

Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

September 13, 2024

Housing Action Plan

Prepared for the 'Round 2' Housing Accelerator Fund

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Background

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville (the Town) is committed to contributing to creating more housing supply while expediting development timelines and approval processes to create a complete community, through a range of housing options and affordability, in proximity to amenities, higher order transit, and employment opportunities to accommodate a growing population. This Housing Action Plan outlines the initiatives and milestones the Town will undertake as part of the ‘Round 2’ Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) being administered on behalf of the Federal Government by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The Town’s application to the HAF program is under the Large/Urban stream for municipalities with a population over 10,000.

The primary objective of the HAF program is to create more housing supply at an accelerated pace, and to enhance the certainty in the planning approvals and building process. There are also several additional objectives:

- 1) Supporting the development of complete communities that are walkable, consisting of appropriate residential density and a diverse mix of land uses, providing access to a wide variety of amenities and services through public and active transportation.
- 2) Supporting the development of affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities that encourage clear pathways to achieving greater socio-economic inclusion largely achieved through the equitable provision of housing across the entire housing spectrum.
- 3) Supporting the development of low-carbon and climate-resilient communities.

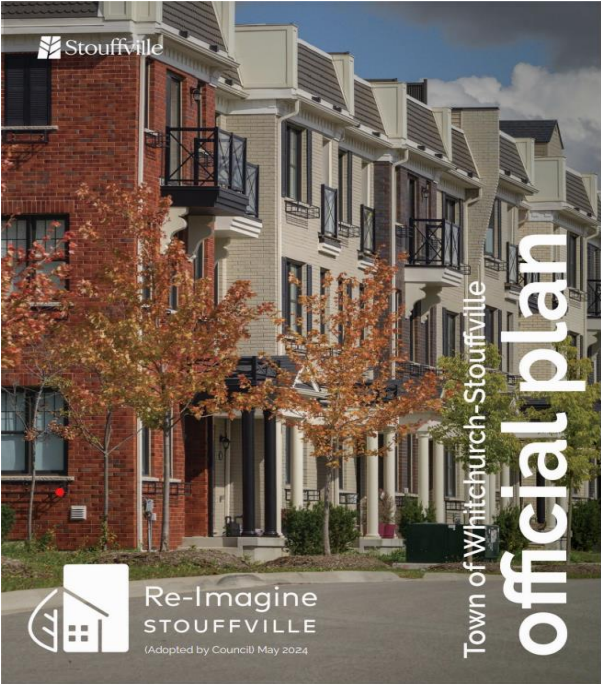
The Town is confident that the initiatives and milestones outlined in this Housing Action Plan support the primary objectives of the second round of the HAF program and the identified best practices from CMHC to accelerate the development of additional housing and creating a complete community.



Current Housing Milestones

The Town is committed to the role it plays in the development approvals process with the goal of increasing housing supply and housing options in the community. The following section summarizes the key initiatives and actions the Town has recently completed or currently undertaking, to accelerate the development of housing within the Town. These initiatives will augment and support the initiatives proposed to be undertaken through the HAF funding which are identified in the Proposed HAF Initiative section this Housing Action Plan.

Re-Imagine Stouffville: New Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Official Plan, Adopted by Council May 2024



The Town’s new Official Plan was recently adopted by Council on May 15, 2024, and is currently being reviewed for final approval by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The new Official Plan implements the policy recommendations identified through the Town’s Housing Strategy, endorsed by Council in May 2022, to accommodate forecasted housing growth to 2051, promote the development of a range of housing options, and facilitate the provision of affordable housing.

Notably, the new Official Plan policies related to accelerating housing growth and the development of affordable housing within the Town include:

- Designates sufficient land to accommodate the development of an additional 18,020 housing units from 2021 to 2051, representing an increase of over 52,000 persons.
- Directs the majority of new housing growth within the Town’s Strategic Growth Areas in the community of Stouffville, including two Protected Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), which are planned to achieve a minimum density target of 150 persons and jobs per hectare.
- Establishes a target of 35% of all new housing growth within the MTSA’s to be affordable housing, and a target of 25% outside of MTSA’s.
- Establishes increased density and height permissions within certain Strategic Growth Areas which contemplate increased building heights from 10 storeys, up to 20 storeys.

- Establishes a minimum density target for designated greenfield areas within new urban areas of 65 persons and jobs per hectare to support more compact and mixed-use communities.
- Supports the building of complete communities by requiring a range of housing options and types, including updated housing mix targets focused on a larger proportion of medium density (27%) and higher density housing options (32%), including emphasis on the ‘missing-middle’ housing.
- Includes targets for a minimum number of affordable housing and purpose built-rental units to be constructed on an annual basis.
- New policies for permitting the development of additional residential units, which may include up to two additional residential units on a lot with a single, semi-detached, or townhouse dwelling.
- Policies which support an age friendly community and housing accessibility through universal design standards.
- Policies to collaborate with other partners and not-for-profit agencies to provide financial incentives for affordable housing projects and the use of surplus lands.

Furthermore, the Town’s new Official Plan also establishes the framework for utilizing available planning tools to facilitate and incentivize the development of affordable housing, including Community Improvement Plans, Inclusionary Zoning By-laws, and Community Benefit Charges.

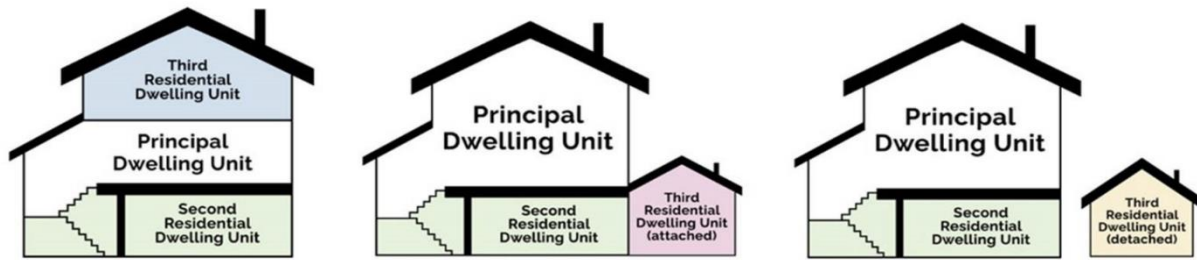
Additional Residential Unit (ARU) Zoning By-law Amendment

On November 28, 2022, Bill 23, the *More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022* received Royal Assent. This Bill required municipalities across Ontario to amend their Official Plans and Zoning By-laws to allow up to three (3) residential units on parcels with detached, semi-detached, and townhouse dwellings within fully serviced (water and sewer) settlement areas. On June 19, 2024, Council adopted Zoning By-law Amendment 2024-078-ZO, to implement Bill 23.

Permitted ARU configurations include:

- i. Two (2) residential units within the principal residential building and 1 in an ancillary building, and
- ii. Three (3) residential units in the principal residential building provided there is no residential unit in an ancillary building.

Within two months of implementing the zoning by-law amendment, the Town has already seen an influx of twenty-seven (27) ARU permits issued within the Town.



Council Motion – Four Residential Unit Permissions

On April 24, 2024, Council approved, in principle, permissions for up to four (4) residential dwelling units on a single property on fully serviced lots within the Town. Council directed Staff to initiate a review of areas within the Town where four (4) residential units would be the most appropriate. This Council motion is intended to advance the provision of more housing and to achieve a wider variety of housing options within the Town to address the missing middle and housing supply gaps (see Appendix – April 24, 2024 Council Motion). Additionally, the Expanding Missing Middle Housing Study proposed through the HAF application (see page 13), builds on this Council direction.

Multiplex Housing Renderings and Pre-Approved ARU Design Plans

The Town is currently undertaking a Request for Proposals (RFP) from qualified professionals to create “ready to use” ARU design plans and multiplex housing renderings. These “ready to use” design plans will work to streamline the approval process for homeowners and builders to construct ARUs. The pre-approved ARU design plans will consist of detached studio and one (1) bedroom units. The Town is also creating a brochure to be made available for the public with key information and considerations for constructing ARUs.

The multiplex housing renderings will consist of 3D renderings of multiplex housing options to demonstrate how multiplexes can exist within established neighbourhoods within the Town. This initiative will support missing middle housing and promote gentle infill and intensification opportunities to increase the range of housing options in the Town. While this is for demonstration purposes, the intent is to help encourage these types of housing within a neighbourhood scale and to assist in education around housing that can fit within the context of an existing neighbourhood.

CityView Implementation

The Town recently launched CityView, its e-permitting and application portal, which will be used for online submissions of planning and building permit applications. The

implementation of CityView is a critical step for the Town in modernizing and expediting its application and approval processes. The Town is anticipated to experience increased growth pressures which demonstrates the need for more automated data collection, assessment and reporting methods. Investing and making improvements to the Town's data collection and reporting methods will support the development of 'real-time' insights while increasing focus on efficiency, strategic outcomes and informed decision making.

Comprehensive Zoning By-law Review

The Town is currently undertaking a comprehensive review of its Zoning By-law to bring it into conformity with the New Official Plan, pending approval from the Province. Once the Official Plan has received Provincial approval, a Request for Proposal (RFP) will be released to undertake this review which will examine all the all properties and corresponding zones in the Town, resulting in increased height and density permissions, and a more diverse range of housing options. The resulting new Zoning By-law will provide a way for the Town to manage land use and future development in an expedited manner, by broadening 'as-of-right' development permissions to accelerate housing development.

Expanded Delegated Approval Authority

To meet the goal of further streamlining approval processes at the municipal level, staff have identified some planning approval processes which are typically administrative in nature, limited in scope, and minor in impact that could be delegated to staff. These processes are typically routine in nature and often complement other existing applications, which would continue to be decided by Council. These delegations could serve to facilitate the planning applications and will streamline the procedures and administration, alleviate some of the volume of applications on Council's agenda. This will also allow Town Council to focus on more intensive and appropriately impactful applications and thereby provide for more efficient delivery of service.

Housing Supply Growth Targets

Municipalities applying for 'Round 2' HAF funding are required to provide housing supply growth targets with and without HAF funding. Projections must include data for a three-year period from September 1, 2024 to September 1, 2027.

Projected Units without 'Round 2' HAF Funding

Single Detached Dwellings	340
Multi-Unit Housing (in close proximity to rapid transit)	104
Multi-Unit Housing (missing middle)	350
Multi-Unit Housing (other)	296
TOTAL	1,090

Projected Units with 'Round 2' HAF Funding

Single Detached Dwellings	340
Multi-Unit Housing (in close proximity to rapid transit)	179
Multi-Unit Housing (missing middle)	485
Multi-Unit Housing (other)	431
TOTAL	1,435

Projected Unit Breakdown by Year with 'Round 2' HAF Funding

Year Ending September 1, 2025	215
Year Ending September 1, 2026	460
Year Ending September 1, 2027	760
TOTAL	1,435

Overall Targets

Total number of HAF incented units	345
Percentage of affordable units projected without HAF	2.50%
Percentage of affordable units projected with HAF	8.78%
Total number of Dwellings (Current Housing Stock)	18,497
Projected average annual housing supply growth rate without HAF	1.96%
Projected average annual housing supply growth rate with HAF (min. 1.1%)	2.59%
Projected increase in the housing supply growth rate (min. 10%)	31.65%

Proposed HAF Initiatives

Applicants for the 'Round 2' Housing Accelerator Fund under the Large/Urban stream must identify a minimum of seven (7) initiatives that will be implemented within three years. These initiatives can include policy changes, system improvements, direct incentive programs, or other programs that support accelerating housing with specific focus on affordable housing while addressing missing middle, increased housing options, and housing in close proximity to transit, which will contribute to a complete community.

The initiatives outlined in this Housing Action Plan meet the criteria required under the 'Round 2' HAF program and align with best practices as identified by CMHC. The Town is committed to implementing these initiatives to support the provision of housing and meeting the reporting requirements to CMHC in order to monitor the success of this Plan.

The Town has identified seven (7) initiatives that all contribute in different ways to help in ensuring more housing is available to the community over the next ten years.



Initiative 1:

Medium and High-Density Parking Study and Zoning By-law Amendment

Description

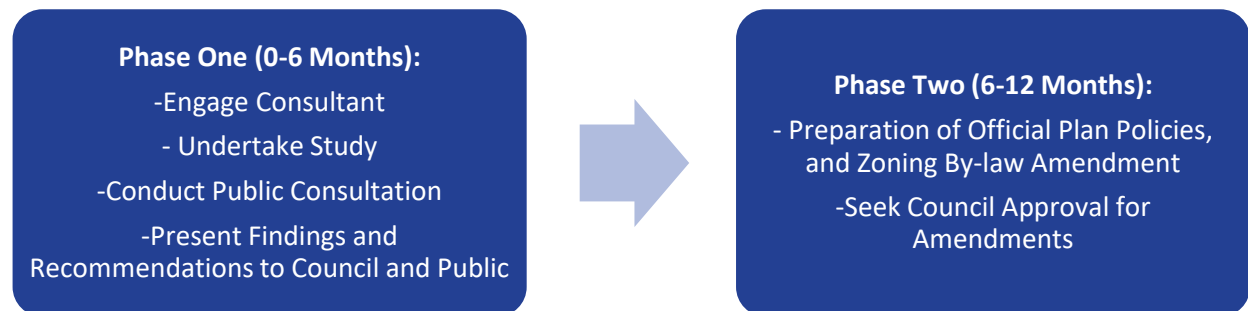
The Town will undertake a study to determine parking requirements for medium and high-density development applications. This study will review and update the Town's parking policies and regulations to determine appropriate parking reductions for these types of applications, including minimum parking rate requirements, and where eligible developments should be located to receive a reduction in parking.

This study will examine the areas in proximity to the Town's Major Transit Station Area's (MTSA's) and will be focused within the Town's Strategic Growth Areas. The Town's Strategic Growth Areas include the Western Approach Mixed Use Area, Gateway Mixed Use Area, and the Highway 48 Mixed Use Corridor. These areas serve as important neighbourhood focal points and main streets for more intensive and mixed-use development, that provide a range of shopping, recreation and housing opportunities with existing and future access to transit.

Timeline

January 2025  December 2025

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 1 year



Cost: \$100,000

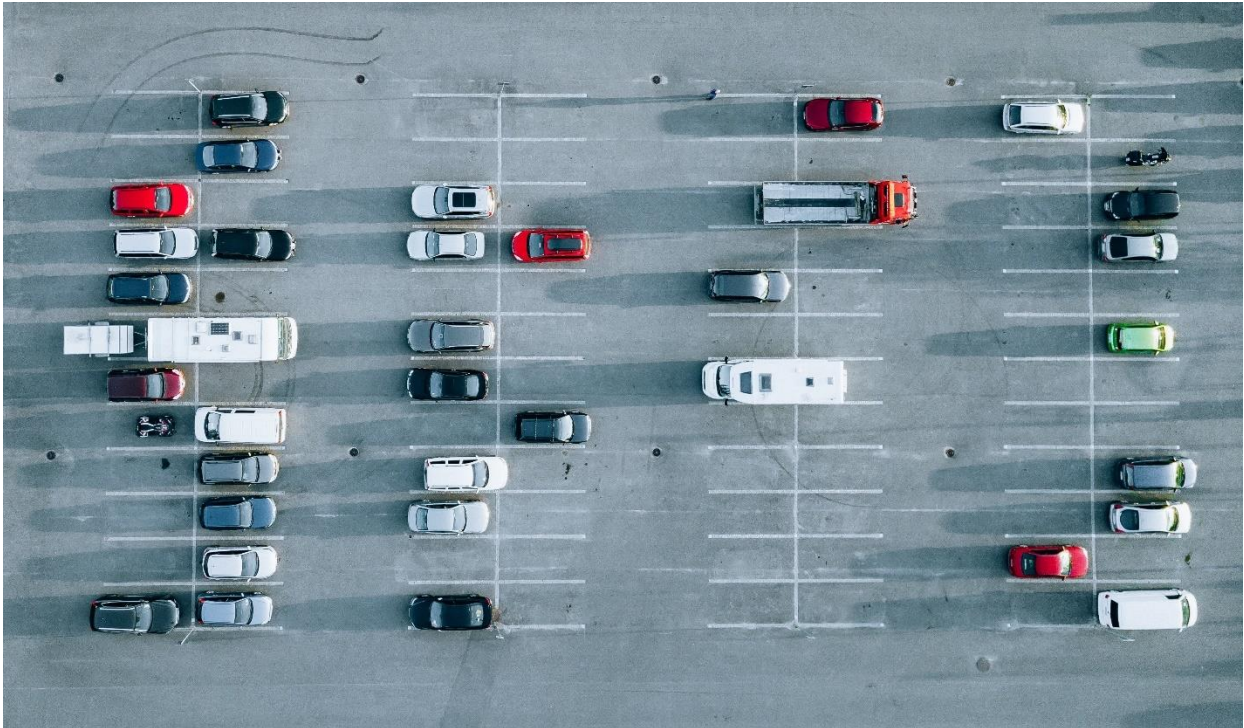
Units: 60

Alignment to HAF 'Best Practices'

- End exclusionary zoning by increasing as-of-right permissions.
- Reduce or eliminate parking requirements.

Expected Results

Reducing parking requirements can encourage more density and better optimize land to increase housing supply in the Town. This can also create opportunities to develop affordable housing as a result of reduced parking near MSTAs and Strategic Growth Areas which reduce car dependency and promote active transportation. Furthermore, reducing parking requirements can increase development project viability while decreasing development costs associated with parking in which cost savings can be passed to renters and buyers to boost housing affordability.



Initiative 2:

Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan

Description

The Town will prepare an Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to help incentivize the rapid deployment of market and affordable housing supply in the Town. The Affordable Housing CIP will create and implement both financial and non-financial grants/incentives to create a range of housing types including affordable housing.

The Town has already identified several potential incentives/programs with further programs to be considered through the preparation of the Affordable Housing CIP. The identified programs consist of the following:

- 1) **Modular Housing Partnership Program** – this partnership program will collaborate with private sector builders/developers to deliver modular/prefabricated housing to rapidly create alternative forms of housing to increase supply in the Town.
- 2) **Additional Residential Unit (ARU) Program** – this program will work to encourage homeowners and builders to construct ARUs in the Town. This will include creating financial building/construction incentives of \$10,000 per ARU, creating a catalogue of pre-approved or “ready to use” detached designs, and an associated informational ARU construction guide/brochure to support streamlining the ARU construction process. The incentive could assist in supplementing the costs associated with servicing the ARU, among other matters.
- 3) **Multiplex Development Program** – this program will create financial incentives to encourage homeowners/builders to construct multiplex style housing.
- 4) **Municipal Land Transfer Framework** – this program will create a framework to transfer/dispose of underutilized municipal lands for affordable housing within the Town. This will create a streamlined process for identifying underutilized municipal lands to be transferred to appropriate development and building partner(s) for the creation of affordable housing.
- 5) Other programs to be determined through the preparation of the CIP.

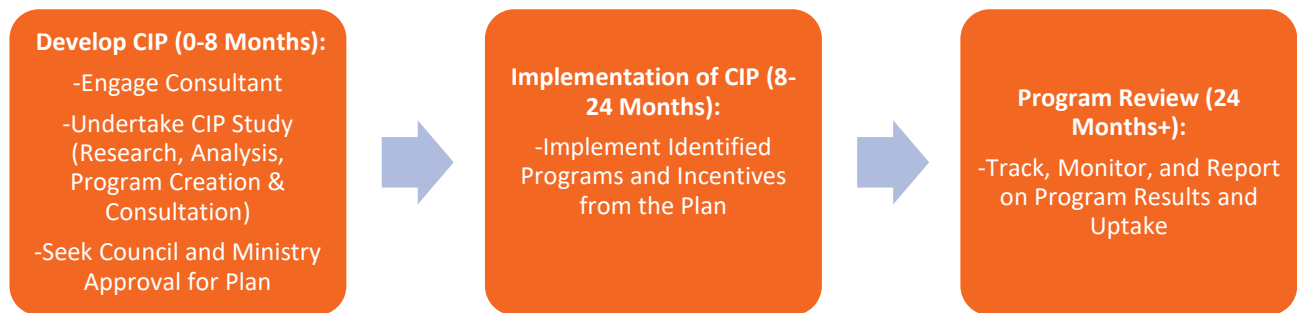
Timeline

November 2024



June 2025

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 1 year + 2 years for implementation



Cost: \$975,000 (this includes completion of the CIP and implementation of incentive programs).

Units: 75

Alignment to HAF ‘Best Practices’

- Develop or enhance affordable housing community improvement plans.
- Introduce design guidelines and pre-reviewed building plans for accessory dwelling units and missing middle housing.
- Implement grant and incentive programs for priority housing types.
- Leverage surplus and underused lands for housing.

Expected Results

The Affordable Housing CIP will support creating a toolbox of both financial and non-financial incentives/programs through identifying a range of municipal tools to encourage market and affordable housing development. This will link together all available municipal tools and resources to make it easier and faster to develop market and affordable housing while addressing housing supply gaps. This will not only contribute to creating a broader range of housing supply, including affordable housing, but will also support the development of missing middle housing and gentle infill in existing neighbourhoods.

Initiative 3:

Expanding Missing Middle Housing Study, Guidelines, and Zoning By-law Amendment

Description

The Town will initiate a study to determine how to fit house-scale buildings in a variety of forms of multiplexes and low-rise apartments into existing residential neighbourhoods. This study aims to support missing middle housing, increase density, and address supply gaps, along with encouraging walkability to local amenities and public transit options.

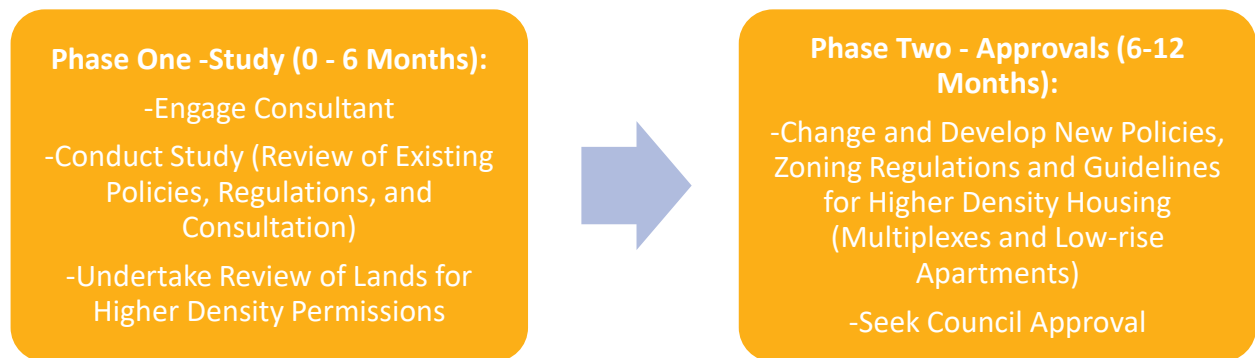
On April 24, 2024, Town Council directed staff to proceed with reviewing areas within the Town where **permitting up to four (4) residential units** per property would be the most appropriate. This study builds on Council direction to address a wider variety of housing options within the Town. The study will also review municipal permissions to **permit up to four (4) residential units** per property.

This study will also include the review and creation of necessary municipal policies, zoning by-law amendment, and the creation of design guidelines to assist with future development applications to support the construction of multiplexes and low-rise apartments in the Town.

Timeline

January 2025  December 2025

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 12 months



Cost: \$200,000

Units: 20

Alignment to HAF ‘Best Practices’

- End exclusionary zoning by increasing as-of-right permissions.
- Eliminate restrictions (e.g., setbacks, floor area) to promote housing diversity and supply.
- Introduce design guidelines and pre-reviewed building plans for accessory dwelling units and missing middle housing.

Expected Results

This study, including implementing zoning by-law amendment and design guidelines, will support reducing barriers to expand housing supply for the missing middle and densifying the number of housing units that may be permitted on a single property in the Town. This will also contribute to higher density urban living along with walkability and community connectivity to transit and amenities.



Initiative 4:

Inclusionary Zoning Study and Zoning By-law Amendment

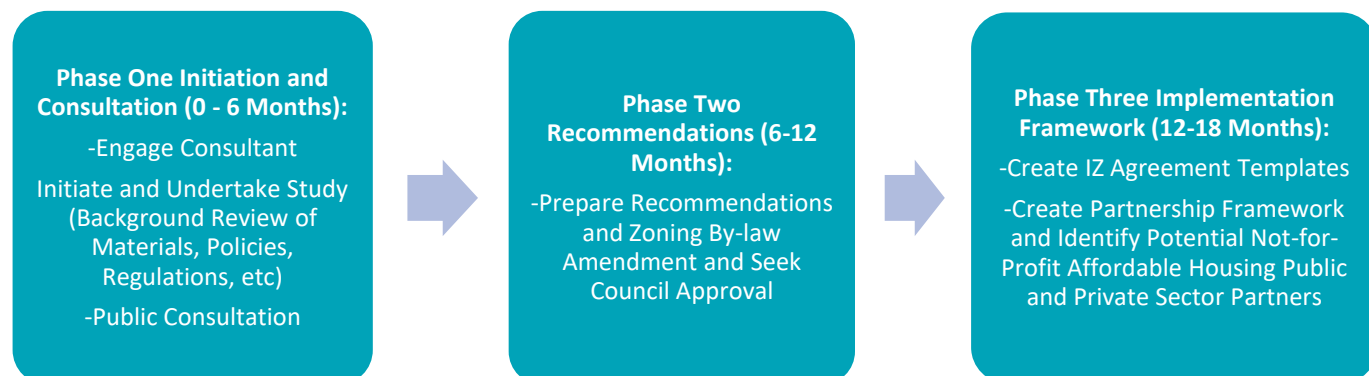
Description

The Town will undertake an Inclusionary Zoning (IZ) study and an implementing Zoning By-law Amendment to increase the supply of affordable housing within the Town's Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), including the Stouffville GO and Old Elm GO MTSAs. This study will establish the minimum percentage of affordable housing units that future developments should provide within the Town's MTSAs. The Town's New Official Plan establishes a target for the development of 35% of all dwelling units within an MTSA to be affordable. The Town will also create an implementation framework consisting of IZ agreement templates to secure the creation of affordable units. A framework will be created to track and report on the ongoing affordability of designated units achieved from IZ. Furthermore, the Town will also create a partnership framework with housing service providers including not-for-profit public and private sectors to provide lower-middle income households with affordable housing units derived from IZ.

Timeline

December 2024  May 2026

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 18 months



Cost: \$150,000

Units: 75

Alignment to HAF 'Best Practices'

- End exclusionary zoning by increasing as-of-right permissions.
- Prioritized/enhanced development approval process.

Expected Results

The IZ study and implementing Zoning By-law Amendment will require a greater supply of affordable housing units in the Town’s MTSA’s. This will allow the Town to allocate a percentage of affordable housing units in future developments to ensure affordable housing units to low- and moderate-income households. In doing so, this will ensure affordable housing options to residents of all income levels to support diversity and inclusivity in the Town.



Initiative 5:

Growth Management Reporting and Tracking Software Tool

Description

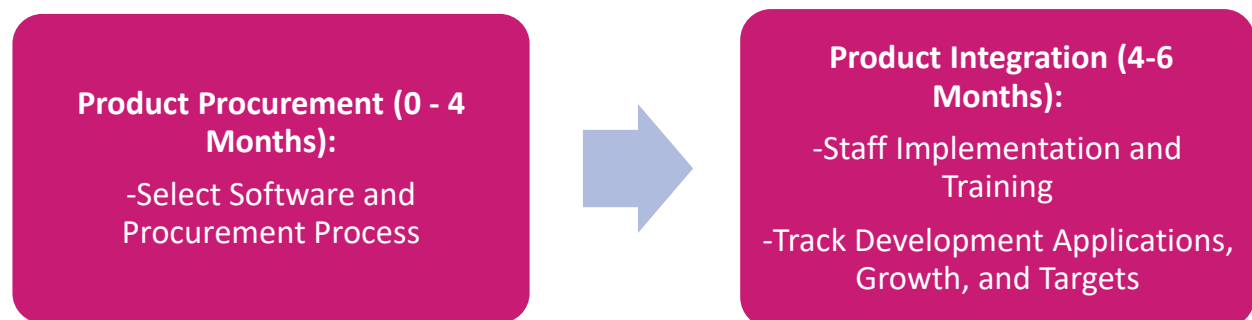
The Town recently launched CityView, an e-permitting and application portal for the submission and processing of planning and building permit applications online. This was an important first step in modernizing and optimizing the application process. The Town is anticipated to experience increased growth pressures, requiring a more robust and automated data collection, assessment and reporting method. Investing and making improvements to the Town's data collection and reporting methods will support the development of 'real-time' insights while increasing focus on efficiency, strategic outcomes and informed decision making.

The Town will build upon its CityView software, by implementing an interactive GIS based software tool to monitor population growth, servicing allocation, and housing and employment growth. This tool will enable staff to spatially track, monitor and report on population, employment and housing trends at all levels of geography for long-term growth forecasts, density and housing targets, along with community demographics. It will help staff monitor, query and analyze growth trends while generating scenarios and reports based on real-time development information and other changing growth parameters in the short to long term. The growth management tool will integrate with the Town's planning and building processing and monitoring software and geographic information systems.

Timeline

December 2024  June 2025

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 6 months



Cost: \$150,000

Units: 0

Alignment to HAF ‘Best Practices’

- Increase process efficiency through e-permitting, streamlined reviews and new digital tools.

Expected Results

By customizing Cityview, the Town will speed up the development of local housing supply. E-permitting and online fee payments will reduce the workload of Town staff, allowing them to focus their productive capacity elsewhere.

This tool will support the Town’s data modernization efforts to assist with streamlining the development approvals process. By consistently tracking growth trends and applications, the Town can respond on a more agile basis to release units from the servicing pipeline that are not being built, to monitor the effectiveness of its housing programs, and to appropriately plan for new growth. Informed decision making will result in efficiencies to costs, better utilization of resources, improved infrastructure planning, faster response times, and capitalizing on potential opportunities, whereby enhancing the Town’s ability to efficiently respond to changes in growth trends and ensure that municipal targets and goals are reached. Additionally, this shift can reduce municipal time updating, retrieving, and reporting on local development trends.



Initiative 6: Expedited Site Plan Approval Process

Description

The Town will develop a new streamlined process to fast-track site plan approval applications while meeting Section 41 requirements of the *Planning Act*. The process will focus on removing duplication and redundancies in current site plan application approval processes and improve the circulation, review and processing of all development applications. An enhanced site plan approval process will be created for projects that specifically include affordable and purpose-built rental housing units. This may include deferring certain engineering reviews and requirements to the building permit stage, as opposed to site plan approvals, thereby eliminating duplication.

Additionally, development projects will receive site plan application fee(s) reimbursed if; a) the development project receives a building permit within 6 months of receiving site plan approval and; b) the development project is ready for construction within twelve (12) months of receiving site plan approval.

Timeline

December 2024  June 2025

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 6 months

Expedited Site Plan Approval (0-6 Months):

- Consult with Internal Departments to Create an Expedited Site Plan Approval Process
- Create Expedited Site Plan Approval Process for Developments with Affordable and Rental Housing Units
- Implement Site Plan Approval Process

Cost: \$700,000 (To complete the new process and implement possible reimbursements)

Units: 75

Alignment to HAF ‘Best Practices’

- Fast-track approvals for affordable housing and purpose-built rentals.
- Review fees and charges including waivers for affordable housing.

Expected Results

This streamlined site plan approval process will work to fast-track site plan approval processes with emphasis on housing developments, through improving inefficiencies and redundancies in the current site plan approval processes. This will also allow the Town to prioritize along with reducing municipal fees and charges regarding developments with affordable housing and purpose-built rental units. The compilation of the above-mentioned efficiencies will work in unison to expedite the supply of much needed housing with additional focus on creating affordable and purpose-built housing for a range of needs in the Town.



Initiative 7:

Servicing Allocation Study and By-law

Description

The Town will undertake a Servicing Allocation Study and implementing municipal by-law to review existing servicing capacity allocation (e.g. water and sewer infrastructure) policies and regulations. This study will determine appropriate development timelines for developers/builders to maintain service allocation approval from the Town. This will also include a revoking servicing allocation policy and By-law for developments that are not proceeding in a timely manner, after receiving planning approvals.

Timeline

January 2025  December 2025

Timeline for Milestone Completion: 1 year



Cost: \$75,000

Units: 40

Alignment to HAF 'Best Practices'

- Review of development charges and fee schedules.

Expected Results

This Study will determine appropriate pathways to assign and re-assign servicing allocation to optimize municipal servicing to expedite development timelines. This will also ensure that developments are completed in a timely manner while encouraging the development of vacant, underdeveloped or idle land with approved servicing allocation to increase housing supply in the Town.

Next Steps

Applications for 'Round 2' HAF funding will be reviewed to determine if they meet program requirements. Evaluation criteria will be used to assess applications and to determine which applicants are selected in the HAF. It does not dictate the funding amounts. All initiatives outlined in the Housing Action Plan will be individually assessed and scored.

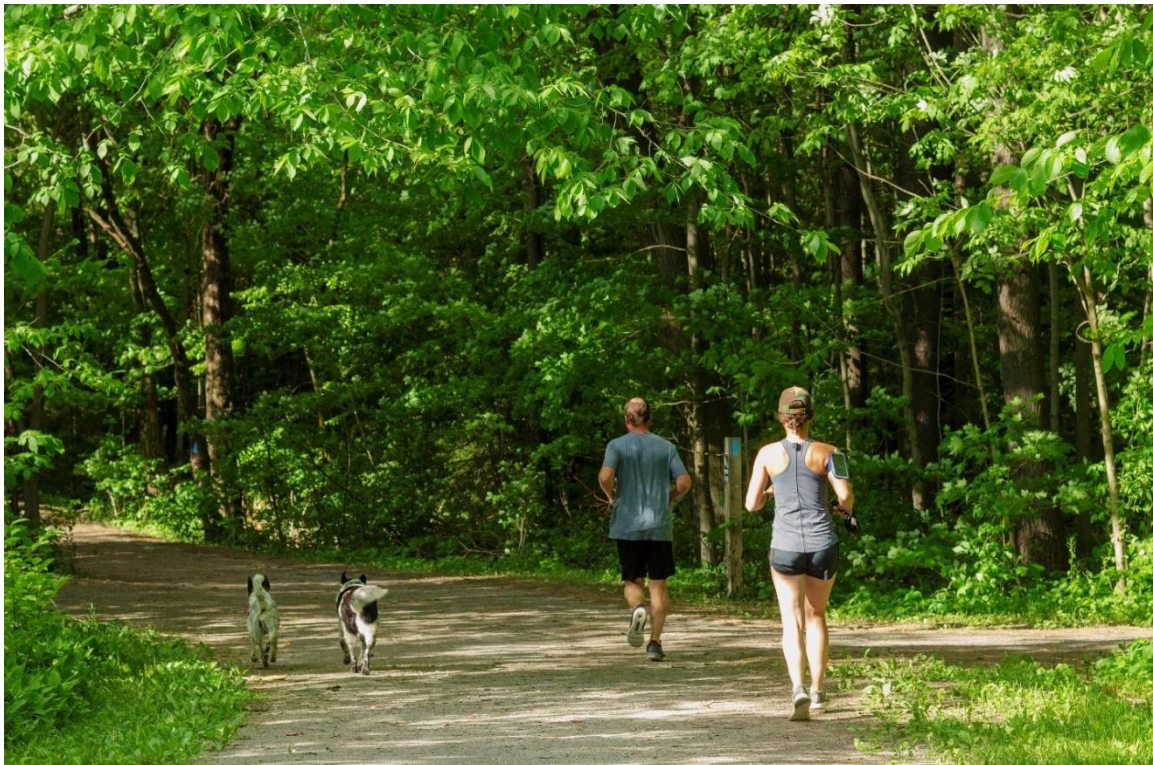
Points for applications will be awarded based on the following criteria:

- Commitment to increase housing supply;
- Relevance of the initiative outcome(s) to one or more of the objectives of the HAF;
- The effectiveness of the initiative on increasing the supply of housing; and,
- The need for increased housing supply.

Successful applicants will be required to report on the following:

- Progress on the initiatives and commitments outlined in the Housing Action Plan;
- Permit data for all housing units receiving building permits during the reporting period; and,
- Details on how HAF funding was used during the reporting period.

The Town is committed to fulfilling its obligations under the funding and reporting requirements of the 'Round 2' Housing Accelerator Fund.



Appendix

Council Motion – Four Residential Unit Permissions



111 Sandiford Drive
Stouffville, Ontario
L4A 0Z8

t: 905-640-1900
tf: 855-642-TOWN
townofws.ca

“Council Minutes Extract from [Wednesday, April 24, 2024 ***Meeting Postponed from April 17, [2024](#) at 1pm]”

Moved By: Councillor Smith

Seconded By: Councillor Sherban

WHEREAS the cost of housing has increased significantly in recent years such that many residents struggle to afford the cost of living; and

WHEREAS the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is committed to doing its part to address the housing crisis by helping to facilitate the building of more options for housing and more affordable housing; and

WHEREAS the Province of Ontario has set a goal of building at least 1.5 million homes by 2031; and

WHEREAS the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville accepted its target of building 6,500 new units by 2031 to help contribute to the Province’s target; and

WHEREAS the 10 best practices from successful Housing Accelerator Fund applications include eliminating restrictions to allow a greater variety in housing types; and

WHEREAS the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force recommends allowing “as of right” residential housing up to four units on a single residential lot; and

WHEREAS gentle density can improve access to affordable housing, better use of existing infrastructure and reduced urban sprawl; and

WHEREAS the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is currently studying Additional Residential Units for the purpose of creating zoning regulations to enable up to three (3) residential dwelling units on fully serviced residential lots as required to bring the Town’s Zoning By-law into conformity with Bill 23, the More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council approve, in principle, the permission for four (4) residential dwelling units to be considered on fully serviced residential lots; and

THAT staff be directed to initiate a review of the appropriate areas within the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville where four (4) residential dwellings units could be appropriate; and

THAT staff be directed to include four (4) residential dwelling units in the ARU Public Planning Meeting on May 1 for public information for consideration; and

THAT staff be directed to bring forward a report with the necessary Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to enact permissions for four (4) residential dwelling units of fully serviced residential lots, where appropriate, for Council consideration.

A recorded vote was requested by Mayor Lovatt. The Clerk called the question and asked each member of Council in turn for their vote:

	For	Against
Councillor Bartley	X	
Councillor Acton		X
Councillor Sherban	X	
Councillor Upton		X
Councillor Kroon		X
Councillor Smith	X	
Mayor Lovatt	X	

Resolution

Carried as Amended