

MINUTES
PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Held at Saanich Municipal Hall, Committee Room No. 2
October 17, 2019 at 5:32 p.m.

Present: Councillor Zac de Vries (Chair), Sophia Baker-French, Suzanne Bartell, Lois-Leah Goodwin, Robin Kelly, Richard Michaels.

Staff: Jeff Keays, Committee Clerk

Regrets: Allan Cahoon, Travis Lee and Peter Rantucci

Guests: John Reilly, Manager, Housing Planning and Programs, Capital Regional District
Regional Housing Service (CRD)

MINUTES

MOVED by L. Goodwin and Seconded by S. Bartell: "That the Minutes of the Planning, Transportation and Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting held September 19, 2019 be adopted as circulated."

CARRIED

CHAIR'S REMARKS

HOUSING NEEDS ASSESMENT

The Chair introduced, John Reilly of the Capital Regional District's Regional Housing Division. Mr. Reilly provided the committee with a high-level overview of the Regional Housing's (RHS) programs and initiatives, including their recent direction to apply to UBCM's Housing Needs Reports (grant) Program. The following was highlighted:

- The CRD's Regional Housing Service (RHS) is led by Senior Manager, Christine Culham and has two branches: Land Banking and Housing Services.
- The CRD is also the sole shareholder of the Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC), which owns and operates more than 1400 housing units in 46 complexes housing over 4000 individuals.
- Planning for the re-development of two existing CRHC communities, Caledonia and Michigan Square, is currently underway. Upon their completion these two projects will result in the development of 170 (net) new units of housing.
- RHS is responsible for the implementation and administration of the Regional Housing First Program (RHFP), a \$90 million initiative to create approximately 1200 new rental units that address the needs of people across the housing spectrum and region.
- The mix of rent levels for projects funded under this program will be: 20% provincial income assistance units, 31% affordable units and 49% near-market units.
- The CRHC recently acquired Millstream Ridge, a newly built 132 unit apartment complex in Langford with support from the program.
- The Housing Planning and Programs branch is specifically responsible for the administration of the Reaching Home Program, the Housing Data Book and Gap Analysis, and ongoing monitoring of and updates to the Regional Affordability Strategy.

- In addition to the coordination and planning of matters pertaining to housing affordability, the Service also manages the Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF)
- Established by the CRD Board in 2005, the RHTF recognizes that housing affordability is a regional priority and key issue in the capital region.
- The Fund provides capital grants for “bricks and mortar” in the acquisition, development and retention of housing that is affordable to households with low or moderate incomes in the region.
- In 2018 the Province passed Bill 18 – 2018: Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs Reports) Amendment Act, 2018 which requires local governments to develop housing needs assessments on an ongoing basis.
- During the CRD’s Development Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC) meetings numerous government entities expressed interest in collaborating on a regional housing needs assessment project.
- The project fits within the mandate of the CRD’s Regional Housing mandate.
- Accordingly, the CRD identified 11 local governments that wished to collaborate on a regional project in 2020.
- The goal of the project is to develop Housing Needs Reports for the 11 participating local governments, while at the same time developing a regional housing data reporting system and a process for providing ongoing support for these governments for the requisite updates.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- There are only 11 of 15 CRD municipalities participating in this project at this time; the remaining 4 either have a policy, or are in the process of updating their Official Community Plan with respect to housing needs.
- As the Province requires that these plans be updated every five years, the 4 remaining municipalities will join when required on a go-forward basis.
- This new requirement comes with associated funding through the UBCM program.
- The CRD requires \$150,000 to complete the work (maximum grant available for regional projects).
- There are numerous data sets to draw upon when developing these assessments.
- The project will be managed by Regional Housing Division.
- Yes, there are challenges with regard to the accuracy of certain data sets. As example, the data can be skewed when a new development is listed as Victoria as opposed to the appropriate municipality.
- The CRD is currently compiling a data set that is drawn from building permits from throughout the region.
- The needs assessments will identify each municipality’s specific needs with regard to archetype, size and price range.
- Three engagement opportunities are being considered: West Shore, The Core and the Peninsula.
- Facilitated stakeholder and community engagement will help to develop and/or confirm our understanding of the current context of each municipality.
- Despite the consolidated nature of the proposed engagement events, each needs assessment will be distinct, and accurately reflect the specific demands of each participating municipality.
- Engagement will include development industry stakeholders, affordable housing providers, community associations and groups and interested members of the public.
- The events will be flexible, insofar as they will be able to respond to each community’s specific needs despite the regional consolidation of the events.

- The engagement efforts are intended to be an exercise in ground truthing, not policy development.
- The assessments will be developed in collaboration with staff from each municipality.
- A consultant will be retained to lead the collaborative project.
- DPAC has formed a working group that will manage the RFP/RFQ process for retaining the consultant.
- Completed reports will be brought forward to their respective Councils in late 2020.
- Council approval is required prior to the assessments going forward to the Province.
- This mandated exercise by the Province will ensure that matters related to housing needs remain at the forefront of municipal planning and consideration going forward.
- The parameters of the grant are strict with regard to data collection.
- The CRD possesses an abundance of consolidated housing data; however, as there is great value in collaboration, the project intends to leverage (through collaborative partnerships) additional data sets in order to develop a comprehensive and robust data set related to housing, which will inform the process for future reporting.
- The aforementioned consolidated data sets are intended to be live, and accessible at any time, thus negating the need for updates every 5 years.
- The economy of scale achieved through this collaborative effort will result in approximately \$280,000 – \$300,000 in savings for the Province.
- It is anticipated that the live data set will also reduce costs associated to the requisite 5 year updates.
- It is anticipated that the RFP will be issued in January 2020, with the consultant being selected by February.
- Data compilation would begin as early as March.
- Spatial analysis is an important factor to be considered; however, the parameters set out by the Province don't include a requirement for this level of analysis.
- CRD staff would require direction from the CRD board to proceed with developing data sets through this lens.
- The CRHC's Westview Project located on Carey Rd. is slated to be completed in early 2020.

The Chair thanked Mr. Reilly for the presentation, and noted that he is looking forward to receiving Saanich's completed report in 2020.

UPTOWN DOUGLAS CORRIDOR PLAN

The Chair noted that the item was listed on the agenda in order to afford committee additional time for discussion on the September 19, 2019, Draft Uptown Douglas Corridor Plan presentation by the Manager of Community Planning.

The Chair noted that staff have done an excellent job in facilitating community engagement on the plan. Engagement efforts have been very well received, with large turnouts for each of their engagement events.

Committee discussion ensued, the following was noted:

- A post-engagement committee discussion may be more appropriate, as it would give staff an opportunity to consider/incorporate any feedback or suggestions they receive.
- It is anticipated that staff will return to the committee with any major revisions or identified areas requiring further study and input.
- The Vernon Ave. corridor should be looked at in greater depth as it cuts a swath of 8

lane highway traffic through the proposed heart of Saanich.

- If Saanich were to assume jurisdiction of this section of Vernon it would be done as a download from the Province.
- In a post-download scenario would new opportunities (Ec. Dev., Housing etc.) be enough to offset any increases in operational pressures to Saanich's budget.
- The completion of the McKenzie interchange will be a game changer.
- The UDC should include an Economic Development Strategy in order to focus and stimulate redevelopment of the area.
- Ground truthing associated to the development of an economic development strategy would confirm whether a potential increase in height (and density), e.g. 8 stories would, in fact, be enough for a property owner to displace an existing car dealership?
- Have staff undertaken an analysis of the long-term implications on tax revenue.

The Committee Clerk will invite the Manager of Community Planning back to committee once the team has had an opportunity to synthesize and incorporate any feedback as appropriate.

FILM STUDIO DEVELOPMENT

The Clerk noted that the Manager of Current Planning had confirmed that the District has no new information regarding the proposed development of a film studio on Camosun's Interurban campus.

The item can be revisited if/when there is something to report.

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair noted that he was interested in exploring in the development of an exemplary business award program for the District. Like the ENA awards this initiative would recognize exemplary Saanich business in a number of (TBD) categories. The Chair requested that the Clerk Investigate and report back on the history and rationale for discontinuing the Park and Tillford Exemplary Business Award.

Member R. Michaels proposed the committee received a presentation from a local company that is seeking feedback on their planned development of a green, EV ride-sharing fleet with a focus on meeting the needs for community transportation.

The meeting adjourned at 9:07 p.m.

Councillor de Vries, Chair

I hereby certify these Minutes are accurate.

Committee Secretary