

Affordable Housing Options

Priorities Committee – May 11, 2021

Council Motion

On October 27, 2020, Council motioned *THAT administration prepare a report for Council's consideration by the end of Q1 2021, on a community-led approach to affordable housing that addresses four specific matters:*

1. A review of best practice strategies to mitigate housing gaps;
2. Prioritization of the Land Use Bylaw amendments for the Urban Service Area;
3. The results of an estimation of homelessness, by way of conducting a homeless count, to better understand housing needs; and
4. Building local and regional partnerships to respond to housing and homeless needs.

Overview

Definitions

Community safety and wellbeing

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment

Recommendations and community-led affordable housing strategy

Next steps

What is Affordable Housing?

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM



Affordable housing does not necessarily mean subsidized housing. It means housing that does not exceed 30% of one's income.

Opportunities for affordability are present at all areas in the housing continuum, including market home ownership.

Housing Affordability

- 49% of households in Strathcona County made an annual income of less than \$100,000 in 2016
- The average price of a single detached home in Strathcona County was \$445,153 in 2018

AUMA Housing Affordability Figures (shelter costs <30% of income)

Gross Annual Income	\$80,000	\$100,000
Maximum monthly mortgage payment	\$1,565	\$2,010
Maximum home purchasing price	\$274,000	\$350,000

Core Housing Need

Core housing need is another key measure in determining housing instability.

Core housing need happens when:

- **major repairs are required**, and residents don't have the means to move to a good unit in their community
- there are **not enough bedrooms** for the residents, and they don't have the means to move
- the current home **costs more than the residents can afford**, and they do not have the means to make a move or find an available affordable home in their community

Community Safety and Well-being



Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. *Academic Pediatrics*. 17 (2017) pp. 586-93. DOI Information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment

Key Findings

- Over 14% of residents are spending 30% or more of their income on housing costs
- Approximately 2,000 households are in core housing need
- Most impacted are single-parent families and those living alone
- Few purpose-built rentals, high rental costs and limited one-bedroom and bachelor options

Conclusion

Housing is unaffordable for many Strathcona County residents and low income households may face challenges finding and maintaining suitable housing.

Housing Needs and Demand Assessment

Recommend that Strathcona County develop *a community-led approach to affordable housing*

Four specific recommendations:

1. Review best practice strategies to mitigate housing gaps
2. Prioritise the Land Use Bylaw amendments for the Urban Service Area
3. Conduct a homeless estimation to better understand housing needs
4. Continue to build local and regional partnerships to respond to housing and homeless needs

PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation Report

Recommendation 1: Review best practice strategies to mitigate housing gaps

- A. Reserving affordable housing units as a percentage of all new builds
- B. Incentivize builders to create medium or high-density builds
- C. Identify parcels suitable for infill
- D. Improve affordable transportation options
- E. Increase allowable densities and heights and support compact housing types
- F. Allow development on parking lots
- G. Density bonuses and requirements
- H. Affordable housing targets and requirements
- I. Reduced and more appropriate parking requirements

Recommendation 2: Prioritise the Land Use Bylaw amendments for the Urban Service Area

- J. Recommendation 2 shows up as J in the following tables.

PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation Report

#	Proposed Action	Timing
D1. I1.	Continue to support Transportation Planning and Engineering Services through the Integrated Transportation Master Plan Update.	Ongoing
D2.	Continue to support Transit Services in the implementation of the Strategic Directions established under the Transit Master Plan.	
D3.	Continue to support County departments and regional collaboration in the expansion of local and regional trail systems.	

PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation Report

#	Proposed Action	Timing
A1.	Consult with Legislative and Legal Services and Provincial Agencies to explore options for inclusionary housing provisions.	Immediate
A2.	Consult with the Urban Development Institute to explore options for inclusionary housing provisions.	
B1.	Consult with the Urban Development Institute regarding incentives for the construction of rental units.	
B2.	Investigate potential ways to reduce red tape and streamline applications for purpose built rental applications.	
E1.	Investigate potential amendments to the Land Use Bylaw and creation of additional resources to better enable lower-cost building forms, such as garden suites or secondary suites.	
G1.	Consult with the Urban Development Institute regarding whether there is a market for a density bonusing program within the Built-up Urban Service Area.	
J1.	Consider the potential of a standardize mixed-use Zoning District applicable to the Built-up Urban Service Area.	

PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation Report

#	Proposed Action	Timing
A3.	Explore potential options that may allow for the incorporation of affordable residential units as a condition of County land transactions.	Short to Medium Term
B3.	Explore the potential for County incentive programs to reimburse all or some of the following fees for purpose built rental developments: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-application fees • Land use rezoning fees • Development site servicing plan fees • Building permit fees • Off-site levies • Re-development levies or contributions • Demolition building permit fees 	
B4.	Explore the potential for the County to build, partner, or acquire affordable or market rental units.	
B5.	Consider the disposal or lease of County lands at below-market value to non-profit organizations with strong track records as providers of affordable residential options.	

PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation Report

#	Proposed Action	Timing
F1. I2.	Conduct a review of Parking Regulations within the Land Use Bylaw.	Medium Term
J2.	Create Mixed-use Zoning Districts for Planned and Greenfield Areas within the Land Use Bylaw.	
A4.	Explore the County's ability to amend the Land Use Bylaw to include provisions regarding inclusionary housing.	Medium Term to Long Range
B6.	Consider the creation of an annual competition to provide County owned surplus land at below-market value for an affordable residential project that applies innovative models in design or operations, or provides targeted supports to underserved populations.	
C1. E2. F2.	Conduct a Servicing and Transportation Study addressing potential capacity issues and upgrades required to provide additional densification within the Built-up Urban Service area.	
C2. F3.	Create Infill Design Guidelines for the Built-up Urban Service Area.	
C3. E3. F4.	Create an Infill Strategy for the Built-up Urban Service Area.	

Assignment of resources and budget required for medium term to long range projects

PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation Report

#	Proposed Action	Timing
B7.	Create new Area Redevelopment Plans within the Compact Development Policy Area of the Municipal Development Plan.	Long Range
C4. D4. E4. F5. I3.	Create new Area Redevelopment Plans within the Built-up Urban Service Area.	
E5.	Review the need for an Update to the Mature Neighborhood Overlay to align with an approved County Infill Strategy.	
G2.	Explore opportunities for density bonusing when drafting new Area Redevelopment Plans within the build-up urban area	
H1.	Provide support in the creation of an Affordable Housing Strategy with targets for affordable residential options within the County.	
J3.	Create Mixed-use Land Use Zoning Districts for areas within Area Redevelopment Plans.	

Assignment of resources and budget required for medium term to long range projects

Affordable housing estimate

Recommendation 3: Conduct a homeless estimation to better understand housing needs

- From November 1-30, 2020, Strathcona County participated in a province-wide estimations project and conducted its first local housing estimate
- The housing estimate was conducted using a service-based approach designed specifically for rural communities
- Community partners and County departments promoted the survey, targeting residents seeking support services who were at risk of, or experiencing, housing insecurity or homelessness
- The County had among the highest response rates across the province, with 126 responses

Affordable housing estimate

Housing Estimate Findings

- The majority of respondents felt Strathcona County did not provide sufficient affordable housing
- While few respondents report experiencing absolute homelessness, 29% of respondents were experiencing housing insecurity.
- Of respondents experiencing housing insecurity:
 - 54% were employed full-time or part-time
 - 24% of respondents experiencing housing insecurity were home-owners
 - 56% of housing insecure respondents had a post-secondary diploma, degree or trade certificate

Affordable housing estimate

- Results from the housing estimate establish a profile of those experiencing housing insecurity and will inform service delivery
- Next steps will be incorporated into the affordable housing strategy and community safety and well-being strategy
- Future estimations will be repeated every several years to track community trends over time



Local and regional partnerships

Recommendation 4: Continue to build local and regional partnerships to respond to housing and homeless needs

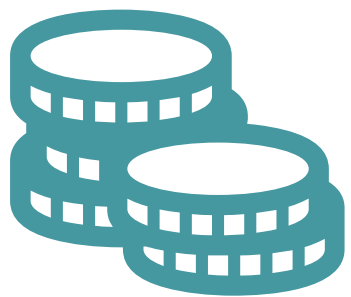
- Leverage Social Framework Leadership Table relationships
- Gain insight from like communities (e.g. St. Albert)
- Explore community-led solutions throughout Alberta (e.g. Medicine Hat)

Affordable Housing is Good Business

Goal 6 of 2020-2023 Corporate Business Plan

"Provide facilities and services that are available and accessible to residents."

- Connected, accessible multi-modal transportation network, including trails
 - Available, accessible and affordable recreational opportunities
 - **Diverse, affordable neighbourhoods, amenities and housing opportunities**
 - Enhanced community interaction and connectedness
 - Accessible community and cultural events, entertainment, shopping and dining opportunities
-



100% of Heartland Housing Foundation's portfolio of affordable apartments for seniors & families (384 units) are completely self-sustaining, requiring no subsidies.

Community-Led Strategy

Housing & Service Collaborative Group

Collaboration between community service providers and housing organizations to:

- Identify current and emergent housing and support needs
- Identify immediate and long-term priority actions
- Actively and collaboratively seek opportunities for federal, provincial & municipal funding/lands to support strategic development of tangible housing solutions

Community-led Strategy



Next steps



Recommendations 1 and 2: Council direction would be required to proceed with the actions outlined in the PDS Affordable Housing Options Recommendation report, including to support the affordable housing strategy.



Recommendation 3: The housing estimate will be repeated every several years to track trends over time. Next steps will be incorporated into the affordable housing strategy and community safety and wellbeing strategy.



Recommendation 4 and affordable housing strategy: Heartland Housing Foundation will lead future on action on affordable housing strategy and partnership development.