

<b>Date:</b>	May 8, 2019	<b>File #:</b>	H5 – Housing Studies
<b>To:</b>	Chair Russell, and the Board of Directors		
<b>From:</b>	Donna Dean, Manager of Planning and Development		
<b>RE:</b>	UBCM Grant Opportunity – Housing Needs Reports Program		

## **Issue Introduction**

A staff report from Donna Dean, Manager of Planning and Development, regarding a grant opportunity from the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) to hire a consultant or consultants to conduct Housing Needs Reports for the Kootenay and Boundary areas.

## **History / Background Information**

An amendment to the *Local Government Act* in 2018 requires local governments to create housing needs reports (Division 22 of Part 14 of the *Local Government Act*). The housing needs reports will help local governments and the Province better understand and respond to housing needs across the Province.

Those reports will be taken into consideration when developing or amending official community plans; and in relation to policy statements and map designations respecting anticipated housing needs or housing policies for affordable, rental, and special needs housing.

In order to facilitate local governments creating or updating housing needs reports, UBCM has committed \$5 million in funding over three years. A maximum of \$200,000 is available for our entire regional district including the eight municipalities and five electoral areas based on population.

The first intake for grant applications is May 31, 2019 and subject to direction from the Board and support from the member municipalities an application will be submitted before the May 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.

## **Proposal**

If supported by the Board and member municipalities, the regional district would coordinate the hiring of a consultant(s) to complete the reports; one for the Kootenay area and one for the Boundary area. The information would be presented in a manner that the needs would be separated for each municipality and electoral area. The benefits of producing region wide reports include economies of scale, a consistent approach, and a template for future updates.

## **Implications**

Preparation of the grant application, the request for proposals process and contract management will have impacts on staff time in the Planning and Development and Finance Departments.

The timing coincides with the planned update of the Lower Columbia Region Housing Need and Demand Assessment, which was last updated in 2015 based on 2011 census data. Other studies have been done in the Boundary over the years, some of which require updating. Comprehensive housing needs assessments for the Kootenay and Boundary Areas, that are updated regularly, will be valuable resources to inform policy and to support grant applications for housing projects. This project also coincides with housing shortages in the City of Grand Forks and Electoral Area 'D'/Rural Grand Forks as a result of the catastrophic flooding in 2018; and staff housing shortages at Big White Ski Resort.

Resolutions of the participating municipalities is also required as part of the grant application. This report has been forwarded to staff at each member municipality to facilitate that.

Once completed, housing needs reports will have to be received by each local government and made available to the public.

## **Recommendation**

That the Regional District of Kootenay Boundary Board of Directors directs staff to submit an application to the Union of BC Municipalities for a grant to conduct Housing Needs Reports in the Kootenay and Boundary areas to a maximum of \$200,000 and FURTHER if the grant is approved amend the 2019 Financial Plan for Service 005 Planning and Development as follows: increase Miscellaneous Revenue Account 11590159 and the Operating Contract Account 12258235 by the appropriate amounts.