



Staff Report

Administration – Chief Administrative Officer

Report To: COW-Finance, Admin, Fire, Legal, Community Services
Meeting Date: May 15, 2023
Report Number: FAF.23.083
Title: Recommended Next Steps to Complete a Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy
Prepared by: Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer

A. Recommendations

THAT Council receive Staff Report FAF.23.083, entitled “Recommended Next Steps to Complete a Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy”;

AND THAT Council approve an upset limit of \$25,000 to complete a Housing Needs Assessment to be completed in 2023;

AND THAT Council provide pre-approval of funding in the amount of \$350,000 in the Town’s 2024 budget to complete a Comprehensive Housing Strategy with the intention to hire one (1) contract staff person that will manage the project including the development and release of a Request for Proposal (RFP) in 2023 with the project being completed by the end of 2024.

or

AND THAT Council direct staff to bring forward a report to further consider the pre-approval funding in the amount of \$350,000 in the Town’s 2024 budget to complete a Comprehensive Housing Strategy to be completed in 2024.

or

AND THAT Council direct staff to include the development of a Comprehensive Housing Strategy for consideration through the 2024 proposed budget deliberations.

B. Overview

This report is a follow up to Council direction that was provided to consider the development of an Attainable Housing Strategy for the Town of The Blue Mountains. Staff recommend that the collection of key data relating to the Town’s current housing stock and real future needs is required to inform future plans.

C. Background

Over the previous Terms of Council, the discussion around the need to increase the range, type, stock, and availability of housing options within the Town and the region has varied and has also seen significant time, energy, and funding spent to date.

Staff suggest that it is critically important to reflect on the good work completed and initiated over the past ten (10) plus years.

Significant effort has been made by a variety of stakeholders to determine how best to increase the stock of attainable housing options as well as how to increase the range of housing stock to provide options that include both long term-rental and ownership models. This work includes the Tourism Labour Force Housing Needs completed by the Blue Mountain Village Association (BMVA) and led by Mark Conway, the June 2019 Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation (BMAHC) Concept Business Model that was led by Strategycorp, the 171 King Street Gateway Project Design Task Force that was led by the BMAHC and facilitated by Nucommons. It is also important to note that the South Georgian Bay Institute is actively engaging key partners and is seen as a leader in the work being completed for Attainable Housing.

Through the work noted above, and along with other work being completed through the network of municipalities, significant information gathering has been completed in the past. This also includes initiatives Grey County has been actively working on and sharing through meetings amongst municipal staff where the County has been providing high-level housing needs information from a Grey County perspective. Staff believe that one of the key pieces of information that is missing is solid data required to make informed decisions regarding next steps.

Council provided direction to staff to consider completing an Attainable Housing Strategy for the Town. As a result of this review, staff recommend that there is a significant benefit to initiating a data gathering process to provide a realistic understanding of the Town's current housing stock composition in order to inform the type of housing stock that is required now and for the future.

While drafting this report, staff made a conscious effort not only to refer to the "Attainable Housing" aspect of a future study but also to refer to the study as a "Comprehensive Housing Needs Study". Staff suggest that a fulsome review of our community of communities' historic, current, and future overall housing needs is extremely important. It is equally important to consider the range of options regarding types of rental and ownership models, ranges of living and accommodation stock, as well as the infrastructure and services available now and into the future.

Too often the terms "affordable" and "attainable" with regard to housing are weaponized to create obstacles to even considering, let alone proceeding, with potential projects. This severely undermines attempts to remedy the housing crisis that we are currently seeing locally, across the province, and in many regions across the country.

Staff recommend that the gathering of this housing data will help inform the Official Plan update process and, if Council wishes to proceed with the development of a Comprehensive Housing Strategy, this collection of data is a perfect feeder of baseline information for that process.

A report regarding the Town's Official Plan will be presented by the Manager of Community Planning at the May, 16, 2023 Committee of the Whole meeting and will refer to the need and purpose of the Housing Needs Assessment.

D. Analysis

The recommendation by staff has been brought forward in a two (2) phased approach that is thought to be manageable with today's internal resources and includes work plans that the 2023 budget is based on while also setting a realistic schedule for how the proposed 2024 Comprehensive Housing Strategy could be completed in 2024.

To authorize the completion of the proposed Housing Needs Assessment by Parcel, staff is recommending that "Single Sourcing" be utilized through the allowances of the Town's Purchasing of Goods and Services Policy [POL.COR.07.05](#).

Single Sourcing is permitted through the Town's Purchasing of Good and Services Policy as stipulated:

- i. Single Sourcing is a method of procurement whereby there is more than one vendor able to supply and a purchase order is issued or contract awarded without a competitive bidding process. Single Sourcing will be permitted if one or more of the following circumstances apply:
 - the compatibility of a purchase with existing equipment, product standards, facilities or service is a paramount consideration.
- ii. The use of Sole and Single Sourcing with a particular vendor exceeding \$25,000 must be reported to Council. Any single or sole sourcing with an amount between \$5,001 and \$24,999 must be reported by the applicable Department Head and approved by the Manager of Purchasing and Director of Finance.

Phase 1: Housing Needs Assessment

Option 1

The Town extends the current scope of work being completed by Parcel outside of the primary scope of work being completed through the Official Plan Review to complete a Housing Needs Analysis. Single sourcing of this work would result in a report being completed within 8 to 10 weeks with findings being provided to Council in September 2023. This timing is based on Council providing direction on May 29, 2023 via Council approval of this report.

Having this work completed in a timely fashion is a valuable opportunity that staff suggest would set the stage for success for the Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy, and also allow for the data to be shared within the Request for Proposal (RFP) materials for potential consultants to review prior to submitting their proposals.

Option 2

That Council direct staff to include the Housing Needs Assessment scope of work into a future Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy. In this option, staff suggest that the development, issuance, evaluation, and award of a Request for Proposal would be considered through the Phase 2 options noted below.

Phase 2: Request for Proposal

Option 1

Staff recommend that the development of a formal RFP for the Town to retain the services of a third-party consulting firm that has the expertise and experience with similar type communities to The Blue Mountains be completed by staff in 2023 for initiation in January of 2024 with completion in the 3rd quarter of 2024. This would be deemed a priority Strategy for the Town.

If Council were to direct staff to move forward with the Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy, staff acknowledge that the formal RFP would be required with no consideration of any Single Sourcing for this work.

Option 2

Council may also wish to consider having the Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy go through the formal 2024 budget deliberations scheduled for December 2023. Approval of budgets is generally received in February. Timing of this work based on the normal process of the budget would suggest the Housing Needs Strategy would be completed in 2nd quarter of 2025.

Staff have provided an estimated budget of \$350,000 for this work. This budget estimate includes the hiring of a contract staff resource to manage this specific project from the initial RFP development to project completion. Staff suggest that this critically important work cannot be managed off the side of one's desk and must be completed with strong collaboration and consultation with our local stakeholders along with our regional, Counties, and Provincial stakeholders.

E. Strategic Priorities

1. Communication and Engagement

We will enhance communications and engagement between Town Staff, Town residents and stakeholders

2. Organizational Excellence

We will continually seek out ways to improve the internal organization of Town Staff and the management of Town assets.

3. Community

We will protect and enhance the community feel and the character of the Town, while ensuring the responsible use of resources and restoration of nature.

4. Quality of Life

We will foster a high quality of life for full-time and part-time residents of all ages and stages, while welcoming visitors.

F. Environmental Impacts

Having a comprehensive understanding of today's housing stock and the recent increase in population will provide additional information regarding how to ensure that the Town can manage impacts on the environment and sustainability within the four pillars while testing against the twenty (20) Bold Actions set out in the Town's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan.

G. Financial Impacts

Staff are recommending that an upset limit of \$25,000 from the Planning Reserve be used for this unbudgeted Housing Needs Assessment project to be completed within 2023, with an additional \$350,000 to be pre-approved for 2024 with funding being identified as 2024 taxation with the Comprehensive Housing Strategy being completed in 2024.

Staff recommend that potential funding support be acquired through a future application to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund is a strong fit for the Housing Needs Analysis Study. However, staff also suggest that this project would be initiated before having an application for that funding considered by the province. The CMHC Housing Accelerator may provide eligible funding to support the Comprehensive Housing Needs Study as well.

H. In Consultation With

Senior Management Team

Shawn Postma, Manager of Community Planning

Sam Dinsmore, Manager of Budgets and Accounting

I. Public Engagement

The topic of this Staff Report has not been the subject of a Public Meeting and/or a Public Information Centre as neither a Public Meeting nor a Public Information Centre are required. However, any comments regarding this report should be submitted to Shawn Everitt, Chief Administrative Officer cao@thebluemountains.ca.

J. Attached

None

Respectfully submitted,

Shawn Everitt
Chief Administrative Officer

For more information, please contact:

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Report Approval Details

Document Title:	FAF.23.083 Recommended Next Steps to Complete a Comprehensive Housing Needs Strategy.docx
Attachments:	
Final Approval Date:	May 8, 2023

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Shawn Everitt - May 8, 2023 - 3:59 PM