

## Small Housing press release

### New Initiative Aims to Merge Climate Action with More Affordable Housing Solutions

**Vancouver, BC – Tuesday, 13 August 2024** - As British Columbia faces another summer of extreme weather conditions amid an ongoing housing shortage, the urgent need for innovative solutions has never been clearer. For too long, addressing the climate crisis and housing affordability has been seen as almost mutually exclusive challenges. However, through its latest initiative, Small Housing is set to demonstrate how these two generational challenges can be tackled simultaneously more effectively.

Funded by the Natural Resource Codes Acceleration Fund, Small Housing's project will work with industry to identify the key barriers and opportunities surrounding high-performance, energy-efficient construction, with a special focus on gentle density and small-scale, multi-unit housing in BC.

Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Canada, the Honourable Jonathan Wilkinson said: "Energy efficiency means cost savings for Canadians. At a time when we are facing challenges with affordability and climate change, we are delivering on the Green Buildings Strategy. This plan meets Canadians where they are at and delivers the action they need, at the pace and scale they are demanding. Canada's first-ever Canada Green Buildings Strategy is a plan to save Canadians money, create jobs and seize the economic opportunities that a clean and sustainable economy presents, and Small Housing's project does just that."

With the recent passage of Bill 44, British Columbia stands at the threshold of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to develop more affordable and sustainable homes through Gentle Density Housing (GDH). This landmark legislation opens new avenues to increase our housing stock while addressing affordability and environmental concerns.

GDH typologies, such as houseplexes, cottage clusters, and laneway homes, offer viable options for adding density to single-family neighborhoods. However, these forms must meet the stringent energy standards set for single-family homes, posing unique challenges in compliance with the B.C. Energy Step Code, Zero Carbon Step Code, and Near Zero-Embodied Carbon standards.

Small Housing's project will address these challenges by reducing barriers to GDH development and promoting the practical application of high-performance building codes. The project will:

- Develop resources and training to help industry stakeholders meet the highest energy and carbon performance tiers.

- Catalyze innovation in housing design, introduce new products such as right-sized heat pumps, and enhance compliance with existing codes.
- Improve the capacity of local government planners and building officials to advance solutions for GDH forms.

Akua Schatz, Chair of Small Housing, outlined: "Through this project, we are positioned to make advancements in addressing our climate challenges while fostering the development of gentle density housing. This dual focus will ultimately contribute to a more affordable and sustainable future for communities across Canada."

MP Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville) said: "Working with organizations like Small Housing is crucial as we strive to address both our climate goals and housing needs. Their expertise and insights into energy-efficient, gentle density housing will play a significant role in creating sustainable communities. We are excited to support and collaborate on initiatives that pave the way for a greener, more affordable future for all Canadians."

## **ENDS**

### **About Small Housing:**

At Small Housing, our mission is to accelerate the adoption of gentle density housing in communities across British Columbia. With single-detached housing representing upwards of 50% of the housing options across the province, there is a big opportunity to create more homes in existing neighbourhoods and more homes within reach.

We are a non-profit organization that collaborates with government, industry, and homeowners to enable the introduction of gentle density, ground-oriented housing in single-family zones.

We work to advance policy and regulatory tools, best practices for home designs, development proformas and affordable housing models, and build the capacity of the sector to increase supply.

For more information on what we do: <https://smallhousing.ca/>

### **Background to Canada Green Buildings Strategy:**

Buildings are Canada's third largest emitter of GHG emissions, with over 96 percent of building emissions coming from space and water heating. Major changes in the building sector are underway and have the potential to create hundreds of thousands of sustainable jobs, improve energy affordability for Canadians, and better equip our communities to withstand the effects of climate change.

The Canada Green Buildings Strategy (CGBS) is being introduced by Natural Resources Canada during this critical time when a renewal of the building sector is underway and sets out the Government's vision and next steps for greener, more energy efficient and

affordable homes and buildings. The Strategy outlines how the Government is taking action to drive down monthly energy bills, helping Canadians reduce their carbon emissions, and ensuring that the homes and workplaces of Canadians are protected against the increasingly harmful effects of climate change. This is all in addition to creating good-paying, sustainable jobs.

For full details of funding recipients -

<https://www.canada.ca/en/natural-resources-canada/news/2024/07/funded-initiatives-announced-with-the-canada-green-buildings-strategy.html>

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