

MINUTES
HOUSING STRATEGY TASK FORCE
Saanich Municipal Hall, Council Chambers
Via Electronic Communications
December 10, 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; Alanna McDonagh, Planner, Community Planning; and Tara Da Silva, Senior Committee Clerk

Facilitators: Lani Brunn, Lead Facilitator, CitySpaces; Julia Bahen, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Kevin Green, Facilitator, CitySpaces; Anna Zhou, Facilitator, CitySpaces;

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

Regrets: M. Holland; L. Mari

CALL TO ORDER

Chair de Vries called the meeting to order at 5:02 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 is Uptown Douglas Plan and the Criteria for the Prioritization Process.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by L. Spalteholz: "That the minutes from the November 19, 2020 Housing Strategy Task Force meeting be adopted."

CARRIED

MOVED by L. Spalteholz and Seconded by J. Reilly: "That the Task Force approve and endorse the revised Criteria and Implementation Considerations as circulated and amended and endorse it as a tool to aid the discussion on the prioritization of actions and policies."

CARRIED

MOVED by M. Poirier and Seconded by K. Wiseman: "That the Task Force forward the following recommendations to Council:

1. That Council direct staff to immediately revise the eligibility for for-profit rental housing in the DCC Reduction policy to a measure that more accurately reflects market rents.
2. That Council revise the DCC Reduction policy following the completion of the housing strategy to incentivize the creation of affordable rental housing in the District of Saanich.

CARRIED

COMMENTS AND UPDATES ON COMMUNITY AMENITY CONTRIBUTIONS (CACs) AND INCLUSIONARY HOUSING PROGRAM

- A summary of the Task Force feedback implemented already has resulted in refinements to the draft Terms of Reference.
 - Include best practices (do's & don'ts) as a component of the scope of work.
 - Include an evaluation of how BC Assessment data impacts land values as part of the economic analysis.
 - Test the validity of CAC rates by calculating the yield and density of sites.
 - The addition of a discussion paper outlining approaches to obtaining amenity contributions helps support public engagement and education.
 - Online presentation/webinars as potential options for additional education have been identified.
 - Considerable equitable distribution and proportionality of the program, in terms of both proximity and needed amenities on a community-wide scale.
 - Examination of alignment and support with senior government policies/regulations is added to the scope of work.
 - Align CACs with other District plans, policies and programs, both through clarifying relationships and application to existing plans and integration with future plans.
- A summary of consolidated Task Force feedback based on the video sessions from the break out rooms.
 - Purpose-built affordable rental should be examined for CAC exemptions. Consider a scale of affordability.
 - There can be inclusionary zoning if density bonusing is given to make it financially feasible and mutually desirable.
 - Evaluate and monitor CACs, inclusionary zoning, and density bonusing to ensure that they capture land value and not adding to the each unit's cost for new buyers and renters.
 - CACs should be specified in a range so that appraisers can build them into the land costs effectively; this mitigates unintended consequences.
 - If you are going with a fixed rate, update it regularly based on market conditions (on a set schedule).
 - The prescriptive approach is more desirable than negotiated CACs.
 - CACs should be balanced in conjunction with DCCs and other costs of the production of housing.
 - The final policy must be clear and predictable.
 - CACs should be focused on equity:
 - Achieve local gaps and needs, possibly combine with community planning processes.
 - Direct CACs to less amenity-rich areas.
 - CACs are often used to appease neighbours, but existing homeowners have benefitted tremendously from increased housing wealth and amenities from CACs and tend to increase the homes' value. Therefore the CACs themselves should focus on enhancing the lives of those who have the least housing wealth or those who face the greatest barrier to housing.
 - Rental housing is a CAC and should be accounted for.
 - There are challenges in defining amenity-rich and poor.
 - Evidence-based density bonusing policy.
 - Any process that moves away from rezoning to pre-zoning or density bonusing schedules is preferred as it could shave off three to five years of getting housing to market.
 - NEW - Open transparency and clear communication about the evidence-based and prescriptive approach.

- NEW - How do we capture affordability of rentals and below market homeownership as related to community amenities?
- NEW – Examine cash versus in-kind contributions.

MOVED by M. Holland and Seconded by R. Kelley: “That the Task Force direct staff to incorporate the input as presented at the December 20, 2020 meeting into the Terms of Reference include it as considerations in the development of the CAC policy as appropriate.

CARRIED

COMMENTS THAT GUIDED FOLLOW-UP DISCUSSION ON UPTOWN-DOUGLAS (UD) PLAN AND SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

Councillors reviewed the footage of breakout rooms. It was not easy to summarize, as there are opposing views on some topics. The most prevalent trends have been summarized.

- The public realm should be prioritized upfront; parks should come parallel to targeting family units.
- Tapering the densities within the UD Plan is too drastic; more tapering should occur outside the defined area of the Plan
 - Concerns were raised that Saanich needs to be cautious that land is not perceived as more valuable than in actuality or it affects affordability.
- Further analysis is needed on the economic impacts of the UD Plan, particularly the industrial lands.
 - Saanich needs an Economic Development Strategy to determine its goals and objectives. The UD should be amended to reflect that vision; there is a need for an economic developer to implement this strategy and offer ongoing advice to several departments as they develop land-use plans or other plans that have economic implications.
 - There is a need for a Regional Industrial Land Strategy to ensure the sustainable development of Saanich, the CRD, and the lower island.
 - Transitioning to a 21st-century understanding find industrial might very well be in order, but it has to be purposeful. Enabling the stratification of industrial land would be market shaping. The need for traditional industrial uses remains in the region but might be best served elsewhere.
- The lower end of the allowable densities should be mandated minimums.
 - The allowable densities should conform to building form, practices, and realities; for example, it is not practical to build eight to ten floors; we should build on efficiencies to remote affordability. Revisit floor plates as per the design guidelines.
 - Concerns were expressed regarding maximum sizes for floor plates.
- The core designation is too constrained and should be expanded to encompass the Urban Mixed-Use Zone.
- Mid-rise Residential should be changed to six to twelve floors, probably the most likely area for redevelopment and growth.
- The Neighbourhood Residential Zone and Neighbourhood Apartment Zone should be increased to four to eight floors and be open to mixed uses.
 - Perhaps just the west side of the UD would be appropriate for mixed-use.
- Planning and land capacity inventory:
 - Analysis on probable post future rezoning capacity; realistic density versus planned density.
 - Availability and land cost are the number one differential in housing costs; fortunately, municipalities have the key level of land-use and zoning powers.

- Smart growth may have misallocated and underinvested infrastructure.
- Greater need for capacity than in our OCP and there is no margin for a balanced market of a healthy inventory to supply ratio.
- The UD Plan's existence does not preclude other centres and villages or corridors from the growth and density they require to meet the needs of Saanich's current and future residents.
- Minimize displacement. Look at reasonable accommodation for tenants that will be displaced. Protect, replace or increase the affordable housing that is already in place.

NEW ACTIONS

Proposed new actions from members of the Task Force:

- That the District pursue a consistent and collaborative approach to Housing Agreements required as a condition of redeveloping housing sites.
 - The primary aims of this action are to avoid conflicts with the funding programs and operating agreements of senior levels of governments, reduce legal costs, reduce delays, make the development approvals process more efficient and ensure that terms of housing agreements are clearly reflected.
- Quantify the marginal financial value of a new resident and explicitly consider it in development decisions.

MOVED by G. Gillespie and Seconded by J. Reilly: "That these new actions be forwarded to the prioritization discussion included in Staff's developing consolidated list of actions."

CARRIED

HOUSING TARGETS

- Targets estimate the future housing demand across the housing continuum.
- Housing targets provide direction to the market and non-market housing providers regarding the type and amount of housing that Saanich plans to enable over the next ten years.
- Housing targets build on and respond to:
 - Housing Needs Report (needs and demand)
 - Housing Strategy (objectives and actions)
 - Regional Growth Strategy (population projections)
 - Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (housing targets)
 - Census Data
- The Task Force's comments on targets:
 - Housing unit targets
 - Guide types of units and how many.
 - Consider what the housing unit mix will be in 20 years.
 - Be flexible.
 - Affordability targets
 - Tie affordability requirements to Provincial and Federal funding programs.
 - Define affordability by local incomes and based on nearby development.
 - Differentiate requirements by tenure.

The meeting adjourned at 7:59 pm.

CHAIR

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

COMMITTEE SECRETARY