



BACKGROUND

December 20th, 2024

In 2023, the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation announced the Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF), a Federal Government initiative aimed at increasing the supply of housing across the country by providing funding to municipalities and other stakeholders. This fund encourages initiatives that boost housing supply and promote the development of affordable, inclusive and diverse communities that are low-carbon and climate-resilient.

In February 2024, Woolwich Township staff were notified by CMHC that its application was approved for funding in the amount of \$6,724,742.20 over a three-year period. This funding supports 10 targeted initiatives intended to address specific local housing needs. The initiatives seek to reduce barriers to development, streamline approvals, and foster partnerships with community housing developers to facilitate the timely creation of housing, including missing middle and affordable units.

Each funding installment furthers the Township's ability to advance these initiatives. The first installment was received in February 2024, with following installments scheduled for February 2025 and 2026. The final installment will be delivered in 2027 subject to the Township achieving its housing target goals of 886 permitted housing units by February 28, 2027. Of these, 455 units must be missing-middle, and 81 units must be affordable. Using the Elmira Core Urban Design Study as a framework to identify underutilized township lands, the Township has been actively working to determine key sites best positioned for redevelopment. This framework provides a glimpse into the changes that could shape Elmira's downtown through public and private initiatives.

In October 2024, the Township submitted an offer on two properties, 22 Church St W, and 6 Maple St, in Elmira, to work towards creating a town square per the urban design concept of the framework, and to create a larger parcel for redevelopment. This square is set to include new green space and will include the development of housing with a development partner. This mixed-use development will focus on affordability and sustainability, ensuring that the area becomes pedestrian-friendly, and encourages social interaction through gathering spaces, fostering a strong economy with local businesses.

The properties at 22 Church St W and 6 Maple St are being purchased for \$4,000,000. The leases of the current tenants at 22 Church including Elmira Home Hardware and Elmira Donuts & Deli end in 2026. At that time, the property at 22 Church St W will be redeveloped through an RFP process initiated in 2025. This process will seek to gather and identify the best-suited development partner for the site and the community.

The combined area of 22 Church St W and 3 Maple St totals 0.645 hectares (1.59 acres). Initial assessments suggest that the site could accommodate up to 77 homes under the Township's current Official Plan policies, which limit developments to 120 people and jobs per hectare. With an Official Plan amendment, the number of homes allowed could increase, enabling greater density and additional housing opportunities to meet the growing needs of the community.

To prepare the properties at 22 Church St W and 3 Maple St for development, the Township will first undertake Phase 1, which will see the partial redevelopment of its Administration Office parking lot, and 6 Maple St, into a new green space and additional parking. This work will

accommodate lost parking spaces during the redevelopment of 22 Church St W and 3 Maple St, ensuring that the housing project can proceed efficiently in 2027.

According to the Woolwich Housing Needs Assessment, the Township's population grew eight per cent from 2016 to 2021 and is projected to reach 36,433 by 2034, which will increase pressure on the housing market. Furthermore, it highlighted the need for diverse housing, such as family-sized homes and accessible units for seniors, and underscored the lack of medium- and high-density options like townhouses and apartments for working professionals, seniors, and moderate-income households. It also mentioned that mixed-use developments combining residential units with retail or medical amenities are popular for downtown revitalization and connectivity.

Ultimately, the recently completed Housing Needs Assessment supports the Township's goals of reimagining underutilized Township lands into vibrant, sustainable communities that address current and future housing needs.

Contact:

Jonathan Delli Colli, Junior Planner - Housing, Development Services

Phone: 519-514-6068

Email: jdellicolli@woolwich.ca