



City of
Peterborough

To: Members of the General Committee

From: Sheldon Laidman, Commissioner, Community Services

Meeting Date: May 8, 2023

Subject: Homelessness Service Strategy and Update, Report CSSS23-013

Purpose

A report to provide information about the homelessness system, including recommendations for short, medium, and long-term strategies to address homelessness in the community.

Recommendations

That Council approve the recommendations outlined in Report CSSS23-013, dated May 8, 2023 of the commissioner of Community Services as follows:

- a) That the presentation from City staff be received as information
- b) That staff be directed to use the unbudgeted increased Homelessness Prevention Program funding for 2023/24 towards the short term strategy outlined in this report which is to include the provision of modular temporary housing at the City-owned 210 Wolfe Street/Rehill Parking Lot properties, secured storage, security, washroom facilities, support services, and site improvements;
- c) That the funding currently included in the 2023 budget for the Overflow Shelter be reoriented to provide support services towards the implementation of the short-term strategy outlined in this report;
- d) That staff be directed to pursue the placement of modular temporary housing on alternative privately-owned sites with appropriate supports with the goal of alleviating usage and dependency on the 210 Wolfe Street/Rehill Parking Lot site;

- e) That staff be authorized to repurpose the funding in the Community Development budget for the meal drop-in program in the amount of \$267,000 towards an emergency winter response program;
- f) That staff provide an update report on the detailed implementation of the short-term strategy and winter response outlined in this report for the August Council cycle;
- g) That the Treasurer, in consultation with the Commissioner of Community Services, be authorized to use the non-standard procurement process to ensure the modular units and other necessary site improvements for the short-term strategy identified in this report can be delivered and implemented prior to October 2023, including the contracting authority to purchase all necessary items and supports attached to the strategy;
- h) That the City will use its funding (municipal, provincial and federal) as it relates to homelessness towards emergency shelter solutions, investing in permanent supportive housing builds, and supporting individuals and families to stay housed through financial supports. Health supports, which are needed to support people who have been homeless to stay housed, are expected to be funded and provided by health agencies, in alignment with the Coordinated Access System;
- i) That staff be directed to review all funding being provided to external agencies and organizations through the Social Services budget to ensure that all funding is in alignment with the core services as identified in recommendation (h);
- j) That staff be directed to review the policies around the provision of social housing units to ensure the units are being optimized to serve more households and is serving those in greatest need of housing; and
- k) That staff be directed to provide a follow up report after consultation with community agencies to prioritize requests to the provincial and federal governments for projects and programs that will best serve to end chronic homelessness in the City and County but which are beyond the mandate or financial capability of the City to provide.

Budget and Financial Implications

Report CSSS23-002 provided a detailed overview and analysis of the homelessness budget and its main funding sources. In the 2023 approved budget, the homelessness program has an overall budget of \$6,934,000, which is funded through \$5,164,000 from the Province, \$1,203,000 from the City, \$208,000 from the County, and the final \$359,000 from City reserves. It was announced in March that the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program would increase its allocation to the City by \$2,500,000. Implementation of the short-term recommendations in this report will be

funded through the 100% provincial Homelessness Prevention Program and reallocations within the 2023 Housing and Homelessness operating budget.

The medium- and long-term strategies are currently not being proposed for funding in this report. Report CAO-2023-7 was presented to County Council on April 5, 2023 requesting additional funding from the County to support homelessness initiatives. County Council did not agree to funding the recommendations included in the report, as they wanted to wait to hear more information about the provincial HPP funding announcement.

Background

Prior to COVID-19, the housing and homelessness crisis was widespread in Ontario and across the country. Homelessness has intensified in most communities since the pandemic, increasing and exacerbating the gaps in other systems that contribute to homelessness while highlighting the lack of resources needed to effectively address the issue. The root causes of homelessness are complex, varied and often stem from the failure of other systems to support the most vulnerable individuals in the community.

In its pre-budget submission to the Province for 2023, Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) states that “the downloading of social housing and homelessness to municipalities in the 1990s hides the fact that our homelessness crisis is a product of provincial choices and policy levers entirely within the provincial sphere of authority, financial responsibility and accountability.” Municipalities continue to bear a significant burden of the costs and implications of homelessness in communities, without the ability to impact the upstream factors that continue to exacerbate homelessness. The inter-related challenges of lack of income, lack of deeply affordable housing supply, and mental health and addictions combine to put increasing strain on municipal tools and systems.

Service System Manager for Housing and Homelessness

The City of Peterborough is the Service System Manager (SSM) for Housing and Homelessness in the City and County. The designation of Service System Managers recognizes that local communities understand local needs and where investments can make the most impact on preventing, addressing, and reducing homelessness. While the City is responsible for planning and providing service options in collaboration with community partners as the SSM, there are significant challenges for this role in the community.

Homelessness is a systemic crisis that calls for an economic, social and health policy response. The City works collaboratively with community health and social service providers on short-term interventions and longer-term strategies to support ending homelessness. Work also continues with both provincial partners and local groups to examine system-level interventions that adapt and respond to social and health equity issues. The City of Peterborough is the Service System Manager and flow through for

many provincial and federal-provincial homelessness responses, while the United Way of Peterborough and District receives Federal Reaching Home funding for homelessness programs. Peterborough is an outlier in Ontario as one of only four communities where Reaching Home funding is not administered by the Service System Manager.

The City is responsible for developing a 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan and working towards the goals in that plan – most notably, ending chronic homelessness. In practice, this means providing emergency shelter, funding supportive housing programs, and building housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.

However, as homelessness is often caused by the gaps in other systems, homelessness funding is often called on to fill the gaps left by those systems. The most notable example is where homelessness funding is directed to fund programs or responses that, while connected to homelessness, are more appropriately provided by the healthcare system. Funding and being responsible for every issue that may be connected to homelessness – detox services, mental health and addictions supports, nurse practitioner clinics, housing supports, etc., has resulted in substantial draws on the Social Services Reserve fund, which is needed to cost-match federal and provincial housing and homelessness projects, among other priorities.

As the SSM, the City has certain provincial requirements that it must abide by and include in any of its homeless responses. This would include having an operational By-Name Priority List (BNPL), as part of a Coordinated Access System (CAS), and to use a Housing First approach.

Housing First

Housing First is a philosophy and approach to ending homelessness that centres on quickly moving individuals experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed. Housing First follows the following five core principles:

- access to housing;
- the right of personal choice;
- focus on well-being;
- personalized supports; and,
- the importance of social connection.

Housing First is an approach that has been proven to work in numerous communities across the world. All the agencies that are funded by the City for homelessness supports are required to participate in the CAS, which includes selecting individuals from the BNPL and implementing a Housing First approach to their programs.

In addition to supporting the implementation of the BNPL, the City is also responsible for providing emergency shelter for the community. There are currently 106 emergency shelter beds across three permanent shelters and an overflow shelter.

While many of the required solutions to help people end their homelessness permanently involve supports from health services, the City does not receive sufficient funding to provide health supports. As a result, there is no 24/7 permanent supportive housing in the City and County of Peterborough. 24/7 permanent supportive housing is necessary to resolve the homelessness of people identified on the By-Name Priority List as having high or very-high acuity, which means they have a combination of physical and mental health challenges as well as substance use.

Current Homelessness System

The BNPL helps community partners know every person experiencing homelessness by name, understand their unique needs, and prioritize them for the most appropriate and available housing. Information for the BNPL is entered in the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS), which is managed by the City. Along with Social Services staff, community partners who participate within CAS and have dedicated funding add and provide updates to HIFIS to ensure the list is as close to real-time as possible.

As of April 15th, there were 302 individuals on the BNPL currently experiencing homelessness in the community. This figure includes those staying in shelters, outside, or in precarious housing circumstances. Over half of the individuals on the list are chronically homeless, meaning they have been homeless for at least six months within the last year. See data included in Appendix B. Another key data point highlighted in the BNPL is the number of individuals who identify as high or very high acuity. When an individual is added to the BNPL, an assessment is completed that identifies the individual's acuity needs, specifically as it relates to finding and maintaining housing. Typically, when someone scores high or very high, the appropriate support service to match the individual to is a purpose-built, 24/7 permanent supportive housing unit and attached program. Of the 302 individuals on the BNPL, 56% of them scored high or very high on the assessment. To end their homelessness, they require 24/7 permanent supportive housing, which is not available in the City and County of Peterborough.

Permanent Supportive Housing

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) is an evidence-based and cost-effective solution for people who are chronically homeless and/or highly vulnerable because of long-term concerns such as: mental illness, developmental disabilities, physical disabilities, substance use disorders, and chronic health conditions. The key components of a permanent supportive housing model include:

- Cultural and community supports

- Tenant security
- Mobile and on-site supports
- In-reach health and social services
- Trauma-informed care
- Assertive engagement
- Flexibility and Affordability
- Harm reduction

In other communities across Ontario, the supports that are provided in 24/7 permanent supportive housing units are funded by the Ministry of Health. Often those sites have significant medical supports attached to the programs including: psychiatrist, managed alcohol withdrawal programs, Personal Support Worker (PSW) supports, clinical social workers, intensive case managers and housing support workers, etc. In a review of the cost of homelessness in four cities in 2006, it was found that the annual basic costs per person were:

- \$66,000-\$120,000 in institutions (prison/detention or psychiatric hospitals)
- \$13,000-\$42,000 for those in emergency shelters
- \$13,000-\$18,000 in supportive or transitional housing
- \$5,000-\$8,000 for singles and families in affordable housing

A separate study on the Canadian Model for Housing and Support (2016), a program for veterans experiencing homelessness, saw the positive impacts by providing housing to individuals. After the first year, the program showed a cost savings of \$536,000/year due to reductions in 911 calls and emergency shelter stays.

The City is continuing to build up a Social Services Reserve in an effort to place the City in a better position with any future applications for health funding for permanent supportive housing. The Ministry of Health will only fund the supports attached to the units and the City will need to have capital funds at the ready for any purpose-built units.

Current Homelessness Prevention Program Funding

The City receives Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP) from the Province to provide affordable housing and support services for people at risk of or experiencing homelessness. Report CSSS23-002 provides a full list of all services currently funded by the provincial funding. Accountability mechanisms with both the federal and provincial homelessness funding include the requirement to operate with a CAS and a BNPL to match individuals and families with housing opportunities that meet their needs as they arise throughout the community. Community outcome measurements are also required. The City has flexibility to use allocated funding for certain eligible services which must be provided in an Investment Plan and approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). Outcome categories for the HPP funding are:

1. Preventing and Diverting Homelessness
2. Addressing Homelessness
3. Reducing Homelessness

The previous HPP allocation was \$5,164,300. Currently, the HPP allocation is used to fund the following programs and services that support individuals experiencing homelessness in the community to address any of the three goals mentioned above:

- Emergency Shelters to operate and provide emergency shelter
- Rent Supplements to support individuals to move into permanent housing
- Prevention, Diversion and Ending Homelessness through Housing Stability Fund
- Supportive Housing Programs that support individuals with different needs to both find and maintain housing
- Health Supports for individuals experiencing homelessness
- Trustee Services for individuals needing financial support

All City-funded programs under HPP participate in the CAS, which includes selecting individuals from the BNPL and using a Housing First philosophy.

Opportunities in the Homelessness System

Homelessness is complex and staff are always looking for new and innovative solutions, while also investing time in improving the current CAS. The following is a list of short-term, medium-term, and long-term strategies staff have developed. Reflected in this list is the recognition of immediate emergency needs, while trying to balance long-term planning for capital builds and larger projects.

1. Short-Term - Winter Response and Wolfe Street Enhancements

In April 2023, the Province announced an increase in the HPP allocation for communities. Peterborough received an annual increase of \$2.5 million, with a new total allocation of \$7,657,600 committed for the next three years. The new allocation must still follow the HPP guidelines and eligibility criteria, in addition to being approved by the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs.

In addition to this new funding opportunity, there are additional funds that could be leveraged to support the homelessness system in its response. Earlier this year, St. John's Church opted not to renew its contract to provide a daily meal and drop-in centre space through the One Roof program as of December 31, 2023. Without a new service provider or space, the emergency after hours space that is provided on days of extreme cold or heat warnings will not be available in the community.

Winter Response Program

It is proposed that the \$267,000 provided by the City to One Roof be used to fund a 24/7 winter response program in the community. As demonstrated last year, there is a need for a winter drop-in program in addition to the shelters. City Staff operated an overnight winter drop-in program as an emergency response during a significant weather event for individuals who had nowhere else in the community to go and it was evident that this is a necessary service in the winter months. In addition, community partners collaborated to open and operate the Stop Gap Drop-In Space from January until April, where there was a significant number of clients who utilized that space and where it was often at capacity. It is clear that there needs to be a specific overnight drop-in space during the winter to keep individuals in the community out of the elements and support them to stay alive. The Wolfe Street building could be transitioned into a winter-emergency response location in the winter, as it has already been fitted to meet the fire and building requirements for an overnight space.

It is not expected that \$267,000 will be sufficient to fund such a 24/7 service so the recommendations in this report identify the usage of the increased Homelessness Prevention Program funding to augment the former One Roof funding.

Wolfe Street Enhancements and Temporary Modular Housing Strategy

There is recognition that some of the individuals who are unsheltered will not stay in the shelter system, as it does not meet their needs or preferences. The number of clients who are unsheltered is continuing to increase, with the latest count being anywhere between 53 to 70 individuals. Appendix B provides statistics and information on shelter usage and those currently tenting. Currently, there is a significant number of individuals who are unsheltered near the Wolfe Street Overflow Shelter. This is causing stress in the neighbourhood while it is unsafe, unsuitable, and unhealthy for those tenting.

Staff are recommending that the additional HPP allocation be combined with the funding for One Roof and Overflow and be leveraged to create a new immediate short-term homelessness response to meet the needs and preferences of the most vulnerable individuals in the community. Staff are recommending that this funding be combined to create a formalized 2023 Winter Response and enhancements to Wolfe Street to better support clients and neighbours. It is important to note that any projects funded would be tied to the CAS and BNPL. See Table 1 below for more information on available funding.

Table 1: Reallocation of Funding

Funding Source	Amount	City-Staff Recommended Allocation
New HPP Allocation	\$2,493,300	Wolfe Street Enhancements

Overflow Funding	\$667,000	Wolfe Street Enhancements & 2023 Winter Response
One Roof Program	\$257,000	2023 Winter Response
TOTAL:	\$3,417,300	

It is recommended that modular units be placed at Wolfe Street for clients who are unsheltered to access. There are multiple types of modular units available in the market that include single cabins, multi room units, dorm style units, and connectable units. This would also include access to bathroom and shower units, storage for belongings and more importantly, access to support services. There would be 24/7 supports; security supports and additional supports at the Wolfe Street building. The Wolfe Street building could be better utilized as a community hub, where agencies could meet with clients who are in the modular units or in community. As a hub, there would be the opportunity to immediately connect individuals to the supports that they need. By providing modular units, clients who are currently unsheltered would be safer and be supported towards stabilization, and ultimately permanent housing. Fencing would be provided to enhance privacy for people using the temporary housing and for neighbours in the Wolfe Street area.

The usage of temporary modular building units not only provides a more secure, safe, and healthier form of temporary housing for those currently unsheltered but also provides a better model for paying for shelter services. Currently provisions in the Ontario Works Act restrict the ability to use Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) funds to pay for stays in shelters. However, the City will be able to use the shelter allowance portion of someone's OW or ODSP payment to go towards both the operational and capital costs of the temporary modular units.

Staff reviewed all city-owned or controlled property as possible sites for a temporary modular development of this sort while also considering the needs and preferences of clients and those tenting in terms of location and amenities. Staff looked at a variety of City-owned facilities and land when considering this proposal, but are recommending 210 Wolfe Street/Rehill Parking Lot as the location for the modular units for the following reasons:

- It is City-owned property which provides flexibility to ensure the success of the modular units and is immediately available to be able to plan for the units prior to the winter. This property is large enough to ensure that sufficient numbers of modular units can be placed on the site as well as the appropriate services needed for all individuals. It is close to downtown, where the majority of the supports and services that clients access are located. There are concerns that any locations outside of the downtown core will not be utilized by individuals who need or prefer to be able to easily access services downtown.

- Providing locations only outside of downtown will ensure that persons will continue to attempt to tent in downtown area parks.
- The Wolfe Street building provides an opportunity for clients to access bathrooms, showers and be provided meals, ensuring that their basic needs are met. By meeting these basic needs, some pressures on the neighbourhood could also be alleviated.
- The Wolfe Street building also provides the opportunity for a community collaboration through a community hub for clients to access supports from a variety of agencies.

Staff have done initial research to ensure that temporary modular buildings can be sourced within budget. Staff would work with Planning, Police, Fire and other appropriate City departments to ensure the success of this operation and its layout. In addition, staff have the support of the following community agencies with this concept and will continue to work with them, as well as other agencies, as they would be relied upon to be involved in the operation of the site and provide the necessary supports:

- FourCAST
- CMHA
- Elizabeth Fry Society
- John Howard Society
- United Way
- Brock Mission
- YES Shelter for Youth and Families
- One City Peterborough

While the specifics of this plan still need to be determined, staff are seeking Council support for the concept and location, and the delegation of decision-making abilities to ensure all elements required can be implemented by the fall of 2023. Staff are not proposing a specific timeframe that the Wolfe Street enhancements would remain in place to allow time to invest in permanent solutions and plan for next steps. The goal is that clients will be supported to move into existing supportive housing programs and or resolve their experience of homelessness but in the meantime, will be provided a unit that is more secure, safer, healthier, and more able to meet individual needs. This plan will meet both the needs of the current clients who are unsheltered, while also supporting the neighbourhood that is currently at Wolfe Street. It is expected that reorienting supports from the Overflow Shelter to these modular units along with better security, site improvements, and on-site storage may lessen the impact on the neighbourhood.

Alternative Locations

Staff understand the complexities and difficulties involved in promoting this concept at Wolfe Street. Staff do not believe that one site on the periphery of the city or away from the downtown can meet the needs and preferences of those currently unsheltered and tenting. However, staff are supportive of pursuing the placement of temporary modular housing units on alternative private sites elsewhere in the city. This would serve to alleviate the usage of Wolfe Street and can provide alternative options for those unsheltered. Staff are recommending that additional locations be pursued to provide temporary modular units on private lands elsewhere in the city with appropriate supports.

2. Medium-Term Recommendations

- **Review HPP Funding** – As referenced earlier in this report, the City receives HPP funding by the Province to either prevent and divert, address or end homelessness. A significant number of programs are currently funded through HPP to support those outcomes, including the Housing Stability Fund that is managed internally at Social Services. A full review of all HPP funding will be undertaken by the homelessness team, providing opportunities for system-level improvements, person-centered system design and strategic planning moving forward.
- **Review all Community Services Funding Grants** – As part of Community Services, there is a variety of Service Grants, Community Project Grants and Community Investment Grants that are awarded annually while there are additional funding agreements to agencies funded through the Social Services budget. Staff were previously directed by Council through the 2023 budget process and recently through the review of Council Report CSD23-004 to review these grant programs. With the increased pressure on housing and homelessness in the community, staff will be reviewing all the Community Services funding grants that are available to determine if any of those funding allocations could be leveraged to support the overall homelessness budget or could be better targeted toward the homelessness response system. Many of these funding agreements are historic in nature and may not reflect current priorities.
- **Build Municipal Contribution** – To be successful with any new provincial or federal funding applications for either support services or capital builds, there is often a municipal contribution required. As the homelessness and housing budgets are already stretched to fund the operation of existing programs, there is no funding currently for capital builds. To be better positioned for any new future funding applications, it is necessary to build up the Social Services Reserve to be accessed when there is a project that requires a municipal contribution. This could significantly increase the chances of being successful with any new applications to the provincial or federal governments.

- **Reorientation of Social Housing Stock** – Existing housing stock in the community housing portfolio is an opportunity to leverage buildings that are already integrated into existing neighbourhoods. New flexibility under the Housing Services Act means that the City as Service Manager could allow Rent Geared to Income assistance to be provided through Portable Housing Benefits in new, non-profit or private developments, freeing up the older stock to be used for people experiencing homelessness, whether through permanent supportive housing or alternative forms of shelter. There are nearly 1,900 rent geared to income units in the system which are currently being used according to previous legislation through a wait list and then occupied for many years by the same tenant. New legislation allows for these units to be used towards higher priorities such as alleviating homelessness or for supportive housing units as transitional housing so that they turn over more quickly to serve more households.
- **Continuing reorientation of Social Services Staff** – Over the past four years Social Services has worked to transform how services are delivered. This means that front-line positions work with individuals to help them access all available programs instead of having staff siloed by program and needing to refer the client to various staff for different programs. As this development continues with more targeted training in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and Trauma-informed Case Management, staff are expanding their knowledge around housing retention, supports to obtain and maintain housing and broader community resources. Staff also go to community locations to support people in their housing or in other areas such as the Library, County Hubs and shelters. This will continue to develop with professional development and when collaborative opportunities arise.

Currently one Client Service Worker is focused on housing stability, rent supplement reviews, and the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) to ensure the community receives as much as possible to support community members and address the deficiencies created by the Social Assistance rates. Council can expect that staff will continue to try to reorient operating funding received from the provincial governments towards housing and homelessness supports as a priority.

3. Long-Term Recommendations

- **Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)** – The acuity level of individuals experiencing homelessness continues to increase, with more than 50% of the current BNPL needing some form of PSH to end their experience of homelessness. This includes a spectrum of PSH with a variety of different health and housing services: stabilizing individuals who have been living outside; options for individuals who cannot or will not immediately stay in shelter and need stabilization supports; individuals who need permanent housing; and individuals who need 24/7 medical supports. Numerous options need to be

available in the community for all these needs, all of which will need to be affordable, purpose-built units. PSH, particularly those with medical supports, are beyond the capability of the City to fund yet are the ultimate solution for the homelessness crisis. The City can focus on the provision of new affordable housing units; however, the specific supports need to be provided and funded by senior government.

- **Affordable Housing Construction** – The vacancy rate in Peterborough is the lowest of all Ontario Census Metropolitan Areas, as it has been for the last two years. Compounded by the high cost of private market rental, there are very few affordable options in the community for people experiencing homelessness to find. The private market will not fill the needs of individuals who need truly affordable housing. As a result, the City has to continue to plan for, and invest in more affordable housing construction. This includes any affordable housing that can be attached to clients who are on the BNPL by supporting clients who are experiencing homelessness to move into housing.
- **Capital Connections to Other Systems** – Recognizing the role that Social Services can play in making connections to other systems that often intersect, there are some opportunities that could result in alignment with other community needs. This is especially the case with upcoming health care needs for builds such as the Community Health Care Center (CHCC) and Consumption and Treatment Site (CTS). Other communities have attached CHCC and/or CTS to permanent supportive housing builds, recognizing the intersection of clients. It is also a good opportunity to maximize any land space and costs of capital builds. Staff will continue to explore any opportunities that present as good business prospects, especially if they will also support meeting the needs of the community. A recommendation of this report is for staff to work with community partners to prioritize future community capital projects so that they can be requested to the Provincial and Federal governments.

Summary

The City of Peterborough has been tasked with ending chronic homelessness in the City and County, but only has authority and control to affect a small number of the factors that cause it and cause it to continue. It is recommended that City-administered homelessness funding be preserved for those factors which the City has authority and control. This includes finding new shelter solutions, investing in permanent supportive housing builds, and supporting individuals and families to stay housed through financial supports. Health supports, which are needed to support people who have been homeless to stay housed, must be funded and provided by health agencies, in alignment with the Coordinated Access System.

The short-, medium- and long-term solutions identified in this report will help ensure that the City is in the strongest possible position to develop a broad range of options to meet

the unique and changing needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community.

Submitted by,

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Attachments:

Appendix A – Homelessness System Glossary of Terms
Appendix B –Homelessness Data

Homelessness System Glossary of Terms

Acuity:

Acuity speaks to the severity of a presenting issue. In the case of an evidence-informed common assessment tool like the **Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT)** – (below), acuity is expressed as a number with a higher number representing more complex, co-occurring issues that are likely to impact overall housing stability. Given the very nature of support programs that do the best work in supporting people with complex, co-occurring needs are hopeful in nature, *acuity* is forward looking when changes in acuity are measured and monitored.

By Name Priority List (BNPL):

The By-Name Priority List (BNPL) is a real-time, up to date list of all people experiencing homelessness in Peterborough. The BNPL helps community partners know every person experiencing homelessness by name, understand their unique needs, and then prioritize them for the most appropriate and available housing.

Built for Zero (BFZ):

Built for Zero Canada is a national change effort, or campaign, led by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH). BFC helps a core group of leading communities to end chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness – a first step on the path to eliminating all homelessness in Canada. Their structured, supportive and data-driven approach focuses on optimizing local homeless systems, accelerating the adoption of proven practices and driving continuous improvement.

Chronic Homelessness:

There is no one definition of chronic homeless, for example there is variance in definitions of chronic homelessness between the United States, Canada (Reaching Home) and other levels of government in terms of the length of time people experience homelessness and co-occurring health issues. The Peterborough Coordinated Access System has the lowest barrier definition of chronic homelessness, that being the experience of being homeless **for at least 6 months in the past 12 months**, and not necessarily not consecutively.

Coordinated Access System (CAS):

A coordinated access system is the process by which individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness are directed to community-level access points where trained workers use a common assessment tool to evaluate the individual or family's depth of need, prioritize them for housing support services and then help to match them to available housing focused interventions. Quality coordinated access systems share several features, including a centralized database that collects and displays real-time data on clients and available housing and supports; clear access

points of entry; common assessment; standardized protocols; and resources (for example, staff) focused on ensuring that people can connect with appropriate housing and housing supports in an efficient manner.

Functional Zero:

A community has ended homelessness when the number of people experiencing homelessness is zero, or if not zero, then either 3 or 0.1% of the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness, whichever is greater. A community can reach Functional Zero on a sub-population of individuals experiencing homelessness. For example, London and St. Thomas have reached Functional Zero for Veteran Homelessness.

Homelessness:

Homelessness refers to the situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it. It is often the result of what are known as systemic or societal barriers, including a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. There are three different types of homelessness:

1. Unsheltered - This refers to individuals who are not accessing emergency shelters or temporary accommodation and are often individuals who are living outside or in places not fit for human habitation. This can include individuals living in vehicles, tents, makeshift shelters, sidewalks, or vacant buildings.
2. Emergency Sheltered – This refers to individuals who are accessing an emergency shelter and system supports. Some shelters are provide only overnight sleeping spaces, while others offer food, clothing and supports. Emergency shelters also includes shelters for individuals and families impacted by violence.
3. Hidden Homelessness – This refers to individuals who are without a permanent home but who are provisionally accommodated by accessing temporary housing by making independent arrangements for short-term accommodation. This can include a short-term stay at a motel or staying with friends (often referred to as “couch-surfing”).

It is important to note that everyone's reasons for and experience of homelessness are different for each unique individual. The pathway in and out of homelessness is fluid and is also different for each individual person. The only way to end homelessness is with housing.

Housing Continuum:

To address and end homelessness, a range of approaches are needed to meet the unique needs of each person. The Housing Continuum is a concept that identifies different housing options for a housing system to be successful. This includes matching housing with programs and supports to help people keep their tenancy. As individuals

circumstance change, so will their place on the housing continuum. A lack of housing options can result in individuals staying homeless for longer or moving through from one end of the continuum to the other. See graphic below that demonstrates the Housing Continuum.



Housing First:

Housing First is a recovery-orientated approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed. The basic underlying principle of Housing First is that people are better able to move forward with their lives if they are first housed. Housing isn't contingent on readiness or compliance (for instance, sobriety). It's a rights-based intervention rooted in the philosophy that the only way to end someone's experience of homelessness is with housing. There are 5 key components of Housing First:

1. **Access to Housing:** Housing First involves providing individuals with assistance in finding and obtaining safe, secure and permanent housing as quickly as possible. Housing is not conditional on sobriety or abstinence or being document ready. Housing First attempts to remove any barriers to moving someone into housing.

2. The Right to Personal Choice: Housing First is a rights-based, client-centered approach that emphasizes individual choice in terms of housing and choice. An individual has the right to decline a specific unit or support program, and this will not impact any future housing or support opportunities.
3. Focus on Well-Being: Housing First is focused on supporting an individual's well-being and ensures that they have access to a range of supports that enable them to nurture and maintain social, recreational, education, occupational and vocational activities. Where it applies, this also means supporting access to a harm reduction environment without requiring abstinence. However, harm reduction can also include abstinence housing, for those individuals who choose that type of support.
4. Personalized Supports: A client-driven approach recognizes that individuals are unique, and so are their needs. Individuals are provided with a range of support services that are individualized, culturally-appropriate, and portable. Supports may address housing stability, health needs, and life skills. Income supports and rent supplements are often an important part of providing client-driven supports, especially if individual's do not have the necessary income to support their housing tenancy.
5. Importance of Social Connection: Housing First includes supporting individuals to integrate into their community, requiring socially supportive engagement and the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities. If people are housing and become or remain socially isolated, the stability of their housing may be compromised.

Indigenous Definition of Homelessness:

In 2017, an Indigenous definition of homelessness was created by Indigenous peoples and has been adopted by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness.

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Metis, and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally, or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships (Aboriginal Standing Committee on Housing and Homelessness, 2012). The full Indigenous Definition of Homelessness can be found on the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness and Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness website.

Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH): Permanent Supportive (or Supported):

Housing (PSH) combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use.

It is one option to house chronically homeless individuals with high acuity. Usually, PSH units are located in one home or building. It could include rooms in an individual house or several or all units of a building. PSH units could be scattered-site units depending upon the acuity level of the individual and the availability of the supports (provided either through home visits or in a community-based setting). (Source: The Homeless Hub)

Rent Supplements:

Rent supplements are government sponsored financial assistance (income) programming for tenants living in market-rate rental housing aimed at alleviating housing costs and expenses for people in need with low to moderate incomes; examples of forms of subsidies include direct housing subsidies, the shelter component of social assistance, and rent supplements. They can either be provided by the municipal, provincial or federal government. Rent Supplements can also be tied to a physical unit, so they are available to anyone who moves into that unit. There are also portable rent supplements that are attached to specific individuals and follow an individual to any unit they move too.

Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT):

The Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) was released to the public in 2010. It was developed as an assessment tool for frontline workers at agencies that work with homeless clients to prioritize which of those clients should receive assistance first. It is an in-depth assessment that relies on the assessor's ability to interpret responses and corroborate those with evidence over several areas of a person's life, with domains as follows:

- A. Mental Health & Wellness & Cognitive Functioning
- B. Physical Health & Wellness
- C. Medication
- D. Substance Use
- E. Experience of Abuse & Trauma
- F. Risk of Harm to Self or Others
- G. Involvement in Higher Risk and/or Exploitive Situations
- H. Interaction with Emergency Services
- I. Legal
- J. Managing Tenancy

K. Personal Administration & Money Management

L. Social Relationships & Networks

M. Self Care & Daily Living Skills

N. Meaningful Daily Activity

O. History of Homelessness & Housing

This tool may only be used by those who have received up-to-date training provided by OrgCode Consulting, Inc. or an OrgCode certified trainer.

Transitional Housing:

Transitional housing is a temporary solution (up to four years) that aims to bridge the gap from homelessness to permanent housing. Many of the people who live in transitional housing use it for support, structure or treatment. Examples in Peterborough include in shelter semi-independent living suites at Cameron House and Brock Mission, as well as the stand alone Rubidge 8-plex. Growth in transitional housing through private landlord engagement has been taking place additionally in Peterborough.

People participating in transitional housing have their housing spot linked to engagement in a program that typically assists people gain skills in managing tenancy and living skills with tailored supports and home visits by housing outreach workers. This model is not linked to the Residential Tenancies Act (RTA).

Homelessness Data

Shelter Data

The City currently funds 74 shelter beds operational 24/7 hours and an additional 32 shelter beds available for 12 hours a night. Between January 1, 2023 and March 31, 2023, there were 295 unique individuals who accessed the shelter system at one point.

Table 1: Shelter Data from January 1, 2023 until March 31, 2023

	Brock Mission	Cameron House	YES Shelter	Overflow
Total Bed Nights	2927	880	2135	2375
Average Occupancy	100%	81%	79%	82%
Average Stays/Night	32 / 32 beds	10 / 12 beds	24 / 30 beds	26 / 32 beds

By Name Priority List Data – Single Individuals Only

This data included below is as of April 15th, 2023 for only single individuals. This data doesn't include families who are on the By Name Priority List (BNPL).

The BNPL is a real-time list of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community and as a result, changes every day. While some of the numbers might be slightly different at the time of this report being published, the main trends will remain the same.

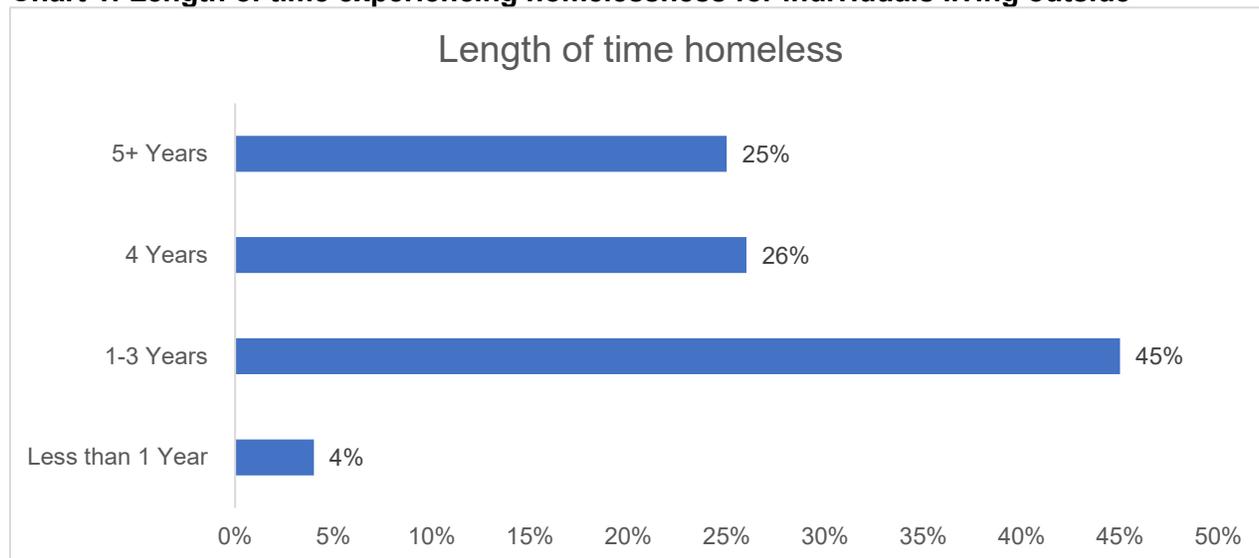
- There are currently 302 persons on the By Name Priority List experiencing homelessness (by definition this includes persons in emergency shelters, sleeping outside, and persons who are precariously housed and consider themselves homeless).
- There are 161 individuals who are chronically homeless, accounting for 53% of the BNPL. (Chronic homelessness is anyone who has been homeless for 6 months or more in the last year)
- There are 168 individuals with very high or high acuity on the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SPDAT) assessment, used to determine an individual's level of need as it relates to housing and homelessness.
- 42 individuals are identified as youth, ages 16-24. In addition, 16 individuals are identified as seniors, over the age of 64.
- There are 61 individuals who identify as Indigenous.

Data from Individuals Living Outside

As of April 15, 2023 there were 53 individuals identified on the BNPL as unsheltered. It should be noted that completing an enumeration of individuals who are unsheltered is challenging for numerous reasons, including the transient nature of the population group. Social Services outreach staff conducted an enumeration over a two-week period in March with individuals who were identified as unsheltered. The following information was gathered from those clients:

- 62 individuals were identified as unsheltered. It should be noted that there were some additional individuals who didn't want to engage with staff during this time period and there were also times where staff were unsure if clients were sleeping outside or visiting tents.
- There were 8 individuals under the age of 25 and 6 individuals over the age of 55
- Only 4% of individuals have been homeless for less than one year and 50% have been homeless for more than 4 years, as shown by the table below:

Chart 1: Length of time experiencing homelessness for individuals living outside



- 17 individuals were connected to multiple agencies and only 9 individuals were not connected to an agency, or it was unknown if they were connected to an agency
- The most common identified reasons for not accessing shelter by individuals were:
 - Safety (personal safety or concerns about safety of personal belongings)
 - Community (their community, including friends or family were outside)
 - Autonomy (the ability to come and go when needed)