



SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

REPORT TO:	CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
DEPARTMENT:	Homelessness Prevention and Children's Services and Housing Services
PREPARED BY:	Melissa Fitzpatrick, Manager Kelly Hall, Manager
REVIEWED BY:	Valerie Colasanti, General Manager Ronald G. Van Horne, Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE:	August 19, 2020
INFORMATION ITEM:	Housing and Homelessness Plan Progress Report

BACKGROUND

At its meeting on November 27, 2013, County Council supported the following motion from the October 16, 2013 Committee P.M. meeting:

#4: Foubister/MacDougall:

- a) *That the County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014 – 2023 be approved.*
- b) *That staff be directed to advise Lambton County Council on any substantive changes that are recommended by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing review which have the potential to impact future levy contributions.*
- c) *That barring substantive changes recommended by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, staff be provided with the authority to implement the recommendations contained within the County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014 – 2023.*

Carried.

Under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*, municipalities must provide an annual report to the public on the progress against their plans by June 30th of each year.

DISCUSSION

The attached Progress Report highlights the work completed over the past year on the implementation of the County's 10 -Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2014-2023). An Internal Implementation Committee, with representation from across County Divisions,

developed this implementation plan with action steps to address the 20 recommendations in the Plan; these recommendations are organized under the three main strategic directions of:

- Homelessness Prevention
- Housing Stability
- Sustainability

Key accomplishments to note for year six of the plan are:

- Through the collaboration of local agencies numerous individuals and families were assisted by the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) which funds homelessness prevention programs and services.
- Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative funded programs include domiciliary hostels, rent/utility banks, emergency shelters, soup kitchens and food banks:
 - 40,023 meals were served at the Soup Kitchen;
 - 217 households were assisted with paying rent and utility arrears for a total of \$171, 658;
 - 969 unique individuals' accessed an emergency shelter for lodging.
- Community Support Workers provided support to an average of 132 individuals per month to improve their quality of life and maintain rental housing.
- 'Ohana Landing was established in 2019 and is a 7 unit transitional housing complex for youth age 16 to 24 years. 'Ohana Landing was made possible through the Home for Good capital grant of \$980,000. This provides affordability payments in exchange for 7 affordable youth transitional housing units. So far, 12 youth have been residents of 'Ohana Landing. Additionally, the Youth received intensive supports from partner agency, Rebound's Housing Support Worker.
- Vision '74 Inc completed construction of a 36 unit apartment building. 19 of these units are affordable housing units.
- The Home Ownership Program provided \$101,300 to assist 6 households purchase affordable homes by providing down payment assistance in the form of a forgivable loan.
- The Lambton Renovates Program administered \$323,188 to assist 18 households make repairs to improve accessibility in their homes.
- Habitat Handyman, a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, completed home repairs for 129 households, assisting homeowners to maintain their homes and increase their housing stability.

- With Council support, through the Investment in Affordable Housing Program (2014 extension), Social Infrastructure Fund, Home for Good and County contributions, in 2019, an additional 26 affordable housing units were added for a total of 74 units built since 2018. Support Services are available in a number of these units.
- Recent regulatory amendments made to Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA) allowed the County of Lambton to implement a Portable Housing Benefit, which provides applicants with the ability to choose rental units based on their specific needs and required supports. Having this flexibility has expanded housing choices and increased affordable housing options. As of December 31, 2019, 35 households received the standard portable housing benefit, 16 households received the Special Priority Policy portable housing benefit, and 1 household in the Anti-Human Trafficking portable housing benefit.
- The Municipal Residency Benefit (MRB), a homelessness prevention strategy delivered by Ontario Works staff for recipients of Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program assisted 1,492 households with items such as utility arrears and connection fees, rental arrears or last month's rent, furniture, moving costs and pre-treatment for pest control.
- The County of Lambton operates three non-profit Long-Term Care homes and two Adult Enrichment Centres (AECs) to address the psychological, social, cultural and spiritual needs of seniors in care. Throughout 2018:
 - 443 individuals resided in the three Long-Term Care homes
 - The Adult Day programs provided services to 122 individuals and extended the days of service in both Petrolia and Sarnia.
- The Home for Good funded project led by the Canadian Mental Health Association Lambton-Kent, provided 37 individuals coping with mental health and/or addictions issues with stable housing and wrap-around supports.
 - A total of 45 individuals have been involved in this program since January 2018. 100% of the participants had moved along the housing continuum into a private market rental.
- The Mental Health and Social Services Team (MHASST) was established in partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). The team is comprised of a Social Service Division employee paired with two CMHA mental health professionals. Working as an integrated team, supports are provided to vulnerable individuals with complex needs that are in receipt of Ontario Works or rent-geared-to-income assisted housing.
 - 47 individuals have been supported through the MHASST to date
 - 100% have either improved or maintained their housing status
 - Participants have been connected to 8 internal CMHA programs and 22 community programs
 - 16 individuals have successfully completed the program and linked to supports

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There is no financial impact on the County Budget as a result of this report.

CONSULTATIONS

Consultations have taken place with members of the County Housing and Homelessness Internal Implementation team, the membership of the County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, and numerous social service agencies in the community.

STRATEGIC PLAN

Implementation of the County's 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (2014-2023) is a legislated initiative delivered in keeping with the County's Mission to promote an enhanced quality of life through the provision of responsive and efficient services accomplished by working with municipal and community partners.

The activities of the Division support the Community Development Area of Effort #3 in the County of Lambton's Strategic Plan, specifically:

- Advocating in a manner that raises the profile of the County and its needs in order to secure improved government supports, funding, grants, and other resources.
- Developing programs and initiatives that address poverty reduction and promote social belonging.
- Planning for and responding to the ever-changing needs of an aging population, homelessness and retaining young people in the community while supporting their transition to being employed community members and future leaders.
- Actively pursuing joint opportunities with community partners that contribute to the well-being of the Lambton Community.

CONCLUSION

The *County of Lambton Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2023* sets the strategic direction for housing and homelessness work for a 10 year period. The development and distribution of an annual Report via the County website fulfills the legislative requirement under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* to report annually on the progress of implementation efforts.