



Governance & Services Committee

Regional District of Central Okanagan

TO: Governance and Services Committee

FROM: Todd Cashin
Director of Community Services

DATE: November 4, 2021

SUBJECT: Regional Housing Strategy – Project Update (6430-40)

Purpose: To provide the Governance and Services Committee with an update on the Regional Housing Strategy and schedule a workshop with the Regional Board for further discussion and input.

Executive Summary:

The RDCO adopted Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 on June 23, 2014. The RGS Priority Projects Plan, a five-year action plan outlining priority initiatives intended to continue implementing the RGS, was endorsed by the Regional Board on July 24, 2017.

A baseline report that demonstrates the housing situation and anticipated housing needs located across the housing continuum and throughout the region was identified as Project No. 3 in the Priority Projects Plan. The Regional Housing Needs Assessment was endorsed by the Board on October 28, 2019.

A consulting contract has recently been awarded to Urban Matters CCC Ltd. to develop a Regional Housing Strategy which was identified as Project No. 6 in the Priority Projects Plan. The Strategy will explore tools and actions that can address housing issues, needs and gaps identified in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. Through a collaborative process, the Strategy will establish a platform for this work to inform a coordinated regional response.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Governance and Services Committee receives the report for information from the Director of Community Services, dated November 4, 2021, with respect to the update on the Regional Housing Strategy.

AND THAT the Governance and Services Committee directs Corporate Services staff to schedule a workshop with the Board of Directors on November 18, 2021 at 8:30 am to inform the collective vision for the Regional Housing Strategy.

Respectfully Submitted:



Todd Cashin,
Director of Community Services

Approved for Board's Consideration



Brian Reardon, CAO

Prepared by: Danika LeBlanc, Senior Planner

Implications of Recommendation:

- Strategic Plan: Receiving the update on the Regional Housing Strategy for information supports the Regional Board Strategic Priorities 2019-2022 with respect to "Sustainable communities". The development of a Regional Housing Strategy was identified as one way to support efforts to create a healthy built environment in which all people throughout the region enjoy access to a diverse range of housing options, remain safe in the face of emergencies and experience a high quality of life.
- Policy: Receiving the update on the Regional Housing Strategy for information supports numerous policies outlined in the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336. The development of the Strategy will advance the goal of Our Housing identified in the RGS to improve the range of housing opportunities to meet the social and economic needs of the region.
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Background:

Regional Growth Strategy

The RDCO adopted Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1336 on June 23, 2014. A regional growth strategy is a long-range planning tool governed by Part 13 of the *Local Government Act* that assists local governments to plan a coordinated future for their communities while dealing with regional issues and decisions that cross local political boundaries. The RGS is also a collective vision from the regional partners for the future in order to create a region that promotes growth that is economically, environmentally and socially healthy over a twenty (20) year time horizon.

RGS Steering Committee

The RGS Steering Committee, created in 2016, is a forum for senior representatives of regional and municipal planning departments, First Nation and agencies with an interest in regional planning to coordinate the strategic priorities around the region and align the priorities with the goals and policies of the RGS.

RGS Priority Projects Plan

In accordance with the RGS, through a collaborative process, RDCO staff, RGS Steering Committee members and elected officials developed a 5-year action plan to outline the priority initiatives to implement the RGS. The action plan is the framework for RGS implementation and based on the regional initiatives identified within the RGS. The Priority Projects Plan was endorsed by the Regional Board on July 24, 2017.

The Plan contains nine projects supporting over 25 policies, across eight Issue Areas of the RGS. These projects are a framework for maintaining momentum toward RGS goals and policies. The projects have been selected and scoped to support regional coordination and collaboration in support of regionally shared needs and goals, and with the expectation that there will be efficiencies from conducting work at the regional level.

The Plan is not a rigid five-year work plan. Each year, the RDCO Board will be asked to consider the recommended projects and approve the requisite resource allocations on a case-by-case basis. As new opportunities or unexpected demands arise, the projects in this Plan can be revised, re-sequenced or replaced as needed.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment

The Regional Housing Needs Assessment is a baseline report that demonstrates the housing situation and anticipated housing needs located across the housing continuum and throughout the region. This project was undertaken due to the growing concern of housing affordability across the Central Okanagan and to better understand local housing issues. With the larger regional situation defined, this can support a coordinated and consistent response toward regional housing goals.

The Assessment was completed to outline where housing gaps exist for Central Okanagan communities, how individual member communities' housing markets affect the regional housing market, provide consideration of housing supply and demand parallel to the coordination of the Regional Transportation Plan, assess needs related to the supply of housing, and meet data collection requirements.

The Assessment was endorsed by the Board on October 28, 2019, and provides a descriptive analysis, data on regional affordability, other specific challenges related to housing, as well as housing highlights for each jurisdiction: two electoral areas, six First Nation reserve lands (including Westbank First Nation and Okanagan Indian Band), District of Peachland, City of West Kelowna, City of Kelowna, and District of Lake Country. It was prepared through regional consultation, an analysis of relevant housing studies and statistics, and ongoing input from the RDCO and regional partners.

Regional Housing Strategy

Shifting federal and provincial government roles have continued to place considerable pressure on local government to become more active in providing and facilitating affordable housing development. Municipalities have an increasingly important role to play as it relates to affordable market and non-market housing to meet community need and support community health and well-being. Despite the development of specific policies, zoning regulations, and financial incentives at individual local levels, there is a need for a coordinated regional approach.

The objective of the Regional Housing Strategy is to develop a regional approach to direct how to move forward to address challenges around affordability, supply, supporting housing across the continuum and improve regional coordination. Through a collaborative process, the Strategy will establish a platform for this work, identify opportunities for action, recommended initiatives, policies, and tools to address identified housing issues, needs and gaps. The Strategy is also intended to establish a shared commitment, identify opportunities where resources can be pooled to have more impact, gain momentum for collective action, advocacy and promote the advancements of partnerships.

At the regional level, the Strategy will identify work that is best done collaboratively to advance the goal of Our Housing through approaches that will improve upon regional coordination of actions to address housing issues, needs and gaps that have been identified for the Central Okanagan.

At the local level, the Strategy will assist with coordinating the individual efforts of each community (and other organizations) by identifying appropriate actions towards achieving this goal. An intended outcome is to provide an overarching guide to partners for a coordinated approach to addressing regional housing issues.

Taking a regional perspective will ensure that individual communities are not working at cross-purposes or that local initiatives are not producing unintended consequences at the regional level. Different activities in different communities may be appropriate to better satisfy regional needs.

It is recognized that a collaborative effort is required throughout all levels of government, the housing industry, community groups and organizations to confront challenges around affordability, supply, and diversity within the region.

The project will include a working session with the Regional District Board of Directors to set regional priorities, identify objectives and explore targets to inform the collective vision, background summary report, stakeholder and community engagement, the Regional Housing Strategy (vision, goals, objectives, strategies/actions, and priority initiatives), recommendations for implementation, and presentation to the Regional Board, member municipalities, and First Nations.

The Regional Housing Strategy will require Regional Board endorsement prior to finalization.

Financial Considerations:

The Regional Board previously approved \$60,000.00 for the development of the Regional Housing Strategy.

Organizational Issues:

The Regional District is involved in the strategy development process through overall project management, contract management, and other administrative functions.

External Implications:

The RGS Steering Committee will provide overall guidance and oversight on the strategy development process.

Considerations not applicable to this report:

- *General*
- *Legal/Statutory Authority*
- *Alternative Recommendation*