A Place to Call Home



TABLE OF CONTENTS _____



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	2
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	3
BACKGROUND	4
PARTNERS	5
METHODOLOGY	6
VISION FOR GUELPH-WELLINGTON	7
STRATEGIC GOALS	8
SETTING AND QUANTIFYING TARGETS	8
SUMMARY OF GOALS AND TARGETS	9
GOAL #1	11
- To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses	
GOAL #2	14
- To provide a range of supports to assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed	
GOAL #3	15
- To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions	
GOAL #4	16
- To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income households	
GOAL #5	18
- To reduce the length of time and number of people that experience homelessness	
GOAL #6	19
- To promote practices that make the housing and homelessness support system more accessible and welcoming	
GOAL #7	20
- To preserve the existing social and affordable rental housing stock	
GOAL #8	21
– To seize opportunities to turn research knowledge into action	
PROVINCIAL PRIORITY POPULATIONS	21
Persons with Disabilities	22
Victims of Domestic Violence	23
NEXT STEPS	24
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	25
GLOSSARY OF TERMS	26
NOTES	28

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This paper presents a 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (HHP) for Guelph Wellington. This strategy has been developed in accordance with the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, 2011.

The HHP builds on the work of the County of Wellington's first Affordable Housing Strategy, which was released in 2005. The process for updating the strategy occurred in three phases:

- a) Need and Demand Study completed by the County (October 2012)
- b) Research and Consultations facilitated by JPMC Services Inc. See Discussion Paper (February 2013) for results.
- c) Strategy Development, also prepared by JPMC Services Inc.

Throughout each phase, hundreds of individuals and organizations were engaged through a variety of public meetings, interviews, targeted focus groups, and surveys.

This report presents the results of Phase 3. It outlines eight goals and 38 actions, which provide a roadmap for achieving the desired vision:



Everyone in Guelph Wellington can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home.



Goals:

- 1. To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses
- 2. To provide a range of supports to assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed
- 3. To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions
- 4. To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income households
- 5. To reduce the length of time and number of people that experience homelessness
- 6. To promote practices that make the housing and homelessness support system more accessible and welcoming
- 7. To preserve the existing social and affordable rental housing stock
- 8. To seize opportunities to turn research knowledge into action

The number of goals and actions demonstrates the breadth and complexity of issues relating to affordable housing and homelessness, and the need for a multi-pronged solution. Increasing the supply of affordable housing alone will not fully address the issues and needs facing the housing and homelessness support system in Guelph Wellington. And while the number of issues to be addressed may seem daunting, the intention behind the HHP is to tackle the issues piece-by-piece and from multiple directions over an extended period of time.

The plan includes examples for each of the actions, and performance measures by which progress towards the goals can be assessed. The list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight best practices and models that could be adapted to the local context. It should be noted that, in many cases, the ability to set specific targets or achieve certain goals is highly dependent upon the availability of funding from other levels of government or community partners. As funding becomes available, more specific targets and implementation plans will be developed. These detailed implementation strategies will take into account different approaches required to address the various urban and rural communities of Guelph Wellington.

As the CMSM for Guelph Wellington, the County has an important leadership role related to system planning, coordination of services and the development of partnerships in the area of housing and homelessness. The HHP is a starting point for the community; it identifies needs and gaps across Guelph Wellington and proposes a range of strategies to achieve the community vision of ensuring that everyone has a place to call home. As a community, continued success will depend upon strong and trusting partnerships. The County will work to develop the goals and actions of the HHP into more detailed implementation plans in close cooperation with all community partners. This collaborative approach to meeting housing challenges will cultivate innovative solutions and will allow the County to maximize the available resources and assets of everyone.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS



AMO	Association of Municipalities of Ontario
CCAC	Community Care Access Centre
СМНА	Canadian Mental Health Association Waterloo Wellington Dufferin
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
CMSM	Consolidated Municipal Service Manager
CRC	Community Resource Centre of North and Centre Wellington
FCM	Federation of Canadian Municipalities
FRPO	Federation of Rental-Housing Providers of Ontario
HHP	Housing and Homelessness Plan
HPS	Homelessness Partnering Strategy
IAH	Investment in Affordable Housing for Ontario Program
LTAHS	Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy
MHCC	Mental Health Commission of Canada
MMAH	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
MOHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
OCISO	Ottawa Community Immigrant Services Organization
ODSP	Ontario Disability Support Program
OMSSA	Ontario Municipal Social Services Association
OPA	Ontario Power Authority
OW	Ontario Works
PTF	Guelph & Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination
ROMA	Rural Ontario Municipal Association
UofG	University of Guelph
WWLHIN	Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network

BACKGROUND



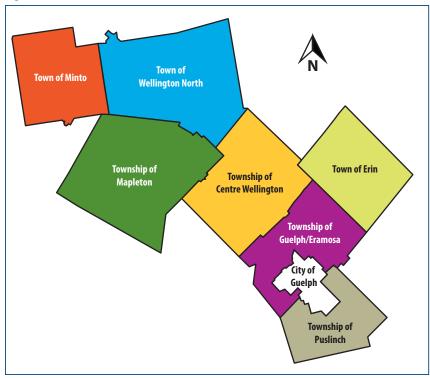
This paper presents a 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan (HHP) for Guelph Wellington.

This strategy has been developed in accordance with the Housing Services Act, 2011 and the Ontario Housing Policy Statement, 2011.

Under the Act, and as part of its role as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) for housing and homelessness, the County of Wellington (the "County") is responsible for developing, approving and overseeing the implementation of a 10-year strategy that:

- a) "Demonstrates a system of coordinated housing and homelessness services to assist families and individuals to move toward a level of self-sufficiency;
- b) Includes services, supported by housing and homelessness research and forecasts, that are designed to improve outcomes for individuals and families;
- c) Is coordinated and integrated with all municipalities in the service area;
- d) Contains strategies to increase awareness of, and improve access to, affordable and safe housing that is linked to supports, homelessness prevention and social programmes and services;
- e) Contains strategies to identify and reduce gaps in programmes, services and supports and focus on achieving positive outcomes for individuals and families;
- f) Contains local housing policies and short and long-term housing targets;
- g) Provides for public consultation, progress measurement, and reporting." 1

Figure 1



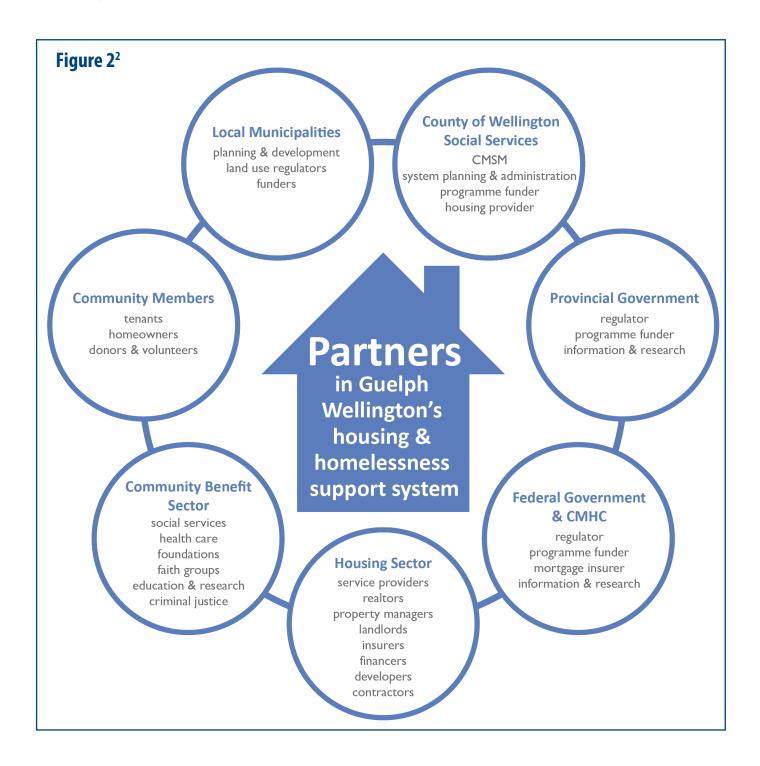
The Province has identified the County of Wellington as the CMSM for the geographic area that includes the County of Wellington and the City of Guelph. The City of Guelph is a separated municipality, and the County of Wellington is comprised of seven lower tier municipalities: Minto, Wellington North, Mapleton, Centre Wellington, Erin, Guelph/Eramosa and Puslinch. In this report, this geographic service area is referred to as "Guelph Wellington".

¹ MMAH (2012). Ontario Housing Policy Statement, page 3.

PARTNERS



Housing and homelessness are complex issues, involving shared accountabilities among all levels of government, the private sector, the non-profit sector, as well as community residents. Strong partnerships and collaborations with the Province, the County and its seven member municipalities, the City of Guelph, and other community stakeholders will be essential to ensuring the successful implementation of this plan.



² Figure 1 is adapted from Bruce County's Long Term Housing Strategy, 2010 - 2020

METHODOLOGY



This HHP builds on the work of the County's first **Affordable Housing Strategy**, which was released in 2005. This new plan takes into account the progress, consultations, and research that have transpired since the first strategy was released.

The process for developing this HHP has been participatory, and has greatly benefited from the input of hundreds of community members who have shared their experiences of housing and homelessness, and their hopes for the future. Key among these voices was the input of 12 members of a Community Reference Group, which met regularly to provide community input, guidance and advice to the HHP project (see Acknowledgements). The strategic planning process itself occurred in three phases:

- 1. Need and Demand Study The purpose of the first step was to gain a better understanding of the current and anticipated future demand for housing in Guelph Wellington. A summary of the findings from this analysis can be found in the Need and Demand Study completed by the County (October 2012). This report highlights key trends in the demographic make-up of the community, the availability of and demand for social and affordable housing, as well as usage of local homeless shelters and eviction prevention services.
- 2. Research and Consultations The focus of phase two was on obtaining community input from individuals with lived experiences (i.e. homeless, social housing tenants, living in poverty, etc.), as well as community service providers, volunteers, landlords and developers, government representatives (both staff and elected officials), and other interested citizens. All told, about 210 individuals participated in a range of interviews, focus groups and town hall meetings, which took place between October 2012 and January 2013. The results of these discussions, as well as the findings of a review of promising practices related to housing and homelessness, were released in a Discussion Paper (February 2013). In addition, a detailed Inventory of existing affordable housing options in Guelph Wellington that are funded by the federal, provincial and/or municipal governments has been compiled.
- 3. Strategy Development The final phase of the process involved articulating the vision and goals/actions that will guide housing and homelessness planning over the next 10 years. To begin with, 272 community members responded to a validation survey, providing feedback on the draft vision statement and strategic priorities outlined in the Discussion Paper. Another 23 individuals participated in three facilitated sessions where specific goals and actions were explored.

This report presents the results of Phase 3. It contains an overarching vision statement, eight goals and 38 actions to address the issues, needs and gaps in the housing and homelessness system in Guelph Wellington, as well as a series of targets and performance measures by which progress towards the goals will be assessed.



Artwork: Wayne Forest Wall of art, Welcome In Drop-in Centre, downtown Guelph

VISION FOR GUELPH WELLINGTON





Everyone in Guelph Wellington can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home.

The above vision statement was developed based on feedback from 272 community stakeholders to a validation survey, and then tested with members of the Community Reference Group. It reflects the community's desire for a vision that is simple, bold and direct. It is intended to be inclusive of all population groups and housing options along the continuum, and to provide a sense of welcoming and warmth. It recognizes that not only is it important for people to be able to find suitable housing, but that they must also be able to keep their housing long-term, with or without supports.



HHP Consultation with the Community Voices of the Poverty Task Force (October 18, 2012).

STRATEGIC GOALS



The **Discussion Paper** details numerous housing and homelessness challenges facing Guelph Wellington. These issues were grouped into six themes for discussion purposes: preventing and eliminating homelessness; supportive housing and housing with supports; income and affordability; housing supply; system navigation; and research, monitoring, and evaluation. Based on community feedback, these themes have been further refined into eight strategic goals and 38 actions, which provide a roadmap for achieving the desired vision: "Everyone in Guelph Wellington can find and maintain an appropriate, safe and affordable place to call home."

The number of proposed goals/actions demonstrates the breadth and complexity of issues relating to affordable housing and homelessness, and the need for a multi-pronged solution. Increasing the supply of social housing alone is insufficient to improve access to affordable and sustainable housing. And while the number of issues to be addressed may seem daunting, the intention behind the HHP is to tackle the issues piece-by-piece and from multiple directions over an extended period of time.

The following are definitions of the strategic planning terms used in the HHP:

- Vision the desired future state
- Goals the result we are trying to achieve
- · Actions what we will do to achieve the goal
- Targets how we will know if we have been successful
- Measures of Success the indicators we will use to measure

Setting and Quantifying Targets

The Housing Services Act, 2011 requires that HHPs contain short and long-term housing targets. These measurements will ultimately allow Service Managers and communities to demonstrate the extent to which each initiative is meeting its desired impact.

In developing this HHP, there was significant discussion about setting and quantifying more specific targets. One option explored was setting targets in accordance with community needs, for example:

Community Need	Ultimate Target
 On average, 108 individuals access the emergency shelters in Guelph per night (2012) 	Zero "absolute" homelessness
1,300 households are on the centralized waiting list for social housing in Guelph Wellington (Dec 2012)	 Creation of new permanent social housing and/or rent supplement units to fully meet the demand of the waiting list
• 12.2% of all households in Guelph and 7.2% in Wellington are living in core housing need (2006)	• 100% reduction in the proportion of households living in "core housing need"

It is recognized that ideal targets should be: specific, measurable, assignable, realistic and time-related. The challenge with basing targets on community need is that they do not follow the "SMART" principle; in so much as achievability is highly dependent upon a range of socio-economic factors that extend well beyond the scope and control of the Service Manager and in many cases local communities (i.e. population growth, economic conditions, housing starts, vacancy rates, etc.). In addition, the ability to meet specific housing targets is highly dependent upon the availability of funding from other levels of government, which, at the time of writing this plan, is not fully known.

Furthermore, it is recognized that the development of housing indicators and measures is a new and evolving area. The Province is currently working with Service Managers to develop a set of common indicators to be used province-wide in the future. Once developed, the County will work with community partners to apply these indicators and measures locally.

As an important first step, a number of short and long-term target areas have been identified for this HHP. As more information becomes available related to programme targets and funding from federal and provincial governments, more measurable targets and implementation plans will be developed in consultation with community partners. These detailed implementation plans will take into account the different approaches required to address the various urban and rural communities of Guelph Wellington.

Summary of Goals and Targets

Listed on the following page is a summary of the goals and targets for Guelph Wellington's HHP. The criteria used in selecting and prioritizing these goals and targets were as follows:

- Mentioned often throughout consultations
- · Supported by Guelph Wellington data
- Supported by best practice research
- Strategic value (ability to leverage something else)
- Achievability
- Affordability

More details, including rationales, examples, and potential indicators that can be used to measure progress are provided in the following pages. The list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight best practices and models that could be adapted to the local context.



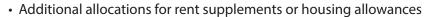
Goals



- 1. To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses
- 2. To provide a range of supports to assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed
- 3. To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions
- 4. To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income households
- 5. To reduce the length of time and number of people that experience homelessness
- 6. To promote practices that make the housing and homelessness support system more accessible and welcoming
- 7. To preserve the existing social and affordable rental housing stock
- 8. To seize opportunities to turn research knowledge into action







- Increase in the availability of housing outreach/support services
 - Shift in funding from emergency shelter beds to eviction prevention and outreach/support programmes and services
 - New funding leveraged and partnerships established to increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low-income residents



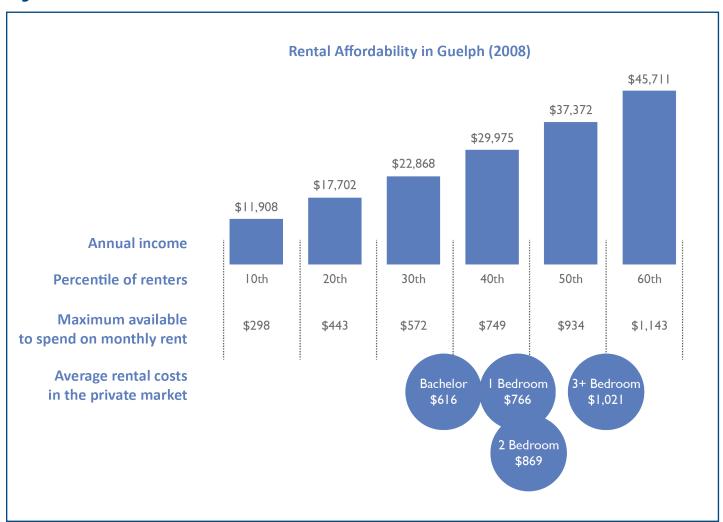
Long-term Targets (by 2024)

- Reduction in the proportion of Guelph Wellington's population who are homeless
- Increase in the number, proportion and availability of affordable housing units across Guelph Wellington
- · Reduction in the proportion of the population on the centralized waiting list
- Reduction in the proportion of households in Guelph Wellington living in "core housing need"

GOAL #1: To help low-income households close the gap between their incomes and housing expenses

One of the root causes of homelessness and housing affordability problems is low income. It's simple math – people need a living wage in order to maintain their housing and pay for other necessities of daily life. The most common causes of housing affordability mentioned during this study were low paying jobs, inadequate social assistance rates, and the expense of raising children as a lone parent. Good employment opportunities, particularly for people with limited education and/or disabilities, are scarce, and temporary jobs, although more plentiful, typically lack sufficient wages and/or benefits. Furthermore, many of the existing social policies and financial programmes intended to assist people living in poverty are inadequate, and some of these financial aids are currently only available to OW/ODSP recipients.

Figure 3³



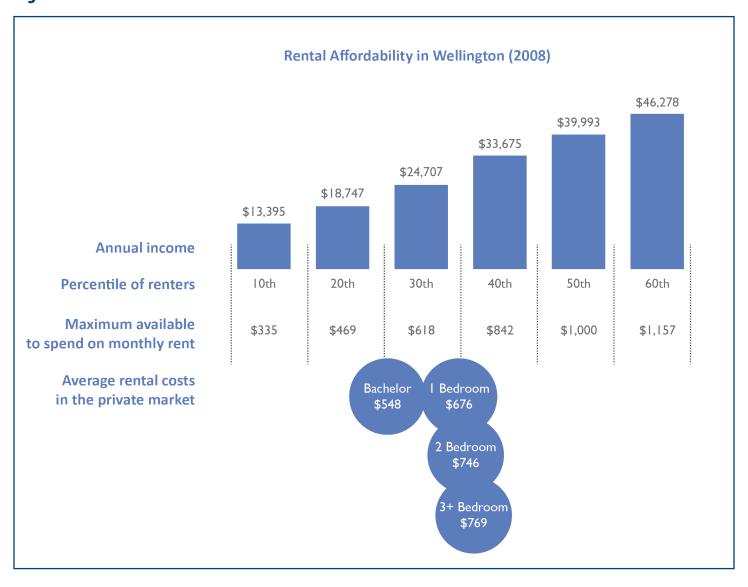
³ Data notes for Figures 3 and 4

Income source: Statistics Canada, 2006 Custom Order, 2005 income percentiles have been inflated by Ontario Consumer Price Index of 6% to the 2008 level

[•] Maximum available to spend on monthly rent = 30% of gross income

Average market rent source: County of Wellington, Housing Services, Average Market Rent Survey, 2009

Figure 4⁴

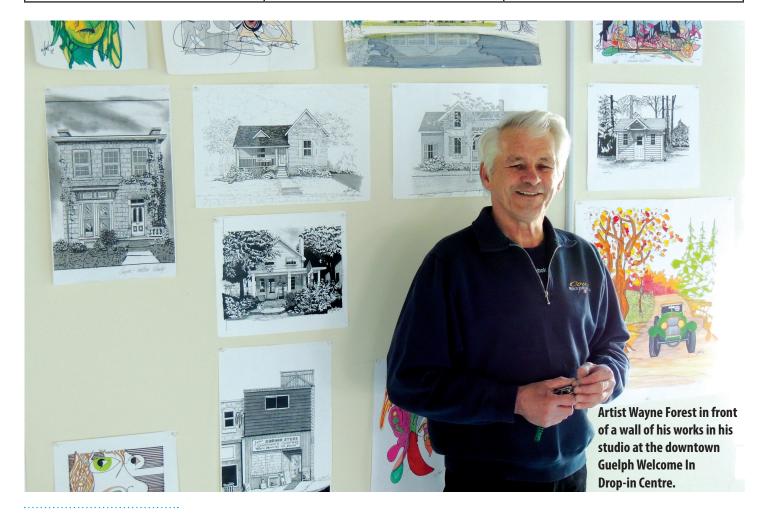


Social (RGI) housing is intended for households at or below the 30th income percentile, while affordable housing (rental or ownership) is generally for households earning between the 30th to 60th income percentiles. Given the long waiting list for social housing in Guelph Wellington⁴, many households at or below the 30th income percentile - \$22,268 in Guelph and \$24,707 in Wellington - are forced to turn to the private market for accommodation. As illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 above, there are limited affordable rental housing options for low-income households in Guelph Wellington.

This goal and the four actions outlined in the table below are intended to help alleviate the gap between income and housing affordability, beginning with the need for more "housing benefits" – monthly allowances that help low-income tenants close the gap between their incomes and the cost of rent. Where feasible, these benefits should be portable and tied to individuals (not units).

⁴ As of December 2012, there were 1,294 households on the centralized waiting list. Average wait times vary from two to nine years, depending on household size and location.

Actions	Examples⁵	Measures of Success
1.1 Expand the existing rent subsidy programmes that help reduce the rents of low-income tenants to an affordable level	County's Rent Supplement and Housing Allowance programmes	Increase in the number of rent subsidies allocated
1.2 Continue to support advocacy efforts to upper levels of government for improvements to the income security system	Municipal advocacy work in collaboration with the PTF, AMO, FCM, OMSSA, ROMA, and other associations that allow local political leaders to advocate to upper levels of government	Improvements to the income security system
1.3 Explore options to assist people with arrears/credit issues to access housing	Landlords willing to accept monthly payments toward last month's rent	Extent to which options meet an identified need
1.4 Continue to work with local utility corporations to reduce the burden of rising utility costs on low-income tenants and homeowners	 OPA's saveONenergy Home Assistance Programme Collaborations between Centre Wellington Hydro and CRC 	 Increased uptake in community energy programs Decreased usage of local utility banks

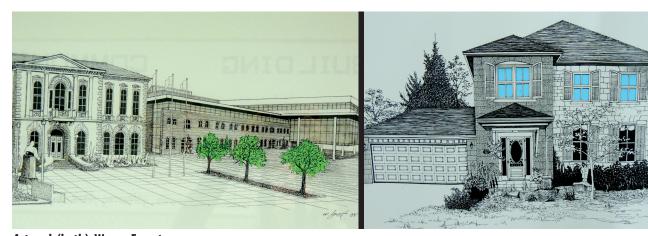


⁵ The list of examples is not intended to be exhaustive, but rather to highlight best practices and models that could be adapted to the local context.

GOAL #2 - To provide a range of supports to assist people at risk of homelessness to remain housed

From a cost/benefit perspective, the most effective way to end homelessness is to stop it before it begins. Some residents lack the necessary "life skills" in financial management, household maintenance, and conflict resolution to successfully maintain their housing. Complaints of tenants being in rent and utility arrears and/or behaving disruptively are frequent, and therefore it is important that the HHP includes an emphasis on eviction prevention. This goal and the actions outlined below speak to the need for early detection activities that proactively identify individuals/families living in precarious situations that could benefit from outreach and support services, including emergency financial aid. It also involves reaching out to at-risk youth who are dealing with family crises that could potentially lead to household breakdowns (e.g. youth leaving homes).

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
2.1 Continue to offer temporary emergency financial assistance to low-income households in need	Rent/utility banks offered by the County, CRC, Drop In Centre, and Salvation Army	Extent to which the number of clients assisted meets demand
2.2 Expand housing outreach and support services (i.e. counselling, mediation, budgeting, and life skills training) that help people keep their housing, including early identification of family crisis issues	 CRC's Outreach and Support services GWSA's Seniors Offering Support Neighbourhood support workers Aftercare support programmes (Michael House, Wyndham House) 	Increase in the number of clients being appropriately referred to and accessing housing outreach and support services
2.3 Work proactively and collaboratively with both landlords and tenants to resolve housing issues and prevent evictions	 Tenant/landlord mediation Workshops regarding tenant rights and responsibilities Publication of an on-line landlord-tenant resource toolkit 	 Improvements in social housing tenant satisfaction rates Decreased eviction rates (social and private sector housing) Improved landlord/tenant relationships
2.4 Work with school boards and youth service agencies to identify children and youth at risk of homelessness, advocate/broker services on their behalf, and assist them to connect with community services	 The RAFT – a youth shelter alternative in Niagara Give Yourself Credit Wyndham House's Outreach and Support Services Mobilizing Local Capacity to End Youth Homelessness 	Decreased usage of the Youth Emergency Shelter (YES) Increase in the number of youth being referred to homelessness prevention services



Artwork (both): Wayne Forest

GOAL #3 - To offer a comprehensive range of supportive housing options for residents with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions

Individuals struggling with complex needs due to aging, developmental disabilities, mental health issues, addictions, etc. require housing coupled with supportive services to help them live as successfully as possible in the community. At present, the supply of supportive housing options located in Guelph Wellington is simply too limited. Although highly desirable, given the current economic environment, it is unlikely that new purpose-built permanent supportive housing units will be constructed in the immediate future. It is therefore recommended that local outreach and support services provided by multi-disciplinary teams be enhanced, and that these services be offered in subsidized and private market rental units. Central to this goal is the need for housing providers to establish partnerships with WWLHIN-funded programmes and services, given the intersection between the health and housing sectors on this issue. Examples of successful models are already in place in the community (see table below). As well, it will be important to ensure that new housing developments take into account the future needs of an aging and increasingly medically complex population.

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
 3.1 Establish a formal working relationship with the WWLHIN to support the MOHLTC's "Home First" philosophy that would include: Supporting community agencies to increase the supply of outreach and housing support services provided to individuals with complex needs due to aging, disabilities, mental health issues and addictions Increasing the supply of supportive housing units in Guelph Wellington Hospital discharge planning and community care offered through the CCAC 	County's partnership with CMHA and Traverse Independence to deliver support services at Fergusson Place County's funding agreements with Retirement Homes under the Domiciliary Hostel Program Assisted Living for At Risk Elderly, Guelph Independent Living	Increase in the number of supportive housing units created Increase in the number of clients being appropriately referred to and accessing community support services
3.2 Establish a Housing First Network composed of multi-disciplinary staff providing housing outreach and support services in a variety of settings, in order to improve service coordination and information sharing (also see 5.2)	Model upon Seniors' Services Network and Hoarding Network	Better coordination and integration of housing support services
3.3 Encourage the development of Secondary Suites; allowing client groups such as low-income seniors or adults with a disability to live independently in their community, close to family and friends (also see 4.8)	• In the City of Guelph, 209 accessory apartment units were created in 2012 – above the City's affordable housing target of 90 units	Increase in the number of secondary suites created

3.4 Promote financial programmes • CMHC's former Homeowner Increased uptake of residential from other levels of government Residential Rehabilitation Assistance renovation programmes that can help homeowners improve Programme (RRAP) the safety and accessibility of their IAH Ontario Renovates Program · Ontario's Healthy Homes homes Renovation Tax Credit

GOAL #4 - To increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options for low- to moderate-income households

Not surprisingly, a fundamental need expressed through the community consultations and the validation survey is for more affordable housing options. The centralized waiting list for social housing is too long; the rental vacancy rate is very low; and the limited affordable options that do exist often fall below tenants' expectations in terms of quality, size and maintenance. Recent grants that have been allocated for developers to build new affordable rental units are appreciated, but viewed as "just a drop in the bucket" as they have not addressed the needs of households on the centralized waiting list. Additional investments from the federal and provincial governments are required in order to increase the supply and mix of affordable housing options across the continuum and within the geographic area.

"Affordable Housing" is a broad term that refers to any type of housing option along the housing continuum. It applies to rental units and home ownership, as well as transitional, supportive and social housing. With respect to private market housing, both the City and County's Official Plans define affordable as the following:

- Affordable rental housing a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent in the regional market area (In 2008, the average market rent for all unit sizes was \$833 per month in Guelph and \$714 in Wellington)
- Affordable ownership housing the purchase price is at least 10% below the average house price of a resale unit in the regional market area (In 2008, the average house price was \$237,000 in Guelph and \$269,000 in Wellington)

The focus of the nine actions listed below is on removing any impediments at the local level that could potentially delay developments, should new funding emerge. They also speak to the need for the County and concerned community partners to advocate for policy reforms that could encourage the development of additional affordable housing units.

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
4.1 Continue to support advocacy efforts to upper levels of government for the funding of new permanent affordable housing units, including options for additional subsidies to reduce rents to RGI levels	Municipal advocacy work in collaboration with the PTF, AMO, FCM, OMSSA, ROMA, and other associations that allow local political leaders to advocate to upper levels of government	 New investments in social housing from upper levels of government Additional allocations for rent supplements or housing allowances
4.2 Consider options and incentives for municipal affordable housing reserves in order to leverage funding from upper levels of government	 Leveraging new federal and provincial funding (e.g. IAH, HPS, etc.) Including a component for social housing support in the next development charges review as in Kingston among other cities 	 Increase in the number of social and affordable housing units created Decrease in the centralized waiting list Additional allocations to local affordable housing reserves

4.3 Maintain a list of priorities and suitable properties for new affordable housing developments, in order to quickly respond to emerging funding opportunities from upper levels of government	• Phase 2 of Fergusson Place	 Development opportunities identified Financial and in-kind commitments by partners identified
4.4 Explore social financing ⁶ opportunities that could be used to increase the supply of affordable rental stock	 Community Forward Fund - provides working capital and bridge loans for Canadian non-profits Infrastructure Ontario mortgages YWCA Toronto Elm Centre - issued a \$1 million community housing bond 	Amount of capital generated through social financing
4.5 Leverage funding from other levels of government to increase home ownership opportunities for low- to moderate-income households	 2nd mortgage (down payment assistance) programmes offered by the County, Options for Homes, and Habitat for Humanity Rent-to-own initiatives 	Increased funding allocated to and usage of the County's Home Ownership Fund
4.6 Create a comprehensive incentive toolkit which could be used by all local planning departments for education purposes, and to encourage the development of new affordable units	MMAH's Municipal Tools for Affordable Housing	Toolkit developed and disseminated all local planning departments
4.7 Provide incentives to support affordable housing in new developments	 Waiving/rebating of planning and building fees Development charge exemptions or grants 	Incentives made available to developers of new construction
4.8 Review planning regulations and by-laws in all of the local municipalities to identify any unnecessary restrictions to the development of new affordable housing units	 Parking requirements Secondary suites (see 3.3) Gap analysis of condominium conversion and demolition control policies 	Regulations and by-laws are reviewed and (if warranted) amended
4.9 Advocate to the Province to permit inclusionary zoning (i.e. require a given share of new construction to be affordable by people with low- to moderate-incomes)		Changes to provincial planning regulations

⁶ **Social finance** is an approach to managing money that delivers a social dividend and an economic return. It includes community investing, micro-lending, social impact bonds, and sustainable business and social enterprise lending (Wikipedia, 2013).

GOAL #5 - To reduce the length of time and number of people that experience homelessness

During the community consultations, there was considerable debate about setting a goal of "zero homelessness." Participants recognized that this is an ideal state, but noted that in reality, due to the complexity of factors that contribute to homelessness, there will always be a segment of the population that finds itself without a roof. The consensus locally is to ensure that any homeless experience is short-lived and that there is suitable shelter accommodation and support services to help people get "back on their feet" quickly.

At present, there are no emergency shelter beds situated in the County; most individuals or families (particularly youth) prefer to stay local and make do, but those who choose to access the shelter system need to travel to neighbouring cities. Furthermore, the current shelters cannot accommodate families (e.g. couples or single fathers with children), and so families often spend their shelter stays in one of the local motels, which have agreements with the Welcome In Drop-In Centre. The use of motels for shelter accommodations presents many challenges, and is of growing concern given the recent trend showing a rise in the number of families and complexity of clients accessing the shelter system.

The following actions are intended to address the existing pressures on the emergency shelter system, and to change the focus of service delivery from emergency housing to Housing First. They are predicated on the assumption that there will be a shift in funding from per diems to eviction prevention, outreach and support services.

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
5.1 Promote a Housing First philosophy, whereby homeless individuals/ families would be placed directly into affordable rental units with on-site supports	MHCC's At Home/Chez Soi project Pathways to Housing (US)	 Increased awareness and understanding of Housing First among local service providers Decreased usage of emergency shelters Improved placement and tenure rate of homeless
5.2 Create a Housing First team that is trained in providing assessments and referrals for complex clients (i.e. youth, adults and families dealing with mental health, addiction and trauma issues)	MHCC's At Home/Chez Soi project	Improvements in the way homeless individuals are triaged and linked with community support services
5.3 Support community agencies to create emergency shelter options that better meet the community needs of the local homeless population	 Family-friendly emergency housing units Bridging the Gap – rural shelter options for youth in Halton The RAFT – a youth shelter alternative in Niagara 	 Decreased usage of motels for shelter accommodation Increase in the number of family shelter spaces established
5.4 Leverage funding from other levels of government/ministries to increase the supply of transitional housing units, in particular for families, victims of domestic violence, youth exiting the child welfare system, and individuals leaving incarceration	 Wyndham House's Suffolk and Bellevue Houses Lutherwood's Family in Transition programme Woodgreen's Homeward Bound (Toronto) 	Increase in the number of transitional housing units created

GOAL #6 - To promote practices that make the housing and homelessness support system more accessible and welcoming

Housing First is based on the belief that housing is a basic human right, and that people should not have to prove that they are "housing ready" by first participating in treatment or by being clean and sober before obtaining somewhere to live. Evidence from other communities that have implemented Housing First indicates that it is a new service philosophy as much as a service delivery model. It often requires a change in existing agency cultures, with emphasis being placed on relationship building and practices that make intake services more user-friendly and welcoming. This includes helping to support people entering and navigating the housing system; for example, accompanying individuals when they inspect units, helping them to negotiate agreements with landlords, and connecting them with local neighbourhood groups and faith communities. This is especially important for newcomers who face considerable challenges finding adequate and affordable housing in neighbourhoods where they feel safe.

In addition, this goal and the actions outlined below speak to the need to ensure social services are better integrated, and where possible, to reduce transportation barriers in rural areas where the lack of public transportation and travel distances make it extremely difficult for individuals to attend appointments.

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
6.1 Support community groups to establish "housing specialist" functions that help people navigate the housing system and connect them with community groups and services	 County's Tenant Placement Service Wyndham House's Youth Resource Centre CRC 211 Service 	 Improved placement rate and tenures of clients Positive client feedback
6.2 Continue efforts to provide multi-service access points at locations in rural communities	County satellite OW office in Fergus	 Number of access points where services are offered in the County Positive client feedback
6.3 Foster inclusion and housing options for new immigrants and refugees	 OCISO – in Ottawa municipal housing case managers provide on- site services at settlement agencies Designated temporary housing accommodations for new immigrants in partnership with employers 	 Better coordination between housing and settlement programmes Positive client feedback
6.4 Continue to explore options for improving transit solutions available to Wellington residents	 CRC's Volunteer Transportation Program funded by the County Rural public transit routes and services for people with disabilities 	Increased transportation options for rural residents
6.5 Foster integration of housing, income support and other relevant community programmes and services	Common intake processesHuman services integration	 Housing and income support services are streamlined Positive feedback from clients and staff
6.6 Continue to address the needs of applicants on the centralized waiting list, as well as to support tenants experiencing transfers due to over/under-housing situations		 Number of social housing applicants being appropriately referred to and accessing community support services Improved social housing tenant satisfaction rates

⁷ Tsemberis, S. (2013, May 2). Presentation at the 2nd National Meeting of Community Advisory Boards and Community Entities., Ottawa, Ontario.

GOAL #7 - To preserve the existing social and affordable rental housing stock

No new permanent social housing has been built in Guelph Wellington since 1995, and much of the existing stock is aging and requires major life-cycle replacements. Consequently, this goal speaks to the need to preserve and upgrade the existing social and affordable rental housing stock.

For example, the County is currently in the process of completing a County-wide Asset Management Plan, which will identify and quantify these needs for all County owned housing. In order to finance necessary capital improvements, it will be necessary to continue to allocate funds to capital reserves, to leverage any upper level government funding available, and to investigate energy efficiency and other renovations that could result in operating cost savings.

In the coming years federal operating agreements and the mortgages of several non-profit buildings are coming to an end. In addition to safeguarding the ongoing operation of these units as affordable options for low-income households, consideration will be given to refinancing these buildings to fund renovations and new units.

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
7.1 Continue to work with housing providers to safeguard the ongoing operation of units (with federal agreements set to expire) as affordable options for low-income households		Proportion of 246 federally funded units maintained as affordable housing options for low-income households
7.2 Explore opportunities for non-profit housing providers to leverage their existing capital assets in order to finance renovations and new units	Ottawa's refinancing of existing social housing to build new units and do renovations	Amount of assets re-financed
7.3 Implement the County-wide Asset Management Plan (expected to be completed by December 2013)		Improvements made to social housing stock
7.4 Encourage landlords to adopt the FRPO's Certified Rental Building Programme, which aims to protect tenants from renting in a poorly maintained building or from a property manager that offers an inadequate quality of service to its tenants	Williams McDaniel buildings in Guelph	Increase in the number and proportion of multi-residential properties designated as Certified Rental Buildings

GOAL #8 - To seize opportunities to turn research knowledge into action

The current housing and homelessness service environment is changing. New approaches such as Housing First have been piloted across Canada, and are currently being evaluated. A recent Provincial Commission has recommended major changes to the social assistance system. And new technologies for energy conservation are emerging. This goal is about building local research capacity, in order to ensure that the outcomes of local housing and homelessness services are monitored, and that "best practices" appropriate for adaptation to the local context are explored and shared with local stakeholders.

It is recommended that the HHP be approached with a learning and evolving orientation, as an opportunity to engage community stakeholders in celebrating what's been achieved, and for making ongoing improvements to the strategy.

Actions	Examples	Measures of Success
8.1 Continue to promote efforts that improve community awareness and understanding of affordable housing and homelessness	 UofG/CMHC Housing Forums Poverty Task Force	Number of housing events/forums held
8.2 Continue to monitor research trends and identify best practices that are appropriate for adaptation to the local context	 Pocket housing (small residences) Housing First Human services integration Social housing redevelopment and regeneration Environmental sustainability and energy conservation 	 Commitment (including financial resources) to conduct research Extent to which research meets an identified need
8.3 Monitor and communicate the outcomes of the HHP on a regular basis		 Annual progress report released HHP updated every 5 years or when major programme changes occur

PROVINCIAL PRIORITY POPULATIONS

The HHP has been intentionally designed to ensure that the needs of vulnerable populations have been taken into account, in particular Aboriginal Peoples living off-reserve, victims of domestic violence, and persons with disabilities.

The Aboriginal population of Guelph Wellington is low (0.9% according to the 2006 Census); however efforts were made throughout the development of the HHP to reach out to local Aboriginal organizations and invite them to participate in community meetings and direct discussions. As we work to implement the HHP and develop more specific implementation strategies, it will be important to continue our efforts to reach out to the local Aboriginal population and consider their housing needs in decisions that are made.

Membership of the Community Reference Group, which provided guidance and leadership to the development of the HHP, was designed to be to inclusive of key priority groups. It specifically included a representative from the local women's shelter, in order to ensure that the needs of victims of domestic violence were considered in the development of the HHP.

As part of the development of the HHP, a full Inventory of Housing Resources that received capital and/or operating funds from one or more levels of government was prepared. This Inventory includes a listing of all "accessible" shelter beds and social housing units available in Guelph Wellington.

During the consultation process, the needs of both provincial and local priority populations were explored. Breakout discussions were held at town hall meetings, in order to probe the specific needs of vulnerable populations, including youth, individuals with physical disabilities, mental health problems and addictions, as well as victims of domestic violence. In addition, staff of Women in Crisis conducted several client interviews on behalf of the consulting team, and targeted focus groups were held for newcomers to Canada and for those working with clients experiencing concurrent mental health disorders and addictions. The theme of targeted transitional and supportive housing for provincial priority populations was repeatedly mentioned in the consultations, and informs the final HHP. For more detail, please refer to the Discussion Paper.

Listed below is a summary of the goals and actions that have specific relevance to individuals with disabilities and victims of domestic violence.

Persons with Disabilities

Goal/Action	Further Explanation
Action 1.2	This action speaks to advocating for better income support programs, although no programmes are referenced by name, this work will include advocacy for better support for clients is receipt of ODSP.
Action 2.2	This action speaks to expanding outreach and support services in order to prevent homelessness. The language used in this action is designed to be open and inclusive of clients dealing with many issues, including those who may be struggling to maintain housing due to a disability.
Action 3.1	This action specifically calls for a stronger relationship with the LHIN to increase the supports and supply of housing available to persons with disabilities. Examples are provided of work that has been successful such as the County's relationship with Traverse Independence.
Action 3.2	The Housing First Network proposed in this action would be inclusive of agencies and services supporting persons with disabilities.
Action 3.3	This action calls for an increased number of secondary suites, and one of the main groups that is noted as benefiting from this approach are persons with a disability.
Action 3.4	This action speaks to the promotion of financial programmes that allow homeowners and landlords to improve the accessibility of their homes.
Action 5.2	The Housing First Team proposed in this action would be inclusive of agencies and services supporting persons with a disability.
Action 6.4	Improvements to transit services are mentioned for clients in the County of Wellington. The action specifically comments on the need to include services for people with a disability.
Action 6.6	This action calls on the County to continue to meet the needs of applicants on the centralized waiting list. As such, the County will need to continue to work closely with persons with disabilities to access appropriate social housing units.

Victims of Domestic Violence

Goal/Action	Further Explanation		
Action 2.2	This action speaks to expanding outreach and support services, including the identification of family crisis issues in order to prevent homelessness. The language used in this action is designed to be open and inclusive of potential victims of domestic violence.		
Action 3.2	The Housing First Network proposed in this action would be inclusive of agencies and services supporting victims of domestic violence.		
Action 5.2	The Housing First Team proposed in this action would be inclusive of agencies and services supporting victims of domestic violence.		
Action 5.3	The County will continue to collaborate with Women in Crisis as the operator of the shelter programmes for victims of domestic violence to ensure that they are supported in meeting community needs.		
Action 5.4	This action specifically speaks to leveraging funding to increase transitional housing supply for victims of domestic violence.		
Action 6.6	This action calls on the County to continue to meet the needs of applicants on the centralized waiting list. Victims of domestic violence are currently given special priority on the centralized waiting list, and represent about one-third of all social housing placements. Special priority status will continue to be part of the ongoing support that the County provides to these clients.		

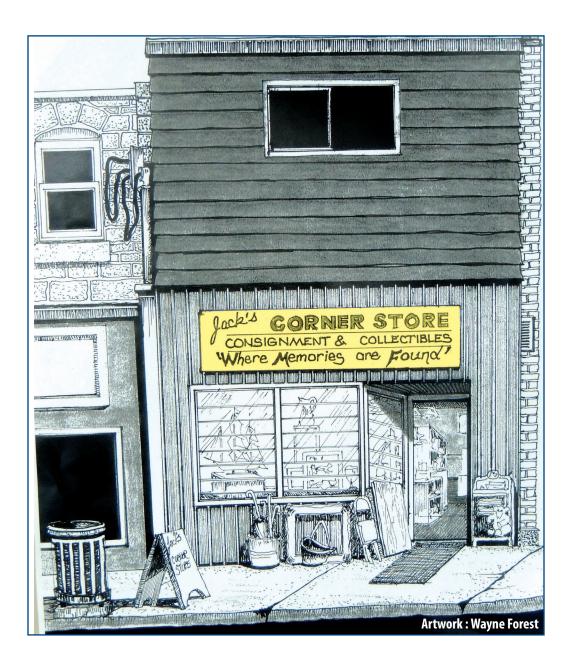


NEXT STEPS



As the CMSM for Guelph Wellington, the County has an important leadership role related to system planning, coordination of services and the development of partnerships in the area of housing and homelessness. The HHP is a starting point for the community; it identifies needs and gaps across Guelph Wellington and proposes a range of strategies to achieve the community vision of ensuring that everyone has a place to call home.

As a community, continued success will depend upon strong and trusting partnerships. The County will work to develop specific targets and more detailed implementation plans, in close cooperation with all community partners. This collaborative approach to meeting housing challenges will cultivate innovative solutions and will allow the County to maximize the available resources and assets of everyone.



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Community Reference Group

Heather Burke, County of Wellington (Co-chair) Stuart Beumer, County of Wellington (Co-chair) Barbara Powell, City of Guelph Debbie Bentley-Lauzon, Wyndham House Don Roth, CMHA Waterloo Wellington Dufferin Gail Hoekstra, Welcome In Drop In Centre Gary Roche, Wellington and Guelph Housing Committee Randalin Ellery, Guelph Wellington Task Force for Poverty Elimination Ryan Pettipiere, County of Wellington Sly Castaldi, Women In Crisis Tim Donegani, City of Guelph Tom Lammer, J. Lammer Developments Ltd

Consulting Team

Eden Grodzinski Jane Londerville Dr. Rebecca Sutherns

Illustrations

Heather Finlayson, Mere Name Design

Our thanks to Sister Christine Leyser of the Welcome In Drop In Centre for allowing us to photograph the work of some of the talented artists of the Drop In community that is on display in the Centre. Special thanks to artist Wayne Forest whose work in featured throughout this document.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Affordable Rental Housing - a unit for which the rent is at or below the average market rent of a unit in the regional market area.

Affordable Ownership Housing - the purchase price is at least 10 percent below the average purchase price of a resale unit in the regional market area.

Core Housing Need - an indicator of housing security (calculated for both rental and home ownership) that takes into account three factors:

- Adequacy Is the dwelling in need of major repair?
- Suitability Are there enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of the household?
- Affordability Do the households spend 30% or more of their before-tax income on accommodation?

Domiciliary Hostels - provide permanent housing with supports for vulnerable adults who require limited supervision and support with daily activities (e.g. retirement homes).

Emergency Shelter - provide short-term lodging and a temporary personal needs allowance until an emergency situation is resolved. Services may also include meals, access to showers and laundry, as well as assistance with linking to other services required.

Housing First - an approach that involves providing homeless people with immediate access to subsidized housing, along with support services. No pre-conditions, such as bringing a substance abuse under control or being stabilized on medications, are imposed.

Housing Outreach and Support Services - help people to live as independently as possible in the community. Services are either provided by workers visiting a resident living in market rental housing, or within specific government funded accommodations like emergency shelters, transitional housing, or supportive housing units. Housing support services provide a range of different tasks to help someone maintain their housing, such as assistance to claim welfare benefits, fill-in forms, manage a household budget, obtain furniture and furnishings, help with shopping and housework, as well as connecting with other specialist services.

Homelessness - a broad term that encompasses the following:

- Absolute living on the street (roofless) or in emergency shelters
- Hidden or concealed staying with relatives or friends (couch surfing), or living in a car, barn, etc.
- Relative living in sub-standard conditions or at-risk of losing their homes (i.e. living in "core housing need")

Market Housing - refers to private (rental or home ownership) where prices are set in the open market.

Social Housing - permanent housing financed at least partly through government funding and mortgage guarantees. A portion of units is rent-geared-to income (RGI), and the remainder may be rented at market rents. For these RGI units tenants pay no more than 30% of their household income in rent and the remainder is subsidized through government contributions. Social housing includes: public housing (which is 100% RGI), municipal and private non-profit rentals, and co-operatives where residents contribute to the management of the property to increase the sense of community and reduce operating costs. In Guelph Wellington, social housing is accessed through the Centralized Waiting List and from specific Housing Providers.

Subsidized Rental - subsidies provided to offset private market rents in private rental units for low-income households. Subsidies are generally provided by the CMSM or Service Provider (e.g. CMHA) for qualifying households in two ways:

- Rent Supplement market rent less RGI calculation (may average \$500 per unit per month); this involves an agreement with a landlord for a particular unit(s) to be allocated to a household(s) on the centralized waiting list
- Housing Allowance fixed housing subsidy (may average \$250 per unit per month) which is attached to the household rather than a specific housing unit

Supportive Housing - permanent accommodation that offers an alternative to institutional care. There is no length of stay duration. A range of support services is provided in order to help residents maintain independence. Supportive housing is geared for individuals with special needs, including long-term mental health problems, physical disabilities, developmental delays and the frail elderly. Supportive housing is accessed through specific Housing Providers.

Transitional Housing - facilities that are targeted to those in need of structure, support and/or skill building, in order to move from homelessness to housing stability and ultimately prevent a return to homelessness. They provide support services such as counselling, job training and placement, community activities, and help with life skills. Accommodation is temporary (time limited). Residents can typically stay up to a maximum of three years; the maximum stay is specified in the service agreement with the CMSM or Service Provider (e.g. CMHA).



ALTERNATE FORMATS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

Notes	

Prepared for: County of Wellington,

Consolidated Municipal Service Manager

Prepared by: JPMC Services Inc. (www.jpmc.ca)

Authors: Eden Grodzinski, Jane Londerville and

Rebecca Sutherns (November 2013)

