

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Human Services

Initiation of a New 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That County Council authorize staff to initiate the development of a new 10-Year Housing and Homelessness (Shelter) Plan, including public consultation with various stakeholders;
2. And further, that County Council authorize staff to solicit prospective consultants to assist in developing the 10-Year Shelter Plan and conduct an update to the current housing needs assessment, funded from the Affordable Housing Reserve in an amount up to \$90,000;
3. And further, that County Council direct staff to consider the relevant initiatives under the 100% Housed Plan in the development of a new 10-Year Housing and Homelessness (Shelter) Plan.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Service Managers are required to develop a 10-Year Housing Plan to identify objectives and targets related to housing and homelessness, as well as actions proposed to meet those objectives.
- As the term of the County's current 10-Year Shelter Plan is coming to a close at the end of 2024, staff are requesting Council approval to initiate a new Plan.
- The new goals and strategies in relation to housing and homelessness will widely be informed by community feedback and updated local housing needs. The Plan will also consider any relevant initiatives under the 100% Housed Plan and other relevant strategies/policies.

Implementation Points

Should Council be supportive of the recommendations contained in this report, staff will initiate the public consultation process, including a mix of in-person focus groups and public surveys, as well as retain consultants to complete an updated housing needs assessment and assist with the overall development of the new Plan.

Financial Impact

The Human Services 2023 Business and Budget Plan included an allocation of \$25,000 in support of a new 10-Year Shelter Plan. While the original allocation was deemed sufficient to support the public consultation and communication components of the new Plan, staff have determined that additional support is necessary to complete an updated housing needs assessment and develop the overall targets and strategies. As such, staff are proposing an additional allocation of \$90,000 from the Affordable Housing Reserve to support the supplementary consultant work that is necessary to develop the 10-Year Plan. These additional funds will also support the completion of an updated housing needs assessment, which is intended to be a stand alone document to support multiple needs. The Affordable Housing Reserve has an updated projected 2023 year-end balance of \$343,875.







Any further financial considerations to support the initiatives and action items that are identified in the new 10-Year Plan will be incorporated into annual Business and Budget Plans, as appropriate.

Communications

In light of the significant public and community partner consultation that is required, staff have been in discussions with Communications on various aspects of the project. Community Planning also provided feedback with respect to the 100% Housed Plan.

Further details will be shared with the public, Area Municipalities, County staff, community partners and various stakeholders, once staff have initiated the consultation period.

Strategic Plan (2020-2022)

					
WORKS WELL TOGETHER	WELL CONNECTED	SHAPES THE FUTURE	INFORMS & ENGAGES	PERFORMS & DELIVERS	POSITIVE IMPACT
1.i. 1.ii.		3.iii.			

DISCUSSION

Background

In accordance with the Housing Services Act, 2011, Municipal Service Managers are required to develop a 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan to identify objectives and targets related to housing and homelessness, as well as actions proposed to meet those objectives. Housing and Homelessness (Shelter) Plans play a critical function in setting out how Service Managers are addressing housing and homelessness locally, including housing affordability, coordination of homelessness and related support services, preventing homelessness and ending chronic homelessness.

On June 10, 2015, County Council approved the 10-Year Shelter Plan presented in Report No. [HS 2015-07](#). In support of this Plan, Council also approved Report No. [HS 2016-01](#), establishing an annual target of 50 new affordable units per year.

As required under the Housing Services Act, 2011, a five year review of the Shelter Plan was also completed in December, 2019. Prior to this review, the County also hosted an information session for senior leaders, planners, builders, employers and surrounding municipalities to learn more about the housing crisis across the Province. In consideration of the information that was received, the five year review highlighted changes in local demographics, needs associated with housing and homelessness, as well as the progress that has been achieved to date. This review also identified five projected outcomes and strategies for 2020 to 2024, as follows:

1. Increase affordable rental housing supply
2. Preserve and optimize existing housing stock
3. Reduce chronic homelessness
4. Increase housing with related supports
5. Increase rent supplement units in the community

In connection with the information that was received through the housing session, on February 12, 2020, Council also passed a resolution committing to the achievement of a “100% Housed” future, through cooperation with Federal, Provincial and Municipal governments, as well as community and industry partners. At that time, Council also considered a draft “100% Housed Plan”, identifying a number of initiatives to support the creation of housing along the continuum, which Council ‘approved-in-principle’ and directed staff to circulate to area municipalities for input.

With the term of the current 10-Year Plan coming to a close at the end of 2024, staff are requesting Council approval to initiate the process of developing new goals and targets in relation to housing and homelessness. While the new Plan will continue to build upon the goals and targets of the current Plan, the housing market has shifted significantly since the adoption of the original Plan, and the subsequent review in 2019. In light of this, there is a need to consider the changing environment and how this impacts housing needs across the continuum.

Comments

[New 10-Year Plan](#)

The County’s current Plan includes a number of outcomes and strategies to address housing and homelessness into 2024. While many of the existing actions and strategies continue to remain relevant, it is important to consider new initiatives to ensure continued effectiveness in addressing housing needs.

The intent of the new Plan is to build upon the County’s current 10-year Shelter Plan, while considering changing market conditions, housing/community needs and financial challenges. The new Plan will consider varying strategies and actions to address critical needs across the housing continuum, including emergency shelters, transitional, social and supportive housing, market and affordable rental housing, and homeownership.

It should be noted that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has not yet provided updated direction in relation to the development of new 10-Year Housing Plans. Should direction be provided, staff will ensure any requirements are incorporated, as necessary.

100% Housed Plan

The 100% Housed Plan was developed in 2019 for the purpose of providing direction to address needs across the housing continuum and assist to transition the County to a fully housed community. With the feedback that was received through relevant public consultation, as well as a high level review of housing needs, the Plan identified a number of tools (regulatory, financial, planning) to promote a 100% Housed future.

While the majority of the goals and strategies in the 100% Housed Plan were relevant at the time of Council’s consideration, there has since been significant progression in the housing sector by not only the County and Area Municipalities, but also the Federal and Provincial governments.

In particular, the County recently adopted the Master Housing Strategy, which provides strategic direction in terms of current and future affordable housing development, including adoption of an Affordable Housing Incentive Program under the County Community Improvement Plan, updates to the County’s definition of affordable housing and focus on priority development sites. Furthermore, Community Planning has been focusing on options to increase density throughout our serviced areas.

To provide further background, the following table provides a list of the overarching tools that were proposed in the 100% Housed Plan, along with the work that has been completed to date.

Tool	Action Items	Provincial / County Implementation
1. Encourage the use of advanced construction techniques.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and develop new funding opportunities to promote the creation of a demonstration project. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modular construction method was used at the County site located at 738 Parkinson Road, Woodstock. • Alternative construction methods are often determined based on applicable funding programs.
2. Implement zoning for increased density, additional residential units, or shared housing options.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update zoning by-laws to permit a wide range of shared housing forms as-of-right (additional residential units (ARUs), stacked row housing, and smaller units). • Include a more detailed monitoring process and targets for housing options, as a means to inform and/or target investment in housing option. • Encourage relaxed restrictions on minimum gross floor area (GFA) for residential units. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Official Plan and Local Zoning By-laws have been, or are in the process of being, updated to support the development of ARUs. • The My Second Unit Program was developed to provide financial incentives to create ARUs. A background document was also developed to educate homeowners on constructing such units. • As part of the Master Housing Strategy, a housing needs

Tool	Action Items	Provincial / County Implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore grants to promote second/additional residential units. • Undertake education and communication strategies on the need for housing types in the County and establish guidance material for homeowners interested in constructing an additional residential unit on an existing property. 	<p>assessment was completed to determine the need for varying housing options. This will be further reviewed as part of the new 10-Year Shelter Plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning continues to explore ways to require increased density in appropriate areas. • County Council density workshop.
3. Facilitate the development of co-housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify an Area Municipality interested in exploring and testing a co-housing model. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Such partnerships continue to be considered, where appropriate.
4. Formalize alternative development standards for affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage relief of parking requirements and reduced setbacks for affordable housing. • Encourage area municipalities to allow for increased density. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parking relief is currently determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on the mix of market versus affordable units in a proposed project, and recommendations of a parking brief. • Community Planning is exploring ways to increase density in appropriate areas. • County Council density workshop.
5. Promote other tenure forms such as rent-to-own housing models.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek out private or non-profit developers to pilot this tool in the County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Bill 109, the Province introduced new definitions for 'Attainable Housing' under the Development Charges Act. Subsequent regulations are still forthcoming and will be considered at that time.
6. Develop programs to support those who are "over-housed" to downsize.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with Fanshawe College off-campus housing department to place student renters with households experiencing "over-housing". • Partner with community group to place renters with households experiencing "over-housing." 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The My Second Unit Program was implemented to assist with those who are 'over-housed'. • Staff have been in contact with Fanshawe College to promote the My Second Unit Program for students.
7. Introduce specific strategies for encouraging smaller-scale and higher-density housing in rural areas.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible to allow different utilization of existing rural housing. • Introduce modest ideas that will increase the supply in rural areas with appropriate servicing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My Second Unit Program. • ARUs • The proposed new Provincial Planning Statement (PPS) promotes institutional and commercial conversions for residential purposes, where appropriate.

Tool	Action Items	Provincial / County Implementation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the conversion of under-utilized buildings to multi-residential use. • Introduce a conversion program to incentivize converting low-density housing into higher-density housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Higher density is not considered in most rural settlements due to level of services (i.e. needs full services).
8. Impose a levy for affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pursue development charge, Community Benefit Charge and/or tax revenue streams to financially support incentives to promote affordable housing construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through Bill 109, the Province removed 'Housing Services' as an eligible use for development charges. As such, this stream of potential funding is no longer available for affordable housing. • Staff continue to investigate the potential use of Community Benefit Charges, but note that it would be applicable to a small portion of development in the County (residential projects over 10 units).
9. Introduce a new financing model for affordable housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage higher levels of government to support the creation of new financing mechanisms for affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMHC continues to implement new financing and funding mechanisms for affordable housing: however, greater focus needs to be placed on providing stable interest rates for affordable housing projects. • Further advocacy is necessary.
10. Explore the feasibility of implementing an inclusionary zoning policy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the feasibility of requiring unit type split targets as a parallel requirement to meeting the necessary density targets. • Assess the feasibility of implementing a Development Permit System (DPS). • Evaluate the financial viability and economic impact of implementing an inclusionary zoning policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Planning has been working to incorporate unit mix targets into secondary plans and identify options to increase direction on unit mix in the Official Plan. • The inclusionary zoning tool cannot currently be utilized in Oxford. The County has requested that the Province allow all municipalities to be able to consider this tool. • The feasibility/benefit of a DPS is being further investigated by Community Planning as part of the density options review.
11. Initiate an expanded Community Improvement Plan (CIP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a tax increment equivalent grant and/or expand other options for tax incentives beyond the current CIP. • Investigate the feasibility of establishing a revolving loan fund, tied to a CIP, which can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Community Improvement Plan was amended to include an Affordable Housing Incentive Program, which provides affordable housing projects with a County Planning Application

Tool	Action Items	Provincial / County Implementation
	be funded with financial assistance from other sources.	Waiver. A similar approach is being considered by Area Municipalities. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other CIP funding programs continue to be explored.
12. Consider property tax incentives to reduce the tax burden on residential rental housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County shall pursue further reduction on multi-residential rental housing and financial incentives to encourage development of residential rental housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New multi-residential rental projects (such as affordable housing) are subject to a reduced County tax rate. • My Second Unit Program. • Additional County base budget of \$3 million per year for affordable housing.
13. Create a pipeline of shovel-ready surplus land for affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create an inventory of available lands that are appropriate for affordable and market rental housing; employ Housing First policies for these lands. • Include potential for partnership with other government facilities (such as libraries, community centres, hospitals, etc.). • Promote the use of public-private partnerships to create mixed-income communities and/or sustainable housing on the sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Master Housing Strategy provides a priority list of affordable housing projects, to which staff continue to make more shovel ready. • County Housing First Policy ensures vacant lands owned by the County are considered for affordable housing as a first priority. • Partnerships continue to ensure the viability and feasibility of affordable housing projects.
14. Introduce a suite of incentives to promote the development of affordable housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County should refine the “attainable” needs and gaps through additional studies monitoring and reporting to ensure incentivized developments are meeting specific affordability thresholds of the population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Missing Middle was reviewed as part of the Master Housing Strategy and the County’s definition of Affordable Housing was expanded to reflect current affordability conditions. • A variety of incentives have been implemented to support the creation of affordable housing. Staff continue to explore more opportunities.
15. Communicate the streamlined development approvals process to prospective developers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create communications materials to promote development in the County. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A variety of communication materials are available on the County website. • Staff continue to explore alternative opportunities to promote a streamlined development process.

While the majority of the above tools have been implemented or reviewed in terms of applicability, some will continue to be considered as part of the new 10-Year Shelter Plan, including alternative financing and funding methods, greater incentives for affordable housing, support for more

housing options, and focus on co-housing models. Staff will ensure the directives provided in the 100% Housed Plan are reviewed and incorporated into the new 10-Year Shelter Plan, where appropriate.

Conclusions

Development of a new 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan requires a collective effort from all levels of government, as well as expertise and input from non-profit and private sector groups, and the support and engagement of community residents. With this effort, the proposed new Plan will provide strategic direction to effectively address housing and homelessness into the next 10 years.

SIGNATURES

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – 10-Year Shelter Plan: 5-Year Update, 2019
Attachment 2 – 100% Housed Plan, February 2020