

Township of Southgate**Administration Office**

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Phone: 519-923-2110**Toll Free:** 1-888-560-6607**Fax:** 519-923-9262**Web:** www.southgate.ca**Staff Report CAO2022-086****Title of Report:** Future Housing Development, Planning and Climate Change Report**Department:** Administration**Council Date:** December 21, 2022**Council Recommendation:****Be it resolved that** Council receive staff report CAO2022-086 as information.**Background:****Housing**

In the past year the Township of Southgate has established a very active and engaged Affordable Attainable Housing Committee that has been reappointed for the new term of Council. The committee members were very engaged and completed a lot of volunteer work outside of the meetings, completing research, they developed a plan of 26 action tasks and focused on 7 priority tasks to advance affordable housing in Southgate. The frustration I could feel from the committee members was their work was paper progress without much quantifiable on the ground results.

The Committee developed and supported with Council approval the initial creation of the South Grey Housing Corporation Working Group partnership.

Planning

At the present time there are efforts through Provincial changes to legislation that the Ontario Government feel will create more housing. It is definitely a debate if Bill 23 and others legislative changes will achieve the results to build 1.5 million new homes in Ontario in the next 10 years. The issue of reducing development charges is loading those lost municipal revenues onto local taxpayers.

When it comes to Conservation Authorities (CA) that is a different story. The province has changed the rules for CA so that they are consistent across the province and less onerous on development. With that said our local Planning in Grey are still using the same rationale that they have followed for years. There needs to be a review of our policies and local political push from upper and lower tier Council to challenge and apply "Common Sense Planning". If we need housing for more people then we need to consider Planning strategies that finds ways to create solutions that supports climate change on smaller lot footprints and that does not waste land.

Climate Change

The Climate Change file has taken a back seat to other priorities when it comes to budget demands. It is very much a part of the staff lens and needs to have more focus and education in the future when discussing asset procurement and building upgrades. Our capital investments and procurement decisions going forward must consider Climate Change impacts and carbon reduction strategies that will create long term efficiencies to reduce operating costs and taxation.

Staff Comments:

Housing

When it comes to housing developments, we need to focus on a wider offering of residential solutions that meet local market demands. The local demand requirement we know is rental spaces and residential ownership properties that are sized in the \$300,000 to \$400,000 price range. Some would say this is not a realistic price point. The problem is these home size options, being less than 1,000 square feet, modular units, trailer park models and tiny homes are not being developed today in our community. The housing units are either being constructed in our community or are available in the region and shipped outside the area to northern communities and the USA. The problem is there are no planned development places to locate these types of homes, unless they have a unique historic zoning to work with. The historic zoning may or may not be good zoning today or an appropriate location, but these locations can proceed. So why not create better locations where it makes good sense when planning rules do not.

We need to challenge our past thinking. We need to be bold, find solutions and lands without future uses and convert these properties to find people and their family a place to live that supports pride of ownership or a place they call home and at the same time allow them to have financial stability.

Planning

So what needs to be done. I received this comment from a non-municipal Planner recently that the Township of Southgate related to our planning attitude is "Positive and Solution Oriented" as a municipality. That is great to hear, but it really feels we stumble a lot trying to create affordable housing.

I think we need to be "Positive and Solution Oriented" when we receive proposals, use more "Common Sense Planning", to find a way. The answer "NO" means maybe there is another way. So let us do what is right, as long as it makes sense and it preserves food production lands and does not further impact agriculture practices. Going forward if we are really interested in creating affordable housing Planners and decision makers need to push back on County Planning rules and the PPS to get the Provincial Planners to help us achieve results. We need to find ways to

create lots for housing from a lot of low hanging opportunities we have in our communities.

Those opportunities are the following:

1. Review checkerboard developments lot sizes where there is municipal road frontage for severance opportunities; and
2. Larger (200 acre) checkerboard lot developments where there are lots without road frontages could be developed by the municipal intervention. Build a municipal road to the Township's standards with the costs being area rated by Municipal By-law onto the property owners to create possibly more developable lots with consents with open road allowance frontage for all the properties like Christie Street was created; and
3. Review lots of record that are over 1 or 2 acres in size and allow severance to not waste land that could be used for single or multiple home builds. At the present time we have 2 proposals with a 6 acre lots presently and few others with 4 acres that could create additional development lots by consents, increase taxation and not impact agriculture MDS calculations. These developments would create housing, increase tax revenue with little more than extra stops for our waste collection as for mobilized services to support the properties; and
4. Municipal park properties and any surplus municipal lands could be converted to residential developments that is not being used to justify our present maintenance levels of service of the property. Cutting grass negatively impacts climate change, so if it is not used and not being developed should we let the grass grow to sequester carbon and support pollinators; and
5. Consider redeveloping end of life gravel pits or rehabbed brownfield lands that could make excellent residential home park developments; and
6. I am sure there are other opportunities we should explore and consider.

Climate Change

The County of Grey has created a "Going in Green" Working and Resourcing Plan for Climate Change that is included in this staff report as Attachment #1. This was created as a County plan that all the municipal CAO's in Grey have requested, because we need this expertise and focused support that we cannot provide or invest in efficiently as lower tier municipalities to gain the staff culture, education and training to support climate change thinking and decision making.

We need to challenge our future procurement decisions with a Climate Change Lens to source solutions that reduces energy consumption, operating costs and the creation of carbon. A recent example is understanding what the difference is between a Hybrid car, know as Mild Hybrids is energy created from the vehicle like braking, a Plug-in or Full Hybrid use fueling batteries with an electric charging system and fulling Electric Vehicle (EV) have no fossil fuel consumption. More detailed information is included in this report as Attachment #2 on Hybrid vehicles and technology. According to a local dealer representative, pickups will soon be available in half ton size models that will use Hybrid technology.

The future will see more technologies in building mechanical systems, public transit vehicles, buses, waste collection trucks and net zero energy for new building construction projects, to name a few. Purchasing decisions will need to consider the life cycle cardon cost of manufacturing, use and disposal of all capital assets.

We need to demonstrate community leadership, test these climate change solutions and make the environment a better place for future generations.

Financial Impact or Long Term Implications

The financial impact as a result of this report is staff efforts already included in general operational budgeting in future years.

Communications & Community Action Plan Impact:

This report has been written and presented to Council to communicate accurate information to the public.

Goal 3 - Promoting Health Services and Housing Choices

Action 3: The residents and businesses of Southgate envision a caring community which meets the needs of all ages and incomes for a healthy and comfortable life, even as our population grows and changes.

Strategic Initiatives 3-A (2019-2023): By means of appropriate policies, incentives and development partners, the Township will facilitate a significant increase in the supply and comfortable life, even as our population grows and changes.

Concluding Comments

1. That Council receive this report as information.

Respectfully Submitted,

CAO approval: Original Signed By

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Attachments:

- Attachment 1 – Grey County “Going in Green” Working and Resourcing Plan
- Attachment 2 – Hybrid Vehicle Technology Information Report