

AGENDA

MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY

Monday, February 3, 2020 at 8:30 a.m.
Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Adoption of Minutes of Previous Meeting**
 - December 9, 2019
 - January 6, 2020
2. **New Business**
 - A. Communications Document – Pausing LAPs – To apply resources for Saanich-wide needs – Receive for information.
 - B. Staff Update – Timing for the Terms of Reference for review of service efficiencies in the development permit process
 - C. Briefing – Partnering with the Province to get Supportive Housing Built Quickly – N. Chaland, E. Valez & T. Phelps Bondaroff
 - D. Housing Task Force
 - E. Infill Policy – Including Cluster Housing – Environmental and Affordability and Limitations
 - F. Tenant Assistance Policy
 - G. Saanich Housing/Demographics Conditions
3. **Next Meeting – March 3, 2020**
4. **Adjournment**

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- ~~Briefing – Partnering with the Province to get Supportive Housing Built Quickly (February).~~
- ~~Saanich Housing/Demographics Conditions (February).~~
- Staff update on options to increase housing supply and affordability within neighbourhoods.
- Update from the December 3, 2019 UDI Lunch: Exploring the Uncharted Territory of Residential Rental Tenure Zoning.
- Maintaining Existing Rental Housing in Saanich.
- ~~Tenant Relocation Policy for Saanich.~~
- ~~Infill policy – including cluster housing – environmental and affordability and limitations (February).~~

- Performa.
- Discussion on evolving the Mayor's Standing Committee into a Task Force which would include external stakeholders.
- Six Month Update – Hiring of New Development Related Staff Positions (March)
- A Saanich Housing Strategy – Discussion Questions and Possible Resources
- Speaker to present on topic of financing for housing.

MINUTES
MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY

Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
Monday, December 9, 2019 at 8:35 a.m.

Present: Mayor Haynes and Councillors de Vries, Mersereau and Plant
Staff: Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer; Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning; MaryAnn Greco, Senior Committee Clerk (left at 8:55 a.m.) and Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk (entered at 8:55 a.m.)

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Haynes called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the minutes of the November 4, 2019 Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting be adopted."

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the fifth bullet on page 3 of the minutes of the November 4, 2019 Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting be amended to replace the sentence "Approximately 1 in 6 or 1 in 7 homes currently have a suite." to "Approximately 1 in 2 homes currently have a suite."

CARRIED

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the ninth bullet on page 3 of the minutes of the November 4, 2019 Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting be amended to replace the word "best" with "recommended"."

CARRIED

The Motion was then PUT and CARRIED

MAIN MOTION AS AMENDED

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the minutes of the November 4, 2019 Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting be adopted as amended."

NEW BUSINESS

1. Housing Needs Assessment – Suggested Stakeholders for Engagement.

The Manager of Community Planning stated:

- a. Participant in the regional planning group, DPAC.
- b. Regional Housing Needs Assessment joint funding application has been submitted to UBCM
- c. A key component of the needs assessment is stakeholder engagement.
- d. The purpose of the engagement is to both validate the hard data and provide the proper context in order to better understand the data.

- e. Engagement efforts will provide a full picture of the housing supply in context.
- f. Noting the importance of this conversation to the committee, staff are here to check-in and seek input on ensuring the right groups are a part of the process.
- g. The funding program and the legislation governing housing needs assessment is a much more focused exercise, not general public input.
- h. Key stakeholder groups in order to understand issues, and context in the region.
- i. Information arising from the needs assessment will be available to the broader public.
- j. CRD is looking to develop a regional housing information system in conjunction with the needs assessment, with the intent for the system to be updated regularly.

The committee made the following comments:

- a. Have staff developed a draft list for consideration, or are you looking for different set of stakeholders that would traditionally be engaged.

The Manager of Community Planning stated:

- a. There are examples from other municipalities that have undertaken needs assessments already.
- b. Saanich has not yet produced a formal list; however, examples staff are considering: business community, development community, non-profit housing providers, educational institutions, major employers i.e. Department of National Defence, agencies and groups serving at-risk and/or vulnerable populations, tenant associations.

The committee made the following comments:

- a. Faith based community and organizations should be included.
- b. Earlier discussions regarding the housing forum generated a number of business/employer stakeholders including: VIATECH, the Chamber of Commerce, UDI
- c. Interested in reaching more renters, such as Tenant Action Group (TAG); however, how to reach those tenants that are not being represented by umbrellas organizations is a challenge, accordingly it may be appropriate to put out an open call for participants from Saanich's renter community.
- d. Landlord BC could be considered represents the interests of landlords, but indirectly represents tenants.
- e. Lending, banking institutions and the role they play in enabling the development of more additional housing.
- f. John Reilly attended the October meeting of PTED to present on the needs assessment.
- g. This discussion would benefit greatly from John Reilly's presentation.
- h. It is understood that the stakeholder engagement aspect of the needs assessment is more of a data collection assessment.
- i. There are number of important data sets and indicators that are note in the scope of the assessment, and as a result some of the data is without context, or appears to skew results.

MOTION

MOVED by Councillor de Vries and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That John Reilly be invited to attend the January 6, 2019 Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply."

CARRIED

The Manager of Community Planning stated:

- a. Having John Reilly attend the January meeting would not have an impact on the timeline for stakeholder engagement, which is targeted for May - September
- b. The Councillor is correct, the primary purpose of the exercise is to validate data; however, the context provided by the stakeholder engagement exercise will help minimize mistakes or errors in data interpretation and validation.

Mayor Haynes inquired:

- a. Do we want to discuss what our expectations for a needs assessment for Saanich (vs. what the CRD is doing) would and what would be an approach to identify Saanich specific housing needs as part of our conversations?

Committee made the following comments:

- a. This would be better left to a future meeting.

2. Update from staff on options to increase housing supply within existing single family neighbourhoods.

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. A summary of initiatives that both this Council and the previous Council considered to address this issue includes:
 - (i) The use of small lot zoning has been in place for a number of years and has been considered successful. A positive example of small lot zoning are the 3 homes that were built in the Uptown Douglas Corridor Area (UDC), at the west end of Cadillac Lane.
 - (ii) Additional applications coming forward in the future.
 - (iii) Question remains how small (the subject lot) is appropriate.
- b. Sidney, allows development on a RS1 Zone that is 250m² (Saanich is 300m²)
- c. Application coming forward that will bring the "too small" discussion to the Chamber.
- d. Existing Zoning Policy: Areas shaded brown on the OCP maps are designated as neighbourhood zones and allows:
 - (i) Duplexes, triplexes, four-plexes;
 - (ii) Town-houses (misnomer, more appropriately described as units that are connected by common walls)
 - (iii) Micro-units (potential use in the UDC transition area), apartments are also permitted, where appropriate (i.e. Shelbourne Valley Corridor, McKenzie).

The Mayor stated:

- a. Is it possible for staff to provide a summary of the actions and initiatives noted during our discussion?

The Director Planning stated:

- a. Staff will provide the committee with a summary of recent and pending actions, and attached hereto as *Schedule "A"*
- b. Micro units have been discussed with a developer for the UDC; anticipate an application will come forward.
- c. This type of housing would be appropriate for transition areas in and around all major centres, villages and corridors.
- d. Planning staff are drafting a report on the potential for micro units. The report is anticipated to arrive at Council in Q2 2020

The committee made the following comments:

- a. Has there been any analysis, Re: previously noted options for increasing supply, in terms of their impacts on affordability, and the type of product they are producing.
- b. Small lot zones, duplexes/triplexes are not effective in absorbing growth, or increasing supply and result in relatively expensive units regardless of lot side
- c. The residual value of a finished home development has a significant impact on the value of land (price goes up), small lots or otherwise, which in turn has an impact on the affordability of any associated development
- d. There are indications that our associated tools are not meeting the current needs, with regard to growth, demand, affordability of our community, as example, a finished quad-plex,

on a \$600,000 lot, will still have an approximate cost of \$690,000 per unit. This is alarming. The Director of Planning stated:

- a. The efficacy of certain building forms and a methodology to provide affordable housing is something that Planning has looked at in general.
- b. Since our last look, when we had a housing strategy, things have changed with regard to type and community expectation.
- c. The housing needs assessment should consider who are you wanting to house on the full spectrum, and what is the best method to do that.
- d. Your goals and objectives, and a sustainable methodology, for creating complete communities should be layered on top of that.
- e. In addition to exploring options to increase below market and rental housing in Saanich, the strategic plan identifies the development of a housing needs assessment and strategy for Saanich as strategic initiatives/actions for Council.

The committee made the following comments:

- a. Supply is about affordability across the entire spectrum.
- b. It is agreeable that those homes priced in the \$500-600k range may not be affordable for all demographics; however, they are attainable to those already living in the community who may wish to downsize while at the same time remain in their community.
- c. The end result of this development pattern is that homes are only attainable to those families/households earning over \$150,000+ per year, essentially cutting off a large segment of the population off from the majority of neighbourhoods, as a corollary, we are basically saying that those earning less should live in the noisiest, busiest and most polluted places. This is concerning.
- d. In our efforts to contain sprawl, Saanich has undermined our own efforts to support the development of affordable housing by constraining the majority of development to villages and centres, where growth is constrained by the availability of land.
- e. The development of a corridor model, similar to what has been developed for the Shelbourne Valley, should be given greater consideration going forward.
- f. Corridor development strategies can increase walkability, and support economic development and transit strategies.

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. The provisions and policies contained within the OCP is administered in an imperfect world.
- b. It is appropriate at certain points to look back to ensure its meeting the community objective.
- c. The current development pattern was developed at the regional level through the regional growth strategy.
- d. Certain areas are uncovered; however, this is to be considered against achieving the objective of developing where existing services are in place we have certain areas that are advantageous.
- e. Despite resulting in some residential lands being undeveloped, it is only Phase 1 of a multi-year plan that will accommodate and support all types of housing and densification along corridors, and in centres and villages.

The committee made the following statements:

- a. It appears that the notion of affordability is missing from the discussion, as we are seemingly only looking at supply. We should also be looking at affordability.
- b. Future discussions on affordability will demonstrate that our current growth patterns are not delivering the outcomes we want.
- c. The difficult conversation is what are we going to do about it?

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. It appears as though this discussion is really about the full spectrum of supply and affordability.

- b. Staff could bring a preliminary information to a subsequent meeting to facilitate the discussion.
- c. The item would be included on the February agenda for further discussions.
- d. The Garden Suites bylaw is currently under development, this will increase the supply of rental housing.
- e. The intent of the program is not short-term rental, but rather to direct the units to the market.
- f. Staff acknowledge that these suites insecure form of housing, as the owner may not decide to not rent out the unit.
- g. Staff directed by Council to look at potential of allowing secondary suites and garden suites at the same time, which turns a single family lot into a defacto three unit development lot. Report in 2020.
- h. Saanich already benefits from a number of lock-off suites in multi-family units, developers are routinely aware that this is an option that is available to them.

MOTION

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the public be permitted to participate as per the Mayor's invitation."

CARRIED

A. Cooper, Abstract Developments stated:

- a. The townhouse development on Boleskine Rd. included a number of lock-off suites as mortgage helpers.
- b. Considering the option for other development sites in the District to see if there is an appetite for the amenity.
- c. Not all planners are aware that this is an option.

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. In response to Council direction with regard to increasing the housing supply, staff are developing the following repots:
 - (i) RA Zoning and the potential densification of these zones (2020)
 - (ii) Micro units to support supply and affordability (2020)
 - (iii) Local Area Plans for Cadboro Bay and Cordova Bay
 - (iv) Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan, densification along corridors and transitional zones including a pre-zoning pilot to support supply and affordability.
- b. Additionally, the Shelbourne Valley Action Plan (SVAP) includes provisions for increased housing/density.
- c. Outcomes from the both the RA Zoning and Micro suite discussion could be incorporated into the SVPA to support activities around densification.

MOTION

MOVED by Councillor de Vries and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That staff provide the committee with an update on options to increase housing supply and affordability within neighbourhoods at the February meeting."

CARRIED

In a response to a question from the Mayor, the Director of Planning stated:

- a. The matter of permitting both garden suites and secondary suites is tentatively tracking for Q2 2020.
- b. The summary table that will accompany the minutes will also include and update regarding the approximate timing of items.

A. Cooper stated:

- a. Affordable housing providers will never build housing in a single family format, as it is impractical.
- b. In essence they are arguing that they are effectively shut out of developing affordable housing on the majority of residentially zoned lands.
- c. Although and the OCP identifies what might be considered (duplex, apartment etc.) in these zones; however, the process for getting approval for less-intrusive housing formats can result in significant delay when compared to a single-family development.
- d. Kelowna has program that allows residents and developers to select pre-approved off-the-shelf designs. Permits are issues by way of delegated authority.
- e. Council should give consideration to delegating some aspects of approval authority down to staff within the context of your discussions on affordability.

3. Update from staff on processes to consider and options to explore the potential for pre-zoning for rental housing as suggested by the Province.

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. Pre-zoning was recently discussed Urban Development Institute's December 3 luncheon, and has been previously discussed at UVIC with the UBCM housing group.
- b. Interested in the outcomes of the UDI session on pre-zoning for apartment rental, as there were a number of the development industry in attendance.
- c. The pilot project currently being considered in the UDC is not prescriptive to pre-zoning for a certain use.
- d. Should the pilot proceed it would serve as a valuable learning opportunity for Saanich.
- e. No further updates at this time. Additional information to be brought forward in January after staff have had an opportunity to consider the outcomes of the UDI seminar.

K. Witcher, UDI stated:

- a. The Residential Rental Tenure Zoning (RRTZ) legislation was developed by the Province and affords local governments with the authority to zone for residential rental tenure, and enact zoning bylaws (requiring new housing on residential areas to be developed as rental, and to ensure that existing rental is preserved).
- b. The industry believes that it will have a negative effects on the value of the land, as uses are restricted to single-use (rental).
- c. Considered by industry as "down-zoning."

A. Cooper stated:

- a. Speaking as UDI board member industry take-away was that when developers consider the purchase of land, they are generally looking lands suitable for the condo-project with the maximum density that generates maximum profit.
- b. According to the industry, pre-zoning for rental, without some form of bonus density, results in a decrease in the land value, and accordingly be perceived as negative by the land owner as they are losing their highest return, best use.
- c. A balance should be struck that encourages this use, while at the same time providing the industry with an opportunity to equalize the financial equation.

K. Witcher stated:

- a. The industry is not suggesting to not have this, but rather it be one tool that comes with both incentives and opt-in opportunities that make the numbers work.

A. Cooper stated:

- a. There is likely to be push back from property owner and the industry on the City of Victoria's plan to apply the RRTZ to all existing rental properties.
- b. Tool can incentivize development of rental, if balanced properly.

The committee made the following statements:

- a. The crux of the issue is affordability of land; however, policy and regulatory tools that temper the value of land can have potentially negative impacts on neighbourhood revitalization efforts.
- b. A balanced approach is required.
- c. Multiple affordable rental buildings are nearing the end of their useful lifecycle.
- d. We need to look at actions and strategies to address this issue.
- e. If conditions for renewal aren't supported there is the potential for a decrease in appropriate, affordable housing as maintenance costs increase.
- f. A staff facilitated discussion on policy tools and options for supporting the lifecycle renewal of Saanich's existing affordable rental stock should be brought forward to a future meeting.
- g. Additionally, a staff update on the options for developing a tenant relocation policy should also be brought forward.
- h. Mayor has met with tenant groups who have expressed their concerns with regard to maintenance issues and the specter of renovictions.
- i. The development/construction industry are developing technologies to extend the useful lifecycle of buildings, including building envelope remediation and structural wrapping.

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. Staff currently undertaking data collection that will help inform a future affordable rental lifecycle renewal discussion.
- b. Saanich does not currently have a tenant relocation policy.

MOTION

MOVED by Councillor Mersereau and Seconded by Councillor de Vries: "That a discussion on maintaining existing rental housing in Saanich be scheduled for the February/March 2020 meeting."

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. Staff will provide an overview of the UDI session with regard to the Residential Rental Tenure Zoning at the next meeting, no motion is required.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

MOTION

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councilor Mersereau: "That the topic of tenant relocation policy be scheduled for discussion at a future meeting."

The Director of Planning stated:

- a. It would be appropriate for this item to come forward at the same time as the discussion regarding maintaining existing affordable rentals in February/March.

The Motion was then Put and CARRIED

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

1. Staff update on options to increase housing supply and affordability within neighbourhoods (February)
2. Update from the December 3, 2019 Urban Development Institute Lunch: Exploring the Uncharted Territory of Residential Rental Tenure Zoning
3. Maintaining Existing rental housing in Saanich (February/March)
4. Tenant Relocation Policy for Saanich (February/March)

NEXT MEETING

January 6, 2019, 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., Committee Room No. 2

MOVED by Councillor Meresereau and Seconded by Councillor de Vries: "That the meeting be adjourned at 9:45 a.m."

CARRIED

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY

DRAFT

MINUTES
MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY
Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
Monday, January 6, 2020 at 8:35 a.m.

Present: Mayor Haynes and Councillors de Vries, Mersereau and Plant
Staff: Paul Thorkelsson, Chief Administrative Officer; Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; and Lynn Merry, Senior Committee Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Haynes called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Regional Housing Needs Reports Project

C. Culham, Senior Manager, Regional Housing and J. Reilly, Manager, Housing Planning and Programs, Capital Regional District (CRD) presented the Regional Housing Needs Reports Project and highlighted:

- New legislation was implemented in May 2018 with the intent to strengthen the ability of local governments to understand what types of housing are needed most in their communities.
- Local governments are required to collect data to identify current and projected housing needs for the next five years, including specific housing types (ownership, rental and number of bedrooms), prepare a report for Council's approval and for publishing on the website and update the report at least every five years.
- The data should include the projected population in each municipality for the next five years, household incomes, significant economic sectors and potential impacts on housing needs.
- When amending the Official Community Plan (OCP) and Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), local governments are expected to consider the most recently collected data.
- The data will be used to inform municipal housing-related planning and policies.
- Resources that will be utilized to collect the data include: BC Assessment, BC Housing data, BC Stats, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation data, Statistics Canada Census data and other data on co-op, non-market and student housing.
- The Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) will deliver a \$5 million, 3 year funding program to support local and regional government projects which would be eligible for up to \$150,000 based on population.
- A consultant will be hired by the CRD to manage the Regional Housing Needs Reports Project.
- The goal of the regional project will be to create a Housing Needs Report for each local government that meets provincial legislative requirements.
- The role of the consultant will be to facilitate stakeholder engagement and to work with the stakeholders to confirm data, projections and identify specific population needs.
- The Housing Needs Report could be used by local governments for broader engagement on policies, guidelines and strategies.
- Potential stakeholders include the development industry, non-profit housing service providers, market housing providers, significant employers, such as DND, institutions (educational, health, financial), Chambers of Commerce and First Nations.

In response to questions, the presenters stated:

- The Regional Housing Needs Report would include data for Saanich as a whole rather than at a neighbourhood level as that data would not be available.
- The consultant would review OCPs to get a sense of the built out environment.
- It is the intent that housing projections align with population projections.
- The report could be used as a foundation for municipal policy development.
- The Housing and Transportation study shows travel patterns throughout the region.

Members of the committee stated:

- The CRD could be asked to present again to the committee once the Regional Housing Needs Reports have been completed.

2. A Saanich Housing Strategy: Discussion Questions and Possible Resources

Members of the committee stated:

- The report from Councillor Mersereau provides links and resources that may be helpful in developing a Saanich Housing Strategy.
- It may be worthwhile to review Burnaby's approach in developing a Housing Strategy.
- The creation of a Task Force may be considered with the intent to provide a series of recommendations to Council that are aimed at improving affordability and to inform Saanich's Housing Needs Report.
- A Task Force could include qualified individuals in the community and run concurrently while the Regional Housing Needs Report is being prepared.
- Stakeholders could include housing advocates, the Chamber of Commerce, the development industry and major employers.
- It could examine conditions that currently exist in Saanich, opportunities for creating new affordable housing, protection of existing housing stock, identification of lost opportunities, and opportunities to work with local, provincial and federal governments.

In response to questions from the committee, the Director of Planning stated:

- Staff can draft Terms of Reference for a Task Force and could include the pros and cons of the creation of a Task Force.
- It will be important to consider how much work can be done in advance without duplicating the work of the CRD and how Saanich should grow in a thoughtful and sustainable manner.
- Community Associations have provided input in terms of housing needs through Local Area Plan updates.
- Reconciliation needs to be accounted for in all aspects of planning processes.

3. Increasing Housing Supply – Recent or Pending Actions

The Director of Planning stated:

- Inclusionary Zoning will be added to the list of actions previously implemented or currently being worked on.
- A report on Increasing the Housing Supply will come to Council in Q1 2020.
- The number of units assigned to each Application Type will be captured as part of the efficiency review of the Development Application Timelines.

4. Verbal Update – Residential Rental Tenure Zoning

The Director of Planning stated:

- New legislation gives municipalities the ability to rezone for rental properties only.
- There is a need to ensure that it is economically feasible for property owners to maintain

their rental properties.

- Financial incentives, such as density bonusing, potentially decreasing parking requirements and decreasing processing timelines, may assist property owners with moving forward with the construction of rental buildings
- Financial institutions may not provide financing to developers who build rental properties as there is no guarantee of return on investment.

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Briefing – Partnering with the Province to get Supportive Housing Built Quickly (February).
- Saanich Housing/Demographics Conditions (February).
- Staff update on options to increase housing supply and affordability within neighbourhoods.
- Update from the December 3, 2019 UDI Lunch: Exploring the Uncharted Territory of Residential Rental Tenure Zoning.
- Maintaining Existing Rental Housing in Saanich.
- Tenant Relocation Policy for Saanich.
- Infill policy – including cluster housing – environmental and affordability and limitations (February).
- Performa.
- Discussion on evolving the Mayor's Standing Committee into a Task Force which would include external stakeholders.
- Six Month Update – Hiring of New Development Related Staff Positions (March)
- A Saanich Housing Strategy – Discussion Questions and Possible Resources
- Speaker to present on topic of financing for housing.

NEXT MEETING

February 3, 2020, 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m., Committee Room No. 2

MOVED by Councillor Plant and Seconded by Councillor Mersereau: "That the meeting be adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

CARRIED

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY



January xx, 2020

What's happening with our Local Area Plans and housing

Temporary pause on LAP updates to address Saanich-wide housing needs.

I wanted to give you an update on Council's recent decision to temporarily pause the multi-year program of updating our local area plans in order to address housing on a Saanich-wide basis.

Our 12 local area plans (LAPs) are the plans for the Saanich's 12 distinct local neighborhoods. Guided by the policies in our 2008 Official Community Plan, and informed by extensive community consultation, each plan identifies features that are highly valued by residents and Council. The 12 LAPs outline local policies on how to add housing, improve accessibility, safe routes to school, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, protect our local environments, build vibrant communities and thereby enhance neighborhoods across Saanich.

Discussions and deliberations

In its 2019-2023 Strategic Plan, Council had directed staff to embark on a renewal process to update the local area plans; some of these were developed 20 years ago. This neighborhood by neighborhood process takes several years or more to complete. The Plan also included a housing strategy, but this was unfunded and un-resourced. After discussion and rethinking, the need to refocus our immediate efforts on more the urgent Saanich-wide housing need was realized.

Consequently, at its November 25 meeting, Council discussed the reallocation of our limited planning resources to a Saanich-wide initiative designed to address the crisis of affordability and insufficient diversity in housing supply. Discussion of this approach arose at the October and November meetings of the Mayors Housing Affordability and Supply Committee. The discussion on a possible pause in the LAP renewal process was captured in a committee resolution to Council. It was reported out at large by residents in attendance to the Saanich Community Association Network (SCAN) and discussed by Council at the November 25 meeting. To provide for wider community input discussion was laid over to the December 16 Committee of the Whole.

It was noted at the November 25 Council meeting that a temporary pause to address housing on a Saanich-wide basis would result in future LAPs being more grounded in Saanich-wide housing needs. Given the significance of housing in local neighbourhoods, once the renewals of the LAPs were restarted these may be completed in a shorter time but still take several years.

Acting on Saanich-wide policies rather than a local-area basis is an effective model for addressing critical municipal issues. Examples include our Saanich-wide approach on the climate emergency, protection of our biodiversity and environmental resilience, active transportation, transit routes, pedestrian and cycling infrastructure, access to green space and banning plastic bags. For housing, it recognizes the Saanich-wide interconnections between housing, transportation, environment, underground infrastructures, employment centers and more.

On December 16, in order to address housing, Council made the majority decision to keep our existing LAPs and temporarily pause their renewal. It's important to note that all the protective aspects for green space, tree canopy, neighbourhoods and community consultation remain in place. It is the updating process that is paused; our current bylaws and LAP remain in effect.

The pause enables us to engage in a Saanich-wide review of our housing needs, and to prepare a strategy to address these. As noted in the staff report of November 13, given their awareness of the discussions at the Mayors Housing Affordability and Supply Committee, staff included potential alternatives should Council wish to adjust the Community Planning work plan priorities. The first alternative option presented by staff on page 8 of the staff report reads as follows:

Re-allocating resources from Local Area Plan updates to policy initiatives.

This would enable issues that are common across neighbourhoods, such as affordable housing and infill housing, to be addressed in a more expeditious manner. However, it would slow down the rate that local area plans are updated.

This alternative option in the staff report aligns with the discussion at both November 25 and December 16 meetings to consider the benefits of a pause in multi-year renewal the LAPs. Staff indicate the housing strategy and needs assessment could be completed in 24 months.

Community consultation processes remain in place

The refocussed approach to housing affordability and supply embraces all the broad community consultative tools that Saanich is renowned for. It is important to our residents and to Council and staff that we listen to all voices and gather as much input as possible in order for Saanich to be successful.

The consultation tools that neighborhoods and community associations expected in the LAP renewal processes will be engaged on a Saanich-wide basis as we review our Saanich-area housing needs. In reviewing current and rezoning and new development applications the traditional voice and roles of Community Associations and residents remain in place.

Current environmental and neighborhood protections remain in place

While the LAP renewals are on hold, all the environmental, green space, tree protections and respect for neighbourhoods in the current LAPs remain in place. Nothing has been dismantled. Meanwhile, Council has ensured the protection of our green space remains a priority. Council has moved to increase tree protection via an updated tree protection bylaw and initiated steps towards planting 2,000 trees/year to increase our tree canopy. As well, staff are bringing forward the Terms of Reference for Resilient Saanich, the Bio-Diversity Framework which includes public and private green spaces.

Council also initiated our work on fighting climate change through the development of the *Climate Plan: 100% Renewable and Resilient Saanich*, which outlines actions to improve our quality of life, protect our community, and reduce local and global risks associated with a changing climate

New Development Cost Charges (DCCs) have also been approved, ensuring we have funding streams to increase park acquisitions as well as to support improvements in neighbourhood sidewalks, cycle routes, parks and infrastructure.

We thank you for your interest and patience as this process unfolds.

Mayor Fred Haynes