

To: Electoral Area Services Committee

Date: 2020-09-08

From: Katelyn Hipwell, Planner II

File No: 6840-20-21246

Subject: Housing Needs Report Project Update

INTENT

This report is intended to advise the Electoral Area Services Committee of information pertaining to the ongoing Housing Needs Report Project. 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 legislation, *Bill 18 – Local Government Statutes (Housing Needs reports) Amendment Act*, requiring local governments provide housing needs reports for their communities. The purpose of the legislation is to help local governments understand current and future housing needs. As a regional district, the FVRD is required to complete a housing needs report for each of the FVRD Electoral Areas.

DISCUSSION

UBCM Funding Program

In November 2019, the FVRD applied for provincial funding to assist with completing the housing needs reports. As part of the application, local governments could choose to include up to five letters of support from partner organizations to demonstrate a commitment to and evidence of community partnerships. The FVRD included two letters of support with the application. Letters were received

from the Hope & Area Transition Society as well as the S.A.Y. Lands Office (representing the Skowkale, Aitchelitz and Yakweakwioose First Nations).

The grant application was successful, and the FVRD received the full eligible amount, totalling \$120,000 (\$15,000 per Electoral Area). A report outlining the funding program, and application requirements were provided to the Committee in October 2019.

Request for Proposals

The FVRD issued a Request for Proposals (RFP-20006) from qualified candidates for the provision of professional planning services involving the completion of a Housing Needs Report and the associated public engagement, data analysis, and capacity building.

The FVRD received five competitive proposals and ultimately awarded the contract to [CitySpaces Consulting](#).

Next Steps and Anticipated Timelines

Engagement

Staff are working closely with CitySpaces as they develop an engagement strategy that outlines the activities planned to engage residents across all eight Electoral Areas with the objective of hearing from a wide range of voices. Engagement activities will likely include:

- Project Webpage
 - Accessible from the FVRD website, the project page will include information about the process, the consultant, upcoming engagement events, data summaries, and, eventually, the final Housing Needs Report.
- Online Survey
 - The survey will be available online as well as in hard copy to reach individuals with limited connectivity.
 - FVRD staff will ensure community groups and prominent stakeholders are invited to participate in the survey.
- Virtual Focus Groups
 - In lieu of in-person meetings in an effort to adhere to COVID-19 protocols, virtual focus groups, geared towards specific stakeholder groups, will be hosted to garner insight into housing challenges and priorities in the FVRD.

Additional engagement activities may also be considered and will be advertised through FVRD social media platforms, including the Project Page on the FVRD website. These engagement activities will begin in September and be carried out throughout the Fall into November. Summaries of the information gathered throughout these activities will be prepared by CitySpaces and presented to the FVRD Board as well as made available on the FVRD website.

Demographic and Housing Data Analysis

To complete the Housing Needs Reports, the Province requires local governments to collect statistical information on:

- Current and projected population;
- Household income;
- Significant economic sectors; and
- Currently available and anticipated available housing units, including types of units.

Bill 18 requires that Housing Needs Reports contain the following:

- The number of housing units required to meet current housing and anticipated housing needs for at least the next five years, by housing type;
- Statements about key areas of local need;
- The number and percentage of households in core housing need and extreme core housing need; and
- A standardized summary form.

Much of the data required to complete the Report is available to through provincial and federal data sets from the following organizations:

- BC Assessment;
- BC Housing;
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation;
- BC Stats; and
- Statistics Canada.

This demographic and housing data will be supplemented by our own development data and additional qualitative data collected through targeted local engagement and analyzed to identify housing needs, gaps, and trends in the Electoral Areas.

Staff Training and Capacity Building

CitySpaces will prepare and deliver additional training for FVRD staff with the goal of building staff capacity to update future Housing Need Reports, as required by *Bill 18* every five years. This will ensure FVRD staff have an understanding of the data collection and analysis approach and methodology, as well as best practices research and other value-add elements of Housing Needs Report preparation. Building capacity within FVRD staff will reduce costs associated with the preparation of future Housing Needs Report updates.

Final Report

The final Housing Needs Report will be presented to the FVRD Board at the December 2020 meeting. The Report will then be made publicly accessible through the FVRD's website.

Accompanying the final report will be an Implementation and Action plan. These plans will be based on the findings of the report, and will provide high-level recommendations about required Official Community Plan amendments and other actions that the FVRD Board may wish to take to address housing gaps and needs in the Electoral Areas. The Action Plan will specifically address anticipated timelines and costs associated with implementation to assist the Board in future priority setting.

COST

Costs incurred by staff and consultants over the course of the project will be borne from the grant funding received through UBCM.

CONCLUSION

In response to provincial legislation changes, the FVRD is completing a Housing Needs Report to better understand current and future housing needs. The Housing Needs Assessment Project, funded through the UBCM Funding Program, is underway. Engagement opportunities tailored to each Electoral Area are anticipated to begin in September and continue throughout the Fall. Staff will continue to provide updates to the Committee and Board throughout the project.

COMMENTS BY:

Graham Daneluz, Director of Planning & Development Reviewed and supported.

Kelly Lownsbrough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Financial Services: Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.