

**REPORT TO ELECTORAL AREAS COMMITTEE
MEETING OF WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 08, 2020**

SUBJECT **Housing Strategy for the Southern Gulf Islands**

ISSUE SUMMARY

To consider a resolution by the Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission that staff develop a housing strategy for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area.

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on December 9, 2019, the Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) passed a resolution requesting that, “the Electoral Areas Committee direct CRD staff to report back on options for pursuing a housing strategy in the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area.”

In 2018, the Capital Regional District conducted a Housing Needs Assessment for the Southern Gulf Islands. This Housing Needs Assessment is attached as Appendix 1. The report summary states:

All evidence clearly points to serious shortages in secure, appropriate and affordable housing for low to moderate income earners. Renters are particularly impacted as their incomes are insufficient to enter the homeownership market, and the limited number of rental properties are increasingly vacant seasonally or placed in the vacation rental market. Community members strongly described the housing situation as bordering on crisis, and as having serious impacts on themselves and their families, community well-being and economic sustainability (JG Consulting, 2018).

The Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission has identified the need for adequate housing as a primary factor influencing the economic sustainability of the islands. Members of CESC have noted that affordable housing is identified as a high priority for land use planning by the Islands Trust Local Trust Committees of the Southern Gulf Islands. Specifically, the Mayne Island Local Trust Committee and the Galiano Island Local Trust Committee have affordable housing as a top priority planning project for this term. Last term, the North Pender Island Local Trust Committee had housing as a top priority and, in an effort to increase the stock of rental housing on the island, passed a bylaw to permit secondary suites. The Islands Trust Council has also issued a number of reports and strategies to address the housing crisis on the islands. In 2018, in addition to completing the Housing Needs Assessment for the Southern Gulf Islands, the CRD approved an updated Regional Housing Affordability Strategy (RHAS), which recommends action at the local level and outlines a number of actions that could be considered for inclusion in more localized municipal and electoral area housing strategies.

ALTERNATIVES

Alternative 1

The Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission recommend the Electoral Areas Committee recommend to the Regional Board:

1. That staff develop a housing strategy for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area, and
2. That implementation of the SGI housing strategy be considered in the 2021 service planning process.

Alternative 2

That the Electoral Areas Committee receive the resolution made by the Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission for information, and refer consideration of development of an SGI housing strategy to 2021 service planning.

IMPLICATIONS

A housing strategy for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area was not identified as a corporate priority in service planning for 2020, and there is no budget to support contracting a third party to prepare a housing strategy. However, given the resources that have already been developed through the housing needs assessment, the renewal of the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy and the housing planning and policy work previously completed by Islands Trust, staff are confident that a strategy can be developed internally without the need for a third-party consultant. If alternative 1 is endorsed by the Board, staff will reprioritize work in the 2020 SGI service plan to allocate staff time to develop the housing strategy to inform potential implementation initiatives in 2021. Such a strategy would be advanced in the form of a staff report with recommendations for action to be considered in the service planning process for 2021. Staff within CRD Regional Housing have been consulted and would be available to contribute support and provide expertise to the development of strategy proposals.

CONCLUSION

The Southern Gulf Islands Community Economic Sustainability Commission (CESC) passed a resolution requesting a housing strategy be developed for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area. There is no budget identified to support contracting a third party to complete this work in 2020, however a strategy could be developed internally using existing staff resources. Next steps involve staff development of a Southern Gulf Islands housing strategy to inform potential implementation initiatives in 2021.

RECOMMENDATION

The Southern Gulf Islands Economic Sustainability Commission recommends to the Electoral Areas Committee to recommend to the Capital Regional District Board:

1. That staff develop a housing strategy for the Southern Gulf Islands Electoral Area, and
2. That implementation of the SGI housing strategy be considered in the 2021 service planning process.

Submitted by:	Justine Starke, MCIP, RPP, Manager, SGI Service Delivery, Corporate Services
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ATTACHMENT(S)

Appendix A: 2018 Southern Gulf Islands Housing Needs Assessment