

November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015

Mayor Lisa Helps and Council  
City of Victoria  
1 Centennial Square  
Victoria, BC V8W 1P6

**Re: Rosalie's Village – Victoria Housing Fund – New Data Shows Housing Crisis Severe for Single Mothers**

Dear Mayor and Council,

I wanted to take the opportunity to highlight the attached article released November 23, 2015 by the BC Non-Profit Housing Association. Through intensive research and data collection, they have assembled a rental housing index – the most comprehensive study of rental housing ever done in British Columbia. The conclusions this data has allowed the non-profit sector to identify single mothers as facing the toughest rental challenges of all demographics across the Province. One-third of single mothers spend more than 50% of their income on rent. If daycare gets added to the costs this single mother has to bear and it quickly reveals how vulnerable and at-risk of homelessness this portion of the population is.

According to BCNPHA, the issue is supply. The Rosalie's Village Project will provide desperately needed supply in the Victoria area, in addition to free daycare and life skills support that will be offered on-site. This project will support single mothers, allowing tenants to gain valuable skills and capacity, empowering these women to be as financially and socially independent as possible. By fully supporting this project through the Victoria Affordable Housing Fund, Council will have a direct impact one of the populations most in need in this Province.

Yours Truly,



Angela Hudson  
Executive Director  
Society of Saint Vincent de Paul of Vancouver Island

Enclosures: "Housing Crisis Severe for Single Mothers, Youth and Aboriginal People," BCNPHA, November 23, 2015

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## BC's Affordable Housing Conference

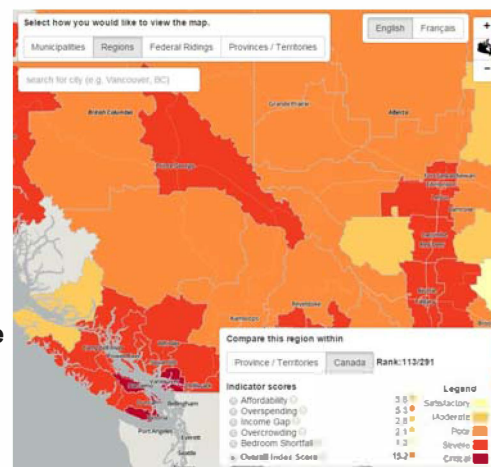
November 22 – 25, 2015

### Housing Crisis Severe for Single Mothers, Youth & Aboriginal People

#### Major Study Highlights Need for Social Housing and Market Rentals for Workers

VANCOUVER, BC--(November 23, 2015) - The most comprehensive study of rental housing ever done in BC shows that our housing system has failed single mothers, and created a crisis for renters under thirty and aboriginal people. In addition, a look into the jobs of renters shows that the lack of available rental housing could impact economic growth.

The significant expansion of the Rental Housing Index was launched today by BC Non-Profit Housing Association and includes an array of local rental housing statistics throughout BC including data on the challenges faced by seniors, immigrants and families. The easy-to-use [online interface](#) also lists the jobs of renters in different communities. At the regional level, it has projections on housing need and in major cities examines neighbourhood level rental data.



[www.rentalhousingindex.ca](http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca)

Tony Roy, CEO of BC Non-Profit Housing Association says, "What we are facing here is a massive supply issue, and I think this study allows us to visualize the people who are most impacted by that crisis. The need for social housing is at an emergency level that is exacerbating homelessness, but we also need to build affordable rental housing aimed at the working class."

Workforce data specific to renters is now available for nearly 100 BC jurisdictions, and shows that while renters are sometimes restaurant and retail workers, a large amount are health care providers, construction workers and accountants. The data was collected using the 2011 National Household Survey and will be updated as soon as the next census is completed. Likely, the issues identified here have become worse in recent years.

David Hutniak, CEO of LandlordBC added, "We need all levels of government to step up to the plate. We need tax incentives for the building of new purpose-built rental and for the renovation and enhancement of aging

existing rental stock to offset high land and construction costs. Better support for renters whose needs are not met through the market, be it through portable housing allowances or similar programming, is also needed."

Linda Morris, Senior VP at Vancity credit union says, "Access to stable and affordable housing for the workforce is part of a healthy community. Vancity is advocating for alternatives to support growth in the affordable housing sector, including rental."

#### **SINGLE MOMS FACING THE TOUGHEST RENTAL CHALLENGES**

Many single mothers are financially struggling to pay rent across the province. One-third of single mothers spend more than 50 per cent of their gross income on rent. That's a crisis level of overspending. In cities such as Coquitlam, Penticton and Nanaimo, over 40 per cent of single mother renter households are spending a majority of their gross income on rent. Cities in Metro Vancouver also have the highest average rents for single mother households, with rents in Coquitlam, Maple Ridge, Richmond and Langley District averaging between \$1,026 to \$1,097, well over the \$812 national average, and intensifying issues of overcrowding.

#### **SENIORS STRUGGLING TO PAY RENT IN BIG CITIES AND SMALL TOWNS**

Rental affordability is also putting a financial strain on seniors. In Kelowna, West Vancouver and Saanich, seniors are facing crisis level of spending, where nearly one-third of all seniors are spending over 50 per cent of their gross income on rent. The Index also shows the highest rents for seniors are Whistler at \$1,909 and West Kelowna at \$1,496. The highest average rents paid by seniors are in regions such as Central Okanagan, where on average seniors spend more than 40 per cent of their gross income on rent at \$1,223.

#### **ABORIGINAL PEOPLE**

In Greater Vancouver and the Capital Region, over a quarter of Aboriginal people are spending over 50 per cent of their gross income on rent. In smaller communities such as Cowichan Valley and Thompson-Nicola, more than one-third of Aboriginal People are spending in excess of 50 per cent of their gross income on rent, putting them at crisis level of spending.

#### **IMMIGRANTS DEALING WITH CRISIS BY OVERCROWDING**

Immigrant household incomes are on par with all renter households in the province. However, while the general population has a 12 per cent incidence of overcrowding, 23 per cent of immigrant households are overcrowded. It appears that immigrant households are coping with high rents by housing more income earners. Some overcrowding issues may relate to preferences for intergenerational living arrangements, suggesting that communities in BC need to build more diverse housing types in the rental market.

#### **ABOUT THE RENTAL HOUSING INDEX**

All of the expanded data is publicly available on an easy to use interactive web-map developed using census data. The Index has become an important tool for housing planners, non-profit housing developers and all levels of government to help plan for future housing needs. To learn more about rental demographics in your community, visit the Index at [www.rentalhousingindex.ca](http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca)

The data will be formally presented today at 12:15 p.m. PST to over 800 affordable housing providers and stakeholders at BC's Affordable Housing Conference (Minoru Ballroom, Sheraton Vancouver Airport Hotel, 7551 Westminster Highway, Richmond, BC).

For further information, or to schedule an interview, please contact:

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