

County of Simcoe  
Housing Attainable Supply Action Plan

**Summary of Consultation**  
'What We Heard' Reports



County of Simcoe Housing Attainable Supply Action Plan

**Summary of Consultation**

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## Public Engagement Meeting

*Virtual Public Engagement Meeting – November 8, 2023*

### Event Summary:

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On Wednesday November 8, 2023, the County of Simcoe hosted a virtual public engagement meeting from 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm. Approximately 31 people attended the consultation session, which included members of the public, council, municipal staff, and N. Barry Lyon Consultants (NBLC).

This consultation occurred after the housing needs assessment was completed and posted to the County's project webpage (<https://www.simcoe.ca/dpt/pln/asap>). A preliminary list of potential strategies to address the housing needs was also developed at this point to receive feedback from stakeholders and the public.

The event included:

- An introduction to the project by County and Orillia staff.
- An introduction to the project by NBLC.
- A presentation of findings from the housing needs analysis by NBLC.
- A presentation of preliminary strategies to address housing needs by NBLC.
- Question and answer period with participants that lasted approximately 45 minutes.

### 'What We Heard' Summary:

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#### Process and Planning Reform

- Discussion of the need to balance speeding up approvals while also appreciating regulations / processes in place to protect environmental features and functions. Confirmation that actions will focus on providing more certainty around the location and implications of natural features to reduce costly studies and feasibility challenges of development, rather than eliminating policies around the protection of such features.
- Discussion of the importance of offering more density to accommodate affordable housing in appropriate locations.
- Acknowledgement of the Landlord and Tenant Board issues that may detract individuals from wanting to be a landlord and creating second suites.
- Some concern identified around reducing/eliminating parking requirements, particularly in areas with no or little transit service.
- Identification that the Provincial Policy Statement does not permit severances on agricultural land and that this might be another way to increase housing supply.

#### Increasing Housing Options

- General support for amending zoning to increase the diversity of housing options in existing communities. Exclusionary zoning practices were identified as limiting the housing

options available, which limits the ability of households to move to more appropriate housing as they age or their household composition changes.

- County should look to policy and incentive tools to encourage greater housing supply, including apartments, second suites, and multiplexes. Identification that these housing forms have not been built in low-density communities for decades.
- Lack of rental housing options is resulting in investors buying homes in Simcoe County to rent them out.
- Attention should be paid to multi-generation and co-housing options as this is becoming more common in the market due to cultural and affordability reasons.
- Medium density and missing middle is identified as an important housing form to be encouraged in Simcoe County to improve attainable housing options.

### Incentives for Housing

- Focus should be on incentivizing affordable housing over market-rate housing.
- Funding for second suites and co-housing can be impactful.

### Advocacy Initiatives

- Orillia Chamber of Commerce identified as a strong advocacy group that can assist the County in their efforts to advocate to upper levels of government.
- Identification that mortgage renewals at higher rates will significantly impact ownership affordability for both current and future owners.
- Discussion that affordable housing strategies must be implemented as quickly as possible to alleviate the significant affordability challenges being experienced.

## Affordable Housing Advisory Committee

*Presentation and Discussion – November 21, 2023*

*Simcoe County Council Chambers*

### Event Summary:

On Tuesday November 21, 2023, NBLC presented the housing needs assessment and preliminary strategic options to the County's Affordable Housing Advisory Committee. The Advisory Committee is made up of key stakeholders and members of County Council. County and Orillia staff were also in attendance. The presentation deck was made available on the project webpage on the County's website.

### 'What We Heard' Summary:

#### Affordability Thresholds

- Identification that the affordable ownership thresholds presented represent first time purchasers with a 10% downpayment, whereas others may have a higher downpayment, particularly if they already own their home.
- In addition to affordable housing objectives, economic development strategies to improve incomes and access to strong employment will also improve affordability.

## Increasing Housing Options and Policy/Process Reform

- Questions around if Tiny Homes would be a possible solution to the housing crisis in Simcoe County.
- A lack of infrastructure to support growth is a key barrier to increasing supply. Greater funding and infrastructure investments are needed, with support from upper levels of government.
- There is a need to streamline approval processes and timelines and to work with lower-tier municipalities on this initiative.
- While modular construction can be challenging and have longevity concerns, it can provide quicker housing options as more permanent housing is developed.
- Developers are more likely to engage in affordable housing if approval timelines are improved and funding can be offered.
- There is a strong need to diversify the housing delivered beyond single-family homes. If single-family homes are developed, they should be required to have separate entrances so second suites can be added efficiently.
- Strong support for a concierge program as recommended by the NBLC presentation.

## Incentives

- General support for building affordable and attainable housing on public lands and partnering with Simcoe County on this initiative.
- Simcoe and local municipalities should create a pipeline of properties for development. This type of public land inventory could also include other lands owned by Infrastructure Ontario, School Boards, Institutional, Churches, etc, in case of future dispositions.
- Any incentive should require long-term affordability to control future rent growth. Incentives should also include recourse if developer does not maintain affordability and other conditions.

## Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #1 – Non Profit Groups

*October 13, 2023, 10:00 – 11:00 am*

*Virtual*

### Event Summary:

On Friday, October 13, 2023, NBLC met with a group of non-profit housing organizations to review the high-level findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and the preliminary list of options to address the housing issues identified.

The following groups participated:

- Board of Habitat for Humanity for Georgian Bay
- Private Landlord in Collingwood and Simcoe County AHAC Member
- Melchior Management

- Holmes Building Systems - Modular Home Building
- Waypoint Centre Housing Coordinator
- Private Consultant for Developers and Volunteer Member of Simcoe County AHAC
- Sionito Group of Charities
- Kindred Works

The meeting included a brief presentation by NBLC, which involved the following:

- Overview of the project including where we are now and phases to be completed.
- Presentation of the Draft Housing Needs Assessment findings.
- Presentation of the Draft Strategic Directions Options.
- Next steps for the project.

After NBLC's presentation a question and answer period occurred. The following discussion questions were provided to groups ahead of time:

- Who does your organization serve?
- How do you fit within the housing spectrum?
- How is your organization funded? What supports do you receive?
- How well do you feel that the draft strategic direction options provide solutions that would help your organization with respect to delivering affordable/attainable housing?
- How can the County support you better in pursuing more affordable housing? Are there any strategic direction options that you believe are missing that would benefit you? Are there any in our list that you do not believe should be pursued?

### **'What We Heard' Summary:**

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#### **Depth of Affordability**

These groups primarily focus on deeply affordable housing, rather than attainable housing. Funding (incentives, subsidy, financing, land) are important for these groups to participate in the delivery of housing.

Recognition that while need for affordable housing is significant, moderate-income housing is also in need and out of reach for many households. Generally, confirm the findings of NBLC housing needs analysis.

#### **Feedback on Draft Strategic Directions**

- While subsidized housing is necessary, there is a need to conduct 'means testing' to ensure households transition out of affordable housing as their economic situation improves.

- Typical time limits on affordable housing (e.g., 20-years) is problematic as these will become market units after this period.
- Even market rate apartment projects are difficult to build in Simcoe County due to feasibility challenges.
- Discussion about HST waiver for rental – might improve feasibility for market rental housing but not affordable housing.
- The focus on new supply is important, but so is the preservation of older rental buildings, whether through funding approaches or rental protection / replacement policies.
- End of operating agreements will likely result in the loss of affordable housing without increased funding. Most groups agreed that while rents would need to increase as funding agreements end, they would likely now target attainable rents rather than full market rates.
- Maintenance of older apartment buildings is a large challenge that requires funding to maintain affordability.
- Social finance approaches to fund affordable housing can be effective, but likely less effective for attainable housing.

## **Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #2 - Employers**

*October 18, 2023, 2:00 – 3:00 pm*

*Virtual*

### **Event Summary:**

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On Wednesday, October 18, 2023, NBLC met with a group of employers from Orillia and Simcoe County to review the high-level findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and the preliminary list of options to address the housing issues identified.

The following groups participated:

- Simcoe County Economic Development
- Georgian College
- Lakehead University
- Food and Beverage Ontario
- Turpin Lumber and Truss
- North Simcoe Economic Development Corporation
- Leadbetter

The meeting included a brief presentation by NBLC, which involved the following:

- Overview of the project including where we are now and phases to be completed.
- Presentation of the Draft Housing Needs Assessment findings.
- Presentation of the Draft Strategic Directions Options.

- Next steps for the project.

After NBLC's presentation a question and answer period occurred. The following discussion questions were provided to groups ahead of time:

- How does the lack of housing affordability in the County impact your organization and employees? What is your biggest obstacle/barrier in terms of housing affordability?
- How do your employees fit within the housing spectrum? Are they full-time, part-time, contract, seasonal, etc.?
- How well do you feel that the draft strategic direction options provide solutions that would help your organization with respect to ensuring your employees have access to affordable/attainable housing?
- How can the County support you better from a housing perspective? Are there any strategic direction options that you believe are missing that would benefit you? Are there any in our list that you do not believe should be pursued?
- Would you be interested in partnering with the County or the local development community to get new workforce or student housing built?

### **'What We Heard' Summary:**

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#### **Impact of Affordability on Business**

- Employers note that even those with good jobs/salaries cannot afford to purchase a home and there are few rental options in many communities in Simcoe.
- Participants generally confirm the findings of the Needs Assessment and note this is directly impacting their ability to hire and retain employees. Many note that employees travel long distances to work due to a lack of attainable housing in the local area.
- A need for both traditional rental housing as well as more affordable rooming house / co-living options, particularly for students.
- A lack of student rentals, for both international and domestic students is identified as a major problem. Rooming houses / co-living in particular would be appropriate for these populations.
- Some employers offer a housing benefit (e.g., rental allowance, downpayment assistance) in addition to salary to better retain employees, which is a strain for business. Some have heard that companies are purchasing homes in the local area to provide affordable rental housing to employees.
- High home prices and a lack of rental housing is impacting economic growth and development.



## Feedback on Draft Strategic Directions

- People aging in larger homes could rent extra rooms out but fear of bad tenants is preventing them from doing so. Tenancy Act changes are not exactly within the scope of this project, but are something that could be of benefit.
- Incentives to create second suites or have over housed homeowners rent a room in their home could be effective solution to increase rental options quickly.
- Many identified the presence of short-term rentals in the community as a problematic element that restricts the supply of long-term rental housing.
- Building more missing middle typologies and rental housing can encourage over housed seniors to sell their home and move into a more appropriate dwelling.
- Incentives to create new affordable and rental housing identified as a strong element of the current options under evaluation.
- The concierge program was noted as an encouraging strategy to better connect parties and funding opportunities. Streamlined funding from CMHC would be beneficial.

## Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #3 – Orillia Development Community

*October 20, 2023, 10:00 – 11:00 am*

*Virtual*

### Event Summary:

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On Friday, October 20, 2023, NBLC met with a group of Orillia developers to review the high-level findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and the preliminary list of options to address the housing issues identified.

The following groups participated:

- Sophie's Landing Development Group
- Sterling Group
- Landen Homes

The meeting included a brief presentation by NBLC, which involved the following:

- Overview of the project including where we are now and phases to be completed.
- Presentation of the Draft Housing Needs Assessment findings.
- Presentation of the Draft Strategic Directions Options.
- Next steps for the project.

After NBLC's presentation a question and answer period occurred. The following discussion questions were provided to groups ahead of time:

- What has been your biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) in regard to delivering affordable/attainable housing?
- How well do you feel that the draft strategic direction options provide solutions that would help your company with respect to delivering affordable/attainable housing?
- How can the County support you better from a housing perspective? Are there any strategic direction options that you believe are missing that would benefit you? Are there any in our list that you do not believe should be pursued?
- If the County wants to reach an attainable price point for new housing how could you deliver this? What funding tools would you need?
- Our strategic direction options include recommended policies to encourage more housing supply, to speed up the development process and to incentivize new development, what do you think the County can do to ensure that more housing supply is actually being built? What would motivate you to deliver a new affordable/attainable project through to the end?

### **‘What We Heard’ Summary:**

#### **Feedback on Draft Strategic Directions**

- To increase housing supply, deferring development charges to completion of construction can be effective. Development charges and other fees can be waived in exchange for meeting a specific sale price or rent.
- Development charges are currently charged based on housing type. They could instead be charged based on a proportion of the home value to ensure these charges are applied more equitably and encourage affordability.
- All groups confirmed incentives are necessary for both affordable and attainable housing to be delivered by the private sector.
- Many groups identified slow approvals, requirements for costly studies and peer reviews, and public consultation / appeals as major impediments to delivering market and affordable / attainable housing.
- Most groups noted that zoning approvals are the most cumbersome. As of right permissions and zoning reform can significantly improve this.
- Onerous parking requirements for missing middle development can make this outcome unfeasible. Similarly, high parking requirements for apartments, particularly where parking must be provided underground, significantly affects financial feasibility. Parking costs are significant. Many participants identified that the market should decide parking requirements as they would not provide fewer spaces than what the market demands.
- Many noted they would develop missing middle typologies in existing neighbourhoods if the process was straightforward and the requirements (e.g., parking, setbacks, lot depths, etc.) were supportive.
- Offering land to developers for the construction of attainable housing would be supported.

## Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #4 – Simcoe Development Community

October 23, 2023, 10:00 – 11:00 am

Virtual

### Event Summary:

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On Monday, October 23, 2023, NBLC met with a group of Simcoe County developers to review the high-level findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and the preliminary list of options to address the housing issues identified.

The following groups participated:

- Bradley Homes
- DG Group
- Dunn Capital
- Georgian Communities

The meeting included a brief presentation by NBLC, which involved the following:

- Overview of the project including where we are now and phases to be completed.
- Presentation of the Draft Housing Needs Assessment findings.
- Presentation of the Draft Strategic Directions Options.
- Next steps for the project.

After NBLC's presentation a question and answer period occurred. The following discussion questions were provided to groups ahead of time:

- What has been your biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) in regard to delivering affordable/attainable housing?
- How well do you feel that the draft strategic direction options provide solutions that would help your company with respect to delivering affordable/attainable housing?
- How can the County support you better from a housing perspective? Are there any strategic direction options that you believe are missing that would benefit you? Are there any in our list that you do not believe should be pursued?
- If the County wants to reach an attainable price point for new housing how could you deliver this? What funding tools would you need?
- Our strategic direction options include recommended policies to encourage more housing supply, to speed up the development process and to incentivize new development, what do you think the County can do to ensure that more housing supply is actually being built? What would motivate you to deliver a new affordable/attainable project through to the end?

## 'What We Heard' Summary:

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### Feedback on Draft Strategic Directions

- The biggest issue facing developers is the length and unpredictability of the development approval process.
- Streamlining the process, reducing studies and appeals, and implementing as of right permissions are necessary.
- Often the engineering side of a rezoning or site plan is what delays a project. It's usually a back and forth between engineers that takes time - sometimes it ends up not being on an issue of incorrect engineering, but rather a discussion of preferences and which standards to meet. Often these also require costly and lengthy peer reviews.
- Involvement from the Conservation Authority also significantly impacts development approvals and feasibility.
- The County's MCR is taking too long to be approved and many local secondary plans are in limbo, which is reducing the amount of land available for development.
- Servicing and infrastructure investments are needed for new supply to be delivered.
- Incentives are needed to encourage affordable and attainable supply.
- Zoning reform is needed to encourage missing middle housing forms. Zoning reform could also include maximum home/lot sizes to encourage smaller and more affordable homes.
- Rising construction costs and interest rates require that housing be delivered at higher prices. Current context makes rental and affordable / attainable housing challenging to deliver.
- Offering land to developers for the construction of attainable housing would be supported.
- Constant changes to policy and process introduces risk and complexity to the development process.

### Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #5 – Subject Matter Experts

*October 25, 2023, 2:00 – 3:00 pm*

*Virtual*

#### Event Summary:

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On Wednesday, October 23, 2023, NBLC met with a group of subject matter experts to review the high-level findings of the Housing Needs Assessment and the preliminary list of options to address the housing issues identified.

The following groups participated:

- Municipality of Meaford
- SGL Planning
- Jones Consulting Group

- MHBC
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute Board Director

The meeting included a brief presentation by NBLC, which involved the following:

- Overview of the project including where we are now and phases to be completed.
- Presentation of the Draft Housing Needs Assessment findings.
- Presentation of the Draft Strategic Directions Options.
- Next steps for the project.

After NBLC's presentation a question and answer period occurred. The following discussion questions were provided to groups ahead of time:

- What has been your biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) in regard to the lack of affordable/attainable housing in the County of Simcoe?
- How well do you feel that the draft strategic direction options provide solutions that would help with respect to delivering affordable/attainable housing?
- How can the County support you better from a housing perspective? Are there any strategic direction options that you believe are missing that would benefit you? Are there any in our list that you do not believe should be pursued?
- What strategic direction options do you think have the highest potential to be scaled up/provide the most impact?
- Our strategic direction options include recommended policies to encourage more housing supply, to speed up the development process and to incentivize new development, what do you think the County can do to ensure that more housing supply is actually being built?

### **'What We Heard' Summary:**

#### **Feedback on Draft Strategic Directions**

- Similar to the developer consultations, this group noted that the biggest issue facing developers is the length and unpredictability of the development approval process.
- As of right zoning permissions will solve a lot of process and approval delays, as well as encourage the types of homes that are needed in the community.
- Simplifying the approval process and zoning can also increase the speed at which homes are delivered, as well as encouraging smaller developers and investors to participate in the development of smaller projects.
- Servicing and infrastructure investments are needed for new supply to be delivered.
- Peer reviews of professional studies add costs and delays to the approval process.
- Developer profits cannot be squeezed to encourage more attainable or affordable housing. Need incentives and process improvements.

- Many of the process elements and peer review requirements have not made projects better quality or provide improvements to residents of these communities. They simply add costs and delay housing.
- Development of commercial properties with residential can be effective to get more apartments built, particularly given that the retail market is challenged.
- Rental housing should be the focus of the strategy and is desperately needed in Simcoe County.
- In addition to incentives and process improvements, it was suggested that rental projects could be exempt from site plan requirements.
- Look at a project that's built and do a post mortem – reflect on fees, submission, comments and identify which one of the processes actually improved a project
- Strategies to eliminate short term rentals should be investigated.
- Avoid implementing holding provisions on new greenfield lands.

## **Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #6 – Follow up with Simcoe Development Community**

*January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 4:00 – 5:00 pm*

*Virtual*

### **Event Summary:**

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On January 17, 2024, Simcoe County staff and NBLC followed up with the group of Simcoe County developers from Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #4 to get feedback on the list of strategic options.

The following groups participated:

- Bradley Homes
- Dunn Capital
- Georgian Communities
- BILD
- Rose Corporation

### **'What We Heard' Summary:**

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#### **Feedback on Strategic Direction Options**

- In terms of financial incentives, need to ensure there is concrete criteria for eligibility, but that the criteria does not become cumbersome.
- Noted that there is some concern with rental replacement by-laws in that they can lead to upkeep / maintenance neglect by landlords, spurring demolition.
- Planning is not always the issue when it comes to approvals in Simcoe County – engineering and conservation authorities can be overly cautious in approvals process.

- Attainable ownership will be a challenge given the wide gap between attainable prices and market prices.
- Development charges play significant role in preventing more attainable home prices.
- Support for the County to take a role in helping to streamline different processes / planning policies or provide framework to local municipalities. Noted that some communities are more challenging to build in than in others – streamlining between communities could help address some of these challenges.
- Focus should be on functional, affordable housing – need to move away from increasing design standards that drive up the cost of building housing and therefore the purchase cost. Consider maximums rather than minimum standards for things like unit and room sizing.

## **Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #7 – Follow up with Subject Matter Experts**

*January 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 3:30 – 4:30 pm*

*Virtual*

### **Event Summary:**

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On January 18, 2024, Simcoe County staff and NBLC followed up with the group of Simcoe County subject matter experts from Stakeholder Consultation Meeting #5 to get feedback on the list of strategic options.

The following groups participated:

- SGL Planning
- Jones Consulting Group
- MHBC
- Ontario Professional Planners Institute Board Director

### **‘What We Heard’ Summary:**

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#### **Feedback on Draft Strategic Directions**

- Support for idea of concierge program / affordable housing office. Noted need for a dedicated person with authority to make decisions related to applications with affordable / attainable housing.
- Suggest being very specific in terms of recommendations to avoid a broad report that sits on shelf and ‘collects dust’.
- Smoother planning process necessary as applications currently get bogged down in long process – particularly for site plan.
- Suggestion that there should be a reduction to how much Council needs to do as part of housing approvals.

- Suggestion that some items (like concierge program) could start with just one or two municipalities, demonstrating to others that it works and creating trust between County and local municipalities.
- Suggestion to focus on minimum requirements for new housing as opposed to maximum requirements for certain items. Example given of a 36-unit development that has had long approvals process. If the development was broken down into three 12-unit developments on the same property, it would sail through approvals, despite same number of units on same parcel.
- Noted that the focus should be on 'good planning' as opposed to 'perfect planning'. Focusing on making everything perfect slows down progress.
- Suggestion that the focus for policy and process reform should not be to adjust existing framework, but to create a brand new framework from scratch. Likely to be more effective.

## Consultation with County Council

*November – December 2023*

*Virtual Presentation and Online Survey*

### Event Summary:

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Virtual presentation of Housing Needs Assessment and online survey provided along with draft strategic options list. Survey provided key questions.

Key questions included:

- Thinking about attainable housing from your municipality's perspective, please select the top five (5) biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) for the County.
- What do you think is the most important Strategic Direction that the County should be doing immediately to improve housing conditions?
- What do you think the County should do immediately to help more housing be within reach of working individuals and families?
- What do you think is the most important Strategic Direction that the County should be doing in the longer term (beyond 5 years) to improve housing conditions?
- More specifically, what Tactical Solutions do you think the County, including Orillia, should do in the longer term (beyond 5 years) to help more housing to be within reach of working individuals?
- What Tactical Solutions do you think have the highest potential to provide the most impact to your community members?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions that you believe are missing from the list that would benefit Simcoe County residents? Are there any Tactical Solutions listed above that should not be pursued?
- What is your opinion on the best way for the County, including Orillia, to fund the eventual list of policies/solutions?



- How should the County balance the need for low-income housing (through the ongoing housing and homelessness plan update) and attainable housing?

Summary of responses – there was 1 response:

- The biggest barriers in the County were identified to be the lack of employment growth, increased population growth, limited affordable and market-rate rental options, local resistance to intensification, and the cost of borrowing.
- The participant identified key strategic directions as being prioritize housing outcomes on public land, streamline development processes and implement policy/zoning reform, advocate for increased funding from other levels of government, advocate for streamlined access to funding and financing from CMHC, advocate for more revenue tools, and act on partnership and coordination opportunities.

## Consultation with Local Municipalities – Survey

*November – December 2023*

*Virtual*

### Event Summary:

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Virtual presentation of Housing Needs Assessment and online survey provided along with draft strategic options list. Survey provided key questions.

Key questions included:

- Please rank in order, the top 3 biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) for the County, on the issue of attainable housing to date?
- What do you think is the most important Strategic Direction that the County, including Orillia, should be doing immediately to improve housing conditions?
- Thinking about attainable housing from your municipality's perspective, please select the top five (5) biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) for the County.
- What do you think the County, including Orillia, should do immediately to help more housing be within reach of working individuals and families?
- More specifically, what Tactical Solutions do you think the County, including Orillia, should do in the longer term (beyond 5 years) to help more housing to be within reach of working individuals and families?
- What Tactical Solutions do you think have the highest potential to provide the most impact to your community members?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions that you believe are missing from the list that would benefit Simcoe County and Orillia residents?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions that should not be pursued?
- What do you think the best use of County-owned land is?

- What is your opinion on the best way for the County, including Orillia, to fund the eventual list of policies/solutions?
- How can the County support you, the local municipalities, to better pursue more attainable housing?

Summary of responses – there were 11 responses to this survey:

- The most common barriers to affordable / attainable housing identified by respondents were: limited affordable and market-rate rental units, lack of housing supply, construction and development costs, limited availability of infrastructure, and local opposition.
- Key strategic options identified by respondents include: providing incentives for new attainable housing, support for planning policy and process reform, creating an enhanced funding stream for attainable housing, advocacy to CMHC for better access to funding and financing, and advocacy for additional revenue tools.
- Additional comments from participants included: the need for affordable housing overshadows the need for attainable housing; changes to Provincial legislation has occurred quickly and municipal staff is ill-equipped to manage the pressures of these changes; coordinated effort to implementation is important; standard requirements across municipalities could be helpful; lack of staff across many municipalities causing issues.

## Consultation with Indigenous Groups – Survey

*November – December 2023*

*Virtual*

### Event Summary:

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Virtual presentation of Housing Needs Assessment and online survey provided along with draft strategic options list. Survey provided key questions.

Key questions included:

- Tell us about your Nation's needs related to off-reserve housing?
- Does your Nation have a specific Housing Mandate? If yes, tell us where the mandate(s) fits within the housing spectrum?
- Have your members received supports in the County, or elsewhere, that have helped to overcome housing obstacles? If yes, what did these supports / services look like?
- Thinking about attainable housing in the County of Simcoe, including Orillia, please select the top five (5) biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) your members face in terms of off-reserve housing.
- What do you think is the most important Strategic Direction that the County, including Orillia, should be doing immediately to improve housing conditions?
- What do you think the County, including Orillia, should do immediately to help housing be within reach of working individuals and families?

- More specifically, what Tactical Solutions do you think the County, including Orillia, should do in the longer term (beyond 5 years) to help more housing to be within reach of working individuals and families?
- What Tactical Solutions do you think have the highest potential to provide the most impact to your community members?
- How well do you feel that the top five (5) Tactical Solutions will help to create more attainable housing to be within reach for your members?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions that you believe are missing from the above list that would benefit your members in accessing attainable housing?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions listed above that should not be pursued?

Summary of responses – there was 1 response to this survey:

- The participant identified poverty, changing household dynamics, limited affordable and market-rate rental units, changing lifestyle and preferences, and lack of livable wages in the Province as key barriers to affordability / attainability.
- Key strategic directions noted by the participant included act on partnership/coordination opportunities, prioritize housing on public land, advocate to upper levels of government for funding and new tools, and implement rental replacement by-laws, among others.
- The participant noted concerns toward sustaining safe and clean affordable housing for families that belong to Indigenous groups. There was interest in implementing programs to mandate developers to include affordable housing in new developments and have affordable units remain affordable for a certain amount of time.

In addition to the above, County staff also met with the Hiawatha First Nation virtually. Some of the key comments received at this meeting included:

- Limit the size of new homes to drive at affordability / attainability;
- Policy and zoning changes to allow for higher densities are important;
- Property taxes for secondary units should not be charged.

## Consultation with Orillia Council – Survey

*November – December 2023*

*Virtual*

### Event Summary:

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Virtual presentation of Housing Needs Assessment and online survey provided along with draft strategic options list. Survey provided key questions.

Key questions included:

- Thinking about attainable housing from your municipality's perspective, please select the top five (5) biggest obstacle(s)/barrier(s) for the City of Orillia.

- What do you think is the most important Strategic Direction that the City of Orillia should be doing immediately to improve housing conditions?
- What do you think the City of Orillia should do immediately to help more housing be within reach of working individuals and families?
- What do you think is the most important Strategic Direction that the City of Orillia should be doing in the longer term (beyond 5 years) to improve housing conditions?
- More specifically, what Tactical Solutions do you think the County, including Orillia, should do in the longer term (beyond 5 years) to help more housing to be within reach of working individuals and families?
- What Tactical Solutions do you think have the highest potential to provide the most impact to your community members?
- How well do you feel that the top five (5) Tactical Solutions will help create more attainable housing to be within reach for City of Orillia residents?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions that you believe are missing from the list that would benefit City of Orillia residents?
- Are there any Tactical Solutions that should not be pursued?

Summary of responses – there was 1 response to this survey:

- The participant identified that some of the biggest barriers to developing attainable housing is local resistance to intensification, an onerous development process slowing the pace of development, post-secondary enrollment, changing planning framework, and a lack of housing supply. This is further exacerbated by the rising rental rates making it difficult for people to find suitable housing options.
- The participant identifies key strategic directions as being the streamlining of development processes, modifying planning policies to create more housing opportunities, acting on partnership/coordination opportunities, advocating to other levels of government for funding, innovation in building and construction, advocate for more revenue tools, and prioritizing housing outcomes on public land.
- The participant noted in written comments that they have a preference for attainable housing incentives to go to smaller builders, and that they would like to see some direction on restricting short-term rentals.