

Cowichan Valley Regional District Electoral Area F - Cowichan Lake South/Skutz Falls Housing Needs Assessment Data Report



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BACKGROUND

The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) is developing a Regional Housing Needs Assessment in partnership with its member municipalities and nine electoral areas. A housing needs assessment will help us understand what kinds of housing are most needed in our region's communities now and in the future, which will help inform the official community plan and development decisions.

Effective April 16, 2019, the Province of British Columbia (BC) requires all local governments to complete housing needs reports for their communities by April 2022 and every five years thereafter. These reports will help local governments and the BC government better understand and respond to housing needs in communities throughout the province. As a basis for determining current and projected housing needs, local governments are required to collect approximately 50 kinds of data about current and projected population, household income, significant economic sectors, and currently available and anticipated housing units. This information has been collected for each of the following areas:

- Electoral Area A – Mill Bay/Malahat
- Electoral Area B – Shawnigan Lake
- Electoral Area C – Cobble Hill
- Electoral Area D – Cowichan Bay
- Electoral Area E – Cowichan Station/Sahtlam/Glenora
- Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake/Skutz Falls
- Electoral Area G – Saltair
- Electoral Area H – North Oyster/Diamond
- Electoral Area I – Youbou Meade Creek
- Town of Ladysmith
- Municipality of North Cowichan
- City of Duncan
- Town of Lake Cowichan

One report has been prepared for the region, one for each electoral area and one report for each of the four municipalities within the CVRD. Each will include the following sections:

1. Demographic Profile
2. Income and Economy
3. Housing Profile
4. Projections
5. Housing Needs
6. Affordability of New Development

The regional report provides additional information, such as a glossary of terms, project overview and context, a description of the housing spectrum and a detailed description of the methodology.

This report now turns to a summary of the key findings in the six areas listed above. This is followed by a comprehensive review of the findings in the six areas. The tables and figures to support the research are listed in Appendix I.

ELECTORAL AREA F – COWICHAN LAKE / SKUTZ FALLS

Electoral Area F – Cowichan Lake Skutz Falls is one of nine electoral areas in the CVRD. It is the largest electoral area in the CVRD, spanning out to the western coast of Vancouver Island. Its main population centres are Honeymoon Bay and Mesachie Lake, two small rural villages which consist mostly of residential uses with very little in the way of daily commercial needs; however, area F is adjacent to the incorporated Town of Lake Cowichan, which includes a hub of services. Electoral area F has 1,607 residents and has a median household income of \$56,804 (2016), below the regional average.

Electoral area F was one of only two jurisdictions in the CVRD to decrease in population (-7%) between 2006 and 2016, although the population grew by 2% between 2011 and 2016. It is almost entirely composed of single-detached homes (90% of units), with small portions of manufactured homes (3% of units), duplexes (3% of units), other ground-oriented types (2% of units) and apartments (1% of units). Electoral area F had a decline in the number of housing units used as a primary residence, declining from 740 units in 2006 to 735 units in 2016 (-1%).

It is the second youngest jurisdiction in the region with a median age of 42.2, and it has the second highest labour participation rate (68.6%). It has a lower share of renter households (17% of households) than other CVRD jurisdictions. The analysis completed in this report shows that an unusually high proportion (46%) of electoral area F's renter households are in core housing need and 21% are in extreme core housing need.

Between 2019 and 2025, electoral area F is expected to grow from 1,607 residents to 2,498 residents, an increase of 55% in six years. Interviews with 11 local developers and realtors indicate that housing demand in electoral area F is greater than supply at present and that new development will be inhibited by lack of services such as sewer and water. Given the projected population growth and household size, this report's analysis estimates that there is a need for 369 units of new housing in electoral area F in the next five years with a particular need for one-bedroom units.

KEY FINDINGS

The key findings are now presented in six key areas: Demographic Profile, Income and Economy, Housing Profile, Projections, Housing Needs and Affordability of New Development. The findings are provided in greater detail within this report in the Findings section.

1. Demographic Profile

- **Population:** Electoral area F was one of two jurisdictions in the CVRD to decrease in population. Electoral area F decreased in population from 1,735 in 2006 to 1,605 in 2016, a 7% decrease. This decline took place entirely in the 2006–2011 period—electoral area F gained residents (2%) in the 2011–2016 period.
- **Age:** Electoral area F is older than the CVRD as a whole, and its average age increased from 42 to 47.4. Electoral area F is one of the jurisdictions that has aged more quickly than other jurisdictions in the CVRD.
- **Household size:** The average household size in electoral area F decreased slightly from 2.3 in 2006 to 2.2 in 2016, in line with change across the CVRD. In general, jurisdictions with smaller households tend to be more senior in age composition.
- **Tenure:** Electoral area F has a share of renters (at 23%) similar to the CVRD's. It is one of the electoral areas with the greatest shares of renters.

- **Unhoused population:** It can be hard to locate and count people in more rural areas. The 2017 Summer Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Homeless Needs Survey Community Report did not provide data specific to electoral area F. Many people who are homeless in the CVRD tend to stay close to a community hub where they can access vital services. Electoral area F has relatively few of these vital services but is adjacent to the incorporated Town of Lake Cowichan, so people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless may locate in electoral area F close to Lake Cowichan. Interviews with local housing organizations suggest that since COVID there has been a new and growing cluster of people experiencing homelessness in Lake Cowichan.
- **Transportation:** Electoral area F is relatively limited in transit service with two bus routes in the eastern portion. Electoral area F has very little population density, and very little mix in uses. Though bus service is available, these aren't convenient for daily use and residents travel by car to perform their daily activities. In comparison to other areas, however, they travel by car for shorter durations—likely to Lake Cowichan where there are more jobs, shops and services. This means transportation costs in electoral area F are high, but residents aren't travelling as far as their peers who live in the South Cowichan.

2. Income and Economy

- **Household income:** Electoral area F has a median household income of \$56,804 in 2016, below the median income across the CVRD. After inflation is removed from the analysis, electoral area F shows a downward trend in median household income between 2006–2016. Electoral area F exhibits significantly more income inequality between tenure groups as the CVRD—with the second-most income inequality in the CVRD, lower than just electoral area I.
- **Employment:** Electoral area F had a particularly high participation rate in 2011 (at 65.2%), but not in 2006 (57.7%) or 2016 (54.1%). Electoral area F's unemployment rate increased substantially from 2006 (5.2%) to 2016 (8.5%), and it is now higher than the unemployment rate across the CVRD.
- **Industry:** Within the CVRD, the labour force is somewhat geographically clustered. Electoral area F includes clusters of manufacturing, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting workers. Electoral area F includes notably few healthcare and social assistance workers, education workers and retail workers.

3. Housing Profile

- **Dwelling types:** The CVRD has a much lower-density housing composition than BC, with single-detached dwellings making up a larger share and apartments making up a smaller share. This holds true in electoral area F, with single-detached dwellings composing 89% of housing units. There are small portions of movable dwellings (5%) and semi-detached units (3%), and minimal amounts of apartments in duplexes (1%) and other single-detached units (1%). Electoral area F had a decline in the number of housing units used as a primary residence, declining from 740 units in 2006 to 735 units in 2016 (-1%).
- **Dwelling age:** Electoral area F has an older housing stock than the CVRD with dwellings older than 1961 making up 26% of the housing stock.
- **Bedroom number:** Electoral area F has a range of sizes similar to the CVRD's, with a slightly higher share of one-bedroom units and three-bedroom units, and a lower share of four-or-more-bedroom units than the CVRD.
- **Non-market housing:** Electoral area F has no non-market units and five households receiving rent assistance in the private market from BC Housing.

- **Market rental housing:** There is limited data on the supply of market rental housing, and most of the supply is likely provided through the secondary rental market.
- **Market ownership housing:** Single-detached homes have been the most desirable and expensive form of housing in electoral area F, followed by manufactured homes and finally duplexes. It is unusual for manufactured homes to be more valuable than duplexes; it is assumed that this reflects electoral area F's manufactured homes being located on larger or better-located parcels of land than its duplex supply. This market saw price stability from 2007 to 2016 as Vancouver Island's economy gradually recovered from the financial crisis of 2008. From 2017 to 2019, prices increased considerably each year for all unit types. This suggests that since 2017 the electoral area's supply of available land has been insufficient to meet growing demand.

4. Projections

- **Households projection:** Between 2019 and 2025, electoral area F is expected to grow from 681 households to 1,050 households, an increase of 54% in six years, which would be a complete departure from previous trends for a jurisdiction that decreased in population slightly from 2006 to 2016.
- **Population projection:** Between 2019 and 2025, electoral area F is expected to grow from 1,607 residents to 2,498 residents, an increase of 55% in six years, which would also be a complete departure from previous trends for a jurisdiction that decreased in population by 7% from 2006 to 2016.
- **Household income projection:** Due to the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic, two income projections were done to 2025. One projection assumes a rapid economic recovery from COVID-19, while the other assumes a slower economic recovery. In 2025 (and in 2025 dollars), electoral area F is expected to have a median household income of \$79,550 in the rapid recovery scenario or \$78,475 in the slow recovery scenario.
- **Tenure projection:** Based on the income projection, real income increases in both scenarios by 2025, but increases more rapidly in the rapid recovery scenario, causing the split of electoral area F's households by tenure to shift slightly toward owners in both scenarios, to a split of 20% renter households and 80% owner households.

5. Housing Needs

- **Projection of housing need by number of bedrooms:** A large majority of households in 2019 and 2025 need only one bedroom for the composition of their household. Many households possess more bedrooms than they need, according to the strict definition of housing need. It is projected that in 2025 electoral area F will need an additional 369 units of housing, most of which should be one-bedroom units. See **Error! Reference source not found.**
- **Homelessness:** There are no emergency shelters or long-term options for those experiencing homelessness in electoral area F. As a result of this, many are seeking shelter options outside of their communities, although there are also reports of a new and growing cluster of people experiencing homelessness in Lake Cowichan. Interviews with local housing organizations suggest that there are opportunities to work with the Town of Lake Cowichan to provide local services for those experiencing homelessness.
- **Non-market housing:** The market will struggle to provide new housing that is affordable for lower income households in electoral area F. Households with incomes below approximately \$57,000 will not be able to afford renting market rental new homes.
- **Market rental housing:** Renter households in electoral area F making less than \$48,400 per year tend to spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing expenses,

placing these households in core housing need. Renter households making less than \$26,600 per year tend to spend more than 50% of their annual income on housing expenses, placing them in extreme core housing need. This analysis suggests that 42% of electoral area F's renter households are in core housing need and 18% are in extreme core housing need. Engagement results identified that a need exists to increase the stock of rental properties, especially affordable and larger sized units.

- **Market ownership:** Owner households without mortgages were analyzed but found that according to this model none of them would be spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing expenses. The majority of owner households with mortgages in electoral area F making below \$44,700 per year spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing expenses, placing these households in core housing need. This analysis suggests that 18% of electoral area F's owner households are in core housing need, in line with trends evident in the census (15% in 2006, 23% in 2011, then 19% in 2016).
- **Historic and current housing condition (adequacy):** Adequacy of housing in electoral area F is similar to the CVRD and British Columbia, with 7% of households living in housing below adequacy standards. More owners (7%) live in housing below adequacy standards than renters (0%). Note that the census data reports that zero renter households required major repairs in electoral area F, so this data point might be spurious.
- **Historic and current overcrowding (suitability):** In electoral area F, the share of owner households (2%) and renter households (6%) experiencing crowding is similar to the CVRD's, with a significantly higher share of renters experiencing crowding.
- **Historic and current affordability:** Compared to the CVRD, affordability in electoral area F is worse for both owners (19%) and renters (44%), to produce an overall share of 25% of households across tenures experiencing affordability challenges. Renters face significantly greater affordability challenges than owners.
- **Core housing need and extreme core housing need:** A significant number (23%) of electoral area F's households are in core housing need. This is in line with the rates reported in the last several censuses (20% in 2006, 23% in 2011 and 25% in 2016).

6. Affordability of New Development

- **Financial Analysis Results:** The analysis reviewed the incomes required and percentages of households who would be able to afford buying or renting in new developments in electoral area F in 2020 and 2025.

Based on a calculation of the household income that would be required to purchase or rent a new unit in 2025, paying no more than 30% of one's income on housing expenses, the capacity of electoral area F's households to afford new construction was calculated. This capacity will increase slightly in the rapid recovery scenario; however, the overall difference between the two scenarios is not huge, suggesting that the electoral area's housing market is unlikely to be severely impacted by COVID-19.

In electoral area F the cost of constructing new townhomes will increase faster than the region's incomes, and the cost of constructing new apartments will tend to increase more slowly. This is probably the result of land price increases for patio homes (a particularly desirable type of townhome) being in such short supply and in higher demand than apartments.

THE FINDINGS

Introduction to the Work

The following section of the report presents the full findings organized by six key topic areas:

1. Demographic Profile
2. Income and Economy
3. Housing Profile
4. Projections
5. Housing Needs
6. Affordability of New Development

The tables and figures that accompany these results can be found in Appendix I.

1. Demographic Profile

The following demographic profile presents historic data for electoral area F as collected from the Statistics Canada Census, Summer Point-in-Time Homeless Count, Homeless Needs Survey Community Report and BC Transit.

1.1 Population

From 2006–2016, BC grew in population from 4.1 million to 4.6 million, an increase of 12%. By comparison, the CVRD grew somewhat slower, from 75,000 to 82,000 for a total of 8% growth during this decade. Within the CVRD, electoral area F was one of two jurisdictions to decrease in population. Electoral area F decreased in population from 1,735 in 2006 to 1,605 in 2016, a 7% decrease. This decline took place entirely in the 2006–2011 period—electoral area F gained residents in the 2011–2016 period (2%).

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From 2006 to 2016, electoral area F maintained its share (2%) of the region’s overall population.

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1.2 Age

Electoral area F’s population is older than the CVRD’s, with its average age increasing by over five years from 29 to 42 from 2006–2016. Electoral area F is one of the jurisdictions that has aged the quickest in the CVRD.

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Note that differences in the pace of aging between jurisdictions mostly reflect migration trends.

Electoral area F has a slightly older average age than the CVRD. It has a similar share of seniors to the CVRD—22% of the population is 65 years or older in electoral area F, similar to the 23% of the population in the CVRD as a region. This proportion has increased dramatically, from just 14% in 2006. Electoral area F also has a higher percentage of seniors than the rest of BC, where 18% of the population is 65 years or older.

Electoral area F has a slightly lower percentage of children (aged 0–14) at 12% of its population than both the CVRD as a region (15%) and British Columbia (15%). Electoral area F also has very similar shares of residents 15–10 years old (5% of its population) compared to the CVRD (5%) and British Columbia (6%), and residents aged 20–24 years old, at 3% of its population (compared to 4% across the CVRD).

1.3 Household Size

Household sizes in British Columbia and throughout the CVRD decreased from 2006 to 2016. Household sizes in electoral area F are similar (at 2.2 people per household) compared to those in the CVRD as a region (2.3 people per household). Average household size has decreased slightly from 2.3 in 2006 to 2.2 in 2016, in line with change across the CVRD as a region.

See **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**: *Distribution of households by number of persons between 2006–2016 and Error! Reference source not found.*

Note that, in general, jurisdictions with smaller households tended to be more senior in age composition. This is intuitive since families with children are typically larger.

1.4 Tenure

During the decade under analysis, renters as a share of all households in British Columbia increased slightly, from about 30% to about 32%. A smaller share of households in the CVRD are renters, but the same upward trend is present: renters increased from 20% to 22% of all households. Electoral area F has a similar share of renters to the CVRD at 23% of households. Electoral area F shows a “rebound” effect, where renter shares actually decreased slightly from 2006 to 2011 and then increased from 2011 to 2016. This effect is particularly pronounced in electoral areas B, D, E and F, so much so that it is suspected the entire effect is a statistical irregularity due to methodological issues surrounding the 2011 Census, rather than a reflection of reality.

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As a share of all households, renter households in subsidized housing in British Columbia made up about 4% in both 2011 and 2016 (2006 data is unavailable for this variable). They make up a lower and decreasing share of households in the CVRD (from 3% in 2011 to 2% in 2016). In electoral area F, renter households in subsidized housing make up 2% of households, increasing from 0% in 2011. In many cases, the total number of households in subsidized housing in smaller jurisdictions, such as individual electoral areas, is ten or fewer. Note that census data is rounded to the nearest five, so there may be some small rounding errors.

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1.5 Unhoused Population

The most recent data that provides information at a finer detail than across the entire CVRD was the Summer Point-in-Time Homeless Count and Homeless Needs Survey Community Report completed in 2017. There was no data provided for electoral area F.ⁱ

However, it is hard to locate and count people who are homeless in rural areas, so there may be more people who are homeless in electoral area F, especially people who may be considered “hidden homeless” who are more difficult to locate and count. Examples of hidden homelessness include people staying with family or friends (e.g., couch surfing), staying in trailers or cars, or accessing transitional or temporary housing.

People who are homeless throughout the CVRD tend to stay close to a community hub where they can access vital services, such as a food bank. Electoral area F is the largest jurisdiction in area, spanning out to the western coast of Vancouver Island. Its main population centres are Honeymoon Bay and Mesachie Lake, two small rural villages that consist mostly of residential uses with very little in the way of daily commercial needs. However, electoral area F is adjacent to the incorporated Town of Lake Cowichan, so people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless may locate in electoral area F close to Lake Cowichan. Interviews with local housing organizations suggest that since COVID there has been a new and growing cluster of people experiencing homelessness in the Town of Lake Cowichan.

1.6 Transportation

For a more fulsome understanding of housing affordability in a region, it's important to study its transportation networks. Transportation costs are a key part of the affordability equation because a home's location and its surrounding land use patterns dictate whether a resident needs a personal vehicle. While rent or a mortgage may seem more affordable in rural areas, the need to drive for employment, services, parks, schools and other daily needs places a significant burden on resident pocketbooks. For this reason, the relative affordability in more remote parts of the Cowichan Valley may be masking the actual costs of rural living.

According to the 2016 Census, in electoral area F, approximately 90% of commuters use a private automobile to get to work. Traveling to work by car takes an average of 27 minutes (one way). Those who take the bus travelled an average of 35 minutes to work (one way). Electoral area F is relatively limited in transit service with two local bus routes (7, 21). Route 7 connects the Lake Cowichan and eastern part of electoral area F to North Cowichan and Duncan. Route 21 links Honeymoon Bay and Mesachie Lake to Lake Cowichan. Trip frequencies are fairly low, a typical stop is serviced by a bus approximately six times per weekday. Route 21 also includes an on-request service along the south shore of Cowichan Lake, which enables riders to request pick up or drop off at their home or employment within 1.5 km of the regular route. Despite this service, ridership is significantly lower than in other parts of the CVRD.

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Electoral area F is the largest in area, spanning out to the western coast of Vancouver Island. Its main population centres are Honeymoon Bay and Mesachie Lake, two small rural villages located a short distance away from the incorporated Town of Lake Cowichan. Both villages consist mostly of residential uses with very little in the way of daily commercial needs. Much of the electoral area consists of rural and resource lands meaning most residents require a personal vehicle to travel. The high transit ridership along bus route 7 is more an indication of passengers riding between Lake Cowichan and Duncan, with very few residents from electoral area F using the service in between. Overall, electoral area F has very little population density, and very little mix in uses. Though bus service is available, many residences are far from the main transit route along Cowichan Lake Road. In comparison to other areas, however, residents travel by car for shorter durations—likely to Lake Cowichan where there are more jobs, shops,

and services. This means transportation costs in electoral area F are high relative to jurisdictions with less car dependency, but residents aren't traveling as far as their peers who live in the South Cowichan.



2. Income and Economy

The following section provides an overview of historic income and economy data for electoral area F from the Statistics Canada Census.

2.1 Household Income

Median annual household income in both British Columbia and the CVRD increased from 2006 to 2016, with the region remaining slightly less affluent than the province throughout this period. BC's median income rose from \$62,000 to \$70,000 and the CVRD's rose from \$60,000 to \$65,000. The gap between the region's median income and the province's median income has increased: BC was about \$2,000 per year per household more affluent than the CVRD in 2006 and in 2016 was about \$5,000 per year per household more affluent.

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Electoral area F had a median household income of \$56,804 in 2016, below the regional average. Median household income in electoral area F decreased from 2006 to 2016.

The value of money tends to decrease over time (inflation), so that it takes more units of currency (nominal income) to achieve the same lifestyle (real income). Shifts in real income may be estimated by removing the impact of inflation, creating a more accurate sense of where income has effectively increased and where it has not.

After inflation is removed from the analysis, median household incomes in BC shows basically no change between 2006 and 2016. The CVRD as a region show a downward trend, as does electoral area F.

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Compared to all households, households in this jurisdiction that own their own homes are wealthier, but the broad differences in wealth between jurisdictions are approximately the same. Electoral area F is close to the regional average, with a median household income for owner households of \$72,157. The median household income for owners is approximately the same in 2006 and 2016, declining slightly in 2011, which could be due to the 2008 financial crisis and consequent recession.

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Compared to renters in BC, renters in the CVRD are less affluent and by a larger margin than all households (about \$38,000 for CVRD renters versus about \$46,000 for BC renters; about \$65,000 for CVRD households versus about \$70,000 for BC households).

Median renter incomes in electoral area F are lower than the average across the CVRD, with a median household income for renter households of \$33,048.

See **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**: *Share of Renter Households by Annual Income* and **Error! Reference source not found.**

The ratio of owner to renter income, which is a rough indicator of the degree of income inequality between these two groups, was calculated. A higher ratio indicates more pronounced inequality. By this measure, the CVRD exhibits slightly more inequality between tenure groups than BC in general. Electoral area F exhibits significantly more income inequality between tenure groups as the CVRD as a whole—the second-most unequal jurisdiction in the CVRD, lower than just electoral area I.

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2.2 Employment

Participation in the labour force during this decade was generally higher in BC than in the CVRD and generally declined (from 66% to 64% in BC and from 60% to 57% in the CVRD). Within the CVRD, electoral area F had a particularly high participation rate in 2011 (at 65.2%), but not in 2006 (57.7%) or 2016 (54.1%).

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The unemployment rate (reflective of those seeking employment but unable to find it) generally increased during this decade but was highest during the recession in 2011. Unemployment in the CVRD (increasing from 6.5% to 7.4%) has generally been slightly higher than in BC overall (increasing from 6.0% to 6.7%), except in 2011 (both 7.8%). Electoral area F's unemployment rate increased substantially from 2006 (5.2%) to 2016 (8.5%), and it is now higher than the unemployment rate across the CVRD.

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2.3 Industry

Within the CVRD, the labour force is somewhat geographically clustered. Note that this refers to the residential locations of workers in these sectors rather than where this employment takes place. Electoral area F includes clusters of manufacturing workers, agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting workers. Electoral area F includes notably few people working in healthcare, social assistance, education and retail.

See **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**: *Share of Labour Force by Industry Sector in 2016.*

3. Housing Profile

The following section provides an overview of historic and current electoral area F housing data from the Statistics Canada Census, BC Housing and BC Assessment.

3.1 Dwelling Types

From 2006 to 2016, British Columbia's housing units used as primary residence grew from about 1.6 million to about 1.9 million, an increase of about 15%. By comparison, the CVRD's housing units grew slightly more slowly from 31,000 to 35,000 for a total of 13% growth during this decade. In electoral area F, there was a decline in the number of housing units used as a primary residence, declining from 740 units in 2006 to 735 units in 2016 (-1%). This decline took place entirely in the 2006–2011 period; between 2011 and 2016 the number of housing units used as a primary residence increased. These units may still exist, but they are not used as primary residences and hence are not counted in the census.

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These trends are all similar to trends in population, except that household sizes in BC, the CVRD and electoral area F are decreasing, so housing units have tended to increase faster than population (or decrease slower than population, as in electoral area F).

Electoral area F has a lower-density housing composition than the CVRD's, which has a much lower-density housing composition than BC:

- Single-detached homes make up the vast majority of the housing supply, maintaining their share during this decade (88% in 2006, 98% in 2011, 89% in 2016)
- Movable dwellings make up the next most common housing type at 5% of the housing stock (2016).
- Semi-detached units are a smaller component of the housing supply (3% in 2016).
- There are minimal numbers of other single-attached units, and apartments in duplexes (1% each in 2016).
- There are no apartments or townhouses in electoral area F.

Movable dwellings tend to be more predominant in the electoral areas than in the municipalities, but electoral area F has a relatively lower share of these units compared to other electoral areas.

See **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**: *Share of total housing units by type 2006–2016* and **Error! Reference source not found.**

3.2 Dwelling Age

In 2016, BC and the CVRD had similar distributions of dwellings by age with dwellings in the CVRD being only slightly older:

- Built before 1960: 14% in BC and 17% in the CVRD
- Built 1961–1980: 30% in BC and 28% in the CVRD
- Built 1981–1990: 15% in BC and 14% in the CVRD
- Built 1991–2000: 18% in BC and 20% in the CVRD
- Built 2001–2005: 7% in BC and 6% in the CVRD
- Built 2006–2010: 9% in BC and in the CVRD
- Built 2011–2016: 7% in BC and 5% in the CVRD.

In summary, about 60% of dwellings were built before 1990. Electoral area F has an older housing stock than the CVRD, with dwellings older than 1961 making up 26% of the housing stock and dwellings built between 1961–1980 making up 32% of the housing stock.

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3.3 Bedroom Number

Compared to BC, the CVRD has a much higher share of three-bedroom apartments (39%) and a much lower share of one-bedroom apartments (9%) but similar shares of two-bedroom and 4+ bedroom apartments. Studio apartments make up a negligible share. It might be said that the CVRD has a narrower range of home sizes available than BC in general.

Electoral area F has similar range of sizes as the CVRD, with a slightly higher share of one-bedroom units (15%) and three-bedroom units (45%), and lower share of four-or-more-bedroom units (18%) than the CVRD.

See **Error! Reference source not found.**, **Error! Reference source not found.** and **Error! Reference source not found.**: *Share of housing units by bedroom count 2006–2016* and **Error! Reference source not found.**

3.4 Non-Market Housing

BC Housing breaks down the types of housing support it provides into four high-level categories: emergency shelter and housing for the homeless, transitional supported and assisted living, independent social housing and rent assistance in the private market. These four categories form a rough housing continuum such that, from left to right, the categories become less intensive and have more units. Within these four categories there are also ten low-level categories having to do with the justification for funding rather than the degree of funding (for example, families versus seniors). Seniors make up the largest funding group in the three largest high-level categories and therefore receive the majority of BC Housing support in the CVRD.

Electoral area F has no units subsidized by BC Housing and five households that are provided rent assistance in the private market. There are no other non-market units within electoral area F.

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3.5 Market Rental Housing

CMHC has a minimum population threshold to complete its rental market survey. As electoral area F is under this threshold, there is no information on the inventory of the purpose-built rental market.

In primarily rural areas, such as electoral area F, most rental stock is provided through the secondary rental market (e.g., owners renting secondary suites, houses, condominium apartments, etc.). There is limited information on the secondary rental market in Canada, including electoral area F, so the true size of the rental market is hard to determine. In addition, units in the secondary rental market can easily “flip” tenures—rented units become owner-occupied, or owners decide to rent out their units.

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Engagement results from electoral area F respondents are consistent with the broader engagement results that suggest the CVRD is in a state of acute rental shortage with almost no vacancy. Electoral area F respondents shared stories of moving due to their rental units being transferred to other tenants, of the high cost of renting and of small unit sizes.

3.6 Market Ownership Housing

The property assessment rolls were analyzed for electoral area F. Property assessment data relates directly to housing affordability for owner-occupant households but does not directly reflect housing affordability for renter households. This is because property values are the main cost factor for owner-occupants whereas rent is the main cost factor for renters. As such, the properties reported below specifically exclude purpose-built rental buildings and focus instead on single-detached homes, manufactured homes, duplexes and stratified multi-family. Note that these properties could still be occupied by renters through the secondary market.

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From 2007 to 2019, the average values of different residential property types in electoral area F have tended to fluctuate in sync, reflecting market forces that impact the property market as a whole, most notably:

- The local employment economy
- Demand spillover from other regions such as the Capital Regional District (CRD) and Metro Vancouver
- Land supply constraints such as zoning and servicing catchments
- Investor and developer attitudes.

Throughout this time period, single-detached homes have been the most desirable and expensive form of housing (\$300,000–\$500,000), followed by manufactured homes (\$150,000–\$300,000) and finally duplexes (\$100,000–\$200,000). Electoral area F had no townhomes or apartments during this time period. It is unusual for manufactured homes to be more valuable than duplexes; it is assumed that this reflects electoral area F’s manufactured homes being located on larger or better-located parcels of land than its duplex supply.

Prices for all three types increased between 2007 and 2008 but then remained stable or even decreased from 2008 to 2016 as Vancouver Island’s economy gradually recovered from the financial crisis of 2008. The value of duplex units dropped noticeably from 2012 to 2013, which may be the result of redevelopment, a change in appraisal methods or some other event. This nine-year period of price stability represents a period of increasing affordability for CVRD

residents and prospective residents and suggests that in electoral area F the supply of available land was adequate to meet residential demand. From 2017 to 2019, prices increased considerably each year for all unit types. This is beneficial to the homeowner households but detrimental to aspiring homeowners and suggests that since 2016 the electoral area's supply of available land has been insufficient to meet growing demand

Interviews were held with 11 local developers and realtors to gain an understanding of the CVRD's residential market. Local experts agree that the CVRD is a highly desirable residential environment with significant unmet demand. Demand has grown considerably in recent years due to the following two factors:

- Although the CVRD used to be outside of Greater Victoria's commuter catchment, high residential prices in the CRD have driven a growing number of households to seek housing further afield. According to one interview subject, traffic counts on Highway 1 in South Cowichan totalled about 10,000 per day in each direction ten years ago, but that number has increased to about 25,000, an increase of 150%, indicating significant growth in the commuting population
- More recently, demand for housing in the CVRD and throughout Vancouver Island has increased due to COVID-19 for several reasons:
 - Since more people are working from home, living close to key employment centres, such as Victoria and the Lower Mainland, is less of a priority, liberating many households to seek more affordable, spacious and desirable housing in peripheral areas.
 - Vancouver Island is perceived as a safer environment during the pandemic than more permeable mainland communities.
 - Some "snowbirds" who would normally make a habit of spending their summers in Canada and winters in warmer parts of North America (most notably Florida, Arizona and Mexico) are expecting to have more difficulty entering other countries in the near future and have opted instead to move to Vancouver Island, Canada's most temperate region.

4. Projections

While all of the information provided to date represents the current housing situation in the CVRD, the following sections focus on projections for what will happen over the next five years. This section includes four projections: Household, Population, Household Income and Tenure based on Statistics Canada Census Data, rennie intelligence's Long-range Projections of Population, Housing, and Employment in the Cowichan Valley Regional District and Environics Analytics Demostats Income and Housing Projections.

4.1 Households Projection

Between 2019 and 2025, electoral area F is expected to grow from 681 households to 1,050 households, an increase of 54% in six years, which would be a complete departure from previous trends for a jurisdiction that decreased in population by 7% from 2006 to 2016. In comparison, the CVRD is expected to grow from 34,744 households to 39,967 households, an increase of 15% in six years.

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4.2 Population Projection

Between 2019 and 2025, electoral area F is expected to grow from 1,607 residents to 2,498 residents, an increase of 55% in six years, which would also be a complete departure from previous trends for a jurisdiction that decreased in population by 7% from 2006 to 2016. By comparison, the CVRD is expected to grow from 80,404 residents to 93,071 residents, an increase of 16% in six years.

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4.3 Household Income Projection

Two scenarios were considered when projecting income to 2025, producing two income projections that are used in this report:

- Rapid recovery scenario: This projection assumes a rapid economic recovery from COVID-19, putting household incomes in 2025 close to where they might have been if the pandemic had not occurred.
- Slow recovery scenario: This projection assumes a slower economic recovery from COVID-19, reducing household incomes significantly compared to the first scenario.

The reality is likely to be somewhere between these two scenarios.

The amount of residential growth that is assumed to occur is identical between scenarios because COVID-19 does not appear to have a negative impact on housing demand in the CVRD. However, the distribution of these households by income varies by scenario: households in the rapid recovery scenario are generally more affluent. In 2025 (and in 2025 dollars), electoral area F is expected to have a median household income of \$79,550 in the rapid recovery scenario or \$78,475 in the slow recovery scenario.

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4.4 Tenure Projection

Tenure is correlated with income: wealthier households tend to be homeowners and less affluent households tend to rent.

To create a projection of housing tenure, split between owner households and renter households by realⁱⁱⁱ income group in 2019 and 2025 is assumed to resemble the split indicated in the 2016 Census in electoral area F.

Compared to 2019, real income increases in both scenarios by 2025, but increases more rapidly in the rapid recovery scenario, causing the split of electoral area F's households by tenure to shift slightly toward owners in both scenarios. The percentage of owners is projected to rise from 77% to 83%.

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5. Housing Needs

The following section now comments on housing needs based on assessed values of ownership housing from BC Assessment, rental values from Canadian Rental Housing Index and Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

5.1 Projection of Housing Need by Number of Bedrooms

For the purpose of this exercise, housing need by bedroom count is defined as one bedroom per cohabitating couple plus one bedroom per individual (including children) not in a cohabitating couple. Average people per household is based on Environics data and in the 2025 projection is adjusted to be compatible with the population per household defined by Rennie Intelligence. Assumptions about how many households contain couples is based on the 2016 Census data.

A large majority of households in both years need only one bedroom (457 households in 2019 and 700 households in 2025). The reason for this is that one bedroom of need corresponds with households that include one person and with households that include one couple, which according to the 2016 Census, comprise about 92% of two-person households.

According to this definition of need, electoral area F contains a significant over-supply of two-bedroom homes and homes containing three or more bedrooms since only 15% of the electoral area's homes had one bedroom, 22% had two bedrooms and 63% had three or more bedrooms. This only implies that many households possessed more bedrooms than they needed according to this strict definition. This does not prevent or indicate a contradiction with 3% of households experiencing overcrowding: it is simply the case that despite the absolute surfeit of bedrooms, some households still had less than they needed.

In 2025, it is projected that electoral area F will need an additional 369 units of housing of which most should be one-bedroom units.

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5.2 Homelessness

As with much of the rest of the region, there is a marked lack of emergency shelters and long-term options for those experiencing homelessness in electoral area F. In particular, there is a lack of safe housing options for youth, First Nations, women and those with mental health challenges. As a result, many are seeking shelter options outside of their communities. Those seeking emergency shelter as well as supportive services frequently travel to Duncan or North Cowichan (particularly the South End), where most programs, shelters and services exist. These areas are overwhelmed by the demand incurred by out of area residents seeking shelter, with many community organizations indicating a desperate need for additional supports.

Interviews with local housing organizations suggest that since COVID there has been a new and growing cluster of people experiencing homelessness in Lake Cowichan and suggest that there are opportunities to work with the Town of Lake Cowichan to provide local services for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

5.3 Non-Market Housing

As per the calculation on affordability of new development, the market will struggle to provide new housing that is affordable for lower income households. In the case of electoral area F, households with incomes below approximately \$57,000 will not be able to afford renting new homes. Some households with income below this amount will still be able to find housing in the rental market, as older rental homes can be more affordable.

The affordability of existing supply and continuing tenancies will depend principally on policies such as rent control legislation, vacant home taxes, and general housing supply growth. The affordability of non-market housing will depend on the magnitude of housing subsidies present.

Electoral area F engagement respondents highlighted the need for more affordable rental units and suggested secondary suites as part of the solution, particularly on large acreages. Electoral area F respondents also spoke to the need for assisted living (housing with supports) to meet housing challenges and favoured the development of numerous, small units over one large (25 unit+) development.

5.4 Market Rental Housing

Rental rate data was integrated from the following sources to produce a model of rental housing costs throughout the CVRD:

- The Canadian Rental Housing Index (2016)
- The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation Housing Data Portal
- Interviews with local property managers.

These results include subsidized rental properties as well as the cost of utilities and are in line with the findings of the Engagement Survey and with current rental listings on Craigslist and similar websites. They are presented below in the form of deciles, which are the rental rates at which 10% of units are more affordable, 20% of units are more affordable, 30% of units are more affordable, etc.

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The CVRD's electoral areas and the Town of Lake Cowichan, unlike the City of Duncan, the Municipality of North Cowichan and the Town of Ladysmith, all have no-to-limited quantitative data on the rental market. Therefore, available data was insufficient to detect meaningful differences between rental housing cost trends in the CVRD's electoral areas and Lake Cowichan.

However, all data sources suggest that the CVRD is in a state of acute rental shortage, with almost no vacancy. Households seeking rent in the region are locating where housing is available rather than where they would prefer, which tends to equalize rental rates throughout the region.

Note also that the data presented above reflects rental rates that are currently paid by households rather than the rates those same units might be able to achieve if they were vacated and placed on the market today. British Columbia's *Residential Tenancy Act* only permits rental rates for a particular tenant to be increased by a limited amount each year. The impact of this policy is that renter households who remain in the same dwelling for many years tend to pay less rent than more recently arrived renter households. Landlords and property owners of currently listed rental

units will therefore tend to ask higher rents than those represented here, as these rates are varyingly subject to rent control.

Housing affordability for renter households was analyzed by assuming that the wealthiest 1% of households will occupy the most expensive 1% of homes, the wealthiest 10% of households in the most expensive 10% of homes, etc. Assigning homes to income groups in this way reveals which income groups might struggle to pay for housing in which jurisdictions.

As noted above, this is only an approximation. In reality, some households will occupy more expensive or less expensive homes than this assumption would assign to them. However, because homes are limited, if a household occupies a more affordable unit than this model would assign and therefore has lower housing costs, that means that another household has to occupy a more expensive unit than this model would assign, and therefore has higher housing costs. As such, the deviations from this model that would exist in real life should cancel each other to produce something close to the averages indicated here.

Renter households in electoral area F making less than \$48,400 per year tend to spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing expenses, placing these households in core housing need. The same data suggest renter households making less than \$26,600 per year tend to spend more than 50% of their annual income on housing expenses, placing them in extreme core housing need.

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This analysis suggests that 42% of electoral area F's renter households are in core housing need and 18% are in extreme core housing need. This is in line with the rates reported in the previous few censuses (42% in 2006, 26% in 2011, and 44% in 2016).

Engagement results identified that a need for more affordable rental units and suggested secondary suites as a solution, particularly on large acreages.

5.5 Market Ownership

Combining the Property Assessment data with the income estimate allowed the relationship between income and housing expenses for owner households in electoral area F to be estimated. This requires certain assumptions:

- The share of owner households with a mortgage in 2019 resembles the share indicated in the 2016 Census (64%).
- Renter households and owner households of the same income are likely to live in units with similar property value. That is, more affluent households of either tenure will live in higher-value units.
- Similarly, owner households with and without mortgages are assumed to occupy units of similar value.
- For the purposes of this analysis, housing expenses include:
 - mortgage payments, if applicable, using a 20% down payment, 3.5% interest rate, 25-year amortization and the property prices of ten years earlier (2009)
 - \$1,212 per year in hydro per household, the BC average
 - municipal service fees of \$465
 - strata and/or maintenance expenses of \$1,200 per year

- property taxes, factoring the BC Homeowner's Grant.

As with renter households, housing affordability was analyzed for owner households by assuming that the wealthiest 1% of households will occupy the most expensive 1% of homes, the wealthiest 10% of households will occupy the most expensive 10% of homes, etc. Assigning homes to income groups in this way reveals which income groups might struggle to pay for housing.

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The majority of owner households with mortgages in electoral area F making below making below \$44,700 per year spend more than 30% of their annual income on housing expenses, placing these households in core housing need. Owner households without mortgages were analyzed but found that according to this model none of them would be spending more than 30% of their incomes on housing expenses.

This analysis suggests that 18% of electoral area F's owner households are in core housing need, in line with trends evident in the census (15% in 2006, 23% in 2011, then 19% in 2016).

5.6 Historic and Current Housing Condition (Adequacy)

The share of all households requiring major repair (the adequacy standard) remained constant in BC between 2006 and 2016:

- For owners: from 6%–5%
- For renters: from 8%–7%
- Average of all households: 6%

Compared to BC, adequacy in the CVRD is about the same for owners and somewhat worse for renters but improving (from 12% in 2006 to 9% in 2016).

Compared to the CVRD, adequacy in electoral area F is slightly worse for owners (7% in 2016) and better for renters (0% in 2016), with the share of households requiring major repair increasing slightly for owners (from 6% in 2006 to 7% in 2016) and significantly decreasing for renters (from 31% in 2006 to 0% in 2016). Note that the census data reports that zero renter households required major repairs in electoral area F, so this data point might be spurious.

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5.7 Historic and Current Overcrowding (Suitability)

The share of all households experiencing overcrowding (the suitability standard) in BC decreased between 2006 and 2016:

- For owners: from 4% to 3%
- For renters: from 12% to 9%
- Average of all households: from 7% to 5%

Compared to BC, households in the CVRD are less crowded for both tenure groups, and improvement was also observed:

- For owners: from 2% to 1%
- For renters: from 8% to 6%
- Average of all households: from 3% to 2%

In electoral area F, overcrowding is less of an issue compared to BC, and similar to rates of overcrowding across the CVRD. Three times the rate of renters experience overcrowding (6% of households) than owners (2% of households).

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5.8 Historic and Current Affordability

The share of all households falling below the affordability standard (housing expenses equal to 30% of household income) remained constant in BC between 2006 and 2016:

- For owners: from 18% to 17%
- For renters: from 34% to 35%
- Average of all households: from 23% to 22%

Compared to BC, affordability in the CVRD is somewhat better for owners (14% in 2006 and 16% in 2016) and somewhat worse for renters (38% in 2006 and 2016 and 42% in 2011 during the recession), to produce a slightly more favourable overall share of 19% of households across tenures experiencing affordability challenges.

Electoral area F is worse for both renters and owners compared to the CVRD, with 19% of owners in the CVRD experiencing affordability challenges compared to 44% of owners in electoral area F. This amounts to an overall share of 25% of households experiencing affordability challenges in electoral area F. Over double the share of renters experience affordability challenges compared to owners, and there has been no significant improvement for either group from 2006–2016. In the region, only Duncan has more households below the affordability standard than electoral area F.

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5.9 Core Housing Need and Extreme Core Housing Need

In 2019, 23% of electoral area F's households are in core housing needⁱⁱⁱ and 3% are in extreme core housing need^{iv}. Of these:

- 18% of owners are in core housing need and 1% are in extreme housing need
- 42% of renters are in core housing need and 18% are in extreme housing need

This is in line with trends reported in the last several censuses, which showed 20% of households in core housing need in 2006, 23% in 2011 and 25% in 2016.

6. Affordability of New Development

A financial model analyzing the cost of residential development for a variety of housing types and tenures was created considering the Altus Construction Cost Guide, development costs by jurisdiction (permit fees, Development Cost Charges, etc.), parking requirements by jurisdiction as defined by zoning bylaw and market research drawn from current listings on realtor.ca.

Using this model, the lowest sale price or rental rate per unit that a builder could afford to charge for the finished product while still achieving a minimal level of profit was identified (this is called the “economic price”). These minimum prices and rental rates imply what levels of household income would be required to purchase or rent new units in electoral area F without paying more than 30% of one’s household income. This analysis is performed for 2020 and 2025.

6.1 Financial Analysis Results

Based on the construction cost assumptions detailed in our methodology^v, the following housing prices represent the most affordable units that a developer or building could afford to produce in electoral area F. More affordable new units may exist, but these would arise from exceptional circumstances such as unusually cheap land.

The price of a new single-detached home is about \$651,000, the price of a new townhouse is about \$449,000 and the price of a new apartment about \$320,000. The monthly rent for new townhomes is about \$1,670 and for new apartments about \$1,180.

To produce an estimate of the minimum income that would allow a household to purchase or rent one of these new units without spending more than 30% of its household income, the following assumptions are used:

- Purchasers will have a mortgage with the following characteristics:
 - 20% down payment
 - 3.5% stated annual interest rate
 - 25-year amortization
- Owners and renters will both pay additional housing expenses as detailed elsewhere in this report, including utilities and property taxes.

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The household income that would be required to purchase or rent a new unit, paying no more than 30% of one’s income on housing expenses, and the percentage of electoral area F’s current households (2019) that could afford that housing option was calculated:

- To purchase a new single-detached home would require \$119,000 of annual household income, and about 21% of households could afford to do so
- To purchase a new townhouse would require \$85,000 of annual household income, and about 39% of households could afford to do so
- To purchase a new apartment would require \$64,000 of annual household income, and about 54% of households could afford to do so
- To rent a new townhouse would require \$76,000 of annual household income, and about 45% of households could afford to do so
- To rent a new apartment would require \$57,000 of annual household income, and about 59% of households could afford to do so.

For each of these categories, note that this is the least affluent demographic that could be served by the new-build market. If supply constraints exist and less housing is built, then that new housing will tend to go to the highest bidder, increasing the price and income required to avoid core housing need.

The economic price of new homes in electoral area F in 2025 was also projected based on the escalation assumptions presented above.

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Compared to 2020, the price of construction in 2025 is expected to increase so that:

- The economic price of a single-detached home will be about \$747,000
- The economic price of a townhouse will be about \$525,000
- The economic price of an apartment will be about \$363,000
- The economic monthly rent for townhomes will be about \$2,035
- The economic monthly rent for apartments will be about \$1,400.

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The household income that would be required to purchase or rent a new unit in 2025, paying no more than 30% of one's income on housing expenses, and the percentage of electoral area F's projected households (2025) that could afford that housing option was calculated:

- To purchase a new single-detached home will require \$135,000 of annual household income. About 22% of households will be able to afford to do so under the rapid recovery scenario versus 19% in the slow recovery scenario
- To purchase a new townhouse home will require \$98,000 of annual household income. About 38% of households will be able to afford to do so under the rapid recovery scenario versus 36% in the slow recovery scenario
- To purchase a new apartment home will require \$71,000 of annual household income. About 58% of households will be able to afford to do so under the rapid recovery scenario versus 57% in the slow recovery scenario
- To rent a new townhouse in the region will require \$91,000 of annual household income. About 42% of households will be able to afford to do so in the rapid recovery scenario versus 41% in the slow recovery scenario.
- To rent a new apartment in the region will require \$66,000 of annual household income. About 63% of households will be able to afford to do so in the rapid recovery scenario versus 61% in the slow recovery scenario.

The capacity of electoral area F's households to afford new construction will tend to increase slightly in the rapid recovery scenario and will tend to decrease slightly in the slow recovery scenario. The overall difference between the two scenarios is not huge, suggesting that the electoral area's housing market is unlikely to be severely impacted by COVID-19. In electoral area F the cost of constructing new townhomes will increase faster than the region's incomes, and the cost of constructing new apartments will tend to increase more slowly. This is probably the result of land price increases for patio homes (a particularly desirable type of townhome) being in such short supply and in higher demand than apartments.

ⁱ At the time of writing this report, data from the point-in-time homeless count completed in March 2020 was not available for individual jurisdictions.

ⁱⁱ “Real” here means that currency inflation is removed so that household incomes can be compared directly between time periods because they have been brought to parity in terms of true spending power.

ⁱⁱⁱ A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and the household would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three housing standards.

^{iv} A household is said to be in extreme housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, affordability or suitability standards and the household would have to spend 50% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that meets all three housing standards.

^v See the regional CVRD housing needs report methodology section for detailed assumptions behind cost of new development.