



# BC Provincial Election Campaign

## VOTERS GUIDE





# INTRODUCTION

**Residents of British Columbia will go to the polls on May 9, 2017 and we invite you to join us to “Make Housing Central” for all candidates in the upcoming provincial election.**



There is no question that affordable housing is the single most important issue that all candidates, from all parties, should be addressing in this election campaign.

As part of our ongoing advocacy for our members, the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) and the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC) have joined together under the umbrella of “Housing Central”. Our focus during the campaign will be to engage and educate candidates on the need for safe, secure and affordable housing and to support our members in connecting with the political parties and their candidates.

The lead-up to election day is a time for action – you can help raise awareness of the important roles that non-profit and co-op housing providers play in every community as well as the challenges currently faced by the sector, and by our members.

So what can you do to help us? We have put together this guide to provide information on the current realities regarding affordable housing in your community. And we are asking you to engage with candidates in your riding and ask them for a higher level commitment to address the issues surrounding the availability of, and access to, non-profit and co-operative housing.

We at Housing Central will be focusing our time and energy in reaching out and sharing our thoughts and concerns with candidates across the province and we need your help in doing so. We appreciate you taking the time to read this election guide and assisting where you can. Please do not hesitate to contact us at Housing Central if you have questions, concerns or you require additional support.

Thank you for being involved – your participation and support are critical to our shared success in being a very loud voice for affordable housing.

**Kishone Roy**

Chief Executive Officer  
BC Non-Profit Housing Association

**Thom Armstrong**

Executive Director  
Co-operative Housing Federation of BC

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# CAMPAIGN PRIORITIES

We are committed to advocating for our members and have been busy this past year connecting with elected officials at all levels of government to share thoughts and concerns on your behalf.

Housing Central has met with leadership of the provincial parties to share our research and ask them to consider our priority policy requests in the development of their housing platforms and policies.

The Affordable Housing Plan, released in 2017 by Housing Central, provides an evidence-based approach to identify the extent of affordability, supply and maintenance issues, with recommended policy solutions.

## We are calling on the next government to:

- ✔ **Increase the supply of affordable non-profit and co-operative housing in partnership with the Federal government and the community housing sector**
- ✔ **Develop a renters grant to solve the affordability gap for renters living in unaffordable units**
- ✔ **Assist communities in maintaining and repairing their existing supply so that it is not lost**
- ✔ **Address homelessness through new investments and coordination of funding and access to housing for the most vulnerable**
- ✔ **Partner with communities to pursue shared-equity and other community-based housing**

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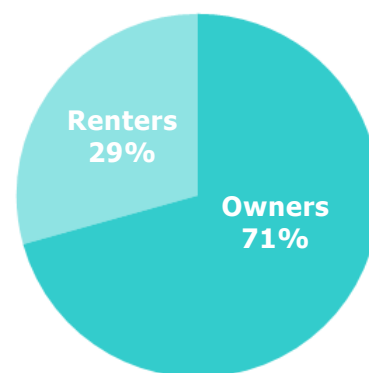
Summary data tables and specific policy recommendations can be found in the BC Affordable Housing Plan at [www.housingcentral.ca](http://www.housingcentral.ca)





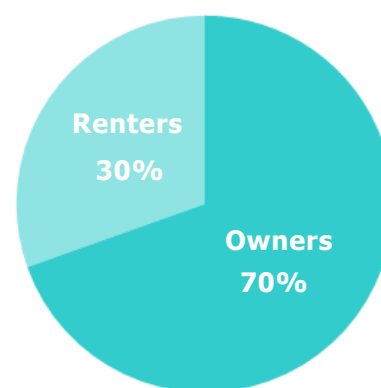
## HOUSING IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Total Households	<b>1,764,635</b>
Number of Renter Households	<b>517,430</b>
Percentage of Renter Households	<b>29%</b>
Number of Renters Spending More Than 30% of Pre-Tax Income on Rent	<b>45%</b>
Number of Renters Spending More Than 50% of Pre-Tax Income on Rent	<b>23%</b>



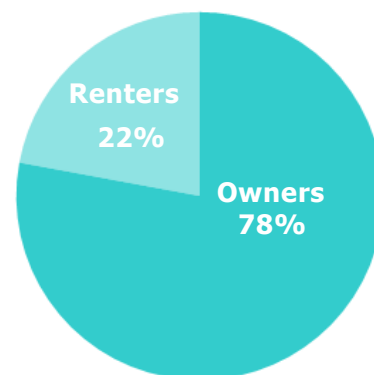
## HOUSING IN THE CITY OF COURTENAY

Total Households	<b>10,890</b>
Number of Renter Households	<b>3,315</b>
Percentage of Renter Households	<b>30%</b>
Number of Renters Spending More Than 30% of Pre-Tax Income on Rent	<b>53%</b>
Number of Renters Spending More Than 50% of Pre-Tax Income on Rent	<b>28%</b>



## HOUSING IN THE TOWN OF COMOX

Total Households	<b>5,975</b>
Number of Renter Households	<b>1,320</b>
Percentage of Renter Households	<b>22%</b>
Number of Renters Spending More Than 30% of Pre-Tax Income on Rent	<b>45%</b>
Number of Renters Spending More Than 50% of Pre-Tax Income on Rent	<b>16%</b>



Further details and information on the methodology behind the rental housing statistics are available through: "Canadian Rental Housing Index." BCNPHA, 2014, [www.rentalhousingindex.ca](http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca)

### Homelessness

In 2013, 157 persons in the Comox Valley were identified as homeless in a study undertaken by the Comox Valley Coalition to End Homelessness. <http://www.cvhousing.ca/2016pitreport/>

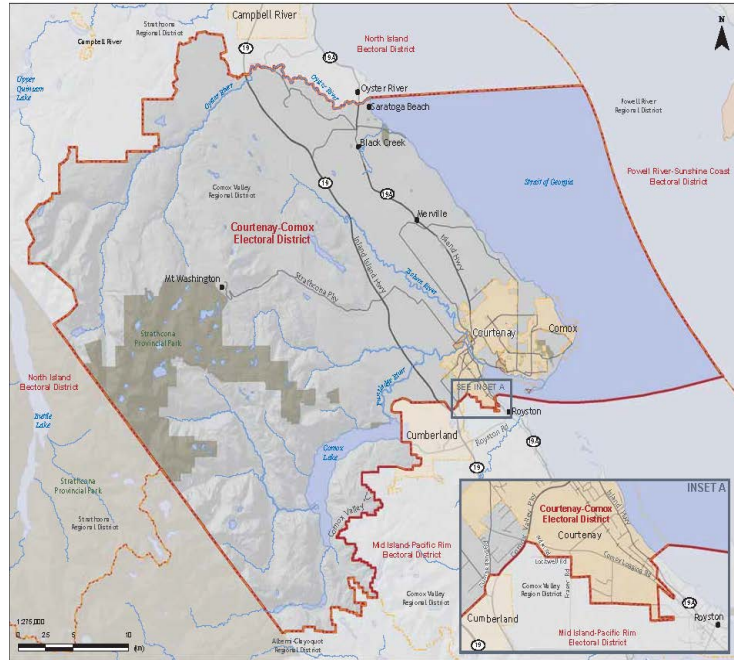
# CANDIDATES IN YOUR RIDING

**JIM BENNINGER** [www.jimbenninger.ca](http://www.jimbenninger.ca)  
BC Liberals

**RONNA-RAE LEONARD** [www.ronnaraeleonard.ca](http://www.ronnaraeleonard.ca)  
BC NDP

**LEAH McCULLOCH** [www.leahmcculloch.ca](http://www.leahmcculloch.ca)  
BC Conservatives

**ERNIE SELLENTIN** [www.bcgreens.ca/crc](http://www.bcgreens.ca/crc)  
BC Greens



# HOUSING CENTRAL MEMBERS IN THE RIDING

## Affordable Housing Societies (units)

- Barrett and Mak Programs Inc.
- Campbell River and District Association for Community Living (4)
- Canadian Mental Health Association - Mid Island Brand (9)
- Communitas Supportive Care Society (4)
- Comox Valley and Courtenay Kiwanis Village Society (68)
- Comox Valley Transition Society (11)
- Courtenay Low Income Housing Society (32)
- d'Esterre Senior Citizens Housing Society (47)
- Glacier View Lodge Society (102)
- M'akola Housing Society (55)
- Salvation Army Comox Valley (14)
- St. John the Divine Abbeyfield House (14)
- Valley Integration to Active Living Society (10)



# WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP MAKE HOUSING CENTRAL?

**During the lead-up to the May 9th provincial election, we are asking our members to take action in helping us to ensure that affordable housing is addressed by candidates and that provincial parties understand and are committed to addressing the challenges faced by housing providers.**

## HERE'S HOW YOU CAN HELP:

### 1 Engage with your candidates

Be courteous and respectful. Be clear and concise in your contact with all candidates, regardless of your political leanings.

Reach out to all the candidates in your local riding to understand what their position is on affordable housing.

If your Co-op or non-profit housing organization has specific issues or concerns, bring them to the candidates attention.

Contact your candidates: write a letter, email, or call their campaign office. We have provided contact information for your local candidates.

Attend an all-candidates meeting and ask questions about what your candidates and their party will do to increase the supply of affordable housing and to make it more accessible to people who need it. We have provided examples of questions that you may wish to ask your candidates.

### 2 Engage with your local community

Speak with your family, friends and neighbors to ensure that they are aware of the issues facing non-profit housing providers and co-operatives.

Make sure your tenants know how to register to vote. Encourage people to vote by putting up non-partisan posters in your housing development.

Invite candidates to meet with your board of directors or your neighborhood group.

If you are active on social media, follow the issue of affordable housing on Facebook and Twitter, and contribute to the discussions online.

### 3 After the election

Follow your local campaign, or use Election BC, to review voting results and know who your elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) is.

Write to your newly-elected MLA to offer your congratulations and introduce yourself and your housing development. Offer to meet with them once they have settled into their office.

Keep in touch to remind them about the commitments they made during the campaign and keep them accountable.

Invite them to meet with your board of directors, or community organization, when they are available, to follow up on actions they can take to address affordable housing issues.



## ELECTION KEY MESSAGES

- ✔ The lack of affordable housing, combined with high-market rents are a problem for low-income and low-wage people in every city and town across our province.
- ✔ The non-profit and co-operative housing sector is the solution to the affordability crisis. Non-profits and co-ops make sure the province's most vulnerable citizens and our workforce have a safe, secure place to call home. We help house people with low incomes, seniors, families, people with disabilities, women fleeing violence, and people vulnerable to addictions and mental health issues.
- ✔ Low-income households in co-operative housing receive rent support under federal housing agreements. With those agreements expiring in the near future, those rent supports also expire. While the provincial government has identified short-term support for 22 co-ops, additional funds are required to keep all low-income co-op members in their homes.
- ✔ The affordable housing crisis can't be solved with one-time measures. For the first time, all three levels of government have made commitments to affordable housing and there is a real opportunity to partner with us to ensure that we have a strong and stable housing supply in the community sector.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOUR LOCAL CANDIDATES

- 1 What role do you think the provincial government should play in developing safe, liveable and affordable housing?
- 2 Through non-profits and co-ops, the community has significant assets to contribute to affordable housing. How can the province best leverage these assets to build new affordable housing?
- 3 How will your party work with other levels of government to get new affordable housing built in the province?
- 4 What do you see as the main barriers to creating and sustaining an adequate supply of affordable housing in our riding? How do you propose to address these barriers?
- 5 In what ways will you personally advocate for more affordable housing commitments? Within your party? Within government?
- 6 When did you last raise the issue of affordable housing within your party or within the legislature?
- 7 Over the next 10 years, operating agreements for co-ops and many non-profit units will expire, leaving operators without funding and low-income members without rent assistance. What will your government do to save our existing low-rent housing stock?
- 8 Has your party set targets for the amount of affordable housing to be developed each year? If so, what are they and what will you do to ensure that these targets are met? If not, will you work within your party to develop targets?



# WE ARE HERE TO HELP AT [www.housingcentral.ca](http://www.housingcentral.ca)

## An Affordable Housing Plan for BC

Housing Central has recently released “An Affordable Housing Plan for BC”, an evidence-based approach to identify the extent of affordability, supply and maintenance issues, with recommended policy solutions. This comprehensive analysis of the province’s housing crisis can be found at [www.housingcentral.ca](http://www.housingcentral.ca)

## Engaging with your candidate and in your community

- ✓ Sample letters and emails to candidates
- ✓ Sample letters to the editor for your local newspaper
- ✓ Sample questions for all-candidate meetings

## Platform analysis

During the campaign, Housing Central will review and provide analysis on the party platform and policies related to affordable housing, co-operatives and non-profit housing. Additionally, we will review and report on debates between the party leaders.

## Detailed information on housing and affordability

BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) has undertaken comprehensive research studies related to housing that provide evidence of the significant need to address affordability and the creation of new housing units.



**The Canadian Rental Housing Index** provides a detailed analysis of the affordability and suitability of rental housing for various income groups in more than 800 municipalities and regions across Canada. Based on 2011 census data, the index will be updated with 2016 data late in 2017. The index can be found at [www.rentalhousingindex.ca](http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca)



**“Our Home, Our Future:** Projections of Rental Housing Demand and Core Housing Need” is the first ever publicly available provincial and regional projections of rental housing demand and core housing need for BC and its regional districts, looking ahead to the year 2036. The projections tell us what needs to be achieved and can be found at [www.bcnpha.ca/research/bcnpha-rental-projections-to-2036](http://www.bcnpha.ca/research/bcnpha-rental-projections-to-2036)



**You Hold the Key:** Low-income co-op members in BC are caught in a housing crunch. You hold the key to help keep rental subsidies that make housing affordable. The You Hold The Key Campaign is a joint partnership of the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHFBC) and CHF Canada dedicated to protecting our most vulnerable members. More information on the campaign can be found at [www.chf.bc.ca/yhtk/index](http://www.chf.bc.ca/yhtk/index)





## Rental Housing Coalition Members

The Rental Housing Coalition includes stakeholders from local government, development and real estate industries, co-operatives and non-profit rental housing groups, who work to seek the cooperation of all levels of government in addressing issues related to rental housing. Members include:

- Aboriginal Housing Management Association [www.ahmc-bc.org](http://www.ahmc-bc.org)
- BC CEO Network [www.beceonetwork.ca](http://www.beceonetwork.ca)
- BC Non-Profit Housing Association [www.bcnpha.ca](http://www.bcnpha.ca)
- BC Seniors Living Association [www.bcsla.ca](http://www.bcsla.ca)
- BC Society of Transition Houses [www.bcsth.ca](http://www.bcsth.ca)
- CHF BC [www.chf.bc.ca](http://www.chf.bc.ca)
- Generation Squeeze [www.gensqueeze.ca](http://www.gensqueeze.ca)
- Inclusion BC [www.inclusionbc.org](http://www.inclusionbc.org)
- Landlord BC [www.landlordbc.ca](http://www.landlordbc.ca)
- Ready to Rent [www.readytorentbc.org](http://www.readytorentbc.org)
- Tri-Cities Homelessness & Housing Task Group [www.tricityhomelessness.ca](http://www.tricityhomelessness.ca)
- Urban Development Institute [www.udi.bc.ca](http://www.udi.bc.ca)
- Vancity [www.vancity.com](http://www.vancity.com)
- Vancouver Collective House Network [www.vancollectivehousenetwork.blogspot.ca](http://www.vancollectivehousenetwork.blogspot.ca)

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For further information on the BC provincial election, polling stations and dates and times for voting, please contact Elections BC.

[www.elections.bc.ca](http://www.elections.bc.ca)

250-387-5305 toll-free 1-800-661-8683

[electionsbc@elections.bc.ca](mailto:electionsbc@elections.bc.ca)

