

Message from the Warden



On behalf of Council, I am pleased to present the County of Wellington's 2022 Annual Report on the Housing and Homelessness Plan– Five Year Update. I am proud of how our community has come together to support each other and work through the many challenges that were part of 2022, the third year of a global pandemic.

The Housing Services division, along with our numerous community partners, continue to work together, making strides towards our housing goals despite mounting social and economic pressures. In 2022, progress continued in the development of new affordable and supportive housing options that, once completed, will provide housing and supports to some of our most vulnerable citizens. Combined, the projects under development in 2022 will significantly expand housing options enhancing our ability to respond to the wide-ranging needs in our service area.

Across the province and in Wellington-Guelph, the need for affordable, appropriate housing has never been greater. We must continue to join together to strengthen our efforts to make our community's vision a reality and ensure that everyone in Wellington County and Guelph can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home.

Sincerely,

Andy Lennox, Warden, County of Wellington

2022 Housing and Homelessness Highlights:

Support for Attainable Housing in Wellington County

In 2022, the County of Wellington Economic Development Division launched a “Yes in My Back Yard” (YIMBY) awareness campaign in Wellington County. The initiative was taken on to encourage support for increased density housing, recognizing the importance of developing a range of housing options that respond to the diverse housing needs in Wellington County. The Housing Services division endorses a “Yes In My Back Yard” (YIMBY) approach, and as a member of the County's Attainable Housing Taskforce, supports the campaign to raise community awareness of the need for diverse housing options and housing density in Wellington County.

Increased Canada Ontario Housing Benefit Funding

The Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) programme is a portable housing benefit which increases the affordability of private market rental units for low-income households. In 2022, the Housing Services division was allocated funding to support 70 low-income households at risk of homelessness with the COHB programme. The timely commitment of this funding made it possible to secure 90 additional housing benefits for our community. This efficient uptake of COHB funding locally helped to demonstrate significant need in the Wellington-Guelph area. Housing Services will continue to advocate to upper levels of government for more opportunities to support households in Wellington County and Guelph with these portable housing benefits.

Fostering Inclusive Community Responses to Homelessness

The Housing Services division continues our partnership with university researchers on the NIMBY To Neighbour research project, which focuses on the unique challenges faced by mid-size cities in preventing and responding to experiences of homelessness. In September 2022, Housing Services staff along with community partners, joined researchers and staff from Cambridge and Brantford for a full-day knowledge-sharing workshop entitled “Fostering Inclusive Community Responses to Homelessness.” The workshop offered participants a chance to connect with local community members, researchers, and participants from other municipalities to develop a network related to homelessness in mid-size cities, sharing learnings from workshop presenters.

New End of Mortgage Strategy Recommendations

On March 30, 2022, the Provincial Government released a new regulatory framework for the administration of social housing in the province. This framework allows for a more flexible funding arrangement between Service System Managers and housing providers and is designed to incentivize housing providers to remain in the system once financial supports towards their mortgages are complete. Working with sector partners, Housing Services developed resources and led discussions with staff and directors of housing providers as part of developing a strategy to implement these new regulations. County of Wellington’s Social Services Committee approved the core principles of a new End of Mortgage Strategy, including recommendations to keep any mortgage savings invested in the housing system. This direction will ensure long-term financial stability of housing providers, improved capital assets, and reliable rent subsidy for housing provider residents for years to come.

Additional Housing-Focused Staff for the Housing Stability System

In 2022, more resources were added to the housing stability system in Wellington-Guelph. A second Diversion and Rapid Rehousing Worker, a second Housing Focused Outreach Worker as well as a new Social Worker position were added to the adult emergency shelter system. These roles have demonstrated encouraging results, contributing to preventative actions and early interventions to reduce homelessness.

Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference

The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness hosted their first in-person conference since before the pandemic began. The Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness conference brings together national and international leaders from communities who are working to end homelessness. Minister Steve Clark from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) recognized Wellington-Guelph in his opening remarks as one of only two communities in Ontario to have achieved and maintained reductions in homelessness. Tim Richter, of the CAEH, also recognized Wellington-Guelph for our success in significantly reducing chronic homelessness among youth. Housing Services and community partner staff had a unique opportunity to learn together, gaining insights into innovative and evidence-based practices and connect with colleagues from across Canada. The Housing Services division supported non-profit service providers who are part of the homeless serving system to attend the 3-day conference.

Province Consolidates Funding: Homelessness Prevention Programme

In April 2022, the Government of Ontario introduced the Homelessness Prevention Programme, which consolidates multiple provincial funding streams. This funding is intended to support Service Manager goals to deliver effective programmes that prevent and respond

to homelessness and housing instability, with a focus on ending chronic homelessness. The consolidated funding also allows for greater flexibility to fund community initiatives and maintain current services delivered in the Wellington-Guelph service area.

Background

The County of Wellington is one of 47 designated Service System Managers for Social Services who deliver Housing Services, Ontario Works, and Children's Early Years services on behalf of the Province of Ontario in a specific geographic area. For the County, the geographic area includes Wellington County and Guelph.

Since the devolution of housing services by the Province of Ontario in 2001, Service Managers are responsible for the administration, planning

and have been the primary funder of community housing and homelessness prevention programmes.

Ontario is the only province in Canada where municipal levels of government have responsibility for the provision of housing services. Other provinces provide housing programmes that are fully funded by provincial or territorial governments with support from federal funding agencies.



Responsibilities across all levels of Government

Federal Government

Through the National Housing Strategy, the Government of Canada provides funding that supports local projects offering low-cost loans and grants to increase the development of affordable rental housing buildings. The federal government also provides funding for portable housing benefits such as the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) and rent supplements that support housing stability for low-income rental households. Additionally, the federal government provides the Reaching Home funding stream, which is designed to provide dedicated funding to support homelessness initiatives.

Provincial Government

Housing services are overseen in Ontario by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) which provides funding to support affordable housing initiatives, rent supplements and portable housing benefits. The Ministry also provides legislative oversight for social housing programming delivered by Service System Managers across the province. Finally, the provincial Homelessness Prevention Programme provides dedicated funds that support local initiatives to prevent and respond to homelessness.

Service System Manager

Service System Managers act as the service delivery agents for federally and provincially funded social housing, government-funded affordable housing programmes as well as initiatives to prevent and respond to homelessness in their respective service delivery area. Service System Managers are responsible to carry out their legislated responsibilities that include administration of Centralized Waiting Lists for social housing and access to subsidized and government-funded affordable housing. They also set local housing standards and eligibility criteria for various forms of housing assistance. Additionally, Service System Managers are an important source of funding for local initiatives to create new and maintain existing affordable housing options in their communities. Service Managers provide advice to developers, planning departments (both upper and lower tier) and work with non-profits and co-operatives in support of initiatives to increase affordable housing options in their communities.

Municipal Government

In Ontario, municipal governments have responsibilities related to housing such as funding social housing and housing stability programmes through the Service System Manager, land use planning, zoning and by-law, and creating official plans that align with provincial directives and policies. Each municipality has a responsibility to plan for and fund the creation of new affordable housing options for their community.

Responsibilities of Housing Services

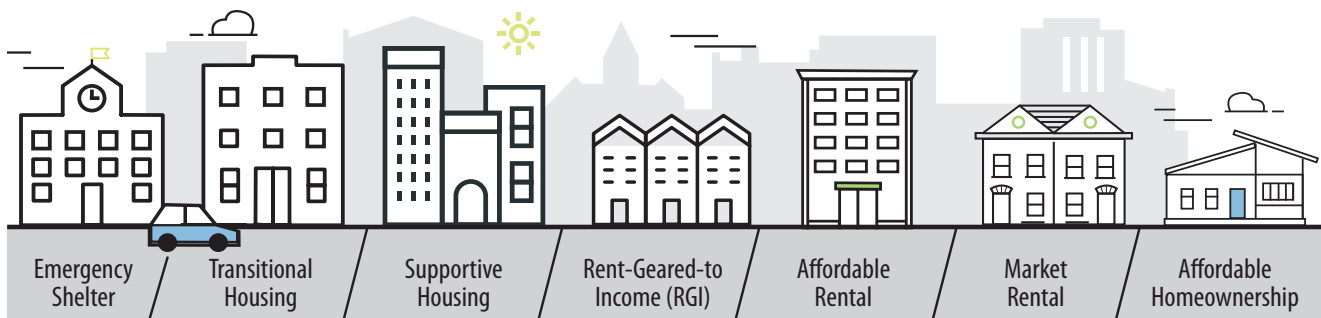
As Service System Manager for Housing Services, the County has a responsibility to plan and manage the delivery and administration of provincially mandated social and affordable housing programmes, as well as initiatives to prevent and respond to experiences of homelessness.

The Housing Services division is accountable directly to their local communities. They work to ensure that services funded by taxpayers are provided in a transparent manner that focuses on quality assurance and local priorities.

By strengthening community partnerships, understanding sociodemographic factors and the complex housing needs of their communities, Service System Managers provide housing supports to achieve better outcomes for their clients.

The work carried out by the Housing Services division and our partner organizations spans across the entire Housing Continuum. As illustrated below, it can be thought of as the range of housing options individuals may need over a lifetime.

Housing Continuum Wellington - Guelph



Most of the work of the Housing Services division focuses on the portion of the Housing Continuum from Emergency Shelters to Affordable Rental Housing.

Provincial Policy Direction

The Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA 2011) sets basic provincial policy directions while giving Service Managers greater flexibility and control in the planning and delivery of housing and homelessness services including social housing administration.

The Housing Services Act, 2011 requires Service System Managers to prepare local 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plans, in consultation with community and service providers, to address the current and future housing needs of individuals and families. They are also required to communicate community progress towards Housing and Homelessness Plan goals and objectives to the province and the public on an annual basis.

In 2014 the County, in collaboration with the community, developed the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan entitled "A Place to Call Home". In 2018, the County undertook a 5-year update which reflects refined objectives that align with provincial policy directions and emerging community needs.

This document outlines 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. This annual report is the third in a new reporting phase which began in 2020 and reflects progress made in 2022 on the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan – Five Year Update.

Housing Services by the Numbers - 2022 Snapshot

Rent-Geared-To-Income (RGI) Households



1,189

County of Wellington
Owned Units

1,112

Social/Community
Housing Provider Units

207

Rent Supplement
Units

Affordable Housing Households



131

County of Wellington
Owned Units

305

Social/Community
Housing Provider Units

180

Affordable Housing
Provider Units

65

Units in
Development

Rent Support Households



175

Canada-Ontario Housing
Benefits (COHB Units)

213

Rent Support
Units

101

Retirement Resident Subsidy
Programme Units

Tenant Supports Programme - Households Assisted



119

Housing Community
Supports

30

Acute Intervention
Programme (AIP)

88

Agency Supported Units



Investment in Housing Stock

Preserving Existing County of Wellington Housing Stock



\$4.7 million

In Capital Projects and Retrofit Expenditures



\$7.3 million

In Maintenance and Upkeep Expenditures

Development of New Housing Stock



\$6.9 million

Committed Investments to
New Builds in 2022

Investing in Co-Op and Non-Profit Community Housing



\$12.4 million

Invested to Support Operational
and Capital Expenditures



Transitional and Supportive Housing



Transitional Housing

66

Unique Individuals
Served in 2022

28

Units in
Development

Supportive Housing

45

Scattered Site
Supported Units

72

Units in
Development

Housing Stability: Outreach and Diversion Supports



Street Outreach

145

Unique Individuals
Served



Diversion and Rapid Rehousing

144

Youth

91

Adult

Diversions from Emergency Shelter in 2022

Housing Stability Programme Households Assisted



Housing Loss Prevention

66

Utility Arrears

315

Rental Arrears



Secure Permanent Housing

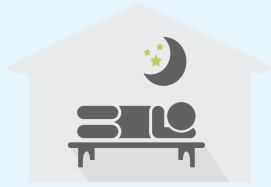
303

First and/or Last
Month Rent

75

Other Housing Stability Expenses
(e.g., moving, appliances)

Emergency Shelters



520

Unique Individuals
Using Emergency
Shelters

79

Number of Unique Individuals
Using Emergency Shelters per
Night on Average

28,639

Total number of
Emergency Shelter
Nights

Homeless Serving System: By-Name List (BNL) Analysis for 2022



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 2022



17
Inflow



137
Active



16
Outflow



The Number of Housing Placements from the BNL (Chronic) in 2022

157



Strategic Achievements and Progress

The 2022 activities and achievements presented in this report are organized according to the eight strategic objectives of the Wellington-Guelph 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan– Five Year Update. In each section the strategic objective is stated, followed by text that describes achievements and actions undertaken in 2022 that relate to the stated objective. The presentation of the activities and actions are grounded in our local context. Progress on these objectives is subject to local circumstances, broader economic and social pressures, and the availability of resources from all levels of government.

Every strategic objective has associated recommended activities from our Housing and Homelessness Plan. A numbered list of recommended activities for each strategic objective appears in each section followed by a visual representation of annual developments. Progress on the individual recommended activities is tracked across three broad categories. First is the “Planning and Development” category and indicates that steps have been taken to begin planning but that the recommended activity is under development. The next category, “Underway and On Track” indicates that actions to carry out the recommended activity have begun and/or continues. The last category “Implemented/Completed” indicates that the activities underway are progressing towards the intended completion of the recommended activity. Different colours correspond to advancements for each year.

The report ends with a two-page table that provides a high-level summary of outcomes, measures, targets and annual progress for each of the 8 strategic objectives.

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

Delivering services that help to reduce the gap between housing expenses and income is a crucial support that enables low-income households to secure and maintain safe, appropriate, and affordable housing. The Housing Services division continues to actively work with community partners to support tenants and landlords through rent supplements, subsidized housing and government-funded affordable housing.

In April 2022, the provincial government introduced the Homelessness Prevention Programme that consolidates multiple funding streams that Ontario’s Service System Managers use to provide a range of services to individuals and families at risk of or experiencing homelessness. The Housing Services division closely monitored and took steps to minimize potential impacts of this consolidation of provincial funding on low-income households. For example, Housing Services staff supported tenants and landlords to ensure a seamless transition from the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Programme which expired in 2022 into being supported through the new Homelessness Prevention Programme.

Housing Services staff continued to work with clients to complete intake and applications for the Canada Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) programme in 2022. The purpose of the COHB programme is to increase affordability and access to private market rental units by providing a portable housing benefit payment directly to low-income households. Additional COHB funding was secured by the Housing Services division thanks to the prior successes in quickly allocating our original COHB funding allocation. These additional funds allowed the Housing Services division to support the enrollment of over 90 new households into the COHB programme in 2022, in addition to our area’s original allocation which supported 70 new households.

Additional funding to support low-income households was contributed in 2022 through the Housing Services division Social and Recreation Grant Programme. The County’s continued investment in this programme supports the health and well-being of Housing Services tenants in Wellington- Guelph and helps close the gap between expenses and income. Community Food Markets continued to be delivered at multiple County-owned buildings, 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. The Community Food Markets also provide volunteer opportunities to tenants, promoting social connections and a sense of community.

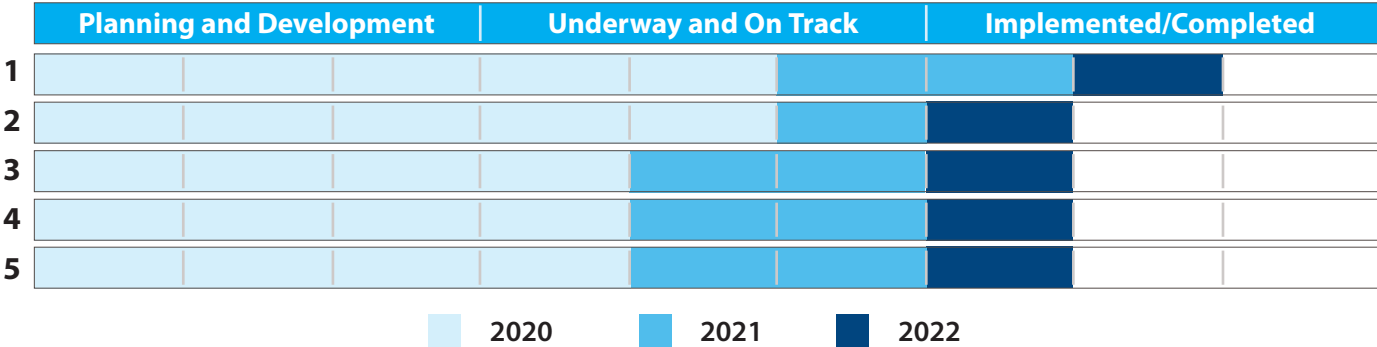
In addition, the Social and Recreation Grant Programme continued to fund summer camp, recreational programming and leadership development opportunities for children and youth who reside in the County’s social housing buildings. Free swim passes for families who reside in the north of the County were also provided through the grant programme.

Housing Services recognizes the increasing financial and social pressures experienced by low-income households in our area and will continue to partner with community organizations to deliver programmes and services that help to lessen the affordability gap and promote housing stability.

Objective 1: Recommended Activities

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.

Objective 1: Status of Recommended Activities



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

Housing stability supports remain a crucial cornerstone of initiatives to prevent homelessness and maintain housing retention. A range of housing stability supports are available that can respond to unique needs of eligible households at risk of or experiencing homelessness.

Housing Services consolidated application processes for housing stability programme support, to streamline service delivery and eliminate the need for residents to access multiple agencies. In addition to delivery of housing stability supports, Housing Services staff shares information about community resources and provides referrals to community agencies that respond to client needs and support the development of independent living skills.

Throughout 2022 we continued to see a strong need for housing stability supports in our communities, such as assistance with rental and utility arrears, that help prevent housing loss due to economic hardships. In 2022, there were a total of 303 households that received support to secure permanent housing through assistance with first and/or last month's rent, compared to 179 households assisted in 2021. Other housing stability supports, such as help with moving expenses, were provided to 75 households in 2022.

Encouraging social connections and a sense of community in social housing is a key consideration in promoting housing stability, housing retention and preventing homelessness. In 2022, Housing Services partnered with community agencies to deliver educational activities in-person. Having these events in-person for the first time since the pandemic began added a welcome opportunity to promote social connections and foster a sense of community for tenants and their families residing in County owned housing. Examples include hosting a safety awareness campaign about the importance of bicycle helmets and community clean up days that give tenants a chance to get to know each other and enjoy a meal together.

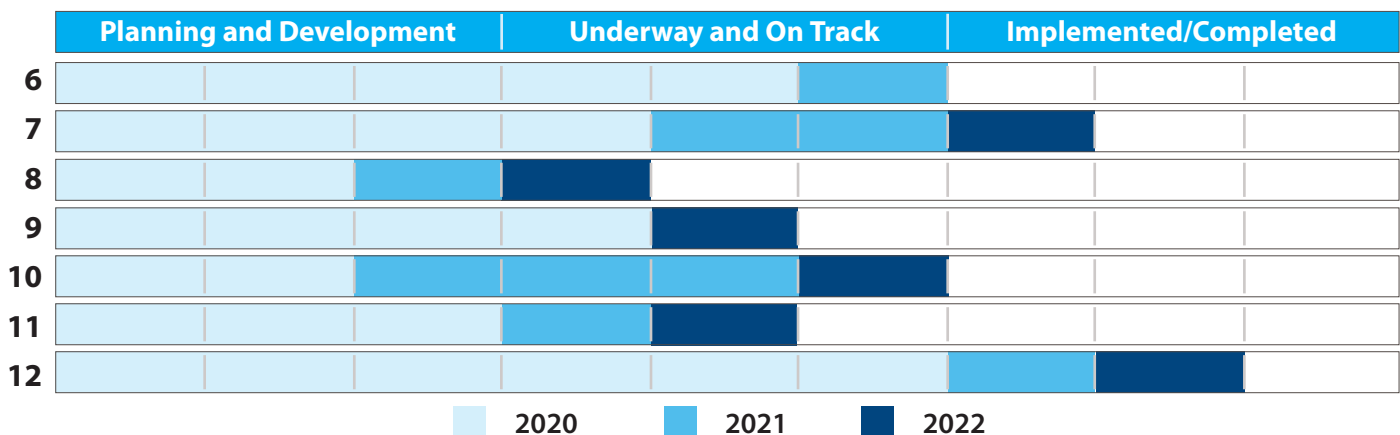
Housing Services continued its long term agreements with Guelph Independent Living and the Victorian Order of Nurses, for the delivery of Senior Support programmes across the County owned housing portfolio. Crime prevention sessions to raise awareness about internet scams and fraud were offered in partnership with the Ontario Provincial Police to seniors at various buildings in Wellington-Guelph. Additional workshops for tenants in partnership with Crimestoppers supported tenants by providing accurate information about the programme.

By providing a variety of supports and collaborating with community partners to increase housing stability, the Housing Services division can support households to thrive in their homes and communities. Housing Services remains committed to the continued efforts, development and enrichment of a wide range of housing stability supports and initiatives that prevent homelessness and increase housing retention.

Objective 2: Recommended Activities

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.

Objective 2: Status of Recommended Activities



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

Throughout 2022, the Housing Services division maintained our commitment to working with community partners by expanding available housing options through the development of new Supportive Housing projects. Supportive Housing programmes provide housing subsidies and health supports for residents with complex needs. The two Supportive Housing projects for adults (Kindle and Grace Gardens) along with the renovations of the youth Supportive Housing programme delivered by Wyndham House, all have expected completion dates in 2023. Once open, these Supportive Housing programmes significantly expand the housing options available in our community and will primarily house individuals experiencing chronic homelessness from the By-Name List and will contribute greatly to our efforts to end chronic homelessness.

In February 2022, additional federal funding to support capital expenses for the Grace Gardens Permanent Supportive Housing programme was announced. The Honourable Ahmed Hussen, Federal Minister of Housing and Diversity and Inclusion was in Guelph, joined by Lloyd Longfield, Member of Parliament for Guelph, Warden Kelly Linton and Cam Guthrie, Mayor of the City of Guelph for the announcement of \$6.4 million in federal funding. This funding was to support the remaining capital costs associated with the development of the 32-unit Supportive Housing project.

The delivery of scattered-site supportive housing services continued in 2022 with the Supportive Addiction and Mental Health programme. This programme is a partnership with Stonehenge Therapeutic Community which pairs rent supplements and specialized supports. The Acute Intervention Programme also continued in 2022 in another partnership with Stonehenge as an option to support tenants struggling with mental illness and/or addictions and who are also experiencing housing instability.

The County of Wellington and the City of Guelph attended the August 2022 Association of Municipalities Ontario conference to advocate for the necessary investments by the Ministry of Health to fund operations at our community's new Supportive Housing programmes. The County of Wellington also advocated to the province for increased healthcare funding for mental health and addictions support in the community.

Locally, Housing Services continued to engage with health partners through ongoing discussions with the Ontario Health Team, previously known as the Local Health Integration Network. This work was done in collaboration with community partners to improve and coordinate access to the health services required to meet the needs of highly vulnerable individuals who are housed or experiencing homelessness.

In 2021, the County pursued the development of a new Transitional Housing property at 65 Delhi, in collaboration with the City of Guelph. In September 2022, the Ontario Land Tribunal reached a decision on a planning appeal that upheld the Guelph City Council unanimous approval of zoning by-law amendments for the proposed project. Towards the end of 2022 Housing Services began working with architects on the development of the 28 unit project.

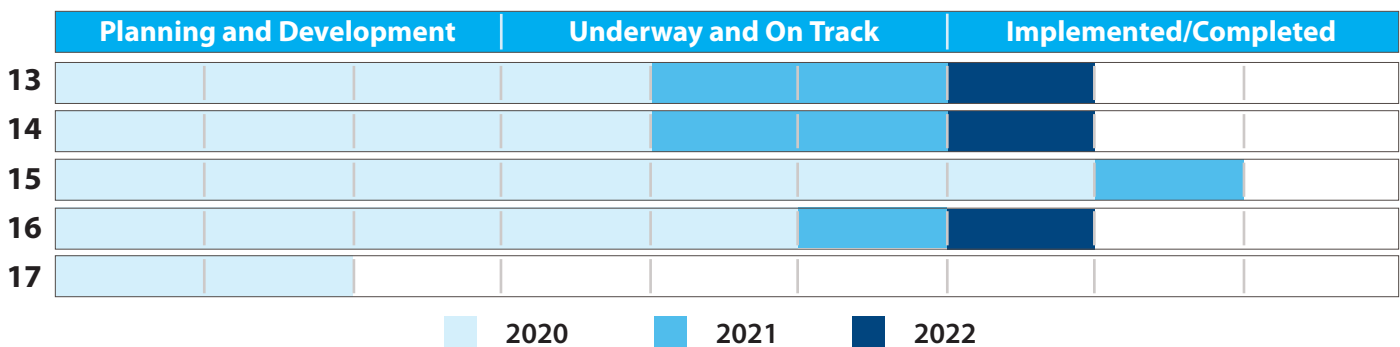
Transitional Housing with supports projects, such as 65 Delhi, provide an intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing. These projects provide individuals with a safe place to stay temporarily along with a programme of individualized services such as counselling, job training and placement, community activities, and help with life skills. These facilities are targeted to those who need support to move from homelessness to housing stability, and ultimately prevent a return to homelessness.

The Housing Services division continues to engage with the community to build stronger connections between health and housing to effectively address the increasingly complex needs of our community's most vulnerable citizens.

Objective 3: Status of Recommended Activities

13. Continue to support Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, Association of Municipalities of Ontario 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 Ontario Health Team 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 Ontario Health Team, Stonehenge Therapeutic Community, and Canadian Mental Health Association to provide rent supplements and Intensive Case Management Support to individuals with complex needs.
17. In partnership with Wellington-Guelph Women In Crisis, explore the feasibility of establishing a second stage housing programme for survivors of family violence and human trafficking.

Objective 3: Status of Recommended Activities



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

With the increasing cost of living and limited availability of rental options, the housing needs of residents across Wellington-Guelph can only be met by having access to a robust and varied supply of affordable housing options. The Housing Services division is committed to ongoing advocacy efforts through municipal associations to all levels of government, for increased funding to support the development of housing stock in our area.

In 2022, Housing Services staff participated in the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association and Association of Municipalities of Ontario led advocacy initiatives. Housing Services was a member of the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association Rental Housing Development Table where discussions focused on emerging best practices to develop and sustain affordable housing options.

Through a combination of municipal, provincial, and federal programmes Housing Services committed \$6.9 million in funding towards the development of new affordable housing units in 2022. Additionally,

Housing Services division allocated \$1,117,200 of Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative funding. This funding provides significant flexibility to address local priorities in the areas of housing supply and affordability, including new affordable rental construction, community housing repair, rental assistance, tenant supports and affordable homeownership. Since 2005, the Housing Services division as Service System Manager, supported the development of 482 units of affordable housing. Of these, a total of 165 units remain in the development phase in 2022, with expected completion of 137 units in 2023 and an additional 28 units with expected completion in 2024. The Affordable Housing Development graphic on the following page provides a timeline of the development of various housing projects since 2005.

Local municipal contributions to the development of affordable housing funds play a critical role in the development of new affordable housing stock. The County of Wellington contributed \$1,670,000 of municipal funds towards the 2022 annual investment to the County's affordable housing reserve, which will be used for future development of affordable housing options in Wellington County.

Additional local investments were contributed through the second year of a two-year pilot with the City of Guelph. The County of Wellington, as Service System Manager, supports the City of Guelph with recommendations for the allocation of its municipal affordable housing reserves contributions. In 2022, just over \$1.3 million from the City of Guelph's Affordable Housing Financial Incentive Programme was put through a County-led Request for Proposal process. These funds were allocated to support the development of a permanent supportive project located in Guelph.

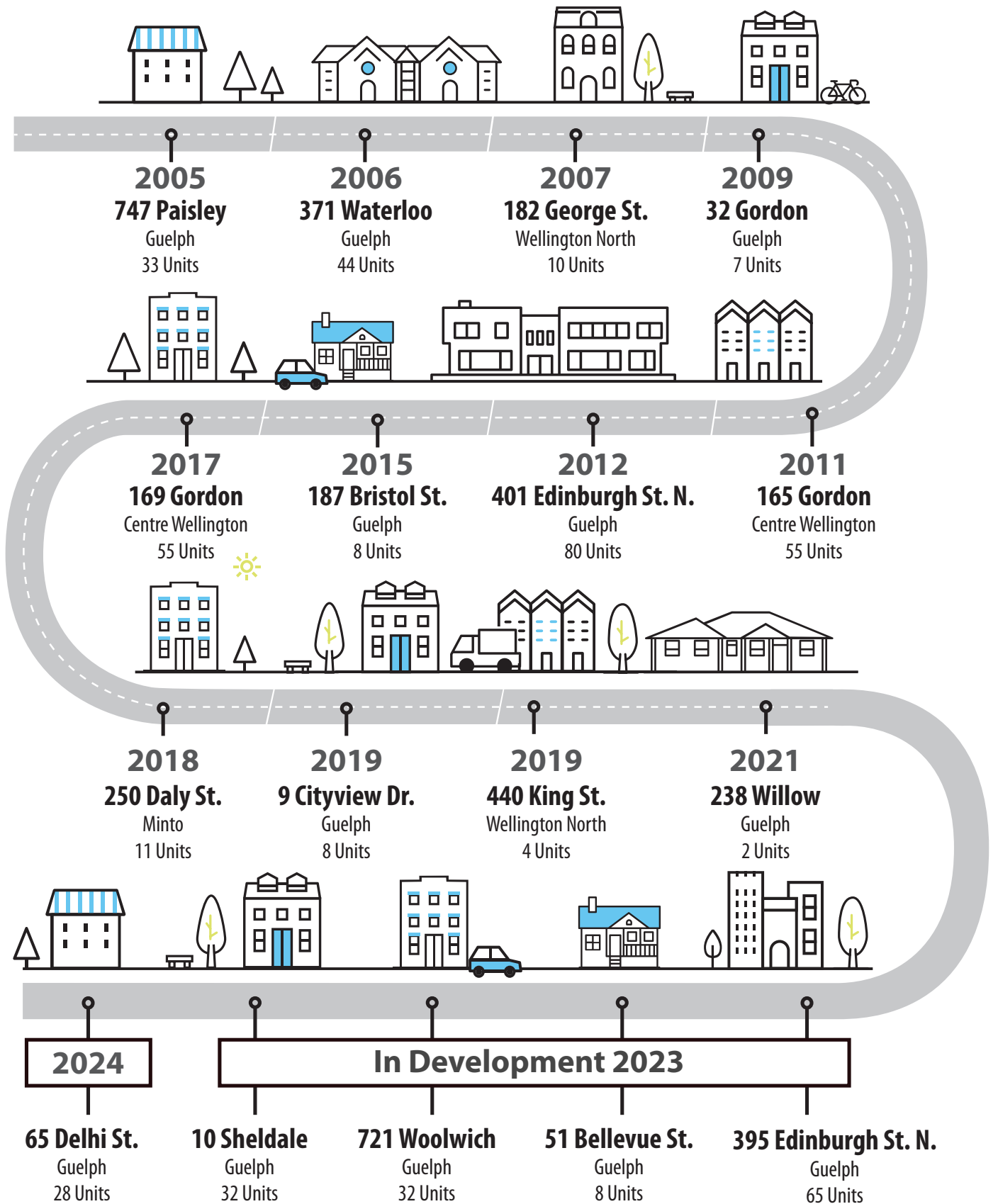
To encourage and promote housing providers and developers to create affordable housing in Wellington-Guelph, Housing Services division partnered with consultants on a virtual workshop series at the end of 2022. The workshop series included information on goal setting, funding and financing, approaches to design and construction, planning and regulatory approval processes, property management, and long-term operations. Over 30 participants from the housing sector attended the series, including housing developers, non-profit housing providers and organizations, mortgage brokers and Co-op associations. The Affordable Rental Housing Development Resource Guide, published in 2021, remains available as a resource on the Housing Services division's website at <https://www.wellington.ca/en/social-services/resources/Housing/2021-Development-Guide.pdf>

The County of Wellington Revolving Loan Fund supports households who meet eligibility criteria to purchase their first home with a downpayment loan of up to \$20,000. Since the County began the Homeownership Programme in 2007, Housing Services has helped 132 low-income households in the Wellington service area to get into the home ownership market, with \$2,138,745 of forgivable loans issued.

The Housing Services division remains committed to collaborative engagement with housing providers and community partners. Through continued advocacy and sustained local investments, the County continues to pursue innovative solutions to local housing gaps and expand affordable housing options in Wellington-Guelph.

Affordable Housing Development

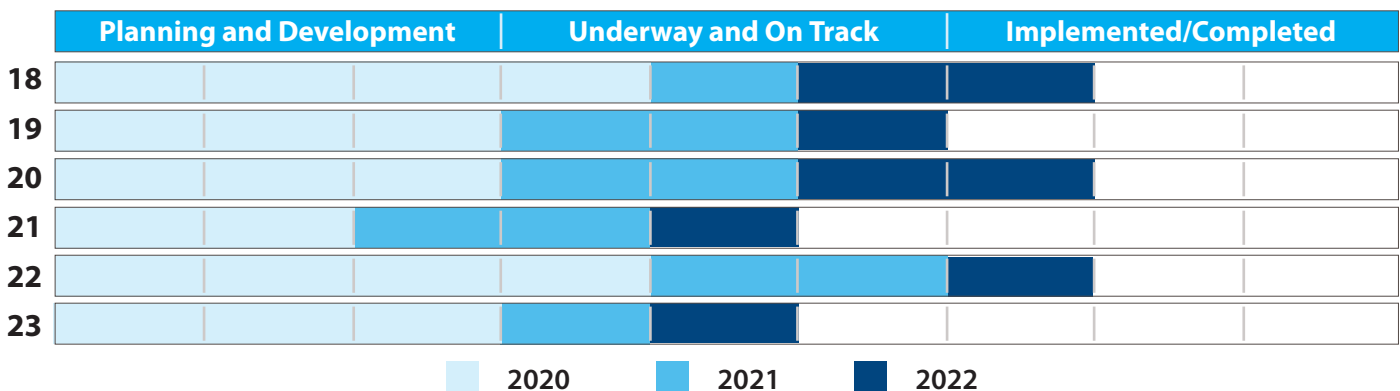
The Housing Services Division has supported the development of 482 units of housing since 2005.



Objective 4: Recommended Activities

18. Continue to support Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, Association of Municipalities of Ontario 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 rent geared to income 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 Divisions and County Departments on development opportunities (e.g., housing and child care development partnerships).
22. Expand affordable housing resources for developers online.
23. To continue to facilitate housing conversations within the rural context.

Objective 4: Status of Recommended Activities



Objective 5: End chronic homelessness

The Wellington-Guelph community made a commitment to end chronic homelessness in 2018. Since that initial commitment we have made important progress towards this goal through our participation in Built for Zero Canada. Wellington-Guelph has received national recognition for reductions in youth and adult chronic homelessness. However, the economic and social pressures that create a challenging housing market and contribute to housing instability, remain significant barriers to reaching our goal.

The Housing Services division and our community partners continue to participate in the Built for Zero Canada campaign to end chronic homelessness. In 2022 there were 157 housing placements of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness from the By-Name List. Each of these housing placements represents an incredible amount of work behind the scenes by community partners and Housing Services staff.

In late 2021, Housing Services and community partners carried out a Point-In-Time Count of homelessness in Wellington-Guelph. In collaboration with the Guelph-Wellington Poverty Taskforce, Housing Services held a virtual debriefing for the public and community partners in March 2022. An overview of the results for all participants of the Wellington-Guelph 2021 Everyone Counts was shared, as well as results for priority populations such as youth, Indigenous members of our community, and rural participants. To support ongoing access to the results, Housing Services division developed a dedicated webpage where the public can learn about homelessness in our community and access results at any time: <https://www.wellington.ca/everyonecounts>

Our community's traditional adult emergency shelters remained closed in 2022 due to health restrictions related to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Continued supplementary COVID-19 funding from provincial and federal governments were again key to our community's ability to provide expanded operations at the 24/7 emergency shelter for adults and families experiencing homelessness. Funding from the Ministry of Health facilitated new supports at the 24/7 shelter with the addition of a dedicated Social Worker role. Adult emergency shelter services available in 2022 included the low-barrier overnight shelter, which remains a key point of contact for individuals experiencing homelessness to begin to build relationships and connections with housing focused services.

Using Social Services Relief Funding from the province, Housing Services also supported additional investments in the housing stability system in 2022. These investments included hiring a second Housing Focused Outreach Worker dedicated to the Guelph downtown core, allowing the original outreach worker to support unsheltered individuals staying in encampments in and around our service area. In 2022, these outreach workers supported 145 unique individuals in our community. A second adult Diversion and Rapid Rehousing Worker role was also added, which helps individuals to quickly find and secure appropriate housing solutions. In 2022, Diversion and Rapid Rehousing Workers supported 144 youth and 91 adults, diverting these individuals away from the youth and adult emergency shelters respectively.



The youth emergency shelter services, delivered by Wyndham House, continue to place a strong emphasis on diversion and rapid rehousing supports. Youth up to 25 years of age are supported by Wyndham House at their emergency shelter, as well as through their transitional and supportive housing programmes. Wyndham House continues to have tremendous success with a sustained reduction of 78% in chronic homelessness in youth since 2018. In June 2022, Wyndham House expanded the supports available to youth with complex needs at their integrated youth hub in downtown Guelph. A wide range of services are provided, from prevention to screening and assessment, clinical supports and urgent issue management. Wyndham House case management workers are co-located at the hub, facilitating integrated and coordinated care for youth accessing Wyndham House operated youth emergency shelter, transitional and supportive housing, all operated by Wyndham House.

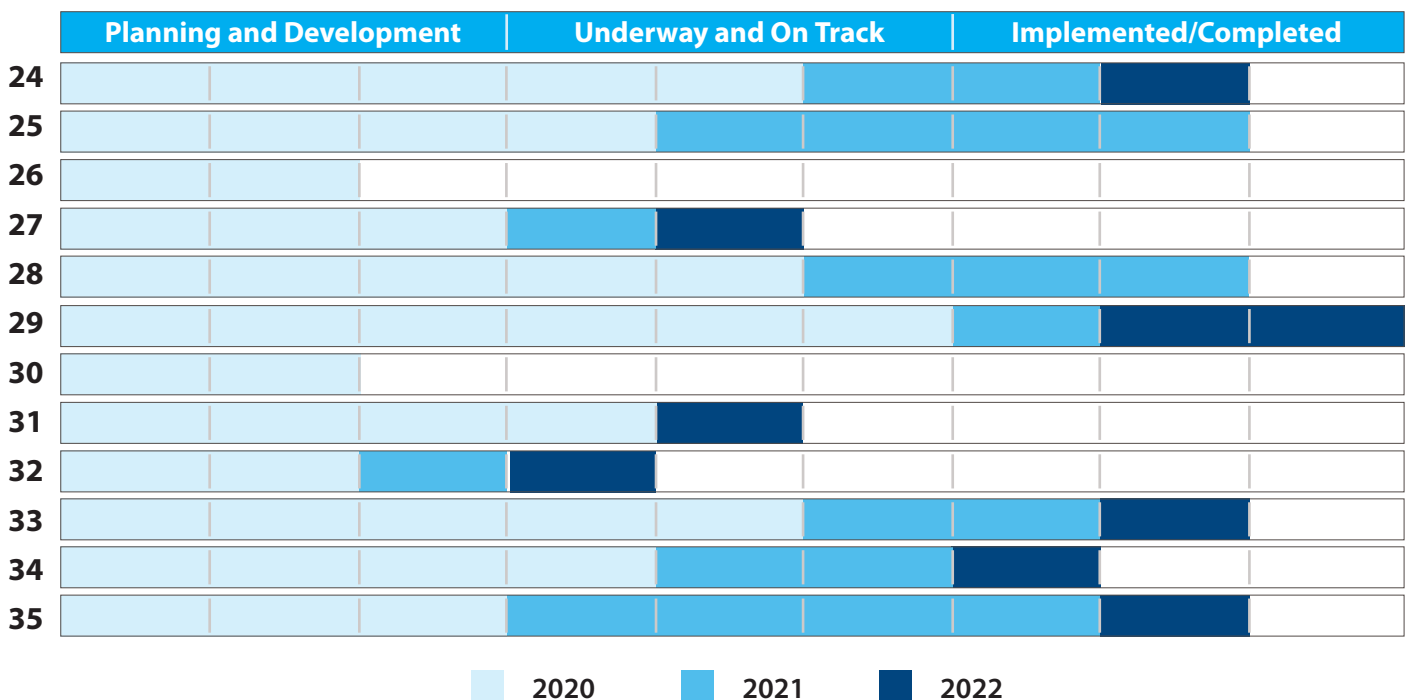
The Housing Services division will continue to work with community partners to secure safe, affordable, and appropriate housing options that respond to the needs of our community’s most vulnerable and contribute to our goal to end chronic homelessness.



Objective 5: Recommended Activities

24. Continue efforts to improve the Coordinated Entry System using the By-Name List 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 Coordinate Entry System 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 the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System 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.

Objective 5: Status of Recommended Activities



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

The progress towards providing client-centred and coordinated access to services in 2022 involved the expansion of our Coordinated Entry System, the provision of continued training opportunities for frontline staff of new and existing partner organizations, and work to develop a rural network of agencies serving those at risk of/or experiencing homelessness.

In 2022, Royal City Mission became the newest community agency to join our Coordinated Entry System and officially become a “door agency”. With this new addition, there are now 15 door agencies across Wellington-Guelph that make up our Coordinated Entry System for those at risk of/or experiencing homelessness. Housing Services hosted multiple training sessions to support Royal City Mission staff to learn about the different aspects of the Coordinated Entry System and data systems.

A new Community of Practice was developed in 2022 as an initiative to improve connections among front line staff from health and housing agencies. The Community of Practice initiative was spearheaded by Housing Services in collaboration with Wyndham House to provide opportunities for staff to share knowledge of local services and together participate in capacity building workshops and activities. The Community of Practice met monthly in 2022 at different locations in Wellington-Guelph with participating organizations taking turns hosting each session. The Community of Practice offered participants a chance to meet in-person and develop connections and share resources for clients and frontline staff, to help improve outcomes for their shared clients.

In 2022, Housing Services began preliminary work to develop a rural Community of Practice. This network will fill a gap by providing opportunities where staff can learn from their peers and experts involved in the service delivery of homelessness and housing programmes with a rural lens. This group holds tremendous potential to help build a more cohesive picture of the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness in Wellington County.

Provincially, the Housing Services division has a leadership role as the Chair of the provincial network of Service System Manager staff who are responsible for the day-to-day administration of Centralized Waiting Lists for social housing. Housing Services staff organize the group’s monthly meetings and in 2022 hosted a one-day training workshop for front-line staff across Ontario. By connecting and sharing resources with colleagues across Ontario, Housing Services works to ensure effective and efficient implementation of services.

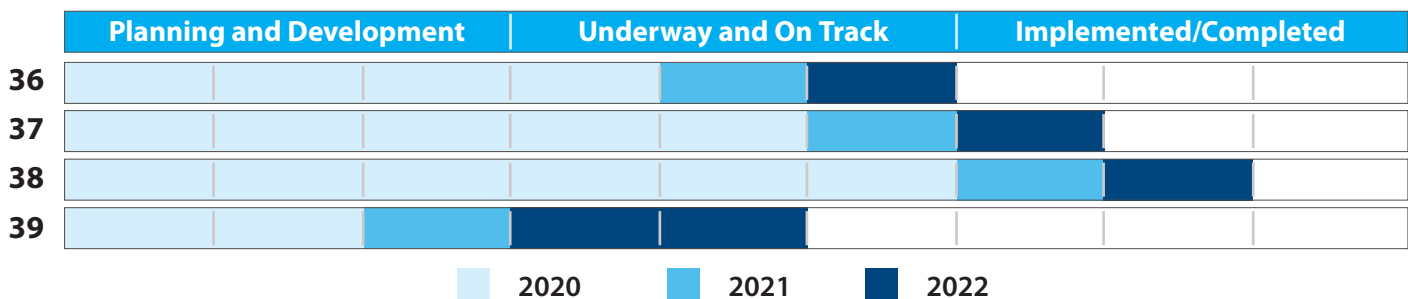
By expanding Wellington-Guelph Coordinated Entry System, providing networking opportunities for front-line staff, and developing a rural network we are making steps towards improved access to supports for the people we serve.



Objective 6: Recommended Activities

- 36. Continue to support Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, Association of Municipalities of Ontario 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.

Objective 6: Status of Recommended Activities



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

The Housing Services division is committed to the sustainability of our community’s social and government-funded affordable housing stock. These resources play a vital role in providing housing opportunities across Wellington-Guelph and are valuable community assets.

In 2022, Housing Services invested \$12 million in funding to preserve existing County owned housing stock in Wellington County and Guelph. Just over \$4.7 million was used to finance capital projects, and \$7.3 million was dedicated to maintenance and upkeep of the County owned buildings.

To support the sustainability of housing provider owned units in 2022, Housing Services allocated \$12.4 million in operational and capital funding. A further \$1.3 million in federal and provincial funding was also dedicated to support the capital funding needs of the portfolio. This funding supported housing providers to complete capital repairs with a focus on health and safety, energy efficiency and accessibility. To further support investments in existing housing stock, County Council committed an additional \$500,000 in 2022 as a municipally funded forgivable capital loan to Guelph Non-Profit Housing Corporation (GNPHC) to assist with its capital needs.

The Housing Services division continues to work with local housing providers to encourage their ongoing involvement in the social and affordable housing system after their mortgages expire. Through this work, Housing Services is supporting continued relationships with housing providers, helping to maintain our community’s existing social and affordable housing stock by minimizing the impact of End of Mortgages (EOM) on publicly supported housing providers.

The province released regulations in March 2022 outlining a new framework that enables a relationship shift between Service System Managers and housing providers. The framework includes more flexible funding arrangements to meet the housing needs of communities, incentivize current or new non-profit and co-operative housing providers to join or remain in the housing system.

Housing Services in partnership with the Housing Services Corporation (HSC) delivered an EOM workshop series in the summer of 2022, for non-profit housing provider board members focused on the provincial regulatory changes. This workshop series is an example of Housing Services' commitment to provide housing providers with resources and tools to engage in Service Agreement discussions that help identify system needs relating to End of Mortgages and the development of new Service Agreements.

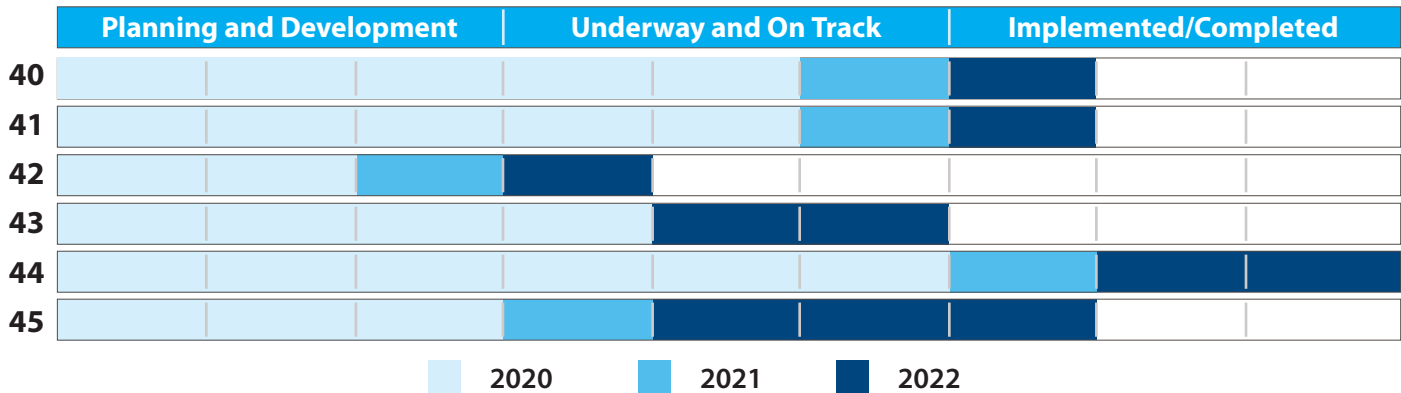
Housing Services continued its work on an asset management strategy for all social housing units to ensure that up-to-date information is available for all buildings. This strategy includes processes to factor in life cycle replacement timelines and inflationary pressures in order to facilitate informed decision making and maximize our ability to sustain current stock of social and government-funded affordable housing.

Objective 7: Recommended Activities

- 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 Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, Association of Municipalities of Ontario and other advocacy efforts to remove outdated Service Level Standards 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.



Objective 7: Status of Recommended Activities



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

In 2022, the Housing Services division continued its relationship building journey with Indigenous community members and Indigenous led service providers. This work is the foundation necessary to develop culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples.

Over the course of 2022, Housing Services continued to collaborate with Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre on the Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker pilot project. Towards the end of 2022, Housing Services secured additional federal funding to expand the programme to include a second Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker with an expected start date in early 2023.

In the summer of 2022, the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre organized a KAIROS Blanket Exercise for front line staff from Housing Services and community partner agencies as part of the Community of Practice network. The workshop was intended to help participants understand the history of Indigenous peoples in Canada, including the foundations of past and current relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. The KAIROS Blanket Exercise represents an important step in supporting Housing Services and community partner staff to begin to understand the historical and ongoing impacts of colonial policies on Indigenous peoples. More information on the KAIROS Blanket Exercise can be found at <https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/>

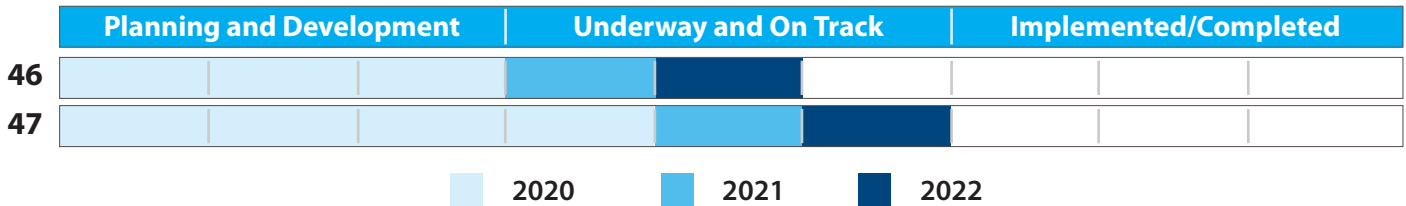
As part of updating the Wellington-Guelph Emergency Shelter Standards, Housing Services developed an engagement strategy to share information and listen to suggestions and comments from people with lived/living experience of homelessness and from front-line staff. Indigenous community members at risk of or experiencing homelessness were identified as a priority group for the engagement strategy. Following preliminary discussions with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre, Clarence Cachagee of Crow Shield Lodge was engaged to act as facilitator and Circle Keeper of the “Indigenous Perspectives Circle.” Results will be reviewed with the Southwest Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre in 2023 and used to inform the update to the Wellington-Guelph Emergency Shelter Standards.

The Housing Services division recognizes that there remains much work to be done beyond the activities reported on in 2022. We remain committed to continued engagement and collaboration with Indigenous community members and Indigenous organizations, to strengthen relationships that are the foundation of our collective work to improving access to culturally appropriate services for Indigenous peoples in our community.

Objective 8: Recommended Activities

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

Objective 8: Status of Recommended Activities



2022 Annual Report on Objectives and Annual Progress/Achievement

| Outcomes | Measures | Targets | Annual Progress/Achievement |
|---|--|---|--|
| 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 2024, 400 households receive rent supports per year | In 2022, 489 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 2024, 75% of households who received a subsidy and/or supports have retained their housing at 6 months follow up | In 2022, 96% 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 2024, there has been a 5% increase in the number of households that receive support services through the Service Manager | In 2022, 473 households received support services and 72 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 2024, 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 2022, 65 units of affordable housing were in development. 1 new homeownership down payment loan 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 2024, Guelph Wellington will reach the third key reduction indicator in the 20KHomes Campaign: Getting Close to Functional Zero Chronic Homelessness | In 2022, Wellington-Guelph 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 2024, Social Services reception and intake is fully integrated | In 2022, 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 2024, the Housing Services Division and local housing providers are collectively continuing to maintain service level standards | In 2022, the Housing Services 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 Wellington Guelph | By 2024, the Housing Services Division 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 2022, Housing Services continued to build partnerships with local Indigenous led organizations, planning the expansion of the Indigenous Housing Outreach Worker pilot and planning an Indigenous-specific engagement session as part of the update to Emergency Shelter Standards. We are on track to meet targets. |

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Warden Andy Lennox, the County of Wellington Council, and the Social Services Committee both past and present, for their ongoing support for housing in our community. We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to Kelly Linton who was the Warden for the most of 2022 for their support.

Importantly, we also want to thank and recognize Housing Services staff for their work to support our tenants and clients in the challenging and ever-changing context of 2022, the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our collective ability to effectively provide high-quality housing services to residents of Wellington County and the City of Guelph is a testament to the hard work and continued dedication of Housing Services staff.

Housing Services would also like to acknowledge the tremendous dedication from local community partners to support the community's most vulnerable and work towards housing stabilization. Housing Services thanks the community agencies and organizations who participated in the Community Partner 2022 Survey that helped to inform this report.

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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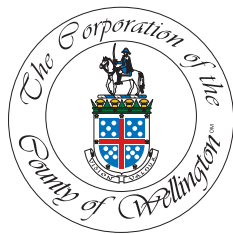
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