



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, January 18, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barrie's Affordable Housing Strategy approved
Nine actions will be taken to address affordability in the city

(Barrie, ON) – At last evening's [Barrie City Council meeting](#), the City's [Affordable Housing Strategy](#) was approved. This document will be the guiding strategy for the City to act on housing affordability in 2024 and beyond.

"One of Council's key priorities is creating more affordable places to live," said Mayor Alex Nuttall. "Our Affordable Housing Strategy is a great start to move beyond intention and into action. We need to take a leadership role to create affordable living solutions while also ensuring we have high-paying job opportunities for our residents. We're committed to building a city where everyone can find affordable homes to purchase or rent alongside fulfilling careers with a focus on true community building."

This document is the third part of a multi-year plan to update Barrie's strategy to create affordable housing, as the current housing market and interest rate changes have made it unattainable for many to find affordable rental housing and affordable ownership options. The City released its previous Affordable Housing Strategy in 2015. As part of the work to create the new document, the City completed the following over the last year:

- A [Housing Needs Assessment](#), which was the outcome of research, public meetings, community consultation, a public survey, and the [2023 Affordable Housing Symposium](#). The Assessment used data to understand where the largest housing gaps exist. The City welcomed public feedback related to housing needs, housing supply, and sought to understand what residents believed the solutions to affordable housing should be.
- Recommendation of policy options and looking at new tools to discuss the action items derived from these options to encourage affordable housing.

Barrie's Affordable Housing Strategy focuses on actions to improve the City's housing affordability, however, the County of Simcoe is the City's Housing Service Manager and they are responsible for providing services such as emergency shelters, transitional housing and social housing.

The City's Affordable Housing Strategy outlines nine actions to be taken to address affordability:

1. Undertake a comprehensive review of the City's Zoning By-law (already underway)
2. Update the City's existing incentive program and increase the annual budget
3. Use public land to deliver new affordable housing (already underway)
4. Work towards a decision faster (shorten approval timelines)
5. Create a concierge program to connect parties who are interested in partnering to deliver new housing
6. Enhance the Simcoe County Secondary Suite program for Barrie
7. Enact a Rental Replacement By-law to preserve existing rental stock
8. Continue to communicate to the public the benefits of growth, density, and affordable housing
9. Explore the potential for inclusionary zoning (already underway)



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The Strategy also outlines additional considerations and advocacy initiatives that should be considered. Some of these items can be undertaken by the City of Barrie, while others are initiatives that will require participation and support from the Federal and Provincial governments.

Now that the strategy is approved, City staff will work on an implementation plan, including any budget requirements, and report back to the City's Affordability Committee by June 2024.

To learn more about the work done to create the strategy, visit buildingbarrie.ca/AffordableHousing. To find out more about Barrie's progress in meeting building goals, visit barrie.ca/BuildingProgress.

- 30 -

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