

**Report to
Rapport au:**

**Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee
Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales
4 February 2021 / 4 février 2021**

and / et

**Planning Committee
Comité de l'urbanisme
11 February 2021 / Choisir la date de la reunion du comité.**

**and Council
et au Conseil
24 February 2021 / 24 février 2021**

**Submitted on 20 January 2021
Soumis le 20 janvier 2021**

**Submitted by
Soumis par:
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**Ward: CITY WIDE / À L'ÉCHELLE DE
LA VILLE**

File Number: ACS2021-PIE-PS-0016

SUBJECT: High Social Impact Projects Program

OBJET: Programme relatif aux projets à fortes retombées sociales

REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That Agriculture and Rural Affairs and Planning Committee recommend Council receive this report for information.

RECOMMANDATIONS DU RAPPORT

1. Que le Comité de l'agriculture et des affaires rurales et le Comité de l'urbanisme recommandent au Conseil de prendre connaissance de ce rapport.

BACKGROUND

Learn more about [link to Development Application process - Zoning Amendment](#)

For all the supporting documents related to this application visit the [link to Development Application Search Tool](#).

The COVID-19 Pandemic and declaration of a State of Emergency in Ontario resulted in the formation of a number of Task Forces, including both the Mayor's Economic Partners Task Force, and the Economic Recovery Task Team. The latter consists of staff from various City service areas, initiated to coordinate a strategy and undertake a series of measures in support of the city's economic recovery. Initiatives implemented through this task team was the subject of an information report to Council titled "[COVID-19 Economic Recovery Update](#)" on September 9, 2020.

One initiative identified was the High Economic Impact Projects Recovery Stream. High Economic Impact Projects (HEIP) are large development projects that provide significant benefits to Ottawa including job creation and economic growth. In response to the evolving business environment resulting from COVID-19, as well as the increased need to target attracting investment. Economic Development Services is currently working to develop a HEIP Recovery Program. This program will be focused on larger commercial, industrial and institutional development projects aligned with the City's economic development priorities.

Planning Services is also investigating a similar program aimed at assisting and advancing specific high social impact projects, such as affordable housing and long-term care facilities

Affordable housing projects have been identified based on the following:

- The City of Ottawa Strategic Plan 2019-2022 speaks to an affordable city for all residents and that residents should have access to safe, adequate and affordable housing.

- The Official Plan Section 2.5 Building Livable Communities speaks to Ottawa Communities being built on the basics including good housing. Section 2.5.2 speaks to affordable and appropriate housing for all residents as the fundamental building block of a healthy, livable community. Official Plan policies contribute to improving the supply of affordable housing in concert with other City initiatives to support the construction of affordable units. The shortage of affordable rental housing is identified as one of the most compelling problems facing Ottawa.
- Section 2.5.2.7 of the Official Plan states that the processing of development applications from non-profit housing corporations and housing cooperatives, for housing intended for persons of low - or moderate-incomes, will be given priority by the City.

Long-term care facilities and Retirement Homes have been identified based on the following:

- The 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan report that went to Council July 15, 2020 identifies older adults as one of the priority populations. Priority populations face significant challenges in navigating and accessing housing that is suitable for their needs and experience discrimination and stigma in the housing market.
- The Plan goes on to describe that older adults who experience homelessness has been on the rise across the country. According to the National Shelter Study from 2005 to 2016, people over 50 years of age represent the second highest shelter population at 23.9 per cent. Last year, 1242 people over the age of 50 experienced homelessness in Ottawa, accessing an emergency shelter.
- As part of the 10-Year Plan and through the Built for Zero initiative, City staff will continue to work with shelters and other organizations to reduce homelessness for older adults.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has exacerbated current pressures on shelter facilities and emphasized the need for affordable housing.

Planning Services powers for development applications are guided by the *Planning Act* of Ontario. While the City has limited powers and financial resources, the identification of projects that have a high social impact is desirable given the above.

DISCUSSION

Objective

A High Social Impact Project (HSIP) is a development application that supports the City's Council priority for thriving communities and promoting the well-being of our residents.

The objective of this initiative is to assist with timelines of related development applications within Development Review and ensure these are prioritized departmentally.

Criteria

Eligibility for the HSIP program will be determinant upon the following, where the applicant would have to meet all the below criteria:

- The applicant is a non-profit organization
- The land use is either residential, is a long term care facility (residential care facility in in the zoning by-law), or is a retirement home
- Where a contribution agreement or municipal capital facilities agreement has or will be entered into with Housing Services

Currently, certain measures are in place to assist and facilitate the development of these types of projects. These include:

- Housing organizations that are charitable or non-profit are currently exempted from paying Planning Application Fees.
- No conveyance of land or payment of money in-lieu under the Parkland By-law 2009-95 is required in the case of the development or redevelopment of a non-profit rental or not-for-profit sponsored ownership residential development or other development that provides public facilities or services and that is undertaken by a non-profit organization.
- There exists a reimbursement program for charitable or non-profit organizations where development related application fees may be eligible for a refund up to 50 per cent.

While the City has limited financial resources available to developers of these projects as part of the Development Review process, the City can assist in expediting applications.

Staff are recommending that these particular land uses be targeted as there is often another agreement with the City outside of the Planning process, such as a contribution agreement or a municipal capital facilities agreement through Housing Services. By capturing Site Plan requirements as part of these other agreements is an opportunity to reduce duplication through Site Plan agreements and expedite the application further.

The possible value of expanding the above-described program to those applications where there is a private sector/for profit applicant and where a portion of the project advances the City's high social impact objectives, will be explored through future phases.

Intake Process

It is the intent of staff to place on the City's webpage, information related to the High Social Impact Project program. As well, through the preconsultation process, Planning and Housing staff will also inform applicants of this opportunity. Nevertheless, applicants will need to identify themselves as potentially qualifying for this program prior to submitting their application. The onus will still be on the applicant to present their case as to the qualifications for projects that they believe would meet the relevant criteria and submit any required development applications.

Roles and Responsibilities

If a project is potentially a High Social Impact Project, a Planner and a Housing Developer will be assigned to determine eligibility and to assist clients in navigating the approvals process.

The Official Plan Section 2.5.2 Affordable Housing refers to the ability of the City to address housing issues in the Official Plan being limited to the land-use policy and regulatory tools under the *Planning Act*. Due to the diverse nature of the housing issue, many factors, which influence its delivery, are beyond the municipality's authority under the *Planning Act*. However, the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Department has identified several potential ways in which assistance may be provided with related Development Applications:

1. The project is identified as a HSIP and the development application is prioritized by staff in Development Review.
2. The circulation period for development applications will be the lesser of 14 calendar days or the standard circulation period dictated by the application type.

3. Required site securities for Site Plan Control applications will be reduced to the lesser of \$50,000 or as per standard calculation dictated by the prepared cost estimates.
4. Consideration of whether a site plan agreement is required or if risk is mitigated through the provision of a letter of undertaking and inclusion of additional provisions within other agreements undertaken with Housing Services.

Action items 1 and 2 will assist with timelines related to these prioritized development applications. There is recognition that this may come at the expense of time related to the processing of other development review applications.

Action item 3 has been identified as often the City is involved in providing funds to the non-profit applicant who in turn uses these to provide the City securities. The intention is that cost estimates would still be entered through standard process and that the Project Manager, would manually adjust the Schedule B that forms part of the Site Plan Control Agreement or Letter of Undertaking to include a line item that indicates, "Security reduction to \$50,000 as project is HSIP". This security would be released once all items are completed as required through the Site Plan Approval process and related inspections.

Action item 4 recognizes that there may be an opportunity to reduce duplication in agreements registered with the City through:

- Consideration of whether a Site Plan agreement is necessary; and
- Whether specificities to the project can be included as part of an agreement that is undertaken by the applicant with Housing Services.

This may reduce time between Site Plan Approval and the provision of a building permit and may free up legal resources for other Site Plan Agreements. The authority to provide a Letter of Undertaking as an alternative to a site plan control agreement resides in the Site Plan Control By-law currently and contemplates a scenario where securities provided to the City are less than \$200,000.

Current Projects

Approximately nine projects have been identified by Development Review staff either in the form of submitted applications or in the pre-application consultation stage that would fit the criteria identified above for being a high-social impact project. Eight more projects may fit the criteria pending further review.

CONSULTATION

Staff involved in the subject report have included those in Development Review, Housing Services, Finance and Legal. Public Consultation was not undertaken as this is an information report for Council and relates to internal City processes.

COMMENTS BY THE WARD COUNCILLORS

This is a City-wide report – Not applicable.

RURAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no rural implications associated with this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no legal implications associated with receiving this report for information.

RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

There are no risk management implications associated with this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications associated receiving this report for information.

ACCESSIBILITY IMPACTS

There are no accessibility impacts.

TERM OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES

This project addresses the following Term of Council Priorities:

- **Economic Growth and Diversification:** Encourage economic growth and diversification by supporting business investment and expansion, and talent attraction and retention, showcasing the city's bilingual and multicultural character, and branding Ottawa as a place to be.
- **Thriving Communities:** Promote safety, culture, social and physical well-being for our residents.

CONCLUSION

Planning Services will review development review applications specifically for those that provide a high social impact and modify processes in order to assist with timelines for those projects identified.

DISPOSITION

Planning, Infrastructure, and Economic Development staff will continue work on evolution of the High Social Impact Projects program and report back as necessary.