



RESOLUTION OF THE REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY OF YORK

Subject: Addressing the Affordable Housing Crisis in York Region

Date: February 25, 2021

Moved by: Regional Councillor DiPaola

Seconded by: Mayor Taylor

Whereas at the January 14, 2021 meeting of the Committee of the Whole (COW), Committee received presentations from Watson & Associates, Staff (C.2) in relation to Item H.2.1 Regional Official Plan Update – Housing Challenges and Opportunities, communications from the Commissioner of Community and Health Services (G.1.1.), delegations via zoom and other written delegations **concerning the lack of housing affordability and the need for purpose-built rental** throughout the Region, and

Whereas at the January 28, 2021 meeting of Regional Council, Council received deputations from Reena Foundation, and Talisker Corporation (Yonge Sixteen LP) concerning the need for assistive housing and purpose-built rental housing to support “complete communities”, and

Whereas on October 24, 2019, York Region identified affordable Housing as a strategic priority in its report: “*Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone – Phase 2 Plan, 2019-2023*”; and

Whereas affordable housing serves a critical economic function by supporting a productive workforce, reducing social service costs, and is an essential component of the Region’s “complete community” vision especially along the Region’s Centres and Corridors; and

Whereas the York Region Official Plan (Policies 3.5.6 and 3.5.7) prescribes minimum housing affordability requirements *for new housing units* along the Region’s Centres and Corridors; and

Whereas the York Region Official Plan (Policy 5.2.10) directs that local/municipal secondary plans and zoning by-laws shall incorporate parking management policies *and* standards that include reduced minimum and maximum parking requirements that *reflect the walking distance to transit and other complimentary uses*; and

Whereas the York Region Official Plan also requires development to implement transportation demand management (TDM) measures, including car share etc.

Whereas from 2014 to 2018, the number of households on York Region’s subsidized housing wait list grew by 41% and applicants who received a subsidized unit in 2018 waited on average at least seven or more years, and

Whereas Staff’s report to the January 14, 2021 COW confirms that York Region is not meeting its annual housing targets, nor affordable housing targets; and

Whereas York Region is one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada; and

Whereas a HOUSING AFFORDABILITY CRISIS EXISTS IN YORK REGION, and

Whereas Regional Council recognizes the need to take immediate action to address the housing affordability crisis – while supporting the Region’s investment in transit along its Centres and Corridors – to serve the Region’s current **and** future residents; and

Now therefore Be It Resolved:

1. Council recognizes and acknowledges that an AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS exists in the Region;
2. Within 30 days, Staff shall identify lands and development sites along the Region’s Centres and Corridors that are proposed for or include provision of:
 - a. Purpose built rental units
 - b. Seniors and other supportive housing units
 - c. Housing for low and moderate-income households
 - d. Zero Car/ and other Transit Supportive households

“(the “Inventory”),

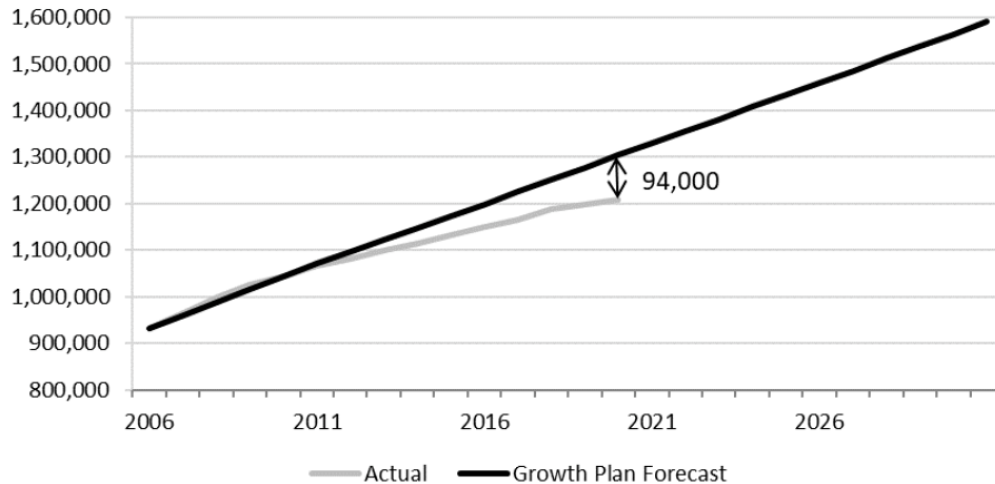
As part of the Inventory Staff shall also determine which sites could be **building permit** ready (aka “shovel ready”), within the following time frames:

- 0 – 12 months
 - 12 months – 24 months
 - 3 – 5 years
 - 5 – 7 years
3. Further, given the connection between the cost of constructing a parking space and the cost of housing/shelter in the Region, Staff shall review Regional Plan Policy 5.2.10 and related policies pertaining to parking management and standards along Regional Centres and Corridors and associated KDA’s, with a view to eliminating the current Regional requirement for zoning bylaws to contain “minimum automobile parking rates” adjacent to higher order transit - and within the Region’s MTSA’s;
 4. That lands and development sites that provide for the housing identified in clause 2 a-d above, be prioritized and “fast-tracked” for approval within current *Planning Act* time frames, if not sooner;

5. That with respect to the proposed 962 unit purpose built rental at 9251 Yonge Street, the City of Richmond Hill be advised that the Region as Approval Authority, supports and endorses the application in principle (including the transit supportive parking rates and provision of community housing units with Housing York Inc.) based on the report and recommendations of Richmond Hill Staff (December 9, 2020) and the advise of Regional Staff; and
6. That Staff do all things necessary to give effect to the foregoing.

Background

Population Growth (actual and forecast), 2006-2031



Source: York Region Planning and Economic Development Branch

In [June 2019](#), Council was advised of some of the risks and implications of not achieving population growth targets. Lower than expected growth creates financial challenges and hinders the timing of the Region's ability to pay down debt and build capacity for additional infrastructure investment needed to achieve the provincial 2051 forecasts of 2.02 million people and 990,000 jobs.

Housing affordability targets are not being met in York Region, challenging complete community initiatives

The ROP includes policy that 35% of new housing in Regional Centres and key development areas be affordable and that 25% of new housing outside of those areas be affordable. The affordability of new ownership housing and the supply of new purpose-built rental housing is [monitored annually](#). The [2019 monitoring report](#) advised Council that only 11% of new ownership housing units were affordable, 99% of which were studio or 1-bedroom condominiums and not suitable for families. The report also advised that only 3% of new housing was classified as purpose built rental housing.

In 2019 the affordable housing threshold was approximately \$484,000. As is shown in Figure 2, the average cost of all new housing types is greater than the thresholds, and the gap between the affordable housing threshold and average market prices is a barrier to home ownership in York Region for many households.