

2018
ANNUAL
REPORT

YEAR
5



A 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

STRATFORD, PERTH COUNTY, AND ST. MARYS • 2014-2024





A Message from the Director of Social Services

I am pleased to share with you the 2018 Annual Progress Report on the *10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys*. This report highlights our communities' achievements in the past year as we continue to work towards our collective vision of ensuring that all people have access to safe, suitable, and affordable housing.

In the fifth year of this Plan, some of our accomplishments included:

- Breaking ground on a number of new construction projects in Stratford, St. Marys and Listowel which, upon completion in 2019, will bring an additional 47 affordable housing units into our communities;
- The official launching of two new programs (Supported Housing of Perth Program and the Salvation Army Housing Help & Voluntary Trusteeship Program) designed to provide housing support to individuals experiencing homelessness based on their level of need; and
- Conducting a homeless enumeration which provided both individual and systems-level information on the scope and nature of homelessness locally.

In 2018, we also initiated activities to improve our communities' capacity to increase local housing solutions. Some of these activities, such as preparing for the implementation of a homelessness management information system and moving towards a quality By-Name-List, were integral for developing a coordinated, local response to homelessness. Other activities were undertaken in order to enhance the capacity of our social housing sector. These included beginning the process of conducting Operational Reviews and planning for the End of Operating Agreements with local non-profit and co-operative housing providers.

These achievements are the result of strong partnerships with local service providers, community members, and the Warden, Mayors and Municipal Councillors. I would like to take the opportunity to thank these key stakeholders for the work they have done in responding to homelessness and promoting housing stability locally. I would also like to acknowledge the dedication of City of Stratford staff who invested their time and energy into facilitating the implementation of the *10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan*.

Sincerely,

Kim McElroy
Director of Social Services

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Introduction

The 2018 Annual Report highlights the achievements made in Year 5 of the *10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (2014–2024)*. These achievements are a result of the commitment and passion of local services providers, community members, municipal partners and City of Stratford staff, all of whom played an important role in furthering our communities' vision that:

"All people will have access to housing that is safe and suitable for their needs, and will have supports that enable them to remain stable in their homes. People may become homeless, or face the possibility of losing their homes, but supports will be in place to help them remain in their housing or to locate to a permanent alternative as quickly as possible, in the community of their choice."

The plan is divided in to five strategic priority areas:

1	Coordination and Collaboration	2	Data Gathering and Sharing
3	Affordable Housing Options	4	Eviction and Homelessness Prevention
5	Homelessness Reduction		



2018 Objectives, Achievements, and Outcomes

1

COORDINATION & COLLABORATION:

To improve coordination in the delivery of housing services and supports, through systems orientation.



VI-SPDAT is a pre-screening, or triage tool, designed to assess the health and social needs of individuals experiencing homelessness in order to match them with appropriate support and housing interventions. Once a VI-SPDAT is completed, the individual is added to the local **By-Name-List** (BNL).

The **SPDAT** is an assessment tool designed to identify areas in the life of an individual or family experiencing homelessness where support is most likely necessary in order to avoid housing instability.

A **By-Name-List** (BNL) is a real-time, dynamic list of all people experiencing homelessness in the community. Rather than being chronological, a BNL orders individuals for services and supports based on level of acuity; individuals with the highest needs are prioritized for services first.



The City of Stratford Social Services Department integrated intake and reception processes for the Housing, Ontario Works, and Early Years & Child Care divisions in order to better coordinate access to social services, reduce duplication of information, and improve client experiences.



Multiple community agencies were engaged as access points where individuals complete the Vulnerability Index-Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (**VI-SPDAT**) in order to streamline referrals to housing support and homelessness programs through the local **By-Name-List** (BNL).



A number of training and professional development opportunities were provided to staff from the Social Services Department and other community agencies to enhance the delivery of homelessness and housing support programming including:

- Using housing-based case management and assertive engagement techniques
- Using Motivational interviewing
- Administering the Service Prioritization Decision Assessment Tool (**SPDAT**)
- Working with Indigenous peoples in culturally appropriate ways
- Using trauma-informed practices
- Understanding the *Housing Services Act, 2011* (HSA), and rent-gearied-to-income (RGI) calculations
- Understanding the *Residential Tenancies Act, 2006* (RTA) and Human Rights



2 DATA GATHERING & SHARING:

To enhance the capacity for gathering data and sharing information between service providers.



In preparation for the adoption of **HIFIS 4**, the Social Services Department investigated best practices in other communities, engaged relevant stakeholders including the City of Stratford IT Department, and developed an implementation plan.



In partnership with the *Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys Alliance to Prevent Homelessness and Enhance Housing Solutions*, the City of Stratford Social Services Department conducted a **homeless enumeration** in order to: 1) Understand the broader nature and scope of homelessness locally; 2) Enhance programming that addresses the local need; and 3) Connect individuals experiencing homelessness with services and supports. You can view the results on page 9.



Work continued towards developing a quality By-Name-List (BNL) to ensure that information about individuals experiencing homelessness locally was accurate, reliable, and consistently updated.



A survey was administered to landlords, property owners, and property managers throughout the Service Manager area in order to:

- Gain a more comprehensive understanding of the private rental market locally (including types, availability, and affordability of units);
- Understand the barriers and challenges landlords face when renting and maintaining properties in Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys; and
- Gather information on useful tools and incentives to support local landlords.

The results of the survey are on page 9.

HIFIS 4 is a software program designed to track and support individuals who are experiencing homelessness. This software allows organizations across the homelessness-serving sector to share information in a coordinated way while maintaining confidentiality and privacy for individuals.

A **homeless enumeration** is a data collection initiative that counts and gathers information on individuals experiencing homelessness during a specific period of time in order to understand the nature and scope of homelessness in communities. It is not a census and is considered an undercount of the number of individuals experiencing homelessness.



3 AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS:

To increase access to affordable housing options.



Construction continues on the Britannia Street project.



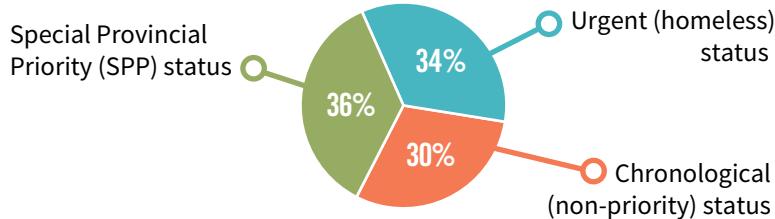
Construction began on Phase 1 of the Britannia St. Affordable Housing Project in Stratford. This building will include a total of 35 new affordable rental units, providing a mixture of 1 and 2-bedroom apartments, and will increase the availability of wheelchair accessible and barrier free units in the community.



Through the capital component of the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP), construction began on three new affordable housing 4-plexes in Perth County (Listowel) and the Town of St. Marys. These properties will provide supported housing for 12 households who were experiencing homelessness.



118 applicants were housed from the centralized waitlist in 2018.
The status of the applicants:



Special Provincial Priority (SPP) status is assigned to a household where a member of that household is experiencing or has experienced abuse by a person with whom they live or have lived. As per the Housing Services Act, 2011, SPP status households are ranked highest on the social housing centralized waitlist regardless of their date of application. Households experiencing extenuating circumstances (including homelessness) can be deemed **urgent status**, placing them higher on the waitlist over other chronological (non-priority) status households.



Seven (7) loans were extended to local households in 2018 through the Affordable Home Ownership Program.



15 households were supported through the Survivors of Domestic Violence – Portable Housing Benefit Pilot Program.



As Service Manager, the City of Stratford Social Services Department completed operational reviews of the 11 non-profit and co-operative housing providers it oversees in order to gain a better understanding of how to support the sustainability of local social housing providers.



The municipally owned and operated Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation (PSHC) held a series of coffee hours inviting tenants to:

- Share their ideas and suggestions on how resident services and supports on PSHC properties can be improved; and
- Learn more about the new Smoke-Free and Cannabis Growth & Usage policies.

9 coffee hours 
were attended by a total of
84 tenants



4 EVICTION & HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION:

To focus homelessness prevention on the individuals and families who are at greatest risk.



The City of Stratford's Social Services Outreach Worker Program supported 85 households experiencing housing instability.



Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funds were used to assist:

118
households with
moving costs



157
households with last
month's rent deposit



113
households with
rent arrears



123
households with
utility arrears



In its first year, the Salvation Army's Housing Help & Voluntary Trusteeship Program supported 160 households experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with finding and maintaining housing. Two (2) of those households also received support with money management in the form of a voluntary trusteeship.



The Social Services Department designed training materials on shelter diversion for internal staff and community partners in order to improve the delivery of emergency housing services through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) Program.



5 HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION:

To transform the provision of emergency accommodation in Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys to focus on helping individuals and families return to permanent housing.



The City of Stratford Social Services Department renewed the community's commitment to the 20,000 Homes Campaign Collaborative (renamed Built for Zero-Canada) which is a national change movement providing intensive and community-specific mentorship, coaching and support to ending chronic homelessness.



The Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) officially launched. Based on Housing First principles, **high-acuity** households experiencing homelessness were provided with intensive wraparound supports and case management to find and maintain housing. The program also provided support to landlords participating in the program (e.g. compensation for repairs beyond normal wear and tear, timely rent payments, etc.).

High-acuity refers to a household's score on the Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT), a triage tool that assesses the health and social needs of individuals experiencing homelessness. A high-acuity score represents a higher depth of need; that is, more complex, co-occurring issues that are likely to impact overall housing stability.

As of December 2018:



households were actively participating in the program



private market landlords had been recruited into the program and provided 6 units to participants

15

households had secured permanent housing:



9

households were housed in the Perth and Stratford Housing Corporation (social housing)

6

households found housing in the private market



The City of Stratford's Intensive Housing and Community Outreach Coordinator provided intensive case management to 11 **high-acuity** households experiencing homelessness and supported them in finding and maintaining housing.



257 households were provided with emergency accommodation in 2018. On average, each household accessed 7.5 nights of emergency accommodation.

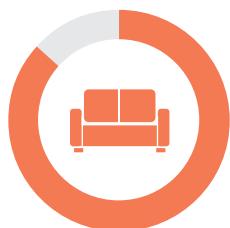


Key Findings

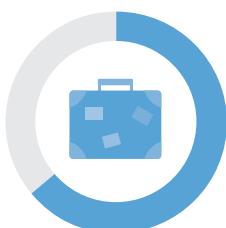
Homeless Enumeration 2018

A total of 101 individuals (adults, youth, and children) were identified as experiencing homelessness during the enumeration period of May 15-18, 2018. This number is based on 79 respondents who completed surveys during the enumeration period¹.

Of those 79 respondents:



78% were provisionally accommodated (23% in provincial institutions)



64% were experiencing **chronic homelessness**



28% were unaccompanied youth (aged 16-24)



11% were families with dependent aged children



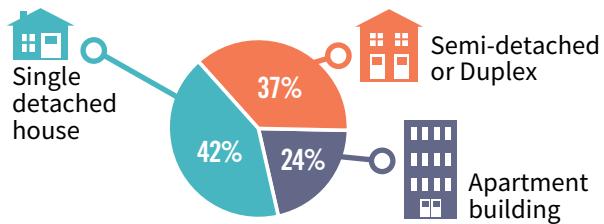
69% identified a relationship breakdown (i.e. conflict and abuse) as a significant reason for their loss of housing

Chronic homelessness refers to individuals who are currently experiencing homelessness and have been homeless for six months or more in the past year.

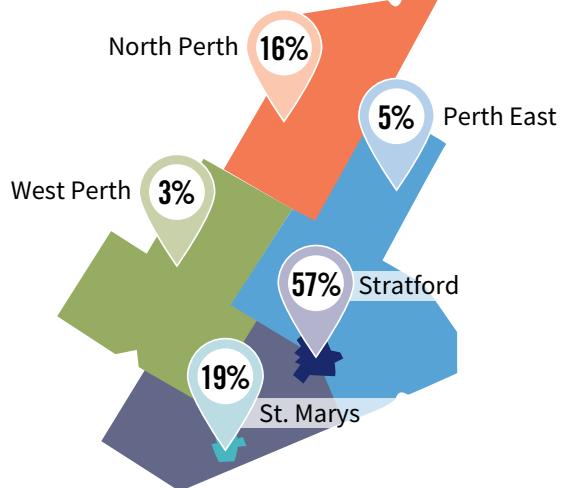
Landlord Engagement Survey 2018

76 surveys were completed

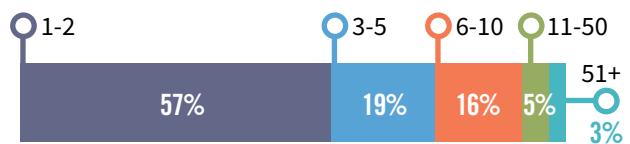
Rental Property Types



Rental Property Locations



Number of Units in Properties



¹ A full report is available on the City of Stratford website.

Moving Forward into 2019



The coming year marks an important milestone in the implementation of the *10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys*. In order to ensure the Plan continues to reflect local needs and address local challenges while also aligning with the work being done at the provincial and national levels, a comprehensive review will be conducted. Undertaking this process provides an opportunity to reflect on the current vision and strategic priorities and make adjustments as necessary. In doing so, we can make sure the Plan continues to be a roadmap for our communities for how we respond to homelessness and support housing stability for those who live here.





City of Stratford

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Please visit our website at www.stratfordcanada.ca/en/insidecityhall/housing.asp
to review or download past reports.