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**Subject:** Initiation of a Housing Needs Assessment

**Department:** Infrastructure Services

**Division:** Planning

**Report #:** INS-2025-033

**Meeting Date:** 2025-06-09

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### Recommendations

**That report INS-2025-033, Initiation of a Housing Needs Assessment, be received; and**

**That staff report back to Council with the final Housing Needs Assessment following its completion and submission to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) in accordance with Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF) requirements.**

### Overview

The Town has an existing Municipal Funding Agreement (MFA) with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) under the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF). The CCBF is formerly known as the Federal Gas Tax Fund and is a stable source of federal funding issued twice a year for local infrastructure projects, including transit.

In 2024, the Town recently renewed its MFA for the CCBF for another 10-year period. A new requirement of the renewed MFA is for municipalities with a population of over 30,000 to complete a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) in order to remain eligible to continue receiving the CCBF. Completing this HNA intends to help municipalities prioritize projects that will support increasing housing supply where its needed. For the Town to continue to receive the CCBF, the HNA must be completed and submitted by the deadline of June 30, 2025.

Completing the HNA is a new requirement of the CCBF and is not identified in any departmental workplan. Furthermore, staff have neither the capacity nor the expertise to complete this study in-house.

It is critical for the Town to undertake the HNA to continue receiving this reliable source of funding. In addition, a HNA will provide valuable insight into our community housing trends, needs and how long-term planning can meet those needs.

The Planning division has an external consultant (SGL Planning) retained on a standing offer basis to provide support for planning reviews and special assignments as needed. Staff have coordinated with SGL to assist with completing this HNA. SGL is working with a sub-consultant with expertise in this subject matter to have the HNA completed for submission by the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. The estimated cost to complete this work is approximately \$42,750 (\$42,000 plus non recoverable HST of 1.76%). There is a 2025 operating budget provision of \$30,000 for the Planning division available to cover costs related to as-needed consultant reviews and minor studies related to planning matters. Staff will monitor the resulting variance and report back to Council on further action required should the excess not be able to be absorbed within the overall 2025 operating budget as part of the periodic financial reporting process. Staff will also report back to Council with the final HNA document once it has been finalized and submitted to AMO under the CCBF.

## **Background**

On July 8, 2024, Council received staff report [CPS-2024-043](#) recommending execution of a Municipal Funding Agreement (MFA) with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) under the Canada Community-Building Fund.

The Canada Community-Building Fund (the “CCBF”), formerly known as the Federal Gas Tax Fund, is a stable and reliable source of federal funding for local infrastructure. This funding is intended to support environmentally sustainable municipal infrastructure, including transit and is provided to communities up-front, twice a year. Municipalities can strategically invest this funding in eligible projects to address local priorities, or can pool, bank or borrow against this funding. First established in 2005, the Fund has continually evolved to meet municipal needs and their critical infrastructure projects.

Execution of the new MFA renewed and extended the previous 10-year MFA executed in June 2014 for another 10-year period, now effective from April 1, 2024 to March 31, 2034. Upon execution of the new MFA, the Town continues to remain eligible for CCBF funding allocated over the next 10-year period, subject to satisfying the terms and conditions of the MFA.

## **Analysis/Current Situation**

One of the new requirements under the 2024 MFA is for municipalities with a 2021 census population of 30,000 or more to prepare and submit a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) to the AMO in order to remain eligible for the CCBF. The HNA is to be used by municipalities to prioritize infrastructure or capacity building projects that support increased housing supply where feasible and appropriate to do so.

Orangeville’s 2021 Census population was 30,167 and therefore must prepare and submit the HNA in order to continue receiving funding under the CCBF. The original deadline to submit the HNA to AMO and publish on the Town’s website was March 31, 2025, which has been extended to June 30, 2025.

## What is the Housing Needs Assessment?

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is a report informed by data and research that describes the current and future housing needs of a municipality, including both quantitative and qualitative research and analysis.

The federal government intends to use municipal HNA's as a key tool in its evidence-based long-term approach to addressing housing needs across the country. HNAs are intended to help all levels of government understand the local housing needs of communities and how they may relate to infrastructure priorities, by providing the data necessary to determine what kind of housing needs to be built and where. The stated intent is to promote systematic planning of infrastructure that takes into consideration current and future housing needs.

The federal government has developed a standard HNA template based on best practices from jurisdictions across Canada that have undertaken their own HNA's, consultations with disciplinary experts, and engagements with provinces and territories. The stated benefits of a standardized template are described as follows:

- Providing the necessary evidence to inform local housing policies, investments and planning practices, grounded in the current and projected needs of a community;
- Fostering the widespread development and adoption of a recognized best practice;
- Ensuring an evidence-based, equity-focused and long-term planning approach to determining the housing needs of Canadians;
- Encouraging an integrated approach by linking HNAs to federal infrastructure programs and planning for future population growth;
- Allowing for comparability across jurisdictions and facilitating roll-up of data to ensure an informed, evidence-based, long-term planning story at the municipal, regional and ultimately national level;
- Supporting local governments in fulfilling the HNA requirement for federal infrastructure funding; and,
- Ensuring local governments have a tool that they can leverage for their own evidence-based long-term planning needs.

The research methodology to be used for the assessment is outlined in the HNA template and includes both quantitative research (economic data, population and household forecasts) and qualitative research (interviews, policy analysis, stakeholder engagement). The HNA template will involve research, data analysis and information reporting for the following themes:

1. Methodology and information sources
2. Community profiles, statistics and trends related to housing
3. Household profiles and economic characteristics of the community

4. Housing needs and local factors for priority groups that face proportionately greater housing needs than the general population
5. Housing profiles, including statistics and trends in housing stock and proportionate needs
6. Projected housing needs and next steps. In other words, how much and what type of housing is needed to meet the needs of the population over the next 10-years
7. How will the results and findings of the HNA be used in long-term planning and what actions can be taken to address identified needs.

Municipalities are required to engage with key stakeholders in the housing sector, including non-profit housing providers, developers and the community, to develop a comprehensive HNA.

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### **Corporate Implications**

Preparing a Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is a new requirement for municipalities with a population of 30,000 or more, in order to maintain eligibility for federal funding through the Canada Community-Building Fund (CCBF). The preparation of this HNA has not been on any departmental work plan, no budget has been allocated, and there is no in-house capacity or expertise to complete the required study by the June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025 deadline.

The Planning Division has a standing offer arrangement with planning consultants (SGL Planning) to provide as-needed assistance to the Town with complex or high-volume application activity or special planning reviews and studies. Given the tight timelines and priority to have this HNA completed, staff have requested SGL to assist with this assignment. SGL has partnered with a sub-consultant (Parcel Economics) with expertise in research and studies similar to the HNA, so that it can be completed by the submission deadline and in accordance with the prescribed methodology approach. Although SGL and Parcel Economics has the expertise required to complete the majority of the HNA work, some aspects of this study still require contributions from Town staff.

The estimated cost for the consultant to this work is approximately \$42,750 (\$42,000 plus non recoverable HST of 1.76%). There is a 2025 operating budget provision of \$30,000 in the Planning division available to cover costs related to as-needed consultant reviews and minor studies related to planning matters. Approximately \$18,000 of this provision has been allocated to other studies leaving \$12,000 available for this work. Staff will monitor the resulting variance and report back to Council on further action required should the excess not be able to be absorbed within the overall 2025 operating budget as part of the periodic financial reporting process.

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## Conclusion

The preparation of a HNA is a new requirement for the Town to remain eligible for federal funding through the CCBF. Preparing the required HNA follows a standardized template provided under the CCBF program. Since this is a new requirement, it is not on any departmental workplan, no budget has been assigned through the 2025 budget process and staff do not have the capacity or expertise to carry-out the study in-house. Staff will continue to work with SGL Planning and Parcel Economics to ensure that the HNA is completed for submission prior to the June 30<sup>th</sup> deadline. Given these tight timelines, staff will provide the completed HNA to Council for information and feedback regarding implementation at a meeting following submission.

Once a HNA has been completed as a federal program requirement, the Town will not be required to complete a new assessment for other Housing, Infrastructure and Communities Canada programs, other than to update it every five (5) years. Notwithstanding this, the HNA can serve as a “baseline” document than can be updated in the meantime if necessary, such as to access other funding sources that may arise.

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## Strategic Alignment

### Strategic Plan

Strategic Goal: Economic Resilience

Objective: Readiness – Ensure availability and affordability of employment lands and housing

### Sustainable Neighbourhood Action Plan

Theme: Social Well Being

Strategy: Ensure residents have access to affordable housing and community services.

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## Notice Provisions

Not applicable.

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Respectfully submitted,

Tim Kocialek, P.Eng., PMP  
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**Attachment(s):** None.