



**AGENDA**  
**LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL**

**Wednesday, June 3, 2026 9:00 a.m.**  
**Council Chambers, Wyoming**

Page

**1. ROLL CALL**

**2. LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that this land on which we are gathered today is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come.

**3. DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

If any.

**4. IN-CAMERA SESSION - 9:00 A.M.**

**Recommendation**

**That the Warden declare that County Council go in-camera to discuss the following:**

- a) to review the Lambton County Council (Closed Session) minutes dated May 6, 2026, pursuant to s. 239(2) (c),(d),(e) and (k) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- b) to receive a report and provide instructions regarding negotiations between the County and Stones 'N Bones Museum for the potential acquisition and display of museum materials, pursuant to s. 239(2)(i)(k) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- c) to receive a report and provide instructions regarding collective agreement negotiations with Unifor Local 302, pursuant to s.239(2)(d) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

**5. OPEN SESSION**

The Open Session meeting will commence immediately following the Closed Session meeting.

6. **SILENT REFLECTION**

7. **RISE AND REPORT MOTIONS OF THE IN-CAMERA SESSION**

If any.

8. **DELEGATIONS**

5 - 19

- a) Marina Sloutsky, Senior Associate and Chris Gorman, Senior Associate, Org Code Consulting, will be presenting to County Council the County of Lambton 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2026-2035.

9. **MINUTES OF COUNCIL (OPEN SESSION)**

20 - 30

- a) Reading and adoption of the Lambton County Council (Open Session) minutes dated May 6, 2026.

10. **BOARD OF HEALTH (Lambton Public Health)**

**A) Board of Health Correspondence to Receive and File Recommendation**

31 - 33

**That the following correspondence item be received and filed:**

- a) BOH 06-04-26 A copy of a letter from Suzanne Trivers, Chair, Board of Health, Algoma Public Health, dated May 15, 2026, regarding a motion in support of Alcohol Labelling Policy (Bill S-202). Algoma Public Health endorses the Middlesex-London Health Unit's report and associated content, recommending alcohol labelling for all alcohol manufactured or sold in Canada with: Health Warnings; Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health; and Standard Drink Size. See attached for the full details of the motion.

**B) Board of Health Information Reports**

34 - 40

- a) Information Report dated June 3, 2026 Regarding Air Quality and Extreme Temperature Initiatives - Update.

41 - 45

- b) Information Report dated June 3, 2026 Regarding Physical Activity and Active Transportation - Status Report.

46 - 50

- c) Information Report dated June 3, 2026 Regarding Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Update.

**C) Board of Health Other Business**

11. **CORRESPONDENCE**

A) **Correspondence to Receive and File Recommendation**

**That the following correspondence item be received and filed:**

- 51 - 52
- a) CC 06-05-26 A letter dated April 28, 2026 from Jeremy Guerette, President Sarnia-Lambton Association of REALTORS to the Warden and Lambton County Council expressing appreciation for Council's decision to approve the development of an affordable housing project at the former St. Bartholomew's Church site. The approval of a 94-unit, rent-geared-to-income building to be owned and operated by the County is a meaningful step forward for this community.

12. **INFORMATION REPORTS**

A) **Cultural Services Division**

- 53 - 59
- a) Information Report dated June 3, 2026 Regarding Wyoming Administration Lobby Improvements.

B) **Social Services Division**

- 60 - 155
- a) Information Report dated June 3, 2026 Regarding County of Lambton 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2026-2035.

13. **ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A MOTION**

- 156 - 159
- a) Tourism Sarnia-Lambton Board of Directors Minutes dated March 5, 2026.

14. **COMMITTEE MINUTES**

- 160 - 165
- a) Committee of the Whole (Open Session) minutes dated May 20, 2026.

15. **ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS**

None at this time.

16. **NOTICE OF MOTION**

17. **OTHER BUSINESS**

18. **NOTICE OF BY-LAWS**

- 166
- a) 14 of 2026 A By-Law of The Corporation of the County of Lambton to

confirm the resolutions and motions of Lambton County Council which were adopted up to and including June 3, 2026.

**A) First and Second Reading of By-Laws**

a) #14 of 2026

**B) Third and Final Reading of By-Laws**

a) #14 of 2026

**19. ADJOURNMENT**

**Recommendation**

**That the Warden declare the meeting adjourned and that the next regular meeting of County Council be held on Thursday, July 2, 2026 with the In-Camera Session to commence at 9:00 a.m.**

**20. O CANADA!**

**21. NOTE**

a) A host is needed for the annual Council Barbecue in September.

# LOOKING AHEAD IN LAMBTON COUNTY

10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan  
(2026-2035)



# PRIMARY GOALS OF THE PLAN

- Every resident has access to safe, suitable and affordable housing
- Homelessness in the County is rare, brief and non-recurring
- All residents have the opportunity to thrive
- Strengthened community well-being, economic stability and long-term population resilience



# LOCAL REALITY IN LAMBTON COUNTY

## Strengths:

- Dedicated service providers and strong collaboration
- Invested community members
- Strong homelessness response infrastructure
- Leadership by County staff and commitment to data-driven and evidence informed practices



# LOCAL REALITY IN LAMBTON COUNTY

## Pressures and Emerging Challenges:

- Significant lack of affordable, deeply affordable and supportive housing stock and appropriate levels of support services
- Net loss of affordable rental units identified in last available rental data over a five-year period
- Housing costs and limited availability has resulted in suppressed household formation signaling rising future pressure and hidden demand
- Limited pathways out of homelessness for those with greatest needs
- Significant over-representation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness



# HOW THE PLAN WAS CREATED

- Key informant interviews with service providers, community partners, elected officials and staff from all tiers of government
- Site visits across crucial housing and homelessness response providers
- Public engagements with community members: virtually, in-person and through an online survey
- Consultations with non-profit housing partners, members of the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee and the homelessness response sector's lived experience table
- Analysis of data in relation to housing, homelessness, income, core housing need and population to identify housing needs



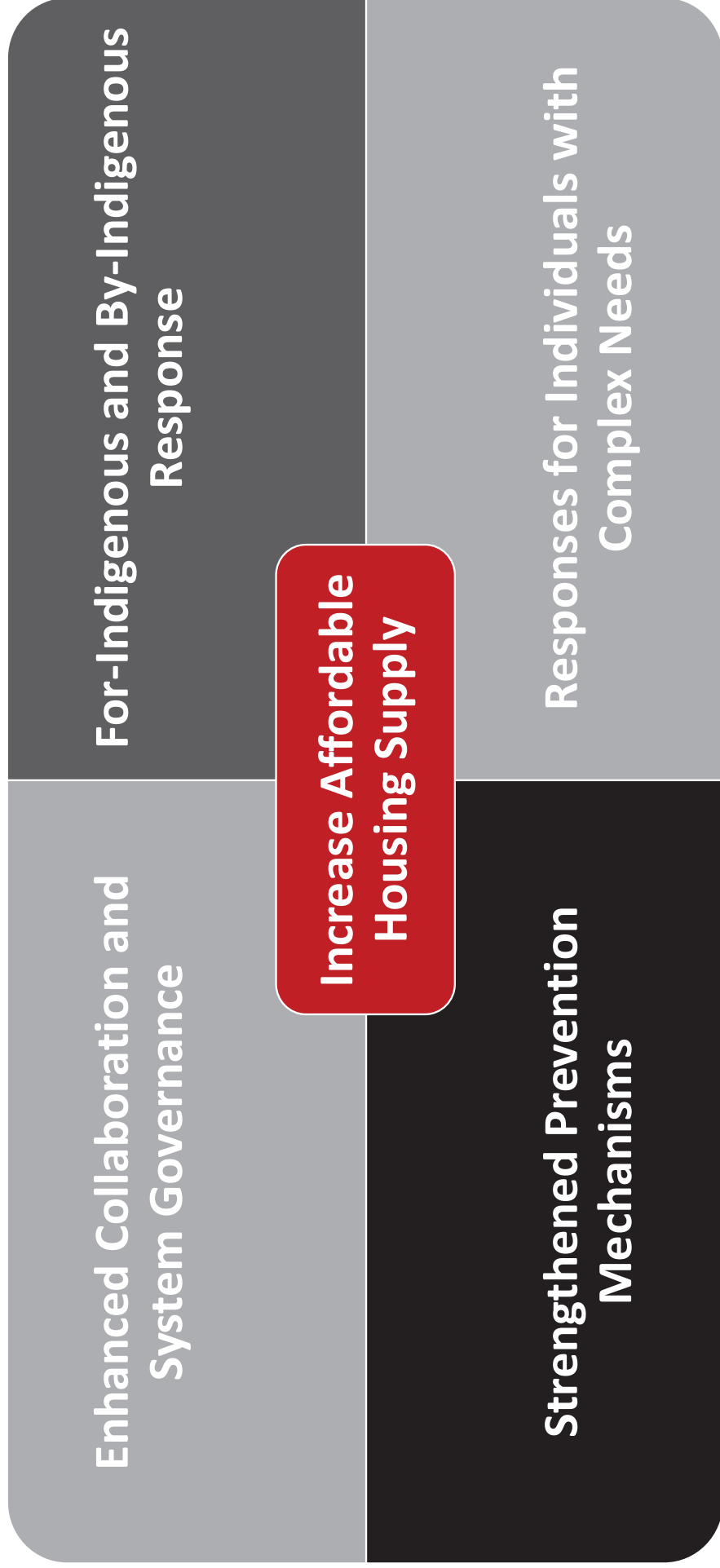
# FOCUS POINTS OF THE PLAN

- An all-of-community plan
- Evidence-informed
- Housing-focused
- Solutions-oriented

**A common vision of a strong and inclusive community, guided by concerted data driven action, where housing is attainable for all and where experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring.**



# PRIORITY THEMES



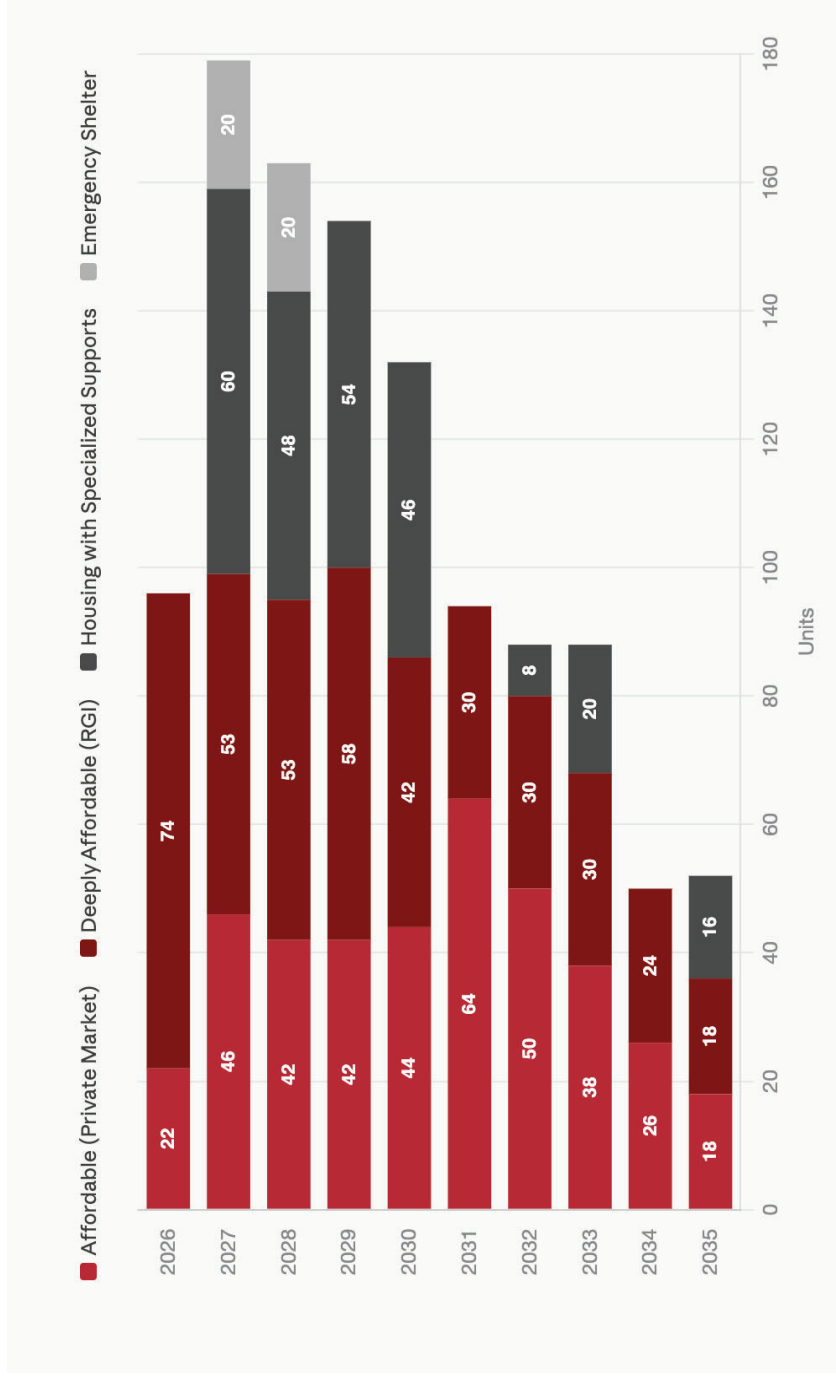
# **PRIORITY 1: INCREASE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS**

- Continue to preserve and protect existing affordable and deeply affordable housing
- Seek investment and development support opportunities
- Consider opportunities around master or head leasing
- Explore municipal incentives for private and non-profit developers

**Increasing housing stock is foundational to every other system improvement including enhanced public safety, accelerated economic development and improved health outcomes.**



## Estimated Housing Need by Type of Accommodation (2026–2035)



**Planned Housing Units by Type, 2026–2035**  
1,096 units across 10 years

**10-YEAR TOTALS**

**412** Deeply Affordable (38%)

**392** Affordable (36%)

**252** Housing with Specialized Supports (23%)

**40** Emergency Shelter (4%)

## **PRIORITY 2: ENHANCED COLLABORATION AND SYSTEM GOVERNANCE**

- Community commitment to increasing the range of housing options across the continuum
- Define municipal (lower and upper tier) roles and responsibilities to grow housing stock and targeted homelessness prevention and reduction interventions
- Increase alignment with other strategic plans
- Collaborate on and support developers with preventative rights-based community engagement
- Implement a communications strategy to keep residents informed and active



# PRIORITY 3: COLLABORATIVE RESPONSE TO INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS

- For-Indigenous, by-Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy
- Advance and formalize relationships with Indigenous partners and Nations
- Increase resources to create culturally appropriate units
- Grow pipeline of Indigenous-led affordable housing projects



## **PRIORITY 4: STRENGTHEN HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION**

- Define an approach to protect against the loss of units in the private market
- Continued commitment to repair, renewal and long-term asset management of Community Housing stock
- Non-profit housing sustainability assessment and planning
- Formalize targeted homelessness prevention and shelter diversion practices



## **PRIORITY 5: RESPONSE FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH THE COMPLEX NEEDS**

- Increase access to housing-focused and low-barrier emergency shelter spaces
- Prioritize supportive housing development and appropriate support options

**Appropriate pathways out of homelessness are missing for people experiencing chronic homelessness with complex needs.**



# WHAT WILL THIS PLAN BRING FORWARD?

- A shared commitment to housing stability for all residents
- A roadmap for the next 10 years to support planning, goal setting and prioritization of initiatives
- Coordinated, sustained action across the housing continuum
- Prevention and early intervention to decrease inflow into homelessness
- Pathways out of homelessness for those with greatest needs
- Strong supply of affordable and deeply affordable housing as a core foundation for the community



# QUESTIONS?





**MINUTES  
LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL**

**May 6, 2026**

Lambton County Council was in session in Council Chambers, Wyoming, Ontario, at 9:00 a.m. on the above date. Warden in the Chair; Roll called; All members present except Councillors D. Cook and I. Veen. Councillors M. Bradley, A. Broad and B. Hand attended virtually.

**LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

We acknowledge that this land on which we are gathered today is part of the ancestral land of the Chippewa, Odawa, and Potawatomi peoples, referred to collectively as the Anishinaabeg. It is through the connection of the Anishinaabeg with the spirit of the land, water and air that we recognize their unique cultures, traditions, and values. Together as treaty people, we have a shared responsibility to act with respect for the environment that sustains all life, protecting the future for those generations to come.

**DISCLOSURES OF PECUNIARY INTEREST**

Councillor T. Case declared a pecuniary interest concerning in-camera agenda item 2 A) a) regarding collective agreement negotiations with CUPE 2926. Councillor T. Case recused himself and left the meeting while the report was being discussed.

**IN-CAMERA SESSION - 9:03 A.M.**

**#1:** Loosley/White: That the Warden declare that County Council go in-camera to discuss the following:

- a) to review the Lambton County Council (Closed Session) minutes dated April 2, 2026, pursuant to s. 239(2) (b),(c),(d),(h) and (k) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- b) to receive a report and provide instructions regarding collective agreement negotiations with CUPE 2926, pursuant to s. 239(2)(d) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- c) to receive a report and provide instructions regarding lease negotiations between the County and a third party relating to property in the City of Sarnia, pursuant to s. 239(2)(c) and (k) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.
- d) to review the Committee of the Whole In-Camera minutes dated April 15, 2026 pursuant to s. 239(2) (e) of the *Municipal Act, 2001*.

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Carried.

Time: 9:10 a.m.

OPEN SESSION

The Warden declared that County Council go back into Open Session. Council then reconvened at 9:12 a.m.

RISE AND REPORT MOTIONS OF THE IN-CAMERA SESSION

The Clerk noted that County Council went In-Camera to discuss the following:

- a) to review the Lambton County Council (Closed Session) minutes dated April 2, 2026;
- b) to receive a report and provide instructions regarding collective agreement negotiations with CUPE 2926;
- c) to receive a report and provide instructions regarding lease negotiations between the County and a third party relating to property in the City of Sarnia; and
- d) to review the Committee of the Whole In-Camera minutes dated April 15, 2026, which included:
  - a report regarding litigation between the County and a third party relating to a development project in the City of Sarnia.

DELEGATIONS

#2: Dennis/Loosley: That we invite the delegations within the Bar to speak to County Council.

Carried.

Tim Welch, President, and Frazier Fathers, Senior Housing Policy Consultant, Tim Welch Consulting, spoke to County Council regarding Lambton County Housing Needs Assessment.

Brad Zantingh, President, Windcliff Group, spoke to County Council and providing additional information on County land needs for the Official Plan.

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MINUTES OF COUNCIL (OPEN SESSION)

The Lambton County Council (Open Session) minutes dated April 2, 2026 were presented.

#3: Sageman/Case: That the Lambton County Council (Open Session) minutes dated April 2, 2026 be accepted as presented.

Carried.

Annual General Meeting of The County of Lambton Community Development Corporation

**May 6, 2026**

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of The Corporation of the County of Lambton Community Development Corporation (CLCDC) was held at the County Council (Open Session) meeting on the above date and was called to order at 9:46 a.m. Invited to the meeting were the institutional members (County Council) as well as the individual members (the Board). Dr. Katherine Albion, Executive Director of the Research Park, made the presentation to the members.

Appointment of the Chair

#4: Bradley/Case: That Warden Marriott be appointed as Chair of the meeting.

Carried.

Introduction of the Members

The Chair of the Board commenced by introducing its members to the Board and the Staff Advisory Committee who were present for the Annual General Meeting as follows: Members Kevin Marriott and Jeff Agar participated in-person, Mike Bradley and Tom Strifler participated virtually. Staff members Stéphane Thiffeault and Karen Bettridge. Dr. Katherine Albion, Executive Director, participated in-person. Members Rob Kardas, David Muir and Miriam Capretz did not participate in the meeting and appointed Mike Bradley as their proxy.

Approval of the Agenda

#5: Boushy/Atkinson: That the agenda for the Annual General Meeting of The County of Lambton Community Development Corporation be approved as presented.

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Carried.

Declarations of Pecuniary Interest

None.

Presentation of the Audited Financial Statements

Karen Bettridge, Treasurer, provided an update on the Financial Statements of The County of Lambton Community Development Corporation for the Year-Ended April 30, 2025.

**#6:** Atkinson/Loosley: That The County of Lambton Community Development Corporation Financial Statements for the Year Ended April 30, 2025 be approved.

Carried.

Update from the Park Executive Director

Dr. Katherine Albion, Executive Director, provided an update to the members regarding activities at the Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park.

**#7:** Loosley/Atkinson: That the presentation provided by Dr. Katherine Albion, Executive Director, regarding an update on the activities at the Western Sarnia-Lambton Research Park be received and filed.

Carried.

Review of the Corporation By-Laws

**#8:** Ferguson/White: That the following resolution of the Members be adopted:

**WHEREAS** the Corporation is a not-for profit organized under *Ontario's Not-for-Profit Corporations Act, 2010 ("ONCA")*;

**AND WHEREAS** the Board of Directors has recommended the Bylaw No.1 be amended as set out in **Schedule A** attached hereto, which amendments:

- (a) revise the composition of the Board of Directors in accordance with the Members' prior special resolution;
- (b) define eligibility criteria for Directors serving as Chair and/or Vice-Chair of the Corporation;
- (c) establish term limits for the Chair and Vice-Chair positions; and
- (d) make consequential amendments necessary to give effect to the foregoing;

**AND WHEREAS** it is desirable to include transitional provisions to implement the amendments set out in **Schedule A**;

**AND WHEREAS** proper notice of the meeting, including notice of the proposed bylaw amendments, was provided to all members in accordance with ONCA and the Corporation's bylaws;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:**

**1. Approval of Bylaw Amendments**

The amendments to Bylaw No. 1, as blacklined in red font on **Schedule A**, which:

- (a) change the composition of the Board;
- (b) define eligibility requirements for Directors serving as Chair and Vice-Chair;
- (c) establish term limits for the offices of Chair and Vice-Chair; and
- (d) make consequential amendments to Bylaw No. 1 to give effect to these changes, and hereby approved.

**2. Transitional Provisions**

**a. Implementation Date**

The new Board composition described in Schedule A shall take effect on January 6, 2027 (the "**Implementation Date**").

**b. Continuity of Current Directors (Interim Governance)**

The Directors validly holding office immediately prior to the date of this resolution shall continue in office until the **Implementation Date**, and shall continue to serve and exercise all powers, duties, and responsibilities of the Board on an interim basis, unless otherwise removed or replaced in accordance with the bylaws of the Corporation or applicable law.

For greater certainty, during this interim period, the current Board is authorized to take all actions necessary to ensure continuity of governance, including (without limitation):

- financial oversight and approvals;
- operational decision-making;
- oversight of committees;
- facilitation of the governance transition and onboarding of incoming Directors.

**c. Transitional Provisions for Chair and Vice-Chair**

Any individual currently serving as Chair or Vice-Chair may continue to hold such office until the **Implementation Date**. The new eligibility requirements and term limits set out in the amendments shall apply only to any subsequent election, appointment, or re-election to those offices.

***d. No Deemed Restart of Terms***

For clarity, no person shall, by virtue of these amendments, be deemed to have commenced a new term of office as Chair, Vice-Chair, or Director.

Carried.

Confirmation of Officers and Directors

#9: Loosley/Atkinson: That the following positions be confirmed for the Board:

- a. Mike Bradley (Chair)
- b. Rob Kardas (Vice-Chair)
- c. Kevin Marriott (Director)
- d. Jeff Agar (Director)
- e. David Muir (Director)
- f. Tom Strifler (Director, for a term expiring January 6, 2027)
- g. Miriam Capretz (Director, for a term expiring January 6, 2027)
- h. Vacant

and that the following Officers be appointed:

- i. Stéphane Thiffeault (Secretary)
- ii. Karen Bettridge (Treasurer)

Carried.

Appointment of Auditors

#10: Ferguson/Sageman: That BDO Canada LLP - Sarnia be appointed as auditors to The County of Lambton Community Development Corporation for 2026.

Carried.

Adjournment

#11: Sageman/Miller: That the Chair declare the Annual General Meeting of The County of Lambton Community Development Corporation be adjourned.

Carried.

Time: 10:22 a.m.

BOARD OF HEALTH (Lambton Public Health)

Board of Health Correspondence to Receive and File

BOH 05-07-26 A copy of a letter from Darrin Canniff, Mayor/CEO, of the Municipality of Chatham-Kent, dated March 20, 2026, regarding the passing of a motion regarding a declaration of food insecurity. The Mayor and Council support the advocacy of the Chatham-Kent Food Policy Council by declaring food insecurity an emergency in the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

BOH 05-08-26 A copy of a letter from Mark Signoretti, Chair, Board of Health of Public Health Sudbury & District dated March 31, 2026, regarding the passing of a resolution requesting that the Ministry of Health update the Healthy Smiles Ontario (HSO) Schedule of Dental Services and Fees to improve provider participation and access to dental care for children and youth.

BOH 05-09-26 A copy of a letter from Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Chair and Loretta Ryan, Chief Executive Officer, Association of Local Public Health Agencies (aLPHa), dated March 27, 2026, congratulating Dr. Kieran Moore on his reappointment as Chief Medical Officer of Health for the Province of Ontario.

#12: Case/Miller: That correspondence BOH 05-07-26, BOH 05-08-26 and BOH 05-09-26 be received and filed.

Carried.

Board of Health Information Reports

#13: McRoberts/Dennis: That the following Information Reports from the Board of Health (Lambton Public Health) be received and filed:

- a) Information Report dated May 6, 2026 regarding Clinal and Family Services Q1 2026 Activity Report.
- b) Information Report dated May 6, 2026 regarding Health Protection First Quarter 2026 Activity Report.
- c) Information Report dated May 6, 2026 regarding Mental Health and Well-Being - Status Report.

d) Information Report dated May 6, 2026 regarding 2026 Vector-Borne Disease Program Update.

Carried.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence to Receive and File

CC 05-11-26 A package from Matthew Heather, Associate Principal – Manager, Planning and Jeff Henry, Urban Planner for Arcadis Professional Services (Canada) Inc., dated April 14, 2026 and April 27, 2026 that contain additional comments on behalf of his Clients Mark and Matt Huzevka pertaining to the County of Lambton's growth management work and land needs assessment ("LNA").

CC 05-12-26 A copy of a letter from Marcus Ryan, Chair, Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus (WOWC) to The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, dated April 20, 2026, advising of its resolution regarding support of Finlay's Law on Emergency Room Reform. WOWC calls on the Provincial Ministry of Health to take immediate action to reduce Emergency Room (ER) times with consideration for the importance of enhanced ER triage protocols and increased funding to strengthen emergency readiness; introduce Finlay's Law to ensure no child in Ontario is left without timely emergency medical care in hospitals; and to enforce the principles and requirements of the *Canada Health Act* through its spending power of Canada Health Transfers to Ontario.

#14: Case/McRoberts: That correspondence CC 05-11-26 and CC 05-12-26 be received and filed.

Carried.

Correspondence from Member Municipalities

CC 05-04-26 An email from Lisa Smeekens, Executive Assistant – Deputy Clerk, Town of Plympton-Wyoming, dated March 26, 2026 regarding a motion passed by Plympton-Wyoming Town Council with respect to heavy truck volumes on County Road 21 (Broadway Street) in Wyoming. The Town of Plympton-Wyoming is requesting that the County of Lambton complete an origin-destination study for County Road 21 (Broadway Street).

#15: Miller/Sageman: That correspondence CC 05-04-26 be received and filed.

Carried.

CC 05-06-26 A letter from Mandi Pearson, Director of Legislative Services, Clerk | Deputy Operations, Town of Petrolia, dated April 23, 2026, advising of its resolutions regarding Municipal Wide Shred Day Event. The Town of Petrolia is requesting that the

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County of Lambton consider adding Shred Days Events to the scheduled household hazardous waste collection events in the calendar year 2027.

#16: Loosley/McRoberts: That correspondence CC 05-06-26 be referred to the 2027 Budget deliberations.

Carried.

CC 05-10-26 A copy of a letter from Mayor Atkinson on behalf of the Town of Plympton-Wyoming to Honourable Paul Calandra, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, dated April 7, 2026, regarding strong support of Cargill Limited's request for a Minister's Zoning Order to limit incompatible development near its grain terminal in Sarnia.

#17: Agar/Atkinson: That correspondence CC 05-10-26 be received and filed.

Carried.

#### INFORMATION REPORTS

##### Infrastructure & Development Services Division

##### Information Report dated May 6, 2026 Regarding County Road 79 Rehabilitation Update

#18: Case/Miller: That the Information Report dated May 6, 2026 regarding County Road 79 Rehabilitation Update, be received and filed.

Carried.

##### Social Services Division

##### Information Report dated May 6, 2026 Regarding Housing Needs Assessment

#19: Sageman/Boushy: That the Information Report dated May 6, 2026 regarding Housing Needs Assessment, be received and filed.

Carried.

#### ITEMS NOT REQUIRING A MOTION

##### Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership Board of Directors Meeting Minutes dated January 27, 2026

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**#20:** Miller/Case: That the Sarnia-Lambton Economic Partnership Board of Directors Meeting Minutes dated January 27, 2026, be received and filed.

Carried.

COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Committee of the Whole (Open Session) minutes dated April 15, 2026 were presented.

**#21:** Ferguson/Sage: That the Committee of the Whole minutes dated April 15, 2026, be accepted as presented.

Carried.

ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

None at this time.

OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor White spoke to Council regarding correspondence received inquiring if the County of Lambton would undertake an Economic Impact Study on the Cargill facility in Sarnia. Councillor Loosley requested that the correspondence be circulated to all of County Council and appropriate staff.

Councillor Hand reminded Council that the Age-Friendly Expo 2026 was taking place today, Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at the Point Edward Arena. All are welcome to attend.

On behalf of Lambton County Council, Warden Kevin Marriott extended sincere congratulations to Councillor Boushy upon his retirement after dedicating more than 50 years of public service to his community.

NOTICE OF BY-LAWS

11 of 2026 A By-Law to Dedicate Certain Lands as Part of the County Road/Highway System.

12 of 2026 A By-Law to Amend By-Law No. 1 of 2026 to Increase the Building Services Department's Chargeable Rate.

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13 of 2026 A By-Law of The Corporation of the County of Lambton to confirm the resolutions and motions of Lambton County Council which were adopted up to and including May 6, 2026.

First and Second Reading of By-Laws

#22: Sageman/White: That By-Laws #11, #12 and #13 of 2026, as circulated, be taken as read a first and second time.

Carried.

Third and Final Reading of By-Laws

#23: Sageman/White: That By-Laws #11, #12 and #13 of 2026, as circulated, be taken as read a third and final time.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

#24: Atkinson/Loosley: That the Warden declare the meeting adjourned and that the next regular meeting of County Council be held on Wednesday, June 3, 2026 with the In-Camera Session to commence at 9:00 a.m.

Carried.

Time: 10:35 a.m.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Kevin Marriott, Warden

\_\_\_\_\_  
Olivia Leger, Clerk



**BOH 06-04-26**

15 May 2026

*Via Email*

Senator Rosemary Moodie  
Chair, Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology

Dear Senator Moodie:

**In Support of Alcohol Labelling Policy (Bill S-202)**

On behalf of the Board of Health of Algonia Public Health (APH), please accept this correspondence informing the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science, and Technology of the Board's support for mandatory alcohol container health warning labels on all alcohol containers sold in Canada, endorsing communications from Middlesex-London Health Unit (MLHU) re: Bill S-202.

Alcohol continues to be a leading risk factor for disease and injury in Canada, responsible for over 17,000 deaths and nearly 120,000 hospitalizations annually<sup>(1)</sup>. The social and economic implications of alcohol are also substantial, costing Canadians \$19.7 billion/year<sup>(1)</sup>, more than the societal costs of tobacco and opioids combined. Tobacco and non-medical cannabis products in Canada are required to display standardized labels that include health warnings and product information designed to inform consumers about associated health risks; labels support health equity in that they can reach all consumers regardless of education, income, or geographical location<sup>(2)</sup>.

Many Canadians are unaware of the causal relationship between alcohol consumption, even at low levels, and cancer risk<sup>(3)</sup>. Many Canadians are also unaware of the information contained in Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health regarding reducing alcohol risk, which involves awareness of standard alcoholic drink measurements.

Alcohol health warning labels are an effective tool to help consumers understand product risk<sup>(1, 2)</sup>. Bill S-202 proposes an amendment to the *Food and Drugs Act*, mandating alcohol warning labels that indicate the volume constituting a standard drink, detail the number of standard drinks in the beverage container, and display health messages regarding the relationship between the number of standard drinks consumed and health outcomes<sup>(4)</sup>.

The last decade has seen the expansion of alcohol sales to grocery and convenience stores in Ontario. This has increased the exposure of alcohol product promotion to children and youth<sup>(5)</sup>. Alcohol labelling has the potential to reach children and youth with messages that will counter

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**Blind River**  
P.O. Box 194  
9B Lawton Street  
Blind River, ON P0R 1B0  
Tel: 705-356-2551  
TF: 1 (888) 356-2551  
Fax: 705-356-2494

**Elliot Lake**  
ELNOS Building  
302-31 Nova Scotia Walk  
Elliot Lake, ON P5A 1Y9  
Tel: 705-848-2314  
TF: 1 (877) 748-2314  
Fax: 705-848-1911

**Sault Ste. Marie**  
294 Willow Avenue  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON P6B 0A9  
Tel: 705-942-4646  
TF: 1 (866) 892-0172  
Fax: 705-759-1534

**Wawa**  
18 Ganley Street  
Wawa, ON P0S 1K0  
Tel: 705-856-7208  
TF: 1 (888) 211-8074  
Fax: 705-856-1752

industry-based advertising, and to provide an opportunity for meaningful conversations between parents and their children regarding alcohol-related health harms.

The Board of Health for APH has historically supported public health policy measures intended to mitigate alcohol-related health harms, including supporting Bill S-254 in April 2023. Alcohol-related harms in Algoma exceed provincial averages and health guidelines; more than half of Algoma adults aged 19 or older exceed drinking guidelines, and the prevalence of heavy drinkers in Algoma is 6% higher than the provincial prevalence (21.2% and 16%, respectively<sup>(6)</sup>). Alcohol labelling is an effective tool to target those exceeding drinking guidelines, as messaging is available at point of pour.

At its meeting on April 22, 2026, the Algoma Board of Health passed the following motion:

**Be it resolved that the Board of Health for the District of Algoma Health Unit endorse MLHU's report and associated content (included in this summary report), recommending alcohol labelling for all alcohol manufactured or sold in Canada with:**

- 1. Health Warnings: prominent, rotating warnings on all alcohol containers.**
- 2. Canada's Guidance on Alcohol and Health: providing guidance for preventing or reducing consumption-related health risks.**
- 3. Standard Drink Size: static standard drink information per container and per serving.**

Algoma Public Health remains committed to preventing and reducing alcohol-related harms and will continue communicating with the communities we serve to increase awareness for the health risks associated with alcohol consumption.

Sincerely,




Suzanne Trivers  
Chair, Board of Health,  
District of Algoma Health Unit

cc: All Ontario Boards of Health  
MP Terry Sheehan, Sault Ste. Marie-Algoma

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|  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION</b></p> |   |
| <b>REPORT TO:</b>   | <b>WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL</b>  |
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>  | <b>LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH</b>  |
| <b>PREPARED BY:</b>   | <b>Chad Ikert, Manager, Health Protection<br/>Lori Lucas, Supervisor, Health Protection</b>   |
| <b>REVIEWED BY:</b>   | <b>Kevin Churchill, General Manager<br/>Stéphane Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer</b> |
| <b>MEETING DATE:</b>  | <b>June 3, 2026</b>   |
| <b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>  | <b>Air Quality and Extreme Temperature Initiatives - Update</b>                               |

**BACKGROUND**

Lambton Public Health’s (“LPH”) role in extreme temperature and air quality initiatives is enabled through the Ontario Public Health Standards (“OPHS”), which mandate Boards of Health to monitor, assess, and communicate to the public about health hazards, including climate change and extreme weather. Under the *Health Hazard Response Protocol, 2019*, public health units work to prevent and reduce the burden of illness from health hazards in the physical environment, including extreme weather, extreme temperatures and air quality.

This report summarizes the extreme temperature and air quality initiatives undertaken by LPH in collaboration with community partners. The most recent update on the Air Quality and Extreme Temperature initiatives was provided to Lambton’s Board of Health (County Council) on July 2, 2025.

**DISCUSSION**

Air Quality

The purpose of LPH’s Air Quality Response Procedure is to mitigate the health impacts from poor air quality events by monitoring, alerting, and conducting response activities. The procedure sets out the steps on how County of Lambton residents will be notified when an Air Quality Warning is issued for Sarnia-Lambton by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (“MECP”) and Environment and Climate Change Canada (“ECCC”), to educate the residents on the Air Quality Health Index (“AQHI”) and precautions that can be taken to reduce health and environmental impacts of poor air quality.

The AQHI is a health risk communication tool designed to provide understanding of what air quality means to health. The AQHI is utilized throughout Ontario, and it provides real-time air quality measurements and forecasts. These measurements are displayed using an index of 1 to 10+, which are linked to a health risk statement. The lower the number, the lower the risk.

In the fall of 2025, ECCC adopted a new colour-coded air quality alert system for Canada as part of updates to its national public weather alert system. The “*Special Air Quality Statement*” alert has been renamed “*Yellow Warning – Air Quality*” and the “*Air Quality Advisory*” alert has been renamed “*Orange Warning – Air Quality*”. The criteria and the standard operations procedures for issuing air quality alerts remain unchanged.

The new colour-coded alert is part of a national initiative to ensure air quality alerts are more reactive and consistent across the nation during extreme wildfire smoke events and aligns with recommendations from the United Nations World Meteorological Organization.

**Yellow Warning** – Air Quality alert is issued when the AQHI value is forecast to reach the high-risk category (AQHI 7-10). The purpose of a Yellow Warning – Air Quality alert is to be precautionary and for individuals to be vigilant of their health. This alert is also issued for areas where wildfire smoke is expected to cause deteriorating air quality, which can range from a few hours to a few days.

**Orange Warning** – Air Quality alert is designed to enhance the public’s awareness and response to air quality concerns during extreme wildfire smoke events. This alert will be issued when the AQHI is forecast to reach, or has reached, the very high-risk category (AQHI of 10 or higher) due to wildfire smoke.

Both the Yellow Warning and Orange Warning Air Quality alerts are issued jointly by ECCC and MECP.

Each May, LPH sends a memo to all County of Lambton employees to remind staff of the notification procedure. All County of Lambton employees are encouraged to visit the [Summer Hazards Intranet](#) page to keep informed on what precautions should be taken during a Yellow and Orange Air Quality alert.

When the first Air Quality alert of the season is issued, LPH issues a media release to the public reminding residents of action steps to take during air quality events, including reducing or rescheduling strenuous activities. The Air Quality Ontario website provides information on the AQHI, and Air Quality alerts. A link to this website can be found on [LambtonPublicHealth.ca](#).

The Yellow Warning and Orange Warning Air Quality alert frequency and duration are summarized in Appendix A.

### Air Quality Partnerships

LPH is a member of the Clean Air Sarnia and Area (“**CASA**”) advisory panel. The CASA advisory panel is a partnership of industry, First Nations, government, and community members dedicated to improving the air monitoring network in the Sarnia area airshed. CASA was formed in 2015 and works to improve air quality in the Sarnia area by:

- Sharing information about ambient air quality.
- Identifying and researching local air quality issues.
- Providing recommendations and information to the MECP and Bluewater Association for Safety, Environment and Sustainability (a.k.a. **BASES**) Environmental Monitoring (formerly the Sarnia-Lambton Environmental Association).
- Informing the public of local air quality.

The CASA website provides the public with transparent and timely public access to real-time air monitoring data. Visitors to [cleanairsarniaandarea.com](http://cleanairsarniaandarea.com) can view contaminant levels from air monitoring stations in the Sarnia and the downriver area. Air quality information is refreshed every hour, and users can clearly understand if the air quality is good, moderate, or poor compared to provincial standards. The site also includes an educational component about air monitoring stations, technology, and contaminants.

### Extreme Heat and Cold Warnings

Extreme heat/cold weather events pose elevated health risks, particularly among vulnerable populations. LPH works in collaboration with community partners to administer extreme temperature initiatives in Lambton County. These initiatives include coordinating or issuing of the ECCC Extreme Heat/Cold Warnings, which trigger response activities among community partners, including the activation of warming/cooling centres. The purpose of amplifying Extreme Heat/Cold Warnings is to provide a framework for implementing and coordinating preparedness and response activities which focus on reducing the negative health impacts of extreme weather conditions. The main objectives of these warnings are to:

- Alert the public, including and especially those most vulnerable, that extreme temperature conditions are either present or expected.
- Inform the public, including those most vulnerable, of the precautions that can be taken to prevent heat-related illness and cold injuries.
- Alert agencies and organizations that work with and provide services for vulnerable populations to prepare for a potential increase in service demand and to take appropriate measures to protect their clients from heat-related illness and cold injuries.

### Extreme Heat

LPH adopted the provincial *Harmonized Heat Warning and Information System* (“**HWIS**”) in the summer of 2016. This system aims to provide a consistent approach for processing and issuing heat warnings in Ontario to better protect residents and vulnerable community members during the summer season. The HWIS was developed jointly by ECCC, Health Canada, Ministry of Health, and Public Health Ontario, in consultation with public health units. The HWIS outlines the thresholds and processes for Heat Warnings and Extended Heat Warnings.

A **Heat Warning** for Lambton County is issued when one or both of the following conditions are met:

- Two consecutive days where the temperature is forecasted to be 31°C or higher during the day and 20°C or higher overnight; and/or
- Two consecutive days where the humidex is forecasted to be 40° C or higher.

An **Extended Heat Alert** is issued when the event is forecasted to last longer than two days and continues for three or more days.

A **Heat Warning** will also be issued by ECCC and LPH when there are episodes of high heat early in the heat season (i.e., May and June) for significant portions of the province. ECCC will use a single day criterion (for max. temperature and/or max. humidex) for the warning as guidance for issuance for the affected forecast region.

### Cold Warning

LPH also issues cold warnings with a similar process to the heat warning system. A **Cold Warning** for Lambton County is issued when one or more of the following conditions are met:

- ECCC forecasts daily predicted low temperature of -15° Celsius without wind chill;
- The wind chill reaches the level at which ECCC issues an Extreme Cold Warning; and/or
- Extreme weather conditions, such as a blizzard or ice storm.

The frequency and duration of Heat and Cold Warnings in Lambton County for the period 2012-2025 are summarized in Appendix B.

### Warming and Cooling Centers

During Special Weather Statements, Heat Warnings, Extended Heat Warnings, and Cold Warnings, temporary warming/cooling center locations are opened by community partners. These include recreation centers, health centers, Lambton County libraries and other designated publicly accessible buildings. LPH provides information about warming and cooling center locations on the LPH website at [LambtonPublicHealth.ca](http://LambtonPublicHealth.ca) and in media

releases issued for Special Weather Statements, Heat Warnings, Extended Heat Warnings and Cold Warnings.

For the 2026 season, there are 38 warming and cooling center locations available throughout the County.

#### Extreme Temperature Interest Group (ETSG)

LPH chairs the Extreme Temperatures Interest Group (“**ETSG**”), which consists of community agencies and organizations that work with vulnerable populations. The ETSG is encouraged to distribute all warnings to their clients and partners to ensure vulnerable populations are protected.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All costs associated with the health hazard program, which includes air quality and extreme temperature initiatives, are cost-share funded between the province and municipality, as approved in LPH’s 2026 Health Protection budget.

#### **CONSULTATIONS**

Staff of LPH’s Environmental Health team were consulted during the development of this report.

#### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

LPH’s health hazard program, which includes air quality and extreme temperature initiatives, are consistent with the principles, values, and areas of effort identified in the County’s strategic plan, supporting the areas of effort toward community development, health, and wellness; service and communications; and partnerships.

#### **CONCLUSION**

LPH’s Air Quality and Extreme Temperature Initiatives have proactively increased the public’s protection and awareness of such health hazards. The partnerships and community engagement opportunities that LPH is involved in have provided effective opportunities to build capacity to address current and future extreme temperature and air quality concerns.

**Appendix A**

**Number of Yellow and Orange Air Quality Alerts (formerly known as Special Air Quality Statement (SAQS), Smog and Air Health Advisories (SAHA), or Air Quality Advisories (AQA)) 2012 - 2025**

|                       | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024* | 2025 | Average |
|-----------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|------|---------|
| Alerts Issued         | 0    | 0    | 3    | 1    | 4    | 0    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 4    | 1     | 4    | 2       |
| Total Duration (Days) | 0    | 0    | 3    | 1    | 3.5  | 0    | 3    | 2    | 3    | 9    | 1     | 9    | 4       |

\*In 2024, Smog and Air Health Advisories ceased to exist and were replaced by SAQS and AQA as per the Ministry of Health's [Wildfire Smoke and Air Quality Health Reference Document | ontario.ca](#). Starting in 2026, the SAQS and AQA will be known as Yellow Warning – Air Quality and Orange Warning – Air Quality.

**Appendix B**

**Number of Heat Warnings (includes Extended Heat Warnings and Special Weather Statements) and Cold Alerts  
2012 - 2025**

|                             | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | 2025 | Average |
|-----------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|---------|
| <b>Heat Warnings Issued</b> | 2    | 5    | 7    | 3    | 6    | 3    | 5    | 5    | 7    | 3    | 4    | 5    | 6       |
| Total Duration (Days)       | 3    | 5    | 23   | 6    | 21   | 8    | 17   | 16   | 19   | 10   | 11   | 24   | 13      |
| <b>Cold Warnings Issued</b> | 10   | 8    | 5    | 2    | 4    | 5    | 0    | 2    | 5    | 2    | 1    | 2    | 4       |
| Total Duration (Days)       | 27   | 26   | 6    | 2    | 7    | 9    | 0    | 23   | 7    | 4    | 1    | 5    | 10      |



**PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION**

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| <b>REPORT TO:</b>        | <b>WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL</b>  |
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>       | <b>LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH</b>  |
| <b>PREPARED BY:</b>      | <b>Siobhan Churchill, Supervisor, Health Promotion<br/>Jordan Banninga, Manager, Health Promotion</b> |
| <b>REVIEWED BY:</b>      | <b>Kevin Churchill, General Manager<br/>Stéphane Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer</b>         |
| <b>MEETING DATE:</b>     | <b>June 3, 2026</b>   |
| <b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b> | <b>Physical Activity and Active Transportation - Status Report</b>                                    |

**BACKGROUND**

Physical activity and active transportation are important contributors to health and well-being. Regular physical activity reduces the risk of chronic diseases, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, several cancers, and respiratory conditions. It also supports mental health and well-being throughout the course of life. Active transportation - getting to destinations by walking, cycling, or using transit - is a practical way to build physical activity into daily routines and has the added potential to reduce emissions, and strengthen community connection.

Lambton Public Health (“**LPH**”) has a mandate under the Ontario Public Health Standards (Ontario Ministry of Health, 2021) and its Chronic Disease and Well-Being Program Standard to assess the prevalence of chronic disease and related risk factors, promote physical activity/active transportation, and embed health equity approaches in programs and services. LPH’s 2025-2029 Strategic Plan further identifies Mental and Physical Health in Early Life as a strategic priority (Lambton Public Health, 2025).

The purpose of this report is to provide the Board of Health (County Council) with an overview of recent local physical activity and active transportation data and summarize how Lambton Public Health contributes to physical activity and active transportation through community and partner mobilization, health teaching and education, healthy public policy, and population health assessment and surveillance.

**DISCUSSION****Community Health Status and Physical Activity**

- **Just over half of Lambton adults meet physical activity guidelines, consistent with provincial rates.** Locally, 54% of adults in Lambton County met or exceeded the recommended 150 minutes per week of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity as of 2021, which is similar to the Ontario rate (Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, 2025).
- **For children and youth, physical activity decreases with age.** In 2025, 65% of Lambton parents surveyed reported that their child 6 years of age or older meets or exceeds the Canadian 24-Hour Movement Guideline recommendation for children and youth (60 minutes per day with vigorous activity at least three days per week) (Preliminary; Lambton Public Health, 2026). Similarly, the Lambton Kent District School Board (“**LKDSB**”) School Climate Survey (2024) found that 61% of Grade 4-6 students, 60% of Grade 7-8 students, and 52% of Grade 9-12 students spent at least one hour per day being physically active (Lambton Kent District School Board, 2024).
- **Most elementary school students participate in extracurricular activities, but participation drops in secondary school.** The 2023 Canadian Health Survey on Children and Youth found that 76% of Lambton youth aged 5-21 participated in coached or instructed physical activity in the past week (Ontario Ministry of Health, 2026). The LKDSB School Climate Survey (2024) found that participation in any extracurricular activities decreased with age (77% of Grade 7-8 students, compared to 62% of Grade 9-12 students).
- **Several chronic conditions that may affect, or be affected by physical activity levels are elevated in Lambton County.** Locally, 33% of youth aged 2-17 and 71% of adults are overweight or obese, both consistent with Ontario averages (Ontario Ministry of Health, 2026; Statistics Canada, 2022-2023). Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and hypertension are also significantly higher than Ontario averages among adults over 20 years of age (Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion, 2025). These conditions can both reduce capacity for physical activity and be worsened by inactivity.
- **Active transportation is an equitable and practical lever for increasing population physical activity.** Nationally, more than two in five (42%) Canadian adults reported using active transportation at least once in the week prior to a 2022-2024 survey (Statistics Canada, 2025). Canadian research indicates that people who use active transportation tend to have higher overall physical activity levels (Statistics Canada, 2025), and that active transportation uptake does not differ significantly across income, gender, urban/rural geography, or education subgroups - making it a potentially more equitable vehicle for improving population health than organized recreation alone (Lang et al., 2026).

Lambton Public Health delivers interventions to promote physical activity and active transportation across settings including schools, community events, and community partnerships.

#### Engaging Community Partners

**Lambton County Trails and Active Transportation Network** - LPH coordinates Lambton County Trails and Active Transportation Network - a multi-sector partnership intended to increase safe use of local trails and active transportation, supporting active lifestyles and strengthening the social fabric of our diverse communities. Partners include municipalities, County of Lambton divisions (Public Works, Social Services) conservation authorities, non-profit groups, and more.

Most recently, LPH convened this group for a full day of planning and networking. Planned outputs for 2026 include an updated map of Lambton County trails, a revised terms of reference for the network, and collaborative focus areas including trail maintenance and service delivery. LPH will continue to support this network by providing coordination and supporting ongoing assessment of the value and impact of the partnership.

#### Education, Skills, and Capacity Building

**Playground Activity Leaders in Schools (“PALS”)** - PALS is an evidence-informed leadership program for children created to increase physical activity, decrease conflict, reduce the incidence of bullying, and provide leadership opportunities for students. LPH uses a train-the-trainer model to support implementation of PALS in local elementary schools and other recreation settings.

**Physical Literacy Teaching and Education** - LPH builds capacity for physical literacy across early years, education, and community settings through training, partnerships, and resource development. Staff deliver workshops and presentations and work with partners to coordinate regional training for the recreation sector.

#### Population Health Assessment and Surveillance

As part of its population health assessment mandate, LPH monitors and shares physical activity trends using a range of local, provincial, and national data sources. The physical activity and active transportation data described in the Community Health Status section of this report reflect LPH's ongoing surveillance activities.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

All costs associated with physical activity and active transportation interventions are cost-share funded between the province and municipality, as approved in LPH's 2026 Health Promotion budget.

**CONSULTATIONS**

In the preparation of this report, staff consulted with Lambton Public Health Epidemiologists and Health Promoters.

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Physical activity and active transportation and the work described in this report aligns with Lambton Public Health's strategic priority of Mental and Physical Health in Early Life and with the County's vision of a caring community. This work supports Lambton County's strategic area of effort related to *Health and Wellness*.

**CONCLUSION**

Physical activity and active transportation are important and modifiable determinants of health in Lambton County. Local school-based data show that physical activity rates decline with age. At the same time, just over half of Lambton adults meet physical activity guidelines, and the renewed Lambton County Trails and Active Transportation Network provides a foundation for collective action.

Lambton Public Health will continue to build physical literacy skills, promote active transportation, engage community partners, and monitor local trends to promote physical activity and reduce the burden of chronic disease in Lambton County.

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|  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION</b></p> |  |
| <b>REPORT TO:</b>   | <b>WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL</b>   |
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>  | <b>LAMBTON PUBLIC HEALTH</b>   |
| <b>PREPARED BY:</b>   | <b>Crystal Palleschi, Manager, Clinical and Family Services<br/>Kerry Phillips, Supervisor, Clinical and Family Services</b> |
| <b>REVIEWED BY:</b>   | <b>Kevin Churchill, General Manager<br/>Stéphane Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer</b>                                |
| <b>MEETING DATE:</b>  | <b>June 3, 2026</b>  |
| <b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>  | <b>Healthy Babies Healthy Children Program Update</b>  |

**BACKGROUND**

As outlined in the *Ontario Public Health Standards*, Lambton Public Health (“**LPH**”) is required to deliver all components of the Healthy Babies Healthy Children (“**HBHC**”) Program in accordance with the *Healthy Babies Healthy Children Protocol, 2018*.<sup>1,2</sup> HBHC is a voluntary, family-centered program funded by Ontario’s Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services.<sup>3</sup>

The HBHC program supports families from the prenatal period until school entry, with the goal of promoting a healthy start in life. Families identified “with risk” through universal HBHC screening are offered further assessment and home visiting services by a Public Health Nurse (“**PHN**”).

LPH PHNs on the Child Health team receive specialized training and can provide:

- Prenatal education and support;
- Referrals to community support services;
- Early identification of and support for healthy child growth and development through screening, assessments, and evidence-based interventions; and
- Support for positive parenting and relationship skill development.

The purpose of this report is to provide a comprehensive overview of the HBHC program and its key components. While Staff provide quarterly updates on program indicators to Lambton’s Board of Health (County Council), the most recent comprehensive report presented to County Council was through the *Healthy Babies Healthy Children Update* report dated September 21, 2022.

**DISCUSSION****Screening & Assessment**

The HBHC Screen is designed to identify families with risk who may benefit from the HBHC home visiting program. The program has three entry points: prenatal, postpartum (birth to six weeks postpartum), and early childhood (six weeks of age until school entry), though most HBHC screens are completed in the postpartum period during the family's hospital stay.

Referrals to the HBHC program can also be made at any time by health care providers, community agencies, or the families themselves.

Families who screen with risk on the HBHC Screen and consent to follow-up are offered an initial home visit with a PHN to complete an In-depth Assessment. The In-depth Assessment is a more comprehensive review of the family's strengths, needs, and circumstances, and helps confirm eligibility for HBHC home visiting services.

In 2025, 1,478 HBHC Screens were completed, including 455 prenatal, 973 postpartum, and 50 early childhood screens. Given that there were 1,104 live births among Lambton resident families in 2025, 88% of families were screened during the postpartum stage, exceeding the provincial target of 80%.

Following universal screening, 285 In-depth Assessments were completed. This represents 94% of families who were offered and accepted a home visit to complete an In-depth Assessment, exceeding the provincial target of 70%. Of the families who received an In-depth Assessment in 2025, 215 (75%) were confirmed as having moderate or high risk and were therefore eligible for home visiting services.

**Home Visiting Services**

Home visiting services are a core component of the HBHC program for families confirmed as eligible following the In-depth Assessment. For eligible families who consent to home visiting services, the PHN and family collaboratively develop a Family Service Plan. This plan is used to identify goals, guide service delivery, and monitor progress over time. Home visiting interventions are tailored to each family's strengths and needs, with a focus on healthy growth and development, parental self-care, infant feeding, breastfeeding support, and parenting.

PHNs use evidence-based assessment tools and interventions to support service planning and monitor progress. For example, the Nursing Child Assessment Satellite Training ("**NCAST**") Parent-Child Interaction Feeding and Teaching Scales are used to assess parent-child interactions and help inform strategies that strengthen attachment, feeding, and child development outcomes.<sup>4</sup>

Families participating in HBHC home visiting are also connected with community services that support infant development, caregiver mental health, and broader family well-being. PHNs also ensure families are referred to other LPH services, as appropriate.

In total, 1,944 home visits were completed with 372 families in 2025, including families who entered the HBHC home visiting program prior to 2025. Among the 215 families confirmed as eligible through the In-Depth Assessment in 2025, 196 (91%) received two or more home visits, exceeding the provincial target of 80%.

#### Professional Development & Evidence-Based Practice

HBHC PHNs receive ongoing professional development to support safe, high-quality, and evidence-informed service delivery. Training topics include Trauma- and Violence-Informed Care, Intimate Partner Violence, De-escalating Potentially Violent Situations, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, French Language Services, and Indigenous Cultural Safety. All Child Health PHNs have completed the Breastfeeding Level II course, and two PHNs are certified Lactation Consultants.

The team also maintains internal capacity to support evidence-based practice. One PHN is a certified NCAST Instructor, which enables LPH to provide in-house annual recertification for PHNs and supports consistency in assessment and intervention.

In 2025, PHNs also completed training related to newly developed Public Health Nursing Care Plans for Supporting Perinatal Mental Health, strengthening the team's capacity to respond to the mental health needs of HBHC clients.

Child Health staff and management also participate in Communities of Practice through the Public Health Nursing Practice Research & Education Program ("**PHN-PREP**").<sup>5</sup> PHN-PREP develops, evaluates, and mobilizes evidence-informed resources to support home visiting programs in Ontario and LPH's involvement helps ensure local practice remains aligned with current knowledge.

#### Program Enhancements & Future Direction

Consistent with LPH's strategic priority of Mental and Physical Health in Early Life, including *enhancing services that meet the needs of children and families*, LPH is participating in a project led by researchers at SickKids Hospital, Toronto, to define Infant and Early Mental Health Care Pathways.<sup>6</sup> The HBHC program is an important entry point for early identification of developmental and mental health concerns among infants and young children. Through participation in this project, LPH aims to improve awareness of available services, strengthen connections among community partners, and support a more coordinated pathway to care for families.

This work is further supported by the *Ontario Early Adversity and Resilience Framework*, recently published by Public Health Ontario's Adverse Childhood Experiences & Resilience Community of Practice.<sup>7</sup> The framework consistently identifies HBHC as an upstream strategy at the child, family, and community levels to build protective factors, reduce early adversity, and foster resilience. LPH will continue to assess local strengths and service gaps in relation to this framework and align program planning with provincial direction as implementation evolves.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The HBHC Program is 100% funded by the Ontario Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services as described in the approved 2026 LPH budget.

**CONSULTATIONS**

LPH's Medical Officer of Health was consulted in the preparation of this report.

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

The HBHC Program contributes to the County of Lambton Strategic Plan 2024-2027, Area of Effort #3, *Community Development, Health and Wellness - Implementing, monitoring and updating community health and wellness-related plans and priorities*. The program is delivered in partnership with local community agencies, fulfilling Area of Effort #5, *Partnerships*.

The HBHC Program aligns with Lambton Public Health's 2025-2029 Strategic Plan, contributing to the strategic priority of Mental and Physical Health in Early Life, particularly *enhancing services that meet the health needs of children and families from preconception to school entry*.

**CONCLUSION**

The HBHC Program is a key component of LPH's approach to supporting families during the critical early years of a child's life. Through early identification, intervention, and community referrals, PHNs help strengthen parenting capacity and promote healthy growth and development. Continued delivery of the program contributes to improved health outcomes for children and families in Lambton County.

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Health Babies Healthy Children Program Update (page 5)

June 3, 2026

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555 EXMOUTH STREET, SARNIA, ONTARIO, N7T 5P6    PHONE 519.336.6871    WWW.MLS-SARNIA.COM

April 28, 2026

**Warden Kevin Marriott**

Lambton County  
789 Broadway Street  
Wyoming, Ontario N0N 1T0

**RE: COMMENDATION ON THE APPROVAL OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT THE FORMER ST. BARTHOLOMEW'S CHURCH SITE**

Dear Warden Marriott and Members of Council,

On behalf of the Sarnia-Lambton Association of REALTORS® (SLAR) and our Members across Lambton County, I am writing to express our sincere appreciation for Council's decision to approve the development of an affordable housing project at the former St. Bartholomew's Church site. The approval of a 94-unit, rent-geared-to-income building to be owned and operated by the County is a meaningful step forward for this community, and SLAR commends Council for the care and resolve it has shown in getting here.

Our Members work in this market every day. They understand, better than most, the gap between what is available and what people can afford. With over 1,000 eligible families currently on the County's waitlist for affordable housing, the weight of that gap is not theoretical; it represents real families, seniors, and individuals who are waiting for a place to call home. The prospect of 94 new rent-geared-to-income units, including 16 barrier-free units designed for those with accessibility needs, is significant.

SLAR has long advocated for proactive, supply-based approaches to housing across our region. Seeing the County step up as the owner and operator of this development, bringing the same standards of maintenance and tenant care that it applies to its existing housing stock, is exactly the kind of responsible, long-term commitment that builds community confidence and delivers lasting results. We are also encouraged by the County's willingness to utilize this existing site rather than wait for other opportunities to emerge.

Thank you, Warden Marriott and Members of Council. SLAR looks forward to seeing further initiatives of this kind move forward across the county, and we stand ready to support that work however we can.

Yours sincerely



**Jeremy Guerette, President**

Sarnia-Lambton Association of REALTORS®

CC:

- Deputy Warden Agar
- Councillor McRoberts
- Councillor Miller
- Councillor Ferguson
- Councillor Sageman
- Councillor White
- Councillor Veen
- Councillor Hand
- Councillor Dennis
- Councillor Atkinson
- Councillor Loosley
- Councillor Boushy
- Councillor Case
- Councillor Cook
- Councillor Broad
- Councillor Bradley

|   |  |
|---|--|
|  | <b>CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION</b>  |
| <b>REPORT TO:</b>   | <b>CHAIR AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS</b>   |
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>  | <b>CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION</b>  |
| <b>PREPARED BY:</b>   | <b>Andrew Meyer, General Manager, Cultural Services / Deputy CAO<br/>Rob King, Manager, Procurement &amp; Projects</b> |
| <b>REVIEWED BY:</b>   | <b>Stéphane Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer</b>   |
| <b>MEETING DATE:</b>  | <b>June 3, 2026</b>  |
| <b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>  | <b>Wyoming Administration Lobby Improvements</b>   |

**BACKGROUND**

In 2023, the General Manager team identified a need to form an internal staff Space Planning working group to survey the various County Divisions regarding their respective service delivery, administrative and storage space requirements. The review of space requirements aligns with the County of Lambton’s ongoing commitment to the provision of responsive services and the alignment of service delivery to emerging needs and expectations.

The objective of the staff working group was to define short-term, mid-term and long-term needs for the corporation to ensure the effective and efficient use of existing space through collaboration across service areas. The group was also formed to raise awareness of the space available and identify opportunities that may not be known to the various service areas.

As an outcome of this process, the staff working group put forward 14 recommendations to the General Manager team to address current and future space needs, and respond to strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

One of these recommendations was to implement a task force of staff representatives at the County Administration building located at 789 Broadway Street, Wyoming, to develop plans for the reconfiguration of administrative, storage and public use spaces at the facility. As part of its planning, this group identified the Council Chambers and lobby space as the most immediate priorities for improvements to address longstanding maintenance and accessibility challenges within these spaces.

In 2025, staff completed the renovations to the Council Chambers space, and began preparations for improvements to the lobby space, to be supported through the 2026 capital budget. Improvements to these public areas represent the initial phases of a multi-

year investment in the County Administration building to address public service, administrative and storage space requirements for the corporation.

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an update on upcoming renovations to the Administration building's lobby area over the course of this summer.

### **DISCUSSION**

In consultation with procurement and facilities staff, the Office of the CAO and the General Manager team, the following improvements were identified for the Wyoming \ Administration lobby space:

- Establish new public consultation space at an accessible service height, with seating and counter surface for review of materials, and new waiting area for visitors;
- Installation of new accessible service desk, rotated 90 degrees to create separation from public reception and administrative areas, with glass screen system and speak port through glass;
- Installation of a new automatic door to provide accessible entry to administrative area, and reception glass;
- Installation of new wall section, doors and frames to separate loading bay from lobby area;
- Replacement of existing floor tile and base throughout, and installation of new stair safety treads and risers, and stair hand railings to improve accessibility;
- Installation of new wall lighting, bulkhead with downlighting for work areas, and ceiling fixtures to suit new layout;
- Electrical and data upgrades to suit new layout and functionality;
- Painting throughout;
- Update wayfinding signage and historical interpretation in public areas.

To support these improvements, staff engaged JPM Architecture Inc. in March to undertake detailed design drawings. The drawings for the renovations are attached hereto for Council's review. The project was issued for public tender in April, and bids were received on May 6, 2026. As an outcome of this process, Tradition Construction Inc. was recommended by the architect as the low compliant bid, at amount of \$235,580.64 plus H.S.T.

In consultation with the contractor, renovation work will commence on Friday, July 3, 2026, and is expected to be substantially completed by Tuesday, September 1, 2026. This timing was conscientiously chosen in order to minimize disruption to the established Council schedule and public service delivery. While there may be some finishing work to complete into the months of September and early October based on the order timelines for materials (specifically, glass and frames required for the project), the space will be accessible to staff, Council and the public effective, Wednesday, September 2, 2026.

Consequently, during the months of July and August, a temporary reception space will be established at the adjacent Lambton County Archives and Library Headquarters facility, located at the rear of the parking lot at 787 Broadway Street, Wyoming. This temporary location will accommodate reception, phone dispatch, and in-person meetings and customer service inquiries over the summer months. Notices informing members of the public of the temporary reception space will be issued prior to the renovations beginning, and clear signage will be erected at the building throughout the renovation period.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no additional financial implications associated with the implementation of these improvements to the Wyoming Administration Building lobby as the project was incorporated in the 2026 capital budget. As noted above, the contractor bid provided is \$235,580.64 plus H.S.T. – an expenditure included in the Corporation's 2026 budget.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

This project involved consultation with the General Manager team, Manager, Procurement & Projects, Manager, Development Services and Chief Building Official, and the Coordinator, Facilities Services.

### **STRATEGIC PLAN**

The proposed accessibility and maintenance improvements to the County Council Chambers align with the County's Strategic Plan commitment to the provision of responsive services and the alignment of service delivery to emerging needs and expectations.

This project also compliments the objectives of the County of Lambton's Accessibility Plan to identify, remove and prevent barriers to people with disabilities.

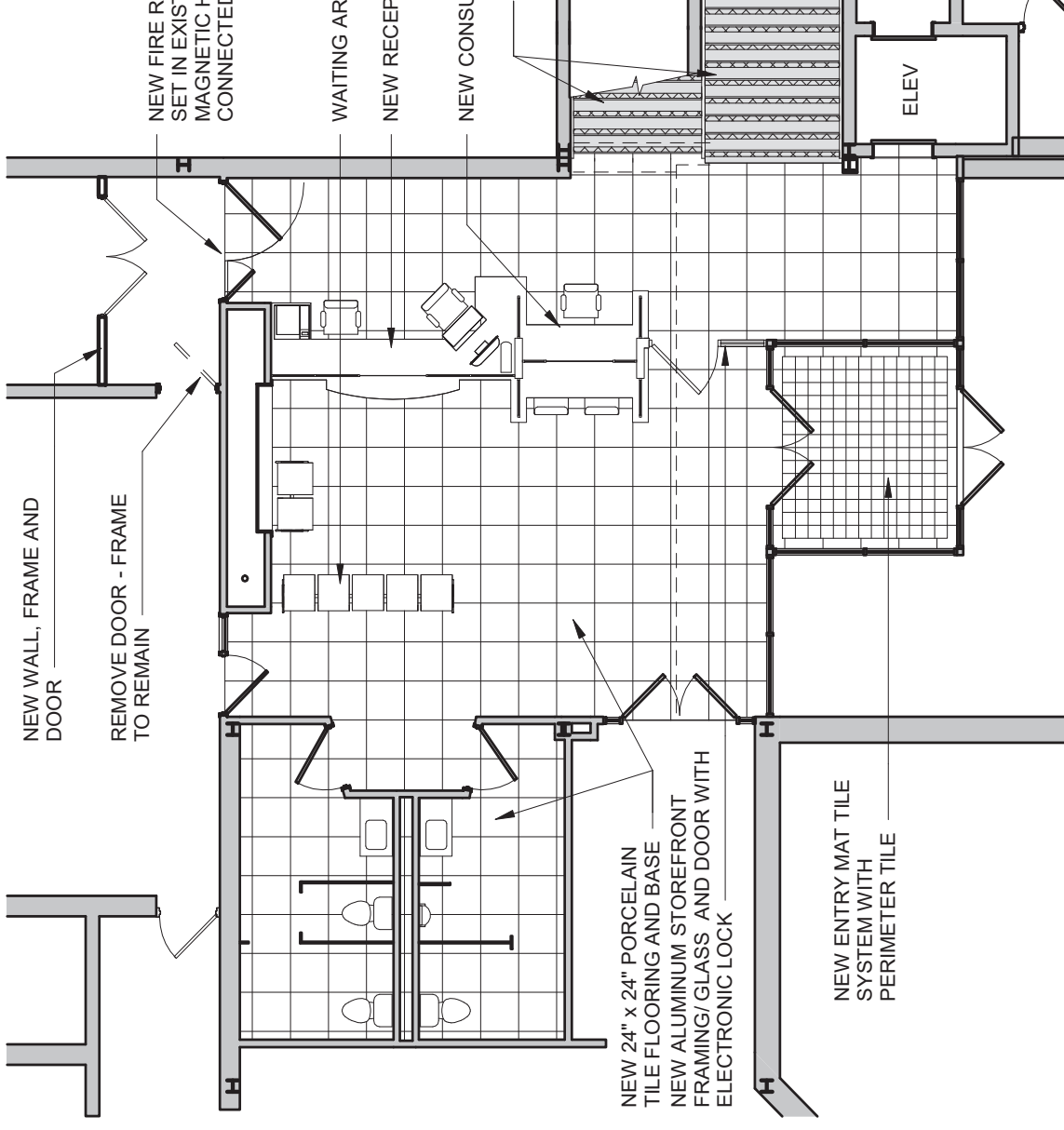
### **CONCLUSION**

As part of the County of Lambton's ongoing commitment to the provision of responsive services and the alignment of service delivery to emerging needs and expectations, staff have proposed a renovation to the lobby space located within the County Administration

Wyoming Administration Lobby Improvements (page 4)

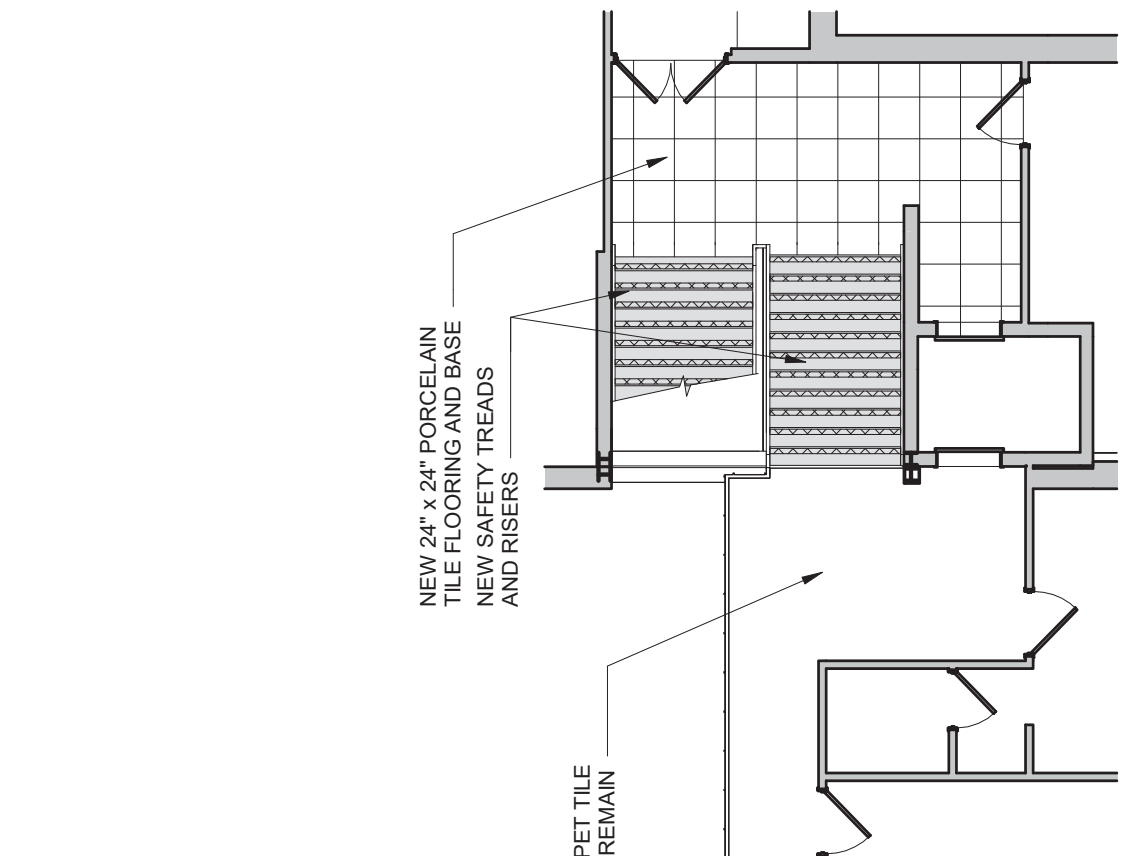
June 3, 2026

Building in Wyoming. This renovation will build upon previous investments in the Council Chambers to address security, accessibility and maintenance improvements in the public areas of the facility.



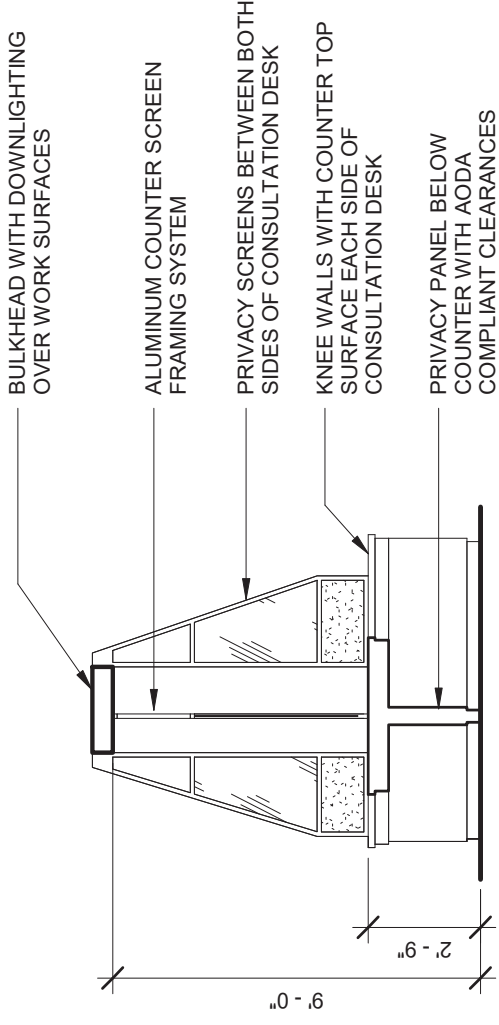
EXISTING VINYL TILE FLOORING TO REMAIN  
 PAINT ALL EXISTING PAINTED WALLS, DOORS AND FRAME FACING INTO LOBBY AREA

**GROUND/LOWER LEVEL PLAN**

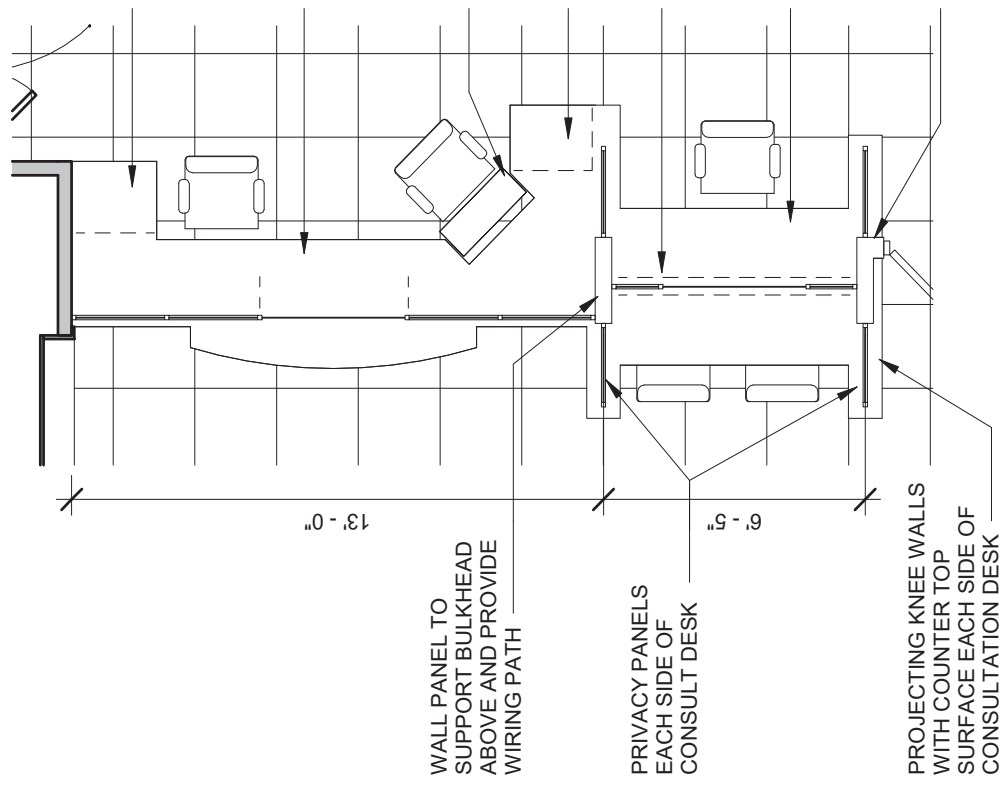
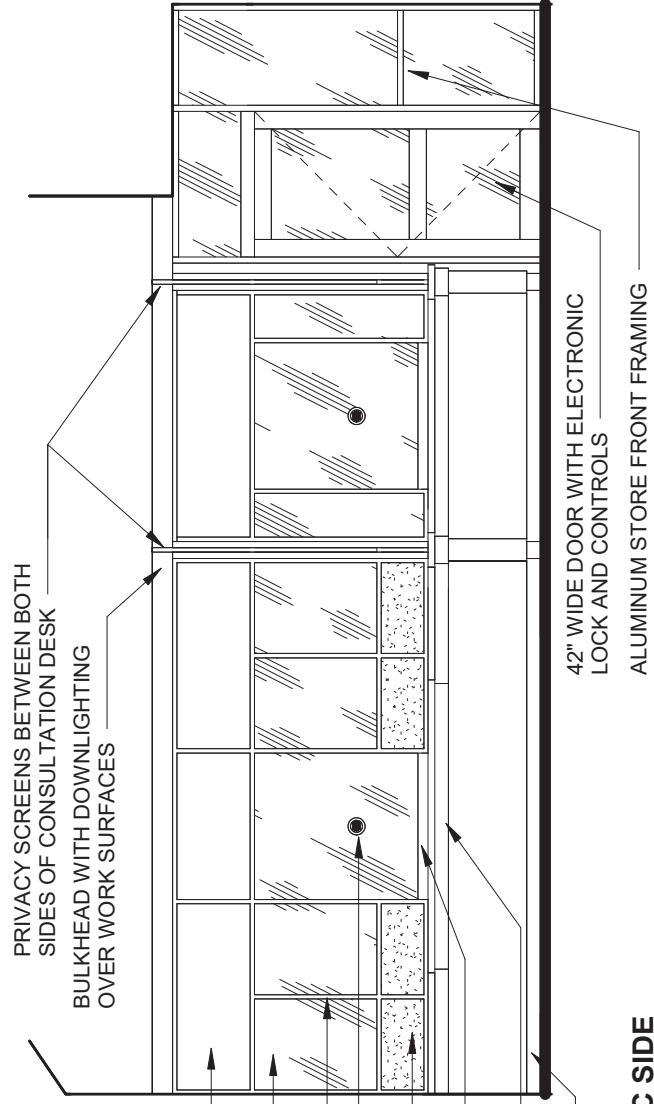


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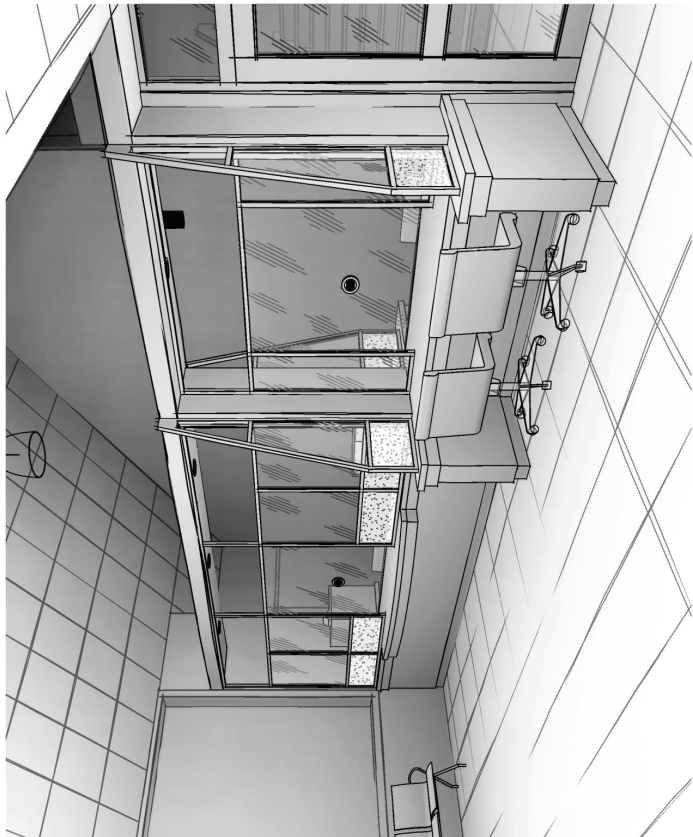
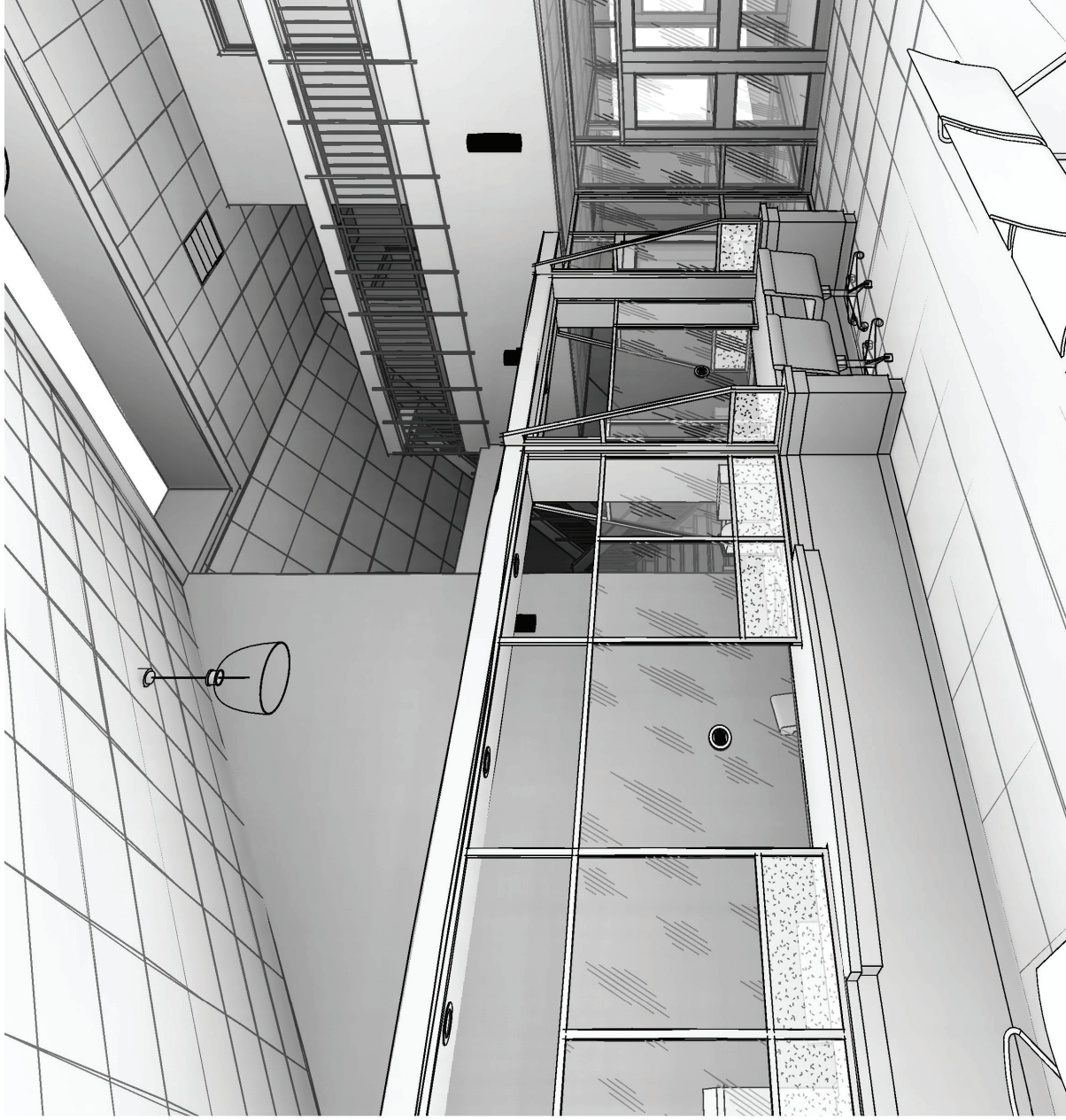
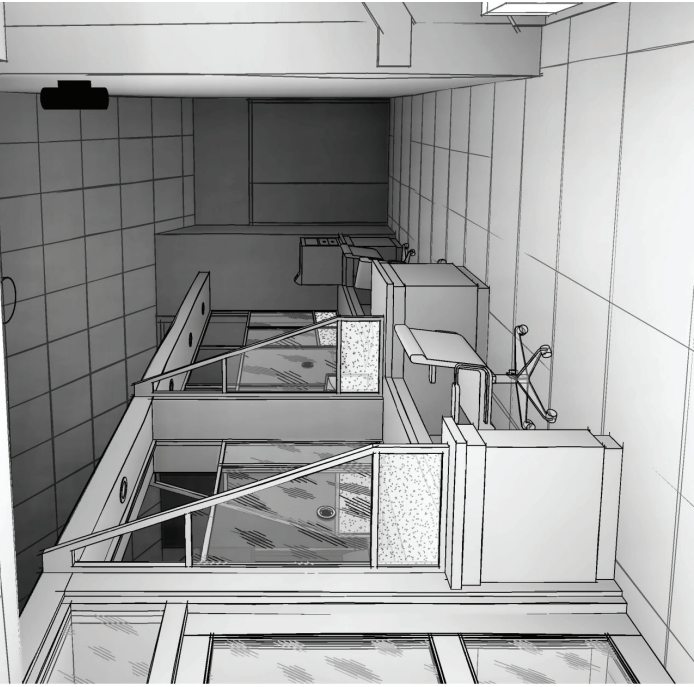
**U.P. PLAN**




**CONSULTATION DESK - SECTION**



**RECEPTION DESK - PLAN**



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|  <p style="text-align: center;"><b>SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION</b></p> |  |
| <b>REPORT TO:</b>  | <b>WARDEN AND LAMBTON COUNTY COUNCIL</b>   |
| <b>DEPARTMENT:</b>   | <b>HOUSING SERVICES</b>  |
| <b>PREPARED BY:</b>  | <b>Melisa Johnson, Manager</b>   |
| <b>REVIEWED BY:</b>  | <b>Melissa Fitzpatrick, General Manager<br/>Stéphane Thiffault, Chief Administrative Officer</b> |
| <b>MEETING DATE:</b>   | <b>June 3, 2026</b>  |
| <b>INFORMATION ITEM:</b>   | <b>County of Lambton 10 - Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2026-2035</b>                       |

**BACKGROUND**

Under the *Housing Services Act 2011*, Service Managers must develop comprehensive, multi-year housing and homelessness plans and review them at least every five years. These plans support local strategic planning to address community housing and homelessness needs.

Lambton County Council approved its first Housing and Homelessness Plan in 2013 and approved a five-year review of the plan in 2020. In accordance with the *Housing Services Act 2011*, the County was required to renew its Plan in 2026. To support this work, OrgCode Consulting Inc. (“**OrgCode**”) was retained to co-develop a comprehensive plan for future housing and homelessness strategies. The attached, updated County of Lambton 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2026-2035 (“**The Plan**”) provides the opportunity to reflect on progress over the past decade, review emergent and future housing needs, and identify priorities for partnership, investment, and system improvement.

This purpose of this report is to share The Plan, attached as (Appendix 1), with Council.

**DISCUSSION**

The Plan was shaped through extensive community engagement, including key informant interviews, site visits, public engagement sessions, an online survey, and consultations with non-profit housing partners, the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee, and the lived experience table. Developed as a community-driven plan, it relies on collaboration across the non-profit, public, and private sectors, as well as local residents, to advance evidence-informed housing and homelessness solutions. Grounded in housing-focused best practices, the Plan’s recommendations aim to improve access to

safe, appropriate housing and support long-term housing stability outcomes in Lambton County.

Guided by the vision that every resident has access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing, the following focus areas are recommended as the County of Lambton moves forward with the Plan:

- Prioritize community collaboration and system governance
- Increase the supply of affordable, deeply affordable, and specialized housing
- Strengthen homelessness prevention mechanisms
- Deepen investment in for-Indigenous and by-Indigenous homelessness response
- Invest in sustainable pathways back to housing for the County's most vulnerable residents

The strategies outlined in the Plan focus on prevention, early intervention, and expanding the supply of affordable housing as key foundations for progress. Achieving meaningful change will require strong collaboration with Indigenous partners, community agencies, municipal and provincial stakeholders, landlords, developers, and individuals with lived and living experience. Successful implementation will also depend on ongoing monitoring, transparent reporting, and a commitment to continuous improvement as community needs evolve.

Using the Plan's findings, staff have created A Housing and Homelessness 5-Year Action Plan (Appendix 2). The purpose of this action plan is to share recommendations from the comprehensive report provided by OrgCode, consolidated into clear, actionable goals for the first five years of the 10-year planning cycle.

As required by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing ("MMAH"), the attached Plan was submitted to the Ministry for review on May 29, 2026. The County of Lambton must allow the Ministry 90 days to comment on the plan before finalizing. Once the Ministry's comments have been provided, staff will return to Council to seek final approval of the Plan.

### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications as a result of this report.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Consultations have taken place with community groups, community agencies, consumers, local municipal staff and politicians, housing providers, Lambton County Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee and County staff from various departments.

**STRATEGIC PLAN**

Delivering housing and homelessness services is 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:

- Strengthening the County's advocacy and lobbying efforts with other levels of government to raise the profile of the County and its needs to secure improved senior government supports, funding, grants, and other resources to meet emerging infrastructure and service needs;
- Consulting with the community and stakeholders on ways to increase housing options and affordability, and innovative programs and initiatives that focus on poverty reduction and promote social belonging;
- Supporting the development of a variety of affordable housing to meet demand;
- Implementing, monitoring and updating community health and wellness-related plans and priorities, including, but not limited to, the *Housing and Homelessness Plan*, *Community Safety & Well-Being Plan*, the Long-Term Care division's mission, vision, and values, *Age Friendly Community Planning framework*, Lambton Public Health's strategic priorities, *Lambton Drug & Alcohol Strategy*, *Lambton EMS Master Plan*, and *Child Care and Early Years 5-Year Service System Plan*; and
- Advocating for, and supporting access to, mental health and addiction services.

**CONCLUSION**

The County of Lambton 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2026-2035 sets out five areas of focus with sub-goals to guide housing and homelessness system planning. Successful implementation and measurable improvements across the housing and homelessness system will require coordinated, sustained action across the full housing continuum. Addressing current pressures is essential not only to reduce homelessness, but to support broader community well-being, strengthen economic stability, and enhance long-term community resilience.

The Plan has been submitted to MMAH for review and comment. Once the Ministry's comments have been provided, staff will return to Council to seek final approval of the Plan.

**LOOKING AHEAD IN LAMBTON COUNTY  
10- Year Housing and Homelessness Plan  
(2026-2035)**

Prepared by



May 25th, 2026

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### **Executive Summary**

As Ontario has mandated that Service Managers submit updated 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plans in 2026, communities have an opportunity to reflect on the successes of the past decade, assess the current and future housing needs of their residents, and identify areas for targeted investments, influence, and partnerships. With this mandate, the County of Lambton hired OrgCode Consulting Inc. to facilitate the co-development of a comprehensive plan for its future housing and homelessness strategies. A revised 10-Year Plan considers the shifts and changes since the last version and outlines how to advance this important work in collaboration with service providers, partners and community members.

### **Community Engagement**

Addressing housing and homelessness response needs is not only a moral and human rights imperative but also a matter of public health, community safety, equity and economic sustainability. This plan, therefore, is designed as a community plan that relies on all sectors, partners (non-profit, public and private) and local residents to contribute to evidence-informed housing and homelessness response solutions. **Every partner and resident can play a part in fostering a community where safe and affordable housing is available to all.** Given the collective effort required to address housing and homelessness needs throughout the community in the coming years, it was important to ensure that diverse voices were heard and represented throughout the planning process. During OrgCode's engagement with the County and the community, information was gathered through a multitude of strategies:

- Key informant interviews with service providers, community partners, elected officials and staff from all tiers of government
- Site visits across crucial housing and homelessness response players
- Two public engagements with community members were held, both virtually and in-person
- A consultation with non-profit housing partners from across the County
- A consultation with members of the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee
- Engagement with the homelessness response sector's lived experience table
- A community survey that residents could access virtually

- Thorough evaluation of robust data sets regarding the current context in relation to housing, homelessness, income, core housing need and population

### **Strengths of the Local System**

Throughout this project, it was clear that Lambton County is a region with dedicated housing and homelessness response providers, invested community members and an impressive homelessness response infrastructure. County staff were consistently recognized for their strong leadership, openness, flexibility and allyship. It was clear that staff know how to respond to homelessness swiftly and with a housing focus. This is evidenced, for example, by its dedicated, concerted efforts to house families quickly and successfully. This capacity has been clearly demonstrated. As well, the data landscape that has been diligently built across the community, with accessible dashboards, aligned and robust datasets, and a dynamic By-Name List that can be used to understand trends across the County. During community engagement and site visits, OrgCode witnessed numerous other examples of significant commitment to best practices, such as:

- Strong provider interconnection across systems
- Shared consents
- Collaborative tables
- Prioritization processes of those experiencing homelessness for community housing
- Established and deeply engaged Lived Experience table
- A HART Hub integrated into homelessness response

### **Housing Pressures and Emerging Challenges**

The community has a strong foundation in place and has achieved measurable gains, despite a lack of affordable housing stock and appropriate levels of support services. Over the past decade, the housing and homelessness landscape in the community has changed significantly since the first iteration of this plan. Hidden homelessness, often reported in the area, is now accompanied by unsheltered homelessness, exposing affordability issues publicly. This shift, along with the lack of understanding of its causes, has increased tensions within a community that feels itself changing without knowing why. Affordability concerns are now affecting more people, with rents rising between 38% and 42% since 2020, while the availability of affordable units has declined. This has led to a net loss of 190 affordable rentals between 2016 and 2021. Renter household incomes remain

significantly lower than owner incomes, making rising costs increasingly unmanageable. **Deeply affordable housing is in critically short supply.** With 1238 community housing units and 1002 households on the waitlist, the system is operating at near-maximum capacity. Portable subsidies alleviate some pressure but are constrained by the high cost and limited availability of private market rentals. The community strongly identifies the need for more affordable rental housing, Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI), and supportive housing options. Demographic factors—including an aging population and more than 700 households experiencing suppressed household formation—signal rising future pressure.

### **Implications for Localized Homelessness**

These affordability pressures directly influence homelessness. Enumeration data identifies high rents, low incomes, and eviction as the primary drivers of recent housing loss. Approximately 300 individuals experience homelessness throughout the County in a typical month, with chronic homelessness representing 55–75% of the caseload. People experiencing homelessness who have mental health or physical health needs are not able to access housing, and their needs are only increasing. **The housing and homelessness crisis in the County is significant and requires a concerted housing-focused response.** A multi-pronged approach is required to meaningfully reduce homelessness numbers in the community, prevent new entries into homelessness and mitigate further housing instability for those at risk.

### **Direction for the Next 10 Years – A Collaborative Approach**

OrgCode's analysis and planning for the County of Lambton, as the Service Manager, focuses on greater coordination and clarity in long-term direction. **No single provider or level of government can, on its own, provide sufficient housing options for all residents and a community response that prevents and reduces homelessness.** Working collaboratively with lower-tier municipalities, non-profit and private partners, it will be crucial for the community to leverage its strengths and capacities to address the needs of individuals across the housing spectrum. The effectiveness of the strategic areas outlined in this report will be significantly strengthened through active participation and partnership with municipal, health, community-based and private development stakeholders.

As the County of Lambton moves forward with its 10-Year Plan, it is recommended that the following areas of focus be addressed:

- Prioritize community collaboration and system governance
- Increase the supply of affordable, deeply affordable and specialized housing
- Strengthen homelessness prevention mechanisms
- Deepen investment in for-Indigenous and by-Indigenous homelessness response
- Invest in sustainable pathways back to housing for the County's most vulnerable residents

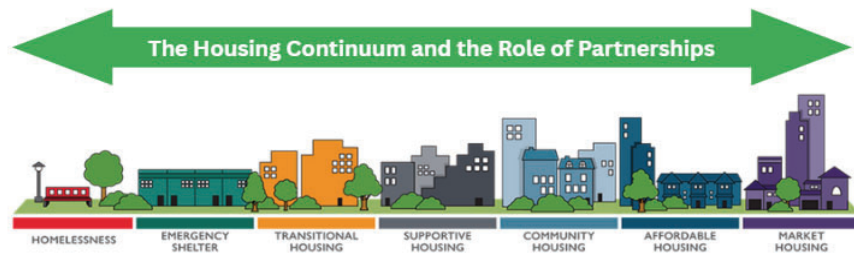
Across these strategic priorities, the community will find opportunities to integrate initiatives that are attentive to moving forward as a region, responding appropriately to the depth of the housing shortage, setting up formalized structures to reduce inflow into homelessness, ensuring that there are appropriate exit options in place for people who are most in need, and always being anchored in reconciliation.

### **Conclusion**

The entire plan is anchored in evidence-informed, housing-focused approaches, with all recommendations aimed at improving access to safe, appropriate places to live and achieving sustainable housing stability outcomes in Lambton County. Acknowledging that housing impacts health and influences access to education and employment, as well as social and economic participation, this Plan helps local communities be better prepared for future challenges. It is action-oriented and drives change to ensure the community can continue deepening its essential work and demonstrating outcomes as it progresses collectively towards one ultimate goal. With this foundation, the County can move forward with a common vision of a strong and inclusive community, guided by concerted, data-driven action, where housing is attainable for all and where experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and non-recurring.

**Introduction**

As is the reality in communities across Ontario, community housing in Lambton County is funded through a long-standing combination of federal, provincial, and municipal investments, strengthened by contributions from non-profit and private partners. As the designated Service Manager under Ontario's Housing Services Act, the County of Lambton coordinates these resources to deliver capital projects - building and repairing affordable and community housing<sup>1</sup> - and operating programs, such as rent supplements, as well as homelessness prevention and response services. Collectively, the County of Lambton administers initiatives dedicated to preserving existing community housing, expanding access to new affordable housing options, and preventing and reducing homelessness throughout the County. Municipal entities are ultimately responsible for ensuring that the number and range of housing options meet the needs of local residents<sup>2</sup>, and for approving policies, plans, and by-laws that manage land and resources and guide decisions about where to build housing and what forms of housing are permitted. The graphic below demonstrates how upper-tier and lower-tier municipal structures, along with community and sector partnerships, support investments and planning for the entire housing continuum:



*Housing outcomes rely on shared responsibility across the full continuum.*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p><b>Upper-Tier (County of Lambton)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Homelessness Prevention Services</li> <li>• Community and Supportive Housing</li> </ul>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable Housing Programs</li> <li>• Investment and Support</li> </ul>      |
| <p><b>Lower-Tier (Local Municipalities)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official Plans and Zoning By-Laws</li> <li>• Site Plan Control and Subdivisions</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building Permits and Inspections</li> <li>• Investment and Support</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>Community &amp; Sector Partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Development</li> <li>• On-Site Supports</li> </ul>                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Operators</li> <li>• Investment and Support</li> </ul>                |

<sup>1</sup> Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO). Municipal Structures as cited via: <https://www.amo.on.ca/municipal-structures>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

While this funding combination by multiple levels of government (as well as partnerships with non-profit and private entities) strives to keep housing safe and sustainable, it often arrives through annual allocations or short-term competitive programs (for example, Affordable Housing Seed Funding Program, Homeownership Down Payment Assistance, and Lambton Renovates), making long-range planning a challenge. Collaboration with all levels of government, the private sector, and community partners is essential to ensure predictable results.

The County of Lambton is in a crucial stage of strategic development as it maps out the Housing and Homelessness Plan for 2026-2035 for the communities that it serves. The 2026-2035 Plan is an important opportunity to understand where the community is now, what has shifted since the previous iteration of the plan and what learnings and strengths the community wants to highlight from its last decade. It is a moment of analysis and reflection while remaining steadfast in its solutions-focused approach to the housing continuum available to local households. As the Service Manager, the County is responsible for delivering valuable housing and homelessness resources, communicating a vision to the community on housing and homelessness, and reporting on key results. The recommendations below were written with this scope of responsibilities at the forefront. They were also developed with a key anchor in mind. First, housing is a crucial social infrastructure and a valuable asset for all people living in Lambton County. Housing is also a foundation for wellness as the needs of local people evolve throughout their lives - it is an important factor in residents' well-being.

The comprehensive roadmap outlined throughout the report provides recommendations for an actionable plan that improves access to housing options across the housing continuum, aligns interventions to reduce homelessness, and focuses on preventing homelessness in the first place. The development of the plan is based on best practices to ensure it is evidence informed. A key focus of this project was to ensure that the recommendations are grounded in the realities of Lambton County residents, as uncovered through analysis of key data and thorough engagement with various populations throughout the community. It is crucial that the plan reflects a variety of realities experienced throughout the County—from low-income residents to homeowners to those experiencing homelessness. Throughout the analysis and development, OrgCode engaged with the community in various ways to hear from a broad spectrum of voices.

This strategic document presents evidence-informed approaches and a shared community vision for addressing housing and homelessness needs throughout the County. The Plan enables the County of Lambton, as the designated Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, to better coordinate and allocate resources tailored to residents' specific needs, and outlines calls to action for the rest of Lambton County to engage meaningfully and impactfully in a pathway towards increased housing stability and homelessness resolution. Together, the whole community can set a clear, shared direction to guide collective action on housing and homelessness.

### **Understanding the Local Context**

This section of the Plan brings together multiple sources of local data to provide a clear and grounded understanding of the housing and homelessness landscape in Lambton County. The analysis draws on housing market information, the community survey, population projections, By-Name Data, the 2024 Homelessness Enumeration, shelter data, and local housing system data to build a comprehensive picture of both current conditions and emerging pressures.

Each dataset contributes to a different perspective. Some describe the scale and characteristics of homelessness. Others reflect how people move through the system, the level of support needs present, or the conditions within the local housing market. The community survey adds an important dimension by capturing lived experience, perceptions of housing challenges, and barriers identified by residents and service providers. The full analysis of the community survey can be found in **Appendix A**.

Looking across these sources creates a more complete understanding of the current housing reality than any single dataset could offer on its own. Together, they show where pressures are building across the housing continuum, how homelessness is experienced locally and how the system is currently responding.

The sections that follow move from an overview of housing conditions and affordability to the availability of deeply affordable housing and broader population trends, before examining the scale and characteristics of homelessness and how the system is currently responding. This progression is

intended to provide a clear line of sight from housing conditions to the pressures experienced within the homelessness response system and to the housing solutions required over the next ten years.

### **Housing Availability and Affordability**

Reducing homelessness ultimately depends on the availability of housing that people can realistically access and afford. Access to affordable housing, however, is a broader issue that also affects many households in the community who may never experience homelessness but still struggle to secure or maintain appropriate housing for their household composition within their income level.

Housing conditions across Lambton County, therefore, shape both homelessness and broader housing stability. When housing costs rise faster than incomes, households with the least financial flexibility face increasing pressure to find and keep housing that is safe, suitable, and affordable. For some households, these pressures contribute directly to homelessness. For others, they result in ongoing housing instability, overcrowding, unaffordable rents, unaddressed safety concerns or difficulty forming and maintaining an independent household.

Understanding the local housing market is an important part of planning an effective response. Examining factors such as rental costs, vacancy rates, renter affordability, and core housing need helps clarify the housing pressures affecting low-income households across the community and the types of housing solutions required in the years to come.

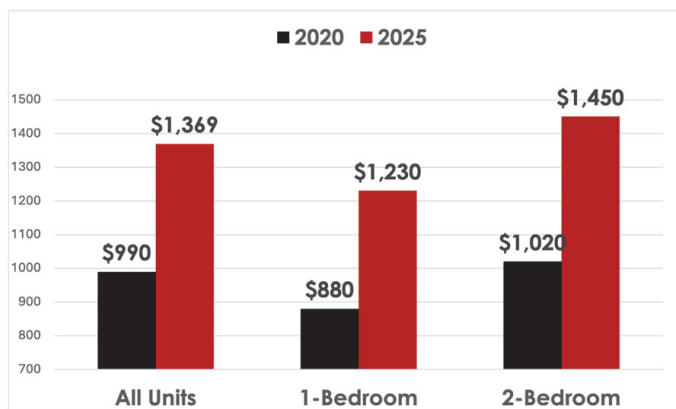
### **Rental Market Conditions**

Rental housing conditions across Lambton County reflect a limited and unevenly distributed rental market. While available Census data suggests that rents were relatively consistent across municipalities in 2021, more detailed and current rental market information is available only for the Sarnia area from the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), as data for smaller communities such as Lambton Shores is more limited and often suppressed due to small sample sizes. This information provides the clearest available picture of rental trends across the region and indicates that rental costs have increased significantly in recent years, posing growing challenges for low-income households.

Between 2020 and 2025 in the Sarnia area:

- Median rent for all unit types increased from \$990 to \$1,369 (38%)
- Median rent for one-bedroom units increased from \$880 to \$1,230 (40%)
- Median rent for two-bedroom units increased from \$1,020 to \$1,450 (42%)

**Median Rent by Unit Type, Sarnia CA (2020 and 2025)**



Rental options outside of Sarnia are more limited. In smaller communities such as Lambton Shores, the rental market is significantly smaller and more constrained. In 2025, the overall average rent in Lambton Shores was approximately \$1,383, broadly comparable to \$1,415 in Sarnia<sup>3</sup>. This reflects both the limited number of available units and the lack of a broad rental supply in many parts of the County. Detailed rental data for Lambton Shores is limited, with many unit-level estimates suppressed or rated as low reliability due to the small size of the local rental market.

Vacancy rates vary across the region. In 2025, the vacancy rate was 5.8% in Sarnia and 4.7% in Lambton Shores, although the Lambton Shores estimate should be interpreted with caution due to limited sample size. While these figures suggest some recent improvements in availability, they follow a period of sustained low vacancy and rising rents. As a result, many households continue to face challenges in securing housing that is both available and affordable.

The supply of affordable rental housing has declined across Lambton County. Between 2016 and 2021:

<sup>3</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). Rental Market Report Data Tables, Ontario, 2025 (custom tabulations). Available via: <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/professionals/housing-markets-data-and-research/housing-data/data-tables/rental-market/rental-market-report-data-tables>

- 115 affordable rental units were added
- 305 affordable rental units were lost
- Resulting in a net loss of 190 affordable rental units

These conditions point to a rental market where costs have risen quickly, affordable options have decreased, and access to suitable housing has become more difficult for households with lower incomes. Even where vacancy rates have improved, the overall level of affordability remains a significant barrier for many renters across the County.

### **Income and Affordability**

Differences in household income shape how housing market pressures are experienced across Lambton County. Available data shows that renter households typically have significantly lower incomes than homeowners, which limits their ability to absorb rising housing costs.

More detailed income data is available for specific parts of the County through CMHC reporting areas. In the Sarnia area, the median income for renter households is approximately \$49,200, compared with \$99,000 for owner households. In Lambton Shores, renter household incomes are lower, with a median of approximately \$43,600, while owner household incomes are approximately \$89,000. Across the county overall, the median household income is approximately \$83,000 before tax.

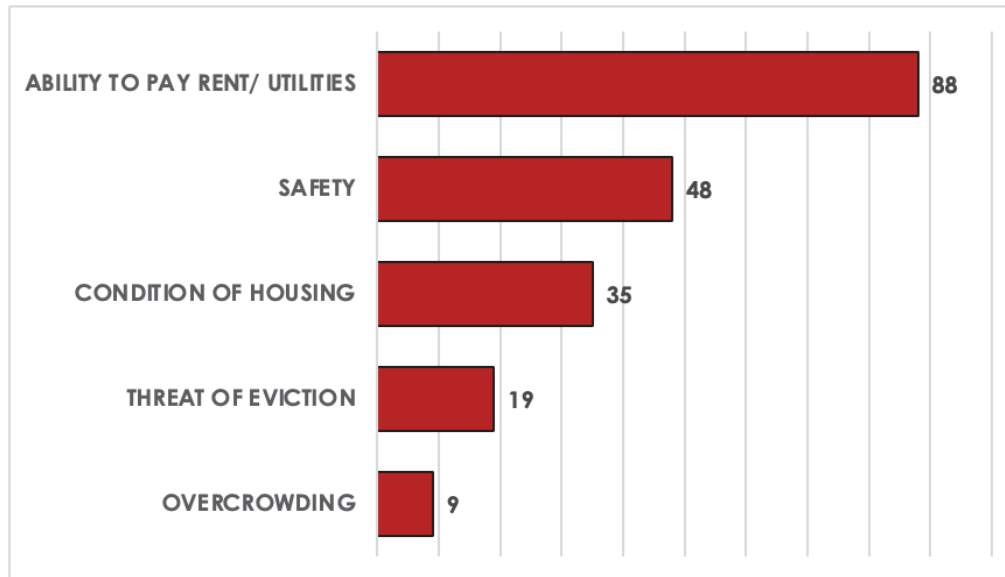
This gap matters because renter households must navigate increasing housing costs with substantially fewer financial resources. As rents rise, a growing share of households are left with limited affordable options within their income range. For some households, this results in ongoing financial strain. For others, it means that suitable housing options are not available at all within their budget.

Survey responses provide additional context on how these pressures are being experienced locally. Of the 494 respondents who answered this question, 177 (36%) identified at least one concern related to their current living situation.

The most frequently reported concern was the ability to pay rent or utilities, followed by issues related to safety and housing conditions, with fewer reporting concerns about eviction and overcrowding.

These findings reinforce the broader pattern identified in the data. While many households are maintaining housing, a significant portion are doing so under financial and structural pressures that increase the risk of future instability.

**Housing-Related Concerns Among Survey Respondents (N=177)**



**Core Housing Need**

A household is considered to be in core housing need when its housing is unaffordable, unsuitable, or in need of major repair, and the household cannot afford alternative housing that meets these standards. An examination of core housing need within the County provides a clearer picture of how widespread housing concerns and pressures are across the community. In Lambton County, 4,410 households are currently in core housing need, representing 8.4% of all households<sup>4</sup>. The impact is concentrated among renter households. Approximately

<sup>4</sup> Source: CMHC Housing Data Tables, based on the 2021 Census

23% of renter households are in core housing need, compared with 3.4% of owner households. Additional indicators reinforce the level of pressure experienced by renter households:

- 35.3% spend 30% or more of their income on housing
- 8.4% of owner households spend 30% or more of their income on housing

These figures indicate that a substantial share of households, particularly renters, are already living in housing that is unaffordable or does not meet their needs. For reference, affordable housing is considered affordable by the federal government if it costs less than 30% of a household's income before taxes (for all tenure types)<sup>5</sup>. The province of Ontario offers up an additional definition "in the case of rental housing, the least expensive of:

1. a unit for which the rent does not exceed 30% of gross annual household income for low- and moderate-income households; or
2. a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the municipality."<sup>6</sup>

Within this context, many households are maintaining housing, but often with limited financial flexibility and an increased risk of future instability.

### **Connection to Homelessness**

These housing conditions are directly reflected in local homelessness data. Findings from the 2024 Homelessness Enumeration highlight the role that affordability plays in both housing instability and entry into homelessness.

- 79 % of respondents reported that rents are too high
- 68 % reported that income is too low
- 61 % reported eviction as the cause of their most recent housing loss

These findings point to a direct relationship between housing market conditions and homelessness. When rents rise faster than incomes and affordable units are

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<sup>5</sup> Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (n.d.). Glossary. National Housing Strategy. <https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/nhs/guidepage-strategie/glossary>

<sup>6</sup> Government of Ontario, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. (2024). *Provincial Planning Statement, 2024: Under the Planning Act*. <https://www.ontario.ca/files/2024-10/mmah-provincial-planning-statement-en-2024-10-23.pdf>

limited, more households are pushed out of their current housing and unable to find other affordable, suitable, and attainable options. Evictions become more common, and fewer alternatives are available in the private market.

This relationship is also reflected in the broader community survey. While most respondents did not report being at immediate risk of homelessness, 30 respondents (6 %) indicated that they feel at risk of becoming unhoused within the next year, and an additional 53 respondents (11 %) reported being unsure about their ability to maintain their housing. Together, this suggests that a meaningful share of households is experiencing a level of housing instability that places them at risk, even if they are not currently experiencing homelessness. Survey responses also indicate that 186 respondents (37 %) strongly agreed that they have someone they can rely on if they experience a housing issue, while 105 respondents (21 %) strongly disagreed, highlighting that not all households have the same capacity to absorb financial or housing shocks. These conditions also make it more difficult for individuals experiencing homelessness to secure housing. Limited availability of affordable units reduces the number of viable exit pathways, even when supports are in place.

Housing market conditions are not simply a contributing factor. They are a primary driver of both inflow into homelessness and the pace at which people can exit. **As long as housing remains unaffordable to households with lower incomes, the system will continue to face sustained pressure, regardless of improvements in service delivery or system coordination.**

### Deeply Affordable Housing Supply

The housing pressures described in the previous sections place increasing demand on affordable housing for households with low incomes. As shown in the housing market conditions and affordability data presented earlier in this section, many households in Lambton County are unable to access or maintain housing within the private market due to rising costs, limited availability, and income constraints. Deeply affordable housing, therefore, plays a critical role in maintaining housing, preventing homelessness and supporting pathways out of homelessness.

In Lambton County, this supply includes rent-geared-to-income housing, rent supplements, and portable housing benefits such as the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit. Together, these programs form the foundation of the local deeply

affordable housing system and represent the primary housing options available to households with the lowest incomes.

Based on available County housing system data, Lambton County has approximately 1,238 community or rent-geared-to-income housing units in total, including county-owned units, former provincial housing units, former federal housing units, and units at the low end of market rent. Within this broader supply, the County has established targets for 1,075 rent-geared-to-income units. In addition, there are 303 County-specific rent supplement units and 268 Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit subsidies, for a combined total of 571 portable or subsidy-based housing supports. Rental Assistance Program (RAP) supplements and those supplements from system partners are not included in this count.

**Deeply Affordable Housing Supply in Lambton County**

| Measure                                  | Units / Households |
|--|--------------------|
| Total community housing units            | 1,238              |
| Rent-geared-to-income units              | 1,075              |
| Rent supplement units                    | 303                |
| Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit subsidies | 268                |
|  |                    |
| Total portable or subsidy-based supports | 571                |
| Households on RGI waitlist               | 1002               |

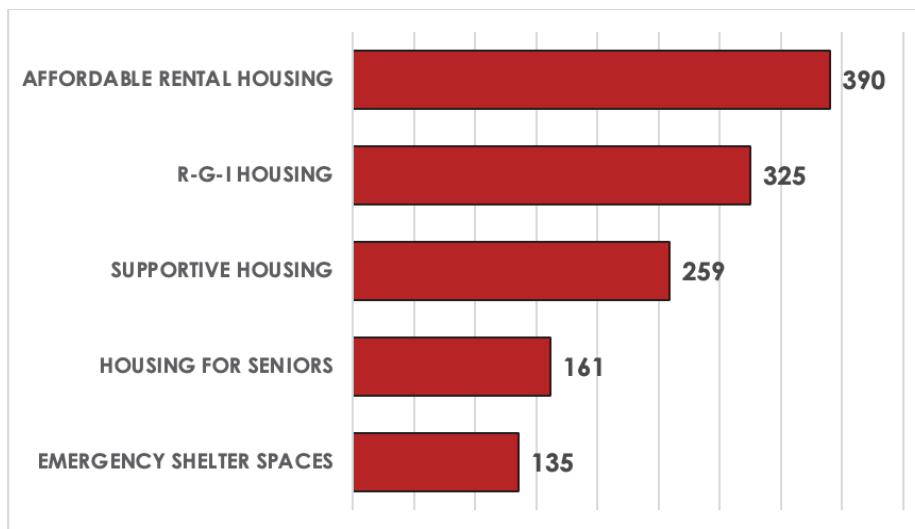
This supply represents a significant level of investment in deeply affordable housing; however, demand remains extremely high. With 1,002 households on the centralized waitlist and 1,075 rent-geared-to-income units, the system is operating with demand nearly equal to its rent-geared-to-income housing supply, leaving little room to respond to current needs or future pressure.

Survey responses reinforce this gap between supply and demand. When asked which types of housing are most needed in Lambton County, respondents most frequently identified affordable rental housing (390 responses, 77 %), rent-geared-to-income housing (325 responses, 64 %), and supportive housing with on-site supports (259 responses, 51 %). These responses align closely with the

administrative data, indicating strong demand for both deeply affordable housing and housing with supports. While other housing types were also identified, the concentration of responses in these categories highlights the extent to which affordability and support needs are shaping housing demand throughout the County.

**Housing Types Identified as Most Needed by Respondents**

(Select up to three responses, N = 508)



The size of the waitlist reflects a broader system dynamic described earlier in this report. Many households with very low incomes are already unable to access the private rental market, as evidenced by high core housing need, affordability pressures, and suppressed household formation. For some households, this results in ongoing housing instability or exposure to unaffordable rents. Consultations with community members identified difficult decisions households were making, such as paying rent or purchasing groceries. For others, it increases the risk of homelessness or limits the ability to exit homelessness once it occurs.

Portable housing benefits and rent supplements expand access to housing by making some private-market units more affordable. These programs are an important part of the local response, but they remain dependent on a rental market that is both limited and increasingly expensive. As a result, they improve affordability for some households without fully addressing the overall shortage of

deeply affordable housing.

The gap between supply and demand must also be understood across the full housing continuum. Households experiencing homelessness, households in core housing need, and households represented within suppressed household formation are all relying on the same limited pool of deeply affordable housing options. This creates sustained pressure across the system and limits the ability to reduce homelessness over time.

The data in this section points to a clear conclusion. Lambton County's current supply of deeply affordable housing is not sufficient to meet existing needs, and future demand is expected to remain strong. **Expanding the supply of deeply affordable housing will be essential to ensuring that more households can access housing that is appropriate to their needs and incomes, reducing homelessness and improving housing stability for low-income households.**

### **Population and Demographic Pressures**

Understanding current and future housing needs in Lambton County requires considering both population trends and changes in household composition. While earlier sections focused on housing conditions, affordability, and supply, broader demographic patterns provide important context for understanding future demand across the housing continuum, including the need for deeply affordable housing.

Population projections for Lambton County indicate modest overall growth, with the community expected to increase by less than 20 % between 2024 and 2051. At the same time, the age profile of the population is shifting. By 2051, seniors are projected to make up between 27 and 30 % of the total population, reflecting a continued aging trend across the community. These changes have implications for the types of housing required, including increased demand for accessible and supportive housing options for older adults, alongside a smaller share of younger households forming independently.

Data from the Lambton County Housing Needs Assessment (2026) indicates that approximately 741<sup>7</sup> households across the County represent suppressed household formation. This refers to individuals or family units who would otherwise be expected to form independent households but are unable to do so due to housing costs or

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<sup>7</sup> TWC. (2026). *County of Lambton Housing Needs Assessment* (prepared for the County of Lambton)

limited availability.

Local analysis from the County of Lambton Housing Needs Assessment similarly identified suppressed household formation in the Sarnia area, estimating that approximately 447 households face these constraints.<sup>8</sup>

This suppressed demand represents an important but often less visible form of housing need. While these individuals may not appear in homelessness data or on housing waitlists, they are part of the broader group of households affected by affordability pressures. Over time, this hidden demand can translate into increased pressure on the housing system as conditions change or as individuals attempt to enter the housing market.

Demographic trends also intersect with income and housing affordability. Lower-income households, including individuals relying on fixed incomes or income assistance, face the greatest barriers in accessing appropriate housing. As housing costs increase, these households are more likely to experience housing instability, remain in unsuitable or overcrowded (and potentially unsafe) housing, or require access to deeply affordable housing options.

Together, these demographic and population factors point to a sustained and growing need for housing that is both affordable and appropriate for different household types. Planning for the next ten years will require not only addressing current housing pressures, but also anticipating future demand driven by demographic change and unmet housing need.

### **Scale of Homelessness in Lambton County**

The housing conditions described in the previous sections provide important context for understanding homelessness in Lambton County. Limited affordability, constrained supply, and growing demand create the conditions under which households lose housing and face barriers to securing new housing. Although many community members may view homelessness as the result of mental health and/or substance use concerns, **poverty and relationship breakdown remain the primary drivers of homelessness across Canada.**

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<sup>8</sup> City of Sarnia and County of Lambton. Housing Needs Assessment. Available at: <https://www.sarnia.ca/housing-needs-%20assessment/>

Understanding the scale of homelessness in Lambton County provides an important foundation for the rest of this plan. Before considering pathways into homelessness, system pressures, or potential solutions, it is necessary to understand how many people are experiencing homelessness in the community and how that number has changed over time.

The two datasets referenced in this section are the Homelessness Enumeration, commonly referred to as a Point-in-Time Count, and By-Name List Data.

A Homelessness Enumeration is a coordinated effort to count people experiencing homelessness over a defined period. In Lambton County, the most recent enumeration took place during the week of October 7, 2024, using the federally supported Point-in-Time Count methodology. As part of this process, surveys were administered to individuals experiencing homelessness, and tally sheets were used by service providers and surveyors to record unhoused individuals who declined or were unable to complete the survey. The Point-in-Time Count itself was conducted on October 9, 2024, and represents a count of people experiencing homelessness during a specific 24-hour period in shelters and public spaces.

By-Name List Data is an ongoing list maintained by the homelessness response system that tracks individuals who are actively experiencing homelessness in the community. The list is updated regularly as people enter or exit the homelessness response system and as new information becomes available. Unlike the Point-in-Time Count, which provides a snapshot at a single point in time, By-Name Data allows the community to monitor trends and understand how the number of people experiencing homelessness changes from month to month.

The results from these two sources show a high degree of consistency in Lambton County. The 2024 Homelessness Enumeration identified 329 individuals experiencing homelessness. By-Name Data from the same month recorded 325 individuals. When the By-Name Data is averaged across the full year, the monthly average in 2024 was approximately 326 individuals experiencing homelessness at any given time.

More recent data suggests that the overall number of people experiencing homelessness may be increasing. By February 2026, the By-Name Data recorded 339 individuals. Notably high inflows across late 2025 and early 2026 have led to

this increase.

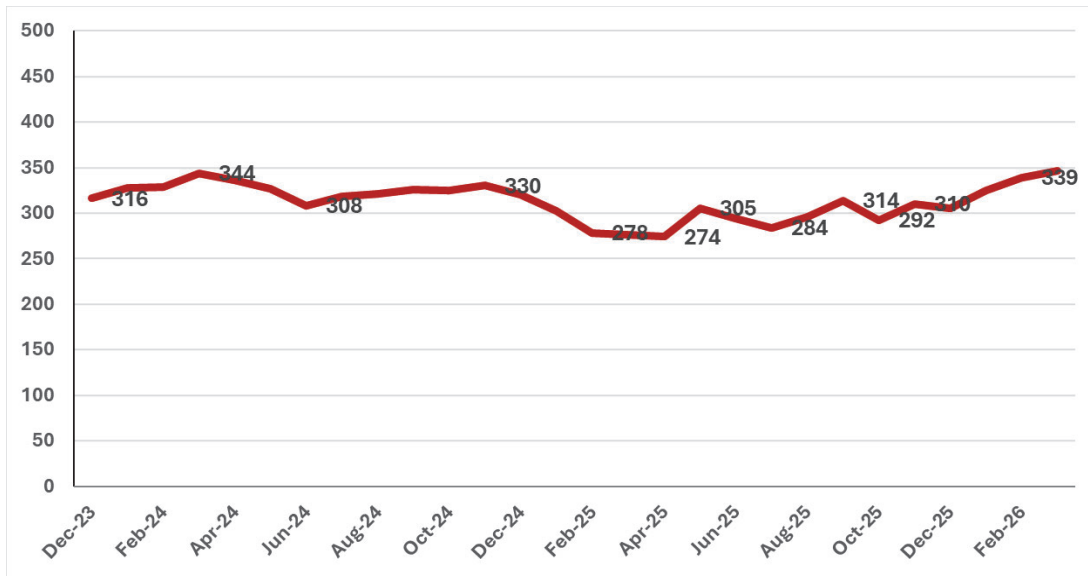
**Estimated Scale of Homelessness in Lambton County**

| Measure of Homelessness                             | Individuals |
|---|-------------|
| Point-in-Time Count (October 2024)                  | 329         |
| By-Name Data (October 2024)                         | 325         |
| By-Name Data (October 2025)                         | 292         |
| By-Name Data (monthly average, 2024)                | ~326        |
| By-Name Data (monthly average, April 2025–Mar 2026) | ~301        |

While the exact number fluctuates from month to month, the data shows that Lambton County has been supporting roughly three hundred people experiencing homelessness at any given time. The consistency between the enumeration results and the ongoing By-Name Data strengthens confidence in this estimate and the fact that Lambton County is achieving comprehensive geographical coverage for coordinated access processes.

The monthly By-Name Data also provides a clearer view of how the number of people experiencing homelessness has shifted over time. The trend line beginning in late 2023 shows numbers generally in the low to mid-three hundreds through much of 2024, followed by a noticeable decline in the early months of 2025. After reaching a low point in the spring of 2025, the number begins to rise again through the summer and fall months, although it remains somewhat lower than the levels observed in 2024.

**Individuals Experiencing Homelessness (By-Name Data)**



This pattern highlights an important reality in the local homelessness response system. **Homelessness is an ongoing system pressure rather than a temporary or episodic issue.** Month-to-month changes can reflect many factors, including data collection constraints, seasonal pressures, housing availability, prevention efforts, and the pace at which individuals can move into permanent housing.

What the data shows clearly is that homelessness in Lambton County is not a rare or isolated circumstance affecting a small number of people. Instead, the community consistently supports several hundred individuals without stable housing at any given time. Understanding the scale of that need provides an important reference point for system planning and housing targets in later sections of this plan.

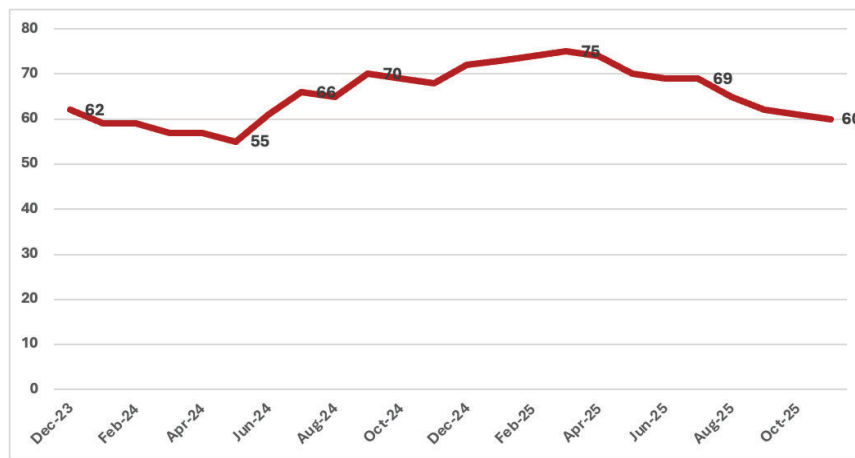
**Chronic Homelessness**

While the overall number of people experiencing homelessness provides an important measure of scale, it does not fully capture the depth or persistence of homelessness within the community. One of the most important indicators for understanding the severity of homelessness is the proportion of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

Under the federal Reaching Home program, chronic homelessness refers to individuals who have experienced homelessness for six months or more within the past year, or who have experienced recurrent episodes of homelessness over the past three years. This definition is used nationally to identify individuals who have been without stable housing for long periods and who often require more sustained housing and support interventions.

The By-Name List Data shows that most individuals experiencing homelessness in Lambton County meet the definition of chronic homelessness. Between December 2023 and November 2025, the percentage of individuals on the By-Name List who were chronically homeless ranged from 55 % to 75 %. Across the full period, an average of approximately 66 % of individuals on the By-Name List were experiencing chronic homelessness.

**Percentage of the By-Name Data Experiencing Chronic Homelessness**



The data also shows some variation over time. In early 2024, the proportion of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness was generally between 55 % and 61 %. The percentage increased steadily through late 2024 and early 2025, reaching a high of approximately 75 %. Through the remainder of 2025, the proportion gradually declined but remained above 60 % in most months.

This pattern indicates that a large share of homelessness in Lambton County is not short-term. Many individuals experiencing homelessness have been without stable housing for extended periods of time or have cycled through homelessness repeatedly. Even as the overall number of individuals experiencing homelessness fluctuates from month to month, the data shows that long durations of homelessness remain a consistent feature of the local system.

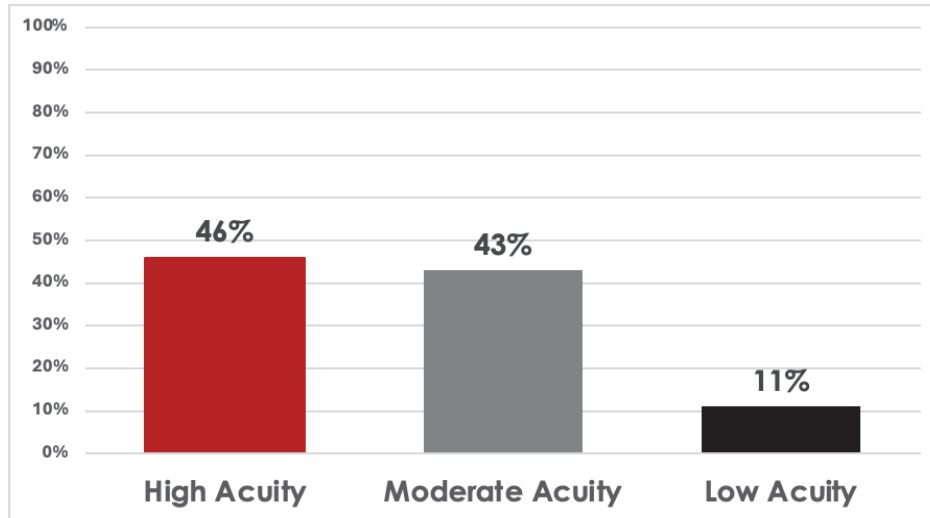
Understanding the prevalence of chronic homelessness is important for planning purposes. Individuals who have experienced homelessness for long periods of time often require different housing responses than those who are newly experiencing homelessness. This includes greater emphasis on permanent housing options paired with ongoing supports, as well as system approaches that prioritize individuals who have been waiting the longest for appropriate and affordable housing.

### **Complexity of Needs**

While understanding how many people are experiencing homelessness is important, the level of support individuals require is equally important for planning housing responses. The needs of people experiencing homelessness vary significantly, and many individuals require more than housing alone to achieve long-term stability.

One way communities assess the complexity of support needs is through acuity assessments used in the homelessness response system. These assessments help identify the level of support individuals may require to secure and maintain housing. Recent By-Name Data indicates that a large share of individuals experiencing homelessness in Lambton County have moderate to high support needs. Among individuals assessed through the By-Name List data, approximately 46 % were identified as having high acuity needs, 43 % as having moderate acuity needs, and 11 % as having low support needs.

**Acuity Levels Among Individuals in the By-Name List Data (2025 Data)**



The acuity distribution within the By-Name List data suggests that many individuals experiencing homelessness require ongoing supports alongside housing. High acuity individuals typically require intensive, more frequent supports, which may include case management, mental health services, addiction treatment, and other health-related interventions. Moderate acuity individuals may require ongoing support to stabilize housing, access services, and maintain income or employment.

Information from the 2024 Homelessness Enumeration provides additional insight into the types of challenges many individuals are experiencing. During the enumeration, 228 individuals completed surveys, providing detailed information about their experiences and support needs. Among those respondents, 65 % reported living with a mental health issue, 63 % reported substance use, and 43 % reported a chronic physical health condition. Many respondents also reported cognitive challenges, acquired brain injury, or sensory impairments.

The enumeration also found that 76 % of respondents reported experiencing two or more health-related risk factors. This level of complexity suggests that many individuals experiencing homelessness are managing multiple challenges simultaneously, which can make it significantly more difficult to obtain

and maintain stable housing without appropriate supports. In addition, as they wait for housing and support options, their health continues to decline, and their use of expensive emergency services increases due to the reality and trauma of being unhoused.

These findings highlight an important implication for the housing and homelessness plan. **Increasing housing supply alone will not be sufficient to meet people's needs if appropriate supports are not available.** A significant portion of individuals experiencing homelessness in Lambton County will require housing options paired with ongoing supports, including supportive housing with 24/7 onsite supports and Housing First interventions that combine housing with case management and access to health services.

Understanding the complexity of needs within the homeless population helps inform the type of housing responses required in Lambton County. Housing solutions must be designed not only to provide stable housing options but also to ensure that individuals have access to the supports necessary to maintain housing stability over time.

### **System Performance and Housing Flow**

Understanding how individuals move through the homelessness response system provides important context for planning housing solutions. While earlier sections described housing conditions and the scale and characteristics of homelessness in Lambton County, the indicators in this section illustrate how people currently interact with the local system as they seek necessities such as shelter, essential services, and pathways back to housing.

Local data shows that individuals leave homelessness and move into housing each month. On average, approximately 17 individuals who were previously unhoused secure permanent housing in a typical month. Outreach and housing supports also assist a smaller number of individuals in moving directly from unsheltered homelessness into housing, with an average of approximately three placements per month.

Diversion efforts also resolve some housing crises before a shelter stay occurs. Diversion refers to problem-solving or short-term assistance that helps someone remain safely housed or identify an immediate community-based alternative to shelter, thereby avoiding sheltered or unsheltered homelessness. In Lambton County, these efforts resolve housing crises for an average of roughly six individuals each month.

### **Average Monthly Housing Outcomes in the Homelessness Response System**

Emergency shelters serve a different but equally important role within the local system by providing temporary accommodation while individuals work toward more stable housing options. Shelter data shows that most individual shelter stays are relatively short per stay, but that a significant cohort of individuals chronically utilize emergency shelters intermittently. Youth aged 16 to 24 remain in shelter for an average of approximately 17 days during a single stay. Adults aged 25 to 64 remain for an average of about 15 days, while adults aged 65 and over remain in shelter for an average of approximately 30 days. These figures represent the length of a single shelter episode rather than the total time a person may experience homelessness across multiple episodes.

### **Average Emergency Shelter Length of Stay by Age Group**

Earlier sections of this report showed that roughly three hundred individuals experience homelessness in Lambton County in a typical month. The indicators presented here help provide additional context for understanding how individuals move through the system alongside that ongoing level of housing need.

Housing placements, diversion efforts, and emergency shelter stays help illustrate how the homelessness response system is currently functioning in Lambton County. These outcomes are closely connected to the availability and affordability of housing in the broader community.

While individuals are consistently moving into housing each month, the overall number of people experiencing homelessness remains relatively stable. This reflects a broader system dynamic in which the number of people entering homelessness is similar to, or exceeds, the number exiting into housing.

With approximately 17 individuals securing housing each month alongside ongoing inflow driven by housing instability, the system is not currently positioned to reduce the overall number of people experiencing homelessness over time. There are more people entering homelessness than are exiting homelessness.

This pattern indicates that improvements in system performance alone will not be sufficient to reduce homelessness at a population level. **Without an increase in the availability of affordable housing for households with very low incomes, the system will continue to operate under sustained pressure.**

**System Gap: What the Data Is Telling Us**

The data presented throughout this section of the plan points to a consistent and reinforcing conclusion about how the housing and homelessness system in Lambton County is currently functioning. Each dataset describes a different part of the system, but together they show a system operating under sustained pressure and not currently positioned to reduce homelessness over time.

The scale of homelessness remains relatively stable at approximately 300 individuals in a typical month. While individuals move into housing on an ongoing basis, the pace of those exits is limited. On average, approximately 17 individuals secure housing each month, alongside a smaller number of placements from unsheltered homelessness and diversion outcomes. These efforts are meaningful at an individual level, but they are not occurring at a scale sufficient to reduce the overall number of people experiencing homelessness.

This reflects a fundamental system dynamic in which inflow into homelessness is keeping pace with, or exceeding, the number of people exiting into housing. As a result, the system is maintaining homelessness rather than reducing it.

Housing conditions are a central driver of this dynamic. Rental costs have increased significantly over time, vacancy rates remain low, and the supply of lower-cost rental housing has declined. For households with low incomes, these conditions limit access to housing within the private market. The same conditions that contribute to people losing housing also make it more difficult for individuals experiencing homelessness to secure housing, even when supports are in place.

The supply of deeply affordable housing is similarly constrained. The number of households on the centralized waitlist for rent-geared-to-income housing is nearly equal to the total number of rent-geared-to-income units in the community. This indicates that the existing system is already operating at or near capacity, with limited ability to respond to current demand and little flexibility to absorb additional need.

Population and demographic trends indicate increasing pressure over time. Lambton County's population is aging, with seniors projected to represent between 27 and 30 % of the population by 2051. Overall population growth is expected to be modest, and provincial projections indicate that natural population change will be negative, meaning deaths will exceed births and population change will increasingly rely on migration. This type of growth creates immediate demand for housing, as new residents require access to housing upon arrival, adding pressure to an already constrained system. In addition, an estimated 741 households represent suppressed household formation, meaning they are unable to form independent households due to housing costs or limited availability. These households are not fully reflected in homelessness data or waitlist figures, but they represent real and growing demand that will place further pressure on the housing system over time.

The data also highlights the depth of need among those already experiencing homelessness. A large proportion of individuals are experiencing chronic homelessness, and many are managing moderate to high support needs alongside housing instability. This underscores that reducing homelessness will require not only additional housing supply but also housing options that are paired with appropriate supports.

Taken together, these conditions point to a system that is constrained on multiple fronts. The rate at which people can exit homelessness is limited by the availability of housing that is affordable to households with very low incomes, while housing conditions continue to contribute to new entries into homelessness. Additional demand is also building outside the system and is likely to become more visible over time.

Under these conditions, improvements in system coordination, service delivery, or program design alone will not be sufficient to reduce homelessness at a population level. Without a significant increase in the availability of housing that is affordable to households with very low incomes, the system will continue to operate under sustained pressure, and the number of people experiencing homelessness will remain relatively stable over time.

This conclusion provides a clear direction for the next section of the plan. Addressing housing needs and homelessness in Lambton County will require a deliberate and sustained expansion of affordable, appropriate, and available housing options for those with the greatest need. The following section outlines the scale and types of housing required over the next ten years to respond to these pressures and reduce homelessness over time.

#### **Estimated Housing Need, 2026–2035**

The analysis in the previous sections show that homelessness and housing instability in Lambton County are being driven by a combination of sustained inflow into homelessness, limited exits to housing, and a shortage of options that are affordable to households with very low incomes. The estimates presented in this section translate those system pressures into the number and type of housing units required over the next ten years to reduce homelessness and improve housing stability. The methodology for the estimates can be found in **Appendix B**.

These estimates are focused specifically on housing required to address homelessness and the needs of households with very low incomes. They do not represent the full scope of housing need across Lambton County, nor do they account for broader market housing demand or population growth across all income levels. Instead, they identify the level of housing required to reduce inflow into homelessness and support exits from homelessness under current system conditions.

The estimates are based on current system conditions, including the scale of homelessness identified through By-Name List data, the prevalence of chronic homelessness, observed housing placements and inflow dynamics, and the broader housing market context described earlier in this report. They reflect the

level of housing required to move beyond maintaining the current system toward achieving measurable reductions in homelessness over time.

The estimates are intentionally conservative. They assume that the current housing stock is maintained, that market conditions do not significantly improve, and that new housing development occurs incrementally over the planning period. As a result, the figures presented below should be understood as the minimum level of investment required under current conditions. Delays in implementation or further deterioration in affordability would increase the level of need.

**Estimated Housing Need by Type of Accommodation, 2026–2035**

| Type of Accommodation   | 2026 | 2027 | 2028 | 2029 | 2030 | 2031 | 2032 | 2033 | 2034 | 2035 | Total | Avg/Year    |
|---|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|-------|-------------|
| Affordable (Private Market, with or without rental assistance)                    | 22   | 46   | 42   | 42   | 44   | 64   | 50   | 38   | 26   | 18   | 392   | <b>39.2</b> |
| Deeply affordable (rent-geared-to-income)   | 74   | 53   | 53   | 58   | 42   | 30   | 30   | 30   | 24   | 18   | 412   | <b>41.2</b> |
| Housing with Specialized Supports (Bridge, Transitional and Permanent Supportive) | 0    | 60   | 48   | 54   | 46   | 0    | 8    | 20   | 0    | 16   | 252   | <b>25.2</b> |
| Emergency Shelter (Homelessness and IPV)  | 0    | 20   | 20   | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 0    | 40    | <b>4.0</b>  |

### **Interpreting the Estimates**

Over the ten-year period, Lambton County requires a total of 1,096 new affordable and specialized housing units, averaging approximately 110 units per year. The largest share of this need is in affordable and deeply affordable housing. A total of 392 affordable units in the private market and 412 rent-geared-to-income units are required, reflecting the scale of demand identified through core housing need, rental market pressures, and the size of the centralized waitlist. Together, these categories account for the majority of housing required and confirm that affordability remains the primary driver of housing instability in the community.

There is also a clear need for housing with supports. The estimates above combine bridge housing, transitional housing, and permanent supportive housing into a single category to facilitate planning. However, the majority of the demand in the County is for individuals with complex needs requiring permanent supportive housing options and pathways out of chronic homelessness. Permanent Supportive Housing typically provides 24/7 supports to individuals experiencing chronic or repeated homelessness who require ongoing supports to maintain housing and who are typically quite vulnerable due to a variety of conditions including mental illness, chronic health issues, physical disabilities and developmental disabilities. Transitional Housing provides support in the medium to long-term (1 to 2 years) through a structured programming model that focuses on individuals who require stabilization support prior to accessing permanent housing. It can often be used to support specific populations like youth and survivors of intimate partner violence. Bridge Housing provides short-term stabilization interventions (6-9 months) with the goal of supporting transitions to permanent housing as quickly as possible. It focuses on intensive supports which helps individuals overcome obstacles that are preventing them from accessing housing as quickly as possible. Specialized models like these meet the needs of different populations. Using data to understand the local realities and what specialized housing options are required to meet local need is encouraged.

The timing of onboarding these units into the housing landscape is critical. A significant portion of new housing is required between 2026 and 2028 to address existing unmet demand. Without early and deliberate investment in housing resources, the system will continue to operate under sustained pressure, and overall levels of homelessness are unlikely to decline. As the County monitors its progress in preventing and ending homelessness, decreased investments in crisis responses, such as shelters, can be reallocated to increased housing solutions (both units and rental subsidies).

## What the Estimates Show

These estimates show that homelessness in Lambton County is driven by multiple pressures across the housing continuum, not a single gap. Increasing supply in only one area will not be sufficient. Expanding affordable housing without supports will not meet the needs of individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. Expanding supportive housing without improving affordability will not reduce inflow into homelessness. Expanding shelter capacity without increasing housing exits will not reduce system pressure.

Reducing homelessness requires a balanced approach across the housing continuum. This includes increasing the supply of deeply affordable housing, expanding supportive housing, transitional and/or bridge housing, and maintaining appropriate levels of shelter capacity. These estimates provide a clear, evidence-informed starting point for that work.

## **Financial Investments to Support Housing and Homelessness Services in Lambton County**

### Financial Contributions by All Levels of Government

As previously noted, the Province of Ontario shares responsibility for housing and homelessness. Legislation clearly assigns primary legal responsibility to the Province, with municipalities tasked with delivery. The Municipalities Under Pressure Report (2025) shows that investments in housing and homelessness in Ontario more than doubled from 2016 to 2021, driven by the urgent need to address the housing crisis and rising homelessness. Recent financial data indicates a notable shift, with municipalities increasingly bearing a larger portion of costs, especially for housing programs. By 2024, municipalities are expected to account for over 65% of housing expenditures. In Lambton County, the combined investments in housing and homelessness services contributed 56% of funding in 2025 and 2023, and 60% in 2024 and 2022. **While these contributions are vital for local efforts to improve housing stability and reduce homelessness, they remain lower than those in other Municipal Service Areas across Ontario in the post-pandemic years.**

| Year | Per Capita Investment | % Invested by Canada – Reaching Home | % Invested by Ontario – HPP, Targeted Housing and Subsidies | % Invested by County of Lambton |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| 2025 | <b>\$240.02</b>       | <b>5%</b>                            | <b>39%</b>  | <b>56%</b>                      |
| 2024 | \$199.03              | 7%                                   | 33%   | 60%                             |
| 2023 | \$174.02              | 9%                                   | 35%   | 56%                             |
| 2022 | \$148.25              | 7%                                   | 33%   | 60%                             |

**Investments in Rent Supplements**

With average rents far exceeding the shelter rates provided by such incomes as Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP), the availability of RGI and affordable housing is essential to reducing housing crises and ending chronic homelessness. However, Community Housing (including RGI) units are not the primary option available for people experiencing homelessness and affordability concerns to access housing. Since the waiting lists for community housing significantly exceed the number of households that actually access it each year, rent supplements (and housing allowances) play an essential role in Ontario's housing strategy. An examination of financial investments in rent supplements in Lambton County demonstrates that municipal investment has remained steady since 2022 at approximately 30% of all housing and homelessness funding dedicated to rent supplements, while provincial investment has covered approximately 70% of rent supplement funding year over year. **The upper-tier municipal investment in rent supplements is currently lower in Lambton County than witnessed for other Service Managers.**

| <b>Investment in Rent Supplements Per Capita, Per Year</b> |                                  |                                |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b>County of Lambton</b>                                   |                                  |                                |                                  |
| Year   | Total Rent Supplement Investment | % of Investment Made By County | % of Investment Made By Province |
| 2025   | <b>\$32.23</b>                   | <b>29%</b>                     | <b>71%</b>                       |
| 2024   | \$27.94                          | 32%                            | 68%                              |

|      |         |     |     |
|------|---------|-----|-----|
| 2023 | \$22.09 | 28% | 72% |
| 2022 | \$21.36 | 28% | 72% |

**Investment in Homelessness Prevention**

Investment in homelessness prevention activities can and should be part of a local strategy to address homelessness. Keeping people in housing is better than the financial and emotional tolls of people experiencing homelessness. Lambton County has demonstrated increasing investment in homelessness prevention since 2022.

One key factor to consider is how prevention resources are distributed and to whom. Establishing cause-and-effect in homelessness prevention can be challenging, and many studies show that most people getting eviction prevention assistance might not have become homeless without it. To make homelessness prevention efforts more effective, financial and support resources should focus on households at the highest risk of experiencing both sheltered and unsheltered homelessness. Those with characteristics similar to chronic homeless individuals represent a good target for prevention<sup>1</sup>. Additionally, some communities have found it more effective to allocate most prevention resources to individuals, couples, and families who have previously experienced homelessness rather than to those who have never been homeless. It is advisable to direct homelessness prevention resources toward households in Lambton County most likely to become homeless without intervention.

| <b>Investment in Homelessness Prevention Per Capita, Per Year</b> |   |  |   |
|---|---|--|---|
| <b>County of Lambton</b>  |   |  |   |
| <b>Year</b>   | <b>Eviction Prevention-Arrears Assistance</b> | <b>Re-Housing for People Facing Eviction</b> | <b>Total Investment in Eviction Prevention Investment</b> |
| 2025  | <b>\$9.59</b>                                 | <b>\$13.35</b>                               | <b>\$22.94</b>  |
| 2024  | \$8.37  | \$12.40                                      | \$20.77   |
| 2023  | \$9.62  | \$12.76                                      | \$22.38   |
| 2022  | \$5.51  | \$8.03                                       | \$13.55   |

**Homelessness Response Investment**

Research is clear that the solution to homelessness is housing, but it is acknowledged that communities must remain prepared to respond to the housing crisis and homelessness. Like the many communities that have shifted to invest more in homeless prevention than in homelessness response services such as shelter and outreach, Lambton County has also successfully made this shift. As demonstrated in the table below, the County continues to invest in shelter, outreach and drop-in/day services. With ongoing and enhanced investments in housing solutions, the County should begin to see a reduction in the need for homelessness response funding.

| <b>Investment in Homelessness Response Per Capita, By Year</b> |                |                 |                             |   |
|--|----------------|-----------------|-----------------------------|---|
| <b>County of Lambton</b>                                       |                |                 |                             |   |
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Shelter</b> | <b>Outreach</b> | <b>Drop-In/Day Services</b> | <b>Homelessness Response Investment Total</b> |
| 2025   | <b>\$18.27</b> | <b>\$1.28</b>   | <b>\$1.00</b>               | <b>\$20.56</b>                                |
| 2024   | \$14.17        | \$1.06          | \$0.68                      | \$15.91                                       |
| 2023   | \$7.97         | \$1.14          | \$0.99                      | \$10.09                                       |
| 2022   | \$7.15         | \$1.45          | \$0.11                      | \$8.71  |

It is also important to consider the other side of the homelessness response: the per capita investment to assist individuals experiencing homelessness in gaining housing and accessing support services to maintain housing. As shown below, the County is currently spending less on community-based housing supports with impacted individuals than on emergency measures. As more housing with on-site support options (transitional and supported housing programs) come online throughout the County, available investments for housing support services will increase significantly.

**Dedicated Re-Housing Services for People Experiencing Homelessness**

An examination of resources dedicated to providing housing support to people who formerly experienced homelessness is lower in Lambton County than in homelessness response investments.

| <b>Investment in Housing Supports to Assist Formerly Homeless People Stay Housed, Per Capita</b> |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Year</b>  | <b>Housing Support Services</b> |
| 2025   | <b>\$8.92</b>                   |
| 2024   | \$10.72                         |
| 2023   | \$11.34                         |
| 2022   | \$9.69                          |

In addition to the housing supports provided, it is expected that many of the people recovering from homelessness likely benefit from rent supplements. **Going forward, it is recommended that Lambton County increase investment in solution-based housing support services to reduce homelessness and prevent future returns to it.** As identified in this report, increased funding for higher intensity, high frequency case management housing-based supports will be required to provide the appropriate level of support for individuals with complex needs in scattered-site private market, community housing units and/or specialized housing with on-site supports.

**Strategic Priorities Recommendations to Address Local Context**

Throughout the implementation of the Housing and Homelessness Plan, the County will decide where to focus its efforts over the upcoming decade. This section outlines recommendations for strategic levers to shift how the system functions, with improvement and refinement in mind. It provides a pathway to map out short-, medium-, and long-term goals while considering the consistent anchors that must keep the strategy aligned throughout this timeframe. Together, these strategic priorities ensure that the County's plan remains focused, adaptive, and equipped to drive meaningful progress towards a more effective, coordinated, and resilient housing and homelessness system responsive to residents' needs.

**Priority 1: Collaboration and System Governance**

The County of Lambton has achieved admirable work in establishing a robust homelessness response system anchored in consistent data and strong partner collaborations. Its accomplishments are described throughout this report. As the 2026-2035 plan is implemented, it will be crucial to outline the County's strategic intent to continue investing in enhanced system governance and community

collaboration. In looking at how to accelerate outcomes and achieve greater impact, there is a need to formalize and map the structures, processes, roles, and decision-making mechanisms that guide the network of system leaders across the County in working toward shared goals and operating in a coordinated, consistent, and accountable way. The County's capacity to maintain its momentum and then accelerate its work is only as strong as the solidarity it builds with its system partners, lower-tier municipalities and the community at large. In practice, this priority area is divided amongst these two audiences.

### **Collaborate Across Systems**

Strong system governance clarifies who is responsible for what, aligns policies and practices across the system, creates shared ways of working together and ensures that resource allocation is coordinated across the County to improve outcomes. The County has a foundation of strong collaboration, amplified by its Coordinated Access Table and Community Advisory Board. Providers report that this collaboration is a strength they want to continue growing to improve system governance.

In consultation, service providers specifically expressed the need to define a clear commitment to end homelessness and mobilize community resources towards this goal. There was a noted sentiment that if the goal is not expressed, the entire community cannot come on board. Providers hoped to move forward strategically and together to communicate the same consistent message throughout their work. It was important to them that the 10-Year Plan be community-centered. A concerted community direction towards reducing and ending homelessness would align all services in the region towards a common goal, despite different mandates. For example, despite various Outreach teams in the County with different mandates (health, Hepatitis C, etc.), all could incorporate housing into their care planning, as it would also improve therapeutic outcomes from their reporting perspectives. This work would support community mobilization, clear messaging, and collaboration with providers on shared care. The Lambton County Coordinated Access Community Collaborative Table (CCT) has done impactful work in aligning resources, transferring knowledge, and completing action-oriented case conferencing in a collaborative manner. It has also been a priority of the table to ensure tools and training are offered to service providers. With this strong foundation in place, these efforts can now be expanded to deepen this work. Some options for solidifying collaborative best practices include:

- Outlining roles and responsibilities for all key players and a clear pathway of coordinated actions
- Completing system mapping with community partners to determine service user pathways and sharpen definitions of homelessness response responsibilities—such as the distinct functions of shelter staff, outreach workers, and Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) teams.
- Defining standards for how services are delivered in a unified fashion while aligning with best practices for each service type
- Establishing formalized professional development procedures across participating agencies (onboarding, ongoing professional development, etc.)
- Expanding membership to crucial partner organizations

Second, as a two-tier municipality, the County administers multiple Provincial programs (Income Support, Children's Services, Emergency Medical Services, Lambton Public Health, Employment Services, etc.) and ensures that the development of a thriving County remains at the forefront of all investments and decisions. Such a commitment is evident in the work completed within collaborative initiatives such as Circles® Lambton and the launch of the innovative Community Health Integrated Care (CHIC) program<sup>9</sup> which has inspired revisions to health service provision across the Province and the Country. The County faces an additional important challenge in clarifying not only the roles and responsibilities of system providers and partners but also those of other key sector and municipal leaders. This transparency is beneficial to service providers and residents in ensuring alignment and collaboration towards a common goal. The opportunity to use this moment of refresh to provide clarity, both internally and externally, was a key priority in consultation, particularly when unpacking the functions of County and municipal partners. The need for less ambiguity also extended to alignment among key leaders in the community on messaging, approaches, and vision. Residents required visibility into how the County and lower-tier municipalities planned to work in a coordinated manner to advance housing initiatives, integrate their priorities, and present a unified voice for investment goals, funding opportunities to support development, partnerships with non-profit and private partners, and public consultation mechanisms. Establishing guidelines for working together, piloting collaborative endeavors, and formally outlining roles,

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<sup>9</sup> Terry AL, Meredith L, Graham J, Law E, Sibbald SL, Trusler A, Thind A. Evaluating the Impact of an Integrated Community Care Model for Older Adults. *Int J Integr Care*. 2025 Nov 7;25(4):8. doi: 10.5334/ijic.9062.

responsibilities, and partnership guidelines is recommended. In defining how the County and municipal partners interconnect within a two-tier governance model, they are encouraged to consider work done by various communities as potential templates (see Oxford County's Master Housing Strategy and 2023-2026 Strategic Plan, and Niagara Region's Attainable Housing Strategy).

The success of communities across the County in ensuring appropriate housing options while also reducing and preventing homelessness depends on the strong, sustained, and tight-knit collaboration among government partners. As noted by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario:

*"All municipal governments, regardless of whether or not they are designated service system managers, play a critical role in facilitating more housing affordability options as a result of the planning and financial tools at their disposal. [...] It works best where there is close collaboration between service system managers and their municipal partners to achieve mutual goals."<sup>10</sup>*

Establishing ways of working together with municipalities and building closer relationships will be paramount to the successful implementation of the 2026-2035 Housing and Homelessness Plan. This new chapter must bring relentless, proactive collaboration. It is recommended that the County continue to share information with all municipalities on results, outcomes, evidence, and lived experience arising from their homelessness response work. While Service Managers lead system response and the development and preservation of affordable and deeply affordable housing stock, their success truly depends on how shared responsibilities are actioned across many different partners.

Finally, as the County and its lower-tier municipal partners work to enhance housing options to meet the needs of all residents, a concerted community approach to expand a wide range of housing options and address the primary drivers of homelessness must also align with other strategic plans. For example, increased affordable housing options, as well as homelessness prevention and reduction, have crucial links to poverty reduction, positive health outcomes, employment opportunities, transportation improvements, community safety and well-being, as well as higher income levels and economic sustainability. In fact, the successful addition of much-needed housing options will be required to truly

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<sup>10</sup>

<https://www.amo.on.ca/sites/default/files/assets/DOCUMENTS/Reports/2022/RevisedABlueprintforActionAnInteegratedApproachtoAddresstheOntarioHousingCrisis20220301.pdf>

meet the goals of such local Plans as the 2024-2029 Economic Development Strategy, the Lambton Public Health Strategy (2025-2029) and all Municipal Official Plans for the eleven local communities governed by the Provincial Planning Statement (2024). Steps to further enhance communication and action-oriented collaboration between municipal and County departments will ensure that housing and homelessness initiatives remain truly community-driven and community-centered.

Linking these plans and ensuring consistent cross-collaboration were seen as crucial elements of homelessness prevention and community response for low-income households. For example, transportation was seen as a priority due to its role in expanding access to units across the region and in individuals' ability to get around the County, thereby reducing isolation and improving community integration. Engagement often raised the need to connect rural communities to the city. Similarly, employment support was viewed as a crucial piece of the support puzzle, noting that employment skills play a role both in housing maintenance and sustainable exits from homelessness. While housing is the solution to homelessness, it is not the only factor that leads people to housing instability in the first place. Other targeted pieces must be considered, such as community well-being, economic challenges, and food insecurity. Integrating plans across the spectrum of services will be a crucial element of a strong community-wide response by the County, its municipal partners, and service providers.

### **Expanding Public Engagement Across Communities**

The Ontario Planning Act defines the provincial requirements for public consultation for land use planning. It outlines key requirements regarding when public meetings must be held and the breadth of input required. New developments in Lambton County follow these provisions. The Act requires public consultation for zoning amendments, official plan amendments, and subdivision plans. This means that a significant number of projects are regularly undergoing public consultation using a variety of approaches. In particular, when the developer is a private or non-profit entity, the process is directed by them and influenced by their capacity and previous experience. Currently, there is a need to map out a community engagement strategy for the County. Such a strategy should be comprehensive, focusing on proactive engagement through knowledge transfer and best practice sharing and building the community's capacity to engage meaningfully with the subject of housing and homelessness.

A community lens to proactive engagement will allow:

- developers to engage meaningfully and proactively with communities throughout the region in ways that align with community values
- residents to champion the work of creating a safer and more inclusive community devoted to ending homelessness

A combination of developer, resident and County initiatives and involvement will allow an all-of-community approach to enhancing connection and communication.

### **Supporting Developers in Preventative Engagement**

Engaging preventatively refers to proactive, early and ongoing involvement of community members, stakeholders, including business partners and potential neighbours regarding new housing developments. Such Proactive and Collaborative Engagement<sup>11</sup> has proven to prevent conflict and the spread of misinformation, promote the inclusion of new tenants within the neighbourhood and create sustainable, positive housing outcomes. Developers should be well-versed in neighbourhood values and instill these in the consultation process and building design. There are many other factors that interested developers can address preventatively with community members, including:

- Investigating how the initiative can support community integration (e.g., neighbourhood events, upkeep of community spaces).
- Ensuring safety within and outside any new building/housing initiative (controlled entry, camera systems, building design that allows staff to see outside, etc.)
- Explore volunteering opportunities (for residents in the community and for community members within the space)
- Offer building tours before move-in
- Host community events on-site after move-in
- Introduce Community Liaison Strategies (discussed below)

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<sup>11</sup> Additional information on the benefits of preventative engagement in housing development initiatives can be explored via <https://www.stantec.com/en/ideas/content/blog/2025/affordable-housing-design-10-ways-to-focus-on-engagement-in-residential-projects/> [https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/polar-polaire/documents/publications/northern-housing-forum/NHF%20-%20SS\\_Engaging%20Communities%20-%202019-05-13%20-%20EN%20-%20FINAL.pdf](https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/polar-polaire/documents/publications/northern-housing-forum/NHF%20-%20SS_Engaging%20Communities%20-%202019-05-13%20-%20EN%20-%20FINAL.pdf) and <https://www.courbanize.com/blog/community-engagements-role-in-preventing-gentrification#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20solutions%20to,community%20programs%20and%20public%20education>.

Preventative engagement could also involve community partners. Establishing strong relationships and clearly defining the roles these partners play in the development process, and the operation of the initiative can demonstrate a shared commitment across the social services sector - and beyond - to the project's success and to ensuring the safety of everyone within and around the space. Ensuring strong, proactive support from law enforcement for the project can also help address concerns from community members. While this "all hands-on deck" approach may be crucial initially for all developments, demonstrated success will allow providers to gradually shift approaches as they monitor Key Performance Indicators across new developments, such as housing stability, reduced emergency service use, and improved wellness outcomes.

Since public input is just one piece of information that can inform project decisions, developers should be establishing a specific scope of control for engagements and setting clear parameters for the consultation itself would be beneficial. A challenge in community engagements can be the diversity of feedback received, both within and beyond the scope of the engagement (i.e., which decisions, revisions, activities, and issues fall within the consultation's mandate). A clear, concise focus on what is up for evaluation and feedback will limit distractions in conversations and increase trust. With a methodology of community cocreation and preventative consultation processes, depending on the development, some of this work might involve some flexibility in building design, particularly when community consultations occur early enough for architects to co-create designs with community members. This responds directly to community needs around neighbourhood character. Features like colours, outdoor space, and design can be part of a collaborative design process that gives community members a sense of ownership over their contributions to the neighbourhood and amplifies goodwill among developers and municipal officials. These conversations also direct consultations away from who will be living in the building and anchor the approach in a rights-based lens— what is up for debate is the design and not who will be living in it.

Additional flexibility can be built into engagements by discussing the support available for the housing development to ease the project's integration into the neighbourhood. This provides additional measures of responsiveness to community concern. Flexibility is encouraged within the capacity to titrate levels of support (support structures and the intensity of programming offered) and to demonstrate responsiveness by increasing supports and the intensity of community partnerships at the start, and adjusting based on need and, once again, key

performance indicators. Providers submitting projects are encouraged to have built-in measures of flexibility and expertise in proactive and responsive community consultation. This will be crucial to pave a path forward in the County and create a variety of housing resources while consistently growing community trust.

Developers are also encouraged to define the boundaries of any consultation process with the use of a strong, clear zero-tolerance policy against discrimination and aggression. All spaces should be clear about setting expectations regarding non-discrimination and what that means in concrete terms. When discrimination is unacceptable, the discussion shifts to legitimate concerns that community members who are seeking information and answers can address. It also allows staff to focus their attention on the right place. In particular, defining consultation parameters that align with the Ontario Human Rights Code and the Ontario Human Rights Commission's (OHRC) guidance on NIMBYism<sup>12</sup> as a form of discrimination will be key, particularly as these aptly state that:

*"People do not have the right to choose their neighbours"*<sup>13</sup>

Any guidance provided to developers around human rights centered community engagement can include:

- A focus solely on challenges around planning and land use
- No tolerance for stereotypes about people who may or may not be housed in a specific building
- Ensuring that additional consultation is not being held only because of the population type of the intended housing project (people with addictions, people with mental health challenges, those receiving social assistance, etc.)
- Screening for discriminatory and restrictive design practices such fences, walls, caps on resident numbers, removing balconies, etc.
- Navigating and addressing discriminatory comments towards intended residents at public meetings

In supporting developers with preventative engagement, the County and all

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/human-rights-and-not-my-back-yard-nimby>

<sup>13</sup> <https://www3.ohrc.on.ca/en/zone-housing-human-rights-and-municipal-planning/overcoming-opposition-affordable-housing>

municipalities invest in communities where everyone can live without discrimination. They ensure a wide range of housing options are available across all areas, and foster connections with residents and neighbours are in accordance with best practices.

### **Information Sharing to and Mobilization of Community Members**

Throughout OrgCode's time in the County, staff uncovered a broad range of misinformation around the purpose of various types of housing developments and the scope of services. There was significant confusion about housing types and their definitions. Ensuring clear, consistent, and plain-language information about the purpose of each development type will be important. The County is encouraged to develop an accessible community glossary to consistently narrow down the language to just a few key terms. This will support the communication process while ensuring that the housing and intervention types are clearly aligned and consistent. The most important definitions are outlined below:

- Affordable housing
- Community housing
- Emergency shelter
- Transitional housing
- Supportive housing

Using consistent language throughout community communication will build a common vocabulary that residents and media outlets can use to engage in conversations about homelessness and housing. Additionally, the County has strong, refined data that must be used to develop a consistent, fact-based narrative on housing instability and homelessness in the community through preventive and collaborative relationships with media outlets and community and government leaders. The successes of housing and homelessness initiatives in the County are also significant despite the current lack of affordable housing options. It is important to begin to share this information proactively and regularly throughout the region. Further, expanding on month-to-month successes and highlighting community partners who are making important differences to illustrate the breadth of impact will be useful. The launch of the next 10-year plan for the County is an essential moment to engage intensively in a communications strategy focused on the housing and homelessness sector's vision, priorities, the reality of the situation in the County, and what is working well. The community survey

demonstrated the concerns that community members have regarding homelessness in the County. Across these results and community engagements, the majority of residents were primarily preoccupied with how people experiencing homelessness are doing and surviving, and most were on board with developing affordable and supportive housing in the community. A communications strategy must respond actively to this majority.

Various models of community liaison strategies can be utilized such as Community Liaison Committees, collaborative tables and neighbourhood ("Good Neighbour") and communication policies for funded service providers. Building in proactive feedback loops with communities to increase genuine participation can be of benefit and provide different opportunities to connect with residents in a productive, relationship-based and action-oriented manner. The County is already engaging in this work through a "Be Part of the Solution" Campaign after identifying a need to reduce myths about homelessness, encourage community action and promote tangible solutions. Strategically growing this communication approach will be central. As a movement towards ending homelessness is clarified and established in the community, roles and responsibilities are clarified, and key partnerships formalized, community members should be proactively invited to come on board as community champions. A broad, proactive education campaign should target housing providers, community partners, community groups, neighbours, and elected officials about the County's strategy and mission, to dispel misconceptions and provide these community leaders with tools and strategies to have their own discussions. These strategies should be aimed particularly at supporters, allies, and also those who are undecided about where they stand. Individuals should be provided with the tools and resources to become champions in the community. Some of this work will involve hyper-local mapping to understand who the key community players are and their networks. This can also include building key allies in systems where more connections are needed, such as hospitals, and expanding the mobilization strategy to include best-practice sharing. Messages need to focus on Lambton County's journey towards ending homelessness, the way the 10-Year Plan has shifted in response to community feedback, and on ensuring that neighbourhood values are inclusive of all community members. Information sharing must also involve presenting the cost of inaction to the community and the realistic consequences of continuing not to respond to need. A community mobilization campaign was seen as a top priority initiative in the County.

**Summary of Collaboration, Engagement and System Governance  
Recommendations**

Deepening community investment and strengthening collaboration around the County's mission to increase and preserve affordable housing, as well as reducing homelessness, will be critical to amplifying system impact and accelerating measurable results. This priority applies both to coordinated work across system leaders—such as municipalities, community agencies, and sector partners—and to sustained engagement initiatives with the broader community. The County is encouraged to prioritize the development of a communications strategy which includes community engagement initiatives. This priority is complemented by the recommendations below as options for operationalization:

- Establish, name and promote a community goal of increasing the range of housing options to meet the needs of County residents
- Articulate and champion a commitment to targeted interventions and housing solutions for low-income housing and homelessness prevention and reduction
- Develop key roles and responsibilities for partners to promote successful implementation. The County must focus on affordable and specialized housing (with supports) options for lower-income households, while municipalities can focus on developing housing for moderate- and higher-income households.
- Promote and increase alignment of priorities and initiatives within other Strategic Plans with the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan
- Educate on the functions of the County as the provincially designated Service Manager and the local Municipalities as they relate to the scope of responsibilities in addressing homelessness
- Collaborate on and support developers with preventative rights-based community engagement for new developments with built-in flexibility
- Develop a community glossary of housing models and homelessness responses to create a collective narrative that is fact-based and respectful
- Preventatively implement a communications strategy and amplify the mobilization campaign focused on community champions

**Priority 2: Increase Affordable Housing Options**

The lack of investment by Federal and Provincial governments for decades has created a crucial gap in affordable housing supply and infrastructure throughout the County. Moving beyond the traditional view of housing as merely a private commodity to a new perspective in which housing is increasingly recognized and treated as essential infrastructure in communities (similar to roads, water pipes, and power lines) will take time and steadfast commitment from the County and its municipal and business partners. In fact, a future of sustainability and prosperity demands more housing, as it provides the foundation for community well-being, economic productivity, and social stability. Increasing stock must be pursued in tandem with other priorities to ensure the 10-Year strategy is multifaceted and addresses the most pressing concerns. To ensure a well-rounded development strategy in the County, the municipal pipeline of projects will be incredibly important, along with a complementary approach to support non-profit and private development. While the County can support non-profit providers and increase the outflow from community housing options, addressing supply challenges must happen in tandem with neighbouring municipalities and private development companies as part of a concerted approach.

**Addressing Supply Challenges**

Housing development must be a clear priority across the County. The importance of having a range of housing options is especially evident in Lambton County, where the private market is currently playing a major role in supporting exits from homelessness across providers, and the County must be commended for its landlord relationships, strong connections to the private market and significant rent subsidy program. Any capacity to keep the By Name List from growing has been achieved through the success of these initiatives. This highlights the key role of access to affordable housing for tenants throughout the community and how continued growth in supply is pivotal to reducing homelessness. While the County itself has a pipeline of projects, consistent concerns were voiced about the general lack of stock, the social mix across the community, and the need for a call to action to create more units across the region. Increasing affordable and

deeply affordable rental supply was seen as a priority across consultations and is echoed throughout this report, including via the housing estimates section. In addition to supporting all low-income households, this priority will play a crucial role in homelessness prevention and reduction and serve as a lever for a move- on strategy to secure valuable higher-intensity resources. For further opportunities to expand affordable options, the County could consider master or head leasing, but only with appropriate and intensive supports in place to ensure successful tenancies. Head leasing is when the County (or a non-profit organization) enters into a lease with a property owner, and the units are then subleased to low-income households, including those recovering from homelessness. Master or head leasing programs<sup>14</sup>, when managed effectively with built-in support mechanisms, can act as a bridge between private landlords and vulnerable tenants, eliminating barriers like poor credit history, lack of rental history, or discrimination.

To complement a community housing development strategy, developers must also be called to action to support the growth of housing stock in communities. In this portion of the work, municipal partners are key to shifting community narratives about housing and the need for a broad range of options, particularly through initiatives that increase housing supply. The City of Sarnia already has an Affordable Rental Housing Community Improvement Plan that offers incentives to the private sector, including a tax incentive grant program, four financial incentive grant programs, and a parking reduction program. The financial incentives included in the plan include a Planning and Building Permit Fee Grant, a Renovation for Purpose Built Rental Housing Grant, a Feasibility Studies for Affordable Housing Grant and an Additional Dwelling Unit Grant. Additional openness is referenced in Petrolia's Housing Needs Assessment, which highlights the wealth of services available in the town and Petrolia's dedication to flexibility in its planning process and to working with all types of developers (private, public and non-profit). This is commendable and should be explored for a crucial partnership. To continue to grow the community's openness to development and capacity to welcome new housing providers, initiatives at all partner levels across Lambton County can contribute. For example, municipal partners can invest through various incentives and opportunities such as:

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<sup>14</sup> To explore master leasing options, research can be found via: <https://endhomelessness.org/blog/how-master-leasing-can-help-the-affordable-housing-crisis/>, <https://www.housingworks.ca/head-leasing>, <https://news.novascotia.ca/en/2026/01/15/lease-program-reducing-hotel-stays-providing-homes-people-experiencing-homelessness>

- Incentivizing private developers for a % of affordable units within new builds
- Waiving taxes on affordable builds that extend past the current scope of rehabilitation and renovation
- Maintain a sustainable revenue stream for seed funding to support newly proposed affordable housing projects
- Streamlined and expedited approval processes
- Normalizing intensification through as-of-right-zoning
- Development navigation support of internal, provincial and federal programs

While these initiatives are advocacy-based, the County can also conduct an assessment to integrate this work with non-profit housing sustainability initiatives to identify incentives that would support providers in continuing to grow their stock. This can be done in partnership with the neighbouring municipalities. In addition to supporting the Official Plans of all municipalities across the County, continued emphasis must remain on preserving the County's current non-market housing options (affordable, rent-geared-to-income, and specialized housing for people with support needs). Such a focus aligns with the National Housing Strategy, the Provincial Planning Statement (2024), Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy and should reflect the identified priorities:

- preserve, enhance and build new community housing developments to enhance long-term sustainability, repair existing stock, reduce red tape, integrate specialized populations and integrate support services, while promoting mixed-income communities
- increase non-market and mixed-income housing supply
- promote modular and innovative housing solutions
- integrate supportive housing with health, mental health and substance use recovery systems
- expand alternatives to encampments and move people into housing
- use By-Name List data and all other available, shared datasets to monitor progress across the housing continuum

### **Establishing a Community Housing Move-On Strategy**

Community housing needs in the County are substantial, with around 1,000 people on the waitlist and an average wait time of about four years for a one-

bedroom apartment. While they wait, their needs are increasing and impacting various aspects of their well-being, from income to health. Addressing this requires not only expanding the number of community housing units to meet demand but also tackling the significant bottleneck of individuals leaving these units when they no longer need them. With a waitlist growth rate of about 15% annually, simply adding more units isn't enough; there must also be opportunities for residents to transition to other community options. Affordable housing options should be available for low-income individuals when they no longer require community housing, but current barriers prevent this, limiting the system's efficiency. Increasing housing stock is part of the solution, alongside evaluation, care planning, and transition support for tenants. The County should develop a systemic move-on plan to identify those ready to transition, connect them to suitable units, and ensure smooth transitions without destabilization. In the short- to medium-term, expanding landlord engagement programs could help create additional pathways out of community housing.

#### **Summary of Increasing Stock Recommendations**

Supply recommendations appear consistently throughout this report because increasing housing stock is foundational to every other system improvement. These recommendations span the full housing continuum - from private-market rentals and home ownership to rent-geared-to-income housing and supportive housing - and reflect the interconnected nature of local housing needs. A coordinated approach to growth is required, one that recognizes that no single type of housing can meet the depth and diversity of housing demand in the County. Increasing affordable housing options requires a diverse strategy with various intervention levers:

- Continue to support the preservation and protection of existing affordable and deeply affordable housing while considering long-term sustainability
- Seek investment and development support opportunities through initiatives such as the federal Build Canada Homes to increase the stock of affordable and deeply affordable rental units.
- Consider opportunities around master or head leasing to secure additional housing options for specialized populations when appropriate supports are in place
- Encourage municipalities to take the lead in working closely with stakeholders and to implement additional incentives for private and non-profit developers to expand housing supply
- Launch a community housing move-on strategy

**All recommendations in this report ultimately depend on increasing housing availability. Without significant expansion in supply, other interventions—no matter how well designed—cannot achieve their intended impact.** Interventions for increasing stock are also incorporated throughout the report because strengthening stock is not only a priority but the necessary foundation upon which all other components of the 10-Year Plan must rest.

**Priority 3: Protect and Grow Affordable Housing Options to Prevent Housing Instability and Homelessness**

The County is currently facing ongoing challenges with high inflow into homelessness, which sustains a constant demand for broad prevention measures. The community survey supports this, with many individuals describing themselves as either insecurely or precariously housed. Engagement with service providers echoes these concerns, as they report that many individuals are struggling to retain their housing and are living in unstable conditions. Numerous residents are in situations that are unsafe, insecure, or temporary. Although the By-Name List tracks the number of known homeless individuals by name, many more people experience severe housing instability, keeping their housing only with great difficulty. Implementing a wide range of interventions will help reduce new entries into homelessness and improve housing stability for those at risk.

**Preserving and Revitalizing Existing Stock**

To prevent housing instability and homelessness in Lambton County, maintaining existing housing stock is essential. This includes private properties, County-owned units, and those managed by community non-profit providers. Protecting current units is crucial as the County expands its portfolio. Data shows a considerable loss of affordable units over the past decade, surpassing the rate of new construction.

When exploring initiatives to safeguard private market affordable units, several options are available across the County to help reduce the loss of affordable private market stock:

- Supporting private landlords through expanding the County's landlord engagement strategy to ensure low vacancy rates
- Development navigation support to access repair and renewal funding
- Investigate right of first refusal initiatives and housing acquisition programs to preserve and develop affordable housing stock<sup>15</sup>
- Support the facilitation of a Community Land Trust in the community<sup>16</sup>

The County must work creatively to ensure that, alongside efforts to increase new supply, existing affordable units are not lost within the private market. This includes implementing strategies that help stabilize current stock, foster stronger relationships with private developers and landlords, and reduce the pace at which lower-cost units are removed through renovation, sale, or redevelopment. Maintaining these units is essential, as replacing lost affordable housing is significantly more difficult and costly than preserving what already exists. Similarly, the County's own housing portfolio requires intentional protection. This means prioritizing repair, renewal, and long-term asset management within the 10-Year budgeting cycle to ensure units remain safe, habitable, and financially viable. Proactive reinvestment will prevent the erosion of available community housing stock and support the continued operation of units serving households with the lowest incomes. Ensuring ongoing upkeep and modernization also strengthens sustainability and reduces future capital pressures.

Further, significant concerns exist around the units operated by non-profit housing providers and their long-term sustainability. Providers are in a difficult place currently. Most are managed by volunteer-run boards, with minimal internal support and few resources. This puts them in a position of great vulnerability, where any challenges they face can pose significant risks, and also lowers their capacity to engage meaningfully in reducing the By-Name List due to the complexity of care required for those tenants. Additionally, providers are currently facing profoundly underfunded reserves and a significant infrastructure deficit. To ensure the sustainability of the non-profit housing sector throughout the County and to create a long-term plan for possible future growth, it is recommended that community housing providers in the County receive support for a sustainability assessment, asset management planning, and succession planning. Grant

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<sup>15</sup> Canadian Centre for Housing Rights: Preserving Affordable Housing in the Private Rental Market (2024). Available via: <https://housingrightscanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/CCHR-PolicyBrief-PreservingAffordableHomesInThePrivateRentalMarket-HousingPolicyToolsSeries-January2024-Final.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Canadian Network of Community Land Trusts via <https://www.communityland.ca/about-us/>

funding should be leveraged through the Community Housing Transformation Centre to bring providers together, explore crucial risks and strengths, and begin mapping out a future for them based on other community housing success models across the country. This avenue will allow providers to not only complete important planning but also explore the feasibility of creative models for pooling their resources and supporting each other, if they are interested. The County's providers are crucial players and cornerstones in the housing sector. They must be supported to ensure they can weather any storms that may come their way.

### **Homelessness Prevention and Shelter Diversion**

Prevention emerged as a consistent priority throughout consultations, reinforced by data showing steady monthly inflow into the homelessness response system. To slow this inflow, the County is encouraged to expand its prevention programming into a comprehensive, well-resourced strategy.

The County's current landlord engagement program is appreciated for its effectiveness in fostering strong partnerships. This is bolstered by on-the-ground initiatives, including collaborations with legal aid, support for arrears, and the embedding of eviction prevention staff within community housing. It will be crucial to extend this expertise and related resources to dedicated homelessness-prevention personnel. In general, standardized homelessness prevention services should include the following key elements:

#### **Targeted eviction prevention, especially for Community and Affordable Housing tenants and households that have experienced homelessness before**

Boosting supports for eviction prevention (including landlord mediation, short-term stabilization, first and last month's rent assistance, and rent and utility arrears) is a helpful intervention. Additional supports that can be used to increase housing retention, such as RentSmart, life skills or vocational groups, should also be explored to increase wellness and resources in community housing buildings and throughout the community at large. Working closely with landlords and non-profit housing providers to implement these programs will be important. Further advocacy-based initiatives include promoting renoviction bylaws.

#### **Homelessness prevention for those most at risk of becoming homeless**

Eviction prevention serves as a vital model for those with lower and moderate acuity, but its overall impact is limited because it does not target the individuals most at risk of homelessness. Therefore, prioritizing homelessness prevention efforts on

the most vulnerable populations is the most effective way to reduce inflow into the homelessness response system. Intensive prevention should be a mandatory component of the initial assessment for service users accessing homelessness services, including shelters, the HART Hub, Outreach, and other services. This requires skilled staff to conduct thorough assessments. The expertise of this staff is crucial, as this level of intervention requires complex family and landlord mediation, as well as comprehensive wraparound support, to address a range of challenges.

Currently, homelessness prevention operates without a centralized structure for intake, with various access points receiving referrals. This decentralized approach means prevention efforts rely heavily on individual worker capacity, individual communication, and case-by-case problem-solving. To enhance effectiveness and targeting, the County should establish a dedicated, professional homelessness prevention team that specifically combines existing preventative efforts. This team would be trained in mediation, risk assessment, financial stabilization, benefits navigation, and landlord engagement, and would operate under clear protocols, shared tools, and a unified mandate to identify at-risk households early and intervene promptly. Centralizing this function would streamline referrals, improve efficiency, and ensure consistent prevention efforts across all access points. Strengthening prevention also requires a focus on supporting ongoing housing stability. For example, to support this, all individuals housed through the By-Name List could be supported with Guest Management Policies as a proactive safeguard against unit take-overs. Unit take-overs—where unauthorized individuals occupy or exert control over a tenant's unit—can lead to eviction, safety issues, or a rapid return to homelessness. Guest Management Policies allow tenants to set clear expectations around visitors, support decision-making when boundaries are being crossed, and enable staff to intervene early when warning signs emerge. When paired with strong case management and ongoing communication with landlords, these policies help protect vulnerable tenants, preserve tenancies, and reduce the likelihood of costly crisis response later.

Together, a formalized prevention team and structured guest management practices create a more coherent, proactive, and protective system. They help ensure that individuals at risk of homelessness are identified and supported before a crisis occurs, and they strengthen post-housing supports that make long-term stability more achievable.

**Shelter Diversion**

As homelessness prevention becomes more fully formalized and embedded within both service delivery and the broader homelessness response system in the County, shelter diversion must also be strengthened as a core function at every entry point into the homelessness response system and delivered alongside. To achieve this, the County will need to expand and deepen shelter diversion practices, so they are not only available but meaningfully responsive to the diverse needs of individuals seeking help. This requires:

- Dedicated resources to support diversion conversations, including staff trained in problem-solving techniques, conflict mediation, and rapid identification of safe alternatives to shelter.
- Strong supervision and quality oversight to ensure diversion is implemented ethically, consistently, and without creating barriers for those who genuinely require shelter access.
- Adequate financial and logistical resources to support alternatives to shelter, such as flexible diversion funds, transportation assistance, temporary rental contributions, or one-time supports to preserve or restore housing.

When implemented in a coordinated and well-resourced manner, shelter diversion serves as a powerful early-intervention strategy. It reduces inflow into the emergency shelter system, protects already-limited shelter capacity for those with the highest needs, and helps individuals stabilize their housing situation without entering the homelessness response system. A strengthened diversion framework at the front door of all emergency services will be an essential component of a comprehensive prevention strategy and a primary driver in reducing homelessness over time.

**Summary of Recommendations Focused on Preventing Housing Instability**

Preventing homelessness in Lambton County requires a sustained, multi-layered approach focused on both stabilizing households at risk and protecting the community's existing affordable housing stock. High inflow into homelessness, considerable housing precarity, and the vulnerability of non-profit housing providers all point to the need for coordinated, well-resourced prevention strategies. Strengthening landlord engagement, preserving affordable units,

supporting the sustainability of non-profit housing and expanding targeted eviction prevention and shelter diversion programs are essential steps. Together, these interventions form a comprehensive framework that can reduce inflow, strengthen housing security for vulnerable residents, and build a more resilient housing system that can prevent homelessness. The recommendations are summarized as follows:

- Define an approach to protecting the loss of units in the private market
- Focus on repair, renewal and long-term asset management of the Community Housing stock
- Support with non-profit provider sustainability planning
- Formalize homelessness prevention and shelter diversion delivery
- Expand eviction prevention

#### **Priority 4: Response to Indigenous Homelessness**

Lambton County sits at the nexus of several Indigenous Nations and has an Indigenous population representing around 5.5% of the total population, as per 2016 data. Homelessness data points to about a quarter of individuals who need housing as being Indigenous. By Name List data provides a number of 22.77% in January 2026. This significant over-representation requires its own strategic approach and strong partnerships with community organizations and surrounding Nations. At this time, to respond to this need, the County has implemented outreach support specifically for Indigenous participants through two designated staff members. These staff members are diligently building bridges with the Nations to establish linkages. Other examples of connections to Indigenous-specific supports include an Indigenous support workers table and housing units for Indigenous participants in the community through the Ontario Aboriginal Housing and Support Services Corporation and the Native Friendship Centre. These resources are important, and staff appreciate the important flexibility built into their roles to deliver these services. This flexibility applies to program development, relationship-based work, and the County's efforts to reduce barriers

(such as land donations for units). While these are crucial pieces, developing a strong for-Indigenous and by-Indigenous strategy in the community to address over-representation will be paramount. This must be directed and put in place through clear connections, established relationships, and formalized partnerships among the County, Indigenous service providers, and surrounding Nations. Individual workers, while skilled at building bridges, cannot be responsible for the next step of system response and collaboration.

### **Partnerships**

The County is encouraged to strengthen its efforts to reduce Indigenous homelessness by demonstrating a clear, ongoing commitment to reconciliation, equity, and accountability. This dedication should inform decision-making, resource allocation, and the development of system-wide solutions. An effective strategy not only emphasizes Indigenous needs but also recognizes the lasting effects of colonial systems, which continue to influence housing outcomes for Indigenous people in the County.

Achieving this work will depend on strong, reciprocal, and trusted partnerships with Indigenous organizations, service providers, and surrounding Nations. These partnerships must be rooted in respect for Indigenous community knowledge, self-determination, and culturally grounded approaches to housing and wellness. Relationship-based collaboration—rather than transactional or program-specific coordination—should form the foundation of all initiatives. This includes ensuring that Indigenous partners are engaged not only in service delivery but in co-designing community priorities and shaping how resources flow. To advance this work meaningfully, the County is encouraged to work closely with community partners, fund their initiatives and actively highlight their work and projects. Centering strengths and successes of Indigenous-led projects will support broader community understanding and help build momentum toward a more equitable system.

Partnerships must extend to other social service delivery departments to support this mission as a community, such as health, mental health, income supports, community safety, and family services, so that the response to Indigenous homelessness is not siloed but supported by a coordinated, wrap-around

approach. A whole-community effort is required to close gaps, align priorities, and ensure Indigenous residents experience consistent support across all service pathways.

Data practices need to evolve to reflect this commitment. Working with Indigenous partners, the County is encouraged to disaggregate data by Indigenous identity, monitor housing stability outcomes, and ensure data practices are ethical, transparent, and community approved. This level of accountability enables the system to not only understand disparities but also measure progress, adapt strategies, and ensure that outcomes for Indigenous individuals are understood, visible, and continually improving. stability

### **Prioritization**

To demonstrate a strong commitment to ending Indigenous homelessness in the County, Indigenous individuals experiencing homelessness should be prioritized for resources as they become available. It is essential that these service users are matched to appropriate resources with supports that are trauma-informed and culturally sensitive, ensuring smooth transitions into housing. Using culturally appropriate methods within the By-Name List and expanding prioritization to community housing units are important steps. Although the current Prioritization Policy recognizes Indigenous Status as a priority, adopting a culturally sensitive assessment tool like PATH or an Indigenous-led (Indigenous-approved) assessment approach would further strengthen the local matching processes used to connect people to limited programs and resources.

### **Housing Options**

The recent opening of units by the Ontario Aboriginal Housing and Support Services, supported in part by a land donation from the County, demonstrates how deliberate, collaborative efforts can expand Indigenous-led housing in the region. To effectively meet the current demand and reduce the over-representation of Indigenous people experiencing homelessness, there must be a continued increase in Indigenous-designed and operated housing options throughout the County. This growth is vital to ensuring housing solutions are culturally grounded, community-centered, and tailored to meet the distinct needs, histories, and strengths of Indigenous residents.

To support this growth, it is essential to strengthen Indigenous providers' capacity, eliminate systemic barriers that block new Indigenous-led projects, and maintain a steady stream of developments. It is recommended that the County work closely with Indigenous partners to identify their specific needs for expanding local Indigenous-operated housing and to ensure these projects remain sustainable over the long term. Proactive measures are crucial to remove systemic obstacles, allowing providers to increase their housing supply and participate fully and fairly in the development process. A predictable, well-supported pipeline ensures a continuous supply of new units, offering a diverse range of options that are culturally appropriate for Indigenous residents over the coming decade. Building this pipeline involves coordinated planning, multi-year investment strategies, and close collaboration with Indigenous organizations to identify opportunities, develop project ideas, and align efforts with cultural values and community priorities.

#### **Summary of Recommendations for Response to Indigenous Homelessness**

As the next 10-Year Plan is launched, the County of Lambton faces an important juncture in its engagement with Indigenous partners. Deepening relationships, forming meaningful partnerships, demonstrating clear commitment and ensuring for-Indigenous by-Indigenous initiatives are pathways to improving housing outcomes in the community. The need for culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous people experiencing homelessness is great in the County, and it must be responded to with a corresponding level of resources. The following recommendations will support as a launching pad towards increased commitment:

- The community to support a by-Indigenous for-Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy
- Advance and formalize relationships with partners and nations
- Expand prioritization to Indigenous households
- Increase capacity and resources to create accessible units that provide culturally appropriate supports
- Grow pipeline of Indigenous-led affordable housing projects

While the development of an Indigenous-specific strategy for the County will outline further supports and resources required, these recommendations outline

some steps that will illustrate a commitment to reducing Indigenous homelessness and over-representation.

#### **Priority 5: Response for Individuals with the Most Complex Needs**

The County deserves recognition for making notable progress in housing individuals experiencing homelessness and those with low to moderate acuity needs. This success hinges on Community Support Workers, strong landlord partnerships, the Homelessness Priority Policy and a housing-focused strategy. However, while these efforts effectively address lower-acuity cases, County staff face resource limitations for more complex, high-needs cases. This is a critical issue that must be prioritized in planning future actions. The longer someone remains homeless, the more their needs grow, and their situations become more complicated. Support requirements increase with time spent in homelessness and the cycle of repeated homelessness following unsuccessful housing placements. In practice, this priority emphasizes providing emergency resources and creating sustainable pathways out of homelessness for this high-need group.

#### **Emergency Response**

When evaluating the options for adults in terms of emergency response, residents experiencing homelessness currently have access to one shelter space, which is actively working to lower barriers to entry and service access; one overflow option; and one sober-living space option. These limited emergency responses play a major role in shaping where adults experiencing homelessness ultimately seek shelter, including options that may be unsafe or inadequate.

Currently, the numbers related to unsheltered homelessness remain consistent across the County due to the significant concerted housing-focused efforts of outreach and shelter teams. Data indicates that roughly 10 to 12 people sleep outside each night, with about 30 unique individuals affected each month. These figures have held steady since the Rainbow Park encampment closed as crucial work has continued with the support of a variety of partners. These numbers and efforts form the basis for discussions about unsheltered homelessness, those most vulnerable, and emergency responses. While discussing those with greatest needs, it is also vital to focus on individuals who are provisionally accommodated. Any support strategy for those with complex needs must include pathways to help residents move out of situations where they are living in unsuitable housing in lieu of shelter or permanent housing accommodations. Reports across the community show a significant population of provisionally accommodated and underhoused

individuals. The increase in the number of people relying on provisional resources highlight concerns about emergency shelter options. The County has robust data around individually cited reasons for not accessing shelter in their monthly dashboards and these can continue to be utilized in their important work in lowering barriers and increasing housing focus in partnership with local shelters. The current prioritization of these improvements in shelter best practices is commendable and will contribute to the increase the number of low- barrier emergency shelter spaces with a strong housing focus, so that when individuals exit shelter, they move toward housing. The overall projections on the number of spaces needed are included in this report.

### **Housing and Support Options**

**At this time, no sustainable pathways into housing exist for individuals with complex needs in Lambton County.** While the County has crucial prioritization in place through its Homelessness Priority Policy for community housing, the supports attached to this housing option are not designed to meet the needs of individuals with complex needs. Thus, the urgent necessity to meet demand for housing options serving those with high support needs must be addressed through a well-resourced approach. Supportive housing with on-site services for individuals with complex needs became a top priority in all discussions. The current community options are insufficient to deliver the intensive, professional support these individuals require, which hampers their chances of escaping homelessness. The supports required are 24/7, intensive, housing-focused and provide high-frequency and high-intensity services. To improve system effectiveness, the County must prevent higher-needs individuals from remaining stuck in homelessness and ensure that responses match their level of need. A permanent supportive housing model responds to the depth of complexity that service users require while being well-versed in mental health, addictions, concurrent disorders, and traumatic brain injury. The supportive housing recommendations in this report emphasize the urgent need for suitable housing solutions for individuals with multiple significant challenges, including those with higher triage scores. Additional advocacy and collaboration opportunities exist for the County to encourage the initiation of a Housing First Assertive Community Treatment Team in the region. A housing-focused, clinically interdisciplinary lens will support individuals who are most in need in the community, wrap them in care, reduce emergency service use, and increase housing retention and stability. Expanding case management supports would also allow the Homelessness Priority Policy to house higher-acuity individuals from the By Names List, including those exiting unsheltered homelessness. Additionally, as individuals with more complex needs move closer to accessing community housing

through the regular waitlist pathway, it is crucial for the County to ensure the right depth of services is in place to support successful transitions into housing.

This was a consistent, priority focus throughout the County- the critical need for intensive, appropriate supports to keep people housed sustainably. Currently, this type of support typically falls to Community Support Workers (CSWs) within the County. Their role, however, was both described and structured to support only individuals with low to medium support needs. While the workers are reported to meet with individuals 2-3 times a week, which reflects a higher level of intensity, their caseloads of 25-30 individuals do not allow for significant depth of engagement in this context. CSWs were consistently filling in the gap due to the lack of appropriate levels of support in the community. Even eviction prevention CSWs ended up supporting individuals on their caseloads for years despite their short-term scope. Across the community, many tenants are described as struggling with housing and lacking the skills to navigate tenancies. High-needs individuals lack the support needed to ensure successful housing placements. People with lived experience also voiced this consistent theme, noting that they are still struggling even after becoming housed. Feedback on a distinct lack of higher intensity support permeated all engagements.

#### **Embedding Data in Service Delivery Planning**

Lambton County has an impressive data-forward culture. Important and cohesive data exists in the community. Dashboards are of quality and up to date. Staff across providers use HIFIS (Homeless Individuals and Families Information System), which sets the stage for shared care planning, prioritizes effective system operations, and anchors the system in trauma-informed care. Consents to be included in HIFIS include those from other community providers, such as the Canadian Mental Health Association. Included providers have been onboarded to HIFIS, have access to HIFIS notes, and also utilize them for their documentation. Many tools exist, and training is easily accessible to staff within their work. Additionally, data is well integrated into the Coordinated Access process, and managers recognize its value and importance for understanding their work. This foundation for the County is a great representation of the crucial work undertaken over the last five years. These are important community gains that have created a collaborative system. The next step is to put processes in place that will ensure front-line staff, management staff, and the County's homelessness response system can leverage this structure to achieve greater organization, collaboration, and efficiency in response.

Currently, managers report a need for greater emphasis on workforce

development to contribute to shared care planning, demonstrate success, and track client care. They report a desire to strengthen documentation to facilitate collaboration across providers. Embedding strong data-focused operationalization will deepen the system's work in shifting from having great data to leveraging it for service planning and day-to-day operations for frontline staff. This work can be supported by:

- Strong documentation standards
- Data use throughout team meetings and for performance reviews
- File audits to ensure strong alignment with best practices
- Embedding case management milestones into HIFIS
- Operationalizing shared care meetings and care conferencing with HIFIS as the foundation of information sharing processes for front-line staff

The role that data plays in system leadership is strong and directs decision-making. Moving forward, shifting the focus to front-line staff and how they engage with data and documentation operationally will allow the system to administer services more smoothly, avoid duplication and ensure a strong collaborative lens to support individuals. At times, staff report siloing in care planning for service users—each provider works on their own goals. Aligning how information management systems are used to support an alignment in care plans will support the continuing quality improvement of the County's homelessness response system.

#### **Summary of Recommendations for Increasing Responses for Individuals with Complex Needs**

The County of Lambton has been effective in supporting individuals with low- and medium-acuity needs to exit homelessness promptly. However, resources and housing options are insufficient to sustainably support those with the most complex needs. Limited emergency response options push individuals towards unsheltered homelessness or situations where they are underhoused. Appropriate pathways out of homelessness are also missing to begin to lower the numbers of those experiencing chronic homelessness on the By-Name List. Finally, despite frontline staff working with an advanced data infrastructure that informs community planning, strengthened operational coaching will assist them in service delivery planning, and improve shared care approaches. To improve responses for individuals with the most complex needs in Lambton County, the following recommendations are provided:

- Grow emergency shelter spaces with a strong trauma-informed housing

focus

- Prioritize supportive housing development
- Invest in intensive case management supports and advocate for Housing First Assertive Community Treatment Team options
- Embed data and documentation best practices in service delivery planning and shared care

This range of interventions will ensure that individuals are appropriately supported throughout their housing stability journey. The need for responses to chronic homelessness in the County is urgent, and a mix of emergency options, supportive housing, deeper clinical supports and enhanced data use to improve system coordination and outcomes is required.

#### **Summary of Next Steps to Enhance Responses to Housing and Homelessness Issues**

Across the assessments and engagements conducted in the County, it became evident that addressing housing and homelessness concerns requires action at multiple levels. The complexity and breadth of challenges facing the region call for a multipronged approach that reflects the needs of the entire community. This includes those:

- impacted by constrained household formation
- with very low and low incomes
- at risk of experiencing homelessness
- experiencing hidden homelessness
- experiencing homelessness for shorter periods of time
- experiencing homelessness in a chronic fashion

The foundation for meaningful progress in Lambton County is a significant increase in affordable rental housing stock. Expanding this supply is essential to support effective system improvements. Sustained reductions in homelessness, greater long-term housing stability, and decreased inflow into homelessness all depend on establishing a substantial and reliable pipeline of new affordable units as a core component of the County's strategy. As demonstrated throughout this analysis, Lambton County faces persistent pressures across the housing continuum - rising

rents, limited vacancy rates, declining lower-cost units, and a deeply constrained supply of community housing. These conditions restrict exit pathways for individuals experiencing homelessness and simultaneously place additional stress on households who are precariously housed. Expanding affordable rental stock directly addresses these structural barriers by increasing the number of viable units available to households with limited financial means, thereby reducing pressure for scarce housing, shortening wait times, and improving the speed and sustainability of housing placements.

An additional foundational priority will be strengthening community collaboration and system governance. This is essential to advancing Lambton County's housing and homelessness response and all other priority areas. The report emphasizes that strong coordination, clearly defined roles, aligned messaging, and shared accountability across service providers, municipalities, and community partners are foundational to achieving measurable reductions in homelessness. Providers expressed a need for a unified community commitment to ending homelessness, supported by system mapping, reduced duplication, and consistent housing-focused practices across all teams. This priority calls for deeper collaboration between the County and municipalities, proactive communication with residents, and consistent information sharing to build trust, mobilize community support, and ensure that all partners are working toward the same strategic vision for housing and homelessness outcomes.

With an adequate supply pipeline, the County can address system improvements, which involve strengthening homelessness prevention mechanisms. It was clear that individuals in low-income situations are resilient and work hard to meet their daily needs despite insufficient income, food insecurity, difficulty accessing transportation, and high housing costs. Consistently, engagement pointed to a broad approach that takes community wellness into account to ensure that individuals not only avoid homelessness but also gain steady, stable ground. To support low-income individuals within the community, formalized homelessness prevention and shelter diversion programs are required, particularly for those who are most likely to end up unhoused.

To significantly reduce the number of people entering homelessness without quick exits, the County should make substantial investments in creating sustainable pathways out of the homelessness response system, especially for those with complex needs. This involves developing a complete range of options that not

only facilitate entry into housing but also support long-term stability. Such pathways include supportive housing with appropriate clinical and non-clinical supports, as well as intensive case management tailored to individuals facing high and complex challenges. These solutions also depend on strong coordination between service providers through shared care practices and effective information management. Without these durable, long-term solutions, particularly for those with chronic or unsheltered homelessness, individuals will keep cycling through shelters, emergency services, and temporary options. Investing in sustainable pathways ensures that people not only exit homelessness but maintain that stability, easing system burdens and promoting lasting community well-being.

The County is encouraged to deepen and formalize its efforts to address the disproportionate number of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness through the development of an Indigenous Housing and Homelessness Strategy. While progress has been made—such as Indigenous outreach programs, forming partnerships with Indigenous service providers, and creating Indigenous-led housing—these initiatives should evolve into a comprehensive, long-term plan rooted in reconciliation, equity, and Indigenous self-determination. Enhancing this approach involves fostering stronger collaborations with surrounding nations, prioritizing Indigenous households in housing allocations, utilizing culturally appropriate assessment tools, and expanding Indigenous-led housing options throughout the County. Building an adequate supply of culturally relevant housing and ensuring Indigenous leadership in planning and decision-making are essential to reducing disparities and improving outcomes for Indigenous residents.

### **Conclusion**

The County's Housing and Homelessness Plan reaffirms a shared commitment to ensuring that every resident has access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing. The findings of this plan make clear that the challenges facing the community - rising housing costs, limited rental availability, increasing pressures on emergency services, and widening inequities - require coordinated, sustained action across all levels of the housing continuum. Addressing these pressures is not only essential for reducing homelessness but also for strengthening community well-being, economic stability, and long-term population resilience.

The strategies outlined in this Plan emphasize prevention, early intervention, and the creation of a strong supply of affordable housing as core foundations for

progress. Achieving meaningful change will depend on deep collaboration with Indigenous partners, community agencies, municipal and provincial stakeholders, landlords, developers, and residents with lived and living experience. Effective implementation will also require ongoing monitoring, transparent reporting, and a commitment to continuous improvement as community needs evolve. In mapping out their short-, medium-, and long-term goals, the County will have to prioritize where to allocate its time, investment, and effort to create a positive impact. These decisions will also be influenced by the participation and contributions of the entire community—municipalities, developers, residents, and other sectors. All will have to be involved for these initiatives to be successful.

In prioritizing stable housing as both a human right and a prerequisite for community wellness, the County positions itself to achieve measurable, lasting improvements in residents' lives. With sustained investment, cross-sector partnership, and a clear focus on equity, the County can move toward a future where homelessness is rare, brief, and nonrecurring - and where all residents have the opportunity to thrive.

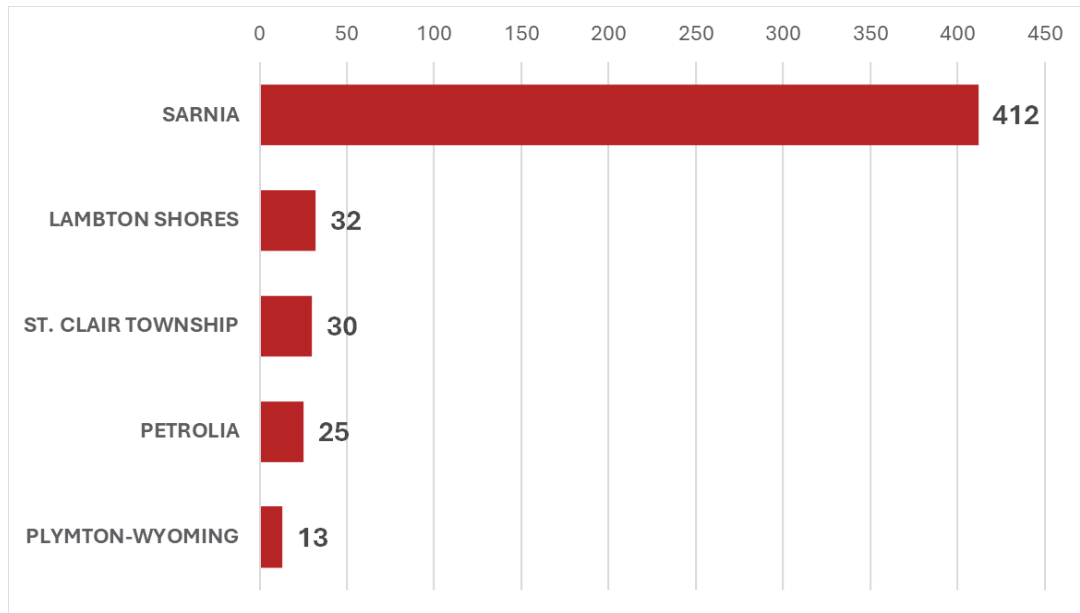
**Appendix A: Community Survey Analysis**

**Who Responded**

The community survey was conducted between January 12 and March 2, 2026. The survey was administered online through SurveyMonkey and promoted by the County of Lambton and community partners. Participation was voluntary and anonymous.

A total of 561 responses were collected. Not all respondents answered every question, so the number of responses (N) varies by question throughout this appendix. All findings are reported using the number of respondents to each specific question.

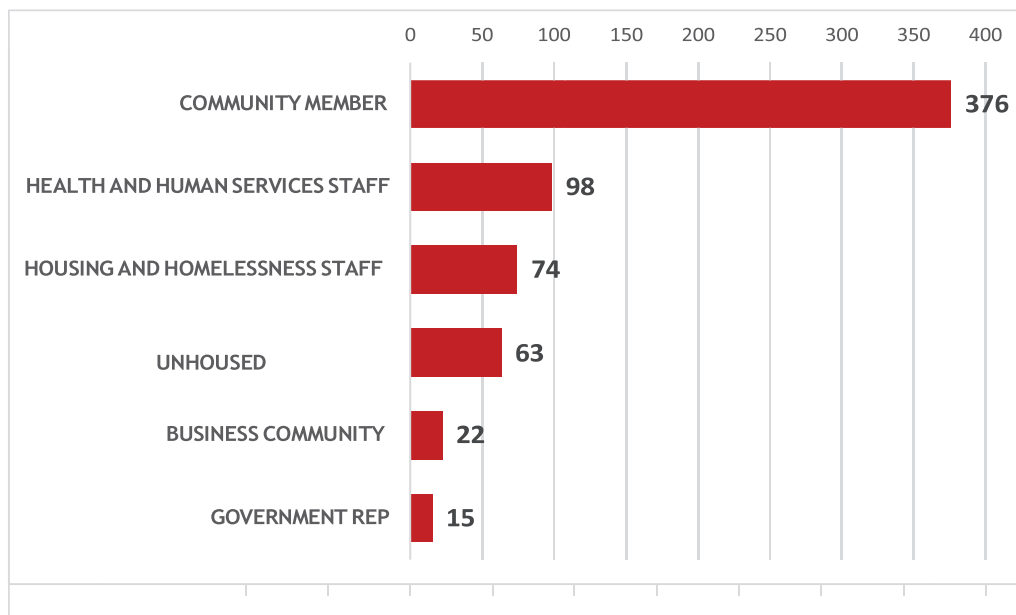
**Survey Respondents by Community of Residence (N=561)**



A total of 561 respondents answered this question. Most respondents were from Sarnia (N=412, 73 %), while all other communities were represented by much smaller numbers. As a result, survey findings are more reflective of perspectives from Sarnia.

A total of 561 respondents answered the question, “Which of the below perspectives are you completing this survey from?” Respondents were able to select more than one option. Most identified as community members, with 376 (67 %), followed by 98 (17 %) working in the health and human services sector and 74 (13 %) working specifically in housing and homelessness. A meaningful portion of respondents also identified as having lived or living experience of being unhoued, at 63 (11 %), adding important direct insight into the challenges reflected throughout this report. Smaller shares of respondents identified as part of the business community, 22 (4 %), or as government representatives, 15 (3 %). In addition, 72 respondents (13 %) selected “other,” which included a mix of perspectives such as educators, librarians, retirees, landlords, volunteers, and individuals identifying as taxpayers. This reflects that the survey reached a broad cross-section of the community.

**Respondent Perspectives (Select All That Apply) (N=561)**



Together, these results provide important context for interpreting the survey findings that follow. The data reflects a broad cross-section of perspectives, with a strong representation from community members and a notable presence of

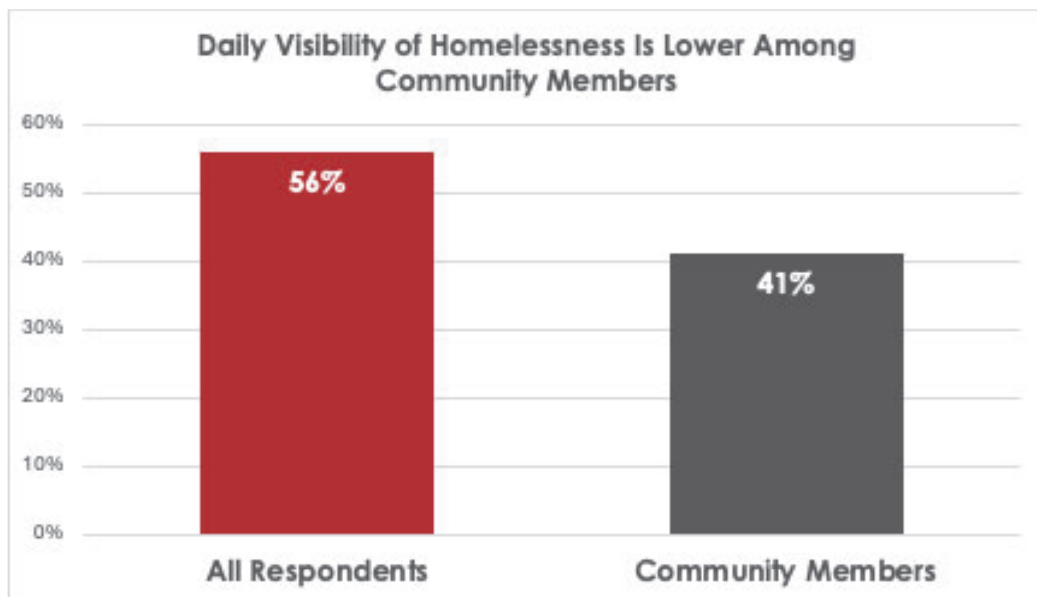
respondents working within health, human services, and housing, as well as individuals with lived experience of homelessness. At the same time, the geographic distribution of responses, particularly the concentration in Sarnia, should be considered when interpreting results across the County.

The following sections build on this context by examining how respondents perceive homelessness in their community, including its visibility, associated concerns, and overall impact.

**Visibility and Perception of Homelessness**

A total of 508 respondents answered the question, “How often do you see people experiencing homelessness in your day-to-day life?” More than half, 284 (56 %), reported seeing homelessness daily, with an additional 114 (22 %) reporting weekly exposure. Very few respondents indicated that they rarely or never see homelessness, 35 (7 %) combined.

These overall results reflect a broad mix of perspectives, including individuals working in the homelessness and human services sectors, those with lived experience, and community members. To better understand how visible homelessness is experienced by the general public, responses were examined separately for those who identified solely as community members.



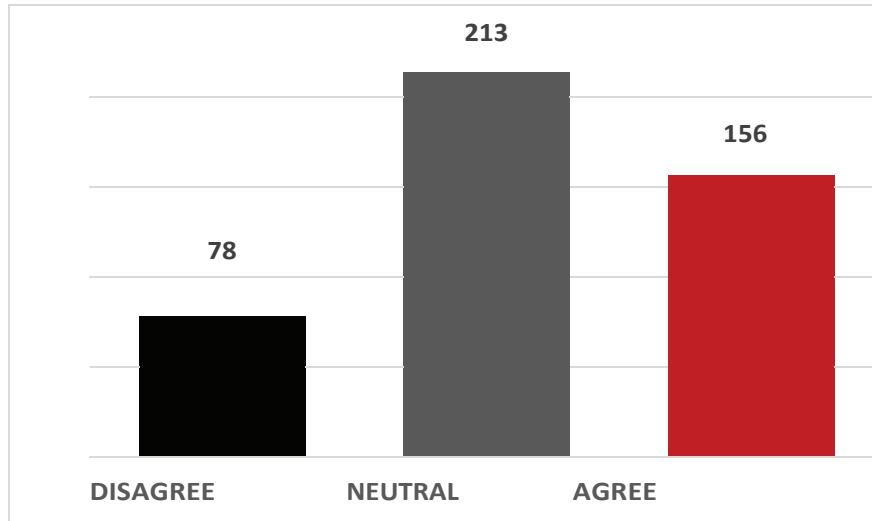
While 376 respondents selected “community member” as one of their perspectives, many also identified additional roles. When isolating those who identified only as community members, a total of 269 respondents remain. Within this group, 111 (41 %) reported seeing homelessness daily, indicating that daily exposure is less common among community members when considered separately from respondents who are more likely to encounter homelessness through their work or lived experience. These results indicate that visible homelessness is a regular and highly present experience across the community, although the frequency of daily exposure varies depending on respondents’ connection to the issue.

Respondents were also asked, “Which concerns, if any, do you associate with visible homelessness in public spaces?” (N=508, multiple responses permitted). The most frequently identified concern was the impact on people experiencing homelessness themselves, selected by 323 (64 %). This was followed by concerns related to cleanliness and maintenance of public spaces, 298 (59 %), comfort and ability to use public spaces, 270 (53 %), personal safety, 265 (52 %), and impacts on local businesses, 265 (52 %). Only 22 respondents (4 %) indicated that they had no specific concerns. These results suggest that concerns about visible homelessness are not limited to public order or safety but also reflect a strong awareness of the impacts on individuals experiencing homelessness.

A total of 494 respondents answered the question, “Have your interactions with visible homelessness changed how you feel about the issue?” Over half, 276 (56 %), reported that their interactions have increased their concern about homelessness. In contrast, 152 (31 %) indicated that their views have not changed, while very few respondents reported reduced concern, 15 (3 %). A small number reported no interactions or were unsure.

Responses to the statement, “Most people experiencing homelessness in Lambton County are originally from Lambton County,” were collected using a 10-point scale, where 1 represents strong disagreement, and 10 represents strong agreement (N=502).

**Perceptions of Whether Homelessness Is Local to Lambton County (N=502)**



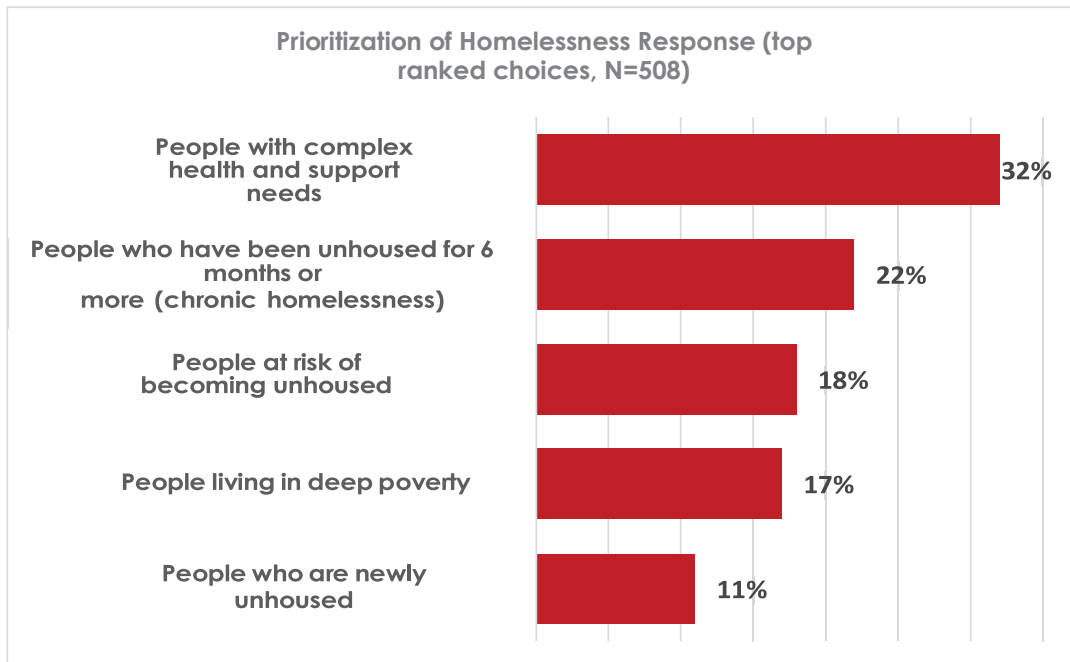
For analysis, responses were grouped into three categories: disagreement (ratings of 1 to 3), neutral (ratings of 4 to 7), and agreement (ratings of 8 to 10). Responses were distributed across all three groupings. A total of 78 (16 %) of respondents expressed disagreement, 268 (53 %) selected mid-range responses, and 156 (31 %) expressed agreement. These results suggest that perspectives on this issue vary across the community. While a portion of respondents believe that most people experiencing homelessness are local to Lambton County, others are unsure or hold different views. This variation highlights that perceptions about the origins of homelessness are not uniform and may be shaped by different experiences or information available to respondents.

Visible homelessness is not a distant or abstract issue for most respondents. It is encountered regularly, often daily, and those interactions are shaping how people understand and respond to it. While concerns include safety, public space use, and community impacts, there is also a clear recognition of the challenges faced by people experiencing homelessness themselves. At the same time, uncertainty about who is experiencing homelessness, particularly whether individuals are local to the community, suggests that public understanding is still forming. This combination of high visibility, growing concern, and mixed perceptions creates both urgency and opportunity for clear communication and informed local responses.

**Priorities for Homelessness Response and Housing Needs**

A total of 508 respondents identified which situations should be prioritized first when investing in homelessness services across Lambton County. Responses indicate a clear

emphasis on supporting individuals with the highest levels of need. People with complex health and support needs were most frequently identified as the top priority, followed by individuals experiencing chronic homelessness. This suggests that respondents recognize the importance of addressing more acute and sustained experiences of homelessness.



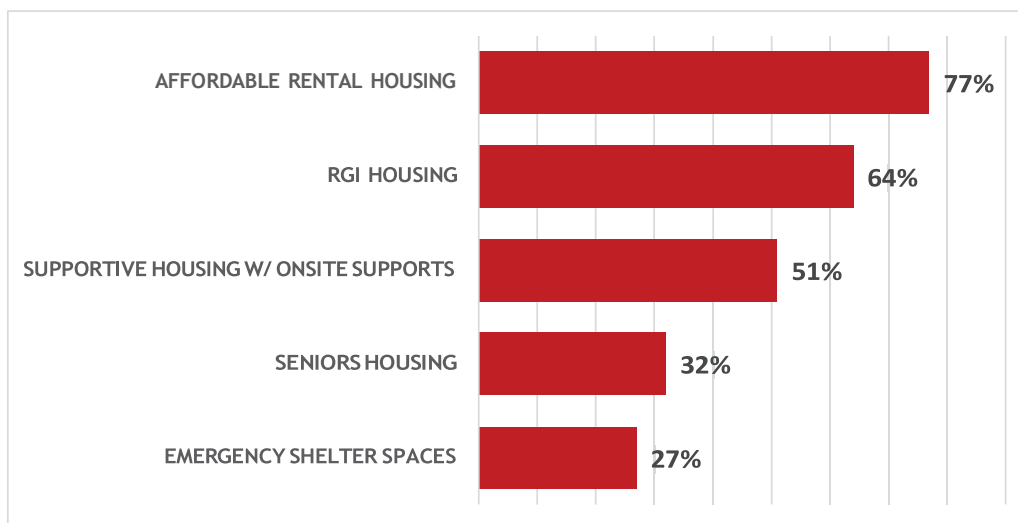
At the same time, respondents also identified the importance of prevention and earlier support for those becoming unhoused. Those who are newly unhoused were also identified as a priority group, alongside people living in deep poverty. While these groups were less frequently selected than others, their inclusion reflects an understanding that reducing inflow into homelessness is also critical to improving overall system outcomes.

When asked to identify the highest priority, 162 respondents (32 %) selected people with complex health and support needs. This was followed by 113 (22 %) identifying people experiencing chronic homelessness, 93 (18 %) identifying people at risk of becoming unhoused, 84 (17 %) identifying people living in deep poverty, and 56 (11 %) identifying people who are newly unhoused.

Respondents were also asked which types of housing are most needed in Lambton

County (N=508, multiple responses permitted). The results point to a clear and consistent emphasis on affordability. Affordable rental housing was selected by 390 respondents (77 %), followed by rent-geared-to-income housing at 325 (64 %), and supportive housing with on-site supports at 259 (51 %). Other housing types, including housing for seniors (161, 32 %) and emergency shelter spaces (135, 27 %), were selected less frequently.

**Most Needed Housing Types (Top Selections, N=508)**



Additional housing needs were also identified across specific populations and housing models. Housing for youth and young adults was selected by 114 respondents (22 %), transitional housing by 98 (19 %), and Indigenous- led housing and supports by 72 (14 %). While these options were identified by fewer respondents, they reflect important and distinct needs within the broader housing system. These results indicate that while a range of housing types is needed, the most pressing gaps are in affordable housing for low-income households, alongside a significant need for supportive housing for those with higher needs.

Community support for expanding housing and homelessness responses is also strong. A total of 267 respondents (53 %) rated their support for new homelessness services as a 10 on a 10-point scale, while 308 (61 %) did the same for new affordable housing. Responses across the scale are heavily weighted toward higher values, indicating broad support beyond only those selecting the highest rating.

Overall, respondents identify both the need to address the most complex experiences of homelessness and the importance of increasing affordable and supportive housing, with strong support for expanding these efforts across the community.

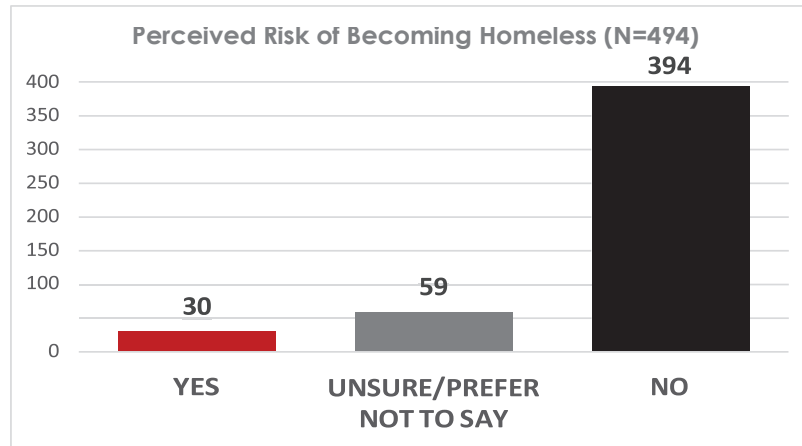
### **Housing Stability and Personal Risk**

A total of 494 respondents answered the question, “Which of the following most accurately conveys your current housing status?” Most respondents reported stable housing situations. A majority, 327 (66 %), identified as homeowners, while 80 (16 %) reported renting in the private market without subsidy and 15 (3 %) reported living in subsidized housing.

Smaller shares of respondents reported fewer stable arrangements, including 35 (7 %) living with a relative and 5 (1 %) temporarily staying with friends. A small number of respondents reported being without housing, 6 (1 %), or living in a motel or hotel, 1 (less than 1 %). While these numbers are small, they indicate housing instability within the respondent group.

A total of 494 respondents answered the question, “Have you ever experienced homelessness?” Most respondents, 384 (78 %), indicated that they have not experienced homelessness. However, 87 (18 %) reported that they have experienced homelessness at some point, with an additional 15 (3 %) preferring not to answer. This indicates that a meaningful portion of respondents bring direct lived experience of homelessness.

Respondents were also asked whether they have concerns about their current living situation (N=494, multiple responses permitted). A majority, 317 (64 %), indicated that they do not currently have concerns. Among those who did identify concerns, the most common was the ability to pay rent or utilities, reported by 88 respondents (18 %). Other concerns included safety (48, 10 %), condition of housing (35, 7 %), and threat of eviction (19, 4 %). A smaller number of respondents reported concerns related to overcrowding (9, 2 %).



A total of 494 respondents answered the question, “Do you feel at risk of becoming unhoused in the next year?”. Most respondents, 394 (80 %), indicated no risk. However, 30 respondents (6 %) reported feeling at risk, while 53 (11 %) were unsure and 6 (1%) preferred not to say. While the proportion reporting immediate risk is relatively small, the number of respondents who are unsure suggests a broader group experiencing some level of instability or uncertainty.

Respondents were also asked whether they had accessed food from a local pantry or meal program in the past year (N=494). A total of 60 respondents (12 %) reported accessing food supports, while 420 (85 %) reported not accessing them. A small number preferred not to answer or selected other responses. Access to food supports is an important indicator of financial strain and may signal underlying challenges related to housing stability.

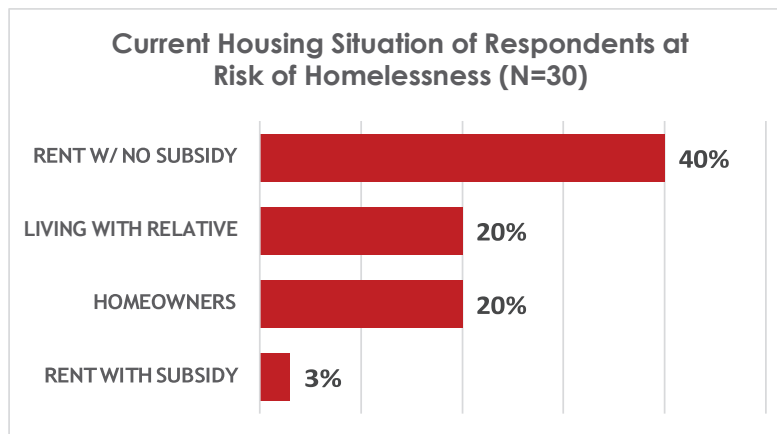
A total of 494 respondents answered the question, “Are you currently working?” Most respondents, 329 (67 %), reported being employed through regular, formal work. A smaller share, 84 (17 %), reported that they are not currently working, while 25 (5 %) indicated they are not of working age. A small number reported informal or cash-based work (5, 1 %), and 44 (9 %) selected “other,” reflecting a range of employment situations.

Overall, most respondents report stable housing and employment. At the same time, the data highlights a smaller but important group experiencing housing instability, financial pressure, or uncertainty about their future housing. The presence of respondents who have experienced homelessness, combined with those reporting concerns about affordability, safety, and potential risk of becoming unhoused, points to underlying vulnerability that may not be immediately visible in broader housing indicators.

**Housing Risk Among Vulnerable Respondents**

When examining respondents who reported feeling at risk of becoming unhoused in the next year (N=30), a clearer picture emerges of where that risk is concentrated. While this group represents a relatively small share of overall respondents, their current housing situations and past experiences point to underlying vulnerability.

Half of those who reported feeling at risk, 15 of 30 (50%), also indicated that they have previously experienced homelessness. In contrast, respondents with lived experience represent a much smaller share of the overall survey population, 87 of 561 (16%). This indicates that people with prior experience of homelessness are significantly overrepresented among those who feel at risk of becoming unhoused again. At the same time, 15 of 87 respondents with lived experience (17%) reported feeling at risk in the next year, suggesting that for some, the experience of homelessness is not a one-time event but part of an ongoing cycle of housing instability.



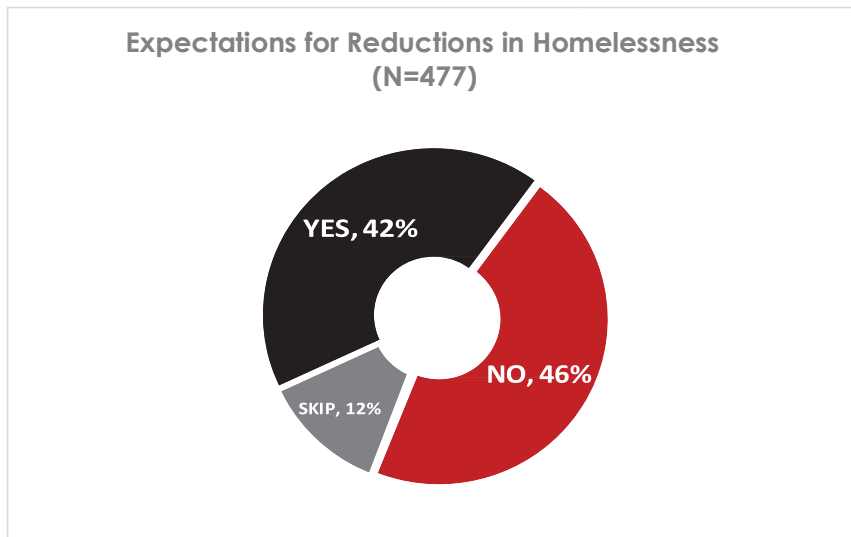
Further looking at current housing situations among those who feel at risk shows that the largest share was renting in the private market without subsidy, 12 of 30 (40%). An additional 6 (20%) reported living with a relative, and 6 (20%) identified as homeowners. Very few respondents in this group reported living in subsidized housing, 1 (3%).

Other responses point to more precarious or informal arrangements, including temporarily staying with friends, renting a room, or living in a shelter. These situations, while not always captured as homelessness, reflect limited housing security and reduced control over one's living situation.

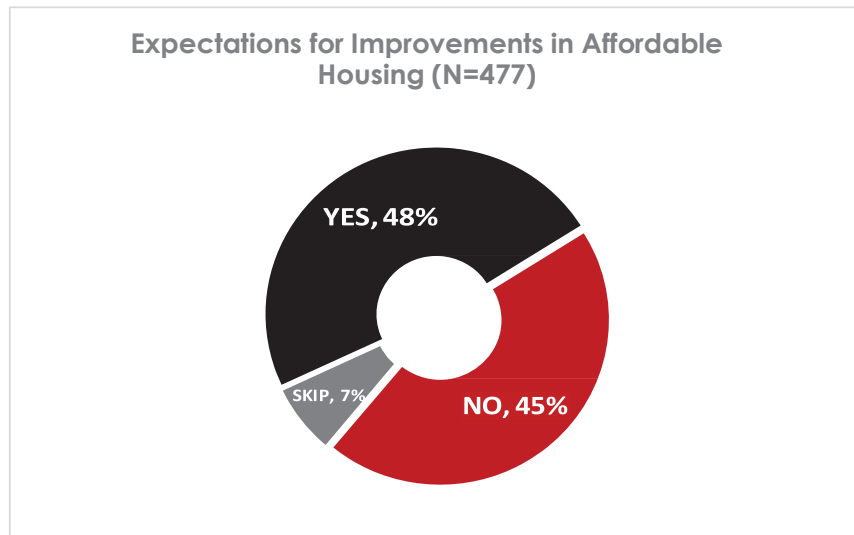
Together, these findings indicate that the perceived risk of homelessness is not confined to those who are currently unhoused. It is concentrated among individuals with prior experience of homelessness and those living in less stable or less affordable housing situations, particularly in the private rental market. The very small number of respondents in subsidized housing who report feeling at risk may also suggest greater stability within that housing type.

**Expectations for Future Homelessness and Housing Outcomes**

A total of 477 respondents answered the question, “Do you believe there will be meaningful and measurable reductions in the number of people experiencing homelessness in your community over the next 10 years?” Responses were divided. A total of 218 respondents (46 %) indicated that they do not believe there will be meaningful reductions, compared to 201 (42 %) who believe there will be. An additional 58 respondents (12 %) did not provide a clear response.



Respondents were also asked whether they believe there will be meaningful improvements in the supply of affordable housing over the next 10 years (N=477). Responses to this question were similarly mixed, though slightly more optimistic. A total of 229 respondents (48 %) indicated that they believe improvements will occur, while 214 (45 %) do not. A smaller share, 34 respondents (7 %), did not provide a clear response.



Responses to these two questions indicate a community uncertain about the future. While there is modest optimism that the supply of affordable housing may improve, this does not translate into the same level of confidence that homelessness will decline. The close split in responses suggests that many respondents are not convinced that current efforts will be sufficient to produce meaningful change over the next decade.

**Concerns About New Affordable Housing Near Home**

A total of 477 respondents answered the open-ended question, “What concerns would you have, if any, about new affordable housing being developed near you?” Responses reflected a mix of support, conditional support, and opposition. A substantial number of respondents expressed little or no concern, with many emphasizing the urgency of addressing housing need. As one respondent noted, “None. There are always going to be downsides, but we are in a housing crisis, and the benefits far outweigh the concerns.”

Among those who identified concerns, the most common theme related to neighbourhood impacts. Many responses referenced safety, crime, drug use, theft, cleanliness, or broader disorder. These concerns were often framed in terms of personal safety and potential changes to neighbourhood character. In some

cases, responses appeared to conflate affordable housing with supportive housing or unmanaged behavioural issues, reflecting uncertainty about who would be housed and what supports would be in place. One respondent captured this perspective directly: "Community safety, theft, and cleanliness are the top three concerns I have with affordable housing being developed near you."

A second major theme focused on the need for on-site supports, staffing, and strong property management. This was raised frequently, including by respondents who were otherwise supportive of new housing. Many emphasized that housing should be accompanied by appropriate services, including mental health and addictions supports, as well as clear expectations for safety and maintenance. As one respondent stated, "On site management and access to real support is the only way this will work."

Location and integration also emerged as consistent considerations. Respondents raised questions about where housing should be located, whether it should be distributed more evenly across the community, and how residents would access services such as transit, groceries, and healthcare. Some supported affordable housing in principle but expressed concern about concentrating developments in specific areas or placing them in locations without adequate infrastructure.

Additional themes included maintenance, design, and the meaning of affordability. Some respondents raised concerns about long-term upkeep, quality of construction, and how developments would fit within existing neighbourhoods. Others questioned whether proposed housing would be truly affordable to those with the lowest incomes.

The responses do not reflect a single dominant viewpoint. While some respondents expressed concern about neighbourhood impacts, others emphasized the need for housing and the importance of doing it well. A large portion of responses fall between these positions, indicating that support for new affordable housing is often conditional on how it is planned, delivered, and supported.

**Perspectives on How the Community Should Respond to Homelessness**

A total of 427 respondents provided open-ended feedback on what they would change about the community's response to homelessness. Responses point to several clear and consistent themes, including the need for more affordable and supportive housing, stronger mental health and addictions supports, and a shift in how people experiencing homelessness are perceived and treated. While there is broad agreement that more needs to be done, responses also reflect differences in how the issue is understood and how solutions should be approached.

A dominant theme across the responses is the need to reduce stigma and shift public attitudes toward greater empathy and understanding. Many respondents emphasized that people experiencing homelessness are often judged, dismissed, or treated as a problem rather than as individuals facing complex circumstances. These responses frequently called for a more human-centred approach, grounded in compassion and respect. As one respondent noted, "Unhoused people are human beings, not problems to be managed, and most are on the streets due to trauma or circumstances beyond their control, fighting every day to survive."

There is also strong and consistent support for increasing the supply of affordable and supportive housing, along with a clear sense of urgency. Respondents repeatedly identified the need for more housing that is accessible to people with low incomes, as well as housing paired with appropriate supports. Many expressed frustrations with the pace of progress and a desire for more immediate action. At the same time, responses make clear that housing alone is not seen as sufficient. Mental health and addictions supports were frequently identified as essential to long-term stability, with one respondent stating, "Supported housing is as vital as affordable housing if not more so. Those who are unhoused with complex issues will not be able to maintain a home even if it is affordable. They need supports."

A further theme centers on the need for stronger coordination, accountability, and follow-through. Respondents pointed to delays, fragmented services, and a lack of visible progress, calling for more effective implementation and clearer

leadership across the system. This includes a desire for responses that are not only well-planned but also measurable and sustained over time.

Prevention and earlier intervention were also identified, though less frequently, as important components of the response. Some respondents emphasized the need to address housing instability before it leads to homelessness, including through eviction prevention, income supports, and earlier system engagement.

Alongside these themes, a smaller but clearly present set of responses emphasized safety, enforcement, and conditional approaches to support. These responses often focused on concerns related to substance use, public disorder, and the impacts of homelessness in shared spaces, and in some cases called for requirements such as sobriety or proof of effort before accessing services. As one respondent expressed, "The taxpayers and working individuals are paying for it, the people using these facilities should have to be clean of drugs and show proof of effort to better their situation." These perspectives are not representative of the majority of responses, but they reflect an important strand of community sentiment that shapes how homelessness is discussed and addressed locally.

Overall, the responses reflect a community that recognizes the complexity of homelessness and broadly supports action, particularly more housing and stronger supports. At the same time, the findings highlight the importance of how these solutions are delivered, including the need to address stigma, build public understanding, and ensure that responses are both effective and accountable.

### **Appendix B: Methodological Approach to Housing Estimates**

The housing estimates presented in this plan were developed using multiple local data sources to understand both the current scale of homelessness and the broader housing pressures contributing to housing instability across Lambton County. Rather than relying on a single dataset or point-in-time snapshot, the estimates were developed by examining how people move into, through, and out of homelessness and housing instability over time.

The estimates are intended to provide an evidence-informed planning framework for the level and type of housing required to reduce homelessness and improve housing stability over the next ten years. The analysis drew on several primary sources of local information, including:

- By-Name Data to understand trends in homelessness, chronic homelessness, inflow, outflow, and acuity
- 2024 Homelessness Enumeration (Point-in-Time Count) data to validate the relative scale and characteristics of homelessness in the community
- Community housing and waitlist data to assess demand for deeply affordable housing
- Rental market, affordability, and core housing need data to understand broader housing pressures affecting low-income households
- Shelter, diversion, and housing placement data to assess current system pressures and housing outcomes

The estimates were developed by aligning observed system pressures with the types of housing required across the housing continuum, including affordable housing, deeply affordable housing, housing with specialized supports, and emergency shelter capacity.

The methodology uses a conservative approach. The estimates assume that existing housing stock is maintained, that market conditions do not significantly improve, and that housing growth occurs incrementally over time. As a result, the figures presented should be understood as minimum estimates required to begin reducing homelessness and housing instability under current conditions.

These estimates are intended to support long-term planning, investment prioritization, and coordinated decision-making across the housing and homelessness response system in Lambton County.

# Looking Ahead in Lambton County

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## Housing and Homelessness **5-Year Action Plan**



2026-2031





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# The Plan at a Glance

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**Vision:** Every resident has access to safe, suitable and affordable housing.

Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (CMSMs) across the province of Ontario undertook the process of updating their 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plans in 2026. Such plans provide communities with the opportunity to reflect on progress over the past decade, review emergent and future housing needs, and identify priorities for partnership, investment, and system improvement.

The County of Lambton engaged OrgCode Consulting Inc. to lead the development of a comprehensive 10-year plan, guiding future housing and homelessness strategies. The updated plan outlines direction for ongoing collaboration with service providers, community partners, and residents of Lambton County.

The purpose of this action plan is to share recommendations from the comprehensive report provided by OrgCode Consulting Inc., consolidated into clear, actionable goals for the first five years of the 10-year planning cycle.

The new 10-Year Plan highlights five focus areas with sub-goals to guide housing and homelessness system planning in the region. Successful implementation and measurable improvements across the housing and homelessness system will require coordinated, sustained action across the full housing continuum. Addressing current pressures is essential not only to reduce homelessness, but to support broader community well-being, strengthen economic stability, and enhance long-term community resilience.

Advancing progress will depend on strong collaboration with community service providers, Indigenous partners, municipal and provincial stakeholders, landlords, developers, and individuals with lived experience. Meaningful change will require input and shared responsibility across all sectors.

# **Priority 1: Enhance Communication & Collaboration**

## **Implement a Social Services Communications Strategy**

Develop and implement a coordinated communications strategy to provide residents, community partners, and interest holders with clear, consistent, and accessible information regarding housing and homelessness services, including how services can be accessed and what supports are available.

## **Develop Community Education Tools**

Create plain-language educational materials to improve public understanding of the local housing and homelessness system, including:

- The roles and responsibilities of the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) and community partners.
- Common housing terminology and key definitions to support residents in navigating available programs, services, and supports.

## **Create an Affordable Housing Toolkit**

Develop a practical toolkit for residents, community organizations, and partners that outlines affordable housing options, application processes, eligibility requirements, and available supports.



## **Priority 2: Expand Affordable Housing Options**



### **Preserve Existing Housing Stock**

Maintain and protect the existing supply of affordable housing units to ensure they remain safe, sustainable, and in a state of good repair for current and future residents.

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### **Pursue and Maximize Funding Opportunities**

Actively identify, pursue, and leverage funding opportunities from federal, provincial, and other external sources to support the development of new affordable housing initiatives and related housing supports.

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### **Explore the Feasibility of Head Lease Agreements**

Assess the viability of utilizing head lease agreements as a strategy to expand access to affordable housing by securing housing units within the private rental market for community use.

# Priority 3: Protect and Grow Affordable Housing

## Develop 206 New Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing Units

Support the development of 206 new rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing units to increase the availability of deeply affordable housing options for households experiencing the greatest financial need.

## Expand Affordable and Supportive Housing Supply

Encourage and support partnerships with non-profit organizations, community agencies, and private developers to increase the supply of affordable and supportive housing options that respond to the diverse needs of the community.

## Strengthen and Sustain Community Housing Providers

Maintain the participation of existing non-profit housing providers within the Community Housing framework to support coordinated service delivery, resource sharing, and long-term system stability.

## Establish an Eviction Prevention Framework

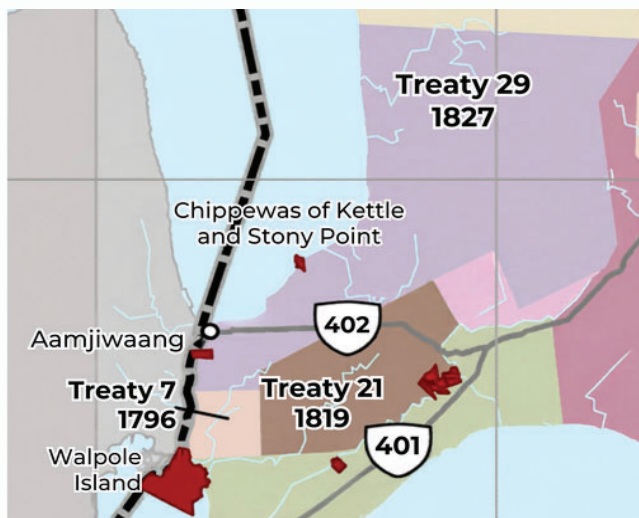
Develop a coordinated, system-wide approach to eviction prevention that identifies households at risk of housing loss early and connects them with appropriate supports, including financial assistance, mediation, and housing stabilization services.

## Strengthen Shelter Diversion Services

Enhance shelter diversion strategies and services to assist individuals and families in identifying safe and appropriate alternatives to emergency shelter, with the goal of reducing shelter reliance and improving housing stability outcomes.



## Priority 4: Strengthen Response to Indigenous Housing and Homelessness



This map depicts all three treaties that span Lambton County, and all reserve lands that Lambton encompasses: Aamjiwnaang First Nation, Kettle & Stony Point First Nation, and Walpole Island First Nation, Bkejwanong Territory. Visit [ontario.ca/treaties](https://ontario.ca/treaties) to view a full treaty map of Ontario.

### **Develop and Implement an Indigenous Engagement Strategy**

Work collaboratively with Indigenous communities, organizations, and service partners to support meaningful engagement and inform planning, decision-making, and service delivery within the Social Services Division.

### **Explore Culturally Appropriate Assessment Tools**

Assess opportunities to implement a culturally informed assessment approach that reflects Indigenous perspectives, values, and priorities to support fair and appropriate access to housing and homelessness services for Indigenous households.

### **Strengthen Culturally Appropriate Supports and Resources**

Identify and expand opportunities to deliver housing and homelessness services in ways that are culturally responsive, respectful, and reflective of the unique needs and experiences of Indigenous individuals, families, and communities.

## **Priority 5: Develop Service Solutions for Individuals with Complex Needs**



### **Identify Partnership Opportunities to Expand Emergency Shelter Capacity**

Work collaboratively with community partners to identify and pursue opportunities to enhance emergency shelter capacity, ensuring the system is able to effectively respond to local demand and evolving community needs.

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### **Implement and Expand Supportive Housing Initiatives**

Partner with supportive housing providers to develop and expand housing options that integrate on-site or connected supports for individuals experiencing higher levels of need or complexity, supporting long-term housing stability.

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### **Explore Integrated Service Models for Individuals with Complex Needs**

Research and evaluate innovative, integrated service delivery models that more effectively coordinate housing and support services, ensuring individuals with complex needs can access timely, appropriate, and person-centred supports.

# The Road Ahead

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The five-year action plan outlines priorities that will further community-wide efforts to reduce homelessness and housing insecurity for residents of Lambton County. It focuses on impactful, actionable priority areas from the fulsome 10-year plan developed by OrgCode Consulting Inc. providing a clear roadmap to guide local planning, set priorities, and coordinate efforts across the homelessness and housing service system.

At its core, the plan focuses on both prevention and response - strengthening early supports to reduce the risk of homelessness while also creating clear, effective pathways to help those with the greatest need to acquire stable housing. Expanding supply of affordable and supportive housing remains a foundational priority, recognizing that long-term housing stability depends on having enough suitable options available to all members of the community.

Together, these priority actions set a course for the next five years, and outline a commitment to collaborative, equitable, and outcomes-based work.





Sarnia-Lambton  
Board of Director's Meeting  
In Person-1455 Venetian Blvd, Point Edward  
March 5th, 2026

**MINUTES** of the meeting of Directors of TOURISM SARNIA-LAMBTON held in person, at Tourism Sarnia-Lambton on the 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2026, at the hour of 9:00am.

**Directors Present:** Mark Perrin, Thera Wagner, Kelly Provost, Stephan Thiffeault, Geoff Eisenbraun, Matthew Slotwinski, Rose Atkins, Chrissy McRoberts and Kevin Marriott. Al Duffy and Angela Edlington both attended online.

**Directors Absent/Regrets:** Bev Hand, Laura Boogemans and Nicola Harney

**Guests:** Linda Fiddy (TSL Accountant)

**1. Call to Order**

Chair Thera Wagner called the meeting to order at 9:00am

**2. Approval of Agenda**

Upon Motion made by, Chrissy McRoberts seconded by Stephan Tiffeault and unanimously carried, IT WAS RESOLVED that today's agenda be approved. Thera Wagner requested to add an in-camera session and that the Charter be added into the board meeting package with timeline.

**3. Declaration of Conflict of Interests**

Chair Thera Wagner asked if any director had any conflict to declare. No conflicts were mentioned.

**4. Approval of Minutes of January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026**

UPON MOTION duly made by Geoff Eisenbraun, seconded by Rose Atkins and unanimously carried, IT WAS RESOLVED that the meeting minutes dated January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2026, be approved as presented.

**5. Business Arising from Prior Minutes**

None

**6. Board Activities**

- **Terms:** It was discussed that some members' terms were coming to an end this year. Kelly Provost mentioned that she wishes to stay as a board member on behalf of the City of Sarnia. Kelly Provost also requested that this be a policy we adopt. Kelly Provost expressed that there should be a MAT representative for the City of Sarnia. Stephan Tiffeault agreed to help work on a draft with TSL on a more formal policy for the terms. Rose Atkins also mentioned that her term is ending this year and that the board will have to look for a new representative for St. Clair Township.

**Decisions/ Action Items:** UPON MOTION made by, Kelly Provost seconded by Stephan Tiffeault and unanimously carried, IT WAS RESOLVED The decision was made that the board will work on a new policy for the terms and review them.

**7. Financial Update**

- **2026 Budget Update:** It was mentioned that the Charter be added to the budget as well as the MAT agreement. It was also requested to have the gross amount listed in the budget.

**Decisions/ Action Item:** UPON MOTION made by Chrissy McRoberts , seconded by Geoff Eisenbraun and unanimously carried, IT WAS RESOLVED that the charter would be added to the January meeting minutes each year to review.

- **2026 Year to Date:** It was mentioned by Angela Edlington that TSL includes current financial statements for January and February. Mark Perrin mentioned that he will request a current balance sheet from the County of Lambton and that Linda will verify the balance sheets once they are submitted to TSL.
- **Reserve Fund Policy:** It was mentioned that there is a certain amount of money in the MAT reserve for upcoming events that are coming to the area. This money will be used to host the events. TSL will pay back the reserve after ticket sales and the event is complete. There was a discussion on the two accounts being separated, MAT will be used for hosting the event and operations will be used for all the things needed to hold the event. There was mention that there will be a fixed amount in the reserve each year depending on the events TSL are potentially hosting . Kelly Provost mentioned TSL looking into the banking agreement and to inquire if it is the best account to be making the most interest.

- **2026 Operation Financial Overview:** Mark Perrin mentioned that this financial overview was separate from TSL's MAT account. This was an overview of operating expenses at 50%. UPON MOTION, duly made by Chrissy McRoberts, seconded by Geoff Eisenbraun and unanimously carried out. The TSL Financial Operating Plan for 2026 was approved.

#### **8. Operational Activities**

- **Director's Report:** Mark Perrin presented TSL's director's report dated March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2026, highlighting updates on hotel stats and partnerships. It was mentioned that our hotel numbers were up due to Sliver Stick. It was explained that in the collaboration with TSL and the Sliver Stick committee we were able to keep visitors in the Lambton County area for these tournaments. Geoff Esienbraun mentioned that this process was helpful in keeping things successful because it helped keep the tournament and hotel stays centralized. It was also mentioned that TSL partnered with a content creator and Shale Ridge. The Nordic Spa campaign has now gone viral in 48hrs with 9,000 comments and 70,000 views.
- **MAT Report:** Mark Perrin presented the MAT report to the board and explained that the operations account and MAT account have been separated. The interest from the accounts has been allocated to the operations account from the last 4 years. It was also explained that in the report there is a portion that is budgeted for the IPM and Air Canada agreement.  
**Decision/ Action Item:** UPON MONTION MAT report was approved by Geoff Esienbraun, seconded by Kevin Marriott and unanimously carried out.
- **Website:** The board was presented with the link for TSL's new website. It was suggested that the agenda for board meetings be added. Chrissy McRoberts inquired how TSL obtains photos from the local businesses. Chrissy McRoberts suggested that TSL make pictures more personalized to the business to entice visitors to come visit. It was suggested to go to different municipalities and ask, "what makes them different and special." Chrissy McRoberts suggested making videos of real-life experiences and sharing these on TSL's social media as well as our TSL website.  
**Decision/ Action Item:** UPON MOTION duly made by Chrissy McRoberts, seconded by Geoff Esienbraun and unanimously carried, IT WAS RESLOVED that Mark Perrin and Adam Veen would discuss the videos as well as reach out to the photographers.

- **Stakeholders Communication Plan/ Municipality Updates:** Mark Perin presented the dates of the municipality meetings. Mark Perrin is sending out packages to the clerks a week prior to the meetings. Mark Perrin met Warwick on February 23, 2026. It was added that they included Corn Fest and Road Fest in that presentation. It was offered to Warwick township that TSL is here to help them promote their events to attract more tourists. There were no questions or comments after the presentation. Adam Veen will be attending the Oil Springs meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

**9. In Camera**

An in-camera session was requested by Thera Wagner.

UPON MOTION to begin in camera was made by Kelly Provost, seconded by Matthew Slotwinski and unanimously carried out.

**10. Next Meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for the following date and time, and is to be held in person: April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2026

**11: Adjournment**

UPON MOTION duly made by Chrissy McRoberts, seconded by Kevin Marriott and unanimously carried, IT WAS RESLOVED that the meeting adjourned at 11:16 am.

Two handwritten signatures in blue ink are present. The top signature is written in black ink and appears to be 'Ben Land'. The bottom signature is written in blue ink and is more stylized and difficult to decipher.



**MINUTES**  
**COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE**  
**(Infrastructure & Development Services/Public Health Services –**  
**Emergency Medical Services/Cultural Services/Long-Term Care/Corporate**  
**Services/Finance, Facilities and Acquisitions/Social Services)**  
**May 20, 2026**

A meeting was held at the County Building at 9:00 a.m. on the above date.

Present

Chair K. Marriott and Members J. Agar, G. Atkinson, D. Boushy, A. Broad, T. Case, D. Ferguson, B. Hand, B. Loosley, S. Miller, D. Sageman, I. Veen and B. White attended in person. Members M. Bradley, D. Cook and C. McRoberts attended virtually. Various staff were present including the following General Managers: Mr. J. Cole, General Manager, Infrastructure and Development Services, Mr. K. Churchill, General Manager, Public Health Services, Mr. A. Meyer, General Manager, Cultural Services, Mr. M. Gorgey, General Manager, Long-Term Care, Ms. M. Fitzpatrick, General Manager, Social Services, Ms. K. Bettridge, County Treasurer, Ms. O. Leger, General Manager, Corporate Services, County Solicitor/Clerk, and Mr. S. Thiffeault, Chief Administrative Officer.

Absent

B. Dennis.

Disclosures of Pecuniary Interest

None.

INFRASTRUCTURE & DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIVISION

Correspondence to Receive and File

DS 06-01-26 A letter from Mike Belan, President, Lambton Federation of Agriculture dated May 1, 2026 regarding support for Cargill Limited's operations as a key partner for Lambton and Ontario Farmers. The Lambton Federation of Agriculture ("LFA") encourages all parties to come together and reach a mutually acceptable agreement. They look forward to future collaboration with all municipal partners, key players in the agri-food sector such as Cargill Limited, and with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Cargill Sarnia Grain Terminal gives LFA farmers and the farmers of Ontario a competitive edge. The LFA strongly supports its continued operation.

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DS 06-02-26 A letter from Tony Bavota, Assistant Deputy Minister, Emergency Response Division with the Ministry of Emergency Preparedness and Response dated May 7, 2026 regarding the County of Lambton satisfying all thirteen (13) program elements required in the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act* (EMCPA) O. Reg. 380/04 for 2025.

#1: Case/Boushy: That correspondence DS 06-01-26 and DS 06-02-26 be received and filed.

Carried.

Information Reports

#2: Miller/Veen: That the following Information Reports from the Infrastructure & Development Services Division be received and filed:

a) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding 1st Quarter 2026 - Building, Plumbing, Septic and By-Law Statistics.

b) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding 1st Quarter 2026 Work in Progress, Statistics and Approval Authority Activity.

c) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Correspondence Regarding Proposed Minister's Zoning Order.

Carried.

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES DIVISION - Emergency Medical Services Department

Information Reports

Information Report dated May 20, 2026 Regarding Paramedic Services Week – May 17-23, 2026

#3: White/Broad: That the Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Paramedic Services Week - May 17-23, 2026 be received and filed.

Carried.

Warden K. Marriott, on behalf of Lambton County Council, recognized Paramedic Services Week and thanked the Lambton Emergency Medical Services team for their dedicated service.

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CULTURAL SERVICES DIVISION

Information Reports

#4: Agar/Boushy: That the following Information Reports from the Cultural Services Division be received and filed:

- a) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Libraries First Quarter 2026 Statistics.
- b) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Museums, Gallery and Archives First Quarter 2026 Statistics.

Carried.

Reports Requiring a Motion

Report dated May 20, 2026 Regarding Libraries Donations January 1 to March 31, 2026

#5: Ferguson/Sagean: That the Libraries Donations, January 1 to March 31, 2026 Report be accepted.

Carried.

Report dated May 20, 2026 Regarding Bequest - Estate of Otto and Kathleen (Cunningham) Schuldt

#6: Loosley/Veen:

a) That Council authorize staff to reallocate the following funds held in the Otto & Kathleen (Cunningham) Schuldt Reserve Fund ("Reserve Fund") to support expenses related to the Robert M. Nicol Library, Petrolia such that both the Youth Bursary Category value of funds at \$73,429.53 and the Youth Programming and Outreach Category value of funds of \$23,429.53 be reallocated to the Building Enhancements Category so that the reallocation of funds held in the Reserve Fund are as follows:

- i. Building Enhancements Category: \$174,475.73;
- ii. Youth Programming and Outreach Category: \$50,000; and
- iii. Youth Materials and Equipment Category: \$121,707.09.

b) That Council authorize staff to approve the Town's expense of \$11,456.11 for the fire compression system and that such expense be drawn upon from the Reserve Fund.

c) That Council authorize staff to discuss with the Town of Petrolia options for growing Petrolia Library's physical footprint to ensure suitable space for the current and future population base.

Carried.

Report dated May 20, 2026 Regarding Museums, Gallery and Archives Collections Management February and March 2026

#7: Miller/Hand: That the Museums, Gallery and Archives Collections Management February and March 2026 Report be accepted, and items recommended for acceptance be approved for inclusion in the respective permanent collections and items recommended for deaccession be removed from the respective collections.

Carried.

LONG-TERM CARE DIVISION

Information Reports

#8: Veen/Atkinson: That the following Information Reports for the Long-Term Care Division, be received and filed:

a) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Small House Project Construction Update.

b) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Small House Project Fundraising Campaign.

Carried.

CORPORATE SERVICES DIVISION

Correspondence to Receive and File

CORP 06-03-26 A copy of a letter from the Western Ontario Wardens' Caucus ("**WOWC**") to The Honourable Rob Flack, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, dated April 20, 2026, providing its perspective on *Bill 100 – Better Regional Governance Act, 2006*. *Bill 100 – Better Regional Governance Act, 2006* signals a clear provincial direction toward governance reform as a tool to advance policy outcomes and raises important considerations for Counties and upper-tier municipalities across Western Ontario. WOWC members recognize the Province's objectives to streamline decision-making and improve alignment between municipal and provincial priorities; however, the proposed introduction of a provincially appointed Warden and Strong Warden powers, represent a significant shift away from locally determined governance models. WOWC

is requesting that, as the Province continues to consider governance reforms, any future changes involving upper-tier municipalities:

- maintain locally elected leadership as a cornerstone of municipal governance;
- recognize the distinct roles and structures of counties, regions, and cities;
- reflect rural and regional realities, including geography and service delivery responsibilities; and
- be developed in partnership with municipalities through meaningful consultation.

#9: Atkinson/Sageman: That correspondence CORP 06-03-26 be received and filed.  
Carried.

### SOCIAL SERVICES DIVISION

#### Information Reports

#10: Veen/Loosley: That the following Information Reports from the Social Services Division be received and filed:

- a) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Ontario Works First Quarter Update Report.
- b) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Housing and Homelessness Plan Progress Report.
- c) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Service Manager Annual Information Return.
- d) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding Housing Services Statistical Report 2026 Q1.
- e) Information Report dated May 20, 2026 regarding LIP Community Plan.

Carried.

#### Reports Requiring a Motion

##### Report dated May 20, 2026 Regarding Cathcart Affordable Housing Project Funding Strategy

#11: White/Ferguson:

- a) Provided that no less than the other level government funding stipulated in paragraph (a)(iii) below is secured by July 31, 2027, that staff be authorized to proceed with the design, engineering and construction a 94-unit affordable housing building at

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718 Cathcart Boulevard in the City of Sarnia (hereinafter, the “Cathcart Boulevard Development”) at an estimated cost of \$32.5 million, to be funded from the following sources:

- i. withdrawal in the additional amount of \$5,900,000.00 from the County’s Affordable Housing Reserve (“Reserve”) with a total amount of \$8,900,000.00 being withdrawn from the Reserve for the Cathcart Boulevard Development;
  - ii. debt financing in the amount of no more than \$7,152,725.000; and
  - iii. other level funding in the amount of no less than \$16,447,275.
- b) Provided that the other level government funding of no less than \$16,447,275 is secured by no later than July 31, 2027, that Staff provide an update to Council prior to commencing construction of the Cathcart Boulevard Development.
- c) That any additional other level funding secured beyond that amount stipulated in paragraph (a)(iii) above for the Cathcart Boulevard Development be applied to reduce the project’s debt financing herein authorized.
- d) That staff provide County Council with quarterly updates on the status of the County’s funding application for other level government funding stipulated in paragraph (a)(iii) above.

Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

#12: Agar/Atkinson: That the Chair declare the meeting adjourned with the next meeting to be held on Wednesday, June 17, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. at the County Building, Wyoming, Ontario.

Carried.

Time: 9:10 a.m.

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Kevin Marriott, Chair

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Olivia Leger, Clerk

**THE CORPORATION OF THE COUNTY OF LAMBTON**

**BY-LAW NO. 14 OF 2026**

**"A By-Law of The Corporation of the County of Lambton to confirm the resolutions and motions of Lambton County Council, which were adopted up to and including June 3, 2026"**

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**WHEREAS** it has been expedient that from time to time, the Council of The Corporation of the County of Lambton should enact the resolutions or motions of Council;

**AND WHEREAS** it is deemed advisable that all such actions which have been adopted by resolution or motion of Council only, should be authorized by By-Law;

**NOW THEREFORE**, the Council of The Corporation of the County of Lambton enacts as follows:

1. That all actions of Council which have been authorized by a resolution or motion of Council and adopted in open Council and that were recorded in the minutes of Council or the minutes of a Committee of Council and accepted by Council up to and including June 3, 2026, be hereby confirmed.

THIS BY-LAW read a first, second and third time and finally passed this 3<sup>rd</sup> day of June, 2026.

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Kevin Marriott  
Warden

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Olivia Leger  
Clerk