



Corporate Report

Report from Planning and Building Services, Planning Services

Date of Report: May 9, 2017

Date of Meeting: June 12, 2017

Report Number: PBS-134-2017

File: 60.73.34

Subject: Housing Action Plan 2017

Recommendation

That staff be directed to prepare necessary new policies, policy amendments, and procedures to address the highlighted priority actions discussed in the attached staff report including:

- Official Plan condominium conversion policy amendment;
- Zoning By-law amendment addressing accessory apartments;
- Zoning by-law amendment incorporating the possibility of inclusionary zoning;
- Development Application changes to streamline affordable housing approvals;
- Community Improvement Plan amendment to include an affordable housing program;
- Regional development charges review and comments;
- Devising an Advocacy program whereby local politicians and senior staff would advocate for the development of affordable housing projects and related funding programs;
- Devising a Collaboration/Education plan so that all citizens understand the need for inclusion of affordable housing in the city; and

That the balance of the tools and actions outlined in this report be explored for possible inclusions during the preparation of the city's formal Housing Action Plan.

FORTHWITH

Summary

Council has directed staff to prepare a comprehensive report on available policy tools and options that could be incorporated into the creation a Housing Action Plan for the City of St. Catharines.

This report serves as Phase I of this study. To this end, Staff have completed a review and are presenting Council with options for both immediate actions and long term policy directions that address affordable housing issues. These options include amendments to the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Community Improvement Plan, procedural alterations, policy directions, information gathering and sharing practices, innovative

development options, and advocacy opportunities. Staff have also listed a number of priorities that should be undertaken first: they include:

- Official Plan amendment to change the policies pertaining to the conversion of rental apartments to condominiums
- Community Improvement Plan amendment to recognize affordable housing as a factor in funding programs
- Exploring the addition of Inclusionary Zoning as a tool to require the construction of affordable housing as part of certain types of development projects
- Devising an Advocacy program whereby local politicians and senior staff would advocate for the development of affordable housing projects and related funding programs
- Devising a Collaboration/Education plan so that all citizens understand the need for inclusion of affordable housing in the city

The following approach is recommended for the creation of the Housing Action Plan:

Phase I – June 12, 2017: Report #1 below discusses the following:

- Background
- Context of affordable housing:
 - Definition
 - Government Roles
 - Legislative context
- Issues Identified
 - current practices
- Tools and Actions
- Next Steps including the assembly of a working group.

Phase II – The Mayor’s Office and staff will assemble a working group of qualified professionals. – Summer 2017

- Advise on priority items set out in this report and to identify other goals and next steps towards a complete Housing Action Plan.

Phase III – Public & Stakeholder Consultation – Summer - Fall 2017

Phase IV – Implementation of chosen options – Fall 2017

Background

In recognition of the rising issue of the need for affordable housing in the City, on January 30th, 2017, the Mayor brought forth a motion that was endorsed by Council as follows:

“That Council direct staff to prepare a comprehensive report on the City’s policy tools and options to encourage the development of affordable housing, including a review of policies related to secondary suites and inclusionary zoning, regulations and allowances

for mini houses, live work spaces, modular homes and laneway homes, as well as a review of the CIP program and development charges policy and other creative incentive options to support the creation of affordable housing in St. Catharines.”

Context

Rising market values and a low rental vacancy rate are exacerbating the availability of affordable housing units in the city. This is a problem that is affecting municipalities worldwide and is not one that can be fully addressed through only immediate solutions. Rather, to deal with affordability issues, the municipality must make a permanent commitment to continue addressing the problem. As markets, and federal and provincial policies shift, the tools and efforts of the municipality will have to adjust accordingly.

Definition

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe defines “affordable” as:

	St. Catharines
Ownership - the least expensive of:	
purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households	\$1746/month – approximately 270,000.00 <i>*this estimate is based on interest rate, property tax and utility cost assumptions.</i>
housing for which the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area	\$244,000.00
Rental – least expensive of:	
rent does not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for low and moderate income households	Approximately \$938 per month
rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.	Equal to or less than \$906 (St. Catharines-Niagara – CMA)

The PPS defines low and moderate income as follows:

- a) in the case of ownership housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 percent of the income distribution for the regional market area; or
- b) in the case of rental housing, households with incomes in the lowest 60 percent of the income distribution for renter households for the regional market area.

Canada Mortgage and Housing Commission (CMHC)

According to CMHC, “affordable” housing should cost less than 30% of before-tax household income.

St. Catharines Vacancy Rate

The latest data from CMHC shows that rental demand is outpacing supply, and that the fixed sample average rent for a two bedroom apartment has continued to rise faster than the province rent increase guideline. The vacancy rate for St. Catharines has decreased from 3.1% in 2015, to 2.5% in 2016. A full summary of CMHC data is shown in Appendix 1 of this report.

Additionally, what provincial policy defines as affordable will not necessarily be appropriate for every real life situation for citizens of the City of St. Catharines. Social conditions, family structures, responsibilities and employment circumstances vary greatly in every individual setting. Council and staff should keep this in mind when prioritizing tools and implementation.

Government Roles

The roles of each tier of government in the provision of affordable housing are as follows:

<p style="text-align: center;">Federal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of policies/regulations• National housing strategies• Funding supply	<p style="text-align: center;">Provincial</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Creation of policies/regulations• Legislative framework• Funding supply• Policy documents
<p style="text-align: center;">Regional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Community services• Housing provider• Oversight and administration for local non-profits• Creation of regional policy• Incentive provision	<p style="text-align: center;">Municipal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy creation• Implementation of provincial and regional policy• Official plan/zoning by-law• Incentive provision

Since St. Catharines is part of a two tier municipal structure, it does not provide community services, administer shelter services, nor establish a housing provider (such as Niagara Regional Housing). The City does not have the jurisdiction, funding or staff to facilitate these services. Rather, it is the city's role and responsibility to ensure that all available planning tools are being implemented for the provision of affordable housing. As well, local politicians can advocate for the provision of tools and funding for their municipality and the Region at large. Though the roles are distinctive for upper and lower tier municipalities, the efforts of both should be collaborative to effectively tackle the issue.

For its part, the Region of Niagara is responsible for housing and its Provincially mandated Homelessness Action Plan. "A Home for All: Niagara's 10 year Community Housing and Homelessness Action Plan" is the Region of Niagara strategy for the provision of permanent and secure residence for the population of Niagara. The priorities of the Plan are as follows:

1. Improve options to house people who do not have a home
2. Expand supports to help people find and retain their homes
3. Increase opportunities and options across the housing continuum
4. Improve the effectiveness of the housing system.

Legislative Context

The relevant provincial legislation that is outlined in Appendix 2 provides guidance, tools and allows for its implementation partly at the local level. Legislation is directed to a wide variety of mandates, including but not limited to land use policy particularly for residential dwelling types. As well, applicable legislation creates:

- i) agencies that are in the business of promoting affordable housing ie., Niagara Regional Housing
- ii) sets out affordable housing policy directed at supply, pricing and long term availability
- iii) provides controls on market forces to regulate the price for housing;

Census Data for St. Catharines

The 2016 Census data regarding populations that was recently released ranks St. Catharines as very high in terms of aging population and percentage of seniors who live in the City. An aging population can have a great impact on the availability and demand of affordable housing. A range of housing options must be made available to seniors to ensure that they can transition to meet their needs while remaining in their local communities.

Issues identified

The first step of this review and research was to determine what issues existed with respect to affordable housing in the City. The problems identified are listed below:

- supply of affordable housing units cannot meet the demands;
- poor condition of available units;
- low quantity of accessible units;
- long waiting lists for Niagara Regional Housing;
- configuration of units is not always appropriate for all individuals and families;
- increasing market values are intensifying the issue
- as a result, a wide spectrum of people are requiring affordable housing and this in turn places pressure on community services such as shelters;
- public stigma of affordable housing developments
- perception that building affordable housing in a neighbourhood will lower property values;
- lack of coordination throughout the Region and other service providers;
- cost of developing affordable units;
- availability of funding;
- accessibility to funding;
- long term affordability is difficult to ensure;
- little certainty in funding, incentives and approvals process;

- innovative options are hindered by traditional regulations;
- reliance on provincial and federal government for initiatives and funding sources; and
- Building Code requirements for accessory apartments are too rigorous and costly

Current practices

The City does have certain tools and policies already in place to encourage the provision of affordable housing. Some of the options available are being used and others require more understanding, communication and advocacy.

Official Plan policies:

Planning tools and policies are but one of many factors that affect the state of the affordable housing market in the municipality and the country at large.

In the City's Official Plan, the Garden City Plan (GCP) policies:

- support appropriate intensification and the development of a variety of housing options and upholds provincial land use policies, especially in the Urban Area.
 - allow for a variety of housing options and tenures in all areas within the Urban Area.
 - encourage a mixture of tenure and housing types
 - provide for flexible accommodation options and a thriving and successful community.
 - allow for the construction of detached accessory apartments in all residential zones subject to a zoning by-law amendment.
 - permits the passing of temporary use by-laws for the purpose of garden suite construction to a maximum of 20 years.
- allow for bonusing under Section 37 of the Planning Act. Affordable housing for low and moderate income groups, or special needs groups is defined as a community benefit with respect to bonusing.

Zoning By-law 2013-283 regulations:

- require smaller minimum lot areas in many zones
- establishes a maximum lot area to ensure underdevelopment does not occur. - - permit interior accessory dwelling units in any detached, semi-detached or townhouse dwelling unit
- help to support the creation of lots and construction of dwellings in laneways subject to the availability of services and adequate access.
- permit Live-work options in a variety of zones.
- permit Home based businesses within a principal dwelling unit subject to certain zoning provisions.
- permit Residential units above, behind or beneath commercial units in the commercial zones.
- permit mixed use zones and encourages the combination of residential and commercial uses and parking exemptions in the City's core.

Recent amendments to the GCP and zoning by-law have served to ensure that residential infill and intensification is appropriate and compatible with the surrounding neighbourhood while not detracting from the opportunity and ability to create affordable housing.

Collaboration

Currently, Staff recognize the need for a collaborative team approach to the issue of affordable housing and are making efforts to have municipal staff members join Regional teams and task forces, as well as attend local conferences, seminars and lectures to better understand the issues being experienced in the Region at large.

Tools and Actions Items

To encourage affordable housing Staff have reviewed a wide variety of options for the municipality to pursue.



Tools and action items are summarized below. Attached as Appendix 3 is a brief description and numerical listing of all of these possible tools, outlining the corresponding role and timeline for addressing each item. Certain of these actions are highlighted as priorities and should be addressed first.

Possible Official Plan Amendments

- Implement the revised Places to Grow policy which will be in effect on July 1, 2017, and will sustain intensification efforts including:
 - Encourage higher density projects in appropriate locations
 - Advocate for increased public transit

- Ensure greater neighbourhood connectivity
- Consider the prohibition of redevelopment sites from downsizing. For example, if the current density of the project is 30 unit/ha, the project cannot be redeveloped below that density even if the zone provides for an allowance of 20-32 units/ha. This initiative would also require an official plan amendment.
- **PRIORITY:** Review Condominium conversion policies, considering more prohibitive wording and studying vacancy rates. The strengthening of condominium polices in the GCP can assist in ensuring that the rental vacancy rate is stabilized. The wording of the current policy should be amended from “discouraging” conversions under the threshold percent to “prohibiting” conversions. The minimum vacancy rate should be reviewed and a provision added requiring the vacancy rate to be at or above that percentage for multiple preceding years. Vacancy rate requirements should be specific for both the city in general and the neighbourhood zone in which the proposed condominium conversion is located. Only with strengthened policies can staff be equipped to appropriately evaluate applications and make recommendations.
- Consider parkland dedication exemptions
- Add demolition control areas to restrict the demolition of existing apartment buildings to ensure supply does not diminish.

Zoning By-law Amendments

Amendments to the City’s zoning by-law also can help encourage the provision of affordable housing in the City including exploring:

- **PRIORITY: Accessory Apartments.** Explore the
 - possibility of permitting detached accessory apartments without a zoning amendment.
 - provide more flexibility for interior accessory apartments
 - expand the maximum size of the units
 - provide parking requirements for the accessory unit
- Parking requirements affect the feasibility of projects. The downtown core is exempt from parking requirements. There is merit in examining additional locations, such as high-density residential and mixed use corridors that could be appropriate for parking exemptions.
- To achieve the same goal of increasing the feasibility of affordable housing projects, increased height allowances for affordable housing projects could be incorporated into zoning regulations.

PRIORITY: Inclusionary Zoning:

This zoning tool requires a certain percentage of units in new developments to be affordable housing units. For example, 10% of 200 units in a new residential development would be required to be affordable. On December 8th, 2016, the Promoting Affordable Housing Act that amended four acts in an effort to encourage the construction of affordable housing and update social housing in the province, was given Royal Assent. One of the amendments made was to give municipalities the right to implement inclusionary zoning. Upcoming Planning Act regulations will dictate the approach and development of policies and by-laws. Public consultation for inclusionary zoning regulations in the Planning Act is scheduled for 2017.

There are both positive and negative examples of inclusionary zoning in the United States and western Canada. The appeal is that the cost of the provision of affordable housing units is shifted to the private sector. Inclusionary zoning also ensures that affordable units are mixed with market value units. This eliminates segregation that can be created by construction of residential developments containing only affordable housing units. There is concern that the cost of constructing the affordable units can only be incorporated into the balance of the development when the number of units is very high. In St. Catharines, most of the current development consists roughly from 10 to 25 units. Additionally, it is very difficult to ensure that the constructed units remain affordable for an extended period of time. Staff recommend that the merits of inclusionary zoning for the City of St. Catharines be examined in detail once the appropriate Provincial regulations have been imposed.

PRIORITY: Application Process Changes

The level of certainty and timelines for the approval process can be a significant factor in a project's success for funding. To address this reality, more certainty should be provided at pre-consultation meetings: a formalized separate approval process should be created with an approval schedule along with a formal staff commitment from various departments/ agencies for an expedited approvals process. This option is not limited to planning approvals but can extend to building permits, scheduling of inspections and external agency approvals. Council could also approve the automatic forgiveness of fees for affordable housing projects. This information can be relayed to the applicant at pre-consultation meeting so that project success can be determined early on in the process.

The addition of a planning staff member that specializes in affordable housing would be an effective staffing tool. This individual would understand current programs, grants, and facilitate affordable housing collaborations and solicit funding options.

Collaboration

To ensure that the above implemented changes are resulting in positive changes, continued dialogue with the development community should occur. Periodic discussions with the development community should be hosted by PBS staff. Should Council chose to implement any of the listed tools and action items, a monitoring system should also be implemented to measure the effectiveness and success of the implemented options.

This will ensure that staff and budgetary resources are being implemented as efficiently as possible.

PRIORITY: Advocacy

For any of the action and tools presented in this report to succeed Council must make a political and financial commitment to continuously support affordable housing initiatives. This commitment can come in the form of motions to petition different levels of government for funding. Council can take an advocacy role, and ensure that the issue and need for a solution is consistently raised with the public and amongst local politicians from all levels of government. Council can endeavor to create a municipal policy that all surplus municipal lands be considered for affordable housing prior to being put to any other use.

Additionally, once the information is gathered and organized there should be a formalization of information sharing between both the Region of Niagara and all of the municipalities within it. This can provide the municipality with necessary information that the Region may possess to improve the availability of affordable housing units. Working with Niagara Regional Housing and Regional Community Services, an overview of the supply and condition of affordable housing units in the City should be conducted. There may be issues that can be addressed by the City's Fire department or by-law division. Additionally, professional associations can be utilized for affordable housing information sharing. Ex: OPPI, CIP, LMCBO, AMO.

Incentives

PRIORITY: Community Improvement Plan Amendments

Community Improvement Plans (CIP's) are one of the most effective tools available to the municipality to directly fund affordable housing projects. The 2015 CIP could be amended to add "affordable housing" as a value added ranking criteria for Tax Increment Financing grants.

A separate grant solely dedicated to affordable housing should be established. Council could then evaluate which types of developments and grants to allocate funding to each year. An effective provision of affordable units in the city is to utilize the existing housing stock.

In addition, possibly a sunset clause could be added to CIP approvals stipulating that construction would have to be completed within a specified time period. Otherwise, the funding approval would lapse and then corresponding monies could be made available for projects that were committed to immediate construction.

Grant/loan Information

Improving the access to funding is as vital as provision of funding. A comprehensive list of a variety of grants, loans, and incentives for all different type of development should be compiled. There should be a dedicated staff member in PBS or economic development that applicants can consult with for grants, to ensure proper provision of information.

PRIORITY: Regional Development Charges review and comment

The Region of Niagara is in the midst of reviewing the development charge by-law. There are several implications for affordable housing developments that can result from the new by-law. Both Council and staff should take an active role in commenting on the implications of these changes. Currently the by-law proposes development charges for detached accessory apartments which greatly impedes their development potential. There is also some concern with the rate at which live-work units would be charged.

Tax Rates

Other financial incentives for considerations are alterations to tax rates. Many condominium conversion applications are made solely for tax purposes. If the taxes levied on a condominium and rental apartment were equal it would eliminate these conversions. There also exists the potential of imposing a vacant home tax and undeveloped land tax to ensure that properties do not sit empty for long periods of time. If development is encouraged, and more housing stock is provided, it can in turn provide some market relief.

PRIORITY: Education and Outreach

Some of the options that do exist within current policies and regulations are either not being used or know by the public and development industry. An important element in successfully integrating affordable housing within the community is informing the public about the current and future local housing needs, the social and economic benefits of meeting these needs and the importance of achieving community acceptance of various forms of housing. Expanded and improved public consultation can lead to a more positive relationship between the developer, and the neighbouring community.

Public education can also provide further information about other factors that affect affordability. Improving affordability can also be achieved by decreasing other costs of living. For example, reducing energy costs, taking advantage of incentives can reduce monthly living costs through new technologies in insulation, appliances, and smart thermostats. Knowledge of the options that are available can also be spread through a public engagement process. For instance, many people in the city are not aware that interior accessory apartments are permitted in all detached, semi and townhouse dwellings.

As an extension of public engagement, staff should consult with all stakeholders involved in the provision of affordable housing including:

- Municipal staff
- Regional staff
- NRH
- non-profit housing providers
- community service providers
- provincial politicians
- federal politicians
- financial institutions

- local developers

Meeting with stakeholders can lead to rewarding discussion of what each stakeholder requires to achieve more success in the provision of affordable housing. An overview of the options that the municipality is considering should be presented to stakeholders to gauge which options would be most effective.

In the research and preparation of this report the Mayor's Office and staff have proactively begun to conduct stakeholder consultation. Meetings have been held with service providers, members of the real estate community, local builders, developers and landlords to better understand the issues, priorities and needs of the community.

The Mayor's Office, staff, and local stakeholders also recently met with the Federal Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Families, Children and Social Development to discuss the Federal government's upcoming National Housing Strategy.

Property Profile creation

Availability of information can be incredibly useful for the development community as well. Staff should create property profiles for sites that are available for potential development/redevelopment. The profiles could include detailed zoning, official plan, and property constraint information, along with available incentives and tax grants. More complete and extensive information of all vacant residential and commercial units in the downtown can assist both planning and economic development staff in encouraging and facilitating development and conversion of vacant units.

Innovation

New technologies and ideas are consistently emerging in the world of development, many of which can be used in the provision of affordable housing. Council's motion requested staff to explore new and emerging trends related to innovative construction and development methods that have been used to increase the availability of affordable housing elsewhere. Options explored include the following: mini homes, container homes, flex housing, 3D printing, alternative development models, and student co-ops. Innovative options are described in detail in Appendix 4 of this report.

Next Steps

In order to review and prioritize all of the presented options the Mayor's Office and staff will assemble a working group of qualified professionals to review the options presented in this report. The working group would serve as a concentrated stakeholder engagement opportunity. Once formed, they would advise, firstly on highlighted priorities, and also on the balance of the potential tools and actions.

Financial Implications

There are several financial impacts associated with the implementation of a variety of the tools and actions listed in this report. Each financial impact will be assessed in future reports at the implementation stage.

Relationship to Strategic Plan

Provision of appropriate housing for the entire population of the City is one of the foundations for becoming a dynamic, innovative, sustainable and livable city. The recommendation and tools and action items have significant connection to the Strategic Plan, including:

- Attracting public and private investment, support local businesses and provide excellent customer service to demonstrate we are open for business
- Attempting to be an affordable city for young people, families and retired older adults
- Developing partnerships to enhance the economic vitality of the community
- Striving for the highest quality of life for all citizens
- Providing excellent customer service and communication with citizens
- Connecting people, places and neighbourhoods

Conclusion

There must be a collaborative approach to tackling the issue of the provision of affordable housing in St. Catharines. Economic development, social service provision, public perception, and public funding at various levels of governments are all contributing factors.

Staff have completed a comprehensive review of policy tools and actions that are available to the municipality to help encourage the provision of affordable housing. These options include amendments to the Official Plan, Zoning By-law, and Community Improvement Plan, procedural alterations, policy directions, information gathering and sharing practices, innovative development options, and advocacy opportunities. Utilizing only one or two of these tools will not be enough. A collaboration of several of the tools will lead to success and ensure community inclusion.

Notification

There is no legislative notification requirement.

Prepared by:

Margaret Josipovic, Planner I

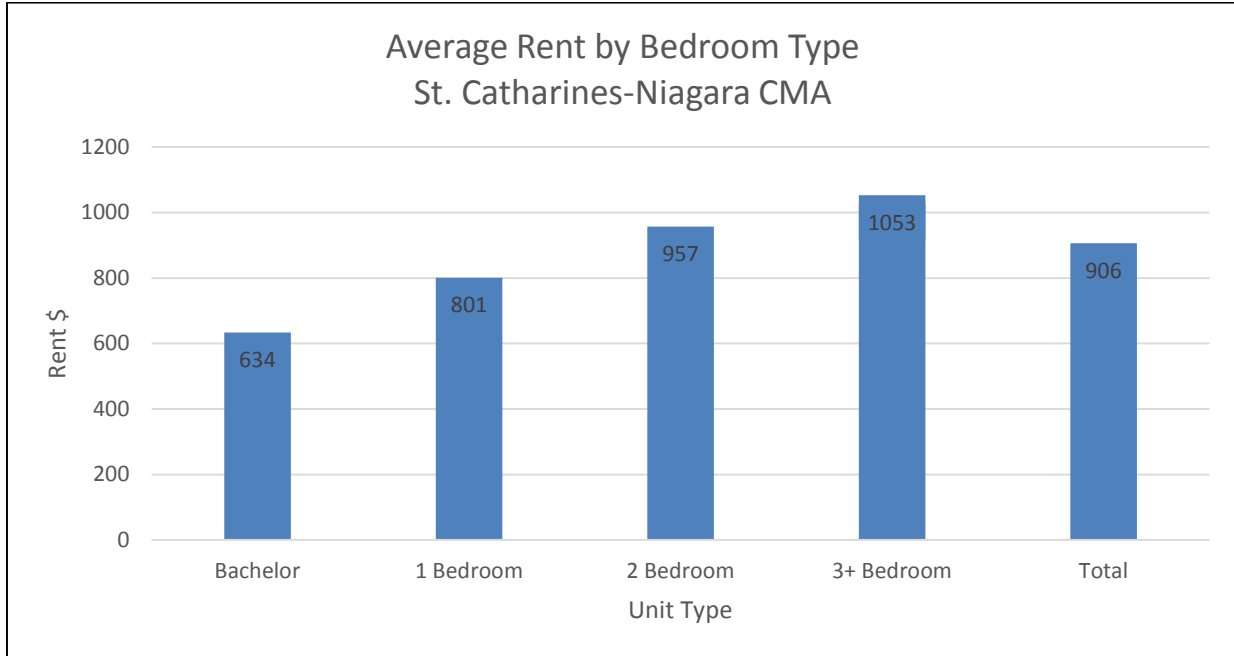
Submitted by:

Judy Pihach, MCIP, RPP
Manager of Planning Services

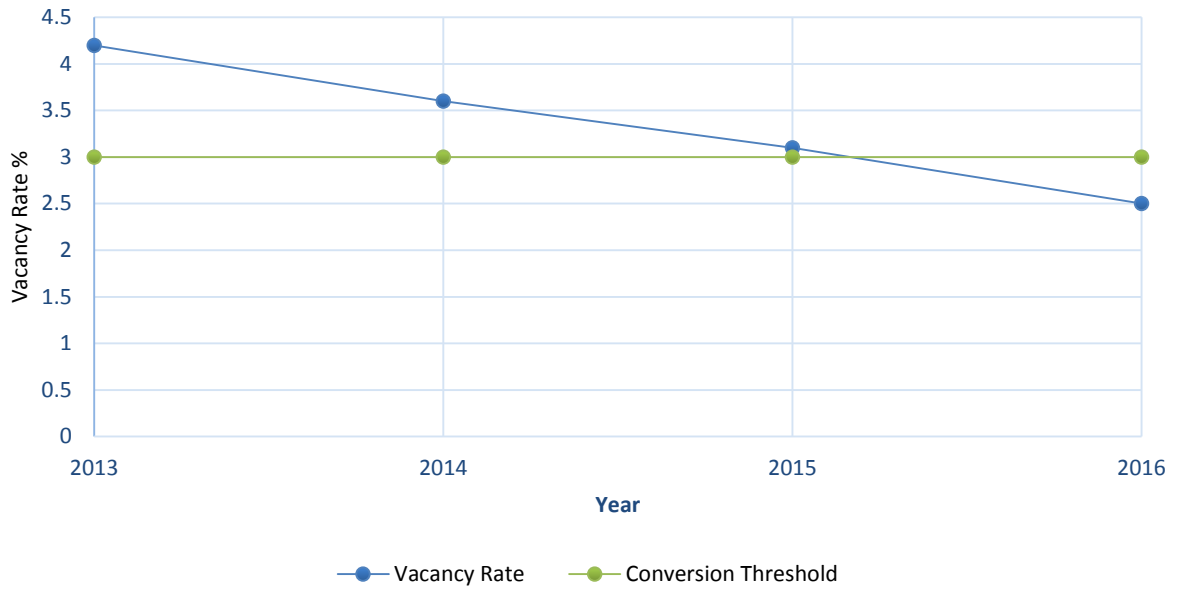
Approved by:

James N. Riddell, M.PL., MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning & Building Services

CMHC Data



Rental Vacancy Rates



Legislative Context

Municipal Act: sets out the rights, responsibilities and powers of municipalities in Ontario.

Planning Act: the foundation for the creation of policy and planning process in Ontario. It provides municipalities with tools to address affordable housing issues such as: density bonusing, protection of affordable rental housing, Community Improvement Plans.

Provincial Policy Statement: base planning and landuse policy that gives direction for Ontario.

Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe: provides direction for how development will occur in southern Ontario, promoting intensification, and secondary units.

Promoting Affordable Housing Act: aims to increase the supply of affordable housing units, and update the social housing system.

Ontario Fair Housing Plan: recently released set of 16 measures the province is introducing to encourage affordable housing, stabilize the real estate market, and protect homeowners and tenants.

Ontario Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy: foundation for improvement of affordable housing provision in Ontario. Requires service providers to develop a housing and homelessness action plan.

Strong Communities Through Affordable Housing Act: – identifies affordable housing as a provincial interest, enhances garden suite provisions, and secondary unit provisions.

Ontario Housing Policy Statement: gives directions for local housing and homelessness plans.

**Priority tools/action items are highlighted in red.*

#	Tool/Action Item	Role	Timing
Advocacy			
1.	Council to pass a motion to petition the Ministry of Housing for funding.	Council	Immediate
2.	Council to pass a motion to petition the province and federal government for the use of public lands for affordable housing projects.	Council	Immediate
3.	Examine the option of creating a municipal service corporation. The corporation can then charge a special levy for defined economic development services, which can include affordable housing.	Council, PBS, Legal, FMS, EcDev staff	Q2 – Q3 2018
4.	Council to pass a motion that a policy be created that surplus municipal lands would be considered for affordable housing before being put to any other use.	Council, Corporate Services?	Q3 2017
5.	Public transit improvement	Council, EcDev staff, Region of Niagara	Immediate and continuous
Zoning By-law Amendments			
6.	Permit detached accessory apartments without a zoning amendment.	PBS staff	Q4 2017, Q1 2018
7.	Increase size allowances for interior accessory apartments.	PBS staff.	Q4 2017, Q1 2018.
8.	Review the parking exemption area in the city, and examine the possibility of including additional lands.	PBS, TES staff.	Q4 2017, Q1 2018.
9.	Consider prohibition of downsizing (developing from higher to lower densities)	PBS staff.	Q4 2017, Q1 2018.
10.	Encouraging built-in accessory apartments in new developments.	PBS staff.	Immediate and continuous.
Official Plan Amendments			

11.	Reviewing and amending condominium conversion policies in the GCP.	PBS staff.	Q4 2017, Q1 2018.
12.	Waiving of parkland dedication for affordable housing projects.	PBS, PRCS staff.	Q3 2017.
13.	Inclusionary Zoning.	Province, PBS staff.	Q1-Q2 2018.
14.	Demolition control areas in the city.	PBS staff.	Q1 2018.
15.	Strengthen affordable housing policies in the GCP.	PBS staff.	Q4 2017.
Process and Staff			
16.	Separate approval process for affordable housing projects	PBS staff, outside agencies.	Q2 – Q3 2017.
17.	Automatic waiving of fees for affordable housing projects.	Council, Regional Council, PBS, FMS staff.	Q3 – Q4 2017.
18.	Provide more certainty at preconsultation	All staff members that are circulated on preconsultation files (Planning, building, zoning, fire, traffic, development, NPCA, Region, NEC, and parks staff.	Immediate.
19.	Extend SP dates for approved projects.	PBS staff.	Immediate.
20.	Planning staff member that specializes in affordable housing.	Council.	Q1 2018.
21.	Continued dialogue with the development community on the streamlining of the development process and removal of barriers.	Council, PBS staff.	Continuous.
Community Improvement Plan Amendments			
22.	Amend 2015 CIP to add “affordable housing” as a value added ranking criteria for TIFs.	PBS staff.	Q4 2017.
23.	Amend 2015 CIP to increase the ranking weight of accessible features within the value added category of TIF approvals.	PBS staff.	Q4 2017.
24.	Provision of a sunset clause in the 2004 CIP.	PBS staff.	Q3 2017.

25.	Consider a separate 2015 CIP grant program for affordable housing	PBS, FMS staff.	Q4 2017.
Incentives			
26.	Creation of a list of all possible grant options along with a dedicated staff contact.	PBS, EcDev staff.	Q2 – Q3 2017.
27.	Staff input and political advocacy regarding Implications of regional development charge changes new by-law	Council, PBS staff.	Q2 – Q3 2017.
28.	Tax rate change	Province, Council, PBS, FMS staff.	2018
29.	Density bonusing.	PBS staff	Immediate.
Collaboration and Information Sharing			
30.	Public education and engagement.	Region of Niagara, PBS staff.	Q3 – Q4 2017
31.	Creation of property profiles to assist with development	PBS, EcDev staff.	Q3 – Q4 2017
32.	Profiles of success	Niagara Regional Housing, Region of Niagara, PBS staff, non-profit housing providers.	Q3 – Q4 2017
33.	Information sharing across all municipalities in the Region.	All municipalities within the Region.	Q3 – Q4 2017
34.	Overview of housing supply, and the condition.	Region of Niagara, PBS staff.	Q4 2017.
35.	Use of professional associations for information sharing (OPPI, CIP, LMCBO, AMO).	Council, PBS staff.	Immediate and continuous.
36.	Expanded and improved public consultation.	PBS staff.	Q3 – Q4 2017.
37.	Stakeholder consultation	PBS staff.	Q3 – Q4 2017.
Innovation			
38.	Encourage and support innovative housing options.	Council, PBS staff.	Immediate and continuous.
39.	Building on publicly owned property or reuse of publicly owned buildings.	TES, PBS staff.	Q3 2017.
40.	The municipality partaking in the development process.	Council, Legal, FMS, EcDev, PBS staff.	TBD.
41.	Innovation in affordable housing competitions for	Council, PBS staff.	2018.

	planning universities in Ontario.		
--	-----------------------------------	--	--

Please note that timing indicated above is approximate and subject to change with staff resources and availability.

Innovative Options

- Mini homes can be built on existing lots of record to utilize undersized lots and minimize construction costs. Consideration should also be given to smaller sized units in apartment buildings in an attempt to maximize density.
- Container housing and modular housing is gaining popularity as well, they are methods of construction that can save time, and lower construction costs.
- Flex housing calls for the adaptability of units for various arrangements. These are units that are predesigned to be able to be easily changed from a studio or one-bedroom apartment to a 3-4 bedroom apartment. This could help meet the needs to housing providers without the limitations of a certain size of unit.
- 3D printing is gaining popularity in the development world. Companies are advertising that a small home can be printed in 24 hours for \$10,000.00. The cost of the printer being \$1 million. Developers in China have recently 3D printed a 5-storey apartment building. While 3D printing may be out of the scope of municipal tools, it is important to be aware of new technologies.
- Different methods of development are also emerging. “Baugreuppen” is European option where a housing complex is co-designed, created, and owned by a number of residents. It is method of removing the developer from the process, thereby achieving costs savings.
- Co-operative housing is becoming a popular choice across the world in cities with high numbers of students. Students do impact the housing rental market and therefore the availability of units. Community land trusts make it possible for houses to be purchased separate from the actual lot, reducing costs. It operates on a long term lease agreement.
- Public land use for affordable housing: innovation is not limited to technologies and methodologies. New policy directions can include the use of publically owned lands for the provision of affordable housing. Staff should create a listing and map of all municipally, regionally, provincially, and federally owned lands, along with those owned by the school boards. It is a method of government participation in the provision of affordable housing without having to provide direct funding. Options that could be utilized would include the reuse of empty buildings, additions to existing uses, and develop vacant lands.
- City affordable housing project: an innovative direction for the city to take would be to partake directly in the development process. This could include acquiring lands, cleaning contaminated sites and partnering with housing providers and developers to construct affordable housing units. This option is a long term political and financial commitment. Staff recommend that the construction of units

remain at the Regional level, however it is an option that some municipalities have taken.

- To encourage new ideas and foster partnerships with the community and beyond, staff should contact Ontario universities to examine the potential of partnering with urban design classes in affiliated planning programs to host affordable housing competitions.