



# HOUSING OUR FUTURE

Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing  
and Homelessness Prevention Strategy



**2022**  
ANNUAL REPORT

# A Message from the Warden

It is a true pleasure to share this report with you as we announce that by the end of 2022, the County of Simcoe and its hard-working team, partners, and area municipalities have been building up our communities through the creation of 2,775 new affordable homes across the region. These homes and investments have been spread across the County, from Bradford West Gwillimbury in the south to Severn in the north, and from Collingwood in the west to Ramara in the east. Housing needs and homelessness challenges do not have borders. This is a regional system approach, which addresses needs across the entire area of Simcoe County.

Over the past nine years, I have been incredibly proud to watch the progress of the 2014-2024 Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy and its increased growth each year, creating more affordable homes and providing additional support for those across the County of Simcoe who need it. That's why when I learned that the initial goal of 2,685 new units of affordable housing had not only been achieved, but exceeded one year ahead of schedule, I was thrilled for those whom we serve across the region. This is a true commitment

to building up the lives of our residents in all of our communities.

With that said, we are not done yet – we are committed to continuing to build up communities and create adequate, attainable, affordable and accessible places to live. That's why we continue to construct buildings in Orillia (130 new units – expected to be completed in 2024), Bradford West Gwillimbury (50 new units – expected to be completed in 2024) and Barrie (at least 176 new units – expected to be 'shovel-ready' in 2024).

This strategy is an innovative, forward-thinking one that sets the course of affordable housing over a ten-year period, and we are already thinking about the next ten years beyond the conclusion of this strategy. We will continue to plan to create affordable living through not only new rental developments, but also through rent supplements, affordable homeownership down payment assistance, affordable second suites, home repairs and accessibility modifications, rent-gear-to-income housing, and an integrated service model for housing and supports.

I am excited to see this ten-year strategy continue to exceed its initial targets over the next year as the strategy wraps up. For more information on this strategy, please visit [simcoe.ca/ourAHHPS](http://simcoe.ca/ourAHHPS).



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Basil Clarke".

Basil Clarke  
Warden, County of Simcoe

# Housing Our Future

## 2022 Annual Report

January 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Each year, under the Housing Services Act (2011), the County of Simcoe reports to the public and Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) on progress made under its 10-year long-term affordable housing strategy, which took effect in January 2014.



# STRATEGIC THEME ONE

## Strong Governance and Leadership

**Desired outcome:** Successful implementation of the Strategy, supported by working partnerships with the public and private sectors, and all levels of government.

Since the onset of the Strategy, the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHA) has ensured strong governance and effective leadership for implementing the County's 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy through ongoing research, discussion, and advocacy efforts.

The AHA Committee includes six municipal representatives for the geographical areas of North, South, East and West Simcoe, Barrie and Orillia, as well as six non-municipal representatives from private, public, and non-profit organizations, selected based on their expertise in the following sectors: building

and development industry, health, homelessness prevention services, landlord/property management, mental health, and addictions care. County staff from the Social and Community Services and Planning departments support the work of this committee. The Warden is an ex-officio member.



### **The Affordable Housing Advisory Committee met five times in 2022. Highlights include:**

- Ongoing monitoring and reporting of local housing data, indicators of regional housing needs, and service level data.
- Research and discussion on various topics, including built forms, attainable housing, coordinated access to homelessness services, local-municipal affordable housing strategies, and Centralized Waitlist rent-g geared-to-income updates.
- Homelessness Shelter Services.
- Recommending changes to the tracking of unfunded secondary suites under Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy (Strategy), based on current rental market data captured in a Local Market Rents study.
- Receiving presentations from community partners and member municipalities.
- Review of new federal and provincial policies.

# STRATEGIC THEME TWO

## Achieve Affordable Housing Target

**Desired outcome:** Simcoe County residents will have access to a minimum of 2,685 new affordable housing units by 2024.

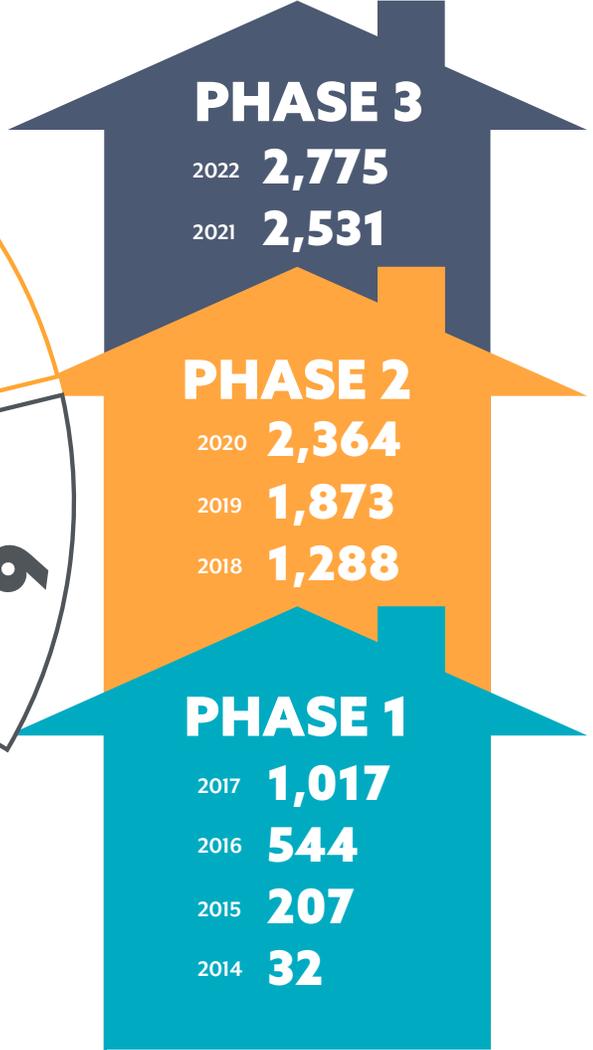
Through a combination of new development, rent supplements/housing allowances, homeownership assistance, and the creation of secondary suites, the County and its community partners have achieved the outcome of 2,775 new units of affordable housing since 2014, including 244 new homes in 2022.

Although the County of Simcoe has

surpassed its minimum target of 2,685 new units, it will continue working to maximize all available resources to create affordable housing options. The County acknowledges a deep need for housing in the community. It is working towards ensuring that all residents have access to adequate, appropriate, affordable housing options that meet their needs.

The current 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy concludes at the end of 2023, and preliminary planning for developing a successor strategy is underway. In addition to an updated local needs assessment, the County will host community consultations and engage key community partners in 2023.

### UNITS CREATED TO-DATE



# AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROGRAM DELIVERY

Through a combination of capital and operating programs, the County of Simcoe offers several programs to increase affordable housing stock and assist County residents in securing affordable housing. In combination, the following programs have worked to increase affordable housing stock across Simcoe County while addressing various housing pressure points across the housing spectrum.

## Monitoring For Success

Based on 2022 data a rating for each program has been assigned

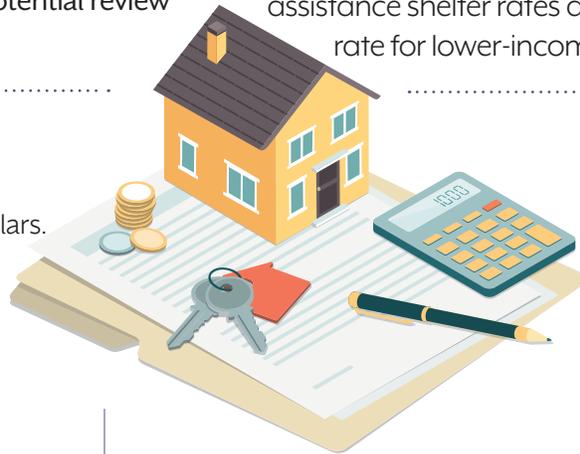
**Red** - Program requires review

**Yellow** - Program is being monitored for potential review

**Green** - Program is operating as intended

## Rent Supplements

A rent supplement or housing allowance can support individuals and families with lower incomes by bridging the gap between social assistance shelter rates and rent or providing a flat rate for lower-income working households.



## How Much Did We Do?

In 2022, the County distributed **\$1.29M** rent supplement/housing allowance subsidy dollars.

## How Well Did We Do It?

- **100%** of eligible referrals to rent supplement were provided a rent assistance subsidy or were referred to alternate programming most appropriate to the household's circumstance. Some households referred to alternate programming may not have met eligibility requirements for that program or depth of subsidy offered may differ to that available through rent supplement programs.
- Throughout 2022, rent supplements assisted households in every municipality, including Barrie and Orillia.

## Is Anyone Better Off?

- **205** households were housed with new rent supplements in 2022
- **1,087** units have been made affordable with rent supplements since 2014
- Rent supplements

continue to assist seniors, youth, low-income earners, Indigenous persons, survivors of human trafficking, and persons experiencing mental health or addiction challenges, persons experiencing chronic homelessness, and others in addressing systemic poverty barriers.

\*Referrals are requested or accepted only in alignment with available funding.

## The Story Behind the Data

Some of the rent supplements provided in 2022 came from a new provincially mandated funding program called Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB). This housing benefit assists low-income households with housing costs and is available to eligible priority groups who are on the Centralized Waiting List, currently residing in shelters, or who are faced with expiring rent supplements under another

**“Thank you. I don’t know how I’d manage without it; I sincerely appreciate it.”**

S., Rent Supplement Recipient

program.

As COHB is a portable housing benefit, it is tied to a household rather than a unit and can be used to find, secure, and pay for housing anywhere in Ontario. Upon

acceptance of the COHB, a recipient must consent to being removed from the centralized waitlist which helps to manage the number of applicants on that waitlist.

The amount a recipient receives is assessed on the household's total earnings and the average market rent amounts in the area where the individual or household chooses to reside. The COHB program is set to end on March 31, 2029.



## ■ Affordable Homeownership Down-Payment Assistance Program

Through its Homeownership Down-Payment Assistance Program, the County of Simcoe provides eligible individuals and families with down-payment assistance towards purchasing a home (in the form of a forgivable loan).

Enabling individuals and families to move out of rental accommodation and into affordable homeownership increases rental opportunities for others by freeing up existing rental space for a new tenant to move in.

### How Much Did We Do?

In 2022, the County distributed **\$91,000** in affordable homeownership down-payment supports.

### How Well Did We Do It?

- The homes purchased were within affordability limits. Clients were able to successfully buy homes below the maximum purchase price of **\$593,879**.

### Is Anyone Better Off?

- **2** households were housed with Affordable Homeownership Down-payment Assistance in 2022.
- **137** households have been housed with Affordable Homeownership Down-payment Assistance since 2014.

In 2022, a total of \$824,731 was returned to the County of Simcoe's Revolving Fund. This sustainability fund holds any down-payment assistance purchasers pay back for redistribution to future program participants.

\*Referrals are requested or accepted only in alignment with available funding.

### The Story Behind the Data

Fueled by low inventory and competitive bidding processes, the marketplace for new and resale homes has become highly competitive and increasingly expensive.

The Home Ownership Down-Payment Assistance Program has mandatory criteria such as a maximum purchase price, financing clauses, and the requirement for a home inspection. While interest in the program remains high, several program participants have been unable to successfully negotiate

**“Thank you so much for everything and for your ongoing support - this program and your assistance has been absolutely life changing for me and my family!”**

T., Homeownership Down-Payment Assistance Recipient

a purchase within the mandatory program criteria. In many cases, loan program participants cannot compete

with private market offers that bid over the asking price or waive conditions.

Likewise, program participants are now facing increasing mortgage lending rates, which has left many moderate-income homeowners unable to obtain mortgages due to stress test criteria and the program's maximum household incomes.

Currently, the County continues to offer funding to prospective homeowners who can qualify for financing, meet the program eligibility criteria, and successfully negotiate a purchase.



## ■ Affordable Second Suites and Urgent Home Repairs and Accessibility Modifications

Secondary suites help address housing pressure points by developing new one- and two-bedroom affordable rental units, improving the options available to single individuals, ageing couples, and single-parent households. Funding of up to \$30,000 per unit is available for property owners to create secondary suites.

Funding of up to \$15,000 is also available for homeowners requiring urgent home repairs or accessibility modifications to stay housed.

Examples of eligible repair projects include mould remediation, plumbing or septic repairs, and roofing or structural repairs. Examples of accessibility modifications include the installation of ramps, handrails, or chair and bath lifts.

---

### How Much Did We Do?

In 2022, the County of Simcoe allocated **\$650,000** towards its Municipal Secondary Suites funding program.

The County also distributed **\$300,000** of federal and provincial Secondary Suites funding and an additional \$200,000 in Urgent Home Repairs through the Ontario Renovates Program.

### How Well Did We Do It?

- **31** eligible households proceeded with a County-funded Secondary Suites applications
- **25** were approved for funding
- **1** was waitlisted, and will receive the next available funding
- **11** eligible households proceeded with a Secondary Suites Application, funded through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)
- **9** were approved for funding in 2022

### Is Anyone Better Off?

- **21** new secondary suites were completed in 2022, with government funding
- **218** new secondary suites have been created with government funding since the onset of the Strategy in 2014
- **22** units were supported with urgent home repairs or accessibility modifications in 2021
- **346** units have been supported with urgent home repairs or accessibility modifications since 2014

---

**“Thank you everyone. I am a very happy to have a new roof.”**

C., Urgent Home Repairs  
Funding Recipients

## **■ New Affordable Rental Development**

### **How Much Did We Do?**

#### **Building Progress in Orillia**

Since breaking ground in 2021, the County Council-approved affordable housing and social and community services hub development in the City of Orillia has made significant progress. The foundation, concrete construction, steel framing, roof, exterior walls and windows have all been completed on the south wing. Work continues on the interior construction and closing in the west wing. At time of writing, final tender awards are in progress for caulking, fire stopping, fireproofing, landscaping, ornamental fencing, wood backing, and concrete curbs and sidewalks.

Once complete, the new building will provide 130 units of affordable housing. The hub model will also

have space for social and community agency partners, including Ontario Works and Social & Community Services, Childcare, EarlyON, Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions, Helping Hands and a hub café.

The two-year development project is expected to be completed in 2024.

#### **Site Preparation in Bradford-West Gwillimbury**

In 2021, County Council approved a new 50-unit affordable housing project mixed family and seniors building in Bradford West Gwillimbury with land donated to the Simcoe County Housing Corporation (SCHC) by the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury. The building includes a County of Simcoe Social

and Community Services office on the ground floor, as well as additional agency space for social and community partnership opportunity. Throughout 2022, the County worked with the Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury and Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority (LSRCA) to attain necessary permits and approvals. Site alteration commenced in late 2022 with preliminary grading, perimeter fencing and mobilization of excavation equipment and materials. Site preparation and development will continue into 2023 with channel realignment, site servicing work, foundation footings, and building construction.

The two-year development project is expected to be completed in 2024.





# Barrie

## Pre-Development and Temporary-Use in Barrie

Following the purchase of a 1.9-hectare (4.7 acre) property in the City of Barrie in 2021, the existing buildings on the site were demolished to ensure safety of the community while reducing maintenance costs of the aged structures. Ultimately, the intended use of the site is to accommodate a mixed-use residential development. Pre-development activities were initiated in 2022. Pending preliminary design and costing approval by County Council in 2023, and subsequent land use planning approvals, the property is anticipated to be ‘shovel-ready’ in 2024.

In the interim, the County of Simcoe and its partners at the City of Barrie identified the Rose Street site for a temporary homeless shelter facility to address the needs of unhoused individuals in the Barrie area during the winter months. The modular nature of this structure will enable the County to transport and use the building in other locations, should needs arise in the future. Learn more about this project under Strategic Theme Five, page 14.

## Barrie Native Friendship Centre

The Barrie Native Friendship Centre acquired and renovated a duplex home in Barrie, using provincial Social Services Relief Funds allocated by Ontario Aboriginal Services. The main floor unit has three bedrooms, and the secondary basement unit has two bedrooms. The housing units are for tenants who are Indigenous and/or families at risk of homelessness or who are currently under housed; people fleeing domestic violence are also eligible. Rents are affordable and include utilities.

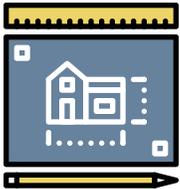
## Georgian Bay Native Women’s Association

The Georgian Bay Native Women’s Association opened four independent living units in Penetanguishene for survivors of violence in 2022, using provincial funds for construction. Rent subsidies are provided in order to improve affordability for tenants.

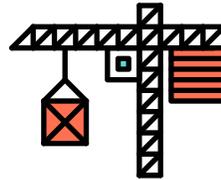
# STRATEGIC THEME THREE

## Protect Existing Public Assets

**Desired outcome:** 85% of existing social housing units in the County remain part of the housing stock.



In 2022, The County of Simcoe invested **\$2.06M** on capital repairs for existing Simcoe County Housing Corporation (SCHC) units.



Through its Non-Profit Provider Capital Repair Loan process, the County provided **\$3.11M** to assist mandated social housing providers with urgent capital repairs.

### Maintaining Affordability upon End-of-Operating Agreements

When community housing providers reach the end of their mortgages, the County, as Service Manager, can partner with the housing provider to ensure the longevity of community housing units.

In 2022, new regulations under the Housing Services Act provided a framework for Service Managers and community housing providers to form new relationships post-mortgage. These new relationships will take the form of a service agreement or, where desirable, an exit agreement.



While the County has yet to enter a formal service agreement, preliminary discussions and planning for end-of-mortgage agreements are guided by the following fundamental principles:

- **Fostering Shared Accountability** through streamlined, simplified, and transparent reporting processes;
- **Partnership**, collaborating to protect, preserve and grow the community housing system to deliver quality housing for residents in our communities while creating conditions that facilitate Housing Providers to be self-sustaining, autonomous and entrepreneurial.
- **Protecting Tenancies** by establishing an appropriate funding approach based on the unique circumstances of each Housing Provider;
- **Protecting Shared Interests** by working together to protect, strengthen, and, where possible, grow the community housing system;
- **Long-Term Sustainability** ensures Housing Providers are viable in all facets of their business: stable tenancies, financial, asset management, governance and operations. Including working together to advocate for permanent financial investments from senior levels of government;
- **Innovation** promotes growth and supporting solutions that modernize the system through capacity building, restructuring and new development.

### Of the original 4,113 units in the social housing portfolio in 2014:

- **2,082** units continue to provide rent-geared-to-income
- **1,804** units continue to offer affordable or low-end of market rent within the community housing system
- **227** units of the original 4,113 units have exited the community housing system, but continue to remain as affordable housing in the community

## Centralized Wait List: Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing

The County of Simcoe maintains waitlists for rent-geared-to-income housing owned or delivered by the Simcoe County Housing Corporation and non-profit or cooperative providers.

As of December 31, 2022, the total number of applicants on the Centralized Waitlist was **4,877** an increase of **4.6%** over the Waitlist reported in 2021.

In 2022, staff processed **1,591** new subsidized housing applications and canceled **1,327\***.

Since 2021, changes in wait times have increased **1.4%** for seniors, and **11.7%** for households with no dependants. Wait times have not changed for households with dependants. These wait times do not include Special Priority Applicants. \*\*

## Applicants on the waitlist include:

- Seniors: **1,953** (40%)
- Adults with no dependants: **1,708** (35%)
- Households with dependants: **1,216** (25%)



## Households Housed

In 2022, **175** households were housed in rent-geared-to-income units. Eighty-eight were from the chronological waiting list, including four applicants who were housed in a barrier free unit, and 87 were Special Priority applicants.

## Canada Ontario Housing Benefit

105 households on the waiting list opted to take the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) rather than wait for subsidized housing. The program provides households with a portable housing benefit to assist with rental costs in the private housing market. The benefit is tied to the household and can be used to help pay rent anywhere in Ontario. Of the 105 households in Simcoe County, 11 were Special Priority, and 94 were on the CWL.

## The Story Behind the Data

In 2022, County staff adjusted how information is collected in its database, RENTCafé. This is to better reflect the numbers on the waiting list and for what size unit. In 2022, there was a large increase in the number of seniors who applied to the Centralized Waiting List (CWL). A total of 390 new applications from individuals 60 years of age and older were received in 2022. An addition of just under 200 applicants turned 60 in 2022.

\* Applicants are cancelled at the applicant's request or if an applicant has failed to inform Simcoe county Housing Corporation with a change in their contact information, rendering us unable to reach them to maintain their status on our waiting list or to offer housing. It is important to note that cancelled applications can be reactivated at the staff's discretion if it is determined the applicant should not have been cancelled or the applicant contacts Simcoe County Housing to explain why they did not respond to an update.

\*\* The Housing Services Act, 2011 legislates that priority status is given to victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.

# STRATEGIC THEME FOUR

## Planning for the Public Good

**Desired outcome:** All municipalities adopt planning, financial and policy tools highlighted in the Strategy to facilitate and promote affordable housing development and transportation modes across the County of Simcoe.

### Municipal Liaison Group

Established in 2016, a Municipal Liaison Group continues to meet quarterly to share best practices for promoting and incentivizing affordable housing development, showcase local municipal projects, and discuss ways to improve affordable housing outcomes at the local municipal level. Topics discussed in 2022 include:

- Use of costing tools to support affordable housing projects
- Progress updates on local projects
- Municipal data needs
- Policy reviews (Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force Report)
- Affordable Housing Advisory Committee updates
- Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario (RPCO) updates
- Participation in One Ontario pilot project to streamline development approvals processes

### Bill 23, More Homes, Built Faster

On October 25, 2022, the Provincial government introduced Bill 23, More Homes Built Faster Act, 2022. Legislative changes included in Bill 23 aim to increase the housing supply throughout Ontario and to achieve the Province's goal of 1.5 million homes in the next 10 years.

Many of these changes are significant, such as the Province removing legislated planning responsibilities from certain upper-tier municipalities, including the County of Simcoe, and the inability of municipalities to collect Development Charges (DCs) in certain instances. Furthermore, DCs are no longer permitted to be applied to Social Housing projects, as a growth-related

service. This results in the loss of considerable revenue the County had budgeted for social housing capital projects and supporting infrastructure.

As current affordable housing capital projects were approved with the inclusion of DC revenues, the County will need to consider alternative sources of funding to address the budget gap.

The County of Simcoe and its municipal planning partners are exploring implementing the changes under Bill 23.



### Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario - Affordable Housing Group

Throughout 2022, the County of Simcoe and the City of Barrie worked together to co-chair the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario (RPCO) Affordable

Housing Group.

The RPCO Affordable Housing Group provides a forum for municipal planners from across Ontario to consider and address

issues relating to the provision and preservation of affordable housing within their communities (with a primary emphasis on rental housing).



## STRATEGIC THEME FIVE

Create an Integrated Service Model for Housing and Supports

**Desired outcome:** People experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing.

The County of Simcoe and its community partners continue to prioritize those in urgent need, connecting residents with essential resources and support programs.

Through federal and provincial funding alignment, the County continues to fund such domains as homeless shelters, a regionalized Housing First program delivered through Empower Simcoe, domiciliary care, supportive transitional housing, community hubs, and rent retention programs.

**109,594**

nights spent in emergency shelters by combined households

**119**

households assisted with transitional housing

**163**

individuals supported by the County of Simcoe's Domiciliary Care Program

**24**

individuals supported by the Seniors at Home Program

**3**

households assisted with Rapid Re-Housing

**122**

households assisted with Housing First

### Eviction Prevention

Housing retention programs are a key resource in preventing eviction into homelessness.

Every circumstance is unique and is assessed on a case-by-case basis to determine the right combination of interventions/assistance to support success. A combined maximum of \$1500.00 for singles/couples and \$2000.00 for families in a 24-month period may be available for one or more of the interventions – First or Last Month's Rent, Moving Expenses, Rental/Utility Arrears.

Requests for housing retention supports come through three main channels: Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, and low-income residents not receiving social assistance.

### How Much Did We Do?

A total of **\$376,724** was issued through the Housing Retention Program in 2022.

### How Well Did We Do It?

County staff processed **4,123** requests for Housing Retention in 2022:

- **37%** of requests were from Ontario Works recipients
- **44%** were requests from Ontario Disability Support Program recipients
- **19%** were requests received from Non-Social Assistance applicants

### Is Anyone Better Off?

- **1,196** households were assisted with funding for housing retention to aid households in paying rent and utility arrears, preventing eviction



## Supportive Housing

Throughout 2022, the cost of food, transit, utilities, and housing continued to increase.

While the entire community was affected, the impact hit hardest on residents already facing the barriers of poverty, food insecurity, homelessness, or compounding

factors related to mental health and addictions. To better meet the needs of compounding social and economic challenges, the County has focused on increasing supportive housing options within the community.

Supportive housing combines subsidized affordable housing with

intensive and trauma-informed coordinated services to assist people experiencing homelessness in maintaining housing through financial assistance, appropriate healthcare, housing supports, and many other opportunities that support their safety and wellness.



### Lucy's Place Addition, Barrie

December 1, 2022, marked move-in day for six new residents of Lucy's Place. Created through shipping-container conversion, the addition of 6-modular units marks the completion of phase two of the County's motel-conversion pilot project.

The new addition was built off-site by Northern Shield Development and finished onsite with help from Community Builders.

The County of Simcoe owns the Lucy's Place property and works with Redwood Park Communities and the Busby Centre to operate and manage the facility and programming. Residents of Lucy's Place receive subsidized rent with support from the County. They are also provided with a variety of supports to assist them

in meeting their goals towards housing stability, health and well-being, family reunification, training or employment opportunities and more from Redwood Park Communities and The Busby Centre.

Opened in 2019, Lucy's Place, phase one, saw the creation of an 18-unit Housing First community for those experiencing chronic (long-term) homelessness. This community-driven project was achieved with funding support from the County of Simcoe, Government of Ontario, and developed through collaboration with Redwood Park Communities, the Busby Centre, the City of Barrie, and several tradespeople, donors, faith organizations, and volunteers from throughout the community.

## Tiffin Street Supportive Housing Project, Barrie

With \$2.5 million in funding from the Province of Ontario, the County of Simcoe was able to create 14 units of supportive housing for people experiencing mental health and addiction issues, persons with disabilities, as well as those experiencing homelessness in Barrie.

The multi-residential, three-storey building will provide a combination of affordable housing with intensive and trauma-informed co-ordinated services to assist tenants in

maintaining stable housing and receive appropriate healthcare and wellness supports. Support services will be provided by the Busby Centre and the Elizabeth Fry Society.

This building contains four accessible units and will include an elevator to give residents with physical disabilities freedom of access and mobility. The building's central location provides residents' easier access to public transportation, parks and grocery stores.

## Home Horizon Youth Transitional Housing Addition, Collingwood

The beginning of 2022 saw the completion of a 4-bed addition to the transitional housing facility for youth operated by Home Horizon in Collingwood. The addition to Barbara Weider House, using Provincial Social Services Relief funds, brings the total number of beds at the house to 10. Youth aged 16-24 are provided a safe place to live and learn life skills.



## Rose Street Temporary Emergency Shelter, Barrie

The County of Simcoe purchased a former Barrie OPP detachment on a 4.7-acre property in 2021 to utilize the centrally-located land to create a multi-residential affordable housing complex and social services hub for seniors, families, and individuals in need.

With the building demolished, the County undertook the initial planning phases for development. The vacant land also presented

another opportunity for protecting individuals experiencing street homelessness through the winter months.

The County of Simcoe and the City of Barrie contributed a combined \$1.2 million to purchase and operate a 50-bed modular structure to provide temporary emergency shelter. The repurposed modular units allowed for a fast turnaround between delivery and operation.

The Busby Centre, which runs the daily operation of the Rose Street shelter, was contracted until April 30, 2023.

Although this temporary solution will ensure resident safety through the winter months, the County and its community partners continue to work towards ending homelessness through Housing First solutions that offer supports and safe, secure long-term housing.

# MOVING FORWARD IN HOUSING OUR FUTURE

The County's current 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy outlines strategic planning activities between 2014 and 2024. While the County continues to create and fund affordable housing units under this plan, much has changed in the past 10 years.

The County of Simcoe has embarked on the planning and developing of a modernized long-term affordable housing and homelessness prevention strategy that will address the complex needs of the community based on current data and local context. Throughout 2023, the County will consult with community partners, industry leaders, and the general public to create a modernized plan for developing affordable and attainable housing options to address residents' needs throughout various life stages.

During the development of a new Strategy, the County will continue to work with local non-profit, cooperative, and private

housing providers, as well as its own Simcoe County Housing Corporation, to protect and preserve existing units. Further, assisting vulnerable residents through increased housing with supports will remain a priority.

Local data is the key to informed solutions. Research and public consultation have been completed on a Homelessness System Review, and are underway for an Attainable Supply Action Plan (Housing - ASAP), and a Simcoe County Housing Corporation – Housing Master Plan, all of which will inform the direction of the County's new 10-year Strategy.

In 2017, the County hosted an Affordable Housing Innovations Forum and discussed many innovative housing solutions, including tiny homes, motel

conversions, container housing, municipal planning tools, and financial incentives. Since this time the County has embarked on integrating innovation into its pursuit of more affordable and attainable housing options. Understanding that material, labour, available land, and completion time all impact the cost and availability of housing, the County and its community partners are committed to working together to find sustainable, economical, and timely solutions to the housing challenges the community is facing today.

For more information on any of the projects or programs within this report, please visit [www.simcoe.ca](http://www.simcoe.ca).





[simcoe.ca](http://simcoe.ca)