



HOUSING OUR FUTURE

Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing
and Homelessness Prevention Strategy

2018 Annual Report



A MESSAGE FROM THE WARDEN

At the County of Simcoe, we are extremely proud of our achievements over the course of the past year. Since 2014, when the County established the goal of creating 2,685 new units in Simcoe County by 2024, we have developed more than 1,200 new affordable housing units across the region, allocated and secured funding for a number of new builds and committed to several projects across the County in partnership with private and not-for-profit organizations.

The County has made significant progress on our new affordable rental builds throughout 2018:

- 147 units in Collingwood are now nearing completion
- Our 99-unit project in Wasaga Beach is under construction
- Council has approved \$12.8M for an affordable rental development in Victoria Harbour; a single three-storey building with 41 units intended for seniors and persons with disabilities

The County continued to collaborate with our local municipalities and cities through a Municipal Liaison Committee, comprising representatives from various municipal planning departments. We also met with our municipal and city councils to provide updates on our progress towards local targets, share information about upcoming opportunities and promote best practices for incentivizing the development of affordable rental housing by the private and not-for-profit sectors.

Throughout 2018, we continued to support and deliver programs along the housing continuum, including homelessness prevention, shelters, rent

supplements and housing allowances, new affordable rental development, the Ontario Renovates programs for Secondary Suites, urgent home repairs, accessibility modifications, and affordable homeownership.



In 2018, we initiated our Phase Two (2018-2020) Implementation Plan, which aligns with the new policy directives outlined in the Ontario Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update (2016) and the goals of the new National Housing Strategy (2017). This will ensure that we are best positioned to effectively undertake new funding and partnership opportunities that support the creation of affordable housing.

Our first Homelessness Enumeration was conducted in April 2018. This new initiative required significant participation by a number of community service organizations and volunteers and resulted in the collection of valuable information for a better understanding of homelessness in our communities.

In 2019, the County of Simcoe will continue working with its public, private, and not-for-profit partners to progress our affordable housing strategies and make meaningful impacts in the lives of all of our residents.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Cornell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

George Cornell,
Warden, County of Simcoe

HOUSING OUR FUTURE

2018 Annual Report

JANUARY 1, 2018 – DECEMBER 31, 2018

About the Housing Our Future 2018 Report Card

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 which took effect in 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.

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.

Under each strategic opportunity, a number of indicators have been identified for tracking and performance measurement.

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?

STRATEGIC THEME ONE

ESTABLISH STRONG LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

OBJECTIVE

Establish strong leadership and an effective governance structure that can oversee the implementation process related to the 10-Year Strategy.

DESIRED OUTCOME

Successful implementation of the Strategy, supported by working partnerships with the public, private and non-profit sectors.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

Strong governance and leadership is characterized by collaboration and partnership across all levels of government, public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. Throughout 2018 the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHA) and County staff participated in a number of activities to support successful implementation of the Strategy and its priority activities, including, but not limited to:

- Developed and published a Phase Two Implementation Plan for Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy, to outline implementation actions to be taken throughout 2018-2020.
- Participated in monthly meetings of the Affordable Housing Advisory Committee (AHA) to translate objectives in the Strategy into specific recommendation for action, as outlined in the approved Implementation Plan.
- Scheduled meetings with the Local Health Integration Networks (LHIN) to determine intersections and potential opportunities to enhance quality and efficiency of service delivery.
- Ongoing participation in a Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Housing and Homelessness Data Forum aimed at increasing available data related to affordable housing in Ontario, and sharing of best practices among regional Service Managers.
- Partnered with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to host a 2018 National Housing Strategy Co-Investment Fund Information Session to present information on the new Fund to representatives from the private, non-profit, municipal, and health sectors. Divided into two streams, the Fund provides for a Housing Construction Stream for new construction, and a Housing Repair and Renewal Stream.
- Worked with private and non-profit groups to develop affordable rental housing.
- Worked on Home for Good and Anti-Human Trafficking initiatives with non-profit groups to create supportive housing.
- Provided input to Provincial Social Housing consultations for system enhancement.
- County of Simcoe launched a regional transit system, connecting communities throughout the County; enhancing opportunities to employment, leisure, health care, and education.



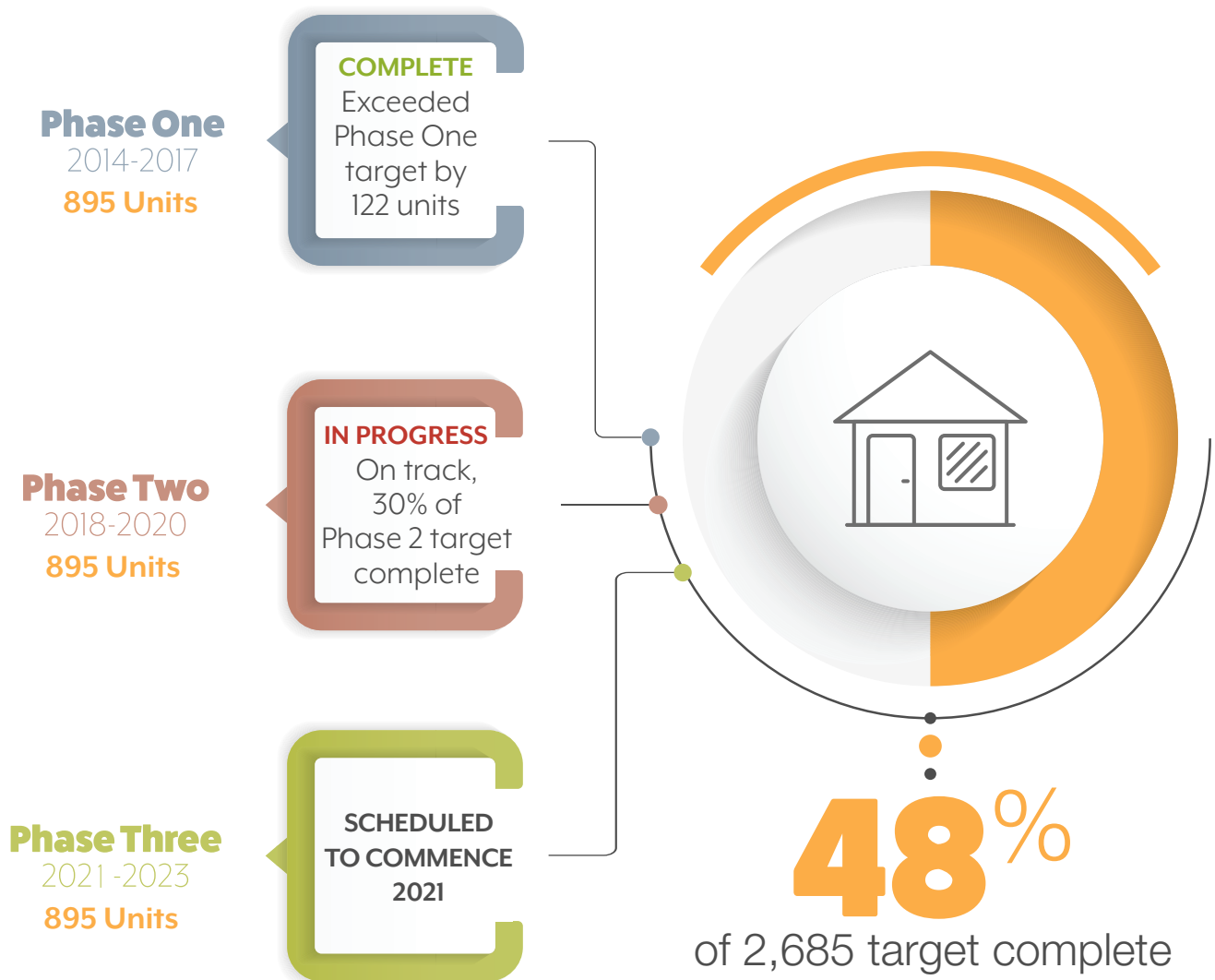
Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

INVESTMENTS

- Council approved \$12.8M for an affordable rental development in Victoria Harbour, a single 3-storey building with 41-units intended for seniors and persons with disabilities.
- Council approved \$500,000 in annual funding for a new Age-Friendly Seniors Housing Grant Program to support eligible applicants in creating age-friendly housing through accessibility renovations or new housing development.
- Approval of \$2M targeted to rural rental development.
- Acquisition of former school site in Orillia by County of Simcoe for potentially affordable housing and other corporate and community hub uses.
- County Council ordered seven new conventional buses, and two specialized buses, for two new routes being opened in 2019.

OUTCOME | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

Successful implementation of the Strategy includes three phases of implementation. Upon completion of the Phase One Implementation Plan, the County and our Community Partners exceeded the target by 13%. In the first year of the Phase Two Implementation Plan, 30% of the three-year target has been achieved.



STRATEGIC THEME TWO

ACHIEVE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TARGET

OBJECTIVE

Successful achievement of the affordable housing targets set out within the 10-Year Strategy.

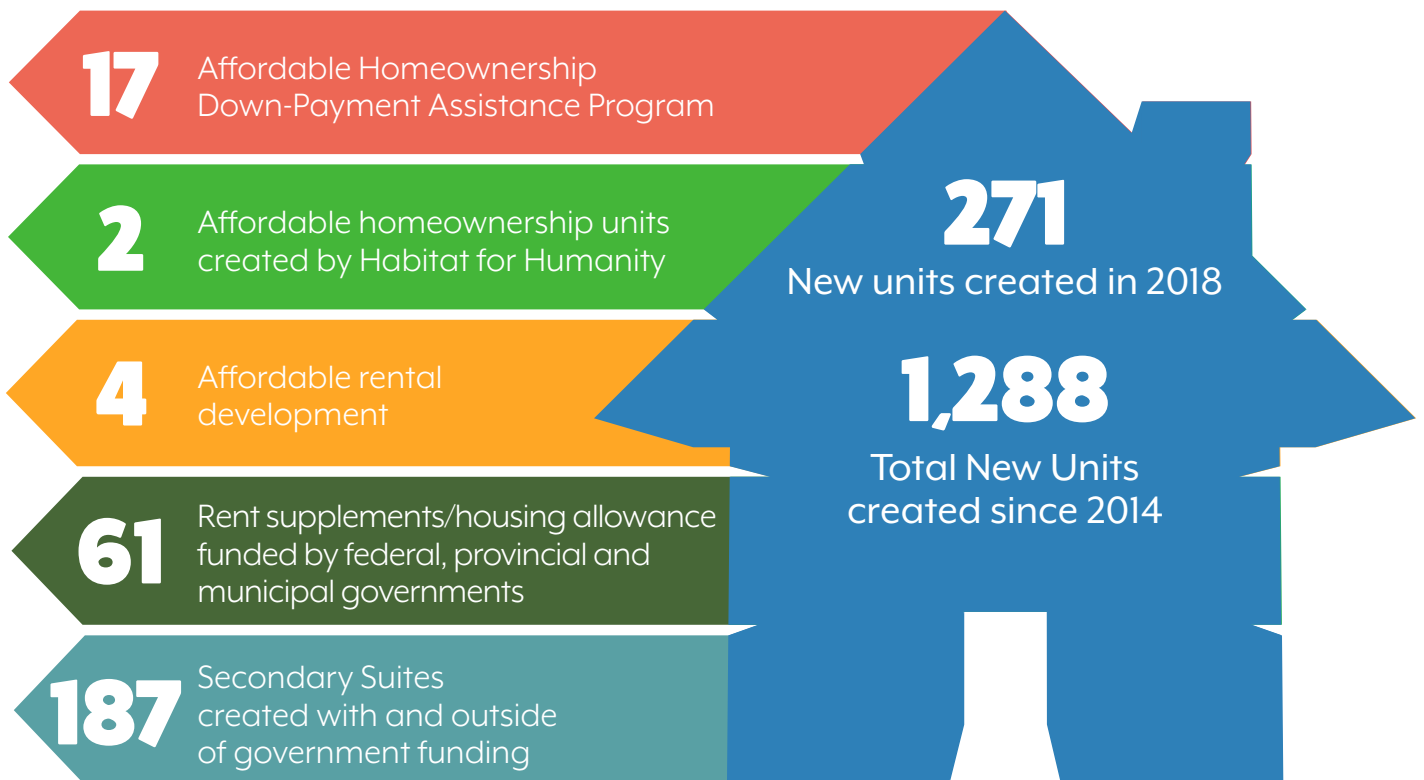
DESIRED OUTCOME

Simcoe County residents have access to a minimum of 2,685 new affordable housing units by 2024.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

Our Community 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy aims to promote, provide, and protect a range of affordable housing options for County residents to ensure that all residents have access to adequate, appropriate and affordable housing that will meet their needs.

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 creation of **1,288** new units of affordable housing since 2014, including **271** new units in 2018.



OUTCOMES | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

The Strategy builds on initiatives proven to work in Simcoe County, which has led to innovative and effective program development and delivery, including:

- Addressing housing pressure points through the development of new one- and two-bedroom affordable rental units; improving the range of options available to single individuals, aging couples, and single-parent households.
- Continued support for innovative approaches to affordable housing.
- Achieving an evidence-informed system through participation in a Provincial Housing and Homelessness Data Forum, and through enhanced data tracking and reporting, including completion of the first Homelessness Enumeration exercise.
- Working with non-County funded agencies and municipalities to effectively track affordable housing units across the County. Since the development of the Strategy, the County has partnered with local member municipalities, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Habitat for Humanity, and Ontario Aboriginal Housing Service (OAHS) to develop a detailed tracking system.

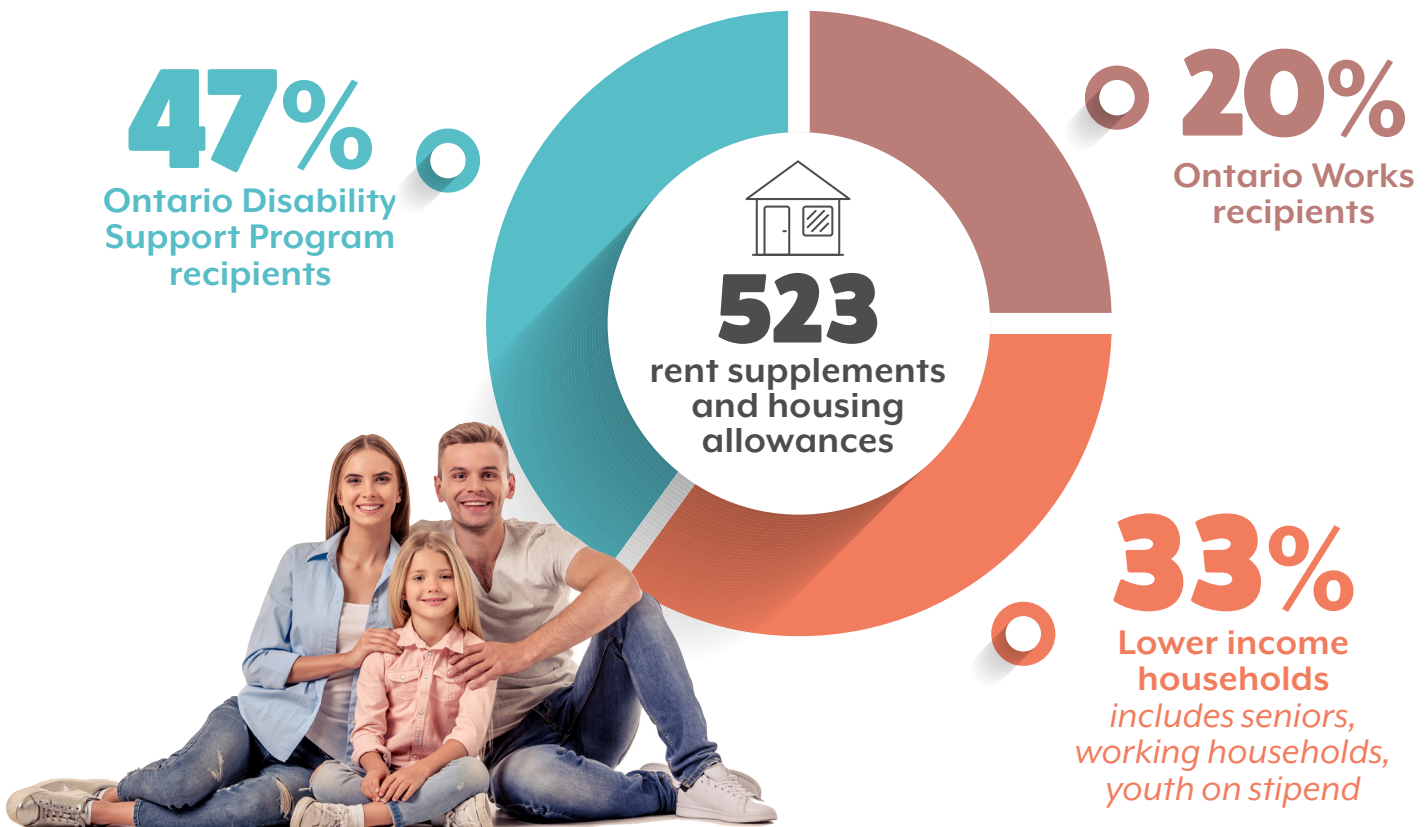
SERVING LOWER INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

A rent supplement or housing allowance provides rental assistance for tenants who cannot afford regular market rent charged by landlords.

Rent supplements focus on supporting individuals and families with lower incomes. Supplements can bridge the gap between welfare shelter rates and rent, or provide a flat rate for lower-income working households.

Since 2014, **523** rent supplements and housing allowances have been created.

Breakdown of County Rent Supplements by Income:





CENTRALIZED WAITLIST REPORT | RENT-GEARED-TO-INCOME

At the end of 2018, the total number of applicants on the Centralized Waitlist was **3,907**, an increase of **23.3%** since 2017.

- Breakdown of applicants:
 - 27.3% Seniors
 - 46.6% adults with no dependants
 - 26.1% households with dependants
- In 2018 there were **1,752** new applications processes, a **12.5%** increase from applications processed in 2017.
- 35% fewer applications were cancelled in 2018 than in 2017
- A decrease in cancelled applications, paired with an increase in new applications, along with a reduced turnover rate across the system have all contributed to an increase of applicants on the waitlist.
- 2018 Centralized Waitlist data shows a continued demand for Social and Affordable Housing. A focus on one-bedroom units and the use of rent supplements/housing allowances continue to provide a balanced approach to meeting the unique needs of residents across the county.

AFFORDABLE MARKET HOMEOWNERSHIP

DID YOU KNOW?

79 new home sales in the private market occurred in 2018, that were at or below the affordable house price for median income households, by municipality.* This number includes homes priced between **\$207,000** and **\$413,000**.

While affordability in the homeownership market is challenging, measuring affordability by median income illustrates there is a small inventory of affordably priced homes, as well as significant demand for more.

*Prices are based on certain assumptions about interest rate, property tax, mortgage insurance and down-payment, and include not spending more than 30% of income on mortgage. Sale prices obtained through MPAC data. Does not include the cities of Barrie and Orillia.

HOME OWNERSHIP DOWN-PAYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

The purpose of the Homeownership program is to provide down-payment assistance in the form of a forgivable loan to eligible individuals and families for the purchase of a home.

Through supporting eligible low- to moderate-income households in moving into homeownership, this program allows individuals and families to secure permanent housing within their community, establish roots, and build housing equity. Movement out of rental accommodations also creates more vacant stock for those requiring affordable and market rent housing.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In 2018, **\$430,000** dollars was allocated towards home-ownership down-payment assistance.

OUTCOMES | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

17 households received homeownership down-payment assistance in 2018. This totals **88** households assisted since 2014.

To increase program sustainability, the County of Simcoe established a Revolving Fund which holds any down-payment assistance that is paid back to the County by purchasers, for the purpose of redistribution to future program participants.

EFFECT/IMPACT | IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

“I wanted to thank you for being part of such an amazing program put on by the County of Simcoe. I wouldn’t have been able to provide a home for my new baby girl without the support of the Simcoe County housing down payment grant. It has changed my life in the best ways possible. I now have a home in my own name and my daughter and I live in [a community] where she can play and grow up in a safe environment.”

– Recipient of Home Ownership Down-Payment Assistance Program



STRATEGIC THEME THREE

PROTECT EXISTING PUBLIC ASSETS

OBJECTIVE

Ensure protection of existing public housing assets amidst end of operating agreements and aging housing stock.

DESIRED OUTCOME

85% of existing social housing units in the County remain part of the housing stock.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In 2015, the County introduced a Capital Repair Loan process to assist mandated social housing providers with urgent capital repairs. This helps to address non-profit social housing infrastructure. In 2018, \$144,872 was issued through provider loans. A total of \$5.8 million has been committed to providers since the establishment of the program in 2015.

\$1.3 Million invested in maintaining assets during 2018

OUTCOMES | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

Some social housing providers can exit the social housing system when their operating agreements end. The County continues to work with providers to track the continuation of affordable housing.

Of the original **4,113** units in the social housing portfolio in 2014, currently **94%** remain in the mandated social housing portfolio, and **99%** of original units continue to be offered at rent geared to income or low end of market rates.

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Ongoing maintenance and preservation of existing housing assets is a continued focus as social housing stock ages. Where prudent to do so, the County seizes opportunities to leverage assets for building more, newer housing stock; as evidenced through strategic redevelopment of existing social housing properties.

An example of this is the demolition of **30** aging rent geared to income townhouse units in Collingwood, for the purpose of developing **30** new units of rent-geared-to-income and **117** new units of affordable housing (pictured below).



STRATEGIC THEME FOUR

PLAN FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD

OBJECTIVE

Strengthen the supply of affordable housing through strengthened partnerships with local municipalities; utilizing a range of policy and planning tools.

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 Simcoe County.

MEET THE M.L.G | MUNICIPAL LIAISON GROUP

Throughout 2018, the Municipal Liaison Group met quarterly to discuss legislative changes and identify best practices in planning for affordable housing. Planning staff and other representatives from the County of Simcoe and member municipalities shared information and case studies on topics ranging from: Community Improvement Plans (CIPs), promotion of Secondary Suites to homeowners, affordable urban design, municipal planning and financial tools for incentivising private development of affordable housing, data collection and tracking of affordable housing targets, and urban and rural housing.



Municipal Liaison Group

STORY BEHIND THE DATA | THE IMPORTANCE OF TRANSPORTATION IN PLANNING

Accessible transportation plays an important role in the health and wellness of all residents, especially those without their own means of transport, by improving access to: community supports, increased health care, places of employment, educational opportunities, and increased access to food and affordable housing options.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In 2017, the County of Simcoe established a Simcoe County Transit Plan (LINX) to provide a network of transit connections that offer affordable rates and that will link transit systems across communities throughout the region. The program will phase in intra-municipal routes and facilitate easier inter-regional or commuter travel.

The first route opened in the summer of 2018 between Midland/Penetanguishene and Barrie. The County of Simcoe will be implementing more routes in August 2019.

One route will be to-and-from Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, Stayner, Angus to Barrie. The other Route is to-and-from Barrie, Oro-Medonte and Orillia.

OUTCOMES | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

Ridership on the first route was approximately 25% above projections according to ongoing daily, weekly, and monthly monitoring reports.

EFFECT/IMPACT | IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

Feedback has been positive, with many riders indicating that the bus service was overdue and now making a positive impact to their lives.

STRATEGIC THEME FIVE

CREATED AN INTEGRATED SERVICE MODEL FOR HOUSING AND SUPPORTS

OBJECTIVE

Create an integrated model for housing and supports; with a Housing First approach.

DESIRED OUTCOME

People experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing.

STORY BEHIND THE DATA | COMMUNITY PARTNERS WORKING TOGETHER

The County of Simcoe continues to work closely with local Community Stakeholders to develop diverse, responsive, and innovative homelessness prevention supports and services.

In 2018, Simcoe County's Housing and Homeless Services System was expanded to increase accessibility of its services to many of the county's most vulnerable residents who are experiencing or are at imminent risk of experiencing homelessness.

Accomplishments include, progress on a motel conversion supportive housing project in Barrie, beginning of another supportive housing project in Orillia, and an Anti-Human Trafficking project in Midland.

33,471

total nights spent in emergency shelters by *combined households

447

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

276

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

70

 households assisted with transitional housing

64

households assisted with Rapid Re-Housing



*Total counts an individual or family households nightly stays, which means some individuals and families may be represented multiple times.

206

households assisted
by the Canadian Mental
Health Association

27

individuals assisted
through the Seniors'
at Home Program

1,762

households supported
by The Salvation Army

SIMCOE COUNTY REGIONAL HOUSING FIRST PROGRAM

Housing First is an approach that aims to house vulnerable people who have experienced homelessness as quickly as possible and provide them with ongoing support.



116

 vulnerable households
assisted through
Housing First Programs

In 2018, Empower Simcoe, the lead agency for the Regional Housing First Program, decentralized its service delivery, placing housing access and housing first workers in service hubs in four of the five regions of the county. With the help of the Biminaawzogin Regional Aboriginal Women's Circle and the David Busby Street Centre, support is offered to community members at risk of homelessness, experiencing homelessness or experiencing rental and/or utilities arrears. Housing Resource Centres are located in Barrie, Orillia, Midland and Collingwood.

An additional Housing Locator worker was hired to serve north Simcoe out of Midland's service hub at The Guest House Shelter and Community Hub. In the fifth region of the county, housing access services were enhanced with the addition of a third housing worker in Bradford, added to the two workers who office out of CONTACT Community Services in Alliston's Town Square. Together, these workers serve vulnerable homeless and near homeless residents of South Simcoe.

EFFECT/IMPACT | IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

"Housing First has not only helped me to have a roof over my head, it has given me the courage to reconnect with my daughter."

– *Housing First Client*

"Without the Housing First Program I would be dead or in jail."

– *Housing First Client*

"I have been very impressed with (the Housing Specialist). From a landlord's perspective it gives me great peace of mind knowing that if anything comes up I can call and a Housing Specialist will take the time and effort in sorting things out with the tenants they support."

– *Landlord Testimonial*

HOUSING RETENTION PROGRAMS | KEEPING PEOPLE HOUSED

The County promotes, provides, and protects a range of affordable housing options for County residents through a number of programs aimed at making impactful improvements to residents' lives. Some programs are designed to provide residents with ongoing assistance towards the cost of housing, while others programs are designed to protect housing for residents who are facing eviction due to rental arrears, at risk of having utilities cut off, or struggling with the cost of urgently needed repairs.

URGENT HOME REPAIRS AND ACCESSIBILITY MODIFICATIONS

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Ontario Renovates is a component of the Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario program and is being delivered by the County of Simcoe with funding from the federal and provincial governments.

This program provides financial assistance in the form of a 10-year forgivable loan to make essential home repairs, and/or a grant to increase a homeowner's accessibility. Examples of eligible repair projects might include mold remediation, plumbing or septic repairs, and roofing or structural repairs. Examples of accessibility modifications may include the installation of ramps, hand rails, or chair and bath lifts.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

In 2018, **\$300,000** was invested in assisting homeowners with urgent home repairs and accessibility modifications which will enable to them continue living in their homes.

OUTCOMES | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

36 households received assistance with urgent home repairs and accessibility modifications in 2018. This totals **223** households assisted since 2014.

EFFECT/IMPACT | IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

"I have owned my home since 1986 (32 years) and words cannot express how this helping hand has given me security, improved health, peace of mind. [I am able] to stay in my home, sleep better, [and] to positively move forward starting with volunteering (passing on a helping hand to others). I sincerely hope this program continues in the future."

– Recipient of Urgent Home Repairs Program

"These words cannot express my appreciation for all that you have done to enable my good health and safety too! Your genuine caring nature and professional qualities you have displayed has made me happy and NO stress in my life today. I am so happy with all that the Ontario Renovates program has accomplished for my wellbeing. Thank you very much!"

– Recipient of Urgent Home Repairs Program



RENTAL ARREARS PROGRAM

STORY BEHIND THE DATA

Financial assistance is available to Simcoe County residents who are at risk of losing their rental housing or having their energy disconnected.

OUTPUTS | HOW MUCH DID WE DO?

County staff processed **4,085** requests for Housing Retention in 2018.

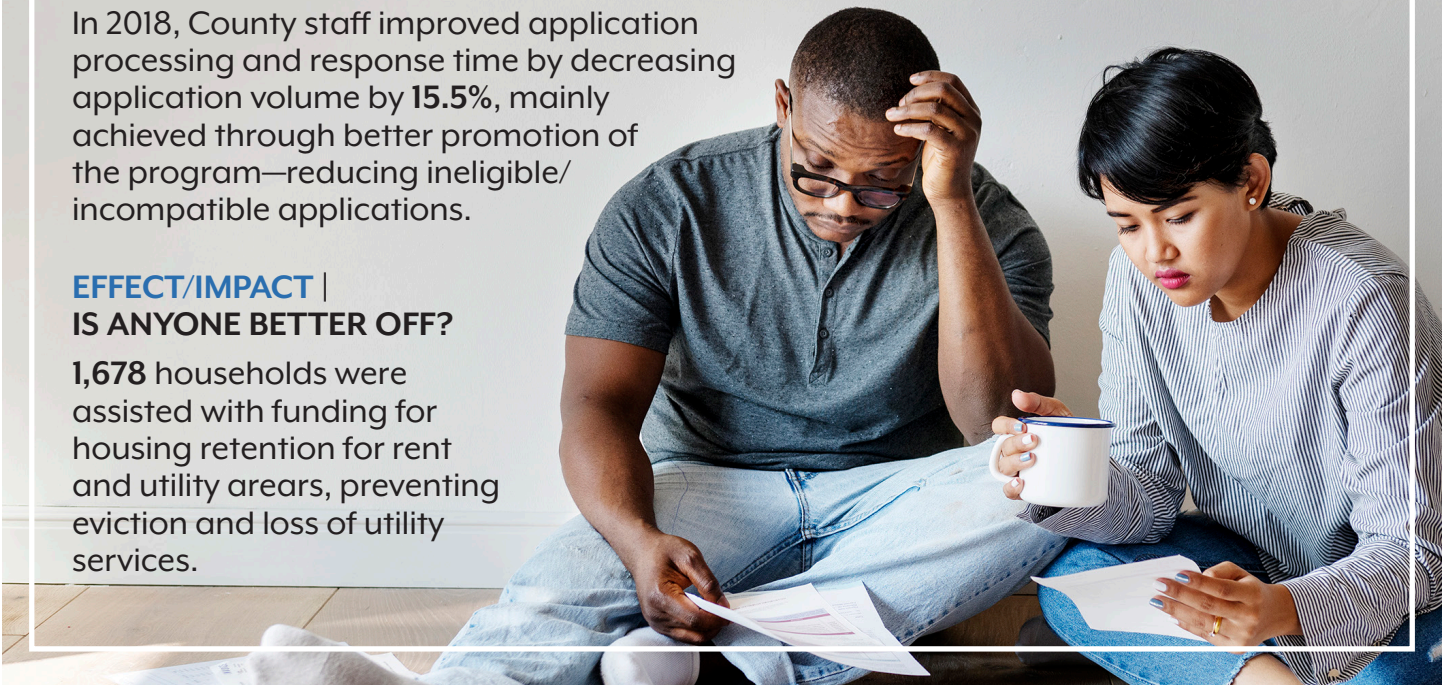
- 55% of requests are from Ontario Works recipients
- 35% are requests from Ontario Disability Support recipients
- 10% are requests from Non-Social Assistance applicants

OUTCOMES | HOW WELL DID WE DO IT?

In 2018, County staff improved application processing and response time by decreasing application volume by **15.5%**, mainly achieved through better promotion of the program—reducing ineligible/incompatible applications.

EFFECT/IMPACT | IS ANYONE BETTER OFF?

1,678 households were assisted with funding for housing retention for rent and utility arrears, preventing eviction and loss of utility services.



IMPROVING INCIDENCE ON DATA AND SCOPE | HOMELESSNESS ENUMERATION

697 people were counted as experiencing homelessness during the 2018 Simcoe County Homeless Enumeration.

The Enumeration provides a count of individuals and families in a community who are staying in homeless shelters, transitional housing, transitional/short-term housing (provisionally accommodated in: transitional housing, motels/hotels, temporarily with others or “couch surfing”, hospitals, or correctional facilities), or sleeping in unsheltered locations (e.g., vehicles, sheds, wooded areas, and parks) during a specified 24-hour period, providing a “snapshot” of homelessness in a community.

Led by Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness, the David Busby Centre, and the County of Simcoe, many community partners and volunteers made the enumeration happen, in April 2018.

The **Top 4** reasons for Homelessness were: Addiction/Substance Use, Inability to pay Rent/Mortgage, Conflict with Spouse/Partner, and Unsafe Housing Conditions.

The findings will be used to further strengthen the local system of homelessness supports and services.



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Service Simcoe