

The TORONTO REPORT CARD on



# HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

2003



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# Introduction

In 1999, the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force recommended that the City produce a report card to monitor homelessness<sup>1</sup> over time to see if it is getting better or worse and how governments are responding. The City of Toronto released report cards in both 2000 and 2001. Now on a two-year reporting cycle, the City presents this report card for 2003.

This report card provides updated information on the state of poverty, housing and homelessness in Toronto along with an overview of government action taken since the 2001 report. In addition, this report card has a stronger focus on solutions, in particular the critical role of affordable and supportive housing in addressing homelessness.

This report provides:

- ◆ an overview of housing and homelessness issues in Toronto with highlights of key policy and program responses
- ◆ a selection of income, housing, and service indicators ([Appendix A](#))
- ◆ a detailed account of government responses since the 2001 report card ([Appendix B](#))
- ◆ a summary chart of key government responses since the 2001 report card ([Appendix C](#))
- ◆ a glossary of terms ([Appendix D](#)).

It is beyond the scope of this report to document the vast array of community-based housing and homeless initiatives in the city. However, the role and expertise of this sector cannot be understated — they are a key partner in Toronto's response to homelessness.

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<sup>1</sup> The City of Toronto defines homelessness as a condition of people who live outside, stay in emergency shelters, spend most of their income on rent, or live in overcrowded, substandard conditions and are therefore at serious risk of becoming homeless.

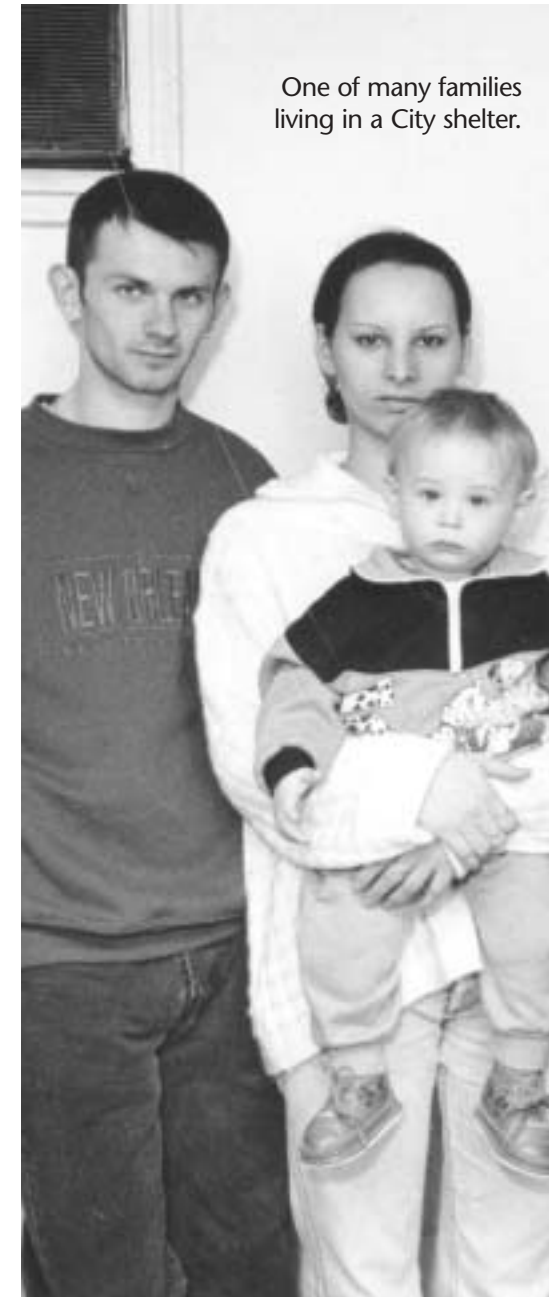
# Housing and Homelessness in Toronto: *An Overview*

Four years ago, the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force released an action plan to address homelessness in Toronto. Since that time, the City has released two report cards on this issue, the last in 2001. What has happened? Has there been any progress?

In the past, senior levels of government funded a social safety net able to respond to changing social and economic needs by providing adequate levels of supports such as social assistance and social housing. However, over the last 20 years, funding cuts have weakened these critical programs. Among actions taken at the federal level, in 1993, the government withdrew its funding for new social housing, followed soon after by the Province in 1995. Next, the Province cut social assistance benefits by 21.6% in 1995 and in 1998 eliminated rent controls on vacant private rental units. The results of these actions have left many people struggling to find housing with less money in a private rental market prone to rising rents. For people with mental health and/or addiction issues, this stress has been compounded by provincial decisions to reduce psychiatric beds without adding enough community-based supports such as supportive housing. The housing and homelessness crisis in Toronto is largely the cumulative result of public policy decisions such as these.

Toronto's economy has grown stronger in recent years. Unemployment rates are down and incomes are up. Rental housing vacancy rates are rising. Low interest rates have created a robust home-ownership market. But, as shown by the statistics below, not everyone is benefiting from these improvements.

- ◆ 552,300 people, or a quarter of Toronto's population, still live in poverty
- ◆ From 2000 to 2002, only 3% of new housing construction was for rental units (873 units) compared to 97% for the home-ownership market (28,492)
- ◆ Toronto rents rose by 31% between 1997 and 2002
- ◆ Today, only 20% of private rental apartments rent for less than \$800 a month
- ◆ More than 25% of tenants in Toronto have annual incomes below \$20,000
- ◆ More than 250,000 tenant households pay more than 30% of their income on rent; 20% pay more than 50%
- ◆ The social housing waiting list now stands at 71,000 households
- ◆ 31,985 different people stayed in Toronto's emergency shelters in 2002: 4,779 were children.





The deteriorating financial circumstances of so many Toronto households have broad and far-reaching implications for the health of the City and the people who live here, especially children and youth, lone-parents and seniors.

*"Decade of Decline",*  
United Way of Greater Toronto

**Action continues to be taken** to address the housing and homelessness crisis in Toronto. However, **the overall impact is incremental** relative to the size of the problem. **There is still a long way to go.** This report card will discuss government action that has been taken since the last report card, the extent to which this action has been effective, and what remains to be done and by whom.

## Toronto's strong economy leaves some behind

Toronto experienced strong economic growth between 1995 and 2000. More people are employed and household incomes have increased overall. This improvement follows from the high unemployment rates and falling incomes of the recession in the early 1990s. According to the 2001 Census, there are almost 100,000 fewer low-income households in Toronto — a drop of 15% over the previous five-year period. This is the good news.

However, Toronto still has a large number of people living in poverty. As shown in Chart #1, 19% of families and 38% of singles had incomes below the Low-Income Cut-off<sup>2</sup> (LICO) in 2001. This represents 552,300 people, or roughly one-quarter of the city's population. Despite improvements in the economy, poverty is still a serious issue for many Torontonians.

People left behind during this period of economic growth include one-parent families, older single women, recent immigrants, young-parent households and tenants. Relative to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the City of Toronto has more people living in poverty and they are getting poorer. Some new immigrants are struggling to become established. Newcomers may face language and cultural barriers and often find that their professional credentials are

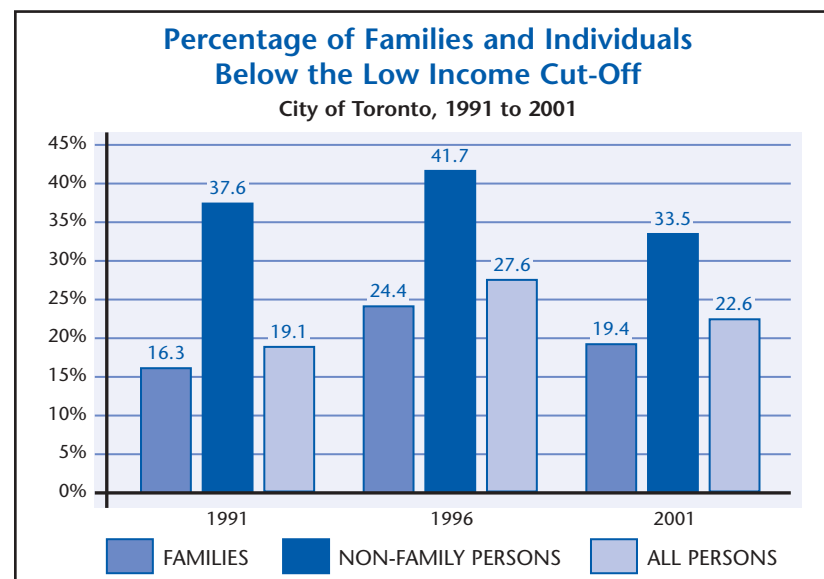


Chart #1

<sup>2</sup>The LICO, or Low-Income Cut-off, is a relative measure of poverty used by Statistics Canada. It takes into account both family size and city size to establish income thresholds. In 2000, the LICO for Toronto was \$34,572 for a family of four and \$18,371 for a single person.

not recognized. Too many end up underemployed. Likewise, people immigrating to Toronto from elsewhere in Canada have difficulty finding employment and housing in an expensive city with less “opportunity” than they expected.

People with the lowest incomes in Toronto rely primarily on social assistance or work for minimum wage<sup>3</sup>, both of which have lost considerable ground against the rising cost of living in recent years. In fact, the poverty gap between Ontario’s social assistance benefit rates and the LICO rose in 2002 compared to 2001<sup>4</sup>. For example, a couple with two children receiving social assistance had one-fifth the income of other families of the same size, the lowest rate in the country.

Unfortunately, very little action has been taken to improve the incomes of people living in poverty — one of the keys to solving homelessness. This is the responsibility of senior levels of government, which have the means and resources to address income disparity. Despite considerable lobbying by community advocates, municipalities, and most recently the private sector, to have social assistance rates increased or at least adjusted to reflect local rents, (which vary greatly across Ontario), the Province has not responded.

The community-based, province-wide campaign *Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids* is actively advocating for an increase in the shelter component of social assistance and to reintroduce effective rent controls. The City of Toronto endorsed this campaign in February 2003 and agreed to lend its name and resources to its public education initiatives. On March 12, 2003 the City joined with the local Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids coalition to launch a poster campaign to promote this initiative across Toronto.

In its last budget, the federal government committed to incremental increases to the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) over the next five years. Low-income families<sup>5</sup> receive the NCBS to help prevent or reduce child poverty and it does make a difference for these families. There will be accelerated increases in the maximum NCBS benefit up to \$2,600 by July 2003. After that, the benefit increases to a maximum \$3,000 annually for the first child by 2007.

However, in Ontario, the NCBS is deducted from families’ social assistance benefits and so they do not benefit from this extra financial support. Six other provinces in Canada allow social assistance recipients to keep all or part of the NCBS benefit.

## Growth in the housing market is for home-ownership

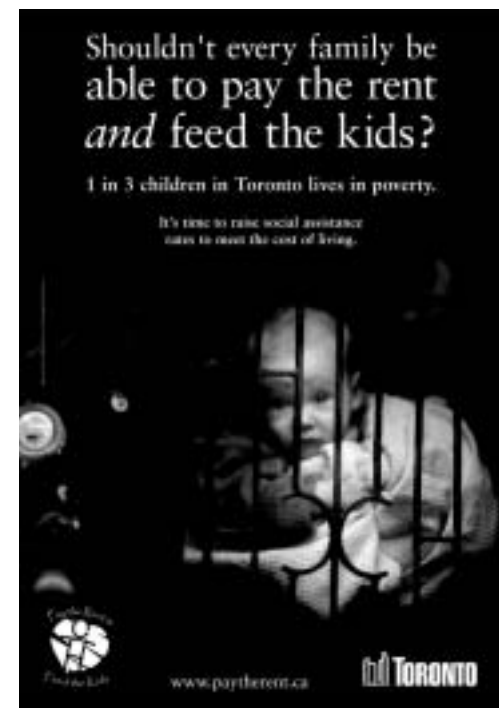
<sup>3</sup> The Province reduced social assistance benefits by 21.6% in 1995. It has been 10 years since the Province raised the minimum wage, which now stands at \$6.85/hour.

<sup>4</sup> National Council on Welfare Rates, 2003.

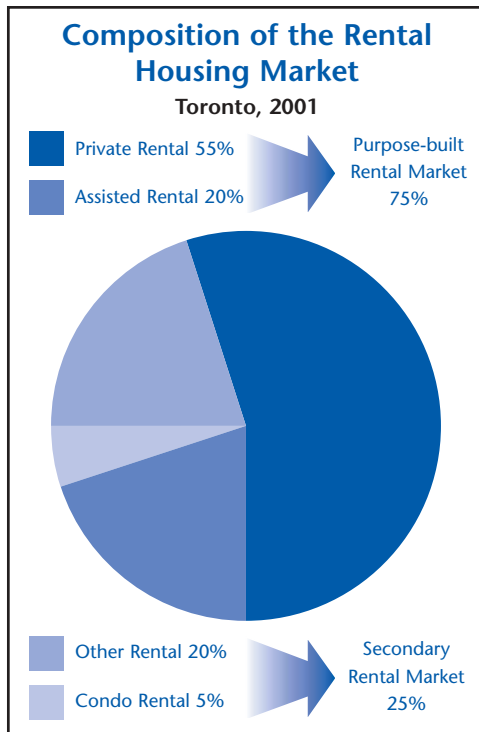
<sup>5</sup> The NCBS provides maximum yearly allowances to all families with a net family income of \$20,921 or less.

Non-European families {in Toronto} make up 36.9% of all families, but account for 58.9% of all poor families.

*“Ethno-Racial Inequality in Toronto: Analysis of the 1996 Census”, Michael Ornstein, 2000.*



2003 launch of *Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids* campaign.



### Toronto's Rental Housing Market

Toronto's rental housing market is made up of both purpose-built rental housing (private rental and assisted housing), and "secondary" rental housing (rented condominiums, rented houses, apartments above stores, second suites and rooming houses). A substantial majority of rental housing is purpose-built, but at least a quarter is in the secondary market. Some estimate that as many as a third of Toronto's tenants live in the secondary rental market. These secondary rental units are less secure as they can easily change from rental to owner-occupancy. Rental condominium rents are generally at the high end of the market.

With low interest rates and rising incomes, GTA growth from 1996 to 2001 (170,000 households) was entirely in the home-ownership sector. Home-ownership rates rose from 60% to 64% of households during this period.

There are now fewer tenants in both the City of Toronto and the rest of the GTA. In Toronto, tenants still make up half of all households (nudging down from 53% to 49%), but rapid home-ownership growth in the rest of the GTA meant that by 2001 only four of every 20 households were tenants, down from five out of 20 in 1996. This is a shift of the previous two decades when the number of tenants grew in both the City and the rest of the GTA.

In sum, the rental share of the overall GTA housing market has shrunk in absolute and relative terms and has become increasingly concentrated in the City of Toronto. As discussed later, Toronto is also home to increasing numbers of low-income and vulnerable tenants.

In contrast to dramatic increases in rental housing supply in the City of Toronto during the 1980s and early 1990s, recent years have seen no growth in the stock of rental housing. The overall supply of rental housing, in fact, has decreased by almost 5,000 units since 1996. The most significant losses were in rented condominium apartments. In the purpose-built rental housing market Toronto continues to lose more units than are being added, although the decline has recently slowed.

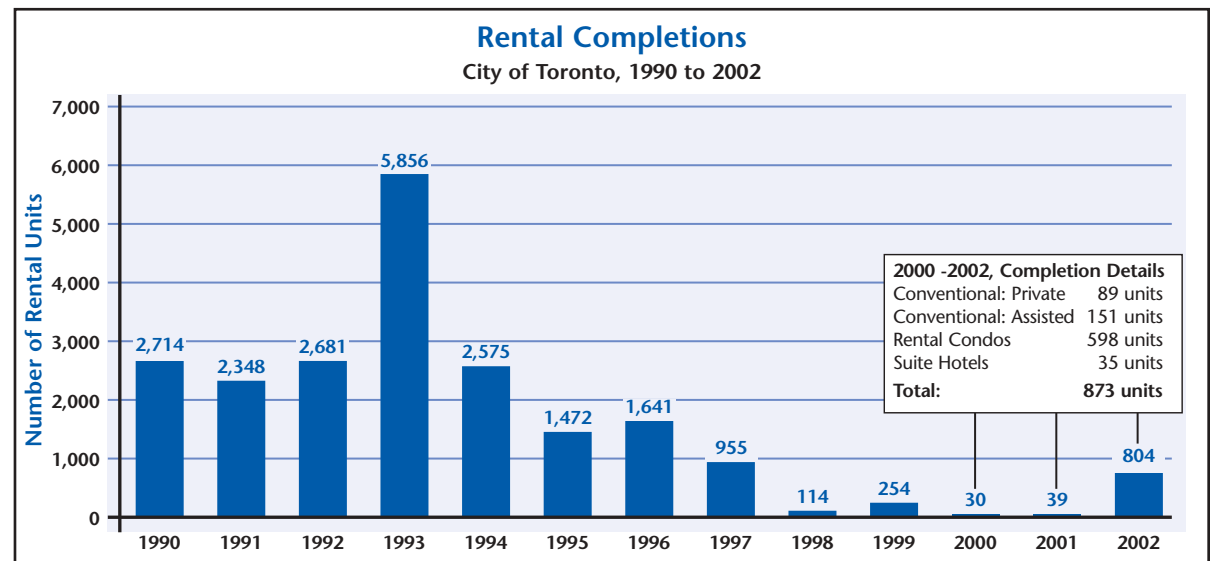


Chart #2

Most new housing construction (97%) in the City of Toronto between 2000 and 2002 was for the home-ownership market. During this period, only 873 new units appeared in the rental housing market (see Chart #2). At the same time, however, the loss of existing units means that there is less rental housing in Toronto now than in 1996. Of the new units, only 240 were purpose-built. The first wave of rental housing assisted by the City of Toronto's housing development program *Let's Build* has been built – making up 151 of the 240 new units.

Increasing the supply of affordable rental housing is one of the keys to addressing the housing and homeless crisis in Toronto. In 1999, the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force set an annual development target for Toronto of 2,000 affordable rental units. It has also been estimated that 2,000<sup>6</sup> new conventional private rental market units are needed annually in Toronto. The 873 rental units built in the last three years represents an annual average of less than 300 units — far short of these targets.

Chart #3

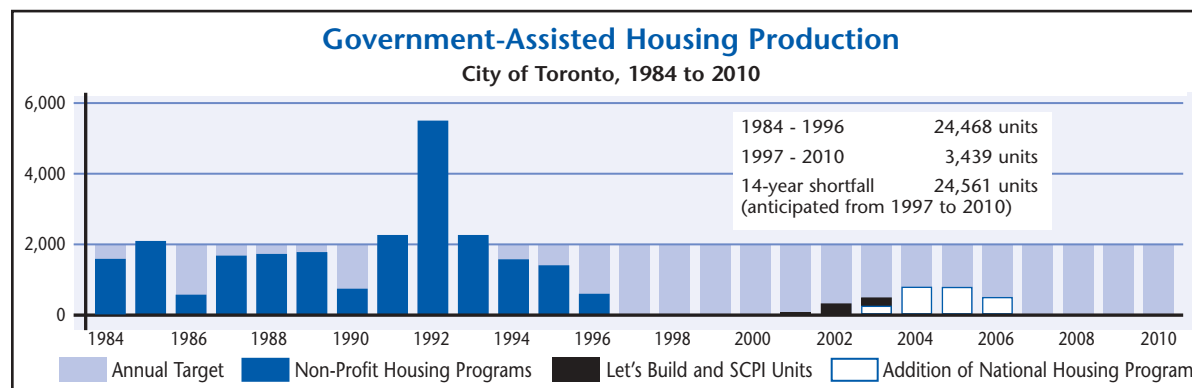


Chart #3 shows the current and future shortfall of affordable housing in Toronto based on the Task Force targets. Even taking into account new units built through *Let's Build*, SCPI and the new federal housing program, there is a very large shortfall of thousands of units resulting from the lack of new rental supply in recent years. This provides a good measure of the size of Toronto's housing problem.

Each level of government has a role to play in resolving Toronto's affordable rental housing shortfall. The City of Toronto's *Let's Build* program has combined municipal resources (including land and capital funding) with some federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) funding and provincial rent supplements to help community-based groups develop affordable or transitional (second-stage) housing. To date, *Let's Build* has supported 11 community housing developments resulting in 493

<sup>6</sup> The conventional private rental estimates are derived from the following reports: *Toronto Plan Directions Report - Toronto at the Crossroads: Shaping our Future, 2000* and *Unlocking the Opportunity for New Rental Housing: A Call to Action, 2001*.

## The Condo Story

It has recently been suggested that Toronto is gaining significant amounts of new rental housing in the form of condominium apartments. But rented condo units have decreased sharply, by a total of 6,226 units between 1996 and 2002.

This represents a total decrease in rented condos of almost 20% over the last six years.

Source: Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation.



Another new downtown Toronto condominium development.



Toronto starts a new affordable housing development at Eglinton Ave. and Northcliffe Blvd.



The severe shortage of affordable housing is one of the major issues facing the city.

*"Affordable, Available, Achievable: Practical Solutions to Affordable Housing Challenges"*  
Toronto Board of Trade, 2003

new affordable units. As of summer 2003, 211 of these units were occupied; the rest are under development. Of the 561 new SCPI-funded transitional housing units, 150 are occupied with the remaining units under development.

In 2001, the federal government announced that it would make \$680 million available over five years for a new national affordable housing program. This announcement was a breakthrough and reversed the decade-old federal decision to withdraw from new affordable housing supply initiatives.

The federal government has allocated \$245 million of this funding to stimulate affordable housing in Ontario. However, the program requires only that "affordable" rents be no more than the average market rent for the local area, as determined by CMHC. As well, the national agreement governing the new program requires that federal funding be matched. The Province of Ontario has limited its contribution to a \$20-million sales tax (PST) rebate program. This will allow up to \$2,000 of the PST charged on capital costs per unit to be saved. This compares with an average federal capital grant of \$25,000 per unit. Most of the remaining matching dollars must be made up locally by municipalities.

In 2002, the Province announced its "Community Rental Housing Program," which outlines the details for using the federal and provincial funding in Ontario. To date, the Province has allocated federal funding to the City of Toronto to invest in a pilot program of 1,000 rental housing units in Toronto. In the spring of 2003, the City's *Let's Build* program issued a "request for proposals" for affordable housing from private and non-profit housing providers. The objective of this proposal call is to invest the available federal and provincial funding to help build up to 1,000 new units of affordable housing. Recommendations for project funding will go to Toronto Council and the Province in September 2003.

Based on an average per-unit federal grant of \$25,000 and \$2,000 in PST rebates, the pilot program represents \$27 million being invested in new affordable rental housing development in Toronto. Based on federal and municipal resources expected to be available, approximately 3,000 new affordable housing units could be developed over the next three to four years.

While the federal affordable housing program, as currently constructed, will stimulate the production of moderately priced, new rental housing, it will not create truly affordable housing for those most in need. Dedicated provincial rent supplement funding is needed for the program to benefit the tens of thousands of low-income Torontonians who require housing renting at \$350 to \$400 per month.

In the immediate future, there is still a need for the Province to increase its investment and provide municipalities with more flexibility to deliver the program. The federal government must also examine ways to expedite use of the additional \$320 million in nation-wide funding for affordable housing that it announced in February 2003, which currently sits unallocated. There could be additional units or deeper subsidies to create more affordable units developed with this extra funding depending upon decisions made by senior governments.

Preserving the existing supply of affordable rental housing stock is as important as generating new supply. The City's new Official Plan includes updated policies to encourage preservation of existing rental housing, to require replacement of any rental housing lost through redevelopment, and to discourage conversion of purpose-built rental housing to condominium.

The federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) allocates roughly between \$6.6 million and \$7.3 million each year to the City of Toronto. This funding is used by low-income home-owners and landlords of rental housing or rooming houses with low-income tenants to repair or replace essential but defective building elements.

## Affordable housing is being lost to rising rents

Along with the overall decline in rental housing in Toronto, low-cost housing is also being lost to rising rents.

Toronto's rental vacancy rate rose to 2.4%<sup>7</sup> in 2002, a jump from previous levels of below 1%. Although vacancy rates have improved across all rent ranges, most of the vacancies are in the higher end of the rental housing market (units between \$1,200 and \$1,600 per month).

Vacancy in the lower end of the rental market (units between \$400 and \$800 per month) is not as high although it has risen above 1%. Adding to the pressure of these lower vacancy rates, is the loss of low-cost rental housing due to rising rents, a trend observed by the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force in 1999 and in the 2001 report card. As recently as 1996, units under \$800 per month made up more than 65% of the market. They now make up only about 20%. Chart #4 shows that in 1996 almost 90% of one-bedroom units in Toronto rented for less than \$800, now only 25% do. Rent increases applied to both occupied and vacated units are responsible for this trend and come as a result of the easing of rent controls in Ontario.

<sup>7</sup> The City of Toronto's benchmark of a "healthy" vacancy rate is between 2% to 3% for three consecutive years. This means that for every 1,000 rental units, 20 to 30 units are vacant at any given time. Vacancy rate, as measured by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation each October, is one recognized measure of the availability of rental housing.

"Our rents continue to spiral upwards, our pensions do not, and therefore our apartments are becoming less and less affordable. Every month, a portion of our tenants who have probably lived in the building for more than 20 years are leaving because they cannot afford these increasing rents."

*Proceedings of the City of Toronto Rental Housing Forum, 2001.*



Vacancy rates improve, but most are at the higher end of the rental housing market.

“As we neared our moving date, we had applied for 20 or 30 apartments with no luck. One landlord actually had the gall to tell us we didn’t make enough money. I was so taken aback by that. My partner had a good professional job. If we could not find a place to live, how can people on social assistance or people working at minimum wage jobs.”

*Proceedings of City of Toronto Rental Housing Forum, 2001.*

...concerning the (Ontario Rental Housing) Tribunal’s application of the *Tenant Protection Act*, 1997, which permits landlords to apply for rent increases based on extraordinary increases in the cost for utilities but does not provide a corresponding right for tenants to apply for rent reduction when extraordinary utility costs no longer exist. I expressed concern about this apparent imbalance in the legislation.

*Ombudsman Ontario Annual Report, 2002-03.*

Under the provincial *Tenant Protection Act*, there is no limit on rent increases when a unit is rented to a new tenant, and rental units built after 1998 are not subject to the annual rent increase guideline restriction. As well, landlords can raise rents above the annual guideline<sup>8</sup> increase to help pay for major repairs, security services or increased operating costs such as property taxes. It can be very expensive for tenants to dispute these “above-guideline increases,” especially if expert advice is required. The City’s Tenant Defence Fund provides grants to tenant groups to help dispute these high rent increases.

Legal Aid Ontario has also implemented several initiatives to help tenants. In September 2001, they opened the Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO). This clinic seeks to improve the housing situation of low-income Ontario residents through test case litigation, law reform, community organizing and public education. Recently, ACTO asked the provincial Ombudsman to review Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal procedures to assess their “fairness” toward tenants.

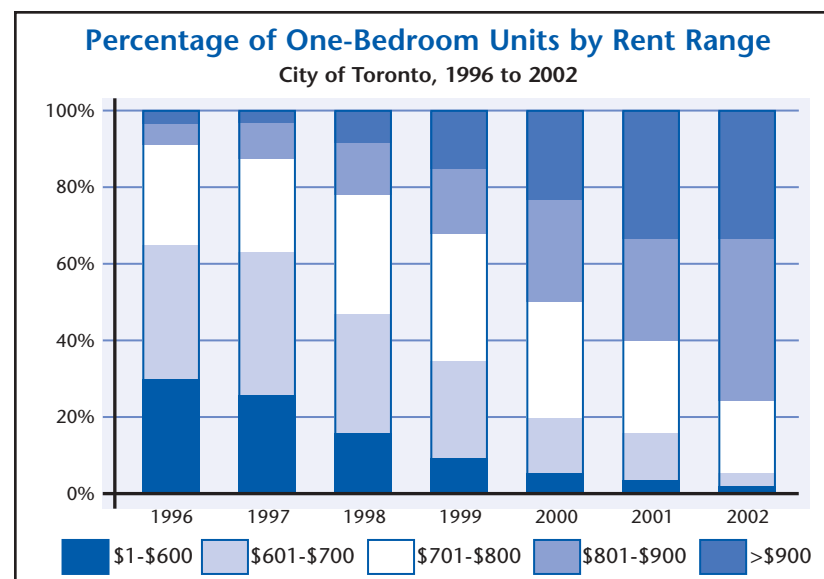


Chart #4

<sup>8</sup> The annual guideline rent increase allowed for 2003 is 2.9%.

## The need for subsidized housing is growing

Most of the less expensive housing in Toronto (units renting for less than \$500 per month) is subsidized, or “rent-geared-to-income” housing, of which the city has about 75,000 units. The demand for these affordable units continues to rise. There are now over 71,000 households on the social housing waiting list — all of who qualified for subsidized rent at the time they applied — including 50,000 on the “active”<sup>9</sup> waiting list. Most of these people have a pressing need for adequate and affordable housing and survive on low wages or fixed incomes either in the form of social assistance or pension benefits. It can take many years to get a subsidized social housing unit. An average of 4,500 households are successfully housed in subsidized social housing every year.

## More supportive housing is needed

Some people need more than an adequate income and an affordable home to stabilize their lives. This includes people with serious mental health and/or addiction issues, young parents (youth) and others who often require supportive housing. There are about 6,300 supportive and special-needs housing units in Toronto. These units are targeted to people with serious mental health and/or addiction issues, women fleeing abusive relationships, people with HIV/AIDS and people who have been homeless for many years.

In 1999, the Mayor’s Homelessness Action Task Force recommended an additional 1,000 supportive housing units in Toronto annually for five years. Over the last three years, the Province has funded about 1,000 supportive units in Toronto, targeted to people with serious mental illness who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. This is progress, but only about a quarter of the supportive housing target has been met to date.

Provincially appointed task forces on mental health implementation, including one for the City of Toronto/Peel Regional Municipality, make the case for more supportive housing. However, the task force reports have yet to be made public and the Province has not announced plans to increase the supply of supportive housing further. There is strong consensus that new supportive housing is essential to reducing homelessness for those most at risk, and urgent action is needed on this front.

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<sup>9</sup> The “active” waiting list refers to the number of people who have provided Toronto Social Housing Connection updated information on their financial status within the previous year.

## High-Support Street Outreach

Since 2001, there has been a shift to “high-support street outreach,” which uses a comprehensive case management approach to help people get off the street and into shelter or housing or access to other services.

Outreach workers work during the day to connect homeless people to services when they are open. During the first quarter of 2003, a total of 725 people were successfully referred to a shelter or housing. Referrals to services such as drop-ins and medical services were also significant.

*Source: Community & Neighbourhood Services, City of Toronto*

## The Revitalization of Regent Park

Regent Park is the largest and one of the oldest public housing communities in Canada. Its construction began in 1948 with the latest buildings added in 1959. More than 2,000 units of rent-geared-to-income housing are spread over 69 acres. It is home to nearly 7,500 people. The Toronto Community Housing Corporation is working with Regent Park residents to revitalize the community. A new vision looks at the whole Regent Park community and its relation to the neighbourhood around it. Regent Park will be reintegrated with the surrounding city to create a vital downtown community while continuing to provide, truly affordable housing.



Little effort is made to align shelter benefits with the cost of market rents... welfare families in Kingston receive the same shelter component of welfare as families in Toronto, despite a wide gap in rents. This should be addressed.

*"Affordable Housing in Canada: In Search of a New Paradigm" TD Bank, 2003.*

## Tenants are increasingly vulnerable

In 2001, there were 637,000 households in the GTA living in rental housing. About three-quarters of the GTA's tenants lived in the City of Toronto. On average, tenants have half the amount of income of homeowners. In 2001, more than a quarter of tenant households had annual incomes below \$20,000. It is difficult for low-income tenants to find housing in Toronto's private rental market because their incomes are not keeping pace with rising rents, as shown in Chart #5. Toronto continues to have the highest rents in Canada, rising 30% between 1997 and 2002.

The growing gap between employment earnings and rental costs place additional pressures on working households, who increasingly find themselves falling behind. Since 2000, there has been a 50% increase in the number of working people using food banks. Households on social assistance, meanwhile, whose benefit levels have been frozen since 1995, fare worse than others.

Despite economic growth and overall increases in incomes since 1995, there has been no improvement in the proportion of people who can afford average rents in Toronto. More than 36% of households had incomes below the affordability level of the average rent in 2000. This lack of improvement is attributed to rent increases, which have offset any gains in tenant income.

Tenants struggling to survive on limited incomes are constantly vulnerable to housing problems and must often prioritize rent above every other living expense, just to stay housed. In 2001, more than 250,000 households in the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (or 42% of overall households) paid more than 30% of their income on rent. A total of 119,135 households paid more than 50% of their income on rent.

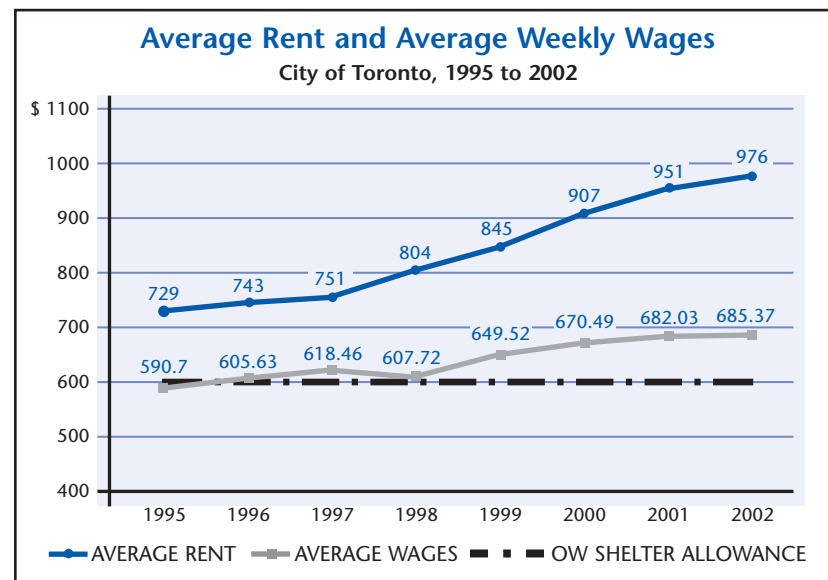


Chart #5



For people receiving social assistance, 72% spend an average of \$173 per month more above the shelter component of their benefit on rent<sup>11</sup>. A single parent with one child receives a maximum of only \$511 per month for shelter, making the vast majority of two-bedroom and even most one-bedroom apartments in Toronto well out of their reach.

Leaving social assistance does not automatically improve one's housing situation. In a recent survey of people who left Ontario Works (social assistance), a considerably higher proportion of respondents acknowledged paying their rent late after they left than while on assistance. In fact, the majority of respondents indicated their financial situation was no better off after they left assistance.

Rent supplements are one direct way to help people with housing affordability problems. Under a contract with the landlord, funds are paid to the landlord each month to cover the difference between an agreed-upon market rent and a geared-to-income rent that the tenant can afford. In 2000, the Province established a new rent supplement program, which, once fully allocated, will assist about 2,500 tenant households in Toronto. This program has enabled many homeless people to secure permanent housing. But there are almost no more rent supplements available in Toronto and the Province has, to date, not committed to expanding the program.

It is unclear just how many evictions are taking place in Toronto. In terms of legal evictions, evidence from the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal suggests that eviction orders may have declined in recent years. In 2001, for example, the number of eviction orders for rental arrears declined by one-third compared with the year 2000 (10,312 in 2001, down from 15,172 in 2000). In 2002, the picture is less

<sup>11</sup> Social assistance benefits have two fixed components, one for shelter and one for basic living expenses, adjusted for household composition and size. For example, a single person receives a total of \$520 per month, comprised of \$325 for shelter and \$195 for remaining expenses. A two-parent family with two children under the age of 12 receives a total of \$1,178 per month comprised of \$602 for shelter and \$576 for remaining expenses.

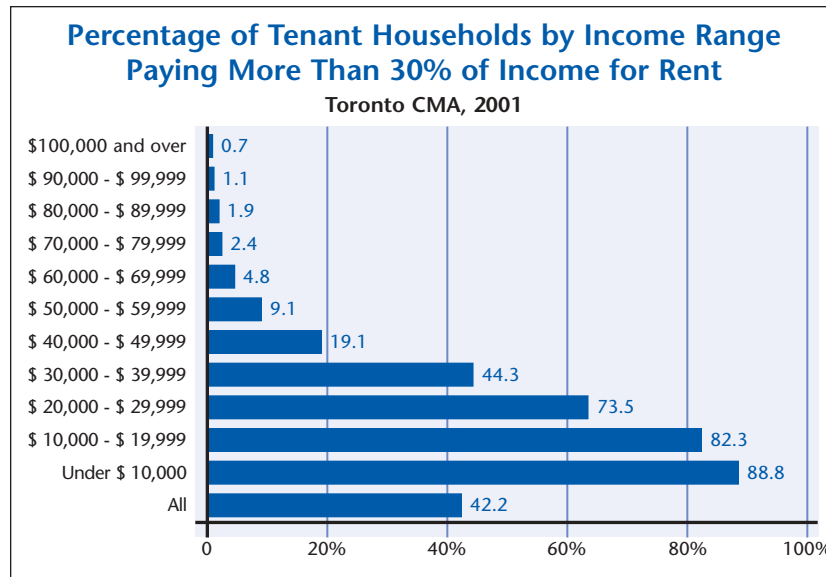


Chart #6

## Beyond the Reach of the Nutritious Food Basket

Toronto Public Health estimated that the average cost of a "Nutritious Food Basket<sup>10</sup>" in 2002 for a family of four at \$529.93 per month. A family of four receiving social assistance that has a monthly rent of \$1,000 would be more than \$130 short of the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket (i.e., excluding other basic needs) after the rent is paid.

Source: Toronto Public Health, 2003.

People who use food banks spend an average of 65% of their income on rent.

Daily Bread Food Bank

<sup>10</sup> The Medical Officer of Health reported on the 2002 Cost of the Nutritious Food Basket (NFB) in May 2003. The NFB is a food costing tool that is a measure of healthy eating. It was concluded that the cost of the 2002 basket was 3% higher than in 2001 and 13% higher overall since 1999.

## Helping to Prevent Evictions

Community agencies work hard to prevent people from losing their housing through an eviction. In the first quarter of 2003, City-funded agencies worked with 2,405 households in Toronto who were at serious risk of eviction. About 63% of these people were singles. Another 34% are families, either one- or two-parent. Agencies have been successful in preventing evictions in many situations — 1,760 in the first quarter of this year alone.

*Source: Community & Neighbourhood Services, City of Toronto.*



A young woman turns to a shelter for help

clear because data are not yet available for the entire year. However, over a ten-month period, more than 8,000 eviction orders were issued.

More programs and services are now available to help tenants who are facing eviction. This includes landlord/tenant mediation services, a rent bank for working families and the City of Toronto's Shelter Fund, which helps families receiving social assistance to pay rental arrears and keep their housing. Single people are not eligible for the Rent Bank or the Shelter Fund. Community advocates continue to stress the need for a similar kind of support to help prevent evictions among single people.

For low-income tenants, once the rent is paid little remains for all other expenses — food, utilities, transportation, etc. A single parent with a child on social assistance, for example, would have \$4.21 available per person per day once the rent is paid. These few dollars must be stretched a long way and many things are sacrificed, including food. The use of food relief programs in the GTA jumped 39% between 1995 and 2003. In March 2003, about 160,000 people per month used food banks, about 75% of who were in Toronto. People also use food banks more frequently. In 1995, food bank clients used food banks an average of six times a year. In 2003, this number grew to an astonishing 17 times — an average of every three weeks.

## There are still many people who are homeless

Homelessness is still the most visible manifestation of Toronto's affordable housing crisis. In 2002, a total of 31,985 different people stayed in an emergency shelter in Toronto one or more times during the year — an increase of 21% since 1990 (see Chart #7). There is still a large number of people sleeping outside and many people are doubled or tripled up in housing, which puts them at significant risk of becoming homeless.

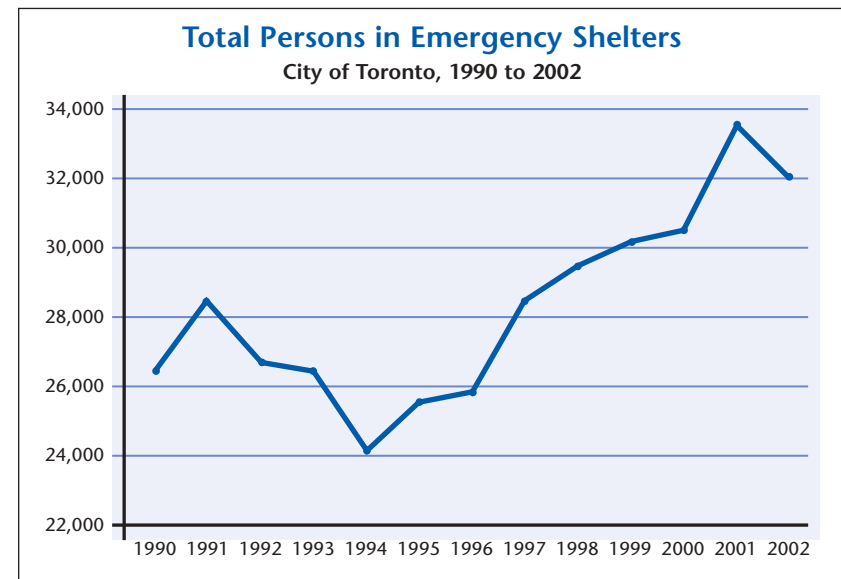


Chart #7

The number of single men and women needing emergency shelter are at the highest levels since 1992. This is of particular concern in the adult men's part of the shelter system, where nightly bed occupancy is often very high and exceeding the City's target of no more than 90% of beds occupied. There has also been an increase in one-parent families needing shelter — up 200 families from 2001.

However, since 2001, the overall number of people using shelters has dropped by about 1,400 people mainly due to fewer two-parent families needing shelter. This decline is partially attributed to more restrictive federal immigration policies that have reduced the number of refugees and other newcomers seeking temporary shelter upon their arrival in Canada. In addition, support services such as the Central Family Intake program have helped families avoid the shelter system altogether. This program incorporates eviction prevention support to help families stay housed, as well as referrals to housing help services for assistance to find more affordable or suitable housing. The rising rental vacancy rate has also helped larger families, which tend to have more financial resources than singles or single parents, to find housing.

The City of Toronto is directing more resources to prevent homelessness. Almost \$15 million of provincial and municipal funding is allocated every year to a wide range of community-based prevention programs. These programs help prevent evictions, help people find appropriate housing and help them to stabilize their lives so they are less vulnerable to losing their housing. One of the challenges to doing prevention is a lack of discharge planning from institutions such as some hospitals and correctional facilities. Intervention at these points can reduce the likelihood of people ending up on the streets or in shelters.

Everyone agrees that shelters are not the answer to homelessness. But, in the absence of any substantial affordable housing development, the need for shelters persists. The City of Toronto has worked hard to meet this demand, especially for adult men and co-ed adults. A key challenge has been finding communities in Toronto that are supportive of having a shelter in their area. The City's new Municipal Shelter By-law, which is intended to help site new shelters throughout the city, is being appealed at the Ontario Municipal Board.

The City of Toronto now has a Multi-Year Shelter Strategy, which sets out future development targets for shelters. Priorities under the strategy include implementing new shelter standards, improving shelter access across the city and addressing the sustainability of shelter funding. Shelters today provide much more than a bed and a meal. Most shelters in Toronto have a range of supports to help people find appropriate housing and get re-established in the community. Shelter workers link people to health and social services, employment and education resources. They also provide follow-up support to help people stabilize in the community so they are less likely to return to the shelter system.

The Multi-Year Strategy focuses on improvements to existing shelter capacity and expanding the focus on services to help people leave the streets or shelter.

*Multi-Year Shelter Strategy for the City of Toronto, June 2002.*

## Helping People Find Housing

Between January and March of 2003, housing help services in Toronto assisted over 8,000 households in their search for permanent and affordable housing. Most of the people helped (80%) were single persons, although a significant proportion (12%) were one-parent families. Due to the shortage of affordable rental housing in Toronto, the search for housing often takes a long time. However, 4,897 of these households (or 60%) were known to have found housing. The majority, about two-thirds, found housing in the private rental market housing, and 16% secured a supportive housing unit.

*Source: Community & Neighbourhood Services, City of Toronto.*

## Future Action Needed

### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

- ◆ Improve income security for low-income people.
- ◆ Fast-track rental housing program funding.
- ◆ Fund rental housing at a level to produce units that are affordable to low-income renters.
- ◆ Fund the revitalization of Toronto's ageing social housing stock.

### PROVINCE OF ONTARIO

- ◆ Improve social assistance benefits, especially the shelter component.
- ◆ Increase minimum wage to reflect rising cost of living.
- ◆ Fast-track rental housing program funding.
- ◆ Provide capital funding for the new rental housing program.
- ◆ Provide rent supplements for new rental housing.
- ◆ Provide funding to support services for new transitional housing.
- ◆ Provide more supportive housing units with ongoing funding.
- ◆ Amend the *Tenant Protection Act* to provide some form of rent protection to vacant units.
- ◆ Increase funding for community mental health and addiction services.
- ◆ Fund the revitalization of Toronto's ageing social housing.

### CITY OF TORONTO

- ◆ Continue to use municipal levers and resources to help build new affordable rental housing (including City lands).
- ◆ Promote inclusive communities.
- ◆ Ensure sufficient shelter beds are available.

## Conclusions & future action

Toronto's stronger economy has improved life for many residents. Incomes are improving and lower interest rates have made home-ownership a reality for more people. However, a large number of people in our city still live in poverty. This group has few options when it comes to housing and are largely dependent on the private rental housing market in which rents continue to rise out of range. Some people, pushed to the edge, end up homeless.

That being said, there has been some progress and important steps taken over the last couple of years. The impact is incremental simply due to the sheer size of the problem and the limited magnitude of the response. The crisis has been many years in the making and therefore the remedy will also take time. Each level of government has contributed new resources that provide the first steps forward. But the level of funding provided is not on the scale that is required, nor are the program objectives as sharp and strategic as they need to be.

Senior levels of government must take action to improve the incomes of people on social assistance as well as the working poor. People must have sufficient incomes to provide for themselves and their families if the cycle of poverty and homelessness is to be broken.

The federal and provincial governments are returning to the business of affordable housing. The 1,000 initial new units that the new federal/provincial program will create in Toronto are most welcome but represent only a first step. Additional program funding must be fast-tracked and better targeted to serve low-income renters. Another \$53 million in federal funding through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative will come to Toronto for 2003 to 2006, some of which will be used to build more transitional housing.

The Province must do much more by providing capital funding, rent supplements and funding for support services for both SCPI transitional housing and the Community Rental Housing Program to ensure these desperately needed units are truly affordable for the people most in need. The Province also needs to provide more supportive housing units and ongoing funding for community-based mental health and addiction programs to ensure appropriate housing and services are in place for people who need additional support to live independently. Finally, amendments are needed to the provincial *Tenant Protection Act* to provide some form of rent protection for vacant rental units.

The City of Toronto must expand its support for the development of new affordable housing through the levers it has at its disposal including continuing to make municipal lands available. In addition, promoting inclusive communities must be a priority for the City, and will require the active leadership of Toronto Council. Successful housing development requires more than capital funding and rental assistance.

A key element is the community acceptance of new housing projects across the city. In recent years, there has been much opposition to the integration of low-income housing into local neighbourhoods.

Also, until such time as new affordable rental housing becomes available, the City of Toronto must also ensure that sufficient emergency shelter beds are in place to meet the needs of people who are homeless.

There is a backlog of demand for affordable and supportive housing in Toronto. There is still a long way to go. To continue the push forward, a broad base of support has emerged in Toronto on the need for an affordable housing strategy and measures to improve income security. Most recently, the Toronto City Summit Alliance, the Toronto Board of Trade and the TD Bank have added their voices to that of the City and the community in this effort. This strengthened support base may help provide the catalyst for action on the scale that is needed to address Toronto's housing and homelessness crisis.



# Appendix A:

## Housing and Homelessness Indicators

A range of indicators were selected for this report that describe the following:

- ◆ income security and economic well-being
- ◆ the state of Toronto's housing market
- ◆ people who are at risk of losing their housing, and
- ◆ people who have lost their housing.

These indicators are drawn from public, institutional and community sources. As much as possible they reflect the most current information available. The City of Toronto will continue to monitor indicators for trends and changes over time.

The list of housing and homelessness indicators is as follows:

### I. Income security and economic well-being

- 1) Median Household Income (pg. 19)
- 2) Characteristics of Low-Income Families and Individuals (pg. 20)

### II. The state of Toronto's housing market

- 3) Composition of the Rental Housing Market (pg. 21)
- 4) Changes to Rental Housing Supply (pg. 22)
- 5) Changes in Owner and Renter Households (pg. 23)
- 6) Rental Housing Completions (pg. 24)
- 7) Applications to Demolish Rental Units or to Convert to Condominium (pg. 25)
- 8) Rental Apartment Vacancy Rates (pg. 26)
- 9) Rent Ranges (pg. 27)

- 10) Social Housing Supply (pg. 29)
- 11) Supportive Housing Supply (pg. 30)

### III. People at risk of losing their housing

- 12) Tenants Paying More than 30% of Income on Rent (pg. 31)
- 13) Average Rents Compared to Average Wages (pg. 32)
- 14) Households With Incomes Below Affordability Level of Average Rent (pg. 33)
- 15) Ontario Works Cases Paying Market Rents in Excess of the Shelter Benefit (pg. 34)
- 16) Social Housing Waiting List (pg. 35)
- 17) Eviction Applications for Rental Arrears and Eviction Orders Issued (pg. 36)
- 18) Use of Food Relief Programs (pg. 37)

### IV. People who have lost their housing

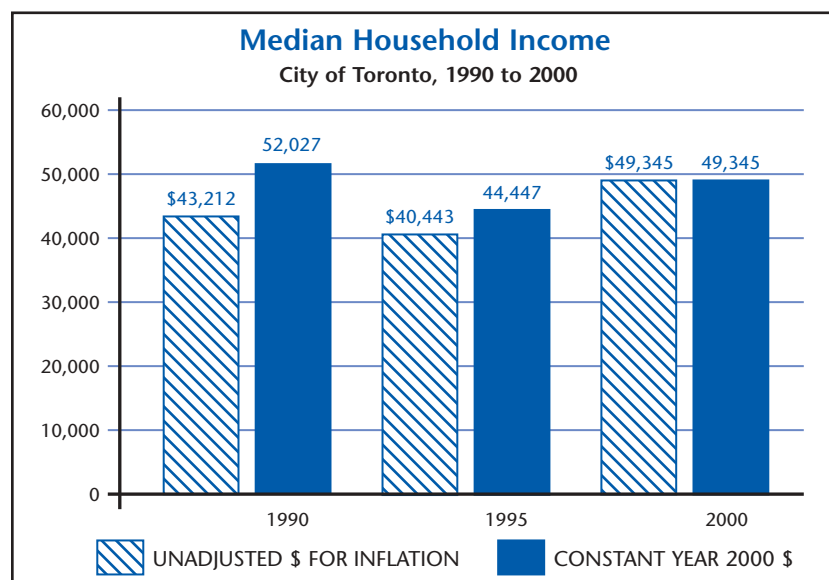
- 19) Use of Shelters (pg. 38)
- 20) Use of Shelters by Children (pg. 39)
- 21) Profile of People Using Shelters (pg. 40)
- 22) Episodic Use of Shelters (pg. 41)
- 23) Use of Out of the Cold Programs (pg. 42)

## I. Income security & economic well-being

The following series of indicators describe the state of economic well-being in Toronto based on the latest information on household income distribution and low-income characteristics.

### 1) Median Household Income

Median income is the midpoint in the income distribution. It provides an indicator of the relative economic position for households and a means to compare change over time.

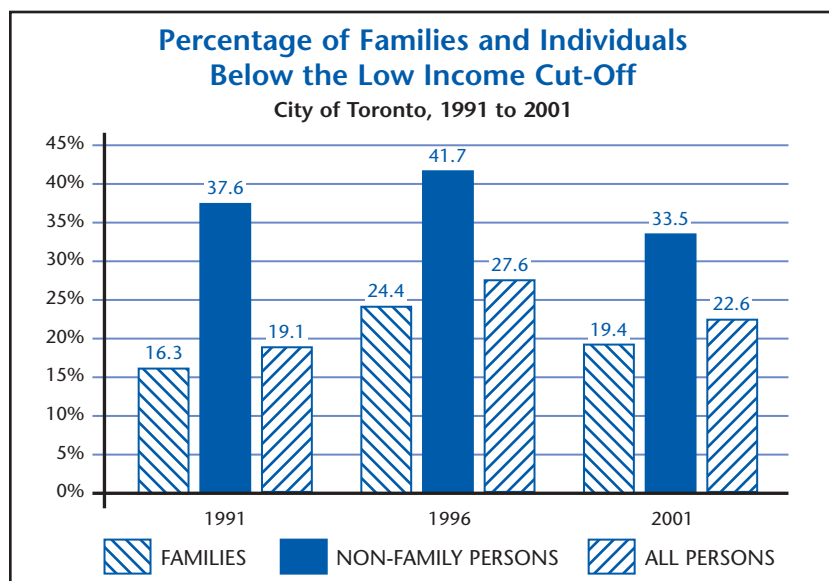


- ◆ Between 1995 and 2000 Toronto experienced strong economic growth as employment increased by 12% and median household income grew by 22%. After falling sharply through the recession and high unemployment during the first half of the 1990s, median household income rebounded from \$40,443 in 1995 to \$49,345 in 2000. However, when inflation is taken into account, median household income remains below 1990 levels.
- ◆ Over the last census period, the distribution of household income in Toronto showed a decline in the number of households at the lower end and growth at the upper. The percentage of households with incomes less than \$20,000 fell from 24% in 1995 to 18% in 2000. Correspondingly, those with incomes over \$100,000 rose from 12% to 18%.
- ◆ While median incomes increased overall for households from 1995 to 2000, one-parent families, tenants, older single women, recent immigrants and youth continue to lag behind. In 2000, for example, median income for two-parent families was 1.5 times that of one-parent families.
- ◆ Lower income households include people receiving social assistance and people who work for minimum wage (\$6.85 per hour).

*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001.*

## 2) Characteristics of Low-Income Families and Individuals

This indicator measures the number of low-income families and individuals in Toronto using Statistics Canada Low Income Cut-off (LICO). The LICO takes into account both household type and city size to establish thresholds. In the City of Toronto, the LICO in 2000 was \$34,572 for a family of four and \$18,371 for a single person.



- ◆ In 2001, 19% of Toronto families and 38% of individuals not living in families had incomes below the LICO. This represents 552,300 people or 23% of all city residents. From 1996-2001, the number of low-income families declined by 24,720 (or 17%), while the total number of people in low-income households fell by 96,980 (or 15%). This reflects a reversal of the trend over the previous five years when the incidence of low income grew dramatically due to the recession.
- ◆ While there has been a decrease in low-income households from 1996 to 2001, levels are still higher than at the beginning of the 1990s. There were 125,600 more low-income persons and 29,205 additional low-income families in 2001 than a decade earlier.
- ◆ Toronto continues to have higher incidence of low income than the rest of the country. This concentration reflects the high number of seniors living in Toronto, the city's status as the prime destination for new immigrants to Canada, and the large proportion of rental housing. In 2001, Toronto included 67% of all low-income families in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), 34% of those in Ontario and 12% of those in Canada.
- ◆ Data from income tax files show that 34% of Toronto children age 17 and under were living in low-income families in 2000. While more than half of low-income children in Toronto lived in two-parent families, the incidence of low income among children in families headed by a single parent was four times as great — 58% compared to 19%. Despite the improvement in income overall, the number of low-income children increased from 152,250 in 1996 to 176,370 in 2001, reflecting, in part, the continuing influx of immigrant families to the city.

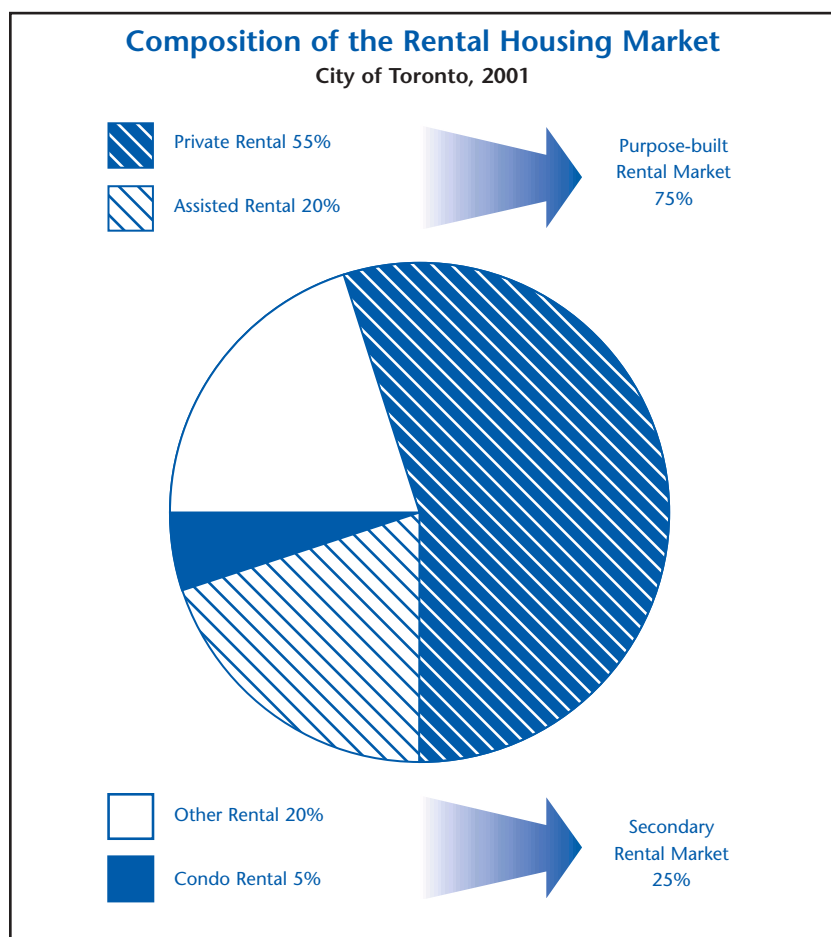
*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001; and Taxfiler data, 2000.*

## II. The state of Toronto's housing market

The following series of indicators describes the composition and state of Toronto's rental housing market based on trends and changes over time.

### 3) Composition of the Rental Housing Market

This indicator describes the current composition of the rental housing market in Toronto based on the combined purpose-built and secondary rental markets.

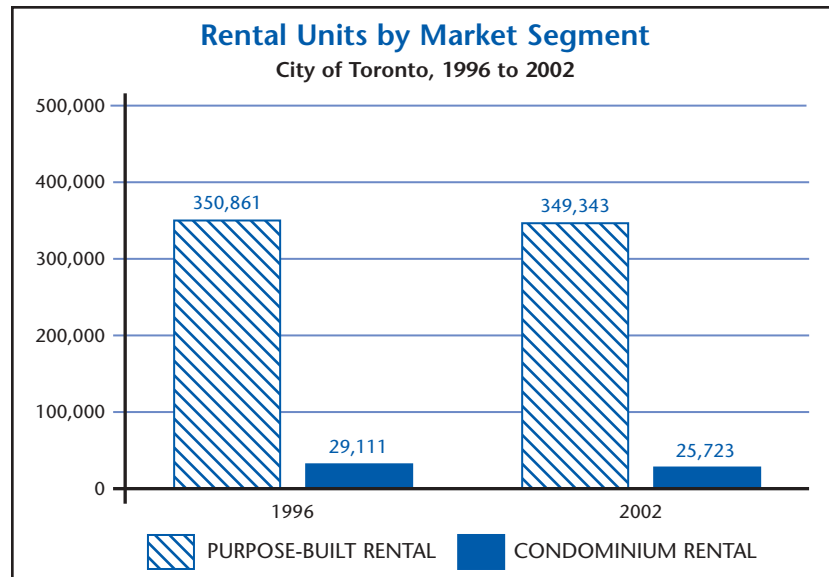


- ◆ Rental housing in Toronto can be divided between two main market segments:
  1. Purpose-built rental housing includes private and assisted (social housing) units in apartments and row houses built specifically for tenant occupancy;
  2. Secondary rental housing, which may be more temporary in nature, often occurs as a single unit rented out by an individual owner. This type of housing includes condominium apartments as well as basement flats, rented houses, duplexes, second suites in houses and apartments over stores (shown as Other Rental in the preceding chart).
- ◆ At least one out of four rental units is in the secondary rental market, although some estimates suggest it is as high as one out of three.
- ◆ Rental condos make up a small portion of secondary rental housing. The majority of tenants living in secondary market housing rent houses, duplexes, second suites and apartments over stores.
- ◆ There is a growing interest in the potential of the secondary rental market because of the lack of growth in the purpose-built rental market in Toronto. Unfortunately, rental units in the secondary market are subject to volatile market forces and can easily change from rental to ownership. Some of this housing, such as rented houses and condominium units, tends to be at the higher end of the rental market accommodating higher-income tenants who might otherwise compete with middle to lower income tenants for other rental housing.

*Data Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Toronto Region Rental Market Survey; Statistics Canada Census 2001; and City of Toronto, Urban Development Services.*

#### 4) Changes to Rental Housing Supply

This indicator describes the change in the supply of Toronto's rental housing stock from 1996 to 2002.



- ◆ Over the last six years, there has been a decline of almost 5,000 rental units in Toronto (combined purpose-built rental and condominium rental units, as seen in chart above).
- ◆ Toronto has lost more units than are being added by new construction in the purpose-built rental market. According to Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation, the supply in the number of units in buildings with three or more units declined by 1,518 between 1996 and 2002.

#### Changes to Supply of Condominium Rental Units

Type of Condo Rental	1996	2002	Change
Condo rentals in secondary rental market	29,111	25,723	-3,388
Condo rentals in purpose-built rental market	4,462	1,624	-2,838
<b>TOTALS:</b>	<b>33,573</b>	<b>27,347</b>	<b>-6,226</b>
Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Condominium Reports and Special Tabulations from Rental Market Reports			

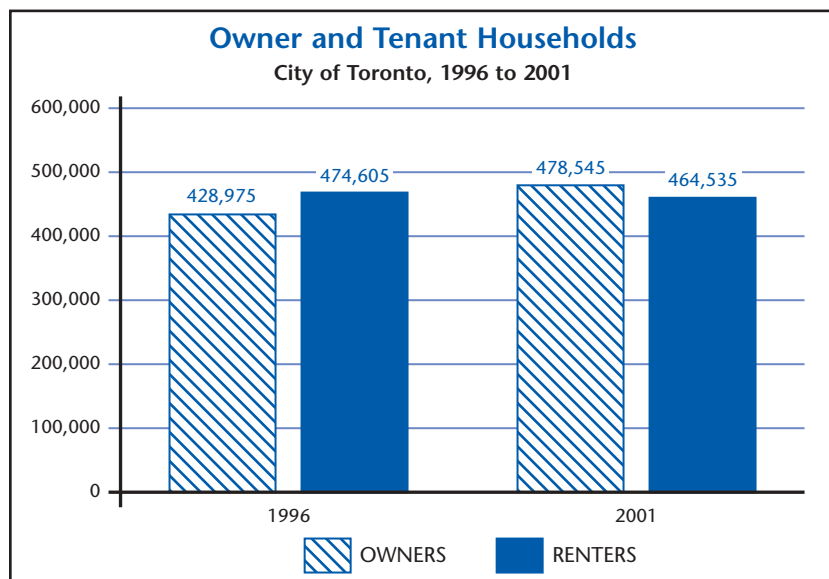
- ◆ Between 1996 and 2002, the most significant losses were in rented condominium apartments (6,226 units). This represents a decline of 3,388 units in the secondary market (as seen in the chart above) and 2,838 units in the purpose-built rental market.
- ◆ The overall loss of rental units may in fact be higher if other types of rental units in the secondary rental market are taken into account, such as rented houses and second suites. Information on the remaining part of the secondary market is not yet available.

*Data Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Toronto Region Rental Market Survey and Toronto Region Condominium Survey; and City of Toronto, Urban Development Services.*



## 5) Changes in Owner and Renter Households

This indicator shows the change in the number of renter and owner households in the City of Toronto between the 1996 and 2001 Census.

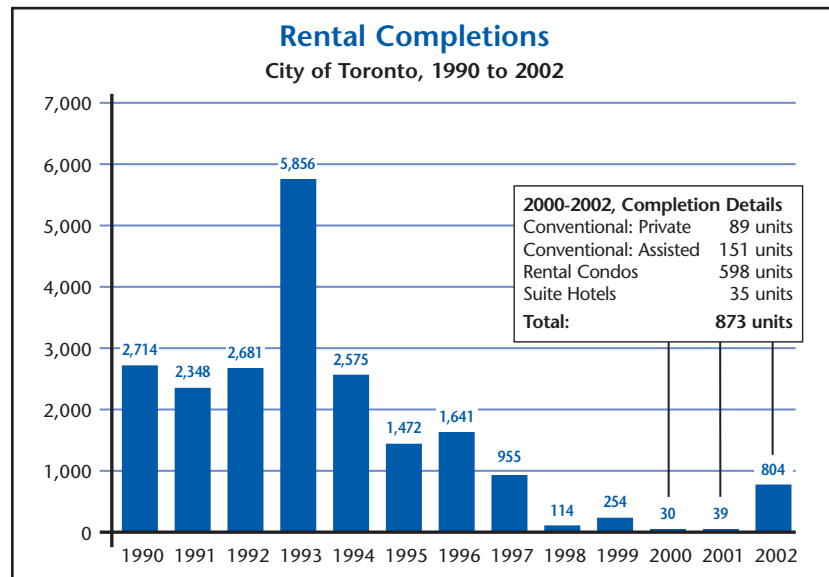


- ◆ There were fewer tenant households in Toronto in 2001 than in 1996. Renters now make up 49% of households as compared with 53% in 1996, a drop of over 10,000 households.
- ◆ Correspondingly, owners now make up 51% of all households compared to 47% in 1996. This shift reflects the improved affordability and availability of homeownership in recent years.
- ◆ Given that the population increased by almost 40,000 households, the lack of rental production in Toronto during the same five-year period meant that rental housing was not a readily available option.
- ◆ The shift towards home-ownership and the decline in renter households is consistent across the rest of the GTA. In this regard, Durham, York, Peel and Halton each had fewer renters in 2001 than in 1996. Combined, the GTA outside Toronto had 9,640 fewer renter households.
- ◆ Tenant households in the rest of the Toronto region accounted for 21% of households overall in 2001, down from 25% in 1996.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001.*

## 6) Rental Housing Completions

This indicator describes the number of rental housing units constructed in the City of Toronto from 1990 to 2002, and provides details on the type of housing tenure developed between 2000 and 2002.



- ◆ Very little new rental housing is being built in Toronto. Over the previous three years, 97% of all housing built in the City was for ownership (28,492 units); only 3% (873 units) was for rental.
- ◆ Most of the rental housing being developed is not purpose-built rental housing, but rather rental condominiums in the secondary market. During this three-year period, 598 of the 873 newly built units were rental condos, while only 240 units were purpose-built.
- ◆ In 2002, rental completions improved, rising from lows of 30 and 39 units in 2000 and 2001 to 804 units in 2002. Among these units, 151 were self-contained assisted housing funded through the City of Toronto's *Let's Build* housing development program. Only 41 of the 804 new units were private rental.
- ◆ Rental completions over the previous three years (2000 to 2002) averaged 291 units annually.
- ◆ In 1999, the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force set an annual development target for Toronto of 2,000 affordable rental units.
- ◆ It has also been estimated that an additional 2,000 conventional rental market units are needed in Toronto (*Toronto Plan Directions Report - Toronto at the Crossroads: Shaping our Future*, 2000, and, *Unlocking the Opportunity for New Rental Housing: A Call to Action*, 2001).
- ◆ Given the average annual completion rate of 291 units in recent years, there is a long way to go before rental production begins to address the substantial shortfall in affordable units that has accumulated over the past decade.

*Data Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation; City of Toronto, Urban Development Services, and Community & Neighbourhood Services.*

## 7) Applications to Demolish Rental Units or Convert to Condominium

This indicator describes losses to the existing, purpose-built rental stock that may result due to demolition and redevelopment of rental housing sites (net of rental replacement units secured by the City of Toronto in agreements with owners), and conversion to condominium.

The City's Official Plan has long included policies to protect existing rental housing. While these policies have been updated and reinforced in the new Official Plan, implementation awaits the outcome of appeals at the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

### Demolition:

- ◆ Since the provincial repeal of the Rental Housing Protection Act in 1998, there have been nine applications to demolish a total of 1,340 rental-housing units for the purpose of site redevelopment.
- ◆ Toronto Council has rejected some applications, a number are pending or waiting final OMB orders, and some have received Council approval subject to agreements to replace as much of the rental housing as possible. Very few rental units have been demolished to date although more demolitions are expected in the near future.
- ◆ The majority of rental units in these applications for demolition and redevelopment have been protected or will be replaced.
- ◆ In general, agreements with owners will ensure that, as a minimum, all of the affordable rental units in the buildings to be demolished will be replaced with new units offered at affordable rents.
- ◆ The new Official Plan policy is to seek replacement of all rental units being demolished, being concerned about any net loss of rental units due to redevelopment.

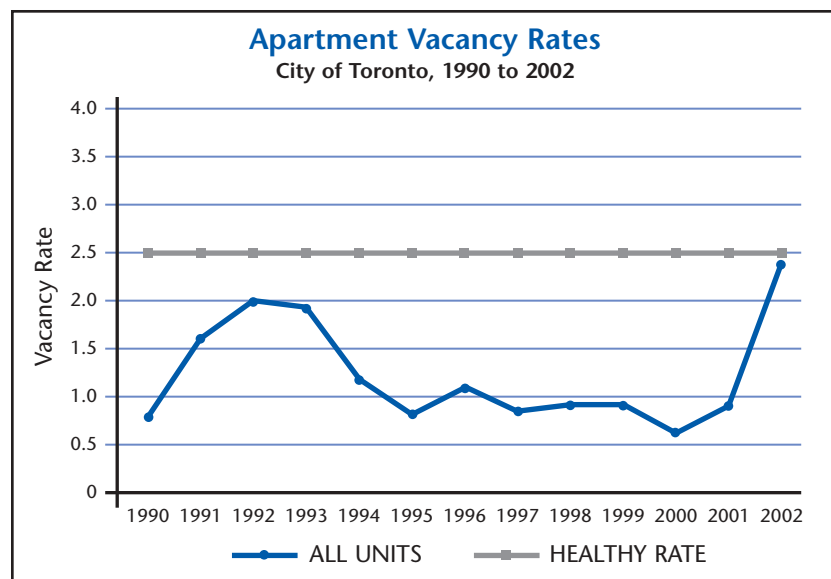
### Conversion to Condominium:

- ◆ City of Toronto policies seek to prevent conversion of multiple-unit rental buildings to condominium. The new Official Plan requires, as a minimum, that vacancy rates be no less than 2.5% for three consecutive CMHC annual rental surveys before conversion applications will be considered. The new Official Plan policies also allow consideration of conversion where all of the rents in the building are in a high-rent category.
- ◆ With vacancy rates below the minimum threshold, Toronto Council has not approved conversion applications with the exceptions noted as follows:
  - Since 1998, Council has approved a limited number of applications for conversion to condominium involving 410 units in buildings that were co-ownership or equity co-operatives, luxury rental, empty and boarded up for ten years, and other exceptional cases.
  - Currently, there are five applications involving 1,703 rental units that have been rejected by the City and subsequently appealed by the owners to the OMB. There has been no OMB decision on these cases to date.

*Data Source: City of Toronto, Urban Development Services.*

## 8) Rental Apartment Vacancy Rates

This indicator measures the availability of rental apartments in the City of Toronto between 1990 and 2002. Data are for private rental apartments (buildings with three or more units) surveyed each October by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

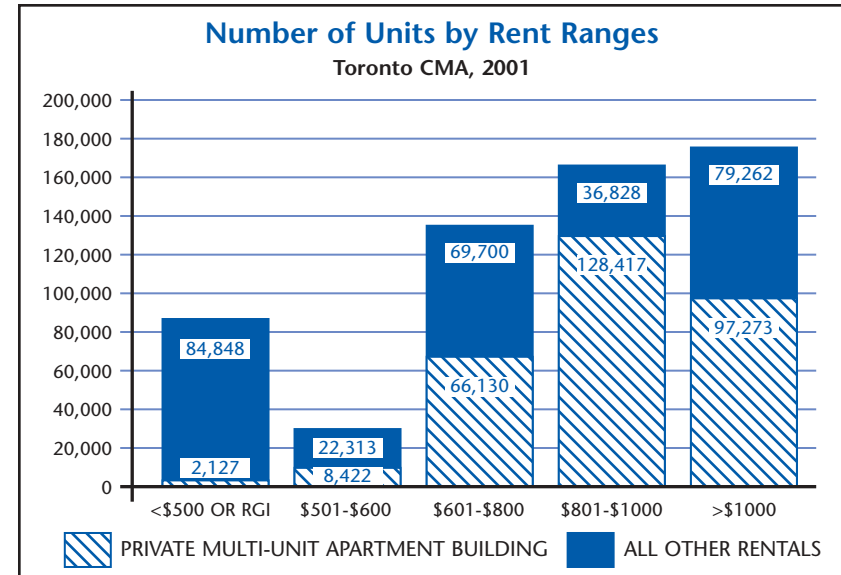
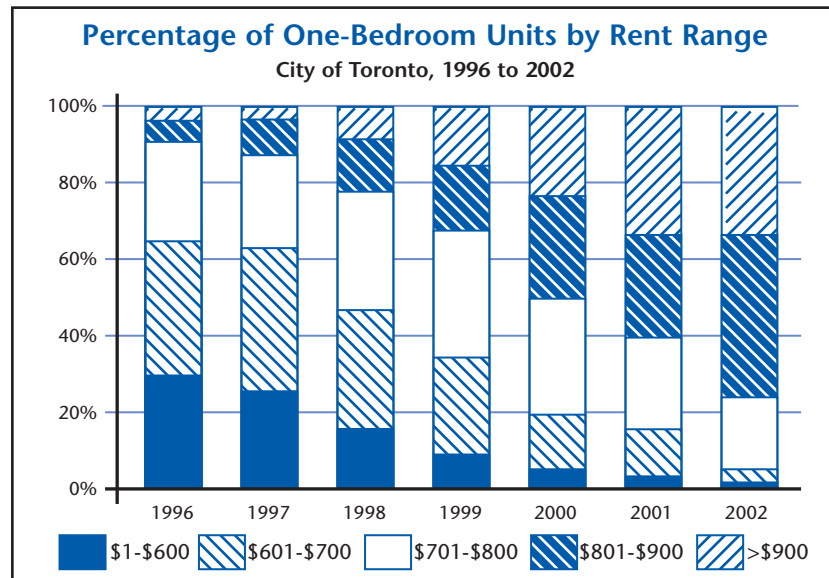


- ◆ Over the past year, Toronto's vacancy rate has risen to levels not seen since 1972. However, it has yet to exceed the City of Toronto's "healthy vacancy rate" benchmark of 2.5%. This means that for every 1,000 apartments, 25 are vacant and available to rent. Toronto Council established the benchmark as an Official Plan housing policy. Council picked the mid-point between 2% to 3%, which is most often cited in Canada as the range for a healthy vacancy rate.
- ◆ In October 2002, the vacancy rate in Toronto was 2.4%, up from 0.9% in 2001 and 0.6% in 2000.
- ◆ Although vacancy rates have improved across all rent ranges, vacancy rates were higher for apartments with more expensive rents (3.3% for units with rents between \$1,200 and \$1,600 per month), and lower where rents were more affordably priced (2.2% for units with rents between \$400 and \$800 per month).

*Data Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Toronto Region Rental Market Survey.*

## 9) Rent Ranges

This indicator compares the number of rental units in selected rental ranges for the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) in 2001. It provides an indication of the number and change in the supply of affordable rental units for households at different levels of income. Data are for conventional rental buildings (those in the private rental market with three or more units) surveyed each October by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.



- ◆ Tenant incomes and household sizes span a wide spectrum. A suitable housing stock would provide units at various rent ranges, corresponding to tenant incomes. In recent years the biggest change in supply has been in the cost of units, not in the number of units. The minor reduction in number of units contrasts with a large loss of cheaper units and gain in more expensive units.
- ◆ Across the Toronto region, the various types of rental housing cover a wide range of rents. More than 73,500 rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units in social housing account for almost all the units renting for less than \$600 per month. This housing is most affordable to households with annual incomes under \$20,000.
- ◆ Average rents for conventional private rental units (\$908 per month) were very close to average rents for all units (\$870 per month). Conventional private rental is concentrated in mid-range rents just above or below \$1,000.
- ◆ “Other rental housing” apart from RGI, is skewed to the lower-middle (\$600 to \$800 per month) or upper price ranges (over \$1,000 per month) where together these units are almost as numerous as conventional rentals.

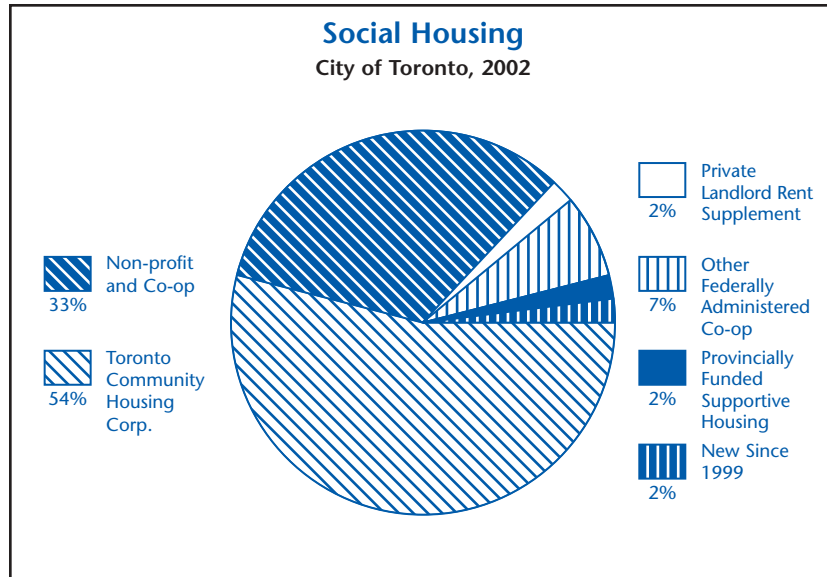


- ◆ There have been dramatic decreases in the number of low-rent units in recent years, continuing the trend observed by the Mayor's Homelessness Action Task Force and the Toronto Report Card on Homelessness 2001.
- ◆ As recently as 1996, units renting for less than \$800 per month made up 65% of conventional private rental units. They now make up only 20% (49,100 of 250,500 units).
- ◆ These trends are the combined result of guideline rent increases, above-guideline increases permitted under legislation, and "vacancy decontrol" which allows landlords to raise rents to open market levels when they turn over to a new tenant.
- ◆ From 1996 to 2002, average rents in Toronto have gone up by 31%, more than double the 14% rate of inflation for the period.
- ◆ Among conventional one-bedroom units, average rent has gone up \$220 over six years to \$894 in 2002. Only 20% of rental units are available for under \$900 per month, whereas six years ago 20% were available for under \$674.
- ◆ Among conventional two-bedroom units, average rent rose \$240 over six years to \$1,055 per month. Only 20% of two-bedroom units were available for less than \$1,050 whereas six years ago 20% were available for under \$700.

*Data Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Toronto Region Rental Market Survey.*

## 10) Social Housing Supply

This section describes the number and type of social and assisted housing units in Toronto.



- ◆ In 2002, there were 108,000 social or other assisted housing units in Toronto. The majority of these units are rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units but some are rented at market rents.
- ◆ Most social housing was developed under comprehensive federal-provincial funding programs and is operated by public or non-profit/co-op groups.
- ◆ Apart from social housing, the affordable housing stock also includes the following: affordable units developed through *Let's Build* and transitional housing funded by the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative; rent supplement units in private rental buildings; private "Limited Dividend" buildings; and new supportive housing funded by the Ministry of Health & Long Term Care.

- ◆ There are 75,000 RGI units in Toronto, including approximately 70,000 in social housing administered by the City of Toronto. Toronto Community Housing manages almost 53,000 of these RGI units.
- ◆ The majority of new additions to the supply of social housing comes as a result of:
  - 1,030 supportive housing units purchased, renovated and/or leased in existing housing stock since 2000, using Ministry of Health & Long Term Care funding.
  - 1,054 *Let's Build* and SCPI transitional housing units under development (427 *Let's Build*, 66 joint *Let's Build*/SCPI, 561 SCPI). As of June 2003, 280 of these total units were occupied.
  - 1,260 provincial "New Tomorrow" rent supplement units, rising to an expected total of 2,500 (including 700 *Let's Build*/SCPI units) once all units are occupied.

*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services.*

## 11) Supportive Housing Supply

This indicator describes the number and type of supportive housing units in social and private rental housing. Supportive housing refers to housing that has support services attached.

Type of Supportive Housing	Number of units
Existing provincial mental health supportive housing <sup>1</sup>	1,500
New provincial mental health supportive housing <sup>2</sup>	1,030
Special needs & supportive units in devolved non-profit/co-ops	1,800
Units in Toronto Community Housing	700
Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (occupied)	150
Provincial rent supplement – supportive/Violence Against Women	230
Mental health (Habitat) boarding homes	930
<b>Total:</b>	<b>6,340</b>

<sup>1</sup> This refers to units developed as social housing under the 1986 to 1995 programs and “transferred” to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care or Ministry of Community, Family and Children’s Services rather than devolved.

<sup>2</sup> This refers to new units developed under the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care homelessness initiative started in 2000.

- ◆ There are approximately 6,300 supportive housing units in Toronto that serve groups at high risk of homelessness. This includes mental health supportive housing, “alternative” housing, or units for client groups including abused women, drug-alcohol users, or people with HIV/AIDS. More are being developed.
- ◆ There are also a large number of Long Term Care units, including 13,031 in licensed Nursing Homes and Homes for the Aged.
- ◆ An unspecified number of supportive housing units are also found in non-profit housing buildings and unregulated retirement homes.

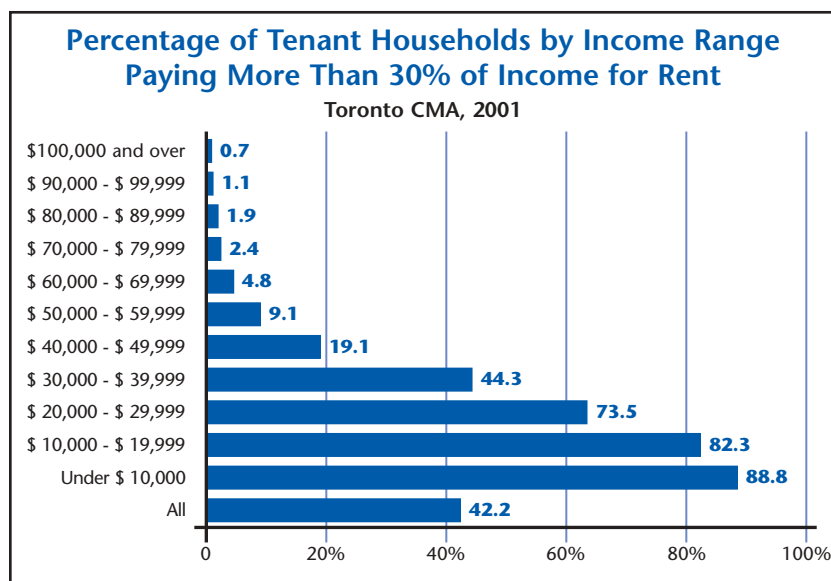
*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services.*

### III. People at risk of losing their housing

The following indicators describe changes and trends in factors that put people at an increased risk of losing their housing.

#### 12) Tenants Paying More than 30% of Income on Rent

This indicator provides a measure of the affordability of rental housing in the Toronto region and the degree to which households at various segments of the income distribution may be facing income security issues due to housing costs.

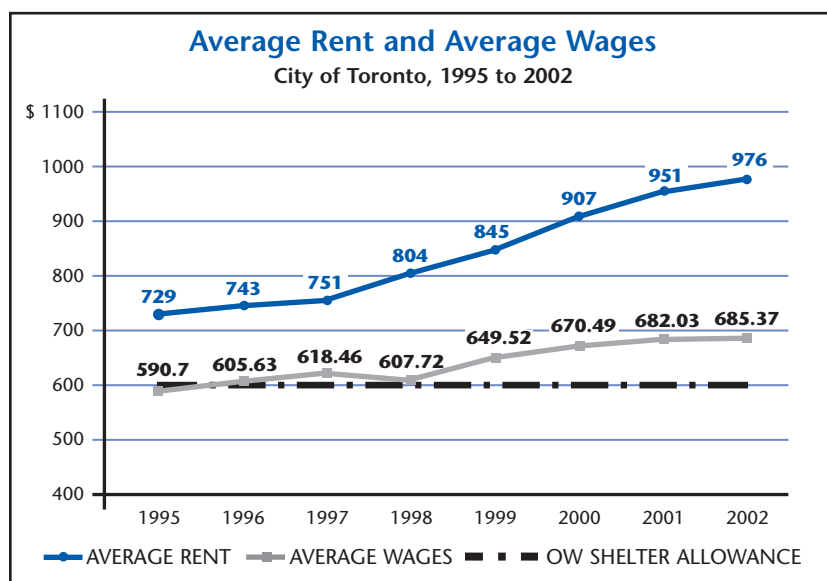


- ◆ In 2001, 601,280 households in the Toronto CMA lived in rental housing. More than three-quarters of these lived in the City of Toronto. Seventy-seven percent of tenant households lived in rental apartment buildings.
- ◆ While the majority of tenant households were made up of single families, individuals or groups of unrelated persons accounted for an additional 44% of tenant households.
- ◆ There were more tenant households at the low end of the income distribution and fewer at the high end than for city households over all. More than a quarter of tenant households had annual incomes below \$20,000, while only 7% had incomes of \$100,000 or more.
- ◆ In 2001, median income for tenant family households and non-family households was \$42,289 and \$28,573, respectively. Median income for homeowners was double that of tenants.
- ◆ Between 1995 and 2000, the median income for tenant households increased by 10% while rents rose by 24%.
- ◆ A key factor in maintaining the economic viability of households is affordable housing costs. For tenants, this is defined as rent that is less than 30% of the total household income. In 2001, 42% (or over 250,000) of Toronto CMA households paid more than 30% of their income for rent. A total of 119,135 paid more than 50% of their income for rent.
- ◆ Households paying more than 30% of income for rent included 121,780 family households, 126,435 non-family households and 2,800 households containing multiple family groups.
- ◆ The number of households paying more than 30% of income for rent declined by 7% in both the overall CMA and the City of Toronto from 1996 to 2001.
- ◆ Fifty-nine percent of tenant households with annual incomes under \$40,000 paid more than 30% in rent in 2001. For those with incomes under \$20,000, 85% were in this circumstance.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001.*

### 13) Average Rents Compared to Average Wages

This indicator measures the increase in rental housing costs and its relative change in relation to wages and Ontario Works shelter benefit from 1995 to 2002. It provides a measure of the degree to which households are able to keep pace with changing rents.



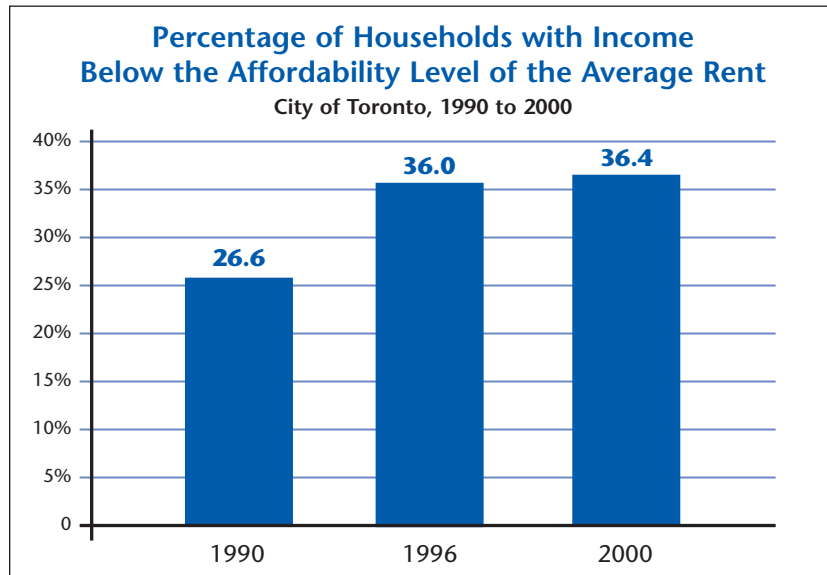
- ◆ Since 1997, the gap between rents and employment earnings has been growing. During this period, weekly earnings in Toronto rose from \$618 in 1997 to \$685 in 2002, a change of 11%. Growth in wages since 1997 reflects strong economic recovery, which included both a rise in overall employment and an increase in the number of full-time jobs.
- ◆ Correspondingly, rents have gone up, but at a faster rate. While rents rose throughout the 1990s, the rate of growth showed marked increase since 1997. Average rents in Toronto grew by 20% from 1990 to 1996, and by 30% for the period 1997 to 2002.
- ◆ In the past six years, average rents rose from \$751 in 1997 to \$976 in 2002. The annual increase in rents averaged 5%, more than double the rate for wages. The accelerated rate of rent increase is attributed to several factors including historically low vacancy rates, shortages in the supply of new affordable rental housing and the impact from the easing of rent controls in Ontario since 1998.
- ◆ The widening gap between employment earnings and rental costs places additional pressure on working households, who find themselves increasingly falling behind. Households on social assistance, meanwhile, who have seen no increase in the shelter component of their benefits since 1996, fare worse than others.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey; and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Toronto Region Rental Market Survey.*



#### 14) Households With Income Below Affordability Level of Average Rent

This indicator provides a measure of the affordability of private market rent and its compatibility with the actual distribution of Toronto household income. Dwelling units are affordable if their rents are less than 30% of household income. Average rent in the city was \$618 in 1990, \$729 in 1995 and \$907 in 2000.



- ◆ The proportion of Toronto households that is able to afford the average rent for a private rental market unit showed no improvement despite the overall increase in household income. Although median incomes rose by 22% between 1995 and 2000, slightly more than 36% of households had incomes below the affordability level of the average rent (\$36,280) in 2000. This represents 343,500 households or a 6% increase over the period.
- ◆ In the first half of the 1990s, the decline in affordability of private rental housing resulted from the combined effects of falling income due to the recession and incremental rent increases. The lack of improvement in 2000 is attributable to the 24% rise in rent from 1995 to 2000, which offset gains in tenant household income over this period.

*Data Source: Statistics Canada, Census 2001; and, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Toronto Region Rental Market Survey.*

## 15) Ontario Works Cases Paying Market Rents in Excess of the Shelter Benefit

This indicator describes the number of cases (individuals or families) in receipt of Ontario Works (social assistance) who are paying a disproportionate amount of their total benefit on rent.

- ◆ In February 2003, seven out of ten households receiving Ontario Works (social assistance) in Toronto paid rent in excess of the maximum shelter component of their benefit. This is attributed to the limited availability of affordable rental housing and frozen benefit levels since 1995.
- ◆ Of the 52,744 active “cases” living in private rental market units, 72% spent more than the shelter component of their benefit on rent. This problem is especially acute for two-parent families with children, who on average pay an excess of \$302 each month.
- ◆ Social assistance benefits include two fixed portions, one for shelter and the other for all other living expenses. On average, people on social assistance spend \$173 per month of their living expenses portion to cover rent.
- ◆ Fewer than 20% of Ontario Works clients live in social housing. The Province’s 21.6% cut to social assistance benefits in 1995 (with no increase since then) has placed the remaining 80%, who rent in the private market, at greater risk of housing problems.

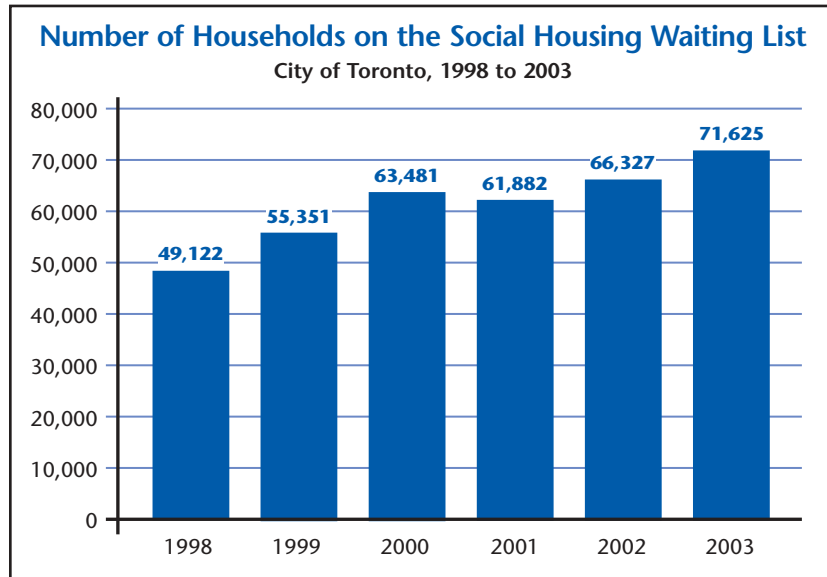
*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services.*

### Number of Ontario Works Cases Paying Market Rents in Excess of the Shelter Benefit – City of Toronto 2003

Family Type	Number of cases	Average Rent Paid	Number in Excess	Percent in Excess	Average in Excess
Single	29,728	\$364.00	20,006	67%	\$95.00
Single with children	15,558	\$678.00	11,310	73%	\$251.00
Couple	1,937	\$622.00	1,520	78%	\$204.00
Couple with children	5,521	\$854.00	4,916	89%	\$302.00
<b>Total:</b>	<b>52,744</b>	<b>\$518.00</b>	<b>37,752</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>\$173.00</b>

## 16) Social Housing Waiting List

This indicator provides a measure of the demand for affordable housing based on the number of applicants on the Toronto Social Housing Connections waiting list for placement in subsidized housing.



- ◆ Since 1998, the number of applications for social housing has risen every year but one, rising from 49,122 in January 1998 to 71,625 in June 2003, a 46% increase. Over this period, applications from seniors increased by 4,891 while those for households without dependants and households with dependants grew by 8,017 and 3,806, respectively.
- ◆ The majority of people on the waiting list are on fixed incomes either in the form of social assistance, or pension benefits. Among active applicants, 33% indicated employment earnings as their primary source of income, 43% said they receive Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support benefits and 13% report some form of pension, Old Age Security or retirement income.
- ◆ Applicants often wait several years before they are placed in housing. In 2003, 20% of applicants had been on the waiting list for less than a year. Of the rest, 38% had been on the list for one to three years, 22% for three to five years, and 19% for five years or more.
- ◆ The City of Toronto has designated a number of “Special Needs” and “Disadvantaged” households, whose circumstances warrant priority for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units. The first priority is victims of violence. Additional priorities include terminal illness, and “over-housed” applicants (social housing residents in units too large for their needs). Disadvantaged households include people who are homeless, newcomers who are homeless, separated families (applicants whose children are in care of the Children’s Aid because of inappropriate housing and whose children will be returned once adequate housing is secured), and youth aged 16 or 17 at the time they applied for housing. One in seven placements from the social housing waiting list goes to someone in the “disadvantaged” category.
- ◆ In March 2003, the waiting list included almost 4,000 special-needs households and more than 6,000 disadvantaged households. People with disabilities comprised the largest group within the special needs category. Homeless households were the largest component of the disadvantaged group, accounting for 50% of those applications.

*Data Source: Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Social Housing Connections.*

## 17) Eviction Applications for Rental Arrears and Eviction Orders Issued

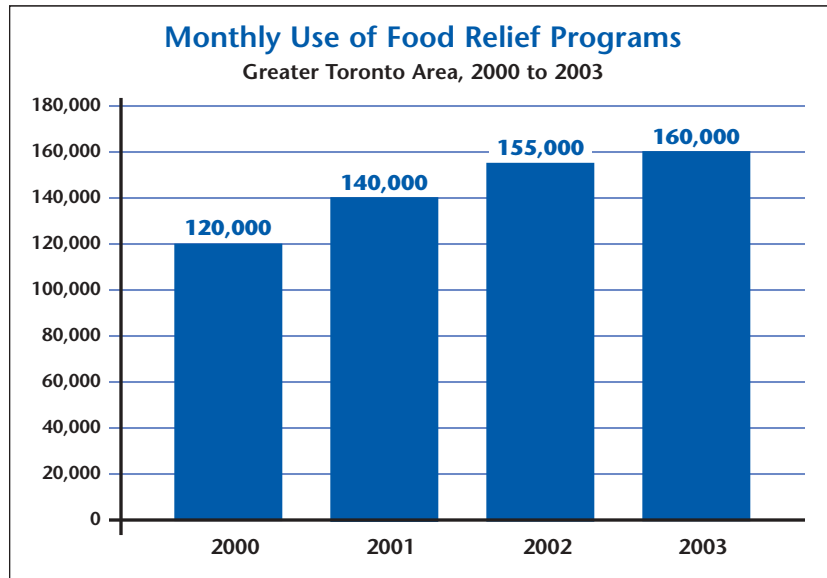
This indicator describes the annual number of applications to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal by landlords to terminate tenancies for rental arrears, and the number of eviction orders issued by the Tribunal. It provides a measure of economic pressures in the rental housing market and eviction trends. Access to Tribunal application information has recently been restricted due to privacy concerns.

- ◆ After peaking in 2000, applications to the Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal for termination of tenancy for rental arrears (L1) declined slightly in 2001. Tribunal orders to evict on the grounds of rental arrears, meanwhile, show a similar pattern, falling from 15,172 in 2000 to 10,312 in 2001. This trend seems to have continued through 2002.
- ◆ L1 applications account for 80% of all applications received by the Tribunal. The vast majority (77%) of L1 applications come from private landlords. In 2002, the average amount of rental arrears was \$1,124, representing an increase of 18% over the previous year.
- ◆ While almost six of ten eviction orders are issued by default (are not contested by the tenant), more tenants are beginning to contest eviction applications. For example, the percentage of people using mediation as a means to resolve the dispute rose from 4.5% in 1999 to 8.4% in 2002.
- ◆ The increase in the number of tenants disputing applications may reflect a growing awareness of the Tribunal process and the impact of housing and legal programs and eviction prevention services that are now available to help tenants.

*Data Source: Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General; and Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal.*

## 18) Use of Food Relief Programs

This indicator describes the number and characteristics of people who use food relief programs. It provides a measure of the vulnerability of low-income households to provide for the basic necessities of life.



- ◆ Between 1995 and 2003, there was a 39% increase in monthly food bank use in the Greater Toronto Area. About three-quarters of food bank users live in the City of Toronto. This reflects the growing difficulty of people to pay their rent and afford other basic necessities of life including food.
- ◆ On average, food bank clients spend 65% of their income on rent.
- ◆ In 2003, after-rent income needed for all living expenses is estimated at \$3.95 per day per person in the household. This reflects a steady decline in available income from \$7.40 in 1995.
- ◆ In 1995, clients used food banks an average of six times per year. By 2003, use shot up to 17 times per year.
- ◆ Since 2000, there has been a 50% increase in the number of employed people using food banks. In addition, 32% of these people have a second person in their household who is also employed. Even with two incomes, food and shelter costs cannot be met.
- ◆ In 1995, about 27% of food bank clients in the GTA had some post-secondary education. That number has increased to 37% in 2003.

*Data Source: Daily Bread Food Bank; and North York Harvest Food Bank.*

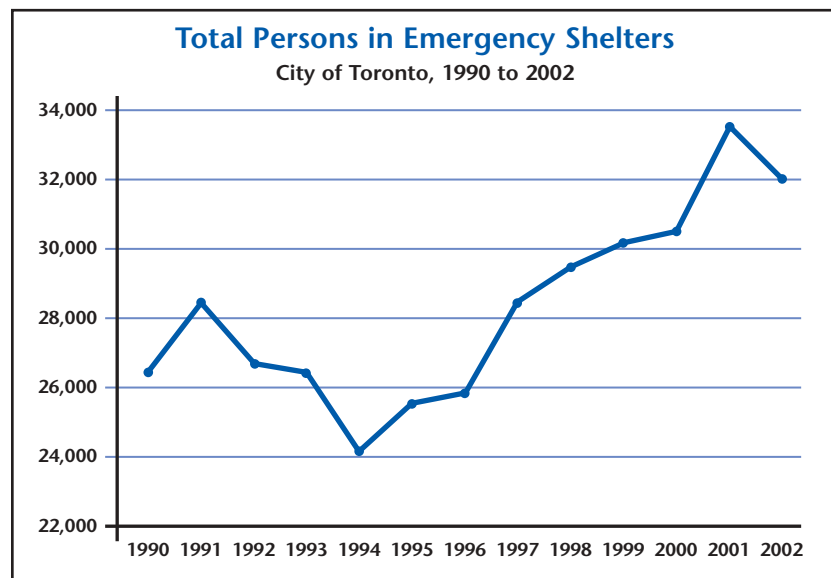


## IV. People who have lost their housing

The following series of indicators describes changes and trends in the profile of individuals and families who have lost their housing and become homeless.

### 19) Use of Shelters

This indicator describes the number of different individuals staying in shelters one or more times on an annual basis between 1990 and 2002. Data includes all persons (adults and children) staying in municipally funded shelters and provincially funded abused women's shelters. Together these account for all Toronto shelter beds.

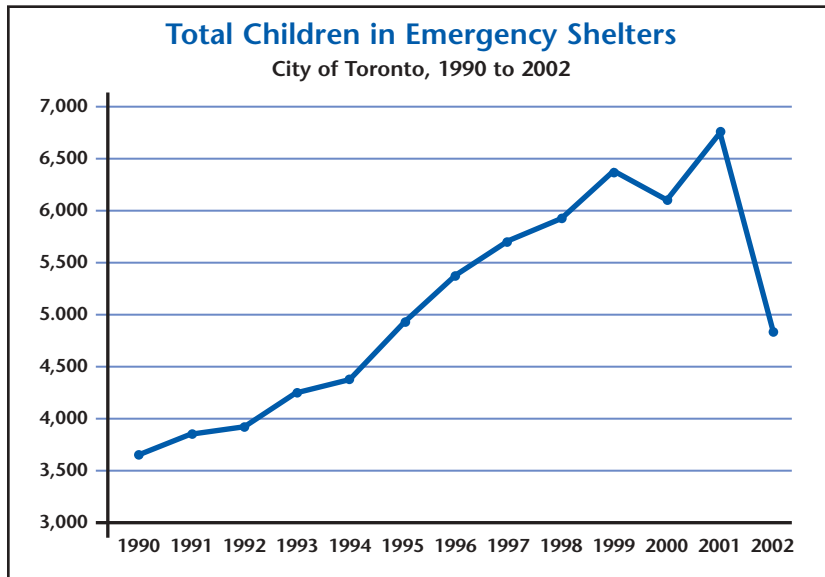


- ◆ The number of different people using emergency shelters rose from 26,529 in 1990 to 31,985 in 2002 — an increase of 21%.
- ◆ However, between 2001 and 2002, the number of people using shelters fell by almost 1,400 mainly due to fewer two-parent families needing shelter.
- ◆ The decline in demand for these families is partially attributed to more restrictive federal immigration policies. This has reduced the number of refugee families and other newcomers, who rely on shelters for transitional housing before finding permanent accommodation. In addition, support services such as the Central Family Intake program have been successful in helping families avoid the shelter system altogether by helping them avert eviction and/or find alternate permanent housing. In addition, support workers in shelters provide follow-up support to help families become stabilized in their housing so they do not return to the shelter system. The vast majority of families use shelter services only once before being successfully re-housed.

*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services and Ontario Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.*

## 20) Use of Shelters by Children

This indicator describes the number of different children who have stayed in shelters from 1990 to 2002. Data include all children staying in municipally funded shelters and provincially funded abused women's shelters. Together these account for all Toronto shelter beds.

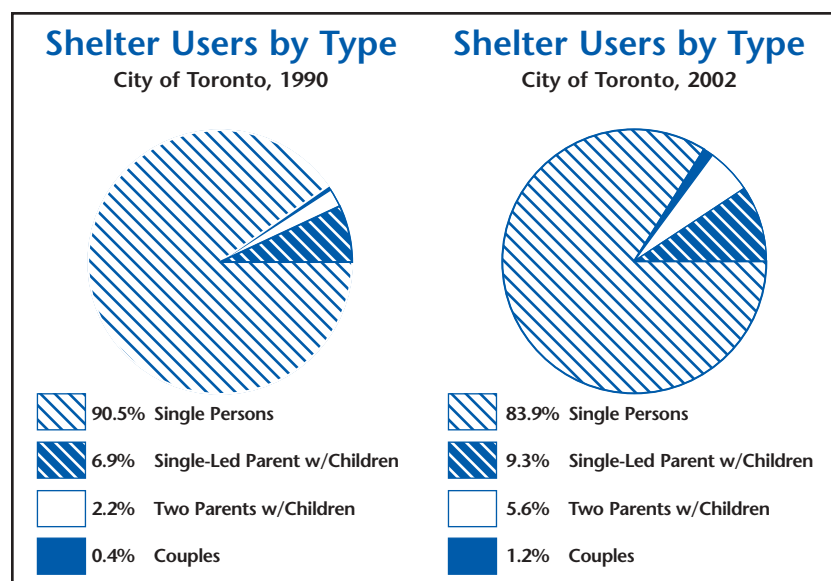


- ◆ The number of children staying in Toronto's shelters rose from 3,642 in 1990 to 4,779 in 2002. After reaching a peak of 6,727 in 2001, the number of children fell sharply in 2002 along with the overall decline in the number of two-parent families using shelters, as discussed in Indicator #19. The current number of children (4,779) is the lowest since 1995.
- ◆ Most of the children staying in shelters were young. In 2002, one-third of children were under the age of four. More than half of the children were school-aged, between five and 14 years of age.
- ◆ The average size of families staying in shelters increased from three persons in 1990 to four in 2002.

*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services and Ontario Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.*

## 21) Profile of People Using Shelters

This indicator describes characteristics of individuals and families using shelters in Toronto between 1990 and 2002. Data include all persons staying in municipally funded shelters and provincially funded abused women's shelters. Together these account for all Toronto shelter beds.



### Singles:

- Single people remain the largest group of people using emergency shelter. In 2002, 15,375 single men used a shelter one or more times during the year, their highest level since 1992. Meeting the demand for shelter for this group remains a significant concern for the emergency shelter system.
- Single women are at their highest level ever as 5,683 used shelters in 2002. While overall bed capacity for single women in the shelter system is usually sufficient to meet the demand, there may be times when certain population groups are not as adequately served — for example, women with substance use and/or mental health issues.

### Families:

- After experiencing steady growth from 1990 through 2001, two-parent families experienced a marked decline from 2001 to 2002. Despite this recent drop, the number of two-parent families with children using the shelter system is nearly three times what it was in 1990.
- Since 2001, the number of two-parent families decreased by a third, from 2,141 to 1,417. Reasons for this decline are discussed in Indicator #19.
- Indications for 2003 suggest that use of the family shelter system has stabilized around 2002 levels.
- The number of couples using shelters grew by 223% between 1990 and 2000. But, the number of couples using shelters fell from nearly 500 in 2001 to about 300 in 2002, a 40% decline.
- Meanwhile, the number of one-parent families using shelters increased by 51% between 1990 and 2002. After declining slightly from 2000 to 2001, the number of one-parent families rose by 200 in 2002. Approximately 2,300 one-parent families used shelters during 2002.

### Youth:

- Youth (aged 15-24) still comprise a large group of shelter users. In 2002, an estimated 6,900 youth stayed in municipally funded shelters, accounting for 22% of all shelter clients. This level is consistent with that of the 1990s, but significantly below the 30% peak of the 1980s. Currently, there are enough youth beds in the shelter system to meet the demand.

### Length of Stay:

- Over the past few years, couples, father-led one-parent families, single women and single men have been staying in municipally funded shelters for shorter periods of time. At the same time, there has been a slight increase in the amount of time two-parent families with children stay in shelters (an average of 3 months) and no change for mother-led one-parent families (an average of 1.5 months).

- ◆ Since 1990, there have been approximately 6,500 households whose accumulated days of stay in shelters is more than one year.

*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services and Ontario Ministry of Community, Family and Children's Services.*

## 22) Episodic Use of Shelters

This indicator describes people who use shelters on an “episodic” basis meaning they have stayed in a shelter more than five times in any given year. Data include only persons staying in municipally funded shelters.

- ◆ Episodic use of shelters by individuals and families rose from 3,024 in 1990 to 3,738 in 2002, a 24% increase.
- ◆ The majority of episodic users are single persons. More single men are repeat users than other client groups. Single men account for most of the increase in repeat use over the past few years.
- ◆ For families, eviction continues to be the main reason they need emergency shelter on a repeat basis.
- ◆ In another form of “episodic” use, 1,334 households needed to use a shelter at least once every year between 1998 and 2002.

*Data Source: City of Toronto, Community & Neighbourhood Services.*

## 23) Use of Out of the Cold Programs

This indicator describes use of the Out of the Cold meal and overnight shelter programs in Toronto for the period of July 2002 to June 2003.

- ◆ Out of the Cold programs are run by a wide variety of faith-based groups across Toronto primarily during the winter season. Some programs run year-round. More than 50 Out of the Cold programs were open during the 2002 to 2003 winter season. Most programs only operated one night a week.
- ◆ From November 2002 to May 2003, Out of the Cold provided 36,973 bed-nights of service. An average of 173 people per night used these overnight shelter programs.
- ◆ In addition to shelter services, Out of the Cold programs served 42,724 meals to people in need. Another 37,600 meals were served through Out of the Cold meal only programs (i.e., overnight shelter was not provided).
- ◆ In addition to meal and shelter programs, Out of the Cold programs offer some or all of the following services: foot care, clothing, laundry, medical services (nursing and doctors), showers and public transit tickets.
- ◆ Out of the Cold operators reported seeing more people with complex problems such as mental health and addiction issues in the past year.

*Data Source: Homeless Support Services Inc., Out of the Cold Support Services.*

## Appendix B:

# Housing and Homelessness Initiatives

This section provides more detail on the initiatives discussed in the main section of this report card. It is not intended as an inventory of all existing government initiatives, but rather key actions taken by municipal, provincial and federal governments since the 2001 Report Card.

## I. Initiatives to Address the Affordability of Rental Housing

Toronto is an expensive city to live in and most low-income people are struggling to survive. To thrive and prosper, people need a level of income that can accommodate local costs of rent, utilities, food, transportation, clothing and other necessities of life. People receiving social assistance and those who work for minimum wage frequently do not have enough to cover these costs. The largest financial pressure for low-income households in Toronto is the high cost of rent.

### *Income Security*

There is strong consensus that addressing poverty is one of the keys to solving homelessness. People with the lowest incomes rely primarily on social assistance or work for minimum wage, neither of which has increased in recent years. In 1995, the provincial government reduced social assistance rates<sup>1</sup> by 21.6%, and froze the minimum wage<sup>2</sup>.

Recent action taken to improve income security for low-income households includes the following:

- ◆ In February 2003, the City of Toronto endorsed the community-driven, province-wide *Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids* campaign to increase the shelter component of social assistance benefits and reintroduce rent controls. The City also agreed to lend its name and resources to public education initiatives related to the campaign. On March 12, 2003, the City joined with the Pay the Rent and Feed the Kids coalition to launch a poster campaign to promote this initiative across Toronto.
- ◆ In May 2003, the City of Toronto asked the Province to endorse an “**Ontario Child Supplement**.” Under this proposal, the Province would provide the child component of the current Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program. The proposal also assumes that families receiving social assistance can keep the federal National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) thereby increasing their income. Currently the NCBS is deducted from social assistance benefits in Ontario.
- ◆ In May 2003, the provincial government announced a campaign promise to create a new **Ontario Child Benefit** for parents receiving social assistance. The benefit would provide \$1,500 per year for the first child, \$1,300 for the second and \$1,200 for each subsequent child. If implemented, this new benefit would provide critical resources for families, although it does nothing to improve the incomes of singles or couples.
- ◆ Increases to the **National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS)** were also announced in the last federal budget, specifically an incremental building of the NCBS over five years. This includes accelerating the increase in the maximum annual benefit to \$2,600 by July 2003. Beyond that, the value of the benefit in inflation-adjusted dollars increases to a maximum of \$3,000 per year for the first child by 2007. The NCBS is targeted to low-income families to help prevent or reduce child poverty and to “promote attachment to the workforce.”

<sup>1</sup> Social assistance is made up of two parts, one for shelter and the other for basic needs. Benefit levels change depending upon the number of people in a family.

<sup>2</sup> The minimum wage in Ontario is \$6.85 per hour (\$6.40 for students and \$5.95 for liquor servers).



## Rent Supplements

Rent supplements are one way to help people with housing affordability issues. Rent supplements involve a contract between a landlord and the government. The latter provides a monthly payment to cover the difference between an agreed upon market rent and a geared-to-income rent that the tenant can afford. While some rent supplements are with private landlords, others are a key part of mixed-income social housing projects to ensure units are affordable to low-income tenants. Not everyone agrees with rent supplements. Some prefer a shelter allowance program, which provides the subsidy directly to the tenant instead of to the landlord allowing the tenant a greater choice of where to live. However, shelter allowance programs are not available in Ontario.

In 2000, the Province established a new rent supplement program using \$50 million annually from savings in a federal housing subsidy. The program, once fully allocated, will fund about 2,500 rent supplement units in Toronto (about 8,000 province-wide). It was recently named the “**New Tomorrow Rent Supplement Program**” replacing the former Homelessness Rent Supplement Program.

The City of Toronto has allocated almost all of the rent supplements available under this program. A key issue has been the sustainability of funding. In 2003, the Province finally provided a 20-year funding guarantee and allocated additional units, bringing Toronto’s total units to 2,487. Of these, 511 units have been used for transitional housing units developed under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) targeted to people who are at high risk of homelessness. A further 124 units have been allocated to abused women and 50 units to other high-risk categories. However, the rent supplements for abused women are for regular residential buildings and so do not provide special safety features that women fleeing violence often require.

## Future Challenges & Opportunities

Aside from the increases to the National Child Benefit Supplement, little has been done in recent years to improve the incomes of people who are most in need. Employment gains have not substantially helped

low-income workers as most of the new job growth has been in the skilled professions. Average wages have improved but only slightly. In reality, people working for minimum wage are not that much better off than people receiving social assistance.

The major challenge related to improving income security for people living in poverty is getting senior levels of government to agree to take action that includes the following:

- ◆ **Increase the minimum wage** levels to be more in line with the cost of living; and
- ◆ **Raise the shelter component of social assistance** to reflect local housing markets.

## II. Initiatives to Increase the Supply of Affordable Housing

Addressing the root causes of homelessness requires increasing the supply of affordable and supportive housing. Over the last two years, all levels of government have been involved in new initiatives. This activity includes new affordable housing, rent-geared-to-income housing, transitional, and supportive housing.

### *New Affordable Rental Housing*

- ◆ Over the last three years, new affordable rental housing development has been led by the City of Toronto’s *Let’s Build* program. Through a request for proposal process, funding has been committed to 11 community projects for a total of **493 new units**. As of summer 2003, 211 of these units were occupied; the rest were under development.
- ◆ The City of Toronto has contributed \$28 million to its **Capital Revolving Fund** for Affordable Housing. A total of \$14.5 million of this fund has been allocated to the above mentioned 11 projects. It is expected that the remaining funds will be allocated this fall.

- ◆ In April 2002, the City passed a **Municipal Housing Facility By-law**, which allows it to provide funding to private-sector developers to build affordable rental housing. This new by-law also provides the opportunity for property tax exemptions to both non-profit and private rental developers.
  - ◆ A key part of the City of Toronto's affordable housing strategy is the **Housing First Policy**, which uses surplus municipal land for housing. To date, 13 City sites (valued at \$5.7 million) have been provided to support the development of 378 units. Of these new units, 153 are built. Another dozen sites are being actively considered but are not yet approved.
  - ◆ Both the federal and provincial governments have contributed **lands for affordable housing**. In December 1999, the federal government agreed to set aside \$10 million nation-wide to facilitate the use of surplus federal lands for affordable housing purposes. In June 2003, the City of Toronto asked the federal government to declare the Moss Park Armoury surplus with a view to using the site for affordable rental housing. A federal decision on this request is pending.
- One site, jointly owned by the federal and provincial governments, has been made available at a nominal cost and is now under development for a total of 92 units. In 2000, the Province announced that provincial lands would be made available for at least 500 affordable units in Toronto. Three sites, including the site owned together with the federal government, have been offered to the City of Toronto. Decisions about the development of two of these sites are still outstanding.
- ◆ In 2001, the federal government announced that it would make \$680 million available over five years for a new **national affordable housing program**. This announcement was a break through and reversed the decade old federal decision to withdraw from new affordable housing supply initiatives.

The federal government has allocated \$245 million of this funding to stimulate affordable housing in Ontario. The **federal/provincial/**

**territorial agreement** governing this program requires the Province to cost-match the federal contribution. This arrangement has allowed the Province to limit its contribution to affordable housing projects to about \$20 million Provincial Sales Tax (PST) rebates. The Province has proposed that almost all of the remaining matching funds come from municipalities. The agreement also set "affordable" rents at or below the CMHC average market rent for the local area.

In 2002, the Province announced the "**Community Rental Housing Program**" component of the federal program, which outlined the details for using the federal and provincial funding in Ontario. To date, the Province has allocated federal funding for the City to invest in a "pilot" of 1,000 rental housing units in Toronto. This spring the City's *Let's Build* program issued a "request for proposals" for affordable housing from private and non-profit housing providers. The objective of this proposal call is to invest the available federal and provincial funding to help build up to 1,000 new units of affordable housing. Specific recommendations for project funding will go to City Council and the Province in September 2003.

Based on an average per unit federal grant of \$25,000 and \$2,000 in PST rebates the "pilot" represents \$27 million being invested in new affordable rental housing development in Toronto. Based on federal and municipal resources expected to be available, approximately 3,000 new affordable housing units could be developed over the next three to four years.

While the federal affordable housing program, as currently constructed, will stimulate the production of moderately priced new rental housing it will not create truly affordable housing for those most in need. Dedicated provincial **rent supplement funding** is needed for the program to benefit the tens of thousands of low-income Torontonians who require housing renting at \$350 to \$400 a month.

In the immediate future there is still a need for the provincial government to increase its investment in the affordable housing program and provide municipalities more flexibility in delivering the program. The federal government must also examine ways and means to expedite use of an additional \$320 million in nation-wide funding for affordable housing that it announced in February 2003, which currently sits unallocated. There could be additional units or deeper subsidies to create more affordable units developed with this extra funding depending upon decisions made by the federal and provincial governments.

- ◆ In 1999, the Province initiated **PST rebates** of up to \$2,000 per unit on building materials for new multi-residential construction. This program lasted for about one year and covers a large part but not all of the PST payable. The funding supported the construction of 2,000 units province-wide, although half went to retirement homes (the rebates were not particular to affordable rental housing). The Province has committed to renew this rebate, to a total of \$21.5 million province-wide as part of its contribution to the Community Rental Housing Program.
- ◆ The City of Toronto continues to make use of **Section 37** of the Planning Act to secure benefits (such as new rental housing or the preservation of existing rental units) in exchange for increases in height/density on redevelopment sites.

### *Preserving Existing Affordable Rental Housing*

In addition to adding to the supply of rental housing, it is important to preserve the existing rental housing. Adding to the availability of rental housing by upgrading or renovating existing housing also takes less time than new development.

Recent action taken to preserve existing affordable rental housing includes the following:

- ◆ Adoption of the City of Toronto's new **Official Plan** in 2002 includes updated policies to encourage preservation of existing

rental housing, to require replacement of any rental housing lost through redevelopment, and to discourage conversion to condominium.

City Council has applied its policies on rental preservation when dealing with individual applications from building owners, and has been defending their decisions on appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board and others.

- ◆ **Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)** funding is used to upgrade the homes of low-income renters and rooming house residents. A new component of RRAP was introduced in 1999, which allows landlords to convert non-residential buildings into housing for low-income people.

Since 2000, annual funding for RRAP in the City of Toronto has ranged between \$6.6 million and \$7.3 million. Priority has been given to repairing or converting affordable rental buildings and rooming houses.

During the 2002/2003 fiscal year, \$6.8 million in RRAP funding was allocated in Toronto. A total of 99 affordable homeowner dwellings were funded for repairs. Seventy-two units of single-family and rental accommodation were modified for disabled access and 379 affordable rental units were repaired or created.

### *Social Housing*

Social housing, which provides rental subsidies to reduce monthly payments, accounts for the majority of cheaper rental housing in Toronto (units renting for \$500 a month or less). With the recent provincial downloading of social housing, the City of Toronto is now responsible for the administration of 95,000 units of social housing — approximately 70,000 of the 95,000 units receive rent geared-to income assistance.

Recent action taken related to improving the condition of social housing stock in Toronto includes the following:

- ◆ The Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) which administers 57,500<sup>1</sup> of the 95,000 social housing units has identified the regeneration and **redevelopment of public housing** as one of its strategic priorities. TCHC is developing a portfolio strategy that identifies where there is a need for redevelopment or investment in the current housing stock in order to revitalize communities.

Two initiatives have been launched. TCHC has received approval in principle from City Council for the revitalization of **Regent Park**. TCHC is also working on the redevelopment of **Don Mount Court**, a 232-unit complex that is suffering catastrophic structural damage. The redevelopment of both sites will replace the low-income units and also add new housing.

- ◆ The City of Toronto and TCHC require the participation of senior levels of government to fund the revitalization of Toronto's aging social housing stock.

### *Transitional & Supportive Housing*

For some people an adequate income and an affordable home is not enough to stabilize their lives. This is especially true for people with mental health or addiction issues who often require transitional or supportive housing. The types and levels of support required by tenants vary considerably and may include help with housekeeping, meal preparation, banking, life skills, medical care, counselling, referrals, employment assistance and drop-in programs.

Two key funding initiatives have helped create new transitional and supportive housing units in Toronto over the last few years – the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), and the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's (MOHLTC) homelessness initiative.

- ◆ The City of Toronto's *Community Plan for Homelessness in Toronto 2000* set out funding priorities for the first three years of the federal **Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative**. A total of \$53 million was allocated for Toronto under this fund of which 40%

<sup>1</sup> This excludes private-landlord rent supplements administered by TCHC.

was used to build **transitional housing**. Since 2000, a total of \$21.1 million in SCPI funding has been allocated to 21 community groups to produce 561 new units of transitional housing in Toronto. This housing is targeted to people coming from the shelter system or who are at significant risk of losing their housing.

A range of community-based organizations operate this housing, selected for their expertise in working with the targeted resident groups. As of June 2003, approximately 150 of these transitional housing units were occupied; the remainder are under development. In addition, 55 of these new rental units have rent supplements provided by MOHLTC.

The City has also allocated \$200,000 in pre-development funding under the first round of SCPI to help 18 community groups develop solid housing proposals and ensure high-quality projects. Many groups want to put energy into permanent solutions such as housing development, but do not necessarily have this specialized expertise. Investing resources into this developmental support is intended to build the longer-term capacity of community groups to partner with the City to build housing.

Toronto's updated *Community Plan* for the **second round of SCPI** (for 2003 to 2006), which will be completed in the fall of 2003, will allocate a significant share of funds to transitional housing.

- ◆ The Ministry of Health & Long Term Care has provided capital and operating funding for new **supportive housing**. This housing is targeted to people with serious mental illness, who are homeless or at significant risk of becoming homeless. In the first round of funding, 724 supportive units were added in Toronto; all are now occupied. A second phase of funding will provide 348 more units in Toronto with others added elsewhere in the province. Most units are located in existing rental housing buildings that were renovated, therefore, these units have not increased the overall supply of supportive housing.

- ◆ The **Toronto-Peel Mental Health Implementation Task Force**, chaired by Michael Wilson, has submitted its report to the provincial Minister of Health & Long Term Care. The report is expected to contain strong recommendations for new supportive housing. This report has yet to be made public and the Province has made no announcements in this regard.

### *Improving the Environment for Market Rental Housing*

The City of Toronto and the Province of Ontario have taken steps to create an environment which will encourage overall rental housing supply. A healthy overall rental market is important to ensure that a diverse range of housing is available. In tight markets, landlords tend to prefer middle-income tenants, which leave few options for low-income tenants including people on the social housing waiting list or in shelters. A viable private rental development sector also helps the City and community sector to efficiently develop new affordable housing.

Recent action taken to improve the environment for private market rental housing development includes the following:

- ◆ In July 2001, the City of Toronto adopted a **Rental Action Plan** entitled *Unlocking the Opportunity for New Rental Housing: A Call for Action*. This strategy recommends a range of changes to encourage new housing development, including changes to mortgage insurance and taxation at all levels of government.
- ◆ In 2002, City Council extended a **special property tax reduction** program for new rental housing from the original eight years to a 35-year period.
- ◆ A provincial **Housing Supply Working Group** has issued two reports, the most recent in November 2002. The recommendations of these reports were aimed at encouraging investment in new rental housing and include measures relating to taxation, mortgage insurance, and tax credits for affordable housing, and other matters. A working group reporting to the federal-provincial-territorial Ministers of Housing is examining these issues further.

### *Future Challenges & Opportunities*

Overall rental housing supply and demand factors have produced higher rental vacancy rates in Toronto over the past year, which may continue. This new environment provides challenges as well as opportunities for the production of affordable rental housing.

Challenges and opportunities related to affordable rental, transitional and supportive housing include the following:

- ◆ All three levels of government, in collaboration with the non-profit and private sectors, have started down the road of **delivering significant volumes of new housing**, with \$1 billion in federal funding nation-wide and a significant amount of matching funds. This is a considerable task.
- ◆ Developing housing is a challenge for the community-based non-profit sector, which often does not have experience building housing but are dedicated to finding long-term solutions to homelessness. The City will need to continue to find ways to provide **developmental support** to these groups.
- ◆ A significant and unresolved challenge is the need to secure provincial funding for **rent supplements** to accompany new affordable rental housing development in order to make the new units truly affordable to low-income households such as people on the social housing waiting list and in emergency shelters.
- ◆ Successful housing development requires more than capital funding and rental assistance. A key element is the **community acceptance** of affordable housing projects across the city. There has been much opposition to the development of affordable housing into local neighbourhoods. Promoting inclusive communities will continue to be an ongoing challenge for the City of Toronto, and will require active leadership by City Councillors.
- ◆ Building housing takes time — one to two years — in the meantime **more emergency shelter spaces** are needed to accommodate the high demand. Meeting the development targets in the City's Multi-Year Shelter Strategy will be a challenge due to community



opposition resulting from misconceptions about who homeless people are and the anticipated effects of having homeless people in their neighbourhoods.

- ◆ An opportunity afforded by the higher-vacancy rental market (currently at 2.4%) is the potential to enter into more rent supplement arrangements with private landlords, or take other steps which will benefit people on the social housing waiting list, in shelters, or facing eviction.

### III. Initiatives that Mediate the Gaps: Programs & Services

Improving income security and ensuring the availability of affordable and supportive rental housing is key to reducing homelessness in Toronto. However, a range of programs and services are also needed to help people who have become homeless or who are at significant risk of homelessness and may need additional supports to stabilize their lives.

Over the last few years, the majority of government funding has gone toward programs and services, in particular emergency shelter. But, until more is done to address the causes of homelessness, programs and services will continue to be needed.

#### *Community Initiatives*

In 1998, the Province of Ontario designated municipalities as the local service managers for homeless initiatives. The City of Toronto directly delivers some of these programs and services. However, the vast majority of these programs and services are provided by the community-based service sector with funding from all levels of government. The City administers funding for the following programs:

- ◆ Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (federal)
- ◆ City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund (municipal and provincial)
- ◆ Off the Streets and Into Shelter (municipal and provincial)
- ◆ Community Partners Program (provincial)
- ◆ Supports for Daily Living (provincial)
- ◆ Redirection of Emergency Hostels Fund (municipal and provincial)

The City's Shelter, Housing & Support Division has worked with funded community agencies over the last couple of years to find better ways to understand the kind of activities and outcomes that these programs have on peoples' lives. As part of this work a performance measurement system has been developed, with input from over 100 community groups, which provides a vision of what homeless programs and services are striving to achieve, specifically to:

- ◆ improve the lives of people who are homeless
- ◆ help people improve their current housing situation
- ◆ help people achieve greater independence
- ◆ help prevent people from losing their housing, and
- ◆ strengthen the service system.

There are five main service sectors: Street Outreach; Drop-in Services, Housing Help, Housing and Hunger, and Community Economic Development/Skills Development. A further "Additional Supports" sector encompasses projects that do not neatly align with the above services sectors but provide a service that supports the system as a whole.

Funded community agencies have provided information on their activities and outcomes for the first quarter of 2003; some also for the last quarter of 2002. This section of the report card presents a selection of this preliminary data to show the impact of these housing and homeless programs and services in Toronto.

#### (a) Street Outreach Services

A combination of City and provincial funding allows community-based service providers to now provide street outreach services across Toronto, seven days a week, 365 days a year. Previous to 2001 the majority of street outreach funding was for programs that provided survival support. While the survival work continues, since 2001 the main focus of street outreach has shifted to "high-support street outreach." This approach uses a case management approach where outreach workers do comprehensive work with people to help them get off the street and into shelter, housing or other suitable programs and services.



High-support street outreach workers work during the day to connect homeless people to mainstream and other homeless programs and services at a time when those services are open. There is also a strong emphasis on co-ordination amongst other agencies with a case management or similar comprehensive approach to service delivery. Transportation is also provided, which improves the success of helping a person move from the street to shelter, especially if the available shelter bed is across the city.

Early results from the new performance measurement system show the effectiveness of street outreach services. In many situations workers were successful in helping someone find shelter or housing. For example, during the first quarter of 2003, a total of 725 people were successfully referred to a shelter or housing. Referrals to other homeless programs and services (for example drop-ins, meal programs, etc.), medical services and referrals to housing were also significant.

### (b) Housing Help Services

Housing help services include housing search, housing stabilization and eviction prevention activities<sup>3</sup>. They provide a range of programs, supports and activities to people who are homeless or who are at-risk of homelessness. These include help to find affordable rental housing, support once housed in the community, and assistance to prevent evictions.

Between January and March of 2003, over 8,000 households were helped with the difficult **search for housing**. Most of the people helped (80%) were single persons, although a significant proportion (12%) were one-parent families. Due to the shortage of affordable rental housing in Toronto, the search for housing can take a long time. However, 4,897 of these households (or 60%) were known to have found housing. The majority, about 2/3, found housing in the private rental market, and 16% secured a supportive housing unit.

Community agencies work hard to **prevent people from losing their housing** through an eviction. In the first quarter of 2003, agencies worked with 2,405 households in Toronto who were at serious risk of eviction. About 63% of these people were singles. Another 34% are either one- or two-parent families. Agencies have been successful in preventing evictions in many situations — 1,760 in the first quarter of this year.

Once people have found a home, they may require longer-term support to keep that housing. During the first quarter of 2003, agencies worked with almost 7,000 households to **help stabilize them in their housing**. Most of these people (72%) were single. On average, workers provided support on nine different occasions over the three-month period showing the high demand for this kind of service. Support from workers includes providing information, making referrals, mediating landlord/tenant issues, advocacy and accompaniment to meetings and appointments.

### (c) Drop-in Services

Drop-ins provide both emergency and prevention services. Drop-ins provide daytime shelter for persons who are homeless, act as an access point to other parts of the service system and provide supports to socially isolated persons in marginal housing arrangements to prevent them from becoming homeless.

Drop-ins often provide a wide range of services for a large number of people on a daily basis. Some people use different drop-ins at different times of the day and week depending on the type of support they need and the hours the drop-in is open. During the first quarter of 2003, City funded agencies providing drop-in services reported serving an average of 1,800 different people each weekday, and 800 different people each day on weekends. On any given day, approximately 1,600 meals were served in drop-ins.

<sup>3</sup> Housing help data is gathered from programs funded through the City of Toronto Homeless Initiatives Fund, Community Partners Program, Supports for Daily Living and the Redirection of Emergency Hostels Fund (see page 52 for a description of the latter program).

## Other Prevention Services

In addition to the Community Initiatives named above, the City of Toronto also provides the following support to help families and individuals from becoming homeless:

- ◆ Using the municipal savings from the National Child Tax Benefit, the City provides a **Shelter Fund** to help families receiving social assistance maintain their housing. The fund has been effective in helping families keep or find more suitable housing. In 2001, the Shelter Fund assisted an average of 2,204 families a month; a further 2,800 families were helped each month in 2002.  
The Shelter Fund policy has been expanded to support families leaving emergency shelters. Families receive additional funds for shelter costs for three months after leaving the shelter. This supports and increases their ability to maintain housing. Families can receive additional funds for shelter costs for up to six months when they are participating in an approved Ontario Works activity.
- ◆ In 2001/02, Legal Aid Ontario implemented several initiatives to help tenants across the province. In Toronto, new initiatives include the following:
  - The establishment of the province-wide Advocacy Centre for Tenants Ontario (ACTO) in September 2001 to improve the housing situation of low-income Ontario residents through test case litigation, law reform, community organizing and public education.
  - The expansion of **legal clinic services**, including:
    - Expanding service areas of three existing clinics in Toronto (West Toronto, Kensington-Bellwood and Parkdale) and increased funding for additional staff to cover the downtown core;
    - Increased funding for additional staff to Aboriginal Legal Services, Centre for Spanish-speaking People, HIV-AIDS Clinic, Scarborough Legal Services and West Scarborough Services;

- Opening a new French language clinic in Toronto in fall 2002;
- Creating the new Outreach Legal Services project providing free legal services for people who are homeless or underhoused.
- The expansion of the **Tenant Duty Counsel** Program across Ontario. The program has increased full-time Tenant Duty Counsels in Toronto from four to six.

- ◆ Under the provincial *Tenant Protection Act*, landlords can raise rents above the annual rent increase guideline to help pay for major repairs, security services or increased operating costs such as property taxes and utilities. The costs to tenants to dispute the “above guideline increase” (AGI) are quite high, especially if expert advice is needed. In response to these concerns, the City of Toronto continues to administer the **Tenant Defence Fund**, which helps tenants dispute above-guideline rent increases.

The Fund has two components. One part provides tenants with a grant to obtain expert representation to dispute AGI applications by landlords, and to challenge landlords’ appeals to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for demolition or conversion. The second component provides services of an outreach team to help tenants organize and prepare for AGI disputes or OMB challenges.

Approximately 30,000 tenant households are helped through the Tenant Defence Fund every year. The total fund is \$325,000, which includes the addition of \$25,000 approved in 2003.

## Shelter Services

The limited development of new affordable rental housing in Toronto has resulted in an ongoing demand for emergency shelter. Recent initiatives undertaken by the City’s Shelter, Housing & Support Division to improve the accountability, availability and quality of shelter services in Toronto include:

- ◆ Development of a **Multi-Year Shelter Strategy**, which sets out future directions and financing of Toronto shelters. The Strategy,

approved by City Council in 2002, has the following priorities:

- Improving the shelter system by implementing new shelter standards, investing in targeted new shelter development, improving shelter access city-wide, establishing cost estimates and projections, and addressing the sustainability of shelter funding;
- Advocating for long-term solutions including ensuring opportunities beyond the shelter system, access to mental health and addiction treatment, and developing affordable, transitional and supportive housing; and
- A focus on accountability by developing a quality assurance program, improving reporting systems and updating the multi-year shelter strategy on an annual basis.

The process of updating the Shelter Strategy is just beginning. This will include examining social and economic factors driving the demand for shelter, changes in government policies or legislation affecting housing and homelessness, best practices and service gaps and trends.

- ◆ In November 2002, City Council adopted a new set of revised **Shelter Standards**. The Shelter Standards outline guiding principles, standards of organisation, access to shelter, resident rights and responsibilities, program standards, food safety and nutrition standards, health and safety standards, and expectations for staff training. Shelter operators have until December 31, 2003 to implement the new standards.
- ◆ Development of a **Quality Assurance** program to assess each shelter's compliance with the new Standards. This involves the collection of operational best practices, the development of a quality assurance self-review and measurement tool, and a final quality assurance review of each shelter. The quality assurance process will enable the City to better document the wide range of services in the shelter system to better address funding relationships, outline responsibilities of each party in an accountability framework, ensure a service baseline, and have additional information to better

understand gaps and trends in the provision of shelter services. There will be opportunities for community input into this process.

- ◆ Staff from several City departments, including Shelter, Housing & Support and Toronto Social Services, are working with staff in the Ministry of Public Safety and Security to improve **discharge planning for people being discharged from jails** and prisons to no-fixed-address. Without appropriate discharge planning to link people with housing and employment, they are at great risk of becoming homeless.
- ◆ Under the Redirection of Emergency Hostel Funding program, announced by the Province in 1999, the City of Toronto has directed considerable resources to **shelter-based prevention services** including the following:
  - *Project Going Home*, which helps people who want to return to their home community.
  - *Housing Matchmaker*, which provides co-ordinated access to housing as well as support and follow-up services to youth and adults who are chronically homeless (have been in a shelter or on the street for more than one year).
  - *Housing and Community Follow-Up Workers*, which help people leaving shelters to find and maintain permanent housing.

### **Health & Mental Health Services**

People who are homeless or at serious risk of homelessness have more health problems than the general population. Their situation is exacerbated by poor nutrition, poor hygiene, and a higher likelihood of experiencing violence or trauma on the street. Homeless people also face many barriers to receiving effective health and mental health services. Traditional approaches do not always work for people with complex needs and homeless people are at greater risk of have their identification, such as their health card, stolen or lost.

- ◆ Over the last several years Toronto Public Health has brought together a diverse group of stakeholders to create the **Homeless**

**Health Reference Group.** One of its work groups focused on discharge planning. This group identified service issues and opportunities to improve discharge planning and follow-up for homeless people discharged from Toronto hospitals.

The group has:

- Identified best practices and community resources needed for discharge planning for people who are homeless. A **tool kit** was developed to assist hospital staff in the discharge process, especially if social workers or discharge planners are not available;
- Distributed the tool kits to acute care hospitals in Toronto;
- Evaluated the tool kit in both July 2001 and May 2002. The tool kit was revised and redistributed to all Toronto hospitals in fall 2002. In addition, a workshop for hospital staff on “better practices” was held in November 2002 at Bridgepoint Health.

The **Infirmiry** Work Group developed a service model to provide short-term health support for homeless people being discharged from hospital to no-fixed-address. Homeless people who are discharged from hospitals but are still sick are often forced to go to busy shelters, or other unsuitable housing. An infirmiry provides more appropriate support to help people to recover. The Sherbourne Health Centre has submitted a proposal for an infirmiry based on this work and is awaiting confirmation of Ministry of Health funding.

The **Homeless Youth with Concurrent Disorders** Work Group was created in 2001 to develop an appropriate and comprehensive service delivery model to address the complex needs of homeless and underhoused youth with concurrent disorders (both mental health and addiction issues). A draft model has been developed identifying contributions of key service providers. The model will be tested with homeless youth. The Work Group is also investigating the feasibility of doing a pilot test of the model in downtown Toronto.

- ◆ The **Rotary Club of Toronto Infirmiry** is a new 36-bed transition unit that is part of the Seaton House Annex Harm

Reduction Program. The Annex is an innovative wet-shelter program for high-risk homeless men and part of the evolving Health Care Complex at Seaton House. The Rotary Club funds this program, which runs in partnership with the University of Toronto through St. Michael's Hospital. The Infirmiry serves homeless men who have been discharged from the hospital and who need increased medical attention due to acute or chronic physical and mental illness, or who need palliative care. This program is also a training site for U of T Family Medicine residents as part of St. Michael's Hospital - Seaton House Inner City Health training program.

- ◆ Seaton House is also improving how it provides health care to homeless men using this shelter. The **Continuum of Care** project aims to strengthen the integration and effectiveness of referral, health care and discharge planning practices between St. Michael's Hospital and Seaton House.
- ◆ Harm reduction services have proven successful in linking people with addictions to supports, such as shelter. Harm reduction facilities have been added to the emergency shelter system, including:
  - The Annex Program at Seaton House with a capacity of 105 beds.
  - The Lounge Program at Women's Residence with a capacity of 15 beds.

Harm reduction focuses on reducing the harm associated with substance use. Programs try to address the person's most pressing needs (shelter, food, clothing, health services, etc.). Although abstinence is not ruled out, it is not necessarily the main objective.

- ◆ The Ministry of Health funds the **Access to Health Cards for the Homeless** project. Under this program, identification clinics are held at three community health centres (Regent Park, Central Toronto and Parkdale). At each site, once a month, representatives from the Ministry of Health come to the clinics so that people who are homeless can apply directly for a health card at a permanent community location.

- The federal government, through the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative, funds the **Partners for Access to Identification** program. This program funds seven outreach workers to operate 40 weekly ID clinics across the City of Toronto to help people get replacement ID such as health cards.

### *Parks & Recreation Services*

People who are homeless regularly use parks and recreation services across the city. In 2003, the City's Parks & Recreation Division developed the Parks & Recreation Homeless Strategy, which documents existing programs and services for people who are homeless or otherwise living in poverty, including:

- ◆ Hired a **full-time outreach worker** to encourage homeless people to use Parks & Recreation programs and services, and to make referrals to appropriate community-based services.
- ◆ Developed a policy on how staff can effectively work with people who are homeless.
- ◆ The provision of free **shower and washroom services**, such as the Harrison Baths.
- ◆ Conducted staff training sessions to increase awareness about homelessness and the range of City and community-based services available to help people who are homeless.

The Parks & Recreation Homeless Strategy also sets out future initiatives including:

- ◆ Increased Homeless **Awareness Training** for front-line staff to include part-time and seasonal staff.
- ◆ District recreation service plans that outline how staff will outreach, serve and provide programming for people who are homeless or living in poverty.
- ◆ A communications plan to communicate the Division's programs and services more effectively.

### *Library Services*

People who are homeless use neighbourhood libraries just like everyone else does. They read newspapers to search for housing and employment. They use computers to access information and check out books to read. Homeless people also use libraries as a safe and quiet refuge from busy shelters or inclement weather. In an effort to improve library services to people who are homeless, Toronto Public Libraries has taken the following action:

- ◆ Developed and held two **staff training** sessions to date. Front-line library staff and security guards were educated on the issues of housing and homelessness as well as the range of community-based services that are available in Toronto to help. Staff also learned about specific library policies that can help make it easier for someone who is homeless to use library services. For example, how someone without identification can take out a book.
- ◆ In a pilot project for 2003, a **special library collection** will be installed directly in one of Toronto's community-based family shelters for use by the adults and children staying in that facility.

### *Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative*

A key funding initiative over the last three years has been the federal **Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative** (SCPI), which is administered by the City of Toronto. First announced in December 1999, SCPI is a flexible program intended to alleviate and prevent homelessness. By March 2004, the City will have allocated \$53.1 million for this first round of the program. The majority of funds have gone toward building transitional housing and shelters. However, considerable resources were used for small capital improvements to homeless services, addressing service gaps, and building capacity in the homeless service system.

SCPI funding does not fall neatly into the housing or service program areas but rather straddles the spectrum of these initiatives in Toronto. Achievements of the first round of SCPI funding are as follows:



- ◆ Capital funding to develop or renovate **21 transitional housing projects** to increase the supply of transitional housing in the city.
- ◆ Capital funding to develop or renovate **eight emergency shelters** to increase the number of transitional and emergency shelter beds in the shelter system.
- ◆ **Small capital improvements to 104 projects** (building improvement or acquisitions) to support homeless programs and services.
- ◆ Funding to **81 homeless programs and services** including direct service delivery, protocol development, staff training and education, planning initiatives, public education, and community research and needs assessment.
- ◆ Funding for **seven research initiatives** related to housing and homelessness.

### *Future Challenges & Opportunities*

Future challenges and opportunities related to homeless services and programs include the following:

- ◆ The continuation of the federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative was announced in the federal Throne Speech in November 2002. Toronto will receive another \$53 million under this **second round of SCPI** providing Toronto with a renewed opportunity to make strategic investments in homeless services as well as transitional housing.

To guide the implementation of SCPI over the next three years of the program, an updated *Community Plan for Homelessness in Toronto* has been developed with input from community-based service providers. The revised plan builds on the successes of the first round, and re-establishes and updates the objectives and funding priorities to include the following:

- Create housing options
- Build public awareness and support
- Targeted capital investments in shelters and other community facilities

- Help people leave the streets and shelters behind
  - Create skills development and employment opportunities, and
  - Build capacity and sustainable partnerships.
- ◆ An ongoing issue for community-based agencies who provide services for homeless and at-risk people is **sustainability of funding**. Most agencies survive by cobbling together different pots of mainly project funding. The uncertainty as to ongoing funding sources creates a sense of instability in the sector which makes long-term planning difficult if not impossible.
  - ◆ Securing **funding for housing support services** that are attached to new transitional or affordable rental housing projects is also a challenge. Few funding sources are available for housing supports and so this continues to be a challenge in helping people to stabilize their lives.
  - ◆ Homeless service providers report a growing number of people using their services with serious mental health and addiction issues. More provincial funding is needed for **mental health and addiction programming**, both within homeless services themselves (such as shelters and drop-ins) and for community-based mental health services at large.



## Appendix C: Summary of Key Government Action from 2001 to 2003

The following chart provides a summary of key actions taken by each level of government since the 2001 report card. Details on these and other initiatives are described in more detail in Appendix B. Please note that this summary is not intended as an inventory of all existing government responses.

City of Toronto	Province of Ontario	Government of Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allocated first round of federal Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative funding (\$53 million over three years).</li> <li>Updated the Community Plan for Homelessness in Toronto, which identifies funding priorities and objectives for second round of SCPI (2004 to 2006).</li> <li>Adopted Municipal Facilities By-Law allowing City to work with private-sector developers to build housing, and to provide property tax exemptions to both non-profit and private rental developers.</li> <li>Adopted new Official Plan with updated policies on preservation of rental housing.</li> <li>Developed 493 units of affordable housing under the City's <i>Let's Build</i> program.</li> <li>Developed 561 new units of transitional housing with SCPI funding.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cont'd on next page...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established the New Tomorrow Rent Supplement Program (2,287 rent supplements in Toronto).</li> <li>Added over 1,000 new supportive housing units in Toronto.</li> <li>Made available to the City of Toronto two properties for affordable housing development. One property, jointly owned with the federal government, is under development for 92 affordable and transitional housing units.</li> <li>Agreed to give proceeds of sale of Princess Margaret Hospital to the City of Toronto for homeless initiatives.</li> <li>Renewal of PST rebates of up to \$2,000 per unit on building materials for multi-residential housing construction as provincial contribution to federal housing program.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cont'd on next page...</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased National Child Benefit Supplement for low-income families.</li> <li>Established national affordable rental housing program (\$680 million nation-wide over five years; approximately \$240 million for Ontario, and \$60 million for Toronto).</li> <li>Announced \$320 million nation-wide in additional funding for affordable rental housing program.</li> <li>Finalized federal/provincial/territorial agreement governing funding for national affordable housing program.</li> <li>Provided \$53 million in funding over three years for Toronto for first round of Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI).</li> <li>Committed to \$53 million in funding (2004 to 2006) over three years for Toronto through second round of SCPI.</li> </ul> <p><i>Cont'd on next page...</i></p>

City of Toronto	Province of Ontario	Government of Canada
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contributed 13 City-owned properties for affordable housing development.</li> <li>• Assumed responsibility for the administration of social housing in Toronto.</li> <li>• Approved revitalization of Regent Park. Redevelopment of Don Mount Court is underway.</li> <li>• Increased Tenant Defence Fund bringing total to \$325,000.</li> <li>• Approved a new Municipal Shelter By-law.</li> <li>• Developed a Multi-Year Shelter Strategy, which sets out future directions and financing of Toronto shelters.</li> <li>• Adopted new Shelter Standards, which are in the process of being implemented, along with a Quality Assurance Program.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Established the Community Rental Housing Program, which is the Ontario component of the federal national housing program.</li> <li>• Initiated “pilot” component of Community Rental Housing Program to build 1,000 new units in Toronto.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocated between \$6.6 million and \$7.3 million annually under Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program to the City of Toronto.</li> </ul>

## Appendix D: Glossary of Terms

### **Affordable rental housing**

Rental housing that is affordable to low to moderate-income households (annual incomes of \$35,000 or less). This may sometimes refer to private rental housing with rents at such levels. Often it refers more specifically to housing that is publicly funded or financed with terms and conditions to ensure such affordable rents. Under the City's new Official Plan, this refers specifically to housing with rents no higher than average market rents by unit type.

### **“Alternative” housing**

Non-profit rental housing whose residents are low-income single people, often with long-term experience of homelessness and/or need for housing supports.

### **“Assisted” housing**

Housing that receives public (government) funding or incentives. This includes not only social housing but also housing assisted through the City of Toronto *Let's Build* program, the federal Residential Rehabilitation and Assistance Program, the Community Rental Housing Program, private rental incentive programs of the 1970s and 80s, and other programs.

### **“Active” waiting list**

The “active” waiting list refers to those applicants on the social housing waiting list who have provided Toronto Social Housing Connection updated information on their financial status within the previous year.

### **Community Rental Housing Program**

In 2001, the federal government announced that it would make \$680 million available over five years for a new national affordable housing program. Of this funding, \$245 million has been allocated to stimulate affordable housing in Ontario under the newly formed Community Rental Housing Program.

### **Conventional rental market**

The conventional rental market is a term used by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) to describe private market rental housing. This includes apartment buildings as well as row housing with three or more dwelling units. CMHC publishes an annual rental market report based on their survey of private and assisted housing, although the report focuses mainly on private rental apartments.

### **Greater Toronto Area (GTA)**

The Greater Toronto Area includes the City of Toronto and the Regional Municipalities of York, Durham, Peel and Halton.

### **Homelessness**

The City of Toronto defines homelessness as a condition of people who live outside, stay in emergency shelters, spend most of their income on rent, or live in overcrowded, substandard conditions and are therefore at serious risk of becoming homeless.

### **Housing tenure**

Housing tenure describes the ownership characteristics of dwelling units. In this regard, units may be either owner or renter occupied.

### **Let's Build**

*Let's Build* is a program established by the City of Toronto to help get new affordable housing built. It offers the services of a skilled team to assist in the planning and development process and a toolkit of incentives to increase the economic viability of affordable housing projects. These can include City-owned land, waiver of development fees, tax incentives and one-time financial assistance from the City's \$11-million Capital Revolving Fund for Affordable Housing (CRF). Since launching in the spring of 2000, *Let's Build* has helped put more than 650 affordable housing units in the pipeline.

### **Long-Term Care units**

Housing with support services for people needing personal care or other services, usually on a daily basis. The principal residents are elderly who are unable to live independently, but others may include those with serious physical disabilities or ongoing illnesses. Long-term care “beds” refers to nursing homes and municipal Homes for the Aged, while long-term care housing units refers to non-profit housing where suitable support services are provided.

### **Median Household Income**

The mid-point of the household income distribution. The median income level divides the distribution in two equal halves.

### **Multiple-unit rental buildings**

These are typically purpose-built buildings, both private market and social, containing two or more dwelling units for rent.

### **Non-family households**

Non-family households include either one person living alone or a group of two or more unrelated individuals sharing a private dwelling.

### **Nutritious Food Basket**

The Nutritious Food Basket is a food costing tool that is a measure of healthy eating. The City of Toronto's Medical Officer of Health reports annually on the cost of the Nutritious Food Basket.

### **Official Plan**

The Official Plan is a policy document that outlines a municipality's vision for the future shape and look of its city. It guides the City in its decisions about growth and development, and how such change can be achieved. In Ontario, Official Plans are legally binding, statutory documents, which are approved by the Provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The City of Toronto adopted a new Official Plan in November 2002. Its final implementation is pending appeals before the Ontario Municipal Board.

### **Ontario Municipal Board**

The Ontario Municipal Board is an independent, quasi-judicial administrative tribunal. Its primary function is to resolve appeals relating to land-use planning decisions made

by Ontario municipalities and other decision makers. The Board has the power to overturn decisions of any municipality and its decisions are usually final. It is made up of 27 members appointed by the Province of Ontario for a three-year term.

### **Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal**

The Ontario Rental Housing Tribunal was created with the enactment of the *Tenant Protection Act* in June, 1998. The role of the Tribunal is to: Resolve disputes between landlords and tenants through either mediation or adjudication; Regulate rent increases in most residential rental dwellings; and Educate landlords and tenants about the rights and obligations each has under the *Tenant Protection Act*.

### **Ontario Works (social assistance)**

Toronto Social Services provides a variety of programs under the *Ontario Works Act*. Staff in 14 community-based offices deliver the program by providing short-term financial support to clients and assisting them as they work toward their goal of finding paid employment reasons. Four program components are available under Ontario Works: Employment Supports, Community Participation, Employment Placement and Learning, Earning & Parenting.

### **Private “Limited Dividend”**

Private rental housing that was financed with below-market CMHC mortgages but no direct subsidy, on condition of being operated with a limited return on investment and income limits on incoming tenants. Most such housing was built in the 1960s and 70s and is \$100 – \$300 below average market rents.

### **Purpose-built rental housing**

Housing which was built with the intention of being rental housing for the long term, and continues to be operated as that. This includes “conventional” private rental housing and social housing, but excludes rental condominiums, ordinary rental houses, duplexes, and second suites.

### **Rent-geared to income (RGI)**

Most of the people who live in social housing pay a “rent-geared to-income” or RGI. For these people, the Ontario government subsidizes the difference between 30 per cent of their income and the rent they would have to pay in the private sector (market rent).

### **Secondary rental market**

The Secondary rental market includes rented condominium apartments as well as rented houses, second suites or basement flats, duplexes, apartments over stores and rooming houses. Secondary rental housing may be more temporary in nature and often occurs as a single unit rented out by an individual owner.

### **Second Suites**

A second suite is a self-contained rental unit created in a single house. Most second suites are basement apartments, although the second unit may be located anywhere in the home. They have also been called accessory units or in-law suites. The City of Toronto permits second suites under certain conditions in all single-detached and semi-detached homes, and in some cases row houses.

### **Shelter system**

The shelter system refers to facilities that provide accommodation and support services to people who are homeless. In Toronto, the shelter system includes facilities administered by the City of Toronto and operated either by the City or a community-based organization. These shelters are funded through a cost-share arrangement between the municipality and the provincial government. Abused women’s shelters in Toronto are 100% administered and funded by the Province.

### **Social housing**

Affordable rental housing operated by co-operative or non-profit agencies, funded under comprehensive federal or provincial programs. Such programs usually provide operating subsidies and some mix of financing, financing guarantees, and/or capital grants, and assured affordability under 35- to 50-year agreements.

### **Special-needs housing units**

Housing that is targeted to resident groups with support or other needs not found in the general low-income tenant population. This term is broader than supportive housing, and also includes housing targeted to youth, very young single mothers, long-term homeless people, refugees, or other groups.

### **Subsidized housing**

Housing that receives or received government funding (same as “assisted” housing).

### **Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative**

In 1999, the federal government announced the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). SCPI includes an investment of \$753 million to help alleviate and prevent homelessness across Canada: \$53.1 million was allocated to Toronto for the period of 2000 to 2003. Another \$53.05 million has been allocated to Toronto for 2003 to 2006. SCPI funding must be targeted to projects that address “absolute homelessness.” This includes people who are living on the street or in emergency shelters.

### **Supportive housing**

Housing in which supports services are provided, either by the landlord or another agency. This involves staff who help residents to keep their housing or to live independently. Supports may include such things as help with daily activities (e.g. for elderly or disabled people), referrals to outside services and counselling, or occasional intervention or advice (e.g., for people with mental health disabilities).

### **Toronto Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)**

The Census Metropolitan Area is a Statistics Canada designation that describes a metropolitan area with high degree of social and economic integration and a urban core of more than 100,000 people. The Toronto CMA has the City of Toronto as its centre and encompasses a geographical area similar to the GTA, excluding Oshawa and Burlington.

### **Vacancy**

Refers to rental dwelling units with no occupants.

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