

# Permanent Supportive Housing & Saying 'Yes in My Backyard'

Effective communication about  
permanent supportive housing &  
strategic advocacy to support action



## Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination

### VISION

Poverty will be eliminated in Guelph-Wellington.

### MISSION

To work collaboratively, informed by diverse voices of experience, to take local action and advocate for system and policy change to address the root causes of poverty.

### Priority Areas:



Livable Incomes  
& Decent Work



Homelessness  
& Housing



Food  
Insecurity



Health  
Inequities

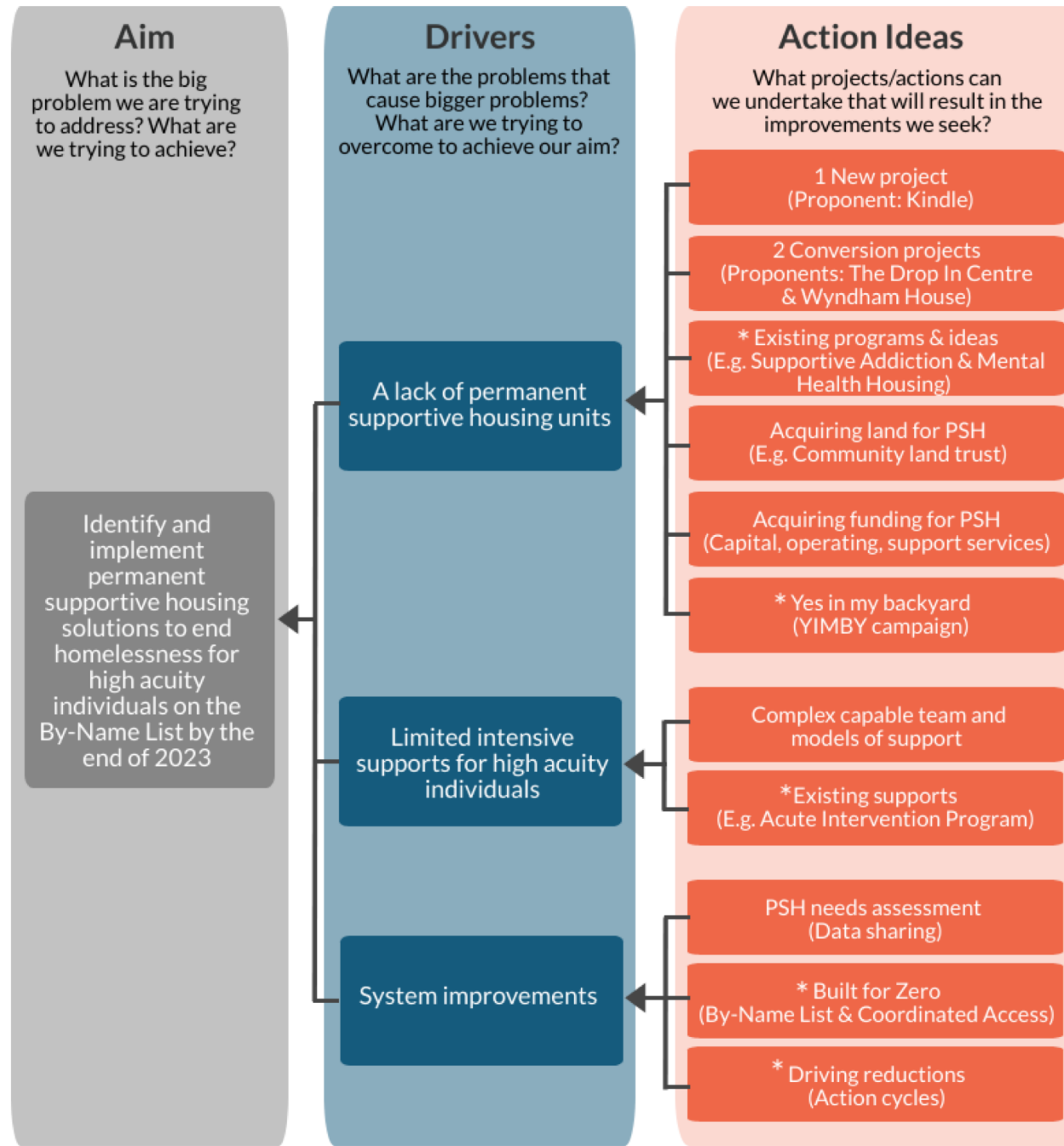


## Ending Homelessness in Guelph-Wellington

- Our community has a plan to end homelessness by 2023
- Permanent supportive housing is an essential part of the plan



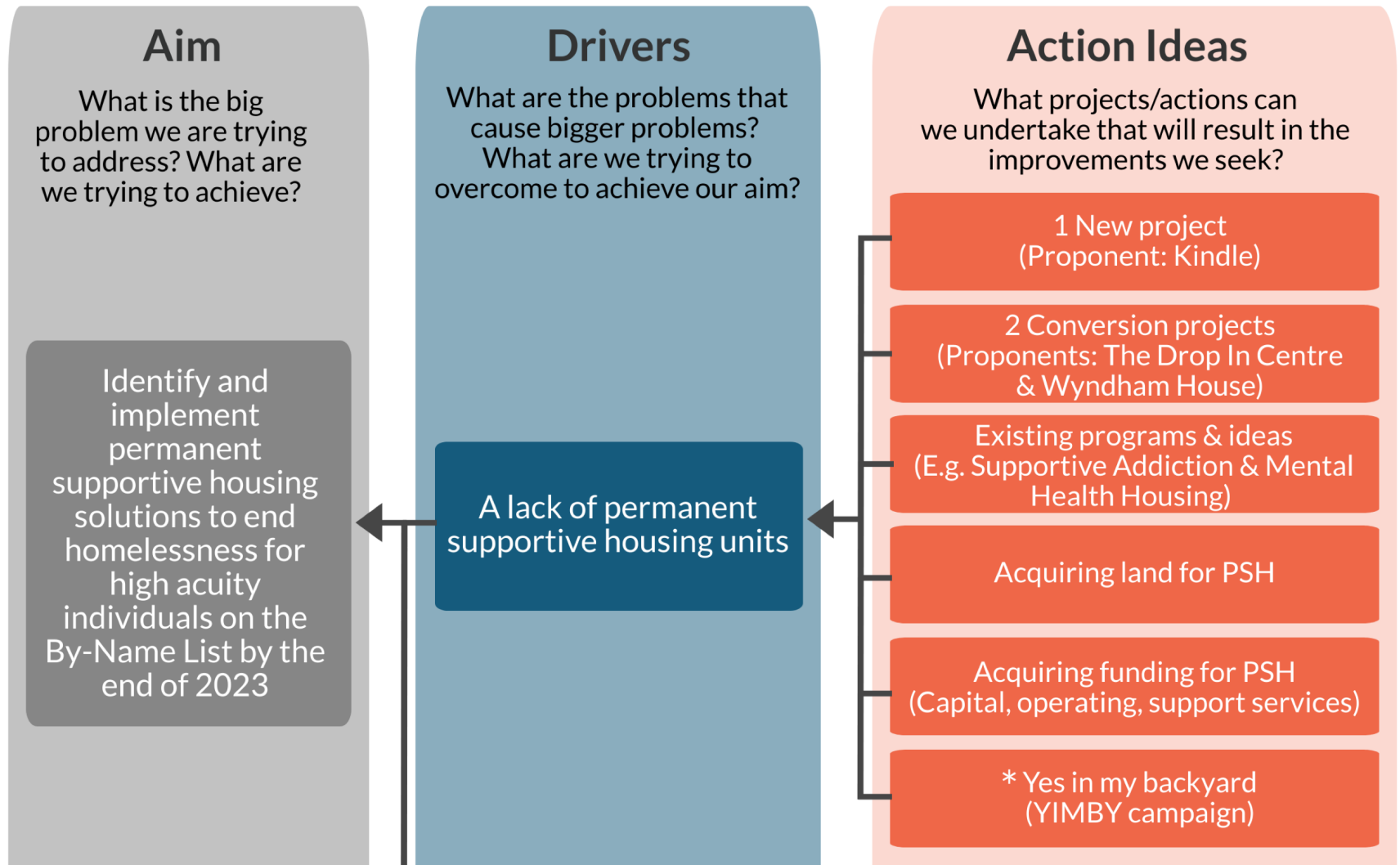
# Ending Homelessness



\* Existing projects & programs that are already underway.



# Ending Homelessness



## ‘Yes in My Backyard’

- Saying yes to accepting our community’s collective responsibility to make our shared space welcoming to everyone



When everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home our whole community benefits.



## ‘Not in My Backyard’ (NIMBY)

- Neighbourhood opposition to a housing development based on stereotypes or prejudice towards the people who will live there
- Concerns often based on assumptions that:
  - property values will decrease
  - safety risks & crime will increase



**How can you tell if opposition is discriminatory or not?**



## Use the cringe test!

- If it sounds wrong to say the same thing about a racial, ethnic or religious group, then it's discrimination...
  - *“Neighbours deserve to be warned before \_\_\_\_\_ move in.”*
  - *“This neighbourhood is not suitable for \_\_\_\_\_.”*
  - *“This neighbourhood already has its fair share of \_\_\_\_\_.”*
  - *“If \_\_\_\_\_ are going to live here, then there should be a wall around it or frosted windows.”*
- General guideline: talk about land use and planning, not people.





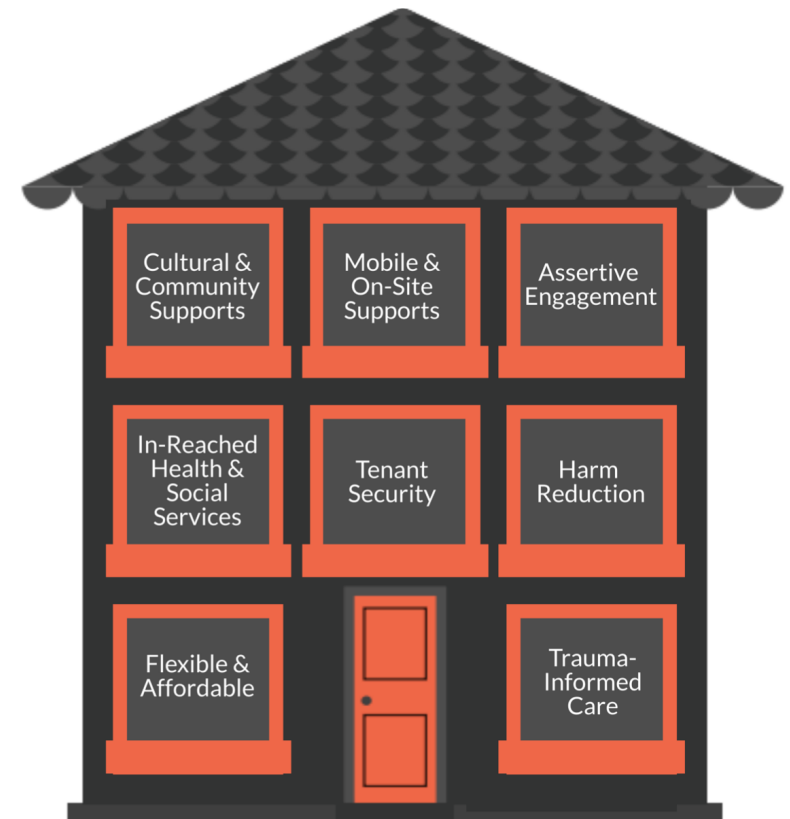
## Housing & Human Rights

- Housing is a human right
- Everyone has the right to be free from discrimination in housing
  - **“Every person has a right to equal treatment with respect to the occupancy of accommodation without discrimination** because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, family status, disability or the receipt of public assistance.” – *Ontario Human Rights Code*, s.2(1)
- People should be able to live in a neighbourhood of their choice free of discrimination
  - **“It is the Ontario Human Rights Commission’s position that people or groups identified under the Code should not have to ask permission from prospective neighbours before moving into a neighbourhood.”** – *Ontario Human Rights Commission*, 2009.



## What is Permanent Supportive Housing?

- Permanent, affordable housing + flexible, voluntary supports
- Assists with housing retention & independent living
- Evidence-based solution for people experiencing homelessness with complex needs

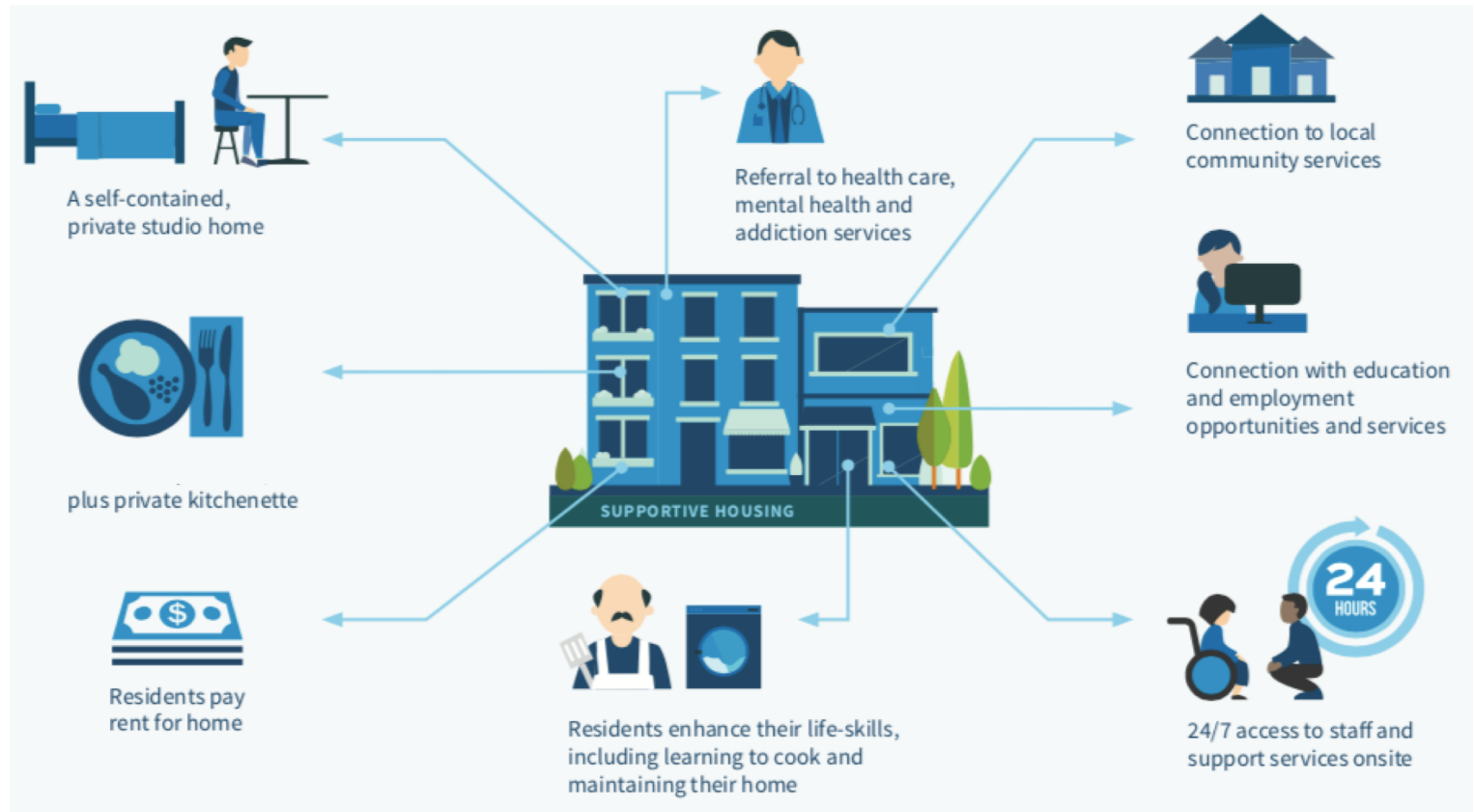


### KEY COMPONENTS OF THE PERMANENT SUPPORTIVE HOUSING MODEL:

Adapted from a graphic developed by Homeward Trust Edmonton to illustrate the key components of the permanent supportive housing model.



# Permanent Supportive Housing



<https://yesinmybackyard.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Community-Benefits-Supportive-Housing.pdf>



**Belief:**

Permanent supportive housing is a cost-effective solution.

TRUE

FALSE

**Key Points:**

PSH is a cost-effective solution that reduces public costs associated with more costly interventions involved in managing homelessness, such as: emergency shelters, healthcare, and emergency services.



**Belief:**

Permanent supportive housing will negatively impact neighbourhood property values.

TRUE

FALSE

**Key Points:**

- Ample research concludes PSH has no impact on property values.
- PSH developments often help to beautify a neighbourhood with new or rehabilitated properties.



**Belief:**

Permanent supportive housing will increase crime and make a neighbourhood less safe.

TRUE

FALSE

**Key Points:**

- This belief is often based on a false assumption that PSH is dangerous for a neighbourhood. That isn't the case.
- Research supports that PSH does not increase crime rates.
- Many existing PSH sites are located close to schools with no issues and with support from the community.



**Belief:**

Permanent supportive housing should be located in residential neighbourhoods.

TRUE

FALSE

**Key Points:**

- It is best practise for PSH to be located near public transportation, employment opportunities, neighbourhood amenities, and community-based services.
- Like anyone else, individuals experiencing homelessness want to live in an affordable neighbourhood that meets their needs.



**Belief:**

Permanent supportive housing falls under the same planning process as any other housing development.

**TRUE**

**FALSE**

**Key Points:**

PSH falls under the same planning and community consultation process as any other development.

- If no special planning approval is needed, public consultation is not required.
- If it is needed, the developer must consult the immediate neighbourhood about land use, not about how the building will be managed or who will live there.





## Belief:

The best way to build support for permanent supportive housing is to maximize community consultation and awareness about the issues during the planning process.

TRUE

FALSE

## Key Point:

- It's important that people understand what they have a say over and what they don't have say over.
- Consultation is about land use, not about how the building will be managed or who will live there.
- Education and awareness is best before and after the planning process.



**Belief:**

Permanent supportive housing residents will not fit into the neighbourhood.

TRUE

FALSE

**Key Point:**

- Inclusive communities provide housing opportunities for all.
- People are experiencing homelessness in neighbourhoods across this community, including in the neighbourhoods where PSH projects are currently proposed.
- Everyone who will live in PSH will choose to live there just like anyone else who might be deciding where to rent or buy a home.



## When conversations get challenging

- You can support or reinforce positions with high level key messages
- Strengthen key messages with personal experience
- Lead with care – support with facts
  - “I’ve seen the difference support can make...”
- Refer to resources that are already developed/approved/accessible
- Know when to end the conversation

**STRONGLY  
WORDED  
LETTERS**



## Bridge and block

- “Bridge” from shaky ground to safer ground:
  - “I can’t speak to that specific situation, but what I CAN tell you... in MY experience... [restate key message.]”
  - “What I really want to talk about is...”
- “Block” inappropriate questions.
  - “I’m not going to respond to that.” or “Sorry, that’s not something I can speak to.”

**STRONGLY  
WORDED  
LETTERS**



## ‘Yes in My Backyard’

- Saying yes to accepting our community’s collective responsibility to make our shared space welcoming to everyone
- Benefits of PSH:
  - positive health outcomes
  - social inclusion
  - participation in education & employment
  - cost effectiveness & increased community wellbeing!



When everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home our whole community benefits.



## When you say ‘Yes in My Backyard’ you:

- support a welcoming community where everyone can access the housing they need free of discrimination
- encourage others to show their support for safe and affordable housing that meets community needs
- help to build the community support necessary to give elected officials the courage to do the right thing.

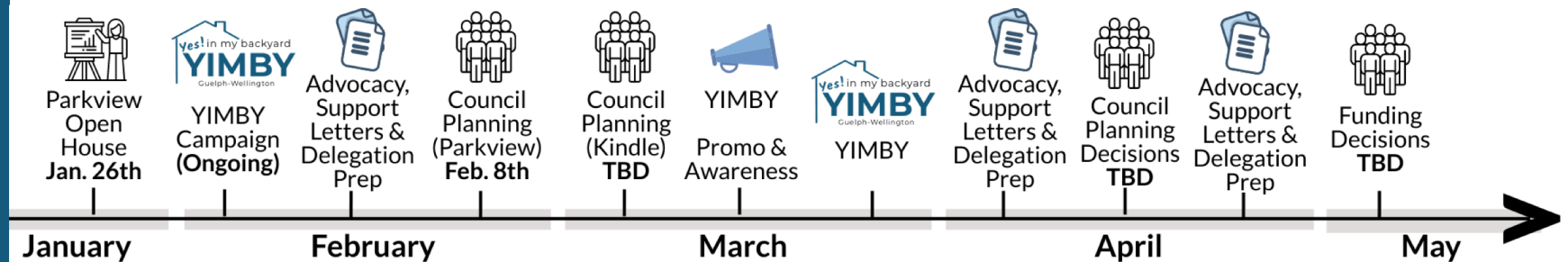


**When do you engage in political advocacy?**



## During decision-making & when there is attention

- When people are paying attention
- When decision-makers are discussing something crucial to your issue, including changes in policy or funding



## Ways to Shift Your Support into Action

- Engage in the planning process
  - Reach out to PSH proponents to express your support
  - Attend open houses & ask supporters to join you
- Email, phone or write your elected officials
- Follow the community conversation
  - Submit a letter to the editor
- Follow decision-making processes
  - Letters of support
  - Delegate (but check-in with the proponent first!)

**Remember: Shared strategy is important to reaching our goal.**





## Sign-up for the YIMBY Campaign

- Add your name to a growing list of supporters!



When everyone has a safe and affordable place to call home our whole community benefits.

Website: [www.gwpoverty.ca/yimby](http://www.gwpoverty.ca/yimby)



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