



# CITY HOUSING STRATEGY

---

## 2007-2012



[ottawa.ca](http://ottawa.ca)

City  
services **3-1-1**  
TTY 613-580-2401



# Table of Contents

---

- Acknowledgements.....ii
- Executive Summary.....iii
- I. Introduction.....1
- II. Housing: A Determinant of Social,  
Economic and Health Outcomes.....5
- III. The Current State of Housing in Ottawa.....9
  - A. Ottawa’s Geography of Housing.....9
  - B. Housing Diversity in Ottawa.....10
  - C. The Existing Stock of Housing.....13
  - D. Affordable Housing.....16
  - E. Supports to Housing.....22
- IV. Community Priorities for Housing.....27
- V. Overview of the City Housing Strategy.....31
- VI. City Housing Strategy.....39
  - Direction 1: Building Healthy, Inclusive,  
Sustainable Communities.....39
  - Direction 2: Promoting and Preserving  
Affordable Housing.....51
  - Direction 3: Meeting the Need for Supports  
to Housing.....59
- VII. Implementing the Strategy and  
Monitoring Outcomes.....65
- VIII. Summary.....69
- IX. Appendix One: Proposed Outcomes  
And Measures.....71

# Acknowledgements

---

The *City Housing Strategy* draws upon a depth of knowledge and experience on housing and the City of Ottawa. It builds on the commitment of the people of Ottawa to establish a long-term vision for the city expressed in *Ottawa 20/20*.

An interdepartmental steering committee was responsible for developing the *City Housing Strategy*. The committee brought an integrated multisectoral perspective to housing that is reflected in the document. Members of the committee included:

Ian Cross  
Elizabeth Dandy, Project Manager  
Ken Foulds  
Dennis Jacobs, Co-Chair  
Noreen Langdon  
David Laut  
Russell Mawby, Co-Chair  
Alain Miguelez  
Colleen Pellat  
Stan Wilder

Many City staff from across the corporation supported the committee's work.

The steering committee relied upon the expertise of the many partners that work to respond to housing needs and issues in Ottawa, including the private development sector, private landlords, non-profit housing providers, transitional and supportive housing providers, social service agencies and emergency shelter operators. The level of engagement of these partners in consultations on the *City Housing Strategy* demonstrated widespread commitment to addressing the city's housing issues.

SHS Inc. provided extensive analysis of trends in Ottawa's housing market and developed a number of background documents that assisted stakeholders to grapple with housing issues and develop solutions.



# Executive Summary

---

Housing is fundamental to the economic, social and physical well-being of Ottawa's residents and communities. Housing is a basic human need, and is the central place from which we build our lives, nurture ourselves and our children and engage in our communities.

At the same time, housing is the fundamental building block of healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. Social and economic development is strongly related to how well our housing stock supports the range of needs and choices we have as residents of a city. Our individual and societal impact on the environment is directly related to how, where and for whom we build housing.

Ottawa is a city with approximately 350,000 dwelling units. Most households are able to choose housing that is affordable and suitable to their needs. However, as a city we can do better to promote healthier, more diverse housing patterns and to ensure that all housing needs are met in our community, now and in the future.

The *City Housing Strategy* has been developed to help the City and the community identify and address gaps in our housing systems to better meet housing needs while supporting the development of healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. It builds on the community vision established during the *Ottawa 20/20* process as well as the City's 20/20 Growth Management Plans adopted by City Council in 2003, including the *Official Plan*, the *Human Services Plan*, the *Environmental Strategy* and the *Economic Strategy*. Both the *Official Plan* and the *Human Services Plan* call for a strategy that outlines specific directions for addressing housing issues in Ottawa and achieving the 20/20 vision.

The starting point for the *City Housing Strategy* is the recognition that "housing" is more than just shelter. It is the system of assets, financing, services, supports, policies and programs that enable Ottawa's citizens to live in their communities. Although the City is only one stakeholder in Ottawa's housing system, this *Housing Strategy* establishes a leadership role for the City of Ottawa in promoting increased communication, collaboration and coordination among partners involved in housing, including all levels of government, private sector partners and non-profit community-based agencies. The goal is to promote a more

comprehensive, integrated response to addressing Ottawa's housing needs.

The *City Housing Strategy* establishes three overall Directions to be pursued until 2012. This period corresponds with the *Official Plan* review cycle and census data releases. The three Directions are supported by twelve Strategies that indicate actions to be prioritized in implementing the *City Housing Strategy*. There are 36 specific recommendations for action that comprise an implementation plan for the *Strategy* and will inform the *City Corporate Plan*. Appendix One proposes measurable outcomes of the *City Housing Strategy* that will support the monitoring of progress over the next five years.

### **Direction 1: Building Healthy, Inclusive Sustainable Communities**

This Direction addresses how we build neighbourhoods for all residents. It is based on the understanding that healthy communities minimize their impact on the immediate and more global environment, are socially inclusive, complete with an array of housing options and supports, and are responsive to and supportive of broader economic and social development goals. It recognizes that the long-term sustainability of communities is based on building a diverse, flexible housing stock today to meet changing needs over time at both household and community levels. The emphasis is on the need to implement a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing housing issues in Ottawa. A comprehensive, integrated approach promotes a broad range of appropriate policies, programs and tools to build healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities.

#### **Strategies:**

*1A. Develop a more comprehensive, coordinated framework of public policies, programs and tools that provide an integrated response to addressing housing issues in local communities.*

A comprehensive housing framework promoting policy integration must incorporate actions from all three levels of government. Given the taxation, legislative and jurisdictional roles of federal and provincial governments, many housing issues that communities face need to be addressed by these levels of government. Municipal governments and the communities they represent must be at the table because of the key role we

play in policy development and implementation, and to ensure that locally-specific housing issues are addressed in the most effective manner.

In addition, improved policy integration at each level of government is also essential so that the full suite of policies and programs that build and sustain our communities are working together to achieve common goals. Improved coordination at the municipal level is important, given local government's role in community-building through, for example, land use planning and the promotion of affordable housing and housing support services.

*1B. Promote compact, sustainable housing development and redevelopment.*

Compact, sustainable housing development is achieved through development that has a minimal impact on the environment and is built with attention to both immediate and future needs and costs. Sustainable development can mean using land wisely, ensuring a sustained response to community needs such as housing affordability and the promotion of energy efficient building technologies. Ensuring a diversity of housing across the city increases housing options in each neighbourhood and reduces the use of cars if people are able to live closer to workplaces. In addition, the existing stock of housing is a precious resource and must be sustained and renewed to meet changing needs and community priorities.

*1C. Encourage and enable diverse, flexible housing solutions across the city, including urban, suburban and rural neighbourhoods.*

To meet the needs of all community members, the housing stock must include a mix of types and tenures, housing affordable to all community members, accessible housing for people with a diversity of disabilities and housing support services for people who need assistance in obtaining and retaining housing. Housing diversity and flexibility will be promoted through municipal zoning provisions, Community Design Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, improvements to municipal planning powers, the use of regulatory incentives such as alternative development standards and through initiatives promoting increased accessibility in housing.

*1D. Maximize opportunities in the existing housing stock to build healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities.*

Housing has a long life span and the promotion of healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities requires initiatives that are specifically directed at the existing stock of housing. This includes initiatives that protect the stock from decline or ones that make more effective use of the stock to address changing needs and community priorities over time.

## **Direction 2: Promoting and Preserving Affordable Housing**

This Direction addresses market gaps in meeting the housing needs of households with low to moderate incomes. It primarily involves targeted initiatives that help to preserve and increase the availability of housing that is affordable to lower income households in Ottawa. While building more inclusive communities is an essential aspect of an affordable housing solution, policies and initiatives addressing the lack of affordable housing in the market place are also crucial. These include direct government incentives and programs as well as other initiatives that promote an increase in the supply of affordable housing and the maintenance of the existing affordable housing stock.

### **Strategies:**

*2A. Promote an integrated, balanced approach to addressing housing needs through income policies and housing supply policies.*

There are two basic issues that face households in need of affordable housing: Their incomes are too low and housing is too expensive – the affordability gap. In a mature urban centre such as Ottawa, an effective housing system that meets all housing needs in our community must address both issues by reducing costs and raising incomes at the lower end of the income spectrum. Policies and programs that address income gaps primarily fall under the jurisdiction of the provincial government and include minimum wage, social assistance, rent supplements and housing allowances. Capital support for new affordable housing development addresses the cost of housing and promotes long-term investment in our neighbourhoods to keep them affordable and inclusive.



*2B. Promote a positive environment to foster affordable housing development.*

The City has a leadership role to play in creating an environment that brings partners together to identify the need for affordable housing, issues in responding to this need and potential solutions to these issues. This role involves encouraging greater communication between partners, facilitating development partnerships, providing development training and developing local policies and tools that encourage initiatives to develop affordable housing.

*2C. Assemble and leverage resources to address the need for affordable housing.*

A variety of resources needs to be assembled to effectively increase the supply of affordable housing, such as finance capital, income support and land. Municipalities are best positioned to leverage and bundle resources at the local level and target them to addressing specific local needs. Federal and provincial governments have central roles to play in providing these resources because affordable housing supports federal and provincial social and economic development policies and, through their control over income and corporate taxation, they have the fiscal capacity and responsibility to support the development of affordable housing. It is also important that public initiatives leverage the participation and expertise of both the non-profit sector, private sector developers and landlords and financial institutions.

*2D. Preserve the existing affordable housing stock.*

Housing which is built or designed to be affordable over the long-term is an important community asset that supports healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. There are approximately 22,500 social housing units across Ottawa that have been built under a variety of senior government programs over the past several decades. This is a crucial stock of housing which must be maintained as permanently affordable, good quality housing for low and moderate income households in the city. There are also approximately 68,500 purpose-built rental units in the private market, many of which provide an affordable option for Ottawa's lower income residents but require rehabilitation to ensure the sustainability of the stock.

### **Direction 3: Meeting the Need for Supports to Housing**

Many people need a range of support services to assist them in finding and keeping housing. Supports to housing range from assistance to locating housing to the prevention of housing loss through assisting individuals with basic activities of daily living. All members of our community may need supports to housing at some point in their lives, making these services an essential part of a healthy, inclusive and sustainable community. There is a strong preventative and cost-effective aspect to housing-focused support services because, when available, such services help avoid reliance on more expensive health and social services. They can prevent the stress and cost of moving into institutional care unless absolutely necessary. They are also an essential part of preventing housing loss and homelessness and in assisting households to find housing.

#### **Strategies:**

*3A. Take a leadership role in promoting the coordination of resources for housing support services and more integrated planning and delivery in the service system.*

The City has a leadership role to play in promoting better local communication, collaboration and coordination across partners who work in diverse sectors providing housing support services. A more coordinated system of resources, planning and delivery will lead to improvements in services and more effectively address individual and community needs. In addition to meaningful collaboration on policy and program development and implementation, increased coordination also involves the development of service delivery partnerships and better linkages between housing providers and service agencies supporting tenants.

*3B. Advocate for increased and sustained funding to increase the supply of both dedicated supportive housing and support services to housing throughout the community.*

Increased provincial funding is required to address the growing need for housing support services in Ottawa. Most of these services fall under the jurisdiction of two provincial ministries, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The federal government plays an important

role through its spending authority over health and social programs (e.g. the Canada Health Transfer and the Canada Social Transfer). It also directly funds settlement services for newcomers and support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

*3C. Promote local initiatives that increase the supply of housing support services.*

In addition to a coordinating role, the City directly promotes and supports community-based initiatives that increase the supply of supports to housing including, dedicated supportive and transitional housing and group homes – housing with on-site support services and programs designed to assist residents to live stably in the community. Part of this also includes building community capacity through, for example, offering development training and workshops or facilitating partnerships.

*3D. Promote improved access to housing support services.*

A diverse range of housing support services are delivered by an array of agencies across the city. It can be difficult for people seeking support to identify the options that are available to them. Increased coordination among agencies is important as well as ensuring that information on housing and support services is readily available to households and easily accessed.

The *City Housing Strategy* brings these strategies together so that we can better understand what we can do together to address gaps in our housing system and help ensure that our communities work for everyone today and in the future.



# I. Introduction

---

Housing is fundamental to the economic, social and physical well-being of Ottawa's families and communities.

"Housing" is more than just shelter. It is the system of assets, financing, services, supports, policies and programs that enable Ottawa's citizens to nurture themselves and their children and engage in their communities.

Housing is a basic need of all individuals in our society. To ensure that housing is available for all, there must be a sufficient supply of housing and the diversity of our citizens must be reflected in a diversity of housing options. This includes a range of housing types and tenures, affordability levels, accessibility features and support services that assist people to locate or retain their housing.

Housing is also the fundamental building block of healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. Socially diverse and culturally vibrant communities are more easily fostered with a diversity of housing options. More compact, denser housing development can minimize impacts on the environment by making more efficient use of land, reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality. Community prosperity is improved when all community members have access to affordable, appropriate housing from which they can engage in the local economy. All of this promotes the long-term sustainable health of our communities.

Ottawa's housing system works reasonably well for most households. It does not work as well for many others, including the over 9,000 individuals who used one of Ottawa's emergency shelters in 2006. There is also growing concern that, as a city, we have grown and developed in a way that is not economically, socially or environmentally sustainable in the long run.

The *City Housing Strategy* promotes a more comprehensive, systematic response to addressing gaps in meeting housing needs while supporting the development of healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. It builds on the recognition that a city's housing needs are addressed in a system of responses and initiatives by a variety of partners. It provides a five year plan for Ottawa's housing system that will be implemented through the *City Corporate Plan*, the *Long Range Financial Plan* and the City's annual budgets.



The *Housing Strategy* is based on the community vision established in the *Ottawa 20/20* process. The *Strategy* builds on this vision and the 20/20 Growth Management Plans adopted by City Council in 2003, including the *Official Plan*, the *Human Services Plan*, the *Environmental Strategy* and the *Economic Strategy*. Both the *Official Plan* and the *Human Services Plan* call for a strategy that outlines specific directions for addressing housing issues in Ottawa and achieving the 20/20 vision.

A highly consultative and inclusive process was implemented to develop the *City Housing Strategy*. Since the City has a range of roles and responsibilities in housing, a Steering Committee comprised of staff from across City departments was established to guide the process.

Throughout the process, consultation with a diverse range of stakeholders from across the community was crucial in shaping the development of the *Strategy*, including private developers, private landlords, non-profit housing organizations, social and support service agencies and federal and provincial governments.

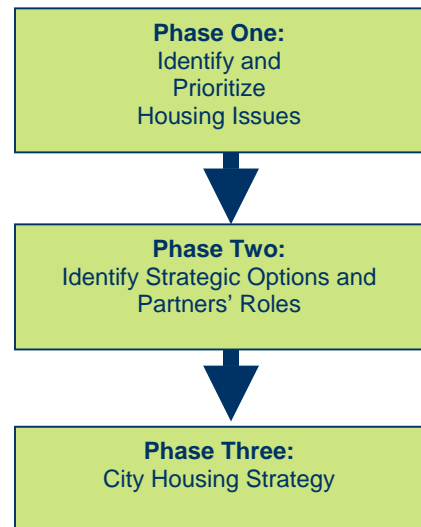
The City is not the only actor in Ottawa's housing system and the *City Housing Strategy* helps to identify other stakeholders and their roles in better meeting housing needs.

The *City Housing Strategy* was developed over three phases:

**Phase One** developed an understanding of housing issues in our community based on an analysis of trends in housing demand and supply. A consultation was held in June 2005 with a wide range of stakeholders to present highlights of housing trends in Ottawa and to obtain feedback on priority issues.

**Phase Two** identified possible strategies to address housing issues while considering the roles of key partners in the city's housing system. A consultation session was held in November 2005 with a wide range of stakeholders to discuss these themes. Participants focused on how to make Ottawa's housing system work better to respond to housing issues in the city. At the session, existing initiatives in the city as well as other possible solutions were evaluated against the housing issues identified in Phase One. Participants also examined the roles of various partners in Ottawa's housing system.

### Developing the City Housing Strategy:



**Phase Three** involved the consolidation of issues and strategies identified in previous phases into a comprehensive housing strategy for the City of Ottawa. An Open House was held in April 2006 to present consultants' recommendations to the City for developing a housing strategy. The Steering Committee then built on the consultant's report to develop the *City Housing Strategy*. The committee received advice from City of Ottawa Advisory Committees while finalizing this document.



## II. Housing: A Determinant of Social, Economic and Health Outcomes in Ottawa

---

This section sets the context for the *City Housing Strategy* by describing the role that housing plays in determining social, economic and health outcomes. The following discussion addresses these dimensions of housing separately. In reality, social, economic and health outcomes are interdependent in people's lives and the communities in which they live.

**Housing as a Determinant of Social Outcomes** – Secure housing is essential to supporting social relationships in our communities. The place we call home is a significant characteristic of how we identify our place in society. Homelessness is as much about marginalization from society as it is about the lack of housing. Given this social dimension of housing, housing conditions are frequently used as an indicator for measuring the level of 'social exclusion' in a society.<sup>1</sup> Social exclusion refers to the process of individuals being excluded from participating in or accessing most of the things that mainstream society values.

Housing is a basic element of community and social infrastructure and is more than just shelter. Our homes support our ability to participate in society. Housing combined with support services is an important way to help individuals forge or maintain connections to their communities. This can be crucial for a number of groups such as people struggling with physical difficulties, seniors living alone and newcomers to Canada.

The way housing is physically situated in the broader community is also important to supporting social engagement. Housing with ready access to a complete neighbourhood infrastructure – including schools, employment opportunities, recreation, health and social services and essential retail – supports the development of socially vibrant communities. Without those amenities

**In a 2003 Resolution, the UN Commission on Human Rights “calls upon all States to promote the residential integration of all members of society at the planning stage of urban development schemes...so as to counter social exclusion and marginalization.” Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2003/27.**

---

<sup>1</sup> E.g. Policy Research Roundtable, *Housing Research, Policy and Practice in the Context of Poverty and Exclusion*, Policy Research Initiative, Government of Canada, October 2004; Meyer Burstein, *Combatting the Social Exclusion of At-Risk Groups, Research Paper*, Policy Research Initiative, Government of Canada, November 2005.

nearby or easily accessible, people can live in isolation and exclusion from society.

### **Housing as a Determinant of Economic Outcomes –**

Secure, affordable housing supports an individual's engagement in the local economy. With housing that people can afford, there is enough left over at the end of the month to pay for food, clothing and other essentials and to participate in the broader consumer economy. Stable, secure housing enables people to remain gainfully employed, sometimes through the combination of housing and support services. Studies have also shown that children who live in inadequate or unaffordable housing tend to do poorly in school, possibly limiting their future work opportunities.

The availability of affordable, appropriate housing is also a key factor behind attracting labour to a city. As senior economists at TD Bank Financial Group have emphasized, "An inadequate supply of housing can be a major impediment to business investment and growth, and can influence immigrants' choices of where to locate."<sup>2</sup>

Currently immigration accounts for an estimated seventy percent of Ontario's net labour force growth.<sup>3</sup> It is forecasted to account for 100 percent of net labour force growth by 2011 due to the retirement of baby-boom workers and the low birth rate for natural repopulation.

More recent immigrants to Ottawa are at the prime working age and are more educated, especially in the physical sciences, engineering and trades. Yet global competition for skilled workers is intensifying and housing plays a significant role in attracting and keeping these workers. In the Ottawa-Gatineau area, the second most serious problem cited by almost six out of ten immigrants after six months in Canada was finding suitable housing, primarily due to its cost.<sup>4</sup>

Finally, not having sufficient affordable housing in a community has been shown to exacerbate urban sprawl, with all the associated costs of servicing outlying growth. Recent results from the 2006 census indicate that increasing numbers of people are leaving the core areas of Ottawa for

**"Affordable housing is frequently viewed as a social and health issue, but the fact of the matter is that it runs deeper than that. Working to find solutions to this problem is also smart economic policy. An inadequate housing supply can be a roadblock to business investments and growth, and influence potential immigrants' decision on whether or not to locate in Canada. Addressing this situation ties in well with the goal of raising the standard of living for all Canadians."**  
**Don Drummond, Senior Vice-President and Chief Economist, TD Bank Financial Group, June 2003**

<sup>2</sup> TD Bank Financial Group, *Affordable Housing in Canada: In Search of a New Paradigm*, TD Economics, Special Report, June 17, 2003.

<sup>3</sup> City of Ottawa, *Faces of Ottawa: A Snapshot of Immigrant Labour Market Integration*, March 2007.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* The most serious problem cited by immigrants in Ottawa-Gatineau was finding employment.



Gatineau and former rural areas simply because they cannot find suitable housing they can afford.

### **Housing as a Determinant of Health Outcomes –**

Numerous studies have outlined the correlation between poor housing and negative health outcomes on individuals.<sup>5</sup> In addition to the negative physical impact of substandard housing (e.g. mold, inadequate heating), households that pay too much for their housing or are living in overcrowded conditions can experience significant psychological distress. Housing that takes up too much of a family's budget can lead to food insecurity and possible malnutrition. With little disposable income after paying for housing costs, children are unable to participate in healthy community activities such as active recreation programs.

In addition, affordable housing combined with health services is frequently a better option for individuals than hospitalization or institutionalization. Home care can significantly improve the health of individuals with physical difficulties while enabling them to remain in the comfort of their homes and connected to their community.

Housing is also a determinant of the broader environmental health of our community. Cities that have significant urban sprawl tend to be more polluted than ones that are compactly developed. Housing that is built with an emphasis on using energy efficiently can significantly reduce a society's contribution to greenhouse gases.

**In 1986, the Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion recognized shelter as a basic prerequisite for health. The Charter was launched in Ottawa by the World Health Organization at the first international conference for health promotion.**



<sup>5</sup> J. R. Dunn, *The Population Health Approach to Housing: A Framework for Research*, Ottawa: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, 2002; Brent Moloughney, *Housing and Population Health: The State of Current Research Knowledge*, Canadian Institute for Health Information and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, June 2004.



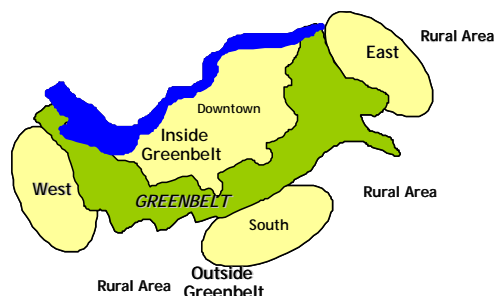
### III. The Current State of Housing in Ottawa

Ottawa is a city with approximately 350,000 dwelling units. Most households are affordably housed in housing which is suitable to their needs. However, as a city we can do better to promote healthier, more diverse housing patterns and to ensure that all housing needs are met in our community. This section provides an overview of housing issues in Ottawa which need to be addressed by the *City Housing Strategy*.

#### A. Ottawa’s Geography of Housing

The City of Ottawa’s *Official Plan* as well as the Ontario government’s *Provincial Planning Policy Statement* strongly support a focus on “smart growth”. Smart growth includes residential development that places priority on utilizing existing infrastructure, takes advantage of opportunities to meet housing needs within existing communities and promotes a compact, balanced and sustainable urban structure.

In recent years, the majority of new housing development has occurred outside Ottawa’s greenbelt, and was at densities and in subdivision layouts that made car use almost unavoidable. At the same time, there is considerable intensification potential in the urban core where denser housing could accommodate population growth and contribute to building healthier and more sustainable communities.



**Housing Starts Inside & Outside the Greenbelt, 1999-2006**

Year	# Inside	# Outside	Total
1999	1,193	3,254	4,447
2000	1,496	4,290	5,786
2001	1,387	4,519	5,906
2002	2,457	4,918	7,375
2003	1,661	4,312	5,973
2004	1,811	5,068	6,879
2005	1,131	3,569	4,700
2006	1,339	4,288	5,627
<b>1999-2006</b>	<b>12,475</b>	<b>34,218</b>	<b>46,693</b>
<b>% 1999-2006</b>	<b>27%</b>	<b>73%</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: CMHC, *Starts and Completions Survey*

## B. Housing Diversity in Ottawa

Housing diversity refers to having a wide range of housing options in our communities so that a range of housing needs are met according to established community priorities. Consultation throughout the *Ottawa 20/20* process indicated that the people of Ottawa place a high priority on ensuring a diversity of housing options across the city with minimal impact on the environment. Housing options can relate to a number of factors including the type of housing (single, townhouse, apartment), tenure (ownership, rental), accessibility for people with physical disabilities, housing affordability and housing support services.

**Housing Type** – Since 1999, fifty percent of new housing production has been single detached homes, which traditionally have been targeted to family households. However, only 25 percent of households in Ottawa are comprised of four or more persons, and average household size in the city is expected to decline over time. Currently, 59 percent of households in Ottawa are made up of only one or two persons.

Figures for the past several years suggest that the development industry is increasingly responding to demand for more diversity in housing type in mixed use developments. Part of this demand stems from the need for more affordable housing options. Denser housing types such as townhouses and apartments, typically with smaller unit sizes, are usually more affordably priced. In 2006, 22 percent of housing starts were apartments, 32 percent were townhouse (row), six percent were semi-detached and 40 percent were single detached homes.

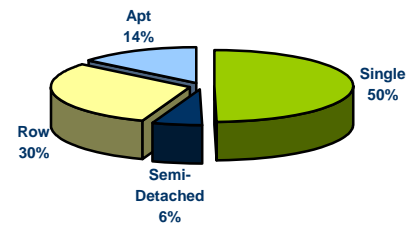
**Housing Starts by Type, 2004-2006**

Year	Single	Semi	Row	Apt	Total	Single	Semi	Row	Apt
2004	2967	340	2421	1151	6879	43%	5%	35%	17%
2005	2121	286	1572	721	4700	45%	6%	33%	15%
2006	2252	367	1789	1219	5627	40%	6%	32%	22%

Source: CMHC, *Starts and Completions Survey*

**Housing Tenure** – Since social housing programs were cancelled in the late 1990s, there have been very few completions of purpose-built rental housing in the city. Since 1996, only six percent of housing completions have been rental. 94 percent have been ownership housing. Last

**Housing Starts by Type, 1999-2006**



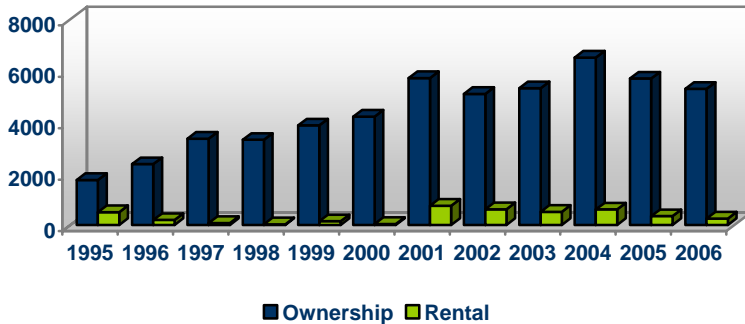
Source: CMHC, *Housing Starts and Completions Survey*



The 6 Grove is a private sector residential development that combines mixed use, denser development with affordability. It is a four-storey building that replaces a surface parking lot on a traditional mainstreet and blends into its surroundings with retail stores along the sidewalk. Its 21 condo apartments were affordable to moderate income households in Ottawa and were almost sold out in less than a year on the market.

year, 249 rental units were completed out of a total of 5,301 housing completions.

**Housing Completions in Ottawa**



Source: CMHC, *Housing Starts and Completions Survey*

Purpose-built rental housing remains an important and necessary part of the housing stock in the city because it offers a relatively stable source of housing for tenants who comprise forty percent of Ottawa households. The demand for rental housing will grow along with the city.

The majority of this demand is from lower income households in Ottawa. This can in part explain why the production of rental housing has been so low over the past decade. It is difficult for the private sector to remain competitive in the market while also providing rents that these households can afford. Other factors contributing to sustained demand for rental housing include relatively high levels of youth employment, prompting earlier household formation. Newcomers to Canada are also more likely to rent and approximately 9,000 newcomers to Canada arrive in Ottawa annually.

With few additions of purpose-built rental housing to the city's housing stock, secondary rental housing is playing a greater role in housing Ottawa's tenant households. An estimate of approximately 27,000 tenant households rent in the secondary rental market which primarily includes rented condos and apartments in houses. City policy encourages additions of secondary suites in homes to bolster the supply of rental housing. It is important to recognize, however, that the secondary rental market is more unstable than purpose-built rental housing since it can be converted back to ownership with relative ease. This creates increased uncertainty for tenant households. It also puts owners of housing at an advantage since they can reposition their units to adjust to market opportunities. Lower income tenant



households usually do not have the financial capacity to purchase or rent housing in their community of choice.

**Accessibility** – Recognition has grown throughout Canada that individuals with physical disabilities should be able to choose to live independently in their own homes. 15.5 percent of Ottawa’s total population has activity limitations, similar to the national figure of fifteen percent of the population.<sup>6</sup> Over two thirds of people who report having a disability experience mobility limitations; thirty percent report a hearing loss; seventeen percent have vision loss; fifteen percent report psychological disabilities and close to thirteen percent report learning limitations.

The rate of disability is linked to age and the need for more physically accessible units is expected to increase with an aging baby boomer population. Forty percent of the population aged 65-74 have activity limitations. For individuals aged 75 and over, the likelihood of having an activity limitation increases to 55 percent.

The most accessible and flexible form of housing is based on the concept of universal design which ensures a housing unit can be easily modified to enable persons with physical disabilities to live independently. Knowledge of the extent of accessibility in the existing stock of housing is limited in part due to the lack of common standards to assess levels of accessibility. The Ontario government is currently working on accessibility standards for the built environment in the context of implementing its *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

**The most accessible and flexible form of housing is based on the concept of universal design which ensures that a housing unit can be easily modified over time as a household ages or as a housing unit changes occupancy.**

Among the non-profit housing stock, there are approximately 800 housing units that are modified to be accessible to an individual living with a physical disability or to allow the individual to live independently. This is a crucial stock of housing since it offers affordable rents and people with disabilities are more likely than the rest of the population to be living on low incomes.

---

<sup>6</sup> Statistics Canada, *Participation and Activity limitation Survey: A Profile of Disability in Canada*.

### C. The Existing Stock of Housing

The vast majority of our housing needs are met through the existing stock of housing. There are approximately 350,000 dwelling units in Ottawa. New annual housing supply only comprises a small percentage of the total housing stock in the city. The number of new completions in Ottawa over the past five years averaged just over 6,000 units annually – only two percent of the existing housing stock.

Existing Stock (2006) vs. New Supply		
Existing Stock	350,000	98%
Annual Completions 5 Yr Average	6,053	2%

**Existing Stock by Type and Tenure** – The 2001 census provides the most recent breakdown of Ottawa’s existing stock of housing. This confirms that the largest portion of Ottawa’s housing stock (forty percent) is comprised of single detached owner occupied homes. The rest of Ottawa’s homeowners (a further twenty percent of the stock) live in condo apartments or semi-detached/row housing.

The second largest portion of the stock (23 percent) is found in the private purpose-built rental housing market. A further seven percent of Ottawa’s households live in social housing and an estimate of nine percent live in the secondary rental housing market which consists of rented condos, secondary suites or converted houses.

**Ottawa’s Existing Stock, 2001 (approximates)**

Head of Household	Dwelling Type	Approximate #	% of Total
Owner	Single detached	122,000	40%
	Attached (semi/row)	45,000	15%
	Apartment	16,000	5%
Renter	Private purpose-built rental market	69,000	23%
	Private secondary rental market	27,000	9%
	Social housing	22,500	7%
Total (2001)		301,500	100%

Source: Statistics Canada, *Census 2001*; CMHC, *Rental Market Report*; City of Ottawa. The number for the secondary rental market is an estimate.

The 2006 census shows that the number of Ottawa’s households has grown by approximately 48,500 to 350,000 households. 2006 census data on dwellings in Ottawa is not yet available. Given recent trends in Ottawa’s housing system, it is likely that the proportion of single detached owner-occupied homes has increased and the proportion of purpose-built rental housing has decreased. The proportion of social housing has declined.

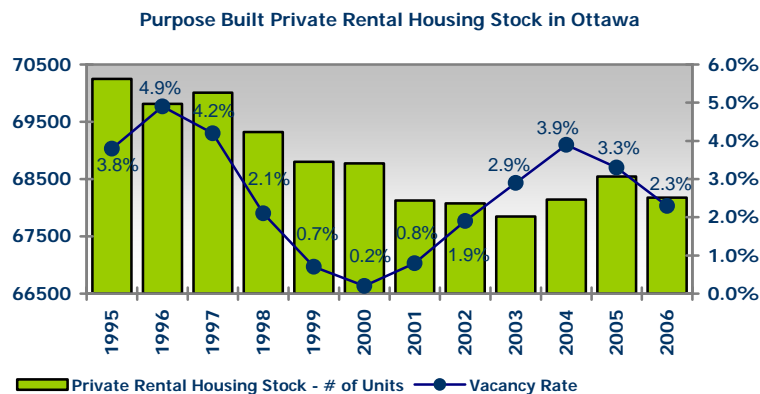
**Housing Repairs** – The existing stock of housing is an important capital asset that needs to be maintained wherever possible. The older rental housing stock in particular tends to be a source of housing that is more affordable to lower income households. However, it can be difficult for owners or investors to rehabilitate this stock while maintaining affordability or financial viability if rents need to increase beyond what the market is willing or able to pay.

Over the years, CMHC’s Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) has supported the renewal of some of the City’s housing stock. Funding under the program is limited, however, and does not currently address the extent of need in the city.

The most recent data indicates that there are 99,500 housing units in Ottawa requiring repairs. 20,000 of these units need major repairs and almost sixty percent of these (11,500) are rental housing units. In addition, much of the older housing stock is relatively energy inefficient. It can be costly to operate and puts pressure both on the environment and household budgets.

**Declining Stock of Purpose-Built Rental** – In addition to limited new rental supply, the stock of purpose-built private rental housing has declined over time, a trend that is mainly attributable to conversions to condominium. City policy restricts conversions of rental to condominium unless the vacancy rate is at or above three percent for two years and the rents of the units in question are above average market rents.

In 2006, there were 68,178 purpose-built rental housing units in Ottawa, down from 70,251 in 1995. With the vacancy rate rising above three percent for the past two years, the City has received applications for the conversion of 2,576 rental units. As of December 2006, conversions were draft approved or granted for 681 of these rental units.



Source: CMHC, *Rental Market Survey*

**Social Housing** – There are approximately 22,500 social housing units across Ottawa that were built under various federal and/or provincial programs until 1995. These units are owned and operated by non-profit housing providers and co-ops, who are required to rent to low-income tenants from the centralized waiting list for social housing.

The operating cost to provide this housing is roughly the same as for any private rental unit. The difference is that social housing receives operating subsidies to cover the difference between the operating cost and the rent that low-income tenants can afford to pay at thirty percent of their gross income. There are also significant legislated constraints on how properties are allowed to be managed and financed.

Under the terms of the Ontario *Social Housing Reform Act* (2002), the City of Ottawa is now responsible for administering operating agreements with and providing subsidy funding to the 56 housing providers and co-ops which manage 18,930 social housing units in the city.

This is a crucial stock of housing that provides a stable, long-term source of affordable housing for low income households. The estimated asset value of social housing infrastructure in Ottawa is approximately \$2.7 billion.

Housing providers are required to maintain capital reserves to address the need for capital replacements as their buildings age. In 2004, an estimate of the capacity of those reserves across the Province of Ontario suggested that, while on average housing providers contributed about \$600 per



Social housing offers stable, affordable homes for low and moderate income households. Completed in 1995, the Conservation Co-op in Sandy Hill is a forerunner in integrating affordability with a wide range of environmental features that reduce operating costs and impact on the environment.

unit to their reserves annually, the requirement to meet future needs was a minimum of \$1,200 per unit.

With the support of the City of Ottawa, social housing providers in Ottawa have been conducting building condition assessments to develop long-term capital replacement plans. The next step will be to ensure that social housing communities have the capacity to implement their plans which may require changes to the provincial government operating legislation, along with significant improvements to how social housing subsidies are funded.

#### **D. Affordable Housing**

Affordable housing is typically defined as housing for which a household spends no more than thirty percent of its income. The federal government's Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) finds that households are in 'core need' if they are paying more than thirty percent of income on housing and they cannot afford the average price of housing in the local area.

The City of Ottawa has followed these guidelines for its definition of affordable housing found in the *Official Plan*. Affordable housing is defined as housing for which a household pays no more than thirty percent of income. It is targeted to households with incomes at the 30<sup>th</sup> income percentile and below for rental housing and the 40<sup>th</sup> income percentile and below for ownership housing. 2006 income percentiles for Ottawa are shown below.

Social housing is inherently affordable because rents are adjusted to ensure that the household pays no more than thirty percent of income. Housing built under the City's *Action Ottawa* program meets the City's definition of affordable housing because all of the units produced under the program have been affordable to the 30<sup>th</sup> income percentile and the majority of units are targeted to households at the 20<sup>th</sup> income percentile and below. In the private market, some of the existing rental stock meets the City's definition of affordable housing although recent completions of purpose-built rental housing have been well above the affordability target. In addition, some ownership housing produced by private developers has met the City's definition of affordable housing.



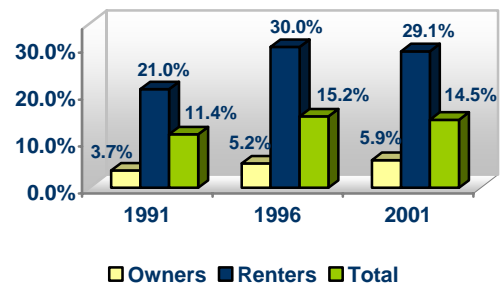
**Need for Affordable Housing** – A recent study by the Royal Bank of Canada suggests that Ottawa is among the most affordable larger urban centres in Canada.<sup>7</sup> The study is careful to point out, however, that Ottawa also has the highest average household income of the cities in the study. Certainly, most households in Ottawa are able to find suitable housing they can afford. However, many households continue to have difficulty in finding affordable housing or are paying increasing portions of their income to meet housing costs. Others are increasingly leaving the city core and seeking more affordable housing in Gatineau and formerly rural areas, with resulting increased commutes and pressures on physical infrastructure.

A key indicator of housing affordability is core housing need – a statistic produced by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) that estimates the number of households who are living in housing that does not meet all of their needs, either because it is in poor condition, overcrowded or unaffordable. According to the most recent data, the incidence of housing need in Ottawa stands at 14.5 percent, an increase over the 11.4 percent reported in 1991. Housing need is much greater among renters than owners. 29 percent of renters live in core housing need compared to six percent of owners.

The majority of housing need in Ottawa results from affordability issues. Approximately 37 percent of renter households, or some 42,000 Ottawa households, currently pay in excess of thirty percent of their income on housing. The majority of renter households earn annual incomes at the low to moderate end of Ottawa’s income spectrum (approximately \$55,000 and below). After paying rent, many have little left over to pay for food, clothing and other essentials.

A useful way to assess how well we are meeting the need for affordable housing is through the use of a “housing continuum” pictured below.

**Core Housing Need in Ottawa by Tenure**

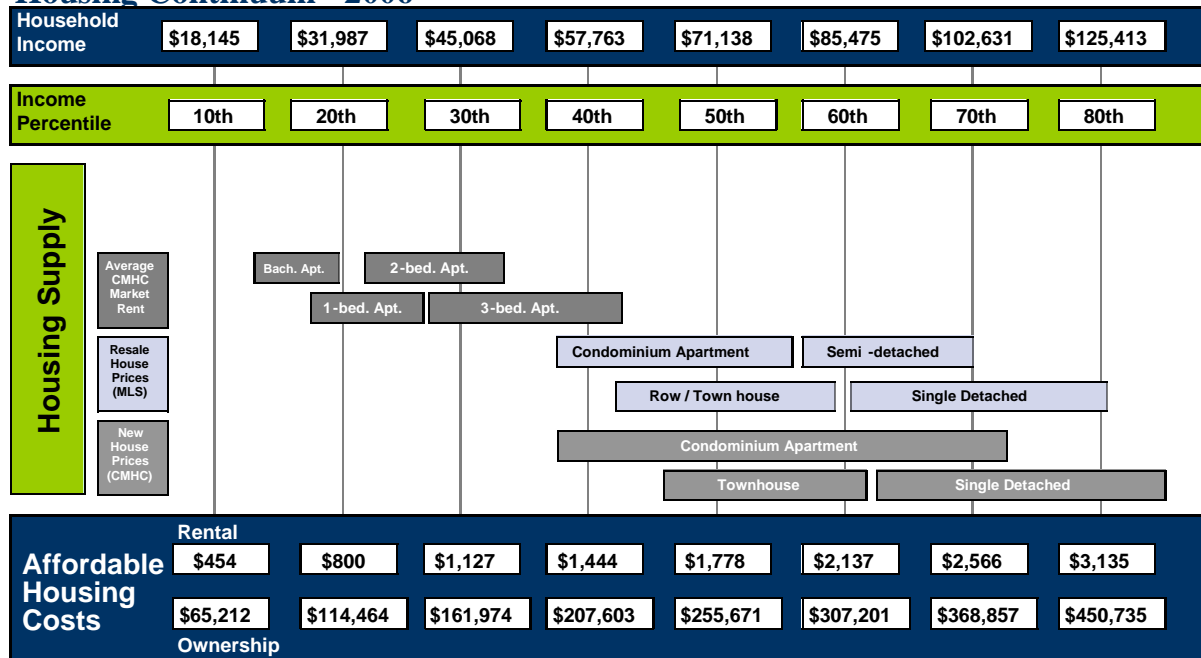


Source: CMHC

**45 percent of lone-parent families in Ottawa face housing affordability challenges. They are followed by non-family households (primarily single individuals) at 42 percent, couples with children (29 percent), couples without children (22 percent) and multiple family households (20 percent).**

<sup>7</sup> Royal Bank of Canada, *Housing Affordability Index*, December 2006.

## Housing Continuum - 2006



Sources: CMHC, OREB, OCHBA, City of Ottawa

The range of household incomes in Ottawa is shown across the top of the graph and represents 2006 estimates. There are approximately 350,000 households in Ottawa. Some 35,000 households (or ten percent of total households) have annual incomes of \$18,145 and below. A further 35,000 households have incomes between \$18,146 and \$31,987 and so on.

The bottom of the chart shows the amount that households can afford to pay for their housing without spending more than thirty percent of income. For example, a household making \$57,763 per year can afford a rent of \$1,444 and a house priced at \$207,603.

The middle of the graph locates different forms of housing according to the average cost of this housing in 2006. For example, an average resale condo apartment in Ottawa is affordable to households with annual incomes of approximately \$57,000 and above but not to households making approximately \$45,000 and below.

The housing continuum graph indicates that households with annual incomes of \$57,763 and below have limited options to purchase affordable ownership housing unless they have a significant amount of equity. Some 70,000 households (\$31,987 and below) have limited affordable housing options unless they are paying below average prices for rental

**More than 35,000 households in Ottawa cannot find affordable housing in the private market unless they have a significant amount of equity or are paying significantly below the average for rental housing.**

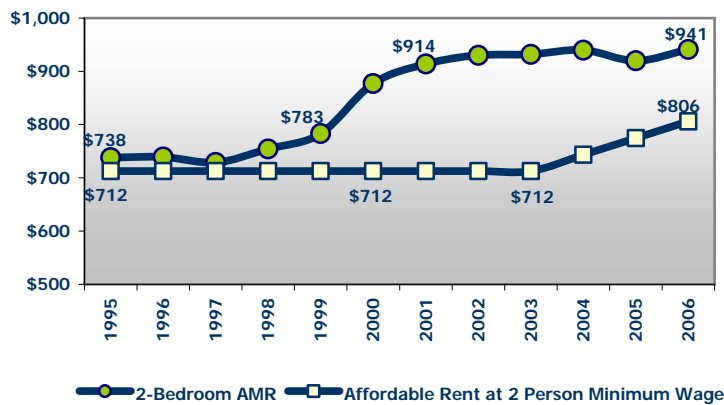
housing or have a significant amount of equity. More than 35,000 households (approximately \$18,145 and below) cannot find affordable housing in the private market at all unless they have a significant amount of equity or are paying significantly below the average for rental housing.

**Rental Housing** – In comparison to major Canadian cities, Ottawa’s average market rents (AMRs) are currently the fourth highest in the country. Rents have increased much faster than incomes at the lower end of the income continuum. An Ottawa household currently needs more than two minimum wage jobs to afford the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment at \$941 per month. Recent CMHC research indicates that the average two-bedroom rent in buildings completed in 2000 and later is \$1,406, 39 percent above the average rent in buildings completed between 1990 and 1999 and well above the affordability threshold for most renter households in Ottawa.

2 Bdrm Average Market Rents, 2006	
Toronto	\$1,067
Vancouver	\$1,045
Calgary	\$960
Ottawa	\$941

Source: CMHC, *Rental Market Survey*

2 Bdrm Apt, Ottawa Average Rents vs. Affordable Rent at 2-Person Minimum Wage



Source: CMHC, *Rental Market Survey* and City of Ottawa

Rents have generally kept pace with inflation since 1995. However, incomes at the lower end of the continuum have stagnated or fallen in real terms since that time. Minimum wage earners have lost real purchasing power to inflation since 1995.

Rooming houses have historically acted as a significant source of affordable rental housing for low income singles in Ottawa. However, even the average rent for a room in a rooming house has risen to approximately \$450 per month, above the Ontario Works maximum monthly shelter

allowance of \$342. The stock, comprised mostly of converted dwellings, has been declining over time as it has been in most other large urban centres across Canada. Currently, there are approximately fifty licensed rooming houses in Ottawa out of a total of approximately 180 identified. The average size is ten rooming units.

The City of Ottawa has been actively participating in funding opportunities for affordable housing at federal and provincial government levels. Through *Action Ottawa*, the City offers housing developers a package of incentives in exchange for rental housing which will be affordable over the long-term for low income households. The package includes City, federal and provincial capital grants in addition to relief from municipal fees and in some cases land.

In 2004, the City established a target of 500 *Action Ottawa* units per year over the next ten years based on the funding participation of federal and provincial governments. Since that time, funding has been allocated to Ottawa for 586 units. Due to the lack of federal and provincial funding, the City has only met thirty percent of its target since 2004.

**Affordable Units Funded vs. City Target**

Year	Target	Funded	Gap
2004	500	271	(229)
2005	500	139	(361)
2006	500	0	(500)
2007	500	176*	(324)
<b>2004-07</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>586</b>	<b>(1414)</b>
<b>As %</b>		<b>30%</b>	<b>70%</b>

\* expected

**Ownership Housing** – The ownership housing market has shown noticeable price increases in recent years. Between 1995 and 2006, the average annual increase in the price of an absorbed new single detached home was 5.6 percent. Since 2000, there has been an average annual price increase of nine percent.

The resale ownership market traditionally provides a more affordable option for households. This market has also experienced significant price increases. Between 1995 and 2006, annual price increases averaged five percent. Since 2000, the average annual price increase was almost nine percent.

Year	Average Price of Absorbed New Single Detached	New Single Year-Over-Year Change	Annual Inflation Rate	Average Resale Year-Over-Year Change	Average Price of Resale Home (All Types)
1995	\$218,275	10.0%	2.8%	-2.7%	\$143,127
1996	\$190,000	-13.0%	1.5%	-1.8%	\$140,513
1997	\$186,534	-1.8%	1.8%	2.4%	\$143,866
1998	\$197,708	6.0%	0.8%	0.0%	\$143,914
1999	\$203,291	2.8%	1.9%	4.0%	\$149,626
2000	\$223,357	9.9%	3.0%	6.6%	\$159,511
2001	\$253,629	13.6%	3.2%	10.3%	\$175,971
2002	\$281,950	11.2%	2.1%	14.1%	\$200,711
2003	\$305,923	8.5%	2.5%	9.0%	\$218,775
2004	\$335,251	9.6%	1.9%	7.7%	\$235,678
2005	\$357,549	6.7%	2.3%	5.4%	\$248,358
2006	\$371,900	4.0%	1.7%	3.7%	\$257,481
<b>Average Annual Change 1995-2006</b>		<b>5.6%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>4.9%</b>	
<b>Average Annual Change 2000-2006</b>		<b>9.1%</b>	<b>2.4%</b>	<b>8.1%</b>	

Sources: CMHC *Housing Now Ottawa*; Ottawa Real Estate Board, Statistics Canada Table 326-0002

The City of Ottawa's *Official Plan* sets a target of 25 percent for new ownership housing to be affordable to households with incomes corresponding to the 40<sup>th</sup> income percentile and below. This target has not been met since the policy was adopted in 2003. Although the City can offer incentives to developers to incorporate affordable housing in new developments, it has no ability under provincial legislation to require affordable housing. This contrasts with the situation in many parts of the United States where municipalities combine a requirement for affordable housing in new developments with a number of incentives to assist developers to meet that requirement.

Although the City's target has not been met, it is important to note that the proportion of annual affordable ownership completions has improved since the policy was adopted by City Council. In 2006, 13.9 percent of ownership completions were affordable to households with incomes corresponding to the 40<sup>th</sup> income percentile in Ottawa (\$57,763) compared to 9.4 percent in 2002. In 2006, only 0.8 percent were affordable to households with incomes at the 30<sup>th</sup> income percentile (\$45,068).

#### Affordable Ownership Completions

Year	% Affordable to the 30th Income Percentile	% Affordable to the 40th Income Percentile
2002	1.3%	9.4%
2003	0.7%	6.0%
2004	1.8%	12.8%
2005	2.4%	13.4%
2006	0.8%	13.9%

Source: CMHC, Custom Tabulation

The slight surge in the condo and townhouse market in recent years has created more affordable ownership options. In 2006, 55 percent of condo apartments and 17 percent of townhouses met the affordable ownership target. Only 0.6 percent of singles and semis met the target. As the cost of singles has increased out of the reach of many households in Ottawa, the housing market has begun to respond to that proportion of demand that cannot afford new singles but can afford condo apartments and townhouses. Relatively low mortgage interest rates have also meant that many households have still been able to access the ownership

market. In 2006, however, increases in mortgage rates have slightly eroded ownership affordability.

**Projected Need for Affordable Housing** – Projected need for affordable housing is derived from population and household growth projections. The City’s current projections are based on estimates from 2001 data and are currently being revised. The current projections suggest that Ottawa will grow by approximately 9,300 households annually until 2021.

Considering historical trends, forty percent of this growth or some 3,700 new households annually may face challenges in finding affordable housing. The *City Housing Strategy* outlines a number of ways to address this as well as existing gaps, including initiatives focused on new development as well as those directed at adapting the existing stock of housing.

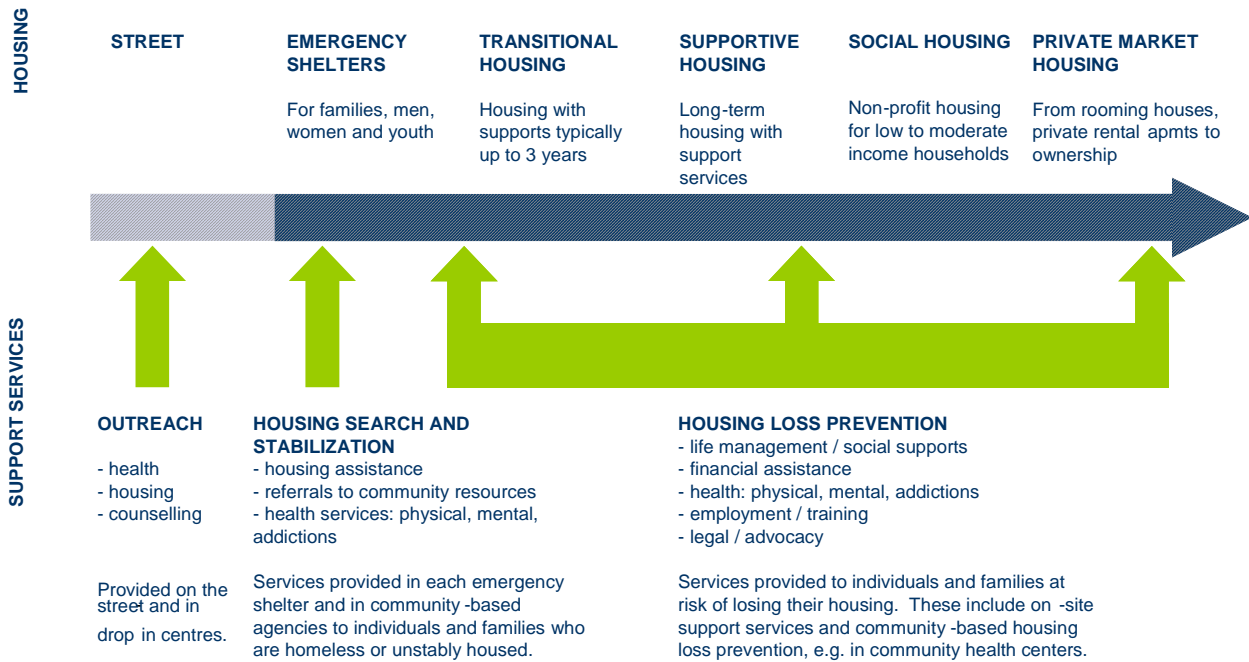
## **E. Supports to Housing**

Many people need a range of support services to assist them in finding and keeping housing. Supports to housing range from assistance to locating housing to the prevention of housing loss. Households can lose their housing due to the inability to pay for its cost (e.g. rent) and/or lack of support in maintaining it. This can include, for example, basic supports to daily living such as regular home care.

Housing support services in the home may be provided by community-based organizations (supported housing) or they may be available on-site at the residence (supportive housing). Transitional housing is another important housing option for households that may require various levels of support to facilitate integration back into the community.

The following graph shows another way of looking at the continuum of housing options in our community – one that depicts the need for supports to housing.

# Continuum of Housing and Support Services



As indicated by the graph, housing support services are essential for households in our community regardless of their housing status – from a family living in an emergency shelter drawing upon housing search services to a homeowner relying on home care services.

Much of the available supports to housing are for individuals with health difficulties or disabilities such as mobility disabilities, mental illness, addictions, developmental disabilities and HIV/AIDs. Other groups may also need specialized housing options and services. These include women fleeing domestic violence, Aboriginal persons, Inuit, people leaving corrections facilities, francophone and other non-English speakers, newcomers, seniors, youth and young parents.

**Need for Supports** – Extensive consultation with community stakeholders confirmed that the need for supports to housing in Ottawa is critical and is not currently being met. A survey of housing and support services conducted in 2005 found that there were long waits for an inadequate supply of supportive housing units for persons with physical, mental and developmental disabilities. At the end of 2006, there were 2,630 applications on the waiting

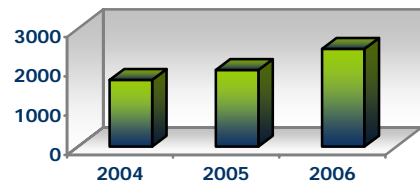


lists of members of the Ottawa Supportive Housing Network. There tends to be limited turnover of units and wait times can extend to up to eight years.

There is a key preventative aspect to housing support services since they can prevent housing loss and cost to the rest of the health and social services system.<sup>8</sup> In partnership with community-based agencies, the City has focused on increasing the level of support services in our community as a way to prevent homelessness.

From 2004 to 2006, the number of households served by the Housing Loss Prevention Network increased by 47 percent from 1,696 households in 2004 to 2,487 households in 2006. The Network consists of six community-based agencies at eleven locations across the city. It provides services to a range of households, including households at imminent risk of losing their housing as well as those with long-term housing issues. Recently the City conducted a survey of all agencies in the city providing housing loss prevention services. It found that over 9,000 households accessed these services in 2006.

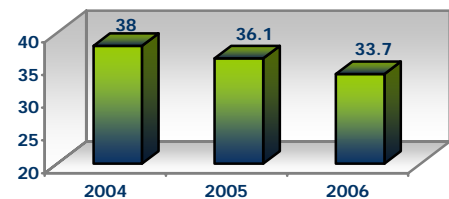
Number of Households Served by the Housing Loss Prevention Network



Source: City of Ottawa

In addition to housing loss prevention, housing search and stabilization services are also a key aspect of supports to housing. An increase in these support services has assisted people in emergency shelters to move into housing faster with the supports necessary to maintain their housing status. Since the City has funded housing support workers in each of Ottawa's shelters, the average length of stay has decreased by eleven percent. These housing support workers help people to find housing and support services appropriate to their needs. Increased and sustained initiatives such as these are necessary to ensure that individuals and families are housed as quickly as possible with the services they need to maintain their housing over the long-term.

Average Length of Stay in Emergency Shelters # of days



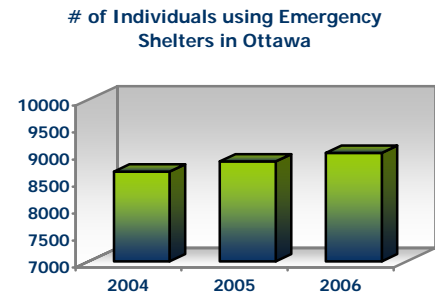
Source: HIFIS

**Homelessness** – Despite this progress, homelessness is still an issue in the city and increased support services combined

<sup>8</sup> CMHC, *Cost Effectiveness of Eviction Prevention Programs*, November 2005; Steve Pomeroy, *The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities*, Prepared for National Secretariat on Homelessness, 2005; Dennis Culhane, Stephen Matraux and Trevor Hadley, "Public Service Reductions Associated with Placement of Homeless Persons with Severe Mental Illness in Supportive Housing", *Housing Policy Debate*, Vo. 13, No. 1, 2002; British Columbia, *Homelessness Cause and Effect - The Costs of Homelessness in British Columbia*, 2001.

with affordable housing would lower the number of households experiencing homelessness even further. Over the three year period from 2004 to 2006, an annual average of almost 9,000 individuals used emergency shelters in Ottawa – each year over 1,000 of these individuals were children.

A snapshot of a typical night in November 2006 gives a fuller picture of homelessness in the city. It found that 668 single men, women and youth stayed in local shelters, 84 families with children (or 227 individuals) stayed in local shelters and forty people slept on the street. The most commonly cited reasons for homelessness among shelter users are: eviction, inability to pay the rent and household conflict.<sup>9</sup>



Source: HIFIS

In 2003, the City began to prioritize homeless households on the centralized waiting list for social housing. One in ten vacant social housing units are given to households that are homeless. Many of these households require supports and the lack of housing support services in the city has placed stress on some social housing communities. Social housing landlords have frequently been faced with having to cobble together the necessary supports for their new residents in order to maintain the sustainability of their communities.

**Seniors** – As the city struggles to address current gaps, the need for supports to housing will continue to increase along with a growing and aging population. The proportion of seniors in our community is expected to increase from fifteen percent of the general population to 23 percent in 2021. An increased supply of home care services will be needed because many seniors choose to ‘age in place’. They prefer to live in their homes and the communities with which they have developed connections over the years. About a third of seniors live alone and seniors living alone are more likely to be women.<sup>10</sup>

Home care services are essential for ‘aging in place’ – they enable seniors to remain in their homes and connected to their communities.

Seniors who have difficulty remaining in their homes can move to private retirement homes or long-term care centres and similar types of accommodation which provide 24-hour on-site staff. Many of these facilities can be expensive, however, and may not be options for lower income seniors. There are waiting lists for long-term care facilities across

<sup>9</sup> Tim Aubry et al., *Panel Study on Persons who are Homeless in Ottawa: Phase One Results, Final Report*, Centre for Research on Community Services, University of Ottawa, 2003.

<sup>10</sup> Statistics Canada, *Selected Highlights from a Portrait of Seniors in Canada*, 1999.

Ottawa and, recently, the provincial government announced its intention to establish regulations for the private retirement home sector. While high quality common standards of care and service are welcome, it will be essential to ensure that these do not limit the supply or affordability of private retirement homes.

**Need for Coordination** – All three levels of government and a multitude of local agencies play a role in providing supports to housing. Two provincial Ministries are responsible for most supports to housing in Ottawa, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The federal government plays a key role in funding homelessness prevention services and settlement services for newcomers.

The provincial government has designated the City of Ottawa as the service system manager for homelessness. Besides administering provincial funds, the City also directly funds and delivers supports in the community. Through its Community Funding Program, the City funds non-profit community-based health and social service agencies, many of which provide supports to housing. The City also owns and operates four non-profit long-term care centres in Ottawa.

The Ontario government has recently created Local Integrated Health Networks across the province. This includes the Champlain Local Integrated Health Network for the Ottawa area which will be responsible for local decisions around provincially-funded health care services such as mental health and addictions services as well as the Community Care Access Centre (CCAC). The CCAC coordinates home care services in Ottawa and manages admissions to long-term care centres across the City.

There are also numerous private and non-profit community-based agencies that provide an array of supports to housing.

Funding and coordination at senior government levels has been inadequate and unstable and, as a result, there are gaps in local services. Services can also be fragmented with agencies working in isolation of each other. The City of Ottawa has made significant headway in promoting coordination and collaboration in the area of homelessness prevention and has been an advocate for increased supports across service sectors. Greater coordination is necessary, however, to ensure that gaps in services are addressed and that community members are aware of what is available to them.

## IV. Community Priorities for Housing

---

Housing was repeatedly identified as a priority during the *Ottawa 20/20* public consultations. Community members highlighted the need to promote a supply of housing corresponding to the diversity of households in Ottawa. They also emphasized that a diversity of housing in communities throughout the city is a key component of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities.

The *City Housing Strategy* builds on the principles established during the *Ottawa 20/20* process while recognizing that the City is only one stakeholder in Ottawa's housing system. A number of partners need to come together to address the community's priorities.

As the preceding section makes clear, housing is more than just shelter. It is the system of assets, financing, services, supports, policies and programs that enable Ottawa's citizens to live in their communities. Given the important roles that federal and provincial governments play in these areas, many housing issues that communities face must be addressed by these levels of government.

Municipal governments and the communities they represent need to be at the table because of the key role we play in policy development and implementation, and to ensure that locally-specific housing issues are addressed in the most effective manner.

The *City Housing Strategy* establishes a leadership role for the City of Ottawa in promoting increased communication, collaboration and coordination among levels of government, private sector partners and non-profit community-based agencies in responding to housing needs and community priorities.

### **Housing and the *Ottawa 20/20* Principles**

**A Responsive and Responsible City**  
**A Caring and Inclusive City**  
**A Creative City Rich in Heritage, Unique in Identity**  
**A Green and Environmentally Sensitive City**  
**A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities**  
**An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All**  
**A Healthy and Active City**

**A Caring and Inclusive City: Access to the Basics** - All people have access to adequate income, food, clothing, housing, transportation, health services and recreation.

**A Caring and Inclusive City: Diversity** - The people of Ottawa respect and celebrate cultural and social diversity, and have access to services that are responsive to special and differing needs.

**A Caring and Inclusive City: Seniors** - Seniors have access to community services that respond to their needs.

**A Green and Environmentally Sensitive City: Development in Harmony with the Environment** - Using land wisely, development builds within the current urban boundary and avoids outward sprawl.

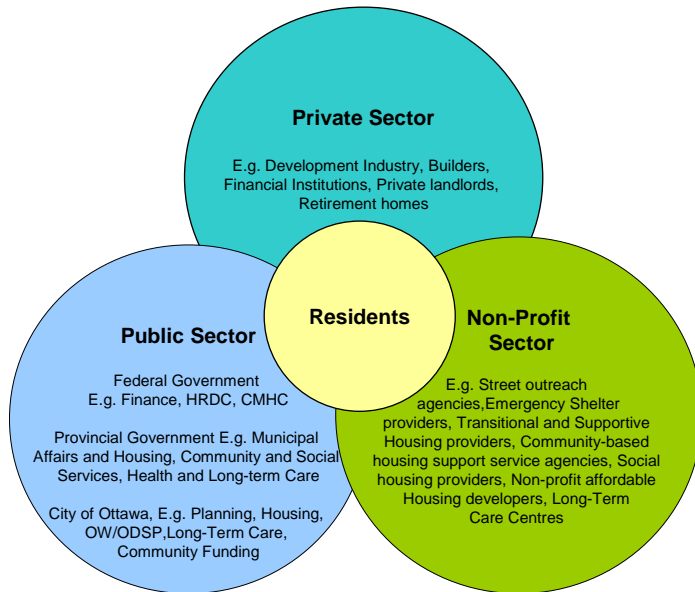
**A Green and Environmentally Sensitive City: A Focus on Walking, Cycling and Transit** - Ottawa implements policies that favour walking, cycling and public transit over the use of private motor vehicles, thereby facilitating the use of modes of transportation that are socially accessible, environmentally healthy and economically feasible.

**A City of Distinct, Liveable Communities: Complete Communities** - Ottawa's communities have a variety of housing choices, employment, parks and a wide range of services and facilities accessible by walking, cycling and transit.

**An Innovative City Where Prosperity is Shared Among All: Connecting People to Opportunities** - Citizens have access to quality training, information, education and community services that provide support to overcome barriers; increase employment; reduce poverty; and create opportunities to participate in the community.

**A Healthy and Active City: Accessibility** - Citizens have access to affordable and barrier-free facilities, programs and services.

## Partners in Ottawa’s Housing System



**Partners in Ottawa’s Housing System** – Over ninety percent of housing in Ottawa is supplied by the private sector. The private sector plays a lead role in creating and maintaining an adequate overall supply of housing that keeps pace with demand and reflects market affordability. The public sector has an important role to play in facilitating, monitoring and regulating the continued supply of private sector housing to ensure that community priorities are met.

The nonprofit sector supplies approximately seven percent of housing in the city and much of the support services that are necessary to assist people to obtain and retain housing. It plays a central role in providing housing and support services for lower income households. The public sector plays a crucial role in supporting nonprofit initiatives through, for example, funding programs and regulating service standards.

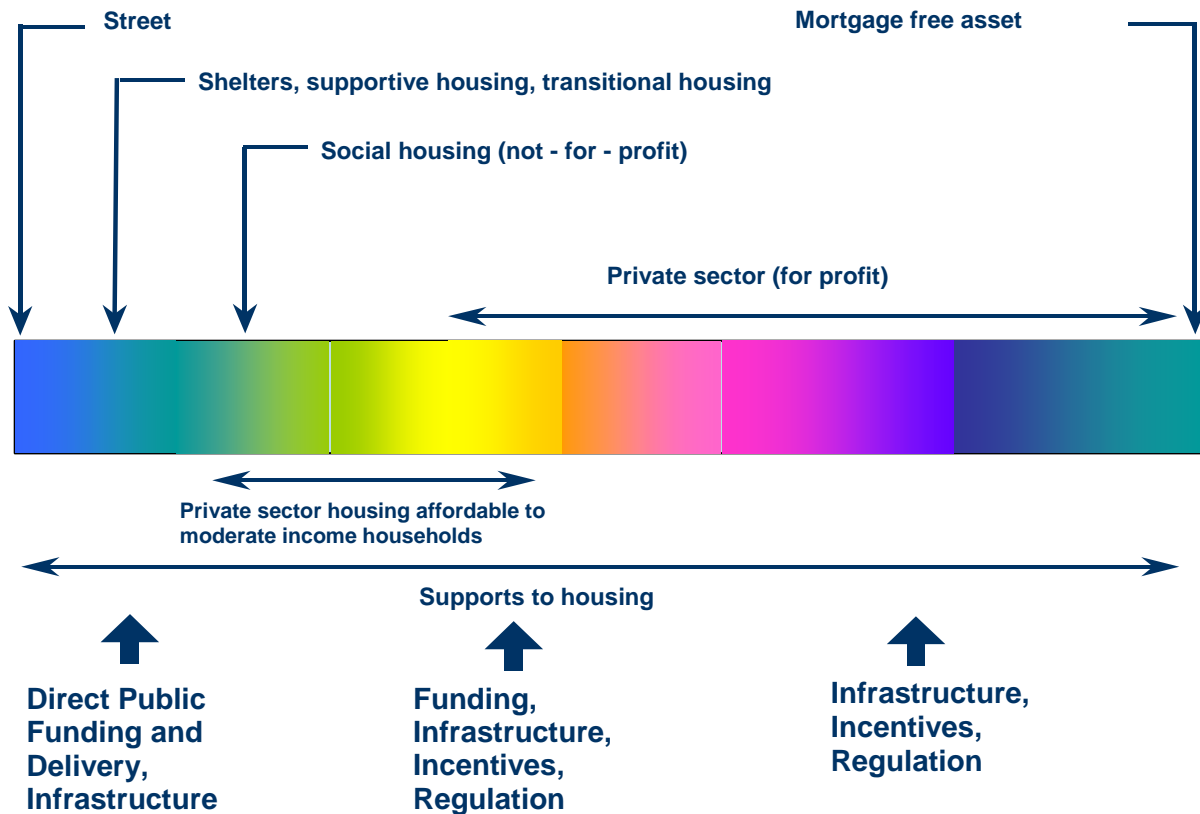
**The Public Sector’s Role in Housing** – The public sector’s overall responsibilities in the housing system are portrayed in the figure below.

Community priorities for housing are expressed in public policies which in turn are implemented through direct public funding and delivery, the provision of infrastructure, public

**The City of Ottawa will take a leadership role in promoting increased communication, coordination and collaboration among all levels of government, private sector partners and non-profit agencies in addressing community priorities in housing.**

incentives and the development and enforcement of regulations.

## Public Sector Role in Housing



**Direct public funding and delivery** might include, for example, the City’s operation of emergency shelters or long-term care centres. Other examples of public funding for housing include federal and municipal funding of social housing or provincial government shelter allowance programs.

A central municipal role is the provision and maintenance of **infrastructure** to support housing development and the built environment more generally. Infrastructure includes, for example, roads, sewers and potable water supply systems.

**Public incentives** for housing are intended to encourage residents, the private sector or non-profit organizations to take initiatives that promote community priorities for housing. For example, the federal government’s mortgage insurance program encourages the financial sector to provide

mortgages to lower income households. Its Energuide for Housing Program encourages households to achieve energy efficiencies in their existing housing. Municipal fee relief to developers in exchange for affordable housing development is another example of an incentive program. Many public sector incentives for housing are provided through the tax system through forgiving corporate or personal taxes. Federal and provincial governments have control over these taxes and tax incentive programs.

Finally, **public regulation** is also needed to ensure that initiatives in the housing system promote community priorities. The provincial government plays a central role in housing regulation through several pieces of legislation such as the *Planning Act*, the *Municipal Act*, the *Development Charges Act*, the *Residential Tenancies Act*, the *Social Housing Reform Act* and the *Ontario Building Code*. At the federal level, the *National Housing Act* and nation-wide spending authority over health and social programs (e.g. the Canada Social Transfer and the Canada Health Transfer) give the federal government a central role in local housing systems. Examples of municipal regulations include Official Plans, Community Design Plans, zoning by-laws, property standards, engineering standards and occupancy standards. Regulations may also be established to oversee the use of public funds for housing such as the federal government's National Homelessness Initiative or municipal regulations for the administration of social housing.

**The *National Housing Act* and nation-wide spending authority over health and social programs give the federal government a central role in local housing systems.**

The actions in the *City Housing Strategy* incorporate all of these public sector roles to promote a more comprehensive, integrated response to community priorities for housing. They do so in a framework that also incorporates the roles of the private sector, the nonprofit sector and residents themselves.



## V. Overview of the City Housing Strategy

---

The *City Housing Strategy* establishes three overall Directions to be followed over the next five years in order to address housing issues in Ottawa and work toward the vision of *Ottawa 20/20*.

- Direction 1: Building Healthy, Inclusive, Sustainable Communities**
- Direction 2: Promoting and Preserving Affordable Housing**
- Direction 3: Meeting the Need for Supports to Housing**

Each of the three Directions is supported by strategic statements. These Strategies indicate which actions will be prioritized in implementing the *City Housing Strategy*.

This section provides an overview of the three Directions and the Strategies that will move us in these directions. The following section outlines the specific Actions that form the implementation plan for the *City Housing Strategy*.

### Direction 1: Building Healthy, Inclusive Sustainable Communities

This Direction addresses how we build neighbourhoods for all residents. It is based on the understanding that healthy communities minimize their impact on the environment, are socially inclusive, complete with an array of housing options and supports, and are responsive to and supportive of broader economic and social development goals. It recognizes that the long-term sustainability of communities is based on building a diverse, flexible housing stock today to meet changing needs over time at both household and community levels.

**The long-term sustainability of communities is based on building a diverse, flexible housing stock today to meet changing needs over time.**

The emphasis is on the need to implement a comprehensive, integrated approach to addressing housing issues in Ottawa. A comprehensive, integrated approach promotes a broad range of appropriate policies, programs and tools to build healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities.

## Strategies:

### **1A. Develop a more comprehensive, coordinated framework of public policies, programs and tools that provide an integrated response to addressing housing issues in local communities.**

The starting point for comprehensively addressing housing issues and needs is a shared understanding that housing is fundamental to the economic, physical and social health of our entire community as well as a basic need of individual households. This means that, in addition to programs targeted at addressing the housing needs of individual households, policies and tools that address the community-building role of housing are also essential.

**Policies and tools that address the community-building role of housing are essential.**

A more integrated response by governments to housing issues will overcome past tendencies for housing initiatives to operate in isolation from each other, leading to missed opportunities and ineffective and potentially contradictory results. Government responses to housing issues have typically been short-term and fragmented, forming a patchwork of initiatives that do not holistically address local issues.

A good example of integrated policy implementation is ensuring that senior government investments in public infrastructure are targeted to communities that incorporate strategies on housing diversity and affordability into local long-term sustainability plans. In the U.S., for example, many states tie access to highway and transit funding to community development plans that promote higher densities, less sprawl and better residential affordability. Canada is just starting to move in this direction with the requirement for cities to have Integrated Community Sustainability Plans in place in order to access federal government gas tax funding.

**A more integrated response to housing issues will overcome past tendencies for public initiatives to work in isolation from each other.**

A comprehensive housing framework promoting policy integration must incorporate all three levels of government. Given the taxation, legislative and jurisdictional roles of federal and provincial governments, many housing issues that communities face need to be addressed by these levels of government. Municipal governments and the communities they represent must be at the table because of the key role we play in policy development and implementation, and to

ensure that locally-specific housing issues are addressed in the most effective manner. Improved coordination at the municipal level is also essential, given local government's role in community-building through, for example, land use planning, the promotion of affordable housing and the delivery of housing support services.

### **1B. Promote compact, sustainable housing development and redevelopment.**

This Strategy supports the City's *Official Plan* and related Growth Plans on encouraging compact, sustainable growth. This can be achieved through policies promoting development that has a minimal impact on the environment, uses land wisely and provides an ongoing response to community needs such as sustained housing affordability. Sustainable development can also be encouraged through the promotion of energy efficient building technologies in new development and the renewal of the existing stock of housing. The promotion of a diversity of housing across the city can increase housing options in each neighbourhood and reduce the use of cars if people are able to live closer to workplaces. In addition, the existing stock of housing is a precious resource and must be sustained and renewed to meet changing needs and community priorities.

**Canada Lands Corporation (CLC) is working with the City to promote compact, sustainable development in Ottawa through the renewal of the Rockcliffe Canadian Forces Base. CLC's plans incorporate housing diversity, business development and neighbourhood scale services in a setting that prioritizes walking, cycling and transit over the use of cars.**

### **1C. Encourage and enable diverse, flexible housing solutions across the city, including urban, suburban and rural neighbourhoods.**

Diverse, flexible housing solutions are the cornerstone of healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. To meet the needs of all community members, the housing stock must include a mix of types and tenures, housing affordable to all community members, accessible housing for people with a diversity of disabilities and housing support services for people who need assistance in obtaining and retaining housing.

**To meet the needs of all community members, Ottawa's housing stock must include a diverse mix of types and tenures, affordable and accessible housing and housing support services.**

Housing diversity and flexibility will be promoted through municipal zoning provisions, Community Design Plans and Neighbourhood Plans, improvements to municipal planning powers, the use of regulatory incentives such as alternative development standards and through initiatives promoting increased accessibility in housing. Directions Two and Three address initiatives specifically related to the need for affordable housing and supports to housing.

## **1D. Maximize opportunities in the existing housing stock to build healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities.**

Although there tends to be an emphasis on promoting new development that adequately responds to housing needs, it is important to recognize that housing has a long life span and that the existing stock of housing provides for the needs of the majority of our community. Annual new completions in Ottawa only comprise approximately two percent of our city's existing 350,000 dwelling units.

The promotion of healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities requires initiatives that are specifically directed at the existing stock of housing. This includes initiatives that protect the stock from decline or ones that make more effective use of the stock to address changing needs and community priorities over time.

## **Direction 2: Promoting and Preserving Affordable Housing**

This Direction addresses market gaps in meeting the housing needs of households with low to moderate incomes. It primarily involves targeted initiatives that help to preserve and increase the availability of housing that is affordable to lower income households in Ottawa. While building more inclusive communities is an essential aspect of an affordable housing solution, policies and initiatives addressing the lack of affordable housing in the market place are also crucial. These include direct government incentives and programs as well as policies and other initiatives that promote an increase in the supply of affordable housing and the maintenance of the existing affordable housing stock.

**Policies and initiatives addressing the lack of affordable housing in the market are crucial.**

### **Strategies:**

#### **2A. Promote an integrated, balanced approach to addressing housing needs through income policies and housing supply policies.**

There are two basic issues that face households in need of affordable housing: Their incomes are too low and housing is too expensive – the affordability gap. In a mature urban centre such as Ottawa, an effective housing system that meets all housing needs in our community must address both issues by reducing costs and raising

incomes at the lower end of the income continuum. Policies that address income gaps include minimum wage, social assistance, rent supplements and housing allowances as well as job creation initiatives. Capital support for new affordable housing development addresses the cost of housing and promotes long-term investment in our neighbourhoods to keep them affordable and inclusive. Although the debate over the past several decades has tended to polarize around income support vs. support for new development, the way forward is to integrate both approaches into a comprehensive, coordinated response to affordable housing needs.

**An effective housing system that meets all housing needs in our community must address the affordability gap by reducing costs and raising incomes at the lower end of the income continuum.**

## **2B. Promote a positive environment to foster affordable housing development.**

The development of affordable housing involves the participation of a variety of partners, including the private sector, the nonprofit sector and all levels of government. The City has a leadership role to play in creating an environment that brings partners together to identify the need for affordable housing, issues in responding to this need and potential solutions to these issues. This might involve encouraging greater communication between partners, facilitating development partnerships, providing development training and developing local policies and tools that encourage initiatives to develop affordable housing.

## **2C. Assemble and leverage resources to address the need for affordable housing.**

A variety of resources needs to be assembled to effectively increase the supply of affordable housing, such as finance capital, income support and land. Municipalities are best positioned to leverage and bundle resources at the local level and target them to addressing specific local needs. Federal and provincial governments have central roles to play in providing these resources because affordable housing supports federal and provincial social and economic development policies. It is also important that public initiatives leverage the participation and expertise of both the non-profit sector and private sector developers and landlords.

**Municipalities are best positioned to leverage and bundle resources at the local level and target them to addressing specific local affordable housing needs.**

## **2D. Preserve the existing affordable housing stock.**

Housing which is built or designed to be affordable over the long-term is an important community asset that supports healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. There are approximately 22,500 social housing units across Ottawa that have been built under a variety of senior government programs over the past several decades. This is a crucial stock of housing which must be maintained as affordable, good quality housing for low and moderate income households. There are also approximately 68,500 purpose-built rental units in the private market, many of which provide an affordable option for Ottawa's lower income residents but require rehabilitation to ensure the sustainability of the stock.

## **Direction 3: Meeting the Need for Supports to Housing**

All members of our community may need supports to housing at some point in their lives, making these services an essential part of a healthy, inclusive and sustainable community. However, the fundamental role of housing as part of community and social infrastructure has sometimes been overlooked. This means that specific sector-based programs have not always been focused on helping people in their homes where they live. Often people are required to move (voluntarily or involuntarily) to access services and supports.

**All members of our community may need supports to housing at some point in their lives.**

There is a strong preventative and cost-effective aspect to housing-focused support services because, when available, such services help avoid reliance on more expensive health and social services. They can prevent the stress and cost of moving into institutional care unless absolutely necessary. In addition, they are an essential part of preventing housing loss and homelessness and in assisting households to find housing.

Housing support services can significantly increase a household's quality of life by assisting individuals with the basic activities of daily living or by providing relief to a relative or friend who is the primary caregiver. In many cases, households may require support for a short period of time – for example, in locating affordable rental housing, making connections to the community or during a period of recovery from health difficulties. In other cases, support is necessary over the long-term and may require on-site staff

support for people with ongoing physical, mental or developmental disabilities.

Safe, stable, affordable, permanent housing is particularly essential to preventing and solving homelessness when it happens. “Housing First” programs focus on providing the services to help people who are homeless move as quickly as possible into housing that is affordable, with a range of services to help them stay in their home. Services can include guidance on money management, lifeskills and employment counselling and support services for individuals with mental illness or addictions. It costs the system more to allow homeless people to continue living on the street relying on many publicly funded services like police, emergency services and hospitals than it does to house them with supports.

## **Strategies:**

### **3A. Take a leadership role in promoting the coordination of resources for housing support services and more integrated planning and delivery in the service system.**

The need for housing support services is addressed through community action, City initiatives and responses by both federal and provincial governments. The City has a leadership role to play in promoting better local communication, collaboration and coordination across the diversity of partners and service sectors. A more coordinated and integrated system of resources, planning and delivery will lead to improvements in services and more effectively address individual and community needs. In addition to meaningful collaboration on policy and program development and implementation, increased coordination also involves the development of service delivery partnerships and better linkages between housing providers and agencies supporting tenants.

Funding at senior government levels can be unstable, uncoordinated and tends to form a patchwork of programs. It also does not always meet the operational needs of support service agencies. In part due to these problems, local services can be fragmented, duplication can exist and agencies may work in isolation of each other. Effective community coordination depends on effective coordination of policies and programs within and between provincial and federal departments and ministries.

**The City has a leadership role to play in promoting better coordination across the diversity of sectors that provide housing support services.**



**3B. Advocate for increased and sustained funding to increase the supply of both dedicated supportive housing and support services to housing throughout the community.**

Although greater coordination can increase the level of services in the community, increased provincial funding is required to address the growing need for housing support services in Ottawa. Most of these services fall under the jurisdiction of two provincial ministries, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. The federal government also plays an important role in funding settlement services for newcomers and support services for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

**Increased provincial government funding is necessary to address the growing need for housing support services in Ottawa.**

**3C. Promote local initiatives that increase the supply of housing support services.**

In addition to a coordinating role, the City directly promotes and supports community-based initiatives that increase the supply of housing support services including, dedicated supportive and transitional housing and group homes – housing with on-site support services and programs designed to assist residents to live stably in the community. Part of this also includes building community capacity through, for example, offering development training and workshops or facilitating partnerships.

**3D. Promote improved access to housing support services.**

A diverse range of housing support services are delivered by an array of agencies across the city. It can be difficult for people seeking support to identify the options that are available to them. Increased coordination among agencies is important as well as ensuring that information on housing and support services is readily available to households and easily accessed.

## VI. City Housing Strategy

---

### Direction 1: Building Healthy, Inclusive, Sustainable Communities

#### Strategies:

- 1A. Develop a more comprehensive, coordinated framework of public policies, programs and tools that provide an integrated response to addressing housing issues in local communities.
- 1B. Promote compact, sustainable housing development and redevelopment.
- 1C. Encourage and enable diverse, flexible housing solutions across the city, including urban, suburban and rural neighbourhoods.
- 1D. Maximize opportunities in the existing housing stock to build healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities.

Action	Context
<p>1.1. Advocate for and recommend to federal and provincial governments a more comprehensive, integrated framework of public policies, programs and tools that promotes local control over policy development and implementation.</p> <p><i>Strategy 1A: Comprehensive, Integrated Response</i></p> <div style="border: 1px solid #0056b3; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Federal-provincial gas tax agreements require municipalities to develop Integrated Community Sustainability Plans to access revenue from the federal gas tax. However, important policies related to community sustainability are not included in the criteria for developing the Plans. This includes the promotion of affordable housing.</b></p> </div>	<p>1.1. Federal and provincial governments have legislative, taxation and jurisdictional powers which make them crucial partners in addressing housing needs and issues in local communities. In Canada, it is widely acknowledged that a more comprehensive, coordinated framework of policies, programs and tools is needed to address housing issues. Within this broad framework, increased local control over policy development and implementation can more effectively address locally-specific needs.</p> <p>There are several initiatives that the <i>federal government</i> needs to take to contribute to a more comprehensive policy framework for housing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Align infrastructure and community development policies to support community housing objectives (e.g. link road or transit funding to community sustainability plans that address housing affordability);</li> <li>▪ Provide ongoing, sustained funding for housing initiatives that address low and moderate income needs;</li> <li>▪ Provide ongoing, sustained funding for services that prevent and end homelessness;</li> </ul>

## Action

## Context

On December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2006, the Federal Finance Committee adopted a motion that read in part: "The Committee believes that appropriate housing is also an important contributor to the productivity of a nation's residents and to the competitiveness of a country, since residents and employees must be well-rested if they are to be productive in society, and children and students must be appropriately housed if they are to concentrate in school as well as to grow and thrive....Moreover, we feel that housing must be affordable."

- Ensure that the supply of settlement services for newcomers is well-coordinated with immigration policy and partners in local housing systems, including nonprofit housing providers;
- Establish long-term funding for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program to help improve existing housing;
- Alter tax policies to stimulate new supply that addresses gaps in meeting needs (e.g. GST rebates on rental housing construction, capital gains provisions to leverage new affordable housing development, capital cost allowance);
- Develop policies to create tax credits for investors in affordable rental housing.

New *provincial government* initiatives should include the following:

- Ensure smart growth policies address local gaps in meeting housing needs such as unmet need for affordable housing;
- Provide municipalities with planning powers to require community benefits such as affordable housing in new development or redevelopment;
- Provide ongoing, increased funding for affordable housing;
- Coordinate policies and programs across Ministries to provide ongoing, increased funding for housing support services;
- Eliminate the land transfer tax on affordable housing developments;
- Establish a 'housing first' policy for surplus provincial government lands, including school sites when they are sold for development;
- Ensure that income policies and income support programs (e.g. minimum wage, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, rent supplements and shelter allowances) fully address the cost of housing and are well-coordinated with housing supply programs such as the Rental and Supportive Housing Program under the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program;
- Fund income redistribution programs such as social housing through the income tax system rather than property taxes.

1.2. Develop and implement a communications strategy to build

1.2. Widespread consultation throughout the *Ottawa 20/20* process confirmed that the people of Ottawa place a high value

**Action**

**Context**

awareness and acceptance in the community of the need for a diversity of housing options in neighbourhoods across Ottawa.

*Strategy IA: Comprehensive, Integrated Response*  
*Strategy IB: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy IC: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

1.3. Identify opportunities for residential development or redevelopment to support *Official Plan (OP)* policies promoting compact development and residential intensification.

Ensure that “smart growth” policies are well-coordinated with other City policies such as the OP affordable housing policy.

*Strategy IA: Comprehensive, Integrated Response*  
*Strategy IB: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy IC: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

**Housing Starts Inside & Outside Ottawa's Greenbelt, 1999-2006**

Year	# Inside	# Outside	Total
1999-2006	12,475	34,218	46,693
% 1999-2006	27%	73%	100%

Source: CMHC, *Starts and Completions Survey*

on healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities with minimal impact on the environment and increased housing options across the city. Despite this, residents can feel threatened by the perceived neighbourhood impacts of individual development proposals that provide for denser development, affordable housing and housing support services. The City is developing a course for Ottawa citizens on understanding land use and development planning. The goal is to give participants the skills, knowledge and resources to meaningfully and effectively participate in the city planning and development process.

The City will also develop communication materials to address residents’ concerns and make clear the linkages between achieving healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities and “on-the-ground” buildings and services.

1.3. An important municipal role is the identification of opportunities for residential development in urban and rural areas to meet population and household growth and to ensure adequate and timely support for these opportunities on lands that are properly designated and serviced. The City’s strategy for residential development corresponds with provincial government policy emphasizing more efficient use of land through intensification and compact development. It seeks to alter historical development patterns in the city that have mostly been characterized by automobile-dependent forms of urbanization.

Since 1999, 73 percent of new housing starts in Ottawa have occurred outside the Greenbelt, and were at densities and in subdivision layouts that made car use almost unavoidable. This suggests that we are not making the most efficient use of land and our existing infrastructure (e.g. roads and municipal services). It also tends to mean reduced air quality in the city as residents are making longer commutes in their cars.

The City’s *2003 Official Plan (OP)* establishes policies that strategically direct growth to six designated areas across the city. Overall, it promotes intensification in the urban core, denser development in greenfields and the strategic staging of greenfield development. Technical research suggests that forecasted growth in Ottawa can be accommodated within the urban boundary as designated in the *OP*. It also shows that the majority of growth can be accommodated through residential intensification in existing urban areas, within areas designated for growth in the *OP*. Between 1998 and 2006, 15.4 percent of

new housing construction has occurred in the OP's six designated areas. In 2006, 16.8 percent of housing construction occurred in the six areas.

Recent development patterns such as an increase in condominium development suggest that the City's emphasis on denser development is having an impact. Nevertheless, it is essential that the supply of opportunities for residential development be closely monitored to support a review of the effectiveness of OP smart growth policies.

In addition to careful monitoring, the City will also ensure that smart growth policies do not work at cross-purposes with other City policies such as the *Official Plan* affordable housing policy. Many municipalities have begun to recognize that policies on compact development and intensification can lead to rising land values and the loss or exclusion of affordable housing during the (re)development process. This contradicts good urban planning and the promotion of diverse, inclusive neighbourhoods by excluding lower income households and potentially forcing people to move further outside the urban core in search of more affordable housing.

Part of the solution includes provincial enabling legislation enhancing municipal authority to require the inclusion of housing at prices affordable to lower income households in the (re)development of land. It also means pursuing a culture of inclusionary planning within the City while working with the development industry.

1.4. Ensure that Community Design Plans and Neighbourhood Plans promote the maintenance of and improvements to the diversity and adaptability of housing, including affordable and supportive housing.

*Strategy IA: Comprehensive, Integrated Response*  
*Strategy IB: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy IC: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*  
*Strategy ID: Existing Housing Stock*

1.4. Both Community Design Plans (CDPs) and Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) are crucial tools for implementing policies that address housing issues and needs in the city. CDPs are important legislative vehicles focusing on the implementation of OP policies through identifying land use opportunities in specific neighbourhoods. Recent CDPs, for example, have included targets for affordable housing and minimum densities in Developing Communities.

Neighbourhood Plans (NPs) are intended to be broader, community-led plans, addressing social and economic as well as land use considerations. They will consider the importance of affordable housing and supports as crucial parts of neighbourhood infrastructure.

As detailed plans for specific neighbourhoods, both CDPs and

1.5. Identify opportunities to showcase innovative housing solutions through demonstration projects and awards.

*Strategy 1B: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

1.6. Pursue authorities from the provincial government to improve municipal powers to regulate land use to better meet housing needs.

*Strategy 1A: Comprehensive, Integrated Response*  
*Strategy 1B: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*  
*Strategy 1D: Existing Housing Stock*

**The City of Toronto requires that, in exchange for density/height incentives, a minimum of twenty percent of new housing units be affordable to lower income households. The policy applies to development on large sites greater than five hectares in size. The City of Vancouver requires twenty percent of the units in large developments to be designated for affordable housing. This policy has generated a capacity for 2500 units. 1250 units have been developed so far.**

NPs are also key vehicles for implementing policies supporting the retention of a diversity of housing, including affordable housing.

1.5. Housing award programs allow us to recognize, celebrate and promote achievements in addressing the diverse housing needs of our population. The City of Ottawa has an urban design awards program to celebrate high quality urban design in the City's built environment. Demonstration projects are another way of promoting advances in developing innovative housing solutions. These can be supported through the provision of City-owned sites or in partnership with the private sector.

1.6. Many municipalities in the United States are able to address local housing needs through inclusionary planning which requires the inclusion of affordable housing or other community benefits in new developments in exchange for government financial and regulatory incentives. In Ontario, this approach would require changes to provincial legislation such as the *Planning Act* or the *Municipal Act*.

Inclusionary planning is seen as a crucial part of smart growth policies. Without such an approach, urban growth management that promotes intensification and increased densities to counteract the cost of urban sprawl can increase land and housing prices, frequently beyond the financial reach of some households.

In addition, inclusionary planning is viewed as a more market-based approach to addressing housing needs because it reflects the true value of development while achieving public policy objectives. For example, by rezoning a parcel of land from non-residential to residential use or by amending a zoning bylaw to allow for increases in height and/or density, the municipality passes on an increase in value (in the form of development potential) to the developer. Requiring amenities in exchange for this increased value is seen as a cost of doing business.

Some believe that requiring the private sector to build affordable housing as part of new development raises the cost of all new development. Over time, however, inclusionary planning policies can stabilize land prices as the cost of land will reflect any additional cost of providing a greater diversity of housing units. In addition, the City is committed to working

in partnership with the private sector to encourage and support its crucial role in housing production while at the same time addressing community priorities. The City will invest in inclusionary planning practices through providing financial support such as fee or tax relief, increased densities and alternative development standards.

The City of Ottawa along with other Ontario municipalities have in the past sought changes to provincial legislation to enable municipalities to better address local housing needs. Recent changes to the *City of Toronto Act* have enabled Toronto to more effectively implement its *Official Plan* housing policies. One of these policies requires that, on large sites greater than five hectares in size, a minimum of twenty percent of new housing units be affordable to lower income households in exchange for density/height incentives.

1.7. Ensure that municipal zoning bylaws promote land use opportunities in all communities for housing solutions that meet the full diversity of housing needs, including affordable housing and housing combined with support services.

Evaluate and report on the development of performance-based planning criteria to promote healthier, more inclusive communities.

*Strategy 1B: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

1.7. Zoning provisions control the use of land and type of development in Ottawa and set specific requirements for development such as provisions for building heights, number of parking spaces and the size of front, side and rear yards. Many cities across North America recognize that zoning provisions are frequently too prescriptive. For example, zoning that restricts the location of group homes in effect zone who gets to live where. Provisions such as these can tend to limit inclusive development that meets the spectrum of housing needs throughout a city, including the need for affordable housing options, rooming houses, supportive housing and housing support services.

There is evidence from other jurisdictions that a shift towards a performance-based planning approach could further promote more flexible, inclusive development opportunities. Rather than specifying what uses are allowed in each zone, performance-based zoning specifies what is not allowed, and instead defines acceptable standards of land use intensity. The focus is on the performance of the development and how it will have an impact on the surrounding area – e.g. noise levels, traffic. International examples indicate that performance-based zoning has been used to promote a number of goals such as reduced environmental impacts and increased housing affordability while protecting communities from unwanted impacts of certain kinds of development.



**Action**

**Context**

1.8. Foster a supply of diverse, flexible, compact housing with development partners through the use of incentives such as increased density and alternative development standards.

*Strategy 1B: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

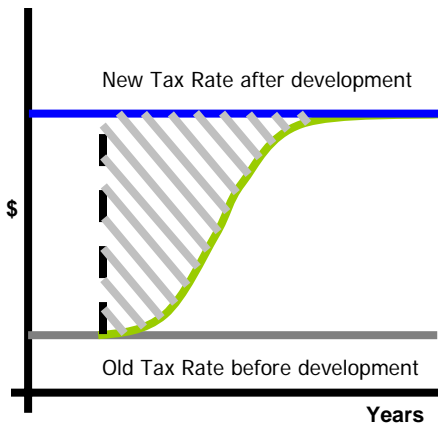
1.8. The City offers a number of planning-related incentives such as relief from development fees to promote a more diverse supply of housing. In addition, under Section 37 of the *Planning Act*, the City can consider granting increased height or density to a proposed development beyond what is allowed under the zoning by-law. In exchange, a developer would be required to provide a benefit to the community such as affordable housing, child care facilities or green space. Density incentives also correspond to City policy that encourages intensification and more compact development overall.

Alternative development standards (ADS) can mean either the general use of flexible planning and engineering standards for urban development or the modification of standards for specific uses such as affordable or supportive housing. The latter option might include, for example, reduced parking requirements where it can be demonstrated that such uses generally require fewer parking spaces. Alternative development standards can also lower the cost of developing housing by reducing the infrastructure costs borne by the developer and the local municipality. ADS is most effective when alternative standards are available as-of-right if certain conditions are met.

1.9. Promote a supply of diverse, flexible, compact housing in brownfield redevelopment projects.

*Strategy 1B: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

1.9. Brownfields are abandoned or underused industrial or commercial lands where there is real or perceived environmental contamination. Encouraging the redevelopment of brownfields can help to achieve more compact development and more efficient use of existing infrastructure, services and facilities. Municipalities can also promote housing which contributes to meeting identified needs.



Phasing in the new tax rate creates room to offset the cost to clean up the site and make it developable. Without clean up, the site is not developed, and the new higher tax rate does not apply.

Brownfield redevelopment can be costly, however, due to the expense of cleaning up a contaminated site. To provide support for this process, the City has recently developed a Brownfield Redevelopment Strategy and a corresponding Community Improvement Plan (CIP). The CIP will implement the Strategy by setting the framework for the dedication of funds and implementation of policy initiatives to improve a specifically defined project area, including the use of phased-in tax increments to offset the extra cost of developing these sites. One of the goals of the CIP is the promotion of a range of housing types, including affordable housing.

The provincial government is also promoting brownfield redevelopment through the provision of funding to municipalities with CIPs in place. The provincial government is

## Action

## Context

1.10. Explore and recommend options for the role that a municipal development corporation could play to contribute to the goal of healthy, inclusive, complete communities through the responsible development of land.

*Strategy IA: Comprehensive, Integrated Response*  
*Strategy IB: Compact, Sustainable Development*  
*Strategy IC: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

providing some funding specifically for affordable housing on brownfield sites.

1.10. Across Canada and the U.S., arms-length public development corporations have achieved significant success toward the goal of building healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. Canadian examples can be found in North Vancouver (Lonsdale Quay Corporation), Medicine Hat, Saskatoon and Toronto (Toronto Community Housing).

In Ottawa, the federal government's Canada Lands Corporation is working with the City and the broader community to plan the redevelopment of the former Rockcliffe Canadian Forces Base. The goal is to develop a diverse neighbourhood which offers choice in housing, employment, commercial, institutional and leisure activities and prioritizes walking, cycling and transit over the automobile. Through a subsidiary entity, Canada Lands redevelops surplus federal government lands to meet key public policy objectives.

The primary role of public development corporations is to manage the development of publicly-owned sites to achieve public policy goals such as increased diversity, flexibility and sustainability in housing. Primary activities include:

- Acquisition and assembly of land to support the development of mixed use, inclusive neighbourhoods;
- Participation in the increase in property value that results from the development process and utilizing those profits to support public policy objectives (reinvestment);
- Filling the development gap by developing turn-key housing developments for agencies in the community with no source of or desire for development expertise;
- Undertaking fund-raising and manage development returns to maintain economic sustainability and independence.

The City of Ottawa has been working towards a land development function since 2005, and is currently working on the development of City-owned lands in Barrhaven's Longfields subdivision. The goal is to maximize the return on investment in those lands by undertaking the lot subdivision, servicing and phasing, while providing increased opportunities to meet public policy objectives, including increased access to development sites by small and mid-sized builders.

## Action

## Context

1.11. Develop municipal policies and initiatives encouraging an increase in accessible housing for persons with disabilities.

Ensure the inclusion of accessible units and visitable designs in City-sponsored housing programs and other initiatives.

Encourage private sector housing developers to develop housing that is accessible to people with a diversity of physical disabilities.

Advocate for federal and provincial government initiatives that support an increase in accessibility to the existing stock of housing.

*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*

**The City's Accessibility Advisory Committee has identified several requirements for visitable housing standards:**

- **Level or gently sloping approaches to dwellings;**
- **Level no-step access at entry door;**
- **Sufficiently wide doors (32"-36"/80-90cm) and corridors (36"/90cm) to accommodate a wheel chair;**
- **For multi-level units, a ground floor toilet facility for wheelchair users and the elderly and a ground floor family room and/or kitchen facility.**

1.11. The City will continue to promote increased accessibility in housing under the *City of Ottawa Municipal Accessibility Plan (COMAP)*. *COMAP* responds to the *2005 Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* which targets improvements in accessibility across public and private organizations over a period of 20 years. The City is participating in the development of accessibility standards under the legislation that will be used to measure achievements in improving accessibility.

The City will also encourage the development of accessible housing through the development approvals process. In addition to the physical accessibility of a housing unit, the location of housing is important to people with disabilities since many require units that are located close to health and social services. Physically accessible units need to be incorporated into existing communities as well as newly developing ones that have supporting health and social infrastructures.

The most inclusive, accessible form of housing is based on a 'universal design' approach which builds flex housing design features into a house to allow it to be easily changed over time as a household ages or as a housing unit changes occupancy. This might include, for example, reinforcement behind washroom walls to enable grab bars to be easily installed or 'roughed in' features to allow the easy creation of a secondary suite as a form of income generation.

Under its *Action Ottawa* affordable housing program, the City provides funding to ensure that five percent of units developed under the program are fully wheelchair accessible to enable the occupant to live independently. In addition, 100 percent of the units must meet visitable standards for accessibility to the maximum extent possible. Visitable housing standards are intended to create homes that are welcoming to individuals who use wheelchairs, walkers or have some other form of mobility impairment.

There are challenges in increasing accessibility in the existing stock of housing. CMHC's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program and its Home Adaptions for Seniors are important programs, particularly for lower income households. These programs are unstable, however, since they must be renewed annually and they remain under-funded compared to the number of households in need of support. The City will advocate for both federal and provincial initiatives that support an increase in accessibility to the existing stock of housing.

## Action

## Context

1.12. Work with the development industry, senior governments and other municipalities to promote energy efficient technologies in new development and redevelopment.

Encourage and enable the incorporation of green technologies in City housing programs and other housing initiatives.

*Strategy 1B: Compact, Sustainable Development*

1.12. The environmental impact resulting from the use of buildings in North America is well-documented, particularly in relation to energy consumption. Studies carried out by the U.S. Green Building Council as well as the Department of Natural Resources Canada have shown that they use 65 percent of total electricity generated, 36 percent of total energy consumed, twelve percent of potable water and forty percent of global material flow.

Initiatives that promote energy efficiencies in housing support a key aspect of the *Ottawa 20/20* vision – liveable communities that are environmentally healthy and sensitive.

Energy efficient technologies can also support the goal of increasing housing affordability by reducing operating costs of housing over the long-term. Under its Green Building Policy, the City expects to achieve a 25 percent reduction in the operating costs of new City buildings through an additional investment of only five percent of the cost of construction. The goal of the policy is to achieve a significant reduction in the environmental impact of new City buildings. Energy efficiencies in housing will also be encouraged in City housing development programs such as *Action Ottawa*.

1.13. Identify and implement initiatives to promote more effective use of the existing stock such as increased zoning flexibility, the promotion of greater physical accessibility and the promotion of energy efficiencies.

*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*  
*Strategy 1D: Existing Housing Stock*

1.13. The preceding actions are primarily targeted to new housing development. More concerted attention must also be paid to the existing stock of housing as this provides for the housing needs of the vast majority of Ottawa's population.

Part of the City's intensification strategy should include support for efforts to adapt the housing stock over time to reflect changing household needs and changing community priorities. The City's bylaw permitting secondary suites throughout Ottawa encourages the use of the existing housing stock to meet a number of objectives. It increases the supply of rental housing, contributes to more compact development and can provide an important source of income for more moderate income homeowners. It has been identified as one way to assist seniors on fixed incomes to age in place.

Several CMHC initiatives are targeted at the existing stock of housing such as its Residential Rehabilitation Assistance programs and its Home Adaptations for Seniors program. Senior governments should also provide assistance to homeowners and landlords to increase the energy efficiency of their properties such as the federal government's Energuide for

1.14. Develop a strategy to maximize use of the Federal Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program to meet local housing objectives.

*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*  
*Strategy 1D: Existing Housing Stock*

1.15. Investigate and recommend mechanisms to ensure the continued viability of the existing housing stock, including ways to promote the financial viability of rental housing, conversion and demolition policies and revitalization and renewal of the stock.

*Strategy 1C: Housing Diversity and Flexibility*  
*Strategy 1D: Existing Housing Stock*

Housing Retrofit Program. This is particularly important for lower income households who cannot afford the upgrades to achieve greater efficiencies. They are also unable to afford new housing that is built to more energy efficient standards and therefore miss out on savings to operating costs accrued by higher income households.

1.14. The federal government's Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP) has been effective over the years in helping people to retain and maintain their housing whether ownership or rental. Since 2000, the program has supported the rehabilitation or modification of over 1,000 housing units in Ottawa. RRAP is implemented in Ottawa through a private agency.

Traditionally, RRAP provides forgivable loans to bring properties up to standards. More recently, other program streams have supported renovations to increase physical accessibility or to add a secondary suite to a home. Funding is limited, however, and some applicants have experienced difficulty in accessing RRAP. A collaborative local strategy around RRAP could address these issues while providing more effective local coordination and integration of housing initiatives.

1.15. The existing housing stock provides the majority of low cost housing options to the residents of Ottawa. The City will ensure that there are policies in place to ensure the continued availability and viability of existing low cost housing options.

Purpose-built rental housing tends to provide a relatively secure form of tenure for lower income households, particularly in comparison to the secondary rental market (e.g. rented condos, duplexes) that can be converted back to ownership with relative ease. Despite its importance, the purpose-built rental stock has been declining over the past ten years primarily due to condo conversions combined with little new supply. Between 1995 and 2006, the purpose-built private rental housing stock declined by 2,073 units. It now stands at 68,178 rental housing units. The most recent census data (2001) suggests that the secondary rental housing market is housing a greater proportion of tenant households than in the past.

Since the demand for rental housing increasingly comes from lower income households, private sector landlords often have

limited ability to raise rents to continue to remain competitive in the private market. In addition, over the years, federal tax changes have eroded the investment climate for private rental housing. The conversion of rental housing to condominium provides a way for landlords/investors to inject capital into the stock and remain competitive.

Part of the investigation of this issue will include a review of the City's *Official Plan* policy on rental conversions. The policy restricts the conversion of rental housing to condominium unless the vacancy rate is at or above three percent for two years and the rents of the units in question are above average market rents. Despite the City's efforts to prevent the loss of the rental housing stock, portions of the stock, including rooming houses, have been lost to conversions over the past two years when vacancy rates rose above three percent. During 2006 (until the vacancy rate sunk below three percent), the City received applications for the conversion of 2,576 rental units. As of December 2006, conversions were draft approved or granted for 681 of these rental units. There is also some evidence that developers register new developments as condos from the start to get around the City's rental conversion policy, further limiting a new supply of purpose-built rental housing.

The demolition of existing housing units can also be part of the urban redevelopment process. The City will review its policy controlling demolitions to ensure that it more effectively implements Official Plan policies.

## Direction 2: Promoting and Preserving Affordable Housing

### Strategies:

- 2A. Promote an integrated, balanced approach to addressing housing needs through income policies and housing supply policies.
- 2B. Promote a positive environment to foster affordable housing development.
- 2C. Assemble and leverage resources to address the need for affordable housing.
- 2D. Preserve the existing affordable housing stock.

Action	Context
<p>2.1. Work with the federal and provincial governments to ensure sustained and sufficient funding for the development of housing affordable to low income households.</p> <p>Advocate for increased local flexibility and an equitable sharing of risks between levels of government in the delivery of the Affordable Housing Program.</p> <p><i>Strategy 2A: Integrated, Balanced Approach</i>  <i>Strategy 2B: Positive Environment</i>  <i>Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources</i></p>	<p>2.1. Through <i>Action Ottawa</i>, the City implements senior government affordable housing initiatives such as the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP). In 2004, the City established a target of 500 Action Ottawa units per year over the next ten years based on the funding participation of federal and provincial governments. Since that time, funding has been allocated to Ottawa for 586 units. It is clear that Ottawa is significantly behind on meeting its target. Although the City has maximized access to available federal-provincial funding for affordable housing, the lack of this funding means that the City has only met thirty percent of its target since 2004.</p> <p>The City will work towards ensuring that the lessons learned in delivering the AHP support more appropriate funding and the development of improved programs addressing housing needs. The City will continue to press for improvements such as increased local flexibility, complementary and supporting objectives and outcomes between program streams, sufficient funding to target low income housing needs and a more equitable sharing of risks in the delivery of the program.</p>
<p>2.2. Build community capacity to develop new affordable housing through training and the facilitation of partnerships.</p> <p>Improve the City's role as a centralized, local housing resource centre.</p> <p>Develop communication materials to</p>	<p>2.2. The City will continue to offer training and build partnerships between agencies interested in developing affordable housing. The City will also continue to promote communication on housing issues and improve awareness of the full array of programs and resources for affordable housing development in the community.</p> <p>One example of this is the need to raise awareness of City policies on affordable housing such as the OP affordable housing</p>



Action	Context
--------	---------

inform potential affordable housing developers about municipal policies and incentives available for affordable housing development

*Strategy 2B: Positive Environment*  
*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources*

policy and policies promoting infill construction, conversions of non-residential spaces and adaptive re-use of buildings. There are also incentives available for housing that meets the OP affordability targets. In the provision of incentives, the City maintains the principle that the level of municipal contribution must be matched by a corresponding level of affordability. In determining incentives for affordable housing development, the City takes into account the return on public investments in terms of achieving policy objectives such as long-term affordability.

2.3. Prepare and maintain an inventory of surplus government (municipal/provincial/federal) and school board land suitable for the development of affordable housing and other community infrastructure needs.

Seek to maintain surplus school board land as a community-owned asset.

*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources*

2.3. The City’s “housing first for land” policy commits the City to consider surplus municipal land for the development of affordable housing first. The City recognizes that, although it may lose the proceeds from selling surplus municipal land, the development of affordable housing offsets this loss since an increased supply of affordable housing saves costs in other City-funded social services (e.g. emergency shelter services).

In support of its “housing first for land” policy, the City is currently developing an inventory of surplus municipal land to enable more strategic decision-making with respect to matching parcels of land to future affordable housing development. This inventory will be enlarged to include potential school board, provincial government and federal government surplus land.

Other governments should develop similar policies so that these often key public sites are used to meet *Official Plan* and other policies for affordable housing and community infrastructure needs.

School sites are particularly crucial to the physical and social infrastructures of neighbourhoods. If school board sites are sold for development, the City will encourage the adoption of “affordable housing first” policies.

Action	Context
--------	---------

2.4. Determine the projected need for affordable housing as a benchmark for evaluating success in meeting this need.

Adopt guidelines for *Official Plan* (OP) affordable housing targets to encourage the development of housing that better responds to identified needs.

*Strategy 2B: Positive Environment*  
*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources*

2.4. The City’s projections for population and household growth are updated as new census data becomes available. Following this, the projected need for affordable housing is determined and used as a benchmark.

The City of Ottawa defines affordable housing as housing for which a low or moderate income household spends no more than thirty percent of income. The City’s *Official Plan* targets 25 percent of new development to be affordable housing.

Experience to date with this policy has shown that, without guidelines to implement the policy, it is possible that small units priced above the market average (for example bachelor units renting at over \$1,100 per month) could qualify as contributing to the OP target. In order to qualify as affordable housing, housing units should meet two conditions simultaneously – they should be both suitable in size and affordable to target households.

The City has developed guideline rents and purchase prices according to the number of bedrooms in a housing unit. These guidelines will be updated annually and used to monitor housing production each year in support of the OP. They will also assist in decision making regarding the level of City investment which may be available to developers that contribute to meeting the affordable housing targets.

**OP Affordable Housing Target Guidelines**

Target Incomes	30th percentile		40th percentile
	Rent	Price	Price
<b>Bachelor</b>	\$527	\$75,712	\$97,039
<b>1 Bedrm</b>	\$650	\$91,200	\$116,806
<b>2 Bedrm</b>	\$750	\$109,400	\$140,167
<b>3 Bedrm</b>	\$950	\$137,400	\$176,107
<b>4+ Bedrm</b>	\$1,150	\$166,900	\$213,844

By way of comparison, in 2006 the average price of a new single detached home price was \$371,900. The average price of a new townhouse was \$236,600. An average resale home (all types) cost \$257,481. The average resale price of a condo apartment in 2006 was \$203,629.

2.5. Create a development review tool to monitor how development or redevelopment contributes to achieving *Official Plan* policies and other City objectives for housing.

2.5. US municipalities such as Austin, Texas use “smart growth” review matrixes when assessing development applications. This approach allows new development proposals to be more easily assessed against the city’s smart growth objectives, and are used to support the city’s investment decisions. Development review tools can be used to:

Action	Context
--------	---------

Strategy 2A: *Integrated, Balanced Approach*  
 Strategy 2B: *Positive Environment*  
 Strategy 2D: *Existing Stock*

- Ensure that development conforms to municipal policies;
- Ensure that the policies themselves are well-coordinated;
- Determine access to any municipal investments, incentives and/or resources that may be available for such things as affordable housing development;
- Assist in monitoring and reporting on the achievement of municipal goals and targets such as the production of affordable housing.

A similar approach should be explored for Ottawa to help guide planning and investment decisions related to new development.

2.6. Establish and support ongoing forums and processes to promote increased communication and collaboration between partners in Ottawa’s housing system on the need to address the lack of affordable housing in the city. Ensure the inclusion of representatives from the private sector, the non-profit sector and all three levels of government.

Strategy 2A: *Integrated, Balanced Approach*  
 Strategy 2B: *Positive Environment*  
 Strategy 2C: *Assemble/Leverage Resources*  
 Strategy 2D: *Existing Stock*

2.6. The development and preservation of affordable housing involves a number of key partners, including the non-profit sector, the private sector and federal, provincial and municipal governments. As the representative of the Ottawa community, the City has a unique role to play in bringing these partners together to work towards affordable housing solutions in Ottawa.

The consultation sessions held throughout the development of the *City Housing Strategy* brought together most of the key community partners involved in housing. They demonstrated widespread interest in the city’s housing issues as well as commitment to developing solutions. Similarly, the development of the City’s *Official Plan* affordable housing policy involved representatives from municipal government, the private sector and the nonprofit housing sector. Ongoing forums and processes such as these will contribute significantly to increased understanding of housing needs and solutions across sectors and the coordination of efforts to meet housing needs.

2.7. Advocate to the provincial government for indexed increases to minimum wage and income support under Ontario Works (OW) and the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) to address the cost of rental housing in localities across the province.

Strategy 2A: *Integrated, Balanced Approach*  
 Strategy 2C: *Assemble/Leverage Resources*

2.7. Over the past ten years, although rents have kept pace with inflation, they have increased much faster than incomes at the lower end of the income continuum largely due to cuts and freezes to OW/ODSP and minimum wage. A household currently needs more than two minimum wage jobs to afford an average two bedroom apartment in Ottawa. As of December 2006, the Ontario Works shelter allowance for a single person is \$342 per month although the average bachelor apartment in Ottawa rents for \$628 per month. The average rent for a room in a rooming house is approximately \$450 per month.

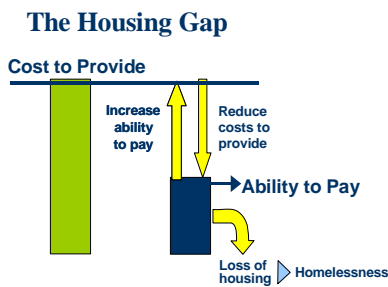
Both shelter allowances and minimum wages should be indexed

2.8. Advocate to the provincial government for increases in rent support and subsidy programs, including rent supplements paid to landlords and housing allowances paid directly to tenants to enable them to continue to afford their housing.

Strategy 2A: Integrated, Balanced Approach  
 Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources

2.8. There are two basic ways of subsidizing housing to make it more affordable to lower income households. Capital subsidies reduce the month to month costs of providing a housing unit, for example, by reducing long-term mortgage debt or lowering utility and other maintenance costs. Operating or income subsidies bridge the gap between what residents can afford to pay and the cost to provide the unit. These are typically provided through monthly rent supplements paid to landlords (including nonprofit and private landlords) or through housing allowances paid directly to residents.

Discussions on the merits of each approach have been ongoing since the early 1970s. Generally, governments have decided that long-term operating subsidy programs are too expensive in the long run and have instead switched to one-time capital grants for new affordable housing development in part because such programs do not require a long-term commitment of funding.



An effective housing system requires both capital and operating programs, plus improved income supports for lower-income households. These programs need to be targeted to where they work best. For example, while on-going operating subsidy programs or housing allowances can be more expensive than capital in the long run, they can be effective at helping to address short term needs, such as helping lower-income households stay in their homes when faced with a relatively short-term loss of income.

If these supports are not available, these households may lose their homes, often ending up in the emergency shelter system, with all the associated disruptions in employment, school and family life. A short term (six months to five years) housing allowance would help these households stay in their homes until the disruption to their incomes is resolved. This is an important part of housing loss prevention discussed in Action 3.6. If longer-term assistance is needed, moving to a lower cost home,

including social housing may be necessary.

As a supplement to the purpose-built social housing stock, the City also manages rent-geared-to-income (RGI) rent supplement programs, funded in part by the Province, that are paid directly to non-profit and for-profit landlords to provide RGI housing. Funding for these programs is capped. Additional funding would enable expansion of the RGI housing stock and help reduce the growing pressure on waiting lists.

2.9. Investigate and recommend options to mitigate the impact on lower income households of increasing housing costs associated with escalating property assessments and utility costs.

*Strategy 2A: Integrated, Balanced Approach*  
*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources*

2.9. Rising utility costs and property assessments increase the expense of operating housing. In recent years, both utility costs (e.g. gas, hydro) and property assessments have risen significantly in Ottawa with detrimental impacts, particularly on lower income households and people on fixed incomes, including much of our senior's population.

The Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC), an arms-length provincial government agency, is responsible for delivering assessment services across Ontario. Municipalities must use MPAC's assessment values when calculating property taxes. Since it is based on housing market fluctuations, this property assessment system tends to result in increased property taxes without necessarily an increase in municipal tax rates, services or household incomes and therefore a household's ability to pay for an increase. Recent provincial government changes to the property tax assessment system will do little to address these problems.

Housing costs have also risen with more market-based approaches to the provision of utilities such as gas and hydro. Market-based utilities can also mean greater uncertainty for households regarding their ability to pay for future housing costs. The provincial government has recently put emphasis on reducing energy consumption (e.g. Smart Meter initiative). There is also a shift toward developing more energy efficient housing. It is questionable, however, whether either of these will sufficiently alleviate the impact of rising costs on lower income households, particularly since lower income households cannot afford newly completed, more energy efficient housing.

In addition to working with the Ontario government to formulate initiatives that are more sensitive to lower income needs, the City will explore options to mitigate increasing operating costs in the context of housing loss prevention discussed in Action 3.6.

Action	Context
--------	---------

2.10. Explore opportunities for the acquisition and rehabilitation of existing buildings to maintain or increase the stock of affordable rental housing.

*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources*  
*Strategy 2D: Existing Stock*

2.10. As discussed in Action 1.14, the existing stock of mostly privately-owned rental housing is an important capital asset and tends to be a source of housing that is affordable to lower income households. According to Statistics Canada data, approximately 44,000 rental units in the city require repairs and 11,500 of these require major repairs. Since much of the older purpose-built rental housing stock can be relatively energy inefficient, it can also be costly to operate and puts pressure on the environment.

It is frequently more cost effective to maintain and renew the existing housing stock than build new housing. The City will investigate ways to support the rehabilitation of this stock while preserving affordability, including using capital program funds to help acquire and renovate existing units and convert them to permanent affordable rental housing.

2.11. Support the maintenance and retention of the social housing stock by ensuring that appropriate legislation and funding is in place to adequately support this significant community asset.

Transfer the cost of subsidizing social housing to the provincial government while maintaining administration and coordination functions at the local level.

*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources*  
*Strategy 2D: Existing Stock*

2.11. The 22,500 social housing units in Ottawa are crucial community assets that provide secure homes for low and moderate income households. 18,930 of these units are under City administration and receive City-funded subsidies to cover the difference between the cost to provide the unit and what low-income tenants can afford to pay.

Because subsidies are in effect an income support program, it is inappropriate to fund these costs from the property tax. They should be uploaded to the provincial government given its control over income taxes. However, local administration is an effective way of ensuring that a more systematic and complete set of policies and services are coordinated in the community and focused on supporting tenants in their homes.

The cost to provide social housing is roughly the same as similar units in the private rental market. However, social housing landlords are restricted in how they can generate revenues to cover those costs. For example, rents and subsidies are set by provincial legislation for most of the social housing stock.

A major concern with social housing is that sufficient funding is not available to fully maintain this housing stock. The City developed a Capital Planning Grant Program in 2004 to help social housing providers to conduct building condition assessments and develop long-term forecasts for capital replacements under its Capital Planning Grant Program. A Revolving Loan Fund will be established to assist housing providers that are facing under-resourced capital reserves.

**Action****Context**

2.12. Optimize the use of social housing by promoting a portfolio management approach to the stock.

*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources  
Strategy 2D: Existing Stock*

**The City currently oversees nine distinct funding programs with a multitude of variations on how specific projects are funded and administered. This limits the ability of social housing providers to effectively manage their housing portfolios across projects.**

2.13. Maximize the use of City-owned social housing assets by promoting the potential of the Ottawa Community Housing Corporation (OCHC) to renew, intensify or redevelop existing properties or develop new affordable housing.

*Strategy 2C: Assemble/Leverage Resources  
Strategy 2D: Existing Stock*

The City will also work to ensure that the viability of operating social housing and maintaining affordable rents will not be threatened with the expiry of operating agreements that have provided for financial assistance from government. The City will advocate to senior governments for adequate funding to address social housing capital needs and to make provisions to preserve social housing once mortgages are paid off.

2.12. The existing stock of social housing has traditionally been operated based on a program management approach. This approach is reflected in the provincial government's *Social Housing Reform Act*. It tends to treat individual projects differently based on the program under which they were funded.

In 2001, the provincial government downloaded the administration of social housing to municipal governments. This provides an opportunity for the City to shift towards a portfolio management approach which treats projects more consistently and considers the entire stock of social housing in Ottawa as providing a comprehensive, integrated response to the housing needs of lower income households.

Across the province, social housing service managers and housing sector organizations are exploring the possibility of modifying existing program operating agreements to allow for a portfolio management approach. This would enable, for example, housing providers and co-ops to manage costs and funding between programs to meet needs across their portfolios.

This City will work with the Service Manager Housing Network, the Ontario Non-profit Housing Association and the Cooperative Housing Federation of Canada to promote a portfolio management approach to social housing.

2.13. OCHC is an arms-length corporation of the City of Ottawa and the second largest social housing provider in Ontario. It provides approximately 14,500 rent-geared-to-income units across Ottawa for lower income households. The corporation is conducting a building condition assessment review that identifies options to renew its stock and potential opportunities for redevelopment. The City is funding a significant portion of this review under its Capital Planning Grant Program which it established for all housing providers under its administration.



## Direction 3: Meeting the Need for Supports to Housing

### Strategies:

- 3A. Take a leadership role in promoting the coordination of resources for housing support services and more integrated planning and delivery in the service system.
- 3B. Advocate for increased and sustained funding to increase the supply of both dedicated supportive housing and support services to housing throughout the community.
- 3C. Promote local initiatives that increase the supply of housing support services.
- 3D. Promote improved access to housing support services.

Action	Context
<p>3.1. In partnership with community agencies, advocate for sustained, coordinated and sufficient funding from the federal and provincial governments to increase the supply of housing support services, including supportive and transitional housing.</p> <p>Work with partners including service providers, nonprofit housing corporations and other local organizations to better integrate the planning and delivery of housing support services at the local level.</p> <p><i>Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System</i>  <i>Strategy 3B: Advocacy for Funding</i>  <i>Strategy 3C: Promoting Local Initiatives</i></p>	<p>3.1. This action addresses the need for increased funding from federal and provincial government for supports to housing. It also emphasizes the need to ensure that services are locally integrated and that planning occurs at the local level.</p> <p>Most housing support services in Ottawa are funded through two provincial ministries, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. Services targeted to ending and preventing homelessness have been supported by both provincial and federal funding, including the development of supportive housing, transitional housing and off-site support services such as housing loss prevention and street outreach initiatives. The federal government also funds settlement services for newcomers.</p> <p>In addition to current unmet need, the need for supports to housing is expected to increase as the population ages and as population growth reflects greater diversity. This includes the need for new supportive housing as well as community-based supports to prevent housing loss. In particular, the relative lack of supports to enable seniors to stay in their homes is a growing concern, in part because of the growing strain on Long Term and Acute Care facilities. There is also an identified lack of supportive and transitional housing in the city in addition to gaps in support services for people with mental health issues as well as people with addictions.</p> <p>The number of government Ministries involved in the area of supports to housing also requires an increased level of coordination and integration that is focused at the local level. For example, settlement services funded by the federal government should be better connected to partners in Ottawa's</p>

housing system such as social housing providers.

Over several years, the City has promoted the local coordination and integration of housing support services that address homelessness. The City continues to pursue greater integration as the provincially-designated service system manager for homelessness initiatives. The City is currently supporting the development of community leadership to advocate for more housing and support services. This was one of the recommendations of the most recent *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*.

The City also administers or provides many other support services, through its roles in public health, employment and financial assistance and community funding.

The City will advocate for appropriate federal and provincial responses to the need for supports to housing in partnership with community agencies and through the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, the Ontario Association of Nonprofit Homes and Services for Seniors and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.

3.2. Support capacity building in the community to foster the development and provision of supportive, transitional and group-home housing and related support services.

Explore and implement innovative local initiatives to promote the development and provision of supportive and transitional housing and community-based housing support services.

*Strategy 3C: Promoting Local Initiatives*

3.2. In addition to a coordinating role, the City directly promotes and supports community-based initiatives that increase the supply of dedicated supportive and transitional housing and group homes – housing with on-site support services and programs designed to assist residents to live stably in the community.

The City has also been offering development training and a series of workshops to help support service agencies understand the housing development process, find partners and develop funding models to facilitate the creation of new supportive housing. This training and other supports have been provided to the network of agencies dealing with developing housing for the former residents of the Rideau Regional Centre, a centre for persons with developmental disabilities which the provincial government is closing.

The City's direct support for local initiatives can lead to innovations in how we address the need for housing. For example, as part of its implementation of the *Community Action Plan on Homelessness*, the City has been investigating the potential conversion of a portion of the emergency shelter stock into supportive housing for individuals who are chronically

3.3. Investigate, identify and recommend solutions to gaps in meeting the need for supports to housing

*Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System*

homeless. The availability of operational funding to support this initiative will be the one of key factors behind its success. There are also planning implications that will need to be reviewed in relation to the City's promotion of initiatives to increase the supply of housing combined with supports, e.g. minimum separation distances for groups homes.

3.3. Knowledge of the extent of demand and supply for supports to housing in Ottawa is not complete. This is partly due to the scope of factors contributing to the need for supports to housing and the lack of coordination between organizations involved in addressing the need. The City will continue to determine the extent of unmet need and recommend solutions.

In doing so, it will build on a number of recent initiatives. In partnership with community agencies and senior governments, the City developed a *Service Inventory of Housing and Support Services for the Homeless and At Risk* that is now posted on a central, community-based website. The City also supported the development of sector plans for agencies delivering services for the homeless and at risk. These have provided a crucial starting point for identifying gaps.

In existing social housing communities, the City intends to investigate the need for support services for the increasing number of residents requiring support to live independently in the community. In the summer of 2007, the City will initiate a review of its local priority rules for social housing and the need for supports to housing that may result from prioritizing high need households on the social housing waiting list.

The City's Seniors Agenda is exploring this issue in relation to the need for housing options and support services for seniors.

3.4. Explore and promote a broader range of housing options and supports for seniors.

*Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System*  
*Strategy 3B: Advocacy for Funding*  
*Strategy 3C: Promoting Local Initiatives*  
*Strategy 3D: Improved Access to Services*

3.4. Ottawa's population of seniors is growing and the City has prioritized seniors' issues in its *Corporate Plan*. The City's Seniors Agenda is comprised of City-facilitated and community-led initiatives in a number of areas important to seniors. "Housing and Aging in Place" has been identified as one of three priorities by the community. The relative lack of supports to enable seniors to stay in their homes and communities is a growing concern, in part because of the growing strain on Long Term and Acute Care facilities.

A working group of community agencies and City staff has been

	<p>looking at different models for seniors' housing and ways to help seniors age in place. An important aspect of this involves exploring partnerships and funding opportunities with the provincial Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care and the Champlain Local Integrated Health Network. Increased coordination among community agencies will also be crucial in promoting a complete array of housing support services for seniors in neighbourhoods across the city.</p> <p>Monitoring of the affordability and supply of private retirement homes will also be important, given the provincial government's intention to establish regulations for this sector.</p>
<p>3.5. Work with local agencies such as support service organizations and nonprofit housing corporations to identify access points to housing and support services and how to improve access through better coordination.</p> <p>Facilitate access to housing and support services by promoting increased community awareness of housing options and support services.</p> <p><i>Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System</i> <i>Strategy 3D: Improved Access to Services</i></p>	<p>3.5. Reflecting the diversity of needs in the community, the provision of supports to housing involves a number of different agencies across the city. A more coordinated or centralized access and referral system would help clients to negotiate the array of available resources and supports. For example, in the area of homelessness prevention, the Housing Loss Prevention Network is a collaborative partnership of six agencies that provides a number of points of access to clients in a networked arrangement.</p> <p>Building on current and previous work, the City will promote increased coordination among agencies serving a diversity of groups in the city to provide support services. Households in need of supports as well as landlords should also be able to easily locate information on available options. The City can facilitate increased access to information through improving its role as a housing resource centre and supporting initiatives to develop central directories such as the Seniors' Housing Directory and the Directory of Ottawa Community Services.</p>
<p>3.6. Prevent housing loss by promoting increased coordination between agencies offering support to tenants and housing providers, such as private landlords and nonprofit housing corporations.</p> <p><i>Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System</i> <i>Strategy 3D: Improved Access to Services</i></p>	<p>3.6. Households can lose housing due to their inability to pay for the cost of housing (e.g. rent) and/or the lack of supports to help them stay in their homes. Many agencies that deliver housing support services intervene with landlords while assisting tenants in getting the supports they need. This prevents tenants from losing their housing and landlords are not put in the position of having to seek an eviction. The costs of evictions can be considerable for both tenants and landlords as well as the broader community. At the same, housing providers need to ensure the economic and social viability of housing communities. Better coordination and information sharing between housing providers and housing loss prevention agencies</p>

can reduce the number of evictions while maintaining the viability of housing communities.

In 2003, the City funded the creation of the Housing Loss Prevention Network to provide services that assist people to retain their housing. The City will work towards ensuring that housing providers are aware of how to access this network of supports for their tenants. This is particularly important for social housing communities facing an increased number of tenants with support needs. In addition to conducting an upcoming review of the support needs in social housing communities, the City has facilitated partnerships between social housing providers and transitional housing support agencies to help abused women and children connect with appropriate community supports.

Evictions can also be prevented through greater coordination between the provision of housing for households on social assistance and the City's delivery of Ontario Works/Ontario Disability Support Program (OW/ODSP). To this end, the Ottawa Community Housing Corporation and the City of Ottawa have recently evaluated their pilot partnership to establish early intervention to prevent the eviction of households receiving social assistance. The City will promote increased communication and coordination between municipal staff that deliver OW/ODSP and social housing providers through initiatives that build on the evaluation of the pilot project.

Action 2.8 highlights the role that short-term housing allowances could play in housing loss prevention by providing short-term housing allowances to help low-income households stay in their homes when faced with a relatively short-term loss of income. If these supports are not available, these households may lose their homes, often ending up in the emergency shelter system with all the associated disruptions in employment, school and family life.

3.7. Support the provision of health, housing and counselling services to assist homeless people in obtaining stable and appropriate housing.

*Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System*  
*Strategy 3B: Advocacy for Funding*  
*Strategy 3C: Promoting Local Initiatives*

3.7. Ottawa has been actively supporting "Housing First" strategies to deal with chronic homelessness. These strategies ensure that housing and services are in place to help homeless people gain and retain housing. Efforts towards improving resources for that approach are beginning to take hold in the broader community. In 2007, City Council directed staff to undertake a review of the costs of dealing with homelessness in the community, with the intent of supporting better funding and policies for current and enhanced "Housing First" strategies.

3.8. Ensure that emergency shelter services are available for those in need. Position shelters as points of access to housing and support services.

*Strategy 3A: Coordinated Service System*  
*Strategy 3C: Promoting Local Initiatives*  
*Strategy 3D: Improved Access to Services*

A crucial part of “Housing First” in Ottawa is the availability of mental health and addictions services. The 2005 *Community Action Plan on Homelessness* emphasized the need for more mental health care for the homeless as well as increased addiction services. The City will work to ensure that its integrated drug strategy will address the needs of Ottawa’s homeless population. It will also advocate to the Champlain Local Health Integration Network and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care for increased funding for mental health and addiction services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

3.8. Since 1999 when the first *Community Action Plan to End and Prevent Homelessness* was developed, Ottawa’s system of services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness has shifted away from crisis management to a focus on prevention. Despite this, families and individuals can still become homeless for a number of reasons. Emergency shelters act as essential safety nets in the event of homelessness and provide a variety of services, including meals, shelter and case management, ensuring that all clients are assessed and referred to the social and health services they need.

Emergency shelters are also a crucial point of access to housing and support services. For each emergency shelter in Ottawa, the City has funded housing support workers to assist people in finding housing and support services appropriate to their needs. Increased and sustained initiatives such as these are crucial to ensuring that individuals and families are housed as quickly as possible with the services they need to maintain their housing over the long-term. Increased coordination of housing support workers with support services providers and housing providers is a key part of the success of this system of services.

## VII. Implementing the Strategy and Monitoring Outcomes

---

The actions outlined in the preceding section comprise an implementation plan that will inform the *City Corporate Plan*. The *City Corporate Plan* outlines priority areas of focus for the City over a three-year period that moves us towards the achievement of Ottawa's 20/20 vision. It represents a framework for the City to consider in making decisions on policies, programs and services.

The City has a number of responsibilities in addressing housing issues across various branches. The implementation of the *City Housing Strategy* through the *City Corporate Plan* will ensure coordination across City departments because each of the City's departments create business plans based on the priorities established in the *Corporate Plan*.

The *City Housing Strategy* will also be implemented through the *Long Range Financial Plan* and the City's annual budget process. Departmental business plans are submitted to Council for deliberation and approval during the budget process.

A City-wide interdepartmental committee of senior staff will be established to oversee the implementation of the *City Housing Strategy*. The City's Housing Branch will take the lead in forming the committee. Part of the committee's work will include ensuring that City departments and branches are well-coordinated in implementing the *Strategy*.

The interdepartmental committee will also work to promote ongoing processes and forums that enable partners in Ottawa's housing system to work more closely together to better identify and meet common objectives. All partners will be made aware of available tools and resources for achieving community goals as well as their potential roles in doing so. This comprehensive housing strategy is an important step in promoting awareness. Tools and resources can include partnership opportunities, funding programs and planning-related tools such as alternative development standards or development fee relief.

All partners should also be consistently involved in policy and program development. This promotes more effective policies and programs and minimizes the potential for negative or contradictory outcomes. Ongoing communication and consultation with the broader



community of Ottawa is also important to ensure that actions reflect community priorities over time.

City Branch	Role in Housing
<b>Planning</b>	Develops land-use related policy and initiatives for housing in Ottawa, e.g. Official Plan, Community Design Plans, Zoning By-law. Implements housing policies through the development approvals process.
<b>Building Services</b>	Responsible for building permits and inspections in the city.
<b>Employment and Financial Assistance</b>	Administers income support and employment programs for low and moderate income households.
<b>Housing</b>	Administers emergency shelters, housing support services for the homeless/at risk, social housing and affordable housing.
<b>Public Health</b>	Responsible for delivering public health services and programs in a variety of settings including people's homes.
<b>Long Term Care</b>	Operates long-term care facilities for seniors who require nursing and on-site personal care.
<b>Cultural Services and Community Funding</b>	Administers funding for agencies that deliver health and social services.
<b>Bylaw Services</b>	Responsible for various City by-laws, including property standards and licensing.
<b>Real Property Asset Management</b>	Responsible for the acquisition, management and disposition of City assets such as buildings and land.

As the first step in implementing the *City Housing Strategy*, the membership of the interdepartmental housing committee and its terms of reference will be established. Public communication materials will be produced to widely communicate the City's strategy for addressing the housing needs of Ottawa's residents. A detailed work plan will be developed that outlines the critical path toward implementing the 36 actions contained in the *City Housing Strategy*. For each action, the work plan will identify key housing system partners to be engaged in implementation, lead roles and timelines for implementation. A report on the implementation of the 36 actions will be prepared annually.

The work plan will also specify the key deliverables for each action. This could include:

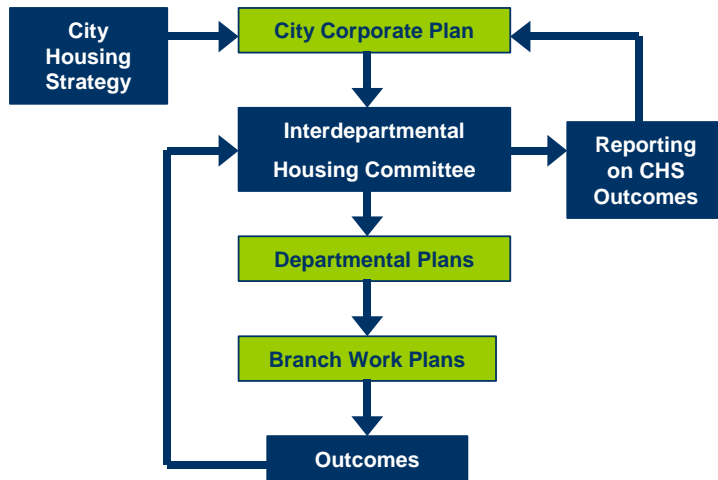
- Policies, bylaws or standards, e.g. policies on housing accessibility, energy efficiency in housing, the loss of rental housing or the development of brownfields, alternative development standards;
- Changes to legislation and supporting regulations and guidelines, e.g. Community Sustainability Plans, affordable housing requirements, the Social Housing Reform Act, OW/ODSP;
- New, increased or redirected resources, e.g. for increased funding and improved programs for housing rehabilitation, affordable housing and housing support services, guidelines for the provision of municipal fee relief or increased densities for inclusionary planning.
- New or improved processes, e.g. forums on Ottawa's housing system, the development of partnerships with community organizations to address seniors' housing needs, increased coordination of housing and support services.
- Capacity building, e.g. training, workshops and the provision of resource material.

Many deliverables will involve the development of recommendations and reports to City Council.

Finally, a crucial step in the implementation of the *City Housing Strategy* will be the confirmation of proposed measurable outcomes for the *Strategy* found in Appendix One. Targets will be developed for each outcome to better support reporting on success in achieving outcomes.

The City will report annually on progress towards meeting these outcomes. A full review of the *City Housing Strategy* will be conducted after five years, corresponding with the *Official Plan* review cycle and census data releases.

## CHS Implementation and Monitoring



Several existing reports currently support annual monitoring of housing outcomes, including: the City's *Annual Development Report* and a number of CMHC reports such as the annual *Rental Market Report Ottawa* and *Housing Now Ottawa*. Housing results are also monitored in corporate-wide initiatives such as the *Ontario Municipal Benchmarking Initiative* and the City's *Quarterly and Annual Reports*.

## VIII. Summary

---

Housing is more than just bricks and mortar, and how we build and maintain our housing has a significant impact on how well our communities function, now and in the future.

The *City Housing Strategy* is a framework for better understanding complex and interrelated housing issues. It is intended to help identify the gaps in the system and how we can work together to fill those gaps.

The City is only one stakeholder in Ottawa's housing system but it has a leadership role in promoting increased communication, collaboration and coordination among partners involved in housing, including all levels of government, private sector partners and non-profit community-based agencies. The goal is to promote a more comprehensive, integrated response to addressing Ottawa's housing needs.

The three Directions, the Strategies and the supporting Actions will form the basis for a more integrated response that deals with housing and communities more holistically. They are not however solutions in themselves but strategic focuses for the work that should be done over the next five years to improve our understanding of the system and our understanding of our respective roles in that system.

If the *City Housing Strategy* is successful, we will see communities that minimize their overall impact on the immediate and more global environment, are more socially inclusive with an array of housing options and supports and are more responsive to and supportive of broader economic and social development goals.

We will see more comprehensive public policies and programs that engage all levels of government in sustained approaches to dealing with housing issues.

We will better understand the fundamental role that housing plays in supporting individuals and families as well as the economic and social health of our communities.

We will have a housing system that includes the supports necessary to enable us to stay in our homes and communities as well as one that avoids the significant costs of not dealing with the need for housing up front.

And we will have a better, shared understanding of what needs to be done between all of the partners that make our housing system work to meet the needs of today and the future.

## **Evaluating Outcomes: A Proposed Framework for Measuring Success in Achieving the Objectives of the *City Housing Strategy***

Governments and other organizations have begun to recognize the need to improve understanding of the impact or *outcomes* of policies and initiatives. The City of Ottawa has prioritized the development of a framework that measures the City's performance in achieving the objectives set out in the *City Corporate Plan*.

Outcomes of the *City Housing Strategy* refer to the direct impact on the local community resulting from the implementation of Strategies and Actions. Indicators will be used in order to quantify outcomes. Indicators are statistical measures of success or failure in achieving objectives. They will enable us to better understand and evaluate progress in the housing system in achieving the objectives of the *City Housing Strategy*. While most indicators can be measured annually, data for some indicators is available less frequently. For example, data on core housing need is derived from census data which is collected every five years.

The objectives for each Direction of the *City Housing Strategy* are below. Each objective is followed by examples of indicators that the City is currently monitoring and will help to support the evaluation of outcomes of the *City Housing Strategy*. Many of the indicators are affected by all of the partners in Ottawa's housing system. For example, an increase in the supply of transitional and supportive housing depends on the provision of federal and provincial government funding and on municipal-community initiatives to build capacity for undertaking new development. An increased supply of affordable housing across the city is affected by the availability of federal, provincial and municipal funding, capacity among non-profit developers, provincial planning legislation requiring affordable housing, the availability of municipal incentives for affordable housing development and private sector take-up of incentives.

For most of the proposed indicators, targets will need to be developed to enable better assessment of success in achieving the objectives of the *City Housing Strategy*. An example of an existing target is the *Official Plan* target for affordable housing (25 percent of all new development). For a few of the indicators, standards will need to be developed or agreed upon before they can be measured appropriately – e.g. standards for achieving energy efficiencies in housing.

### **Direction One: Building Healthy, Inclusive, Sustainable Communities**

#### **Objectives:**

- A. Housing contributes to building a more compact urban geography and reduces impact on the environment.
- B. Diversity in the supply of housing is increased throughout the city to better meet the needs of all residents.

- C. Physical accessibility in housing is increased to better meet the needs of Ottawa's residents.
- D. The existing housing stock is maintained in good repair.

### **Evaluating Outcomes:**

- A. Urban geography and impact on the environment.
  - Housing starts by location as a percentage of total housing starts.
  - Number of new dwelling units built in target OP-designated areas as a percentage of total residential construction.
  - Number of housing starts by type (single, semi, townhouse, apartment) as a percentage of total number of housing starts.
  - Number of housing starts by type on City-owned sites as a percentage of total number of housing starts on City-owned sites.
  - Number of housing completions meeting defined standards for energy efficiency as a percentage of total number of housing completions.
  - Number of housing completions on City-owned sites meeting defined standard for energy efficiency as a percentage of total housing completions on City-owned sites.
  - Number of existing housing units modified through government programs for increasing energy efficiency in housing (e.g. Energuide) as a percentage of total housing stock.
- B. Housing diversity throughout the city.
  - Number of housing completions by area and type (single, semi, townhouse, apartment).
  - Number of housing completions by area and tenure (ownership vs. rental).
  - Number of rental housing completions on City-owned sites as a percentage of total housing completions on City-owned sites.
  - Number of conversions of rental housing units to condominium.
  - Number of purpose-built rental housing units in the city.
  - Number of rooming houses in the city.
  - Number of affordable housing completions by area (e.g. central, east, west, rural).
  - Number of affordable housing completions on City-owned sites as a percentage of total housing completions on City-owned sites.
  - Number of supportive housing completions on City-owned sites as a percentage of total number of supportive housing completions on City-owned sites.
- C. Availability of physically accessible housing.
  - Number of housing completions meeting defined standards for accessibility as a percentage of total number of housing completions.
  - Number of housing completions meeting defined standards for accessibility on City-owned sites as a percentage of total number of housing completions on City-owned sites.
  - Number of housing units meeting defined standards for accessibility and completed under government programs (e.g. Action Ottawa) as a percentage of the total number of housing units developed under government programs.
  - Number of existing housing units modified through government programs (e.g. RRAP) as a percentage of the total housing stock.



- D. Housing requiring repairs.
- Number of ownership and rental housing units requiring repairs as a percentage of the total housing stock.
  - Number of ownership and rental housing units requiring major repairs as a percentage of the total housing stock.
  - Number of housing units repaired through government programs (e.g. RRAP).

## **Direction Two: Promoting and Preserving Affordable Housing.**

### **Objectives:**

- E. The supply of housing is more affordable to low and moderate income households.
- F. Incomes of low income households are increased to better address housing costs in the city.
- G. The cost of operating housing does not exceed the financial capacity of low income households.
- H. The social housing stock is maintained as good quality housing affordable to low and moderate income households

### **Evaluating Outcomes:**

- E. Supply of affordable housing.
- Number of owner and renter households in core housing need as a percentage of the total population.
  - Number of affordable ownership housing units started/completed as a percentage of total housing starts/completions.
  - Number of affordable rental housing units started/completed as a percentage of total housing starts/completions.
  - Number of publicly-funded housing units affordable to low income households as a percentage of defined target (currently target of 500 per year).
  - Number of surplus publicly-owned sites made available for affordable housing as a percentage of all surplus publicly-owned sites.
  - Number of affordable ownership and rental housing completions on publicly-owned sites as a percentage of all housing completions on publicly-owned sites.
  - Number of affordable housing units completed through acquisition and rehabilitation as a percentage of all affordable housing units funded through government programs.
- F. Incomes compared to housing costs.
- Number of full-time minimum wage jobs required to rent an average two bedroom apartment in Ottawa without spending more than 30 percent of household income.
  - OW shelter allowance for a three-person household as a percentage of the average rent for a two bedroom apartment in Ottawa.

- ODSP shelter allowance for a single person as a percentage of the average rent for a bachelor apartment in Ottawa.
- Number of units/households receiving rents supplements/housing allowances as a percentage of number receiving rent supplements/housing allowances in previous years.

G. Incomes compared to operating costs.

- To be determined. Examples could include:
  - Utility costs as a percentage of incomes and available financial supports to mitigate increased utility costs.
  - Percentage increase in property assessments compared to percentage increase in incomes.

H. Social housing stock.

- Total number of social housing units.
- Capital and subsidy funding for social housing compared to previous years.
- Number of social housing providers accessing funds for capital replacements as a percentage of total housing providers.
- Total amount of City loans provided to social housing providers for capital replacements.
- Information from the City's Building Condition Assessment program on long-term capital needs of social housing to be included.

### **Direction Three: Meeting the Need for Supports to Housing.**

#### **Objectives:**

- I. Households in need of support have access to an increased supply of housing support services and/or transitional and supportive housing.
- J. Households at risk of losing housing are able to retain their housing.
- K. Households experiencing chronic homelessness are stably housed with appropriate support services.
- L. Emergency shelter services are available when needed.

#### **Evaluating Outcomes:**

- I. Access to housing support services and transitional and supportive housing.
  - Number of transitional and supportive housing units completed annually.
  - Number on waiting lists for supportive housing as a percentage of total number of supportive housing units.
  - Length of wait for supportive housing.
  - Number of households receiving housing search and stabilization services.

- Number of emergency shelters with housing search and stabilization services as a percentage of total number of emergency shelters.
  - Length of stay in emergency shelters.
  - Number of households receiving housing loss prevention services as a percentage of the total population.
- J. Housing retention of households at risk of losing their housing.
- Number of households receiving housing loss prevention services who retained housing after six months as a percentage of total number of households receiving housing loss prevention.
- K. Availability of housing with appropriate supports for individuals that experience chronic homelessness.
- Number of households who retained housing under 'Housing First' initiatives after six months as a percentage of total number of households housed under 'Housing First' programs.
- L. Availability of emergency shelter services compared to the need for shelter services.
- Occupied bed-nights as a percentage of total number of bed-nights available.