

Attachment A:

Housing Strategy
Terms of Reference

June 9, 2020

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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Saanich maintains that one of the fundamental elements of creating and maintaining a healthy, inclusive, and sustainable community is the provision of a range of housing types that can accommodate people of different ages, incomes, household structures, and physical and social needs. Working towards a diverse and affordable housing stock is also an important foundation for supporting growth and responding to changes in population and housing trends.

In Saanich and across the region, the growing housing affordability and homelessness crisis has brought a sense of urgency to address shelter needs across the housing spectrum, especially for low and moderate income households. The housing spectrum is a visual reference used to categorize and describe the full range of temporary, non-market and market housing types from emergency shelters to home ownership.

Housing Spectrum



Increasingly complex housing issues impact a wide range of household structures, ages, and incomes. In Saanich, housing affordability challenges are evident with 45% of renters and 19% of homeowners paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs. Affordability has been impacted by rising housing prices and an insufficient supply of housing to meet current and future needs for adequate, suitable, and affordable housing. Expanding housing choice and affordability, encourages the development of diverse, livable neighbourhoods near transit and within walking distance of parks, schools, and other amenities.

The Saanich Strategic Plan identifies the development of a Housing Strategy as a key initiative. This initiative was further prioritized by a motion passed by Council directing staff to focus planning resources on priorities and policies to increase the supply, diversity and affordability of housing including a housing strategy, housing needs assessment, and service delivery review.

The Terms of Reference provides the background, approach, scope and timeline for development of the Housing Strategy. Existing affordable housing policies in the Official Community Plan (OCP) and local area plans, direction in the Strategic Plan, and other relevant plans will help inform and support the development of the Housing Strategy.

COVID-19 Context

On March 11, 2020, the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus was declared a pandemic by the Director-General of the World Health Organization. The Province of BC has implemented a plan to manage the impact of COVID-19 and Saanich has established its own emergency planning and communications, focussing on containment and information activity while preparing for other possible eventualities. As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves, the District of Saanich continues to focus on helping our community stay safe and healthy.

The pandemic impacts the development of the Housing Strategy in two important ways. Firstly, the Strategy will need to consider the long lasting housing impacts of the pandemic. While it is not yet possible to quantify the negative impacts to housing affordability and supply as a result of this rapidly changing crisis, it is clear the adverse impact will be significant and existing housing challenges will be amplified.

Secondly, the development of the Housing Strategy will take into account limitations with respect to engaging the public and stakeholders as a result of the current pandemic and social distancing measures. The Terms of Reference outlines an approach that recognizes these limitations and integrates a level of flexibility to respond to the fluidity of the situation.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of Saanich's Housing Strategy is to direct how we will move forward to achieve greater housing supply, affordability and diversity and accommodate a broad range of community housing needs now and into the future.

With an objective to foster healthy, inclusive, equitable, and affordable housing opportunities, the strategy aims to improve housing outcomes and support residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities through housing policy and other actions. The strategy will set a framework to implement and prioritize action-oriented strategies, providing guidance for Council decision-making. In addition, it will promote the advancement of partnerships and enhance community awareness of housing issues and opportunities.

3. STRATEGY FOCUS AREAS

The Official Community Plan and Strategic Plan provides direction for key focus areas for the Housing Strategy and an organizational framework for development of policies and actions. The following describes the five focus areas:

1. Increase Affordable Housing

Increase support for and supply of affordable, adequate, and accessible housing for low to moderate-income households and vulnerable residents including people who are homeless or at risk of being homeless.

2. **Support Housing Diversity and Supply**

Work towards achieving a diverse housing supply that meets the needs of current and future residents by expanding housing choices through type, size, tenure, price, and location.

3. **Promote and Protect Rental Housing**

Support the retention, revitalization and development of rental stock to address the current shortfall and meet future rental housing demand while supporting existing tenants.

4. **Reduce Barriers to Housing**

Identify options to reduce financial and regulatory barriers, align municipal processes with housing targets to address housing needs, and provide tools to support the development of a diversity of housing.

5. **Strengthen Partnerships and Build Awareness**

Support development of innovative and affordable housing solutions by strengthening existing and new partnerships, providing equitable engagement and capacity building opportunities, and building awareness in the community.

Municipal strategies and actions will be developed in response to each of the focus areas and complement the District's existing housing policies and initiatives.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

In order to address existing and future housing needs with greater housing supply, affordability and diversity, Saanich's Housing Strategy will set strategic direction over the next 10 years and establish 3-year priority actions. Existing housing policies and initiatives that address housing supply, diversity and affordability will be considered for alignment and integration during development of the strategy.

The scope of work includes the following elements:

Background Information, Data and Context Analysis

- *Demand and Supply Analysis* - Provide an overview of current housing conditions and the existing and projected housing needs in Saanich using an evidence-based approach with accurate and comprehensive data based on available information and the Housing Needs Report.
- *Case Study Reviews* - Review Housing Strategies and best practices in other jurisdictions, including building on and aligning with efforts of the Capital Regional District (CRD) and partner CRD municipalities.
- *Role Contextualization* - Inventory and communicate the roles and initiatives of the federal government, the provincial government, the Capital Regional District, non-profit organizations, private developers and the District of Saanich in addressing housing needs.

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- *Stakeholder Engagement* – Undertake engagement with housing stakeholders to develop an in-depth understanding of housing issues and potential responses.
 - *Affordable Housing Definition* - Review and consider refining Saanich’s definition of Affordable Housing while taking into account other household costs such as utilities, transportation, childcare and access to amenities.

Equity

- *Equity Lens* – At project initiation, apply an equity lens designed to identify applicable statistical data, remove barriers to engagement, evaluate impacts of strategies and actions, and lead to more equitable housing outcomes.

Engagement

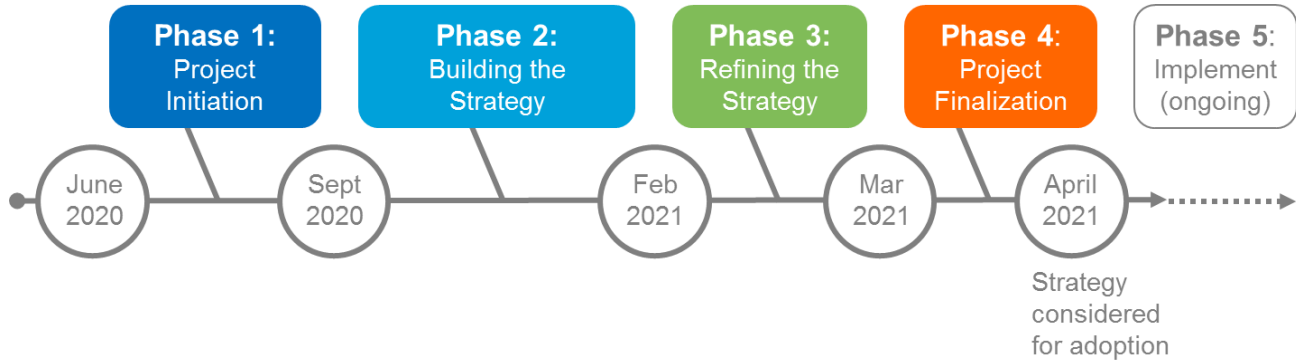
- *Balanced Process* - Deliver an engagement process that balances a streamlined process with engagement that addresses equity, inclusion, and diversity, to ensure an understanding of community and stakeholder perspectives on housing concerns, challenges, barriers, priorities, and solutions.
- *Task Force* – Deliver recommendations to Council that outline strategies and actions that respond to the five focus areas. The recommendations will prioritize actions, focus on the District’s role, and partnership opportunities with the non-profit sector, private sector, local organizations, communities and all levels of government
- *Integration with Housing Needs Report Project* – Build on data developed from the Housing Needs Report and integrate stakeholder engagement activities to ensure alignment of projects and minimize impacts on stakeholders.
- *Housing Website* - Create a Saanich housing webpage that serves as a central location for information, statistics and initiatives related to housing and a tool to raise awareness of housing issues. The website would remain a key tool to support implementation after completion of the project.

Developing Strategies and Actions

- *Strategies and Actions* - Recommendations from the Task Force for housing strategies and action will be refined based on stakeholder and public input;
- *Targets* - Develop 10 year housing targets that respond to the type and amount of housing needed to meet existing and emerging housing demands and sets a clear direction for Saanich;
- *Monitoring and Evaluation* - Develop a framework to monitor and report on progress towards achieving targets and actions and to assess current housing market conditions.

5. PROJECT PROCESS AND TIMELINE

Developing a Housing Strategy is anticipated to take 11 months to complete. The figure below provides an overview of the process.



Detailed descriptions of the project phases, key activities, deliverables, and timeline are provided in the table below. While the process and projected timeline is well defined, adjustments may be required given the complexity of the subject matter and uncertainty regarding the suitability and timing of in-person engagement techniques.

| Phase | Activities | Key Deliverables | Duration |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------|
| Phase 1: Project Initiation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare background information and baseline data on demographic, housing and economic data using information from the Housing Needs Report and other sources • Research and technical analysis of key issues, opportunities, and best practices • Develop the engagement strategy • <i>Phase 1 Engagement – Issues and Opportunities</i>. Obtain key stakeholder and public input regarding housing needs, affordability, and supply challenges, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Targeted interviews and online focus groups with key stakeholders ○ Online public engagement to build awareness ○ Public Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalized detailed plan scope • Data and statistics, including initial Housing Needs Report data • Engagement Strategy • Phase 1: Engagement Report • Preliminary Action List • Housing website and associated information materials | 3 months (Jun - Aug) |

| | | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| <p>Phase 2: Building the Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Phase 2 Engagement –Actions and Innovation.</i> Prioritize and confirm strategies and actions while exploring innovative ideas to address key housing affordability and supply issues, through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Task Force ○ Public survey to gain feedback on the Task Force recommendations • Update data and targets based on the Housing Needs Report • Update draft strategy • Task Force Recommendations presented to Council • Draft the Housing Strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Based on Task Force recommendations, public input and key stakeholder feedback | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Needs Report • Task Force Report to Council for consideration • Public survey results • Initial Draft Housing Strategy | <p>5 months (Sept –Jan)</p> |
| <p>Phase 3: Refining the Strategy</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review of draft strategy • Revise / refine Housing Strategy • Develop implementation and monitoring strategy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised Draft Housing Strategy | <p>1.5 months (Feb - Mar)</p> |
| <p>Phase 4: Project Finalization</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop staff report • Council meeting | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Housing Strategy • Council Report | <p>1.5 months (Mar - Apr)</p> |
| <p>Phase 5: Implement, Monitor & Report</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement priority actions • Monitor and report out on progress towards achieving targets • Adapt the strategy based upon progress towards targets and changing conditions | | <p>Ongoing (Post adoption of Strategy)</p> |

6. ENGAGEMENT

An integral component of the Housing Strategy is a comprehensive engagement process that provides opportunities for Saanich residents and key stakeholders to gain an understanding of current housing issues and provide input on housing challenges, needs, opportunities, and solutions.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the engagement strategy will be developed using creative solutions in order to achieve meaningful engagement while recognizing the limitations of replacing face-to-face consultation and the capacity of stakeholders and the public to

participate. Rethinking traditional engagement techniques will help staff adapt to changing conditions without delaying implementation of this important strategy. Non-traditional civic engagement platforms and accessible, off-line solutions will also be explored within the scope of the project. Finally, allowing for a flexible approach is imperative while navigating through this incredibly challenging crisis and complex subject matter.

The engagement approach aims to emphasize accessibility, inclusion, and equity including consultation with equity seeking groups and those that are typically under-represented. In recognition of Saanich’s commitment to reconciliation, engagement with neighbouring First Nations governments as well as other Indigenous groups and organizations, is another important element of the approach.

Building on engagement for the Housing Needs Report will also play a key role to reduce consultation fatigue and to gain valuable input for developing actions that are impactful and targets that reflect the greatest housing needs.

Engagement Approach

Saanich adheres to the International Association of Public Participation (IAP2) spectrum of participation which identifies the level of community involvement in decision making. The table below describes the level of public participation for each project phase and anticipated strategies for public and stakeholder engagement used to garner interest and participation in engagement events. These strategies may be adapted or supplemented to help achieve a comprehensive engagement process.

| Engagement: Goals and Tools | Level of Public Participation (IAP2) | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|---|
| | Inform | Consult | Involve |
| Public Participation Goal | To provide balanced and objective information that will keep key stakeholders and the public up to date and raise awareness of the project, housing needs, and public engagement opportunities. | To obtain key stakeholder and public feedback on options, alternative solutions, and the draft strategy. | To work directly with key stakeholders and the public throughout the process to identify housing issues, receive feedback, and prioritize potential key strategies, actions, and partnership opportunities. |
| Proposed Engagement Tools | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project web site • Email updates • Social media • Media (offline advertisements) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups • Task Force |

Key Stakeholders

Key stakeholders will be consulted and provided the opportunity for input, with the greatest involvement, during Phase 1 and 2. Initially, communication tools such as informational interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders will be conducted.

A draft list of key stakeholders is outlined in Appendix A and will be supplemented as the detailed plan scope is finalized and engagement is initiated. Identified stakeholder groups include:

- Government Organizations
- Educational Institutions
- Health Institutions & Social Agencies
- Economic Development Agencies & Business
- Building Development Industry
- Non-profit Developers & Housing Providers/Agencies
- Community Members

Task Force

The Task Force will function as an advisory body to support the development of the project by recommending strategies and actions designed to achieve greater housing supply, affordability and diversity and accommodate a broad range of community housing needs now and into the future. To ensure an equitable approach, a diverse group of stakeholders including non-profits, industry, developers, and those experiencing significant challenges in finding affordable and suitable housing will be invited to participate.

The Task Force will operate in Phase 2 of the process and be tasked with developing recommendations that will form the basis of the Strategy content. It is anticipated the Task Force will sit for approximately 2 to 3 months. The structure and role of the Task Force are outlined in the Housing Strategy Task Force Terms of Reference.

7. RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER INITIATIVES

Saanich and regional plans, policies, and initiatives will influence the Housing Strategy and be considered for alignment and integration during development of the strategy. These resources include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **Saanich Official Community Plan (OCP), 2008** - Includes affordable housing policies and policies related to promoting complete communities and Centres, Villages and Neighbourhoods with diverse housing.
- **Local Area Plans and Centre, Corridor & Village Plans** – These plans form part of the OCP and include direction for housing supply, diversity and affordability. Plans currently under development include the Cadboro Bay Local Area Plan Update, Cordova Bay Local Area Plan Update, and the Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan. These plans provide a valuable opportunity to implement housing directions the local scale.

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- **CRD Regional Housing Affordability Strategy, 2018** - Includes housing affordability approaches and policies, establishes regional housing development targets, and supports municipalities and electoral areas in establishing local targets, monitoring results, and identifying potential solutions.
 - **Housing Needs Report** - This report is led by the CRD in collaboration with Saanich and 10 other local government entities. The report will meet Provincial requirements and provide a comprehensive analysis of the supply and demand of housing within Saanich and the region as well as the amount and type of housing that will be needed to meet community growth. This initiative will parallel the development of the Housing Strategy, with information from the Housing Needs Report integrated into and used to refine the Housing Strategy.
 - **Service Delivery Review** - This project will provide a service delivery assessment for all development application processes and is anticipated to be initiated in 2020.
 - **Parallel Initiatives** - Planning initiatives that address housing supply, diversity and affordability have been identified by Council through the Strategic Plan or Council motions. A number of these initiatives are underway and will be completed during development of the Housing Strategy, while all being considered for alignment and integration with the Strategy. Significant parallel initiatives include:
 - Developing a Tenant Assistance Policy;
 - Exploring increases to height and density in RA (apartment) zones;
 - Developing options for Community Amenity Contributions and Inclusionary Zoning;
 - Developing a new zone for low-rise apartments with micro-units;
 - Exploring the potential to permit garden suites and secondary suites on the same lot; and
 - Providing information on the legalization of tiny homes.

8. BUDGET

In addition to staff resources, the budget for the project is anticipated to be \$120,000. The budget includes project costs for technical consultant work, stakeholder and public engagement (online tools), Task Force meetings (facilitator, online tools, and potential venues), print production and graphic design work, advertising, and a contingency to enable additional analysis and expertise as required.

9. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables will be achieved through the Housing Strategy planning process:

- Task Force Recommendations;
- 10 Year Housing Strategy;
- 10 Year Housing Targets;
- 3 Year Priority Actions; and
- Monitoring and Reporting Plan.

APPENDIX A: KEY STAKEHOLDER LIST

The following table provides a draft list of key stakeholders. This preliminary list may be expanded or refined as the Engagement Strategy is finalized and engagement is initiated.

| Key Stakeholders | |
|---|---|
| Saanich Council & Committees | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Saanich Council • Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee • Housing Strategy Task Force |
| Saanich Departments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saanich Corporate and Legislative Services • Saanich Engineering & Public Works • Saanich Finance • Saanich Parks and Recreation • Saanich Planning |
| Government Organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital Regional District • BC Housing • BC Assessment • Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation • Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing • Neighbouring municipalities • Neighbouring First Nations governments • Vancouver Island Health Authority |
| Educational Institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Camosun College • School District 61 and 63 • Student Associations • University of Victoria |
| Health Institutions & Social Agencies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vancouver Island Health Authority • Saanich Volunteer Services Society • Victoria Foundation |
| Economic Development Agencies & Business | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial Institution • Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce • Tourism Victoria • Vancouver Island Economic Alliance • Vancouver Island Technology Park |
| Building Development Industry | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Construction and design industry • Commercial landlords/Rental and strata property management • Landlord BC • Market developers • Real Estate Foundation British Columbia • Urban Development Institute • Vancouver Island Real Estate Board • Victoria Home Builders Association • Victoria Residential Builders Association |

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|---|---|
| <p>Non-profit developers & housing providers/ agencies</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadmead Care • BC Non-Profit Housing Society • Canadian Senior Cohousing Society • Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria • Co-operative Housing Federation of BC (CHF BC) • Co-op Housing Associations in Saanich • Garth Home Society • Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness • Greater Victoria Housing Society • Habitat for Humanity • Island Community Mental Health • Intercultural Association of Greater Victoria • M'akola Housing Society • Mount Douglas Seniors Housing Society • Our Place Society • Pacifica Housing • Pacific Housing Research Network • Saanich Neighbourhood Place • Victoria Cool Aid Society • Victoria Native Friendship Centre • United Way of Greater Victoria |
| <p>Community Members</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith organizations • General Public and Residents • Members of Equity Seeking Groups • Saanich Community Associations • Saanich Community Association Network (SCAN) |