

# Northumberland Inter-Municipal Task Force on Housing and Homelessness

## Terms of Reference

### Mandate

The Northumberland Inter-Municipal Task Force on Housing and Homelessness was formed through motions of member councils in response to the increasing prevalence of housing precarity in Northumberland and recognition of the complexity of these issues and the many challenges of addressing them. The Task Force is comprised of lower-tier councillors and/or staff, with support from Northumberland County staff, for the purpose of supporting the Service Manager's role in aligning policies, programs, and approaches to addressing affordable housing and shelter needs across Northumberland; and for facilitating dialogue and collaboration between municipalities in the region to address these issues proactively. It operates with the recognition of the County's mandate, services, and programs relating to housing and homelessness, but with special attention to the lower-tier role in fulfilling that mandate through agreements such as the [Affordable Housing Strategy](#); and with regard to the lower tier's distinct ability to address housing and homelessness issues, for example as outlined in the [Housing Affordability Task Force report](#) and covered in [academic research](#). It provides a forum for information sharing and coordination in service of this mandate. And it provides a collaborative basis for advocacy.

### Goals and Objectives

This Task Force will endeavour to:

- Share and align best practices between lower tier municipalities on housing and homelessness policies and programs, with recognition of the necessity of supporting the entire housing continuum;
- Clarify roles between upper and lower tier municipalities to be more mutually supportive and efficient, particularly with respect to the implementation of existing plans such as:
  - The Northumberland County Affordable Housing Plan;
  - The Northumberland Community Safety and Well-Being Plan; and
  - The Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force report
- Support public relations and communication, including education on policies, programs, and jurisdictional distinctions;

Share information about housing and homelessness and related issues, and public experience related to these issues.

Further, this Task Force will inform and inspire reports and policy motions advancing progress in the areas of housing and homelessness, including:

- A review of lower-tier bylaws related to the issue of housing and homelessness, with the purpose of making recommendations to:
  - Ensure that municipal bylaws are aligned with the housing-first approach practiced by Northumberland County Social Services, and with the harm-reduction approach practiced by the HKPR Health Unit
  - Ensure that zoning bylaws are aligned with best practices to facilitate the rapid development of housing units
- Determining the social cost of homelessness in Northumberland, with figures and/or estimates of direct and indirect costs including:
  - Lower-tier costs for responsibilities such as policing, bylaw enforcement, first responders, facilities and maintenance costs, etc., with estimates as to how much of those costs are related to homelessness
  - County costs for social services, indicating the amount paid by municipal levy; and estimates for the financial impacts of homelessness related to paramedicine
  - Estimates of Economic Development impacts related to homelessness

## **Member Requirements**

The Northumberland Inter-Municipal Task Force on Housing and Homelessness is to be comprised of no more than two (2) members from each lower-tier municipality in Northumberland, with support from County staff for information purposes whenever possible. Membership in this task force is open to all Northumberland municipalities, but is not required. Each municipality may appoint members to this task force according to their own procedural bylaw. This voluntary organization is freestanding, with any reporting requirements for individual members to be determined by their delegating municipal council. The task force or its members do not have the authority to make direct representations of any municipality to federal or provincial governments.

## **Term**

The term of office for the Northumberland Inter-Municipal Task Force on Housing and Homelessness will be until the end of voluntary collaboration between its members, or as determined by each delegating council.

## **Frequency and format of meetings**

The task force shall meet as needed in service of its goals and according to the availability of its members. Meetings may be in person or virtual, and email communication is encouraged.