



Re: Affordable Housing and the Climate Emergency

Dear Mayor and Council,

Transition Sooke strongly agrees with the District of Sooke's support for affordable, non-market housing. Our Scenario D, an alternative growth scenario for the Sooke OCP, proposes that new development consist almost exclusively of affordable housing and small, independent businesses (https://sooketransitioninitiative.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/scenario-d-trsansionsookelow-growth_low-carbonrev.pdf). A fundamental feature of those new buildings was that they would be "zero-energy."

In a recent email exchange with BC Housing (Marcio Teixeira da Silva, Development Manager, Development and Asset Strategies), Transition Sooke asked some questions about the new BC Housing affordable housing developments under construction in Sooke (Charters Road and Drennan Street).

Using Transition Sooke's "Climate-First" approach (<https://sooketransitioninitiative.files.wordpress.com/2021/05/climate-first-vs-lcr.pdf>), we assessed the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions of the two buildings.

The following are key points of that assessment:

- When operational, the two buildings will produce 18.607 tonnes CO₂/year
- No calculation is available of the GHGs from the construction process
- No calculation is available on the loss of carbon sink for the two properties
- The units in the two buildings will be heated with electric baseboard heaters (heat pumps would be far more efficient and much cheaper to run)
- There is no air conditioning in the buildings (During the heat dome this past summer, residents in these building would have been subjected to a serious health threat)
- The buildings will be constructed to Step Code 3
- There are no passive or active solar or solar-ready features
- There are no electric car charging stations

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We are very concerned with the construction features of these buildings.

We realize that the original applications for these projects were probably submitted a number of years ago, and so were not subjected to a Low Carbon Resilience (LCR) assessment. In emails with BC Housing, they have indicated that they will “abide by all municipal requirements established by Sooke.”

We are requesting the District of Sooke to ask BC Housing to bring their buildings into alignment with the District’s climate emergency goals.

Truly affordable housing is badly needed and fundamental to the sustainability of Sooke and the wellness of its residents. But these buildings will be expensive to operate, may be uncomfortable and even unhealthy for residents, and will make it very difficult to meet the GHG emissions targets of the District.

Transition Sooke
(with unanimous support of its Active Members)