



PORT COLBORNE

Subject: Affordable Housing Strategy – Project Update

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2022-103

Meeting Date: June 28, 2022

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Officer Report 2022-103 be received for information.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to update Council on the status and next steps of the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan project being led by Tim Welch Consulting and the City's Project Review Team (PRT). This report will accompany a Power Point presentation by the consultant at the June 28, 2022 Council meeting.

Background:

Staff report 2019-101 provided an update to Council on the creation of an affordable housing strategy. Council approved funding in the 2020 Capital Budget to retain a consultant. Staff report 2022-30 provided an update to Council on an RFP process that resulted in Tim Welch Consulting being awarded the contract to complete an Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan to comprehensively address how and to whom to provide a sufficient range of affordable housing options and opportunities within the City of 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.

Discussion:

The Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan project is being delivered in two phases:

- Phase I: a Housing Background report detailing the current and projected state of housing in Port Colborne including demographic analysis, housing supply and demand analysis, and calculations of affordability
- Phase II: the Affordable Housing Strategy & Action Plan providing recommendations to improve housing affordability in Port Colborne

This project is timely given the comprehensive review of the City's Community Improvement Plan (CIP) programs that is underway. 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.

It is also important to note that there have been recent provincial and federal announcements regarding housing supply and housing affordability. Having Council approved Affordable Housing Strategy will help the City with its eligibility for funding from federal and provincial programs to support partnership opportunities to create more affordable housing units.

Internal Consultations:

The PRT comprised of staff from Economic Development and Tourism Services and Planning and Development are working closely with Tim Welch Consulting.

Financial Implications:

Financial implications of an affordable housing strategy and action plan will be considered as part of Phase II.

Public Engagement:

The consultant prepared a public engagement plan to obtain input from residents and key stakeholders. City staff from Economic Development and Tourism Services and Corporate Communications worked with the consultant to post a survey on the City's website and this was promoted through various channels including City news updates, social media, and emails to key contacts. This online survey generated 147 responses.

The consultant and the Project Review Team also worked together to create Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of social service agencies, not-for-profit housing providers, developers, business stakeholders, and City staff. A total of four (4) TAC meetings are planned. In addition to the TAC meetings, the consultants interviewed twenty-three (23) stakeholders in the public, private and non-profit sectors.

An in-person public open house has been scheduled for Tuesday July 5, 2022 from 6pm to 8pm at the L.R. Wilson Archives Building. This meeting will be promoted through a news release, it will be posted on the City's website and social media channels, and an email notification will be sent to key contacts and community stakeholders.

Strategic Plan Alignment:

The initiative contained within this report supports the following pillar(s) of the strategic plan:

- Attracting Business Investment and Tourists to Port Colborne
 - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
-

Conclusion:

There is a shortage of affordable housing in Port Colborne and throughout the Niagara Region. Supportive policies and incentive programs are needed to encourage private and non-profit investment to build affordable housing units across the entire housing spectrum. To this end, Tim Welch Consulting, with the assistance of a cross-divisional City Project Team, is leading the development of an Affordable Housing Strategy. The consultant is planning to bring forward a report and recommendation to Council in September 2022.

Appendices:

- a. Draft Housing Background Report
- b. Housing Strategy PowerPoint Presentation

Respectfully submitted,

Gary Long
Manager of Strategic Initiatives
905-835-2900 x.502
Gary.Long@portcolborne.ca

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.