



Township of Woolwich Housing Needs Assessment

Committee of the Whole Meeting
November 5, 2024

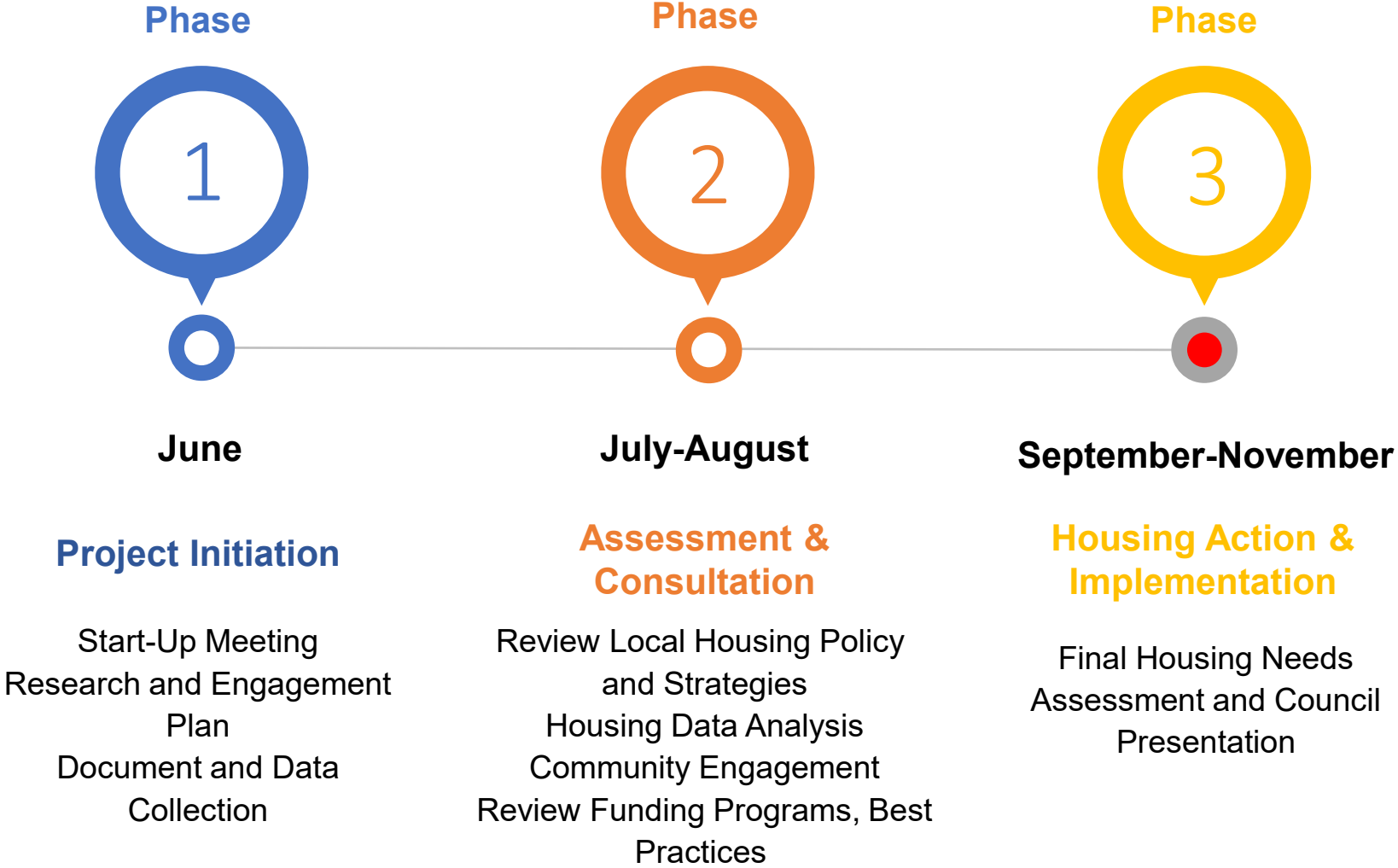




Agenda

1. Project Overview
2. Housing Needs Assessment Findings
3. Action Plan Recommendations
4. Questions

Phases and Timelines



The Housing Continuum



Housing Needs Assessment Findings

Population & Housing Growth Forecast

- The Township has seen an 8.0% increase of population over the last census period
- It is growing at a higher rate than the province (5.8%), but not as high as Waterloo Region as a whole (9.9%)
- The population is expected to grow to 28,500 residents by mid 2024 and 36,433 residents by the year 2034
- The employment growth is expected to remain steady through to 2034
- As of the 2021 Census, over 23% of the population of the Township of Woolwich is aged 60 or above
- This points to a need for seniors housing with accessible design considerations as this population continues to age and mirrors a need throughout much of the province of Ontario
- The Township also has a high population of children, with 27.2% of people under the age of 20
- This reflects the larger number of families in the community, as well as larger family sizes, and affects Woolwich's housing needs, specifically unit sizes and types of dwellings

Income & Housing Tenure

- Woolwich has a noticeably higher share of high-income households as compared to the province of Ontario average
- 49% of households earning \$100,000 or more per year after tax (36.5% in Ontario)
- 13% of households earning less than \$40,000 per year after tax (19.1% in Ontario)
- As of the date of data collection for the 2021 Census, there were a collective 998 purpose-built rental units in the Township of Woolwich and Township of North Dumfries (reported together by CMHC)
- The 1,505 renter households in Woolwich by itself, identified through Census data, suggests that many renter households live in secondary rental units (e.g., rented ownership households, duplex apartments, accessory apartments, or non-registered rental spaces)
- The disparity between renter households and purpose-built rental units indicates the importance of the Township of Woolwich encouraging the development of rental units
- Current and past vacancy rates in the Township of Woolwich are significantly lower than that, estimated to be at around 0.7% across all unit types in 2023. Vacancy rates below 3 can drive up rents as tenants compete for fewer units.

Affordability Challenges

- Housing costs (ownership and rental) are deeply unaffordable for those making minimum wage or in receipt of Ontario Works or ODSP
- There is significant a disparity between renter households and purpose-built rental units; Woolwich may need to continue to add new purpose-built rental units in the future
- Of 9,005 households, 540 were found to be in core housing need (6%) as of 2021 (12.1% in Ontario)
- 13.7% of households in Woolwich were found to be living in unaffordable dwellings, with 18.4% living in unaffordable, unsuitable, or inadequate housing

Acute Needs

There is an **acute need** for:

- Attainable ownership housing, including modest units within reach of first-time home buyers and those looking to downsize.
- Rental housing at various price points, including deeply affordable RGI units.
- Fully accessible 1 and 2-bedroom rental units, as well as larger 3-bedroom+ rental units to accommodate large families and multigenerational households.
- Attainable row housing, ground level units in stacked towns and medium to higher density apartments with accessibility features targeting older adults.
- Infill developments and subdivisions with increased housing density and a variety of unit types (e.g., stacked towns, duplexes, and ARUs).

Housing Action - Strategic Priority

Areas Identified

Nine recommendations across four strategic priorities have been identified that support the outcome of increasing the supply of affordable and attainable housing:

- 1. Advocacy, Awareness & Outreach**
- 2. Policy & Zoning**
- 3. Innovation**
- 4. Monitoring & Process Improvements**

Action Plan Recommendations

Initiative	Description	Comments
Leverage the Development Liaison Committee to Gather Feedback & Share Resources	Local developers willing to meet with municipal staff and “talk through” some proformas to determine types and combinations of units to be incorporated into new subdivisions or infill projects	This could be added to the workplan and agendas for the Development Liaison Committee, and sample subdivision layouts developed with a diversity of building typologies that are workable for local developers.
Host a System Integration Summit	Connect private, non-profit and gov’t organizations with the aim of developing inter-sectoral partnerships that would enable local service agencies, non-profits and developers to leverage existing assets to build more housing	Stakeholder engagement highlighted a need for increased cross sectoral engagement and partnerships. Leveraging local assets and knowledge pertaining to supportive housing and support services could better serve populations with special needs and promote housing stability and create additional residential units within the Township.

Action Plan Recommendations

Initiative	Description	Comments
Greater Collaboration with Region of Waterloo	Enhance ongoing collaboration with the Region and engage in joint advocacy at the Provincial and Federal levels.	No single level of government can solve the housing supply challenges alone. Enhance continuous and ongoing collaboration with the Region to ensure alignment and efficiency in addressing housing and homelessness issues. Joint advocacy for stronger rent control measures at the provincial level could support legislative changes that would have a positive impact on renters within the Township.
Development of a Surplus Lands Disposal Policy or Procedure	The Township can develop a Surplus Lands Disposal policy or procedure for adoption by Council and consider the use of municipally owned sites for high-impact community projects.	Township staff should maintain a short-list of high-impact community projects that would address gaps identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. These could include, but are not limited to, below market rate seniors' housing, deeply affordable housing and RGI units, modest accessible units, and larger family-sized rental units and attainable ownership units.

Action Plan Recommendations

Initiative	Description	Comments
Enact Municipal Capital Facilities By-Law	By-law allows creation of an agreement to create relationships with external parties to deliver services on behalf of the municipality.	Assistance for municipal capital facilities from a municipality can include: granting or lending money; transferring or leasing property; guaranteed borrowing; and property tax exemptions or reductions
CIP Enhancements for Affordable Housing	Community Improvement Plan (CIPs) can be used as a tool to offer incentives that encourage development of affordable housing, renovations and conversions of properties from non-residential to residential.	The project area should align with the new settlement area boundaries in their entirety, ensuring that all developers have access to the program and that affordable housing is not concentrated in certain areas within the villages.

Action Plan Recommendations:

Initiative	Description	Comments
Promote and Accept a Range of Housing Models	Promote and allow more housing types that serve vulnerable populations to ensure affordable options are available to all in the community.	Encouraging alternative forms of housing construction such as manufactured housing, prefabricated housing, and tiny homes can expand housing options available in the community.
E-Permitting System and Integrated Software for Housing Development	The implementation of an E-permitting system through an online portal for development applications, permit issuance and fee payments to increase staff capacity as required.	System enhancements may increase capacity for Township staff to manage the volume of planning applications in a timely fashion and increase ease of circulation to commenting agencies.
Develop Tracking Tools to Monitor Progress	Develop tools for evaluation of the housing goals and objectives and inform strategic priorities for the Township of Woolwich.	Staff will be able to use these tools to assess progress and inform actions to ensure return on investments.

Thank You!

TWC
tim welch
consulting inc