

# HAF Action Plan Summary – Saint John, NB

## **Explanatory Notes:**

- *The following summary is a high-level overview of the approved Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Action Plan.*
- *Local governments are expected to follow statutory processes and procedures when considering and adopting bylaws and policies, including public notification and input processes. HAF recipients have committed to follow regulatory requirements and to actively pursue the relevant council or other approvals needed to advance these initiatives.*
- *HAF recipients are also required to complete and regularly update a Housing Needs Assessment Report.*

## **Initiative 1: North End Secondary Plan**

Supporting neighbourhood revitalization and infill development in the North End neighbourhood (*implementation through 2026*).

- This initiative includes a Community Improvement Plan to address remediation and site preparation challenges, an infill strategy to increase density in key corridors, and a long-term infrastructure roadmap.
- Revitalization will unlock mixed-income communities including affordable home ownership, affordable rentals, and supportive housing.

## **Initiative 2: Housing Concierge Program for Purpose-Built Rentals**

Streamlining planning approvals and enhancing incentives for large purpose-built rental projects.

- Dedicated project champions will work with building, heritage, infrastructure, and planning staff to proactively identify problems from pre-application to permit issuance – helping purpose-built rentals proceed to construction more quickly (*concierge service launched in early 2025*).
- An expanded incentives program will also be rolled out to assist developers facing construction challenges (*implemented in 2024*).

## **Initiative 3: Unlock Gentle Density**

Accelerating approvals and creating new incentives to promote missing middle housing options and gentle density (*implementation in 2024 and 2025*).

- The City will develop model schematic plans for two- to six-unit dwellings and ADUs to support accelerated approvals, and promote these options through a builder education program.
- A new grant program will also be rolled out to help incentivize more missing middle housing forms.

#### **Initiative 4: Capitalize Affordable Housing**

Expediting the development of affordable housing through targeted financial support for the non-profit sector (*implementation in 2024*).

- The City's Affordable Housing Grant Program will be updated and enhanced to provide financial support tailored to the needs of non-profit and affordable housing developers.
- A soft costs grant will be launched to assist non-profit developers with pre-construction costs.
- A three-year pilot will reimburse a portion of planning, building, infrastructure and heritage fees for eligible projects.

#### **Initiative 5: Leverage Public and Underutilized Land**

Creating a geographic information system (GIS) to inventory all public and underused lands for potential redevelopment as affordable housing.

- A new GIS tool will help identify and coordinate redevelopment opportunities with government and non-profit partners, including local land banks and land trusts (*implementation in 2024*).
- The City's land acquisition and disposition policy will be refined to increase the amount of municipal land made available for affordable housing (*implementation in 2024 and 2025*).

#### **Initiative 6: Zoning Bylaw Reform**

Accelerating comprehensive zoning bylaw reforms to facilitate intensification and reduce development approval timelines (*implementation by early 2025*).

- Saint John will allow up to four units within fully serviced residential zones and up to 6 units within intensification areas, greater density around key corridors and in proximity to post-secondary education institutions, and increasing maximum height allowances from 5- to 6-storey heights in mid-rise residential areas.
- The City will also review design requirements (e.g., glazing, step backs) within the city centre, streamline developer agreement conditions, and consider means to streamline affordable housing approvals.

#### **Initiative 7: E-Permitting for the One Stop Development Shop**

Speeding up permit approvals by introducing an online permitting system (*implementation through 2026*).

- This initiative includes researching e-permitting software, analyzing options, selecting a provider, and launching the new platform to support more efficient permit reviews and approvals.

## **Initiative 8: Governance Reform**

Exploring governance enhancements to increase the supply of affordable housing over the long term.

- Saint John will investigate various governance models (e.g. municipal housing entity, arms length corporation, in-house solution) for implementing the City's Affordable Housing Action Plan and promoting non-profit housing development (*analysis complete in 2025, recommendations implemented in 2026*).