

HOME, TOGETHER:

WINDSOR ESSEX HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS MASTER PLAN



2019 - 2028

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The development of the Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan was led by Vink Consulting in collaboration with the Project Executive Team from the City of Windsor.

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OUR VISION

Windsor Essex is an inclusive community where everyone has a safe, affordable, accessible, and quality home, and everyone lives where they can actively participate

GOALS

KEY TARGETS

GOAL 1: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY

- » By 2028, the number of new affordable housing units and/or rent assisted units will increase by 30%
- » On average, 30% of existing social housing units will be repaired annually
- » By 2022, a tracking mechanism will be established by the municipal building and planning departments to track private market affordable housing units

GOAL 2: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND HOUSING THAT IS LINKED WITH SUPPORTS

- » More people will be linked with appropriate supports to maintain housing
- » By 2024, 70 more people will be housed through Housing First programs

GOAL 3: ENDING HOMELESSNESS

- » By 2021, people seeking emergency shelter will be assessed to determine if existing and appropriate supports and housing options are available and if so, they will be diverted from entering the homeless-serving system
- » By 2028, 2,800 people experiencing homelessness will be housed through Coordinated Access (CA) systems
- » By 2024, 50% of people experiencing chronic homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports
- » By 2028, 100% of people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports
- » By 2028, 50% of people experiencing homelessness leaving institutions will be discharged into appropriate housing

GOAL 4: ADDRESS INDIGENOUS HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS NEEDS

- » By 2028, 80% of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness will have access to housing and supports by Indigenous led organizations
- » By 2028, 100 new affordable housing units will be created for Indigenous Peoples

GOAL 5: REDUCE AND PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

- » By 2026, a coordinated youth homelessness prevention response system will be in place
- » By 2028, 100 youth experiencing homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports

GOAL 6: FOSTER SUCCESSFUL TENANCIES THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

- » By 2024, 90% of tenants receiving support services through community collaborations will retain their tenancy for a minimum of 12 months

GOAL 7: MONITOR, REPORT AND EVALUATE

- » By 2021, establish a cross-sectoral data collection and reporting framework
- » By 2021, develop, implement, and maintain a public awareness and education campaign on the Plan and housing and homelessness issues

UPDATING THE ORIGINAL PLAN

The original Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan was prepared in 2013, adopted by City of Windsor Council and accepted by the Province in 2014. The Plan has guided the work of the City of Windsor as Service Manager, and the community, in delivering housing and homelessness services for the past five years.

Over the past five years, the community has worked collaboratively to complete, or make progress on, 52 of the 63 (83%) strategies outlined in the original 10 Year Plan. Nevertheless, there is more to do.

As a community, we find ourselves in a place where **the landscape has changed** in the housing and homelessness sector. In 2018, the Federal government announced its first National Housing Strategy that includes a new homelessness strategy called Reaching Home. The **situation in our community as it relates to housing and homelessness has also changed** since 2014. The vacancy rates in our rental market are at historical lows and we have seen substantial increases in rent and house prices. As a sector, and a community, **we have learned a lot** over the past five years **about effective solutions and best practices** to address housing and homelessness needs, including the implementation of a Housing First program in 2015 and coordinated access to homelessness services through the By-Names Prioritized List in 2018.

Undertaking a review and update of the Plan allows us to ensure the Plan continues to meet updated Provincial requirements for housing and homelessness plans established by the *Policy Statement: Service Manager Housing and Homelessness Plans* and the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA). An updated Plan will also ensure that the community is able to **respond to the opportunities** presented in the National Housing Strategy, including Reaching Home, as well as Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy and any other future Provincial and Federal housing and homelessness initiatives. It provides an opportunity to plan for the delivery of these programs in our community by **updating our priorities** and reviewing current data and new evidence related to best and promising practices, and using this knowledge to refine and update our strategies.

The updated 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan (referred to as the "Plan" throughout the document) represents a **shift in our focus**, from establishing some of the key building blocks of a housing and homelessness system and working more collaboratively across sectors, to **ensuring our efforts are aligned around key goals that are focused on long-term housing outcomes**. The updated Plan also aims to improve **systems integration**, recognizing that the systems that contribute to homelessness in the first place must also play a role in addressing it. The housing and homelessness sector cannot end homelessness and address all housing needs on its own. Our community will work to integrate the housing and homelessness system with health, justice, child welfare, social services, and education systems as well as other sectors such as philanthropy and the business community. **With the updated Plan as a guide, together, we will be able to make substantial progress in reducing homelessness and addressing housing need in our community over the next 10 years.**

ACHIEVEMENTS UNDER THE ORIGINAL PLAN (2014-2018)

As a community, we have come a long way since we launched our first 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan in 2014.

We have completed 52 out of our original 63 strategies that were outlined in the original Plan.

Highlights of some of the strategies that were completed or are in progress as a result of the goals and strategies in the original Plan are as follows:

- » Introduction of a **Housing First Program**, Windsor Essex Housing Connections, which has transformed the way our community supports people experiencing homelessness;
- » Increase in the number of **affordable housing units**;
- » The Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation's (CHC) 145 unit Meadowbrook development represents the regions first mixed income affordable housing development **funded collaboratively by all three levels of government and represents the largest investment made in affordable housing by the City of Windsor in 30 years**. The development will provide housing to people that are diverse in incomes, abilities, ages and supports;
- » Expansion of **rent supplement and housing allowance programs**;
- » Utilized funding from other levels of government to complete much needed **capital repairs in our existing social housing stock**, improving the long-term viability of these properties;
- » **New health funded supports** in our Housing with Supports program and new partnerships with our health partners that will enhance the way that our community supports people;
- » The Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation (CHC) has undertaken a **regeneration study** of their social housing stock. This work will evolve over 2019 and will position CHC to be ready for future housing investments.

Refer to Appendix E: Progress Under the Original Plan for more information on the activities and outcomes that have resulted from the original Plan.

Strategies that are ongoing or have not been completed have been reviewed and incorporated into this updated Plan, where appropriate. **Refer to the Current State and Future Needs Report for more information on which strategies are in progress and which strategies have been incorporated into the updated Plan.**

KEY TERMS

Some key terms and concepts mentioned throughout the Plan are explained below.

Affordable Housing

The term ‘affordable housing’ encompasses a broad range of housing, including community/social housing, private market rental units, and ownership housing. Based on the Provincial Policy Statement’s (PPS) definition of affordable housing:

- » **Affordable ownership housing** in Windsor Essex refers to housing that is priced at least 10% below the average purchase price of a resale unit in Windsor Essex
- » **Affordable rental housing** in Windsor Essex refers to units rented at or below the Windsor Essex alternate average market rent for a specified unit size.

When referring to affordable housing in the Plan we are using the two definitions above.

Community housing

Community Housing is housing owned and operated by non-profit housing corporations, housing co-operatives and municipal governments or district social services administration boards. These providers offer subsidized or low-end-of market rents – housing sometimes referred to as social housing and affordable housing.

Housing First

Housing First is an approach or model of programs that aims to help people experiencing homelessness quickly access and sustain permanent, affordable homes. The key principles that distinguish a Housing First approach include varied, flexible and responsive support services, no preconditions to housing, financial assistance, assistance with tenancy management, and case management services.

Social Housing

Social housing is subsidized housing that generally was developed under federal and provincial programs during the 1950s – 1990s and currently legislated under the Housing Services Act, 2011, where ongoing subsidies enable rents to be paid by residents on a ‘rent-geared-to-income’ (RGI) basis (i.e. 30% of gross household income). Social housing is also called subsidized, RGI, community, or public housing. Additional social housing units are no longer being developed¹ due to changes in programs.

Supportive Housing

Supportive housing refers to a combination of housing assistance and other supports that help people to live as independently as possible. This includes several forms of rent subsidies (e.g. rent-geared-to-income in social housing, rent supplements, housing allowances) and housing types (e.g. dedicated buildings, individual units). Supports also take a variety of forms and vary in intensity based on people’s unique needs (e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Nursing, Social Work, etc.).

Additional key terms are discussed in Appendix A.

SERVING PEOPLE IN NEED: THE WINDSOR ESSEX HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM

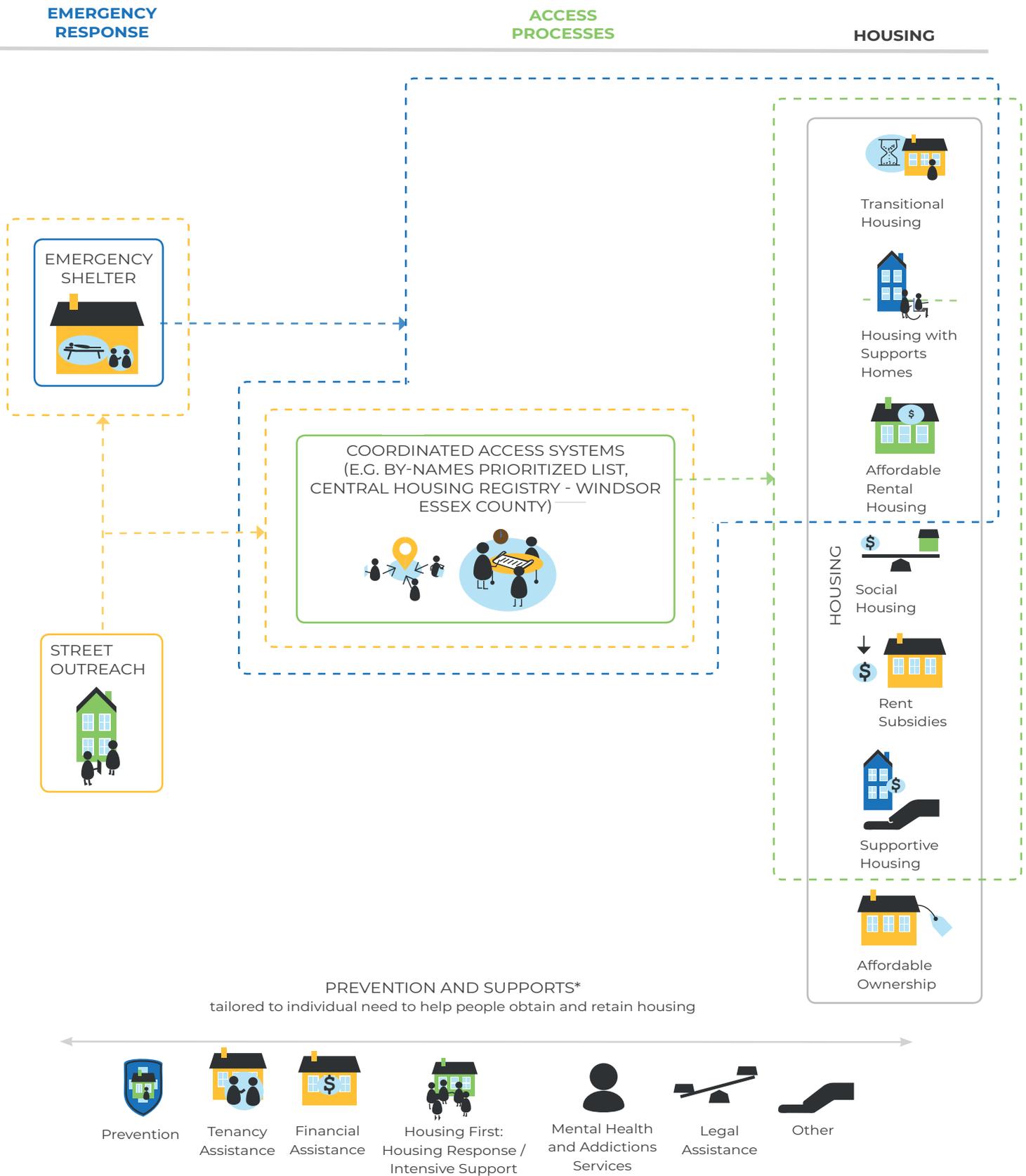
Our community has made significant progress over the past five years adding some of the key foundational building blocks of an effective service delivery system, including Housing First for people experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness. Over the next few years, our community will continue to develop its housing and homelessness system by adding, and advocating for, other evidence-based solutions such as, diversion, a continuum of supportive housing options to meet people's individual needs as well as Indigenous and youth-specific housing options. As a community, we will assess and implement best practices as we work together to expand our supply of affordable housing and supportive housing and end chronic homelessness.

Each of these components play an important role within the service delivery system, but it is the integration of the interventions and collaboration with other sectors that drives our ability to achieve our collective goals. For example, Windsor Essex has been an early adopter of a coordinated access system, known as the By-Names Prioritized List (BNPL). As of March 2019, 25 agencies were participating in this coordinated access system to assess people's level of need (i.e. acuity) using a common assessment tool, the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) to refer people experiencing homelessness to the By-Names Prioritized List. Each week, the partnering agencies come together to match people who are prioritized on the list with an appropriate program that is able to provide that person with housing and on-going supports needed to assist the person retain their housing and end their experience of homelessness. Over the next few years, our community will work towards expanding coordinated access to a broader range of community partners to ensure all those experiencing homelessness are identified, assessed and have their housing and support needs met.

The diagram on the following page presents the key components of Windsor Essex's housing and homelessness system. People experiencing or at risk of homelessness currently enter our service system through one of several channels:

- Prevention services;
- Emergency shelter services;
- Outreach for people sleeping rough;
- Coordinated access through the By Names Prioritized List for people experiencing homelessness;
- Coordinated access through the Central Housing Registry - Windsor Essex County for social and affordable housing.

WINDSOR ESSEX'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SYSTEM



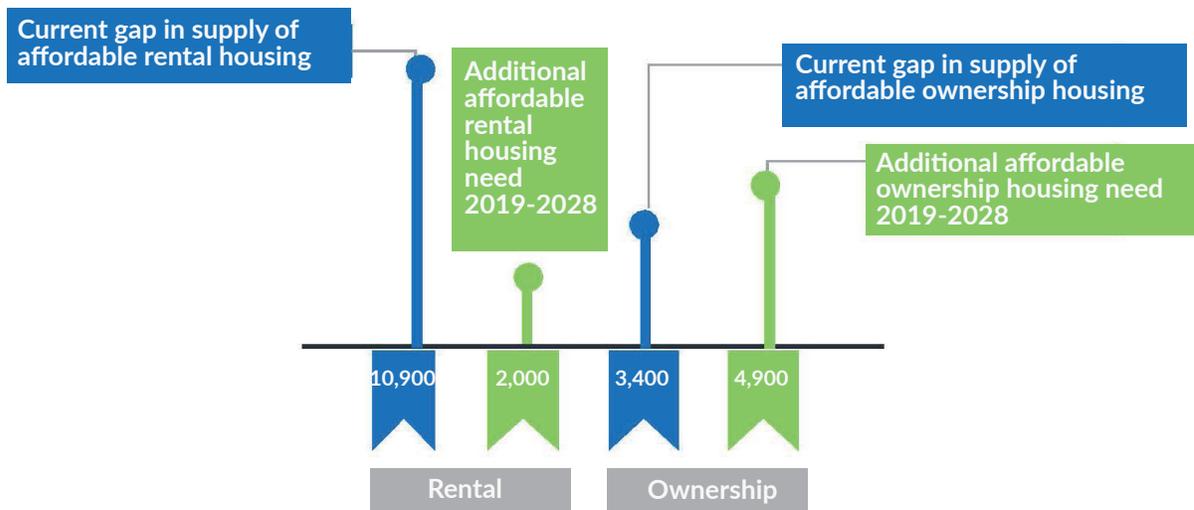
* Prevention and supports require collaboration from housing, homelessness, justice, health, education, child welfare and other systems

CURRENT STATE OF HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS IN WINDSOR ESSEX

The current state of housing and homelessness in Windsor Essex provides an overview of findings as of 2019 and looks forward to the future needs.

The Windsor Essex housing market has changed since 2014. The availability of affordable housing has declined. Average rents and house prices have steadily increased, while vacancy rates in the rental housing market have fallen to historical lows. As of 2019, there is a sizable gap between the need for affordable housing and the supply of affordable housing. Given anticipated population growth and demographic changes, the need for both affordable rental housing and affordable ownership housing is anticipated to grow between 2019 and 2028.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING GAP IN WINDSOR ESSEX³:



Expanded supportive housing options for a range of population groups are also urgently needed in Windsor Essex. Below is a snapshot of the number of people currently waiting for supportive housing with some of the supportive housing providers in Windsor Essex that maintain waiting lists.

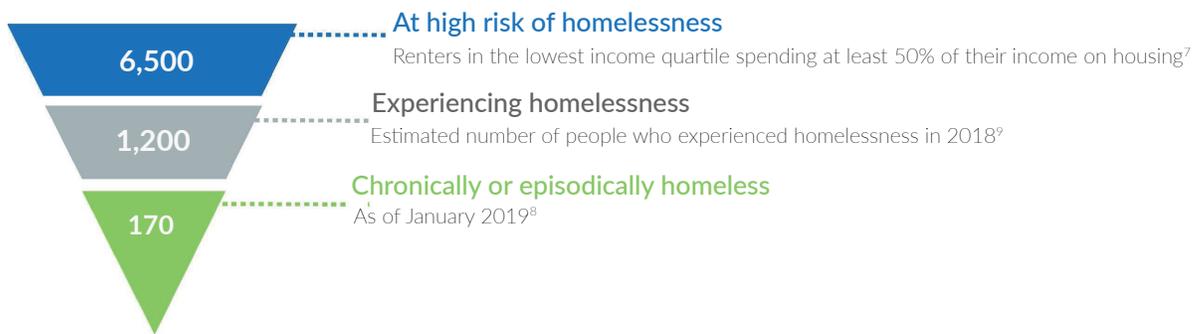
HOUSING LINKED WITH SUPPORTS GAP IN WINDSOR ESSEX²:



HOMELESSNESS:

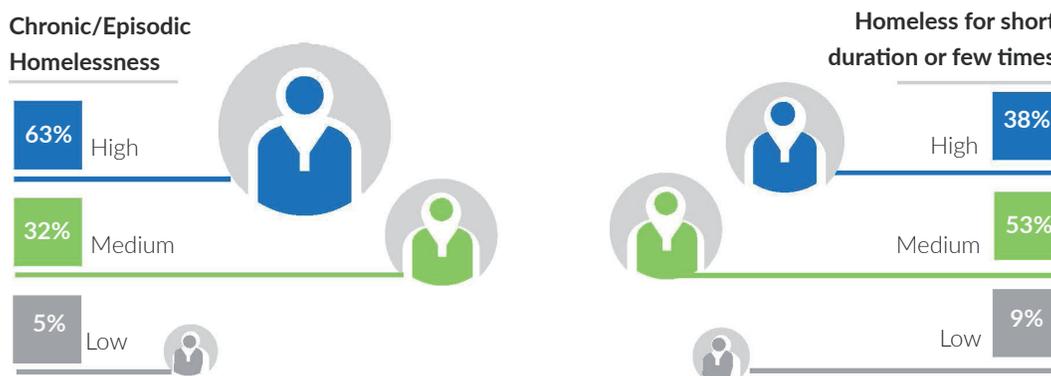
About 6,500 renter households in Windsor Essex have incomes in the lowest quartile of renters' incomes and are spending more than half of their income on rent⁴. This is a good indicator that these households are at high risk of homelessness, as they have limited means for unplanned expenses, job losses, and emergencies. It is estimated that up to 1,200 people experienced some form of homelessness in Windsor Essex in 2018. For most people, homelessness is experienced only once and for a short period of time. Some people experience recurring episodes of homelessness (episodic). A small portion experience long-term and ongoing homelessness (chronic). As of January 2019, 170 people were experiencing chronic or episodic⁵ homelessness.

HOW MANY PEOPLE MAY BE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS IN WINDSOR ESSEX?



Acuity is an assessment of the level of complexity of a person's experience in terms of vulnerability and need. It is used to determine the appropriate level, intensity, duration, and frequency of supports required to sustainably end a person's or family's homelessness. In Windsor Essex, the SPDAT suite of tools are used to determine acuity. The majority (63%) of people experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness have high acuity, suggesting that they require high intensity supports (e.g. may require up to three years of support). Some (38%) of the people who have experienced homelessness only once or twice and for a short period of time, also have high acuity levels and still require intensive supports, however the majority of this group requires moderate intensive supports.

ACUITY⁶:



Refer to the Current State and Future Needs Report for more information about the current state of housing and homelessness in Windsor Essex.

THE UPDATED PLAN (2019-2028)

After extensive community consultations and a study of evidence-based best practices, the updated Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan (2019 – 2028) upholds the original vision, and lays out renewed guiding principles, goals and targets that are in line with the emerging and best practices as well as the latest data about needs in our community.

VISION:

Windsor Essex is an inclusive community where everyone has a safe, affordable, accessible, and quality home, and everyone lives where they can actively participate

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

The following guiding principles will direct our action, as a community, in support of the Plan:



Achieving our goals is a collective responsibility that will require cross-sectoral **collaborative action** to develop system-level solutions.



We will implement **evidence-based** solutions with a focus on efficiency, cost-effectiveness and continuous improvement.



Our programs, services and supports will be **people-centred** and aimed at helping people obtain and retain housing.



The Plan will be **responsive** to the National Housing Strategy, Ontario's Community Housing Renewal Strategy, and any other future Provincial and Federal housing and homelessness strategies and initiatives.



Achieving the goals under the Plan will require **leveraging additional resources** from all levels of government.

IMPLEMENTING THE UPDATED PLAN (2019-2028)

Achieving the vision of the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan will require funding and leverage strategies to ensure resources meet the current and future demand.

FUNDING AND LEVERAGE STRATEGIES

Implementation and completion of the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan will require resources, human and financial by multiple sources. Options include pursuing additional funding from all levels of governments, other community sectors, partnerships with other sector organizations and the integration and data sharing with other identified community wide housing, supports and services.

The following sections describe strategies and policy recommendations that the City and County may consider to maximize its ability to implement the plan.

Capital Planning

The City and County should consider incorporating the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan strategies and targets into its annual Operating Budget and long term Capital Budgets to ensure that projects are considered in the City's and County's budget planning process.

Integration

The City and County should integrate the need for affordable housing as a strategic priority and incorporate them into their municipal plans, adopt policy changes and create new capital projects, where feasible.

External Funding Sources

The cost of implementing the plan can be reduced by pursuing external funding sources and partnership opportunities, where available. The City's Housing Service Department regularly pursues funding opportunities for housing and homelessness initiatives through all levels of government. Opportunities should also be explored to maximize funding opportunities through public-private partnerships, private sector, other public sectors and private sector developers.

GOALS, STRATEGIES AND TARGETS:

The Plan lays out seven ambitious goals along with strategies and targets to achieve and measure these goals which are described in this section. Additional targets can be found in Appendix D: Performance Measurement Framework.



GOAL 1: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY

GOAL 1: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY

KEY TARGETS

- » By 2028, the number of new affordable housing units and/or rent assisted units will increase by 30%
- » On average, 30% of existing social housing units will be repaired annually
- » By 2022, a tracking mechanism will be established by municipal building and planning departments to track private market affordable housing units

I STRATEGIES:

i. Adjust municipal land use planning regulations and offer incentives to increase the supply of affordable housing

As of 2019, the need for affordable housing exceeded the supply by at least 9,500 rental and 3,400 ownership housing units in Windsor Essex¹⁰. While there is no single solution to tackle this complex issue, many policy approaches can be used to help increase the supply of affordable housing. In 2018, Windsor's City Council approved changes to its Official Plan and Zoning By-law to allow for the creation of second dwelling units in existing and newly constructed detached, semi-detached and townhouse dwellings. The amendments also allow for the creation of a dwelling unit within an accessory structure on the same lot as the main dwelling. The City of Windsor's Planning Department has prepared promotional material to raise awareness of this housing opportunity and together with the Building Department will be monitoring the number of second units created. This was an important step aimed at expanding the supply of affordable housing, but there are other regulatory changes, planning policy, and financial incentives that could be considered in Windsor Essex. Refer to Appendix B: Planning and Financial Tools for a description and further information on the tools that should be considered.

ii. Identify municipal surplus properties and pursue the use for affordable housing developments

The availability of land at a reasonable price can be a barrier to the development of affordable housing. Municipalities can use public lands to reduce development costs, such as entering into land leases, donating land, and providing land at below market value. In addition to offering surplus municipal land, municipalities can consider providing additional properties they acquire through purchase, tax foreclosure, inclusionary zoning, or transfer from the Federal or Provincial government for affordable housing. As a community, we will work with appropriate municipal departments in Windsor Essex to explore this strategy and bring recommendations forward to the appropriate Council(s). Following implementation of this strategy, we will explore the possibility of establishing a target related to surplus municipal properties.

iii. Reduce barriers to the development of affordable housing through collaborative efforts between municipal departments

Windsor Essex developers identified that they would like municipalities to streamline or speed up planning and building approval processes for affordable housing. Shortening the time-period required for application approvals can reduce the overall cost of an affordable housing development by allowing construction to start sooner and reducing carrying costs. As a community, we will work with appropriate municipal departments in Windsor Essex to

explore opportunities to streamline or speed up planning and building approval processes in an effort to reduce barriers to the development of affordable housing.

iv. Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and collaborative opportunities, including with the private sector, to create, maintain and preserve affordable rental housing

With the announcement of the National Housing Strategy in 2017, it is anticipated that Windsor Essex will receive additional funding over the next 10 years, but the specific federal contributions to our community have not been announced at the time of writing this Plan. We do know that some of the initiatives will have specific allocations for Windsor Essex, but interested parties across the country can access others such as the Co-Investment Fund, through an application process. Some federal allocations may require provincial and/or municipal contributions as well.

As a community, we will work to leverage opportunities made available through the National Housing Strategy and other provincial initiatives to access as much funding for affordable housing for Windsor Essex as possible.

Other opportunities to create, maintain and preserve affordable housing will also be pursued. These may include partnerships between government and non-profit and private entities, with both entities sharing the risks and rewards.

v. Promote affordable homeownership through financial support

Our community will seek out funding and, where possible, provide financial support to help make home ownership a reality for low and moderate income households in Windsor Essex. In cases where financial support is provided as a loan, when loans are paid back, we will reinvest the money to support home ownership for more households. Providing financial support for homeownership will help ease the demand for rental housing by assisting renter households to buy affordable homes.

“ We need to think differently and smarter about what we can build to meet needs. ”

– Community Stakeholder

vi. Conduct a review of the current social housing stock to determine the current and future state of repair and leverage government funding to support capital repair, replacement and upgrading of major building components for social housing

Windsor Essex's 7,000 social housing units were built between the 1960s and 1990s. They are an essential part of the community's affordable housing supply. While some social housing providers have accumulated capital reserves, they are often insufficient to adequately maintain the units. For example, in 2017, the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation (CHC) completed a regeneration study that states assuming the current level of capital funding from the City (and County) to CHC remains the same, there will continue to be an unfunded capital deficit of \$9.5 million annually to maintain the housing stock in a good state of repair. The City as Service Manager continues to monitor and assess the extent of the capital deficit for all social housing providers in Windsor Essex and works diligently to seek out funding from upper levels of government to address the capital repair backlog.

By 2022, the City will conduct a review of the current housing stock to determine the current and future state of repair and include the analysis currently identified by the Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation through their Regeneration Plan.

vii. Utilize available rent subsidies to maintain current levels of social and affordable housing and to minimize the impact of the expiring housing programs

In addition to the non-profit social housing units, Windsor Essex currently administers funding for close to 1,200 rent subsidies, many of which are delivered through various agreements with private landlords. Time-limited Federal/Provincial programs funded many of these rent subsidies. Rent subsidies for approximately 550 units/households are set to expire by 2024.

There are also 459 units built under early Federal-Provincial affordable housing programs whose agreements will be expiring, and upon turnover, providers who have not committed to longer-term affordability have the option to transition these units to market rents over time.

With the increased supply pressures within the affordable rental housing market, efforts need to be made to replace units lost through these transitions so the total supply of affordable units continues to increase. Our community also needs to utilize available allocations of the upcoming portable housing benefit funded under the National Housing Strategy¹¹.

viii. Provide capacity building supports to the non-profit housing sector to manage properties and develop affordable housing

Supports will be provided to staff and volunteer boards of directors of non-profit housing providers to strengthen their capacity to effectively manage their housing properties. This may include providing training, tools related to governance, residents, and asset management. Supports will be leveraged from sector organizations such as the Ontario Non Profit Housing Association (ONPHA), Co-operative Housing Federation – Ontario (CHF), and Housing Services Corporation (HSC), in addition to supports provided locally.

ix. Encourage and support infrastructure and energy assessments of the social and affordable housing portfolios to establish a baseline for future planning and redevelopment / regeneration and provide supports to assist with regeneration and redevelopment

As social housing buildings age and their mortgages expire, social housing providers need to determine their future viability and understand their options, to develop an asset management plan for moving forward. Our community will plan for sustainability of the social housing portfolio. Providers will be encouraged to undertake various property/portfolio based assessments. This may include assessments related to the condition of buildings, energy audits, long-term operating viability after expiry of funding agreements, assessments of redevelopment and regeneration potential and identification of opportunities to strategically manage social housing assets. Our community will leverage tools and resources from sector organizations where available.

Some social housing providers may wish to consider redeveloping their social housing portfolios. Full-scale redevelopment and regeneration are complex processes that require collaboration and must consider legislative requirements including but not limited to service level standards and approvals. Some social housing providers may benefit from additional guidance or assistance as this will require a fair amount of time and resources to undertake. Our community will leverage supports available through sector organizations and other levels of government, to provide additional technical supports to social housing providers and assist with regeneration and redevelopment of their housing stock.

x. Collaborate with other sectors to contribute to the development and implementation of community well-being and safety plans as it pertains to high risk communities

People living in some high-density social housing developments in Windsor Essex experience issues with crime and lack of security. Social housing applicants do not generally view these developments as desirable. Community action plans are required to tackle the entrenched challenges within these social housing developments. Multi-stakeholder strategies with dedicated resources and investments from all parties, including government, other funders, and businesses are needed. Windsor Essex's housing and homelessness sector will collaborate with other sectors to develop and implement community well-being and safety plans for high-risk communities.

xi. Advocate to Federal and Provincial governments to allow Service Manager flexibility for rent subsidy calculations and to approve alternate average market rents based on current local economic conditions

With changes in the housing market over the past two years, finding rental housing below average market rents published by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) has become increasingly challenging. Historically, people that had access to rent subsidies were generally able to find housing in a relatively timely manner. In today's market, it can take people with rent subsidies between two and three months to be housed. Windsor Essex needs changes to the maximum allowable rent for people receiving rental assistance or different rent subsidy formulas to allow them to access units that are available in the market. Our community will advocate to the Federal and Provincial governments for changes to these.

The City of Windsor has already prepared a business case for the Provincial government that is based on data the City of Windsor has collected on the local rental market, rather than CMHC data, and has been working with the Province, to use alternative average market rents for some rental assistance programs.

“ Finding a landlord was really difficult. ”

– Person with Lived Experience



GOAL 2:
SUSTAIN AND EXPAND HOUSING
THAT IS LINKED WITH SUPPORTS

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SUSTAIN AND EXPAND HOUSING THAT IS
LINKED WITH SUPPORTS

KEY TARGET



More people will be linked with
appropriate supports to maintain
housing



By 2024, 70 people will be housed
through Housing First programs

STRATEGIES:

i. Expand Housing First programs

Housing First programs are an essential component of the homeless-serving system. They play a key role in addressing the housing and support needs of people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness.

Since the original plan, the community developed and implemented a Housing First program, Windsor Essex Housing Connections which has supported 544 people as of the end of 2018. If our community is going to end chronic and episodic homelessness in Windsor Essex, Housing First programs, providing both case management supports and rent subsidies, need to be expanded.

Under the Plan, our community seeks to house 70 more people through Housing First programs by 2028 in an effort to end chronic and episodic homelessness.

ii. Expand services and supports for people who experience chronic, episodic or high acuity homelessness and who have been identified as having complex needs

Some people experiencing chronic or episodic homelessness with complex mental health, addictions, or cognitive challenges have a higher level of need than can be effectively supported through the existing Housing First programs. These individuals require permanent supportive housing or scattered-site housing with Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) supports to permanently end their experiences of homelessness. Without these housing options in Windsor Essex, efforts made to end chronic homelessness will not succeed. Some people with complex needs have lost housing quickly because the supports needed were not in place while others have remained homeless due to a lack of supports. It will take governments, agencies, housing and homelessness providers working together to deliver the housing and supports necessary to end homelessness.

iii. Review, research, assess and implement a continuum of housing options that will address varying levels of need for support that is people centred and aligns with best practices

Expanded supportive housing options for a range of population groups are urgently needed in Windsor Essex. In cases where people need accessibility modifications to meet their housing needs, the community has identified that meeting those needs are a top priority. Some service providers in our community have had strong success with new models of supportive housing. For example, organizations serving people with developmental disabilities are using technology, such as tablets and smartphones programmed with special apps, to assist participants in their everyday living. Building on this success, efforts will be made to research, assess and implement a continuum of housing options that will address accessibility needs and the varying levels of support needed in order to provide successful, safe, adequate and sustainable long-term housing. The review will include consideration of the need for housing and supports for people requiring a high level of care.

iv. Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and collaborative opportunities for supportive housing options based on best practices

As part of our efforts to expand housing that is linked with supports/supportive housing options that align with best practices, our community will advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources and seek collaborative opportunities, with government, charitable organizations, and the private sector.



GOAL 3:
ENDING HOMELESSNESS

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ENDING HOMELESSNESS

KEY TARGETS

- » By 2028, 2,800 people experiencing homelessness will be housed through Coordinated Access (CA) systems following a Housing First philosophy
- » By 2024, 50% of people experiencing chronic homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports
- » By 2028, 100% of people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports
- » By 2021, people seeking emergency shelter will be assessed to determine if existing and appropriate supports and housing options are available and if so, they will be diverted from entering the homeless-serving system
- » By 2028, 50% of people experiencing homelessness leaving institutions will be discharged into appropriate housing

Ending Homelessness

The Plan uses the concept of “functional zero” as the measurement for ending homelessness. **Functional Zero is when we reach a state where we have more capacity in our housing and support system than we have people who are experiencing homelessness.** It means that we have a system in place to ensure that homelessness is prevented whenever possible, and that **experiences of homelessness are rare, brief, and nonrecurring.** A community will have achieved functional zero when it has three or less people experiencing chronic homelessness in a month, sustained over six months¹².

Achieving functional zero in Windsor Essex requires a **greater focus on prevention**, so that homelessness can be prevented for a high percentage of people accessing homelessness prevention services. Functional zero also requires **coordinated outreach** so that all unsheltered individuals are engaged with services and offered low-barrier shelter and housing. An **increase of affordable housing supply, Housing First programs, and supportive housing**, as well as a diverse range of housing and service providers working together in a **well-coordinated system** will also be required to ensure appropriate housing and supports are available to people experiencing homelessness, and to allow us to achieve a steady decline in the number of people experiencing homelessness. **Integration** of the housing and homelessness system with health, justice, child welfare, social services, and education systems are also critical to the community’s success in ending homelessness.

STRATEGIES:

i. Conduct emergency shelter review and implement recommendations to improve emergency services for people experiencing homelessness

Emergency shelter is an essential part of our homeless-serving system. With appropriate housing and support options in the community, emergency shelter services would only be used to provide people experiencing a temporary crisis with accommodation for a brief and non-recurring period of time.

There has been a significant increase in demand for shelter starting in 2017 and Windsor Essex has relied heavily on the use of motel rooms to meet the emergency accommodation needs of families. This comes at substantial expense. Investing additional dollars in shelter results in fewer resources that can be used for long-term housing and supports. A review of our shelter system will assess the best use of resources within our shelter system and identify what is needed to align our shelters with best practice approaches. This includes ensuring there is consistent screening for people seeking shelter, and if appropriate, providing diversion supports to help them stay in safe non-shelter alternatives. When shelter is required, immediate and easy access needs to be offered for all individuals and household types, at any time of day or night. Consideration will be given to the needs of residents in Windsor Essex and specific population groups who have historically been overrepresented in homelessness. Shelters should be focused on housing and be an access point for housing and supports. A review of our emergency shelter system will determine opportunities to improve shelter services and recommendations will be implemented to ensure approaches are low barrier, focused on permanent housing outcomes, and meet peoples' needs.

“ I know what it is like to be homeless and be scared that you are not going to be able to stay in the same place the next night. ” – Person with Lived Experience

ii. Expand and formalize collaboration and coordination of homelessness street outreach including other sectors and municipal departments

Outreach programs facilitate access to basic needs and housing supports for people sleeping outside. As a community, we need to expand and formalize our outreach efforts to ensure everyone sleeping outside is connected to Coordinated Access for housing and supports and to engage and support them until they obtain permanent housing.

Currently, after being connected to Coordinated Access for housing and supports, some people may go months without engaging with the homeless-serving system, which can halt the community's efforts to house them, because it is unclear if they are still homeless. A number of these individuals later re-engage, confirming that they are still in need of housing. The process of supporting access to housing then continues, but their experience of homelessness is longer than it may have needed to be. Efforts need to be made to work together to develop a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of various service providers within the homeless-serving system and the roles of other intersecting sectors (i.e. Health, Justice, CP Rail, etc.) and municipal departments (i.e. Parks, Police Services, By-Law enforcement, etc.) to provide outreach, a coordinated response and/or facilitate access to housing in order to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness.

iii. Demonstrate and formalize a commitment to working with partners across service systems to increase coordination and access to housing, homelessness prevention services and other human services to better serve people with complex needs

The significant mental health, addiction, trauma, and chronic physical health conditions amongst some people experiencing homelessness point to the need for collaborative efforts to wrap/layer a number of services around people with complex needs to support them in addressing their homelessness and maintaining housing stability. As a community, we need to implement collaborative solutions between providers in the homeless-serving system as well as with system stakeholders in health, justice, and child welfare to better serve those in need of multiple supports. As a community, we will also look at who, among those experiencing homelessness, are on both the By-Names Prioritized List and the Central Housing Registry – Windsor Essex County and who are accessing services only through one of the two lists.

iv. Expand supports, through a variety of partnerships, to people at risk of homelessness

Efforts to end homelessness will not succeed without having an effective response system that prevents homelessness where possible. A range of interventions are required to prevent homelessness. These include rental assistance, landlord mediation, and legal support. These also include other services to support people to stabilize their housing, such as life skills supports and mental health and addiction services. A wide range of agencies and all levels of government can contribute to the prevention of homelessness. We need to establish new partnerships to provide targeted interventions aimed at supporting individuals and families at high risk of homelessness. We need to coordinate our efforts up-stream to intervene before people become homeless or entrenched in homelessness. Earlier program intervention in a housing crisis, results in better outcomes for the individual or family involved at a lower cost. We also need solutions that are targeted to meet the unique needs of different population groups, whether they are part of the LGBTQ2S community, youth, survivors of human trafficking or domestic violence, single adults, or families.

v. Conduct continuous improvement reviews for homelessness funded programs that support people to obtain and retain housing

Continuous improvement reviews will be conducted of homelessness funded programs that support people to obtain and retain housing. A process review will be initiated in an effort to streamline access to funds through programs that prevent homelessness.

vi. Establish prevention approaches and housing solutions that respond to family needs based on evidence and sector best practices

Families often touch many different systems including education, income support, immigration, child welfare, legal, and health as well as housing and homelessness. To effectively address family homelessness all of these systems must be better integrated so that families do not 'fall through the cracks'. We will establish new partnerships between service providers and across sectors to explore system-level and service interventions to prevent family homelessness and help support families in meeting their housing needs.

vii. Research, assess and where appropriate implement a diversion approach

Diversion supports help people in a housing crisis avoid a shelter stay by using creative problem-solving, advocacy and flexible assistance to help identify safe alternatives such as staying with family or friends; and supporting them to access community resources to address their long-term housing situation. Our community will research, assess, and where appropriate, implement a diversion program in our emergency shelters. We will also implement diversion approaches across the homelessness-serving sector. Our approach to diversion will include youth specific diversion measures, including enhancing family and natural supports.

Approximately 2,000 people¹³ accessed the three Windsor Essex emergency shelters in 2018. Other communities that have implemented diversion effectively have seen at least 30% fewer people accessing their emergency shelters. Windsor Essex will look to these communities to inform the development of our diversion program. Diversion support will ensure that interventions occur before people enter emergency shelters and can help address their housing needs so that they do not enter the homeless system unnecessarily.

viii. Expand coordinated access to additional services/agencies and systems and continuously improve the By-Names Prioritized List

Our community has introduced coordinated entry, assessment and prioritization to facilitate access to moderate and intensive housing and supports for people experiencing homelessness. As a community, efforts will be made to expand coordinated access to include all housing targeted at people experiencing homelessness, providing people with a broader range of housing and support options. This includes aligning access to social housing for people assigned the Homeless or At-Risk Priority with the By-Names Prioritized List. Further efforts will be made to expand coordinated access to include housing and supports for people with physical and/or developmental disabilities, mental health concerns, and addictions.

“ Collaboration is happening. ”
– Community Stakeholder

ix. Plan, develop and implement collaborative protocols across sectors to coordinate discharge planning to support transitions to appropriate housing

As a community, we want to ensure that people leaving correctional facilities, hospital, treatment, and the child welfare system are connected with appropriate housing solutions to prevent them from becoming homeless. We will work closely with health, justice, child welfare, and other system partners to establish a housing and homelessness system that is integrated with these systems. Collaboration will occur with system partners to develop protocols, and coordinate discharge and transitional planning from these systems to collectively meet our common goal of addressing homelessness.

x. Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and collaborative opportunities to align with the goal of ending homelessness

Significant investments are needed to achieve the targets outlined in the Plan. The City as Service Manager and Community Entity has responsibility for administering the Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) and the Federal government's new redesigned homelessness funding program, Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy. As such, the City will work to align and integrate the two funding initiatives to ensure a coordinated response to end homelessness.

Other funders will be engaged on an ongoing basis to continue to support system planning and alignment of future funding programs, regardless of source, with the Plan's priorities.

If our community is to achieve the targets outlined in the Plan, partnerships and collaborations need to be expanded to leverage new housing and homelessness funding beyond current sources. This will also include exploring other diverse sources of funding.



GOAL 4:
ADDRESS INDIGENOUS HOUSING
AND HOMELESSNESS NEEDS

GOAL 4:
ADDRESS INDIGENOUS HOUSING AND
HOMELESSNESS NEEDS

KEY TARGETS

- » By 2028, 80% of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness will have access to housing and supports by Indigenous led organizations
- » By 2028, 100 new affordable housing units will be created for Indigenous Peoples

STRATEGIES:

i. Support Indigenous organizations to create and retain Indigenous led affordable housing

About 9,870 people of Indigenous identities live in Windsor Essex. The incidence of core housing need is much higher among Indigenous households than among non-Indigenous households (17.5% vs 10.7%¹⁴). Systemic racism against Indigenous people has led to disparities in housing, including access to housing and culturally appropriate housing¹⁵. Our community needs to recognize and address the disparities in the housing situation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous households.

Affordable housing for Indigenous people should be designed, owned and operated by Indigenous housing and service providers. The Plan calls for 100 new affordable housing units to be created for Indigenous peoples by 2028. Our community will advocate for and support Indigenous organizations to create additional culturally-appropriate affordable housing. Our community will also work to repair the existing social housing stock operated by Indigenous organizations.

ii. Expand homelessness services and supports led by Indigenous organizations

Approximately 18% of Windsor Essex's homeless population identify as having Indigenous identity¹⁶. This compares to 2.5% of Windsor Essex's population¹⁷. The prevalence of Indigenous homelessness reflects the legacy of colonialism, intergenerational trauma, and residential schools, and results in both a physical loss of "home" and a sense of disconnection from social, spiritual, emotional, and physical relationships¹⁸.

Since the original Plan was created, two Indigenous Housing Advocates have been added to the homelessness service system as part of Windsor Essex Housing Connections, the community's Housing First program.

Homelessness services led by Indigenous organizations need to be expanded if our community is going to address and end homelessness amongst Indigenous peoples. This includes, but is not limited to, Indigenous Housing Advocates, housing focused outreach, and landlord recruitment. Under the Plan, an additional 20% of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness will be housed by Indigenous Housing Advocates and supported to remain housed for at least six months.

iii. Expand services for Indigenous peoples by Indigenous providers/people within mainstream organizations

Many Urban Indigenous peoples are served by non-Indigenous organizations within the homeless-serving system. The experience of Urban Indigenous peoples should be acknowledged and efforts should be made to ensure services meet their needs.

For Indigenous people, being homeless can be experienced from diverse perspectives: cultural, spiritual or emotional¹⁹. It is more than a loss of housing. Therefore, services provided within non-Indigenous organizations should be culturally appropriate and address more than housing. Under the Plan, our community will endeavor to expand services for Indigenous peoples by Indigenous peoples and link Indigenous service providers within mainstream organizations.

iv. Implement training to the homeless-service system on Indigenous led services for the Indigenous community

Staff and stakeholders across the homeless-service system require an understanding of Indigenous homelessness as a colonial legacy that has resulted in intergenerational trauma, and needs Indigenous ways of healing to end experiences of homelessness. Windsor Essex will work with Indigenous led organizations to implement training to the homeless - service system to help foster a climate where the unique history of Indigenous peoples is recognized and respected in order to provide appropriate care and services in an equitable and safe way, without judgement or discrimination.

v. Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and collaborative opportunities to support Indigenous housing and homelessness needs

In an effort to address Indigenous housing and homelessness needs, our community will advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources and collaborative opportunities, with government, charitable organizations, and the private sector.



GOAL 5:
REDUCE AND PREVENT YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS

GOAL 5:
REDUCE AND PREVENT YOUTH
HOMELESSNESS

KEY TARGETS

- » By 2026, a coordinated youth homelessness prevention response system will be in place
- » By 2028, 100 additional youth experiencing homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports

Youth (people 16 to 24 years of age) are over-represented among Windsor Essex's homeless population. As well, stakeholders identified youth homelessness as a key issue that needs to be addressed.

Addressing youth homelessness can prevent future adult chronic homelessness. Our community can meet our goals of ending chronic homelessness, in part, by preventing and ending youth homelessness.

STRATEGIES:

- i. Ensure services have well-articulated roles, target populations, eligibility criteria, outcomes and introduce measures to enhance service integration within and between the youth-serving and homelessness-serving systems

In the first 5 years of the original Plan, efforts were made to coordinate housing and support programs for people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness. There is still much to do to coordinate the diversity of youth-focused services that currently exist in our community to address youth homelessness. As a first step, efforts will be made to ensure services are organized, have well-articulated roles, target populations, eligibility criteria, and outcomes. Mechanisms to enhance service integration within and between the youth-serving and homeless-serving systems will also be introduced. This may include developing a community response protocol related to youth homelessness in order to coordinate services.

- ii. Implement targeted prevention measures for youth

Prevention needs to be an essential focus in our efforts to end youth homelessness. Our community will endeavour to work collaboratively to implement targeted prevention measures for youth. Early intervention and prevention of youth homelessness should include measures that specifically target youth at risk of homelessness, including but not limited to programs such as family and natural supports programs, working with the education system to identify those at risk earlier, shelter diversion, and developing policy and programs that can ensure that youth are better supported when transitioning out of the child welfare and youth justice systems. Our community will engage in systems planning with relevant provincial and federal government Ministries and agencies to implement targeted systems and prevention measures for youth. Prevention measures for youth should also include eviction prevention, including providing information and advice to youth and their families, providing financial supports to tenants for essential needs and/or arrears, access to legal supports, and targeted crisis intervention.

iii. Explore innovative models of peer-based support and mentorship

Peer support is common within mental health and addiction services. It is less common in homelessness services, but does present a potentially impactful approach to service delivery for youth. Peer workers can provide emotional support, social support, and empathy through listening to other youth still living the experience of homelessness. They do not need to be experts in local service options. Our community will explore innovative models and peer-based support and mentorship for youth experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

iv. Establish housing solutions that respond to youth needs based on evidence and sector best practices

Youth require targeted housing solutions and interventions that can support their transition into adulthood. These should include returning home (family reconnect), emergency shelter, transitional housing (Foyer Model), supportive housing, and independent living. Youth housing solutions should be based on the Housing First for Youth principles, which include immediate access to housing with no preconditions, youth choice, positive youth development and/or orientation, individualized and client-driven supports, and social and community integration. Youth should have flexibility to move among housing programs to achieve greater independence as they build life skills, including the ability to re-engage should their needs change.

“ Without a separate program stream,
we are failing youth ”

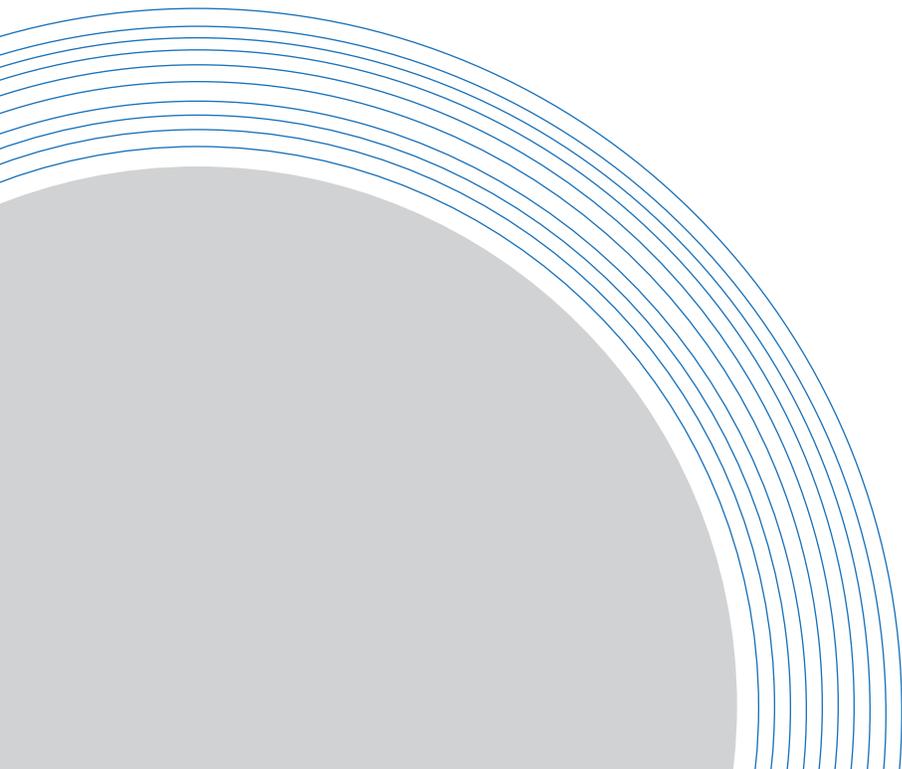
– Community Stakeholder

v. Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and collaborative opportunities to support the needs of youth

As a community, we will advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources and collaborative opportunities to support the needs of youth. This will include exploring contributions from government, charitable organizations, the volunteer sector, and the private sector.

vi. Participate and collaborate to identify a lead to establish and implement a youth planning governance structure

Leadership and a governance structure is essential to executing the youth specific components of the Plan. A group or organization needs to be identified to provide backbone supports to lead implementation of the youth specific components of the Plan. One of the first strategies our community will implement under this Plan will be to develop infrastructure and governance necessary to begin to plan the implementation of the youth specific components of the Plan.





GOAL 6:
FOSTER SUCCESSFUL TENANCIES
THROUGH COMMUNITY
COLLABORATION

GOAL 6:
FOSTER SUCCESSFUL TENANCIES
THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

KEY TARGET

- » By 2024, 90% of tenants receiving support services will retain their tenancy for a minimum of 12 months
- » 50 people living in social, affordable, and supportive housing will receive RentSmart training each year
- » 15 social, affordable, and supportive housing landlords will receive RentSmart training each year

STRATEGIES:

- i. Establish collaborative responses to increase supports to affordable, social and supportive housing and private sector tenants, including a response to tenant crises

Successful tenancies are a key component to preventing homelessness, increasing housing stability, and achieving optimal well-being.

A number of supports exist in Windsor Essex to help people maintain their home and supports to improve their housing stability, health and well-being. Often, tenants are not connecting with available supports. In addition, tenant needs can change over time, and in some instances, can very quickly lead to crisis situations. As a community, we will establish collaborative responses to enhance affordable, social housing and private sector tenant access to supports, including families. This will include collaborative responses to tenant crises.

“ Social housing providers are increasingly housing more vulnerable populations ” – Community Stakeholder

- ii. Formalize partnerships to provide cross sectoral community supports to housing and homelessness program participants

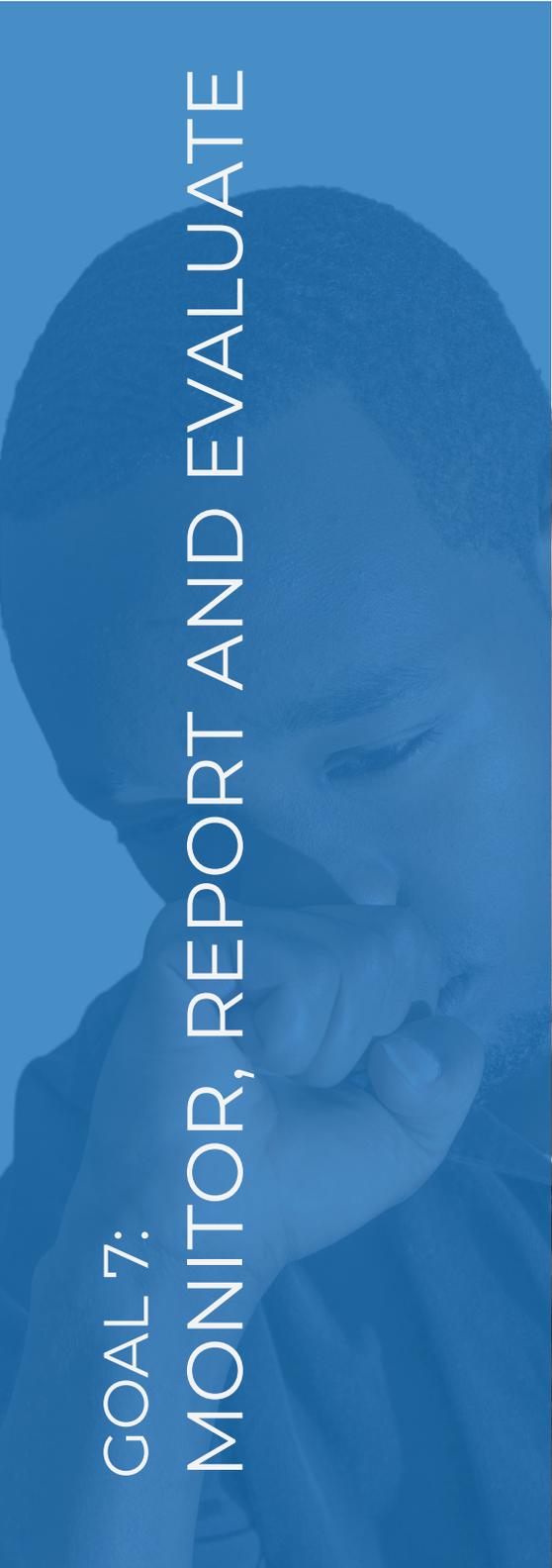
Given the often co-occurring mental health issues, addiction and trauma among vulnerable tenants and people experiencing homelessness, there is a need for enhanced access to mental health, addiction, and behavioural supports among housing and homelessness program participants to help maintain successful tenancies. This will require collaborative efforts from government, health, housing and homelessness service providers, and other service providers. To support enhanced access of housing and homelessness program participants to non-housing community supports, our community will formalize partnerships to provide these supports, where appropriate.

iii. Provide landlord and tenant education to support successful tenancies

Many landlords and tenants would benefit from education aimed at increasing housing stability. Through the RentSmart program, our community will provide education to tenants and landlords to support successful tenancies. This will include topics such as tenant and landlord rights and responsibilities, best practices in housing stability, what to do in the event of a crisis, homelessness prevention, and available community supports.

iv. Advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and collaborative opportunities to foster successful tenancies

To support our efforts to foster successful tenancies, continued effort will be made to advocate for and leverage diverse funding sources, and seek out collaborative opportunities between government, charitable organizations, and the private sector.



GOAL 7:
MONITOR, REPORT AND EVALUATE

GOAL 7:
MONITOR, REPORT AND EVALUATE

KEY TARGETS

- » Establish a cross-sectoral data, collection and reporting framework
- » Develop, implement, and maintain a public awareness and education campaign on the Plan and housing and homelessness issues
- » By 2022, Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) will be implemented in 100% of agencies participating in coordinated access

STRATEGIES:

i. Implement Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) in the community and expand its use across sectors

A common information management system is an essential tool for enhancing service coordination within the homeless-serving system that also supports system planning. The Federal government's common information management system is Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) 4.0. HIFIS will be implemented across the emergency shelters and Housing First programs first, and then expanded to coordinated access partner agencies and permanent supportive housing programs across the remaining homeless-serving system.

ii. Develop, adopt, and monitor minimum collective accountability standards, quality standards, and performance measures for programs within the homelessness system

To evaluate efforts against the Plan's goals and targets, accountability standards, quality standards, and performance measures will be established for key program types, including emergency shelter, housing with supports, and Housing First programs.

iii. Develop and implement community wide outcomes and an accountability framework to evaluate performance of the homelessness system

The City, in its dual role as Service Manager and Community Entity, does not have responsibility for administering all of the funding needed to achieve our intended outcomes. Funding with provincial ministries, the United Way, and other funders will need to be aligned to reach the targets established in the Plan. To support this, community wide outcomes and a shared Plan accountability framework will be developed which identifies resources and funding coordination processes, roles, and accountabilities to support Plan strategies. The Federal government, as part of the Reaching Home program, also requires that community-wide outcomes be established.

iv. Create dashboards and other methods to improve data sharing and reporting on program and community level outcomes

To monitor and evaluate our performance, program and system data will be gathered and analyzed for the purpose of creating dashboards and other mechanisms for sharing the information. Dashboards may be established for chronic homelessness, youth homelessness, Indigenous housing and homelessness, and social and affordable housing. This information will help us understand populations served, and will inform future planning to ensure people accessing programs and services have access to appropriate and relevant resources and supports. As part of this work, our community will explore the possibility of establishing a data committee with representation from community partners to support sharing of information.

v. Engage with the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Board to act as champions of the Plan and inform the development of a work plan that supports the goals and strategies of the Plan

The Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee and Community Advisory Board will be engaged to act as champions of the Plan and inform the development of a work plan to put the Plan and its strategies into active use in our community. This includes efforts to raise awareness of key issues and prompt change in policy and service delivery in a way that improves a person's outcomes. However, it is more than just building awareness, our housing and homelessness sector will come together and work closely with other sectors to initiate action to achieve the goals and strategies in the Plan.

vi. Monitor the needs of the community through data analysis

As demographics shift and programs and policies change, the needs of various populations may change. As a community, we will monitor needs, and will adjust and implement strategies based on identified needs of target populations.

vii. Educate and increase awareness of roles, target populations, and eligibility criteria, of a wide range of services

An increased awareness of roles, target populations, and eligibility criteria of a wide range of services is needed to ensure people with homelessness service needs are effectively supported and the homeless-serving system is working in an integrated manner. Education of those in need of service as well as community partners across the housing and homeless-serving system will be provided to increase awareness about available services to support effective service delivery.

viii. Create tools to increase community awareness and education of homelessness

Individuals experiencing homelessness and at risk of homelessness are often stigmatized. There are significant consequences to the misperceptions and fears about homelessness. Some individuals have been denied adequate housing, employment or services because of their homelessness. The stigma of people experiencing homelessness, including stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination needs to be addressed.

Tools to increase community awareness and education of homelessness will be created. Efforts will be aimed at both the general public and key target groups including service providers and landlords. Awareness campaigns will include replacing myths about homelessness with accurate knowledge and efforts to increase interactions between those with lived experience and those who might hold stigmatizing attitudes. As a community, we will also work with the media to raise awareness of housing and homelessness issues. It will be important to include people with lived experience in designing, developing and delivering strategies to increase community awareness and education of homelessness.

x. Publish annual reports based on achievements under the Plan

The Plan's progress will be monitored and annual reports will be published highlighting achievements and identifying priorities that still need to be completed

ix. Engage in a five-year review of the plan in 2023

The Plan is intended to be a living document, where strategies are updated as new information becomes available. In addition, a more thorough review of progress and update of the strategies will be required in five years. A refresh of the Plan will begin in 2023.



NEXT STEPS

This Plan represents a **major opportunity to improve services** to those in Windsor Essex who require affordable housing, are currently experiencing homelessness or are at risk of homelessness, or who are vulnerably housed. Developed after consultation with a wide spectrum of not for profit service agencies, private sector businesses and people with lived experience, this Plan reflects a **coming together** to address common issues of the lack of affordable housing and homelessness. As such:

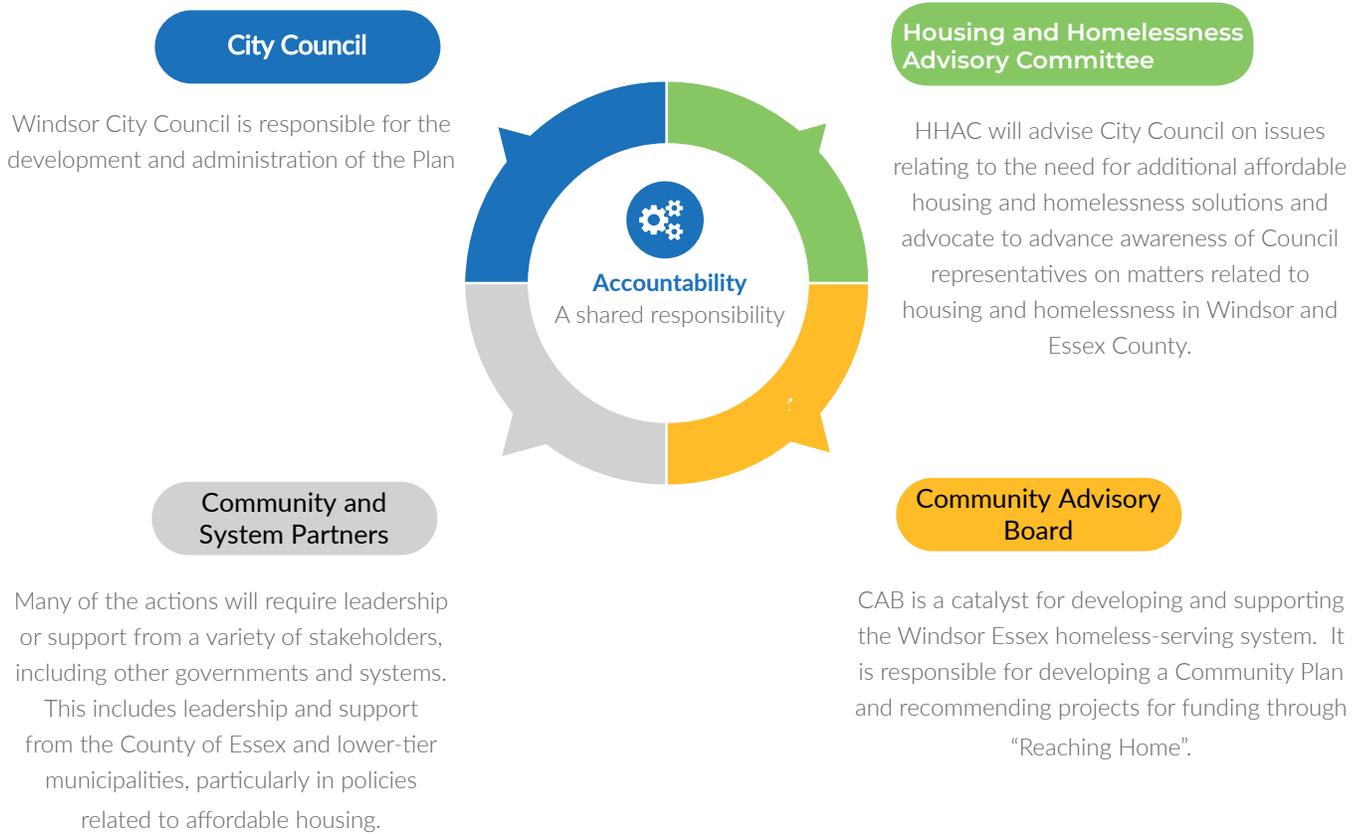
This Plan is a Community Plan.

At the same time, the Federal government has introduced Canada's National Housing Strategy 'A Place to Call Home', which includes "Reaching Home", a plan to address homelessness in Canada. Significant financial resources are attached to both these strategies. Together with the provincial government's Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy and Community Housing Renewal Strategy this represents an alignment of government efforts to serve vulnerable families and people in need of housing.

This Plan represents an **opportunity** to make significant progress in improving housing outcomes for people in need throughout Windsor Essex.

As an **immediate first step**, the City of Windsor will engage with the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee (HHAC) and the Community Advisory Board (CAB) to act as champions of the Plan and inform the development of a work plan that supports the goals and strategies of the Plan. Building from this, the Plan's partners will identify timelines for achieving key actions as part of their roles.

HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN ACCOUNTABILITY



Ongoing **system planning** efforts, and **refinements** of the targets and strategies outlined in this Plan, will be required, as further information becomes available and current needs and service capacity change.

Achieving our goals will require cross-sectoral collaborative action and integration of programs, services and sectors. To move the Plan into implementation, the City of Windsor will work with community partners and stakeholders to define the financial and other commitments, accountabilities, and actions required to end homelessness and meet our community’s housing needs.

Together we can create a community where everyone has a safe, affordable, accessible, and quality home, and everyone lives where they can actively participate

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

Accessible: In reference to a type of housing unit, accessible refers to units that are designed to promote accessibility for individuals with disabilities. This sometimes includes physical elements such as low height cupboards or light switches, wide doorways, and adapted bathrooms

Acuity: An assessment of the level of complexity of a person's experience. Acuity is used to determine the appropriate level, intensity, duration, and frequency of case managed supports to sustainably end a person's or family's homelessness. In Windsor Essex, the SPDAT suite of tools are the tools used to determine acuity

Adequate Housing: Dwellings not requiring any major repairs, as reported by residents

Affordable Housing: The term 'affordable housing' encompasses a broad range of housing, including social housing, private market rental units, and ownership housing. Based on the Provincial Policy Statement's (PPS) definition of affordable housing:

- **Affordable rental housing** in Windsor Essex refers to units rented at or below the Windsor Essex average market rent for a specified unit size
- **Affordable ownership housing** in Windsor Essex refers to housing that is priced at least 10% below the average purchase price of a resale unit in Windsor Essex

Assertive Community Treatment (ACT): An interdisciplinary team of professionals available around the clock to provide treatment, support, and other needed services. The ACT team will typically engage people immediately after they have secured permanent housing and will regularly offer a variety of services to choose from. Services may be delivered in people's homes or in community offices or clinics. ACT teams might include social workers, physicians, nurses, occupational therapists, psychologists, counsellors, addictions specialists, housing specialists, employment specialists, administrative assistants, and other professionals (Homeless Hub)

At Risk of Homelessness: Refers to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness)

Best Practices: Refers to practices and procedures rooted in evidence-based research

By-Names Prioritized List: Refers to a real-time list of people experiencing homelessness that includes a robust set of data points that support coordinated access and prioritization at a household level and an understanding of homeless inflow and outflow at a system level. The real-time actionable data supports triage to appropriate supports and services, system performance evaluation, and advocacy. (20K Homes Campaign)

Client: A person served by or utilizing the services of a social agency.

Community Advisory Board (CAB): The Community Advisory Board is a catalyst for developing and supporting a local homeless-serving delivery system. The CAB is responsible for being representative of the community; producing the Reaching Home Community Plan; and recommending projects for funding to the Community Entity (City of Windsor). (Homelessness Partnering Strategy)

Community Housing

Community housing is housing owned and operated by non-profit housing corporations, housing co-operatives and municipal governments or district social services administration boards. These providers offer subsidized or low-end-of market rents – housing sometimes referred to as social housing and affordable housing

Coordinated Access: A coordinated access system is the process by which individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness are directed to community-level access points where trained workers use a common assessment tool to evaluate the individual or family's depth of need, prioritize them for housing support services and then help to match them to available housing focused interventions. In Windsor Essex, it is also referred to as the BNPL. (Reaching Home Directives)

Chronic Homelessness: Refers to individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness and who meet at least one of the following criteria:

- They have a total of at least six months of homelessness over the past year
- They have recurrent experiences of homelessness over the past three years, with a cumulative duration of at least 18 months. (Reaching Home Directives)

Core Housing Need: A household is in core housing need if its housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax income to access local housing that meets all three standards. (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation)

Diversion: A preventative strategy/initiative to divert individuals from becoming homeless before they access a shelter or immediately expedite their exit from the shelter system. This may include helping people identify immediate alternative housing arrangements and connecting them with services and financial assistance to help them maintain or return to permanent housing

Episodic Homelessness: Refers to individuals who are currently homeless and have experienced three or more episodes of homelessness in the past year (episodes are defined as periods when a person would be in a shelter or place not fit for human habitations, and after at least 30 days, would be back in the shelter or inhabitable location. (20K Homes Campaign)

Evidence-based: The integration of best practice research evidence within clinical expertise and client values. In the context of social programs, services and supports, evidence-based refers to the use of high-quality evidence (e.g. randomized control trials) to develop, test, and modify programs and services so that they are achieving intended outcomes

Families: Households of two or more people and include two adults who are married/living together as well as head(s) of household with a child or children

Functional Zero: Functional Zero is a relative measurement of the state of homelessness in a community. Functional Zero recognized that homelessness and risk cannot be completely eradicated nor can efforts undermine personal choice in some instances. Functional Zero is measured as a community having three or less people experiencing chronic homelessness in a month, sustained over six months (Turner, Alanese and Pakeman)

High Acuity: A person will be considered high acuity if they have a Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) score of 8+ as a youth or single adult, or 9+ as a family

Homelessness: Describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness)

Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee (HAC): An advisory committee to Windsor City Council. Its mandate is to advise City Council on issues related to the supply, demand, and need for additional affordable housing units and homelessness; act as a medium for informational exchange with sector representatives on housing and homelessness program initiatives and community issues; act as a resource and advocate on behalf of all stakeholders to educate and advance the awareness of Council representatives on matters pertaining to housing and homelessness in Windsor and Essex County

Housing Allowance: Is a form of a rent subsidy that provides a fixed-amount benefit directly to households, usually in the private rental market. It is tied to the household (portable), so it moves where they move

Housing First: Is a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed. There are five core principles of Housing First:

1. Immediate access to permanent housing with no housing readiness requirements
2. Consumer choice and self-determination
3. Recover orientation
4. Individuals and client-driven supports, and
5. Social and community integration

Indigenous: A collective name for the Indigenous Peoples of North America and their descendants. The Canadian Constitution recognizes three groups of Aboriginal people: Indians (commonly referred to as First Nations), Métis, and Inuit. (INAC)

First Nations (Non-Status): People who consider themselves Indians or members of a First Nation, but whom the Government of Canada does not recognize as Indians under the Indian Act, either because they are unable to prove their status or have lost their status rights. Many Indian people in Canada, especially women, lost their Indian status through discriminatory practices in the past. Non-Status Indians are not entitled to the same rights and benefits available to Status Indians. (INAC)

First Nations (Status): People who are entitled to have their names included on the Indian Register, an official list maintained by the federal government. Certain criteria determine who can be registered as a Status Indian. Only Status Indians are recognized as Indians under the Indian Act, which defines an Indian as, “a person who, pursuant to this Act, is registered as an Indian or is entitled to be registered as an Indian.” Status Indians are entitled to certain rights and benefits under the law. (INAC)

Inuit: An Aboriginal people in Northern Canada, who live in Nunavut, Northwest Territories, Northern Quebec and Northern Labrador. The word means “people” in the Inuit language – Inuktitut. The singular of Inuit is Inuk. (INAC)

Métis: People of mixed First Nation and European ancestry who identify themselves as Métis, as distinct from First Nations people, Inuit or non-Aboriginal people. The Métis have a unique culture that draws on their diverse ancestral origins, such as Scottish, French, Ojibway and Cree. (INAC)

Indigenous Homelessness: describes the situation of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness)

Intensive Case Management (ICM): Intensive case management is a team-based approach to support individuals, the goal of which is to help clients maintain their housing and achieve an optimum quality of life through developing plans, enhancing life skills, addressing mental and physical health needs, engaging in meaningful activities and building social and community relations. It is designed for clients with lower acuity, but who are

identified as needing intensive support for a shorter and time-delineated period

LGBTQ2S: Refers to Lesbian Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Two-Spirit and other gender/sexual identities

Low Acuity: a person will be considered low acuity if they have a VI-SPDAT score of 6 or less as a youth or a single adult, or 3 or less as a family

Mid Acuity: a person will be considered mid acuity if they have a VI-SPDAT score between 4-7 as a youth or a single adult, or 4-8 as a family

Point-In-Time Count: provides a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness at a point in time. Basic demographic information is collected from emergency shelters and short term housing facilities, and a survey is done with those enumerated through a street count. Public systems, including health and corrections, provide numbers of those without fixed address on the night of the count as well

Prevention: refers to the activities, interventions and planning that prevents individuals and families from experiencing homelessness

Regeneration: involves major changes (redevelopment, expansion, repairs or upgrades) to social housing projects in order to enhance its use to both tenants and the surrounding community

Registry Week: is a method of homelessness enumeration that involves a co-ordinated, multi-day count of homeless persons on the streets, in shelters and other spaces frequented by homeless persons. A Registry Week is a coordinated outreach and assessment process to collect information that will help find housing for persons experiencing homelessness, starting with the most vulnerable. (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing)

Rent Assistance/Subsidy: This is a term that generally applies to any form of financial assistance provided by government to lower the rent. This includes rent-geared-to-income assistance in social housing, rent supplements, housing allowances, and housing benefits

Rent Supplements: A subsidy paid to a landlord to bridge the gap between a tenant's rent-geared-to-income and the market rent ceiling set by the municipality

Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI): refers to a rental structure in which the client pays a rental rate that represents 30% of their income. RGI subsidies are used to bridge the gap between the client's ability to pay and either break-even rents or market rents (*Housing Services Act, 2011*)

Service Prioritization Decision Assessment Tool (SPDAT): An assessment tool to determine client placement based on

the level of need. The SPDAT looks at the following: self care and daily living skills; meaningful daily activity; social relationships and networks; mental health and wellness; physical health and wellness; substance use; medication; personal administration and money management; personal responsibility and motivation; risk of personal harm or harm to others; interaction with emergency services; involvement with high risk and/or exploitative situations; legal; history of homelessness and housing; and managing tenancy

Sleeping rough: People who are unsheltered, lacking housing and not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation. In most cases, people sleeping rough are staying in places not designed for or fit for human habitation, including: people living in public or private spaces without consent or contract (public space such as sidewalks, squares, parks or forests; and private space and vacant buildings, including squatting), or in places not intended for permanent human habitation (including cars or other vehicles, garages, attics, closets or buildings not designed for habitation, or in makeshift shelters, shacks or tents)

Social Housing: Social housing is subsidized housing that generally was developed under federal and provincial programs during the 1950s – 1990s, where ongoing subsidies enable rents to be paid by residents on a ‘rent-geared-to-income’ (RGI) basis (i.e. 30% of gross household income). Social housing is also called subsidized, RGI, community, or public housing. Additional social housing units are generally no longer being developed due to changes in programs

Subsidized housing: A type of housing for which government provides financial support or rent assistance

Support Services: Services directed at supporting individuals and families with daily living (e.g. referrals, individual case management, personal identification, transportation, legal/financial assistance, mental health and child care)

Supportive Housing: Refers to a combination of housing assistance and other supports that help people to live as independently as possible. This includes several forms of rent subsidies (e.g. rent-geared-to-income in social housing, rent supplements, housing allowances) and housing types (e.g. dedicated buildings, individual units). Supports also take a variety of forms and vary in intensity based on people’s unique needs (e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Nursing, social work, etc.)

VI-SPDAT (Vulnerability Index - Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool): The VI-SPDAT is complementary to the SPDAT and used triage people to appropriate housing and supports

Youth: Persons aged 16-24. (20K Homes Campaign)

Youth Homelessness: Describes the situations and experience of youth people between the ages of 16 and 24 who are living independently of parents and/or caregivers, but do not have the means or ability to acquire stable, safe or permanent residence. (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness)

APPENDIX B: PLANNING AND FINANCIAL TOOLS

The following table describes some of the planning and financial tools that Windsor Essex municipalities should consider in order to expand the supply of affordable housing.

One of the tools the Province has now given municipalities the opportunity to use is inclusionary zoning. The potential for use of inclusionary zoning in Windsor Essex should be considered jointly by local municipalities.

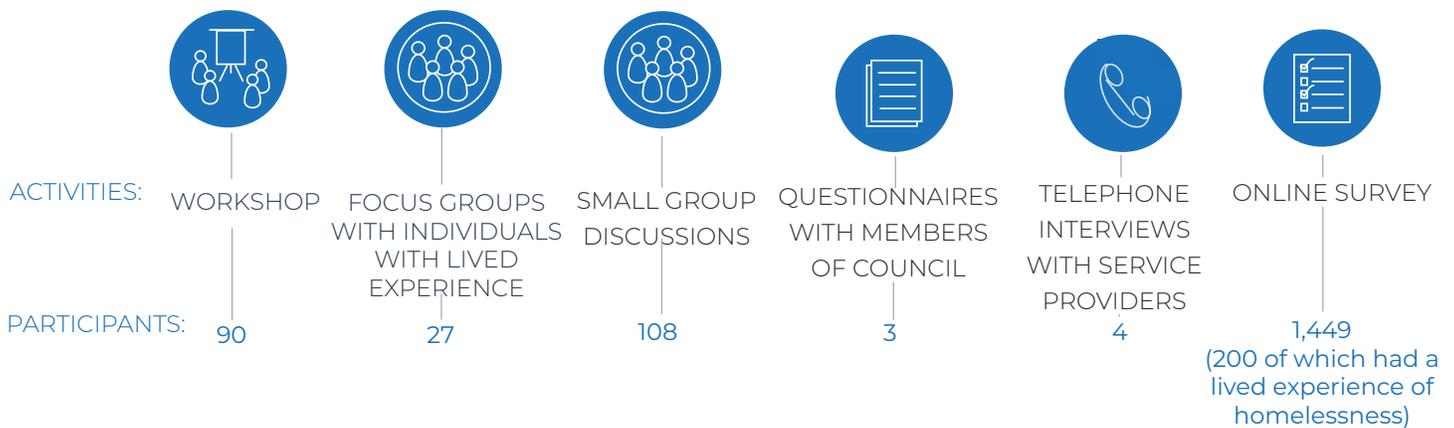
	Direct Cost	Potential Impact (Rural)	Potential Impact (Urban)	Ease of Implementation
Regulatory and Planning Policy Options				
Reduction, or exemption, in the parkland requirements	Low	Low	Low	Simple
Inclusionary zoning , which could require new residential development to include a percentage of affordable housing units as a condition of a development application	Medium	Low	Medium	Moderate
Pre-zoning (or pre-designating) lands to permit greater range of housing types, higher densities, more compact or infill development, or reduced unit sizes, etc.	Low	Low	Low	Simple
Financial Options				
Charge for social housing in Development Charges By-Law so that new development helps pay for increased capital costs for social housing because of the increased needs for social housing that arise from new development	Low	Low	Low	Simple
Off set planning application, permit fees, and development charges	Medium	Low	Medium	Moderate
Property tax rate reductions, rebates or exemptions on new affordable housing	Medium	Low	Low	Simple
Tax increment equivalent grants to property owners to offset a portion of the property tax increase resulting from a redevelopment	Medium	Low	Low	Simple
Affordable housing reserve fund to assist municipalities to accrue and access funds to make financial contributions towards affordable housing	High	High	High	Moderate
Provide grants or loans	High	High	High	Simple
Designate the whole or part of the municipality as a community improvement project area in order to purchase, hold, lease or sell land or put in place a grant or loan program for affordable housing	High	High	High	Simple
Selling or leasing surplus municipal land at reduced cost	High	Medium	Medium	Simple

» Feedback received from developers interested in building affordable housing during the consultation sessions was that municipalities should consider pre-zoning or pre-designating land to permit smaller lot sizes and encourage affordable housing development. This strategy also helps to address neighbourhood opposition to proposals for affordable housing, as developers would not be required to navigate the rezoning process that can discourage affordable housing development.

APPENDIX C: CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

A vital component in the review of Windsor Essex’s Housing and Homelessness Plan is a meaningful and comprehensive community engagement strategy. As part of this strategy, a broad range of stakeholders were invited, through various consultation formats, to share their insights, ideas and experiences on the strengths, challenges, and gaps in housing and homelessness services across Windsor Essex, and to help determine priorities for the next Plan.

Over January and February 2019, stakeholders participated in the following activities:



Key messages from these consultations, summarized below, provides valuable knowledge to inform the development of the Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan and guide housing and homelessness services for the next 5-10 years.

Together, with the analysis of existing data and findings from the best and promising practice review, the consultation findings provide a solid basis for setting the future direction and decision making for housing and homelessness services in Windsor Essex.

KEY MESSAGES AND THEMES

Key messages and themes that emerged throughout the consultations are summarized below. These were used as the building blocks to establish the renewed goals and strategies, aligned with best practices.

INCREASING AFFORDABLE HOUSING

A critical issue facing Windsor Essex, as described by stakeholders, is a significant lack of affordable rental housing. Stakeholders express a growing gap between current shelter allowance rates and average rents as well as long waiting lists for subsidized housing. People with lived experience describe barriers in accessing units such as having identification, credit checks, background checks, security and key deposits. People with lived experience also express that many ‘affordable’ units that are available are infested and/or unsafe. Youth, in particular, describe unsafe living

environments. Discrimination and misunderstanding by some landlords was also described by many stakeholders as a barrier in the community. This was emphasized for youth, LGBTQ2S people, Indigenous People, people on income assistance, and newcomers.

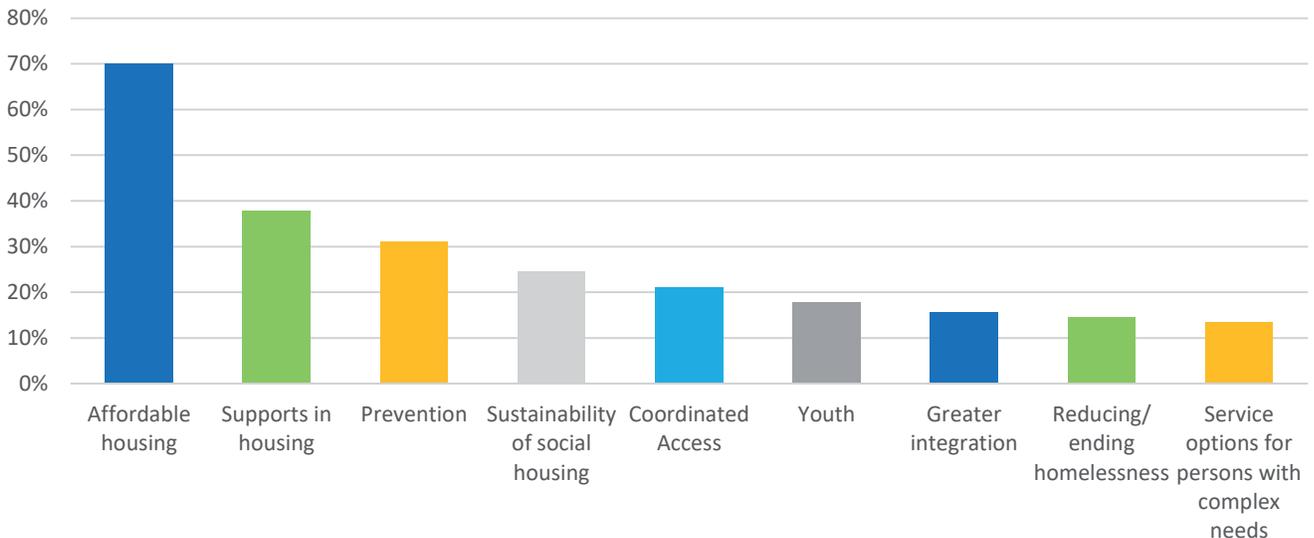
An important suggested strategy put forward by stakeholders is working with landlords to help eliminate barriers for people in need of affordable housing such as streamlining the rent subsidy processes. Other suggestions include exploring various options to encourage the development of new affordable housing such as financial incentives, policies to support new development, utilizing surplus lands, partnerships, further streamlining the permit process, and looking at options to create smaller housing forms.

Exploring ways of reducing barriers to rent supplements/subsidized housing (i.e. streamline application forms, more partnerships with landlords etc.) is another strategy to improve access to affordable housing.

Ensuring landlords are in compliance with existing by-laws was also emphasized as a key strategy to ensure safe housing for all residents.

Overall, the need for a commitment towards new/more affordable housing was stressed throughout all consultation initiatives.

TOP PRIORITIES TO BE ADDRESSED IN THE HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN, AS IDENTIFIED BY WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS



MAINTAINING SOCIAL HOUSING

Participants from the non-profit housing sector spent time discussing the need to understand the current social housing stock and what is needed (both from a capital and operating perspective) in order to sustain and strengthen the current system. Priorities to strengthen the social housing system, described by participants, include establishing a commitment to creating more affordable housing, better ‘matching’ of tenants to supports, supporting providers who want to expand their portfolios/properties, and conducting a comprehensive review of the current social housing stock to identify assets and risks.

ENSURING SUFFICIENT SUPPORTS

A key message heard from stakeholders was the overall need to ensure a full range of supports are available and accessible; meaning people are aware of them and able to access them in accordance with their needs (are affordable and no waiting lists). All stakeholder feedback highlighted the need for more mental health supports.

Ensuring wrap around supports for people with complex and/or high needs, including people who have experienced violence and trauma, was stressed for people living in all housing forms. Stakeholders expressed concern that people may be falling through the cracks as a result of strict mandates and limited resources. In particular, more resources for mental health, behavioural supports, cultural sensitivity and family mediation were highlighted. More supports for people with substance use disorder including harm reduction strategies was also noted by participants. The need for more housing with support services for persons with developmental disabilities was also emphasized. Leveraging technology to provide supports was another suggestion that has had some success already in neighbouring communities. Additional resources for more housing workers and support/social workers was expressed as a key action needed to better help people access and maintain housing.

The need to increase income support levels was also emphasized throughout the consultation activities, including by people with lived experience.

PROVIDING EFFECTIVE EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Participants in various discussion sessions highlight a need for 24/7 access to emergency/crisis services. Persons with lived experience emphasize the need for somewhere to go, keep warm and access services in the day as well as evening. Several stakeholder groups also highlight the need for low-barrier options to emergency housing services.

Having emergency housing options for Indigenous Peoples and culturally appropriate services on-site was identified as a need in Windsor Essex.

Several stakeholders pointed to the success of the Housing First program, Windsor Essex Housing Connections, yet emphasized the need for a Housing First program specifically for youth. Having more shelter beds for youth was also emphasized.

Other specific groups identified by stakeholders in need of enhanced emergency services include families and people living in the County. Removing barriers for LGBTQ2S people was also emphasized including ensuring people have the right place to go where they feel safe.

Strategies suggested to improve Windsor Essex’ emergency response to people who are homeless include having on-site support workers within shelters, having transitional or ‘step-up’ housing options, and establishing a crisis fund to help prevent and reduce homelessness. Having more supports to help with ID and other requirements for housing was also mentioned.

Creating a greater understanding of what is currently available was also a key need expressed by stakeholders. Increasing outreach, enhancing partnerships with schools, and creating a central website for all available services were also suggested as ways to improve access to, and awareness of, current emergency support programs.

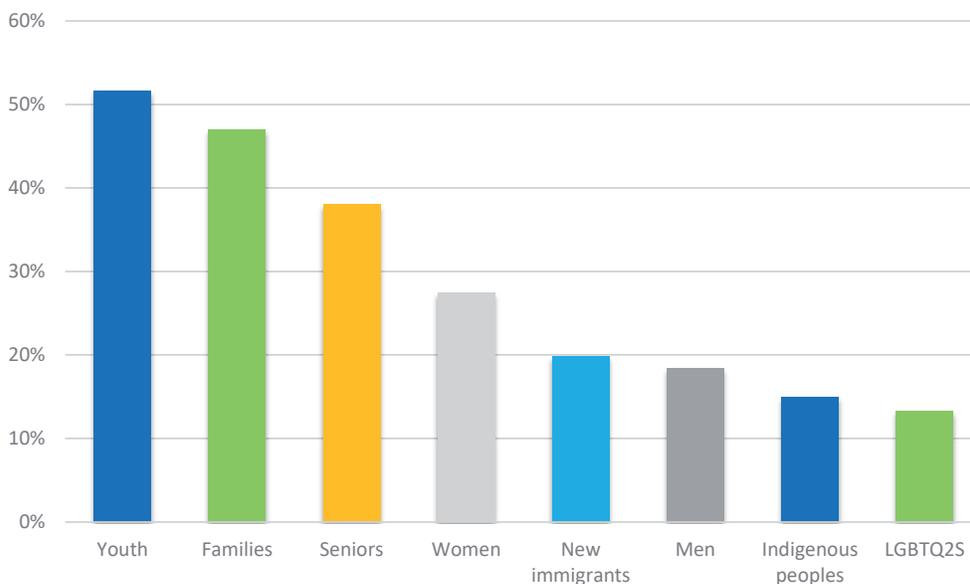
DESIGNING A COORDINATED SYSTEM

Many stakeholders noted that there have been considerable efforts, and achievements, over the past several years to collaborate more with system partners. Consultation participants highlight that these efforts should continue and expand. Suggestions include making enhancements to coordination tables, expanding the agencies in Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), and continuing to build partnerships with other sectors (i.e. CAS, schools, police, hospitals, jails, private sector) to prevent any discharges into homelessness. More engagement with people with lived experience was also emphasized.

The implementation of a diversion program, including shared screening processes and flexible funding, was also highlighted as a key component in reducing homelessness.

Many consultation participants also emphasized the need for more resources to achieve greater coordination, and ultimately to prevent and reduce homelessness. More resources to support Housing First and increase the number of housing workers and Housing Advocates, including Indigenous Advocates, were underlined.

POPULATION GROUPS SURVEY RESPONDENTS IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A PARTICULARLY DIFFICULT TIME FINDING AFFORDABLE, ADEQUATE HOUSING



ESTABLISHING SUCCESSFUL TENANCIES

Maintaining successful tenancies was a key theme to emerge from the various consultation sessions. Participants emphasized the need for ongoing outreach, education and enhanced partnerships with landlords. Having a support person/agency for landlords to connect with was emphasized as a key factor in maintaining successful tenancies and positive relationships with landlords. Landlords have an important role within the housing system and ensuring those relationships are preserved and built upon was seen as very important. Stakeholders also stress the importance of wrap-around supports for people to maintain their housing and improve their health and well-being.

Other strategies emphasized by consultation participants was the need to ensure a rapid response in a crisis situation and coordinating strategies within social housing communities to help keep people housed. Having navigators and more support workers was also highlighted as well as the need for more access to transportation.

Another important component to achieving successful tenancies identified by participants was the need to create relationships and build trust with tenants.

CREATING SYSTEM AWARENESS AND NAVIGATION

Another important theme to emerge from discussions is the need for greater awareness of existing supports and services. A lack of awareness was expressed by both service providers themselves, wanting to be more aware of other services in the system, and from people with lived experience who express not knowing where to go in a crisis and how to access services.

Youth suggested that that an app or central website with all housing/shelter and services would be very helpful.

A key message heard in several discussions was the importance of building relationships. Support service staff as well as people with lived experience express the value in building positive relationships. For people with lived experience, they express the importance of getting to know someone over time and trusting them to provide support and guidance.

Continuing to build partnerships and conducting outreach were also seen as key building blocks to addressing the housing and homelessness needs in Windsor Essex. Engaging people with lived experience was also highlighted as a strategy for improving housing and homelessness solutions.

Other common suggestions by stakeholders was to continue efforts to share data and knowledge, establish indicators and targets in evaluating housing and homelessness initiatives, and to review policies to ensure they are inclusive.

APPENDIX D: PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT FRAMEWORK

Implementation and completion of the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan will require resources, human and financial by multiple sources. Options include pursuing additional funding from all levels of governments, other community sectors, partnerships with other sector organizations and the integration and data sharing with other identified community wide housing, supports and services.

The following sections describe strategies and policy recommendations that the City and County may consider to maximize its ability to implement the plan.

Capital Planning

The City and County should consider incorporating the Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Master Plan strategies and targets into its annual Operating Budget and long term Capital Budgets to ensure that projects are considered in the City's and County's budget planning process.

Integration

The City and County should integrate the need for affordable housing as a strategic priority and incorporate them into their municipal plans, adopt policy changes and create new capital projects, where feasible.

External Funding Sources

The cost of implementing the plan can be reduced by pursuing external funding sources and partnership opportunities, where available. The City's Housing Service Department regularly pursues funding opportunities for housing and homelessness initiatives through all levels of government. Opportunities should also be explored to maximize funding opportunities through public-private partnerships, private sector, other public sectors and private sector developers.

The following table outlines the indicators and data sources required for measuring and evaluating progress under the Plan. The indicators and data sources are subject to change based on prescribed performance metrics directed by other levels of government.

GOAL 1: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND SOCIAL AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLY

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
» By 2028, the number of households assisted in RGI, affordable rental housing units and/or rent assisted units will increase by 30%	○ # of households in receipt of RGI social housing and/or rent subsidies (including Canada Housing Benefit), or affordable rental housing below Average Market Rent compared to January 2019 baseline of 8,700 households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Windsor • Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing • CMHC • Stats Can
» By 2022, conduct a review of the current social housing stock to determine the current and future state of repair	○ Completion of review of state of repair of the current social housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Windsor
» On average, 30% of existing social housing units will be repaired annually	○ % of social housing units repaired	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Windsor
» By 2022, a tracking mechanism will be established by the local building/planning departments to track private market affordable housing units	○ Establishment of a tracking mechanism for private market affordable housing units. Once established, the indicator will be: # of private new housing units intended to be rented below the average market rent for the specified unit size for Windsor Essex	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local municipal building departments • CMHC
» At least 80% of existing social housing units, approximately 168 units will be retained through rent subsidies after the expiry of operating agreements	○ # and % of social housing, units with expired operating agreements with new rent subsidy agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Windsor
» More people housed from the Central Housing Registry – Windsor Essex County waitlist	○ # of households housed from the Central Housing Registry – Windsor Essex County waitlist annually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Central Housing Registry – Windsor Essex County

GOAL 2: SUSTAIN AND EXPAND HOUSING THAT IS LINKED WITH SUPPORTS

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
<p>» By 2020, develop a way to track people linked with supports across various sectors and set a target to increase this</p>	<p>○ Establishment of a tracking mechanism for people linked with supports. Once established, the indicator will be: # of people who are linked with appropriate supports to maintain housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Health • Development Services Ontario • Assisted Living Southwestern Ontario (ALSO) • Other Community Partners providing housing linked with supports • City of Windsor
<p>» By 2024, 70 more people will be housed through Housing First programs and supported to retain their housing at six months</p>	<p>○ # of people housed through Housing First programs (also to be reported by sub-population - youth, single adults, families, Indigenous Peoples) and remain housed at 6 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-Names Prioritized List
<p>» A review and research of a continuum of housing options that will address varying levels of need for support will be conducted by 2020</p>	<p>○ Completion of review and research on housing that is linked with supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Windsor

GOAL 3: ENDING HOMELESSNESS

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
<p>» By 2028, 2,800 people experiencing homelessness will be housed through Coordinated Access (CA) systems following a Housing First philosophy</p>	<p>○ # housed off the By-Names Prioritized List (also reported by sub-population, where possible) and remain housed at 6 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-Names Prioritized List
<p>» By 2024, 50% of people experiencing chronic homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports</p>	<p>○ # of people experiencing chronic homelessness (also reported by sub-population, where possible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-Names Prioritized List • Shelter and outreach providers

GOAL 3: ENDING HOMELESSNESS (CONTINUED)

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
<p>» By 2028, 100% of people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports</p>	<p># of people experiencing chronic homelessness. Functional zero will be achieved when this number accounts for three or less people. (also reported by sub-population, where possible)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By-Names Prioritized List • Shelter and outreach providers
<p>» By 2021, people seeking emergency shelter will be assessed to determine if existing and appropriate supports and housing options are available and if so, they will be diverted from entering the homeless-serving system (ie. emergency shelter)</p>	<p>% of people seeking shelter who are connected to prevention supports (also reported by sub-population, where possible) and remain housed at 6 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIFIS or other reporting tool
<p>» By 2028, 50% of people experiencing homelessness leaving institutions will be discharged into appropriate housing</p>	<p>% of people experiencing homelessness discharged into homelessness from incarceration, hospitals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Correctional Services • Ministry of Health • Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services • HIFIS or other reporting tool
<p>» Initiate and complete the emergency shelter review, by 2020</p>	<p>Completion of the emergency shelter review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • City of Windsor
<p>» By 2022, 100% of those experiencing homelessness will be engaged with and referred to housing and supports within 21 days</p>	<p>% of people who are referred to housing and supports or exit the homeless-serving system within 21 days (including those who have refused a referral but who are regularly (at least every two weeks) engaged with to offer a referral)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIFIS or other reporting tool
<p>» By 2022, additional formalized partnerships will be established with organizations serving Windsor Essex residents at risk of homelessness to work in an integrated manner to ensure those at risk of homelessness receive appropriate supports</p>	<p># of formalized partnerships established to work an integrated manner to serve those a risk of homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIFIS or other reporting tool

GOAL 3: ENDING HOMELESSNESS (CONTINUED)

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
» By 2022, 100% of the By-Names Prioritized List agencies that support people experiencing homelessness will actively participate in coordinated access	% of By-Names Prioritized List agencies that support people experiencing homelessness that actively participate in coordinated access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By-Names Prioritized List
» By 2023, implement cross sectoral protocol to coordinate discharge planning	Completion of cross sectoral protocol to coordinate discharge planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> City of Windsor

GOAL 4: ADDRESS INDIGENOUS HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS NEEDS

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
» By 2028, 80% of Indigenous peoples experiencing homelessness will have access to housing and supports by Indigenous led organizations	# of Indigenous people housed by Indigenous Housing Advocates compared to 2018 and remain housed at 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By-Names Prioritized List
» By 2028, 100 affordable housing units will be created for Indigenous peoples	# of new affordable housing units created for Indigenous peoples	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HIFIS or other reporting tool
» By 2028, capacity will be built within mainstream organizations to respect and respond to the needs of Indigenous people by Indigenous led organizations	# of targeted services for Indigenous people within shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing operated by non-Indigenous organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shelters, transitional and supportive housing providers
» The current number of Urban Native Social Housing units, 81 units, will be sustained and maintained	# of Urban Native social housing units # of Urban Native social housing units that received funding for repair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can-Am Urban Native Homes City of Windsor

GOAL 5: REDUCE AND PREVENT YOUTH HOMELESSNESS

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
» By 2020, a governance structure related to youth homelessness will be created	Establishment of a governance structure for youth homelessness	• City of Windsor
» By 2026, a coordinated youth homelessness response system will be in place	Establishment of a Youth Homelessness Response Protocol	• City of Windsor
» By 2028, 100 additional youth experiencing homelessness will be housed with appropriate supports	# of youth housed in Housing First For Youth and other targeted housing and supports for youth and remain housed at 6 months	• By-Names Prioritized List

GOAL 6: FOSTER SUCCESSFUL TENANCIES THROUGH COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
» By 2024, 90% of tenants receiving support services will retain their tenancy for a minimum of 12 months	% of tenants receiving coordinated and integrated package of supports to maintain their housing in affordable, social and supportive housing (will be reported for families as well as singles) and retain their tenancy at 12 months	• City of Windsor
» 50 people living in affordable, social and supportive housing will receive RentSmart training each year	# of tenants who receive RentSmart certification	• RentSmart Community Partners
» 15 affordable, social and supportive housing landlords will receive RentSmart training each year	X landlords will receive RentSmart certification	• RentSmart Community Partners

GOAL 7: MONITOR, REPORT AND EVALUATE

TARGET	INDICATOR	DATA SOURCE(S)
» By 2022, Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) will be implemented in 100% of agencies participating in coordinated access	○ % of By-Names Prioritized List agencies that support people experiencing homelessness using HIFIS	• HIFIS or other reporting tool
» By 2021, establish a cross-sectoral data, collection and reporting framework	○ Cross-sectoral Data Advisory Committee established	• City of Windsor
» By 2021, develop, implement, and maintain a public awareness and education campaign on the Plan	○ Public awareness and education campaign activities conducted	• City of Windsor
» Publish annual community report card	○ Annual community report card / community progress indicators published	• City of Windsor

APPENDIX E: PROGRESS UNDER THE ORIGINAL PLAN

The following table outlines some of the activities and outcomes under the original Plan.

GOAL

Access

Activities

Outcomes (to 2017)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implemented Coordinated Access System (including common intake) ● Established and launched By-Names Prioritized List (BNPL) (centralized list to prioritize supports and services for people experiencing chronic and episodic homelessness) ● SPDAT training ● Dialogue with Erie St. Clair LHIN and health partners ● Creation and coordination of Windsor Essex Community Outreach Table (COT) ● Common referral process established for Housing Stability Fund ● Established Windsor Police Services Situation Table ● Participation in the Built for Zero Collaborative (focused on ending chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness) ● Established Portal for Housing Help website | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 8 agencies; 31 people trained in BNPL processes ● 4 agencies; 26 people trained in Vi-SPDAT (2017) ● 5+ agencies participating in COT ● 27+ agencies participate in Situation Table ● Monthly meetings with LHIN |
|--|--|

GOAL

Housing Supports

Activities

- Established Windsor Essex Housing Connections
- Trusteeship Program created (financial management assistance)
- Refinements to Housing Stability Plan
- Enhancements to Keep the Heat program
- Fidelity assessment on WEHC
- Creation of Indigenous Housing Advocate (2)

Outcomes (to 2018 unless specified)

- 194 people received Intensive Support
- 360 people received Housing Response (or equivalent)
- 2,975 people received Service Coordination
- 632 people supported through Trusteeship Program
- 435 people supported through Housing Advocate program (may include duplicates for people supported in two different years)
- 75 people housed with assistance from Housing Advocate
- 14,049 people served through Housing Stability Plan

Interim Housing

- Downtown Mission opened 103 bed shelter for men, women, youth and families (not City funded)
- Reviewed interim housing policies and standards (including length of stay)
- Homeless Individual and Family Information System (HIFIS) training
- Shelter review (to be initiated 2019)

- 6,806 households accessed CHPI (may include duplicates)
- 2,273 women received shelter (Women's Centre)
- 1,247 families received shelter (Women's Centre)
- 3,289 men received shelter (Salvation Army)

Housing Linked with Supports

- Housing with supports standards review (underway)
- Implemented Housing with Supports Team
- New health funded supports (including Nurse practitioner and physiotherapy)
- Quality of Life funding enhancements
- Annual funding per diem increases

- Enhancements to Housing with Supports include van for ACCESS, outdoor furniture, appliances, exercise equipment and Mental Health First Aid and Applied Suicide Skills Training
- Average of 350 people subsidized in Housing with Supports in City
- Average of 229 people subsidized in Housing with Supports in County

GOAL**Rental Housing****Activities**

- Continued investments in affordable rental housing
- Capital investments in social housing through Social Housing Improvement Program (SHIP)
- Established Survivors of Domestic Violence Portable Housing Benefit Pilot Program (SDV-PHB)
- Two new pilot programs (SHARP) created through Ministry of Environment and Climate Change: Climate Change Action Plan
- Review of social housing policies completed
- Windsor Essex Community Housing Corporation Regeneration Study completed
- Secondary Suite policy and by-law approved

Outcomes

- 286 new affordable and accessible rental units created
- 34 households supported through SDV-PHB
- 2 housing providers received SHARP funding towards energy efficient initiatives to 5 social housing buildings
- 29 housing providers received funding through SHIP
- 2,669 people housed through social housing waiting list (as of 2017)

Ownership Housing

- Homeownership Downpayment Program Assistance and Ontario Renovates offered annually
- Continued collaboration with Habitat for Humanity

- 91 households assisted with Home Ownership Program (including 3 Habitat for Humanity households)
- 139 households assisted with Ontario Renovates Homeowners program
- 11 households assisted with Ontario Renovates Multi-residential program

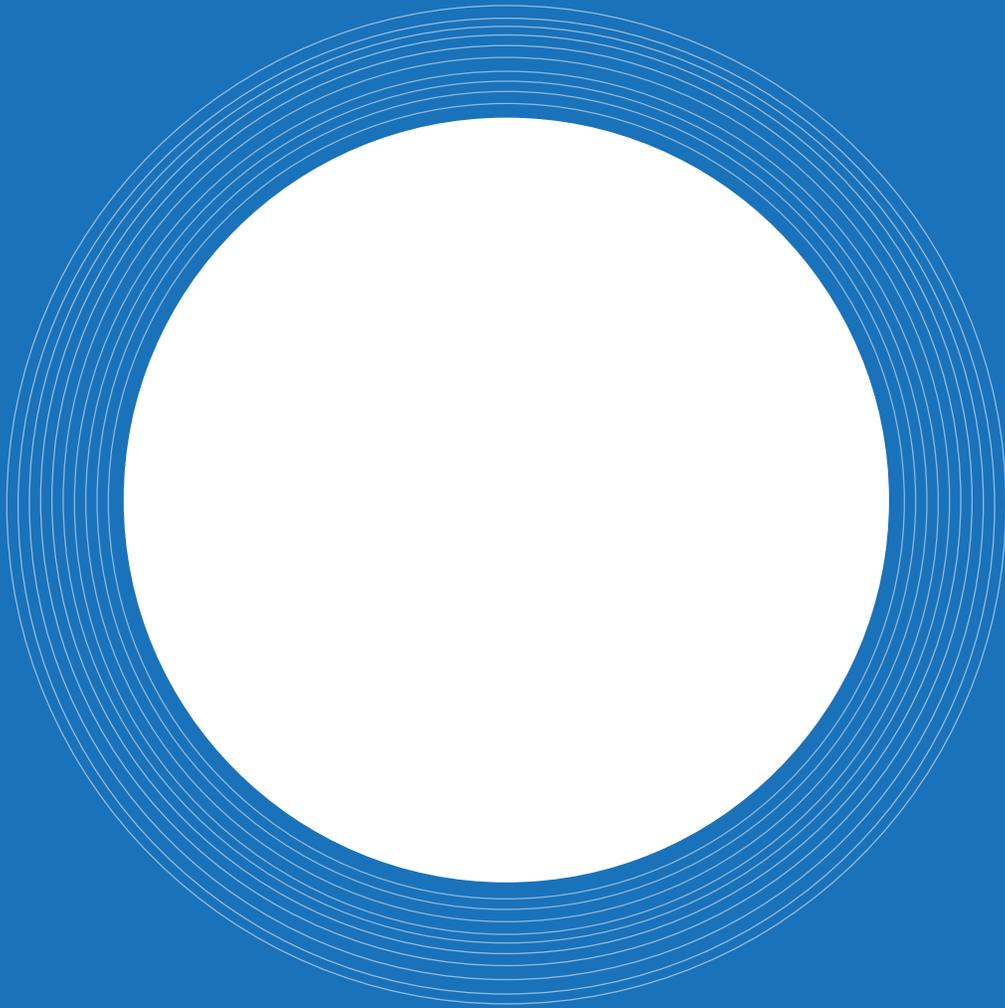
Monitoring, Reporting and Evaluation

- Established Implementation Committee for Housing and Homelessness Plan (I-CHHP)
- Conducted Housing First Training
- Conducted Point in Time (PiT) Count and 20,000 Homes Campaign Registry Week
- Prepared annual report card
- 5-Year Review underway

- Annual Report Cards
- 240 volunteers participated in PiT Count

Endnotes

- 1 Although some may be redeveloped
- 2 Source: Survey of Housing Linked with Support Service Providers
- 3 Vink Consulting calculations based on Statistics Canada Census, 2016 and Ministry of Finance Population Projections, 2018
- 4 Source: <http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca> based on Statistics Canada, Census, 2016
- 5 See Appendix A for definitions
- 6 Chronic/Episodic calculations based on BNPL Feb. 2018 – Dec. 2018, Transitional homelessness calculations based on the 2018 PIT Count and Registry Week - people homeless in the past 7 days
- 7 Source: based on rental households spending more than half of their income on rent. Data from <http://www.rentalhousingindex.ca> based on Statistics Canada, Census, 2016
- 8 Source: Based on Windsor Essex BNPL, January 2019
- 9 Based on the number of people who were added to the BNPL as of August 2019
- 10 Vink Consulting Calculations based on Statistics Canada, Census, 2016
- 11 The Canada Housing Benefit will provide affordability support directly to families and individuals in housing need, including potentially those living in social housing, those on a social housing wait-list, or those housed in the private market but struggling to make ends meet
- 12 In comparison, an absolute end to homelessness refers to a true end in which all individuals have the appropriate housing and supports to prevent any experience or immediate risk of homelessness. Functional and absolute zero are not opposing concepts; rather, as we strive towards an absolute end to homelessness, we can use the functional zero definition to describe and assess progress.
- 13 This does not necessarily represent unique individuals. Some may have had multiple stays in shelter
- 14 Source: CMHC (Census-based housing indicators and data, 2011)
- 15 Patrick, Caryl. (2014). *Aboriginal Homelessness in Canada: A Literature Review*. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.
- 16 Source: Calculations based on BNPL Feb. – Dec. 2018
- 17 Source: Statistics Canada Census, 2016
- 18 Thistle, J. (2016). "Defining Indigenous Homelessness: 'Listen and They Will Tell You'". Homeless Hub. <http://homelesshub.ca/blog/definingindigenous-homelessness-%E2%80%9Clisten-and-they-will-tell-you%E2%80%9D>
- 19 A Way Home, Youth Homelessness Community Planning Toolkit



Home, Together

Windsor Essex Housing and Homelessness Master Plan

2019