

CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF HURON

Planning and Development Department

To: Mayor and Members of Town of Goderich Council
From: Victor Kloeze, Planner and Denise Van Amersfoort, Senior Planner
Date: February 22, 2021
Subject: **Housing Initiative – ‘Through a Housing Friendly Lens’**

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the attached report be received for information and further that a Council workshop be scheduled to discuss the options and provide direction on implementation.

Background

In December of 2019, County Council directed staff to initiate a series of housing projects targeted at the on-going housing crisis. One of the projects involves applying a ‘housing friendly lens’ to the policies and provisions which guide development in the County including Official Plans and Zoning By-laws. The planning documents largely guide residential development and have significant impact in terms of the type of development which is permitted and built in different areas. A review of all residential Official Plan policies and zoning provisions is required to ensure that the standards are achieving current and future housing needs of the community.

The Housing Lens incorporates a second initiative which involves the ‘pre-zoning’ of parcels for higher density residential uses. For large undeveloped parcels, the traditional approach has been to zone the parcel Future Development until such time as a proposal is brought forward. By proactively, ‘pre-zoning’ these larger parcels and setting minimum requirements for density, the development process will be more streamlined.

Comments

The attached report outlines a series of recommended Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendment options; while the goal is to have consistency across the County, contextual differences need to be reflected in the planning approach. For example, fully serviced settlement areas will be able to achieve a denser form of housing than those areas which rely on private services. The overall goal is to create a more flexible planning regime for residential projects where concerns of the residents are integrated through the application of the Residential Intensification Guidelines into the site planning process rather than being integrated by through a variance process.

The process to date has included a review of commonly amended zoning provisions for multi-unit developments, a review of each Official Plan with a ‘housing friendly’ lens to identify policies which could be made more flexible and introduce new policies which support the development of attainable housing.

In terms of consultation, the Department has consulted with: members of the development community including local developers, surveyor and draftspersons; members of the agricultural community including the OFA Policy Advisors, Huron County Federation of Agriculture, Farm Credit Canada and a representative from an Anabaptist community and; members of the municipal community including the Clerks/CAOs and the Chief Building Officials (with whom a detailed roundtable with all Planners and CBOs was conducted).

Next Steps

The next step in this process is to discuss recommended Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments with local Councils. Each local Council will provide direction as to which of the options should be put forward for consideration under the Planning Act process (involving public consultation, public meetings, etc). The options will also include potential sites for ‘pre-zoning’.

The purpose of the proposed Council workshop is to discuss the 3 C's: content of the amendment, communications strategy and consultation plan. It is important that the community be aware of and engaged in terms of the proposed changes and with the continued limitations on in-person meetings, different strategies will need to be considered.

Summary

Huron County is experiencing a housing crisis; the goal of this project is to ensure that the planning framework is designed to facilitate the building of residential units to meet future and the current needs of our community.

'Original signed by'

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