



PORT COLBORNE

Subject: Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan – Final Report

To: Council

From: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer

Report Number: 2022-201

Meeting Date: September 13, 2022

Recommendation:

That Chief Administrative Office - Economic Development and Tourism Division Report 2022-201 be received; and

That Council approve the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan report and recommendations as attached to Report 2022-201.

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council approval for the City's ten (10) year Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan and to discuss implementation and next steps. This report will accompany a Power Point presentation by Tim Welch Consulting.

Background:

One of the action items in the City's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan, under the "Attracting Business Investment and Tourism" pillar, is to complete an Affordable Housing Strategy. The City issued an RFP in November 2021 to contract a consulting firm to develop an Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan that would include housing research and an up-to-date needs analysis; extensive public and stakeholder engagement; and innovative and achievable recommendations to entice both the private and public sectors. After reviewing and evaluating five submissions, the City's Project Review Team (PRT) selected Tim Welch Consulting (TWC) and retaining the consultant was approved by Council (Report 2022-30).

This report follows up on Report 2022-103 and a project update presented by Tim Welch Consulting at the June 28, 2022 Council meeting.

Discussion:

The consultant's Power Point presentation will include an overview of the recommendations of the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan. In summary, the recommendations support four goals: (1) increase diversity of housing; (2) promote greater intensification and density; 3) protect and expand purpose built rental supply; and (4) increase support for affordable housing through awareness and outreach.

These goals were further developed into four general themes: (1) Policy and Zoning; (2) Incentives; (3) Advocacy, Awareness, and Outreach; and (4) Monitoring. There are recommendations for each theme, and these are summarized in the Action Plan including the scope of work necessary, the required resources, and anticipated timelines.

Staff are supportive of the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan and recommend Council approval so that staff can begin discussing next steps and a work plan to implement the recommendations. Staff are also recommending that the Affordable Housing Strategy be implemented in the new Council term along with other foundational strategic and legislative documents that will implement policy directions and Council's vision. These documents, which are slated to be updated over the next 6-18 months and need to be aligned with the goals of the Affordable Housing Strategy, are as follows:

- Revised Sale and Disposition of City Land Policy
- Comprehensive CIP Review
- Growth Projections and Growth Management Study
- Strategic Plan Refresh
- Development Charges Background Study
- Official Plan Review

Internal Consultations:

A City Project Review Team, comprised of key staff from Planning and Economic Development, worked together on project management, attended Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings and the open house, and provided input to TWC. This Project Review Team will continue to work together, with City staff, and the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) on implementation of the Affordable Housing Strategy and ensuring alignment with key documents.

Financial Implications:

Council approved \$75,000 for an Affordable Housing Strategy in the 2020 Capital Budget. The cost of this project, based on the submission from TWC, is \$49,840 plus HST.

The financial implications of the Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan are limited as many of the recommendations are policy and process related and can be implemented by City staff. As an example, some of the recommendations will form part of the project scope for the Official Plan review to commence in 2023.

It is staff's intention to discuss the recommendations in more detail to determine what can be completed by staff and where the assistance of a consultant would be beneficial. There are capital funds remaining for this project that could be used to cover additional consulting fees to assist with some of the action items and implementation.

Public Engagement:

A key deliverable of this project was public and stakeholder engagement. The details are as follows:

- a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of not-for-profit organizations, social service agencies, local developers, business stakeholder groups, and City staff was formed. The TAC Committee met four times to review housing research and data, stakeholder feedback, and provide comments on draft recommendations;
 - 24 interviews were conducted with key opinion leaders, elected officials, housing providers, not-for-profit organizations; and developers;
 - an online public opinion survey was created and there were 147 responses;
 - an open house held on July 5th included 30 attendees;
 - a dedicated project page was set up on the City's website to provide information and updates.
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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
 - City-Wide Investments in Infrastructure and Recreational/Cultural Spaces
 - Governance: Communications, Engagement, and Decision-Making
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Conclusion:

An Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan has been completed by Tim Welch Consulting with project oversight by City staff and a Technical Advisory Committee. There has been significant public engagement including stakeholder interviews, an online survey, and an open house.

The completion of the Housing Strategy fulfills an action item in the City's 2020-2023 Strategic Plan.

The Action Plan includes thirteen (13) recommendations, many of which can be completed by City staff and Council support, while others will require the services of an external consultant.

Staff are recommending Council approval so that staff can begin developing a work plan for implementation to coincide with the new Council term and align with other foundational strategic and legislative documents that will guide City governance and administration.

Appendices:

- a. Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan – Final Report – prepared by Tim Welch Consulting
- b. Port Colborne Affordable Housing Strategy-Presentation

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.