

CITY OF HAMILTON

COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

TO: Chair and Members Emergency & Community Services Committee	WARD(S) AFFECTED: CITY WIDE
COMMITTEE DATE: June 11, 2012	
SUBJECT/REPORT NO: Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (CS11017(b)) (City Wide)	
SUBMITTED BY: Joe-Anne Priel General Manager Community Services Department	PREPARED BY: David Brodati 905-546-2424 ext. 6159 Molly Elliott 905-546-2424 ext.1782 Jennie Vengris 905-546-2424 ext.7801
SIGNATURE:	

RECOMMENDATION:

- (a) That Phase One of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton (attached as Appendix A to Report CS11017(b)) be received and endorsed;
- (b) That staff be directed to complete Phase Two: An Implementation Framework for the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton and report back to Emergency and Community Services Committee for approval by March 31, 2013.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is a 10-year plan that will guide decision making on how the Hamilton community will address affordable housing and homelessness issues. The scope of the plan is broad given the City’s mandate as Service Manager for affordable housing and homelessness. It encompasses the entire housing continuum including homelessness prevention and services, emergency shelters, transitional and supportive housing, rent-geared-to-income housing, market rental housing and affordable homeownership.

As a community, Hamilton has done much work to address affordable housing and homelessness and continues to be seen as a leader in implementing innovative approaches and solutions. This Action Plan builds on our assets.

It is a two-phased plan. Phase One of the Action Plan contained in Appendix A to Report CS11017(b) – A Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton is the strategic phase focusing on an aspiration for our community, core values that underpin the Plan, broad outcome areas and strategies. Phase Two will be an implementation framework that details targets to be achieved, timing, responsibility and accountability, costing, and measuring and reporting on our progress towards achieving our strategic directions.

Phase One of the Action Plan is being presented to the Emergency and Community Services (E&CS) Committee for endorsement in principle. Staff will continue to work collaboratively with community partners to develop the Phase Two implementation framework and return to the E&CS Committee for approval by March 31, 2013.

While the development of the Action Plan has been led by the City, it has been a collaborative effort involving community partners and multiple stakeholders. The central strategy for community involvement is the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group. The Planning Group is co-sponsored by the City of Hamilton and the Affordable Housing Flagship. It is comprised of more than two dozen representatives from key housing and homelessness sectors. The time, energy, and dedication demonstrated by members of the Planning Group is a strong testament to the community's commitment and resolve to help us achieve the vision of "everyone has a home". The list of Planning Group members is attached as Appendix B to Report CS11017(b) – Housing and Homelessness Planning Group Membership List.

The Planning Group helped shape the Action Plan's comprehensive community engagement strategy. Through the community engagement process, approximately 800 people were engaged in the development of Phase One of the Action Plan.

FINANCIAL / STAFFING / LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

There are no financial implications for Phase One of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Phase Two of the Action Plan will be an implementation framework that will identify costs, responsibilities and timing.

Staffing:

The development of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is being undertaken using existing staff resources in the Housing Services Division.

Legal:

There are no legal implications to Report CS11017(b)

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND (Chronology of events)

In 2004, Council approved Keys to the Home: A Housing Strategy for Hamilton (HSC04037(a)/PED04296) which was the first housing strategy for the City since amalgamation. It offered 24 recommendations, all of which have been implemented and an update provided to the E&CS Committee on April 18, 2007 in Report HSC04037(b).

In 2007, Council approved Everyone Has a Home: A Strategic Plan to Address Homelessness (ECS07020). This was Hamilton's first comprehensive plan to address homelessness and created the aspiration that "everyone has a home". The plan offered five broad outcomes with 36 strategies. Most of the strategies have been implemented with a few requiring re-examination given the current state of homelessness and the changing landscape of Hamilton's homelessness service delivery. That re-examination occurred as part of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

In 2008, Planning and Economic Development staff collaborated with Community Services staff to develop residential housing policies as part of the new Urban Official Plan. Those policies, when approved by the Ontario Municipal Board will provide the land use planning policy framework to guide all types of housing development.

The Province's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) focuses on transforming the way housing and homelessness services are delivered to achieve better outcomes for people. Emerging from the LTAHS, the Province developed the Housing Services Act, 2011. The Act, in conjunction with the Provincial Housing Policy Statement, provides a new legislative framework for affordable housing and homelessness in Ontario. The Act requires that municipalities complete a 10-year housing and homelessness plan.

In October 2010, the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group was convened to provide guidance to staff in the development of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Housing & Homelessness Action Plan links to and complements other key City of Hamilton planning initiatives including:

- *City of Hamilton Corporate Priority Plan* – The vision of the City of Hamilton is to be the best place in Canada to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities. Successful implementation of the Action Plan will be a significant contributing factor in helping to achieve the City’s vision.
- *The Human Services Planning Initiative (HSPI)* – The HSPI is a process to address the need for integrated human services in Hamilton. The *Playbook: A Framework for Human Services Planning* provides the roadmap to do that.
- *The City of Hamilton New Urban Official Plan* – The City’s New Urban Official Plan contains residential and housing policies that are complemented and supported by the Action Plan, including policies and strategies that address a mix and range of housing, density bonusing, secondary suites and zoning. The New Urban Official Plan will come into effect when approved by the Ontario Municipal Board.
- *Neighbourhood Development Strategy* – this strategy works with priority neighbourhoods by engaging residents and creating approaches to improve quality through local community development activities. Stable, quality affordable housing contributes to improved neighbourhoods.

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

In total approximately 800 people were engaged in the development of Phase One of the Action Plan.

While the development of Phase One of the Action Plan was led by the City, it was a collaborative effort involving community partners and multiple stakeholders.

The Planning Group shaped the Action Plan’s community engagement strategy. A strong commitment to hearing directly from the community was established to ensure that the Action Plan was person centred. Community engagement activities included:

- Hiring three community based facilitators to assist with community conversations, data analysis and strategy development.
- Consulting eight Citizen Advisory Committees of Council.
- Completing 22 Community Roundtable Discussions (14 discussions with people with experiences of homelessness or housing insecurity).
- Collecting General Public Surveys in nine local sites.
- Engaging a range of stakeholders at a follow up event where the initial findings were put on display for feedback.

The development of the Action Plan has been informed by the knowledge and expertise in the community. In addition to engaging citizens and groups and incorporating their experience into the Plan, many forms of statistical information have been analyzed to ensure the Action Plan is evidence based. Housing need and homelessness indicators and housing market conditions were presented to E&CS Committee in December 2011 as Appendix C to Report CS11017(a) – Housing and Homelessness Action Plan. Reviews of local academic, government and community based reports as well as provincial, national and international reports on housing and homelessness were undertaken.

Planning and Economic Development staff participated on the Planning Group. Three meetings were held with Planning and Economic Development staff to review the Action Plan outcomes and strategies.

Staff from Public Health, Neighbourhood Development Strategy, Police Services and EMS participated in roundtable discussions about the Action Plan. Staff from other Divisions within the Community Services Department participated, including Recreation, Ontario Works, Social Development and Early Childhood Services, Lodges and the Immigration Partnership Council.

Interviews were also held with six City Councillors to learn about the issues relating to affordable housing and homelessness in their Wards.

ANALYSIS / RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

There are many reasons why a Housing and Homelessness Action Plan is needed:

- Data on housing need and homelessness in Hamilton provides clear evidence that while much has been done to address these issues, more work lies ahead. For example:
 - Almost 5,700 households are waiting for Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) housing in Hamilton. This is a significant increase from two years ago;
 - In one year, 5,653 individual men, women & children spent at least one night in an emergency shelter in Hamilton;
 - In 2006, 21% of renter households paid more than 50% of their income on shelter. These people are at significant risk of homelessness; and,
 - Hamilton is projected to grow by approximately 26%, to 658,900 people by 2031. As identified in the new Urban Official Plan, Hamilton must create 629 new rental housing units each year to meet the housing demand of that

population growth. With this growth, there will be demographic changes which will require an appropriate housing response.

- It is important for Hamilton to have clear priorities in order to be prepared for future funding and partnership opportunities. The Action Plan will develop a community owned vision, shared goals, agreed upon priorities and strategies for housing and homelessness in Hamilton. This will allow for potential funding opportunities from Federal and Provincial governments to be matched to local needs, instead of allowing available funding to drive community responses. This is particularly important given the direction to consolidate funding programs and give local municipalities more flexibility on how that funding should be used.
- As Service Manager for affordable housing and homelessness issues, the City is required to develop a 10-year plan as mandated by the Province's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and the Ontario Policy Statement on Affordable Housing.
- While previous plans to address housing (Keys to the Home, 2004) or homelessness (Everyone Has A Home, 2007) issues in Hamilton were important achievements, the social and economic environment has shifted over time, in large part due to a major economic recession. The time is right to look at the current situation and what needs to change in order to better address affordable housing and homelessness in an integrated way.
- There is a strong socio-economic case to be made for addressing housing and homelessness issues. Research shows that adequate and affordable housing are linked to positive health outcomes for individuals, families and communities. Investing in affordable housing is an economic stimulus with multiplier effects in other sectors of the economy. Affordable housing with supports and homelessness prevention creates long term public cost savings. The public cost in the form of incarceration, hospital stays and emergency shelters is greater than the cost of a housing first approach, which reduces those uses.

Phase One of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan contains the following strategic elements:

- A community aspiration addressing homelessness and affordable housing
- Seven values that underpin the Plan
- Five broad outcome areas that the Plan will work to achieve
- 54 strategies that will help us achieve the outcomes and move us towards our aspiration

Aspiration:

The Action Plan articulates the following aspiration: ***Everyone Has A Home...Home is the Foundation.***

“Home” is defined as accommodation that is safe, affordable, adequate, suitable, with appropriate supports where necessary and that helps people realize their full social, economic and health potential.

The community challenged the Action Plan Project Team and Planning Group to be bold when developing the Action Plan. The aspiration “Everyone has a home” is certainly bold and far reaching. It is an end state that will be very difficult to realize, but the community made it clear that addressing affordable housing and homelessness needs to be a priority.

The addition of the tag line “...Home is the foundation” emphasizes that housing underpins the social, economic and physical well-being of citizens. This recognizes that housing has an impact on so many different aspects of people’s lives which means that strategies and solutions which successfully address affordable housing and homelessness must be integrated with many different sectors and services.

Core Values:

All aspects of the Action Plan are grounded in the following core values:

- **Person-Centred Supports:** People and their experiences are central in all planning and development considerations.
- **Rights-Based and Anti-Discrimination:** Housing is a fundamental human right. Some groups of people face disproportionate barriers to safe and secure housing. Efforts must acknowledge these inequities and intentionally work to eliminate them.
- **Risk and Protective Factors:** Evidence demonstrates that people who have more protective factors in their lives mediate risks better. Successfully addressing homelessness and housing insecurity increases those factors in people’s lives that protect and support them while decreasing the risk factors in peoples’ lives.
- **Evidence-Based, Measurable and Impact-Driven:** Housing and homelessness responses should be based on intentional planning and good evidence which have measurable positive impacts and outcomes.
- **Efficient and Effective Use of Community Resources:** Human and financial resources spent to address housing and homelessness are investments in the community that reduce public costs in other areas.

- **Integrated and Comprehensive Community Planning:** The private, public and voluntary sectors, along with engaged citizens, are all important and interconnected parts of the community that plans together. As is the voice of people who have experienced homelessness and housing insecurity.
- **Place and Neighbourhoods:** A full range of quality housing options contributes to neighbourhoods that are healthier and more dynamic.

Outcomes and Strategies:

The Action Plan identifies five outcomes that are critical to the community aspiration of everyone having a home. A total of fifty-four strategies are presented in Phase One of the Action Plan grouped by the relevant outcome area.

Outcome 1: There is More Affordable Rental and Ownership Housing in Hamilton to meet the Need and Demand

Creating new affordable housing is important because it adds to the existing housing stock and offsets any loss of housing due to demolitions and conversions. New housing supply provides for more choice and helps moderate price increases in the market.

Given the economic reality of rental housing in Hamilton, the private sector alone will not invest in new affordable rental housing. Some form of public subsidy is needed. While the City of Hamilton can and is playing its part to increase the supply of affordable rental housing, the responsibility for this task also rests with the Federal and Provincial governments, the private sector, and the community at large. It is essential that the senior levels of governments continue to invest in affordable rental housing in a permanent and sustained manner.

The Action Plan presents twelve strategies to achieve the outcome of increased affordable housing by:

- Developing housing in a more collaborative way involving partnerships;
- Looking at existing resources and seeing what can be leveraged;
- Looking at how land use planning and the City's system of development approvals can facilitate affordable housing goals being met.

Outcome 2: Increase People's Housing Affordability, Stability and Choice

For many people housing is simply not affordable. Lack of income and the high cost of housing not only make it hard for people to find housing that is affordable to them, it limits where they may choose to live and in what kind of housing they may choose to live in.

The Action Plan presents ten strategies to deal with people's housing affordability, stability and choice by:

- Helping people to afford housing by increasing income opportunities, and through programs to help keep housing affordable;
- Ensuring a full range of housing in all neighbourhoods to increase people's choice and to improve neighbourhoods.

Outcome 3: People Have the Individualized Supports They Need to Help them Obtain and Maintain Housing

Many people require more than simply the bricks and mortar of a housing unit to remain successfully and adequately housed. Many people needing support with their housing are not receiving them in a timely and adequate manner. A prime example is health related supports such as substance abuse and mental health services.

There are multiple types and levels of housing supports that individuals or families may need and each of these supports are often provided by different service providers and funded by different government bodies. This patchwork is further complicated by a lack of clarity around jurisdictional responsibility of government funders and service providers. This results in service gaps and challenges accessing services for people seeking support.

The nine strategies in the Action Plan are aimed at ensuring people are receiving adequate and timely supports so they can access and remain housed by:

- Building better working relationships and coordination with key Ministries and departments in the Federal and Provincial governments that fund and provide supports (e.g. Ministry of Health & Long Term Care) and whose clients are often discharged into homelessness (e.g. corrections and child welfare); and,
- Expanding housing with supports options in the community.

Outcome 4: People live in housing that is good quality, safe and suitable to their needs

The availability of housing and being able to afford it are critical for people's well-being. But if the housing is not of decent quality and if people do not feel safe in their housing they are not truly in a home, no matter how affordable the housing may be.

The fourteen strategies to achieve the outcome of good quality, suitable and safe housing focus on:

- Upgrading the physical quality of housing;

- Ensuring the suitability of housing meets people's needs in terms of size, functioning, and modifications that allow full use of the unit and building; and,
- Creating safe environments within affordable housing communities and community building to improve the social quality of affordable housing communities.

Outcome 5: People Receive Respectful, Quality Service within a “User Friendly” System and Experience Equity in Housing

People need to access affordable housing and related supports easily in order to be successful in finding and maintaining housing.

The system of housing services is complex. It is not always easy to understand or access the supports to get and maintain housing. Applications for social housing, access to supports for housing, finding apartments within the private market and learning about potential subsidy programs are examples of components of the housing services system. Through focus groups held as part of the Action Plan's community engagement strategy, staff heard that navigating such a complex system of services is challenging for people. Staff also heard that people who rely on community, social and/or government related services have experienced some form of stigma, inequity or service that lacks compassion or respect.

A common theme arising from the focus groups was that many renters face barriers such as discrimination in trying to find housing and face stigma if they are housed in particular neighbourhoods or housing situations. Participants in the focus groups indicated that tenants can be exploited through tactics that include lack of maintenance, harassment and other illegal actions. These experiences often result in people becoming more vulnerable, more frustrated and more deeply in crisis. In extreme cases, it can be an infringement on the human rights of renters.

The Action Plan presents nine strategies to achieve the outcome of people receiving respectful quality services and experiencing equity in Housing including:

- Strategies that promote better customer service through a more coordinated and consistent housing service system; and,
- Information and education on the housing rights and responsibilities of landlords and tenants.

Phase Two:

Phase Two of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan will be an implementation framework for the aspiration, values, outcomes and strategies identified in the Phase One portion of the Plan. The implementation framework will answer the following questions:

- Who will lead implementation of each of the 54 strategies of the Action Plan?
- Who else needs to be involved for each strategy?
- How will the specific needs of different populations be addressed?
- What is the timeline for implementing each strategy? Is it immediate, short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years), long term (5+ years) or ongoing?
- What targets should be set?
- How much will it cost?
- What are the sources of funding?
- How will progress towards achieving our outcomes be measured, evaluated and reported on?

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

None

CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLAN (Linkage to Desired End Results)

Focus Areas: 1. Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization, 2. Financial Sustainability, 3. Intergovernmental Relationships, 4. Growing Our Economy, 5. Social Development, 6. Environmental Stewardship, 7. Healthy Community

Financial Sustainability

- ◆ Address infrastructure deficiencies and unfunded liabilities
- ◆ Generate assessment growth/non-tax revenues

Intergovernmental Relationships

- ◆ Influence federal and provincial policy development to benefit Hamilton
- ◆ Acquire greater share of Provincial and Federal grants (including those that meet specific needs)
- ◆ Maintain effective relationships with other public agencies

Growing Our Economy

- ◆ Competitive business environment

Social Development

- ◆ Everyone has a home they can afford that is well maintained and safe
- ◆ Residents in need have access to adequate support services
- ◆ People participate in all aspects of community life without barriers or stigma

Healthy Community

- ◆ An engaged Citizenry
- ◆ Adequate access to food, water, shelter and income, safety, work, recreation and support for all (Human Services)

APPENDICES / SCHEDULES

Appendix A to Report CS11017(b) – Phase One of a Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton.

Appendix B to Report CS11017(b) – List of Housing And Homelessness Planning Group Membership List.

A Housing and Homelessness Action Plan for Hamilton

Phase One

ASPIRATION & CORE VALUES

The following Aspiration and Core Values have informed each stage of the Action Plan development process and are intended to be a foundation for the implementation framework moving forward.

Aspiration

Everyone has a home...Home is the foundation.

Core Values

The Hamilton community commits to the following core values to ensure that everyone in Hamilton has a home:

- 1. Person-Centred Supports:** People and their experiences are central in all planning and development considerations. People are supported in ways that make sense for their unique circumstances and their economic, cultural, and gendered realities. This includes a commitment to strategies that ensure that people are more secure in their housing and do not become homeless.
- 2. Rights-Based and Anti-Discrimination:** Housing is a fundamental human right. Some groups of people face disproportionate barriers to safe and secure housing. Oftentimes, these barriers are a result of racism, oppression and discrimination. Efforts must acknowledge these inequities and intentionally work to eliminate them.
- 3. Risk and Protective Factors:** Evidence demonstrates that people who have more factors in their lives that are protective mediate risks better. Successful community responses around homelessness and housing insecurity work to increase the protective factors and decrease the risk factors in peoples' lives.
- 4. Evidence-Based, Measurable and Impact-Driven:** People in our community deserve housing and homelessness responses that are based on intentional planning and good evidence, high quality and that have measurable positive impacts and outcomes.

- 5. Efficient and Effective Use of Community Resources:** Human and financial resources spent to address housing and homelessness are investments in our community that reduce public costs in other areas.
- 6. Integrated and Comprehensive Community Planning:** The private, public and voluntary sectors, along with engaged citizens, are all important and interconnected parts of the community that plans together. As is the voice of people who have experienced homelessness and housing insecurity. To ensure this integrated planning is authentic, transparency and communication must be at the core of our work.
- 7. Place and Neighbourhoods:** Place matters. People will exercise choice over where they live. A full range of quality housing options contributes to neighbourhoods that are healthier and more dynamic. Healthy neighbourhoods are also a place where community and less formal supports can flourish and support people to feel connected and included in all elements of civic life.

OUTCOMES AND STRATEGIES

The following five outcomes are essential in order to realize our shared aspiration of “Everyone Has A Home...Home is the Foundation”. Each outcome has a number of strategies that when implemented will help us achieve the outcome.

An implementation framework for the strategies will be further developed as part of phase two of the Action Plan.

Outcome 1: There is More Affordable Housing in Hamilton to Help Meet the Need and Demand

Strategies

- 1.1 Advocate for the creation of a National Housing Strategy and advocate to provincial and federal levels of government to adequately fund new affordable housing development
- 1.2 Explore potential for new incentive and funding programs and expand and promote more broadly existing City incentive programs to increase the supply of affordable housing (e.g. capital grants/loans, tax deferrals, waived development and other charges etc.)
- 1.3 Facilitate land use planning approvals for affordable housing developments by:

- City of Hamilton Housing Services Division staff work collaboratively with the Business Facilitators in the Planning & Development Department to ensure all affordable housing developers are provided with the most up to date information to guide affordable housing developments through land use planning approvals and building permit application processes
 - The City's Planning & Economic Development Department implement a system of flagging development applications that meet criteria of affordable housing and expedite the processing of those applications
 - Explore funding opportunities (e.g. CMHC SEED funding) to facilitate housing development project management expertise for affordable housing proponents where necessary
- 1.4 Explore the feasibility of inclusionary zoning (i.e. zoning that requires/mandates a certain component of larger developments to be affordable housing) and seek necessary provincial legislative changes that would facilitate the implementation of inclusionary zoning in Hamilton
- 1.5 Explore the feasibility and further promote opportunities that exist in the Urban Hamilton Official Plan for density bonusing (i.e. developers gain more density and increased height in exchange for providing affordable housing), and use of Community Improvement Plans to offer other incentives for affordable housing
- 1.6 As part of the City's new Comprehensive Zoning By-law, explore the potential for pre-zoning (i.e. pre-established approvals) appropriate areas/land parcels to permit as-of-right higher density multi-residential development, converting non-residential space to residential and adding apartments in houses and ground-related dwellings
- 1.7 Inventory and map affordable housing development opportunities including:
- underutilized commercial space that can be converted to residential
 - vacant residential space in buildings
 - vacant government land that is viable/suitable for affordable housing development/redevelopment
- 1.8 Advocate for changes to the City's and senior governments' surplus land policy to make surplus land available for affordable housing development at discounted or no cost
- 1.9 Investigate the feasibility of transitioning rental units that currently do not meet by-laws/standards to become in compliance with necessary by-laws/standards, as well as incentives to bring the units up to standard
- 1.10 Provide learning opportunities to community leaders, decision makers and the general public around good urban planning principles in order to support their role as facilitators of affordable housing development

- 1.11 Explore opportunities for social housing providers to leverage their existing capital assets in order to develop additional affordable housing units (e.g. many social housing providers have equity in their existing social housing projects that can be used to finance new housing)
- 1.12 Explore the feasibility of establishing a Housing Trust fund to help finance affordable housing development

Outcome 2: Increase People's Housing Affordability, Stability and Choice

Strategies

- 2.1 Encourage mixed housing and mixed income development in all urban neighbourhoods by:
 - Increasing opportunities for rental, social and affordable housing in areas that currently offer limited opportunities
 - Ensure all social housing communities have a market housing component
 - Explore opportunities for social housing communities to redevelop to include a mix of new housing options
- 2.2 Develop a policy and strategy to ensure the low and moderate income households in neighbourhoods experiencing economic growth and transformation are not displaced or negatively impacted by gentrification (this should include research on any potential negative impacts)
- 2.3 Increase homeownership opportunities for renters- including social housing tenants (e.g. down payment assistance programs, rent-to-own initiatives, and education on purchase process etc.)
- 2.4 Expand portable and in situ rent subsidy programs (i.e. rent supplements and/or housing allowances that go with the tenant and are not tied to a particular unit)
- 2.5 Investigate the feasibility of developing an emergency housing subsidy to help tenants and homeowners bridge temporary financial crisis situations
- 2.6 Reduce the burden of growing utility costs on low income tenants and homeowners through:
 - Building relationships with local utility corporations to limit the impact of arrears on households
 - Explore options to increase energy efficiency of homes
 - Advocate for removal of HST

- Advocate for removal of deposit requirements
- 2.7 Encourage the development and implementation of enhanced eviction prevention policies in the social housing system
- 2.8 Reduce the burden of last month's rent on tenants through:
- Reviewing and more broadly recommending practices of social housing landlords that allow tenants to pay last months rent over an extended period of time
 - Investigate the effectiveness of eliminating the need for last month rent (look to other jurisdictions e.g. Montreal)
- 2.9 Explore options that ensure social housing applicants and tenants have as much choice as possible (e.g. increase in the number of times they can refuse an offer to be housed; choice based letting)
- 2.10 Advocate for changes to income policies including:
- Increased social assistance rates so shelter allowance components meet average market rent levels
 - Adoption of a Living Wage policy
 - Guaranteed Annual Income Supplement is automatically allocated based on income tax information
 - Advocate for changes to the ODSP system so that benefits are not provided at the end of the month for the preceding month

Outcome 3: People Have the Individualized Supports They Need to Help them Obtain and Maintain Housing

Strategies

- 3.1 Expand housing with support options including mobile, in-situ and transitional housing options
- 3.2 Develop a formalized working relationship with the MOHLTC/LHIN to increase access to health services including:
- addictions services
 - housing with support services for seniors, people living with mental health, acquired brain injury and/or physical disabilities
 - hospital discharge planning & after care
- 3.3 Work with the Federal and Provincial corrections systems in order to increase the support to individuals being discharged into the community

- 3.4 Work with the Ministry of Youth and Children's Services in order to increase the support to youth being discharged out of the Child Welfare System to live independently in the community
- 3.5 Increase and formalize information sharing and partnership between landlords/housing providers (both public and private market) and social support networks
- 3.6 Implement an assessment and support process in the coordinated access to social housing system that will more immediately address the needs of social housing applicants.
- 3.7 Make available high quality, trauma-informed counselling supports for individuals and families in homelessness and/or insecure housing situations
- 3.8 Advocate for an increase to the OW & ODSP personal needs allowance
- 3.9 Support the implementation of current and emergent local housing and homelessness systems plans that address housing with supports

Outcome 4: People live in housing that is good quality, safe and suitable to their needs

Strategies

- 4.1 Explore the potential for new funding programs and expand and promote more broadly existing programs for rehabilitating the housing stock, including:
 - Ontario Renovates
 - Grassroots, neighbourhood or community based quality-improvement initiatives
- 4.2 Review the impacts of continued proactive enforcement of property standards on the supply of affordable rental properties
- 4.3 Explore a rating and incentive program for landlords to maintain high property standards within private market and social housing
- 4.4 Develop a communication strategy to landlords about maintenance responsibilities and available programs to rehabilitate the housing stock
- 4.5 Develop and implement a proactive and coordinated strategy to address bedbugs with a focus on human rights
- 4.6 Increase the number of rental housing units that meet the needs of larger families

- 4.7 Support and monitor housing providers in the implementation of the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act on the Built Environment
- 4.8 Expand assistance programs to facilitate modifications for persons with disabilities in private market housing (e.g. Ontario Renovates)
- 4.9 Inventory, rate and increase the number of social housing units that meet the needs of persons with disabilities through existing and new housing opportunities.
- 4.10 Adequately fund capital reserves for social housing based on building condition assessments
- 4.11 Encourage all social housing providers to ensure that tenant safety is ensured through capital and infrastructure audits and improvements (e.g. comprehensive lighting and building security systems)
- 4.12 Plan and implement community building efforts that will develop a 'sense of community' in all social housing (e.g. activities that will positively enhance neighbour relations)
- 4.13 Streamline and provide supports in the process for transfers within social housing (e.g. over-housed or under-housed situations, domestic violence, acquired disability etc.)
- 4.14 Develop and implement person-centred made-in-Hamilton occupancy standards for social housing

Outcome 5: People Receive Respectful, Quality Service within a “User Friendly” System and Experience Equity in Housing

Strategies

There are a number of strategies that can promote better customer service through a more coordinated and consistent housing service system including:

- 5.1 Develop a system navigator role that is focused on supporting people in directly accessing appropriate housing supports
- 5.2 Develop a practice of cross-sectored case conferencing to ensure optimal services for people
- 5.3 Develop web and print based resources that comprehensively outline all housing options in Hamilton and relevant contact information in a variety of languages and forms

- 5.4 Develop information and data sharing protocols across relevant housing, income and other support systems
- 5.5 Through training and cross-sectored collaboration, provide comprehensive and certification-based training on a number of service-improvement areas, such as:
 - Understanding the Housing System
 - Anti-Oppressive and Anti-Racist Service Provision
- 5.6 Encourage organizations to engage in service & system planning
- 5.7 Expand tenant and landlord, outreach and mediation with a focus on tenants' rights and diversity
- 5.8 Develop a general public awareness campaign regarding housing rights, anti-discrimination in housing and where to get housing (e.g. communications to the general public, tenants, young people, newcomers, Aboriginal people, seniors and landlords)
- 5.9 Ensure that clients/participants/tenants are meaningfully engaged in planning and decision making in the areas that impact their lives. This includes:
 - a model for citizen engagement which will be applied to the Action Plan implementation phase and the Housing Services Division and
 - citizen engagement as part of housing and homelessness service funding relationships with community based agencies

NEXT STEPS

Phase Two – Implementing the Housing & Homelessness Action Plan

Phase Two of the Housing & Homelessness Action Plan will be an implementation framework for the aspiration, values, outcomes and strategies identified in this Phase One portion of the Plan. In order to be successfully implemented, resources, participation and support from all stakeholder groups are necessary.

The implementation framework will answer the following questions:

- Who will lead implementation of each of the 54 strategies of the Action Plan?
- Who else needs to be involved for each strategy to be effectively implemented?
- How will the specific needs of different populations be addressed when implementing each strategy?

- What is the timeline for implementing each strategy? Is it immediate (now), short term (1-2 years), medium term (3-5 years), long term (5+ years) or ongoing?
- What targets should be set?
- How much will it cost?
- What are the sources of funding?
- How will progress towards achieving our outcomes be measured, evaluated and reported on?

Developing Phase Two of the Action Plan will involve further community collaboration to create the implementation framework and answer the above questions. The target for completing Phase Two is first quarter of 2013.

The following strategies will serve as a starting point for the Phase Two implementation framework:

Implementation Framework (IF) Strategies

- IF 1. The City of Hamilton will contribute existing staff resources to facilitate the implementation of the Housing & Homelessness Action Plan and to its ongoing monitoring, reporting and evaluation, and will also explore funding opportunities to implement the Action Plan.
- IF 2. Develop a coordinated strategy for effectively advocating to upper levels of government.
- IF 3. Develop a comprehensive Housing & Homelessness Action Plan Education & Communication Strategy.
- IF 4. Build research and evaluation capacity within the housing and homelessness sectors through partnership with the academic community
- IF 5. Develop & implement ways of encouraging people to participate in the ongoing implementation of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan in a meaningful way.

Housing and Homelessness Planning Group Membership List

Name	Sector/Organization
Brett Barnes	Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation
Tony Brutto	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Carol Cowan	Hamilton Emergency Shelters Integration & Co-ordination Committee
Glenys Currie	Seniors Sector
Karen Davis	Social Housing
Kathy Dimassi	Co-operative Housing Providers
Mara Fortino	Service Canada
Gillian Hendry (Co-Chair)	City of Hamilton Housing Services Division
Loretta Hill-Finamore	Street Youth Planning Collaborative
Larry Huibers (Co-Chair)	Affordable Housing Flagship
Bill Janssen	City of Hamilton Planning & Economic Development
Melanie McAuley	Hamilton Executive Directors' Aboriginal Coalition

Cindy Sue McCormack-Montana	Hamilton Executive Directors' Aboriginal Coalition
Jeff Neven	Affordable Housing Flagship
Brenda Osborne	Social Housing
Megan Platts	Affordable Housing Flagship
Michael Power	Residential Care Facilities
Maria Antelo	Solutions to Housing Actions Committee/Legal Clinics
Joanne Santucci	Hamilton Food Share
Miranda Borisenko	Ministry of Community and Social Services
Medora Uppal	Woman's Abuse Working Group
Renee Wetselaar	Affordable Housing Flagship
Alan Whittle	Affordable Housing Flagship
Teshome Woldeselassie	Newcomers