

DATE: July 24, 2023

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCIL

NAME AND TITLE: Deanna Wasnik, Director, Planning and Development

SUBJECT: Support for Application to Housing Accelerator Fund

ATTACHMENT(S): None

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Council:

1. SUPPORTS Administration's application to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Accelerator Fund.
2. DELEGATES authority to the Director of Planning and Development to approve the required action plan for the application submission.
3. AUTHORIZES the Director of Planning and Development and the Director of Finance to sign any necessary funding agreements and attestations.

PURPOSE:

For Council consideration.

DISCUSSION:

The 2022 update of the City's 2021 Housing Needs Report showed a continued demand for a large volume of various housing types to meet the core housing needs of a diverse set of demographics. At a high level, there are a minimum of 8,123 units in the core need within a timeframe of 2023-2031, working out to approximately 1,000 units per year. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), 598 units were completed in 2022.

The CMHC recently released guidelines for their Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) program which aims to increase the supply of housing through incentives and accelerated processes. This program offers funding over 4 years for initiatives that result in a net increase in permitted housing units on a per unit basis relative to what projected housing targets would be without Housing Accelerator Fund initiatives and contributions. To apply, the City of Prince George must develop a framework action plan, using a prescribed form, and identify a minimum of 7 initiatives with milestones that outlines how the City will increase the average annual rate of housing growth by at least 10% and the housing growth rate by at least 1.1%.

The estimated funding framework includes base funding, which incents all types of housing supply with top-up funding that further incents multi-unit housing and affordable housing. Permitted uses of HAF funding includes investments in HAF action plans, investments in affordable housing, investments in housing-related infrastructure, and investments in community-related infrastructure that supports housing.

Prior to the announcement of the HAF program, Administration applied successfully to the Northern Healthy Community Fund administered by Northern Development Initiative Trust to support the development of a Housing Needs Action Plan and the capacity to carry it out. A Request for Proposals (RFP) process was recently completed, resulting in the selection of consultants to support the development of the Housing Needs Action plan. This work will support the development of necessary requirements for the application to the HAF program until the August 18th, 2023 deadline and will continue until mid- to late-October to further detail the initiatives and their implementation. Administration will return to Council with the completed action plan at this time; should the City be successful in its application to the HAF, it's expected that the contribution agreement will be signed at this point as well, creating a smooth transition from planning to action.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES:

This project is aligned with myPG Goals, Council's 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, and Economic Development Strategy goals:

- myPG goal: Affordable, Accessible Housing
- Strategic Plan: Economic Growth and Diversity
- Economic Development Strategy: Expand and Support Prince George's Target Clusters

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS:

There is no required monetary contribution from the City of Prince George to access this funding. The funds would be an addition to the current budget.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION:

The City's core housing needs indicate the need to take an active approach to supporting the increase of residential development. By applying to the Housing Accelerator Fund through Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the City can be awarded funding for implementing initiatives over a multi-year period that accelerate the supply of housing and enhance certainty in the approvals and building process. There is no required monetary contribution from the City of Prince George to access this funding.

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

Deanna Wasnik, Director, Planning and Development

PREPARED BY: Deklan Corstanje, Manager, Economic Development

APPROVED:

Walter Babicz, City Manager

Meeting Date: 2023/7/24