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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: #2025-INFO-24
Date: April 11, 2025

Subject:

CMHC Housing Design Catalogue

Recommendation:

Receive for information

Report:

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the [Housing Design Catalogue](#) released by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) on March 7, 2025.

2. Background

- 2.1 The CMHC created the Housing Design Catalogue ("Catalogue") as one way to help simplify how housing can be delivered. The concept is to offer builders pre-vetted architectural options to help reduce the cost, time and uncertainty involved in new housing development.
- 2.2 The Catalogue was prepared following a consultation period, culminating in the summer, 2024 "Housing Design Catalogue - What We Heard Report". In general, the Report highlighted the following themes that informed the preparation of the Catalogue:
- a. Focus on designs that encourage density - Given the urgent need for more homes to be built faster, the catalogue will yield more impactful results if it focuses on higher density forms of housing within existing communities – such as four or six-unit multiplexes and accessory dwelling units.
 - b. Accelerate approvals for new homes – A significant challenge in standardizing design at the national level is the ability to respond to the fragmented, community-specific nature of local rules.

- c. Set the bar high for sustainability and accessibility - Promote greater accessibility as an essential component of new home design. Designing for climate compatibility and energy efficiency should be done without sacrificing speed or cost.
- d. Demonstrate and encourage innovation - Promote innovative homebuilding techniques, including prefabrication and / or modular homebuilding techniques as an opportunity.
- e. Allow flexibility and evolution – Provide some design flexibility to adapt to site conditions, local context, aesthetics or the ability to make home additions while adjusting to evolving homebuilding techniques, materials science and construction technology.

3. Housing Design Catalogue

- 3.1 The [Housing Design Catalogue](#) includes “Accessible-ready” and “Enhanced accessible” designs for meeting home accessibility needs.
- 3.2 All designs are based on climate performance targets that exceed minimum requirements in provincial building codes, with base models aiming for Tier 3 of the 2020 National Building Code.
- 3.3 The Catalogue reflects regional differences in design, construction practices, materials and housing needs and are intended to align with local approval processes.
- 3.4 The Catalogue aims to simplify and accelerate homebuilding by standardizing plans to reduce the time and cost involved in the design process, while supporting opportunities for prefab construction.
- 3.5 A series of designs were created for illustrative purposes intended to reflect the housing types and conditions for each region across the country. For Ontario, the following designs were created:
 - a. Accessory Dwelling Unit 01 (1 bedroom - 59 m²)
 - b. Accessory Dwelling Unit 02 (3 bedrooms - 95 m²)
 - c. Stacked Townhouse 01 (2 units, 1-3 bedrooms, 201 m²)
 - d. Stacked Townhouse 02 (2 units, 1-4 bedrooms, 237 m²)
 - e. Fourplex 01 (4 units, 1-3 bedrooms, 362 m²)
 - f. Fourplex 02 (4 units, 1-3 bedrooms, 303 m²)
 - g. Sixplex (6 units, 1-2 bedrooms, 450 m²)
- 3.6 Each package includes conceptual floor plans, a perspective drawing and rendering. Final architectural packages will be issued once available.

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

- 4.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following Strategic Direction(s) and Pathway(s) in Durham Region’s 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

- a. Connected and Vibrant Communities
 - C2. Enable a full range of housing options, including housing that is affordable and close to transit.
 - b. Environmental Sustainability and Climate Action
 - E2. Collaborate with partners on the low-carbon transition to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions across Durham Region.
 - c. Strong Relationships
 - S3. Collaborate across local area municipalities, with agencies, non-profits, and community partners to deliver co-ordinated and efficient services.
- 4.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundation(s) in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
- a. Processes: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.
 - b. Technology: Keeping pace with technological change to ensure efficient and effective service delivery.
- 5. Conclusion**
- 5.1 Staff will provide a provide update on the final Housing Design Catalogue in a future Council Information Package once it is made publicly available.

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

Stella Danos-Papaconstantinou
Commissioner of Social Services