

MINUTES
HOUSING STRATEGY TASK FORCE
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Via Electronic Communications
October 22, 2020 at 5:00 p.m.

Present: Chair de Vries and Vice Chair Harper

Staff: Cameron Scott, Manager, Community Planning; Current Planning; Nadine Kawata, Planner, Community Planning; Gina Lyons, Senior Planning, Current Planning; Alanna McDonagh, Planner, Community Planning; Matt Blakely, Planner Senior Planning Technician – Research and Analysis (Community Planning); and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

Facilitators: Lani Brunn, Lead Facilitator, CitySpaces; Kevin Green, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Emma Watson, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Anna Zhuo, Facilitator, CitySpaces;

Members: E. Dahli; S. Dutchak; C. Forester; C. Friesen; E. Gibson; G. Gillespie; M. Holland; R. Kelley; L. Mari; M. Poirier; D. Posavad; J. Reilly; L. Spalteholz; K. Wiseman; V. Wynn-Williams

Regrets: J. Tarbotton

CALL TO ORDER

Chair de Vries called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m.

CHAIR'S REMARKS

- A reminder was given that the meetings are being webcast and about Saanich's Respectful Workplace Policy. This meeting's focus area is Housing Diversity and Supply.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by S. Dutchak and Seconded by L. Spalteholz : "That the minutes from the October 15, 2020 Housing Strategy Task Force meeting be adopted."

CARRIED

MOVED by M. Poirier and Seconded by G. Gillespie: "That the Task Force refer proposed action items 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 for consideration during the prioritization process and that the Task Force direct staff, facilitators, and the Council representatives refine these actions based on the considerations from the Task Force."

CARRIED

MOVED by L. Spalteholz and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That the Task Force refer the following new actions to the meeting for Focus Area #3:

- Encourage strata conversions for single-family houses, break up properties into strata units, create a resource centre for homeowners to encourage conversion of homes, update single-family dwelling zones to allow for multiples units;
- Investigate preapproving modular homes to drive down costs and cut down permitting time for garden suites;
- Develop policies and guidelines for appropriate family housing, including a mix of bedroom sizes (two, three, and more than three) and tenures (non-market and market rental); and
- Explore changes to apartment zoning needed to allow for outside access to ground floor units.”

CARRIED

MOVED by K. Wiseman and Seconded by J. Reilly: “That the Task Force refer the following new actions to the meeting for Focus Area #4 and direct staff, facilitators, and the Council representatives to refine these items based on the Task Force’s preliminary feedback, prior to further discussion during Focus Area 4:

- Equitable distribution of all forms of housing across the District;
- Consideration of expanding certain policies outside the Urban Containment Boundary, equitable access across all neighbourhoods;
- Tie affordability requirements to provincial and federal funding programs;
- Define affordability in two ways – tied to local incomes and contextually based on nearby development;
- Reduce barriers to renters in new strata developments;
- Consider connecting multi-bedroom unit requirements to height and density; and
- Develop an inventory of rental and affordable rental.”

CARRIED

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by M. Holland: “That the Task Force refer the following new action to the meeting for Focus Area #5 and direct staff, facilitators, and the Council representatives to refine these items based on the Task Force’s preliminary feedback, prior to further discussion during Focus Area 5:

- Considerations for affordability for rental housing, including defining affordability in both absolute and relative terms, as well as design guidelines that support affordable rentals.”

CARRIED

MOVED by J. Reilly and Seconded by D. Posavad : “That the Task Force refer the following new action to the meeting for Focus Area #5 for further discussion during Focus Area 5:

- Create a rental registry that the District can facilitate, where people with different rental needs can connect to address their distinct needs and co-benefits. One centralized database.”

CARRIED

MOVED by C. Friesen and Seconded by G. Gillespie: “That the Task Force refers the following new action to the appropriate focus areas where appropriate and direct staff, facilitators, and the Council representatives to refine this item based on the Task Force’s preliminary feedback:

- **Encourage or incentivize affordable living features to lower transportation costs, utilities and overall living costs.”**

CARRIED

MOVED by C. Friesen and Seconded by S. Dutchak: “That the Task Force refer the following new action to the meeting for Focus Area #4 for further discussion during Focus Area 4:

- **Create resources, assistance centre, incentive package for landlords to rent units to vulnerable households such as refugees, people experiencing poverty, or other vulnerable demographics;**
- **Encourage and destigmatize boarding and rooming houses, shared housing and other low barrier forms of housing.”**

CARRIED

SUPPORT HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SUPPLY

C. Scott, Manager, Community Planning, presented and highlighted to the Task Force:

- The Official Community Plan (OCP) is the land use framework that is used by Saanich.
- Local Area Plans (LAP) implement broad directions of the OCP and are integral to creating a greater degree of certainty. LAPs can result in changes to the OCP and give the District the ability to achieve community buy-in.
- To determine available capacity, current zoning and policy parameters were examined.
- Theoretical capacity – numerous factors that cause friction for potential (re)development, including high-value improvements on the land, property owner circumstances, and contamination.
- According to the CRD report, between 2019 – 2038, the projected growth of 6828 new dwelling units and 15,522 new people in Saanich.
- The estimated zoned capacity is 49,188 additional dwelling capacity and 118,051 additional people (based on 2.4 people per unit).
- There are limitations with projections. They are based on historical growth patterns, and numerous factors can influence population growth, such as job opportunities, geographic/lifestyle preferences, household preferences and supply of housing available.
- Highlights of the Housing Needs Report (HNR) projections:
 - o May be latent demand, as 1495 housing units were created from 2016-2019, with projected demand of 2241 units between 2016-2020.
 - o Projected demand is 53% owner and 47% renter.
 - o Projected net growth for seniors is ten times that projected for people of working age.
 - o Most growth is projected for non-census families or couples without children.
 - o 60% of demand is for two or three plus bedroom units.

SUPPORT HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SUPPLY NEW ACTIONS

N. Kawata, Planner, Community Planning, presented and highlighted to the Task Force:

1. New zone for apartments with micro units – This is a parallel initiative. Explore the development of a new or modified Single Family Dwelling (RS) or Apartment (RA) Zone within urban areas that would accommodate multi-unit buildings and permit micro-units on lots that were previously single-family lots. May include provisions for specific criteria such as lot size, setbacks and pre-defined envelope requirements to ensure the development fits in with the neighbourhood character.

2. RA (Apartment) Zone -increase height and density– This is a parallel initiative. The needs assessment identified an opportunity to increase the supply of multi-unit residential housing. Council provided direction to develop changes to apartment (RA) zoned properties to permit increased height and density in Saanich.
3. Missing Middle Housing Policy and Zoning Amendments. Conduct a policy review and create a series of recommendations to inform a new approach that will make it easier to build more infill or missing middle housing in Saanich. Missing middle housing typically refers to duplexes, townhomes, row houses, and houseplexes. This process may include developing design guidelines and focusing on low and medium density areas, housing for students, families, seniors, and equity-seeking groups.
4. Explore ways to achieve greater supply, affordability and diversity through policies in plans for local areas, centres and corridors – Identify opportunities to support the development of affordable, supportive and diverse housing stock when developing plans for local areas, centres and corridors. May include reviewing height and density in key areas, supporting developing complete communities, and exploring incentives.
5. Family housing policy for low to moderate income households – Consider the development of a Family Housing Policy, which may include strategies such as creating a bylaw to mandate the creation of two and three bedroom units in new developments, establishing dwelling unit densities to reflect housing desired housing types, financial incentives, and policies that support family-appropriate amenities at the neighbourhood scale.
6. Develop pre-approved infill housing prototypes through a design competition – in these competitions, community members, design professionals, builders, and developers work collaboratively to find ways to increase infill housing options. Often new zones are created using the winning submissions as a starting point.
7. Single-detached dwelling conversion policy – Policy changes to make it easier to convert houses to multiple units in order to create more rental, affordable rental and affordable homeownership units.

POSSIBLE NEW ACTIONS TO SUPPORT HOUSING DIVERSITY AND SUPPLY

- Use 3-D modelling to show zoning bylaw changes; use the model to demonstrate the capacity.
- Look at affordable homeownership and long term leases. Consider partnerships with local organizations for affordable, stable housing so residents can put down roots and feel invested in the community.
- Take an area like Burnside/Gorge and establish an innovation district using a code approach. Use performance-based zoning.
- Reduce barriers in new developments (pet restrictions, age limitations, rental exclusion in stratas).
- Create a university district.
- Increase opportunities for co-housing and co-operative housing; Saanich should make this more feasible.
- Focus on revisiting the Official Community Plan, no the Local Area Plans for managing growth.
- Support housing options for ageing in place and for first time home buyers.
- Create strategies to address housing demand and speculation

MOVED by M. Holland and Seconded by D. Posavad: “That the facilitators, Saanich staff and Council representatives collect the input from this meeting and organize and submit the summaries for the Task Force’s consideration and discussion at the next meeting.”

CARRIED

The meeting adjourned at 7:56 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY