



livegreen 
Sustainability
Report
2020/21



Sunset at Altamount Beach Park, West Vancouver, British Columbia.

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Introduction

This report describes BC Housing’s sustainability performance results for the 2020/21 fiscal year, and compares these results to the three-year targets set in the [2017/18 *livegreen* Sustainability Plan](#). While 2020/21 targets were not set out in the 2017/18 plan, 2020/21 targets have been included in this report and are replicated from the 2018/19 targets. Through a planning process initiated in 2019/20, BC Housing is reviewing our sustainability practices and engaging staff across the organization to develop metrics and targets. This process will help prepare for the launch of a new Sustainability and Resilience Strategy in 2021/2022.



Report on Performance

This report outlines activities in the three strategic areas: **Housing Excellence**, **Integrated Decisions**, and **Change Agent**. The results are presented in the tables, followed by explanations and detailed descriptions of actions taken.



Housing Excellence

Innovation in the design, construction, renovation and management of housing

Housing Excellence guides activities related to improving expertise and innovation in the delivery, renovation and management of social housing, it also ensures the quality and durability of housing construction and maintenance.

Results

AREA	MEASURE		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Buildings	Percentage reduction in GHGs from all buildings owned or leased by BC Housing	Target	20% or more	20% or more	20% or more
		Result (2007 baseline)	34%	36%	N/A
		Result (2010 baseline)	N/A	N/A	15%
2) Green Buildings ¹	Percentage of provincially sponsored affordable housing units designed to meet the energy and sustainability targets defined in the BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards	Target	45%	50%	50%
		Result	56%	54%	51%
3) Waste Management ²	Percentage of construction, redevelopment, or retrofit waste diverted from landfill	Target	80% in Lower Mainland & Greater Victoria; 60% Rest of the Province		
		LM&VI Result	63%	88%	77%
		Rest of BC Result	82%	85%	31%
4) Residential Construction Research and Education	Published research report conducted with key stakeholders	Target	At least one major research project published	At least one major research project published	At least one major research project published
		Result	8 major research projects published	5 major research projects published	4 major research projects published ³

1 This measure has been refined in 2017/18 to reflect the fact that energy and sustainability targets have now been defined in the newly updated BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards. Previously, we were measuring the percentage of newly constructed units designed to a third-party sustainability standard. This measure was introduced in 2016/17.

2 This measure is based on projects that are completed within the fiscal year and relies on information supplied by contractors. Information may not be available for all projects completed within the fiscal year at the time of reporting. In addition, not all contractors track their waste diversion and those that do not track are not included in the denominator. Overall, 70 per cent of projects in 2017/18 reported on their waste diversion as required.

3 These research projects are outlined on page 12.



1. Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Buildings

TARGET NOT MET

For the 2020/21 reporting year, BC Housing has changed from a 2005 baseline to a 2010 baseline for greenhouse gas emissions related to buildings, to align with other Public Sector Organizations, based on direction by the Climate Action Secretariat. Results prior to 2020/21 are based on a 2005 baseline.

In 2020, our greenhouse gas emissions related to energy consumption for space and water heating and electricity for social housing buildings totaled 27,973 tonnes of CO₂ equivalent, a 15 per cent decrease compared to 2010.

Our emissions saw an increase of seven per cent between 2019 and 2020⁴. Factors related to the COVID-19 pandemic (such as changes in tenant behaviours) have increased our emissions compared to the previous year. Cooler weather in 2020 also had a slight impact, as buildings required more fuel and electricity for heating compared to our baseline year. Organic growth in our portfolio, the purchase of existing properties that are not energy efficient, and new construction and renovations that do not meet our energy targets or did not pursue fuel switching also had an impact.

Greenhouse gas emission reductions compared with our baseline are mainly a result of our energy conservation efforts since 2010. This includes multi-year building upgrades, fuel switching, and energy programs, increasing energy efficiency standards for new construction, and ongoing improvements in energy management in our portfolio.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › BC Housing administers or supports a range of energy efficiency programs for social housing providers, in collaboration with our partners. In 2020, these programs included:
 - The **CleanBC: Social Housing Incentive Program (SHIP)** in partnership with the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA). This provincial program launched in 2018 helps affordable housing owners and operators reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It supports natural gas and fuel switching measures (and other electrification opportunities) that result in significant reduction in current fossil fuel use. In 2020, 11 projects were completed with an estimated annual GHG reduction of 426 tCO₂e.



Stephen Village in Kelowna, built to BC Energy Step Code Level 3 and opened in September 2020.

- The **Energy Conservation Assistance Program (ECAP)** in collaboration with BC Hydro and FortisBC. Through this program, tenants receive free energy evaluations and free installation of energy saving products. In some instances, they also receive free fridge, furnace replacement or additional insulation. In 2020, participation in this program was put on hold, due to the restrictions to accessing tenants' suites during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The **Energy Efficiency Retrofit Program (EERP)**, along with our partners the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), BC Hydro, and FortisBC. This program enabled approximately 12 electric and 15 gas-focused energy retrofit projects, for a total estimated savings of 112,850 kWh and 13,850 GJ respectively in 2020. The program offers non-profit housing providers additional funding to complete small-scale, energy saving retrofits of items such as light fixtures and boilers.
- › In partnership with the Columbia Basin Trust (CBT) and BCNPHA, we assisted non-profit housing providers with the costs of increasing energy efficiency. Through an agreement with the CBT, we supported and provided subsequent funding to non-profit housing providers for energy retrofits during 2018 and 2019. In 2020, we signed a new Contribution Agreement for a third phase of this programming, starting in 2021.

⁴ The comparison between 2019 and 2020 is based on absolute emissions, while our 2010 baseline is recalculated to reflect buildings in our portfolio during the reporting year. Baseline recalculation is conducted as per the GHG reporting protocols

- › In 2020, BC Housing worked with consultants to conduct 28 energy audits on high-, mid- and low-rise housing buildings to determine details of current energy consumption patterns and opportunities for savings. This will allow for energy conservation measures in future fiscal years. Funding for audits and repairs will come from the Capital Renewal Fund.
- › Several large energy retrofits were completed at BC Housing directly managed sites in 2020. These retrofits are expected to result in significant energy savings.

For more information on our actions related to greenhouse gas and energy reductions in our housing portfolio – please see [BC Housing's 2020 Climate Change Accountability Report](#).



2. Green Buildings

TARGET MET

New social housing construction projects target high levels of the BC Energy Step Code. This is a performance-based approach that will result in energy savings above base building code in new buildings constructed through our programs. Our green building measure was modified in 2017/18 to reflect the new requirements in [BC Housing's Design Guidelines and Construction Standards](#). We now measure the percentage of provincially-sponsored affordable housing units designed to meet the energy and sustainability targets defined in the BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards. This includes projects that are designed to meet other sustainability standards such as LEED and Built Green.



731 Station Avenue in Langford, built to BC Energy Step Code Level 4 and opened in March 2020.

Provincially-funded new construction must meet the BC Housing Design Guidelines and Construction Standards. Provincially-financed projects are also encouraged to target a step of the BC Energy Step Code. Both funded and financed projects are included in our revised target.

In the 2020/21, 51 per cent of newly constructed units funded or financed through BC Housing programs were designed to meet the energy and sustainability targets in our Design Guidelines and Construction Standards, including those that met a third-party sustainability standard (such as LEED).

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › In 2020/21, we completed 22 projects that have achieved high levels (three or higher) of the BC Energy Step Code.
- › To date, BC Housing and our non-profit housing partners have over 60 buildings registered with the Canadian Green Building Council and 50 have received Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification.
- › We have also been working with our partners to construct buildings that achieve the Passive House standard. We now have four buildings in four different regions, certified to Passive House. This includes a development in Fort St John, completed in 2019. A portion of this development is currently serving as temporary workforce housing for BC Hydro staff, in addition to providing affordable and market rental housing to the community. In 2020, several Passive House projects were in the Design Development Stage.



3. Waste Management

Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island: **TARGET NOT MET**
Provincial target (not including the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island): **TARGET NOT MET**

Many of our construction tenders require a percentage of construction, renovation, or demolition waste to be diverted from landfills.⁵ Last year, we diverted 3,662 tonnes of waste, which represented 74 per cent of waste from 42 projects across the province (average for all projects).

Our projects in the Lower Mainland and on Vancouver Island diverted 77 per cent of tracked waste from landfills, a diversion rate which did not meet our target of 80 per cent. In the rest of B.C., we diverted 31 per cent of tracked waste from landfills, which did not meet our target of 60 per cent.

In addition to construction, renovation and demolition waste, we have taken strides to reduce the amount of residential waste going to landfill from our directly managed housing. Our staff work with social housing residents to keep recycling and compostable materials out of the landfill.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › The types of material that were diverted from landfill with the highest rate of success included: concrete, cardboard/paper, asphalt, and green waste (100 per cent of these materials were diverted). Other materials with a high rate of diversion were metals, wood products, and gypsum wallboard. This waste, which would otherwise have ended up in landfills, was recycled or repurposed.
- › We provided waste management education for our project management teams, and supply chain managers to ensure tender documents included expectations about waste management.
- › Education and monitoring was performed to increase the uptake in recycling and composting among our tenants.

⁵ This requirement is applied to projects with budgets greater than \$100,000. Not all project submitted their waste diversion information. Information was missing for 73 projects in 2020/21.



4. Residential Construction Research and Education

TARGET EXCEEDED

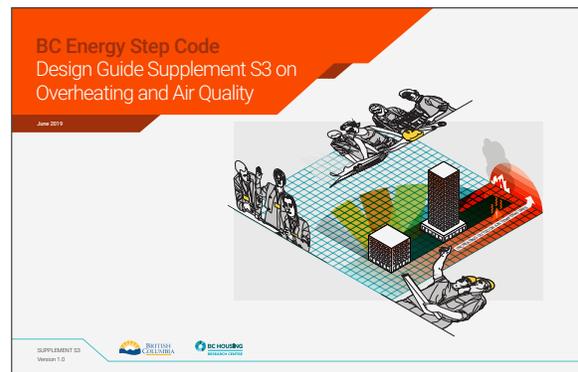
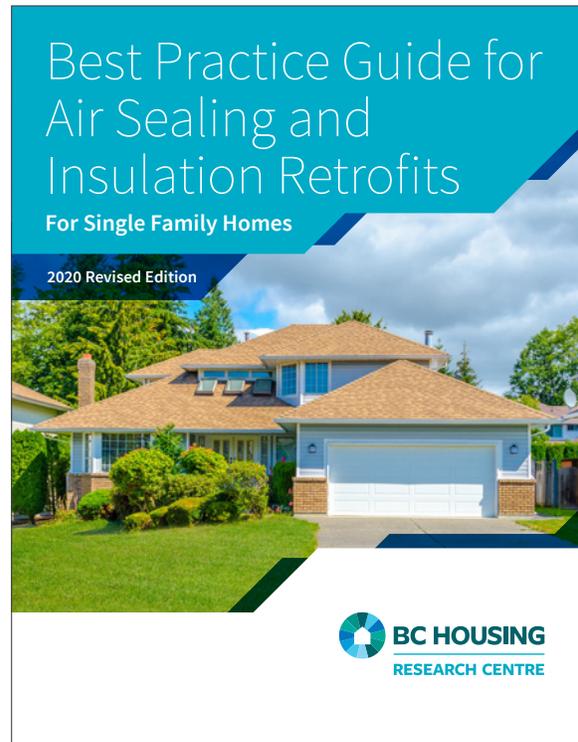
BC Housing conducts technical research and provides education to help improve the quality of residential construction and increase building energy efficiency and resiliency. In 2020/21, we published four major research reports related to sustainability, in collaboration with our research partners.

We also produce educational videos and webinars for the building sector, which have been a successful communication channel for technical information and case studies.

BC Housing has a significant role to play in the implementation and adoption of the BC Energy Step Code in communities across BC and has assisted the Energy Step Code Council in conducting research related to this code.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › The following reports were completed in 2020/21:
 - [Design Guide Supplement on Overheating and Air Quality Guide](#)
This guide provides information on the key strategies and approaches necessary to reduce the impacts of a warmer climate on mid- and high-rise (Part 3) wood-frame and noncombustible residential buildings within British Columbia.
 - [Builder Insight Bulletin No. 19 – Modelling the Future Climate in Passively Cooled Buildings](#) This bulletin provides an overview of how designers can improve building resilience by considering the risk of overheating and meeting the BC Energy Step Code. It includes a methodology for analyzing and reporting the potential for passively cooled buildings to overheat under future climate scenarios. This technical bulletin is intended for readers with an understanding of energy modelling and supports a consistent standard for use across the building industry.
 - [Best Practice Guide for Air Sealing and Insulation Retrofits for Single Family Homes \(2020 Revised Edition\)](#) This guide consolidates best practices for air sealing and insulation retrofits (i.e. building enclosure weatherization) for British Columbia homes. The Air Sealing and Retrofits guide is intended to be a reference tool for construction industry professionals and can help contractors learn how to perform weatherization work



- [Building Envelope Thermal Bridging Guide 1.6 – Digital Version](#)
This guide aims to help the B.C. construction sector realize more energy-efficient buildings by looking at current obstacles and showing opportunities to improve building envelope thermal performance.

These publications and many more can be found on the BC Housing Research Centre webpage. www.bchousing.org/research-centre

Climate Change Adaptation at BC Housing

In addition to our efforts to decrease our contributions to climate pollution through reduction of our GHG emissions, we also recognize that we are already being affected by the changes in our climate. The average temperature across the province has increased by 1.4°C over the last one hundred years, with impacts on residential buildings across B.C.

In 2017, BC Housing identified the following climate change impacts as top priorities: hotter and drier summers, warmer and wetter winters, and increased risk of flooding. These findings were further validated by the Preliminary Strategic Risk Assessment for British Columbia published by the Provincial Government in July 2019, with the high risk of severe wildfire seasons also added. In 2020, BC Housing continued implementation of our Climate Adaptation Framework, focusing on the health and safety of tenants and building occupants, especially with regards to their comfort during extreme heat and wildfire smoke events.

In 2020, BC Housing continued our collaboration with the BC Non-profit Housing Association (BCNPHA), the City of Vancouver and other partners, and offered a series of three recorded webinars addressing extreme heat and poor air quality due to wildfire smoke. Topics covered included: Retrofits for Overheating Buildings and Poor Indoor Air Quality, Addressing Covid-19 and Overheating in Non-profit Housing, and Building Overheating and Air Quality: Considerations in New Construction. The

webinars are available to watch on our website: <https://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat/resources-webinars>

We developed new tools and resources for the non-profit housing providers to address the risk of extreme heat, wildfire smoke and COVID-19. They are available on our website and provide information on communication, education, planning, space cooling guides, and more. <https://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/extreme-heat>

BC Housing presented several sessions at the national Adaptation Canada2020 Conference. These presentations included: Costing Climate Change Adaptation, Building Adaptive, Resilient Housing – Lessons from the Field, Green Roofs and Infrastructure, The Overheating and Air Quality Design Guide, MBAR Training and Capacity Building for the Construction Sector.

Several of BC Housing’s new and existing projects participated in the Mobilizing Building Adaptation and Resilience (MBAR) pilot projects. MBAR is a multi-year, multi-stakeholder knowledge and capacity building project led by BC Housing, with participation and contribution from over 30 organizations, including national, provincial, and local agencies, and industry partners. Through MBAR, the BC Housing projects participated in building assessments, detailed analysis for specific climate adaptation considerations, and implementation of some measures.





Integrated Decisions

Integration of financial, social, and environmental considerations in planning and decision-making

Integrated Decisions ensures sustainability is incorporated into all levels of decision-making at BC Housing. This gives us clear direction via an on-going assessment of the impacts of our corporate actions on local and global communities and ecosystems.

Results

AREA	MEASURE		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Office Paper	Percentage reduction in GHGs from all office paper	Target	70%	70%	70%
		Result (2007 baseline)	55%	56%	N/A
		Result (2010 baseline)	N/A	N/A	40%
2) Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Emissions: Fleet	Percentage reduction in GHGs per km travelled from all fleet vehicles ⁶ (2016 baseline)	Target	5%	5%	5%
		Result (GHG kg/km)	5%	0%	2%
3) Sustainable Procurement	Percentage of tenders to suppliers that include sustainability evaluation criteria and other sustainability factors ⁸	Target	50%	50%	50%
		Result	43%	40%	63%

⁶ Includes trips by BC Housing staff using the corporate Modo car-sharing account.

⁷ These sustainability factors include sustainable product specifications, waste reduction and diversion, efficiency, and positive contributions to local communities.



1. GHG Emissions: Office Paper

TARGET NOT MET

For the 2020/21 reporting year, BC Housing has changed from a 2005 baseline to a 2010 baseline for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions related to office paper use. This aligns with other Public Sector Organizations, based on direction by the Climate Action Secretariat. Our targets were developed to reflect a baseline of 2005 and have not yet been updated to reflect the new baseline. Results prior to 2020/21 are based on the 2005 baseline.

In 2020, our greenhouse gas emissions from office paper totaled 18 tonnes of CO₂e. Our efforts in paper conservation in 2020/21 led to a 40 per cent reduction in emissions compared to our new 2010 baseline, a 57 per cent reduction in emissions per employee. We also saved 19 trees compared to 2010, when our paper use amounted to the equivalent of 62 trees.

In 2020, due to a shift to teleworking during the COVID-19 pandemic, the organization purchased significantly less paper (27 per cent less) than in 2019. We saw a corresponding decrease in GHG emissions due to paper use between 2019 and 2020. Last year, our GHG emissions related to paper use decreased by 25 per cent compared to 2019.

Despite these efforts, we did not meet our target of a 70 per cent reduction in emissions, partially because our baseline year has changed. In addition, our number of employees has grown steadily since 2010.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

Our practices and initiatives which led to reductions in GHG emissions from paper use, included:

- › Encouraging staff to reduce printed materials by promoting paperless meetings and giving our printers a default setting of double-sided. As many of our employees switched to remote work in 2020, they used electronic documents instead of printing as frequently.
- › Our office services staff made every effort to buy 100 percent recycled paper. Staff only purchased paper with a lower recycled content if 100 per cent recycled content was not available for the required paper type.
- › BC Housing’s Records and Information Centre championed paper reduction in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated work with departments to move various files to completely electronic, particularly as large sections of staff began working at home exclusively and still required access to materials.



Employees Please complete your online HEALTH CHECK before entering!

ALL EMPLOYEES, CONTRACTORS AND VISITORS
Do not enter if in the last 14 days you have:

- traveled outside Canada
- been in contact with someone who has a probable or confirmed case of COVID-19
- been advised by your health authority or physician that you should self isolate
- been experiencing cold, flu or COVID-19-like symptoms, even mild ones

If any of these apply to you, please do not enter and proceed home.

Symptoms include

• fever	• sore throat	• headache	• nausea
• chills	• runny nose	• fatigue	• vomiting
• cough	• loss of smell or taste	• diarrhea	• muscle aches
• shortness of breath		• loss of appetite	

If you are experiencing symptoms, contact your doctor or call 811.
BC Housing Employees, please also advise your supervisor.

BC Housing’s digital COVID-19 Employee Health Check

- › The Human Resources Information Systems team has been digitizing HR Processes and moving all systems away from paper-based processes to automated, digitized and in some cases App-based processes. To date, this has included:
 - COVID-19 Employee Health Check
 - Teleworking Agreement
 - Employee Change Form
 - Payroll Change Form
- › The IT Department is also undertaking an IT Modernization project. This includes strengthening systems and putting tools in place to support greater flexibility in remote and teleworking, enabling secure digital signatures and secure data collection, and supporting digitized systems throughout the organization.



2. GHG Emissions: Fleet

TARGET NOT MET

In 2020, BC Housing had 61 fleet vehicles, primarily trucks and vans used by grounds and building maintenance staff. Office pool vehicles included Smart Cars and hybrid vehicles. Ten per cent of our fleet vehicles in 2020 were fuel-efficient.

In 2020, our greenhouse gas emissions from mobile sources (fleet vehicles, Modo vehicles, and grounds equipment) totaled 283 tonnes.

We have been reporting on GHG emissions related to fleet and equipment since 2010. During that time, we have improved the methodology for reporting, including measuring fleet emissions.

Beginning in 2015, we calculated GHG emissions using reported fuel consumption data. Due to the improved reporting methodology, we directly obtained most fuel consumption data, while estimating only a small portion. This minimized the uncertainty of estimation. For the calculation of kilometers travelled, we used odometer readings for each vehicle.

A baseline was established in the 2016/17 *livegreen* Sustainability Report for this measure (0.41 kg of GHG per kilometre travelled for fleet vehicles⁸) and targets have been set beginning in the 2017/18 reporting year.

In 2020/2021, we did not meet our target of five per cent reduction in GHGs per kilometre travelled from all fleet vehicles, as our greenhouse gas intensity was 0.40 kg of GHG per kilometer travelled.

While we did not meet our GHG intensity target, we did see a 14 per cent decrease in kilometres travelled in 2020 compared to 2019. This was because many of our staff worked remotely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and did not use the office pool vehicles as frequently. However, our building maintenance and ground crews continued to use vehicles for their work. Due to the reduction in kilometres travelled, we also consumed fewer litres of gasoline and diesel in 2020 compared to 2019.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › In addition to our fleet vehicles, we have a corporate account with Modo, a car-sharing cooperative, for staff use in the Vancouver Coastal and Fraser regions. Our Modo account gives our staff access to a wider range of vehicles and provides flexibility on where to get them. Starting in 2016, emissions from staff trips in Modo vehicles were calculated and reported alongside BC Housing's own fleet. Almost fifty per cent of kilometres driven in Modo cars in 2020 were taken in hybrid vehicles, resulting in greenhouse gas savings.

- › Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/21, we moved almost all in-person meetings, training, gatherings, and events to virtual, online platforms, reducing our work-related travel significantly.
- › We performed regular maintenance on all fleet vehicles to ensure that they are operating as efficiently as possible. When required, we replace older vehicles with newer, more efficient models.
- › The Lower Mainland grounds and maintenance fleet continued to use a GPS fleet tracking system to reduce fleet mileage. This allowed fleet managers to reduce kilometres driven by allocating resources more efficiently and monitoring idling behaviours.
- › Due to a shift to teleworking during the pandemic, average carbon emissions due to commuter trips per employee dropped almost 65 per cent in 2020 compared to our baseline year.
- › The annual employee sustainability survey showed that the trend of BC Housing employees choosing hybrid and fully electric vehicles continued in 2020. While the automobiles used by employees to commute to and from work in 2020 still run primarily on gasoline, 2020 saw the highest ever share of hybrid and fully electric vehicles at over eight per cent.



⁸ Please note, this was incorrectly identified as 0.39 in the 2019/2020 *livegreen* Sustainability Report.



3. Sustainable Procurement

TARGET MET

Sustainability is engrained in our procurement process. We consider sustainable product specifications, waste reduction and diversion, efficiency, and positive contributions to local communities when procuring our goods and services. Last year, 63 per cent of tenders included such sustainability factors, our highest percentage yet and a significant increase from 2019.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › Tender requirements include product specifications limited to green certified labels, or if not certified, a requirement to meet a minimum criterion.
- › We encourage contractors on social housing capital projects to participate in employment programs such as BladeRunners, Tradeworks, or Embers. These programs help clients including unemployed or low-skilled employed individuals, women, Indigenous Peoples, youth-at-risk, and persons with disabilities.
- › We inform social enterprises when issuing tender calls so that they are aware of the opportunities.
- › Where applicable, construction and service provider tender requirements include environmental criteria for specific land/building design issues and operations.
- › BC Housing is in the process of piloting a Social Procurement program that includes a target related to employment for Indigenous and equity-seeking groups. It also includes a target for the value of spend for goods and surveys purchased from Indigenous and equity-seeking businesses, social enterprises, and third-party certified social impact companies.
- › BC Housing has an Indigenous Procurement Policy, which uses procurement practices to support Indigenous business development.

Indigenous Relations at BC Housing

INDIGENOUS PARTNERSHIPS

BC Housing's work spans the province and takes place on the traditional territories and ancestral home of BC's First Nations peoples. We recognize that Indigenous People's history and connection to these lands are marginalized as a result of colonization. We also recognize that Indigenous People are disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate changes such as extreme heat events and wildfires and flooding.

Our 2020/2023 Service Plan includes the goal to build "Strong Indigenous partnerships and relationships based on principles of reconciliation." An important part of the relationship building includes an understanding that there is a lot we can learn from Indigenous culture, practices, and knowledge in terms of sustainability, resiliency, and care for the natural world. We are grateful for the existing relationships we have with Indigenous communities.

BC Housing is committed to partnering with First Nations. We have entered into Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with 19 First Nations to collaborate on the improvement of residential asset management practices.

BC Housing works with these First Nations to build capacity in the administration of housing and develop and share best practices in residential asset management. We provide practical training in critical areas, such as asset condition assessments, data management, capital planning, maintenance management, energy management, procurement, construction project management, funding and grant application writing. In turn, the First Nations provide unique insight to the issues and challenges of on-nation housing.

RECONCILIATION STRATEGY

BC Housing has committed to developing a Reconciliation Strategy. In August 2019, we contracted Two Worlds Consulting for this work. This Strategy will set a high-level direction for the next five years and establish a broader and more meaningful framework for how we conduct our business. This includes a stronger level of commitment related to our adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.



KIKÉKYELC in Kamloops is operated by Lii Michif Otipemisiwak Family and Community Services, and provides culturally safe, fully supported housing for Indigenous youth and Elders.



KIKÉKYELC in Kamloops, built to BC Energy Step Code Level 3 and opened in September 2020.



Speqəŋéutxw (Spaken) House in Victoria is operated by The Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness, and offers culturally supportive housing to Indigenous women experiencing homelessness.



Change Agent

Guiding and supporting others in taking actions towards sustainability

As a **Change Agent**, BC Housing serves as a leader in sustainability, working towards positive change with our clients and partners in the social housing sector, and the residential construction industry.

Results

AREA	MEASURE		2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
1) Employee Engagement on Sustainability ⁹	Percentage of employees who indicated they feel supported by BC Housing to make good sustainability choices at work and at home	Target	80%	80%	80%
		Result	85%	N/A	82%
2) Leadership in Sustainability and Residential Construction ¹⁰	Number of hours of training related to sustainable building practice, offered to the residential construction industry	Target	4,500hrs	4,500hrs	4,500hrs
		Result	3,214hrs	5,085hrs	2,215 hrs
3) Tenant Engagement on Sustainability	Percentage of tenants who indicated they had been involved in a <i>sustainability</i> activity ¹¹	Target	10%	15%	15%
		Result	8%	N/A	5%
4) GHG Emissions: Employee Commuting	Percentage reduction in GHG emissions from employee commuting (emissions per employee from 2009 levels)	Target	10%	10%	10%
		Result	-2%	-0.6%	64%

⁹ The survey was not administered in 2019/20.

¹⁰ This measure was introduced in 2016/17.

¹¹ Change in language in the tenant survey in 2020/21. The question was previously about participation in a "livegreen" activity, change to "sustainability" activity in 2020/21.



1. Employee Engagement on Sustainability

TARGET EXCEEDED

Sustainability is firmly engrained as part of our organizational culture at BC Housing, and is built into our training and onboarding for new employees. We support BC Housing employees to both reduce work-related GHG emissions and integrate sustainability into their home lives. Our *livegreen* Sustainability Plan has been in place for 10 years as we continue to act as a sustainability leader in the Canadian housing sector.

Our *livegreen* Employee Council is an employee-run council that plans activities and educational opportunities to raise awareness of sustainability issues. Our dedication to sustainability is paying off. In 2020/21, 82 per cent of employees indicated that they feel supported by BC Housing to make sustainable choices at home and at work.

As a result of this work BC Housing has been recognized as one of Canada's Greenest Employers for the seventh consecutive year.



A BC Housing employee connecting with nature.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

› Our employee green team, the *livegreen* Council, plays a key role in encouraging sustainable employee behaviour both in the workplace and at home. This helps to establish sustainable lifestyles for employees, families and communities. The committed and corporate-sponsored *livegreen* Council represents every branch of BC Housing. Council members work to a strategic plan that is informed by the findings of our annual sustainability survey. In 2020/21, despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the council initiated over 15 campaigns, articles and educational events, including:

- Events related to sustainable food choices
- Go by Bike Week
- A 30x30 Nature Challenge
- Lunch and Learns on various topics

With so many employees working from home, the events provided employees with an opportunity to connect socially with their colleagues, improving moods and fostering connections. The importance of nature was also highlighted for many around the province, as we found ways to explore safely outdoors and connect with nature.

- › BC Housing administers an annual sustainability survey to measure, evaluate, and monitor the sustainability practices of employees year over year. This monitoring allows the evaluation of the *livegreen* program's progress. The 2020 survey reflected the fact that most BC Housing employees were working from home during the pandemic, and not commuting into the office, therefore reducing their greenhouse gas emissions related to commuting. In addition, employees showed notable positive change in home recycling and disposal practices.
- › BC Housing's employee-led community investment program, Community Connections, had a record year in 2020, raising over \$300,000 for 102 different charities. Since the start of the program in 2008, \$2 million has been raised for local charities contributing to environmental, social, and economic sustainability programs in local communities in tangible ways. The program's Employer Supported Volunteerism component was limited by COVID-19 restrictions this year. Despite this, BC Housing staff participated in the Homeless Count, Coldest Night of the Year, Shoreline Cleanup, food bank deliveries and sorting and other volunteerism that could be done remotely or within COVID-19 protocols.



2. Leadership in Sustainability and Residential Construction

TARGET NOT MET

One of the goals in BC Housing's Service Plan is to provide "sustainability leadership in residential construction", bringing together two areas where we have significant leadership responsibilities. We partner with industry and government partners to initiate technical research and education projects that promote the durability and energy efficiency of new residential construction.

Last year, BC Housing provided over 2,215 hours¹² of training related to sustainable building practices to the residential construction industry through online seminars and pre-recorded webinars. We did not meet our target of 4,500 hours, due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on both BC Housing webinar scheduling and residential construction industry professionals.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › Now in its seventh year, BC Housing's [Building Excellence Research & Education Grants](#) program encourages research and education to improve the quality of residential construction, as well as strengthening consumer protection for buyers of new homes in B.C.

Projects funded in 2020/21 included:

- Developing a course on Retrofitting Buildings for Energy Efficiency in line with the CleanBC initiative.
 - Identifying the technical, economic and environmental challenges of simultaneous energy and seismic upgrade of existing buildings. Developing standard protocols to address these challenges through case studies.
 - Delivering workshops aimed at equipping South Asian contractors with information on how to save energy and manage energy costs of homes.
- › For a complete list of projects funded in 2020/21 or for more information about the grant, please visit: <https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/research-education-grants>
 - › Topics covered in Building Smart training for construction industry professionals included delivering thermal comfort in residential buildings and an introduction to the Integrated Design Process.



¹² The total number of hours is calculated based on the total number of participants for each training opportunity and the scheduled meeting time in hours.



Residents at a BC Housing building celebrate their newly built garden plots.



3. Tenant Engagement on Sustainability

TARGET NOT MET

BC Housing is the largest landlord in the province and manages over 7,000 housing units, which provide homes to many more tenants. Every two years, BC Housing administers a tenant survey.

In 2020/21, five per cent of our tenants participated in a sustainability activity, a slightly lower percentage than the past three years.¹³ This reduction in participation may be due to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the number of events held at directly managed social housing developments.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › Staff worked with tenants to reduce the amount of residential waste that goes to landfills through our organic waste diversion program.
- › The BC Housing People, Plants & Homes (PPH) program organizes events for BC Housing tenants across the province and helps residents at directly managed sites connect with gardening activities.

In 2020, the program undertook the following sustainability initiatives:

- Partnered with a local community garden that provided us with fresh produce and created a Garden to Table Meal program that allowed us to supply tenants with fresh and nutritious food on a weekly basis.
- Created informative weekly e-newsletters that are being distributed to tenants
- With the influx of cleaning supplies and plastic materials coming into our warehouse, PPH installed two new soft plastic receptacles in common areas.
- Held over-the-phone information sessions with tenants at one building about native plant and insect species. Tenants were provided with wooden tiles in the shape of insect, flowers and leaves that they painted. PPH then picked them up and installed the tiles on chain link fence that surrounded the kids playground.
- The Vancouver Island team partnered with the Victoria Food Recovery Network that rescues food from grocery stores. PPH used the food donations to create produce bags and made weekly deliveries to tenants.
- In the northern region, PPH installed 28 new community garden planters and initiated a coupon program that allowed tenants to purchase seedlings and grow food for themselves.

¹³ Source: BC Housing 2020 Tenant Survey



4. GHG Emissions: Employee Commuting

TARGET EXCEEDED

In 2020, our average GHG emissions per employee for commuting was extremely low, down 64 per cent from our baseline year, due to the fact that the majority of our staff were working from home during the COVID-19 Pandemic. As BC Housing returns to normal activity after the end of the COVID-19 Pandemic, it will be important to note whether an increase in telecommuting and remote work will allow us to maintain reductions in GHGs from commuting.

The proportion of alternatively fueled commuter vehicles (propane, hybrid, fully electric) compared to gasoline fueled commuter vehicles has increased steadily over time since 2009, with the highest ever share of hybrid & fully electric vehicles observed in 2020 at over eight per cent.

KEY ACTIONS TAKEN:

- › Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we replaced many in-person meetings with virtual meetings, reducing our work-related travel significantly.
- › BC Housing continued to support ongoing employee programs such as:
 - A transit pass program
 - Teleworking
 - Discounts on bikes and bike accessories as well as storage and route planning for cyclists
 - Taxi vouchers in emergency situations for employees who commute sustainably
 - Employee incentives to sustainable modes of transportation through the Green Rewards Program

Next Steps

Over the past 10 years, BC Housing has been guided in our sustainability efforts by the *livegreen* Sustainability Plan. The *livegreen* Sustainability Plan has been integrated with our corporate and branch plans to ensure we have been considering sustainability in all of our business practices, including employee engagement, procurement, and community connections.

In 2019, BC Housing conducted a review of our sustainability priorities and activities. This included an in-depth review of BC Housing's current approach to sustainability policy, governance, and decision-making. The review was followed by engagement with nearly 25 per cent of staff, including an advisory group and the executive committee. The assessment and engagement culminated in recommendations to inform future sustainability work which we began implementing in 2020.

BC Housing is engaged in a process of rethinking our definition of sustainability. This includes broadening our efforts to include Reconciliation with Indigenous People as well as the pursuit of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging in our programs and operations.

BC Housing is building on the work undertaken in 2019 to review our sustainability practices. We have developed a new Sustainability and Resilience Strategic Framework which will form the basis of a new Sustainability and Resilience Strategy, to replace the *livegreen* Sustainability Plan.

This Sustainability and Resilience Strategy will help shape our sustainability initiatives over the coming years. We will be publishing our new Sustainability and Resilience Strategy in 2021/22.



livegreen 