
From: Kyle Bentley
Director, City Development & CBO

Subject: Pickering Housing Strategy Study
- Status Update
- File: D-1300-014

Recommendation:

1. That Report PLN 11-21 of the Director, City Development & CBO, providing an update on the status of the City of Pickering Housing Strategy Study, be received for information.

Executive Summary: Council directed staff to undertake a Housing Strategy Study that will result in a comprehensive strategy and action plan that addresses the need for delivering more lifecycle housing options, including affordable and accessible units, to support changing demographic conditions. Details of the purpose and objectives of the Housing Strategy Study can be found in the June 15, 2020 Report PLN 05-20 to the Planning & Development Committee. The Study is currently in Phase 1. Next steps include additional engagement opportunities and the preparation of a Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan for circulation, review, and comment.

Financial Implications: There are no financial implications applicable to this report.

Discussion:

1. Purpose

The purpose of this report is to update Council on staff's progress on the Housing Strategy Study.

2. Background

2.1 Study Initiation

On June 15, 2020, following the consideration of Report PLN 05-20, Council directed City Development staff to undertake a comprehensive housing strategy study. A link to Report PLN 05-20 is available on the Housing Strategy Study page of the City website.

2.2 Study Purpose

The purpose of the Housing Strategy Study is to:

- establish the City's role and priorities with facilitating opportunities for developing housing, affordable housing, and age-friendly housing in Pickering over the next 10 years (2021 – 2031);
- assist Council with decision making;
- provide a framework for staff in implementing its responsibilities, including those that relate to the coordination of actions with other agencies, organizations and governments;
- assist in guiding residential growth within the City;
- aid in the education and creation of general public awareness of what the City is doing on this issue; and
- provide a mechanism to monitor progress as the City works to implement its plan.

2.3 Study Objectives

The key objective of the Housing Strategy Study is to provide a framework so that the City can ensure that there is a supply of suitable (as it relates to the size of the household), adequate (as it relates to physical condition) and affordable (as it relates to household income) housing for all ages and abilities within its jurisdiction. This will help to ensure that the City meets the housing needs in support of a diverse population and workforce.

2.4 Study Process

The Housing Strategy Study consists of 3 phases:

- Phase 1: Research and Gap Analysis;
- Phase 2: Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan; and
- Phase 3: Recommended Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

There are engagement opportunities for the public and stakeholders throughout the Study. We are currently in Phase 1 of the Study.

3. Study Status

Since the launch of the Study, City staff:

- Have undertaken research and analysis to determine the housing gaps within the City. Staff are in the process of finalizing the Research and Gap Analysis Report. In addition to collecting information and data on the City's demographic profile, socio-economic characteristics of households and housing stock, and associated trends and forecasts, the report contains information pertaining to the policy and legislative context for the provision of affordable housing. Once complete, the Research and Gap Analysis Report will be made available to Council and the public;
- Hosted an electronic public open house on January 21, 2021 with 3 "live" delegates and 3 additional delegates that provided comments via email (as of the writing of this report, there have been 131 views of the YouTube recording of the meeting); and
- Are coordinating stakeholder meeting(s) with government, not-for-profit, and other agencies and associations, including the development and building industry.

4. Engagement

City staff created a Housing Strategy Study webpage, which went live on January 6, 2021.

Electronic Public Open House 1, the first public engagement opportunity for the Study, was advertised on the Community Page of the News Advertiser on January 7 and 14, 2021, as well as on the City's website. In addition, a news release was issued on January 14, 2021, followed by social media messages. City staff also sent notice of the Electronic Public Open House directly to members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Seniors Community Services Council, and the Age Friendly Steering Committee.

4.1 Summary of January 21, 2021 Electronic Public Open House

The following highlights some comments and questions received either by email or at the January 21, 2021 Electronic Public Open House. A complete summary of comments/questions and staff responses is contained in Attachment #1 to this report.

- Rent-to-own/lease-to-own options should be made available near transit, shops, and other amenities.
- What is Pickering's plan for seniors' developments, including detached bungalows with garages?
- The Study should look into encouraging rooming/lodging house licenses and basement units as it provides essential affordable housing options.
- The City is encouraged to mandate affordable housing through Inclusionary Zoning policies and zoning by-laws.
- We are part of the aging population of Pickering and we own our home and would love to get old in it. Property taxes are a large part of the housing cost and we have seen ours increased by 60 percent in the last 15 years and it seems that the trend is continuing. At this rate, ever increasing taxes are eroding house affordability. How do you see retirees being able to afford the property taxes for their home?
- The City should look at encouraging more mixed-use development.
- When looking at new affordable housing, the City should ensure that "corners do not get cut" during construction that could result in substandard housing.

5. Next Steps

Next steps include, completing the Research and Gap Analysis Report and initiating Phase 2.

Phase 2 of the Study includes:

- considering the feedback from the Phase 1 engagement opportunities;
- preparing a Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan;
- hosting a Public Open House to hear feedback on the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan;
- circulating the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan to Stakeholders for their input; and
- reporting to Planning & Development Committee.

Phase 3 of the Study will include consideration of the feedback from the Phase 2 engagement, the preparation of a Recommended Housing Strategy and Action Plan, and a recommendation report to Planning & Development Committee.

Attachment:

1. January 21, 2021 Electronic Public Open House 1, Summary of Comments/Questions and Staff Responses
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Prepared By:

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Director, City Development & CBO

Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer

Housing Strategy Study
 January 21, 2021 Electronic Public Open House 1
 Summary of Comments/Questions and Staff Responses

Item Number	Comments/Questions	Staff Response
1.	We would like to own a home. Rent-to-own/lease-to-own options would be great to include as part of the Study. These housing options would be great to have locations near transit, shops, other amenities.	The Housing Strategy Study will be looking at how the City can facilitate a variety of options for housing type and tenure, including rent-to-own/lease-to-own options. City staff will be hosting stakeholder meetings with the development and building industry, as well as not-for-profit and government agencies, to hear what they have to say about the provision for this, and other housing options.
2.	Why does Pickering not have more senior housing similar to Amica Swan Lake in Markham, Eastern Gate and Northern Gate Retirement Community in Stouffville, or Wilmont Creek Retirement Community in Newcastle?	<p>Amica Swan Lake in Markham is a seniors' living complex (3-4 storey building, wide range of amenities). Eastern Gate & Northern Gate are attached bungalows using a form of life-lease (e.g., right-to-occupy agreement). Wilmont Creek in Newcastle are bungalows, residents do not own them but lease the land on which the bungalows sit. These examples provide a variety of ownership styles and tenures. In addition to City policy, market conditions and fluctuations drive what type of housing can be made available. The City encourages the widest range of typologies. Through the Study, we will identify additional role(s) the City can take in providing a range of housing typologies.</p> <p>Viva Retirement Home provides independent and assisted living opportunities for seniors in Pickering and is located at Kingston Road and Glengrove Road.</p> <p>Amica Pickering is a seniors lifestyle building currently under construction at the northeast corner of Glenanna Road and Pickering Parkway. In addition, City staff is reviewing a seniors residence application from Chartwell proposed to be located at Kingston Road and Valley Farm Road.</p>

Housing Strategy Study
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3.	What is Pickering's plan for senior development including detached bungalows with garages?	<p>Pickering's land value has dramatically increased in the last few years and this has impacted whether this option would be affordable for seniors downsizing.</p> <p>City staff will be hosting stakeholder meetings with the development and building industry, as well as not-for-profit and government agencies, to hear what they have to say about the provision for this, and other, housing options.</p>
4.	<p>The current cost of housing in Pickering does not offer affordable options for a variety of residents ranging from Registered Nurses to individuals on Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP). Because of this, some people require shared living quarters with others or they will face potential homelessness. Many tenants in this form of housing are considered vulnerable populations (e.g., essential workers, seniors, co-op students, individuals living with a disability, racialized individuals). Surrounding municipalities have made rooming/lodging house licenses difficult and seem to be discouraging them. This can lead to increased levels of homelessness. I do not want Pickering to discourage this type of housing. Discouraging this type of housing violates guidelines set out by the Ontario Human Rights Commission (Room for everyone: Human rights and rental housing licensing). This Study should look into encouraging rooming/lodging house licenses and basement units as it provides essential affordable housing options.</p>	<p>The City of Pickering Official Plan policies encourage the provision of a wide variety of housing types and tenure to meet the needs of existing and future populations of the City, including shared living accommodation.</p> <p>As with the construction of all types of housing, shared accommodation must meet the requirements of the Ontario Building Code (OBC) for building and fire safety. Other concerns that arise with shared accommodation include the amount of parking provided.</p> <p>The City does not prohibit people from sharing housing accommodation, and there is no zoning by-law prohibition on rooming/lodging houses in Pickering.</p>

Housing Strategy Study
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5.	When looking at new affordable housing, the City should ensure that “corners do not get cut” during construction that could result in substandard housing.	All construction is required to meet the Ontario Building Code (OBC). The City of Pickering Building Services staff review plans and inspect construction to ensure that the OBC requirements are met. There are no reductions in performance standards for affordable housing construction within the OBC.
6.	The Province enables municipalities, like Pickering, to mandate affordable housing through Inclusionary Zoning policies and zoning by-laws. I encourage the City to implement this.	Inclusionary Zoning is a relatively new “tool” introduced by the Province to enable municipalities to require a certain amount of affordable housing as part of new developments. Through the Housing Strategy Study, the City will be examining how this tool can be implemented, and the merits to its implementation.
7.	Will the Study be looking at transitional housing?	<p>Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s National Housing Strategy Glossary of Terms defines “Transitional Housing” as housing that is intended to offer a supportive living environment for its residents, including offering them the experience, tools, knowledge and opportunities for social and skill development to become more independent. It is considered an intermediate step between emergency shelter and supportive housing, and has limits on how long an individual or family can stay. Stays are typically between 3 months and 3 years.</p> <p>The Study will also be considering Transitional Housing.</p>

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8.	<p>We are part of the aging population of Pickering. We own our home and we would love to get old in it. It seems that property taxes are a big part of the housing cost. They increased 60 percent in the last 15 years and it seems that the trend is growing. At this rate ever increasing taxes are eroding house affordability. When the minimum wage is 15-16 CAD and old age security is around 1,000 how do you see retirees afford the property bill on their home?</p>	<p>The concern over increased property taxes and its impact on housing affordability will be reviewed in consultation with the City's Finance Department, through the subsequent phases of the study.</p>
9.	<p>We need to see more broad housing types also with other types of development. Such as mixed-use development. For example a site that contains not only owned units but also affordable housing and rental units alongside commercial/retail space all built together on the same site. So I would like the City to look more at encouraging mixed-use development moving forward in the housing strategy.</p>	<p>The City, through the Study, will examine opportunities to strengthen and expand its housing policies and zoning by-law provisions to facilitate more housing types and affordable housing as part of mixed-use developments.</p>
10.	<p>There are a lot of working class people who are not able to purchase a home. Is there a plan for any new co-op housing to be built to reduce the number of people on current waiting lists [for subsidized housing]?</p>	<p>Currently there are no development applications for co-op housing in Pickering. This Study will examine different types of housing and how the City can help to facilitate affordable housing including co-op housing.</p>
11.	<p>What are Pickering's policies with respect to basement apartments?</p>	<p>Currently the City of Pickering's zoning by-laws refer to basement apartments as Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) and permit a total of two residential units on one property, subject to meeting certain conditions.</p>

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		<p>These conditions include that the property have a minimum of 3 parking spaces, the ADU occupy no more than 100 square metres, and that a home-based business is prohibited in either dwelling unit of a dwelling containing an accessory dwelling unit.</p> <p>ADUs in the City of Pickering are governed by the Two-Dwelling Unit By-law No. 7579/17 and must be registered in order to ensure that the two-dwelling unit property meets required safety standards and can be located for providing emergency response.</p> <p>Changes to the <i>Planning Act</i>, introduced through the <i>More Homes, More Choice Act</i> in 2019, permit a total of three residential units on one property. Some of the changes introduced include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requiring municipalities to permit second units in detached, semi-detached, and row houses in primary dwellings and within ancillary buildings or structures; • prohibiting municipalities from applying a development charge for second units above garages or in laneways, or built in new homes (subject to restrictions); and • requiring municipalities to permit two units in either the primary dwelling unit or in any ancillary building, effectively allowing up to three residential units on a single lot. <p>The Housing Strategy Study will review the new provincial requirements and how they impact existing policy and regulations.</p>