

**For immediate release
August 20, 2019**

SQUAMISH-LILLOOET REGIONAL DISTRICT INITIATES HOUSING NEED AND DEMAND STUDY

With consultant in place, community engagement process planned to begin in October, 2019

Pemberton, BC – The Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is initiating a housing need and demand study in order to better understand the housing pressures facing rural areas of the regional district.

The study is funded through the Province of British Columbia's Rural Dividend Fund and will be developed by Urban Matters. The SLRD gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Province of British Columbia.

Work began on the study in July, with the first phase including a comprehensive background review, and an initial analysis of current and emerging needs.

The project will involve a robust community and stakeholder engagement process, including a series of community workshops, an online survey and stakeholder interviews. The plan will encompass all SLRD electoral areas, but will not include member municipalities, as housing in those areas falls within the jurisdiction of each local government.

The study will meet the new provincial requirements for housing needs reports that took effect in April 2019, requiring all local governments in B.C. to complete housing needs reports by April, 2022 and every five years thereafter. Housing needs reports are a means for communities to better understand the current and future housing needs by identifying existing and projected gaps in housing supply.

The SLRD study will involve the collection and analysis of a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data to compile a detailed picture of local housing issues. This project will result in an actionable report that will inform regional planning in the future, and will consider the unique housing context of each electoral area to guide area-specific solutions. It will include a current needs analysis, a demand analysis, and a supply analysis that examines both current and future housing supply.

"This project is not only timely, but also extremely important to future planning for the district," said SLRD Board Chair, Tony Rainbow. "The regional district has experienced growth pressures and escalating housing costs in recent years, which has led to a lack of available affordable housing. Anecdotally, we hear of families – and professionals – having to leave the region due to a lack of housing, which leads to many challenges, including a worker shortage. The SLRD is excited to partner with Urban Matters to deliver a study that will benefit the overall health of rural communities within the regional district."

Through the engagement process, residents and stakeholders will have opportunities to share their insights into the current housing situation in the region, along with future housing needs in their respective communities.

Community housing workshops are being planned for each electoral area in the fall of 2019. The workshops will provide an overview of the planning process, highlight success stories from other regions and offer an opportunity to hear from the public about key priorities, issues and opportunities. An online survey, which will be launched during the workshops, will provide an additional means for public input.

More information about the project, including the anticipated timeline, and details regarding the various engagement opportunities, can be found on the SLRD's website:

<https://www.slrd.bc.ca/inside-slrd/current-projects-initiatives/slrd-housing-need-demand-study>

Residents with questions can contact:

Kim Needham
Director of Planning and Development Services
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 242
Email: kneedham@slrd.bc.ca

Alix MacKay
Planner
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 224
Email: amackay@slrd.bc.ca

- 30 -

About the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District

Located in southwestern BC, the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District (SLRD) is a local government federation consisting of four member municipalities (the District of Lillooet, the District of Squamish, the Village of Pemberton and the Resort Municipality of Whistler) and four unincorporated, rural electoral areas (A, B, C, and D). Headquartered in Pemberton, which is the approximate geographic centre of the region, the SLRD delivers a wide range of local, regional and sub-regional services to approximately 42,665 residents (2016 Census).

Media Contact:

Patricia Westerholm
Communications Coordinator
Squamish-Lillooet Regional District
Telephone: (604) 894-6371 ext. 244
Email: pwesterholm@slrd.bc.ca