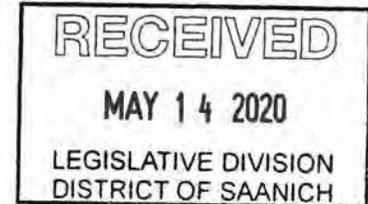




The Corporation of the District of Saanich

Report

To: Mayor and Council
From: Sharon Hvozanski, Director of Planning
Date: May 14, 2020
Subject: Housing Strategy – Terms of Reference
File: 2140-50 • Affordable Housing – Housing Strategy



RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council endorse the Housing Strategy Terms of Reference (see Attachment A).
2. That Council allocate \$120,000 of (2018) surplus appropriation for the Local Area Plans to the development of the Housing Strategy.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to:

- Provide Council with a general overview of the subject matter;
- Seek Council's endorsement of the Terms of Reference for a Housing Strategy; and
- Seek Council direction on funding the development of the Housing Strategy.

DISCUSSION

Background

The housing affordability crisis is evident in Saanich and in communities across the region, impacting the health, well-being, vibrancy and economic resiliency of the community. Rising housing costs, limited housing diversity and an insufficient supply of appropriate, accessible, and secure housing geared to low and moderate income households has created challenges in Saanich and the region. Additionally, there is need for supportive and transitional housing to support Saanich's most vulnerable residents.

The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) considers housing affordable if total shelter costs are less than 30% of a household's before-tax income. In Saanich, 45% of renters and 19% of homeowners are paying more than 30% of their income on shelter costs (2016 Census). As the population in Saanich increases, demand for affordable and attainable housing will also grow.

Council Direction

Housing Strategy

The Strategic Plan identifies the development of a housing strategy through the following initiative:

“Develop a Saanich housing strategy to identify and implement policies to increase the supply, affordability and diversity of housing.”

Subsequent to adoption of the Strategic Plan, on December 9, 2019, this initiative was further prioritized by a motion passed by Council, which stated:

“That Council approve to pause initiation of new Local Area Plans to focus planning resources on priorities and policies to increase the supply, diversity and affordability of housing, including the housing strategy, housing needs assessment, and service delivery review.”

Parallel Initiatives

In addition to the Housing Strategy, other housing initiatives have been directed by Council through the Strategic Plan or Council Motions. These initiatives will be undertaken concurrently, as resources permit, and may be aligned and integrated with the Housing Strategy. These related initiatives are in progress or under consideration and include the following:

- Below market and rental housing (to be integrated as part of Housing Strategy);
- Community Amenity Contributions Policy (in progress);
- Development Application Process Review (in progress);
- Garden Suite + Secondary Suite – allow both in single family zones (in progress);
- Housing Needs Report (in progress);
- Inclusionary Zoning Guidelines (in progress);
- Modular housing options on municipal lands (in progress);
- New zone for Micro Units (in progress);
- RA (Apartment) Zone – heights and density increases (in progress);
- Tenant Assistance Policy; and
- Tiny homes (in progress).

Context

Existing Saanich Policy and Initiatives

Existing housing policies and initiatives in Saanich have made progress towards supporting and implementing an increase in housing affordability, diversity and supply. As described in the Official Community Plan (OCP), 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. Saanich’s affordable housing policies are incorporated in the OCP and include policies aimed at promoting complete communities with diverse housing. Other notable initiatives include:

- Land use and housing planning through Local Area Plans and Centre, Corridor and Village plans;

- Council support for a significant number of affordable and supportive housing units over the last 40 years;
- Accelerated application processing for non-profit affordable housing, projects with an affordability component; and high profile projects;
- Participation in the Capital Regional District’s (CRD) affordable housing strategy, programs, and committees; and
- Contributions to the Saanich Affordable Housing Fund and CRD Regional Housing Trust Fund.

Contributions to housing in Saanich have been positive; however, there are growing housing affordability issues, particularly for renters, limited housing choices, supply challenges, and growing income inequity. As a result, Saanich will greatly benefit from the development of an overall guiding document to coordinate and prioritize efforts towards greater housing affordability and diversity across the housing spectrum.

Housing Spectrum

A healthy community includes housing and supports that meets a range of community needs. The development of a Housing Strategy will need to consider all elements of the Housing Spectrum (see Figure 1).



Figure 1: Housing Spectrum

Roles and Responsibilities

Addressing the housing affordability crisis is a priority at every level of government. Local government has an important role in supporting long-term housing affordability, diversity, and supply. Municipalities are responsible for determining land uses and housing capacity; setting policies, plans, and regulations that respond to local housing conditions; administering development approval processes; establishing strategies for use of municipal resources; and playing an advocacy and partnership role with various sectors to increase the supply of affordable housing.

Many factors, outside the control of local governments, have influenced the current housing crisis. After a long period of limited senior government funding, the new National Housing Strategy and the Province of BC’s 30-Point Plan for Housing Affordability are helping to build and finance a range of affordable and supportive housing projects. The Capital Regional District (CRD) supports the development of affordable housing within the region, addressing the housing needs of our most vulnerable citizens and fostering a collaborative regional approach to creating a healthy sustainable housing system. Private developers, non-profit organizations and community partners play a vital role to ensure housing is built and the appropriate supports are provided.

COVID-19 Pandemic

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 British Columbia 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 impacts to housing affordability and supply as a result of this rapidly changing crisis, impact will be felt and existing housing challenges will likely be amplified.

Secondly, the development of the Housing Strategy will take into account the necessary changes 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.

HOUSING STRATEGY TERMS OF REFERENCE

The proposed Terms of Reference has been developed to direct how the District of Saanich would move forward to achieve greater housing supply, affordability and diversity and accommodate a broad range of community housing needs now and into the future (see Attachment A).

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. The strategy would set a framework to implement and prioritize action-oriented strategies, providing guidance for Council decision-making. In addition, it would promote the advancement of partnerships and enhance community awareness of housing issues and opportunities.

Considerable guidance in the development and implementation of housing strategies can be gained from the experiences of other municipalities. In particular, the City of Victoria's Housing Strategy and Action Plan provides an applicable and comparable local context. The Terms of Reference outlines a scope of work and process that integrates lessons learned from other jurisdictions.

Strategy Focus Areas

The Official Community Plan and Strategic Plan provide direction for key focus areas for the Housing Strategy and an organizational framework for development of strategies 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.

Project Process

The proposed planning process is scheduled to take up to 12 months, and would commence upon approval of the Terms of Reference by Council. The project would be undertaken in four phases (see Figure 2).

Integration of Housing Needs Report

The development of a Housing Needs Report is underway and will provide foundational data and a clear sense of housing needs in the District of Saanich. The report is being developed through a collaborative process with the CRD and 10 other local governments and is expected to be concluded by the end of 2020.

Data from the Housing Needs Report on existing housing supply and projections for housing demand will influence the development of the Housing Strategy and provide the basis for establishing housing targets. Initial data and results from the report's stakeholder consultation, which are anticipated to be available during Phase 1 of the Strategy, will provide valuable input on housing issues and direction for an initial action list. Incorporating stakeholder feedback from the Housing Report should also reduce consultation fatigue by focussing targeted interviews and focus groups on supplementary information.

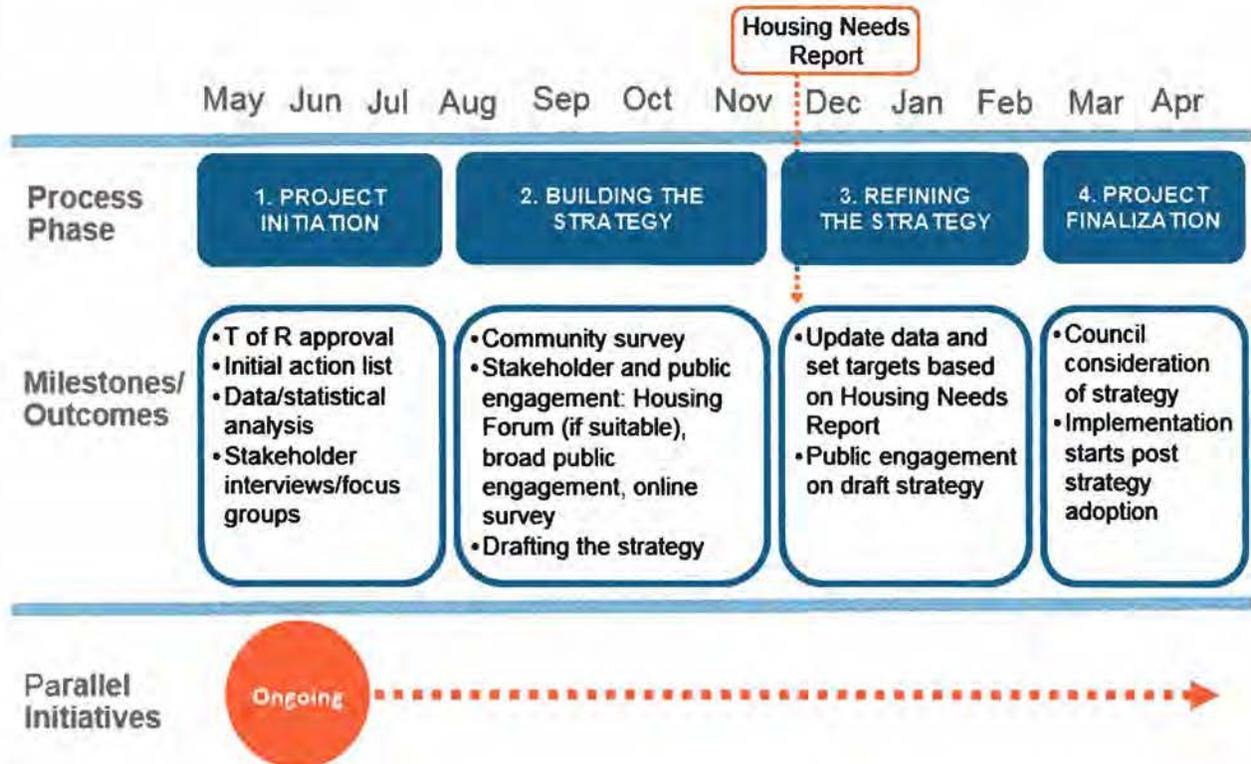


Figure 2: Housing Strategy Process

Scope of Work

In order to address existing and future housing needs, 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:

- Overview of current housing conditions and the existing and projected housing needs in Saanich;
- Review Housing Strategies and best practices in other jurisdictions;
- Communicate government and stakeholder roles in addressing housing needs;
- Review and consider refining Saanich's definition of Affordable Housing;
- Apply an equity lens designed to lead to more equitable housing outcomes;
- Deliver an engagement process that prioritizes equity, inclusion, and diversity, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of community and stakeholder perspectives on housing concerns, challenges, barriers, priorities, and solutions;
- Build on data developed and stakeholder engagement input from the Housing Needs Report;
- 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;
- Respond to the five focus areas by outlining municipal strategies and actions;
- Within each focus area, identify short-term priorities to be addressed over the next three years;

- Develop 10 year housing targets that respond to housing needs and demands and sets a clear direction for Saanich; and
- Develop a framework to monitor and report on progress.

Engagement

Addressing the current housing needs and growing affordability issues is a complex challenge that requires participation from the community and stakeholders in order to be successful. According to the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation, the design of the community consultation program depends on the desired goal for public participation. In this project, the highest goal on the spectrum is to involve the public: to work with the public throughout the process in order to understand community concerns and aspirations (see Figure 3).

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 • E-mail updates • Social media • Media (offline advertisements) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Open houses Stakeholder and public engagement using online and/or in-person engagement tools including a survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups • Housing Forum (if appropriate)

Figure 3: Housing Strategy Public Participation

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, engagement will be adapted to use creative solutions in order to achieve meaningful engagement while taking into consideration the limitations of replacing face-to-face dialogues and 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 will incorporate online tools, such as webinars, video conference calls, and virtual open houses. Allowing for a flexible approach is also imperative while navigating through this incredibly challenging crisis and complex subject matter.

With an innovative approach to engagement, equity and inclusion remain as foundational values. The proposed public participation process seeks to engage a broad range of participants including renters, homeowners, those experiencing housing challenges, and persons who are members of equity-seeking groups. Designing an equitable and inclusive

engagement approach will be particularly important when considering capacity of participants to access online engagement tools. Accessible, offline platforms will be explored such as direct mail and newspaper and radio advertisements, and “appointment based” in-person events.

The Terms of Reference includes the Mayor’s Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply as a key sounding board throughout the process. The Committee would provide feedback on key facets of the project as needed.

One the main components proposed for stakeholder engagement, the Housing Forum, is another element that may require a creative approach as a result of the rapidly changing COVID-19 crisis. The proposed forum provides an opportunity to bring together stakeholders, with diverse viewpoints and interests, to collaborate and co-create housing solutions. The purpose of the forum is to work with key stakeholders to test a wide range of potential housing solutions, spark new ideas, design recommendations, prioritize actions, and help build a successful housing strategy. While a Housing Forum is tentatively planned for the Fall, alternatives may need to be employed to work around COVID-19 related constraints. For example, a virtual Housing Forum may be initiated using a platform that allows online communication with stakeholders, presentations that outline the context, voting polls, and facilitated break-out discussions. Incorporating equity into this approach may include telephone access and separate offline engagement opportunities.

ALTERNATIVES

1. That Council approve the recommendations as outlined in the staff report (Staff recommend).
2. That Council reject the recommendations as outlined in the staff report.
3. That Council provide alternate direction to Staff.

Should Council provide alternate direction to staff that changes the scope of the strategy, amendments would be required to the Terms of Reference. Potential alternatives could be:

Process

Council could direct staff to incorporate an alternate process approach. Two alternate approaches are outlined below.

- a) Delay Engagement until After Housing Needs Report: As an alternative, Council may select to delay major engagement until the completion of the final Housing Needs Report to allow for the comprehensive analysis on existing and project housing needs to be incorporated.

The advantage of this approach is that with a detailed understanding of housing needs, engagement and development of housing actions and targets can focus on the areas that are most urgent.

The disadvantage of this approach is an extended timeline for completing the Housing Strategy (estimated to be completed by the Fall 2021) and delaying implementation of priority actions.

- b) **Reduced Timeline:** As an alternative, Council may select to speed up the timeline for completing the project by replacing the Housing Forum with focus groups and targeted engagement.

The advantage of this approach is a reduced timeline for completing the Housing Strategy, with a Strategy completed by the end of 2020. Staff also estimate a budget of \$90,000 for this alternative.

With a reduced level of engagement and less ability to bring a diverse group of stakeholders together, the disadvantage of this approach is that innovative approaches and clear understanding of the priorities may be challenging.

Committee Support

Council could direct staff to form an advisory committee or select committee as an alternate approach to engagement.

A critical component of the Housing Strategy is consultation with key stakeholders and the public. In addition to the engagement tools proposed for the project, committees may be established to seek input, community guidance, expert advice, and recommendations for consideration by Council and staff. The recommendation in the staff report is to utilize the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply as a sounding board throughout the process, but not to form a specific committee focused on the Housing Strategy itself. Standing committees differ from advisory and select committees as they are established by the Mayor for matters the Mayor considers would be better dealt with by committee and provide a more informal forum to receive information from members of the public and staff.

In terms of housing, many municipalities have successfully established advisory and select committees at different points in time, including:

- Prior to development of a housing strategy to determine issues, priorities and direction;
- During the development of a housing strategy to provide feedback and recommendations; and/or,
- During implementation of action items from a housing strategy to provide advice and feedback.

Options for including an advisory or select committee are outlined below:

- a) **Advisory Committee:** Council may establish and appoint advisory committees to consider and make recommendations to Council and Staff on matters set out in the committees' Terms of Reference or on matters referred by Council. Advisory Committees are often established for the entire duration of a project to provide general feedback on policies and strategies or to provide input on a specific issues. Although advisory committees are not set out explicitly in provincial legislation, the ability to seek advice is implied through local government's corporate authority.

If an advisory committee is implemented as part of the process to develop the Housing Strategy, the advantage is an opportunity to gain input from a broad or select stakeholder group throughout the duration of the project. The disadvantage of this approach is an extended timeline due to the additional time needed to form and administer an advisory committee. This approach will also be challenging to implement due to the COVID-19

pandemic, social distancing measures, and time commitment needed from stakeholders that may be focussing their time and energy on delivering essential services or supporting our most vulnerable residents.

- b) **Select Committee (also referred to as a Task Force):** As defined in the Community Charter (Section 142), Council may establish and appoint select committees, often with a defined start and end date, to consider or inquire into a specific project or issue and to report their findings and opinions to Council. Select committees are formed and members appointed by Council as a whole, by majority vote. At least one member of a select committee must be a Council member.

If implemented prior to initiating the Housing Strategy, a select committee could provide recommendations for priorities and actionable direction, forming the basis for developing the strategy. The advantage of this approach is that it allows for input from a diverse stakeholder group with a variety of expertise, viewpoints and understanding of housing challenges in Saanich. The disadvantage this approach is an extended timeline due to the additional time needed to form and administer a select committee. This approach will also be challenging to implement due to the COVID-19 pandemic, social distancing measures, and time commitment needed from stakeholders that may be focussing their time and energy on delivering essential services or supporting our most vulnerable residents.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The project, as presented in the Terms of Reference, is proposed to be completed primarily by the District of Saanich Staff, with a budget of \$120,000. In 2019, Council allocated \$125,000 of 2018 surplus to the Local Area Plans. It is recommended that these funds be re-allocated towards this planning initiative.

STRATEGIC PLAN IMPLICATIONS

The development of a housing strategy is included as an initiative in the District of Saanich 2019 - 2023 Strategic Plan. This work would be in support of one of Councils key objectives, namely the provision of a broad range of housing by; type, tenure, price and location.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

Policy

The following District of Saanich and Capital Regional District policies are the most applicable to this initiative:

Official Community Plan (2008)

- 4.2.1.1 “Support and implement the eight strategic initiatives of the Regional Growth Strategy, namely: Keep urban settlement compact; Protect the integrity of rural communities; Protect regional green and blue spaces; Manage natural resources and the environment sustainably; Build complete communities; Improve housing affordability; Increase transportation choice; and Strengthen the regional economy.”
- 4.2.1.5 “Consider the capacity of all types of infrastructure including municipal services, schools, social services, and open spaces when reviewing growth options.”

- 4.2.4.1 “Foster sustainable and pedestrian and cycling-friendly neighbourhoods by...supporting a range of housing choices, by type, tenure and price.”
- 4.2.3.9 “Support the following building types and uses in ‘Villages’:
- Small lot single family dwelling houses (up to 2 storeys)
 - Carriage/coach houses (up to 2 storeys)
 - Town houses (up to 3 storeys)
 - Low-rise residential (3 - 4 storeys)
 - Mixed-use (commercial/residential) (3 - 4 storeys)
 - Civic and institutional (generally up to 3 storeys).”
- 5.1.2.6 “Work with the Capital Regional District and other stakeholders to implement the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.”
- 5.1.2.9 “Encourage the creation of affordable and special needs housing by reviewing regulatory bylaws and fee structures to remove development barriers and provide flexibility and incentives.”
- 5.1.2.12 “Consider the potential for affordable housing in conjunction with municipal community centres and surplus lands within the Urban Containment Boundary.”
- 5.1.2.13 “Encourage the retention of older multiple family rental accommodation by considering higher density redevelopment proposals on these sites, if the same number of rental units are maintained, and the units are secured through a housing agreement.”
- 5.1.2.14 “Investigate criteria for considering “inclusionary zoning” (% of units for affordable or special needs housing) and density bonusing as part of development applications, in order to provide for affordable and/or special needs housing.”
- 5.1.2.15 “Consider requiring registration of a covenant on the title of new multiple-family developments prohibiting Strata Council rental restrictions as part of rezoning applications.”
- 5.1.2.17 “Support the provision of a range of seniors housing and innovative care options within ‘Centres,’ ‘Villages,’ and Neighbourhoods, to enable people to ‘age in place.’ ”
- 5.1.2.18 “Work with the CRD and other stakeholders to address both immediate and long-term homelessness issues by: continuing to implement Saanich’s cold/wet weather strategy to address homeless shelter needs during extreme weather; working towards the provision of sufficient ‘shelter housing’, ‘transitional housing’, and ‘permanent supportive housing’ in the region; and, developing and implementing early intervention strategies to help citizens avoid the need to access ‘shelter’ and ‘transitional housing’.”

CRD’s Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (2018)

The Regional Housing Affordability Strategy provides a framework for addressing challenges and supporting a collaborative regional approach to creating a healthy sustainable housing system, supporting a shared regional response to issues of housing affordability and homelessness.

The strategy follows five goals, including:

- Goal #1 Build the right supply of housing across the spectrum;
- Goal #2 Sustain a shared regional response to existing and emerging housing demand;
- Goal #3 Protect and maintain existing non-market and market rental housing stock;
- Goal #4 Develop and operationalize a regionally coordinated housing and homelessness response; and
- Goal #5 Create community understanding and support for affordable housing developments.

Policy Analysis

The Official Community Plan (OCP) contains strong policies that support improving housing affordability, expanding housing choice and flexibility, and increasing the supply of market and non-market housing within Centres, Villages, and neighbourhoods. Consideration of tools and regulatory changes that improve housing outcomes are encouraged through policies that support the development of affordable and special needs housing and focus on housing needs for seniors, families, and people experiencing homelessness. The Housing Strategy provides an opportunity to align with, complement, and expand on OCP housing policies, by developing a guiding document that prioritizes action-oriented strategies in order to achieve the greatest impact on addressing housing needs and improving housing opportunities for current and future residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

The OCP incorporates five strategies from CRD's 2001 Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) that provide a framework for regional and municipal governments to take action to improve housing affordability. Saanich's Housing Strategy will consider regional housing priorities outlined in the OCP and align with goals set in the updated 2018 RHAS, by building on partnerships with other levels of government, private developers, non-profit organizations and community partners; establishing strategies and actions that reflect the RHAS; and, implementing an engagement strategy that promotes community understanding.

CONCLUSION

The Housing Strategy is an opportunity to develop a guiding document to identify and set priorities for action-oriented strategies that will help Saanich achieve greater housing supply, affordability and diversity and address challenges across the housing spectrum. The strategy provides a framework to advance housing policy and regulations, consider new tools and procedural changes, and enhance partnership opportunities in order to meet the housing needs for current and future residents.

An essential component of building a successful strategy will be stakeholder and public consultation. The Terms of Reference outlines a process and engagement process that acknowledges the COVID-19 pandemic and adopts a flexible approach that will deliver a Saanich Housing Strategy within a year. The process will enable a comprehensive understanding of housing needs and challenges, while building awareness and support in the community.

The attached Terms of Reference outlines a proposed process for developing a 10 year Housing Strategy with 3-year prioritized actions. The budget, estimated at \$120,000 would enable robust engagement and provide some contingency for analysis of specific issues. A completed Housing Strategy will provide Saanich with a clearer picture of housing needs in the

community and a set of defined actions to address housing issues in a measured and effective manner.

Prepared by: 

Nadine Kawata
Planner

Reviewed by: 

Cameron Scott
Manager of Community Planning

Approved by: 

Sharon Hvozdzanski
Director of Planning

NK/m

Attachment

ADMINISTRATOR'S COMMENTS:

I endorse the recommendation from the Director of Planning.



Paul Thorkelsson, Administrator

Attachment A:

Housing Strategy
Terms of Reference

May 14, 2020

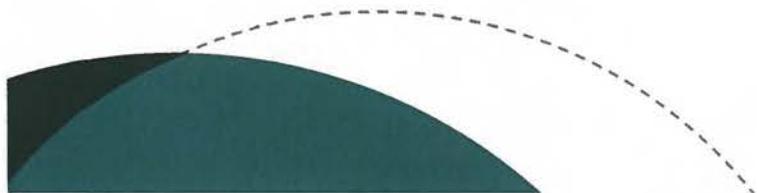
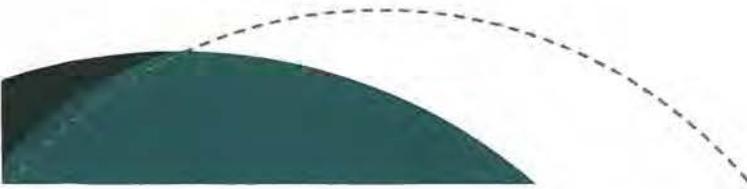


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1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

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.

-
- *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

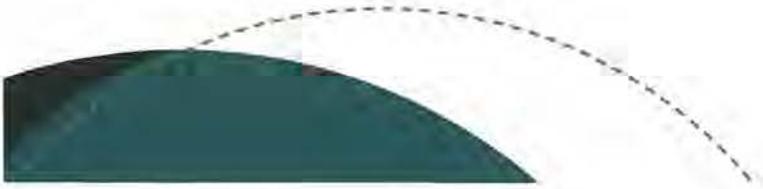
- *Equity Lens* – At project initiation, apply an equity lens designed to identify applicable statistical data, remove barriers to engagement, evaluate impacts of strategies and actions, and lead to more equitable housing outcomes.

Engagement

- *Comprehensive Process* - Deliver an engagement process that prioritizes equity, inclusion, and diversity, to ensure a comprehensive understanding of community and stakeholder perspectives on housing concerns, challenges, barriers, priorities, and solutions.
- *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* - Respond to the five focus areas by outlining strategies and actions that focus on the District’s role and partnership opportunities with the non-profit sector, private sector, local organizations, communities and all levels of government;
- *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 12 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 	<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 (May-Jul)
Phase 2: Building the Strategy	<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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 2: Engagement Report • Initial Draft Housing Strategy 	4 months (Aug-Nov)

	<p>address key housing affordability and supply issues, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Stakeholder engagement ○ Housing Forum (if suitable) ○ Broad public engagement ○ Online survey 		
Phase 3: Refining the Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal review of draft strategy • <i>Phase 3 Engagement: Draft Housing Strategy Review</i>. Gain feedback through community events, open houses, and/or online tools. • Update data and targets based on the Housing Needs Report • Further analyze options, actions and targets based on public and key stakeholder feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phase 3: Engagement Report • Housing Needs Report • Revised Draft Housing Strategy 	3 months (Dec-Feb)
Phase 4: Project Finalization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop staff report • Council meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proposed Housing Strategy • Council Report 	2 months (Mar-Apr)
Phase 5: Implement, Monitor & Report	<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 		Ongoing (Post adoption of Strategy)

6. ENGAGEMENT

An integral component of the Housing Strategy is a transparent and comprehensive engagement process that provides opportunities for all 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 will incorporate online tools such as webinars, video conference calls, and virtual open houses. Accessible, off-line solutions such as direct mail, newspaper advertisement, and radio updates, will also be explored. 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 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"> • Survey • Open houses • Stakeholder and public engagement using online and/or in-person engagement tools including a survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Focus groups • Housing Forum (if appropriate)

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. During Phase 2, it is

anticipated that stakeholder consultation will be used to test a wide range of potential housing solutions, spark new ideas, and develop recommendations for implementing strategies, and prioritizing actions. If practical, a Housing Forum will be held with key community stakeholders. To ensure an equitable approach, a diverse group of stakeholders including non-profits, industry, developers, and equity seeking groups will be invited to participate.

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

Mayor's Standing Committee on Affordable Housing

Throughout the process the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply, whose mandate is to make recommendations to Council on how best to address housing affordability and supply now and over the long-term, will serve as a critical sounding board to provide advice on processes and potential actions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this approach may be revised.

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.
- **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 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:

- 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 • Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability • Healthy Saanich Advisory Committee
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 Social Development & Poverty Reduction • 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 • Saanich Youth Council • 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"> • Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce • Vancouver Island Economic Alliance • Vancouver Island Technology Park
Building Development Industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Home Builders Association • Construction and design industry • Commercial landlords • Landlord BC • Market developers • Real Estate Foundation British Columbia • Urban Development Institute • Vancouver Island Real Estate Board
Non-profit developers & housing providers/ agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broadmead Care • BC Non-Profit Housing Society • Canadian Senior Cohousing Society

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria • 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 • 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
Community Members	<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)

