



CORPORATE REPORT

To: CAO for the Regional and Corporate Services Committee

Date: 2019-05-08

From: Melissa Geddert, Planning Technician

File No: 6430-01-General

Subject: Bill 18 – 2018 Local Government Statutes Amendment Act, 2018 – Housing Needs Reports

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Committee of information pertaining to the enactment of *Bill 18 – Local Government Statutes Amendment Act* requiring the preparation of Housing Needs Reports. Staff is not looking for a recommendation and has forwarded this information should members want more clarification to discuss the item further.

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Support Healthy & Sustainable Community

Provide Responsive & Effective Public Services

BACKGROUND

In 2018 the Provincial Government introduced *Bill 18 - Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs Reports) Amendment Act, 2018*, amending the *Local Government Act*. The intent of the legislation is to provide local governments with tools to understand the need for more affordable and appropriate housing in British Columbia's tight real estate market.

As of April 16, 2019 Bill 18 has come into force. Bill 18 requires local governments to assess the housing needs of their communities and report on the findings. The reports will help local governments and the Province better understand and respond to long-term housing needs specific to their communities. Per the legislation, Housing Needs Reports must be considered when amending or creating Official Community Plans and Regional Growth Strategies.

DISCUSSION

Bill 18 - Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs Reports) Amendment Act, (attached as Appendix A) is now in effect. Under the requirements of the Act, the Fraser Valley Regional District (FVRD) and each municipality is required to produce a Housing Needs Report within the next three years (April 2022) and

every five years after that. Each municipality and regional district is required to collect data, analyze trends and present reports that describe current and anticipated housing needs.

Provincial Requirements

The legislation and regulations outline specific requirements for local governments to determine current and projected housing needs. Attached as Appendix B is a summary of the legislative and regulatory requirements for housing needs reports, which involves collecting and analyzing distinct types of data about:

- current and project population;
- household income;
- significant economic sectors; and
- currently available and anticipated housing units.

The data for the housing needs reports includes:

- **BC Assessment data** – evaluation of assessed values and sales prices of housing;
- **BC Housing data** – inventory of non-market housing and new homes registered;
- **BC Stats data** – projected population and household demographics from 2018 to 2028;
- **Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) data** – assessment of primary rental market prices, primary rental vacancy rates and some secondary rental market data;
- **Statistics Canada Census data** – analysis of population and household demographics, labour force, household income, housing units and core housing need.

As part of the legislated requirement to monitor the Regional Growth Strategy, the FVRD holds a large amount of data required for the Housing Needs Report, but there are gaps. In addition to the FVRD's inventory, the province is preparing an accessible database that includes a large proportion of data the FVRD is required to collect. However, information gaps on rental data for the Electoral Areas and smaller communities may need to be addressed through collaboration with community partners.

Community Partnerships

Partnerships between local governments to undertake this work are permitted. If requested, the FVRD could consider coordinating the collection and reporting of housing needs information on behalf of a member municipality, provided that community specific information and reporting is provided for each individual electoral area and participating municipality.

Funding

To assist local governments with meeting the new requirements, the Province is providing a funding program administered by the Union of BC Municipalities. All local governments are eligible to apply. Applications are now being accepted for the 2019 program, the application deadlines are May 31, 2019 and November 29, 2019.

Funding maximums are based on the population of the planning area and are outlined in Table 1. Under the Housing Needs Reports program, eligible costs and activities must be cost-effective and include:

- Development of new or updated housing needs reports (as required by the Local Government Act), including:

- Project management and coordination;
- Data collection (from public agencies and/or other data costs), compilation and analysis, not including data made available via the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing for the purpose of developing housing needs reports;
- Research specific to the development of housing needs reports;
- Community engagement, such as collaboration with neighbouring local governments and partner organizations, community surveys, and engagement activities;
- Publication of housing needs reports including editing, proofing, graphic design, etc.;
- Presentation of housing needs reports to Council, Board, or Local Trust Committee;
- Consultant costs;
- Incremental staff and administration costs;
- Public information costs; and
- Training and capacity building for local government staff specific to developing housing needs reports.

Funding requests for combined planning areas (municipalities, and/or electoral areas) may be submitted as a single application for eligible, collaborative projects. The total funding request for regional projects cannot exceed \$150,000. To qualify for funding, projects must be capable of completion within one year from the date of funding approval.

Table 1 - Planning Area Net Population Funding Maximum (Based on 2016 census of population)

Planning Area	Net Population	Funding Maximum
Fraser Valley A	405	\$15,000
Fraser Valley B	915	\$15,000
Fraser Valley C	1,023	\$15,000
Fraser Valley D	1,529	\$15,000
Fraser Valley E	1,540	\$15,000
Fraser Valley F	1,293	\$15,000
Fraser Valley G	1,776	\$15,000
Fraser Valley H	1,847	\$15,000
Abbotsford, City of	141,397	\$70,000
Chilliwack, City of	83,788	\$50,000
Harrison Hot Springs, Village of	1,468	\$15,000
Hope, District of	6,181	\$20,000
Kent, District of	6,067	\$20,000
Mission, District of	38,883	\$30,000

CONCLUSION

Housing needs reports are a means for the FVRD to better understand the region's current and future housing needs. The report will help identify existing and projected gaps in housing supply and is critical to developing a housing strategy or action plan.

COMMENTS BY:

Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning: Reviewed and Supported

Stacey Barker, Director of Regional Services: Reviewed and supported.

Mike Veenbaas, Director of Financial Services: No further financial comments.

Jennifer Kinneman, Acting Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.