

INFORMATION NOTE

Title: Affordable Housing Strategy Update

Date Prepared: February 14th, 2020

Report To: Affordable Housing Working Group

Councillor and Role: Deputy City Mayor Sheilagh O'Leary

Ward: N/A

Issue: Provide an update on the City of St. John's Affordable Housing Strategy 2019-2028 and main areas of work

Discussion – Background and Current Status:

The City of St. John's approved the Affordable Housing Strategy, 2019-2028, in November 2018. The strategy will address the municipality's housing needs by working in step with partners, stakeholders and residents to create and maintain safe, suitable and affordable housing throughout the city. The following is an update on the main areas of work.

Growing Capacity

We were pleased to partner with Choices for Youth to welcome two National colleagues to St. John's; Dominika Krzeminska the Director of Strategic Initiatives with CHRA and Stéphan Corriveau, the Executive Director of the newly formed Community Housing Transformation Centre.

The week's agenda included

- Individual meetings with community housing providers/ support organizations
- Meetings with City of St. John's and NLHC government officials to discuss regional strategic directions and opportunities for collaboration
- 'Growing Capacity in Community Housing' public forum. This event sought to raise awareness on the two organizations, their programs and capacities. It allowed attendees to engage with these National Organizations and discuss our together discuss our local context within their National mandates and strategic priorities.
- Choices for Youth and Happy City co hosted a panel discussion on Affordability in St. John's. Dominika took part in this event as the panelist on housing affordability.

ST. JOHN'S

Successful Tenancies

The Your Rights and Responsibilities as a Tenant document developed by the City and our affordable housing partners, has been updated to reflect the Residential Tenancies Act changes that came into effect in 2019. The document has recently been translated into French and Arabic and has been uploaded to the City of St. John's website City of St. John's> publications> housing.

Housing Catalyst Fund

A Housing Catalyst Grant selection committee was established to review submissions. It included the CMHC Affordable Housing Specialist, NLHC Manager of Affordable Housing programs and the following internal staff: Chief Municipal Planner, Supervisor– Tourism & Events, Manager- Housing and the Affordable Housing and Development Facilitator. Due to remaining funds from 2019, The selection committee was able to recommend seven applications for funding, 5 at \$10 000 and an additional 2 at \$5 000 each. Recommendations were approved by Committee of the Whole on February 12th.

2020 Housing Catalyst projects are as follows:

Organization	Project	Grant Amount
Fundamental Inc	Net Zero Ready Affordable Tiny Home- Prototype Unit	\$10 000
Power Brothers Inc	Design costs to make affordable housing units accessible as part of retrofit build	\$10 000
Stella's Circle Community Services	Consultant costs to expand housing portfolio and maximize current units/land	\$10 000
L'Arche Avalon	Floor plan design for the construction of two l'Arche Avalon homes and a day centre	\$10 000
Connections for Seniors	Supportive Housing Needs Assessment for Older Adults	\$10 000
NL Gray Gays	Housing and care needs assessment for LGBTQI2S community	\$ 5 000
Universal Design Network	Universal Design Education	\$ 5 000

Property Standards

We continue to reach out to Eastern Health to see if they would be interested in the 'Safe and Healthy Housing' Presentation. The next scheduled presentation will be held for Stella's Circle staff on March 5th.

Land

Habitat for Humanity will be applying for rezoning on the City owned Eric Street parcel of land. Internal consultations continue to be held to investigate any concerns raised with the proposed development to date. Habitat for Humanity are preparing a potential design and until this design is submitted to the Planning Department, community concerns can't fully be investigated as they relate to the project (ex. impact on trees or traffic flow). In the interim, a meeting has been set up with the West End Community Alliance to outline concerns and ensure that the project process and current phase are understood. This will be an informal meeting outside of the formal public consultations that are part of the rezoning process.

Once the potential design has been submitted, an engagement meeting will be held with the community gardeners and Habitat for Humanity to discuss possibilities for revitalization of the garden.

An engage page has been set up that outlines the project background, FAQs and the project lifecycle <https://www.engagestjohns.ca/eric-street>

NIMBY

The Affordable Housing Working Group determined there was value in updating the NIMBY toolkit to include new case studies, an updated contact list and revised CSJ Planning Process. The update is now complete. The new revised document has been uploaded on the Canadian Home Builders of Newfoundland and Labrador website and is linked on the City of St. John's Website under publications> housing. A workshop and relaunch event are being planned for May 2020.

Social Marketing Strategy

A social marketing campaign has been created to tackle the fears associated with affordable housing through increased information (awareness campaigns, success stories, etc.) and focusing on the benefits of affordable housing. Three videos are complete and a revitalized website to accompany these videos is now being created. We hope to launch this social marketing strategy in tandem with the NIMBY workshop.

Key Considerations/Implications:

1. Budget/Financial Implications: Funding is already allocated for 2020 Affordable Housing objectives.

2. Partners or Other Stakeholders: The City's Affordable Housing Strategy was built upon public and strategic stakeholder engagement, and the implementation continues to be guided and shaped by multi-stakeholder partnerships and processes.
3. Alignment with Strategic Directions/Adopted Plans: The Affordable Housing Strategy aligns with the Strategic Plan's vision and directions. Affordable Housing implementations actions work in tandem with the Municipal Plan and Development Regulations.
4. Legal or Policy Implications: No legal implications.
5. Privacy Implications: None anticipated at this time.
6. Engagement and Communications Considerations: The City's Communications and OPS departments are aware, involved and very supportive of the work being completed under the Affordable Housing Strategy
7. Human Resource Implications: None anticipated at this time.
8. Procurement Implications: None anticipated at this time.
9. Information Technology Implications: None anticipated at this time.
10. Other Implications: None anticipated at this time.

Conclusion/Next Steps: Work continues to progress initiatives in the Affordable Housing Strategy

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Reviewed by/Date: Judy Tobin, Manager, Non-Profit Housing

Approved by/Date: Judy Tobin, Manager, Non-Profit Housing

Attachments: N/A