



**Township of Southgate  
Affordable Attainable Housing Committee**

**August 23, 2022**

**7:00 PM**

**Electronic Participation**

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**Pages**

**1. Electronic Access Information**

If you wish to listen to the Southgate Affordable-Attainable Housing Committee meeting electronically please wait until the start time of the meeting, then dial in with your phone using the following information:

Phone Number: **1 (647) 497-9373**

Access Code: **523-831-101**

**2. Call to Order**

**3. Confirmation of Agenda**

**Be it resolved that** the Committee confirm the agenda as presented.

**4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

**5. Delegations & Presentations**

**6. Adoption of Minutes**

1 - 4

**Be it resolved that** the Committee approve the minutes from the July 26, 2022 Affordable-Attainable Housing Committee meeting as presented.

**7. Staff Updates**

**7.1. South Grey Housing Development Corporation Presentations to the Municipality of Grey Highlands and the Town of Hanover - Verbal Update**

5 - 21

**7.2. Affordable-Attainable Housing Survey - Verbal Update**

The online Affordable-Attainable Housing Survey can be completed [here](#).

**8. New Business**

**8.1. Media Relations Campaign Update**

**9. Correspondence**

**Be it resolved that** the Committee receive the items of Correspondence consent agenda dated August 23, 2022 as information.

- |   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <b>9.1. ROMA - Insider Rural Attainable Housing Task Force</b>  | <b>22 - 24</b> |
| <b>9.2. South Grey News - Affordable Housing Corporation Article</b>  | <b>25 - 26</b> |
| <b>9.3. Insider - Barndominiums Article - received August 8, 2022</b>   | <b>27 - 41</b> |
| <b>9.4. Edmonton Journal - Edmonton's Food Bank City Should Work on Poverty to Fix Food Security - received August 15, 2022</b> | <b>42 - 50</b> |

**10. Next Meeting**

Tuesday September 27, 2022 at 2:00PM.

**11. Adjournment**

**Be it resolved that** the Committee adjourn the meeting at [TIME].



**Township of Southgate**  
**Minutes of the Affordable-Attainable**  
**Housing Committee**

July 26, 2022  
7:00 PM  
Electronic Participation

Members Present: Mayor John Woodbury  
Councillor Martin Shipston  
Councillor Michael Sherson  
Gerry McNalty  
Jennifer DeJong  
Morgan McCannell

Members Absent: Muriel Scott  
Janice Powell

Staff Present: Dave Milliner, CAO  
Holly Malynyk, Recording Secretary

**1. Electronic Access Information**

Affordable-Attainable Housing Committee recordings will be available on the Township of Southgate [YouTube Channel](#) following the meeting.

**2. Call to Order**

Councillor Shipston called the meeting to order at 7:00PM.

**3. Confirmation of Agenda**

**Moved By** Councillor Michael Sherson

**Seconded By** Jennifer DeJong

**Be it resolved that** the Committee confirm the agenda as amended to include an item to discuss a recommitment to the goals of the Committee.

**4. Declaration of Pecuniary Interest**

No one declared a pecuniary interest related to any items on the agenda.

**5. Delegations & Presentations**

None.

**6. Adoption of Minutes**

**Moved By** Gerry McNalty

**Seconded By** Councillor Michael Sherson

**Be it resolved that** the Committee approve the minutes from the June 28, 2022 Affordable-Attainable Housing Committee meeting as presented.

**Carried**

**7. Staff Updates**

**7.1 Terms of Reference - CAO Dave Milliner**

CAO Milliner presented the updated principles in the Terms of Reference.

**Moved By** Gerry McNalty

**Seconded By** Councillor Michael Sherson

**Be it resolved that** the Committee recommend that Council consider the approval of the amendments to the Affordable Attainable Housing Committee Terms of Reference.

**Carried**

**7.2 Recommitment of the Goals of the Committee**

Vice Chair McNalty discussed the recommitment of the goals of the Committee, noting that the Committee is looking at housing as a whole, and not specific areas of housing so that no

individuals and community members are left behind and that housing should be available for everyone.

CAO Milliner noted that the Committee should develop a working list of goals and share it amongst each other and with staff to ensure that the goals are being worked on and maintained. Members noted that they will continue to work toward the goals that are going to benefit the communities in the Township.

## **8. New Business**

### **8.1 Media Campaign - Jordan de Jong**

Jordan DeJong introduced himself to the Committee and discussed what he would be able to offer to the Committee and the community on a volunteer basis to develop a media campaign and market the work that the Affordable-Attainable Housing Committee is pursuing.

### **8.2 Media Relations**

Vice Chair McNalty touched on having a media relation standing item on the agenda, so that members could discuss any information or developed materials to bring to the public.

### **8.3 Reconsideration of Item 7.1 - Terms of Reference**

CAO Milliner asked if the Committee could reconsider its motion approved under Item 7.1 - Terms of Reference

**Moved By** Councillor Michael Sherson

**Seconded By** Gerry McNalty

**Be it resolved that** the Committee reconsider Item 7.1 - Terms of Reference.

**Carried**

**Moved By** Councillor Michael Sherson

**Seconded By** Gerry McNalty

**Be it resolved that** the Committee amend the Terms of Reference to include a Media Relations and Communications

Support as a non-voting member to the Affordable Attainable Housing Committee.

**Carried**

#### **8.4 Affordable Attainable Housing Survey**

Members discussed the Affordable-Attainable Housing Survey. Members discussed where they would distribute the survey to and will work with staff to ensure that paper copies are printed and handed out to community partners and that copies are put on the Township of Southgate website and social media platforms.

#### **9. Correspondence**

**Moved By** Councillor Michael Sherson

**Seconded By** Gerry McNalty

**Be it resolved that** the Committee receive the items of correspondence dated July 26, 2022.

**Carried**

#### **9.1 Town of Collingwood - Affordable Housing Workshop**

#### **10. Next Meeting**

Tuesday, August 23, 2022, at 7:00PM

#### **11. Adjournment**

The Committee adjourned the meeting at 8:13PM.

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Chair Martin Shipston

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Recording Secretary Holly Malynyk

## **Township of Southgate**

### **Administration Office**

185667 Grey Road 9, RR 1  
Dundalk, ON N0C 1B0

**Phone:** 519-923-2110  
**Toll Free:** 1-888-560-6607  
**Fax:** 519-923-9262  
**Web:** [www.southgate.ca](http://www.southgate.ca)

## **Staff Report CAO2022-049**

**Title of Report:** South Grey Housing Corporation Report

**Department:** Administration

**Council Date:** August 18, 2022

### **Council Recommendation:**

**Be it resolved that** Council receive staff report CAO2022-049 as information; and

**That** Council approve staff to develop a draft South Grey Housing Corporation Working Group Terms of Reference document and a framework for the 4 municipal partners of Grey Highlands, Hanover, Southgate and West Grey to meet and explore the opportunity to create a Housing Corporation by developing a short-term plan and longer term strategy for the region.

### **Background:**

At a Special Council meeting on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 a presentation was made by staff on behalf of the Southgate Affordable Attainable Housing Advisory Committee on a proposal to develop a South Grey Housing Development Corporation with area municipalities.

**Moved By** Councillor Shipston; **Seconded By** Councillor Dobreen;

**Be it resolved that** the Committee of the Whole receive the Affordable Attainable Housing Committee - South Grey Housing Development Corporation Proposal Presentation for information; and

**That** the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to receive the Affordable Attainable Housing 5 Committee Resolution #2, dated April 26, 2022 as information; and

**That** the Committee of the Whole recommend that Council direct staff to schedule presentations with the municipalities of Grey Highlands, Hanover and West Grey to seek feedback, direction and support for a South Grey Affordable Housing Strategy that would consider in the 2023 budget cycle to consider hire an employee to manage and setup a management board to create a South Grey Affordable Housing Development Corporation.

Carried No. 2022-329

### **Staff Comments:**

Southgate received significant interest and appreciation from the 3 Municipalities we presented to. We presented the South Grey Housing Development Corporation Proposal as a presentation (Attachment #1) to:

- Municipality of Grey Highlands Council on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022 at 1:00 pm
- Town of Hanover Council on August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 4:00 pm
- Municipality of West Grey Council on August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at 9:00 am

The next step for Southgate staff will be to develop a South Grey Housing Corporation Working Group Terms of Reference as a framework for the 4 municipalities to start the discussions on a process and short-long term strategy to see where it leads us. Staff will seek approval from Southgate Council and Southgate's Affordable Attainable Housing Advisory Committee on the Terms of Reference document and seek feedback on the framework from the partner municipalities and their Councils.

### **Financial Impact or Long Term Implications**

There is no financial impact as a result of this report in the 2022 budget other than staff time. Consideration in the 2023 budget cycle discussions will need to consider about \$40,000.00 investment to the South Grey Development Corporation.

### **Communications & Community Action Plan Impact:**

This report has been written and presented to Council to communicate accurate information to the public.

### **Goal 3 - Promoting Health Services and Housing Choices**

#### **Action 3:**

The residents and businesses of Southgate envision a caring community which meets the needs of all ages and incomes for a healthy and comfortable life, even as our population grows and changes.

#### **Strategic Initiatives 3-A (2019-2023):**

By means of appropriate policies, incentives and development partners, the Township will facilitate a significant increase in the supply and variety of both rental and purchase housing/accommodation within Southgate.

### **Concluding Comments**

1. That Council receive this report as information.
2. That Council direct staff to develop a draft South Grey Housing Corporation Working Group Terms of Reference document and a framework for the 4 municipal partners of Grey Highlands, Hanover, Southgate and West Grey to meet and explore the opportunity to create Housing Corporation by developing a short term plan and longer term strategy for the region.

Respectfully Submitted,

**CAO approval:** Original Signed By Dave Milliner – CAO

[dmilliner@southgate.ca](mailto:dmilliner@southgate.ca) 519-923-2110 x210

- Attachment 1 – South Grey Housing Corporation Presentation
- Attachment 2 – Hanover Mayor Sue Paterson email dated August 10, 2022





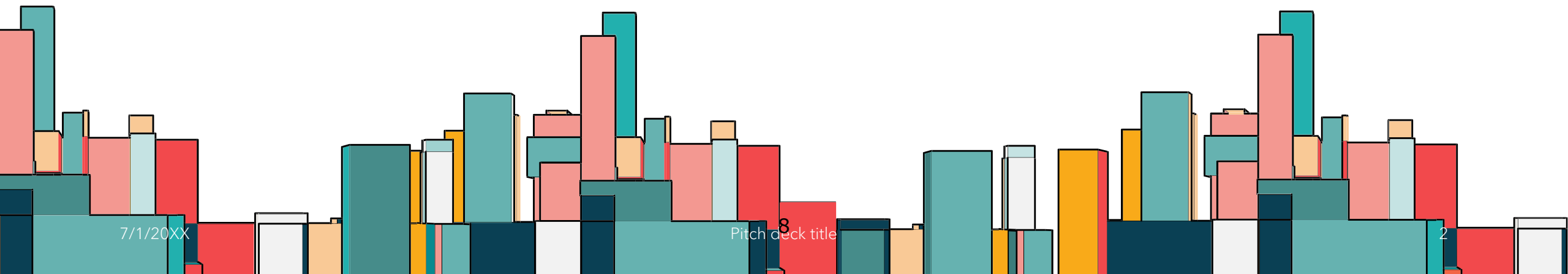
# **SOUTH GREY HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION PROPOSAL**

Initial Municipal Presentation

June, 2022

# WHY IS SOUTHGATE LEADING THIS PROPOSAL ?

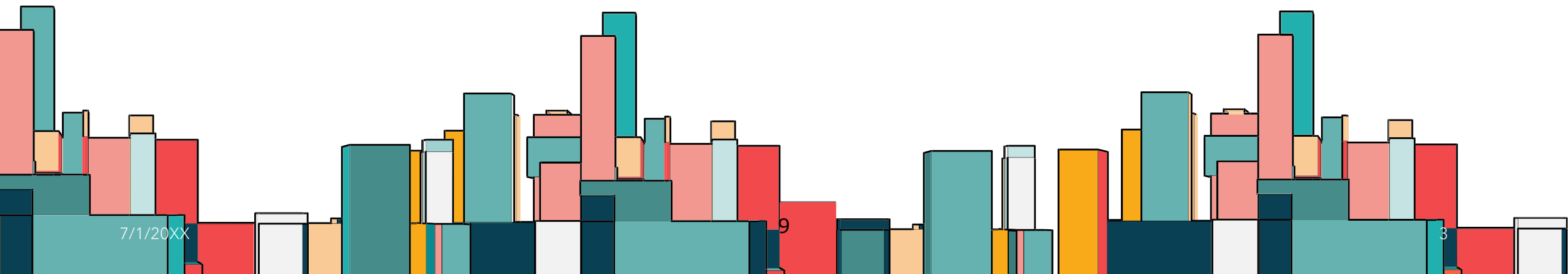
- Southgate Council appointed a Southgate Affordable Attainable Housing Advisory Committee (SAAHAC) in 2021.
- The SAAHAC Committee operates under a Southgate Council approved Terms of Reference.
- The SAAHAC Committee has created 26 Housing Tasks as recommendations going forward.
- The SAAHAC Committee has ranked the Tasks to focus on the Top 7 Recommendations for the rest of their 2022 mandate.



# SOUTHGATE'S HOUSING COMMITTEE

## 7 PRIORITY TASKS

1. Apply a "Housing First" Policy to work with developers of privately owned property.
2. Apply a "Housing First" Policy to use municipally owned surplus land.
3. Conduct a Community Survey and Data Collection.
4. Investigate the merits of forming an Attainable Housing Development Corporation.
5. Consider reducing or waiving of Development Charges.
6. Explore the existing planning policy frameworks and Zoning By-law.
7. Update Official Plan(s) & Zoning By-Law to accommodate additional Housing models/types.





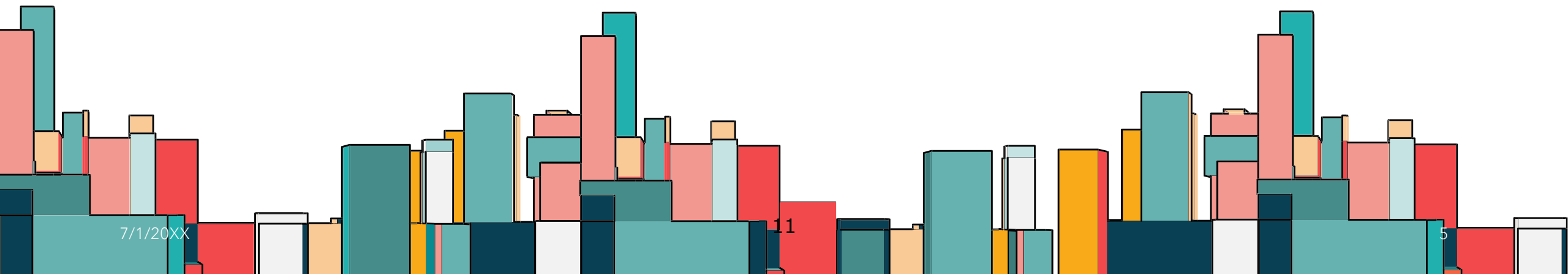
# INVESTIGATE THE MERITS OF FORMING AN ATTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

AAHC Resolution from their April 26, 2022 meeting:

**Moved by** Councillor Michael Sherson; **Seconded by** Morgan McCannell;

**Be it resolved that** the Committee appoint Gerry McNalty and Muriel Scott to work with the CAO and the Mayor to create a presentation proposal to neighbouring municipalities for a South Grey Affordable Housing Strategy and staff lead.

**Carried**

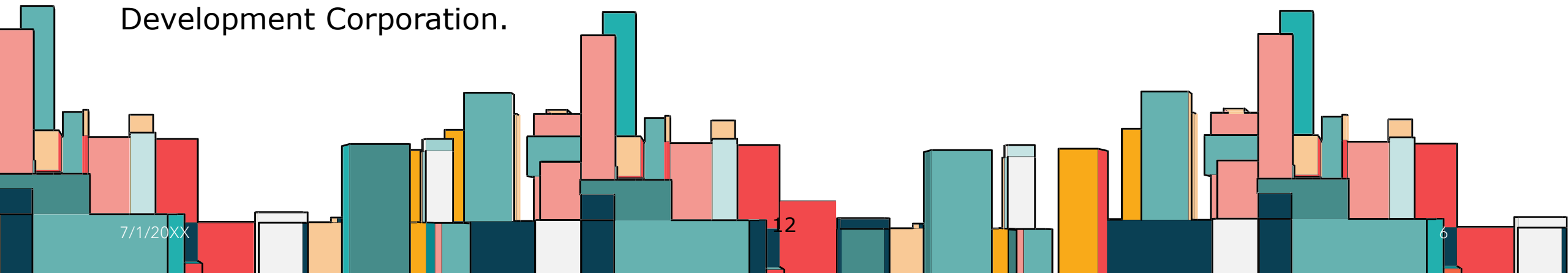


# INVESTIGATE THE MERITS OF FORMING AN ATTAINABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

The Southgate SAAHAC presented to Council on May 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022 to the Township's COW and received support through the following resolution of Council:

**Be it resolved that** Council receive the Southgate Affordable Attainable Housing Advisory Committee Resolution #2, dated April 26, 2022 as information; and

**That** Council direct staff to schedule presentations with the municipalities of Grey Highlands, Hanover and West Grey Councils to seek feedback, direction and support for a South Grey Affordable Housing Strategy that would consider in the 2023 budget cycle to hire an employee to manage and setup a management board to create a South Grey Affordable Housing Development Corporation.

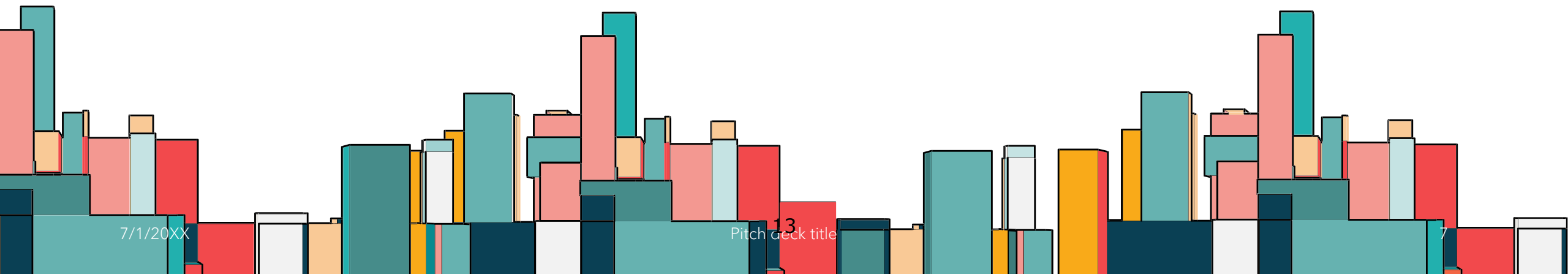


# WHO ARE WE PRESENTING TO?

Grey Highlands  
Southgate

Hanover  
West Grey

- However, at a recent CAO's meeting in May, 2022 there was significant interest that this should include all Grey County Lower Tier municipalities.



# OUR AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSAL

- The proposal is to put “**Housing Talk**” into “**Housing Actions**”
- Create a **South Grey Affordable Housing Strategy**.
- The core of the Strategy would be to create an **Attainable Housing Development & Mortgage Corporation (AHDMC)**.
- The **AHDMC** would create partnerships, developments and long-term funding models to deliver and manage the project life cycle as a community rental affordable and attainable ownership housing spaces.
- Municipal **AHDMC** partners may need to consider consistent local affordable housing development policies and project development agreements.



# BUSINESS MODEL



## **Vision**

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To create quality living spaces where people can live and work in our communities.



## **Mission**

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To provide and maintain affordable housing that is safe and maintained by connecting people so they can securely raise their family in comfort and with respect .



## **Values**

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- Accessibility
- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Community Vision
- Integrity & Trust
- Partnerships
- Respect
- Security

# FINANCIAL SUPPORT MODEL



PROPERTIES  
REVENUES

- Revenue obtained from property rentals once established.
- Financial Management
- Sustainability



MUNICIPAL  
SUPPORT &  
INVESTMENTS

- Land Contributions
- Planning Policy Change
- DC's forgiven
- Building Permits & Inspections



GRANTS &  
FUNDERS

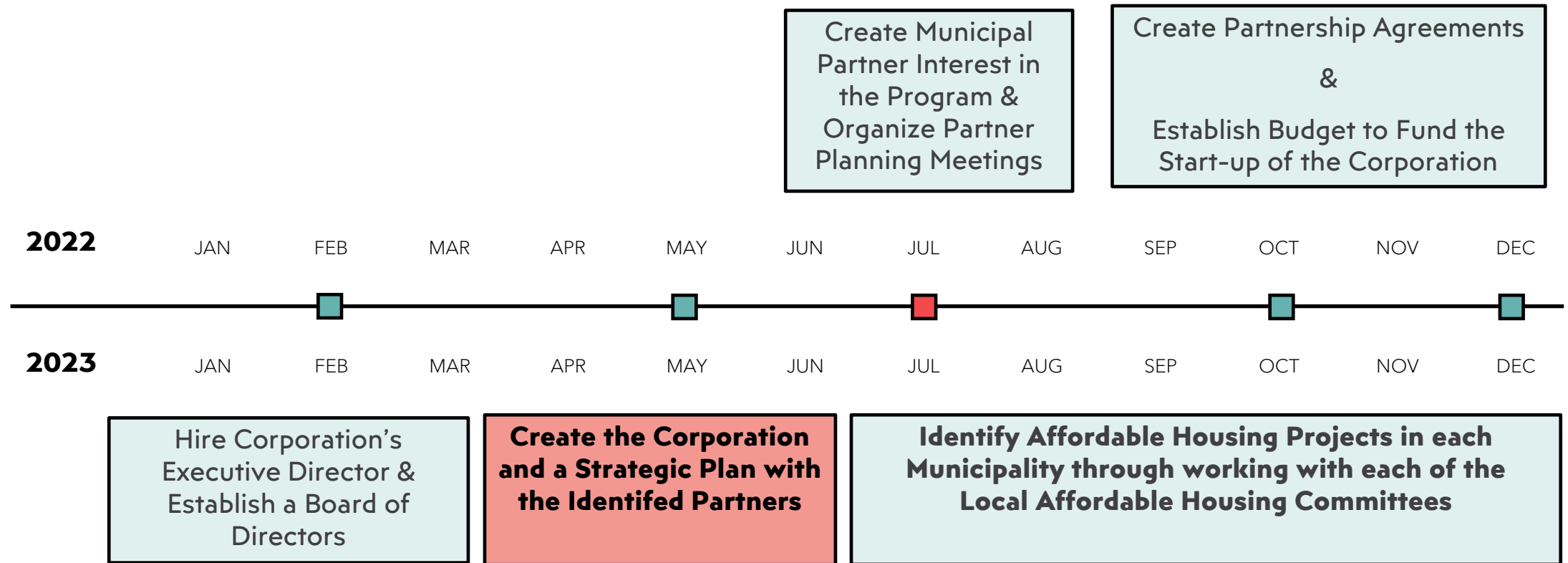
- Federal, Provincial and County Funding to support Projects.
- Long Term Mortgages
- Financial Management



COMMUNITY  
PARTNERSHIPS

- Not-for-Profits
- Builders
- Developers
- Building Maintenance

# MUNICIPAL PARTNERS PROPOSED FOUR YEAR HOUSING ACTION PLAN IN 2022 & 2023



# MUNICIPAL PARTNERS PROPOSED FOUR YEAR HOUSING ACTION PLAN - 2024 TO 2026

**2024**  
**To**  
**2026**

1. Establish the Corporation to become Independent of Municipal funding support.
  2. Annual General Meeting for the Corporation & Annual Reports to member Councils.
  3. Grow the capacity of the Corporation and the Affordable Housing Projects.

JAN      FEB      MAR      APR      MAY      JUN      JUL      AUG      SEP      OCT      NOV      DEC

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# BUDGET PROJECTIONS

Yearly Partner Contributions		YEAR 1	YEAR 2	YEAR 3 & 4	
Income		4 partners	5 partners	7 partners	
Municipal Contribution	40,000	160,000	200,000	280,000	
Total Income		160,000	200,000	280,000	
Expenses					
Salaries & Benefits		100,000	120,000	190,000	
Travel		10,000	20,000	20,000	
Equipment & Office Supplies		10,000	20,000	30,000	
Operating Audit & Legal		40,000	40,000	40,000	
Total Expenses		160,000 <sup>19</sup>	200,000	280,000	13

# THANK YOU & QUESTIONS

Township of Southgate

Dave Milliner - CAO

519-375-0122

[dmilliner@southgate.ca](mailto:dmilliner@southgate.ca)

**From:** Sue Paterson <spaterson@hanover.ca>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 10, 2022 3:06 PM  
**To:** John Woodbury <jwoodbury@southgate.ca>; Dave Milliner <dmilliner@southgate.ca>  
**Cc:** Sherri Walden <swalden@hanover.ca>  
**Subject:** Housing proposal

Good afternoon Mayor Woodbury and CAO Dave:

Thank you for attending our August 8, 2022 meeting as a delegation to provide information about the South Grey Housing Development Corporation Proposal.

Hanover Council expressed their support of exploring the feasibility of a local Attainable Housing Development Corporation.

We look forward to hearing more about this proposal.

Best regards, Sue

**Sue Paterson, Mayor**  
**Town of Hanover**  
[341 10th St. Hanover ON N4N 1P5](#)  
**t** [519.364.2780 x 1230](tel:519.364.2780) | **c** [519.379.5441](tel:519.379.5441)  
**e** [spaterson@hanover.ca](mailto:spaterson@hanover.ca) | [hanover.ca](http://hanover.ca)



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# ROMA Insider: Rural Attainable Housing Task Force

May 18, 2022

## ROMA's Attainable Housing Task Force

ROMA's newly-formed Attainable Housing Task Force held its first meeting mid-April. One of the tasks undertaken at this first meeting was to look at the results of the survey distributed by ROMA to its members to gain insight into key issues and priorities impacting the ability to provide purposed built housing and rental housing, planning and development barriers, and opportunities in rural municipalities.

With a very high response rate of 55% and 244 respondents, 75% noted that cost/affordability, demand and housing shortages are at the forefront of barriers experienced by small municipalities. Additionally, 68% of respondents said availability of a construction workforce is a challenge.

The Attainable Housing Task Force is comprised of experts with backgrounds in housing policy planning and development, as well as municipal staff and ROMA Board members. With the survey results in mind, as well as priorities outlined in ROMA's [Opportunities for Rural Ontario in a Post-COVID World](#) action plan, the group will focus on three main areas of advocacy for rural Ontario:

- Attainable housing and purpose-built rentals
- Barriers to development in rural Ontario
- Strategies to incentivize housing development in rural communities

The Attainable Housing Task Force is meeting monthly until late summer.

## Zone Meetings on Opportunities for Rural Ontario Action Plan

Throughout the month of April, ROMA Board Chair Robin Jones and Kathy Wood, CEO of Pivotal Momentum Inc., held four Zone meetings to present ROMA's Opportunities for Rural Ontario in a Post-COVID World action plan to Zone members.



Together, they presented the five key themes of the plan, which include digital connectivity, housing, access to services, workforce development and growth opportunities, as well as the plan's 23 recommendations that act as a roadmap for Ontario to reach its potential beyond COVID. All four meetings were well attended by Zone members.

As well, on May 13, Chair Jones and Kathy Wood virtually attended the regular meeting of the Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus to present the plan and discuss the Attainable Housing Task Force.

Check out the [ROMA Zone map](#) to learn more about your ROMA Zone.

### **ROMA's Strategic Priorities**

The ROMA Board has approved its [strategic objectives](#) for 2022. ROMA will strive to advance rural municipal priorities, with a focus on the ROMA Action Plan to support the prosperity and essential role of rural communities to the pandemic recovery. ROMA will also maintain strong partnerships across Ontario to ensure a strong and unified municipal sector.

### **LAS Resources: Risk Management**

LAS has created a risk management working group to share best practices and provide for sector-wide collaboration on a critical and complex issues. Resources are available at the [LAS Municipal Risk Management page](#) for resources on this complex issue.

On June 2, from 11:30 to 12:30 EDT LAS will host a discussion of municipal CAOs [Risk Management - What is your insurance strategy?](#) Every municipality needs one will be a dynamic and strategic discussion on evolving issues facing municipal administrators. Using the principles of Chatham House Rule, municipal CAOs are invited to ask questions, share expertise and collaborate with peers on the issues that keep you awake at night.

### **ROMA Board of Directors**

#### **Board Zone Contacts**

- Zone 1: Dennis Crevits, Councillor, Municipality of Central Elgin
- Zone 2: Chris White, Mayor, Township of Guelph-Eramosa
- Zone 3: Lloyd Ferguson, Councillor, City of Hamilton
- Zone 4: Allan Thompson, Immediate Past Chair, AMO Rural Caucus, Mayor, Town of Caledon
- Zone 5: Pam Sayne, Councillor, Township of Minden Hills
- Zone 6: Kim Love, Mayor, Township of Madawaska Valley
- Zone 7: Cameron Wales, Councillor, City of Brockville
- Zone 8: Eli El-Chantiry, First Vice Chair, Councillor, City of Ottawa
- Zone 9: Bill Vrebosch, AMO Rural Caucus, Councillor, City of North Bay
- Zone 10: Janet Hager, Councillor, Municipality of Red Lake

## **AMO Rural Caucus Members**

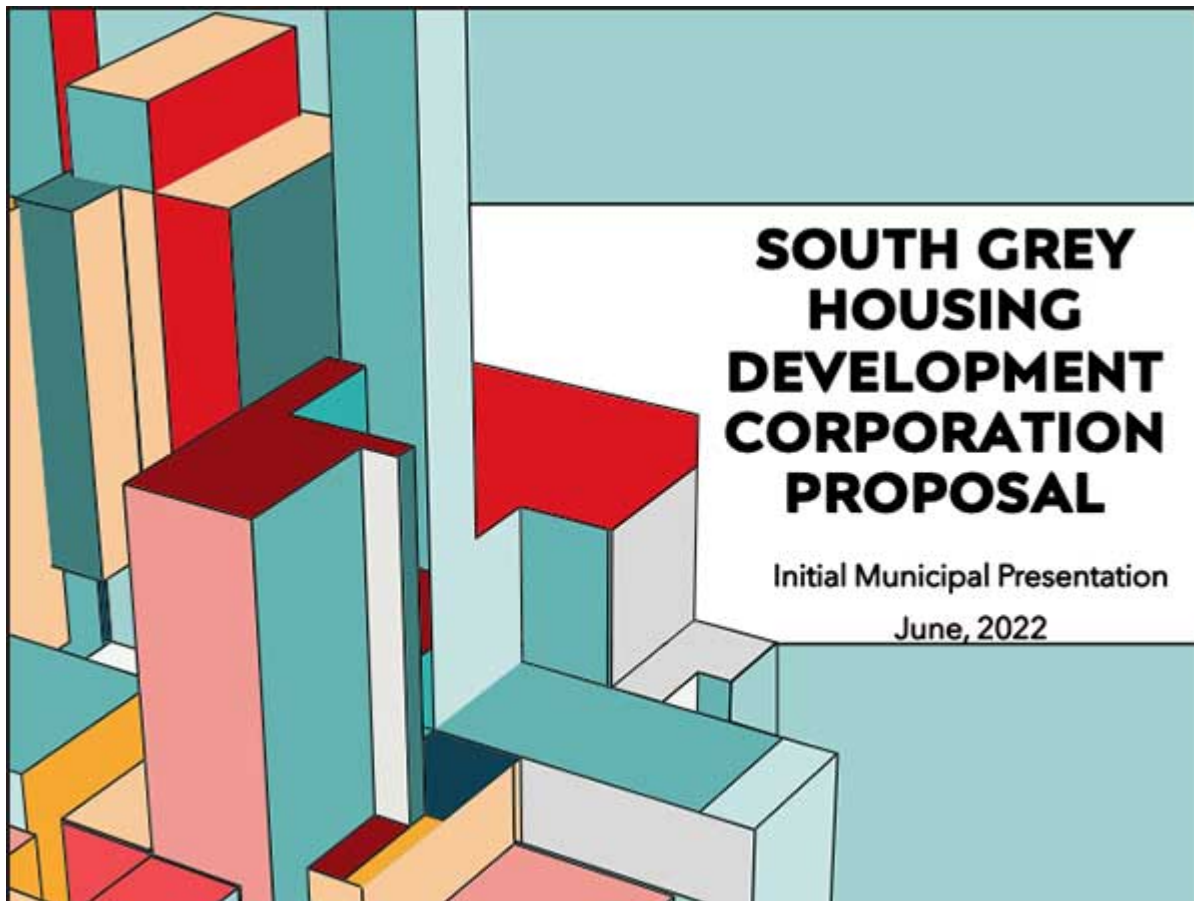
- Robin Jones, ROMA Chair, Mayor, Village of Westport
- Christine Robinson, 2nd Vice Chair, Mayor, Municipality of West Grey
- Peter Emon, Reeve, Town of Renfrew
- Christa Lowry, Mayor, Municipality of Mississippi Mills
- Sandra Datars Bere, CAO, Corporation of the County of Bruce

### **Category**

ROMA Insider

### **Share this Post**

# Southgate leads initiative to form an Affordable Housing Development and Mortgage Corporation for Southern Grey County



BY SOUTHGREY.CA STAFF — Southgate CAO Dave Milliner is leading an initiative to form an Affordable Housing Development and Mortgage Corporation for Southern Grey County.

After Southgate Council first established an Affordable Attainable Housing Advisory Committee (SAAHAC) in 2021, the committee created a plan to be brought before other municipalities in an effort to find economies of scale and a shared focus.

The proposed corporation would work with developers of privately owned properties, as well as municipally owned surplus lands for the purpose of creating low-cost housing in the region.

It is hoped that by reducing or even waiving development charges and making improvements to planning policies and zoning bylaws, a program could be developed in which selected local individuals are assisted with the purchase of an affordable home. Milliner explained that the corporation would take a 'Housing First' approach to unconditionally meet a person's most basic needs for housing.

Within the next four years, the corporation would seek funding and community partnerships, identify projects and work with each community local affordable housing committees.

On August 3, Milliner presented the affordable housing initiative to Grey Highlands Council with a view to open further discussions on the proposed corporation. Presentations to Hanover and West Grey municipalities will also be delivered.

Grey Highlands Council received the presentation favourably and CAO Karen Govan vowed to work with Milliner and discuss next steps.

At South Grey News, we endeavour to bring you truthful and factual, up-to-date local community news in a quick and easy-to-digest format that's free of political bias. We believe this service is more important today than ever before, as social media has given rise to misinformation, largely unchecked by big corporations who put profits ahead of their responsibilities.

South Grey News does not have the resources of a big corporation. We are a small, locally owned-and-operated organization. Research, analysis and physical attendance at public meetings and community events requires considerable effort. But contributions from readers and advertisers, however big or small, go a long way to helping us deliver positive, open and honest journalism for this community.

Please consider supporting South Grey News with a [donation in lieu of a subscription fee](#) and let us know that our efforts are appreciated. Thank you.

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## Move aside, tiny homes: The barndominium is the hottest thing in alternative housing, and it shows just how much the pandemic has changed what people look for in a home

Amanda Goh Aug 8, 2022, 2:13 AM

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Exterior of Holly Angel's barndominium [Holly Angel](#)

**Barndominiums are popping up across the US.**

**These farmhouse-style homes combine living space and a garage or working area under a single roof.**

**Economic factors and a renewed interest in farmhouse living are contributing to the trend.**

A couple of years ago, Colleen Roberts and her husband Mitch celebrated the 4th of

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OWN.

"I said, 'Absolutely not,'" Roberts told Insider. "After touring the inside though, I realized how nice they could be."

Two kids later, they got their chance to have one. They had outgrown their home and were looking for an option that was spacious, affordable, and required minimal maintenance.

Once they compared the cost of a barndominium with that of a traditional home, it was a no-brainer decision.

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**Colleen Roberts and her family in their bedroom.** [Roberts Farmstead](#)

"We were under \$400,000, not including the land since we already owned it," [Roberts](#), a civil engineer, told Insider of the construction costs. Like many other barndominium lovers, the couple took on the role of general contractor and oversaw the construction process.

In the two years since they've moved in, their barndominium has proven to be everything they had hoped for. Their attached garage gives them room to host parties and do DIY projects without leaving the house. There's even space for their two daughters to ride their bicycles.

"I could never go back to a small garage. Our previous home was all brick and about a third of the size, and our utility bills are the same or less," Roberts said. "It wasn't easy, but I'd do it all over again."



The interior of Colleen Roberts' barndominium. [Roberts Farmstead](#)

## A spike in barndominium interest

The term "barndominium" is commonly used to refer to large, steel buildings that combine living quarters and a garage or working area under a single roof. From the outside, they often look like traditional barns. But on the inside, they tend to have an open-plan layout and all the fixings and decorations of a regular home.

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"They began as a practical and affordable solution — taking a prefab structure and

[← HOMEPAGE](#)

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acreage, equipment, and even horses, the idea of having everything under one roof is appealing."

He attributes part of the popularity of barndominiums to HGTV's home-renovation hit "Fixer Upper."

"While the idea of taking a pole barn and converting it into a living space did exist prior to the show, the program helped mainstream the idea of farmhouse living," Gunther said.

Interest in this type of housing started growing when the pandemic hit. [Google](#)

[Trends data](#) shows search interest for the term "barndominium" has been trending upwards since the start of 2020.

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"There has absolutely been a spike in interest around barndominiums, especially since COVID started," Don Howe, who runs the website [Barndominium Life](#), a directory of barndominium-related resources, said.

There are also more listings on Realtor.com that mention "barndominium" in 2022 than there were in 2020, based on data the site's research team sent Insider. For the week of July 9, 1,875 listings mentioned the word "barndominium." In contrast, for the week of July 11, 2020, there were only 774 listings that mentioned the word. Many of these homes are in middle America, and 58% of all the listings from the week of July 9 were in Texas.

Howe said the trend has evolved over time: While some barndominiums are converted from barns, prospective owners are increasingly building them from scratch.

The first time Stacey Lynn Bell and her husband Oliver tried to build a pole barn house out of wood, they didn't manage to complete it. Twenty-five years later, they decided to try again.

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"We've always wanted to do this, so we thought we should go ahead and do it this time," Bell told Insider. This time around, they decided to use steel instead of wood. "My husband said, 'You should just be the builder,' and the next morning I woke up and I became Stacey Lynn the barndo builder."

**Bell sitting on her side porch.** [Our Barndominium Life](#)

Bell took charge as the designer and general contractor, and the couple spent the next year building their metal-framed home.

After sharing photos of their Texas barndominium on social media, people started asking if they designed for others. In 2020, they launched a design business called [Our Barndominium Life](#) through which they offer construction advice and interior-design consulting services.

**The exterior of the Creek House.** [Our Barndominium Life](#)

"COVID hit and people were trying to get a little bit more elbow room, a little bit more space between them," Bell said. Communication companies also started improving high-speed internet and cellphone coverage in rural areas, which enabled people to

work remotely, she said. "You've got this whole movement of people out from the city and into the country."

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She expected most of her clients would be in their fifties or sixties, but found that in practice, much of the market skewed younger.

"I would say, between the 28-to-35 age range, that's probably 25% of our market," Bell said. "It's pretty amazing how many young up-and-coming professionals are really looking to change their lifestyle and have a little bit more land to enjoy the outdoors with their kids."

**The interiors of the Creek House.** [Our Barndominium Life](#)

While some barndominium owners are pandemic converts, for others, the housing style is nothing new.

"For us, I guess we never knew they were trendy, as we both have been around them for 35 years," [Holly Angel](#), an administrative assistant from southern Missouri, told Insider. "As a young girl, my parents' friends had barndominiums, but of course back then they were just referred to as barn houses, and I always loved them."

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**Angel and her family standing outside their barndominium.** [Holly Angel](#)

Angel and her husband sold their home in 2020 to build a three-bedroom, two-bathroom barndominium on family land. They hired subcontractors to build the frame of the house and complete the electrical and plumbing work.

"Everything else we finished out ourselves, including all the trim work, painting, tile work, hanging doors, and light fixtures," Angel said. She estimates they saved

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A collage showing the interiors of Angel's barndominium. [Holly Angel](#)

## Saving money on the outside

Apart from pandemic-driven factors, the increased interest in barndominiums is the result of several trends blending together, George Ratiu, a senior economist and manager of economic research at Realtor.com, told Insider.

"On one hand, buyers have been on the search for more space, especially during the past couple of years," Ratiu said. "On the other hand, soaring home prices have led many Americans toward less expensive alternatives."

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The cost of building a barndominium from scratch, or converting an existing barn into living quarters, is generally lower than that for a new house, Ratiu said.

But with supply-chain problems and labor shortages, this difference might not be as substantial as it used to be, Bell said. "Now with the popularity of barndominiums and what's going on with the pandemic, you get to save money on the outside of the barndominium, but once you get on the inside, it pretty much rivals what you would do in a traditional home," she said.

**The interiors of the Creek House.** [Our Barndominium Life](#)

More than anything, Bell said the housing style is about a shift in how people want to live.

People are looking for a more relaxed way of living, and barndominium life provides space to start a garden and raise chickens, she said. "It's not just about the construction type, it's also about the lifestyle."

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That said, for Bell, part of it is about the materials. "I just think steel is sexy," she said.

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## Local News

# Edmonton's Food Bank tells city to work on poverty to fix food security

*"Giving away food is easy when you compare it with poverty ... Those are the hard conversations we have to have as a society, as a city, and one idea will not fix it all"*

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A volunteer packs hampers at the Edmonton's Food Bank. The annual drive at the Heritage Festival brought in 22,761 kilograms of food but had a goal of 50,000 kilograms. PHOTO BY DAVID BLOOM /Postmedia, file

Handing out free food won't solve poverty or food insecurity and the city needs to use its influence to fix the root causes, according to Edmonton's Food Bank.

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Here are all the rankings in which Canada is now last

Demand for its hamper program hit record heights in June — nearly double the requests from in 2020 — showing the need for the service, the charity said. But in a letter sent to councillors ahead of a committee meeting discussion on food insecurity, the food bank said governments and society need to address the

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is a moral dimension to hunger and we must all be committed to enhancing the health and well-being of others. After all, salvaged food is not a realistic substitute for policies that help vulnerable Canadians enter the workforce, or access adequate income support, and affordable housing that enables low-income people to live with dignity.”

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Tamisan Bencz-Knight, a spokesperson for Edmonton’s Food Bank, told Postmedia more energy needs to be put toward poverty reduction in general because food insecurity is just one symptom. She said helping people with housing, addictions, childcare, transportation, and mental health are key.

“Feeding people is good, we need to keep doing that, but we’re not moving that bar,” she said. “Giving away food is easy when you compare it with poverty ... Those are the hard conversations we have to have as a society, as a city, and one idea will not fix it all.”

Apart from talk on inflationary pressures, councillors didn’t discuss poverty in relation to food security more generally during the meeting. However, some members asked city administration if advocacy on food security is being considered now. No specifics on planned actions were given.

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In June, 30,770 people received a hamper from the food bank, the highest of any June in the charity's history. By comparison, 17,962 people got a hamper in 2020, and just 12,622 in 2012. Food hampers helped 34,867 people last month, the highest ever.

## Shortfall in Alberta supports

Multiple gaps in social services, many under provincial jurisdiction, are identified in the food bank's letter — "inadequate welfare benefits, lack of disability supports, family breakdown and domestic violence, chronic unemployment, lack of subsidized daycare and rent, unreasonable and unsafe housing, addictions, and much much more."

Eric Engler, press secretary for mental health and addictions associate minister Mike Ellis, wrote in an email that the Alberta government is continuing to support the most vulnerable, including with \$6 million to food banks and community groups offering food supplies.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

"We are doing everything we can to help families get the support they need to pay rent, buy food, find and keep appropriate housing and care for their loved ones," he stated. "Overall, Alberta's government has committed more than any other province for affordability with more than \$2 billion dollars in relief that includes fuel tax relief, electricity rebate, affordable childcare, and a natural gas rebate that will begin this fall."

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On addictions, he pointed to the addition of 8,000 new treatment spaces, a recovery facility with 100 beds outside Edmonton, services to reduce harm like the Digital Overdose Response System (DORS) app, and expansion of opioid agonist therapy and covering the costs of the injectable opioid treatment drug Sublocade.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW

Advocates have called for the province to make harm-reduction services more accessible. In May, 118 drug poisoning deaths were reported in Alberta, well above pre-pandemic levels.

While it doesn't offer specific policy changes, Edmonton's Food Bank urged city council to review recommendations by Food Banks of Canada in its recent Hunger Count report. Suggestions (some issues are federal) included new supports for renters with low incomes, making affordable housing available quicker, expanding support for low-wage and underemployed workers, minimum income pilot programs, and more support for low-income single adults.

Results of a survey in Edmonton's Food Bank's 2021 report found most users needed between \$200 and \$600 more a month to reduce reliance on its services. Its survey found many users aren't aware of or weren't using some City of Edmonton programs like the free leisure pass (around 75 per cent) and the low-income bus pass (around 70 per cent).

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