



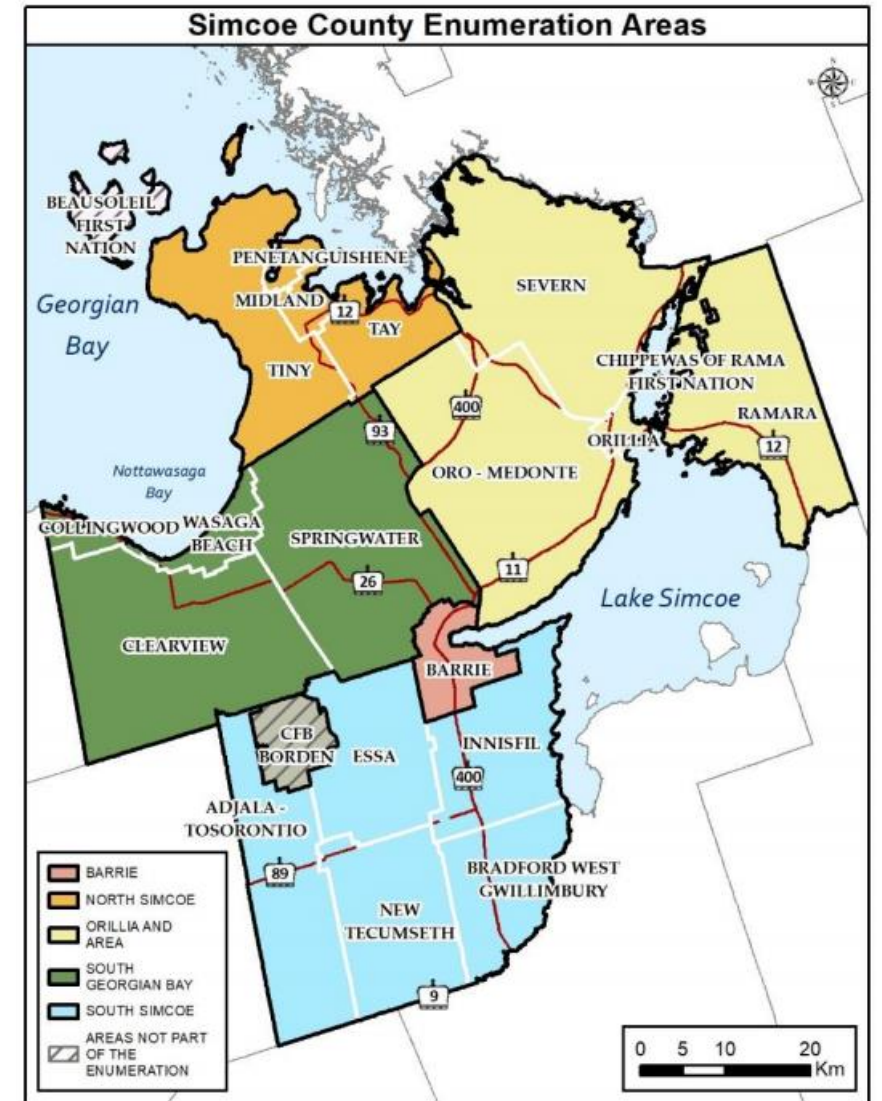
Co-ordinated by the David Busby Street Centre

# 2020 Homeless Enumeration Simcoe County: Lessons Learned

January 20, 2021

# About Simcoe County

- Located about an hour north of Toronto
- Population 479,650 (2016 census)
- Significant population growth
- Mix of urban and rural
- 18 local cities, towns, and townships
- Previous enumerations included 5 local headquarter locations



# Why Conduct Enumeration During a Pandemic?

- To understand the **unique** and **unprecedented** situations of homelessness so that local responses can be developed
- To understand homelessness among people who are typically underrepresented in enumerations because they are staying with friends/family/acquaintances (the **hidden homeless**)
- To understand impact of changes in programs/service delivery due to COVID-19
- To protect the safety of individuals by following **COVID-19 guidelines** and **procedures** consistent with local **public health recommendations**



# COVID Safety Measures

- No magnet events (i.e., no events with large groups of people)
- No volunteers; surveys were conducted by staff at community agencies, who have experience in safe delivery of services during COVID-19
- Online survey (not HIFIS), in addition to having paper surveys available
- Verbal instead of written survey consent
- No volunteers for data entry
- Virtual training through the use of videos
- No headquarter locations in local communities
- Protocols were reviewed and approved by local Public Health



# Key Lessons Learned

- Need lots of time: to engage with people, train staff, plan for temporarily modified service delivery models, coordinate staffing
- Need a strong communication plan (esp. without headquarters)
- Gift card wasn't as big an incentive
- Was harder to find people through outreach; hotspots weren't as "hot"
- Some agencies providing virtual services had a harder time reaching clients
- Response fatigue
- Weather! First snow storm of the year
- Follow up survey with agency partners will provide further insights



# Questions

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