

**CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT**  
**Regional Planning Services Department**

Staff Report to the Regional Planning Committee  
Meeting of Wednesday, March 19, 2003

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**SUBJECT:**

Regional Housing Affordability Strategy – Update, Working Papers and Workshop #3

**BACKGROUND:**

- **Sept. 15/16, 2000** – At the second Regional Summit, elected officials confirmed that the elements of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) should include housing affordability. Results of a random survey of regional residents confirmed that 82% of the representative sample surveyed found that preparation and implementation of a *regional* housing affordability strategy was acceptable.
- **Winter, 2000** – The draft RGS is prepared, and includes as one of its major elements, the need to improve housing affordability in the region.
- **March 28, 2001:** The CRD Board authorizes initiation of projects to develop a regional transportation strategy and a regional housing affordability strategy, and allocates funds for cost-sharing these projects with other agencies.

A Terms of Reference is then prepared and circulated to the municipalities for comment, funding partners are identified and funding secured, and a partnership agreement is executed with the Capital Region Hospital Board, (then) Capital Region Health Authority, BC Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., and Capital Region Housing Corp.

- **October 24, 2001** – Based on the foregoing, the CRD Board approved initiation of a project: "to develop a practical and effective Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) for the Capital Region, to ensure that all residents of the Capital Region, especially moderate and low income households, have a reasonable choice of housing by type, tenure, price/rent and location, over both the short and long term."
- **March, 2002** – The contract for the project is awarded to a consulting team led by Urban Aspects and work commences on gathering the baseline data for a market analysis.
- **May 30, 2002** - The Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from a number of sectors including finance, housing providers, developers, business, municipalities and representatives from the other two RGS implementation strategies, met for the first time. Members were given an orientation to the project. They met again in September, to discuss the Phase 1 report findings.

- **June 2002** - Focus groups with various stakeholders were held to discuss the data being gathered by the consultant team. These discussions provided validation of their findings, and identification of trends missed in the evaluation of the current housing situation here.
- **September 17 & 18, 2002** - Preliminary results were presented at Workshop #1, held in Victoria City Council Chambers on Sept. 17 and 18, 2002. Nearly 90 of the region's elected officials, members of the housing industry, housing advocates, and general public met to hear and discuss the results of the analysis prepared by the consultants.
- **December 10, 2002** – Workshop #2 at the Juan de Fuca Fieldhouse; approximately 58 participants discussed the results presented in Working Paper #1, and some possible solutions identified during the preparation of Phase 1 of the project.
- **January 22, 2003** – RPC received background information and an update on the RHAS.

### **DISCUSSION:**

The Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS) is one of three implementation strategies of the Regional Growth Strategy. Besides being one of the provincial goals for growth strategies, housing supply and price were identified during the initial phases of the RGS preparation as being major concerns, both currently and in the future. The RGS Bylaw endorses the preparation of a housing strategy and implementation agreements, through a cross-sectoral partnership, within two years of adoption of the RGS. It also endorses the creation of cross-sectoral partnerships to continue the work of, and to implement, the strategy. Note that the strategy deals with 'housing affordability' and not 'affordable housing'. The latter has a connotation of low income or social housing. This Strategy is intended to deal not only with housing for those with no or low incomes, but also housing for moderate-income residents and market housing.

The partners involved in preparation of the strategy include CRD Regional Planning Services, Capital Region Hospital District, Vancouver Island Health Authority, BC Housing, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp., and the Capital Region Housing Corp. Many other housing stakeholders are represented on the project's Advisory Committee or have attended the first two workshops.

A briefing sheet on the Strategy is attached (Attachment 1).

### **Update and Working Papers:**

Phase One – “Assembling the Database” is complete. Working Paper #1 has been finalized, and an appendix added which contains more detailed data used in the analysis.

Phase Two - “Testing and Building Capacity” is also complete. Working Paper #2 contains

information on the challenges and opportunities surrounding the issue of housing affordability in the region (a short presentation on this section will be given at the RPC meeting on March 19). Its appendix contains details of the various options or solutions that might be used here, in various combinations and by various stakeholders, to address the problem. They are arranged by categories, including Local Government, Land Costs and Availability, Intensification, Raising Funds, Awareness Raising, Employee Housing, Homeless and Hard to House, Self-Help, and Senior Government Programs. Having read this report would be very beneficial to participation in Workshop #3.

Both of the reports are attached.

**Workshop:**

In the third and final Workshop (March 26, 6:30 to 9:30 p.m., Mary Winspear Centre, Sidney), attendees will be seated in stakeholder groups, and asked to determine whether each of the options listed in the Working Paper #2 Appendix will work from their perspective. If it will not, they will be asked to explain why not, and how it could be changed to make it workable. These comments will be collated as input into the recommendations in Phase Three.

**If you have time to read only one report before the workshop, read Working Paper #2.**

**Recommendation:**

That Regional Planning Committee receive the report as information.

**FINANCIAL IMPACT OF THE RECOMMENDATION:**

N/A

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Chris Goldburn, MCIP  
Manager, Information Services &  
RHAS Project Manager

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Mark Hornell, MCIP  
Director - Regional Planning Services

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S COMMENTS:**

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W.M. Jordan, Executive Director

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