



Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Selina Robinson and Westbank First Nation Chief Christopher Derickson announced the housing project in a groundbreaking ceremony on Friday. (Twila Amato - Black Press Media)

# Affordable rental homes coming to Westbank First Nation

The project will bring 17 rental units to the community

Jan. 31, 2020 12:00 a.m. / [NEWS](#)

The Westbank First Nation and the provincial government are partnering to build 17 new rental homes on WFN land.

The project will see a two-storey apartment building with 14 rental units for the nation's members. The building will have a mix of one- and two-bedroom units, with an accessible layout for ground floor units. A second building will have three two-bedroom townhomes.

Monthly rents for the apartments are projected to be \$400 for the one-bedroom units and \$570 for the two-bedroom units. The province, through the Indigenous Housing Fund, will

provide a \$2.8 million grant for the project, as well as an annual operating subsidy.

Minister of Housing Selina Robinson and Westbank First Nation Chief Christopher Derickson made the announcement during a groundbreaking ceremony Friday.

“Housing is the foundation on which people build their lives. With these homes, more Westbank First Nation members will be able to stay in their home community, surrounded by their culture and tradition,” Robinson said.

“Our government is proud to be working in partnership with First Nations, Indigenous leaders, and Indigenous housing providers to build much-needed new, affordable homes like these for Indigenous peoples across B.C.”

Derickson said most of the WFN population is young, with many young families and young professionals wanting to stay in the community but they have a difficult time getting into the housing market.

“We’re seeing a lot of our members who go out to university and want to come back and live and work in the community or within the local region here,” he said. “Many First Nations across Canada are seeing their members move away from the reserve, but we’re actually seeing our members come home and we want to provide a place for them.”

He added the partnership points to reconciliation in B.C.

“I think it’s a great example for the rest of Canada in terms of what can be done when a province is dedicated to reconciliation, dedicated to implementing UNDRIP. I think it

goes a long way in demonstrating this government's commitment to reconciliation in B.C.”

The second complex, which will include the three townhouses will feature two-bedrooms, living, dining and kitchen areas and one-and-a-half bathrooms in each unit. Monthly rents are projected at \$570 each.

The province, again through the Indigenous Housing Fund, will provide a \$600,000 grant for the project as well as an annual operating subsidy.

Construction on both projects will start in early February and is scheduled to be completed by the spring of 2021.

**[READ MORE: Province announces more affordable rental homes for Kelowna](#)**

**[READ MORE: Kelowna 14th most expensive city to rent](#)**

---

## **Twila Amato**

Video journalist, Black Press Okanagan  
Email me at [twila.amato@blackpress.ca](mailto:twila.amato@blackpress.ca)  
Follow me on [Twitter](#)