



# Committee Report

<b>To:</b>	Warden Hicks and Members of Grey County Council
<b>Committee Date:</b>	May 13, 2021
<b>Subject / Report No:</b>	HDR-CW-08-21
<b>Title:</b>	Housing and Homelessness Plan Update 2021
<b>Prepared by:</b>	Anne Marie Shaw, Director of Housing
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	
<b>Lower Tier(s) Affected:</b>	All
<b>Status:</b>	Adopted as presented by Committee of the Whole through Resolution CW85-21; Endorsed by County Council CC45-21

## Recommendation

1. That report HDR-CW-08-21 regarding the Housing and Homelessness Plan update for 2020-21 be received for information.

## Executive Summary

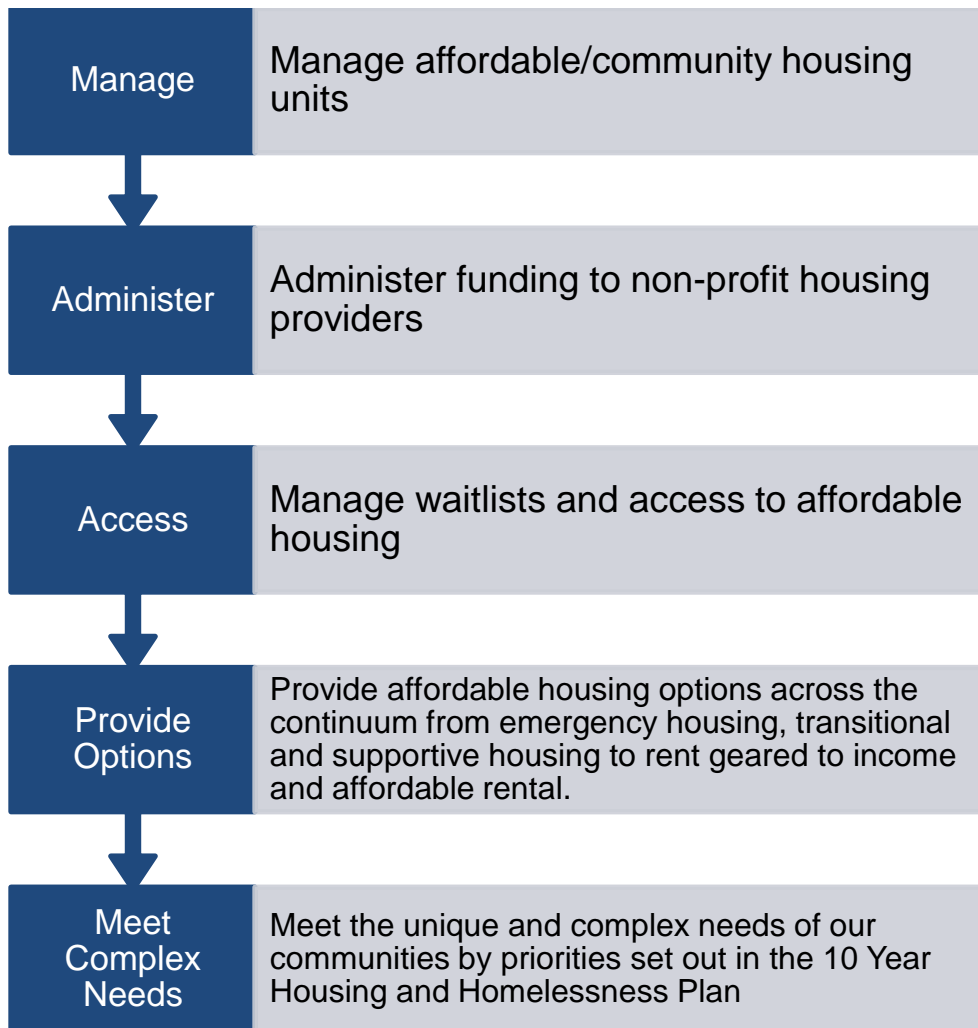
This report will provide information on the current state of housing and homelessness in Grey County and an update on strategies from Grey County's Housing and Homelessness Plan for 2020 -2021

## Background and Discussion

This report will provide information on the current state of housing and homelessness in Grey County and an update on strategies from Grey County's Housing and Homelessness Plan for 2020 -2021. The report identifies issues with low vacancy rates, high monthly rental amounts, and a lack of supply overall in rental housing. The annual report documents the process in meeting the targets set by the updated Grey County Housing and Homelessness Plan 2019-2024.

# Service Systems Manager Responsibilities

Service Managers or Service Systems Managers are responsible for the following:



## Housing Affordability

For housing to be considered affordable the housing costs must be 30% or less of a household's gross income.

- A single person on Ontario Works receives \$733 monthly so an affordable rent would be \$219 a month,
- a single person on Ontario Disability Support Program receives \$1,154 a month so affordable rent would be \$364 a month,
- a senior earning \$2,000 on a fixed income can afford \$600 a month.

Rents such as these do not exist in the private market so affordable or community housing is an important part of our community. Grey County is tasked with providing affordable rents through community housing, non-profit housing and rents supplements. Rising market rents and a low vacancy rate have made finding affordable housing difficult for those in low income brackets.

## Average Market Rent

According to Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, the average market rent in Grey County for a one bedroom is \$817 a month. Across Grey County a one-bedroom ranges from \$800-\$1250 a month, often without the inclusion of utilities.

## Vacancy Rate

Since 2014 Grey County's vacancy rate has continued to decline. In 2014 the vacancy rate was 4.3% and steadily declined and was 1% in 2020. A healthy vacancy rate is considered 4% where rents are lower and there is supply to meet demand.

## Need for Affordable Housing

There are 620 Grey County residents on the Grey County Housing Waitlist, 74 with no current address, 27 Bruce County residents and 192 residents from outside Grey County for a total of 913 applicants.

<b>Waitlist (Current Grey County Households)</b>	<b>Total</b>
Chatsworth	<b>8</b>
Dundalk	<b>18</b>
Durham	<b>39</b>
Flesherton	<b>14</b>
Hanover	<b>50</b>
Holstein	<b>1</b>
Meaford	<b>47</b>
Markdale	<b>23</b>
Neustadt	<b>1</b>
Owen Sound	<b>409</b>
Thornbury	<b>10</b>
Grey County total	<b>620</b>
No Address	<b>74</b>

## Housing Availability 2020

Grey County provided subsidy to 1611 units of housing and assisted 66 more household with Provincial rent subsidies.

- 997 units Grey County Housing

- 522 units Non-Profit Housing
- 72 rent supplements at \$168,000 annually
- 20 rent supplements for transitional housing at \$30,000 annually
- 66 Provincial portable housing Benefits approximately \$250 a unit for approximately \$200,000 annually

In 2020, 70 people were housed off the waitlist of those 17 were victims of domestic violence. The average wait time for a unit is 2-5 years depending on your location in Grey County. Approximately 158 private units were funded through a rent subsidy.

## Creating Affordable Housing

In 2020, the Affordable Housing Task Force was created and an Action Plan for creating affordable housing units was developed. [Affordable Housing Action Plan](#)

The plan identified opportunities to create affordable housing



Rent Supplements



Co-invest with Non - Profit Housing Providers



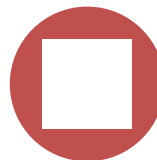
Durham Seniors Housing Opportunity



Grey County Housing Opportunities



Land Bank and or Properties Requiring Renovation



Waiving Fees and Incentives

**Rent Supplements:** provide County and Provincial funded rent subsidies to people living in appropriate housing to assist with the high costs of rents and utilities.

**Co-invest with Non-Profit Housing Providers:** the current programs from the Federal/Provincial governments are aimed towards non-profits creating affordable housing. Units can be a conversion, renovation, or new build. Non-Profits that already provide housing are likely to keep the units as affordable after the 20-year timeline. The funds available require additional funding for a build to be sustainable.

**Durham Seniors Housing Opportunity:** Staff will explore opportunity for a senior's affordable housing build as part of the campus of care model at the new LTC site in Durham. The building would be a mix of affordable and market housing.

**Grey County Housing Opportunities:** Grey County has opportunity at a few sites for redevelopment. Adding on to existing builds or building on adjacent property. Staff will explore future possibilities. There is also opportunity to divest some of our older detached houses to assist in funding new, energy efficient buildings. New builds would be a mix of affordable and attainable housing units.

**Land Bank or Properties Requiring Renovation:** Grey County is working with municipalities to identify lands that could be acquired or used for an affordable housing build. Lands could be acquired by a non-profit or private developer in exchange for affordable housing units.

**Waiving Fees and Incentives:** Community Improvement Plans and other strategies such as waiving development fees will assist with keeping the cost of a build low so affordable rents can be charged.

## Affordable Housing Fund

The Affordable Housing Task Force recommended an Affordable Housing Fund be set up to fund the above Housing Action Plan items. Council approved the creation of the Affordable Housing Fund and a 1% annual levy contribution to the fund.

The funds will consist of:

- Annual 1% levy contribution of approximately \$650,000
- Federal/Provincial fund contribution through Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI) of approximately \$500,000. Funds can only be accessed by Non-Profit sector
- Divestment of property funds.

The funds will be used to create new affordable housing, renovations to create affordable housing, rent supplements or other programs to allow residents to remain housing and purchase of land/buildings if suitable for affordable housing.

## New Housing Development

In the last three years Grey County has funded 57 units of affordable and modest market housing. All affordable units are occupied with people from our waitlist except for the Community Living build

- Community Living six units completed in 2018
- Owen Sound Housing Company 36 units completed in 2019
- Durham Tremble Build 15 units complete in 2019

Other housing for 2020-21:

- Owen Sound Housing Company 60 units to be complete early 2022
- 10 transitional units to be complete 2020
- 66 portable housing rent supplements 2020
- 30 portable housing rent supplements 2021
- 30 rent supplements 2021

Grey County has identified 200+ affordable/attainable housing possibilities. These are in varying stages of readiness

- 30 units Durham

- 90 units Owen Sound
- 30 units Owen Sound
- 50 units Dundalk
- 15 units Hanover

## Reduce Homelessness

### Housing First Community

Grey County is a “housing first” community. This means that finding housing is seen as the primary focus. Rather than ask individuals to attend treatment or complete programming to obtain housing staff work with community agencies to assist in finding housing and wrapping around supports. Housing First is the only methodology that has been able to demonstrate measurable success in addressing chronic homelessness. Chronic homelessness is defined as experiencing homelessness for six or more months out of a year.

Grey County works with and funds many community partners to assist those experiencing homelessness.

- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Y Housing
- Safe n Sound
- Non-Profit Housing Providers
- M'Wikwedong
- Southern Ontario Aboriginal Health Access Centre
- Other community partners that provide services to those experiencing homelessness

### Emergency Housing System

#### Emergency Short Term Housing

Grey County has a 24-hour, 7 days a week Emergency Short Term Housing Program run by Y Housing, 211 Community Connections and Safe n Sound. In 2020, the program supported 395 emergency short term accommodations through motels, hotels and private landlords with an average length of stay of seven days.

This is a 160% increase in stays and a 300% increase in cost due to COVID-19 compared to 2019.

Y housing works with the individual to find more permanent housing solutions and connects to community supports.

#### Housing Response Table

Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness are prioritized because they need a high level of support to obtain and sustain housing. A Housing Response Table (HRT) supporting both Grey and Bruce Counties was established in 2020. The HRT works to support people with a housing first approach to finding and maintaining housing. The County is funding two positions, a Coordinator and Outreach Worker through Canadian Mental Health Association to support those identified as experiencing chronic homelessness. Referrals come from community agencies, hospital, police and other community partners. Once identified participants are placed

on a by names list. A By-Names List is a real time list of prioritized individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Participants are assisted with finding housing and wrap around supports to assist them in maintaining their housing. There are currently 10 transitional units being built to support this program.

The program started in February 2021, 33 people have been referred that are experiencing chronic homelessness (six months or more in one year). Currently three people have been housed with supports. People also receive supports while waiting for housing.

### Housing with Supports

Grey County funds five housing with supports providers. Tenants receive assistance with daily living tasks such as meals, medications, laundry and daily activities supports.

In 2020, 85 individuals received supports in 2020 at a cost of \$740,000 funded through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative.

### Sustainable Housing Benefit

In 2020, 582 people received funds for rental or utility arrears, last months rent or moving expenses in the amount of \$300,400

<b>2020 SHB Allocations</b>	<b>Households</b>	<b>Dispersed (\$)</b>
<b>Utility Costs</b>	88	41,722
<b>Rental Arrears</b>	110	63,464
<b>Last Month's Rent</b>	303	173,838
<b>Moving Expenses/ Appliances</b>	56	13,111
<b>Other</b>	25	8,265
<b>Total</b>	582	300,400

### Social Services Relief Fund Initiatives to Date

Social Service Relief Funds are available to assist agencies that support people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with COVID related expenses and increase in services. The funds can be used for staffing, emergency housing, cleaning, food services, mental health services, PPE, rental arrears and transitional housing.

The funding was received in three phases: Phase 1 \$2,313,900, Phase 2 \$1,227,247 and Phase 3 \$1,770,258. Phase 3 funds are available until December 2021.

### Measuring Outcomes of Housing and Homelessness Plan

Grey County released the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan in 2014. The plan was updated again in 2019 to reflect changes in community need. A summary of progress towards the outcomes of this plan are listed below. Highlights:

363 affordable units provided  
HDR-CW-08-21

122 renovations completed

Date: May 13, 2021

10 transitional units built 2021  
Homelessness Response Table  
Outreach Workers Funded

20 rent subsidies for transitional units  
By Names List established  
Tenant Services Staff enhanced

## Strategies Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2024 Summary

Create More Affordable Housing

Preserve Existing Stock

Reduce Chronic Homelessness

Increase Supportive Housing

Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2024 Outcomes	
Outcome	Progress
200 affordable units over 10 years:	<b>363 affordable units since 2014</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rent supplement</li> </ul>	72 (2014-16) 66 added in 2020
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homeownership</li> </ul>	108 down payments
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New affordable rental</li> </ul>	57 units complete, 60 units early 2022
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing Action Plan</li> </ul>	Plan for 200 + rental units
100 renovations and repairs for homeowners with limited incomes	122 renovations complete
Preserve 1380 social housing units	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5-year capital plans with non -profits</li> </ul>	BCA's to be completed June 2021 to assist with this process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Building Condition Assessments</li> </ul>	June 2021 expected completion date. 10 Year capital budget
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enter into new agreements with Non-Profits</li> </ul>	On going as agreements expire 2022-27



Preserve 110 transitional units (Housing with Supports)	Annual funding secured for housing with related supports
Increase number of successful tenancies and prevent evictions in social housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Tenant Services Team</li> </ul>	Tenant Services Coordinator hired 2017 Community Relations Worker hired 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase community agency involvement</li> </ul>	Increased services at Family Resource Centres  Increased partnerships with community supports
Interagency system for those experiencing homelessness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a Homelessness Response Table (HRT) and By Names List</li> </ul>	HRT established in 2019  By Names List started February 2021
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 50% decrease in Chronic Homelessness</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase number of individuals successfully housing for a period of at least 6 months</li> </ul>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Fund to support maintaining housing</li> </ul>	Sustainable Housing Benefit created
Increase Supportive Housing	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide 20 rent supplements for transitional housing</li> </ul>	20 rent supplements provided to CMHA and Y Housing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fund Outreach Worker through community partner</li> </ul>	Two Outreach Workers funded at CMHA and one at Y Housing through Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative and Social Services Relief Funds
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create Transitional Housing Units</li> </ul>	10 transitional units to be complete by end of 2021



## Legal and Legislated Requirements

The County of Grey as the Service Manager is required to report annually on the progress of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

## Financial and Resource Implications

Funds are a mix of Federal, Provincial and County

## Relevant Consultation

- Internal: Housing
- External: Community Partners

## Appendices and Attachments

None