

To: Chief Administrative Officer **Date:** July 4, 2022
From: Mike Dickinson, Manager of Long Range Planning and Special Projects
Subject: **Affordable Housing Strategy Quarterly Report – July 2022**

Recommendation(s)

This report is provided for information. No staff recommendation accompanies this report and Council action is not required.

Purpose

This report provides Council with information regarding implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy (AHS).

Background

On February 7, 2022, Council, at its Regular meeting, approved the AHS. Subsequently, staff commenced implementing this strategy, focusing on the top 13 strategies identified as being the most impactful for improving housing conditions in Mission. As mentioned in the Strategy, 'Mission will prioritize initial implementation efforts on these Strategies over the next three years.' 'Work is underway on certain strategies and others may occur concurrently.' Staff engaged with the Sustainable Housing Committee and with the joint sub-committee (comprised of members from the Development Liaison Committee and the Sustainable Housing Committee) who shared valuable insights for implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Discussion and Analysis

Staff are implementing the AHS by addressing specific components of the top 13 strategies (Attachment A). The AHS notes that not enough housing units are being constructed in Mission to keep pace with projected population growth. Currently, 165 dwelling units are being built annually and more than twice as many units are needed to make a positive change in the housing market. Critically, more purpose-built rental units are needed. According to the 2020 Housing Needs Assessment Report (that provided background information for the AHS), to make a significant improvement to the housing market, 1,315 rental units are needed to be built between 2020 and 2024 (averaging 261 rental units/year). Mission residents with the highest priority need for housing and shelter include women and children in crisis, people with mental or physical disabilities, seniors, Indigenous people, and individuals who are experiencing and at risk of homelessness.

Staff are implementing the AHS by focusing on the following critical strategies:

- Strategy 1.2 Streamline the Development Approvals Process

To activate the AHS recommendations, Development Services staff are prioritizing the processing of affordable housing projects to help ensure that more units will be available for occupancy. The development planning staff complement is proposed to be increased in 2022 to help fulfill this objective. This objective is coupled with new processing approaches that include the separation of rezoning and development permit applications, thereby

allowing applicants opportunities for more expeditious application processing where detailed development permit designs would not have to be prepared in advance of or at the earliest stage of application submissions.

- **Strategy 3.1 and 3.3 Social Housing Projects**

Staff have been actively engaged in working with SARA for Women in activating two affordable housing projects. One project is for the redevelopment of the Santa Rosa site in Mission's Downtown, whereby staff expedited processing of the rezoning application for this site as a top priority to assist SARA to meet a CMHC funding deadline. The other SARA project is for a second stage housing proposal that is currently being investigated for site suitability. Alternate sites are also being investigated for consideration if the proposed site does not prove to be acceptable to BC Housing, the funding agency for this proposal.

Staff are also working with Mission Community Services in assessing a proposal for a new youth centre located in the Downtown. This project is intended to replace the existing youth facility with a significantly larger facility with youth-focused services and accommodation.

- **Strategy 1.1 Hire a Social Housing Coordinator**

Staff are preparing a terms of reference for retaining a consultant to help the City in facilitating the development of additional rental and affordable rental housing units. The Housing Coordinator will need to build partnerships with the non-profit sector, find suitable sites for development, act as a liaison when non-profits submit funding applications, and assist with the preparation of Housing Agreements. The work plan will consider advancing social housing projects currently underway as well as new projects. It is anticipated that this position will be activated within the next two months.

- **Strategy 5.2 Tenant Relocation and Protection Policy**

Staff have commenced work on a policy framework to ensure that households and persons living in older rental buildings are adequately notified, compensated and provided with assistance in finding new housing when older housing stock is proposed for redevelopment. This is a complex issue that requires significant research and engagement and is anticipated to take place over the next 12 to 18 months.

Council Goals/Objectives

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Communication

Through the preparation of the AHS, staff consulted with members of the Sustainable Housing Committee, Development Liaison Committee, non-profit housing providers, BC Housing, and other interested parties. Engagement continues with these committees and agencies as implementation of this strategy's key elements occurs.

Summary and Conclusion

This is the first quarterly report to Council that explains how the City's Affordable Housing Strategy is being implemented. Staff will provide Council with the next quarterly report that will highlight progress in implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy including updates on social housing projects including those for SARA for Women and a proposed youth build, securing a Housing Coordinator, and researching a tenant relocation and protection policy.

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Reviewed by: Dan Sommer, Director of Development Services

Approved for Inclusion: Mike Younie, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments

Attachment A: Affordable Housing Strategy - Top 13 Strategies