

October 25, 2016
Our file: 10-5040-20/AFFHOU/2016-1
Doc #: 2439045.v1

Chair Greg Moore
Metro Vancouver Regional District
4330 Kingsway
Burnaby BC V5H 2A5

Dear Chair Moore:

RE: Coquitlam Council Feedback on Regional Affordable Housing Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the final Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy ('Regional Strategy').

The City of Coquitlam considers finding housing affordability solutions a crucial issue for the Greater Vancouver area. Recently, the City passed Coquitlam's *Housing Affordability Strategy* which works in partnership with others to promote practical solutions to housing affordability. Coquitlam Council have reviewed the Regional Strategy and appreciate the efforts Metro Vancouver has made to align with Coquitlam's Affordable Housing Strategy (HAS), and to support regional cooperation.

The attached Council report was carried unanimously by Council at the October 17, 2016 Regular Council meeting. The report endorses the Regional Strategy and recognizes that Coquitlam's feedback on the previous draft has been incorporated in this final Regional Strategy. Specifically, that it has been revised to provide more flexibility to municipalities to balance their service priorities. Additionally, it is recognized that, as identified in the Metro Vancouver Regional Strategy, the policy goals will rely heavily on the financial and policy support from higher levels of government to be successfully implemented.

Congratulations on completing this work, which I hope will contribute to addressing affordability solutions for all residents of greater Vancouver.



If you have any questions, or if you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at rstewart@coquitlam.ca or 604-927-3001, or Jim McIntyre, General Manager Planning and Development at jmcintyre@coquitlam.ca or 604-927-3401.

Yours truly,



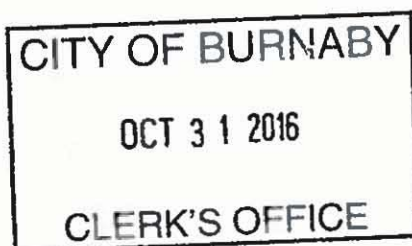
Richard Stewart
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Jim McIntyre, General Manager Planning and Development
Carl Johannsen, Manager Community Planning
Heather McNell, Manager Regional Planning
Metro Vancouver Member Municipalities

Attachment:

- *1. Updated Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (Doc #: 2405085)

*AVAILABLE IN CITY CLERK'S OFFICE



October 7, 2016

Our File: 01-0480-20/HOUS1/2016-1

Doc #: 2405085.v3

To: City Manager

From: General Manager Planning and Development

Subject: **Updated Regional Affordable Housing Strategy**

For: **Council**

Recommendations:

That Council:

1. Endorse-in-principle the Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, on the understanding that Coquitlam has its own Housing Affordability Strategy that has been developed to specifically respond to Coquitlam's local housing affordability challenges; and
2. Direct staff to send a letter that contains Council feedback on this item and attaches this report, to Metro Vancouver, as Coquitlam's response to Metro's request for endorsement of the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy.

Report Purpose:

This report provides commentary on the Greater Vancouver Regional District ('Metro Vancouver' or 'Metro') Regional Affordable Housing Strategy ('Regional Strategy') which has been sent to member municipalities for endorsement.

Strategic Goal:

Coquitlam's recently-adopted Housing Affordability Strategy (HAS) (see www.Coquitlam.ca/housing for the document) supports the 'Achieve Excellence in City Governance' Strategic Goal as it guides Coquitlam's response, as a local government acting in partnership with others, to housing affordability challenges.

Providing comments on the draft Regional Strategy is an opportunity to further demonstrate Coquitlam's approach to addressing housing affordability.

Background:

The Metro Vancouver Regional Strategy has been in development over the past several years, and in Fall 2015 the Metro Board requested formal comments, from Coquitlam (and other member Metro Vancouver local governments), on the policy content of the draft Regional Strategy.

Staff compared the draft Regional Strategy with Coquitlam's HAS, which was endorsed at Council's December 7, 2015 Regular meeting. Based on this analysis, it was reported to Council that the Regional Strategy exhibits considerable alignment with Coquitlam's HAS, yet in its draft state it did not reflect the

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Background: cont'd/

balanced, 'tailored to Coquitlam' approach of the HAS. More specifically several areas of concern were identified with the Regional Strategy, including overly-prescriptive policies, in a report presented to Council on February 1, 2016. Based on this, Coquitlam sent a response to Metro (Attachment 1) which highlighted Coquitlam's concerns and the high priority HAS actions that Coquitlam is undertaking to address local housing affordability challenges.

Subsequent to receiving Coquitlam's comments, along with similar comments and concerns from other Metro municipalities, Metro staff revised the Strategy. The Metro Board subsequently adopted the updated Regional Strategy on May 27, 2016. Metro has now circulated the updated Regional Strategy to member municipalities, with a request that 'member municipalities endorse the Strategy as a 'collaborative approach through which stakeholders can advance its vision, within their authority' (see Attachment 2).

This report provides a high-level overview of the updated Regional Strategy (Attachment 3), and details how Coquitlam's concerns with the original draft Regional Strategy (as presented at the February 1, 2016 Council meeting) have been addressed in the updated Regional Strategy.

Discussion/Analysis:

As previously reported to Council, the original draft Regional Strategy contained policies that 'required' municipalities to undertake certain actions, including land acquisition, inclusionary zoning and one-for one rental replacement, that do not reflect the policy approach of the HAS. Within this context it's important to note that Coquitlam's HAS is the product of considerable Council discussion and work, over the course of 2 years, to develop a housing affordability approach that is appropriate for Coquitlam's needs, context and available resources.

Based on feedback from Coquitlam and other member municipalities,

these overly prescriptive policies have been removed, and the updated Regional Strategy now contains policies that are prefixed by 'municipalities shall consider'. This approach is better aligned with the HAS, is better suited to the wide range of municipal contexts within Metro Vancouver region, and acknowledges that member municipalities are the best judges of which housing affordability actions are appropriate and implementable in their communities.

Additionally, staff also note that the updated Regional Strategy now places greater emphasis on senior government financial participation, as a necessary component of dealing with affordable housing in the Region. This responds to concerns expressed by Coquitlam that the Regional Strategy needs to recognize that the creation of new affordable units at the local government level requires senior government support and funding, otherwise the ability of local governments to respond to housing affordability challenges will be limited.

Discussion/Analysis: cont'd/

Specific Regional Strategy Changes to Highlight

For Council's reference, a more detailed table that highlights how Metro has addressed Coquitlam's concerns, through changes to the Regional Strategy, is provided as Attachment 4.

Significant changes are summarized as follows:

1. The original draft Strategy contained a policy that required one-to-one rental unit replacement policies, where existing rental supply is being redeveloped.
Change: In its place the updated Regional Strategy now notes under Goal 2 (page 22) that "Municipalities will consider, through plans, policies and programs: g) Offering Incentives and tools to preserve and sustain existing purpose-built market rental housing (i.e., reduced parking, increased density for infill development, transfer of density, one for one replacement policies, standards of maintenance bylaws) as needed. This change is consistent with Coquitlam's HAS policies regarding rental housing.
2. The original draft Strategy noted that "Municipalities will, through plans, policies and programs, demonstrate how Housing Actions plans, policies and initiatives are intended to work towards achieving Metro 2040 housing demand estimates."
Change: The updated Regional Strategy now notes under Goal 1 (page 22) that "Municipalities will consider, through plans, policies and programs, monitoring and reporting on progress towards achievement of Metro 2040 housing demand estimates".
3. The original Regional Strategy contained a policy under Goal 4 (page 29) that required municipalities to establish transit-oriented inclusionary housing targets.
Change: The update Strategy now notes that "Municipalities will consider through plans, policies and programs, transit-oriented inclusionary housing targets."
4. Under Goal 4 (page 29) the original draft Strategy contained a policy that required municipalities to purchase and hold site/air space parcels for new non-profit housing along frequent transit corridors.
Change: this policy has been removed from the updated Regional Strategy, as this requirement was asking local municipalities to make obligations beyond their financial capacity.

Regional Strategy Recommendation

As noted above, the development of Coquitlam's HAS involved considerable Council discussion, review and determination of housing affordability approaches. During the course of this discussion, many approaches were considered, including those proposed during the development of the Regional Strategy. However, the final HAS product reflects Council's decision to create a balanced approach that responds to local housing affordability challenges through partnerships and creative, incentive-based approaches, and emphasizes the need for senior government funding to make it work – as Coquitlam will not be able to effect housing affordability solutions on its own.

Discussion/Analysis: cont'd/

Regional Strategy Recommendation cont'd/

Based on this context and the above analysis, staff recommends that Council endorse-in-principle the Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, as a high-level regional policy reference document, and on the understanding that Coquitlam has its own Housing Affordability Strategy that has been developed to specifically respond to Coquitlam's local housing affordability challenges. Staff also recommend that a letter that contains Council feedback on this item, and attaches this report, be sent to Metro Vancouver as Coquitlam's response to Metro's request for endorsement of the Regional Strategy.

Next Steps:

Staff will monitor the endorsement of the RAHS by other municipalities and provide updates to Council if necessary, as a part of periodic reporting by Coquitlam staff to Council on HAS implementation progress.

Financial Implications:

The Metro Regional Strategy has no financial implications, on the basis that only Coquitlam's HAS identifies Council's approach to addressing local housing affordability issues, and represents Council's decision on how the City's limited financial resources are allocated to housing affordability initiatives.

Conclusion:

As summarized in this report, the updated Metro Vancouver Regional Strategy exhibits a stronger alignment with the Coquitlam Housing Affordability Strategy, and contains policies that are less prescriptive than what was reported to Council in February 2016. Based on this, staff recommends that Council endorse-in-principle the Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy, on the understanding that Coquitlam has its own Housing Affordability Strategy that has been developed to specifically respond to Coquitlam's local housing affordability challenges.



J.L. McIntyre, MCIP, RPP

LM/ms

Attachments:

1. Letter dated February 16, 2016 from Coquitlam Council to Metro Vancouver entitled Draft Metro Vancouver Affordable Housing Strategy (Doc# 2197642)
2. Letter dated June 29, 2016 from Metro Vancouver Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (Doc# 2409021)
3. Regional Affordable Housing Strategy Revised June 20, 2016 (Doc# 2375077)
4. Summary table of June 20, 2016 Regional Affordable Housing Strategy revisions (Doc# 2407249).

This report was prepared by Lisa Moffatt, Planner 2 and reviewed by Bruce Irvine, Planning Projects Manager and Carl Johannsen, Manager Community Planning.



February 16, 2016
Our File: 10-5040-20/AFFHOU/2016-1
Doc #: 2197642.v1

Chair Greg Moore
Metro Vancouver Regional District
4330 Kingsway
Burnaby, BC V5H 2A5

Dear Chair Moore:

RE: Coquitlam Council Feedback on Draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategy

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the Metro Vancouver Draft Regional Affordable Housing Strategy (draft 'Regional Strategy').

Coquitlam Council and staff have compared the draft Regional Strategy with Coquitlam's Housing Affordability Strategy (HAS), which was endorsed by Council at the December 7, 2015 Regular Council meeting and sent to Metro Vancouver on December 17, 2015.

The attached Council report (with report Attachment 3), was carried unanimously by Council at the February 1, 2016 Regular Council meeting, and contains the findings of this comparison and commentary on the proposed Regional Strategy policies. The report notes there is considerable alignment between the draft Regional Strategy and Coquitlam's HAS, including concentrating density around transit, partnership-based solutions and a variety of tools to encourage new rental housing development.

However, the Regional Strategy also contains some actions that are not aligned with Coquitlam's HAS, which recognizes the reality of limited local government resources and the need to balance the City's community service priorities.

Based on this, the report concludes that the draft Regional Strategy should be revised to enable more flexibility in how local governments respond to challenging affordable issues in their respective contexts, and emphasize that senior government funding is necessary to achieve the Regional Strategy's requirements.

In addition to this, during the course of Council discussion on the draft Regional Strategy, the following items were noted by Council Members:



- contrary to the language included in the draft Regional Strategy, Metro Vancouver does not have the authority to require its member municipalities to take specific action or enact specific policies in relation to affordable housing, and the Regional Strategy should accordingly be amended to include more flexible policy language;
- housing affordability is a regional issue, yet affordable housing policies need to be practical and less regulatory, as municipalities have limited tools to address this challenge on their own, and lack the mandate to do so;
- rather than being a directive document that dictates how municipalities must spend their budgets and tax dollars, such as purchasing land along transit corridors for affordable housing, the draft Regional Strategy should act as a general policy resource and guide that outlines best practices and affordable housing incentives within our mandate as local governments;
- 'affordable living', in terms of accounting for housing and transportation costs together, is an important consideration;
- rental replacement policies should be incentive-based and not requirements for individual land owners, as the development of new affordable housing is something that should be shared among partners; and
- the Regional Strategy should emphasize a broader, incentive-based approach.

If you have any questions or if you would like to discuss this further, please contact me at rstewart@coquitlam.ca or 604-927-3001, or Jim McIntyre, General Manager Planning and Development at jmcintyre@coquitlam.ca or 604-927-3401.

Yours truly,



Richard Stewart
Mayor

c - Council

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☐ Tabled Item for Council Meeting

☐ Correspondence Item for Council Meeting

☒ For Information Only

☐ For Response Only

☒ Copies To: **GM P+O**

↳ to coordinate any necessary follow-up

letter only, report on file in Clerk's Office

Office of the Chair

Tel. 604 432-6215 Fax 604 451-6614

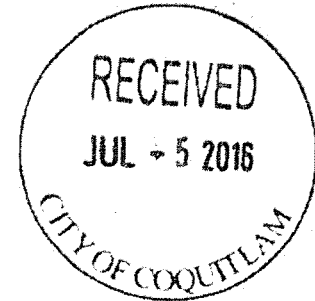
File: CR-12-01

Ref: RD 2016 May 27

JUN 29 2016

Mayor Stewart and Council
City of Coquitlam
3000 Guildford Way
Coquitlam, BC V3B 7N2

Dear Mayor Stewart and Council:

Re: Regional Affordable Housing Strategy


At its May 27, 2016 regular meeting, the Board of Directors of the Greater Vancouver Regional District ('Metro Vancouver') adopted the following resolution:

That the GVRD Board:

- a) *Adopt the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy attached to the report dated May 13, 2016, titled "Regional Affordable Housing Strategy"; and*
- b) *Convey the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy to member municipalities with a request to endorse the Strategy as a collaborative approach through which stakeholders can advance its vision, within their authority;*
- c) *Transmit the Regional Affordable Housing Strategy to the BC Minister Responsible for Housing, The Honourable Rich Coleman; The Minister of Families, Children, and Social Development, and the Minister responsible for Housing and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, The Honourable Jean Yves Duclos, and other stakeholders with an interest in regional housing affordability; and*
- d) *Direct staff to develop an implementation plan for Metro Vancouver actions.*

We are pleased to provide a copy of the *Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* for your reference.

The high cost of housing in Metro Vancouver is a major concern for residents and local governments. First adopted in 2007, the new *Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* (2016) aims to provide leadership and a collaborative approach for meeting the region's pressing housing issues. Our vision is to have a diverse and affordable housing supply so Metro Vancouver region can remain livable and prosperous.

In November 2015, the GVRD Board conveyed to Municipal Councils the Draft *Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* for review and comment. Some Councils endorsed the Draft Strategy at that time, or provided support in principle and offered suggestions for improvement. Others received it for information only. The final *Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* (RAHS) that was adopted by the GVRD Board took these comments into consideration.

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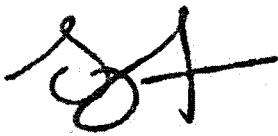
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The GVRD Board requests that your Council endorse the *Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* as a collaborative approach to addressing regional housing needs.

We request that you inform the GVRD Board of your Council's decision by November 30, 2016.

The next step will be for the GVRD Board to write to the federal and provincial governments and other key stakeholders, such as Health Authorities, urging that they take the recommended actions in the Strategy.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GM' with a stylized flourish.

Greg Moore
Chair, Metro Vancouver Board

GM/DL/me

Encl: *Regional Affordable Housing Strategy* dated June 20, 2016 (Doc #18636406)