

# PDS Community Housing Implementation Plan Report

## Multiple Housing Types

June 2016

# HOUSING MIX

## INTRODUCTION

Strathcona County's Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing has recommended that Planning and Development Services examine various topics regarding Community Housing opportunities within the County. This report is in response to the following item of the April 26, 2016 report:

*3.1 That Administration prepare a report identifying Possible Planning Policy tools that can be implemented to help ensure developers provide various multiple housing types within all new residential neighbourhoods.*

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to outline potential policy tools and policy topics that can be incorporated into municipal regulatory documents in order to ensure a variety of housing types are included into all new residential neighbourhoods.

## BACKGROUND

As individuals pass through various stages of their lives, their housing needs often change. Part of implementing smart growth is ensuring that a range of housing options are available for varying income levels and demographic groups. Communities should provide enough variety in housing types and price ranges to accommodate a vast array of needs and tastes.



A key component of ageing in place is adaptable, flexible housing that accommodates the changing needs of occupants as they age and allowing them to remain in their neighbourhoods. Housing diversity can assist younger families and young adults wishing to

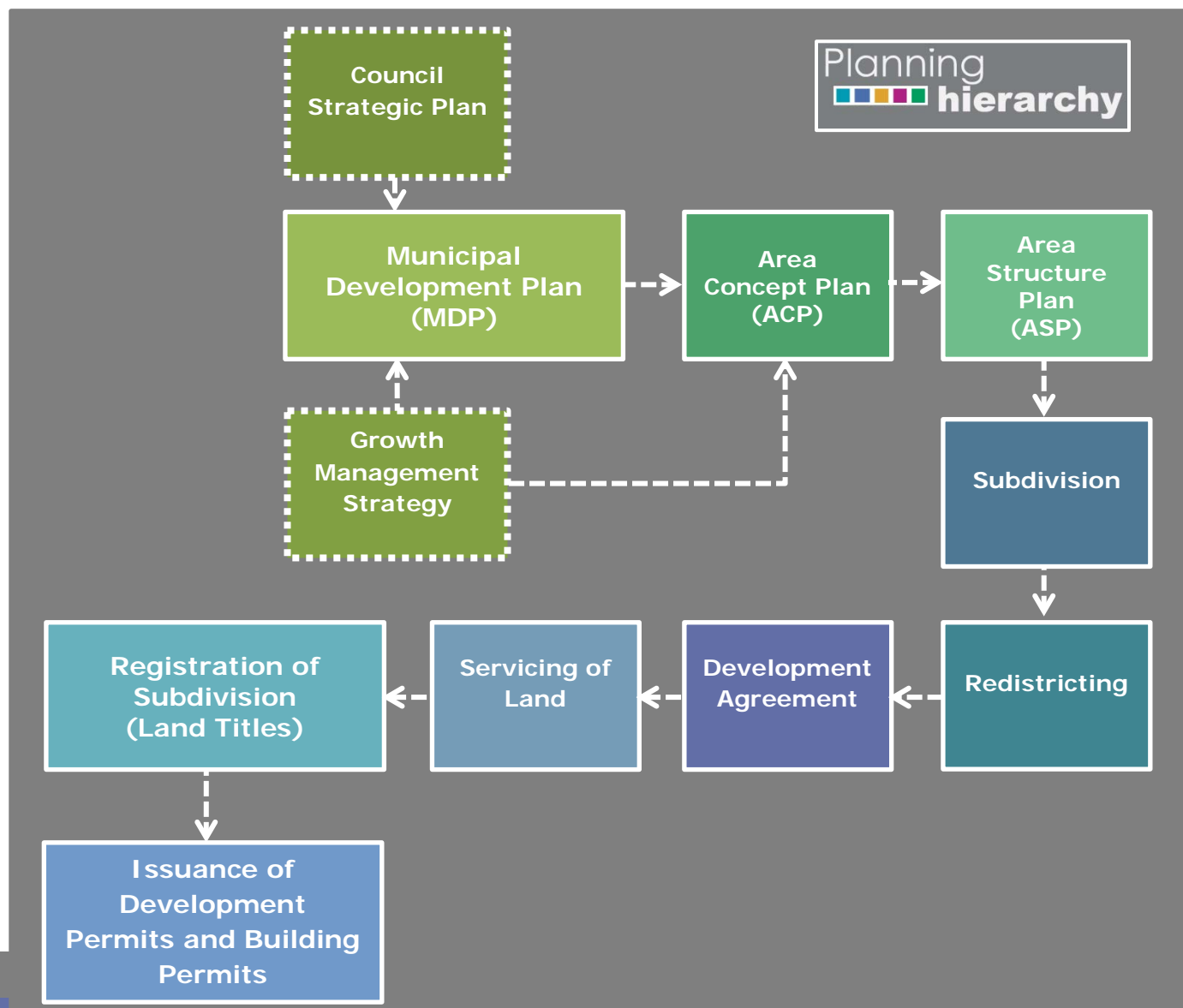
establish themselves in the community or lower income residents wishing to find more affordable housing options, including rental housing.

## BACKGROUND (CONTINUED)

When neighbourhoods do not have housing choices, residents often must choose between either a long commute or moving to another community with more affordable housing. Housing choice can offer people requiring assisted living and other support to remain in the community. In some instances, some individuals may want to forgo the demands of a house and its inherent responsibilities for the ease of apartment or condo living.

## POLICY TOOLS

The Planning Hierarchy is where policies can be implemented to ensure housing diversity within neighbourhoods. High level policy within the Municipal Development Plan (MDP) can filter through subsequent statutory documents such as the Area Concept Plan (ACP) and Area Structure Plan (ASP) to ensure various multiple housing types are incorporated into zoning, subdivision and development. As the planning process becomes more detailed from the MDP through to the ASP, so can the policies that support housing diversity.



## POLICY TOOLS (CONTINUED)

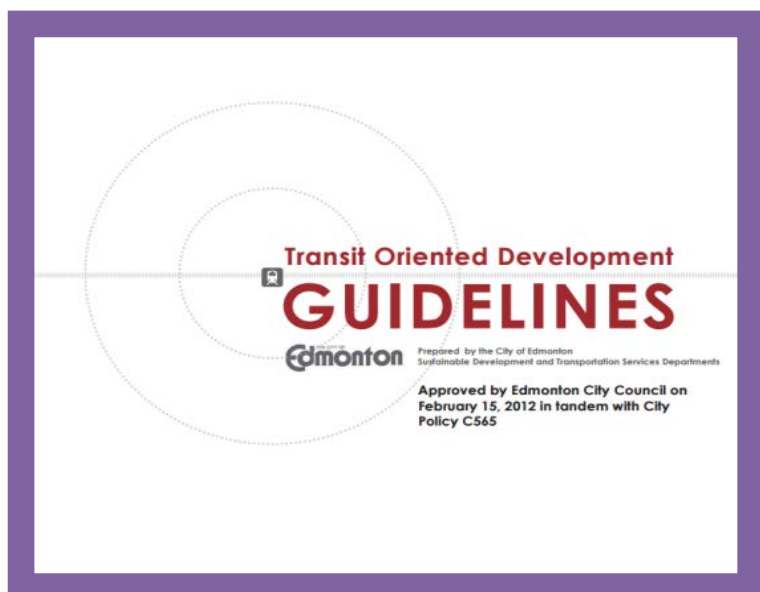
In addition, Council may also adopt policy guidelines to provide additional guidance on more specific topics. Examples of policy guidelines in other municipalities include:



### Design Guidelines



### Affordable Housing Guidelines



### Transit Oriented Development Guidelines

## POLICY TOPICS

Topic	Explanation
<b>COMPACT DEVELOPMENT</b>	<p>The Capital Region Growth Plan Task Force is in the process of updating the Capital Region Growth Plan. One of the guiding principles is compact development. Compact development incorporates higher density development by providing diversity of housing types.</p> <p>A neighbourhood with greater density will have a greater variety of housing types and therefore a greater quantity of affordable units than a low-density neighbourhood consisting exclusively of single-family homes. To create a vibrant place to live, the community needs different types of development and different types of density. Neighbourhoods have life cycles as families grow and age and they cannot thrive over the long-term with only one development choice. This greater range of housing types expands housing choices within a neighborhood allowing residents to choose housing that meets their changing needs and preferences over their lifetime.</p> <p>Density targets under the current Growth Plan for Sherwood Park are 30-45+ du/nrha. For Bremner they are 30-40 du/nrha. The most recent draft of the Growth Plan 2.0 is proposing minimum densities of 45 du/nrha. More certainty on the final numbers should be available in October when Growth Plan 2.0 is submitted to the Capital Region Board for approval. The County's MDP and subsequent statutory plans for new residential neighbourhoods will be required to meet the approved Capital Region Board density targets.</p>
<b>COMPLETE COMMUNITY</b>	<p>As defined in Strathcona County's Municipal Development Plan, a Complete Community is:</p> <p><i>"A community that provides a range of choices in the physical and social elements of neighbourhoods, such as housing, shopping, working, travel, leisure, services and social contacts with goals of reducing distances and travel times. A complete community encourages diversity at a neighbourhood scale"</i></p> <p>Incorporating complete community concepts within statutory documents can help to ensure multiple housing types are provided within a neighbourhood.</p> <p>As part of the MDP update, Administration is looking at how to expand on the complete community definition in the MDP by providing more guidance and policies related to this concept for new neighbourhoods.</p> <p>The current draft of the Capital Region Growth Plan 2.0 is proposing to incorporate the concept of complete communities and would require the MDP and subsequent statutory documents to incorporate housing diversity as part of a complete community for new greenfield developments.</p>
<b>TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD)</b>	<p>One area receiving growing attention is the extent to which neighbourhoods with mixed land uses and access to public transit may reduce commuting costs for households. By creating choice, housing density and diversity also contributes to improvements in the transportation system. With destinations close by, car trips are shorter, resulting in fewer vehicle miles driven. Additionally, people can choose to walk, bicycle or take transit at least some of the time. For those who cannot drive – children, elderly, the disabled and some who cannot afford a car – such a choice equals the opportunity to travel independently. A diverse range of housing should be located near transit and/or job centers. The location of housing relative to the location of employment opportunities, transport and other local services can be incorporated into policies related to transit oriented development (TOD).</p>

Topic	Explanation	
TARGETS FOR HOUSING TYPE	The Bremner Growth Management Strategy has a number of policy directions and strategies relate to housing diversity. Some of this information is provided below. These policy directions and strategies may be incorporated into the Bremner Area Concept Plan and subsequent Area Structure Plans.	
	Low-density Neighbourhoods	Are intended to contain a mix of lower density housing comprised predominantly of detached dwellings (approximately 60%) but also semi-detached dwellings and duplexes (20%) and townhomes (20%).
	Medium-density Neighbourhoods	Are intended to accommodate a mix of low-rise housing, including townhomes (approximately 50%), detached dwellings (20%), semi-detached dwellings and duplexes (20%) and apartments in lowrise Buildings generally up to four storeys (10%).
	Mixed-use Centres	Are intended for higher-density forms of housing, including apartments in low-rise buildings (approximately 50%), townhomes (30%) and apartments in mid-rise buildings up to nine storeys (20%). These areas would also accommodate small-format and mid-size retail and other commercial uses in standalone buildings or integrated with residential uses in mixed-use buildings.
	Planning areas subject to ASPs and comprised of multiple neighbourhoods should accommodate a full range of housing types and sizes. The following maximum and minimum targets for Low-density and Medium-density Neighbourhoods combined should guide ASPs and Plans of Subdivision:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maximum 60% single-detached and semidetached houses</li><li>• Minimum 25% townhomes</li><li>• Minimum 10% apartments</li></ul> <p>Based on these percentages, if an area meets the maximum of 60% for single-detached and semi-detached houses, 5% of its housing make up will be flexible between townhomes and apartments after it meets the minimum requirements for those two types of housing.</p>	
SECONDARY SUITES, GARDEN SUITES AND GARAGE SUITES	<p>Municipalities across Canada have recognized suites as a viable source of rental housing. They can also provide extra revenue or mortgage support for families looking to buy a home. Suites also allow people to age in place, and can provide a sense of security for seniors or persons with a disability. As well, secondary suites allow families to stay together by providing a first home for an adult child or elderly relative.</p> <p>As part of the Bremner Growth Management Strategy, policy directions regarding suites are recommended to be incorporated into future Area Structure Plans to support this type of housing option.</p>	



Topic	Explanation
<b>INCLUSIONARY HOUSING</b>	<p>A negotiation between a municipality and a developer for inclusion of affordable housing lands or structures within new developments. Inclusionary housing is one way the province is working with municipalities to address the critical need for affordable housing in a collaborative and sustainable way as part of the MGA Review.</p> <p>As the update of the MGA will provide authority and assistance in these efforts it is recommended that this option not be undertaken until the adoption of the new Act. Further information on inclusionary housing is provided within the PDS Community Housing Implementation Plan Report on Developer Incentives.</p>

## NEXT STEPS

The next step for this initiative relate to the Municipal Development Plan Update currently underway. Planning and Development Services is working on policies for new neighbourhoods within the MDP to incorporate various multiple housing types related to the policy topics listed above. These overarching MDP policies will direct more detail on these topics through the Planning hierarchy.

Implementation items will be listed within the MDP if there is a need to direct Administration to explore and expand additional topics through Council adopted policy guidelines.

The timeline for the final draft of the MDP update to come to Council is late 2016/early 2017. The revisions made to the timeline are due to the concurrent *Municipal Government Act (MGA)* review and the update to the Capital Region Growth Plan (CRGP).

The MDP must be in compliance with the *MGA* and the policies of the CRGP. The Province has indicated that the Legislature will complete debate of the Bill regarding the updated *MGA* during the fall 2016 sitting, while the Capital Region Growth Plan is expected to be presented to the Capital Region Board for approval on October 13, 2016.

In addition to the MDP, the Bremner Area Concept Plan will play a vital role in providing direction the topics above to incorporate various multiple housing types for new neighbourhood in Strathcona County

