

Meeting Date: January 17, 2022
Department: Chief Administrative Officer
Report No.: CAO-2022-02
Submitted by: Fred Tranquilli, Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk
Approved by: Fred Tranquilli, Chief Administrative Officer / Clerk
SUBJECT: **Status Update - Rapid Housing Initiative (2) Application**

RECOMMENDATION: THAT: Council receive Report CAO 2022-02 for information; and further, THAT: Council supports the Caradoc Housing Corporation moving forward the project at 22647 Adelaide Road, Mount Brydges under the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF).

STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT:

This matter is in accord with the following strategic priorities:

- Growth Management – Provide a variety of attainable housing options that address affordability challenges
- Growth Management – Increase density and rental options downtown
- Destination Building – Support the revitalization of downtowns in Strathroy and Mount Brydges

BACKGROUND:

In Budget 2021, the Government of Canada committed an additional \$1.5B funding for the RHI2 to address the urgent housing needs of vulnerable people in Canada by providing them with permanent affordable housing within a short time frame. In all, this new funding would help increase the supply of affordable housing in Canada by at least 4,500 units, which is in addition to the 4,700 units already funded through the initial \$1B investment.

The RHI2 generated significant interest, resulting in many quality applications which required a critical assessment of all applications. While the CMHC was unable to offer financial support for our project under the RHI2, they would like to discuss the National Housing Co-Investment Fund (NHCF) with us. The NHCF is another good program that can finance this project through a low interest mortgage and begin to address the affordable housing shortage in the community. This program is an open and non-competitive funding stream.

As indicated above, at its core, the RHI program's focus is to address the *urgent housing needs of vulnerable people in Canada*. We improved our proposal's scoring by obtaining the support of the Women's Rural Resource Center and agreed to earmark accommodations for women and children fleeing violence. In order to achieve a higher score on the program evaluation, partnership with our local First Nations neighbors would have been helpful. Despite a number of meetings initiated by the Mayor and staff, meaningful engagement/commitments on this file and the Municipality's recreational strategy have not yet materialized.

While staff and our project partners were optimistic that the community's attainable housing shortage might be addressed using a RHI grant, the CMHC regional representative feels strongly that an application under the above noted funding stream will be viewed with more favor. The primary objective of the Caradoc Housing Corporation and the NHCF is to address affordability issues. Providing a variety of attainable housing options that address affordability challenges is one of the Growth Management strategies reflected in the Corporate Strategic Plan 2020-2029 adopted unanimously by Council. A small number of the units will be offered at market rent to assist with funding the low interest mortgage.

The Caradoc Housing Corporation Board is comprised of Mayor Joanne Vanderheyden, Fred Tranquilli (CAO), Bill Dakin (Dir. of Finance), Jennifer Huff (Dir. Building and Planning), and Lindsay Laskey (Deputy Treasurer). The CHC Board recommends and supports proceeding with an application to the NHCF. In the event the Council supports this recommendation and the funding application is successful, our project partners are at the ready to submit an application with construction expected to commence in Q3/Q4 of 2022.

CONSULTATION:

- CHC Board
- Project Partners
- CMHC

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

- N/A

ATTACHMENTS:

- NONE