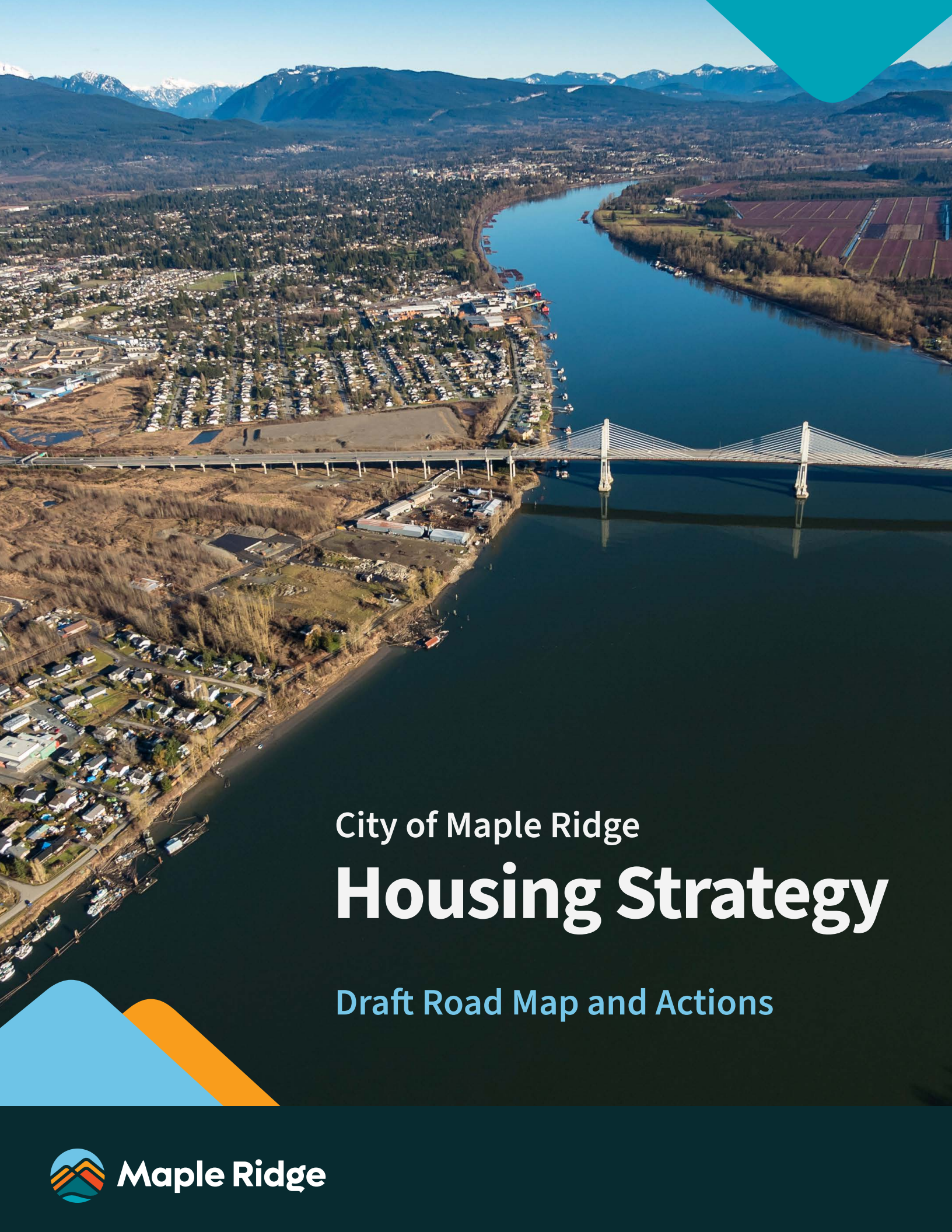


An aerial photograph of a city, likely Maple Ridge, showing a large river flowing through it. A prominent cable-stayed bridge spans the river. The city is densely packed with houses and commercial buildings. In the background, there are large mountains with patches of snow under a clear blue sky. The image is framed by teal and orange geometric shapes in the corners.

City of Maple Ridge Housing Strategy

Draft Road Map and Actions



Maple Ridge



Prepared for

The City of Maple Ridge

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Executive Summary

The 2024 Housing Strategy updates the City's approach to housing so that the City can equitably meet the needs of current residents, accommodate projected growth, and better address the current housing crisis. With new legislative requirements from the Province of BC, municipalities in Metro Vancouver and beyond are required to significantly reconsider land use on single-family lots and around transit stations. The 2024 Housing Strategy provides a much-needed update to the 2014 Housing Action Plan. The City also updated its Housing Need Report (HNR) concurrently with the development of this strategy.

The HNR indicates that the current housing crisis is impacting a cross-sectional of demographics in Maple Ridge, including those who rent, own, live in non-market (subsidized) housing, or are experiencing homelessness. The HNR reports that the income-to-housing cost disparity in the City is continuing to increase, low rental vacancy rates are restricting housing choices, and ownership tenure continues to drive development even while being inaccessible to growing numbers of current and prospective residents.

The HNR highlights the following key issues that this Strategy seeks to address:

- **High Growth Rates:** Maple Ridge welcomed 8,200 new households between 2006 to 2021 (15-year period) and is projected to see the addition of 8,600 new households between 2023 and 2033 (10-year period).
- **Need for Purpose-Built Rentals:** While the overall proportion of renters remains low compared to the region (which is 37.8% renter households), the high-cost of ownership and a growing gap between income and cost of ownership are likely to drive more demand for rental housing given the relatively low number of purpose-built rentals and a low vacancy rate.

- **Need for Affordable (Below-Market) Housing:** The gap between the cost of owning and renting and what people can afford is growing. Maple Ridge needs approximately 2,000 new affordable units over the next twenty years to address this underlying need; about half of these should be affordable rentals, while the remaining should be a mix of affordable and attainable ownership housing forms.
- **Equity Considerations and Seniors:** Equity-deserving groups (communities that experience significant collective barriers in participating in society) are at higher risk of being in core housing need. Maple Ridge is also an aging community, with seniors (65+) projected to account for 18% of the total population by 2028, and by 2033, the total population of seniors is projected to reach 4,666. Seniors, more often than other demographic groups, require housing that meets specific standards.
- **OCP Capacity Considerations:** Current zoning capacity for Maple Ridge exceeds the required need for capacity based on Housing Needs Report requirements. The City's planning efforts should therefore focus on directing growth within the City's Urban Development Area, particularly around the key growth areas within the city centre. By concentrating growth within established areas, such as the downtown centre and near transit facilities, the City can strive to create complete neighbourhoods that ensure a high quality of life by having a density of amenities, services, and employment and recreational opportunities within walking distance. This approach also ensures that the City and the development community can leverage existing infrastructure, such as waterlines, sewers, and roads, to create more a cost-effective and sustainable City over the long-term.

To ensure everyone who wants to call Maple Ridge home can realistically do so, the 2024 Housing Strategy focuses on the following five key strategies:



Prioritize Needed Forms of Housing

- Develop a transparent, sliding-scale incentive program that supports housing across the housing network
- Review and expand density bonusing policy
- Determine feasibility of implementing inclusionary zoning
- Update Revitalization Tax Exemption Program



Strengthen Renter Protections

- Update tenant relocation assistance policy and modular park home redevelopment tenant assistance policy
- Monitor need for a strata conversion bylaw
- Explore development of rental replacement policies
- Explore use of residential rental tenure zoning (RRTZ) in key areas



Address Barriers to Development

- Implement pre-zoning
- Streamline development approvals process



Promote Equity and Inclusion Initiatives

- Partner with organizations addressing homelessness to strengthen services
- Adopt adaptable housing standards
- Strengthen connections with newcomer and Indigenous housing providers
- Support housing initiatives for under-served demographics



Advocacy and Education

- Promote new funding for housing to developers and the public
- Advocate to senior government for resources to support growth and affordability

These strategies are intended to strengthen the City's response to housing issues, align with new provincial requirements around land use, and support municipal innovation in tackling the housing crisis.

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1 Introduction

Maple Ridge is in the grip of an acute housing crisis that is being felt across Metro Vancouver and Southwestern BC. This crisis is not just a statistic but a reality that is impacting all demographics and threatening the quality of life for current and future Maple Ridge residents. Between 2006 and 2021, median household incomes in Maple Ridge, which are higher than regional averages, increased by 22%. However, monthly rental and home sale prices rose by approximately 80% and 250%, respectively. This disparity between income and housing costs is particularly impacting at-risk residents, such low-income households and other equity-deserving demographics.

Since completing the 2021 HNR, the City has completed and is currently undertaking several housing initiatives to increase housing supply, affordability, and inclusivity, and to streamline the development approval process. This work includes but is not limited to the following:

- Updated the Zoning Bylaw to align with new Provincial legislation on Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing (Bill-44) and Transit-Oriented Areas (Bill-47) (2024)
- Reducing off-street parking requirements for certain properties in the CBD (Ongoing)
- An update to the Tenant Relocation Policy (2023)
- An update to Density Bonus Policy for affordable housing (2019)
- Updated the Minor Development Variance Permit Delegation Bylaw No. 7952-2023) to ensure it useable by staff and is easily understandable by the development community (2023)
- An update to Community Amenity Contribution program (2022)
- Expanding the Supportive Recovery Housing in Residential Areas program (2021)
- Enhanced flexibility of the Detached Garden Suite program (2019)



1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

The purpose of the 2024 Maple Ridge Housing Strategy is to outline how housing can be made more affordable and inclusive. This Housing Strategy creates a framework for how Maple Ridge can increase housing affordability, incorporate recently introduced provincial legislation, reduce development constraints, and increase the supply of rental and other priority forms of housing.

The Strategy focuses on ensuring that all elements of the Housing Network are considered, and that municipal policy initiatives focus on providing a balance of all housing types, with an emphasis on those that may need the most support. The Housing Network is a concept that demonstrates the full range of types and tenures of housing, including seasonal shelters and homeownership. As an illustration, the Network has two purposes — to provide readers with an “at-a-glance” look at the different kinds of housing that comprise a complete community and as a tool to identify gaps in the housing market. The Network has been envisioned to supplement the concept of a Housing Continuum, as the linear nature of a continuum may assume upward mobility is desirable. The Network reflects the diversity of choice that is needed to support changing life circumstances; households can move around the Network as needed — there is no determined pathway and no desired end goal.



Figure 1. The Housing Network

1.2 Municipal Role in Housing

Municipalities play an active role in housing policy and development to ensure the housing needs of diverse demographics are met. Municipalities will continue to rely on longstanding tools that guide what is built and how it is built include: Official Community Plans, land use bylaws, design guidelines, and policy strategies continue to form the basis for long-term land use in communities. However, municipalities are also exploring innovative ways to increase housing supply, such as establishing Community Land Trusts, partnering with community organizations and non-profits to activate under-utilized lands, and using development financial tools to ensure demand for infrastructure, servicing, and community amenities is met.

Some common municipal roles in the housing sphere include:

- Facilitate development through planning and approvals
- Regulate and incentivize needed forms of housing
- Invest in priority housing forms through land contributions and grants
- Monitor housing trends (e.g. through Housing Needs Reports)
- Advocate to senior government for additional resources
- Educate the public on housing needs and gaps
- Partner to support needed housing and innovations in housing delivery

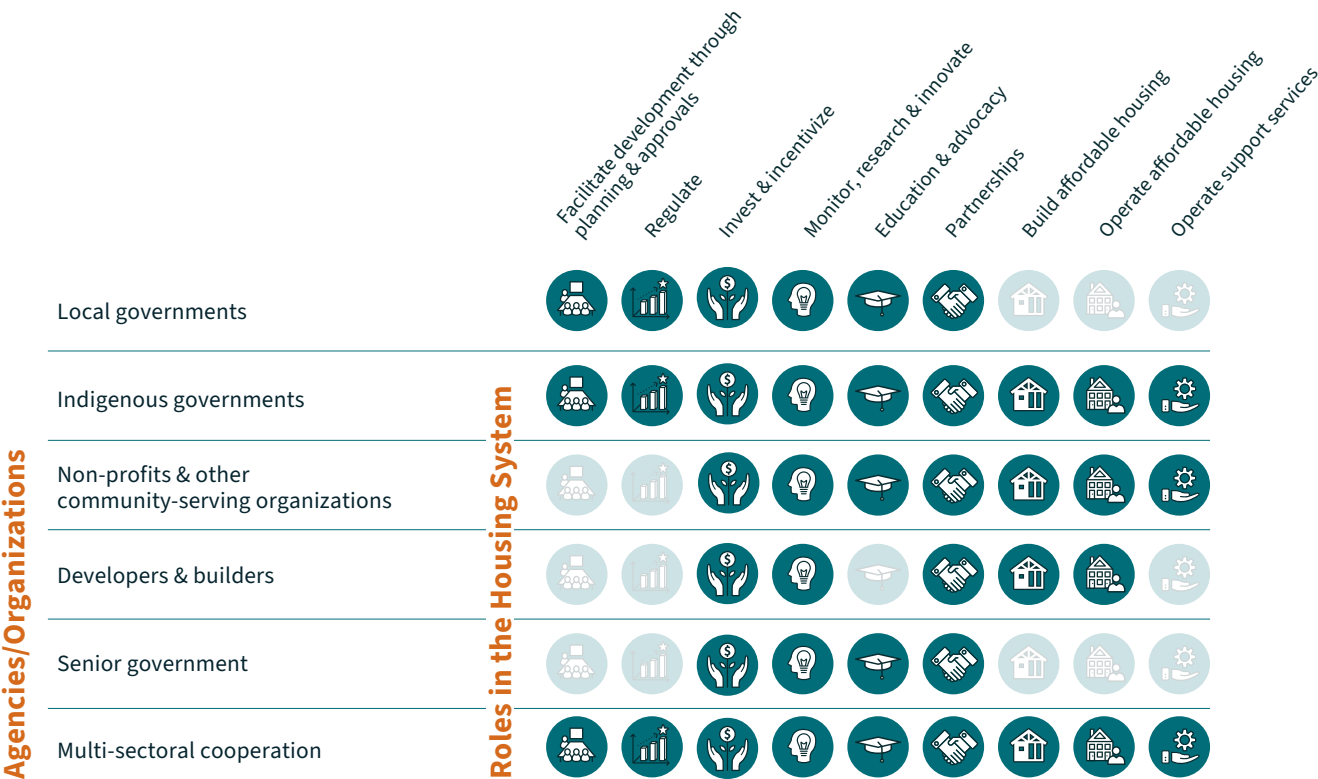


Figure 2. Opportunities and Roles for Actors in the Housing System

With some exceptions, municipalities have not historically built or operated affordable housing or support services and have instead partnered with other organizations within the housing system. However, leading the development of new affordable housing opportunities is a role some municipalities are beginning to explore.

Development of new affordable housing opportunities is a role some municipalities are beginning to explore.

1.2.1 Provincial Legislative Changes

In 2023, the Province of BC made several significant legislative changes to the Local Government Act that directly targeted the development of multi-family housing and the general under-supply of housing across the province. The intent is to take a multi-pronged approach that will drive significant increases in housing supply with a significant focus on densifying the least dense areas in major Cities and areas near major public transportation infrastructure. The sweeping changes were put forth in three separate bills as described below:

Bill 44 – Small Scale, Multi-Unit Housing

The SSMUH legislation is in effect for all communities with a population greater than 5,000 or that are within an urban containment boundary. Maple Ridge is within Metro Vancouver’s urban containment boundary and is thus impacted by the SSMUH legislation. The SSMUH legislation includes the following as-of-right development considerations:

- 1 secondary suite and/or ADU in all single-family and duplex lots.
- 3-4 units per single-family and duplex lots
- 6 units per single-family and duplex lots near transit stops with frequent service.

Bill 46 – Development Financing

Bill 46 introduced changes to how municipalities can collect development charges. Bill 44 expanded the scope of what Development Cost Charges (DCCs) can be collected for and introduced a new development financing called Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs), which will be enforceable via bylaw. Amenity Cost Charges are intended to replace Community Amenity Charges (CACs), which are determined on a case-by-case basis through negotiations between the municipality and developers.

Bill 47 – Transit-Oriented Areas

The TOA legislation applies near rapid transit stations and bus exchanges, specifically for parcels zoned residential. There are three new transit-oriented areas (TOAs) designated by the province:

- Port Haney Station
- Maple Meadows Station
- Haney Place Transit Exchange

The TOA legislation stipulates specific density requirements within 800 meters of rapid transit infrastructure. Additionally, off-street residential parking requirements have been removed for developments in these areas. Table 1 shows the required densities at rapid transit stations (SkyTrain) and bus exchanges. The City does not currently have SkyTrain but Transport 2050, Metro Vancouver’s regional transportation plan, includes expanding the Major Transit Network to Maple Ridge as a 10-year priority.

Table 1. Prescribed Land Use Considerations for Transit-Oriented Development

Transit Hub Type	Prescribed Distance	FAR	Building Height (Storeys)
Rapid Transit	<200m	Up to 5.0	Up to 20
	201-400m	Up to 4.0	Up to 12
	401-800m	Up to 3.0	Up to 8
Bus Exchange	<200m	Up to 4.0	Up to 12
	201-400m	Up to 3.0	Up to 8

2 Key Housing Issues in Maple Ridge

The 2024 Housing Needs Report (2024 HNR) identified several key housing issues and growth trends occurring in Maple Ridge.

This section provides an overview of the key findings of the 2024 HNR.



2.1 Planning for Growth

Maple Ridge is a rapidly growing community that has experienced an increase of approximately 22,000 new residents and 8,200 new households between 2006 to 2021, as shown in Figure 3.

Approximately four-fifths of all housing in the City is owned, while about one-fifth is rented. Between 2023 and 2028, the City is projected to see the addition of 4,500 new households and a further 4,100 new households between 2028 to 2033. Additionally, to create a complete community, one that has access to daily needs, essential services, parks, employment, and entertainment, new growth needs to focus on densifying neighbourhood centres, including the Town Centre, the Hammond Area, Transit-Oriented Areas, and Major Transit Corridors.

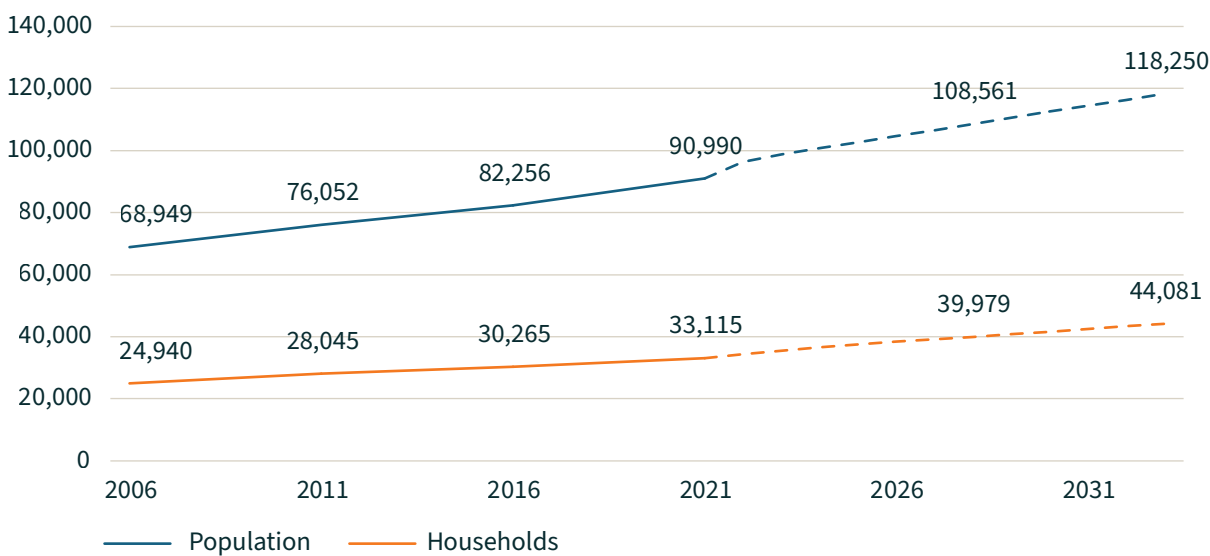


Figure 3. Population and Household Growth 2006-2033

2.2 Strong Need for Purpose-Built Rentals

Renters represent a growing number of households in Maple Ridge and neighbouring communities, as shown in Figure 4. While the overall proportion of renters remains low compared to the region (which is 37.8% renter households), the high-cost of ownership and a growing gap between income and cost of ownership are likely to drive more demand for rental housing despite a relatively low number of purpose-built rentals and a low vacancy rate. Based on the 5-year housing need calculation from the City's Housing Needs Report, a minimum of more than 1,900 rental units are needed, with a minimum of 400 of those requiring moderate to deep affordability. To accommodate a diverse and inclusive population in Maple Ridge, a greater proportion of new housing needs to be rental. Despite increased housing costs, rental housing remains more affordable than ownership for median-earning households by type (e.g. couples with children, single-parent families, etc.).

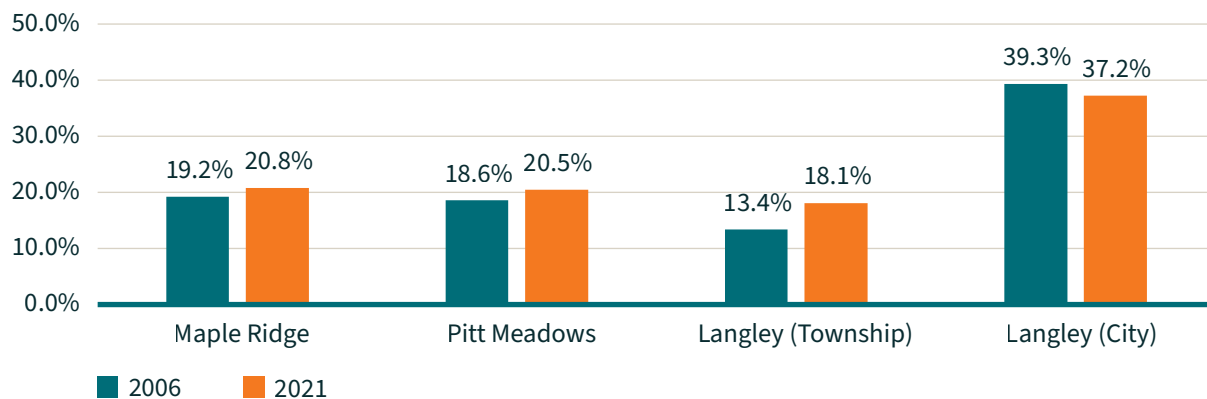


Figure 4. The Proportion of Rental Housing in Comparable Neighbouring Municipalities 2006-2021

Source: Statistics Canada, Census Profiles for Maple Ridge, 2006, 2021

2.3 Affordability

As with much of the region, a high proportion of households are experiencing core housing need.¹ In 2021, Maple Ridge had 4,160 households in core housing need, of which about 47.6% (1,980 households) were renters, despite renters only representing 20.8% of all households. Renters disproportionately experience affordability issues, due to lower incomes than owner households: 28.7% of renters experienced core housing need in 2021, compared to 8.3% of owners. More than 10% of renters and 3.3% of owners experienced extreme core housing need in 2021.

As identified in the 2024 HNR, this affordability gap means that Maple Ridge needs approximately 2,000 new affordable units over the next twenty years to address this underlying need; about half of these should be affordable rentals, while the remaining should be a mix of affordable and attainable ownership housing forms. Additionally, a portion of the units intended to address population and household growth will need to be affordable. Provincial guidelines for how to assess tiers of affordability is expected to be forthcoming through new provincial regulations on Housing Needs Reports. The City is already seeing significant growth in denser and infill forms of housing, which are typically more affordable than single-family dwellings.

In 2021, Maple Ridge had 4,160 households in core housing need.

1 Statistics Canada and CMHC have established national housing standards for affordability, adequacy, and suitability. Communities throughout Canada use these standards as indicators to identify issues and make improvements related to housing. A household meets the housing standards when the following conditions are met:

1. Adequate housing does not require any major repairs.
2. Affordable housing has shelter costs equal or less than 30% of total before-tax household income.
3. Suitable housing has enough bedrooms for the size and composition of resident households according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

Core housing need (CHN) is a two-step indicator. A household is in CHN when it does not meet one of the above indicators and cannot afford alternative suitable and adequate housing in their community. Extreme CHN is a subset of households in core housing need. This refers to those households in core housing need who are spending more than 50% of their total before-tax household income on housing.

2.4 Equity Considerations and An Aging Population

The 2024 Housing Strategy is intended to prioritize equity-deserving demographics, which are often vulnerable to housing crises and fluctuations. The 2024 Housing Needs Report identified that the following demographics (Figure 5) are at a higher risk of being in core housing need.

The demographics listed on Figure 5, in addition to smaller households, moderate and lower-income households, and renter households, are at acute risk of experiencing core housing need. As of 2021, approximately 2,000, or 27% of 1-person households, are experiencing core housing need, compared to only 11% of 2-person households.

Maple Ridge is also an aging community, with seniors (65+) projected to account for 18% of the total population by 2028, and by 2033, the total population of seniors is projected to reach 4,666. Seniors, more often than other demographic groups, require housing that meets specific standards. For many seniors living on a fixed-income housing options are limited. More accessible and supportive housing across a continuum of need (from independent living to care homes) is needed to accommodate an aging demographic, and wraparound services to support aging in place will become increasingly important as the community ages.

Homelessness remains an issue in the City, with an estimated 135 to 392 individuals experiencing homelessness in Maple Ridge, according to the 2023 Point-In-Time Count and based on a per-capita allocation of regional figures from the Integrated Data Project in 2021.² The City is increasingly taking an active role in reducing homelessness and poverty in Maple Ridge by exploring opportunities for redevelopment of existing resources to better serve the community. In 2019, the City of Maple Ridge implemented its Community Social Safety Initiative (CSSI), which was intended to help provide support and services to individuals experiencing homelessness and/or substance use and who were sheltering outside. In 2024, the City completed **Thrive Maple Ridge: A Public Well-Being & Safety Strategy**, which outlines bold steps to support residents and their well-being and represents an evidence-based model of well-being and safety.

2 https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/housing-and-tenancy/social-housing/supportive-housing/2021_idp_cohort_report_homeless_population_in_bc_final.pdf

Key Housing Issues in Maple Ridge

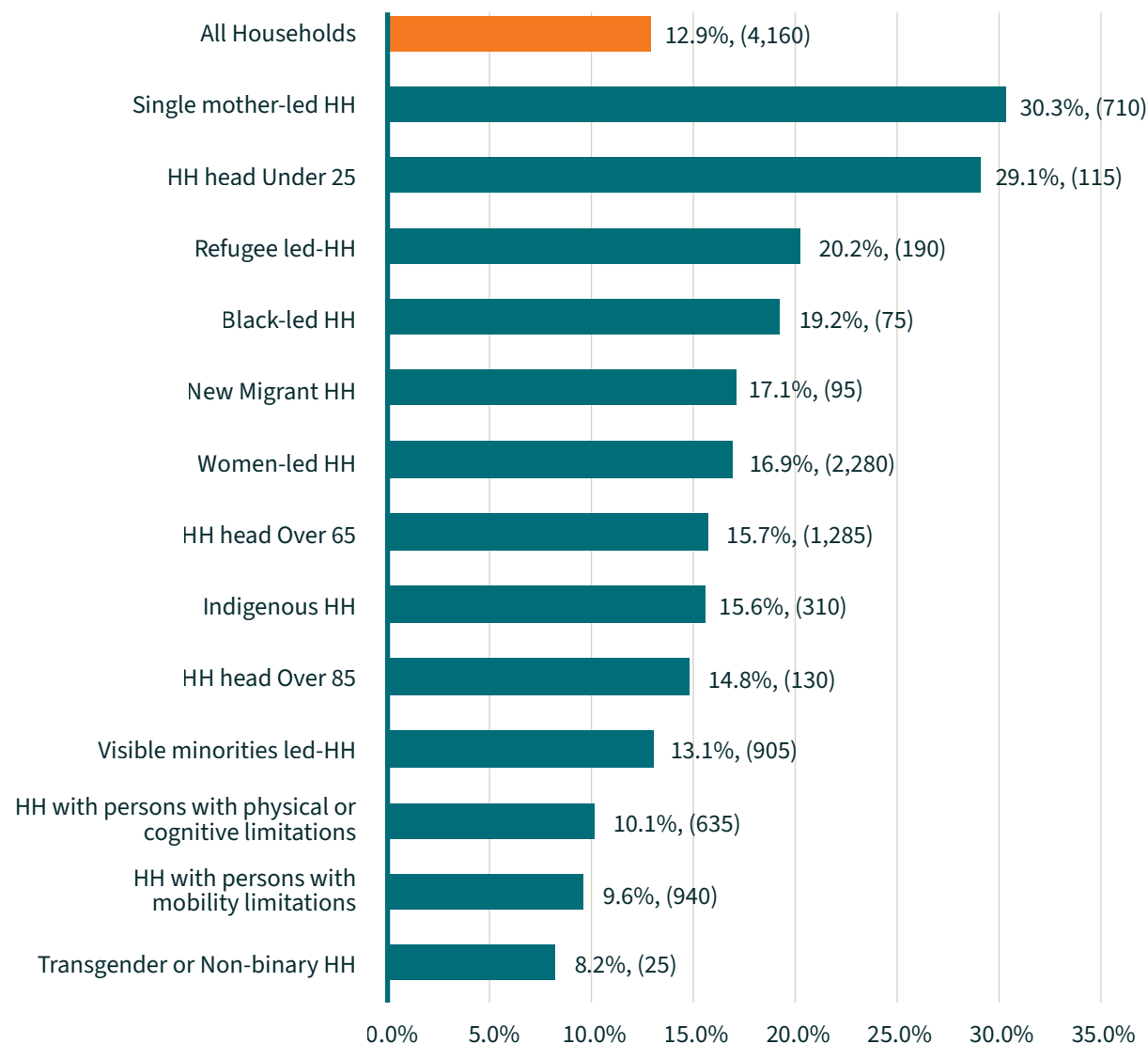


Figure 5. Percentage of Households in Core Housing Need by Priority Population and Income Category, 2021

2.5 OCP Capacity Considerations

In July 2024 provincial guidelines were released determining 5 and 20-year housing needs for municipalities across BC. Under Bill 44, local governments are required to use Housing Needs Reports to calculate 20-year total number of housing units anticipated, based on underlying need (core housing need, homelessness, suppressed household formation) and anticipated need (growth projections). The complete calculation is available through the City's Housing Needs Report; however, the following summary provides an overview of these needs over the next 20 years:

- 1,692 units to reduce extreme core housing need (892 affordable rental, 800 affordable ownership)
- 392 units to reduce homelessness
- 2,249 units to reduce suppressed household formation
- 18,654 units to accommodate growth
- 4,790 units to account for additional market demand
- Total 27,778 units needed by 2041

Based on analysis undertaken as part of this work, the existing OCP had the following capacity:

- Current existing housing: 33,663 existing units
- Additional undeveloped capacity: 47,193 units
- Total OCP capacity: 80,856 units

Based on new capacity added by provincial legislation in 2023-2024, through Bills 44 and 47, the following additional capacity was added:

- Transit-oriented area (TOA) additional capacity: 10,864 units
- Small-scale multi-unit housing (SSMUH) additional capacity: 22,419 units
- Total units (existing OCP, TOAs, SSMUH): 114,139 units

Current zoning capacity for Maple Ridge therefore exceeds the required need for capacity based on Housing Needs Report requirements. The City's planning efforts should therefore focus on directing growth within the City's Urban Development Area, particularly key growth areas within the city centre.

Key Housing Issues in Maple Ridge

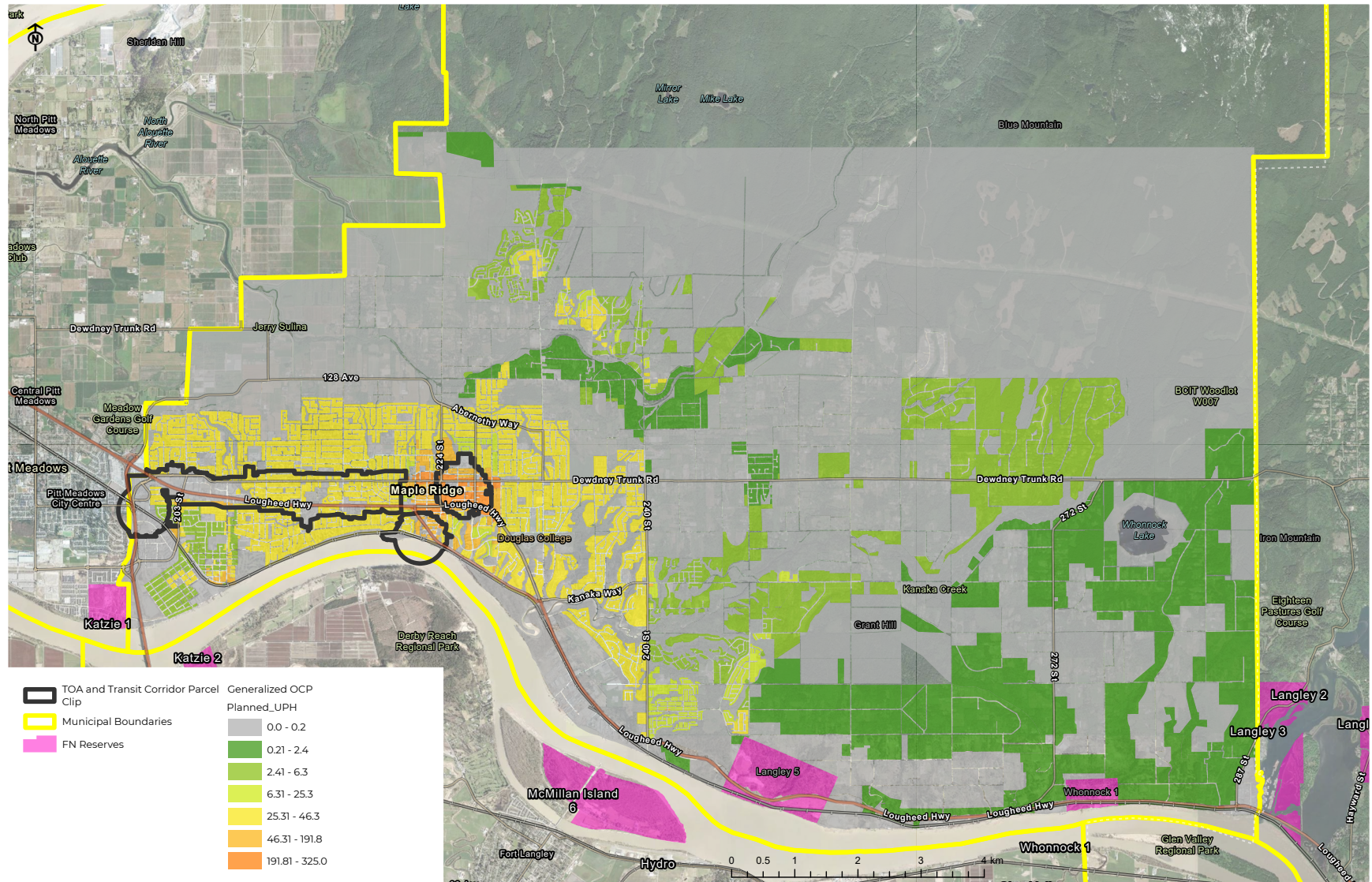


Figure 6. OCP Capacity Based on Maple Ridge OCP, 2014



Key Housing Issues in Maple Ridge

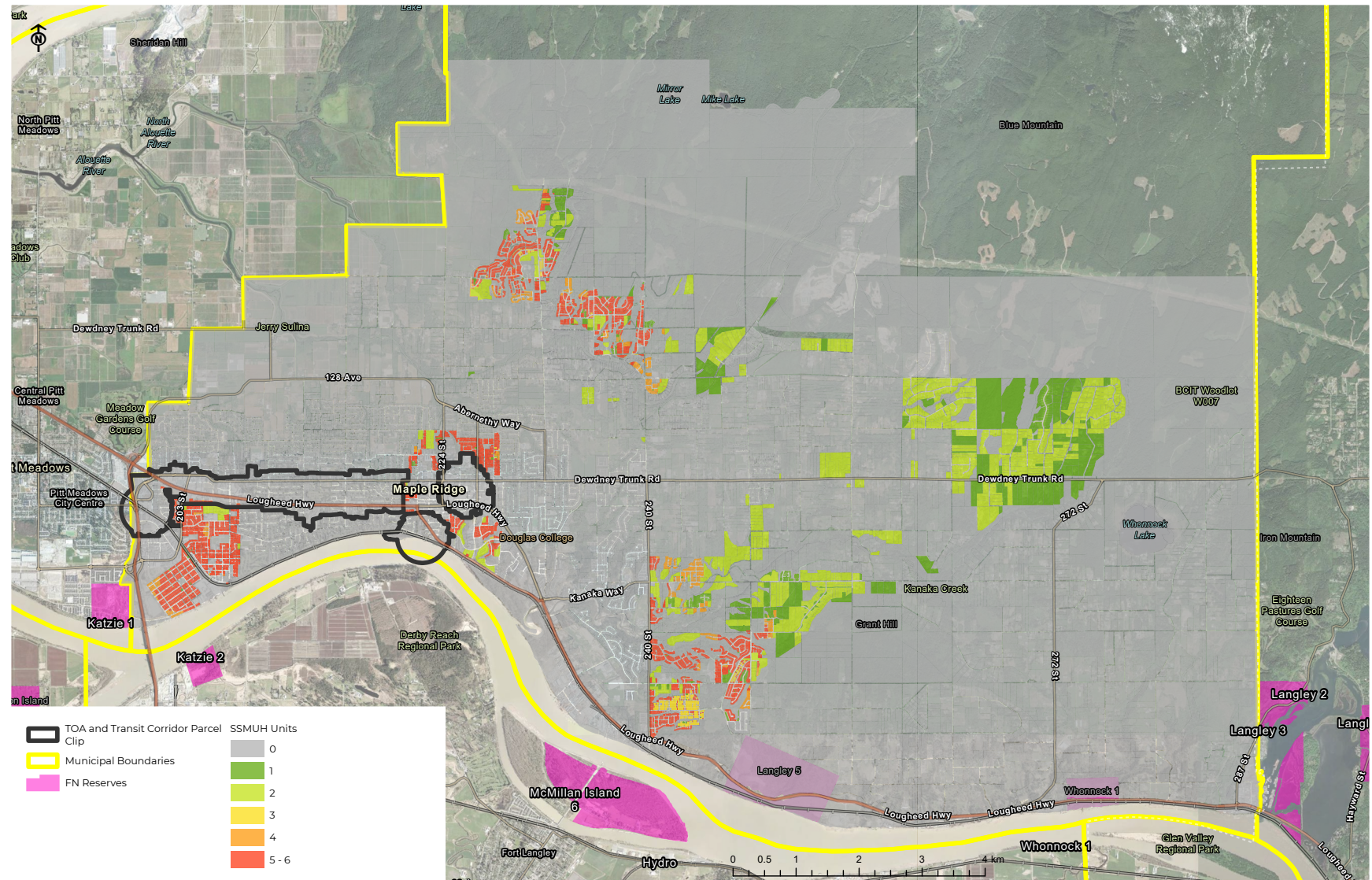


Figure 8. Additional SSMUH Capacity

3 Strategies

The City's efforts will focus on five core areas that are intended to strengthen partnerships, streamline development processes, focus limited resources on key housing priorities, protect renters, and support those demographic groups most in need of housing. The 5 strategies to address housing need in the community are:



Strategy 1: **Prioritize Needed Forms of Housing**



Strategy 2: **Strengthen Renter Protections**



Strategy 3: **Address Barriers to Development**



Strategy 4: **Promote Equity and Inclusion in Housing Initiatives**



Strategy 5: **Advocacy and Education**





Strategy 1

3.1 Prioritize Needed Forms of Housing

Housing exists in a network, and it is vital that all components of this continuum are served. It is important that the City prioritizes a wide range of housing from a land-use and regulatory perspective, investments and incentives should be focused on those forms of housing that are most needed in the community, as indicated by the household and demographic groups that are in highest need.

Figure 6 provides a visual representation of the Housing Network. On the far left, there is housing for individuals and families in crisis who need emergency shelters, are experiencing homelessness or need some other forms of support. In the middle is below-market rental housing (including units and rental subsidies) that supports independent renters. On the right are market rentals and homeownership which requires little to no support. The current housing crisis is making it increasingly difficult for people to access housing in the market, meaning that below-market forms of housing are increasingly needed to support even moderate to middle-income earners.

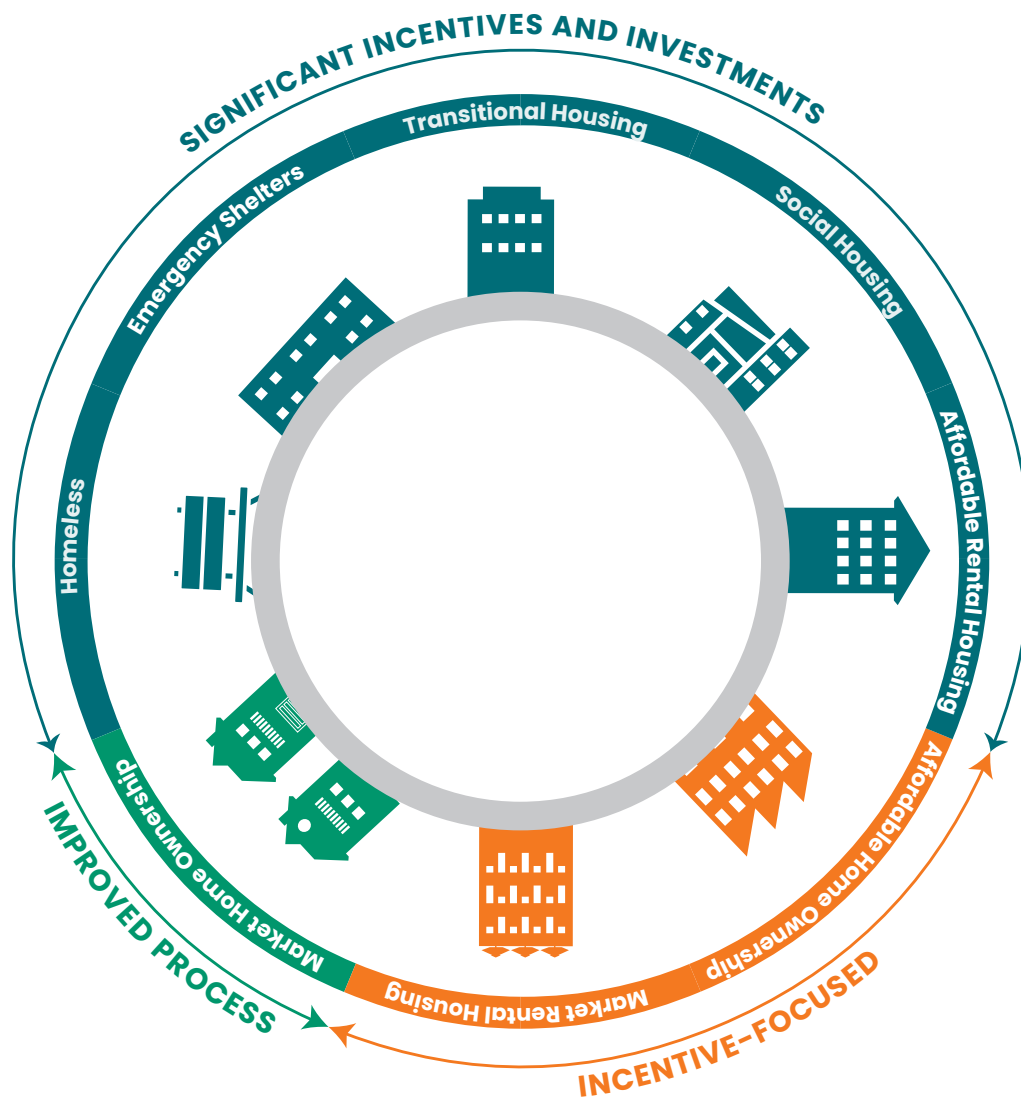
On the next page is a list of priority housing types identified in the 2024 Housing Needs Report that the City needs to prioritize.

Priority Housing Types

- Housing to address homelessness.
- Transitional housing
- Additional supportive housing
- Youth housing and supports
- Long-term health care (e.g. assisted living, nursing facilities) for seniors

Non-market and affordable rental housing, including for specific demographic groups

- Seniors
- Immigrant households
- Indigenous households



Significant incentives & investments

- Land contribution or partnership
- Density bonusing opportunities for non-profit projects
- Significant parking reductions
- Fast track approvals process and concierge development service
- Explore reduced design requirements
- OCP designation and prezoning
- Explore waiver or reduction of development charges

Improved process

- Prezoning for density
- Clearer and transparent development approvals
- Pre-approved designs and site plans for certain forms of infill housing
- Explore and implement non-permitted accessory dwelling unit compliance options
- Explore opportunities for 'as of right' density that complements provincial legislative changes

Incentive-focused

- 'Concierge' development service
- Density bonusing opportunities to support greater affordability
- Parking reductions in proximity to transit
- Fast track approvals process
- Explore reduced design requirements
- Partial reduction of development charges

Figure 9. Sliding Scale of Incentives to Support a Range of Options Across the Housing Continuum

Big Move: Examine Opportunities for a Housing Authority

Municipalities are increasingly moving into the role of direct participation in the housing market through the development of housing authorities or other arms-length entities. These organizations are developed to leverage existing municipal resources (land, knowledge of the development approvals process, partnerships, etc.) in order to expedite the development of non-market housing. Historically there have been relatively few municipal housing authorities in BC, though many Alberta communities, including Calgary, Edmonton, and Wood Buffalo, have long-standing municipal housing corporations that manage a significant portfolio of units.

While the Whistler Housing Authority is recognized as well-established example in British Columbia, the current housing crisis is driving many municipalities in BC to explore the feasibility of developing a housing authority. The purpose of a housing authority is to create an arms-length entity that can drive the development of non-market housing through partnerships with government agencies, BC Builds, non-profits and developers.

Two recent examples of municipalities undertaking this work include Kamloops and Burnaby. In 2023, Kamloops recently incorporated a Community Land Trust “as an alternative model of housing development where land is held in trust for the community and cannot be sold at market rates.” Burnaby’s City Council (also in 2023) moved to create the Burnaby Housing Authority, which has identified the following objectives:

- “Create more housing by adding to existing sources of housing supply
- Act like a private housing developer, while delivering non-market housing for public benefit
- Help fill gaps in Burnaby’s housing supply strategically
- Contribute to the larger housing ecosystem through collaboration, not competition”

Both examples highlight how the municipal role of housing development is changing in the face of extreme housing pressures, particularly in urban areas of BC.

Undertaking the development of an arms-length housing entity can require a significant investment of resources; however, it may also have a positive impact in that a municipal authority is uniquely positioned to collaborate across the housing sector with non-profit housing providers, private sector developers, and senior levels of government. Additionally, a housing authority does not need to be limited solely to Maple Ridge: there may be opportunities to work collaboratively with neighbouring jurisdictions (e.g. Pitt Meadows) to undertake a sub-regional approach to housing issues.

This may be a unique model through which to consider opportunities to support innovative ownership models as they emerge.

Develop a Transparent, Sliding-Scale Incentive Program that Supports New Development Across the Housing Network

It is important that the City creates a clear set of sliding-scale incentives (i.e. stronger incentives to support deeper affordability) that support the development of priority housing while still capturing amenity contributions to ensure Maple Ridge is a complete community with ready access to parks, daily needs, and essential services. Below is a set of potential incentives the City can use to encourage affordable and rental housing.

Consider the Role of Land Contributions

Contributing municipally owned land to support the development of affordable housing can significantly reduce the cost of development. A municipality can provide land through long-term leases, affordable sales, or donation, to reduce the overall cost of development of affordable housing.

To inform the Housing Strategy, point-in-time financial analysis findings are presented in this section to demonstrate the relative impact of municipal incentives on the development viability for a typical 6-storey woodframe apartment in Maple Ridge. Note that the impact of the levers on development viability will change at any given time depending on market conditions.



Big Move: Develop a Land Strategy

A Land Strategy outlines the city's approach to the acquisition, disposition, and management of municipally owned land. Through a land strategy a city can prioritize how to better use under-developed land and outline how partnerships can support the development of priority housing types and affordable housing.

Increasingly, municipalities are identifying land as a key barrier to the development of key forms of housing, particularly affordable housing. While municipal land can play an important role in supporting the development of new rental forms of housing, there are a number of avenues municipalities can explore to activate under-utilized land, including:

- Identifying City-owned lands suitable for affordable housing projects;
- Identify other potential unused or under-utilized government lands, such as provincial or federal sites, that can support housing to leverage senior government funding programs (e.g. BC Builds)
- Partner with other landholders (e.g. non-profits, the school district, churches, private sector) to support affordable housing development on non-traditional lands through partnership and innovation;
- Assess the feasibility of a land acquisition strategy to determine whether what potential acquisitions the City can support.

The City is already pursuing several of these avenues informally; however, formalizing the City's approach to land use through a comprehensive strategy will strengthen the impact of these activities.

Density Bonusing

Density bonusing is a tool that can grant developers additional density by meeting certain development goals, such as a certain percentage of affordable housing. This tool is discussed in further detail under Action 1.ii.

Review Parking Requirements

The substantial cost of construction for residential parking is a significant factor in high rent and sale prices, especially for higher-density developments. Reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements can significantly lower the cost of construction for developers and subsequently lower housing costs. Reducing or eliminating minimum parking requirements can also contribute to advancing other municipal goals, such as the transition to sustainable transportation. Due to the limited transit frequency and available routes, initiatives to reduce or eliminate parking restrictions in underserved areas must consider what available transportation options there are and potentially include other transportation demand management tools.

Financial Analysis Findings

A reduction in required off-street parking stalls has a sizeable impact on decreasing project costs, which increases the financial viability for strata and market rental development.

When modelling a typical 6-storey wood frame apartment, a reduction from:

- 1.7 to 1.2 parking stall per unit decreases project costs by 5-6%
- 1.7 to 1.05 parking stall per unit decreases project costs by approximately 10%
- 1.7 to 0 parking stalls per unit decreases project costs by 15-20%

Fast Track Approvals

A municipality can implement an expedited approval program for priority housing types. By identifying the types of housing that the community needs in the immediate term, a municipality can minimize the approval process by reducing wait times, waiving rezoning processes (particularly for projects that align with the OCP), and waiving public hearing requirements. By creating a fast approval track for priority types of developments, the cost associated with approval delays can be reduced for developers, and the most needed types of housing can be built more quickly, including affordable rental housing and priority ownership models such as infill.

Financial Analysis Findings

Beyond reducing wait times for development approvals, a local government may choose to prezone for priority types of development as part of fast tracking approvals.

By waiving the rezoning process, the development approvals may be reduced from a typical 24 month timeline to just 8 months. In Maple Ridge, this results in:

- A decrease in overall project costs for a typical 6-storey woodframe market rental apartment by 1%.

Perhaps more importantly, prezone provides certainty to the development community which acts as additional incentive (e.g., lowered risk, lowered financial return expectations) for development to take place.

Reduced Design Requirements

Design requirements imposed through municipal bylaws and design guidelines are often necessary to ensure proper design and form or achieve certain community goals such as livability and energy efficiency targets.

However, overly strict design requirements can create barriers to development, adding costs both to initial design and construction. Strict design requirements coupled with higher tier Step Code requirements can add substantial cost to a project. Maple Ridge will explore opportunities to reduce design requirements while still achieving the objectives of Step Code by simplifying requirements. The City can also align its design requirements and targets with provincial and federal funding sources to reduce the regulatory complexity for developers trying to receive funding for the development of priority types of housing.

Waive or Reduce Development Charges

Maple Ridge uses DCCs to levy a fee on development to pay for new or expanded infrastructure such as sewer, water, drainage, parks and roads necessary to adequately service the demands of that new development. These fees can be a significant cost to projects and typically will increase the resulting rent or price of housing. Municipalities can choose to waive or reduce these fees for priority development types, although they are typically waived only for priority forms of housing (e.g. affordable or purpose-built rental housing). Maple Ridge currently has a reduced DCC process for affordable housing developments.

These waivers would come at a direct cost to the City. Therefore, the City must carefully evaluate whether they can support the foregone revenue associated with waiving or reducing DCCs in exchange for the affordable housing benefits provided, particularly for projects built by for-profit developers. Since DCCs operate on the principle that growth pays for growth, excluding housing projects from these fees forces the City to seek alternative sources of funding for major infrastructure projects. In the case of non-market housing projects, municipalities typically will draw from Affordable Housing Reserves to replace the forgone revenue. Typically these reductions are most impactful when the reduction or waiver occurs up-front, rather than in the form of a rebate.

Financial Analysis Findings

Based on a typical 6-storey wood-frame apartment in Maple Ridge, a 100% waiver of municipal development cost charges (DCCs) decreases the overall project cost by approximately 2%.

Amenity Cost Charges (ACCs), introduced in Bill 46-2023 is a new development finance tool that allows local governments to collect funds for amenities like community centres, recreation centres, daycares, and libraries from new development that results in increased population. ACCs operate in a similar manner to DCCs in that they provide transparency and cost certainty for developers. However, the act of site-by-site negotiations is lost through ACCs. As ACCs become more widely applied, the City should consider the waiver or reduction of ACCs on affordable housing projects to help support overall affordability, and because these projects are intended to provide the community amenity of affordable housing.

Review and Expand Density Bonusing Policy

Density bonusing is a tool used by municipalities to grant developers additional building density or height beyond what is permitted by zoning on their site in exchange for community benefits. Typically, in exchange for extra density, municipalities require a certain proportion of affordable housing; however, some Metro Vancouver municipalities have extended this to include market rentals.

The City's current Density Bonusing Policy applies to the Town Centre Area and Major Corridor Residential. It is recommended that the city expand the Density Bonusing Policy to include TOAs and frequent transit corridors, and consider how to encourage other needed forms of housing through density bonusing. Prioritizing these higher-density areas enables the City to recapture community benefits that may have been previously negotiated for during the rezoning process. The City has identified this as an initiative to undertake as part of Council's 2024 Strategic Work Plan.

Financial Analysis Findings

A review of the Density Bonus Policy rates set out for the multi-family residential zones is recommended. The financial analysis finds that some zones do not permit for 6 storeys, even with density bonusing, and that the bonus density provided may not offset the costs of providing underground parking.

Recent legislative requirements (Bill 44-2023 & Bill 47-2023) to pre-zone land to permit small-scale multi-unit housing and transit-oriented development (TOD) may change the municipal approach to capturing community amenity value through the rezoning process

Innovation: Bonus Density Incentive

To further incentivize the development of family housing - Do not count the third bedroom of a three-bedroom unit towards FAR. This has the potential to encourage family housing in multi-family housing developments.

in these areas. The rezoning process typically involves a negotiation between the developer and the municipality, wherein the municipality asks for certain types of community amenity contributions (CACs), such as parks, community facilities, affordable housing, or in-kind volunteer cash contributions to fund similar initiatives. For TOAs, the Province has introduced an interim measure which permits local governments to use the existing base densities established in their zoning bylaws for their density bonusing programs.

The Province anticipates that by mid-2025, local governments will transition to using new proactive planning tools to secure affordable housing and community amenities through TOA development, such as amenity cost charges and other tools under ongoing development.

Determine Feasibility of Implementing Inclusionary Zoning

Inclusionary Zoning is a tool through which a municipality can require specific percentages of units in new residential development to be allocated for uses such as affordable housing, accessible housing, or any other housing that achieves community goals. Historically, inclusionary zoning in BC has been undertaken through density bonusing provisions, where developers can receive additional density in exchange for an affordable unit or cash contribution.

As of the writing of this draft of the Strategy, Bill 16 (2024) has received first reading in legislature. Bill 16 includes provisions that allow local governments to implement mandatory Inclusionary Zoning. This will allow local governments to require residential developments (in whole or in part) within a zone to include a portion of affordable housing (as defined by the local government through a bylaw), including the portion of units to be provided, the size, ownership, management, and tenure of said units, and the duration of time associated with affordability conditions. This includes transit-oriented areas, and includes provisions for a cash-in-lieu alternative for developers.

Maple Ridge has identified this as an initiative in Council's 2024 Strategic Work Plan: "The integration of inclusionary zoning requirements for mixed-use developments around transit corridors has been identified as a key opportunity to expand housing choice in key growth areas within the City. Through this work item, an inclusionary program will be explored that is reflective of our community need as well as provincial mandates."

Update Revitalization Tax Exemption Program

A municipal council may, by bylaw, exempt specific properties from municipal property value taxes for up to 10 years in order to encourage economic, social or environmental revitalization within a community. By implementing Tax Exemptions for specific areas in the City, the City can incentivize the redevelopment or improvement of priority growth areas. A Revitalization Tax Exemption is typically tied to the development of multi-family housing, adaptable unit design, affordable housing and/or social housing. In Maple Ridge, an updated Revitalization Tax Exemption may be best implemented in anticipated growth areas but are outside of designated TOAs.

Prince George – Multi-Family Housing Incentive Bylaw

Prince George implemented a Revitalization Tax Exemption program that focused on key growth areas identified in the City's OCP. For medium to high density developments located in the identified key growth areas developments received a tax exemption from municipal property taxes up to 100% of assessed value of land and improvements. The program also required that specific guidelines were met for adaptable housing for a percentage of units.





Strategy 2

3.2 Strengthen Renter Protections

Update Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy and Modular Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy

A Tenant Relocation Assistance (TRA) Policy is intended to reduce the likelihood that the existing purpose-built market rental housing stock will be redeveloped. If demolition occurs, the impact of the loss of the rental housing stock will be reduced. Currently, Maple Ridge's TRA Policy requires developers to create a Relocation Assistance Plan that includes consideration for a period of notice, right of first refusal, rent controls, compensation depending on the length of tenancy, and assistance with moving expenses. To strengthen the TRA Policy and other similar policies, the City may explore the following:

- Require developers to implement a strategy for assisting tenants in finding appropriate housing.
- Enhance communication requirements with tenants, such as requiring a tenant relocation coordinator.
- Include consideration for those living in non-market housing rental units and non-profit co-op housing.
- Additional support for vulnerable tenants

Monitor Need for Strata Conversion Bylaw

The City is not currently experiencing significant conversion of purpose-built rental housing into strata condominiums. Given current market conditions and the age of existing purpose-built rental in Maple Ridge (according to CMHC 66% of purpose-built rental in the city was built prior to 1980), the city is unlikely to see strata conversions and more likely to see older purpose-built rental redeveloped into new units. As such, it is more likely that the City will need to consider rental replacement and tenant protection policies to protect renters and rental housing. However, the City should continue to monitor the need for this type of policy, as it can be readily adopted should strata conversions emerge as an issue.

Explore Development of Rental Replacement Policies

A Rental Replacement Policy is intended to reduce the impact of redevelopment on the rental housing stock. A Rental Replacement Policy requires that the redevelopment of a purpose-built rental building replace all or a specified portion of the existing number of rental units. The City may implement a Rental Replacement Policy across the City or in priority growth areas such as the Town Centre, TOAs, or other transit corridors.

This tool can also be combined with Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ), described below.

Explore use of Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ) in Key Areas

In 2018, the Province amended the Local Government Act to provide municipalities with the authority to zone for exclusively rental tenure. Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ) is a type of zoning that is typically used to restrict multi-family residential to exclusively rental tenure. The use of RRTZ has been relatively limited. However, increasingly, municipalities are blending the use of rental replacement policies with the use of RRTZ when existing purpose-built rental is being redeveloped. RRTZ powers are applied to the zoning for those units that are required to be protected through rental replacement.

Example: Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ) Implementation Approaches

- The City of Victoria has incorporated RRTZ into their density bonusing policy. If a proposed development incorporates a rental component the density bonusing programs will now permit additional FSR, incentivizing developers to build more rental housing.
- The City of Vancouver has applied a pre-zoning approach for rental tenure, allowing low- and mid-rise rental builds on certain commercial zones on arterial streets. This approach eliminates the rezoning process for purpose-built rental projects, reducing approval wait times, associated costs and staff resources.



Strategy 3

3.3 Address Barriers to Development

Implement Pre-Zoning

The City was required to update zoning to conform to Bill 44-2023 and Bill 47-2023 by June 30th, 2024. These two bills add considerable capacity to the City's OCP, through additional infill density on single family lots and higher density around transit.

In addition to this new capacity, the City may wish to explore additional pre-zoning for priority growth areas, such as the Town Centre and additional transit corridors that are not included in the designated TOAs. By doing so, the City can expedite development in key growth areas.

Pre-zoning does have some trade offs to consider, most notably by impacting the City's ability to negotiate for amenities that would typically take place during a rezoning process. While it is anticipated that the new ACC tool introduced by the government could partially address this, the tool does not allow for the capture of affordable units or a contribution to an affordable housing fund. Recently, the province introduced legislation (Bill 16) to allow municipalities to implement inclusionary zoning, which would allow municipalities to require a portion of affordable units in new developments, even when a rezoning is not taking place; however, the specifics of this legislation are anticipated in late 2024.

Streamline Development Approvals Processes

Many municipalities are currently undertaking reviews of the development approvals process to identify areas for improved efficiency and streamlining to support faster delivery of housing. Creating a concierge style development process can also increase efficiency, build community trust, and improve education on development. These have been identified as a strategic priority for the City, through the 2024 Strategic Work Plan. Key components include:

- Creating development application prioritization criteria
- Establishing benchmark timelines for internal City process and reviews for the development application process
- Conducting incentive program feasibility assessment for multi-family housing

There are a range of additional potential activities local governments can adopt that reduce development approvals timelines. These include:

- Developing a concierge service to facilitate affordable housing development service for applications that meet set criteria (below market or all rental or family housing, etc.) and supports these applications during all phases of pre-development work;
- Continue to strengthen internal municipal coordination between planning and engineering to ensure streamlined application processing;
- Using the concierge service to coordinate with utility providers and provide assistance with navigating the referrals process (e.g. Fortis/Hydro/Telus can often hold up construction because of slow communication and complex requirements during the referral process);
- Pre-approved designs for priority housing types (e.g. infill housing, purpose-built rental housing using forthcoming catalogues of provincial and federal options [note: this work is scheduled to begin in April 2024].

Big Move: Implement New Approach to Development Approvals

In 2023 the City of Kelowna received a \$350,000 grant from the provincial [Local Government Development Approvals Program](#) to support changes to the development approvals process. The City used these funds to work with Microsoft in developing an artificial intelligence chatbot. The bot allows the automated process of development applications and is able to answer applicant questions on the City's zoning bylaw, Official Community Plan and other key areas of planning.

The City of Maple Ridge is exploring machine learning and AI into their development application process. Ensuring Maple Ridge keeps pace with current trends will be important to be aware of opportunities to increase efficiency. Other innovations in this field include e-permitting and digitized case management.



**Strategy 4**

3.4 Promote Equity and Inclusion in Housing Initiatives

Partner with Organizations Addressing Homelessness to Strengthen Services

Through organizational partnership, the City can implement innovative strategies to create more affordable housing options for those who need it most. Typically, a municipality will partner with existing community organizations that hold under-utilized land, non-profits or neighbouring municipalities. Through partnership, multiple benefits can be achieved, such as cost-sharing, reduced development costs, and greater awareness and support for affordable housing.

Example: City of Chilliwack - Adaptable Housing Policy

Since 2012, the City of Chilliwack has required that 50% of all new apartments be built to the adaptable housing standards of the BC Building Code.

As of Fall 2022, there have been 1,251 adaptable housing units built across the City.

Adopt Adaptable Housing Standards

Maple Ridge is an aging community with a projected population of 22,633 seniors by 2033. Adaptable housing requirements can ensure that a proportion of new rental units are appropriate for an aging community. Adaptable Housing Standards are included as optional in the BC Building Code. The City should explore requiring a certain proportion of new units in multi-family development to meet the adaptable housing standards as outlined in the BC Building Code. New provincial requirements will become effective in March 2025 that will require municipalities to require 100% adaptable suites in large apartment and condominium buildings.

Strengthen Connections with Newcomer and Indigenous Housing and Service Providers

It is projected that significant levels of new immigrants and a continuation of a growing urban Indigenous population will increase housing demand in Maple Ridge. It is critical that the City strengthen connections with Indigenous Housing and new immigrant housing service providers. Key actions in this area could include:

- Partnering with Katzie and Kwantlen First Nations to better understand the needs of their members in urban areas;
- Working with Indigenous housing providers and organizations to support opportunities for Indigenous housing in Maple Ridge, such the Fraser River Indigenous Society and the Gold Ears First Nation Society;
- Identifying and working with immigrant-serving organizations to understand their clients' housing needs and identify opportunities for partnership.

Support and Streamline Non-Market Housing Initiatives for Equity-Deserving Demographics

The City can create a housing continuum that prioritizes inclusivity for all residents by supporting non-market housing initiatives for equity-deserving groups. Potential actions include:

- Reduce or waive securities for paving and landscaping, recognizing that BCH oversees development
- Do not require Housing Agreements for BCH funded projects in cases where BCH requires covenants on title and implements those covenants through agreements and contracts with operators
- Avoid duplicate standards - assess how BCH Design Guidelines align and do not align with municipal requirements
- Create a streamlined DP review process for BCH projects, recognizing that developments must meet BCH Design Guidelines

Inclusive housing initiatives typically will prioritize support for women, seniors, the BIPOC community, the LGBTQSIA+ Community, as well as individuals with mobility and cognitive impairments. Opportunities to support such initiatives will likely be through partnering with community organizations and non-profits or leveraging potential Provincial and Federal grant opportunities.

Example: Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee

The Surrey Urban Indigenous Leadership Committee emerged from the Surrey Urban Aboriginal Social Innovation Project. Though the Social Innovation Project finished in 2018, the Committee has continued to advocate on behalf of urban Indigenous residents of Surrey.

SUILC has undertaken significant research on the issues and challenges facing urban Indigenous residents of Surrey, from data analysis, to projections to community engagement. The City works with SUILC by providing an administrative for funding applications (e.g. the City is the applying body for funds and grants for SUILC), and regularly participates in meetings of SUILC. The City also integrated SUILC's research on Indigenous housing issues into Surrey's Housing Needs Report, and recently (spring 2024) released an RFP for Indigenous housing providers for affordable housing units within a mixed-use hub, reflecting the City's commitment to serve the ongoing needs of Indigenous residents.





Strategy 5

3.5 Advocacy and Education

Promote New Funding for Housing to Developers, Non-Profits and the Public

Currently, there a wide range of housing funding programs available to the non-profit and private development sectors. These funding opportunities represent key interventions that can make the difference in project viability. The City can work with both non-profits and developers to educate these stakeholders around what is currently available. Some key opportunities that exist as of the development of this strategy (April 2024) include:

- **CMHC's Seed Funding** program re-opened in Spring 2024, and provides grant and interest-free loan payments to individuals and organizations involved in early phases of creating affordable housing. This funding can be pivotal in moving an affordable housing project from idea into pre-development.
- **CMHC's Apartment Construction Loan Program** (formerly Rental Construction Financing Initiative): This financing program provides low-cost financing with long-term amortization periods (40-50 years) to eligible borrowers to construct rental housing. This funding comes with affordability and accessibility requirements for a portion of units and is available to private developers.
- **Secondary Suites Incentive Program:** This new program targets homeowners to create affordable housing through the private market. The program provides homeowners with up to 50% of the cost of renovations (up to \$40,000) to construct a new secondary suite on their property that will be rented out for below market rates.
- **BC Builds** is an emerging program provided through the Province of BC that is intended to activate provincial lands, and support partnerships between other community landlords to build housing for middle-income working households throughout the province.
- **BC Housing's Community Housing Fund**

Advocate to Senior Government for Resources to Support Growth and Affordability

This strategy outlines key actions that City may explore to increase housing supply, affordability, and inclusivity. Many of these proposed actions will require significant financial and resource investments and will be greatly accelerated by additional funding from senior levels of government. The City will continue to advocate to senior levels of government for additional resources to fund key priorities areas, including but not limited to the following:

Infrastructure planning

The City is projected to continue growing at a rapid pace placing increasing demand on existing infrastructure. Further studies to determine municipal infrastructure capacity and demand for future expansion projects will be needed.

Affordable Housing

Increasing affordable housing is a strategic priority for the City. Many of the current financial tools used to increase affordable housing such as tax incentives, fee waiving or reductions, and land acquisition can come at a high-cost burden to the City. Additional funding would accelerate planning and infrastructure initiatives to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Stronger Tenant Protections

In addition to municipal tools to protect tenants as described in 3.2, the City will continue to advocate for stronger rental protections at the Provincial level, such as rent increase controls, and the expansion renter rights.

Climate Change

The City has ongoing projects related to climate action as of this draft strategy. The results of these initiatives will be important factors to consider in decision making processes relating housing, such as including a climate lens in development applications. The City will advocate to senior levels of government for additional funding to conduct further research relating to the impact of housing on the local and broader environment.

Appendix 1

Next Steps and Implementation

The City of Maple Ridge has taken substantial actions in recent years to address the ongoing housing affordability crisis, but more still needs to be done. The action items associated with this plan's five key strategies are prioritized and detailed below. The implementation framework presented below outlines key actions, implementation considerations, timeframes, and resource considerations. Timeframe considerations use the following terminology:

- Short-term: 1 to 2 years
- Medium-term: 2 to 4 years
- Long-term: 4 years and beyond

Strategy	Action	Implementation Considerations	Timeframe	Resource Considerations
Strategy 1: Prioritize Need Forms of Housing				
1.i	Develop a Transparent, Sliding-Scale Incentive Program	Build on land economics review to prioritize key elements and a focus on stronger incentives being linked to deeper levels of affordability.	Short to Medium-Term	May require external support if land economics study is undertaken.
1.i.a	Land Contributions and Land Strategy		Medium to Long-Term	
1.i.b	Density Bonusing (see 1.ii)		Short-Term	
1.i.c	Review Parking Reductions		Short-Term	
1.i.d	Fast Track Approvals		Short-Term	



Appendix 1

Strategy	Action	Implementation Considerations	Timeframe	Resource Considerations
1.i.e	Reduced Design Requirements	Build on land economics review to prioritize key elements and a focus on stronger incentives being linked to deeper levels of affordability.	Medium to Long-Term	May require external support if land economics study is undertaken.
1.i.f	Waive Development Charges		Short-Term	
1.ii	Review and Expand Density Bonus Policy	Will require land economics review. Can be undertaken in conjunction with 1.i and 1.iii.	Short-Term	Will require external consultant support.
1.iii	Determine Feasibility of Implementing Inclusionary Zoning	Guidelines have not been released by province but will require some level of land economic analysis. Undertaking land economics review to determine extent to which it may disincentivize develop, identify potential balancing incentives; analysis could be coupled with 1.i and 1.ii.	Medium-Term	Will require external consultant support.
1.iv	Update Revitalization Tax Exemption Program	May be considered in conjunction with OCP updates.	Short-Term	May require external consultant support.
Strategy 2: Strengthen Renter Protections				
2.i	Update Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy and Modular Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy	Already underway.	Short-Term (and partially complete)	Can be undertaken by staff.
2.ii	Monitor Need for Strata Conversion Bylaw	Requires ongoing monitoring of rental conversions.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by staff.
2.iii	Explore Development of Rental Replacement Policies	Requires ongoing monitoring of rental redevelopments.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by staff.
2.iv	Explore Use of RRTZ in Key Areas	May be done on a case by case basis, or undertaken through a pilot project.	Medium Term	Can be undertaken by staff.



Strategy	Action	Implementation Considerations	Timeframe	Resource Considerations
Strategy 3: Address Barrier to Development				
3.i	Implement Pre-Zoning	Likely to be undertaken through OCP and zoning bylaw updates.	Short to Medium-Term (and underway)	Can be undertaken by staff; may require consulting support. Likely to require significant public engagement, but can be aligned with OCP updates required by 2025.
3.ii	Streamline Development Approvals Process	Some elements are already underway.	Medium-Term	Can be undertaken by staff; may require some consultant support.
Strategy 4: Promote Equity and Inclusion in Housing Initiatives				
4.i	Partner with Organizations Addressing Homelessness to Strengthen Services	Requires ongoing partnerships and coordination.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by staff.
4.ii	Adopt Adaptable Housing Standards	Consideration should be given of new provincial regulations in 2025.	Short-Term	Can be undertaken by staff.
4.iii	Strengthen Connections with Newcomer and Indigenous Housing and Service Providers	Requires ongoing partnerships and coordination.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by staff.
4.iv	Support and Streamline Non-Market Housing Initiatives for Equity-Deserving Demographics	Should be considered in conjunction with 1.i.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by staff.



Appendix 1

Strategy	Action	Implementation Considerations	Timeframe	Resource Considerations
Strategy 5: Advocacy and Education				
5.i	Promote New Funding for Housing to Developers, Non-Profits and the Public	Requires development of educational materials and regular updates to ensure alignment with funding sources.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by staff.
5.ii	Advocate to Senior Government for Resources to Support Growth and Affordability	Requires active council consideration and action.	Ongoing	Can be undertaken by Council and senior staff.



Appendix 2

Community Engagement Summary

Introduction

The development of the 2024 Housing Needs Report and Housing Strategy included community engagement to better understand the existing barriers and opportunities in housing that may not be apparent through traditional data collection and analysis. The feedback from community engagement with the public and stakeholders will inform the development of both the Housing Needs Report and, importantly, the Housing Strategy, which will both inform future policy and land use planning decisions.

The community engagement for the 2024 Housing Needs Report included three engagement events as listed below:

- A Community Survey - March 7th to March 26th
- Virtual Engagement with the development and non-profit community – January 25th
- Community Stakeholder Workshop – February 1st at City Hall Council Chambers
- Community Open House – March 7th at the Maple Ridge Public Library

Throughout the engagement, key issues emerged, such as the need for more rental housing, seniors housing, and supportive housing. A more streamlined development approval process was noted as a key opportunity to accelerate the development of affordable and market housing.

This brief What We Heard memorandum summarizes the results of the community survey and the combined barriers and opportunities that the community and stakeholders identified through all community engagement events.

Community Survey

The Community Survey that was open from March 7th to March 26th identified community concerns and opportunities for housing in Maple Ridge. The survey received 47 total responses. The community survey revealed that participants typically want new growth to be prioritized near the town centre, in addition to the desire for more walkable nodes with amenities outside of the town centre. Unsurprisingly, affordability was noted as a key issue for housing in Maple Ridge, with some indicating a lack of supply and densification as a reason. Lagging infrastructure was also flagged as a key concern, with many participants noting that roads and congestion are intertwined with housing issues in Maple Ridge. When asked what demographics are typically at the highest risk of being impacted by housing unaffordability, participants indicated concerns for seniors, youth, and young families with children. Several respondents also pointed out that low-income individuals and families are struggling to find affordable rental options, however there were mixed opinions on how to address homelessness in Maple Ridge among those who specifically brought it up as a concern.

The community indicated several key opportunities to improve housing and overall livability in Maple Ridge. Most participants indicated that increasing the housing supply in the City, especially near downtown and around frequent transit, is what is needed. Participants also stressed that the development approval process needs to be streamlined to accelerate the development of housing projects. Many participants also suggested that to increase affordability, the City should explore further reducing or eliminating parking minimums for higher-density developments as a solution.

The survey found that to solve the supply and affordability crisis, participants think a diversity of housing types and tenures is needed. Participants noted a diverse housing realm is needed in Maple Ridge, including missing middle developments across the City, and mid-rises and high-rises near the town centre. Many participants also indicated more below-market rental housing is needed.

In summary, the survey revealed that participants typically want a diversity of housing types, the densification of the town centre, more walkable neighbourhoods across the City, increased transit-oriented development, and more affordable housing.

The Community Survey ask participants high-level demographics questions to gauge the audiences providing feedback. To summarize the survey received input from residents across the City who are primarily between the ages of 35 and 64, who own their own home, and have lived in Canada for at least the past five years. The survey did not receive substantial input from rental households, youth and seniors, and newcomers to Canada.

Below is summary the survey respondent demographics:

- The survey received the most responses from people aged between 35 and 64 (77%), while younger adults and seniors provided less input.
 - » 25-34: 6 total responses (13%)
 - » 35-44: 14 total responses (30%)
 - » 45-54: 10 total responses (21%)
 - » 55-64: 12 total responses (26%)
 - » 65-84: 5 total responses (11%)
- The vast majority of respondents were homeowners, with 81% of respondents being owners, while only 19% were renters.
- The survey received responses from across the City. The Town Centre and Albion neighbourhoods provided the most input with 33% and 20% of responses, respectively.
 - » Town Centre: 15 total responses (33%)
 - » Webster's Corners: 4 total responses (9%)
 - » Whonnock: 3 total responses (7%)
 - » Silver Valley: 5 total responses (11%)
 - » Albion: 9 total responses (20%)
 - » Port Hammond: 6 total responses (13%)
 - » Port Haney: 3 total responses (7%)
- None of the 47 respondents re-located to Canada in the past 5 years.

Summary of Barriers & Issues

We heard barriers and issues relating to housing impact all demographics, but specific at-risk demographics such as seniors, youth, new immigrants, and others are struggling more than others. The community engagement identified four main themes for why this happening, as detailed below:

1 Lack of appropriate seniors housing

- Limited availability of seniors co-op housing and long waitlists for existing seniors co-op housing
- A lack of available housing that meets the accessible needs of people with mobility issues
- Lack of or awareness of support services that assist older individuals in finding suitable housing

2 Affordability

- Households earning median incomes can not afford to enter the ownership market
- Many families are struggling to affordable rental housing, especially families with low-or-fixed-incomes
- Low-income individuals must choose between housing and other essential needs, including food security and medical expenses
- Youth and young adults are leaving Maple Ridge due to lack of available affordable housing

3 Existing Supportive Housing is not held to a high standard

- Existing supportive housing was heard to typically be older and not maintained at a high standard, effectively reducing the appeal of supportive housing and negatively affecting current livability for residents

4 Unfavourable Development Conditions and Lack of Development Capacity

- We also heard from the development community that building under current economic conditions is often not feasible. These issues are magnified by the fact that many local buildings, while experienced in single-family development, may lack the necessary operational capacity for larger and more complex multi-family projects

Summary of Opportunities

We heard from the public that there are many potential opportunities to address the existing barriers and enhance the City’s overall housing environment. The key themes that arose are summarized below, including accelerating housing, creating a complete community, supportive and alternative housing, and for the City to take a more active role in housing.

1 Accelerate Housing Development

- Explore fast-tracking certain types of developments (i.e., multi-family with an affordable component or purpose-built rentals)
- Eliminate parking minimums across the City
- Ensure legalizing suites is not cost-prohibitive
- Explore Tax breaks or other incentives for those building secondary dwellings on their properties
- Provide more further incentives for developers to build rental units
- Explore Modular housing
- Explore pre-approved designs

2 Supportive and Alternative Housing

- Increase awareness and check-ins for people who live alone, particularly seniors
- Develop more progressive building guidelines to ensure new buildings, especially rentals, are accessible/adaptable and allow for aging in place
- Need more emergency shelter spaces
- Need more transitional housing that connects to a broader spectrum (i.e., Shelter, Supportive Housing, Affordable, Market). Reduce the number of people slipping through the spectrum.
- Explore different housing subsidy types for various income and special needs thresholds
- Explore Tiny Homes
- Explore Lock-off suites
 - » This would allow “mom and pop” property owners to take advantage of new legislative density allowances

3 Create a Complete Community

- There is a need for more complete neighbourhoods outside of downtown, with walkable access services and amenities
- There is a demand for more employment opportunities downtown and locally
- Need more supportive housing near transit
- Balance the need for green space with the need to increase housing supply

4 Supportive and Alternative Housing

- The City should explore fast-tracking certain types of developments (i.e., multi-family with an affordable component or purpose-built rentals)
- Eliminate parking minimums across the City
- Ensure legalizing suites is not cost-prohibitive
- Tax breaks or other incentives for those building secondary dwellings on their properties
- Provide more incentives for developers to build rental units
- Explore Modular housing
- Explore pre-approved designs

5 Taking a More Active Role

- The City should take a more active role in managing housing
- Create partnerships with non-profits and faith-based institutions
 - » Example – Mission, Tiny Homes on Church land
- Need better management of rental buildings
- Explore acquiring land

Specific Locational Opportunities

Community members were asked where future development should be prioritized outside of the downtown. We heard that more development is needed along the water and that the Hammond Mill Site may have the potential for redevelopment.

Summary

The feedback heard indicates that there are substantial affordability issues across the City, which are particularly impacting at-risk demographics. We heard that the community sees great opportunity in accelerating housing development through incentives and reducing the logistics of development approvals, but also want to ensure adequate amenities and infrastructure are considered alongside housing development. Lastly, the community indicated the new growth and investment services improvement needs to prioritize housing and services for at-risk demographics, such as seniors, youth, and young adults.



Maple Ridge