



Enabling Housing Choice North Project

Enabling Diverse Housing Development in Peace River



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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT




We, the Rural Development Network (RDN) and the Enabling Housing Choice North (EHC) project acknowledge that Peace River, Alberta, Canada is located on Treaty 8 territory, signed in 1899. This territory is the shared traditional and ancestral home of the Cree, Dene, and Métis peoples.

We acknowledge that we are all treaty people with a shared unity that is tied to the land. Through our work we take part in that responsibility and with our treaty connections. We stand in alliance with all treaty people and take ownership in all that we do, with a mind toward reconciliation now and in our ongoing endeavours.

Furthermore, we acknowledge the ancestors of all Treaty 8 Nations who have lived on this land and their descendants who will continue to live here. We appreciate and honour the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are with us today and those who have gone before us.

RDN is committed to supporting the implementation of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action, and believes in the need for meaningful engagement and consent with Indigenous peoples in the community. As this project specifically touches on development and planning concepts which are built on a colonial system of governance and land use management, we also recognize that we have more work to unpack the systems in which we are upholding and working within.

It is our sincere hope that the findings provided in this report will serve to address Peace River's diverse housing needs and provide greater housing security and inclusion for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the community and surrounding area



PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the Alberta Real Estate Foundation for their funding and support of this project. We would also like to express our appreciation to Peace River in their efforts to help tackle housing diversity and choice in Albertan communities through participation in the Enabling Housing Choice (EHC) North project.

Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all the individuals from Peace River who participated in the internal interview process for this project. Your willingness to share your valuable insights, experiences, and perspectives has been instrumental in shaping the recommendations provided in this report.

Lastly, we extend our gratitude to all the external interview participants from the local housing industry in Peace River and surrounding area. We greatly appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to sharing your insights, identifying key challenges, highlighting opportunities, and suggesting ways to advance Peace River's diverse housing goals. Your expertise and contributions have played a vital role in shaping the understanding of the current housing landscape and guiding us towards meaningful solutions.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Sustainable Housing Initiative (SHI) partnered with Peace River to prepare *Enabling Diverse Housing Development in Peace River*, which offers recommendations for diversifying housing choice and development in the community.

The EHC North Project aims to provide insight on how rural Alberta municipalities can support growth in their communities and help provide more housing options and choices to their residents through local policy changes and capacity building strategies.

SHI and Peace River's partnership will support the project's goals in constructing meaningful policy change while contributing to the Enabling Housing Choice Guidebook. Furthermore, it is intended to assist Peace River in determining municipal tools and areas of opportunity for enabling diverse housing development that meets the needs of Peace River's residents.

PURPOSE

The purpose of *Enabling Diverse Housing Development in Peace River* is to investigate and analyze the current barriers to diverse housing development in the Town, while also identifying municipal tools, incentive policies, and areas of opportunity that can be leveraged to enable more diverse housing options. By examining the existing landscape, the report seeks to provide actionable recommendations and strategies that the municipality can implement to foster a more inclusive and sustainable housing environment, while also accommodating the diverse needs of its residents.

Our research, along with feedback gathered through community engagement, shows that Peace River has made meaningful progress in increasing the availability of diverse and affordable housing options. This report reflects the Town's continued efforts to address local housing needs.

The recommendations included are intended to build on the progress already made and encourage practical discussion about how Peace River can maintain and strengthen its approach to housing choice and diversity. In addition, this report is designed to support the goals and policy directions outlined in the following documents:

- Peace River *Municipal Development Plan* (2013)
- Peace River *Land Use Bylaw* (2025)

PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of *Enabling Diverse Housing Development in Peace River* consisted of the following main elements:

- Researching best practices and reviewing Peace River’s statutory plans, strategies and relevant guiding documents.
 - Understanding the context that characterizes Peace River’s current housing landscape through a review of published housing related data.
 - Gathering locally informed opinions on Peace River’s housing situation through interviews with subject matter experts and housing interest groups.
 - Identifying the various opportunities and challenges associated with diverse housing development within Peace River’s housing landscape.
 - Making recommendations on municipal tools and approaches that will have the highest potential to encourage diverse housing development in Peace River.
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METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to obtain information and findings for *Enabling Diverse Housing Development in Peace River* consisted of the following:

- **Online Community Survey:** The survey was prepared by the EHC North team and was conducted using an online survey platform. It was made available from April to May 2025. A total of 150 responses were submitted.
- **Interviews/Focus Groups:** The key actor interview and focus group process consisted of conducting 7 interviews and 3 focus group sessions with developers, home-builders, realtors, residents and staff from Peace River to gain a variety of insights and opinions on the current state of Peace River’s housing landscape. The interviews/focus groups were conducted from June to August 2025.
- **Key Topics/Themes of the Interview and Focus Group Process:** The following key topics and themes were discussed throughout the course of the interview process:
 - Barriers/challenges for developing diverse housing types in Peace River
 - What municipal tools and approaches the Town can utilize to encourage diverse housing development
 - How the Town can further incentivize diverse housing development while strengthening partnerships with the development industry.

REPORT OVERVIEW

Section 1 provides an overview of the importance of housing diversity for Peace River, while highlighting key areas of housing needs in the community.

Section 2 provides an initial exploration of potential development incentive policies that Peace River can adopt to encourage the development of diverse housing. The primary focus of this section is to provide incentive examples that address key areas of housing need within Peace River, while outlining different avenues for incentivizing developers to undertake housing projects within Peace River.

Section 3 draws upon input gathered from the community survey, developers, realtors, home builders, and various community stakeholders, and contains recommended amendments to Peace River's current Land Use Bylaw (2025).

Section 4 presents and examines various solutions, options and approaches that are available to address housing challenges within Peace River.

Section 5 identifies additional areas of opportunity that Peace River can explore to continue attracting residential development and investment within its community.

Section 6 outlines next steps of the project as the EHC North team will continue to monitor progress and key milestones related to diverse housing development in Peace River.



SECTION 1: HOUSING NEEDS IN PEACE RIVER

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This section highlights the significance of housing diversity for Peace River, while also summarizing the housing needs identified by participants throughout the community engagement process. It emphasizes that a variety of housing options is essential for the Town and presents insights into why different participants feel that such diversity is necessary. By showcasing these viewpoints, we can gain a deeper understanding of the role housing diversity plays in fulfilling the Town's housing and community needs.

1.1 IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING DIVERSITY

Housing diversity refers to the range of housing types and forms in a community. A diverse community has **various** different **dwelling types** and **sizes** – which may be achieved by flexible zoning that promotes a variety of building forms. By providing greater housing choice, communities can meet the housing needs of increasingly diverse residents and household types (such as young families, professionals, retirees, people with disabilities). The importance of housing diversity for Peace River, or any community for that matter, is significant and can have various positive impacts on the residents and the Town as a whole. Such impacts include:

- **Social and Economic Diversity:** Housing diversity attracts a broader range of residents with varying income levels, backgrounds, and lifestyles. This fosters a more diverse and inclusive community, creating a vibrant social fabric and supporting local businesses with a broader customer base.
- **Population Growth and Retention:** Offering a diverse range of housing options can attract new residents to Peace River and encourage existing residents to stay. Young professionals, families, retirees, and individuals with different housing needs can all find suitable accommodations, helping to sustain or increase the Town's population.



- **Attracting a Skilled Workforce:** If Peace River aims to attract businesses and industries, a diverse housing market is crucial. Potential employees will be more likely to consider moving to the Town if there are housing options that address their preferences and needs.
 - **Aging Population and Accessibility:** As populations age, the need for accessible and age-friendly housing becomes more important. Housing that includes designs which accommodate people with mobility challenges allows older residents to continue to live comfortably in their community.
 - **Community Stability:** A mix of housing types can contribute to community stability. If the Town's housing market is solely reliant on one type of housing, fluctuations in that market can have a disproportionate impact. A diverse market can mitigate these effects by spreading risk across different housing sectors.
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WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about the **importance and meaning of housing diversity** in Peace River, participants provided the following comments:

- I would say that it's having an inventory of rentals available to match every individual's needs. Every price point, family size, to me that's diversity - having that full range of options available.
- Housing diversity is having the ability to find a place to live that meets their needs at various stages of people's lives.
- Diversity is having enough choices that people can find housing that suits the way they want to live whether it's small, large, rowhouses, apartments etc. There has to be enough choices for people to live how they want to live.
- Having a range of housing styles and range of property values - so that everybody can get into the homeownership market.
- Housing diversity to me is having a spectrum of housing options.
- Housing diversity absolutely is important - I think having various types and sizes of homes for purchase is important.
- It's also affordability, and having different levels of affordability and what that means for individuals.

1.2 HOUSING NEEDS IN PEACE RIVER

The EHC team gauged community engagement participant's perspectives on the need for diverse housing in Peace River. The following areas of need were considered to be the most important by participants.

1.2.1 INCREASED RENTAL HOUSING OPTIONS

During the engagement process, participants consistently emphasized the urgent need for **increased rental housing** options in Peace River. Most participants noted a high demand and low vacancy rate for rental properties in Peace River. This is largely due to several factors, including recent apartment fires that significantly reduced available units, an influx of new workers moving to the area, and a general preference among some residents to rent rather than purchase, especially when first arriving in the community.

Survey findings noted that approximately **92%** of respondents felt there are not enough homes available for people (locals and/or newcomers) to rent in Peace River.

WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about the **need for more rental housing** in Peace River, participants provided the following comments:

- *Any type of housing that gets built that is **a rental** will get **filled fast**. People are leaving the town to live in Grimshaw.*
- *There have been recently a couple of fires that have **impacted vacancy rates** in Peace River.*
- ***Availability of rental housing** is very important. Rentals are more important at this point because a lot of people can't afford to buy housing. A lot of workers are coming to town and are **unable to find housing**.*
- *Rental housing is important, there are people who come to Peace River for work and it is a culture shock for many people. There's **not a lot of rental stock available**.*
- *A lot of people who come to the area are unsure of how Peace River will work for them so they don't want to buy housing and would **prefer to rent**.*
- *Several people have mentioned that they will have to quit their job if they can't find rental housing.*

1.2.2 SMALLER & MEDIUM-SIZED SINGLE DETACHED HOMES

Community engagement participants noted a demand for small and medium-sized single-family detached homes, as these are often easier to maintain and more affordable than larger properties. This type of housing was noted as sought after by younger families and individuals with limited budgets.

WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about the **need for more smaller and medium-sized single detached housing** in Peace River, participants provided the following comments:

- *Lots of people are looking for that **mid-sized, mid-priced** with a yard (not too big of a yard) and a garage and close to amenities.*
- *I think there is a need for it, **small and medium stuff** that comes on the market is a bit older so **there's a need for it** - its just right now I don't think there are builders that will build them without pre-selling, nothing is built on spec out here.*
- *Given the economy that we have in Peace River, the budget does not always accommodate a bigger home. A lot of the requests among clients are **small to mid size homes that are easy to maintain**.*
- *Property taxes are also high, this prohibits younger buyers from buying bigger homes.*
- *Whatever housing growth we are doing and are looking to target for further development, it's **important to make sure there is a balance**. More people will be drawn to 2-3 bedroom **medium sized** houses - but you don't want to exclude the other houses such as 1-2 bedroom and 4-5-6 bedroom houses across the spectrum.*
- *Price range is an important point for buyers - it's usually **single family detached with a single garage**, in a nice quiet neighbourhood. The price range is usually under 300k is what I work with more often, but other price points as well. People want 4 bedrooms and 2 bathrooms.*
- *We definitely need more for sure. We **need more medium sized homes**, as opposed to smaller, as older houses are smaller. Also if you build 1500 or 1800 square feet, your increased cost to build a little bit bigger is negligible so you have to make sure that the profit margin makes sense for developers/builders so I would focus more on the medium to larger homes.*

1.2.3 SENIORS HOUSING

Participants from the interviews and focus groups noted a strong need for diverse housing options for seniors and retirees in Peace River. This includes a range of facilities from assisted living to smaller, independent living spaces like one-level rowhouses or condos with small yards, as current options are limited and often have long waitlists.

It is important to note that **51%** of survey respondents indicated they felt seniors **do not have the ability to age in place/retire** in Peace River.

WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about the **need for more seniors housing** in Peace River, participants provided the following comments:

- *Now more than ever, with baby boomers approaching retirement, there is a definite **need for seniors housing**.*
- *All the communities in the area, **everyone needs seniors housing**; we have assisted living facilities and they are adequate but we also need the in-between phase where they downgrade to smaller houses with small yards and maintain independence.*
- *Every time seniors comes up, they say they want 1000-1200 square foot rowhouse developments with a garage. We've been trying to get a condo development going for awhile, but its **hard to find people interested enough to finance the project**.*
- *There are a couple of facilities that are aimed at seniors that require assisted living. There is a **huge waitlist for these facilities**. In the area not necessarily in Peace River, there is some housing meant for seniors to downsize but not a lot.*
- *Senior housing - I know there are condos (apartment style) but I have not seen much else available for purchase - any buildings that would be like townhomes (1 level) there is a market for it and this would be a great option.*
- ***Need more affordable, accessible housing**. It would be nice for there to be a seniors community with **townhouses** and shared common areas.*
- *The housing I'm doing right now is for sale for senior development - 1-level stuff with no basement - there is a niche market for that.*

1.2.4 ATTACHED FORMS OF HOUSING

Throughout the engagement process, participants noted a significant need for attached forms of housing in Peace River, including townhouses, rowhouses, condos, and apartments. This demand is driven by the **need for more affordable options**, a desire for lower-maintenance living compared to single-family homes, and the opportunity to **increase housing density** within existing spaces.

WHAT WE HEARD:

When asked about the **need for more attached housing** in Peace River, participants provided the following comments:

- *There are different types of housing available: duplexes, triplexes, and row houses. What's important is **maximizing the housing within the spaces we have**. So if you have a lot, you can build triplexes to maximize the lot.*
- *Every time seniors comes up, they say **they want 1000-1200 square foot rowhouse developments with a garage**. We've been trying to get a condo development going for awhile, but its hard to find people interested enough to finance the project.*
- *The major barrier of course is cost. Whether it's townhouses, rowhouses or semi-detached - in Peace River - I can't think of 2-3 developments that are newer than 20 years.*
- *[There is a need for] condos, apartments, rowhouses and townhouses.*
- *There hasn't been a lot of land development in the last 10 to 15 years. The land that is available to be built on has a lot of restrictions. They **don't have any areas that are available to build duplexes or row housing** due to the land and zoning not being there.*
- *Single-family living is not for everyone, some people like the community that comes with condos or the less work associated with duplexes. They don't have enough developers to come in and build a bunch of duplexes.*
- *People should be able to buy condos and other **missing middle housing**.*

SECTION 2: POLICY INCENTIVE RECOMMENDATIONS

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This section explores potential development policy incentives Peace River can implement to encourage development of diverse housing options. The goal is to identify strategic opportunities for new incentives that will attract developers and contribute to the Town's economic growth and overall advancement.

Additionally, this part includes insights and perspectives gathered from our engagement process with internal and external stakeholders. It is important to note that the perspectives presented here are those of the participants and do not necessarily represent the views or official positions of the Town of Peace River or its administration.

2.1 EXPLORING POLICY INCENTIVES FOR PEACE RIVER

This section outlines additional areas of opportunity the Town of Peace River could explore to adopt policy incentives that encourage development of their diverse housing needs identified in [Section 1.2](#) of this report.

2.1.1 Recommended Action: Create a General Residential Development Incentive

Targeted Area of Housing Need: A general residential development incentive could help Peace River attract new housing investment across all housing types—such as single-family homes, duplexes, townhouses, multi-family units, and seniors or accessible housing—while targeting areas of greatest need, **increasing the overall supply of diverse and affordable homes.**

Description: The purpose of this policy incentive is to encourage developers, homebuilders and property owners to facilitate residential development within Peace River.

Examples of general residential development incentives can include:

- **Fee Reductions or Waivers:** Development permit fees, building permit fees, offsite levies, and utility connection fees.
- **Property Tax Incentives:** Multi-year municipal property tax exemptions, rebates, or phased reductions for new residential developments.
- **Land Support:** Discounted sale of municipal land, long-term leases, or provision of serviced lots for residential construction.
- **Planning and Regulatory Flexibility:** Density bonuses, relaxed lot size or setback requirements, reduced parking minimums, and expedited development approvals.
- **Financial Grants:** Upfront grants for pre-development costs, infrastructure improvements, or construction of affordable or multi-family units.

Important Note: A comprehensive review of the Town of Peace River’s current offsite levies and fees was not conducted as part of this research. These would need to be assessed accordingly prior to adopting a general residential development incentive.

BENEFITS:

- **Encourages Diverse Housing Development:** Supports a mix of single-family, multi-family, seniors, and accessible housing to meet the needs of Peace River’s residents.
 - **Increases Housing Supply and Affordability:** Reduces development costs, making new homes more attainable for families, workers, and seniors.
 - **Promotes Efficient Use of Infrastructure:** Concentrates growth in serviced areas, maximizing existing roads, water, and sewer systems.
 - **Supports Community Growth and Retention:** Attracts and retains residents, workers, and businesses by providing a range of housing options throughout the Town.
-

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Determine Housing Needs:** Identify the types of housing most needed—single-family, multi-family, seniors, rental, or accessible units—and which areas of the Town have the greatest demand.
- **Infrastructure Capacity:** Assess whether existing roads, water, sewer, and other municipal services can support additional development without significant upgrades.
- **Financial Implications:** Evaluate the short-term cost of fee waivers, tax exemptions, or grants against the long-term benefits of increased property assessment, population growth, and economic activity.
- **Alignment with Planning and Policy:** Ensure incentives are consistent with Peace River’s Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, and long-term growth management objectives.
- **Equity, Clarity, and Community Support:** Design transparent eligibility criteria, timelines, and performance requirements, while engaging residents to ensure incentives meet community goals and are widely supported.



WHAT WE HEARD:

Engagement findings related to creating a general residential incentive are provided below:

Community Survey Findings:

- **Tax Incentives:** Many respondents suggested property tax breaks for new developments, often suggesting a reduced or eliminated tax for the first few years (e.g., 3-5 years) or until completion, and potentially tying the duration or percentage to the property type (home vs. commercial).
- **Reduce Red-Tape & Fees:** Several responses also highlighted the need to streamline the building permit process, reduce bureaucracy/red tape, and eliminate or lower development fees, including offsite levies, which are seen as significantly increasing the cost of new development.
- **Zoning & Development:** Suggestions included making it easier for home builders, developing more lots, and allowing for higher density development (multi-unit, secondary/tertiary units) especially closer to the downtown core and amenities.

Interview/Focus Group Comments:

- Create a **property tax deferral** to build spec houses, have property tax deferred until they sell.
- **Property tax deferral** - making it a deferred payment as opposed to upfront. Or split, a portion upfront and have a certain amount deferred.
- Maybe **reducing building permit fees**. **Property tax breaks** for a certain amount of time. That is a huge relief for people, because of the property taxes being so high.

2.1.2 Recommended Action: Create an Accessory Dwelling Unit/ Secondary Suite Development Policy Incentive

Targeted Area of Housing Need: Accessory dwelling units (ADU's) and/or secondary suites increase **the supply of rental housing** quickly by making use of existing homes without the need for major new construction. They also offer more affordable options in established neighborhoods, helping meet diverse rental needs.

Description: The purpose of this policy incentive is to encourage developers, homebuilders and property owners to facilitate the creation of ADU's or secondary suites within residential properties in Peace River. Such development incentives vary by location and can take many forms, but are critical in **helping address rental housing needs** in both rural and urban communities.

Examples of these incentives can include:

- **Reduced Permit Fees & Expedited Permit Processes**
- **Tax Deferral, Rebate or Refund Incentives**
- **ADU/Secondary Suite Grant Programs**

BENEFITS:

- **Increases Affordability:** ADU's/secondary suites can provide additional affordable and low end of market housing options within a community, helping to address housing shortages and affordability challenges.
- **Provides Income Stability for Homeowners:** Rental income obtained from secondary suites/accessory dwelling units can help offset mortgage costs, property taxes, and rising living expenses.
- **Increases Housing Supply Quickly:** Encourages homeowners to add rental units within existing homes, creating "gentle density" without large-scale redevelopment.



IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Financial Impact on the Town:** The Town should consider the overall impact of any incentives on municipal revenue and budget.
- **Equity and Clarity of Incentives:** Consider whether the incentive applies to new construction only, or includes upgrading existing suites to bring them up to code.
- **Establish Eligibility Criteria:** The Town should consider establishing eligibility criteria for property owners, builders or developers who want to participate in the incentive program. Factors that could be considered consist of the following:
 - Compliance with existing Land Use Bylaw regulations and building codes.
 - Prioritizing applications in locations that have limited availability of affordable rental housing.
 - Conduct public engagement to gather input and address concerns while creating transparency and building support for the incentives.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING:

The Town of Okotoks established a *Secondary Suite and Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant Program* in 2023 to provide financial assistance for the development of secondary suites or accessory dwelling units that meet Safety Codes requirements. This program **offers grants of up to \$5000 or \$10,000** depending on the type of project, on a first-come first-served basis, subject to funding availability.

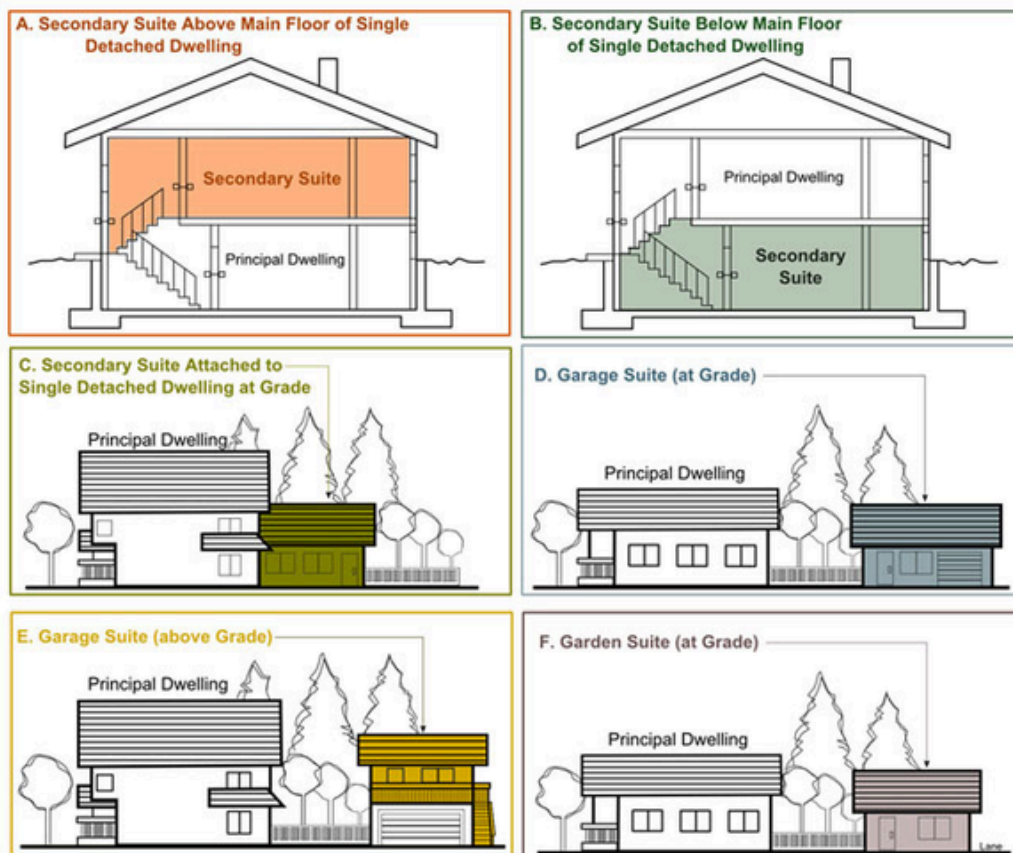
The Town of Westlock created a *Rental Suite Incentive* so that **homeowners can access a \$10,000 grant** for the addition of a legal basement, garage, or garden suite. One suite is eligible per property, and licensed *pre-approved plans* are available for garage and garden suite designs. You can also utilize the incentive to make an existing non-permitted suite legal and safe to occupy.

WHAT WE HEARD:

Engagement findings related to secondary suites and incentivizing them are provided below:

- **Survey Findings:** Accessory Dwelling Units (garage/basement/garden suites) were chosen **40%** of the time by participants as a **preferred type of rental property**, while **homes for purchase** with accessory dwelling units were chosen **42%** of the time.
- **Interview/Focus Group Comments:** *A great deal of the beat up old stock is getting bought and renovated, so is there a need for a renovation incentive in Peace River. We could combine that with **an incentive to encourage people to build secondary suites**, which would help with increasing density. There are only 2 people in the town who have built legal secondary suites - we need some kind of incentive to get people to build suites that are to code and inspected.*

EXAMPLES OF SECONDARY SUITES/ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS:



2.1.3 Recommended Action: Create a Residential Renovation Incentive

Targeted Area of Housing Need: A residential renovation incentive would help meet housing needs in Peace River by encouraging upgrades and conversions that create more rental units and homes for purchase. It also supports upgrading attached housing types, making better use of existing neighbourhoods while increasing affordability and housing choice.

Description: The purpose of a residential renovation incentive is to encourage homeowners and developers to reinvest in existing housing stock in Peace River to **improve safety, quality, and longevity** of housing units. By offsetting renovation costs, it helps expand and maintain housing while making more efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Examples of residential renovation incentives can include:

- **Reduced Permit Fees & Expedited Permit Processes**
 - **Tax Deferral, Rebate or Refund Incentives**
 - **Renovation Grant Programs**
-

BENEFITS:

- Can help **increase** the supply of **quality rental** and **for-purchase** housing by making renovation projects more financially feasible.
 - Preserves and **improves** existing **housing stock** in Peace River, extending the life of homes and neighbourhoods.
 - Encourages more **efficient use of infrastructure** by reinvesting in established communities rather than new greenfield development.
-

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

- **Financial Impact:** Assess the cost to the municipality, long-term tax implications, and sustainability of the incentive program.
- **Eligibility and Targeting:** Clearly define which renovations, housing types, and affordability outcomes the incentive is meant to support.
- **Administration and Oversight:** Ensure the Town has capacity to manage applications, monitor compliance, and measure the program's effectiveness.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING:

The Town of Ponoka established a Major Home Renovation Incentive Program to allow Ponoka residents to **qualify for property tax breaks** if they complete major renovations on their home, which increase their property's assessment value by at least 20 percent (excluding land assessment value.) New residents who buy a 'fixer-upper' can also qualify for this incentive program, while realtors could use this program to promote the sale of 'fixer-uppers.'

WHAT WE HEARD:

Engagement findings related to incentivizing the renovation of existing housing units in Peace River are provided below:

- **Survey Findings:**
 - **45%** of the responses indicated that high housing construction/renovation costs and condition of current housing stock in Peace River were important housing issues.
 - Survey participants directly mentioned **renovation incentives** 3 times, with one participant being in favour of the Town offering a renovation incentive, while the other did not, instead wanting incentives for new home construction. The other participant mentioned creating incentives for apartment owners to fix up and update their properties, possibly through a tax break.
- **Interview/Focus Group Comments:** *A great deal of the beat up old stock is getting bought and renovated, so **there is a need for a renovation incentive** in Peace River. We could combine that with an incentive to encourage people to build secondary suites, which would help with increasing density.*

2.1.4 Recommended action: Create an attached/multi-family Development Policy Incentive

Targeted Area of Housing Need: Multi-family/attached homes are important for Peace River because they provide diverse, affordable, and lower-maintenance housing options that help retain residents, support local workers, and make efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Description: An attached or multi-family development incentive would help Peace River **increase housing supply** by encouraging projects such as duplexes, townhouses, fourplexes, apartment buildings, and seniors-oriented housing. These incentives can support more **attainable** and **lower-maintenance** options, including rental apartments, age-friendly units, and mixed-use residential developments in serviced areas.

Examples of attached and multi-family development incentives that municipalities commonly use include:

- **Financial Incentives:** Waiving or reducing development permit fees, building permit fees, offsite levies, or municipal utility connection fees for projects such as duplexes, townhouses, apartments, or seniors housing.
- **Tax Incentives:** Multi-year municipal property tax exemptions or tax rebates for new multi-family rental buildings or affordable/seniors-oriented developments.
- **Planning and Regulatory Incentives:** Density bonuses, reduced parking requirements, relaxed lot size or setback standards, and expedited development approvals for attached or multi-family housing.

BENEFITS:

- **Diverse Housing Supply:** Increases housing supply and choice by encouraging duplexes, townhouses, apartments, and seniors-oriented housing that meet diverse community needs.
- **Greater Affordability:** Improves affordability by lowering development costs, which can translate into more attainable rental and ownership options.
- **Infrastructure Efficiency:** Uses existing infrastructure more efficiently by supporting compact development in serviced areas.
- **Aging & Workforce Support:** Supports aging in place and workforce retention by providing lower-maintenance housing options for seniors, young families, and local workers.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS:

- **Local Housing Need and Market Demand:** Confirm which housing types are most needed (e.g., duplexes, rentals, seniors housing) and where demand is strongest within the Town and serviced areas.
- **Infrastructure and Servicing Capacity:** Assess water, wastewater, roads, and emergency services to ensure they can support higher-density development without creating long-term cost pressures.
- **Financial Impact on the Town:** Evaluate the short-term revenue impacts of fee waivers or tax incentives against the long-term benefits of assessment growth and population stability.
- **Alignment with Planning Policies:** Ensure incentives align with the Municipal Development Plan, Land Use Bylaw, and growth management objectives, including appropriate locations and design standards.
- **Community Acceptance and Design Quality:** Consider public perception and incorporate design guidelines that ensure multi-family and attached housing fits well with existing community character.

WHAT OTHER MUNICIPALITIES ARE DOING:

The Town of Vermilion established a *Multi-Family Development Incentive Program* to encourage development of new multi-family residential dwellings within Vermilion. The intent of this program is to provide an incentive for construction of new multi-family dwellings with 4 or more units.

The Town of Drumheller created a *Multi-Unit Residential Rental Incentive Program* that encourages construction of new attached and multi-unit housing – including multi-unit rental buildings with at least two units and other qualifying residential dwellings – by offering a municipal property tax abatement over four years. The incentive reduces early carrying costs for developers, appears as a credit on tax notices, and stays with the property if sold during the incentive period.



WHAT WE HEARD:

Engagement findings related to attached/multi-family homes and incentivizing them are provided below:

- **Survey Findings:** Attached housing types, such as apartments, townhouses/rowhouses and duplexes/triplexes/fourplexes were chosen by **64-74%** of *Community Survey* respondents as a preferred rental option.

2.2 ADVERTISING AND PROMOTING HOUSING DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Advertising and promoting development incentives to developers, builders, and property owners in Peace River holds crucial importance for the Town's growth, economic vitality, and long-term sustainability. Effectively communicating these incentives can lead to a range of positive outcomes:

- **Attracting Investment:** Clear and compelling promotion of development incentives can attract developers, builders, and property owners to consider Peace River as a viable and attractive location for their projects. This can stimulate increased investment in the community, leading to the creation of new developments, job opportunities, and economic growth.
- **Enhancing Competitiveness:** Effective promotion of incentives can set Peace River apart from other communities and regions competing for the same investment and development projects. By showcasing the unique benefits and opportunities the Town offers, Peace River can position itself as a preferred destination for developers and builders.
- **Encouraging Collaboration:** Promoting development incentives can foster collaboration between the Town's municipal government, local businesses, and property owners. When stakeholders are aware of the incentives available, they may be more willing to work together to realize mutually beneficial projects that contribute to the community's development and prosperity.

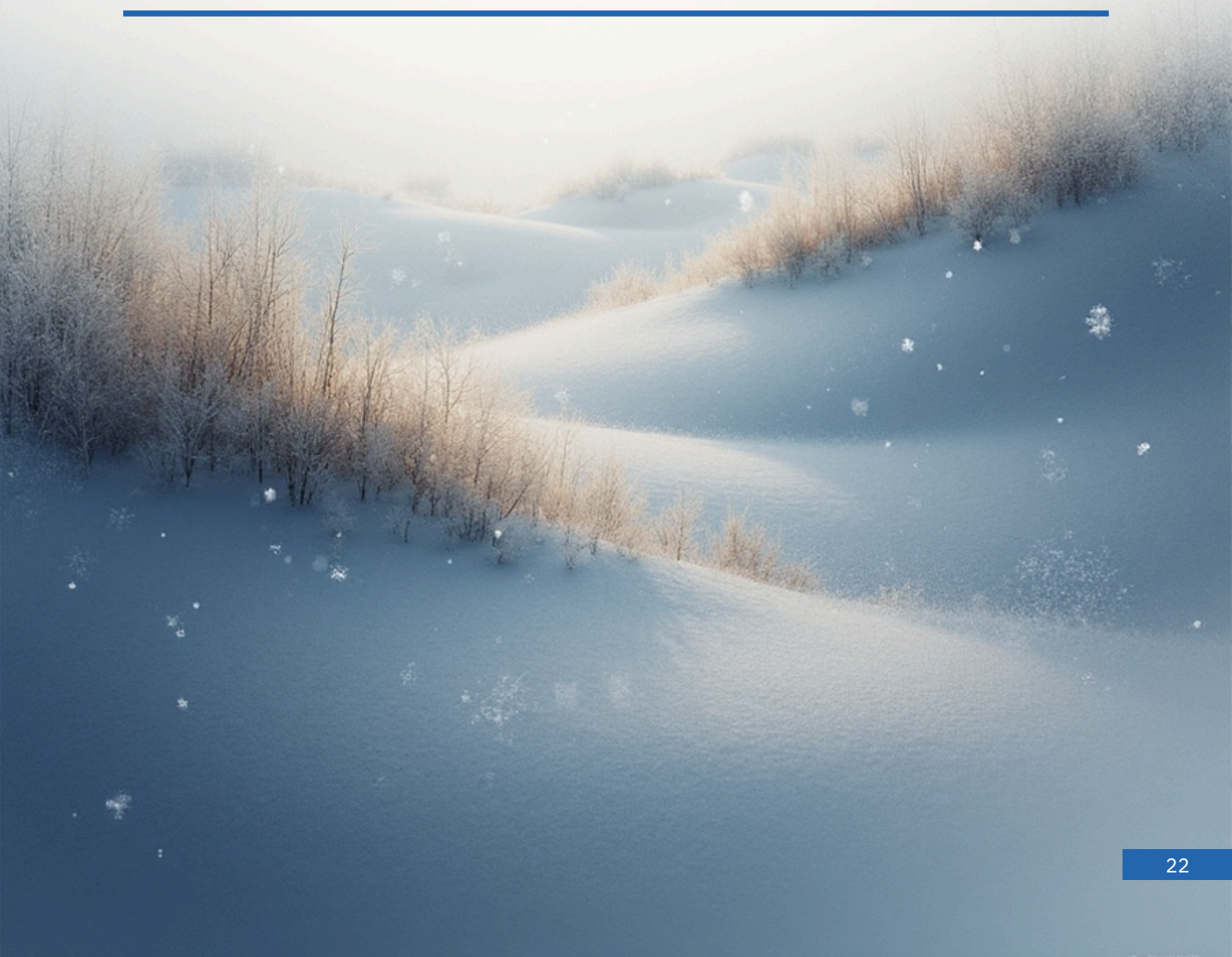


SECTION 3: LAND USE BYLAW RECOMMENDATIONS

3.0 INTRODUCTION

This section outlines recommended amendments to Peace River’s existing *Land Use Bylaw* (2025), in light of the engagement responses from the community survey, developers, realtors, home builders and community stakeholders.

The intention of these recommendations is to initiate and promote discussion among community stakeholders - Town administration, developers, planners, businesses and residents. They are suggestions that may help to reduce development barriers, increase housing supply and encourage housing diversity in Peace River.



3.1. GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS TO INCREASE HOUSING DIVERSITY AND DENSITY IN PEACE RIVER

Peace River’s current *Land Use Bylaw* (2025) regulates the type of housing and uses that may be built in residential districts. It has been identified that diversifying the types of housing that may be built in the various residential districts will help increase housing choice and potentially influence affordability of housing in the Town.

The following section contains recommendations and tables that outline existing dwelling types that are permitted uses within various districts of Peace River’s Land Use Bylaw. They also outline recommendations and considerations for additional permitted uses that correspond with those dwelling types, or in certain cases monitoring and/or incentivizing their use within those districts.

3.1.1 ADD RESIDENTIAL DWELLING OPTIONS AS PERMITTED USES:

Note: As long as development applications for these uses meet the requirements of the Land Use Bylaw, it is **to the advantage of the municipality** to make them **permitted uses**. Administration can outline what these requirements are to meet the permitted use requirements - anything that doesn’t meet those requirements becomes discretionary.

TABLE 1: EXISTING & RECOMMENDED USES IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

Existing Permitted Uses & Dwelling Type	Recommend Adding as Permitted Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single Detached Dwelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RTM & Moved-In Dwellings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accessory Dwelling Units 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor This Use Consider Adding Policy Incentive (see Section 2.1.2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apartment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apartment Hotel Residential Condominium

3.1.2 ADD RTMS & MOVED-IN DWELLINGS AS PERMITTED USES:

The Town of Peace River should consider making RTMs (ready-to-move) homes and moved-in dwellings a **permitted use** in its residential districts because it would increase housing supply quickly and affordably, providing more options for families, seniors, and workers.

Making RTMs and moved-in dwellings a permitted use rather than a discretionary use **helps streamlines approvals**, providing faster and more predictable development processes.

A simplified definition of **RTM dwellings** is that they're homes that are built in a factory setting and then moved onto the site, either as one unit or as several pieces, and typically (but not always) onto a basement. A **moved-in dwelling** (or building) is one that was built and has existed elsewhere for a period of time (often many years) and is now being moved from its original location to a new site.

The end result is a dwelling that is difficult to distinguish from a dwelling that was built on-site (stick built). These factory-built homes are as **durable and livable** as anything built on-site and should be permitted in the same way as a stick-built home.

3.1.3 WHERE APARTMENTS ARE ALLOWED - ADD RESIDENTIAL CONDOMINIUMS

Condominiums and **apartments** may appear identical from the outside, but they differ fundamentally in ownership. Condominiums involve ownership of individual units, whereas apartments are primarily for renting. Although the distinction goes beyond this basic explanation, it captures the essence of their differences. Both building types are generally constructed in a similar fashion, resulting in comparable designs.

Despite these differences in tenure, since the resulting construction of both structures looks similar, it may be worthwhile to consider **permitting residential condominiums** in areas where apartment buildings are already allowed.

Note: A definition of **residential condominium** would need to be added to Peace River's *Land Use Bylaw* (2025).

Here is an example of a **definition for residential condominiums**, obtained from the Town of Grimshaw's *Land Use Bylaw* (2020).

- **CONDOMINIUM-TYPE OWNERSHIP** means a form of property ownership [where] a structure with multiple residential units involving areas of common property ownership that is registered in accordance to *The Condominium Property Act*.

TABLE 2: EXISTING & RECOMMENDED USES IN COMMERCIAL & RIVERFRONT DISTRICTS

Existing Permitted Uses & Dwelling Type	Recommend Adding as Permitted Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Detached Dwelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTM & Moved-In Dwellings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apartment Hotel • Residential Condominium
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessory Dwelling Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor This Use • Consider Adding Policy Incentive (see section 2.1.2)

3.1.4 ADD INDUSTRIAL CAMPS AS USES IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS

Adding **Industrial Camps** as uses will enable the development of short-term accommodations, such as for the nuclear facility construction workers. The number of **workers needed for the construction phase (short-term)** of the nuclear facility will likely be greater than those that stay in the area long-term. Once the short-term housing need has been satisfied, the industrial camps could be decommissioned or used for workers at other construction or special purpose projects.

It is suggested that **Industrial Camps** could be added as permitted or discretionary use in these land use districts:

- **Industrial 1 (M-1)**
- **Industrial 2 (M-2)**
- **Future Development (F-D)**

Note: A definition of **Industrial Camps** would need to be added to Peace River’s *Land Use Bylaw* (2025).

Here is an example of a definition for **Industrial Camps**, obtained from the Town of Grimshaw’s *Land Use Bylaw* (2020).

- **INDUSTRIAL CAMP** means a self-contained residential complex used to house workers for industrial camps, contracting firms etc. on a temporary basis away from their permanent place of residence. An industrial camp is usually made up of a number of mobile units which provide sleeping, eating, recreational and other basic living facilities, constructed so that they may be dismantled and moved from the site.

TABLE 3: EXISTING & RECOMMENDED USES IN INDUSTRIAL & FUTURE DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS

Existing Permitted Uses & Dwelling Type	Recommend Adding as Permitted Uses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Single Detached Dwelling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RTM & Moved-In Dwellings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessory Dwelling Unit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor This Use • Consider Adding Policy Incentive (see section 2.1.2)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where There are No Permitted Residential Dwellings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industrial Camps

3.1.5 ADD APARTMENT HOTELS AS USES IN VARIOUS DISTRICTS

Adding **Apartment Hotels** as a use could also be suitable to accommodate construction workers at the nuclear facility. Once the short-term housing need for the workers has been satisfied, the apartment hotels could be transitioned into other housing needs, such as **transitional housing**, or **housing for students**, or **housing for newcomers** until they find something permanent.

It is suggested that **Apartment Hotels** be added as a **permitted use** to the following districts:

- **Residential 4 (R-4)**
- **Primary Commercial (C-1)**
- **Commercial Neighborhood (C-N)**
- **Commercial Residential (C-R)**
- **Riverfront Development (R-D)**

Note: A definition of **Apartment Hotels** would need to be added to Peace River’s Land Use Bylaw (2025).

Here is an example of a definition for **Apartment Hotels**, obtained from the Town of Fairview’s Land Use Bylaw (2024).

- **APARTMENT HOTEL** means a development consisting of dwellings contained within a building or a part of a building having a principal common entrance. Each dwelling will be suitable for use by one or more persons for **more than five consecutive days** and include cooking facilities. Each dwelling will be furnished including dishes and linen, and where maid service, telephone service, or desk service will be provided.

SECTION 4: HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This section presents and examines various housing solutions and approaches that are available to address housing challenges within Peace River.

Through our research, all EHC North community partners indicated a shared commitment to tackling not only the overall shortage of housing but also several specific challenges, including:

- Limited availability of affordable, accessible, and attainable housing
- Shortage of rental housing
- High construction costs and a lack of builders
- Insufficient senior housing

Each of these challenges will be addressed individually, while also considering their interconnections, as they are closely linked and often influence one another.



4.1 EXPLORING POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS FOR RURAL HOUSING CHALLENGES:

The information provided below regarding potential solutions to Peace River’s housing challenges will address the general desire/need for more housing, more rental housing, and affordability. Information and links will be provided to the following alternative and innovative housing solutions/types:

- **Modular Housing**
- **Co-op Housing**
- **Land Trusts**
- **Accessory Dwelling Units**
- **Fast-Track Housing**
- **Tiny Homes**

4.1.1 MODULAR HOUSING SOLUTIONS:

Modular housing could offer a practical solution for Peace River by providing faster, more cost-effective construction compared to traditional building methods. Its flexibility allows for a range of housing types—including affordable, rental, and seniors housing units.

WHAT IS MODULAR HOUSING?

A modular home is a type of **prefabricated** house **built in sections** in a climate-controlled factory and then transported to a building site for assembly by a builder on a permanent foundation. Unlike mobile homes, modular homes must meet the same building codes as traditional, site-built homes and are **not intended to be moved once assembled**. This method of construction can result in a **faster build time** and **lower costs** due to factory efficiencies. These homes are often called factory-built, system-built or prefab (short for prefabricated) homes.

On the other side of this solution, modular home companies need to work with a local builder and/or municipality to facilitate and install the housing. For example, **ATCO Structures** has teamed up with **Attainable Homes Calgary** to provide lower cost, attainable housing in Calgary.

In order to pave the way for modular housing, Peace River must think differently and set themselves apart from other northern Alberta communities.

For example, it may be helpful to set up a **housing authority** to facilitate the process to bring modular homes into the community. The housing authority would work with the municipality to acquire land, make sure all the pre-development needs are met (services, permitting, etc), secure funding and then liaise with the modular housing company to install the housing.

FURTHER RESOURCES ON MODULAR HOUSING:

- [10 Basic Facts You Should Know About Modular Homes](#)
- [What is Modular Construction?](#)
- [Modular Building Systems: Overview and Benefits](#)

4.1.2 CO-OP HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Co-op housing could help address Peace River's housing challenges by providing affordable, community-owned options that keep costs lower for residents. This model fosters long-term stability, encourages local involvement in housing decisions, and can help meet the demand for rental and accessible housing in the region.

WHAT IS CO-OP HOUSING?

Co-op housing is a form of residential ownership **where members buy shares** in the housing cooperative corporation, not a specific unit, and then pay a monthly fee to cover the costs of the building and land. Each co-op is a legal association, and **members are called shareholders** who have a voice in the co-op's governance and democratically make decisions, often through an elected board of directors. Co-op members purchase shares in **the corporation** that **owns the entire property**. The share includes the ability to lease or purchase a specific unit.



Co-op housing has potential to provide housing that can be offered to residents at **‘below-market’** rates, whether to rent or to purchase. Since the co-op controls the property, the price of the housing is set and controlled by its members. The co-op model can be applied to any type of housing, including multi-unit attached or single detached housing, below-market housing, and seniors housing. A co-op model could also champion the construction of tiny homes (discussed below) or modular housing (discussed above).

Again, in order to facilitate co-op housing, Peace River must think differently. It may be helpful for the **community to set up a housing authority** to research and gather interest in this housing model. It could provide local investment opportunities so that appropriate and affordable housing is developed that truly meets the needs of the community.

EXAMPLES OF CO-OP HOUSING:

- [Sangudo Opportunity Development Co-op](#)
- [Linden Housing Co-op](#)
- [Community Economic-Development Investment Funds \(CEDIFs\) | Nova Scotia Securities Commission](#)

FURTHER RESOURCES ON CO-OP HOUSING:

- [Alberta Community & Co-Operative Association](#)
- [Federal Co-operative Housing Development Program](#)
- [Co-op Housing Development Program](#)
- [Canadian Co-operative Investment Fund](#)

4.1.3 FAST-TRACK HOUSING SOLUTIONS

Fast-track housing could help Peace River quickly increase its housing supply by streamlining approvals and accelerating construction timelines. This approach can rapidly address shortages, reduce wait times for rentals and affordable units, and respond efficiently to the community's urgent housing needs.

WHAT IS FAST-TRACK HOUSING?

Fast-track housing refers to a streamlined development process, either through expedited permit approvals or a project delivery method where construction of a new house is accelerated. In this instance, the focus is on projects that will use **pre-approved designs** or that meet specific criteria outlined in the Land Use Bylaw, with the intention of building housing faster and more affordably.

To make this work efficiently, the community/municipality will typically use a pre-approved set of designs that can be approved by municipal staff more quickly. These designs could include both **multi-unit attached** and **single detached housing** types, as well as **'below-market'** housing or **seniors** housing.

For example, the federal government has developed the **Housing Design Catalogue**, which could be used as a guide to develop fast-track housing types in a municipality. The municipality could also work with a modular home company (i.e. **ATCO**) to develop housing that would address specific community needs.

EXAMPLES OF FAST-TRACK HOUSING:

- There are not a large number of municipalities using pre-approved designs to facilitate fast-track housing. Here are a couple of examples:
- [Infill Fast-Track Housing - Kelowna](#)
- [Housing Accelerator Fund | City of Edmonton](#) - an accelerated permitting process for housing is in the development stages
- [Modular – Anhart Construction](#) - a developer that installs modular tiny homes



4.1.4 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) SOLUTIONS:

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) could provide a flexible and cost-effective housing option for Peace River by allowing homeowners to add small, independent living spaces on existing properties. ADUs can increase rental and affordable housing availability, support multi-generational living, and make efficient use of existing land and infrastructure.

WHAT ARE ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS?

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a **secondary, self-contained living space** on the same property as the primary home (typically a single-detached dwelling). It is also known as a secondary suite, granny suite, garage suite, in-law suite, basement suite, and more. These units will have a private entrance, and will include their own kitchen, bathroom, living area, etc. They can be internal (**basement suite**), attached to the main house (**granny suite**), above the garage (**garage suite**) or completely detached (**backyard suite**). ADUs provide flexibility for homeowners, serving purposes such as housing for family members, generating rental income, or creating a home office. They cannot be sold separately from the primary residence.

As suggested in the review of the Land Use Bylaw earlier in this document, one of the quickest ways to increase the number and affordability of housing in a small community is to add Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as a permitted use. Since the Town has already added ADUs to its Land Use Bylaw, the next step is to develop incentive policy to install ADUs, which could help meet the housing needs for specific residents, such as students who need short-term accommodation, elderly parents who are not ready to move into care homes, or single people who do not need a great deal of space.

EXAMPLES OF FUNDING & INCENTIVES FOR ADUs

- [CMHC Refinance - Encouraging Gentle Densification](#)
- [Accessory Dwelling Units: Case Studies and Best Practices](#)
- [Secondary Suite Development Incentive Program Policy No: 237-AD-24](#)
- [Secondary Suites and Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant Program](#)

4.1.5 TINY HOME DWELLING SOLUTIONS:

Tiny homes offer a potential alternative housing solution in Peace River by providing more affordable and flexible housing options for residents facing limited availability and rising costs. Their smaller footprint suits rural and lakeside environments, allows for more sustainable development, and can help the Town address housing shortages without having to build extensive new infrastructure.

WHAT ARE TINY HOMES?

Tiny homes are small, efficient dwellings, **typically under 500 square feet 46 (sq m)**, that are designed to promote a minimalist lifestyle. While size is the primary factor, the definition also encompasses the intention of living simply, with many tiny homes being mobile (built on wheels) or using space-saving designs like lofts.

For tiny homes to be relevant and suitable for rural communities, this **definition will need to be amended** to ensure that the dwelling meets the requirements of the National Building Code and Land Use Bylaw. For example, minimum floor areas in new residential development in a Land Use Bylaw are typically 900 to 1000 square feet (84 to 93 sq m). In addition, since tiny homes are typically intended to be mobile, consideration will need to be given to where in the community they would be most useful, or whether mobility of the home would have to be not allowed.

EXAMPLES OF TINY HOME DEVELOPMENT & COMPANIES

- [Canada Tiny Home News - information and resources around tiny home development](#)
- [Rohe Homes - tiny home developer](#)
- [Bluegrass Meadows Micro Village - a tiny home village built in BC](#)
- [Modular – Anhart Construction - tiny home developer](#)
- [The First Tiny House strata in Canada is approved in Okotoks - tiny home community still under construction](#)
- [Veteran Villages - Homes For Heroes Foundation - tiny home development specifically designed for veterans](#)

4.1.6 LAND TRUST SOLUTIONS:

Land trusts could be a strong option for Peace River because they help keep housing affordable over the long term by reducing the cost of land and limiting price increases over time. They also allow the community to have more control over how land is used, helping balance new housing needs with protecting local land and supporting sustainable growth.

WHAT ARE LAND TRUSTS?

A land trust is a legal, non-profit entity that **holds land for the benefit of the land's owner** or **for a specific purpose**. Community land trusts are incorporated organizations created to acquire and hold land in trust for community use, such as affordable housing. Land trusts are typically membership-based organizations. They're governed by a board of directors, which is made up of community members and non-profit organizations with a stake in their community.

Again, in order to use a land trust to develop housing, Peace River must think differently. It may be helpful for the community to set up a housing authority to research and gather interest in this housing model. It could provide local investment opportunities so that appropriate and affordable housing is developed that truly meets the needs of the community.

EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS:

- [Creation of a Community Land Trust for Affordable Housing](#)
- [Community Land Trusts in Canada](#)
- [The Temiskaming District Community Land Trust | CMHC](#)

FURTHER RESOURCES ON COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS:

- [CLT Funding Sources - Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts](#)
- [Affordable Housing Innovation Fund](#)

SECTION 5: AREAS OF OPPORTUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This section presents and examines the various areas of opportunity that may be available to address housing challenges within Peace River.

Through our research, all EHC North community partners indicated a shared commitment to tackling not only the overall shortage of housing but also several specific challenges, including:

- **Limited availability of affordable, accessible, and attainable housing**
- **Shortage of rental housing**
- **High construction costs and a lack of builders**
- **Insufficient senior housing**

Each of these challenges will be addressed individually, while also considering their interconnections, as they are closely linked and often influence one another.



5.1 FACILITATE CONTINUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Town of Peace River is well-positioned to build off of the extensive community engagement that was conducted for this research by continuing to have meaningful conversations about housing diversity with its residents. Continuing engagement with a broad spectrum of residents — landowners, renters, young and old, families, childless couples, businesses, homebuilders, and developers — will provide valuable insights that are essential for expanding housing options in Peace River. Furthermore, involving a diverse group of residents in discussions about housing diversity will naturally open the door to conversations about housing needs, wants and preferences in the community.

5.1.1 RECOMMENDED ACTIONS: ESTABLISH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

To facilitate continual community engagement in Peace River, it is recommended that the Town consider the following:

- Set up an ad hoc **steering committee** to facilitate this initiative. Suggested members include community leaders, seniors, young people, couples, realtors, developers, home-builders, Town employees, business owners and anyone else who has something to say about housing;
- Prepare a mandate and/or guidelines for the steering committee that outlines its objectives and goals; this mandate will be updated by the committee as needed;
- Committee tasks could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Plan and host community events to encourage participation, connection, and feedback from local residents.
 - Build partnerships with local organizations and stakeholders to support shared goals and initiatives.
 - Gather and relay community feedback through surveys, meetings, or forums to inform decision-making.

BENEFITS:

- **Local Insights and Trust-Building:** Creates direct channels for residents to share real experiences and priorities, helping the Town's planners understand the specific housing challenges in Peace River while building trust and cooperation.
- **Targeted Solutions:** By gathering feedback from diverse groups (renters, homeowners, Indigenous communities, seniors, workers), the committee helps identify which housing needs are most urgent and what solutions will actually work.

- **Stronger Collaboration and Faster Implementation:** A formal committee connects residents, service providers, developers, and local government, which helps improve coordination, reduce housing barriers, and speed up the adoption of housing initiatives that will reflect Peace River’s priorities.

5.2 CONTINUE WITH EDUCATION, PROMOTION AND MARKETING OF THE TOWN

This section outlines additional initiatives that could add to Peace River’s promotion and marketing campaigns for the community.

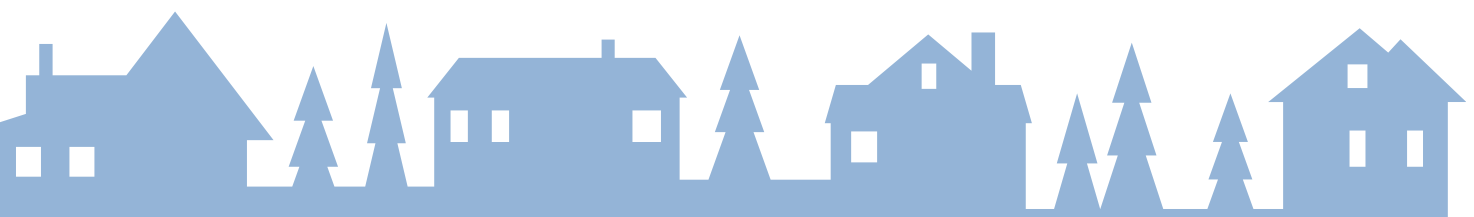
5.2.1 RECOMMENDED ACTION: CREATE A MARKETING CAMPAIGN

A **strategic marketing campaign** is recommended to effectively highlight Peace River's significant development potential, capitalize on growth opportunities, and actively promote the area as an optimal choice for housing development. This campaign should integrate elements that demonstrate Peace River's commitment to **sustainable** and **diverse growth** and make it appealing to prospective developers, builders, and property owners.

The initiative should go beyond emphasizing the Town’s unique character and community spirit to also showcase its progressive approach to rural planning, development and investment. Key features to spotlight within the campaign include current and future **development incentives**, and the **availability of vacant land** for purchase.

BENEFITS:

- Attracts developers and investors by promoting **available land, housing demand, and local incentives** for building.
- Raises awareness of Peace River’s quality of life, community strengths, and long-term growth potential.
- Encourages **partnerships** and **interest** that can lead to more diverse and much-needed housing.



5.2.2 RECOMMENDED ACTION: PROVIDE READILY AVAILABLE INFORMATION ABOUT THE TOWN

To further promote the Town, provide local information about residential development opportunities and initiatives. It is recommended that this information be in both digital and print formats, to engage all age-groups and demographics.

Suggestions for **informational packages/resources** include the following:

Accessory Dwelling Units:

- Provide a definition, an outline of the process and any current incentives for construction of these units.
- Provide information about where ADUs may be built in the Town.

Peace River As A Great Place To Live:

- Provide details about employment opportunities and key industries in the area.
- Offer information about local healthcare facilities and services
- Detail the educational facilities available, from primary schools to higher education institutions.



5.3 FACILITATE HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Stakeholder interviews and discussions in Peace River consistently emphasized the value of **collaborative partnerships** involving the Town, developers, home builders, and the community. This section provides strategies for **connecting developers** with community members to foster these partnerships. The goal is to advance Town initiatives and effectively address the diverse housing needs within the community.

5.3.1 RECOMMENDED ACTION: CONTINUE FOSTERING DEVELOPER/BUILDER RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

As provided in **Sections 5.1** and **5.2**, and continuing with the community engagement theme, it is recommended that the Town consider the following:

- Create a **Community Housing Committee** to facilitate this initiative;
- Include a **variety of community members** on the committee, such as community leaders, seniors, young people, couples, realtors, developers, home-builders, Town employees, business owners and anyone else who has something to say about housing;
- Prepare a mandate and/or guidelines for the committee that outlines the project **objectives** and **goals**; this mandate will be updated by the committee as needed.
- Committee tasks could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Review and explore various housing solutions outlined in **Section 4** of this report to address Peace River’s housing needs;
 - Research and prepare a **plan to form partnerships** between developers and other stakeholders, as listed above;
 - Educate developers and community members about **development incentives**, issues and opportunities that are available in the Town;
 - Facilitate the creation of a **housing cooperative**, or other housing initiative, between developers and local stakeholders. Documents that could help assist with these potential initiatives are available on the RDN website:
 - “Paths for Housing Co-ops: Guidebook”
 - “Step by Step Guide to Developing Affordable Housing”

WHAT WE HEARD:

Engagement findings related to improving communications and relationships with local developers/builders are provided below:

- We need **clear and consistent communication** from the Town and faster permitting processes. If the Town has something like that it will make things easier.
- Simplify the process, have more of an open mind and **be ready to have those conversations** with people who want to develop. Look at the big picture instead of “I don’t want that there”.
- The people who make decisions in the Town **aren’t communicating well** with those that are affected by the decisions.
- They **need something that makes it easy** for people to know **what they can build and where**.

5.4 REPURPOSE EXISTING VACANT BUILDINGS AND SITES INTO RESIDENTIAL USE

Vacant buildings and sites, both residential and commercial, can be a valuable resource to provide additional housing in a rural community. Many rural communities have a few vacant buildings that may have **potential to be repurposed as housing**. A common example of this is repurposing a local motel into residential apartments.

To facilitate upgrading vacant residential or repurposing vacant retail or commercial buildings, it is recommended that the Town consider the following:

- Utilize the **Community Housing Committee** to facilitate this initiative;
- Task the Community Housing Committee to create an **inventory of vacant properties and buildings** that have potential for conversion to dwellings;
- Research **incentives** and **policies** to assist with the development and/or conversion of vacant buildings.

Examples: Converting a school to affordable housing in Lunenburg, NS

Converting a hotel to affordable housing in Edmonton, AB

SECTION 6: NEXT STEPS

This report on *Enabling Diverse Housing Development in Peace River* was initiated to provide locally-relevant information about housing challenges and barriers in the Town, and then prepare suggestions to facilitate development of more diverse housing options in the Town.

FACILITATE CONTINUOUS DISCUSSION

As stated previously, the purpose of providing these recommendations is to help facilitate discussion among community stakeholders - Town Administration, residents, home-builders, local businesses and others - to review, analyze and disseminate the suggestions in a way that will work best for the Town. It is expected that the recommendations will be implemented over a period of time, as funds become available, and as the community learns how to move forward in addressing its diverse housing needs.

MONITOR AND TRACK PROGRESS

Following the completion of this report, the EHC project team will develop a progress tracker to report on project milestones and achievements with respect to the report's recommendations. In addition, the project team will check in with Peace River Administration on a regular basis to keep track of progress and provide feedback or insights, as needed.

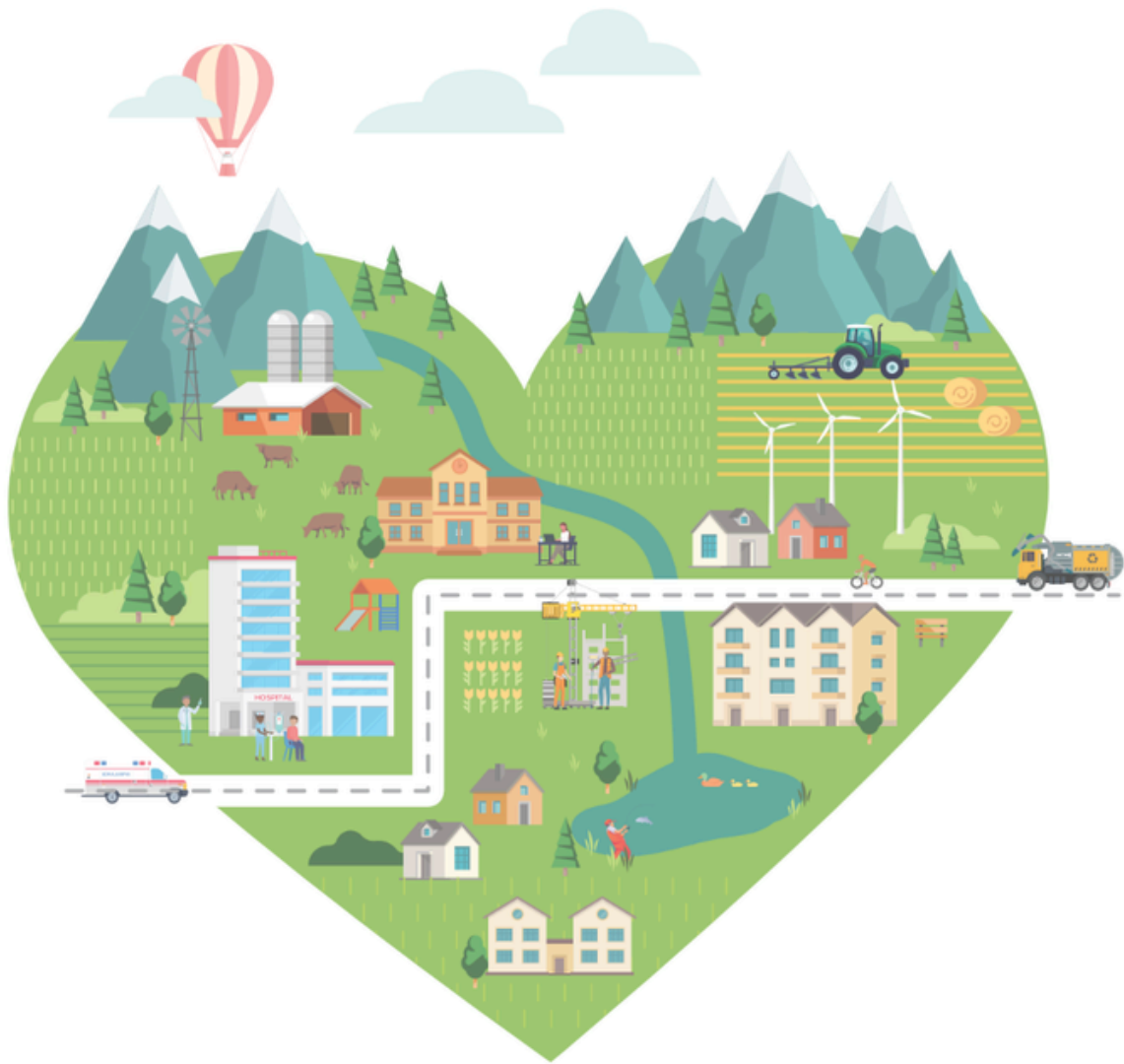
GUIDEBOOK FOR DIVERSIFYING HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

One of the final outcomes from this research project is the forthcoming update of RDN's **Guidebook for Diversifying Housing in Rural Communities**. The Guidebook will outline strategic planning tools and suggestions for accomplishing housing diversity goals in northern rural communities. The EHC team anticipates that the Guidebook update will be ready for release in April 2026.

FINAL WORDS

The pursuit of diversifying housing in Peace River will be a multifaceted and ongoing challenge. It will necessitate collaboration and dedication from a variety of stakeholders. The Town of Peace River will play a crucial role in actively committing to the diversification of housing within the community. By working together with other community partners — the Town can effectively address its housing needs and set a positive example for other communities facing similar obstacles.

With determination and teamwork, Peace River can lead the way towards a more inclusive community, where all residents have access to a range of affordable and diverse housing options.



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