



ALBERTA
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Enabling Housing Choice Project

Diversifying
Housing
Development
in Trochu

Town of Trochu

September 2023



RURAL
DEVELOPMENT
NETWORK



LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

We, the Rural Development Network (RDN) and the Enabling Housing Choice (EHC) project, acknowledge that the Town of Trochu is located in Treaty 7 territory, signed in 1877.

We acknowledge that we are all treaty people with a shared unity that is tied to the land.

We stand in alliance with all treaty people and take ownership in all that we do, with a mind toward reconciliation now and in our ongoing endeavors.

We acknowledge the ancestors of all Treaty 7 Nations who have lived on this land and their descendants who will continue to live here. This territory is the shared traditional and ancestral home of the Blackfoot Confederacy, consisting of the Piikani, Amksapi Piikani, Siksika, and Kainai Nations, as well as the Tsuu'tina and the Iethka Nakoda Nations, which includes the Chinikii, Bears Paw, and Lyarhe First Nations.

We also acknowledge that this territory is home to the Michif and Metis Nation of Alberta. We appreciate and honour the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are with us today and those who have gone before us.

We are strongly committed to supporting the implementation of Canada's Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and believe in the need for meaningful engagement and consent with Indigenous peoples in the community. As this project specifically touches on development and planning concepts which are built on a colonial system of governance and land use management, we recognize that we have more work to do in order to fully unpack the systems in which we are upholding and working within.

It is our sincere hope that the findings provided in this report will serve to address Trochu's diverse housing needs and provide greater housing security and inclusion for both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in the community and surrounding area.



PROJECT ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Thank you to the Alberta Real Estate Foundation for their funding and support of this project. We would also like to express our appreciation to the Town of Trochu in their efforts to help tackle the housing diversity and choice issues in Alberta communities through participation in the Enabling Housing Choice project.

Furthermore, we would like to express our appreciation and gratitude to all the individuals from the Town of Trochu who participated in the community surveys, individual interviews, and focus group discussions for this project. We appreciate the time and effort you dedicated to sharing your insights, identifying challenges, highlighting opportunities, and suggesting ways to improve housing diversity in Trochu. Your contributions have played a vital role in shaping the understanding of the current housing landscape and guiding us towards meaningful solutions. Your generosity and willingness to collaborate have been instrumental in our goal to create a more diverse, inclusive and diverse housing environment in Trochu.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	1
Purpose	1
Project Scope	2
Methodology	2
Report Overview	3
Section 1 - The Importance of Housing Diversity For Trochu	4
1.1 Importance of Housing Diversity	4
1.2 Housing Needs in Trochu	6
1.3 Addressing Trochu's Housing Needs	10
Section 2 - Incentive Policy Recommendations	11
2.1 Enhance Existing Development Incentives	11
2.2 Additional Housing Policy Incentives	14
2.3 Advertise & Promote Housing Development Incentives	19
2.4 Further Policy Incentive Approaches	20
Section 3 - Municipal Tools and Areas of Opportunity	21
Recommendations	
3.1 Trochu Land Use Bylaw Adjustments	21
3.2 Repurpose Existing Vacant Buildings for Residential Use	31
3.3 Facilitate Continual Community Engagement	32
3.4 Continue with Education, Promotion and Marketing	33

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3.5 Facilitate Housing Partnerships and Collaboration	35
3.6 Address Legislation and Regulations That Control Residential Development	36
Section 4 - Next Steps	40
4.1 Facilitate Continuous Discussion	40
4.2 Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Application	40
4.3 Monitor and Track Progress	40
4.4 Guidebook for Diversifying Housing Development in Rural Communities	41
4.5 Final Words	41
Resources	42



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Rural Development Network (RDN), under its Sustainable Housing Initiative (SHI) program, has partnered with the Town of Trochu to research local housing challenges and prepare recommendations to update existing policy and bylaws that will encourage diverse housing development in the Town. As part of this process, community members - residents, home-builders, business people, and other stakeholders - were part of a community engagement process to collect information and insights about housing issues, foster community buy-in, and contribute to the preparation of meaningful policy change that will support housing diversity in Trochu.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the research was to examine the current challenges that are affecting Trochu's ability to encourage housing development in the Town and then provide recommendations and strategies for the Town to create a housing environment that will accommodate the needs of its residents and encourage housing diversity.

Information about current housing challenges was collected through community surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and a review of existing municipal tools, policies, and bylaws.

The policy and bylaw recommendations that are presented in this report are intended to encourage and facilitate discussion among community members and with the Town, focussing on housing diversity, housing policy, and housing needs. In this way, the community as a whole will be engaged in determining appropriate and meaningful municipal tools that will address and enable diverse housing development to meet the needs of Trochu residents.

In addition, the combined recommendations from all the municipalities that were part of this research will be compiled in the Enabling Housing Choice Guidebook, due for publication in Spring 2024.

PROJECT SCOPE

The scope of the project consisted of the following elements:

- Research best practices regarding diverse housing development in municipalities in Alberta and across Canada;
- Review Trochu's statutory plans, strategies, policies and other relevant planning and economic development documents;
- Understand the context for Trochu's current housing landscape through a review of online community-related information and sites;
- Engage the community in discussing the current local housing environment, through the use of engagement strategies with stakeholders: community surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions;
- Identify the various opportunities and challenges that are associated with and have been identified for housing development in Trochu's housing landscape;
- Prepare recommendations outlining potential municipal tools and areas of opportunity that will address the diverse housing needs identified for residents through the research.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology outlined below was used to conduct the research and prepare the information for both the What We Heard Report and the Final Policy Recommendations Report.

- **On-line Community Survey:** The survey was prepared by EHC team and was conducted using an online survey platform. It was available to the public for 2 weeks on the Town's website. A total of 24 responses were submitted.
- **Interviews:** This process consisted of online interviews with 5 different housing industry experts to gain insights and opinions about the current state of housing in Trochu. The interviews were conducted from May 3 to July 10, 2023.
- **Focus Group:** The focus group discussions were conducted with 5 local residents (as a group) using an online platform, again to collect insights and opinions about the current state of housing in the Town. The focus group discussion was held on July 20, 2023.
- **Key Topics/Themes of the Interview and Focus Group Process:** The following key topics and themes were discussed throughout the course of the interview process and focus group discussions:
 - Barriers/challenges for developing diverse housing types in Trochu;
 - What municipal tools the Town can utilize to encourage diverse housing development;
 - How the Town can further incentivize diverse housing development, while strengthening partnerships with the development industry.

REPORT OVERVIEW

Section 1 is a discussion about the importance of housing diversity in communities like Trochu. It emphasizes the importance of diverse housing in creating and supporting a complete community, and how this aligns with addressing housing needs in the Town.

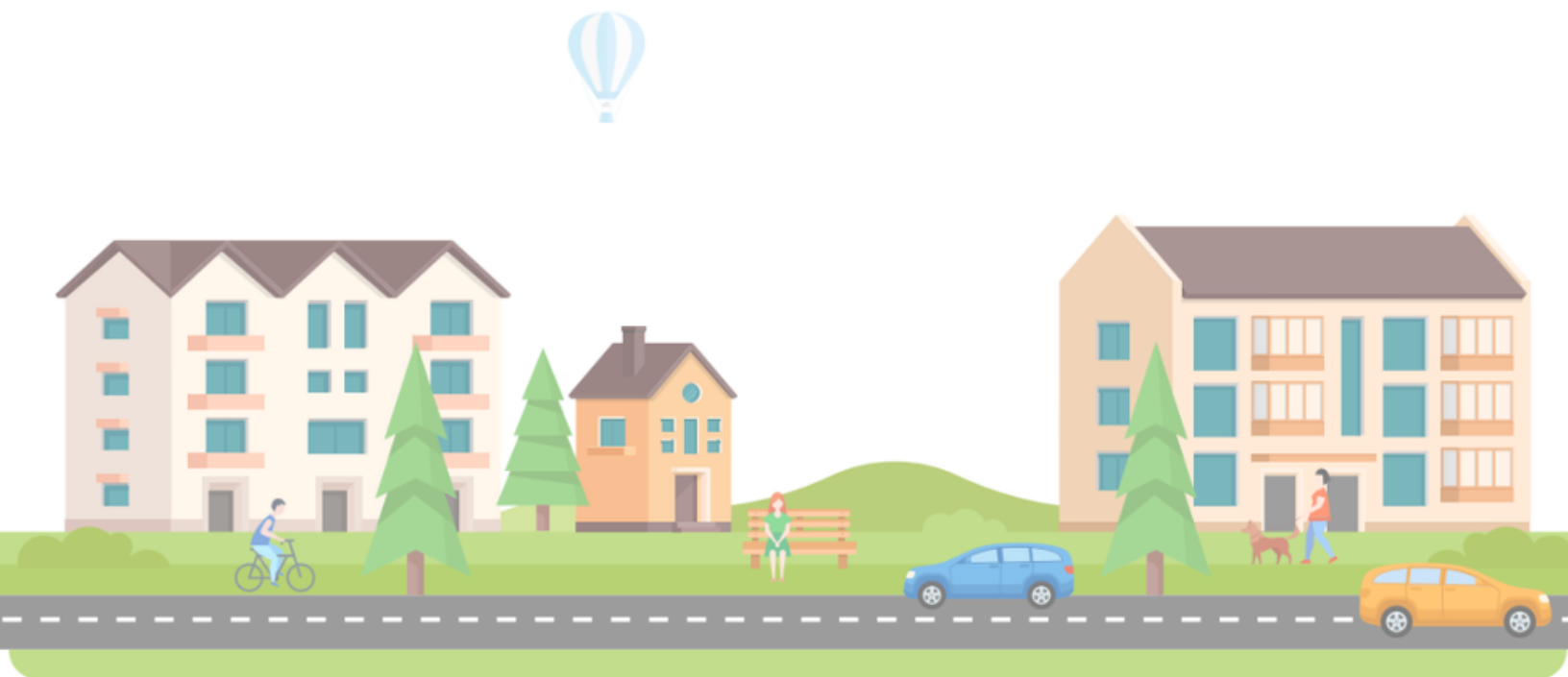
Section 2 presents incentive policy recommendations that will assist with attracting housing development to Trochu. The recommendations include the following:

- Enhancing existing housing development incentives
- Developing additional housing policy incentives
- Advertising and promoting housing development incentives

Section 3 outlines recommendations to amend Trochu's current municipal tools, such as the Land Use Bylaw zoning districts, to better accommodate diversity in housing. It also provides recommendations for 'Areas of Opportunity' in Trochu, as follows:

- Repurposing existing vacant buildings and sites for residential use
- Facilitating continual community engagement
- Continue with education, promotion and marketing of the Town
- Address legislation and regulations that affect residential development

Section 4 outlines next steps of the project as the Enabling Housing Choice team will continue to monitor progress and key milestones related to diverse housing development in Trochu.





SECTION 1: THE IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING DIVERSITY FOR TROCHU

INTRODUCTION

This section aims to emphasize the value of housing diversity for Trochu while sharing viewpoints from survey respondents and interview/focus group participants. It underscores how diverse housing options are crucial for the town and offers insights into why various participants believe such housing is necessary. By showcasing these perspectives, we can better understand the significance of housing diversity in meeting the town's needs and aspirations.

Furthermore, this section includes findings from Trochu's recent Housing Needs Assessment to provide statistical evidence for housing needs in Trochu, while also facilitating a comparison between these empirical findings and the community's own perceptions regarding the types of housing that are in demand. This multi-faceted approach ensures that this report is well-grounded in both quantitative data and the lived experiences of the local residents, guiding informed decisions and strategies to address Trochu's housing needs effectively.

1.1 IMPORTANCE OF HOUSING DIVERSITY

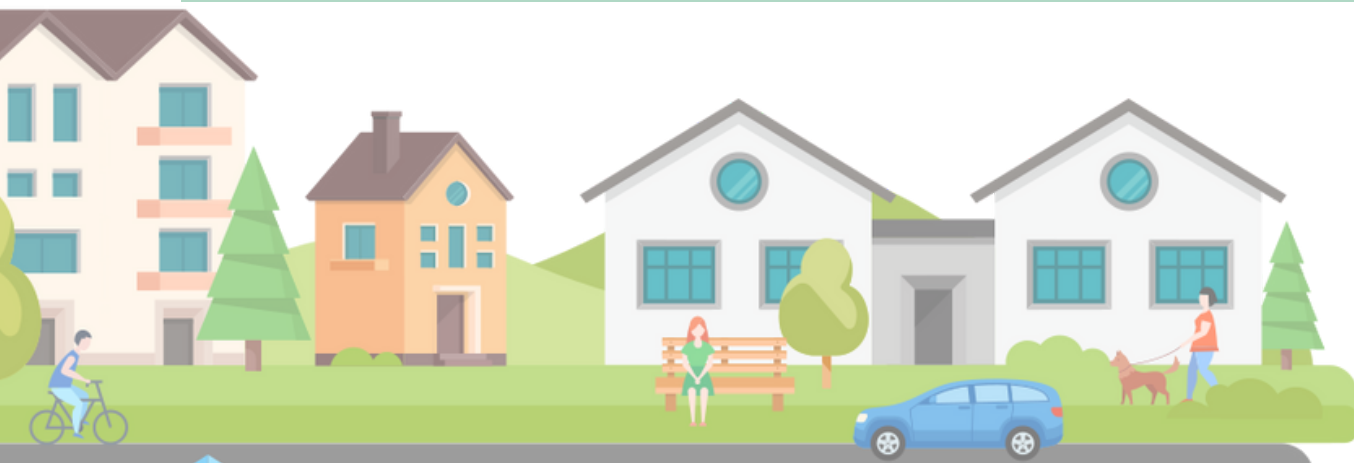
Housing diversity refers to the range of housing types and forms in a community. A diverse community has various different dwelling types and sizes – which may be achieved by flexible zoning that promotes a variety of building forms. By providing greater housing choice, communities can meet the housing needs of increasingly diverse residents and household types (such as young families, professionals, retirees, people with disabilities). The importance of housing diversity for a town like Trochu, or any community for that matter, is significant and can have various positive impacts on the residents and the town as a whole. Such impacts include:

- **Social and Economic Diversity:** Housing diversity attracts a broader range of residents with varying income levels, backgrounds, and lifestyles. This fosters a more diverse and inclusive community, creating a vibrant social fabric and supporting local businesses with a broader customer base.
- **Population Growth and Retention:** Offering a diverse range of housing options can attract new residents to Trochu and encourage existing residents to stay. Young professionals, families, retirees, and individuals with different housing needs can all find suitable accommodations, helping to sustain or increase the town's population.

- **Attracting a Skilled Workforce:** If Trochu aims to attract businesses and industries, a diverse housing market is crucial. Potential employees will be more likely to consider moving to the town if there are housing options that cater to their preferences and needs.
- **Aging Population and Accessibility:** As populations age, the need for accessible and age-friendly housing becomes more important. Housing diversity can include designs that accommodate people with mobility challenges, ensuring that older residents can continue to live comfortably in their community.
- **Community Stability:** A mix of housing types can contribute to community stability. If the town's housing market is solely reliant on one type of housing, fluctuations in that market can have a disproportionate impact. A diverse market can mitigate these effects by spreading risk across different housing sectors.

What We Heard

- “We need a range of housing available for income levels, size of family, age of residents, mobility concerns, etc.”
- “I think housing diversity is important everywhere because there are lots of different people with lots of different needs and wants.”
- “As we have a wide diversification of cultures, we do need housing diversity to suit everyone”
- “Housing diversity means a variety of homes being offered for sale and rent. It is a way to accommodate new workers for local businesses, retired people who move in from the country, and people who have to commute because they can’t find a place in Trochu”.
- “While diversity is important on the surface, diversity for the sake of diversity is not right. What Trochu residents need and want is more important, especially for rental or attached housing. The Town should not bring in someone to build a whole area of condo housing where people are not interested. The housing that’s being built is what clients are asking for and want. If a builder doesn’t get asked to build rental or attached housing, it doesn’t get built”.



1.2 HOUSING NEEDS IN TROCHU

While the updated *Needs and Demand Assessment* (2023) provides a comprehensive statistical analysis of Trochu's overall housing needs, the EHC team gauged survey respondents and interview participant's perspectives on the need for diverse housing in Trochu.

1.2.1 Increased Rental Housing Options

Throughout the community engagement process, participants consistently emphasized the urgent need for increased rental housing options in Trochu. Participants noted that a shortage of rental properties is affecting both newcomers seeking temporary accommodations and long-term residents in search of more flexible living arrangements. The participants underscored how additional rental housing would not only address housing scarcity but also support the town's economic growth by attracting a diverse workforce. Their insights emphasized the tangible impact that an enhanced rental housing market could have on Trochu's overall livability and community vitality.

What We Heard

- “There is a lack of rental housing in Trochu. Workers that come in to work for local companies are typically looking for rental housing. As a result, young people must look for housing elsewhere”.
- “The resale market for existing housing is strong so prices are climbing. As a result, there is no attainable (affordable) housing for local workers.”
- “Local workers need housing but often don’t have the ability to purchase, so rental units are important, especially smaller units. Townhomes and apartments are more efficient and cost effective than building a single detached dwelling, but the cost of building and keeping rent affordable is still an issue.”
- “Many people currently commute to Trochu for work. If additional housing was available I believe they would choose to live here”.

Findings From The Housing Needs Assessment:

- 42% of renters (40 people) live in single detached homes, 21% of renters (20 people) live in apartments with fewer than five storeys, 16% (15 people) rent apartments or duplex units and 10% (9 people) rent mobile homes.
- 23% of renters (about 22 people) live in non-affordable housing.

What The Data Suggests:

- Of those people renting in Trochu, almost half live in single detached homes, rather than more affordable rental units, such as apartments or townhomes. As a result, these single detached dwellings are not available to purchase because they're tied up as rentals. In theory, more rental units in Trochu should help (some) people choose more suitable rental dwellings, which may free up the number of single detached homes for people to buy.
- Additionally, with almost 1 in 4 renters living in non-affordable housing, construction of rental units such as apartments or townhomes should help renters choose more suitable and affordable rental units.
- **Note:** While the Needs Assessment provided overall percentages of renters for specific housing types, it is important to note that it did not **directly measure the need for rental units** because there is not enough rental data available for Trochu and the County of Kneehill County. The Alberta Vacancy and Rental Cost Survey only examines rental information in communities with populations between 1,000 and 9,999 and with at least 30 or more rental units. Trochu's population and rental unit numbers don't meet these criteria.



1.2.2 Housing For Retirees & Seniors

Community engagement participants also underscored the urgent requirement for additional housing options tailored to Trochu's senior population. Participants expressed concerns about the limited availability of suitable housing for seniors, emphasizing the need for age-friendly accommodations that promote independence and community engagement. With the town's aging demographic in mind, interviewees stressed the importance of expanding housing options that cater to the unique needs of seniors, ensuring their comfort and well-being while fostering a sense of belonging within the community.

What We Heard

- “Retirees and seniors are also moving into the Town, looking to downsize to single-level units or other smaller housing types. This group has dominated the rental market. There needs to be more housing types to accommodate the seniors demographic”.
- “A significant need is the new seniors complex. If it were built, there would be available housing as people moved into their purchased suites. Get it done!!”

Findings From The Housing Needs Assessment:

- Unfortunately, the Statistics Canada data in the Housing Needs Assessment does not provide the information necessary to make conclusions about these comments or the general need for seniors housing in Trochu.
- While the data collected shows the number of seniors in the various housing types in Trochu, Stats Canada has determined that these numbers are too low to be used to project future seniors housing needs in the community.
- In fact, because of privacy requirements (FOIPP) and concerns about low numbers in communities under 5,000 people, senior specific housing data has not been collected since 2021.



1.2.3 SMALLER HOMES FOR FIRST-TIME BUYERS & YOUNG FAMILIES

Community engagement participants identified the need for smaller homes that are tailored to first-time buyers and young families. Participants expressed that the traditional concept of larger, sprawling homes no longer aligns with the financial realities and lifestyles of emerging generations. Instead, the focus has shifted towards practicality, efficiency, and affordability.

What We Heard

- “There is a significant lack of smaller family homes for first-time buyers and young families. Newcomers to Trochu are looking for smaller, cost-effective housing, such as duplexes”
- “Trochu needs more small, affordable housing choices for young people.”
- “I think a multi-unit complex which has a reachable entry point would attract employed young people who can’t afford detached homes on their own”

Findings From The Housing Needs Assessment:

- There is an insufficient number of 1-bedroom, 2-bedroom, and 3-bedroom dwellings and an abundance of 4-bedroom homes in Trochu.
- The County and the Town would be best served by building more 1 and 2-bedroom units

1.3 ADDRESSING TROCHU'S HOUSING NEEDS

Overall, the findings from Trochu's Needs and Demand Assessment (2023) correlate with the perspectives obtained from our community engagement process. This suggests that the community's perceptions of Trochu's housing needs are well supported by quantitative data and supports the recommendation that further action is required to address these needs.

Recognizing the pressing need for diverse housing development in Trochu, the subsequent sections of this report delve into a comprehensive analysis of current development incentives, land use regulations and municipal initiatives related to housing development in the community. Through an examination of these factors, this report aims to provide an understanding of Trochu's existing housing landscape and identify areas for improvement.

Furthermore, the recommendations provided in the following sections of this report are grounded in research that has been gathered through community engagement efforts. Collaborative discussions with developers, homebuilders, and internal staff from the Town have provided a multifaceted perspective on the challenges and opportunities related to housing development issues in Trochu. This synthesis of input from stakeholders has been instrumental in shaping recommendations that are not only practical but also tailored to the unique dynamics of Trochu. Through these collective insights, the recommendations provided in this report are intended to enhance the current planning and development environment in Trochu, so that it better fosters diverse housing construction, while aligning with the aspirations of residents, the development industry, and other local stakeholders.



Section 2: Policy Incentives Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

This section's primary focus is to analyze existing incentive policies in Trochu, with the intention of providing insights that may improve or enhance those policies. In addition, we will endeavor to identify and assess additional approaches that have been used in other communities, which may assist developers, home-builders and homeowners in developing more diverse housing options in the Town.

By examining the current incentives and identifying potential areas of opportunity for additional incentives, this section aims to chart a strategic course that will not only assist developers, home-builders and homeowners, but also contribute to the Town's overall prosperity and continued progress.

The following sections provide recommendations for amendments and additions to policy incentives that may assist developers, home-builders and homeowners in facilitating diverse housing development in Trochu.

2.1 ENHANCE EXISTING DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

The following amendments to Trochu's Economic Development Incentive Policy are recommended for consideration by the Town to help attract housing development in the community.

Note: For clarity, the following Economic Development Incentive Policy has been abbreviated to reflect policy guidelines and conditions that relate only to residential development in Trochu.



1 . ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVE POLICY (2023-04-10-01)

Current Purpose: To outline “Economic Development Incentives” to potential clients and to expedite the process of attracting investors to the Town of Trochu.

Current Guidelines: To encourage economic development in our community the Town of Trochu will consider the cancellation of all municipal taxes on the following properties. Provincial taxes will remain in effect.

- **Residential New Build/Lot**

- During the construction phase for a period of up to one (1) year, the Council may consider cancelling 100% of all municipal taxes
- In the first year of occupancy the Council may consider canceling 100% of all municipal taxes
- In the second year the Council may consider canceling 50% of all municipal taxes

- **Residential/New Build/Expansion or Addition to Existing House or Lot**

- The Town Council may consider canceling taxes using the same formula based on the finished assessed value for properties who expand or add a home or revenue property to their property. The value of construction must be greater than \$75,000.

Recommended Enhancements/Amendments:

- To consider extending the overall duration of the “construction phase” in which Council may consider canceling 100% of all municipal taxes beyond the one (1) year period.
- To consider canceling municipal taxes for properties who expand or add a home or revenue property to their property, that directly results in dwelling units that are more affordable or diverse, for a period of one (1) or more years. The cancellation of municipal taxes would apply only to the value of property taxes that increased due to the expansion/addition.
- To explore further options for incentivizing the development of accessory dwelling units in Trochu.

Benefits

- A lengthened timeline for tax incentives provides developers with a longer horizon for their investment to mature along with a sense of stability and predictability.
- Can serve as a powerful catalyst for property owners to invest in expanding their properties or adding revenue-generating units that provide greater housing diversity and affordability. The temporary tax relief provides a financial incentive that may encourage property owners to take action on development projects they might have otherwise postponed.
- Encouraging the addition of secondary suites or accessory dwelling units can contribute to an increase in available housing units, addressing housing shortages and supporting population growth. This, in turn, can help create more diverse housing options and promote a well-balanced housing market.

Important Considerations

- The Town should assess the potential impact of increased timelines for tax incentives on their local revenue. This includes projecting the expected reduction in tax revenue and determining whether the benefits of increased housing development outweigh the financial costs.
- It is important to let recipients of this incentive know that the tax incentives apply only to municipal property taxes; school taxes cannot be deferred or forgiven.
- The Town should consider whether they want to target the incentive to particular types of housing. For example, it could reward housing development that was identified through the community engagement process, such as
 - Singles or couples without children (new workers or empty nesters)
 - Retired; 55+ community members
 - Couples with children (small families)
 - Affordable housing (need to define affordable)

What Other Municipalities Are Doing:

- The Town of Okotoks established a [Secondary Suite and Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant Program](#) in 2023 to provide financial assistance for the development of secondary suites or accessory dwelling units that meet Safety Codes requirements. This program offers grants of up to \$5000 or \$10,000 depending on the type of project, on a first-come first-served basis, subject to funding availability.
- The Town of Mayerthorpe's [Development Tax Incentive](#) establishes a rebate structure for municipal tax incentives to encourage new housing, commercial and industrial development to help stimulate the economy over a period of three years.

What We Heard

- “Any incentive on this front (housing) certainly helps. Unsure if it’s as attractive as it could be and could potentially be improved/enhanced”
- “Defer property taxes for the developer for 3 or more years (or the length of the project), allowing them to build and sell units without having to cover taxes. The town would start collecting taxes from the owner once the units were sold. This would help the developer with ongoing expenses but still generate taxes for the town later”.
- “The Town should provide incentives to homeowners who add secondary suites”.

2.2 ADDITIONAL HOUSING POLICY INCENTIVES

This section outlines additional areas of opportunity the Town of Trochu could explore to adopt policy incentives that encourage the development of diverse housing types in the community.

1 . CREATE AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT POLICY INCENTIVE

Affordable housing policy incentives can spur the creation of new affordable housing units, helping to meet the needs of individuals and families who struggle to find suitable and affordable homes.

Incentives such as density bonuses, reduced building setbacks, reduced parking requirements, reduced permitting fees, tax exemptions or deferrals, and infrastructure cost sharing can help reduce the costs of developing new housing and, therefore, improve the affordability of that housing.

Additionally, if municipalities allocate dedicated funds towards the construction of affordable housing, these funds can be used to assist private developers or non-profit housing providers in constructing affordable housing units in a community.

Benefits

- The primary benefit is spurring the development of affordable housing units in Trochu. Incentives can motivate builders or non-profit affordable housing providers to construct affordable housing, which can help lower-income individuals and families find suitable places to live.
- Affordable housing incentives can promote socio-economic diversity within communities. When affordable housing is available in various neighbourhoods, it can help reduce concentrations of poverty and create more inclusive, mixed-income communities.
- Enabling the development of affordable housing will provide Trochu's workforce with increased housing options for low-income earners while reducing the likelihood of workers searching for housing outside the community.
- The Town currently owns a portion of land that could be developed to provide affordable housing units. By developing an affordable housing policy incentive, the Town could attract potential partners to develop affordable housing units on municipally-owned land.

Important Considerations

- The Town should research and establish a cohesive definition of what is considered affordable housing in Trochu.
- The Town should establish clear affordable housing targets.
- The Town should establish clear eligibility criteria for builders and non-profit affordable housing providers to access incentives. Criteria could include whether projects address Trochu's affordable housing targets, or if the development will remain affordable for a certain duration (i.e. 20 years).
- The Town should explore opportunities for partnerships with private developers, non-profit organizations, and community groups to leverage resources and expertise in reaching its affordable housing goals.
- The Town should involve the community in the policy development process. This would consist of gathering input from residents, stakeholders, housing advocates, and developers to ensure that the policy aligns with local needs and values.

What Other Municipalities Are Doing:

- The City of Lethbridge's [Affordable and Social Housing Capital Grant](#) provides financial support to non-profit and for-profit organizations for eligible projects that involve purchasing, constructing, renovating or retrofitting affordable and social housing units in their community.
- The Town of Okotoks' [Below Market Housing Incentive Grant Program](#) offers a financial incentive to facilitate the development of below market housing units in Okotoks aimed at addressing waitlist demands and improving the ability of people employed in Okotoks to also reside in Okotoks.
- **Note:** Capital grants for affordable housing are often explored and implemented by larger urban centres and cities in Alberta. By taking positive action on affordable housing incentive policies, the Town of Trochu would be at the forefront of smaller, rural municipalities seeking to provide solutions for affordable housing provision in their communities.

What We Heard

- “Affordable housing is needed, not high end. Most of the employment in a small community does not pay above average wages and pays mostly lower wages”
- “My biggest concern is how do we make affordable housing, with the costs of products increasing.”
- “Workers coming into the Town are looking for affordable housing for their families. While there are inexpensive homes in the Town, they are mainly older single family homes that are in need of significant maintenance and repair.”
- “Workers are living outside of the Town and spending their money elsewhere. In order for Trochu to thrive, people need to work and live in the Town, and spend money in the town. There is a need to foster local builders and developers to build locally and then reinvest in the Town”.

Important Considerations

- The Town should identify the average cost of running water/sewer services up to property lines, in addition to the costs of installing water meters.
- Consider the long-term sustainability of the policy incentive by evaluating its financial feasibility and ensuring that it aligns with the long-term goals of Trochu.
- The Town should research similar policy incentives that have been developed in other municipalities.
- Assess the existing water and sewer infrastructure capacity to accommodate increased demand from mixed-use developments.
- Plan for future infrastructure upgrades and expansions to support the additional load that mixed-use developments might bring.
- Define eligible areas or zones within Trochu where mixed-use developments are eligible for the incentive. This can help target areas that require revitalization or increased economic activity.

What We Heard

- “The cost of land is typically less in small towns than in cities. However, developing the land still includes servicing costs: water, sewer, paving, and other infrastructure. This up-front cost is tough for developers to absorb because they don’t recoup this cost until lots or units are sold”.
- “Assist with land servicing costs to install infrastructure and utilities. This would greatly reduce the upfront costs being borne by the developer”.



2. CREATE A POLICY INCENTIVE FOR WATER/SEWER CONNECTION COSTS TO ENCOURAGE MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENTS

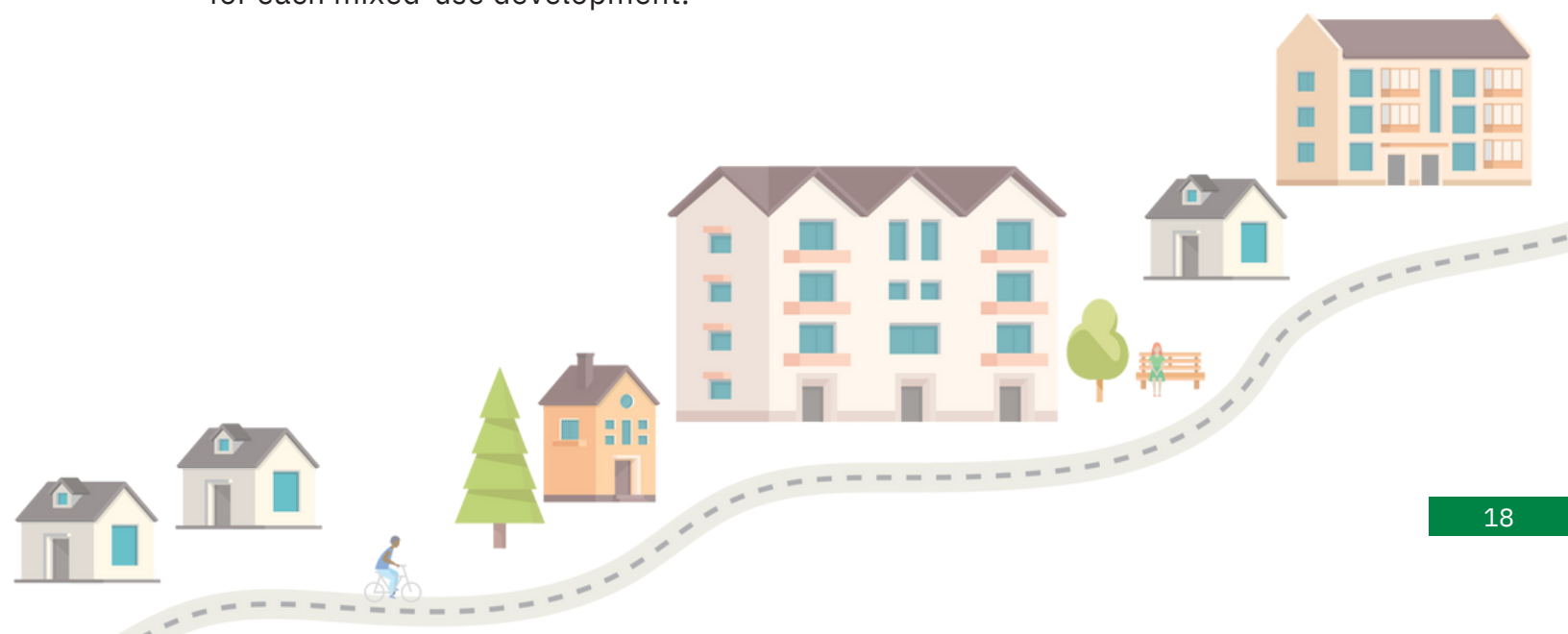
Description:

Policy incentives that reduce initial water/sewer connection costs have the potential to encourage and promote the creation of mixed-use developments within a specific area. Mixed-use developments combine various land uses, such as residential, commercial, office, and recreational spaces, within the same project or neighbourhood.

Note: While the recommendation for this policy incentive was not informed by the *What We Heard Report*, it will align with strategic initiatives outlined within the Town's application to CMHC's Housing Accelerator Fund.

Benefits

- Covering portions of initial water/sewer connection costs can significantly lower the upfront costs for developers. This can make mixed-use projects more financially viable and attractive, especially for smaller businesses and developers.
- Lowering connection costs can expedite the development process, encouraging developers to move forward with their plans more quickly. This can lead to faster occupancy, revenue generation, and community benefits.
- While this requires dedicated funding streams for the municipality, the long-term benefits of increased property values and economic activity can lead to higher property tax revenue for the municipality.
- By making a portion of these costs a responsibility of the Town, this ensures that water/sewer connections and water meters to property lines are installed correctly for each mixed-use development.



2.3 ADVERTISE AND PROMOTE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT INCENTIVES

Advertising and promoting development incentives to developers, builders, and property owners in Trochu holds crucial importance for the Town's growth, economic vitality, and long-term sustainability. Effectively communicating these incentives can lead to a range of positive outcomes:

- **Attracting Investment:** Clear and compelling promotion of development incentives can attract developers, builders, and property owners to consider Trochu as a viable and attractive location for their projects. This can stimulate increased investment in the community, leading to the creation of new developments, job opportunities, and economic growth.
- **Enhancing Competitiveness:** Effective promotion of incentives can set Trochu apart from other communities and regions competing for the same investment and development projects. By showcasing the unique benefits and opportunities the town offers, Trochu can position itself as a preferred destination for developers and builders.
- **Encouraging Collaboration:** Promoting development incentives can foster collaboration between the Town's municipal government, local businesses, and property owners. When stakeholders are aware of the incentives available, they may be more willing to work together to realize mutually beneficial projects that contribute to the community's development and prosperity.



2.4 FURTHER POLICY INCENTIVE APPROACHES

The following policy incentives have been implemented by other rural municipalities throughout Western Canada. The intent of outlining these incentives is to provide an initial starting point for exploring alternative incentive approaches that enable housing development in Trochu.

- [Mayerthorpe Subdivision Tax Refund Program](#)

Purpose: To encourage the creation of new lots within Mayerthorpe through a one-year, 75% tax refund

- [Drumheller Multi-Unit Residential Rental Incentive Program](#)

Purpose: To incentivize the development of affordable multi-unit residential rental dwellings through a 4-year property tax abatement.

- [Vermillion Community Improvement and Infill Program](#)

Purpose: To encourage the demolition of an old residential dwelling and subsequent construction of a new residential dwelling within existing residential districts through a one-year tax cancellation incentive.

- [Martensville Development Incentive Program](#)

Purpose: To provide a tax abatement on vacant lots to encourage residential, commercial and industrial land development.

- [Dauphin Housing Incentive Program](#)

Purpose: To encourage the creation of new residential dwellings to address Dauphin's housing shortage, the City provides an incentive of \$1,000 per new dwelling unit created (house, apartment, basement suite etc.)





SECTION 3: Municipal Tools and Areas of Opportunity Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

This section outlines recommended changes to Trochu's existing Land Use Bylaw, in light of the responses from the community survey, developers, realtors, home builders and community stakeholders. It also provides recommendations for other initiatives to encourage increased housing diversity and choice in Trochu.

The intention of these recommendations^{*} is to initiate and promote discussion among community stakeholders - town administration, developers, planners, businesses and residents. They are suggestions that may help to reduce development barriers, increase housing supply and encourage housing diversity in Trochu. The most important consideration with these suggestions is that they be used as a platform for discussion about the status quo, whether the community feels the status quo should be changed, to what degree it should be changed, and then how to facilitate that change.

The first part of this section will outline suggested amendments to the current Land Use Bylaw to enhance and enable diverse housing development in the Town. The following parts will outline other areas of opportunity that can be explored to facilitate diversity and inclusion in the Town.

3.1 TROCHU LAND USE BYLAW ADJUSTMENTS

The Town of Trochu is working with their planner from Palliser Regional Municipal Services to update their current Land Use Bylaw and Municipal Development Plan. In collaboration with the Town and the Palliser planner, this is an opportune time to make changes to these statutory documents that will enhance housing development and diversity in the Town.

The following amendments to the Land Use Bylaw are recommended for consideration by the Town to help diversify the types of housing that may be built, increase density in a way that will not adversely affect existing neighbourhoods, and shorten the process for development permit approvals.

Note: Important considerations and mitigation measures related to these recommendations are provided in 3.1.3 (page 29).

3.1.1 INCREASE HOUSING DIVERSITY AND DENSITY IN RESIDENTIAL DISTRICTS

The current Trochu Land Use Bylaw regulates the type of housing and uses that may be built in residential districts. It has been identified that diversifying the types of housing that may be built in the various residential districts will help increase housing choice and potentially influence the affordability of housing in the town.

The following Land Use Bylaw amendments are recommended for consideration to enhance housing options in the community.

Increase housing density in residential districts of the Land Use Bylaw

Current:

In the Single-Detached Residential District (R-1), the General Residential District (R-2) and the Residential Acreage District (RA) of the Land Use Bylaw, Secondary Suites are listed as a discretionary use.

Secondary Suite Definition: “means an accessory dwelling unit that is located as part of the same building as a Single-Detached dwelling that is owner occupied . . .” The secondary suite may be attached, where it’s part of or connected to the existing dwelling, or it may be detached, where it’s a separate building but located on the same parcel as the dwelling.

Recommended Amendments:

- Add density and diversity to existing residential areas by making secondary suites a permitted use in the Single-Detached Residential District (R-1), the General Residential District (R-2) and the Residential Acreage District (RA) of the Land Use Bylaw.
- Replace the term ‘secondary suite’ and ‘garden suite’ with ‘accessory dwelling unit’.

Benefits:

- Increases density and diversity in these residential districts without significantly altering the existing built environment or the neighbourhood;



Benefits:

- Increases density and diversity in these residential districts without significantly altering the existing built environment or the neighbourhood;
- Reduces the length of the permit approval process. Typically a permitted use application will be processed within 2 to 3 weeks of submission. However, a discretionary use must be decided upon by the MPC, which takes 4 to 6 weeks depending on how often the MPC meets. In addition, a discretionary use permit may be appealed, which can add several weeks to the process;
- Provides additional rental options for single people and couples;
- May potentially provide additional rental options for low and moderate-income households;
- Adds housing to the neighbourhood, often without the need to update or build additional infrastructure to support it;
- Provides revenue for the homeowner and increases property value;
- Creates additional property tax revenue for the town.

What We Heard

- “Trochu should allow for in-law (secondary) suites in existing single family homes and in shops.”
- “Prioritize affordability and rental opportunities to builders. Trochu can significantly benefit from more low-cost and more affordable housing types, in addition to providing more rental units for their workforce.”

Increase housing diversity in residential districts of the Land Use Bylaw

Current:

In the Single-Detached Residential District (R-1), single-detached dwellings and RTM dwellings are listed as permitted uses; modular homes and moved on dwellings are discretionary uses; duplexes and other attached dwellings are not listed as allowable uses.

In the General Residential District (R-2), single-detached dwellings, duplexes, RTM dwellings and semi-detached dwellings are listed as permitted uses; apartments, attached housing and modular dwellings are discretionary uses.

In the Residential Acreage District (RA), single-detached dwellings and RTM dwellings are listed as permitted uses; manufactured homes, modular homes and moved on dwellings are discretionary uses; duplexes and other attached dwellings are not listed as allowable uses.

Recommended Actions:

- Diversify the types of housing and uses in the Single-Detached Residential District (R-1) by adding the following dwelling types as permitted uses:
 - Modular home
 - Manufactured home
 - Moved on dwelling
- RTM dwelling is already listed as a permitted use in this district;

Note: After discussion with the Trochu planner and administration, the updated Trochu Land Use Bylaw will combine RTM, modular and manufactured dwelling types under the heading 'manufactured home' and then list manufactured home as a permitted housing type in this district.

- A moved on dwelling will be categorized as a type of dwelling and then addressed based on that.

- Diversify the types of housing and uses in the Single-Detached Residential District (R-1) by adding the following dwelling types as discretionary uses:
 - Duplex
 - Attached housing
 - Semi-detached housing
- Amend the General Residential District (R-2) to a medium density residential district. Diversify the types of housing in this residential district by adding the following dwelling types as permitted uses:
 - Modular home
 - Manufactured home
 - Moved on dwelling
 - Attached housing
- Refer to above note about these types of homes (orange box);
- RTM dwelling, semi-detached dwelling and duplexes are already listed as a permitted use in this district;
- A moved on dwelling will be categorized as a type of dwelling and then addressed based on that.

Consider Manufactured Homes:

Manufactured housing typically refers to dwellings that are built wholly or partially off site and then moved onto a lot (see full definition in Land Use Bylaw). While the term ‘manufactured dwelling’ typically brings up images of a decrepit ‘mobile home’ or ‘trailer’, the design and construction of manufactured homes has progressed to the point that, they can fit very nicely into the housing design of existing neighbourhoods.

Benefits:

- Adding attached housing types as a discretionary use in the R-1 district and as a permitted use in the R-2 district increases the range of housing types that may be built in a residential district.

Note: ‘Attached’ housing has been referred to as the ‘missing middle’ of housing - these housing types fall between single detached homes and low or mid-rise apartment buildings, and they tend to be more affordable than detached homes.

- Making these uses permitted rather than discretionary reduces the length of the permit approval process. Typically a permitted use application will be processed within 2 to 3 weeks of submission. A discretionary use must be decided upon by MPC, which takes 4 - 6 weeks depending on how often MPC meets. In addition, a discretionary use permit may be appealed, which can add several weeks to the process;
- These housing types can add to housing diversity and inclusion for newcomers in the community, in both the rental and homeownership areas;
- These housing types may help expand the supply of less expensive housing and/or affordable housing, in both the rental and homeownership areas;
- Adding these uses can help to increase density in the neighbourhood incrementally. For example, building duplexes on infill lots will change density, but most likely the change will occur over a long period of time; this makes the changes less dramatic and potentially more acceptable to neighbours;
- The increase in density can potentially be achieved in the neighbourhood without the need to update or build additional infrastructure to support it;
- Attached housing and manufactured homes can be more cost-effective to build than single-family homes; this housing is often considered more attainable/affordable in terms of cost to build and cost to rent or purchase;

What We Heard

- “The Trochu Land Use Bylaw is predominantly R1 zoning, which is zoning that prioritizes single detached homes. While there are smaller areas of R2 zoning in the town, which allows for duplexes and other attached dwellings, zoning regulations should be changed to allow for other types of housing”
- “An existing mobile home subdivision is unpopular with the majority of the population. Mobile home areas are typically regarded negatively by the local population. It might be more acceptable to incorporate manufactured homes into single family areas than in separate subdivisions”

3.1.2 ENABLE ADDITIONAL RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN COMMERCIAL AND INDUSTRIAL DISTRICTS

The current standard in the Land Use Bylaw is to regulate residential development in commercial and industrial areas. Through the community engagement process, it has been identified that commercial areas in the Town may benefit from limited residential development, which may help to diversify housing and potentially influence housing affordability in the town.

The following Land Use Bylaw amendments are recommended for consideration by the town to enhance housing options in the community.

Increase housing diversity in commercial and industrial districts

Current:

In the Central Business District (CB) of the Land Use Bylaw, the following dwelling types are allowed as discretionary uses:

- Dwelling units accessory to a commercial use
- Attached housing/apartments subject to R-2 district.

In the Arterial Commercial District (C-1) of the Land Use Bylaw:

- Dwellings that are attached or accessory to a principal commercial building/use are allowed as a discretionary use.

In the Industrial District (M-1) of the Land Use Bylaw:

- No residential uses are listed as permitted or discretionary uses.



Recommended Adjustment:

Diversify the types of housing development that are allowed as permitted uses in the commercial and industrial districts of the Land Use Bylaw by making the following changes:

- Allow for mixed-use development in the commercial and industrial districts to encourage limited residential use in these districts.
 - In Trochu's case, this will involve listing 'dwelling units above grade' as a permitted use in new or existing commercial or industrial development.

Note: 'Mixed-use development' is defined as a blend of multiple uses, such as residential and other uses, into one space where the uses are physically and functionally integrated. It may apply to a single building or to an entire block.

- In the current list of uses, rename 'dwelling units that are accessory to a commercial use' to 'dwelling units above grade'.
 - Make 'dwelling units above grade' a permitted use in the 3 districts;
 - The definition and regulations/guidelines for construction of these dwelling units will be provided in the Land Use Bylaw.

Benefits:

- Increases the range of housing in the community;
- Reduces the length of the permit approval process. Typically a permitted use application will be processed within 2 to 3 weeks of submission. A discretionary use is decided upon by MPC, which takes 4 - 6 weeks depending on how often MPC meets. In addition, a discretionary use permit may be appealed, which can add several weeks to the process;
- Housing can be added to an existing development, in some instances without the need to update or build additional infrastructure to support it (see building code discussion in Section 3.1.3);

- Adds to housing diversity and inclusion for newcomers in the community, in both the rental and homeownership areas;
- Increases the ability for businesses to house new workers. This can take different forms: temporary housing for a worker until they are able to rent or purchase; long-term housing for a worker who doesn't need more than what the unit offers.
- Expands the housing supply; may contribute to the supply of less expensive and/or affordable housing.

3.1.3 IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

It is important to discuss the recommended changes and benefits listed above in terms of additional considerations and impacts to existing residential neighbourhoods and commercial areas. Mitigating measures have been suggested, but should be discussed further by the Town Administration, the planner, the Council and other stakeholders.

- Building code regulations may require unexpected and expensive construction costs for the homeowner or business owner. (i.e. fire code requires fire-rated walls between home and suite).

Action: Ensure that residents who are taking advantage of these changes understand the importance of following code requirements and what the costs of those requirements are.


- Additional parking may be needed where density is increased, which may add to parking issues in the area.

Action: Review and revise parking requirements as necessary in the Land Use Bylaw to ensure they meet the needs of both the landowner and residents in the surrounding area.

- Adding density to residential areas and adding dwellings to commercial areas over many years may have a cumulative effect that creates a need to upgrade infrastructure (water, sewer, etc.);

Action: Prepare an inventory, analysis and master plan for the town's existing and future infrastructure.

Note: Refer to Section 2.2 (page 14) for policy consideration.

- 
- Increased density in residential areas and adding dwellings to commercial areas could create pushback from surrounding neighbours or businesses from the increase in people and cars in the area.

Action: Engage residents, Council and community stakeholders to discuss the benefits and implications of this change;

- Making a use permitted instead of discretionary can have far-reaching effects on the community. Permitted applications are approved by the Development Officer rather than MPC, which speeds up the permitting process. While this can have a positive effect on how quickly a use may be built, it also removes the ability for neighbours to speak against an application or appeal a decision that may have a negative impact on them.

Action: Engage residents, Council and community stakeholders to discuss the benefits and implications of this change; ensure that everyone understands the pros and cons of this matter.

- The above recommended changes to the residential, commercial and industrial districts may impact other areas of the Land Use Bylaw that are not discussed above. It is important to have a thorough discussion about how these recommendations will impact the entire bylaw and not just the sections being changed.

Action: Engage residents, Council and community stakeholders to discuss the benefits and implications of this change;



3.2 REPURPOSE VACANT BUILDINGS FOR RESIDENTIAL USE

Vacant buildings, both residential and commercial, can be a valuable resource to provide additional housing in a rural community. Many rural communities have a few vacant buildings that could be repurposed as housing. A common example of this is repurposing a local motel into residential apartments.

Recommended Action: To facilitate upgrading vacant residential or repurposing vacant retail or commercial buildings, it is recommended that the Town consider the following:

- Set up a steering committee to facilitate this initiative; suggested members include community leaders, realtors, developers, home-builders, town employees, business owners.

Note: While it is suggested that a steering committee be created to facilitate the tasks in Sections 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 of this report, it is acknowledged that there may be limited availability and capacity of potential committee members to sit on 4 separate committees.

Therefore, it is further suggested that one steering committee may be created to address all the tasks outlined in these Sections, with regular reports and updates from the committee to Trochu Council.

- Prepare a mandate and/or guidelines for the group that outlines the project objectives and goals; this mandate would be updated by the committee as they take ownership of the project;
- Prepare an inventory of vacant properties and buildings with notable characteristics and features that have potential for conversion to dwellings;

Examples of converting existing buildings to other uses:

- [Converting a school to affordable housing in Lunenburg, NS](#)
- [Council approves incentives to help create affordable housing - Orillia News](#)

3.3 FACILITATE CONTINUAL COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

To achieve the goal of increasing housing diversity and choice in Trochu, the Town will benefit from early and continual engagement with community members. All residents - landowners, renters, young and old, couples with and without children, businesses, home-builders, and developers - have important information to contribute about determining how to increase housing choice and diversity in the Trochu. Without a doubt, having a diverse group of people involved in talking about housing diversity will inevitably lead to further discussions about affordable housing opportunities in the community.

Recommended Action: To facilitate community engagement that will continue into the future, it is recommended that the Town consider the following:

- Set up a steering committee to facilitate this initiative; suggested members include community leaders, seniors, young people, couples, realtors, developers, home-builders, Town employees, business owners and anyone else who has something to say about housing;
- Prepare a mandate and/or guidelines for the steering committee that outlines its objectives and goals; this mandate will be updated by the committee as needed;
- Committee tasks could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Spreading the word about the changes that are happening in the community to help reduce perceived negative impacts or pushback.

Benefits:

- Engaging residents and stakeholders early in the process and having them review and take ownership of suggested changes to policy and bylaws about diverse or affordable housing will help to reduce negative reactions and pushback from the community;
- Having community members spread the word about the benefits and implications of the changes should help increase 'buy in' by the community.



3.4 CONTINUE WITH EDUCATION, PROMOTION AND MARKETING

Trochu has done an excellent job of educating the community about policies, events and issues. The “Why Trochu” campaign was pointed out repeatedly as an effective tool to promote the community.

This section will go over additional initiatives that will add to Trochu’s promotion and marketing campaigns for the community. It should be noted that many of these were suggestions that came through the community survey, interviews, and focus group discussions.

3.4.1 Recommended Action: Enhance the Why Trochu Campaign

To further bolster the "Why Trochu" campaign and amplify its impact, it is recommended that a strategic campaign be prepared to further spotlight the Town's compelling development incentives, take advantage of growth opportunities, and promote Trochu as an ideal location for housing development. By integrating these elements into the campaign, Trochu can effectively showcase its commitment to fostering sustainable and diverse growth and attracting prospective developers, builders, and property owners.

This enhanced initiative is intended to emphasize not only the Town's unique charm and community spirit but also its forward-thinking approach to rural planning and investment. The campaign can spotlight Trochu's incentives for property expansion, secondary suites, and new housing units, offering a compelling proposition for individuals seeking to invest in the community.

What We Heard

- The “Why Trochu” initiative was mentioned by most of the interviewees as being quite successful. However, it was noted by one interviewee that it only targets people that are currently looking for a home, so they suggested that radio advertisements should be added, to target people that aren’t even looking but might be enticed to consider moving to or developing in Trochu.
- “Market the town to cities as an attractive place to live, with the added bonus that people can work remotely from home. Trochu has many local amenities and is within a short driving distance of Calgary. Promote the fact that people can work from Trochu and still access amenities, both locally and farther away. Foster a stronger sense of community”.

3.4.2 Ensure Information About the Town is Readily and Easily Available

To further promote the Town, (part of the ‘Why Trochu’ campaign) provide local information about residential development opportunities and initiatives. It is recommended that this information be in both digital and print formats, to engage all age groups and demographics.

Suggestions for information packages include the following:

- Housing Incentives
 - Example: [Dauphin Housing Incentive Program](#)
- Trochu As a Great Place To Build
 - Market and advertise available vacant lots and buildings that may be repurposed.

What We Heard

- “Invest in advertisements that will attract people from other areas of the country. For example, there have been instances where people from other provinces review and buy local real estate online. Promote the amenities of the town to attract these buyers.”





3.5 FACILITATE HOUSING PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION

Through the interviews and discussions with Trochu stakeholders, there were several comments about the need to create partnerships between the Town, developers and/or home builders and the community. This section will provide suggestions to connect developers and community members in creating partnerships to help the Town move forward with initiatives that meet the diverse housing needs of the community.

3.5.1 Recommended Action: Establish a Development Relations Committee

As provided in Sections 3.3 and 3.4, and continuing with the community engagement theme, it is recommended that the Town consider the following:

- Set up a steering committee to facilitate this initiative; suggested members include community leaders, seniors, young people, couples, realtors, developers, home-builders, Town employees, and business owners;
- Prepare a mandate and/or guidelines for the committee that outlines the project objectives and goals; this mandate will be updated by the committee as needed;
- Committee tasks could include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - Research and prepare a plan to form partnerships between developers and other stakeholders, as listed above; include seniors in these partnerships;
 - Educate developers and community members about development issues and opportunities;
 - If feasible, facilitate the creation of a housing cooperative between developers and local stakeholders
 - [“Paths for Housing Co-ops: Guidebook”](#)
 - [“Step by Step Guide to Developing Affordable Housing”](#)

What We Heard:

“Create partnerships between outside developers and local community leaders. Outside developers tend to not have a localized understanding of small towns such as Trochu, so having someone local to work with will help them succeed in local projects”.

3.6 ADDRESS LEGISLATION AND REGULATIONS THAT AFFECT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the stakeholder engagement process in Trochu, several interviewees commented that existing regulations and codes can have a detrimental impact on their ability to build housing quickly, efficiently and affordably.

The Alberta Municipal Government Act and the Alberta New Home Warranty Program regulate and impact municipal housing development. These two statutes are provincially regulated, and so are not in the realm of a municipality to change directly. However, municipalities have the ability to lobby the government to affect change. This section will summarize how this legislation regulates and affects municipal housing development and provide suggestions for the Town to address recommendations for change.

3.6.1 Recommended Action: Address Municipal Housing Development Issues with the Alberta New Home Warranty Program Issues and the Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA)

The Alberta New Home Warranty Program came into effect on February 1, 2014. The program is part of the New Home Buyer Protection Act, most recently updated on December 15, 2022.

This legislation makes home warranty coverage mandatory for new homes in Alberta. It requires builders to provide home warranty coverage on all new residential homes, including condos, manufactured homes and recreational properties; it does not apply to renovated homes. All new homes, built after February 1, 2014, must have the following minimum warranty coverage: one year on labour and materials, two years on delivery and distribution systems, five years for building envelope, and ten years for major structural components.

The intention of the program was (and is) to provide homeowners with peace of mind, first, that their home had been built properly, and second, that their investment was protected. Whether this goal has been achieved is up for debate and requires further discussion.

In the case of small rural home-building companies, the Warranty has had a detrimental effect. By requiring that these small companies put money aside for ten years for warranty purposes makes it difficult for them to continue building homes because that money is no longer available to cover ongoing expenses. Larger home-building companies (operating primarily in larger urban areas) can more readily manage these warranty requirements.

In addition, rural areas typically have only a few home-builders, mostly small family-run companies that only build a couple of houses per year. The Warranty makes it much more difficult for them to continue operating if a portion of their finances is unusable. As a result, many of these small rural home-building companies have switched from home construction to home renovation. This switch has resulted in fewer new homes being built in rural areas.

Action: Collaborate with other municipalities to prepare resolution(s) to lobby the Alberta government to review the Alberta New Home Warranty Program. The intent of the review is to determine the effectiveness of the legislation and then decide whether changes are needed to improve it.

The Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA) provides direction regarding how municipalities must operate. It empowers municipalities to shape their community and plan for growth and regulates how they are funded and how they should govern.

The Alberta MGA does not provide for or regulate any type of diverse or affordable housing development.

In the interviews and focus group discussions, a few people commented about the need for additional provincial government assistance and policy direction regarding the provision of affordable housing. A good starting point would be for the MGA to provide guidelines and regulations that will encourage developers to build more affordable (and diverse) housing in municipalities.

Examples of where this type of regulation has been enacted are in the BC Local Government Act and the Ontario Planning Act. Both provide information and regulations in their municipal governing legislation that outline how affordable housing is to be provided through municipal policy and bylaws.

These documents could be valuable resources for the Alberta government to enact legislation that will address both diversity in housing and affordable housing.

Action: Collaborate with other municipalities to prepare a resolution(s) to lobby the Alberta government to review the Alberta Municipal Government Act, with the intention of adding affordable, attainable, and diverse housing requirements to the legislation. This will give municipalities another tool to address affordable housing issues in the province.

Action: Continuing with the community engagement theme, it is recommended that Trochu set up a steering committee or task force to review the Alberta New Home Warranty Program and the Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA).

Considerations:

- This task force to address the New Home Warranty Program and the Municipal Government Act could be combined with the steering committee in Section 3.5;
- The committee should be composed of community stakeholders, such as, but not limited to: home-builders, developers, community leaders, seniors, realtors, young people, couples, and business owners;
- It could also include Council members and Town Administration;
- It will review the Alberta New Home Warranty Program and the MGA, identify the key issues that affect the Town, and then prepare recommendations to address the issues for Council to consider;
- The task force and Town would benefit from collaborating with other like-minded municipalities to prepare resolutions that address the issues identified by the task force and present them at the annual Rural Municipalities Association (RMA) and the Alberta Municipalities Association (MA) conference.

What We Heard:

- “Remove as much ‘red tape’ and bureaucratic involvement as possible to make sure there are no barriers in the way for developers and builders. Outdated rules and regulations are frustrating and should be changed.”
- “There needs to be sufficient planning and permitting to protect those who own already but not so much that builders don’t build. The Town’s purpose is to ensure orderly growth and high quality builds.”

3.6.3 Recommended Action: Address Building Code Issues

A third regulation that several interviewees felt inhibited housing development were the Alberta Safety Codes regulations - aka building, plumbing, gas, and electrical codes and regulations.

It is important to state that Provincial Safety Codes provide important safeguards that ensure buildings are properly built and safe for habitation. At the same time, it is understandable that builders are frustrated by excessive or obsolete standards and codes that can add to their already high costs and hinder innovative construction ideas. However, it is noted that municipalities are not directly involved in home inspections and enforcing safety codes.

Action: It is recommended that the Town redirect home-builders who have issues with building or safety regulations to the Alberta Safety Codes Council.

What We Heard:

- “Lobby and advocate to remove regulatory barriers to alternative housing construction techniques”





SECTION 4: NEXT STEPS

This report on Diversifying Housing Development in Trochu was initiated in response to the need for research about local housing challenges and barriers in the Town and an agreement with the Enabling Housing Choice (EHC) team to provide recommendations to facilitate the development of more diversity in housing options in the Town.

4.1 Facilitate Continuous Discussion

As stated previously, the purpose of providing these recommendations is to help facilitate discussion among community stakeholders - Town Administration, residents, home-builders, local businesses and others - to review, analyze and disseminate the suggestions in a way that will work best for the Town. It is expected that the recommendations will be implemented over a period of time, as funds become available, and as the community learns how to move forward in addressing its diverse housing needs.

4.2 Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Application

Where it was applicable for Trochu, the recommendations in the report have been presented so that they will help support the initiatives outlined in Trochu's application for The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's (CMHC) Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF). The HAF will provide funding for municipalities to fund and support local initiatives aimed at increasing housing supply in the community, such as affordable housing, housing-related infrastructure or community infrastructure that supports housing.

4.3 Monitor and Track Progress

Following the completion of this report, the EHC project team will develop a progress tracker to report on project milestones and achievements with respect to the report's recommendations. In addition, the project team will check in with Trochu Administration on a regular basis to keep track of progress and provide feedback or insights, as needed.

4.4 Guidebook for Diversifying Housing Development in Rural Communities

One of the final outcomes from this research project is the preparation of a Guidebook for Diversifying Housing Development in Rural Communities. The Guidebook will outline strategic planning tools and suggestions for accomplishing housing diversity goals in rural communities. The EHC team anticipates that the Guidebook will be ready for release in spring 2024.

4.5 Final Words

Pursuing the goal of diversifying housing in Trochu will be a complex and ongoing endeavor. It will require collaboration and commitment among numerous stakeholders. The Town of Trochu will have a pivotal role in being active and dedicated to diversifying housing in the community. In collaboration with other community stakeholders - residents, home-builders, local businesses - the Town will be able to address its housing needs and provide a positive example for other communities facing similar challenges.

With perseverance and collaboration, Trochu can pave the way for a more inclusive community, where all residents have access to diverse and affordable housing.



RESOURCES:

Alberta New Home Warranty Program (2023)

Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2023). Housing Accelerator Fund

City of Dauphin (2022). \$1,000 Per Unit Housing Incentive Program

City of Lethbridge (2021). Affordable and Social Housing Capital Project Grant (CC49)

City of Martensville (2020). Development Incentive Program

Dawson, Dave (2020) Council Approves Incentives to Help Create Affordable Housing. Orillia Matters.

District of Lunenburg (2023). Municipality Negotiating with NEST on the sale of the Former Centre School Property.

Government of Alberta (2023). Municipal Government Act (MGA)

Government of British Columbia (2023). Local Government Act

Government of Ontario (2023). Ontario Planning Act

Rural Development Network (2021) Paths For Housing Co-Ops Guidebook

Sustainable Housing Initiative (2023) Step-By-Step Guide to Developing
Affordable Housing

Town of Drumheller (2023). Multi-Unit Residential Rental Incentive Policy

Town of High River (2021). Land Use Bylaw

Town of Mayerthorpe (2017). Subdivision Tax Refund Program (X-003)

Town of Mayerthorpe (2020). Development Tax Incentive (X-005)

Town of Okotoks (2021). Below Market Housing Incentive Grant Program
Policy (CMD-P-3.1)

Town of Okotoks (2022). Secondary Suite and Accessory Dwelling Unit Grant Program

Town of Trochu (2015). Municipal Development Plan

Town of Trochu (2021). Economic Development Incentive Policy (No. 2021-01-25-02)

Town of Trochu (2022). Land Use Bylaw

Town of Trochu (2022) Strategic Plan (2022-2025)

Town of Trochu & Kneehill County (2019). Intermunicipal Development Plan

Town of Vermillion (2017). Multi-Family Development Incentive Policy



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