

## **CITY OF NANAIMO**

### **BUSINESS CASE – Community Development: Manager, Social Planning**

#### **CURRENT OVERVIEW**

In recent years, the field of social planning has grown in importance to the City as the community grapples with a myriad of complex issues including homelessness, seniors, childcare, food and vulnerable populations.

Significant new policy documents have been developed including:

- Nanaimo's Affordable Housing Strategy (August 2018) which provides a framework for the City to work with other levels of government, the private sector and nonprofit organizations to facilitate the development of affordable housing. The strategy also assists the City to establish policies and regulations that allow them to effectively respond to development applications.
- Age-Friendly City Plan (July 2019) which sets out a number of objectives and strategies to address the barriers that lead to social isolation for adults over the age of 55 in the City. The Strategy sets out a number of actions requiring facilitation and implementation by the City lead by the City's social planners.

In the fall of 2019, Council established the Health and Housing Task Force to work with the Nanaimo Homeless Coalition to identify gaps or overlaps in current service provision and to make recommendations on a new holistic approach to addressing homelessness in Nanaimo. The Task Force membership includes key service providers, the RCMP, Island Health, SFN, the United Way, Service Canada and BC Housing. The recommendations of the Task Force are anticipated in the fall of 2020. It is assumed a number of the key implementation items will be delegated to City staff.

In July 2020, the City entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with BC Housing to build new housing in the community over the next few years. The landmark MOU includes new developments proposed for six sites around the city. It includes three affordable rental buildings with approximately 125 homes for family and individuals. It also includes four purpose build permanent supportive housing developments with approximately 190 homes for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

In addition, the Social Planners assist with grant programs, provide a valuable facilitation role with nonprofit partners and help shape City policy from a social sustainability perspective.

#### **Current Staffing – Social Planning**

- One Manager, Community Planning (responsible for OCP, Neighbourhood Planning, Social Planning)
- Two Social Planners

## **BUSINESS ISSUE**

The current workload placed on the two social planners and the Manager, Community Planning is significant. The Manager, Community Planning is leading the Reimagine Nanaimo process and directs four other planning staff in the Section.

The social planning file has grown to a size where a dedicated Manager, Social Planning is warranted.

## **EXPECTED OUTCOME**

Introduction of a Social Planning Manager is anticipated to:

- Increase capacity & availability staff to work on social planning issues;
- Advance key projects such as the Affordable Housing Strategy, the BC Housing MOU and the action items from the Health and Housing Task Force ; and
- Enable the Manager of Community Planning to focus on long range and neighbourhood planning initiatives, especially the Reimagine Nanaimo process.

## **OPTIONS**

### **Option #1 – Add a Manager, Social Planning**

Create a new management position reporting to the Director, Community Development to oversee the implementation of the City's social planning responsibilities.

Benefits:

- Increased capacity/availability;
- Ability to advance key social planning files such as Affordable Housing Strategy, BC Housing MOU and the actions items from the Health and Housing Task Force;
- Provides increased supervision and leadership for the social planners;
- Will increase City's presence around key social planning functions and show an increased leadership role; and
- Enables the Manager, Community Planning to focus on key strategic initiatives such Reimagine Nanaimo.

Weaknesses:

- Permanent increase to the operating budget of Community Development

Financial Analysis:

- The position is anticipated to be a management level 7, with an annual salary of \$127,948 plus benefits for an estimated total of \$158,774.
- Additional annual cost are anticipated at \$5,600 for membership, professional development, smart phone, mileage and computer charges.
- One-time cost upon the creation of the position is projected at \$2,700. This includes the purchase of phones (smart and desk), and computer.

## **Option #2 – Maintain Status Quo**

### Benefits:

- No increase to operating budgets

### Weaknesses:

- There will be capacity issues in implementing the Affordable Housing Strategy, BC Housing MOU and Health and Housing Task Force Recommendations.
- The delivery of Reimagine Nanaimo could also be impacted as the Manager of Community Planning will need to continue to share their time between the two fields.

### Financial Analysis:

N/A

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Option #1 is recommended