

Housing Issues Identified

- The majority of households in Leeds and Grenville are owner households (78.1%), with only 21.9% of households renting. However, renter households are experiencing the greatest difficulty in affording their shelter costs (35.2%) as compared to households that own their home (10.7%).
- In 2020, there were 2,205 households in Leeds and Grenville that could not afford to pay more than \$1,025 on monthly shelter costs; 600 households that could not afford to pay more than \$410 per month.

Homelessness Supports

- The number of households entering into and affected by homelessness has greatly increased since the previous Housing and Homelessness Plan.
- There is a need for more supportive services and transitional housing for those who are experiencing homelessness, and more supports to be housed and live independently.

Homelessness Prevention

- Supports are needed to keep people housed for longer, and prevent a return to homelessness.
- As the cost of rents continue to rise faster than incomes, there is significant core housing need and an affordable housing deficit that presents housing affordability issues.

Community Housing Supply

- There is a need for more rent-geared-to-income one-bedroom units in Brockville, Prescott and Kemptville.
- More Affordable Housing options are needed to provide an affordable home for all households, to prevent further households from being at-risk of homelessness and entering into homelessness.
- Continuing to maintain rent-geared-to-income housing targets as housing projects exit their original operating agreements.
- The Community Housing portfolio is a valuable community asset, which is aging and needs to continue to be maintained and repaired to prevent the loss of subsidized housing units.

Vision


To encourage and support access to safe, secure, suitable, and affordable housing that reflects the changing needs of the community.

Goals

The Plan has identified three overarching strategic goals that outline tangible actions that are linked to specific outcomes and measures:



Ending Homelessness



Preventing Homelessness



Facilitating Community Housing Supply

Goal 1 – Ending homelessness by supporting and housing persons that do not have a home.

Goal 2 – Preventing homelessness and maintaining housing stability.

Goal 3 – Facilitating and promoting a supply of community and affordable housing to ensure an adequate supply and choice of housing for low income households.

Discussion One – Vision Statement and Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles

Fundamental to achieving the Housing and Homelessness Plan (The Plan) goals, are the Guiding Principles that will direct the implementation of The Plan.

Persons-Centered Approach

People and their experiences are central to the planning and development of housing and homelessness programs. A person-centered approach to service will listen to and include the perspective of persons affected by housing instability and homelessness in housing planning. Programs and services will centralize around a person's unique needs and direction. The Counties will take steps to ensure that the voice of the local homeless and at-risk of homelessness population, is heard when developing appropriate services and supports for the local community.

Housing First

The Housing First model will move people into housing, and then strategies are developed to ensure that people are supported and housed successfully. When a housing-first approach is used to provide housing stability, people can better move forward with their lives if they are first housed before addressing their personal challenges that led to homelessness.

Prevention Focused

Keeping individuals and families housed is by far the most cost-effective way to avoid catastrophic health, justice and social services costs. Recognizing that prevention is a more economical and effective use of resources, the Housing and Homelessness Plan will place an emphasis on programs and services that prevent and address homelessness before it happens.

Community Partnerships

It is critical in service planning that strong partnerships are created and maintained, and that services are coordinated for a community-wide approach to addressing housing instability and homelessness. The private, public, and voluntary sectors, along with engaged citizens are all important and interconnected parts of the community. Housing and homelessness planning requires and must include, strong partnerships between all levels of government, non-profit housing providers, community resources, health services, and those individuals/families that require supports. Engaging in partnership opportunities with community stakeholders will better coordinate service provision, prevent duplication of services, and strengthen the quality of services provided to persons who are homeless, or at risk of becoming homeless.

Locally Driven

The Housing and Homelessness Plan must be relevant to and based upon the unique needs of persons in our community. Each community will have different needs based upon the size of the urban/rural area, and the unique resources, such as the services and supports readily available in the community. Housing and homelessness services are locally driven, based upon the local population needs, and created through strong partnerships with a holistic approach.

Inclusive

All services, programs, and planning will reflect the voices and experiences of families and individuals that are experiencing homelessness, or are at risk of homelessness. All persons have a right to equal treatment and access to services that is free from discrimination because of their race, sex, gender, sexual orientation, family status, age, receipt of public assistance, and/or disability. Services provided will be inclusive, equitable, welcoming, and will promote a sense of home and belonging for all.

Fiscal Responsibility

There must be accountability to the people we serve; the citizens, elected officials, and the municipal and provincial governments. The development of housing and homelessness support strategies will include balancing the fiscal reality of the ability to fund services, while maintaining quality services and supports to those in need.

Outcomes Based

Priorities are developed that reflect the needs of the local communities that can be measured and evaluated to determine program success and need for improvement. Program outcomes will include outcomes for housing those who are homeless, and those at risk of being homeless to remaining housed, and targets for the provision of housing that is affordable for low to moderate income households.

Vision Statement and Guiding Principles Discussion Questions

1. Are there suggested revisions or alternatives you would propose with regards to the proposed vision statement? Should the Vision Statement
 - Stay the same?
 - Be modified?
 - Change?

2. Are these the guiding principles we should move forward with?
 - a. Should they be changed? If so, how?
 - b. Are there any principals you feel are missing? If yes, please specify.

Discussion Two – Goals and Actions

Strategic Goal #1: Ending homelessness by supporting and housing persons that do not have a home.

Current Actions:

1. Commitment to a Three-Year Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Annual Homelessness Report that will review the services provided to ensure that a greater emphasis is placed on initiatives and programs that result in more people being housed and more people stayed housed for longer periods of time; and to prepare the Counties to receive more resources to further reduce its unhoused population.
2. Provide and flow funding for varying levels of emergency shelters according to acuity to meet the needs of persons who are unhoused through service agreements with community organizations.
3. Continue to maintain the ByName List to accurately track and count the unhoused population to provide the supports needed to the unhoused population.
4. Provision of Supportive Housing provided through the Community and Social Services Division and service agreements with community organizations.
5. Provision of emergency vouchers through Community and Social Services and community partners to provide food, transportation, and accommodations for households that are in an emergency.
6. Provision of community outreach services through the Community and Social Services Division and community partners to support the unhoused population. Community outreach includes food security programs, case management and referrals for ByName list clients, ongoing supports and services such as counselling and behavioral supports.
7. Continue to provide the Justice Involved Housing Program, which provides services to individuals involved in the justice system such as those on probation/parole, correctional institutions, and local bail supervision programs.

Future Actions:

1. The creation of 150 Supportive Housing Units that provide for varying levels of supports according to acuity.
2. Investigate additional/alternative emergency shelter opportunities and transitional mid-term accommodations.
3. Expand community partner participation of the ByName List for all organizations that support the unhoused population.
4. Transform the Counties' current shelter service into a program that places increased emphasis on supporting clients to move into housing.
5. Improve outreach services to better track homelessness across the Counties.
6. Increase the amount of Transitional-Supportive Housing available in the Counties.
7. Build and enhance community partnerships in support of a coordinated and community-wide effort to reduce homelessness across Leeds and Grenville.
8. Be ready for future investment. Should the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program funding levels increase in the next 2-3 years, the Counties will have a plan ready to immediately and effectively invest these resources.

Strategic Goal #2: Preventing homelessness and maintaining housing stability.

Current Actions:

1. Continue to administer the Homelessness Prevention Benefit to issue funds to prevent eviction and loss of utilities.
2. Continue the Supportive Housing Program, which includes preparing individuals in the program for independent living in the community.
3. Continue to fund the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative - Housing Allowance program, and participate in the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program, to make the cost of renting more affordable for eligible households in their current home.
4. Continue to fund the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative - Ontario Renovates Component and revolving loan fund to eligible households to repair their existing home and complete accessibility repairs, to ensure that the home is habitable and accessible.
5. Continue the Justice Involved Housing Program, which engages with individuals in institutional settings to divert and prevent a return to homelessness.

Future Actions:

1. Assess the feasibility of a municipally-funded housing allowance program, to reduce dependency on the Homelessness Prevention Benefit for rent and utility arrears.
2. Assess the feasibility of a municipally-funded rent supplement program to increase the number of new Affordable Housing units created in the community.
3. Investigate future programs and options that can assist households to remain housed for longer periods, and reduce homelessness in Leeds and Grenville.
4. Enhance the Counties' existing homelessness prevention programs so that 20% more community members receive financial support annually.

Strategic Goal #3: Facilitating and promoting a supply of community and affordable housing to ensure an adequate supply and choice of housing for low and moderate income households.

Current Actions:

1. Continue to invest in current community housing assets through asset management planning and supporting community housing providers with provincial Repair funding.
2. Continue to target and fund the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative – Housing Allowance to support the continued provision of rent-g geared-to-income units in non-profit and co-operative housing units whose operating agreements have expired.
3. Continue to contribute to the housing amortization reserve.
4. Support the development of new subsidized and affordable housing units through the Leeds and Grenville Affordable Housing Development Lab.
5. Assisting the development of new community and affordable housing units through referrals for land developers and non-profit housing providers to relevant project funding and financing programs.
6. Supporting the development of new community and affordable housing units through the provision of data and information required to develop a business case for new development.
7. Promotion of housing development in rural areas, including cost-effective waste water and drinking water funding programs and options.
8. Encouragement of rapid housing development through the promotion of alternative building methods to build housing faster and affordably.
9. Continue to fund the Affordable Home Ownership Program, to assist first-time homebuyers with down payment assistance for the purchase of their first home, to open more rental stock in Leeds and Grenville.
10. Continue to fund the Secondary Suite Program, to create an Affordable additional residential unit (ADU) on the property of their primary residence, to increase the supply of Affordable Housing Units.
11. Continue to fund the Leeds and Grenville Landlord Secondary Suite program, to create an Affordable additional residential unit (ADU) in an existing residential rental unit to increase the supply of Affordable Housing Units.

Future Actions:

1. Develop a Housing Strategy Plan for County investments in Homelessness, Affordable and Supportive Housing in Leeds and Grenville.
2. Based on data, establish unit size, tenant and geographical targets for new affordable and supportive housing.
3. Establish a multi-year plan for new subsidized housing units, with a focus on the development of high need units in high demand areas.
4. Review the current community housing stock, and assess if the unit composition and mandates meet the needs of those waiting on waitlists.
5. Assess the feasibility of a municipally-funded rent supplement program, to increase the number of subsidized housing units to reduce wait times.
6. Supporting Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy.
7. Engage in discussions with housing developers regarding the challenges and needs for constructing new affordable and community housing units, and advocate for system change to ensure rural affordable housing development is viable and receives the financial resources needed.

Goals and Actions Discussion Questions

3. Are there any other Actions that the Counties should include in its Housing Plan?
4. Which Activity do you think should be the first priority in moving forward on the Housing Plan?
5. If it was necessary to eliminate one activity due to time, cost or other factors, which Action do you feel the Counties could remove?

Survey QR Code

Provide your feedback using the QR Code to access the link to the Housing and Homelessness Plan consultation survey.

