



Draft  
Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework

**May 2021**

BC Housing is committed to Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia. We are committed to embedding the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging, sustainability, and resilience into all our work.

The Draft Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework supports the integration of these responsibilities into BC Housing’s mission: to make a positive difference in people’s lives and communities through safe, affordable and quality housing.

Following approval of the Framework, BC Housing will develop a Sustainability and Resilience Strategy. The Strategy will detail our actions, timelines, and accountability for each strategic direction in the Framework.

BC Housing would like to thank Pinna Sustainability and Seriously Planning Consulting for their support and guidance during the development of the Draft Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework. Our thanks to BC Housing staff for their input and feedback on this important work.

## Territorial Acknowledgement

BC Housing acknowledges that we conduct our activities on the homelands of thousands of Indigenous peoples and many Nations across British Columbia. Each has their own unique traditions, culture, worldviews, languages, and history.

In BC there are 203 First Nation communities, seven different language families with 34 distinct languages. Many individuals identify as First Nations, Metis and Inuit. This high number of distinct Indigenous languages and cultures in BC is unique in Canada. We recognize that Indigenous peoples have lived in the area now known as BC for more than 10,000 years, and that colonialism is a current, ongoing process. BC Housing needs to learn to recognize how we perpetuate our participation in the harm and injustice from colonialism.

BC Housing is committed to adopting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action and implementing the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We humbly acknowledge that Indigenous people have taken care and stewarded these lands from time immemorial. Indigenous worldviews are more aligned with principles of sustainability than the current capitalistic system based on the premise of unlimited growth. We also recognize that many Indigenous leaders and community members are at the forefronts of fighting for protection of the environment. Many Indigenous peoples are most affected by the rapid changes in the weather patterns and their consequences such as: loss of ice, more extremely hot days and unprecedented wildfire smoke, loss of biodiversity and others.

We have much to learn from Indigenous ways of knowing and being in the world. We hope that this Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework takes us in the direction of working together to create a more just and sustainable world.

## Message from the CEO

I am proud of the work BC Housing employees and partners do each day to serve diverse communities across the province to access safe, affordable housing. Climate change is an unprecedented challenge facing our province, particularly our most vulnerable. The Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework will allow us to address these risks by building on our strength and community wisdom.

BC Housing operates on many Indigenous territories across the province. The Indigenous Peoples who have resided here since time immemorial have demonstrated immense resilience. They have deep rooted values of sustainability, practiced daily for hundreds of generations. BC Housing, and British Columbians, have so much to learn from Indigenous Peoples in BC about the histories of this province and the environmental shocks such as flood and earthquakes that, over time, they have proven resilient to. It is unacceptable that Indigenous Peoples today face multiple inequities due to colonial systems of oppression, including accessing culturally appropriate and sustainable housing. BC Housing is committed to righting this wrong, and to advance Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to light social, environmental, and cultural priorities in our society. Our organization is reflecting on and re-examining how to improve equity while also addressing sustainability and building resilience to climate change. Our Office of Equity Diversity Inclusion and Belonging was recently established to support and advance a deep equity analysis of BC Housing's work. We are committed to valuing underrepresented and marginalized voices. The Framework aims to be inclusive and collective to meet the needs of British Columbians and will bring in the voices of community through engagement.

The work of climate scientists underscores the need for direct and rapid action if the global community is going to restrict average global warming to 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and avoid worst case scenarios. In [CleanBC](#), the province has outlined a clear path to meet its 2030 climate targets. This Framework supports the call to action to hold global average temperature increase at 1.5°C and supports the province to meet the targets set out in [CleanBC](#).

I am grateful for those who contributed to the development of this Framework. It marks a meaningful moment in our history. We are broadening our understanding of sustainability, and the interconnections between Reconciliation, climate action, environmental protection, resilience, and equity. BC Housing will use this Framework to develop the Sustainability and Resilience Strategy that will help our organization along the path towards a sustainable, equitable and resilient BC.

# Table of Contents

ii

<b>Territorial Acknowledgement</b> .....	<b>iii</b>
<b>Message from the CEO</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Table of Contents</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b> .....	<b>6</b>
About BC Housing .....	6
About this Framework.....	8
<b>Background</b> .....	8
The Opportunity.....	8
Context and Purpose.....	10
How the Framework was Developed .....	11
<b>2. Our Work to Date</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Pursuing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples.....	11
Pursuing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging.....	12
Sustainability.....	12
Climate Adaptation and Resilience.....	13
<b>3. Sustainability and Resilience Framework</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Goal 1: Improved Housing Outcomes for British Columbians</b> .....	16
<b>Goal 2: Stronger BC Housing Service Programs and Community Housing Sector Capacity</b> .....	17
<b>Goal 3: Strong Indigenous Partnerships and Relationships Based on Principles of Reconciliation</b> .....	18
<b>Goal 4: Improved BC Housing service delivery through alignment with principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB), Reconciliation, sustainability and resilience. Also, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.</b> .....	20
<b>4. Next Steps</b> .....	<b>21</b>
<b>5. Appendix A - Definitions / Glossary</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>6. Appendix B - Sustainability Recommendations</b> .....	<b>27</b>

# 1. Introduction

## About BC Housing

BC Housing develops, manages and administers a wide range of affordable housing options across the province. Working with the ministry responsible for housing, all levels of government, the private sector, and non-profit sectors, BC Housing addresses critical gaps across the housing continuum. These range from emergency shelter and rent assistance in the private market to affordable home ownership. We also license residential builders, administer owner builder authorizations, and carry out research and education that benefits the residential construction industry, consumers and the affordable housing sector.

Since the declaration of the COVID-19 global pandemic and the March 2020 declaration of a provincial state of emergency, BC Housing collaborated with regional health authorities, municipalities, and non-profit shelter and housing providers to develop and advance the provincial response. During 2020 we mobilized to provide self-isolation sites, distributed personal protective equipment and meals, administered the BC Temporary Rent Supplement program, supported over 600 people to relocate to safe indoor accommodation from three encampment sites, secured 300 temporary spaces for women fleeing violence and more, while continuing to provide housing to over 110,000 households across the province.

BC Housing's COVID-19 response has taken place and exposed the interconnections between other major societal challenges: the deepening opioid crisis, rising homelessness, systemic inequities, discrimination, and increasing impacts of extreme weather patterns. Responding to the pandemic highlighted the limitations of addressing a single isolated challenge. To address this, BC Housing is committed to increasing our understanding of the systemic and interconnected causes of discrimination and inequity, so we can advance our mission to 'make a positive difference in people's lives and communities through safe, affordable and quality housing'. As a government agency, with major impacts on development and management of affordable housing in the province, we recognize our responsibility to conduct our work in a way that addresses the multitude of challenges facing British Columbians today.

## Mandate

BC Housing is responsible for fulfilling the directives of the Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing's [yearly mandate letter](#). Our social housing responsibilities reflect an order-in-council under the Ministry of Lands, Parks and Housing Act that established the British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing) in 1967. Our obligations related to strengthening consumer protection for new homebuyers and improving the quality of residential construction comes from the 1998 [Homeowner Protection Act](#).

### 2020 Mandate Letter Principles

- **Putting people first:** making decisions to meet people's needs. Ensuring that everyone is safe and can participate in the post-pandemic economic recovery that will work for everyone, not just those at the top. Making life more affordable for everyone.
- **Lasting and meaningful Reconciliation:** focus on creating opportunities for Indigenous peoples to be full partners in our economy. Providing a clear and sustainable path for everyone to work toward lasting recognition and Reconciliation.
- **Equity and anti-racism:** addressing systemic discrimination, increasing IBPOC (Indigenous, Black and People of Colour) representation within the public service, informing policy and budget decisions through a Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) lens.
- **A better future from fighting climate change:** implementing the provincial climate action plan: CleanBC, to create a low-carbon economy. Protecting the air, land, water and supporting communities to prepare for climate impacts.
- **A strong, sustainable economy that works for everyone:** building the clean, innovative economy of the future. Supporting British Columbians through the pandemic and to economic recovery.

**Mission:** Making a positive difference in people's lives and communities with safe, affordable, and quality housing.

**Vision:** BC Housing is a trusted leader and partner in sustainable solutions for British Columbians.

### Values:

- **Forward Thinking:** We see the way ahead and create flexible, adaptable solutions for the future
- **Client Focused:** We serve British Columbians and their communities. We are fair, respectful and understanding
- **Empowerment:** We are relationship builders, committed to making strong, sharing partnerships that respect everyone
- **Responsibility:** We have high professional standards. We are committed to making the best use of taxpayer resources. We are accountable, reliable and transparent in our work

## About this Framework

### Background

In 2019, BC Housing reviewed the *livegreen* Sustainability Plan and related sustainability projects across the organization. Included: an assessment of policy, governance, decision making and reporting within the context of best practices and global trends. The review involved consultation with an internal advisory group, the executive team, and engagement with 25% of BC Housing staff through regional workshops and interviews. The outcome of this review was a set of recommendations for the development of BC Housing's new Sustainability and Resilience Strategy.

These recommendations build on BC Housing's successes and are the foundation for sustainability work built during the previous decade. They provided an opportunity to broaden our understanding of what it means to pursue sustainability as an organization and across the housing sector. Two key recommendations:

- Creating a shared understanding of what sustainability means (including social sustainability)
- Embedding accountability for this renewed definition of sustainability into our governance structure and business practices

The draft recommendations from the review were shared with the Executive Committee and the Board of Commissioners at their 2019 strategic planning meetings leading to the creation of this Strategy Framework. Recommendations are in Appendix A.

### The Opportunity

Recognize the system-wide impacts of decision making and the social, environmental and financial implications of all BC Housing decisions: If successful, the Framework will begin the process of removing tensions between:

- Per unit construction costs and investing in systems that support equity, diversity, inclusion, belonging, Reconciliation, resilience, and sustainability
- Addressing the housing crisis and the ecological crisis when making procurement decisions
- Use short-term financial indicators and long-term social, environmental and financial return on investments
- Embrace a sense of urgency to act fast in a way that supports inclusion, diversity, equity, and longer-term planning

### Global Megatrends Facing Organizations Today

*Megatrends* are defined as trends that impact on a global scale. The following are important global trends that will affect BC Housing. They need to be considered and reflected in this framework:

- Increasing homelessness
- Increasing lack of affordability
- Growing resource scarcity (labour shortages / rising construction costs)
- Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPPA), and the imperative to seek Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in BC
- Climate change
- Gender inequality
- Social polarization
- Income inequality
- Aging Infrastructure
- Instability, and the changing nature of work (gig-economy)
- Emerging technology, data privacy and security

Source: <https://www.ipsos.com/sites/default/files/10-Mega-Trends-That-are-Reshaping-The-World.pdf>



- Understand the fast pace of efficiency, and the slower pace of equity, Reconciliation, healing, and inclusion

A Sustainability and Resilience Strategy is an opportunity to protect our organization. To advance system-wide resilience from future shocks and stresses from climate change, future pandemics, or other global megatrends and to protect our investments over time. This Strategy will drive innovation and leadership in the housing and construction sectors. Finally, it will more strongly align our values and the

outcomes of our work. As we move forward, we acknowledge that the Strategy will be a living document, supporting our sector to learn and improve over time.

### **Equity in the Sustainability Review**

Key equity points from the Sustainability Review:

- Create a common understanding of sustainability
- Ensure accountability to support equity, diversity, social justice, inclusion, and Reconciliation
- Extend BC Housing’s reach into communities through engaging tenants as sustainability champions
- For project and program risk assessment, include social (e.g., health and equity) and environmental (e.g., climate) risks into Enterprise Risk Management
- Develop a Social Return on Investment (SROI) decision-making tool. Model the social outcomes (health, equity, social justice, reconciliation, etc.) of investments before final investment decisions are made
- Include equity, social justice and Indigenous Reconciliation content into sustainability training materials
- Publish annual Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to show sustainability outcomes of housing investments. Commit to sharing improvements over time.

When asked “In one word: What comes to mind when you think of sustainability?” Many respondents stated “equity”.

When asked, “Considering upcoming capital investments, changing landscapes, and pressures to deliver new units, what are the opportunities for sustainability advancement now?” Respondents told us that “BC Housing needs to dovetail this work with our upcoming directions: social equity, Reconciliation and accessibility”.

BC Housing is ready to integrate equity and Reconciliation into sustainability work.

## Context and Purpose

The Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework builds on BC Housing’s past work and new priorities. It is guided by the need for just, resilient, environmentally sound, and fiscally responsible housing that meets the needs of our changing world. We are acting with a renewed sense of commitment to address systemic racism and inequalities in all contexts. We know that many people we serve are disproportionately impacted by climatic changes already being experienced in our province, such as extreme heat and wildfire smoke. We know that focusing on just one issue can create unintended consequences. – such as the impact of focusing on energy efficiency resulting in housing prone to overheating. The Framework takes a system-wide view. This creates an opportunity to find new solutions and create new opportunities for equitable, inclusive, sustainable, and resilient housing that advances Reconciliation.

### Integration with existing and ongoing work

The Framework was developed within the context of the following BC Housing documents:

- Draft Service Plan (2021/22 – 2023/24)
- Reconciliation: Moving Forward Together report (2020)
- COVID 19 Recovery Plan (2020)
- Sustainability Recommendations (2019)
- *livegreen* Sustainability Plan
- Enterprise Risk Management

The Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework:

- Outlines how our sustainability and resilience work supports BC Housing’s vision, mission, goals, and guiding principles
- Offers **Sustainability Objectives** that align with each Service Plan goal. Each goal advances sustainability and resilience
- Identifies **Strategic Directions** to achieve our sustainability objectives
- Provides an **Engagement Plan** to grow new audiences

The Framework structure and goals align and integrate with BC Housing’s 2021/22 Service Plan. Following Framework development, BC Housing will start a Sustainability and Resilience Strategy. This will describe actions, timelines, resource requirements and provide a reporting structure for each strategic direction in the Framework. Building on current work, the Framework will be used as a tool to embed resilience and sustainability priorities into BC Housing’s governance structure (Figure 1 below).



Figure 1: Sustainability and Resiliency Strategy in BC Housing's Governance Framework

## How the Framework was Developed

Over forty staff from across BC Housing provided guidance and support on the creation of the Framework. Staff were organized into advisory committees or *Transition Teams*. These Teams focused on three themes based on 2021/22 Service Plan Goals:

1. Improving Housing Outcomes
2. Strengthening BC Housing Service Programs and Community Housing Sector Capacity
3. Improving BC Housing's Service Delivery Team.

One overarching committee, the Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Development Team, were responsible for integrating all aspects of the Framework. After the Transition Teams review the work, the Framework will be presented to the Executive Committee for final review and approval.

Throughout, it was acknowledged that more engagement is needed to strengthen Indigenous partnerships and relationships based on Reconciliation principles (Service Plan Goal 3). There is a need to create a stronger connection and integration of BC Housing's Reconciliation work with our Sustainability and Resilience commitments.

## 2. Our Work to Date

### Pursuing Truth and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples

Since our 1967 start, BC Housing has operated on the traditional territories and ancestral homes of Indigenous peoples across the province. We recognize that Indigenous People's history and connection to these lands was disrupted because of colonization. To this day colonization continues to cause harm and intergenerational impacts on Indigenous People across our shared lands. As a landlord, employer and funder of affordable housing programs, BC Housing has the responsibility for decolonizing our relationship with Indigenous peoples.

BC Housing has strong relationships with Indigenous community partners. We work to enhance these relationships and include the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) into our daily business practices. BC Housing is committed to ending racist and discriminatory policies, processes and approaches. We are committed to educating our staff about the past and ongoing acts of colonization we are grappling with today. We recognize that Reconciliation is an ongoing process and that we are on a learning journey.

Recently, BC Housing worked with Two Worlds Consulting (TWC) to learn what we are doing well and what we need to change to improve our Reconciliation path. Based on this work, with feedback from Indigenous partners, we created the Moving Forward Together Roadmap. The Roadmap identifies short-, medium- and long-term actions, and commits BC Housing to:

Principles of Decolonization and Reconciliation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Indigenous-led</li><li>• Community-driven</li><li>• Collaborative</li><li>• Mutual respect</li><li>• Reciprocity</li><li>• Self awareness and self reflection</li><li>• Effective communication</li><li>• Flexibility</li><li>• Builds capacity</li><li>• Upholds Indigenous self-determination</li></ul>

- Work with Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations to assess BC Housing policies and practices based on a Reconciliation lens and decolonization
- Seek input from Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations on how they would like to be engaged in next steps
- Continue engaging with Indigenous Nations, communities and organizations on the development of a Reconciliation Strategy
- Continue sharing information, listening and getting feedback on how to develop and use a Reconciliation Strategy

BC Housing is working on making these commitments. While not final yet, they are a guide for the development of the Framework.

## Pursuing Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

As an affordable housing agency, BC Housing knows that racialized people are disproportionately represented in homeless and low-income communities. We understand that societal and financial injustices caused by racism and poverty are perpetuated within our society and institutions. Challenges to equity include worsening economic inequality, unemployment, housing affordability, homelessness, and increasing impacts of climate change. Racial justice, Reconciliation is linked to healthier, equitable communities. We recognize systemic barriers and how implicit biases continue to impact Indigenous and other marginalized populations in BC. This includes, but isn't limited to: racialized people, people with a disability, 2SLGBTQIA+, people who experience the effects of intergenerational poverty, immigrants, and refugees.

BC Housing helps with on-going provincial efforts to address inequity. We strive to provide safe, affordable housing to those in need. We also work to provide supports to residents disproportionately impacted by climate change.

To advance our commitment to equity, BC Housing is conducting a deep equity analysis of our operations, programs, policies, strategies, methods, and measures. BC Housing, through the Office of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging, will work with leadership, staff and partners to integrate equity, diversity, inclusion and belonging principles into all the work we do. Like Reconciliation, this will involve engaging with employees and partners through a comprehensive assessment plan and culturally inclusive consultation. We commit to ensuring supports are available for employees who identify as Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, People with Disabilities and 2SLGBTQIA+.

## Sustainability

BC Housing's past sustainability efforts, like the *livegreen* Plan and other initiatives, brought significant value to the organization and the housing sector. More energy-efficient and low-carbon social housing buildings, innovative building designs, organizational and industry improvements in waste management, and high levels of employee engagement were created.

Greener buildings help us make more socially-just buildings. BC Housing staff consider themselves agents of change. They are recognized leaders in sustainable residential construction research and education. Some noteworthy achievements:

- Reduced our greenhouse gas emissions by 31% in 2019 (against 2005 baseline). We have had carbon neutral status since 2010

- Saved money with strict energy performance standards for new construction and major building retrofits resulting in lower utility costs
- Achieved higher energy standards with more than 60 buildings registered with the Canadian Green Building Council. Received 49 Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certifications
- Support innovation: four Passive House projects in the BC Housing project portfolio
- Completed 11 projects that achieved Step Code levels 3 or higher (2019)
- Grew industry collaborations: with numerous publications and training events on Green and resilient building technologies
- Awarded one of Canada's Greenest Employers for six consecutive years

These are significant achievements. We recognize our efforts need to be faster and happen more often. We must build resilience into the most catastrophic consequences of global warming, biodiversity loss and other strains on natural systems. To be successful, we must make sustainability and resilience enhance Reconciliation, equity, inclusion, diversity and belonging.

## Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Over the past 10 years, most of our sustainability work focused on climate mitigation or reducing our global greenhouse gas emissions. This changed in the last few years. Some extreme weather events – very poor air quality due to wildfire smoke, extremely hot, record-breaking temperatures, and more flooding events, show that climate change is a social issue. Its impacts already affect our tenants, buildings and organization. BC Housing is taking action to deal with climate change in the following ways:

- Conducted a high-level climate risk assessment. This identified our top risks: hotter and drier summers, warmer and wetter winters, and increased risk of flooding. These could potentially impact the health and safety of tenants, increase operating building costs, and put new demands on our resources.
- Started a collaborative, multi-year knowledge and capacity building research project: Mobilizing Building Adaptation and Resilience (MBAR). This project aims to help people protect their homes and buildings from climatic changes and seismic shocks. Pilot projects get access to resources and renovation, design expertise to help buildings stay comfortable, safe and resilient, even with heavier rainfall, hotter summers, wildfires, flooding, and windstorms
- Researched and published low-carbon, resilient building guides and bulletins for the residential construction industry
- Conducted a pilot project on ways to increase social connections and resilience among social housing tenants
- Created a COVID Recovery Plan focused on equity, sustainability, resilience, learning and collaboration

As the global pandemic unfolded in 2020, BC Housing activated Emergency Response Plans to adapt to new challenges and priorities. BC Housing's COVID response was reviewed, and lessons were captured to inform future work. Our recent and ongoing pandemic experiences show how vital upholding equity is when preparing for unexpected shocks and ongoing stresses. We are committed to making a more resilient organization and building stronger communities. We want to better support people's health and well-being during difficult times.

## Shocks and Stresses

For more resiliency, BC Housing must anticipate and plan for future **shocks** and **stresses** that will challenge our ability to deliver on our mandate.

**Shocks** are events that outstrip the capacity of a society to cope (UNDP). British Columbians experience a range of shocks every year. A changing climate will cause many more events. To prepare for shocks, we need to identify and reduce risks and enhance resiliency. Known shocks include:

- Earthquakes
- Forest fires / Air quality
- Flooding
- Extreme weather
- Public health emergencies (opioid crisis, pandemics)

**Stresses** are long-term pressures that undermine the stability of a system and increase vulnerability within it (USAID). Over time, these changes can gradually compromise health and safety, increase building maintenance and repair, and put new demands on an organization.

- **Climate stresses:** Hotter, drier summers; wetter, warmer winters; stronger storm events
- **Socio-economic stresses:** Affordability, aging populations, food insecurity, homelessness, gender inequity, poverty, racism, ongoing colonialization.
- **Environmental stresses:** Species extinction, accumulation of toxins in ecosystems, climate collapse

### 3. Sustainability and Resilience Framework

This section presents the Sustainability and Resilience Framework for further engagement and strategy development. Sustainability Objectives and Strategic Directions are aligned with each BC Housing 2021-22 Service Plan goal. Some strategic directions may apply across multiple goal areas. The figure below provides an overview of the four Service Plan Goals and associated Sustainability Objectives. The following pages include a list of Strategic Directions under each of the Sustainability Objectives.



## **Goal 1: Improved Housing Outcomes for British Columbians**

Goal 1 in the Service Plan is to improve housing outcomes in many ways. The Sustainability and Resilience Strategy Framework focus for this goal is improving housing outcomes through resilient and sustainable construction and renovation practices. This goal also refers to consumer protection work related residential construction quality.

### **Sustainability Objective**

Advance sustainable, low-carbon, innovative and resilient buildings that promote equity, inclusivity and Reconciliation. Fostering strong communities with buildings that perform well over time.

### **Strategic Directions**

1. Better leverage affordable and market housing investments to achieve cultural, equity, environmental, and financial performance outcomes. ‘Future proofing’ housing infrastructure to climate change and reducing total costs of ownership over time.
2. Develop a higher level of accountability for sustainability performance requirements for new construction projects. This includes updating BC Housing’s sustainability governance and accountability framework, setting ambitious targets, improving monitoring and reporting, and more.
3. Develop clear performance requirements for the renovation and maintenance of building assets to improve sustainability performance over buildings’ lifetime.
4. Develop innovative tools and resources to streamline management and report on equity, Reconciliation, sustainability and resilience outcomes related to new construction and renovation.
5. Enhance our commitment to develop knowledge, provide guidance, tools, and tangible examples to lead the building design and construction industry in its transformation towards sustainable, equitable and resilient building practices



## **Goal 2: Stronger BC Housing Service Programs and Community Housing<sup>1</sup> Sector Capacity**

The community housing sector, including non-profit, co-op housing providers and BC Housing's directly managed units, play various roles in tenant well-being, including low-income families and individuals, seniors, people with disabilities and people from equity-denied groups. BC Housing plays a critical role in supporting the capacity development of the community housing sector.

### **Sustainability Objectives**

The Community Housing Sector<sup>1</sup> is actively supported in developing their capacity to build and manage safe, healthy, affordable, low carbon and resilient housing.

### **Strategic Directions**

1. Further enhance sustainability capacity and resiliency in the community housing sector. Provide sustainability training and tools for non-profit organizations and BC Housing staff.
2. Empower and engage affordable housing tenants and households from the project building design stage through to ongoing building operations and maintenance.
3. Engage tenants and households as sustainability champions to support grassroots sustainability initiatives. Include food security, emergency preparedness and response, cultural supports, and community building projects.
4. Identify opportunities to advance sustainable property management practices in directly managed housing.
5. Continue to leverage the experience and learnings within the directly managed portfolio for the benefit of the broader social and market housing sectors. Include development and sharing of tools, training, design guides, and other resources that meet equity, Reconciliation, sustainability, and resilience goals.

---

<sup>1</sup> The community housing sector includes non-profit affordable housing providers, co-ops, and housing managed directly by BC Housing staff.

## Goal 3: Strong Indigenous Partnerships and Relationships Based on Principles of Reconciliation

Many Indigenous peoples face countless housing challenges compared to other British Columbians. In response, BC Housing recently completed the first phase of a Reconciliation Report based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) for our mandate and situation. Developed in partnership with Indigenous organizations, communities and First Nations, the What We Heard report titled: *Reconciliation: Moving Forward Together*, lays out several recommendations for BC Housing to explore when developing the Reconciliation Strategy.

This goal refers to our Reconciliation work and our commitment to uplift Indigenous peoples in every aspect of our operations. Strategic directions under this goal may apply to the other goal areas.

### Sustainability Objective

In alignment with BC's 2019 Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act, **BC Housing will emphasize Indigenous peoples' rights to live in dignity, to maintain and strengthen Indigenous institutions, cultures and traditions and to pursue self-determined housing.** This includes prioritizing high quality, low carbon, resilient, culturally appropriate, and affordable housing that is in keeping with Indigenous needs and aspirations.

### Strategic Directions

1. Engage with Indigenous partners and tenants to determine how BC Housing can better operationalize the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People (UNDRIP) and the call to action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to support sustainable, resilient Indigenous communities.
2. Develop and deliver education and training sessions to BC Housing staff and partners on implementing UNDRIP and TRC recommendations.
3. Establish an Indigenous partner's table to review and co-develop BC Housing's Indigenous housing policies, plans and programs through a cultural safety lens based on a jointly developed Terms of Reference.
4. Enhance efforts to safely include Indigenous people into all levels of the organization, both through hiring practices and in partnership.
5. Enhance efforts to focus resources towards Indigenous-led housing projects that advance sustainability and resilience.

6. Seek out opportunities to enhance capacity that supports self-determined, sustainable, resilient housing.
7. Collaborate with organizations such as the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA), the First Nations Housing Infrastructure Committee (FNHIC), and others. Together, work to accelerate our efforts to providing culturally appropriate housing that achieves high sustainability and Resilience outcomes for Indigenous tenants.

## **Goal 4: Improved BC Housing service delivery through alignment with principles of Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging (EDIB), Reconciliation, sustainability and resilience. Also, lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic.**

This goal focuses on how we deliver services while addressing social and environmental injustices. How can we reduce our negative impact on climate change and climate breakdown? How can we be more prepared to manage other risks, like earthquakes and pandemics? Strategic directions under this goal are internally focused and help us include sustainability and resilience in our work.

### **Sustainability Objective**

Integrate equity, inclusion, low-carbon resilience, and sustainability into BC Housing's programs, policies and business practices.

### **Strategic Directions:**

1. Work across the organization with staff to create and communicate a common understanding of what sustainability and resilience means at BC Housing. Show how this connects to EDIB and Reconciliation. Ensure efforts are consistent in practical applications within specific business areas.
2. Formalize accountability for equity, Reconciliation, sustainability and resilience into BC Housing's governance. Include integration into board oversight, cross-organizational management systems, and employee performance management.
3. Further embed equity, Reconciliation, sustainability and resilience into corporate planning and risk management.
4. Develop the tools and resources required to streamline equity, Reconciliation, sustainability, and resilience into BC Housing's business practices to enhance quality and ease of collaboration.
5. Improve employee and organizational knowledge, competency and capacity in equity, Reconciliation, sustainability and resilience decision-making, risk management and performance tracking.
6. Set effective, ambitious targets with appropriate timelines and resources to meaningfully achieve intended outcomes. Pair this with a comprehensive and transparent reporting framework to enhance the use of all BC Housing sustainability-related policies (e.g.: EDIB, Reconciliation, emissions reductions, waste, and environmental performance).

## 4. Next Steps

Engagement is an important next step to develop the Sustainability and Resilience Framework and Strategy. To date, we have not engaged on this topic with Indigenous communities or with our external stakeholders, the people we serve, work with, and others impacted by our actions. We are developing an engagement process for our partners and stakeholders to review and provide input for our new Sustainability and Resilience Framework and resulting strategy. These activities will take place in the next few months. Once the Draft Framework is final, we will begin creating the Sustainability and Resilience Strategy. It will address additional levels of detail, including strategies and actions. Key next steps:

- Continue to work with the existing Transition Teams. Create an additional Transition Team for Goal 3: Strong Indigenous Partnerships and Relationships Based on Principles of Reconciliation
- Design an engagement process, supporting materials and other needed resources. This includes: development of engagement principles, stakeholder groups' mapping and prioritization for each of the Transition Teams and developing an engagement process
- Implement engagement
- Capture and include engagement feedback for review

### Key objectives of the stakeholders' engagement process:

- Validate strategic sustainability objectives and directions
- Understand how stakeholder groups might be impacted (negatively and positively) by BC Housing's sustainability and resilience work
- Inform the development of the strategy – provide specific actions, KPIs, accountability
- Explore how BC Housing can better collaborate with stakeholders to advance Reconciliation, equity, sustainability, and resilience

### Areas to develop:

- Continue to explore how to uplift Indigenous ways of knowing. Include diverse voices as we continue to develop strategic directions and actions
- Develop instructions for engagement with Indigenous representatives and equity-seeking groups. Support culturally safe conversations and processes
- Create performance metrics and targets to create accountability and help us be successful
- Develop an implementation plan including resource requirements, timeframes, partners, etc.
- Define roles and responsibilities for BC Housing as an organization. Work with partners and other community leaders to identify roles for their organizations
- Develop a reporting framework that supports inclusion of diversity, Indigenous knowledge and cultural practices and continual improvement
- Create formal and informal connections with current projects underway to advance other organizational commitments. Ensure there is a strong focus on Reconciliation and Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging

## 5. Appendix A - Definitions / Glossary

This section provides a definition of terms used in the Sustainability and Resilience Framework. These are applied, suggested definitions. These will be reviewed to ensure our organizational values and commitments are reflected.

### 2SLGBTQIA+

Two Spirit, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Queer, Intersex, Asexual. The placement of Two Spirit (2S) first is to recognize that Indigenous people are the first peoples of this land and their understanding of gender and sexuality precedes colonization. The '+' is for all the ever-expanding ways we become aware of sexual orientations and gender diversity. (Source: [Equity & Inclusion Glossary of Terms - UBC Equity & Inclusion Office](#)).

### Belonging

Belonging is defined as, “the feeling of security and support when there is a sense of acceptance and inclusion for a member of a certain group”. Feeling a sense of belonging is about feeling comfortable and safe to bring one’s full self to work. Creating a sense of belonging at work involves the interplay of three mutually reinforcing elements: feeling comfortable at work, including being treated fairly and respected at work, feeling connected to one’s colleagues and one’s teams. Belonging feels like one’s contributions and strengths matter. Ensuring a feeling of achievement and that one is making a meaningful impact on organizational goals.

Source: [Creating a culture of belonging | Deloitte Insights](#) and [Why Does Belonging Matter at Work? | Blog.SHRM.org](#)

### Climate Change

Climate change is a long-term change in average weather patterns that have come to define Earth's local, regional and global climates. These changes have a broad range of observed effects that are synonymous with the term. Changes observed in Earth’s climate since the early 20th century are primarily driven by human activities, particularly fossil fuel burning. These increase heat-trapping greenhouse gas levels in Earth’s atmosphere, raising Earth’s average surface temperature. These human-produced temperature increases are commonly referred to as global warming. (Source: [NASA, Global Climate Change](#))

### Community Housing Sector

Includes Non- Profit, affordable, social, and subsidized housing providers.

### Diversity

Diversity includes all the ways that people differ from one another. It includes many individual attributes such as gender, race, ancestry, language, age, sexual orientation, religion, socio-economic background, immigrant, and newcomer status physical ability, learning style, ethnic origin, life

experience and age. Teams and groups on their own can be diverse, individuals cannot. (Source: BCH Intranet and [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)).

## **DRIPPA**

Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (Declaration Act) – Landmark legislation to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples in B.C., developed collaboratively by the Province and the First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC). The Declaration Act took effect on November 28, 2019.

The Act mandates B.C., in consultation and cooperation with Indigenous peoples, to take all measures necessary to bring provincial laws into alignment with the UN Declaration and to develop an action plan to meet the objectives of the UN Declaration, with annual public reporting to monitor progress and ensure accountability. The Act enables new decision-making agreements between B.C. and Indigenous governing bodies on decisions that directly affect Indigenous peoples – with clear processes, administrative fairness and transparency. The Act acknowledges Indigenous governing bodies as determined and recognized by the citizens of the Nation.

(Source: [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act; 2019/2020 Annual Report](#))

The purposes of this Act are as follows:

- (a) to affirm the application of the Declaration to the laws of British Columbia;
- (b) to contribute to the implementation of the Declaration;
- (c) to support the affirmation of, and develop relationships with, Indigenous governing bodies.

(<https://www.leg.bc.ca/parliamentary-business/legislation-debates-proceedings/41st-parliament/4th-session/bills/first-reading/gov41-1>)

## **Equity**

The effort to provide different levels of support based on an individual's or group's needs to achieve fairness in outcomes. Working to achieve equity acknowledges unequal starting places and involves addressing root causes of inequities, not just their manifestation. This includes elimination of policies, practices, attitudes, and other cultural messages that reinforce differential outcomes or fail to eliminate them. (Source: [Key-Equity-Terms-and-Concepts-vol1.pdf \(cssp.org\)](#) and British Columbia's Office of Human Rights Commissioner, "Disaggregated Demographic Data collection in British Columbia: The grandmother perspective", September 2020 )

Urban Sustainability Directors Network identified four types of equity: Procedural (engagement & representation), Distributional (Access), Structural, Transgenerational (unfair burdens on future generations).

## **Global Warming**

See Climate Change.

## **Inclusion**

Inclusion builds a culture and state of belonging. Where contributions and participation of people of different backgrounds and identities are actively invited, valued, and integrated equitably into

processes, activities, decision and policy making, including as decision makers and collaborators. Inclusion involves all people being given opportunities to grow and feel they belong. Diversity efforts alone do not create inclusive environments. Inclusion involves a sense of being able to bring your full self as you are and being accepted, rather than feeling the need to assimilate (Source: [Key-Equity-Terms-and-Concepts-vol1.pdf \(cssp.org\)](#) and Ford Foundation).

### **Individual Racism**

The attitudes and actions of individuals that support or perpetuate racism. Individual or interpersonal racism can occur on a conscious or unconscious level and be active or passive. (Source: [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#)).

### **Institutional Racism**

Institutional racism refers to the ways institutional policies and practices can create different outcomes for different groups. Addressing institutional racism requires the examination and dismantling of policies and practices that serve to perpetuate disparities. (Source: [Racial Equity Tools Glossary](#) and [Key-Equity-Terms-and-Concepts-vol1.pdf \(cssp.org\)](#) ).

### **Reconciliation**

Reconciliation emerged as a response to the historical injustices and discrimination against Indigenous peoples resulting from colonial systems and ethnocentric views that centred Western<sup>3</sup> (e.g., European/North American) ideals and knowledge systems. For over a century, Canada's colonial policies have sought to eliminate the rights, governments, cultures, resources, lands, languages, and institutions of Indigenous peoples with the goal of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their rights, lands, and title and assimilating them into "mainstream" Western culture. (Source: Reconciliation report)

Reconciliation is about acknowledging and addressing these inequalities. It's about working to establish and maintain a mutually respectful relationship between Indigenous and non- Indigenous peoples. Reconciliation ensures systemic and cultural change to eliminate racist and discriminatory practices, policies, and approaches within organizations and in the business that they pursue to build respectful and trust-based relationships.

### **Resilience or Resiliency**

The capacity of individuals, communities, institutions, businesses, and systems within a city to survive, adapt and thrive, no matter what kinds of chronic stresses and acute shocks they experience. (100 Resilient Cities)

Resilience is the capacity of a system, an individual, a forest, a city, or an economy, to deal with change and continue developing. It is about the capacity to use shocks and disturbances like a financial crisis or climate change to spur renewal and innovative thinking. Resilience thinking embraces learning, diversity and above all the belief that humans and nature are strongly coupled to the point that they should be conceived as one social-ecological system. ([Stockholm Resilience Centre](#))



## **Social Return On Investment** - SROI

SROI is an internationally standardized methodology for describing and understanding the financial value of outcomes created through a social investment. It reveals how much social value is created for every dollar invested. SROI combines quantitative, qualitative, and participatory research techniques. (Source: Social Return On Investment (SROI) Of Affordable Housing Development report – in BC Housing publications)

## **Social Resilience**

“The ability of groups, or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances as a result of social, political and environmental change (Adger, 2000)

## **Sustainability**

“The state of the global system, which includes environment, social and economic subsystems, in which the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’ (International Organization for Standardization (ISO)

We define sustainability as “enabling people to lead socially just lives within ecological limits.” BCIT

### Sustainability Principles

In a sustainable society,

- I. ... people are not subject to conditions that systematically undermined their capacity to meet their needs (such as shelter, food, sense of belonging and purpose)  
  
and nature is not subject to systematically increasing
- II. ... concentrations of substances extracted from the Earth’s crust (such as fossil fuels or heavy metals);
- III. ... concentrations of substances produced by society (such as plastic or toxic materials)
- IV. ... degradation by physical means (such as deforestation).

(Source: The Natural Step, quoted in BC Housing’s Sustainability Policy)

## **Systemic Racism**

Systemic racism is racism that has formed the foundation of current society. It is embedded in all aspects of society. It involves institutions, policies, practices, ideas, and behaviours. Systemic racism includes culture including media representations, social practices and policies connected to work, education, health care, and other systems that represent and celebrate particular dominant groups and negatively impact the safety and wellbeing of nondominant, equity-seeking groups. (Source: Kids Help Phone and Centre for Diversity and Inclusion, Useful Definitions around Racism)

### **TRC - The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC)**

“For over 150 years, residential schools operated in Canada. Over 150,000 children attended these schools. Many never returned. Often underfunded and overcrowded, these schools were used as a tool of assimilation by the Canadian state and churches. Thousands of students suffered physical and sexual abuse. All suffered from loneliness and a longing to be home with their families. The damages inflicted by these schools continue to this day. In 2009, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada began a multi-year process to listen to Survivors, communities and others affected by the Residential School system. The resulting collection of statements, documents and other materials now forms the heart of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation.” (Source: [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba](#))

### **UNDRIP - The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples**

UNDRIP is the most comprehensive international instrument on the rights of Indigenous peoples. It establishes a universal framework of minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the Indigenous peoples of the world. It elaborates on existing human rights standards and fundamental freedoms as they apply to the specific situation of Indigenous peoples.

It was adopted by the General Assembly on Thursday, 13 September 2007, by a majority of 144 states in favour, 4 votes against (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the United States) and 11 abstentions. Years later the four countries that voted against have reversed their position (Canada in 2016) and now support the UN Declaration. (Source: [United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs Indigenous Peoples](#))

## **6. Appendix B - Sustainability Recommendations**

An excerpt of eleven Recommendations from the Sustainability Review report submitted to BC Housing by Pinna Sustainability in November 2019 is available as a separate document.