

Housing & Homelessness Plan Update Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario

2019 Addendum

Prepared For:



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1. Executive Summary

OrgCode Consulting, Inc. has been honoured to assist the District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board (DSSMSSAB) in the development, implementation and review of its *10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan*, as is required by the provincial *Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy* (LTAHS) and the *Housing Services Act (2011)*. As the designated Service Manager, the DSSMSSAB is responsible for the administration of a broad range of provincially legislated social housing, affordable housing and homelessness programming. In 2016, the Ministry of Housing released the *Policy Statement: Service Manager's Housing and Homelessness Plans* by the Ministry of Housing to update the 2011 *Ontario Housing Policy Statement*. To ensure that the DSSMSSAB's Housing and Homelessness Plan aligns with the revised provincial expectations, the District of Sault Ste. Marie hired OrgCode Consulting to review the current plan with particular focus on compliance and required updates/revisions. The review of the Housing and Homelessness Plan began in the early months of 2019 and the following report presents OrgCode's findings.

Communities achieving success in preventing and ending homelessness successfully align available finite resources differently and innovatively, leverage existing resources and partnerships and execute the proven strategies to end chronic homelessness. Regardless of the ongoing shortage of affordable and social housing resources throughout the Province of Ontario and the challenges inherent in ending chronic homelessness, Sault Ste. Marie remains unrelentingly focused on targeting available funds and opportunities to increase access to affordable and supported housing options locally while collaborating with partners and residents to ensure that homelessness remains rare, brief and non-recurring.

Throughout Ontario, access to finite social housing units and rental assistance supports often feels like a highly competitive game of musical chairs with too many eligible residents seeking the opportunity and too few affordable housing opportunities to meet the local need. Within the District however, DSSMSSAB has demonstrated the value of leveraging the available social housing resources into a community asset to ensure that the community's most vulnerable residents receive priority in accessing housing and supports while also purposely building new affordable and supportive housing to meet local needs. In identifying examples of

communities achieving success in the implementation of housing and homelessness plans, Sault Ste. Marie remains a beacon of hope for sister communities struggling to find innovative and collaborative opportunities to prevent and end homelessness through housing solutions.

For decades, communities viewed homelessness as a direct result of personal issues such as poverty, mental illness, substance use, tragedy and poor decision-making. The reality, however, is far more tied to structural inadequacies, inappropriate policies and a lack of understanding of the role of affordable and appropriate housing in creating healthy communities. Many people believe that the policies and economic conditions that lead to homelessness are huge societal issues that cannot be tackled deliberately and systematically by higher orders of government. However, a review of the plan's strategic directions as well as the activities and progress being achieved in the District of Sault Ste. Marie provide an example of collaboration and innovation that could be replicated in communities across the province to accelerate efforts to end chronic homelessness.

Like so many Canadian communities that are making progress in preventing and ending homelessness, the District has a strong network of agencies and professionals committed to improving the availability of affordable housing, homelessness prevention efforts and ensuring the rapid journey back to housing stability for those that have lost housing. It has also adopted many of the approaches proven to improve the impact of the social service system such as:

- quality training for front line practitioners,
- coordinated intake/access processes that reduce trauma for people served and increase transparency and accountability for services, programs and agencies,
- investments in the empirically-proven Housing First programming stream, and
- the optimization of available affordable housing investments.

What sets DSSMSSAB apart from many of its sister Service Managers, however, is the no-nonsense and logical approach used to see the goal of ending homelessness as intrinsically tied to improving access to affordable housing, social services and financial benefits for individuals and families experiencing homelessness. Together with its confidence in available support options to complete the task of increasing stability for tenants, the deliberate connection between the homelessness response system and the

social housing resources ensures an innovative and solution focused approach.

2. Introduction

Service Managers across Ontario are diligently reviewing their Housing and Homelessness Plans to ensure an alignment with Provincial policies, evidence informed practices and evolving community needs. OrgCode's approach to the review of DSSMSSAB's Housing and Homelessness Plan was to not only ensure local compliance with the updated LTAHS policy statements but to also identify recommendations to further enhance the system of housing and homelessness to additionally improve local outcomes for community members.

To identify if the DSSMSSAB *10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan* is in compliance with the updated LTAHS policy statement, OrgCode compared the Strategic Directions and Objectives identified in the *Plan* to the updated LTAHS policy priorities. To complement this analysis, OrgCode also completed a data and document review, interviews with DSSMSSAB staff as well as a review of the professional development, system enhancements and collaborative efforts completed locally to identify opportunities to improve affordable housing options and end chronic homelessness. This five-year review process - as mandated by the *Housing Services Act (2011)* - also offers an opportunity for Service Managers to ensure that plans continue to reflect the local context regarding housing and homelessness.

3. Alignment with the Housing Services Act (2011) and the Updated Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy (2016)

The 2016 update to Ontario's LTAHS focuses on the following enhancements:

- Incorporation of the vision that every person in Ontario has an affordable, suitable and adequate home to provide the foundation to secure employment, raise a family, and build strong communities.
- Addition of new policies to require alignment with Ontario's land use planning framework and encourages DSSABs to work closely with those communities within their regional boundaries to maximize available land use planning initiatives.
- Reflects provincial goals to reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness and increase the number of people

experiencing housing stability, including the long-term goal of ending homelessness, and the specific goal of ending chronic homelessness by 2025.

- More closely links its LTAHS's vision and goals to align with Ontario's broad objective of fostering social inclusion and enabling community and economic participation for all Ontarians.
- Highlights the commitment to develop an Indigenous housing strategy and the need to engage with Indigenous organizations and communities, and to coordinate housing and homelessness services with local Indigenous housing and support services,
- Highlights that Housing and Homelessness Plans are an important tool to support poverty reduction.
- Emphasizes the need for strong partnerships and collaboration across sectors and improving client access to services across service systems, including a move to human services integration.
- Stresses Housing and Homelessness Plans should focus on client-centred, coordinated access to housing and homelessness services.

In reviewing the DSSMSSAB *10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan*, it is immediately evident that the 2014 Plan is well-positioned to closely align with the 2016 update to the Province's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy. The five strategic directions outlined in the *Plan* include:

1. Expand access to affordable housing in the Service Area;
2. Foster the development of an integrated system of housing and homelessness services;
3. Enhance support services for homeless individuals and families;
4. Develop solutions to prevent homelessness;
5. Engage in ongoing planning.

The 2014 *Housing and Homelessness Plan* details 15 Objectives and 61 Action Items to assist in achieving the evidence-informed 5 Strategic Directions. This Plan not only aligns with the Provincial strategies and policies but also establishes the road map for increasing the collective impact to enhance housing options to meet local needs while endorsing innovation and an unrelenting focus on Housing First approaches to prevent and end homelessness. Although some minor tweaks are recommended, the following table is provided to demonstrate how the DSSMSSAB *10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan* aligns with the 2016 update to the LTAHS.

Updated Criteria for Provincial LTAHS		Alignment to 2016 Updates? ✓ or X	DSSMSSAB Plan Components that Demonstrate Alignment		Sample of Local Activities & Successes that &/or Suggested Enhancements
			Relevant Strategic Direction	Relevant Objectives & Action Items	
Accountability and Outcomes	Demonstrate a system of coordinated housing and homelessness services that assist households to improve their housing stability and prevent homelessness.	✓	<p>2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.</p> <p>5: Build Capacity for Data Use and Planning</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Items 2.1.1 - 2.1.8, inclusive</p> <p>Objective 2.2: All homeless services staff and ancillary service staff participate in joint professional development to ensure alignment with best practices.</p> <p>Action Items 2.2.1 - 2.2.4, inclusive</p> <p>Objective 2.3: All community partners are engaged in ongoing homelessness service system planning.</p> <p>Action Items 2.3.1 - 2.3.3, inclusive</p> <p>Objective 5.1: Improve data collection strategies.</p> <p>Action Item 5.1.1. and 5.1.3</p> <p>Objective 5.2: Implement an annual performance monitoring process.</p> <p>Action Item 5.2.3</p>	<p>DSSMSSAB joined Built for Zero-Canada in May 2016 and is implementing coordinated access and a By Name List. Acuity scores and case conferencing techniques are incorporated into matching and referral processes.</p> <p>Weekly multi-sector meetings occur with Homelessness Prevention Team partners including ODSP, OW, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS), John Howard Society (JHS), CMHA, Community Mental Health, United Way, Pauline's Place, Vincent Place, Indian Friendship Centre and Sault Area Hospital. These meetings identify appropriate services for individuals and families experiencing homelessness and housing crises.</p> <p>An Affordable Housing and Homelessness Working Group began in the Fall of 2017.</p> <p>DSSMSSAB funded agencies use a common system of data collection.</p>
	Include strategies to promote client-centred, coordinated access to housing and homelessness prevention services.	✓	<p>2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Items 2.1.1 - 2.1.7, inclusive</p>	<p>DSSMSSAB joined Built for Zero-Canada in May 2016 and is implementing coordinated access and a By Name List.</p> <p>The SPDAT was identified as the common assessment tool in 2015. Prioritization, Matching and Referral processes and policies are under development.</p> <p>As of 2019, there are three points of access for the urgent homeless priority category. They include jail, shelter, and hospital. The access locations will be review and three more locations will be added, that have been identified as locations that individuals experiencing homelessness frequent. These include the Indigenous Friendship Centre, Soup Kitchen Community Centre and the Neighbourhood Resource Centre.</p>

	Be developed with public consultation and engagement with diverse local communities, including those with lived experience of homelessness.	✓	2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services. 5: Build Capacity for Data Use and Planning	Objective 2.3: All community partners are engaged in ongoing homelessness service system planning. Action Items 2.3.1 - 2.3.3, inclusive Objective 5.1: Improve data collection strategies. Action Item 5.1.3 Objective 5.2: Implement an annual performance monitoring process. Action Item 5.2.3	Multi-partner working groups include frontline workers in different sectors or with different populations (e.g., addictions, mental health, emergency shelter, youth services, Aboriginal services) to share best practices and develop protocols for collaboration and coordination of services. Homelessness Prevention Team weekly meetings provide opportunities to share challenges, successes, outcomes and impacts. The voice of people with lived experience is incorporated in the community planning processes.
	Include strategies to measure and report publicly on progress under the plan.	✓	5: Build Capacity for Data Use and Planning	Objective 5.1: Improve data collection strategies. Action Item 5.1.3 Objective 5.2: Implement an annual performance monitoring process. Action Item 5.2.3	The plan for public information sharing includes posting the updates on an annual basis on the DSSMSSAB's website. These annual reports submitted to the province are public.
Goal of Ending Homelessness	Be informed by the results of local homelessness enumeration.	✓	2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services. 5: Build Capacity for Data Use and Planning	Objective 2.3: All community partners are engaged in ongoing homelessness service system planning. Action Items 2.3.1 - 2.3.3, inclusive Objective 5.1: Improve data collection strategies. Action Item 5.1.3.	Point in time counts were conducted in 2016 and 2018. The next PIT count is scheduled for March 2020. Point in Time Counts will continue to be an important aspect of DSSMSSAB planning and outcome monitoring in Sault Ste. Marie moving forward. <i>Suggested Enhancement: Incorporate homelessness enumeration initiatives in Objective 5.1</i>
	Include a strategy to prevent and reduce homelessness, incorporating innovative approaches and a Housing First philosophy.	✓	2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services. 3. Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families	Objective 2.2: All homeless services staff and ancillary service staff participate in joint professional development to ensure alignment with best practices. Action Item 2.2.1 Objective 3.2: Provide access to Housing with Supports for individuals and families with mid and high-acuity. Action Item 3.2.1 – 3.2.3, inclusive	Sault Ste. Marie joined the Built for Zero Campaign in May of 2016. The District participates in virtual learning sessions as well as submitting data on a monthly basis to ensure the data is reliable. Housing First program began in 2015. Rapid Re-Housing program began in 2017.

	Include strategies to reduce and prevent the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness and homelessness among youth and Indigenous peoples, as appropriate to the local context.	✓	<p>3: Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families</p> <p>4: Re-focus Solutions to Prevent Homelessness</p>	<p>Objective 3.2: Provide access to Housing with Supports for individuals and families with mid and high-acuity.</p> <p>Action Items 3.2.1 - 3.2.4, inclusive</p> <p>Objective 3.3: All emergency shelters are focused on helping clients return swiftly to housing.</p> <p>Action Items 3.3.1 – 3.3.5, inclusive.</p> <p>Objective 4.1: The impact of short-term financial assistance to cover rent deposits and rent and utility arrears is maximized by targeting the most at-risk households</p> <p>Action Items 4.1.1 – 4.1.4, inclusive.</p> <p>Objective 4.2: Increase access to support services to prevent evictions</p> <p>Action Items 4.2.1 – 4.2.5, inclusive.</p> <p>Objective 4.3: Engage in additional outreach to vulnerable households to help prevent crises that result in housing loss.</p> <p>Action Items 4.3.1 and 4.3.2.</p>	<p>The local Homelessness Prevention team is made up of staff from two Indigenous organizations including Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services as well as the Indigenous Friendship Centre. Their weekly attendance at these meetings provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue for prevention and intervention strategies for Indigenous clients. Culturally appropriate services for Indigenous individuals who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless are provided by OAHS.</p> <p>Housing Stability Bank implemented in 2017.</p> <p>Shelter review completed in 2015. Shelter diversion process incorporated in 2017.</p> <p>Coordinated intake incorporated in 2016.</p> <p>Housing First programming implemented in 2015 and Rapid Re-Housing programming began in 2017.</p> <p>Supportive housing developed in 2015.</p> <p>Service hubs located in high risk neighbourhoods in 2017.</p> <p>Urgent homeless category incorporated into Centralized Housing Wait List process.</p> <p>Special Priority status increases access to social housing units and resources for individuals and families fleeing intimate partner violence.</p>
Coordination with Other Community Services	Demonstrate a commitment to working with partners across service systems to improve coordination and client access to housing, homelessness prevention services and other human services.	✓	2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Items 2.1.1 - 2.1.7, inclusive.</p> <p>Objective 2.2: All homeless services staff and ancillary service staff participate in joint professional development to ensure alignment with best practices.</p> <p>Action Items 2.2.1, 2.2.2 and 2.2.4.</p> <p>Objective 2.3: All community partners are engaged in ongoing homelessness service system planning. Action Items 2.3.1 - 2.3.3, specifically</p> <p>Action Items 2.3.1, 2.3.2 and 2.3.3.</p>	<p>Coordinated intake and assessment began in 2015. By Name List implemented in 2019. Case conference used to assist with matching and referral processes to appropriate services dedicated to preventing and ending homelessness.</p> <p>Weekly Homeless Prevention Team meetings incorporate multi-sector partners.</p> <p>Urgent Homeless Category added to SSM Centralized Housing Registry in January 2015 enhancing access to social housing resources.</p> <p>Professional development sessions opened to community partners and service provider calendars shared.</p> <p>Housing and Homelessness Planning Committee developed in 2017.</p>
	Demonstrate progress in moving toward integrated human services planning and delivery.	✓	2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Items 2.1.1 - 2.1.7, inclusive</p> <p>Objective 2.2: All homeless services staff and ancillary service staff participate in joint</p>	<p>As identified above, numerous multi-sector working groups exist and meet regularly.</p> <p>OrgCode is currently investigating the benefits, challenges and opportunities to integrate services for the DSSMSSAB</p>

				<p>professional development to ensure alignment with best practices.</p> <p>Action Items 2.2.1 - 2.2.4, inclusive.</p> <p>Objective 2.3: All community partners are engaged in ongoing homelessness service system planning.</p> <p>Action Items 2.3.1 - 2.3.3, inclusive</p>	
	Address collaboration, where possible, with Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs), to coordinate Service Manager social and affordable housing and homelessness services with LHIN funded services.	✓	2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Item 2.1.7</p>	<p>Opportunities to partner with LHIN funded services have been optimized locally.</p> <p>The project at 137 East St incorporates 0.5 positions funded through the NE LHIN administered by Algoma Public Health for a Community Rehabilitation Worker.</p> <p>The 345 St Georges project has dedicated 10 beds with 24-hour support for those with a psychiatric diagnosis who require intensive supports. This program is in partnership with Sault Ste Marie Corporation and Community Mental Health Association. Funding provided by the North East LHIN.</p> <p>The NE LHIN recently introduced their neighborhood models in two of the seniors' buildings at 615 Bay St and 55 Chapple Ave. Both these program locations are funded by the NE LHIN.</p>
Indigenous Peoples	Include a strategy for engagement with Indigenous organizations and communities – including First Nation, Métis, Inuit organizations and communities, where present in the service area.	✓	<p>2. Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.</p> <p>2. Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Item 2.1.8</p> <p>Objective 2.3: All community partners are engaged in ongoing homelessness service system planning.</p> <p>Action Item 2.3.3</p>	<p>The Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS) and the Indian Friendship Centre are key partners on the weekly Homeless Prevention Team.</p> <p>OAHS ensures that culturally safe services are provided to Indigenous individuals and families.</p> <p>The creation of the by-name list as well as the utilization on the IFC for a local access points will address the needs of indigenous people.</p> <p>The local Homelessness Prevention team is made up of staff from two Indigenous organizations including Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services as well as the Indigenous Friendship Centre. Their weekly attendance at these meetings provide the opportunity for ongoing dialogue for prevention and intervention strategies for indigenous clients. Culturally appropriate services for indigenous individuals who are at risk of homelessness or who are homeless are provided by OAHS.</p>
	Demonstrate a commitment to coordination and collaboration with Indigenous housing providers and service providers to support access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples.	✓	2. Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.	<p>Objective 2: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Item 2.1.8 and 2.3.3</p>	<p>DSSMSAB provided funding for the Homeward Bound Program. The Indigenous Homeward Bound program provides stable housing and integration of wholistic community supports, education and employment to single Indigenous mothers and their children to strengthen the successful transition to independence and self-sufficiency.</p> <p><i>Suggested Revisions: Incorporate an additional Objective in Strategic Direction 3: Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families to identify collaboration with Indigenous partners. Also incorporate an additional Objective in Strategic</i></p>

					<i>Direction 1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area. For Indigenous people.</i>
A Broad Range of Community Needs	Include a strategy to address accessible housing and homelessness services for people with disabilities, as well as those who have mental health needs and/or addictions.	✓	<p>1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area</p> <p>3. Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families</p> <p>4: Re-focus Solutions to Prevent Homelessness</p>	<p>Objective 1.3: Develop a long-term financial plan, including new social housing stock, preventative maintenance and capital reserve on existing social housing stock.</p> <p>Action Item 1.3.2</p> <p>Objective 3.2: Provide access to Housing with Supports for individuals and families with mid and high-acuity.</p> <p>Objective 4.1: The impact of short-term financial assistance to cover rent deposits and rent and utility arrears is maximized by targeting the most at-risk households.</p> <p>Objective 4.3: Engage in additional outreach to vulnerable households to help prevent crises that result in housing loss.</p>	<p>The Housing & Homelessness committee and the Mental Health and Addictions Committee ensure that services are available for individuals and families requiring housing stability and homelessness prevention supports.</p> <p>In 2019, there were two new buildings currently in construction at 676 Second Line West - 8 of those units have been dedicated for developmentally challenged individuals.</p> <p>137 East St has 4 fully accessible units as well as 9 units dedicated for those who require semi-supportive living.</p>
	Include a strategy to address the housing needs for survivors of domestic violence, in coordination with other community-based services and supports.	✓	3. Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families	<p>Objective 3.1: Survivors of domestic violence are able to access safe, affordable housing and support services.</p> <p>Action Item 3.1.1, 3.1.2, 3.1.3</p>	Special priority access to social housing resources was enhanced in 2016 when the district participated in the Portable Housing Benefit pilot. This additional access portal to meet the needs of survivors and their families continue to meet the unique needs of this population.

	<p>Address the needs of different demographic groups within their community. This could include seniors, Indigenous peoples, people with developmental disabilities, children and youth, LGBTQ youth, women, immigrants and refugees, persons released from custody or under community supervision, youth transitioning from the child welfare system and Franco-Ontarians.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.</p> <p>3: Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families.</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Item 2.1.1 and 2.1.3.</p> <p>Objective 3.2: Provide access to Housing with Supports for individuals and families with mid and high-acuity.</p> <p>Action Item 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3 and 3.2.4</p>	<p>The creation of the by-name list as well as the utilization on the IFC for a local access points will address the needs of Indigenous people. The SLW build will be addressing the needs of the developmentally disabled. The Urgent Homeless Category takes into account all different demographic groups. The system is designed to capture those most vulnerable and demographic groups including seniors, Indigenous peoples, people with developmental disabilities, children and youth, LGBTQ youth, women, immigrants and refugees, persons released from custody or under community supervision, youth transitioning from the child welfare system and Franco-Ontarians.</p>
	<p>Demonstrate a commitment to service delivery that is based on inclusive and culturally appropriate responses to the broad range of community needs.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>2: Foster the Development of an Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness Services.</p> <p>3: Enhance Housing Support Services for Homeless Individuals and Families</p>	<p>Objective 2.1: Access to homelessness support services is streamlined.</p> <p>Action Item 2.1.1 and 2.1.3.</p> <p>Objective 3.2: Provide access to Housing with Supports for individuals and families with mid and high-acuity.</p> <p>Action Item 3.2.1, 3.2.2, 3.2.3 and 3.2.4</p>	<p>Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services (OAHS) as well as the Indigenous Friendship Center sit as part of our Homelessness Prevention Team. They provide supports for those who wish to receive Indigenous-specific supports.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Non-Profit Housing Corporations and Non-Profit Housing Cooperatives</p>	<p>Include strategies to support capacity building and sustainability in the non-profit housing sector.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area</p>	<p>Objective 1.1: Continue to encourage and facilitate the addition of new rental housing and affordable ownership housing to reduce pressure on the social housing stock.</p> <p>Action Item 1.1.3: Recommend that the City of Sault Ste. Marie designate a “point person” in the Planning Department to provide guidance and assistance for proponents that incorporate affordable or non-profit housing.</p> <p>Action Item 1.1.7: Explore opportunities to partner with non-profit organizations to build affordable ownership housing for low- and moderate-income families.</p> <p>Objective 1.2: Existing rental housing in the community is preserved and maintained.</p> <p>Action Items 1.2.1 – 1.2.2</p> <p>Objective 1.3: Develop a long-term financial plan, including new social housing stock, preventative maintenance and capital reserve on existing social housing stock.</p> <p>Action Items 1.3.1 – 1.3.8, inclusively.</p>	<p>The strategy supports capacity building. Action Item 1.3.5 begins to address sustainability, but there is a need to flesh this out more fully. There is currently no formal policy. The budgets are reviewed on an annual basis. As rent supplement units cease it creates more opportunities to provide Portable Housing Benefits to those on the chronological waitlist allowing individuals to seek affordable housing in the private market.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Private Housing Market</p>	<p>Identify an active role for the private sector in providing a mix and range of housing, including affordable rental and ownership housing, to meet local needs.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area</p> <p>Strategic Direction 4: Re-focus Solutions to Prevent Homelessness</p>	<p>Objective 1.1: Continue to encourage and facilitate the addition of new rental housing and affordable ownership housing to reduce pressure on the social housing stock.</p> <p>Action Item 1.1.3, 1.1.5, 1.1.6</p> <p>Objective 1.2: Existing rental housing in the community is preserved and maintained.</p> <p>Action Items 1.2.1 – 1.2.2</p> <p>Objective 4.2: Increase access to support services to prevent evictions</p> <p>Action Items 4.2.3</p>	<p>Properties purchased by the DSSAB will be renovated or existing structure removed for a new build. Partnership with Habitat for Humanity uses vacant properties for development of affordable Homes.</p> <p>City of SSM has an agreement with the DSSMSSAB to offer all tax sale properties for review and upon acceptance they are to be sold to the DSSAB for \$1 for renovation or future development of affordable housing. This will also allow for employment and training opportunities for those receiving Ontario Works.</p>
	<p>Identify and encourage actions for municipalities and planning boards, where applicable, to support the role of the private sector, including the use of available land use planning and financial tools.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area</p>	<p>Objective 1.1: Continue to encourage and facilitate the addition of new rental housing and affordable ownership housing to reduce pressure on the social housing stock.</p> <p>Action Item 1.1.3 and 1.1.6.</p>	

	Reflect a coordinated approach with Ontario's land use planning framework, including the Provincial Policy Statement.		1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area	Objective 1.1: Continue to encourage and facilitate the addition of new rental housing and affordable ownership housing to reduce pressure on the social housing stock. Action Item 1.1.3.	The SSM Draft Official Plan appears to align with the Provincial Policy Statement, which is referenced in Action Item 1.1.1. We are continuing to work on the plan with regular meetings and participation.
	Align with housing strategies required by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, where applicable.	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability	Demonstrate a commitment to improve the climate resilience of social and affordable housing stock. This can include taking steps to limit vulnerability to flooding and extreme weather.	✓	1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area	Objective 1.4: Support Environmental Sustainability and Energy Conservation. Action Item 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.4 and 1.4.5.	Energy efficiency features are incorporated in new affordable housing and renovations to existing housing as they are made. Partnership with Housing Services Corporation (HSC) and local utilities to perform energy audits.

4. Working to Accelerate Local Efforts to Prevent and End Chronic Homelessness

As the Service Manager and the lead agency for the implementation of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan, the DSSMSSAB is to be commended for its leadership, fiscal stewardship and collaborative spirit. The District will need to maintain this steadfast commitment to achieve the goal of preventing and ending homelessness locally as it enters the last 5 years of its *Plan*.

Coordinated intake has improved the trauma-informed and results-oriented processes of access, prioritization, matching and referral. It has also shifted to a more dynamic prioritization process to ensure that it reflects community realities while ensuring that those individuals and families that demonstrate the greatest depth of need are housed and served first.

The implementation of Housing First and Rapid Re-Housing as program models is achieving the housing destinations and housing stability rates required to end chronic homelessness while preventing a return to homelessness in the future for the clients served.

The DSSMSSAB's commitment to the development of new affordable housing options developed with its partners, including the 345 St. Georges project and 137 East Street affordable housing project, as well as its leveraging of local community housing options, via the Urgent Homeless Category for the Central Housing Registry, to tackle homelessness and housing instability, is commendable. The local system must continue to enhance the active involvement/participation of all community partners that provide housing and support options locally, regardless of independent mandates, varying funding sources and targeted populations.

In OrgCode's experience, the DSSMSSAB is demonstrating provincial leadership in ensuring that the homelessness response system is formally connected to its financially assisted housing program within the district. Through formalized agreements between community-based service providers such as the John Howard Society, the Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, and both local shelters, SSM Housing Corporation has proven to be one of the most important landlords for the district in demonstrating its commitment to housing people recovering from chronic homelessness.

In addition to the Special Priority provided to women and families fleeing violence in the community, strategic efforts to end chronic homelessness have also been of importance to DSSMSSAB. With the development of an Urgent Homeless Category, the district has ensured that modified chronological access leverages social housing as a true community asset. As a Service Manager, the strong connection between the homelessness response system and the financially assisted housing system provides an example of service integration and collaboration that could be replicated throughout the province.

The following activities/enhancements are recommended to accelerate the progress to achieve the prevention of and the end to chronic homelessness throughout the district.

Strategic Direction 1: Expand Access to Affordable Housing in the Service Area.

As is the situation in communities across the province and the country, the demand for affordable, appropriate and accessible housing options in the District continues to be a concern for local residents. DSSMSSAB has done an admirable job of using the powers and the land use planning strategies to enhance housing development locally. For example, there have been 61 new units of affordable housing from 2015 to 2020 and the 2014 Rental Housing Community Improvement Program, which incentivizes the construction of new rental units, has results in 267 rental units being added to the local housing market across 13 development projects.

Funding Year	Project name	Address	Number of New Affordable Units Funded
2015-2016	Diplomat Hotel /North 44 Property Management	844 Queen St East	11
2016-2017	Silverbirch Development (Sault) Ltd.	531 Trunk	5
2017-2018 (2)	Sault Ste. Marie Housing Corporation Homeward Bound Sault Ste. Marie Ph. 1	137 East St 676 Second Line West 462 McNabb Street	13 4* 6*
2018-2019	Sault Ste. Marie Housing Corporation	676 Second Line West	13*
2019-2020	Sault Ste. Marie Housing Corporation	90 Chapple Avenue	9*
*denotes units are still under construction and not yet occupied			

DSSMSSAB is encouraged to continue working with non-profit and private partners to enhance the range of housing available to meet the varied needs of local residents. Recognizing the history of the DSSMSSAB of

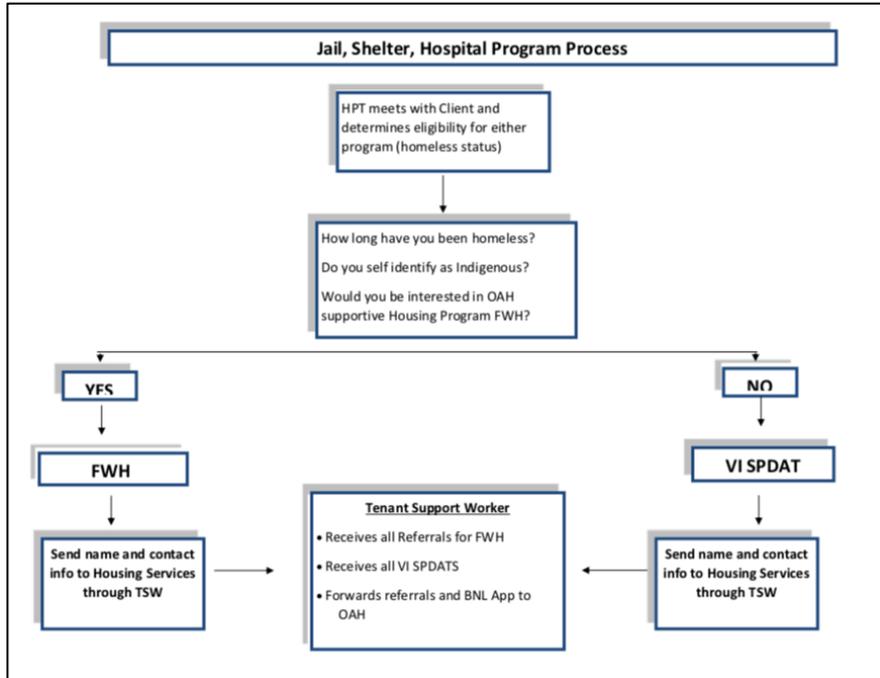
optimizing social housing units and rental supplements as a community asset to end chronic homelessness, the District is encouraged to continue being diligent in avoiding saturation of buildings with tenants requiring high intensity case management supports, unless those supports are available on-site most hours of the day. Over-saturation can indeed unintentionally change the culture of the buildings and communities.

To reflect the active involvement of Indigenous agencies as collaborative partners in ensuring the development of and access to safe, affordable housing for Indigenous individuals and families, it is recommended that an additional Objective be incorporated into Strategic 1.

Strategic Direction 2: Integrated System of Housing and Homelessness

Accomplishments have been achieved locally in creating a multi-sector approach to preventing and ending homelessness leading to an impressive list of active partners working to improve local efforts. DSSMSAB is encouraged to continue capitalizing on opportunities to triage for homelessness prevention, shelter diversion and homelessness in all front doors to human and social service across the District. Continuing to increase the number of agencies – including Health, Justice and Children Services funded – filling internal housing and support vacancies from the By Name List would further enhance local efforts to ensure that homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring. As senior DSSMSAAB management staff also chair such local committees as the Mental Health and Addictions Committee, the increased participation of non-CHPI funded agencies within Coordinated Intake is highly feasible. As a highly inclusive process, future evolutions of the Coordinated Access (CA) and By-Name List processes will be even more effective in supporting shared clients through the CA process.

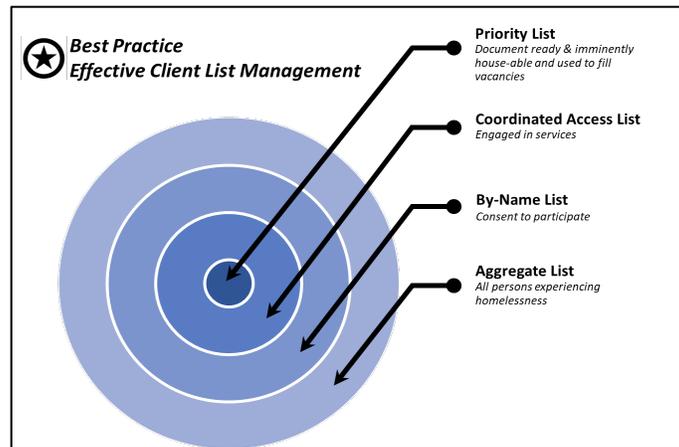
The following chart demonstrates how the cross-sector coordination work operates locally. Continual improvement of these activities is encouraged.



The design and implementation of Coordinated Access (CA) helps communities ensure fairness, prioritize people most in need of assistance and match individuals/families to appropriate housing and services in a more streamlined and coordinated way. This will translate to better outcomes for people returning to a housed state and for the community as a whole. As a Built for Zero-Canada community, the District is improving the quality of its By Name List and the effectiveness of prioritization and matching individuals and families to the most appropriate service or program. Transforming the Coordinated Access process from one that relies on descending acuity into more of a dynamic prioritization process that examines multiple factors including the length of homelessness (for example, 3 or more years of cumulative homelessness), type of homelessness (unsheltered versus sheltered), and acuity score will assist in the prioritization process used and the matching to available re-housing services. As an example of this, Appendix A demonstrates the prioritization model used by the Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton and provides an example of a more dynamic approach to prioritization. A comparable approach is recommended for the District.

Working to ensure that those clients that are prioritized for referrals to available housing supports are document-ready prior to referrals being made will enhance efficiencies in the time required for positive housing

move-ins. Moving from a By Name list to a Priority list (as demonstrated in the below graphic) will be essential in increasing this efficiency.



Strategic Direction 3: Enhancing Housing Support Services for Homeless

1. As is the scenario in most Canadian communities, the emergency homeless shelter in the District feels and absorbs the pressures of homelessness in the community. Emphasis on shelter diversion and rapid exit out of shelter through rapid resolution will remain essential throughout the District to achieve the prevention and ending of chronic homelessness. It is recommended that on-site coaching and evaluation of shelter service delivery become a focus of the 2020 professional development agenda to ensure that strategies and approaches presented in training session are implemented effectively.
2. To accurately reflect the collaboration and shared leadership demonstrated by the Indigenous partners throughout the District, it is recommended that an additional Objective be included to ensure that “Indigenous people are able to access safe, affordable housing and support services in a culturally safe manner.” The details of how this service is delivered locally can then be incorporated into the *Plan*.
3. To ensure fidelity to evidence informed practices and approaches, it is recommended that program reviews should be annually completed as a quality assurance and quality control mechanism. A performance framework is recommended below.

Strategic Direction 4: Re-Focus Solutions to Prevent Homelessness

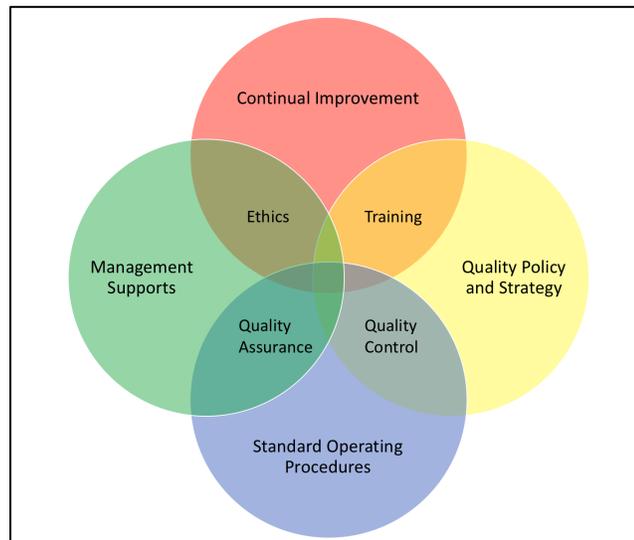
DSSMSSAB is encouraged to actively engage private and non-profit landlords to investigate the factors that lead to housing crises and eviction. Improving relationships with local landlords will enhance housing location and homelessness prevention efforts. For tenants that are attached to social housing/RGI units or rental supports, it would also be helpful to investigate an early warning system to reduce the number of evictions experienced by these individuals and families to reduce the likelihood of a return to homelessness, even if they are no longer attached to case management supports.

Strategic Direction 5: Build Capacity for Data Use and Planning

- 1. Homelessness Management Information System:** The ongoing adoption of an open and shared data system such as HIFIS by DSSMSSAB and community partners will better equip the local system to respond in real time to the needs of the community and those experiencing housing instability and homelessness.
- 2. Homeless Enumeration as a Planning Strategy:** DSSMSSAB and its community partners have been coordinating and implementing homeless enumeration activities since 2016. To accurately reflect the local context and its commitment to strategic data-driven planning, it is recommended that an additional Action Item be added to Strategic Direction 5.
- 3. Performance Management Framework:** An enhanced focus on a program and system performance framework is recommended to complement the sharing of information, stories, outcomes and impacts that occurs during the weekly Homelessness Prevention Team meetings. Such a formalized framework promotes standards of care, quality policies and the measurement of key performance indicators will promote consistency and accountability for all community partners in their quest for service excellence.

One of the ways to further enhance the pathway forward is to examine a *Quality Framework* which identifies actionable measures that can be incorporated into the homelessness response system and provides a baseline for future quality control and quality assurance efforts. The

diagram below demonstrates a quality framework that has been proven to be beneficial for many Service Managers:



Quality Policy and Strategy

In the future, DSSMSSAB performance evaluations can monitor evidence of quality policy and strategy. A shared and coherent narrative throughout the community as to *why* the community does the work that it does will prove to be essential and this shared vision is reflected in the policies and strategies that identify *what* and *how* the community prevents and end homelessness locally.

Work to further enhance shared ownership over the quest to prevent and end chronic homelessness will continue to be a priority moving forward, especially as it relates to active involvement in the Coordinated Intake process by all community partners regardless of funding sources (CHPI, Reaching Home, LHIN, Justice, etc.).

Standard Operating Procedures

As a community moves toward an end to chronic homelessness, one of the delicate balancing acts is standardizing operating procedures across providers while still supporting the individual mandates and missions of the various organizations that conduct the work. Generally, contracted service providers use their funding agreements as the basis for what is required in service delivery. While not a bad start, standard operating

procedures are more than fulfilling contract requirements. A set of core principles that anchor the program areas across population groups and funding sources is recommended.

Management Supports

Ending homelessness requires both leadership and management. On the leadership front it is about bringing people/partners on a journey to realize a vision where homelessness is rare, brief and non-recurring in local communities. On the management front it is about aligning resources and ensuring the execution of the tactical aspects of the vision.

The most obvious management support sphere for DSSMSSAB relates to contract management with homeless service providers. This is the vehicle by which there is influence on implementation of the quality policy and strategy and the execution of the standard operating procedures. For the community to be successful at ending homelessness this is not a passive pass-through function of dollars; this is an active, intentional engagement of investing in results and impacts to the participants, the agencies and the communities.

To enhance Management Supports and further amplify the impact of standard operating procedures, it is also recommended that DSSMSSAB investigate the opportunities to provide on-site oversight and monitoring of the work being completed in the community. Such on-the-ground shadowing will improve DSSMSSAB's ability to provide support and coaching within their formal relationship with an independent organization. Such oversight and monitoring of contracted operations also promotes the updating of agency-based implementation of evidence informed standard operating procedures.

Continual Improvement & Training

Certainly, the efforts over the past few years by DSSMSSAB and several of the community-based organizations would suggest that continual improvement is important to the work. Training is a subcomponent of Continual Improvement and Quality Policy and Strategy. Training is central to the ability to get better and ensure that service providers have the skills necessary to execute on the policy and strategy. As such, training must be seen as an integrated necessity to achieve results as opposed to an add-on

to “regular” work. The ongoing commitment to continuous capacity building for local practitioners is commendable. As data management and system performance strategies improve locally, collaborating with agencies and programs locally to share in the responsibility to improve local capacities to meet the needs of residents will continue to be essential.

Quality Control

Quality Control is a multi-stepped process necessary for the Policy and Strategy and Standard Operating Procedures to realize its fullest potential. It is best thought of as a preliminary examination of whether the Policy and Strategy as well as the Standard Operating Procedures are being followed.

Within human and social services however, there is often limited evidence of quality control mechanisms within programs/agencies delivering services to those that are homeless. Many organizations have internal policies and procedures but internal policies and procedures must reflect the strategies and procedures that are inherent to the delivery of Housing First oriented services that align with a recovery and trauma informed orientation.

Quality Assurance

Quality Assurance is a Management Support function that measures whether or not Standard Operating Procedures are being followed. If the Standard Operating Procedures are not being met, Quality Assurance identifies the remediation necessary to be able to meet the standard, and which management supports are critical to achieving the preferred operating standard.

The development of a Quality Assurance Framework as part of the service agreements with funded agencies provides another opportunity for enhancement within the service management area. DSSMSSAB would be well served to implement tools that allow for self-assessment on a regular basis, as well as improve its monitoring capabilities to have even more subject matter expertise within DSSMSSAB staff.

Ethics

To enhance shared ownership and the ethics behind activities and priorities to prevent and end homelessness, the homelessness response system would benefit from intentional conversations around the ethics of the work. This would likely gain the greatest traction if the focus of the discussion started with the intended outputs and outcomes of the work.

5. Concluding Thoughts

The staff members involved in the work of ending homelessness within the DSSMSSAB are worthy of our highest esteem. Intelligent, thoughtful, strategic and innovative, they are relentless learners, passionate informed advocates, and are transforming their community to see a housing-focused approach to ending homelessness as the norm. Their leadership is amongst the finest we have encountered in all of our travels throughout North America. What is quite impressive and worthy of mention is that this group also seems to manage ambiguity really well. They do not profess to have the answers to all situations and problems, but they are unrelenting in their pursuit of finding answers.

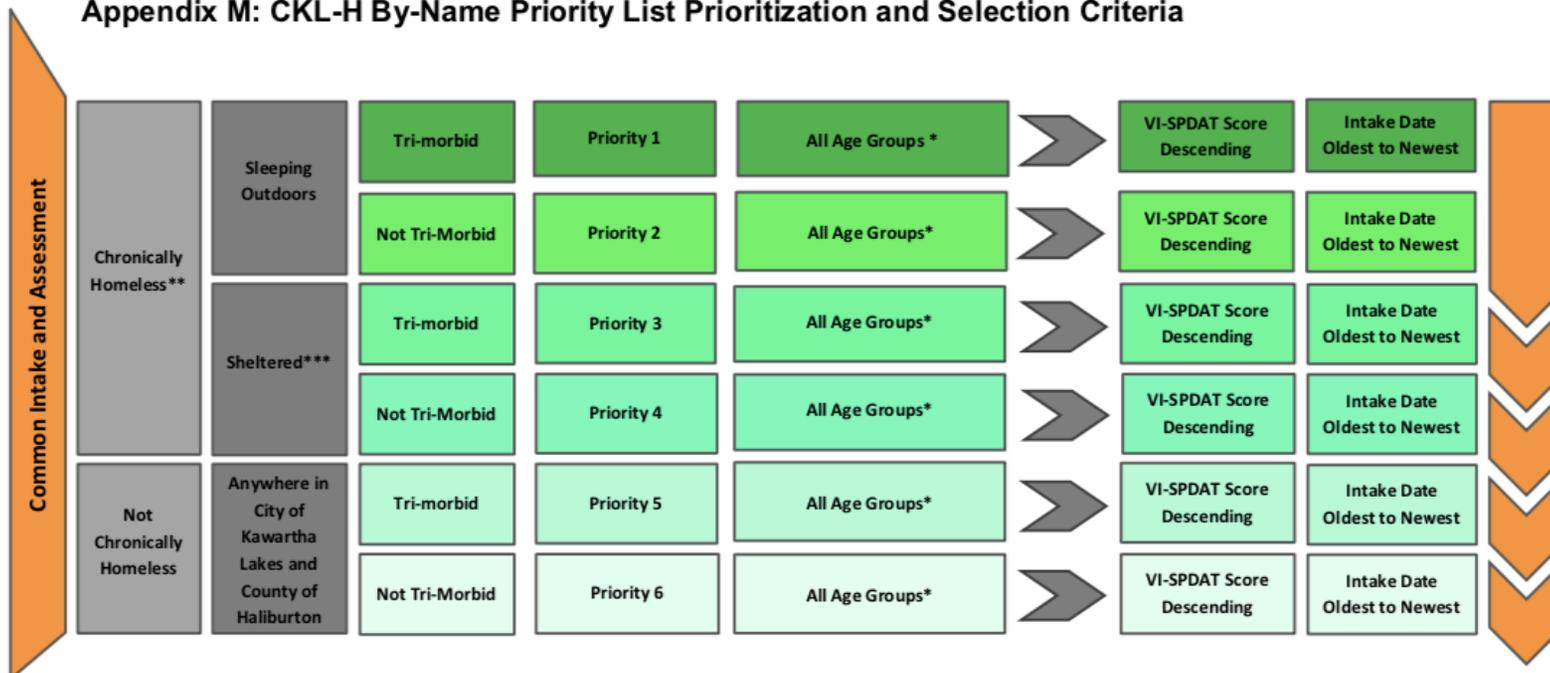
It has been an honour to assist in the refinement of DSSMSSAB's Housing and Homelessness Plan. The quest for continual improvement must now focus on ensuring that the implementation of evidence informed practices is happening and the system of care operates as a true partnership between DSSMSSAB and all of its community partners. The successes and progress achieved to date for the local households experiencing housing instability and homelessness has been stellar and we hope that the implementation of the recommendations and suggestions presented in this report will establish enhanced momentum to achieve an end to chronic homelessness by 2025.

APPENDIX A

Sample of Dynamic Prioritization

***By Name Priority List Prioritization and Selection Criteria,
City of Kawartha Lakes-Haliburton***

Appendix M: CKL-H By-Name Priority List Prioritization and Selection Criteria



***Note- One in every four matching opportunities from the CKL-H BNL will involve prioritizing youth ages 16-24 who will be given priority over other age groups within their priority level.**

****Note** – Chronic Homelessness is defined as an individual or family who is currently homeless and has been homeless for more than an accumulated 6 months in the past 12 months.

*****Note-** Sheltered refers to individuals who are emergency sheltered or provisionally accommodated.

*This resource was adapted from the City of Peterborough – Social Services’ By-Name Priority List Prioritization and Selection Criteria Flow Chart