

DATE: March 28, 2019**FILE:** 5040-01**TO:** Chair and Directors
Committee of the Whole**FROM:** Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative OfficerSupported by Russell Dyson
Chief Administrative Officer*R. Dyson***RE: Review of Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service**

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide information on the Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service, Function 450.

Recommendation from the Chief Administrative Officer:

None. This report is provided for information.

Executive Summary

At the February 26, 2019 meeting of the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) Board, direction was provided for staff to investigate the current scope of the service and the ability of the CVRD to accept lands under this function.

A review of the service establishment bylaw (Appendix A) and relevant background information has identified the following:

- The service is specifically to acquire land for emergency shelter and supportive housing purposes.
- The service has seen minimal activity since 2013 with the board's interests redirected to the Comox Valley Homelessness Supports Service.
- The bylaw defines the terms "emergency shelter" and "supportive housing" which specifies that the latter term is a combination of housing and services intended as a cost-effective way to help people live more stable, productive lives. This definition precludes initiatives such as non-market rental housing and employee housing from being eligible under the bylaw.
- The service is able to accept and hold land and funding donated to the CVRD for the stated purpose.
- The annual costs of the service are apportioned among the participating areas on the basis of population.
- A review of the service is to be conducted every five years. As 2019 is the scheduled year for such a review, staff have identified this report for that purpose.

Prepared by:

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Concurrence:

J. Warren

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Stakeholder Distribution (Upon Agenda Publication)

None.	
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Background/Current Situation

The Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service was established in 2009 for the acquisition of land for the purposes of emergency shelter and supportive housing.

Originating from the CVRD’s Commission to End Homelessness and the City of Courtenay’s Mayor’s Task Force on Breaking the Cycle of Mental Illness, Addictions and Homelessness in the Comox Valley, the service was established to formalize a partnership between the CVRD and its member municipalities for funding land acquisitions for this purpose. Specifically, the service was contemplated as a key mechanism for Comox Valley Local Governments to acquire lands that could then be utilized to secure funding from BC Housing for the construction of facilities to be used for emergency shelter and supportive housing. This approach recognized the requirements of BC Housing in funding such facilities and their ability to provide resources and leadership in taking tangible steps to help alleviate homelessness.

In 2010, the CVRD issued a public call for interest from property owners who had land to sell that met the criteria for a site for an emergency shelter and supportive housing. Three submissions were received and evaluated with a number of adjoining properties on Cliffe Avenue emerging as the best fit overall. The CVRD Board approved the purchase of three properties on Cliffe Avenue at a price of \$470,000 plus HST for the site of an emergency shelter and supportive housing and provided BC Housing with conceptual designs to assist with funds being identified to construct and operate the facility.

Following the purchase, significant concerns from the neighborhood were raised about the proposed development. In recognition of the City of Courtenay’s responsibility for the development processes related to the Cliffe Avenue properties and their interest for a greater role in determining the location of emergency shelters/supportive housing inside their boundaries, the land was subsequently transferred to the City of Courtenay on the condition that the properties, or proceeds from the properties should the City of Courtenay dispose of the properties, be used for emergency shelter/supportive housing purposes as originally intended. In 2013, the City sold the Cliff Avenue properties for \$355,000 and with the proceeds purchased a property at 810 Braidwood Road in Courtenay to be used as the location for a supportive housing project.

In 2016, supported by a \$3 million grant from the Province, the M’akola Housing Society, in partnership with the City of Courtenay and the Wachiay Friendship Centre initiated the development of a 35-unit affordable housing complex for low-income singles and those at risk of homelessness at the Braidwood site.

Since the transfer of the Cliffe Avenue properties, the Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service has been largely inactive. It is important to note that in 2015 following a successful referendum, the CVRD created the Comox Valley Homelessness Supports Service to provide funds to one or more local nongovernmental organizations based on a board approved five-year action plan to address homelessness in the Comox Valley. Funding from this service has been utilized to support the Braidwood Housing Project.

Policy Analysis

Bylaw No. 52 being “Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service Establishment Bylaw No. 52, 2009” provides the legal framework for the service and sets out the basic parameters and rules of the partnership.

The following definitions are provided for in the service establishment bylaw:

- (a) Emergency shelter – any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless. The facility can be operated publicly or privately to provide housing for individuals or families who are otherwise homeless and have no immediate prospects of more long-term housing or shelter;
- (b) Supportive housing – a combination of housing and services intended as a cost-effective way to help people live more stable, productive lives. Supportive housing works well for those who face the most complex challenges, i.e. individuals and families confronted with homelessness and who also have very low incomes and/or serious and persistent issues that may include substance abuse, addiction or alcoholism, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, or other serious challenges to a successful life.

Staff have interpreted the latter term to mean that in order to qualify as a supportive housing project, it would have to provide supports related to mental health and/or substance use and/or other challenges within the facility. Non-market rental housing or employee housing with no supporting services would not qualify.

Options

The board may consider the following options regarding this service:

- Maintain the service under the current terms with the understanding that it may be utilized in the future to acquire land for an emergency shelter or supportive housing project;
- amend the service to expand the scope to include land for non-market rental housing and/or other housing services;
- repeal the service and investigate the establishment of a new service that aligns with the board’s specific interests for housing services;
- repeal the service; or
- focus resources through the Comox Valley Homelessness Supports Service.

With respect to this staff report, the board may:

1. Receive this staff report and direct further investigation or action based on the options outlined above.
2. Receive this staff report and take no further action at this time.

Financial Factors

The Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service is largely inactive at the current time and as such has no tax requisition, capital requirements or otherwise. The service does have an established reserve fund with a balance of \$29,401. In order to account for the minimal administration required for the service, \$301 is withdrawn from the reserve fund annually for this purpose. These and other financial details were presented to the board during the budget presentation on February 26, 2019 and subsequently endorsed for inclusion with the 2019-2023 Five-Year Financial Plan.

It is noted that short term debt was used to purchase the Cliffe Avenue properties in 2010. This debt was fully paid in 2012.

Legal Factors

None.

Regional Growth Strategy Implications

The Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service is noted as being generally supportive of Regional Growth Strategy Objective 1-B: Increase affordable housing options.

Intergovernmental Factors

As explained in the Background/Current Situation section of this report, cooperation with all participants regarding any land acquisition under this service is strongly encouraged to ensure all parties are supportive of advancing a particular project within any jurisdiction.

Interdepartmental Involvement

Corporate Services and Executive Management Branch are working collaboratively on this initiative.

Citizen/Public Relations

None.

Attachments: Appendix A – Bylaw No. 52 being “Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service Establishment Bylaw No. 52, 2009”

COMOX VALLEY REGIONAL DISTRICT

BYLAW NO. 52

A bylaw to establish the emergency shelter and supportive housing land acquisition service

WHEREAS under section 796 of the *Local Government Act* a regional district may operate any service the board considers necessary or desirable for all or part of the regional district;

AND WHEREAS the board of the Comox Valley Regional District wishes to establish a service to acquire land for emergency shelter and supportive housing purposes in the Comox Valley Regional District;

AND WHEREAS the approval of the inspector of municipalities has been obtained under section 801 of the *Local Government Act*; and

AND WHEREAS the approval for the participating areas was obtained by alternative approval process under section 801.3 of the *Local Government Act*;

NOW THEREFORE the board of the Comox Valley Regional District in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

Service

1. (1) The service established by this bylaw is to acquire land for emergency shelter and supportive housing purposes in the Comox Valley Regional District.
- (2) The service shall be known as the emergency shelter and supportive housing land acquisition service (the “service”).

Definitions

2. The following definitions apply under this bylaw:
 - (a) Emergency shelter – any facility, the primary purpose of which is to provide temporary or transitional shelter for the homeless in general or for specific populations of the homeless. The facility can be operated publicly or privately to provide housing for individuals or families who are otherwise homeless and have no immediate prospects of more long-term housing or shelter;
 - (b) Supportive housing – a combination of housing and services intended as a cost-effective way to help people live more stable, productive lives. Supportive housing works well for those who face the most complex challenges, i.e. individuals and families confronted with homelessness and who also have very low incomes and/or serious and persistent issues that may include substance abuse, addiction or alcoholism, mental illness, HIV/AIDS, or other serious challenges to a successful life.

Boundaries

3. The boundaries of the service are coterminous with the Comox Valley Regional District including the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, the Village of Cumberland, Electoral Area ‘A’ (Baynes Sound – Denman / Hornby Islands), Electoral Area ‘B’ (Lazo North) and Electoral Area ‘C’ (Puntledge – Black Creek).

Participants

4. The participating areas for the service are the City of Courtenay, the Town of Comox, the Village of Cumberland, Electoral Area ‘A’ (Baynes Sound – Denman / Hornby Islands), Electoral Area ‘B’ (Lazo North) and Electoral Area ‘C’ (Puntledge – Black Creek) (the “participating area”).

Cost recovery

5. The annual cost of providing the service shall be recovered by one or more of the following:
- (a) Property value taxes;
 - (b) Parcel taxes;
 - (c) Revenues raised by other means authorized by the *Local Government Act* or another act; and
 - (d) Revenues received by way of agreement, enterprises, gift, grant or otherwise.

Maximum requisition

6. The maximum amount that may be requisitioned annually for the cost of the service established by this bylaw is the greater of \$275,000 or 2.5 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Apportionment

7. The annual costs of the service shall be apportioned among the participating areas on the basis of population as defined in the schedule to the *Community Charter*.

Review of service

8. All aspects of the emergency shelter and supportive housing service shall be reviewed every five years, with the first review occurring in 2014.

Citation

9. This Bylaw No. 52 may be cited for all purposes as the "Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service Establishment Bylaw No. 52, 2009".

READ A FIRST AND SECOND TIME THIS	26TH	DAY OF	MAY	2009.
READ A THIRD TIME THIS	26TH	DAY OF	MAY	2009.
APPROVED BY THE				
INSPECTOR OF MUNICIPALITIES THIS	26TH	DAY OF	JUNE	2009.
RECEIVED THE				
APPROVAL OF THE ELECTORS THIS	24TH	DAY OF	AUGUST	2009.
ADOPTED THIS	25TH	DAY OF	AUGUST	2009.

F. Bates
 Chair

D. Oakman
 Deputy Corporate Legislative Officer

I hereby certify the foregoing to be a true and correct copy of Bylaw No. 52 being "Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Land Acquisition Service Establishment Bylaw No. 52, 2009" as adopted by the board of the Comox Valley Regional District on the 25th day of August 2009.

D. Oakman
 Deputy Corporate Legislative Officer