



GTHC 4-Phase Plan  
July 12<sup>th</sup> 2024

## **BACKGROUND ON THE GUELPH TINY HOMES COALITION**

The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition (GTHC) is a community-led coalition whose goal is to provide safer housing for unhoused community members and support them through the next steps of their housing journey.

The GTHC convened in January 2024 with the intention to explore community-based approaches to address the increasing issue of homelessness in Guelph.

GTHC members recognize that tent encampments neither safely nor adequately shelter unhoused residents and that additional housing options are needed.

GTHC membership is made up of health and addictions specialists, people with lived experience, the business community, faith groups and a custom home builder.

The proposed GTHC model expands the range of options on the housing continuum in Guelph for unhoused community members. Since January, 2024 GTHC has:

- Held two strategic planning sessions culminating in a project charter.
- Engaged in consultations with similar projects, such as the Wolf St. Project (Peterborough) and A Better Tent City (Kitchener).
- Incorporated as a non-profit and established a Board of Directors.
- Released an Expression of Interest (EOI) to help identify public or private land for the project.
- Received a commitment from a charitable organization to provide tax receipts for the project.
- Recruited over 70 volunteers and received unsolicited commitments for in-kind and financial donations by many Guelph-based manufacturers, businesses and individuals.
- Developed a project management plan for the coalition's deliverables and key milestones.
- Arrived at an agreement in principle with Royal City Mission to support the coordination of services with Guelph-based health and social service providers.
- Built a prototype home and displayed publicly to engage with the community
- Hosted a webinar with the intention of sharing information and addressing community concerns.
- Consulted with all key social service and health providers in the Guelph/Wellington working closely with this population.



## COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The GTHC plan has gained support from many key social service and health agencies, who have expressed an ongoing commitment to provide coordinated health and social support for potential residents. These organizations include, but are not limited to:

- The Guelph General Hospital
- The Guelph Community Health Centre
- Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington
- Stonehenge Therapeutic Community
- Sanguen Health Centre

Additional Organizations that have expressed their support include:

- Guelph Chamber of Commerce
- The Guelph Community Foundation, and
- Habitat for Humanity.

### **The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition is proposing a Four-Phase Plan to ensure this project is implemented as quickly as possible.**

GTCH is proposing a four-phase plan to ensure that community members currently living outdoors will have an additional, safe option on the housing continuum that will support safety and stabilization, ideally before winter, 2024. Each phase of the four-phase plan will be informed by best practices and in consultation with similar projects. The four-point plan includes:

#### **Phase 1 - Land Securement/Lease Arrangement**

The GTHC is in negotiations with the City of Guelph to identify a suitable parcel of land that can contain 25-50 tiny homes with a shared kitchen, washroom and laundry area. Confirming location is the most important first step.

We continue to work with the City of Guelph (but not exclusively) to identify a viable site for the Tiny Home Project. The GTHC through our Expression of Interest, released in April 2024, highlighted the following criteria for the preferred location:

1. At least 0.8 acres but up to 2 acres in size.
2. Has significant table land that is well drained.
3. Serviced with water and sanitary sewer facilities.
4. Has sufficient electricity on site or nearby.



5. Ideally physically separated from residential areas
6. Outside of the downtown core area.
7. Within walking distance to transit and other urban amenities.
8. A site owned by a landowner willing to sign up to a three-year lease agreement.

The coalition recognizes that a site that meets that above criteria that can be secured for this initiative will also require the support of the City's elected officials to suspend the Zoning bylaw in order to move to the next stages (land servicing and building). As a result, the coalition will not proceed with a proposed site unless its members are confident that the site fits the majority if not all the criteria – and in advance a neighbourhood consultation and site mitigation measures' plan is drafted and shared with municipal decision-makers.

## **Phase 2 – Fundraising and Project Management**

The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition has developed a project budget, engaged with builders, volunteers and donors, and has developed initial budgets and a rudimentary fundraising plan. However, in the absence of a confirmed site location or commitment from the City of Guelph, it is premature for The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition to arrive at a finalized plan as key details having yet been established. A fundraising principle is more appropriate at this time.

Our fundraising principle: The GTHC will fundraise 55 percent of capital costs for the project, with the remaining funds to be covered by the City of Guelph, with the exception of the City's in-kind services. Annual operating costs will also be covered by the City of Guelph. Once a location has been identified, the GTHC will finalize a fundraising plan that will be delivered within a specific timeline. If the fundraising goals as established in the mutually agreed fundraising plan are not met by the coalition, the Tiny Home Project will not proceed.

Our initial capital budget ranges between \$1.6M and \$2.4M while operations (service provision plan) is forecasted at \$627K. This is an initial estimate and subject to change depending on the site location.

As soon as a site is secured and approvals are received, the Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition will hire a part-time project coordinator who will develop a project management plan. GTCH will also finalize a fundraising plan with key partners including the Guelph Community Foundation and the Guelph Chamber of Commerce.



Additionally, GTHC recognizes that questions and concerns from surrounding community members may arise. Our key priorities include safety, communication and engagement. Once a site location has been identified, The GTCH will prioritize the implementation of a Community Engagement Committee. to address concerns.

### **Phase 3 - Land Servicing and Building Out the Tiny Homes Site**

Once a preferred site location has been identified, The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition and the landowner will be in a position to understand the site servicing requirements and costs. We will work with the City to service the site.

The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition is requesting waste and water connections; bus/public transportation connection, garbage pick up, and that permitting and leasing costs for the site are also covered by the City. We also request the in-kind removal of topsoil if grading/leveling of the site is required.

Once a site location has been finalized, The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition will engage with the City to discuss what additional service costs can be covered by the coalition. As examples, the coalition is prepared to cover electrical upgrades, grading of the site, site/location capital improvements, and fencing. This scope of the site servicing to be covered by the coalition is highly dependent on the preferred site/location.

The coalition has developed and built a prototype of a suitable energy efficient tiny home and could quickly scale up production. Each unit takes approximately one week to build. The homes are 120 sq. feet in size, constructed of quality materials including steel siding, spray foam insulation, and a lockable steel front door. The homes cost between 25-30K/each.

The coalition is being approached by other tiny home builders – and it is our intent undertake a procurement process that will result in the most energy efficient homes (with the lowest ongoing costs) at the lowest price point.

In Year 1, the project will be limited to 20 tiny homes with a focus on developing overall site infrastructure (community hub/kitchen/washrooms/laundry). In Years 2, the project will increase to between 40 and 50 tiny homes. Plans for the communal building (kitchen, washrooms and laundry area) are dependent on the lot size and shape but can easily be developed.



## **Phase 4 - Operational Delivery**

The Guelph Tiny Homes Coalition has an agreement in principle with Royal City Mission (RCM) to provide basic services while also coordinating health and social service providers with wrap-around supports to assist residents of the community.

We propose that annual operating costs will be covered by the City of Guelph at an estimate of 627K/year. This will include, but is not limited to:

- Hiring staff to support residents
- Provision of meals
- The development of:
  - an equitable an intake and assessment process
  - community guidelines and safety protocols
  - individualized support planning for residents
- Developing additional policies and procedures based on resident and community needs

**As the coalition continues the work to secure the best possible site for the tiny homes project, we ask Guelph City Council to endorse tiny home projects as a viable model for working to address homelessness in the City of Guelph.**