ACRD Housing Briefing Note

# Topic

Rural capacity to address housing issues - balancing the need to create a more robust and inclusive spectrum of housing options with capacity of small communities.

# Background

This June municipalities, electoral areas and Nations within the Alberni Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD) came together to discuss housing challenges and shared opportunities. While the diversity of communities in the region was evident, trends around regional community's capacity to plan for, identify and implement housing solutions emerged. Communities in the ACRD identified the following shared priorities to address housing for their residents as well as the region:

* Need for a more robust housing spectrum to meet the varied needs of residents, from emergency housing to affordable market options.
* Housing shortage and a high percentage of renters and homeowners spending more than 30% of their income for accommodation if it is at all available. Impacting business in tourism-based communities and the ability to recruit and retain working families in all communities of the ACRD.
* Needs assessments to identify data and housing strategies appropriate for local residents. Communities in the region are in different phases with needs assessments. Some communities have completed a study, while others are in process or planned for the next fiscal if funds available.
* Mechanisms to identify and implement solutions such as a regional housing authority.

Resources and opportunities around housing in the province have increased drastically, many rural and remote areas are not able to take advantage of this influx due to a lack of capacity around data collection, planning and overall coordination.

# Data

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| **Census Stats** | **ACRD** | **Port Alberni** | **Tofino** | **Ucluelet** |
| **Average After Tax Income 2015, One Person** | $32,722 | $31,840 | $36,432 | $29,011 |
| **Average After Tax Income 2015, Two or More Income Households** | $70,328 | $66,465 | $83,098 | $76,500 |

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| **Community** | **Paying more than 30% on housing –owners** | **Paying more than 30% on housing - renters** | **Dwellings requiring major repairs** | **Average Value of Dwellings** | **Average monthly shelter costs** |
| **ACRD** | 15.3% | 47.3% | 1390 out of 13655 | $316,602 | $817 |
| **Port Alberni** | 13.6% | 52.5% | 705 out of 7410 | $233,739 | $789 |
| **Tofino** | 29.5% | 28.6% | 55 out of 755 | $648,561 | $1046 |
| **Ucluelet** | 29.8% | 38.6% | 75 out of 740 | $397,800 | $1005 |

# Points for Consideration

* Need for more accurate data collection:
* Require regional and sub regional collaborations on data to be more effective
* Needs assessments are crucial tools for municipalities
* Census data is challenging in rural communities – not reflecting actual population, more transient populations and seasonal influxes
* Useful to know data – who is commuting between communities, up to date rental and real estate numbers, how is housing effecting communities and business, etc.
* Need for regional/sub regional collaborations (housing authority) to address shared needs:
* Data collection and data validity
* Require a diverse mix of housing options to address challenges
* Average household income vs costs
* Construction and land costs/availability
* Seasonality and tourism based economies – high housing costs/housing shortage and transient populations
* Absentee and/or bad landlords

# Request

Larger centres with established housing authorities and established non-profit housing organizations are better positioned to take advantage of government funding for planning and construction. More rural and remote areas such as ACRD have far less capacity and access to expertise. We require assistance to evaluate governance and organizational structures for delivering affordable housing, conduct needs assessments, develop shelf-ready housing development plans to take advantage of government funding announcements.