



CORPORATION OF THE TOWNSHIP OF ESQUIMALT

Municipal Hall
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Legislation Text

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REQUEST FOR DIRECTION

DATE: February 9, 2017

Report No. DEV-17-011

TO: Laurie Hurst, Chief Administrative Officer

FROM: Marlene Lagoa, Community Development Coordinator

SUBJECT:

Official Community Plan Review - Phase 5 Consultation

ESSENTIAL QUESTION:

How should the Township consult with stakeholders during Phase 5 of the Official Community Plan review process?

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Committee of the Whole receive Staff Report No. DEV-17-011 for information and provide direction to staff on the preferred approach to consult with stakeholders on 1) housing policies and tools and 2) newly proposed OCP policies.

BACKGROUND:

The Township of Esquimalt commenced the review and update of its Official Community Plan (OCP) in Fall 2015. The review process entails a total of 7 phases that is expected to be completed with the adoption of a new OCP by the end of this year. Staff is in the process of completing Phase 4, the development of new policies and guidelines. Phase 5 will be the third opportunity for residents and stakeholders to provide their input during the OCP review process. A timeline of the OCP review process is attached as Schedule A.

At the October 17, 2016 Regular Committee of the Whole meeting, staff were directed to schedule a Housing Forum as part of the OCP review process to provide focused public input on housing issues. Following the event, staff is to prepare a report to Council summarizing the results of the Housing Forum.

ISSUES:

Taking the public input received to date, staff has drafted new goals, objectives and policies for the Official Community Plan update. The Phase 5 consultation and communication plan is attached as Schedule B.

Housing Forum

The purpose of the Housing Forum is to conduct focused public consultation on housing tools and strategies for the updated OCP. The Township organized a similar forum on “Healthy Housing” in April 2015. A copy of the forum itinerary, as well as the participant input received, is attached as Schedule C.

Staff will invite representatives of large and small developers, non-profit housing providers, residents’ associations, and members of the community with knowledge and expertise on housing issues. A challenge will be scheduling the forum at a time that would accommodate the availability of both professionals and residents. For instance, an event that is scheduled during daytime hours is more likely to attract development and housing professionals but may not be convenient for residents.

Staff recommends acquiring the services of an affordable housing consultant to oversee and facilitate the housing forum. The fee for professional consulting services can be covered within the OCP review budget request for carry-over from 2016 to 2017.

The forum will focus on the following 8 common housing tools and strategies used by local governments: inclusionary zoning; secondary suites; density bonus; resale price restrictions; housing fund; land banking; housing organization; and partnerships for affordable housing.

Staff recommends the Housing Forum be held a couple of weeks before the Phase 5 Open House. There are a few options for the event format of the Housing Forum, which are:

- Open House: Display boards, staff to address questions, opportunities to leave written comments.
- Workshop: Facilitated activities and questions for participants to complete.
- Roundtable: Open table top discussion with a facilitator to guide the conversation.

Open House

The purpose of the Open House is to provide an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to discuss the newly proposed OCP policies with staff. Policy discussion briefs will be prepared and available at the event as well as on the website. Staff also recommends hosting a booth at Buccaneer Days where copies of the policy briefs will be available for review. Residents and stakeholders will be asked to submit their input on the newly proposed OCP policies in writing for Council and staff consideration.

One challenge will be keeping the level of participant engagement up as an updated OCP is developed. As we get further along the 2 year process towards a draft plan, the complexity of the consultation process increases (e.g. reviewing a draft plan in its entirety) as well as the possibility of participant burnout. For instance, the first engagement opportunity was the launch of the “Kick Off Survey” - a simplified survey with primarily close-ended and rated responses. Whereas, the “Looking Forward Survey” had predominantly open-ended questions asking respondents to share their ideas and wishes for the future. The survey response rate dropped from 539 completed “Kick Off” surveys to only 221 completed “Looking Forward” surveys. Furthermore, post card mailers were mailed to every address in Esquimalt and only approximately 50 people attended the Looking Forward Forum

last spring. There may also be some individuals who feel they have already provided the Township with their input and have nothing further to add.

Another concern is finding a suitable space to host an Open House event. The “Looking Forward Forum” was held at the Esquimalt Recreation Centre to attract walk-in traffic. To accommodate the forum, Parks and Recreation Services staff had to move or cancel programs and rentals for the evening. The format of the event was table top discussions led by staff. Furthermore, the room was only a bit larger than Council Chamber.

Staff is seeking further direction from the Committee on the following:

- Date, time and location of consultation events
- Format of consultation events
- Council interest in hosting a booth at Buccaneer Days
- General input on consultation and communication plan (see Appendix B)

ALTERNATIVES:

1. That the COTW receive Staff Report No. DEV-17-011 for information and provide direction to staff on the preferred approach to consult with stakeholders on 1) housing policies and tools and 2) newly proposed OCP policies.
2. That the COTW provide alternative direction to staff.
3. That the COTW request further information from staff.