

REPORT TO COUNTY COUNCIL

Housing for All 2024-2033 (10-Year Housing & Homelessness Plan)

To: Warden and Members of County Council

From: Director of Human Services

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That County Council approve “Housing for All 2024-2033 Plan”, the County’s new 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, as attached to Report HS 2024-09;
2. And further, that Report HS 2024-09 be circulated to Area Municipalities for information purposes.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Service Managers are required to develop and maintain a 10-year housing and homelessness plan to address local housing and homelessness needs.
- As the term of the County’s current 10-Year Housing Plan is coming to a close at the end of 2024, Council directed staff to initiate the process of developing a new plan (entitled ‘Housing for All’), including new goals and targets for housing and homelessness.
- The proposed ‘Housing for All’ Plan (“the Plan”) is widely informed by community feedback and updated local housing needs.

IMPLEMENTATION POINTS

Staff will continue to work towards the strategic directions of the Plan, with a focus on measurable actions.

Overall, the Plan will act as guidance in the County’s efforts to address housing and homelessness, including consideration in the annual budget process, informed by anticipated Federal and Provincial funding commitments and applicable partnerships.

Financial Impact

Any financial commitments related to the directives of the Plan will be considered by County Council through the annual budgeting process or a separate staff report.

Communications

In support of the new Plan, a comprehensive community engagement strategy was developed. As part of the strategy, a broad range of stakeholders, including community partners, Area Municipalities, developers, members of the public and County Council, were invited to share their insights on the housing and homelessness system in the County, to assist in determining priorities for the new Plan.



In terms of next steps, should Council be supportive of the recommendations contained in this report, staff will circulate the new Plan to each of the Area Municipalities for information purposes. The Plan will also be available to the public by way of the County website, and staff will continue to report back to Council on an annual basis, detailing the progress towards the directives of the Plan, as required by the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

2023-2026 STRATEGIC PLAN

Oxford County Council approved the [2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#) on September 13, 2023. The Plan outlines 39 goals across three strategic pillars that advance Council's vision of "Working together for a healthy, vibrant, and sustainable future." These pillars are: (1) *Promoting community vitality*, (2) *Enhancing environmental sustainability*, and (3) *Fostering progressive government*.

The recommendations in this report supports the following strategic goals.

Strategic Plan Pillars and Goals

PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3
		
Promoting community vitality	Enhancing environmental sustainability	Fostering progressive government
<p>Goal 1.1 – 100% Housed</p> <p>Goal 1.3 – Community health, safety and well-being</p> <p>Goal 1.4 – Connected people and places</p>		<p>Goal 3.1 – Continuous improvement and results-driven solutions</p> <p>Goal 3.2 – Collaborate with our partners and communities</p> <p>Goal 3.5 – Advocate for Oxford County</p>

See: [Oxford County 2023-2026 Strategic Plan](#)

DISCUSSION

Background

As a Service Manager, the County is required under the *Housing Services Act, 2011 (HSA)*, to develop and maintain a 10-year housing and homelessness plan to address local housing and homelessness needs. The Act prescribes specific requirements for the plan, including an assessment of current and future housing needs, and objectives and measures related to addressing those needs.

In June 2015, Council approved the County's first 10-Year Housing Plan, as presented in Report HS 2015-07. In support of this Plan, Council also approved Report HS 2016-01, establishing an annual target of 50 new affordable units per year. As required under the *HSA*, a five-year review of the Plan was later completed in December 2019, to which Council approved the following updated outcomes and strategies:

1. Increase affordable rental housing supply
2. Preserve and optimize existing housing stock
3. Reduce chronic homelessness
4. Increase housing with related supports
5. Increase rent supplement units in the community

With the term of the current 10-Year Plan coming to a close at the end of 2024, staff received Council's approval in July 2023 (through Report HS 2023-11) to initiate the process of developing new goals and targets in relation to housing and homelessness. As a result of this direction, consultants were retained to complete an updated housing needs assessment, as well as to assist in developing the new Plan (Attachment 1).

Comments

The County's current Housing Plan includes a number of outcomes and strategies to address housing and homelessness into 2024. While many of the existing actions and strategies continue to remain relevant, it is important to consider new initiatives to ensure continued effectiveness in addressing housing needs.

The intent of the new Housing for All plan is to build upon the County's current 10-year Plan, while considering changing market conditions, housing/community needs and financial challenges. The new Plan considers varying strategies and actions to address critical needs across the housing continuum, including emergency shelters, transitional, social and supportive housing, market and affordable rental housing, and homeownership.

Housing for All Framework

The proposed Housing for All plan includes five strategic directions in relation to the housing and homelessness system. These directions are further defined by a set of key action items, with a set of progress measures to ensure each action is being implemented appropriately.

It should be noted that the proposed Plan is intended to provide the overarching direction as it relates to the housing and homelessness system, with more specific implementation documents, including the Master Housing Strategy and proposed Homelessness Response Strategy, acting as the action documents to implement more specific changes to the system.

The following table provides an overview of the strategic directions, including the associated action items and measures, that are proposed in the new Plan. A more comprehensive list is provided on pages 15 to 29 of the attached plan.

Table 1: Housing for All Strategic Directions and Actions

Strategic Direction	Action Items	Measures (not exhaustive)
1. Reduce Homelessness Through Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a Homelessness Response Strategy • Improve and increase access to emergency and transitional housing options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of individuals housed on the by-name (housed, added, removed, etc.) • Emergency shelter usage • Individuals who received support services (funded through HPP)
2. Support Housing Stability Through Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve access to and coordination of services • Strengthen the system of supports through enhanced partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing a central database for collecting data from community partners • Rent supplement applications • Creating supportive housing
3. Maintain and Improve the Existing Housing Portfolio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain community housing as mortgages expire through negotiating new agreements • Continue to invest in repair and renewal of the County’s housing portfolio • Implement asset planning technology to support capital planning for community housing providers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) for all housing providers • Training for all housing providers • Asset planning software will provide data to make evidenced based decisions for capital investments • Number of service agreements negotiated to maintain community housing providers • Number of RGI units in Oxford County

Strategic Direction	Action Items	Measures (not exhaustive)
4. Increase Affordable and Rental Options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the Master Housing Strategy as funding becomes available • Facilitate new affordable housing units through partnerships and innovation • Explore the benefits of establishing a County development corporation • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate a minimum of two affordable housing projects per year • Partner with an Area Municipality to support a project that provides a co-location for affordable housing and a municipal service
5. Advocate for Increased Investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborate with other Service Managers and municipal organizations to advocate for sustained federal and provincial investment in new affordable housing programs • Work with local partners to advocate for increased investment in homelessness response and housing stability supports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse/support advocacy efforts of other organizations, as appropriate • Convene an engagement with local service managers to determine opportunities to develop regional advocacy messaging.

Provincial Requirements

For Council’s information, while the province has indicated that they are in the process of reviewing 10-year plan requirements, which have not been updated since 2018, it is not yet clear when updated guidance will be provided. Although Provincial direction is necessary for completing the new Plan, in light of the lack of direction to date, and understanding that most Service Managers are in similar positions, staff are recommending adoption of the proposed Housing for All plan, understanding that any required changes will be brought forward to Council for consideration at a later date, if necessary.

CONCLUSIONS

The development of the new 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan required a collective effort from all levels of government, as well as expertise and input from non-profit and private sector partners, and community residents. With this effort, the new Plan provides strategic direction to effectively address housing and homelessness into the next 10 years.

SIGNATURES

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Departmental approval:

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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 Housing for All 2024-2033, August 14, 2024

Attachment 2 Housing for All 2024 2033 Council Presentation, August 14, 2024