



Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy 2013-2023

June 2017 - Progress Report



Table of Contents

- Background and Vision 3
 - Housing Issues..... 3
 - Summary of Housing Issues in Bruce County 4
- 2016 Highlights 5
- Coming in 2017 5
- HOUSING TARGETS 6
- Our goal 7
- Progress on Addressing Actions 8
 - Educate Partners 8
 - Accomplishments 8
 - What’s Next..... 9
 - Cultivate strong partnerships and coordinate efforts..... 9
 - Accomplishments 9
 - What’s Next..... 10
 - Enhance financial and program supports for housing services..... 10
 - Accomplishments 10
 - What’s Next..... 11
 - Make Planning Rules More Flexible 11
 - Accomplishments 11
 - What’s Next..... 11
 - Maintain Existing Stock 12
 - Accomplishments 12
 - What’s Next..... 12
- Investment in Affordable Housing 13
- Additional Units Created in 2016 13
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) 14
- Summary 15



Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Background and Vision

In 2013, Social Services and Housing Committee approved the Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy Update 2013-2023 (the Strategy). The Strategy incorporated information and actions from the first Strategy developed in 2010, as well as new initiatives to address the housing needs of people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, persons living with disabilities, women experiencing domestic violence and off-reserve indigenous persons.

The Strategy is a commitment by County Council, staff, and other organizations in the community to collaborate and implement actions that will improve the health and quality of life of Bruce County citizens. The collective vision is to create appropriate, affordable, diverse and supportive housing choices for all Bruce County residents. This document is an update to the current Long Term Housing Strategy, which outlines progress of our journey as we work towards making this shared vision a reality.

Housing Issues

In October 2014, SHS Consulting facilitated workshops with the Bruce County community and its partners, developers and builders to share knowledge and to gain an understanding of housing challenges, emerging trends and the community's collective process in addressing Long Term Strategy actions. A summary of the key discoveries are outlined below. In 2016, we continued on our journey as we worked towards meeting the Strategy goals and eliminating issues faced by residents who call Bruce County home.

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Summary of Housing Issues in Bruce County

Housing issues identified in 2013 were reaffirmed by the community at the workshops. The high cost of utilities has become an additional issue added to work plans for the housing division.

 <p>The seniors demographic continues to grow faster than others</p>	 <p>Employment trends are influencing demand for affordable housing</p>	 <p>Inadequate supply of housing for persons with disabilities and availability of support services</p>	 <p>New housing stock is concentrated and not diversified</p>
 <p>Affordability remains an issue for some households</p>	 <p>Maintaining the existing stock is a challenge</p>	 <p>Finding and maintaining housing is a challenge for some</p>	 <p>High cost of utilities</p>

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2016 Highlights

- Commitment to build eight new affordable units in the Municipality of Kincardine
- Commitment to complete a secondary suite in the Municipality of Kincardine
- 163 applicants offered social housing units in 2016
- \$211,815.29 distributed to 262 eligible applicants in 2016 for first or last month's rent, rental arrear, utility arrears and/or moving expenses
- \$330,350 distributed to 36 home owners for energy efficiency and accessibility upgrades
- \$36,950 provided to four new homeowners to assist with the down payment on their new homes
- \$798,464 in Social Housing Capital improvements through the Social Housing Energy Efficiency Program funding to increase energy efficiency

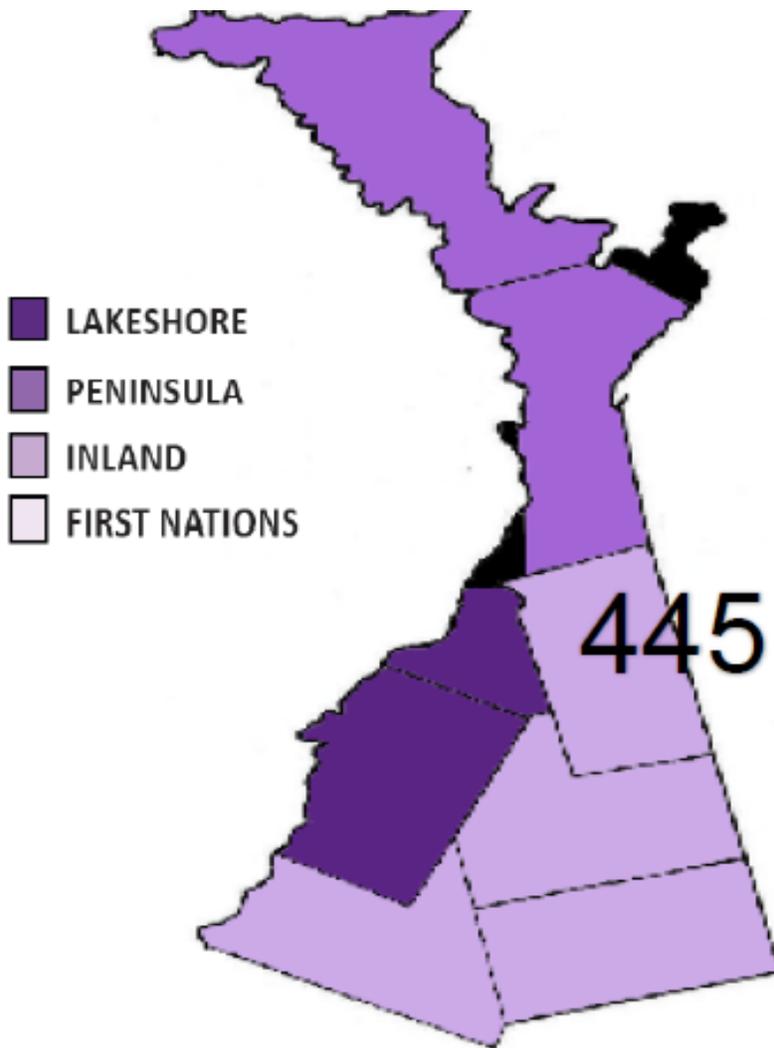
Coming in 2017

- Completion and occupancy of eight new affordable units
- Completion and occupancy of a secondary suite
- Release of Community Delivered Supportive Rent Supplement Pilot Program to increase the number of supportive rental opportunities in Bruce County
- Release of New Rental Expression of Interest for new rental development in Bruce County
- Submission, in partnership with Women's House, Community Living, YMCA and HopeGrey Bruce, for the Home for Good Supportive Housing Expression of Interest
- Submission, in partnership with Grey Bruce Health Unit, for the Anti-Human Trafficking project
- Sustained investment in the home repair program
- Continuation of the Housing Stability Fund to assist households with first or last month's rent, rent arrears, utility arrears and/or moving expenses
- Continued engagement with a variety of sectoral partners through the Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY) Team
- Continued collaboration through membership in the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force, as well as, specific efforts of the Housing Sub-Committee

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

HOUSING TARGETS

2013 - 2023



To support our vision of “appropriate, affordable, diverse and supportive housing choices for all Bruce County residents”, the following housing targets for new housing supply are adopted:

Unit Type: 70% low density, 30% medium and high density

Tenure: 70% ownership housing, 30% rental housing

Affordability: 30% of all new supply meet the County definition of affordable housing

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Our goal as a community is to create 445 affordable housing units in the next ten years (2013 - 2023)

This will be done by creating a greater supply of new affordable ownership, rental, and special needs housing units. Additionally the strategy will use the rent supplement program. Working with partners in the private, non-profit and government sectors will be critical to the success of the strategy. This success will also rely on implementing the strategic directions and priority actions that have been identified in this document.

Defining Affordable Housing

The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation considers housing affordable if shelter costs account for less than 30 per cent of before-tax household income.

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Progress on Addressing Actions

Bruce County has a clear role in helping to achieve outcomes. A healthy, coordinated and integrated housing and homelessness system relies on the efforts of all partners to help advance solutions. Based on community feedback regarding the current housing issues facing Bruce County, the following five goals were identified:

- educate partners;
- cultivate strong partnerships and coordinate efforts;
- enhance financial and program supports for housing and services;
- make planning rules more flexible; and
- maintain existing stock.

Rooted in these goals are 35 actions - the stepping stones for meeting these goals. This progress report details Bruce County's accomplishments in 2016.

Educate Partners

The aim is to broaden community awareness and support for the updated strategy and to increase the capacity of non-profit and private sector housing providers.

Accomplishments

- Continued engagement between a variety of sectoral partners in the Yes in My Back Yard (YIMBY) group. YIMBY is comprised of partners from support agencies, private sector, non-profit and faith communities
- An external consultant facilitated a dialogue with the YIMBY group in June 2016 to reaffirm and address the local housing and homelessness concerns and map out potential actions
- In partnership with Grey County, Bruce County hosted a housing symposium to recognize National Housing Day, the event was attended by over 80 participants from both counties with presentations from Public Health, CMHC, YMCA, Hope Grey Bruce, and a Developer, Vernon Martin
- Regular updates and activities posted on the Bruce County website and Facebook page
- Continued partnership with the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force Housing Action Group to lead, support and develop housing related projects

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

- Information sharing and education about municipal by-laws impacting tenants
- One of the founding members of Bruce Grey Data Information Sharing Collaborative, a collective of not-for-profit, social service, government, health and education organizations that seek to mobilize community decision-makers to share vital local rural data to better inform regional programming, policies, funding and social services to support prosperity, sustainability and the well-being of the community.

What's Next

- Continued membership on YIMBY and Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force and also the specific Housing Action Group
- Continued housing and homelessness updates on Bruce County website and Facebook

Cultivate strong partnerships and coordinate efforts

Coordinating efforts for housing and support service delivery among stakeholders and developing a 'no wrong door' culture for providing services.

Accomplishments

- Ongoing communication and information sharing with various community partners including Public Health, Women's House, YMCA, HopeGrey Bruce, VON, Community Living, mental health and development services
- Ongoing work with Bruce County, Planning & Development Department
- Strong partnership with YMCA to deliver services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness
- Continued partnership with Westario Power to deliver the Low Income Electricity Assistance Program (LEAP) to residents in Bruce, Grey, Huron and Wellington counties
- Continued partnership with Health Smiles Ontario to offer dental services in social housing common room
- Partnership with Grey Bruce Health Unit and Grey County Housing to initiate a community Engagement Pilot Project in a social housing neighbourhood
- Continued membership in the Grey Bruce Task Force on Crystal Meth and Other Drugs, Community Leaders in Grey and Bruce working to shift attitudes, improve policies and change systems in support of those experiencing and/or at risk of

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

substance abuse.

- Commissioned with Grey County the development of a customized information portal with Community Connections: 211 to provide an ease of access to service information and ensure there is “no wrong door”

What’s Next

- Submission of Home for Good Expression of Interest in partnership with YMCA, Hope Grey Bruce, Women’s House & Community Living for increased housing supports and rent supplement dollars
- Grey Bruce Public Health, with Bruce County Housing division support, submitted an Expression of Interest for an Anti-Human Trafficking Project

Enhance financial and program supports for housing services

Continuing financial and program support for affordable and special needs housing, advocating to senior governments for funding of affordable and special needs housing, and encouraging better access to health -related services that help to sustain households.

Accomplishments

- Promotion of affordable homeownership throughout Bruce County
- Promotion of the Ontario Renovates program to residents who own their own homes and require minor repairs for sustainability
- Administration of Housing Stability Fund is focusing on ensuring the funds are making a sustainable impact to lower income residents
- Administration of the Low-income Electricity Assistance Program to assist with high energy costs
- Continued partnership with VON Aging at Home Supportive Housing in County operated social housing units
- Continued partnership with Hope Grey Bruce for supported rent supplement units
- Community Support Program engages tenants who are or may become at risk of losing their housing or who may need additional supports to keep their housing

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

What's Next

- Bruce County has released an Expression of Interest for a Community Delivered Rent Supplement Pilot Project to be administered by the successful proponent who will provide support services to the tenant
- Bruce County awaits review and results of the submission of Home for Good Expression of Interest and the Anti-Human Trafficking project from the province

Make Planning Rules More Flexible

Eliminating policy and zoning barriers to the creation of affordable housing, including secondary suites and encouraging the use of Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) and other planning tools to encourage a more diverse housing stock.

Accomplishments

- Commitment of funding for the first Secondary Suite in the Municipality of Kincardine
- Respond to regular inquiries from developers who want to build affordable housing
- Increase the diversity of housing stock, including adding private rentals for seniors due to changes in County Official Plan
- Community Improvement Plans: CIP's are encouraging secondary suites as accessory apartments
- Continuing to work with lower tier municipalities to leverage flexibility for affordable housing development

What's Next

- Completion and occupancy of first Secondary Suite developed using Investment in Affordable Housing funds
- Continued investment in the development of affordable housing



Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Maintain Existing Stock

Promotes improving energy efficiency and the condition of the existing housing stock and ensuring the sustainability of social housing properties in Bruce County.

Accomplishments

- Over \$2,000,000 in capital upgrades for existing local housing corporation, social housing stock
- Announcement of the Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF) and the Social Housing Energy Efficiency Program (SHEEP)
- Bruce County received \$798,464 for energy efficiency upgrades, which included new windows, heat pump systems and new hot water tanks in eligible buildings in social housing units
- Bruce County also received \$597,360 from the Social Housing Improvement Program, which allowed for capital improvements including, a new roof, a new well and parking lot improvements in social housing units
- The home repair program assisted 36 home owners in 2016 to maintain or upgrade their homes for energy efficiency, accessibility and capital upgrades

What's Next

- Continued administration of the home repair program
- Capital improvements will continue in 2017

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Investment in Affordable Housing

The Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program in Bruce County will provide \$3,023,200 in federal and provincial funding for the creation and repair of affordable housing over 6 years.

In 2016, Bruce County received an additional \$1,826,100, over two years, for the Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF). SIF is administered within the same guidelines of the IAH program.

Components

- **Rental Housing:** to increase supply of rental housing for households on, or eligible to be on the social housing waitlist
- **Homeownership:** to assist low to moderate income renter households to purchase affordable ownership and rental properties
- **Home repairs and renovations:** financial assistance to renovate affordable ownership
- **Rent supplement:** to address affordability issues of households in modest private rental units

Additional Units Created in 2016

Rental Housing - Funds were committed to develop eight new affordable units in the Municipality of Kincardine. Construction will begin in 2017

Homeownership - four new homeownership loans were granted in 2016

Home repair - thirty-six home repair applications were approved in 2016

Rent Supplement - Bruce County created 13 new rent supplement units in 2016

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)

The vision for the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) is a better-coordinated and integrated service delivery system that is people-centered, outcome-focused and reflects a Housing First approach to prevent, reduce and address homelessness in communities across Ontario.

CHPI's two main outcome objectives are:

- 1) To assist people experiencing homelessness obtain and retain housing; and
- 2) To assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed.

Components

- **Housing Stability Fund:** To assist individuals, couples and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to secure affordable permanent housing in Bruce County
- **Community Support Coordinator:** Provides financial counseling and supports related to affordable housing to individuals who are at risk of eviction
- **YMCA Grey Bruce:** Provided housing support services for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness

In 2016, \$ 416,900 of provincial funding was spent on these programs to assist residents of Bruce County who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy

Summary

Bruce County has remained committed to its vision and has cultivated and developed strong partnerships within the community to broaden awareness and acceptance of the need for more affordable housing.

A special thank you to County Council, County staff, the YIMBY Team, all of our community partners and developers for their dedication, commitment and innovation shown that is proving to result in Better Housing Choices for All for our residents who call Bruce County Home.

For more information on Bruce County's Long Term Housing Strategy Update or to discover how you can support the housing vision in your community, [Click here](#)

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