

DATE: June 20, 2024**FILE:** 6430-01**TO:** Chair and Directors
Regional District Board**FROM:** James Warren
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by James Warren
Chief Administrative Officer**J. Warren****RE: Strategic Planning Session Outcome****Purpose**

To present the strategic planning session outcome and confirm actions items related to the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board's focus on non-market rental housing.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

THAT the immediate-, medium- and longer-term actions associated with housing, and specifically related to non-market rental housing as the priority focus, be approved as described in the staff report dated June 20, 2024.

Executive Summary

The CVRD Board regularly engages in strategic planning ([2023-26 term of office Strategic Plan](#)) to set a high-level course for priorities and initiatives affecting the Comox Valley. In June 2023, the Board recognized the need for actions in response to housing affordability and determined its focus to be on non-market rental housing. On May 30, 2024, in a strategic planning session facilitated by Allison Habkirk, the Board received information on three bodies of work related to housing:

- RGS Housing Action Plan
- Homelessness Needs Assessment and Community Plan
- Direct Action Feasibility Study

The May 30 Strategic Planning Workshop Report is attached (appendix A) to this staff report. To summarize the outcome of the May 30 session, several immediate, medium and longer-term actions for "CVRD non-market housing" are being considered and would need Board ratification:

- **Immediate actions** (July to December 2024)
 - o Incorporate May 30 feedback from Directors into the three bodies of work (1: housing action plan, 2: homelessness needs assessment and

- community plan, and 3: direct action feasibility study) and will be brought back to the board for approval.
- CVRD to continue providing homelessness supports through function 451 and the Coalition to End Homelessness, understanding this is an area of provincial responsibility.
- Continue to fund function 450 for acquiring lands for an emergency shelter and/or supportive housing
- **Medium term** (initiating in September 2024 and target before June 2026)
 - Opportunity exists to consider funding towards non-market rental housing through supporting community projects in a similar manner as the board funds homelessness supports.
 - Amend functions 450 and/or 451 as needed, in order to provide necessary resources to initiatives the Board gives direction for.
- **Longer term** (identify key actions from the Direct Action Feasibility Study to incorporate into 2025 and subsequent financial plans)
 - Confirm the deliverables to be pursued from CVRD to support non-market housing, such as:
 - Provide supports to third parties to develop non-market housing
 - Acquire land/buildings for non-market housing
 - Development, acquisition and/or operation of non-market housing
 - Confirm the vehicle to support those non-market housing action, such as:
 - In-house
 - Contracted to third party contractor or non-profit
 - Housing corporation/agency

Staff are recommending the above noted actions be supported to enable further analysis and consideration. Engagement, reports and subsequent decisions will be presented to the Board as this work evolves. Alternatively, specific direction should be provided if there are substantive deviations from the noted actions.

Prepared by:

J. Warren

James Warren
 Chief Administrative
 Officer

Government and Community Interests Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

N/A	✓
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Attachments: Appendix A – Strategic Planning Workshop Report



WORKSHOP REPORT

Subject:	CVRD Strategic Planning 2024
Date:	June 13, 2024
Meeting Date:	May 30, 2024
Time:	8:30 am-3:00 pm
Location:	CVRD Civic Room
Prepared by:	Allison Habkirk BA MA MPA MCIP

Following the Fall 2022 local government elections, the CVRD Board met in January 2023 and again in June 2023 to develop the 2023-2026 CVRD Strategic Plan. The Electoral Area Services Committee also met in April 2023 to focus on input into the overall Board Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the Board in August 2023. Since that time the CRVD instituted regular Strategic Plan reporting which has provided the Board with opportunities to receive regular progress reports on the wide range of initiatives included in the plan.

At the June 2023 Strategic Plan Workshop special attention was given to the topic of affordable housing. At that time the Board expressed interest in focusing efforts on the non-market rental housing component of the Housing Wheelhouse. Since then the Board directed three Strategic Housing Projects be undertaken in relation to the Regional Growth Strategy : 1) Housing Action Plan, 2) Homelessness Needs Assessment and Community Plan, and 3) Direct Action Feasibility Study.

The objective of the May 30, 2024 CVRD Strategic Planning Workshop was to focus in on the topic of housing and build on the June 2023 Board direction and subsequent Strategic Housing Projects work that is currently underway.

The morning was spent hearing from Staff and consultants involved in the Strategic Housing Projects. Alana Mullaly and Jake Martens introduced the Strategic Housing Projects followed by presentations by each of the consultants working on the three projects.

The day generally followed the outline below.

8:30 am	Welcome and introductions	Chair & James Warren
	Session overview	Allison Habkirk
	Introduction of Strategic Housing Projects	Alana Mullally, CVRD
	Housing Action Plan	Courtney Lawrence
	Homelessness Needs Assessment and Community Plan	Lisa Moffatt
	Direct Action Feasibility Study	Sue Ritchie Raymond
12:25 pm – 1:00 pm	Lunch break	
1:00 pm – 3:00 pm	Board discussion	

The Board raised questions and offered comments on each of the projects. Key amongst these are noted below.

Housing Action Plan

- Number of goals could be reduced and the goals simplified to 1) a regional approach to housing and 2) increased non-market housing supply
- Rural housing issues are different than municipal

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- Limited public land available in the Comox Valley – the CVRD or other agency may need to subsidize land purchases
- A concern was raised that there is talk but no action
- Would like to focus on home sharing and matching over and underhoused people in both urban and rural areas

Homelessness Needs Assessment

- The question was raised expressing concern that the Homelessness Needs Assessment is a duplication of existing information
- The map in the study does not include Union Bay and the islands – there are housing initiatives on the islands e.g. Hornby
- The continuum graphic is helpful
- What proportion of homeless need supports beyond housing – need data on homeless needs/homeless profile

Direct Action

- There is a major gap in non-market housing and a gap in the housing construction sector to build housing
- Affordable housing is currently in the older existing stock – that’s where the Board should be focussed
- Municipalities and the Board should focus on approval processes and pre-approved plans
- There is no mention of co-op housing
- Would like to focus on non-market rental housing
- Concern regarding rural areas not eligible for \$40,000 secondary suite funding
- Would like to see an inventory of sites available for non-market housing
- Would like to see the CVRD secure land for non-market housing
- Would like to see a column for “effectiveness/impact” added to the matrix
- Partnering with non-profits will not allow for significant growth in non-market housing – would like forward facing centralization for building non-market rental housing
- Would like to see ratings for landlords and tenants
- Would like to see consideration of social impact bonds.

Following the lunch break the Board discussed the work to date and gave broad direction to staff on each of the key components. The flipchart notes from this discussion are attached as an addendum to this report.

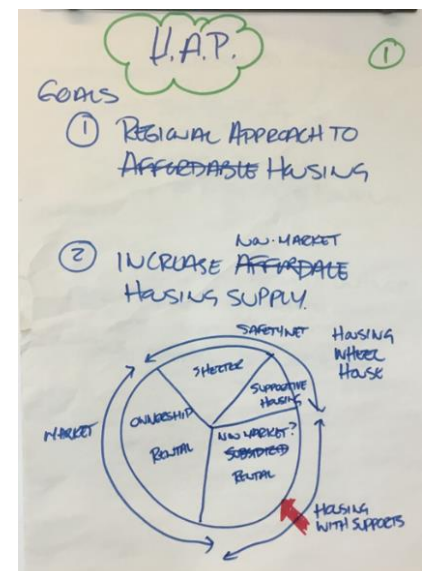
Housing Action Plan

At the outset of the discussions staff clarified that the Housing Action Plan will provide broad policy basis for all housing wheelhouse sectors in the CVRD.

With this clarification the Board discussions focussed on its particular interest in non-market rental housing.

The Board acknowledged it wants to take a regional approach to housing recognizing that the challenges are regional and individual jurisdictions are limited in their ability to adequately address the challenges.

It was suggested that the draft Housing Action Plan goals were too numerous and could benefit from editing into a few concise goals.

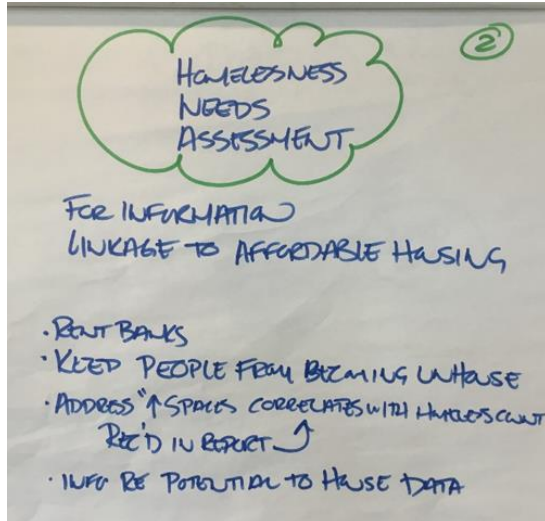


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Board members generally agreed to two primary goals for the Housing Action Plan.

1. Have a regional approach to housing
2. Increase the supply of non-market housing

Homelessness Needs Assessment

The Homelessness Needs Assessment research was provided for information. The Board acknowledged the work other agencies and authorities are doing in the emergency shelter sector of the Housing Wheelhouse; this is a vital component of a regional approach to housing. The work is also critical as ultimately/ideally members of the community who are unhoused will find likely housing in the non-market housing sector.

Direct Action Feasibility Study

Board discussion started with consideration of three simple alternatives for direct action:

1. **Support others**
 - Offer early support
 - Provide incentives
 - Support organizations with capacity
2. **Acquire land and offer for non-market rental development**
 - Acquire lands/buildings both private and public
3. **CVRD builds non-market rental housing**

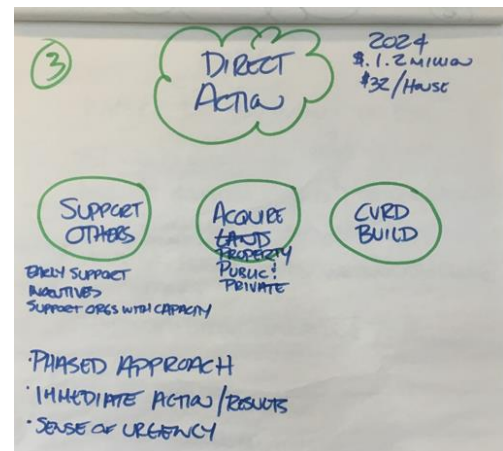
There was discussion of implementing a phased approach where the CVRD would continue to support others, continue to accumulate funds through Service 450, and work on establishing a housing agency.

There was a desire on the part of some directors to take immediate action and to communicate a sense of urgency in addressing the non-market rental housing needs while others expressed a desire to save the Service 450 funds for use by the housing agency. There was no consensus on the direction. There was also discussion of increasing the levies for Service 450; again, there was no consensus on this direction and a general sense that more time is needed to further consider options, along with better understanding the degree of effectiveness for the options.

Where do you want to be in 2026 with respect to your housing goals?

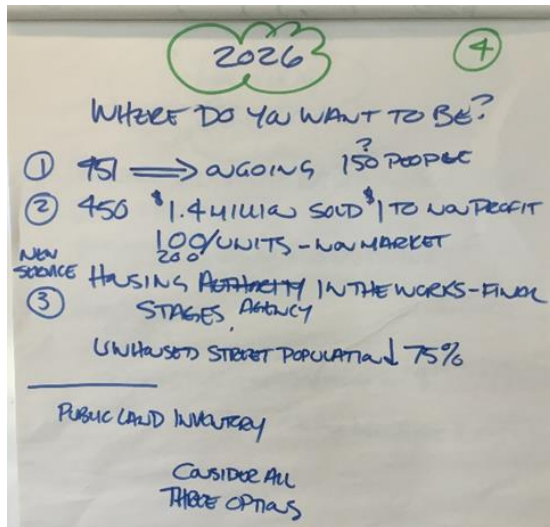
The Board was asked where it wanted to be in 2026 with respect to its housing goals.

This question generated good discussion and although there was not consensus the following were discussed and gained differing levels of support:



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1. Service 451 continues and potentially sheltering at least as many people as currently or perhaps as many as 150 people.
2. Service 450 funding, current and future reserves, is used to fund 100/200/300 units of housing in partnership with a not-for-profit organization. There was not strong agreement on this direction, some directors felt it would be better to hold onto the funds to be used by the housing agency and others wanted to see it used to develop units ASAP.
3. Housing agency is in the final stages of being established. There was good agreement on this direction.
4. Unhoused street population is reduced by 75%. There was general agreement on this direction.
5. A current inventory of public land available for non-market housing is available/ready to be accessed by partners or the housing agency. There was strong agreement on this direction.

Housing Agency

The Board considered 3 options for the structure of a housing agency:

- Partnership with existing agencies
- Capital Regional District model
- Start with land inventory and acquisition

The Board also considered possible objectives for the housing agency with the thought that form should follow function. Suggested objectives for the agency:

- should be able to grow to scale quickly,
- should be designed to be efficient with resources and produce impact for dollars spent, and
- should have the ability/capacity to work in multiple jurisdictions e.g. municipalities and electoral areas.

There was general agreement on these objectives and a leaning towards creating an agency that is modelled after the Capital Region Housing Corporation.

Next steps

Staff will take the feedback of the Board and integrate it into the Housing Action Plan, Homelessness Needs Assessment and Direct-Action projects. These will be placed on future Board agendas for discussion and direction.

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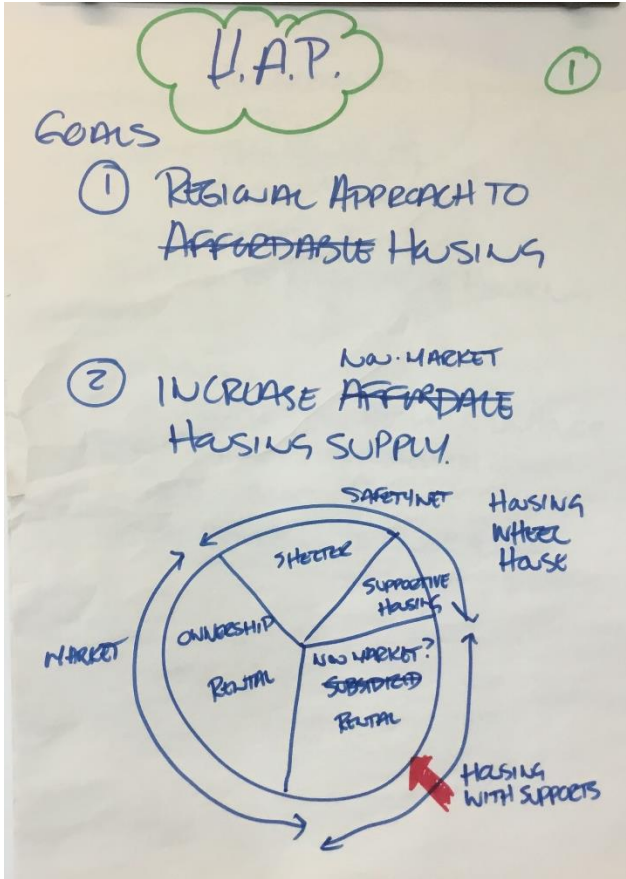
ADDENDUM: MAY 30, 2024 WORKSHOP NOTES FROM FLIP CHARTS

Housing Action Plan

Following on the morning discussion two key goals were identified for the Housing Action Plan

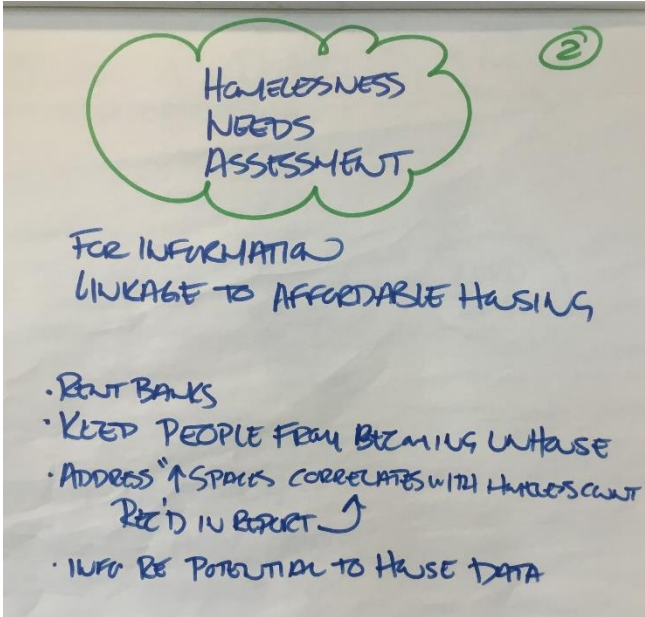
1. Have a regional approach to housing
2. Increase the supply of non-market housing

Board focus on non-market rental housing



Homelessness Needs Assessment

The morning's presentation was provided for information. Although the Board is not focused on the emergency shelter sector of the Housing Wheelhouse as others are providing services in this sector, the Homelessness Needs Assessment is integrally linked to the topics of affordable housing.



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Direct Action

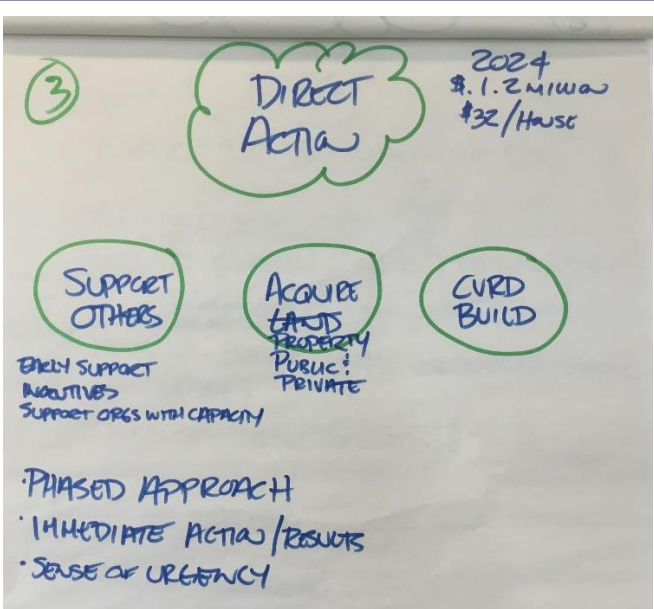
Options:

- 1. **Support others**
 - Offer early support
 - Provide incentives
 - Support organizations with capacity
- 2. **Acquire land and make available for non-market rental development**
 - Acquire lands both private and public
- 3. **CVRD builds non-market rental housing**

Consider a phased approach

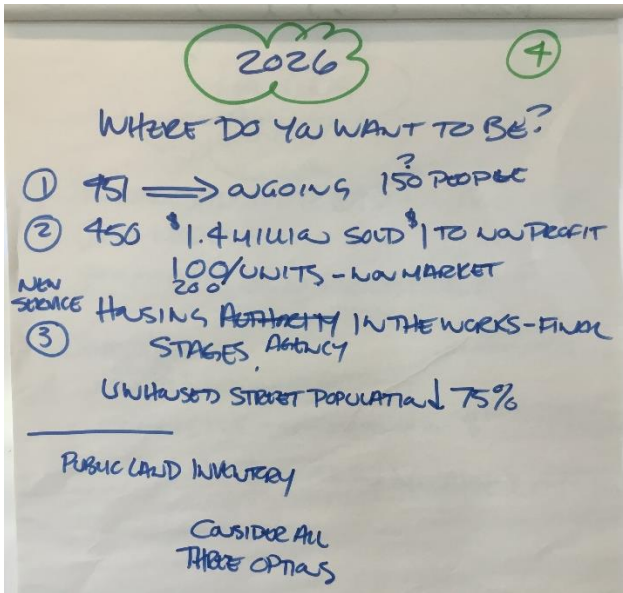
Take immediate action and produce results

Convey a sense of urgency



Where does the Board want to be in 2026?

- 1. Service 451 continuing and potentially sheltering at least as many people currently or perhaps as many as 150 people
- 2. Service 450 current funding of \$1.4 million is used to fund 100/200 units of housing in partnership with a not-for-profit organization. There was not strong agreement on this direction. Some felt it would be better to hold onto the funds to be used by the housing agency and others wanted to see it used for the development of units ASAP.
- 3. Housing agency is in the works – final stage
- 4. Unhoused street population is reduced by 75%
- 5. A current inventory of public land available for non-market housing is available



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Housing Agency

Options:

- Partnership with existing agencies
- CRD model
- Start with land inventory and acquisition

Housing agency objectives

- Grow to scale quickly
- Efficiency – ensure there is impact for dollars spent
- Ability/capacity to work in multiple jurisdictions e.g. municipalities and electoral areas

