



Bruce County Long Term Housing Strategy 2013-2023

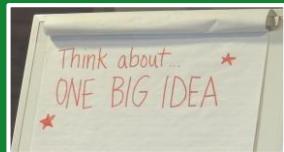
June 2016 - Progress Report



people-focused



collaborative



solution-based



local strengths

housing
choices
for all

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 aboriginal people.

The Strategy is a commitment by County Council, staff, and other organizations in the community to work together to implement actions which 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 our current Long Term Housing Strategy, which outlines our progress 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 understanding housing challenges, emerging trends and the community's collective process in addressing Long Term Strategy actions. A summary of the key findings are outlined below. In 2015 we continued to work towards the Strategy goals and the elimination of the issues faced by Bruce County residents.

Summary of Housing Issues in Bruce County

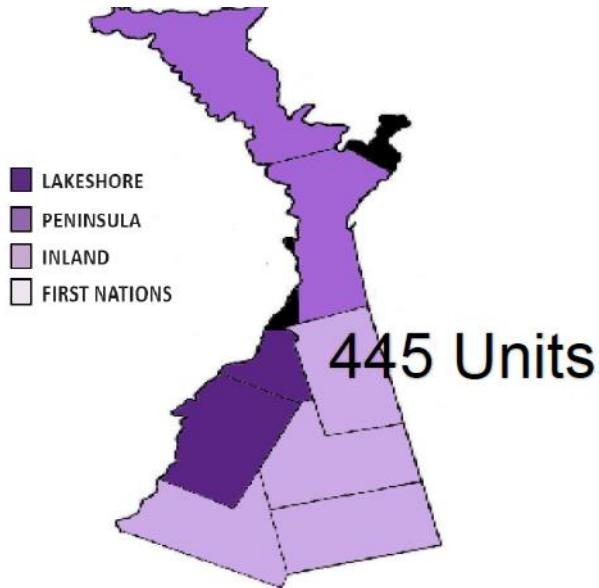
The housing issues identified in 2013 were reaffirmed by the community. As well, the significant impact of the high cost of utilities was felt by many participants to be an important housing issue which needs to be addressed in Bruce County.

	<p>The seniors population continues to grow faster than other groups</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>



HOUSING TARGETS

2013 - 2023



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

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



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

This goal will be achieved by creating a greater supply of new affordable ownership, rental, and special needs housing units and by using rent supplement. 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 broadly accepted approach to defining affordable housing is housing where a household is not spending more than 30 percent of its income on housing costs. In Bruce County, similar to many communities across the province, affordable housing is available to most residents; however, for some, affordable housing is out of reach.



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; making planning rules more flexible and maintaining 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 2015.



educate partners

The first strategic action in the Bruce Count Long Term Housing Strategy is aimed at broadening community awareness and support for updated strategy and to increase the capacity of non-profit and private sector housing providers.



Accomplishments

- Continued commitment to and involvement in the Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY) group. YIMBY is comprised on partners from various sectors including; support agencies, private sector, lower tier municipality, non-profit and faith community leaders
- Held five meetings to discuss various projects and the educating the community about affordable housing
- YIMBY members presented to lower-tier municipalities to educate and update councilors and members of the public
- Presented the *Progress and Priority Setting, Fall 2014 – what we heard from the community...*to Bruce County Council and made the document available on the Bruce County website
- Raised public awareness of housing issues through newspaper articles and church services
- Regular updates and activities posted on the Bruce County website and Facebook page
- Partnership with Grey Bruce Public Health & the Bruce Grey Poverty Task Force Housing Action Group to develop the Above Standard Housing Project

Above Standard Housing Project

In the short-term, this project seeks to better understand the local factors that contribute to the persistence of substandard housing conditions. In the long-term, it is hoped this understanding will inform the development of strategies/initiatives that will improve and sustain housing conditions.





cultivate strong partnerships and coordinate efforts

Targeted at 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, United Way, Hope Grey Bruce, VON, Community Living, mental health and developmental services
- Ongoing participation in the Poverty Task Force and Housing Sub-Committee to share information and create solutions related to housing
- Information sharing and education about municipal by-laws impacting tenants
- Ongoing work with the Bruce County Planning Department
- Strong partnership with YMCA to deliver services to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness
- Partnership with Westario Power to deliver the Low Income Electricity Assistance Program (LEAP) to residents in Bruce, Grey, Huron, Wellington counties



- Development of Grey Bruce Data Consortium to ensure better collection and use of data
- Information was shared about the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) was distributed to all community partners and various Bruce County departments
- YMCA, Bruce County Library System, Bruce County Social Services and Housing worked diligently to ensure low-income residents were informed about and assisted in applying for the OESP program
- Partnership with Healthy Smiles Ontario to offer dental services in social housing complex common room



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 home ownership throughout Bruce County
- Administration of Housing Stability Fund is focusing on ensuring the funds are making a sustainable impact to lower income residents



- Bruce County hired a second Tenant Coordinator to increase housing supports for tenants



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

- Regular inquiries from developers to build affordable housing and to partner with others
- More diversity of housing stock, more private rentals for seniors due to changes in the County Official Plan
- Inquiries regarding Secondary Suite development
- Community Improvement Plans: CIP's are encouraging secondary suites in accessory apartments
- Continuing to work with lower to municipalities to leverage flexibility for affordable housing development





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
- Capital upgrades included replacement of fire alarms, emergency lighting upgrades, window replacements, roof replacements, and balcony repairs
- The Home Repair program assisted 20 home owners in 2015 to maintain or upgrade their homes for energy efficiency, accessibility and capital upgrades
- Bruce County Housing Corporation (BCHC) assumed ownership of Port Elgin Rotary Non-Profit (PERNP) which will ensure that 45 affordable housing units remain in the housing system



- Information about the Ontario Electricity Support Program (OESP) was distributed to all Bruce County Housing tenants who pay for their electricity
- Enhancing use of Asset Management Software and preparations for an updated Asset Management Plan to be completed in 2016.



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.

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 2015

Rental Housing - no new rental housing was created in 2015

Homeownership – one new homeownership loan was granted in 2015

Home repairs – twenty-two home repair applications were approved in 2015

Rent supplement – Bruce County created 29 new rent supplement units in 2015



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 2015, \$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.





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.

Although there were no new rental units created in 2015, Bruce County is targeting financial assistance for new affordable units in 2016. Despite this, the introduction of the CHPI program has enabled the County to assist individuals, couples and families with finding and maintaining affordable housing in the area. Additionally, although we are aware of the development of new or renovated private sector affordable rentals in the area, these rentals are not reflected in our housing targets. Bruce County will be investigating ways to gather, measure and disseminate this information to better report on the additional affordable housing within the County.



*A special thank you to County Council, County staff, the YIMBY team, all of our community partners and developers for your dedication, commitment and innovation to move towards **Housing Choices for All** in Bruce County.*

For more information on Bruce County's Long Term Housing Strategy Update or to find out how you can support the housing vision in your community, visit:

[www.brucecounty.on.ca/services-health/social-housing/housign program/long-term-housing-strategy.php](http://www.brucecounty.on.ca/services-health/social-housing/housign-program/long-term-housing-strategy.php)

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