

Information Report



Service Area	Infrastructure, Development and Enterprise Services
Date	Friday, August 18, 2023
Subject	Housing in Guelph Workshop Summary

Executive Summary

Purpose of Report

To provide a summary of the Guelph City Council [Housing in Guelph](#) education workshop held on Tuesday, July 11, 2023.

Key Findings

The Housing in Guelph workshop provided a thorough overview of City activities and current state of the collective efforts underway to increase housing supply in the community, provided answers to Council member's questions and facilitated a brainstorm session for future-focused goals.

Strategic Plan Alignment

The City's role in increasing housing in Guelph aligns with the Guelph. Future ready. strategic priority areas of Working Together for our Future, notably long-term financial affordability and improving communications; and Building our Future to increase the availability of housing that meets community needs.

Financial Implications

The financial impacts of the City's efforts to facilitate housing in Guelph to date were identified in the staff presentation. Ongoing and future efforts will be presented to Council for consideration as part of the multi-year budget process this November.

Report

Details

On July 11, 2023, City staff hosted an educational workshop for Council on the state of [housing in Guelph](#).

Staff started the session with a comprehensive [presentation](#) about the housing continuum, the City's role in addressing and facilitating housing in Guelph, its progress to date, and key challenges.

Following the presentation, staff facilitated a question-and-answer period and a brainstorming session. The following summarizes these two components of the workshop.

Question and Answer Period

Council members were asked to submit questions in advance of the workshop to provide staff the opportunity to respond in detail. Questions received in advance were sorted into seven key theme areas:

- Expediting City processes
- Staffing and other resources required to expedite applications
- Incentivizing action to increase supply
- Infrastructure acceleration
- Advocacy
- Partnerships with other organizations
- Wellington County and the role of the City's Consolidated Municipal Services Manager (CMSM)

The facilitator framed each theme area and staff with subject matter expertise addressed the questions. Due to time constraints, not all submitted questions were addressed during the session. Staff also captured the questions raised in the meeting. This information is summarized in Attachment-1 Housing Workshop Summary of Councillor Comments.

Brainstorming

Following the question-and-answer period, Council members and City staff, together, participated in collaborative brainstorming activity. The brainstorming focused on the right side of the housing continuum. Further information on the left side of the housing continuum will be presented to City Council on September 12.

The workshop participants considered the following invitation: Imagine it's September 2026 (the end of this Council's term). What do you want to be able to say we collectively accomplished as it relates to the right side of the housing continuum?

In small groups of four to six people, participants discussed their ideas, which were captured using a digital whiteboard.

After about 20 minutes, the facilitator brought the whole group back together to share and cluster their ideas. This gave Council members and City staff a chance to hear the diversity of ideas discussed in the small groups and see where there was overlap.

Following the workshop, staff refined the ideas into 10 key themes that reflected the participant's collective interests:

- Develop and strengthen partnerships that catalyze momentum
- Leverage incentives to drive housing development
- Meet growth targets responsibly
- Prioritize finding collaborative solutions
- Attract and retain a best-in-class team to meet our goals
- Modernize our approach to servicing applications
- Achieve and maintain a zero active appeals status
- Lay the groundwork required for growth
- Get results from federal and provincial governments through advocacy
- Clarify roles and make progress on affordable housing

Additional details within these themes are available in Attachment-1 Housing Workshop Summary of Councillor Comments.

Next Steps

City staff continue to report on progress through annual [growth management and affordable housing monitoring reports](#); quarterly [municipal planning data](#) to the province; and a monthly [building permits report](#). Additional communications are available on [guelph.ca](#), including an [interactive story map](#).

At a Special City Council meeting on September 12, Council will receive a third-party report on the gaps and opportunities within the community connected to issues of homelessness, mental health, and substance use. In addition, the County of Wellington will present its housing and homelessness plan, and City staff will seek Council's approval on the project framework for the update to the [Housing Affordability Strategy](#) developed in 2017.

In October, staff will provide a response report to Council on the items in Attachment-1.

Financial Implications

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Consultations

The City's internal Housing Team.

Attachments

Attachment-1 Housing Workshop Summary of Councillor Comments

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