

# HOUSING

Many people want to live in this beautiful part of the world, however, high housing costs are discouraging people to move or stay here. The high cost of housing is the biggest threat to the quality of life in this region, affecting the stability of our economy, the environment and our social fibre.

## Housing Need

Over 22,000 households in the region (1 in every 6 households) are in core housing need, meaning that they cannot find somewhere to live that is in reasonably good condition and is big enough for their household without spending more than 30% of their income.

**Number of Households in Core Housing Need by Municipality<sup>1</sup>**

	Number of Households	Percent of households
Esquimalt	1,450	20.3%
Victoria City	8,830	24.0%
Oak Bay	905	12.0%
Saanich	4,850	12.2%
Central Saanich	500	8.8%
North Saanich	255	6.4%
Sidney	660	13.4%
Colwood	520	11.0%
Highlands	85	15.0%
Langford	1,120	16.5%
Metchosin	170	10.7%
Sooke	610	18.1%
View Royal	415	14.5%
<b>BC's Capital Region</b>	<b>22,205</b>	<b>16.7%</b>

## Vacancy Rates

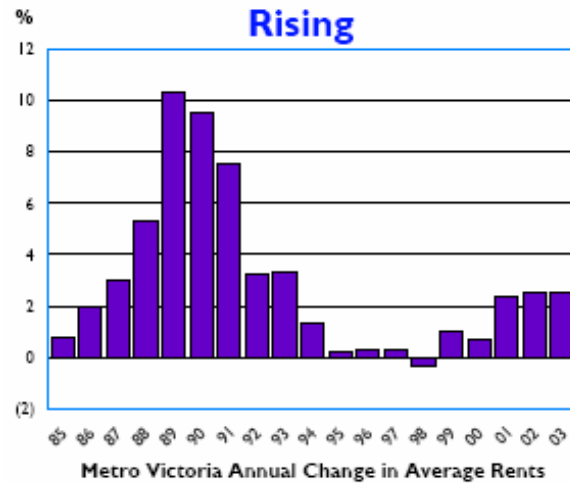
Low vacancy rates mean that many people in our community struggle to find homes. At about 1.1%, the rental vacancy rate is among the lowest in the country. <sup>2</sup> There has been almost no new private market rental housing built in the last 20 years in the Capital Region.

*“If you’re on Income Assistance you get the last chance to get the place. The people with the money can just put the damage deposit down right away.”*

- single man describing his experience looking for housing

Compared to other metropolitan areas in Canada, Victoria ranks in roughly the middle for rental housing costs. However, partly because of the low vacancy rates, rents are increasing.<sup>4</sup>

**Metro Victoria Rents Rising**



CMHC Victoria 363-8040

*“[When the new owner came in] I asked that the rent remain the same, and she pointed to the market value in rent, which doesn’t mean a thing to anyone on low income... There are owners who consider long term tenants a good investment. I’d like that kind of an owner. Then we could help each other.”*

- senior in market rental

## Non Profit Housing

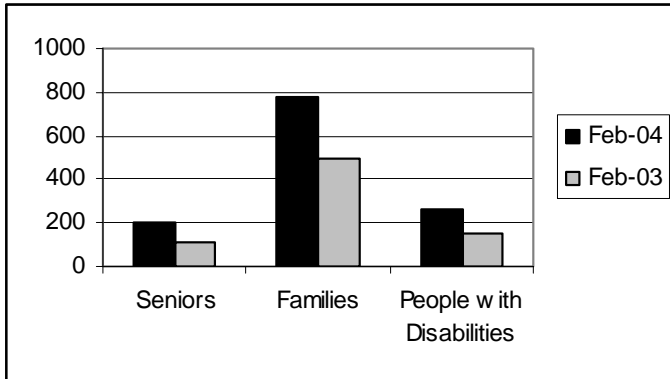
Non Profit Housing offers affordable housing options for people who live on low incomes – especially for families, seniors and people with disabilities.

*“I’m very thankful for the space I have. We have two bedrooms. Just the space has really helped our quality of life.”*

- single mother in social housing

Unfortunately the demand for social housing far outweighs the supply.

In June 2004, the Capital Region Housing Corporation had a wait list of 1340 households, including 839 families (with over 1000 children), and 285 people with disabilities.<sup>5</sup> And the waitlists are growing:



### Reasons for hope

Since January 2003 in the CRD:

- 328 more low income households have safe, decent, and affordable housing.
- 6 municipalities have passed bylaws or approved projects that addressed housing affordability.
- Discussions are ongoing about a Regional Housing Trust Fund.

Sources:

- 1 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- 2 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- 3 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
- 4 CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy, Working Paper #1, p. 12-13
- 5 Capital Region Housing Corporation



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**Bringing people together  
to create solutions in the areas of homes,  
paid work and community connections  
in BC's Capital Region.**