



2025

INTERIM HOUSING NEEDS REPORT



Mayor & Council
Village of Fraser Lake

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SUMMARY

The vast majority of data in the report is from the 2021 census. Anecdotally, many people question the accuracy of the 2021 census as they have seen more occupied homes than in previous years, in spite of a reported population decline.

Fraser Lake has also seen significant shifts since the 2021 census with the COVID-19 pandemic, inflationary pressures, and now the closure of the Fraser Lake and Canfor Plateau sawmills impacting local employment, population, demographics, home values, etc.

The *Housing Units Required* projections are calculated based off a continuation of reported trends locally, regionally, and province wide. A dramatic local decrease in population between the 2011 and 2016 census is the reason for anticipated negative supply needed to meet household growth.

Should one or more infrastructure or industrial projects go ahead as anticipated, these projections will likely prove inaccurate and result in the Village unable to meet housing demands for locals and businesses being unable to find employees.

The Village will benefit from planning for multiple growth scenarios over the next 5 years including the status quo, 20% growth, and 50% growth.

Housing Units Required

The Housing Assessment Resource Tools provide automated calculations for the 5 and 20-year Housing Needs Reports numbers. These use data from Statistics Canada's Census, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and BC Housing.

All units have been rounded up as partial housing units cannot meet housing needs.

5-year Housing Needs

Housing Type	Number of units (rounded up)
Supply of units to reduce extreme core housing need	1
Supply of units to reduce homelessness	2
Supply of units to address suppressed household formation	11
Supply of units to meet household growth	-19
Supply of units to meet at least 3% vacancy rate	1
Supply of units to meet local demand	11
TOTAL	7

20-year Housing Needs

Housing Type	Number of units (rounded up)
Supply of units to reduce extreme core housing need	3
Supply of units to reduce homelessness	4
Supply of units to address suppressed household formation	43
Supply of units to meet household growth	-31
Supply of units to meet at least 3% vacancy rate	3
Supply of units to meet local demand	42
TOTAL	64

Households in core housing need

There are currently no households in core housing need or extreme core housing need within the Village, though with potential growth and/or increases in housing costs, this could change quickly.

Required units in the 5 and 20-year projections are based off provincial and regional anticipated needs, but these needs can be met through many different kinds of housing development.

Key areas of local need

Affordable housing

Affordable housing is defined as housing that costs 30% or less of gross household income. In 2021, median household incomes were \$71,000, meaning affordable housing would be anything up to \$1,775 per month.

With the economic shifts in Fraser Lake, median household incomes and thus affordable housing rates are expected to be lower. There was a healthy gap between the cost of housing and incomes in 2021, but that will likely have narrowed at this time yet is still anticipated to be deemed affordable.

Rental housing

The Village's Rental Vacancy Rate is 1.4%, half of the recommended 3%. Increasing rental vacancy rates can be accomplished through the gentle densification of existing residential zones in secondary suites and accessory dwelling units, which the Village has already approved through Bylaw changes, or the addition of dedicated rental housing stock.

Rents in 2021 averaged \$900, though this has since increased by an estimated 33% to \$1,200 with many workers from the Coastal Gaslink project in the Village from 2021-2024. Rents do not appear to have come down with the completion of the project.

Special needs housing

There is no supply of dedicated special needs housing in the Village. Demand for this type of housing is currently unknown.

Housing for seniors

Current seniors' housing is comprised of one building with 23 independent living units, and land has already been purchased for expansion.

Expansion into supportive housing, long-term care, and palliative care would likely require partnerships with organizations like Northern Health and BC Housing, and an increase in the number of trained health workers within the Village. These service expansion options are already being discussed between the Village and not-for-profit service providers.

Housing for families

The supply of housing with 3+ bedrooms is able to meet the Village's current needs, though due to the age of these homes many require significant repairs, and some will likely need to be rebuilt entirely in the next decade. The cost of building represents a barrier to growth, as current home prices are more affordable than a new build and would make it difficult for developers to break even on sales.

Shelters for individuals experiencing homelessness and housing for individuals at risk of homelessness

Demand calculations for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness are done regionally, and then calculated per capita by community within the Regional District of Bulkley-Nechako.

There is currently no identified homelessness within Fraser Lake, though that does not mean homelessness may not occur in the future. The supply of dedicated housing for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness is likely unnecessary, and anyone who finds themselves in that situation within Fraser Lake will likely be better served with alternatives such as BC Housing's Private Market Rent Assistance programs, provided affordable rentals are available within the community.

Housing in close proximity to transportation infrastructure that supports walking, bicycling, public transit, and alternative forms of transportation

Aside from regional Northern bus services (BC Bus North, Northern Health Connections), there are no fixed transit stops within the Village where transit-oriented development is recommended.

Dedicated active transportation infrastructure is available the length of the community along the highway, but the streets are also largely considered walkable and bikeable and the Village is compact enough to make active transportation throughout feasible for many people. No changes to zoning or development plans are necessary at this time to further encourage active transportation.

Looking back

The Village's last Housing Needs Report was produced in 2023. Since then, amendments have been made to the Zoning Bylaw to allow for secondary suites and accessory dwelling units in residential zones, along with changes to setback and coverage limits to allow for more housing on existing lots.

No changes in housing needs have been noted since the 2023 report, though significant changes have taken place in the community and surrounding area pertaining to employment. Anecdotal shifts in housing, particularly the number of people moving both to and from Fraser Lake, have been noted but to date no data has been gathered on the overall impacts.