



July 15, 2021

City of Burnaby
4949 Canda Way
Burnaby BC V5G 1M2

Dear Mayor and Council,

Thank you for your consideration of signing a letter in support of affordable housing in the City of Burnaby. Red House Solutions Ltd. is assisting the Board of Directors of Halston Hills Housing Co-operative (Halston Hills) to obtain funding from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to preserve and develop affordable housing units on their property located at 8868 Horne Street in Burnaby. Red House Solutions is a local consulting firm focusing on the preservation and creation of affordable housing throughout British Columbia. Working with not-for-profit housing providers, unions and faith-based organizations as well as federal, provincial and private financial solution providers allows Red House Solutions to leverage dynamic relationships throughout the affordable housing sector to maximize opportunities to support the availability of affordable housing for all members of society.

CMHC requests this letter of support as part of the seed funding application to highlight commitment from federal, provincial and local governments for this particular project. Without full support from the Mayor and Council, the success of a project of this scale is in jeopardy. CMHC understands that all levels of government must work together in many different capacities to ensure the implementation and completion of affordable housing projects. By providing the seed funding, CMHC allows Halston Hills to complete the studies and reports necessary for a large-scale construction project, and the City in turn can provide support through policies that promote the advancement of affordable housing.

As part of the services offered to Halston Hills, Red House Solutions has drafted a sample letter to assist the Mayor and Council Members in understanding the type of support the City would provide. The letter provides statistics taken directly from the City's own reports supporting the need for more affordable housing as well as from BC Housing and Statistics Canada. The letter states that the Mayor and Council would welcome more affordable housing in the City of Burnaby. Please find the file attached to this email.

Last year, Mayor Lisa Helps of Victoria signed a letter in support of Tyee Housing Co-operative, and we are happy to report that building permit is in progress and the project is expected to break ground at the end of August. Earlier this year, Sooke Mayor Maja Tait also signed a letter of support for Frances Gardens Housing Co-operative, and that project is gaining momentum. We have attached those letters for your reference as well.

Thank you again for your time and assistance with this matter. We appreciate the opportunity to approach the Mayor and Council with this dynamic proposal.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Megan Haney".

Megan Haney
RED HOUSE SOLUTIONS LTD.

Copy to:
Acting City Manager
Dir. Corporate Services
Dir. Planning & Building

The British Columbian affordable housing solutions people.

www.redhouse.solutions

July 16, 2021

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
700 Montreal Road
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0P7

Dear CMHC,

The purpose of this letter is to provide CMHC with details of the support that the City of Burnaby, both Council and Staff, is providing with respect to the affordable housing development project at Halston Hills Housing Co-operative as a means to demonstrate our commitment to retaining, preserving and expanding affordable housing communities in our city.

Our Approach

Halston Hills Housing Co-operative is a 90-unit townhouse style, not-for-profit, affordable housing cooperative situated at 8868 Horne Street in Burnaby. Halston Hills remains one of the few truly affordable housing communities in this area by providing two, three and four-bedroom units at rents 25% lower than the median rent of \$1,750 in Burnaby.

Our approach is direct: work with the co-op to facilitate the development of new affordable units on their vacant land.

City of Burnaby's Existing Housing Stock

Securing affordable and appropriate housing is a major challenge facing a substantial number of residents in Burnaby. Interviews with non-market housing providers indicate there is a significant need for more below-market and affordable rental housing. Although many residents are paying over 40 to 50% of their income towards rent, many still do not meet the income thresholds set by BC Housing to qualify for affordable housing units and must remain in market housing. Meanwhile, CMHC indicates that spending 30% of gross household income is considered the upper limit of affordability, confirming that many residents are in core housing need.

The City of Burnaby currently has 5,764 non-market housing units (roughly 5.6 percent of the total occupied housing). Yet 16,650 households in Burnaby are in core housing need. The number of affordable units is clearly insufficient. In particular, there are limited affordable units that are appropriate for Burnaby's largest demographic, 20–34-year-olds with young families requiring more than one bedroom, as well as one-person households and seniors that want to age-in-place.

Addressing the creation of additional, non-market affordable housing is an urgent matter. It is imperative to maximize density by building new, one-bedroom affordable housing units to downsize single residents and seniors who have become over housed in two, three and four-bedroom co-op homes. Freeing up the larger units of the 1,900 affordable co-op homes will service the largest demographic of people aged 20 – 34 with an average family size of 2.9 people per household.

Our Commitment

Halston Hills Housing Co-operative has our full support in their efforts to secure the funding needed to add units to their valuable affordable housing complex.

Enhancing housing affordability is extremely important. With the price of detached homes rising 42% over the last three years, and the price of apartments and townhomes rising on average 80%, many residents of Burnaby are resigned to rental housing options. Meanwhile rental prices have risen 20%

on average in the same time period. With this level of unaffordability, renters are forced to pay more as the supply for housing decreases and the demand increases.

Practical Support Steps

The City of Burnaby assists our not-for-profit partners by expediting our development and building permit processes under the Fast-Track Approvals Policy to ensure the project gets supported to finalization.

Through our Deferral of Development Cost Charges and Permit Fees policy, the City of Burnaby allows for the deferral of applicable City development cost charges and permit fees for non-market housing projects for a period of up to 24 months, commencing from the time of final development approval. This policy helps defer costs early in the development schedule which is generally the most difficult financial period prior to the generation of cash flow.

We also provide guidance on the engagement with our engineering and planning departments, as well as staff and Council, which ensures that the process is smooth and seamless.

The Mayor's Task Force Report also recommends supporting housing options at below market rates. Burnaby generates this funding through its density bonus program and advocates to senior levels of government for policy changes and increased funding for non-market housing. It also seeks partnerships with non-profit housing providers to increase the City's inventory of low-cost housing.

Conclusion:

Rental housing is important for the growing population of the City of Burnaby. There is a significantly low number of affordable rental housing units available and in turn, many of our most vulnerable citizens are left without appropriate options and must spend an exorbitant percentage of their income on shelter. The City of Burnaby works to ensure that housing affordability is a priority and that our residents are able to obtain safe, secure housing within their economic means.

Once again, Halston Hills Housing Co-operative has our full support.

Sincerely yours,

Mike Hurley, Mayor

City of Burnaby

(Presented on City of Burnaby Letterhead)



File No. 0400-01

January 12, 2021

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
c/o Redhouse Solutions
via email: jeannine@redhouse.solutions

Re: Letter of Support and Commitment for Frances Gardens Housing Cooperative: Seed Fund Application

The purpose of this letter is to provide CMHC with details of the support the district municipality of Sooke, both Council and Staff, is providing with respect to the above-mentioned project as a means to demonstrate our commitment to retaining, preserving and expanding affordable housing communities in our municipality.

Our approach to working with Frances Gardens Housing Cooperative

Frances Gardens Housing Cooperative is a 36-unit, not-for-profit, affordable townhouse style housing cooperative situated in the Sooke subdivision, at 6579 Throup Road, and which remains one of the few truly affordable, and vibrant, communities in this area, with an additional housing society, Knox Presbyterian, in the nearby vicinity.

Our approach is direct: work with the co-op to facilitate the development of new affordable units on their vacant land.

Sooke's Existing Housing Stock

A significant proportion of market rental stock is purpose-built rental housing, which provides greater security of tenure than secondary rental units because it is built to support long-term tenancies, with the units designed to remain in the rental market for the life of the building.

Securing affordable and appropriate housing is still one of the biggest challenges facing a substantial number of Sooke residents. And for our residents who are fortunate to already have housing security, finding ways to make room for others in a way that is sensitive to the needs of existing residents is also of paramount importance.

We **simply** cannot afford to **lose affordable housing stock**.

Interviews with non-market housing providers indicate there is a significant need for more below-market and affordable rental housing. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the demand for affordable housing for middle income households has not been higher within roughly the last 30 years. A trend in skyrocketing rents began in about 2014 and, although applicants are often paying over 40 to 50 percent of their income towards rent, many still do not meet the income thresholds set by BC Housing and must remain in market housing. Furthermore, stakeholders and business owners remarked in interviews how it is difficult to procure a workforce when housing costs keep existing employees insecure and potential employees unable to live in Sooke.



Thus, the number of occupied private dwellings in Sooke increased steadily but at a rate that is less than expected for its population growth during 2001-2016.

However, the community will be well-served by encouraging the continued growth of the number of apartment buildings with less than 5 storeys, which can be an affordable product type in any community. Additionally, where contextually appropriate, apartment buildings with more than 5 storeys could serve the District's growing population well as the demand for housing will likely require more density in certain areas of the community.

The District of Sooke currently has about 268 non-market housing units (roughly 5 percent of the total occupied housing). Affordable units are limited. Based on data and interviews/surveys with stakeholders, it is of particular concern that there are limited affordable units that are appropriate for one-person households, lone-parent households, and seniors that want to age-in-place. The expected increase in the share of the population aged 65 years and over in Sooke will likely increase the need for more seniors housing as well as Assisted Living.

Addressing non-market housing needs is imperative. With the aging population of Sooke and the increase in middle aged families, there is a scarcity of appropriate affordable housing. The expected increase of the District's population will lead to seniors being displaced due to assisted living and downsizing. Similarly, middle-aged families will likely downsize due to being "empty-nesters." This leaves a large portion of the population unable to manage their housing needs because those that cannot afford a home find spiking rent prices. Thus, this puts pressure on seniors and those most vulnerable to the community.

The housing needs also require services that will support those in need, such as homelessness outreach and prevention, women, and children at risk of violence, individuals with addiction and substance use, individuals with mental and physical health conditions and/or other challenges that puts them at a higher risk of homelessness.

Although the District has added "68 apartment units and 7 duplex dwelling units during 2011-2018", this is an insufficient amount of housing for the demands of the population.

Our Commitment to Frances Gardens Housing Cooperative

Rest assured; Frances Gardens Housing Cooperative has our full support in their efforts to secure the funding needed to add units to their valuable affordable housing complex.

Enhancing housing affordability is extremely important. A large variety of dwelling types are unaffordable to the community, such as a house being a median price of \$599,900 and only being a housing option for 18% of the district. With this unaffordability, renters will be forced to pay more as the supply for housing decreases and the demand for it increases.

Studies have found that Sooke's residentially parcelled zones are significantly low. Zones R1 and R2, making up 54 acres of land, are the most vacant zones. An increase in density to these zones would help the housing crisis in Sooke in terms of housing supply and resources. The zoned parcels could be a significant use to Sooke in the short run if they are used for housing, provided that no major land development issues affect these parcels. Studies have also found that 43 vacant R3 zoned parcels that may be a potential opportunity to provide duplex housing in the



short run. These under-utilized lands and vacant zoned parcels could provide a variety of housing types for the population of Sooke which would increase housing opportunities to the population.

Practical Support Steps

As we demonstrated during the process to approve the Know Presbyterian Project, we assist our not-for-profit partners by expediting our development and building permit processes to ensure the project gets supported to finalization.

We also provide guidance on the engagement with our engineering and planning departments, as well as staff and Council, which ensured that the process was smooth and seamless.

Conclusion

Rental housing is important for the growing population of Sooke. There is a significantly low number of rental houses and due to this, rent has spiked. The population of Sooke is becoming more elderly and it is imperative that we can maintain housing security. Housing affordability should be the main priority.

Once again, Frances Gardens has our full support.

Sincerely,

Maja Tait, Mayor



September 25, 2020

Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
700 Montreal Road
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0P7

Dear CMHC,

RE: Letter of Support and Commitment for Tyee Housing Cooperative: Co-Investment Fund Application and Project to Remediate 75 Units of Affordable Housing

The purpose of this letter is to provide CMHC with details of the support the City of Victoria, both Council and Staff, is providing with respect to the above-mentioned project as a means to demonstrate our commitment to retaining, preserving, and expanding affordable housing communities in our City.

Background

In July 2019, Council adopted Phase Two: Victoria Housing Strategy 2019 – 2022, which builds on Phase One of the strategy and Council's Strategic Plan. Phase Two (2019 – 2022) acts on learnings from the implementation of Phase One by outlining refinements to existing policies to maximize their effectiveness and adds a range of new and bolder approaches to achieve our goal of housing affordability and choice for all.

The purpose of this strategy is to define the City's role in the provision of affordable housing; to assess and forecast Victoria's affordable housing needs now and in the future, and to establish targets and tools to meet those needs. The strategy aims to be action-oriented, with each phase focusing on concrete measures implemented over a three-year period. Annual monitoring and updates will guide continual improvement. The stated goal of Phase One of the Victoria Housing Strategy was to increase the supply and diversity of non-market and market housing across the housing spectrum and throughout Victoria that meets the current and future needs of low and moderate income households.

The strategy provides guidance for housing policies and initiatives that meet residents' needs across the housing continuum, including non-market housing, affordable rental housing, market rental housing, and affordable or entry-level ownership. No one policy on its own is expected to address all housing needs and collaboration with senior levels of government is critical.

This housing shortage has resulted in low vacancy rates and rents that are putting some of our residents in really stressful situations. Renters who may need to move because of a change in life circumstance or a renovation to their building are finding it very difficult in a market with a rental vacancy rate that has hovered somewhere between 0.5% and 1.1%. For families who need larger units, this vacancy rate is even tighter; it is next to impossible to find a three-bedroom unit, let alone a four-bedroom. Living with this kind of stress puts unnecessary pressure on people, some of whom are already vulnerable.

This is not a special interest issue – **sixty-one percent** of Victoria’s population are renters. Focusing on Renters and their needs is important because renters make up 61% of the Victoria’s population. This proportion continues to increase in both Victoria and the region as home ownership becomes increasingly out of reach for even higher income earners.

Renters also typically have lower incomes than homeowners and this also highlights our push to retain the supply of existing affordable housing stock.

In the first phase of the Strategy described above, our actions were categorized under three broad strategic directions: Supply, Diversity, and Awareness.

In Phase Two, our categories have been expanded into five thematic areas:

- Focus on Renters
- Increase Supply
- Housing Choice
- Track and Improve
- New Ideas

We need to take care of the supply we already have by making sure it is safe and secure, and that tenants are protected from hazardous living situations or precarious housing.

A cornerstone of our commitment is the suite of new **actions** the City is outlining for consideration and exploration.

An extract of these specific actions include:

- The Renters Advisory Committee, which works at improving conditions and wellbeing for renters in the City of Victoria
- A Streamlined Development Permit Application Process, with a priority for non-market applications
- A Streamlined Building Permit Application Process, with a priority for non-market applications

Our approach to working with Tyee Housing Cooperative

One of our action items arising from our Phase Two has been:

24. Facilitate, incent, and support co-op housing

Tyee Housing Cooperative is a 75 unit, Arthur Ericson designed, not-for-profit, affordable townhouse style housing cooperative situated in the Victoria West subdivision, at 103 Wilson Road, and which remains one of the few truly affordable, and vibrant, communities in this area, while the surrounding area has seen a significant development process undertaken.

Tyee have moved forward to securing funding from the CMHC Co-Investment Fund, a Federal Housing Initiative that we support, and which we would like to see more and more projects access. We understand that the original application was submitted in June 2020 and we would certainly value the prioritization of this project due to the clearly demonstrated benefits to our City and the devastating impacts the removal of this quantity of affordable housing stock would have.

Victoria's Existing Housing Stock

A significant proportion of market rental stock is purpose-built rental housing, which provides greater security of tenure than secondary rental units because it is built to support long-term tenancies, with the units designed to remain in the rental market for the life of the building.

The majority of the City's own purpose-built rental stock was built in the 1960's and 1970's and our own resources are already stretched thin ensuring that we modernize and refresh these existing units.

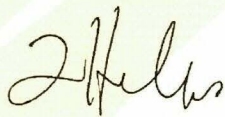
Securing affordable and appropriate housing is still one of the biggest challenges facing a substantial number of Victorians. And for Victorians who are fortunate to already have housing security, finding ways to make room for others in a way that is sensitive to the needs of existing residents is also of paramount importance.

We cannot afford to lose affordable housing stock.

Our Commitment to Tyee Housing Cooperative

Rest assured, Tyee Housing Cooperative has our full support in their efforts to secure the funding needed to modernize and upgrade their valuable affordable housing, and the City of Victoria would happily provide additional information in this regard if needed.

Sincerely Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Helps'.

Lisa Helps
Victoria Mayor