Rural Housing Information System

Stakeholder Feedback of the Design Plan

PURPOSE

- Provide an update to stakeholders
- Request feedback regarding the preliminary design plan
- Ensure we understand your data needs & priorities
- Ask about data you may be willing to share and your capacity to provide it
- Recruit participants for user testing

IN BRIEF

- The Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus (EOWC), the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI), and Itergy are partnering to develop a data solution to support affordable housing in rural communities.

- This digital tool aims to provide local, reliable, salient, and current rural data to assist proponents & municipalities in the planning and construction of new, affordable housing.

BACKGROUND

- There is a **growing, acute shortage of housing** in Eastern Ontario, particularly in rural regions.

- While home prices have generally reliably risen for nearly 20 years, there has been a sudden spike in rural home prices following the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Eastern Ontario regions averaged **32.4%** in median home price increases from 2020-2021 (*CREA*).

  - While Toronto averaged ~18%, Northumberland County was 44%, City of Kawartha Lakes was 60%, while Prince Edward County averaged **79**%.

CANADA   ONTARIO

Ontario's Most Popular Real Estate Market Is Now Rural, While People Flee Toronto

Rural Ontario the new hot spot for home buyers

New report indicates Simcoe County had the highest percentage increase in house sales in the GTA

Feb 6, 2021 7:00 PM By: Mark Pavilons, Local Journalism Initiative

CANADA

Canada's Property Bubble Pushed Ontario Prices To Grow Over 30% In All But 3 Markets

Red-hot and rural: Canadian towns grapple with big-city-like real estate boom

By Julie Gordon

Posthaste: Rural rush – the real housing bubble is in Ontario's cottage country

Rest-and-recreation destinations may give sleepless nights to those who were late to the market

Yadullah Hussain
May 03, 2021 • May 3, 2021 • 6 minute read

Canadian recreational house prices soar 11.5% as remote work drives demand in cottage country   Français

PROJECT PARTNERS

EOWC — Eastern Ontario Wardens' Caucus

- Supports and advocates on behalf of the property taxpayers across rural Eastern Ontario

- Covers an area of 45,000 square kilometres from Cobourg to the Quebec border, and includes 13 upper-tier and single-tier municipalities as well as 90 local municipalities

ROI

- EOWC has partnered with ROI to leverage their data expertise and support the scalability of the prototype

- ROI has extensive experience with data collection and integration for rural areas, developing evidence-based policy, and communicating data to local decision-makers

Itergy

- Consulting firm founded to help mid-sized businesses and large corporations improve the reliability, security and performance of their Microsoft infrastructure

- Specializes in Active Directory and IAM (Identity Access Management), is a Microsoft Gold and Silver certified partner, and manages Windows servers, security solutions, Active Directory, and full infrastructures on 6 continents and in over 65 countries

PROJECT UPDATE

Round 1 – Scoping & Start Up - Complete
- Consultation with stakeholders
- Preliminary design plan
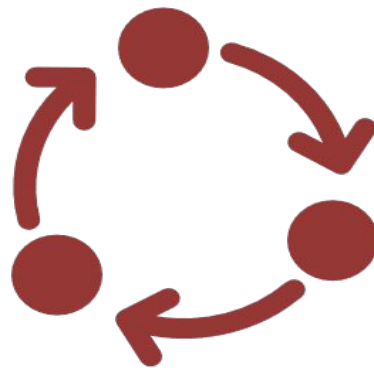
Round 2 – Development & Testing - In progress
- Refinement of design plan through stakeholder input
- Selection of data sources
- Web development
- User testing (May – December 2022)

Rollout & Scalability - In progress
- Tentative launch at EOWC conference and other events
- Scalability plan to include additional regions

ROI

ROUND 1 – WHO WE CONSULTED

- We consulted with:
  - Quinte Homebuilders Association
  - Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
  - Other Eastern Ontario homebuilders' associations
  - Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada
  - Municipal Planning, Economic Development & Housing/Social Services Staff from all 13 EOWC upper and single-tier counties
  - Ray Bollman - Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

- Surveys were also sent to a selection of Eastern Ontario commercial and residential realtors and developers, to gauge which data would be the most useful for residential construction & sales

ROUND 1 – WHAT WE HEARD

Rural Challenges

Poorly maintained, underpopulated and non-uniform data between jurisdictions creates an information gap for stakeholders:

Municipal Staff & Council

- need authoritative data to address ratepayers' resistance to flexible residential zoning changes that increase options for affordable housing units
- need credible data to justify municipal investments in affordable housing

Developers & Builders Associations

- need reliable information on rules and incentives to entice them to consider rural areas where construction rules and incentives vary
- need data to assist with grant applications to improve their chances of success and to determine ROI in rural areas

Social Service & Housing Managers

- need reliable data to plan and implement housing plans effectively and understand regional trends

Non-Profit Housing Providers

- need easy access to rural data to complete funding applications

Economic Development & Real Estate Professionals

- need detailed rural data that is not skewed by urban areas to develop investment cases for rural communities

IMPORTANT DATA POINTS

These data points (non-exhaustive) were the most frequently mentioned in consultation as being useful for new construction & sales.
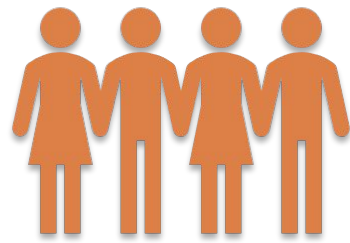
Demographic trends (population growth, age, income)
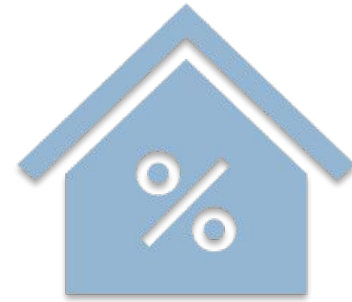
Average market rents & home prices, correlated to income
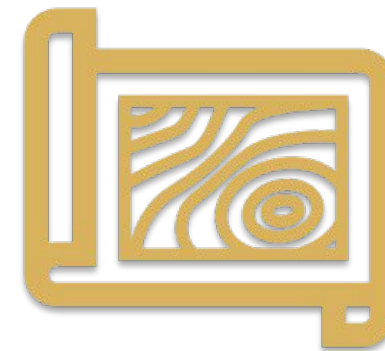
Available zoned & developable land
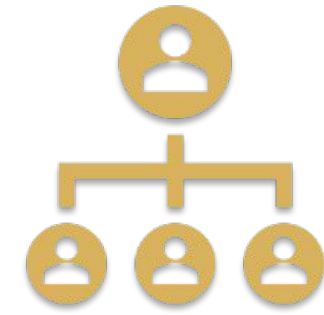
Local organizations available for collaboration

Soft costs (development charges, parkland levy, school fees)

Available building incentives, CIPs, grants, etc.

Relevant municipal planning by-laws
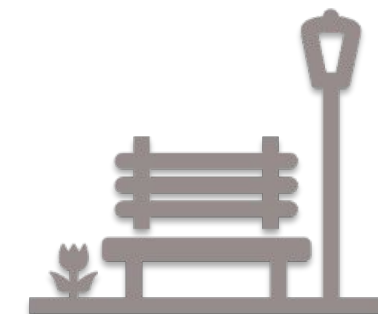
Assets & amenities that support residents

RURAL HOUSING INFORMATION SYSTEM - PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLAN

- **Public-facing**
  - Some information may be restricted to specific user groups

- **Logical organization**
  - Community profiles
  - Thematic data groups

- **Interactive & custom**
  - Data visualizations
  - Downloadable data
  - Custom reports
  - Community comparison tool
  - Interactive mapping feature
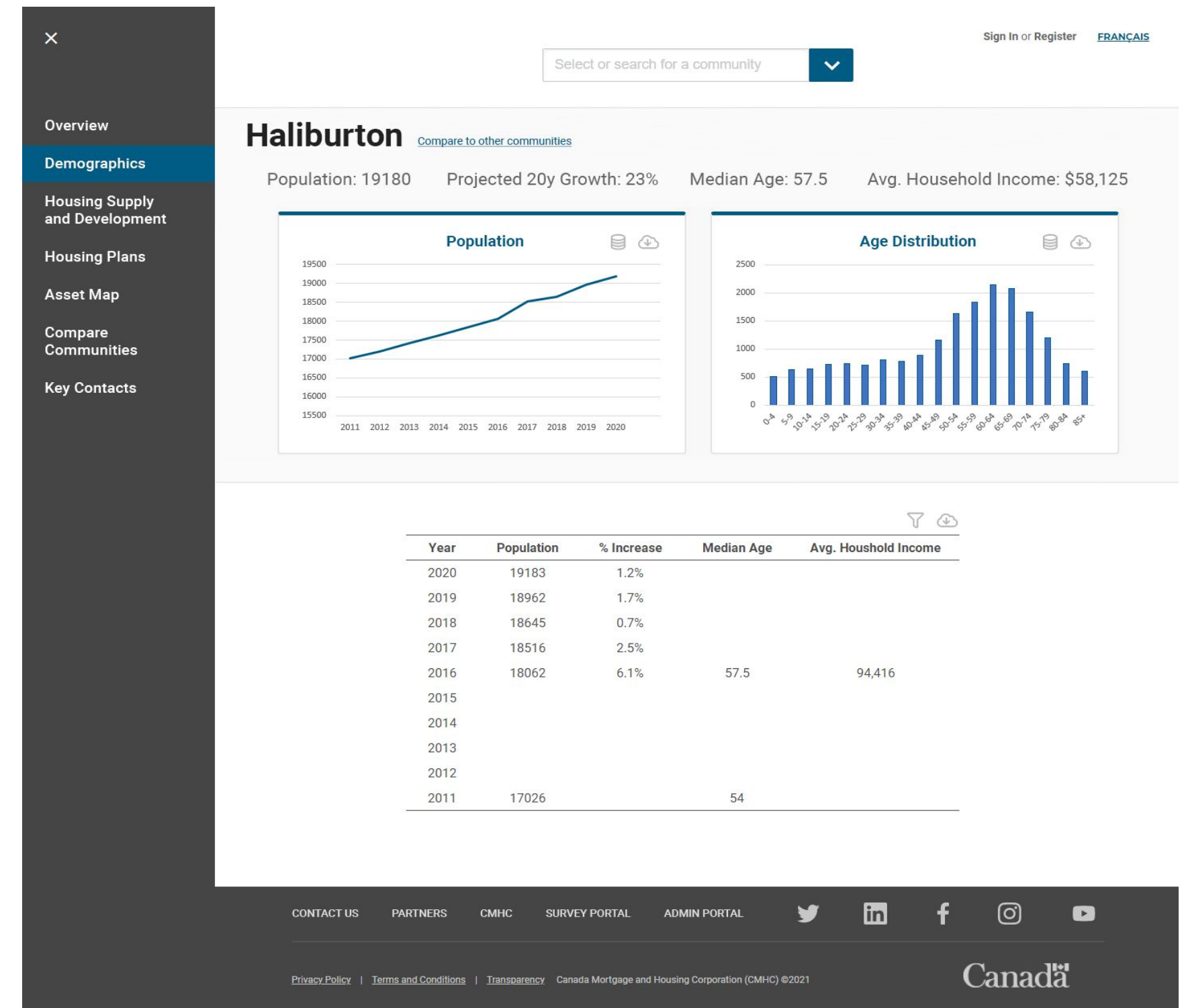
RURAL HOUSING INFORMATION SYSTEM - PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLAN

- **Uploading data**
  - Data can be uploaded automatically, or manually with controlled user access
  - Manually-uploaded data will be reviewed before publication
  - Approved data will be automatically integrated with existing datasets

RURAL HOUSING INFORMATION SYSTEM - PRELIMINARY DESIGN PLAN

- **Collecting stakeholder data**
  - Administrative portal enables the creation of surveys to collect stakeholder data that is shareable, but not readily available

  - Surveys can be automatically pushed to stakeholders on a regular schedule

  - Examples of survey data types:
    - Housing costs

      Municipal fees, funding, incentives…
    - Housing supply

      Number of units built…
    - Housing market

      Sale/rental history…

DESIGN PLAN FEEDBACK – FUNCTION & UTILITY

DESIGN PLAN FEEDBACK – SIMILAR TOOLS

Census Profile and Data Viewer
- Presents StatsCan data only

CMHC Housing Market Information Portal
- Presents Census and CMHC data
- Lacks data for rural areas

Townfolio
- Provides community profiles using various data sources
- Requires an annual subscription fee

Housing & Homelessness Tool
- Coming soon
- Available only to Service Managers
- Presents customized StatsCan data, CHMC data, 3rd party data, and municipal data

Community Accounts
- Developed by Memorial University in NFLD
- Adopted by the Northern Policy Institute for rural communities in Northern Ontario
- Could be applied to other parts of Ontario
- Relies mostly on StatsCan data
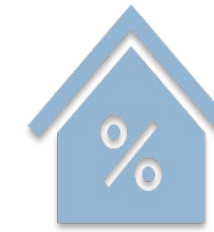
DESIGN PLAN FEEDBACK – SIMILAR TOOLS

- Which of these data points is most important for you?

- Are there issues with current data sources/information that should be addressed? For example:
  - StatsCan – Outdated data (5-year update cycle)
  - CMHC - Lack of local data to adjust average market rent
  - Municipal websites – Difficult to find by-laws, soft costs, building incentives

- Do you have access to data that you can share with us?
  - How frequently would this data be updated?
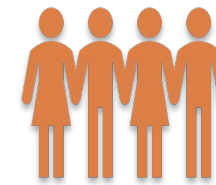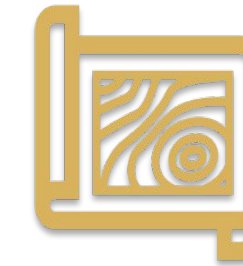
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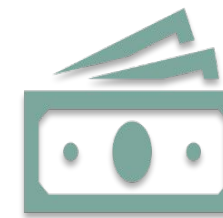
Average market rents & home prices, correlated to income

Available zoned & developable land

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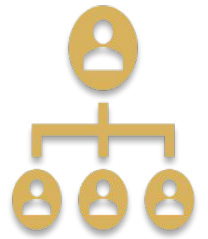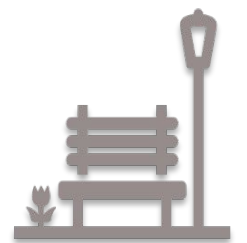
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NEXT STEPS – USER TESTING

- ROI is recruiting stakeholders to take part in user testing during 2022. We are currently recruiting municipalities, developers, and not-for-profit organizations.

- The aim is to gather information directly from intended users to help build a more robust tool.

- Involvement in the user testing process is free of charge and will include intermittent training, feedback, and follow-up with ROI staff at scheduled dates.
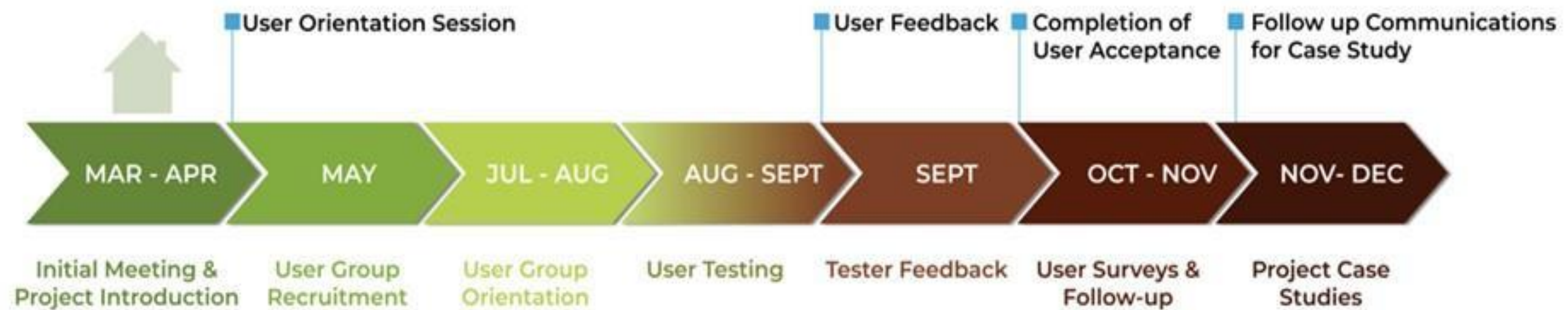
Contact:
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Please join our engagement platform, ROI Connect, to receive project updates, share your feedback with us and participate in ongoing discussions.

THANK YOU!

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