

HALIFAX

Housing Accelerator Fund

Application Update

September 26, 2023

Program Focus



Implementation of initiatives to get **more homes built faster**



Speed up approvals and building processes



Minimum Requirements

Applicants must:

- Develop an action plan
- Commit to a housing growth target
- Complete/ update housing needs assessment
- Submit periodic reports



HALIFAX



Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities

1. Legalizing 4 units as-of-right city wide;
2. Legalizing dwellings up to 4-storeys high for all residential areas in the Centre Plan;
3. Creating a non-market affordable housing strategy with staff dedicated to it; and
4. Increasing density and student rentals within walking distance of the City's first rate post-secondary institutions.

1. 4 Units City-Wide

- Regional Council has already made changes that remove exclusionary zoning
- Draft Regional Plan is supportive of increasing gentle density
- Provincial Housing Panel has also identified this as an action

2. 4 Storeys Centre Plan

- Regional Council has already enabled 11m in all areas (2.75m per storey or 9ft)
- Draft Regional Plan is supportive of increased missing middle housing
- Centre Plan already enables conversions to 6 units in all Established Residential 3 areas

2. Height Centre Plan

- Height means the vertical distance between a structure's average finished grade and the structure's highest point.
 - Connected to building typologies (low-rise, mid-rise, tall mid-rise, high-rise)
 - Low-rise is 11 metres
 - Average Finished Grade means the elevation of the finished ground abutting a structure, averaged around the perimeter of the structure.

3. Affordable Housing Strategy (Non-Market)

- Regional Council has already completed an Affordable Housing Strategy/Work Plan
- Affordable Housing Commission also identified strategic goals and actions
- Provincial Government is expected to deliver a Housing Needs Assessment and Housing Strategy
- Draft Regional Plan has dedicated a Chapter on Housing identifying strategic actions

4. Increasing Density and Student Rentals

- Regional Council focused on Post-Secondary Education and increasing property rights in the areas surrounding those institutions through the Centre Plan
- Additional opportunities can be explored through the rezoning process and working with postsecondary institutions to identify rapid solutions to student housing at the site-level

Heritage & Infrastructure

- Staff recommend adjustments for height exclude existing or proposed heritage districts and registered heritage properties
- Requirements for infrastructure will be considered as the amendments proceed and staff conduct necessary due diligence

Recommendation

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council,

1. Direct the Chief Administrative Officer:
 - a. To respond to the letter from the Minister of Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada, as included in Attachment A, to indicate HRM will include the initiatives as generally outlined, and further detailed in the staff report dated September 25, 2023, along with all additional required documentation to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as the Municipality's application under the Housing Accelerator Fund program to the extent the Municipality has the authority to do so;

Recommendation Continued

- b. Expedite amendments to the Regional Plan and supporting secondary planning strategies and land use by-laws (following the closure of the Regional Plan Review Phase 4 Public Participation Program on October 27, 2023) to enable:
 - i. a minimum of four units per lot in all residential zones across the municipality, and
 - ii. increase to the maximum height in all Centre Plan Established Residential Zones from 11 metres to 12 metres;
- c. To create a public-facing affordable housing strategy, including a non-market component, as outlined in this report and to dedicate a Housing Accelerator Fund position to this work;

Recommendation Continued

- d. To work with HRM post-secondary institutions to increase density and create opportunities for student housing within a walking distance from post-secondary institutions across HRM; and
2. Request the Mayor to write a letter to the Province requesting a legislative amendment to grant the Chief Administrative Officer the authority to discharge existing development agreements where the development agreement is more restrictive than the as-of-right zoning.