



External Briefing Note

GEORGINA

Subject: Housing Needs Assessment – Project Update

To: Mayor and Council

From: Denis Beaulieu, Director of Development Services

Date: March 5, 2025

Briefing:

On October 9, 2024, Council received a [Briefing Note](#) on the status of the procurement process to engage a consultant to prepare the Town's Housing Needs Assessment (HNA), the completion of which is a federal requirement for municipalities to access funding through the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) and the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The Town is a significant beneficiary of funding from these two programs, being \$1,560,281 through the CCBF and \$1,460,850 through the HAF in 2025 alone.

On October 22, 2024, a contract was awarded to Vink Consulting Inc., in collaboration with J Consulting Group, to collect and analyse data, undertake stakeholder consultations and prepare the Town's HNA. In accordance with the Scope of Work for the HNA project, the purpose of this Briefing Note is to further update Council on the status of the project and outline next steps. In this respect, the consulting team has been making good progress on the tasks within all three phases of the project (project initiation and management, research collection and analysis, housing needs assessment report), including the following:

- Preparation of a Communication and Engagement Plan
- Preparation of a master Stakeholder List
- Review of existing policies and strategies
- Collection and synthesis of data
- Completion of HNA Questionnaire from AMO
- Release of an online community survey
- Interviews, community drop-in sessions, stakeholder focus groups, vulnerable population engagement
- Completion of a housing need and supply analysis

Preliminary findings from the research and consultations include:

- Need for greater housing diversity, including smaller housing types and more rental housing options.
- Housing affordability is a critical concern for all stakeholder groups, with an emphasis on the need for deeply affordable housing (e.g. rent-geared-to-income), affordable rental housing and condominiums.
- Specific housing challenges identified for youth and young families, seniors, persons with disabilities, and low-income individuals and families.
- Need for more supportive housing forms including emergency/transitional housing, and housing with supports for persons with disabilities and seniors.
- Developers emphasized high construction costs, lengthy approval processes, and infrastructure needs to support development as key barriers to building housing. Community resistance or NIMBYism also seen as a barrier to development.
- Sense among residents and stakeholders that homelessness is increasing.
- Lack of emergency housing options is a concern raised by community organizations and people experiencing homelessness.
- Specific barriers for people experiencing homelessness in accessing housing include limited supply of affordable housing, some discrimination by landlords, lack of references and income history, and limited support services (e.g. mental health services).
- Several opportunities suggested by private and non-profit stakeholders include exploring more infill development, leveraging municipal land, updating zoning regulations, and partnerships with the private sector, non-profit organizations and other levels of government.
- Other factors influencing housing need include limited public transportation and employment opportunities.

Staff was also recently informed that the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) received approval from Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada (HICC) to extend the deadline for municipalities to complete their HNA from March 31st to June 30th, 2025. This has afforded the consultants an opportunity to extend the deadline for the online community survey, to gather additional data and stakeholder feedback, and to better align public engagement with other scheduled events in the Town (e.g. Good Food Collective Community Lunch at the Link in Sutton).

Following completion of the stakeholder engagement process and the collection of outstanding data points, the next steps in the process will be to complete the data analysis and a draft of the HNA report. It is anticipated that staff will report out to Council with a final HNA in May 2025.

Should you have any comments or questions related to this Briefing Note, please contact me via telephone at 905-476-4301 ext. 2321 or via email at dbeaulieu@georgina.ca.