



Pemberton

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

Final Report

December 2009

Prepared for:



Prepared by:



FOREWORD

The Village of Pemberton and CitySpaces Consulting would like to thank the individuals and groups who shared their time and feedback with us in the development of the Affordable Housing Strategy. We would like to thank Mount Currie Coffee, the Pemberton Community Centre, the Pemberton Health Centre and the Bank of Nova Scotia for hosting our survey stations during the month of June and those individuals who took the time to complete the survey. Special thanks are also given to the Development Services staff at the Village of Pemberton, members of the project steering committee, Councillors and development industry representatives who committed valuable insights, ideas and time to review materials and ensure that the proposed approaches reflected the local context and perspective. The appendices identify members of the steering committee, key staff, and those individuals and groups involved in the consultation process.

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SUMMARY OF STRATEGY

VISION

The Pemberton Affordable Housing Strategy seeks to “create a mix of rental, ownership and non-market housing options to meet the diverse and evolving needs of Pemberton residents”.

GOALS

The Village of Pemberton shall seek to:

- Enhance the supply and quality of rental housing for low income households.
- Provide a variety of affordable ownership housing options for young families, first time home purchasers and those seeking to move up the property ladder.
- Encourage housing designed to meet changing household needs and allow seniors to age in place.
- Encourage the development of housing for seasonal workers.
- Encourage the provision of housing services and supports for Pemberton’s vulnerable populations.

ROLES

The Village of Pemberton has six key roles in delivering affordable housing within the community:

- Role #1 - Setting Policy: Clear, consistently applied policies express the City’s commitment to affordable housing.
- Role #2 - Establishing Regulations: Effective use of regulatory authority creates housing opportunities to facilitate affordable housing options.
- Role #3 - Revenue Generation and Land Banking: Strategic use of Village resources (land, revenues) can support an increased supply of affordable housing.
- Role #4 - Leveraging Partnerships: Collaboration with the business and non-profit communities, and Provincial agencies can lead to creative solutions to existing and emerging housing issues.
- Role #5 - Advocacy, Education and Capacity Building: Dedication of staff resources, political leadership and advocacy toward senior levels of government will demonstrate a commitment to ongoing leadership and contribute to increased capacity to create affordable housing.

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STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Strategic Direction #1 - Draft and adopt affordable housing policies that provide clear and consistent direction to staff, council and developers.
- Strategic Direction #2 - Streamline the development review process and remove barriers to affordable housing development.
- Strategic Direction #3 - Amend regulations to encourage innovation in the design and planning of new residential construction as well as residential redevelopment and infill projects.
- Strategic Direction #4 - Amend zoning regulations to facilitate the development of accessory suites as a means of increasing the rental housing stock.
- Strategic Direction #5 - Use financial tools to facilitate the development of affordable housing.
- Strategic Direction #6 - Consider approaches to legalize and facilitate the development of secondary suites.
- Strategic Direction #7 - Introduce municipal programs and mechanisms to direct funds toward affordable housing initiatives.
- Strategic Direction #8 - Build partnerships that can lead to the development of non-market housing projects in the Pemberton area.
- Strategic Direction #9 - Build partnerships that can lead to the development of rental housing projects in the Pemberton area.
- Strategic Direction #10 - Continue to liaise and facilitate dialogue with key stakeholders and community groups regarding housing issues.
- Strategic Direction #11 - Advocate to senior levels of government on housing matters beyond the Village's jurisdiction.
- Strategic Direction #12 - Provide information and outreach to community members.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

In recent years, housing issues in Pemberton have become a growing concern for residents, employers and community leaders alike. Substantial increases in real estate prices coupled with a scarcity of good quality rental housing have resulted in less choice in the housing market for a broad range of households. Such housing challenges have also been linked to Pemberton’s economic and social sustainability with issues related to accommodating the local workforce, ensuring a safe and secure rental stock, and creating choice in the housing market for all households.

Both the Village of Pemberton and Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) have recognized the need for policies and mechanisms to increase the supply of affordable housing in the area, and considerations for affordable housing have been articulated through a number of recent policies and plans. Still, a comprehensive approach to emerging affordability challenges is needed.¹ In spring of 2009, with financial support from the UBCM Community Health Promotion Fund, the Village initiated the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy and commissioned CitySpaces Consulting to undertake this work.

1.1 STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The Affordable Housing Strategy, presented here, builds on the research findings documented in the Pemberton Affordable Housing Strategy Background Report. The Background Report outlines the policy, planning and regulatory framework for affordable housing in Pemberton; presents the facts and factors that underly housing affordability based on available housing statistics; and identifies preliminary issues and considerations based on discussions with Village of Pemberton staff, members of the Affordable Housing Strategy Committee and key-informant interviews. Committee members and key informants are identified in Appendix B.

To validate the initial Background Report findings, the consultants facilitated a stakeholder workshop and held a public open house during the month of June. A list of workshop participants and open house attendees is included in Appendix B. To further substantiate the initial findings, a community-wide survey was also conducted during the month of June. The survey was available both on-line and at four locations in Pemberton – the Mount Currie Coffee Company, the Bank of Nova Scotia, the Pemberton Health Centre and the new community centre. Results of the survey, completed by 80 respondents (32 online and 48 hard copy) are attached as Appendix C.

In September 2009, a draft Affordable Housing Strategy was presented to Village of Pemberton Council. Council provided input and direction to staff and the consultants to conduct a follow-up workshop with development industry representatives to explore the potential cost implications of the proposed strategic directions. A workshop was subsequently held in early December 2009 with development industry representatives and members of Council providing valuable input to the strategic directions. The recorded flipchart notes from this workshop are attached as Appendix D. The input gathered from the workshop was used to revise and finalize the Affordable Housing Strategy.

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¹ The policy and planning context in Pemberton is described in the Pemberton Affordable Housing Strategy Background Report (June 2009), attached to this report as a companion document.

In summary, this Strategy has emerged from:

- A review of Village of Pemberton and SLRD plans and policies;
- An analysis of housing-related statistics;
- Discussions with Village of Pemberton staff and community stakeholders;
- A community-wide survey;
- Input from Village of Pemberton Council; and
- Consultation with development industry representatives.

1.2 REPORT STRUCTURE

The Affordable Housing Strategy is prefaced by a description of Pemberton’s current housing context, which identifies factors affecting housing affordability in the community, the populations most in need and the key issues related to the current housing supply. Based on Pemberton’s current housing context, a framework for planning and decision-making is proposed. This framework includes an overarching vision, five goals for affordable housing, five roles for the Village of Pemberton and a set of corresponding strategic directions. An implementation plan follows with specific attention to priorities, roles, timelines and monitoring.

The attached appendices provide background material related to the research and consultation process (Appendices A, B, C and D). Selected affordable housing best practices are included in Appendix E. The background report, upon which the Affordable Housing Strategy is largely based, is attached as Appendix F.

1.3 A DEFINITION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Affordable housing may be defined differently by different communities. In Canada, the commonly accepted definition for affordable housing comes from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) – housing that costs no more than 30% of a household’s gross income. In some communities, affordable housing may be defined more narrowly and targeted specifically to populations earning a percentage of the median household income.²

In Pemberton, issues related to suitability and quality of the housing stock are identified as being integral to planning for affordable housing. With this in mind, the following definition of affordable housing is proposed for Pemberton:

“Affordable housing refers to housing that enhances the quality of life of inhabitants of the Pemberton area and costs no more than 30% of the median household income.”

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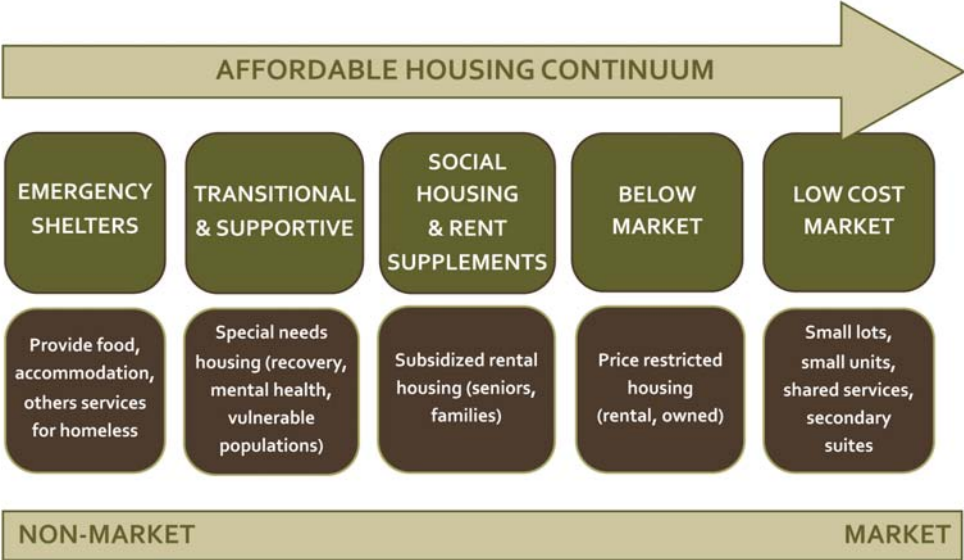
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² Where median household incomes are vastly disproportionate to home prices, it may be necessary to use an adjusted annual median income. For example, the Teton County Housing Authority based in Jackson Hole, Wyoming aims to provide housing opportunities to employees in Teton County who make less than 120% of the median income.

1.4 THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTINUUM

The affordable housing continuum, illustrated in Figure 1 on the following page, represents the spectrum of affordable housing types. At the far left of the continuum are non-market options including emergency shelters for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. At the far right of the continuum are affordable rental and home ownership options for households with low to moderate incomes. As the continuum shifts from left to right, the level of government involvement and subsidy declines and is replaced by a greater reliance on private sector solutions.

Figure 1: Affordable Housing Continuum



Source: CitySpaces Consulting Ltd. 2009

In Pemberton, the affordable housing continuum is only partially represented. On the non-market side, there is no emergency shelter, transitional, or supportive housing. Social housing and rent supplements are provided to a limited extent: the Pemberton Lion’s Villa includes eight units for seniors; and ten households are receiving rental supplements (seven through the Rental Assistance Program (RAP) and three through the SAFER³ program). However, the Province has recently committed funding for an 18-unit complex through BC Housing’s Seniors’ Rental Housing Initiative.

There is currently no price restricted (below market) housing – a type of housing typically administered by a housing authority as in the case of Whistler or Ucluelet. Low cost market housing is available largely through secondary suites although the Village’s small-lot zoning also provides potential for this type of housing.

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³ The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for BC seniors (age 60 and over) with low to moderate incomes and who are renting their homes.

2.0 PEMBERTON'S HOUSING CONTEXT

2.1 KEY INDICATORS

Statistics Canada data along with information about recent development and real estate activity in Pemberton help to inform the housing context. Relevant demographic, socio-economic and housing indicators are described in the Background Report. Some of the notable indicators are highlighted here.

2.1.1 Demographic Indicators

- Pemberton is one of the fastest growing municipalities in BC, growing by 6% per year between 2001 and 2006, compared to the provincial annual growth rate of 1% per year.
- In 2006, more than half of Pemberton's population (51%) was between 25 and 44 years of age.
- In 2006, 28% of households were couples with children, 26% of households were couples without children, 29% of households were singles and 15% consisted of other household types (multiple-family households, lone-parent family households and non-family households).

2.1.2 Socio-economic Indicators

- Approximately 21% of Whistler employees reside outside Whistler, primarily in Squamish or Pemberton.⁴
- Compared to 66% BC-wide, 89% of Pemberton's population participates in the labour force.
- More than one quarter of the labour force (26%) is employed in sales and service sector jobs, while 21% is in management and 18.5% is in trades, transport and equipment (i.e. construction).

2.1.3 Housing Indicators

- Pemberton's housing stock has tripled since 1996 with 70% of new building starts in multi-family units.⁵
- There are approximately 1,200 to 1,300 units currently in the development pipeline, although the Village has experienced a slowdown in development activity in 2008.⁶
- Low-cost market rental housing in Pemberton is limited primarily to secondary suites. According to the Village of Pemberton, 88 suites have been permitted while existing illegal suites are hindered by the flood construction level.⁷
- The Lions Villa is the only seniors social housing development in Pemberton (although as noted, additional seniors housing is expected to be developed).

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⁴ Personal communication with Marla Zucht, Whistler Housing Authority. August 2009.

⁵ Village of Pemberton Building Statistics. June 2009.

⁶ Village of Pemberton Development Services Department. Snapshot 2009: A Community Status report to inform Pemberton's future land use and growth policies. May 2009.

⁷ Personal Communication with Caroline Lamont. Village of Pemberton. June 2009.

2.1.4 Housing Costs

- Between 2003 and 2008, median real estate prices for single detached homes in Pemberton more than doubled, while apartment prices virtually tripled. Single detached home prices increased from \$240,000 to \$530,000; townhomes increased from \$175,000 to \$320,000 and apartments increased from \$90,000 to \$270,000.⁸
- Rents in Pemberton range from \$551 for a shared unit to \$1,891 for a house or townhouse with three or more bedrooms. Typical 1-bedroom units rent for \$922 and 2-bedroom units rent for \$1,341.⁹

2.1.5 Housing Affordability

Using estimated household income figures for 2008, Table 2 presents the maximum purchase price and maximum rents for different types of households earning the median household income in Pemberton.

Table 1: Estimated Maximum Housing Costs (2008)

Household/Family Type	Median Income	Available Income for Rent (30%)	Maximum Purchase Price (5% down)	Maximum Purchase Price (10% down)
Married Couple Families	\$68,500	\$1,710	\$281,000	\$297,000
Single Parent Families	\$42,250	\$1,060	\$148,000	\$156,000
One person household	\$36,300	\$910	\$118,000	\$124,000

Source: CitySpaces Calculations based on 2006 Federal Census and adjusted to 2008 using Provincial wage earnings. Mortgage calculations determined using ING-posted rates for five-year fixed term at 4.49% (June 2009), 25 year amortization and \$350 monthly costs for property taxes, maintenance fees and utilities.

- Married couples earning the median household income of \$68,500 could afford \$1,710 for rent; single parent families could afford up to \$1,060 per month; and one person households could afford up to \$910 for rent. While the median-income household in Pemberton may be able to afford current rents in the area, the greater challenge is reported to be the availability of suitable and adequate rental housing units.
- Married couples earning the median-income could afford a home priced at approximately \$297,000 with a 10% down payment. Single parent families could afford a home priced at approximately \$156,000 and one person households a unit priced at \$124,000. Overall, options for home ownership are limited for all households. First-time home buyers are generally limited to condominium apartments and those looking to move up the property ladder may not be able to do so because of limited choice in the market.

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⁸ Whistler Real Estate Company. June 2009.

⁹ The Pique Classifieds - Rental Listings in the February and September issues, 2002-2009.

2.2 FACTORS AFFECTING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Some of the major factors affecting housing affordability in the Pemberton area include:

- Physical constraints affecting the supply of serviceable land such as floodplain, agricultural land reserve, steep slopes, slope aspect (sun/shade), and soil/bedrock conditions;
- Construction costs including high servicing and site preparation costs (i.e. filling sites upon the floodplain or blasting areas of significant bedrock);
- Costs related to regulatory processes such as rezoning and development permitting and other development requirements such as geotechnical studies, landscaping and lighting requirements, off-site servicing, Development Cost Charges (DCCs) and Community Amenity Contributions (CACs);
- Limited housing supply, as noted by 40% of survey respondents;
- Pemberton's role as a bedroom community with high demand for housing from Whistler employees, as noted by 51% of survey respondents;
- High housing costs in relation to personal incomes as noted by 68% of survey respondents and substantiated by the consultants' maximum purchase price calculations; and
- Competition from investment or second home purchasers, as noted by 43% of survey respondents.

With regard to the last two factors, there is some speculation that the Sea-to-Sky highway improvements (between Whistler and Vancouver) will increase accessibility to communities in the corridor. Despite current economic conditions, decreased travel time to and from the lower mainland is expected to attract increasing numbers of second-home owners and amenity migrants¹⁰ and further stimulate economic development in the Pemberton area.

2.3 HOUSING ISSUES AND GAPS

The research has highlighted gaps in Pemberton's housing stock and, in particular, a variety of challenges related to the provision of rental, ownership and non-market housing.

2.3.1 Rental Housing

There are key challenges related to the provision of affordable rental housing in terms of supply and quality.

- Given the nature of the local economy, there is high demand for rental accommodation during the ski season, particularly with competition from Whistler employees. Compounding the issue, the reliance on sales, service and trades-related employment results in a disconnect between local incomes and housing costs.
- There is also an emerging concern that the 2010 Olympic Games may negatively impact the availability of rental housing to local residents as owners withhold their rental units to accommodate short-term visitors prior to and during the Games.

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¹⁰ The term, amenity migration, was coined by Laurence A.G. Moss in "Beyond Tourism: The Amenity Migrants" (1994) and refers to the movement of people to places, permanently or part-time, principally because of the actual or perceived higher environmental quality and/or cultural differentiation of the destination.

- Based on community survey results, concerns regarding rental housing challenges were noted:
 - 62% of respondents indicated that it is difficult or very difficult to find affordable rental housing.
 - 31% of respondents indicated that it is difficult or very difficult to find well-maintained rental housing.
 - 93% of survey respondents indicated that secondary suites are an important form of rental housing in the Pemberton area.
- Many secondary suites are not registered because they have been in existence for a long time, were constructed illegally or were constructed beneath the Flood Construction Level (FCL).^{11 12}
- Key-informants noted that a hostel or dormitory-style development with shared living quarters could be an asset in the community, serving the transient/short-stay or seasonal populations.

2.3.2 Ownership Housing

Challenges related to affordable ownership housing in Pemberton appear to be less related to lack of supply than to a lack of housing options in the community. In particular, key informants and workshop participants suggested that it can be difficult to get into the market and also to move up the property ladder with typical household incomes. The lack of housing to accommodate changing household needs was identified as a significant issue. Young families, in particular, seeking larger homes with private yards, find that this type of housing product is difficult to obtain while maintaining affordability. Others noted the lack of housing to accommodate “aging in place”.

Results of the community survey support these findings:

- 73% of respondents indicated that it is difficult or very difficult to find a home that is affordable.
- 67% of respondents indicated that it is difficult or very difficult to find a home that is affordable and has enough interior space to meet household needs.
- 64% of respondents indicated that it is difficult or very difficult to find a home that is affordable and has enough exterior space to meet household needs.
- 54% of respondents indicated that, within the next five years, they will need to upsize to a larger home to accommodate a growing family.
- 23% of respondents indicated that, within the next five years, they will need to downsize to a smaller home.

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¹¹ The Flood Construction Level (FCL) is the minimum allowable elevation for a habitable space (above mean sea level). This height is determined by an engineering assessment of the flood hazard. In new construction, the underside of a wood floor system or the top of a concrete slab must be no lower than the FCL.

¹² The municipalities of Port Coquitlam, Chilliwack, New Westminster and Richmond were contacted regarding their approach to secondary suite development in flood-risk areas. All municipalities indicated that illegal suites are enforced on a complaint basis. None of the municipalities authorize secondary suites in flood risk areas and none have identified options to legalize suites through mitigation techniques. It has been suggested that Council has authority to permit suites in geologically hazardous areas but that the BC Emergency Program will not respond to areas where charters have been overridden to allow development in flood-risk areas. Contacts are identified in Appendix B.

Many of the stakeholders, key-informants and community members involved in the research suggested that there is a need for a variety of housing forms, sizes and lot configurations in order to reconcile housing cost with quality of life and to meet the unique and changing needs of households.

2.3.3 Non-Market Housing

There is currently no non-market housing in the Pemberton area, such as a shelter or treatment centre, dedicated to the community’s most vulnerable populations. Discussions with Sea-to-Sky Community Services indicate that the Sea-to-Sky Corridor is home to a significant and growing homeless population with an estimated 200 homeless people residing between Squamish and Whistler and an additional 200 homeless people residing between Whistler and Pemberton.¹³ The number of homeless in the Pemberton area has not been officially documented, although Sea-to-Sky Community Services suggests that, at any given time, the homeless population will include both people who are entrenched homeless – living in tents or other substandard shelter – and “hidden homeless” – those who have no fixed address but arrange temporary shelter with friends or acquaintances.

This assumption was supported by those involved in the consultation process who reported there were individuals living in the woods outside Pemberton who had no other housing options, and others who are living in cars or trailers on private property because they are unable to obtain short-stay housing. It has further been suggested that there is often a “temporary homeless” population where individuals arriving in the community can’t return home due to the lack of public transit.

Studies undertaken by the Joint Winds of Change Committee have identified a need for both residential treatment services and support recovery services in the Pemberton Valley.¹⁴ Although facilities exist for Lil’wat Nation members and Pemberton residents outside the region, either in the lower mainland or in Squamish, such services are not easily accessible particularly due to the lack of public transportation and poor accessibility to family and community supports.

*Figure 2:
Single detached dwelling under
construction in the Benchlands,
where construction site preparation
often involves rock blasting.*



Credit: CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

¹³ Personal communication with Peter Harker, Sea-to-Sky Community Services. August 2009.

¹⁴ Winds of Change: Drug & Alcohol Services Feasibility Study. 2008.

2.4 TARGET POPULATIONS

Five target groups have been identified that merit specific attention through the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy. These groups were confirmed by workshop and open house participants.

2.4.1 Low Income Households

Pemberton's low income households have difficulty finding secure, long-term housing that is both affordable and appropriate to their needs. The research suggests that rental housing is often difficult to obtain and that rental housing prices are often high in relation to household incomes. Households within this demographic include those on fixed incomes or those in low-paying service sector jobs.

2.4.2 Seasonal Workers

Seasonal workers are another group that are challenged with finding secure, affordable housing. Seasonal workers are a vital component of the regional economy – contributing primarily to Whistler's tourism economy and, to a lesser extent, farming activities in the Pemberton Valley. According to the Whistler Housing Authority, 79% of the winter workforce live in Whistler, while the remaining 21% (2,940) live primarily in Pemberton or Squamish.¹⁵

2.4.3 Young Households

With 51% of the population between 25 and 44, young households constitute a major part of the Pemberton community. Young households, including families and individuals, seeking to move up the property ladder are finding that their options are limited. Growing families seeking more interior space and secure, private yards are challenged to find homes which meet their needs, yet fit their budgets.

2.4.4 Seniors

Seniors currently comprise a small proportion (3%) of the population. Still, the lack of seniors' housing continues to be a concern, particularly in light of the trend to allow "aging in place" and the likelihood that today's young households will eventually become seniors themselves. Recent studies and work of the seniors housing committee have explored ways to accommodate the existing and future seniors' populations through a range of market and non-market housing options.¹⁶ The proposed 22-unit seniors rental housing facility may largely address the current demand for housing although, moving forward, other types of seniors' housing should be considered.

2.4.5 Vulnerable Populations

Based on anecdotal evidence, consideration for vulnerable populations is a necessary element of the housing strategy. Such populations may include the hidden homeless, entrenched homeless and temporary homeless in addition to those suffering from mental health and/or drug addiction problems. However, further research is needed to identify all vulnerable populations within the Pemberton Valley and also to ascertain the extent of their needs.

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¹⁵ Personal communication with Marla Zucht, Whistler Housing Authority. August 2009.

¹⁶ Notable studies include the Pemberton and Mount Currie Age-friendly Community Project and Pemberton Valley 55+ Housing Market Study and Financial Feasibility Analysis.

3.0 AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR PEMBERTON

The Affordable Housing Strategy is focused on the provision of home ownership, rental housing and non-market housing with specific attention to Pemberton’s target populations, including low-income households, young families, seniors, seasonal workers, and vulnerable populations. A guiding vision and five goals are provided as the foundation for six key roles and corresponding proposed strategic directions for the Village of Pemberton.

3.1 A VISION FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Pemberton Affordable Housing Strategy seeks to “create a mix of rental, ownership and non-market housing options to meet the diverse and evolving needs of Pemberton residents”.



Photo Credit: CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

Figure 3: Typical multi-family housing typology in the Pemberton Plateau neighbourhood.

Figure 4: Typical multi-family housing typology in the Pioneer Junction neighbourhood.



Photo Credit: CitySpaces Consulting Ltd.

3.2 FIVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING GOALS

With an understanding of the Pemberton Housing Context and target populations, the Village of Pemberton shall seek to:

1. Enhance the supply and quality of rental housing for low income households.
2. Provide a variety of affordable ownership housing options for young families, first time home purchasers and those seeking to move up the property ladder.
3. Encourage housing designed to meet changing household needs and allow seniors to age in place.
4. Encourage the development of housing for seasonal workers.
5. Encourage the provision of housing services and supports for Pemberton's vulnerable populations.

3.3 FIVE KEY ROLES FOR THE VILLAGE OF PEMBERTON

The Village of Pemberton has five key roles in delivering affordable housing within the community:

1. **Setting Policy:** Clear, consistently applied policies express the City's commitment to affordable housing.
2. **Establishing Regulations:** Effective use of regulatory authority creates housing opportunities to facilitate affordable housing options.
3. **Revenue Generation and Land Banking:** Strategic use of Village resources (land, revenues) can support an increased supply of affordable housing.
4. **Leveraging Partnerships:** Collaboration with the business and non-profit communities, and Provincial agencies can lead to creative solutions to existing and emerging housing issues.
5. **Advocacy, Education and Capacity Building:** Dedication of staff resources, political leadership and advocacy toward senior levels of government will demonstrate a commitment to ongoing leadership and contribute to increased capacity to create affordable housing.

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4.0 STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

In relation to the five key roles, there are twelve strategic directions. For each strategic direction, there are specific actions. The actions are intended to achieve results in a timely fashion, respecting Pemberton's small community context and limited resources. The strategic directions, along with their specific actions, aim to facilitate a mix of affordable housing including rental, ownership and non-market options while recognizing the unique and evolving needs of Pemberton residents.

4.1 ROLE #1: SETTING POLICY

Clear, consistent policies express the Village of Pemberton's commitment to affordable housing. When Village officials meet with prospective developers, funders, partners or senior government representatives, it is beneficial to have a clear policy framework.

The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the Village's guiding decision-making framework for growth and development. Policies to address affordable, rental and special needs housing are a legislative requirement of the OCP, and as such, will be introduced as the current OCP (adopted in 1999) is updated. These policies must be appropriate to Pemberton and should also reflect the regional context.

The draft Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) calls for consistency among affordable housing policies across the region and provides strategic direction with regard thereto. The RGS specifically directs the adoption of policies and regulations to support live-work, mixed-use neighbourhoods, and residential intensification (secondary suites, flex-housing, infill and small lot development); financial tools (e.g. cash-in-lieu of social housing contributions, waiving DCCs, property tax exemptions, and land grants); and tools to increase the affordable housing supply and create housing that is perpetually affordable).

Similarly, housing policies within the Village of Pemberton OCP could be aligned with the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Area C Plan (also pending adoption), which contains specific language and direction around affordable housing: supporting principles of smart growth; advocating for a range of affordable housing options and including policies (e.g. secondary suites and cluster housing development, providing for new and existing mobile home parks, compensating for the net loss of affordable housing, considering 10%-15% inclusionary zoning, financial contributions to an affordable housing fund, and density bonuses for the provision of affordable housing).

Policies are intended to provide a wide range of housing forms (i.e. different tenure, type and price point) to ensure there is choice and diversity of housing for residents. This would ensure that people and households of all ages and income levels are accommodated through the local housing market. This would involve the development of different housing forms across the housing continuum – from non-market housing through to home ownership.

Strategic Direction #1

Draft and adopt affordable housing policies that provide clear and consistent direction to staff, council and developers.

- Introduce OCP policies to:
 - encourage diverse housing forms through a variety of approaches such as cluster development, manufactured homes, lot-splitting and small-lot

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development, lock-off units, residential infill/intensification, grow homes¹⁷ and coach houses.

- encourage diverse housing tenures (e.g. fee simple ownership townhouses and rowhouses as an alternative to stratified townhouse condominiums. With municipal support and the use of party wall agreements, fee simple rowhousing projects have been recently introduced in a number of Lower Mainland communities¹⁸).
- protect and enhance the supply of rental housing introducing incentives to encourage new single detached homes to be “secondary suite ready”.
- support the development of short-stay rental housing.
- support the development of non-market housing.
- restrict the rental of private homes for nightly/tourism purposes.
- support accessory housing for employees working in industrial areas (while maintaining primarily industrial uses).
- support accessory housing for employees working in agricultural areas (while maintaining primarily agricultural uses).
- Acknowledge that affordable housing is an important community amenity to be considered for inclusion with major development applications (on par with parks, recreational facilities, public art and other services) subject to the project’s location and form.
- Develop a policy statement on manufactured home parks to supplement the requirements of the Manufactured Home Park Act. The intent behind this policy statement would be to further address the issues of tenant displacement and loss of affordable housing.

4.2 ROLE #2: ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS

Regulatory mechanisms such as subdivision, zoning and building bylaws are the most direct tools available to municipalities to facilitate the development of affordable housing. Periodically, bylaws need to be reviewed to ensure they do not hinder the development process. This is also necessary to facilitate the legalization of existing secondary suites, encourage more suite construction and encourage innovative and affordable land use applications and housing forms.

Strategic Direction #2

Streamline the development review process and remove barriers to affordable housing development.

- Proactively review Village zoning, subdivision and building bylaws to ensure regulations and standards are not a barrier to affordable housing development. It is recommended that members of the development community continue to be

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¹⁷ Avi Friedman’s Grow Home gives people what they need in a house at an affordable price - a quality product that allows both the perimeter and interior of a house to be expanded and changed to fit the space needs and budget of its owners.

¹⁸ Parklane Homes’ Bedford Landing in Langley (<http://www.bedfordlanding.com/>) and Aragon’s Port Royal development in Queensborough, New Westminster (<http://www.portroyalhomes.ca/>)

involved in this process to collaboratively identify process barriers and improvements to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

- Revise the Village's current approach to Development Cost Charges for residential development¹⁹ to a per square metre basis rather than a per unit basis and decrease DCCs for rental housing restricted to local employees. This would benefit developers of smaller sized units and, potentially, incentivize more innovative, compact housing and affordable rental housing.
- Designate and/or rezone lands that are appropriate for new housing development.
- Work towards clarifying unknown development requirements within existing policies and regulations, rather than adding new requirements and costs during the development review process.

Strategic Direction #3

Amend regulations to encourage innovation in the design and planning of new residential construction as well as residential redevelopment and infill projects.

- Review Section 508 of the zoning bylaw and consider reducing parking requirements for housing projects.
- Introduce conditional regulations in the zoning bylaw and development permitting to encourage infill and intensification of the RS1 zone. This includes lot splitting, backyard infill, front-back duplexes, triplexes and fourplexes.
- Continue to encourage rezoning applications to facilitate innovative and affordable housing.

Strategic Direction #4

Amend zoning regulations to facilitate the development of accessory suites as a means of increasing the rental housing stock.

- Review RS2 (small-lot) regulations and incorporate relaxation of lot width to 9.1 m (30 feet) subject to certain conditions that ensure that other zoning requirements can be satisfied.
- Allow secondary suites as accessory uses on small lots subject to certain conditions that ensure other zoning requirements can be satisfied.
- Allow new multi-family developments to incorporate lock-units²⁰ (or flex units) as accessory uses. "Lock-off units" can be found in resort and university communities²¹ as they are often suitable for short-term occupants (e.g. seasonal workers).
- Amend Section 208 of the zoning bylaw (accessory single residential use) reducing the minimum floor area of accessory suites to 35 m².

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¹⁹ The Village has commenced this process. Personal communication with Caroline Lamont. September 2009.

²⁰ A lock-off unit can be generally defined as a self-contained dwelling unit within, but separate from, a multi-family housing unit, which may have independent access to the exterior or common area within the building.

²¹ Lock-off units can be found in a number of resort communities including Lake Tahoe and Vail. They have recently been introduced locally in Burnaby (Verdant at SFU UniverCity), Vancouver, and Langford.

- Amend Section 210 to allow an accessory suite in a duplex or townhouse dwelling subject to certain conditions that ensure that other zoning requirements can be satisfied.
- Increase the maximum height of accessory buildings in the RS1 (residential) zone to accommodate coach houses or suites above garages.
- In the Downtown core, parking requirements for accessory suites could be waived entirely if the units are restricted (with a covenant on title) as rental housing for local employees (and where employee parking has already been applied to corresponding commercial uses).

Strategic Direction #5

Use financial tools to facilitate the development of affordable housing.

- Continue to support and maintain a consistent approach to density bonusing as a mechanism to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Strategic Direction #6

Consider approaches to legalize and facilitate the development of secondary suites.

The Background Report and subsequent community survey confirm that secondary suites are a vital component of Pemberton’s rental housing stock. While the current zoning bylaw allows secondary suites in single detached homes, there is an opportunity to support the development of new suites and improve the safety of existing suites – namely those beneath the FCL.

- Research and formalize “alternative life safety standards” and amend the Building Bylaw to require compliance with “alternative life safety standards” for existing suites. Maintain “compliance with the BC Building Code” for new-build situations.
- Consider reducing the utility rate for legal secondary suites to no more than 40% of the rate for the primary unit.
- Encourage all new single detached homes to be “suite ready” to enable a portion of a home to be utilized as a secondary suite if needed. The philosophy underlying this approach is based on the assumption that the various households which occupy a home during its lifetime will have different needs. Furthermore, making a home “suite ready” from the start is generally less costly than it would be to try to retrofit an existing home. Typically, where “suite ready” programs are in place, provisions are made for independent heating systems (e.g. gas fireplace in the future suite area); fire separation; inter-connected smoke detection; and a separate entrance to the unit from the exterior.
- Introduce a *Standards of Maintenance* bylaw for rental housing. Local governments can enact standards of maintenance bylaws to enforce basic levels of maintenance for rental accommodation. The bylaw can be used to ensure apartment buildings, secondary suites and other dwellings that are rented meet minimum standards for comfort and safety. In the case of secondary suites, a complaint by a tenant under this bylaw could result in an unauthorized suite being required to be upgraded to meet the required standards without necessarily being shut down for non-compliance with other bylaws (e.g. zoning).

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4.3 ROLE #3: REVENUE GENERATION AND LAND BANKING

Strategic Direction #7

Introduce municipal programs and mechanisms to direct funds toward affordable housing initiatives.

- Establish a housing reserve fund and terms of reference for the operation of the account. A housing reserve fund can be used to purchase land for the purposes of affordable housing and/or to provide grants to non-profit housing providers and support other affordable housing initiatives. A housing committee could be set up to advise on the allocation of affordable housing dollars in the housing reserve fund by developing criteria for project selection and expectations.
- Direct funds from density bonusing initiatives or other sources that are earmarked for affordable housing into the Village's housing reserve fund.
- For non-profit housing providers, consider providing grants in lieu from the housing reserve fund to offset the costs associated with Development Cost Charges (DCCs) or other permit fees on a case-by-case basis.
- Establish a land reserve and terms of reference for the management of the reserve. Similar to the housing reserve fund, the Village of Pemberton can create a land reserve or land bank as a mechanism for acquiring a supply of serviceable land for the purpose of affordable housing. A housing committee should advise on the acquisition and disposition of reserve land.
- Use land within the reserve for the purpose of developing a short-stay rental housing project or shelter, supportive or transitional housing facility.

4.4 ROLE #4: LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic Direction #8

Build partnerships that can lead to the development of non-market housing projects in the Pemberton area.

Local governments throughout BC partner with the Provincial government and non-profit agencies and housing providers to develop and acquire housing for low income households. The Village of Pemberton previously partnered with the Lions and BC Housing to obtain funding for 18 units of subsidized rental housing for seniors.

- Build and strengthen partnerships with other agencies (i.e. BC Housing, the SCRDC, Lil'Wat First Nation and Sea-to-Sky Community Services).²²
- Working proactively with partner agencies to identify the population groups who are most in need of housing and support services in the Pemberton area.
- Collaborate with BC Housing and leverage partnerships to develop an emergency shelter or supportive housing for vulnerable or special needs populations. The Village could provide community grants, make land contributions or expedite approvals to facilitate such a development.

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²² It is important to build on partnerships such as the Pemberton - Mount Currie Joint Winds of Change.

Strategic Direction #9

Build partnerships that can lead to the development of rental housing projects in the Pemberton area.

Partnership opportunities offer the greatest chance of success at developing purpose-built rental housing projects given current market conditions. Below-market or donated land would be required alongside additional incentives in order to make rental housing financially viable.

- Pursue partnership opportunities with the private sector and government and investigate the feasibility of developing a short-stay rental project (e.g. dormitory style rooms with shared living areas or small units).²³ The Village could provide financial grants, make land contributions or fast-track the review process.

4.5 ROLE #5: ADVOCATING, EDUCATING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

The Village can demonstrate its commitment to affordable housing through strengthening the housing policies within the Official Community Plan and by pursuing the recommended directions within this housing strategy. Ongoing leadership would further involve advocacy to senior levels of government and capacity building within the community.

Strategic Direction #10

Continue to liaise and facilitate dialogue with key stakeholders and community groups regarding housing issues.

- Establish an affordable housing or housing advisory committee to consider future housing issues, undertake regular monitoring and evaluation of the Affordable Housing Strategy (and actions) and advise on the housing reserve fund and housing land reserve.
- Encourage the formation of a liaison group with representatives of the development community active in the Pemberton area.²⁴ This group could act as an advisory board for planning and regulatory issues.

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Strategic Direction #11

Advocate to senior levels of government on housing matters beyond the Village's jurisdiction.

- Seek funding from provincial and federal government agencies to conduct an FCL Reduction Analysis.
- Advocate to the provincial government to review and consider relaxations to flood control related requirements for residential construction, without reducing flood hazard protection levels. This would include consideration of secondary suites in houses on the floodplain.

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²³ An example of this type of project would be the 180-unit hostel developed as part of the Whistler Athletes Village for the 2010 Olympics. Following the Olympics, the hostel will provide short-term and budget accommodation. The hostel was developed through a partnership between Hostelling International Canada and the Whistler 2020 Development Corporation (WDC), a wholly owned subsidiary of the Resort Municipality of Whistler (RMOW).

²⁴ A candidate group may be the Canadian Home Builders Association - Sea to Sky Chapter, which (according to the chapter website at www.chbaseatosky.com) serves the Sea to Sky Corridor including Mount Currie, Pemberton, Whistler, Squamish & Furry Creek.

- Advocate to the federal government through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other advocacy groups regarding tax disincentives and other barriers that inhibit the development of new purpose-built rental housing.

Strategic Direction #12

Provide information and outreach to community members.

- Use the Village of Pemberton website to provide housing information and to promote housing programs and initiatives.
- Arrange for the Residential Tenancy Branch (RTB) to host a presentation regarding the rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants well in advance of the 2010 Olympics.
- Provide information about existing government programs:
 - The BC Housing Rental Assistance Program provides cash assistance to eligible low-income, working families with at least one child under age 19 and a household income less than \$28,000 per year.
 - The BC Housing Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides cash payments to subsidize rents to residents who are 60 or over.
 - The CMHC RRAP (Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program) program offers a forgivable loan for the creation of a secondary suite for low-income seniors or adults with disabilities. The Village can promote the program among resident homeowners.
- Provide information and educational opportunities to residents and potential residents to encourage home ownership and create successful home owners.
- Educate landlords about building and electrical code requirements, alternative life safety standards and minimum maintenance standards for rental housing.
- Develop and distribute information (e.g. fact sheets) on innovative housing forms and concepts (e.g. shared equity or co-housing models) to encourage innovation in housing.

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5.0 PRIORITIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

A general timeline is proposed for implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy, which acknowledges the Village's limited resources. Short-term priorities are immediate and intended to be addressed in the first half of 2010. Medium priorities are intended to be addressed over a two-year time horizon including 2010 and 2011. Long-term priorities are identified as those that will be more complex in scope and will require a longer time frame to implement. These may be completed from 2012 onward. A prioritization table is presented below.

Strategic Directions & Actions	Short-term Priority	Medium-term Priority	Long-term Priority
1. Provide clear and consistent policies			
▶ Introduce new OCP policies to support diverse housing forms and tenures	★		
▶ Acknowledge affordable housing in the Community Amenity Policy	★		
▶ Develop a manufactured home park policy statement		★	
2. Streamline regulatory review process			
▶ Review Village subdivision, zoning and building bylaws with development community		★	
▶ Revise approach to calculating DCCs for residential development	★		
▶ Designate and/or rezone lands appropriate for new housing development		★	
▶ Clarify development requirements in existing policies and regulations	<i>ongoing</i>		
3. Amend regulations to encourage innovation			
▶ Review zoning requirements for parking and consider revising requirements for housing		★	
▶ Introduce conditional RS1 zoning regulations to allow for infill/intensification		★	
▶ Encourage rezoning applications for innovative affordable housing projects	★		
4. Amend regulations for accessory rental suites			
▶ Zoning amendments to facilitate accessory rental suite and lock-off suite development	★		

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Strategic Directions & Actions	Short-term Priority	Medium-term Priority	Long-term Priority
▶ Introduce restrictive covenant when parking waived for employee housing in downtown		✱	
5. Use financial tools			
▶ Ensure a consistent approach to density bonusing to facilitate affordable housing	✱		
6. Legalize/facilitate secondary suites			
▶ Consider reducing the utility rate to no more than 40% of the primary unit for legal suites	✱		
▶ Introduce alternative life safety standards and amend building bylaw		✱	
▶ Create incentives to encourage new single detached homes to be secondary suite ready		✱	
▶ Introduce a standards of maintenance bylaw		✱	
7. Municipal programs/mechanisms to fund affordable housing			
▶ Establish a housing reserve fund		✱	
▶ Establish a land reserve		✱	
8. Leverage partnerships to develop non-market housing			
▶ Build and strengthen partnerships with BC Housing, SCRD, Lil'Wat, and Sea-to-Sky Community Services	<i>ongoing</i>		
▶ Identify population groups in need		✱	
▶ Leverage partnership to develop an emergency shelter or supportive housing		✱	
9. Leverage partnerships to develop short-stay rental housing			
▶ Leverage partnership to develop a short-stay rental project		✱	
10. Liaise with key stakeholders and community groups			
▶ Establish a housing committee		✱	
▶ Establish a developer liaison group		✱	

Strategic Directions & Actions	Short-term Priority	Medium-term Priority	Long-term Priority
11. Advocate to senior levels of government			
▶ Explore FCL Reduction Analysis		✱	
▶ Advocate to the provincial government to reconsider flood control requirements		✱	
▶ Advocate to the federal government to remove barriers to purpose-built rental		✱	
12. Provide information and outreach			
▶ Use the Village website to provide information	<i>ongoing</i>		
▶ Arrange for the RTB to provide a presentation on tenant/landlord rights and responsibilities	<i>ongoing</i>		
▶ Provide information about existing government programs	<i>ongoing</i>		
▶ Provide educational opportunities regarding home ownership	<i>ongoing</i>		
▶ Educate landlords about codes, alternative life safety and maintenance standards	<i>ongoing</i>		
▶ Provide information on innovative housing forms and concepts	<i>ongoing</i>		

6.0 MONITORING & EVALUATION

Over time, the housing needs of Pemberton residents will undoubtedly change due to fluctuating market conditions. At the present time, there is speculation that the upcoming 2010 Olympic Games are exerting pressure on the housing market, and that this pressure may subside once the Games have concluded, particularly once the stock of affordable units are released in Whistler. There is also speculation, however, that Pemberton will become increasingly attractive to amenity migrants seeking a piece of paradise in the mountains and thereby driving up demand and corresponding costs for housing -- as has been the case in numerous mountain communities. The future is uncertain.

Because of the potential for changing market conditions and corresponding changes in the community's housing needs, regular review, monitoring and updating of the Affordable Housing Strategy is important. Ongoing research and assessment of affordable housing needs in relation to Village of Pemberton policies and priorities will ensure that strategic directions for affordable housing continue to be valid and effective. The following steps are recommended:

- Monitor and report annually on the implementation of the affordable housing strategic directions and status of affordable housing development. A "current conditions" snapshot or report card may be used to assess the priority housing issues of the day and the extent to which the Affordable Housing Strategy is in line with these issues.
- Every five years (following the completion of the federal census), revisit the key indicators of housing affordability (as identified in the Background Report) to evaluate local housing needs and housing affordability.
- Amend the strategic directions as necessary to reflect changing housing conditions.
- Amend municipal policies and regulations as necessary to address affordable housing needs.

The consultants recognize that the implementation and monitoring of a comprehensive affordable housing program is challenging for small municipalities with limited budgets and staff resources. For this reason, it is recommended that a volunteer housing committee be utilized (as directed under Strategic Direction #10) where possible to consider and advise on housing-related matters. Two purposes will be served: (i) to minimize the burden on municipal resources; and (ii) to help build capacity to support an affordable housing program in perpetuity.

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7.0 CONCLUSION

The Village and the community at large have expressed a desire to take action to address affordable housing in the Pemberton area. The research on housing conditions has confirmed the need for a comprehensive strategy to address housing affordability, quality and diversity for a range of population groups including: low-income residents, seasonal employees, young households, seniors and vulnerable populations.

The 2009 Affordable Housing Strategy aims to address the needs of each population group through actions which are suited to the community's specific needs, while recognizing the Village's limited resources. The Strategy does, however, place the onus upon the Village, including its staff and Council, to provide leadership in implementation. The Strategy is also strongly reliant upon the development of partnerships with other government agencies, developers and the community in order to build the needed capacity to achieve the actions identified within the twelve strategic directions.

It is also recognized that, over time, the community's needs may change and that the Affordable Housing Strategy will have to be adapted to meet these changing conditions and emerging priorities accordingly. For this reason, the Village of Pemberton will have to remain proactive in monitoring the strategy, reporting annually on the progress within the strategic directions and comprehensively reviewing the strategy every five years. The ongoing implementation of this Housing Strategy will demonstrate the Village's continuing commitment to affordable housing and choice for residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.

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APPENDIX A - REFERENCES

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APPENDIX B - STUDY PARTICIPANTS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STEERING COMMITTEE

Jordan Sturdy, Mayor, Village of Pemberton

Lisa Griffith, Planner, SLRD

Rick Staehli, Resident

Kirsten McLeod, Pemberton Supermarket

MUNICIPAL STAFF RESOURCES

Caroline Lamont, Manager of Development Services/Project Manager

Jill Brooksbank, Communications

Suzanne Belanger, Development Services

KEY INFORMANTS

- Peter Harker, Sea to Sky Community Services
- Michael Hutchison, Bethel Corporation
- Bruce McFadden, Pemberton Foundation & Seniors Housing Committee
- Michael Rosen, Planning Consultant
- Nolan Cox, Pemberton Secondary School Principal
- Garth Phare, Signal Hill Homes
- Shane Pedrini, Contractor
- Tom Horler, Chamber of Commerce/ McDonald's Restaurant
- Gayle Andrews, Mt. Currie Band
- Tina Rizutti, Former Resident Renter
- Norm Leblanc, Lizzie Bay Logging
- Tim Arthur, Port Coquitlam Planning Department
- Jillian Villeneuve, Chilliwack Development Department
- Dave Guiney, New Westminster Development Services Department

VILLAGE OF PEMBERTON COUNCIL

- Mayor Jordan Sturdy
- Councillor Lisa Ames
- Councillor Susie Gimse
- Councillor Ted Craddock
- Councillor Alan leBlanc

WORKSHOP & OPEN HOUSE PARTICIPANTS

- Lisa Ames
- Susie Gimse
- Garth Phare
- Drew Meredith
- Jordan Sturdy
- Kim Needham
- Alan leBlanc
- Caroline Lamont
- Rick Staehli
- Eric Prall
- Don Coggins
- Pat Saintsbury
- Tim Sutherland
- Gail McKellar
- Christiane Bless
- Rosalind Steel
- Lori Pilon
- Ivan Knowles
- Gayle Andrews
- Bruce Van Mook
- Brian Young
- Lisa Griffith
- Richard Nicolas
- Ted Craddock

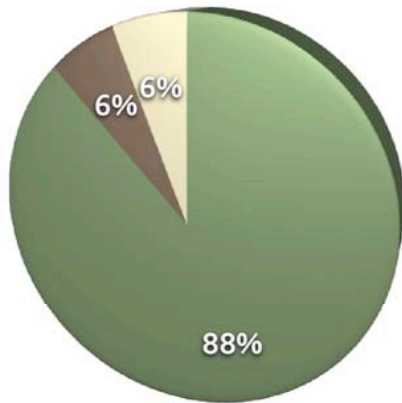
APPENDIX C - AFFORDABLE HOUSING SURVEY RESULTS

Community Survey Results

Between June 12th and 30th, 2009, CitySpaces Consulting conducted a survey to find out what people think about affordable housing in the Pemberton area. 80 people completed the survey (32 online and 48 hardcopy).

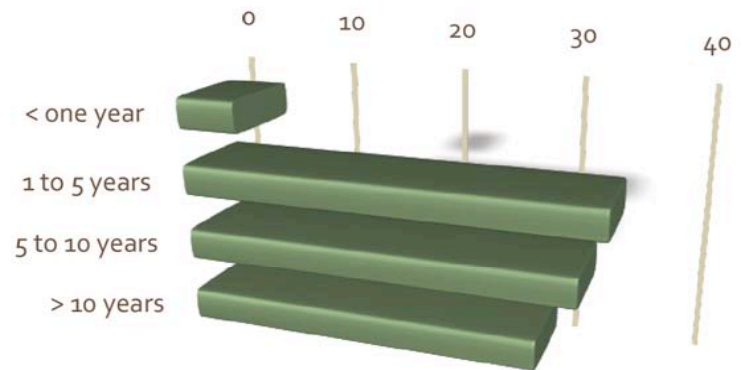
Here are the results:

Where do you live?

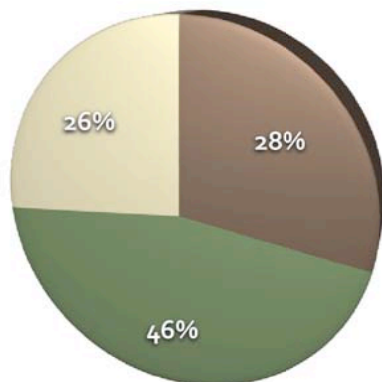


- In Pemberton
- Work in Pemberton; live elsewhere
- Don't live or work in Pemberton

How long have you lived in Pemberton?

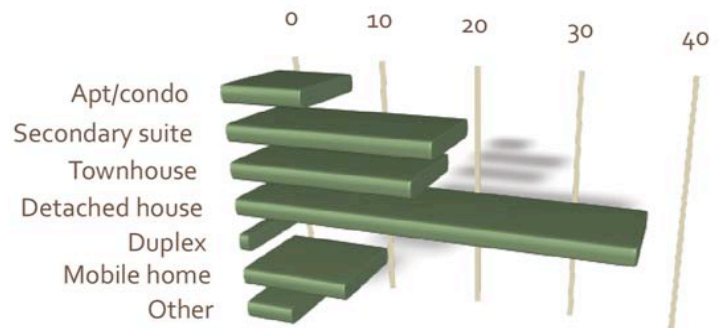


What percentage of your monthly income goes to housing?



- < 30%
- 30 to 50%
- > 50%

What type of housing do you currently live in?



Thinking of your current housing situation, how satisfied are you with the following:

	Unsatisfied or Very Unsatisfied	Neutral	Satisfied or Very Satisfied
Cost of housing	45%	14%	42%
Quality of housing	18%	29%	53%
Safety and security	8%	12%	79%
Size of interior space	19%	17%	64%
Exterior amenities (deck, patio, yard)	23%	24%	53%
Amount of parking	17%	13%	71%
Access to transit	35%	19%	46%
Access to shops and services	22%	11%	67%
Access to recreational amenities (park, playground, trails)	27%	12%	61%

How easy is it to find rental housing that:

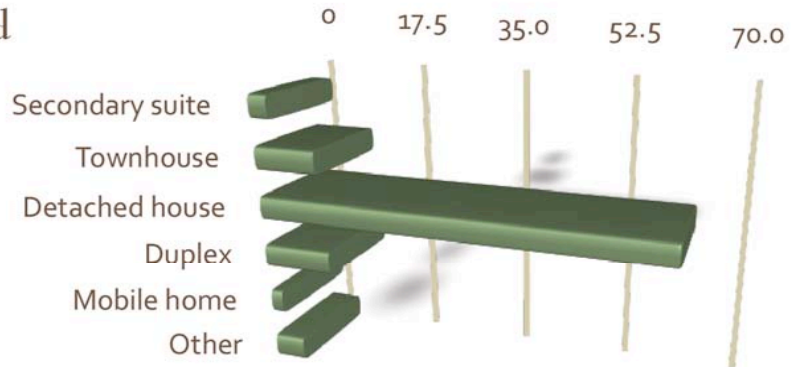
	Difficult or Very Difficult	Neutral	Easy or Very Easy	Don't Know
Is affordable	62%	5%	8%	25%
Is safe	13%	26%	34%	26%
Is well-maintained	31%	24%	23%	22%
Has enough interior space	35%	28%	11%	26%
Accepts pets	43%	16%	11%	30%
Offers a long term lease (> 1 year)	22%	29%	18%	32%

93% of respondents think that secondary suites are an important form of rental housing in the Pemberton area.

When buying a home in Pemberton, how easy is it to find the following:

	Difficult or Very Difficult	Neutral	Easy or Very Easy	Don't Know
A home that is affordable	73%	13%	9%	5%
A home that is affordable and has enough interior space to meet my needs or the needs of my family	67%	19%	8%	6%
A home that is affordable and has enough exterior space to meet my needs or the needs of my family	64%	27%	3%	6%

What type of housing would you prefer to live in?



If you believe housing in Pemberton is not affordable, tell us why.*

There is limited supply.	40%
Competition from investment or second home purchasers drives up costs.	43%
High demand in Pemberton, because there isn't enough housing in Whistler.	51%
Housing costs are high compared to personal incomes.	68%
Other**	15%

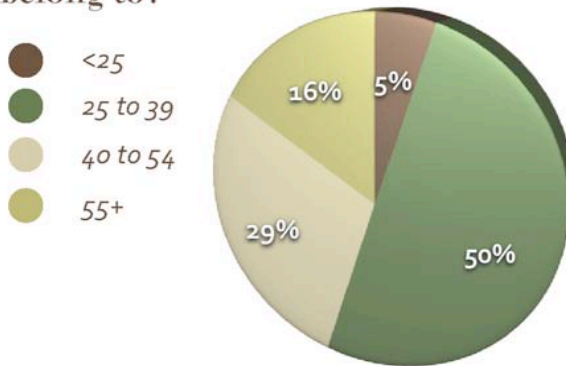
If you think you will need to relocate within the Pemberton area in the next 5 years, tell us why.

As my family grows, I will need to upsize to a larger home.	54%
I have more space than I need, and would like to move to a smaller home.	8%
I will be retiring, and would like to downsize to a smaller home.	15%
Other	22%

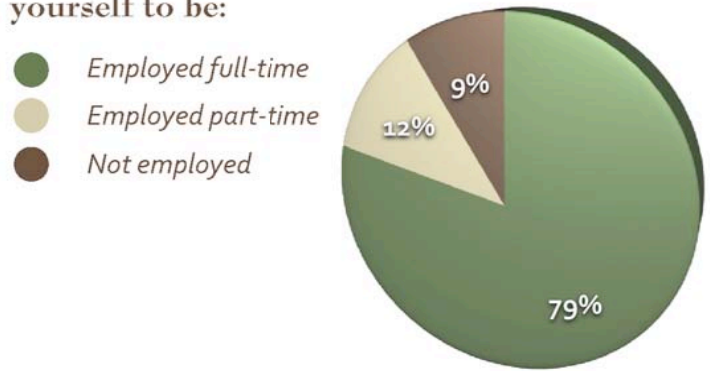
* More than one answer may have been given.

** "Other" responses referred to: size of new homes, high costs of construction, and relative affordability compared to other areas.

Which age group do you belong to?



Do you consider yourself to be:



What people are saying...

"A variety of housing stock and accommodation options, from trailers to rental suites to co-op housing options, to co-housing experiment on properties are all important components".

"A lot of people are drawn to this region because they want to live a self-sufficient lifestyle...housing options that might take that into consideration would be excellent".

"There is not a lot of diversity in the Pemberton housing stock – there is a lot of "entry" level options – the market is quite saturated in that department, but it seems to be difficult for people to make the next step".

"For a dog-friendly community, it is still hard to find affordable places that accept pets and smokers".

"It's equal to renting in Whistler if you want a decent house, but we lack pools, lakes, commuter trails, and affordable groceries".

"The Pemberton market is very much tied to the Whistler market with respect to what is, or is not, available up there".

"We need to make sure that our community is a place that firefighters, paramedics, teachers, nurses, administrators, government employees, etc., can afford to be".

"Many young families and seniors have moved farther north for jobs and affordable housing, or to be closer to medical facilities".

"Need more affordable housing with access to amenities".

"In detached houses, one suite should be allowed only".

"Have an area which restricts rental/ownership to people who work between Squamish and north of Pemberton to stop vacation homes being bought".

"Need to build bungalows for seniors – there is a huge demand and Pemberton seniors are leaving the area".

What else we heard...

- Low quality of the rental stock – particularly the condition of suites.
- Co-housing and co-ownership housing were raised as viable options for households looking to buy in Pemberton.
- There were mixed opinions regarding subsidized housing, along the lines of the Whistler Housing Authority.
- Concerns regarding municipal charges and fees, which increase development costs, and subsequently house prices.
- Limited choice in the ownership market.

APPENDIX D - DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES WORKSHOP NOTES

SETTING POLICY

- encourage, not require, new single detached homes to be secondary suite ready
- cost of suites built at time of original home construction is estimated to be 10-15% less than suites built in existing homes
- area construction is to a higher standard than the BC Building Code
- don't make suites a requirement but incentivize
- houses over a certain size could be required to have suites
- financing costs/underwriting
- explore incentives
- decreased costs to homeowner later vs. initial costs of construction
- reduce DCCs one incentive
- CMHC programs to help create suites
- reduce municipal taxes
- reduce building inspection fees
- be careful with approach to DCCs
- community amenity contributions should produce community amenity in a timely manner
- affordable housing is a community amenity on par with other amenities (e.g. parks)
- affordable housing could be considered a community amenity in some projects

ESTABLISHING REGULATIONS

- integrate affordable housing with new development
- more DCC discussion needed
- amend DCCs to encourage affordability (small lots, small units)
- lower DCCs if suites constructed legally
- fast tracking is not applicable; all processes should be streamlined
- remove the "oh by the way" from the process; know what requirements are needed at the beginning (e.g. streamlining development fees collection)
- eliminate variables from the development review process (i.e. breach flow analysis)
- SLRD has an updated fees bylaw
- pre-designate lands for affordable housing; use density bonusing/amenity zoning
- eliminate the 6-12 month rezoning processes
- parking is an issue with multiple rentals on properties

APPENDIX D - DEVELOPMENT INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES WORKSHOP NOTES

- encourage transit
- parking off-street; community parking
- downtown parking needs to be dealt with; downtown serves larger regional area so needs parking
- need a parking/transit strategy
- conditional zoning to RS1
- there is support for coach houses (example of City of North Vancouver)
- small lots parking issue
- consider snow storage, snow guards
- need a meeting to discuss parking issues
- allow flex units/lock-offs in new multi-family housing developments

FINANCIAL TOOLS

- provide land
- reduce the regulatory process requirements to produce non-market housing which is affordable
- need to reduce costs of process
- eliminate land costs to make a rental project affordable/viable
- due diligence on certain sites needed
- consider costs associated with the building code and building bylaw
- standards of life safety needed
- explore borrowing potential through municipal finance authority
- explore tax increment financing

USING RESOURCES

- short stay housing needed for Pemberton? not for Whistler workers; perhaps for farm workers
- could have RV parking/temporary on-site worker housing
- look at development permit requirements to facilitate this type of temporary use
- use development/building representatives for the liaison group
- do a breach flow analysis to reduce the flood control level and reduce costs

FINAL COMMENTS

- implement strategic directions in a timely manner
- host a community non-development workshop
- take a big picture / regional approach to affordable housing

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

This document brings forward a small selection of examples of affordable housing best practices occurring throughout North America. Examples have been divided into the following categories:

- Market Rental Housing
- Market Ownership Housing: Infill/Intensification Policies
- Density Bonus Initiatives
- Reducing Costs
- Inclusionary and Affordable Ownership Housing
- Innovative Financing/Partnerships

MARKET RENTAL HOUSING

City of Coquitlam Secondary Suites: Alternative Life Safety Standards

The City of Coquitlam has an established set of building code equivalencies – “alternative life safety standards” – for secondary suites for houses that were built before July 1, 2000. This is intended to reduce the costs of legalizing existing suites. These standards allow lower ceiling heights, alternatives to sprinklers and existing heating systems. The information is available in an accessible “plain language” document on the City’s website. (www.coquitlam.ca)

Nanaimo: Rooming Houses Policy

In 2008, the City of Nanaimo amended its Official Community Plan to include a policy on rooming houses. The policy encourages rooming houses in existing single family dwellings and/or purpose-built facilities throughout the city. Homes or purpose built facilities must be in keeping with the character of the area, comply with Building Code regulations, and should be equitably distributed throughout neighbourhoods. (www.nanaimo.ca)

Province of British Columbia Office of Housing and Construction Standards: Model Standards of Maintenance Bylaw

BC local governments can enact a standards of maintenance bylaw to enforce basic levels of maintenance for rental accommodation. A standards of maintenance bylaw can be used to ensure that apartment buildings, secondary suites, houses and condominiums that are rented and any other types of rental housing meet minimum standards of comfort and safety. A model standards of maintenance bylaw may be obtained from the Office of Housing and Constructions Standards website. (www.housing.gov.bc.ca/housing/guide.html)

MARKET OWNERSHIP HOUSING: INFILL/ INTENSIFICATION POLICIES

City of Vancouver: Kingsway and Knight Housing Area Plan

In 2004, a Housing Area Plan for the Kingsway and Knight area was adopted. The Plan included two new residential zones: a Courtyard Rowhouse and Small House/Duplex Zone. These zones were intended to deliver housing that includes many of the desirable features of a single family home while providing a more affordable alternative. The Plan allows for incremental development to occur in the existing neighbourhood without the need for large land assemblies. All new development is subject to guidelines to ensure attractive building design, quality materials, landscaping and neighbourhood fit. (www.vancouver.ca)

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

City of Coquitlam: Southwest Coquitlam's Housing Choice Study

In 2007-08, the City undertook a study and identified strategic recommendations to facilitate the implementation of infill and intensification of low density neighbourhoods. This included neighbourhood area plan policies, a zoning bylaw review, and the development of checklists, design guidelines and conditions to enable and encourage the redevelopment of single detached housing to triplex, duplex with coach house, fourplex, and small lot configurations. (www.coquitlam.ca)

Port Coquitlam: Freehold Tenure Row Housing

In 2003, the City of Port Coquitlam amended its Official Community Plan to allow for a new RM-3R zone in areas designated for apartments to accommodate freehold tenure row housing projects. Various sections of the zoning bylaw were also amended to accommodate the new use and small lots. New development applications do not require an OCP Amendment. (www.city.port-coquitlam.bc.ca)

District of Delta: Coach House Zone

In 2007, Delta adopted zoning bylaw amendments to the RS9 coach house zone. The amendments provide opportunities for alternate housing forms, less interruption of existing street forms, and greater compatibility with adjacent residential development. In 2008, the District published design guidelines for housing and coach housing in the community of Ladner. (www.corp.delta.bc.ca)

City of Vancouver's Laneway Housing

In June 2009, Vancouver City Council adopted guidelines for laneway housing in the RS1 and RS5 residential districts. The guidelines include provisions for building quality, durability and expression; scale and massing; privacy; lane frontages and landscaping. Notably, laneway houses are generally located in the space where a garage would be permitted. By regulation, they may not be strata-titled; require one on-site parking space and may be up to 750 sf in size. (www.vancouver.ca)

DENSITY BONUS INITIATIVES

City of Burnaby: Community Benefit Bonus Program

Through the Community Benefit Bonus Program, the City of Burnaby facilitates the development of affordable housing and amenities in distinct parcels in town centre areas. Bonus density is used in conjunction with comprehensive development zoning. Burnaby adopted the City of Vancouver's formula for calculating contributions: Bonus Floor Area (sf) multiplied by Market Land Value (\$ per buildable sf). The value of the amenity received is equivalent to the increased value of the property arising from the density bonus. The density bonus bylaw sets the conditions by which the maximum floor area ratio (FAR) may be increased. (www.burnaby.ca)

City of Vancouver: Density Bonusing

The City of Vancouver has density bonusing policies in local area plans that permit increases in height and density and reductions in parking requirements for new developments. Density bonusing is used to leverage public amenities, which may include affordable housing. The Oakridge/Langara planning policies provide opportunities for an increase of up to 20% in density to encourage the provision of City desired public amenities. (www.vancouver.ca)

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

REDUCING COSTS

Verdant (Simon Fraser University, Burnaby)

Targeting Simon Fraser University faculty and staff, The Verdant is a 60 unit strata-titled stacked townhouse in Burnaby Mountain that provides affordable homeownership units at 20% below those of comparable market housing in Burnaby.

- The project, completed in 2007, is based on a partnership between SFU Community Trust, VanCity Enterprises and ReSource Rethinking Building Inc. SFU provided the land at a discounted price (50% of market value) and bought back 20 units to be managed by the university as rental housing for staff and faculty.
- To further reduce project costs, ReSource Rethinking Building provided development management services on a fixed fee basis, and lower marketing costs were achieved by using a direct marketing approach.
- With a reduced cost base overall, debt servicing costs were inherently reduced. VanCity also provided innovative financing in the form of preferential mortgage terms with low interest rates and longer amortization rates. Home ownership equity was based on a fixed return option.
- The long term affordability of the project is ensured by restrictive covenant to control resale and thereby limit price appreciation relative to that of adjacent developments.
- The City of Burnaby also eliminated a second set of development cost charges for secondary suites development as part of the mixed use development which allows suites in strata townhouses or apartments. These “multi-family flex units” are dwellings containing a defined area for potential rental accommodation. The units, if rented, must be registered with the student housing registry at the university. (www.verdantliving.com)

Lancaster Net Zero Energy Live/Work Townhomes (Oakland, California)

As a demonstration project, Zeta Communities developed a net zero energy, urban infill, townhome project in Oakland, California. The homes are 1,540 sf, zero lot line, live/work units incorporating a ground floor work studio, 2-bedrooms, amenity spaces and sustainable landscape and a one-car garage. The homes, incorporating photovoltaics, automated energy controls and high-performance insulation, are certified LEED platinum and projected to produce more energy than they consume. Because they are constructed in a factory off-site, the homes are manufactured at a significantly lower cost than to build on site. (www.zetacommunities.com)

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

INCLUSIONARY AND AFFORDABLE OWNERSHIP HOUSING

Inclusionary housing policies are intended to facilitate secure, suitable, affordable housing for a community's working population unable to find such housing in the open market. There are often restrictions on price, income and/or residency to ensure that target populations are reached.

Affordable Home Ownership (City of Langford, BC)

In March 2004, the City of Langford (Greater Victoria) adopted a housing policy to deliver affordable single detached dwellings in new subdivisions through an amenity zoning bylaw using the density bonusing provisions of the *Local Government Act*.

- In December 2007, the City updated its policy to identify the neighbourhoods to which the amenity requirement applies. In these areas, rezoning applications of 10 or more "single residential" lots must include small lot affordable lots. For each group of 10 single detached lots, the development is required to provide one affordable housing unit.
- Council may agree to allow one or more affordable housing units to be provided on a site different than that being developed, subject to the location being confirmed prior to approval of the bylaw.
- An affordable housing agreement is signed between the developer and the City of Langford to restrict the maximum sale price to \$165,120 (August 2009) to qualified purchasers. After the first five years, the owner is permitted to increase the sale price by \$2,000 for each year of the ownership period. After 25 years, the home may be sold at market value.
- The City's Affordable Housing Committee reviews the applications of prospective purchasers to determine eligibility and need. The Committee controls the transfer or resale of affordable homes for a period of five years and selects subsequent purchasers. The maximum household income to be eligible for this housing is \$60,000. (www.langford.ca)

Boulder, Colorado

The City of Boulder has a 40-year history of making affordable housing a reality and is approaching its goal of setting aside 10 percent of local housing as "permanently affordable" (approximately 4,500 homes). In the last seven years, 1,000 permanently affordable homes were made available and 200 more are expected between 2008 and 2009. Of this number, 61 percent of units are intended for rental and 39 percent for homeownership. These homes are available to households with incomes between 30% and 80% of the Annual Median Income.

- In 2007, the median price for a detached home in Boulder was \$540,000 and \$242,000 for a townhouse condominium. In 1980, the City began to enter into contracts with developers, requiring the inclusion of modest-sized units in new developments that could only be sold to buyers of low and moderate incomes. Since then the Inclusionary program has evolved with a cap on resale prices and on the income of would-be buyers. Developers can opt for cash-in-lieu which, on average, range from \$100-\$150,000 per required affordable unit. (www.bouldercolorado.gov)

Mixed-Market Housing, Foxcroft (Salmon Arm, BC)

In 2009, the Province of British Columbia and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CHMA) partnered to develop an affordable housing complex in Salmon Arm. The development is an apartment

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

condominium with 11 units for sale and 28 units for rent. Families with an income under \$55,000 are eligible to purchase the for sale units, which are being sold for \$135,000. The for rent portion of the development is reserved for low income individuals who are at risk of homelessness. Both complexes are managed by the CHMA, who maintains resale control over the property.

Mixed Equity Co-op – Mountain Haven Coop (Canmore, Alberta)

The Mountain Haven Co-operative located in Canmore has developed an affordable housing project based on a mixed equity co-operative model. On a non-profit basis, the Co-op has constructed 44 stacked townhouse units, including 12 Non-Equity and 32 Equity units.

- Prospective owners/co-operative members must have an annual household income that is within the income cap of \$66,500. Co-operative members must qualify for an individual mortgage in order to purchase a home at a price range of \$167,589 to \$234,638.
- The mixed equity units consist of 40% continuing and 60% limited equity home ownership. Over time, co-operative members can build equity in their home. The co-operative also aims to maintain the 60%/40% distribution over time by repurchasing units as required to maintain that balance.
- With respect to resale, the co-operative registers title covenants restricting occupancy and resale. The restriction on resale price is limited to 110% of inflation measured by CPI.
(www.canmore.ca)

Not-for-profit Condo Model – Clarence Gate Project (Ottawa, Ontario)

Centretown Affordable Housing Development Corporation (CAHDCO) develops projects based on an affordable home ownership model that ensures long term affordability by controlling the terms of resale and leasing. An example of this program, the 30-unit Clarence Gate Project, was implemented in 2003.

- The key to the project's affordability is modest design and low profit. One-third of the units were sold at market prices to provide a capital subsidy to the affordable units.
- This not-for-profit condo model is a tenure arrangement designed to balance the need for the sponsor (CAHDCO) to retain control of resale and ensure long term affordability, and the homeowner's need to protect his or her equity. Purchasers are required to sign an option that gives CAHDCO the opportunity to buy back the unit. Owners receive their full purchase price plus inflation (determined by CPI), plus a 3% charge for administration and resale.
- Owners are required to consult with CAHDCO in the event that the unit is to be rented. The approval to lease cannot be unreasonably withheld; however, the duration of the lease may be no more than one year, and the rent charged must meet the affordability criteria.
- Purchasers pay the financing costs, taxes, utilities and a monthly fee for a share of common expenses. CAHDCO also negotiated with the City to ensure property taxes reflect the controlled value of the home as opposed to the higher market price.
- Most of the parking spaces are rented out by the condominium to the unit owners. This revenue helps to reduce common cost expenses. (www.cahdco.ca)

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

INNOVATIVE FINANCING/PARTNERSHIPS

Provincial Homeless Initiative

The Province has committed to creating more than 4,000 housing units under the Provincial Homelessness Initiative. BC Housing leverages partnerships with local governments and non-profit service providers and allocates funding to developments that integrate subsidized housing with support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, people with mental illnesses and physical disabilities, those with drug and alcohol addictions, aboriginal peoples, youth, and women with children fleeing abusive relationships. To date the Province has acquired 25 Single Room Occupancy hotels in Vancouver, Victoria and New Westminster, and is funding pre-development costs for approximately 1,900 city-owned supportive housing units in Vancouver, Victoria, Kelowna, Surrey, Abbotsford, Nanaimo, Maple Ridge, and Campbell River.

Reduced Downpayment and Monthly Subsidy (Medicine Hat, Alberta)

In Medicine Hat, the city's largest local builder – Classic Construction Limited – developed an innovative solution to create affordable homeownership opportunities. In partnership with the City of Medicine Hat and CMHC, Classic Construction has facilitated the construction of approximately 442 units through assisting purchasers of new below-market housing units.

- Each purchaser receives an equity subsidy of approximately \$5,000 that reduces the downpayment and also receives a monthly subsidy for five or seven years to reduce mortgage costs, condominium fees and utilities. Classic Construction contributes approximately \$18,000 per unit to cover the monthly subsidy. This subsidy is gradually decreased over the five or seven years, allowing homeowners to adjust to making the monthly payments independently at the end of the subsidy period.
- The Medicine Hat Community Housing Society provides homeowner training to potential buyers and administers the monthly mortgage subsidy. CMHC provides mortgage loan insurance flexibilities to homebuyers. The City of Medicine Hat helps to facilitate these projects through relaxed zoning requirements for density, greenspace and site coverage.
- Classic Construction has now expanded this model of affordable home ownership to the Alberta towns of High River and Canmore. (www.cmhc.ca)

Mortgage Financing Innovation (Vancouver, BC)

Vancity is an example of a lending institution that offers a number of financing options to provide flexibility and opportunity for new home owners in the Vancouver real estate market.

- Mixer Mortgage – a new approach to traditional home buying designed for multiple households who partner up to purchase a home. The new owners/partners can share the down payment, mortgage payments and other ownership expenses. While each party's name appears on the title for the property, the owners have the flexibility to decide how the costs are divided among the partners. (www.vancity.com)

Second Mortgage Financing – Options for Homes (Toronto, Ontario)

Launched in 1992, Options for Homes is a non-profit agency targeting lower income households currently renting their homes, those who have limited opportunities to buy into the current market, and those who are not familiar with the principles of home ownership. The model brings low and

APPENDIX E - SELECTED BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

moderate income people into the condominium market through lowering project costs and second mortgage financing.

- The non-profit finds residential land and pre-sells the condo units. The buyers form a co-operative housing corporation, which then hires Options as the development consultant to provide the expertise to develop the project. This includes finding contractors, architects and lawyers, providing marketing and arranging financing.
- The condos are sold at scheduled information sessions. The purchase “consultants” who assist buyers are not real estate agents, but for the most part, owners from other Options’ projects working part time for a small flat fee. Real estate agent fees are thereby eliminated.
- A second mortgage representing the difference between the building costs and market value is set up. This second mortgage, however, lies dormant until the owner either sells the property or rents it, thereby deterring speculators. For example, a condo unit valued at \$110,000 on the market is sold at the cost price of \$100,000. The down payment is taken off the cost price (\$100,000), leaving the buyer with a mortgage of \$94,500, \$10,000 less than they would have had to pay at full market price. As the condos appreciate, so does the second mortgage, an amount buyers must repay if they rent or resell. This money then goes into an equity pool that is used to develop other similar projects. (www.optionsforhomes.ca)

Habitat for Humanity (Continent-wide)

Habitat for Humanity Canada is a national non-profit organization that mobilizes volunteers and community partners in building affordable housing and promoting home ownership as a means to breaking the cycle of poverty. Habitat builds modest homes with simple yet effective designs, reduced building costs through the use of skilled and unskilled volunteer teams, and building material donations by private sector sponsors. Typically, the affordable housing units are sold at 10% below market prices, much of which can be attributed to the donations of time and material.

Families are provided with a first mortgage based on construction costs at a zero interest rate, and a second mortgage based on market value (difference between market value and first mortgage). Second mortgages are forgiven after 12 years of residence.

Habitat has also developed a revolving fund in which the mortgage payments made by families are used as a source of capital to build new homes for other families in need. The revolving fund is now used primarily for multi-family dwellings due to increasing land costs across the country, while historically single detached units were the norm. (www.habitat.ca)

APPENDIX F - AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY BACKGROUND REPORT



Pemberton Affordable Housing Strategy

Background Report

Prepared for the Village of Pemberton | June 2009



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Affordable Housing
Strategy - Background
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Prepared for the
Village of Pemberton

June 2009

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Affordable housing considerations have been an important aspect of the Village of Pemberton policies and plans for the past several years. Facing continued pressures on rental housing and rising real estate prices, the Village initiated the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy in the Spring of 2009 and commissioned CltySpaces Consulting to assist with this work. This initiative is intended to create a policy and planning framework through which the Village can effectively respond to its affordable housing issues.

This background report provides an outline of the policy, planning and regulatory framework for affordable housing in Pemberton; an analysis of available data to produce indicators of housing affordability; and an identification of preliminary issues and considerations based on key-informant interviews. Key research findings are as follows:

Key Population Groups

Four population groups have been identified as being in housing need and in need of special consideration through the Affordable Housing Strategy:

- Low income households seeking rental or ownership housing suited to their needs;
- Young families looking to move up the property ladder or into ground-oriented housing suitable to family living;
- Seniors seeking housing to accommodate “aging in place”; and
- Seasonal workers looking primarily for secure and affordable short-term housing.

Key Housing Indicators

- Pemberton is one of the fastest growing communities in BC, with a population that has roughly tripled since 1996. Many of the newcomers are young families and individuals working in Whistler, resulting in a younger population overall compared to the rest of the province, along with high rates of labour force participation.
- Pemberton’s housing stock has tripled since 1996, with 70% of building starts in multi-family units and the remainder in single detached units. New construction activity is reported to have slowed down somewhat in the past two years.
- In Pemberton, low cost market housing is limited to secondary suites in detached houses. There are no purpose-built rental apartment buildings in the Village. In terms of non-market housing, the Lions Villa seniors housing is the only project in the Village. A small number of households receive rental assistance funds through the BC Rental Assistance program for families and SAFER¹ program for seniors.
- Between 2003 and 2008, single detached home prices increased 20% reaching a peak median price of \$530,000 in 2008. During the same five year period, townhouse prices increased 18% reaching a peak median price of \$320,000 in 2008 and, notably, apartment prices increased 70% reaching a peak median price of \$270,000 in 2008.
- According to the classified listings from 2008-2009, rents in Pemberton range from as low as \$551 for a shared unit to \$1,891 for a house or townhouse that has three



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¹ The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for BC seniors (age 60 or over) with low to moderate incomes and who are renting their homes.

bedrooms or more. A typical 1-bedroom unit rents for \$922 and a 2-bedroom unit rents for \$1,341. Between 2002 and 2008, rents increased by as much as 20%, according to the rental classified listings.

- For the typical Pemberton household, rental units remain relatively affordable. Married couples earning the median household income of \$68,500 could afford \$1,700 for rent, single parent families could afford up to \$1,050 per month and one person households could afford up to \$900 for rent. Rental housing may, however, be difficult to find.
- With regard to purchasing a home, a married couple family earning the median-income could afford a home priced at approximately \$297,000 with a 10% down payment. Single parent families could afford a home priced at approximately \$156,000 and one person households a unit priced at \$124,000. Overall, options for home ownership are limited for all households. First-time home buyers are generally limited to condominium apartments and those looking to move up the property ladder may not be able to do so because of limited choice in the market.

Key Factors and Considerations

- Housing issues span geopolitical boundaries and housing in Pemberton need to be considered in a regional context encompassing SLRD Area C and Mount Currie.
- Recent studies have focused on the provision of seniors housing in the community in response to the desire to have seniors “age in place”. BC Housing has recently committed to constructing an additional eighteen new modular units for seniors and persons with disabilities as part of the Provincial Seniors’ Rental Housing Initiative.
- A number of challenges directly affecting housing in Pemberton have been reported:
 - Demand for recreational and retirement housing by non-residents and Whistler commuters has resulted in house prices that exceed local affordability levels;
 - Limited supply of rental housing has resulted in low vacancies and concerns around quality and safety of the stock of secondary suites in private market homes;
 - Pemberton is home to a mix of multi-unit and single detached dwellings. With a large share of the population in the young family stage, many residents have reported there is limited choice within the ground-oriented dwelling stock;
 - Physical constraints to development such as building on the floodplain, land within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), topographic conditions, and lack of servicing are reported to have resulted in complex approval processes and above average costs;
 - Housing in Pemberton is closely tied to the housing situation in Whistler. As employee housing projects in Whistler (Rainbow, Athletes Village) reach completion, a decline in demand is anticipated to occur in Pemberton. Conversely, improved accessibility due to Sea-to-Sky highway improvements between Whistler and the lower mainland could positively impact housing demand in the Pemberton area and beyond; and
 - The opportunity to benefit from short-term rentals to tourists during the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Games is expected to displace long-term renters and exert pressure on the rental market during the winter months preceding and following the Games.



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INTRODUCTION

Pemberton has experienced significant growth and change in recent years. The community's natural setting, abundance of outdoor amenities and recreation opportunities, proximity to Whistler, friendly, small-town character and lower cost housing, in comparison, have attracted many people, employees and young families to Pemberton. In response to new demand for housing, several multi-family housing and mixed use projects have been constructed close to the Village Centre, with development beginning to emerge more slowly in other areas, such as the Benchlands.

In recent years, however, land values have escalated, presenting challenges for local residents in terms of housing affordability and attainability.

“Over the long-term, real estate values in the Village of Pemberton have been consistently rising, and affordable housing has become a prevalent issue for the municipality”².

In order to address both the current and future housing needs of the community, the Village of Pemberton has embarked on the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy. This background report provides a summary of the contextual information, including statistical and qualitative research findings, to describe Pemberton's current housing situation and appropriately guide the development of a strategy. More specifically, this report provides:

- An outline of the policy, planning and regulatory framework for affordable housing in Pemberton;
- An analysis of current demographic and development related data to produce key indicators of housing affordability in Pemberton; and
- An identification of preliminary issues and considerations related to housing affordability based on key-informant interviews.

It is recognized that, although this research is being conducted at the request of the Village of Pemberton, housing issues are both local and regional in nature, crossing the jurisdictional boundaries of the Village of Pemberton, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and Lil'Wat First Nation. As such, the research focuses not only on the Village of Pemberton but on the Pemberton area in general.



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Prepared for the
Village of Pemberton

June 2009

² Benchlands Neighbourhood Concept Plan. 2007.

A FRAMEWORK FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

DEFINITIONS

The definition of affordable housing remains a moving target. According to CMHC, affordable housing is housing that costs no more than 30% of a household’s gross income. In addition to affordability, issues related to suitability and quality of the housing stock are identified as being integral to planning for affordable housing. For Pemberton, the following affordable housing vision and definition of housing affordability have emerged:

Vision: *Our affordable strategy seeks to create a mix of rental and ownership housing options that meet the needs of Pemberton residents.*

Definition: *Housing affordability refers to a household’s ability to pay for housing at a reasonable percentage of household income. In Canada, this is typically 30% of gross income.*

THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CONTINUUM

The affordable housing continuum, illustrated in Figure 1, represents the spectrum of affordable housing types. At the far left of the continuum, is emergency shelter for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. At the far right of the continuum, are affordable rental and home ownership options for households with low to moderate incomes. The continuum shows a shift from non-market housing to housing that is government subsidized, to affordable housing that is provided in the private market. As one moves along the continuum, reliance upon government support decreases and independence increases.

Figure 1: Affordable Housing Continuum



Source: CitySpaces Consulting Ltd. 2009

Lower cost market housing in Pemberton is limited to rental housing in the form of secondary suites. Social housing is limited to the Pemberton Lions Villa, an eight-unit complex for seniors. However, the province has recently committed funding for an 18-unit seniors complex with funding from BC Housing as part of the new Seniors’ Rental Housing Initiative. Ten households in Pemberton receive rental supplements through the Rental Assistance Program for families (7 households) and the SAFER program for seniors (3 households).³

³ The Shelter Aid for Elderly Renters (SAFER) program provides monthly cash payments to subsidize rents for BC seniors (age 60 or over) with low to moderate incomes and who are renting their homes.



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LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

Since the federal government withdrew funding for new social and cooperative housing in 1992, provincial and municipal governments have become more involved in identifying and addressing housing needs. In British Columbia, BC Housing has played an increasingly important role in providing housing to vulnerable populations including low-income individuals and families, homeless and populations at-risk of homelessness.

A municipality's powers in relation to housing are derived from the Community Charter and the Local Government Act (LGA). The Charter (2004) gives BC municipalities the authority to legislate in a number of broadly-stated spheres of jurisdiction and provides:

- more flexibility to identify and provide service that Council considers necessary or desirable, such as housing;
- clear authority to regulate, prohibit and impose requirements;
- ability to waive or reduce fees when land or improvements are held by a charitable or non-profit corporation;
- authority to establish a tax exemption program for an area designated as a revitalization area.

In 1993, the BC Government amended the *Municipal Act* (now, the *Local Government Act*) to require municipalities to include policies related to affordable, rental and special needs housing in their Official Community Plans. The LGA contains a number of additional provisions related to housing:

- Provides flexibility to allow higher density (bonus zoning) in return for the provision of community amenities, including affordable and special needs housing.
- Enables a local government to enter into a housing agreement with a landowner regarding the occupancy of the housing units in terms of tenure, classes of person, administration of the units, rents and lease, sale or share price. The housing agreement is registered on title and is binding on future owners.
- Provides authority to waive or reduce a Development Cost Charge (DCC) for not-for-profit rental housing.
- Allows for variation of DCCs according to different sizes or different numbers of lots or units in a development.
- Stipulates that the BC Building Code applies to all municipalities, of which Part 9.36 reflects on Secondary Suites.

THE POLICY AND PLANNING CONTEXT IN PEMBERTON

There are a number of policies, plans and regulations which comprise the current framework for housing development in Pemberton. In particular, affordable housing is flagged as a key planning issue in several documents. Key documents are noted here:

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Regional Growth Strategy (Draft 2008)

The Squamish Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) supports a range of quality affordable housing and housing types, targeting households of low and moderate income earning less than 80% of



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the median income. It includes policy statements regarding stakeholder collaboration, advocating for a range of housing types and housing affordability, and promoting consistency of affordable housing policies across the region.

Strategic directions include:

- Establish a regional affordable housing strategy encouraging regional housing trust funds, partnerships with non-profit organizations and exchange of experiences via an affordable housing committee
- Adopt policies and regulations to support live-work, mixed-use neighbourhoods, and residential intensification (secondary suites, flex-housing, infill and small lot development)
- Encourage affordable housing self-help initiatives (e.g. community housing land trusts)
- Adopt financial tools (e.g. cash-in-lieu of social housing contributions, waiving DCCs, property tax exemptions, and land grants)
- Adopt price, resale, rent geared-to-income controls and other options to increase supply of affordable housing and create housing that is perpetually affordable
- Encourage cooperation with community services groups and developers to supply low-cost housing options for seniors

The Official Community Plan (OCP)

Pemberton's Official Community Plan (OCP) adopted in 1999 establishes a number of policies and priorities in terms of housing:

- Encourage developers of Crown benchlands to include a range of multi-family residential housing opportunities; target of 25% multi-family housing
- Consider use of Comprehensive Development (CD) zones to accommodate multi-family housing; support increased densities for affordable housing with tangible community benefit
- Encourage housing for seniors and seniors housing located close to community amenities or Village centre
- Encourage residential uses within mixed-use buildings downtown
- Encourage group home facilities in residential areas
- Require careful review of development proposals for land within potential natural hazard area.

Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Area C Official Community Plan (Draft)

The Village of Pemberton is adjacent to the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) Area C. While not within the Village of Pemberton's jurisdiction, the SLRD Area C OCP warrants consideration. Land use planning policies affecting Area C have implications for growth and development in the Village of Pemberton.

- The Area C OCP speaks to supporting principles of smart growth including: directing urban development towards existing communities; building compact, mixed-use



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neighbourhoods; creating walkable communities; promoting a variety of low impact transportation options; and advocating for a range of affordable housing options.

- Policies affecting rural residential areas allow for secondary suites and cluster housing development.
- Policies specific to affordable housing include: distributing affordable housing throughout the plan area; maintaining existing mobile home parks and considering new mobile home parks subject to conditions; compensation for net loss of affordable housing units as a result of rezoning through relocation allowance or assistance, replacement of affordable housing on-site, or other approaches; consideration for 10-15 % inclusionary zoning; financial contributions to an affordable housing fund; and density bonuses for the provision of affordable housing.
- The SLRD Area C OCP also makes notable reference to the possible future development of 400 ha of land south of Mosquito Lake with the potential for densities equivalent to the Pemberton Benchlands area (5.25 units per hectare) which could be allocated in several ways to include a broad range of housing types from some acreage type lots to apartments⁴.

Strategic Plans (2005-2009)

Pemberton Council has addressed housing issues through its annual strategic planning processes:

- Supporting affordable housing is identified as one action to facilitate social sustainability. This action involves concentrating development into nodes which enhance walkability and providing a variety of housing options to ensure diversity.
- Developing an affordable housing policy *“to ensure a diverse range of options, provide developer incentives to value resident affordability, and explore the role of secondary suites, modular homes, townhomes and hostel.”*
- Exploring the feasibility of developing a secondary suites policy regarding new and existing suites, and an affordable housing strategy *“that addresses the community’s needs and challenges (seniors and staff housing)”*.
- Supporting a multi-generational community and the ability for residents to “age in place” working in partnership with the Seniors Society, Lions Club and Mount Currie Band in addition to continuing *“to support and facilitate the process for development of the Lions land into seniors housing”*.

Benchlands Neighbourhood Concept Plan

The 2007 Benchlands Neighbourhood Concept Plan (NCP) establishes a land use and servicing framework for the future development of the hillside adjacent to Pemberton’s village centre. The NCP proposes a mixed use, hillside residential neighbourhood consisting of ground-oriented single family and multi-family housing units. Phase 1 includes 503 dwelling units including 189 secondary suites within large and medium single family homes. The OCP requires 25% of new housing in the Benchlands to be multi-family housing.



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⁴ Squamish-Lillooet Regional District Area C Official Community Plan. Draft, 2008.

The plan is based on the assumption that Pemberton’s demographic profile points to a need for affordable and flexible housing for young families that they will be able to grow in to over time. The plan also assumes that secondary suites will be desirable as mortgage helpers and to help provide lower cost rental housing in the community.

“Surveyed public opinion during the public consultation process has stated that affordable single family housing options are desirable, and that secondary suites are a necessary component of future growth in the Village. The Benchlands NCP aims to meet this demand by designating a broad range of single family lot sizes, multi-family townhomes, and the provision for accommodating secondary suites in larger single family homes”⁵.



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⁵ Benchlands Neighbourhood Concept Plan. 2007.

INDICATORS OF THE HOUSING MARKET IN PEMBERTON

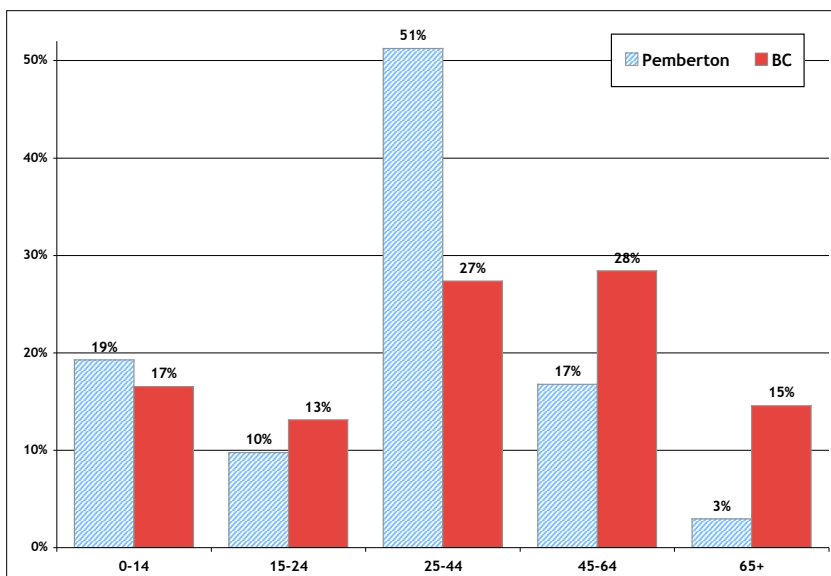
A number of demographic, socio-economic, housing, and income-related data help to inform our understanding of Pemberton's housing market.

DEMOGRAPHIC INDICATORS

Population Profile

One of the fastest growing municipalities in BC, the Village of Pemberton grew at a rate of 6% per year between 2001 and 2006 compared to a provincial growth rate of 1% per year. Compared to the previous census period, however, Pemberton experienced a slowdown in its pace of growth – 34% between 2001 and 2006 compared to 94% between 1996 and 2001.

Figure 1: Population by Age, Pemberton and BC, 2006



Source: Statistics Canada, Census

- Generally, Pemberton has a younger population than the rest of the province. The median age in 2006 was 33 years of age compared to 40 years of age in BC.
- In 2006, more than half the population (51%) was between 25 and 44 years of age, compared to only 27% of the provincial population. Conversely, only 17% of Pemberton residents were between the ages of 45 and 64, and no more than 3% were seniors over the age of 65. While the share of the population over 45 has risen during the last census period, they make up a smaller share of the population in Pemberton (20%) than the rest of BC (43%). This distribution illustrates the extent that Pemberton's population consists of working families with children. (Figure 1)
- Between 1996 and 2001, there was a large increase among the 25 to 44 year old age group (118%) as well as children under 14 years of age (84%). In the more recent census period, 2001 to 2006, the most substantial changes were occurring among the older 45+ age groups.



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SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS

Pemberton's economy, although historically rooted in agriculture and forestry, is today strongly tied to tourism and Whistler Resort, in particular. Approximately 21% of Whistler employees (2200) reside outside in Whistler, primarily in Squamish or Pemberton⁶. Although Whistler has a well-established employee housing program, many people choose Pemberton as a lower cost alternative for both renting and owning a home. Whistler employees may also seek home ownership in Pemberton due to the absence of housing restrictions⁷.

Labour Force

The 2006 Census indicates a high level of labour force participation (the percentage of adult residents 15 years and older who are either working or actively seeking work), 89% in Pemberton compared to 66% BC-wide. This is not surprising, given the large share of the population of working age.

- Over a quarter of the labour force is employed in sales and service sector jobs (26%), while 21% work in management and 18.5% work in trades, transport and equipment operation (primarily construction jobs).
- Between 1996 and 2006, unemployment rates fell from 9.6% in 1996 to 4.8% in 2001, to 3.5% in 2006. Comparitively, the unemployment rate for BC in 2006 was 6.0%.

HOUSING INDICATORS

Housing Stock

In 2009, Pemberton was estimated to have over 1,000 occupied dwelling units, triple the housing stock in 1996. The vast majority of housing was ground oriented (87%) including single detached, duplexes, townhouses and mobile homes. The remaining 13% were in apartment condominiums. As part of the ground oriented stock, 5% of the dwelling units were in mobile homes and 9% were estimated to include secondary suites⁸.

Secondary suites (accessory suites) are permitted in new and existing single detached homes on residential and ALR designated land. Suites are not currently permitted on lots smaller than 1.2 hectares or beneath the Floodplain Control Level (FCL). However, many suites have been constructed illegally in basements upon the floodplain by owners taking advantage of existing space.

Although many are illegal, suites are recognized as an important source of rental housing within Pemberton. The Village of Pemberton has gone through a process of registering suites in order to charge homeowners the appropriate utility charges.



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⁶ Whistler Housing Authority Employer Housing Needs Assessment. 2008.

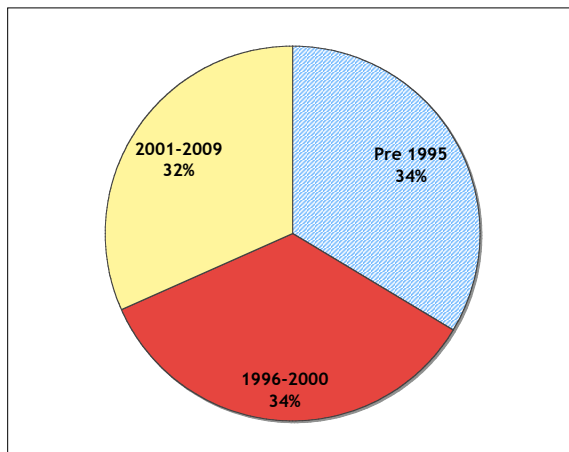
⁷ Whistler Housing Authority (WHA) administers a pool of affordable ownership and rental housing. Some WHA units are occupancy restricted, and are required to be occupied by either a Whistler employee or retiree. Other units are both resale and occupancy restricted, and must be occupied by a Whistler employee or retiree while the resale price of the unit is controlled by the WHA.

⁸ Village of Pemberton building permit statistics.

Age of Housing Stock

Statistics Canada data on the period of construction of occupied private dwellings illustrates that Pemberton is a relatively young community. Of all dwelling units in the Village of Pemberton, roughly one third were built before 1995, one third were built between 1996 and 2000, and the remaining third were constructed since 2001.

Figure 2: Period of Construction



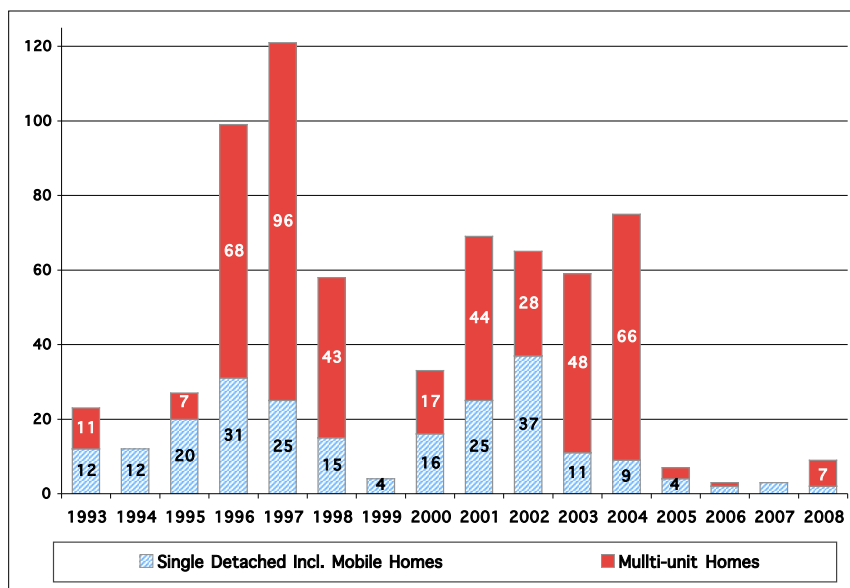
Source: Statistics Canada, Census - Updated with Building Permit Statistics

Development Activity

Annual building permits suggest an increase in construction activity in the Village of Pemberton between 2001 and 2004. During this time, 74% of building permits were for multi-unit housing and 26% were for new single detached or mobile home construction.



Figure 3: Residential Building Permits, New Construction (1993-2008)



Source: Village of Pemberton Building Permit Statistics

Since 2004, real estate and development activity has experienced a slowdown, corresponding with trends in the Whistler market. Nonetheless, there are a number of major residential development projects to note:

- Pemberton Benchlands – a development of 600 to 700 units of small lot, single detached homes and townhouses included in the Benchlands Neighbourhood Concept Plan. Phasing for this project is expected to be over a 15 year period.
- The Plateau – mixed single detached and multifamily development and a number of vacant lots that have yet to come on the market.
- BCR Properties/Signal Hill Homes – rezoning application in process for 281 units during the first phase and approximately 170 units in the second phase.

Additionally, a number of mixed-use projects are in the development pipeline including:

- Arbutus Walk - commercial/multi-family residential development including 5 live-work units.
- Harrow and Portage - commercial and multi-family residential development including 43 housing units.
- Portage Station - The Landings - Commercial/live-work/multi-family development including 7 live-work units and 37 housing units.
- Gateway 1 - Commercial/Multi-family/hotel development including 27 units.
- Gateway 2 - Commercial/Multi-family development.
- Frontier Street - Commercial/Multi-family development including 41 units.
- Expedition Station - Commercial Live-work/Residential including 17 units.

Overall, 1,203 to 1,303 housing units are anticipated through projects in the development pipeline⁹. Notably, a 2007 study by Stantec estimated that an additional 3,071 dwellings would be required in the Pemberton-Mt. Currie area to accommodate anticipated population growth over a 20-year period¹⁰.

Real Estate Prices (1998 - 2008)

Available real estate data from 1998 to 2008, indicate that real estate prices increased steadily over the ten-year period. Notably, there has been a significant increase in residential real estate prices over the past four to eight years. Figure 4 shows changes in median real estate prices based on resale house prices in the Whistler Listing System. These figures do not include private sales (by owner) or pre-sales (new projects) typically listed with a real estate company.



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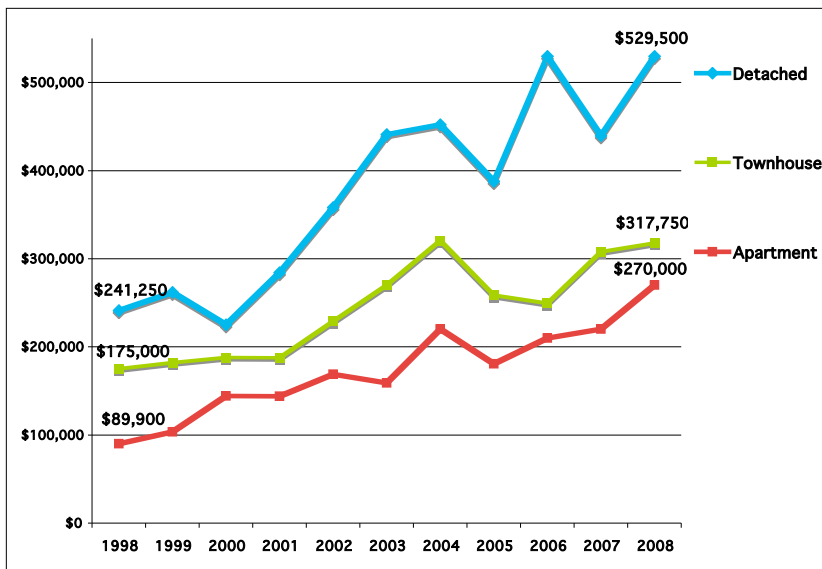
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⁹ Snapshot 2009: A Community Status report to inform Pemberton's future land use and growth policies. Village of Pemberton Development Services Department, May 2009.

¹⁰ Pemberton and Area Sub-regional Land Use Planning Study. Prepared for the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District, Village of Pemberton and Lil'Wat Nation. Stantec Consulting Ltd. 2007.

Figure 4: Median Real Estate Prices (1998-2008)



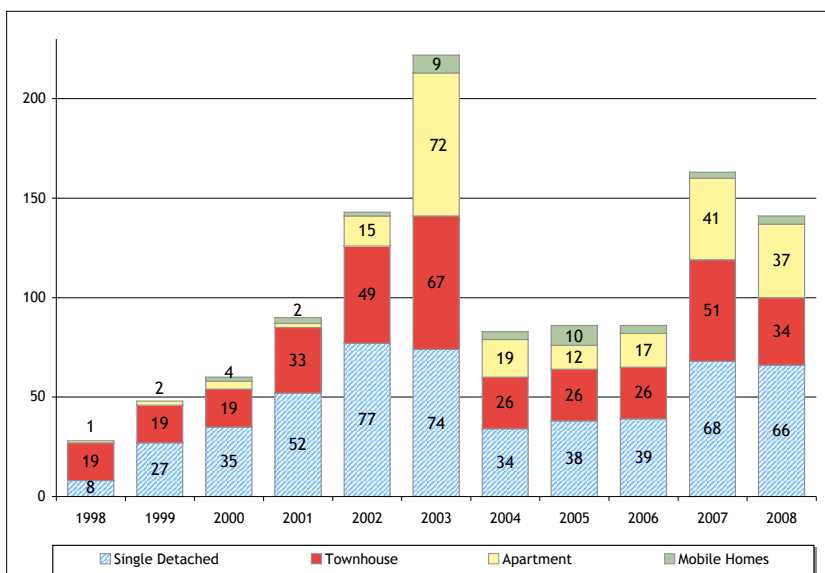
Source: Whistler Real Estate Company

Between 2003 and 2008, single detached home prices increased 20% reaching a peak median price of \$530,000 in 2008. During the same five year period, townhouse prices increased 18% reaching a peak median price of \$320,000 in 2008 and, notably, apartment prices increased 70% reaching a peak median price of \$270,000 in 2008.

Real Estate Sales (1998 - 2008)

Since 1998, the number of real estate sales in the Whistler Listing System has gradually increased each year, reaching a peak in resale transactions in 2003 with 224 sales. Sales dropped between 2004 and 2006, with roughly 85 transactions per year, but have since recovered to an average of 153 sales per year in 2007 and 2008. (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Real Estate Sales (1998-2008)



Source: Whistler Real Estate Company



While the resale market is split between single detached homes and condominiums (both apartments and townhouse units), the majority of new projects that have come on the market in the past few years have been multi-family attached dwellings.

Tenure

Similar to many BC communities, Pemberton is primarily a community of home owners – 65% of households currently own their home. However, the proportion of home owners in the community has been declining. Between 1996 and 2006, the proportion of owned dwellings has declined from 73% to 65%. During the same period, the share of households who rent their residence has increased from 28% to 35%.

Rental Rates

As rental market data for Pemberton is not compiled through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s rental survey, rental listings within *The Pique* classified advertisements were used to determine estimated average rents for typical rental unit types. The figures in Table 1 do not account for units rented by word-of-mouth or alternate advertisements.

Table 1: Estimated Average Rents (2002-2009)

Average Rent \$	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
Shared	\$437	\$458	\$467	\$475	\$428	\$481	\$523	\$551
1 Bedroom	\$702	\$707	\$689	\$691	\$634	\$600	\$811	\$922
2 Bedroom	\$944	\$955	\$952	\$856	\$838	\$848	\$1,126	\$1,341
3+ Bedroom	\$1,591	\$1,563	\$1,467	\$1,271	\$1,141	\$1,469	\$1,891	\$1,682
Units Listed	99	111	189	272	132	85	76	53

Source: *The Pique Classifieds - Rental Listings in the February and September issues, 2002-2009*

- According to the classified listings from 2008-2009, rents in Pemberton range from as low as \$551 for a shared unit to \$1,891 for a house or townhouse that has three bedrooms or more. A typical 1-bedroom unit rents for \$922 and a 2-bedroom unit rents for \$1,341. Between 2002 and 2008, rents increased by as much as 20%, according to the rental classified listings.
- The rental market in Pemberton has been closely connected to Whistler’s tourism economy and has historically offered Whistler employees a relatively more affordable alternative. As such, the decline in tourists to Whistler in 2005 and 2006 would have resulted in an increase in Pemberton’s rental supply (and rental price decrease). Similarly, the spike in Pemberton rental prices seen in 2008 and 2009 is likely related to pre-Olympic construction activity in Whistler.



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HOUSING AFFORDABILITY INDICATORS

Income to Housing Costs

In order to determine whether or not housing is affordable, housing costs are compared to household income. Affordable housing is typically considered to be housing that costs less

than 30% of a household's gross income. However, 32% of a household's gross income is used by lending institutions, corresponding to gross debt service ratio, for the purposes of approving mortgages.

Using estimated household income figures for 2008, Table 2 presents the maximum purchase price and maximum rents for different types of households earning the median household income in Pemberton.

Table 2: Estimated Maximum Housing Costs (2008)

Household/Family Type	Median Income	Available Income for Rent (30%)	Maximum Purchase Price (5% down)	Maximum Purchase Price (10% down)
Married Couple Families	\$68,500	\$1,710	\$281,000	\$297,000
Single Parent Families	\$42,250	\$1,060	\$148,000	\$156,000
One person household	\$36,300	\$910	\$118,000	\$124,000

Source: CitySpaces Calculations based on 2006 Federal Census and adjusted to 2008 using Provincial wage earnings. Mortgage calculations determined using ING-posted rates for five-year fixed term at 4.49% (June 2009) 25 year amortization and \$350 monthly costs for property taxes, maintenance fees and utilities.

- With regard to rental housing, according to the calculations in Table 2, married couples earning the median household income of \$68,500 could afford approximately \$1,700 for rent, single parent families could afford \$1,050 per month and one person households could afford up to \$900 for rent. This assumes households are spending a maximum of 30% of their income on rent.
- With regard to purchasing a home, according to the calculations in Table 2, a married couple family earning the median-income would be able to afford a home priced at approximately \$297,000 with a 10% down payment. Single parent families would be able to afford a home priced at approximately \$156,000 and one person households a home priced at \$124,000.
- For the typical Pemberton household, rental units remain relatively affordable (Table 1). However, key informant interviews indicate that affordable rental housing can be difficult to find.
- On the home ownership side, many households would not be able to purchase a home in Pemberton without surpassing the affordability threshold established by lending institutions. Single detached houses and many townhouses would be unattainable without a more substantial down payment or other special circumstances and starter homes for first time buyers would likely be limited to condominium apartments.
- Apartment units valued at \$270,000, based on 2008 resale prices, are most “attainable” for median income earning married couple families. Some married couple families could afford a typical townhouse unit with a larger down payment or potentially a lower-priced townhouse unit with 10% down payment. Singles and single parent families appear to be priced out of the homeownership market in Pemberton.



PRELIMINARY ISSUES AND CONSIDERATIONS RELATED TO HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

HOUSING CHALLENGES

Discussions with Village of Pemberton and SLRD staff, members of Village of Pemberton Council, local developers and employers, and residents suggest that there are challenges in Pemberton related to both rental and ownership housing.

Cost of housing

The cost of housing has repeatedly been cited as the greatest housing challenge in Pemberton. The ability to pay for housing, as already described, determines whether or not housing is affordable. From the census data, we know that a large proportion of Pemberton residents are employed in service sector jobs and, although median incomes do make rental housing affordable, there is far less choice in the home ownership market.

Rental Housing Availability

Key informants noted that it can be difficult to find rental housing in Pemberton, especially during the ski season. This applies to both workers looking for short term seasonal accommodation and workers in need of longer term housing arrangements. There is competition for space primarily with workers who are unable to find accommodation in Whistler. Some renters have been forced to leave Pemberton because housing was unavailable. There is also some concern that the 2010 Olympic Games will negatively affect the availability of rental housing to longer-term workers as owners convert their long-term rentals to short-term accommodation from now until after the Games have concluded in Spring 2010.

Ownership Housing Options

Key informants noted that it is difficult to get into the ownership housing market in Pemberton and, also, that there are a lack of housing options for people seeking to move up the property ladder. Reasons cited included the high cost, limited supply and poor quality of housing.

A number of key informants suggested that it would be very difficult to obtain ground-oriented housing, particularly single-detached housing, with typical household incomes. Young families, in particular, wanting to move from multi-family housing into ground-oriented housing with private yards find that this type of housing product is difficult to obtain while maintaining affordability. Similarly, those seeking housing options to accommodate aging in place noted that such options are limited. Some suggested a need for a good variety of unit types and sizes to meet the varying needs of different household types.

Physical Constraints

There are numerous physical constraints which present limitations to development in Pemberton. These include the prevalence of land within the floodplain, the agricultural land reserve, steep slopes, slope aspect (sun/shade), and soil and bedrock conditions. The limited supply of appropriately zoned and/or serviced land was also a common challenge cited by key informants.



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Development Costs

There are a number of costs associated with development in Pemberton -- these include costs typically involved with development (i.e. land purchase, servicing, and regulatory review) and also costs that are uniquely associated with development in Pemberton. These include primarily costs associated with preparing sites for construction. There is an additional expense with construction upon the floodplain where sites on the floodplain need to be filled or built to the flood construction level. Development in an area with significant bedrock, such as the Benchlands, may require rock blasting, which can also be very costly. Developers spoke to the high cost of land, high cost of off-site servicing, need for geotechnical studies, stringent landscaping and lighting requirements, community amenity contributions and a cumbersome development review process as being factors contributing to high development costs and the final cost of housing.

Economic Challenges

A number of key informants referenced Pemberton's role as a bedroom community for Whistler as being a challenge both in terms of competing for housing with Whistler workers and also because Pemberton lacks its own significant economic generator or employment base. There was also the suggestion that employee hiring and retention for professional jobs can be difficult in Pemberton due to the cost of housing. Conversely, a lack of good paying local jobs and job security (permanent jobs with benefits) were also noted as challenges to finding stable and affordable housing in Pemberton.

Other Considerations

The research has brought to light a number of other considerations that are relevant to the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy for Pemberton.

- Although land values have risen in Pemberton, those values remain lower than land values in Whistler. As such, Pemberton continues to be seen as an attractive and more affordable alternative to Whistler.
- Pemberton's housing market is closely interconnected with that of the markets in Squamish and Whistler. While higher real estate prices and rents in Whistler have increased demand for more accessible alternatives in Pemberton, increasing development and product choice in Squamish have also increased the appeal of that community to residents in the region, potentially slowing down the growth in Pemberton.
- Sea-to-Sky highway improvements increase accessibility to communities within the corridor, shortening the time it takes to travel to and from the lower mainland. This may result in increasing pressure on Pemberton as a destination for second-home owners and may also stimulate economic development within Pemberton.
- The lack of public transportation in the Pemberton Valley has been identified as a challenge related to housing. People come to Pemberton to access local services and entertainment but may be unable to return home, and rendered "temporarily homeless", due to limited transportation options.
- Discussions with Sea-to-Sky Community Services suggests that the Sea-to-Sky Corridor is home to a significant and growing homeless population. The number of homeless who



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may be living in the Pemberton area is unknown. However, anecdotally, there are people living in the area in tents or other substandard shelter.

- Although not directly a housing challenge, a number of key informants referred to a lack of community cohesion resulting from Pemberton being comprised of a mixture of long term residents and a transient population.
- In 2008, the Pemberton Lions Activity Society contracted a study, with funding through BC Housing, to determine seniors' housing needs and create a seniors housing vision for Pemberton. Through a seniors housing survey and community forums, the study confirmed the demand for seniors housing in Pemberton. Roughly half the survey respondents (51) expressed a need for independent living units and the other half (53) expressed a need for assisted living units, both now and in the future. Some of the desired characteristics of this housing include housing on one level, shared indoor and outdoor amenities, one or two bedroom units, and housing that is close to transit and services.

TARGET POPULATION GROUPS

An analysis of relevant data sources and information collected through key-informant interviews indicates that there are four key demographic groups that merit specific attention through the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy.

Low income households

Pemberton's low income households are a population group challenged with being able to find secure, long-term housing that is both affordable and appropriate to their needs. The research reflects a common perception that rental housing is often difficult to obtain and that rental housing prices are high in relation to household incomes. Households within this demographic primarily include those on fixed incomes or those working in the service sector of the economy.

Young Families

Young families seeking to move up the property ladder are finding that their options are limited. Growing families, for instance, seeking to move from multi-family housing to more ground-oriented and detached housing forms with secure, private yards are challenged to find suitable homes which meet their lifestyle needs yet fit within their budgets.

Seniors

While seniors remain a relatively small proportion of the population, the limited stock of seniors' housing has been reported to be one of the prominent concerns of Pemberton residents. There is a growing trend toward planning for seniors to "age in place". There have been a number of discussions in the community regarding how to accommodate an aging seniors' population and the importance of providing a range of market and non-market housing options. Some of Pemberton's seniors have assets and reasonable incomes, but are challenged by the lack of options that allow them to downsize to one-level ground-oriented living.



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Seasonal Workers

Seasonal workers are another group that are challenged with finding secure, affordable housing. Seasonal workers are a vital component of the regional economy -- contributing to the tourism economy based primarily in Whistler and also, to a lesser extent, farming activities in the Pemberton Valley.

Others

An often overlooked group in smaller communities is the homeless. There is no empirical data to substantiate the number of homeless people living in the Pemberton area. However, we know anecdotally that there are people living in tents or other types of substandard shelter in the Pemberton area. It has also been suggested that there is frequently a “temporary homeless” population – where individuals arriving in the community can’t get home due to the lack of regional transit service or because short-stay housing isn’t available.

CONCLUSION

A review of relevant plans, policies and documents and discussions with key informants confirms that Pemberton faces a number of housing challenges that warrant further consideration. These include: the cost of both rental and ownership housing; limited rental housing availability; limited choice in home ownership options; and physical constraints to development including the floodplain, agriculturally zoned land, topographic conditions, and lack of servicing. Further to this, it is evident that Pemberton is tied strongly to the Whistler economy. Its role as a bedroom community for Whistler presents a challenge in terms of competition in the market contributing to the cost of both rental and ownership housing.

An examination of both rental rates and home prices, in relation to area incomes, indicates that housing affordability is a concern across the population. For the typical Pemberton household, rental rates appear to be relatively affordable but the research suggests that adequate and affordable rental accommodation is difficult to obtain. On the ownership side, married couple families have some choice in the market, while singles and single person households are virtually priced out. First-time home buyers are generally limited to condominium apartments and townhouses, while those looking to move up the property ladder may not be able to do so because of limited choice in the market.

The Village of Pemberton has begun to examine housing affordability issues and taken measures to address these issues through development -- primarily within the Benchlands area (although uptake in the Benchlands has been slow). In addition, Pemberton has a considerable number of secondary suites. Despite the fact that only some of the units have been permitted (by building permit), secondary suites represent an important stock of affordable rental housing within the community in addition to serving as mortgage helpers. A limited amount of affordable seniors housing has been constructed to date, with eighteen additional units coming on stream. Based on population projections and anticipated development, a housing shortage is expected over the next 15 to 20 years.

An Affordable Housing Strategy is needed to address Pemberton’s immediate and long-term housing challenges. Specific groups needing attention include: low income households seeking rental or ownership housing; young families looking to move up the property ladder or into ground-oriented housing; seniors wanting to “age in place”; and seasonal workers looking for secure and affordable short-term housing.



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