpful.

WORKSHOPS

We developed and facilitated three virtual workshops, each focusing on different segments of the housing wheel: subsidized and supportive housing; owner and rental housing; and a separate workshop for student housing. Emergency shelter and transitional housing was covered through a series of additional interviews in order to reach those communities. Each workshop was two hours long, and covered current housing, challenges and concerns, ideal housing, small steps, and big ideas for improving housing in Castlegar. An interview summary for the conversations on emergency shelter and transitional housing can be found below. The workshop agendas and interview questions can be found in Appendix B.

STUDENT HOUSING WORKSHOP

CURRENT HOUSING

Students were asked about their current housing situation, particularly, how they found housing, what barriers they faced to finding ideal housing, and what they liked about their housing situation in Castlegar.

- **Diverse housing:** Students live in many different types of housing, ranging from on-campus housing, to CMHC (Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation) subsidized housing. Some students also live in their cars, couch-surf¹, or share apartments with roommates
- **Challenges finding housing:** Most students who participated in the workshop expressed difficulty finding adequate and affordable housing
- **Legality:** Some students were unsure whether their leases were legal

CHALLENGES + CONCERNS

Students identified a series of challenges and concerns for finding adequate housing.

- **Affordable housing:** Lack of available affordable housing for students
- **Housing support:** Lack of housing support during the pandemic
- **Between semesters:** There is no grace period in existing student housing (e.g., dorms) to allow students to move out following exams. Students are charged per night after the end of the semester (into summer), when residence turns into tourist accommodation
- **Strict limitations:** There are limitations on the number of students allowed to share a home (e.g. three bedroom suites only permit three students, but could easily accommodate two couples)
- **Discrimination:** International students are not treated as well as domestic students in Castlegar's housing market and experience racism and discrimination
- **Deposit and references:** It is difficult for some international students to pay a deposit and to provide local references

¹ Couchsurfing is where a person stays temporarily in someone else's home, typically with improvised sleeping arrangements (such as on a couch).

IDEAL STUDENT HOUSING

Students were also asked what their ideal housing situation would be. Most had trouble imagining an ideal housing situation and stated that they just wanted stable and affordable housing. This demonstrates that their basic housing needs are not being met, making it difficult for them to imagine anything that would go beyond basic needs.

- **Culturally appropriate housing:** that allows students to live with people with shared cultures and/or identities
- **Diversity of housing options for students:** three-bedroom apartments with common areas, family housing, intergenerational housing, etc.
- **Affordable housing:** rooms for \$600/month or less and discounted rent
- **Location:** Conveniently located within walking distance or well connected by transit to grocery stores, childcare and other essential amenities

SMALL STEPS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Students were asked to identify small steps to get one step closer to solving housing challenges that could be done by a few people with limited additional resources.

- **Affordable housing:**
 - Rental rebates for students
 - Standardized cost for student rentals based on expenses (e.g. tuition, food, books, etc.) and students' average income
- **Housing resources and support:**
 - Student housing bulletin boards that are frequently updated
 - Resources to understand if a rental agreement is legal
 - Website dedicated to student housing that is actively promoted to landlords and students
 - Long term agreements that allow students to stay in the same place for the duration of their schooling
 - Foster connections between students and people of other ages and backgrounds to support students in finding housing

BIG IDEAS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Students were asked to imagine big and bold ideas for action on housing in Castlegar.

- **Affordable housing:**
 - Acquire land and remove it from the speculative housing market
 - Develop a partnership between Castlegar and Selkirk College to build student housing on municipal land. (for all students - with families, partners, singles, etc.)
 - Create a student housing co-op
 - Provide homeowner incentives to build secondary suites for students
 - Provide rent control for student housing
- **Intergenerational housing**
 - Create a [homeshare program](#)²
 - Create a community hub with integrated services, such as a daycare and/or family community centre with shared meals and services (e.g., mental health drop-in, children's programs, etc.)
- **Support students with families:**
 - Family-friendly student housing.
 - More childcare options for students

² Canada HomeShare is a program run by the National Initiative for the Care of the Elderly (NICE) that matches older adults (55+) with a spare room in their home who would benefit from receiving additional income and/or help around the home with university and college students seeking affordable housing. In exchange for reduced rent of

\$400-\$600 per month, the student provides up to seven hours of companionship and/or assistance with completing light household tasks, such as preparing and sharing meals, tidying up, carrying groceries, or walking a pet. More information: <https://www.canadahomeshare.com/>

EMERGENCY & TRANSITIONAL HOUSING INTERVIEWS

Initially a workshop was planned for emergency and transitional housing, but due to low registration, we shifted our approach, and completed seven individual interviews with service providers, people with lived experience, and the RCMP:

- Deb McIntosh, Castlegar Community Harvest Food Bank
- Ray Griffiths, Shelter Coordinator, Castlegar and District Community Services Society
- Lora Plotnikoff, Women’s Centre, Safe Home, Women’s Outreach, Castlegar and District Community Services Society
- Ryall Giuliano, Street Outreach Worker, Nelson Community Services
- Jordan Sherstobitoff, Street Outreach Worker
- Monty Taylor, Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Person with Lived Experience

CURRENT HOUSING LANDSCAPE

Participants were asked to describe the current housing landscape, including how they or clients found housing, and what barriers they faced.

- **Community Harvest Food Bank (CHFB)**
 - Has been providing emergency housing in Castlegar for 25 years. CHFB spends close to \$40,000 per year on emergency housing. Generally house up to five people in small individual units in a motel.
 - Initially opened up a church basement as emergency housing, run by volunteers
 - Currently also doing wellness checks at night
- **No transition house** in Castlegar so we need to refer people to Trail and Nelson or other areas
- **Safe home:**
 - Two locations, both are one-family units for either a woman or a woman and her children
 - Technically can stay 20 to 45 days, but usually allowed to stay longer due to waitlists and processing times
- Women usually find other accommodations when leaving the Safe Home (sometimes with family), but sometimes have no choice but to go back to their aggressor
- **Shelter:**
 - There was a demonstrated need for a shelter in the community. BC Housing funded a shelter until the end of June 2021. It is a low-barrier, 24-hour shelter, and shelters an average of 13 people per night
 - Opening the shelter shed light on the importance of getting the community on board from the beginning
 - There is a misconception that shelter is drawing people in from other communities. Generally people who have families and connections to Castlegar are now staying in Castlegar
 - Needs to be within walking distance to daily needs

- **Stigma:**
 - People who are unhoused face significant stigma in the community
 - There is a perception that the opening of the shelter increased visibility of homelessness and drug use, which exacerbates stigma
 - Media has amplified one side of the issue rather than those with lived experience, which is adding to stigma
- “Castlegar is a small town. If you see someone leaving the shelter, you know that person is experiencing homelessness. It is hard to stay out of the public eye in a small town. Once that happens you won’t be able to find a rental in someone’s house. We need housing that won’t be so biased.”

CHALLENGES & CONCERNS

Participants identified a series of challenges and concerns.

- **No affordable housing in Castlegar:**
 - There is no housing for individuals on income assistance
 - Clients have rented out garages, are sleeping in tents, and doing sex work for housing
 - COVID-19 left people outside with nowhere to go
- **Single men are most in need of emergency and transitional housing:**
 - There are no resources available for single men
 - There are very few housing options for low-income single people, and many end up in motel rooms or trailers
- **Mental health system is overloaded:**
 - Delays in the mental health provision system render it useless to many people, especially those who most need these services. It takes over a week to get a response from a mental health provider
 - People with disabilities or mental health challenges aren’t able to navigate the bureaucracy of the welfare and support system
- People with mental health challenges do not receive sufficient support, and in some cases they can get evicted, become homeless, and then it’s very difficult for them to find alternative housing
- **Transit is a real challenge:** there is no greyhound service and you need a credit card and identification to book a bus ticket, so it can be hard to leave the community
- **NIMBYism:** Everyone agrees that they need more housing, but no one wants it in their backyard
- **Lack of funding** for emergency and transitional housing is a huge drain on housing and service providers
- **Pet restrictions** for subsidized and rental housing are significant barriers that should be eliminated
- **There are no day-time drop-in centres** or employment opportunities for people who are un-housed

IDEAL HOUSING

Participants were asked about what their ideal would look like for housing in Castlegar.

- **Emergency housing needs to be integrated** into communities. Infill housing should be for lower income households so that people can become part of a community and not isolated or “othered”
- **Low-income housing with transitional spaces:**
 - Safe homes
 - Low-cost housing for single people
 - Well-maintained housing designed by and for people accessing services
- **Supportive housing:**
 - Linked housing and mental health support services are needed to address barriers
 - An apartment building with one storey as supportive housing with a social worker who can help people with whatever they need. Some people are totally different when they have access to needed supports
- A ten-unit floor would be enough to support a large number of clients
- May not be realistic right now due to the low public support around the shelter
- **Build strategic partnerships** following the example of Nelson Cares: Cross-subsidized developments, with businesses or higher-end units that will pay for subsidized units
- **Increase housing stock:** Over the last ten years our population has grown by over 1000 people and we have not increased our housing capacity at all
- **Communal supportive housing:** Follow the example of Trail’s four-bedroom supportive housing: Individuals who need to live in a community setting, and staff from the shelter help: they deliver lunches, see them twice a day, and take them to appointments

SMALL STEPS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Participants were asked about potential small steps that would improve the emergency and transitional housing situation in Castlegar.

- **Secondary suites:** Encourage people to have secondary suites
- **Tax on housing sales:** City should retain tax sales from houses to put towards affordable housing
- **Parking bylaws:** Change parking bylaw minimum requirements (e.g., there is an empty nightclub, but can’t build or convert to housing because there isn’t enough space for parking)
- **Lower development charges** for incorporating affordable housing
- **Showcase success stories**
- **Actively support the shelter:** The City should do more to actively and publicly support the shelter and reduce stigma.
 - “In Trail, there is a stigma reduction project right now, showing people’s lived experience showing that they are human. It is

- a good City and mental health collaboration.”
 - Need the City to be on board and to stand up for people, and to help amplify their voices
 - Need to get the community on board with emergency, transitional and subsidized housing early on in the process
 - Don’t change zoning bylaws so that the emergency shelter isn’t an allowed use
- **Create a peer support network**, a network of people with lived experience
- **Mental health support:**
 - More outreach workers and mental health support
 - Crisis response nurse, like in Trail and Nelson
 - Need to have a 24-hour emergency room, and fix the primary care centre and crisis response
 - Police are overly involved in mental health and drug-induced crises
- **Focus on local residents:**
 - One of the challenges when building supportive or low-barrier housing is a perception that people will come from other communities to use it
- Critical that part of the criteria to access housing is that you’re from or have relationships to Castlegar
- Important to get public support
- Known that housing people reduces cost and impact on community financially
- **Fund a warming bus** to better support people who are unhoused during the colder months (e.g. Vernon)
- **Protect mobile homes** and provide stability to residents
- **Continue building relationship** between CDCSS, Council, City, and RCMP Victim Services
- **Safe homes:** let women decide what supports they need
- **Education:** Education is necessary in order to build support for projects, such as housing first model (and financial benefits of housing first model), history of the overdose crisis and harm reduction. Get people excited about having an inclusive and supportive community.
- **Harm reduction:** Build a greater harm reduction movement in Castlegar.

BIG IDEAS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Participants were asked big ideas to improve emergency and transitional housing.

- **Right to Housing:** People are getting arrested and charged for “criminal activity” for just existing. Make this illegal
- **Prioritize housing:** City recently bought vacant building downtown for the art gallery and are working with BC Housing for housing upstairs. Put this energy into housing people first, then things like art galleries
- **Develop housing:** Work with BC Housing and Interior Health to explore developing more housing in Castlegar
- **Non-profit:** Create a professional non-profit organization that will develop and operate housing

- **Coordination:** fund a position to coordinate housing, like a housing coordinator or a housing hub
- **Cross-subsidized housing:** Follow Nelson Cares example, with a mix of emergency shelter, low-barrier harm reduction housing, market apartments, affordable housing, and assisted living. The market housing helps subsidize the other housing. This can be flexible to help meet changing needs.
- **Low-barrier harm reduction housing:** Having housing that people can access even if they have mental health issues or use substances. A fully staffed site is something a lot of people need to be housed successfully.
- **Addictions centre:** Build an addictions centre with about 20 rotating beds, six weeks on, split by gender, and staffed and run by peers
- **Affordable seniors housing:** Create a financially accessible version of Castlewood (a seniors retirement home)
- **Mental health support:** Provide mental health support to prevent the vicious cycle of drug-mental health-criminal justice. Create a crisis outreach worker or peer response team to respond to calls rather than the police
- **Diverse housing:** Build a variety of housing, with multi-unit housing and single supportive housing. Have affordable family housing. Have enough housing for everyone who wants to live here
- **Row houses:** Build housing similar to Arrow Lakes Road housing (BC Housing row housing development)
- **Focus on the system:** Any housing that is built will relieve some pressure on the housing market.

QUOTES

"Even your everyday church going student ends up living on the streets."

"Without housing, no one can get healthy. You're at the mercy of everyone else."

"Even if you're housed temporarily, you still feel like you don't belong in the community because everyone hates you."

"It's hard to meet your basic needs living on the streets, people start to use drugs to escape homelessness, abuse, and trauma, and it all adds up."

"Without a home you can't feel like you're part of the community, you can't get an income, so you're screwed in every way."

"It takes two incomes to get a place, unless it's subsidized, and then it comes with a bunch of rules."

"People need to move away from this idea that people who are on the street deserve to be there."

"Once someone has their own space and something they can be proud of, they can take steps to stabilize."

"We need a change in mentality, the city is made of people, not just sewers and pipes."

SUBSIDIZED & SUPPORTIVE HOUSING WORKSHOP

CURRENT HOUSING

Participants were asked to describe their current housing situation, particularly how they found housing, what barriers they faced, and what they liked about their current housing situation.

- **Housing availability is very limited**
 - “nothing on the market and when one finally comes available, the price has skyrocketed since last year”
 - Lack of accessible and affordable options for seniors and people with disabilities
- **Long waiting lists** for subsidized units in the Castlegar, which is not responsive to current need
- **Student family housing:** Student housing only offers “single” units, no family or shared units

CHALLENGES + CONCERNS

Participants identified a series of challenges and concerns for finding adequate housing.

- **Short-term rental:** Conversions to short-term high rent units (e.g., AirBnB) reducing units for long term rental
- **Home ownership:** Inaccessible home ownership for low-to moderate-income families
- **Inadequate housing** and illegal suites
- **Supports for people** to keep their current housing is not accessible or non-existent
- **Youth leaving care:** Lack of housing for youth leaving care who still need access to supports

IDEAL HOUSING

Participants were asked what their ideal housing situation would be. Participants in this workshop also had trouble imagining an ideal housing situation, and most stated that they just wanted safe, stable and affordable housing.

- **Meeting diverse housing needs**
 - Intergenerational, family suites, pet-friendly, etc.
 - Co-op housing
 - Single-detached homes that can be shared in different ways (e.g., intergenerational co-living)
 - Innovative facility for residents with dementia
 - Recreational opportunities and facilities (e.g., community gardens, communal kitchens)
- **Supportive housing**
 - No waitlists for supportive and subsidized housing
 - Flexible on-site support programs: care workers, housing workers, intensive case managers
 - Supportive housing linked to social enterprise or empowerment programs
 - Low-barrier housing: shelter component of benefits paid directly to landlord, with a rent supplement for rest of market-rate rent
 - Community involvement in supportive housing: programs from the community interwoven with supports on site (e.g., student groups helping to run recreational or activity programs)
 - More housing like Rota Villa: supports that are needed by many (e.g. in-facility supports for meals)

SMALL STEPS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Participants shared potential small steps but stated that ultimately what is needed are big ideas for addressing the housing crisis.

- **Education and community engagement**
 - Coordinate advocacy events for the community to provide education and work on stigma around poverty and mental health
 - Invite speakers to come talk to the City and explore housing strategies in other municipalities (e.g., Revelstoke, Nakusp, and Nelson)
 - Create avenues for community members to shape housing
- **Support vulnerable residents**
 - Create an eviction prevention program or rent bank to help people stay in their current housing
 - Collect data on vulnerable persons utilizing emergency services to be able to better customize services to the needs of the community
 - Assess current resources that could partner with supportive housing providers to provide more support services (e.g., Selkirk College program could provide student work placements in providing mental health or community supports)
- **Support landlords**
 - Create a landlord tool kit: review who can provide housing, how, what do they need
 - Dial-back secondary suite codes

BIG IDEAS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Participants brainstormed, discussed and voted on big ideas to improve housing in Castlegar. The following are some of the key priorities identified to improve subsidized and supportive housing in Castlegar.

- **Priority #1: Create a new Housing Coordinator Position** within the City that is dedicated to housing and homelessness. This would be a lead role in addressing Castlegar's housing-related challenges, particularly as housing policy transitions to a more central role within the City's planning function. More specifically, this position would oversee the formation of housing policies and strategies and would advise on advancing the City's role in the development of a diverse range of housing options that are stable and affordable. The coordinator should live in the community and have a vested interest in the community. The position could be funded by the City, Regional District, or Columbia Basin Trust. There was discussion about this being a shared position between municipalities in the region, but participants felt more comfortable with Castlegar having its own housing coordinator
- **Priority #2: Lower development costs & rezoning** to promote development of adequate and affordable housing
- **Priority #3: Explore what other municipalities are doing** to facilitate the development of affordable housing

Some other suggestions from workshop participants include:

- **Secure core funding** for the provision of affordable housing
- **Cross-sector partnerships:** For example, Nelson's most recent development, business community
- **Create a housing registry:** Create an online database system of people that need housing with housing types and social housing available as it is hard to get information on housing in the City
- **Supports for aging in place:** Provide case or outreach workers and improved access to medical treatment to help people to stay living in their homes longer
- **Loans and grants:** Lean on Columbia Basin Trust and government for low-interest loans and grants
- **Housing office:** Set up a housing office
- **Build accessible housing** or renovate existing housing to be accessible financially/physically (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)
- **Multi-generational housing:** Secure funding, site, partnership and facilitators to build multi-generational housing

MARKET HOUSING WORKSHOP

CURRENT HOUSING

Participants were asked to describe their current housing situation, particularly how they found housing, what barriers they faced, and what they liked about their current housing situation. Participants were assigned one of three break-out discussion groups based on their housing situation: tenants, homeowners, landlords and developers.

Tenants

- **Unstable housing:** Most participants were renting and were either concerned that they were going to lose their housing or had difficulty finding their current rental. One participant stated that “even people with a lot of privilege aren't able to find housing”
- **Low supply:** Low housing stock for homeownership, no rental options. No apartments, or row houses. Limited availability is a result of Castlegar's housing history, where homeownership was accessible and there wasn't much of a need for rental housing. Advice for people seeking rental housing: “give up! there are no affordable rental options in Castlegar”
- **Networks:** Traditionally, you find housing based on who you know

Homeowners

- **No issues:** Several homeowners expressed that they have not faced housing challenges in Castlegar, but see the housing crisis affecting many people in the community and see the need for rental housing and supportive housing
- **Diverse housing:** The political and community attention on housing and creating a variety of options is seen as a good thing

Landlords & Developers

- **Rental homes:** Some of the participants ready to sell rental homes because they reached their targets, but know doing so will displace families
- **Building rental:** Some participants were part of a group of employers building a rental building. They have employees moving to Castlegar who need to settle down first in rental housing.

CHALLENGES + CONCERNS

Participants identified a series of challenges and concerns for finding adequate housing.

Tenants

- **Supports:** “Many [people who struggle with mental health and substance use] will be permanently unhoused unless we change how we provide housing”
- **Low-income:** Lack of rental or owner options for low-income residents

Homeowners

- **Attainable housing:** Lacking attainable housing even for those with moderate incomes
- **Losing employees:** Employers are losing or unable to attract employees, as people are not able to find a home
- **Little available:** There is very little available on the market, with multiple offers coming in over the list price

- **Starter homes:** Have lost starter homes to AirBnB and investors. A participant noted that Castlegar is either losing young people are having them end up in really bad situations
- **Mobile homes:** Mobile homeowners are getting older and selling as they age out. New mobile park owners have a captive audience, as mobile homes cannot move, and can raise rents significantly and charge increased utilities on everything possible (e.g., street lights).

Landlords & Developers

- **Many applicants:** There are very few rental homes available. When there is a vacancy, there will often be 25 to

IDEAL HOUSING

Participants were asked what their ideal housing situation would be. Several participants found it difficult to express their ideal housing situation because the situation was so dire that just accommodating their basic needs seemed ideal.

Tenants

- Co-op housing
- Family, intergenerational and pet-friendly housing
- Increase access to housing subsidies for diverse demographics
- Protect mobile home parks
- Develop low-rise apartments and row housing
- An intergenerational version of Rota Villa
- Follow Nelson's example and create the same momentum through partnerships and development
- Owned or secure long-term rental with outdoor space in a small community
- Affordable version of the housing on Merry Creek Rd (condos)
- Old-style motels with two-three bedroom suites and shared space

hundreds of qualified applicants for a single unit

- **Underhoused:** Many families with secure employment are underhoused or unhoused
- **Displacement:** Market is reaching the threshold to sell for property holders, which is resulting in displacement.
- **Political willingness:** Willingness of people in different neighbourhoods to accept development
- **Application process:** Challenges with permitting, and the requirements for commercial and parking will result in fewer units which is not ideal
- **Speed of response:** Government and non-profits move slowly in comparison to the housing crisis

- "City needs to have skin in the game for things to change"

Homeowners and Landlords

- Recruitment of employees is easy, as there are plenty of homes to rent and purchase once they are established in the community.
- Homes that are in walkable neighbourhoods with sidewalks that are not car-dependent
- Density, infill, and multi-unit options with a mix of unit sizes, including townhouses and apartments
- More options for seniors, including:
 - Smaller homes that are close to town and walkable to amenities and parks
 - Supporting people staying in their homes with a vetted service

- Blended communities and alternatives
- Support for more transit (e.g., Grandview needs to have road developed for a bus)
- Improved conditions for end-of-life housing
- Diverse housing for needs according to life stage, age, and ability
- Affordable housing in good repair
- Convert mobile home parks to small home communities with a co-op structure to maintain tenure security

SMALL STEPS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Participants were asked to identify small steps that could be achieved with minimal additional resources to improve market housing in Castlegar.

- **Create partnerships:** Follow Nelson's example and create the same momentum through partnerships and development
- **Change co-op income limits:** Eliminate income requirements to join co-ops, specifically for people over 50 - people have savings and can afford the rent
- **Incentives for rental housing:** Create incentives through municipal and/or regional government for development of rental housing, or incentive for below-market housing
- **Tax deferral:** Allow property tax deferral if they develop infill as rental
- **Height:** Change bylaws to allow more than four storeys
- **Development process:** Revise bylaws to stop impeding development. "I hear stories that developers won't come to the area because of the time it takes to actually get building."
- **Laneway housing and secondary suites:**
 - Improve laneway clearing
 - Allow subdivision of lots so that seniors can help finance home for young families
- Allow laneway housing to enable families to live together in separate housing in the same lot
- Allow secondary suites in housing that is not owner-occupied. "As owners, if a suite is illegal we can't insure it and we are unwilling to invest in something that is uninsured."
- **Mixed-use:** Work with owners of the downtown buildings to develop housing in the upper levels.
- **Tiny homes:** Zone for small home communities.
- **Short-term rental:** License and tax AirBnBs and short-term rentals differently than residential and use the revenue to support housing programs. AirBnBs are a business and they take stock out of our housing stock, so it needs to be taxed differently.
- **Vacant home tax:** There are a lot of vacant homes in Castlegar. Some people use their second in-town home as a storage unit as it is cheaper than renting an actual storage unit. Include AirBnBs and short-term rentals as vacant homes.

BIG IDEAS TO IMPROVE HOUSING

Participants brainstormed, discussed and voted on big ideas to improve housing in Castlegar. These are the key priorities identified by participants to improve market housing in Castlegar.

- **Make housing a right**
 - Provide housing to all: Transitional housing, low-income with no money in the bank, to low-income folks with savings
 - Housing diversity: Housing is not one size fits all, provide diversity from mobile parks, row houses, tiny homes, three-bedroom homes, etc. Developers and the City should collaborate to make this happen
- **Create a housing hub:**
 - A housing coordinator so this work isn't piecemeal
 - Provide housing services for people who are exploring housing options that fall outside of the status quo (e.g. two unrelated people buying a home)
 - Create opportunities for people to meet and share housing costs – an affordable version of co-housing
 - Individualized resources that can respond quickly to housing needs
- **Create incentives to develop vacant lots:**
 - Need an incentive to develop vacant property (e.g., Church-owned vacant property)
 - Many vacant lots downtown are un-serviced which is costly. This has been cost prohibitive, but has just hit the tipping point for market housing, but the market won't address that for low-income households
 - Develop community residential on vacant lots throughout the City
- **Be innovative:**
 - Create intergenerational affordable housing co-op with low-income purpose-built suites
 - Build hope! Tell people about new housing opportunities so they don't completely lose faith
 - Allow commercial owners to live in commercial buildings when they are the business operator
 - City should develop a multi-unit building using 99 year leases. The City could also take an equity stake and partner with developers if it was developed as rental in order to lessen the upfront costs
 - Change the City's variance requirements with a survey of topography issues in order to lower the barrier to renovate and infill
- **Require rental component** in all civic and institutional buildings
- **Enforce problem premises bylaws** more aggressively to push housing into the market under better ownership
- **Mobile homes:** Up-zone mobile homes so that the owner has an opportunity to sell to a developer (for small homes or apartments) rather than a slumlord who will squeeze the tenants for everything

ONLINE SURVEY

We received 344 responses to the survey. In the survey, we asked questions in three general categories:

1. Your housing experience and challenges in housing in Castlegar.
2. Vision for housing in Castlegar.
3. Strategies for housing in Castlegar.

Our analysis of responses is below.

WHO WE HEARD FROM

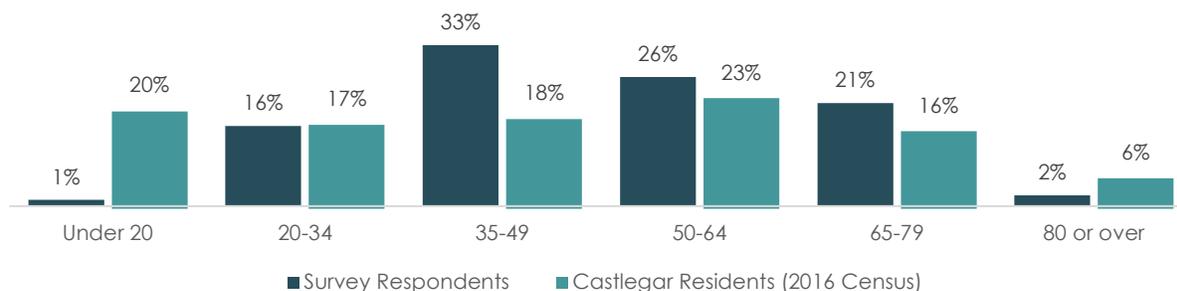
We heard 400+ from people with a wide variety of housing experiences. As part of the online survey, with 344 respondents, we asked several demographic questions. Demographic questions included age, gender, household income, and race and ethnicity. While not everyone answered these questions, the following is an overview of those who did.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER?

We ask these questions to better understand who's participating in the Housing Strategy - who we're hearing from, and importantly, who we haven't heard from. This helps the project team tailor our approach to try and reach those who were less represented to make sure we hear from all the different groups that are affected by housing in Castlegar.

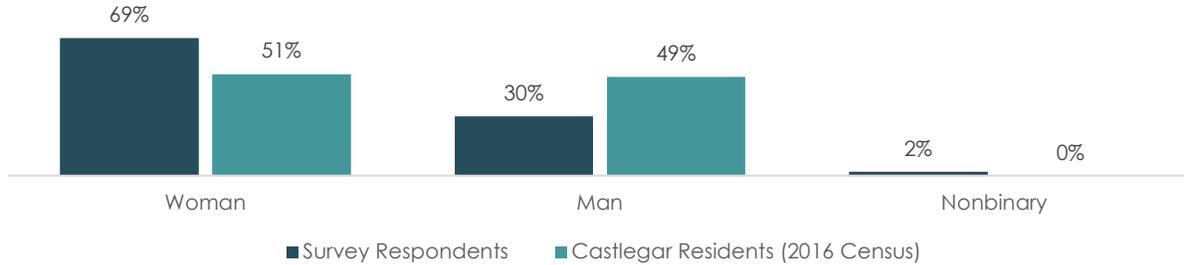
AGE

Participants were a broad range of ages. People aged 35-49 were overrepresented in survey responses, and people aged under 20 were particularly underrepresented.



GENDER

Compared to the Castlegar population, women are significantly overrepresented in survey responses.



Note that the 2016 Census did not collect information on nonbinary people.

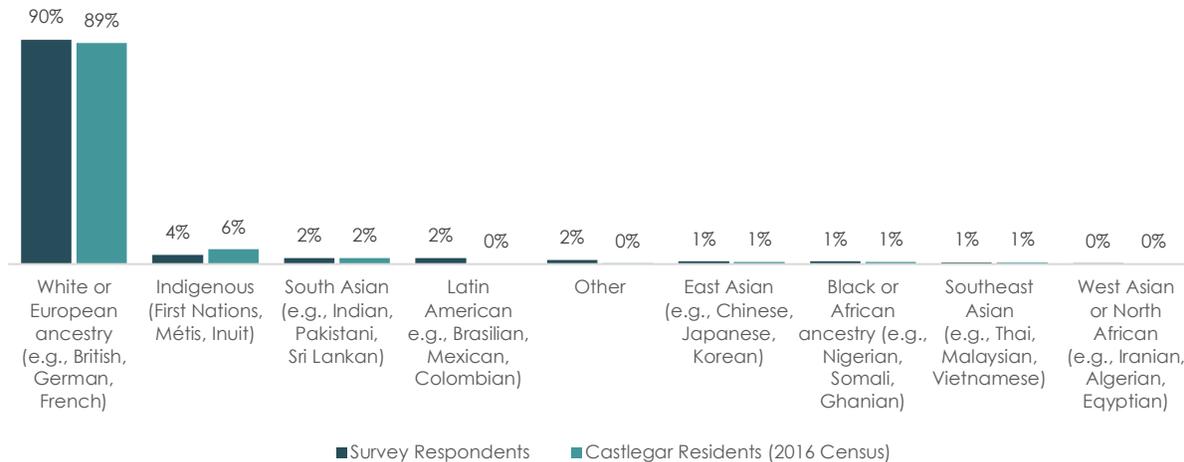
HOUSEHOLD INCOME

Participants represented a broad range of income levels (after tax). Households with income under \$20,000 per year and income between \$20,000 to \$39,999 were underrepresented in survey responses, and households with income of \$100,000 or more were overrepresented.



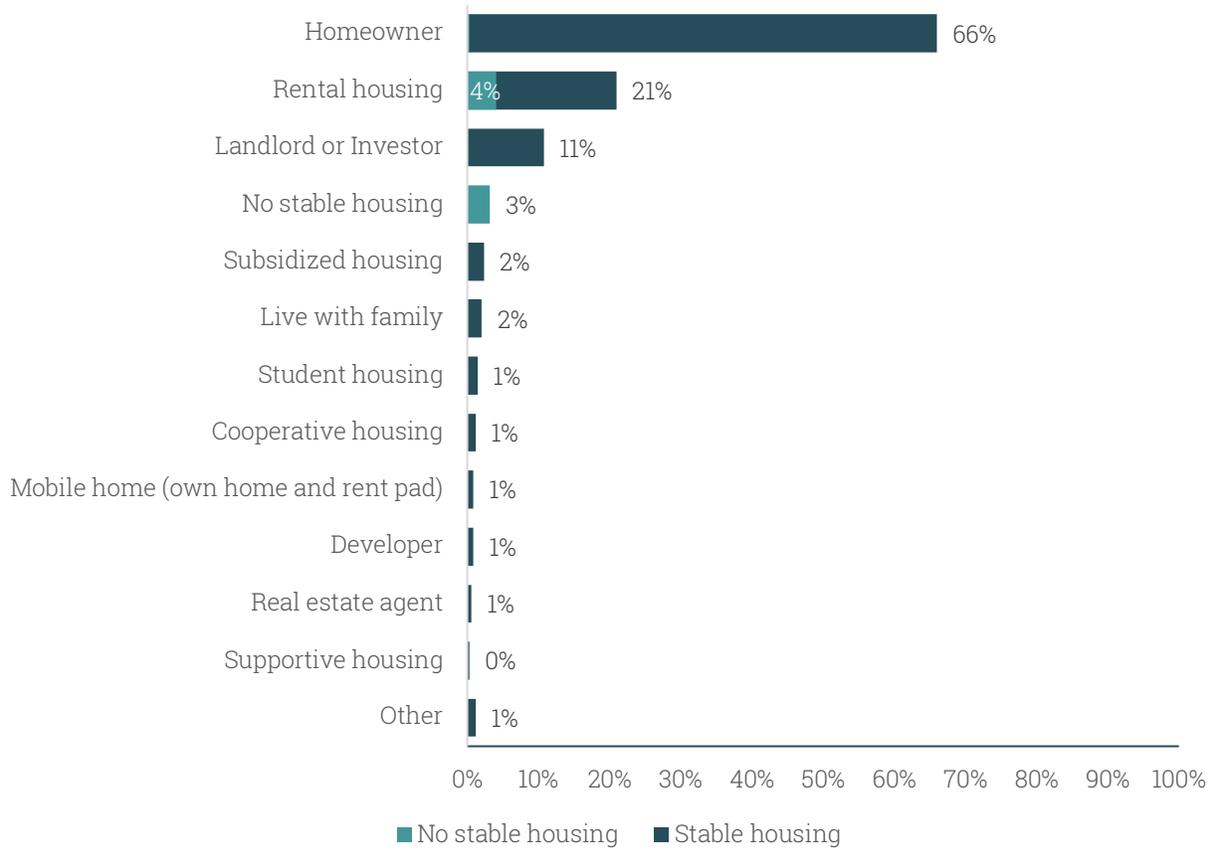
RACE AND ETHNICITY

Survey responses were broadly representative of the Castlegar population in terms of race and ethnicity. As a result, the overwhelming majority of survey respondents are white or of European ancestry.



HOUSING EXPERIENCE

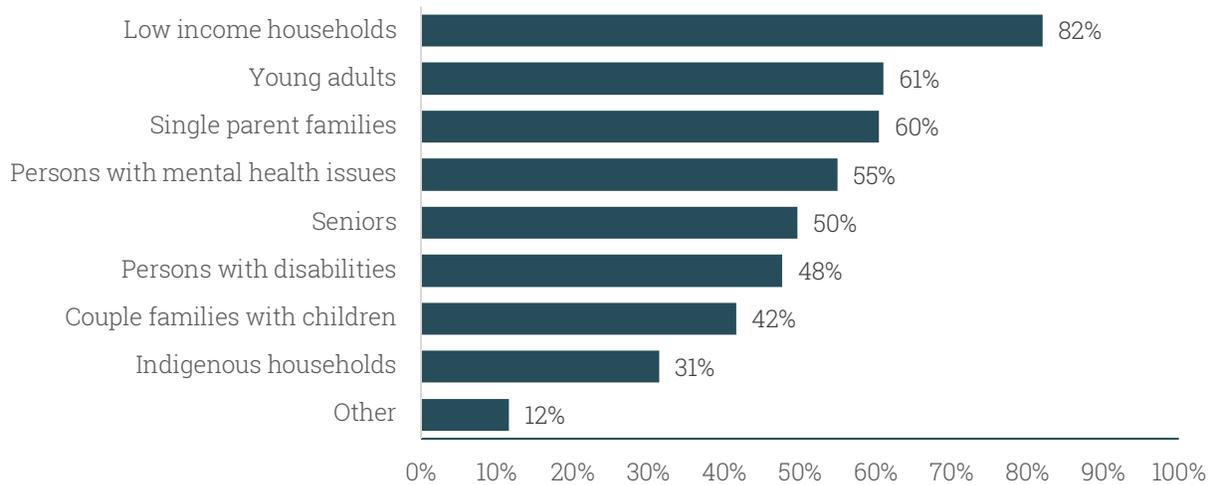
What is your current housing situation?



Participants could select all that apply.

Most respondents (66%) were homeowners, approximately the same percentage as the number of households in Castlegar. There were a significant number of renters (21%) and landlords or investors (11%) who responded. Approximately 3% of respondents selected “no stable housing” and selected no other option.

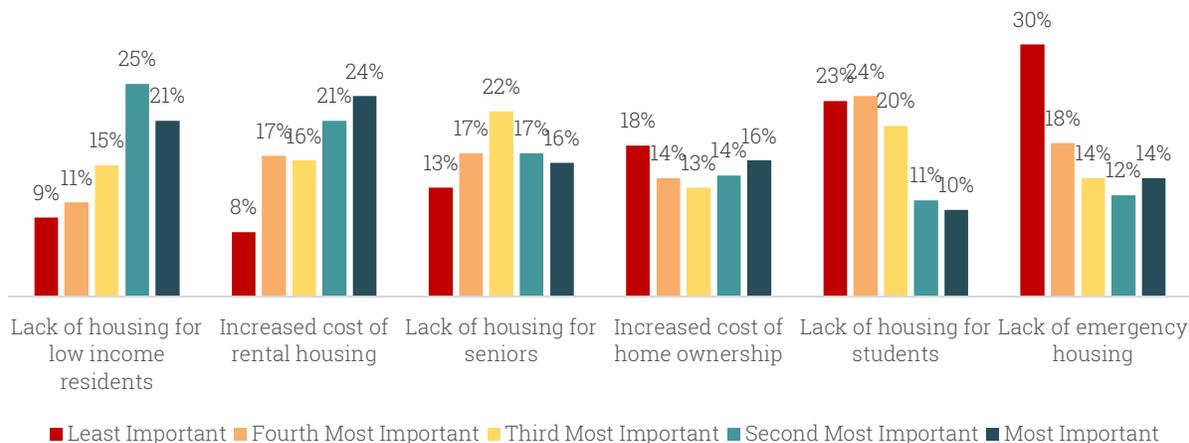
Who do you think is having the greatest difficulty meeting their housing needs in your community?



Participants could select all that apply.

The vast majority of respondents see the need to provide housing for low-income households. A clear majority of respondents thought young adults, single parent families, and people with mental health issues also have difficulty meeting their housing needs. Significant numbers of respondents also pointed to the needs of seniors and persons with disabilities, with fewer respondents selecting couple families with children or Indigenous households.

When you look 10 years or more into the future, what is the most pressing issue you are concerned about regarding the housing needs in Castlegar?



Participants could rate each option from "least important" to "most important".

Respondents selected the lack of housing for low-income residents and the increased cost of rental housing as the most pressing issues in Castlegar. Respondents generally thought the lack of housing for students and lack of emergency housing were the least pressing issues.

Experience with housing in Castlegar

Participants were invited to share anything else about their experience with housing in Castlegar.

Market rental (114 comments):

- The lack of rental housing is dire. There is minimal rental housing available at any given time. Rental costs are extremely high and increasing, with many people finding it extremely difficult to find anything they can afford that is in good condition. Long-term housing security is also an issue, as people face evictions and being forced to move multiple times and struggle to find housing that “feels like a home.” Owners will sometimes convert their single-detached houses into multi-unit properties or sell their units due to a high real estate market. Some people experienced landlords who abused a lack of knowledge about tenancy laws.
- *“Finding a place to rent and to find an affordable place is a gamble of basic needs where I was almost homeless every time I had to move to a new place.”*
- People looking to rent face discrimination, including racism and for being young. People facing particular challenges include low- income households, single parents, young single adults, people with pets, large families, people with disabilities.
- Some participants said that rental prices increased significantly when Selkirk College started to bring in many international students, who also needed a home. Employers have had multiple experiences where they have lost or been unable to recruit employees due to a lack of housing.

Market ownership (59 comments):

- There is low supply of housing for sale, and housing prices are high with big increases over the past several years. It is especially difficult for people to get into the market with limited “starter homes”. Many people who own feel lucky that they do, and were able to get into the market several years ago.
- A number of people commented on the lack of homes that are not single-detached houses. Some participants noted that investors from out of town will buy properties to use as AirBnBs or short-term rentals.
- *“Very high prices make purchasing a property hard. Add in high demand and little to no options make it nearly impossible to buy as people from the city are moving in and over bidding for property. More real estate is required to deal with the high demand.”*

Senior Housing (29 comments)

- It is hard to find housing for seniors, including for low-income seniors, supportive housing, and down-sizing options within walking distance of daily needs.
- *“I am a senior that will need to downsize in the next 5 -7 years. There are a lot of elderly people that need and will need to find affordable housing. Housing with no stairs, small yards they can manage.”*

Subsidized and Supportive Housing (24 comments)

- There is an extreme shortage of subsidized housing and supportive housing, including for people on income assistance, people with disabilities, people who need mental health supports, and for people who need other supports. The existing subsidized housing has a very long waitlist. There is a need for housing with a greater subsidy than currently exists in Castlegar.
- *"My family and I currently live in subsidized housing and we are extremely grateful for it. Since moving in we have been able to "get back on our feet" [so to] speak and wanted to move out to allow another family in need a place to stay, but are quite literally unable to find rentals that are fairly priced."*

Student and Young Adult Housing (21 comments):

- The increase in students has put pressure on the rental market, making it more difficult for other households to find housing. It is very hard to find housing as a student or as a young adult. Many young adults face discrimination in the housing market.
- *"International students coming to live from abroad and attend Selkirk College are often in dire straits trying to find affordable rentals. Some young women are taken advantage of by others in houses they share – there is a whole subculture of abuse happening because they can't find affordable, safe housing."*

No problems (15 comments): People who have no issues affording housing in Castlegar.

Landlords (14 comments): Landlords fear having tenants who will not pay rent or cause damage to their property. Many feel that restrictions and tenancy laws make renting a suite less desirable.

Emergency Shelter (12 comments): The emergency shelter is controversial. Some comments supported the opening of the emergency shelter; others did not support it or thought that the current location of the emergency shelter was inappropriate as it is too close to residential and lacks needed supports.

Families (14 comments): It is very difficult to find affordable housing for young families, and they are forced to move frequently. In multiple instances, all large families could find to rent are two-bedroom units and are forced into overcrowded situations.

Building housing is challenging (13 comments): Building housing in Castlegar is a lengthy, expensive, and a difficult process. The return-on-investment in Castlegar is not strong enough to incentivize development. Specific challenges included:

- City regulations and cost, including: permits and other costs, zoning restrictions, and development application processing time;
- Increasing cost and supply issues of building materials; and
- High demand on trades people.

Unhoused people (10 comments): The number of people who are unhoused is increasing. The housing crisis is everyone's responsibility, and more education is needed to reduce the stigma.

Quality of housing and repairs (8 comments): There are severe issues with the safety and quality of some rental housing, with a perception of little bylaw enforcement. Some owners struggle with the costs of necessary repairs.

Taxes (8 comments): Increases in taxes and utilities can contribute to the unaffordability of both ownership and rental housing.

Need a mix of uses (5 comments): There is a lack of affordable housing close to amenities and transportation options.

Pets (5 comments): It is particularly hard to find housing if you have pets and has resulted in people becoming homeless.

Focus on long-term residents (5 comments): Should protect and support people who are long-term residents of Castlegar rather than those migrating to the Kootenays, including prioritizing non-market units, and prevention of empty homes.

Housing is interconnected (3 comments): The housing system is interconnected, where a shortage in one aspect can cause shortages elsewhere (e.g., lack of senior housing means that they are unable to sell their current large homes). Increasing supply in a few areas may change the entire system. Housing also connects with other aspects of wellbeing and the local economy.

"For me, finding stable housing was such a relief that it stabilized my marriage and helped me have the mental and emotional resources to be a better parent and employee."

Other comments (17 comments)

- Need more affordable housing.
- Castlegar doesn't need more higher-density housing.
- Hard to rank the housing needs of different groups.
- Concerned about crime.

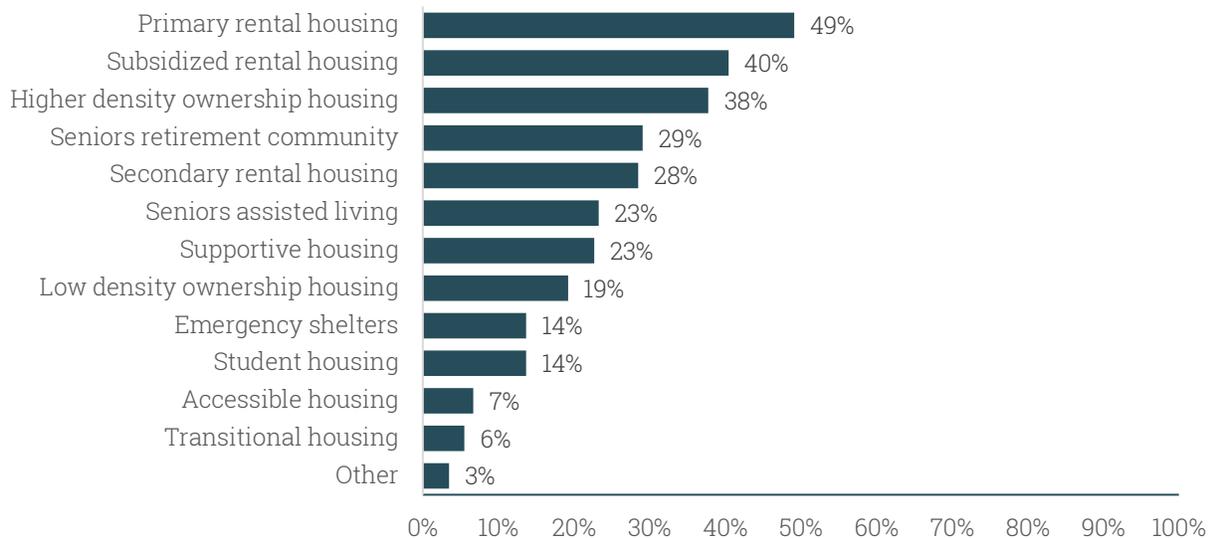
VISION FOR HOUSING IN CASTLEGAR

Participants were invited to answer the following question: “Imagine yourself 10 years or more into the future and you see a newspaper. You pick it up and the headline is celebrating the work in the City of Castlegar on housing. What is the headline?”

- **More housing is being built or available** (157 comments), especially:
 - **Affordable or subsidized housing** (29 comments): Subsidized housing for low-income households.
 - **Senior housing** (27 comments): Homes for seniors, including affordable rental and seniors complexes.
 - **Rental housing** (21 comments): More apartment buildings, and rental rates have stabilized.
 - **Multi-unit buildings** (14 comments): More multi-unit buildings, including apartments and condos.
 - **Ownership housing** (10 comments): More ownership options, including for first-time homebuyers, young families, and condos.
 - **Student housing** (6 comments): Affordable housing for students and young adults.
 - **Supportive housing** (5 comments): Increase in supportive units including for people with disabilities.
 - **Emergency shelter** (5 comments): The emergency shelter has vacancies and is in an appropriate place.
 - **Laneway homes or tiny homes** (4 comments): Laneway and tiny homes are approved.
 - **Families** (3 comments): Affordable housing for families.
 - **Single-detached** (2 comments): Affordable houses and subdivisions.
 - **Other** (2 comments)
- **A home for all** (96 comments): Everyone has an affordable and suitable home. There are no people unhoused.
- **City is a leader** (32 comments): The City is a leader, takes action, and other places can learn from Castlegar. The City develops affordable housing.
- **Castlegar is a great place to live** (21 comments): Castlegar has a high quality of life. It is safe and offers walkable neighbourhoods with lots of parks and greenspace, and focuses on sustainable developments. Downtown is thriving.
- **Castlegar is worse** (17 comments): The situation worsens in Castlegar.
- **Castlegar continues to grow** (4 comments): Castlegar continues to grow at a rapid pace.
- **Greater housing diversity** (10 comments): Castlegar has a wide range of housing options to meet the needs of diverse households.
- **Change regulations** (7 comments): Castlegar reduces barriers to development, including zoning and land use, and enforces bylaws on illegal secondary suites and upkeep.
- **Reduce taxes** (7 comments): Castlegar keeps taxes the same or lowers taxes to increase housing affordability.
- **Focus on partnerships** (6 comments): The City works with developers and non-profit community groups to incentivize and develop housing.
- **Other** (5 comments)

STRATEGIES FOR HOUSING IN CASTLEGAR

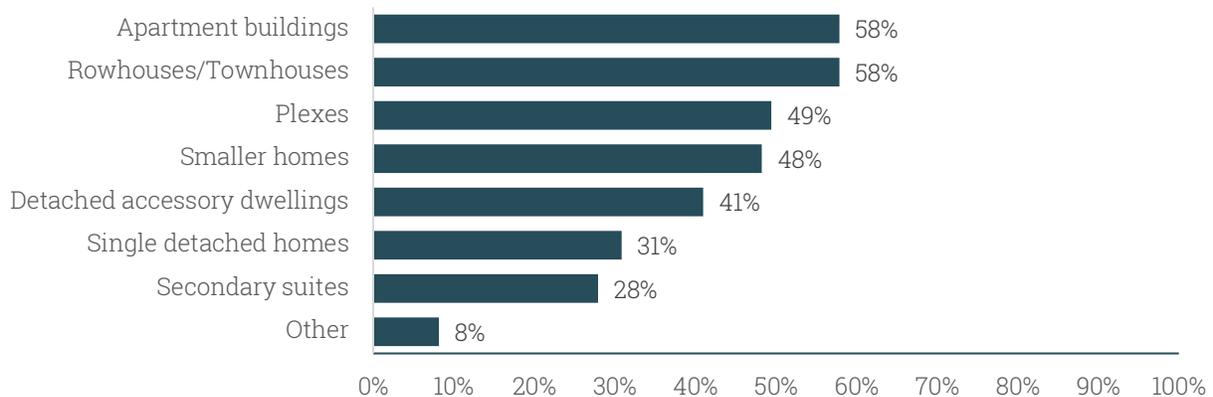
What types of housing do you think are needed to meet housing challenges in Castlegar?



Participants could select their top three choices.

The top types of housing respondents selected were primary rental housing (49%), subsidized rental housing (40%), and higher density ownership housing (i.e., townhomes or condos) (38%). Fewer respondents selected seniors retirement community (29%), secondary rental housing (28%), seniors assisted living (23%), supportive housing (23%), and low density ownership housing (19%). Emergency shelters, student housing, accessible housing, and transitional housing were selected by the fewest respondents.

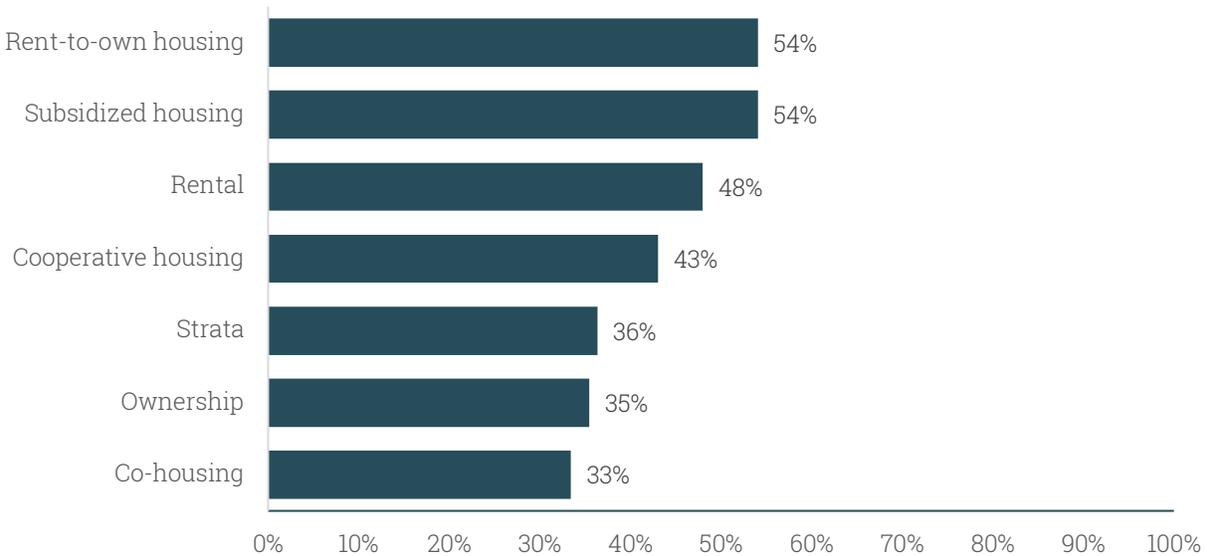
What housing forms would you like to see more of in Castlegar?



Participants could select all that apply.

Most respondents would like to see more apartment buildings (58%) and rowhouses or townhouses (58%). A large number would also like to see plexes (i.e., duplexes, triplexes, etc.) (49%), smaller homes (48%), and detached accessory dwellings (41%). A minority of respondents would like to see more single-detached homes (31%) and secondary suites (28%).

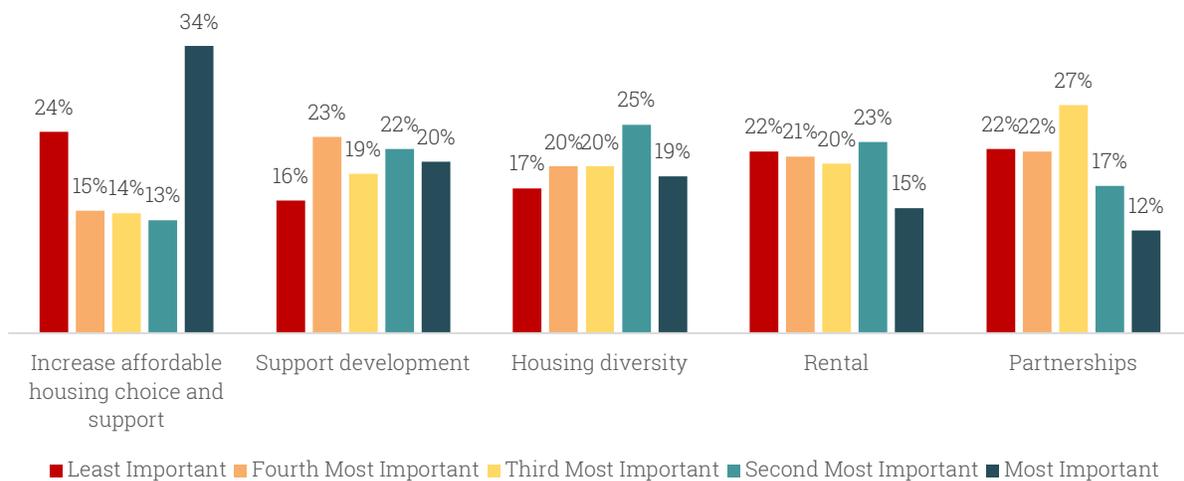
What types of housing tenure (the financial arrangement made giving you access to housing) would you like to see more of in Castlegar?



Participants could select all that apply.

A majority of respondents would like to see more rent-to-own housing (54%) and subsidized housing (54%). A large number of respondents would like to see more rental (48%) and cooperative housing (43%), with fewer wanting to see more strata (36%), ownership (35%), and co-housing (33%).

What should the City of Castlegar prioritize to improve housing conditions over the next 10 years?



Participants could rate each option from “least important” to “most important”.

“Increase affordable housing choice and support” was the highest ranked strategy, but was also polarizing: it simultaneously received the highest number of participants ranking it as “most important” and as “least important”. All other strategies received a fairly even level of support.

What is your big idea to improve housing in Castlegar?

- **Multi-unit buildings** (51 comments): A higher supply of multi-unit buildings and townhomes.
- **Subsidized and affordable housing** (48 comments): Subsidized and affordable housing is built for low-income households, including a significantly higher number of BC Housing units and units that allow pets.
- **Greater rental supply** (46 comments): There is a higher rental supply, especially apartments and purpose-built rental buildings.
- **Greater supply and diversity** (43 comments): Need a greater supply and diversity of housing.
- **Update Zoning and Regulations** (31 comments): Update zoning and loosen regulations and bylaws to allow greater housing diversity and supply.
- **Tiny and small homes** (30 comments): Allow building smaller and tiny homes on properties and create communities with communal spaces that allow tiny homes, mobile homes, and camping trailers or recreation vehicles.
- **A vibrant downtown and mixed-use buildings** (28 comments): Build more residential to create a thriving downtown and allow and build more mixed-use buildings.
- **Housing for seniors** (26 comments): More housing for seniors, including places to down-size, senior communities, and housing with supports.
- **Encourage development** (19 comments): Encourage development through incentives, reducing red tape, and partnerships.
- **Secondary suites and laneway homes** (17 comments): Reduce regulations on secondary suites, and allow accessory dwellings (e.g., laneway homes).
- **Supportive housing** (17 comments): Including for people with disabilities, mental health support, addictions support, and for people moving out of homelessness.
- **City development** (15 comments): City should invest in development or partner with organizations to develop housing.
- **Reduce or cap rent** (12 comments): Put a cap on rental increases or the ratio between rental price and home costs.
- **Ownership housing** (12 comments): Create more affordable ownership opportunities (e.g., smaller homes, condos).
- **Housing for students and young adults** (10 comments): Create housing for students and young adults, such as a dormitory, single room rental housing, affordable rental, and increase transportation options to Selkirk College (e.g., shuttle, bridge between Selkirk College and downtown).
- **Focus on partnerships** (10 comments): Partner with BC Housing, developers, and non-profit groups to build housing.
- **Reduce taxes** (10 comments): Reduce taxes and utilities to increase affordability of housing, including for rental.

- **Focus on infill** (9 comments): Focus on infill over new subdivision and low-density housing.
- **Incentives and support for landlords** (9 comments): Incentives or programs to help establish and maintain rentals (e.g., for secondary suites).
- **Housing first model** (8 comments): Use a housing first model and consider housing to be a human right.
- **Support from the City** (7 comments): Need greater support from the City, including tenancy supports to both landlords and tenants and for people looking for housing. Ideas include a housing coordinator at the City or a housing registry.
- **Mobile homes** (6 comments): Some participants would like to phase out mobile homes, while others would like to see more (or more affordable) mobile homes.
- **Sustainable housing** (6 comments): Use sustainable materials and build net-zero.
- **Inclusive zoning** (5 comments): Use inclusive zoning to require affordable housing in new developments.
- **Consultation and education** (5 comments): This survey and other consultation and education opportunities are a great start.
- **City leadership** (5 comments): Need greater leadership and support from Council and the City with proactive planning and strategy.
- **Housing for families** (5 comments): Improve housing options for families.
- **Other:**
 - The City should stay out of housing. (4 comments)
 - Develop land surrounding Castlegar. (3 comments)
 - Focus on long-term residents (3 comments).
 - Create temporary housing like an RV or tent park with communal spaces (3 comments).
 - Create a co-housing complex (2 comments).
 - Create a first-time homebuyer incentive (2 comments).
 - Be innovative and creative (2 comments).
 - Regulate short-term rental (2 comments).
 - More rent-to-own options (2 comments).
 - Promote the economy and increase wages. (2 comments)
 - Other (10 comments)

APPENDIX A – KEY ACTOR INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR DEVELOPERS

1. What challenges do you see for housing development currently and over the next five years and in the next 10 years?
2. What housing products are people interested in?
3. Where do you see gaps in the housing market?
4. What incentives might the municipality offer that would help attract different housing forms (townhouses, 4-plexes, multi-unit dwellings)?
5. Do you have experience accessing grant funding or loans for non-market rental housing?
6. What is the best way to engage with you and your colleagues going forward (survey, workshop, other)?

QUESTIONS FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

1. What you would say are the biggest barriers for your clients to access affordable housing?
2. What programs or services do you offer to help your clients access affordable housing?
3. What is Castlegar doing now that is working well for affordable housing?
4. In what ways might your organization have additional capacity to offer new or different programming to support affordable housing?
5. We are planning on hosting focussed conversations with the community you serve. Can you describe ways that would be best to engage with them (e.g., virtual focus group or workshop, survey, other)? Are their barriers we need to address to help them participate (e.g., access to technology, child care, etc.)?
6. We are looking to recommend potential members for a Lived Experience Advisory Committee to help oversee implementation of the Housing Strategy. Who might you recommend we consider to invite to that Committee?

Centering Lived Experience: Our approach involves establishing a Lived Experience Advisory Committee to create a meaningful avenue for community members with lived experience of poverty to shape local policy, engagement, and planning. The Lived Experience Advisory Committee will ensure that the development and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy is grounded in community needs, while providing people with lived experience of poverty with mentorship opportunities, as well as compensation for their time and expertise.

QUESTIONS FOR NON-PROFIT HOUSING PROVIDERS

1. What is currently working well for you to support the delivery of affordable housing?
2. What is Castlegar doing well to support your delivery of affordable housing?
3. What would you say are your top three obstacles to providing affordable housing?
4. In what ways might your organization have additional capacity to offer new or different programming to support affordable housing?

5. We are planning on hosting focussed conversations with the community you serve. Can you describe ways that would be best to engage with them (e.g., virtual focus group or workshop, survey, other)? Are there barriers we need to address to help them participate (e.g., access to technology, childcare, etc.)?
6. We are looking to recommend a Lived Experience Advisory Committee to help oversee implementation of the Housing Strategy. Who might you recommend we consider to invite to that Committee?

Centering Lived Experience: Our approach involves establishing a Lived Experience Advisory Committee to create a meaningful avenue for community members with lived experience of poverty to shape local policy, engagement, and planning. The Lived Experience Advisory Committee will ensure that the development and implementation of the poverty reduction strategy is grounded in community needs, while providing people with lived experience of poverty with mentorship opportunities, as well as compensation for their time and expertise.

APPENDIX B – WORKSHOP AGENDA

PURPOSE

Each workshop will be focused around one segment of the housing wheel:

- Emergency shelter and transitional housing
- Non-market housing (subsidized and supportive)
- Market housing (rental and ownership)
- Student housing (with Selkirk College students)

These focus groups are intended to help us:

- Understand the top priorities and issues in each sub-category of the housing wheel;
- Brainstorm actions for the Housing Strategy;
- Prioritize and provide feedback on challenges and opportunities for potential actions in the Housing Strategy;
- Identify roles of organizations in providing and supporting housing in Castlegar;
- Inform development of a Lived Experience Advisory Group; and
- Cultivate relationships between the City and organizations providing and supporting housing.

AGENDA

- Welcome and introductions (10 minutes)
- Presentation on the Housing Strategy and Questions (10 minutes)
- Now: Challenges and opportunities (25 minutes)
 - “Tell us about your housing journey: How did you find housing? What barriers are you facing to finding ideal housing? What is good about your housing situation in Castlegar?”
- Wow: Vision and ideal state (25 minutes)
 - “What would an ideal housing situation look like for you?”
- Break (5 minutes)
- How: What can we do to get there? (30 minutes)
 - “Think about your ideas for action on housing in Castlegar. What are your 15% solutions? Solutions that get us one step closer to solving challenges, that could be done by a few people and without a ton of extra resources?”
 - “Think big and bold about ideas for action on housing in Castlegar. If you were ten times bolder, what big idea would you recommend? What first step would you take to get started?”
- Report-back (10 minutes)
- Thank you and next steps (5 minutes)