



2017 ANNUAL
PROGRESS REPORT
ON HOMELESSNESS

Introduction

The Community Action Group on Homelessness is pleased to provide the 2017 Progress Report on Homelessness Fredericton. We are currently three years into our multi-year plan to end homelessness, The Road Home. We are well on our way, but to reach our goal, we have some heavy lifting ahead of us over the next two to three years.

Since the launch of The Road Home, our community has made significant systems changes and investments that help to ready the ground for a fully functioning systems approach to homelessness grounded in Housing First. These changes and investments include: increased federal investments directed toward the creation of intensive supports for chronically homeless individuals and the creation of an Emergency Housing Fund; a two-year increase in allocation of provincial rent subsidies expressly to support organized departures from homelessness; the adoption of a triage and assessment tool to help coordinate access to services; creation of a Fund to facilitate the sustainable construction of new Housing First housing options in our community; unprecedented collaboration and investment from private sector and community members in building a Housing First framework; heightened engagement and leadership at a municipal level; and encouraging partnerships across all three-levels of government around the common goals set out in The Road Home.

While we now have many of the elements necessary to end chronic homelessness, there are still dangerous gaps in our approach and an urgent need to mesh the existing elements together into a fully functioning system. The ultimate goal of The Road Home is to ensure that homelessness is no longer an enduring and persistent experience for anyone in our community. Beginning with ending chronic and episodic homelessness, with the long-term goal that no one in Fredericton will experience homelessness on the street or in emergency shelter for longer than 10 days before they have access to appropriate, permanent housing and the supports needed to maintain it.

One of the best indicators of how well we are doing in reaching this goal is to measure average duration of homelessness, length of shelter stays and how often a person re-enters the homeless system. Our community's most recent Point in Time Count showed that the median duration of homelessness reported by survey participants was 180 days, with an average duration of 199 days. This is a far cry from our goal of 10 days. However, in 2017 we did see an 18% reduction in average length of stay among men at the Fredericton Homeless Shelter Inc.. but a 7.5% increase among women. We also saw an 18% reduction in average number of re-admissions among men and a 26% reduction among women: both positive trends. Despite this positive trend, our adult homeless shelters are still dangerously close to capacity throughout the year. The men's and women's shelter both experienced approximately a 20% increase in occupancy rate last year: meaning more beds were typically used each night. With 1/5 households in extreme core housing need (paying more than 50% of their income on housing), we are at a great risk that these numbers will go up.

We have a long way to go to reach our goal; however, the collaborative work done by dedicated community groups, government partners and private citizens to date has readied the ground for significant changes in duration and frequency of homelessness. We hope to see this reality reflected in data in the coming years.



The Numbers

Data Collection & Limitations

There are a number of limitations to reporting on homelessness. Studies produce estimates and best guesses, usually based on the use of services (shelters, food banks, housing agencies, etc.). However, this only reflects a portion of the homeless population.

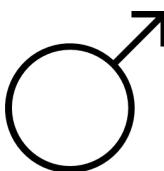
While data collection and measurement tools have improved significantly over time, it still remains that a great number of people who experience homelessness are often temporarily staying on couches, sleeping in their vehicles, rough sleeping outside or hidden in plain sight. Many of these individuals are outside of our shelter and/or homeless-serving system; as such, it is difficult to accurately reflect their numbers. Statistics Canada's 2014 General Social Survey (GSS) on Canadians' Safety revealed that approximately 8% of people over the age of 15 reported that they, at some point in their lives, had to temporarily live with family, friends, in their car, or anywhere else because they had nowhere else to live—a situation referred to as 'hidden' homelessness.

Despite these challenges and limitations, we are able to report on shelter usage in Fredericton. Thanks to data collection measures of local shelters and other service providers, we are able to contrast local statistics year to year and gain an understanding of certain trends. This report also relies on other data collection tools such as our local Point-in-Time Count and data from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and New Brunswick Social Development for our Housing Indicators, to provide context for local housing challenges. These indicators (e.g., the number of public housing units, number of people on the subsidized housing waiting list, social assistance rate, and median rent) continue to show the uphill climb individuals face in securing safe, affordable housing. While the numbers don't tell the whole story, they provide us with some valuable insight as to the challenges our community faces and the work that is left to be done.

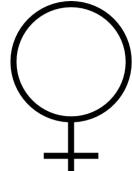
HOUSING INDICATORS FREDERICTON	2014	2015	2016	2017
# of people/families on waiting lists for rent subsidies (Fredericton region)	1,270	1,360	1,099	1,201
Market Rental Vacancy (Month of October)	5.8%	5.9%	4.4%	4.8%
Average market rental cost for 2 bedroom apartment (Month of October)	\$809	\$840	\$850	\$860
Average market rental cost for 1 bedroom apartment (Month of October)	\$677	\$690	\$697	\$710
Social Assistance Rate (Single Individual)	\$537	\$537	\$537	\$537
% of rental households in core housing need	20%	20%	24%	24%
% of rental households in extreme core housing need	16%	16%	20%	20%
# of affordable housing units created	0	0	32	34

244 adults stayed in shelters in 2017 in Fredericton

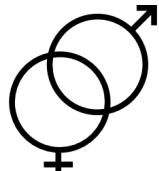
73%
male



25%
female



2%
other



St. John House

DATA FREDERICTON HOMELESS SHELTER	2016	2017
St John House (Men's Shelter)		
Number of shelter beds	25	25
Number of unique individuals who stayed at St John House	137	178
Total number of bed-nights used by those who stayed*	7,251	7,708
Total number of stays across the year**	729	809
Average length of stay at emergency shelter (in days)	53.57	44.05
Average number of admissions per client	5.56	4.52
Average nightly occupancy rate	79%	96%

*How many times beds were occupied across the year

**Some individuals return and have multiple stays

Notable Changes Year Over Year



Grace House

DATA FREDERICTON HOMELESS SHELTER	2016	2017
Grace House		
Number of shelter beds	10	10
Number of unique individuals who stayed at St John House	58	66
Total number of bed-nights used by those who stayed*	2,083	2,337
Total number of stays across the year**	345	177
Average length of stay at emergency shelter (in days)	29.91	32.15
Average number of admissions per client	5.95	4.42
Average nightly occupancy rate	57%	67%

*How many times beds were occupied across the year

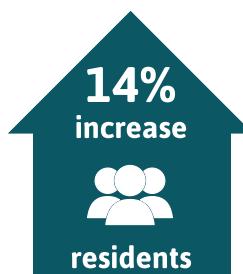
**Some individuals return and have multiple stays

In 2017 both Grace House and St John House saw significant increases in occupancy rates and shelter users. This means there were more people using shelter services compared to 2016 and fewer vacant beds available to those in need. The men's shelter operated at 96% overall capacity which means 150 days were spent at or above 100% capacity.

Spatial capacity is not the only capacity issues faced by shelters. The experience of homelessness is correlated with increased incidence of illness and injury, and over time health problems accumulate. As a result, people who are homeless typically have complex lives and complex needs. Shelters are faced with the challenge of trying to meet these needs with limited resources. This means shelters can 'reach capacity' and still have beds open when they have several extremely high needs individuals on board.

According to the Canadian Institute for Health Information (CIHI) approximately 30% of those who are homeless suffer from mental illness; however, the number of individuals living in a shelter at any given time can be much greater. The Fredericton Homeless Shelters reports that approximately 70% of shelter users in 2017 experienced compromised mental health: ranging from anxiety and depression to psychosis and severe personality disorders. A great number of people also have concurrent disorders. This means that, in addition to a mental health problem, such as a diagnosed illness, an individual has a second condition, such as an underlying addiction or chronic health issue. Studies suggest that individuals with the concurrent disorder are more likely to experience homelessness: this trend is reflected in Fredericton where many shelter users also live with degrees of dementia, early set Alzheimer's and general health issues such as diabetes, high blood pressure.

Notable Changes Year Over Year

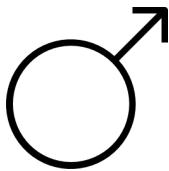


35

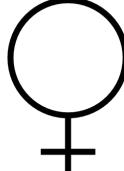
youth stayed in
transitional
housing in 2017
in Fredericton



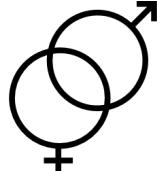
43%
male



49%
female



8%
other



Chrysalis House

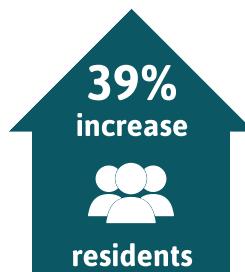
DATA YOUTH IN TRANSITION Chrysalis House (Youth Shelter)	2014	2015	2016	2017
Number of unique individuals who stayed at Chrysalis House	39	28	46	35
Number of re-admissions*	8	9	16	10
Total occupancy rate	77%	66.5%	71%	79%
Average length of stay (in days)	89 92 (f) 86 (m) 10 (o)	84 117 (f) 49 (m)	64 84 (f) 44 (m) 69 (o)	89** 134 (f) 49 (m) 83 (o)
Gender distribution***	79% (f) 18% (m) 3% (o)	57% (f) 43% (m)	52% (f) 47% (m) 2% (o)	49% (f) 43% (m) 8% (o)

*This data includes those people who are admitted more than once during the year

** 2017's data reflects long-term residents and includes all dates into 2018 (April 16)

*** O indicates those who do not identify as cis-gender male or female

Notable Changes Year Over Year



Youth Homelessness

Youth homelessness in Canada is a serious and pervasive issue. Although the problem at times lacks visibility, statistics recount that over the course of the year the number of young people who wind up homeless in Canada is at least 35,000 and on any given night, there may be 6000 homeless youth. Many of these youth rely on housing services on a temporary or long-term basis; one in five shelter users are youth. The situation here in New Brunswick and within Fredericton is no anomaly. Youth experiencing housing crisis need and actively seek out services.

Since March 2002 Youth in Transition has assisted 296 youth over 436 stays. Since 2007, our average overall occupancy at Chrysalis House has remained 75%. The impact of housing instability for youth is dire. Only one in three youth experiencing homelessness in Canada graduate high school. More than half of homeless youth have been in jail, a youth detention centre or prison. "When young people come to depend on emergency services without access to permanent and age-appropriate housing and necessary supports, this leads to declining health and well-being and most certainly to an uncertain future." (Gaetz, Youth, 2014)



The problem is pervasive; the need is there, as is the desire to access services. The causes of youth homelessness include but are not limited to: domestic violence, mental health, addictions, abuse (physical, sexual, emotional, neglect), poverty, underemployment, lack of housing affordability, and system failures (child protection, health & mental health and corrections). (Gaetz, Coming Age, 2014)

“Failure to prevent our youth from entering into homelessness and/or early intervention will most certainly lead to yet another generation of individuals trapped in chronic and episodic homelessness.”

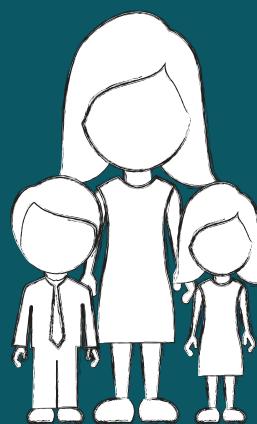


159 parents and children stayed in shelters or second stage housing in 2017 in Fredericton

Transition House & Liberty Lane

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (VAW) & SECOND STAGE HOUSING	2016	2017
Number of women who stayed at a VAW shelter or second stage housing	84	104
Number of children who stayed at a VAW shelter or second stage housing	55	55

85
women



55
children

stayed in transitional housing in Fredericton in 2017.

BEHIND THE NUMBERS



Finding the Forgotten

Written by: Kari Hirst

A lonely house stands on a quiet street corner; dilapidated and dejected, holding on to none of its former beauty. It stands completely abandoned; left alone to its own destruction; much like those who have chosen to make their homes within its walls; finding some small sense of security inside the crumbling filthy structure.

Just like the dwelling they inhabit, the people inside have been completely abandoned; left broken and dejected, first by their world and then by themselves as their source of comfort becomes their all-consuming commander, and all they are is torn away by this relentless new master. Their will is no longer their own, and their bodies become beaten and battered under the heavy yolk of their heartless boss.

People look at them with disgust in their eyes. They call them, "Junkies, crack heads, worthless, loser." It doesn't matter what they say, no one could hate them any more than they already hate themselves. These uncaring people with their cruel words don't understand that those they beat down were once just like them; they refuse to look underneath. They can't comprehend that some are further trapped by elements outside their addiction.

For some, it might be a sexual predator who has gotten them hooked to fund his own habit. Still, others are imprisoned by their own minds; trapped on an emotional roller coaster that lifts them up and drops them down way faster than they can possibly keep up with. Others live in a world of delusions that are so vivid, with voices that are so real that they can't escape them, and therefore they are compelled to follow them even into their own demise. All the while, others are crippled by such intense fear that every corner of their world becomes a corner of uncertainty. They find their solace in whatever relief comes through the door, and soon they can't imagine getting through the day without their new BFF.

"Between Valentine's Day and mid-April 2018, 5 of us died; 1 from complications due to alcoholism; 1 from an overdose; 1 from a heart attack; and 2 by suicide."

I know situations like this can be hard to understand for the average person. But I do understand because I have been there, done that. We are equals! These are the hidden homeless; these are my people, and far too many of them die in their despair; broken and defeated.

I can just imagine how heart-breaking these stats are for you to read. Now I ask you to imagine how devastated we feel because these aren't stats for us; they're real people, who lived lives and touched lives; these are our friends, and they were taken far too soon.



"Just like the dwelling they inhabit, the people inside have been completely abandoned; left broken and dejected"

I can remember making the trek each morning across the bridge to check on that abandoned house and my friends who had come to call it home. I remember worrying that I would find it burnt to the ground. I remember the relief that flooded me when I saw that it had not, and then my breath catching as I climbed the rickety stair case, hoping beyond hope that everyone inside would be alive and well. Fortunately, I didn't lose any that summer. However, I did lose contact with a few of them when they boarded the house up; abandoning them once again to find whatever safe haven they could find in an increasingly chaotic world. And all that's left for me to do is wish that they find peace and healing.

I remember someone asking me why I wasted my time on those people. I said, "first of all it's not been a waste." One of the boys said he was thinking of ending it before he met me because he was convinced no one cared, and then when I came along he had someone who cared and that was a game changer for him.

And as long as we can keep them alive there is still hope, even if they can't see it yet.

" One of the boys said he was thinking of ending it before he met me because he was convinced no one cared"

This is the beauty of peer support. We can connect with our people at a deeper level, using the healing power of empathy. We can find the broken and defeated that no one else can find because we are one of them, and they trust us enough to invite us in.

" We can connect with those who have lost all faith and both themselves and in the system set up to serve them."

We can connect with those who have lost all faith in both themselves and in the system set up to serve them. We can be there in the wee hours when everyone else has gone home and the pain of living becomes too much.

These are the reasons why I believe that effective housing first systems should value paid Peer Support Workers as part of their teams. It's because they understand nothing can be built for us without including us every step of the way.



Ending Chronic Homelessness

The Supportive Housing Network

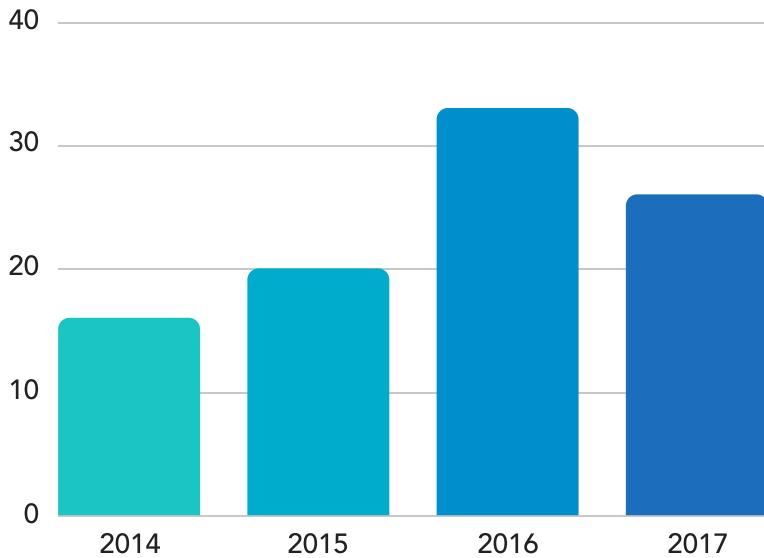


In the spring of 2010, the Housing Division of the Department of Social Development, in partnership with the Fredericton Homeless Shelters Inc., hosted a meeting with interested community stakeholders. The goal was to work collaboratively with the community partners to provide the support that emergency shelter clients needed while they transitioned into their own affordable housing units.

Initial meetings determined what basic necessities, along with what on-going short-term support, should be provided to ensure a successful transition and sustainable tenancy. An ad-hoc working group was formed and it was named The Supportive Housing Network (SUN) Committee.



Annual Sun Moves



Eight years later, SUN has grown into a collaboration between over a dozen homeless serving non-profit organizations; faith-based groups; provincial government partners from Horizon Health and Department of Social Development; Fredericton City Police Neighborhood Action Team; and private sector supporters.

Since its formation, SUN has helped re-house 160 people through the collective efforts of its members and the generosity of the community.

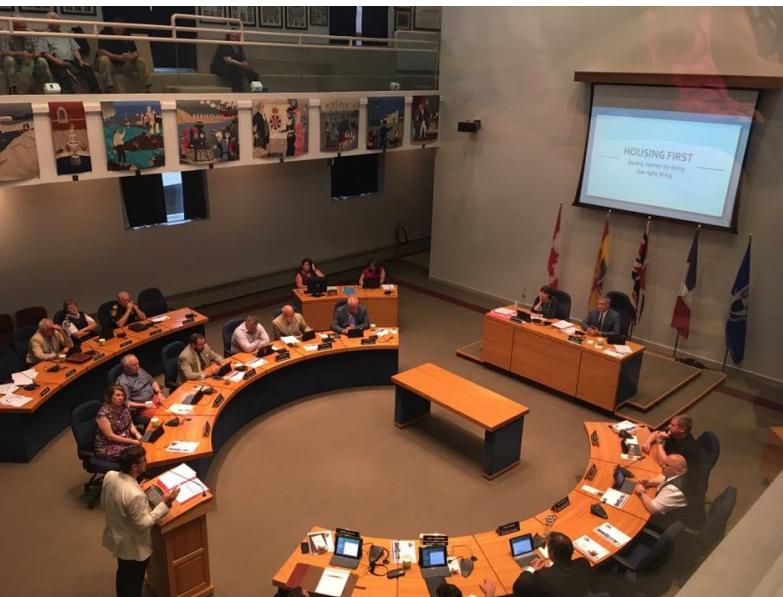


Fredericton Housing First Fund

The Fredericton Housing First Fund (FHFF) is a unique trust agreement between the United Way of Central New Brunswick and the Fredericton Community Foundation created to directly support the vision set out in *The Road Home: A Plan to End Homelessness Fredericton*. The Fredericton Housing First Fund has been designed to provide capital for the construction of Housing First developments and to serve as an enduring endowment that will support their long-term, sustainable maintenance.

The goal of the Fund is to raise \$1.4-million to enable the creation of 40 new Housing First units in greater Fredericton. Raised funds will be used to leverage provincial and federal investments (40% Housing First Fund combine with 60% from federal and provincial contributions) to create a model of sustainability.

The FHFF was born from the efforts of the Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness, which was initially formed to examine what role our municipal government can play to help achieve the goals set out in *The Road Home*.



However, Task Force members reached well beyond their initial mandate and created long-lasting partnerships and initiatives that will continue to benefit our community long after the completion of the Task Force. One such long-lasting and independent byproduct was the creation of the Fredericton Housing First Fund.

In the few short months since the inception of the Fund in 2017, \$999,376 has been raised to date. Remarkably, this total has been raised across 21 donors, each contributing a minimum of \$35,692 (with some making multiple contributions). Their collective generosity will kick-start the construction of 28 Housing First apartments throughout the city

28 OF 40 UNITS FUNDED



 = 1 contribution of \$35,692
 = Housing First units yet to be funded

SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR COMMUNITY DONORS:

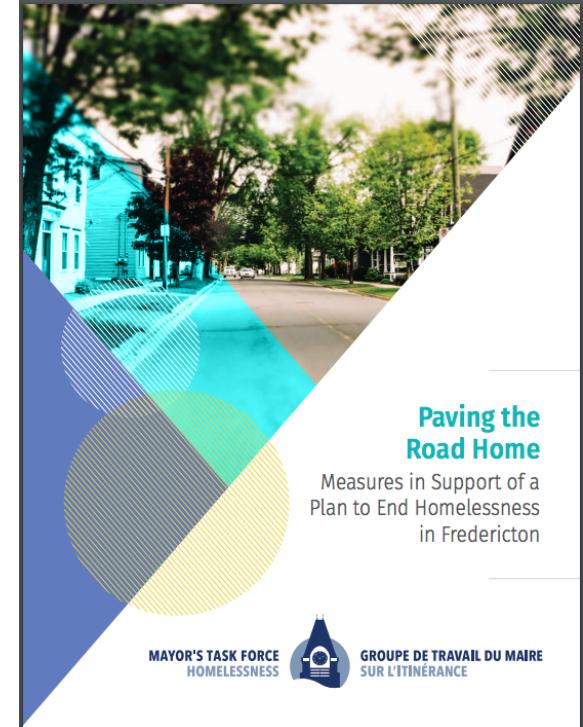
- Isaac's Way Restaurant
- The J.T. Clark Family Foundation Inc
- The J.T. Clark Family Foundation Inc.
- Jim & Beth Clark
- David & Elizabeth Wilson Family Foundation
- Grimross Brewing Corp. Stephen Dixon & Dawn Vincent-Dixon
- John & Pam Clark
- John & Pam Clark
- Bird Holdings Ltd
- René Blanchard and Lori Northrup
- Colpitts Development
- Anonymous
- Anonymous
- Springhill Group of Companies
- D.W. Clark Services P.C. Inc
- Crosspoint Church
- Crosspoint Church
- Brian Jones
- Lesley Steele
- Marcel LeBrun
- City of Fredericton
- City of Fredericton
- City of Fredericton
- Teed Saunders Doyle-Bird Holdings Ltd
- Richard and Michele McGuigan
- Bringloe Feeney LLP
- Tim Clark

The Mayor's Task Force on Homelessness

In November 2016, Mayor Mike O'Brien commissioned the Task Force on Homelessness, bringing together community leaders in a number of disciplines including architects, designers, builders, private, non-profit and public-sector property developers, non-profit associations, those with lived experience, apartment owners, and academics. The task force's mandate was to recommend to Council immediate and long-term actions within the City's jurisdiction and ability to help advance the goals of The Road Home, the strategic plan to end chronic homelessness in Fredericton.

In June of 2017, the task force delivered its final report, Paving the Road Home, which included 18 evidence-based recommendations for City Council to consider as a way to meet goals set in The Road Home.

- Reducing parking requirements for Housing First construction where appropriate to decrease development cost and increase the land available for purposes that better meet community needs.
- Donating or leasing surplus city-owned remnant properties where appropriate for Housing First developments.
- Amending the definition of "assisted living" to include "permanent supportive/supported housing" to avoid the necessity of rezoning and allow churches to more easily build Housing First developments on their own land.
- Providing Housing First participants with subsidized bus passes to increase access to health and social supports and opportunities for education and employment.
- Conducting an analysis of best practices and regulatory structures for rooming houses.
- Raising awareness about the broad community benefits of affordable housing and Housing First through a 'Yes in My Backyard' education campaign.
- Exploring the viability of creating an Affordable Housing Land Trust under the municipal structure.
- Conducting a process improvement strategy to make it easier for non-profits to participate in affordable housing development.



Since the release of the recommendations, Council voted to support a significant contribution to the Fredericton Housing First Fund (\$107,000 across three years) and have played a key role in leveraging provincial and federal partnerships in support of building Housing First solutions in Fredericton.

City Council and Staff also worked to prioritize recommendations for more immediate deliberation. City Staff recommended the following items for prioritization:

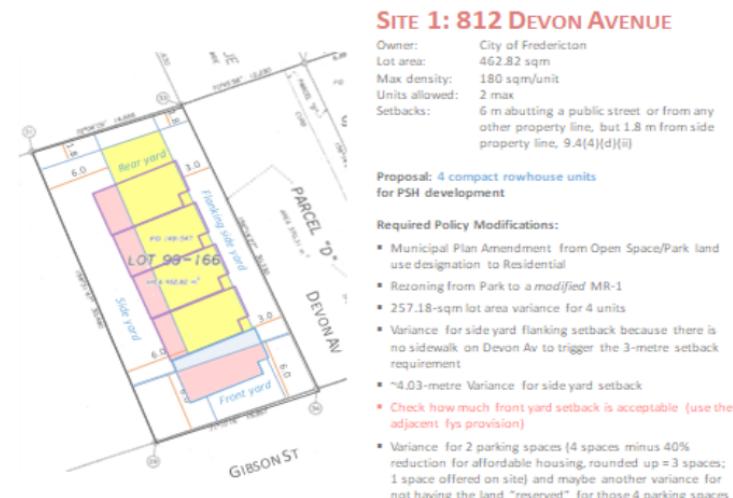
Donate, discount or lease surplus City-owned remnant properties for Housing First units.

Waive or reduce permit fees and water/sewer hook-up fees for HF projects.

Ensure that growth planning for Fredericton's high-density areas and centrally-located neighbourhoods include plans for affordable housing through density allowances.

Subsidize bus passes for recent Support Network Committee (SUN) clients actively working with the Homelessness Partnering Strategy and Social Development Intensive Case Management supports.

Analyze best practices on rooming houses and present recommendations to Council for consideration and approval.



HOW YOU CAN HELP END CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS

A growing number of communities across North America have proven that it is possible to end chronic homelessness and to reduce the overall length of homelessness for others. These communities have shown us that is is possible and that it is more cost-effective than the status quo.

Fredericton can be a community where homelessness is no longer a persistent and enduring experience for anyone but it will take your help.

Where do you fit into the work of ending homelessness? One way to help understand it is to use an analogy. Imagine that each person who ends up on streets, on couches or in shelters is instead struggling in a raging river: that river is homelessness.

Now imagine that you see someone drowning in the river and you run down to the banks and save them. As soon as you help them climb out you realize other people are also drowning the river. Now you need help to help rescue the others. You call to your friends, people walking by and anyone who will listen to come help. You all work together and get better at saving people from drowning. Over time, you have warm blankets, hot soup and dry clothes to offer the people you have rescued.

Eventually, you realize you have rescued some of these same folks before. In fact, half are people you have already rescued multiple times. Why are they ending up in the river again and again?

You think you should send some of your team upriver to figure out what's going on and do something to help. But you are faced with a horrible dilemma. If some of your rescue team goes upstream, you will not have enough people downstream to save people from drowning. People will get past you and possibly die.

Our homeless-serving system faces a similar dilemma. Upstream solutions do exist. We now know that providing rent/geared-to income along with intensive mobile supports reduces incidences of re-entry to the homeless system, saves lives and is more cost-effective than only providing emergency services. However, how do we send resources upstream to do this when we are already at capacity pulling people out downstream. We just don't have enough people or resources to send upstream but if we did: this impact could be tremendous.

The facts show that 15% of people who experience homelessness are folks who have been trapped in this cycle for a long time. The longer a person remains on the streets or in a state of crisis (as homelessness is); the more likely they are to live with increasingly complex side effects, dangerous coping mechanisms and compromised health. As a result, this 15% (chronic and episodic homelessness) rely heavily on emergency services like hospitals, shelters, police and ambulance. In fact, this 15% rely on 50% of all the services used in the homeless system.

Getting back to our analogy, chronic and episodic homelessness (that 15%) ARE half the people in the river. Meanwhile, our shelters, soup kitchens, food banks and outreach programs, etc. are like the people down by the river pulling folks out. They are the emergency services. If we are able to prevent that 15% from returning to homelessness (or the river) there will be 50% fewer people in the river.

The dilemma is how do we get supports upstream without losing downstream supports? Downstream supports are essential as we cannot prevent 100% of people from falling into the river or homelessness and, when they do, we need emergency services to support them. The way forward is to grow our efforts for the next three years so we can do both!

Here is where you come in: we need everyone down by the river helping out so we can send supports upstream and stem the flow of people into homelessness. If you are not down by the river, join us. If you are already there, we ask that you commit to growing your efforts.

Communities that have successfully ended chronic and episodic homelessness have adopted a formula that is one part upstream, one part downstream, and one part advocacy. This 1/3 + 1/3 + 1/3 approach is a short-term commitment to creating significant long-term change.

So please, over the next three years, commit to supporting emergency services in the homeless system, invest financially or through your labour in upstream efforts and advocate to help grow this support. Ending homelessness is only possible through the collective efforts of many. There is room down by the river... join us.

1/3

UPSTREAM



- Support the building of new affordable housing
- Donate to the united way of central NB to support Housing First services
- Help efforts to move homeless into their own homes
- Donate time and household items to the sun committee to help move people out of homelessness

1/3

ADVOCACY



- Let your elected officials know that ending homelessness is important to you
- Advocate for inclusion of housing first principles in provincial housing strategy
- Encourage your friends, family, workplaces to get involved

1/3

DOWNTREAM



- Donate funds to emergency shelters
- Volunteer in soup kitchens & drop-ins
- Ask homeless-serving agencies how they need help
 - *Bus tickets?
 - *Clothes?
 - *Food items?



Acknowledgements

The Annual Progress Report on Homelessness is made possible by many people. Sincere thanks go to all the community members who shared their stories and to the local organizations who contributed their annual statistics, stories, photos and information.

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This report is available for download at www.roadhomefredericton.com

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