



2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan: Priorities and Next Steps

Recommendation:

THAT Council receives the 2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan for information;

AND THAT Council direct staff to pursue the prioritized housing strategies and initiatives as set out in the November 12, 2024, report titled “2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan” in alignment with Council’s discussion.

Report Purpose and Summary Statement:

The 2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan discusses the strategies and initiatives to be pursued arising from the 2024 Housing Needs Report and Housing Strategy and provides staff’s recommendations for Council’s consideration and input.

Previous Council Action:

Council endorsed the 2024 Housing Needs Report at its meeting on September 10, 2024. Council subsequently received the Housing Strategy report prepared by Urban Matters for information on September 24, 2024 and requested staff host a Council Workshop for further discussion and prioritization of the recommendations of the Strategy.

Financial Impact:

n/a

Funding Source:

n/a

Strategic Alignment:

Liveable Community

Communications:

The community engagement for the 2024 Housing Needs Report and Housing Strategy took place in Q1 of 2024.

Applicable Legislation/ Bylaw/Policy:

n/a

To: Mayor and Council

File number:

13-6440-20

2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan: Priorities and Next Steps

BACKGROUND:

Council endorsed the City of Maple Ridge's [2024 Housing Needs Report](#) prepared by Urban Matters at its meeting on September 10, 2024. The Housing Needs Report recommended that attention be focused on: the provision of affordable rental units; addressing homelessness; providing more housing for families, seniors, indigenous and other equity-deserving groups; and to direct housing development within the city's key transit and growth nodes. To address these housing needs, Urban Matters additionally prepared the [City of Maple Ridge Housing Strategy: Draft Road Map and Actions](#) which was received by Council for information on September 24, 2024. That report presented a suite of possible strategies, best practices, and initiatives that could be considered by the City.

The City has a prevailing [Housing Action Plan \(HAP\)](#) endorsed by Council in 2014, and an accompanying [implementation framework](#) endorsed by Council in 2015. The 2014 HAP highlighted the need for greater housing mix and innovation, a focus on market and non-market rental housing, and the use of financial measures (e.g., relaxation of carparking requirements; density bonus schemes) and advocacy towards realizing the strategies. Many of the strategies and initiatives in the HAP have been implemented to date, and while several have been superseded by the new provincial housing legislation, most are still relevant for Maple Ridge.

Updating the City's Housing Action Plan

For consistency and continuity, the 2014/15 Housing Action Plan and implementation framework should be updated to align with the requirements of the new provincial legislation and as informed by the latest 2024 Housing Needs Report. The 2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan outlined in this report discusses the strategies and initiatives for Council to consider as priorities and next steps that staff would proceed to study further. The intent of the proposed updated Housing Action Plan is to provide a roadmap for Council's initiatives to address the community's housing needs and give a broader perspective of how the various strategies and initiatives work together.

DISCUSSION

Workshop objectives

Council's feedback is sought for the following:

- the strategies and initiatives recommended in the Housing Strategy that Council would like to prioritize so staff can proceed to study them further over the short to longer term;
- the longer-term initiatives that are to be monitored and reconsidered in the future; and
- the review timeframes for these initiatives.

An overview of the key proposed prioritized initiatives of the Housing Strategy will be presented by staff at the associated Council workshop. With feedback from Council, staff would then complete additional analysis and refinement of the individual priority initiatives, with these individual items returning to Council at the appropriate time with staff's implementation recommendations, for Council's consideration. Staff anticipate that these priority action items would be undertaken and incorporated as part of future business planning

cycles and during the update of the Official Community Plan (OCP) by December 31, 2025 as required by provincial housing legislation.

2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan: Key Strategies and Initiatives

The proposed strategies and initiatives of the Housing Strategy fall within four broader strategy pillars:

1. Prioritize Needed Forms of Housing
2. Streamline Development Application Processes
3. Harness Regulatory and Financial Tools
4. Develop a Land Governance Strategy

Attachment 1 shows the strategies and initiatives prioritized within 3 timeframes for Council's consideration. The proposed timeframes are:

- Immediate and Short term (1 year to the end of 2025). This aligns with the legislative requirement to update the OCP by December 2025.
- Medium term (2-3 years, end 2027)
- Long term (3-5 years+, end 2029+)

Council can expect staff's review for most of the following strategies and initiatives to return to Council for consideration and direction on next steps in the short to medium term as summarized below. Many of these reviews are already ongoing by Planning staff. Those that require external support and partnerships are likely to require funding and be in the medium to longer term. The proposed initiatives and timeframes are summarized in Attachment 1 to guide Council's discussion.

Immediate term (over the next 6 months)

1. Support the development of a greater mix of housing forms
 - a) Produce pre-approved site plans applicable to the local context to facilitate the uptake of Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing developments (SSMUH).
 - b) Produce pre-approved building designs applicable to the local context to facilitate SSMUH. As external expertise is necessary to support the development of building designs, this could realistically extend beyond 6 months. Funding is to be considered through the 2024 business planning cycle.
2. Safeguard adequate housing for families
 - a) Study the feasibility of requiring new housing developments to provide a minimum number of 2-bedroom and larger sized units. This would better align future housing supply with the unit-mix of housing needed, as guided by the endorsed Housing Needs Report and the provincial housing targets for the City.
 - b) Consider incentivizing larger-sized units by offering a density bonus to developers to exclude counting the 3rd bedroom (and more) of larger sized units as floor area.
3. Strengthen renter protections
 - a) Continue to review and monitor the *Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy* and *Modular Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy* to strengthen renter protections. These policies were last updated in 2023 and will be brought back before Council for review and consideration in early 2025.
 - b) Develop tenant protection measures (e.g., bylaws, policies) to strengthen the protections and supports against potential displacement of tenants in cases of redevelopment.
 - c) The Province released interim guidance on implementing Bill 16 (i.e., Tenant Protection Bylaws) on September 11, 2024, providing the possibility for municipalities to designate development permit areas to require compliance with tenant protection bylaws in these areas.
 - d) Develop a rental replacement policy to protect rental housing.

- e) Continue to monitor the need for a Strata Conversion Bylaw. Staff note that as over 60% of the purpose-built rental developments in Maple Ridge were built in the 1980s and earlier, they are unlikely to be attractive towards strata conversions.

4. *Harness regulatory and financial tools*

- a) Develop a transparent sliding scale incentive program to encourage affordable inclusive homes. This would include:
 - Reviewing parking requirements to facilitate housing developments in key growth areas and the Town Centre. This is ongoing and a draft of the revised Parking Bylaw will soon be submitted for Council's consideration.
 - Updating density bonus schemes for alignment with new provincial housing legislation and consider other areas for further incentivization. This review is underway with funding approved through the 2024 business planning cycle.

5. *Streamline development application approvals*

- a) This review is underway and includes introducing a concierge service for development approvals, implementing a Certified Professionals program in Building, and developing a fast-tracked stream for selected, simpler types of development applications (e.g., those in accordance with pre-approved site and building designs).

Short-term (before the end of 2025)

1. *Encourage purpose-built rental housing and affordable home ownership*

- a) Explore how to better facilitate purpose-built rental developments through a mix of regulatory and financial mechanisms as well as stakeholder partnerships. This could include:
 - Working with non-profit community partners and provincial agencies like BC Builds to facilitate partnerships.
 - Considering the feasibility of Residential Rental Tenure Zones in the local context.
- b) Explore affordable home-ownership models and pathways. This could include exploring the feasibility of implementing a rent-to-own concept.

2. *Facilitate housing for seniors and aging-in-place*

- a) Study the feasibility of implementing adaptable housing standards for new housing developments, aligning it with provincial regulations taking effect in 2025.
- b) Develop a senior-friendly renovation kit to retrofit existing homes and enable aging-in-place.
- c) Update the age-friendly city framework to better address seniors' housing and eldercare needs across the care spectrum.

3. *Facilitate pro-active planning*

- a) Develop implementation guidelines for transit-oriented areas (i.e., Haney Place Transit Exchange, Port Haney Station, Maple Meadows Station).
- b) Refine land use designations and policies in target growth areas, such as the Lougheed Transit Corridor and the Town Centre, as part of the OCP update.

4. *Streamline processes*

- a) The upgrade of technology and platforms to facilitate digital services and digital plan submissions are underway.
- b) A comprehensive review of regulations, design guidelines and processes is being conducted.

Short to medium term (to the end of 2027)

1. Promote equity and inclusion

- a) Produce an equity-lens driven housing needs and amenity assessment to better understand the gaps and service ecosystem of indigenous, newcomer and ethnic groups. This will help to identify gaps and address culturally appropriate housing needs.

2. Harness regulatory and financial tools

- a) Review the use of development cost charges (DCCs), amenity cost charges (ACCs) and community amenity contributions (CACs), exploring measures to incentivize affordable, inclusive housing in priority locations. An initial study on amenity cost charges is underway, with some funding approved through the 2024 business planning cycle.
- b) Explore the feasibility of implementing inclusionary zoning in key growth areas, within the local Maple Ridge market context and property dynamics.

3. Land governance strategy

- a) Develop an inventory of existing and potential city-owned land and properties. Strategies, where feasible and appropriate, would be explored towards optimizing these sites for affordable housing supply and associated amenities. Opportunities to cultivate partnerships with community stakeholders, as well as regional and provincial agencies and non-profit organizations, on specific sites will also be explored.

Initiatives for consideration over the longer term (3-5 years+)

The Housing Strategy recommended that the City explore the possibility of setting up a municipal housing authority (similar to the Burnaby Housing Authority) as an effort to boost affordable housing supply. Maple Ridge does not currently have the scope, scale of housing developments nor the market conditions to justify the significant investment in resources for a separate government entity such as this. This is an option that could be revisited over time for reconsideration when market conditions change. Similarly, the proposal to update the Revitalization Tax Exemption program could be evaluated for feasibility at a later stage.

Next Steps

Council's feedback on prioritized strategies and initiatives will be incorporated and prioritized within the City's business planning cycle, departmental work plans, and the upcoming OCP update. Separate briefings by Planning staff will be prepared for Council to explore particular topics and discussed at subsequent workshops (e.g., rental housing policies). These workshops will allow for further discussion of existing policies and potential gaps in anticipation of the short-, medium- and long-term initiatives recommended in this report as they are brought forward for Council's consideration.

Strategic Alignment

The 2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan is an initiative under the Liveable Community Pillar of the 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

Financial Impact

Many of the initiatives have been put forward in the City's application to the second round of CMHC's Housing Accelerator Fund. If successful, this funding will boost and speed up the ongoing and intended initiatives to be pursued.

CONCLUSION

This report provides Council additional information on the recommended strategies and initiatives set out in the Housing Strategy report prepared by Urban Matters and recommend those that the City should consider over the short, medium and longer term. Upon receiving Council's feedback at the workshop, staff will incorporate comments and the intended prioritized actions within the City's business planning cycle and upcoming OCP update. The individual initiatives will return at the appropriate times for Council's consideration and direction.

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Attachment: (A) Attachment 1: "2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan: Priorities and Next Steps"

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - 2024 HAP.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 6, 2024

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Amanda Grochowich, Manager of Community Planning

James Stiver, Director of Building, Development and Planning

Carolyn Mushata, Director of Legislative Services and Corporate Officer

Scott Hartman, Chief Administrative Officer

Attachment 1

2024 Proposed Housing Action Plan: Priorities and Next Steps

- **Short term** = (1year, end 2025)
- **Medium term** = (2-3 years, end 2027)
- **Long term** = (3-5 years+, end 2029+)

Housing Strategy	Initiatives	Timeframe		
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
1. Support the development of a mix of housing forms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Updated the bylaws for Small Scale Multi-Unit Housing (SSMUH) and Transit-Oriented Areas (TOAs) to be aligned with new provincial legislation. This encourages mixed residential and mid-to-higher densities in key growth areas. 	Completed.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce pre-approved site plans and building designs applicable for the local context to facilitate Small-Scale Multi-Unit Housing developments. 	√		
2. Explore affordable home ownership models and pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the possibility of implementing a rent-to-own concept 	√		
3. Encourage new purpose-built rental housing opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore measures to facilitate purpose built rental developments 	√		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with provincial agencies (e.g. BC Builds) and community partners towards affordable purpose-built rental developments 		√	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the feasibility of the Residential Rental Tenure Zones (RRTZs) in the local context 	√		
4. Strengthen rental protections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to review and monitor the Tenant Relocation Assistance Policy and Modular Home Park Redevelopment Tenant Assistance Policy to strengthen protections. 	√		

Housing Strategy	Initiatives	Timeframe		
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
	• Monitor Need for Strata Conversion Bylaw.	On-going		
	• Develop tenant protection bylaws	√		
	• Develop a rental replacement policy	√		
5. Facilitate housing for seniors across the care spectrum to enable aging in the right place.	• Adopt Adaptable Housing Standards. Study the feasibility of implementing adaptable housing standards for new housing developments, aligning it with provincial regulations taking effect in 2025.	√		
	• Develop a senior-friendly renovation kit to retrofit existing homes and enable aging-in-place	√		
	• Update the age-friendly city framework to address seniors housing needs across the care spectrum.	√		
6. Safeguard adequate housing for families	• Study the feasibility of requiring new housing developments to provide a minimum number of 2-bedroom and larger sized units, aligning it with housing needs and housing targets.	√		
	• Consider incentivizing larger-sized units by offering a density bonus to exclude counting the 3 rd bedroom (and more) of larger sized units as floor area.	√		
7. Promote equity and inclusion through continuous engagement with equity-deserving groups to address culturally appropriate housing needs	• Produce an equity-lens driven housing needs and amenity assessment to better understand the gaps and service ecosystem of indigenous, newcomer and ethnic groups.		√	
8. Partner with organizations addressing homelessness to strengthen services	• Updated homelessness policy completed in 2023. Continuing to review and monitor to strengthen protections.	On-going		

Housing Strategy	Initiatives	Timeframe		
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
9. Explore feasibility of implementing Inclusionary Zoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Study the components of an inclusionary zoning (IZ) design to assess its feasibility, scale and applicability in key areas within the local Maple Ridge market context and property dynamics. 		✓	
10. Facilitate proactive planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop implementation guidelines for transit-oriented areas (i.e., Haney Place Transit Exchange, Port Haney Station, Maple Meadows Station). Refine land use designations and policies in target growth areas, such as the Lougheed Transit Corridor and the Town Centre, as part of the OCP update 	✓		
11. Explore opportunities for a Municipal Housing Authority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the feasibility and applicability in the local Maple Ridge context for reconsideration. 			✓
12. Update Revitalization Tax Exemption Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor the feasibility and applicability in the local Maple Ridge context for reconsideration. 			✓
13. Streamline development application processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Upgraded development application software and monitoring system (AMANDA 7) 	✓		
a. Upgrade technology and facilitate digital services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement digital plan submissions (e.g. Dig-E-Plan) 	✓		
b. Review of regulations, design guidelines and processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing 	✓		
c. Streamline development application approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce a ‘concierge’ service Implement a ‘Certified Professional Program’ 	✓		

Housing Strategy	Initiatives	Timeframe		
		Short Term	Medium Term	Long Term
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore developing a fast-tracked stream for selected simpler types of development applications such as those in compliance with pre-approved building plans (e.g. for Small Scale Multi Unit Housing developments). 	√		
14. Harness regulatory and financial tools to encourage affordable inclusive housing through a transparent sliding scale program. This includes:				
a. Review of Parking Requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underway. 	√		
b. Review and Expand Density Bonusing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Update density bonus schemes to align them with new provincial housing legislations and review possibilities for further incentivization to address housing needs (e.g. see 6). 	√		
c. Review Development Charges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing. Latest DCCs were updated in 2024. The initial phase of the ACC study is underway. Full review of DCC, ACC, CACs would be conducted. 		√	
15. Develop a land governance strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce an inventory of existing and potential municipal land and city-owned properties, developing strategies towards optimization of these sites for affordable housing supply and associated amenities. 	Ongoing		
a. Produce an inventory of city-owned land and properties				
b. Leverage partnerships and opportunities with provincial / federal agencies and with community stakeholders to optimize land use for affordable inclusive housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Submitted grant application for CMHC's Housing Accelerator Fund (2.0) in Sep 2024. If successful, this would boost resources to accelerate the strategies. 			