



OAKVILLE

REPORT

Planning and Development Council

Meeting Date: October 15, 2024

FROM: Planning and Development Department

DATE: October 1, 2024

SUBJECT: **Housing Strategy and Action Plan including Housing Updates**

LOCATION: Town-wide

WARD: Town-wide . Page 1

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the Housing Strategy and Action Plan be approved.
2. That the Rental Housing Demolition or Conversion Protection Guidelines be endorsed.

KEY FACTS:

The following are key points for consideration with respect to this report:

- On July 10, 2023, Planning and Development Council received a staff report titled [Housing Strategy and Action Plan including the Housing Accelerator Fund Application](#). Council received a draft Housing Strategy and Action Plan (HSAP) and directed staff to undertake public engagement on the HSAP, report back to Council on what was heard, and refine the HSAP, as necessary, in coordination with other ongoing initiatives, prior to approval in full.
- Council approved a portion of the HSAP regarding the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) program, as it was a required component of the town's application to the HAF program. Since the time of approval, the town is no longer participating in the HAF program.
- Town staff have undertaken public engagement on the HSAP and have refined the HSAP, as necessary, in coordination with other ongoing

initiatives. This report brings forward an updated HSAP, attached as **Appendix A**, for approval.

- At the July 10, 2023, Planning and Development Council Meeting, Council passed Rental Housing Protection By-law 2023-102. The by-law was approved under the authority of Section 99.1 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, which provides municipalities with the authority to prohibit and regulate the demolition and conversion of residential rental properties.
- This report brings forward Rental Housing Demolition or Conversion Guidelines for Council, attached as **Appendix D**, for endorsement. The guidelines are a user guide to understanding the Rental Housing Protection By-law.
- On March 18, 2024, Planning and Development Council received a staff report titled [*White Paper: Planning Act Tools to Facilitate Development of Affordable Housing*](#). The white paper is supplementary to the town's HSAP and provides details regarding *Planning Act* tools that the town may use to support the provision of housing that is more affordable. At the meeting, Council directed staff to prepare a housing needs assessment, and initiate and undertake work programs in an efficient, and where possible, concurrent manner to investigate, and if deemed appropriate, implement the following *Planning Act* tools:
 - Inclusionary Zoning within Protected Major Transit Station Areas;
 - Community Planning Permit System within Midtown Oakville and with opportunity to do so in other parts of the Town; and
 - Community Improvement Plan to incentivize affordable housing across the Town.
- Since the time the white paper was prepared, provincial legislation has evolved. A second edition of the white paper has been prepared to reflect these updates and is available on oakville.ca. This report includes a status update on the work program items noted above stemming from the white paper.
- On May 6, 2024, Planning and Development Council directed staff to create a Sheridan College Housing Taskforce with the objective to enable, advance, and accommodate the development of residential uses, including student housing, on the Sheridan College campus. Further, staff were directed to create a work program to bring forward recommendations necessary to achieve the findings of the taskforce. Staff continue to undertake this directive and an update is provided in this report.

BACKGROUND:

The town is committed to playing its part in meeting the need for housing and addressing the demands of Ontario's growing population. The town is also committed to ensuring that growth is contextually appropriate and financially sustainable. The town recognizes the need for new housing includes a broad range of housing required by the public, including market-based, rental, attainable, affordable, social, and assisted housing. The town also recognizes its role within the housing system, as an approval authority with the ability to enable housing development and housing supply but does not build housing units directly.

The purpose of this report is to:

- a) bring forward an updated Housing Strategy and Action Plan (HSAP), attached as **Appendix A**, for Council approval;
- b) present the findings from the community engagement undertaken for the HSAP, attached as **Appendix B**;
- c) direct members of the public and Council to the updated *White Paper: Planning Act Tools to Facilitate Development of Affordable Housing*, which reflects updated legislation that has come into effect since it was presented to Council in March 2024;
- d) bring forward the Rental Housing Demolition or Conversion Guidelines, attached as **Appendix D**, for Council endorsement;
- e) provide an update the Council directive from May 6, 2024 to create a Sheridan College Housing Taskforce.

The report also provides an overview of implementation work stemming from the HSAP, as put forward in the town's 2025 budget.

TECHNICAL & PUBLIC COMMENTS:**A) Housing Strategy and Action Plan Update**

The town's Official Plan, *Livable Oakville*, provides the framework for how the town will grow and change into the future. It is founded on a mission statement and guiding principles, one of which is to provide "choice throughout the town in order to enable the availability and accessibility of a wide range of housing." This guiding principle is accompanied by principles that ensure a livable community is created which directs "the majority of growth to identified locations where higher density, transit and pedestrian oriented development

can be accommodated” and to “preserve, enhance and protect the distinct character, cultural heritage, living environment, and sense of community of neighbourhoods”.

The Housing Strategy provides an extension to the Livable Oakville Plan’s mission statement and guiding principles and sets a path forward with goals and objectives to guide decision making specific to housing. The Action Plan puts in place initiatives the town can undertake to further achieve the goals and objectives of the strategy, and ultimately the Livable Oakville Plan. Together, the HSAP is the town’s guiding document to improve the housing landscape across Oakville and achieve positive housing outcomes.

The HSAP provides a comprehensive approach and identifies many opportunities for the town to strengthen its policies, regulations, programs and by-laws for such matters as inclusionary zoning, rental protection, and affordable housing, among others that will improve housing across the housing continuum.

The HSAP is structured around six goals and objectives, which are intended to achieve five key housing outcomes. The plan includes nearly 70 actions that the town can take over the coming years to improve the housing landscape in Oakville and strengthen its partnerships with upper levels of government, agency partners and the development industry in the effort to deliver the housing Oakville needs.

On July 10, 2023, Planning and Development Council received a draft HSAP and directed staff to undertake public engagement on the HSAP, report back to Council on what was heard, and refine the HSAP, as necessary, in coordination with other ongoing initiatives. Accordingly, the HSAP has been updated to reflect community feedback and in coordination with other ongoing initiatives and is attached as **Appendix A** for council approval.

A list of refinements that were made to the HSAP are provided in **Appendix C**.

B) Housing Strategy and Action Plan – Community Engagement

On July 10, 2023, Planning and Development Council directed staff to undertake a public engagement program on the Housing Strategy and Action Plan, report back to Council on the findings, and refine the Housing Strategy and Action Plan, as necessary, in coordination with other ongoing initiatives.

Public engagement opportunities to help refine the HSAP were provided in the summer and fall 2023, and included an online survey, public open houses and attendance at the Oakville Seniors Housing Symposium. A full summary of the

community engagement events and feedback received is provided in **Appendix B**.

Staff received a wide range of comments via the engagement sessions. Some comments were outside the purview of the municipality or extended beyond housing, specifically. Many comments considered broad concepts such as the provision of innovative housing, preserving neighbourhood character, growth management, environmental and transportation concerns, livability and quality of living spaces. Staff note that although many of the comments submitted may not see a direct response within a new or revised “action item” in the HSAP, the comments submitted are still vital as staff move toward implementing the various action items, including new policies and programs necessary to create a better housing environment in Oakville. For example, the revised action item 1.5 states that the town:

“Develop a policy section specific to housing in the general policies in the Livable Oakville Plan, including any goals and objectives for housing town-wide. This will ensure housing policies apply to all land use designations where housing is permitted, including mixed use areas. Incorporate housing policies from the Halton Region OP in the Livable Oakville, as applicable.”

The action item noted above will consider the broader themes and concepts provided in the public comments received. Further, any policies incorporated into the town’s Official Plan with respect to housing, will also consider the broader Livable Oakville Plan in its totality, which already includes many policies pertaining to areas of interest identified in the public comments including growth management, environmental protection, and transportation systems and networks, among others.

C) White Paper: Planning Act Tools to Facilitate Development of Affordable Housing

On March 18, 2024, Planning and Development Council received a staff report titled [White Paper: Planning Act Tools to Facilitate Development of Affordable Housing](#). The white paper is supplementary to the town’s HSAP and provides details regarding *Planning Act* tools that the town may use to support the provision of housing that is more affordable. At the meeting, Council directed staff to prepare a housing needs assessment, and initiate and undertake work programs in an efficient, and where possible, concurrent manner to investigate, and if deemed appropriate, implement the following *Planning Act* tools:

- Inclusionary Zoning within Protected Major Transit Station Areas;

- Community Planning Permit System within Midtown Oakville and with opportunity to do so in other parts of the Town; and
- Community Improvement Plan to incentivize affordable housing across the Town.

Since the time the white paper was prepared, provincial legislation and policies have evolved. As a result, a second edition of the white paper has been prepared to reflect these updates, which is available on [oakville.ca](https://www.oakville.ca). An overview of the changes that have been made to the white paper are provided in the executive summary.

Further to the Planning and Development Council meeting on March 18, 2024, staff have undertaken several steps to carry out Council's direction.

In May 2024, the Town issued a request for proposals to undertake the Housing Needs Assessment, prepare a CIP background study and, if deemed appropriate, a Community Improvement Plan. The successful consultant is SHS Consulting and the Town proposes to hold three focus group sessions with members of the building industry, housing providers, businesses, and community groups in the fall to assist with preparing the Housing Needs Assessment, Inclusionary Zoning framework, and preparing the CIP background study.

Work with respect to Midtown Oakville continues which will inform Community Planning Permit System enabling policies and the development of a Community Planning Permit by-law for Midtown Oakville.

Staff will be reporting back to Council on these matters periodically. A comprehensive public engagement plan has been developed to ensure that these projects are carried out efficiently and effectively, to minimize consultation fatigue and ensure feedback is provided to constructively inform these processes.

D) Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Guideline

Rental housing is an important tenure of housing for many residents in Oakville, and access to a healthy supply of rental housing units is critical. At the July 10, 2023, Planning and Development Council Meeting, Council passed Rental Housing Protection By-law 2023-102. The by-law was approved under the authority of Section 99.1 of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, which provides municipalities with the authority to prohibit and regulate the demolition and conversion of residential rental properties.

The by-law addresses Action Item 2.1 in the HSAP and is a key tool to achieve goal 2 of the housing strategy, which is to "Improve Housing Affordability, Housing Options and Housing Choice".

Protecting existing rental housing stock is important because the town's current rental vacancy rate of 1.6% (2023) is much lower than a balanced market level of approximately 3%. The Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) states that a vacancy rate of at least 3% is considered necessary for adequate competition and housing options.

The town's vacancy rate has been below 3% for the past five years, indicating a need to maintain, secure and increase rental housing stock in Oakville.

To assist with the administration of the Rental Housing Protection By-law, Rental Housing Demolition or Conversion Guidelines have been prepared and are available on [oakville.ca](https://www.oakville.ca), and attached as **Appendix D**. The guidelines provide an overview of how to proceed when an application is made for a demolition or conversion of a residential rental property, either independent of or in conjunction with a development application.

The guidelines will assist landlords, tenants, and the development community in understanding the process for demolition or conversion of existing residential rental units on a property.

The guidelines provide a range of options for applicants to meet the objective of no net loss of affordable rental units because of a development proposal. Additionally, the guidelines provide a Notice and Communication Strategy for the applicant to implement as part of the application process.

The guidelines were presented to the Developer Liaison group, and were posted to the Town's website. No comments have been received on the guidelines. Town staff are seeking Council's endorsement of the guidelines.

E) Sheridan College Housing Taskforce

At the Planning and Development Council Meeting held May 6, 2024, Town Council passed the following motion:

1. Staff be directed to create a Sheridan College Housing Taskforce with the objective to enable, advance, and accommodate the development of residential uses, including student housing, on the Sheridan College campus; and,

2. Staff be directed to create a work program, in alignment with ongoing HAF initiatives, to bring forward any necessary recommendations, including programs, Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law Amendments, to achieve the findings of the Sheridan College Housing Taskforce to expedite the delivery of student housing on the Sheridan Campus.

Since the time the Council motion was passed:

- The Town is no longer participating in the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) program, and the development of a work program in alignment with other HAF initiatives is not required.
- The province's Bill 185, *Cutting Red Tape to Build More Homes Act, 2024*, received royal assent on June 6, 2024. It made changes to the *Planning Act* that exempt universities and colleges, including Sheridan College, from the provisions of the *Planning Act*. These changes include the rules which govern how municipalities can apply official plan policies and zoning regulations to publicly funded colleges and universities. Essentially, publicly funded colleges such as Sheridan College no longer require planning approvals from the town to move forward with development (e.g. Official Plan Amendments, Zoning By-law Amendments, Site Plan approval). They do, however, still require other development approvals to address matters such as water and sanitary servicing.
- The Provincial Planning Statement, 2024 was released and will come into effect on October 20, 2024. It consolidates and replaces the Provincial Policy Statement, 2020 and A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2019. The new PPS, 2024 contains policy direction on accommodating student housing, including that:
 - 6.2.5 Planning authorities shall collaborate with publicly-assisted post-secondary institutions, where they exist, to facilitate early and integrated planning for student housing that considers the full range of *housing options* near existing and planned post-secondary institutions to meet current and future needs.
 - 6.2.6 Further to policy 6.2.5, planning authorities should collaborate with publicly-assisted post-secondary institutions on the development of a student housing strategy that includes consideration of off-campus housing targeted to students.

Given these changes, the focus of work to be undertaken by the Sheridan College Housing Taskforce, as directed by Town Council, may require refinement and/or expansion beyond the initial objective of delivering

residential uses and student housing. A Terms of Reference for the Sheridan College Housing Taskforce is under development. Town staff have held preliminary discussions with Sheridan College and are ongoing.

Staff note that, once assembled, a first step for the Sheridan College Housing Taskforce should be to develop a project charter (or similar) to re-establish the purpose of the taskforce, its objectives, scope, and responsibilities.

IMPLEMENTATION:

The HSAP identifies many opportunities for the town, within its jurisdiction, to strengthen its policies, regulations, programs and by-laws regarding housing. To make progress on the Housing Strategy and Action Plan, foundational studies have already started which will support the next steps of delivering on updated land use policy and implementation tools, including a Housing Needs Assessment. This work program is being undertaken in a coordinated manner with other projects related to the Housing Strategy and Action Plan, to investigate, and if appropriate, implement:

- Inclusionary Zoning within Protected Major Transit Station Areas
- A Community Improvement Plan to incentivize affordable housing across the town

Notwithstanding the foundational work noted above, there are a number of new housing-related initiatives that also need to be undertaken to implement the action items of the HSAP. A business case, with a capital cost of \$500,000, to begin implementing action items under the town's Housing Action Plan is submitted as part of the town's 2025 budget process, including:

- the continuation of a Housing Secretary Office, which has been created and staffed with cascading backfill positions, to advance the town's Housing Action Plan and the next suite of projects (listed below);
- undertaking the Residential Policy Review as part of the town's Official Plan Review program;
- undertaking a Gentle Density Strategy, as identified by Council at their Planning and Development Council meeting on January 22, 2024;
- advancing the required infrastructure studies and planning necessary to realize development opportunities (e.g. housing) within the Bronte GO MTSA, including Environmental Assessment, Area Servicing Plan, and Transportation Studies, as well as updating the Zoning By-law to put in place as-of-right permissions; and,
- forming the Sheridan College Housing Taskforce, charged with devising solutions for the college area.

While some initiatives will be dependent on partnering with other levels of government and grants, there are some items which require commencement, and will assist the town to realize its housing pledge to facilitate 33,000 new homes by 2032.

CONSIDERATIONS:

(A) PUBLIC

Public engagement opportunities to help refine the HSAP were provided in the summer and fall 2023, and included an online survey, public open houses and attendance at the Oakville Seniors Housing Symposium. A full summary of the community engagement events, and feedback received is provided in **Appendix B**.

(B) FINANCIAL

A business case, with a capital cost of \$500,000, to begin implementing action items under the town's Housing Action Plan is submitted as part of the town's 2025 budget process.

(C) IMPACT ON OTHER DEPARTMENTS & USERS

To implement the action items identified in the HSAP, various town departments will be required to assist and/or lead various studies and related programs.

(D) COUNCIL STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

This report addresses Council's strategic priorities of Growth Management, Community Belonging, Environmental Sustainability and Accountable Government.

(E) CLIMATE CHANGE/ACTION

Enabling housing opportunities with outcomes intended to create livable, complete communities, work to create low-carbon and climate-resilient communities by ensuring new housing is provided in a manner that is less car dependant, reduces urban sprawl, and creates walkable and transit-supportive development patterns.

CONCLUSION:

The Housing Strategy provides an extension to the Livable Oakville Plan's mission statement and guiding principles and sets a path forward with goals and objectives to guide decision making specific to housing. The Action Plan puts in place initiatives the town can undertake to further achieve the goals and objectives of the

strategy, and ultimately the Livable Oakville Plan. Together, the HSAP is the town's guiding document to improve the housing landscape across Oakville and achieve positive housing outcomes.

The HSAP provides a comprehensive approach and identifies many opportunities for the town to strengthen its policies, regulations, programs and by-laws for such matters as inclusionary zoning, rental protection, and affordable housing, among others that will improve housing across the housing continuum.

APPENDICES:

- APPENDIX A** Housing Strategy and Action Plan
- APPENDIX B** Public Engagement Summary
- APPENDIX C** Refinements made to the Housing Strategy and Action Plan
- APPENDIX D** Rental Housing Demolition or Conversion Guidelines

Prepared by:
Brad Sunderland, MCIP, RPP
Housing Secretary, Housing Secretariat Office

Submitted by:
Gabriel A.R. Charles, MCIP, RPP
Director, Planning & Development