

DATE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 17, 2018

AUTHORED BY KARIN KRONSTAL, SOCIAL PLANNER

**SUBJECT NANAIMO AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY AND NANAIMO'S ACTION PLAN TO END HOMELESSNESS - ENDORSEMENT**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide Council with the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy and Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness (2018-2023), and to request that Council endorse these documents.

### **Recommendation**

That Council:

1. endorse the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy; and
2. endorse Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness (2018-2023).

## **BACKGROUND**

On 2017-APR-24, Council approved the Terms of Reference to move forward with an Affordable Housing Strategy (the "Strategy"), the City's first comprehensive study of affordability across the housing continuum, which includes social, non-market, and market housing. The Strategy establishes the City's role and priorities with regard to promoting affordable, appropriate, and accessible housing in Nanaimo over the next ten years (2018 - 2028).

On 2018-APR-23, Council received the Affordable Housing Strategy Discussion Paper, the first of two deliverables to come out of the Strategy process. The Discussion Paper provided a situational analysis of existing and projected housing supply and needs, the identified public priorities, and a list of potential policy solutions to address current and anticipated housing needs. The Discussion Paper was used to inform the policies in the Affordable Housing Strategy ("the Strategy"), which is now complete and is included as Attachment A.

On 2018-JUL-09, Council received the Nanaimo Action Plan to End Homelessness report (the "Action Plan"), which was presented by the Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition. The Action Plan is a five-year plan to help Nanaimo end homelessness, or where homelessness persists, to diminish the harms it produces by guiding and organizing homelessness services. It was recommended that the Action Plan be brought back to Council for endorsement once the Affordable Housing Strategy was complete, as the reports are companion documents. The Action Plan is included in this report as Attachment B, but the process of developing the Action Plan is not addressed in this report as that process was led by the Homelessness Coalition.

## Affordable Housing Strategy Process

The Strategy process was overseen by a steering committee comprised of representatives from the development sector, non-profit housing providers, and government agencies. The Strategy process was comprised of five phases:

**Phase 1: Plan Initiation** - Terms of Reference approval, background studies and research, RFP for consulting services and formation of a steering committee.

**Phase 2: Issue and Opportunities** - A range of public engagement activities aimed at identifying community priorities and concerns related to housing availability, affordability, and accessibility.

**Phase 3: Options Development** - Creation of a list of potential policy solutions that corresponded with the identified housing priorities, concerns, and opportunities.

**Phase 4: Draft Strategy** - Work to refine and prioritize policy options with stakeholders and the steering committee, a public Open House, and online survey to collect feedback on policies.

**Phase 5: Finalize Strategy** - Presentation to committees, report to Council, and final adoption.

### *Public Engagement*

The public engagement activities from Phase 2 of the process are summarized in Chapter 2 of the Discussion Paper. Since publication of the Discussion Paper, the City held two additional Open Houses and created an online survey to collect public input on the policy options proposed to be included in the Strategy. Overall, more than 1,500 people participated in one or more consultation activities. Notably, there was a strong representation from both renters and homeowners from neighbourhoods across the city. Where there was an identified gap in knowledge or a group underrepresented, the project team made efforts to reach out and speak to member(s) of that group to ask for feedback on policies.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Strategy describes affordable housing as “*Housing that includes a variety of housing types, sizes, tenures and prices and housing that supports a mix of incomes, ages and abilities. It includes housing across the entire housing continuum from temporary shelter to social or supportive housing, market rental and homeownership.*”

Traditionally, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation has defined affordable housing as that costing no more than 30% of income. However, Nanaimo’s strategy targets both low and moderate income households, as well as renters and owners. Different levels of affordability apply to different types of households and, as such, the Strategy includes definitions for *non-market housing*, *affordable market rental* and *affordable home ownership* that were created specifically based on the Nanaimo context and goals.

The Strategy outlines five broad policy objectives, each with a number of policies and actions that will help achieve the stated goal. The five objectives are:

1. Increase the supply of rental housing stock
2. Support infill and intensification in existing neighbourhoods
3. Diversify housing form in all neighbourhoods
4. Continue to support income and special needs housing
5. Strengthen partnerships and connections

In total, the Strategy includes 23 policies and over 100 actions. The final section of the Strategy lays out an implementation plan that identifies a timeline and City lead for each action.

### **Community Vitality Committee Recommendation**

The Community Vitality Committee (CVC) whose mandate is to promote the community's wellbeing and to make recommendations to Council on proposed initiatives related to social equity, had a representative on the steering committee. On 2018-SEPT-05, CVC passed a resolution recommending that Council adopt the Affordable Housing Strategy and endorse the Action Plan to End Homelessness.

### **OPTIONS**

1. That Council:
  - a) endorse the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy; and
  - b) endorse Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness (2018-2023).
  - **Policy Implication:** The policy directives of the Affordable Housing Strategy have implications for amendments to the Official Community Plan and the Zoning Bylaw, which will be undertaken by Staff over the next 1-5 years.
  - **Engagement Implication:** The Strategy considers and reflects input from over 1,500 Nanaimo residents who took part in one or more public engagement activities during the one-year planning process.
  - **Strategic Priorities Implication:** Affordable Housing is one of the two Strategic Initiatives identified in Council's 2016 – 2019 Strategic Plan Update. ]
2. That Council not endorse the Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy or Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness (2018-2023).

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- The Affordable Housing Strategy is a municipal plan that establishes the City's role and priorities with regard to promoting affordable, appropriate, and accessible housing in Nanaimo over the next ten years.
- The Nanaimo Action Plan to End Homelessness is a five-year plan by the Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition to help end homelessness in our community, or where homelessness persists to diminish the harms it produces.

- Staff recommend that Council endorse the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Nanaimo Action Plan to End Homelessness as guiding documents for addressing housing issues in our community. |

## **ATTACHMENTS**

ATTACHMENT A: Nanaimo Affordable Housing Strategy

ATTACHMENT B: Nanaimo's Action Plan to End Homelessness 2018-2023

### **Submitted by:**

Karin Kronstal  
Social Planner |

### **Concurrence by:**

Dale Lindsay  
Director of Community Development |