

## WHAT WE HEARD REPORT Housing Accelerator Fund Application

### Description

The federal government announced the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) in March 2023. The HAF provides incentive funding to local governments to boost housing supply across Canada. It also supports the development of complete, low-carbon and climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse.

### Using What We Learn

Stakeholders offered valuable feedback in developing an approach to the City's application for the HAF.

### What We Did

The application for the HAF must include an action plan that outlines supply growth targets and specific initiatives to grow housing supply and speed up housing approvals with the overall objective to accelerate the supply of housing. To gain input on the initiatives for inclusion in the action plan, the following was undertaken:

Government to government meetings were held with the Saskatoon Tribal Council and a meeting with Métis Nation – Saskatchewan is being planned.

In addition, the following stakeholder meetings were held:

How we gathered input	Who we had conversations with
<p>A stakeholder workshop was held on April 6, 2023 to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• inform stakeholders about HAF;</li> <li>• gain input from stakeholders through a survey and roundtable discussion about the initiatives the City should consider when developing the HAF application; and,</li> <li>• gain input, through a dot exercise, about which priorities area the City should consider for funding.</li> </ul> <p>A follow up meeting was held on May 8, 2023.</p>	<p>Council members: Mayor Clark, Councillor Gough and Councillor Kirton</p> <p>SaskBuilds Saskatchewan Housing Corporation Saskatchewan Health Authority Saskatoon and Region Homebuilders' Association Saskatchewan Realtors Association Saskatoon Land Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership Saskatchewan Landlords Association Saskatoon Fire</p>
<p>A virtual meeting was held on May 5, 2023 with representatives from the Province to discuss Saskatoon's HAF application.</p>	<p>Representatives from Government Relations, Saskatchewan Housing Corporation and SaskBuilds.</p>
<p>Meetings were held with internal groups to discuss opportunities for Saskatoon's HAF application.</p>	<p>Saskatoon Fire Saskatoon Land Planning and Development Building Standards Saskatoon Water Construction and Design Transportation Technical Services</p>

## What We Heard

Feedback from stakeholders was used to formulate initiatives that will be included in the HAF application.

### Stakeholder Workshops

Applicants of HAF are encouraged to select from a list of twenty-five initiatives provided by CMHC that align with the objectives of the HAF. A minimum of seven initiatives are required for the HAF application.

A stakeholder workshop was held on April 6, 2023, to assist administration with prioritizing which initiatives should be included with the HAF application. A follow-up meeting was held on May 8, 2023. Stakeholders prioritized the following initiatives from the CMHC list and provided feedback on the benefits, risks, impact and implementation for each:

- 1) Promoting high-density development without the need for rezoning (as-of-right zoning), e.g., for housing developments up to 10 stories that are in proximity (within 1.5 km) of rapid transit stations and reducing car dependency;
- 2) Allowing increased housing density (increased number of units and number of stories) on a single lot including promoting missing middle housing forms typically buildings less than 4 stories;
- 3) Enable mixed-use redevelopment of city-owned properties, while where appropriate maintaining the current government use e.g., building housing on top of a library or office space ;
- 4) Promoting infill development with increased density and a variety of unit types;
- 5) Implement revised parking requirements (flexibility/reduced/eliminated);
- 6) Implementing disincentive, costing or fee structures to discourage such things as unit vacancy, underdeveloped/idle land and low-density forms of housing;
- 7) Waiving public hearings on all affordable housing projects that conform to the Official Community Plan;
- 8) Promote and allow more housing types that service vulnerable populations; and
- 9) Partner with housing providers (Stakeholders advised this should all providers - not only affordable housing providers - in order to hit unit targets).

The following initiatives were identified by stakeholders; however, after further evaluation, Administration will not be including them in the HAF application:

<b>CMHC Initiative</b>	<b>Reason Why Not Including In HAF Application</b>
Encourage alternate forms of housing construction such as modular housing, manufactured housing and pre-fabricated housing	The City has a process in place to allow these forms of development.
Aligning development charges with the cost of development	The item is being managed under a separate existing project.
Implementing new/enhanced processes or systems such as case management, e-permitting, land and building modelling (Specifically evaluating an AI model similar to the model being explored by the City of Kelowna)	Administration's focus for the next two years is to get the full suite of Zoning, Bylaw Compliance and Building Permit workflows into our ePermitting system.

Stakeholders also provided feedback on areas the City should consider for use of the HAF funding.

Following prioritization by stakeholders, Administration held follow-up meetings where appropriate and finalized the list of selected initiatives based on feedback from CMHC representatives.

#### Virtual Meeting with Provincial Representatives

A virtual meeting with Provincial representatives was held on May 5, 2023. A draft list of initiatives Administration is considering for the HAF application was shared. The meeting also included general discussion about opportunities moving forward. We will continue to explore opportunities to work with Provincial representatives as the HAF initiatives are further built out and as the Housing Strategy is developed.

#### Individual Meetings with Internal Stakeholders

Individual meetings were held about initiatives that will be led by departments external to Planning and Development, including Saskatoon Fire and Saskatoon Land.

Information about the HAF was shared with the Major Application Group led by Planning and Development. This group includes internal department representatives which may be impacted by the increased number of permits required to fulfill the HAF targets.

#### **What Went Well**

- Trying different engagement tactics such as surveys, workshops and virtual meetings to gain feedback; and
- Able to meet with stakeholders in-person with short notice.

#### **What We Can Do Better**

- Due to the limited time in pulling together an application and the limited scope of the application requirements, the Administration did not engage with a broad group of stakeholders, internal or external.

#### **What's Next**

- Administration will work with CMHC to refine the final HAF application for the application deadline in early summer 2023; and
- Administration will continue to work with the Province and our partners as the initiatives are further built out.