

Progress update - February 2024

Strategic Plan 2021-2026

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE 2023 UPDATE](#)

Modernize Service System Planning

Improve digital and electronic access to programs and services

- Cellular and mobile workforce is now possible in all departments to support the provision of virtual services.
- Increasing paperless transactions and facilitating digital payments to vendors.
- Digital signatures are being implemented to streamline business practices and improve customer experience.
- Implemented a user friendly program for child care billing, record storage and information retrieval.
- All Ontario Works clients are automatically signed up for MyBenefits. MyBenefits is a web-based platform that allows you to access your Ontario Works case online. We continue to promote the tool at intake, on website and through social media channels.
- Implemented an Electronic Document Management System in Ontario Works.
- Worked with a 3rd party to improve Rent Cafe, a web-based resource for the Housing Programs team to maintain the Centralized Wait List for housing in the District.

Strengthen Collaboration

Strengthen communications and information sharing with municipalities

- Presentations have been made to 13/22 Councils to date. The remainder are planned for 2024.
- We continue to build and leverage partnerships, with our Director of Income Support & Stability as Co-Chair of the HSSN group as of Dec 2023.
- Creation of a NOSDA Communications Working Group, led by Parry Sound DSSAB CAO, to help build assist in the advocacy work of Northern Ontario Service Managers.

Work together with partners to balance local priorities with operational and financial realities

- Housed 124 people in 2023 off the ByName List
- Secured partnerships for transitional housing to start Feb 2024.
- Ongoing partnerships with WPSHC, Community Paramedicine, Coordination with CMHA.
- Continuing by-monthly meetings with ODSP Manager. Joint protocols established with North Bay office. ODSP staff attend office regularly.

Holistic Approach to Human Services

Continue to promote integration between internal and external program & service areas and support the implementation of a single window access to integrated human services

- Income Support & Stability team has expanded their working relationship with Esprit.
- We continue to implement the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan (life stabilization framework)

Pursue opportunities to pilot innovative programs and services that support life stabilization of residents

- Transitional housing to open in East Parry Sound in February 2024, leading to improved outcomes based on our Housing & Homelessness Plan.
- Life skills programs to be implemented in 2024.

Effective Infrastructure Renewal

Assess all DSSAB assets; including housing, child care, and public sites

- All assets and new building Condition Assessments completed in 2023 are now being uploaded into our new fixed asset module. Will be completed in March 2024
- Explored opportunities for external government funding to support sustainability and growth of capital DSSAB Assets and have received various CMHC grants for Social Housing assets.
- Upgrading energy efficient lighting, windows currently underway, and planned for 2024.
- NOAH is now 100% controlled by the DSSAB on December 8/2023 and is now included in DSSAB annual budget for Affordable Housing and Market rents.

Achieve Organizational Excellence

Continuous improvement in administrative, governance, planning, procedures, and policies to enable the DSSAB to achieve shared strategic goals

- Implementing shared financial folders which facilitate management staff to view accounts payable invoices. All management staff have access to financial programs to login to view financial reports and transactions in their departments to manage their budgets more effectively.
- Ensured each department is fully integrated into the budgeting process for 2024 and fully understands and can be accountable to their department budget.



Modernize Service System Planning

Improve digital and electronic access to programs and services

- Continue to support technology that improves communication. A new external website is planned for 2024.
- Implementing online solutions for Ontario Works clients to request and access benefits (Utilizing MyBenefits, text and email for clients to submit requests).
- New IT documentation system and improvements to data storage and backup.
- Improved data sharing across all departments.
- Created efficiencies for staff to access and use technology (ie. password management).
- Revamped the DSSAB core network infrastructure and service room - facilities rebuild.
- Reviewed data integrity and created a plan for backup.
- Conducted a cyber assessment and a plan for a cyber attack.
- Implemented digital HPP app for payment issuance through SAMS to reduce manual payments and support ease of data collection.



Strengthen Collaboration

Incorporate Indigenous Truth and Reconciliation guiding principles and practices in the engagement, development and delivery of programs and services

- Continuing in 2024 with the next session of Cultural Competency training (mandatory for all staff).
- Child Care Service Management resource library now includes a collection of books and toys to help connect children to the indigenous peoples and cultures. These resources are available to borrow by child care operators throughout the district.
- Regular meetings were held with the Parry Sound Friendship Centre and will continue into 2024.



Holistic Approach to Human Services

Prevent and respond to homelessness and develop solutions to assist people to access housing across all levels of the housing continuum/spectrum

- Increased housing stock through the renovation of a 3 bedroom duplex into two 1-bedroom RGI units.
- Ready to open 4 transitional units at Broadway in early 2024, in support of improved outcomes based on our Housing & Homelessness Plan.
- Clients will continue to be offered COHB (Canada Ontario Housing Benefit) and upon acceptance, will be moved from the centralized wait list.
- Continue work on a revitalization of the Home Ownership and Ontario Renovates Program which assists homeowners in remaining in their homes & supporting those entering the housing market.



Effective Infrastructure Renewal

Develop a housing priority plan that outlines options to support core need households, including repurposing existing infrastructure and building new financially assisted housing

- 2023 Building condition assessments completed and uploaded into asset management system will allow 10 year capital reports to be generated for replacement and reserve planning purposes.
- New Asset Management system tags operating and capital transactions to assets as expenses are incurred to better reflect the costs associated with each asset and its replacement value
- 4 transitional units to open in East Parry Sound in Feb 2024. Exploring options for West Parry Sound which includes partnership with the WPSHC, the Safe Justice Bed program, and Esprit
- Renovation of 3 bedroom duplex to two 1-bedroom RGI units increased housing stock on the East side of the district.



Achieve Organizational Excellence

Build a culture of employee engagement, training, and collaboration

- Fundamentals of Transformative Mentoring and Coaching complete, Team building complete, communication training will be booked for 2024
- Continued with Calm Subscription for all employees.
- Continuing in 2024 with the next session of Cultural Competency training (mandatory for all staff).


Use program statistics and performance indicators to demonstrate programs and service outcomes and help decision-making

- Discussions with Nurse Practitioner Led Clinics (NPLC) regarding primary care challenges in East Parry Sound are ongoing.
- Had a discussion with Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) about supplemental data that we can provide to support further clarification regarding Housing Prevention Program (HPP) funding.

Progress update - February 2024

Strategic Plan 2021-2026

[CLICK HERE TO VIEW THE 2023 UPDATE](#)

 **Modernize Service System Planning**

 **Strengthen Collaboration**

 **Holistic Approach to Human Services**

 **Effective Infrastructure Renewal**

 **Achieve Organizational Excellence**

- **Transform business practices to support more responsive delivery based on outcomes**
 - Created integrated Supervisor positions East/West in preparation for the Social Assistance Recovery and Renewal Plan implementation.
 - Ongoing implementation of upgraded software for asset management and housing - anticipated rollout is March 2024 affecting all processes.
- **Explore creative options to offer and support enhanced or expanded programs and services**
 - Employment Placement Partnership with Employment North supported 10 people in 2023. Mental health & addictions worker providing supports.
 - Finalizing enhancement of partnership with Community Paramedicine to do ridealongs.
 - EarlyON now has a full time Virtual Resource Facilitator for programs.
 - Developed and implemented a recruitment plan for Home Child Care providers.
 - Implemented the DSSAB's workforce Strategy for the recruitment and retention of ECE's in the District.

- **Work with community health organizations to better integrate health supports into the services we offer**
 - Signed as a Collaborative Partner with the West Parry Sound Ontario Health Team (OHT) which has now been approved by the province.
 - Senior leadership has regular meetings with Ontario Health Northeast.
 - Staff collaborate with community partners and are making connections as their program models and mandates change
 - Continued support and participation of the Health & Social Services Network group (HSSN). Director of Income Support & Stability acts as Co-Chair of the group.

- **Demonstrate progress in moving towards integrated human services planning & delivery**
 - Reviewing the previous 5 year Housing and Homelessness plan, and will begin working on a plan for the next five years.
 - Community partners to provide most up to date information/access to affordable housing options (COHB, rent supplement,)
 - Improved our electronic program for better integration with programs/projects and services. Tenant Services & Housing Programs teams have been onboarded. Exploring integration with Esprit.
 - Implementing emcampment tracking tool early 2024.
 - Housing Operations Department now communicates through a joint electronic tool with other program (Ontario Works, Housing Stability Program) regarding tenants that are at risk of homelessness. Case Conferencing between programs currently ongoing .

- **Sustain and revitalize the community housing assets**
 - In addition to Building Condition Assessments (BCA's) that were completed for our directly operated buildings, we also had these assessments completed for non-profit providers to assist them with planning/budgeting.
 - Fostering relationships with housing non-profits (community housing sector) by working with providers to identify opportunities to expand and maintain the current social and affordable housing stock. (ie. The Hub, Golden Sunshine, NOAH)

- **Improve communications with various stakeholders and local media**
 - Successful launch of a new employee portal providing staff with an improved intranet that is more accessible and user friendly.
 - Met with municipal Councils throughout the District of Parry Sound to expand our reach and enhance public knowledge of the DSSAB's programs and services. As of December 2023, we've provided a verbal presentation to 13 of out 22 municipalities, with plans for the remaining 9 presentations to take place in 2024.
 - Summer EarlyON programming has shifted to local outdoor public spaces to be more accessible and meet people where they are.
 - The Tenant Services team is developing a detailed tenant handbook that supports transparency and communication.
 - Branding guidelines, including refreshed branding, staff training, and a toolbox for branding resources has been shared with staff on the new internal website.