
From: Kyle Bentley
Director, City Development & CBO

Subject: Pickering Housing Strategy Study
- Status Update, Phase 2
- File: D-1300-014

Recommendation:

1. That Report PLN 28-21 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. An update on the Study was provided in the March 1, 2021 Report PLN 11-21.

The Study is currently in Phase 2. This report presents an update on the Study and the Draft Action Plan. Next steps include circulating the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan to internal departments, agencies and interested stakeholders for review and comment, and the preparation of a Recommended Housing Strategy and Action Plan for presentation to the Planning & Development Committee in the Fall of 2021.

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, and to present the Draft Action Plan to Planning & Development Committee.

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's 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 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.

We are currently in Phase 2 of the Study.

3. Study Status

Since the launch of the Study, City staff:

- Hosted an electronic public open house on January 21, 2021;
- Met with stakeholders on February 25, 2021, including, government, not-for-profit, and other agencies and associations, as well as the development and building industry;
- Met with the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee on March 17, 2021;
- Completed a Research and Gap Analysis Report, March 31, 2021 (the Report), which is the consolidation of the research and analysis done to determine the housing gaps within the City. 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. The Report was completed at the end of March 2021 and is available on the Housing Strategy Study page of the City website (https://www.pickering.ca/en/city-hall/resources/HSS/HSS_Phase1_ResearchGap_Analysis-ACC.pdf).
- Prepared the Draft Action Plan;
- Presented the Draft Action Plan at an electronic public open house on April 29, 2021 with 2 "live" delegates (as of the writing of this report, there have been 51 views of the YouTube recording of the meeting); and
- Presented the Draft Action Plan to the Pickering Accessibility Advisory Committee on May 19, 2021.

4. Research and Gap Analysis Report

The Research and Gap Analysis Report concluded that the City's current housing stock is not fully addressing the needs of City residents. Key findings of the Report indicated that there is an overall need for housing options for low and moderate income earners, more affordable rental and ownership housing in a range of unit sizes, and accessible units.

The primary rental market refers to units purposely built for the rental market. In particular, the Report identified the need for additional primary rental market units of all sizes, the protection of existing rental units, and the need for additional accessible rental units. In addition, the Report identified the need for home ownership housing options for moderate income earners in a range of unit sizes as well as accessible units.

The Province of Ontario has completed several significant policy initiatives that have an impact on facilitating the provision and/or protection of affordable housing. They include: the adoption of the *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016*; the adoption of the *More Homes More Choices Act, 2019*; the 2019 update to A Place to Grow, Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe; the 2020 update to the Provincial Policy Statement; and the adoption of the *COVID-19 Economic Recovery Act, 2020*. The City has an opportunity to address these policy gaps through the Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

5. Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan

The Draft Action Plan (see Attachment #1) contains a list of actions that the City may consider to address the affordable housing gaps identified through the Research and Gap Analysis Report, March 2021, and an associated lead department, timeframe and cost. The actions are grouped according to the following 6 themes:

1. Planning Policy;
2. Financial Incentives;
3. Partnerships;
4. Education;
5. Advocacy; and
6. Other Actions.

The following lists the actions under consideration according to theme:

1. Planning Policy:
 - Changes to the Pickering Official Plan to:
 - Add definitions for 'Affordable Housing' and 'Housing Options';
 - Conform to recent changes to provincial policy and legislation;
 - Add policies to protect existing rental housing stock from conversion and demolition, and consider adding polices to implement Inclusionary Zoning;
 - Review and update the City zoning by-laws and Two Dwelling Unit By-law to reflect the provincial changes to permit secondary units in a detached, semi-detached or row house, as well as in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached or row house;

- Consider allowing secondary units in rural areas subject to the capacity of well and septic systems, reducing the parking requirement for secondary units located in areas well served by transit, as well as examine other existing zoning requirements that may be barriers to adding secondary units;
 - Consider removing or reducing the minimum requirement for parking spaces and allowing developers to propose alternative options for affordable housing and/or supportive housing;
 - Consider discouraging “down zoning” high and medium density residential development to a lower density; and
 - Add an application requirement for the submission of an Affordability and Accessibility Analysis.
2. Financial Incentives:
- Consider waiving fees or providing a grant equivalent to certain development application fees, development charges, property taxes, parkland dedication requirements, and/or reductions in letters of credit for affordable rental, affordable ownership, and/or supportive housing developments;
 - Expedite approvals for projects which provide affordable rental, affordable ownership, supportive housing, and purpose-built rental housing units;
 - Consider establishing an annual budget item as part of the City’s annual operating budget;
 - Consider establishing a Housing Reserve Fund;
 - Consider establishing a corporate policy whereby surplus or underutilized City-owned lands are first considered for development of affordable rental housing; and
 - Consider establishing a Vacant Home Property Tax.
3. Partnerships:
- Consider acting as a “broker” between developers and operators (of rental accommodation) to facilitate affordable primary rental accommodation; and
 - Communicate and work with Durham Region and developers on funding and other incentives that may be available to address the City’s housing needs.
4. Education:
- Provide guidance to proponents of affordable and/or supportive housing on the planning and building approvals processes.
5. Advocacy:
- Advocate for the Province to establish a minimum number or a percentage of accessible units for major residential development; and
 - Advocate for the school boards to reduce, waive, and/or defer their portion of Development Charges for affordable rental housing.

6. Other Actions:

- Ensure there are no barriers to shared living arrangements in appropriate areas as of right;
- Establish a Monitoring Plan to regularly review and update the baseline housing data to ensure the goals and objectives of the Housing Strategy are being met;
- Encourage developers to design flexible spaces for shared living or multi-generational living; and
- Encourage developers to add universally designed and constructed units to projects.

Staff is preparing the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan Report, which contains a description of the draft actions and a rationale for implementing the draft actions.

6. Engagement

Electronic Public Open House 2 was advertised on the Community Page of the News Advertiser on April 15 and 22, 2021, as well as on the City's website. City staff also sent notice of the Electronic Public Open House 2 directly to members of the Accessibility Advisory Committee, Seniors Community Services Council, the Age Friendly Steering Committee, and participants at the February 25, 2021 Stakeholder Meeting.

6.1 Summary of April 29, 2021 Electronic Public Open House 2

Staff heard from two delegates at the April 29, 2021 Electronic Public Open House, and received a few emailed comments prior to, and during the Open House. A summary of comments/questions from Electronic Public Open House 2 is contained in Attachment #2 to this report.

7. Next Steps

Next steps include, completing the Phase 2 engagement and initiating Phase 3, including the following tasks:

- circulating the Draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan Report to internal departments, agencies and interested stakeholders for review and comment;
- considering the feedback from the Phase 2 engagement opportunities;
- preparing a Recommended Housing Strategy and Action Plan; and
- providing a recommendation report to Planning & Development Committee in the Fall of 2021.

Attachments:

1. Draft Action Plan
 2. April 29, 2021 Electronic Public Open House 2, Summary of Comments/Questions
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Prepared By:

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Recommended for the consideration
of Pickering City Council

Original Signed By

Marisa Carpino, M.A.
Chief Administrative Officer



Number	Draft Action	Gap Number Addressed	Lead Department	Timeframe	Cost
1.0	Policy				
1.1	Add a definition of “affordable housing” to the City’s Official Plan.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.2	Add a definition of “Housing Options” to the City’s Official Plan.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.3	Amend the City’s Official Plan to reflect the Provincial Policy Statement 2020 requirement for the municipality to maintain the ability to accommodate residential growth for a minimum of 15 years (as opposed to 10 years as currently written).	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.4	Consider amending the City’s Official Plan policy to maintain a short term supply of residential lands with development approvals to accommodate a 5 year demand, up from the current requirement of accommodating a 3 year demand.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.5	Add new official plan policy to protect existing rental housing stock from conversion.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.6	Add new official plan policy which prohibits the demolition of existing rental housing units.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.7	Consider adding new official plan polices to implement inclusionary zoning in protected major transit station areas following Durham Region’s completion of the “Assessment Report”.	Gap 4	City Development	Short- to Medium-term	Low

Number	Draft Action	Gap Number Addressed	Lead Department	Timeframe	Cost
1.8	<p>Secondary Units:</p> <p>(a) Review and update the City zoning by-laws and Two-Dwelling Unit By-law to reflect the <i>More Homes, More Choice Act</i> changes to permit secondary units in a detached, semi-detached or row house, as well as in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached or row house.</p> <p>(b) Consider allowing secondary units in rural areas subject to the capacity of well and septic systems.</p> <p>(c) Consider reducing the City’s parking requirement for secondary units located in areas well served by transit.</p> <p>(d) Examine other existing zoning requirements that may present barriers to increasing secondary units within the City.</p> <p>This could potentially be partially addressed through the City’s current Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review initiative.</p>	Gaps 2, 4	City Development, Corporate Services (Municipal Law Enforcement)	Short-to Medium-term	Low
1.9	Consider removing or reducing the minimum requirement for parking spaces and allowing developers to propose alternative parking space options for affordable housing and/or supportive housing.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low

Number	Draft Action	Gap Number Addressed	Lead Department	Timeframe	Cost
1.10	Consider discouraging “down zoning” high and medium density residential designations to lower density residential designations.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
1.11	Add an official plan policy requiring the submission of an Affordability and Accessibility Analysis as part of a complete application for residential development.	Gap 4	City Development	Short-term	Low
2.0	Financial Incentives				
2.1	Consider waiving fees or providing a grant equivalent to certain development application fees, development charges, property taxes, parkland dedication requirements, and/or reductions in letters of credit for affordable rental, affordable ownership, and/or supportive housing developments.	Gaps 1-3	Finance Department	Medium-term	Medium-High
2.2	Expedite approvals for projects which provide affordable rental, affordable ownership, supportive housing, and purpose-built rental housing units.	Gaps 1-3	City Development, Engineering, Fire	Short-term	Low
2.3	Consider establishing a corporate policy whereby surplus or underutilized City-owned lands or buildings are first considered for development of affordable rental housing prior to being sold.	Gaps 1-3	Corporate Services, Finance	Short- to Medium-term	Medium - High
2.4	Consider establishing an annual budget item as part of the City’s annual operating budget.	Gaps 1-3	Finance	Short- to Medium-term	Low

Number	Draft Action	Gap Number Addressed	Lead Department	Timeframe	Cost
2.5	Consider establishing a Housing Reserve Fund.	Gaps 1-3	Finance	Short- to Medium-term	Low
2.6	Consider establishing a Vacant Home Property Tax.	Gaps 1-3	Finance	Short- to Medium-term	Low
3.0	Partnerships				
3.1	Consider the City acting as a “broker” between developers and operators (of rental accommodation) to facilitate affordable primary rental accommodation.	Gaps 2	Economic Development, City Development	Short-term	Low
3.2	Communicate and work with Durham Region and developers on funding and other incentives available to address the City’s housing needs.	Gaps 1-3	City Development	Short-term	Low
4.0	Education				
4.1	Provide guidance to developers, not-for-profits and other proponents of affordable rental, affordable ownership and/or supportive housing, on the planning and building approvals processes.	Gaps 1-3	City Development	Short-term	Low
5.0	Advocacy				
5.1	Advocate for the Province to establish minimum number of accessible units or a percentage of accessible units for major residential development.	Gaps 1-3	Corporate Communications	Short-term	Low

Number	Draft Action	Gap Number Addressed	Lead Department	Timeframe	Cost
5.2	Advocate for the school boards to reduce, waive and/or defer their portion of Development Charges for affordable rental housing.	Gaps 1, 2	Corporate Communications	Short-term	Low
6.0	Other Actions				
6.1	Ensure there are no barriers to shared living (co-housing, co-living) arrangements in appropriate areas as-of-right.	Gaps 1-3	City Development	Short-term	Low
6.2	Establish a Monitoring Plan that will regularly update and review the baseline data set established in the Research and Gap Analysis Report, March 31, 2021, with the goal of identifying whether or not the goals and objectives of the Housing Strategy are being met, and if any modifications to the Action Plan are necessary to ensure that the goals and objectives of the Housing Strategy are met.	Gaps 1-4	City Development	Short-term	Low
6.3	Encourage developers to consider designing flexible spaces that can accommodate shared living or multi-generational living.	Gaps 1, 3	City Development	Short-term	Low
6.4	Encourage developers to add accessible/universally designed and constructed units to projects.	Gaps 1-3	City Development	Short-term	Low

Housing Strategy Study
 April 29, 2021 Electronic Public Open House 2
 Summary of Comments/Questions

Item Number	Comments/Questions
1.	The cost of insuring shared housing (sometimes referred to as “rooming houses”), may impact a home owner. For seniors who may have the space and may welcome the company, the extra costs of these issues could outweigh their desire to assist someone with their housing situation.
2.	The City’s 55+ Advisory Committee, has been considering the option of accommodating younger single individuals co-habiting with a senior, thus providing the singleton with affordable housing options in return for some assistance to the senior, such as lawn mowing, snow removal etc.
3.	The City should ensure that a Shared Living form of housing is encouraged. Sharing accommodations is the most common way for minimum waged workers to obtain affordable housing. Some municipalities regulate shared living accommodation (“rooming houses”). There needs to be municipal, regional, and provincial initiatives to overcome structural barriers to shared living.
4.	How will Pickering resolve issues of multiple cars parked in driveways and on the street that may result from affordable housing such as rental apartments and rooming houses? Does the Planning Committee have a method to deal with a potential lack of upkeep of the area surrounding these units. In Toronto we hear about used drug needles left outside and liquor bottles being left about as well as transients loitering. Has the City developed a plan to deal with these negative issues in the planning process? How will the Planning Department ensure the overall look of Pickering will not be diminished?
5.	If low cost housing is a priority, why not include studio apartments or condos that will be more affordable?
6.	As a senior I was happy to hear consideration concerning the accessibility of housing. I would like to see more bungalow condos similar to the ones beside the Pickering City Hall. The bungalows there are always in very high demand. Coupled with that, smaller detached bungalows should also be a considered.
7.	Pickering seems to focus its energy on creating more high density housing such as condos, apartments and town houses. Why is there no focus on single family homes for young families or bungalows with a garage for seniors. I feel there is too much emphasis on high density and not enough on the younger families and older seniors.

Housing Strategy Study
 April 29, 2021 Electronic Public Open House 2
 Summary of Comments/Questions

Item Number	Comments/Questions
8.	Pickering Council entertained the request to build a high condo building at the waterfront at the bottom of Liverpool Road. Why is Pickering not focusing its efforts to create as much parkland as possible along the waterfront for all Pickering residents to enjoy? The waterfront trail should incorporate as much greenspace as possible for residents. Ajax was very forward thinking in doing just that. As a result there are miles of waterfront trail to walk and enjoy.
9.	Is Pickering interested in designing a seniors shared living house design? Have you studied the Golden Girls of Port Perry?
10.	BILD spoke about the importance of partnerships in addressing the declining affordability in housing in the Greater Toronto Area, including the organization's support for funding and grants from all levels of government. In particular, they expressed that they are encouraged by the wording in the Draft Action Plan and an approach which includes a suite of incentives that seeks to provide affordable housing units. In addition, BILD expressed an interest in ensuring that any future Inclusionary Zoning policies or requirements are applied in such a way to not unintentionally undermine future housing stock or choice, as well as the City's overall growth objectives. BILD suggested that a working group be established between the City and BILD.
11.	BILD stated that it's fairly common when the industry is proposing new development that they are faced with community opposition and that community education is necessary to combat the stigma of the word "affordable". BILD expressed that they believe that the success of implementing affordable housing begins early on with Council, and requires their support and endorsement to be the champions for these policy directions, and ends with residents who need to understand the social implications of opposing these types of initiatives.