

MINUTES
MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY
Held online via Microsoft TEAMS
October 25, 2021 at 8:30 am

Present: Mayor Fred Haynes (Chair), Councillor Zac de Vries, Councillor Karen Harper,
Regrets: Councillor Ned Taylor

Staff: Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; Pam Hartling, Senior Planner, Community Planning, Nadine Kawata, Planner, Community Planning

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Haynes called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by Councillor Harper and SECONDED by Councillor de Vries: "That the Minutes of the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting held June 14, 2021, be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

NEW BUSINESS

1. Proposed Cordova Bay Local Area Plan

Staff presented the Draft Cordova Bay LAP. This item was a Re-referral presentation to the Committee, noting that some of the questions and comments taken from the April 12 meeting were incorporated into the presentation.

Key points included:

Housing Policy in the Proposed LAP:

- Policy is the first place to start in making changes to housing.
- Cordova Bay LAP contains strong policy support for housing affordability and supply, and supports implementation of the Housing Strategy.
- Staff are confident that the LAP is in alignment.

Focus Areas in Housing Strategy:

- Policy support for affordable / supportive housing:
 - Saanich parcel on Doumac for non-market housing.
 - Support for churches to build on institutional parcels.
 - Support affordable/non market housing on Trio site.
 - Implement Housing Strategy.
- LAP encourages rental housing in area of high home ownership.
- Strong policy support for expanding housing diversity and supply:
 - Supports new housing in Village and Ridge Node and Trio site.
 - Village Plan completed and the Village area is expanded.
 - Supports neighbourhood infill of duplex/triplex & four-plex on corner lots.
- To reduce barriers to housing development, LAP has:
 - Policy support for reducing parking standards during redevelopment.
 - Supports a review of bylaws and procedures to make housing projects that are

supported by policy easier to achieve, such as infill in single detached neighbourhoods.

- There is policy support to strengthen partnerships in housing, specifically with local churches, NP housing orgs, and First Nations.
- Housing Strategy calls for enhanced community engagement. Updating LAPs has provided an excellent opportunity to educate the public on housing needs in Saanich, to raise awareness of issues, to build support and community capacity.
- Understanding housing demand and addressing land speculation best done at District-wide level, although LAP provides opportunity for community education and discussion.

How LAPS evolve over time:

- Saanich may adopt policies or practices in support of housing diversity and supply that go beyond or conflict with LAPs.
- LAPs are not immune from progress toward housing goals.
- Official Community Plan amendments will be proposed to keep LAPs up to date.
- The proposed Cordova Bay LAP will be evaluated every 5 years.

In response to comments from the Committee staff noted:

- The 1998 LAP has not been regularly updated is due to resources. The past Planning Department was not as large as today. Allocation of funding has been decided by past Councils. LAPs were updated at a pace of one per year but had multiple planners, with two to three planners each carrying one plan themselves. Higher community involvement and engagement extends the process.
- Financial analysis rationale – Shift in cost (construction, etc.) - As the market grows there is greater revenues that can be accrued but there is also increased cost. The right kind of form that would be suitable for this area needs to be considered — parking, site design, unit revenues – with trying to create a balanced mix of factors in design conditions.
- Provision and the focus of the rental market: Initial building height and density and working with non-for-profit developer on the site has been put forward to the owner. Trio offers some possibilities. Garden suites are now available as a rental form. Properties on Sutcliffe are designated for three stories and a fourth where affordable housing is possible.
- With regards to rising housing prices (continuing throughout the pandemic), policy direction in the Plan is to update every five years – and could include revisions to building height and floor space. There is flexibility within the policy for Council to make amendments in order to acknowledge different conditions.

Discussion ensued and the Committee members noted:

- The need for tools for Council in the Official Community Plan.
- Reasons non-profit housing community have voiced for failing to get funding resulting in projects not going forward include uncertainty over zoning and timelines.
- Within the LAP is there a way to look at zoning to be put in place by Saanich ahead of time or does the applicant need to come forward.

In response to the Committee's comments staff advised:

- An in-camera preliminary Council discussion would be required to decide whether the OCP needs specific wording to appear more appealing for this local area.
- In section 1.2 of the LAP in the explanation of how the LAP is to be used – under planning framework it is indicated *“Council may, at any time may support proposals that do not align with specific General Plan or LAP provisions. In instances where a proposal gives rise to a direct conflict with the provisions of the LAP or General Plan, a statutory process with public input would be required to amend the LAP and/or General plan.”*
- The LAP document will help accelerate timelines in the way that it provides clarity and clear policy, which will improve timelines. However it will not make as large of a timing

impact as the software component improvements (example: Bluebeam – which will cut down on timelines significantly).

In response to the Committee's comments regarding the adjustment to potential suggestions coming forward from the Province with regards to the DPAR process the Director of Planning indicated the funding available will determine how the department will be able to respond to the suggestions. The number of requests will also determine on how to proceed.

In response to the Committee's comments staff provided the following information on the Cordova Bay LAP:

- Began in 2018 but due to COVID-19 there has been a delivery delay. Without the delay it could have delivered in 2 ½ years.
- Public engagement occurring in November, will go forward to Council in early 2022.
- If there is value seen in a LAP process, the process needs to be well-resourced, so that more than two per year can be put forward.
- The housing strategy is underway and the framework is there to support the LAP. Enough supporting documents in terms of climate plan, housing strategy, active transportation plan, etc. are available to better progress in times of change and provide the allowance to move forward quickly on a number of issues, with housing continuing on a parallel.
- Possible to do focused LAP updates on growth areas – corridors, villages, major centres.
- The way to move forward is in this multi-stream approach.

2. Housing Strategy Monitoring Framework

Staff presented the Housing Strategy: Monitoring Program presentation to the Committee.

Key points included:

Implementation & Monitoring:

- Implementation Process has a 10 year timeframe dependent on Council direction and resources.
- Top 12 Actions – immediate priority – implementation from 2021 – 2023
- Phase 1 – 28 actions – high priority – implementation from 2021 – 2025
- Phase 2 – 18 actions – medium priority – implementation from 2025 – 2028
- Phase 3 – 15 actions – low priority – implementation from 2028+

Monitoring Program – includes two key tools used to monitor trends, information, and evaluate progress of the Housing Strategy:

- Housing Needs Report (HNR) updates and Council direction to synchronize with Census cycles.
- Annual Housing Strategy Progress Reports:
 - Evaluate progress on implementation of the Housing Strategy and presents relevant housing data and analysis.
 - Report on: Progress on housing Strategy actions; updates on related Saanich and regional initiatives addressing housing; progress towards meeting demand estimates; overall housing trends; and key indicators.

Discussion ensued and in response to questions from the Committee staff noted:

- The Housing Needs Report provides information regarding how the existing built environment will have on demographic trends. With the new census it will show whether there are shifts with affordable and rental housing.
- Actions within the Strategy address Committee's concern in how we work with the community, with people that don't currently live in the community but would like to,

partnerships, and the equity lens.

The Committee noted:

- A strong metrics program is needed in terms of our own processes. Reducing barriers to housing development in how we measure things is essential to succeeding with timing in the housing market.
- Is there a option to go to CRD Housing Corporation – large number of low-density lands.

3. Dinner & Learn Topics: Proforma

The Chair noted that UDI recently presented to regional mayors – noted that Proforma would be a topic of interest for a future Council Learning Session.

Staff advised they could work with UDI (and a non-profit to bring into the discussion if needed).

Discussion ensued and staff noted to the Committee that clear information or questions that Council is seeking must be forwarded to staff in advance in order to prepare the information presentation.

MOVED by Councillor de Vries and SECONDED by Councillor Harper:

“Staff to engage with UDI to explore the possibility of having a Council Learning Session as discussed in this meeting.”

CARRIED

The Chair confirmed this topic will come back to the next meeting as an agenda item on November 29.

4. Speaker to present on Topic of Financing for Housing

The Chair noted this item was brought forward from previous minutes and therefore included in this agenda. No further discussion is required. By Committee consensus, Item 3.(d) was struck from the agenda.

ROUNDTABLE

Discussion ensued and staff provided the following information:

- The Updated Garden Suite Report is currently being finalized, and will come forward to Council before the end of the year.
- Report on Housing Strategy Implementation: The Director of Finance will be asked to attend the next meeting on November 29 to provide information on this item. Per the Committee's comments this will allow the Committee to weigh in on this item before it goes to Council, essential to the way in which the Housing Strategy is implemented (with regards to resources, etc.).
- Canada / BC Expert Panel Report on Housing issued summer 2021 – Staff confirmed they will bring forward a high level overview / synopsis as an approach to look at what resources would be involved and what date it would be appropriate to come to this Committee at a future date in the new year.
- Staff are tracking the Province's DAPR recommendations and will provide a high level overview and summary to the Committee when it is available.

Chair Haynes noted there will be an upcoming Committee structure change effective December 1, 2021. Councillor de Vries (Chair), Councillor Mersereau (added), Councillor Taylor (removed).

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

- Update on staff engagement with UDI to explore the possibility of having a Council Learning Session.
- Update from Director of Finance on the Housing Strategy Implementation Report.
- Canada / BC Expert Panel Report on Housing (summer 2021) Overview.

NEXT MEETING

November 29, 2021, 10:30 AM

ADJOURNMENT

**MOVED by Councillor Harper and SECONDED by Councillor de Vries,
"That the meeting be adjourned at 10:46 a.m."**

CARRIED

Mayor Haynes, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary