YOUR VOICE. YOUR HOME.

MEETING THE HOUSING NEEDS OF BURNABY RESIDENTS

DISCUSSION GUIDE
This report was independently prepared by Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. It was funded by the City of Burnaby as part of the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing. *Your Voice. Your Home. Meeting the Housing Needs of Burnaby Residents* is the community engagement arm of the Task Force. As such, the results from *Your Voice. Your Home.* will be received by the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing to inform the Task Force’s final recommendations to Burnaby City Council.

The purpose of this Discussion Guide is to support the dialogue at a Community Recommendations Workshop being held on May 25, 2019. The Discussion Guide is intended to support workshop participants and Burnaby residents in learning about housing issues and exploring diverse perspectives on housing solutions.

This publication does not necessarily reflect the opinions of Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue or the City of Burnaby. Any works referring to this material should cite:


**City of Burnaby**

Burnaby is a vibrant city at the geographic centre of Metro Vancouver. It has an amazing natural environment, a strong cultural mosaic and thriving town centres. The City of Burnaby provides facilities and services that support a safe, connected, inclusive, healthy and dynamic community. As the third-largest city in B.C., Burnaby is home to more than 232,000 residents (2016 Census) and is projected to grow to 345,000 by 2041.

www.burnaby.ca/yourvoice
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**SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue**

Simon Fraser University’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue fosters shared understanding and positive action through dialogue and engagement. As a trusted convener and hub for community initiatives, we have engaged hundreds of thousands of participants to create solutions for many of society’s most pressing issues, and actively support student learning through experiential education opportunities.

www.sfu.ca/dialogue
dialogue@sfu.ca
@sfudialogue
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Thank you for taking the time to come together today to discuss housing in Burnaby.

It is not typical to find ourselves in a room with 100 or more residents meeting to develop recommendations for concrete action on community and affordable housing. Over the past few months more than 2,300 Burnaby residents like you have shared their thoughts through Your Voice. Your Home. Thank you for your input so far and for the discussions you will be part of today.

Each person here brings a valuable and unique perspective to the table, shaped by your housing experiences, needs and challenges.

Housing affects everyone, so it is really important that we hear all points of views, and continue to listen to each other throughout the discussion.

At the end of the workshop, you will be presenting a series of recommendations that are in the best interests of the entire community. These recommendations are incredibly important and will be presented to and help guide the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing as well as Burnaby’s City Council.

On behalf of the City of Burnaby, City Council and the Task Force, thank you for your leadership, expertise and collaboration. Together we can ensure that Burnaby housing meets the needs of all current and future residents.

Sincerely,

MIKE HURLEY
MAYOR, CITY OF BURNABY
Residents of Burnaby and across the region are currently experiencing a housing crisis. Housing costs have risen in recent years, existing affordable homes are being lost, supply is not meeting local demand and many residents are being left behind. Your Voice. Your Home. Meeting the Housing Needs of Burnaby Residents is an innovative partnership between the City of Burnaby and SFU’s Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue, designed to hear from the community and inform the work of the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing.

Whether you are a workshop participant, stakeholder or resident, this Discussion Guide presents a factual overview of housing in Burnaby and will introduce you to a range of housing approaches and perspectives. Naturally, given the diversity and complexity of housing, you may find some ideas to be familiar and agreeable and others strange and uncomfortable – and that is okay.

If you are reading this Discussion Guide in preparation for the Community Recommendations Workshop, welcome! You have a unique and rare opportunity to join your fellow residents and community stakeholders to shape Burnaby’s housing future. You were randomly selected because together you represent a wide diversity of housing experiences and needs and reflect the demographic diversity of Burnaby.

The chance to sit down with fellow residents to share ideas and create concrete recommendations is rare in our democracy. We look forward to making the most of this opportunity and to amplifying your voices. Happy reading!
WHAT IS DIALOGUE?

Dialogue does not believe that all differences disappear or that 100% consensus emerges, but it does prioritize the search for common understanding rather than emphasizing differences.

IDEAS FOR SUCCESSFUL DIALOGUE

Speak Personally
Share stories of your experiences and personal values rather than set opinions.

Treat Everyone Equally
Leave status, role and stereotypes at the door.

Listen to Understand and Speak to be Understood
Disagreement is normal – use this as an opportunity to clarify new ideas and perspectives.

Challenge Ideas, Not People
Express disagreement with ideas, not with personalities or motives.

Be Disciplined in Your Participation
We share the responsibility for a good meeting. Stay on topic, be respectful and be sure to share air time.
Background

Your Voice. Your Home. Meeting the Housing Needs of Burnaby Residents is highly integrated with the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing. Its activities are divided into three phases:

Phase One – Generating Ideas
Phase One heard from over 2,300 Burnaby residents. It provided a series of engagement opportunities for the community to share their ideas, experiences and solutions. The resulting What We Heard Report presents a detailed overview of public input and is available online.

Phase Two – Trade-Offs and Solutions
Phase Two of Your Voice. Your Home. will build upon the ideas from Phase One, consider different options to improve housing in Burnaby and evaluate trade-offs. Activities include: a second online survey to evaluate quick starts from the Mayor’s Task Force, this Discussion Guide and a Community Recommendations Workshop.

Task Force Final Report
Following the Community Recommendations Workshop, a Community Recommendations Report will be presented to the Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing to inform its Final Report, expected in July 2019.

Phase Three – Action
The final project phase will be action by the City of Burnaby. This action will include quick starts, as well as longer term actions that may take place over a number of years.
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

BURNABY HOUSING PROFILES

In order to illustrate the diverse housing experiences of Burnaby residents, the following profiles were developed based on survey and interview data. Please note that each profile reflects the experiences of several individuals, is framed by overall housing trends and includes direct (unedited) quotes.

JEREMY, 26 | LIVES WITH PARENTS
Student in Need of Affordable Housing

Housing Experience: Jeremy is a student at Simon Fraser University. He works two part-time jobs and is looking to save enough money to move out of his parent’s home. However, with current rental prices this is looking less and less likely in the near future. Jeremy needs more affordable rental options which allow young people like him to move out but still remain in Burnaby.

“Residents shouldn’t have to constantly worry about their housing future. There should be affordable options available that suit the needs of all.”

KAREN, 33 | RENTER
Young Family Struggling to Purchase First Home

Housing Experience: Karen and her husband Joe currently live in a basement suite in North Burnaby. They are looking to purchase a townhouse in the City but the prices are too expensive for their current incomes. They are also expecting their first child and would like to settle into a home that is near a good school and park.

“We would prefer to own our home instead of renting. We’re expecting our first child [and] a separate home office would be nice.”

KIM, 38 | RENTER
Worried about Limited Housing Options for Single Mothers

Housing Experience: As a single mother with two young boys, Kim finds it hard to pay rent and save for the future. The lack of certainty surrounding her living situation causes her a great deal of stress and anxiety. In order to provide for her family, she works two jobs, but still finds it difficult to live in Burnaby. She would like to see more affordable housing options, particularly for single mothers.

“So many of my friends have moved out of Burnaby because they couldn’t afford it. I don’t recognize the neighbourhood anymore. The whole City has changed. I don’t want to be the last person left on the block.”
**SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

**SUE, 56 | RISK OF HOMELESSNESS/RENTER**

*Renter Needing Housing Support to Prevent Future Homelessness*

**Housing Experience:** Sue has been homeless in the past and is currently struggling to find affordable housing. She usually shares accommodation with strangers but this makes her feel unsafe. As a result, she frequently has to move. She occasionally works at restaurants and receives a $375 shelter allowance but still cannot afford rent. She has been on a waitlist for social housing for three years. Sue wants more affordable social housing options so that she can have a safe, permanent home.

“I am embarrassed to ask friends for more help. There isn’t enough social housing for people with extremely low-incomes. Everyone should be able to have a safe and secure home that they can afford.”

**SUNEEL, 59 | HOMEOWNER**

*Concerned about Children’s Housing Futures*

**Housing Experience:** Suneel lives with his wife and children in South Burnaby. As a homeowner, he is concerned about rising property taxes. Looking ahead, Suneel worries about increasing rent costs in Burnaby and the impact this will have on his children.

“We need to build neighbourhoods and communities where people can live comfortably.”

**MARIA, 67 | RENTER**

*Demovicted Metrotown Resident*

**Housing Experience:** Maria lives in Metrotown and has been demovicted twice in the last 5 years. Her current building is scheduled to be demolished as well. She is extremely concerned about the living conditions she has experienced, including: mould, leaking plumbing and mice. Maria believes there needs to be more accountability to ensure proper living conditions within buildings like hers.

“As a senior, I am very scared of being demovicted. It’s like having an anvil constantly hanging over your head. You know it’s going to drop but you’re not sure when.”
SECTION 2: BURNABY HOUSING FACTS AND FIGURES

BURNABY AND ITS RESIDENTS

LET’S TAKE A WALK AND GET TO KNOW THE PEOPLE OF BURNABY!

People are getting older. In 1996, the average person was 38 years old. Now the average is 40. ²

Burnaby is the 3rd largest city in B.C!

While Burnaby occupies just 3% of land in Metro Vancouver, it accounts for 10% of the population! ¹

In 2016, Burnaby’s population was 232,755. ⁴

An average household has 2.5 persons. ⁷

59% of people aged 15+ have a post-secondary education or degree. ⁵

Between 2006 to 2016 the number of seniors (65+) increased by 31%, while the number of children aged 5-19 decreased by 1%. ³

AGE AND POPULATION ⁶

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-4</td>
<td>10,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-19</td>
<td>32,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-34</td>
<td>55,925</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-49</td>
<td>48,070</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50-64</td>
<td>48,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-79</td>
<td>26,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80+</td>
<td>10,205</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Did you know? There are 144,322 jobs in Burnaby and a 6.4% unemployment rate. 

95% of Burnaby residents live within 400m (5 min walk) of a bus stop or Skytrain station. 

50% of Burnaby’s population was born outside of Canada. The top three places of origin are China, Hong Kong and the Philippines. 

Who lives in Burnaby? 

There are 92,205 households in Burnaby and the average household income is $64,737. The different household types are illustrated in the graph below.

Languages spoken at home:

- 61% English
- 12% Mandarin
- 9% Cantonese
- 3% Korean
- 3% Tagalog
- 12% Other

Burnaby has 4 town centres and 13 urban villages.

Discussion Guide
If you live in Burnaby, chances are you either rent or own a home. As a renter, you either live in a non-market or market rental. Market means that it is privately owned (by a person or corporation) and does not receive any financial support or subsidies. Non-market housing receives government support/subsidies or is operated by a non-profit. Burnaby's housing continuum below highlights these categories.

**WHERE ARE YOU ALONG THE HOUSING CONTINUUM?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NON-MARKET HOUSING</th>
<th>MARKET HOUSING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EMERGENCY SHELTERS</td>
<td>RENTAL HOUSING</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme weather shelters</td>
<td>Apartment buildings, rented</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and warming centres</td>
<td>condos, houses, secondary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>suites, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRANITIONAL HOUSING</td>
<td>HOME OWNERSHIP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary housing with supports</td>
<td>Condos, single family homes,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>duplexes, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HOUSING WITH SUPPORTS</td>
<td>Non-profit and public rentals,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group homes, long-term care,</td>
<td>co-operative housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>assisted living, etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NON-MARKET RENTAL HOUSING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-profit and public rentals,</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-operative housing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**TEMPORARY**  **LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT ASSISTANCE**  **PERMANENT**

**HIGH**  **LOW**
BURNABY RENTAL STOCK

More than one third of Burnaby residents are renters. In Burnaby there are an estimated 37,989 rental units, approximately 15% (5,764) of which are non-market (subsidized).

Housing units are divided into four main categories: single and two family houses, row and townhouses, apartments with less than 5 storeys and apartments with 5 or more storeys. Over 40% of housing units are single and two family houses.

Out of 92,195 total housing units, 9,332 are new, built between 2011-2018. In 2018, 84% of new housing units were high-rise apartments. Most of this construction has taken place in Burnaby’s town centres and urban villages.

NON-MARKET RENTAL

- Non-Profit (2,656)
- Housing Co-Op (1,900)
- Public Housing (752)
- Assisted Living, Supportive and Transition Housing (456)

MARKET RENTAL

Of Burnaby’s total market rental units, approximately 37% are apartments, 32% are condos and 21% are secondary suites. Of the apartments, 63% are one-bedrooms and only 3% are three-bedroom units. Apartment vacancy rates are incredibly low, hovering between 1.5%-2.2%, depending on the number of rooms.
HOW MUCH CAN BURNABY RESIDENTS AFFORD?  

Only 13% of homes sold in Burnaby in 2017 were considered "affordable", down from 33% in 2012.

A low-income household (earning $35k or less) can afford to spend up to $874 per month on housing.

A household earning Burnaby’s median renter income ($45,839) can afford to spend up to $1,146 per month.

Households earning Burnaby’s median owner income ($80,492) could purchase a home with a maximum price of approximately $400,000.

27% of Burnaby households have household income below $35,000.  

LOOKING TO BUY?

Over the past three years, the cost of housing in Burnaby has increased substantially:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Detached homes</td>
<td>$1,530,700</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Townhouses</td>
<td>$783,600</td>
<td>77%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartments</td>
<td>$698,000</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The typical British Columbian homeowner aged 55+ enjoys over $424,000 more net wealth in their homes than did the same aged person four decades ago, after adjusting for inflation.  

LOOKING TO RENT?

Over the past three years, the cost of rental housing in Burnaby has increased substantially:  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Price</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>$985</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Bedroom:</td>
<td>$1,149</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Bedroom:</td>
<td>$1,466</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Bedroom:</td>
<td>$1,672</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In 1976 it took an average 25-34 year old approximately 6 years of full-time work to save for a 20% down payment. As of 2018, it takes approximately 29 years.
SECTION 2: BURNABY HOUSING FACTS AND FIGURES

HOUSING NEEDS

ONE IN 5 HOUSEHOLDS IN BURNABY FACES OVERCROWDING, POOR UPKEEP OR UNAFFORDABLE HOUSING COSTS.

16,650 HOUSEHOLDS IN BURNABY IN CORE HOUSING NEED 27

Approximately 20% of total households are in core housing need, including almost one in three renter households. These households require major repairs, do not have enough rooms or are not affordable*.

*DEFINITION OF AFFORDABILITY

According to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), housing is considered to be affordable when a household spends less than 30% of pre-tax income on shelter.

1,664 BURNABY RESIDENTS ON NON-MARKET B.C. HOUSING WAITLIST IN 2018 28

Of that number, 595 are families, 500 are seniors, 247 are people with special needs and 128 are single people.

DEMOVICTIONS IN METROTOWN 28

Between January 1, 2011 and April 30, 2019 a total of 685 purpose-built apartment rental units were demolished within the boundaries of the Metrotown community plan area.

2,520 RENTAL UNITS REQUIRED, BY INCOME, 2016-2026 30

According to Metro Vancouver, between 2016-2026 the City of Burnaby will need 5,900 new rental units.

Almost 50% of the need is for household incomes under $30,000.
Housing Vulnerability

Homelessness is a major concern for many Burnaby residents.

Among the 16,650 Burnaby households who are in core housing need, 6,620 households are at risk of homelessness, or about 40%. This is determined by households who are in core housing need and spending at least 50% of their income on housing.

Households at risk include:

- Singles alone: 2,675
- Couples with children: 1,505
- Couples without children: 1,085
- Single parent families: 1,060
- Other: 295

27% of Burnaby households (24,880) have an annual income of less than $35,000. 32
12% of renter households are at risk of homelessness. 33
6% of owner households are at risk of homelessness. 34
The Community Benefit Bonus Housing Fund collects 20% of all developer contributions to the City’s density bonus program. So far it has collected more than $123 million for affordable housing and has supported many different projects.

The Tenant Assistance Policy supports tenants who are facing relocation due to redevelopment or renovation of multi-family rental buildings. Guidelines include a minimum four months’ notice and monetary compensation of three months’ rent for affected tenants.

The Affordable Units Policy specifies that 20% of new units on publically owned land be non-market rental housing.

The Rental Conversion Control Policy prohibits the conversion of purpose-built rental buildings.

The Fast Track Approvals Policy ensures that priority is given to processing applications for non-market housing during the development application review process.

The City Lands Program for Non-Market Housing Projects leases land to non-profit societies and private sector partners to deliver more housing.

In addition to the policies listed to the left, the City of Burnaby is currently developing a series of new policies at the request of Council. These include policies that address:

**Rental Zoning**, including replacement rental units, inclusionary rental housing, rental housing in Commercial (C) Districts and rezoning of existing rental properties;

**Accessory Units** in single and two family neighbourhoods, including accessory suites in duplexes and laneway homes/carriage houses;

**Tenant Support**, including: updates to the Tenant Assistance Policy and a review of best practices for Standards of Maintenance policies;

**Homelessness Response**, including: new warming centres, temporary shelters and supportive housing; and

**Regulating Short-Term Rentals**, like Airbnb.

Burnaby has supported the creation of 316 affordable housing units over 8 sites through its City Land Leases. 

DID YOU KNOW? 

Burnaby has supported the creation of 316 affordable housing units over 8 sites through its City Land Leases.
WHAT CAN BURNABY DO?

HOUSING IS A COMPLEX ISSUE WHICH INVOLVES GOVERNMENT SUPPORT AND OVERSIGHT AT ALL THREE LEVELS: FEDERAL, PROVINCIAL AND MUNICIPAL. AS A RESULT, EACH LEVEL HAS SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES THEY MANAGE. FOR EXAMPLE:

THE CITY OF BURNABY CAN:

- Designate land for different purposes;
- Zone and rezone land for different uses;
- Zone land for rental housing only;
- Lease land that it owns, for limited cost;
- Provide extra density in exchange for community benefits, like affordable housing;
- Require housing agreements (that specify rents and other conditions) for properties being rezoned;
- Permit accessory housing types such as laneway homes;
- Partner with the Federal and Provincial Governments on housing projects;
- Use its Housing Fund to contribute to affordable housing projects;
- Issue building permits and ensure building safety; and
- Issue business licences or deny/revoke them.

THE FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS CAN:

- Oversee mortgage regulations and homeowner assistance programs;
- Enforce landlord-tenant relations;
- Determine local government authority and responsibilities;
- Amend the B.C. Building Code and other safety standards;
- Regulate strata corporations;
- Administer existing public, co-operative and non-profit housing;
- Provide income assistance;
- Collect tax dollars to fund housing;
- Provide tax incentives for affordable housing;
- Impose additional taxes to reduce speculation;
- Regulate the real estate industry; and
- Set interest rates.
### BURNABY'S TOOLBOX

In addition to its areas of direct responsibility, the City of Burnaby has a number of tools it can access to advance its housing goals. These tools will be important to consider as we begin to reflect on possible housing approaches and solutions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Updating or establishing new plans and policies</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Shaping land use patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Streamlining processes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using its own resources (financial, land, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enforcing bylaws and regulations within its jurisdiction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating partnerships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leveraging resources from others (government, private sector, non-profits)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advocating at different levels of government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educating residents</td>
</tr>
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</table>
BURNABY’S FINANCES ARE SUSTAINABLE AND WELL MANAGED

The City of Burnaby is one of only two local governments in British Columbia that operate free of debt. Households pay slightly less money in property taxes than in neighbouring cities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Burnaby</th>
<th>Vancouver</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Average property taxes per household in 2018</td>
<td>$3,700</td>
<td>$4,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANNUAL SPENDING PER RESIDENT</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2019’s total budget was $743 million.</td>
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</table>

REVENUE FROM DEVELOPMENT HELPS TO MAINTAIN HEALTHY FINANCIAL RESERVES AND CREATE NEW BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Burnaby had $1.6 billion in financial reserves by the end of 2018, or approximately $6,300 per resident.

These reserves are forecast to grow slightly in 2019, with $239 million in capital spending offset by revenues from development and other sources.
SECTION 2: BURNABY HOUSING FACTS AND FIGURES

THE CITY HAS A $123 MILLION FUND FOR HOUSING – OTHER FINANCIAL RESERVES ARE ASSIGNED TO SPECIFIC PURPOSES

The City’s reserves include a $123 million fund for affordable and special needs housing. The rest of the City’s reserves are divided into more than two dozen separate accounts, each with a specific purpose.

$123 million

BURNABY’S TOTAL RESERVES IN BILLIONS

$1.6B

$123 million

$527 million

$587 million

$151 million

$90 million

$87 million

Affordable and special needs housing

Recreation centres, libraries, parks, public spaces and art, childcare, etc.

Replacing land, infrastructure and equipment

Maintaining sewers, waterworks and “other”

Supporting environment, heritage, arts and culture and safety (gaming reserve)

Helping with unexpected costs and/or under-spending from past budgets

CREATING AFFORDABLE HOUSING REQUIRES SUBSIDIES

Hundreds-of-thousands of dollars in subsidies are required to make housing affordable for a low-income family. The following example is intended for illustrative purposes only.

Affordable housing for 200 low-income families

Construction subsidy: $50-80 million (estimate)

Benefit: Affordable housing for 200 low-income families

Description: 200 two-bedroom apartments with affordable rent for a family with $30,000 annual household income ($750 per month)
HOUSING APPROACHES

INTRODUCTION
IN THIS SECTION, WE WILL PRESENT FIVE DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO BURNABY’S HOUSING FUTURE:

1. Treat Housing as a Personal Responsibility
2. Embrace Growth and Density to Increase Housing Supply
3. Protect and Reinvest in Existing Affordable Rentals and Enforce Regulations
4. Partner with Community Housing Sector to Build Affordable Housing
5. Deploy Government Resources to Ensure Housing for All

These approaches are intended to be thought provoking and explore the widest possible spectrum of ideas based on research and extensive public input from Phase One of Your Voice. Your Home.

The approaches do not necessarily reflect the perspectives of the SFU Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue or the positions of the City of Burnaby. Most participants will find ideas they agree with, as well as ideas they disagree with.

The purpose of including this wide range of approaches is to encourage participants to consider trade-offs and potential positive and negative consequences of each approach. Although presented separately, many of these approaches could be adapted or combined. Workshop participants are encouraged to build from these approaches, as well as contribute new ideas as they develop their own recommendations.

*Please note that the following approaches are presented in no particular order.*
This approach treats housing as a personal responsibility, to be governed by the housing market and individuals’ choices.

It argues that cities like Burnaby should focus their resources on public goods that benefit the entire community. Burnaby has limited ability to raise revenue and much of the taxation burden already falls on property owners.

Proponents of this point of view might argue that spending large amounts of money to subsidize housing for relatively few residents and not others is not fair, nor is it sustainable. Many individuals have worked hard for years without government assistance to be able to pay for their current accommodation. Being able to live in a particular neighbourhood and in a particular type of home is not a right. According to this argument, if someone cannot afford to live somewhere, they may need to move.

WAYS FORWARD UNDER THIS APPROACH:

A) Limit government housing support except in cases of extreme need, such as: homelessness and persons with disabilities.

B) Prioritize spending on shared community infrastructure and amenities, rather than housing, like roads and sewers, sports fields and recreation centres and services like police, fire and garbage collection.
SECTION 3: HOUSING APPROACHES

- Building housing can be very expensive and can divert resources away from shared community infrastructure and amenities.
- Government intervention can create dependency, remove market incentives and further skew housing prices.
- Subsidized housing normally benefits a limited number of individuals and often cannot meet the needs of all residents.
- Burnaby is traditionally not responsible for housing and action should come from the Federal and Provincial Governments, not cities.

PROS

CONs

- Forcing people who cannot afford housing to leave Burnaby would separate them from their families, communities and support networks.
- Without affordable housing, Burnaby may have trouble attracting and retaining workers to sustain its businesses and services.
- There are many low-cost ways that municipalities can support affordable housing, such as: creating rental-only zoning, establishing a density bonus program or partnering with senior levels of government.
- The local housing market is skewed by global investment, which has helped raise prices beyond the reach of many local residents.

QUESTION

When is housing a personal responsibility and when should the government intervene?
SECTION 3: HOUSING APPROACHES

APPROACH TWO:
EMBRACE GROWTH AND DENSITY TO INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY

This approach seeks to embrace Burnaby’s transition from suburb to growing urban centre, with a goal to create more homes for more people.

It argues that Burnaby’s high prices are caused in part because there are too few homes to meet demand. With more households moving to Metro Vancouver every year there are not enough new units being built to keep pace.

Currently, much of Burnaby’s land is zoned for single or two family dwellings. As a result, there is quite low housing density throughout much of the City. The result has been two housing extremes: areas defined by single family homes and areas defined by high-rise condos.

Demographics in 2019 are changing and residents require more housing options to support their diverse needs. Fulfilling these needs requires increased variation in housing types across neighbourhoods, town centres and major corridors. Although new homes are often expensive, increasing supply will potentially increase vacancy rates and reduce prices in the long-term.

WAYS FORWARD UNDER THIS APPROACH:

A) Allow multi-family dwellings across all neighbourhoods, including: laneway homes, secondary suites, duplexes and row houses.

B) Allow construction of 4-6 storey apartment buildings in existing single and two family neighbourhoods.

C) Expand high density towers near rapid transit corridors, town centres and urban villages.

D) Create rental-only zoning and encourage construction of missing housing types, including 3+ bedroom homes for families.
SECTION 3: HOUSING APPROACHES

PROS

- Laneway homes, coach houses and secondary suites provide good options for youth, seniors and family members, while protecting neighbourhood character.
- Townhouses, row houses and 4-6 storey apartment buildings can create housing more efficiently and lead to more “walkable” communities.
- Allowing high-density towers is a fast and efficient way to create large amounts of housing, increase environmental sustainability and generate revenues for the City.

CONS

- Gentle densification can take decades to pay off and does not necessarily create affordable housing. It also puts pressure on existing parking, transportation and services.
- Many residents choose to live in single and two family neighbourhoods for the lifestyle they provide and may not welcome larger buildings and other changes.
- Condos and high-rise towers tend to cater to higher incomes, can displace existing affordable housing and are often blamed for increased social isolation among urban residents.

QUESTION

How should future population growth be distributed among Burnaby’s town centres, urban villages and neighbourhoods?
SECTION 3: HOUSING APPROACHES

APPROACH THREE: PROTECT AND REINVEST IN EXISTING AFFORDABLE RENTALS AND ENFORCE REGULATIONS

This approach emphasizes the need to protect and reinvest in existing affordable rental stock. It argues that urgent action is required to prevent further loss of rental housing. This means halting or reducing “demovictions” that make way for high-rise developments, restricting the use of short-term rentals such as Airbnb that displace affordable housing and creating rules to stop “renovictions” from displacing existing renters. Reinvesting in existing affordable rental stock is also necessary to maintain minimum standards in terms of quality, health and safety. From this perspective, tenants deserve to have their basic housing needs met just as much as homeowners, yet some residents are living in terrible conditions that put their well-being at risk. Enforcement and advocacy is therefore necessary to mitigate the power imbalances between renters and landlords to ensure the quality and safety of rental units.

WAYS FORWARD UNDER THIS APPROACH:

A) Freeze density levels around existing rental apartment buildings so that building owners have fewer incentives to demolish existing rental housing.

B) Require landlords to provide temporary accommodation to renters during renovations and to allow occupants to return to their rental unit at the same rent after renovations are complete.

C) Introduce a policy restricting short-term rentals so that services such as Airbnb do not displace existing rental housing stock.

D) Enact and enforce a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw to ensure upkeep of rental buildings and support tenants in navigating challenges with their landlords.
SECTION 3: HOUSING APPROACHES

PROS

• Preserves existing affordable rental housing and allows existing renters to have a more secure housing future.
• Protects vulnerable renters, such as low-income seniors and reduces the power imbalance between tenants and landlords.
• Ensures better quality affordable rental units, resulting in less negative impacts on health, safety and well-being.

CONS

• Risks driving up long-term housing prices by failing to create the thousands of new housing units required by the Regional Growth Strategy to handle an increasing population.
• Does little for young people, recent immigrants and others who currently lack affordable housing.
• New rules and costs fail to recognize that many existing rental buildings have limited ability to cover major repairs or are in need of outright replacement.

To what extent should property owners, rather than the government, be responsible for creating and maintaining affordable housing in Burnaby?
This approach emphasizes that Burnaby has limited taxation powers and that funding affordable housing is primarily the responsibility of the Federal and Provincial Governments – not cities.

It argues that the City cannot solve the housing affordability crisis in Burnaby alone. However, it can be a critical part of the equation by entering into partnerships that leverage the assets of non-profits and other levels of government. This approach recognizes that non-profits and government agencies like B.C. Housing and CMHC can act as both operators and developers.

Constructing affordable rental stock is expensive, largely because of the cost of land. Burnaby currently has a program to supply City-owned land for housing investments by non-profit and public housing operators. Burnaby also has the ability under its density bonus program to rezone land so that property developers can build additional units to offset the cost of providing affordable housing.

WAYS FORWARD UNDER THIS APPROACH:

A) **Allow developers to build more units** in exchange for more affordable housing (density bonuses).

B) **Seek out more partnerships** where the City uses its Housing Fund to leverage the resources of its partners to create new affordable housing units.

C) **Fast track application review and approval** for projects with significant affordable housing benefits.

D) **Spend Burnaby’s resources on housing only when receiving contributions from other levels of government.**
• Allows Burnaby to create affordable housing for specific populations with diverse housing needs and at different stages of life, without compromising its financial sustainability.

• Leverages the financial resources of non-profits and government agencies, such as B.C. Housing and CMHC, as well as their expertise and ability to innovate.

• Non-profits are mission-based and reinvest surplus funds towards their affordable housing programming.

• Non-profits and government providers have income-testing programs to ensure that tenants qualify for low-cost housing.

PROS

CONS

• Diverts City-owned land and development revenues to benefit specific households rather than the entire community.

• Even if Burnaby doubles or triples the rate of new housing units through community partnerships, very few residents would benefit.

• Cities around Metro Vancouver already do this and have not managed to solve the affordability crisis.

• Working with many different non-profits could reduce Burnaby’s flexibility to change housing priorities over time and shifts the burden of navigating multiple waitlists to residents.

What groups or individuals should benefit first from subsidized housing and why?
This approach is based on the belief that Burnaby is responsible for ensuring affordable housing for everyone who wishes to live within its borders.

It argues that housing is not a commodity or investment but rather a necessity for creating stable lives and vibrant communities. Access to adequate housing should be considered as important as access to clean water, education and healthcare.

Without considerable housing investment, many residents will be left behind with no way to live safely, productively and with dignity. In addition to spending its own resources, Burnaby could seek to redistribute the resources of developers and property owners to support affordable housing for those in need. It could also lobby other levels of government for increased housing support.

WAYS FORWARD UNDER THIS APPROACH:

A) Mobilize all possible City resources towards building 16,000 units of affordable housing in order to support all households in core housing need.

B) Implement a rental replacement policy for demovictions to ensure that redevelopment projects guarantee all existing tenants temporary housing and permanent replacement rental units with no significant rent increases.

C) Create a policy to capture increased land values when upzoning neighbourhoods so that windfall goes to affordable housing instead of homeowners.

D) Aggressively seek partnerships and funding from senior levels of government.
SECTION 3: HOUSING APPROACHES

- Would reduce and prevent housing insecurity for Burnaby’s most vulnerable communities, which can have serious physical and mental health consequences.
- Recognizes the full scale of the housing problem, including impacts on the middle class, on the economy and on the ability of young people to remain in Burnaby.
- Would create more healthy and cohesive societies, with the understanding that housing unaffordability and insecurity are increasing urban isolation.
- Direct action by Burnaby can create results faster than waiting for other funders and partners to be in place.

**PROS**

- Building enough homes to address Burnaby’s core need would cost billions of dollars, more than is available across all levels of government.
- Burnaby’s financial reserves are already largely allocated to functions such as emergency services, roads, trails, parks, recreation facilities and other community infrastructure.
- Burnaby should not replace the traditional roles of the Federal and Provincial Governments in building affordable housing and the non-profit sector in operating non-market housing.
- Developers may not be able to afford providing replacement units for all displaced tenants, which could stall growth and constrain long-term housing supply.

**CONS**

**How should the City of Burnaby prioritize spending on housing versus recreation centres, parks and other community services and amenities?**
WHAT’S ON YOUR MIND?

Throughout this Discussion Guide you have been presented with a series of housing-related questions. You have learned about Burnaby’s demographics, housing context and needs and have been introduced to different housing approaches and some of the possible ways forward.

These questions are designed to get you thinking about your own values and perspectives. How do your personal housing experiences, needs and challenges shape your answers to the following questions?

• When is housing a personal responsibility and when should the government intervene?
• How should future population growth be distributed among Burnaby’s town centres, urban villages and neighbourhoods?
• To what extent should property owners, rather than the government, be responsible for creating and maintaining affordable housing in Burnaby?
• What groups or individuals should benefit first from subsidized housing and why?
• How should the City of Burnaby prioritize spending on housing versus recreation centres, parks and other community services and amenities?

DO YOU HAVE ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?
Take a moment to write down any other questions you may have.

Q1:

Q2:

Q3:

Q4:

Q5:
REFERENCES AND FURTHER READING

1. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
2. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
4. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
5. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
6. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
7. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
8. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
9. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Households’
10. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Households’
11. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Where is Burnaby’s Housing?’
12. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
13. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby By The Numbers’
14. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Housing Stock’
15. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Where is Burnaby’s Housing?’
16. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Where is Burnaby’s Housing?’
17. Statistics Canada, 2016 Census, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Housing Stock’
18. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Rental Stock’
20. Primary Rental Market, Unit Count and Vacancy Rates, CMHC, October 2018, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Rental Stock’
21. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019, Table 5.5., as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Burnaby’s Affordability’
22. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019 (Table 1.4), as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Homelessness’
23. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019, Table, 5.4., as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Affordability’
25. CMHC, Primary Rental Market Statistics, Burnaby, 2018., as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Affordability’
26. Dr. Paul Kershaw. Generation Squeeze Research and Knowledge Translation Lab at the University of B.C. Calculations based on home price data from Canadian Real Estate Association data. Earnings data are from Statistics Canada Custom Table C903459 “Income of individuals, by sex, age group and income source, 2017 constant dollars, Canada, provinces, Full-Time, Full-Year Earners only.”
27. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019 (Table 3.1), as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Housing Need’
28. City of Burnaby
29. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019 (Table 3.5), as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Housing Need’
30. Metro Vancouver, Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, 2016, as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Housing Need’
31. Metro Vancouver Housing Book, 2019, Table 3.3., as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Homelessness’
32. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019 (Table 1.4), as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Homelessness’
33. Metro Vancouver Housing Data Book, 2019 (Table 3.2), as referenced in Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Homelessness’
34. Burnaby Housing Fact Sheet ‘Homelessness’
35. City of Burnaby
36. Vancouver Sun, How do your taxes and user fees compare to neighbouring cities?, September 30, 2018 (rounded to nearest hundred, does not include provincial taxes)
37. City of Burnaby, 2019-2023 Provisional Financial Plan (per resident numbers rounded to nearest hundred)
38. City of Burnaby, 2018 Annual Municipal Report

The Burnaby Housing Fact Sheets referenced above are available here:
https://www.burnaby.ca/Assets/city+services/planning/Housing+Fact+Sheets.pdf
SUMMARY OF HOUSING APPROACHES

SECTION 3: SUMMARY OF APPROACHES

1 TREAT HOUSING AS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

A) Limit government housing support except in cases of extreme need, such as: homelessness and persons with disabilities.

B) Prioritize spending on shared community infrastructure and amenities, rather than housing, like roads and sewers, sports fields and recreation centres and services like police, fire and garbage collection.

2 EMBRACE GROWTH AND DENSITY TO INCREASE HOUSING SUPPLY

A) Allow multi-family dwellings across all neighbourhoods, including: laneway homes, secondary suites, duplexes and row houses.

B) Allow construction of 4-6 storey apartment buildings in existing single and two family neighbourhoods.

C) Expand high density towers near rapid transit corridors, town centres and urban villages.

D) Create rental-only zoning and encourage construction of missing housing types, including 3+ bedroom homes for families.

3 PROTECT AND REINVEST IN EXISTING AFFORDABLE RENTALS AND ENFORCE REGULATIONS

A) Freeze density levels around existing rental apartment buildings so that building owners have fewer incentives to demolish existing rental housing.

B) Require landlords to provide temporary accommodation to renters during renovations and to allow occupants to return to their rental unit at the same rent after renovations are complete.

C) Introduce a policy restricting short-term rentals so that services such as Airbnb do not displace existing rental housing stock.

D) Enact and enforce a Standards of Maintenance Bylaw to ensure upkeep of rental buildings and support tenants in navigating challenges with their landlords.
PARTNER WITH COMMUNITY HOUSING SECTOR TO BUILD AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A) Allow developers to build more units in exchange for more affordable housing (density bonuses).

B) Seek out more partnerships where the City uses its Housing Fund to leverage the resources of its partners to create new affordable housing units.

C) Fast track application review and approval for projects with significant affordable housing benefits.

D) Spend Burnaby’s resources on housing only when receiving contributions from other levels of government.

DIRECT WHATEVER RESOURCES ARE REQUIRED TO ENSURE HOUSING FOR ALL

A) Mobilize all possible City resources towards building 16,000 units of affordable housing in order to support all households in core housing need.

B) Implement a rental replacement policy for demovictions, to ensure that redevelopment projects guarantee all existing tenants temporary housing and permanent replacement rental units with no significant rent increases.

C) Create a policy to capture increased land values when upzoning neighbourhoods so that windfall goes to affordable housing instead of homeowners.

D) Aggressively seek partnerships and funding from senior levels of government.