

To: Electoral Area Services Committee
From: Katelyn Hipwell, Planner II

Date: 2021-04-08
File No: 6840-20-21246

Subject: Final Housing Needs Report for the Electoral Areas

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board receive the final Housing Needs Report for the Electoral Areas.

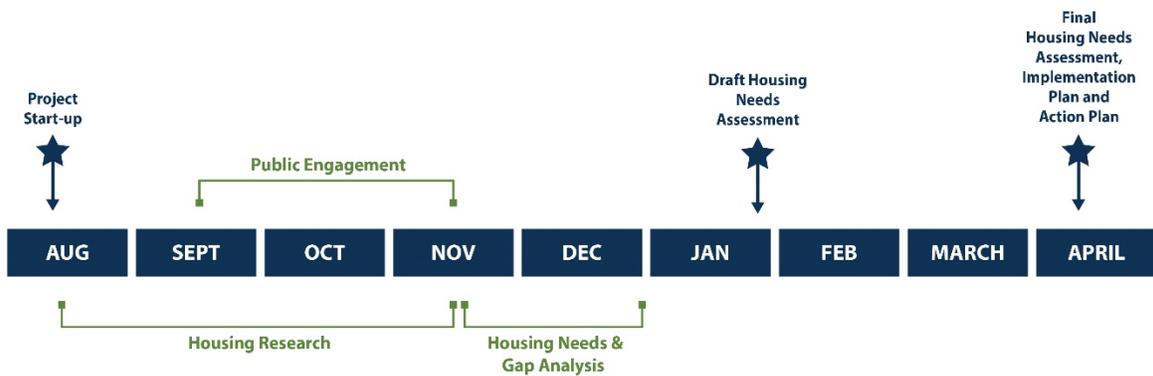
AND THAT the Fraser Valley Regional District Board direct staff to publish the final Housing Needs Report online for free public access in accordance with Part 14 of the *Local Government Act*.

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 government understand current and future housing needs. As a Regional District, the FVRD is required to complete a housing needs report for each of the eight FVRD Electoral Areas.

In January 2020, the FVRD was successful in receiving a grant through the UBCM Housing Needs Reports Funding Program. The FVRD received the full eligible amount, totalling \$120,000 (\$15,000 per Electoral Area). The provincial funding is to assist with undertaking the housing needs report which will help the FVRD inform local plans, policies, and development decisions as they relate to housing needs. This information was summarized in staff reports to the Committee in October 2019 and September 2020.

Per the funding approval agreement between the FVRD and UBCM, all project activities must be completed within one year of the funding approval. This required that project activities be completed by January 2021. However, due to circumstances surrounding the Covid-19 pandemic, many agencies throughout the FVRD have experienced reduced capacity for engagement. Resultantly, many planned engagement activities for the project were delayed. The FVRD received a project extension from UBCM to extend the deadline to April 30, 2021, for the completion of all project activities. All final reporting requirements will be submitted to UBCM no later than May 30, 2021. This information was summarized in a staff report to the Committee in November 2020.



The FVRD awarded a contract to City Spaces Consulting Inc. 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 for FVRD staff.

The project start-up began in August 2020, with public engagement occurring late into Fall 2020. Subsequent stages of the project included extensive background research and a housing needs and gap analysis derived from the results of the engagement, background research, and data analysis undertaken. FVRD staff from Electoral Area Planning Services and Strategic Planning & Initiatives have worked closely with CitySpaces Consulting Inc., reviewing and refining the draft Housing Needs Report.

CitySpaces Consulting Inc. will host a workshop with FVRD Planning Staff in April 2021 for the purposes of building internal capacity to undertake Housing Needs Assessments in the future. The intent of this workshop is to review the final Housing Needs Report for the Electoral Areas; gain an understanding of the extent and types of engagement employed during the process; review a synopsis of the data and the analysis methodology used by the consultant; as well as general guidance on process. The outcome of this workshop will be to provide a roadmap and thorough understanding to FVRD staff of how to replicate this process to prepare future reports as is required by section 585 of the *Local Government Act*.

DISCUSSION

Purpose of a Housing Needs Report

This Housing Needs Report provides an understanding of the populations most challenged to afford suitable and adequate housing in the FVRD’s Electoral Areas. Analysis of quantitative and qualitative data allows the FVRD to identify trends specific to each Electoral Area and implement appropriate strategies to address current and anticipated housing needs for the region’s residents. The public engagement component of the project provides opportunities for stakeholders and the public to provide insights and comments on housing in the Electoral Areas and adds additional context to the findings of the quantitative data analysis.

Legislative Requirements for Housing Needs Reports

All Housing Needs Reports are required to contain the following information:

- Statement about key areas of local need, including affordable housing, rental housing, special needs housing, seniors housing, family housing, and shelters and housing for people at risk of homelessness;
- The number of housing units required to meet current and anticipated housing needs for at least the next five years, by housing type (defined as size by number of bedrooms); and
- The number and percentage of households in core housing need and extreme core housing need.

Regional Districts must include this required content for each electoral area.

Additionally, local governments are required to receive by resolution the Housing Needs Report at a Board meeting that is open to the public and ensure that the Report is published on an internet site that is publicly and freely accessible, i.e. the FVRD's website.

Housing Needs Report Format

The Housing Needs Report is presented in two parts followed by two appendices, which form an integral part of the document. Part 1 includes a summary of the overall Housing Needs Report for the Electoral Areas, including key findings and key areas of local need, which captures the legislatively required Housing Needs Summary Statements and housing supply gaps and related issues. Part 2 of the report presents an Implementation and Action Plan that identifies policy and regulatory directions and partnership and awareness and advocacy opportunities to enable the FVRD to effectively meet the current and anticipated housing needs for the Electoral Areas.

The report appendices include the Electoral Area Indicators which is a summary of the quantitative data and the individualized Electoral Area Housing Needs reports; and an Engagement Summary Report. Individualized reports are prefaced by an at-a-glance summary of the key findings that pertain to each Electoral Area, including each EA's specific housing gaps and related issues.

The final Housing Needs Report meets the legislative requirements of the *Local Government Act* and is attached to this staff memo for the Board's review. A summary presentation by CitySpaces Consulting Inc. will be provided at the regular April 8, 2021, EASC Meeting, providing an opportunity for Electoral Area Directors to pose questions related to the final report.

COST

All costs incurred by staff and consultants over the course of the project are funded through the grant funding received through UBCM. The project extension did not impact the project budget or result in additional consulting costs.

CONCLUSION

The FVRD has completed a Housing Needs Report in accordance with the requirements of the *Local Government Act* to better understand current and anticipated housing needs in the Electoral Areas. The project is funded through the UBCM Housing Needs Report Program. The final Report must be received by the Board at a meeting that is open to the public and must be published for public access on the FVRD's website. A Housing Needs Report once received, must be updated every five years by the local government.

COMMENTS BY:

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

Alison Stewart, Manager of Strategic Planning: The *Local Government Act* requires that Regional Growth Strategies (RGS) take Housing Needs Reports into account when being created or updated. The EA Housing Needs Report provides, for the first time, insight into housing challenges in rural parts of the region, which are experiencing increasing pressure as the lower mainland's population continues apace. The report provides a basis for further discussions on addressing housing challenges in the region. With the Electoral Area report, in combination with reports prepared by member municipalities, the FVRD will have a more complete picture when updating housing policy components of the RGS.

Kelly Lownsborough, Chief Financial Officer/ Director of Finance: Reviewed and supported.

Jennifer Kinneman, Chief Administrative Officer: Reviewed and supported.