

## News Release



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2023

### **Public and business input sought on workforce housing in Cowichan**

**DUNCAN, BC** – The Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD) invites employers, workers, developers, public service providers, and others to a series of virtual workshops to identify issues and opportunities for workforce housing in Cowichan.

The CVRD is developing a Workforce Housing Strategy for the Cowichan region. Economic Development Cowichan (EDC) is leading the work with support from Cowichan Housing Association. The goal of the project is to come up with actions for increasing housing availability and affordability for the labour force. CitySpaces Consulting will bring their extensive expertise to the work, and a Project Advisory Group has been formed with representation from a wide variety of sectors and groups.

“We are keenly aware that Cowichan does not have enough housing for everyone, and more people are moving here every year,” said Barry O’Riordan, Manager of Economic Development Cowichan. “When workers are unable to find or afford housing in the region, Cowichan businesses of all sizes and sectors struggle to attract and retain staff, exacerbating the national labour shortage. The Cowichan Workforce Housing Strategy will identify actions that can be taken to address these housing issues.”

In summer 2022, EDC conducted a series of Workforce Housing Surveys to identify the impacts of housing affordability and availability on workers and employers. The data gathered is being used as a baseline in the development of the Workforce Housing Strategy. A summary of the survey results is available at [planyourcowichan.ca/workforce-housing](https://planyourcowichan.ca/workforce-housing).

EDC is also hosting a series of workshops to discuss current workforce housing issues and opportunities, where we want to be in the future, and how we want to get there. These discussions will help the project team develop a vision and framework for the next step in the process: the solutions. Specific workshops are being held for employers, workers, builders & developers, service providers, local government, and the public. The workshops will take place virtually between January 30 and February 8, 2023.

Registration is open now at [planyourcowichan.ca/workforce-housing](https://planyourcowichan.ca/workforce-housing).

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