

REPORT TO: Mayor James M. Diodati
and Members of Municipal Council

SUBMITTED BY: Planning, Building & Development

SUBJECT: **PBD-2020-14**
Housing Directions Study: Council Authorization

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council authorize the development of a Housing Directions Study to help provide policy and strategic guidance to future ownership, rental and affordable housing initiatives in the City.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The current stock of housing in the City is not able to meet the need of residents. A Housing Directions Study will provide a measured assessment of present and future unmet housing demand, with an emphasis regarding the entire housing continuum. The Study will offer short, medium and long-term recommendations with respect to housing strategy, policy changes and possible incentives that will help provide a more diverse range and mix of housing options and densities to meet the current and future demand.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's authorization of the undertaking of a Housing Directions Study to help guide future housing initiatives in the City. The provision of housing is a Provincial interest and the Province provides strategic policy direction on housing to municipalities through the 2019 Provincial Policy Statement and the 2019 Provincial Growth Plan. As part of the two-tier governance structure, Niagara Region is the Service Manager when it comes to the provision of social and affordable housing. Niagara Region also through its Official Plan contains housing policies that encourage diversity in housing type, size and tenure to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents.

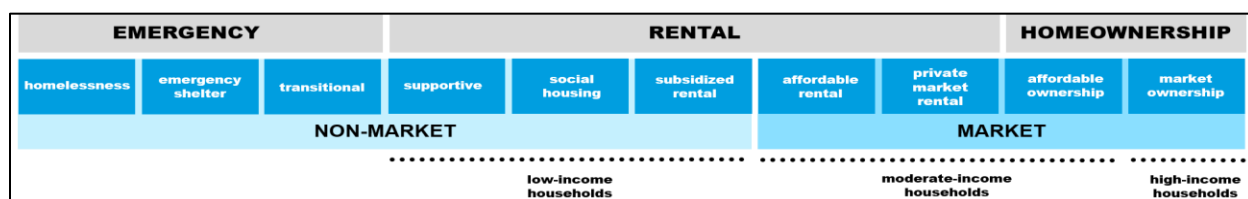
The City's future housing work to be identified in the Housing Directions Study must align with Provincial and Regional priorities. The Region is currently undertaking a Regional housing strategy as part of a new Official Plan. The Region's strategy must among other things: identify a diverse range and mix of housing options to meet the needs of current and future residents; establish targets for affordable ownership and rental housing and identify land use planning tools to support these measures and align with the Region's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) which was approved by Regional Council in 2013 and came into effect on January 1, 2014. As part of the Region's work, a comprehensive database has been created to estimate the current and future demand for ownership, rental and affordable housing within Niagara Region.

ANALYSIS

Understanding the current and future demographic profile of the City, assessing and quantifying the current and future housing need and comprehending how these two factors may evolve overtime as the City grows are the first concrete steps to developing a more diverse housing stock that will accommodate the broad needs of an increasingly diverse community. The City's housing strategy must also address how we use our Greenfield lands and utilize intensification opportunities to meet long-term housing requirements.

Utilizing the Region's housing work as a launching point, the City will be undertaking a Housing Directions Study to provide a detailed assessment of the present and future unmet housing demand in Niagara Falls, with an emphasis on the entire housing continuum. (see Figure 1 below) The Study will be an integrated and strategic approach to ensuring that there is a sufficient broad array of housing options available to meet the full spectrum of needs found in the community. The results of this Study will help Council, stakeholders and community members (including the development community) develop a comprehensive understanding of the housing market and key housing issues. This understanding will provide Council and City staff a solid basis from which to formulate strategy, policy decisions and community-specific housing priorities. It is intended that the Study will produce short, medium and long term recommendations with respect to Official Plan policies that will help implement the Study's findings. Further, it is anticipated the Study will recommend how the City can incentivize the creation of additional affordable/rental housing through amended or new financial incentive programs.

Figure 1: Housing Continuum



Consultation

Consultation with stakeholders will be important throughout the development of the Housing Directions Study. To help solicit feedback, it is proposed that the Study will be guided by a Technical Advisory Committee. The Technical Advisory Committee will be composed of City and Regional staff, other technical experts, key community representatives and representatives from the City's Homelessness Committee.

Next Steps

Upon Council's endorsement of this report, staff will initiate the procurement process. It is anticipated that the Study will be able to commence at the beginning of the second quarter of the year.

FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Directions Study will be funded through the 2020 Council approved Planning operating budget. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The recommendations of the Study may have an impact on future annual operating and capital budgets.

CITY'S STRATEGIC COMMITMENT

The development of a Housing Directions Study is consistent with the City's Strategic priorities of Diverse and Affordable Housing.

LIST OF ATTACHMENTS

➤ None.

Recommended by:

Alex Herlovitch, Director of Planning, Building & Development

Respectfully submitted:

Ken Todd, Chief Administrative Officer

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Attach.

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