

Annual Report to Province - 2016

Housing & Homelessness Action Plan in Hamilton

Everyone has a home...Home is the Foundation



Everyone has a home...home is the foundation. This is the collective mandate that has been endorsed by the City of Hamilton and the Hamilton community. It is a mandate that is focused on implementing 54 strategies that fall under five outcome areas and require collective action by all stakeholders and community members.

The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is a community based, person centred plan that sets a vision, clear targets and goals to ensure everyone in Hamilton has a home. On December 11, 2013, Hamilton City Council approved Hamilton’s Housing and Homelessness 10 year Action Plan. This is a comprehensive decision-making tool that links with and complements other key planning initiatives in Hamilton. The Action Plan is City led, but community owned.

This report focuses on the work that has occurred during the third year of implementation of the Action Plan. This report provides 2016 highlights and is by no means reflective of all the good work going on in our community which contributes to the Action Plan.

The Plan is guided by seven **core values**:



Our Community Aspiration “Everyone has a home...Home is the foundation”, acknowledges that good, safe and affordable housing is the foundation for good quality of life. Research clearly shows better health, learning and economic outcomes for people who are appropriately housed

The 2016 community update builds upon the strong implementation work that has been reported in 2014 and 2015. Many items started in previous years continue to be implemented and have not been re-reported in this report. Please visit www.hamilton.ca/housingactionplan to see these previous reports to the community.



YEAR 3 – 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

ENGAGEMENT: STRATEGY 3.7, 5.3, 5.7, 5.8, 5.9

- **Planning Group** – Housing Services coordinates a cross sectoral working group that focuses on the implementation of the 10 year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. In 2016, this group met to discuss priorities for the Social Infrastructure Fund, provided input on the City’s submission on the National Housing Strategy consultation and City Council’s \$50 million investment in poverty reduction, which focused on new affordable rental supply, rehabilitation social housing and addressing poverty in the Indigenous community.
- **Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee** – In September 2016, the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee was launched with 15 Hamilton residents volunteering as members.

Committee Mandate

Communicate and work to address the needs of citizens within the community for whom barriers exist to accessing safe, suitable, and affordable housing, including the supports needed to enable citizens to obtain and retain their homes, and;

Support the City of Hamilton’s 10 year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan by providing information, advice, and recommendations to the Emergency & Community Services Committee regarding the Action Plan’s successful and meaningful implementation.

- **Eviction Prevention** - Increased collaboration between housing providers and Housing Services staff to prevent economic eviction of tenants. The City of Hamilton developed an eviction prevention toolkit in 2014. This toolkit is a community resource that is accessed by social housing and private sector landlords. Events were held October 2016 for landlords to learn about the toolkit. These sessions were put on in partnership with Housing Services Division, Hamilton Housing Help Centre, Hamilton Community Legal Clinic and the Hamilton District Apartment Association. Additionally Housing Services staff facilitated a session with Good Shepherd for 25 front line community workers in June 2016.

NEW CONSTRUCTION AND CAPITAL: STRATEGY 4.1, 4.10, 4.11

- **Social Infrastructure Fund** – In June 2016, the Province announced Federal/Provincial housing investments under the 2016 Social Infrastructure Fund in order to improve the quality and increase the supply of affordable housing while also stimulating economic growth. This fund includes additional funding for Investment in Affordable Housing Extension and Social Housing Improvement Program addressed below.
- **Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP)** – Hamilton was allocated \$11,597,400 to fund and support repairs in Hamilton’s social housing stock.

- **Investment in Affordable Housing Extension** – Hamilton was allocated \$12,064,800 to invest in the creation of new affordable rental housing, and providing new housing allowances. The new rental housing funds were awarded through an RFP process to three projects:
 - Indwell Community Homes (56 units),
 - Indwell Community Homes (42 units)
 - Sacajawea Non-Profit Housing Inc. (23 units)

- **2016 Municipal Capital Funding Program**– On January 20, 2016, Council approved \$3 million for social housing repairs and regeneration. \$1.5 million went to CityHousing Hamilton and \$1.5 million to the other 42 social housing providers. These funds will positively impact 550 units.
 - 19 units (including 11 large units) will be returned to a habitable state for occupancy
 - 63 units will be saved from becoming vacant in the near future; and,
 - 468 units will have serious health and safety impacts addressed.

- **Halam Park Housing Cooperative Inc.** – Creation of eight new one bedroom accessible units at Halam Park that will help address over-housed households and free up some larger units in this social housing co-operative. Beginning in June 2016, new co-op members have started to move into the community. This project was possible because of \$550,000 in capital funding and \$222,000 in waived development charges by the City. Halam Park was also able to install 39 new furnaces and complete necessary interior and exterior sewer repairs.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS: STRATEGY 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.8, 3.10

- **Survivor of Domestic Violence Pilot** – The City of Hamilton was awarded \$1.2 million over two years for a Survivor of Domestic Violence Pilot by the Province of Ontario. This portable housing benefit will assist approximately 120 survivors of domestic violence who are currently applicants on the centralized wait list for social housing.

- **Municipal Housing Allowance Program** – In 2016 the City of Hamilton approved the new Municipal Housing Allowance Program. This \$775,750 portable rent subsidy program will assist 240 households in securing and maintaining stable housing.

- **Housing First Program** supports homeless individuals or families to move from the streets or a shelter into permanent housing with intensive case management services to assist them in maintaining their housing. Four agencies (Wesley Urban Ministries, Good Shepherd, Catholic Children’s Aid Society, and the Aboriginal Health Centre) deliver Housing First programs for single men, women, youth and Indigenous people experiencing homelessness. The targets for Housing First interventions in 2015-2016 and 2016 -2017 are 121 and 138 respectively. In 2015-2016 the target was exceeded by 67%, with 181 individuals housed. The program is on track to meet the 138 person target for 2016-2017. **93%** of Housing First clients remain housed after 6 months.

ADVOCACY AND INFORMATION GATHERING: STRATEGY 1.1, 2.9, 3.10

- **Point in Time Count** – The City of Hamilton did a homelessness point in time count in 2016. This event saw 263 volunteers survey 504 individuals and 22 families experiencing homelessness in Hamilton. Of those surveyed, 57% were experiencing chronic homelessness.
- **National Housing Day 2016** – The City of Hamilton organized a National Housing Day event, November 25th, 2016 that featured keynote speaker Senator Art Eggleton.
- **National Housing Strategy** – The City of Hamilton provided comments to the National Housing Strategy consultation done by the Federal Government in October 2016.

Hamilton's submission for the national housing strategy focused on:

- The need for increased financial commitment;
- The need for better supports to enable people to remain housed, and better coordination between programs that improve supply or affordability, and those that provide supports;
- Improved coordination of legislation, programs, and services between all levels of government. This is particularly important in light of the provincial housing system changes that are underway and proposed;
- The need for new affordable rental development; and,
- Specific programmatic responses to Canada's housing issues, such as Housing First to address homelessness.



Challenges and Key issues for 2017

Significant additional investment in the affordable housing sector is needed to fully implement the Action Plan. Current funding enhancements and program envelopes from all levels of government have contributed to only partially achieving some of the targets in the plan. The current level of funding and enhancements over the last three years are not sufficient to reach the target investment of \$427 million over 10 years which is required to fully achieve the targets identified in the plan.



The Hamilton housing market is very heated.

Prices of existing homes increased by about 14% in 2016, with the average home price climbing to \$441,619 in October 2016.

Vacancy Rates: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reports the vacancy rate for buildings with 6 or more units was 4.5%. CMHC projected in their fall 2016 Housing Market update for Hamilton that the rental apartment vacancy rate will edge consistently lower until 2018.



Social Housing Capital Repairs- The overall budget for subsidies to social housing providers is currently \$67 million annually. Approximately \$46 million of this is funded from the municipal tax levy. Currently all social housing providers in Hamilton have insufficient reserves to fully address the cost of outstanding capital repairs and most would need to approach the City for funding for any serious emergency repairs. The estimated cost to rehabilitate all of Hamilton's social housing stock could be \$500 to \$600 million over the next 20 years.



2017 Work plan Activity Priorities

West Harbour – The City of Hamilton has been exploring the disposition of lands in the West Harbour for the implementation of the City’s Waterfront Development plan. Overall it is important for the creation of balanced neighbourhoods in Hamilton that the developments of the West Harbour lands include affordable housing in the long term. City Council voted on November 2nd 2016 to ensure a minimum of 5% of this development would be affordable homeownership. **(Strategy 2.2, 2.8)**



Implementation – The City and community agencies continue to implement the various programs supported through HPS, CHPI, SIF/IAH and municipal contribution funding streams. These programs include a variety of housing allowances, rent supports and the Ontario Renovates program **(Strategy 2.4, 3.8, 4.1,)**

End of Federal Operating Agreements – Social Housing providers may divest themselves of holdings when they are no longer required to maintain the units as social housing once operating agreements expire. This could result in a loss of rent-geared-to-income stock. The City will work

Outcome Areas



closely with social housing providers to find solutions to mitigate the potential loss of stock and continue discussions with the Provincial and Federal governments about their respective roles in maintaining the existing stock. **(Strategy 1.11)**

Engagement – The implementation of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is predicated on strong engagement of those currently living along the affordable housing continuum, service providers providing supports and the broad community, to highlight the importance of affordable housing. The key aspects of engagement in 2017 will be the continuation of the Planning Group, the first year of the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee and dedicated engagement evaluating the progress of the plan as we approach the five year half way point of the plan. **(Strategy 5.7, 5.8, 5.9)**

Inclusionary Zoning – Develop policy to implement Inclusionary Zoning as part of every new residential development. **(Strategy 1.4)**

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A 10-year, person-centred plan to make sure that everyone in Hamilton has a home

Questions regarding this report should be directed to:

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