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April 10, 2008



**SMART GROWTH BC UNVEILS BC'S FIRST
MARKET AND NON-MARKET AFFORDABLE HOUSING TOOLKIT**

Vancouver, BC –“Local governments can, and must, provide leadership to address our current and looming housing crisis,” says Smart Growth BC’s Executive Director, Cheeying Ho. Smart Growth BC just released its latest publication, *Creating Market and Non-Market Affordable Housing: A Smart Growth Toolkit for BC Municipalities* to assist local governments in promoting affordable housing. The publication provides detailed explanations of eight tools and strategies, from inclusionary zoning to land banking, and highlights examples of best practices across BC. It demonstrates how local governments are adapting affordable housing strategies to fit their unique needs, and addresses the gap between market rate and social housing.

One of the innovators featured in the Toolkit is the District of Ucluelet, a community that has already won accolades and awards for its Official Community Plan. By using a by-law called inclusionary zoning, 15% to 20% of all new development in Ucluelet will be affordable – a goal the community has indicated is a priority. In *Westcoaster.ca*, local builder, Peter Stade says, “I want to see [Ucluelet] remain a healthy and family-oriented town.”

Another practice highlighted in the toolkit is resale price restrictions, which the Whistler Housing Authority is using. Over the past 10 years, this strategy has enabled 475 residents to purchase a diversity of units, from studios to four-bedroom homes, at 30% to 70% below market price. These restrictions will continue to apply to the units once resold to allow a return on the initial investment, while ensuring that affordability relative to market is maintained for the community. Resident Shelagh Bridgwater said, “This program is providing my husband and [me] with the unique opportunity to own property and put down roots in this community. In Whistler, we found both, a good job and a place to live; a place we can call home.”

Creating Market and Non-Market Affordable Housing: A Smart Growth Toolkit for BC Municipalities explores innovative partnerships between government and industry, collaborations that tap into promising market and non-market opportunities and ensure that all residents can continue to live in our communities. Rich Coleman, the Minister Responsible for Housing, says, “The Smart Growth toolkit provides tools local governments can use to encourage affordable housing developments. The toolkit complements actions taken under the province's housing strategy, Housing Matters BC, including the recent expansion of the rental assistance program.”

Smart Growth BC is the leading non-governmental organization working towards creating more livable communities in British Columbia. The toolkit will be presented at Smart Growth BC’s upcoming conference, April 18th, 2008 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Vancouver, and is available for free download at www.smartgrowth.bc.ca. **For more information or to set up an interview with the toolkit authors, please contact:**

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