

**REPORT TO THE PLANNING & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE  
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, MAY 24, 2006**

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**SUBJECT****REVISED REGIONAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGY – REVIEW PROCESS  
OPTIONS****PURPOSE**

1. To present three options for the review and approval of the revised regional housing affordability strategy (RHAS).
2. To present background information on homelessness in the Capital Region requested by the Committee at the April meeting (Attachment B).

**BACKGROUND**

On August 11, 2004 the Board directed staff to prepare a revised RHAS (as summarized in the April 26, 2006 staff report to the Committee) and to prepare a process for public review of the revised RHAS to obtain feedback from a broader regional public.

Community consultation during the process to develop the RHAS occurred between June 2002 and June 2004 and included:

- ongoing input from a stakeholders advisory committee;
- focus group interviews with stakeholders in June 2002;
- a regional workshop on preliminary research results on September 17/18, 2002;
- a regional workshop on possible solutions identified on December 10, 2002;
- a regional workshop on the feasibility of possible solutions on March 26, 2003; and,
- a regional workshop on housing trust funds on November 26, 2003.

The *Final Consultants Report – A Proposed Housing Affordability Strategy for the Capital Region*, was reviewed by member municipalities between October 2003 and June 2004 with final results of that review presented to the former Regional Planning Committee in July 2004 and the Board in August 2004.

Apart from the focused consultation with member councils in early 2005 leading up to the establishment of the Regional Housing Trust Fund, there has been no community consultation on the RHAS since the spring of 2004. Input on work to prepare the revised RHAS was limited to representatives of the Project Management Team (senior staff from CMHC, BC Housing, VIHA, CRD, and CRHC) and input from senior staff from Services Canada and the City of Victoria involved in the Victoria Homelessness Community Plan process.

## **ALTERNATIVES**

1. That the Board direct staff to undertake a stakeholder representative focused consultation process that solicits the comments and recommendations of RHAS funding partners, the stakeholders advisory committee, and the Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC).
2. That the Board direct staff to undertake an municipal and agency focused consultation process that solicits the comments and recommendations of the RHAS funding partners, the stakeholders advisory committee, the DPAC, and member councils and electoral area Directors.
3. That the Board direct staff to undertake a broad community consultation process that seeks input from RHAS funding partners, the stakeholders advisory committee, the DPAC, member councils and electoral area directors, and regional residents at large.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Attachment A outlines the general components, timeline and resource requirements of the three alternatives. Financial implications of the three alternatives are:

Alternative 1: Approximately \$1,000 to print and distribute review copies of the RHAS, included in budget.

Alternative 2: Approximately \$2,500 to print and distribute review copy of RHAS would consume approximately 50% of RGS print budget. Will result in reduction in number of reports that can be printed (eg: TravelChoices Implementation & Investment Plan reports, RGS 2005 monitoring report).

Alternative 3: Approximately \$9,000 - \$10,000 in costs for printing/distribution, advertising, meeting expenses. Will result in need to reallocate approximately \$7,000 currently earmarked for RGS interim update related expenses.

## **GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

RGS initiative 3.2 calls for the preparation and adoption of a RHAS to improve housing affordability and ensure that all residents of the Capital Region - particularly for low and moderate-income households, the elderly, youth, those with special health and other needs, and the homeless – have reasonable choice of housing by type, tenure, price and location. RGS implementation initiative I-6 calls for the incorporation of revisions stemming from the RHAS into the interim update of the RGS, currently scheduled to begin in the autumn 2006.

## **SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS**

The three alternatives propose increasingly broad and formal levels of municipal and public consultation with the level of staff effort and expenditure increasing from alternative 1 – 3. The staff time and budget resource impacts of alternatives 1 and 2 can be accommodated.

Alternative 3 would require a re-allocation of resources and effort over what was anticipated for the 2006 work plan and budget.

Substantial time has passed since stakeholders and member councils reviewed the previous draft RHAS. Nevertheless the most controversial recommendation of the RHAS (to establish a regional housing trust fund) has been undertaken. The revised RHAS essentially shortens and clarifies content that has been reviewed previously, and responds to Board direction to revise the housing facilitator and housing resource centre proposals. The proposed strategy to address homelessness in the region is new, although it builds on work that has been underway in the region for several years.

Alternative 1 provides the most time effective way to move the project forward, with the least impact on department resources and the interim update timeline. Although broad community input would not be solicited, information would be available on the CRD website and publicized through regular CRD communications and media releases. All comments and suggestions will be welcome and any comments received on the revised RHAS will be included in the information presented to the Committee and the Board. As well, the public review process for the interim update of the RGS, will give regional residents the opportunity to review a regional housing policy that the revised RHAS proposes for inclusion in the RGS.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee recommend to the Board that staff be directed to undertake a limited consultation process that specifically solicits the comments and recommendations of Regional Housing Affordability Strategy funding partners, the stakeholders advisory committee, and the Development and Planning Advisory Committee before making final recommendations to the Board.

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### **COMMENTS:**