

CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee
Meeting of Wednesday, January 17, 2001

SUBJECT:

Management Options for the Preparation of a Regional Housing Affordability Strategy

BACKGROUND:

Oct 11, 2000: Committee-of-the-Whole reviews the findings of Capital Summit 2 and recommends to the Board that staff be authorized to prepare a draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) on the basis of the findings.

Oct 18, 2000: Regional Planning Committee reviews preliminary project descriptions and implementation options for regional strategies for transportation, economic development and housing affordability (Agenda Item #5). The Committee directs staff to initiate discussions with prospective partners in the three strategic initiatives and report back to the Committee beginning in January 2001.

Nov 8, 2000: The Board authorizes Regional Planning Services (RPS) to prepare a draft RGS.

DISCUSSION:

Attachment A, *A Discussion Paper on Preparing A Strategy for Improved Housing Affordability in the Capital Region*, provides an overview to some of the issues related to housing affordability, and some of the implications of different approaches to dealing with those issues. As well, it discusses the partnership opportunity afforded by the Housing Affordability Partnership (HAP).

A partnership approach to developing a strategy for housing affordability offers the best opportunity to design a strategy that can be acted upon effectively. This is true whether the Board decides to take a lead role in preparing, managing and implementing a housing affordability strategy or a more supporting role in a partnership under other leadership.

Currently HAP, while comprehensive in its membership, is a strictly voluntary association with no funding or permanent secretariat. Furthermore, it is not formally established either as a society or corporation, nor under terms of reference received from any public or private body. These circumstances prevent HAP from taking leadership in developing a housing affordability strategy at this time. At present, HAP could likely serve as an advisory group or stakeholder forum to a process led by the CRD, providing input into the development of a strategy and perhaps delivering commitments from individual organizations in its implementation. It is unclear as well from staff discussions with HAP, if the partnership has clearly defined what role it would like to assume in the preparation of a housing affordability strategy. Before HAP would be in a position to effectively undertake this assignment, it would have to formally constitute itself either as a non-profit society or as a task force with a specific mandate from the CRD Board. In either instance funding would have to be identified to support and staff HAP, as

well as provide it with a budget to undertake the strategy itself. Whether HAP would have a longer term role in implementing, monitoring and maintaining a housing affordability strategy would have to be determined through the process to prepare the strategy itself.

The discussion paper identifies funding implications and cost-sharing opportunities for a housing affordability strategy initiated by the CRD, with HAP constituted as a task force or steering committee operating under terms of reference approved by the Board. RPS could provide a secretariat function for HAP and meeting space, as well as project management services for the preparation of the strategy (including retaining and overseeing the work of any consultants or contractors). A consultant budget in the order of \$140,000 has been estimated with RPS contributing \$50,000 from its budget to this total.

A housing affordability strategy, whether undertaken through CRD leadership or by a formally constituted HAP with CRD participation, to have formal status under the Regional Growth Strategy, must be adopted by the Board as an implementation agreement under Section 868 (1) of the *Local Government Act*.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Regional Planning Committee receive this report for information and direct staff to:

1. Continue discussions with the Housing Affordability Partnership to clarify their potential role and participation in preparation of a Regional Housing Affordability Strategy; and,
2. Prepare, in consultation with the Housing Affordability Partnership, detailed terms of reference for undertaking a Regional Housing Affordability Strategy for the Committee's review.

Mark Hornell, Acting Manager
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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:

W.M. Jordan, Executive Director

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