

Report to

Agenda Item # 5

REPORT TO

**CRD REGIONAL PLANNING AND PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23, 2008**

SUBJECT CURRENT HOUSING SECRETARIAT INITIATIVES TO ADVANCE THE REGIONAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGY (RHAS)

BACKGROUND

On March 13, 2007 the CRD and its member municipalities unanimously endorsed adoption of the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy. This strategy document identified five strategies for focus and direction in resolving the critical affordable housing issues and shortages within the Regionregion.

These strategies are identified as follows;

Strategy #1 Secure More Funding for Non-Market and Low End of Market Housing

Strategy #2 Establish and Enhance Pro-Affordability Local Government Policies and Regulations across the Regionregion

Strategy #3 Facilitate Community-Based Affordability Partnerships and Initiatives

Strategy #4 Build Neighborhood-Level Support for Housing Affordability

Strategy #5 Expand the Scope of the Victoria Homelessness Community Plan to the Region as a Whole

Overview of the present Present initiativesInitiatives

Strategy #1

The primary activity of the Secretariat -CRD-activity to encourage new funding initiatives is being seeded by the administration and growth of the Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF) and by efforts to coordinate and align this work with other funders supporting our region.- This fund was adopted and has been in operation since March 2005. At present 10 of the 13 municipalities are participants in the program which generates approximately \$900,000 annually. The RHTF has been very successful in leveraging funding from private sector, senior government and community organizations to create in excess of 150 additional affordable housing units since 2005. An overview of projects advanced by the fund is summarized in

Appendix A.
Attachment No. 1-

When the Housing Secretariat was established the Affordable Housing Development Framework, endorsed by the Board, proposed the creation of a Community Housing Funders

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Table. This proposed collaboration among Funders was recommended to will better align housing needs with the limited resources that have been available in the region. This initiative has now been incorporated into the Greater Victoria Commission to End Homelessness. The alignment of funding initiatives will be pivotal in demonstrating the need for and securing substantial additional dollars from senior levels of government, private and public funders and establishing a long-term affordable housing delivery agreement. While the priority activities of the Commission will initially be focused on the 'hardest to house' it is recognized that ending homelessness will require initiatives across the entire affordable housing continuum.

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Strategy #2

~~This implementation of this strategy has begun and~~ is being implemented by establishing close working relationships with member municipality planning staff. Activities have included the review of a number of official community plan (OCP) policies in consideration of the local and regional context. In addition, it is acknowledged by many member municipalities and the Islands Trust that there is a need to institute a process to identify best practices and policy gaps or opportunities to make affordable housing implications an inclusive part of the development approvals process. The preparation of a development of this development framework has begun with work completed by the Housing Affordability Partnership (HAP) and the Housing Action Team (HAT). Both of these organizations have a close link with the various housing stakeholders in the region, including municipal planning staff representation. The ~~Housing HAT Action Team~~, centered under the Housing Secretariat will be instrumental in the development of proposed policy options and best practice regulations that should assist in creating additional affordable housing. Recently the Housing Secretariat has been appointed to coordinate the receipt of provincial funding, in partnership with the ~~HAPousing Affordability Partnership~~ to deliver the Affordable Sustainable Housing Project.

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Strategy #3

Affordable housing and homelessness is increasingly becoming a number one priority for resolution by municipal councils and senior levels of government.

Over the past number of years the CRD has established a good working relationship with a number of community organizations. Joint housing operational activities were carried out with organizations such as Urban Development Institute (UDI), ~~HAPousing Affordability Partnership~~, Victoria Real Estate Board and the United Way/Community Council. The activities of various organizations and agencies are now being realigned as a result of the CRD objective to implement an Affordable Housing Delivery Framework and more specifically in addressing homelessness, through the formation of the Greater Victoria Commission to End Homelessness. However, additional initiatives will need to be undertaken to secure additional neighbourhood association and private sector support to partner on affordable housing issues and development. The Housing Secretariat ~~HATousing Action Team~~ has been designated secured as the organization to locate, negotiate and process the first 150 units for homeless in partnership with in partnership with the the Housing Support Working Group that reports to the. ~~This working group is one of a number of teams that has been created under the~~ Greater Victoria Commission to End Homelessness.

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Strategy #4

The ~~HAPousing Affordability Partnership~~ has undertaken a number of initiatives to garner community support from neighbourhood associations and municipalities in the creation and maintenance of affordable housing in the region. An initiative of significance was a well

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Planning and Protective Services Committee – April 23, 2008

Re: Current Housing Secretariat Initiatives to Advance the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS)

Page 4



attended conference held in May 2007 that included a good representation of the CRD ~~Municipalities~~ municipalities and neighbourhood associations. The purpose of this event was to establish better understandings and directions on how to achieve neighbourhood cooperation on the development of affordable housing. Some of this work has begun with the past efforts of HAP, UDI, the Real Estate Board and the ~~HATousing Action Team~~ with active participation by the Affordable Housing Secretariat through neighbourhood association outreach and community meetings.



Strategy #5

The Greater Victoria Commission to End Homelessness is presently at the stage of identifying its organizational structure and its links to various elements of the community. Following the release of the Homelessness Task Force ~~Report~~report, the CRD Housing Secretariat and its ~~Housing Action Team (HAT)~~ was given the mandate to assist in the identification and assembly of appropriate affordable housing units under the City of Victoria's FIRST 50 Committee, to successfully accommodate 50 homeless persons by March 1, 2008. Presently, HAT is carrying out the delivery of identifying new units, and building networks with private landlords under the direction of the Housing Support Working Group.

Next Steps

The Affordable Housing Secretariat is currently working with CRD municipalities and the senior levels of government in establishing affordable housing policies and practices that will foster and facilitate affordable housing in response to the above referenced strategies.

At the present time, ~~municipal OCPs~~the CRD ~~Official Community Plans (OCP's)~~Cops vary significantly in their respective approaches in giving consideration to the creation or maintenance of affordable housing. An OCP status document was completed and was being tracked by the ~~HAP~~Housing Affordability Partnership group. This provided an overview of the present status of municipal affordable housing initiatives and policies. The work was provided to the Secretariat to evaluate in the interest of developing potential regional housing policies and to assist all municipalities through the sharing of information and ideas.

The Secretariat also participated in the development of a Smart Growth Tool Kit prepared by Smart Growth BC which is attached as ~~Attached Appendix B~~. The Housing Secretariat participated on the advisory committee in the formulation and direction of best practices. The CRHC and CRD Housing Trust Fund were profiled as Best Practices within British Columbia. Other published best practices are being assessed and evaluated for applicability to our region.

CONCLUSIONS

With continued work on the strategies and initiatives of the RHAS, the CRD Housing Secretariat has made significant progress in identifying policies that could be considered for adoption by municipalities. The CRD Housing Secretariat will work in partnership with Regional Planning,

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Planning and Protective Services Committee – April 23, 2008

Re: Current Housing Secretariat Initiatives to Advance the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS)

Page 6



the Housing Corporation and member municipalities to propose OCP policies and best practices~~develop OCP's~~ that promote~~will adopt~~ affordable housing. This will also include policies and strategies to foster and facilitate the development of affordable housing initiatives that are considered appropriate by each municipality but collectively achieve the overall goals of the adopted regional strategy.



RECOMMENDATIONS

~~1. That the report *eCurrent Housing Secretariat #Initiatives to aAdvance the #Regional hHousing aAffordability sStrategy (RHAS)* be received for information, prior to the end of June 2008, the CRD CAO, General Manager of Planning and Protective Services, Senior Manager CRD Planning and the Housing Secretariat meet with the CEO and Planning Director of each municipality to establish an overall framework and agreed upon strategy to implement the next steps of RHAS.~~

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~~2. That the future initiatives of the Regional and individual municipality affordable housing strategies be incorporated within the monthly operations of the Development and Planning Advisory Committee (DPAC).~~

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and

~~3. That the CRD Housing Secretariat, subject to completion of recommendation #1, undertake to assist each of the member municipalities in achieving their respective affordable housing policies, strategies and targets.~~

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~~Henry Kamphof, *Report Writer* Senior Manager Robert Lapham,
MCIP General Manager
Housing Secretariat Planning and Protective Services
Concurrence~~

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