November 2025

Saugeen First Nation Housing Engagement

The Saugeen Housing Department and Together Design Lab are working together to make housing better in the community. Hearing about the housing experiences, challenges, and goals of community members is an important step to understanding what changes are needed now, and the community's vision for housing in the future.

Project update

From August 19th to 21st 2025 we visited Saugeen and talked to community members about housing. We had a housing barbecue outside of the Band Office, a table at the community forum event and at the night market. We also visited the Elders Lodge, Wellness Building, Ontario Works and the Community Garden and spent time with community members learning from their stories, opinions and ideas about housing. Community members of all ages were invited and welcomed to join housing activities and discussions.









Across the summer, we also met with Saugeen First Nation staff from Community and Social Services, Governance and Strategic Initiatives, Lands, Health and Wellness to talk about the ways housing is important to their day to day work, and how it could be better for the community members who access their programs.

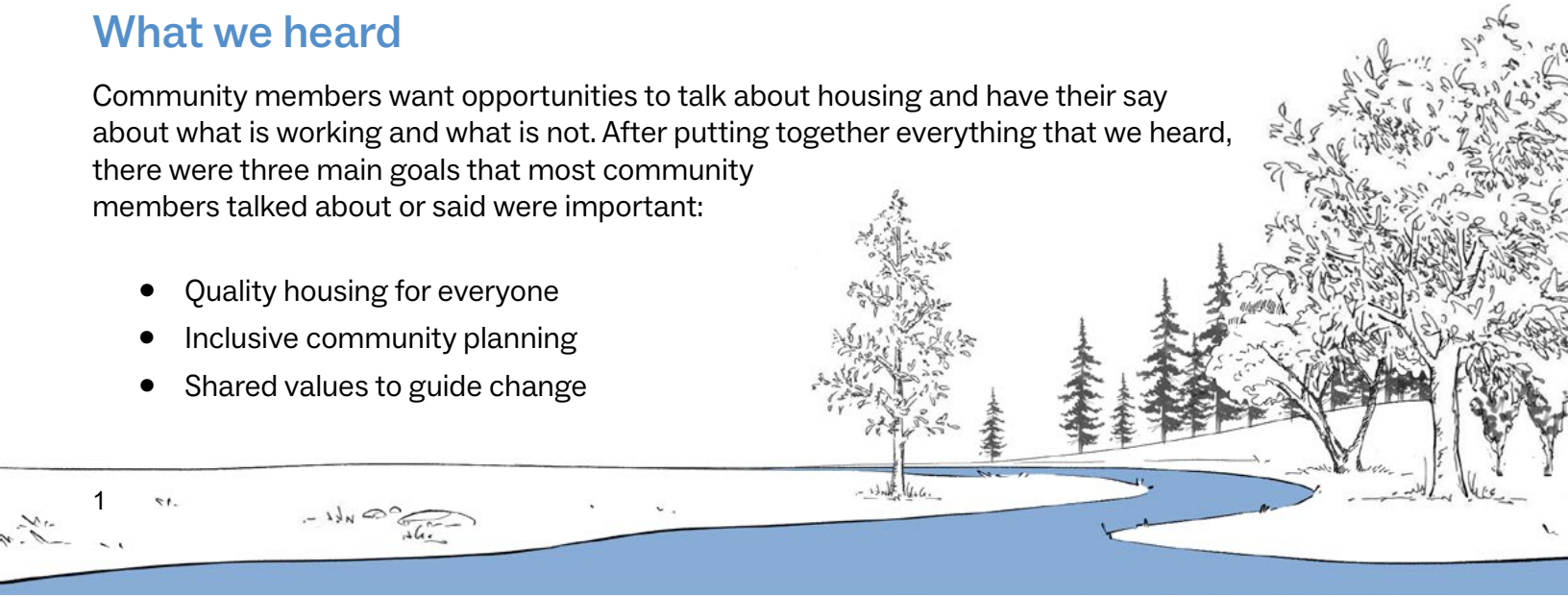
To understand what community-led housing change would look like we listened and asked questions about:

- What is housing like in Saugeen right now?
- What goals are there for housing in the future?
- Whose housing needs are not being met?
- What values should guide housing decision-making?

What we heard

Community members want opportunities to talk about housing and have their say about what is working and what is not. After putting together everything that we heard, there were three main goals that most community members talked about or said were important:

- Quality housing for everyone
- Inclusive community planning
- Shared values to guide change



Quality housing for everyone

- Three- and four-bedroom houses are being built but are not what everyone wants, needs or can afford. There is a need for different housing options, especially for young adults, single adults, Elders and large families.
- Homes need repairs, renovations and modifications to make sure housing is safe and supports occupants as their needs change or families grow.
- Opportunities are needed for community members to gain skills in housing such as construction, red seal trades (plumber, electrician) and land surveying to create job opportunities and keep money in the community.

Inclusive community planning

- Future planning should promote the things community members love about living in Saugeen like closeness to family and friends, the natural environment, space, freedom and recreation.
- All members living Saugeen need access to community programs, essential services (groceries, medical appointments) and social connections, especially those living up French Bay Road.
- There is not only a need for more housing but supporting infrastructure like roads, water, wastewater treatment, community space, and transportation.

Shared values to guide change

- Housing decision-making will better meet community needs if it is aligned with the values that community members felt were most important: accountability, affordability, fairness, safety and accessibility.
- The housing policy is not working as well as it could, and needs to be reviewed and updated.
- Clear communication is needed about housing programs and services that are available in the community and how to access them, including who is eligible and who to talk to.

Stay up to date

What we learn and other important updates will be shared through presentations, flyers (like this), a final report and on the project website. For more information about what we heard from community engagement and to stay up to date on the project scan the QR code or visit:

https://www.togetherdesignlab.com/sfn

Together Design Lab

Together Design Lab is a research team at Toronto Metropolitan University made up of faculty, staff and students with training in urban and regional planning and architecture. For the past 10+ years, we have worked with First Nations communities and other partners to create community-led housing change through community engagement and housing research. Together, with our partners, we develop policy, program and design solutions by listening to and valuing the knowledge and experiences of all members of the communities we work with.

