



# BC Municipal Election Campaign

## COMMUNITY GUIDE





# INTRODUCTION

**British Columbians will go to the polls on October 20, 2018 to elect Mayors and Councillors in their communities. There is no question that affordable housing is one of the most important issues to be addressed and we are asking candidates to “Make Housing Central” in their campaigns, and asking our members to hold them accountable.**



BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA) represents over 600 non-profit housing providers across British Columbia; the Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHF BC) represents 250 co-op housing providers. Collectively, we represent almost 100,000 households in the province. As part of our ongoing advocacy for our members, BCNPHA and CHF BC have joined together under the umbrella of Housing Central to ensure that the facts on housing and affordability in your community are known and shared.

The lead-up to election day is a time for action. We will be reaching out throughout the campaign with information for our membership and for candidates and encouraging engagement between the two groups.

We are asking our members to engage with candidates so there is a common understanding of the important roles that non-profit and co-op housing providers play in communities, and additionally, the challenges currently faced by our members and the community sector.

We are asking candidates to review this guide to understand the current realities regarding affordable rental housing in their communities and commit to our Make Housing Central Pledge. Furthermore, we are asking you to talk with our members and commit to addressing the issues surrounding the availability of, and access to, non-profit and co-operative housing.

We appreciate you taking the time to read this election guide. Please do not hesitate to contact us at Housing Central if you have questions or you require additional information.

Thank you for your commitment in working with us toward shared success in addressing the challenges of ensuring safe, livable, and affordable housing in communities for all British Columbians.

**Thom Armstrong**

Executive Director  
Co-operative Housing Federation of BC

**Jill Atkey**

Chief Executive Officer  
BC Non-Profit Housing Association



# 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 their behalf.

**Our primary focus of this campaign is to ensure that civic candidates:**

- ✓ **Understand housing affordability in their municipality and/or region**
- ✓ **Commit to Making Housing Central in their campaign by signing on to our Pledge**
- ✓ **Understand what municipal tools exist to support the development of new affordable housing units and retention of existing affordable units**
- ✓ **Address homelessness that may exist in their community**

# CAMPAIGN 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 one of the solutions 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.
- ✓ Many co-ops (50 in Vancouver alone) are on land leased from municipalities or private landlords. Their leases must be renewed to provide long-term security of tenure on fair and reasonable terms.
- ✓ 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.

# CAMPAIGN CONTACT

**Diana Dilworth**

Government Relations Manager, Housing Central

**email:** [diana@bcnpha.ca](mailto:diana@bcnpha.ca) **phone:** 778-945-2170

[@bcnpha](#)

[@chfbc](#)

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## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC BENEFITS OF SUPPORTING AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN COMMUNITIES



### Family stability:

With nearly one in five renter households in BC spending over half of their income on shelter, affordable housing is central for family stability. When households spend too much of their income on housing, they end up sacrificing other necessities such as food, clothing, and childcare.



### Education:

Affordable housing is crucial for the education outcomes of children as well as adults. Studies have shown a link between stable, affordable housing and better grades, higher educational attainment, and ultimately higher incomes for low-income individuals and families.



### Health:

There is a range of beneficial health outcomes associated with affordable housing. Research has shown a strong link between the condition of housing and physical health outcomes of individuals. Adequate and affordable housing is associated with better birth outcomes for children, as well as reduced cardiovascular disease, depression, and mortality.



### Social connection:

Affordable housing options are often located in more remote areas of communities, disconnected from schools, transit, community centres, social networks and other amenities. A lack of affordable housing can lead to social exclusion of vulnerable groups and result in greater marginalisation or disconnection.



### Job creation and spending:

The rental housing sector in BC has enormous benefits for job growth and spending in the economy. A 2013 study by LandlordBC and KPMG Canada found that BC's rental housing sector contributed \$10.60 billion to Canada's GDP and generated 82,851 full-time equivalent jobs across BC.

High housing costs impact where workers can locate and increasingly this has led to greater difficulty/increased challenges for employers to attract and retain labour. Cleaners, restaurant workers, bus drivers, teachers, nurses, police officers and other professions all require affordable housing to make thriving and functioning economies.



### Cost savings:

It is cheaper to invest in affordable housing than do nothing. Homelessness alone is estimated to cost Canadians \$7 billion annually, including \$1 billion per year in British Columbia. Research has found that for every \$10 spent on housing and supports for those who are chronically homeless, \$21.72 is saved in costs related to health care, the justice system, shelters, and other social supports. While building affordable housing is expensive, not building housing is more expensive.



## WHAT CAN CANDIDATES DO TO HELP MAKE HOUSING CENTRAL?

During the lead-up to the October 20th municipal elections, we are asking candidates to take action in committing to address affordable housing as a priority.

### 1 Engage with our members

Reach out to our members in your community to understand what their issues and concerns are. A list of members in your riding has been provided in this guide.

### 2 Understand the municipal role in addressing housing and affordability issues

The Housing Central website provides valuable evidenced-based resources to help you understand housing affordability in your community and across our province. We encourage you to take the time to review data related to your community and region and take the Make Housing Central Pledge found on the [www.housingcentral.ca](http://www.housingcentral.ca) website. Share your commitment on social media using the [#MakeHousingCentral](https://twitter.com/MakeHousingCentral).

### 3 After the election

Familiarize yourself with the co-operatives and non-profit housing providers in your riding. Reach out and introduce yourself and confirm your commitment to addressing affordable housing issues on their behalf. You can also connect with them at our regional events and annual Housing Central Conference.

## WHAT CAN HOUSING CENTRAL MEMBERS DO TO HELP MAKE HOUSING CENTRAL?

During the lead-up to the October 20th municipal elections, we are asking our members to participate in their local civic elections.

### 1 Engage with your candidates

Reach out to the candidates in your community to understand what their position is related to housing and affordability. Write an email, make a phone call and engage with candidates when they knock on your door.

Attend an all-candidates meeting and ask questions about what they will do to increase the supply of, and retain existing affordable housing in your community.

### 2 Engage with your local community

Speak with your family, friends and neighbours to ensure that they are aware of the issues facing non-profit housing providers and co-operatives. Make sure your residents know when and where to vote.

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 and know who your elected officials are. Write to your newly elected officials to offer congratulations and introduce yourself and your housing developments.

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



# TAKE THE MAKE HOUSING CENTRAL PLEDGE

During the lead-up to the October 20<sup>th</sup> civic elections, we are asking all candidates across the province to Make Housing Central in their campaigns.

Candidates can show their support for affordable housing by taking the pledge to Make Housing Central. By taking the pledge, you commit to:

- ✓ **Contribute public land to the community housing sector for new affordable homes**
- ✓ **Protect existing affordable housing supply through retention and replacement policies**
- ✓ **Zone existing and new rental developments as rental only**
- ✓ **Streamline municipal permitting and rezoning processes to fast-track development of affordable rental housing**
- ✓ **Pursue partnerships with local non-profits, co-operatives and other stakeholders in the community housing sector to create new affordable housing developments**

Visit [www.housingcentral.ca](http://www.housingcentral.ca) to learn more about these actions and to take the pledge. Once you've signed on, share your commitment on social media using the [#MakeHousingCentral](https://twitter.com/MakeHousingCentral).





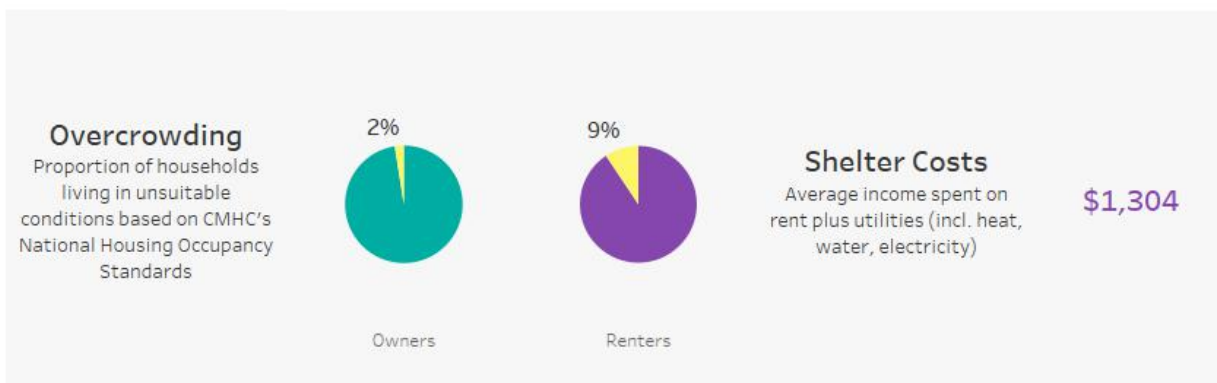
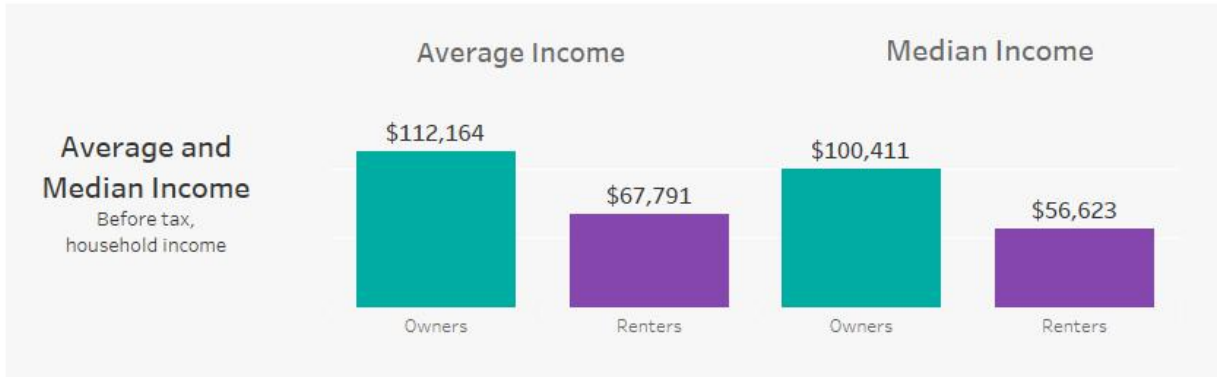
## Squamish

Number of Owner Households

5,265

Number of Renter Households

1,975



All data sourced from Statistics Canada, 2016 Census. Additional details found at [www.rentalhousingindex.ca](http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca)



# HOUSING CENTRAL MEMBERS IN THE COMMUNITY

## **Non-Profit Housing Providers (194 units)**

Howe Sound Women's Centre Society

Sea to Sky Community Services Society

Squamish Helping Hands Society

Squamish Senior Citizens Home Society







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

## An Affordable Housing Plan for BC



### An Affordable Housing Plan for BC

Presented by the BC Rental Housing Coalition

An Affordable Housing Plan for BC is the first-ever publicly available provincial and regional plan for solving the affordable housing crisis. It quantifies the number of affordable rental homes that need to be built in the province, and outlines an income support plan for individuals and families struggling to pay rent. The provincial plan and regional breakouts can be found at [www.housingcentral.ca](http://www.housingcentral.ca)

## Engaging with your candidate and in your community

- ✓ Sample letters and emails for candidates
- ✓ Sample questions for candidates at your doorstep
- ✓ Sample questions for all-candidates meetings

## Detailed information on housing and affordability

Housing Central has undertaken comprehensive research studies related to housing that provide evidence of the significant need to address affordability and create 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-demand-projections-to-2036](http://www.bcnpha.ca/research/bcnpha-rental-demand-projections-to-2036)

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)

