

Enhancing Capacity to Address Housing Affordability and Homelessness in the Comox Valley

**Presentation to the CVRD Committee of the Whole
Meeting – January 25, 2011**

Butler Associates Consulting and Bazink Solutions Inc.

Introducing Ourselves

Diana Butler and Wendy Zink

- Planners – members of the Canadian Institute of Planners.
- Many years in professional practice focussed on housing affordability and homelessness.
- Many years of experience designing and implementing consultation processes.
- Experience in the public, private and not-for-profit sectors, in both staff positions and as consultants.

Terms of Reference

- Undertaking independent research/ review of background documents.
- Consultation – organization of an open house / public meeting.
- Recommending members for the CVRD Standing Committee.
- Recommending sustainable funding models.
- Providing support to the CVRD housing and homelessness Standing Committee.

Terms of Reference (Cont'd)

- Identifying barriers and tools to increase affordable housing options .
- Developing a funding and project opportunities database to address homelessness.
- Developing a housing inventory and gaps analysis.
- Identifying/ organizing learning opportunities.
- Recommending the best path forward.

What's Been Done So Far

- Reviewed local background documents.
- Created a data base of key stakeholders and others.
- Developed an inventory of affordable housing and homeless facilities and analyzed the gaps.
- Put together information on funding possibilities.
- Identified housing polices contained in local OCPs.
- Assembled examples of 'Best Practices'.
- Identified learning opportunities.

What's Been Done So Far (Cont'd)

- Prepared a submission for the Chamber of Commerce Showcase.
- Responded to staff, Standing Committee, and community requests for information and advice.
- Attended the September 9th AHERO meeting.
- Met with and/or interviewed 35+ stakeholders and others – some more than once.
- Organized, facilitated and summarized a Roundtable Session (September 30th), attended by 35 key stakeholders.
- Solicited interest/ reviewed applications/ recommended members for Standing Committee.

What's Been Done So Far (Cont'd)

We've provided on-going support for the Standing Committee.

- November 1: Committee role and terms of reference; work plan and timetable.
- November 26: Presentations from BC Housing and VIHA on their programs and funding procedures.
- November 29: Presentations from local planners on their housing policies and programs.
- December 16: Update on Cliffe Avenue property and facilitated priority setting session to develop an action framework.

What We Plan to Do in the Time Left

January, February and March

Another 3 Standing Committee Meetings:

- Video conferencing session with Island housing providers.
- Focus group with local developers and realtors.
- Identification of projects/ properties for providing/ developing additional housing capacity.
- Identification of a priority action framework.
- Organization of a community forum/ meeting/ open house.
- Recommendation of the ‘best path forward’.

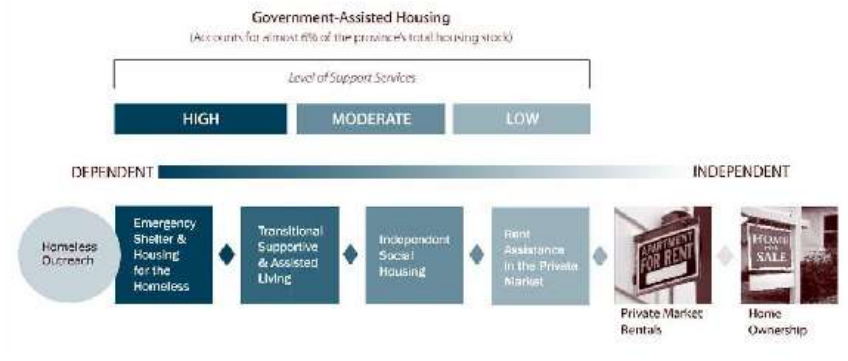
Observations

- Changing circumstances – adjusting and adapting.
- Gaps in the housing continuum:
 - A lack of supportive-transitional housing for the homeless, a lack of social housing for low-income singles and families.
 - The immediate and greatest need is for more capacity on the dependency side of the housing continuum.

The Housing Continuum

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

The housing continuum extends from emergency shelter and housing for the homeless through to affordable rental housing and home ownership. This diagram illustrates this continuum including the portion that is government-assisted with differing levels of support services through to independent housing in the private market.



Observations (Cont'd)

- The Comox Valley is on BC Housing's radar.
- Staff are actively engaged in advising on how to proceed with a funding application for the Cliffe Avenue site.
- BCH has indicated the information provided to date is sufficient for moving forward.
- BCH has also indicated that a competitive proposal call process will be used to select an operator..

Observations (Cont'd)

- BCH is likely to fund only 1 high-needs project at this time – money is tight, obtaining funds is very competitive.
- BCH has cautioned they need to hear a coordinated voice from the Valley.
- Other projects are being pursued in the community.
- For anything positive to be achieved, there is an urgent need to determine where you want to go— in both the short and longer term.

Experts in the field consistently emphasize Speaking with one voice is by of housing affordability and homelessness.

Observations (Cont'd)

- Successfully addressing housing affordability and homelessness requires:
 - Advocating for housing units
 - Engaging the community
 - Building strong relationships
 - Adopting a range of strategies
 - Being prepared to respond when opportunities arise.
 - Being flexible - build a robust model that can respond to changing opportunities
 - Recognizing housing and homelessness as a function within the organization and allocating resources

Observations (Cont'd)

- Municipalities and regional districts are increasingly recognizing the need for local government action to address housing affordability and homelessness.
- Housing affordability and homelessness will not be addressed by a one shot effort.
- A good start has been made.
- Success requires concerted and continued effort.

When our contract finishes, we hope there is something in place to continue the work that has been started:

- sufficient resources
- information
- organizational capacity

Conclusion

Thank you.

If you have any questions, we would be pleased to respond.