

DATE OF MEETING April 23, 2018

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SUBJECT [AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER]

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with the Affordable Housing Strategy Discussion Paper and an update on the Affordable Housing Strategy process.

Recommendation

That the Affordable Housing Strategy Discussion Paper report be received for information.

BACKGROUND

On 2017-APR-24, Council approved the Terms of Reference to move forward with the 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. Once adopted, the Strategy will establish the City’s role and priorities with regard to promoting affordable, appropriate, and accessible housing in Nanaimo over the next ten years (2018-2028).

Two reports are being developed through the Strategy process: the Affordable Housing Discussion Paper (the “Discussion Paper”), and the final Affordable Housing Strategy and Implementation Plan. The Discussion Paper is now complete and is included as ‘Attachment A.’

The purpose of the Discussion Paper is to provide a situational analysis of existing and projected housing supply and needs, the identified public priorities, and a list of potential policy solutions. The Discussion Paper will be used to inform the policies that are included in the final Strategy document, which is anticipated to be completed by August 2018.

Process

The Strategy process includes five phases:

- Phase 1 – Plan Initiation
- Phase 2 – Issue and Opportunities
- Phase 3 – Options Development
- Phase 4 – Draft Strategy
- Phase 5 – Finalize Strategy

As part of Phase 1 – Plan Initiation, the project team developed the process framework, collected relevant background information and studies, created a steering committee, and issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for consulting services (which was awarded to City Spaces Consulting and Colliers International). The data analysis resulting from this phase of the process forms the first chapter of the Discussion Paper.

Phase 2 – Issues and Opportunities included a range of public engagement activities aimed at identifying community priorities and concerns related to housing availability, affordability, and accessibility. Consultation activities included six community engagement events, three focus groups, a stakeholder World Café, and an online survey with almost 1,000 respondents. The results of the consultation input are summarized in the second chapter of the Discussion Paper.

We are currently at the end of Phase 3 – Options Development. This phase looked to create a list of potential policy solutions that correspond with the identified housing priorities, concerns, and opportunities. This list of policy options comprises the third chapter of the Discussion Paper.

Steering Committee

The Strategy process is overseen by a steering committee comprised of representatives from the development sector, non-profit housing providers, and government agencies. The Community Vitality Committee, whose mandate is to promote the community's wellbeing and to make recommendations to Council on proposed initiatives related to social equity, has also been engaged in the process and will consider a final recommendation of the Strategy to Council. A draft of the Strategy will also be presented to the Community Planning and Development Committee for feedback.

DISCUSSION

The Discussion Paper is divided into three chapters: 1) Data and Policy Review, 2) Public Engagement Summary, and 3) Policy Options.

Data and Policy Review

This chapter provides an overview of relevant legislation, regulations, policies, and projects that help shape housing affordability in Nanaimo. It also provides an analysis of current housing supply and demand, as well as forecasts future trends over the next 25 years.

Public Engagement Summary

The second chapter outlines the feedback received from various engagement activities with different stakeholder groups. Over 1,277 people took part in consultation activities, providing their feedback as to which housing issues are of greatest concern to them and where they saw opportunity for the City to improve housing affordability and/or accessibility.

Policy Options

The final chapter identifies potential policy options that address the following objectives:

- Increasing the supply of rental housing stock
- Supporting infill and intensification in single detached neighbourhoods
- Increasing and diversifying the supply of multi-unit housing stock
- Continuing to support the development of low-income and special needs housing
- Strengthening government and community partnerships

- Providing housing education and support

The list of policy options considered both recent City accomplishments and the successes in other cities with comparable demographics. The potential policy options were also reviewed by the steering committee, an internal advisory group of City staff from various divisions, and stakeholders from various sectors at a World Café event.

Next Steps

There will an Open House held on Saturday, 2018-APR-28, at St. Andrews Presbyterian Church from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., which will give the public an opportunity to find out what we have learned to date in the Affordable Housing Strategy process, and to provide their input on the proposed policy options. The proposed options will also be presented to the steering committee for input. Once this feedback is gathered, the project team will begin drafting the final Affordable Housing Strategy and Implementation Plan, which will be brought to the Community Vitality Committee and the Community Planning and Development Committee prior to proceeding to Council for consideration of adoption.

SUMMARY POINTS

- Council approved the Terms of Reference for the Affordable Housing Strategy on 2017-APR-24.
- The Affordable Housing Discussion Paper presented provides the background information required to develop the final Affordable Housing Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- The final Affordable Housing Strategy and Implementation Plan is anticipated to be completed by August 2018.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Affordable Housing Strategy Discussion Paper |

Submitted by:

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