

Annual Community Report -2017

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 requires 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 fourth year of implementation of the Action Plan. This report provides 2017 highlights and is not 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.

YEAR 4 – 2017 HIGHLIGHTS

OUTCOME 1: Create more affordable rental and ownership housing in Hamilton to help meet the need and demand



- Implementing the \$50 million Poverty Reduction Implementation Plan over 10 years will help to address the supply of affordable housing, quality of social housing and Indigenous poverty. This Plan will see equal funding of \$20 million invested in the supply of affordable housing and the quality of social housing, and \$10 million over 10 years invested in Indigenous poverty reduction. The Indigenous component will be administered by Hamilton Executive Directors Aboriginal Coalition.

- In September 2017, Council approved \$12.8 M for the funding of three new affordable housing projects. These 102 new units will be built by the Hamilton Young Women’s Christian Association (YWCA), Indwell Community Homes, and March of Dimes Canada Non-Profit Housing Corporation. The projects are funded by the Investment in Affordable Housing – Extension New Rental Housing Component (IAH-E), Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF), and the Council approved Poverty Reduction Investment Fund.
- Council approved 19 City-owned land parcels for the purposes of affordable housing development. Plans for these sites will be developed in 2018 and beyond.

OUTCOME 2: Increase people’s housing affordability, stability and choice



- In 2017, 501 social housing units were rehabilitated or maintained primarily through the investment from the City and the Federal/Provincial Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP).

- In 2017, 672 households secured social housing through the Access to Housing Waitlist. Growth of the Access to Housing Waitlist outpaced the number of households that were housed and ended the year with 6,293 families compared to 5,964 families at the beginning of 2017.

OUTCOME 3: Provide people with the individualized supports they need to help them obtain and maintain housing

- In 2017, the City was awarded \$2,827,351 over three years from a new Provincial program known as Home for Good. The funding was allocated to the following community partners for the provision of housing and supports to individuals experiencing homelessness: Wesley Urban Ministries, Good Shepherd, Hamilton YWCA, Catholic Children’s Aid Society and the Aboriginal Health Centre. In the 2017/2018 fiscal year, Home for Good funding will be leveraged with existing federal and provincial funding to reach the community target of housing individuals experiencing chronic homelessness.

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- Hamilton has been a location for the Provincial Basic Income Pilot. A basic income is a payment to income eligible families or individuals that ensures a minimum income level, regardless of employment status. It replaces other forms of social assistance such as Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program.
 - Housing First programs housed 204 individuals experiencing homelessness, exceeding the target of 138 individuals in 2016-17. 93% of these individuals remained housed at six and 12 months, significantly more than the targeted program retention rate of 80%.
 - The Municipal Housing Allowance Program (MHAP) funded annually through the municipal levy, provides monthly housing allowance support for eligible households for up to an 8-year period. Housing allowances are a flat rate rent subsidy which are calculated based on household size and are paid on behalf of the household directly to the landlord. The program launched in July 2016 and in 2017 added 108 housing allowances supported through the program to a total of 224. The MHAP is just one of many rent subsidy programs administered through the City of Hamilton. As of December 2017, approximately 1,836 households received a rent subsidy by way of a fixed monthly rate or a reduced rate based on the combined income of the household.
 - Clinical social workers provide trauma focused counselling for individuals in shelter to prepare them to be housed and maintain their housing. In 2017, the Clinical Social Workers worked with 315 people, and conducted 789 sessions of trauma focused counselling and 274 brief intervention sessions.
 - The Residential Care Facilities (RCF) Client Subsidy Waitlist was revamped from a “placeholder” format to a truer representation of individuals wanting to move into an RCF. As a result, the number of people on the waitlist, as well as the amount of time spent on the waitlist, was reduced. As of February 2018, the average time on the waitlist was 10 days, with 1 resident active and waiting for subsidy to be housed in an RCF.
 - Permanent housing with supports combines rental and/or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for chronically homeless individuals/families with high acuity related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use. New Provincial investments and changing policies and practices within this housing model were released in 2017 and require review and analysis to ensure the City is aligned with emerging practices and expectations. This includes a review of Residential Care Facilities by the Housing Services Division in 2018.



OUTCOME 4: Ensure people live in housing that is good quality, safe and suitable to their needs

- In 2017, the Ontario Renovates Program in Hamilton aided 51 households with repairs to their homes to help them stay in safe and adequate housing. This program also expanded its scope in 2017 to include mobile homes which will help more Hamiltonians remain in safe and well-maintained housing.



- Eleven households were assisted through the Emergency Repair Program.
- Hamilton's Community Bed Bug Strategy continues to be implemented with a Council approved plan. The implementation focuses on direct assistance for residents, workplace training and policy, public education and prevention, and integrated pest management.

OUTCOME 5: Provide people with respectful, quality service within a “user-friendly” system and experience equity in housing

- The Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee consulted on the City's Home for Good expression of interest, Poverty Reduction Implementation Plan and the National Housing Day agenda. Additionally, they engaged multiple aspects of the HHAP and will continue to support its implementation in 2018.
- National Housing Day 2017 saw over 160 community members and stakeholders come together to engage on housing and homelessness issues in Hamilton. The agenda was focused on the development of more affordable housing and included a keynote address by two community members who have experienced the benefit of living in accessible and affordable housing.



Did you know

The Realtor's Association of Hamilton-Burlington reported an average resale price of a home in Hamilton of \$515,583 for May 2018. This increase in house price puts a strain on the ability of individuals and families, particularly first-time buyers, to afford quality housing in Hamilton.

Vacancy Rates: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation reports the vacancy rate for buildings with 6 or more units was 4.5% in 2017. CMHC projected in their fall 2016 Housing Market update for Hamilton that the rental apartment vacancy rate will edge consistently lower until 2018.

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 only partially to 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.



System challenges

Social housing providers may divest themselves of their holdings once their operating agreements expire and they are no longer required to maintain the units as social housing. The end of operating agreements could thus result in a loss of rent-gearred-to-income rental stock. The City is working closely with social housing providers to find solutions to mitigate this potential loss, and continues discussions with the Provincial and Federal governments about their respective roles in maintaining the existing stock.

The funds that are required to end chronic homelessness outpace homelessness funding overall. The homelessness serving system will need to coordinate the overall service levels with the current resources to meet individuals needs and support people to remain stably housed.

There is an ongoing need for social housing capital repairs in Hamilton. In the short term, over \$10 million is needed for 20 projects of high priority. Over the long term \$400 million is needed for capital repairs over the next 20 years.



2018 Review of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan

2018 will be a year of review for the Action Plan. The review will create a framework and prioritize the strategies for the next 5 years of the Action Plan. This process will be an opportunity to review what is working, what is not working and what changes to the Action Plan are needed.

In 2017 the Provincial Government released a policy statement to ensure that the review of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plans align with the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, including the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025. The eight areas of focus are:

- ★ Accountability and Outcomes
- ★ Goal of ending homelessness
- ★ Coordination with other community services
- ★ Indigenous Peoples
- ★ A broad range of community needs
- ★ Non-profit housing corporations & non profit housing cooperatives
- ★ The private housing market
- ★ Climate change and environmental sustainability

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

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