

Housing Accelerator Fund Summary

The Housing Accelerator Fund provides incentive funding to local governments encouraging initiatives aimed at increasing housing supply. It also supports the development of complete, low-carbon and climate-resilient communities that are affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse.

The ability to provide a range of appropriate housing options (including market, affordable, and subsidized housing) will increase the chances that individuals, families and neighbourhoods will have the stability they need for a healthy and sustainable future. Both the needs for and the projected benefits of a well-thought-out housing strategy are many, and include:

- Housing will provide for the needs of residents as they join the community, form relationships, find and participate in employment, and ideally age and remain part of the community.
- Updated housing stock will provide for better use of community resources, be more energy efficient, and better provide for the health of residents.
- An effective housing plan also provides for more well-thought-out land use, promoting not only the siting and more effective use of community facilities, but also the protection of open spaces for recreation and conservation.
- Availability of appropriate housing of various types also helps to attract, retain, and provide for the growth of the local and regional labour force, supporting the Town and region's economic development goals.

Grand Bay-Westfield

In 2023, EBP completed a Housing Needs Assessment for the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, the results have informed the towns HAF application;

- Between 2016-2022
 - Number of Households increased by 4% between
 - 20% increase in young workforce
 - 22% increase in aging population (60+ Years)
 - 5% increase in one-person households
 - 1,677% increase in net migration, from 26 to 462 residents
- Core Housing Need – dwellings that exceed household income levels
 - 4% - Owner occupied
 - 24% - Tenant occupied

The results of the report indicate the need for smaller housing units suited to seniors and smaller families that are more affordable than the current housing stock.

Town of Grand Bay-Westfield

The town has developed 5 initiatives to help address the issues identified by the housing needs assessment.

Initiatives:

1. Implementing incentives, costing and fees to increase affordable housing
2. Strategies to promote increased density
3. Updated infrastructure planning
4. Develop process for utilizing town-owned land for housing.
5. Process enhancements for building permits

By implementing this initiatives it is believed that an additional 30 housing units (above the current growth rate) can be created over a 3 year time frame.

Initiative #1 Details

Initiative Name

Incentives, Costing and Fee Structures

Initiative Type

Implementing incentives, costing or fee structures to encourage such things as affordable housing.

Describe your initiative, including its goals and objectives

That the Council of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, with Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) funding, shall develop and adopt policies, programs and initiatives to increase the number of affordable housing units - with emphasis towards neighbourhoods with higher walkability scores and access to public transit. To encourage greater density, Council shall:

- As part of a pilot program - Remove all permitting fees and charges related to new affordable housing units. If the program is a success, the fees may be dropped permanently. This will support the development of affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities.
- As part of a pilot program - Provide reimbursements to developers to remove infrastructure barriers such as well water exploration and the needed installation of cisterns, to development and provide necessary infrastructure who develop:
 - Family units in multi-unit housing or above commercial units
 - Three affordable housing units
 - Seniors housing, including affordable seniors housing units
 - Multi-unit housing, also known as 'missing middle' housing including:

- Courtyard housing
- Duplexes
- Fourplexes
- Garden suites
- Low rise apartments
- Mid-rise apartments
- Row houses
- Secondary suites
- Triplexes

Estimated Start Date

2023-11-01

Estimated Completion Date

2026-12-31

Priority Objectives

Creating more supply of housing

Supporting affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities

Explain how the initiative supports the Priority Objective(s) selected

By removing the fees for building and development permits it will reduce the upfront costs for developers. By also providing financial support to reduce barriers that developers encounter such as access to water, it will encourage them increase the supply of affordable housing units.

By targeting reduced fees and financial support to developers willing to build affordable units it will foster development of housing that is affordable and aimed at families and lower income individuals.

Milestones

Milestone Name	Development Incentive By-law Change
Estimated Start Date	2023-11-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-05-31
Description	<p>The Incentive By-law shall be changed removing incentives from the purchaser as property tax incentives to the Developer to reduce or eliminate the cost of infrastructure development. Reducing or eliminating infrastructure development barriers is a systemic barrier and incentives can be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform the necessary environmental review process and access to water and well drilling; • Integrate various water supply systems to control water supply and mitigate the limitation of well systems for multi-residential units including affordable housing.

Town of Grand Bay-Westfield



Milestone Name Permitting Fees & Costs Policy Changes
Estimated Start Date 2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date 2024-05-31
Description As a pilot project, policies shall be developed to remove all permitting fees and costs related to affordable housing to reduce the cost of development within the Town and encourage more affordable housing units. If this pilot project is successful then fees may be dropped permanently.

Milestone Name Public Relations & Marketing
Estimated Start Date 2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date 2026-12-31
Description Develop a publicity and marketing awareness campaign - enabling landowners, builders and developers to utilize the new incentives and the process changes within the Development Office, to release land for development. This will ensure that landowners and developers are aware of the changes made. It is anticipated that material produced by this campaign will be able to be used for many years.

To assist with this a marketing company will be enlisted to create a marketing and education plan including the following items:

- Developer and Landowner Program
- Program Strategy
- Brand Strategy
- Developer Tool Kit Marketing Campaign
- Strategic Workplan
- Creative material inc. photography
- Asset development
- Media buy

Initiative #2 Details

Initiative Name

Promote Increased Density

Initiative Type

Allowing increased housing density on a single lot including promoting “missing middle” housing forms

Describe your initiative, including its goals and objectives

That the Council of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, with Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) funding, shall develop and adopt policies, programs and initiatives to increase density with emphasis towards neighborhoods with higher walkability scores and access to public transit.

To encourage greater density, Council shall:

1. Council shall permit residential buildings above three (3) floors. Currently due to limitations of the Fire Department residential buildings are permitted to be a maximum of three (3) floors. By removing this limit and allowing buildings with more floors density will be increased.
2. To address the limitations of the local Fire Department, the Town will enter into Fire Service Agreements for the aid of ladder trucks for buildings above three (3) stories.
3. Cultivate housing partners, private and non-profit, through a business plan and marketing and education programs to develop affordable housing and Seniors housing.
4. Develop a density incentive for projects that have a minimum of 4 housing units per 1 acre lot.

Estimated Start Date

2024-01-01

Estimated Completion Date

2025-12-31

Other Expected Results

"Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within 10 Years" is a projection of the "Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within the Program Period."

Priority Objectives

Creating more supply of housing

Supporting affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities

Explain how the initiative supports the Priority Objective(s) selected

By allowing buildings to be higher, more units will be built in developments which will increase density. This increase in density will assist developers in raising capital through bank financing and should decrease the per unit building costs making units more affordable.

By working in conjunction with for-profit and non-profit housing partners, more affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse community shall be developed. The marketing and education program the Town will work to attract partners who can provide inclusive and affordable housing options. The business plan will work as a “proof of concept” to demonstrate the financial benefits to potential partners.

Milestones

Milestone Name	Fire Service Agreements
Estimated Start Date	2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date	2025-06-30
Description	Council shall approve a new Fire Service Agreement enabling neighbouring fire departments to provide ladder trucks to suppress fires in buildings with four or more stories.

Milestone Name	Mid-rise Apartment Policy
Estimated Start Date	2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date	2025-06-30
Description	Council shall develop and approve a policy permitting apartment buildings with four or more stories.

Milestone Name	Develop Density Incentive
Estimated Start Date	2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-05-31
Description	Council shall authorize and approve the development of a new Density Incentive, encouraging more missing middle housing and social inclusion. This incentive would be directed at developers who create missing middle and inclusive housing that meets a density threshold. This threshold would be set at a minimum of 4 housing units per 1 acre lot.

Milestone Name Cultivate Housing Partners
Estimated Start Date 2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date 2025-06-30
Description Identify potential housing partners both private and non-profit. Once identified the Town will work with this network of partners with the aim of increasing affordable housing and housing units aimed at seniors. Town staff will work hand-in-hand with these partners to understand and tackle challenges/obstacles that stand in their way.

Milestone Name Business Plan - Seniors and Affordable Housing
Estimated Start Date 2024-03-01
Estimated Completion Date 2024-12-31
Description The Town of Grand Bay-Westfields housing needs assessment identified the need to increase the supply of housing that meets the needs of smaller households and residents over 55 years of age. The aim of this milestone is to undertake a study/business plan on the market viability of housing that suits the needs of smaller households and residents over 55 years of age. This plan can then be used as a marketing tool to promote the concept and recruit housing partners and developers to increase the housing stock aimed at this demographic.

Initiative #3 Details

Initiative Name

Infrastructure and Planning

Initiative Type

Updating infrastructure planning to align with official community plans, growth targets, and housing needs assessment

Describe your initiative, including its goals and objectives

That the Council of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, with Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Funding, shall develop and adopt policies, programs and initiatives to update infrastructure planning to align with the community plan, growth targets and housing needs assessment. Emphasis will be placed on neighbourhoods with higher walkability scores and access to public transit. To encourage greater density, Council shall:

1. Update infrastructure planning; and
2. Develop a Transit Plan and Active Transportation Plan addressing the needs of commuters and newcomers
3. Update the Town's Climate Change Action Plan to ensure an accurate understanding of the Town's carbon footprint and reset goals for the reduction in carbon emissions
4. As a pilot project, provide reimbursements for Environmental Impact Assessments and Potable Water Assessments
5. As a pilot project, support site preparation with the development of a hydrology map of the properties with higher walkability scores and access to public transit

Estimated Start Date

2024-01-01

Estimated Completion Date

2025-12-31

Other Expected Results

"Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within 10 Years" is a projection of the "Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within the Program Period."

Priority Objectives

Creating more supply of housing

Supporting affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities

Supporting complete and walkable communities with diverse land uses and access to amenities

Supporting low-carbon and climate-resilient communities

Explain how the initiative supports the Priority Objective(s) selected

One of the largest barriers to growth within the Town is access to drinking water, the Town has no municipal water system so all houses are reliant on wells for water. By developing and maintaining a hydrological map of the town future growth can be directed to the areas where it can be supported by water. This information can be leveraged by developers when working through Environmental Impact Assessments with the provincial government, reducing their costs and speeding up the application process.

By completing a transit study and active transportation plan the Town can direct future growth to areas with the greatest access to existing and planned transportation corridors. Understanding the patterns of public transportation use and the current/future needs will be critical in planning the growth of our transit system. Access to transit systems is vital to encouraging growth in affordable and inclusive housing.

Ensuring that the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield has a mature and developed asset management plan will assist it in ensuring the impacts of climate change on Town infrastructure are accounted for. By updating the Town’s Climate Change Action Plan, the Town will be able to accurately predict its carbon footprint and identify areas of improvement.

Milestones

Milestone Name	Update Infrastructure Planning
Estimated Start Date	2024-06-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	Council shall approve the retention of a consultant to upgrade the current asset management processes - including developing a professional development program for the Public Works Department leadership team.

Milestone Name	Complete Transit Study
Estimated Start Date	2024-04-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	Council shall approve the retention of consultants to develop a Transit Plan to ensure an efficient and relevant Transit Plan to assist students, seniors, commuters, and immigrants to locate to Grand Bay-Westfield. Further, an Active Transportation Plan, with a trail plan, shall be developed

ensuring increased walkability through and about Town with trails used to link neighbourhoods.

Milestone Name Complete Active Transportation Plan
Estimated Start Date 2024-04-01
Estimated Completion Date 2025-12-31
Description Council shall approve the retention of consultants to develop an Active Transportation Plan to review and recommend enhancements to the Town's transportation corridors. It is anticipated that such a plan would include cycle lanes, a trail system linking neighbourhoods, and other measures to increase walkability and active living.

Milestone Name Sustainable Water
Estimated Start Date 2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date 2026-12-31
Description Council shall approve the retention of consultants to determine sustainable water locations through site preparation using hydrological studies, for those areas with high walkability scores and access to public transit and specific sites within the studied area.

Milestone Name Environmental Impact Assessment
Estimated Start Date 2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date 2024-05-31
Description Council shall approve a program to provide assistance to developers who are required, due to provincial legislation, to conduct an environmental impact assessment to develop bare land.

Milestone Name Climate Change Action Plan
Estimated Start Date 2024-01-01
Estimated Completion Date 2025-12-31
Description Council shall approve the updating of the Climate Change Action Plan so the Town's carbon footprint is up-to-date, and carbon reduction targets are recalibrated.

Initiative #4 Details

Initiative Name

Disposal of Town-Owned Land

Initiative Type

Create a process for the disposal of city-owned land assets for the development of affordable housing as-of-right

Describe your initiative, including its goals and objectives

The Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, with Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) funding, shall develop a Town-Owned Land Disposal Process. This will include complementary incentives to mitigate ongoing limitations, such as drinking water accessibility for mixed housing. This Process will involve a Town-Owned Land Assessment to identify land suited for development. The Town of Grand Bay-Westfield shall develop a Request for Proposal (RFP) that can be used to identify developers to help meet the housing targets.

Estimated Start Date

2024-02-01

Estimated Completion Date

2024-12-31

Other Expected Results

"Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within 10 Years" is a projection of the "Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within the Program Period."

Priority Objectives

Creating more supply of housing

Supporting affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities

Supporting complete and walkable communities with diverse land uses and access to amenities

Explain how the initiative supports the Priority Objective(s) selected

This Town-Owned Land Disposal Process will accelerate housing development by increasing the availability and visibility of land suited for development. As part of this Process, the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will require developers to include "missing middle" and affordable housing in housing developments that take advantage of this program, thereby increasing the diversity of the housing supply.

Through a Council process, the development shall emphasize affordability, inclusiveness, diversity and equitability.

Town owned land that has access to transit, recreation infrastructure and other amenities will be weighted higher for development. This should ensure that housing is developed in areas that residents can access with means other than personal vehicles.

Milestones

Milestone Name	Town-Owned Land Disposal Process
Estimated Start Date	2024-02-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	The Council of Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will develop a Town-Owned Land Disposal Process to encourage affordable housing and mixed housing development. This will include an inventory of land available and a ranking of lots recommended for disposal with weighting given to lots with high walkability scores and access to transit.

Milestone Name	Public Education & Marketing
Estimated Start Date	2024-02-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	Council shall authorize a public education and marketing campaign - advising builders and developers of the advantages of development in Grand Bay-Westfield. And, to let potential home buyers and renters know of the virtues of living in Grand Bay-Westfield.

Initiative #5 Details

Initiative Name

Process Enhancement

Initiative Type

Implementing new/enhanced processes or systems

Describe your initiative, including its goals and objectives

That the Council of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield, with Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) funding - shall develop and adopt policies, programs and initiatives that add efficiencies to the development and building permit process with the aim of increasing

accessibility and decreasing processing times. Council shall direct Administration to enhance its permitting processes by:

1. Delegate greater authority to the CAO to administer the incentive program;
2. Increase Administrative capacity to support housing;
3. Implement e-Permitting process to improve approval times 10%;
4. Decrease the turnaround time needed to process development and building permits; and
5. Residential market and cost study - update the Housing Needs Assessment in 2026 including the vacancy rate.

Estimated Start Date

2024-02-01

Estimated Completion Date

2026-12-31

Other Expected Results

"Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within 10 Years" is a projection of the "Estimated Number of Units the Initiative will Incent within the Program Period."

Priority Objectives

Creating more supply of housing

Supporting affordable, inclusive, equitable and diverse communities

Explain how the initiative supports the Priority Objective(s) selected

The streamlined Permit Application Process will accelerate housing development by ensuring adequate processing capacity within the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield. By moving to an Online Building Permit Application Process, the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will respond to developers submitting Building Permit Applications in a timely manner.

Furthermore, the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will also clarify the obligations of involved parties by amending the Developer Service Agreement (DSA). By ensuring this agreement is clear and concise it will make it easier for developers to understand their obligations when planning developments.

The updated Housing needs assessment in 2026 will help provide guidance on the gaps that exist in the housing market of Grand Bay-Westfield. This can be used to gauge the changes in housing stock since the most recent assessment and identify gaps to provide guidance for future developments.

Milestones

Milestone Name	Delegate Authority
Estimated Start Date	2024-02-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	The Council of the Town of Grand Bay-Westfield shall delegate greater authority to the CAO to govern the permitting process. This will include but not be limited to: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Incentive programs2. Permitting processes and Procedures3. Increased capacity
Milestone Name	Enhancements to Housing Needs Assessment
Estimated Start Date	2024-02-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	Council shall improve the retention of a consultant to update and expand the current Housing Needs Assessment, and conduct a residential market and cost study. This will include analysis to establish and validate the current vacancy rate within the Town. It has been noted that if there was reliable vacancy data available it would assist developers in raising finance with lenders.
Milestone Name	Permit Application Process Streamlining
Estimated Start Date	2024-02-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-12-31
Description	The Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will implement an Online Building Permit Application Process to supplement the existing Building Permit Application Process. A planning consultant will be retained to review the towns current processes and make recommendations for improvements with the aim to make the process for accessible and reduce processing times.
Milestone Name	Developer Service Agreement (DSA) Amendment
Estimated Start Date	2024-02-01
Estimated Completion Date	2024-05-31

Description The Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will amend the current Developer Service Agreement to ensure greater transparency in fees, charges and responsibilities.

Milestone Name Permit Application Capacity Enhancement

Estimated Start Date 2024-02-01

Estimated Completion Date 2026-12-31

Description The Town of Grand Bay-Westfield will increase processing capacity in the Development Office. This will ensure that Building Permit Applications are reviewed and processed in a timely manner.