

City of North Bay Report to Council

Report No: CSBU-2025-011

Date: February 11, 2025

Originator: Adam Curran

Business Unit:

Department:

Community Services

Planning & Building Department

Subject: Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF)– Implementation Plan – Growth Community Improvement Plan (GCIP) Amendment and Additional Dwelling Units (ADU) – Official Plan and Zoning Amendments.

Closed Session: yes no

Recommendation

- 1) That City Council recognizes the seven initiatives identified in the City of North Bay’s Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application as presented in Report to Council CSBU-2025-011 by Adam Curran;
- 2) That City Council direct staff to amend the City’s Housing Action Plan to reflect the seven initiatives; and
- 3) That the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) implementation be referred to the Community Services Committee of Council for the required statutory public meetings under the Planning Act.

Background

The City of North Bay has been successful in receiving \$10.6 million dollars for their application to the Federal government’s Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) administered by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). HAF was established to provide incentive funding to local governments to improve housing processes and ultimately create more housing units. The funding is meant to remove barriers and support the development of affordable, inclusive, equitable and climate-resilient communities by supporting housing related local initiatives.

The City’s application included identified seven initiatives to improve housing processes and create additional housing units. The purpose of this report is to identify the seven initiatives and outline how these initiatives will increase

North Bay's housing supply. Some of the proposed initiatives will require an Official Plan and/or Zoning By-law amendment. This report outlines the various Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments required and provides recommendations to refer these matters to Committee for the required public meetings under the Planning Act.

The seven initiatives are:

1. Allow 4 units As-of-Right within the City's Settlement Area, where a property is connected to municipal services;
2. Make municipally owned lands available for housing;
3. Update the Growth Community Improvement Plan (GCIP) to expand the Housing Target Area and provide Top-Up Funding of the GCIP;
4. Introduce E-Permitting, Delegation of Authority and 3D Mesh/Digital Twin-Increase Processes Efficiency;
5. Comprehensive review of development charges and fee schedules, including waivers for affordable housing;
6. Development Application Review Team (DART), prioritized and enhanced development approval process for rental and affordable housing and provide a concierge service for affordable housing development; and
7. Reduce Parking Standards and Promote Active Transportation.

Each initiative, either independently or in combination with other initiatives, will create additional and enhanced opportunities to create additional housing units in the City of North Bay. Each initiative identifies how many new housing units it will incentivize. The City of North Bay's target is 840 new housing units over the three years of the program, of which 337 are intended to be directly related to HAF incentives.

Initiative Details and Implementation Status

1. Allow 4 units As-of-Right within the City's Urban Settlement Boundary;

This initiative would allow for up to three Additional Dwelling Units (ADUs) for a total of four units as-of-right on an urban serviced lot within the settlement area.

The City currently permits up to two ADUs as a right within the settlement area. Since the implementation of ADUs, the City has seen a substantial shift in how housing units are being created.

In 2024, the City had 36 ADUs created, which represents 36% of the new housing starts in 2024. This was also up from 20 and 22 ADUs in 2022 and 2023, respectively. ADUs support new housing unit opportunities, which are generally less expensive than new residential units and can be relatively easier and quicker to create. It is anticipated that this trend will continue and is an appropriate way to create new residential units.

To increase the number of ADU's per lot from 2 to 3 (not including the primary residence), the Official Plan and Zoning By-law must be amended. The draft Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment to implement this initiative are attached as Appendix 'A'. This includes a full planning analysis as required by the Planning Act.

2. Make Municipally Owned Lands Available for Housing

The City of North Bay will identify municipal land that could be made available for new housing construction.

The City consider certain municipally owned lands feasible for the development opportunity for new affordable home ownership and rentals.

These potential lands will be brought forward on a case-by-case basis to City Council for review, consideration and approval to be deemed surplus to be developed under the HAF program.

3. Develop Grant Program – Expansion of the Housing Target Area and Top up Funding of the Growth Community Improvement Plan (GCIP)

The City of North Bay has had the GCIP in place since 2020. The GCIP has 4 target areas, Industrial, Waterfront, Downtown and the Housing target areas.

The Growth CIP - Housing Target Area has already approved a number of applications, and if all approved applications are constructed it is estimated that 169 net new housing units to come to the market. The City continues to see growth in the number of Housing Target Areas applications.

Through the HAF application, the City identified two proposed changes to the Housing Target Area through the GCIP.

Action 1: Expand the Housing Target Area

The first initiative expands the Housing Target Area to the entire designated Settlement Area within the City's Official Plan. By doing so, the City will provide financial incentives to property owners for infill and intensification of residential development.

The current incentives within the housing target area include:

- 100% of Municipal Fees rebated (Building Permit, Planning Act Fees);
- 100% of Development Charges rebated;
- Up to 50% to a maximum of \$5,000 to assist with Professional Services for housing unit design; and
- A property tax benefit would be available to property owners who create affordable rental units with a 100% tax rebate of the incremental tax payable increase each year for 6 years.

This initiative was supported and approved by Council in the summer of 2024 and is currently in place and the City is accepting applications.

Action 2: Provide Top-up Funding

The second initiative would offer top-up funding of 75% of expenses, up to \$25,000 per unit for new housing units. This initiative is specifically focused on rental housing projects and aims to encourage the development of ADUs and new multiple residential apartment dwellings. This top-up funding is supported by Official Plan policy and regulation development that ensures continued ADU and multi-unit housing construction.

The goal is to incentivize the creation of varied housing types, including the missing middle, non-market, and market rental housing, throughout the city by offsetting a portion of the cost of construction.

The overall objective of these initiatives is to stimulate the creation of new housing units, promote diverse housing options, and facilitate the intensification of residential development within the City.

This initiative requires an amendment to the GCIP. The details of the proposed amendment are included in Appendix 'C'. In addition to the specific program changes, staff are proposing to create detailed guidelines and provide for strict development timelines to ensure that housing units are coming to market as quickly as possible. Preference will be given to construction ready projects.

4. E-Permitting, Delegation of Authority and 3D Mesh/Digital Twin

Action 1: E-permitting/Electronic Development Applications.

The City has just recently implemented an e-permitting process for both Building Permits and Planning Applications (Citywide). The E-permitting is available for all types of planning and building permit applications.

The E-permitting assists greatly in monitoring progress towards Key Performance Indicators for planning and building permit applications. E-permitting will create automated workflows to streamline process efficiency

to speed up reviews of applications. Including concurrent review of files by various departments. A user-friendly interface improves the experience for the applicant, making it easy to submit and monitor their applications progress.

E-permitting has been implemented for Planning Act applications and Building Permit Applications. Details on this process, including instruction videos/Frequently Asked Questions are available on the City's website: [Building Permits](#) and [Planning Applications](#).

Action 2: Increased Delegation to Staff

As permitted by the Planning Act, the City will increase delegation of approval authority to staff. The City proposes completing an Official Plan Amendment and amendment to the City's Delegation By-law to permit certain technical matters to be delegated to staff with the expertise to review and approve these items.

The delegation of these routine technical matters will permit staff members to approve applications where required. This may include the removal of a holding zone, Temporary Use By-laws, Consent Granting Officials and extension to Draft Plan of Subdivision and/or Condominiums, and Validation Certificates.

This initiative requires an amendment to the City's Official Plan. The details on this amendment, including a full planning analysis, is included in Appendix 'A'.

Action 3: 3D Mesh/Digital Twin

The City of North Bay has initiated works towards providing aerial imagery, oblique imagery and 3D Mesh data and applications. High-resolution aerial imagery and advanced technology offers detailed, accurate views of properties and infrastructure. This can help the City with tasks like property assessments, urban planning, infrastructure management, and disaster response. This data can be used to streamline processes, improve decision-making, and enhance overall efficiency in managing municipal services.

The City will also be able to use this technology to support ongoing education on the look and feel of residential development within the existing urban form and ongoing efforts to determine the impact of climate change, model changes to determine potential impacts on the City's infrastructure and to plan and update the City's infrastructure accordingly.

This work is currently underway and expected to be implemented in 2025.

5. Comprehensive review of development charges and fee schedules including waivers for affordable housing.

On August 13, 2024, Council passed an extension of the Development Charges By-law. This By-law extension ensures that Development Charge rates are clear, transparent and predetermined (not subject to negotiation). The By-law was extended for 5 years holding current Development Charge rates in place and creating stability for the development community. The existing Development Charges have remained unchanged since 2014 and are 50% below the 2014 maximum permitted development charge rate.

The City has taken an additional step in the Development Charges By-Law by including a reduced rate to support new housing construction for Entry Level/Starter homes. This reduces the rate paid within a range of 50% to 100% depending on the size of the structure. In addition, the Development Charges By-law waives all development charges for affordable housing projects, projects by colleges and universities (to support student housing initiatives) and additional dwelling units.

This initiative is complete.

6. Development Application Review Team (DART)

The City has an established track record of supporting and facilitating all forms of development within the community.

Action 1 - Prioritized/enhanced development approval process for rental and affordable housing.

Through this initiative, the City will create a process to fast-track the development review and building permit review for non-market and purpose-built multiple residential dwellings. This will ensure that all non-market and purpose-built multiple residential dwellings are processed quickly and efficiently to allow this form of new housing units to come online quickly. This project supports the City's overall strategy to support new housing creation and aligns with the other initiatives proposed, including the Development Grant Programs (Growth CIP) to support new housing units. This initiative focuses on improved case management to ensure priority projects are managed efficiently to support applicants through any necessary development approvals process. Information on the City's Development Application Review Team (DART) is available on the City's website.

Action 2 – Concierge Service

The City will identify one key staff member who will be the key point of contact for any non-profit housing developer/provider. This concierge service will help non-profit providers to navigate the development and building permit process. This service will support and facilitate discussions with the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB), the City's Service Manager, which is responsible for social housing within the City of North Bay.

This initiative is in place. Adam Curran is the designated City staff person to assist non-profit housing providers navigate the development and building permit process.

7. Reduce Parking Standards and Promote Active Transportation

Action 1: Reduce Parking Standards

Through the adoption of the City's new Additional Dwelling Unit policies and regulations, the City reduced the maximum required parking per ADU from 1 parking space per unit to 0.5 parking spaces per unit.

The City continues to invest consistently year over year in new active transportation opportunities and has developed a recognized leading edge public transportation system with Dynamic Dispatch. These initiatives provide a viable alternative to the use of personal vehicles and support the reduction of parking requirements, allowing for additional flexibility in providing new housing units by reducing the amount of land area necessary for parking-related uses. This allows for more dwelling units per property and increases project viability and density.

This reduced parking standard is currently in place.

Action 2: Promote Active Transportation

The City adopted an Active Transportation Master Plan in 2019. The purpose of the Active Transportation Master Plan is to create the vision and establish a plan related to the improvements necessary in the City's Active Transportation network and infrastructure to support a connected, integrated transportation network that reduces the dependency on personal vehicles.

This initiative would result in an integrated active transportation system creating cyclist-friendly multi-modal points at key transit stops, the Transit Terminal and municipal cycling destinations.

The scope of the project includes the purchase and installation of 21 bicycle racks on city buses and the purchase and installation of 30 secure bike/personal areas at transit terminals, stops and cycling destinations. Not all locations would have a storage area. The storage areas would be locker-type storage.

The City is purchasing and installing 5 bike lockers that store 2 bikes per locker that are placed in strategic locations to support the use of public transportation and reduce car dependency. These bike lockers will provide secure storage and peace of mind for users to support the use of public transportation and City recreational facilities.

The following initiatives have been completed or soon to be completed:

- Twenty-one (21) bike racks have been installed on transit buses; and
- Thirty (30) personal/secure in the summer of 2025

The proposed 7 initiatives will incentivize additional housing units being created in North Bay.

The purpose of the first section of this report is to provide details on the seven initiatives. Staff will continue to bring amendments and policies to implement the initiatives when appropriate.

Proposed Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments

Attached to this report are proposed Official Plan Amendments and Zoning By-law Amendments to implement the following initiatives:

- 1) Appendix 'A' and Appendix 'B' - An Official Plan Amendment and a Zoning By-law Amendment to Allow 4 units As-of-Right within the City's Settlement Area and an Official Plan Amendment to permit enabling policy to permit Delegated Approval to Staff; and
- 2) Appendix 'C' - An Official Plan Amendment to amend the City's GCIP to top up funding within the Housing Target Area.

The Appendices provide planning rationale and justification.

Financial/Legal Implications

The City of North Bay has entered into an agreement with the Federal Government to receive \$10.6 million dollars to implement the seven initiatives to incent the creation of 337 housing units over three years. The funding is conditional upon the City achieving its housing target, and requires annual reporting to Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) on the status of the implementation of the initiatives.

The Top-Up Funding to GCIP will be funded through the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). Applications will be accepted on a first come, first served basis with preference to ready for construction projects. All other aspects of the GCIP are funded from the existing GCIP reserve fund.

Corporate Strategic Plan

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|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Natural North and Near | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Economic Prosperity |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Affordable Balanced Growth | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Spirited Safe Community |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible and Responsive Government | |

Specific Objectives

- Promote and support public and private sector investment;

- Explore and implement opportunities to streamline processes, policies and practices that make it easier and more effective to do business in North Bay;
- Provide smart, cost-effective services and programs to residents and businesses;
- Facilitate the development of housing options to service the entire community, with consideration to socio-economic characteristics of the community;
- Continually improve policies and practices that celebrate diversity and create a welcoming environment that supports development, growth, and community engagement; and
- Facilitate the development of housing options to service the needs of the community.

Options Analysis

Option 1:

- 1) That City Council recognizes the seven initiatives identified in the City of North Bay's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application as presented in Report to Council CSBU-2025-011 by Adam Curran;
- 2) That City Council direct staff to amend the City's Housing Action Plan to reflect the seven initiatives; and
- 3) That the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) implementation be referred to the Community Services Committee of Council for the required statutory public meetings under the Planning Act.

Option 2:

- 1) That City Council does not recognize the seven initiatives identified in the City of North Bay's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application as presented in Report to Council CSBU-2025-011 by Adam Curran;
- 2) That City Council does not direct staff to amend the City's Housing Action Plan to reflect the seven initiatives; and
- 3) That the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) implementation not be referred to the Community Services Committee of Council for the required statutory public meetings under the Planning Act.

This option is not recommended as it is required as part of the City's agreement with the Federal Government's Housing Accelerator Fund.

Recommended Option

Option 1 is the recommended option.

- 1) That City Council recognizes the seven initiatives identified in the City of North Bay's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application as presented in Report to Council CSBU-2025-011 by Adam Curran;
- 2) That City Council direct staff to amend the City's Housing Action Plan to reflect the seven initiatives; and
- 3) That the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) implementation be referred to the Community Services Committee of Council for the required statutory public meetings under the Planning Act.

Respectfully submitted,

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Title: Policy and Business Development Planner

I concur with this report and recommendation

Name: Beverley Hillier, MCIP, RPP

Title: Manager, Planning & Building Services

Name: Ian Kilgour, MCIP, RPP

Title: Director, Community Services

Name: John Severino, P.Eng., MBA

Title: Chief Administrative Officer

Personnel designated for continuance:

Name: Adam Curran, M.E.S., MCIP, RPP

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