

# Staff Report

Presented By: Kristen Sears, Planning Policy Coordinator  
Meeting Date: February 23, 2026  
Subject: Housing Accelerator Fund Update  
Attachment(s): Housing Accelerator Fund Update Presentation

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## **Recommendation**

That Council receive the Housing Accelerator Fund Report Update report for information.

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## **Report Summary**

The Town of Saugeen Shores received approximately \$3.2 million in funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund in 2024. The following background and analysis provide Council with an update on the current progress, next steps, and reporting of related Town initiatives completed to date.

## **Background/Analysis**

The Town of Saugeen Shores was awarded approximately \$3.2 million in funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund in the fourth quarter of 2024. This funding supports the Town's ongoing efforts to expand housing opportunities, with an anticipated outcome of approximately 450 new homes over the next decade. The funding is being implemented through eight municipal initiatives aimed at advancing long-term housing strategies, reducing barriers, and streamlining development approval processes in Saugeen Shores.

The Town's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) eight municipal initiatives include:

1. Consolidation Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance Approval Process
2. Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments to Enable Inclusionary Zoning
3. Made in Saugeen Shores, Ready-to-Build Housing Designs
4. Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan Update
5. Housing-Driven Community Planning Permitting and Housing Opportunities System
6. Non-Profit Housing Partnerships
7. Property Repurpose Utilization Program to Convert Surplus and Underutilized Land to Housing

## 8. Incentive Programming Tools to Enable the Construction of Affordable and Attainable Housing

The background, current progress and next steps for each Town initiative is provided below:

<p><b>1. Consolidation Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance Approval Process</b></p> <p><u>Background:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) updated its Environmental Compliance Approval application process, now known as the Consolidated Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance Approval (CLI ECA). As a result, the Town is now responsible for managing these approvals.</li><li>• To simplify this process, the Town in 2024 introduced an online application system for developers applying for municipal CLI ECAs related to the municipal sewage collection and stormwater management systems.</li></ul> <p><u>Current Progress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As of March 13, 2024, the Consolidation Linear Infrastructure Environmental Compliance Approval Process was fully implemented and promoted through the Town’s social media channels.</li><li>• The Town continues to receive applications through this online process.</li></ul> <p><u>Next Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town will continue to monitor and report on the number of permitted housing units created as a result of this initiative.</li></ul>
<p><b>2. Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendments to Enable Inclusionary Zoning</b></p> <p><u>Background:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• This initiative involved significant amendments to the Town’s Official Plan and Zoning By-law in 2024 to remove barriers to housing development and increase housing diversity, with a focus on more affordable housing options for residents of Saugeen Shores.</li><li>• The initiative also includes an enabling policy to explore inclusionary zoning (IZ), as well as an inclusionary zoning assessment, the requirements of which are outlined in the Planning Act prior to its implementation.</li></ul> <p><u>Current Progress:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• As of October 30, 2024, the Town completed this initiative following Council’s approval of the proposed amendments.</li></ul> <p><u>Next Steps:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Town will continue to explore ways to remove red-tape from the development process while maintaining standards that meets the needs of a growing community.</li></ul>

- As part of the agreement with CMHC, the Town will continue to monitor and report on the number of permitted housing units created as a result of this initiative.

### **3. Made in Saugeen Shores, Ready-to-Build Housing Designs**

#### Background:

- The Ready-to-Build Housing Designs Initiative offers a collection of seven pre-reviewed housing designs—four ARUs and three low-rise options—that align with Saugeen Shores' small-town character and comply with the Ontario Building Code and local zoning regulations. The housing designs provide final renderings, floor plans, and essential building specifications offering a valuable head start by streamlining the planning review process and reducing design and engineering costs.

#### Current Progress:

- As of December 15, 2025, the Made in Saugeen Shores, Ready-to-Build Housing Designs initiative was completed. The catalog and inquiry request form were made available on the Town's website and promoted through social media.
- The Town has received multiple inquiries regarding the available construction drawings and anticipate the first project to be issued this year.

#### Next Steps:

- Staff will continue to work with the communications team and the County to promote the initiative.
- The Town will continue to monitor and report on the number of permitted housing units created as a result of this initiative.

### **4. Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan Update**

#### Background:

- The Town is advancing an update to its existing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) to review and develop financial incentives to support housing, with a particular focus on affordable housing.

#### Current Progress:

- The project is approximately 70% complete, with anticipated completion by Q1 of 2026. We are presently at Milestone 2, which involves reviewing potential programs for consideration and assessing the feasibility of implementing each program.
- A Council report will be brought forward for information prior to finalization, identifying the list of recommended programs for consideration as well as a project update.

#### Next Steps:

- With Council input on the recommended programs, the consultants will begin finalizing an updated draft CIP for a public meeting.

### **5. Housing-Driven Community Planning Permitting and Housing Opportunities System**

#### Background:

- The Town is currently in the process of developing a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS), a land use planning tool designed to streamline development approvals. The

CPPS combines zoning, site plan, and minor variance processes into one single approval process, reducing approval timelines from 90 to 45 days.

- In addition to the CPPS, the Town committed to completing a Nodes and Corridor Study to further support the scope of the project, as well as a Housing Opportunities System Study to diagnose the demand and supply pressures and identify strategies where the CPPS can best deliver the right homes in the right places.

#### Current Progress:

- The project is approximately 75% complete with anticipated completion by Q3 of 2026. At this time, staff are currently advancing the following:
  - The Administration and Interpretation sections of the Draft By-law have been reviewed and consulted on by Town and County staff; and
  - An internal workshop for Town and County staff regarding the scope and intensification targets for development has been conducted and is currently being reviewed to inform by-law development. The scope currently includes the Core Commercial areas of both Downtown Port Elgin and Southampton.

#### Next Steps:

- To complete this initiative in accordance with the Town's agreement with CMHC, the next identified steps include:
  - Hosting a public information centre (PIC), anticipated in the coming month;
  - Preparation of a Draft Community Planning Permit By-law;
  - Preparation of a Draft Official Plan Amendment; and
  - Additional stakeholder engagement.

### **6. Non-Profit Housing Partnerships**

#### Background:

- This initiative provides a central focus on the creation and solidification of long-lasting relationships with non-profit housing providers. It also prioritizes the development and implementation of streamlined processes that will integrate new strategies and best practices to best maintain these partnerships while facilitating the development of attainable and affordable housing in the community.

#### Current Progress:

- This initiative is currently on track and approximately 56% complete, with anticipated completion by Q2 of 2026. We are presently at Milestone 2, which requires advancing a housing action strategy. The intent of this strategy is to focus on the key areas being policy, regulations, process, partnerships and infrastructure. It would also provide an opportunity to consolidate previous housing-related work conducted and recommendations, as well as identify timelines for implementation of recommendations.

#### Next Steps:

- A request for proposal for identified work will need to be developed to implement such a strategy. Anticipated to be developed and available for proponent selection Q1 of 2026.
- Completion of the Housing Action Strategy and other policy and framework updates will result in the completion of this project.

## **7. Property Repurpose Utilization Program to Convert Surplus and Underutilized Land to Housing**

### Background:

- This initiative will identify surplus and underutilized lands and buildings and establish new municipal policies and processes that support community developers and landowners in transforming existing properties and/or creating housing units through gentle intensification.

### Current Progress:

- This initiative is currently on track and approximately 40% complete, with anticipated completion by Q3 of 2026. Staff are presently advancing a community improvement plan framework amendment through the CIP update identified in initiative 2.
- This review will examine how a property repurpose program or related incentives can be utilized and implemented.

### Next Steps:

- Similar to the Affordable Housing on Town-Owned Lands Policy and evaluation matrix, the Town proposed a policy document to support the implementation of a property repurpose program. This will represent the next milestone in advancing the initiative.

## **8. Incentive Programming Tools to Enable the Construction of Affordable and Attainable Housing**

### Background:

- This initiative aims to enhance and streamline the process for evaluating and applying for incentive programs designed to support housing development. This initiative is intended to support the financial analysis conducted through the Affordable Housing Community Improvement Plan (CIP) Update and to ensure that incentive programs are effective in facilitating the construction of housing units in Saugeen Shores.

### Current Progress:

- This initiative is currently on track and approximately 53% complete, with anticipated completion by Q3 of 2026. This program provides financial support to initiative 2 being the Community Improvement Plan Update and will aid in its further development as components of each initiative's milestones align.

### Next Steps:

- As previously noted, the Town will bring forward a staff report in Q1 for Council consideration and awareness outlining recommended housing-related programs to be made available to residents. This will provide the Town with the necessary framework to execute incentive programming for housing development.

### Reporting

CMHC has formal reporting requirements that must be met in order for the Town to continue receiving funding. Reporting typically includes a signed attestation, project spending details, building permit data and updates on initiatives, including their level of completion and whether they are meeting milestone and project completion dates.

To date, the Town has completed the semi-annual and first annual reporting requirements. The first annual report covered the period from December 6, 2024 to December 5, 2025 and identified the following key information:

- The Town is currently on pace to surpass the housing supply growth target of 1.90%
- A total of 249 net new units were permitted in this period, including:
  - 74 single-detached homes
  - 92 missing middle housing (e.g., townhomes, duplexes, semi-detached homes, additional residential units); and
  - 83 other multi-unit housing (e.g., fourplexes, apartment units)

The second and third annual reports will be required on the anniversary of the agreement signing, being late Q4.

### **Linkages**

- Strategic Plan Alignment: Pillar 1: Meeting the Needs of a Growing Community
- Business Plan Alignment: Development Services Division Highlight

### **Financial Impacts/Source of Funding**

No costs or revenue is associated with this report.

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