



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: October 14, 2025
To: Mayor and Council
From: Michelle Melady, Research and Program Analyst
Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing
Shannon Archer, Business Integration Manager
Report Number: COU25-130
Attachments: None

Title: Affordable Homeownership Program Eligibility Criteria Update

Objective: To provide Mayor and Council with an update regarding expanded eligibility criteria for the Affordable Homeownership Program.

Background: The Corporation of the City of Stratford is the provincially designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager and administers the Affordable Homeownership Program (AHP) which provides low to moderate income households with down payment assistance loans of up to 5% of the purchase price of a home. The down payment assistance loan is interest-free and forgivable after 20 years, provided there has been no default under the terms of the loan. If the residential property is sold before the 20 years, the principal amount of the loan plus a percentage of the capital gain realized through the sale is repayable.

Amounts recovered from repaid loans are kept in a revolving fund reserve and redistributed to qualified applicants. The current thresholds are determined by ministry parameters. The current maximum household limit for applications to the Affordable Home Ownership Loan Program is \$117,400. The current maximum purchase price of an eligible residential property for 2025 is \$685,286.

The program has also been amended to allow for anyone to reside in Stratford, Perth County or St. Marys or has a job offer or current employment locally to apply and to allow for newly built homes to qualify.

Analysis: The Affordable Home Ownership Program was originally provincially funded and administered by the City of Stratford.

The program has seen low utilization with only four loans being issued since January 2020. With the change in eligibility, the maximum household income qualifications has been increased by 17.4% from the 2023 program eligibility criteria and the maximum purchase price has also increased 12.5%. The addition of including those who may live outside of Stratford, Perth County and St. Marys currently but who have employment or a job offer locally as well as including newly built homes will expand who can access the program and is intended to also support local employers with the recruitment and retention of employees. Increasing capacity to move households through the housing spectrum aligns with the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan's priorities of creating attainable housing options and ending homelessness by creating permanent housing solutions.

The City is still required to follow the prescribed thresholds and maintain the program's intent but as there has been no additional funding provided, the balance the City has in the reserve operates as a revolving fund.

Current funds available is in the revolving fund reserve (R-R11-SHOL) the balance of which currently could support approximately 8 to 12 new loans, depending on the house purchase price. Should all the funding in the reserve be exhausted, the program would be paused until more funding becomes available through the repayment.

Financial Implications:

Financial impact to current year operating budget:

Due to the use of reserve funds, there is no anticipated impact on the current year budget.

Financial impact on future year operating budget:

An impact on future years operating budget is not anticipated.

Legal considerations:

To protect the City of Stratford's interests, a mortgage or charge on the land is registered against the property's title, with the assistance of legal counsel.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Build Housing Stability

This report aligns with this priority as expanding the Affordable Homeownership Program provides a valuable resource to individuals and families and provides autonomy to select housing within the criteria of the program to suit the needs of the household.

Intentionally Change to Support the Future

This report aligns with this priority as access to good, quality affordable housing has community-wide benefits related to health, education, social inclusion and economic vitality for the community.

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, "Affordable Home Ownership Eligibility Criteria Update" (COU25-130), be received for information.

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Recommended by:

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