

MINUTES
HOUSING AFFORDABLE STANDING COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room 2
770 Vernon Avenue
November 10, 2025, at 10:30am

Present: Councillor Judy Brownoff, John Bourcet, Councillor Karen Harper, Mayor Dean Murdock (Chair), Councillor Teale Phelps Bondaroff, Virginia Holden, Vera Wynn-Williams

Staff: Carley Friesen, Senior Planning of Housing, Thomas Kempster, Planner of Housing, Pam Hartling, Housing Planning and Policy Manager, Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning

MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor K. Harper and Seconded by Councillor T. Phelps Bondaroff: "That the Minutes of the Housing Affordability Standing Committee meeting held May 26, 2025, be adopted as circulated."

RESULT: Carried 7 to 0

IN FAVOUR: Murdock, Harper, Brownoff, Phelps Bondaroff, Bourcet, Holden, Wynn-Williams

OPPOSED: None

CHAIRS REMARKS

Mayor Murdock read the Territorial Acknowledgement and the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Statement.

OVERVIEW OF NON-MARKET RENTALS

Thomas Kemster, Planner of Housing, presented a PowerPoint on non-market housing. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Councillor K. Harper advised that it would be helpful for Council to receive a consolidated report that clearly outlines what is actively underway across the housing file, so Council understands its current position and overall progress. The necessary information exists, and staff can compile the numbers. Staff noted that non-market projects follow a different pathway and that applications in this category are increasing. There have been lessons learned from processing these applications that can be applied to create efficiencies, as part of staff's ongoing process reviews. In this framework, staff are assessing opportunities for increased delegation, and Council may consider broader use of pre-zoning for additional housing types. Staff plan to bring a Housing Progress Report to Council in 2026.
- Staff noted challenges caused by the loss of institutional lands, but there have been potential opportunities to acquire these provincial properties. While we do not maintain a full public inventory of Saanich-owned lands, the Lands Division conducts reviews as needed, though available municipal lands are limited
- On project counting and incentives, staff confirmed that non-market units at Nigel Valley and UVic student housing will be reported to the Province at the building permit stage to be included in the provincial housing targets. Not all non-market projects receive automatic exemptions; however, groups can apply for municipal tax exemption programs. Staff are

regularly receiving inquiries from seniors' societies and will continue to promote and encourage these opportunities.

- Staff noted that development permit volumes have tripled.
- J. Bourcet highlighted that complex building designs can lead to overlapping and conflicting requirements, particularly where BC Housing's affordability regulations conflict with municipal requirements. Staff are working to minimize redundancies and improve alignment while maintaining flexibility such as parking requirements.
- With respect to supported housing, staff confirmed it is considered within the same overall framework and is eligible for the same municipal programs, supports, and prioritization. Alignment with community housing needs remains a priority. Family sized units are a notable need and are supported by the OCP. Given our dependence on senior government funding, staff are prioritizing what's emerging in the Housing Progress Report while continuing to assess needs across the region and track external funding.

MOVED by Councillor T. Phelps Bondaroff and Seconded by Councillor K. Harper: "That the Housing Affordability Standing Committee receive for information."

RESULT: Carried 7 to 0

IN FAVOUR: Murdock, Harper, Brownoff, Phelps Bondaroff, Bourcet, Holden, Wynn-Williams

OPPOSED: None

PRIORITIES FOR PHASE 2 AND PHASE 3 ACTIONS IN THE HOUSING STRATEGY

Carley Friesen, Senior Planner of Housing, presented a PowerPoint on the priorities for phase 2 and phase 3 actions in the housing strategy. The following was noted in response to questions and during committee discussion:

- Staff advised that the Province's short-term rental program is expected to come before Council in the new year. Staff recommend aligning Saanich's approach with provincial direction. There is a need to bring forward clearer expectations for housing on institutional lands through zoning, while avoiding creating public expectations as the District does not own these lands. Staff will continue to encourage senior government participation and support.
- Staff are actively tracking and engaging with grant programs. Within the financial plan, infrastructure remains a priority, and all proposals will be assessed for legislative compliance. There is nothing for Council decision in the short term. Staff continue targeted engagements with the development community. Engineering have also reached out to developers regarding Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing.
- J. Brownoff emphasized the importance of an aggressive plan supported by investments. V. Holden highlighted land-use economics, noting that amenity and storage expectations can significantly affect project costs. She advised against layering too many policies and opportunities to use incentives, particularly in major rezonings associated with commercial developments.
- J. Bourcet stated that many priorities currently lean toward non-market housing and cautioned against losing sight of market housing supply. He noted that adding amenities without nuance may limit developer flexibility and recommended an economic strategy with oversight. He also pointed out the conflict between protecting and promoting rental housing and the impacts of tenant assistance policies during redevelopment. To improve processes and timelines, he encouraged a shift toward incentive-based approaches, clearer staff support to help developers meet housing goals, and a review of development permit guidelines that may be extending processes and reducing certainty.

MOVED by Councillor T. Phelps Bondaroff and Seconded by V. Holden: “That the Housing Affordability Standing Committee recommends that Council approve Phase 2 and Phase 3 Actions in the Housing Strategy.”

RESULT: Carried 7 to 0

IN FAVOUR: Murdock, Harper, Brownoff, Phelps Bondaroff, Bourcet, Holden, Wynn-Williams

OPPOSED: None

ADJOURNMENT

MOVED by V. Wynn-Williams and Seconded by J. Bourcet: “That the meeting be adjourned.”

RESULT: Carried 7 to 0

IN FAVOUR: Murdock, Harper, Brownoff, Phelps Bondaroff, Bourcet, Holden, Wynn-Williams

OPPOSED: None

The meeting adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting date will be determined at a later date.

Mayor Dean Murdock, Chair

I hereby certify these minutes are accurate.

Sydney Murphy, Committee Clerk