




CITY OF HAMILTON
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
Planning Division

TO:	Chair and Members Planning Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	September 21, 2021
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Family Friendly Housing (PED21107) (City Wide) (Outstanding Business List Item)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Melanie Pham (905) 546-2424 Ext. 6685
SUBMITTED BY:	Steve Robichaud Director, Planning and Chief Planner Planning and Economic Development Department
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION

- (a) That Report PED21107, including the discussion paper titled *Encouraging Family Friendly Housing in Hamilton*, attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED21107, be received;
- (b) That Planning Division and Housing Services Division staff be authorized to consult with the public on the Discussion Paper “*Encouraging the Development of Family Friendly Housing in Hamilton*”, attached to Report PED21107 as Appendix “A”, and report back to Planning Committee with recommended actions for encouraging and maintaining family friendly housing in the City of Hamilton;
- (c) That Item 17E be identified as complete and removed from the Planning Committee Outstanding Business List.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Having an appropriate mix and range of housing, in terms of form, function, tenure, and affordability, is critically important to the health and well-being of residents. As cities

grow and change, it is important for municipalities to understand housing needs in order to direct change that will help to meet the full continuum of needs within the community. The Province of Ontario has directed municipalities to manage growth by prioritizing intensification to achieve compact, transit-supportive, complete communities. The question of, and subsequent policy and planning response to how intensification can address the needs of families to ensure that all of the City's communities are attractive places for families to live is an important City building goal. This Report is focused on ensuring that residential intensification in the City's urban areas is responsive to the needs of families, using the term 'family-friendly housing' to refer to housing that meets the needs of households with children.

In October 2017, Planning Committee directed staff to conduct a feasibility study along with appropriate public consultation for the development of a Family Friendly Housing Policy that would explore means of incorporating consideration for families in future development proposals for rental units, condominiums and affordable housing. This Report addresses Item 17E on the Planning Committee's Outstanding Business List.

The discussion paper attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED21107 provides a background of Hamilton's family demographics, development activity in Hamilton, and a review of family-friendly planning approaches in other communities. The discussion paper explores feasible actions which could be taken to ensure that intensifying areas in Hamilton continue to be great places for families to live. Potential actions include the use of various tools such as strategies, action plans, official plan policies, urban design guidelines, and zoning by-law regulations.

Staff are proposing that public and stakeholder consultation take place to collect input on the potential directions in the discussion paper "Encouraging the Development of Family Friendly Housing in Hamilton" attached to Report PED21107 as Appendix "A". The proposed actions support the City's vision to be the best place to raise a child and age successfully as well as the goals of the Urban Hamilton Official Plan by helping to ensure that new housing in intensification areas reflects the needs of families in addition to other household types. The results of this consultation will inform the City's Municipal Comprehensive Review process, the zoning by-law reform project and associated site plan and urban design guidelines.

Alternatives for Consideration – See Page 10

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial: The costs associated with recommended consultation (e.g. organizing consultation events and/or preparing materials, and notification measures) will be paid for through existing funds in the Community Planning Studies account.

Staffing: N/A

Legal: N/A

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

- 2017: Planning Committee directs staff to conduct a feasibility study with appropriate public consultation for the development of a Family-Friendly Housing Policy that would explore means of incorporating consideration for families in future development proposals for rental units, condominiums and affordable housing. (October 17)
- 2018 - 2019: Province undertakes public consultations for the Housing Supply Action Plan.
- 2019: Bill 108, *More Homes, More Choice Act* receives royal assent. (June 6)
- 2020: Amendment 1 to *A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* takes effect. (August 28)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

The Planning Act

The *Planning Act* (the Act) requires municipalities to have regard for matters of Provincial interest in their decisions and that “the adequate provision of a full range of housing, including affordable housing” is identified as a matter of Provincial interest. The proposed actions outlined in this Report support the Provincial interest of providing an appropriate range of housing to support all needs, including the needs of families with children.

Provincial Policy Statement (2020)

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) provides policy direction on matters of Provincial interest related to land use planning and development.

The PPS states that healthy, liveable and safe communities are sustained by a number of factors, including “*accommodating an appropriate affordable and market-based range and mix of residential types (1.1.1b)*”.

Planning authorities are directed to permit and facilitate “*all housing options required to meet the social, health, economic and well-being requirements of current and future residents, and all types of residential intensification (1.4.3b)*”.

Planning authorities must also “*identify appropriate locations and promote opportunities for transit-supportive development, accommodating a significant supply and range of housing options through intensification and redevelopment where this can be accommodated* (1.1.3.3).

The proposed actions outlined in this Report aim to facilitate housing types needed to meet the needs of residents.

Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2019, as amended in 2020)

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the Growth Plan) builds upon the principles within the PPS and contains policies for municipalities about directing growth and achieving complete communities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. One of the guiding principles listed in the Growth Plan is to “*support a range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and affordable housing, to serve all sizes, incomes, and ages of households* (1.2.1). The Plan outlines current issues of housing affordability in many urban areas, due to growth and lack of housing supply, and looks to address this challenge by providing direction to plan for a range and mix of housing options.

The plan does not directly reference the term “family friendly housing” but notes specifically that direction is being provided to facilitate “*higher density housing options that can accommodate a range of household sizes in locations that can provide access to transit and other amenities*” (2.1). In this regard, Policy 2.2.6.3 states that “to support the achievement of complete communities, municipalities will consider the use of available tools to require that multi-unit residential developments incorporate a mix of units sizes to accommodate a diverse range of household sizes and incomes” (2.2.6.3).

Policies 2.2.1.4c) and 2.2.6.1a) also speak about achieving complete communities by providing a diverse range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and affordable housing, accommodating people at all stages of life, and meeting the needs of all household sizes and incomes. Municipalities are directed to identify mechanisms, including land use planning and financial tools, to implement the housing policies of the Growth Plan (2.2.6.1b)). This includes implementation through official plan policies and zoning by-laws (2.2.6.1e)).

The potential actions outlined in this Report are consistent with the policies of the Growth Plan.

Urban Hamilton Official Plan (UHOP)

The housing policies of the UHOP are focused on providing an appropriate range of housing types, forms, tenures, densities, and affordability levels to meet the social,

health and well-being requirements of all current and future residents, but these policies do not specifically speak to the term “family-friendly housing”.

Residential intensification is a key component of the City’s growth strategy, particularly in strategic growth areas such as nodes and corridors, since it provides an opportunity to create a wider range of housing types to meet Hamilton’s housing needs. One of the criteria for evaluating intensification projects is to look at how a proposal contributes to maintaining or achieving a range of dwelling types and tenures, including “family-friendly housing”.

Rural Hamilton Official Plan (RHOP)

The overlying planning principles in the RHOP are the protection of the agricultural land base and natural resources, and protection of natural heritage resources. Residential development is restricted to existing permissions and Rural Settlement Areas. Development potential in Rural Settlement Areas is very limited. As such, the RHOP does not contain detailed housing policies about providing a range and mix of housing types.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Housing Services Division

This report has been prepared in conjunction with assistance from Housing Services Division staff. Housing Services Division provided data and reviewed the discussion paper attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED21107.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Recommendation (c) of this Report proposes a public consultation process be initiated, to confirm specific actions that the City could implement to support family friendly housing.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

The discussion paper “Encouraging the Development of Family Friendly Housing in Hamilton” is attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED21107 which:

- provides a summary of demographics and housing data related to families, both nationally and within Hamilton;
- defines the issues around family friendly housing and why supporting families in our higher density areas is important for a City’s health and vitality;

- includes a detailed review of available literature, municipal policies and other programs that are available on the subject of family friendly housing and family friendly cities; and,
- uses this to outline some potential actions that might be considered for Hamilton.

Based on the literature review, the needs of children and families have not always been adequately considered as a result of urbanization and /or intensification. Maintaining the ability for families and children to thrive in urbanized areas is a growing challenge that many cities are trying to address. The literature review identifies a wide array of approaches and best practices that have been used to support, promote and/or encourage housing for families in intensifying cities, including appropriate housing design.

Existing Work Completed

The City of Hamilton has already been advancing the objectives of providing appropriate supply of housing for families and creating high quality living environments for families and children. Specific initiatives which should be noted include:

- Hamilton's Charter of Rights of Children and Youth;
- City-wide Transportation Master Plan;
- Active Sustainable School Transportation Charter and School Travel Planning;
- New Comprehensive Design Standards for development (in progress);
- Residential Zoning project – Low Density Phase (in progress);
- Secondary Dwelling Unit Regulations;
- Flexible Zoning for child care locations in Zoning By-law 05-200; and,
- Flexible Parking Standards for larger units in Zoning By-law 05-200.

Planned Projects

There are several upcoming planning projects with linkages to family-friendly housing. These projects are described below.

1. Inclusionary Zoning

The City is assessing the creation of inclusionary zoning standards, now that specific requirements have been established by the Province. Requirements mandating different sizes of affordable units (i.e. 1 bedroom, 2 bedroom and 3 bedroom) is an option being considered as part of the inclusionary zoning review.

2. Community Benefits Charge By-law

A community benefit charge by-law to cover the cost of various “soft” services and amenities needed to support development, in accordance with new Provincial requirements under Bill 108 is currently being developed by staff. This process should ensure that an appropriate proportion of these funds is used for the provision of family-supportive amenities and services.

3. Residential Zoning Project – Medium and High Density Phases

The Residential Zoning Project will establish new zoning for all residential lands across the City and will include pre-zoning medium and high density residential lands. Approaches that could be considered for the medium and high density residential phases of this project, include:

- Assessing areas where it may be appropriate to amend existing residential zoning permissions to permit ground oriented medium density residential uses, such as block townhouses, back-to-back townhouses and stacked townhouses. These housing forms are considered family-friendly and can provide a greater range of housing options for families. Generally, these forms are more affordable than single detached dwellings.
- Requiring the same parking ratio for two and three bedroom dwelling units as one bedroom units such that larger units are not discouraged through increased parking requirements.
- Setting minimum standards for common indoor and outdoor amenity space in multiple dwellings.
- Requiring common outdoor amenity areas for ground-oriented dwelling types such as block townhouses, back-to-back townhouses and stacked townhouses, which may have limited amenity space.

4. Review of Criteria for Condominium Conversions

Council has provided previous direction to staff via a Planning Committee motion to review existing criteria for conversions of primary rental housing from rental tenure to condominium within the City’s Official Plan, and report back with recommendations on any proposed revisions. Staff are undertaking the review as directed by Council. As part of this project, staff are evaluating the potential use of a Municipal Act by-law in conjunction with Official Plan policies to regulate demolition and conversion of rental housing. This tool is identified in the discussion paper attached as Appendix “A” to Report PED21107 in examples from Mississauga and Toronto as a useful approach to protecting and replacing existing

family-sized rental housing stock. This type of by-law will be considered by staff as part of the Council directed review on strengthening condominium conversion criteria.

Other Approaches

Eleven discrete actions are listed in the discussion paper which could be considered as part of a strategy of addressing housing need for families in Hamilton.

In addition to these items additional options are discussed that are broader in scope than the specific focus on housing, but which could play a meaningful role in advancing family-friendly housing goals in addition to other child-friendly goals, such as creating a city-wide Child Friendly Hamilton strategy or action plan, similar to the 2014 Age Friendly Hamilton Plan. Many of the objectives of the Age-Friendly Hamilton Plan have parallels to the needs of children and parents. Areas of alignment include a need for appropriate housing, housing affordability, safe networks for walking and cycling, accessibility, better access to information and program supports, and access to recreation, leisure and cultural activities. Other broader initiatives identified include innovative children's programming ideas to create more locations and opportunities in the City for children's play in denser urban areas.

The eleven housing-focused approaches identified as potential approaches for Hamilton are listed below. Additional details about each item are included in the discussion paper attached as Appendix "A" to Report PED21107.

1. Add policy language to the Official Plan about meeting the housing needs of families with children and larger households. This may include specific guidance for the review of *Planning Act* applications to ensure that housing needs for families are addressed;
2. Add policy language to the Official Plan promoting the use of flexible unit layouts that can be adapted over time to meet the changing needs of residents;
3. Add specific targets for family sized units in new high density developments to the Official Plan to promote an adequate supply of housing, particularly in intensification areas. This would require an assessment study to be completed to determine where these targets should be applied;
4. Implement Zoning requirements for new high density developments above a threshold number of units to provide a minimum number of 3 bedroom units as a percentage of the total number of units. This action would implement any targets applied in action 3;

5. Define a “family-oriented dwelling unit” or “unit suitable for larger household sizes” in the Zoning By-law and link to zoning requirements for larger units;
6. Require communal outdoor play areas or public-private open spaces with play areas in the Zoning By-law, for housing types where private yards are not provided or are minimal;
7. For multiple dwellings, require indoor communal amenity space in addition to outdoor space in the Zoning By-law;
8. Create a supplementary design guidelines document for outdoor amenity areas;
9. Create supplementary family friendly design guidelines for the interior design of high-rise buildings and units;
10. Conduct neighbourhood assessments to identify the degree of and potential for child-friendliness, and develop focused action plans or strategies for improvements. Implement initially as a pilot project for a single neighbourhood; and,
11. Require a Housing Options report to be submitted as part of a complete application under the *Planning Act*, to collect information about proposed housing unit types, sizes, number of bedrooms and anticipated price ranges.

Recommended Next Steps

Staff recommend that an initial consultation take place to obtain feedback on the discussion paper and the eleven potential actions that have been identified. The consultation should seek feedback on which measures are supported by residents and stakeholders, which are considered priorities, and whether there are any other measures that residents and stakeholders think should be added. This input will be used by staff to make a recommendation on which actions should be considered further for implementation.

Recommendation (c) of Report PED21107 directs staff to complete this initial consultation and report back to Planning Committee. Based on the actions which are recommended to be implemented, the report back to Planning Committee will include further details about additional consultations which are needed and further work that would need to be completed to finalize the details of any actions.

If actions 3 and 4 on Page 8 of Report PED21107 are recommended to be considered further, a needs assessment and market feasibility report is recommended as a necessary step prior to any decision to implement mandatory requirements for larger three-bedroom units in new multi-unit developments.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. The Committee may direct that consultation only occur for specific approaches and may exclude other approaches from consideration. This would narrow the scope of the consultation but may limit the value of feedback.
2. The Committee may receive the Report but direct that public consultation for the suggested options be put on hold until such time as in-person consultations can resume. Including in-person consultation as part of a consultation approach is beneficial for gaining additional input. However, it could delay the implementation of any actions as it is not known when the ability to conduct in-person consultations may resume.
3. Instead of completing a preliminary consultation, the Committee may direct staff to initiate development of the amendments and guidelines which would be required to implement the actions, and focus consultation on refining the details of the draft amendments and documents. Staff do not recommend this alternative as obtaining feedback in the early phases of a project generally leads to better input and improved public consultation and project outcomes.
4. The Committee may receive the Report but take no further action. This option is not recommended because the discussion paper concludes that the provision of family friendly housing is an important issue, and also confirms that there are a number of actions that can be taken to appropriately address the housing needs of families with children, particularly in higher density areas of the City.

ALIGNMENT TO THE 2016 – 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

Community Engagement and Participation

Hamilton has an open, transparent and accessible approach to City government that engages with and empowers all citizens to be involved in their community.

Healthy and Safe Communities

Hamilton is a safe and supportive city where people are active, healthy, and have a high quality of life.

Built Environment and Infrastructure

Hamilton is supported by state of the art infrastructure, transportation options, buildings and public spaces that create a dynamic City.

Our People and Performance

Hamiltonians have a high level of trust and confidence in their City government.

OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report PED21107 – Encouraging Family Friendly Housing in Hamilton
– Options Discussion Paper