



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
1229 Esquimalt Road
Esquimalt, B.C. V9A 3P1

Legislation Text

File #: 19-570, Version: 1

REQUEST FOR DECISION

DATE: December 9, 2019

Report No. DEV-19-112

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Tricia deMacedo, Planner II - Policy and Bill Brown, Director of Development Services

SUBJECT:

Multi-Family Design for Social Well-Being

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council;

- (1) receive the final report entitled 'Designing Density' by Judith Cullington and Associates [Appendix A] from the Multi-family Design for social well-being project and the 'Designing Density' survey results [Appendix B] as attached to Staff Report DEV-19-112, for information; and
- (2) direct staff to:
 - a) Develop design guidelines for Development Permit Areas based on the recommendations in this report;
 - b) Begin preparation of a social well-being checklist; and
 - c) Present both of these documents at a future Committee of the Whole meeting for discussion.

RELEVANT POLICY:

Official Community Plan Bylaw, 2018, No. 2922

STRATEGIC RELEVANCE:

Strategic Priorities 2019-2023

Healthy, Livable and Diverse Community - Develop health strategies for our community: Develop design guidelines for improving the design of 'missing middle' housing (PlanH).

BACKGROUND:

In the fall of 2018, the Township received a \$10,000 Community Wellness Strategy grant from PlanH Healthy Communities Fund. This grant program is administered by BC Healthy Communities Society. The Township proposal was to examine the relationship between design in multi-family buildings and social connectedness of residents. Specifically the project was to research best management practices (BMPs), engage the public on their preferences and to develop policy recommendations to guide the Township in updating the design guidelines within the Official

Community Plan (OCP) for multi-family housing. The project also focused further on 'missing middle' housing such as townhouses, small apartment buildings and condominiums.

The project started in late 2018 with the hiring of Judith Cullington from Judith Cullington and Associates to help with the research and public engagement. Ms. Cullington assisted staff with speaking to a selected group of stakeholders with expertise in multi-family housing design, construction, provision, maintenance etc. in five different focus groups during the early spring of 2019. The results of the discussion with focus groups are included in the final report. The Township also conducted a public survey during the late spring/summer and conducted pop up sessions during the summer. The results of this survey are attached as Appendix B. Staff then worked to develop recommendations based on the results of the focus groups and survey. These recommendations were presented at a public open house on October 10, 2019.

While the original grant funding has been exhausted, staff intends to continue work on the project in two key areas; development of draft design guidelines to update the OCP and development of a social well-being checklist. The design guidelines would draw on the information gathered through research and public engagement to update existing guidelines within the OCP in Development Permit Areas, with first priority given to DPA No. 6: Multi-family Residential. Many of the recommendations, such as design practices for interior spaces, cannot be implemented through a development permit process. Similar to the green building checklist, staff envision a social well-being checklist that would encourage applicants to incorporate design Best Management Practices for social well-being. It would also provide both staff and Council a template for review of future applications.

ISSUES:

1. Rationale for Selected Option

The 'Designing Density' report contains a wealth of information on how multi-family residential design can influence and support social connectedness. As the municipality creates additional density, residents can become concerned about loss of community. The Township can avail itself of the information in this report to ensure that future applications consider social connectedness and incorporate some of the best management practices recommended in the report. In addition, the report also contains recommendations that can be used to inform Council policy and budget decisions on active transportation, energy efficiency, public spaces and parkland acquisition etc.

2. Organizational Implications

There are no significant organizational implications.

3. Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications of the report with the exception of staff time to complete the additional processes as outlined and recommended.

4. Sustainability & Environmental Implications

There are no direct sustainability or environmental implications, however the report does include a number of recommendations that promote a more complete, compact community with more choices for public transit and active transportation, that would in turn have environmental benefits in addition to health benefits.

5. Communication & Engagement

The project entailed a significant amount of community engagement through focus groups, the survey and the open house. Over 400 people participated in the survey alone. No additional consultation is planned; however, any design guideline recommendations will be presented to Council at a future date and will include public input as a requirement for any amendment of the OCP.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That Council;
 - (1) receive the final report entitled 'Designing Density' by Judith Cullington and Associates [Appendix A] from the Multi-family Design for social well-being project and the 'Designing Density' survey results [Appendix B] as attached to Staff Report DEV-19-112, for information; and
 - (2) direct staff to:
 - a) Develop design guidelines for Development Permit Areas based on the recommendations in this report;
 - b) Begin preparation of a social well-being checklist; and
 - c) Present both of these documents at a future Committee of the Whole meeting for discussion.
2. That Council provide alternative direction to staff.