

Housing is Fundamental

City & County of Peterborough | A report to the community from the Affordable Housing Action Committee



'Survival of the fittest' never so much in vogue

Vacancy Rate Rises to 4.8%. Why?

- Lower demand for private apartments
- Higher supply of rental units
- Decade low employment
- Competition of alternative housing forms including student residences at Trent University.

Source: Rental Market Report, Peterborough CMA, Fall 2013, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation

Rental Market Changes (2013)

- vacancy rate 4.8% - up from 2.7% (2012)
- average 2-bdrm. rent up by 2.6%

Source: Rental Market Report, Peterborough CMA, Fall 2013, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation

Note: Increased vacancy rates should restrain rent increases.

Peterborough Rents Up, Earnings Stagnant

The average rent for two bedroom apartments increased by 2.6% while average weekly earnings remained unchanged from last year.

Source: Rental Market Report, Peterborough CMA, Fall 2013, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation

Rental Market Supply Increases Slightly

Completion of 12 rental apartment units and the first phase conversion of the former St. Joseph's Hospital contributed to this outcome.

Source: Rental Market Report, Peterborough CMA, Fall 2013, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation

Be fit or you're no longer in the game. On the sidelines you can enjoy minimum-wage jobs, housing and food insecurity, compromised health and limited opportunity for social engagement. Your children may encounter developmental and educational barriers which, in turn, will help them find their place on the sidelines.

Now, allow for this correction. You can be strong, competitive and capable and still be on the sidelines. Outsourcing, loss of job security, benefits and pensions, and government funding cuts can disable anyone.

Canada **IS** a wealthy nation!! But millions of households are housing insecure and at least 200,000 people are visibly homeless. These numbers will rise as federal funding for almost 600,000 subsidized households is set to decrease and ultimately expire. Waitlists for affordable housing continue to grow with Ontario's record currently at over 156,000 households.

Mayors of this country's largest cities have called 'housing' a crisis. Why? The vulnerable (those affected by unaffordable and inadequate housing or homelessness) are growing in number. Mayors are also well aware that housing is a key social determinant of health. They know it is more cost-effective to house people than let emergency services and social programs pick up the slack.

The numbers of precarious and vulnerable people are not declining in Peterborough. Our provincial government pushed those numbers higher this year (2013) with cuts to social service benefits. Housing saw no new funding injections from senior levels of government and no reason to be hopeful. Furthermore, most federal housing agreements will expire within the next five to eight years. Proudly we can say our municipal government has improved the housing environment, but without federal and provincial funding, it faces severe limitations.

Paul Armstrong, AHAC

Please refer to:

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/megan-yarema/ontario-premier-housing_b_3636560.html Net Migration

Net Migration Positive, But at Historic Lows

With deaths exceeding births, the natural population change in Peterborough is negative and migration has been slower in recent years. With unemployment rates higher than the Ontario average, fewer people are moving to the area (CMA). Some are leaving the area for better employment. Slower net migration has placed upward pressure on the vacancy rate.

Source: Rental Market Report, Peterborough CMA, Fall 2013, Canada Housing and Mortgage Corporation

The Peterborough Picture

Peterborough Emergency Shelter Costs

2013	Brock Mission	Cameron House	Youth & Family Emergency Shelter	TOTALS	Difference from 2012
Number of Bed Days	11,903 <i>11,060 (2012)</i>	2,770 <i>3,264 (2012)</i>	6,117 <i>6,492 (2012)</i>	20,790 <i>20,816 (2012)</i>	0.12% decrease
Total (per diem) Cost	\$523,732	\$121,880	\$269,148	\$914,760	
Municipal Base Funding	\$125,322		\$65,140	\$190,462	
Shelter Service Enhancement Funding	\$49,800			\$49,800	
Total Cost: Per Diem, Base Funding, Enhancement Funding	\$1,155,022 <i>\$1,234,059.20 (2012)</i>				6.4% decrease

Notes: The Brock Mission and Cameron House are operated by one entity or service provider.
Source: Social Services Department, City of Peterborough, February 2014

Average # individuals sheltered per night	
2011	47
2012	57
2013	57

Source: Custom Calculations: A.H.A.C.



Additional homeless persons are living outside of the shelters.

Source: AHAC



Cuts Hurt Our Most Vulnerable

The province also has a role in our city's housing crisis. In 2013, the Ontario government eliminated the Community Start-Up and Maintenance Benefit (CSUMB). This benefit helped people receiving social assistance to pay for large or unexpected housing-related costs, supporting them to become and remain housed. Queen's Park passed responsibility for homelessness prevention programs to municipalities, but passed along only half of the money that had been spent on CSUMB.

Source: AHAC

1,474 on Social Housing Wait List, Greater Peterborough Area (2013)

Source: Housing Access Peterborough

Renter Household Income – Peterborough (City)

More than 50% of renter households cannot afford the median renter shelter cost (\$850 monthly). Approximately 60% cannot afford an average market 2-bdrm. rent (\$915.).

Income	Number of Households	% of Income required for a average 2bdrm. (\$915/month)
Under \$10,000	890	110% or more
\$10,000 to \$19,999	2,030	110% to 55%
\$20,000 to \$29,999	2,540	55% to 36.6%
\$30,000 to \$39,999	1,865	36.6% to 27.4%
\$40,000 to \$59,999	2,530	27.4% to 18.3%
\$60,000 to \$79,999	900	18.3% to 13.7%
\$80,000 to \$99,999	535	13.7% to 11%
\$100,000 and over	420	11% and less
Total Households	11,710	

Note: Median Renter Household Income is \$32,046.

Source: National Household Survey, 2011, Income and Housing, Topic-Based data from Statistics Canada; Acquired by Community Data Program, Peterborough Social Planning Council (local lead); Custom calculations AHAC

From the renter household income distribution above, we know that many households are paying well in excess of 50% of their total household income ('**severe core housing need**'). 'Housing-induced poverty' is an impediment to health precluding good nutrition, proper clothing or medical requirements. This is common when income levels are low or unsustainable.

Source: AHAC

47,240 individuals have annual incomes below the median before-tax income of \$29,294. More than 29,000 people have annual incomes below \$15,000.

Source: National Household Survey, Peterborough CMA, 2011 (2010 incomes - individuals 15 years and older)

'Core Housing Need' (30% Or Greater Shelter-To-Income Ratio)

	Renter Households	Owner Households	Totals
All Households	12,735	34,880	47,615
Spending in excess of 30%	6,126 (48.1%)	6,209 (17.8%)	12,335 (25.9%)

Source: National Household Survey Data, StatsCan, 2011 Census, Peterborough CMA, Ontario

Change from 2006 Census

The above 2011 data almost duplicates the 2006 Census data. At that time 50.4% of renter households were in 'core housing need' while half of those were in 'severe core housing need'.

Peterborough CMA - Fall 2013

Average Private Market Rents & Required Minimum Income

	Rent	Hourly Wage	Annual Wage
Bachelor	\$622	\$12.76	\$24,880
1 Bdrm.	\$778	\$15.96	\$31,120
2 Bdrm.	\$915	\$18.77	\$36,600
3 Bdrm.	\$1,085	\$22.26	\$43,400

Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Rental Market Report, Fall 2013 (Peterborough CMA) and Custom Calculations (AHAC)

Note:

1. Market rents may or may not include heat and hydro.
2. Rents are 'affordable' (CMHC definition) when wages are at or above the numbers in the chart.
3. Rents are deemed affordable when they represent no more than 30% of the gross, combined household income. (CMHC)
4. Hourly wage based on an individual working 37.5 hours weekly for a full year (1,950 hrs.)

Source: A.H.A.C.

O.W. and O.D.S.P. Caseload - City and County of Peterborough

	Ontario Works (O.W.)	Ontario Disability Support Program (O.D.S.P.)
2010 (Dec.)	3,680*	3,921
2011 (Dec.)	3,816*	4,154
2012 (Dec.)	3,948*	4,243*
2013 (Dec.)	3,802*	4,452*

Source: Social Services Division, City of Peterborough; Ontario Disability Support Program, Peterborough Office.

*reflect annual year-to-date averages at year's end

O.W. caseloads have **decreased** by 3.7% (2012-2013)

O.D.S.P. caseloads have **increased** by 4.9% (2012-2013)

Ontario Social Assistance as % of Minimum Wage Rates

When social assistance rates are expressed as a percent of minimum wage rates, Ontario Works recipients are currently receiving about the same amount as they would have received in Ontario during the Great Depression.

1937	1990-91	2011	2014
36%	70%	36%	35%*

Monthly Minimum Wages - \$54.17 (1937) ; \$1,787.50 (2014)

Monthly Social Assistance Rates - \$19 (1937) ; \$626 (2014)

Source: The Social Assistance Review: The Broad Context, John Stapleton, September 12, 2011

*custom calculation by AHAC (O.W. Single rate - \$626; Minimum wage - \$11.00/hr.)

Thirty Years Following 1984...The Single O.W. Rate Should Be...\$719.59...Not \$626

Ontario's single O.W. rate has not kept pace with inflation over the past thirty years.

Monthly Social Assistance Rates - \$346 (1984) ; \$626 (2014)

Source: John Stapleton, Open Policy Ontario. <http://openpolicyontario.com/> ; Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator

An Alternative for Some Homeless Persons

Some homeless persons find it very difficult to use our shelter system and abide by shelter rules. Not wishing to engage with the formal system of services means these people find themselves sleeping outside in all kinds of weather. Concern in this community has relentlessly agitated for an alternative for these individuals.

Beginning November 23, 2013, the Social Services Division, St. John's Anglican Church, All Saints Anglican Church, the Canadian Mental Health Association (C.M.H.A.), Murray Street Baptist Church and George Street United Church began a 'warming room'. The program runs seven nights a week during the winter and is coordinated by St. John's Anglican Church with the help of a City-paid volunteer coordinator. There are over 150 volunteers involved. On average, fifteen individuals use the program every night

Through their effective outreach work, staff from Social Services, C.M.H.A., and key program volunteers have done even more. Some of the program users now have housing.

This is a community success story involving the City of Peterborough (Social Services), volunteers, church organizations and many who donate to the program. Their persistence and dedication have brought a measure of comfort and safety to some of our homeless. This is an outstanding example of 'social inclusiveness'.

Source: AHAC

Sources of Income – Peterborough CMA 2010

Employment..... 67.0%

Government Transfers... 16.2%

Pensions/Annuities 11.3%

Investment 3.6%

Other Money..... 1.8%

Source: NHS Profile, Peterborough, CMA, Ontario, 2011

Notes: 25% of Peterborough CMA's labour force works part-time. Income from government transfers is almost equivalent to the combined income from investment, pensions/annuities, and other money.

Putting Peterborough in Perspective

Percent of Population in Lower Half of National Income Distribution

	Percent
Barrie	46.3
Guelph	41.3
Hamilton	44.1
Kingston	45.6
London	50.3
Oshawa	39.8
Peterborough	49.9

Note: The lower the percentage, the more prosperous is the community.

Source: National Household Survey Profile, CMA, Ontario, 2011, Statistics Canada;
Based on population 15 years and older; Custom Calculations AHAC

Part-time Work

	Labour Force Working Part-time in 2010
Barrie	20.9%
Guelph	20.7%
Hamilton	21.9%
Kingston	22.1%
London	23.0%
Oshawa	19.5%
Peterborough	25.0%

Note: 42,725 worked full-time; 14,210 worked part-time; 3,365 did not work

Source: NHS Profile, Ontario, 2011; Custom Calculations, AHAC

Note: Peterborough has a substantial percentage of part-time employment which is associated with lower incomes and high 'core housing need' rates.



Paying More Than 30%

Households Paying More Than 30% of Combined Household Income	% of Renter Households	% of Owner Households
Barrie	49.4	23.4
Guelph	40.9	19.2
Hamilton	42.5	18.6
Kingston	47.8	15.6
London	44.7	17.2
Oshawa	42.9	20.3
Peterborough	48.1 (6,209)	17.8 (6,126)

Source: National Household Survey Profile, CMA, Ontario, 2011

Almost half (48.1%) of all renter households have unaffordable housing. Renter households are almost three times as likely as owner households to have unaffordable housing.

Source: AHAC

Affordability Revisited

Last year Housing is Fundamental demonstrated that while Peterborough average market rents were affordable in respect of other Ontario municipalities, our income levels were definitely lower. Using the same municipalities, the updated cost-income comparison suggests that Peterborough's 'affordability' issue continues to find its roots in lower income levels.

	Median Rental Shelter Cost (annual)	One Maintainer Households - Median Income (annual)	Shelter to Income Ratio %
Barrie	\$12,024	\$34,380	35.0
Guelph	\$10,308	\$33,433	30.8
Hamilton	\$9,576	\$32,363	29.6
Kingston	\$10,176	\$31,524	32.3
London	\$9,300	\$30,342	30.7
Oshawa	\$10,824	\$37,087	29.2
Peterborough	\$10,200	\$29,665	34.4

Source: National Housing Survey, CMA, Ontario, 2011
Custom Calculations, AHAC.

Please note: A one-maintainer household can have more than one occupant.

In the Peterborough CMA the incidence of low-income is 13.1% or 15,015 individuals according to the after-tax Low Income Measure.

Source: National Household Survey Profile, Peterborough CMA, 2011, Statistics Canada



Working for Nothing

When you work eight or twelve hours shifts at \$10.25 an hour, pay for childcare and all living expenses, you have nothing left at the end of the month other than a balance owing on your credit card.

Working hard, but not getting ahead is common for more than a million Canadians working for minimum wage. According to Rafael Gomez of the University of Toronto, with cost of living factored in, **current minimum wage is one-third of what it was in 1970.**

In Canada, **public** attention is growing on various policy responses, from raising minimum wages to introducing living-wage legislation or testing, again, the idea of a basic income supplement.

Source: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/economy/working-for-nothing-canada-joins-global-minimum-wage-debate/article16508375/>

Projected Minimum Wage (Ont.) With Average Inflation of 1.62% Per Annum:

Year	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Hourly	\$11.00	\$11.18	\$11.36	\$11.54	\$11.73	\$11.92	\$12.11

Note: From 2008 to 2014 the average annual inflation rate was 1.62% (Bank of Canada Inflation Calculator). This rate has been used in the above six-year projection of minimum wage.

Source: AHAC Custom Calculations

Low inflation and low interest rates are expected to continue in Canada. With a small hourly base of \$11.00/hr. and continuing low inflation, it is unlikely that minimum wage earners will escape the poverty trap.

Source: AHAC

Income Comparison (before tax \$)

	Median Income (All Sources)	Median Employment Income	Median Household Income
Barrie	\$31,167	\$49,941	\$70,745
Guelph	\$34,119	\$51,085	\$71,597
Hamilton	\$31,497	\$52,033	\$65,851
Kingston	\$32,415	\$49,126	\$63,564
London	\$29,772	\$47,963	\$58,405
Oshawa	\$34,816	\$55,256	\$76,816
Peterborough	\$29,294	\$46,164	\$58,314

Source: National Housing Survey, CMA, Ontario, 2011

Income is a key factor in housing affordability.
Low income is associated with higher 'core housing need' rates.

Source: AHAC

Note: For every number in this comparison chart, half of the population in the income grouping earn less than the number shown. **Example: Half of all Peterborough (CMA) individual incomes from all sources are less than \$29,294.** Half of all Peterborough (CMA) employed individuals earn less than \$46,164.

Deja Vu

The City's jobless rate was highest in February (8.7%) and March (11.2%) 2014 among Canada's major census metropolitan areas. Canada's unemployment rate declined slightly from February to March (2014).

Source: Peterborough Examiner, March 7, 2014, April 4, 2014
www.thepeterboroughexaminer.com/2014/03/07/jobless-rate-back-to-highest-in-canada

Job creation in Canada this year has been the weakest in a non-recession year in more than a decade. Jobs being created are of low quality.

Source: Huffington Post Canada, Daniel Tencer, Jan. 25, 2014
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/12/11/job-market-canada-2013_n_4421034.html

Long-term unemployment (jobless for one year or more) has nearly doubled since the beginning of the recession.

Source: The Canadian Press, Julian Beltrame, July 16, 2013
http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2013/07/16/oecd-canada-long-term-unemployment_n_3603546.html

Household Debt

As of the third quarter of 2013, average household debt has increased to 163.7% of disposable income. Debt is often a compensation for insufficient income.

Source: Reported by Statistics Canada, December 2013



Housing Affected Housing Effects

Growing Inequality: What's the Big Deal?

- Expansion of low-income
- More people having less choice
- Eroding quality of life
- Poorer health for more people
- A very different-looking society of privilege and denial
- Impeded economic development

Ontario's income gap between the richest and poorest families is now at levels not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Fifteen per cent of Ontario's children live below the Low Income Measure, according to Statistics Canada.

Average CEO salary has grown from 25 times the average Canadian income in 1980 to 250 times the average income in 2011

Source: Falling Behind, Ontario's Backslide into Widening Inequality, Growing Poverty and Cuts to Social Programs, Natalie Mehra, Director of the Ontario Health Coalition, prepared for the Ontario Common Front, Aug. 29, 2012

National Trends that Impact Peterborough

- One in four (13.1 million) households live in unaffordable housing
- Cost of homes increased 63% since year 2000; workers earned 13% more in same period
- Since 2011 federal social housing commitments decreased affecting 18,400 households
- Only 10% of housing built in the past 15 years has been rental housing
- Average 2-bdrm. apartment price rose 2.7% between 2012 & 2013
- Average hourly wage rose 1.9% between 2012 & 2013
- Hundreds of thousands of Canadians on waitlists for affordable housing

Source: Canadian Housing Renewal Association (CHRA), Nov. 22, 2013

Does Everyone Get on the Bus?

Example of Social/Economic Inequality:
A person works a full year, full-time and has to use the food bank.

Example of Social/Economic Inequality:
Being unable to afford necessary medication.

Example of Social Inclusion:
Established funds that assist in emergencies. e.g. Housing Stability Fund; Fund for Utility Service Emergencies

Income Gap Upsets Canadians

Survey Findings: (expressed by interviewees)

- 78% believe income gap has grown
- 70% think it has made Canada less fair
- 55% are troubled by their financial security
- 67% are worried about their children's financial future

Source: Income gap study shows Canadians troubled by 'less fair' society Toronto Star, Feb. 6, 2014; Survey by: York University Institute for Social Research, David Northrup, Lesley Jacobs

Profound Income Disparity Peterborough CMA

Individuals with Income	
Under \$80,000 annually	More than \$80,000 annually
86,185	12,630

49,407 Peterborough CMA residents (age 15 and older) have before-tax incomes less than \$29,294.

Source: National Household Survey, Peterborough, CMA, Ontario, 2011

"One of the fundamental bedrocks of being a Canadian is thinking we have a fair society".

Source: David Northrup

Food Count 2013

7,724 Peterborough City and County residents were helped in March 2013.

In addition 17,000 children received breakfast at school daily.

78.2% of users are on O.W. or on disability related income support.

10.6% of users had job income.

Source: Kawartha Food Share, November, 11, 2013

A new Canadian phenomenon: middle-class to minimum wage.

Eric involuntarily left a \$75,000 a year job with full benefits, pension and five weeks' vacation. Trying to replace this job was fruitless. He now works as a night-shift college porter earning \$30,000 a year. Eric is typical of thousands of workers in the past 15 to 20 years who have left the middle class with no means of returning. Along the way to his present position, he worked at many minimum-wage jobs. He was forced to sell his house and borrow money from relatives.

Middle-class optimism has been replaced by a pervasive, dark pessimism and a loss of faith in the ethic of progress. Canadians who identified themselves as middle class in 2002 equalled 67%. In 2013 this has declined to 48%.

In Canada we have moved from an inclusive society to an 'extractive' society designed to extract incomes and wealth from one subset (the masses) to benefit a different subset (the governing elite).

Source: Michael Valpy special to the Toronto Star, Dec. 13, 2013 From middle-class to minimum wage. With no way back

Income inequality has risen in tandem with a stagnant economy.

WHAT WE KNOW...

"Lack of [safe, affordable] housing is directly linked to higher morbidity (illness) and higher mortality (death)".

Source: The Wellesley Institute 2011

"In Ontario, housing is more unaffordable now than it was twenty years ago."

Source: Falling Behind, Ontario's Backslide into Widening Inequality, Growing Poverty and Cuts to Social Programs 2013, The Ontario Common Front, August 29, 2012

"Ontario has the highest housing costs of any province."

Source: Michael Shapcott, Wellesley Institute

Housing affordability is a primary and crucial foundation for any poverty alleviation strategy.

Source: AHAC

Minimum Wage and Living Wage

Minimum Wage = a legislated mandatory, minimum hourly wage payable to all workers.

Living Wage = an hourly wage necessary for living requirements in a particular jurisdiction.

Notes: Peterborough Living Wage is \$16.47/hr. (for each of two wage earners in a family with two dependents) and \$14.30/hr. (for an individual in a single-person household).

Low Income Cut-Offs (LICO)

LICO is a measure of poverty. Numbers provided are guidelines created by Statistics Canada. Those falling below the numbers are said to be living in poverty.

Wage Comparison for Individual Workers (Annual Amount Before Tax)

LICO (municipalities of 30,000 to 99,999 population)	Ontario Minimum Wage (\$11.00/hr.)	Living Wage Peterborough for an individual (\$14.30/hr.)
\$19,941	\$21,450	\$27,885

Source: Statistics Canada and Calculating a Living Wage for Peterborough (2012), Custom Calculations, AHAC

The proposed Ontario Minimum Wage will provide approximately \$1,500 more than the 'poverty line' and approximately \$6,400 less than a living wage in Peterborough.

While movement to \$11 per hour is of some assistance, it is insufficient for a single person in Peterborough.

Source: AHAC

"An adequate standard of living means that a good society not only ensures that good-quality health care is available to everyone, but also access to adequate housing, employment at a living wage, and essential support services must also be available for everyone, not just those who can afford them."

J. David Hulchanski, Homelessness In Canada, February 2009

When Homeless People Were Housed

"It is important to note that before 1980 large numbers of people in developed countries were not unhoused, not homeless. Although their housing was of questionable condition, they were housed usually in rooming houses and flophouses. Homeless men didn't have ties to a family group (a home) and therefore were without the economic or social support a family home normally provided. A clear distinction made in 1960 by the Social Planning Council of Metro Toronto stated that homeless men were "home"-less, not unhoused. In 1960's Canada there were homeless persons, but no problem called 'homelessness'; they had housing."

Source: J. David Hulchanski, Homelessness In Canada, February 2009

"We have limited resources for the prevention of dehousing and for quick rehousing. Most resources and professional attention are focused on supporting people in their homelessness. This is the situation in which we are stuck today."

Source: J. David Hulchanski, Homelessness In Canada, February 2009

"The term 'homelessness' was first used in the early and mid 1980's to refer to the problem of dehousing - increasing numbers who were once housed and no longer housed."

Source: J. David Hulchanski, Homelessness In Canada, February 2009

They did it in Waterloo!

What? Provided safe, affordable, supportive housing for 30 persistently homeless persons by building a five-storey building in Waterloo.

Who? Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW).
Housing Consultant: Tim Welch

How? Vision, Persistence, Funding

Funding:

- \$1.38 M from the Affordable Housing Program (AHP)
- \$0.42 M from Canada's Economic Action Plan (CEAP)
- \$1.8 M from the Government of Ontario
- \$0.099 M from the federal Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS)
- Seed funding from CMHC
- \$0.199 M – a grant from the City of Waterloo
- \$0.147 M from the Region of Waterloo in offset costs (municipal development charges)
- Region of Waterloo support staff through its Domiciliary Hostel Fund
- \$0.7 M from Adopt a Room Campaign for furnishings

Source: CMHC Project Profile, Supportive Housing of Waterloo (30-04-12)

What is the cost of homelessness?

Study Name: Health Care and Public Service Use and Costs Before and After Provision of Housing for Chronically Homeless Persons With Severe Alcohol Problems

Study Results: Median Monthly Costs Per Individual

One Year Prior to Study	After 6 months in housing	After 12 months in housing
\$4,066	\$1,492	\$958

Note: Total cost offsets (savings) for Housing First participants relative to control individuals averaged \$2,449 per person per month after accounting for housing program costs.

Findings:

- Reduced public burden associated with overuse of crisis services
- Reduced alcohol consumption
- Benefits continue to accrue the longer individuals are housed
- On-site medical/mental health services, supportive case managers, and minimized rules and regulations help retain individuals in housing

Conclusions:

Housing First is associated with improvements in the life circumstances and drinking behaviours of the chronically homeless population while reducing their use of expensive health and criminal justice services.

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association
April 1, 2009, Vol 301, No. 13 <http://jama.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=183666>

Rent Supplements Approved

It is highly unlikely that a new-built apartment can be rented at a price affordable to low-income households - not unless there are funding programs which will discount the rent.

These same low-income renter households are unlikely to have affordable rents where they currently live. But there is a way to reduce the housing burden of these households. They're called "rent supplements" and they effectively bring rents closer to 'affordable' levels.

In 2014 Peterborough City Council approved funding for a municipal rent supplement program. These supplements will help stabilize some of the most vulnerable households giving people more choice over nutrition, health, clothing and other necessities. Low-income households receiving supplements are more likely to avoid costly eviction as well.

"You have to take that tension off people's backs.... It gives people that breathing room to be better parents, to be better workers, because they have that freedom." Councillor Dean Pappas quoted by the Peterborough Examiner from the Committee of the Whole meeting in February 2014.

AHAC commends the efforts of City Staff and Council that have led to this program.

Source: AHAC



AHAC Recommendations

1. Monitor progress outcomes of the Housing and Homelessness Plan
2. Develop strategies to protect Peterborough's social housing stock as federal funding agreements conclude
3. Promote incentives to developers to build rental housing
4. Preserve and enhance municipal funding for rent supplements
5. Ensure appropriate distribution of Housing Stability Funds across the spectrum of low income households

Peterborough's HCRT - Highly Successful Work

The Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT) is a seamless service to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, and who have multiple, complex challenges. Consisting of representatives from Fourcast, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), City of Peterborough Social Services, Brock Mission, the Youth Emergency Shelter, and the Housing Resource Centre, HCRT works with consenting individuals referred by any community service provider. Other agencies such as Nijikiwendidaa, Crossroads, PRHC or Peterborough Housing Corporation are invited to participate or join the team on a case by case basis.

The HCRT program is funded through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative. In addition to the case conferencing, additional services from Four Counties Addiction Services and trustee support from Canadian Mental Health Association is available to individuals as part of the case plan.

This program has resulted in a positive outcome for many and is an example of improved people-centred service as outlined in the 10 year Housing and Homelessness Plan. From June 2012 to October 2013 a total of 60 people had been referred to HCRT. A stable living arrangement with support was achieved for 24 people during that period.

Source: Social Services Division, City of Peterborough

AHAC Commentary:

In the housing domain one of the highest-priority goals is securing housing for homeless individuals. This is the work being achieved by the Homelessness Coordinated Response Team (HCRT). AHAC applauds this highly effective effort.

Housing is the big piece in poverty.

Here are a few of the trends that will impact the growth of poverty in the future:

- replacement of middle-income jobs with minimum-wage jobs;
- declining employer pension plans;
- earners' inability to save;
- rising personal and household debt levels;
- outsourcing of work to off-shore locations;
- federal/provincial tax breaks that favour higher-income earners;
- the insidious erosion of social programs.

Not surprisingly some municipalities report that their Ontario Works recipients are staying in the system for longer periods.

Foremost in any effort to mitigate poverty is housing that is affordable according to each household's income. As demonstrated by the trends, this has become increasingly difficult.

In the new economy of 'extraction' poverty is likely to continue growing its constituency.

Source: AHAC