

**CITY OF TORONTO
HOMELESSNESS PARTNERSHIP INITIATIVE
COMMUNITY PLAN
2007 - 2009**

PREAMBLE:

The federal government has been providing funds to help communities address homelessness since 2000, first under the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) and, as of April 2007, through the Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI). The programs have been well received across the country, because resources are always welcome but more importantly, because these programs have allowed communities to assess their needs and develop their own priorities. The program, while focused on alleviating homelessness, was very flexible in the range of activities that could be funded.

In Toronto, the funds have been extremely helpful. Since 2000, we have built over 1100 units of transitional and supportive housing, have created over 586 new or replacement shelter beds and have improved over 250 homeless serving facilities and shelters through renovations and building improvements. The funds have enabled innovation and pilot approaches. For example, the City's Streets to Homes approach was begun with SCPI funding and is now a key program in the City's efforts to end street homelessness, having housed over 1,400 people directly from the street since February 2005. Service gaps in the area of pre-employment training, skills development and employment opportunities have begun to be addressed. The funds have enabled us to maintain and build the capacity of our community partner agencies and to build public awareness of the issue of homelessness and the work that the City and its community partners are undertaking to address it.

With the support of SCPI funds, we engaged community agencies and others in a dynamic process of learning about and moving towards building true collaborative efforts to end homelessness. Beginning with a series of workshops on innovation, collaboration and the importance of involving all sectors – government, business, community agencies and the public – a committed group of people have formed an Innovator's Council. The Council will build on this multi-sector approach to change, innovation and collaboration.

But there is still much to be done. While over 1100 housing units have been built over 6 years, the demand for supported units and affordable housing is huge, with over 60,000 people on the social housing waiting list in Toronto. The short timelines of the federal programs have mitigated against building more housing, as the timelines for good development usually exceed the time we have available. If there were ongoing sustainable federal funding, more housing could be planned and implemented.

While we have undertaken new and innovative approaches like Streets to Homes and our Transition to Work Pilot Project, we have no sustainable source of funds to maintain

these highly successful initiatives in the community beyond March 2009. We have learned how important follow-up services are in helping people to keep their housing and begin to reintegrate into the community, but we will have no ability to provide this service when the HPI program ends. And the City's first ever Street Needs Assessment, conducted in April 2006, estimated that there were over 5000 homeless people in Toronto on that night, with over 800 homeless on the street.

We welcome the new HPI program and the funds allocated to the City of Toronto. This document outlines how we will invest those funds to March 2009. But, the need for an ongoing sustained funding source is critical to maintain the momentum and achievements of the past 6 years.

BACKGROUND:

In February 2007, Toronto City Council approved a high level plan for the City's investment of Homeless Partnership Initiative funds. The approved strategic objectives and priorities and a broad estimate of how the funds would be allocated among the priorities can be found below.

The April 2006 Street Needs Assessment indicated that 16% of all homeless people in Toronto and 24% of street homeless, were Aboriginal. As a result, in addition to the 6 objectives outlined below, City Council approved an allocation of 20% of all HPI funds (net of administration) for initiatives to address issues concerning Aboriginal homelessness. A separate community consultation and planning process is underway to develop an investment plan for the Aboriginal allocation that has the support of Aboriginal agencies, key community stakeholders and the City. It is anticipated that the priorities and projects that come forward for the Aboriginal allocation will fall into the six broad objectives outlined in the City's HPI Plan.

**High Level HPI Plan Approved by Toronto City Council
March 2007**

Objectives	Priorities	Proposed Allocation (Net of Admin.) (%)
<p>1. Create new housing opportunities with supports</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create new transitional and supportive housing units • Improve community acceptance of housing for people requiring supports • Build partnerships to test and support new solutions • Improve service delivery, accountability and management through front line training and management development 	<p align="center">35</p>

Objectives	Priorities	Proposed Allocation (Net of Admin.) (%)
<p>2. Target capital investments in community and city facilities and shelters</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain and improve the physical infrastructure of community and city facilities and shelters to enhance service delivery • Develop a replacement site for the city assessment and referral centre and shelter • Create new shelter beds in response to specific needs • Improve community acceptance of community and city facilities and shelters • Build partnerships to test and support new solutions • Improve service delivery, accountability and management through front line training and management development 	<p>20</p>
<p>3. Help people access permanent housing and leave the streets and shelters behind</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House people quickly • Continue to improve street outreach services • Ensure people who are homeless have ID in order to access housing • Increase the potential of drop-ins as centres of opportunity to support homeless people in accessing housing • Partner with corrections, child welfare, health, mental health and addictions services to improve service access, delivery and linkages to housing • Build partnerships to test and support new solutions • Improve service delivery, accountability and management through front line training and management development 	<p>19</p>
<p>4. Help keep people housed who are at risk of homelessness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide housing supports to homeless people recently housed to help keep them housed • Increase the potential of drop-ins as centres of opportunity to support homeless people in maintaining housing • Partner with corrections, child welfare, health, mental health and addictions services to improve housing support systems • Build partnerships to test and support new solutions • Improve service delivery, accountability and management through front line training and management development 	<p>12</p>
<p>5. Create skills training and employment opportunities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare people for employment through intensive pre-employment training and support • Build employment expertise and supports within the shelter system to support client reintegration • Create private sector partnerships that provide employment pathways for clients • Create employment through social purpose enterprise 	<p>12</p>

Objectives	Priorities	Proposed Allocation (Net of Admin.) (%)
	initiatives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build partnerships to test and support new solutions • Improve service delivery, accountability and management through front line training and management development 	
6. Monitor and measure results of homelessness investments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake second city sponsored street needs assessment • Implement improved program effectiveness measures • Develop and implement a shelter management information system 	2

HPI IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Toronto’s share of the \$269.6 million federal government Homelessness Partnering Strategy is \$34.58 million to cover April 1, 2007 through to March 31, 2009 – a two year funding commitment.

A ‘bridging’ agreement under HPI extended more than 40 community-based services originally funded under the previous program (SCPI), from April 1 to December 31, 2007.

This document outlines the implementation plan for the delivery of the remaining HPI funds – from January 2008 to March 2009. With such a short time remaining in the program, the plan does not promote the start up of many new services, but rather the continuation and/or expansion of some existing programs and services and a focus on innovation and service co-ordination.

The Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI) Community Plan builds on approaches and strategies that have worked in Toronto and generally supports a “housing-first” philosophy. The plan strongly focuses on supporting those people most in need of help to find and keep housing and on building a strong and co-ordinated system of services.

Much has been learned over the past several years, so this plan emphasizes sharing information and data, analyzing trends and observations, and continuing to increase our knowledge base by undertaking new research, reviews of promising and best practices, monitoring of results, building community and agency capacity, and building on gains made in public awareness through SCPI-funded programs.

The Aboriginal allocation of 20% (net of administration) reflects the high needs in this area and our interest in working in collaboration with the Aboriginal community to address their needs, within the high level objectives approved by Council.

The HPI implementation plan outlined below was developed from the high level plan approved by Council. It further defines the actions under each objective and outlines both specific projects and more general ideas for enhancing service and building knowledge and skill.

Most projects will be selected through an RFP process. Some initiatives are noted as “priority projects” – for the most part, these are existing projects where an RFP process is not warranted (for example the Toronto Enterprise Fund, managed by the United Way) but where the project is clearly supporting the objectives and it is important for the work to continue uninterrupted. Some priority projects reflect new opportunities that have arisen that will advance our work in key areas, such as the new partnership with Inner City Health Associates to help fund and co-ordinate access and delivery of certain health services to people who are homeless.

CONSULTATION PROCESS

The HPI Community Plan was developed following a thorough assessment of its predecessor program – the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI), through which successes and continuing needs were highlighted. The first draft of the Plan was written following extensive consultation with City staff, where a number of suggestions for action were brought forward. Through this process it became clear that the focus of the Plan should be to continue, and in some cases expand, on what was working well. In addition, there should be an emphasis on assessing our achievements to date and continuing to look for innovative ways to continuously improve service delivery. The results of the Street Needs Assessment also helped inform the content of the Plan.

The draft Plan was presented to several key committees for input. These included the HPI Community Reference Group, the Street Outreach Steering Committee, the Alternative Housing and Services Committee, the Immigrant and Refugee Housing Task Group, the Innovator’s Council, the Homeless Health Reference Group, and an inter-governmental/inter-divisional OW/ODSP working group. The draft was distributed widely to agencies and individuals through our electronic distribution lists and was posted on the Division’s website. As a result of feedback, the draft was revised to reflect the good input received and a penultimate draft was redistributed to senior City staff, the Community Reference Group and the Street Outreach Steering Committee for final comment.

The HPI Community Plan will be submitted to the federal government in mid October for their review and approval. In March, 2007, the General Manager of Shelter, Support and Housing Administration was given delegated authority by City Council to submit the Community Plan, which was built on the high level objectives approved by Council at that time.

OBJECTIVE 1: Create New Housing Opportunities with Supports

Proposed Allocation: \$8.875 M

Overview:

- Because of the two-year time limitation, development of new housing will be challenging
- The City has a commitment to green development and has included environmental requirements in the RFP
- There is a need to look at housing models that deal with very hard to serve groups and to ensure that we are maximizing the range of rental housing options available to people

ACTION:

Create new housing units

- Develop more units, giving priority to housing people from shelters and clients of the Streets to Homes program
- **Priority project:** Work in partnership with Toronto Community Housing Corporation to pilot a housing model for seniors who may not be eligible for or who cannot function in the traditional long term care environment. Develop, test and evaluate a model that creates homes for homeless clients (seniors and those with long term care needs) who have histories of substance use, mental health issues or challenges with activities of daily living. The process will help identify models for housing other groups with complex needs
- Provide predevelopment funds to shelters interested in redeveloping/intensifying their shelter sites to provide some longer term transitional shelter or housing units
- With relevant City Divisions, examine current zoning regulations, licensing by-laws and building code conflicts to resolve issues which prevent the expanded use of rooming houses, SROs and second suites as options for affordable housing
- Undertake research with the intent of demonstrating the importance of promising and best practices in non-conventional rental housing such as rooming houses and second suites, as part of the City's supply of affordable housing

OBJECTIVE 2: Invest in Community and City Facilities Serving Homeless People

Proposed allocation: \$2.57 M

Overview:

- Flexibility is needed to respond to emerging needs
- The City's commitment to green development will be built into capital RFPs
- There is an ongoing need to build community understanding and acceptance of the role and successes of the services for people who are homeless or at risk

ACTION:

Develop, maintain and improve the capital infrastructure

- **Priority project:** Complete the renovation of 129 Peter Street as the Assessment and Referral Centre and 40 bed shelter
- Create new shelter beds and/or re-profile existing beds in response to specific or emerging needs
- Support building improvements in shelters and community facilities. Priorities will include: the needs of drop-in centres for improved heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems, storage, computers, space for case-conferencing, security and outdoor space; a continued focus on safety and improving the living conditions within shelters (for example by improving ventilation systems to reduce the spread of communicable diseases); the conversion of non-profit rooming house units to single rooms with supports. Green building improvements will be given priority.
- Develop a green user guide for use in shelters, existing buildings and new developments
- Develop and implement a plan for investment in supplies for shelters and drop-ins for use in case of emergency, so the most vulnerable can continue to receive service in an emergency situation

ACTION:

Build community/neighbourhood acceptance of homeless serving facilities

- Continue to build public awareness and understanding of the role and successes of transitional and supportive housing, shelters and homeless services
- Through an RFP process, support agencies in their social marketing, community relations, community outreach and communications planning efforts. Areas of interest will include: creating opportunities for the community use of meeting space and resources within community facilities, promoting the use of "peer concierges" to help address security issues, build community acceptance and provide work experience for homeless people, development of a speakers bureau of neighbourhood residents to address community meetings, community development assistance to housing and shelter providers to integrate new units/beds into their neighbourhoods
- Undertake a review of the impact of housing and shelter projects on real estate values in their neighbourhoods

OBJECTIVE 3: Help People Access Permanent Housing and Leave the Streets and Shelters Behind

Proposed allocation: \$4.876 M

Overview:

- There have been many successes helping people access housing through the Streets to Homes, Hostels to Homes and Housing Help Within Shelters programs, through Housing Connections, Housing Help Centres and numerous housing help projects. The HPI funds can help build on these successes and address some gaps
- We have been fortunate through SCPI to fund several system-level supports and have learned the importance of these supports in both helping people access housing and in building the capacity of the system to improve service
- Using the experience of the past several years, the challenge now is to continue to innovate and move to even more integrated and collaborative responses
- The allocation includes projects funded through SCPI that continue under HPI to December 2007

ACTION:

Build on approaches that work: improve service delivery

- **Priority project:** Continue the Multi Disciplinary Outreach Team and co-ordination of efforts with the health system
- **Priority project:** Work in partnership with Inner City Health Associates and other health service partners including the newly established Local Health Integration Networks to help fund and co-ordinate access and delivery of health services within the homeless service system
- **Priority Project:** Maintain and potentially expand the moving service for Streets to Homes and shelter clients
- Continue to support services that provide system-wide support to individuals or agencies that assist people to find and keep housing
- Through Streets to Homes:
 - Implement additional specialized housing programs to provide a viable transitional housing model for street-involved clients with complex needs
 - Implement dedicated units in existing supportive/alternative housing with follow-up supports provided by the housing provider
 - Implement post-incarceration housing support projects
 - Implement technology solutions to streamline service and support the health and safety of workers

OBJECTIVE 4: Help Keep People Housed Who Are At Risk of Homelessness

Proposed allocation: \$3.89 M

Overview:

- The post occupancy survey of Streets to Homes clients, reports successful housing choices, with 87% of people staying housed. The follow-up supports provided to recently housed people are critical to this success
- As a key strategy in maintaining housing and as more people get housed, more follow-up service is required
- Specialized housing retention and life skills programs, such as money management, decision-making, financial literacy etc, could strengthen people's chances of success in keeping their housing
- With more than two years of intensive experience housing people and assisting them to keep their homes, it is time to step back and look at research and promising and best practices for follow-up services in order to continue to improve service delivery. We now need to reflect on our learning, build and consolidate the knowledge and address gaps
- The allocation includes projects funded through SCPI that continue under HPI to December 2007

ACTION:

Build on approaches that work: improve service delivery

- Through Streets to Homes:
 - Respond to demonstrated need for more follow-up supports accessible across the City, as more people get housed
 - Enhance the ability for follow-up workers to deal quickly with housing issues arising unexpectedly and thereby prevent eviction and maintain good relationships with landlords
- Pilot models to respond to the intensive follow-up needs of specific client groups
- Build client skills to maintain housing through increased access to trusteeship and/or money management support, financial literacy training, decision-making skill development etc

ACTION:

Identify and promote best practices and innovative approaches

- **Priority project:** Hold forums highlighting innovations such as rapid housing, MDOT, post incarceration, employment projects, QA approach in shelters, Hostels to Homes and system supports and involve key people from other jurisdictions

- Investigate promising and best practices in housing follow-up to better understand what models work best under varying circumstances. Research wrap-around models that reduce relapse, how and when clients can/should be referred on to other service systems and longer term outcomes of ‘Housing First’ approaches in other jurisdictions.
- Undertake a review of housing help and follow-up services across the City to identify opportunities to enhance efficiencies and co-ordination
- Study post-occupancy outcomes under various housing help models
- Consult with front-line staff on their experiences and innovations in keeping people housed
- Explore the issue/need for flexible tenure options which support stabilization as a step towards permanent housing
- Support innovative approaches that enhance integration/co-ordination between services that help people find and keep housing (e.g. drop-in centres, street outreach services, shelters, housing help centres, follow-up services, private landlords)
- Support peer learning and smart networks to encourage effective coordination across agencies and sectors to improve efforts re prevention, follow-up, diversion etc
- To help stabilize housing choices, implement capacity building efforts for small landlords and rooming house landlords regarding requirements under the law, dealing with tenant issues etc; examine options to support tenants in their rooming house/boarded house situations

OBJECTIVE 5: Create Skills Training and Employment Opportunities

Proposed allocation: \$2.92 M

Overview:

- Build on the successes of the Transition to Work Pilot Project, begun under SCPI
- Continue to build the employment related skills and resources of shelter workers
- Enhance access to pre-employment/life skills training for clients in shelters
- Focus on providing the full spectrum of services to support employment
- Create opportunities for social purpose enterprise development
- Continue efforts re volunteerism and public and private sector job opportunities
- The allocation includes projects funded through SCPI that continue under HPI to December 2007

ACTION:

Build on approaches that work: improve service delivery

- **Priority project:** Continue the Transition to Work Pilot project, including the Life on Track pre-employment workshops for shelter residents and the Homeless Environmental Volunteer Project and volunteer work placements within the City
- **Priority project:** Continue the *Streets to Homes Employment Follow Up Initiative* to provide employment supports to recently housed clients and evaluate the pilot
- **Priority project:** Continue to support the Toronto Enterprise Fund with a focus on shelter and transitional housing resident participation in the social enterprises
- Support effective community based projects that respond to the need for a continuum of employment services (pre-employment, life skills, career and work planning, skills training, job search and maintenance, job development and coaching)
- Provide predevelopment funding to shelters, transitional housing providers and other homeless serving agencies to undertake feasibility studies for in-house employment opportunities
- Ensure strong linkages between the Hostels to Homes project and employment opportunities

ACTION:

Build skills and new reintegration opportunities

- Provide pre-employment/life skills training and employability training to shelter and follow-up workers through the Hostels Training Centre and on site
- Work with other City Divisions to support volunteerism and targeted hiring for homeless/at risk people by providing linkages and job coaching
- Build relationships with the employer community to stimulate job and training opportunities; put increased effort into job development for the homeless
- Explore skills training avenues with other orders of government, educational institutions, industry and trades

OBJECTIVE 6: Monitor and Measure the Results of Homelessness Investments

Proposed allocation: \$1.583 M

Overview:

- The Street Needs Assessment and Post Occupancy Survey have provided excellent information on the needs of the homeless population and on the impact of services. A second Street Needs Assessment is planned
- The Shelter Management Information System will be a critical information source. It will be completed and implemented during this phase of federal funding
- The Shelter, Support and Housing Administration Division's updated website has dramatically improved our ability to make the public aware of the services available and the positive results achieved
- With the support of SCPI funding, several initiatives were instrumental in helping agencies build skills and management expertise. Under HPI, this momentum will continue and grow
- Successful system wide supports such as RENT, the Drop-in Network, PAID and the Harm Reduction Task Force were made possible through SCPI funding. These supports contribute to the provision of co-ordinated, informed and high quality services to clients
- With the system now focused on getting and keeping housing, new training needs are emerging across sectors. Core training needs must be clarified and addressed
- Work was undertaken over the past year in partnership with Tamarack – an Institute for Community Engagement, to build knowledge and understanding about collaborative action. An 'Innovator's Council' has evolved through this initiative. Efforts to build collaborative responses to ending homelessness, to build leadership capacity and develop a strong consumer voice will continue under HPI
- The Drop-In Review is underway and may result in projects to pilot new ideas and approaches that support the important role of these services in helping people find and keep housing
- The allocation includes projects funded through SCPI that continue under HPI to December 2007

ACTION:

Get and give good information

- **Priority project:** Prepare for the City's next Street Needs Assessment
- **Priority project:** Complete implementation of the Shelter Management Information System
- **Priority project:** Maintain and continuously improve the city website; use as a vehicle for reporting on results and sharing information and ideas
- Evaluate recent in-depth training initiatives to assess the long-term impact on organizational effectiveness and thus contribute to a capacity-building framework for use by the City and the community in planning future initiatives

- Work with shelter providers and other homeless/housing service agencies, other funders, advocates and health professionals, to consider ways to identify and evaluate best practices that could be used throughout the homeless/housing service continuum
- Through the research activities outlined under Priority 4, good information will be attained on approaches to finding and keeping housing

ACTION:

Maintain and build strong services

- **Priority project:** In partnership with the United Way: support innovation and collaboration in finding new funding and capacity building practices that lead to system solutions to ending homelessness; build sector capacity and leadership through innovative and strategic investments; increase access to leadership development opportunities to maximize capacity and system level change
- **Priority project:** Together with the Innovator's Council, continue to build and support multi-sectoral collaborative efforts to end homelessness, including the public, non-profit, private and service-user sectors; build a strong voice for homeless/formerly homeless people at agency and system levels
- Through an RFP process, fund projects that maintain and enhance system wide services, supports and co-ordination mechanisms
- Deliver in-depth training on strategic fundraising and resource development for agencies that have not already received such training
- Enhance and extend training on facility management and building maintenance training to shelter and other service providers
- Identify core training needs across sectors and develop a core curriculum
- Build management skills of housing providers and rooming house owners through operational management training
- Support the Drop-in review as required to pilot models, undertake training etc
- Build on the emergency planning training for shelters begun under SCPI; develop drill management planning with shelters and undertake a major city-wide drill exercise

October 17, 2007

Appendix 1

Summary of Allocations by Strategic Objective*

Aboriginal Strategy:	\$6.4 M
Objective 1: Create new Housing with Supports	\$8.875 M
Objective 2: Invest in Community and City Facilities	\$2.57 M
Objective 3: Help people Access Permanent Housing	\$4.876 M
Objective 4: Help Keep People Housed	\$3.89 M
Objective 5: Create Skills Training and Employment Opportunities	\$2.92 M
Objective 6: Monitor and Measure the Results on Investments	\$1.583 M
Administration:	\$3.466 M
TOTAL:	\$34.58 M

* allocations include approximately \$6.5 M already committed for projects originally funded through SCPI that are continuing under HPI to December 2007