

# BRIEFING

## Subject: Progress Report on Community Housing Strategy Year Three- 2017

Presented to: Council  
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## BACKGROUND

### Reason for Report

To provide Council with a status update on the progress made in 2017 toward the recommendations from the 2014 Banff Community Housing Strategy.

### Summary of Issue

The 2012 Housing Study and the 2014 Banff Community Housing Strategy highlighted the shortfall of available and affordable rental housing units as Banff's most pressing need. The lack of housing has many implications, including social and economic realities. In October of 2014, Council adopted the 2014 Banff Community Housing Strategy as a guiding document to assist with decision making related to housing.

Like most tourist destinations, especially those with a limited land base, Banff has a history of difficulty in providing sufficient and appropriate housing for all those who are eligible to reside in town.

Council's four year Strategic Priority Action Plan included the following outcomes by 2018, as related to housing.

- Banffites support the Parks Canada eligible resident requirements, and 100% of housing units are occupied by people who meet these requirements
- At least 80 % of those who work in Banff, live in Banff and those who live in other communities do so by choice
- At least 1% of our accommodation is accessible for people with mobility limitations
- Our rental vacancy is 1% or higher
- 200 new housing units have received occupancy permits since 2014
- Neighbourhood satisfaction with parking and noise management has increased since 2014
- Residents understanding of, trust in and engagement with the development process has increased since 2014

Key findings from the 2012 Community Social Assessment and the 2012 Banff Housing Study Affordability:

- Young adults are experiencing overcrowding, poor quality, and expensive housing. A challenge if they are trying to get out of party scene when roommates are in it. Needing to get away from crowded housing- often by going to bars. Showing up without a job, housing or much money.
- Seniors- lack of levels of care increases chances they may need to leave community.
- Those individuals over 40 have expressed concerns about being able to remain in the Banff community as they age due to high cost of housing.

- Banff has 0% vacancy rate. A healthy vacancy rate is 3-5 %. Currently with 0% vacancy the supply and demand of the rental market is creating an untenable market for rental. Demand is far out stripping supply and we are seeing significant rental prices.
- 54% of Banffites rent compared to 26% in the rest of Alberta.
- Renters are 60% more likely to experience affordability challenges in Banff than homeowners
- 77.6% of Banff households could not afford to purchase a median priced apartment
- 88.5% of Banff households could not afford to purchase a median priced townhome, duplex or single family home
- Median market home ownership is affordable to roughly 10-25% of Banff's population
- While rental and home ownership are both required in Banff, the shortage of affordable rental units appears to be the more pressing need

**The highlights accomplished from the Community Housing Strategy 2014-2017 include:**

1. Partnership with Parks Canada to acquire lands within the town boundaries. The Town has been successful in creating a partnership and the release fees for 14 lots on Deer Lane (now Coyote Lane) and Cave Ave. have been negotiated.
2. In 2016, the Coyote Lane Affordable Housing Development was submitted to, and approved by the Municipal Planning Commission.
3. Coyote Lane Affordable Housing commenced construction in the spring of 2017 with completion and occupancy of 131 units slated for summer of 2018.
4. Successful partnership/funding proposal with the provincial government securing a \$12,000,000.00 grant through a tenancy in common agreement.

The Community Housing Strategy has five predominant theme areas, each with recommendations and timelines. The five theme areas are:

1. Rentals
2. Partnership and Collaboration
3. Regulatory and Policy Framework
4. Public Education, Outreach and Advocacy
5. Accountability and Monitoring

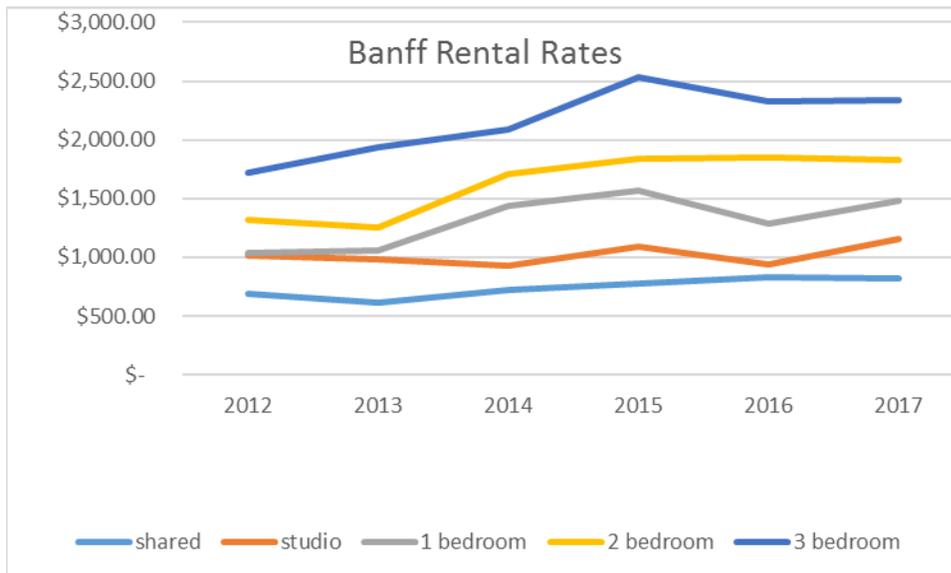
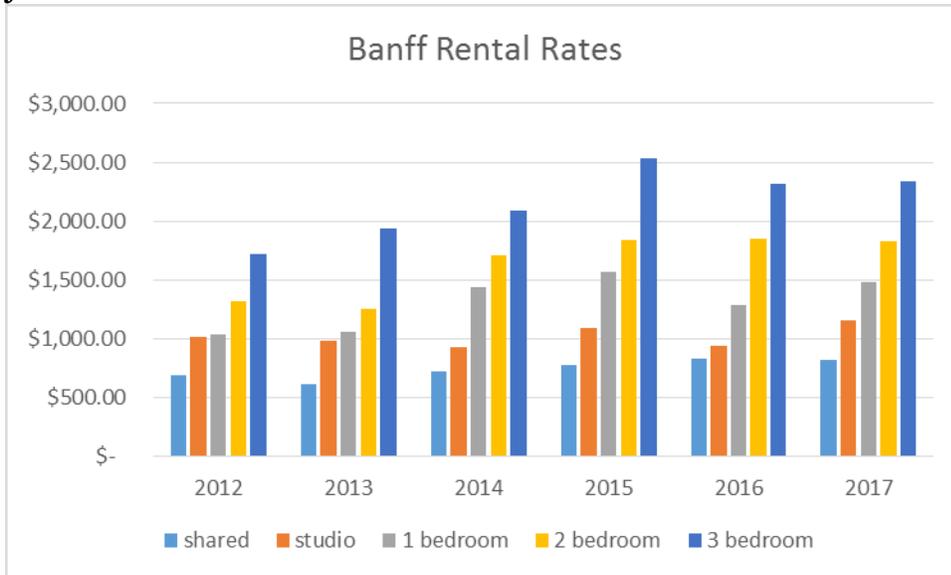
The following is a summary of the progress that was made in 2017 toward the recommendations cited from the Banff Community Housing Strategy.

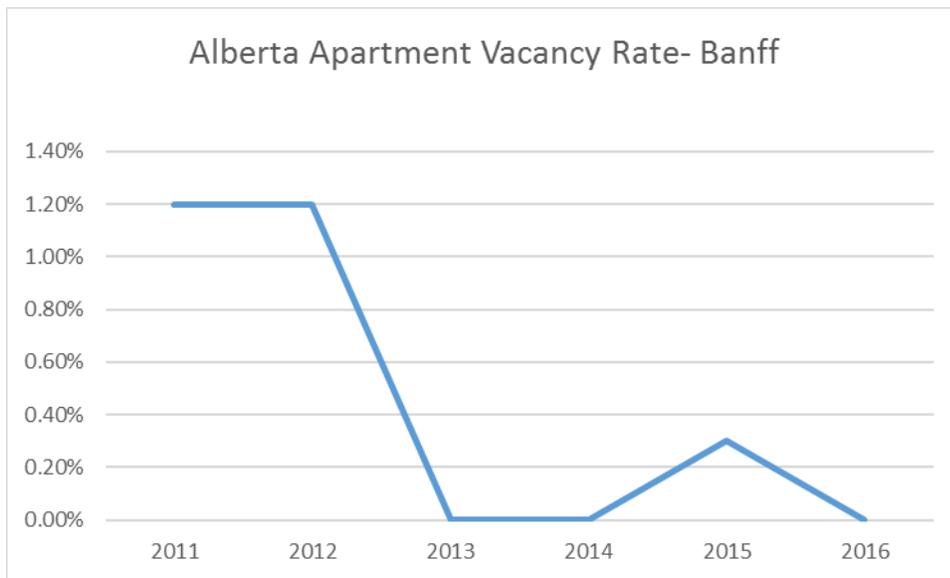
Rental

**4.1.1.1 Improve data collection and publication.**

Action: Review the provinces vacancy rate for Banff annually. Review the Job Resource Centre rental price data bi-annually.

**Job Resource Centre Rental Rates**





*Outcome: Public accountability, transparent tracking of our rental housing situation, good data to support decision making.*

#### **4.1.1.2 Educate and inform landlords**

Action: Provide/make available a best practise lease and best practise guidelines for all landlords.

Banff.ca/housing has incorporated tips for landlords and tenants as well as sample lease agreements and templates.

There are many different types of leases agreements available to landlords. Depending on the situation, the type of agreements may vary. Agreements can be periodic tenancies, including monthly periodic tenancies (where the tenant agrees to rent month-to-month and pay rent on a monthly basis) or a weekly periodic tenancies (where the tenant agrees to rent week-to-week and pay rent on weekly basis) or a Fixed Term Lease.

*Outcome: Landlords report better knowledge around these issues and tenant complaints diminish.*

#### 4.1.1.5 *Mandate on site management for larger properties*

Action: Track noise complaints from larger multi-unit buildings.

Town of Banff – Bylaw registered noise complaints

Housing Type	2015	2016	2017
Single Family Homes/duplexes	12	7	10
Townhouse style 4-6 units	6	1	0
Multi-unit apartments	12	2	3

It continues to appear that higher density/multi-unit apartment-style residential developments do not contribute to an increase in noise complaints. Bylaw generally receive more noise complaints from lower density residential developments.

*Outcome: Large scale housing providers have onsite management and neighbourhood complaints diminish.*

#### 4.1.1.6 *Grow Banff Housing Corporation as a rental provider*

Action: Until rental shortfall is addressed, emphasize rental property development and management.

Banff Housing Corporation will significantly increase the size of its rental portfolio in the summer of 2018. In preparation for the new area of focus, a new staffing structure has been created including rental and lease management, building operations with an emphasis on preventative maintenance and financial management and reporting. In anticipation of the opening of Ti'nu-affordable rental housing development, BHC has developed and prepared for the intake of applications for 131 rental units. The process included developing extensive applicant eligibility criteria, pre-lease and lease agreements and assignment of units. Leases and units will be assigned when occupancy dates are confirmed by the builder, Knightsbridge Homes.

*Outcome: BHC increases the size of its rental portfolio. Vacancy rates increase, and there is greater access to affordable rental accommodation.*

### Partnership and Collaboration

#### 4.2.1.2 *Engage the region on housing issues.*

Action: Join the interagency group and actively engage in their information sharing discussions.

- Active member of Bow Valley Homeless to Housing Coalition (H2HC)
- Bow Valley Housing Action group- chairperson.
- Presenter at Alberta Network of Public Housing Agencies (ANPHA) provincial conference 2017.
- Member of the BCNPHA ( BC Non Profit Housing Association)

*Outcome: Better regional information sharing leading to shared solutions on housing issues.*

#### **4.2.1.4. Engage the Province in funding housing land.**

Action: Lobby to access provincial funds to acquire housing lands in the Town of Banff.

In the spring of 2016, the provincial government announced affordable housing development funding was available. The Town of Banff housing team created a proposal for submission to Alberta Seniors and Housing Minister, Lori Sigurdson. The Ti'nu affordable housing project was shovel ready, the need for rental housing was clearly identified through the 2012 Banff Housing Study and the 2013 Community Housing Strategy, and Town of Banff council had committed to the build. The provincial government granted the project **\$12,000,000.00** with a tenancy in common agreement. This funding will allow the Town of Banff to reduce the overall debt of the project, decrease the rental rates while still servicing the debt through the rents collected therefore maintaining a non-tax-payer supported project.

*Outcome: Access to developable and redevelopable land in the town, with funding assistance that will make the resulting units more affordable.*

#### **4.2.1.7 Share information on housing-related employee incentives**

Action: Encourage information sharing among employers regarding housing incentives, such as employers supported down payments an employer support rent to own options.

In 2017, Banff Lake Louise Hospitality Association (BLLHA) conducted a *Housing Compensation* assessment amongst its members. Their findings indicated that 73.0% of businesses are offering some form of discount on staff accommodation. Most businesses offer discounted employee rental housing but very few offered incentives for home ownership. Rental housing was offered to frontline employees by 68.0% of businesses, to supervisors by half and to executive staff by a quarter.

Currently, there are two business/organizations that offer employee purchase incentive programs.

*Outcome: Information on practicalities of these types of projects will be readily available to interested employers.*

#### **4.2.2.1. Conduct employer surveys**

Action: Create a winter and summer survey- assist with predicting housing demand.

- 2017 BLLHA member survey – Housing Compensation survey
- 2017 Community Satisfaction Survey
- Town of Banff- Cave Ave Proposed Affordable Rental Housing survey. Technical delays moved the start of the survey January 2018. Results to be shared in 2018.

*Outcome: Current information to guide decision making and help update the housing strategy.*

### Regulatory and Policy Framework

#### **4.3.1.8. Consider additional means of contributing to the housing reserve.**

Action: Investigate a low density, residential tax rate is legally possible

Action: Consider mechanisms beyond cash in lieu to contribute to the Housing Reserve fund

The Corporate Services member of the housing team to bring a briefing to council in 2018.

*Outcome: Potential for additional contributions to the housing reserve fund, leading to funding being available for housing initiatives*

#### **4.3.1.9. Encourage and mandate barrier-free/accessible housing units**

Action: Create an information sheet for developers speaking to the merits of barrier –free housing and how to provide it.

Action: Create an incentive package to encourage barrier free development and re-development.

Action: Draft and present for approval a technical amendment to the LUB.

The Planning and Development member of the housing team will bring a briefing to council in 2018.

*Outcome: more barrier free housing units in the town of Banff.*

#### **4.3.1.10 Enforce the eligible residency requirement**

Action: Create a public education campaign specific to the eligible residency requirement and the enforcement of the same.

*Residential leases in Banff National Park state that the Land is to be used for residential purposes and that a fundamental condition of the Lease is that each person occupying the Land shall be an Eligible Resident in accordance with the National Parks Lease and Licence of Occupation Regulations.*

Parks Canada requires proof be provided to ensure occupants are eligible residents in Banff National Park. Proof of eligibility is required when there is a change in ownership of a residential lease, a renewal of an expiring residential lease, a new residential lease is issued, and when financing is required on a leased property (new or renewed). Parks Canada Banff Field Unit Realty process approximately 400 of these types of transactions a year. Additionally, there are instances of requiring proof of eligible residency when formal complaints are brought to Parks Canada's attention.

In 2017, in order to renew a bed and breakfast license, the Town of Banff and Parks Canada require owners to sign a statutory declaration providing confirmation of proof that they are an eligible resident of Banff National Park.

*Outcome: 100% of residential lands in Banff are occupied by eligible residents.*

#### **4.3.1.11 Ensure that residential lands contain habitable dwelling units**

Action: investigate existing lease clauses, in this park and others, to see what is said on the subject of vacant lands.

Currently working with Parks Canada to review lease clauses/bylaw changes that may allow enforcement for construction on empty lots/condemned buildings within a designated period of time, or face penalty

Other examples of communities addressing empty or uninhabitable units and housing shortages:

- January 1, 2017, the city of Vancouver introducing the *Empty Homes Tax* to address Vancouver's housing shortfall. Vancouver is the first Canadian city to address unoccupied residential units by implementing a property tax relative to vacancy. Every owner of residential property in Vancouver is required to submit a property status declaration each year to determine if their property is subject to the tax.
- In Paris, the city has recently increased its annual surcharge for owners who keep properties empty. Since 2015, second-homeowners in France's most pressurized housing markets have paid a 20% premium on the annual tax d'habitation property tax. However, since the end of January those in Paris have been charged 160% of the standard rate. The city also offers grants and incentives to encourage owners to rent out properties not in use.

The Corporate Services member of the housing team is investigating the feasibility of the above scenarios and will bring a briefing to council in 2018.

*Outcome: Over the long term, best use of residential lands in the town.*

#### **4.3.2.1.      *Review height restrictions***

Action: Review height restrictions when BMP and LUB are reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance between aesthetics and housing need.

BMP review to start in 2018.

*Outcome: Appropriate height restrictions to meet the varied needs of the community.*

#### **4.3.2.2      *Review commercial housing requirements***

Action: Review commercial housing requirements when BMP and LUB are reviewed to ensure an appropriate balance between aesthetics and housing need.

BMP review to start in 2018.

*Outcome: Appropriate commercial housing requirements that reflect the pressure put on the community by new development and intensification.*

## Public Education, Outreach and Advocacy

### 4.4.1.1. *Foster understanding through information.*

Banff.ca/housing website analytics:

We continue to populate the website with pertinent, up-to-date information ranging from landlord and tenant information, leases agreements, where to find a rental unit, how to purchase a home within the Banff Housing Corporation structure to how to apply for a unit at Ti'nu- affordable housing development. Traffic response to Banff.ca/housing website:

Website area	Unique page visits 2017	Total page views
Housing	16,555	20,863
BHC	4218	5541
Ti'nu Affordable Rental Housing	851	1063
How to buy a home with BHC	947	1166
Current listings with BHC	3283	5323

Specific website area: Ti'nu affordable housing development	Unique page visits	Total page views
Eligibility criteria	1,386	1,803
Deer Lane Floor Plans	926	1,201
Deer Lane Finances	972	1181
Rent Application Doc Checklist	840	1046
Rent Application	757	954
Deer Lane Board Introducing	484	596
Deer Lane Unit Mix	422	525
Deer Lane Site	421	522
Deer Lane Sustainable Living	201	256
Housing Strategy	533	604

Action: Post all housing information as it becomes available.

*Outcome: Transparency and an informed public. One stop shop, 24/7 access to information.*

### 4.4.1.5. *Make housing prominent at public engagement events.*

Action: Create a once of the year “State of Housing” report for Banff.

As per Banff Community Housing Strategy communications has focussed on educating the public of the need for affordable housing. The Banff Resident Satisfaction survey indicated that need is understood: 86% of respondents said affordable housing is the number one issue for Banff. The

communication focus will now broaden on specific projects as well as updating the community on progress made. All communication will reinforce the need for affordable housing.

*Outcome: More people will have the facts about housing in Banff. Banff has the opportunity to celebrate progress. Public will understand actions are being taken to improve the housing situation in Banff and will know about the supports available to them.*

#### **4.4.2.1. Celebrate successful density**

Action: Prepare comparisons, publicize results.

Many large scale residential developments in Banff are still in the building stage. A number of these projects have occupancy scheduled in 2018. These developments will be monitored by the Town of Banff as to the impact of density in neighbourhoods. Areas to be assessed include community and neighbourhood connectivity, social engagement, safety and security, access to the outdoors and recreational opportunities, length of tenancy, transit and walkability, and noise and vandalism.

Noise complaint indicators over the past three years have shown that large scale residential development are not the primary contributor to late night noise nor vandalism. In 2017, Bylaw received 34 noise-related complaint in total, only 3 were associated with multi-unit apartments.

*Outcome: people will better understand the implications of well-planned density.*

### **Accountability and Monitoring**

#### **4.5.1.1. Track housing through municipal census**

Action: Add questions to census on housing type and housing needs.

In the 2017 municipal census two areas of questioning focussed on specifics related to housing. These questions will be used as key indicators for policy development, discussion and implications for future housing initiatives. Questions surrounding vehicles per unit and number of renters versus owners will help guide the community, particularly in the areas pertaining to residential parking policy and ownership population. The census saw a 4% shift in the percentage of renters to owners in Banff over the last 3 years. The average vehicle ownership ranges from .8 for large scale apartments (+50 units) to 1.0 vehicle for 1-10 units. Overall, owners tend to have a higher ratio of vehicle ownership than renters.

*Outcome: Accurate census data that we can rely on for discussion and trend identification.*

#### 4.5.1.2 *Maintain and publicize housing inventory*

Action: Continue to report to council on new developments.

The following is a chart of building permits that are still under construction and those that have been completed and issued occupancy permits. The number of units currently under construction will likely have a significant impact on the market rentals available in Banff in 2018.

Year of Completion (received Town of Banff occupancy permits)	Units
2013	3
2014	4
2015	41
2016	20
2017	3
Total	71
<b>Currently under construction (building permit issued but no occupancy)</b>	<b>195</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>266</b>

*Outcome: an accurate, up-to-date picture of development in Banff, plus historical information to identify trends.*

#### **Response Options**

This report is submitted for Council's information.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

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