



**PORT COLBORNE**

**Subject: RFP for Affordable Housing Strategy**

**To: Council**

**From: Chief Administrative Office**

Report Number: 2022-30

Meeting Date: February 22, 2022

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**Recommendation:**

That Chief Administrative Office Report 2022-30 be received for information.

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**Purpose:**

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the process of retaining a consultant to develop an Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan.

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**Background:**

Staff report 2019-101 updated Council on the creation of an affordable housing strategy. Council approved funding in the 2020 Capital Budget to retain a consultant. A long-term action plan is needed to improve access to affordable housing that encompasses the entire housing spectrum. The objective of the 10-year (2022-2032) Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan is to comprehensively address how and to whom to provide a sufficient range of affordable housing options and opportunities in Port Colborne.

The City does not offer community services, administer shelter services, or act as a housing provider. Rather, it is incumbent upon the City to ensure that planning tools and incentives are made available to support affordable housing and that municipal policy is consistent with regional and provincial direction.

This project is timely given the comprehensive review of the City's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs that is currently underway and scheduled for presentation to Council in Q3/Q4 2022. The City's CIP consultant has been asked to provide comments and analysis about adding an affordable housing CIP to the City's current suite of incentive programs.

This project also follows through on a commitment in the City's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, specifically the action item of developing an affordable housing strategy under the "Attracting Business Investment and Tourism" strategic pillar.

City staff have had preliminary discussions with housing providers and consultants from across Niagara to obtain strategic advice and insights regarding current affordable housing policies and programs. Niagara Regional Council has identified affordable housing as a strategic priority and the Region has development incentives for affordable housing projects. The Region's incentives can complement the policies and incentives that Port Colborne may implement in the future. Moreover, having a Council-approved 10-year (2022-2032) Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan will attract private sector investment and facilitate partnerships with non-profit organizations.

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### **Discussion:**

Staff from Economic Development and Tourism Services, Planning and Development, and Purchasing developed an RFP, posted it on the City's website and Biddingo, and forwarded it to a list of companies that have completed similar projects for other municipalities. A cross-divisional Project Review Team (PRT) was formed to evaluate the proposals and make a recommendation to Council. The timelines for the RFP process was as follows:

- Issue RFP – December 14, 2021
- Deadline for submitting proposals – January 19, 2022
- Complete evaluation of submitted proposals – February 4, 2022

The City received five (5) proposals from the following firms: ISL Engineering and Land Services Ltd.; N. Barry Lyons Consultants Ltd. (NBLC); SHS Consulting; StrategyCorp; and Tim Welch Consulting Inc.

As per the terms of the RFP, all proposals were evaluated using a scoring matrix. A review of fees, enclosed as a separate document along with each proposal, was performed only after scoring all other criteria. Based on the scores and a consensus reached by the PRT, the contract has been awarded to Tim Welch Consulting Inc.

According to the timelines outlined in the consultant's proposal, this project will start in late February and proceed through to a final report and presentation to Council in August. The Project Review Team (PRT) plans to work closely with the consultant throughout the project's entire duration.

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### **Internal Consultations:**

Staff from Economic Development and Tourism Services, Planning and Development, and Purchasing (Corporate Services) collaborated on the RFP and a cross-divisional PRT was established to evaluate the submissions.

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### **Financial Implications:**

Council approved \$60,000 in the 2020 Capital Budget to retain a consultant to develop an affordable housing strategy. Tim Welch Consulting Inc.'s fee for this project is \$49,840 (exclusive of HST).

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### **Public Engagement:**

The consultant will prepare a public engagement plan and obtain input from residents and key stakeholders. City staff will work with the consultant to promote this project through various channels including City news updates, website, social media, and email.

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### **Strategic Plan Alignment:**

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillars of the strategic plan:

- Attracting Business Investment and Tourists to Port Colborne
  - City-Wide Investments in Infrastructure and Recreational/Cultural Spaces
  - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
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### **Conclusion:**

There is a shortage of affordable housing in Port Colborne and throughout the Niagara area. Supportive policies and incentive programs are needed to encourage private and non-profit investment to build affordable housing units across the entire housing spectrum. An RFP was developed to retain a consultant to prepare a 10-year (2022-2032) Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan. A cross-divisional Project Review Team was formed to evaluate proposal submissions and award the contract to the successful proponent.

The City will not be in the business of building affordable housing units, but it can create supportive policies and incentives that attract private sector investment and

partnerships with non-profit organizations for the construction of new and much-needed affordable housing units in our community.

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### **Appendices:**

- a. RFP 2021-43 Affordable Housing RFP

Respectfully submitted,

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### **Report Approval:**

All reports reviewed and approved by the Department Director and also the City Treasurer when relevant. Final review and approval by the Chief Administrative Officer.