

HOUSING OUR FUTURE

Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing
and Homelessness Prevention Strategy

2015 Annual Report



A Message from the Warden



We continue to progress our affordable housing strategies and make meaningful impacts in the lives of our most vulnerable citizens, as highlighted in our 2015 Annual Report.

In 2015, we achieved an important milestone by developing and approving our 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Prevention Implementation Plan. This Plan will ultimately guide us towards creating 2,685 new affordable housing units in Simcoe County by 2024. Our Affordable Housing Advisory Committee is taking an active leadership role in implementing our strategies, as we continue to move forward with impactful solutions for our communities and residents.

Partnerships have and will continue to play an essential role in achieving our long-term goals. We met with all 18 of our regional municipalities and cities to share our plans and receive input on our implementation strategy. These meetings have fostered even stronger commitments from all parties as each partner assigned a municipal liaison to work with County staff moving forward.

Members of our Council and staff have also met with the private sector, developers and landlords to understand their barriers and provide information about our programs and funding opportunities. We also met with the North Simcoe Muskoka and Central LHINs to bring them into the fold and determine how we can work together to meet the needs of our vulnerable residents.

In addition to partnerships, advocacy will continue to play an important role moving forward. Our Councillors were active at AMO and OGRA/ROMA conferences and promoted affordable housing during our Simcoe County Stronger Together Conference.

2015 saw the County advance our strategies, build and foster partnerships and also take many positive steps towards achieving our targets:

Funding:

- County Council approved additional funding of \$600,000 annually for 10 years to support creation of 100 new rent subsidy units
- County Council approved funding of \$1.5 million over two years to create 60 Secondary/Garden Suites – these investments will complement \$600,000 already dedicated through federal and provincial programs
- Invested \$5.5 million in maintaining our existing housing assets

Achievements:

- In 2015, our member municipalities issued 134 building permits for secondary suites and/or garden suites. Secondary Suites provide a cost effective way of increasing the supply of affordable housing options in both rural and urban settings
- Redevelopment of the County's Brooks Street seniors housing complex in Barrie will add 54 new units
- Council approval to proceed with preliminary design and costing of two potential new builds and redevelopments was initiated in 2015

These are tremendous successes and we continue to build and develop creative solutions that improve housing opportunities and support the movement of residents through the housing continuum. I would like to recognize the federal and provincial governments for continuing to support affordable housing programs. I truly believe that lending a helping hand to those most in need is the right solution, and we look forward to continuing to push forward in 2016.

Sincerely,

Gerry Marshall
Warden, County of Simcoe

Housing Our Future Annual Report

JANUARY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2015

About the Housing Our Future 2015 Annual Report

Under the Housing Services Act (2011), the County of Simcoe, as Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for this region, is responsible for developing and implementing a 10-year long-term affordable housing strategy effective January 2014.

Approved by County Council on January 28, 2014, *Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy* outlines five strategic opportunities for effectively addressing housing and homelessness needs across the County:

1. Establish strong leadership and governance
2. Achieve affordable housing target
3. Protect existing public assets
4. Plan for the public good
5. Create an integrated service model for housing and supports

The 10-year plan incorporates both population-level and performance-level outcomes required to achieve community well-being and policy and/or program effectiveness.

What's more, under each strategic opportunity, a number of indicators have been identified for tracking and performance measurement.



Definitions

► Outcome:

A condition of well-being for children, youth, adults, families, seniors, and/or all county residents.

► Indicator:

A measure that helps quantify the achievement of the desired outcome.

► Performance Measure:

A measure of how well a program, agency, or service system is working.

Performance Measurement

Using Results Based Accountability, a simple common-sense framework, this report card will use three performance measures to evaluate implementation of our Strategy.

HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

QUANTITY #

HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

QUALITY %

IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

EFFECT/IMPACT

=

HOW ARE WE DOING ?

Strong Governance and Leadership

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY ONE

DESIRED OUTCOME: Successful implementation of the Strategy is supported by working partnerships with the public and private sectors, and all levels of government.

Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

The Affordable Housing Advisory (AHA) Committee is a sub-committee of County Council established in 2014 to support the implementation of *Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy*. A major focus of the AHA Committee's work in 2015 was to develop an implementation plan for the 2014-2017 planning cycle for County Council approval.

To complete this important task, the AHA Committee met monthly and focused efforts on gaining a greater understanding of the needs, challenges and opportunities to advance affordable housing at a local municipal level and with our various sector partners. Members of the AHA Committee and staff attended 18 municipal deputations which were intended to seek feedback and to obtain customized strategies for each municipality to be included in the implementation plan. In addition, meetings were held with the development community, landlords and the health and not-for-profit sectors to gain a better understanding of their needs, so that these needs could be reflected in our implementation planning process. Strong partnerships and shared vision for action was a central theme for the AHA Committee's work in 2015.

The implementation plan for 2014-2017 (phase one) was approved by County Council in November 2015. The plan included a target to achieve 895 units of affordable housing by December 2017. Good progress has been made on reaching this target and County Council has committed municipal funding to achieve 200 units in the 2016/17 budget cycles.

Advocacy was also an important theme in 2015. The County provided comments to the Province of Ontario with respect to the provincial long-term affordable housing strategy update. Warden Gerry Marshall and senior staff met with the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing at the Association of Municipalities Conference and OGRA/ROMA. These meetings provided a forum to share the good work that is occurring in Simcoe County with respect to our Strategy, and also to share areas of concern and highlight opportunities to improve the range of affordable housing initiatives for our residents.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

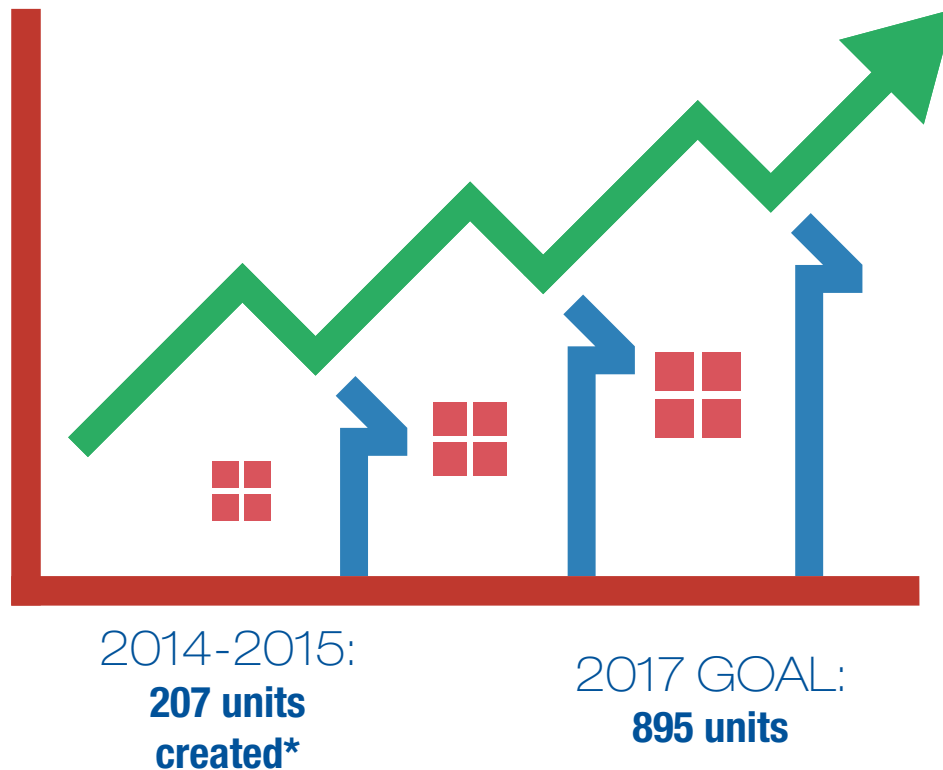
- ▶ Held 18 municipal deputations to raise awareness of affordable housing needs and to encourage partnerships.
- ▶ Focus Groups held with building industry, Land Development Association and landlords.
- ▶ The 2014-2017 Implementation Plan was approved.
- ▶ New municipal funding committed.

Achieve Affordable Housing Target

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY TWO

DESIRED OUTCOME: Simcoe County residents have access to a minimum of 2,685 new affordable housing units by 2024; Phase 1 of the implementation (Jan. 2014 - Dec. 2017) will target 895 new affordable housing units

Housing Progress to Date - Phase One



Adequate, appropriate and affordable housing for all Simcoe County residents.

Having a place to call home provides an important base and anchor in our lives. A home nurtures and supports individuals and families as they go about their daily lives and is directly linked to their health, wellness, safety, and productivity.

In January 2014, County Council approved *Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy*, a shared community vision of actions needed to effectively address housing and homelessness needs across the County. To make housing more attainable for Simcoe County residents, we set a target to increase our affordable housing supply by 2,685 units by 2024. The target for 2014-2017 is 895 units.

**The units were created under Rental Development, Homeownership, Ontario Renovates and operating programs funded by federal, provincial, county, and municipal governments. The total number of units created does not include the number of building permits that were issued for secondary suites occupancy for 2014 and 2015. These numbers will be included in future annual reports, when the information becomes available.*



HOW ARE WE DOING?

During 2014-2015:

- Seven new secondary suites funded and completed. Seven more in progress.
- 38 affordable rental units completed with 75 affordable rental units in progress.
- 402 rent supplements and housing allowances continued, plus 123 additional units created in 2015, which includes 36 units created in partnership with health sector agencies.
- 39 households assisted with down payments for affordable homeownership, including 15 new households in 2015.
- 134 building permits issued for secondary and garden suites for 2015. Of these, approximately 114 affordable units are in the process of being created without government assistance.

** Data on the number of building permits issued was provided by municipalities.*

Story Behind the Data

Since the inception of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program in 2002, 451 units in 14 affordable rental projects across seven municipalities have been developed with federal/provincial funds. County development charges were rebated in all applicable projects. County funds have been used to create a 25-unit seniors affordable housing project and to support an additional four units, for a total of 480 new affordable rental units created over the past decade. Currently, 75 units are under construction thanks to a combination of federal, provincial, county, municipal and non-profit funding. Plans are underway for an additional 100 units using new federal and provincial funding.

The homeownership program helps free up rental accommodation and provides low-to-moderate income households with down payment assistance. Since 2008, 345 households have received assistance in obtaining affordable homeownership, including 39 households since January 2014. Additionally, secondary suites are an economical means to not only create an affordable rental unit but also assist the homeowner with an additional source of income. Support for construction of secondary suites has been developed using federal and provincial funding. Beginning in 2016, the County will implement its own secondary suites program, as this is a viable option in rural and urban areas. County funding will also support a new rent subsidy program starting in 2016.



ACCOMPLISHMENTS

▶ The affordable housing site in Barrie has been under construction throughout 2015 and will be open in the summer of 2016. This site has been expanded to include 54 new, one-bedroom units for seniors, providing greater accessibility.

▶ 2015 funding for capital improvements increased by \$2.1 M.

▶ Capital upgrades that are focused on energy efficiencies resulted in 30% reduction in fuel costs, and rebates and savings of \$29,000.

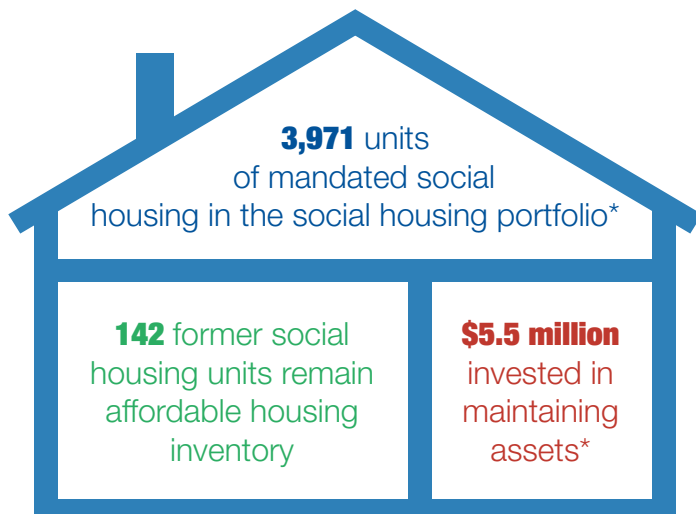


Protect Existing Public Assets

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY THREE

DESIRED OUTCOME: 85% of existing social housing units in the county remain part of the housing stock.

HOW ARE WE DOING?



*This includes properties owned by the Simcoe County Housing Corporation, as well as non-profit providers.

Story Behind the Data

Some social housing providers can exit the social housing system when their operating agreements end. The County is working with providers to track the continuation of affordable housing. 142 units of former social housing continue to be offered as affordable housing, meaning 100% of social housing units remain affordable housing.

A Capital Repair Loan process was established in 2015 to assist mandated social housing providers with urgent capital repairs. This will help to address non-profit social housing infrastructure. During 2015, capital improvements such as life safety upgrades, ventilation projects, window replacements and balcony restoration projects were addressed through capital repair loans.

Plan for the Public Good

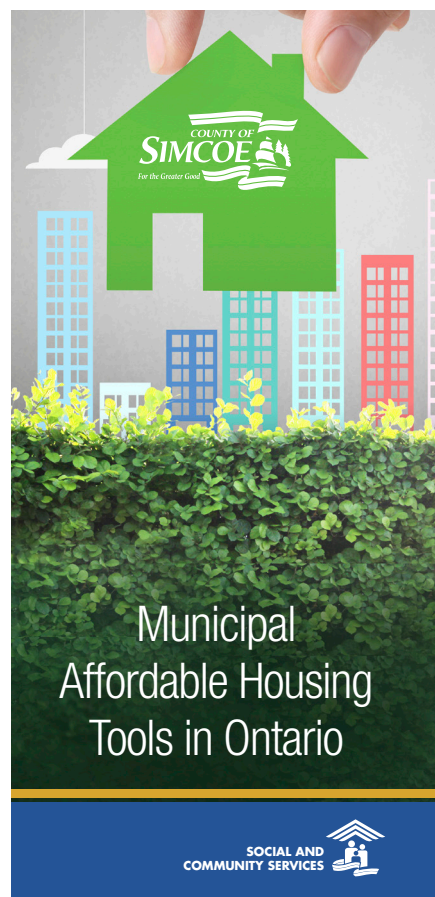
STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY FOUR

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.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- County continues to provide development charges and property tax incentives for affordable housing development.
- Municipal Affordable Housing Tools in Ontario pamphlet was developed to provide information on how affordable housing is an essential component of planning.
- County land-use planning software has been created, where data collected is used to advance affordable housing development.
- Promoted the use of municipal tools through municipal deputations and the Simcoe County Conference.



County Staff participated in the Barrie Built Form Task Force to complete a report that details a planned solution to affordable housing needs.

Story Behind the Data

Many of the municipalities in Simcoe County have or will be addressing the opportunity and challenges of affordable housing in their respective municipalities. They are open to looking at ways to empower their municipality and others to create innovative solutions to affordable housing. The Municipal Liaison Group meets to discuss ways to improve the availability of affordable housing.

As outlined in *Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy*, focus will be placed on strengthening the supply of affordable housing and further promotion of available affordable housing planning tools and financial incentives.

The County of Simcoe continues to actively provide information for homeowners, municipal partners, developers, and building officials to promote the benefits of creating affordable housing.

Create an Integrated Service Model for Housing and Supports

STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY FIVE

DESIRED OUTCOME: People experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

26,823 total nights spent in emergency shelters by combined households

409 households were successful in retaining their housing at six-months follow-up*

380 households

in permanent housing with supports that use Housing First Approaches which include:

99 households assisted by the Canadian Mental Health Association

13 households assisted with Rapid Re-Housing

226 households supported by the County of Simcoe's Domiciliary Care Program

42 households supported by the Salvation Army



Story Behind the Data

In shifting from emergency shelter responses to Housing First approaches in 2015, the County proceeded to support ongoing planning for three community hub projects. The shift will help to improve access and service coordination for individuals and families experiencing longer-term chronic homelessness. These service delivery hub models once fully operational will be located in Barrie, Midland, and Orillia. These projects continue to engage their local communities by focusing on people-centred services and approaches that maximize on how we can all work together to ensure housing stability, safety and community inclusion when tackling the issues of homelessness.

**Some household follow-ups at six months may be duplicated.*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

➤ Fostered new partnerships with the health and not-for-profit sector to support vulnerable clients.

➤ Of the 112 low-moderate income households that were assisted with home repairs and accessibility modifications since 2014, 80 were seniors and/or persons with accessibility challenges.

➤ In partnership with community Housing Resource Centres, we have implemented a new rental allowance program to help re-house individuals and families with moderate acuity needs as assessed through the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) with a monthly rental allowance for up to nine

months. The Rapid Re-Housing Program includes the following supports:

- Screening and assessment including analysis of housing history in order to better understand tenant housing and retention barriers.
- Issue(s) identification in order to assess if housing start-up financial assistance is required and for what duration.
- Assistance with apartment searches and supports.
- Tenant follow-up services along with landlord outreach and relations.

HOW ARE WE DOING?

2,689 households

assisted with funding for housing retention for rent and utility areas

112 households

have received assisted with home repairs and accessibility modifications since 2014, including 59 households in 2015

84 households

assisted with transitional housing



Story Behind the Data

Local agencies joined the 20,000 Homes Campaign, supported by the County, with the goal to host a region-wide registration week in early winter 2016. The 20,000 Homes Campaign is a national movement of communities working together to permanently house 20,000 of Canada's most vulnerable homeless people by July 1, 2018.

This campaign is led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) and is modelled after the 100,000 Homes Campaign in the United States. The goal of the campaign is to draw attention to the urgent and immediate action to house those who remain homeless and who need permanent, safe, appropriate and affordable housing with the support necessary to sustain it. The Simcoe County campaign will draw attention to the importance of Housing First approaches for those living with chronic and/or episodic homelessness.



Photos from the Visibly Unseen Photo Exhibit



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and Homelessness Prevention Strategy



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