

Memo



Date: October 5, 2015
To: Ron Mattiussi, City Manager
From: James Moore, Long Range Policy Planning Manager
Subject: Housing Strategy Implementation - Follow-up

Purpose:

To provide additional clarity regarding the Housing Strategy Implementation following Council discussion at its regular meeting of September 28, 2015.

Discussion:

The status of the implementation of Kelowna's Housing Strategy was provided to Council in a staff report on September 28, 2015. Following this report, Council raised two items for discussion: (1) the provision of a more detailed analysis for the rental housing sector, including an annual target; and, (2) the establishment of an Ad-Hoc Committee/Advisory Panel to inform the next policy update on housing scheduled to coincide with the next OCP review, set to begin in 2017.

Rental Housing Information

Staff gather considerable information on the rental housing sector, such as the vacancy rate, rental prices, and an estimate of the total number of rental units by type. This information is provided via a number of different sources, including the annual Housing Report, the Official Community Plan Indicators Report, and the Community Trends Report.

Staff concur that a more detailed and rigorous analysis of the rental housing sector is warranted. A clear target is needed, with performance to be measured annually. Included in the detailed analysis should be the number of rental housing units, and the type of rental accommodation (e.g.: non-profit supportive housing and market rental housing). Information at this level is missing from the current analysis. Staff will include this in the annual reporting process starting in the spring of 2016 with the Housing Report.

Ad Hoc Committee / Advisory Panel

As noted in the staff report regarding the implementation of the Housing Strategy, the strategy's twenty-five recommendations are 96% complete. Staff will be working through 2016 to complete the remaining items. 2017 will mark the beginning of the background work and research for the next Official Community Plan (OCP) update. Included in this review will be a thorough analysis of the housing sector. Conducting the analysis at this time will be advantageous, as it will be informed by new Statistics Canada census data and by an improved understanding of broader social, economic and demographic trends.

As 2017 approaches, staff will have to prepare a comprehensive strategy to guide the background research process, including consideration of advisory panels, and the engagement of specialized consultants and experts as appropriate. Each of these tasks is complex and requires the development of Terms of Reference to determine objectives, scope, deliverables, resourcing, timelines and appropriate stakeholder representation. Making a determination at this extremely early stage about how background research on housing should be approached may limit the options for how staff approach other key topic areas, and could force staff to establish advisory panels on all other subject areas. Certainly, advisory panels should be given thorough consideration as one of several possible approaches to research closer to 2017 as part of the overall research strategy. This strategy will need to be reviewed and approved by Council in advance of the commencement of research work.

Respectfully Submitted,

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cc:

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