

Housing and Homelessness System Planning Update

Council Meeting

June 24, 2025

Why We Are Here Today?

System planning to establish strategic vision and priorities to direct:

- The City's responsibility and opportunity to act in areas of deep housing need
- The urgency of rising homelessness and housing insecurity
- The gaps in the current system coordination and resourcing
- The need for a clearer, more consistent approach to decision-making

Current State

- Current 10 Year Plan doesn't reflect current needs and realities, and lacked capacity and financial planning
- Urgent need for short and long term financial plan
- Lack of progress towards meeting affordable housing targets, influenced by growing socioeconomic challenges
- Fragmentation of roles across departments and programs, and the lack of aligned goals

Why Do Systems Planning for Housing and Homelessness?

- Need to have greater focus on specific strategic priorities vs. broad objectives
- Leverage and optimize areas of system the City of Kawartha Lakes can influence
- Establish a near-term and long-term financial plan to support new strategy
- Plan and align resources and policies
- Support internal coordination across various departments

Systems Planning is Multi-Faceted

- **System Design**
 - Structured approach to designing a system that efficiently reduces homelessness
- **Program Interaction**
 - Optimizing how programs interact, rather than looking at them in isolation
- **Balanced Solutions**
 - Ensure the right mix of prevention, emergency response, and long-term solutions
- **Resource Alignment**
 - Aligns resources, policies, and interventions with population needs over time

Deliverable – Strategy vs. Plan

The Strategy

What it is:

A long-term, structural framework (5-10 years) that defines the City's direction on housing and homelessness.

What it does:

- Sets strategic actions and priorities
- Aligns departments in the City
- Informs infrastructure, investment, service
- Guides decision-making across changes in funding or leadership
- Clarifies governance and roles

Think of it as:

The blueprint. It defines where you're going and what matters most.

The Plan

What it is:

An annual or short-term operational document that turns the strategy into action.

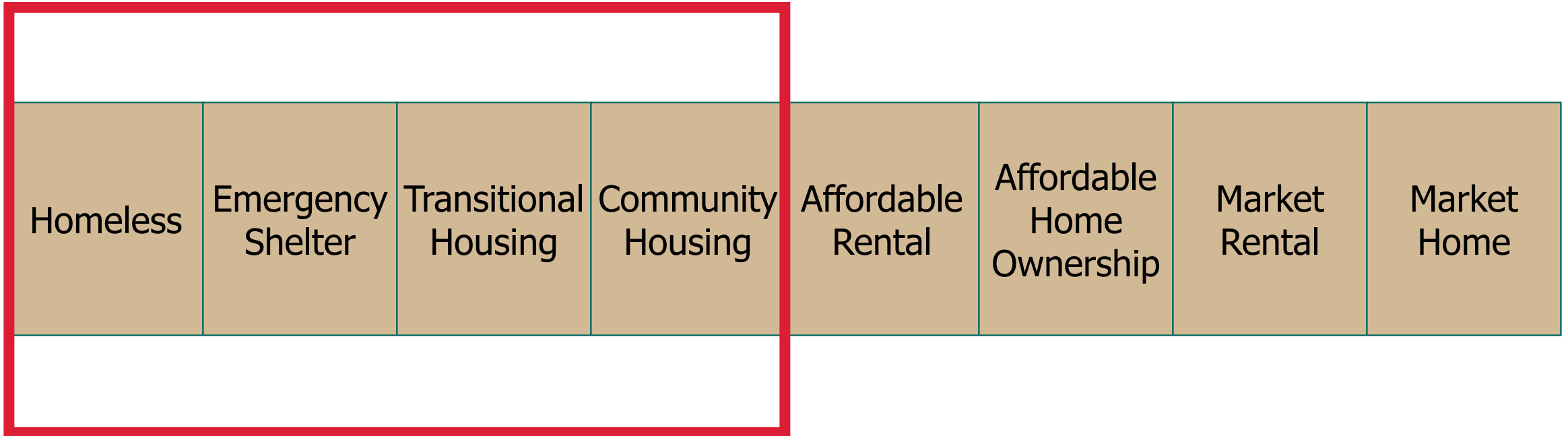
What it does:

- Identifies specific projects, programs, and initiatives
- Adjusts year to year based on funding, staffing, and needs
- Tracks progress and adapts to emerging issues
- Is more detailed and implementation-focused

Think of it as:

The action list. It shows what will be done this year to move toward the strategic vision.

Housing Continuum – The Area of Focus



A System Plan Makes the Difference

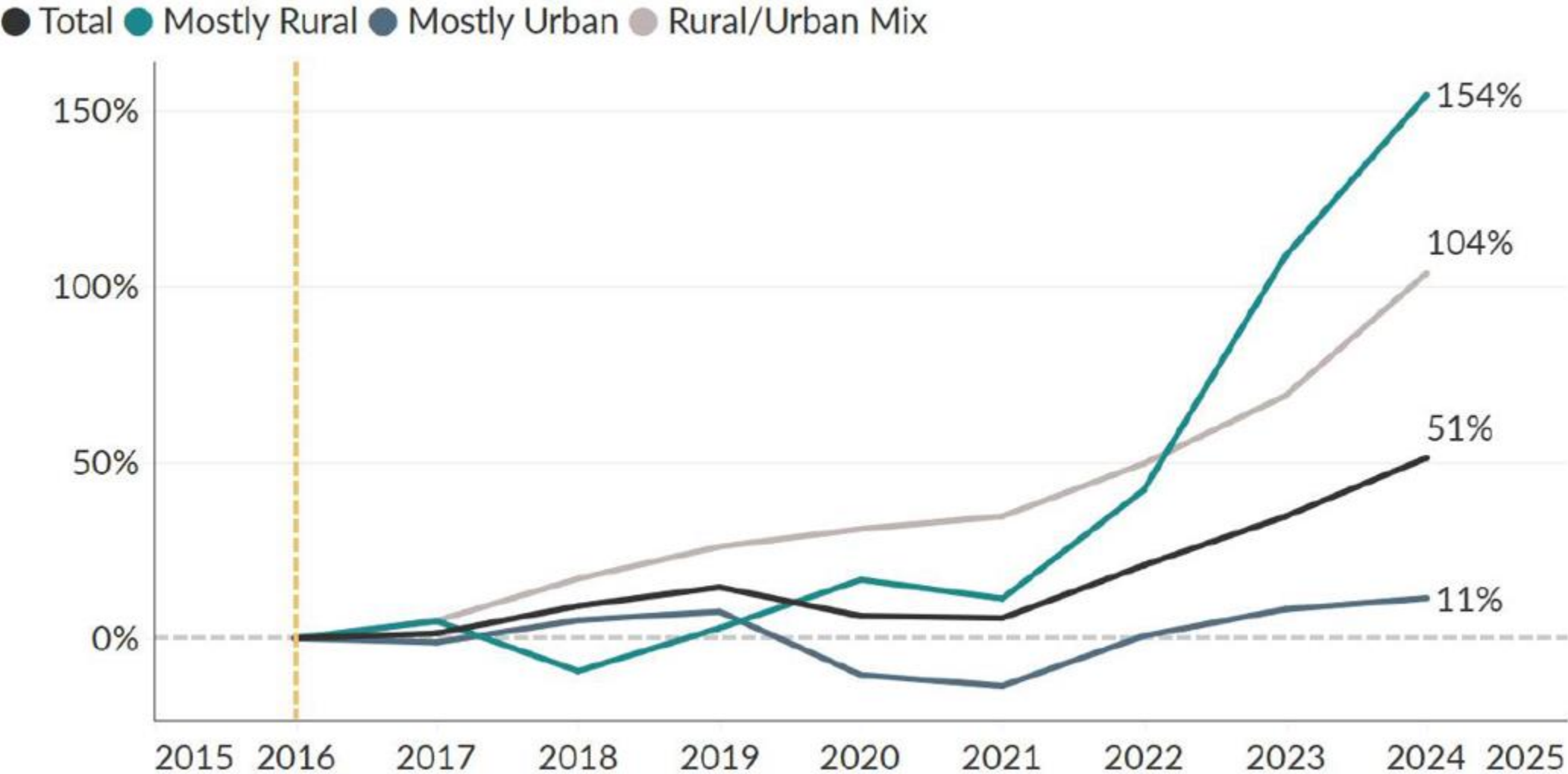
What Makes the Difference?

- More prevention means fewer people reach crisis
- Permanent housing options increase exits from homelessness
- Supportive housing meets the needs of people with higher complexity
- Earlier investment reduces long-term system pressure
- Better system performance means fewer people return to homelessness



**Desired
Outcomes**

People Experiencing Homelessness in Ontario

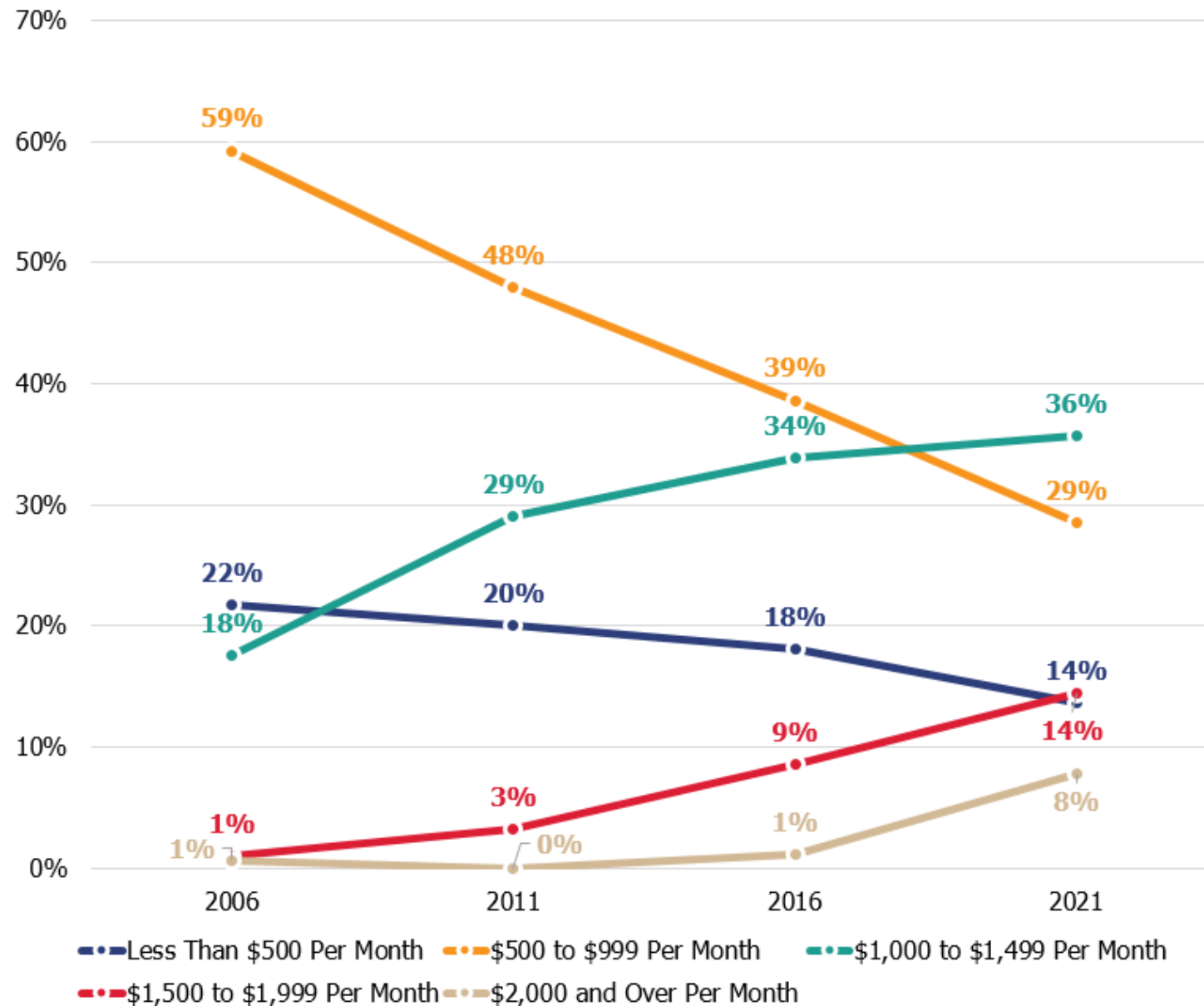


Data Story

Housing & Homelessness Needs

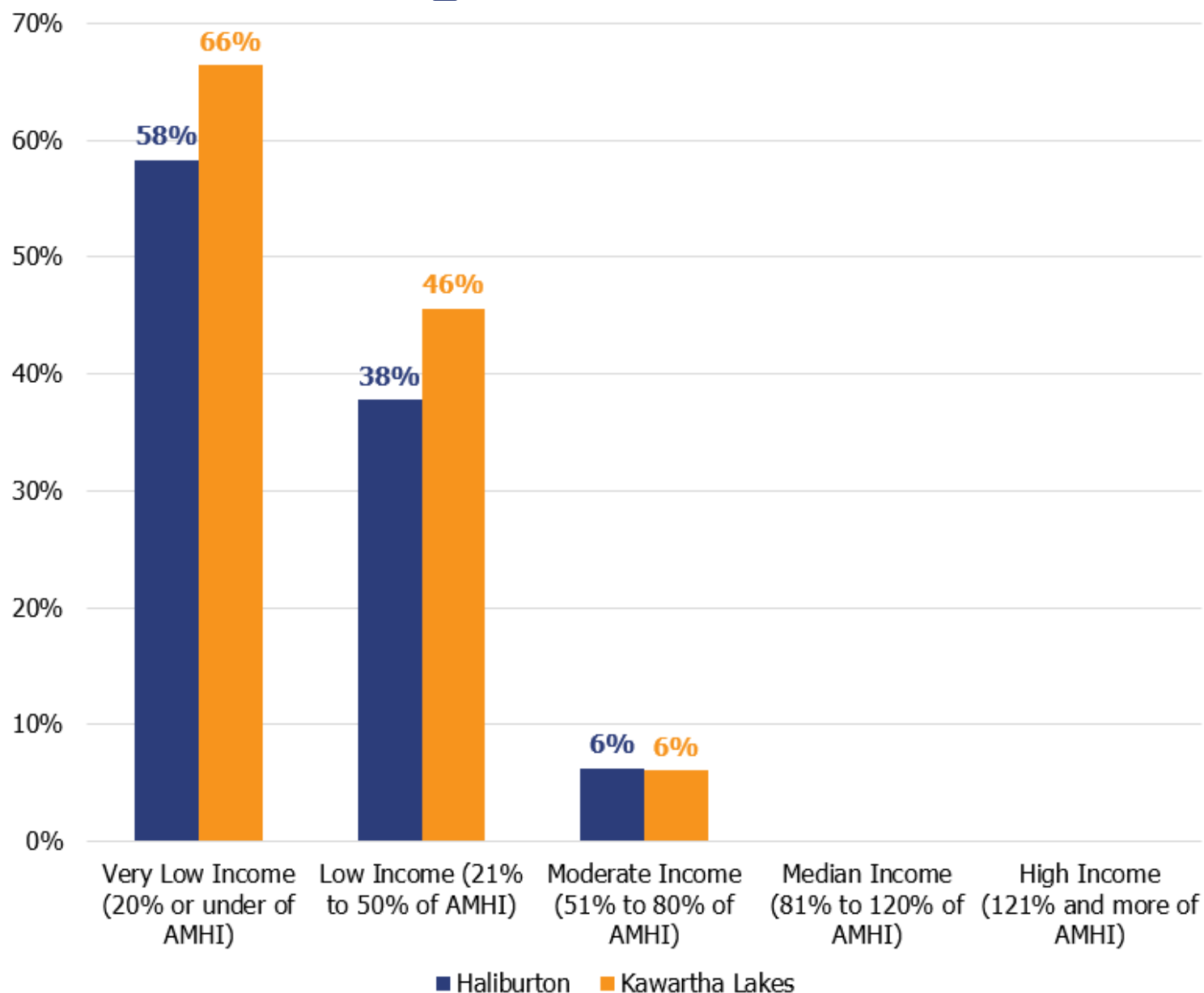
Fewer Options for Affordable Rent

Monthly Shelter Costs for Renters in Kawartha Lakes



Source: CMHC

Core Housing Need



Households in core housing need by income category, 2021

Source: Statistics Canada

Community Voices

Housing & Homelessness Needs

65

Interviews with people
at-risk or experiencing
homelessness

In-community settings



- Stability barriers
- Affordability
- Safety & vulnerability to compounding risks

59

Interviews with community
partners

Virtual and in-person



- Perspectives on where more housing & supports are needed
- Strong theme about resourcing, right supports for right people

241

Survey responses

Via Jump-In platform



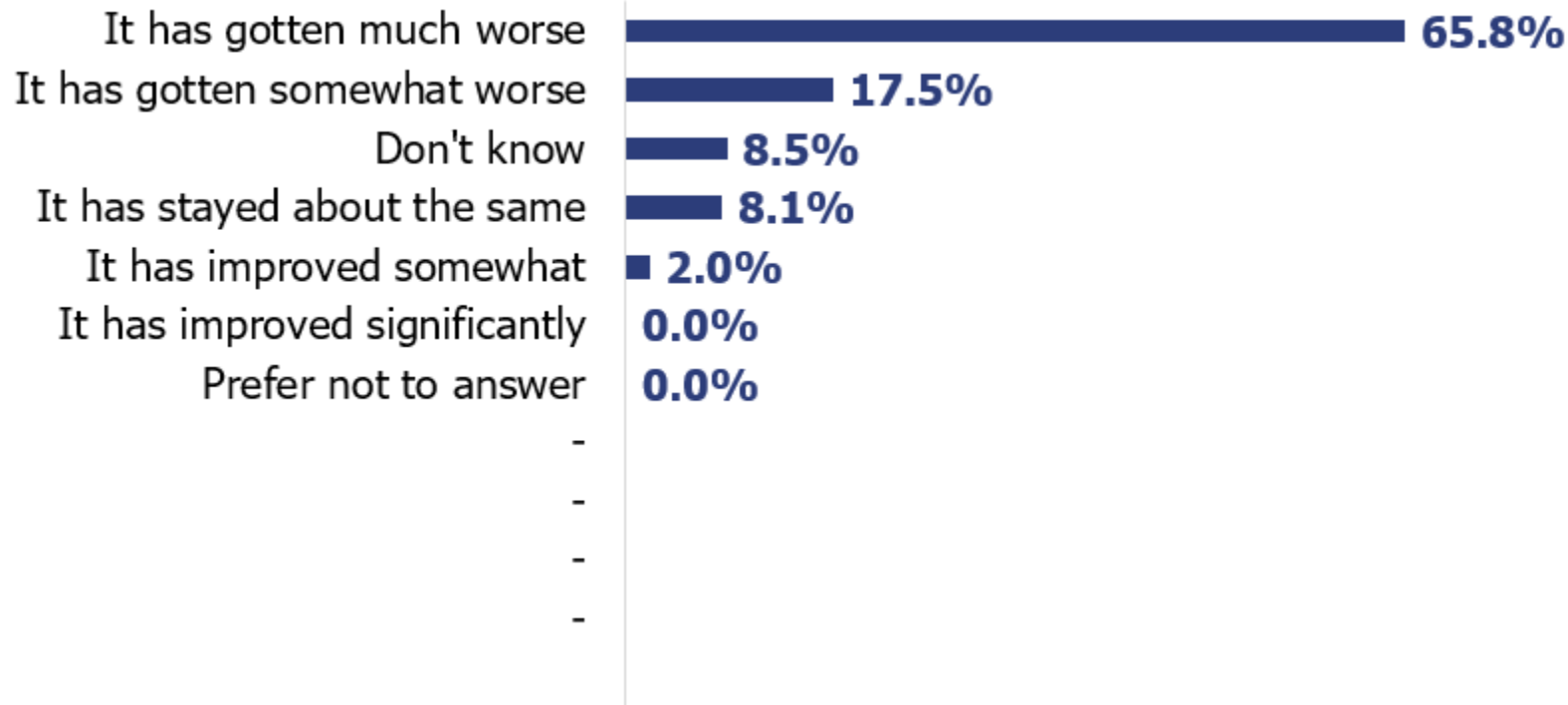
- Top challenges in housing search were high prices for renting & owning, not enough housing, and quality

Increasing Visibility of Homelessness

- Encampments, once rare, are now reported in Lindsay and other communities
- Individuals are living in tents, trailers, buses, and vehicles with no viable alternatives
- Couch surfing and overcrowding remain widespread but less visible
- Service providers and community members describe this shift as recent and notable, creating community tensions

"We've never had encampments in our town before. And all of a sudden, we've got 45 people living in tents."

How would you describe homelessness in your community compared to three years ago? n=234



Safety risks in unsheltered settings

- Participants describe ongoing threats in encampments: theft, harassment, and physical assault
- Personal belongings frequently stolen or vandalized
- Displacement is common, including forced removal of tents and personal items
- Environmental risks include fire hazards, weather exposure, and lack of sanitation

“They bulldozed my tent before and took everything. I’ve had to start over plenty of times.”

Stigma

- Participants described being yelled at, stared at, or avoided in public spaces
- Some reported being denied services or deliveries based on perceived housing status
- Stigma contributes to isolation and reluctance to access help
- Experiences of judgment were reported in stores, service agencies, and health care settings
- These dynamics were noted as barriers to both seeking housing and maintaining stability

“They throw stuff at us from their cars. They don’t want us here.”

Housing instability involves frequent cycling

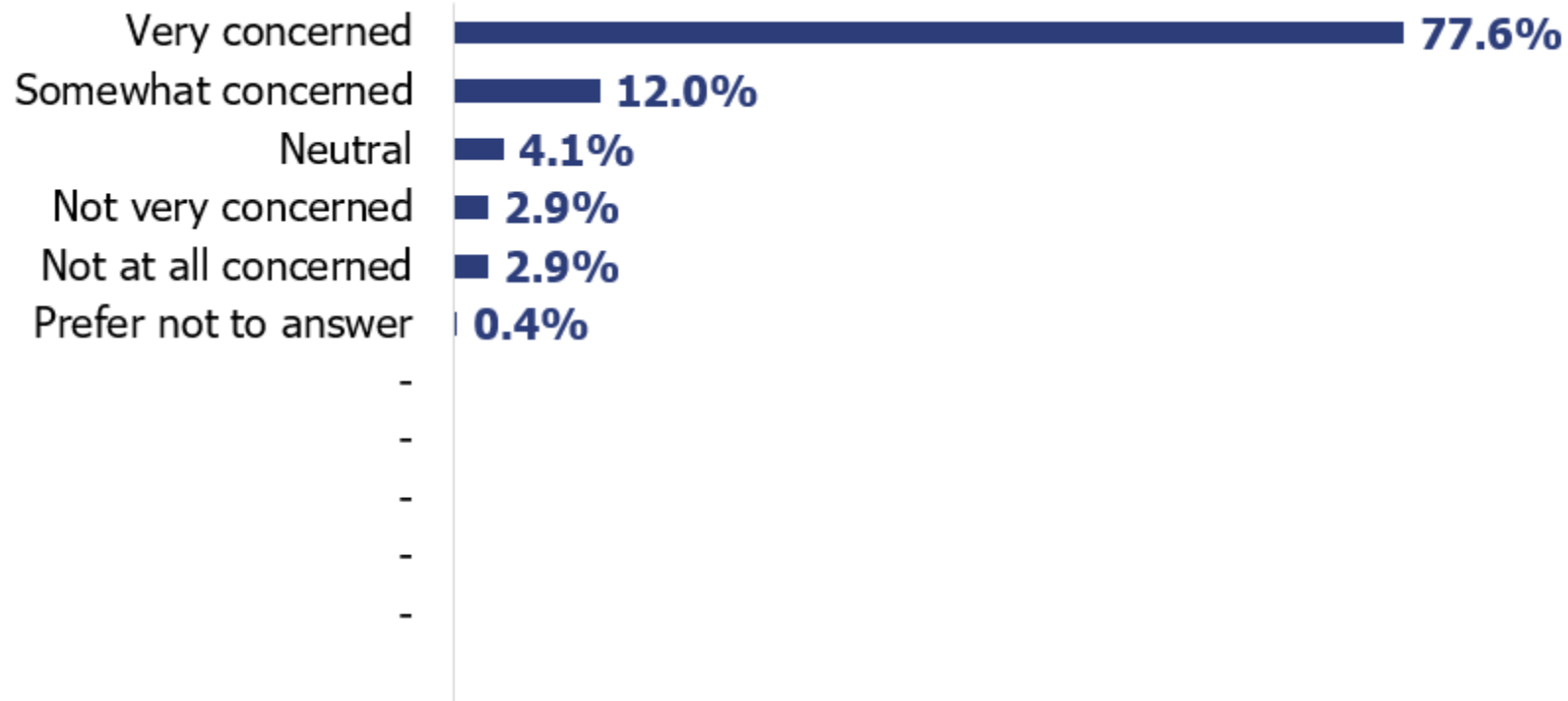
- People often move between shelters, encampments, couch surfing, and temporary placements
- Some return to homelessness due to conflict with neighbours, lack of formal leases, or unsafe conditions
- Informal rentals may involve overcrowding or exposure to substance use
- Supportive housing placements can break down without ongoing assistance
- Participants emphasized that being housed does not always mean being stable or secure

Affordability gaps and limited housing options

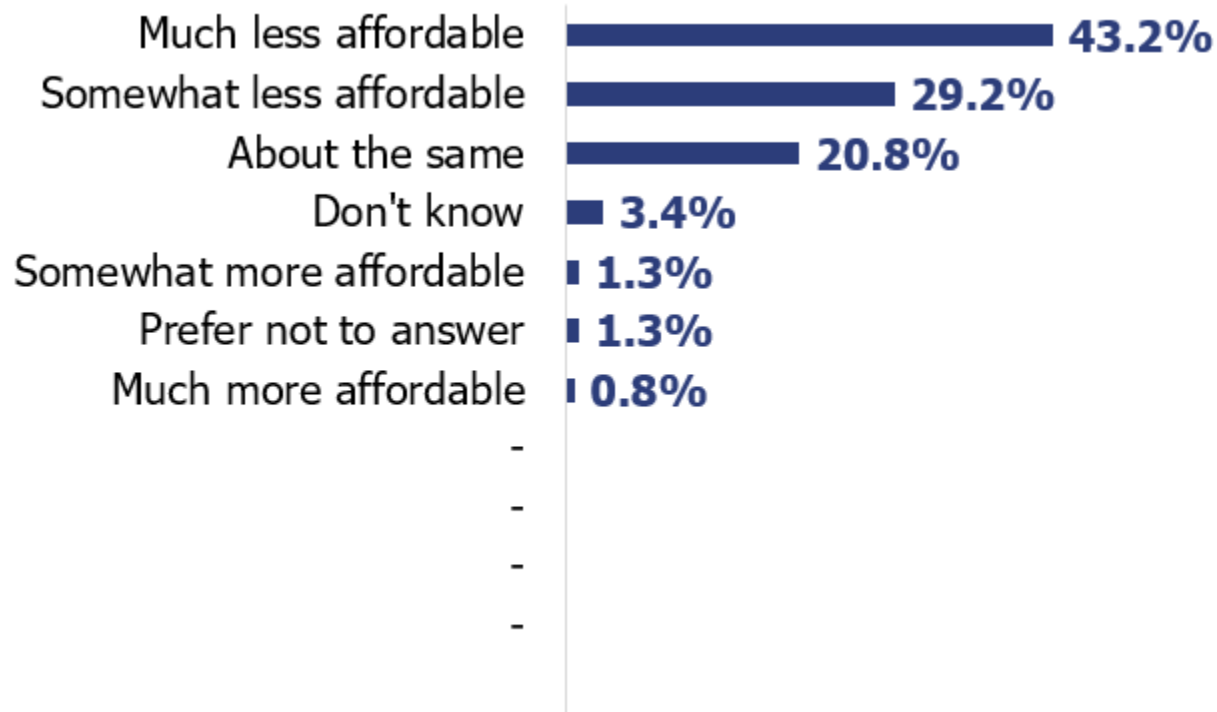
- Participants frequently cited high housing costs and low availability as key barriers
- Affordable rentals are scarce, especially in rural and smaller communities
- Some respondents said housing units were available, but in poor condition or priced far out of reach
- Waitlists and competition discourage people from applying or reapplying
- Individuals with stable incomes—including full-time workers—reported being unable to secure housing locally

“There are no options for affordable housing as a single person... I have a good job and still can’t afford to live here.”

How concerned are you about the availability of affordable housing in the community in which you live? n=241

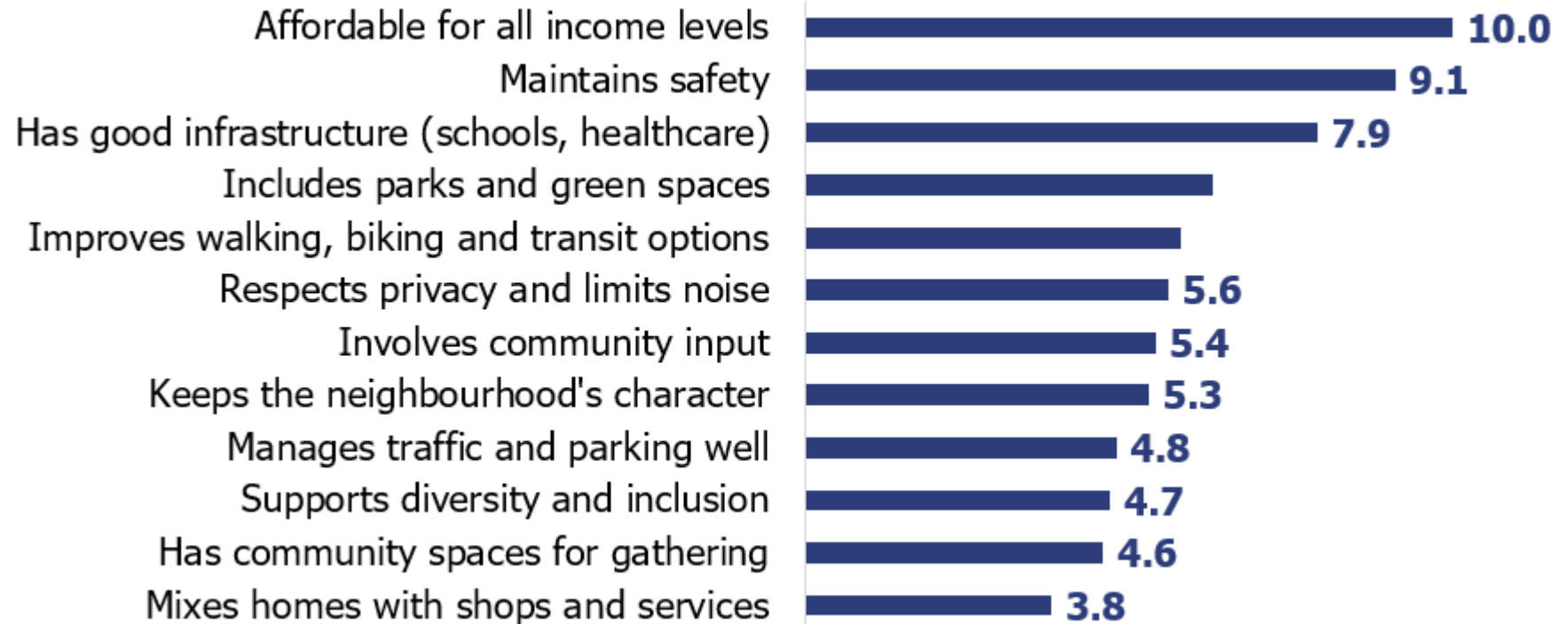


Compared to 3 years ago, how has the affordability of housing you've lived in changed? n=236



What the community is asking for

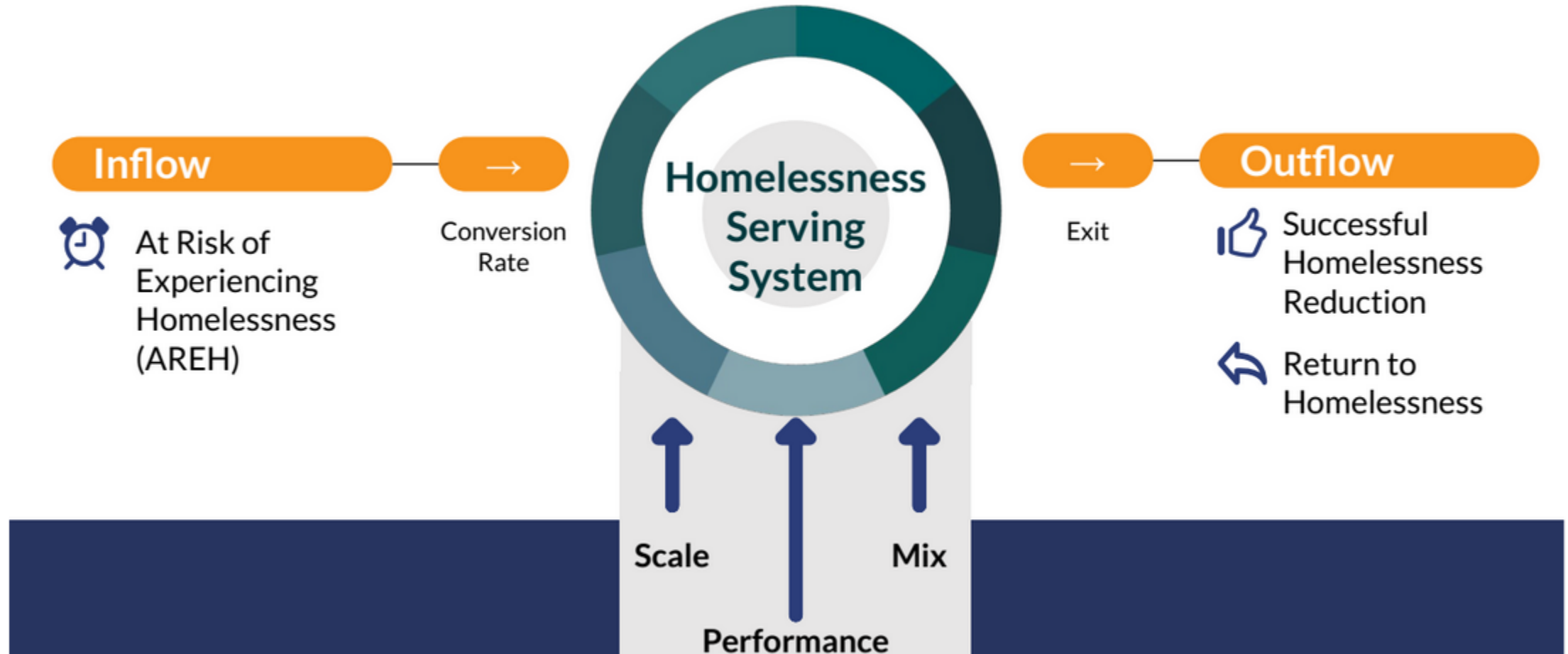
- Participants consistently called for deeply affordable, stable housing – not temporary placements
- Emphasis on wraparound supports, including mental health, addiction services, and case management
- Frustration with short-term fixes, limited prevention, and inconsistent services
- Residents want housing that is safe, inclusive, and supported by long-term investment



Projection Modelling

Housing & Homelessness Needs

Managing the flow in the system



Municipal levers to impact results

Inflow Influence: Low

Macro socioeconomic factors you can't control:

- Population growth
- Economy
- Private market affordability
- Vacancy rates
- Health / justice impacts
- Social assistance

Response Influence: High

Control over program design:

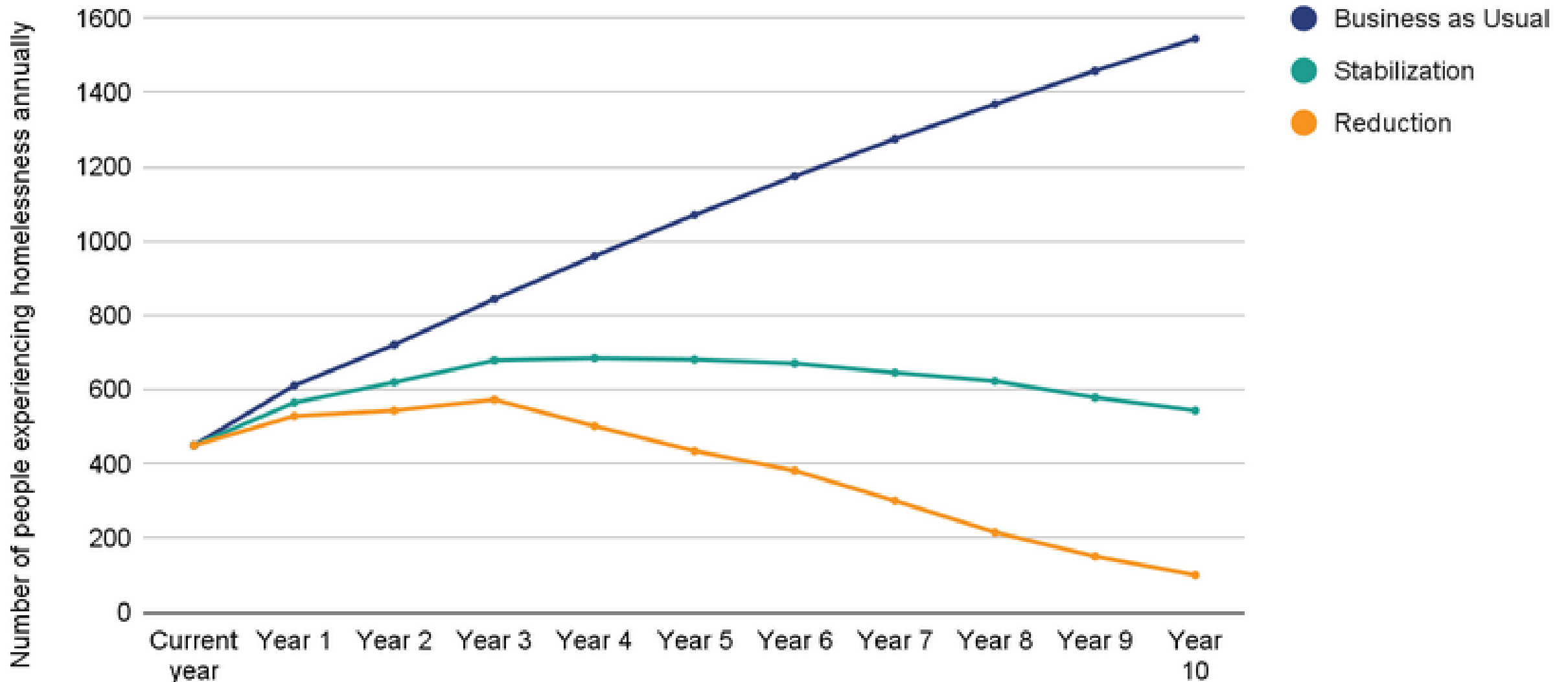
- Length of stay
- Exit types
- Staff ratios, capacity
- Matching people to right spaces

Outflow Influence: Medium

You can shape long-term exits through:

- Housing supply
- Stability supports
- Prioritization strategies
- Advocacy for resources

Projected homelessness under three scenarios



Where we are headed

Optimized Housing and Homelessness System

Strategic
Positions and
Policy

Integration
and
Connection
into Municipal
Plans

Reviewing
Partnerships
and Aligning
Resources

Program
Enhancement

Strategic position and policy changes

- Review and establish clear expectations of our system overseeing deeply affordable housing
- Support a separate corporate initiative to establish clear and consistent affordability expectations for private developers
- Land acquisition plans to support deeply affordable housing
- Explore opportunities to find revenue sources to support deeply affordable housing development
- Long-term investment planning for affordable housing reserve

Integration and connection into municipal plans

- Strategic Plan
- Asset Management Plan
- Long-Range Financial Plan
- Development Charge Study
- Official Plan
- Annual Budget Planning

Reviewing partnerships and aligning resources

- Governance and operational review with KLH Housing Corporation
- Partnership review with the County of Haliburton



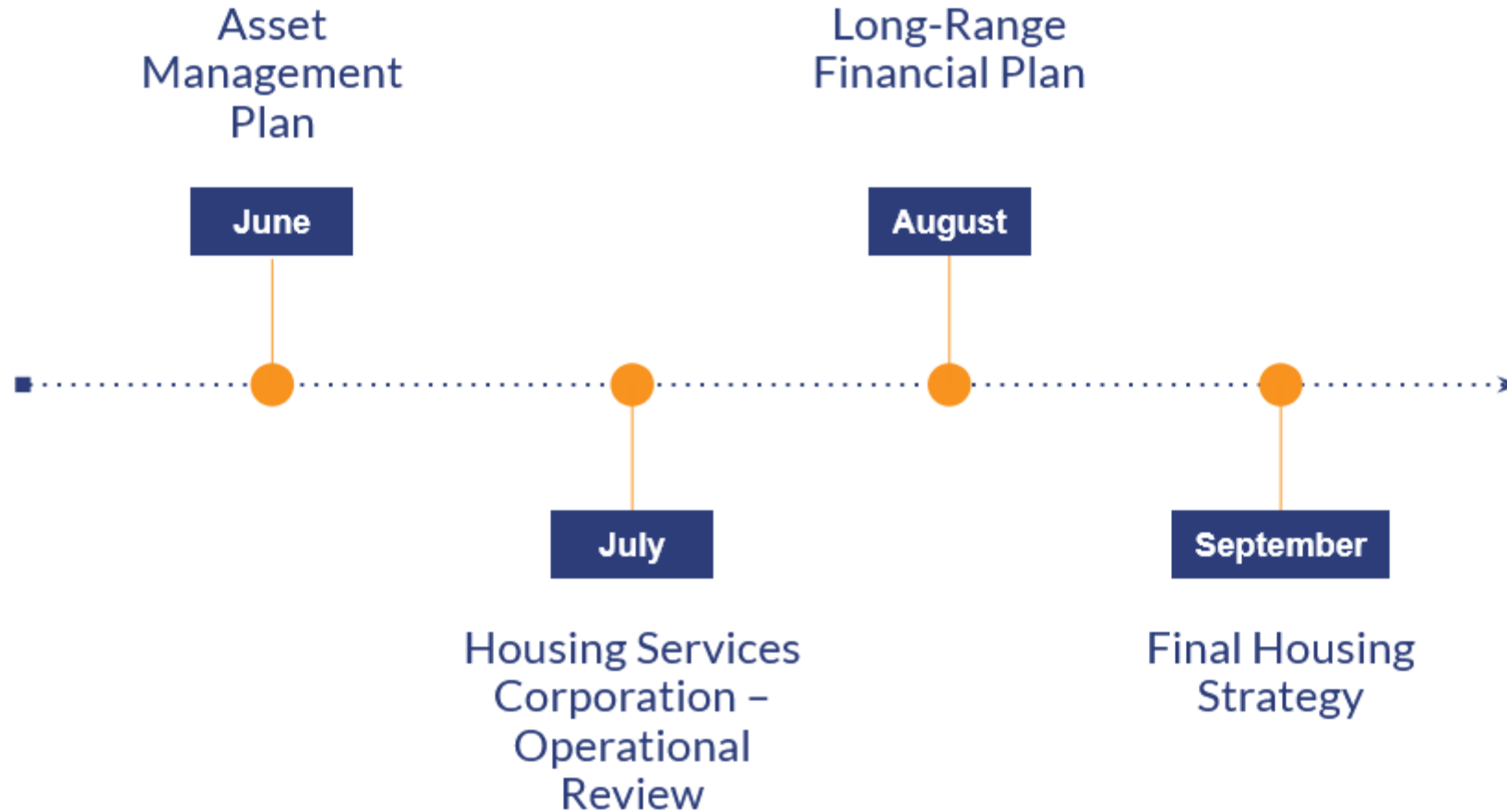
Program enhancement

- Community housing waiting list local priority optimization
- Community housing support plan for vulnerable applicants and tenants
- Improving system capacity for homelessness prevention supports
- Improving capacity for the Housing and Homelessness team
- Implementation of integrated care hub services

Completed and underway

- Encampment protocol
- Increased emergency shelter capacity
- Financial support and renovations of the integrated care hub
- New staff positions for Housing Services
- Supportive housing program review and continued refinement
- Emergency shelter services continued review and enhancement

Next steps



Questions?



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