

**MINUTES**  
**MAYOR'S STANDING COMMITTEE ON HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND SUPPLY**  
Held online via Microsoft TEAMS  
**November 29, 2021 at 10:30 am**

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

Staff: Sharon Hvozdanski, Director of Planning; Valla Tinney, Director of Finance; Cameron Scott, Manager of Community Planning; Nadine Kawata, Planner, Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

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**CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Haynes called the meeting to order at 10:33 a.m.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

**MOVED by K. Harper and Seconded by N. Taylor: "That the Minutes of the Mayor's Standing Committee on Housing Affordability and Supply meeting held October 25, 2021, be adopted as circulated."**

**CARRIED**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**1. Housing Strategy Financial Implications**

N. Kawata, Planner, presented to the Standing Committee:

- The process developed to determine the financial implications of implementing the Housing Strategy and review recommendations for funding the implementation process.
- The Housing Strategy provides direction on how Saanich can achieve greater housing supply, affordability and diversity and accommodate a broad range of community housing needs now and into the future.
- There is a 10-year timeframe to implement the actions. Implementation is dependent on Council direction and the staff and financial resources needed.
- Successful implementation of the Housing Strategy relies on sufficient financial resources and staff capacity.
- A developed Funding Strategy outlines resource requirements and supports Council's decisions to allocate resources to implement the Strategy and establish long-term commitment.
- Analysis was undertaken to determine the types of resources needed, types of financial impacts, the timeline for implementation and financial requests by year.
- Examples of resource needs are research and analysis, consultant and technical studies, engagement activities, development of housing programs, financial incentives to promote housing and identifying future resource needs.
- The different types of financial impact are: known (implementation of the action requires known financial resources and staff support), potential (may require financial resources in the future), internal resources (implementation by existing or new staff), other – funded separately (implementation and funding through a parallel initiative, and other (no financial impact).

- Financial implications over the 10-year timeframe are broken down into two categories: one-time and ongoing costs. In the one-time cost category, the 5-Year Funding Strategy covers the Top 12 & Phase 1 Actions (2021-2025) and the Future Funding Strategy, Phase 2 and 3 Actions (2026 to 2030). On-going costs are staff resources.
- The 5-Year Funding Strategy is funded by the annual surplus allocation from 2022-2025 to implement the Top 12 and Phase 1 Actions.
- The Strategic Initiatives Contingency from 2021 will initiate three key actions – the missing middle, land capacity analysis and defining affordability.
- The Contingency Fund allows staff to quickly respond to additional unanticipated project needs such as events, technical analysis, facilitation, public engagement, and research.
- The potential financial impact identifies possible financial resource needs dependent on initial project work, analysis by staff and/or Council direction. Examples include implementing of study recommendations, activating housing programs, providing of incentives, and other public engagement.
- The on-going costs are existing and new staff resources for implementation processes and outcomes over ten years.
- The Manager of Housing and Policy will lead the implementation with support from two new positions; a Senior Planner and a Planning Analyst.
- The recommended approach is to implement the Housing Strategy over ten years through the allocation of additional resources, approve commitment to a 5-Year Funding Strategy through the annual surplus allocation for the one-time resource requests, allocate \$162,500 from the Council Strategic Initiatives Contingency Fund and approve two new Planning positions, effective April 1, 2022.
- The alternative approaches are 1) No new staff, which results in longer timelines; 2) No new staff and reallocate existing Community Planning staff, which maintains the 10-year timeline; or 3) Reduce the financial resources, which creates a longer timeline.

The Manager of Community Planning stated:

- What could be lost if staff is reallocated will be identified in a report coming before Council in December. It could be the updated Local Area Plans (LAP), the development of centres, corridors and villages plans (CCVs) and/or policy work such as the update of parking standards
- The initial work is intended to be covered / completed by existing staff, RA apartment zoning, for example.
- Each of these actions will help to modernize our approach to housing. Many of the items implemented will support the development process review.

The Director of Planning noted that:

- There will be decisions to make regarding the impact of recent Provincial delegation changes if more power is devolved to staff. Issues include reallocation of work, perhaps not doing some work, or possibly looking at some staff resources to deal with the new delegation. Some items will be faster for the applicant, but the internal resources are not set up because Council is the decision-maker.

Committee comments:

- If CCVs are considered a top priority then a discussion about choices is needed.
- When reports come in separately, there isn't a clear understanding of how these projects relate to the overall capacity of the Planning Department.

The Manager of Community Planning stated:

- Strengthening the District-wide approach to planning (through OCP, LAPs, CCVs) is within the top 12 priorities and is a near term implementation item.

Committee comments:

- There is concern over multiple reports coming before Council and Council trying to understand FTEs and departmental capacity.

The Director of Planning noted that:

- Community Planners also work on Heritage and Art projects; these will not be lost but will be delayed.
- Community and Current Planning are maxed out in terms of capacity; they are over-subscribed. This only leaves Sustainability and Environmental Services. We can reallocate those resources, but that has impacts. An overall picture can be provided.

Committee comments:

- There is a lack of alignment between the available resources and what we are trying to do. The Council has not seen enough resource requests reflect that issue; Council needs to see how over-subscribed the department is. It will not be surprising if it is two or three-fold.
- We need to build capacity through changing processes and procedures.

The Director of Planning noted that:

- Numerous resource requests have been submitted over the years and we have gratefully received quite a few.
- Council could direct what they would like to achieve corporately. Resources internally can be moved, or contractors or other solutions can be looked at collectively. We can build a staffing complement to help Council get where it wants to go policy-wise or process-wise.

Committee comments:

- Some members of Council may be unaware of the pressures in this department; it needs to be targeted every year. A 10-year plan is too long of a horizon for a crisis. There seem to be no alternatives other than to make the process longer.
- We should be making the process quicker by adding more resources or changing the processes. The three and four-year timelines are very much the status-quo approach to how we do things.
- The world is changing quickly; a streamlined approach is needed where engagement and technology are leveraged to create a decision-making process that is more aligned with the urgency and severity of the housing crisis.
- When the challenges are multifactorial, the short-term benefits are being over-valued at the significant cost of the long-term benefits.
- The same timelines and processes are not appropriate; these need to be revisited to see how it can be done differently and significantly faster.

The Mayor made note that, as of January 2022, the Standing Committee will be comprised of Mayor Haynes, Councillor de Vries (Chair), Councillor Harper and Councillor Mersereau.

The Director of Planning stated that

- The Planning Department is in varying stages of the hiring process for the new hires. It is anticipated that by the end of Q2 2022, the hiring process will be complete for all of the positions.
- Planning has completed some calculations regarding applications where a Public Hearing is necessary – those that conform to the OCP; an update will be given at the December 13th Council meeting. What is being enacted is currently being discussed with the Legal

Department.

Committee comments:

- Risk comes with trying new things; smart risks are good things to take.
- This change in Provincial legislation for increased delegation for projects that fit the OCP but there is conflict within some of our planning framework. In the past, we've appended LAPs to become part of the OCP, which has created several conflicts. A simple way to resolve this would be to make the OCP a stand-alone document that directs community planning work. The LAP informs but does not have the same direct connection.

The Director of Planning noted that:

- Since 1979 Saanich has planned with the overarching of the OCP, and general policies and then refinement and community engagement through LAPs, giving some power to the local communities. As a result, those LAPs were embedded as part of the OCP. Should they be decoupled, it isn't an issue if they comply with the OCP. Staff have devised a plan to continue with a hybrid and look at areas where growth will occur.

Committee comments:

- It would create a greater sense of clarity to remove the LAP's from the OCP and put them in the role of "informing" because they are derived from an older process. The old direction from the LAPs is being used to direct Current and Community Planning when there is much newer policy and direction, in a general sense, in the OCP. This is a Council discussion that needs to be had.
- Should Council move forward with the CVCP or LAP updates, the timeframe to do 12 or cover the whole of Saanich is not sufficient; we'll be grappling with old LAPs and an ageing OCP, stifling some of the innovation we might see.

The Director of Planning noted that:

- Some communities only have an overarching OCP, and that needs to be balanced with a very engaged community that wants to participate and be part of the decision-making.

Committee comments:

- We have trouble reaching the entirety of the community. People that are often not called in to our discussions have the most to lose. We need to engage the public for housing and ensure all voices are heard.

**Action: Cam/Nadine to provide timelines for existing development approval processes for next meeting. (one-page document) – Provide to Mayor in advance of next meeting please.**

**Future Agenda Items:**

The following was discussed:

- Update of the Planning Department's hiring process – where are we for the different positions?
- Timelines for existing development approval processes
- How do we engage the public for housing and make sure all voices are heard?

The next meeting will be Monday, January 10, 2022.

**ADJOURNMENT**

**MOVED by Councillor Harper and Seconded by Councillor Taylor, "That the meeting be adjourned at 11:41 a.m."**

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Mayor Haynes, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

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Committee Secretary