



Strategic Housing Initiatives in The Blue Mountains

AMO Delegation – Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

August 17, 2022

The Need

- The need for attainable housing has reached a critical state within The Blue Mountains. This is affecting the local workforce and the health, safety and quality of life of residents.
- The average resale price of a Single-Family Home (not on water) in The Blue Mountains has increased from \$366,782 in 2008 to \$1,508,871 in 2021 (source MPAC data).
- The lack of affordable housing in The Blue Mountains is hampering the development of the community in that the lack of any affordable housing is making it impossible for essential workers to live in the Town. This includes, but is not limited to, police officers, volunteer firefighters, young doctors, personal support workers, early childhood educators, and other service industry workers.
- The Town does not have a problem with new home construction – in excess of 400 new homes a year – However, very few are in the attainable category as builders find higher margins in the high-end home construction. **While the faster approvals in recent provincial legislation will help add to the total home stock, almost all will be in the non-affordable price range.**

Initiatives

1. Legislative (Abbott's Appeal)
2. Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation
 - Gateway Project
 - Engagement with developers
3. Campus of Care Project

Legislative

- Abbott's subdivision appeal to get clarity on what tools are available to the municipality to require developers to include ***“an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents”*** as required by the Provincial Policy Statement (Para 1.4.3)
- Issue is complicated by the two-tier governance structure in which Grey County is the approval authority for plans of subdivision.
- The Town opposed Grey County's approval of the Abbotts Subdivision, on the basis that the Town believes that the Planning Act, the Provincial Policy Statement, and the Grey County Official Plan provide the ability to ask for the provision of 30% affordable units in the plan of subdivision.

Grey County Resistance



<https://www.collingwoodtoday.ca/the-blue-mountains-and-grey-highlands/sharp-divide-between-tbm-and-grey-county-on-affordable-housing-5472389>



<https://www.collingwoodtoday.ca/the-blue-mountains-and-grey-highlands/soevers-call-for-stricter-affordable-housing-rules-struck-down-5514466>



<https://www.collingwoodtoday.ca/the-blue-mountains-and-grey-highlands/grey-county-councillors-vote-against-being-more-informed-5635859>

Abbott's Subdivision

Town of The Blue Mountains

The Planning Act, Section 2 "Provincial Interest" states:

"The Minister, the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board and the Tribunal, in carrying out their responsibilities under this Act, shall have regard to, among other matters, matters of provincial interest such as,...

(j) the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing;..."

Section 3(5) states: "A decision of the council of a municipality, a local board, a planning board, a minister of the Crown and a ministry, board, commission or agency of the government, including the Tribunal, in respect of the exercise of any authority that affects a planning matter,

(a) shall be consistent with the policy statements issued under subsection (1) that are in effect on the date of the decision; and

(b) shall conform with the provincial plans that are in effect on that date, or shall not conflict with them, as the case may be.

PROVINCIAL POLICY STATEMENT Part I: Preamble 1.1.1

Healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by ... b)accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types (including single-detached, additional residential units, multi-unit housing, affordable housing and housing for older persons),...

Paragraph 1.4.3: "Planning authorities shall provide for an appropriate range and mix of housing options and densities to meet projected market-based and affordable housing needs of current and future residents of the regional market area by: a) establishing and implementing minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households

GREY COUNTY OFFICIAL PLAN , Paragraph 4.2 (f) :

"(f) The goal of providing housing opportunities to moderate and lower income households. The County would like to achieve a minimum target of 30% of new housing, or units created by conversion, to be affordable in each local municipality.

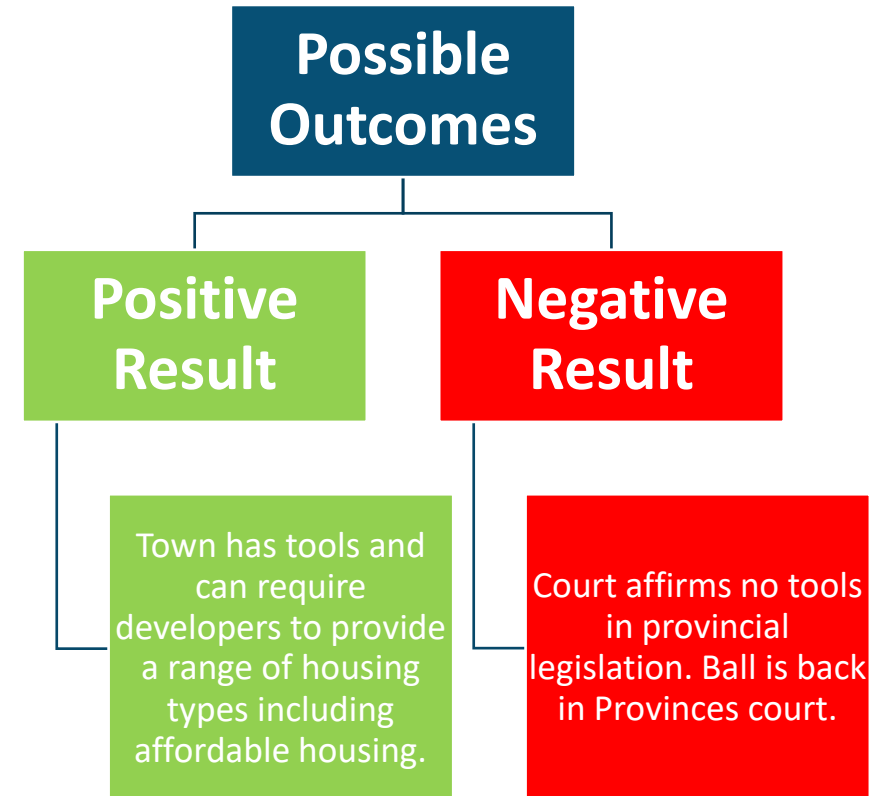
Grey County

Position at the Ontario Land Tribunal

- Counsel for the Appellant provided the Tribunal a copy of an email sent from Mr. Treslan's office, as he was unable to attend closing arguments. The email was read into the record, as follows:
- "Mr. Treslan, solicitor for the County of Grey, regrets that his trial is currently ongoing and that he is unable to make final submissions on the issue of the request by the Town for the condition relating to affordable housing. This is a request of concern to the County. Mr. Treslan has reviewed my submissions relating to that issue and adopts them as his own on behalf of the County. Absent inclusionary zoning powers or legal bonusing, the County submits that it has no legal authority to impose a condition requiring the dedication of affordable housing by a private developer in any manner (nor were they asked to in this instance). The County further submits that this Tribunal has no jurisdiction to impose such a condition. If such a condition were imposed, it would amount to expropriation without compensation."

Abbott's Subdivision Status

- The Ontario Land Tribunal has ruled against Town
- The Town has asked Ontario Land Tribunal Chair for review
- The Town has asked for leave to appeal if review is negative



Need for Better Definitions

- **Definition** – “Affordable” vs “Attainable” vs “Missing Middle” housing.
- Need to clearly define the problem(s) in the Planning Act or other Act(s) while at the same time considering local or regional perspectives.
- For ownership, try using a percentage of a recognizable benchmark like the **Average Assessed Value** as determined by MPAC.
- For rentals, use the **Average Market Rent** as determined by CMHC.
- Require that Municipalities incorporate the standardized Provincial definitions for “affordable” or “attainable” or “entry level” / “missing middle” housing in Official Plans.

A Market Based Simple Solution

An Affordable Housing Credit Program

Allow Municipalities to create an Affordable Housing Credit Program under the following criteria:

1. The Municipality must have an Inclusionary Zoning Bylaw or Official Plan requiring development proposals to have a minimum percentage of housing stock that fits with the Official Plan definitions noted above. This will then set an affordable housing minimum for each new development.
2. Developers can choose to build in excess of the minimum number of units and can use this excess as a credit for their own future projects or sell these credits to other developers. Municipalities will then certify the surplus units so that only valid surplus units are available for application to other projects.
3. Allow developers to meet their number by either building to that minimum or buying affordable housing credits from other developers in the area who have surplus credits.
4. Municipalities would be the program administrators but not participate in the aftermarket sale of credits other than to certify the units for sale.

The Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation

- To address the growing issue, the Town established the Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation (BMAHC), with a mandate to facilitate the supply of ownership and rental units in the Town of The Blue Mountains in a financially prudent manner that supports economic development and workforce development.
- In 2020, the Town purchased the former grocery store property in Thornbury and transferred ownership to the BMAHC to create attainable rental housing.
- The Gateway Project is now at the RFP stage.
- Inflation is putting pressure on the affordability within the height restrictions of the Official Plan.
- Since news of our stand at OLT, developers have engaged with the BMAHC.

Community Campus of Care - Ministers Zoning Order

- On February 22, 2021, the Town announced the purchase of 125 Peel Street in Thornbury. The 32-acre property was identified as a property of interest and strategic location for a range of potential uses.
- Through an innovative and unique partnership, the Town is working with the Province and the Ministry of Long Term Care to develop a new 160 bed long-term care facility within the Community Campus of Care. The facility will feature a retirement living accommodation focused on healthy seniors' living, and a variety of attainable housing units and dwellings to support the staff working at the Community Campus of Care.
- In April 2022, the Town submitted an application for a Ministerial Zoning Order to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing outlining the proposed use of the lands at 125 Peel Street.
- The Town would like to thank Minister Clark and Ministry Staff, Ian Kerr, Erick Boyd, and Tyler Shantz for the continued support and consideration of the MZO.

Requests for Consideration

1. The Town requests that the Ministry confirms the Planning Act tools or establish new tools for the creation of a local Attainable Housing Credit System.
2. The Town requests a meeting with Ministry Policy Staff to further discuss the Attainable Housing Credit System.
3. The Town requests that the Ministry provides financial support for the King Street mixed use attainable rental building.
4. The Town requests that the Ministry approve the Minister's Zoning Order for the Community Campus of Care project.



Questions?