



Legislation Text

File #: AR-19-234, **Version:** 1

TAMRMS#: B06

Housing Affordability and Accessibility Project Update

Presented by: Lory Scott, Affordable Housing Liaison

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Housing Affordability and Accessibility Best Practices Report, provided as an Attachment 1 to the July 8, 2019 agenda report entitled "Housing Affordability and Accessibility Project Update" be received as information.
2. That Administration return in Q2, 2020 with the Housing Affordability and Accessibility recommendations for Council's consideration.

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide Council with the initial findings of research into methods being undertaken in Canadian municipalities to inform best practices for housing affordability and accessibility. The best practices research will be utilized to inform the overall strategy returning to Council in Q2, 2020.

ALIGNMENT TO PRIORITIES IN COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Priority #5 - Enhance Housing Options

Facilitate an increase in the variety of housing types in St. Albert to respond to market demands and accommodate the diverse needs of residents.

2018 - 2021 Corporate Business Plan Activity

5.3: Work with regional partners to explore the creation of additional housing options to address issues of affordability and accessibility and review best practices for alternative financing.

ALIGNMENT TO LEVELS OF SERVICE DELIVERY

Service Name: Strategic Land Planning

Service Definition: Development, management and implementation of the corporate land strategy. Search for land for new capital projects, high school sites, and affordable housing locations.

ALIGNMENT TO COUNCIL DIRECTION OR MANDATORY STATUTORY PROVISION

N/A

BACKGROUND AND DISCUSSION

The initial findings of the Housing Affordability and Accessibility Best Practices Summary are being provided as information to receive general feedback from Council on the intended direction. This report examines methods utilized in municipalities across Canada that could be replicated to affect change in housing supply and diversity through:

1. Fiscal measures - to improve the economics of housing production such as direct funding, land, development incentives, relief from fees and charges, or financing options.
2. Regulatory measures - to stimulate housing supply through changes to the regulatory environment.
3. Advocacy strategies - to stimulate partnerships with other levels of government, the public and private sector, and to improve public awareness or political support for actions to address housing needs.
4. Governance strategies - to improve policies and processes of housing delivery and operation through relationships with housing partners, alignment with Municipal Development Plan (MDP) policies, and federal and provincial strategic direction.

The project strategy recommends focusing on approaches that could achieve a high level of benefit at a small cost, be relatively easy to implement, and be suitable for the St. Albert context, in alignment with National Housing Strategy direction.

Project Timelines

The MDP rewrite is occurring concurrently with the Housing Diversity project, providing an opportunity to align MDP policies with housing diversity actions. The estimated project completion of the MDP in Q2, 2020 will correspond to the timelines identified for this project.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS OR ENGAGEMENT

Administration has met individually with more than twenty-five local social service agencies, internal city departments, and housing organizations to gather information on local challenges in relation to housing supply and demand. While each agency's mandate differed, common themes emerged related to the use of program funding principally for housing needs, and the impacts that are being felt through a lack of affordable housing options.

Refer to: *Stakeholder Engagement Summary*

There is an opportunity to incorporate questions on housing within the 2019 Community Satisfaction Survey to gather a statistically representative sample of public opinion on housing as a priority City investment.

The MDP public consultation processes will be utilized to inform housing affordability and accessibility policy direction.

IMPLICATIONS OF RECOMMENDATION(S)

Financial:

None at this time.

Legal / Risk:

None at this time

Program or Service:

None at this time

Organizational:

The 2019 Corporate Business Plan update added an additional task to review best practices for alternative financing to the scope of this project.

ALTERNATIVES AND IMPLICATIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

Report Date: July 8, 2019

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