

July 28, 2022

SRD Housing Needs Reports - Final Results

The Strathcona Regional District (SRD) has now completed the Housing Needs Reports for each of the four Electoral Areas in the District. The *Local Government Act* requires all local governments to complete Housing Needs Reports every five years. This project was funded through a \$60,000 grant from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and was carried out by M'akola Development Services (MDS) on behalf of the SRD.

This project launched in January 2022 and combined data collection with an extensive public engagement process, including a public survey and in-depth interviews with elected officials, housing service providers, community groups and others with local knowledge related to housing. Several key themes and areas of concern emerged from this study, including:

- **Populations in all four Electoral Areas are growing and aging.**
This demographic shift was reflected in comments received, as residents in all Areas expressed concern about their ability to afford and maintain their own properties as they age, and for their children's ability to own or rent in their community.
- **Rental units are hard to find, are more expensive, and are more likely to be in poor condition than owner-occupied housing.**
Regionally, about 18% of households rent, and of those, 41% are in "core housing need". This means their housing is either unaffordable (defined as costing more than 1/3 of their household income), in need of major repair, or overcrowded. For comparison, 9% of owner households are in core housing need.
- **Residents want a diversity of housing types and tenures offered in their communities.**
There is a clear interest in housing for seniors and other vulnerable populations, offering a range of home care, supportive and semi-supportive housing options. Additionally, many expressed support for changes to permit secondary dwellings (such as tiny homes or lane-way housing), secondary suites, and other forms of higher density in residential areas.
- **The cost of home ownership exceeds the purchasing power of median income households by significant margins.**
This is true in all Electoral Areas, though this gap is widest in Area B (Cortes Island) where the cost of the median home is estimated at \$794,600, though a household earning the median income could only afford a \$207,000 home.

Additional concerns were raised on the limitations of existing water and sewer infrastructure in rural areas, insufficient housing for seasonal workers, and the challenges posed by a rise in short-term rental and recreational properties.

For more information about this project, including the full reports, please visit:

<https://srd.ca/housing-needs-report-project/>

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