



Housing Acceleration Plan

September 2025

Introduction

The Housing Acceleration Plan (Acceleration Plan) is tailor-made to address the specific housing challenges facing Ottawa, while maintaining a holistic, balanced view that considers all aspects of city-building. The Acceleration Plan contains 53 actions to deliver on five key objectives that are targeted to areas where the City has the greatest control and influence. While each of the five objectives include distinct actions, they are designed to work together as part of a cohesive strategy. Collectively, the actions aim to accelerate all forms of housing development, with a particular focus on affordable and urban options.

The City will not be able to drive results alone. Strong partnerships with the Federal and Provincial governments are necessary to coordinate actions and support funding. Equally, the housing sector must be ready to respond to the opportunities presented.

When taken together, the actions outlined in the Acceleration Plan will fundamentally overhaul the City’s approach to housing. It is an ambitious plan that goes far beyond continuous improvement, using every tool within the municipal toolbox to drive transformational change and clear the way for new homes to be constructed in the short term.

The five key objectives of the Acceleration Plan are:

- 1) Simplify the regulatory environment and expedite approvals processes
- 2) Evolve City culture to be housing development friendly
- 3) Introduce more flexibility in fees and charges
- 4) Consolidate and strengthen capacity for Affordable Housing development
- 5) Unlock urban intensification and Transit Oriented Development

Contents	
Simplify the regulatory environment and expedite approvals processes	3-6
Evolve City culture to be housing development friendly	6-7
Introduce more flexibility in fees and charges	8-9
Consolidate and strengthen capacity for Affordable Housing development	9-11
Unlock urban intensification and Transit Oriented Development	11-15

1. Simplify the regulatory environment and expedite approvals processes

A) Simplify rules and guidelines that consider the impact on development costs and housing affordability

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
1 (S)	Through the new Zoning By-Law, eliminate barriers and offer flexibility to facilitate increased housing construction including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish expanded opportunities for housing with broad permissions • Simpler form-based zoning city-wide as opposed to building type • Flexibility on parking to reflect market need 	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action will be addressed in the New Zoning By-Law. Planning, Development and Building Services will bring forward a report and final draft of the new Zoning Bylaw to a joint Planning Housing Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on December 17, 2025, and to Council on January 28, 2026.
2 (S)	Amend Site Plan Control By-law (No. 2014-256) to extend exemptions currently in place for developments less than 10 units.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Planning, Development will review options to update the Site Control By-law following the review and amendments to the terms of reference for items listed on the Development Application Study Policy (DASP) by Q1 2026.
3 (I)	Streamline the tree conservation guidelines, including expanding the as-of-right zone to include a portion of the excavation area.	Strategic Initiatives	Climate Change and Resiliency Services will update the Tree Conservation Guidelines and produce a simplified checklist to supplement the Tree Information Report by Q4 2025.
4 (I)	Align tree permit issuance with building permit issuance while ensuring compliance with the Tree Protection By-law as a condition for approval.	Strategic Initiatives	Climate Change and Resiliency Services will amend the timing of tree issuance permits by the end of Q4 2025.
5 (S)	Undertake a comprehensive review of the Urban Design Guidelines including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • window streets in new subdivisions • noise attenuation requirements for mid-rise • floor plate requirements 	Planning, Development and Building Services	Planning, Development and Building Services anticipates bringing forward recommendations to update matters that go to the Urban Design Review Panel (UDRP) and general guideline updates and new low-rise and mid-rise development guidelines by

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			Q2 2026. The balance of the Urban Design guidelines are anticipated by end of 2026 to early 2027.
6 (S)	Develop a strategy to undertake a comprehensive review of Secondary Plans with an aim to streamline and remove old and outdated secondary plans.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Planning, Development and Building Services anticipates returning to Planning and Housing Committee and the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee with a strategy to review Secondary Plans in early Q1 2026.

1. Simplify the regulatory environment and expedite approvals processes			
B) Optimize legal agreements and streamline the development review process			
(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council			
#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
7 (I)	Increase capacity in Legal Services through the addition of two resources dedicated to development review, funded through the Housing Accelerator Fund.	Legal Services	This action is in progress, Legal Services expect the additional resources will be in place by Q4 2025.
8 (I)	Expand the use of scoped Site Plan Agreements.	Legal Services Planning, Development and Building Service	Legal Services and Planning, Development and Building Services are considering all applications awaiting an agreement as candidates for a scoped Site Plan agreement. Going forward this approach will be updated in our internal procedures by end of Q4 2025.
9 (I)	Expand the use of letters of undertaking.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Legal Services and Planning, Development and Building Services are considering all applications awaiting an agreement as candidates for a letter of

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			undertaking. Going forward this approach will be updated in our internal procedures by end of Q4 2025.
10 (I)	Develop streamlined templated legal agreements.	Legal Services Planning, Development and Building Services	Legal Services and Planning, Development and Building Services have sought representatives from the Greater Ottawa Home Builders Association (GOHBA) and law society to identify members who would work with the City to draft the legal agreements by end of Q4 2025.
11 (S)	Undertake a review of the terms of reference for items listed on the Development Application Study Policy (Information and Materials for Planning Applications (By-Law No. 2023-297) for opportunities to increase flexibility in interpretation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of studies and plans required, and timing • Reduce the level of detail required for pre-consultation • Streamline the approval process for applications of high quality • Explore opportunities to remove the need for transportation studies in certain areas of the city • Accept studies prepared by certified professionals without requiring duplicate review 	Planning, Development and Building Services	Planning, Development and Building Services will recommend amendments to the terms of reference for items listed on the Development Application Study Policy (DASP) by Q1 2026.
12 (S)	Engage industry to identify common deficiencies in application materials to support the industry in improving the quality of their submissions.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Planning, Development and Building Services will collect feedback from staff and bring forward to the Planning and Engineering Liaison Committee in Q1 2026.

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13 (M)	Undertake a review of the Committee of Adjustment.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Planning, Development and Building Services will review the delegated authority and the Terms of Reference for the Committee of Adjustment with recommendation for Council in Q1 2027 that could be implemented prior to appointment in the next term of council.
14 (M)	Pilot the use of artificial intelligence (AI) as approval processes become automated.	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action will be explored and considered as appropriate and applicable in the ongoing implementation of the Land Management System (LMS).
15 (S)	Update the engineering design guidelines for sewer and water to incorporate technical bulletins.	Infrastructure and Water Services	Infrastructure and Water Services expect to complete this action by Q1 2026.

2. Evolve City Culture to be Housing Development Friendly

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#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
16 (S)	Provide tools and guidance to staff on applying a risk-based approach to parks policies, minor deviations from engineering standards, and other technical guidance based on past practices.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Requires agreement and documentation across departments on the range of acceptable site-specific variations from set standards and requirements. Will be communicated to Council through Memorandum in Q2 2026.
17 (I)	Proactively resolve conflicts to reduce the need to go to the Ontario Land Tribunal.	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action is underway. By adopting a results-oriented and risk-based approach Staff will aim to proactively resolve conflicts.

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18 (I)	Update the Parkland First Policy, Delegation of Authority By-law and Parkland Dedication By-law from Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services (RCFS) Department to the Planning, Development and Building Services (PDBS) Department and transfer parks planning staff involved in development review process from RCFS to PDBS and streamline the scope of the review.	Planning, Development and Building Services Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services	Planning, Development and Building Services and Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will work collaboratively to update relevant documents and coordinate the transfer of Parks Planners upon approval of this report.
19 (S)	Undertake an end-to-end review of the development approval process for each development typology considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities to empower Planning staff to resolve interdepartmental conflicts early and deliver coordinated, issue-resolved comments to applicants • How staff are organized to support the development of subject matter experts • Opportunities to foster mentorship, knowledge sharing and corporate memory • Identify business decisions that can be made solely by Planning Services staff 	Planning, Development and Building Services	In late Q3 through to the end of Q4 2025, Planning, Development and Building Services will lead the first phase of review with departmental staff and second phase with other departments. The results are expected to inform minor process changes and internal procedures.
20 (S)	Increase in-office presence to facilitate timely in-person meetings for pre-consultation and to support issue resolution during detailed design.	Planning, Development and Building Services	As per the memo from the City Manager on August 26, 2025, the City of Ottawa will return to five days in the office as the new standard for all City employees effective January 1, 2026.

3. Introduce More Flexibility in Fees and Charges

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
21 (I)	Suspend the Community Benefit Charges By-law for 5 years from date of application approval and return the funds collected to date.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Effective upon Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002).
22 (I)	Defer Development Charges to occupancy.	Planning, Development and Building Services Finance and Corporate Services	Effective upon Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002).
23 (I)	Defer the collection of Cash-in-lieu of Parkland until occupancy for an 18-month period, while the comprehensive policy review is completed.	Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Finance and Corporate Services	This action will be implemented following Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002). Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will review this recommendation further in the comprehensive review of Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland, expected by Q1 2027.
24 (I)	Reduce Cash-in-lieu of Parkland charges for all projects of less than 20 units in historical plans of subdivision within the greenbelt to 5% for an 18-month period while a comprehensive review is completed.	Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Finance and Corporate Services	This action will be implemented following Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002). Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will review this recommendation further in the comprehensive review of Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland, expected by Q1 2027.
25 (I)	Defer previously announced building code fee increases, specific to Residential Occupancies.	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action will be included in the 2026 Draft Operating Budget.
26 (M)	Undertake a Development Charge Structure Review.	Finance and Corporate Services	A Development Charge Structure Review is expected by Q3 2027.

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#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
		Planning, Development and Building Services	
27 (M)	Undertake a comprehensive review of the Cash-in-lieu of Parkland policy.	Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Finance and Corporate Services	A comprehensive review of the Cash-in-Lieu policy is in progress and an update is expected by Q1 2027.
28 (M)	Undertake a comprehensive review of the methodology to simplify security requirements and associated quantity estimates.	Planning, Development and Building Services Finance and Corporate Services	Implementation is expected by Q2 2027.

4. Consolidate and Strengthen Capacity for Affordable Housing development

A) Strategic use of public lands

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
29 (I)	Proactively undertake design and site preparation activities on City lands to support affordable housing development.	Strategic Initiatives	This action is in progress and Strategic Initiatives expect to implement by Q4 2025.
30 (M)	Create a 10-year housing roadmap for City-owned lands.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives expect to complete this action by Q1 2027.

4. Consolidate and Strengthen Capacity for Affordable Housing development

B) Propose opportunities to consolidate affordable housing development and scale up existing non-profit housing developments

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
31 (I)	Amend the criteria for eligibility under the <i>Reimbursement Program for Development-Related Fees for Charitable or Non-Profit Organizations</i> , to include site plan planning and building permit fees for non-profit affordable housing projects.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Effective upon Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002).
32 (S)	Undertake an analysis of public developer options to determine the most efficient model to leverage the strengths of the City, Build Ottawa and Ottawa Community Housing to address existing challenges to developing affordable housing.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives will return to committee by Q2 2026 with a cost-benefit analysis of model options.
33 (I)	Introduce flexibility in calls for proposals for funding and municipal land for affordable housing to ensure projects are financially viable and sustainable.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives will implement flexibility in calls for proposal by Q4 2025.
34 (S)	Review the eligibility criteria for the Municipal Capital Facility designation to introduce greater flexibility for new developments, with a focus on supporting long-term affordability and sustainability.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives expect to implement by Q2 2026.
35 (S)	As part of the Zoning By-Law Review, proactively permit residential uses in conjunction with church and institutional uses to eliminate costly rezonings.	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action will be addressed in the New Zoning By-Law. Planning, Development and Building Services will bring forward a report and final draft of the new Zoning Bylaw to a joint Planning Housing Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on December 17, 2025, and to Council on January 28, 2026.

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#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
36 (M)	Support the growth and capacity of non-profit housing providers by enabling intensification on existing sites and exploring innovative financial tools to unlock portfolio expansion for long-term sustainability.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives expect to implement by Q3 2027.
37 (S)	Create a simplified regulatory environment for not-for-profit housing providers that considers the sector's capacity.	Planning, Development and Building Services Strategic Initiatives	A simplified regulatory environment will be developed by Q1 2026 and piloted on the next round of municipal lands made available for affordable housing development.

5. Unlock Urban Intensification and Transit Oriented Development			
A) Rebalancing uses in downtown, particularly the central business district, by enabling more residential			
(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council			
#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
38 (I)	Establish a working group between the City, Federal Government, and agencies to identify lands for residential development.	Strategic Initiatives	This action is underway.
39 (I)	Waive Cash-in-lieu of Parkland for office-to-residential conversions for an 18-month period while a comprehensive policy review is completed.	Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Finance and Corporate Services	This action will be implemented following Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002). Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will review this recommendation further in the comprehensive review of Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland, expected by Q1 2027.

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#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
40 (S)	Recommend regulatory changes and financial incentives to support downtown revitalization, including through more residential developments downtown and in the Central Business District (CBD).	Strategic Initiatives Planning, Development and Building Services Finance and Corporate Services	Strategic Initiatives will return to committee in 2026 with recommendations for regulatory changes and the allocation of financial incentives in support of office conversions or other housing initiatives to address this action.
41 (M)	Engage the Federal government to discuss zoning as they identify their priority sites.	Planning, Development and Building Services Strategic Initiatives	This action is underway, and staff will continue to work with federal counterparts. An update will be provided as part of the progress report planned for Q2 2026.
42 (M)	Investigate opportunities for zoning of select municipal sites that are in close proximity to transit and other amenities for mixed use residential.	Planning, Development and Building Services Strategic Initiatives	Staff will continue to work with internal counterparts as properties are identified. An update will be provided as part of the progress report planned for Q2 2026.

5. Unlock Urban Intensification and Transit Oriented Development			
B) Facilitate gentle density and diverse typologies (infill, missing middle, modular-friendly city)			
<i>(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council</i>			
#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
43 (S)	Introduce an Additional Residential Unit accelerator and fast-tracking program funded through the Housing Accelerator Fund.	Strategic Initiatives	Program to be launched in 2026, Strategic Initiatives will include an update in the progress report planned for Q2 2026.

5. Unlock Urban Intensification and Transit Oriented Development

B) Facilitate gentle density and diverse typologies (infill, missing middle, modular-friendly city)

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
44 (S)	Introduce a Missing Middle accelerator and fast-tracking program funded through the Housing Accelerator Fund.	Strategic Initiatives	This program is expected to launch in Program to be launched in 2026, Strategic Initiatives will include an update in the progress report planned for Q2 2026.
45 (I)	Waive Cash-in-lieu of Parkland for small or adaptive developments for an 18-month period, while the comprehensive policy review is completed.	Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Finance and Corporate Services	This action will be implemented following Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002). Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will review this recommendation further in the comprehensive review of Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland, expected by Q1 2027.
46 (S)	Eliminate zoning barriers to modular and prefabricated housing methods.	Planning, Development and Building Services Strategic Initiatives	The new Zoning By-Law will include flexibility regarding height limits to support modular housing development. Planning, Development and Building Services will bring forward the final draft of the new Zoning Bylaw to a joint Planning Housing Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on December 17, 2025, and to Council on January 28, 2026. Additionally, staff will continue to monitor policies to ensure there are no barriers to modular and prefabricated housing.
47 (S)	Broaden zoning provisions to increase the potential for gentle density in neighbourhoods.	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action will be addressed in the New Zoning By-Law. Planning, Development and Building Services will bring forward a report and final draft of the new Zoning Bylaw to a joint Planning Housing Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on December 17, 2025, and to Council on January 28, 2026.

5. Unlock Urban Intensification and Transit Oriented Development

B) Facilitate gentle density and diverse typologies (infill, missing middle, modular-friendly city)

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#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
48 (I)	Use pre-set building designs, including Additional Residential Units, developed and in use by other municipalities in Ontario or developed by the private sector, to allow for expedited building permits.	Planning, Development and Building Services	Effective upon Council approval of Report ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002, Planning, Development and Building Services will review already approved pre-set building designs in use by other municipalities in Ontario, as well as organizations such as the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and select designs that can be applied locally. Selected and approved public sector designs will be made available for public use, enabling expedited building permits for project utilizing those designs. Planning, Development and Building Services will also expand the master template program to include multiplex and Accessory Residential Units.

5. Unlock Urban Intensification and Transit Oriented Development

C) Reducing barriers to Transit Oriented Development

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
49 (I)	Cap Cash-in-lieu of Parkland at 10% for hubs and major corridors for an 18-month period while a comprehensive policy review is completed.	Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services Finance and Corporate Services	This action will be implemented following Council approval of this report (ACS2025-SI-SPO-0002). Recreation, Cultural and Facility Services will review this recommendation further in the comprehensive review of Cash-in-Lieu of Parkland, expected by Q1 2027.

5. Unlock Urban Intensification and Transit Oriented Development
C) Reducing barriers to Transit Oriented Development

(I) immediate implementation (S) short-term implementation, this Term of Council (M) medium-term implementation, next Term of Council

#	Action	Lead Department(s)	Timeline for implementation
50 (S)	Create development scenarios for City lands (e.g. park and ride lots) to create vibrant, walkable, mixed affordability transit-oriented neighborhood centers.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives will initiate this action and include an update in the progress report planned for Q2 2026.
51 (S)	Proactively undertake site preparation of public lands along transit hubs and major corridors.	Strategic Initiatives	Strategic Initiatives will initiate this action and include an update in the progress report planned for Q2 2026.
52 (S)	Through the new Zoning Bylaw, increasing the maximum height to support intensification in strategic growth areas such as hubs and along major corridors.	Planning, Development and Building Services	This action will be addressed in the New Zoning By-Law. Planning, Development and Building Services will bring forward a report and final draft of the new Zoning Bylaw to a joint Planning Housing Committee and Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee on December 17, 2025, and to Council on January 28, 2026.
53 (M)	Increase brownfield incentives near transit.	Planning, Development and Building Services Finance and Corporate Services	Planning, Development and Building Services will evaluate the impacts of the changes brought forward in April 2024 and return to the next term of Council with a response to the recommendation. This will include a comprehensive look at the Brownfield Redevelopment CIP focused on what we have learned since the latest amendment.