



SOCIAL SERVICES STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP TARGETED OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN REVIEW

December 10, 2020, 5:15 pm to 7:30 pm
Virtual workshop via Zoom

PURPOSE

The Targeted OCP Review Social Service Stakeholder workshop, hosted on December 10th, 2020, connected with social service providers and their clientele to listen to and learn about key issues facing equity-priority populations in the District, and the impacts of COVID-19 on these groups. The workshop fostered dialog around the four Targeted OCP Review topic areas – Climate Action, Transportation, Economy and Employment Lands, and Housing – and participants suggested options to address these issues.

This workshop builds on the series of stakeholder workshops in spring 2020, before the COVID-19 pandemic put a temporary pause on the project. The spring 2020 stakeholder workshops focused on hearing about each of the Targeted OCP Review topic area from participants with professional background in those respective areas.

The input received at the Social Service Stakeholder workshop will be used to help inform the social equity lens that is being developed to better understand the four key topic areas in the Targeted OCP Review, and will be and shared with Council. The final deliverable of the Targeted OCP Review is an Action Plan.

For more information on the Targeted OCP Review, please visit: dnv.org/officialcommunityplan

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The most frequently mentioned issues by participants include:

- Cost of living on the North Shore.
- Otherism – xenophobia, renter discrimination, and anti-newcomer sentiments.
- Housing security and suitability.

The most frequently mentioned possible actions by participants include:

- Champion 15-minute neighbourhoods (neighbourhoods where all services and amenities are within a 15 minute walk), and invest in last-mile trips (routes between home and transit hubs).
- Diversify options for multi-family residential housing and provide options for a wider range of demographics.
- Invest in outreach to youth and equity-priority populations.

PARTICIPANTS

In total, 22 individuals attended the workshops. Participants represented staff and clientele from a variety of service providers, including:

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| • Family Services of the North Shore | • North Shore Crisis Services Society' |
| • Harvest Project | • North Shore Disability Resource |
| • Hollyburn Family Services | • North Shore Multicultural Society |
| • Lookout Housing and Health Society | • North Shore Neighbourhood House |
| • Lynn Valley United Church | • Parkgate Community Services Society |
| • North Shore Alliance Church | |

WORKSHOP PROGRAM

Introduction

The virtual workshop began with an overview of the District of North Vancouver's role in the community, and the various ways that citizens may interact with us or use our services. The presentation provided participants with background knowledge of the Official Community Plan and its functions, as well as the Targeted OCP Review process and key issues identified from engagement events prior to the onset of COVID-19.

To gain a better understanding of the representatives in the room, workshop participants were anonymously polled. Participants included staff members of invited organizations and their clientele, identifying with a range of racial and socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental health needs that they are living with.

Activity 1 - Understanding Issues and Challenges

The first activity provided a forum for broad, open-ended conversation about participants' lived experiences in the District regarding the four Targeted OCP Review topic areas – issues, barriers, what is working well for them, and what is not. Participants were divided into three breakout groups of 6 or 7 individuals, each with a facilitator and note-taker. Breakout groups concluded the Activity 1 by reporting back to the larger group with regards to their findings.

Activity 2 - Identifying Needs and Possible Actions

The second activity commenced with a presentation on potential actions identified in previous stakeholder workshops, prior to the impacts of COVID-19. Note-takers, and facilitators returned to their breakout groups to for another organic discussion on how to address the findings shared in Activity 1. Breakout groups concluded Activity 2 by reporting their findings back to the larger group.

Conclusion and Next Steps

District staff and consultants concluded the workshop with a summary of next steps, and an overview of how the findings from the presentation will be reported out and used in the drafting of the Action Plan.

ACTIVITY 1 - ISSUES IDENTIFICATION

Input gathered during Activity 1 has been grouped into key themes. Key themes are listed in no particular order.

Key Themes	Participant's Perspectives on Issues
Subsidized Housing Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rent for supportive and subsidized housing is often too expensive for eligible households, and locations are often not ideal in terms of proximity to transportation, amenities and services.
Housing Suitability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is challenging for non-profits to afford space for affordable housing on the North Shore. The rent that non-profits collect from clients for housing is insufficient to cover costs (e.g. strata fees). Families are experiencing trouble securing affordable rental options with sufficient space, as three bedroom options and larger units are limited.
Housing Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renters are left with lingering sentiment of "where will we go next?" Oftentimes, they are phased out of their current living situation by factors like renovations and sale of the property.
Access to Employment and Community Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A central location is very important to low-income families, as a lack of private vehicles creates a need for reliable public transportation, and a need to locate close to community amenities (e.g. supermarkets, employment centres, etc.). Proximity to community amenities in town centres is vital for seniors as many rely on reliable transportation to access food services. Seasonal access to essential services varies. Some residents find themselves "stranded" during COVID-19 and winter months due to snow and geography.
Supportive Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are limited spaces for assisted living/seniors care within the District. There is a need for more women's shelters in the District.
Housing discrimination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Renters experience discrimination based on race, age, sexual orientation, or income status. A lack of culturally-appropriate housing options and prejudices against Indigenous youths. Lifestyle choices (e.g. smoking, pets) impact the ability to attain housing. Need creative affordable housing solutions, outside of multi-storey high density development. There is a divide between long-term homeowners, and renters or those moving into town centres.
Cost of Living	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In addition to housing affordability, other household costs of raising a family on the North Shore leaves low-income populations more vulnerable. Transitional housing is intended as a temporary housing solution, however individuals cannot afford to move out of transitional housing. There is a need to recognize that incomes fluctuate over lifetimes. Seniors and retired populations are increasingly vulnerable to homelessness, and are seeking support at shelters and other services at an increasing rate. Organizations see more people utilizing food security services since COVID-19, though it was on the rise before as well.
Disparity between local wages and cost of living on the North Shore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care and service workers (e.g. some essential service workers) cannot afford to live in the District and have trouble commuting, leaving gaps in care services. Housing and employment options for young people are limited and part-time jobs that are available are insufficient to support living in the District. Small businesses struggle to retain staff due to challenges of transportation and housing.
Xenophobia / Otherism / Anti-Newcomer Sentiments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts and initiatives to accept immigration and multiculturalism in the District are perceived as lagging behind those of other North Shore communities.
Environmental Stewardship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Climate change is the largest priority in the long term. Lynn Valley fires in the summer pose a safety concern for residents.
Accessibility in Green Spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some local parks and natural areas are not accessible for individuals who are not able-bodied.
Limited Mental Health Resources and Social Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a challenge to find accessible mental health and crisis services at differing levels, and current resources are not sufficient to meet the demand of calls received from youth and adults. Access to many social services end when individuals turn 25 years old, and children in foster care are vulnerable due to aging out of the system.
Child Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is a challenge for families to find child care that is in proximity to residences that is affordable and matches working hours of parents.
Pace of change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a loss of sense of community when people move away due to the cost of living in the District, and a loss of long-time support networks for residents. There is a perception that growth and change in North Shore communities has happened fast, and long-term residents would like to be more involved with changes.
Biking conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are concerns about safety despite introduction of bike lanes.
Parking requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emphasis is placed on multi-family parking requirements without restrictions placed on single-family homes.

ACTIVITY 2 - POSSIBLE ACTIONS

Input gathered during Activity 1 has been grouped into key themes. Key themes are listed in no particular order.

Key Themes	Participants' Perspectives on Possible Actions
Engage with the community directly at District facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize resources such as libraries and recreation centres, and explore more opportunities for intercept surveying.
Engage with youth and young adults aged 20-40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Find solutions to increase their involvement in local government. Bridge intergenerational wealth gap by creating more housing models and equity-building opportunities for young families and people, such as rent-to-own housing.
Champion development of the District's town centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-family housing solutions can address issues with affordable housing, transit access, access to amenities and services, and difficulties with retaining workers for small businesses. Champion "15 minute neighbourhoods" with cohesive amenities would address challenging geography and seasonal access/movement (e.g. snow). Utilize town centres as a resource for fostering social connection and fighting social isolation. Dedicate more Community Amenity Contributions towards affordable housing. Simplify and expedite permitting and development approval processes so that housing can be created faster.
Consider house-sharing programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single-family housing owned by seniors that have vacant rooms can be rented to other students, young families, and other seniors—which support senior homeowners in return. Explore co-locating options to support child care needs of young families, and increase supply of larger units that are suitable for families. Roommate registry to support matching seniors with each other. Loan to seniors to create legal secondary suites.
Diversify options for multi-family housing options and provide rental options that suit different demographics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore densification of single-family neighborhoods (e.g. coach houses and townhouses). Diversify rental options for different demographics. Require developers to define who affordable housing is for, and index units to meet a variety of socio-economic brackets). Implement renter protection policies for "demovictions" and rent increases. Explore opportunities to utilize District lands for supportive housing or other community amenities.
Secure affordable housing units at no cost to non-profits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To keep rates within what clients can afford, negotiate with developers to lower the financial risk of purchasing units for non-profits. Include secondary suites in existing subsidized and supportive housing facilities.
Invest in "last-mile trips" (i.e. route between home and transit hub)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fortify transit networks, with solutions that are also appropriate to the District's suburban character/needs. Invest in more bicycling infrastructure (e.g. storage and charging stations for electric bikes) to address current gaps. Establish more car-sharing opportunities, such as those previously provided by Car2Go. Further separate bicycle lanes by vehicular traffic, and consider routes that are off main roads and have lights at crossings.
Acknowledge Interconnectivity of Targeted OCP Topic Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate interconnected Targeted OCP Review topic areas whilst developing an economic development policy.
Strengthen overdose response services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish safe consumption sites.
Invest in outreach for equity-priority populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a District staff position to support equity-priority populations. Invest in language facilitation services to strengthen engagement with people of diverse ethnic backgrounds.