

DATE OF MEETING December 14, 2020

AUTHORED BY KARIN KRONSTAL, SOCIAL PLANNER

SUBJECT HEALTH AND HOUSING ACTION PLAN UPDATE

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Governance and Priorities Committee with the draft Health and Housing Action Plan from the Health and Housing Task Force in order to obtain feedback on the draft and provide next steps in the process.

Recommendation

That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council:

1. extend the mandate of the Health and Housing Task Force until 2021-FEB-28 to allow time for Task Force members to engage their respective organizations on their role in implementing the Health and Housing Action Plan before returning to Council; and
2. direct Staff to return to Council with a final Health and Housing Action Plan for endorsement along with recommendations regarding any additional investment by the City towards implementing the Health and Housing Action Plan.

BACKGROUND

On 2019-MAY-13, Council approved the creation of a Health and Housing Task Force (the “Task Force”) to address the health and housing crisis in our community. At the same meeting, Council approved a Task Force Terms of Reference and appointed Councillors Bonner and Hemmens as Chair and Alternate Chair (See Attachment A – Health and Housing Task Force Terms of Reference). This report provides an update to Council on the outcome of the work of the Task Force and presents the draft Health and Housing Action Plan (see Attachment B).

At its Special Meeting on 2019-OCT-29, the Task Force worked with a facilitator to identify priorities for the Task Force to focus on for the remainder of its term. The outcome of this meeting was the following recommendation that Council passed at its “In Camera” meeting held 2019-NOV-04:

- “1. That Council direct Staff to hire a contractor until June 2020 with funds re-purposed from the Drop-In Centre to coordinate the activities of the Health and Housing Task Force.*
- 2. Council request Service Canada to engage Turner Strategies to assist the Health and Housing Task Force with its work starting January 2020.”*

Of the \$110,000 budget for this project, \$60,000 was provided by the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition via the Community Entity; \$40,000 was provided by Service Canada, and \$10,000 was provided by the City of Nanaimo. While Dr. Turner was originally scheduled to conclude the

project in July 2020, delays due to COVID-19 extended the timeline by approximately five months. The scope of Dr. Turner's deliverables under this contract included the following:

1. A Health & Housing Action Plan outlining priorities for Nanaimo, targets/gaps/costs to address current and projected vulnerable population needs;
2. Systems Map of 600+ services operating in Nanaimo to understand ecosystem gaps, overlaps and support coordination, and provide help seekers a real-time systems navigation tool (HelpSeeker.org);
3. Strategic engagement to generate key stakeholder buy-in for systems change from end users, service providers, funders/policy makers, and inform public of efforts;
4. Integrated Funding Strategy to create co-investment model among diverse sources to align efforts to maximize impact/performance;
5. Integrated Coordinated Access model to support streamlined process across ecosystem to optimize efforts to prevent and end homelessness; and
6. Complex Needs Integrated Service Model to support housing and wellbeing needs of Nanaimo's 50 highest systems users as a flagship cross-systems initiative.

The delivery of the draft Health and Housing Action Plan (Attachment B) fulfills the first of the deliverables listed above. Dr. Turner's team also completed an Integrated Needs Assessment and Social Impact Audit that supports the recommendations of the Action Plan, which is not included in this report as they are considered supporting documents and their key findings are referenced in the Action Plan.]

DISCUSSION

The proposed Health and Housing Action Plan (the "Action Plan") outlines a series of multi-sectoral investments that would alleviate the current health and housing crisis in our community. One of the primary recommendations that the Action Plan makes is to create a new, arms-length social development entity (a 'Systems Planning Organization' or SPO) tasked with leading implementation of the Action Plan. The Action Plan further recommends creating a 'Council of Champions' made up of diverse sector leaders at the decision-making level who would oversee the SPO and advocate for resources to support community priorities (both within the member organizations and from other funding sources).

The Action Plan proposes the SPO could be incubated within either the City of Nanaimo or the United Way Central & Northern Vancouver Island (the 'United Way'). One consideration is that the United Way already is the Community Entity for the Federal Reaching Home grant funding program, and, therefore, is already playing a coordinating function among the non-profits serving vulnerable populations. According to the Action Plan, the SPO would move out of the host organization and become an independent organization within the first few years of operation.

The Action Plan proposes the cost of creating the SPO (\$3.6M over 5 years) would be split between the various government partners involved in the Task Force as well as the United Way (it should be noted that none of the partners named have actually signed on yet to fund this initiative, as the Action Plan was only recently completed). The Action Plan suggests that by optimizing the resources going into the existing social service system through improved coordination, the return on investment in an SPO could be as high as \$30 for every \$1 spent on

improved coordination. However, this would also be contingent on the willingness and ability of the various organizations working in Nanaimo to shift resources rapidly.

The next step in the process is for the Governance and Priorities Committee to consider the draft Action Plan, ask questions, and suggest any desired changes. When the draft has been reviewed, Staff are recommending the Action Plan be brought to a Regular Council Meeting for consideration of endorsement, along with the proposed options in terms of taking leadership on implementation, including:

1. In partnership with other agencies, provide additional resources to another organization to take on portions of the Action Plan implementation through creation of a new SPO; or
2. Consider taking on the role of SPO, as many of the advocacy/research roles are already being done by City Council and Staff (with additional resources from other sources and in-kind contributions).

There are advantages and disadvantages to each option that the Task Force is still exploring. Regardless of whether the City takes on the SPO role, the Plan recommends the City be one of the organizations represented on a new Council of Champions that will provide overall direction and leadership to the SPO.

The Governance and Priorities Committee is not being asked for a decision today on the question of governance or further investment. Rather, Staff are seeking feedback on the draft Action Plan and direction regarding whether a finalized Action Plan should be brought to a future Regular Council Meeting for endorsement of endorsement along with recommendations regarding any additional investment by the City towards implementing the Action Plan.

Council is also being asked to extend the mandate of the Task Force until 2021-FEB-28. This will allow time for Task Force members to bring the Action Plan back to their respective organizations for consideration of what resources can be allocated or redirected towards its implementation. The Task Force would meet again, if necessary, before the final Health and Housing Action Plan returns to Council.

OPTIONS

1. That the Governance and Priorities Committee recommend that Council:
 1. extend the mandate of the Health and Housing Task Force until 2021-FEB-28 to allow time for Task Force members to engage their respective organizations on their role in implementing the Health and Housing Action Plan before returning to Council; and
 2. direct Staff to return to Council with a final Health and Housing Action Plan for endorsement along with recommendations regarding any additional investment by the City towards implementing the Health and Housing Action Plan.
 - Advantages: This option provides the Governance and Priorities Committee with the opportunity to provide feedback on the Health and Housing Action Plan before consideration of endorsement. It also allows the other Task Force members time to engage their respective organizations in the same manner, and would allow them to meet again as a formal body if required.

- Disadvantages: Requires extending the mandate of the Health and Housing Task Force again. The Governance and Priorities Committee would not be able to make a decision on the Action Plan or the role of the City in implementation today but would have to wait until a future meeting to do so.
-

2. That the Governance and Priorities Committee provide alternative direction.

SUMMARY POINTS

- On 2019-MAY-13, Council approved the creation of a Health and Housing Task Force to address the health and housing crisis in our community.
- The Task Force has spent the last year working with a consultant, Dr. Alina Turner, to create a draft Health and Housing Action Plan.
- Staff are seeking feedback on the draft Health and Housing Action Plan before bringing it to a Regular Council Meeting for endorsement with any additional recommendations related to implementation.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Health and Housing Task Force – Terms of Reference

ATTACHMENT B: Draft Health and Housing Action Plan

Submitted by:

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Manager, Community Planning

Concurrence by:

Bill Corsan
Director, Community Development

Dale Lindsay
General Manager, Development Services