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Month Day, 2023

Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

70 York Street
Suite 1100,
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Via Email Only

Re: Enhancements to City of Cambridge Housing Accelerator Fund Application

The City of Cambridge was pleased to submit a Housing Accelerator Fund Application to CMHC in August 2023, which contained an Action Plan of eight (8) Initiatives. Minor revisions and additional information were submitted in September 2023, in response to questions of clarification from CMHC. Staff brought a recommendation report to Council in October 2023, and as a result Council endorsed the HAF Action Plan as submitted to CMHC and directed staff to enter into a future Contribution Agreement if selected to participate in the HAF program.

In response to a request in early December 2023 from CMHC to consider enhancements to the City's current HAF Application. CMHC provided ten (10) best practices from successful municipalities to guide these enhancements.

Although the City believes our current HAF Application is in significant alignment with these best practices, the following application enhancements are submitted for CMHC consideration:

1. **Further Relax Zoning Regulations** (Aligns with best practices #1, 6 and 7):
 - a. Advance a statutory process to remove density regulations and replace with form based zoning.

2. **Enhance Affordable Housing Development Opportunities** (Aligns with best practices #2, 4, 8, and 10):
 - a. Include the following two (2) additional city owned properties for potential development of Affordable Housing to the List Proposed for Rezoning and RFP Process:
 - i. 0 Bishop Street North (southeast of intersection of Conestoga Boulevard and Bishop Street North – east of Cambridge Centre Mall)
 - ii. 0 Grand Ridge Drive (southwest of the intersection of Cedar Street and Grand Bridge Street)
 - b. Update the City's Policy on city owned lands including developing a defined strategy for accelerating disposal of surplus city owned lands and public-private partnerships for affordable housing projects
 - c. Update the existing Affordable Housing CIP, which offers waiver or return of application fees, tax increment grants & other grants across the entire City.
 - d. Prepare an Affordable Housing Agreement template to be entered into by the City, Region and developer to secure the long term provision of an affordable housing development with a standardized approach. This tool will allow for the rapid issuance of approvals and financial incentives for these types of housing developments.
 - e. Update the existing collection and distribution procedures for the Affordable Housing Reserve Fund (AHRF). This will increase the amount collected in the fund, clarify how and when the funds are distributed/accessed, and clarify how the Fund will be integrated with other City processes and programs.
3. **Enhance Streamlining of Approvals** (Aligns with best practices #3 and 4):
 - a. Bring Consent Applications to Council when combined with an Official Plan Amendment and/or Zoning By-law Amendment to avoid separate consideration by Committee of Adjustment and Council.
 - b. Move to all planning applications submitted through the Online Application Portal – currently Committee of Adjustment of Applications, Lifting of Holding and Part Lot Control Exemptions, and Sign Variance and Fence Variance Applications are not able to be submitted through the Portal.
4. **Introduce Stagnant Lands Strategy** (Aligns with best practice #4):
 - a. The strategy will involve: a) outreach to landowners of approved developments which have seen no activity in 2 years and b) work to resolve roadblocks and develop a customized path forward to permit issuance.

5. **Enhance Support for Growth of Missing Middle Housing** (Aligns with best practice #9):
- a. Publish an updated Accessory Residential Unit Handout which includes a zoning checklist, a building design requirements checklist and a complete permit application checklist. It will be available on the City's website and will be distributed in other ways to customers.
 - b. Review and establish pre-approved building permit plans for small infill housing.

Cambridge Council endorsed the enhancements contained in this letter through a report brought forward to Council on December 19, 2023. The Minutes from this Council meeting have been appended for reference.

Thank you for your consideration. The City of Cambridge is eager to participate in the Housing Accelerator Fund Program, in partnership with CMHC.

Kind Regards,

Jan Liggett
Mayor for the City of Cambridge