

Blue Mountain Ratepayers' Association (BMRA)

TBM Housing Strategy and Affordable Housing

Presentation to Committee of the Whole

January 14, 2025



Acknowledging our Town's Housing Problem

- TBM's last two Councils have expressed a commitment to addressing our housing challenges:
 - Dramatically skewed housing mix
 - Lack of Affordable Housing (AH) and Market Rental Units
 - Absence of community clarity and acceptance of AH needs
 - No sense of an integrated TBM Growth Strategy
- *Clear recognition of problem – Housing Emergency Declaration*
- A Committee of Council is being formed to focus on Housing
 - Will this entity effectively fill the void left by the dissolution of the Blue Mountains Attainable Housing Corporation?

Current Housing Market and Demographics

- The Town's own Housing Needs Assessment Study clearly identified our significant challenges:
 - Housing mix is dramatically skewed with single detached homes at 80%
 - Just 13% of residents rent, compared with 31% for the Province
 - Income levels – there is a large proportion of high-income households, but 50% of households have incomes below \$100K
- And there has been little discernible progress over the past 6 years

Gaps identified in the Housing Needs Assessment

The Housing Needs Assessment identified the following gaps:

- Affordable housing
 - Purpose-built rental housing
 - Smaller housing
 - Seniors housing and long-term care
 - Workforce housing
- Comment from the TBM Chamber of Commerce – “Our members continue to consistently report significant challenges in the areas of talent acquisition and retention as a result of the limited housing options available to prospective employees within the Town... the vast majority of members support municipally led initiatives to incentivize development of affordable housing in the Town”

Housing Strategy Working Group

Formed in 2024, the Housing Strategy Working Group includes:

- Blue Mountains Ratepayers' Association
- Institute of Southern Georgian Bay
- The Blue Mountains Chamber of Commerce
- Members of the housing development community

Why the Working Group was formed

- To provide input and recommendations to help realize progress on affordable as well as market rental housing
- **What we want to share today:**

Our summary of housing opportunities and approaches

Housing Strategy Working Group – Input to Council

- The Housing Strategy Working Group develop a series of recommendations:
 1. **Dedicate a portion of a senior staff position as an Affordable Housing point person – could this responsibility be part of the proposed Growth Management Specialist?**
 - Expedite AH Planning and Building Permit approvals
 - Advocate for Public interest in Affordable Housing
 - Connect and promote interested parties in AH development
 - Track progress and results
 2. **Establish a strategic action plan with measurable goals for purpose-built rentals, both at market rate and attainable rates.**
 3. **Implement a Service Allocation Bylaw that prioritizes AH developments**

Housing Strategy Working Group – Input to Council

- 4. Embed housing affordability in the updated Official Plan and make any necessary changes to the Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw.**
- 5. Make zoning changes as necessary to implement a Community Planning Permit system, will provides access to tools such as inclusionary zoning.**
- 6. Review the Community Improvement Program with local stakeholders to determine how it can best incentivize affordable housing.**
- 7. Prepare an inventory of under utilized Town-owned lands which could be made available on a long term leased basis for affordable housing.**

Housing Strategy Working Group – Input to Council

8. Explore revenue tools which could fund affordable housing, such as:

- Portion of Municipal Accommodation Tax proceeds
- Sale of surplus Municipal properties unsuited to residential development
- Cash or land donated to Town for tax receipts
- Grey County contributions
- Additional lands for the construction of large homes
- Community bonds guaranteed by the Town

9. Engage with other Municipalities in Southern Georgian Bay to work collaboratively towards realizing affordable housing objectives

Thank you

- On behalf of all the the members of the Housing Strategy Working Group, thank you for this opportunity to share our views.
- We believe that it is time for the Town of the Blue Mountains to take definitive steps to address the declared housing emergency, and work towards meeting our affordable housing needs