



# STAFF REPORT

**TO:** Council **MEETING DATE:** September 6, 2016  
**FROM:** André Boel, Director of Planning **FILE NO:** 5040-10-08-03  
**SUBJECT:** SCAHS Affordable Housing Project update

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## RECOMMENDATION(S)

**THAT staff's report regarding SCAHS Affordable Housing Project update be received;**

**(staff request Council direction regarding the funding request from Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society based on the options listed at the end of the report)**

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## BACKGROUND/PURPOSE

The Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society (SCAHS / the Society) and the Town of Gibsons are working together to explore the feasibility of the development of affordable homes on Town land. This report provides Council with an update on this project parallel to a presentation / request from the Society scheduled for the September 6<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## DISCUSSION

On June 21st 2016 Council resolved the following:

*Affordable Housing Process (R2016-200)*

*THAT the 5 road dedication locations for the Affordable Housing Project be endorsed subject to further review based on business plan to be developed by the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society;*

*AND THAT fundraising efforts for the feasibility analysis of the road dedication locations by providing a letter of support to the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society be supported.*

*Road Closure Project (R2016-201)*

*THAT staff initiate the road closure process for the 5 road dedication areas as follows:*

- *Harmony Lane / Franklin Road*
- *Beach Avenue / Glen Road*
- *Bals Lane / Seaview Road*
- *Bals Lane / Glen Road*
- *Glassford Road / Gower Point Road*

The Society received a letter of support in July, but unfortunately this letter did not satisfy the requirements of CMHC. To address this matter the Society developed a different proposed approach where a small grant from the Town could support an analysis to determine the feasibility of the concept for a single site. Provided this is successful, a follow up grant application to CMHC would seek funding for a more detailed and comprehensive business plan for at least 5 units.

Town staff has started the preparations of the road closure process for the 5 sites. As a first step a geotechnical investigation was arranged for two steep sites on Balls Lane. The preliminary results of this assessment raise doubts about the viability of the Glen Road parcel whereas the Seaview Road parcel seems to provide a sufficient buildable area. The next step would be to have a surveyor prepare the road closure plan for the four remaining sites. Once this plan is available, the Town can consider a road closure bylaw that would clear the way to raise title to these sites. In the meantime the Society would get more clarity regarding the feasibility of the affordable housing project. Based on the outcome of the feasibility study Council would further consider if and how the new parcels would be made available for the project.

## **COMMUNICATION**

The geotechnical investigations unfortunately raised some concerns in the Heritage Hill neighbourhood. Over the summer staff has responded to several enquiries following the investigation and explained the background and the preliminary nature of the project. Some residents have expressed concerns about the physical suitability of the site and whether affordable housing would fit in with the rest of the neighbourhood in terms of aesthetics and socially.

In addition, the Society was invited by a group of residents to discuss the project on August 8. Approximately 25 people attended and the Society explained the tentative plans for affordable housing.

The Town's Public Participation Toolkit was used to explore other communication efforts. Once there is more certainty regarding the feasibility and more clarity regarding tenure, price point and design of the affordable housing units, a more extensive community involvement should occur. However, at this point with only limited information available, staff and the Society feel it is premature to organise an information meeting.

In the meantime, in response to the interest from nearby residents, staff has taken the initiative to inform all neighbours within 50 m of the prospective sites in writing about the project and about the upcoming surveying work. Also, a website page has been created for other interested community members and a Facebook notice has promoted this available information.

## **PLAN/POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

### **Strategic Plan Implications**

Council's 2016-2018 Strategic Plan includes the goal of "*Collaborating on affordable housing initiatives*" under the header Community Development. This request is part of a process where the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society and the Town work together to explore and identify ways to construct affordable housing in the short term.

### **Financial Plan Implications**

There are two funding options for the grant request.

The first option is to use available funds in the 2016 budget. The 2016 Operational Budget has room for this relatively minor request since a planned project of around \$10,000 has been postponed until 2017. The available budget could be used for the grant. This option has the advantage that no expenditure bylaw needs to be prepared.

The second option is to allocate funds from the reserve fund. A supportive grant could be funded by the Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund which holds approximately \$250,000. In addition, surveying and geotechnical cost could be added as well. To make this possible Council would need to adopt an expenditure bylaw.

The request can be considered to fit Council Policy 3.14 regarding the use of the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund.

*Council may consider applications for a grant or loan from the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund, subject to approval and adoption of a expenditure bylaw (as required for Reserve Funds). The following list outlines eligible requests that can be made by proponents of Affordable Housing projects:*

- ***project development funding***, for example for expert reports following a satisfactory feasibility analysis
- contribution to off-set Development Cost Charges and / or development application fees
- contribution for required off-site works under the Subdivision Bylaw and / or administration charges for a Servicing Agreement
- contribution to facilitate securing funds from other sources
- contribution for cost of construction or the purchase of land
- contribution to facilitate the operation of a homeless shelter

(The surveying and geotechnical investigations for the road dedication sites are dealt with separately under the existing Operational Budget as Town costs for exploring the creation of new Town owned parcels).

### **Other Policy or Plan Implications**

The Official Community Plan's Affordable Housing Strategy indicated that the Town supports initiatives which help provide affordable housing in the community.

#### *Policy 9.4.6*

*Support initiatives which help provide affordable housing in the community, including:*

*(...)*

- *Lands acquired by the Town may be conveyed to a registered non-profit for the purpose of*

*affordable housing.*

*(...)*

- *Continue to develop partnerships for the establishment of new affordable housing and protection of existing affordable housing in the Town of Gibsons.*

*(...)*

## **RECOMMENDATIONS / ALTERNATIVES**

Staff request Council direction regarding the request for grant funding from the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society.

Option 1:

*THAT Council approve the requested grant for the Affordable Housing Project by Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society, funded by the Other Planning Professional Services item in the 2016 Operational Budget*

Option 2:

*THAT Council request staff to prepare an expenditure bylaw to fund the requested grant for the Affordable Housing Project by Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society from the Affordable Housing Statutory Reserve Fund.*

Option 3:

*THAT Council suggest to the Sunshine Coast Affordable Housing Society that senior government funding be sought for the development of the business plan.*

Respectfully Submitted,



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André Boel, RPP  
Director of Planning

### **CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S COMMENTS:**

I have reviewed the report and support the recommendation(s).



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Emanuel Machado  
Chief Administrative Officer