

Subject	Homelessness Community Plan – 2003 Update
Recommendations	<p>THAT the 2003 community plan update prepared by the Wellington and Guelph Housing Committee entitled “Community Plan to Address Homelessness in Guelph-Wellington (2003 Update)” be received; and</p> <p>THAT this report be used as a basis for reporting on the changing circumstances of homeless individuals in our community since 2002; and</p> <p>THAT this assessment report be used as a basis for requesting further funding from senior government sources addressing homelessness in Guelph; and</p> <p>THAT recognition and thanks be given to the Wellington & Guelph Housing Committee for co-coordinating the preparation of this plan update.</p>
Background	<p>A community plan to address homelessness in Guelph and Wellington County was prepared over 2001 and 2002. The Plan was prepared by representatives of a broad cross-section of the community involving service providers, faith communities, government agencies, funders and community members. The Plan served as the basis for receiving government funding in 2002 from the National and Provincial Homelessness Initiatives. The Plan’s findings were endorsed by Guelph City Council in June 2002 after a community public meeting held by the Wellington & Guelph Housing Committee.</p> <p>The attached report (see Appendix A) is a 2003 update of the Community Plan. The update was prepared by planning staff at the United Way Community Services of Guelph & Wellington, with co-ordination assistance by the Working Group on Housing and Homelessness. City planning staff assisted in the preparation of the plan update.</p> <p>The original Plan was endorsed by the Wellington & Guelph Housing Committee at their meeting on March 27, 2003.</p> <p>The purpose of the 2003 update has 3 primary objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- To communicate the on-going issues of homelessness in Guelph-Wellington;- To outline the current “assets and gaps” in housing and service provision for homeless individuals (or persons at-risk to homelessness) in the community. This review also serves as a ‘report card’ for the initial allocation of homelessness initiative dollars in 2002 by the federal & provincial governments;- To assess future priorities in homelessness matters. <p>For the purposes of the Plan, a homeless person is defined as</p>

May 14, 2003

Report #
03-40

Planning & Building Services

Prepared by:
Paul Kraehling,
Senior Policy
Planner

Approved by:

Craig Manley,
Manager of Policy
Planning

Jim Forbes,
Director of
Planning &
Building Services



“anyone without a permanent address, or adequate and suitable shelter.”

To prepare the Plan update, the community researchers used a variety of information benchmarking tools: review of existing reports on service needs/demands; focus group discussions, surveys to organizations involved with the continuum of community supports. The following existing community supports were evaluated for ‘assets’ and ‘gaps’ concerning homeless situations:

- Emergency shelters, transitional and non-profit/co-operative housing;
- Drop-in centres;
- Access to housing services;
- Meal and nutrition programs as well as food bank services;
- Furniture/appliance banks & sources
- Outreach services;
- Health and educational services
- Employment and pre-employment services;
- Life skills programs and child care supports;
- Moving costs and goods storage services;
- Eviction prevention.

What has changed with regards to community homelessness?

The following discussion highlights some of the changed circumstances regarding community homelessness since 2002:

- senior government funding for:
 - o Shelter upgrading for Wyndham House (transitional housing for youth);
 - o Equipment purchase and life skills training (eg. Cooking, shopping) at Chalmers United Church;
 - o Emergency shelter for up to 20 youth (Change Now) at Chalmers United Church;
 - o Emergency shelter spaces for 8 youth, adults and families (Matrix affordable Homes for the Disadvantaged);
 - o Emergency housing info referral service (Wellington/Dufferin Distress Centre);
 - o Weekend part-time service for outreach worker (Cdn. Mental Health Association);
 - o A limited trusteeship volunteer rent program (Family Counselling and Support Services).
- continued use of area motels for overflow of emergency shelter provision (approx. 100 cases per year).
- identification of the availability of temporary housing at the University of Guelph during the summer months.
- allocation of 100 units for affordable rental housing to Guelph and area as being identified as a high need priority area, ie. federal/provincial housing program
- increased number in persons requesting social housing, ie. 2,500 applicants (July 2001) to 2,800 applicants (December 2002), *source: Wellington & Guelph Housing Services*

May 14, 2003

Report #
03-40

**Planning &
Building Services**

Prepared by:
Paul Kraehling,
Senior Policy
Planner

Approved by:

Craig Manley,
Manager of Policy
Planning

Jim Forbes,
Director of
Planning &
Building Services



- need to improve service tracking mechanisms, ie. Implementation of Homeless Individuals & Families Information Systems (HIFIS) software.

The above comments are only a sampling of changed circumstances in the area over the past year. The reader should make reference to the report in Appendix A for a complete run-down on housing and support services available in the community.

Priorities of Action

The Community Plan - 2003 Update has outlined several changed priorities for action in our area. These are based on an assessment of the assets and gaps identified in the report. The following priorities are identified:

- 1) social housing (#5);
- 2) long term affordable rental housing (#5);
- 3) County of Wellington transportation access to emergency shelters in the City of Guelph (#2);
- 4) transitional housing – City of Guelph (#3);
- 5) transitional housing – County of Wellington (#4);
- 6) temporary housing (--);
- 7) access to housing programs (#6);
- 8) outreach & accessory services for individuals and households (#6);
- 9) emergency shelters - City of Guelph (#1);
- 10) advocacy recommendations on policy (#7);
- 11) data collection (#8);
- 12) supportive services (#9).

(#) = 2002 Community Plan priorities

This Plan Update should serve as a basis for further funding work to address the ‘need gaps’ in services and supports for homeless persons in Guelph and Wellington.

Alternatives

Do not support the homelessness plan update.

Implications

Will not be representative of the City’s existing & continued interest in assisting homelessness initiatives in the community. Also will be inconsistent with the continuum of housing services and supports advocated in the City’s 2002 Affordable Housing Action Plan.

Funding

Future requests for homelessness funding to the City will go through the normal budgeting processes in place. Plan will serve as a basis for requests to senior government levels for additional community homelessness funding.

May 14, 2003

Report # 03-40

Planning & Building Services

Prepared by:
Paul Kraehling,
Senior Policy
Planner

Approved by:

Craig Manley,
Manager of Policy
Planning

Jim Forbes,
Director of
Planning &
Building Services

