

**REPORT TO THE PLANNING & PROTECTIVE SERVICES COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26, 2006**

SUBJECT**FINAL DRAFT REGIONAL HOUSING AFFORDABILITY STRATEGY****PURPOSE**

1. To introduce the revised regional housing affordability strategy (RHAS) to the Committee and Board for information.

BACKGROUND

The RHAS stemmed from discussion at the Second Regional Summit, held on September 15/16, 2000, where elected officials confirmed that the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) should include policy direction on regional housing affordability, subsequently included in the RGS as initiative 3.2. The draft RHAS was prepared under a partnership agreement between the CRD, the Capital Region Hospital Board, the Capital Region Health Authority (now VIHA), the Capital Region Housing Corporation, BC Housing, and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, with work on the project initiated in October 2001 following municipal review of the draft project terms of reference. The purpose of the project is "To develop a practical and effective [strategy] ... 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."

Consultants were retained and work began in March 2002. Community consultation during the process included ongoing input from an advisory committee, focus group interviews, and two major workshops held in September and December 2002. The *Final Consultants Report – A Proposed Housing Affordability Strategy for the Capital Region*, was received by the former Regional Planning Committee on July 16, 2003, and subsequently circulated to member municipalities for review and comment, along with a discussion paper on housing trust funds.

Following review of municipal comments received, Regional Planning Committee concluded that there was sufficient support to consider the establishment of a regional housing trust fund, and to take forward a revised RHAS provided that proposals related to a Housing Resource Centre and Housing Facilitator were either eliminated from the RHAS, or clearly identified as functions to be handled through existing Capital Region Housing Corporation programs, or by a non-government body such as the Housing Affordability Partnership (HAP). The committee also concluded that the revised RHAS should clarify that proposals related to the harmonization of local development regulation, and the preservation of the existing rental housing stock, should be undertaken by municipalities acting alone or in partnership with their neighbours.

The Board accepted the committee's recommendations, and on August 11, 2004 directed staff to prepare a final RHAS revised as recommended, following completion of further work on the proposed regional housing trust initiative, and further, to prepare a process for public review of the final draft RHAS to obtain feedback from a broader regional public.

ALTERNATIVES

N/A

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

GROWTH MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

RGS initiative 3.2 calls for the preparation and adoption of a RHAS to improve housing affordability and ensure that all residents of the Capital Region - particularly for low and moderate-income households, the elderly, youth, those with special health and other needs, and the homeless – have reasonable choice of housing by type, tenure, price and location.

SUMMARY/CONCLUSIONS

Following the Board's review of municipal comments on the draft RHAS, work was undertaken on the first priority recommendation of the draft RHAS, the establishment of Regional Housing Trust Fund (RHTF), culminating in the adoption of the RHTF establishment bylaw in March 2005. Work since then has focused on launching the RHTF, which funded its first projects in late 2005, and the revision of the RHAS by members of project management team, representing the funding partnership member organizations. Attachment A – *Final Draft Regional Housing Affordability Strategy* (April 2006) – responds to the Board's first direction to complete a revised version of the RHAS. Options for moving forward with the RHAS in response to the Board's second direction will be presented to the committee for consideration at the May 2006 meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

That the report be received as information.

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Kelly Daniels
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COMMENTS: