

Public Land for Attainable Income Qualified Co-Op Housing - Hesperia

The recently completed City of Vernon Housing Needs Report (HNR Method Technical Memorandum, September 2024), clearly outlines the housing needs by income. Our Not-for-Profit (NFP) social housing providers have focused mainly on those with very low (2%) and low incomes (19%) as shown in Table 3 on page 5. To date those in the moderate annual income range (\$35,000 – \$59,999) have not been the target of our public assisted housing, yet find themselves significantly challenged to pay market rents while making up 19% of households. These moderate income households have estimated available monthly housing income allocation of \$876-\$1,500 (Table 6), usually well below what is available through market rental when the number of bedrooms required is included as a factor. This is a significant and increasing gap (Table 8), often referred to as the missing middle.

To provide new attainable housing units for the moderate income households requires intervention in the housing development market as there is a significant limitation on the number of existing housing units in this category in Vernon and the surrounding jurisdictions. In general, the intervention options are providing public land, providing low cost (public) financing, ensuring construction of lower cost dwellings (finishes, sizes, etc), and providing development expertise thorough NFP volunteers and reduced cost professionals.

Vernon has a unique opportunity to allocate 5 acres of the Hesperia Lands to Co-op Housing Federation of BC, to conduct a feasibility study for constructing and managing (at scale) an income qualifying Co-op Housing development focused on moderate income households. Committing the land to Co-op Housing BC would enable the City of Vernon to begin providing many additional housing units directly targeted on meeting the housing and financial needs of moderate income households by: 1) providing the land, 2) engaging an experienced NFP developer, 3) accessing lower priced financing and 4) participating in ensuring that the actual housing constructed would be needs focused. It could also, through requiring income qualification over time, ensure the long term maintenance of housing for those households with moderate incomes.

Motion:

WHEREAS: The City of Vernon has the opportunity to allocate 5 acres of Hesperia Land to Co-op Housing Federation of BC, to conduct a feasibility study for constructing and managing (at scale) an income qualifying Co-op Housing development focused on moderate income households; and

WHEREAS: committing the land to Co-op Housing BC would enable the City of Vernon to begin providing many additional housing units directly targeted on meeting the housing and financial needs of moderate-income households;

THEREFORE, be it resolved, that Council direct staff to research the feasibility of this joint venture and provide options for Council's consideration.