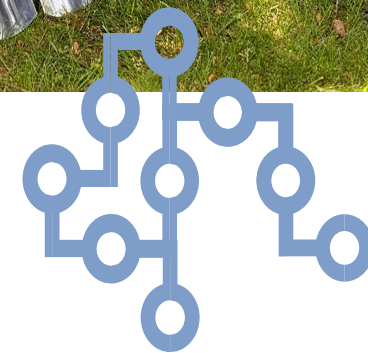
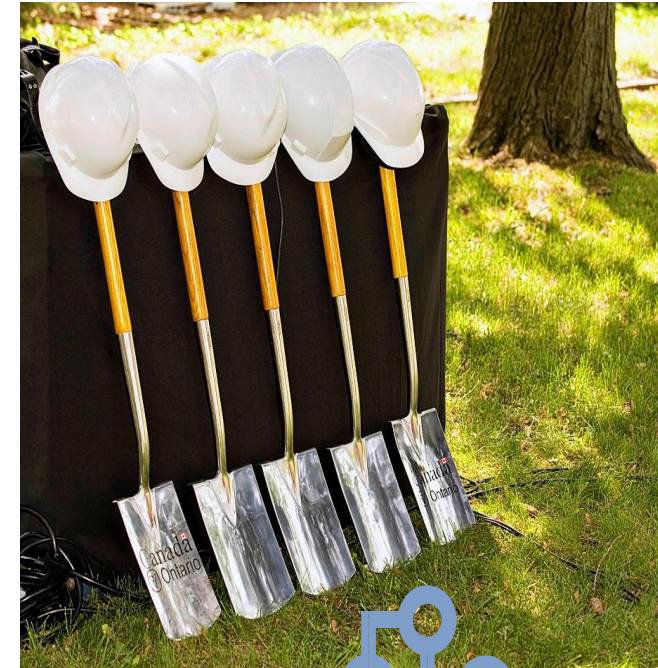


# ST. THOMAS AND ELGIN HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN

## TAKING STOCK WORKING TOGETHER

### *2015 Progress Report*



# Introduction

The City of St. Thomas, in its role as the Service Manager for St. Thomas and Elgin County, is responsible for delivering social and community services throughout the City and the County. These services are delivered by the St. Thomas – Elgin Ontario Works Department. As part of its mandate, the Department administers and delivers a range of housing and homelessness programs including existing social housing, new affordable housing, rent supplements, housing allowances, home repair assistance, homeownership down-payment assistance, funding for emergency shelters and transitional housing, and other homelessness prevention programs including the Housing Links for People (HeLP) program.

The Ontario Works Department works in collaboration with the County of Elgin and area municipalities, with existing private sector and not-for-profit housing providers, with support services agencies, and with many individuals and organizations in the community to help meet the housing and homelessness prevention needs in support of residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County.

In the past, the Department has undertaken numerous reports and studies about community housing and homeless needs and has worked with organizations to implement many of the key initiatives from those studies.

As required in the *Housing Services Act*, City of St. Thomas Council approved a 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan for St. Thomas and Elgin County in December 2013. The Plan was implemented on January 1, 2014. Service Managers are required in the *Act* to report annually to the public by June 30 on progress in achieving the recommendations in their Plans during the preceding year.

This, then, is the 2015 Progress Report for St. Thomas/Elgin County.



**Service Managers  
are required to report  
annually to the public on  
progress in achieving the  
recommendations in their  
10-year Housing and  
Homelessness Plans.**



# Vision

St. Thomas and Elgin County recognize the importance of having affordable, adequate and appropriate housing for its residents. In co-operation with not-for-profit and private-sector partners in the community, and with support from federal and provincial levels of governments, St. Thomas and Elgin County will work towards meeting the housing and support needs of the community, with the elimination of long term homelessness as a key goal.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3	STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4
Increase housing supply options to meet projected needs.	Provide supports to keep people in the sustainable housing they currently have.	Enhance the current service system to prevent homelessness, and when homeless “rapidly” move people into stable housing.	Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to senior levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1

### Increase housing supply options to meet projected need

*Seven recommendations with actions, targets, measures, and the detailed 2015 progress report are attached.*

#### Progress in 2015

City Council approved three new affordable housing projects in July 2015 under the IAH program:

1. 10 units at 560 Talbot Street (Capital Theatre)
2. 12 units at 207 Ross Street
3. 10 units at 33 Elysian Street

All are one-bedroom units, including accessible units.

Seven new private sector landlords entered into Housing Allowance or Strong Communities Rent Supplement agreements with the Ontario Works department in 2015.

Potential purchaser of Scott Street School in St. Thomas is considering re-developing the building into affordable housing.

\$84,000 was invested in the Housing Allowance component of the IAH program to provide \$150/month in rent supplements to an average of 52 households in the private sector.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2

### Provide supports to keep people in the sustainable housing they currently have

*Seven recommendations with actions, targets, measures, and the detailed 2015 progress report are attached.*

#### Progress in 2015

\$450,000 in HeLP funding was allocated to assist low-income households with homelessness prevention supports. The funds were spent as follows:

- 44% for utility arrears (455 households)
- 22% for last/first month's rent (208 households)
- 16% for rent arrears (102 households)
- 10% for furniture (115 households)
- 3% for moving costs (70 households)
- 5% for other necessities (61 households)

Through the IAH Home Repair Program, \$50,000 helped seven homeowners in St. Thomas/Elgin pay for new roofs (4), major foundation repairs (1), furnace replacement (1), & sewer line repairs (1).

\$540,730 in CHPI funding helped agencies provide client-centred supported housing as follows:

- YWCA Residence (17 beds)
- Harmony House (3 beds)
- Fair Winds (3 beds)
- Second Story (6 beds)
- Fresh Start (10 beds)
- CMHA residential care program (71 beds)

YWCA was granted \$360,000 over three years through the provincial Local Poverty Reduction Fund to strengthen and evaluate a program for homeless and at-risk youth in Elgin County.

YWCA will expand its existing services by hiring a social worker and adding an assessment tool to help match young people to housing support services.



## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3

Enhance the current service system to prevent homelessness, and when homeless, “rapidly” move people into stable housing

*Five recommendations with actions, targets, measures, and the detailed 2015 progress report are attached.*

### Progress in 2015

#### 76 individuals

stayed at the Inn Out of the Cold shelter during the 2015/16 winter season from November 2015 to April 2016; total of 800 bed nights; 18 female and 58 male guests; length of stay from 1 night to 133 nights (average: 1-5 nights); many individuals visited the shelter for a hot supper only.

Staff and outside agencies collaborate to find supported transitional or permanent housing solutions for individuals staying at the shelter.

56 youth received services through the Youth Homelessness Protocol in 2015 (66% male, 34% female) ages 15-24.

15 men were housed at the 7-bed Second Story supported transitional housing program during 2015; ages of residents ranged from 17-50, average age 30.

#### This is David's success story . . .

“When I was 18 years old I was living at home and trying to establish my independence. My father and I butted heads and didn’t agree on tons of stuff and there was other stuff going on at home, too. I was connected to the YWCA and called and set up a date for me to go and see the housing option for young men called Fair Winds. I toured the house and met the Client Advocate and she helped me to establish goals. Fair Winds is not a group home. It is a transitional home and helps you to gain skills and make sure you are ready to be on your own. It was like the training wheels of life for me. Fair Winds taught me how to live with roommates...even when you don’t always get along with them. I lived at Fair Winds for six months. It was a good experience for me. I also applied for the [YWCA Youth Engagement Project](#) and gained employability skills, training and job experience. I now have a job and am living in my own apartment.”

Six young men ages 16-24 moved through Fair Winds transitional housing program.

20 hostel rooms for women are available at the YWCA Residence on Mary Street; 40 women received housing services in 2015.

Four young women ages 16-24 moved through the Harmony House transitional housing program in 2015.





## STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4

Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to senior levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents

*Thirteen recommendations with actions, targets, measures, and the detailed 2015 progress report are attached.*

### Progress in 2015

The LHIN has been notified of the need for additional funding for the residential care homes program, as well as supports for tenants with undiagnosed mental illnesses; connections with key LHIN staff are being made; a funding proposal is pending.

Cross training of Ontario Works and Public Health front-line staff took place in 2015.

Provincial government initiatives were introduced:

- Ontario's 5-year Poverty Reduction Strategy
- Local Poverty Reduction funding
- A report called "A Place to Call Home" launched a 10-year commitment to end chronic homelessness in Ontario

A Community Leaders' Cabinet was formed in November 2015 by Mayor Heather Jackson to collectively champion for a better quality of life for the community.

A group of community agencies and individuals has held initial discussions to form a Poverty Roundtable for St. Thomas/Elgin, focussing on local actions and advocacy for system and policy changes to address the root causes of poverty.

## Recommended Actions

### Strategic Direction 1.0

#### Increase housing supply options to meet projected need.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: Increase the mix and supply of housing options, including the number of affordable rental units, market rental units, condo units, and affordable homes in the City of St. Thomas and the County of Elgin.						
Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
1.1.1 Encourage municipalities to work with private and non-profit builders/developers to ensure the construction of a mix of new housing and/or conversion of existing buildings with a focus on new units in the areas of highest demand and for the types of housing in areas of highest demand. This should include a portion of ownership housing priced below affordability levels and a specific focus on building one bedroom units in St. Thomas, including accessible rental units.	<p>Increase the supply of affordable one-bedroom rental units.</p> <p>Increase the supply of accessible apartments.</p> <p>Increase the supply of affordable condo apartments, townhouses and single family homes.</p>	<p>Number of new one-bedroom apartments created.</p> <p>Number of new accessible apartments created.</p> <p>Number of new affordable ownership condo apartments, townhouses and single family homes created.</p>	2014-24	City	Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) 2014 Extension was announced; 6 year program from 2014-2020; \$4,513,200 allocated to St. Thomas/Elgin; \$3,136,000 earmarked for new rental housing.	City Council approved three new affordable housing projects in July 2015 under the IAH program: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>10 units at 560 Talbot (Capitol Theatre)</li> <li>12 units at 207 Ross</li> <li>10 units at 33 Elysian</li> </ol> All are one-bedroom units, including accessible units.
1.1.2 Encourage City and lower-tier municipalities to establish municipal incentives that promote the development of mixed density neighbourhoods.	<p>Establish new multi-residential tax class</p> <p>Reduce or eliminate development fees and other charges for affordable housing.</p>		2014-19	City/ County/ Twps	Increase in mix of new housing construction in St. Thomas; more condominiums, apartment buildings planned by private developers in 2014.	OW Director met with Elgin County Council in June 2015 and Aylmer Town Council in July 2015; encouraged municipalities to consider providing financial incentives



## Strategic Direction 1.0

### Increase housing supply options to meet projected need.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1: Increase the mix and supply of housing options, including the number of affordable rental units, market rental units, condo units, and affordable homes in the City of St. Thomas and the County of Elgin.**

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
						for the development of affordable housing.
1.1.3 Permit secondary suites—all areas within St. Thomas and Elgin County should ensure their planning policies permit secondary suites/garden suites in single detached and row houses in compliance with Provincial direction.	All City and lower tier municipalities establish policies to permit secondary suites or garden suites.	Number of municipalities which have established policies.	2014-19	City/ County/ Twps		Will be considered as part of an Affordable Housing Strategy for St. Thomas in 2016.
1.1.4 All municipalities to include directions in their Official Plans that support the development of new affordable rental housing to meet the needs of their communities.	All upper and lower tier municipalities include provisions for the development of affordable housing in their Official Plans, to comply with the 2008 housing affordability targets.	All municipalities have established affordable housing targets in their Official Plans.	2014-19	City/ County/ Twps	Central Elgin reduced municipal property taxes for two social housing providers.	Will be considered as part of an Affordable Housing Strategy for St. Thomas in 2016.
1.1.5 Actively advocate for a commitment from municipal and provincial governments as well as school boards for a more flexible approach to consider the use of publicly owned land (including surplus school sites) for affordable housing, even if affordable housing is only a part of the redeveloped publicly owned sites.	Council/staff advocate or lobby to provincial gov't and school board to consider this request.	Examples of flexible new approaches achieved.	2014-19	City/ County/ Twps/ Prov/ Fed		Potential purchaser of Scott Street School in St. Thomas is considering re-development into affordable housing.

## Strategic Direction 1.0

### Increase housing supply options to meet projected need.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1: Increase the mix and supply of housing options, including the number of affordable rental units, market rental units, condo units, and affordable homes in the City of St. Thomas and the County of Elgin.**

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
1.2 Increase the number of rent supplements available to low and moderate income families.	Expand RS program as funds become available.  Increase number of portable RS.	Number of new RS units.	2014-19 As funding becomes available.	City/ Prov/ Fed	An average of 38 renters in the private sector received Housing Allowances of up to \$150 per month; approximately \$64,000 in program funds.	\$84,000 was invested in the Housing Allowance component of the IAH program to provide \$150/month in rent supplements to an average of 52 households in the private sector.  12 apartments at St. Thomas Elgin Second Stage Housing for victims of domestic violence are supported through the Housing Allowance program.
1.2.1 Undertake strategic outreach to landlords to encourage them to rent to low-income households through the provision of Rent Supplements and/or ongoing tenant support from community workers, building on the model CMHA has developed for its clients. Where possible, accessible units should be a priority when entering into rent supplement agreements.	Increase collaboration with private sector landlords, and number of RS in private sector.	Number of new RS landlords.  Number of new landlords partnering with the City.	2014-19	City		Seven new private sector landlords entered into Housing Allowance or Strong Communities Rent Supplement agreements with the OW Dept. in 2015.

## Strategic Direction 2.0

Provide supports to keep people in the sustainable housing they currently have.

### OBJECTIVE 2.1: Ensure that a coordinated system of supports is available to those currently in sustainable housing.

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
2.1.1 Continue to fund existing programs that help people maintain housing, evaluating effectiveness, enhancing where needed, as funds become available (such as Focus Fairview).	Continue to offer HeLP, LEAP and other homelessness prevention programs currently in place, monitoring, modifying and enhancing delivery as required.	CHPI Performance Indicator reports.  Client satisfaction surveys.	2014-19	City/ Prov	<p>\$400,000 in HeLP funding was allocated to assist low-income households with rent and utility arrears and other homelessness prevention supports.</p> <p>Other community agencies such as the Salvation Army and the Red Cross assist with utility arrears.</p>	<p>\$450,000 in HeLP funding was allocated to assist low-income households with homelessness prevention supports. The funds were spent as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- 44% for utility arrears (455 households)</li><li>- 22% for last/first month's rent (208 households)</li><li>- 16% for rent arrears (102 households)</li><li>- 10% for furniture (115 households)</li><li>- 3% for moving costs (70 households)</li><li>- 5% for other necessities (61 households)</li></ul> <p>A new pilot program similar to Focus Fairview was initiated by Elgin &amp; St. Thomas Housing Corporation at a public housing complex on Confederation, called Connect Confed; the program supports families living at the complex by bringing services and programs on site.</p>

## Strategic Direction 2.0

Provide supports to keep people in the sustainable housing they currently have.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Ensure that a coordinated system of supports is available to those currently in sustainable housing.						
Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
2.1.2 Ensure that new programs and services are developed according to client-centred (not system centred) principles, using strategies and measurements devised by Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA).	Consider single point of entry, minimizing referrals to other sources, flexibility and coordination among services providers, using measures developed by OMSSA.	Alignment with OMSSA strategies and measurements.	2014-19  As funding becomes available	City	\$316,250 in CHPI funding helped agencies provide client-centred supported housing as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YWCA Residence (17 beds)</li> <li>• Harmony House (3 beds)</li> <li>• Fair Winds (3 beds)</li> <li>• Second Story (6 beds)</li> <li>• Fresh Start (10 beds)</li> <li>• CMHA residential care program (45 beds)</li> </ul>	\$540,730 in CHPI funding helped agencies provide client-centred supported housing as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• YWCA Residence (17 beds)</li> <li>• Harmony House (3 beds)</li> <li>• Fair Winds (3 beds)</li> <li>• Second Story (6 beds)</li> <li>• Fresh Start (10 beds)</li> <li>• CMHA residential care program (71 beds)</li> </ul> <p>In November 2015, City Council approved in principle the plan to merge the operations of Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation into the City's operating structure; this will result in one access point for all social assistance applications including social housing, and better integration of social services.</p>
2.1.3 Establish a Community Worker position to be shared between the public housing corporation, non-profits and co-op housing providers to provide residents with connections and assistance to access community support agencies with the objective of preventing evictions and promoting successful tenancies.	Improve understanding of the importance of housing stability  Increase the number of	Compare number of evictions, late rent, N4's reduced prior to program intervention.  Number of interventions by worker	2014-19 as funding permits	City	2 Housing Programs Coordinator staff in the OW Dept. provide community outreach services to assist social housing providers	Evictions were prevented for over 100 households through outreach support from two Housing Programs Coordinator staff in the OW Dept.; outreach support was provided to assist social housing providers through eviction

## Strategic Direction 2.0

Provide supports to keep people in the sustainable housing they currently have.

**OBJECTIVE 2.1: Ensure that a coordinated system of supports is available to those currently in sustainable housing.**

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
2.1.4 Incorporate basic life/living skills, and financial literacy programs where possible in supports and services to people who are currently housed and for those in transition.	successful tenancies.	with current tenants and actions taken to maintain housing.  Number of evictions averted due to intervention.			through eviction support interventions.	interventions, by assisting HeLP applicants with other resources such as the Ontario Energy Support Program, the Housing Allowance Program, or referring applicants to apply for GAINS or other income sources.
					Life skills, financial, and other support services are built into transitional housing programs delivered by community agencies and supported through CHPI (see 2.1.2).	Life skills, financial, and other support services are built into transitional housing programs delivered by community agencies and supported through CHPI (see 2.1.2).
2.1.5 Endorse the need, and actively pursue funding for a Social Worker through the YWCA to support emergency and transitional housing residents in the community.	Increase the number of successful tenancies by emergency and transitional housing residents.	Number of residents securing stable housing and maintaining it for a period of at least six months.	2014 Dep. on available funding	City/Community		YWCA was granted \$360,000 over 3 years through the provincial Local Poverty Reduction Fund to strengthen and evaluate a program for homeless and at-risk youth in Elgin County. It will expand its existing services by hiring a social worker and adding an assessment tool to help match

## Strategic Direction 2.0

Provide supports to keep people in the sustainable housing they currently have.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: Ensure that a coordinated system of supports is available to those currently in sustainable housing.						
Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
						young people to housing support services.
2.1.6 Continue to provide, and expand where possible, funding for low to moderate income home owners to undertake emergency or essential home repairs to allow them to continue to live in their own homes.	Assistance to at least 10 households per year.	Number of home owner households able to continue to live in their homes when necessary health/safety repairs completed.	2014-19	City/Community	The St. Thomas/Elgin Home Repair program ran from 2012-14; \$100,877 was provided to 21 households for emergency or essential repairs, mainly roof and furnace replacements or repairs.	Through the IAH Home Repair Program, \$50,000 helped 7 homeowners in St. Thomas/Elgin pay for new roofs (4), major foundation repairs (1), furnace replacement (1), and sewer line repairs (1).
2.1.7 Evaluate the current St. Thomas Home Repair Program for its effectiveness prior to 2015. If deemed effective in keeping these homeowners in their homes, continue/expand the program as federal/provincial funds become available.	Evaluation of effectiveness of program	Number of households assisted and housing retained	2014-15	City	<p>\$50,000 was allocated to continue the home repair program from 2015-2020 through the Investment in Affordable Housing program extension.</p> <p>\$328,240 in IAH funding was allocated to ten residential care homes in St. Thomas and Elgin for the installation of sprinkler systems to comply with mandatory Fire Code requirements.</p>	<p>See 2.1.6</p> <p>9 of the 10 fire sprinkler system installation projects were substantially completed in 2015.</p>



### Strategic Direction 3.0

Enhance the current service system to prevent homelessness, and when homeless “rapidly” move people into stable housing.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Ensure that emergency and crisis services are accessible to persons experiencing episodes of homelessness, with a view to immediately setting goals, with supports, to move into stable, sustainable housing.**

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
3.1.1 Ensure existing programs and services that help people maintain housing and prevent homelessness continue, new programs and services are developed according to client-centred (not system centred) principles, evaluating effectiveness, and enhancing where needed, as funds become available. Use strategies to measure outcomes devised by OMSSA.	See 2.1.2 above	See 2.1.2 above	2014-19	City	<p>A new Residential Care Homes delivery system was implemented on April 1, 2014 through a partnership between the City and CMHA Elgin Branch, increasing the level and quality of services for about 45 vulnerable residents.</p> <p>CMHA purchased additional crisis beds in the community to quickly house people in need of shelter and support.</p> <p>20 hostel rooms for women are available at the YWCA residence on Mary St.; 42 women were served.</p>	<p>The Residential Care Homes program expanded to an average of 71 residents at four group homes; the program successfully supports residents in unregulated group home beds; CMHA received funding from the LHIN for a full-time staff through the mental health and addictions supportive housing program - primary focus is on recreational and social activities.</p> <p>20 hostel rooms for women are available at the YWCA Residence on Mary St.; 40 women received housing services in 2015.</p>

### Strategic Direction 3.0

Enhance the current service system to prevent homelessness, and when homeless “rapidly” move people into stable housing.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Ensure that emergency and crisis services are accessible to persons experiencing episodes of homelessness, with a view to immediately setting goals, with supports, to move into stable, sustainable housing.**

Actions		Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
3.1.2	Evaluate how attendance at Inn Out of the Cold, particularly for people regularly staying at the Inn Out of the Cold, is affected by the opening of the Second Story transitional housing and examine the need for increased services for the population served, including an evaluation of daytime programming, extending the season and the need for additional transitional or supportive housing.	Reduced use of emergency short-term housing.  Shorten length of stay through rapid housing approaches  Reduce recidivism	Quantitative/ qualitative evaluation – occupancy  Ability to assess mental health and other issues and capacity to assist  Review where people transition to, need for supports to obtain housing, etc.	Spring 2015	Com-munity /City	61 individuals stayed at Inn Out of the Cold during the 2014/15 winter season; total of 706 bed nights; another 150 individuals came for hot suppers only; staff work with Second Story and YWCA to refer individuals to Second Story or other housing; CMHA and Oxford-Elgin Legal Clinic assist; CHPI funds from the City support the shelter operations; Inn staff is available year-round.	76 individuals stayed at Inn Out of the Cold shelter during the 2015/16 winter season from November 2015 to April 2016; total of 800 bed nights; 18 female and 58 male guests; length of stay from 1 night to 133 nights (avg. 1-5 nights); many individuals visited the shelter for a hot supper only. Staff and outside agencies collaborate to find supported transitional or permanent housing solutions for individuals staying at the shelter.

## Strategic Direction 3.0

Enhance the current service system to prevent homelessness, and when homeless “rapidly” move people into stable housing.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Ensure that emergency and crisis services are accessible to persons experiencing episodes of homelessness, with a view to immediately setting goals, with supports, to move into stable, sustainable housing.**

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
3.1.3 Determine how Second Story is addressing the transitional housing needs of men in the community, and what service gaps continue to exist for this population.	Reduction of service gaps.	Quantitative /qualitative evaluation re: occupancy  Ability to assess mental health and other issues and capacity to assist  Review where people transition to, need for supports to obtain housing etc.	Spring 2015	City/Community	Second Story opened in November 2013; 7 hostel beds; 22 residents ages 16-69 housed from Dec. 2013 to Dec. 2014; CHPI funds from the City help support operations.  Need identified for more housing for young men.	15 men moved through the 7-bed Second Story supported transitional housing program during 2015; ages of residents ranged from 17 to 50, average age 30.  Need identified for more housing for young men.
3.1.4 Endorse recent youth homelessness recommendations. Implement Coordinated Service Protocol to Respond to Youth Homelessness, evaluate implementation, and determine how this protocol can be extended to other populations.	Youth protocol implemented and determine applicability/ revision for use with non-youth homeless.	Evaluation of youth inter-agency protocol system.	2014-19	CCYE/Community/City	An inter-agency protocol was established through the Children’s Action network in 2013 to coordinate service provision for homeless youth; 44 homeless youth between the ages of 15 and 24 accessed resources through the protocol.  7 young men moved through Fair Winds transitional housing for	56 youth received services through the Youth Homelessness Protocol in 2015 (66% male, 34% female) ages 15-24. Top need for service was lack of affordable housing. Provincial Poverty Reduction funding has been received to strengthen and evaluation the Protocol (see 2.1.5).  6 young men ages 16-24 moved through Fair Winds transitional housing program

### Strategic Direction 3.0

Enhance the current service system to prevent homelessness, and when homeless “rapidly” move people into stable housing.

**OBJECTIVE 3.1: Ensure that emergency and crisis services are accessible to persons experiencing episodes of homelessness, with a view to immediately setting goals, with supports, to move into stable, sustainable housing.**

Actions	Targets	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
					young men ages 16-24.  4 young women ages 16-24 moved through the Harmony House transitional housing program.	in 2015.  4 young women ages 16-24 moved through the Harmony House transitional housing program in 2015.
3.1.5 Investigate a “Housing Help Centre” or a one stop social services delivery model and/or connections with health services. Expand the Housing Program Coordinator role and resources to meet increasing need and provide central access for people to go to for services.	Measure caseload and outcomes for people being served by the Housing Program Coordinator (HPC), and determine; need to enhance this service, community capacity to meet need; and model.	Evaluation or report on findings, including recommendations.	2014-19 dep. on funding avail	City/Com-munity	Two Housing Programs Coordinators at the OW Dept. are able to access various programs and resources to help people find or sustain housing.	In November 2015, City Council approved in principle the plan to merge the operations of Elgin and St. Thomas Housing Corporation into the City’s operating structure; this will result in one access point for all social assistance applications including social housing, and better integration of social services.

**Strategic Direction 4.0**

**Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to seniors levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents.**

**OBJECTIVE: 4.1 Increase community partnerships and collaborations and actively advocate for a reduction in poverty and increased housing stability for all residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County.**

Actions		Target	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
4.1.1	Examine opportunities for further service integration of health and social services and support community agencies in pursuing additional funding through the LHIN to address housing and support needs of persons with mental illness, addictions and undiagnosed mental illness.	Initiate and monitor the implementation of the 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan including a review at 5 years	HHAG reports annually on Housing and Homelessness Plan progress through an Annual Report Card	2015-19	City/Com-munity/LHIN/Prov	A new residential care homes network was established, connecting health services with care homes operators; Central Community Health Centre now makes regular mobile unit visits to homes.	The LHIN has been notified of the need for additional funding for the residential care homes program, as well as supports for tenants with undiagnosed mental illnesses; connections with key LHIN staff are being made; a funding proposal is pending.
4.1.2	Expand collaborative priority-setting through the Housing and Homeless Action Group (HHAG). Effective planning of homeless-related mental health and addiction services, and housing supports, will require enhanced collaboration between the LHIN, the City and other community support organizations, including the Aboriginal community, Violence Against Women Agencies and Accessibility Committees.		City reporting annually on Provincially-prescribed Performance Measures			Community partners meet quarterly at the Housing & Homelessness Action Group table; HHAG is actively working to engage the LHIN.	HHAG has identified the following gaps in housing/homelessness services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Renovations required in private upper apartments in downtown core</li><li>- Supportive housing needed for individuals with dual diagnoses, addictions, and acquired brain injuries</li><li>- Housing for young men</li></ul>

## Strategic Direction 4.0

**Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to seniors levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents.**

**OBJECTIVE: 4.1 Increase community partnerships and collaborations and actively advocate for a reduction in poverty and increased housing stability for all residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County.**

Actions		Target	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
4.1.3	Encourage and support community initiatives for supportive housing. Seek capital funding through senior levels of gov't, coordinate funding with partners such as LHIN, CMHA etc.	Determining the need for housing, intended population, number of units, model of support, secure funds for capital and operating.	Supported housing needs assessment.	Ongoing 2014-19	Com-munity/ City/ Prov	HHAG is actively working to engage the LHIN.	Engagement activities are ongoing.
4.1.4	Investigate ways to expand outreach of housing/homelessness services to the County i.e. Skype might be used by several agencies to provide remote access to prevention, as well as other services. Model may become a rural virtual "hub" shared by many community services, as well as those relocating to London.	Contact other SM re: outreach methods to rural/remote areas, evaluate for St. Thomas Elgin, determine appropriate implementation strategy for City and community programs.	Improved service to rural or remote areas in Elgin.	2015-19	City/ Com-munity	OW Dept. opened a satellite office in Aylmer in Sept. 2014.	OW staff make use of rural or remote community centres as access points for applicants to drop off paperwork, fax signed documents, or send emails (i.e. West Elgin Community Centre, Aylmer Community Centre, or the Livingston Centre in Tillsonburg).



**Strategic Direction 4.0**

**Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to seniors levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents.**

**OBJECTIVE: 4.1 Increase community partnerships and collaborations and actively advocate for a reduction in poverty and increased housing stability for all residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County.**

Actions		Target	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
4.1.5	Increase opportunities for information sharing and cross training across agencies and volunteers to enhance knowledge understanding and communication	Increased inter-agency training.	Number of multi-sector training sessions system for sharing information and collaborative service provision opportunities.	Ongoing 2014-24	City/Community		<p>OW and Elgin St. Thomas Public Health managers meet regularly to share program information.</p> <p>Cross training of OW and ESTPH front-line staff took place in 2015.</p> <p>Staff from outside agencies regularly present information at OW general staff meetings; OW staff are regularly invited to present program information to outside agencies.</p>
4.1.6	Advocate for policy change to build on the approach of the Ontario Child Benefit by developing an expanded range of income and services to be available to all low-income Ontarians.	Increased financial security for low-income residents.	Number and types of lobbying actions.	2014-2024	Community, directly to provincial gov't (MCSS, and MoH/LTC) using approp-		<p>A Community Leaders' Cabinet was formed in November 2015 by Mayor Heather Jackson to collectively champion for positive quality of life changes for the St. Thomas/Elgin community.</p>

## Strategic Direction 4.0

**Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to seniors levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents.**

**OBJECTIVE: 4.1 Increase community partnerships and collaborations and actively advocate for a reduction in poverty and increased housing stability for all residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County.**

Actions	Target	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
4.1.7 Advocate for the replacement of short-term coverage in Ontario Works with more appropriate financial support outside of the social assistance system for those who are temporarily unemployed.				riate and effective methods.		A group of community agencies has held initial discussions on forming a Poverty Roundtable for St. Thomas/Elgin focussing on local actions and advocacy for system and policy changes to address the root causes of poverty.
4.1.8 Support the advocacy campaign for a healthy food supplement of \$100 monthly to all adults receiving social assistance in Ontario.				Sector organizations and Municipal Councils (OMSSA/AMO/FCM)		
4.1.9 Advocate for increased and stable funding from the Federal and Provincial governments in order provide new affordable rental housing units in the City and County.	Lobby through sector organizations and Municipal Councils (OMSSA/ONPHA/AMO/FCM/ CHRA) and directly to provincial gov't (MCSS, MMAH and MoH/LTC) using appropriate and effective methods.	Number of new affordable rental housing units.  Examine change in federal funding for social housing.  # of new rent supplement units.  Examine change in rent supplement	2014-2024	City/Com-munity		
4.1.10 Advocate for Federal and Provincial government funding to maintain existing social housing stock in the City and County.						
4.1.11 Advocate for increased Federal and Provincial funding for portable rent supplements, especially to meet the needs of the working poor.						

**Strategic Direction 4.0**

**Pursue community partnerships and broaden community awareness while advocating to seniors levels of government to ensure stable housing and poverty reduction for all residents.**

OBJECTIVE: 4.1 Increase community partnerships and collaborations and actively advocate for a reduction in poverty and increased housing stability for all residents of St. Thomas and Elgin County.						
Actions	Target	Measure	Time frame	Resp.	2014 Progress Report	2015 Progress Report
		funding.				
4.1.12 Encourage all existing social housing providers to reduce energy and water consumption/costs through the use of available grants	Reduce operating costs for social and affordable housing providers	# of new units using grants  Energy efficiency of new units	2014 - 2024	City	Information on funding/grant opportunities is forwarded to housing providers.	Information on funding/grant opportunities is forwarded to housing providers.
4.1.13 New affordable housing created with federal, provincial or municipal funds should be encouraged to exceed the energy efficiency requirements of the 2012 Building Code.						The Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) program Request for Proposals in April 2015 included the following requirement: Energy efficient features may include but are not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• HVAC systems;</li><li>• use of LED lighting;</li><li>• insulation and high performance building envelopes beyond the minimum Ontario Building Code (OBC) requirements</li><li>• Energy Star rated windows and doors;</li><li>• Smart Meter;</li><li>• Products that reduce water consumption beyond OBC requirements.</li></ul>