

## Slocan seniors' housing project to break ground this fall

*submitted*

"It's been a very long haul," said Slocan Valley Seniors' Housing Society president Rita Moir, "but we are really pleased to announce final funding has

been approved for affordable seniors' rental housing in the Village of Slocan."

BC Housing, Columbia Basin Trust (the Trust), the Village of Slocan, Slocan Valley Economic Development Commission, RDCK, Slocan Valley Community Legacy Society, Heritage Credit Union, Slocan Legion Branch #276, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, local housing and trades professionals and the entire local community have contributed funds, land, and many thousands of volunteer hours toward making the \$1.9 million project a reality.

Along with the good news, there is still one hurdle: the 12-suite project in the heart of Slocan has been downsized to eight units due to sharp increases in construction materials and additional requirements since initial budgeting two years ago. BC Housing is encouraging the society to pursue the additional four units when a future program becomes available.

"We'll think of these eight units as Phase One," said Moir. "We're so glad to get going with these eight beautiful suites, and construction will include the infrastructure to get those final four done as soon as possible." The four-plexes, directly behind the Slocan Library and Wellness Centre, will include six one-bedroom suites with lofts and two two-bedroom suites.

BC Housing is contributing \$831,000 plus a low-interest mortgage, the Trust is providing \$269,000, and the community, including those aged one to ninety-one, raised more than \$45,000 last year during a three-day Hike or Bike for Housing. The Village contributed land leased for \$1 per year for 99 years,

plus help with infrastructure, funding, and permitting. Over \$110,000 in pro bono professional services have been contributed by community professionals, including building designer Eric Clough, legal counsel Leon Pigott, and engineers Ted Nunn and Dale Norman. Bartel Skeete of Winlaw donated \$25,000 worth of construction lumber.

"This has really been a group effort," said Moir, "but we especially want to thank our team: building designer Eric Clough and project coordinator Tamara Smith, who worked doggedly with BC Housing; Mark Brunton at the Trust; and Slocan's Mayor Jessica Lunn, council, staff, and CAO Michelle Gordon. I also want to thank our housing society staff and board of 12 stalwart volunteers, who have worked so hard and have held firm. It is a big project for a small non-profit society."

The society publicly tendered the project, and as a result, NDB Construction (Nancy and Darin Berg) of Castlegar was chosen and plans to start construction this fall.

A 2015 Need and Demand Study by housing consultant Ann Harvey documented the great need for seniors' housing: almost 50% of the Slocan Valley population of 5,000 are age 50 or older, yet there are only 20 units of affordable, purposely-built seniors' rental housing, including the housing society's Passmore Lodge, in the 100-km long mountain valley.

For more information, visit [www.svhousing.ca](http://www.svhousing.ca) or Facebook. [com/svhousing](https://www.facebook.com/svhousing) and watch for further announcements about official celebrations and ground-breaking ceremonies.