



GREATER VICTORIA
HOUSING SOCIETY

Since 1956

Building Homes. Creating Communities.

The Next Ten Years 2015 - 2025

The Society is a Registered Charity 10817 3238 RR0001

Introduction

- As a socially responsible and responsive organization we see many challenges and opportunities as we look at the next ten years.
- The purpose of this document is to establish a long view road map to ensure we address the challenges, exploit the opportunities and focus our strategic priorities between now and 2025.

Our Mission

Greater Victoria Housing society is dedicated to providing affordable rental housing in Greater Victoria.

Our Goals

- To provide high quality, safe, affordable housing for low to moderate income households.
- To maintain our existing housing to the highest standard.
- To respond to the need for affordable housing by building, buying or acquiring additional rental.

Our Strategic Priorities

- Growth, to address housing needs in our region
- Awareness, to enhance our public profile and communicate the need for affordable housing and to attract partners and funders for new development
- Good Management, to ensure we are financially stable and secure
- Excellence, in our leadership, governance and management.

Challenges in the Next 10 Years

- Increasing costs and maintenance demands of our older buildings.
- An increase in tenants with multiple needs.
- Changing demographics in our region including growth in the frail senior population and increasing numbers of adults with disabilities.
- Changing housing needs in the region leading to more diversity in our tenant mix.
- Even though we are an active organization in our region, our profile remains lower than we like and our mandate is not always understood.



- Our growth as a society and our changing environment requires regular review of our organizational structure.
- A number of retirements of key staff.
- There is limited government support for new housing.
- Increasing competition in fund raising and appealing to the community's philanthropists.
- Government funded operating agreements will expire at three buildings.
- Managing complex and sometimes difficult partnerships.

Opportunities in the Next 10 Years

- We celebrate our 60th Anniversary in 2016.
- We will be mortgage free at three buildings.
- We will have title to the land for all but 3 of our buildings.
- We are participating in a neighbourhood redevelopment planning exercise that is designed to address needs at our Nigel Square property.
- Construction costs and interest rates remain low, facilitating new development.
- We have an excellent reputation on which to build.
- We can develop strategic partnerships with community service organizations and real estate sector interests.
- We have a separate corporation which can be used to achieve some of our goals.
- We have experience and skilled staff to implement our goals.
- We have a board focused on the success of the society.
- We are implementing new property management software that will increase our efficiency and effectiveness.



Safe, affordable and quality housing provides the platform from which people can flourish. We provide a dignified infrastructure and a foundation for people's lives.



527 units with rent geared to income (subsidized)
212 units with rent on the door (tenants pay full operating cost)

The Values That Guide Us

FOCUS ON GOOD OUTCOMES FOR OUR TENANTS

Our society exists to serve the needs of low to moderate income tenants. Housing is the most basic need required for good health, social and financial outcomes. We focus our activities on our tenants achieving these outcomes.

Focusing on good outcomes for our tenants looks like:

- Carefully matching tenants to rental units that best meet their needs.
- Assisting tenants when their tenancy is at risk by helping them with repayment plans or referring them to resources to help resolve their issues.
- Ensuring we communicate roles and responsibilities.
- Providing respectful and timely communication as issues arise.
- Maintaining our properties to a high standard, so tenants feel valued and respected.



We change people's lives by removing the stressor of the lack of good housing.

RESPECT

We value our tenants, staff and volunteers as unique individuals who each bring something valuable and important to our relationships and work.

Respect looks like:

- Positive communication – focusing on strengths and opportunities, not deficiencies and shortcomings.
- Starting with curiosity and not judgment when assessing others.
- Accepting we each have a responsibility for being respectful.
- Addressing conflict: by getting assistance, by not letting events fester and by differentiating between facts and feelings.

FLEXIBILITY

Our work is varied and complex and our staff and tenants have varied and complex lives. Therefore, as an employer and landlord we support flexibility in the workplace as long as there is advance notice, it fits operational needs and does not pass a responsibility or burden to another person.

Flexibility looks like:

- Staff volunteer to work at different hours to meet extraordinary operational needs.
- Staff are given time to attend or participate in personal events that are important to them.

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- New tenants are given flexible move in dates.
 - Tenants are given repayment plans when they are in arrears and in financial difficulty.

SUPPORT IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

We rally our resources and moral support when staff or a tenant faces a difficult situation.

Support in Difficult Situations looks like:

- Supervisors attend the buildings to support the caretakers when a challenging incident occurs.
- Professional counselling is provided for staff to handle difficult situations and issues.
- Community support service referrals are provided to tenants needing assistance to maintain their tenancy.

PROFESSIONALISM

We identify and aim to achieve best practices in our work.

Professionalism looks like:

- Supporting training and maintaining professional designations related to our work.
- Following through and doing what we say we will do.
- Being aware of and exceeding regulatory and safety standards.
- Respecting and protecting the privacy of our tenants and staff.
- Taking responsibility for our actions
- Reporting our successes and failures and learning from both.
- Maintaining our properties to the highest standard possible within budgetary constraints.
- Committing to financially sustainable growth.
- Committing to environmentally sustainable practices.
- Committing to philanthropy in order to achieve our mission.
- Being an employer of choice in our field.
- Communicating clearly with staff, tenants and volunteers about key events and initiatives that impact them.
- Bringing forward suggestions for change and improvement.
- Sharing our knowledge and expertise and supporting other organizations in our community.

TO BE SUCCESSFUL WE NEED:

- Adequate revenues raised from multiple sources.
- Partners willing to share work, ideas and risk.
- Trained staff, dedicated to our mission.
- A committed, strategic and governance-focused Board of Directors.
- Entrepreneurial attitude and willingness to take appropriate risks to advance our mission.

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Our Vision: Greater Victoria Housing Society 2025

Greater Victoria Housing Society is known as a leader in the development and management of high quality rental housing for low to moderate income households who live independently.

GOVERNANCE

Our Board Members have a range of skills, networks and interests to help us achieve our mission.

The Board continues its focus on governance and concerns itself with the key policy and strategic directions of the society and in ensuring the society meets its financial and legal obligations.

Board members are active and visible in the community promoting our work.

Board members are philanthropic and support the work of the Society.

OUR BUILDINGS

Our buildings are in excellent condition, are maintained regularly and a vigorous preventative maintenance program is in place.

Tenants take pride in their home and the building and play an active role in keeping the buildings looking great.

We have plans in place for buildings nearing the end of their operating agreements and/or economic life.

OUR TENANTS

Tenants are supported by staff that makes referrals to ensure coordinated and appropriate support services.

Community agencies provide services and activities that benefit our tenants.

OUR FUND RAISING ACTIVITIES

We have a vibrant fund raising program.

We have two key signature events every year: one hosted by another organization and one we organize ourselves. Our own event is unique and reflects our work in the community.

We have several partners who work with us to fund and develop new buildings.

We have a small, but important annual donor base.



The 25 year forecast is for 353 to 478 additional Renter Households every year in the Capital Region.

The 25 year forecast is for 110 to 154 new **Low Income** Renter Households every year in the Capital Region.

(BC Non-Profit Housing Association)

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We have a well-established social enterprise that provides income for our charitable purposes.

OUR PLAN TO ACQUIRE NEW BUILDINGS

We build or acquire one new apartment building about every two years.

We have built and own our own office space, in a building with rental units above.

We absorb properties of societies that want to dissolve. We focus on acquiring properties for families and seniors who can live independently, in the Greater Victoria area.

STAFF

We have an energetic, well connected Executive Director who focuses on the growth of the Society.

The management team has a succession plan in place and is well supported by “seconds-in-command”.

Staffing levels support the Society’s mission and business plans.

We have a well-developed orientation/training program to support new staff.

We support continuous learning as part of annual performance planning.

Staff enjoy salaries and benefits commensurate with their expertise and with standards in the sector.

The role of volunteers has been developed with proper job descriptions, training and supervision.

FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

The Society lives within its means.

Appropriate increases have been negotiated with funders such as BC Housing.

Our market buildings generate revenue used as a contingency for the society and as equity for new projects.

We have developed and sustained other sources of revenue, through activities that remain true to our mission.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

We strive for best practices in energy conservation. We work with experts and access programs that increase energy efficiency in our buildings.

We use durable materials to reduce garbage.

We recycle where appropriate.

We consider the costs/benefits of all environmental products and services in our operations.

OUR PLAN TO ACQUIRE NEW BUILDINGS

The Society has an up to date business continuation plan that deals with major events such as an earthquake or loss of our administration headquarters.

Capital Planning and Property management software contributes to operational effectiveness.

Technology and mobile devices are cost-effective and make us more efficient.

The office is established in commercial space we own.

Where appropriate, shared services/space has been established with other organizations.

Our communication tools are up to date and serve the needs of our clients and stakeholders.

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