

## County Orillia Campus Development – FAQs

### ABOUT THE PROPOSED COUNTY ORILLIA CAMPUS DEVELOPMENT:

Q: *What will the development include?*

A: The development will include:

- Affordable housing units for seniors, families and individuals
- Social and Community Services space to house County services, including Ontario Works, Children and Community Services, and Social Housing
- Community partners, such as Victorian Order of Nurses (VON), Simcoe Muskoka Family Connexions, EarlyON Child and Family Centre, and a Licensed Child Care Centre

Q: *How many affordable housing units will the development have?*

A: The Campus will include approximately 130 Simcoe County Housing Corporation (SCHC) affordable mixed units for seniors, families and individuals

- Approximately 46 units are multi-bedroom units targeted to families, and the balance of the units are 1-bedroom and studio units
- All 1-bedroom and studio units will follow a universal design for aging in place
- A common room for tenants with adjacent rooftop amenity area, including planter box gardens, is planned

Q: *How large is the proposed building?*

- A: This is a multi-storey building (proposed six storeys) and the building footprint (inclusive of affordable housing and commercial/office space) is approximately 216,000 sq. ft.
  - The proposed commercial/office space footprint is approximately 60,000 sq. ft.

Q: *How will physical distancing be maintained during COVID-19?*

A: The County takes the safety of the community and contractors seriously. Construction site health and safety best practices are always adhered to. Additional on-site distancing and sanitization will occur while operating during COVID-19

- Regular cleaning and sanitization measures will be implemented, similar to those in operation at SCHC buildings
- Generous programming and common space allows for a safe gathering place, respectful of distancing requirements, and offers associated social and mental health benefits

Q: *What is the cost?*

A: The project is anticipated to cost \$79 million between 2020 and 2022, including funding from municipal partners, the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario through the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative

- Affordable Housing estimated cost: \$57 million
- Commercial/office space estimated cost: \$22 million
- The campus rent/lease formula, combined with asset management strategies, results in an estimated net benefit of approximately \$800,000 in annual reserve contributions

- The project's operational sustainability includes a combination of quality building materials and practices, as well as accounting for the necessary capital reserve. This ensures the building will not require additional investment for the next 50 years
- The County and its funding partners have invested in significant affordable housing builds in the last two years:
  - Collingwood (2018/2019): \$40 million – includes 147 units and approximately 12,000 sq. ft of commercial / office space
  - Wasaga Beach (2019/2020): \$27 million – includes 99 units and no commercial/office space
  - Victoria Harbour (under development): \$13.5 million – includes 41 units and no commercial/office space
  - The County is also pursuing opportunities for affordable housing developments in Barrie and the southern part of Simcoe County as near-future projects

Q: Does the design feature sustainable technologies?

A: The design incorporates proven technologies for efficiencies in electricity, power and water consumption, including new standards set out by the County's sustainable energy policy and teams

- The design will ensure efficient use of the land and will be strongly rooted in good urban planning and design practices, working in collaboration with the City of Orillia
- The design will also incorporate some historical elements from the former ODCVI and respect past traditions
- The existing arboretum will be preserved

Q: *What will happen to traffic in the area?*

A: Like any new development, a higher density or infill-housing proposal must meet the municipality's planning and engineering standards. In addition, multiple-family dwellings near quality transit services are likely to attract residents with lower levels of car ownership, as are dwellings geared to older people, people with disabilities, and families with lower incomes. (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2012).

As part of the 2020/21 pre-construction consultation process, the County will do a traffic study for the Orillia Campus.

Q: *Has the County led similar projects in the past?*

A: The County has demonstrated leadership through its innovative approach to developing affordable housing, having completed several major projects in Collingwood, Wasaga Beach, Victoria Harbour, Barrie and Bradford.

Q: *What is the timeline?*

A: Construction is anticipated to start in late spring or early summer of 2021 with anticipated completion in 2023.

## **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND APPROVAL PROCESS:**

*Q: Has there been any public consultation for this project?*

A: Following the County's purchase of the former ODCVI property in Orillia, the County contracted the services of Eco-Ethnomics, a social innovation consulting firm with extensive background in community hub development and community engagement, to conduct a community visioning and consultation process. The consultation methods included in-depth interviews and a workshop with the Project Advisory Committee (9 participants), an online community survey (475 respondents), stakeholder interviews (32 respondents), mobile engagement labs conducted at four Orillia community-based locations at a variety of times (125 participants), and community consultation sessions (30 participants). This process was held during spring and early summer 2019, with the findings reviewed and analyzed by County staff during fall 2019 prior to bringing the report for Council consideration in January 2020.

The compelling vision that emerged from the consultation process is one of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive regional community hub which provides affordable housing options for seniors and other mixed income households, helps to alleviate the barriers to accessing essential community and social services for residents, and creates a sense of inclusion.

Based on the findings of this consultation, the identified community needs and uses have been incorporated into a preliminary design for County Council's consideration.

*Q: Is more consultation with area residents planned?*

A: Pending Council approval of the preliminary design and costing, the details of the proposed design component of the development, through additional studies and reports, can be initiated. The County will host a public information session to share the results of the above noted reports and studies and project information to address concerns and to receive feedback about proposed development and design.

*Q: How can I participate in the public information session during the COVID-19 pandemic?*

A: Public information session(s) will be planned to share information and provide opportunities to see the results of these studies, as well as to offer input on the proposed campus development. Ongoing advancements are being made with regard to hosting and accommodating public participation to ensure appropriate social distancing is maintained, such as online public engagement, factsheet distribution, and virtual meetings.

*Q: What is the approval process?*

A: Prior to construction, planning and development applications must be submitted to the City of Orillia. It is anticipated that both a zoning by-law amendment (ZBA) and site plan application (SPA), as well as required supportive studies and reports, will be required to be submitted for City of Orillia review and approval as part of the project development process during 2020/21.

In addition, prior to consideration of certain types of planning applications, such as a ZBA, a statutory public meeting must be conducted for the purposes of providing the public with information and to receive submissions regarding development, which can be reviewed by the City of Orillia. Public meetings provide an opportunity to submit feedback on the proposed planning application.

## DETAILS ABOUT AFFORDABLE HOUSING:

*Q: Why is the County Developing Affordable Housing in Orillia?*

A: Across the region, the demand for affordable housing has been identified in the County's 10-Year Affordable Housing and Homelessness Prevention Strategy. The Strategy's goal is to achieve 2,685 affordable housing units by 2024. As of December 31, 2019, a total of approximately 1,900 affordable housing units have been created county-wide. The general target for the creation of affordable housing units identified in the Strategy for the City of Orillia, and the Townships of Oro-Medonte, Ramara and Severn is a total of 392 units (220 have already been achieved). Despite this progress, the current average wait time for affordable housing in Simcoe County is more than two years.

*Q: What is "Affordable Housing"?*

A: A conventional measure of housing affordability is the shelter cost-to-income ratio, which most commonly sets the affordability threshold at 30% of before-tax household income. (CMHC, 2019. Defining the Affordability of Housing in Canada). Simcoe County Housing Corporation typically sets affordable rents for new Affordable Housing developments at approximately 80% of Average Market Rent (based on CMHC annual data reports).

*Q: What is the difference between Affordable Housing and Social Housing?*

A: Social Housing, a commonly used term, is a category of housing that includes public housing, cooperatives, and non-profit providers that are specifically identified in the Housing Services Act and that receive government funding to assist with rent subsidies and operating and capital costs.

Social Housing is often used interchangeably with Affordable Housing, but they are two different things. All social housing is affordable, but not all affordable housing is social housing.

The County's Orillia Campus development is designed as Affordable Housing, potentially with the inclusion of only three replacement Social Housing units.

*Q: Who owns the Simcoe County Housing Corporation?*

A: The County of Simcoe is the sole shareholder of Simcoe County Housing Corporation. This means that the County is the owner and manager of Simcoe County Housing Corporation properties that provide affordable housing to seniors, families and individuals. This also means that the Affordable Housing created will be well-maintained and will be kept affordable in perpetuity.

*Q: Will my property value be negatively affected by a nearby affordable housing development?*

A: No, in fact some research suggests that the opposite is true. Property values have been shown to increase after affordable housing developments have been built. (HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, 2020)

*Q: Won't this put additional strain on public services and infrastructure (i.e. water, sewer, schools, & roads)?*

A: Generally, higher-density housing needs less extensive infrastructure than new development – features like piped water, sewer services, schools and roads already exist. Also, higher-density development and infill can provide the larger customer base needed to increase the range and quality of available services (such as public transit). (Ontario Human Rights Commission, 2012)

As part of the 2020/21 pre-construction consultation process, the County will work closely with the City of Orillia for planning including on services and infrastructure, as well as with the school boards.

*Q: What about my safety? Will this development make my neighbourhood and my community more dangerous?*

A: There is no evidence that affordable housing leads to increased crime rates. (HomeComing Community Choice Coalition, 2020)