



Whitchurch-Stouffville Housing Strategy

Phase II: Housing Strategy – Final

April 26, 2022 (updated May 17, 2022)



OFFICIAL
PLAN
R E V I E W

Contents

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS & RECOMMENDATIONS	3
3	HOUSING STRATEGY	6
4	ACTION PLAN	18
	APPENDIX A: MODEL OFFICIAL PLAN POLICIES.....	21

1 Introduction

1.1 Background & Project Process

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville is a lower-tier municipality in York Region with a population of approximately 49,864¹ people located on the eastern border of York Region approximately 50 kilometres north of Toronto. The Town has recently experienced rapid growth as it becomes increasingly urbanized. This growth is anticipated to continue to the year 2051, with a projected population of 88,155 residents² (+77%).

To ensure an appropriate amount and mix of housing to accommodate population growth, the Town undertook a Housing Strategy (“Strategy”). The Strategy is being conducted concurrently with the Town’s Official Plan Review (“OPR”) to bring its Official Plan (“OP”) into conformity with Provincial Plans and policies as well as the new York Region Official Plan. The primary objective of the Strategy is to support the Town’s OPR and inform policy development to support the provision of a range and mix of housing options to meet the Town’s housing needs to 2051.

The work program for the Housing Strategy is divided into two phases:

- **Phase I: Housing Background Report** analysing housing needs and supply in the Town; and,
- **Phase II: Housing Strategy** to address challenges and close gaps between housing needs and supply.

The Phase I Report was endorsed by Council in February 2022. This Housing Strategy Report represents the completion of Phase II.

1.1.1 Housing Policy Background & Context

Housing in Whitchurch-Stouffville is governed by a variety of local, regional, and provincial policies. As a lower-tier municipality, Whitchurch-Stouffville does not administer housing programs directly, however it can create policies to support housing programs at upper levels of government. Importantly, the Town directs the use of land through the Official Plan and Zoning By-law as well as land use planning approvals, taxation, and collection of development fees, all of which impact the cost of housing. The Town can also provide financial or regulatory incentives to developers to build affordable housing.

The Housing Strategy is designed to operate in this policy and regulatory context and will focus on municipal tools available to address housing affordability and the provision of a range of

¹ Statistics Canada 2021 Census (unadjusted)

² Draft York Region Official Plan (December 2021)

housing options within the Town. It also aligns with Regional housing goals as it is to inform the Town's new Official Plan which must be in conformity with the Region's Official Plan.

1.2 A Note on Data

Regional population and affordability targets have been revised between the completion of the Phase I: Housing Background report and the Phase II: Housing Strategy, based on more recent census data. As a result, there may be discrepancy between numbers and figures cited in the Phase I: Background Report and this document. The numbers in this Report represent the most up-to-date data and supersede data in the Phase I Report where discrepancies exist.

1.2.1 Population Projections

This Report uses the most recent population projections to 2051 provided by York Region in the Draft York Region Official Plan ("ROP") released for comment on December 1, 2021. The current projected population of 88,155 people has been revised from earlier projections (92,900 people) as a result of changes to the proposed settlement expansion areas. It should be noted that the Region's draft population allocation represents a minimum population target, and the draft population forecasts are subject to change, pending the approval of the York Region Official Plan. It is anticipated that the draft population forecasts identified in the Draft ROP will be revised prior to approval of the Region's new Official Plan.

The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville completed its own preliminary population projections that anticipate a 2051 population of 101,400 based on current and anticipated growth and intensification pressures. The Town will continue to work with Regional staff throughout the Region's Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) to finalize the 2051 growth forecasts and allocations to the Town.

1.3 Report Organization

The remainder of the Report is organized as follows:

- **Section 2** summarizes the key findings and recommendations from the Housing Background Report that informed the Housing Strategy;
- **Section 3** presents the vision, goals, and recommendations of the Housing Strategy;
- **Section 4** contains the Action Plan, summarizing action items, how they link to the Housing Strategy goals, scope of work and resources required, and timeframe for implementation.

2 Summary of Key Findings & Recommendations

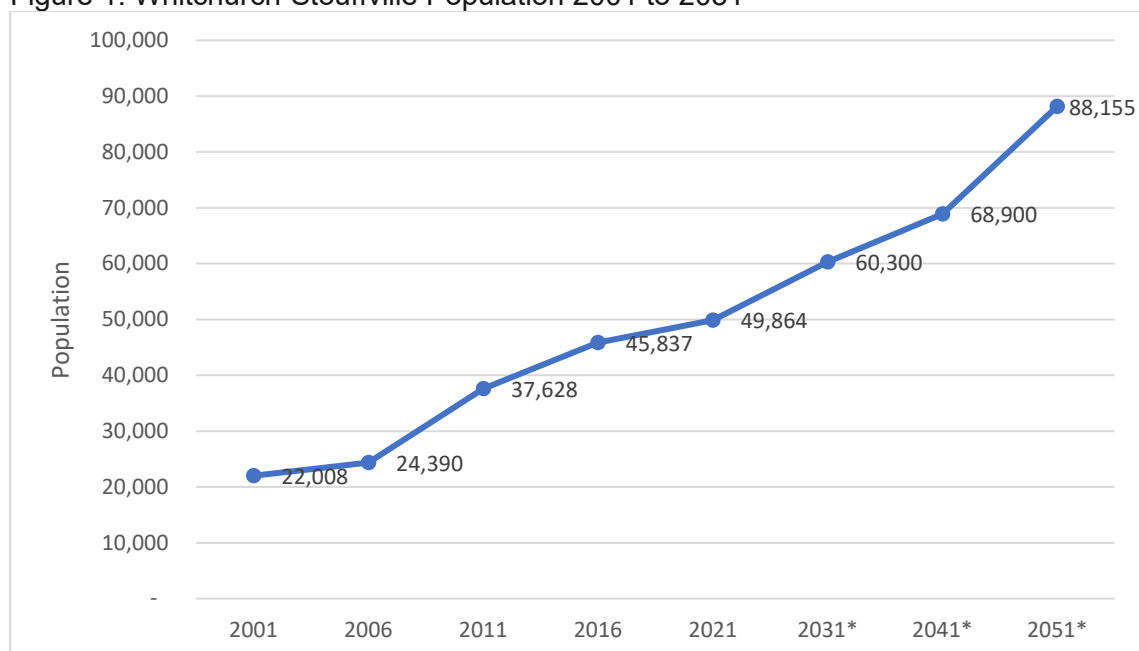
2.1 Phase I Report Key Findings

The following findings from the Phase I: Background Report shaped the preliminary goals and recommendations contained in this Strategy.

1. Significant population and household growth projected

The population of Whitchurch-Stouffville is projected to grow to approximately 88,155 residents by 2051, an increase of 38,775 above the current population of approximately 49,380 residents. Approximately 14,480 housing units are projected to be required to accommodate this population growth, or an average of approximately 483 new housing units per year.

Figure 1: Whitchurch-Stouffville Population 2001 to 2051



*Note: Projected population

Source: Statistics Canada Catalogue no. 98-316-X2021001, no. 98-316-X2016001, no. 98-316-XWE, no. 92-591-XWE; York Region Draft Regional Official Plan (December 1, 2021)

2. Affordability challenges

Housing is becoming increasingly unaffordable in Whitchurch-Stouffville. The average new house price has doubled in the past 10 years from \$484,666 in 2011 to \$996,421 in

2021³. Average rents have also increased from \$945 in 2011 to \$1,368 in 2021⁴ and the rental vacancy rate has been below 3% since 2016. Renter households face greater affordability challenges than ownership households with 46% spending more than 30% of their income on housing and 32% being in core housing need⁵. For comparison, 24% of ownership households are spending more than 30% of their income on housing and 8% are in core housing need.

3. Lack of housing diversity

Just over three quarters of housing stock in Whitchurch-Stouffville is single-detached houses. There are limited options for residents who want to live in other types of housing. Single-detached houses are typically more expensive than other forms of higher-density housing (semi-detached, townhouses, condominiums, apartments) and are the most land intensive. While housing diversity is increasing in the Town based on new construction starts, most of the new and planned stock is targeted at the ownership market. As mentioned in finding #2 above, the average new house price in 2021 was \$996,421. Almost no purpose-built rental stock has been built in the past five years and there remains little existing purpose-built rental stock in the community.

4. Density and protecting green space

Whitchurch-Stouffville residents value the surrounding green space and desire to see these areas conserved, while limiting urban expansion. Intensification through infill and higher density housing is required to help reduce this, however there are concerns about ensuring that the density is appropriate and does not negatively affect the existing character of the community. Infill and higher density housing will also be required to meet population targets and intensification requirements set by the Region.

5. Community opposition

Community opposition and a lack of understanding about housing affordability challenges and the perceived resistance to certain types of new development (namely higher density built forms) is a significant barrier to addressing affordability. There is a perception among some residents that affordable or higher density housing (condos, apartments, townhouses) will bring “problem” residents into the community as well as perceived compatibility issues between higher-density built forms and existing lower density housing. Additionally, some residents may be unaware of the housing challenges facing their community and do not realize that there is already a need for affordable

³ CMHC Market Absorption Survey

⁴ Rents reflect all unit sizes and the Aurora-Newmarket-Whitchurch-Stouffville subregion. Rental data specific to Whitchurch-Stouffville was suppressed by CMHC.

⁵ Core housing need is defined as living in housing that is considered unsuitable, inadequate, or unaffordable AND being unable to find suitable and adequate housing that is affordable (costing less than 30% of household income) in the local housing market

housing in a range of built form typologies within the community. Increased communication and awareness for the community was seen as important to gain acceptance for higher density growth and development moving forward.

2.2 Community Engagement

The Housing Strategy was informed by the following community engagement activities:

- **Phase I: Housing Background**
 - **Community Survey**

An online community survey was posted to the Town's Housing Strategy project webpage in December 2021, to gather resident perspectives and information on current housing challenges and opportunities in Whitchurch-Stouffville. The survey consisted of multiple choice and short answer questions (25 questions total). A total of 75 residents completed the survey.
 - **Housing Summit**

The Town hosted a Housing Summit on December 9, 2021 to formally launch the Housing Strategy. The Summit featured presentations and a panel discussion from Regional staff, the consultant team, and a keynote speaker highlighting important research findings and innovative housing strategies and solutions. There were approximately 160 attendees and more than 100 questions and comments were received during the Summit.
 - **Stakeholder Interviews**

Ten (10) semi-structured interviews with local and regional stakeholders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors were conducted to gain local and regional perspectives on housing in Whitchurch-Stouffville, which informed the current housing challenges and opportunities.
- **Phase II: Housing Strategy**
 - **Open House**

The Town hosted an Open House on March 8, 2022, to discuss the preliminary Housing Strategy and solicit feedback from residents on the vision, goals, and recommendations. Approximately 40 people attended.
- **Phases I and II**
 - **Technical Advisory Committee**

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) made up of members of the private, public, and non-profit housing sectors and municipal staff provided input on all elements of the Phase I and II Reports.

3 Housing Strategy

3.1 Vision & Goals

The vision statement and goals are intended to guide municipal decision making with respect to accommodating future housing options within the Town.

3.1.1 Vision

The vision statement for the Housing Strategy was informed by the findings in Phase I as well as provincial, regional, and local housing policies. The vision statement is intended to be concise and clear, as well as aspirational and achievable. The vision statement is:

Housing that is dignified and affordable is available for all residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville no matter their age, family composition, or income.

3.1.2 Goals

The following four goals have been established for the Housing Strategy based on findings from the Phase I: Background Report:

1. **Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for current and future residents**
2. **Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth**
3. **Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply**
4. **Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach**

3.2 Housing Strategy Recommendations

The Housing Strategy recommendations are organized into four (4) themes:

1. **Policy & Zoning**
2. **Incentives (Financial & Non-Financial)**
3. **Advocacy, Awareness & Outreach**
4. **Monitoring**

A rationale/description, timeline, and required resources (e.g., partners, costs) are included for each recommendation, as well as the Housing Strategy goal the recommendation supports. In some cases, a rationale, timeline, scope of work, and/or the required resources are provided for a group of recommendations.

Model Official Plan policies supporting these recommendations are included in Appendix A. These policies are intended to be implemented through the Town's new Official Plan, and subsequently, through the Town's update to the Comprehensive Zoning By-law. Other recommendations will need to be carried out by staff and implemented in other ways outside of the Official Plan.

3.2.1 Policy & Zoning Recommendations

Policy and zoning are important to examine because they can either limit or support housing affordability by determining where and what can and cannot be built in the Town.

Recommendation 1: Include definition of “affordable” in the Official Plan

Recommendation 2: Identify and establish affordable housing targets and purpose-built rental housing targets in the Official Plan

Rationale/Description: Defining “affordability” and identifying affordable housing targets in the Official Plan provides clarity and metrics in support of affordable housing goals. The Town will use the Region’s definition of “affordable” for consistency/conformity and to help align with available funding opportunities. The Region defines affordable as:

- For **ownership housing**, housing with a purchase price that results in annual accommodation costs not exceeding 30% of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households.
- For **rental housing**, housing that rents at 125% or less of average market rent (AMR) in the regional market area, by bedroom type.

For the purposes of this definition, “low- and moderate-income households” means the lesser of:

- a. households with incomes in the lowest 60% of the income distribution for the regional market area or,
- b. households with incomes in the lowest 60% of the income distribution for the local market area.

Low- and moderate-income households are defined as households with incomes in the lowest 60% of the income distribution for the regional or local market area, whichever is lesser. In 2020, the lowest 60% of the income distribution is households with annual earnings of \$125,957 or less. This threshold is updated by the Region annually. Based on this threshold, an affordable ownership price for low- and moderate-income households is \$503,145 or less⁶. The maximum

⁶ 2020 Assumptions: 25-year mortgage, 4.95% annual interest rate, 0.752% annual property tax, 5% down payment, 4% mortgage insurance

2020 rental thresholds range from \$1,244 for a bachelor to \$2,179 for a three-bedroom apartment⁷.

Housing targets must align with targets set out in the Regional Official Plan. The Region is targeting 14,476 new housing units in Whitchurch-Stouffville to 2051 or 483 new units per year. The Region is targeting 25% of new units to be affordable outside of Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs) and 35% of new units to be affordable within MTSAs. Whitchurch-Stouffville has two MTSAs: the Stouffville GO station and the Old Elm GO station (formerly Lincolnville GO station). The Region is also targeting 1,750 purpose-built rental units to be constructed in Whitchurch-Stouffville to 2051. There is no affordability criteria tied to this target to encourage the construction of general purpose-built rental.

York Region estimates that within the Town, approximately 4,200 units will be built within MTSAs and 10,300 will be built outside of MTSAs to 2051, resulting in a total of 4,038 affordable units over the forecast period, or 135 affordable units per year on average across all housing typologies. For the 1,750 purpose-built rental target, a sub-target of 50% of these units is recommended as affordable rental units to ensure the development of both affordable and market purpose-built rental units in the community.

Table 1: Summary of Housing Targets

Housing Target	Total Number of Units Targeted to 2051	Average Annual Number of Units to 2051
New housing units (market and affordable)	14,476 units	483 units
New affordable housing units (all housing typologies)	4,038 units	135 units
New purpose-built rental units	1,750 units	58 units
New affordable purpose-built rental units	875 units	29 units

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Required Resources: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

⁷ CMHC Rental Market Survey (Table 1.1.2) (2022)

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Recommendation 3: Include support for higher density housing, infill development, and non-traditional housing types in the Official Plan

Rationale/Description: Higher density housing, infill housing, and non-traditional housing types will promote greater housing options for Whitchurch-Stouffville residents. The Official Plan can support these outcomes by allowing a broader range of permitted dwelling types in land use designations/zones and more flexible land use policies that expand residential dwelling type permissions. A more permissive Official Plan that supports these housing options – for example, allowing a broader range of permitted dwelling types and more flexible land use policies that expand residential permissions – will allow more developments to proceed as of right without requiring an Official Plan Amendment, which can add additional time and cost to a development. Opportunities for a broader range of housing types and densities must also be considerate of the neighbourhood context and character to ensure compatibility and appropriate built form transitions. Gentle intensification through additional residential units (secondary suites) within established neighbourhoods may help address these issues. Changes to the zoning by-law would also be required to implement these Official Plan policies.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Required Resources: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Recommendation 4: Develop a policy to review the suitability of surplus municipal land or buildings for affordable housing before selling/leasing or redevelopment

Rationale/Description: Low or no-cost land can increase financial viability of affordable housing developments. It was noted there is limited surplus municipal land available in the Town. Existing municipal buildings should also be considered for housing where redevelopment may be proposed, for example, by including municipal services on the ground floor and providing levels of affordable housing units on upper floors.

This recommendation aligns with draft ROP policy 2.3.2.5: To promote housing options, including those identified in policy 2.3.2.1 through the use of land use planning, financial and

other tools, including: a. prioritizing the use of public lands for affordable housing, and emergency and transitional housing, including areas well serviced by transit.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply

Scope of Work: Research and analysis to identify surplus land/buildings; policy development

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities

Timeline: Medium term (3 to 5 years)

Recommendation 5: Explore the potential and include enabling policies in the Official Plan for inclusionary zoning (IZ) in Provincially-approved areas

Rationale/Description: An inclusionary zoning by-law could allow the Town to require the creation of affordable units in otherwise market-rate developments. Current provincial legislation allows IZ to be implemented within regionally-defined Protected Major Transit Station Areas (PMTSA) where an assessment report and independent peer review demonstrate market viability of IZ. IZ is currently the only tool available under the Planning Act that allows the Town to require the development of affordable housing. There are two PMTSAs in Whitchurch-Stouffville: the Stouffville GO Station and Old Elm GO Station.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply

Scope of Work: Include policies to enable Inclusionary Zoning in the Town's Official Plan through OPR; Inclusionary Zoning Assessment Report per O. Reg 232/18

Required Resources: Part of Town staff requirements; Consultant required to complete Assessment Report and IZ by-law

Timeline: Medium term (3 to 5 years)

Recommendation 6: Introduce demolition/conversion control and rental replacement policies and framework

Rationale/Description: There is currently a limited amount of purpose-built rental stock in the Town and the potential exists for existing rental housing stock to erode further through lot consolidation and redevelopment within intensification areas and other identified growth areas. Demolition and conversion control and rental replacement policies and by-laws will assist in protecting existing purpose-built rental units.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years)

Recommendation 7: Expand Additional Residential Unit (secondary suites/accessory apartments) permissions

Rationale/Description: Additional Residential Units (ARUs; referred to as secondary suites/accessory apartments in the Whitchurch-Stouffville Zoning Bylaw) are a form of gentle intensification that can increase rental supply, are more affordable than renting entire detached houses, can make ownership more affordable by providing an income stream for owners, support multi-generational households, increase density without substantial change to neighbourhood appearance, and may boost assessment-based tax revenues without an increase to municipal servicing costs. The Planning Act allows for up to two (2) ARUs for singles, semis, and townhouses: one additional unit in the main dwelling and a second additional unit in an accessory/ancillary building elsewhere on the property. Currently, ARUs in Whitchurch-Stouffville are only permitted as wholly contained units within single-detached dwellings and require a minimum of three parking spaces on the property. Expanding permissions for secondary suites to other building typologies (semi-detached houses, townhouses) and in buildings or structures ancillary to the main structure, as well as loosening parking requirements, can help to increase supply of these units.

Specific regulations guiding the creation of such additional residential units will be set out in the Zoning By-law.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years)

Recommendation 8: Ensure the new Official Plan is not overly restrictive in its policies and not unintentionally discriminatory to accommodating various housing options

Recommendation 9: Following the completion of the new Official Plan, as part of a comprehensive Zoning By-law review and/or update, ensure that Zoning By-law regulations are not overly restrictive or unintentionally discriminatory

Rationale/Description: Restrictive policies in an Official Plan and/or zoning by-law can limit the type and amount of housing that is permitted with negative outcomes for housing options and affordability. Specific areas to investigate include:

- Removing barriers to higher-density housing (density limits, minimum lot sizes, lot area coverage, setbacks, etc.)
- Removing barriers to non-traditional housing types (multi-generational housing, micro suites, live-work units, additional residential units)
- Expanding permissions for additional residential units (secondary suites, garden suites, laneway houses)
- Expanding as-of-right residential permissions in low-density residential areas
- Expanding as-of-right residential permissions in areas not currently zoned for residential uses (i.e., commercial or institutional areas), subject to available infrastructure capacity and good planning principles
- Exploring opportunities to reduce parking requirements for residential developments (e.g., near transit, affordable developments)
- Removing separation distance requirements for group homes

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply

Scope of Work:

- Official Plan: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise
- Zoning By-law: Research and analysis following approval of Official Plan

Required Resources:

- Official Plan: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise
- Zoning By-law: Part of Town staff responsibilities; Consultant may be required

Timeline:

- Official Plan: Short term (1 to 3 years)
- Zoning By-law: Medium term (3 to 5 years)

Recommendation 10: Provide direction in the Official Plan to implement the Housing Strategy

Rationale/Description: Ensure the Official Plan supports the implementation of the Housing Strategy.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for current and future residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply
- Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Required Resources: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise

3.2.2 Incentives (Financial & Non-Financial) Recommendations

Housing is becoming increasingly expensive to build. Rising land, materials, and labour costs make it difficult to provide housing that is both affordable and financially viable from a development perspective. Incentives can increase project viability resulting in more housing options that are affordable. Incentives can also target specific housing types/forms that are needed in the Town and increase the chances of certain housing targets being met.

Recommendation 11: Explore viability of financial and non-financial incentives for affordable housing and purpose-built rental developments

Rationale/Description: Incentives can reduce capital and/or operating costs and make affordable housing and purpose-built rental developments more viable. Possible incentives may include:

- Financial
 - Development charges grants or deferrals
 - Planning application fees grants or waivers
 - Parkland dedication fees grants or waivers
 - Property tax reduction or deferrals
- Non-Financial
 - Reduced parking requirements

Most financial incentives can only be offered through one of two implementation vehicles: a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) or a municipal capital facilities by-law. CIPs permit a municipality to provide financial incentives in support of development or redevelopment objectives in a specific geographic area. In this case, the objective would be the creation of affordable and/or purpose-built rentals. The Town may wish to include specific incentives for affordable housing and/or purpose-built rental developments in its existing Town-wide CIP or establish a separate Affordable Housing/Purpose-Built Rental CIP. Municipal capital facilities by-laws are passed for specific developments on a case-by-case basis. Provincial legislation requires a municipal housing facility by-law be passed before a housing development can be deemed a municipal capital facility. The municipal housing facility by-law must include a definition of affordable housing and public eligibility requirements for the housing units to be provided as part of the municipal capital facility by-law. Incentives related to development charge deferrals do not require an implementation vehicle.

In some cases, municipal incentives are a prerequisite to access incentive programs from upper levels of government. For example, York Region's Purpose-Built Rental and Affordable Purpose-Built Rental Development Charges Deferral programs require lower-tier municipalities to provide similar or better incentives to proponents to access these incentives.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities; Consultant may be required

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years)

3.2.3 Advocacy, Awareness & Outreach Recommendations

Housing challenges are multi-faceted and solutions require the involvement and support of many different groups and actors.

Recommendation 12: Encourage discussion/negotiation with private developers to achieve affordable housing targets as part of the planning approvals process

Rationale/Description: Information regarding the Town's affordable housing goals and targets should be included on development application forms with the request that proponents demonstrate how their development will help to achieve these goals or targets. A proposal would not be rejected if it does not contribute to affordability goals/targets, but explicitly referencing affordability at the outset of the development process ensures it is a part of the discussion and is a strong signal of the Town's commitment to the provision of affordable housing.

Goals Supported:

- Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach

Scope of Work: Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities

Timeline: Short term (1 to 3 years) and ongoing

Recommendation 13: Facilitate collaboration and partnerships between private, public, and non-profit groups to create affordable housing

Rationale/Description: Private, public, and non-profit/community groups have different assets and expertise that can contribute to the creation of additional housing in the Town. This may include property appropriate for housing, capital funding for construction, construction experience, operational experience, and/or an understanding of the needs of potential occupants. Unfortunately, these groups are often siloed. Connecting these disparate groups may reveal housing opportunities "hiding in plain sight".

Goals Supported:

- Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach

Scope of Work: Research and facilitation

Required Resources: Dedicated staff resources

Timeline: Short-term (1 to 3 years) and ongoing

Recommendation 14: Advocate for additional funding for housing from the Federal and Provincial governments

Rationale/Description: As a lower-tier municipality, Whitchurch-Stouffville does not build housing directly and is dependent on upper levels of government. Housing York Inc., York Region's housing corporation, is responsible for developing and operating affordable housing in the Town using federal, provincial, and regional funding. Greater funding for housing, offered either through the Region or directly to affordable housing proponents would make affordable housing developments more financially viable as well as potentially offer deeper levels of affordability. Additional funding can also better leverage municipal financial incentives offered.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents

Scope of Work: Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities; commitment from Council

Timeline: Short-term (1 to 3 years) and ongoing

3.2.4 Monitoring Recommendations

Monitoring housing outcomes is necessary to understand if housing targets are being met and to update policies accordingly with changing market dynamics and local housing context.

***Recommendation 15:* Develop a housing indicators monitoring and reporting system**

Rationale/Description: Monitoring and reporting on key housing indicators is an important measure of progress towards achieving housing goals and targets. Specific indicators to track should include:

- The total number of residential units by type (single-detached, townhouse, apartment, etc.) and tenure (rental, owner)
- The number of **new** residential units completed by type and tenure
- The number of residential units **approved** by type and tenure
- The number of **affordable** residential units approved by type and tenure
- A summary of incentives used for the creation of **new** units, including program and dollar amount where applicable
- Average and median prices/rents for all housing stock
- Average and median ownership prices for **new** construction

Indicators will be tracked using Town development information, Toronto Region Real Estate Board (TRREB) sales data, and Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) and CMHC rental data.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply
- Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach

Scope of Work: Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities

Timeline: Report on annual basis – one year after approval of the new Official Plan and Housing Strategy and annually thereafter

Recommendation 16: Review the Housing Strategy every five to ten years

Rationale/Description: It is important to regularly update the Housing Strategy to ensure it responds to and reflects changing and emerging housing needs over time. It is recommended the Strategy be updated every five to ten years to align with the release of census data, Regional Housing & Homelessness Plan review requirements, and municipal Official Plan review requirements.

Goals Supported:

- Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
- Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
- Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply
- Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach

Scope of Work: Research and analysis

Required Resources: Part of Town staff responsibilities; Consultant may be required

Timeline: Long term (5+ years) and ongoing

4 Action Plan

The Action Plan presents a summary of all fifteen (15) recommendations in the Housing Strategy for ease of reference.

<i>Theme</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>	<i>Goal(s) Supported</i>	<i>Scope of Work</i>	<i>Required Resources</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>
Policy & Zoning	1. Include definition of “affordable” in the Official Plan	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review
	2. Identify and establish affordable housing targets and purpose built rental housing targets in the Official Plan	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review
	3. Include support for higher-density housing, infill development, and non-traditional housing types in the Official Plan	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review
	4. Develop a policy to review the suitability of surplus municipal land or buildings for affordable housing before selling/leasing or redevelopment	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Research and analysis to identify surplus land/buildings; policy development	• Part of Town staff responsibilities	Medium term (3 to 5 years)
	5. Explore the potential and include enabling policies in the Official Plan for inclusionary zoning (IZ) in Provincially-approved areas	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Include policies to enable Inclusionary Zoning in the Town’s Official Plan through OPR; Inclusionary Zoning Assessment Report per O. Reg 232/18	• Part of Town staff requirements; Consultant required to complete Assessment Report and IZ by-law	Medium term (3 to 5 years)
	6. Introduce a demolition/conversion control and rental replacement framework	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities	Short term (1 to 3 years)
	7. Expand Additional Residential Unit (secondary suites/accessory apartments) permissions	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities	Short term (1 to 3 years)

Theme	Recommendation	Goal(s) Supported	Scope of Work	Required Resources	Timeframe
	8. Ensure the new Official Plan is not overly restrictive in its policies and not unintentionally discriminatory to accommodating various housing options	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	Short term (1 to 3 years)
	9. Following the completion of the new Official Plan, as part of a comprehensive Zoning By-law review and/or update, ensure that Zoning By-law regulations are not overly restrictive or unintentionally discriminatory	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Research and analysis following approval of Official Plan	• Part of Town staff responsibilities; Consultant may be required	Medium term (3 to 5 years)
	10. Provide direction in the Official Plan to implement the Housing Strategy	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply • Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise	Short term (1 to 3 years) as part of Official Plan Review
Incentives (Financial & Non-Financial)	11. Explore viability of financial and non-financial incentives for affordable housing and purpose-built rental developments	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities; Consultant may be required	Short term (1 to 3 years)
Advocacy, Awareness & Outreach	12. Encourage discussion/negotiation with private developers to achieve affordable housing targets as part of the planning approvals process	• Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach	• Part of Official Plan Review/Regional Conformity Exercise; Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities	Short term (1 to 3 years) and ongoing
	13. Facilitate collaboration and partnerships between private, public, and non-profit groups to create housing	• Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach	• Research and facilitation	• Dedicated staff resources	Short-term (1 to 3 years) and ongoing

Theme	Recommendation	Goal(s) Supported	Scope of Work	Required Resources	Timeframe
	14. Advocate for additional funding for housing from the Federal and Provincial governments	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents	• Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities; commitment from Council	Short-term (1 to 3 years) and ongoing
Monitoring	15. Develop a housing indicators monitoring and reporting system	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply • Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach	• Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities	Report on annual basis – one year after approval of the Housing Strategy and annually thereafter
	16. Review the Housing Strategy every five to ten years	• Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents • Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth • Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply • Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through awareness and outreach	• Research and analysis	• Part of Town staff responsibilities; Consultant may be required	Long term (5+ years) and ongoing

Appendix A: Model Official Plan Policies

Preamble

Housing is a key priority for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville. A range of housing types, sizes and prices are needed to meet the varying needs of the Town's residents and workers as they move through different stages of life. Housing that is dignified, appropriate, and affordable is important for both individual and community well-being, and housing that is affordable is important to help attract a diverse workforce to support the Town's economic development and support wide ranges of employment opportunities. In order to meet the needs of current and future residents at each stage of their life, a range of housing is needed that includes emergency shelters, transitional housing, subsidized and/or government assisted housing, affordable rental housing, affordable home ownership, market rental housing, market home ownership, and supportive housing.

The policies in this section are intended to meet the following vision and goals for housing to assist the community of Whitchurch-Stouffville in addressing local housing needs.

Vision

Housing that is dignified and affordable is available for all residents of Whitchurch-Stouffville no matter their age, family composition, or income.

Goals

1. Increase diversity of built form and tenure to provide more housing options for residents
2. Promote greater intensification and density to leverage existing physical and social infrastructure and appropriately manage growth
3. Protect and expand purpose-built rental supply
4. Increase support from Council, Town staff, local developers, and residents for new housing developments through education and outreach

The Town supports achieving a range of housing uses and types, including housing that is affordable, by applying regulatory, advocacy, and financial incentive approaches.

Recommended approaches are outlined below.

Policy & Zoning

- Include definition of "affordability" in the Official Plan
- Identify and establish affordable housing targets and purpose-built rental housing targets in the Official Plan
- Include support for higher-density housing, infill development, and non-traditional housing types in the Official Plan

- Develop a policy to review the suitability of municipal land or buildings for affordable housing before selling/leasing or redevelopment
- Explore the potential and include enabling policies in the Official Plan for inclusionary zoning (IZ) in Provincially-approved areas
- Introduce a demolition/conversion control and rental replacement framework
- Expand Additional Residential Unit (secondary suites/accessory apartments) permissions
- Following the completion of the new Official Plan, as part of a comprehensive Zoning By-law review and/or update, ensure that Zoning By-law regulations are not overly restrictive or unintentionally discriminatory
- Provide direction in the Official Plan to implement the Housing Strategy

Advocacy, Awareness & Outreach

- Encourage discussion/negotiation with private developers to achieve affordable housing targets as part of the planning approvals process

Monitoring

- Develop a housing indicators monitoring and reporting system

Model Policies

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
Policy & Zoning	Include definition of “affordable” in Official Plan	For ownership housing, housing with a purchase price that results in annual accommodation costs not exceeding 30% of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households. For rental housing, affordable is defined as a unit for which the rent is at or below 125% of the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area, by bedroom type. Low- and moderate-income households are defined as the lesser of: • households with incomes in the lowest 60% of the income distribution for the regional market area or, • households with incomes in the lowest 60% of the income distribution for the local market area as determined by the Region in their capacity as Housing

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
		Service Manager
	Identify and establish affordable housing targets and purpose-built rental housing targets in the Official Plan	That a minimum 25% of new housing outside of major transit station areas be affordable. That a minimum 35% of new housing in major transit station areas be affordable. In order to meet regional targets for purpose built rental housing, the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville will target the completion of rental units in accordance with Table 2 of the York Region Official Plan, which is set out below: • 2021 - 2031 Total Unit Target - 500 • 2031 - 2041 Total Unit Target - 500 • 2041 - 2051 Total Unit Target - 750 • 2021 - 2051 Total Unit Target - 1,750 The Town should target 50% of purpose-built rental apartments completed annually to be affordable rental units.
	Include support for higher-density housing, infill development, and non-traditional housing types in the Official Plan	The Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville will provide opportunities for: • The development of a range of housing choices in terms of type, tenure and price; • The production of a variety of dwelling types for both the ownership and rental markets; and • The production of housing for persons with special needs, including but not limited to group homes, housing for the elderly and emergency shelters
	Develop a policy to review suitability of municipal land or buildings for housing before selling/leasing on the open market or	The Town will collaborate with York Region to consult with school boards, not-for profit agencies, institutional providers (e.g., places of worship), Federal and Provincial agencies and other such groups to: • Identify surplus government/agency lands

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
	redevelopment	and/or buildings that may be suitable for affordable and attainable housing development; • Prioritize the sale or lease of suitable surplus municipal property for the development of affordable and attainable housing in accordance with the Region's Disposal of Land By-law; and • Identify brownfield and greyfield sites, including underutilized commercial sites or strip plazas, outside employment areas for mixed-use residential intensification and affordable housing development.
	Explore the potential for inclusionary zoning (IZ) in Provincially-approved areas	The Town will explore opportunities to implement Inclusionary Zoning where it is permitted by Provincial legislation and where a Municipal Assessment Report completed in accordance with O. Reg 232/18, under the Planning Act, demonstrates financial viability of implementing such a tool.
	Introduce a demolition/conversion control and rental replacement framework	The Town will ensure that the quality and quantity of the existing rental housing stock is maintained. In this regard, conversion of residential rental properties to a purpose other than the purpose of a residential rental property, or the demolition of residential rental properties with six or more units, will not be permitted if it adversely impacts the supply of rental housing, as determined by housing targets, including affordable rental targets, set out in this Plan, the York Region Official Plan; or, as determined by rental vacancy rates being below the minimum 3% threshold. The Town will implement a Demolition and Conversion Control By-law and a Rental Replacement By-law to further ensure protection of rental housing options.

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
	Expand Additional Residential Unit (secondary suites/accessory apartments) permissions	The Town supports gentle intensification through the provision of additional residential units. Accordingly, the use of two residential units shall be permitted in a detached house, semi-detached house or townhouse; and a residential unit shall also be permitted in a building or structure ancillary to a detached house, semi-detached house or townhouse. Each additional residential unit should meet the following standards: • Additional Dwelling Units will not be permitted in lands identified as Natural Core and Natural Linkage, floodplains or other areas zoned Environmental Protection; • Only one Additional Dwelling Unit may be allowed in a single-detached dwelling in areas within the Oak Ridges Moraine • The floor area of the Additional Dwelling Unit must be smaller than the floor area of the principal dwelling • The accessory building must conform to the front yard and exterior side yard setbacks of the zone in which it is located • 1 parking space should be provided and maintained for the sole use of the occupant of each additional residential unit, unless stated otherwise in the Zoning By-law Specific regulations guiding the creation of such additional residential units will be set out in the Zoning By-law.
	Ensure the new Official Plan is not overly restrictive in its policies and not unintentionally discriminatory to	Provide for a mix and range of housing options suitable for all ages, household sizes and abilities, in partnership with the Regional Municipality, senior levels of government, the development industry, community partners and other stakeholders including:

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
	accommodating various housing options	• Affordable housing to address need throughout the income spectrum, including market and community housing; • Emergency and transitional housing; • Co-housing; group, rooming, and special needs housing; and • Purpose built rental housing.
		To promote housing options, through the use of land use planning, financial and other tools, including: • Prioritize the use of public lands for affordable housing, and emergency and transitional housing, particularly in areas well serviced by transit; • Encourage the development industry to: ○ show flexibility in design and construction choices for new developments; and ○ Identify approaches and locations for affordable housing early in the development process. • Work with the Region and other key stakeholders to explore opportunities to deliver housing in a timely manner.
	Provide direction in the Official Plan to implement the Housing Strategy	To implement the Town's Housing Strategy and key actions, in collaboration with the Region, senior levels of government, the development industry, community partners and other stakeholders to increase housing options, including affordable and purpose-built rental options.
Advocacy, Awareness & Outreach	Encourage discussion/negotiation with private developers to achieve affordable housing	Policy 1: As part of a development application, the Town shall require the submission of a housing impact statement, either as a standalone report for large-scale projects, or as a section within a planning justification report

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
	target as part of the planning approvals process	for small-scale projects, demonstrating how the proposal meets the Town's Housing Strategy, which shall identify the following: • The proposed housing mix by dwelling type and number of bedrooms, as applicable • How the proposal contributes to achieving the York Region Housing targets and Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville Housing Targets, including identification of any proposed new affordable or assisted housing units; • How the estimated rents and/or sales prices of the initial prices of the development are at or below the affordable housing threshold by type; • Where construction of the units is expected to occur in phases, information regarding the number of affordable housing units to be provided per phase, where applicable; and • The proposed legal and/or financial mechanisms to ensure the delivery of any proposed new affordable housing commitments, affordability duration, and mechanisms to retain the long term affordability of units, where applicable Policy 2: The requirements set out in Policy 1 would also apply where a development proposal would result in the loss of six or more rental housing units and will also require the applicant to identify: • a tenant relocation plan; and, • how the rental units will be replaced, either on site or at another location
Monitoring	Develop a housing indicators monitoring and reporting system	It is a policy of Council to implement the Town's Housing Strategy and provide ongoing monitoring and reporting on implementation

Theme	Recommendation	Model Policy
		and achievement of the targets set out therein and in this Plan. To this end, an annual report will be provided to Council to update on progress in implementing the Housing Strategy.