

Pilot project aims to speed up affordable housing

(Penticton, BC – March 1, 2024) – A pilot project that would see the City work with non-profits to assist in the development of affordable housing projects is on the Council agenda this Tuesday.

“We know the need for affordable housing is growing and one of the Official Community Plan-Housing Task Force recommendations was for the City to find new ways to support non-profit housing proponents to develop new units,” says Steven Collyer, the City’s housing and policy initiatives manager. “This innovative pilot project would provide a way for us to partner with non-profits to unlock the potential for new housing, access senior government funding, and help meet council’s priority of attainable and accessible housing.”

Under the proposal, non-profits would be able to access funds from the City’s Affordable Housing Amenity Reserve for pre-development work to give them a better chance of success when accessing capital grants from senior levels of government.

According to the City’s 2023 Housing Needs Assessment Currently, there is a backlog of 162 individuals seeking non-market housing, and an estimated 172 to 286 additional subsidized housing units may be required by 2031.

“One of the challenges we’ve heard from groups like 100 More Homes is that when applying for capital grants they need to ensure the projects are ‘shovel ready’ and that the architectural plans are in place to allow for immediate construction,” says Jamie Lloyd-Smith, the City’s social development specialist. “We’re expecting more funding opportunities from senior levels of government this year, and funders are increasingly looking for projects that demonstrate strong partnerships. This pilot would allow our non-profits to be in a much stronger position to receive funding and build the needed housing.”

As an example, the report notes that in 2021 funds were used for pre-development work for the city-owned land on 2509 South Main Street (formerly Shielings Motel). That work included engaging an architect to produce concept plans for an affordable housing project. The final concept was for a 56-unit apartment development on the site and a funding application was made to BC Housing in late 2023.

The report is asking that \$100,000 be transferred from the Affordable Housing Amenity Contribution Reserve for the one-year Affordable Housing Pilot Funding Program.

The full report can be found at www.Penticton.ca/agendas

Media Contact:

250-490-2339

communications@penticton.ca