Minutes – Executive Policy Committee – July 8, 2025

REPORTS

Item No. 2 Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law Amendments

EXECUTIVE POLICY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

The Executive Policy Committee concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and recommended to Council:

1. That a By-law to amend the Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law No. 64/2024, a draft of which is attached hereto as Appendix A to this report, be enacted.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Duncan,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in and forwarded to Council.

Carried

Councillor Browaty was absent from the vote on the above motion.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law Amendments

Critical Path: Executive Policy Committee - Council

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
A. Rappaport	S. Armbruster, Interim CAO	T. Graham	S. Armbruster, Interim CAO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) Grant Program By-law No. 64/2024 would benefit from updated amendments to more effectively support implementation and advance the program's objectives of accelerating housing, including projects under the Land Enhancement Office initiative. The recommended By-law amendment addresses four changes:

- That entities could apply and be conditionally approved for HAF grants before owning or leasing the property. The current By-law requires applicants for any HAF grant to be the current owner or lessee of a property prior to being conditionally approved for a grant. The proposed amendment would remove this requirement; the bylaw would maintain a requirement to own or lease the property prior to releasing funds under the program. This amendment will support early commitment of funding for projects under the City's Land Enhancement Office.
- That construction costs are added to the approved list of eligible expenses for land enhancement projects. This proposed amendment would allow greater flexibility for commitments of funding to these projects.
- That the Downtown Area is explicitly identified as an area eligible under the Multi-Family Sustainable Housing and Infrastructure Grant (MSHIG). The area was always included and outlined in the maps in the Schedule of the By-law, but for greater clarity, is explicitly added to the list of eligible areas.
- Additionally, as the Multi-Family Sustainable Housing and Infrastructure Grant (MSHIG) program provides funding to developers to upgrade water and sewer infrastructure, a further amendment is recommended so that developers using the HAF grant are not entitled to recoup funds from others (as per the Development Agreement Parameters).

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a By-law to amend the Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law No. 64/2024, a draft of which is attached hereto as Appendix A to this report, be enacted.

2. That the Proper Officers of the City be authorized to do all things necessary to implement the intent of the foregoing.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

The recommended By-law amendments will facilitate the intent of the HAF Grant Program, including the Multi-Family Sustainable Housing Infrastructure Grant (MSHIG), by allowing applicants to apply to the program and be conditionally approved prior to purchasing or leasing the property in question.

Only Council can amend or enact By-laws.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no direct financial implications to the recommendations of this report. Adoption of the recommendations above will strengthen HAF initiatives, by allowing projects to access multiple HAF initiatives, including Land Enhancement Office properties and MSHIG, increasing their likelihood of success in achieving the City's housing goals and commitments under the HAF agreement with the Federal government.

Adding construction costs to the list of eligible costs for land enhancement projects will allow greater flexibility in how the grant is used and help facilitate objectives of accelerating housing construction.

The proposed amendment also clarifies that any future reimbursements related to grant-funded infrastructure will be appropriately directed back to the City, reflecting the public investment made.

HISTORY

Background
The Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) is a $4 billion national housing program launched in 2023 by the Government of Canada through the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). This program provides funding to local governments to support the creation of 100,000 net new permitted housing units during the three-year duration of the program. In December 2023, CMHC approved a total allocation of $122.4 million for Winnipeg under the HAF. Winnipeg's allocation is based on achieving building permit approvals for an additional 3,166 net new housing units over a three-year period.

On May 30, 2024, Council passed the Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law No. 64/2024, which includes multiple granting streams funded through the HAF agreement. On January 30, 2025, Council approved the Multi-Family Sustainable Housing and Infrastructure Program (MSHIP) and an amendment to the by-law to include the Multi-Family Sustainable Housing and Infrastructure Grant (MSHIG). This grant is intended to support water and sewer infrastructure investments that are necessary for the construction of high-density sustainable multi-family housing in targeted areas of the City.

Proposed By-law Amendments
As the City launched the MSHIP in April 2025, and will be releasing applications in Spring 2025, barriers to implementation and acceleration of housing were noted, and amendments are being brought forward for Council's consideration to achieve the intent of the program.

The HAF Grant Program provides conditional approval for projects approximately 12 months before a project is ready to enter into the funding agreement and start construction. The current By-law requires applicants for any HAF grant to be the current owner or lessee of a property prior *to* being conditionally approved for a grant. The proposed amendment addresses a timeline barrier by not requiring a finalized or executed lease/land sale agreement prior to conditional approval, but rather prior to release of funds. This amendment will allow projects to continue pre-development and therefore reach the timelines under the HAF Grant Program, including to achieve building permit units under the City's HAF Agreement with the Federal Government.

The Public Service further recommends that construction costs be added to the approved list of eligible expenses for land enhancement projects. This proposed amendment will allow greater flexibility in providing funding commitments to assist these projects to move forward. While construction costs were originally included as eligible as part of the "other" category, this amendment will be clearer and more transparent that they are explicitly identified as eligible expenses.

An amendment is included to add the Downtown area as an eligible location for grants under MSHIP. Although the area was always included and outlined in the maps in the schedule of the By-law, it is now being explicitly added to the list of area descriptions for greater clarity.

The Development Agreement Parameters (Council Policy PD-031) allow developers to recover costs when they, at their own expense, install/upgrade infrastructure that benefits third parties. As the MSHIG program provides funding to developers to upgrade water and sewer infrastructure, there is a further amendment recommended that developers who use the MSHIG are not entitled to recoup further funds from others in the future for the specific costs they have already received funding for. They would be still entitled to recoup costs from anything above what the grant has funded. Additionally, any funds recouped by the City as a result of the infrastructure invested with MSHIG, the by-law indicates that the funds be directed to facilitate water and/or sewer infrastructure to support further housing development.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement

Date: June 2, 2025

Project Name:

Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law Amendments

Comments:

There are no financial implications associated with the recommendations of this report.

Randy Bernard

Randy Bernard, CPA, CMA
Manager of Finance & Administration (Campus)
Corporate Finance Department

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with:

- Legal Services
- Planning, Property and Development – Land Development
- Water and Waste Department – Engineering Services Division

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

01-4 HOUSING
Direction 1: Support diverse housing options in each neighbourhood or neighbourhood cluster throughout the city
Direction 2: Collaborate with other levels of government and other partners to renew and regenerate Winnipeg's housing stock
Direction 3: Establish partnerships with the private, not-for-profit and government sectors to provide affordable housing throughout the city, with particular focus on locations near a variety of transportation options

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Strategic Opportunity #5 Low Carbon and Energy Efficient Buildings
Key Direction 5.2 Improve Energy Performance of New Buildings

- Provide resources and incentives such as property tax relief or permit cost reduction program to building owners that demonstrate high energy efficiency

Key Direction 5.4 Build Climate Equity

- Build partnerships with key stakeholders such as the local neighbourhood associations, Building Urban Industries for Local Development (BUILD) and Centre for Aboriginal Human Resources Development (CAHRD) to build local capacity and equity.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The information and recommendations presented in this report align with the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy (2021 – 2031) Guiding Principles:

- We will Uphold Human Rights
- We will Honour Relationships and Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples
- We will Address Systemic Oppression, Trauma and Social Inequity
- We will Promote and Maintain the Welfare of All Residents
- We will Develop Trust and Meaningful Partnerships to find solutions and drive change

Goal 2: The City Actively Plans for and Partners in Affordable Housing

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Office of the Chief Administrative Officer
Prepared by: Lissie Rappaport, HAF Manager
Emma Fineblit, Housing and Neighbourhood Revitalization Coordinator
Date: June 13, 2025

Attachments:

Appendix A – By-law to Amend the Housing Accelerator Fund Grant Program By-law No. 64/2024