



Report To:	Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board
From:	Donna Moroso, Director of Integrated Social Services Rhonda McCauley, Social Housing Program Supervisor
Date:	June 25, 2015
Re:	10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan - Progress Report

Report

The purpose of this report is to provide the DSB Board and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) with a year one (1) update on the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan targets, objectives, and progress achieved by the DSB for the 2014 calendar year.

Background

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

The Province outlined basic requirements for the content:

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

Year One Report

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

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

#1 Understand and Respond to the District's Demographic

- Not actioned at this time

#2 Strong Emphasis on Seniors Required – Housing and Supports

- The Manitoulin-Sudbury DSB has approved the transition of two social housing buildings back to '[seniors-only](#)' from the existing building stock. The population and consultation data strongly demonstrated demand for this change.
- The DSB has approved a [Special Priority Policy](#) to make Seniors 65+ a priority on the waiting list when in receipt of an eligible application for Rent-Geared-to-Income.
- The Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) Program will continue to assist seniors and the ability to 'age at home'.

#3 Implement Strategies to Support Overlooked Populations – Aboriginals, Youth, and Individuals who are Homeless

- Haven House was a successful applicant for the Investment in Affordable Housing program and received funding for renovations and repairs to ensure that the shelter continues to operate unencumbered by infrastructure repairs. Haven House, located on Manitoulin Island, provides safe emergency accommodation to women and children in crisis.

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

- Procedures have been developed for the Investment in Affordable Housing Program using the Revolving Loan Fund (RLF) to create a Homelessness Prevention - Emergency Repair response. The Healthy Community Funds (HCF) are provided by the Integrated Social Services (ISS) department to respond to household financial crisis's but are not geared toward emergency repairs greater than approximately \$3,000. The Emergency Repair procedure uses RLF funds and follows the [Ontario Renovates Policy](#) but are fast tracked by accepting documentation in "good faith" for funding approval. The building inspection service is also fast tracked. The detailed documentation review occurs concurrently with the repair work to facilitate the most efficient and effective repair to prevent homelessness.

#5 Imperative Action on Improving Transportation Accessibility Required

- Not actioned at this time

#6 Employment and Training Opportunities

- The DSB has made efforts to inform local contractors of the Jobs for Youth program in order to facilitate future potential apprenticeships in the infrastructure repair industry. Further to this, we have advertised to local contractors, the IAH preference for contractors engaging in apprenticeship programs. Developing community capital in the construction industry will benefit social housing as the aging infrastructure will require continued maintenance and repairs.

#7 Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Housing

- The focus on energy efficiency and sustainable housing has taken a more global focus by implementing LED replacement for lighting where financially appropriate. The continued focus on Energy Star rated appliance replacements continued with 100% completion of the replacement of fridges that were not Star Rated. The Save-On Energy program provide 18 replacements in 2014.
- General repair of the social housing infrastructure continues to focus on the integrity of the building envelope. DSB tenders have been updated to specifically include the requirement to ensure that best sustainability and efficiency practices are followed. Incremental energy efficiency with every aspect of DSB housing has taken precedence over the previously considered Energy Plan. Energy consumption tracking continues with a renewed focus on tenant education on energy usage reduction.

#8 Innovation and Efficiency with Affordable Housing

- We continue to administer the very successful [Direct Shelter Subsidy Program](#) to assist with maintaining affordable accommodations to singles and families on Ontario Works with higher than Shelter Component costs.
- The Building Condition Assessment's (BCA) completed in 2011 were used for Capital Asset Management Plans and annual budgets through 2016. The DSB received Municipal Infrastructure Investment Initiative Funding for Asset Management software starting in 2013. The software has the capability to create updated BCA's which will continue to direct Capital Asset Planning for the future.
- The Ontario Renovates component of the Affordable Housing program was successful in that the funding was equitably distributed throughout the District serving clients who met the MMAH guidelines. The largest centers in the district were most heavily represented in the applications received and future programs will continue to be advertised throughout the district. There were more applicants than funding available and as such a significant waiting list remained following the end of the program. There was no appreciable decrease in the percent of dwellings requiring major repairs from 2006 through 2011 ([Canadian Mortgage & Housing Corporation Dwelling Condition](#)). This suggests that greater investment is required in government assisted home repair to improve the average condition of housing in Ontario.
- The approved [IAH - Home Ownership](#) program delivery in response to the Plan direction to explore home ownership programs. The first applications are expected to be considered in the second quarter of 2015 as development of the program, pre-screening software and associated documentation will be developed to ensure a transparent program.
- Alternative development options continue to be explored focusing in on affordability and options for supportive housing and working with the Local Health Integration Network and Community Care Access Centres in concert. The absence of significant federal and provincial funding for new development in rural Northern Ontario communities hampers the development potential.

#9 Increase Opportunities by Increasing Knowledge Dissemination

- Ongoing

#10 Spearhead Integrated Service Delivery

- The DSB is actively involved in several working groups that focus on innovative service delivery within our communities. While much of this work is focused on Seniors, the concepts are given consideration to the catchment as a whole

#11 Increased Advocacy Roles for Civic Leaders

- Ongoing

#12 Increase Program Evaluations

- Ongoing

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

- Ongoing

#14 Rationalizing the Social Housing Stock

- The DSB continues to review the current housing stock, and review opportunities to purpose-serve our communities.
- The DSB established an [Affordable Housing Policy](#) that is based on 80% of the Average Market Rent for a community. The DSB determines the Average Market Rent by community based on several factors, which include local rental market conditions, the annual Canada Mortgage and Housing Rental Market Survey and the allowable rents under the Affordable Housing Program as established by the MMAH. Based on the [Affordable Housing Policy-Issue Report](#), the DSB converted Woods Lane Apartments in Gore Bay to Affordable Housing designation effective January 1, 2014. This conversion will ensure continuation of supplement to the operational dollars required to maintain the building more efficiently. The Average Market Rents will be reviewed and updated on an annual basis as required.
- The Affordable Housing Rent policy, although not Rent-Geared-to-Income, allows persons to rent a unit within the DSB Housing portfolio at 80% of the average market rent as established by the DSB. This will result in more affordable rents for residents while allowing greater revenue return to operate the project.

Conclusion

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