

REFUGEE RESPONSE TEAM

Thompson Okanagan & Kootenays

Shuswap Creative Housing Meeting

(As part of the City of Salmon Arm Social Impact Advisory Committee Meeting, December 16, 2022 @ 8:00 am)

Attendance:

Present:

Councillor Louise Wallace Richmond
Shannon Hecker
David Parmenter
Jen Gamble
Tim Gibson
Larissa Image
Kim Sinclair
Karen Hansen
Patti Thurston
Erin Jackson
B. Puddifant

City of Salmon Arm, Chair
Canadian Mental Health Association
Interior Health Association-Mental Health
Shuswap Immigrant Services Society
Shuswap Children's Association
Okanagan Regional Library
Aspiral Youth Partners
Shuswap Association for Community Living
Shuswap Family Centre
City of Salmon Arm
City of Salmon Arm, Record

Acknowledgement of Traditional Territory:

We acknowledge that we are gathering here on the traditional territory of the Secwepemc people, with whom we share these lands and where we live and work together. *(Made at the opening of the SIAC meeting)*

Introduction to Housing Meeting:

RRT Overview (Jen Gamble):

The Refugee Response Team (RRT) is a province-wide initiative funded and directed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs in association with Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada. The RRT local service agencies assist refugees and temporarily displaced Ukrainians fleeing conflict to resettle in BC.

The RRT is collaborating with the BC Government to help host discussions on Creative Long-Term Housing solutions across the BC Interior because though the housing crisis impacts many, it disproportionately affects new arrivals to BC.

The initiative is aiming to connecting local government, financial lending institutions, real estate boards, private landlords, and other housing and accommodation stakeholders to foster cooperative action, solution-focused discussion, and information-sharing on the topic of long-term housing.

Canada

This project is made possible through funding from the Government of Canada and the Province of British Columbia



WelcomeBC



This is an opportunity for us to gather and share resources focused on creative solutions. Through this initiative Salmon Arm will be able to provide the provincial government with community specific feedback.

Previous Work Overview (Louise Wallace Richmond):

The City of Salmon Arm, in partnership with Community Service Agencies, has created two documents that contain important information for these discussions.

City of Salmon Arm Social Impact Assessment 2021

Link: <https://www.salmonarm.ca/documentcenter/view/3335>

- housing accessibility discussion included

Salmon Arm Community Housing Strategy 2020

Link: <https://www.salmonarm.ca/documentcenter/view/3061>

- discussed available obstacles such as land availability (ALR, Mountains) and the resulting need to consider higher density housing

The Salmon Arm OCP needs to be updated and these reports will feed into that process.

CMHA housing projects, Birch and Larch are completed and there have been no calls for community housing from BC housing.

Discussion:

Challenges:

Short supply and high demand key issue.

Affordability of housing is an issue. Some residents are moving away from the area due to high housing costs.

Hard to measure informal rental market -for example people with a room for rent.

- Not tracked currently but would be beneficial if a way to track was created
- Tracking could also help identify risks for vulnerable populations -ie. Renting an illegal suite can mean renters 'fly under the radar' and do not know their rights.

Rentals are often found through Facebook now, no longer through the local paper and this can cause a barrier for individuals without access to technology.

Use of space a problem in Salmon Arm and the Shuswap.

- Empty commercial spaces go unused
- Seasonal residents leave their second homes uninhabited over the 'off' season.
- Some areas of the city have large lots that could accommodate more housing but for an individual homeowner, who is not a developer, paying for the additional infrastructure (like water and sewer lines) is cost prohibitive.

Creative Solutions:

- 1) Co-op Housing is a positive model that creates housing levels that reflect income levels of occupants. Creating purpose-built housing important.
 - In Salmon Arm, one co-op has land that could be further developed but might need partnership and support to move forward.
- 2) Tax revitalization would encourage multi-family building. However, this would have to be at a higher-level government than the city.
- 3) There are many homes in Salmon Arm that could be fixed up. Current homeowners could be incentivised by improvement grants. If landlords could get these then older rentals would not fall out of the rental pool.
- 4) Rebates from building a legal secondary suite in an existing home would encourage homeowners to undertake construction. Often additional suites are too expensive for the average homeowner. This would also have to come from a higher level of government than the municipality.
- 5) The creation of a rental bank or physical rental board could help address technology and language barriers.
- 6) Taking a holistic approach to the housing issue is important. Considering the whole ecosystem and how we move people through all the stages of life is critical in building longevity into the housing inventories. For example, implementing Universal building standards for all new construction will mean that housing is appropriate for individuals to age in place.

Next Steps:

Meeting Notes:

These meeting notes will be submitted to RRT for inclusion in the feedback shared to the provincial government.

Second meeting:

A larger meeting in next fiscal year is of interest to participants and attendees in this meeting could spread the invitation to their networks.