
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs

New affordable homes open for people in Courtenay

COURTENAY – Indigenous Elders, individuals and people with disabilities with low or moderate incomes now have access to 40 affordable homes in Courtenay.

“The opening of these homes means more people can have safe, affordable places to live, close to their families, culture and community,” said Ravi Kahlon, Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs. “These welcoming spaces will make people feel safe, supported and truly at home in affordable housing that meets their needs.”

Naut’sa mawt (pronounced not-sa mott), a Coast Salish word meaning “together as one,” at 1679 McPhee Ave. is a five-storey, wood-frame building with 40 affordable homes prioritized for Indigenous people. Managed by Wachiay Friendship Centre Society, the building features a mix of studio and one-bedroom units with rents ranging from \$500 to approximately \$1,300 per month. Nearly 80% of units are fully accessible or adaptable, and thoughtfully designed to support people with diverse needs.

“We raise our hands to celebrate the community support provided by AHMA member, Wachiay Friendship Centre Society,” said Margaret Pfoh, CEO of the Aboriginal Housing Management Association (AHMA). “AHMA members are quietly making a huge difference all across B.C. with housing that is affordable, culturally informed and serves those most in need.”

The Wachiay Friendship Centre Society owns the building and aims to create a space where Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities can gather, exchange traditions and learn from one another. The building is adjacent to the Wachiay Friendship Centre, which delivers more than 50 programs and services to Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

“Wachiay Friendship Centre Society is thrilled to see the completion of Naut’sa Mawt,” said Monica Goodheart, president of Wachiay Friendship Centre Society. “This will provide much-needed housing for our most vulnerable and valued population, our Elders and other community members who are struggling to find safe affordable housing.”

This project is part of a \$19-billion housing investment by the B.C. government. Since 2017, the Province has nearly 92,000 homes delivered or underway, including more than 700 in Courtenay.

Quotes:

George Anderson, MLA for Nanaimo-Lantzville –

“The opening of these 40 homes is a meaningful example of what can be achieved through strong partnerships with Indigenous communities. Everyone deserves a safe place to call home,

and that's exactly what these homes represent for the people of Courtenay."

Josie Osborne, MLA for Mid Island-Pacific Rim –

"We are welcoming 40 new homes into the community of Courtenay, homes that will soon be filled with stories, connection and the daily rhythms of life. These homes are more than buildings. They are a foundation for people to stay rooted in the place they love, close to family, culture and community."

Will Cole-Hamilton, board chair, Comox Valley Regional District –

"This project represents key relationships with our Indigenous partners and addresses ongoing housing needs in the community. Congratulations to the Wachiay Friendship Centre Society on this fantastic achievement in providing safe and inclusive spaces to those in need."

Bob Wells, mayor of Courtenay –

"Partnerships have played a key role in this amazing project, and we're proud the City has been a contributor. We are truly grateful for the vision and leadership of Wachiay Friendship Centre Society, collaboration with M'akola Housing Society and major funding from BC Housing and CMHC."

Quick Facts:

- The Province, through BC Housing, contributed \$7.2 million for the project through the Community Housing Fund.
- The Province is also providing an annual operating subsidy of \$212,000.
- The federal government, through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, provided \$2 million through the Affordable Housing Fund.
- The Wachiay Friendship Centre Society provided the land, valued at approximately \$878,000, and \$5,000 in cash equity toward the project.
- Other contributions include a grant of approximately \$180,000 from Comox Valley Regional District, approximately \$90,000 in waived development fees from the City of Courtenay and nearly \$24,000 grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

Learn More:

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for people in British Columbia, visit:

<https://strongerbc.gov.bc.ca/housing/>

A map showing the location of all announced provincially funded housing projects in B.C. is available here: <https://www.bchousing.org/projects-partners/Building-BC/homes-for-BC>

To learn how BC Housing is helping to build strong, inclusive housing communities, visit:

<https://www.bchousing.org/podcast>

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