

Memorandum

COM-C 3-2025

Subject: Supportive Housing Strategy Update

Date: January 7, 2025

To: Public Health and Social Services Committee

From: Sandy Dupuis, Associate Director Community Strategies and Priorities

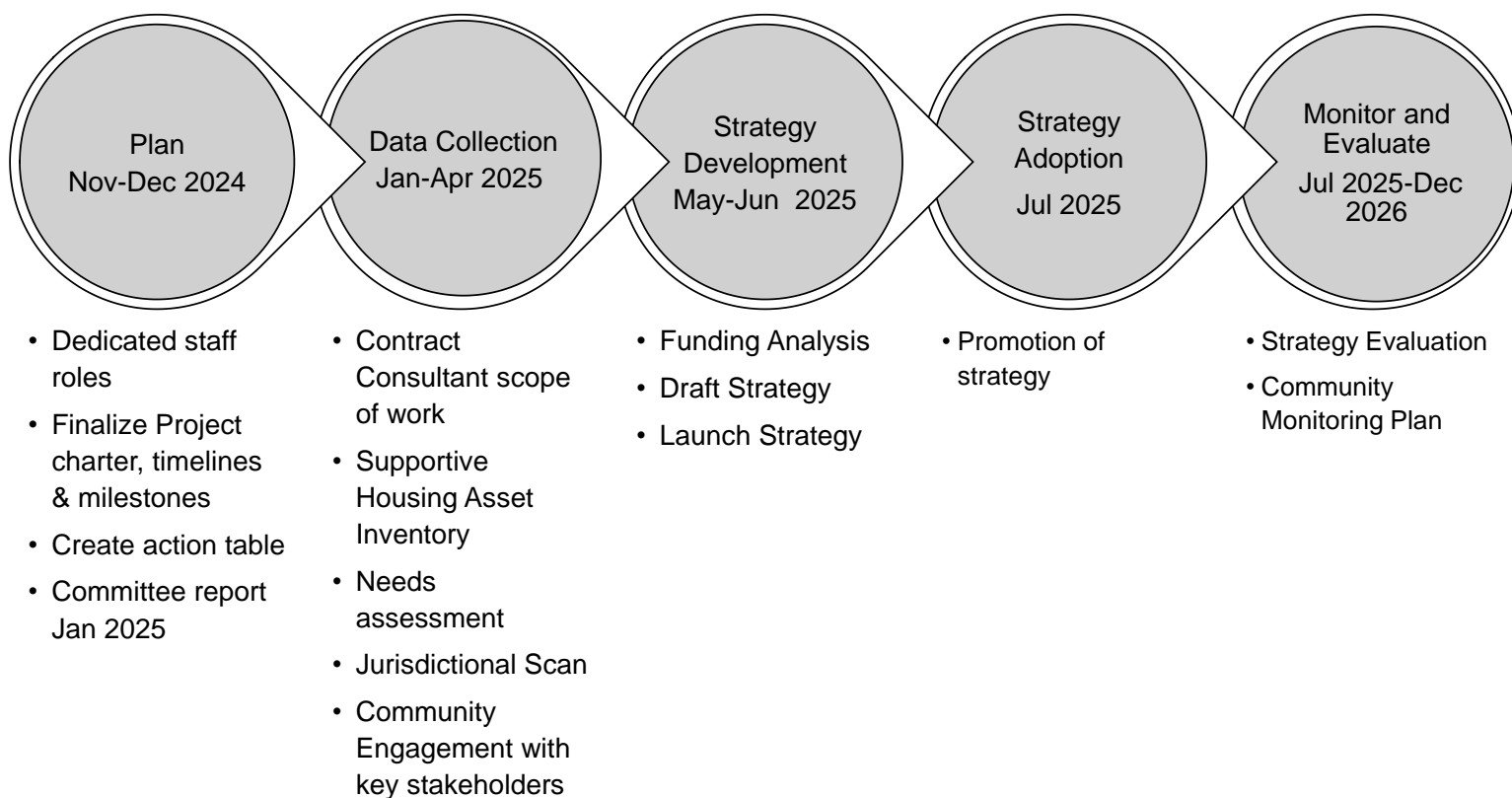
The solution to homelessness is housing. The type of housing needed to exit homelessness is determined by an individual's complexity of health and housing needs. Supportive housing is one very important type of housing in exiting people from homelessness. Broadly speaking, supportive housing (also known as housing with supports), is a term used to describe a wide range of housing options with support services that enable people exiting homelessness, people with mental health and addictions, people with disabilities and more to achieve housing stability and live independently in community. As the proportion of people experiencing homelessness who have complex needs continues year after year to increase, supportive housing options become a more important housing solution.

Niagara currently has limited supportive housing supply for people exiting homelessness, which includes options such as housing first, home for good, transitional housing, permanent supportive housing and bridge housing. These housing options total approximately 412 supportive housing units in Niagara. It is known that a well-functioning homelessness system typically has a 1:4 or 1:5 ratio of shelter beds to housing exits (reference Org Code). In Niagara, this sits at approximately 1:1.5; meaning for every one shelter bed there is only a 1.5 supportive housing exit option.

With the urgent and growing need for supportive housing in Niagara Region, Niagara Region Community Services is proposing the development of a multi-year supportive housing strategy and investment plan to address homelessness and the housing needs of our community's most vulnerable residents. This plan will determine the number of supportive housing units needed for our region and the funding required from all orders of government (including Ministry of Health, Niagara Region investment, and others) to meet the identified supportive housing targets.

To create this plan, the following steps will be taken over the course of 2025 to develop a comprehensive local supportive housing strategy for Niagara Region (see also visual below with identified timelines):

- Needs Assessment: develop a detailed understanding of the need, define priority groups in need of supportive housing, establishing a community action table to inform the local need, contracting a consultant to identify the number of supportive housing needs and potential funding sources
- Asset Inventory: complete a local supportive housing asset inventory beyond just the homelessness sector
- Funding analysis: analyze the potential government funding available to fund growth of supportive housing in Niagara.



Respectfully submitted and signed by

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