

MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: July 22, 2024
To: Mayor and Council
From: Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer
 Joani Gerber, CEO of investStratford
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report Number: COU24-081
Attachments: None

Title: Housing Projects and Initiatives Update

Objective: To provide Council with an update regarding projects and initiatives across the spectrum of supportive, community, affordable and attainable housing.

Background: The Stratford Attainable Housing Project identified the spectrum of housing types and provided clarity between the role of the Social Services and other social service agencies in supportive, emergency and affordable housing relative to attainable rental, attainable ownership and market housing. The following graphic was developed to visually depict the full spectrum of housing:



City Social Services/
Social Service Agencies

Attainable
Housing
Project

The Stratford Attainable Housing Project is a result of a collaborative effort amongst Council members, municipal staff, stakeholders, and community participants. Key recommendations include:

- Develop a Community Incentive Toolkit with an implementing Community Improvement Plan to financially support the creation of attainable housing. *Status: Deferred to a future budget year.*
- Consider municipally owned land as a tool to further support the creation of additional attainable housing. *Status: Options currently under review.*
- Launch an awareness campaign to inspire the community to be informed, engage, and act on matters related to attainable housing. *Status: On-going posts through various social media channels.*
- Engagement of a housing specialist position to guide attainable housing research, projects and initiatives. *Status: Underway.*

These recommendations are intended to complement the Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County and St. Marys and the Community Safety and Well-being Plan. The goal of the Housing and Homelessness Plan is ending homelessness, creating attainable housing options, sustaining community housing and addressing a diversity of needs as strategic objectives, while the Community Safety and Well-being Plan’s Priority Area 2 is Adequate, Affordable and Attainable Housing with a goal of increased availability and accessibility of affordable, safe and suitable housing. Additionally, the City of Stratford’s Strategic Priorities from 2024–2027 include the priority of Building Housing Stability.

The current Centralized Waitlist for housing (rent-geared-to-income), at the end of April 2024 includes the following:

Date	Type of unit				Type of family			Total
	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	4+ Bedroom	Singles and Couples	Families	Seniors	Grand Total
April 2024	305	85	57	53	265	180	55	500

At the same period there were 166 individuals reported as homeless on the By-Name List for Stratford, Perth County and St. Marys.

Additionally, the number of current open employment opportunities in Stratford is 500+ (indeed.ca, Jul 10, 2024). In the Spring/Summer of 2023 our large employer visits informed us that 40-60% of their workforce is commuting. This translates to ongoing and immediate risk in the existing workforce as well.

Analysis: the strategic objectives and goals listed above. This includes the rebuild and revitalization of 9 Fulton Street in Milverton and building a supportive multi-residential building at 398 Erie Street in Stratford.

9 Fulton Street, Milverton:

Type: Social Housing

- The rebuild and revitalization of 9 Fulton Street, Milverton was approved by Council on February 26, 2024, through the City of Stratford 2024 Capital Program at an estimated cost of \$5,301,500 to be funded by undertaking long-term debt. The tender for demolition of the building has been released with a contract anticipated to be awarded in September 2024. Tender documents for architectural services and construction management are being developed and are anticipated to be released in August 2024.

398 Erie Street, Stratford:

Type: Supportive Housing

- The creation of a multi-residential supportive housing building at 398 Erie Street, Stratford was approved by Council on February 26, 2024, as an Expansion Initiative at an estimated cost of \$4,972,000 to be funded by undertaking long-term debt. Tenders for demolition, architectural services and construction management are being developed and are anticipated to be released in August 2024.

Housing Specialist:

Type: Affordable/Attainable Rental/Ownership Housing Initiatives

The Housing Specialist is a jointly funded initiative between the City and investStratford for a one-year period and was a key recommendation of the Stratford Attainable Housing Project. Work commenced in June 2024 on the following deliverables:

- Provide a point of contact and communication link between internal and external stakeholders.
- Expand community partnerships and enabling additional private-public-not-for-profit collaborations with the goal of building needed housing.
- Activate and collaborate with realtors, homeowners, builders, renovators, and municipal staff to support the creation of additional dwelling units and secondary suites, including, but not limited to the creation of online tools and resources.
- Develop and execute communication and marketing strategies to inform, encourage, and enable the public to create additional housing units, while also acting as a concierge for stakeholder inquiries.

- Liaise with the private sector; City of Stratford Departments; City Council and the CAO's Office to assess lands (new & existing), infill opportunities and all Government funding programs to improve the service delivery and process of housing development and identify opportunities for dwelling units priced with working individuals and families in mind.
- Provide insight and guidance to enhance service delivery, process, and policy development that would enable needed attainable/affordable housing via ongoing conversations and collaborations with City staff.
- Activate identified city held lands and projects and provide support to ensure progress towards new build attainable/affordable housing.
- Research and assess multiple opportunities and provide clear recommendations to senior City leadership and Stratford City Council for consideration.

Working closely and in collaboration with City and investStratford staff, the Housing Specialist is currently active with two potential opportunities, Now Housing and 161 East Gore Parcel:

Analysis: The Social Services Department is currently undertaking two projects intended to work towards addressing the strategic objectives and goals listed above. This includes the rebuild and revitalization of 9 Fulton Street in Milverton and building a supportive multi-residential building at 398 Erie Street in Stratford.

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NOW Housing:

Type: Affordable Rental Housing

- NOW Housing is an Ontario focused company using modular construction to provide affordable housing where it is needed most. By providing an improved housing solution, the organization's goal is to change the landscape of communities, allowing everyone to maintain independence and dignity. NOW Housing has a passion to provide affordable housing for everyone, especially those with a variety of special needs. Steel modular housing has been successful in communities around the world with a growing appreciation in Canada.

Through cooperative endeavors with agencies, organizations, Municipal and Regional Governments, private and non-profit organizations, NOW Housing aims to be the largest builder of affordable housing in Ontario and eventually Canada, by continuing to deliver cost-conscious solutions.

- Subject to further Council review and approvals, City staff and investStratford have been in discussions with NOW Housing and are in the process of developing a strategy, in partnership with interested not-for-profits organization(s), for donating a multiplex of six fully furnished 1 bedroom, 320 sq. ft. units in Stratford.
- The preliminary project budget is \$1.2-1.75M and NOW Housing is donating approximately \$1.1M, excluding land and servicing costs that are estimated at upwards of \$650,000. The City is to identify the most strategic location, which may be City-owned lands or a not-for-profit organization with excess lands (e.g., church) that is interested in affordable housing. Once the multiplex is fully constructed, the intent would be to donate the development to a local not-for-profit or other organization to maintain and manage.

161 East Gore Parcel:

Type: Community and/or Attainable Ownership/Rental Housing

- Preliminary research and investigations are underway for the potential development of the City-owned 161 East Gore Street parcel for community and/or attainable ownership/rental housing. The property is approximately 0.24 hectares in size and is designated as 'Residential Area' in the Stratford Official Plan. Servicing would need to be enhanced and extended, including approximately \$600,000 for a watermain of which \$215,000 for preliminary work included in the 2024 budget. Various density and development options are also being explored for the parcel.
- The current goals would be to develop the property in partnership with a not-for-profit organization and to maximize the number of units through a public planning process. A detailed report and strategy will be presented to Council for consideration at a future date.

Public Private Partnerships:

Type: Affordable/Attainable Ownership/Rental Housing

- Ongoing relationships are being nurtured and exist between the City of Stratford and our development & Non-Profit community. Existing buildings and new builds are being reviewed often for opportunities. These can include partnership and promotion of the space or a potential purchase of a building into the City Housing inventory.

Financial Implications:

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Financial impact to current year operating budget:

- Estimated cost of \$5,301,500.00 for rebuild and revitalization of 9 Fulton St., Milverton. \$250,000 was included in the 2024 budget representing 50% of the long-term debt repayment costs. If these amounts are not required in the current year because debt is not yet incurred, the amounts are used to reduce the required borrowing.
- Estimated cost of \$4,972,000 for multi-residential supportive housing building at 398 Erie St., Stratford. \$500,000 was included in the 2024 budget representing 50% of the long-term debt repayment costs. If these amounts are not required in the current year because debt is not yet incurred, the amounts are used to reduce the required borrowing.
- \$100,000 cost for Housing Specialist Position split between the City and investStratford. This was included in the 2024 budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

- The remaining 50% of the debt repayment will be brought into future operating budgets to ensure sufficient funds are available for the debt repayment. Detailed reports and financial analysis for NOW Housing and 161 East Gore Street will be brought forward as expansion initiatives in the 2025 budget process for consideration.

Link to asset management plan and strategy:

- Development of any new City-owned assets are recorded in the City's asset inventory, where amortization is captured over the useful life of the asset, and future replacement costs are quantified to establish transfers to reserve funds to pay for the ultimate replacement of assets and their components.

Legal considerations:

- Potential partnerships with not-for-profits and other organizations will require legal oversight and review.

Insurance considerations:

- All new City-owned assets are recorded in the City's asset inventory, where they are typically insured for replacement value. Additional assets result in increased insurance premiums.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as:

- Streamlining of the approvals process to enhance opportunities for new forms of residential development.
- Potential for partnerships with non-profit organizations to use municipal land for the development of affordable homeownership or affordable rentals.
- Provide safety and stability for unhoused community members by constructing new supportive/supported housing.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

This report aligns with this priority:

- Building meaningful partnerships to address community needs.

Alignment with One Planet Principles:

Health and Happiness

- Encouraging active, social, meaningful lives to promote good health and wellbeing.

Equity and Local Economy

- Creating safe, equitable places to live and work which support local prosperity and international fair trade.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled Housing Projects and Initiatives Update (COU24-081) be received as information.

Prepared by:

Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
 Joani Gerber, CEO of investStratford
 Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing
 Mike Pullen, Managing Director of investStratford

Recommended by:

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer