Sḵwx̱wú7mesh Úxwumixw
Squamish Nation

Housing Allocations Policy Update

Ta na wa Shéway I7x̱w ta Úxwumixw (Planning & Capital Projects) and Wa Ns7eyx̱ ta Temíxw (Community Lands) are working to create a standalone Allocations policy. Between May 22 and June 20, 2024, we invited Squamish People to engage on how we could make improvements in three key areas: **clarity**, **transparency**, and **consistency** when it comes to lot and home allocations. We asked about changes to both the policy and the process of allocations. A summary of this engagement can be found at **https://www.squamish.net/community-initiatives/housing-policy-engagement/.**

Squamish Nation staff have used the feedback from Squamish People to develop proposed updates to the Allocations Policy. Squamish Nation staff are now reporting back on what was heard and gathering Squamish People's feedback on the proposed updates.
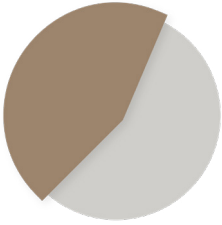
To provide your feedback on the proposed changes, visit **www.surveymonkey.ca/r/AllocationsPhase2**

TAKE THE SURVEY

Improving Clarity

44% of survey respondents felt that the Allocations Policy and process were not clear and easy to understand.

We heard:

- It is confusing that the Nation uses previous fiscal years to manage the Housing List (e.g., Squamish People are confused about why the 2012/2013 List was recently published).

- Squamish People want more clear information about how and when allocations happen.

- Applicants would like to be reminded to update their information.

Actions We're Recommending to Improve Clarity

- **Recommendation #1:** Update the Allocations Policy to make it clear that allocations are not done annually. Rather, allocations will be considered for approval during the annual budgeting process.

- **Recommendation #2:** Update the Housing List from the fiscal year of the previous allocation to the present year to eliminate multiple lists and reflect people's current circumstances.

- **Recommendation #3:** At least annually, remind applicants to update their information. Update the policy to specify the date that updates must be made to reflect accurately on the next publication of the Housing List.

Improving Transparency

56% of survey respondents felt that the Allocation Policy and process were not transparent.
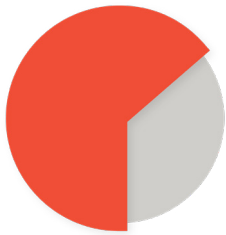
We heard:

• The Housing List needs to be published regularly.

• More transparency is needed about the Allocations Policy, the Housing List, and allocations decisions.

Actions We're Recommending to Improve Transparency

• **Recommendation #4:** Publish the Housing List annually by a date specified in the policy.

• **Recommendation #5:** Create an ongoing communications plan for informing Squamish People about the Housing List, the process for allocations, and information on whether an allocation will take place that year.

Improving Consistency

63% of survey respondents felt the Allocations Policy and process were not consistent.

We heard:

- Some past decisions have been inconsistent with policy, creating concerns about favouritism and improper allocations decisions.

- There has been inconsistent information and communications shared about the Policy.

Actions We're Recommending to Improve Consistency

Pensioners

- The current Housing Policy is unclear on whether someone should automatically be moved to the Pensioner category when they turn 65. This means some people may move to the Pensioner category while others may stay in their current category.

- This creates uncertainty for people in other categories and grants greater priority to people 65 and over.

- **Recommendation #6:** Require everyone to be transferred automatically to the Pensioner category once they turn 65.

Single Parents

- The current Housing Policy defines a Single Parent as someone with minor children or dependent adults living permanently with them.

- In practice, homes have been allocated to applicants with adult children living at home, recognizing that children may move in and out of their family's home over time.

- **Recommendation #7:** Update the definition of Single Parent to allow people to be in the single parent category regardless of the age of their child or whether the child lives with them.

Married/Common-Law Verification

- The Housing Policy requires people to be legally married, united by traditional laws or customs, or living together for at least two years to be in the married/common-law category. This has not been consistently verified.

- **Recommendation #8:** Update verification requirements to require either a marriage licence or at least one joint tax filing for people to be in the married/common-law category. Some people in marriage-like relationships may not be able to provide these documents for legitimate reasons. We are working internally to identify alternative methods of verification.

Housing List Eligibility

Gifted Homes

- The current Housing Policy allows someone who is gifted a home to stay on the Housing List. This is considered a loophole that encourages home sales to be hidden as purchasing a home automatically removes an applicant from the Housing List.

- **Recommendation #9:** Update Housing List eligibility so that a person is removed from the Housing List if they are gifted a house.

Inherited Homes

- The current Housing Policy allows a lot to be transferred to a minor if the transfer is made to an adult in trust for a minor.

- There have been concerns that people are registering homes in their child's name so that they won't be removed from the Housing List to increase the chance that their immediate family receives multiple homes.

- **Recommendation #10:** Update the policy so that if someone who has inherited a home is also given an allocation, the Nation will select from the following two options based on the condition of the existing home: 1) build the new home on the existing lot or 2) transfer the existing lot to a family member who will live in the home, and then select a new lot for their allocation.