

# Key Take-Aways/Messages from the Regional Housing Task Force Report

*Prepared by: Marg Scheben-Edey, Housing Advocate, Member of Regional and Town of Collingwood Affordable Housing Task Forces*

- Housing supply is not meeting demand and the projections show that this will only get worse in the years ahead. We need to put a high priority on ensuring that serviced and properly zoned residential lands are available within our built boundaries. Identify where intensification should occur and mix of housing choice to create inclusive, sustainable communities.
- The pandemic exacerbated the affordability gap but it has existed for over 30 years. Rent and house prices do not keep pace with wages, this means AH stock has to be protected from market influences. Pricing based on what the market can bear will widen the gap.
- There is a deep shortage of rental housing available and in the last three decades, the area has lost more rental units than have been created. Discourage conversion or demolition of existing units. Ensure units that are created i.e. secondary suites remain “affordable” for a designated period of time. Short term accommodation is also a significant factor in taking rental properties out of long- term rental supply.
- Housing is very much part of any economic development strategy. We are experiencing a loss of labour force and will be unable to attract new workers to fill projected growth demands in the region.
- Facilitating the creation and retention of secondary suites and ADU's is one “rapid” tool for the creation of new units. Financial incentives tied to rental rates is one tool for encouraging affordable unit creation.
- Community Improvement Plans, Community Benefit bylaws and Municipal Capital Facilities Bylaws can incentivize the creation of Affordable Housing but any such policies must ensure social good with rents that are affordable in perpetuity.
- Community Land Trusts are seen as increasingly important in taking housing out of the speculative market and securing long term affordability and security of tenure. Municipalities can take a lead role in seeding the establishment of these.
- Retention is critical and in fact, we are currently losing far more affordable units than are being created. Consider ways of retaining existing housing stock and supporting good landlord/tenant relations.
- Government, community organizations, non-profits and the private sector must work together to provide AH.

Consider what it would look like to work together. Contributions from all levels of government are needed and there must be an understanding that financial incentives are not a loss in revenue but rather, an investment in the community.

- Municipalities must identify detailed benchmarks and targets for unit creation together with implementing policies. Data driven decision making has never been more important.
- Municipalities/government should prioritize affordable housing on any town/government-owned lands and capital community projects
- Extra efforts and dedicated staff resources toward increasing awareness, promotion and facilitation of innovative and non-traditional housing models that make home ownership more affordable (e.g., shared equity, cohousing, communal housing, rooming houses and life lease housing). Include consideration of not-for-profit developers/builders, social enterprise models.
- Plan ahead for potential projects and be ready to apply for grants or subsidies from the government that will reduce overall development costs. This includes coordinating and collaborating with local housing advocacy groups, community partners, government agencies and the private sector to support the provision of affordable housing.