



# CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

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## Legislation Details (With Text)

**File #:** 17-248      **Version:** 1      **Name:**  
**Type:** Staff Report      **Status:** Passed  
**File created:** 6/13/2017      **In control:** Committee of the Whole  
**On agenda:** 6/19/2017      **Final action:** 6/19/2017  
**Title:** Affordable Housing Workshop Summary Report, Staff Report DEV-17-036  
**Sponsors:**  
**Indexes:**  
**Code sections:**  
**Attachments:** 1. Esquimalt workshop summary report (final draft\_May30)

Date	Ver.	Action By	Action	Result
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## REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

**DATE:** June 13, 2017      Report No. DEV-17-036

**TO:** Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

**FROM:** Marlene Lagoa, Community Development Coordinator

**SUBJECT:**  
Affordable Housing Workshop Summary Report

**ESSENTIAL QUESTION:**  
How should the Township proceed based on the findings from the affordable housing workshop?

**RECOMMENDATION:**  
That the Committee of the Whole receive Staff Report No. DEV-17-036 for information, provide direction to staff on whether to proceed with further engagement opportunities, and direct staff to draft new policies for the Official Community Plan based on the findings from the affordable housing workshop.

**BACKGROUND:**  
At the February 20, 2017 Regular Committee of the Whole meeting, staff was directed to acquire the services of an affordable housing consultant (Whistler Centre for Sustainability) to oversee and facilitate an affordable housing workshop. The workshop forms part of the Official Community Plan (OCP) review process with the intent of providing focused stakeholder input into affordable housing solutions for Esquimalt.

The workshop was held on May 5, 2017 and included:

- two guest speakers on affordable housing best practices;
- a review of different types of residents housing needs;
- a discussion on affordable housing goals and desired outcomes; and
- an assessment of affordable housing strategies and tools and whether they would work in Esquimalt.

Close to 60 people attended the workshop including representatives from the following sectors: local government, builders/developers, federal government, architects, non-profit organizations, and residents.

A summary report of the workshop activities and findings is attached to this report.

## **ISSUES:**

The ideas and discussions from the affordable housing workshop will inform and shape the development of affordable housing policies for the OCP update.

### Supported Strategies

Participants supported a diversity of housing types. There was strong support for secondary suites, infill housing, and purpose built rental. There was also support for creating smaller housing forms, as well as alternative ownership models such as co-operatives and stratas.

Workshop participants supported these strategies for creating affordable housing:

- providing incentives and pre-approvals for affordable housing, potentially including different processes for non-profit developers;
- ensuring new housing fits into the neighbourhood (through the neighbourhood plan and good design);
- a housing fund;
- working with non-profit organizations/developers, including the need to ensure these organizations are funded; and
- utilizing non-profit owned land and assets.

### Concerns & Considerations

A common concern was the need to address parking issues; however, conflicting solutions were proposed by participants. On one hand participants felt that there needs to be enough parking spaces for additional housing units. On the other hand participants noted the need to relax parking requirements for housing, such as secondary suites, based on the assumption that tenants do not own vehicles.

There was limited support for resale price restrictions and covenants that would ensure housing is affordable beyond the initial purchaser. Some participants indicated concerns with it being difficult to administer and manage; however, others believed it is the only way to get people into home ownership.

There was also limited support for municipal acquisition of land and creating land trusts. Participants suggested exploring collaborative opportunities with the Capital Region Housing Corporation as well

as the federal government regarding workforce housing.

Another issue that was identified as having an impact on affordable housing in the community and needs to be dealt with is short term rentals. Participants recognized that short term rentals provide home owners with some extra income, so there needs to be more discussion to determine the circumstances under which, if any, they should be allowed.

A number of participants referred to the issue of wages as a factor for affording housing costs, and made suggestions regarding income and/or rental supplements.

### Further Engagement Opportunities

The consultant recommends further exploration on topics that appeared to be less understood by participants.

Some examples of further engagement possibilities recommended by the consultant are:

- host a follow-up workshop to focus on OCP policy development;
- host a design charrette to identify parcels of land where housing could be built and the partners that need to be involved;
- create a housing task force that can identify the terms of reference for a housing fund, which was strongly supported, and to explore options for a housing organization;
- host another discussion or learning opportunity about resale price restrictions and/or municipal land acquisition, two topics that could have clear benefits in creating affordable housing in the long-term, but may not be well understood and did not have as strong support in the workshop; and
- host a follow-up workshop with the development/builder community to identify the key steps required to support the building of affordable housing.

### **ALTERNATIVES:**

1. That the COTW receive Staff Report No. DEV-17-036 for information, provide direction to staff on whether to proceed with further engagement opportunities, and direct staff to draft new policies for the OCP based on the findings from the affordable housing workshop.
2. That the COTW provide alternative direction to staff.
3. That the COTW request further information from staff.