



Report To:	Program Planning Committee
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services Rhonda McCauley, Social Housing Program Supervisor
Date:	June 22, 2016
Re:	10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan – 2016 Progress Report

## Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the DSB Board and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing with a year two (2) update on the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan targets, objectives, and progress achieved for the DSB for the 2015 calendar year.

## Background

Through the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) and with the passing of the Housing Services Act (HSA), 2011, the Province completed the devolution of Ontario's affordable housing to municipalities. The Province required the development of a [10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan](#) to reflect certain principles or 'interests' that the government had prescribed in addition to considering and responding to local needs.

The Province outlined basic requirements for the content:

- plans must identify current and future housing needs,
- set objectives and targets related to identified needs,
- describe actions to meet these goals, and
- indicate how the process will be measured.

## Year One Report

The [Year One report](#) of the Plan was presented to the Board on June 25, 2015 and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on June 30, 2015.

## **Year Two Report**

This Year Two report on the Plan includes a review of the priorities that were the response to the accumulation of data and research pertaining to housing, income, and homelessness gathered from within the DSB at the time the Plan was developed. The priorities overlap and complement one another, with an integrated approach focused on addressing housing and homelessness in the ten-year period. Many priorities involve continuing and building on existing initiatives that the DSB has in place, as well as increasing its efficiency and capacity as a community partner around housing and homelessness. Integrated service delivery and enhanced evaluation are frequently emphasized components to many of the priorities. The priorities also evolve over time as opportunities for new initiatives arise.

**The fourteen (14) priorities of the Plan are as follows and actions reported accordingly.**

### **#1 Understand and Respond to the District's Demographic**

- The tenant and applicant demographic are reviewed to determine if the buildings designation or tenant composition should be amended accordingly.

### **#2 Strong Emphasis on Seniors Required – Housing and Supports**

- The Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Program - [Ontario Renovates](#) will continue to assist seniors and their ability to 'age at home'.

### **#3 Implement Strategies to Support Overlooked Populations – Aboriginals, Youth, Non-Senior Persons with Disabilities, and Individuals who are Homeless**

- Began discussions with Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to develop a partnership to support vulnerable populations. ([Transitional Community Support Worker Pilot Project](#))
- Advocating with the Provincial Government to reevaluate the reductions to the Youth Job Connection program
- Implemented [Duty to Accommodate Policy](#) to implement strategy and guidelines for accessibility requests and a commitment to develop new modified units, where absent and appropriate if the need presents.

### **#4 Address Additional Gaps in Services that Contribute to Imminent Risk of Homelessness**

- Developed a pre-screening tool to ensure that the applicants with the highest need are prioritized for the Affordable Housing Program.

- Approved the DSB's first Affordable Housing Program – [Home Ownership](#) Loan. This facilitated a single family transition from rental to home ownership which otherwise would not have been possible.

#### **#5 Imperative Action on Improving Transportation Accessibility Required**

- Continue to operate the DSB van fleet that assists with the transportation of clients to education facilities.

#### **#6 Employment and Training Opportunities**

- The DSB continues to establish local community partnerships for employment and training opportunities with the Chapleau Learning Centre, Alpha-En-Partage, Collège Boréal and Cambrian College. New and creative programs as generated based on community needs.

#### **#7 Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Housing**

- Began the investigation into Union Gas incentives to transition a Social Housing apartment building to a high efficiency boiler system from the current less efficient system.

#### **#8 Innovation and Efficiency with Affordable Housing**

- We continue to administer the very successful [Direct Shelter Subsidy Program](#) to assist with maintaining affordable accommodations to singles and families on Ontario Works with higher than Shelter Component costs. We reviewed the program to expand qualification of applicants to include ODSP and low income families to subsidize in place.
- Policy amendments to expand building funding opportunities commenced and will be fully implemented in 2016.
- The North East Local Health Integration Network hosted its inaugural Housing Forum bringing together community partners to focus on affordable options for supportive housing.

#### **#9 Increase Opportunities by Increasing Knowledge Dissemination**

- Provide staff with culturally appropriate training, mental health and addictions education sessions. Staff drive the topic selection and the education increases the effectiveness of staff as they communicate with clients. The information is further disseminated to clients and community partners.
- Bi-annual tenant meetings at the Social Housing buildings are hosted to inform the residents of policies, changes and programs offered by the DSB.

## **#10 Spearhead Integrated Service Delivery**

- Although the initial integration of the Social Assistance Management System (SAMS) program was challenging, the program allows for further integration and support of clients across DSB programs.
- Development of a pre-screening tool for housing applicants began which will streamline the process, and alleviate outdated applicant information, while maintaining the centralized waiting list.

## **#11 Increased Advocacy Roles for Civic Leaders**

- The Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) was extended through the Investment in Affordable Housing program commitment through to 2020 allowing the program to continue past the former expiry date of the program.

## **#12 Increase Program Evaluations**

- Ongoing

## **#13 Closely Monitor the Release of RFPs and Opportunities for Funding**

- Investigated Infrastructure Ontario's (IO) Green Loan Fund which provides low interest loans for new housing developments. The fund was not pursued as additionally required grant funding was not available.
- The DSB continues to monitor and explore additional funding opportunities year over year.
- The Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC) seed funding opportunities have been communicated to housing developers throughout the district as this fund may provide the impetus for new affordable housing development.

## **#14 Rationalizing the Social Housing Stock**

- The DSB continues to review the current housing stock, and review opportunities to purpose-serve our communities.
- Review of current policies to expand DSS Policy to include ODSP and Low Income Households, allowing rent subsidy to be paid in place and be portable. This will align our policies with 2016 amendments to the Long Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS).
- The Social Housing Market Rent amounts were adjusted to be more in line with the regions' Household Income Limits (HILs) allowing substantially more tenants to qualify for RGI. [The Social Housing Market Rent - Issue Report](#) was approved by the Board and will be fully implemented by July 2017 using the approved 2-year phased in approach.

## **Conclusion**

We will continue to work towards addressing each recommendation and continuing with the work achieved thus far. We believe in our 10-year plan and will continue to work towards ensuring our communities benefit from our commitment.