



February 24, 2014

CVRD Board of Directors
Comox Valley Regional District
600 Comox Road
Courtenay BC V9N 3P6

Mayor and Council
City of Courtenay
830 Cliffe Avenue
Courtenay BC V9N 2J7

Mayor and Council
Town of Comox
1809 Beaufort Avenue
Comox BC V9M 1R9

Mayor and Council
Village of Cumberland
2673 Dunsmuir Avenue Box 340
Cumberland BC V0R 1S0

Dear Local Government Councils and Board,

Building Housing Solutions Together
Comox Valley Housing Task Force Recommendations to Local Governments

Comox Valley local governments recognize the importance of access to safe, affordable, and appropriate housing for the health and success of our communities and since 2011 have supported the Housing Task Force (CVHTF) to build local capacity to address homelessness and affordable housing.

The CVHTF requests to make a presentation at each Municipality and the Regional District in time for 2014 budgets, and requests that the following recommendations be considered:

That the Comox Valley Regional District establish a service to collect funds regionally to address affordable housing and homelessness; and, that within that service, a Local Government Non Profit Corporation be established to fulfill the service mandate.

In addition, that local governments provide \$15,000 in bridge funding (Appendix 1) to the CVHTF in order to bring an orderly closure to the work of the CVHTF, ensure on-going progress on local homelessness and housing matters, and a smooth transition to the next governance entity. Any remaining funds would be turned over to the new Local Government Non-Profit, should the service be established and a new entity created, or returned to local governments.

Direction and support for a permanent, supported backbone organization comes from both the work done in this community over the past 6 years and solidified by the most recent “Building Housing Solutions Together” events hosted by the CVHTF. The Affordable Housing Community Forum (Oct. 16, 2013), was attended by local and provincial professionals, elected officials and stakeholders. The Facilitated Discussion (Jan. 23, 2014) was attended by our local politicians, municipal staff, social service professionals, the faith community, housing providers and local business leaders. These events highlighted the willingness and need for our community to find solutions together. The Report and Recommendation from the Facilitated Discussion is attached for your information.

Why the CVHTF supports a Local Government Non Profit Corporation

1. Professional Expertise: The options considered at the January 23, 2014 Facilitated Discussion provide for a neutral, specialized housing services planner; however, with management by a separate non-profit board, the mandate for the service would be more accountable to all local governments and would be better able to equitably serve all four jurisdictions through delivery of a mutually supported strategy/plan.

2. Accountability and Transparency: Can be built in to the system, with funding conditions and regular service reviews.

3. Community Advisory: The Provincial Government, a major funder for supportive housing, has consistently indicated that the community needs to work together to achieve the success that has eluded us to date. Providing direct government service does not obviate the need for working together locally. A non-profit board ensures such continued effort.

4. Regional Participation: To avoid conflict, a regional service allows all jurisdictions to participate equitably, with confidence of continuity, and without potential conflict of interest between jurisdictions.

5. Common Plan: Every jurisdiction has issues with people becoming homeless or fighting to maintain housing, and the need for supportive housing crosses all jurisdictions. A regional plan that maintains the autonomy of each authority (over zoning, etc), allows buy-in to a comprehensive Comox-Valley wide plan.

6. Flexibility: Housing solutions in today's world require innovative partnerships and collaborations. Maintaining a separate entity from bureaucracy permits increased flexibility and allows for a more supportive role to advance housing solutions.

With your support for these two recommendations, we can all look forward to a bright new future for affordable housing services in the Comox Valley. Thank you for all your support in reaching this point and for your consideration today!

Sincerely,

Ronna-Rae Leonard, Chair
Comox Valley Housing Task Force

Attachments:
Report and Recommendation Jan 23rd CVHTF Facilitated Discussion

Appendix 1

CVHTF Budget Bridge Funding

Background:

When the CVHTF was established in July 2011, \$25,000 was assigned for administrative and contract services and \$75,000 for the Community Capacity grant program. An additional \$14,482 was assigned to the CVHTF in September 2011, which was divided between admin and contract services. The CVHTF also applied for and received, on behalf of the CVRD, a grant of \$5,000 from BC Healthy Communities for the Building Housing Solutions Together forum and facilitated session. This provided \$44,482 of funding from 2011 to date (averaging approximately \$15,000 per year) for the CVHTF to undertake the development and administration of the Community Capacity grant program and the Building Housing Solutions Together project, as well as support the work of the CVHTF.

Bridge Funding Budget:

Activity	Budget
Contracted Website Maintenance/upkeep	\$3600 per annum
General Administration	
Priority tasks to be completed (current CVHTF work left)	\$2000
Administrative support from March 2014 (10 hours per month plus supplies for 6 mnths)	\$2000
Administration Fee (Managing Funds in Trust)	\$2250
Support for establishment of new entity <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pursue funding opportunities• Preparation of public information regarding new entity• Continued networking and research on new entity• Logo/Website name change etc.• Follow-up implementation support for new entity	\$5,150
Total Budget Request	\$15,000