



COUNCIL – AGENDA REPORT

Meeting Date: 5 November 2024
Subject: Research Report on Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing
Directorate: Community Safety and Social Services

Issue:

Council is being provided with new research on Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing in the Airdrie context, for information.

Policy / Council Direction:

In June 2023, Council unanimously endorsed Airdrie's [2024-2030 Affordable Housing Principled Action Plan](#), setting direction on how the municipality will advance housing solutions in the next six years. **Strategic Objective #3: Grow Housing Serving Airdrie's Labour Force** includes a specific goal to preserve and increase Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) through removing barriers to creating more lower cost housing faster.

In addition, allowing more broadly permitted accessory suites through Land Use Bylaw amendments is one of the seven initiatives in the City of Airdrie's [Housing Accelerator Fund \(HAF\) Action Plan](#), endorsed by Council in April 2024.

Background:

New research supplements previous research presented to Council

Airdrie's [2024 Housing Needs Assessment](#) and [Housing Landscape Opportunity Analysis](#) provided evidence that there is a severe shortage of housing options for low and moderate-income residents. To help address this shortage, both reports included a recommendation that the municipality take action to preserve and increase Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) across the city.

The term Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing refers to rental housing that is typically more affordable than other housing available in an area because of its form (e.g., secondary suites), tenure (e.g., rental), size (e.g., studio/bachelor suites), location, age and finishing. It is called "naturally occurring" because it does not require government subsidies to make it affordable. It is available in the private market and is more affordable because of its lower construction and maintenance costs and its lower market value.

The attached research report provides detailed analysis, case studies, and implementation strategies to guide Airdrie's approach to preserving and expanding NOAH. It is supplementary material that is relevant to land use planning decisions coming before Council, including recommendations for a Land Use Bylaw amendment for Accessory Suites. Accessory suites are a prime example of NOAH.

Putting People First

Nearly 2,000 households in Airdrie are in core housing need and housing insecurity is expected to grow, especially for renters and low-income households. Increasing and preserving NOAH is an essential component of the City's action in improving housing security among Airdrie's citizens, including low-income members of the community and work force.

The research report highlights the importance of NOAH in the Airdrie housing landscape, noting that in rapidly growing cities like Airdrie, preserving and expanding NOAH is essential to maintain affordability as the population increases. Among other benefits, the report finds that NOAH:

- increases affordable housing supply while maintaining neighbourhood character,
- supports diverse living arrangements, including multigenerational families,
- allows for more efficient use of existing infrastructure, and
- diversifies housing options across neighbourhoods.

Council Committee Routed Through:

This report did not go through any Council Committees.

Administration Recommendation:

Administration recommends that Council receives this report and Attachment 1: HelpSeeker report – Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing in Canada, for information.

Alternatives/Implications:

Administration has no alternatives to propose.

Budget Implications:

Budget items supporting affordable housing initiatives will be presented to Council through the annual budget process or other process as requested by Council.

Communications and Engagement:

Ongoing Affordable Housing Public Information Campaign.

Recommendation:

That Council accepts the report entitled “ Research Report on Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing” and the HelpSeeker report – Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) in Canada, for information.

Jessica DeVreeze
Affordable Housing Team Leader

Staff Presenter:	Jessica DeVreeze, Cheryl Selinger
External Presenter:	none
Department:	Community Safety and Social Services
Reviewed by:	Kevin Weinberger
Attachments:	#1: HelpSeeker report – Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing (NOAH) in Canada