

## Guelph Wellington Affordable Housing Symposium | Phase 2

November 21, 2019

1-4 p.m.

Community Living Guelph Wellington

As a follow-up to the two-day Affordable Housing Symposium in late September, Habitat for Humanity Wellington Dufferin Guelph held a half-day action-oriented session with 46 community members, representing local government, developers, building industry, social agencies and affordable housing advocates in attendance.

Steve Howard, CEO of Habitat for Humanity WDG, welcomed participants, provided a recap of the September Symposium, and identified the purpose of the afternoon session – to bring new models of cooperation forward that will offer solutions to the housing spectrum. Steve's slides are available [here](#).

The interactive part of the session was facilitated by Dr. Rebecca Sutherns of Sage Solutions and opened with this question:

### If you had to house 5,000 people on low to modest income by 2030, what would you do/need?

- Inclusionary zoning:
  - 15% supportive housing, 15% RGI, 15% affordable, 55 regular (incentive)
  - Every 10 give back 1
  - Press the province to bring this back as a tool
- Any municipal build includes affordable housing
- Co-living/Home sharing – supported by dedicated agency
- More senior assisted housing
- Funding for secondary suite renos – how-to/in-a-box
- Kitchener policy change?
- Franchise it
- Improve RGI housing conditions so people stay
- Optimize existing space to free up housing space in creative ways
- Where would we find 400-500 acres to build enough for this? Mount Forest? Then pay for better transportation.
- Build mixed neighbourhoods, not ghettos

## Initial recommendations re: governance structure, from the nine tables present:

- Core team with expertise/coordinator for land, money, social services, construction, government
- Single group for the full continuum is an equity issue, as there is more need at one end. Invite experts into the room to talk to everyone doing projects, when needed.
- Multi-year approach with projects prioritized based on need. Purposeful meetings with experts we can all draw on when needed. Trust and accountability for decision-making processes.
- Community Land Trust – independent, objective – beware of vested interests. Include end users. Bring people in as needed.
- We like the model as proposed initially for a central group. Add the owners of existing stock. Be sure it has strong linkages with the Alliance to gauge/meet need. Build a Strategic Plan for coordination across multiple populations. When you stem the tide it can change the need. (e.g. youth housing with F&CS and Wyndham House)
- Whole continuum yes, but the deepest need it at the homeless end. One leader to coordinate various parts and roles. A person who really “gets it” – politics, development, social issues. Include end user input.
- Charity model does not work – build on everyone’s strengths. Ask all parties what they have and what they need. This is a health conversation, not just housing. Explore home sharing – create a team just for this. Community bonds, marketed to foreign investors – make it “juicy” to invest in affordable housing.
- Most immediate benefit is to address homelessness – impact is lighter at the other end of the spectrum. Pull together data, leadership, a “doing arm” that can jump at opportunities with money, construction and management.
- Treat it like an organization. Fund it. Collaboration attractive money. Challenge of individual mandates and budgets. Build a cohesive model across support levels that includes reciprocity. Do joint ventures – this organization should not be just about coordination.

## Who should be involved and give leadership to this? What skills are needed?

- For a Land Trust, it’s a small group of well-connected people with broad knowledge, strong negotiation skills and “fire in the belly!”
- Shared principles first, then various practical skills (e.g. law, building, community needs etc.), led by a champion with a big personality

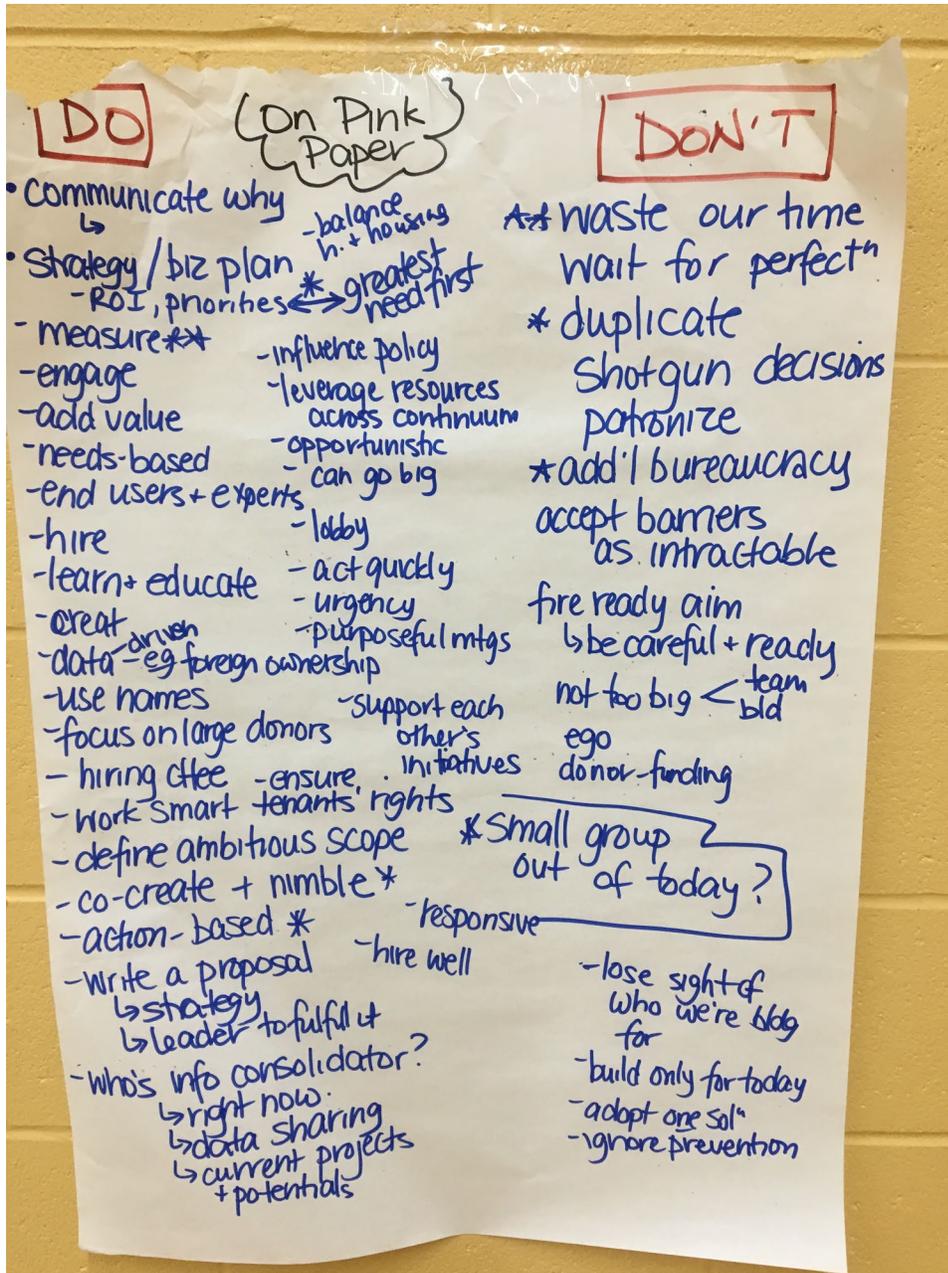
- Multiple roles: developers, architects, CMHC, City, County, a fundraiser, financier, those needing housing, housing providers across the spectrum
- Core committee that is local, neutral, has seen success elsewhere and can communicate well.
- Visionary person and leadership team with a variety of skills and connections including with community bonds and intersectionality of need
- A really good gatekeeper. Only meet when needed, with the right people at the right time, so that we honour people's time.
- A strong leader who can build a building, with "industry translators" as needed. The direction of the group will determine specifically who is needed. Perhaps more from the development world than social services?
- A small steering committee to process these ideas.
- Funded, not in people's spare time. Someone who becomes "the face."

### How would this be resourced?

- A paid leader at first, then self-funded eventually. TCG model of various contributions during start-up, plus money for research.
- One person – stakeholders contribute. An unbiased do-er. 10C?
- TCG model – everyone puts skin in the game – including City/County. Faster-moving than grants. Could be a fee-for-service hire.
- Independent group – needs staff. Government funded at first, self-sufficient eventually.
- Paid position with community leadership support to open doors for them. Secondment? CMHC Innovation Fund?
- Hire the "driver" – stakeholders contribute.
- Dedicated person for launch – to develop the model. Inventory capacity within agencies. Shift money to the front end – "pay now or pay later." The resources are there. "Make the rich pay!"
- Full-time staff – five people over two years? Look to internal resources. Paid start-up before first building project.

## What should we do first and for sure? Not do?

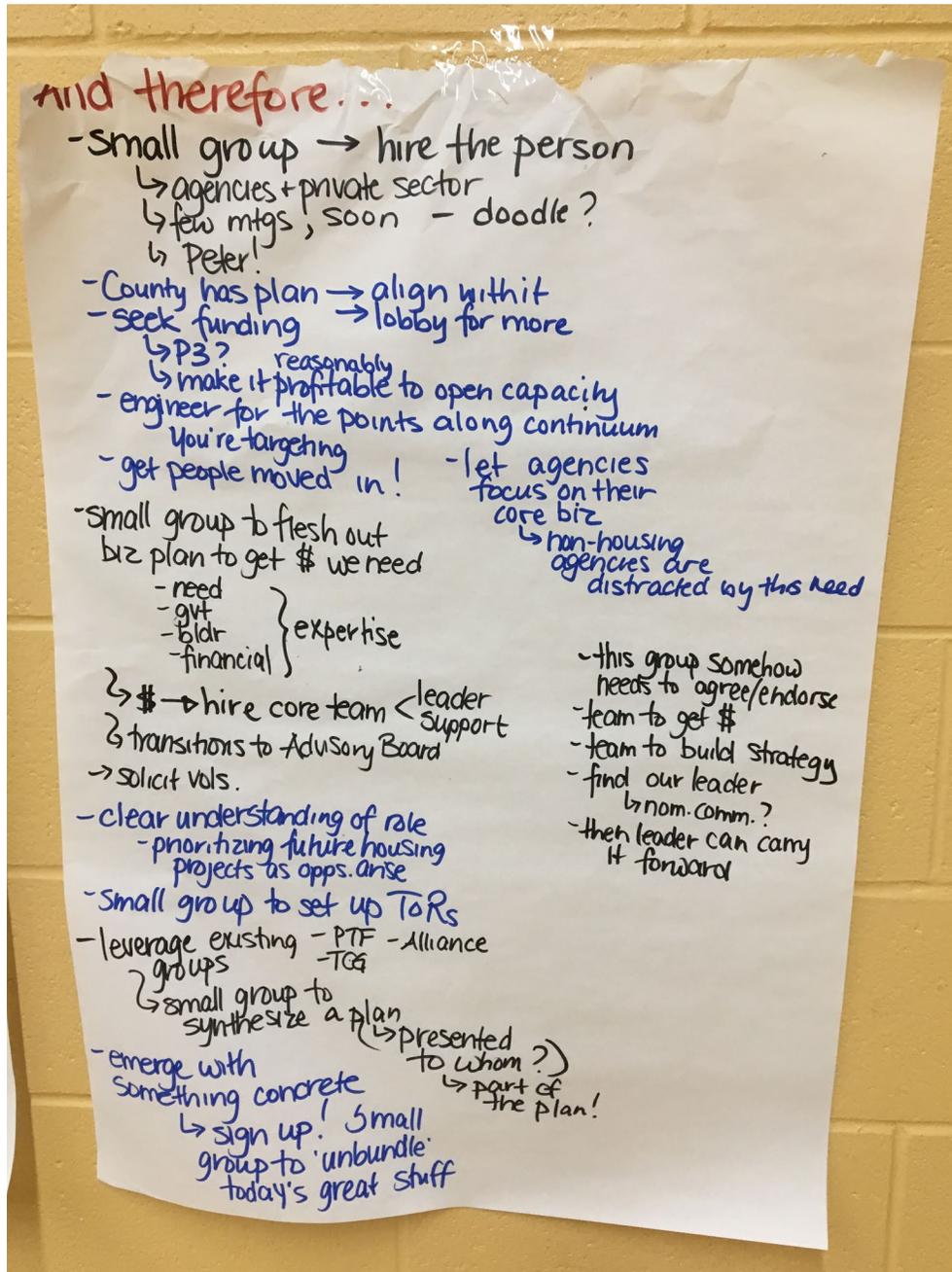
This conversation was more 'rapid fire' style – highlights were captured in this photo and in the detailed notes in the section that follows.



## “Put the Puzzle Together”

What options would you recommend and what's the concrete next step as we leave?

The rough notes from this question are shown here, with detailed individual and table notes below.



- Act quickly, with an appropriate sense of urgency
- Need full support of leaders who open doors for this new role
- Small group to develop next steps (4)
  - Just 1 or 2 meetings
  - Max. 7 people (Doodle poll? Email to solicit volunteers? EDs?)
  - Trusted group
  - To galvanize interest and collect money – put a call out to the community to support the project by donating what they can
  - To flesh out business plan (2)
  - To get the project manager hired (4)
  - Decide who will oversee this role (3)
  - Set Terms of Reference
  - These people may or may not be part of the ultimate action group – responsible for creation period (2) -- becomes advisory board, or appoints one
  - Or fund consultant to do the first few steps – buy transitional capacity (2) – head hunter?
  - Develop a skills/content expertise matrix
  - Utilize existing Housing Alliance with more strategic members – action committee of Alliance (2)
- Develop strategy with outcomes, targets, ROI, priorities
- Funded proportionately between agencies and investors and participating groups (TCG model) – (3)
  - Less from non-profits – already taxed
  - Cross-sector benefits to ‘tap’ for money
  - Ask City (4), County (5), Community Foundation
  - LHIN, Ministry
  - Find willing partners, sponsors
  - Investment from local employers
  - Tithe?
  - Community bonds
  - Move from charity model to active profit/business recovery
  - Focus on a couple of large donors
  - Take resources from back end to front end
  - CMHC Innovation Fund
- Project manager/Activator (8)
  - Contractor/fee for service (might be 2-3 people) – RFP? Secondment? (3)
  - Full-time, dedicated, funded (6) – with work space (3)
  - Give structure to what the action committee will look like
  - Crafting the message
  - Developing models
  - Be clear if role is advice/coordination or action/joint ventures. Assist proponents in getting houses built (2)

- Non-biased (3)
- Information consolidator
- Identify agencies involved, their level of commitment and concerns
- Spot opportunities
- Central resource/facilitator – guide those who have ideas and questions. Actual consulting/contacting.
- Endorsed by larger group and government
- Can support diverse projects across the spectrum (2)
- Do-er (2)
- Strong communicator with people skills (2)
- Community builder
- Inclusive, empathetic humble
- Understanding of intersectionality
- Understands finance, ROI, bonds (3)
- Needs and project-based – pulled the right people together at the right time
- Build an independent core group
- City and County involvement (depending on which end of the spectrum)
- Gatekeeper to pull together expertise
- Passionate leader
  - Fire in the belly
  - Visionary
  - Innovator
- Someone from development that has been in the non-profit sector; enough tech skills with supportive housing content (2)
- Principled, trustworthy (3)
- Personality
- Leverage experts and residents across the spectrum to inform projects
- Be opportunistic, nimble, risk-taking
- Debunking myths
- Think about relationships, human capital
- Negotiator/lobbyist/mediator (2)
- Well connected (4)
- Relational (2)
- Maybe a group like 10C?
- Quarterback
- Local knowledge, finger on the pulse (2)
- Proven success
- Centralized data storage and sharing – identify current projects and partnerships
- Allow time for learning, getting to know the partners
- Education piece re where housing subsidies re going – shortfall in development charges = \$8 million/year
- Rep from each sector/Varying expertise (9)

- Involve planners (2)/geographers who look at the socioeconomic conditions of existing community and potential impacts to community. Health, not just housing
- Industry “translators”
- Strategic thinkers
- Collaborators
- Small enough to be nimble (3)
- Action-based
- Find root causes
- Landlords/owners of existing stock (that voice is missing) (2)
- Legal
- Chamber of Commerce
- Habitat – staff or board member
- Hope House
- Private donors/investors
- Community Land Trust? (2)
- Architect
- CMHC
- Health
- Developers
- Data manager; manager of Community Land Trust; CFO, Social Services liaison; City/County leaders and planners
- Land; money; social services; construction; government
- End users/ Lived experience (3)
- Newcomers
- Pull in specialists for a pipeline of prioritized projects
- Enough front line service agencies to influence/inform priorities
- Multiple components in concert – collaborative effort easier to gather/solve
  - Research and data
  - Knowledge of the need, market, bottlenecks
  - Coordinated leadership
  - A strategy with measurable outcomes
  - Advocacy/policy influence – various orders of government – and political analysis (5)
  - A “doing arm” – financing, building, management
  - Space for complexity and creativity
- Focus
  - A concerted effort on increasing subsidized and supportive housing, addressing homelessness (2) – where we can have the most impact/influence
  - Unique needs of each area
  - Existing resources and new builds
- Resource needs

- Salary and benefits (2)
- Research
- Won't know what's needed until you have the structures in place
- Money for start-up – after that, position should be self-funding from a % of projects – cost recovery (2)
- Alliance (community need) ----- Action (bricks and mortar) -- complementary (4)
  - Alliance is leader – Action committee gets things built for them
- Prioritization
  - From a community lens
  - Based on need – start with greatest need first (2)
  - Pay attention to risk
  - Equitable approach
  - Individuals, with whole community's wellbeing first and foremost
  - Balance the influencer/leveraging community
  - “We don't need to worry about people who can purchase houses”
  - Rights of tenants are protected
  - Sort out how to focus on homeless population
  - Alliance should set priorities
- Running parallel projects (e.g. military model, post WWII)
- Research
  - Understand what is causing displacement
  - Informed by outside municipalities that are having a positive impact on housing solutions
  - Need to understand the issues – that there are external pushes on our housing market
  - Address gaps – vacant investment properties; money laundering; secondary market, foreign ownership
  - Demand data from government
  - Analyze data we already have
- Leadership must be determined by mission, vision, values, strategic goals
- Can't be 'side of the desk' work – sustainable funding
- Is leadership group like a “cabinet”?
- We can go big
- One team gets funding for a strategy and another team builds the strategy OR One team is a nominating committee to pick a leader, then the leader gets funding and builds a team, overseen by another team.
- Define/co-create the scope, with ambition
- Create a proposal that goes out to multiple stakeholders to fund an affordable housing strategy. Then get a leader to deliver the plan
- Habitat helps convene

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- Needs accountability in decision-making processes and criteria (2)
- Leverage existing groups to review this (PTF; Alliance)
- Communicate key messages, financial benefits
- Declare an emergency
- Needs to be a health and housing conversation
- Make targets public
- Support each other's initiatives
- Remember the County

### Goal

- Mixed housing
- Several options
- Concurrent projects

### Don't do

- Don't get bogged down in talk or bureaucracy
- Don't accept that barriers are intractable/immovable
- Don't get hung up in grants
- Don't reinvent the wheel, duplicate (3)
- No standing/pointless meetings (4) or additional bureaucracy (2)
- Don't apply a universal approach
- Don't wait for a perfect solution
- Avoid ego
- Not fire-ready-aim – do our homework (2)
- Avoid adding to current workload
- Don't patronize vulnerable people
- Committee -- not too big
- Don't build for today
- No single solution
- Don't start big
- Don't ignore preventative steps (e.g. in schools)

## Who will carry this forward for now?

The following people put their names forward to get the ball rolling:

Name	Affiliation
Paul Barson	County of Wellington
Stacy Cooper	RONA
Danna Evans	City of Guelph
Peter Forde	community member
Sarah Haanstra	Toward Common Ground
Holly Hendershot	Habitat WDG
Gail Hoekstra	Drop in Centre - Guelph and Wellington
Steve Howard	Habitat WDG
Peter Kastner	Habitat WDG
Jane Londerville	Guelph Wellington Housing Committee
Brian McPherson	Community member
Domenica McPherson	Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
Sheila Markle	Kindle Communities; Family & Children Services GW
Jim Marshall	Blue Valley Construction
Mark Poste	County of Wellington
Denise Renaud	community member
Britney Rodgers	Legal Clinic of Guelph and Wellington County
Chris Willard	Guelph Community Foundation