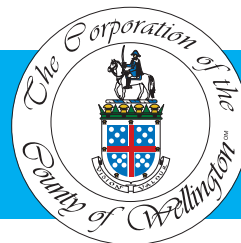


A PLACE TO CALL HOME



2021 Annual Report

**A 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Guelph-Wellington
Five Year Update (2020-2024)**



MESSAGE FROM THE WARDEN



On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present the County of Wellington's 2021 Annual Report on the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan— Five Year Update.

The second year of a global pandemic has made 2021 another challenging year for us all.

Despite the barriers the pandemic has created, our community's efforts to deliver on our housing goals have gained momentum. This year, we were able to make investments in and build new affordable and supportive housing units, provide more support for low-income renters, and continue building relationships with Indigenous partners. This progress is possible because of the strong leadership of County Council and the unwavering commitment of Housing Services, the federal and provincial governments, local service providers, Indigenous partners, health partners, residents and communities across our service delivery area.

Working together towards recovery from the pandemic, the County of Wellington along with our numerous community partners have been seeking opportunities to make the systemic and structural changes needed to ensure that the community members are able to access appropriate housing options. Together we can guide future investments to build inclusive and complete communities for generations to come.

Once again, I am proud of how our community has responded to the many challenges faced in 2021 and for the accomplishments made to address housing needs in Guelph-Wellington. This is important work and progress must continue as the need for affordable housing is so large in our community, like many others across the province. Importantly, we need the support of all our community members toward this work to ensure that everyone in Guelph and Wellington can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home.

Sincerely,

Kelly Linton, Warden, County of Wellington

2021 Housing and Homelessness Highlights:

Local Leadership – National Housing Strategy

In April, the County of Wellington Warden, Guelph MP, City of Guelph Mayor, the Director of Housing and community partners joined Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on a virtual call to discuss federal housing and homelessness programmes in Guelph-Wellington. As an allied community, we continue to advocate for increased investments to end chronic homelessness and address housing affordability in Guelph-Wellington. The strong partnerships and collaborative work of Housing Services with community and health partners continued in 2021, facilitating consensus across our community, and recognizing the need for ongoing advocacy to increase housing and homelessness system resources to meet the diverse and complex needs in our community.

Capital Investments in Housing

With commitments from provincial and federal levels of government, over \$11 million has been committed by the County of Wellington towards the development of new housing stock in Guelph-Wellington. This large investment has funded the development of 107 units of affordable and supportive housing and 50 units of market rent housing. While each project is at a different stage of development, the new permanent supportive and affordable units will improve our efforts to end chronic homelessness and offer our community much needed supports and affordability. The County continues to work with community partners and health funders to support the operational needs of these projects.

Local Affordable Housing Investments

In 2021, the County of Wellington Council and City of Guelph Council approved a two-year pilot of a new municipal affordable housing reserve process. This partnership with the City of Guelph enables the County of Wellington as service manager to provide support to the City in the delivery of its municipal affordable housing reserves to increase affordable housing stock in the community. In 2021, just over \$1.2 million from the City's Affordable Housing Financial Incentive Program was put through a County-led Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the development of affordable housing. Two projects were supported with this funding that will create permanent supportive housing opportunities for our community's most vulnerable. Annually, the County contributes \$1,000,000 in base funding to its affordable housing reserve, dedicated to the development of County owned and operated affordable housing units. The County also directs the net proceeds from the operation of our 131 affordable units toward the affordable housing reserve. These net proceeds totaled over \$440,000 in 2021, resulting in a total contribution of \$1.44 million towards future affordable housing development. Local investments are important to leverage funding opportunities from other levels of government.

Guelph-Wellington 2021 Everyone Counts

The Guelph-Wellington 2021 Everyone Counts survey took place over a two-day period across Guelph and Wellington County as part of a coordinated Canada-wide count of individuals experiencing homelessness. The count was planned and carried out by Housing Services in collaboration with community service agencies that make up the homeless serving system, Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC), and in partnership with the Guelph

& Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination. The count provides a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness in our community, giving us an estimate of the minimum number of people experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington on a single day. The results show that at least 270 people were experiencing homelessness in Guelph-Wellington on the night of the count. The information collected from the survey will be used to inform service planning; programme development; and to refine existing services. In addition, our local survey results contribute to snapshots of homelessness both across Ontario and nationally. For more information, please visit our website - [Guelph-Wellington 2021 Everyone Counts](#).

Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker

Working together to build relationships with Indigenous organizations and community members is an essential first step in developing culturally safe and appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples in our area. Housing Services has continued on the path of learning and relationship building with local Indigenous partners this year. Engaging with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) creates opportunities to explore new ways to bring culturally appropriate services to Indigenous individuals in Guelph-Wellington. Indigenous peoples continue to be over-represented among people experiencing homelessness. In response to this, Housing Services partnered with SOAHAC to develop a two-year pilot project for an Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker to deliver supports to Indigenous individuals in our community experiencing homelessness or housing instability. Indigenous individuals also have access to SOAHAC'S interdisciplinary team including primary health care, mental health, child and youth navigation, outreach support, women's health promotion, patient navigation, and traditional healing.

COVID -19 Pandemic – Housing Services Update

The COVID-19 global pandemic continued to present challenges throughout 2021. With each new wave of the pandemic services, individuals and families were constantly having to adapt to shifting health and safety requirements. Throughout 2021 County of Wellington offices remained closed to the public due to ongoing pandemic health requirements. Housing Services continued service delivery with a variety of remote and virtual options, responding to tenant and community housing needs with minimal impact to tenants interruption. In addition to providing virtual services typically delivered in person at our offices, many Housing Services staff continued to deliver services and supports in person at our housing units throughout the pandemic, responding to time sensitive housing and tenant needs to assist low income families meet their basic needs. Housing Services implemented a strong communication strategy to keep tenants informed of income and other supports available during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also supported housing providers to navigate the rent freeze in 2021 and supported social housing buildings cover additional cleaning costs needed to meet COVID-19 related requirements.

Mitigating the Impact of COVID-19 on Vulnerable Households

As the service manager we have seen how the pandemic has contributed to social isolation, rising costs of basic needs, service access barriers and loss of income which continue to affect the people we serve. Housing Services worked with community organizations to reduce the strain on individuals and families from vulnerable groups who the effects of the pandemic have hit the hardest. Food security initiatives developed

in partnership with the Guelph-Wellington Seniors Association (GWSA) for tenants included Community Food Markets as well as delivery of pantry items and prepared food to many of our social housing tenants.

Through strategic partnerships, Housing Services improved access to COVID-19 vaccines for emergency shelter users and for tenants by partnering with public health to deliver pop-up vaccination clinics in social housing buildings and emergency shelters across Guelph-Wellington. We also strengthened relations with the Guelph-Wellington Community Health Van to improve access to harm reduction supplies as well as peer and social supports for tenants in Guelph.

Importantly, we implemented strategic supports to improve access to virtual services for our tenants by creating Wi-Fi access points in the common areas of social and affordable multi-residential buildings. In further efforts to increase digital equity, Housing Services provided tablets to individuals within the homeless serving system to reduce barriers and facilitate access to virtual health and human services.

Knowledge Mobilization through Partnership with Researchers

In an effort to strengthen connections to academic research, Housing Services entered into a multi-year research partnership with Laurier University and University of Guelph. The project “From NIMBY to Neighbour” is focused on investigating homelessness in mid-sized cities and involves community engagement activities. Participation in this research project provides us with opportunities for new ways to connect with and learn from the people we serve. Through this partnership we have a unique opportunity to develop new connections and make a meaningful contribution to research that expands our collective understanding of how communities

like ours think about and respond to homelessness. By seizing opportunities to engage with post secondary institutions, we foster new partnerships and enhance our ability to integrate research and evidence into the planning and development of local housing and homeless system services.

Background

The Housing Services Act, 2011 requires Service Managers to prepare local housing and homelessness plans to address the current and future housing needs of individuals and families. The County of Wellington ('the County'), in collaboration with the community, developed the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (HHP) entitled "A Place to Call Home" in 2014.

In 2018, the County undertook an update of the HHP, to reflect on, plan and improve our housing and homelessness system to lead to better outcomes for residents of Guelph-Wellington.

The HHP sets out how we plan to address housing and homelessness locally, including housing affordability, coordination of support services, the promotion of human-centred and culturally appropriate service delivery models, housing stock revitalization, and ending chronic homelessness. The HHP - Five Year Update reflects refined objectives that align with provincial policy directions and emerging community needs.

This annual report is the second in a new reporting phase which began in 2020 and reflects progress made in 2021 on the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan – Five Year Update.



Housing Services by the Numbers 2021 Snapshot

RENT GEARED TO INCOME (RGI) HOUSEHOLDS



1,189
COUNTY OF WELLINGTON
OWNED UNITS

1,112
SOCIAL/COMMUNITY
HOUSING PROVIDER UNITS

200
RENT SUPPLEMENT
UNITS

AFFORDABLE HOUSING



131
COUNTY OF WELLINGTON
OWNED UNITS

303
SOCIAL/COMMUNITY
HOUSING PROVIDER UNITS

180
AFFORDABLE HOUSING
PROVIDER UNITS

65
UNITS IN
DEVELOPMENT

2
NEW UNITS

RENT SUPPORT HOUSEHOLDS



106
CANADA-ONTARIO HOUSING
BENEFITS (COHB) UNITS

157
RENT SUPPORT UNITS

119
RETIREMENT RESIDENT
SUBSIDY PROGRAMME UNITS

TENANT SUPPORTS PROGRAMME - HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED



97
HOUSING COMMUNITY
SUPPORTS

23
ACUTE INTERVENTION
PROGRAMME (AIP)

43
AGENCY
SUPPORTED UNITS

INVESTMENT IN HOUSING STOCK

PRESERVING EXISTING COUNTY OF WELLINGTON HOUSING STOCK



\$5.6 million

IN CAPITAL PROJECTS AND RETROFIT EXPENDITURES



\$6.1 million

IN MAINTENANCE AND UPKEEP EXPENDITURES

DEVELOPMENT OF NEW HOUSING STOCK



\$12.6 million

COMMITTED INVESTMENTS
TO NEW BUILDS IN 2021

INVESTING IN CO-OP AND NON-PROFIT COMMUNITY HOUSING



\$13 million

INVESTED TO SUPPORT OPERATIONAL AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES



TRANSITIONAL AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING



TRANSITIONAL

48

UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS
SERVED IN 2021

SUPPORTIVE

24

SCATTERED SITE
SUPPORTED UNITS

40

UNITS IN
DEVELOPMENT

HOUSING STABILITY: OUTREACH AND DIVERSION SUPPORTS



STREET OUTREACH

51

UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS SERVED



DIVERSION AND RAPID REHOUSING

138

YOUTH

129

ADULT

DIVERSIONS FROM EMERGENCY SHELTER IN 2021

HOUSING STABILITY PROGRAMME HOUSEHOLDS ASSISTED



HOUSING LOSS PREVENTION

90

UTILITY ARREARS

391

RENTAL ARREARS



SUPPORTS TO SECURE PERMANENT HOUSING

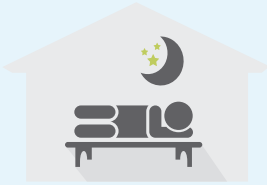
179

FIRST AND/OR LAST
MONTH RENT

97

OTHER HOUSING STABILITY EXPENSES
(E.G., MOVING, APPLIANCES)

HOMELESS SERVING SYSTEM SUPPORTS



491

UNIQUE INDIVIDUALS
USING EMERGENCY
SHELTERS

72

UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL
COVID-19 ISOLATION
SHELTER STAYS

26,604

TOAL NUMBER
OF EMERGENCY
SHELTER NIGHTS

HOMELESS SERVICES BNL ANALYSIS: CHRONIC



The Guelph-Wellington By-Name List (BNL) is a real-time, up-to-date list of all people experiencing homelessness in our community. Using this robust set of data, our community can track how many people are coming into homelessness, moving into housing, and our progress towards ending chronic homelessness. Understanding the scope of homelessness in our community is helping us target resources to stem inflow and drive outflow into permanent housing options.

Average BNL inflow/outflow in 2021



16
INFLOW



125
ACTIVE



15
OUTFLOW



THE NUMBER OF HOUSING PLACEMENTS
FROM THE BNL (CHRONIC) IN 2021

130



OBJECTIVES: STRATEGIC ACHIEVEMENTS AND PROGRESS

Objective 1: To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses

Low incomes, perhaps more than ever before, pose a major barrier to securing and maintaining appropriate, safe and affordable housing. While rent geared to income units can protect affordability because rent calculations are based directly on the tenant's income, households supported in the private market are subject to market pressures, highlighting the need for reliable and deep rent supports to stabilize these low income households. The County continues to advocate for increased investments to extend time limited rent support programmes and, to increase allocations of existing rent support programmes and/or housing allowances.

Housing Services led the intake efforts in our community for the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) programme, which has seen the County receive more portable housing benefit funding than initially allocated in the first 2 years (2020-21 and 2021-22). The enhanced COHB funding allocation is helping to make housing more affordable for vulnerable community members. As of December 2021 there were 106 households receiving COHB in Guelph-Wellington. In addition, Housing Services staff met regularly with market landlords in order to explore partnerships through the rent supplement programme. Maintaining and growing these partnerships allows the County to protect affordable units in the private market and increase unit availability for low income households.

In an effort to build digital equity and reduce household costs, the County installed 32 Wi-Fi access points in the common areas of social and affordable multi-residential buildings in Wellington County and the City of Guelph, providing free Wi-Fi access to over 1000 housing households. This, coupled with a device loaning programme for individuals experiencing homelessness will have reduced household costs for low income households in our community.

Further investments were made through the Housing Services Social and Recreation Grant Programme to support the health and well-being of our tenants, particularly seniors and youth. Housing Services allocated grants to the Guelph Wellington Seniors Association (GWSA) to pilot Community Food Markets at seven senior and adult lifestyle buildings. The pilot aimed to improve wellness outcomes by providing easy access to healthy food in a predictable, regularly scheduled market-style format that increases dignity and reduces stigma for those experiencing food insecurity. In total, 17 Community Food Markets were attended by 527 visitors, distributing an impressive 3,732 pounds of produce and the GWSA delivered produce, pantry items and frozen meals to social housing tenants on a weekly basis.

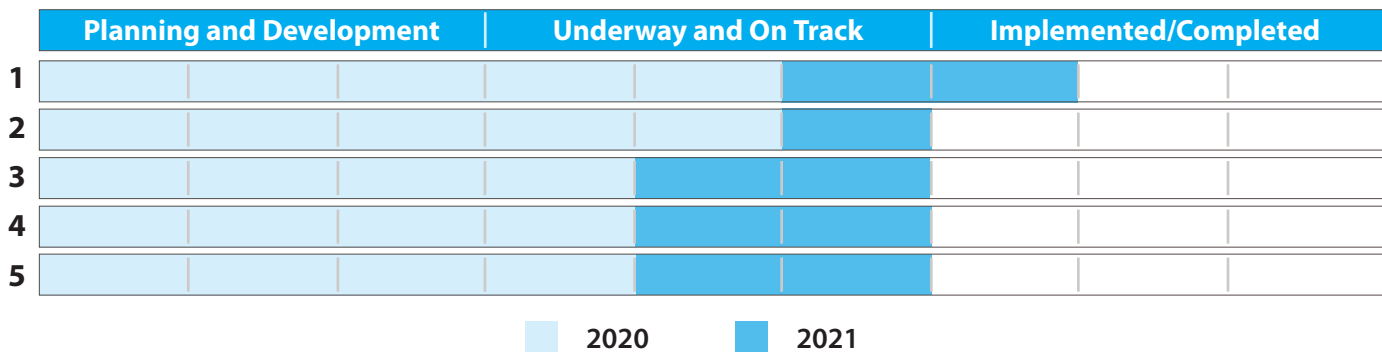
Additionally, the Social and Recreation Grant Programme funds were used to deliver programming to support the well-being of children and youth who reside in our social housing units. In partnership with Shelldale Family Gateway and the Brant Avenue Neighbourhood Group, summer camps were held over 8 weeks in July and August providing recreational programming and leadership development, at no cost, to close to 300 children and youth residing in these Guelph neighbourhoods. The funds were also used in partnership with the Town of Minto to increase access to recreational opportunities to provide free swim passes to families in the north of the County.

The County will continue to take actions to strengthen and expand options to support low income households in our community.

Objective 1 Strategic Actions

1. Continue to seek additional funding from upper levels of government (e.g. National Housing Strategy) to expand rent support programmes.
2. Engage upper levels of government partners to extend existing rent support funding past their current expiry dates.
3. Continue to recruit and build relationships with private market landlords in order to facilitate new rent supplement units.
4. Continue to monitor best practices and regulatory changes regarding the delivery of rent supplement and portable housing benefit programmes, and update existing policies as needed.
5. Continue to support the work of the Guelph and Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 2: To provide a range of housing stability supports to assist with housing retention and homelessness prevention.

The County demonstrated a renewed commitment to housing stability supports, implementing eviction prevention practices into service delivery in 2021 through the consistent application of a three touch point system of intentional communication with tenants prior to taking action with the Landlord Tenant Board (LTB). Internally, Housing Services is working towards increased and strategic communication processes across housing teams to identify new ways to collaborate in supporting tenants at risk of eviction.

Fostering the development and maintenance of social connections and a sense of community in social housing is an important factor in promoting housing stability, housing retention and preventing homelessness. Unfortunately, the continued COVID-19 pandemic restrictions severely limited the ability of Housing Services to offer community-building activities to tenants in social housing units. Community agencies who would typically run programmes in the buildings were not able to do so in 2021. Nonetheless the County made important contributions to keeping social housing tenants safe by ensuring common rooms remained closed and reopened safely in accordance with public health requirements.

Beyond social connections, assisting individuals who are at risk of homelessness access funding to prevent eviction remains a primary focus of our work to increase housing stability. The County delivered

\$754,463 in Housing Stability Programme funding that supported 757 households in 2021. The Housing Stability Programme expanded supports in 2021 by adding a new Diversion and Rapid Rehousing worker position to support individuals at risk of, or newly experiencing homelessness, to become rehoused.

In addition to supporting tenants, Housing Services staff also play an important role in developing and maintaining strong relationships with housing providers. In 2021, Housing Services staff hosted working groups with housing providers to review and discuss changes to the Housing Services Act. Through these workshops, Housing Services led a collaborative process with housing providers to support new RGI administration requirements. In addition to the creation of an updated Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) Guide, the County further supported housing providers' capacity to administer the RGI Simplification changes by funding one staff per housing provider to attend the (virtual) Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association's online course on RGI Simplification.

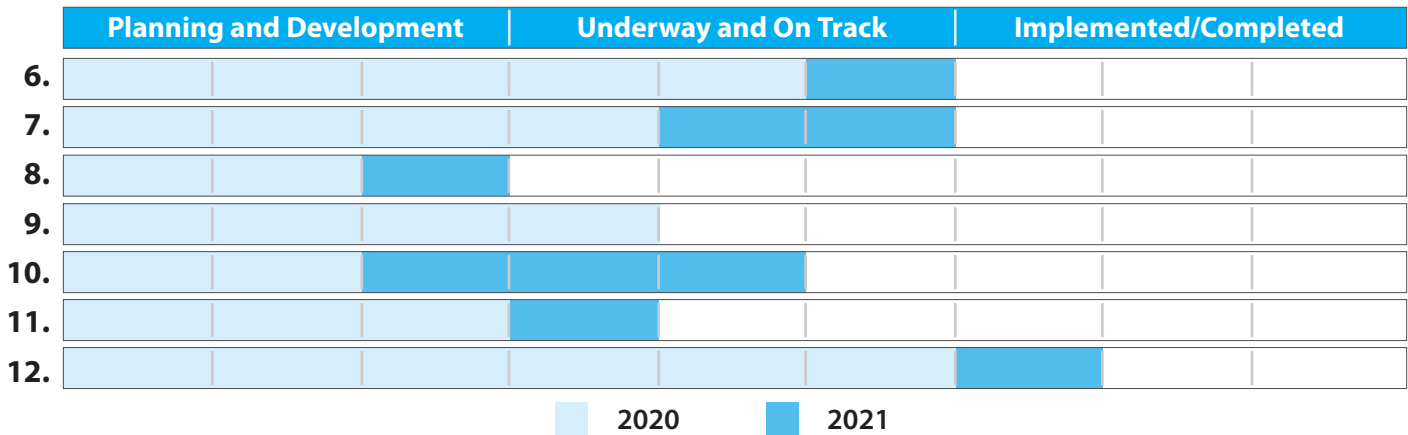
Moreover, our staff engaged with housing providers in a number of ways to sustain and nurture existing relationships with landlords, as well as help build capacity of landlords to foster effective and supportive relationships with tenants. For example, in 2021 the County partnered with Homewood Health Care to deliver a virtual session for landlords on "Building Effective Relationships with your Tenants". Supporting housing providers through information and resource sharing, networking and training opportunities contributes to housing stability in our community.

The County is committed to continued development and refinement of a comprehensive suite of supports and services.

Strategic Actions

6. Adopt and implement an Eviction Prevention Strategy which provides an integrated range of services to prevent those at imminent risk of eviction from becoming homeless. Work with other housing providers in delivering a coordinated approach to eviction prevention.
7. Hold education workshops for front line staff working for community organizations (social services, health care, education, child welfare, housing providers, etc.) to share information about available housing stability programmes, tenant rights and responsibilities, social housing application process, reasons for vacancies, etc.
8. Work with Local Immigration Partnership to advocate for better housing options for refugees and newcomers.
9. Create additional educational resources for renter households (e.g., renter's toolkit, RentSmart courses).
10. Strengthen pre-offer process to identify "housing readiness" and support needs and facilitate referrals to appropriate community services.
11. Continue to foster community building activities within social housing buildings which enhance relationships among neighbours and decrease conflicts.
12. Continue to assist individuals that are at risk of homelessness or homeless with supports and services to prevent eviction and increase housing stability.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 3: To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions

Our community’s unrelenting commitment to the development of new supportive housing options for residents with complex needs continued throughout 2021 - even in the face of the many challenges posed by the ongoing pandemic.

In 2021, the County worked with all levels of government on investments to help support individuals with complex needs in our community experiencing chronic homelessness. In addition to \$1.2 million in provincial COVID relief funding, County of Wellington advocacy efforts resulted in \$8.1 million of capital funding from federal and provincial governments. These total investments of \$9.3 million make possible the creation of two supportive housing projects, Grace Gardens, a permanent supportive housing project for adults and the creation of the Bellevue permanent supportive housing project for youth.

Also in 2021, we initiated development of a Transitional Supportive Housing Project for 65 Delhi Street in partnership with the City of Guelph which is currently in the planning phase. If successful, the proposed project would bring up to 28 Transitional Housing units with 24/7 staff and onsite health and social supports for people in our community experiencing chronic homelessness.

Continuing to strengthen partnerships between health and housing is a key aspect of Housing Services strategy to provide stable and consistent programming to support residents with complex needs. In 2021, we allocated the remainder of \$750k awarded by the Ministry of Health to the County in partnership with the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN). These funds were used to support three local initiatives to offset costs related to pandemic staffing and supports.

Housing Services is exploring new partnerships with service providers to improve access to health supports and services through a scattered site model. Supportive services are delivered to tenants in social housing and private market rental housing buildings ensuring easy access to mental health and addiction supports. Examples include a successful collaboration between the County, WWLHIN, CMHA and Stonehenge resulting in a total of 32 rent supplements coupled with specialized supports.

Drawing on provincial funding streams we were able to continue the Acute Intervention Programme (AIP) introduced in 2020, with expanded capacity in 2021 providing an additional layer of housing stability

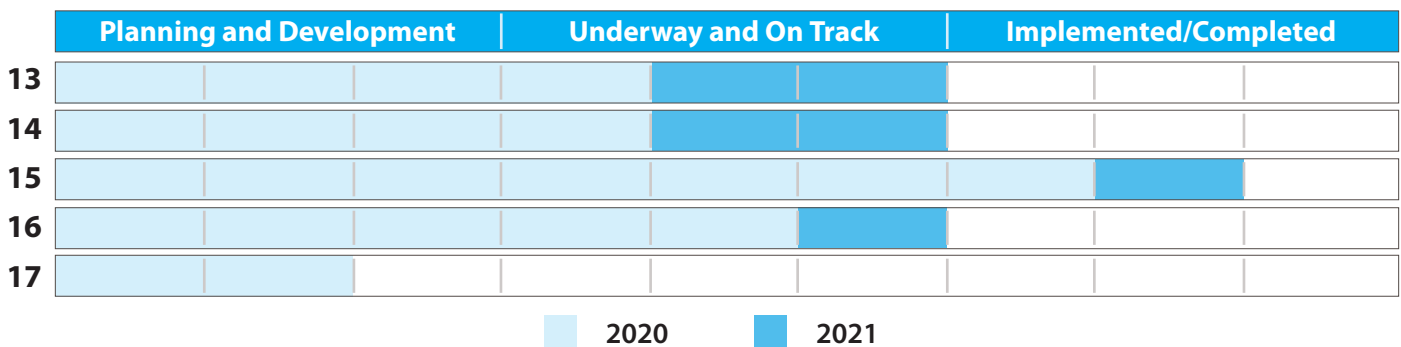
supports to existing tenants with complex needs who experience housing instability. Further, additional funding made it possible to develop and implement a 12-month pilot, creating a new social worker position within the homeless serving system with a focus on delivery of trauma counselling and treatment.

The County remains committed to working with community and health partners in the collaborative development and coordinated delivery of more specialized services to prevent eviction for tenants with complex needs and to foster housing stability.

Strategic Actions

- 13. Continue to support OMSSA, AMO and other advocacy efforts to upper levels of government regarding the need for a range of supportive housing options, including permanent units that offer 24/7 on-site supports.
- 14. Work with the Waterloo Wellington LHIN to develop a plan for leveraging resources from upper levels of government to develop permanent supportive housing units.
- 15. Bring together community partners to explore opportunities to expedite access to mental health assessment and counselling supports and services for vulnerable tenants, when a tenancy is in immediate jeopardy.
- 16. Continue to partner with the Waterloo Wellington LHIN, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community, and CMHA to provide rent supplements and Intensive Case Management Support to individuals with complex needs.
- 17. In partnership with Guelph-Wellington Women In Crisis, explore the feasibility of establishing a second stage housing programme for survivors of family violence and human trafficking.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 4: To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low to moderate-income households

The need to find ways to increase availability and improve access to affordable housing has become more and more apparent over the course of 2021. With the rising cost of housing alongside limited wage increases many households cannot keep up with the cost of living and are looking for more affordable housing options. As the service manager we advocate with intergovernmental partners, collaborate with area municipalities and engage with community leaders to find innovative solutions to local housing gaps.

In 2021, the County of Wellington championed local housing and homelessness needs through various municipal and service manager associations and participated in a virtual discussion with County of Wellington Warden our local City of Guelph Mayor and the Prime Minister on federal housing and homelessness programmes in Guelph and Wellington County.

Through municipal, provincial and federal programmes, the County was able to commit over \$12 million in funding towards the development of affordable housing in Guelph-Wellington in 2021. The County also supported expansion of affordable housing options for seniors. In Rockwood, the County provided the Eramosa Non-Profit Housing Corporation with funding for pre-development activities and a development charge deferral agreement, which will support the inclusion of at least 8 units of affordable housing in their development project. Through additional advocacy efforts we were able to commit additional funding to St Joseph's Housing Corporation towards construction on their Silver Maples Project in Guelph, an apartment and townhome complex with 65 units being delivered affordably.

Also in 2021 the County of Wellington Housing Services entered into an Affordable Housing Strategy partnership with the City of Guelph to provide support in the delivery of municipal affordable housing reserves to increase affordable housing stock. In 2021, \$1.2 million from the City's Affordable Housing Financial Incentive Program was put through a County-led Request for Proposal (RFP) process for the development of affordable housing in the community.

In support of homeownership, the County of Wellington provided 6 households with \$20,000 each in forgivable down-payment loans towards the purchase of their first home through the Homeownership Programme. A total of \$120,000 in new homeownership assistance provided in 2021 was made possible through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative and the County of Wellington's Revolving Loan Fund. Since the county began the Homeownership programme in 2007, we have helped 131 low income households get into the home ownership market, with \$2,118, 745 in down payments and forgivable loans.

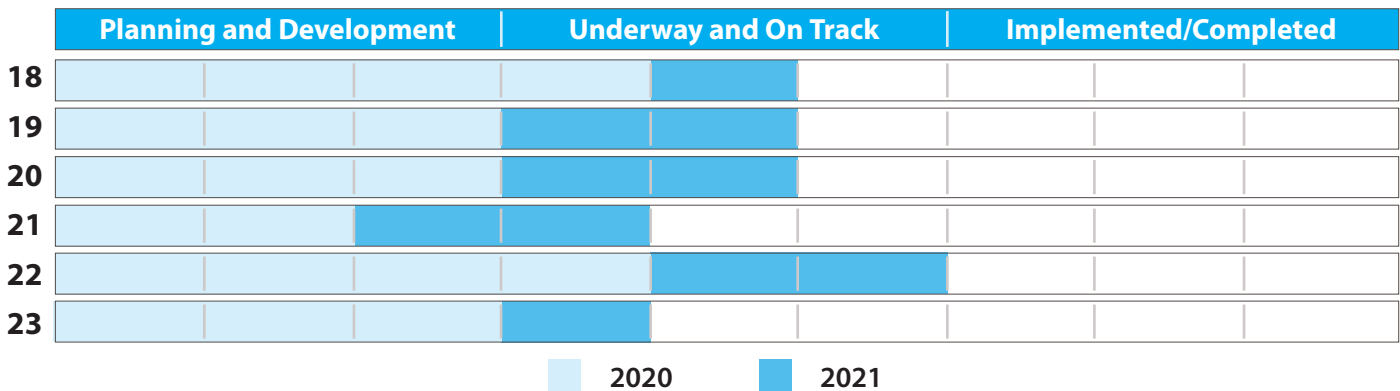
Finally, to continue to expand affordable housing resources, Housing Services hosted a virtual workshop series on affordable housing development. Resources from this workshop series, include a revised Affordable Housing Development Guide released in 2021 and available on the Housing Services website.

Housing Services is committed to enhancing our ability to recognize and respond to housing needs in rural and urban contexts and will continue to engage in collaborative work with local partners to grow much needed affordable housing options for the future.

Strategic Actions

18. Continue to support OMSSA, AMO and other advocacy efforts to upper levels of government regarding the need for more funding to support the development of new permanent affordable rental housing units, including options for additional subsidies to reduce rents to RGI levels.
19. Leverage funding from upper levels of government to increase homeownership opportunities for moderate-income households (i.e. 40th-60th income percentile).
20. Continue to collaborate with area municipalities on:
 - Strategically targeting housing investments in alignment with area-led Community Improvement Projects, Official Plans and Economic Development activities.
 - Exploring inclusionary zoning and/or alternative development standards to promote affordability.
 - Creating an inventory of public land/assets and brownfield properties.
21. Continue to collaborate with other Social Services and County Departments on development opportunities (e.g., housing and childcare development partnerships).
22. Expand affordable housing resources for developers online.
23. To continue to facilitate housing conversations within the rural context.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 5: End chronic homelessness

The County of Wellington along with our community partners are working to transform our local homelessness serving system and end chronic homelessness. Through system planning, strategic investment and service partnerships we are seeing reductions in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness. With these results, we are seeing additional investments from other levels of government and enhanced local leadership towards meeting our goal of ending chronic homelessness.

Guelph-Wellington’s Coordinated Entry System (CES) standardizes a pathway for connecting individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness to the resources available within the County of Wellington Housing Stability System. The Guelph-Wellington By-Name-List (BNL), which is a part of CES, is a real-time, up-to-date list of all people experiencing homelessness in our community and informs referrals to appropriate housing services and supports. We are one of only two communities in Ontario to achieve and sustain a reduction in chronic homelessness from our BLN baseline in 2018. In addition to this success, the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH) recognized Guelph-Wellington’s progress

towards ending chronic youth homelessness and by year end, our community achieved a 78% reduction in chronic youth homelessness since August 2018.

Historically, funding for our homeless serving system, through the federal Reaching Home programme, has been low for a service area of our size. However, this year through successful advocacy efforts, the County received increased Reaching Home funding. These additional funds are being used towards capital costs for local Supportive Housing projects and for an additional Housing Stability Coordinator needed to support improvements to our Coordinated Entry System (CES) processes and the enhancement of our Homelessness Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS 4) database.

In 2021, the County leveraged available provincial funding through the Social Services Relief Fund, Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative and Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative, and federally through the Rapid Housing Initiative to strengthen our local efforts to end chronic homelessness. Funds were used to support the continuation of our pilot with Wyndham House to maintain increased staffing required to provide services 24/7 for youth throughout 2021. Additionally, the Warming Centre pilot was extended through 2021 allowing continued low-barrier shelter options for individuals experiencing homelessness, a key point of contact to begin relationships and a pathway to longer term housing solutions.

Available services were expanded by partnering with the Stepping Stone to pilot a new Street Outreach Worker. Their focus is to engage with individuals experiencing homelessness not currently accessing shelter, to build relationships and begin to support their housing needs. In addition, a second adult system Diversion and Rapid Rehousing Worker will be piloted for 12 months through the Stepping Stone. Their focus is to assist persons at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness find opportunities to stabilize their housing without entering the shelter system or, to support a return to housing.

Emergency shelter services are a part of the homeless serving system and provide necessary crisis response needed to end chronic homelessness. Our community's traditional adult emergency shelters remained closed in 2021 due to health restrictions related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Existing COVID-19 funding from provincial and federal governments were key to our community being able to continue to fund additional staffing positions at our community's Warming Centre and at our community's isolation shelter for individuals experiencing homelessness.

The County of Wellington Housing Services continues to participate in Built for Zero – Canada, a national campaign focused on ending chronic homelessness. In 2021 our community joined the veteran cohort of Built for Zero. Expanding our participation and increasing our national partnership will improve local supports available in our response to end veteran homelessness.

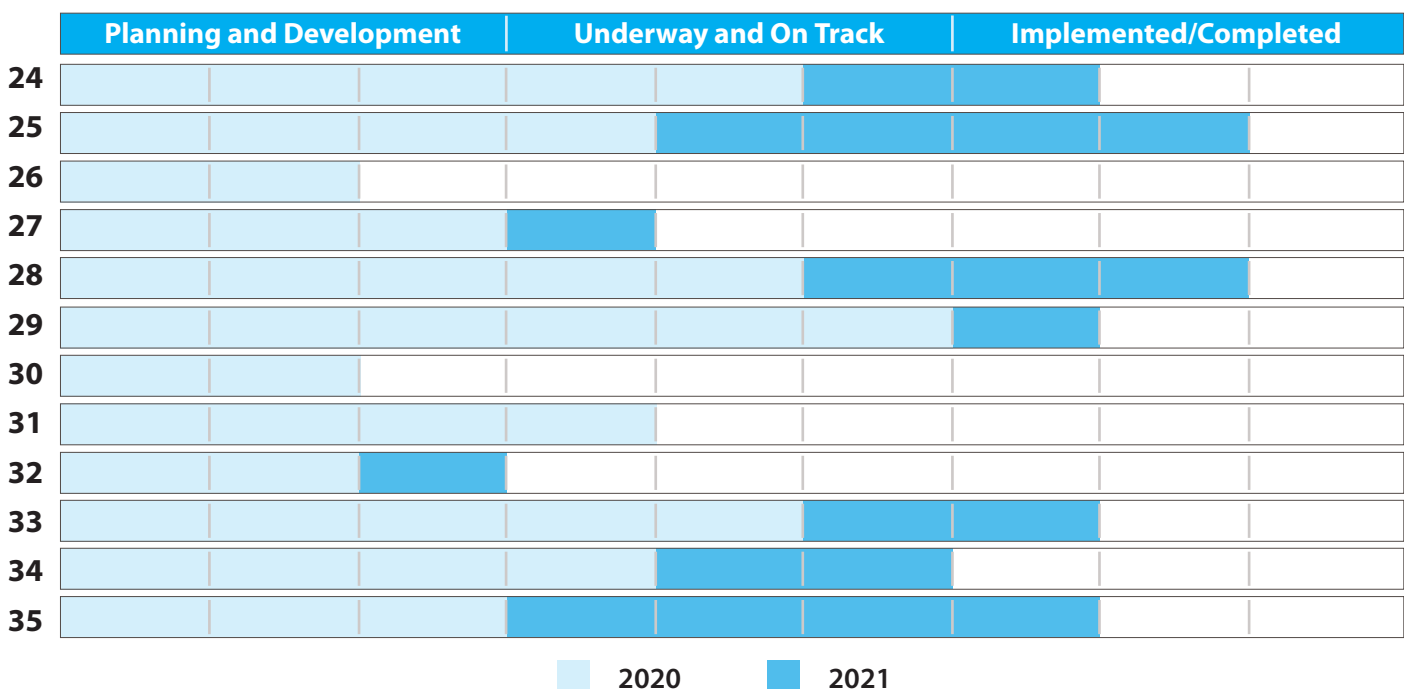
Fostering local partnerships continues to be an important part of the work we do. As a community we have developed a working group to explore opportunities for housing and homeless serving system partners to collaborate and investigate new ways to improve system responses. Housing Services is committed to continued work towards system change with a view to strengthen our local response to end chronic homelessness.



Strategic Actions

24. Continue efforts to improve the CES using the BNL and System Scorecards provided by the 20K Homes Campaign to drive monthly reductions in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.
25. Explore the feasibility of a Street Outreach Programme.
26. Conduct a fidelity assessment of the Housing First Programme and explore opportunities to expand the Programme including leveraging peer support for the Programme.
27. Establish a process to create a coordinated care plan as part of CES for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.
28. Continue to collaborate with community partners to conduct homeless enumeration every two years.
29. Establish a Housing Locator position with service providers to design a Landlord Engagement Strategy to enhance and create new landlord partnerships.
30. Collaborate with the Upper Grand District School Board and Wellington Catholic District School Board on introducing homelessness curriculum into the schools.
31. Continue to support the work of the Rural Youth Homelessness Committee and the new Rural Emphasis campaign to raise awareness of youth homelessness in rural Wellington.
32. Collaborate with institutions on strategies to improve discharge planning processes.
33. Implementation of HIFIS 4 across all of the Housing Stability service providers to enhance service delivery.
34. Seek further opportunities to intentionally pair Provincial, Federal and Municipal initiatives.
35. Continue to advocate for increased funding through the renewed Homelessness Partnering Strategy to strengthen our local response to chronic homelessness.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 6: To promote client-centred, coordinated access to the housing and homelessness system

The County is committed to investing in improvements that remove barriers and facilitate coordinated access to integrated and client-centred services across housing and homelessness systems. 2021 was the first full-year with the online application system for rent-g geared-to-income (RGI) housing and supports. By year end, there were more than 1,600 households with eligible online applications, which is about half of the entire Centralized Waiting List (CWL). Online application reduce administrative burdens and improve the applicants ability to manage and maintain their eligibility.

The County continued to work with community partners to improve access to the homeless serving system and in particular with health partners to create a coordinated care plan as part of our Coordinated Entry System (CES). In 2021 there has been a focused effort to advance coordinated intake with community partners who deliver intensive mental health and addiction supports to tenants through the SAMH programme and for the new Grace Gardens Permanent Supportive Housing programme.

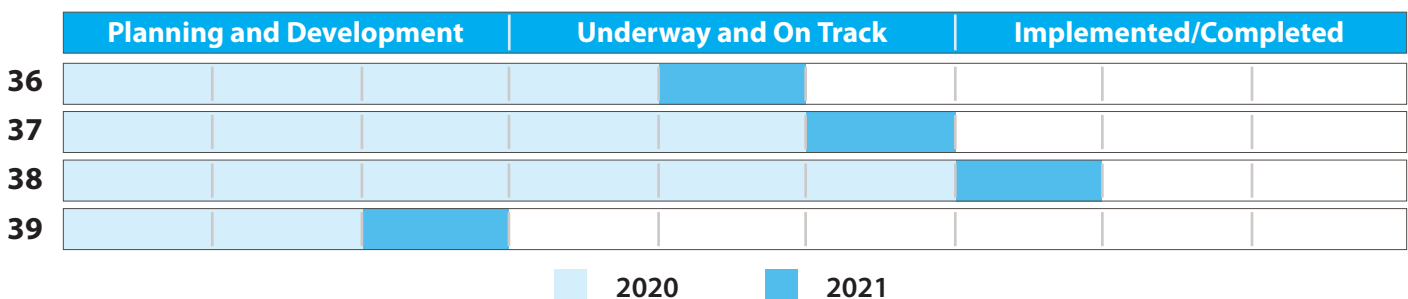
Further, Housing Services staff were invited to collaborate with other Built for Zero communities in a proposal to apply to the National Housing Strategy Solutions Labs Program to Improve Access to Community Housing for People Experiencing Homelessness. The participation of our staff in this exciting initiative has great potential to share local expertise and learn from other regions, enhancing service coordination between our housing and homeless serving system locally.

The County will continue to work with internal and external partners to improve system navigation and service experience and as well as integrating more technology options into how we interact with tenants, clients and applicants.

Strategic Actions

- 36. Continue to support OMSSA, AMO and other advocacy efforts to remove legislative barriers and administrative burdens that are obstacles to furthering service integration at the local level.
- 37. Continue efforts to further improve coordinated access to the housing and homelessness system.
- 38. Continue efforts to modernize housing policies and practices (e.g. on-line application process, annual updates to the centralized waiting list, mobile rent payments, etc.).
- 39. Continue to expand and streamline the process between divisions by integrating intake and having common communication, reporting and services in place to provide better outcomes for people.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 7: To support the sustainability of the existing social and affordable housing stock

The importance of planning for and allocating resources to support the sustainability of our aging social and affordable housing stock was a major focus of Housing Services work in 2021. Ensuring that our buildings continue to be viable for existing and future tenants is essential to making our community a place where everyone can have a safe and affordable place to call home.

In 2021, the County continued to invest substantially in maintenance, repairs and updates that contribute to improved assets life expectancies, better living environments and increased energy efficiencies. Through the Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative, the County of Wellington spent \$1.2 million (\$453,221 in 2020-2021 and \$747,051 in 2021-2022) towards repairs in housing provider buildings, with a focus on health and safety, energy efficiency, urgency, accessibility and financial need.

In 2021, the County invested over \$12 million in housing portfolios of our housing provider partners in the community, which are our non-profit and co-op housing providers in the community, as well as over \$11 million in the capital and maintenance of our own housing stock. County Council also committed \$500,000 in a municipally funded forgivable capital loan to Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation (GNPHC) to assist with its capital reserves.

The County has identified opportunities to incorporate new technologies and systems leading toward environmental sustainability. Capital projects and asset replacements have begun transitioning toward a sustainable model for climate change. In 2021, Housing Services investigated and evaluated a variety of affordable and sustainable construction methods by reaching out to Canadian industry leaders in innovative design and visiting their facilities and sites. Housing Services learned about new technologies and construction methods that could reduce construction time, improve building quality, and reduce overall costs.

The County worked with local federal housing providers to incentivize their continued involvement in social and affordable housing after their mortgages expire and in 2021 completed the first End of Operating Agreement renewal with an agreement that extends until 2035. In addition, the County advocated for recognition at the provincial level of End of Mortgage impacts on housing providers leading to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) commitment to release regulatory amendments that address funding issues present with End of Mortgage housing providers.

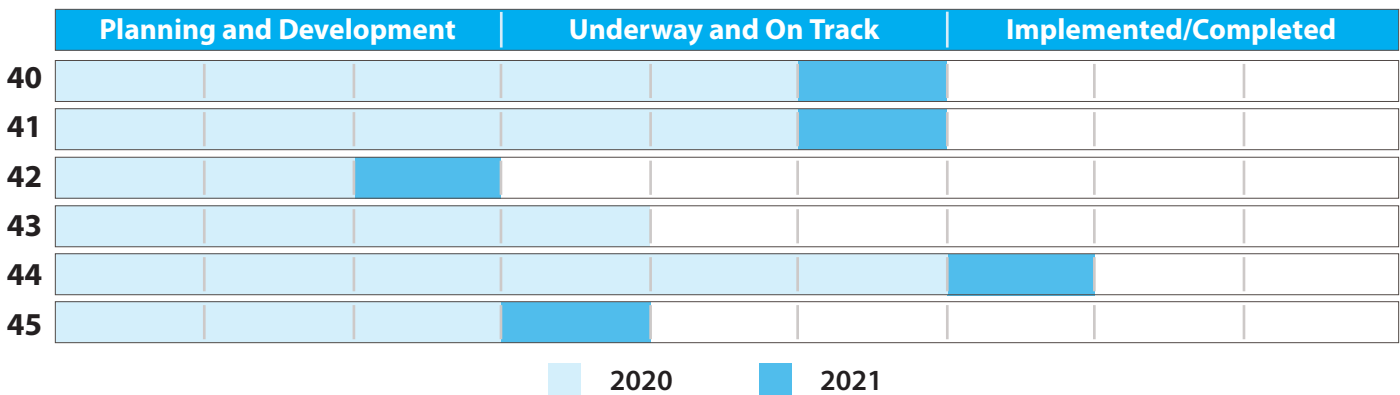
The County is committed to continued strategic and significant investments in maintenance and capital repairs to our aging social and affordable housing units is needed to protect limited housing stock in our community.

Strategic Actions

- 40.** Continue to leverage funding from upper levels of government to address safety and structural repairs, climate change, environmental sustainability, and accessibility needs.
- 41.** Continue to support OMSSA, AMO and other advocacy efforts to remove outdated Service Level Standards (SLS) that measure only a portion of the possible tools and approaches to improve housing availability and affordability, limiting flexibility and innovation.
- 42.** Develop a business case for regenerating the County's public housing stock, which takes into consideration selling off single/semi-detached units and reinvesting the proceeds in new development opportunities, or site densification options.

- 43. Continue to support non-profit housing corporations and co-operatives in the delivery and potential development of social and affordable housing (e.g., education workshops, sharing of best practices and operating policies and procedures, support for the development of funding proposals and business cases, joint tendering opportunities, common list of approved vendors, etc.).
- 44. Continue to work with our local federal housing providers to try and maintain their involvement in social and affordable housing after their mortgages expire.
- 45. Develop a funding strategy between local provincial reformed housing providers and the County of Wellington to ensure that the providers thrive in our community by maintaining existing and developing new high quality and stable long term social and affordable housing.

Status of Strategic Actions



Objective 8: To foster access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples

The County is committed to growing our relationships with the local Indigenous community and Indigenous organizations to better understand the housing needs of Indigenous peoples in Guelph-Wellington. By fostering partnerships with Indigenous organizations, we can begin to develop culturally safe and appropriate housing services to support Indigenous people in Guelph-Wellington.

In 2021, the County partnered with Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre (SOAHAC) to develop and pilot a two-year Indigenous-led housing position to increase culturally safe and appropriate supports for individuals and families experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. The Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker position was filled September 2021. We have also engaged with SOAHAC to join the Housing Stability Working Group, and they are a Door Agency for our community’s Coordinated Entry System (CES) for those experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

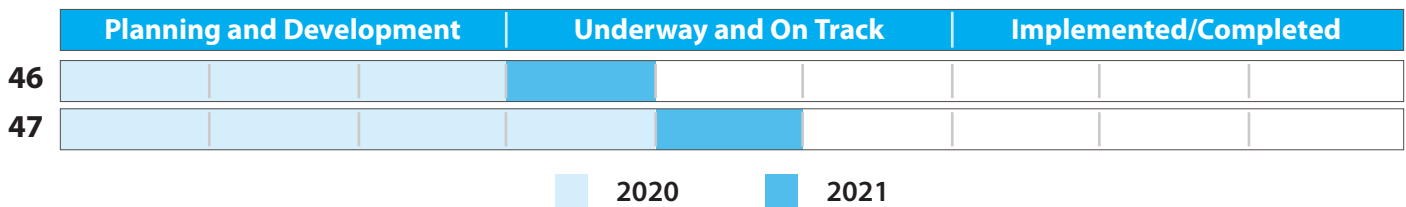
As part of the Guelph-Wellington 2021 Everyone Counts point in time count of homelessness, the County worked closely with SOAHAC to develop an Indigenous outreach strategy to ensure that the enumeration activities included a culturally safe and appropriate option for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness to participate. SOAHAC coordinated and hosted a magnet event in downtown Guelph where the Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker and other Indigenous staff were available to complete the Guelph-Wellington 2021 Everyone Counts survey with Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness in a culturally safe context.

Housing Services is committed to the ongoing outreach and relationship building to engage and work with Indigenous organizations and partners to develop safe and culturally appropriate services and supports to respond to the housing needs of Indigenous peoples in Guelph-Wellington.

Strategic Actions

- 46. Strengthen relationships with Indigenous organizations and communities in our Service Manager area.
- 47. Coordinate with Indigenous community and partners to support access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples in our Service Manager area.

Status of Strategic Actions



PROVINCIAL OUTCOMES TABLE: 2021 PROGRESS

Outcomes	Measures	Targets	Annual Progress/Acheivement
OBJECTIVE 1: To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses			
Improved access to rent supports that help improve housing affordability for low-income households	Number of households that receive rent supports per year	By 2023, 400 households receive rent supports per year	In 2021, 463 households received rent supports. We are on track to meet targets.
OBJECTIVE 2: To provide a range of housing stability supports to assist with housing retention and homelessness prevention			
Improved access to supports and resources for tenants and landlords to stabilize housing and reduce evictions	Number of households at risk of homelessness that are stabilized (includes eviction prevention services, and assistance with rental and energy arrears) per year	By 2023, 75% of households who received a subsidy and/or supports have retained their housing at 6 months follow up	In 2021, 94% of households who received a subsidy and/or supports had retained their housing at 6 months follow up. We are on track to meet targets.
OBJECTIVE 3: To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions			
Increased access to supportive housing options that help people to successfully live independently	Number of households that receive housing support services through the Service Manager per year	By 2023, there has been a 5% increase in the number of households that receive support services through the Service Manager	In 2021, 355 households received support services and 40 units of supportive housing were in development. We are on track to meet targets.
OBJECTIVE 4: To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low to moderate income households			
Increased number of households who are living in affordable housing options	Number of households in affordable housing per year	By 2023, there has been a 5% increase in the number of affordable housing units Increasing number of first time homeownership grants and Ontario Renovates programme participation	In 2021, 2 units of affordable housing were built and 65 units were in development. 6 new homeownerships down payment loans issued. We are on track to meet targets.

Outcomes	Measures	Targets	Annual Progress/Achievement
OBJECTIVE 5: To end chronic homelessness			
People experiencing chronic homelessness find and maintain housing.	Reductions in the number of people actively experiencing chronic homelessness	By 2023, Guelph Wellington will reach the third key reduction indicator in the 20K Homes Campaign: Getting Close to Functional Zero Chronic Homelessness	In 2021, Guelph-Wellington By-Name-List (BNL) has remained below baseline. We are on track to meet targets.
OBJECTIVE 6: To promote client-centred, coordinated access to the housing and homelessness system			
People are able to access the housing and homelessness support services they need in a timely and efficient manner	Number of activities undertaken to improve coordinated access and customer service (i.e., training, policies, phones, positions, etc.)	By 2023, Social Services reception and intake is fully integrated.	In 2021, Housing Services continued to support activities to strengthen integrated service delivery. We are on track to meet targets.
OBJECTIVE 7: To support the sustainability of the existing social and affordable housing stock			
Improved viability of existing RGI units and social housing assets beyond their original operating and mortgage agreements.	Number of households in RGI and affordable housing units	By 2023, the County and local housing providers are collectively continuing to maintain service level standards.	In 2021, the County continued to maintain service level standards. We are on track to meet targets.
OBJECTIVE 8: To foster access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples			
Improved access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples	Number of engagement activities and resources initiated to deepen understanding of Indigenous housing and homelessness experience in Guelph Wellington	By 2023, the County and community housing partners are engaged in the development of a meaningful process that supports Indigenous participation in the housing and homelessness initiatives in our community.	In 2021, Housing Services continued to build partnerships with local Indigenous led organizations, on the Guelph-Wellington 2021 Everyone Counts point in time count of homelessness and to pilot a new Indigenous-led Housing Outreach Worker. We are on track to meet targets.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank Warden Kelly Linton, the County of Wellington Council, and Social Services Committee both past and present, for their ongoing support for housing in our community.

We would also like to thank our community partners for their commitment and support to address housing and homelessness issues in these very challenging times. Finally, we would like to recognize the dedication and work of our Housing Services staff who, in spite of personal and professional challenges caused by the pandemic in 2021, were able to nimbly respond to the layers of pandemic pressures, ensuring the effective, efficient and fair provision of high quality housing services to residents of Wellington County and the City of Guelph. Finally, we would like to thank Amy Johnson for invaluable contributions to this report and to Housing Services for the past 5 years.

Communication:

The County of Wellington will distribute this annual report to the community through presentations at local community tables, through posting on the County’s website and sharing directly with participating stakeholders. This report will also be sent to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing as part of the County’s commitment to report annually on our progress toward goals and targets established by the community on the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

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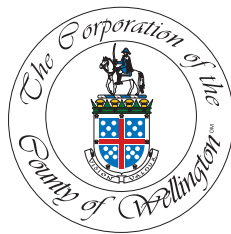
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