

Report to Council



Date: February 7, 2022
To: Council
From: City Manager
Subject: Regional Housing Strategy – Project Update and Delegation
Department: Policy and Planning

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives for information the report from the Planner Specialist, dated February 7, 2022 regarding the Regional Housing Strategy.

Purpose:

To provide Council with an update on the preparation of the Regional Housing Strategy including a delegation from consultant Urban Matters.

Background:

On June 23, 2014 the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) adopted the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS). The RGS is a long-range policy document that provides direction for the coordinated growth of the region amongst its member municipalities and electoral areas. In July 2017, the Regional Growth Strategy Priority Projects Plan was finalized, which comprised a Five-year Action to implement commitments defined in the RGS. A Regional Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) and a Regional Housing Strategy are two of those priority projects. The Regional HNA was completed in 2019, and the RDCO has now initiated a planning process to develop a Regional Housing Strategy (RHS).

Discussion:

The RDCO has retained Urban Matters CCC (a subsidiary of Urban Systems) to develop the Regional Housing Strategy. The process of developing the Strategy is scheduled over the coming months with completion anticipated in early Summer 2022.

The process for developing the RHS is collaborative and includes touchpoints with staff and Councils of all four member municipalities of the RDCO, Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, and the public. The Regional Growth Strategy Steering Committee, containing staff representatives from these governments alongside regional stakeholders, is acting as an advisory group to the RHS process. The RDCO Board of Directors will consider final endorsement of the Strategy.

The Regional Housing Strategy is intended to establish a platform for informing a regional approach to housing gaps and anticipated needs that were identified in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment. A Regional Housing Strategy is not expected to direct actions of specific member municipalities, but rather assist in coordination across the region by providing best practice research, identifying across the region similarities and differences in housing needs, and identifying where opportunities for synergies and opportunities for alignment of individual actions might exist.

Specific objectives of the process and resulting plan, as provided by RDCO staff and Urban Matters, are:

- Strengthen Regional Governmental Coordination between RDCO electoral areas and member municipalities;
- Strengthen mechanisms for information sharing and partnership with First Nations, local governments, and non-profit housing providers;
- A coordinated advocacy strategy aligned with Provincial and Federal housing policy to approach higher levels of government for additional Central Okanagan resources and supports
- Develop regional best practices to regulate and protect rental housing stock;
- Regionally assess development processes for opportunities to streamline where possible for affordable housing.

A representative from Urban Matters will provide a presentation to Council that includes background information leading to the Regional Housing Strategy, an overview of the upcoming process, and detailed description of project objectives.

Conclusion:

An update to the City's Healthy Housing Strategy, expected to begin in 2023, will be able to build upon the work being done via the Regional Housing Strategy. Additionally, the Regional Housing Strategy process provides an opportunity for a shared understanding and coordinated strategic response to housing needs at a regional scale. Additional opportunities for the City of Kelowna to provide input on the RHS will be available in late spring. Staff will bring forward further updates on this process to Council as appropriate.

Considerations applicable to this report:

Existing Policy:

Kelowna Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 12300:

Policy 9.3.4. Regional Approach to Social Issues: Collaborate with local governments and key stakeholders to support initiatives that address regional issues such as social, childcare, transportation, housing, and food security.

Policy 16.3.3. Regional, Indigenous and Community Partners: Continue to foster relationships and partner with the Regional District of Central Okanagan, Westbank First Nation, Okanagan Indian Band, neighbouring municipalities, post-secondary institutions and other key community partners to effectively deliver on implementation actions.

Policy 16.4.3. Housing Needs Assessments. To ensure that the Growth Strategy continues to support onboarding of a diverse housing supply, undertake housing needs assessments to inform scheduled Official Community Plan updates. Work with the Regional District of Central Okanagan, other municipalities and First Nations to address shared housing objectives

Submitted by:

D. Sturgeon, Planner Specialist

Approved for inclusion:



James Moore, Manager of Long Range Planning

cc:

Department Manager, Community Planning