

Municipality of North Perth

Housing Action Plan

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Introduction

The Municipality of North Perth has identified a set of initiatives to address North Perth’s housing supply and support the development of more priority unit types. These initiatives are based on the findings of the Perth County Housing Needs Assessment and align with the requirements of the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund Program.

If the Municipality’s submission to the Housing Accelerator Fund is not successful, this Action Plan will continue to be used as a tool to support implementation of the Municipality’s strategic priorities related to housing.

In October 2022, a Housing Workplan was approved by North Perth Council. Many of the actions of the Housing Workplan were incorporated into the new North Perth Housing Action Plan for the purposes of the Housing Accelerator Fund submission. Some actions were not incorporated as they did not fit within the parameters of the Housing Accelerator Fund and are listed as initiatives 12-16 in this plan.

Action Plan Initiatives

1. Additional Dwelling Units

HAF Initiative Type: *Encouraging Accessory Dwelling Units – a second smaller unit on the same property as a primary unit*

Description: To encourage detached ADUs within the Municipality’s low-density residential zones through the development of an ADU Toolkit. The kit will include a variety of pre-reviewed designs that comply with the building code and key advice for locating these units on lots to comply with zoning provisions. Emphasis will also be on fire prevention and planning for fire preparedness in designing ADUs. A promotion and outreach campaign will be developed and launched to introduce the kits and encourage homeowners to learn more. The campaign will increase public understanding of ADUs, emphasize the benefits of ADUs for both property owners and individuals seeking housing, and highlight the importance ADU registration for fire and emergency preparedness. The creation of ADUs will benefit the housing spectrum by increasing housing density on a single lot, promoting infill developments, and reducing barriers to creating these units.

2. Housing Community Improvement Plan

HAF Initiative Type: *Implementing incentives, costing or fee structures to encourage such things as affordable housing and conversions from non-residential to residential.*

Description: North Perth will undertake the process to develop a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) as authorized in the Planning Act that specifically incentivizes affordable housing and conversion of existing structures for housing in specific zones. Being a tool that permits a municipality to spend monies and enter into agreements to achieve defined community benefits, a CIP with a focus on affordable/attainable housing can promote the production of housing by assisting and stimulating the private sector. The objectives of the project will be to:

- identify priority areas within the Municipality’s zones, including residential uses (residential, commercial, and agricultural)
- Inventory existing and/or new incentives by their scope and identify gaps or opportunities to expand or implement incentives (e.g., Downtown Housing Grant Program, ADU Grant, Planning Application and Building Permit Rebate, Design and Study Grant, Tax Increment Grant, and Brownfield Financial Tax Incentive Grant)
- Develop the CIP parameters and seek approval
- Develop and implement a multi point marketing and outreach campaign to encourage uptake (web, social media, displays, workshops and testimonials)

3. Municipal Land Disposition and Affordable Housing Redevelopment Program

HAF Initiative Type: *Enable mixed-use redevelopment of city-owned properties*

Description: Creation of a land disposal/redevelopment program and establishment of partnerships to create affordable housing in the community. This initiative will identify potential municipal-owned land assets that are underutilized or brownfield sites that would be suitable for mix-use redevelopment which would include affordable housing. The Municipality will develop a framework for partnerships with non-profit housing providers, large local employers, or area developers to create Private-Public partnerships to dispose of municipal land assets or support the design/build and operating of a facility on public or private land. The goal of such a program is to address local needs for affordable housing, as well as explore increased access to social and public health services through community hub models. Public-private partnerships and cross-sector collaboration will efficiently address the greatest needs of the community and region to support program success and sustainability.

4. Develop Policies to Increase Density and Promote Missing Middle

HAF Initiative Type: *Allowing increased housing density (increased number of units and number of stories) on a single lot including promoting “missing middle” housing forms typically buildings less than 4 stories.*

Description: This initiative involves research and development of Official Plan and Zoning policy that put alternative forms of housing into the mainstream to be balanced with the more traditional housing forms in the more rural municipalities in Ontario such of single detached, semi detached and townhouse development.

New policies will highlight and establish as of right policy environments to encourage more ADUs, Tiny Homes, Communal Housing, Boarding Homes, Cooperative Housing, Missing Middle Detached Housing, etc.

This initiative will be supported by collaboration amongst Municipal staff and County Planning staff.

The resulting policies will then be introduced through additional tools such as concept/building plan examples and information brochures.

Further, this initiative will involve the research and development of a Density Statement to actively encourage a community shift towards higher density development than is traditionally proposed in North Perth.

New Official Plan policy is under development to establish density targets for Perth County Municipalities. North Perth will augment that policy with clear expectations about achieving these targets and aiming higher where possible. A Council approved Density Statement will direct developers to adopt their role in increasing density and demonstrate that in their proposals. It will give Council a foundation to collectively evaluate proposals for redevelopment and greenfield development in relation to the Official Plan targets and help them with reasoning when the development threatens abilities to meet the density targets established in the Official Plan. Density targets have traditionally been hard to enforce on an individual development basis.

The Statement is a valuable tool for staff, in particular Planning staff, to use at pre-consultation meetings with developers and property owners to communicate the density levels that are expected in the municipality. This tool will guide decision making by Council on development proposals within the municipality and ensure that infill and higher density is prioritized in developments.

5. Streamline Planning Approvals

HAF Initiative Type: *Implementing new/enhanced processes or systems such as case management, e-permitting, land and building modelling*

Description: Several new/enhanced processes will be implemented at the Municipal and County level to streamline and accelerate planning approvals including:

- Update pre-consultation materials to assist developers in preparedness and foster a greater understanding by applicants on study(s) requirements and purposes for their applications.
- Update application forms to reduce redundancy and facilitate implementation of the Cloudpermit Planning Module that is being implemented in 2023/2024.
- Conduct a Phase 1 Archaeological Assessment for the Municipality. This will establish a screening tool to determine earlier in the planning process what developments will be exempted and which ones need to proceed to subsequent phases.

6. West End Development Plan and Implementation

HAF Initiative Type: *Create a process for the disposal of city-owned land assets for the development of affordable housing as-of-right (not requiring rezoning)*

Description: This plan will guide the development of 212 acres of municipally owned designated lands that are anticipated to be brought into the urban boundary through the new County Official Plan (2023/2024) and establish a servicing strategy (water, wastewater, stormwater) for other lands within the broader study area. Building on the Housing Needs Assessment, plan development will target specific needs identified in the Assessment and lay out some of the basic

parameters and zoning for mixed uses, and a mixed density of residential development. Development of specific zoning will then be developed to encourage the types of structures to inspire a variety of ownership or rental options and encourage a mix of affordable/attainable/market residential units. The Municipality will pre-zone the property and provide corresponding engineering drawings for servicing the land, putting the lands into a shovel-ready situation. Decisions on private, municipal, or partnered development options are yet to be made.

7. Vacant Land/Unit Tax

HAF Initiative Type: *Implementing disincentives, costing or fee structures to discourage such things as unit vacancy, underdeveloped/ idle land, and low-density forms of housing*

Description: This initiative will include investigation of the proposed establishment of a Vacant Land/Unit Tax as a measure to address current housing supply issues, as outlined in Section 338 of the Municipal Act, 2001. By creating a disincentive to have residential properties/units remain vacant, the Municipality will encourage owners to maintain, occupy or rent their properties, therefore increasing the housing supply, particularly in the rental market. Initial research will analyze the extent of residential vacant properties/units within the municipality and whether the establishment of a Vacant Land/Unit Tax would be valuable. Vacant Unit Tax Programs in other jurisdictions (e.g., City of Ottawa, City of Hamilton) will be analyzed to determine program parameters and best practices.

8. Public Education and Communication Campaigns

HAF Initiative Type: *Promoting and allowing more housing types that serve vulnerable populations*

Description: Development of public education and communication campaigns that will educate on the following themes:

- 1) Findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and forecasted housing needs
- 2) Awareness of the growing population in the community experiencing vulnerable housing situations (e.g., homelessness or risk of homelessness) or that cannot find suitable housing (e.g., youth, newcomers, potential employees)
- 3) Combating nimbyism, and exclusive behaviour at public planning meetings and in neighbourhood disputes.

The Municipality will hire expertise in community education and develop training workshops and materials on the above themes, as well as the broad community benefits of greater diversity in housing options. A key objective of the campaign will be to foster community ownership/support of the local housing crisis and solutions. A dedicated webpage will be created on the Municipality of North Perth website for housing related information and resources. This webpage will be promoted through social media, mail-outs, radio, and community partners. Education and engagement sessions will be coordinated with relevant stakeholder groups (e.g., staff, Council, community service groups, builders, developers, etc.) to provide information and resources, as well as receive feedback.

9. Explore Partnerships for Affordable Housing

HAF Initiative Type: *Partnering with non-profit housing providers to preserve and increase the stock of affordable housing*

Description: The Municipality will explore partnership opportunities with local housing agencies, non-profit housing providers, institutions, businesses, and the development community to deliver affordable and/or alternative housing projects. Potential partnerships to be explored include United Way Perth Huron/Community Renewal Company, City of Stratford Social Services Housing Division, Indwell, Habitat for Humanity, as well as local businesses that would receive employee attraction/retention benefits through housing development.

10. Develop Climate Lens

HAF Initiative Type: Implementing measures to address or prevent flood plain or climate change risk

Description: Focused implementation, and update where necessary, of recommendations of the Green House Gas Reduction Plan (2021). Immediate priority of adopting the use of a climate lens tool to assess municipal decisions, how decisions impact the climate and if decisions will be affected by climate change. A climate lens tool will also allow senior leadership and staff to implement climate related decisions that align with their departmental priorities. Development of the climate lens decision-making tool will support the Municipality's strategic priority of being a leader in mitigating and adapting to the challenges of climate change by becoming a low-carbon and climate resilient community.

11. Completion and Implementation of Development Charges Review and Update

HAF Initiative Type: Aligning development charges with the costs of infrastructure and servicing

Description: Investigation of changes to the Development Charge By-law via the Development Charges Review and Update project for the purpose of incenting/encouraging increase housing supply, particularly affordable and attainable units.

Additional Housing Initiatives

- 12. Continued Involvement in the new County Official Plan**
- 13. Host Housing Workshop with Key Stakeholders, including Local Developers, Builders, and other Stakeholders**
- 14. Investigate Tools to Help Residents in Seeking and Providing Rental Housing**
- 15. Collaborate and Support Community Partners on Locally-Driven and Grassroot Solutions to Affordable Home Ownership/Rentals**
- 16. Investigation, Planning and Construction of Affordable Housing Units and/or Complex**

Implementation Schedule

The Housing Action Plan Implementation Schedule is dependant on approved annual budgets, department business planning and staff capacity.

Initiative	Start Date	End Date	Estimated Cost
Additional Dwelling Units	April 2023	April 2024	\$20,000.00
Development Charges Review	July 2023	December 2023	\$25,000.00
Housing Community Improvement Plan	September 2023	January 2024	\$150,000.00
West End Development Plan and Implementation	September 2023	September 2025	\$150,000.00
Land Disposition and Affordable Housing Redevelopment Program	January 2024	May 2024	\$40,000,000 <i>(reflects cost for Access Centre project)</i>
Policies and By-laws to Increase Density and Promote Missing Middle	January 2024	January 2025	\$10,000.00
Streamline Planning Approvals*	January 2024	January 2025	\$50,000.00
Affordable Housing Partnerships	January 2024	September 2026	\$1,000,000.00
Public Education/Communication Campaign*	January 2024	September 2024	\$40,000.00
Develop Climate Lens	May 2024	October 2024	\$15,000.00
Vacant Unit Tax*	January 2025	December 2025	\$20,000.00

* Indicates where County of Perth and/or lower tier collaboration is anticipated