

**REPORT
ON
SERVICE SECTOR PLANNING
FOR
SINGLE WOMEN
EXPERIENCING OR AT RISK OF HOMELESSNESS
IN OTTAWA**

**Prepared under the direction of the
Homelessness Community Capacity Building Team**

February 2005

This Plan is a component of the City of Ottawa' Community Capacity Building Project around issues of homelessness, facilitated by the Social Planning Council of Ottawa and funded by the National Homelessness Initiative and the City of Ottawa.

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For Single Women
Experiencing or at Risk of Homelessness
in Ottawa**

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**SERVICE SECTOR PLANNING
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SINGLE WOMEN
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IN OTTAWA**

BACKGROUND

In 2004 the City of Ottawa contracted with Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) to receive and administer a second round of two-year funding under the National Homelessness Initiative (also known as “SCPI”).

One of the important commitments in that contract was **building community capacity around issues of homelessness**. The City’s role is to ensure that there is a community process to effect this.

To determine how to undertake the Community Capacity Building (CCB) process, the City gathered a reference group of a dozen community leaders in May 2004, facilitated by Paul Born of the Tamarack Institute. The resulting plan, known as The Tamarack Report, states that the **expected results of the CCB initiative** are:

1. Healthier agencies/service providers who understand their capacity to deliver effective service;
2. Partnerships that will maximize existing resources to provide even better quality client services;
3. Clear articulation and understanding of contributions, roles, responsibilities and relationships of all stakeholders in addressing issues of homelessness;
4. Effective multi-media communications that will inform, stimulate, problem solve and advocate;
5. Understanding by all stakeholders of the efficacy of a coordinated, integrated service system, which will lead to ongoing commitment to be part of it;
6. Sustainability of core services supported by all stakeholders; enhancements of quantity or quality are recognized value-added services when funding is available.

The Social Planning Council (SPC) of Ottawa has been engaged to coordinate the work of a steering committee known as the CCB team beginning in Fall 2004. Refer to Appendix 1 for a list of members of the CCB team. The CCB team’s role is to oversee implementation of the **recommendations of the Tamarack Report**, which are listed below:

1. Develop a service inventory
2. Build individual and organizational capacity to end homelessness through training, sector planning, coaching, consulting, funding and fundraising
3. Develop vision and collaboration through sharing information and aligning work, prospecting leaders and champions, who have a desire to end homelessness in Ottawa, developing a communication strategy and developing a long term plan.

The details of these recommendations were distributed to community stakeholders in the summer of 2004. Refer to Appendix 2.

This report is responding to the second recommendation with the deliverable of a sector plan for services for women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The CCB team further refined this to focus on single women without children.

CONTEXT

Listed below are the reference documents that support this sector planning.

City of Ottawa's **Ottawa 20/20 – Human Services Plan** identifies the following action under the policy statement about poverty reduction and increasing self-sufficiency:

“16. Implement the City’s Affordable Housing Strategy and the Community Action Plan to end and prevent homelessness.”

Ottawa’s Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: 2002-2005 sets out the existing continuum of services and a vision of affordable, appropriate housing and supports to prevent and end homelessness. The four priorities of that plan are to:

1. Increase the supply of affordable and appropriate housing.
2. Prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless, and assist people while they are homeless.
3. Achieve legislative and policy changes to end homelessness.
4. Ensure a coordinated, comprehensive and accountable community response to homelessness.

The community confirmed these four priorities in September 2003 as preparation for the community plan that the City submitted to HRSDC to access SCPI funding for the homeless. Appendix 3 provides a **Summary of Findings** of that consultation process. Included in this summary are several references specifically about women’s services:

- *Need to increase appropriate supportive and transitional housing for young women, young men, single adult women and single adult men with various and complex service needs.*
- *Need to increase beds for single adult women (preferably supportive housing over emergency shelter)*
- *Need to increase number of transitional housing units for homeless men and women leaving addiction programs, including those designated for Aboriginals.*

That consultation also provided more information for the **Continuum of Housing and Support Services for the Homeless**, another framework document for assessing and positioning services and service providers. Refer to Appendix 4.

It should be noted that references to services for Aboriginal women are consistent with Ottawa's Aboriginal Community Plan for Addressing Homelessness developed by the Aboriginal coalition in December 2003. That plan describes the service needs of homeless Aboriginal people and the service system gaps at that time, and identifies the priorities for creation of new services and increased capacity in the system. That plan will be a source document during development of the next Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness

FOCUS POPULATION

The decision to develop a plan for single adult women not currently with children was based on a growing understanding that they have needs that are distinct from homeless men and even some that are distinct from homeless women with families. It is generally accepted that women in this vulnerable situation have unique health and safety needs. It is also noted that there is a culture/philosophy of service delivery that needs more research and description. The network of services includes both women-only and co-ed services but there has been little planning or research to consider how these services could be optimized to better address the distinct needs of single women. Further, according to City of Ottawa's data, the number of bed nights used by single women accessing emergency shelters in Ottawa decreased by 15% in 2003, then rose again by 46% in 2004. This situation is currently being analyzed.

The Community Capacity Building team recognized that there is also a need to focus on the issues of women with children who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness. Furthermore, the group was aware that homelessness could be a factor in women's not having their children with them. However, the group determined that there were additional and distinct issues for this group, and that the issues of women with children would better be served by being the focus of a future plan.

PROCESS

The process to develop this report included the following steps:

- a selected literature review
- nine focus groups with single women currently without children who were experiencing homelessness, at risk of homelessness, and/or have been previously homeless (totaling 42 women)
- one focus group, with 19 front-line workers at agencies
- twenty-two structured telephone interviews, with executive directors from service agencies
- a forum for management and board members from service agencies, and funders on November 24, 2004, with 33 participants, including representatives from 16 service providers
- a meeting with directors of four primary service agencies to review and obtain feedback on the draft recommendations
- two meetings with the CCBT, and several rounds of email draft reports and feedback

The focus groups and interviews had the objective of identifying the needs of homeless and at-risk women, pressures encountered by the service system in responding to those needs, as well as the strengths of the service system. The forum had as an objective to identify ways to work more effectively by identifying means of collaboration and partnerships within the system.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Current Service System

There was enough information gathered during the consultation process to produce a version of the Continuum of Housing and Support Services that focuses on women's services. Refer to Appendix 5. The development of a Service Inventory by March 2005 will clarify these services even further. The intent of this inventory is to identify current assets that service providers bring to the service system; for example, direct client service, donated dollars, shared staff, functional partnerships.

Strengths of current system

The following is a summary of what the participants in the focus groups and interviews identify as working well within the Continuum:

- well motivated agencies and staff, especially women's shelters
- diversity of staff
- service partnerships among agencies
- improvement in communication among agencies and their staff
- the supportive and transitional housing that is available is appreciated
- street outreach, including outreach van
- Housing Loss Prevention Network
- Inner City Health Project
- Drop-ins and community centres
- Aboriginal coalition working together to address needs of women

It was obvious from the feedback that there is a real strength in the way in which agencies and their staff work together with a focus on the clients. Also, there was acknowledgement that there are existing services along the full range of the Continuum, whether women-only or mixed, although these services might not have sufficient service capacity.

Challenges of the current system

The primary challenges are common to all sectors of the population experiencing or at risk of homeless: adult single men and women, youth, families, transgendered, Aboriginal, immigrant or any other designation. These challenges are:

- insufficient affordable housing units
- insufficient transitional and supportive housing units
- insufficient accessible, appropriate supports whether assigned to individual clients or to service locations
- inadequate income to cover costs of food, clothing, transportation, laundry, and haircuts
- difficulties for individual workers, agencies and funders in focusing on more strategic prevention and early intervention supports instead of just crisis response
- inconsistencies in quality and professionalism of service delivery

However, there are issues that appear to be quite significant specifically for single homeless women. No matter where the women live or what services are provided, there are three topics that thread throughout all the consultations about single women experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

1. Safety issues

Issues of safety are of higher concern to homeless women and women at risk of homelessness than is the case with men. The examples are myriad: older women in shelters and drop-ins experience victimization and physical crowding; street engaged Aboriginal women face extreme risks of violence, rooted in discrimination and marginalization, which are both a contributing cause and a result of engagement in the sex trade; some women of all ages feel great discomfort in using co-ed services or in being served by men; women with serious mental health and/or addiction problems pose safety threats to themselves and others.

2. Health care issues

Without diminishing the need for ongoing health care services for other sectors of the homeless population, it is noted that the identification of need for increased health care is validated by the findings of the Centre for Research on Community Services in the Panel Study on Persons Who are Homeless in Ottawa (December 2003). Their sample indicated that needs related to physical and mental health are predominant among single female adults.

Physical health:

'In particular, single women were the only subgroup that were experiencing levels of physical health that were, on average, significantly lower than their counterparts in the general population. A sizeable minority of single women in our sample also reported the presence of such chronic health conditions as respiratory problems, arthritis, back problems, and migraines.' (p.39)

Mental health:

'Over half of our single female adult respondents reported having a chronic mental health problem of depression, bipolar disorder, or schizophrenia. One third of them stated that they had needed health care in the past year but failed to receive it.' (p.39)

3. Aging population

During the consultation, participants expressed a strong concern about the special needs of the older, single homeless women. An extrapolation of the health data referenced above tells planners and service providers that the older (over 40 years of age) women have difficulties with mobility and accessing scattered services. Their vulnerability exacerbates issues of safety and personal security. The needs of this population are described well in a report prepared for Cornerstone by The Flett Consulting Group Inc., Senior Women's Supportive Housing Residence Phase II – Final Report, June 2003.

Guidelines for Building Capacity in Service System

In discussions about building capacity for a service system that would be most effective for women who are experiencing or are at risk of homelessness, the following guiding principles emerged:

1. Complete range of services: a full range of services is provided and accessible to meet the wide range of clients' needs wherever they are currently situated on the Continuum – from the street to emergency shelter to supportive housing, or independent housing. These services reflect the need for women-only services in addition to mixed services.
2. Collaboration/partnerships: each partner in the service system understands its role and responsibilities within its mandate and its position on the Continuum. Effective functional partnerships are based on a common understanding of these positions.
3. Client-centered service delivery: all services, separately and together as part of the system, are client-centered. Services are provided in a safe environment and by well-trained staff who are skilled at helping the women feel comfortable. All services are accessible to designated clients and are delivered in a respectful, consistent manner, offering as much choice as possible. It is an accepted practice and initiative is taken to ensure client participation in planning and evaluating all services provided to them throughout the system.
4. Cultural diversity/cultural competence: the system provides services that are culturally and linguistically appropriate for clients; this means there are some culturally specific services and culturally competent staff in all services; this is particularly important for Aboriginal women who comprise a disproportionate number of homeless women.
5. Commitment to prevention and early intervention: the service system is designed to place resources in the services that will help women retain appropriate housing. If they do become homeless, they will be assisted with housing search immediately.
6. Accountability: all service providers in the system, individually and collectively, are accountable to the community, to the consumers, and to their funders. It is accepted practice that there be ongoing monitoring and evaluation for accountability and for reviewing the appropriateness of funding allocations. It is recognized that it is sometimes necessary to strategically reallocate resources in a way that maximizes resources in a changing service environment. This might mean strengthening what is working well now and reducing or eliminating other services.

These principles are consistent with the 'Guiding Principles for Ottawa's Ideal Service System' of the Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: 2002-2005.

Key Elements of Proposed Service System

It should be noted that the following points are those of particular concern in women's services found on the Continuum of Housing and Support Services. **It is understood that the core services and funding that are needed for all sectors of the population experiencing or at risk of homelessness are not all identified in this report.**

In keeping with the principle of client-centered service delivery, the proposed service system takes into consideration all aspects of safety wherever and whenever services are provided to women experiencing or at risk of homelessness. This includes the option of sites separate from men, and female staff well trained in women's issues. Also, response to health care issues are noted in the key elements throughout the proposed service system outlined below.

The following is presented as it is identified on the Continuum – first the Housing Services and then, the Support Services.

Housing Services

These are the kinds of actual 'bricks-and-mortar' bed spaces and housing units available across the Continuum. They are found in various types and sizes of facilities.

Emergency Shelters

There are ten emergency shelters in the city plus overflow at the YM/YWCA and motels, as needed. One of the shelters is women-only, one is for women and children, two have separate space for women in a co-ed facility and then there is overflow in the YM/YWCA and motels. All shelters provide food, overnight accommodation and personal support through case management.

Proposed for women specifically:

- Enough beds to allow choice of women-only or co-ed facility
- Safe and secure shelter with personal safety plan in place
- Female staff available at all times
- Fully accessible facilities for mobility impaired women in women-only shelters

Transitional Housing

Transitional housing has on-site support (not necessarily full time) and time-limited occupancy, typically not more than three years. It is usually used for clients who are coming from another service or program (e.g. emergency shelter, addiction treatment, shelter for abused women) and who need time and support to prepare to live more independently.

Proposed for women specifically:

- Variety of housing models; e.g. apartments, group home, shared accommodation, fully accessible for mobility impaired clients
- Choice of women-only sites
- Female staff available on all shifts
- On-site services; e.g. case management, life skills training, housing placement
- Personal safety plan in place
- Particular need for spaces for women coming out of addiction treatment

Supportive Housing

‘Supportive housing is a community-based, person-centered model of providing affordable, permanent accommodation. Housing support staff assist individual tenants in attaining their optimum quality of life and encourage the development of healthy communities.’

-Ottawa Supportive Housing Network brochure, 2004

In addition to the agencies in the Network that provide supportive housing and other non-profit service providers, there are 25 private operators of domiciliary hostels that provide food, accommodation and certain personal support with 24/7 staff.

Proposed for women specifically:

- Women-only or co-ed units, some with full accessibility for mobility impairments
- Female staff available at all times
- Projects purposefully designed for older single women
- Increased number of units for women with special needs; perhaps designated facilities for women with mental health issues and/or addiction problems
- Personal safety plan in place

Social Housing

‘Social housing is rental housing that was built and maintained with government funds and is made available to families and individual with low and moderate

incomes. Rental rates are set according to the income of the household with no more than 30 per cent of their income going to rent. There are 58 independent non-profit housing organizations in Ottawa with approximately 25,000 units.'

-City of Ottawa web site for Housing

Proposed for women specifically:

- Recognition of distinct needs of homeless women who need timely access to social housing, particularly for women fleeing abuse.

Private Market Housing

Private market housing includes all other rental and owned units from rooms in rooming houses, to townhouses, single-family dwellings, and high-rise condos. A common rule of affordability is that no more than 30 per cent of a household's income should be spent on housing for either rent or a mortgage. The need for more affordable rental housing and/or more rent supplements is the primary problem for all sectors of the client population that are homeless or at risk.

Well-managed rooming houses are recognized as a viable form of housing. Currently, in Ottawa, there are seven houses in which all 73 rooms are rented by women.

Proposed for women specifically:

- Increase in rooming houses that are occupied by women only

Support Services

There are many kinds of support services that are already being provided across the Continuum. Some are on-site in various facilities; others are attached to particular individuals or groups of clients. The need is great and the staff resources are inadequate. The proposed service system acknowledges that the homeless population is aging in the same way as the general population. It is also generally recognized that being chronically homeless or unstably housed accelerates the characteristics of aging. This means that all services must take into account the particular needs of aging, vulnerable women.

Outreach Services

These are services provided for clients who are on the street, using drop-in centres or unstably housed. These services may include personal support, crisis intervention, transportation to shelter or withdrawal management services (detox), healthcare, mental health support, some food services and clothing programs, assistance with searching for housing and employment.

Proposed for women specifically:

- Increase in number of female outreach workers to work only with street-involved women, particularly Aboriginal workers
- More female mental health and addiction workers and abuse counsellors
- Action plan to address serious safety issues for women on the street and in co-ed drop-ins
- Regular supply of hygiene products and underwear
- Health care specific to women's issues
- Access to telephone and voice mail services at drop-ins
- Referrals to community resources are appropriate to the women; e.g. to a worker in a centre with a safe environment for women who have been abused

Shelter Services

Besides the basic food, overnight accommodation and case management, there are often many other services that are provided on-site either by the shelter operator or by another agency. The case worker refers clients to these other services as appropriate.

For women specifically:

- Client-driven service plans developed with a female case worker
- Support services provided on-site to mitigate safety issues; e.g. financial and legal assistance, addiction services, mental health workers, employment supports, access to telephones and message services, abuse counselors
- Female housing support worker available to all women in shelters, including co-ed facilities
- Regular supply of hygiene products and underwear
- Timely access to health care specific to women's issues
- Referrals to community resources appropriate to the women; e.g. to a worker in a centre with a safe environment for women who have been abused

Housing Loss Prevention Services

The Housing Loss Prevention Services are provided in the community where the clients actually live (e.g. Community Health Centres, Action Logement) or on-site in residential facilities as tenant support to a specified population (e.g. Options Bytown).

Proposed for women specifically:

- Female support workers who understand women's perspective, particularly concerns about safety and abuse
- Single women are seen in locations that they consider safe and comfortable for them

- Timely access to health care specific to women's issues
- Increase in number of female mental health and addiction workers, perhaps through outreach services
- Easier access to financial, legal and employment assistance

Employment services

Generally, the employment expectations are reduced for women who receive Ontario Works benefits while they are residing in hostels, or the activities outlined in their participation agreement are not enforced. Searching for alternate suitable housing accommodation becomes the priority activity for hostel residents. It is essential to support the women if they are already involved or wish to be involved in employment or training activities. This could be done through the provision of Employment Related Expenses benefits and Employment Start-up benefits. A new participation agreement could be drawn up to emphasize the importance of finding accommodation as a step toward employability.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are consistent with the priorities of the Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness 2002-2005 referenced previously but will focus on the issues specific to delivering effective service to single women experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

It is generally understood that an **increase in the supply of affordable housing** (including supportive housing) is essential to the well being of all vulnerable citizenry. The other side to that is the need for **adequate income security**, an issue for all sectors of the homeless population. There are also issues of inadequate **funding** for the entire system.

However, the following recommendations are focused on the particular needs of women in the service system currently in place. Accomplishing these recommendations over the next three years will allow time for the longer term solutions to be planned and implemented to the benefit of all sectors of the homeless and at risk population.

Recommendation 1: Increase the supply of transitional and supportive housing for women by 180 units by 2008, with related support services.

Action #1	Offer training in developing supportive housing to existing and potential housing providers for women's services; this includes planning how to work together and leverage money.
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Note: training series January-April 2005 being offered by Housing Branch, City of Ottawa as part of Capacity Building Program for Supportive Housing; consultant advice available.

Action #2 Supportive Housing Network work with Centre for Research on Community Services at the University of Ottawa to prepare proposal for research on the need for supportive and transitional housing for women experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Ottawa.

Note: the City will be releasing a Request for Proposal for research projects on homelessness in Spring 2005.

Action #3 Request that the City of Ottawa's Housing Branch work with the community stakeholders to develop a Supportive and Transitional Housing Strategy that will address the needs of various designated populations. This would include women and all their sub-groups, with particular work done around needs of senior women, Aboriginal women, women with mental health and addiction issues. It would also address issues of the sustainability of operating funds.

Note: this Strategy would be informed by the above research project and would be based on the principles of community capacity building, involving the primary service providers for mental health, addiction and Aboriginal issues. Such a project has already been identified in the consultations around the Affordable Housing Strategy.

Action #4 The CCB team organize a Supportive and Transitional Housing Roundtable where all stakeholders in women's services, current and potential, can share best practices and innovative ideas around development, explore partnership possibilities and develop action plans.

Note: this can be part of the training and coaching activities supported by the CCB team.

Action #5 The CCB team accept requests for grants training and development on better models and practices around service delivery in supportive housing services for women, with particular attention given to the distinct needs of Aboriginal women. This would give service providers an opportunity to enhance their services as part of the delivery system.

Note: this can be part of the training and coaching activities supported by the CCB team.

Recommendation 2: Strengthen support services to women.

Action #6 The CCB team requests that funders determine, in consultation with service providers, the need for service and best use of existing resources across the service system.

Note: this would require a commitment for serious consideration before any reallocation of resources, and it would be essential to provide a rationale for the re-allocation of funds.

Action #7 The CCB team request that the City of Ottawa's Employment and Financial Assistance Branch meet with primary service providers to women to discuss providing service on their community service sites so there is easier, safer access.

Action #8 The CCB team request that the City of Ottawa's Housing Branch find a way to increase the number of Housing Support Workers available to help women find and maintain appropriate housing.

Note: this could be a particular consideration during the rationalization of most of the support service system which will be happening in 2005.

Action #9 Primary service providers to women meet with health care providers to women to discuss possibilities of enhanced health care to these vulnerable women. This would include attention to the distinct health

needs of Aboriginal women and Aboriginal models of healing and wellness.

Note: health care specific to women has been an emerging service over the past decade; there are fresh possibilities with the opening of the Shirley E. Greenberg Centre for Women's Health which does have funding for projects that are not covered by the Ministry of Health.

Recommendation 3: Increase the safety and security of women wherever they are staying or accessing services.

Action #10 The CCB team ensure that issues of street safety for women are included in the scope of the current Task Force on Homelessness and the Safe Streets Act and that there is appropriate representation and input to their task.

Note: a member of CCB team is now on the Task Force

Action #11 The CCB team accept requests for grants for safety audits and action plans and for staff training around safety issues for both clients and staff.

Note: this can be part of the training and coaching activities supported by the CCB team.

Recommendation 4: Strengthen Coordination of, and Support to Service Providers

Action #12 The CCB team requests that an organization like United Way help service providers to women who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness establish a task-specific working group or long term network. This group can identify and address issues of coordination of service, integrated case management, functional partnerships that maximize available resources for women's services. It can also become

a collective advocate for these women.

Note: there are various groupings of service providers with different focuses; possibly these could be reconfigured; this can be part of the capacity building exercises supported/funded by the CCB team. There needs to be discussion about how to support effective planning and action for the Aboriginal women in the community.

NEXT STEPS

1. The CCB team will include implementation of these recommendations in its workplan for the duration of this project, that is until 2005.
2. By December 2005, a community leadership table will be developing a longer term plan for addressing these women's issues in the context of the complete service system for those experiencing and at risk of homelessness.
3. The CCB team commits to providing regular updates on these recommended actions to all stakeholders.

Members of the Community Capacity Building Team

- Tim Aubry, University of Ottawa
 - Lorraine Bentley, Supportive Housing Network
 - Yolande Cremer, City of Ottawa
 - Cheri Crosby, Human Resources Development Canada
 - Paddy Fuller, community member
 - Joan Gullen, community member
 - Linden Holmes, Ministry of Community and Social Services
 - Luc Legault, community member
 - Nancy MacNider, Youth services
 - Carl Nicholson, Immigrant services
 - Jean Sorensen, City of Ottawa
 - Trudy Sutton, Alliance to End Homelessness
 - Dennise Taylor-Gilhen, United Way/Centraide Ottawa
 - Castille Troy, Aboriginal Services
 - Connie Woloschuck, City of Ottawa
-
- Coordinators:
 - Marie-Josée Legault, Social Planning Council of Ottawa
 - Dianne Urquhart, Social Planning Council of Ottawa



City Of Ottawa
Housing Branch,
Residential and Support Services

Community Capacity Building - Framing a Plan
May 2004

(recommendations, only)

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Community Capacity Building (CCB) is one of the strategies approved by Human Resources Skills Development Canada as part of Ottawa's Community Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness.

The expected results of the CCB initiative are:

1. Healthier agencies/service providers who understand their capacity to deliver effective service to the homeless and those at risk;
2. Partnerships that will maximize existing resources to provide even better quality client services;
3. Clear articulation and understanding of contributions, roles, responsibilities and relationships of all stakeholders in addressing issues of homelessness;
4. Effective multi-media communications that will inform, stimulate, problem solve and advocate;
5. Understanding by all stakeholders of the efficacy of a coordinated, integrated service system, which will lead to ongoing commitment to be part of it;
6. Sustainability of core services supported by all stakeholders; enhancements of quantity or quality are recognized value-added services when funding is available.

On May 4, 2004, the Housing Branch convened an Allocations Reference Group under the facilitation of Paul Born of Tamarack Institute to develop a plan to spend the funding available for this process.

The following recommendations are now being implemented through the Social Planning Council. All stakeholders will have opportunity to participate as the process evolves by December 2005.

Recommendations from the Tamarack Report

After exploring the context and environment to reduce homelessness and build community capacity in Ottawa participants agreed on a direction forward.

The group spent considerable time in conversation regarding setting realistic goals and achievable projects versus starting a transformational process that may not be sustainable. The goal of the group was to develop a process that could achieve concrete outcomes over the next 20 months and which would also lay the foundation for a more comprehensive, transformational approach. Three interrelated recommendations emerged.

Recommendation 1: An inventory with a difference

It is recommended that the City of Ottawa update and expand the current inventory of service organizations for the homeless and the partnerships in which

they work. In addition, the City should start an inventory of non-profit and private sector providers of affordable housing.

This inventory will do more than provide static information. The inventory will act as a research project, asking interviewees a range of capacity building questions to help assess future needs and to gather information for a more comprehensive multi sector community plan.

A small multi sector committee (inventory team) will act as a reference group to work with City staff to design and implement the inventory and disseminate its findings. It is recommended that this inventory will be available to the public and, of course, be updated regularly.

The following questions are to act as a starting point for the committee:

- Who is currently providing housing and services for the homeless? We need to collect the data in such a way that a comprehensive database can be created (the database will include email addresses in order to communicate more fluidly with this group).
- What kind of housing and or services do they provide? This information needs to be gathered in such a way that stakeholders are able to find common ground and gaps.
- What is the capacity or learning needs/desires of the businesses or organizations that support people who are homeless?
- What other services do these organizations provide that either helps reduce or alleviate poverty? Are there organizations that help the poor but are not specifically identified as service providers for the homeless? If so, who are they and what do they do? Can any of these services be adapted to help those who are homeless or at risk?
- What has already been done? What sustainable accomplishments in the fight against homelessness do these organizations feel they have made?
- What should be done? What ideas do business and organizations have to eliminate homelessness in Ottawa?

Deliverables:

- 1) A database of service providers, including not for profit and private housing organizations will be developed and made accessible to stakeholders in the community.
- 2) An inventory of existing partnerships related to homelessness will be completed.
- 3) An inventory of capacities and learning needs of organizations and sectors that are addressing homelessness will be developed.
- 4) An inventory of accomplishments realized in the past five years that have helped to end homelessness, as identified by service providers, will be developed.

- 5) An inventory of ideas for addressing homelessness in Ottawa will be developed.
- 6) A synthesis report based on the inventory, as well as committee findings, will be drafted.

Recommendation 2: Build individual and organizational capacity to end homelessness

That the City of Ottawa, working through the Social Planning Council, develop a process through which the capacity of organizations and individuals from the not for profit, business, and government sectors will be enhanced.

A multi sector committee (community capacity building team) will be formed and a consultant hired to design, implement and disseminate a community capacity building program.

The community capacity building team (CCBT) will work closely with the inventory team (IT) but will not wait for the inventory to be completed before it acts. The team will make requests to, and respond to requests from, community groups and business for help in designing and implementing new ideas. The team will also develop learning opportunities to enhance the capacity of organizations and individuals to reduce homelessness.

The committee will develop the final work plan for the CCBT once it is formed. The following activities can act as a starting point for the work of the committee. The committee is not to function as a planning committee but rather be action oriented.

- a) **Training:** The CCBT will identify, develop and promote training opportunities. City of Ottawa staff and stakeholders have identified a variety of training needs that can be implemented immediately (e.g. safety training, collaboration skills, diversity training, partnerships with business and high impact idea generation). As the IT begins its work and identifies needs, more training opportunities will be developed.
- b) **Sector Planning:** There is a need for sector planning; some of the identified sectors are homeless and at risk women, the Somali population, clients with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and client with developmental disabilities. The committee will establish a multi stakeholder process by which the community will develop a series of plans based on sector needs.
- c) **Coaching and Consulting:** As groups identify new ideas or specific challenges they can apply to the CCBT for coaching assistance. The team may provide a capacity building grant or provide direct assistance to the applicant. We are particularly interested in ensuring that boards of

directors undertake an organizational assessment and develop a plan related to clearly identifying their roles and responsibilities within their organization and the broader service delivery system. Other areas that have been identified are developing volunteer programs and safer housing initiatives.

- d) Funding and fundraising:** As groups develop plans based on new ideas or to overcome challenges, they will require funding to implement these plans. The CCBT will provide training in fundraising or coaching to help with this activity.

Deliverables:

1. A minimum of ten training sessions will be developed and delivered that will address organizational or sector capacity needs.
2. A minimum of five lunch and learn events will be developed and delivered.
3. A minimum of three sector plans will be developed: homeless and at risk women, the Somali population, adults with developmental disabilities.
4. A minimum of 20 grants will be made to build organizational capacity.

Recommendation 3: Building vision and collaboration

That the City of Ottawa, working through the Social Planning Council, form a leadership team made up of members of both the IT and CCBT. The longer-term goal of this leadership team will be to develop a collaboration of business, voluntary and government leaders, with people living in poverty working together to end homelessness in Ottawa.

The CBT and the IT will form the nucleus of the leadership team that will meet regularly to share information and inform each other's work. The two teams will have the power to add members based on need.

Though the work of the leadership team will evolve over time, the following activities can act as a starting point for the committee.

- a) Share information and align their work:** The work of the CCBT and the IT are interrelated and complementary. The inventory informs the work of the CBT and therefore the information collected must be relevant to current and future capacity building needs. It is expected that, by the time the inventory is established, the IT will be folded into the CCBT.

- b) Prospect leaders and champions:** The teams can identify key leaders from all sectors who have a desire to end homelessness in Ottawa and the skills or influence to advance this agenda. As these individuals are identified they can be added to the committee.
- c) Develop a communication strategy:** Community capacity building requires a community with a higher vision for what it is able to do to reduce homelessness. The team can work with a consultant to create and implement an awareness campaign that is community wide or sector specific. The communications plan will also include strategies and protocol for communications among the stakeholders in services to the homeless.
- d) Develop a long-term plan:** Once a larger leadership team has formed, a community plan with key strategies to end homelessness can be developed. This plan will build on previous accomplishments and should have buy in from as many of the stakeholders identified in the inventory as possible.

Deliverables:

- 1) A leadership roundtable will be formed to coordinate the homelessness community capacity agenda.
- 2) A communication strategy will be developed that will enable deeper communication within and across sectors and promote understanding related to homelessness within Ottawa.
- 3) A long-term plan will be developed to address both capacity and service needs for the elimination of homelessness in Ottawa.

Process for Implementation

There was agreement in principle at the meeting on May 4, 2004 that the implementation of these recommendations will require a leader. The City already has many roles in response to issues of homelessness from funder to service provider to network facilitator. Thus, the Housing Branch feels it is important to have a more objective party actually facilitate the process of developing the Inventory and Community Capacity Building Teams, doing sector planning, etc. Then, the City can participate fully as a member of these teams.

For the following reasons, it was decided that the Social Planning Council would be the appropriate body to take on this role because it:

- is a non-profit that is an integral support to the social services community, committed to building healthy community

- has a primary mandate for facilitating planning around social issues in the community, including making accessible a comprehensive portfolio of community based social research
- has a history of building community capacity since 1928; e.g. in response to identified needs in the community, facilitated establishment of United Way, Youth Services Bureau and Causeway sheltered workshops for the mentally ill
- is not a funder for any of the stakeholders in this process
- does not itself provide direct service, advocate on behalf of any particular service provider or benefit from such a relationship, thus ensuring an objectives position
- has current, demonstrable experience in facilitating strategic community planning; e.g. City of Ottawa's Human Services Plan
- is experienced in developing potential for community interaction
- maintains a unique, larger strategic perspective on developing long term solutions to the social ills of Ottawa.

Although the Housing Branch would be purchasing facilitation and planning services from the Social Planning Council, any actual contracts for training, etc. would have to be recommended by the Community Capacity Building Team and be administered by the City of Ottawa, according to SCPI and City procedures.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION ON HOMELESSNESS, FALL 2003

Summary of Findings

Following is a summary of the priorities and actions from the Community Action Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness: 2002-2005. These priorities were confirmed and emerging/urgent issues around homelessness were identified by participants in:

- a consultation meeting attended by over 100 people including clients, funders, planners and service providers on September 11, 2003;
- seven focus groups with clients at agencies serving homeless people; and
- several key informant interviews.

The key points from the consultation process are shown in italics, and have been attached to the most relevant priority. This information was used in determining the reallocation of provincial funding for homelessness and will be reflected in the specifications in the Requests for Proposals for Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) funding.

Community Action Plan to Prevention and End Homelessness: 2002-2005

Priority #1 Increase the supply of affordable and appropriate housing

Action # 1: *Support the activities of the City's Affordable Housing Strategy.*

- *Need more affordable housing (for singles, couples and families), and rent control.*

Action # 2: Increase the supply of affordable, supportive and transitional housing by community and government partners working together to develop new and alternative approaches.

- *Need to increase appropriate supportive and transitional housing for young women, young men, single adult women and single adult men with various and complex service needs.*
- *Need to provide emergency beds in more appropriate facilities for each of young women and young men, or alternatively supportive/transitional housing beds or a combination.*
- *Need to increase beds for single adult women (preferably supportive housing over emergency shelter)*

Action # 3: Maintain the stock of rooming houses.

- *Need to increase support services to help people maintain their housing (both ongoing supports including tenant support in social housing and rooming houses, and interventions to prevent housing loss anywhere in the community).*

Priority #2 Prevent individuals and families from becoming homeless, and assist people while they are homeless.

Action # 4: Prevent loss of housing, help homeless people attain appropriate housing, and support people while they are homeless, through a coordinated service system that makes the most effective use of available funding.

- *Need to increase support services to help people maintain their housing (both ongoing supports including tenant support in social housing and rooming houses, and interventions to prevent housing loss anywhere in the community).*
- *Need to increase number of transitional housing units for homeless men and women leaving addiction programs, including those designated for Aboriginals.*
- *Need increase in interveners for tenant-landlord issues, and access to legal assistance.*

Action # 5: Continue to develop and implement a comprehensive outreach service system that addresses the needs of homeless people.

- *Need additional street outreach services including health and mental health services and specific services for Aboriginals.*
- *Need weekend service at drop-in centres.*

Action # 6: Meet the health and long term care needs of homeless individuals and families, particularly those with mental health, substance use and chronic health problems.

- *Need increase in support services for people with addictions and mental illness, using harm reduction approach.*
- *Need pre-treatment/stabilization and aftercare support for addicts.*

Action # 7: Promote investment in community support programs including supportive and transitional housing and discharge management for people being discharged from institutional care.

Action # 8: Encourage programs that help people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to increase their earned income and financial independence.

Component #3 Achieve legislative and policy changes to end homelessness.

Action # 9: Advocate for federal and provincial governments to develop legislation and policies that prevent and end homelessness.

- *Need an increase in Personal Needs Allowance, Ontario Works, Ontario Disability Support Program, allowable earnings, and minimum wage.*
- *Need ongoing, adequate core funding for essential services.*
- *Need more affordable housing for singles, couples and families, and rent control.*

Component #4 Ensure a coordinated, comprehensive and accountable community response to homelessness.

Action # 10: Develop an Implementation Task Force to promote comprehensive collaboration amongst all funders and policy-makers related to homelessness, in order to execute this Action Plan.

Action # 11: *Coordinate municipal efforts, and maximize the City's effectiveness in preventing loss of housing and responding to homelessness issues.*

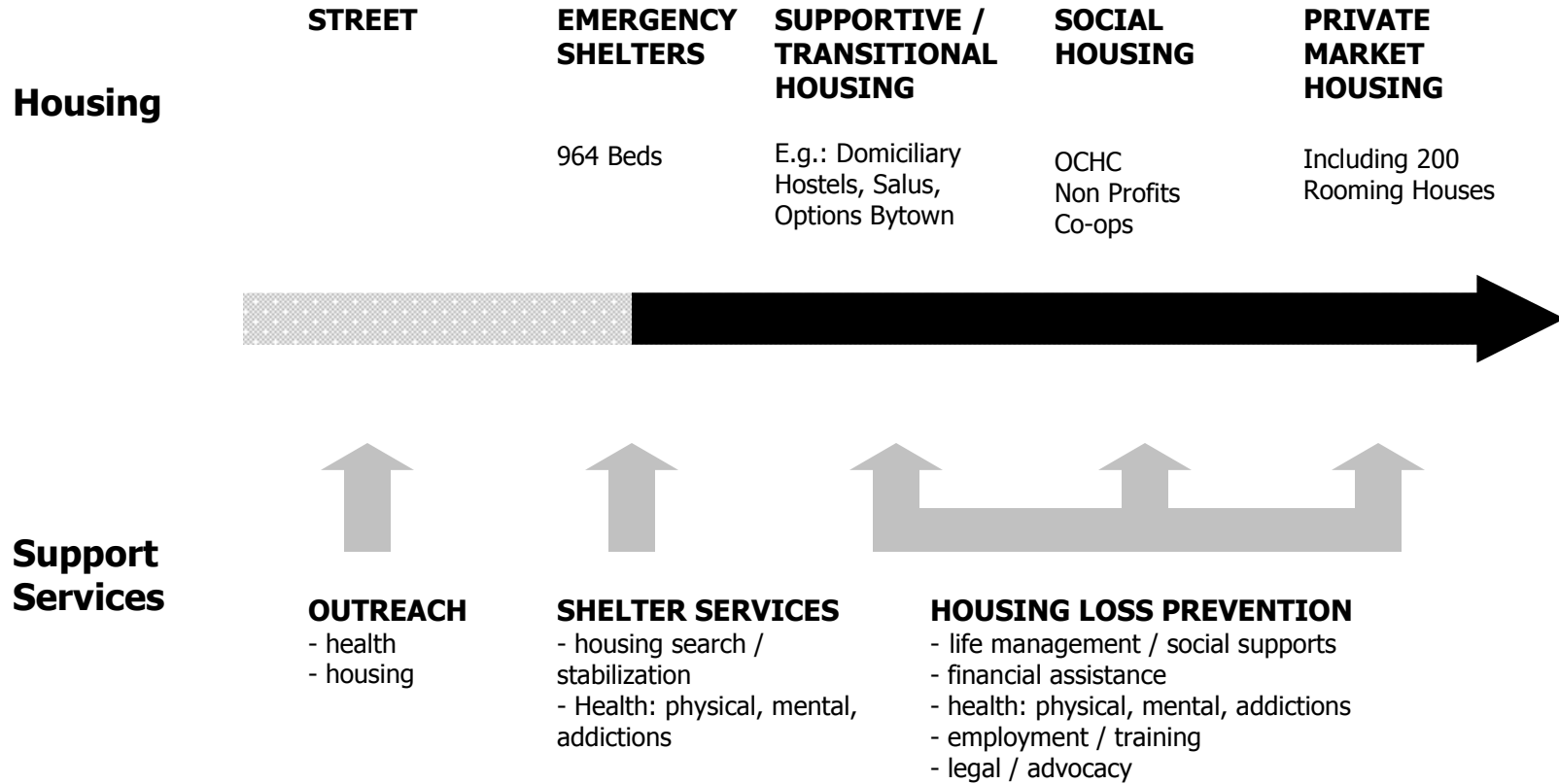
Action # 12: Community Capacity Building

- *Need planning and coordination to increase the community's capacity to deal with homelessness including, for example, new partnerships, training, and discharge planning.*
- *Need coordinated, consistent training for front line workers in topics such as harm reduction, cultural sensitivity, supporting people who have mental illness, and Aboriginal culture.*
- *Need increase in French support services that are easily and directly available to clients.*
- *Need separate, culturally appropriate services to Aboriginals and youth.*
- *Need a coordinated community communication strategy.*

November 2003

City of Ottawa – Housing Branch

Continuum of Housing and Support Services



Continuum of Housing and Support Services for Single Homeless Women

Key:
Women-only services in bold; co-ed in regular type

Housing

STREET

EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Cornerstone, Oshki Kizis, YSB Young Women's; Shepherds of Good Hope, CIC Reception House; overflow at YM/YWCA and motels.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Elizabeth Fry Society, Harmony House, Youville Centre, St. Mary's Home, Emily Murphy, E. Horne, palliative care at The Mission

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Piccadilly, 515 MacLaren, McPhail House, Aboriginal Youth Home, 3 Dom Hostels, 23 other dom hostels, Salus, Options Bytown, Daybreak, CMHA, Upstream, Bruce House

SOCIAL HOUSING

OCHC
 Non Profits
 Co-ops

PRIVATE MARKET HOUSING

Including 200 Rooming Houses (**7 women only**), and shared accommodation (**some for women-only**)
 -All other rental and owned units

Support Services

OUTREACH SERVICES

On street and at drop-in centres - health, housing search and stabilization, food, clothing, transport to shelter, etc.
The Well, St. Joe's Women's Centre, Centre Sophie, six other drop-ins, Salvation Army Outreach Van, ROH, CMHA, Centre 507, Wabano, Innercity Ministries, Street Ambassador, Operation Go Home, Jewish Family Services.

SHELTER SERVICES

At each shelter including **Cornerstone, Oshki Kizis:** Case management - housing search and stabilization, referrals to health care: physical, mental, addictions services

HOUSING LOSS PREVENTION

- life management/social supports, financial assistance,; health (physical, mental, addictions), supports for training and employment, referrals to advocacy and legal supports
The Well, St. Joe's Women's Centre, Minwaashin Lodge, Canadian Mental Health Assn., Catholic Immigration Centre, community-based Housing Loss Prevention Network, Housing Help, Action Logement, Options Bytown, Tungasuvvingat Inuit, Odawa Native Friendship Centre, Royal Ottawa Hospital, Centre 454, Centre 507, Shepherds' Drop-In, Youth Services Bureau Drop-In, Causeway Work Centre, Rooming House Services Team;

