

Housing Needs Reports – Summary Form

MUNICIPALITY/ELECTORAL AREA/LOCAL TRUST AREA: City of Courtenay

REGIONAL DISTRICT: Comox Valley Regional District

DATE OF REPORT COMPLETION: 05/2020 (MONTH/YYYY)

PART 1: KEY INDICATORS & INFORMATION

Instructions: please complete the fields below with the most recent data, as available.

LOCATION	Neighbouring municipalities and electoral areas:
	Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, Electoral Areas A-C
LOCATION	Neighbouring First Nations:
	K'ómoks First Nation

POPULATION	Population: 26,945 (est.)		Change since 2016 :	5.2 %	
	Projected population in 5 years: 28,490		Projected change:	5.7 %	
	Number of households: 13,020 (est.)		Change since 2016 :	7.6 %	
	Projected number of households in 5 years: 14,030		Projected change:	7.8 %	
	Average household size: 2.1				
	Projected average household size in 5 years: 2.0				
	Median age (local): 50.4		Median age (RD): 51.8	Median age (BC): 42.5 (2016)	
	Projected median age in 5 years: 51.5				
	Seniors 65+ (local):	29.4 %	Seniors 65+ (RD):	28.7 %	Seniors 65+ (BC): 18.3 (2016) %
	Projected seniors 65+ in 5 years:			33.3 %	
	Owner households:		69.6 %	Renter households: 30.4 %	
	Renter households in subsidized housing:			11.9 %	

	Median household income	Local	Regional District	BC*
INCOME	All households	\$ 57,463	\$ 64,379	\$ 69,995
	Renter households	\$ 34,367	\$ 38,394	\$ 45,848
	Owner households	\$ 69,537	\$ 73,367	\$ 84,333

* City of Courtenay switched the information in the cells for Renter and Owner values in BC columns as they were incorrect in the original document.

ECONOMY	Participation rate: 55.7 %	Unemployment rate: 8.5 %
	Major local industries: Retail Trade (17.5%), Health Care & Social Assistance (13.0%), and Accommodation & Food Services (10.3%)	

HOUSING	Median assessed housing values: \$ 500,250	Median housing sale price: \$ 400,430
	Median monthly rent: \$ 940 (CMHC)	Rental vacancy rate: 1.2 (CMHC) %
	Housing units - total: 13,300 (est.)	Housing units – subsidized: 325 (BC Housing)
	Annual registered new homes - total: 352	Annual registered new homes - rental: 74
	Households below <i>affordability</i> standards (spending 30%+ of income on shelter): 24.2 %	
	Households below <i>adequacy</i> standards (in dwellings requiring major repairs): 4.6 %	
	Households below <i>suitability</i> standards (in overcrowded dwellings): 2.2 %	

Briefly summarize the following:

1. Housing policies in local official community plans and regional growth strategies (if applicable):

Housing policies are included throughout both the City of Courtenay's Official Community Plan (Bylaw No. 2387) and the Comox Valley Regional District Regional Growth Strategy (Bylaw No. 120, 201). In the RGS, Goal 1 in the policy areas section is to "ensure a diversity of housing options to meet evolving demographics and needs." In the OCP housing is only touched on generally, but is expected to be a key feature in the 2020 OCP update.

2. Any community consultation undertaken during development of the housing needs report:

Community consultation was extensive for this project. The project team distributed a community survey that received nearly 800 responses, hosted focus groups with important local housing actors, conducted a series of key informant interviews, and held "pop-up" engagement events at local gathering places. Overall, the study counted more than 1000 engagements across all municipalities and electoral areas. An engagement report is included as an appendix to the housing needs report.

3. Any consultation undertaken with persons, organizations and authorities (e.g. local governments, health authorities, and the provincial and federal governments and their agencies).

Staff from all local governments and the regional governments were involved in a small advisory committee that oversaw the study. The project team also conducted interviews with the regional and local representatives, Comox Valley Community Health Network (funded by Island Health), Community Living BC (crown corporation), and 19 Wing (CFB Comox).

4. Any consultation undertaken with First Nations:

The project team hosted a small pop-up engagement event at the Wachiay Friendship Centre in Courtenay and indigenous service providers were present at multiple focus groups. The CVRD sent a request to participate in the study to the K'ómoks First Nation, but there was limited capacity of staff to participate.

PART 2: KEY FINDINGS

Table 1: Estimated number of units needed, by type (# of bedrooms)

	Currently	Anticipated (5 years)
0 bedrooms (bachelor)	160 (est.)	190
1 bedroom	975 (est.)	1,040
2 bedrooms	4,505 (est.)	4,850
3+ bedrooms	7,380 (est.)	7,950
Total	13,020 (est.)	14,030

Comments:

The current number of households demanded (2020) is estimated as a function of population change and the demand for housing per defined age cohort. Overall, Courtenay will demand 7.8% more dwellings between 2020 and 2025 - greater growth than that of population (5.7%). Greater growth is tied to an aging maintainer composition and subsequent declining household sizes.

Table 2: Households in Core Housing Need

	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>All households in planning area</i>	9,335	100	10,410	100	11,370	100
Of which are in core housing need	1,230	13.2	1,660	15.9	1,580	13.9
Of which are owner households	320	4.9	415	5.6	400	5.0
Of which are renter households	905	32.8	1,240	32.8	1,180	35.1

Comments:

The number and rate of Core Housing Need increased between 2006 and 2016 across both tenure types. Affordability rates decreased slightly for owners and renters, suggesting that although there may be more households that can reasonably afford their dwellings (relative to the annual total), there is a simultaneous increase in how many cannot reasonably afford an alternative dwelling option in the same area.

Table 3: Households in Extreme Core Housing Need

	2006		2011		2016	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
<i>All households in planning area</i>	9,335	100	10,410	100	11,370	100
Of which are in extreme core housing need	780	8.4	820	7.9	760	6.7
Of which are owner households	220	3.3	215	2.9	175	2.2
Of which are renter households	560	20.3	610	19.9	585	17.4

Comments:

Extreme Core Housing Need rates decreased over the decade across all tenures, indicating that less households (relative to the total households in the given year) paid more than 50% of their income on shelter. Overall, fewer were in Extreme Need in 2016 than 2006, due to a larger drop in owners in said circumstance; Extreme Need renter households increased.

Briefly summarize current and anticipated needs for each of the following:

1. Affordable housing:

Affordability rates indicate somewhat improving financial circumstances even if total households experiencing unaffordability has risen across both tenures. Improvements reflect a significant influx of higher income households. Lower income bracket household totals have also grown, meaning need for affordable housing continues to rise.

2. Rental housing:

Between 2006 and 2016, renter and owner households grew at similar rates, illustrating that households are not being pushed to rental markets due to highly appreciating real estate. Recent sales trends do show rapid appreciation, suggesting rental housing will become increasingly important, to be seen in incoming 2021 census data.

3. Special needs housing:

According to BC housing data there were 26 requests for special needs housing in Comox. That is the highest number in the region. Additionally, across the valley 72.9% of all households in Core Housing Need have at least one person with an activity limitation. This indicates a need for affordable, accessible located in Courtenay.

4. Housing for seniors:

The proportion of seniors to total population continues to increase, reducing overall household sizes. Overall, seniors consume more homes overtime as they age in place, removing said homes from the market when no reasonable alternatives are available. Independent, senior specific housing is essential to reintegrate existing housing.

5. Housing for families:

Families with children are growing slowest of all census family types. Even so, they grew by 460 over ten years, with most occurring for rentals. Young families are buying homes later due to high prices, increasing the demand for larger rentals, mostly within the primary rental market where there are few 3+ bedrooms.

6. Shelters for people experiencing homelessness and housing for people at risk of homelessness:

Engagement and quantitative data indicates an extreme need for increased shelter space and rentals available to those collecting a shelter allowance. There was evidence of increased "hidden homelessness" indicating a need for lower-priced rental housing. There are currently 270 applicants on BC Housing's waitlist.

7. Any other population groups with specific housing needs identified in the report:

The 2018 PIT count identified 117 people without housing. Of these thirty-two percent of participants identified as being Indigenous; comparatively, 6 percent of the total population identifies as Indigenous.

Were there any other key issues identified through the process of developing your housing needs report?

The City has the highest proportion of single person households, resulting in smaller average household sizes and unit types. Courtenay is also the centre of service delivery and experiences the highest rates of visible homelessness and highest demand for shelter assistance rate housing. Senior persons are growing faster than the regional average. Median household income cannot reasonably afford median single-family and town house prices. Lone parent households cannot reasonably afford to own any type of housing. Almost 50% of renters are living in an accommodation they cannot reasonably afford. Short Term Rentals grew significantly in last four years, reaching above regional average market share for commercial units.