

Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING February 10, 2021

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SUBJECT HEALTH AND HOUSING ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide the Health and Housing Task Force with the final Health and Housing Action Plan and recommended next steps for implementation.

Recommendation

That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council:

- a. endorse the draft Health and Housing Action Plan;
- b. direct Staff to facilitate the establishment of a Systems Planner Organization; and
- c. direct Staff to seek funding from partners for establishing a Systems Planner Organization.

BACKGROUND

This report provides the Health and Housing Task Force (the “Task Force”) with the final version of the draft Health and Housing Action Plan that reflects the work of the Task Force (see Attachment A). The report also identifies next steps for consideration to recommend to Council for implementing the Action Plan.

The Task Force and its Terms of Reference was approved by Council at its Special Meeting held 2019-MAY-13. At the same meeting, Council appointed Councillors Bonner and Hemmens as Chair and Alternate Chair (see Attachment B).

At its Special Meeting on 2019-OCT-29, the Task Force worked with a facilitator to identify priority actions. 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. That Council request Service Canada to engage Turner Strategies to assist the Health and Housing Task Force with its work starting January 2020.”*

Although Council allocated sufficient funds for the \$110,000 budget, community partners contributed \$100,000 (\$60,000 was allocated by the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition via the Community Entity using Federal funds designated to address homelessness in Nanaimo and \$40,000 was provided by Service Canada).

The contract, originally scheduled to conclude in July 2020, was delayed by approximately five months due to COVID-19. The deliverables under this contract included the following:

1. A Health and Housing Action Plan outlining priorities for Nanaimo, and 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 final Health and Housing Action Plan meets the first deliverable listed above. An Integrated Needs Assessment and Social Impact Audit was also completed; however, they are not included in this report as they are considered supporting documents that inform the recommendations of the Action Plan.

At its Special Council meeting on 2020-DEC-14, Council received a presentation on the draft Action Plan, and passed the following motions:

- "1. That Council 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.*
- 2. That Council 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."*

Later during the same meeting on 2020-DEC-14, Council passed an additional motion related to resourcing Action Plan implementation:

- "That \$380,000 be added to the 2021-2025 Financial Plan for Health and Housing Initiatives; and that \$100,000 allocated for the day time drop-in center be reallocated to Health and Housing initiatives in the 2021-2025 Financial Plan."*

DISCUSSION

The proposed Action Plan shows that through enhanced collaboration, integration and restructuring of existing health and housing services and supports, there could be a significant positive impact on the number of vulnerable community members who could be served adequately using both existing and future resource investments. Ultimately the Action Plan

shows that fewer resources will be needed to keep pace with demand if funding and resources are used more effectively to meet health and housing needs. However, it is recognized that this would be contingent on the willingness and ability of the various organizations working in Nanaimo to shift resources, change the ways they work, and to overall better coordinate to achieve collective priorities.

There are six immediate action steps identified in the report:

1. Formally call key partners to action to identify areas to support the Action Plan, including capacity to resource funding needs identified.
2. Create a Health & Housing Governance Board to oversee Plan implementation, maintain accountability and focus; its Funders' Table committee will secure the \$18.5M needed for Year 1 rollout.
3. Support incubation of a Health and Housing Systems Planner Organization to help optimize current approaches and maximize return on investment.
4. Expand implementation of the Integrated Coordinated Access model to help with consistent triage of priority clients for the Health and Housing Intervention Teams and supportive housing units and existing resources.
5. Launch Health and Housing Intervention Teams to offer immediate rental subsidies with intensive outreach of wraparound social and health supports to those experiencing the most substantial health and housing complexity/ vulnerability.
6. Secure Permanent Supportive Housing with onsite wraparound social and health supports for individuals in need of intensive low- barrier housing models.

A key immediate action (#3 above) is *supporting incubation of a Health and Housing Systems Planner Organization to help optimize current approaches and maximize return on investment*. Essentially, a Systems Planner Organization (SPO) would be responsible for several key areas of plan implementation focusing especially on improved coordination and organisation of existing health and housing resources.

The Action Plan suggests that the benefits of investing in an SPO would likely result in a high return on investment through improved coordination. However, one key factor impacting this success will be the commitment of individuals and organizations to support the SPO and agree on their role in achieving plan priorities, take concrete action to share resources, and ultimately change the way they currently work to better serve those in need.

While in some communities the SPO resides effectively within local governments, in others it is a stand-alone, new, non-profit organization. Based on discussion with Task Force members, the Action Plan proposes that the SPO be directly incubated with an external agency for one to two years before becoming an independent organization. Reflecting the fact that further discussions are required, the statement on Page 26 of the plan regarding the United Way as SPO incubator has been amended from "will" to "may". This change recognizes that the United Way as the incubator remains a viable option without committing the organization or the City in this planning document. The proposed recommendations in this report reflect the Plans call to establish a SPO. If the recommendation is approved by the Task Force and endorsed by Council, Staff will be directed to facilitate the establishment of a SPO which may include an incubator organization.

The Action Plan estimates that the cost of creating the SPO (\$3.6M over five years) would be split between the various government partners involved in the Task Force as well as others. For a similar type of organization, the City of Kelowna contributes on average \$150,000 a year (approximately \$750,000 over five years) with other funders contributing the remainder of the budget. The City has allocated \$480,000 per year to support plan implementation for five years. If this amount is fully dedicated to the work of the SPO this would amount to \$2.4 Million over five years leaving an estimated shortfall of \$1.2 Million.

The Action Plan intends that the SPO and other coordination activities be collaboratively funded. Related to this, the first immediate action step listed above identifies formally calling “*key partners to action to identify areas to support the Action Plan, including capacity to resource funding needs identified.*” While various agencies including members of the Task Force have been asked to do this and bring this forward in meetings, it is clear that more time is needed to discuss this further and get these commitments formalised by each Task Force representative’s decision makers.

Attachment C provides a draft summary table of key actions under six theme areas (Systems Coordination, Diverse Housing Options, Leadership Engagement, Prevention, Complex Needs Capability and Poverty Reduction). Based on the Action Plan and the mandates of different organizations, the summary includes a draft identification of the anticipated role of the SPO versus the City and other agencies in leading/supporting the different actions. This draft is intended to generate further discussion and confirmation of roles. Any feedback from the Task Force members on the draft summary will be helpful with the establishment of the SPO and clarification of roles in plan implementation

NEXT STEPS

The recommendations of the Task Force will proceed to Council for endorsement of the Plan and final decisions with respect to implementation, including governance.

Staff are seeking direction from the Task Force on the following recommendations to Council.

OPTIONS

1. That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council:
 - a. endorse the Health and Housing Action Plan;
 - b. direct Staff to facilitate the establishment of a Systems Planner Organization; and
 - c. direct Staff to seek funding from partners for establishing a Systems Planner Organization
- The advantages of this option: The Action Plan provides a coordinated framework for responding to the City’s health and housing crisis. Endorsing the Action Plan validates the work of the City and its Partners and allows Staff to proceed with implementing the plan. Furthermore, getting confirmation of partner funding to add to City funds to resource this work will help establish ownership, collaboration, and commitment to implementing the Action Plan.

- The disadvantages of this option: Delaying on these recommendations might be interpreted as the City not being committed to the Action Plan.
- Financial Implications: Council has allocated \$480,000 per year for five years towards plan implementation. This totals approximately \$2.4 Million over five years, some or all of which could be allocated to a Systems Planner Organization. Should other partners commit to funding and/or contributing other resources to the Systems Planner Organization, then more City resources would be available to implement other immediate actions identified in the plan.

2. That the Health and Housing Task Force 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 to create a Health and Housing Action Plan.
- Staff are seeking Task Force recommendation to Council to endorse the final Health and Housing Action Plan as well as next steps on implementation.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Draft Health and Housing Action Plan

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

ATTACHMENT C: Draft Summary of Key Action Plan Areas by Lead Agency

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