



Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness and
Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy Update
Session 111: Queen's Park Check-in
2015 Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association Annual Conference
Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
October 16, 2015

Purpose

The purpose of this presentation is to provide an update on:

- i. The work of the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness
- ii. The consultations and work currently underway to update the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS)

Context

- The Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the 2014 Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) Mandate Letter direct the ministry to undertake a review of the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (LTAHS) by 2015-16 to reflect lessons learned and new research on best practices related to housing and homelessness.
- The PRS sets a bold, long-term goal of ending homelessness. It also commits the government to seek expert advice to develop new measures to track homelessness and create a plan to end it.
- In December 2014, MMAH, in collaboration with the Poverty Reduction Strategy Office established the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness ('the Panel').

Seeking Expert Advice on Homelessness

- In January 2015, the government established the Expert Advisory Panel on Homelessness (the Panel).
- The Panel was co-chaired by the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Deputy Premier, President of the Treasury Board, Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy.
- The Panel consisted of 14 members reflecting Ontario's geographic diversity and a wide range of experience and expertise in homelessness issues, including:
 - Lived experience of homelessness
 - Expertise in Aboriginal and youth homelessness
 - Technical expertise in homelessness-related data and measurement
 - Knowledge of delivery of homelessness programs and services

The Mandate of the Expert Panel

- The purpose of the Panel was to provide expert advice to the ministers on the following areas:
 - Defining homelessness in Ontario.
 - Prioritizing and setting targets to end homelessness in Ontario.
 - Measuring homelessness and collecting data to track progress.
 - Expanding the evidence base and building capacity to address homelessness

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Targeted Engagement with Additional Experts

- Recognizing that there are many experts with varying perspectives and experiences related to homelessness, the Panel engaged in broader discussions with 40 experts.
- The Panel heard from presenters representing sub-populations including youth, LGBTTTQ communities, Aboriginal peoples, women experiencing domestic violence and sexual exploitation, new immigrants, and people with mental health and additions challenges
- The Panel also heard from representatives of nine municipalities/regions responsible for the administration of housing and homelessness services at the local level

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LTAHS Update Goals

- The LTAHS Update represents the next stage of a long-term transformation of Ontario's system of housing and supports, focussing on three goals:
 1. Achieve better housing outcomes for more people by exploring changes to housing legislation, policies, and programs
 2. Create more affordable housing opportunities by using current and future investments, and by encouraging more investment by the private, co-operative, and non-profit sectors in affordable housing projects
 3. End and prevent homelessness by aligning with the goals set out in the 2014 Poverty Reduction Strategy, and by providing a range of tools to help people find and keep affordable housing
- MMAH is updating the LTAHS utilizing a whole of government approach, recognizing that housing is a core determinant of mental and physical health, and economic and social well-being

LTAHS Update: Vision and Themes

Every person has an affordable, suitable, and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family, and build strong communities

- Consultations launched on April 14, 2015 and concluded on July 3, 2015.
- A short consultation document was released as part of the consultation launch, with questions based on the four themes of the LTAHS Update.
- MMAH received over 110 stakeholder submissions during the consultation period and attended 38 meetings and consultation sessions.
- ONPHA was a key contributor to the consultation process.



LTAHS Stakeholder Consultations

- The Ministry launched consultations to inform the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy update on April 14, 2015. The launch included a consultation discussion document, a web page with opportunities for public comment, and a news release. Over 110 written submissions were received from stakeholders and the public.
- Ministry staff also engaged with stakeholders during the consultation period by leveraging existing forums and tables and by visiting stakeholder conferences and events.
 - Approximately 38 meetings in locations across the province took place.
 - ONPHA and many of its members were engaged as part of the process
- In addition to the consultations, MMAH held seven technical advisory tables on social housing
 - At these tables, Service Managers and housing providers stressed the need for greater flexibility in how municipalities and providers administer and make decisions related to their housing systems
- MMAH, along with partner ministries, also undertook two focus groups: one on performance measurement and one with housing providers, service managers, LHINs and support service agencies to discuss opportunities to improve supportive housing.

LTAHS Aboriginal Engagement

- The ministry undertook dedicated engagement with Aboriginal organizations to discuss ways to improve housing outcomes for Aboriginal peoples and to reduce Aboriginal people's experiences of homelessness.
- This included discussions with a broad range of Aboriginal organizations, including housing providers, provincial organizations and political-territorial organizations. For example, ministry representatives met with:
 - The Aboriginal housing providers table of the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
 - the Joint Working Group on Violence Against Aboriginal Women (JWG)
 - the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres (OFIFC), and
 - Chiefs of Ontario (COO)
- Ministry representatives also met with leaders from Grand Council Treaty Three in the Kenora and Fort Frances areas, as well as local Aboriginal health and social service organizations.

LTAAHS Update: Consultation Themes

- Analysis of the stakeholder submissions and public feedback received as part of the LTAAHS Update consultations resulted in a number of emerging key themes:
 - Need to increase the supply of affordable housing
 - Need to update/reform the current Rent-Geared-to-Income system
 - Make housing assistance portable, not tied to a specific housing unit
 - Streamline access to housing and support services as it is too complicated for clients
 - Expand access to support services so it is easily available to tenants receiving housing assistance
 - More money is needed to maintain and/or increase the supply of affordable housing
 - Service Managers and housing providers need better data
 - There is a need for a dedicated Aboriginal housing strategy
- MMAH has been working with ministries across government reviewing input and analyzing options.

Appendix A: Expert Panel Membership

Hon. Deb Matthews (Co-chair), Deputy Premier, President of Treasury Board and Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Hon. Ted McMeekin (Co-chair), Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

Chris Ballard, Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister Responsible for the Poverty Reduction Strategy

Pedro Barata, Vice President, Communications and Public Affairs, United Way Toronto & York Region

Maya Chacaby, Aboriginal Cultural Competency Education Coordinator, Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres

Michael Creek, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Working for Change

Dr. Cheryl Forchuk, Professor, Western University and Associate Director, Arthur Labatt Family School of Nursing

Dr. Stephen Gaetz, Professor, York University and Director, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness

Dr. Stephen Hwang, Physician, St. Michael's Hospital

Dr. Kwame McKenzie, CEO, Wellesley Institute and Medical Director, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health

Mike Nadeau, Commissioner Social Services, Sault Ste. Marie

Joe-Anne Priel, General Manager, Community and Emergency Services Department, City of Hamilton

Bruce Rivers, Executive Director, Covenant House

Aseefa Sarang, Executive Director, Across Boundaries

Michael Shapcott, Director, Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness

Brian Smith, Retired CEO, WoodGreen Community Services

Simone Thibault, Executive Director, Centretown Community Health Centre, Ottawa