
**Community Plan Update on Homelessness Initiatives in
Peterborough City and County and Evaluation of the
Government of Canada's National Homelessness Initiative
Supportive Communities Partnerships Projects**

**Prepared for
Community Advisory Board and Affordable Housing
Action Committee**

**Interim
Executive Summary
Community Plan Update**

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Executive Summary

The Community Plan Update on Homelessness Initiatives in Peterborough City and County has been developed in response to the new National Homelessness Initiative – Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS).

Overview of Homelessness Partnering Strategy

As of December 2006, the Federal government announced a new homelessness program to replace the SCPI National Homelessness Initiative. The new program, called Homelessness Partnering Strategy (HPS) will receive \$270 million over two years. The program is scheduled to run from April 1 2007 to March 31 2009.

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current Community Plan, including: providing an update on homelessness within the City and County of Peterborough, and to re-evaluate the priorities identified in the previous community plan update. The process undertaken to update the Community Plan will also ensure that the gaps, assets and priorities are communicated to the community members of Peterborough City and County creating further awareness around homelessness.

Community Plan Development and Implementation

The development of the Community Plan Update endeavoured to create a planning process that was representative and inclusive of the views and needs of all stakeholders. The Community Plan involved an extensive consultation process and the input and participation by a number of local agencies, government departments and community residents.

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) and the Affordable Housing Action Committee (AHAC) provided overall guidance in this Community Plan Update. Stakeholders from across Peterborough City and County had several opportunities to participate in identifying priority issues and target areas.

Process for Development of the Update

The process undertaken to update the plan included:

- Hiring a consultant
- Consulting with CAB
- Reviewing existing material
- Developing a key stakeholder list

- Meeting with homeless and at risk individuals
- Conducting interviews with community agencies
- Holding two public forums

Process for Implementation of the Update

Implementation of the Community Plan Update will involve preparing and administering the Request for Proposal process to allocate Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS) funds, undertaking the communication strategy, monitoring the implementation of the Community Plan Update through the funding period, and evaluating the results once HPS funds have been spent.

In addition, it is anticipated that the Community Plan Update will be a catalyst for action by community agencies, funders and government. It is an important tool for the City and County of Peterborough to advance its goals with respect to homelessness and the housing insecure. City and County Government as well as community agencies can review the gaps identified in the Update and find ways to address these gaps in addition to those that may be addressed through HPS funding. Agencies may also use the information in the Community Plan Update to support their funding requests and as a source of information on what services are provided by other agencies.

To ensure the implementation of the Community Plan Update, it is required that a permanent body take ownership of this document. To make the longer term success of this Update certain, it is recommended that the Affordable Housing Action Committee present this Community Plan Update to City and County Council for approval and endorsement. While it is suggested that AHAC be the main group responsible for the implementation of the Community Plan Update, to make possible its greatest success the Update must be the responsibility of all stakeholders of the community at large. It is the tool to provide direction for the City and County of Peterborough in addressing homelessness and housing insecurity in the short and longer term.

Priorities and Objectives of the Community Plan Update

The following summarizes the Community Plan Objectives and Priorities.

Priority Area 1: Housing Retention/Homelessness Prevention

Objective: To ensure programs, services and advocacy measures are in place to help people at risk retain their housing in order to prevent homelessness.

Priority Area 2: Outreach, Support and Aftercare Services

Objective: To ensure the adequate supply and sustainable funding of outreach, support and aftercare services — designed to be coordinated, accessible, seamless, 24/7 and client-centred — in order to move people off the streets and, perhaps via emergency and transitional housing, into permanent housing.

Priority Area 3: Emergency Housing

Objective: To ensure the adequate supply and sustainable funding of emergency housing that meets the needs of all client groups (e.g., single men, single women, abused women/children, families, single-parent families, youth, Aboriginal people, new immigrants, people with mental and/or physical disabilities, etc.).

Priority Area 4: Transitional Housing

Objective: To ensure the adequate supply and sustainable funding of transitional housing that meets the needs of all client groups (e.g., people coming out of correctional facilities, people coming out of health facilities, people leaving emergency shelters, etc.).

Priority Area 5: Supportive Housing

Objective: To ensure the adequate supply and sustainable funding of supportive housing that meets the needs of all client groups.

Priority Area 6: Permanent Housing

Objective: To ensure that all residents in the City and County of Peterborough have safe, adequate, affordable, accessible and sustainable housing.

Priority Area 7: Accountability and Inclusive Decision-Making

Objective: To ensure that the process for identifying gaps, determining priorities and funding programs and services within the system that serves the needs of the homeless and housing insecure is inclusive, transparent and built upon solid accountability measures.

Priority Area 8: Public Awareness and Community Support

Objective: To ensure that the broader community is aware of, and sensitive to, homelessness and housing insecurity issues in order to gain its support (monetary and non-monetary) for programs and services.

Priority 9: Community Capacity

Objective: To ensure that the community has the capacity to develop and deliver a meaningful, appropriate and sustainable response to homelessness and housing insecurity.

Assets and Gaps in Addressing Homelessness

In order to define what direction was to be taken by community members, agencies and government in addressing homelessness, an inventory of the existing support and services (assets) and the need for these services (gaps) was identified in the 2003 Community Plan Update. As part of this Community Plan Update process community agencies identified were asked to update their information on assets and gaps and to identify other agencies to be added to the inventory.

The Community Plan Update provides a summary of the assets and gaps that currently exist in the City and County of Peterborough.

Proposed Activities

One of the key elements of a Community Plan is to identify priority issues or areas of greatest need for homeless people in the City and County of Peterborough based on the community's objectives an analysis of assets and gaps.

HIGH PRIORITIES (for 2007)

Priority Area 1: Housing Retention/Homelessness Prevention

1. Develop and implement a business plan to increase amount of emergency funds to prevent homelessness.
2. Increase access to emergency funds by reducing eligibility criteria for emergency discretionary benefits and related benefits/funds.
3. Ensure that the community has advocate services to negotiate with landlords in cases of rent arrears.
4. Increase community awareness of the services and supports available to help retain housing
5. Increase availability of and access to life skills, education and job training programs to meet the needs of youth, Aboriginal people, single mothers and other groups in need.
6. Increase the incidence and quality of discharge planning for people coming out of correctional facilities, hospitals, mental health facilities, shelters, etc.

7. Advocate with the provincial government for changes in ODSP, OW, National Child Benefit (NCB), and minimum wage. Advocacy should also include streamlining or rationalizing the regulations and application process of social assistance rules and policies.
8. Increase the inclusion of recipients in the design and delivery of social welfare services.
9. Advocate to the provincial government for day care subsidies that allow mothers to work and keep more of what they earn for housing.

Priority Area 2: Outreach, Support and Aftercare Services

1. Assess current outreach, support and aftercare services in order to allocate resources according to community need.
2. Develop and implement a protocol for the delivery of collaborative inter-agency outreach, support and aftercare services.
3. Increase the number of outreach/support/aftercare workers.
4. Provide appropriate client-centred outreach, support and aftercare services (e.g., for youth, Aboriginal people) through increased staff training and inter-agency collaboration.
5. Develop and fund “out of shelter and into housing” supports that help people transfer into and retain permanent housing, and increase access to necessary goods and services (including nutritious food, subsidized or free bus passes, furniture and household goods, recreational activities (especially for children), lease co-signers, obtaining I.D., medical/dental/vision care, clothing, hygiene kits, etc.).
6. Pursue a community-based and coordinated plan to increase access to recreational and social opportunities for children living in poverty and increase awareness of access opportunities for families.

Priority Area 4: Transitional Housing

1. Research needs and priorities in order to develop additional transitional housing; in particular youth, women and persons with substance abuse.
2. Support development of a rehabilitation centre or transitional housing model for persons with substance abuse.

Priority Area 8: Public Awareness and Community Support

1. Develop and implement a comprehensive campaign and/or strategies to promote an understanding of homelessness and housing insecurity within the community. Clear messages are necessary, including identifying the root causes of homelessness.
2. Create and deliver public education programs to reduce discrimination against, and stereotyping of homeless and specific groups such as youth and Aboriginal people.
3. Increase individual and private-sector donations to homelessness and affordable housing (including the Peterborough Affordable Housing Foundation).

4. Consider having AHAC to be the conduit of information or source of information on a regular basis to the community.

Priority Area 9: Community Capacity

1. Ensure adequate staff to support the implementation of the recommendations of the Community Plan and to increase and sustain community partnerships and networks.
2. Continue to explore models for homelessness funding network or community foundation.
3. Expand participation in, and support ongoing work of, an Agency Network to ensure that services are, to the degree possible, coordinated, easy to access, easy to understand and not overlapping in order to best serve client needs.
4. Explore, develop and implement the common information management tool for measuring outcomes of homelessness funding and services (HIFIS).
5. Continue to provide resource development support (e.g., training) through AHAC in order to expand the range of funders and potential contributors, seek out innovative funding partnerships, and link agencies and networks with potential partners for funding and other resources.

LOWER PRIORITIES (for 2007)

Priority Area 3: Emergency Housing

1. Develop sustainability plans for each existing shelter (e.g., Brock Mission, YES, etc.) to ensure these shelters are appropriately funded and not subject to financial crises.
2. Further develop business plan (including sustainability component) for Minimum Barrier Shelter.
3. To advocate to the province for an increase to the per diem rates for shelters.
4. Develop a multi-service centre (i.e. drop-in/day shelter) that meets basic needs of homeless or those at risk of homelessness.
5. Negotiate systems that allow for longer stays within emergency shelters.
6. Develop an Aboriginal community centre/drop-in centre, potentially with a limited number of beds for emergency housing.
7. Establish models of County-based emergency accommodation.

Priority Area 5: Supportive Housing

1. Support local agencies interested in pursuing additional funding from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and Ministry of Community and Social Services to address needs for supportive housing.
2. Conduct information session for student renters to educate on tenant rights and responsibilities.

Priority Area 6: Permanent Housing

1. Assess and support the strategies and activities that arise out of the Housing Needs Assessment Study for Peterborough City and County (October 2003) and Update (2006) such as recommendation to permit accessory suites as-of-right.
2. Look into affordable ownership models.
3. Research ability to improve rooming house regulations and identify opportunities for this form of housing to better meet housing needs of single individuals.

Priority Area 7: Accountability and Inclusive Decision-Making

1. Increase the degree to which the evaluation of programs and services includes feedback from the people who use the programs and services.
2. Increase the degree to which the evaluations of programs and services are communicated and made accessible to the public.
3. Deliver an annual status report on the implementation of the Community Plan and involve the community in reassessing priorities as needed.
4. Increase the capacity of agencies to evaluate programs using outcomes-based and client/user-feedback models (HIFIS).

Supports to Sustainability

Partnerships are a key factor in the sustainability of the Community Plan. Their involvement in not only the process but in the implementation is integral to the success of the Community Plan Update. The Update identifies community partnerships and activities that will contribute to the sustainability of the Community Plan.

Communication Strategy

A coordinated and effective communications strategy for the Community Plan development and implementation process is an important element in the success and sustainability of a community's efforts on homelessness. A communication plan should also help foster community support for the process, increase partnerships and increase public awareness. The Community Plan Update outlines the objectives of the community's communication plan.

Community's Contribution

Confirmation of funding from other sources must equal any community allocation under HPS. At this stage of the Community Update this information is not available. This information will be incorporated at a later date by the Affordable Housing Action Committee.

Evaluation Strategy

The Community Advisory Board (CAB) has identified six major measurable outcomes that the Community will use to measure the process and success of their efforts in addressing homelessness.

1. What difference has expending the HPS funds (or other) made in building public awareness of the issues of homelessness or housing insecure?
2. What difference has expending these funds made in contributing to the community's capacity to create a meaningful and sustainable response to homelessness and housing insecurity?
 - a. Were users of services included as part of governance and planning?
3. What difference has expending these funds made to the City and County's ability to address the needs of people who are homeless or housing insecure?
 - a. What difference was made to ensuring an adequate supply of outreach and support services?
 - b. What difference was made to ensuring an adequate supply of suitable housing (emergency, transition, supportive, permanent)?
4. What difference has expending these funds made towards the prevention of homelessness in Peterborough City and County?

Note: the above outcome will vary depending on the nature of the project and specific measures should be outlined at the beginning of the project. Specific measure may include:

- i. Have evictions decreased?
 - ii. Has food bank use decreased?
 - iii. Has the number of days spent in shelters decreased?
 - iv. Has the social housing waiting list decreased?
 - v. Are more people participating in program through volunteering or other civic engagement?
5. What was done to ensure that the process for distributing these funds was accountable, inclusive and transparent?
 - a. Had the level of inter-agency cooperation increased?
6. What expectations were not met? Were there areas where you hoped to see a difference but which you did not?

In order to effectively respond to the above outcomes, the RFP process for funding should outline a requirement that such measures be presented at the onset of the project. At the completion of the project, each initiative can then be evaluated based on compliance with the terms and conditions of their contractual agreement.