



LIVE GREY

DISCUSSION PAPER

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INTRODUCTION



Live Grey captures some of the key areas that influence living standards and quality of life in Grey County. There are many factors that can lead to someone feeling included, healthy, culturally interested and supported by their community. We want to ensure basic needs of residents are addressed to make Grey County a desirable place to live.

Residents of the County identified the importance for healthy communities. They are keen to see supportive built infrastructure, services and access to information that will inform them to make healthier life choices.

There were also several comments regarding the needs of aging populations, youth and Indigenous groups. For aging groups, there are key focus areas that typically assist in creating accessible environments. The County intends to look at policies that deal with outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation and housing. We also want to promote spaces that are appealing for youth to keep them involved in the community. There is need to explore ways to increase job opportunities and promote the County as a desirable place to live. County planning staff should also recognize and value our local history and culture, including the traditional uses of land by Indigenous communities. Indigenous groups need to be included in discussions where they may be impacted by a decision. We want to promote the needs and wants of all members within the County as best we can.

INTRODUCTION



Understanding ever changing housing needs for the area was viewed as important by the community. Demographic trends are shifting, with aging populations identifying as a larger percentage of the overall population. Community members are interested in seeing variety in housing stock, such as allowing for smaller, more experimental housing types (i.e. tiny houses). It is also critical to provide affordable housing throughout the County.

As well, recognizing and protecting culture within the County can influence the appeal of an area. Our goal is to support the arts and cultural growth in the area by creating accommodating policies that allow for unique uses of space.

Based on comments we heard from community members, we have broken down the topic into four subthemes:

1. Healthy Communities
2. Community Inclusion
3. Housing
4. Culture

INTRODUCTION



As part of the research process, the County obtained the expertise from university students, consultants and other professionals to help us understand trends in the area. Many reports were created for the County, but also for other government bodies (e.g. Grey Bruce Health Unit). The province has also updated a number of their policies and some are applicable for this discussion paper. Below are a few of the reports reviewed for Live Grey:

1. Provincial Policy Statement 2014
2. Growth Management Strategy Update 2015
3. Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census Statistics Canada
4. Community Foundation Grey Bruce Vital Signs 2016
5. Grey County Tourism Destination Development Action Plan 2016
6. County of Grey Housing and Homelessness 10 year Plan 2014-2024
7. Age-friendly Community Study 2017
8. Grey County Corporate Strategic Plan 2017-2019
9. Grey County Housing Data 2015 Update
10. Planning Act Changes 2015
11. Healthy Rural Communities Tool Kit 2015
12. Healthy Kids Community Challenge South East Grey & Friends 2016
13. Building Health Communities Together- An Alignment Strategy 2016
14. Grey County Communication Strategy 2016-2019

The following sections provide a more in-depth discussion for each of the four subthemes identified under Live Grey.





HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

More than half of the world’s population lives in urban areas. Some of the major draws to ‘city life’ are career opportunities, access to healthcare, social outlets and better living standards. Big city living is something populations in Grey County have avoided or have otherwise not had the opportunity to experience. As one resident stated during the Age-Friendly Communities Study, residents in Grey County enjoy “the opportunity to live in a rural setting where people know each other. There is fresh water and air and space to breathe away from the city and you can get involved with community and know your neighbours,” (anonymous, age 36-55, pg.26 age-friendly report U of Guelph).

Of Grey County’s total population, 53% live in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2016). Rural areas are defined as small towns/villages populated with fewer than 1,000 people, agricultural lands and remote and wilderness areas (Statistics Canada, 2015). The remaining 47% of the population are living in small population centres between 1,000 and 29,999 people.

Our residents have chosen to live here for a reason and we want to ensure optimal health and living standards. However, statistics prove that this aim can be difficult to achieve in rural areas. Many studies show that rural populations tend to have lower overall rates of health (Pong, 2016). Because of the significant rural population and small urban settlements in Grey County, there are concerns of health and wellbeing.



Grey Bruce Health Unit indicators were selected to highlight some of the overall health trends in the area from 2011-2014.

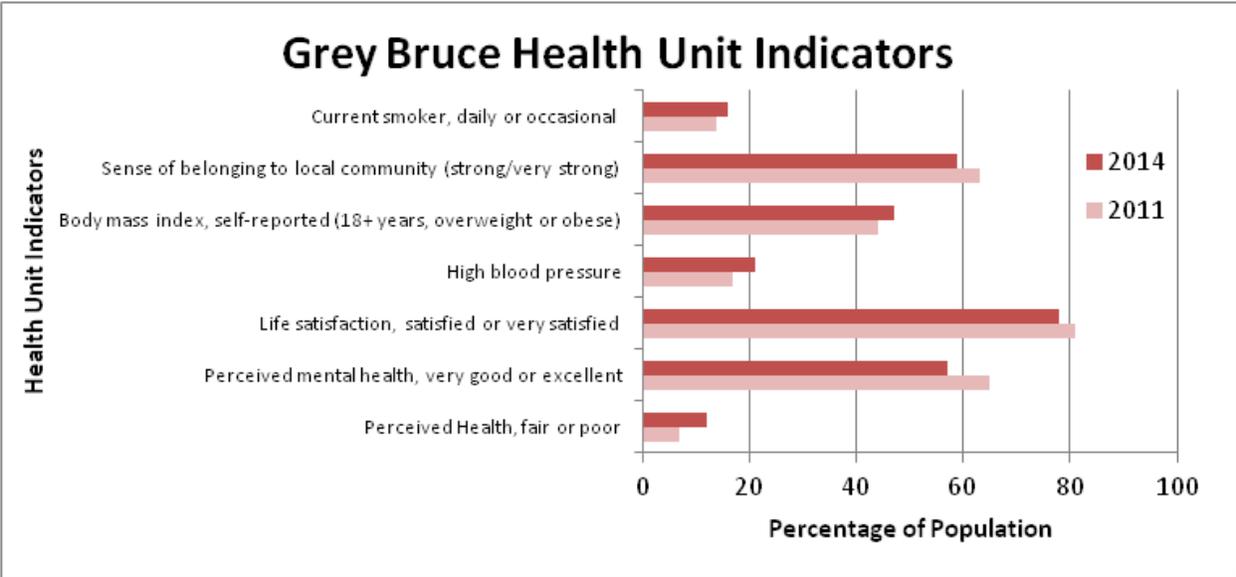


Figure 1: Grey Bruce Health Unit Indicators

Source: Statistics Canada, 2014

A comparison of the health unit indicators was made with national statistics. The following three indicators increased on the County and National level from 2011 to 2014:

- perceived health, fair or poor
- high blood pressure
- body mass index, self-reported, adult (18 years and over), overweight or obese

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

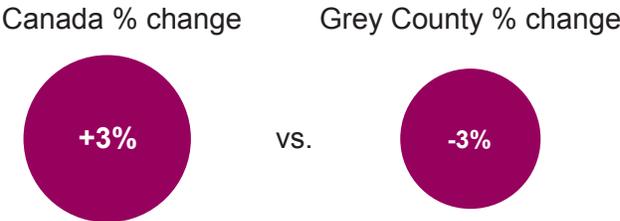


The remaining four indicators below show significant differences in trend patterns from the County vs. National level over the same time frame.

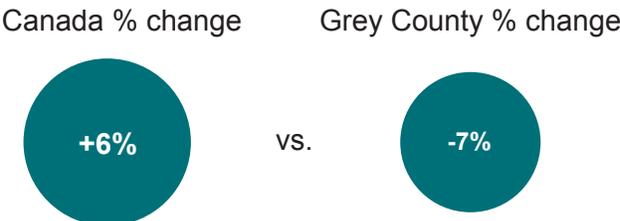
PERCEIVED MENTAL HEALTH, VERY GOOD OR EXCELLENT (2011-2014)



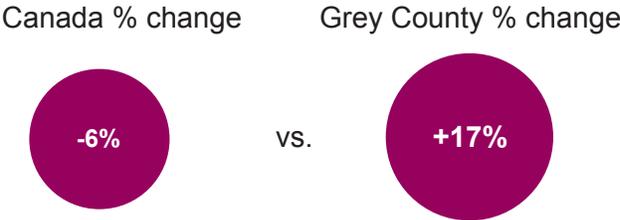
LIFE SATISFACTION, SATISFIED OR VERY SATISFIED (2011-2014)



SENSE OF BELONGING TO LOCAL COMMUNITY, SOMEWHAT STRONG OR VERY STRONG (2011-2014)



CURRENT SMOKE, DAILY OR OCCASIONAL (2011-2014)



HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



Further health information was found in the Vital Signs report produced by Community Foundation Grey Bruce. This Community Foundation was founded in 1994 and looks to promote community wellbeing by identifying community issues and granting funds to non-profit organizations that provide necessary initiatives and services.

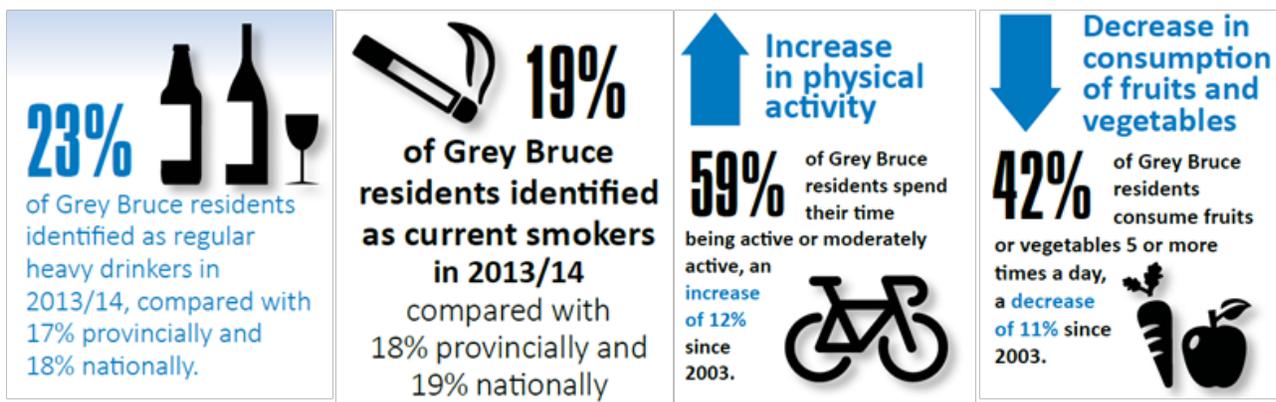


Figure 2: Grey Bruce Vital Health Signs

Source: Community Foundation Grey Bruce Vital Signs Report 2016

As part of the Grey County Official Plan update we need to have more strict language addressing healthy community needs. There are a number of policy changes that can improve and promote healthy initiatives. For instance, we can look at including policies that encourage active transportation (walking and cycling) and trail connectivity. We should also be looking at how we can clearly identify the role of community parks and recreation in our communities. There are also policy gaps that would speak to urban agriculture, food systems planning and food security. We want to provide Grey County residents the opportunity to buy local food and as well as the education and skills to grow their own produce. A number of these policy areas are explored further in three of our other discussion papers: Move Grey, Cultivate Grey and Natural Grey.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

How can Grey County become more inclusive? What are the needs of populations that are typically less engaged in the community? We want to create an environment where everyone feels connected in their community. Residents of Grey County should feel supported to live, work, shop and play, regardless of their age and ethnicity.

There are two significant population trends in Grey County. First, the population is aging and second, there is significant out-migration of youth. Furthermore, there are several Indigenous groups that play an important role within the County.

Population aging is not something that is unique to the County. This phenomenon is occurring nationally. In Canada, 2016 was the first year that there were more seniors (5.9 million) than children 14 years of age and younger (5.8 million). Aging populations require modified services to ensure the continuation of active living. This is going to have important implications for planning in Grey County (Hemson, 2015). Lower numbers of children and the outmigration of youth will continue to impact the County. More recently, the County has experienced a few school closures and amalgamations because of this shift in population.

To support this population, many research, government and professional groups have explored ideas for accessible outdoor spaces and building design, transportation, and housing. They would also like to encourage respect and social inclusion, social participation, communication, civic participation, employment opportunities and community support and health services. We want aging populations to feel supported by their community so they can happily age and access their required needs.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Below is a figure highlighting the most recent population change in Grey County. As of 2016, Grey County had 22,630 residents 65+ compared to only 13,890 people 0-14 years of age.

Population change by broad age groups, Grey 2006 to 2016

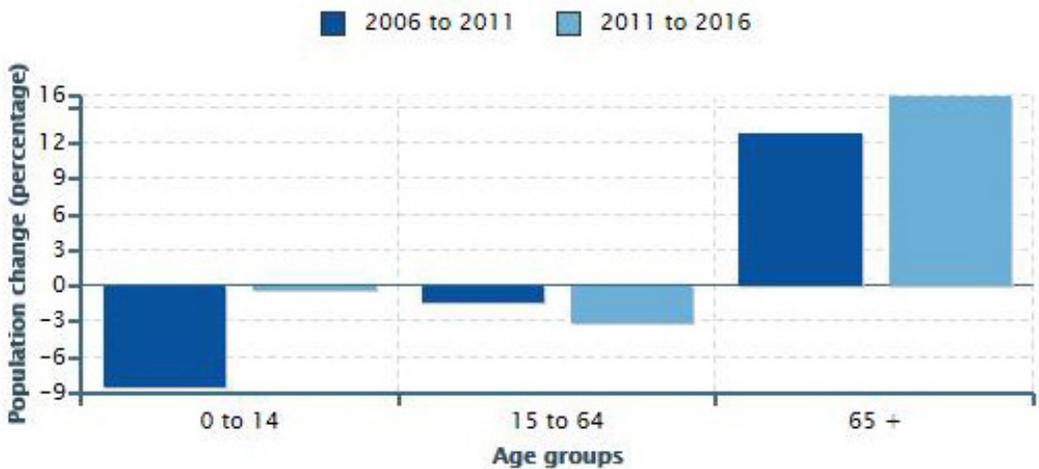


Figure 3: Population change by broad age groups, Grey County, 2006 to 2016
 Source: Statistics Canada, 2017, Focus on Geography Series, 2016 Census.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Out-migration of youth is also quite common in rural areas. Youth feel pressure to relocate to larger urban centres for education and employment purposes. Figure 4 illustrates the pronounced reduction in populations aged 10-19 and 40-49 from 2006-2016. There are several scenarios that could explain why these two population groups show the greatest decline. Those aged 40-49 could possibly be parents for those aged 10-19. Relocating could either be driven by the youth or the parent. Parents may be seeking further advancement in their careers or simply a change of career. Or they could be relocating to provide further opportunities for their kids. Youth may be involved in sports or other extra-curricular activities that require specialized facilities.

Engaging youth and providing opportunities to showcase their skills is critical for generating long-term interest in the County as a place to live and raise a family. Promoting job opportunities within Grey, and youth entrepreneurship, will be a crucial factor in trying to retain our youth populations. We also need to look at attracting young newcomers to the area to generate growth. It is important to have supports and facilities (i.e. healthcare, educational, recreational, and cultural) offered by the County and lower-tier municipalities that make this area a desirable place to invest.

Grey County realizes the need to create economic opportunities for all ages to provide a sustainable quality of life. How can we fuel creative ways to educate our youth? We want them to thrive in this environment and to not feel limited by employment opportunities that exist. A resident of the County quoted they would like to see more "... jobs to keep our youth here or come back to," (Anonymous, age 65+).



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Connecting youth to affordable recreational and extra-curricular activities is also important. Rural areas tend to have more restrictive transportation barriers. Youth may not have access to a vehicle or may not be old enough to drive. The Healthy Kids Challenge policy report (2016) reiterated the importance of having supportive policies that promote walking, cycling and trail development. Pedestrian trails and cycling routes can link community facilities and major parks and open spaces.

Offering active transportation infrastructure connecting to community recreation centres may improve accessibility and use among youth. A facility such as the new YMCA in Owen Sound plays an important role in supporting youth networks. These facilities offer recreational programming, sports competitions and a safe place for youth to hang out.

Community hubs and mentorship/apprenticeship programs are also critical supports for youth. A community hub can be described as a place where people stay active and are engaged in learning activities. These spaces are intended to enhance individual health, happiness and personal achievement. LaunchPad in Hanover is an example of an activity and technology centre for young people aged 12-18 years. Some of the sessions provided are: cooking, baking, coding, engine repair, sewing skills, job hunting and yoga. The County needs to explore policies that would encourage the creation of these spaces.



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

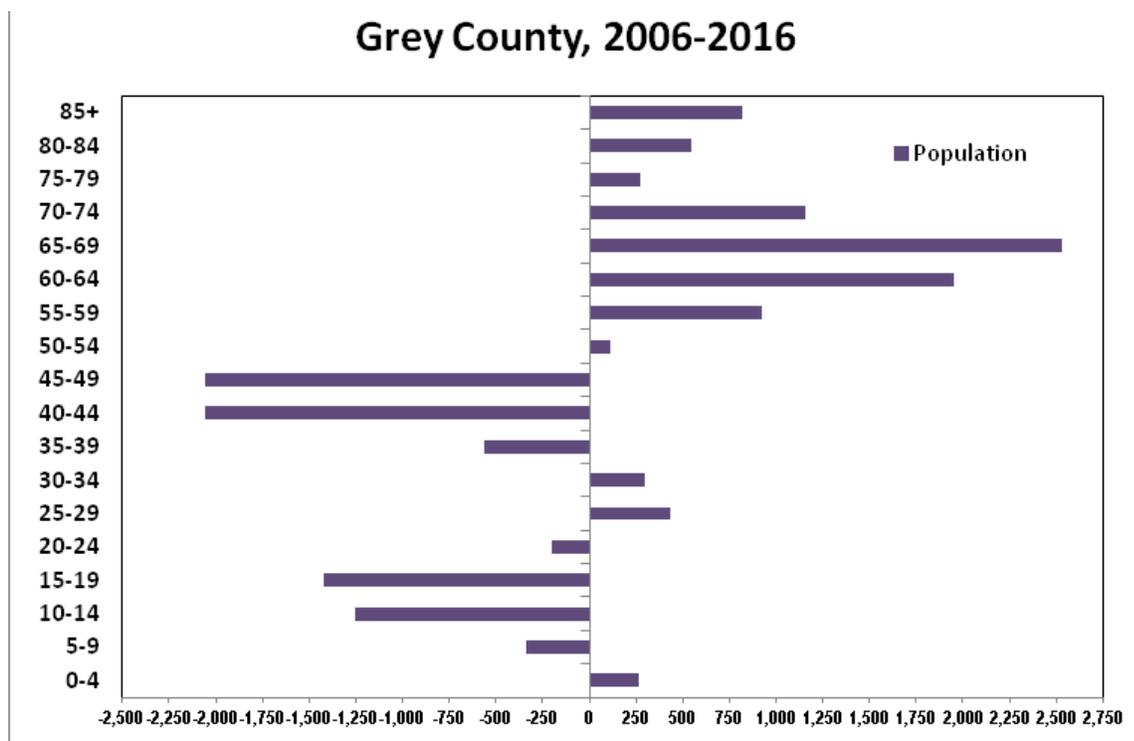


Figure 4: Historical Migrant Age Structure, Grey County, 2006-2016

Source: Statistics Canada 2006, 2011, & 2016 Census



COMMUNITY INCLUSION

Within Grey County there are several Indigenous populations that have traditional territory: Six Nations of the Grand River, Metis Nation of Ontario, Historic Saugeen Metis and Saugeen Ojibway Nation. These groups are circulated on planning applications to receive input. Occasionally, communications are also sent to Huron Wendat Nation, Wyandotte Nation and Beausoleil First Nation Administration.

Many Canadian Indigenous Peoples have historically been subject to a disruptive past. Because of this, these groups can be skeptical about participating in state-driven planning processes because they have been marginalized and silenced before (Berke et al. 2002). Grey County wants to work towards reducing communication barriers and enhance cultural understanding among this population. We need to be respectful that Indigenous communities prefer to problem solve and mediate internally using their own processes, and in their own time (Matunga, 2013). In working through these processes, we also need to be mindful of legislation and policies that set communication standards and timelines for the planning process.

As part of Recolour Grey, we will engage Indigenous communities in the County to seek their input on all five of our discussion papers. We want to identify what their policy interests are and in-turn what they would like to see included in our official plan.



HOUSING

Precarious living situations can lead to enormous stress on individuals. They are often required to work longer hours, sacrifice living essentials such as adequate food, heating, medication, education and travel longer distances for work or services. Affordable housing and addressing homelessness are major considerations in providing community health, economic vitality and reducing public costs on health care and emergency services.

Each city and municipality has its own unique challenges when it comes to addressing homelessness and housing affordability. Some areas may experience higher poverty rates, job opportunities may be limited and there may not be adequate facilities to assist with mental and physical health. As a result, it may be difficult finding a “one size fits all” solution for homelessness and affordable housing.

This year (2017) in Toronto and the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH), housing prices have reached an all-time high. The Ontario Government released 16 measures that would improve affordable housing supply and generally bring stability to the real estate market. Examples of a few measures include:

1. Expanding rent control (to include buildings built after 1991) so that all rental units will be limited to annual rent increases according to Ontario’s inflation-based guidelines (currently set at 1.5%).
2. Introducing a targeted \$125-million, five-year program to encourage construction of new rental apartment buildings by rebating a portion of development charges.
3. Implementing a 15% non-resident speculation tax for real estate purchased by anyone who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Ontario.



HOUSING

Grey County is located a few hours northwest of the GGH and is not directly implicated by these policies. Development growth and housing prices in the County have generally not been as hot as GGH rates. Although, some may speculate that because housing is perceived as more affordable in the region, this may attract investors. High development rates and housing prices in the Town of the Blue Mountains could be evidence of this already happening and recent growth interest in Southgate (Dundalk), Owen Sound and Grey Highlands.

Furthermore, home sales broke an all-time record high in May 2017, according to the Realtors Association of Grey Bruce Owen Sound. Sales activity rose 16.3% compared to May 2016. The average sale price of homes sold in May 2017 was \$295,890, up 17.6% from the previous year's statistics. And the total number of active residential listings was the lowest overall supply since the late 1980s. It will be important to keep an eye on changes to the housing market to better inform policy decisions.

Overall aging trends in Grey County are influencing housing demand and supply. Current (2017) and anticipated senior housing trends indicate there is growing interest for lifestyle communities. Seniors are looking to downsize and reduce home ownership responsibilities while maintaining a level of independence. Staff at Grey County along with hired consultants have researched the current housing climate and identified trends that exist.



ARE HOUSING AND RENTAL UNITS AFFORDABLE IN GREY COUNTY?

Housing affordability defined by the Provincial Policy Statement (a guiding document for planners) states the costs for maintaining and running a home should not exceed 30% of gross annual household income for households with income levels in the lowest 60%.

According to the Housing and Homelessness 10 year Plan 2014-2024, key findings were:

- Grey County has an aging rental housing stock.
- More than 3,300 households are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs and 73% of these households are renters.
- Household incomes are below the Ontario average, especially for renters.
- There is a lack of mixed dwelling types of housing especially in rural areas.
- The number of people accessing homelessness services is increasing.

Figure 5 illustrates housing satisfaction rates from a sample population in Grey County. These findings were compiled into a report focusing on age-friendly planning conducted by University of Guelph students (2017). Findings indicate that 38% of survey respondents were dissatisfied with the housing options in Grey County. Seemingly, only 18% were pleased with the housing options in the area, whereas 37% were neutral. Also of note, there were only 150 Grey County residents that completed the survey. As a result, this may not represent the feelings of the broader County population. Respondents varied in age, with the most sizeable response rate from those 65+ followed by those aged 56-65, 36-55 and 18 or younger.

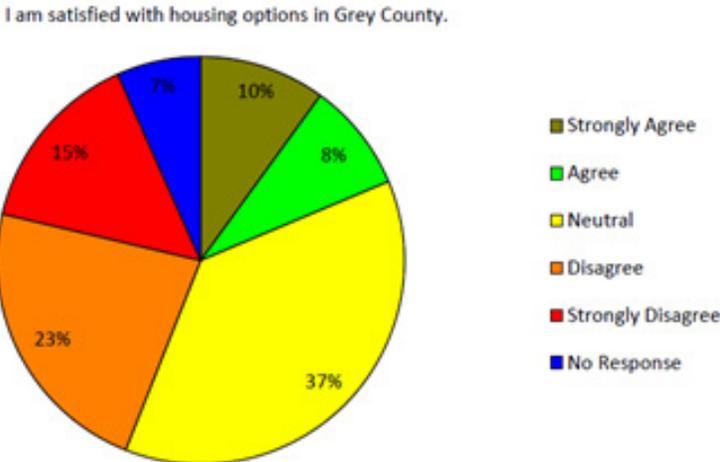


Figure 5: Satisfaction with Housing Options Source: U of Guelph Age-friendly Study 2017

HOUSING



Furthermore, according to annual statistics provided by the Realtors of Grey Bruce Owen Sound and the Southern Georgian Bay Association of Realtors, average housing prices within the County have increased by 7% from 2015 to 2016. Chatsworth experienced the highest growth at 22%, followed by West Grey at 12%, and Georgian Bluffs at 10%. The Town of the Blue Mountains has considerably higher housing prices compared to all other municipalities in the County. There, houses on average are sold for \$300,000 more than all other municipalities. Average housing price in Grey County increased from \$314,771 in 2015 to \$335,255 in 2016.

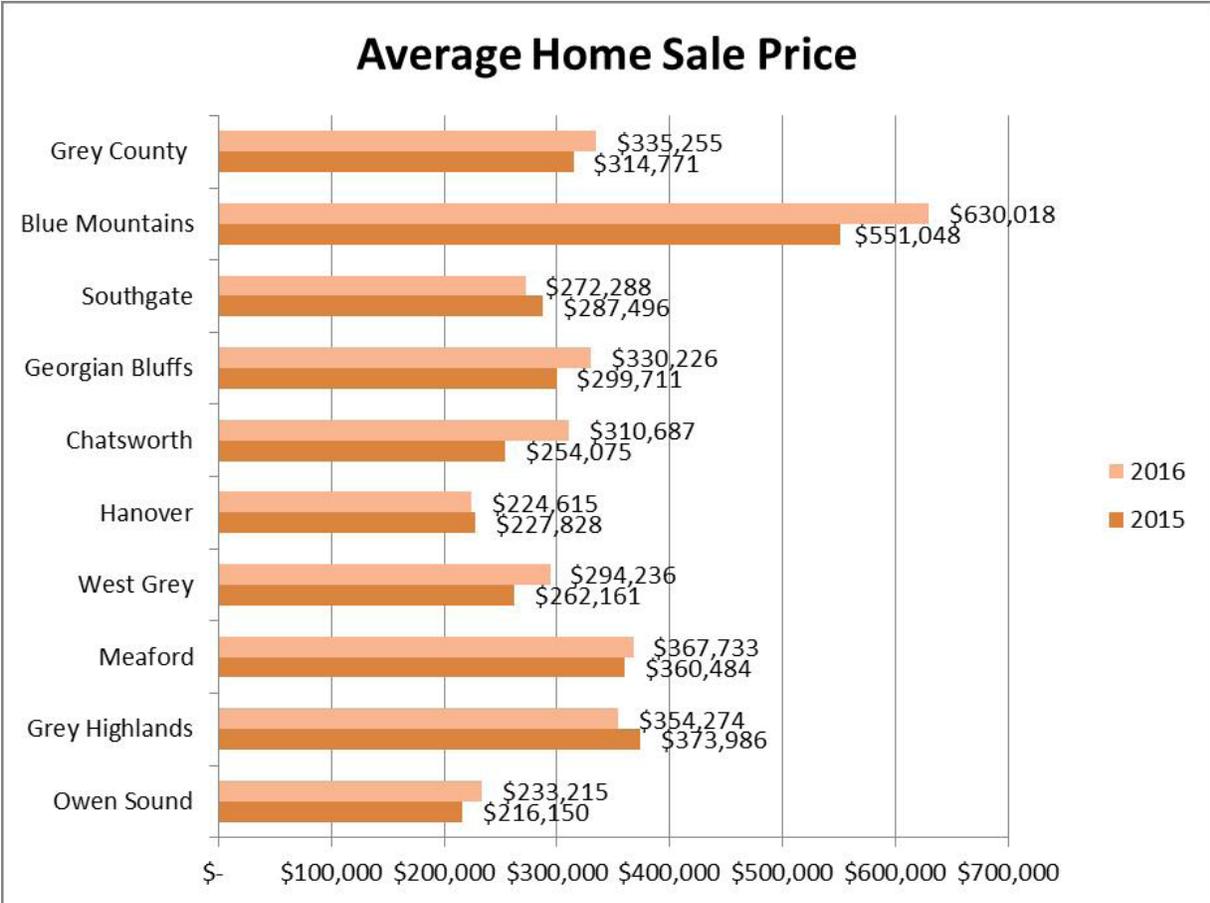


Figure 6: Average Home Sale Price 2015 & 2016

Source: Realtors of Grey Bruce Owen Sound & Southern Georgian Bay Association of REALTORS

HOUSING



SHS Consulting conducted a study in 2015 illustrating Grey County housing trends. As part of the report, housing purchase price affordability was calculated by taking into account total household income levels. They estimated 2015 income levels using 2010-2015 Ontario inflation rates. Affordable purchase price was based on purchasing power of incomes in the lowest 60% with a 10% down payment, 25-year amortization period and 4.06% interest rate.

Figure 7 shows average housing sale prices in Meaford, Grey Highlands and The Town of Blue Mountains exceed affordability rates. This means home ownership is less accessible. In the remaining six municipalities housing seems to be fairly affordable because the average housing sale price is lower than the affordability rate.

Although, it is important to keep in mind that there may be housing closer to the higher end of the affordability threshold, suggesting households with incomes falling within the lower percentiles would still not be able to afford homeownership without spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs (SHS Consulting, 2015).

MUNICIPALITY	AFFORDABILITY RATE 2015	AVERAGE SALE PRICE 2015	DIFFERENCE
Owen Sound	\$268,134	\$216,150	\$51,984
Grey Highlands	\$336,217	\$373,986	-\$37,769
Meaford	\$344,656	\$360,484	-\$15,828
West Grey	\$317,470	\$262,161	\$55,309
Hanover	\$259,301	\$227,828	\$31,473
Chatsworth	\$323,423	\$254,075	\$69,348
Georgian Bluffs	\$365,122	\$299,711	\$65,411
Southgate	\$301,804	\$287,496	\$14,308
Blue Mountains	\$386,428	\$551,048	-\$164,620
Grey County	\$322,506	\$303,880	\$18,626

Figure 7: Affordability Rate by Total Household Income, Grey County, 2015

Source: Realtors of Grey Bruce Owen Sound & SHS Consulting

HOUSING



Housing preferences are changing and we were curious to see whether ownership of housing stock reflected these changes. There was 77.6% single detached houses as a percentage of all occupied dwellings in Grey County 2016. This percentage has declined when comparing findings from 2011 (83.1%) and 2006 statistics (78.4%). This suggests an increase in middle housing types (i.e. multi-unit, condominiums, or clustered housing types, duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, apartments, semi-detached houses, or townhouses). We expect to see this trend continue and we see the importance of having policies in place to promote this type of development.

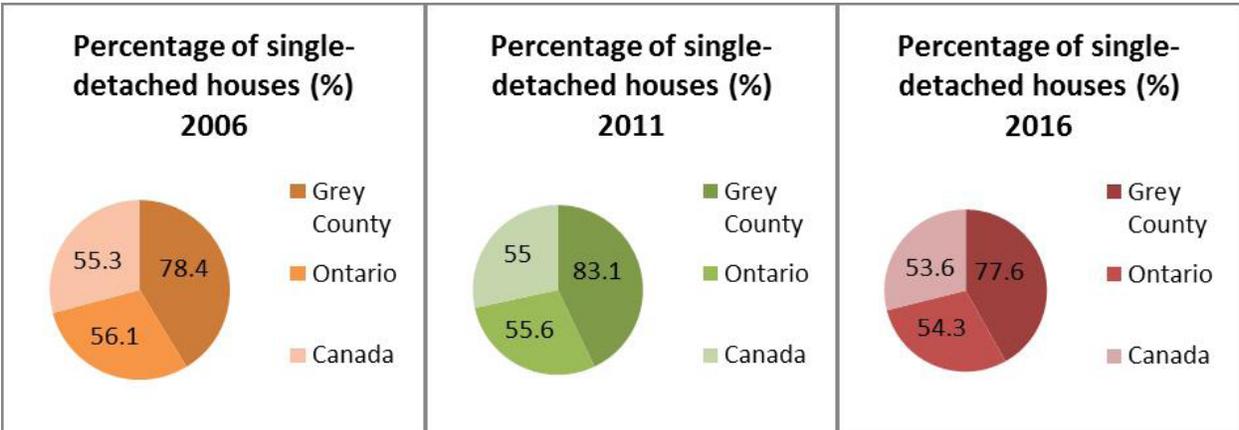


Figure 8: Percentage of single-detached houses (%) occupied compared to all other private dwellings in this region

Source: Statistics Canada (2017, 2012, 2006)

The rental market in Grey County seems to be fairly affordable. However, when using household incomes (both owner and renter households), households falling in the lower percentiles in Owen Sound and Hanover would not be able to afford average rental rates. What this suggests is that some households have to find some form of financial assistance to avoid spending more than 30% of their income on housing costs.

HOUSING



It is important to note that it was difficult to find reliable statistics to provide a detailed analysis on the rental market. One of the explanations for this is Canadian Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) does not have available rental data for rural municipalities. Typically, their reports review Census Metropolitan Areas (populations of at least 100,000) and Grey County falls just below this population threshold. It would also be difficult to infer findings from County level statistics, as rental vacancy and affordability rates are likely not evenly distributed. Other means of collecting data were reviewed such as looking through newspaper advertisements and internet postings. It was found that there were very few rentals advertised online (only one in Chatsworth); therefore, SHS Consulting opted not to include these findings because of a limited sample size.

We expect by next review more statistics will be readily available since the federal government has budgeted almost \$300 million for data collection about the housing market over the next 10 years.

	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom	Total
West Grey	**	\$511	\$581	\$740	\$567
Southgate	**	**	**	**	\$700
Grey Highlands	**	**	**	**	**
Hanover	**	**	**	**	\$762
Chatsworth	**	**	**	**	**
The Blue Mountains	**	**	**	**	**
Meaford	**	\$693	\$866	\$905	\$806
Georgian Bluffs	**	**	**	**	**
Owen Sound	\$574	\$706	\$861	\$896	\$798

Figure 9: Grey County Average Rental Housing Costs, Grey County, 2015

Source: SHS Consulting based on CMHC Housing Information Portal for West Grey, Meaford and Owen Sound for April 2015; Grey County Rent Supplement Report for Hanover and Southgate (Dundalk)

HOUSING

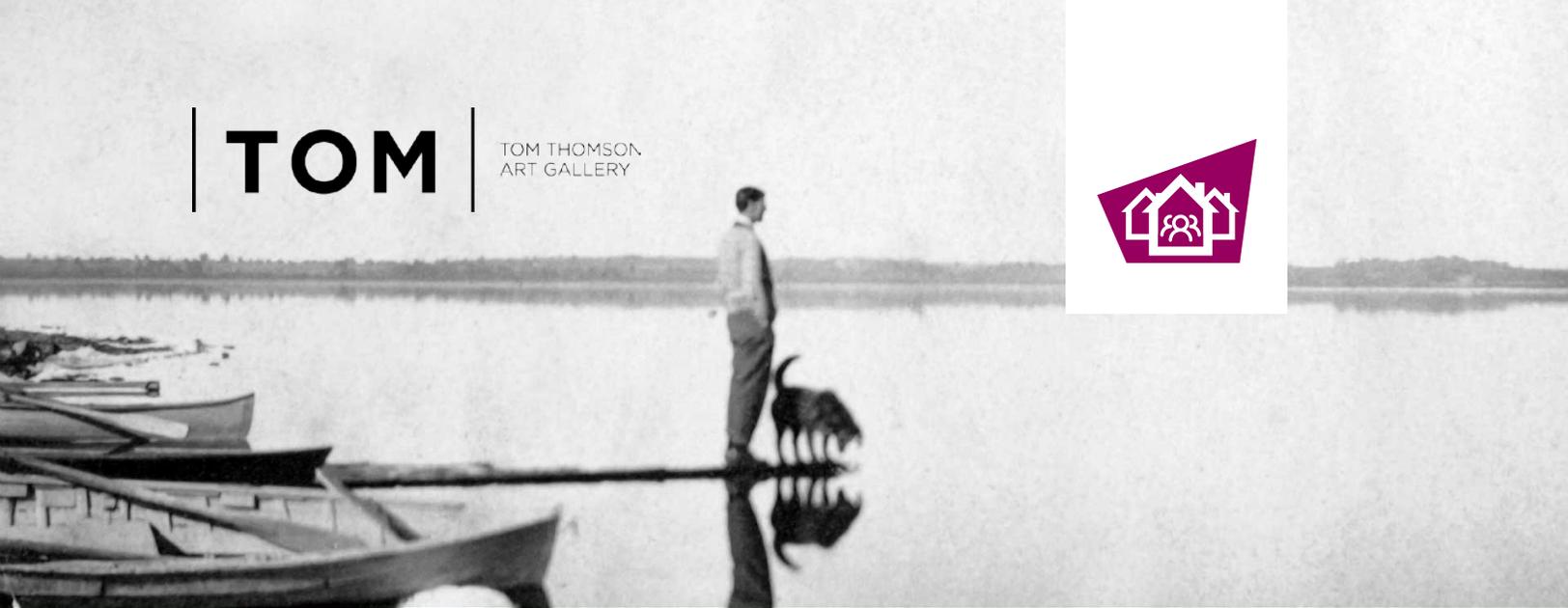


Figure 10 illustrates that average rental rates from 2006 to 2011 in the County grew on average by 20.7%. The markets with the highest rent were The Town of Blue Mountains, Grey Highlands and Southgate. Georgian Bluffs, West Grey and Chatsworth had the lowest rental rates. In most municipalities, with the exception of The Blue Mountains, average rental rates increased significantly more than household incomes.

	Median Household Income			Average Rent			Average Value of Dwelling		
	2006	2011	% Increase	2006	2011	% Increase	2006	2011	% Increase
West Grey	\$52,119	\$59,205	13.6%	\$596	\$705	18.3%	\$223,459	\$281,833	26.1%
Southgate	\$56,710	\$56,480	-0.4%	\$621	\$845	36.1%	\$226,565	\$250,565	10.6%
Grey Highlands	\$51,771	\$58,944	13.9%	\$633	\$854	34.9%	\$277,475	\$327,117	17.9%
Hanover	\$44,771	\$46,595	4.1%	\$665	\$791	18.9%	\$180,631	\$226,702	25.5%
Chatsworth	\$50,647	\$57,378	13.3%	\$559	\$717	28.3%	\$213,087	\$276,506	29.8%
The Blue Mountains	\$59,061	\$66,428	12.5%	\$854	\$898	5.2%	\$406,839	\$498,576	22.5%
Meaford	\$51,634	\$64,666	25.2%	\$684	\$757	10.7%	\$261,355	\$315,908	20.9%
Georgian Bluffs	\$62,082	\$68,520	10.4%	\$557	\$676	21.4%	\$258,625	\$302,207	16.9%
Owen Sound	\$40,919	\$49,428	20.8%	\$616	\$760	23.4%	\$191,623	\$225,275	17.6%
Grey County	\$49,912	\$56,518	13.2%	\$638	\$770	20.7%	\$244,305	\$294,327	20.5%

Figure 10: Household Income, Average Rent and Value of Dwelling Increase, Grey County, 2006 and 2010
 Source: SHS Consulting based on Statistics Canada National Household Survey, 2011

The Province has outlined policy direction to achieve efficient and resilient development and land use patterns. One of the main priorities is to accommodate an appropriate range and mix of residential (including second units, affordable housing and housing for older persons). At the County level, we want to identify policies that support housing intensification and mixed housing types. Further, we want to encourage experimental housing types such as life lease, cooperative housing and secondary suites. We also want to ensure an ample supply of affordable housing and support the maintenance and upkeep of existing housing stock.



CULTURE

“It goes without saying that “culture” is a confusing word, this year or any year. Merriam-Webster offers six definitions for it (including the biological one, as in “bacterial culture”) -The New Yorker, Joshua Rothman, December 26th, 2014.

Within Grey County, a major part of the ‘cultural’ discussion includes the County’s rich heritage and archaeological features. Through preservation and educational outreach, those that live in the County and visitors to the area find a greater appreciation for the local past. Some of the initial economic practices are still in operation today, such as the use of Georgian Bay harbours and farming.

Grey County also has many registered archaeological sites that provide insights into who inhabited the lands thousands of years ago. Some include Paleoindian components which is the term used to classify the first people that inhabited the Americas (~45,000-12,000 years before the Common Era). Others identify Iroquoian settlement, artifacts from the “woodland” period (~1000 years before the Common Era), lithic scatters (flakes of tools or tool fragments), potential villages, and camp sites (Martelle, 2010). More recently in the mid 1800’s, Grey County was home to many African-Americans escaping slavery. There were also many Mennonite and Amish people that came to settle in the area during that time and there are a number here today.

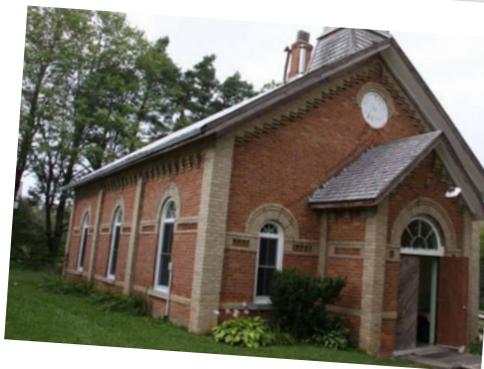
CULTURE



Another important meaning of culture that resonates quite strongly within Grey County is the prevalence of art, entertainment, theatre, and creative spaces. Offering cultural activities and cultural spaces promotes citizen engagement and overall wellbeing. People thrive when they are provided opportunities to explore new ideas and try something different. Cultural spaces encourage people to do just that. Some examples of recognized cultural spaces within the County are: Owen Sound's Roxy Theatre, Tom Thomson Art Gallery, Meaford Hall and the Hanover Civic Theatre. As well, there are arts and craft locations such as: Intersections woodworking studio, Corner House Studio, Bare Birch, Beaver Valley Glassworks, Fine Art and Antiques, Flesherton Gallery and many more. For further information www.visitgrey.ca/play/arts-culture provides an extensive listing and description of cultural spaces in the area.



1



2



3



4

¹ Source: https://www.tripadvisor.ca/Attraction_Review-g984031-d6211326-Reviews-Meaford_Hall_Arts_Cultural_Centre-Meaford_Grey_County_Ontario.html

² Source: <https://greyhighlands.civicweb.net/document/150788>

³ Source: <https://www.visitgrey.ca/unique-grey/historical-sites>

⁴ Source: <http://tomthomson.org/venue/tom-thomson-art-gallery>



GREY COUNTY PLANNERS ROLES IN LIVE GREY

Planners have many different responsibilities as part of their job description. We want to share a few non-policy related initiatives we are either currently incorporating or looking to incorporate to help better serve the public.

COLLABORATE REGULARLY WITH PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS.

Since 2011, the County CAO, Director of Planning, Medical Officer of Health, Director of Operations, Population Health Manager and Health Promoter have been meeting 3 to 4 times per year. Some of the projects undertaken collaboratively by the County and Public Health team have focused on active transportation, land use planning and public consultation. More recently in 2017, monthly staff meetings for both Grey County Planning and Grey Bruce Health Unit include a representative from each respective party. From a planner's perspective, public health officials can help inform better land use decisions, community design, and development.

ARRANGE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICIALS TO COMMENT ON THE FOLLOWING REPORTS:

- 5/10-year official plan reviews
- Secondary plans
- Strategic plans
- Master plans
- Comprehensive zoning bylaws
- Large commercial/institutional type development
- Plans of sub-division/condominiums
- Road re-construction
- Other applications upon the municipality's request



GREY COUNTY PLANNERS ROLES IN LIVE GREY

IMPROVE UNDERSTANDING AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT PLANNING.

Our goal is to enhance transparency in processes and streamline any inquiries by improving public understanding about planning. County planning staff currently run educational sessions about planning using LEGO®. Through volunteer work initiated by the Ontario Professional Planners’ Institute (OPPI), County staff have been able to reach younger planning audiences with LEGO®. Site visits to schools, libraries, and youth centres have been happening since 2015.

ENHANCE PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT.

The Ontario Profession of Planning is governed by a legal document called the *Planning Act*. As part of the *Planning Act*, there are specific regulations that outline public notice and public engagement requirements for proposed changes to an existing plot of land. We are looking to update our current public engagement strategies to go beyond the bare minimum required by the Act. For instance, we want to increase our use of technology as an outreach medium.

EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT AFFORDABLE HOUSING.

We want to educate the public about what current housing trends are to assist/guide development to address affordability needs for aging, youth, and Indigenous populations.

GREY COUNTY PLANNERS ROLES IN LIVE GREY



COORDINATE COMMUNITY EDUCATIONAL EVENTS THAT ARE RELATED TO PLANNING, AND BUILD AWARENESS ABOUT PLANNING ISSUES.

County planning staff members are co-leading annual Jane's Walks. These walks are locally organized tours that are held once a year throughout the world with the intent of gathering people together to explore and talk about their neighbourhoods. They are named after Jane Jacobs, a journalist, author and activist who explored the city life around her while living in New York and Toronto. Earlier community educational events have included World Town Planning Day and an Aggregates 101 event which aimed to inform people about the planning process for sand, gravel and stone extraction.

IMPLEMENT COMMUNICATIONS CHANGES.

We are working alongside Grey County's communications department to implement some suggested changes from the communications strategy created for 2016-2019. As part of this strategy, many different audience groups were outlined and discussed such as Indigenous Peoples of Canada. An overview of communication preferences was conducted and some tactical recommendations were provided. Some of the recommendations were to increase one-on-one engagement at events, use social media and understand the preferred communication channels and partners.

Use community assessments to monitor community inclusion (Grey Bruce Public Health Unit)

- PLAY-Friendly
- Age-Friendly
- Youth Friendly

PARTICIPATE IN LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

For example, the planning department at the University of Waterloo has reached out to County planning staff to participate in a research project focusing on Indigenous Peoples and planning. Part of the process as participants will be to read a resource package that discusses how planners can better consult Indigenous populations. This will help staff understand how to better achieve policy 2.6.5 of the Provincial Policy Statement...

Planning authorities shall consider the interests of Indigenous communities in conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources.

LIVE GREY POLICY OPTION SUMMARY



Many factors related to Live Grey are within the control of the County and member municipalities through our official plans and zoning by-laws. Here's what our official plan will need to do:

1. HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

- Include criteria that identify when public health officials should be circulated for comments.
- Specify policy direction to create healthy environments for settlement areas and rural areas in municipalities. This will support the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) direction on matters relating to land use planning and development.
- Ensure policy supports recent changes to the *Planning Act (2015)* that focus on providing, *“built form that is well-designed, encourages a sense of place, and provides for public spaces that are of high quality, safe, accessible, attractive and vibrant”*.
- Provide policy that promotes active streetscapes, active transportation, transit, street connectivity, supply of open space and recreation facilities, accessibility to healthy foods, development of urban agriculture and local food production.
- Encourage sustainability of services and land use. We want to consider long-term environmental implications when decision-making occurs.



2. COMMUNITY INCLUSION

- Ensure policies include accessibility measures to accommodate youth, aging populations and all other members of the public.
- Include descriptive measures and procedures for informing and obtaining views of the public on official plan amendments, zoning by-laws, plans of subdivision and consents.
- Ensure we explain the effect of public input on any decisions that are made. According to the *Planning Act*, it will be up to the local discretion on how to explain effect of public input on land use decisions. This will increase transparency and consistency in municipal decision-making.
- Provide detailed local policies that address changes made to the Provincial Policy Statement (2014) related to Metis and First Nations. Changes made include:
 - o Policy 1.2.2 Planning authorities are encouraged to coordinate planning matters with Indigenous communities.
 - o Policy 4.3 This Provincial Policy Statement shall be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the recognition and affirmation of existing Indigenous treaty rights in section 35 of the *Constitution Act*, 1982.
- Consider further policy direction that would facilitate the duty to consult with Indigenous Peoples of Canada.

3. HOUSING

- Update affordable housing policies to enable the use of inclusionary zoning at the municipal level once detailed regulations have been released by the Province. Some of the key components of this type of zoning include allocating lands to include affordable housing units and providing for those units to keep them affordable over time. In Ontario, inclusionary zoning policies will restrict municipalities from accepting money instead of inclusionary units or allow the units built on off-site lands, prohibit appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board from municipal inclusionary zoning official plan, and request municipalities to implement a process to ensure inclusionary units remain affordable over time.
- Map areas in the County that are eligible for inclusionary zones (i.e. the County's settlement areas).

LIVE GREY POLICY OPTION SUMMARY



- Address two strategic initiatives outlined by Grey County Corporate Strategic Plan 2017-2019:
 - *Improved access to affordable housing through policies and funding to increase affordable housing stock and maintain existing stock.*
 - *Continue advocacy for rural-friendly policies and funding for education, health, housing and transportation.*
- Encourage affordable housing within municipal planning documents by:
 - Supporting secondary suite legislation.
 - Supporting the maintenance and improvement of the existing housing stock. This will be encouraged through local maintenance and occupancy standards bylaws.
 - Waiving or reducing fees for development applications, building permits, and planning applications for affordable housing initiatives.
 - Encouraging a diverse range of housing by type, size, tenure, and affordability to meet projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents of the County.
 - Investigating county or municipal lands for future development.
 - Working with developers to promote affordable housing units.
- Establish and implement minimum targets for the provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households.
- Strengthen our housing intensification targets and further encourage residential densities by accommodating rental units, accessory apartments, secondary suites, semi-detached, duplexes, townhouses and low-rise apartment units.
- Intensification and mixed housing types. Further, we want to encourage experimental housing types such as life lease, cooperative housing, and secondary suites. We also want to ensure an adequate supply of affordable housing and support the maintenance and upkeep of existing housing stock.
- Promote experimental housing types (i.e. life lease, cooperative housing, etc.).



4. CULTURE

- Develop an Archaeological Management Plan to document all known archaeological sites, built heritage resources and traditional land use patterns. This plan will help planners preserve any archaeological potential of land. Updates to the Official Plan will look to reflect some of the provisions outlined in the Management Plan for archaeological preservation.
- Map areas of high archaeological potential in Grey County.
- Provide supportive policies to consider the interests of Indigenous communities in conserving cultural heritage and archaeological resources.
- Ensure policies preserve the agricultural/rural character of Grey County. Include more direction on how to designate rural heritage areas and/or countryside landscapes as conservation districts and/or defined cultural heritage landscapes.
- Broaden the definition of culture in official plan policies to recognize arts and creative spaces. For example, the City of Toronto has proposed several policy initiatives that encourage artistically focused spaces and activities. They include retention and expansion of spaces for cultural purposes in the downtown, allowing for a full range of cultural activities (i.e. live music venues), enhancing entertainment districts and ensuring all spaces are accessible.
- Consider flexible official plan provisions to also encourage flexible zoning. A general idea of this would be to allow for 'unconventional' mixed-use spaces such as live-work studios. Environments can play a large role in influencing creativity and creative thinking. Allowing people to practice their art and attend cultural events within suitable environments creates for a more welcoming approach.
- Include policies that further protect heritage features found within settlement areas. Identify the intent and objectives of managing local heritage features.



WHAT'S NEXT?

This Live Grey paper will be presented to Grey County Council. Staff will then prepare draft policies to address the items highlighted above, taking into account Council's feedback and the community conversations we've had to date. We will then have further conversations with the community in the summer and fall of 2017 to see if these policies address the needs of the community now and into the future. Finally, we will then bring the complete official plan document for Council to consider.