



September 2024

Community Conversation Toolkit

London-Middlesex Homeless Prevention
and Housing Plan

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Section 1:

Introduction and Overview

About the London-Middlesex Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan

The [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#) and [City of London Housing Stability Action Plan 2019 – 2024](#) are being reviewed in 2024. Under the Housing Services Act, 2011, Service Managers are required to review their homeless prevention and housing plans every five years. Local plans must extend for a period of 10 years after the review.

The City of London is the Service Manager for London and Middlesex. As Service Managers last reviewed and approved their local plans by December 2019, Service Managers are expected to commence a review of their local plans in 2024 to meet the requirements under the Housing Services Act.

It is expected that the review will result in one comprehensive plan for the County of Middlesex and the City of London.

The plan will be informed by and is intended to complement the [Middlesex County Strategic Plan](#), [Ontario's Homeless Prevention Program](#), the [Government of Canada's National Housing Strategy](#), and [Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy](#).

What is the purpose of the review?

The purpose of the review process is to ensure the County of Middlesex and the City of London have a transformational community plan that strategically informs homeless prevention and housing over the next ten years. The review is an opportunity for the County of Middlesex and the City of London to identify local community needs to be addressed.

The review is intended to satisfy the planning requirements of Municipal Council, the Province of Ontario, and the Government of Canada, and will align with existing municipal, regional, provincial, and national strategies.

How will the new plan be developed?

- 1. Consultation** – Opportunities to share insights and ideas will be made available through the completion of community conversation toolkits, an online survey, and targeted direct engagement with specific sectors and equity-denied groups. (September 2024 – November 2024)
- 2. Plan Preparation** – The information gathered through the community consultation process will be used to prepare draft strategies and actions. (December 2024 – February 2025)
- 3. Plan Approval** – Municipal Councils of the County of Middlesex and the City of London will review and approve the plan. (March 2025 – April 2025)

The timelines may change depending on direction from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Did you know?

Affordability

- **1,450** renters and **2,085** owners as of 2021 are living in unaffordable housing in Middlesex County. The largest groups of those live in Strathroy-Caradoc, with **720** renters and **575** owners, and Middlesex Centre with **195** renters and **590** owners.
- A **62%** increase occurred between 2016 and 2021 in the number of Middlesex County households spending more than 30% of their income on housing (a measure of being in affordable housing need).
- **\$232,700** in household income is required for ownership in Middlesex County and **\$143,800** in Strathroy-Caradoc to be affordable. This illustrates that affordability is limited to highest income earners.
- **\$2,363** was the average market rent for a two-bedroom apartment in 2021 in Middlesex County, which would require a household income of **\$113,600** to be considered affordable.
- With a growing population and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is evident that Middlesex County continues to experience significant demand on their housing markets. With an influx of new, younger residents to the County, and rising interest rates coupled with high housing costs, the data reveals a continued strain on the ability for Middlesex County to provide affordable, suitable and adequate housing for its residents. Those moving into the County are bringing with them higher incomes, further straining the housing market. Residents most in need continue to face precarious housing conditions, where those earning minimum wage are virtually shutout of affordable housing according to CMHC statistics of average market rent.

Development

- **\$10M** has been committed from CMHC to support the support the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc to develop **37** new affordable housing and market rental housing units in Mount Brydges, comprising a mix of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments with **80%** designated to be affordable housing.
- According to CMHC's Starts and Completions Survey, single and row/townhouse units dominate new construction in Middlesex County. There were **731** units completed in 2021, which represent over **half** of all units completed from 2019-2022.
- **564** community housing units existed in 2021 in Middlesex County including **301** rent-geared-to-income units report to the City of London as the Service Manager. The total number of community housing units includes **159** London Middlesex Community Housing Units and the remainder are private not-for-profit units, all located in Middlesex County.

Future Demand

- **6,230** additional households are expected in Middlesex County from 2021 to 2046. Middlesex’s municipal potential housing supply is geared toward low-density housing, accounting for 64% of the entire housing supply. Medium-density (defined as townhouses) housing accounts for 20% and high-density accounts for the remaining 16%. Higher-density housing will be more in need to address younger adults moving into the region, inter-generational growth, and the increasing population of seniors. An adequate supply of designated residential lands is available to the municipality to accommodate the growing housing demand in both the short-term and long-term.

For more information about Middlesex County’s housing needs, please read [Housing Needs Assessment](#) and the [Middlesex County Attainable Housing Review Report – Interim Final Report](#).

Section 2:

Facilitation Guide for Community Conversations

About This Toolkit

The community is invited to share their ideas about strategies and actions for the London-Middlesex Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan. Feedback will be collected online through a survey and through community conversations.

This Toolkit has been prepared to support hosting a community conversation. All feedback will be compiled and used to create draft strategies and actions for the London-Middlesex Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan.

Materials Required to Facilitate a Community Conversation

- Facilitation Guide (Section 2 of this Toolkit)
- Community Conversation Workbook (Section 3 of this Toolkit)

Instructions for Facilitating a Community Conversation

The instructions below will assist you to facilitate a community conversation.

1. Welcome all participants and thank them for being part of the community conversation.
2. Review the information on pages 4-6 of this Toolkit. This will help make sure that everyone participating has the same general understanding.
3. There are eight Strategic Priorities for discussion and feedback. Please see page 8 of this Toolkit for a list of the Strategic Priorities. Please review the Strategic Priorities with your group. Together, decide which Strategic Priorities will be discussed during the community conversation.
4. Begin with one Strategic Priority. Read or ask participants to read the “What’s been happening?”, and “Strategic Initiatives” sections in the Community Conversation Workbook for the chosen Strategic Priority. You can also choose to skip reading this information and go directly to the questions. However, this information can provide important context for your group.
5. Ask the group the specific questions related to the Strategic Priority. Please write their responses to each question in the space provided. You can also type your notes in the electronic version of the Community Conversation Workbook.

Instructions for Sharing Feedback from the Community Conversation

1. Please submit the results of your community conversation by November 15, 2024.
2. If using an electronic copy of this workbook, please email results to socialservices@middlesex.ca when the workbook is complete.
3. If using a paper copy of this workbook, please scan the document and email it to socialservices@middlesex.ca.

Community Conversation Strategic Priorities for Review and Discussion

There are eight Strategic Priorities that you can discuss through your community conversation. These include:

Housing

1. **Affordability:** Increase in affordable, quality, and mixed housing options.
2. **Range of Housing Options:** Increase in range of housing options available.
3. **Housing Supports:** Increase in supportive and specialized housing available.
4. **Service Coordination:** Increase in service coordination and collaboration across the system.

Homeless Prevention

1. **Temporary Housing Options:** Decrease in the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.
2. **Housing Retention:** Increase in the number of individuals who secure and retain housing.
3. **Supports:** Increase in the availability access to services and supports for individuals at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.
4. **Service Coordination:** Increase in the availability access to services and supports for individuals at-risk of or experiencing homelessness.

You can choose to discuss one, two, three or all eight of the Strategic Priorities depending on the interests of your group. For more information about the Strategic Priorities, please see the [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#).

Section 3:

Community Conversation Workbook

Summary Information

Please complete the following information about the community conversation. Thank you!

Name of Community Conversation Facilitator:

Email of Community Conversation Facilitator:

Date of the Community Conversation:

Name of the Organizations, Association, or Group that Hosted the Community Conversation:

Number of Participants Involved in the Community Conversation:

What's been happening?

- In July 2024, an [Implementation Report](#) went to County Council. Within the report the [Affordable Rental Housing Development Resource Guide](#) was highlighted: With the recognition that community not-for-profit housing providers and the private sector play crucial roles in the provision of housing, an “[Affordable Rental Housing Development Resource Guide](#)” was developed. The guide serves as a resource for organizations seeking to engage in the development, construction, and management of affordable and attainable housing. Although not an exhaustive “how-to” guide to development, the guide sets out the framework within which housing projects are undertaken, provides practical insights into the development process, and serves as an orientation tool and offers insights into best practices and unique considerations for affordable housing projects.
- Middlesex County was a leader in Ontario in supporting CMHC Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) applications from local municipalities. This included retaining a consultant to assist with initiative creation and a County-wide housing needs assessment. Middlesex County staff also completed or supported local staff in completing HAF applications. Local municipalities in Middlesex County were some of the few non-urban centered municipalities to submit applications to the HAF program. Following the original HAF application deadline, Middlesex County conducted a robust advocacy and engagement process with MP’s and CMHC staff. Advocacy efforts will continue in 2024.
- CMHC has advised the HAF program received 544 applications nationwide (7 originated from Middlesex County municipalities).
 - 179 HAF applications resulted in signed agreements. One of those agreements is with Quebec for \$900,000,000 which Quebec allocates to projects
 - Approximately 30 signed agreements nationwide were for small/rural/northern and indigenous applications (14 have been announced to date)
 - So far in Ontario, only the Town of Marathon has received funding under the small/rural/northern/indigenous stream of HAF.
- Although not successful, the goal of HAF was to develop initiatives to support the continuum of housing in Middlesex County, to work to address the housing crisis.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Affordability” through the following strategic initiatives.

Affordability Strategic Initiatives

1. Explore use of publicly-owned, available lands for additional affordable housing units.
2. Promote opportunities for redevelopment.
3. Highlight the opportunities that exist in the County to fast track development approvals.
4. Make stakeholders aware of external funding opportunities (i.e. Federal, Provincial).
5. Encourage local municipalities to promote affordable housing. Identify and share best practices in affordability.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with increasing housing affordability in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve how Middlesex County responds to housing affordability in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Housing Strategic Priority 2: Range of Housing Options

What's been happening?

- Using the data and information from the Attainable Housing Review, throughout 2023 work on the identified housing continuum and identified gaps in the provision of housing and corresponding strategies has started.
- The Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc, through its Non-Profit Housing Corporation, develop new affordable housing units. Construction of the affordable apartment building in Mt. Brydges was completed and apartments were made available in 2023. The building has 37 units which include some that are affordable housing units.
- In the Municipality of Middlesex Centre the construction of the initial phase of the 69 unit innovative development called 'Design for Happiness' is well underway.
- Throughout 2023, local communities across the County have been approving several new higher-density housing developments. Examples of these developments are the apartments in Lucan; townhomes in Kilworth; Dorchester, Thorndale, Ailsa Craig, Mount Brydges and others.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Range of Housing Options” through the following strategic initiatives.

Range of Housing Options Strategic Initiatives

1. Review inventory of housing stock (inventory) in Middlesex County.
2. Encourage local municipalities to promote a range of housing options.
3. Provide local municipalities with educational material about housing options and affordability.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with increasing the range of housing options in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve the range of housing options in Middlesex County in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Housing Strategic Priority 3: Housing Supports

What's been happening?

- The Community Navigator, continues to be instrumental in supporting residents with applications to housing program, Canada-Ontario Housing Benefits (COHB) and various other supports for housing and general life stabilization. The Community Navigator was able to submit 25 COHB applications for residents in the County. The approval rate of these applications was 100%.
- County Council and Senior Administration continue to attend delegations with Provincial Ministries and MPPs to highlight the housing and homelessness needs and gaps in the County, identify the significant growth occurring in the County and advocate for additional funding to address the strategic priorities identified in the County of Middlesex Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan.
- YOU's Next Wave Youth Centre opened 2 transitional housing spaces. These spaces fill a gap of supports for youth housing in the County. The County of Middlesex Social Services supports this initiative through HPP funding.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Housing Supports” through the following strategic initiatives.

Housing Supports Strategic Initiatives

1. Explore supportive and specialized housing opportunities.
2. Leverage current units as transitional housing units, i.e. YOU, LMCH.
3. Advocate for additional support services across the County.
4. Explore the use of innovative programs to encourage inclusive access to housing i.e. Rent Smart.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with providing housing supports in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve how Middlesex County provides housing supports in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Housing Strategic Priority 4: Service Coordination

What's been happening?

- The County has ongoing meetings with community agencies and partners to understand the pressure the community is facing when supporting individuals that are unsheltered or at risk of being unsheltered.
- The Middlesex Homeless Action Committee (MHAC) committee met on a regular basis in 2023. The members of the committee are from various sectors; housing supports, police services, Community Navigator, County representative, community agencies and members of the community. This committee was created to advocate for more subsidized and affordable housing, as well as to increase public awareness of the homelessness situation in Middlesex County. MHAC was able to support local fundraising events regarding homelessness, and have advocated for more services in Middlesex County. MHAC completed a needs assessment of services and supports available in the county to better understand the gaps in services in the County. The key takeaways were that affordable and supportive housing are required to support individuals at risk of or who are experiencing homelessness.
- The County implemented the use of the Homeless Individuals and Family Information System (HIFIS) in 2022. The Manager of Social Services and the Community Navigator have access to the system. In 2023 discussions started with CMHA TVAMHS, YOU – Next Wave and WRRC to bring these organization on board. The three organizations will join using HIFIS in 2024.
- Middlesex County is represented at the Middlesex Situation Table (MST) by the Community Navigator and the Manager of Social Services. MST is a diverse spectrum of service providers that collaborate weekly and mobilize appropriate short-term interventions to address situations of Acutely Elevated Risk (AER). Many of the situations presented involve either homelessness, or risk of homelessness.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Service Collaboration” through the following strategic initiatives.

Service Collaboration Strategic Initiatives

1. Advocate for County access to funding to meet service goals.
2. Identify and leverage partnership opportunities with all stakeholders, i.e. local municipalities, service clubs, churches, property owners, settlement services, etc.
3. Schedule presentations to County Council from London Middlesex Community Housing and City Housing Department.
4. Coordinate activities between stakeholders.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with housing service coordination in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve housing service coordination in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Homeless Prevention Strategic Priority 1: Temporary Housing Options

What's been happening?

- In 2023, the Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program funding helped support our most vulnerable in the community. The County was able to provide temporary housing supports through two of the local motels in the County. The Middlesex Accommodations Program (MAP), was formalized using HPP funding. In 2023 the program supported 55 individuals from 41 household, bringing the total number from its inception to over 150 individuals supported. With the continued partnership between the Middlesex County Social Services Department, CMHA TVAMHS and Community Navigator, the number of individuals and/or families experiencing homeless was mitigated. Working with other local agencies; WRRC, YOU-Next Wave, 37 Frank Street and other community partners best practices and supports were shared amongst the group.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Temporary Housing Options ” through the following strategic initiatives.

Temporary Housing Options Strategic Initiatives

1. Work with community partners to identify, explore and develop innovative ideas.
2. Identify and share best practices in temporary housing.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with temporary housing options in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve how Middlesex County addresses temporary housing options in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Homeless Prevention Strategic Priority 2: Housing Retention

What's been happening?

- The Community Navigator, continues to be instrumental in supporting residents with applications to housing program, Canada-Ontario Housing Benefits (COHB) and various other supports for housing and general life stabilization. The Community Navigator was able to submit 25 COHB applications for residents in the County. The approval rate of these applications was 100%.
- Through HPP funding allocations the County was able to provide rent, utility cost relief, last months rent, food security programs to many individuals in need.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Housing Retention ” through the following strategic initiatives.

Housing Retention Strategic Initiatives

1. Build a plan and strategy around Housing First Model.
2. Explore the use of innovative programs to encourage inclusive access to rental properties, i.e. Rent Smart.
3. Work with community partners to identify and explore innovative ideas, i.e. Housing Access Centre, London Middlesex Community Housing, City of London.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with housing retention in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve housing retention in Middlesex County in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Homeless Prevention Strategic Priority 3: Supports

What's been happening?

- Through the Middlesex County Social Services and Community Partners network the sharing of information about resources for housing and support for individuals experiencing homelessness has continued to be successful in diverting and supporting people from being homeless. Twenty-four unique agencies attend the meetings or are updated via the minutes.
- The Middlesex Community Navigator has built strong relationships with each community in the County. Providing resources, supports and helping to complete engagements with 813 households experiencing homelessness to support obtaining and retaining housing, additionally the Community Navigator had engagements with 1483 households who were at risk of being homeless to remain housed.
- The Middlesex County Homelessness Action Committee continued meeting and advocating throughout 2023. The intent of the committee is to advocate and share information about the need for subsidized and affordable housing in the County. Middlesex County Homelessness Action Committee completed a needs assessment, which highlighted that affordable and supportive housing was the highest need. Other areas included food security, education for the community, education for renters and landlords and life skills for highly barriered individuals. The committee also identified the need for improvements to the Middlesex County Social Services website. The website was redesigned to be more user friendly and provide access to information and supports. A Food Bank and Meal Program calendar was created and posted on the County's website, this provides individuals and families with one document outlining the supports available in the County, it also provided MHAC with the gaps needed to be worked on in 2024.
- Working with the City of London, the County continues to advocate for more funding through the Homeless Prevention Plan. The County's Social Services department applies for any and all funding that is available through provincial, federal and/or other sources.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Supports” through the following strategic initiatives.

Supports Strategic Initiatives

1. Create an inventory of services to share with the community for better system navigation.
2. Advocate for additional support services across the County.

Questions

1. What do you think is going well with homeless prevention supports in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve homeless prevention supports in Middlesex County in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Homeless Prevention Strategic Priority 4: Service Coordination

What's been happening?

- The County continues to use innovative and strategic ideas and initiatives on how best to use funds of the Homeless Prevention Program yearly. The Social Services Department continuously checks in with Ontario Works caseworkers, community partners and individuals they support to ensure the right services and supports are made available.
- The County continues to raise awareness of the increased homeless and at risk of homelessness populations through council reports, presentations and community conversations.
- The County implemented the use of the Homeless Individuals and Family Information System (HIFIS) in 2022. The Manager of Social Services and the Community Navigator have access to the system. In 2023 discussions started with CMHA TVAMHS, YOU – Next Wave and WRRC to bring these organization on board. The three organizations will join using HIFIS in 2024.

Strategic Initiatives

Through the current [Middlesex County Homeless Prevention and Housing Plan 2019 – 2024](#), Middlesex County is addressing “Service Coordination” through the following strategic initiatives.

Service Coordination Strategic Initiatives

1. Continue to allocate CHPI funding to meet identified community need.
2. Conduct a homeless prevention enumeration event every two years.
3. Create an awareness campaign about homelessness.
4. Look for funding opportunities that support community need.
5. Continue to support and be involved with community tables.
6. Ensure that the diverse needs in our communities are being considered.
7. Identify and leverage opportunities to work with community partners

Questions

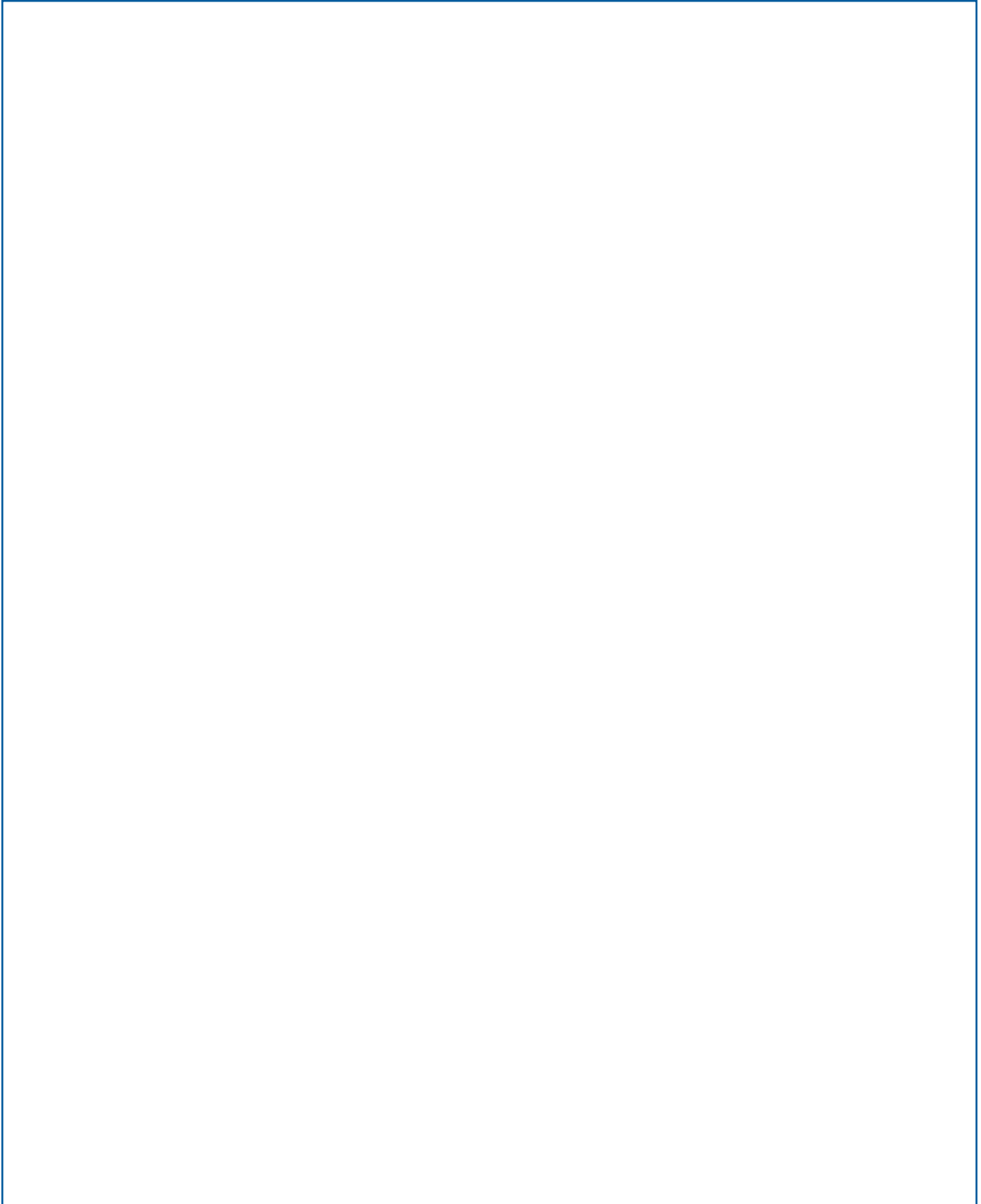
1. What do you think is going well with homeless prevention service coordination in Middlesex County?

2. What solutions or actions would you recommend to improve homeless prevention service coordination in Middlesex County in the next five to ten years?

3. Thinking beyond the need for financial resources, what is required to implement your solutions or recommendations (e.g., land, systems, operational review)?

Additional Notes

If there is anything that you would like to share about housing and homelessness in Middlesex County that does not fit into the eight strategic priorities, please feel free to share it below.



Community Conversation Toolkit

*London-Middlesex Homeless Prevention
and Housing Plan*