

COCHRANE DISTRICT SOCIAL SERVICES  
ADMINISTRATION BOARD

10-YEAR HOUSING PLAN UPDATE –  
2021 PROGRESS REPORT



Cochrane District  
Social Services  
Administration Board

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## Introduction

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This is the second progress report for the Phase 2 update (Five Year Review) of A Blueprint for Sustainability, 10-year Housing Plan of the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board. This report provides a summary of achievements and unforeseen challenges faced in 2021.

By completing this review, the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board (CDSSAB) is meeting its obligations set out in the Housing Service Act, 2011, and complies with the 2016 Policy Statement: Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans. While this review process may be a mandatory provincial requirement, regular measuring and reporting of progress towards achieving the Strategic Goals is critical to ensure the plan remains relevant and efforts are focused on the greatest need for the District.

While challenges and ripple effects associated with the COVID-19 pandemic continued to affect CDSSAB Housing plans and operations in 2021, Housing staff continued to adjust to “a new normal” and worked hard to ensure the safety of staff, tenants and the vulnerable populations we serve.

Homelessness issues have existed for many years before the plan but they have been exacerbated by the pandemic and are at critical levels today. Along with municipalities and Indigenous partners, CDSSAB continues to face extraordinary challenges to meet the needs of those living with mental health and/or addiction issues. To that end, CDSSAB is appreciative of having received funding through several provincial programs. Many of these programs gave CDSSAB, as Service Manager, the flexibility to work with community partners to determine how best to serve and support the people of the Cochrane District during these unprecedented times.

In 2021, CDSSAB was able to advance important goals, including securing more permanent emergency shelter space for vulnerable individuals, supporting households in rental arrears due to pandemic impacts on employment, hiring additional mental health and addictions workers and making much needed capital repairs to improve the safety and comfort of tenants.

Cochrane DSSSAB is proud of its housing staff, who have continued to forge ahead and have come up with creative solutions to meet the challenges faced through this period of continued uncertainty.



*Figure 1 - CDSSAB Property at 58 Lakeview, Timmins ON*

## Summary of CDSSAB's 10-Year Housing Plan

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The District of Cochrane's 10-Year Housing Plan, **A Blueprint for Sustainability** (referred to hereafter as the Plan) was developed in collaboration with community partners, supported by extensive consultation with a wide range of stakeholders and residents representing the interests of people who are at different stages along the housing continuum. The Province of Ontario approved the Plan in 2014.

The plan enabled CDSSAB to target limited financial resources to best serve residents, link community partners and build on existing opportunities to secure effective housing, make the best use of existing stock, plan for new housing development, ensure existing housing is in good, safe condition and help prevent the cycle of homelessness.

Phase 2 of the Plan for 2019-2024 took stock of accomplishments between 2014-2019, updated local population and economic data and laid out what remains to be done. The focus of Phase 2 is working to ensure our communities have a full range of housing options that enable people to stay in their communities as they move into adulthood, begin careers and families, and grow older.

While CDSSAB has had to delay some elements of the Plan due to the unforeseen challenges brought forward by the COVID-19 pandemic, the strategic goals of the Plan remain at the core of all activities conducted by CDSSAB housing staff.

### Strategic Goals at a Glance





## 2019-2020 Progress Report

The first progress report for the Phase 2 update (Five Year Review), which provided a summary of achievements for 2019 and 2020, was submitted to the province in accordance with legislative requirements. The report outlined how progress on the Plan was interrupted by the unprecedented and challenging COVID-19 pandemic. For the better part of 2020, CDSSAB was forced to pivot from regular operations. We had to act quickly to adopt new practices, identify emerging issues, develop new strategies to ensure the safety of the vulnerable population, tenants and staff, and ensure the continuity of daily operations.



*Figure 2 - CDSSAB Property at 12 McPherson, Kapuskasing ON*

Despite all the challenges presented by COVID-19, CDSSAB housing staff made a lot of progress toward advancing the important goals laid out in our 10-year Housing Plan including providing emergency housing for vulnerable individuals, establishing the HousingNOW program and the acquisition of numerous properties to add more affordable housing for the long-term. In 2019 and 2020, CDSSAB also coordinated continuous coordinated and collaborative efforts with a variety of stakeholders. This work continues with staff building on existing partnerships and developing new ones to reflect the broad range of services necessary to create safe and sustainable housing.

## Ongoing Challenges

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### COVID-19

As the COVID-19 situation continued to evolve throughout 2021, Housing Services remained at the forefront and adapted many new practices to ensure the safety and wellbeing of its tenants and employees.

Practices adopted by Housing since the onset of COVID-19 pandemic to ensure the safety of tenants and staff include:

- Enhanced cleaning protocol at all Senior residential buildings that ensures all common surfaces such as door handles, handrails, elevator buttons and laundry facilities are cleaned three times daily, seven days a week
- Installed hand sanitizing stations at all entrances to Senior buildings and CDSSAB offices
- Paused the use of common rooms and using scheduling for laundry facility use in place at all Senior buildings
- Enhanced cleaning protocol implemented in all CDSSAB offices

- Trained staff in the use of required PPE as per the most current Porcupine Health Unit guidelines
- Instructed staff who are able to effectively perform their duties from home to continue to do so
- Continued to perform wellness calls to seniors and families to ensure their safety, health and well-being
- Programmed Air Makeup Units in Senior buildings and offices to operate on a modified schedule to maximize air exchange
- Updated signage at senior buildings continually as per current Public Health Unit (PHU) guidelines, with memos being hand delivered to senior and family units
- Adjusted training for summer students from group setting to individual learning on computer and question and answer testing. Training includes added feature of COVID-19 best safety practices
- Modified summer student duties to maintain COVID-19 safe practices
- Directed staff and contractors to perform only emergency work in units, with other work being deferred to when PHU guidelines allow
- Modified staff deployment for move out repairs and cleaning to allow for social distancing
- Hired qualified personnel to perform COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests in congregate care settings and emergency shelter settings to protect vulnerable population. Have successfully identified positive cases that were missed through regular screening protocols. See more under [Funding Sources](#)

CDSSAB Housing staff are continually working to find new and innovative ways to stay ahead of the ever-changing health crisis.

## Impact of Supply Chain and Inflation

The COVID-19 pandemic had a disruptive impact on many areas, including supply chains. This resulted in the rise of shipping and production costs and scarcity of certain construction materials due to labour shortages. In turn, this caused a steep rise in property and maintenance costs. In 2021, economic forecasts were also predicting the rise of interest rates to curb inflation.



*Figure 3 - Vacant lot purchased for development on 4th St. and 4th Ave in Cochrane, ON*

All these factors, combined with the fact that there is very limited government funding support for new construction projects, has meant a significant slow down in the CDLHC's ambitious plans for new acquisitions, renovations and affordable housing creation in the District.

## Rapid Housing Initiative Applications

In March of 2021, the CDLHC was notified that all four applications for the CMHC Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) were not approved. While CMHC stressed that the applications were strong and of high priority, they were not approved due to the projects not being close enough to being “shovel-ready” – something that is difficult to achieve with limited amounts of pre-development funding available through government and sector grant programs. CMHC staff also mentioned that there was significant interest in the RHI program with funding requests exceeding \$4 billion dollars for the \$ 500 million available.

The CDLHC projects featured in the applications were:

- **457 Wilcox St. in Timmins (retrofit project)** – In 2020, CDSSAB initiated a partnership with North Eastern Ontario Family Services (NEOFACS) to renovate existing school infrastructure to add transitional units for vulnerable youths aged 16 to 21. This project was initially delayed due to difficult construction market conditions caused by COVID-19.
- **Nosov Dr. vacant lots in Iroquois Falls (new construction)** – This land was donated by the municipality and CDSSAB has been exploring the construction of a new group home in partnership with Community Living Iroquois Falls. Community Living provides bilingual individualized services to persons with developmental disabilities, to facilitate full participation and inclusion in their community.
- **107 Aurora Ave. in Cochrane (retrofit project)** – This land includes a vacant administrative building and is currently owned privately. CDLHC initiated negotiations with the owner for the retrofit and subsequent sale of the land and structure which could potentially add 16 new units and an additional six modular homes.
- **MacLean Dr. vacant lot in Timmins (new construction)** – In alignment with the CDLHC strategy to create new stock across the housing spectrum including market rent homes, the lot at Maclean Drive and Victoria Ave was acquired in December 2020. The lot is suited for the construction of two residential four-plexes (8 new units). Some engineering and soil sample work was conducted in 2021 for pre-development purposes.

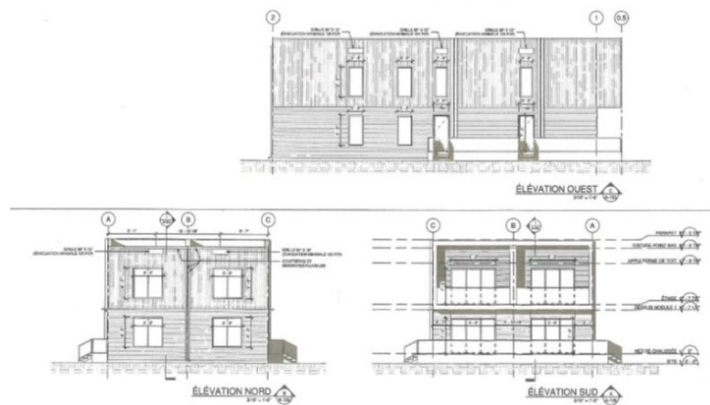


Figure 4 - Conceptual drawings for the proposed two new four-plexes in on MacLean Drive in Timmins

CDLHC will continue to look at all options to make these projects become a reality.



## Pause on Evictions

Since the onset of COVID-19, the Province of Ontario has introduced a number of measures to protect residential tenants. These measures include a rent freeze for 2021 and a suspension on residential evictions for non-payment of rent to ensure people are not forced to leave their homes during the provincial declaration of emergency and while stay-at-home-orders were in place. This was the second time in less than 12 months that the Province placed a pause on residential evictions.

Since many tenants faced a reduction of hours of work or layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic, CDSSAB felt it was important to act with compassion when working with tenants in arrears situations. To that end, CDSSAB applied the following:

- Employing proactive communication with tenants through all available channels on how tenants could report changes to their incomes rather than waiting for the annual review
- Applying a reduction in rents on the first day of the month following the change of income
- Making reasonable efforts to follow up with tenants regarding verification documents such as Record of Employment and letters from employers, and being flexible with deadlines
- Negotiating reasonable payment plans if the tenant is unable able to pay the full amount
- Referring tenants to other Provincial and Federal supports available, as applicable



*Figure 5 - CDSSAB Property, Semi Family Units on Campion St. in Iroquois Falls ON*

In February 2021 CDSSAB estimated that arrears for LHC units throughout the Cochrane District could hit unprecedented levels exceeding \$200,000 – approximately five times the normal average. Housing Providers in the District are experiencing a similar issue. In response, CDSSAB allocated a portion of the allocation received through Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) in March 2021 for rent relief and homelessness prevention.

## Ga Beh Shoo Men's Shelter Cochrane Unexpected Closure

The Ga Beh Shoo Men's Shelter located in Cochrane was designed to provide a temporary short-term home for males over the age of 18 years old. The shelter had six beds and offered culturally appropriate services to Indigenous males who had become homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Gah Be Shoo provided support services to those who attended the shelter for extended periods that promoted self-sufficiency and healthy lifestyles. Additional programming through the Ininew Friendship Center included employment services, job searches, healing circles, traditional knowledge, counselling, education on addictions and dependency along with other related services as requested.

On August 5th, 2021, CDSSAB administration was notified that Ga Beh Shoo Men's Shelter had closed their doors to the shelter for an undetermined length of time. Citing staff shortages, staff issues, and issues with guests, the Executive Director made the decision to cease and review operations.



Figure 6 - Ga Beh Shoo In Shelter for Men, Cochrane ON  
Source: [The Cochrane Times-Post](#)

CDSSAB felt strongly that there is a great community need for the Ga Beh Shoo shelter and the services it provided. In an effort to support shelter administration and encourage them to re-open, CDSSAB:

- Offered additional CHPI funding
- Convened meetings between Living Space Shelter and the Ga Beh Shoo Shelter management and staff to review policy, procedures and standards
- Arranged for Living Space management to visit the shelter to share operational experiences and offer staff respite

Despite these efforts, in August 2021 the Ga Beh Shoo ED confirmed that the Board had resolved to keep the closure of the shelter in effect. The reasoning included lack of funding, staff shortages and lack of training, among other issues.

While the Ga Beh Shoo Board considers all options, including the purchase or construction of a larger facility to qualify for a larger stream of funding, there is no current time frame for re-opening. CDSSAB and Living Space will continue to work closely with Ininew Friendship Center to ensure referrals for individuals requiring emergency shelter are processed and accommodated in Timmins. CDSSAB will continue to work with Ga Beh Shoo Men's Shelter in seeking a short-term and long-term solution to best serve the vulnerable population and meet the emergency shelter needs in Cochrane.

## Enumeration of Homelessness

On August 25th, 2021 CDSSAB along with many community partners conducted a Point-in-Time Count throughout the Cochrane District. Across the District, trained volunteers from community

service providers assisted with administering surveys, answering questions and documenting key information.

Point-in-Time (PiT) count is a strategy to help determine the extent of homelessness in a community at a single point in time. It provides a “snapshot” of the characteristics of people experiencing homelessness, to help better understand the nature and extent of homelessness, to support planning and program delivery to address the issue.

During the August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2021 PiT Count in the CDSSAB region, a total of 242 people participated in the survey (approximate increase of 120% from 2018). A total of 312 people were observed as experiencing homelessness but did not participate in the survey (approximate increase of 180% from 2018).

### Results and Findings

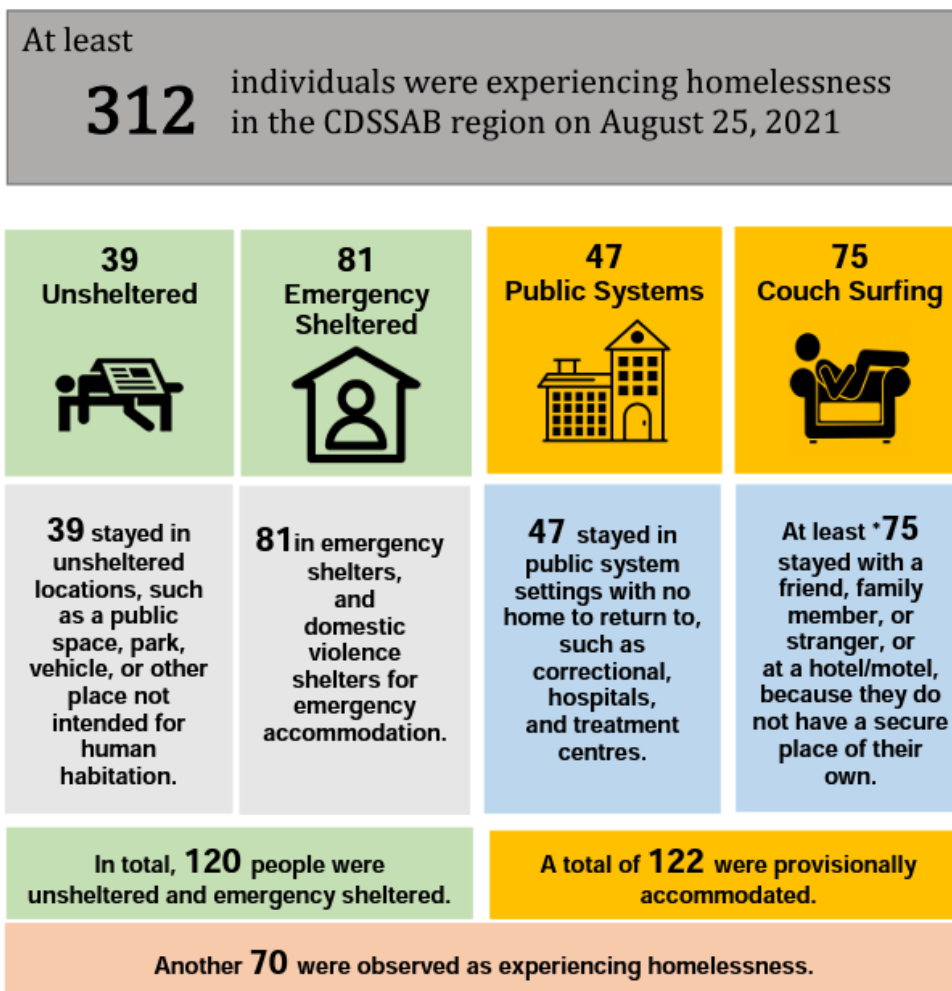


Figure 7 - Source: [PiT Nov 2021 Report](#)

\*The total number of individuals counted to be couch surfing is a gross undercount as it solely relies on the PiT methodology.

One of the required reporting data for the MMAH includes chronicity of homelessness. As per the definition from Reaching Home, chronic homelessness refers to at least six months of homelessness over the past year or 18 months over the past three years. Of the 242 people who completed the survey, 149 (62%) people are experiencing chronic homelessness.

Although not captured in the preceding, and based on survey results, there is a number of people approaching chronic homelessness and others who are experiencing episodic homelessness and at risk of homelessness (i.e. hidden homelessness).

Similar to the 2018 enumeration, a significant finding is of the 242 people who completed the survey, 198 (82%) identify as Indigenous. Of the 198, Timmins has the highest population at 111 (56%), followed by Moosonee at 42 (21 %). It is important to note that of the 198, 28 (14%) of surveyors who identified as Indigenous are incarcerated. On the topic of incarceration, of the 242 survey respondent, 43 (18%) people identified incarceration (prison) as a reason for losing their housing.

The following eight recommendations were developed based on the responses identified through this enumeration project, consistent with the goal of reducing or eliminating homelessness:

- 1) Expand culturally competent supports and housing services for Indigenous people that are developed and administered by and in partnership with Indigenous organizations including Indigenous government, while maintaining good relations and partnerships with other housing service providers in the CDSSAB region.
- 2) Implement and fully operationalize the By-Names List (BNL) and Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) to the entire CDSSAB region.
- 3) Enhance research and understanding of hidden homelessness to tailor systems planning, policy development, and innovative solutions to reflect the needs of this population.
- 4) Work with municipalities to improve and expand public awareness and education about homelessness. Organizations who provide and align with housing and homelessness services are not solely responsible to improve public education; understanding, advocacy, and partnership begin at the municipal level.
- 5) Collaborate with key service providers to address service gaps in both child welfare and corrections systems, particularly to those aging out of foster care as well as those who are incarcerated and preparing to discharge.
- 6) Work and advocate as a region, that is a collective voice that ensures everyone in the CDSSAB region has access to safe, affordable, appropriate, long-term housing.
- 7) Partner with organizations to investigate opportunities for economic development, workforce education promotion and development of affordable housing.
- 8) When preparing for future enumerations, consider lessons learned and conduct a follow up survey with agency partners will provide further insights.

The data collected from the 2021 PiT Count in the CDSSAB region will be used as a benchmark of progress to end homelessness, modifying and creating programs and services to serve the

homeless population, revisiting and updating policies regarding housing and social assistance, and uniting support from the community to collaborate and join in the efforts to reduce homelessness in the CDSSAB region.

## Funding Sources

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Through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, various funding streams have enabled the introduction of new programs to respond to the ongoing need for increased services and supports for the most vulnerable populations including the aged and homeless. These funding streams include:

- Social Service Relief Fund (SSRF)
- Ontario Housing Priority Initiative (OPHI)
- Canada Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)
- Canada Housing Priority Initiative (CHPI)

Funding through these streams has allowed for the introduction of new programs and enhancement of existing programs including:

- **HousingNOW** – Established in 2020, this initiative is based on the values of respect, dignity, hope and collaboration. CDSSAB, Canadian Mental Health Association Cochrane-Timiskaming (CMHA-CT) and Living Space continue to work on procuring suitable permanent housing for emergency shelter patrons via private landlords and current stock. See more updates on [HousingNow below](#).
- **Partnership with CMHA-CT** – additional pandemic funding has allowed for collaborative partnership with CMHA-CT to address the needs of the vulnerable population living with mental health and /or addictions. Programming provides mental health/illness and substance use supports and services, harm reduction, crisis intervention and prevention services. This funding has also supported wrap-around support services for HousingNow participants to ensure continued private tenancy. See further updates under [Mental Health and Homelessness Supports](#).
- **Homelessness Prevention Programs** – Includes the availability of funds for households throughout the District facing eviction for unpaid rent due to hardships caused by reduction in hours of work or layoff as well as utility bank to assist in paying of utility arrears. Additionally, Timmins Native Friendship Center offers life stabilization programs for households in Moosonee.
- **Emergency Shelter Solutions** – Secured motel rooms for individuals facing homelessness after being released from correctional system and individuals living in a congregate or shelter setting that are required to self isolate due to symptoms of COVID-19.



- **Supports for Food Securities** – Food banks and soup kitchens throughout our 13 member communities continue to receive additional funding to secure their supplies to respond to increased need.
- **Antigen Testing** – Funding was used to hire qualified personnel to perform COVID-19 Rapid Antigen Tests. This initiative will mitigate the ongoing risks of COVID-19 for vulnerable individuals in congregate care settings and emergency shelter settings in the District. To date, an average 356 tests have been performed monthly. Testing has resulted in the confirmation of four positive cases that were not identified through regular screening protocols.
- **Capital Projects** – Completed necessary repairs at various locations to ensure the safety of individuals housed. Work included exterior work, interior repairs and fire prevention equipment. See more under [Capital Repairs](#).



Figure 8 - Kapuskasing Food Bank

Thanks to these provincial funding streams and the flexibility around the use of funds, CDSSAB has been able to respond to increased demand for supports and services and distribute funds within the District, where it is most needed.

## Highlighting Opportunities & Success Stories

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### HousingNOW

The COVID-19 crisis created an unforeseen opportunity to develop HousingNOW – an innovative collaboration between several community partners to work towards effectively ending homelessness in the City of Timmins. The program is targeted at emergency shelter patrons who have demonstrated the ability to transition to permanent housing. By developing a network of private landlords through incentives and offering the required



Figure 9 – Source: [CDSSAB](#)

wrap-around services through partnerships with other community agencies, the program aims to ensure the long-term success of the patrons in the program.

CDSSAB continues providing rent supplements, housing allowances, start up kits, first and lasts months rent, repair of damages and regular inspections. To date there are 64 individuals permanently housed through this initiative.

Once individuals have transitioned from homelessness to suitable permanent housing, there is an ongoing challenge to provide tailored and wrap around services to maintain their tenancy. As part of the commitment to sustaining these supports long-term, CDSSAB has remodelled an Ontario Works Case Manager position to provide ongoing Life Stabilization activities that are client-focused. The Case Manager will monitor individual progress with regular check-ins, issue benefits accordingly, collaborate with partners to provide wrap-around services and connect individuals with new community resources, and provide life skills coaching.

Keeping these individuals housed is essential to ending homelessness by 2025.

## Partnership with Canadian Mental Health Association - Cochrane-Timiskaming

CDSSAB continues to face extraordinary challenges, which have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, to meet the needs of those living with mental health and/or addiction issues.



Figure 10 – Source: [CMHA-CT](#)

As part of CDSSAB's ongoing partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association-Cochrane-Timiskaming, a support services Memorandum of Agreement was established in 2021.

The initiatives collaborated on include:

### Multi-disciplinary Support Services Team

CDSSAB will administer and flow funds to cover the costs for a multi-disciplinary team to provide a range of treatments, rehabilitation and support services 24/7 to HousingNow clients. Supports and services outlined in agreement include but are not limited to:

- Providing assistance and supports related to activities of daily living
- Performing 24/7 On-Call duties for crisis intervention
- Assessing risks for harm reduction including suicide, overdose and other safety concerns
- Conducting comprehensive individual assessments to tailor services to individual need
- Acting as liaison between other agencies and services
- Coordinating clinics and services involving specialists as required

- Identifying gaps in short-term and long-term services and determining best course of action
- Advocating on behalf of individuals to ensure continuous services
- Working collaboratively with families and all community partners to complement individual recovery plan
- Achieving outcomes consistent with the HousingNow program objectives
- Reporting service levels and outcomes on a quarterly basis

### Additional Mental Health and Homelessness Supports

On March 10 2021, CDSSAB received an allocation through the provinces Social Services Relief Fund to support mental health and addictions, mitigate continued impacts of the pandemic on the homelessness sector, support households who may be in rental arrears and at risk of becoming homeless, and maintain, monitor and improve infection prevention measures. The funding was earmarked for the following initiatives:

- **Emergency Shelter Solutions** - To help prevent Indigenous women being released from correctional facilities from falling into homelessness, a new initiative was put in place to secure local emergency shelter space. In a model that replicates the HousingNOW program, a block of 10 rooms has been rented at local motel. To start their journey to independent living, wrap around services will be provided on demand targeting mental health, addictions, food security and life stabilization. This program aligns with the agreement CDSSAB entered with CMHA-CT for continued mental health and addiction services to prepare these individuals for the transition to suitable permanent housing. As an individual “graduates” to permanent housing, continued supports are tailored to their needs to ensure success.
- Homelessness and Prevention
  - **Rent Relief:** Approximately 250-350 requests for rent-relief are anticipated once provincial postponement of evictions is lifted and landlords start demanding repayment of arrears.
  - **Supports and Services:** hiring qualified personnel to perform the COVID-19 rapid tests will mitigate ongoing risk for vulnerable individuals in congregate settings and emergency shelters. It is anticipated that tests performed at least once a week in these settings will help prevent asymptomatic individuals from unknowingly spreading COVID-19.

### Hiring Additional Mental Health and Addictions Workers

In January 2021, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced an additional funding allocation through the Social Service Relief Fund to help Service Managers respond to the continued demands for mental health and addictions supports. In Partnership with CMHA Cochrane Timiskaming branch and Timmins Native Friendship Centre, part of this funding was used



Figure 11 - Timmins Native Friendship Centre  
Source: [Timminstoday.com](http://Timminstoday.com)

to hire additional mental health and addictions workers for the remainder of 2020-21 fiscal year.

## Living Space Emergency Shelter

Living Space Emergency Shelter (Living Space) was founded to address homelessness and coordinate services to prevent and end homelessness. Living Space offers emergency accommodations and coordinates with community partners to leverage services for its patrons.

For the past three years, Living Space has been able to secure additional temporary locations as part of its winter services plan to operate a 24-hour overflow warming center during the extremely cold winter months. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Public Health guidelines, Living Space had not been able to secure a location for temporary shelter in the winter of 2020/21. As a result, the CDLHC sought a permanent solution and acquired the property at 316 Spruce Street S in January 2021. This property is well suited for Living Space operations as well as all future overflow and warming space needs during cold winter months. Day programs can be offered in the same building completely independent from the shelter area.



*Figure 12 - 316 Spruce St. S in Timmins, new home of Living Space Shelter.*

From May to October 2021, CDLHC undertook renovations at 316 Spruce St. S, which included upgrading and/or adding:

- Fire suppression and alarm system upgrades to meet code
- Accessible washrooms
- Showers
- Laundry facilities
- Healthcare room
- Registration desk and entrance on the day-shelter section
- Perimeter fencing

A long-term lease and occupancy with Living Space started on November 2021. In 2021, Living Space served a total of 267 unique patrons.



## Partnership with Borealis Container Farming

In 2021, CDSSAB administration established a collaborative partnership with Borealis Container Farming for the development of an indoor community garden. The indoor garden could operate and produce year-round to help bring members of all ages from the community together, teach the community about healthy food choices and produce healthy foods at affordable prices. CDSSAB provided the space for the garden at 33 Sterling in Timmins, a property with an existing 62-unit seniors building and a large unused open tract of land. The property is also adjacent to Ecole Catholique St-Gerard and a short distance from the Sterling Families project consisting of 66 family units.

CDSSAB executed a lease agreement with Borealis for five years at no cost and took care of securing building and planning permits. Borealis was responsible for all start-up capital and operational costs as well as developing the program and delivery model.

As of the winter of 2021, the program is fully operational and producing fresh produce for various community programs that benefit low-income families in Timmins.



*Borealis container farms for indoor community garden at 33 Sterling Ave, Timmins*

## Spruce Hill Lodge Acquisition

The need for supportive housing options for seniors and individual with disabilities is high in Timmins and region, and the demand for affordable supportive housing for seniors far exceeds the supply. Spruce Hill Lodge offers lodging and services for seniors and persons with disabilities of low-to-moderate-income who require support to live independently and can accommodate up to 55 tenants in its facility in South Porcupine.





Figure 13 - Spruce Hill Lodge retirement home, 200 Bruce Ave in South Porcupine

In the summer of 2021, the Spruce Hill Lodge Board of Directors approached CDSSAB/CDLHC to discuss a plan for the acquisition of the facility and operations. Spruce Hill Lodge had been facing various challenges and the Board felt that the best way to ensure continued operations was to have CDSSAB/CDLHC assume operations.

CDSSAB/CDLHC staff put together a plan to save the operation and continue to house the existing tenants. The plan included:

- Transfer title of the property to CDLHC for \$1
- Transfer remaining mortgage to CDLHC
- CDLHC to replace existing Board of Directors who no longer wish to serve
- CDLHC to take over property management and maintenance

The plan is for the new ownership and operational model to be in place by spring 2022. While the CDSSAB/CDLHC will be the new owner, the existing not-for-profit entity will remain and will continue to operate the facility with its existing employees.

## Partnership with Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services



Figure 14 - Source: [OAHS](#)

Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS) offers culturally appropriate services within the housing continuum for safe and affordable housing. Their client programs and services are innovative, evidence based and designed to meet the unique needs of the community they serve. In September 2020, CDSSAB started discussions with OAHS regarding establishing a partnership that would result in an effective

and more efficient use of shared resources, reduce homelessness, increase options for housing of the Indigenous population, and reduce waitlist managed by CDSSAB. In addition, the presence of OHAS properties in Moosonee creates opportunities to piggyback contractor services for better rates.

In 2021, CDSSAB continued to work with OAHS to maximize resources and better serve Indigenous people in the District. This includes having OAHS representatives sit at the HousingNOW table and working together to complete various funding applications for programs for programs aimed at better serving the Indigenous population within the District.

## By-Names List and Coordinated Access System

One of the recommendations that came out of the [2021 Enumeration of Homelessness](#) conducted in August 2021 as was mandated by the province, was to implement and fully operationalize the By-Names List (BNL) and Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) to the entire CDSSAB region.

The BNL is a real-time list of people (who provide consent to be added) experiencing homelessness throughout the Cochrane District. Having a centralized list helps to better connect people with the services and support they need to end their experience of homelessness. The BNL data will also provide a better understanding of homelessness within the District, allow tracking of changes in service needs and support advocacy for the housing resources needed to end homelessness.

The following work was completed by CDSSAB staff in 2021 to ensure a functional BNL was in place by January 1<sup>st</sup> 2022:

- Established several processes and policies for BNL intakes, regular updates and referrals.
- Developed and delivered BNL referral training to CDSSAB Staff and partner agencies, with sessions scheduled monthly for new staff and agencies.
- Created and shared a consent form to allow for client information to be shared with other service providers for the coordination of services.

CDSSAB aims to have the majority of service providers across multiple service sectors in the Cochrane District trained on BNL referrals by September 2022.

As per federal requirements as part of the Reaching Home Strategy, Living Space, as Community Entity for Reaching Home, successfully implemented HIFIS 4 for the Cochrane District in 2021. Moving forward, CDSSAB aims to have HIFIS 4 administration transferred to CDSSAB, develop the foundation for HIFIS governance, and implement HIFIS access and training to core partners in the District by the end of 2022.

The Reaching Home Strategy also stipulated the creation of a Community Advisory Board (CAB) to act as an advisory body providing guidance on issues of homelessness for Timmins. The CAB will provide input on service, planning, funding and the coordination of the homelessness services system. While work to establish the Board started in 2021, CDSSAB aims to have the CAB be representative of Cochrane District by the fall of 2022.

In 2021, CDSSAB also started working towards yet another requirement under the federal Reaching Home Strategy – the establishment of a Coordinated Access System (CAS). CDSSAB aims to have the system’s guide developed and the CAS operationalized with CDSSAB’s Core Partners by end of 2022 or early 2023.

## Emergency Shelter Standards

Emergency shelters are an integral part of the housing continuum that includes homelessness prevention, transitional support, subsidized housing, rent supplements, supportive housing and outreach services. With supports in place, shelters can act as a gateway for homeless individuals into to transitional, supportive and permanent housing.

CDSSAB partners with community agencies to deliver emergency shelter services that foster choice, respect diversity and offer services to help homeless people. The CDSSAB has a responsibility to ensure that patrons are housed in shelters that meet acceptable standards in terms of safety, accountability and the provision of cost effective services.

In order to uphold this responsibility, CDSSAB has developed a shelter standard to provide shelter operators and residents with a clear set of expectations and guidelines for the provision of shelters services in the District. All emergency shelters funded by the CDSSAB are required to adhere to the shelter standards.

This document is not meant to dictate shelter policy or operations but rather to provide a clear set of standards for all stakeholders including clients and can be used as a tool to identify where policy and procedures need to be modified or developed.

The Emergency Shelter Standard is guided by the following principles:

- 1) **People Centered Approach** – An approach that provides accessible, quality services that focus on positive results that include income security, sustainable housing, ongoing support services and other measures to ensure self sufficiency
- 2) **Outcome Focused** – Services will be monitored, evaluated and continuously improved to ensure acceptable performance and accountability
- 3) **Partnership Based** – Build on existing partnerships with community support groups, volunteers, neighbours and CDSSAB as they are key to the success to maximize local resources
- 4) **Fiscal Responsibility** – Intended outcomes outlined in Shelter Standard will be measured in regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness of existing programming and services
- 5) **Diversity and Inclusion** – All individuals will receive equal treatment. Programs, services and initiatives will reflect experiences and input from individuals with lived experience of homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

The Emergency Shelter Standard will assist CDSSAB in ensuring the delivery of safe, accountable and cost-effective shelter services for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

**CDLHC**

The Cochrane District Local Housing Corporation (CDLHC) is a development entity with the goal of addressing gaps between affordable housing supply and demand. The business of the corporation is to create new affordable housing stock, maintain current CDLHC assets, and to generate funds to be invested in the creation of new affordable housing. Furthermore, the CDLHC was specifically created to meet the legislated requirements under the Housing Services Act, 2012, and implement remedies that address the affordable housing needs presented in the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Capital Repairs

**Exterior Renovations at 183-189 Fifth Avenue, Timmins**

The January 2021 COCHI funding allocation was designated for use of exterior renovations at the 183-189 Fifth Avenue, Timmins, Ontario, a property recently acquired by the CDLHC. This residential property consists of three buildings with a total of eleven affordable units. The property is in the downtown core and is strategically located to provide transitional housing units with easy access to essential support services. The buildings needed significant outdoor repair including siding installation, window replacement, exterior door replacement and installation of fencing. Renovations are now fully complete.

**Renovations at 71 Main Street, South Porcupine and 45 Spruce Street South**

In January 2021, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced an additional funding allocation through the Social Service Relief Fund to help Service Managers respond to the continued demands for mental health and addictions supports.

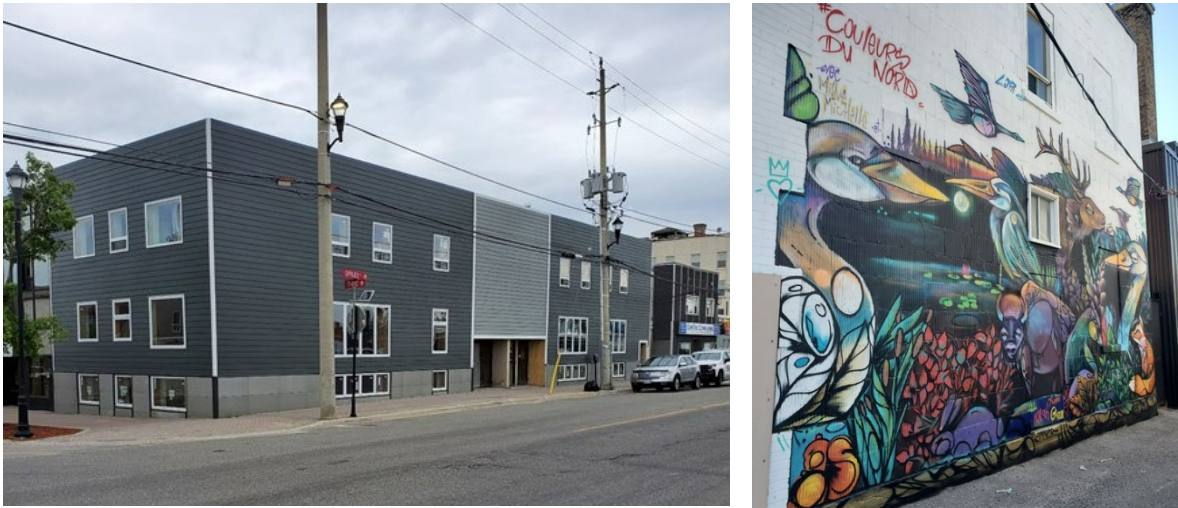


*Figure 15 - Sample Affordable Apartment at 71 Main Street, South Porcupine*

CDSSAB is appreciative that the ministry has allowed for flexible and creative solutions for the funding that are tailored to the community needs. This funding was used for two subsidized housing properties, which include residents in need of support services for mental health and addiction issues.

These include:

- 1) Renovations of rental units at 71 Main Street, South Porcupine, including the installation of security system and secure entrance. 71 Main Street was acquired by CDLHC in August 2020. The installation of the security system and secure entrance will ensure the safety of all tenants residing in the building. Renovations are now fully complete.
- 2) Exterior renovations and secure vestibule at 45 Spruce Street South. 45 Spruce Street South is another property acquired by CDLHC in August 2020. This building is a mix of four commercial units and seven residential units. The exterior of the building needed significant repair. These renovations are now fully complete.



*45 Spruce St. S., Timmins, ON façade and community project mural on the north exterior wall*

## Property Acquisitions & New Construction

### **316 Spruce Street S. Timmins**

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Living Space Emergency Homelessness Shelter was able to secure additional temporary locations as part of its winter services plan to operate a 24-hour overflow warming center during the extremely cold winter months. However, in 2020, Living Space has not been able to secure a location for temporary shelter due to Public Health restrictions. As a result, the CDLHC sought a permanent solution and found 316 Spruce Street S. This property is well suited for Living Space operations, including all future overflow and warming space needs during cold winter months. The building features open-concept spaces, offices, kitchen area, and numerous accessible washrooms. Day programs can also be offered in



the same building completely independent from the shelter area. The acquisition had closing date of January 11, 2021.

### **303 Sixth St. in Cochrane**

A Purchase and Sale Agreement was accepted on June 22, 2021. This property is a two-storey residential apartment complex consisting of nine residential units (market rent) with large parking area.



*Figure 16 - 303 Sixth Street, Cochrane ON*

### **191 Fourth Avenue in Cochrane**

In collaboration with Living Space, CDLHC submitted an application to United Way Muskoka for their Reaching Home capital funding program. The funding was requested for the construction of a new six-plex to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. The application was successful and a maximum of \$500,000 was approved in the fall of 2021. This new development is planned for completion by September 2022. This initiative is meant to add more shelter space to be accessed by Living Space or Innew Friendship Center.



NORTH EAST PERSPECTIVE



*Figure 17 - conceptual drawing for the for the new six-plex construction through the Reaching Home Capital Grant, currently under construction on the corner of 4th Street and 4th Avenue in Cochrane, ON*

## Lot at MacLean Drive and Victoria Ave

Lot was purchased in late 2020, well ahead of anticipated date. The lot is suited for the construction of 2 residential four-plexes. While the Rapid Housing Initiative application was not successful, CDSSAB has this project ready for any future grant programs.

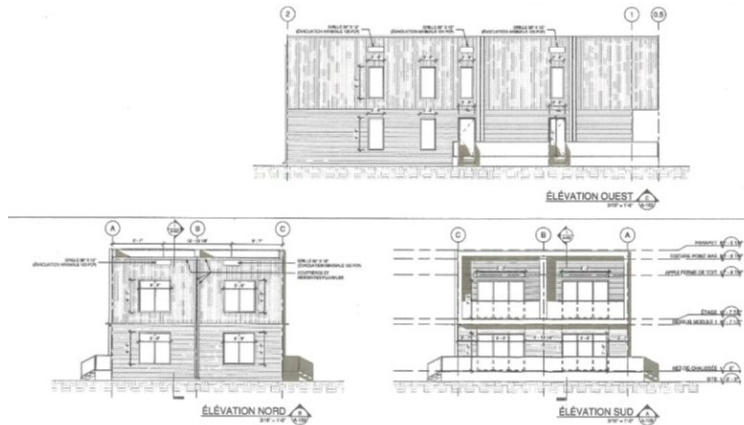


Figure 18 - Conceptual drawings for the proposed 2 new 4 plexes in on MacLean Drive in Timmins

## Looking Ahead

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### 2022 Housing Services – Capital Asset Management Plan

CDSSAB completed Building Condition Assessments in early 2021 to help determine the capital investment needs for major repair, renewal, compliance, and upgrades in all facilities.

Based on the data, CDSSAB is projecting approximately \$21M in renewal requirements over the next 5 years. This is due in large part the age of our portfolio. A plan was formulated for 2022 with a total budget of \$1,228,500.

### End of Mortgages

In late 2021, CDSSAB administration engaged with Housing Services Corporation to complete an End of Operating Agreements (EOA) analysis and recommended strategies for the Board's consideration. A key component of the strategy will be establishing a formal action plan to work with Non-Profits and Co-ops to make informed decisions for the long-term planning of their organizations.



This plan will also advance the CDSSAB **A Blueprint for Sustainability, Housing Plan 2019-2024**, specifically Strategic Goal #3: *Ensuring the Long-Term Viability and Sustainability of the Existing Community Housing Stock* and will support the following objectives:

- Establish an efficient, sustainable and collaborative community housing system by strengthening the capacity of the non-profit sector, and
- Work with housing providers to safeguard the ongoing operations of units (with federal agreement set to expire) as affordable options for low-income households.

### Value-for Money audit aimed at Homelessness

In June 2021 the Office of the Auditor General of Ontario commissioned a Value-for Money audit aimed at Homelessness in Ontario. Four Service Managers including Toronto, Ottawa, Sudbury and Cochrane District and one Indigenous Program Administrator, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services participated in the audit.

CDSSAB staff worked closely with Audit Committee staff and shared documentation including:

- Program operating policies and guidelines regarding shelter, homelessness services and homelessness prevention
- Detailed breakdown of specific programs/services provided through Canada Homeless Prevention Initiative (CHPI), Homes for Good (HFG) for 3 fiscal years ending 2020/2021
- Detailed breakdown of Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF) programs that were funded
- MOUs with 3rd party service providers
- 10-Year Housing Plan Update - 2019/2020 Progress Report
- Additional program details that provide related services to homelessness prevention

The Office of the Auditor General released their findings in the **Value-for-Money Audit: Homelessness, in December 2021**. CDSSAB Administration will review and take into consideration the recommendations to develop, standardize, and improve service delivery.

### Township of Opasatika Proposal – Stage 2

In 2019, The Township of Opasatika presented CDSSAB a proposal to create four – two-bedroom affordable residential units in a vacant school. Through the Ontario Priority Housing Initiative, CDSSAB supported the development of two of the four new units (Stage 1). Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Stage 1 was completed in early 2021.



Figure 19 - Opasatika Community Hub

In September 2021, the Township of Opatatika presented CDSSAB with a proposal to pursue the development of the two other proposed units (Stage 2). The proposal was approved and CDSSAB awarded \$225,000 to the Township through the Ontario Priority Housing Initiative (OPHI). The development is expected to be completed in 2023/24.

## Goal 1: Strengthen the Housing System to Support Vulnerable Households to Achieve Housing Stability

\*\*Anticipated timelines have been identified for each activity. Short term refers to the next two years (2020-2022) and longer term indicates work that will be more than a two-year period and by 2024.

### Objective 1: Expand and maintain homelessness prevention strategies

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
1.1	Seek additional opportunities to collaborate with organizations that are supporting individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, using CHPI data to inform new approaches in relation to addressing homelessness within the community.	Short-term	<p>Partnered with various local organizations to provide emergency shelters during the COVID-19 crisis, as well as to launch new HousingNOW initiative in 2020. This involved ongoing collaboration among partner agencies through the formation of a working group and weekly meetings to address everchanging needs throughout the pandemic.</p> <p>Established support services agreement with Canadian Mental Health Association – Cochrane-Timiskaming in 2021 which includes funding multi-disciplinary Support Services Team and other supports to help keep people with mental health and addictions issues housed.</p>
1.2	In partnership with stakeholders and community agencies, undertake a homelessness enumeration count every two years to support and inform the planning of homelessness in communities across the District. The CDSSAB is targeting the next homelessness enumeration for 2020/2021.	Short-term	<p>Homelessness in Cochrane District: 2018 Remuneration was submitted to CDSSAB in February 2019.</p> <p>On August 25th, 2021 CDSSAB along with many community partners conducted a Point in Time Count throughout the Cochrane District. An increase of approximately 180% was observed in people experiencing homelessness, as compared to 2018.</p>



1.3	In partnership with Living Space, community agencies and relevant stakeholders, continue to participate in the biannual Homelessness Summit (2021) to address and share solutions to homelessness.	Short-term	Postposed due to COVID-19 pandemic.
1.4	Develop protocols with institutions such as hospitals and jails to prevent individuals becoming homeless upon release.	Long-term	In 2021, a new initiative was put in place similar to HousingNOW to help prevent Indigenous women being released from correctional facilities from falling into homelessness. The initiative includes providing rooms at a local motel and helping clients to start their journey to independent living with wrap around services targeting mental health, addictions, food security and life stabilization.

**Objective 2: Meet the need for emergency and crisis accommodation for transients and the homeless**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
2.1	Explore opportunities to increase additional shelter in the District such as renovating and rehabilitating CDSSAB purchased property adjacent to Living Space to support the provision of additional 22 transition/emergency beds.	Short Term	Living Space – renovations started in 2020; purchased building adjacent to current shelter and several other properties on the block.  Living space was able to offer 18 beds as of September 2020 due to distancing requirements as a result of Public Health guidelines during COVID.
2.2	Work with emergency shelters and transitional housing providers to transition to a housing-first focused approach to service delivery.	Short Term	Ongoing including HousingNOW initiative, which is in line with the housing-first approach.

			Also, 2021 initiative to help prevent Indigenous women being released from correctional facilities from falling into homelessness by providing emergency shelter rooms in a local hotel and services to help them start their journey to independent living.
2.3	Work with our partnership agencies to develop solutions for youth homelessness.	Long Term	In Feb 2020, CDSSAB met with North Eastern Ontario Family and Children’s Services (NEOFACS) to discuss collaborative partnership for the development and expansion of their current children’s residential programs.  A Rapid Housing Initiative funding applications was also submitted in 2020 to fund 100% of the development costs to create 5 independent youth units at NEOFAC Wilcox St. property. While the application was not successful, CDSSAB continues to look for options to make this project a reality.
2.4	Develop protocols for moving individuals from homeless shelters to supportive/affordable housing solutions.	Long Term	Ongoing including HousingNOW initiative, which is in line with housing-first approach.

**Objective 3: Develop an ongoing relationship and work with the Indigenous community and First Nations in the CDSSAB service area to better serve and identify housing options and supports that work for the indigenous population, in particular the homeless and youth**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
3.1	Through the recent formal MOU with the Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Kapuskasing Indian Friendship Centre, and Ininew Friendship Centre, the CDSSAB will collaborate on relevant policy and program areas related to urban indigenous people in the District in particular: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>emphasis placed on addressing the lack of affordable housing and culturally appropriate housing for urban indigenous residents</li> </ul>	Short Term	Ongoing.  In September 2020, CDSSAB also started discussions with OAHS regarding establishing a partnership that would result in an effective and more efficient use of shared resources, reduce homelessness, increase options for housing of the Indigenous population, and reduce waitlist managed by CDSSAB.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>partner to deliver children and youth services and programming to urban indigenous communities, develop a joint strategy to address human trafficking, especially as it affects urban indigenous community in the Cochrane District</li> </ul>		<p>Provided funding in 2021 to Timmins Native Friendship Center to support life stabilization programs for households in Moosonee.</p> <p>In Partnership with CMHA Cochrane Timiskaming branch and Timmins Native Friendship Centre, used SSRF funding to hire additional mental health and addictions workers for the remainder of 2020-21 fiscal year.</p>
3.2	<p>CDSSAB in partnership with the Nishnawabe Aski Nation (NAN) and through the MOU will participate in the NAN-CDSSAB Collaboration Steering Committee and will work together to address priority areas to ensure adequate housing for all families and individuals in the District, focusing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating and improving infrastructure to enable an adequate amount of housing</li> <li>identifying mechanisms to improve communication between NAN and the CDSSAB</li> <li>streamlining and expediting progress in eradicating homelessness</li> <li>developing strategies to encourage development and engagement from First Nations, CDSSAB and NAN community members</li> </ul>	Short Term	Ongoing.
3.3	<p>The CDSSAB through Living Space will support the implementation of the Bail Bed Program for Indigenous People being delivered by NAN, which will include creating 3 to 6 transitional housing units.</p>	Short Term	<p>In February 2019 the Inninew Friendship Centre in partnership with Living Space submitted a proposal to the Attorney General for the provision of 4 units to be used for patrons awaiting court proceedings. The total budget is \$182,740 (includes residential services)</p>

**Objective 4: Support victims of domestic violence**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
4.1	Actively support victims of domestic violence to ensure they have access to housing and support services working in partnership with Timmins & Area Women in Crisis, Centre Passerelle pour Femmes, and Tranquility House Women’s Shelter- Tri Agency Violence against Women Collaboration Committee.	Short Term	Ongoing.

**Objective 5: Help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
5.1	Based on funding availability, provide housing allowances to support low- and moderate-income owners households to eliminate major repair need and to make accessibility renovations thus enabling households to maintain homeownership.	Short Term	Ongoing.
5.2	Support households to achieve homeownership by providing financial assistance for a down payment to purchase a house in the CDSSAB service area.	Short Term	Ongoing.
5.3	Implement the Expression of Interest for the OPHI fund for the purposes of creating new rental housing, supporting unit modification and provision of down payment assistance.	Short Term	In September 2019, CDSSAB issued an Expression of Interest for the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI).  CDSSAB received 3 proposals, all three submissions were completed:  1. Opasatika Township: proposal to develop former school property with two family residential units.

			<p>Part of the school has already been developed as a Community Hub. Stage 2 – the construction of 2 additional units was approved in Sept 2021.</p> <p>2. Town of Hearst Non-Profit Housing Corporation: request for replacement of old windows and baseboard heaters with improved efficiency models expected to deliver a reduction in utility costs and improve comfort for tenants. Wheelchair lift will also be replaced to meet accessibility requirements.</p> <p>3. Ontario Renovates Program: remaining funds will be used to assist individual households in the District for qualifying renovation projects.</p>
5.4	Explore options that may support providing a deeper affordability incentive or housing allowance to enable households to maintain their housing status.	Long Term	Ongoing.

**Objective 6: Addressing the needs of the senior population**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
6.1	Pursue a partnership with the Ontario Health Team to bring sustainable support services to the Cadence Residence in the Town of Cochrane.	Short Term	Delayed due to the pandemic.

**Objective 7: Create opportunities for residents in the District to improve the quality of life, support healthy living through the provision of support services and programs**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
7.1	CDSSAB is committed to developing solutions for youth and will work with community partners and the Youth	Short Term	In progress.



	Wellness Hub to support service provision and program and supports for youth.		
7.2	Cochrane DSSAB will participate in the multi-sectorial advisory committee with representatives from health and mental health services, educational services, community and social services to advance the development of the Community Safety Well-Being Plans.	Short Term	Ongoing.

## Goal 2: Strengthen the Housing System to Support Vulnerable Households to Achieve Housing Stability

### Objective 1: Create situations that support local affordable housing development at the local & municipal level

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
1.1	By 2021, the CDSSAB will develop dedicated human resource capacity to support a housing development function to expedite development initiatives supported through the CDLHC.	Short Term	Complete - Housing Development Manager hired in July 2020.
1.2	To respond efficiently to emerging funding opportunities from upper levels of government, the CDSSAB will identify and maintain a list of priorities and properties for new affordable housing developments.	Short Term	Four applications were submitted for the Federal government's Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI), including projects in Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Cochrane. Total ask was approximately \$10M. While the projects were not approved in the first phase, CDSSAB is hopeful there could be funding available in the future.  CDLHC also keeps a list of prospects for new developments and retrofits.
1.3	Explore innovative approaches and models for the provision of affordable housing (i.e., tiny homes, modular homes, mixed income) and market profit for	Long Term	Ongoing.

	purpose housing to be able to reinvest funds into new housing.		
1.4	Working in partnership with school boards and the local schools in Hearst, Iroquois Falls and Opasatika, CDSSAB will explore opportunities for re-purposing school infrastructure to increase affordable ownership and rental options in the District.	Long Term	In progress.
1.5	CDSSAB will explore innovative opportunities similar to the management of Fairway Village that enables profit-for purpose, where revenue generated is put back into operating/capital budgets.	Long Term	Ongoing.
1.6	CDSSAB through the CDLHC will explore and identify a range of financing vehicles that can enable the development of new affordable housing across the District to meet community needs.	Long Term	<p>In 2020, the CDLHC purchased a number of local properties suitable for renovation, in order to meet current and future local needs. A partnership with TD Commercial Banking Services provided financing with favourable financing options.</p> <p>Note that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a disruptive impact on many areas including supply chains, inflation and interest rates, making new developments more difficult to pursue.</p>

**Objective 2: Engage private developers and facilitate public-private partnerships in housing development where the risks and profits are shared across partners and reinvested into additional development opportunities**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
2.1	CDSSAB will seek opportunities to partner with private developers (i.e., Praztek Construction) to forge a public private partnerships model and/or joint venture that supports affordable housing development for the District.	Long Term	Discussions are ongoing. Letters of support were provided to developers bidding on the City of Timmins RFP for the Melrose Heights and Park Ave. subdivision developments.
2.2	Create a private developer and homebuilder roundtable to increase private involvement in affordable housing development across the District.	Long Term	In planning stages.

**Objective 3: Leverage opportunities and land to support future affordable housing development**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
3.1	CDSSAB through the CDLHC will explore and investigate opportunities to secure new sites, surplus land and acquire unused infrastructure for strategic real estate purchase that could be utilized for affordable housing development.	Short Term	Work is ongoing though setbacks expected due to rising costs of real estate as a result of the pandemic.
3.2	Explore future development opportunities to be “shovel” ready to create additional affordable housing units as new Federal-Provincial funding is made available.	Short Term	Four applications were submitted for the Federal government’s Rapid Housing Initiative, including projects in Timmins, Iroquois Falls and Cochrane. Total ask was approx. \$10M. While the projects were not approved in the first phase, CDSSAB is hopeful there could be funding available in the future.
3.3	CDSSAB will work with the Ministry of Education and local school boards to establish a notification process	Short Term	Ongoing.

	that ensures CDSSAB receives warning regarding the disposal of surplus school properties.		
3.4	Assess the potential and feasibility for purchasing derelict houses in the District that can be converted into housing units.	Long Term	Ongoing.

**Objective 4: Build healthy communities that provide a range of housing options to meet the physical, social and economic needs of District residents**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
4.1	Initiate a new partnership with NEOFACS to assess opportunities for renovating existing school infrastructure to create 8 to 10 units for youth (ages 16 to 21 at risk).	Short Term	In February 2020, CDSSAB met with North Eastern Ontario Family Services (NEOFACS) to discuss collaborative partnership for the development and expansion of their current children’s residential programs.  In light of difficult construction market conditions caused by COVID-19 pandemic, some development projects may have to be postponed.
4.2	Examine the feasibility of providing alternative types of financial incentives to households (particularly in rural communities) with low incomes; especially households that fall within the first and second income deciles.	Long Term	Ongoing. CDSSAB is looking at a number of Capital Repair incentives to for households of with low incomes to help them maintain their homes.
4.3	Explore options for delivery of rent subsidies including options such as the Portable Housing Benefit for increased opportunities for households to access affordable housing options.	Short Term	In late 2019, MMAH announced the launch of the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit program under the National Housing Strategy. The program provides portable housing benefit directly to households throughout the province. By April 2020 all funding had since been distributed.

			In 2021, rent subsidies were focused on tenants who lost their income due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
4.4	Explore options for allocating a portion of the District IAH-E funding specifically for a local rental allowance program.	Short Term	Program agreements are due to end in 2023/24. The Rent Allowance Program supports low-income families with rent assistance, while participants are on the waiting list for RGI units. CDSSAB staff direct participants who are facing long wait for an RGI unit to the Canada/Ontario Housing Benefit, as a longer term solution.
4.5	Explore opportunities to develop student housing in partnership with local stakeholders on lands or underutilized buildings located in the City of Timmins.	Long Term	Discussions with College Boreal are ongoing regarding integrating dedicated student housing units in the redevelopment of the Golden Manor property (requires City of Timmins approval).  Plans to purchase a property for international student housing with College Boreal are still in place, but has been delayed due to difficult market conditions.
4.6	Where prudent to do so, maximize profit of existing housing stock as leverage for building or modifying units to create more, newer housing.	Long Term	Ongoing. CDSSAB has administered modest rent increases (inline with provincial rent-increase guidelines) to its affordable units in order to keep up with ongoing maintenance costs and ensure the long-term sustainability of CDSSAB properties.



### Goal 3: Ensure the Long-Term Viability and Sustainability of the Existing Community Housing Stock

#### Objective 1: Establish an efficient, sustainable, and collaborative community housing system by strengthening the capacity in the non-profit sector

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
1.1	Through timely operational reviews, work with social housing providers and their Boards of Directors to explore all options to achieve financial viability and system level efficiencies while continuing to meet the requirements of the Housing Services Act.	Short Term	<p>In 2019, the CDSSAB approved budget included the addition of a Housing Program Manager with responsibility to implement and conduct a more robust operational review process.</p> <p>As of October 2019, a full operational review was completed for City of Timmins Non-Profit Housing Corporation and Moosonee Non-Profit Housing Corporation.</p> <p>In June 2019, CDSSAB introduced quarterly reporting to assist housing providers in managing their portfolios more efficiently. This process will allow housing providers to identify issues related to rental revenue, arrears and financial management more quickly and to take corrective action.</p> <p>In late 2021, CDSSAB administration engaged with Housing Services Corporation to complete an End of Operating Agreements (EOA) analysis and recommended strategies for the Board’s consideration. A key component of the strategy will be establishing a formal action plan to work with Non-Profits and Co-ops to make informed decisions for the long-term planning of their organizations.</p>

**Objective 2: Minimize risk and maintain sustainability**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
2.1	Through the provision of property management services, develop processes to work with non-profits to ensure asset sustainability and minimize risk.	Short Term	<p>CDSSAB offers support to local Non-Profits and co-ops through education and regular meetings on financial reporting, tendering, tenant administration and maintenance services.</p> <p>Through the CDLHC, CDSSAB is seeking further opportunities to provide property management services to other private housing entities (similar to Fairway Village contract) in the future.</p>

**Objective 3: Work with housing providers to safeguard the ongoing operation of units (with federal agreements and mortgages set to expire) as affordable options for low-income households**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
3.1	CDSSAB will develop a plan to guide its work internally and for working with non-profit housing providers to support the planning for expiry of mortgages and operating agreements; and manage projects in difficulty.	Short Term	<p>To prepare for End of Operating Agreements and to ensure the viability for all providers, CDSSAB began the process of conducting full operational reviews on all providers in 2019.</p> <p>In late 2021, CDSSAB administration engaged with Housing Services Corporation to complete an End of Operating Agreements (EOA) analysis and recommended strategies for the Board’s consideration. A key component of the strategy will be establishing a formal action plan to work with Non-Profits and Co-ops to make informed decisions for the long-term planning of their organizations.</p>

**Objective 4: Ensure responsible stewardship of housing assets and resources through continued long-term planning for the provision and protection of the affordable housing portfolio**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
4.1	Work with housing providers to use Asset Planner and enter data to support the development of capital plans and to gauge and forecast facility replacement costs.	Short Term	<p>In September 2020, the CDSSAB Board approved new Local Rule regarding Capital Reserves Expenditures (12-26); The new rule provides guidance for a detailed legend to report in the AIR, to be used and updated annually in Asset Planner by the Cochrane DSSAB.</p> <p>In December 2019, CDSSAB forecast generated through Asset Planner projected approximately \$19,000, 000 in renewal requirements over the next 5 years across the CDSSAB portfolio.</p> <p>CDSSAB completed Building Condition Assessments again in early 2021. Based on the data, CDSSAB is projecting approximately \$21M in renewal requirements over the next 5 years.</p>
4.2	Undertake updated Building Condition Assessments (BCAs) for all properties and ensure all providers have access to their BCAs for planning purposes, and preparing a long-term capital needs strategy/plan using BCA results to identify capital requirements. Include an energy audit component to the next cycle of Building Condition Assessments.	Long Term	BCAs were completed in early 2020 for all Co-ops, Non-Profits and LHC properties, and again in 2021.

## Objective 5: Ensure CDSSAB housing stock is energy efficient

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
5.1	Participate in, and apply for, external and government funding grants for building improvements and efficiency upgrades for existing buildings.	Short Term	<p>In September 2019, CDSSAB issued an Expression of Interest for the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI) and the Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI). CDSSAB received 3 proposals. All three submissions were recommended for approval.</p> <p>In September 2021, the Township of Opasatika presented CDSSAB with a proposal to pursue the development of Stage 2, which includes adding two more units to development in vacant school. The proposal was approved and CDSSAB awarded \$225,000 through the Ontario Priority Housing Initiative (OPHI).</p> <p>The January 2021 COCHI funding allocation was designated for use of exterior renovations at the 183-189 Fifth Avenue, Timmins, Ontario.</p> <p>In January 2021, CDSSAB used funding allocation through the Social Service Relief Fund for renovation at 71 Main Street, South Porcupine as well as 45 Spruce Street South.</p>

## Objective 6: Help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
6.1	Develop protocols to manage the liability associated with obligations under the Housing Services Act and in the post-mortgage maturity environment.	Short Term	Ongoing. CDSSAB has been working closely with co-ops and non-profits as their mortgages near their maturity dates, to ensure all avenues are explored and that they are well prepared for EOA/EOM.

6.2	Explore consolidation and merges with CDLHC operations to maintain affordable housing units and to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiencies.	Short Term	<p>In progress.</p> <p>CDSSAB was able to work with the Spruce Hill Lodge Board on a plan to assume operations of the property in order to ensure more efficient operations and avoid any eviction notices for tenants.</p> <p>CDSSAB has also taken over the administration duties for several local co-ops in order to achieve further efficiencies and cost savings.</p>
6.3	Review the service-level standards and rules governing the administration of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing and develop an internal process for working with HSA mandated providers to ensure SLS compliance.	Short Term	<p>In 2019, the provincial government made several changes to the process for calculating Rent-Geared-to-Income calculations, recognizing the formula was too complex and difficult for tenants to understand.</p> <p>CDSSAB implemented the new simplified regulation on July 1, 2020.</p>
6.4	Review and update the current Centralized Waiting List policy and procedures to align with the HSA regulatory changes.	Short Term	<p>Effective January 1, 2020, Ontario Regulation 367/11 under the HSA has been amended to include a new provincial eligibility rule on refusal of offers, rules on household preferences for a housing project and changes to meet occupancy standards. CDSSAB fully implemented these changes.</p> <p>By-Names List (BNL) was developed and operationalized and Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS 4) implemented by January 1st, 2022. BNL referral training and the Information Sharing with Other Service Providers Consent Form was developed and provided to agencies in 2021.</p>
6.5	Initiate a review and monitoring process to track the pooling of capital reserve investments of mandated	Short Term	<p>In September 2020, the CDSSAB Board approved new Local Rule regarding Capital Reserves Expenditures (12-26); the rule will ensure compliance to legislative requirements,</p>



	(HSA) housing providers with the requirement for non-profits to submit capital plans.		provide a clear definition of capital expenses, and provide direction to prioritize capital needs. The new rule provides guidance for a detailed legend to report in the AIR, to be used and updated annually in Asset Planner by the Cochrane DSSAB. The rule also defines criteria for the Housing Providers spending limits and the requirement for a Request for Proposal & requirement to tender.
6.6	Establish direction with housing providers to find operational efficiencies and to consider options including, but not limited to, organizational mergers.	Long Term	CDSSAB housing staff has been working with all local community housing providers to ensure they explore all options in advance of expiring agreements (EOA). CDSSAB has also contracted the Housing Services Corporation to provide EOA seminars for providers to guide them in considering all options that will help them to continue to offer affordable housing.

## Goal 4: Plan for the Public Good

### Objective 1: Build on the current level of service integration to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the social services and DSSAB programs and infrastructure

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
1.1	Participate in a Northern Ontario DSSAB initiative that will better leverage the power of the group and achieve operational efficiencies for the DSSAB owned infrastructure while managing risk at the local level.	Short Term	As CDSSAB Service agreements near their expiry, staff are ensuring wherever possible, contracts are tendered District-wide to take advantage of cost savings that come with larger contracts. This includes maintenance for elevators, lifeline safety and pest control.
1.2	Update our 10 Year Blueprint for Sustainability Plan as required to be able to ensure alignment with the DSSAB service system management model and with provincial	Long Term	2019/20 Progress report complete  2021 Progress report to be submitted to the province Summer/Fall 2022

	interests as outlined in Ontario’s Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update.		
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**Objective 2: Continue lobbying and advocacy efforts with senior governments**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
2.1	Through NOSDA (Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association), the CDSSAB will advocate to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to establish a framework by which the Ontario Health Agency and the local District Ontario Health Team engage directly with CDSSAB in integrated health service planning, local planning and healthcare resource allocation to address issues affecting the social determinants of health. CDSSAB will ensure senior management level representation at all planning tables in Northern Ontario and in the District.	Short Term	Ongoing.

**Objective 3: Improve the Coordination and Capacity within the System**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
3.1	Strengthen the partnership with the District’s local Ontario Health Team to expand and improve the provision of health care services to residents living in DSSAB owned social housing, as well to develop housing and support service options for a broad range of community groups in the District.	Short Term	In January 2020, CDSSAB met with the Centre de sante communautaire de Timmins to discuss the possibility of a partnership for the development and expansion of current programs to mutually benefit the respective organizations and Francophone community. However, progress on this initiative has stalled due to changing priorities as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### Objective 4: Municipalities consider the DSSAB and seek advice with respect to housing development

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
4.1	Develop a Municipal Liaison Group that meets at least three times a year to further investigate opportunities and ways to improve affordable housing outcomes at the local municipal level and share best practices for promoting and incentivizing the development of affordable housing.	Short Term	In progress. CDLHC was invited to present to the City of Timmins Community Development Committee to discuss housing, potential projects, and tools that the City can utilize to assist in the development of affordable housing units with the CDLHC.

#### Objective 5: Support the Northern Growth Plan

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
5.1	Participate in roundtables and working groups that include the Northern Policy Institute, the Local Planning Council, Far Northeast Training Board, Timmins Economic Development Corporation and other stakeholders; to develop strategies and tools that are aimed at economic development, workforce education and training to ensure that the District is strong sustainable community that is attractive to its current residents and brings new residents to live communities across the District.	Long Term	Ongoing. While the COVID-19 pandemic put an end to most face-to-face roundtables and working groups, these groups were able to pivot quickly and move the work online in accordance with Public Health guidelines. Virtual meetings were held regularly in 2021, which helped with information sharing and moving a number of strategies forward.
5.2	CDSSAB with local partners and stakeholders will support a service and settlement immigration plan that enables a supportive transition of the refugees and immigrants to the District and the local communities.	Short Term	Ongoing.
5.3	Working through NOSDA, the CDSSAB will participate in the development of an educational strategy with the five colleges across Northern Ontario to establish an	Long Term	The planning and implementation of this strategy was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic as students moved to a virtual format. CDSSAB has continued talks with Collège

	employment development program for youth and college graduates.		Boréal, and is hopeful this work will continue once the pandemic ends and students return to in-person learning.
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**Objective 6: Support economic development**

#	ACTIONS	TIME FRAME	UPDATE
6.1	CDSSAB will participate in educational partnerships to establish a construction program with the local colleges (College Boreal and Northern College) to create opportunities for students to gain employment experience in the communities in the District. The goal is to foster skills trade internships and an apprentice program for youth that provide work placement and employment opportunities that relate directly to, or support, housing provision in the District.	Long Term	Ongoing. As above, this objective was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic as students moved to a virtual format. CDSSAB is hopeful this work will continue once the pandemic ends and students return to in-person learning.
6.2	CDSSAB will investigate expanding partnerships to local post-secondary partners, which will include soft skill and white-collar capacity enhancements in addition to trades.	Long Term	Ongoing.

## Our Continuing Journey

Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board is committed to working towards a community with adequate and affordable housing choices for all.

A place where needs can be met to ensure everyone has a safe, affordable and appropriate home.