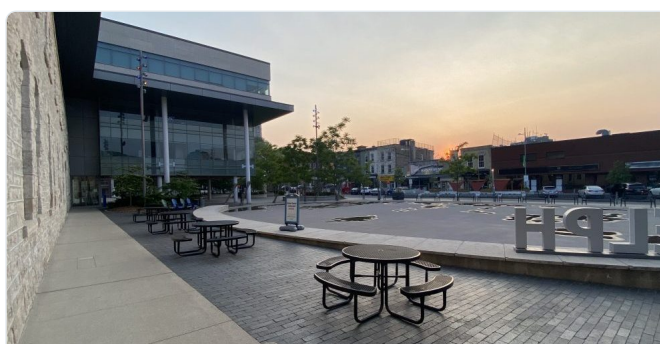




**Adam A. Donaldson** @adamadonaldson

Sep 12 · 99 tweets · [adamadonaldson/status/1701699704377966757](https://twitter.com/adamadonaldson/status/1701699704377966757)

Coming at 5 pm, a special meeting about housing and social services in Guelph. Here's the meeting preview from Politico:



**City Council Preview – What's on the Agenda for the Meeting on Septe...**

In July, there were promised future steps about tackling the housing crisis in Guelph, and we've now arrived at the next step. At this special meeting entirely dedicated to the housing crisis...

<https://guelphpolitico.ca/2023/09/01/city-council-preview-whats-on-the-agenda-for-the-...>

Jennifer Gibson from Homewood Health Centre is next. She says this report can't be taken without any data validation process, since it might have long-lasting effects as long-term decisions are made based on it.

Cllr Busuttill ask about validation process. Gibson says Homewood wasn't consulted, and they were not part of the survey, and it is the schedule 1 facility for the area. They should have been consulted.

Cllr O'Rourke asks about not receiving the report, council can't direct staff to do future work without it. Gibson says that's fine, and they would welcome future work with the City, but the tone of the report was ant-collaborative.

O'Rourke asks about discharge plans at Homewood. Gibson says they have a number of different plans and support co-ordination, plus out-patient services.

Caton asks if there's a breakdown between publicly-funding and privately-funded services. Gibson says 37% of funding comes from government, all patients are at least partially funded by OHIP.

Allt asks if Gibson has an estimate about how much more money they'd need to expand community support. She says the number is "sizeable", but there would be less accommodation for those separation of public and private services.

Cllr Richardson asks about wait times. Gibson's not familiar with the exact wait times, but if someone presents in crisis that's done quite quickly. (She's an accountant not a clinician, you

see.)

Guthrie asks about the edits made after meeting Homewood. Gibson says that we can't be sure who read the original report or the advised report, Homewood also appreciate the opportunity to work further with the consultants.

So that was the last delegation. Guthrie calls a 25-minute break. And then we'll get into questions about the presentation.



We just got the one minute warning...

Mayor Guthrie calls the meeting to order again.

Next:

- Questions for consultants, staff
- County presentation & Qs
- Closed Meeting
- Affordability Strategy

Goller asks if the old report before changes over the weekend is still available. DCAO Clack-Bush says the old version of the report was taken down due to Homewood's concerns, but there is a list of changes.

Goller asks if there's any evidence that advocacy to the feds and ONgov will work. Jodie Sales from intergovernmental says advocacy is key and we have the data with the consultant's report to back it. Staff will strategise about direct options.

Goller asks what's next? Clack-Bush says that there are some directives coming out of tonight that will then be coalesced into a report that will come back with further recommendations at October 17 special meeting.

Goller asks if there's anyone in Canada that's getting it right? Robson says many of the municipalities they talked to are looking to see what comes from this process in Guelph. There doesn't appear to be a "perfect solution."

Caron asks excluding youth homelessness from the overview. Clack-Bush says that the project had to be given specific parameters. Robson says they did look at services the included youth, but looking at >18 youth specific services was out of scope.

Clack-Bush adds that they might look at council about direction about doing further research on other areas of homelessness and mental health. She notes a correspondence about the impact of brain injury as another specific area.

Caron asks about the missing mentions of FCM and AMO. Sales says that one of the things that staff will look at and notes that the OBCM are looking at models like the one mentioned in this report, so not starting from zero on some of this advocacy work.

Busuttil asks if the purpose is to change the role of the City or the outcomes. Petrina says that even in council there's some confusion about their role, so providing clarity helps council and the community understand the messaging. Respondents worried about gov structure

Cllr Downer asks if might be a good idea to have a kind of summit. Lots of partners involved. Clack-Bush says the 2nd piece with the presentation from the County is key, so we need to know where they are before proceeding.

O'Rourke asks why no explicit advocacy for increase to ODSP and non-market units. Clack-Bush said the direction from council was to look at homelessness, but the City does have to look at the whole continuum.

O'Rourke asks what's missing for low barrier services. Robson says there's a lot of moving around to get the full suit of services, which can have an impact on how people are able to access all available services.

O'Rourke asks about what leverage the City can use in this report. Robson thinks human rights housing approach and clarifying role with the County are the two biggest pieces.

Caton asks about disability barriers, no recommendations about that. Clack-Bush says that might not have been in scope, and it wasn't something they heard in stakeholder interviews other. It can be a takeaway though.

Caton asks if the proper time for further direction is the Oct 17 meeting? Clack-Bush says that might be best.

Allt says human rights approach has obligation to act, what does that mean in concrete terms? Clack-Bush says she's not sure they have enough info to answer that tonight, if council agrees with rec, then staff will need to do work to define that.

Robson says that the human rights approach means that the idea of having a place to live is not a privilege but agrees that there needs to be more information that council needs before making that formal policy.

Allt asks if the County will also have to agree that housing is a human right. Robson says it could be considered complimentary work to the County, but the City could also work with the County to establish a human rights approach to housing.

Cllr Chew asks how a human rights approach will change the way the City advocates. Sales says there will need to understand what that looks like through the programs provided, it will align Guelph with the feds so there will be efficiencies.

Cllr Billings asks about alternate care clinic, is the London one 100% ministry funded? Robson says the London model was funded through Ontario Health.

Guthrie asks if there's been any other agencies or stakeholders that came forward since report released. Clack-Bush says no.

Guthrie notes in the case of IMPACT this will be the umpteenth time they've asked for more funding. How many times can the City ask? Petrina says no one commented on those repeat asks, but there's no reason to advocating either.

Guthrie asks where council can drill down to get at the effectiveness of the investments already made. Robson says that was at heart of Rec #5, they want to know at the end of the day if anyone is better off. What are we trying to achieve in short, med. and long-term?

We're now moving to the Housing and Homelessness Plan from the County of Wellington. Social Services Administrator Luisa Artuso is here, and so is Warden Lennox and CAO Scott Wilson.

For the record, the information in this report will also be presented to the Social Services Committee meeting tomorrow.


This is what the County has to do according to the ONgov:

### Provincial Mandates


- ❖ The maintain a By-Name List that records individuals that are experiencing chronic homelessness.
- ❖ To ensure the provision of an emergency shelter system.
- ❖ To maintain the service target of a minimum of 2,342 Rent-Geared to Income Subsidized housing units.
- ❖ To reduce chronic homelessness

Framework:


### A New Direction: A Framework for Homelessness Prevention. (Dej, 2017)




First, **you can prevent it** - that is, put in place mechanisms to stop or greatly reduce the risk that people will become homeless in the first place.



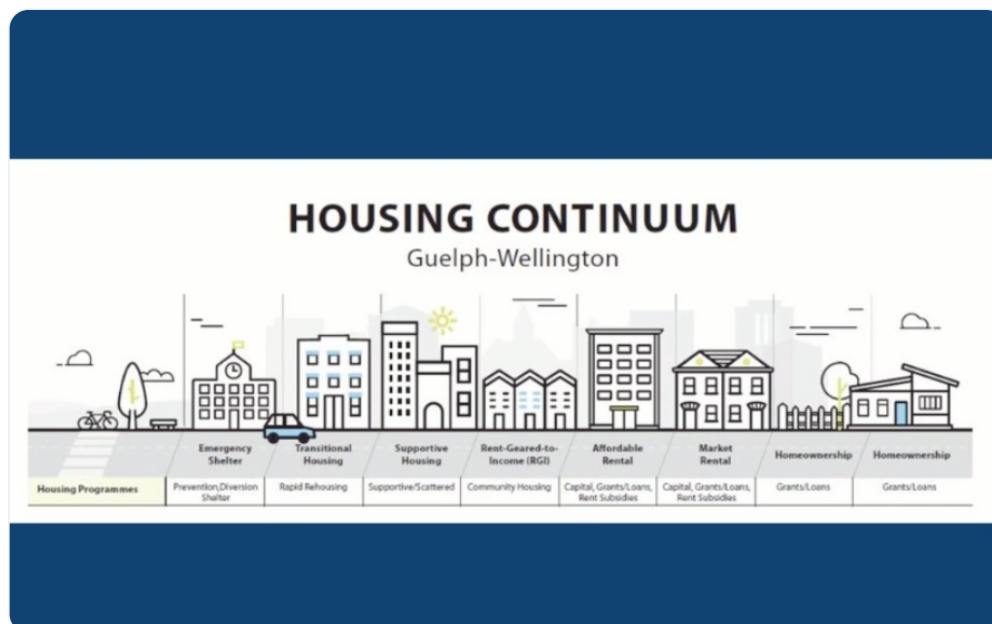
Second, **you can provide emergency services** (e.g., shelters, soup kitchens, day programs) because no matter how good your prevention strategies are, some people will experience difficulties that result in the loss of their housing and home.



Finally, **you can move people into housing with necessary supports** to reduce the risk of recurrence, ideally as rapidly as possible, so that the period one experiences homelessness is as short as possible.



#HousingContinuum



137 individuals on the By-Name List in 2023, now up to over 150. There are also 105 people in emergency shelters in the first half of 2023, and its gone up more in August.

Response:

### Responding to Increased Experiences of Homelessness

#### New Emergency Shelter Beds

38 beds in October 2023

27 beds in November 2024 (preliminary planning stage)

#### New Transitional Housing Units

28 Units in July 2024

15 Units in November 2024 (preliminary planning stage)



Housing services tries to take a home first approach, but there is a lot of stress on that, especially if a tenant has mental health issues. Here are some of the next steps the County is taking up:

### Next Steps


- Health and Housing Symposium Fall/Winter 2023
- Advocacy for increased provincial and federal funding for Housing Services
- Advocacy for Ministry of Health funding
- Work with local municipalities to leverage opportunities to increase government-funded affordable housing units.



Artuso says they've seen a big shift in the number of people that need housing in 2023 and the biggest pressure now is keeping up with demand. Having a robust BNL helps, but the key is to be ready to address the need if it continues to grow.

Responding is difficult depending on needs. More shelter beds are being open for families because there's more demand there. Also a drug-free facility because some shelters have people using substances and others are in recovery.

Goller asks how we determine how many shelter spaces are needed. Artuso says she's not sure if there's a magic number, but they need data to support what service they need and then allocate funds. Outcomes are different depending on individual. No one size fits all.

Goller asks about meeting targets on reducing wait list for rent-geared-to-income wait list. Artuso said that they need about 4,000 more units, and as ONgov contribution to rent supplements has  it's been hard to add units.

Artuso says right now they're at the mercy of hoping that private developers might want to come in and build RGI housing. She says what the County is asking for right now is to prioritise emergency response and advocate for more funding.

Goller asks what kind of financial commitment that Guelph has to make to add to social housing stock. Artuso says the County put aside 1 per cent of levy, about \$1.3 mn, that's put in a reserve until Fed or ONgov funding is available. They did this for Fergus project.

How much money does Guelph need to start putting away? Artuso says County and City staff can look at that and develop a number.

Caron asks how people become unhoused, people end up in the system because the private market has changed what's affordable. Artuso says there's a variety of reasons why ppl experience homelessness, and that's why a diversion team is so critical.

Caron notes that rising cost of utilities are pushing people to the brink, is the County committed to net zero builds and renos? Artuso says the County aims to build environmentally friendly buildings and can provide more info on specifics.

Caton asks about the difference between people who need accessible units and don't. Artuso says that the wait list includes needs of the individual and if the number of people need accessible units exceeds availability, they will retrofit.

Caton asks about accommodation for people with environmental sensitivities. Artuso says that they will address that need, and the newer units offer more efficiency and improved HVAC.

Downer asks about the plan for the housing symposium mentioned in the slides. Artuso says it will be this fall or winter, and in talking with health partners they added the component. It will create a framework to support the needs of people and what kind of housing support.

Downer asks if any consideration or guidance will be taken from the report produced for city council tonight. "I believe it would be very wise of us to consider everything in that report," Artuso said.

Allt asks about the demographics of people looking for housing. Artuso says it's broad, but there are some common themes and trends. She can ask housing staff to provide more info. Allt says 3,000 families needing 900 sq feet each could mean \$900 mn price tag.

Allt asks housing as a right. Artuso says when using that term, you have to understand what that means, and what it means to her is doing everything you can within the system to house somebody., but what happens if they don't want to work within that system.

Chew says that we often don't recognise the good work that County staff have done diverting people, what is working right now? Artuso says there needs to be a change in national & provincial policy on social services & it needs to look at all things that leads to homelessness.

Artuso adds that we are on the cusp of developing a system that is much more inline with the needs of today and we need to get better at telling the story of the people that came out the other side. The success is invisible and that means it's working.

Chew asks if we'll see an increase in the number of people diverted in the next year. Artuso says there will be a decrease once the supportive and transitional housing opens up, but we also need to keep our guard up and expect the unexpected.

O'Rourke dittos the recognition of frontline workers, and that we're opening five new facilities in two years. Is that good collaboration and how do we keep the momentum up?

Artuso says that was because of good collaboration, and understanding the needs and supporting one and other. Feds and Prov. give you lots of capital, but no operating.

Goller asks about consideration of moving services out of the downtown core. Artuso says the closest shelter to DT is 23 Gordon. The new male adult shelter will be on Hwy 6 and the family one will be on 1 Waterloo. Also, shelters are not where people spend their daytime hours.

Artuso adds that people need to ask themselves why people are being driven downtown, what other services are being offered down there?

Guthrie asks Artuso knows about support requirements of people on the BNL? She will have to come back with that exact info, but there's been a significant increase, and 2 FT workers are going all-day to stabilise people. Also, more people in need than on the BNL.

Artuso says that high acuity needs would be about 15-20%.

Guthrie's concerned about losing momentum, so how quick can we have the summit? Artuso says the division is committed and this can't happen soon enough. They want to have the summit as quickly as possible, but it's contingent on availability of partners.

Also, the symposium is meant as a kick off to engagement on the County's next 10-year housing plan. So there are many different considerations at play.

That wraps up the County presentation. Council will now move into closed session on the following:

### **5.3 Housing - Collective Results Interview Findings - 2023-349**

Section 239(2) (b) of the Municipal Act relating to personal matters about an identifiable individual, including municipal or local board employees.

### **5.4 Potential Property Acquisition to Support Housing Supply**

Section 239(2) (c) of the Municipal Act relating to a proposed or pending acquisition or disposition of land by the municipality or local board.

Goller/Caron move motion to go into closed.



After about 70 minutes, council is now emerging from closed session.

Summery:

Interview findings: Council received Info and gave direction

Property acquisition: Info received, no direction.

Motion to go past 11 pm passed unanimously.

Motion: That the Review and Gap Analysis of Homelessness, Substance Use and Mental Health Services report dated September 12, 2023 be received.

Downer wants to make sure that the housing summit is on the staff's radar. Clack-Bush confirms.

Goller asks if there should be a motion to receive the County report. Clerk McMahon says they can, but it's part of the public record.

Gibson says one comment that stuck with him, and he knows it's a national problem, but there's a frustrating cycle with renovictions, interest rates, et al. He looks forward to a stable rate of inflation b/c it's one of the root causes in affordability.

Guthrie thanks council because the money for the report was in the budget. He also thanks staff b/c he had frustrations in the last budget around this issue. A lot had to do with clarity of roles, and there's no lack of empathy. The issue is what the City can handle.

Guthrie asks anyone in the development community, or a landlord with even just an extra room, please do what you can to help. Also, the upper levels of government have really failed on this file. This is the #1 issue for every mayor, and the response is not coming. Frustrating.

Burnout of staff at aid agencies is also key. They've seen slight increases in funding, and are working in precarious situations with people on the edge. Guthrie thanks those workers on



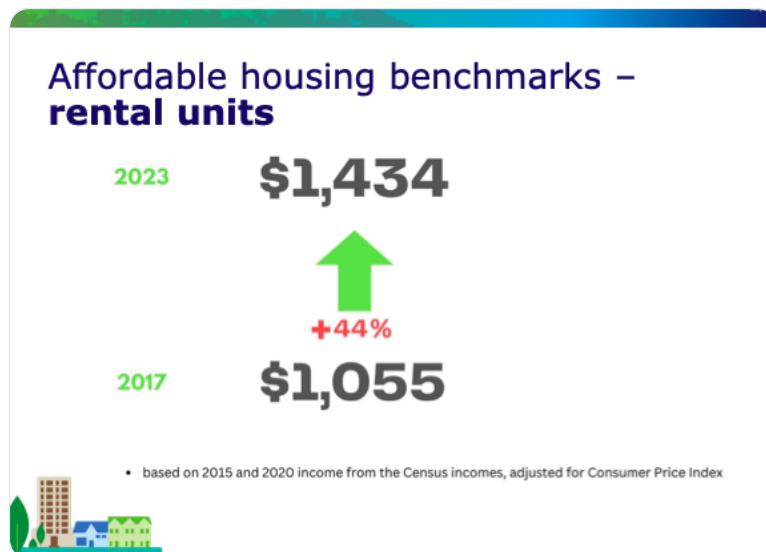
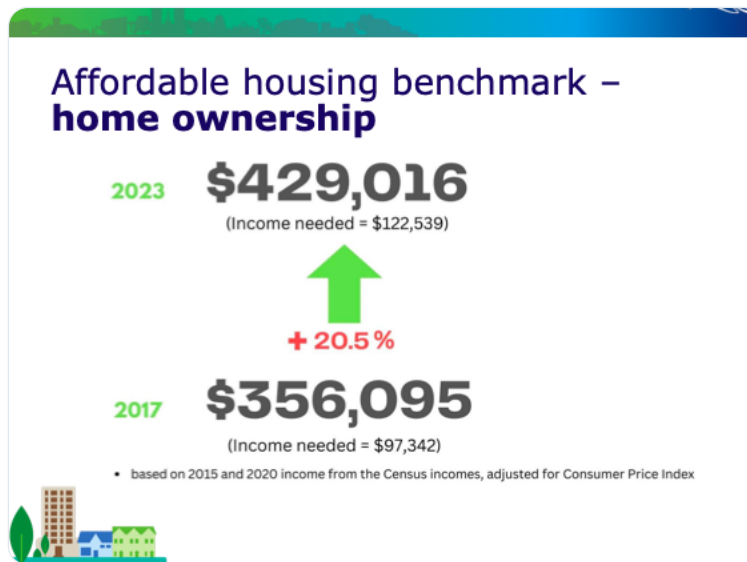
behalf of the city, and hopes there's soon no more reports, just action!

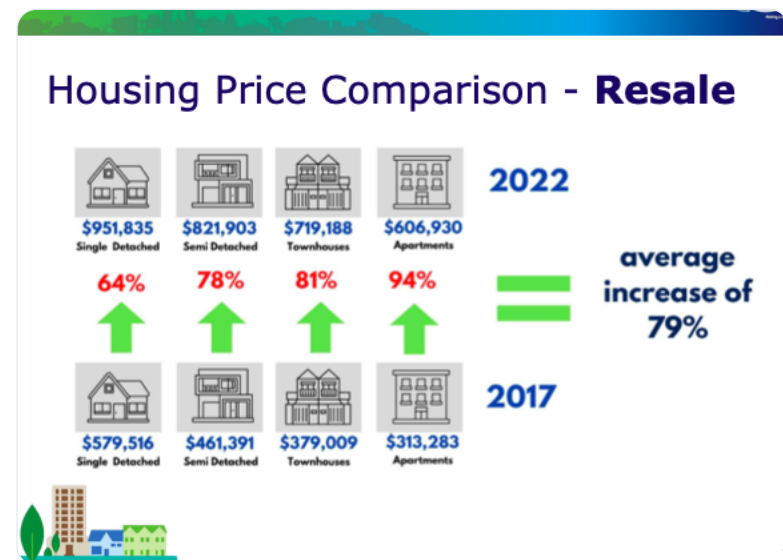
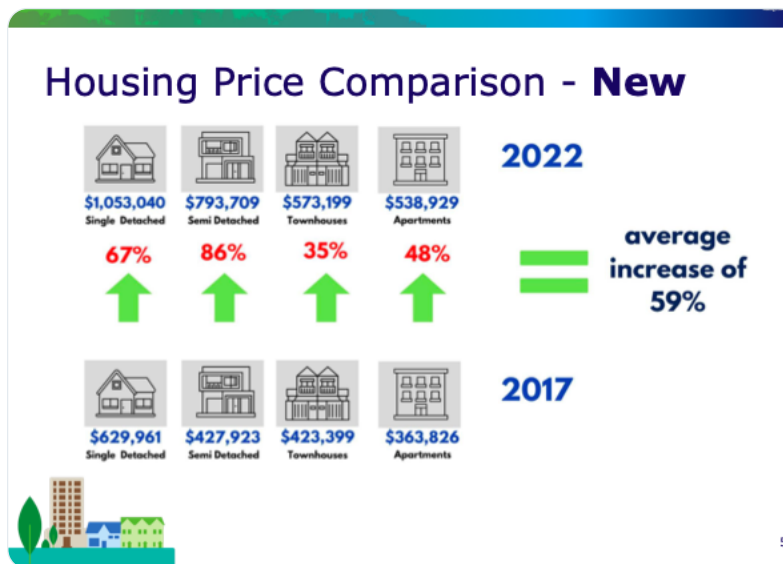
Next (yes, next): Affordability Strategy – Project Initiation. Cushla Matthews, Senior Policy Planner, will present.

Three takeaways for this presentation:

- 1) Why are we initiating this project?
- 2) What are the goals?
- 3) We have a strong desire to collaborate with as many stakeholders as possible.

Why are we updating the strategy?





Income has increased an average of 31%. Housing prices have increased an average of 59% (new) and 79% (resale). To quote the report, "There is a significant gap."

No primary affordable rental units have been built in the last five years without incentives. No one is building them out of the kindness of their heart, Matthews says. Also, the addition of supply \*alone\* will not solve affordability.

The plan:

Goal 1: Enable a greater supply and mix of housing

Goal 2: Maximize and protect the use of existing housing resulting in a greater supply of affordable housing

Goal 3: Enhance capacity, awareness, and supports for affordable housing

The timeline:



Busuttil/Klassen move the recommendation: That Report 2023-331 from Planning and Building Services regarding the initiation of the Housing Affordability Strategy project, dated September 12, 2023, be received.

Busuttil asks if the City can determine its own definition for affordability. GM of Planning Walkey says that they're still working with the income-based definition, but they will also have steps for the market-based affordability. (Though income is better.)

Goller asks about the scope in terms of 4plexes and beyond (?). Matthews says they're looking at four-plus and building on the intensification in Shaping Guelph and where gentle density works best.

Goller asks about the advisory group. Matthews says on page 7 of report it explains who they will like to engage; there will be an internal group with the City and County and an external group with lots of names and groups.

Goller asks if the general public will be given a chance to join up. Planning policy manager Aldunate says it will be a mix of invited peeps and general recruitment.

O'Rourke says at AMO they heard from The Canadian Lived Experience Leadership Network (CLELN), they have a charter that she found helpful for reaching out to people on this issue. Matthews say she would love to see it.

Chew asks about allocating resources in-house and to consultants. Aldunate says there will be a set scope for consultants with an emphasis on expertise that can't be found in-house.

Guthrie asks if there's anyway this can go faster. Walkey said they anticipated this question, and it's aligned with the County's process to make sure they've tied off the whole continuum. It might come in segments depending funding, but it will take time to look at whole thing.

Motion to receive approved.

"Wow, that's a lot of housing discussion tonight." Guthrie.

Bylaw of the week: (2023) - 20829: A by-law to confirm the proceedings of a meeting of Guelph City Council held September 12, 2023. Moved by Gibson/Caton and approved.

We're finished...



@threadreaderapp unroll please

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