

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Council's Commitment to Housing: "St. Mary's Working on Solutions for Housing Needs"

St. Mary's, November 15, 2023 – The Municipality of the District of St. Mary's Council has pledged its commitment towards creating a more inclusive and sustainable community by addressing the housing crisis that the Municipality has been facing. With rising housing prices and a shortage of affordable housing options, the council has recognized the urgent need to take action to ensure that everyone has access to safe, secure, and affordable housing.

In a statement released today, Warden Wier said, "Housing is a fundamental human right, and it is our responsibility as a Municipality to ensure that every possible policy and financial commitment is in place to accelerate residents' access to a decent and affordable place to live. Council's commitment to housing is not just about providing a roof over people's heads, but also about creating a more equitable and sustainable community for all."

The council's commitment to housing is a multi-faceted approach that includes a variety of strategies to increase the supply of affordable housing, prevent homelessness, and improve the quality of existing housing. Some of the key initiatives that the Council has undertaken include:

1. Modernized Municipal Planning Strategy and Land Use By-law in 2022 including commitments that align with the Provincial Housing Goal:

- Support for greater housing affordability and diversity by permitting:
  - Duplexes, Multi-units (3-20), Semi-detached and Townhouses in Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, and Mixed Use Zones,
  - Manufactured Home Parks in the Medium Density and Rural Resource Zones and,
  - Tiny Home Communities in the Medium Density and Rural Resource Zones.
- Support for greater variety of housing types and scales by permitting:
  - Duplexes and Semi-detached housing in Rural Resource Zone
  - backyard/ secondary suites in all zones that permit single detached dwellings (including tiny homes)
  - Small options Homes in all zones that permit single detached housing plus the Institutional Zone and,
  - High Density Residential housing larger than 20 units in size (by Development Agreement) in the Medium Density Residential and Mixed Use Zones.

2. Committed to actions brought forward from the Land Development Committee for housing including:

- Assessing the utility capacity and infrastructure readiness for growth,
- Assessing and updating Municipal process readiness (i.e. policies, by-laws, permits) including adding the lenses of biodiversity and climate change to municipal business, project and practices.
- Pursue Federal and Provincial funding to increase housing supply,

- Identify and foster suitable partnerships with non-profit housing associations to ensure equitable and sustainable solutions are created,
- Create an annual budgetary line for housing commitments and,
- Reserve Municipal land for a potential housing project.

3. Directed Staff to pursue funding through the Federal Housing Accelerator Fund including the required:

- Initiatives to increase annual permitted units such as funding for public infrastructure expansions and capacity building.

The council's commitment to housing is a critical step towards creating a more inclusive and sustainable community. By ensuring that everyone has access to safe, secure, and affordable housing, we can reduce poverty, improve health outcomes, and promote economic growth. The council encourages residents to get involved in these initiatives and help make St. Mary's a better place to live for all.

For more information about the council's commitment to housing, visit [www.saint-marys.ca](http://www.saint-marys.ca).

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