

ATTACHMENT A

KEY AREAS OF HOUSING NEED

The 2023 *Housing Needs Report* (HNR) identifies the population groups with the greatest barriers in accessing stable housing, and who struggle to access and retain affordable housing. These population groups include renters with low or moderate incomes, individuals with special needs, seniors, families, youth, Indigenous People, and people experiencing homelessness. City funds provided to the Nanaimo Region Rent Bank program (administered by Connective Support Society Nanaimo) are for rent bank loan capital aimed at the following key areas of housing need:

- *Renters* – the HNR shows that the number of rental households grew from 10,955 in 2011 to 14,385 in 2021. According to the HNR, 24.2% of renter households are in core housing need, paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Renters in core housing need are more susceptible to housing loss due to personal or financial crisis. Engagement from the HNR revealed that renters are increasingly challenged to retain or find available and affordable units. 2024 data show a vacancy rate of 2.9% putting it close to the healthy level of 3% to 5% however anecdotal reports suggest that many of the available units remain unaffordable for a significant portion of the population.
- *Individuals with Special Needs* – for people living with a disability, it can be challenging to acquire, afford, and/or retain housing that meets their needs. People living with disabilities often receive provincial disability assistance and these funds are often entirely spent on housing leaving little room for other essential costs of living. For instance, a single person on disability assistance may receive up to a maximum amount of \$1,483.50 monthly. In addition, people with disabilities are often ineligible for rent supplements because they are already receiving government benefits.
- *Seniors* – represents a large proportion of households on the BC Housing Affordable Housing Registry. As of June 2025, 376 seniors in Nanaimo were waiting for placement in affordable housing, highlighting the urgent need for more accessible and affordable housing options for older adults.
- *Families* – there is a shortage of affordable, family-friendly housing units with three or more bedrooms in Nanaimo. Units that are suitable for larger families tend to have some of the highest rental costs. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the median rent for a two-bedroom apartment in 2024 was \$1,556. However, a review of various online rental platforms shows higher median rents for two-bedroom units, ranging from \$1,900 to \$2,247 per month. Families with low to moderate incomes who require three or more bedrooms often face significant challenges in finding housing that is both affordable and adequate.
- *Youth* – housing affordability is a primary concern for low-income youth, youth transitioning out of foster care, and youth living on their own for the first time. With lower incomes and no references, youth struggle to find and retain affordable housing.
- *Indigenous People* – there is a lack of housing for Snuneymuxw People on reserve and very limited affordable housing options off reserve. With lower incomes and systemic discrimination it can be very challenging for Indigenous community members to find culturally appropriate affordable housing.
- *People Experiencing Homelessness* – the number of people experiencing homelessness in Nanaimo continues to rise. In 2024, the Homeless Point-in-Time Count reported 621 individuals as unsheltered. However, frontline service providers estimate that between 800 and 1,000 people are currently experiencing homelessness in the city. Many individuals face significant barriers to securing stable housing due to the complex challenges and trauma associated with homelessness. For many, financial assistance alone is not enough, intensive support services are often required to help individuals obtain and maintain stable housing.