FINAL REPORT

BUILDING COMMUNITY CAPACITY TO ADDRESS HOUSING
AFFORDABILITY AND HOMELESSNESS
IN THE COMOX VALLEY

March 2011

1. Introduction

In March, 2010 the Vancouver Island Health Authority (VIHA) awarded funding to the CVRD to provide community capacity for addressing housing affordability and homelessness. Following the successful submission of our response to the CVRD Request for Proposals, the CVRD contracted us (Butler Associates Consulting and Bazink Solutions Inc.) to provide professional services for the period of mid-August 2010 to March 31, 2011. The scope of work we were expected to undertake is described in Attachment 1.

Housing is a cornerstone for building strong communities and access to housing is pivotal to community stability – it is a key determinant of a healthy community. Where and how people live not only affects individual health, but the wellbeing of the whole community.

There are lots of reasons for caring…

- Housing is the single largest community land use. Designed carefully, it contributes to stable neighbourhoods and a range of life-cycle options and needs.
- At its most basic, housing provides a *physical structure* essential for keeping people warm, dry, and safe from illness or injury.
- Housing is the largest monthly expenditure for most households. If housing consumes too much income, families or individuals can face difficult choices e.g., sacrificing the budget for food, clothing, or other necessities, sharing housing with others leading to overcrowding, or working longer hours to cover housing costs.
- High housing costs hinder economic development by making it difficult to attract, recruit, and retain qualified workers, by deterring businesses locating/remaining in the community, and by reducing expenditures on other goods and services.
- High housing costs impact health and social service costs by making it harder to maintain health, to access and use services. Interventions (e.g. health care, income security, and justice) for those who do not have adequate housing are generally some of the most expensive.
- Housing conditions can support or disrupt social networks and opportunities for employment, training and education.

The following report provides:

- a brief description of the work we carried out over the past few months;
- our observations about 'capacity' in the Comox Valley – existing and needed – for effectively dealing with housing affordability and homelessness; and,
- a recommendation of 'the best path forward' to address housing affordability and homelessness in the Comox Valley.

As we complete our work, we would like to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by the members of the Standing Committee – Councillor Leslie Baird, Diane Collins, Anne Davis, Director Jim Gillis, Maureen Haslehurst, Brent Hobden, Roger Kishi, Tony Law, Joline Martin, Sam Sommers, and Councillor Marcia Turner, under the able chairing of Councillor Ronna-Rae Leonard. As well we would like to thank CVRD staff, in particular, James Warren for his constant diligent assistance.

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2. Summary of Work Undertaken

The following section outlines the various activities we have undertaken between mid-August 2010 and March 31, 2011. Where reports have been prepared, they have been posted on the CVRD web site.

Information and Reports

- Reviewed local background documents, reports and research.
- Created a data base of key stakeholders and others.
- Identified the housing polices contained in the various local Official Community Plans (OCPs).
- Developed an inventory of affordable housing and homeless facilities in the Comox Valley and analyzed the gaps, barriers, and ways to address them.
- Assembled a list of housing affordability and homelessness 'Best Practices' and examples of projects and approaches used throughout the province.
- Identified projects and properties that have the possibility of providing/ developing additional housing capacity in the Comox Valley.
- Assembled information on funding sources and possibilities.
- Prepared a report on possible future governance structures.

Community Outreach

- Attended the AHERO meeting on September 9th, 2010.
- Met with and/or interviewed approximately 50 stakeholders and others – many more than once, including local government administrators, planners, developers, not-for-profit service and housing providers, etc.
- Organized, facilitated and summarized a Roundtable Session held on September 30th, attended by 35 key stakeholders (representing the various sectors usually involved in addressing housing affordability and homelessness – local and provincial governments, First Nations, health, social services, housing providers, economic development and business, the faith community, and the media) to discuss capacity issues in the Comox Valley and encourage the submission of applications for membership on the Standing Committee.
- Prepared a submission for the Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce Showcase to organize a workshop highlighting the role that business can play in addressing housing affordability and homelessness.
- Initiated on-going contact and updates with BC Housing, VIHA and local planning staff.
- Made a presentation to the CVRD Board on January 25, 2011 on our work.
- Attended and participated in the January 26, 2011 Open House regarding the proposed development of emergency shelter/supported housing on Cliffe Avenue site.

Learning Opportunities

- Identified a number of learning opportunities (e.g. workshops, conferences) for stakeholders and Standing Committee members to take part in, including the sending of two members of the Standing Committee to the annual BC Non-Profit Housing Association workshop in November, 2010.

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- Responded throughout to staff, Standing Committee, and community requests for information and advice.

Standing Committee Support

- Prepared an advertisement soliciting interest regarding appointment to the Standing Committee, reviewed the applications and provided the CVRD Chair with recommendations for potential members.

- Provided on-going support to the Standing Committee, including participation in and the preparation of the agendas and materials for 5 meetings (November 9, December 16, January 26, February 24, and March 16) at which the following matters were discussed, developed and/or presented: Committee governance, role, terms of reference, work plan and timetable; Committee and community learning opportunities; existing and future housing project/ development potential; a priority action framework; future organizational options; and regular updates on the Cliffe Avenue property.

- Organized two Standing Committee sessions, one on November 26th with BC Housing and VIHA representatives and one on November 29th with local planners to provide information on their programs, policies, and practices.

- Recommended, identified, and scoped a number of activities for the Committee to consider in the next three months of its mandate:

  - a video conferencing session with Capital Region housing providers (e.g. Pacifica, Cool Aid, M'Akola, Our Place and the CRD Coalition to End Homelessness) to provide tangible advice on how to develop housing for the homeless and those at-risk of homelessness and the how and why to establish housing trust funds;

  - the organization of a community workshop facilitated by BCNPHA on developing housing for local housing and service providers, local government elected officials and staff, business community, and Standing Committee members (note: a potential location for this workshop has been identified at North Island College);

  - development of a communications/ consultation strategy; and,

  - organization of a bus tour to visit homelessness facilities in the mid and south Island.

3. Observations

In the course of our work over the past months, we have formed a number of observations about 'capacity' in the Comox Valley (both existing and needed), for effectively addressing housing affordability and homelessness.

- While there are bits and pieces in place, there are gaps in the housing continuum. In comparison to other areas on Vancouver Island and throughout BC, the Comox Valley is under served in many areas. Moreover, most existing facilities/projects are operating at capacity.

- The immediate and greatest need is for more capacity on the dependency side of the housing continuum: in particular, longer stay housing such as transitional housing, second stage housing and supportive housing is required to meet outstanding needs. Importantly, this housing needs to be affordable and services need to be available 24/7.

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- The groups in greatest need for having their housing needs addressed include:
  - the mentally ill and addicted, including individuals who cannot remain substance-free
  - women who have left abusive relationships
  - families, including those who want to remain together
  - youth who have left foster care (especially those 15 years of age and up)
  - seniors, particularly lower income seniors who may live alone.

  First Nations people, are included in all of these groups, similar to other communities on Vancouver Island.

- There are a number of projects in the works that have the potential to address many of the identified outstanding needs (see Attachment 2).

- Realizing these projects will require the fostering and active pursuit of funding and service partnerships. In addition to traditional sources such as CMHC, BC Housing, MCFD, VIHA, and local governments, other sources include foundations (e.g. Vancouver Foundation, Real Estate Foundation), granting organizations (United Way, credit unions), and community and business donors. Successful project development elsewhere clearly demonstrates that multiple funding and service partnerships are required.

- It takes time to develop housing. If anything concrete is to be achieved, a clear focus on what needs to be done over both the short and long term, and the organizational and funding capacity to carry it out are critical components. Housing affordability and homelessness **will not** be addressed by a one shot effort or overnight.

- The Comox Valley is now clearly on BC Housing's radar and its staff have been actively engaged in advising the Standing Committee and CVRD staff on how to proceed with a funding application for the Cliffe Avenue site – with the precise details (e.g. site and building design) to be determined at a later date (and hopefully assisted through further community consultation). BC Housing staff have indicated that the information provided so far is sufficient to get started, to move forward and that a competitive process, through a proposal call, is expected to be used to select an operator.

- Given how tight money is, it is unlikely that BC Housing will provide funding for more than one high needs project in the Comox Valley in the foreseeable future. There is a lot of demand for funds throughout the province and the process for obtaining those funds is very competitive. BC Housing furthers cautions that it needs to hear a coordinated voice from the Valley. **Speaking with one voice is consistently emphasized by experts in the field of housing affordability and homelessness.**

- It appears that recently funding applications have also been submitted from local proponents for two other proposals. Their identity has not been made known to the CVRD, nor is it clear if these projects would compete for scarce BC Housing funding. However, this development demonstrates clearly the need to speak with one voice, to be clear about community priorities.

- We appreciate that traditionally local government has not been very involved in addressing housing affordability and homelessness issues, except in a general way, setting out policies in their OCP and Zoning Bylaw, but times have changed. Increasingly local governments throughout BC and Canada are recognizing that they need to be more directly involved.

- A good start has been made at the local level – Courtenay, Comox, Cumberland, and the CVRD all have housing policies and regulations in place and continue to refine these. Success requires concerted and continued effort to ensure the appropriate policies and practices are in place and consistent from one jurisdiction to another.

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- If housing affordability and homelessness are to be successfully addressed over the long-haul, experts emphasize that it will be important to continue:
  - advocating for housing units
  - engaging and communicating with the community, including local government officials and staff
  - building strong relationships and partnerships
  - adopting a range of strategies
  - being prepared to respond when opportunities arise
  - being flexible – building a robust model that can respond to changing opportunities
  - recognizing housing and homelessness as a legitimate function within local government and allocating adequate resources to it.

- There is considerable and demonstrated benefit in becoming members of key and existing housing networks.

  - At our urging, the CVRD became a member of the BC Non-Profit Housing Association (BCNPHA). This provides them with access to BCNPHA's very considerable and valuable services, including the primary annual housing conference in the province and their housing development workshops and consultant advice. It would be beneficial to maintain this membership and to encourage and assist community members and elected officials o attend the annual conference and utilize the services offered.

  - The Canadian Housing and Renewal Association (CHRA) provides a national voice for addressing affordable housing and homelessness issues and solutions through advocacy, research, education and training. Joining CHRA (see chra-achru.ca.) should be given consideration.

  - The CMHC Affordable Housing Centre (see solutions@cmhc.ca) has a comprehensive range of information of affordable housing information, tools and resources. Its E Notification provides monthly notices on tools, web forums, financial assistance, and success stories. Registration is free and the information can be shared with community stakeholders – thus building community capacity.

It is our hope that the Comox Valley will ensure there is something in place to continue the work that has been started – that sufficient resources and organizational capacity exist to ensure that the very serious issues of housing affordability and homelessness can be appropriately and effectively addressed.

4. The 'Best Path' Forward

Included in our scope of services was the requirement to recommend to the CVRD the best path forward to address housing and homelessness in the Comox Valley, considering: ongoing funding commitments if required; jurisdictional authority to undertake works if required; and partnership opportunities.

Accordingly, we have investigated a number of approaches used locally and by other municipalities and regional districts in the province (see Attachment 3), interviewed key stakeholders (including local CAOs), and held three sessions with the Standing Committee to discuss possible options.

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As you are aware there have been several previous local government attempts at putting an organizational structure in place to address housing affordability and homelessness in the Comox Valley – the Mayor's Task Force, the Comox Valley Commission to Address Homelessness, and latterly, following the recommendation of the CitySpaces report, *Creating Certainty Within Uncertainty: A Regional Structure to Address Homelessness,* and funding provided by VIHA, the CVRD Standing Committee on Homelessness.

> **The process has been one of 'starts and stops', with a resulting loss of momentum, focus, and continuity.**

Based on our discussions with a broad cross-section of stakeholders, it is apparent that there is a growing weariness in the community with the intermittent response to establishing an effective and enduring local government mechanism for addressing housing and homelessness in the Comox Valley – 'we don't want to go through this again'. As well, frustration is mounting in the community generally with the perceived lack of action to address housing issues coupled with the belief that the Valley has missed out on securing housing, especially from the province, because it hasn't 'spoken with one voice.'

What Are the Options?

There are numerous options for carrying on the work that has begun. The options range from establishing a regional body under the auspices of the regional district or a partnership of local government jurisdictions, to creating a new stand-alone body, to attaching the new body to an existing community organization. These options are presented and discussed below.

A. Local Government Organization

New RD service

- The establishment of a regional district service for addressing housing affordability and homelessness is a proven and increasingly used approach in BC. It recognizes that homelessness and housing affordability issues are regional in origin and impact, requiring concerted, efficient, effective, and accountable regional coordination and support. However, based on our discussions with local stakeholders, there is an apparent reluctance to establish a new CVRD service. This is not uncommon. Experience shows that in areas where a regional district service has been established, it has usually been achieved incrementally – it did not happen overnight. There needs to be a clear understanding of regional district roles, costing and service delivery mechanisms and, equally important, a readiness to choose a different approach if others have not worked as well as desired.

- There is also some reluctance on the part of (some) local governments to take on a more assertive housing responsibility, seeing it as senior government downloading, that if once accepted would be a 'slippery slope' to more responsibility (and cost).

Sub regional service (e.g. a regional district/ municipal partnership

- There are indications of some interest on the part of (some) local jurisdictions in the possibility of establishing a sub-regional district service (i.e. a partnership between (some) municipalities and the regional district. However, it is not at all certain that this approach would be acceptable to all local government jurisdictions.

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Part of an existing RD service (e.g. RGS/Administration)

- The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) includes the development of a housing strategy as a goal. During the development of the RGS, a Technical Committee comprised of local planning staff was created – the first time for the region where planners met together on a regular basis. Extensive community consultation was also part of the RGS's development. As a result, there is a wealth of experience and skills to draw upon.

Municipal/ Regional District Task Force

- There is a precedent (the Cycling Task Force) where local governments in the Comox Valley have come together to support and pursue priorities. This approach has the benefit (as seen by some) of involving all the local government jurisdictions in the region, while avoiding the establishment of a new or expanded service within the Regional District.

B. A New Stand-Alone Organization

Establish a new commission/ not-for-profit society/ corporation

- Any new organization would need to find resources to maintain its work (e.g. staff and office space). Where this funding would come from is not clear, unless local governments provide seed funding to get it started and working.

- For some, the advantage of this approach is that it would be at arms-length from local government – there is some indication that community organizations are not entirely trusting of local governments' willingness to seriously address housing and homelessness.

C. Existing Community Organization

Existing organization with relevant mandate

- There is no existing not-for-profit social service/housing organization within the Comox Valley that currently has the capacity (including essential skill sets) to provide the kind of organization that is needed – nor is it certain that they would be willing to take on more than they are doing now.

- Existing umbrella social service/housing organizations are volunteer-based, with no paid staff – "they are already working beyond capacity, can't ask volunteers to do more". For example: AHERO and the Social Planning Society are networking organizations whose members work for a variety of other organizations – neither has dedicated paid staff or office space.

Existing organization that expands its mandate

- Existing housing providers are stretched – many face significant challenges managing the housing they own/operate, leaving no additional capacity to take on new responsibilities.

- The Economic Development Society has been suggested as a possibility, particularly as housing has an economic development component and is already supported by local governments in the Valley. It has not been possible, however, to assess the efficacy of this approach, despite numerous attempts to contact the Society's CEO to scope its potential.

As part of trying to determine what would be the best option for the future, we sought the views of various key stakeholders for their advice. The generally preferred view is to choose a path that:

- takes an incremental approach, starting modestly and demonstrating value over time
- has a strategic planning, coordinating, communication and consultation focus (rather than direct housing implementation/delivery role)
- is connected directly to and has the support and backing of local government
- maintains connectivity with other community entities, e.g. housing and service providers, funding and service delivery agencies, and the wider community
- builds support, trust and respect amongst all stakeholders, including the wider community
- provides a focus in the region for addressing housing and homelessness.

Based on our experience working in and with many communities and governance structures and our discussions with a variety and range of local stakeholders, the choice of the 'best path forward' should be based on its ability or potential to exhibit the following:

- **Transparency** – demonstrating fair and open, clear and understandable workings, decision processes, and finances
- **Accountability** – being accessible and answerable to the community (including local government)
- **Efficiency** – making the best use of existing resources (e.g. municipal and regional planning and administrative staff) and actions (policy strategies and regulatory mechanisms/tools)
- **Effectiveness** – producing outcomes that successfully address housing and homelessness
- **Flexibility** – responding practically to existing and emerging local needs and circumstances
- **Inclusiveness** – involving stakeholder, community, local and senior governments and institutional partners

> - **Transparency**
> - **Accountability**
> - **Efficiency**
> - **Effectiveness**
> - **Flexibility**
> - **Inclusiveness**

The Recommended Path Forward

1. Recommendation: The Best Fit and Path Forward

We recommend establishing a Comox Valley Housing and Homelessness Task Force that would be an advisory body responsible to the area's local government jurisdictions (e.g. Town of Comox, City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, and CVRD Electoral Areas 'A', 'B', and 'C'). The establishment of the Task Force can be done by Council/RD resolution.

2. Recommendation: Purpose/ Mandate

The Task Force would make recommendations to the member jurisdictions concerning matters related to building the Comox Valley's capacity to address homelessness and housing affordability – similar to the purpose outlined in the CVRD's Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness Terms of Reference.

3. Recommendation: Membership/ Composition

Based on the recent and successful Standing Committee experience, we recommend the Task Force's membership comprise both elected and community members – enabling a direct link to and draw on the community's perspectives, expertise and partnerships.

Elected members (4) would be appointed by the Town of Comox, City of Courtenay, Village of Cumberland, and one member from the CVRD Electoral Areas 'A', 'B', and 'C').

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Community members (6) would be solicited by public advertisement and chosen by the elected members of the Task Force.

We recommend that the community membership be based on a sector approach, similar to that used for the Standing Committee, and increasingly being used throughout the province. The various sectors should include: business/ economic development, housing/development, faith communities, First Nations, social service providers, health, funders, and justice.

4. **Recommendation: Roles/ Responsibilities**

The following roles/ responsibilities should form the basis of the Task Force's work:

- **Advocacy** – providing a voice/support for homelessness and housing affordability initiatives
- **Community and neighbourhood consultation and engagement** – raising public awareness, understanding, and support of/for housing affordability and homelessness issues and best practices
- **Communication** – using a variety of tools, e.g. media (including social media), events, presentations, websites, etc.
- **Information and analysis** – undertaking research related to housing and homelessness, advising and assisting local government actions (strategies, regulatory initiatives, policy planning and decision-making) to facilitate affordable housing development, providing information about funding opportunities and housing needs, identifying priorities
- **Partnerships** – facilitating, building, and strengthening links between/ among local and senior governments, non-profits, and the private sectors (private property owners, developers, business) – facilitating community-based partnerships and initiatives
- **Networking** – establishing and working with local, provincial, and national housing organizations
- **Funding** – identifying funding opportunities and sources, assisting in leveraging/ securing public and private investment, reviewing and recommending applications for funding for non-market and low end of market housing
- **Coordination** – supporting the coordination of housing and housing related services (e.g. advocacy, consultation, communication, research, partnering, networking, and funding development) to avoid duplication and address gaps
- **Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting progress** – to the community, local governments, and funders.

5. **Recommendation: Resources**

The Task Force <u>cannot</u> operate effectively without dedicated resources. It is not realistic to think otherwise – relying on already stretched volunteers is a non-starter. Resources (e.g. meeting/ office space, staff, consultant services) can be provided in-kind, through grants and donations.

Administrative support needs to be provided on an-going, consistent basis: to put together agendas, record minutes, organize meetings/ community events, respond to information requests, etc. Funding and in-kind donations for this should be provided from the local government jurisdictions involved in the Task Force.

Local technical staff support (e.g. local planners) from the various local government jurisdictions in the area needs to be available. This can be done on an as required basis, depending on the nature of the expertise required and resources permitting.

However, local technical support, will, in all likelihood, need to be augmented if real progress in addressing housing development is to be made. There is no development expertise currently available within the area's local governments. Amongst the capacity challenges, noted by housing providers, local planners and administrators, are: the lack of time and expertise in the not-for-profit housing sector for putting together development proposals that can obtain local government approval on an expeditious basis and the need to put together effective funding and service partnerships to facilitate housing development.

Consideration should be given to purchasing the services of a development consultant, selected through a proposal call, who can assist the Task Force with some of the functions described under Task Force Roles above. Assistance with a call for proposals to acquire such services could be provided by BCNPHA as part of their member services.

Such expertise can be funded in several ways: grants from local government, possibly augmented by an allocation from Chances Gaming Centre and funding from other sources (e.g. BC Housing, CMHC, MCFD), institutions (e.g. VIHA), foundations (e.g. Vancouver Foundation, Real Estate Foundation), granting organizations (United Way, credit unions), and community and business donors. It may also be possible to re-coup some or all of the cost of this service from housing developers.

The amount of funds from the area's local governments required to support the Task Force will depend on what/how much can be contributed in-kind. Assuming that administrative support will be provided in-kind, we estimate and recommend that initially an annual local grant of $25,000 should be provided to support/augment the work of the Task Force. How this is allocated amongst the various jurisdictions will be up to them, but we recommend a practice used in other areas – 50% based on property assessment and 50% based on population.

6. **Recommendation: Meeting and Reporting**

The Task Force should meet on a monthly basis and provide quarterly reports to each of the local government jurisdictions represented. Meetings should be open to the public.

The various sector representatives should be expected to keep in touch with the other key stakeholders in their sector. This is not meant to be an onerous task, but basically one of ensuring that the lines of communication are open – it can be done by meeting or by email. From time to time, a Roundtable, could be convened to solicit community stakeholder input and report on progress to date.
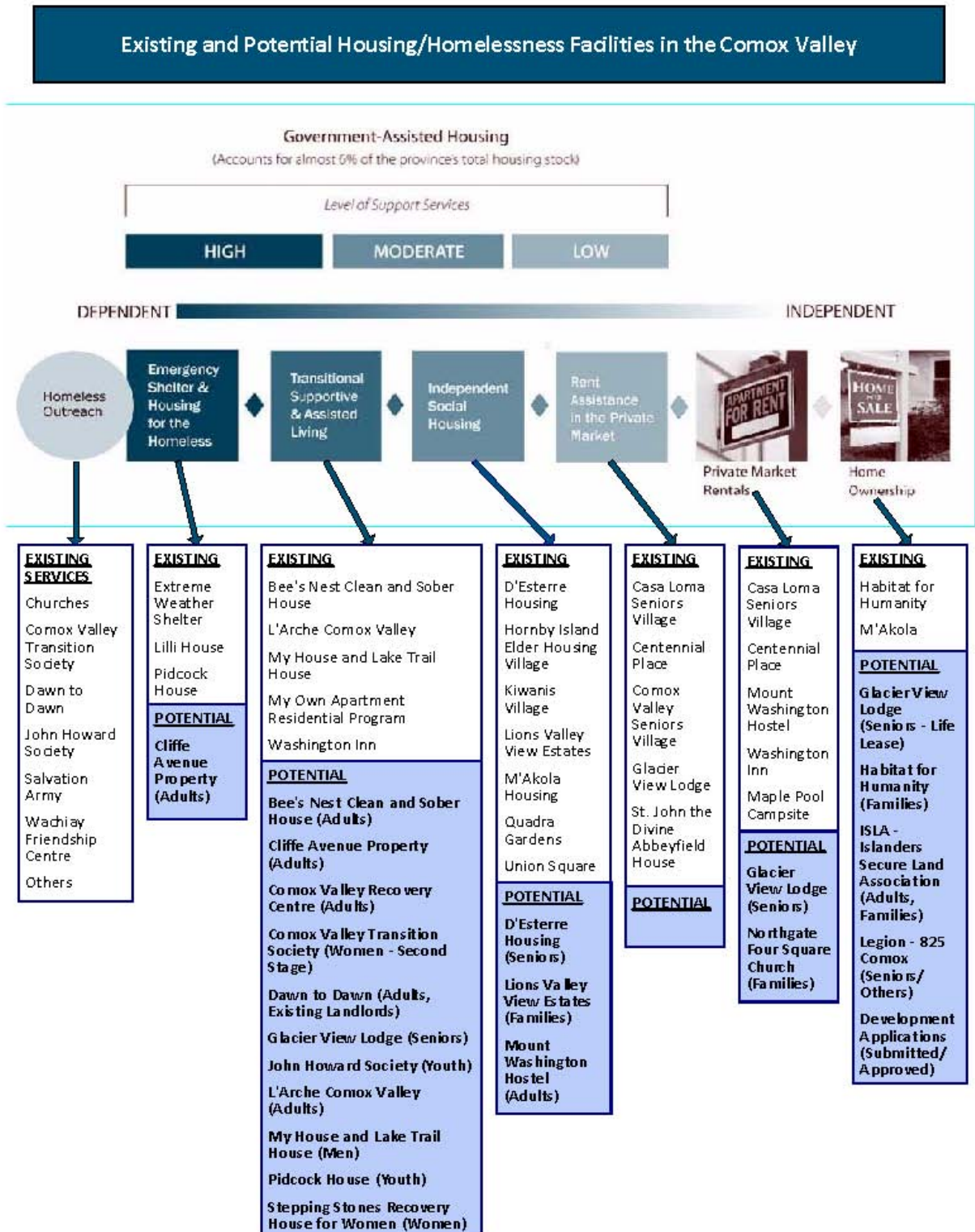
The Task Force should report out to the wider community annually. This could take the form of an annual report and/or a community forum.

Communication with the Task Force should usually occur through the Chair or a designate appointed by the Chair.

Attachment 1 – Consultant Scope of Services (CVRD RFP August 2010)

- Independent research.

- Open house / public meeting before September 15, 2010 that invites public, service providers and public safety representatives with aim towards:

  - recommending to the CVRD board chair a membership list for the CVRD housing and homelessness standing committee
  - exploring assertive community treatment (ACT) team concept
  - developing community understanding of and support for: secondary suites, rental accommodations, single room occupancy (SRO) units, emergency shelters, and supportive housing.

- Developing recommendations for models that would provide sustainable funding to address affordable housing and homelessness.

- Providing support to the CVRD housing and homelessness standing committee including:

  - preparing reports for the committee's consideration regarding grant opportunities, barriers to affordable housing, emergency shelter land acquisition, development opportunities, community capacity development, etc
  - coordinating and attending committee meetings and providing professional advice to committee members and staff (note: committee meetings should occur bi-monthly in coordination with CVRD staff and the consultant may engage smaller working groups to focus on specific issues).

- Meeting with local government staff and community organizations to:

  - identify barriers for increasing options for affordable housing
  - provide tangible examples of tools to assist in developing range of housing options.

- Developing a database that lists funding opportunities (federal, provincial, local government and private sector) and examples of suitable projects that would increase community capacity to address homelessness.

- Developing an inventory of organizations in the Comox Valley that are providing the range of housing services including analyses showing were gaps exist. Inventory to include organizations' key contacts, roles, mandates, goals etc.

- Coordinating workshops to be hosted locally for and / or organizing for local housing and homelessness organization members and advocates to attend conferences related to housing and homelessness and capacity building.

- Recommending to the CVRD the best path forward to address homelessness in the Comox Valley, considering: ongoing funding commitments if required; jurisdictional authority to undertake works if required; and partnership opportunities.

Attachment 2 – Existing and Potential Housing/Homelessness Facilities

Existing and Potential Housing/Homelessness Facilities in the Comox Valley

Government-Assisted Housing
(Accounts for almost 6% of the province's total housing stock)

Level of Support Services

HIGH | MODERATE | LOW

DEPENDENT — INDEPENDENT

Homeless Outreach

Emergency Shelter & Housing for the Homeless

Transitional Supportive & Assisted Living

Independent Social Housing

Rent Assistance in the Private Market

Private Market Rentals

Home Ownership

EXISTING SERVICES

Churches

Comox Valley Transition Society

Dawn to Dawn

John Howard Society

Salvation Army

Wachiay Friendship Centre

Others

EXISTING

Extreme Weather Shelter

Lilli House

Pidcock House

POTENTIAL

Cliffe Avenue Property (Adults)

EXISTING

Bee's Nest Clean and Sober House

L'Arche Comox Valley

My House and Lake Trail House

My Own Apartment Residential Program

Washington Inn

POTENTIAL

Bee's Nest Clean and Sober House (Adults)

Cliffe Avenue Property (Adults)

Comox Valley Recovery Centre (Adults)

Comox Valley Transition Society (Women - Second Stage)

Dawn to Dawn (Adults, Existing Landlords)

Glacier View Lodge (Seniors)

John Howard Society (Youth)

L'Arche Comox Valley (Adults)

My House and Lake Trail House (Men)

Pidcock House (Youth)

Stepping Stones Recovery House for Women (Women)

EXISTING

D'Esterre Housing

Hornby Island Elder Housing Village

Kiwanis Village

Lions Valley View Estates

M'Akola Housing

Quadra Gardens

Union Square

POTENTIAL

D'Esterre Housing (Seniors)

Lions Valley View Estates (Families)

Mount Washington Hostel (Adults)

EXISTING

Casa Loma Seniors Village

Centennial Place

Comox Valley Seniors Village

Glacier View Lodge

St. John the Divine Abbeyfield House

POTENTIAL

EXISTING

Casa Loma Seniors Village

Centennial Place

Mount Washington Hostel

Washington Inn

Maple Pool Campsite

POTENTIAL

Glacier View Lodge (Seniors)

Northgate Four Square Church (Families)

EXISTING

Habitat for Humanity

M'Akola

POTENTIAL

Glacier View Lodge (Seniors - Life Lease)

Habitat for Humanity (Families)

ISLA - Islanders Secure Land Association (Adults, Families)

Legion - 825 Comox (Seniors/ Others)

Development Applications (Submitted/ Approved)

Attachment 3 – Examples of Organizational/Governance Structures in BC

For many years, local governments (municipal and regional, large and small throughout BC have established (and are increasingly establishing) structures to deal with housing affordability and homelessness. Provincial legislation requires local governments to address housing affordability in their Official Community Plans and Regional Growth Strategies. Typical approaches are described below.

Some Regional Examples

Capital Regional District
The Housing Secretariat was established in 2007 by the CRD Board. The Secretariat has a mandate to develop a coordinated approach within the Region to increase the supply of affordable housing by: facilitating the development of partnerships between non-profit housing organizations, private property owners and developers, and providing information about funding opportunities. The Secretariat also acts as Administrator of the Regional Housing Trust Fund and participates on several local committees aimed at increasing the supply of affordable housing in the CRD.

The Capital Region Housing Corporation is a non-profit provider of over 1200 rental units of affordable housing. It is a wholly owned subsidiary of the CRD, established in 1982 to build, purchase, lease/rent, acquire, sell, manage and mortgage real and personal property to be used in conjunction with public housing. It is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of CRD Directors/ Alternates and members of the community who are appointed by the CRD Board.

Metro Vancouver
Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (MVHC) owns and operates 50 plus affordable rental housing sites across the Lower Mainland. Board members are appointed elected officials.

Greater Vancouver Regional Steering Committee on Homelessness
The Committee, established in 2000, arose from the recognition that homelessness is an issue in every Metropolitan Vancouver community and the need for a regional response to the growing problem of homelessness.

The RSCH now includes over 40 members representing service providers, community-based organizations, business and labour, and all levels of government. The Committee has grown to become the regional voice on homelessness. Metro Vancouver, in partnership with United Way of the Lower Mainland, provides administrative and policy support to the Committee.

Some Municipal Examples

Nanaimo
Has a staff-led Steering Committee that oversees the Homelessness Action Plan, monitors and reports out to the community, ensures that progress is being made, and advocates to senior governments as required. Committee members include elected officials, senior city staff and representatives from service providers, VIHA, the business associations and the broader community.

Kelowna
Has a Council Housing Committee (established in 1985), supported by staff, whose mandate spans the continuum of affordable housing homelessness. Membership (12) includes up to 2 councillors as non-voting liaison members.

Cranbrook
The Accessible Housing Committee, established in 2009, to assess the need for accessible (affordable and social) housing and identify a practical, comprehensive approach to addressing that need and advise Council accordingly'. This includes: investigating and reporting on existing resources available to support, assist, supplement or provide for accessible housing; holding direct discussions with representatives of all levels of government, crown corporations, agencies and community based service organizations to explore, define and report on practical, timely mobilization of resources; undertake community consultations; facilitate cooperative inter-agency implementation of accessible housing strategies. The Committee has 6 community/agency members and 1 Council member. The Chair or designate reports to Council every 6 months. Budget is $10,000 with technical and administrative support provided by the City.

Campbell River
Newly established, the Community Homelessness Coalition mandate is to facilitate and coordinate community responses to homelessness by: securing and developing affordable long-term housing; developing and implementing a plan to enhance day-time services; promoting public awareness and understanding; evaluating the effectiveness of activities and programs, identifying gaps and duplication; liaising with all levels of government. Coalition members include a diverse cross-section of the community, including elected officials from all levels as ex officio members. Technical and administrative staff support is provided, as well as a budget of $5,000.

Some Municipal Examples cont'd

Whistler
The Whistler Housing Authority (formed in 1997) is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Resort Municipality of Whistler. It has 2 parts: the Whistler Housing Authority Ltd, a municipal corporation that is legally responsible for resident restricted housing developments and the Whistler Valley Housing Society, a volunteer, non-profit society formed under the Societies Act as a legal entity qualified for acquiring CMHC funding. The Housing Authority Board of Directors has 7 community members appointed by Council (4 also sit, along with 3 other directors on the WVHS Board).

Kamloops
The Social Planning Council (established in 1993) acts in an advisory capacity to City Council on social issues in the community, including housing and homelessness. The committee consists of 9 citizens-at-large, ex-officio members from City staff and various social service agencies. It makes recommendations to Council on a wide variety of social concerns, planning issues and development of municipal strategies to meet community social needs. The committee also assists with the development of the Community and Social Plans, and in the review of Social Planning Grant applications.

Surrey
The Surrey Homelessness and Housing Society was established to oversee the Homelessness and Housing Fund. The Society's Board of Directors is chaired by a Councillor, and consists of 2 Council members and cross-sectoral community stakeholders from the business, faith and non-profit sectors as well as the community-at-large. Staff are ex officio members.

Some Stand-Alone Examples

Greater Victoria
The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) is a registered society born out of a need to address homelessness at a regional level. As a society it is a partnership of local service providers, non-profit organizations, all levels of government, business and the faith community, operating outside local government structures. The Society has had to secure funding to pay overhead and operational costs.

Nelson
The Nelson and District Community Resources Society, administers the contract for the Nelson Committee on Homelessness.

The Nelson Housing Forum (started in 2009) is made up mostly of local service providers that cooperate and collaborate on the increasing issue of housing affordability in Nelson. The intent of its monthly meetings is to provide a space for sharing information, resources, expertise, and communication amongst various groups that are working on housing/affordability/transition issues within the City.

Some Other Examples

Comox Valley Economic Development Society
The Comox Valley Economic Development office was formed in 1988 and is a non-profit society with annual funding from the City of Courtenay, Town of Comox, Village of Cumberland, and the Comox Valley Regional District areas A, B and C. The Board of Directors is comprised of 13 members; six elected officials from each of the municipalities and regional district areas, six elected Directors from the private sector, and one Ex-officio Past-President. Reporting: the economic development officer coordinates a meeting with the chief administrative officers of the CVRD, Village of Cumberland, City of Courtenay and Town of Comox at least semi-annually during the Term of the Contract to review the work plan objectives as it relates to the Services the Society provides.

Comox Valley Environmental Council
The Council' is a 20 year-old non-profit society which acts as an umbrella organization for 18 local environmental organizations and local Municipal and Regional representatives. Its purpose is to: act in an advisory capacity to government, industrial and development agencies; enhance the planning process; act as a watchdog; support member organizations; promote and create change in fish enhancement activities. Membership ($25) is open to local organizations with environmental concerns. There is local government representation on the Council. CVEC meets about seven times a year, meetings are open to the public, are generally with a small group of people, and often include a short presentation of some local issue.

Some Other Examples cont'd

CRD Arts Committee and Council
The Council is a volunteer committee that provides advice on arts policy and program development for the Capital Region. They are also responsible for the adjudication of applications to the project and operational support programs. The Advisory Council (12 community volunteers) is appointed by the CRD Arts Committee. The membership represents a wide range of experience and interest in the arts and other professions. Advisory Council members are non-remunerated. The Council provides advice to the Arts Committee on policies to foster and promote the arts, reviews, adjudicates and making recommendations to the Arts Committee on operating and project grant applications The Arts Advisory Council holds regular meetings each month and holds an annual, half-day planning session in the spring, as well as three special meetings for the adjudication of Operating Grant applications. A Funding Sub-committee meets twice a year for review of Project Grant applications.

The CRD Arts Committee (7 members) is comprised of elected officials, appointed by the CRD Chair. The Committee is responsible for support and development of the arts in the region through: overseeing operational and project support to arts organizations; considering policies aimed at creating an environment conducive to a wide range of arts activities; and approval of overall Arts Development budget.

Greater Victoria Housing Affordability Partnership (HAP)
HAP was a public-private non-profit group working together to address housing affordability concerns and raise awareness of emerging housing issues and opportunities in the Capital Region. It evolved from a community development initiative in the city of Victoria and operated in the Capital Region for the last decade. The Capital Regional Housing Corporation and BC Housing provided grants to get HAP launched. From its beginnings HAP evolved into a unique cross-sectoral partnership with representation on its Steering Committee from the public, private, and not-for profit sectors as well is key sectors of the housing and financial industry. Members were expected to bring the perspective of their sector and their individual skills and experience. For a number of years, HAP activities were coordinated through a contracted position; more recently, on an interim basis, administrative support for the Steering Committee has been provided by the Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria – the Secretariat. Over the years, funding for HAP was raised from a number of different sources (e.g. BC Housing, BC Real Estate Foundation CRHC, Coast Capital, and VanCity).

South Okanagan-Similkameen Conservation Program (SOSCP) and Partners Environmental Planning Initiative
This innovative approach is gaining attention from a number of other partnership initiatives focused on sustainable land and resource planning. What makes the South Okanagan distinctive is that several local governments have pooled resources to share the services of an environmental planner. This has resulted in consistency and a 'made in the South Okanagan' approach to a proven planning tool.

CitySpaces Recommendation
- Creating a housing function for the CVRD.
- Creating a Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness.
- Creating an Advisory Committee on Housing and Homelessness.
- Creating a part-time position of Housing Planner.