

INFORMATION REPORT

TO:	Chair and Members Healthy and Safe Communities Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	April 23, 2018
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Housing and Homelessness Action Plan Update (HSC18017) (City Wide)
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
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SIGNATURE:	

Council Direction:

In December 2013, City Council approved the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (Report CS11017(c)) and there was a commitment to report to Council annually on the implementation progress. Report HSC18017 provides a review of progress for the 2017 reporting period.

Information:

In addition to the commitment to report annually to Council on the progress of the implementation of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP), the City has an obligation under the *Housing Services Act, 2011* to report to the Province and the public. To fulfil this obligation an additional document will be released in June 2018.

Background

The HHAP is a person-centred plan that sets a vision, targets, outcome areas, and strategies to ensure everyone in Hamilton has a home. The HHAP was designed as a comprehensive decision-making tool through a collaborative effort of City staff, key community partners who make up the Housing and Homelessness Planning Group, and the broader community. The HHAP includes five outcome areas:

- Create more affordable rental and ownership housing in Hamilton to help meet the need and demand
- Increase people's housing affordability, stability and choice

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- Provide people with the individualized supports they need to help them obtain and maintain housing
- Ensure people live in housing that is good quality, safe and suitable to their needs
- Provide people with respectful, quality service within a “user-friendly” system and experience equity in housing

Implementation funding

By 2023, the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan was costed at an additional \$427 million investment above 2013 levels. The HHAP has seen investments by all three levels of government since its approval, but the City continues to fall short of the additional \$42.7 M/year required to implement the plan. City Council has contributed significantly to solving this financial challenge with the approval of the \$50 M over ten years Poverty Reduction Investment Plan in 2017. This plan focuses on the construction of new affordable units, ensuring the quality (capital) of current social housing units, and general poverty reduction investments in the Indigenous community.

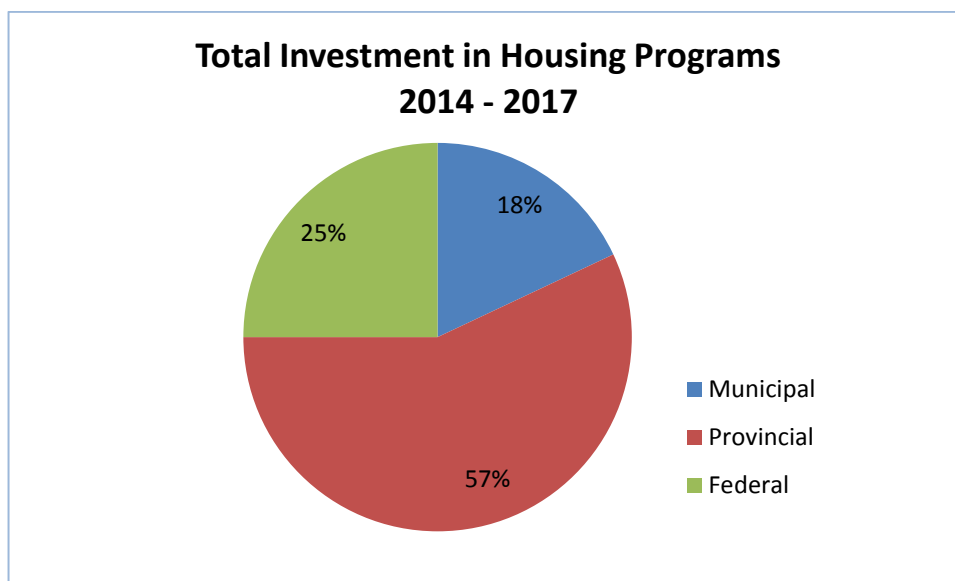
Total Contributions Towards Implementation of the HHAP by Level of Government

Contribution by Level of Government	Municipal	Provincial	Federal	Total
2014	\$4,679,328	\$18,996,791	\$7,341,660	\$31,017,779
2015	\$4,309,198	\$22,121,550	\$7,535,104	\$33,965,852
2016	\$12,615,352	\$28,375,483	\$14,587,101	\$55,577,936
2017	\$10,642,853	\$28,421,121	\$13,614,651	\$52,678,625
Total	\$32,246,731	\$97,914,945	\$43,078,516	\$173,240,192

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In the past four years (2014-2017) there has been approximately \$173 million invested in housing and homelessness programs.

Making the housing system more responsive to need

Coordinated access within the homelessness serving system:

Hamilton has officially been declared the third Community in Canada to have implemented a By-Name Priority List which will assist our community to reduce and end homelessness. The By-Name Priority List is a list of all people experiencing homelessness in the community. It is updated in real time, meaning the list is updated with information as soon as it is received. The list will prioritize individuals according to their level of need and experience of chronic or episodic homelessness, so that they can be connected to the right service based on their preferences and available resources. Individuals in emergency shelters and transitional housing are now assessed and added to the By-Name Priority List. This information is shared by service providers, provides and accelerates housing placements, and reduces pressures in the emergency response system (e.g. outreach, shelters, etc.). The information on the By-Name Priority List is also used to provide community progress reports and provide information on progress toward reducing and ultimately eliminating chronic homelessness.

The next phase of the work will focus on further coordinating service efforts. Staff from the Homelessness Policy & Programs, Residential Care Facilities Subsidy Program and Emergency Shelter Services teams and sector representatives are

working together on the development of a Coordinated Access and Housing Prioritization System for the homelessness serving sector. Initiatives include the development and implementation of common intake and consent forms, training for agency staff, and the development and roll-out of the By-Name Priority List, among others.

Enhanced model of the social housing waitlist:

The Housing Services Division has implemented Phase 1 of the Co-ordinated Access System for Social Housing and relocated the waitlist service to the Housing Services Division located at First Place.

The direct program delivery will focus on continuous improvement and accountability through initiatives such as:

- Improving the information available to households and individuals about housing choices and other available supports such as Ontario Works, Child Care, Recreation;
- Working closer with households and individuals to ensure that their housing needs are optimally aligned with the most appropriate housing options;
- Connecting households and individuals with existing homelessness and shelter system workers;
- Maintaining a comprehensive building inventory with neighbourhood, building and unit amenities;
- Streamlining the application process by implementing an online process and identifying other options for accessing the services;
- Conducting client satisfaction and system improvement surveys;
- Conducting education workshops with applicants, housing providers and other community service providers; and,
- Improving data collection to better support non-social housing programming (e.g. establishing community hubs, private sector development of housing, recreational programming).

2017 HHAP Highlights:

The following are some important high-level accomplishments.

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 the 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

- The Social Housing Apartment Retrofit Program (SHARP) funded 15 projects in Hamilton for a total value of \$7.17 million. These projects support the climate change initiatives of the City of Hamilton and will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an estimated 1,291,360 kilograms of carbon dioxide per year.
- 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

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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.

- The Province of Ontario announced Hamilton as a location for the 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

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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.

Challenges

- 1) The Realtor's Association of Hamilton-Burlington reported an average resale price of a home in Hamilton of just under \$500,000 for February 2018. This increase in house prices puts a strain on the ability of individuals and families, particularly first-time buyers, to afford quality housing in Hamilton.

- 2) 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.
- 3) The Federal Government has released the National Housing Strategy and the program details and funding envelopes are expected to be released in April 2018. It is expected that these programs and funds will have a significant impact on new affordable housing, the operation of the City's social housing, housing subsidy programs, and homelessness services by providing funding and a new legislative framework for housing.
- 4) 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.
- 5) The Access to Housing Waitlist for social housing continues to grow and saw an increase from 5,964 families as of December 31, 2016 to 6,293 families as of December 31, 2017. This growth is currently outpacing the rate of placement for households. This trend is due to the increased need in our community, lack of new rental housing supply, and lack of turnover of units in our social housing system.
- 6) 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-geared-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.

Five-year review of the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan:

The HHAP was approved in December, 2013 and will undergo the five year review in 2018/2019. In 2017, the Provincial Government released a policy statement to ensure that the five-year review of Housing and Homelessness Action Plans aligns with the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, including the goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025. The policy statement highlights eight areas of focus including accountability and outcomes, the goal of ending homelessness, coordination with other community services, support for Indigenous Peoples, a broad range of community needs, non-profit housing corporations & non-profit housing cooperatives, the private housing market, and climate change & environmental sustainability.

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This five-year review process will be an opportunity to review what is working, what is not working, whether any changes are needed, and reprioritize implementation strategies.

The Provincial Government has set a deadline of January 1, 2019 for initiation of the review of Housing and Homelessness Action Plans.

Appendices and Schedules Attached

Appendix A to Report HSC18017: Infographic of Housing Services Implementation 2017