

“Strengthening the Foundation”

A review of the Peterborough Hostel System

**Social Services Division
City of Peterborough
October 2009**



**A report prepared for the Councils of the City and
County of Peterborough**



Credits

Many people contribute every day to strengthening the foundation of our homelessness system but I would like to thank those that made special contributions to this report:

D'Arcy Bowker – Intern from the University of New Brunswick
Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee
Housing Worker Network
Hostel Liaison Workers, Hostel Executive Directors, Community Agencies
Ontario Works Staff
Other municipalities who shared information and practices

...Most of all those who use the hostel system and were willing to share their experiences

Thanks to everyone for your input and contributions to this report – any errors or omissions are my own.

Nancy Fischer
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Section 1: Executive Summary

This hostel review was initiated to meet the evaluation requirements of municipal service agreements with Brock Mission and Youth Emergency Shelter. The review was confined to the hostel system and used multiple methods of data collection. The methodology included client surveys, agency submissions, community consultation, staff surveys and focus groups, financial and occupancy reviews as well as a literature survey. This client group is difficult to engage through traditional data collection methods. Every effort was made, given the time and resource constraints, to obtain the best data possible but direct client input was limited. In the future, a more qualitative review by a third party over a longer period of time may encourage more client responses. Though in some areas client response was limited, given the variety of methods of data collection and the consistency of key findings, there is sufficient evidence to support the following recommendations.

Throughout the review process, ideas for improvement were identified that fall into four main areas:

- 1) Service (including Safety and Security for clients)
- 2) Staffing
- 3) Funding
- 4) Accountability

The recommendations have been grouped following these key areas but they are not in any order of priority.

Service, Safety and Security

Recommendation #1

That the municipality provide support to the hostel operators to assist with security enhancements at the hostels by investing unspent 2009 hostel allocation up to \$10,000/ hostel for security camera systems at Brock Mission and YES.

Recommendation #2

That the Hostel Liaison Workers and hostel staff strengthen links to other homelessness and housing agencies to provide a more integrated service for clients.

Recommendation #3

That a transparent and accountable protocol be developed by the Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee related to the case management of people who are unable to reside at the hostels.

Staffing

Recommendation #4

That the Hostel Liaison Workers (HLW) role shifts to provide intensive case management support to clients before and after a hostel stay. Residential care workers employed by hostels will continue to provide primary intensive case management while a resident stays at the hostel. Ontario Works eligibility remains a key function of the HLW role even while a client is in the hostel.

Recommendation #5

That joint training be established for Social Services and hostel staff that focuses on client service and non-violent crisis intervention. Unspent 2009 municipal hostel allocations up to \$7,000 could be reinvested to provide for salary costs for hostel staff to attend training in 2009 and 2010. In future years the hostel operators will need to budget accordingly for necessary staff coverage for training.

Funding

Recommendation #6

That the municipality establishes a local funding formula for hostel transfer payments based on the provincial per diem model and stabilized with base funding to be negotiated on a biannual basis. That service contracts governing the funding formula be established retroactively to August 3, 2009 and that they be extended to 2013 with the expectation that hostel operators will continue to diversify their programs and funding to remain stable as the demand for homelessness services diminishes over time.

Recommendation #7

That the service agreements with the hostel operators be amended retroactively to August 3, 2009 to clarify the definition of a hostel stay from “bed nights” to “days of service”, providing recognition and payment for the work associated with the first day of residency and the hostel intake process.

Recommendation #8

That the municipality commit to investing surplus funding due to reduction in hostel demand into transitional housing and other longer term solutions to homelessness.

Accountability

Recommendation #9

That the Social Services staff complete regular hostel service agreement reviews, including inspections. Staff will complete financial reviews quarterly and agreement reviews on an annual basis.

Recommendation #10

That the recommendations and actions of this report be monitored by the Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee on a semi annual basis, with a one year follow up report to be provided to Joint Service Steering Committee.

Recommendation #11

That future integrated community planning be undertaken to strengthen the networks of service providers serving those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless (mental health, counselling, medical, addictions, youth supports).

This hostel review started as an operational review and consequently has generated a number of recommendations that are mostly operational in nature. Recommendations

6, 7 and 8 relate to policy and/or funding and will require additional Council consideration before implementation.

The hostel system must stand on a strong foundation. It is at the base of a larger system of different levels of government, community agencies and clients that address the issues of homelessness in our community. The clients we work with are in crisis but there is no reason for the system to remain in crisis. Through the approval and implementation of these recommendations we can help to strengthen the foundation of Peterborough's hostel system.

Section 2: Hostel Review Mandate

On August 3, 2009 the original initial three-year term of the service agreements between the City of Peterborough and the emergency hostel operators (Brock Mission and Youth Emergency Shelter) expired. The agreements did specify, however, the term would be extended one more year unless terminated. As part of the renewal process a review of the agreements was required. This review was seen as an opportunity to develop additional stability in the system and to support ongoing client service. The following purpose statement, principles and statement of scope were developed to guide the review.

2.1 Purpose

To meet the requirements for review as established in the service agreements and Council reports

To review the service agreements with hostel operators to ensure efficient, effective, accountable, high quality service delivery

To strengthen the emergency hostel system and reduce the demand for future homeless services.

2.2 Guiding Service Principles

Client centered approach

Most efficient use of existing resources

Stability for local programs

Most effective model for service delivery including safety, quality of service and housing placement for hostel residents

Reduce duplication in services and programming

Funding models to be coordinated with service expectations.

2.3 Scope

The 2009 hostel review is an operational review of the emergency hostel services covered under the contractual relationship between the City of Peterborough and Brock Mission and between the City of Peterborough and Youth Emergency Shelter. This includes all hostel services for men, women, youth and families. The women's hostel service agreement was approved in June 2009 but is included in this review to ensure consistency among all programs should the recommendations be adopted.

The Social Services Division Hostel Liaison Worker program is included in this review as the program is tightly connected to the emergency hostel services delivery system. This program was established to improve the link between Ontario Works and hostel services.

The 2009 hostel review does not include programming or service agreements related to the Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP), the Our Space drop in centre, or the Housing Resource Centre. CHPP funding was in the process of allocation

at the same time as this review was underway. The drop in centre has only been in operation since December 2008 and will be reviewed later in the year, closer to the service agreement expiry date. The only funding agreement between the Housing Resource Centre and the Social Services Division is the Emergency Energy Fund and the contract is being renewed.

Ideally, all community homelessness programs would be reviewed together but, given the reality of different sources of funding and service agreement deadlines, this is not currently possible. It is hoped that by 2011 a more comprehensive homelessness community plan will be undertaken that will build on this review and incorporate the other homelessness services that are out of scope for this review.

Section 3: Background

3.1 History of Hostel Service

The emergency hostels were originally established by not for profit agencies to provide shelter for homeless individuals.

Brock Mission was originally called Kingan House, as the first location on Brock Street was the home and hardware store of Robert Kingan. The agency began in 1986 and a year later the first men moved into the hostel. Since then, Brock Mission has grown to temporarily house 435 men with 8283 days of service in 2008. Brock Mission has also grown to include Cameron House, a hostel for women situated in an old farmhouse in the north end of the City, which opened in 1996. In February 2008, Brock Mission moved the men's hostel program to 217 Murray Street, in the old Peterborough Legion building, where it continues to deliver the men's hostel services and the Open Table, a daily evening meal for those in need. Brock Mission supports the motto "...every person is a person of worth..."

A new emergency hostel, the Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) opened in December of 2002. YES now provides an emergency hostel for up to 15 youth as well as emergency food, assistance with housing and employment search, life skills training, and the Carriage House alternative classroom for youth. YES houses youth aged 16-24 and also provides a separate area with 15 beds for families with children. YES manages some 2nd stage housing called Abbott House that helps to transition youth to more independent living.

Over the last several years other emergency hostel programs have been funded by the municipalities such as a small family hostel and Ozanam House for homeless individuals recovering from addictions. These programs are no longer in existence or receiving municipal funding.

In 2003 the system was in crisis and a report was commissioned to bring stability to the sector. In response to the 2003 review, the municipality designated additional supports through dedicated, specialized intensive case managers. These staff, called Hostel Liaison Workers (HLW), create case plans with hostel residents in an effort to address barriers that prevent them from securing and maintaining housing. They also support Ontario Works applications and the per diem payments to the hostels. The HLWs provide service on an individual basis and through a group setting referred to as the GROW (Gaining Residential Opportunities With Us) group. The system still struggled with funding issues but the HLWs were established with the expectation that intensive case management would help clients obtain and retain housing and therefore reduce the demand on the hostels. The system continued to struggle with financial stability, which worsens as the demand fluctuates.

3.2 Goals and Main Activities

The goal of emergency hostels is to provide immediate emergency shelter and to support people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to secure and maintain housing. The programs are open to anyone who needs the service but are targeted to individuals that are connected to the City and County of Peterborough and who are willing and/or able to participate.

The main activities for this program include:

- Emergency shelter and food
- Income support through Ontario Works (social assistance)
- Housing referral and search
- Housing retention
- Case management and coordination
- Weekly group work.

3.3 Current Resources and Funding

The Hostel Liaison Worker program has three full time case managers supported by a supervisor (.33 FTE). Currently there is one staff vacancy in the program. There are no volunteers involved in the program but occasionally placements students may participate with the paid staff.

The emergency hostel programs are currently funded based on per diem funding mechanisms allocated under the Ontario Works Act in conjunction with 100% municipal funding as outlined in the following table. The agreements between the City and the hostel operators are governed by individual service agreements that articulate the details required for the payment/service relationship, which extends beyond the requirements of the Ontario Works Act. Council can set the requirements of the hostel service agreements within the restrictions of the Ontario Works Act.

2009 Funding Model

	Municipal Cost	Provincial Cost	Total Payment to Agency (occupied bed/ night)
Per diem cost shared with Province	\$ 9.14	\$36.56	\$45.70
100% Municipal per diem top up	\$ 6.35		\$ 6.35
Total	\$15.49	\$36.56	\$52.05

The 2009 approved municipal budget for the hostel programs (transfer payments to the hostels and the hostel liaison workers) follows:

Description	Provincial Cost share	Municipal Cost share	Total Budget
Hostel Liaison Workers Salaries		64,229	64,229
Employee Benefits		17,342	17,342
Brock Mission Per Diem	392,010	177,938	569,948
Cameron Per Diem	39,120	63,540	102,660
Yes Per Diem	294,008	133,453	427,461
Non-OW Client Supports		5,000	5,000
	<u>\$ 725,138</u>	<u>\$ 461,502</u>	<u>\$ 1,186,640</u>

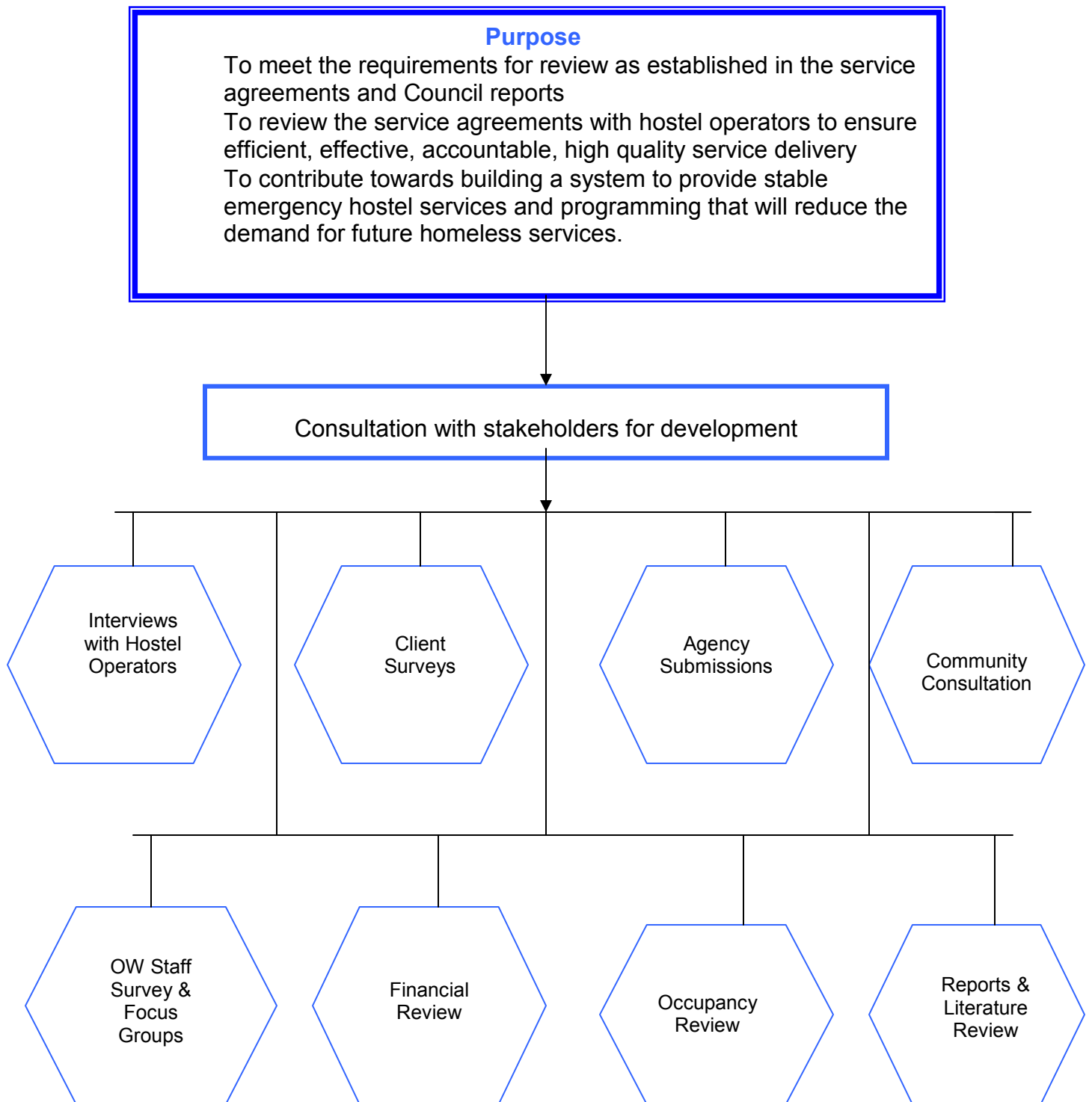
Municipal Cost Share

City	291,502
County	<u>170,000</u>
	<u><u>\$ 461,502</u></u>

Effective December 1, 2009 there will be a 2% increase to the provincial per diem rate.

Section 4: Hostel Review Process/Methodology

The hostel report framework is illustrated in the following diagram.



4.1 Consultation in Development

The hostel review framework, including the purpose, principles, scope and methodology, were developed with input from community stakeholders. The first draft of the review framework was presented and discussed with the Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee. This committee consists of senior staff of Brock Mission, Canadian Mental Health Association, City of Peterborough Housing and Social Services divisions, Community Counselling and Resource Centre, FourCAST, Peterborough and Lakefield Community Police, Peterborough Social Planning Council and Youth Emergency Shelter. Amendments to the review framework were incorporated based on the input from the committee. In addition, the revised hostel review framework was presented and discussed with front line staff at the Housing Worker Network. This group provided key insights into communication strategies, which helped to form the consultation and communication plan. The input from community stakeholders facilitated this review and added to the quality of the final product.

4.2 Reports and Literature Review

The hostel review started with an examination of the available literature on hostel programs. Reports, bylaws and sample service agreements were requested from a number of municipalities. Some of the information has been used in the compilation of this report and a significant resource list has been compiled for future community planning.

4.3 Input from Stakeholders (Clients, community, agencies, hostel operators and staff)

A number of mechanisms were developed to encourage input from stakeholders. The priority was to gather client and hostel operator input. A client survey was mailed to all Ontario Works recipients. In addition to providing the survey directly to clients via mail, the survey was also available on the City website, and through the following agencies and advocates:

- Brock Mission
- Cameron House
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Carol Winters
- FourCAST
- Havelock TEACH Centre
- Housing Resource Centre
- Native Friendship Centre
- Ontario Disability Support Plan
- Our Space Drop in Centre
- Peterborough Community Legal Centre
- Rural Outreach Centre (ROC) Buckhorn
- Youth Emergency Shelter
- YWCA

The survey focused on client needs, the quality of service and suggestions for improvement. Community agencies were also provided the opportunity to present submissions focusing on their awareness of client needs, quality of service and suggestions for improvement. Clients, agencies and the general public were invited to attend two community consultations that were held at the Peterborough Public Library to discuss the hostel system. These consultations were advertised through similar mechanisms to the client survey.

In addition to client and community participation, input was also sought from hostel operators and Social Services staff. Individual interviews were held with hostel operators, and focus groups were held with key Social Services staff. All Social Services staff were provided with the opportunity to complete an online survey similar to the survey completed by clients.

4.4 Financial and Occupancy Review

To complete the collection of information for the hostel review, financial and occupancy data was analyzed. The financial review included a review of the hostel operators financial statements and meetings with the operators to determine the cost of delivering services and to establish minimum funding levels to ensure viability of the programs. The review also included an examination of municipal and provincial funding.

The occupancy review of the hostels was designed to determine the demand for each type of hostel over the last 5 years as well as to collect some basic demographic information. The demand for hostel related service delivered by the Social Services division through the hostel liaison workers was also examined. Every attempt was made to identify the people that the system was unable to serve by assessing the volume of chronically homeless individuals and those supported through the after hours program whose needs could not be met in the traditional system. It is recognized that this review is unable to accurately capture information about the individuals that are not served by the system but who may benefit from the services.

Section 5: Findings

A variety of mechanisms were utilized to gather the findings for this report, including surveys, interviews, focus groups and written submissions. The following section outlines the key findings with some additional information attached as appendices.

5.1 Report and Literature Review

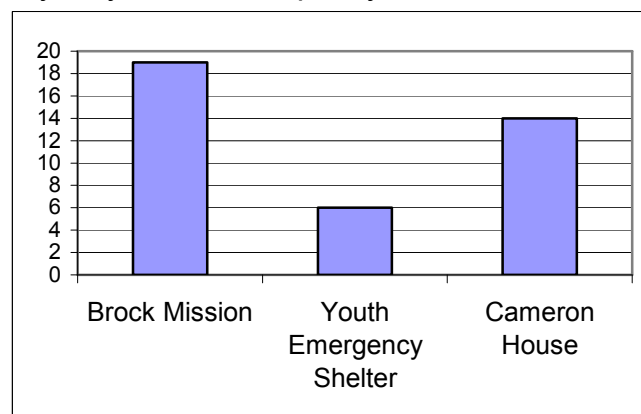
A review of current local, provincial, national and international literature was completed. Innovative practices can be found and the readings spark healthy discussion, but the solutions to the concerns regarding the hostel system in Peterborough will largely be “made in Peterborough”. The collection of service agreements and service standards supplied by other municipalities will support the required revisions to the service agreements in the implementation stages of the report recommendations. Volumes of reports, more directly related to the larger system issues regarding homelessness, are now available for future community planning.

5.2 Client Survey

This section includes the client survey results investigating residency circumstances prior to staying at a hostel, quality of service from the hostels and the Social Services Division as well as resident recommendations for improvement. The original survey is attached as Appendix A.

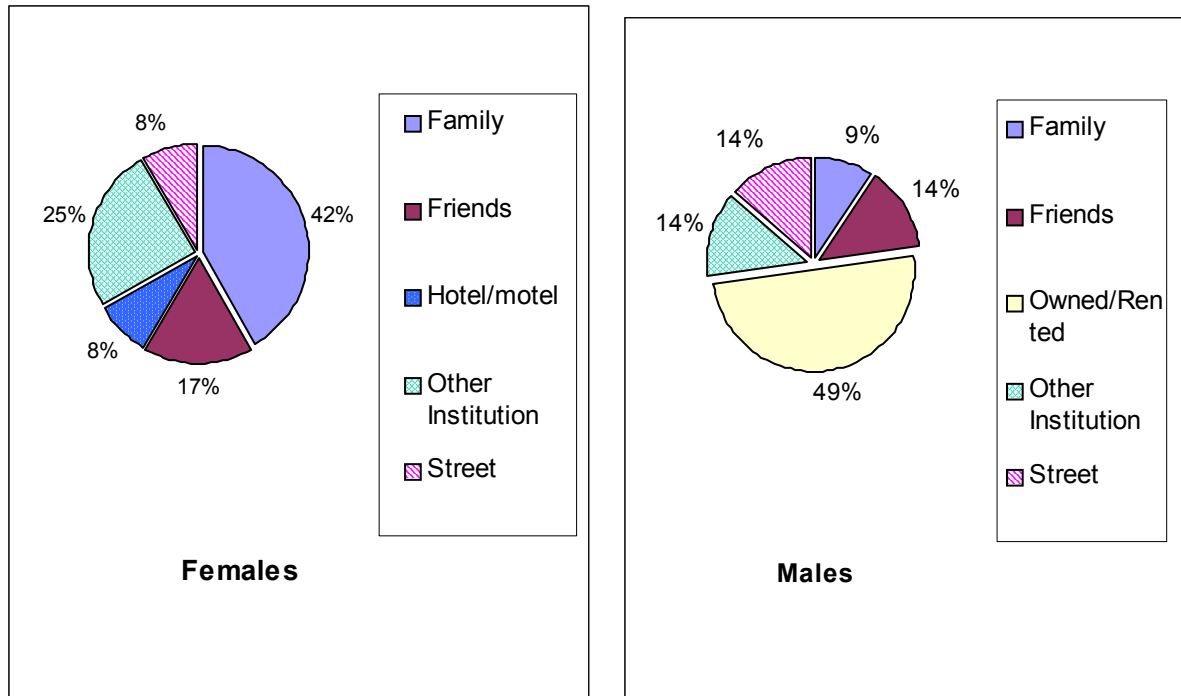
There were 3103 surveys mailed to Ontario Works clients and 309 surveys were returned though not all respondents had experience with the hostel system. Eighteen (18) of the 309 surveys returned were submitted electronically via the city’s web site. Though every effort was made to facilitate the return of surveys from hostel residents, only 39 respondents had stayed in the hostels. Due to the limited response from hostel residents the survey does not provide statistically significant information but it does provide some information about the quality of services and the individual comments, in combination with other methods of research, help to identify areas for improvement.

Of the 39 respondents that had stayed in a hostel, this table shows which emergency hostel they stayed in, in the past year:

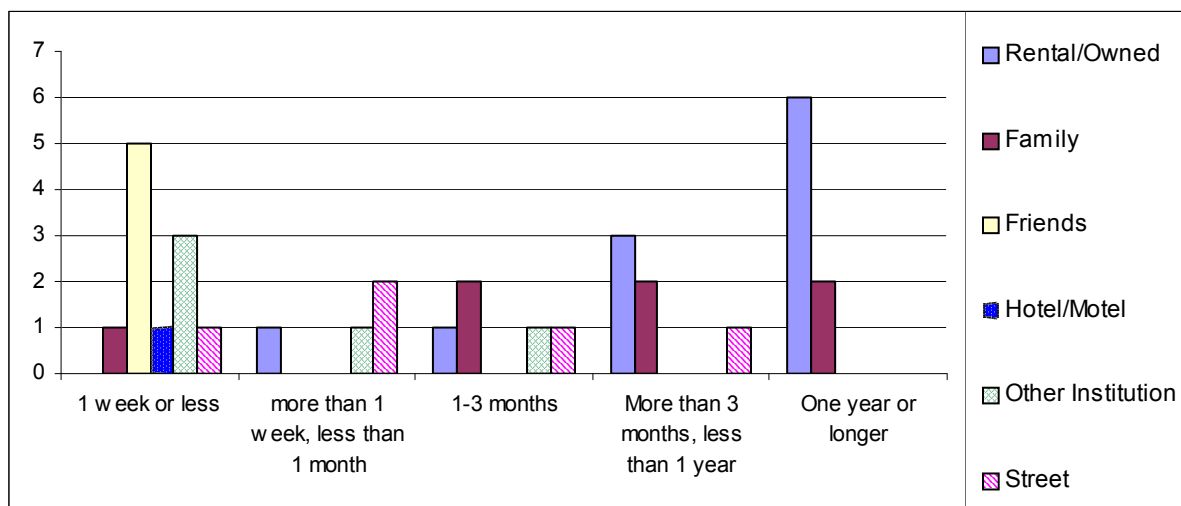


Residence History

There was a considerable difference between the accommodation patterns of males and females immediately prior to entering the hostels. Females were more likely to have been living with family and friends prior to entering a hostel whereas males were more likely to be living in rented or owned accommodations prior to entering the hostel. This difference in residency may indicate that different outreach and programming approaches are appropriate.

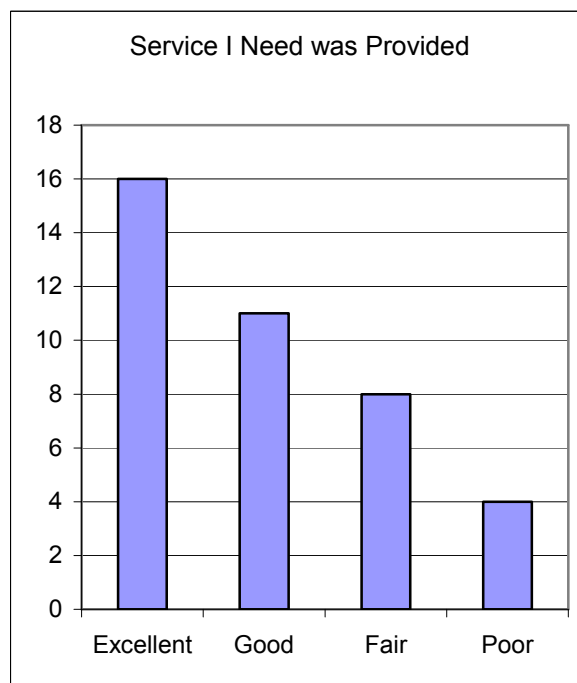
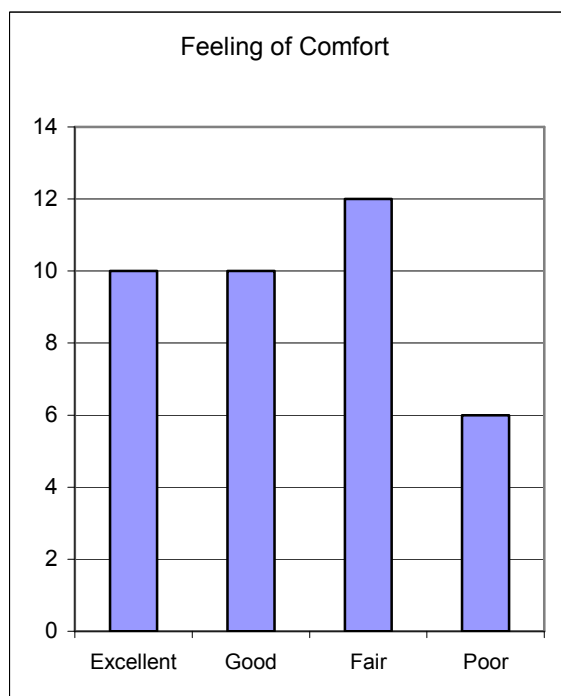
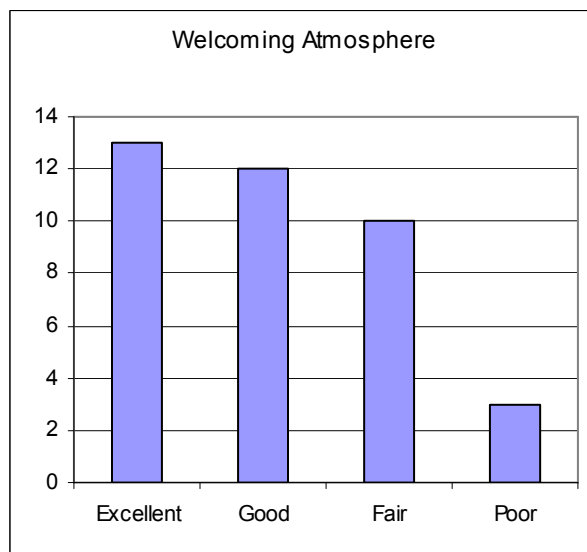


The following graph reflects the results of the question “How long did you stay there before you entered the hostel?” Motels and friends are generally short-term stays whereas staying with family or in a rental or ownership situation tends to be longer term. A small number of individuals spend considerable time on the street.



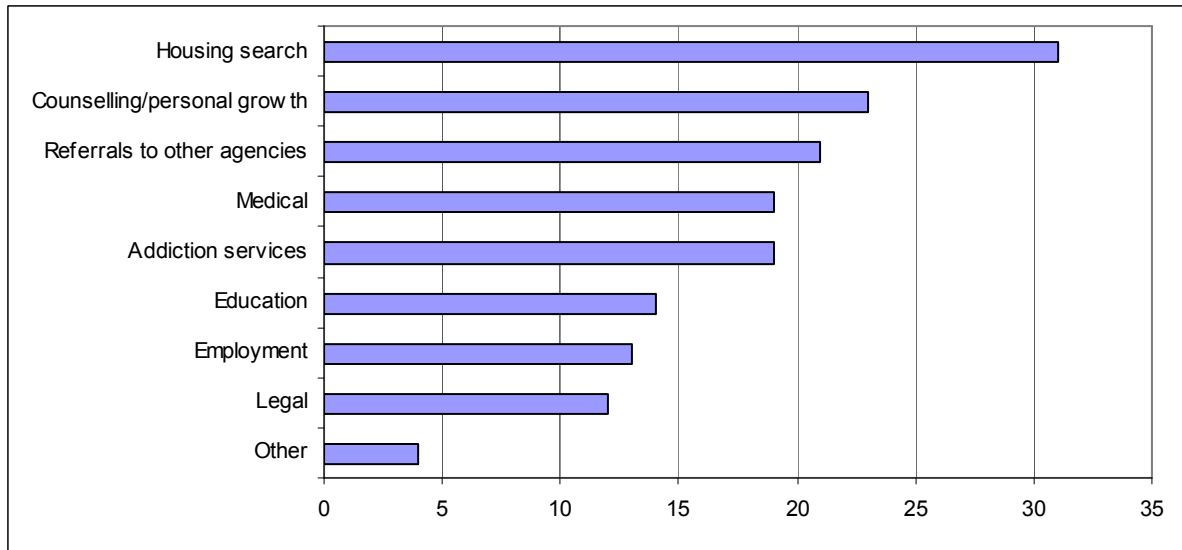
Hostel Service

Respondents were asked to rate the quality of service received while residing at the hostel.



Seventy-one percent (71%) of residents stated that the quality of service at the hostel was excellent or good, though 47% of the respondents stated that the “feeling” of comfort was fair or poor. YES and Cameron House reported a higher feeling of comfort than Brock Mission residents. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the lower feeling of comfort at Brock Mission may be related to the dorm style sleeping arrangements compared to shared bedrooms in the other hostels. The quality of service responses presented by hostel are available in Appendix B.

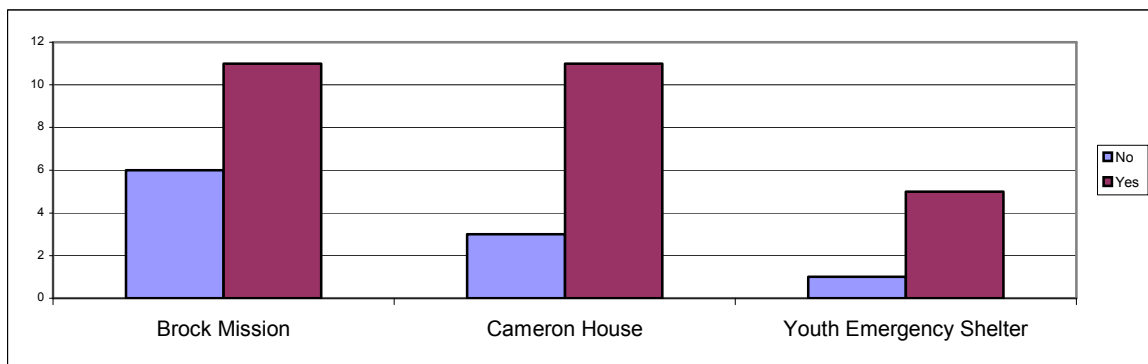
The following chart represents supports that respondents think are important to receive at a hostel:



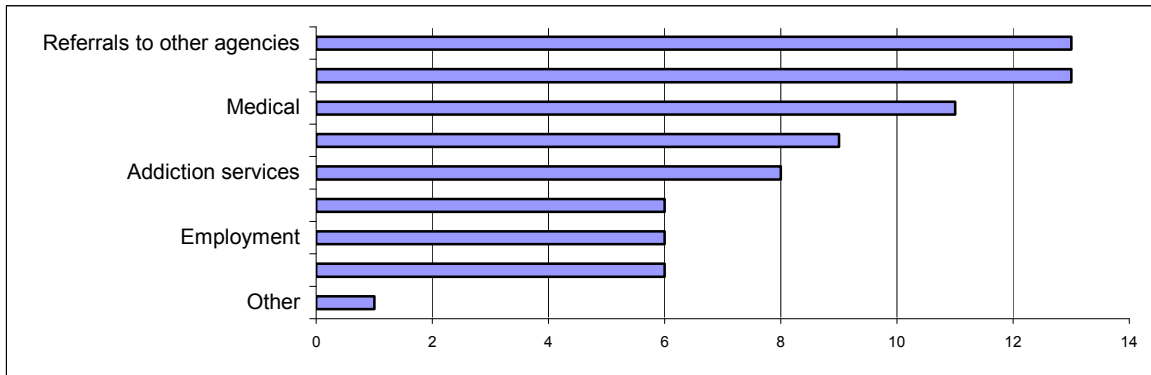
The supports that respondents think are important were also sorted by each individual hostel (Appendix C). The needs identified by clients are fairly consistent across the hostels, though education support is a higher priority at YES.

Ontario Works Service

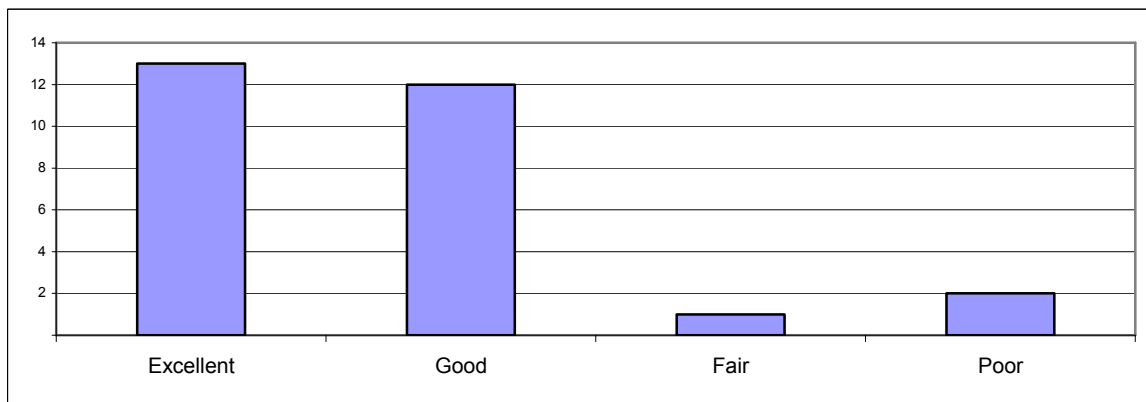
The following graph indicates the results of the question: “Did you meet with an Ontario Works caseworker at the hostel?”



When you met with an Ontario Works caseworker, what did you discuss?



Question: Please rate the quality of service you received from the Ontario Works Caseworker?



Eighty-nine percent (89%) of respondents indicated that the quality of service delivered by the Ontario Works caseworker was good or excellent. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of respondents felt that the Ontario Works caseworker helped to improve their situation.

The final question on the client survey asked, “If you could redesign the hostel system to be the way you think it should be, what changes would you make?” The following are a representative selection of the responses:

“At least 2 staff on at least from 7 am to 11 pm. More church involvement. Workshops or support groups (crafts, music, volunteer program). Community involvement.”

“More help seeking affordable housing – not just lists – actually finding somewhere to live instead of a tent.”

“No alcoholics or drugs allowed...”

“Better security/such as cameras on entrance common areas because of theft of property/people not staying at mission* coming and going as they please drugs being sold & bought on mission property. More police presence.”

“I don’t believe I would change anything. The staff was most helpful & considerate. They helped me start over in a positive direction in a time it was most needed. My respect and many thanks to everyone there.”

“Have listings and help for apartments.”

“More one on one counselling based.”

“More strict about patience, courtesy and behaviour of the ones staying there.”

“Need two people on at all times – safety concerns.”

“Safety of users of service.”

“Better security. Not like a prison but to make one feel safe.”

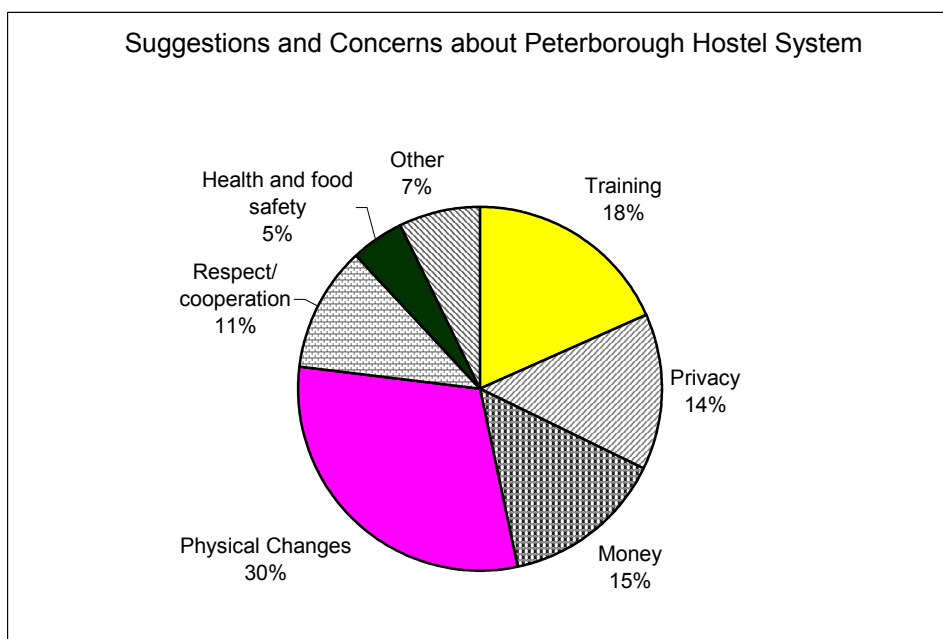
“More money for those that need the help.”

5.3 Community Consultation

The community consultation was held in mid July at the City of Peterborough Public Library. Thirty-four people attended the consultations. Three key questions were posed:

- 1) What is your positive assessment of the current hostel system?
- 2) What are your concerns, and criticisms of the present system?
- 3) What are your suggestions and plans to improve the present system?

The discussion was facilitated by City staff and all ideas were recorded. Participants were asked to rank the suggestions and plans for improvement. Appendix D provides tables with the raw data containing the responses and relative ranking. The following chart provides a summary of the suggestions grouped into 7 broad categories. Any suggestions that had less than 2 votes were grouped as “other”.



Training

Approximately 1/5 (18%) of the priority suggestions and concerns centered around the training of staff and volunteers who work within the hostel system. Recommended areas of focus for training included mental health, addictions, sensitivity, empathy, diversity, and compassion.

Privacy

Another key concern identified through the consultation process focused on a lack of privacy for residents of the hostels. Recommendations included establishing hostels that are not dorm style sleeping and providing each guest with their own sink, desk and door. Some of the suggestions for privacy are linked to the suggestions concerning physical space.

■ Money/Funding

The fourth highest priority identified at the community consultation, with 15% of the votes, was concerned with core funding for services including adequate food, mental health supports and other poverty and hostel issues. Attendees at the consultation encouraged the City to evaluate the priority of poverty related funding.

■ Respect and Cooperation

A common theme in discussion with the community was the importance of respecting others. People expressed the value of open communication, understanding and acceptance, regardless of religious attachments. The importance of an impartial resolution process that focused on listening, accountability, and safety became part of the discussion centered on respecting the individual.

■ Health & Food Safety

A smaller group of suggestions that received 5% of the priority votes concerned the importance of safe food handling guidelines, hand sanitizers and regular public health inspections

■ Other (did not include more than 2 votes)

Includes:

- Transparent complaint process involving 3rd party agencies
- Board of Directors – should include a broad spectrum of people
- Set up a process so that pets are not a barrier for people to enter the hostels
- City of Peterborough staff should do unannounced visits to programs
- Harm reduction should be part of emergency hostel services

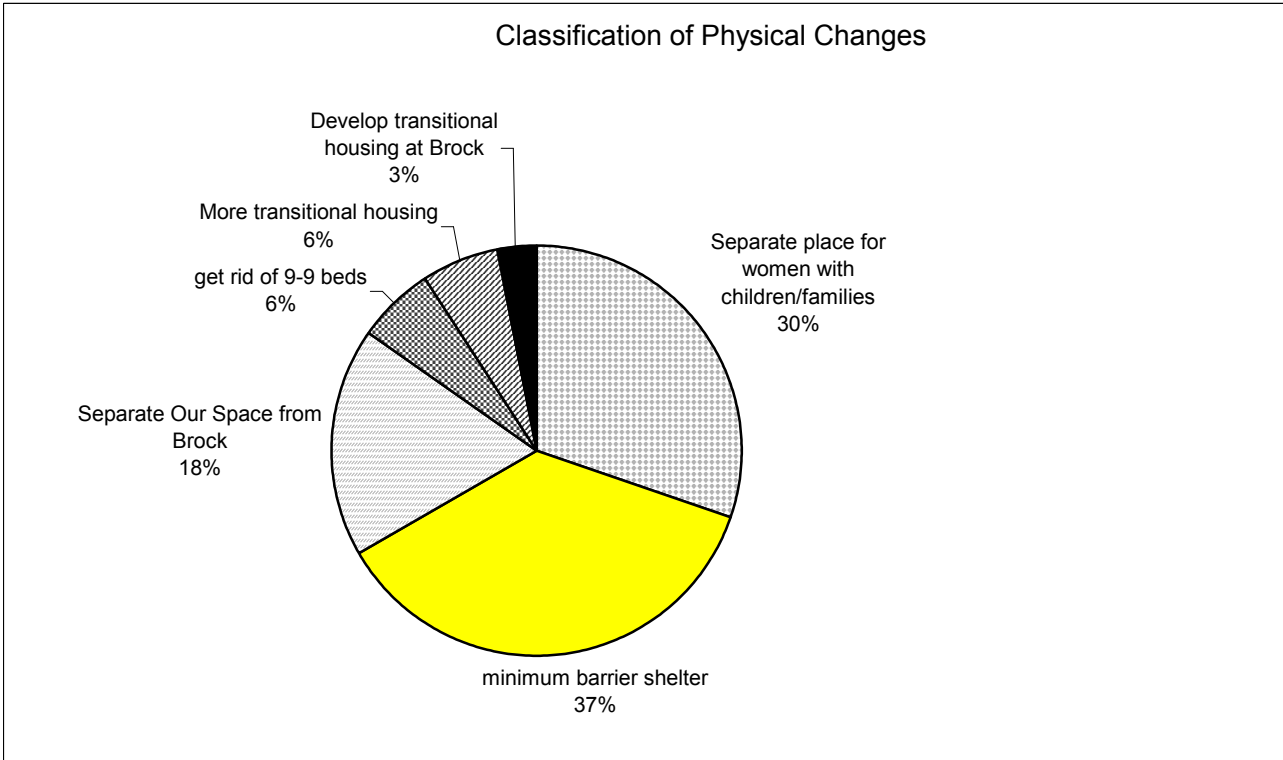
■ Physical Changes

Suggestions for physical changes in the hostels were the highest priority concern identified at the consultations.

Suggestions included:

- Separate place for women with children/families
- Minimum barrier place for people to go (wet/damp hostel)
- Separate Our Space from Brock
- Get rid of hostel beds that are available from 9 pm to 9 am only
- More transitional housing
- Develop transitional housing at Brock site (think and participate in continuum of housing)

Given the extent of the discussion and the priority identified for physical changes, this information has been further analyzed to identify which physical changes are most desired.



Almost 37% of the individuals attending the consultation ranked the minimum barrier hostel as priority within the context of physical changes, followed by a separate hostel for women with children/families. A minimum barrier shelter has few rules in order to be as inclusive as possible for residents. It includes allowing intoxicated individuals access to the shelter. Some hostels even serve alcohol within the hostel.

It was expressed by some individuals that combining youth with women and families was inappropriate. Ten respondents indicated that they would like a separate place for women with children and families.

A total of 34 people attended the consultations and this summary represents the information provided by those individual that were engaged in the process but may not be representative of the overall community.

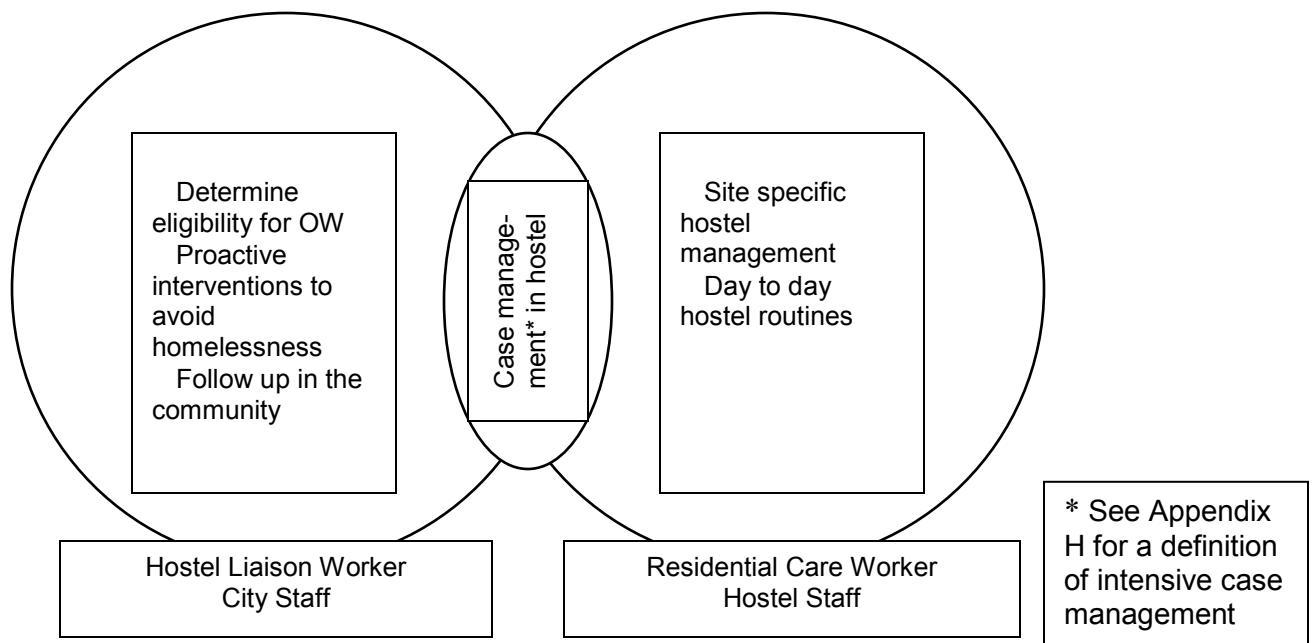
5.4 Community Agencies and Hostel Operator Feedback

Several agencies and the hostel operators provided comments for the hostel review. Concerns expressed by agencies, including the hostel operators, often echoed the feedback and concerns expressed in the client survey findings and from community consultations. A few of the comments and concerns submitted by agencies moved beyond the scope of this review. Any comments beyond the scope of the review have been forwarded to the appropriate city staff for consideration outside of the review process. Some concerns articulated within the agency submissions were based on misinformation or miscommunication and in addition, remarks included requests for better communication between agencies. Continued efforts should be undertaken to enhance the communication between agencies, the Social Services Division, the residents and the public.

Feedback from agencies and hostel operators covered a wide range of topics including the role of staff and intensive case management, system barriers, service standards, funding concerns, and alternative hostel models. Not all agencies provided comments in all areas and not all agencies held the same views but the following serves as a summary of the key discussions.

Roles of Staff and Intensive Case Management

The role of Hostel Liaison Workers (front line City staff working with the homeless and hostel population) and the role of residential care workers (front line staff employed by the hostels) was a source of some confusion and there was some duplication of services. The residential care workers had the closest proximity to the hostel residents and therefore had the easiest approach to deliver service to residents. The residential care workers were unable to follow up with hostel residents after they were established in the community or to provide proactive interventions to avoid homelessness due to the site-specific nature of their jobs. Hostel liaison workers were the only staff able to determine OW eligibility. The following figure represents the overlap identified between the front line roles.



There were many positive comments about the effectiveness of intensive case management practices when engaged with residents struggling with housing issues. There were concerns about the faith-based nature of some case management practices, but these concerns could not be substantiated when discussed with hostel operators. Anecdotally, the level of intensity of case management matched with the level of need and was seen as a key indicator for a successful outcome.

System Barriers

A number of bureaucratic rules were seen as barriers to the delivery of service. Some of the rules are needed but others could and should be reviewed. For example, hostels are required to provide the Social Services Division with fire inspection reports and now, as a result of this report, the inspection reports can be provided directly to the Social Services Division from the Fire Department, removing an unnecessary step. Hostel operators also questioned the need for audited financial statements instead of the less expensive review engagement. In keeping with other municipal grant programs and given the level of funding and the recommended base funding formula, the existing service agreement requirement for annual audited statements remains unchanged.

Concerns were also expressed regarding the resources required to complete an intake assessment and the lack of funding on the day of intake. Other areas of concern included requiring homeless youth under 18 to attend school as a condition of eligibility and retaining a bed for individuals who are attempting a phased in reconciliation with family. It was recognized that the hostel program within the Ontario Works Act has significant room for discretion and that the full available discretionary decision making was not always applied on a case by case basis.

Service Standards

There was consistent support for the existing City Service Standards for the operation of the hostels but concern was expressed about the level of funding required to achieve the standards. City staff are accountable to monitor the standards, but some concerns were expressed by outside agencies, as City staff have not effectively communicated the standards and monitoring process to outside stakeholders. This appears to be largely a communication shortfall rather than a process shortfall.

Funding Concerns

Community agencies expressed the need for stable core funding for hostel operations but hostel operators provided additional details regarding specific funding issues. Hostel operators expressed concerns about the fluctuation of cash flow depending on occupancy. The hostels are required to always be ready to receive residents and so the costs are fixed, but the hostel operators are only paid when a resident spends the night. The peaks and valleys of revenue, combined with steady expenses on a tight budget is problematic for hostel operators. Hostels manage within the constraints of their revenue and operators expressed concern regarding the lack of ability to deal with maintenance. More details regarding the hostels' financial situation are identified in the financial findings section.

Alternative Hostel Models

Community agencies identified a number of alternatives or additional emergency hostel models/types they would like to see developed in Peterborough. Requests included more hostels that can serve individuals with mobility impairments, separate specialized hostels for youth and families, a minimum barrier hostel and more hostels that provide a continuum of housing. The continuum approach has been demonstrated at YES, as it provides emergency shelter on Brock Street and then second and third stage housing with progressively less supports at other locations. The approach of providing a diminishing level of support through different housing alternatives is also being implemented at Cameron House.

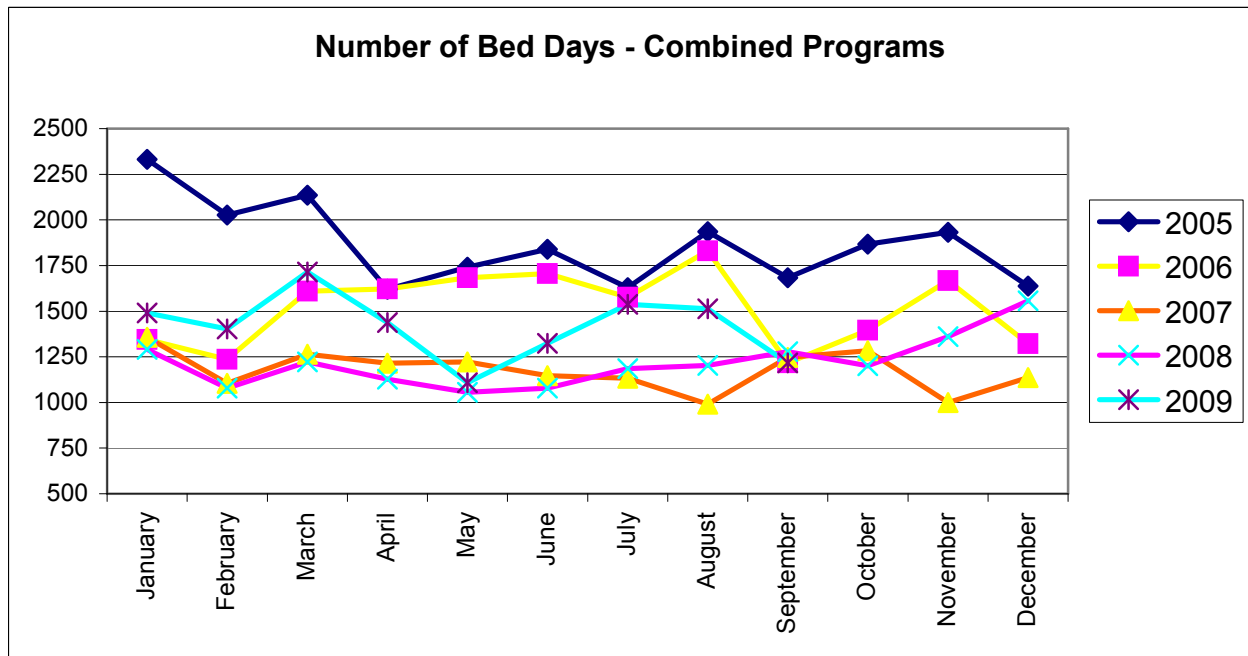
5.5 Social Services Staff

To gather information from Social Services staff a focus group was held with staff working in the hostel program and a questionnaire was circulated for all staff to provide input. The hostel staff spent considerable time discussing the hostel liaison worker and other related roles as well as the value of intensive case management. Intensive case management was clearly identified as an important component of the hostel program by both the hostel staff and other Ontario Works staff. The hostel liaison workers identified some changes that they would like within the program. Desired changes include more interaction with other housing and homelessness related agencies and more individual case planning with more client supports. Staff also identified the need for more transitional and residential style housing, particularly for single men. In general, Social Services staff felt that intensive case management was an important component for a successful program and that hostel clients needed a safe, clean place to live while receiving additional supports to secure and maintain housing.

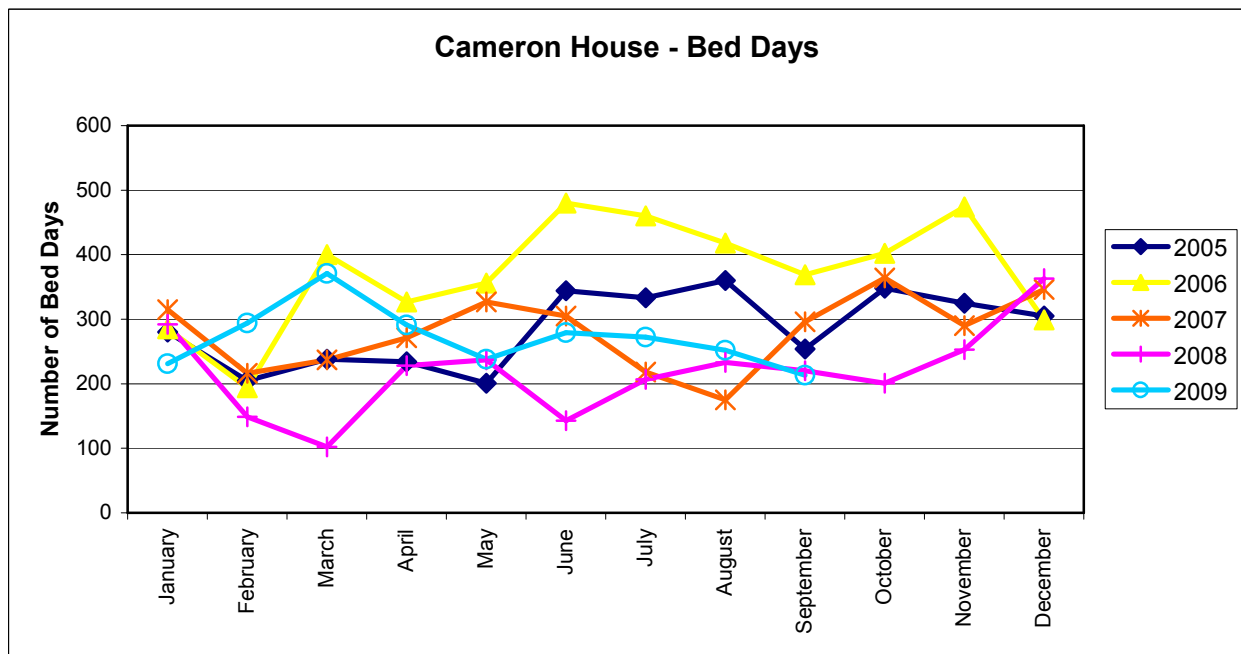
5.6 Occupancy Review

The occupancy review was designed to determine the demand for each type of hostel.

The occupancy of the hostels can be measured by how many days a bed was occupied. The first chart represents the occupancy of all hostels combined over the last five years. There is ongoing variability in hostel occupancy that does not follow seasonal trends. Generally, overall usage declined between 2005 and 2008 but increased in 2009.

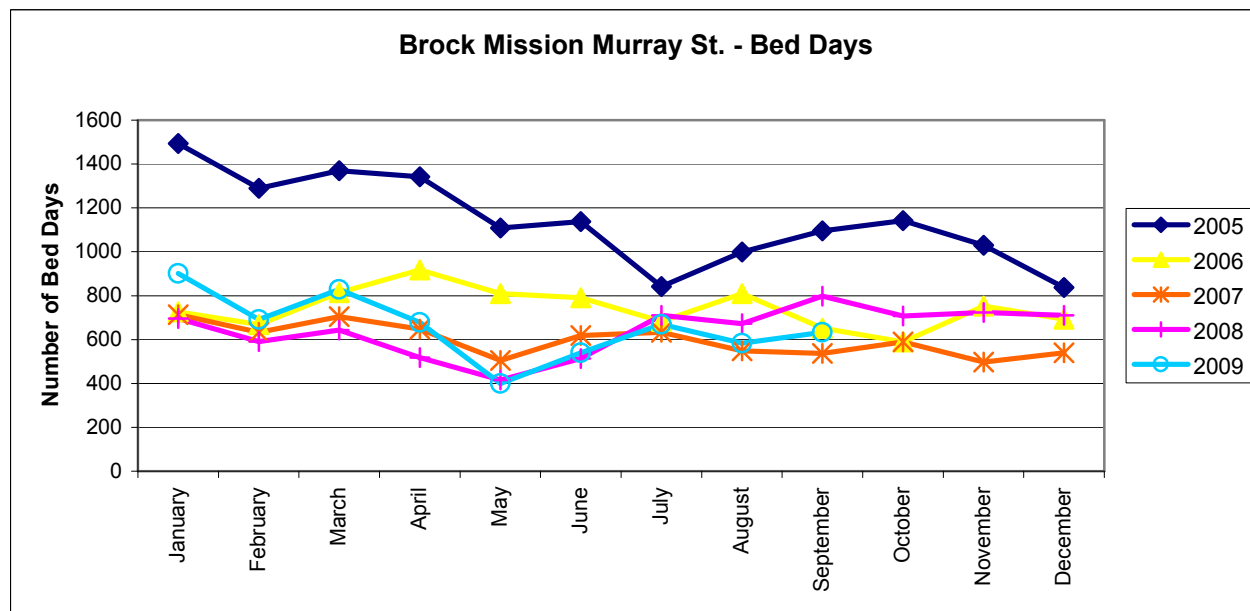


The following charts represent the occupancy of each of the hostels over the last 5 years. Types of services offered at specific hostels have varied over the last 5 years. Children stayed at Cameron House until February 2008 but now the hostel is exclusive to single females. Prior to February 2008 Cameron House's maximum capacity was 20 beds/night (approx 600 beds/month) but the current contract allows for a capacity of 10 beds/night or approximately 300 bed nights per month. Cameron House has been running close to or above capacity recently but a new homelessness program that will provide a semi-independent living program and additional housing units at Cameron House should alleviate the capacity concerns.

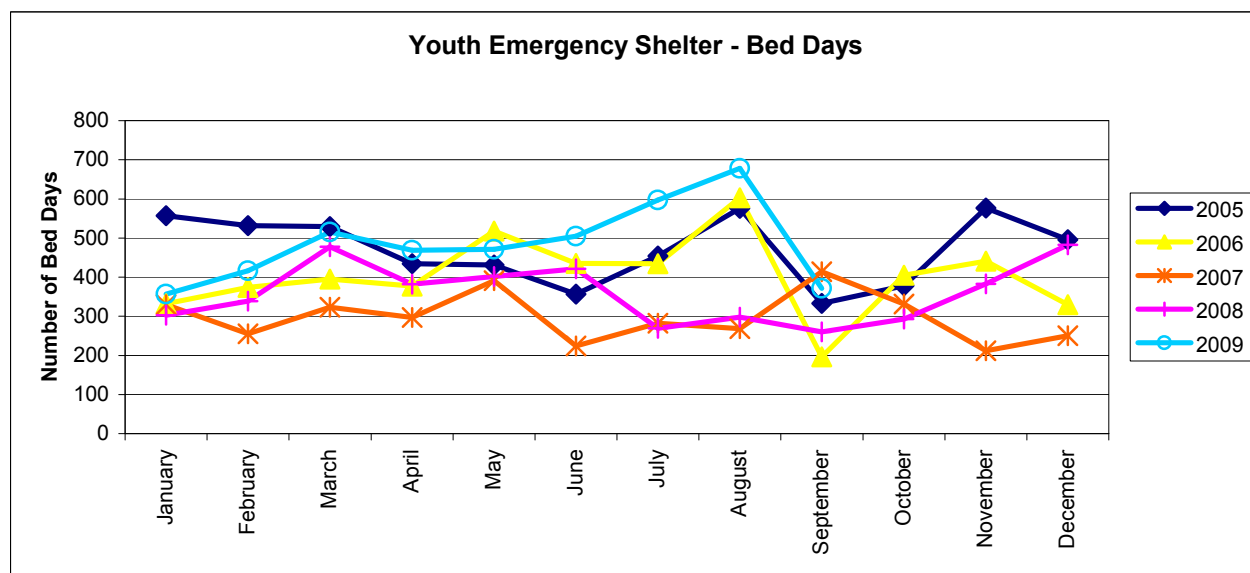


Kingan House, which relocated to Murray Street in 2008, provides emergency hostel services for single adult men. In 2005, Kingan House occupancy statistics also included the warming room program, which has inflated the numbers for that year.

The men’s hostel has had a capacity that varies over time from a high of 40 beds per night (approx 1200 beds per month) to a low of 30 beds per night (900 beds/month). As indicated in the following chart, the men’s hostel has excess capacity.



Finally, YES has the capacity for 15 beds per night for youth and 15 beds per night for families for a total of 30 beds per night or approximately 900 bed nights per month. YES is also running below capacity although on occasion an individual may need to be referred to an alternate provider because the specific type of bed (female youth, male youth or family) may be over prescribed.



Overall, the beds available within the hostel system exceed the demand. Though there appears to be sufficient capacity within the system, not all individuals could be sheltered within the hostel system. In 2008, 5 individuals were unable to be housed in the hostels and in the first half of 2009 there were 13 individuals not housed in the hostels due to capacity issues. Behaviour issues prevent a larger number of individuals from accessing the hostel system. In 2008 there were 88 incidents when an individual could not be sheltered at the hostels due to behaviour issues and in the first half of 2009 there were 61 incidents. Intensive case management often provides for a suitable case plan even for those individuals who are very difficult to shelter but there are rare occasions where a client's behaviour can be a barrier to accessing most local services.

Another measure of the volume of cases that may benefit from hostel services, but who are not residing in a hostel, is a count of the social assistance cases that are currently residing at no fixed address. In July 2009, there were 32 social assistance cases that were associated with no fixed address. Thirteen of the 32 cases were actively engaged with a hostel liaison worker even though they were not residing at a hostel. No suitable measure or proxy measure was found to estimate the number of non-social assistance clients who needed homelessness supports but were not engaged with the homelessness system.

5.7 Financial Review

The financial review included multiple meetings with each hostel operator, a review of 2007/8 and 2008/9 audited financial statements and an analysis of the 2009/10 budgets for each hostel. City staff with both financial and program expertise completed the review.

The financial review supports the hostel operators concerns that the emergency hostels do not have sufficient funding to support existing programs. The hostels are not operating at maximum capacity and this contributes to the revenue shortfall. Some months, occupancy was higher than others, creating peaks and valleys for the operators' revenue but the costs to meet the service contract requirements remain fixed. The hostel operators' budgets were very lean, particularly in the areas of staff training and building maintenance and repairs. Hostel operators were working within the existing service agreement constraints and spending was reflective of the limited funding.

YES has demonstrated a diversification of programs and funding streams. YES operates a variety of programs with a variety of funding sources and therefore only 25% of YES funding comes from the emergency hostel program. In comparison, Brock Mission's programs have been more centered around the provision of emergency shelter and therefore 65% of their funding comes from the emergency hostel program. The high dependency on one source of funding creates a risk for Brock Mission if hostel bed demand is reduced. The new service agreements should promote a diversification of programming and funding to increase the system stability by setting clear expectations within the terms of the agreements.

The current funding formula, based on per diems, financially rewards operators for increasing the volume of business. However, it also encourages hostel operators to

continue to deliver service to more challenging residents. It is important that there is some financial incentive based on per diems to continue to promote policies that are as inclusive of all potential residents. The new funding formula should also financially reward the reduction of hostel demand, as this is the program vision. Base funding provides an enhanced stability and a sharing of financial risk for the hostel operators. Longer-term agreements provide additional stability to the hostel system and its residents. A mix of base funding and per diem payments promotes the inclusion of as many residents as feasible.

Section 6: Recommendations

The recommendations flowing from the findings are in four key areas: Service (including Safety and Security), Staffing, Funding and Accountability.

Service (including Safety & Security)

Security and Conflict

Residents, hostel operators and community stakeholders have expressed concerns about safety and the “feeling of comfort” at the hostels, particularly at YES and Brock Mission. Balancing a policy that allows as many individuals as possible access to the hostel while at the same time ensuring security for all can be problematic. A security camera system in common areas will be an effective method of enhancing security and also the feeling of comfort at the hostels for the residents, staff and operators with a relatively minimal one time investment. Cameron House is undergoing extensive renovations and is therefore not included in this recommendation

Recommendation #1

That the municipality provide support to the hostel operators to assist with security enhancements at the hostels by investing unspent 2009 hostel allocation up to \$10,000/ hostel for security camera systems at Brock Mission and YES.

Action:

Hostel operators to procure appropriate security camera systems for Brock and YES before December 31, 2009

Service Integration

Though this review focused on the hostel system, it became clear during the consultation that the integration of the hostel and City Social Services programs within the larger homelessness system is critically important to the client service experience. It is important for quality service that the hostels and social services staff utilize all the resources that are available in the community to support this vulnerable population. There are some existing practices, such as the Housing Worker Network, that support integrated service delivery. Additional processes and relationships can be established to enhance inter agency service delivery.

Recommendation #2

That the Hostel Liaison Workers and hostel staff strengthen links to other homelessness and housing agencies to provide a more integrated service for clients.

Actions:

Social Services staff will develop multi agency consent forms to streamline the communication process with multiple agencies while maintaining the confidentiality for the client and ensuring that the client is at the centre of case planning.

By December 31, 2009, Social Services staff will meet with the Housing Resource Centre staff to enhance the integration of service delivery and to develop a protocol for sharing information and coordinating case planning.

Over the next 12 months, Hostel Liaison workers are to complete a site visit and meet with agency staff to discuss integrated service delivery with 12 related homelessness and housing agencies.

In the next 4 months, Social Services staff will coordinate 4 community case conferences for appropriate hard to service cases.

Crisis Response Protocol

Developing appropriate service delivery plans is important while residents are in the hostel but service delivery to clients who cannot reside in the hostel is equally important. The occupancy review has revealed a small but persistent group of individuals whose needs cannot be met within the existing hostels. The care of those people who are unable to reside in the hostels was an area of concern for the hostel operators, City staff and the community as a whole. There was some confusion and misinformation about current processes but there may also be some variation in the application of current procedures.

Recommendation #3

That a transparent and accountable protocol be developed by the Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee, related to the case management of people who are unable to reside at the hostels.

Actions:

The Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee to draft a protocol by November 2009

Involved agencies to endorse the joint protocol by December 1, 2009

Committee members to implement protocol within their respective agencies by December 31, 2009

Social Services Staff to post protocol on the "Hostels and Homelessness" page of City web site by January 1, 2010

Staffing

HLW Intensive Case Management

A key component to the delivery of any service is the staff. The hostel system has many passionate, dedicated staff at both the community agencies and at the City. Client comments such as “they (the staff) do a great job and truly care about everyone no matter what the circumstances” illustrate their dedication.

The client survey has indicated that not all residents had the opportunity to meet with a caseworker and the community consultation highlighted areas of focus for staff training. There were some areas of duplication between residential care workers (employed by the hostels) and Hostel Liaison Workers (employed by the City) particularly in the hostel setting.

In addition to the finding of the hostel review, due to rising demand for caseworker resources for ongoing caseloads, the hostel liaison worker complement will be reduced from three to two. The staff position will be reallocated to a different caseworker role. Due to the reduction in staffing within the hostel unit, it becomes more important to focus on intensive case management resources in the areas that cannot be served by others, such as the residential care workers.

Recommendation #4

That the Hostel Liaison Workers (HLW) role shifts to provide intensive case management support to clients before and after a hostel stay. Residential care workers employed by hostels will continue to provide primary intensive case management while a resident resides at the hostel. Ontario Works eligibility remains a key function of the HLW role even while the client is in the hostel.

Actions:

Role clarification will continue to be refined to ensure integrated services between residential care workers at the hostels and hostel liaison workers at Social Services do not result in gaps or overlaps in service for residents.

Technology barriers will need to be resolved so that access to limited aspects of the Ontario Works database will be available to workers allowing them to complete financial case management activities away from the office. Technology solutions to be in place by March 31, 2010 and staff to be appropriately trained.

Hostel Liaison Workers to visit the hostels 5 days/week to complete Ontario Works applications and follow up including housing plans and employment.

An enhanced template and expectations for individual service plans to be created by December 1, 2009.

Service plans to be completed for all HLW clients by January 31, 2010. HLW caseloads should not exceed 50 clients at any given time but discharge planning from the program should begin as soon as housing is established. Discharge process may take several months.

All clients should be seen minimally every two weeks by HLWs and the service plan to be updated.

Individual plans to be established as part of intensive case management that include addressing concerns regarding pets, mobility and accessibility challenges.

Training

Training is critical to maintain and enhance service delivery. The cost of training has been identified as a concern for hostel operators, but all involved in this consultation have agreed on the importance of ongoing training for staff and volunteers.

Recommendation #5

That joint training be established for Social Services and hostel staff that focuses on client service and non-violent crisis intervention. Unspent 2009 municipal hostel allocations up to \$7000 to be reinvested to provide for salary costs for hostel staff to attend training in 2009 and 2010. In future years the hostel operators will need to budget accordingly for necessary staff coverage for training.

Actions:

The Social Services 2010 training plan will be shared with hostel operators by December 31, 2009 with quarterly updates as needed. Additional available seats will be offered to hostel operators for their front line staff.

All City hostel staff to attend coaching and problem solving training by March 31, 2010. Additional available seats will be offered to hostel operators for their front line staff.

City Hostel staff to undertake a refresher/ update of motivational interview training to reinforce practices learned in 2008. Training to be completed by October 2010.

Funding

Funding Formula

The existing funding formula was based on the per diem model designed by the province. This model has proven problematic for small operators due to the fluctuation in revenue and the inability to meet the expenses without supplementary funding. This has resulted in an unstable hostel system as operators struggle with financial viability. Existing service contracts expired on August 3, 2009 but were renewed for a one-year term pending the results of this report.

The proposed funding model has been developed in consultation with the hostel operators and would provide additional stability for the hostel system as well as sharing the risk between the hostel operators and the municipality, although without additional overall cost to the municipalities.

A summary of the recommended funding model for the next two years is outlined in the following table. This table represents the cost comparison associated with changing the funding formula from per diem only to a combination of per diem and base funding. The comparison assumes a consistent number of bed nights between 2009 and 2010 so that the cost of this recommendation can be isolated. It is anticipated that the bed nights will change between 2009 and 2010 and those costs are addressed in the section concerning recommendation #7.

Gross Current and Proposed Annual Hostel Funding Models			
	2009 Current	2010 Proposed	
	Per diem only	Per diem	Base funding.
Cost Shared Per Diem	45.70	46.70	-
100% Municipal Top-Up Per Diem	6.35	-	-
100% Municipal Base	-	-	175,500
Sub total	52.05	46.70	175,500
Bed Nights	21,135	21,135	-
		987,005	175,500
Total Payment	\$ 1,100,077	\$	1,162,505

Using the 2009 estimated volume of service (21,135 nights of service) this model will be slightly more expensive than the existing agreements by \$62,428 however these costs are offset by a reduction in hostel liaison workers as outlined in recommendation #4. The proposed municipal costs for the recommended changes remain less than the 2009 hostel budget.

2010 Municipal Hostel Costs Compared to 2009 Budget

	2009 Budget	2010 Projected	Variance
80.6/19.4 Cost Share	181,284	172,855	8,429
100% Municipal per diem	193,646	175,500	18,146
Other 100% Municipal	86,571	23,034	63,537
	\$ 461,501	\$ 371,389	\$ 90,112
City (47.3%)	291,501	201,389	90,112
County (52.7% up to \$170,000)	170,000	170,000	-
	\$ 461,501	\$ 371,389	\$ 90,112

Recommendation #6

That the municipality establishes a local funding formula for hostel transfer payments based on the provincial per diem model and stabilized with base funding to be negotiated on a biannual basis. That service contracts governing the funding formula be established retroactively to August 3, 2009 and that they be extended to 2013 with the expectation that hostel operators will continue to diversify their programs and funding to remain stable as the demand for homelessness services diminishes over time.

Actions:

The service agreements with the hostel operators will need to be revised to reflect the new funding formula for a term of 4 years, with the base funding to be renegotiated bi annually. Revisions to be executed within 3 months of council approval of the funding formula.

Business and budget processes must be established to review the hostel base funding for adjustment in conjunction with the City budget process. Process to be established by March 31, 2010 for the 2011 budget process.

Planning for renewal of the existing service contracts in 2013 to be incorporated into the larger community homelessness planning process anticipated in 2010/11.

Days of Service

In addition to changes in the funding formula, hostel operators expressed concerns regarding the days covered by the per diem payments. Per diem payments are currently issued for beds in use at 2 am. Given the existing service agreement language, the residents' first days at the hostel were not covered. In consultation with provincial staff, it was determined that the municipality had the latitude to define a hostel stay to include the first day of residency.

Based on 2008 data, this change in definition regarding the hostel stay will result in additional payable days of service for each of the hostels as follows:

Brock	1380 days / year
Cameron	384 days/ year
YES	<u>300 days/ year</u>
Total	2064 days/year

Assuming the new funding formula is in place this represents a cost of \$96,389 (2064 days X \$46.70) of which \$77,689 will be funded by the province and \$18,700 will be funded by the municipalities. As indicated in recommendation #6, the proposed costs for the recommended changes remain less than the 2009 hostel budget.

Recommendation #7

That the service agreements with the hostel operators be amended retroactive to August 3, 2009 to clarify the definition of a hostel stay from "bed nights" to "days of service", providing recognition and payment for the work associated with the first day of residency and the hostel intake process.

Action:

The service agreements and associated business and payment processes to be revised to clarify the definition of a hostel stay within three months of council approval.

Reinvestment

The last recommendation concerning funding relates to the surplus funding in homelessness services that may be realized due to effective programming.

Homelessness prevention requires a continuum of service and the emergency hostel programs are only a small part in a larger system. Longer-term solutions, such as transitional housing are better for the resident and the community. A pilot project is underway at Cameron House to explore the impacts of semi-independent living units, associated with an emergency hostel facility.

Securing funding for the longer-term projects is often challenging, but an ongoing municipal commitment to the importance of lasting solutions would help to build a better future for Peterborough's vulnerable populations. Ideally, the investment in longer-term solutions would be calculated as a percentage of the budget committed to emergency hostels. It would be difficult to implement that recommendation during these times of fiscal constraint, as it would require additional municipal funding. An alternative recommendation that moves towards the same solutions at a slower pace, but within the existing municipal costs, follows:

Recommendation #8

That the municipality commit to investing surplus funding due to reduction in hostel demand into transitional housing and other longer term solutions to homelessness.

Action:

A budget process to be developed by March 31, 2010 to identify savings, utilizing the 2009 hostel budget as a base, and to determine the appropriate mechanisms for allocating the funding in keeping with City policy.

Accountability

Monitoring

At the community consultation concerns were raised regarding the City's role in monitoring the hostel system and the taxpayers investment. Recommendations #9 and #10 are included to ensure that City staff not only continue their role of monitoring the financial investment of the taxpayers of Peterborough in the hostel system but also ensure that the results are publicly reported.

Recommendation #9

That the Social Services staff complete regular hostel service agreement reviews, including inspections. Staff will complete financial reviews quarterly and agreement reviews on an annual basis.

Actions:

Social Service staff will review hostel billing on a monthly basis by the 20th of the following month.

Social Services staff will review service targets, occupancy and financial information on a quarterly basis within 6 weeks of the end of the quarter.

Social Services staff will review compliance with service agreement standards on an annual basis to include fire and health inspections by September 30th every year.

Social Services staff will complete unannounced inspections of the sites every year.

Reporting

Recommendation #10

That the recommendations and actions of this report be monitored by the Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee on a semi annual basis with a one year follow up report to be provided by staff to the Joint Services Steering Committee.

Actions:

That the Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee review the implementation of this report's recommendations and actions in May and November 2010

That a staff report be brought forward to the Joint Services Steering Committee in late 2010 or early 2011 to provide an update regarding the status of the recommendations and actions of this report.

Future Community Planning

Finally, as mentioned in a number of the findings and throughout this report, the hostel system is only one component of a larger homelessness system that involves all three levels of government, numerous community agencies and the people we serve. The City can play a key role as the service system manager for homelessness services, but it will take all members of the community working together to change the future for the most vulnerable members of our community.

There are a number of homelessness programs that will require review and planning over the next few year: Homelessness Partnership Strategy (expires March 31, 2011), Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Fund (expires December 31, 2011) and the hostel agreements if approved as requested, will be need to be reviewed in 2012.

Recommendation #11

That future integrated community planning be undertaken to strengthen the networks of service providers serving those who are homeless or at risk of being homeless (mental health, counselling, medical, addictions, youth supports).

Actions:

Peterborough Homelessness Support Services Coordinating Committee is undertaking a process to determine the combined capacity of the community agencies to provide case management services to homeless individuals. Case management will be used as the guiding language and will include any or all of the following service functions being performed for the above-noted population: intake, screening and assessment, crisis intervention, counselling, and outreach. Report anticipated by March 31, 2010.

City staff to facilitate a community planning process, engaging other levels of government, community agencies and other stakeholders. A proposed structure for the planning process to be prepared by City staff by October 2010, if resources are available.

The following chart summarizes the recommendations and the source of the findings that support the recommendations.

<u>Recommendations</u>	Client survey	Community Consultation	Agency & Operator Feedback	Staff Survey	Occupancy Review	Financial Review
Service, Safety & Security						
1. Security and conflict	X	X	X	X		
2. Service Integration		X	X	X		
3. Crisis Response Protocol		X	X	X	X	
Staffing						
4. HLW intensive case management	X	X	X	X	X	
5. Training		X	X			
Funding						
6. Funding formula	X	X	X	X	X	X
7. Days of service		X	X			X
8. Reinvestment			X			
Accountability						
9. Monitoring		X	X			X
10. Reporting		X				X
11. Future community planning		X	X			

It is as important to explain why certain items are not included in recommendations as it is to explain the reasons for the recommendations themselves. Concerns related to the variety of hostel types, such as requests for separate youth and family hostels, a minimum barrier hostel, bedrooms instead of dorm style accommodations or for more supportive housing options have not been included directly in this report. These

