



City of Kingston
Information Report to Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee
Report Number HHC-24-004

To: Chair and Members of the Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee

From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services

Resource Staff: Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Housing & Social Services

Date of Meeting: December 14, 2023

Subject: Standing Update Report – December 2023

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 1. Support Housing Affordability

Goal: See above

Executive Summary:

The Housing & Homelessness Advisory Committee is provided with an update report on the housing and homelessness system in Kingston and Frontenac at least quarterly throughout the year. The report includes updates regarding homelessness services, social housing programs, affordable housing projects and initiatives, and other updates as applicable.

Recommendation:

This report is for information only.

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Options/Discussion:

The report is organized in three sections providing updates on homelessness services, social housing programs and affordable housing projects and initiatives.

By Name List (BNL) and Coordinated Access

As per previous reports, people on the BNL may be precariously housed or unhoused ranging from and not limited to living in shelters, motels, with family, incarcerated, in hospital or living rough. A Coordinated Access System is a community-wide system that streamlines the process for people experiencing homelessness to access housing and support services as an essential step to delivering a more coordinated housing system. Funded agencies within Kingston’s homelessness system participate in a coordinated approach to assisting the most vulnerable on the BNL. The BNL has stabilized over the last four months with a similar amount of people entering and exiting homelessness. The majority of the people entering homelessness in the City of Kingston were newly identified and an equal number of files became inactive. During the last two months, 37 households became housed. Below are the BNL numbers from the last seven months:

Table 1: By Name List Data, Q2, Q3 and Q4 2023

Month	Number of People
April 2023	440
May 2023	411
June 2023	480
July 2023	524
August 2023	533
September 2023	531

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October 2023	537
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Shelters/Overnight Drop-in Centre Updates

The Integrated Care Hub (ICH) re-opened the overnight drop-in services in mid-October for 20 people in addition to their 25 shelter beds in their rest zone. Beyond the overnight spaces, the ICH continues to offer programming which provides low-barrier access to care and services. The key components of the site continue to include:

- A drop-in centre where individuals can access food, harm reduction supplies, support and community.
- Consumption and Treatment Services (CTS) operated by Street Health Centre (part of Kingston Community Health Centres).
- Integrated care where community organizations provide access to social, economic and community health services to those we serve.

Street Mission’s evening winter programming at 218 Concession Street Shelter began on November 2nd. Individuals are welcome from 8 pm to 11 pm to warm-up, participate in activities, have a hot meal and access shelter beds.

St. Mary’s Cathedral will open its cold-weather shelter space December 4th. This service provides 12 beds for men, access to showers, clothing services and a hot breakfast.

Lily’s Place, which provides emergency shelter for families and access to support services and skills programming has expanded within its current two properties to allow up to 31 individuals to stay. This is an increase of 12 additional beds from the Standing Update Report shared in August.

Street Outreach Services

Welcoming Streets, a downtown-focused pilot street outreach program for individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, has been in operation since July 1, 2023. This program is a partnership between the Downtown Kingston Business Improvement Area (DBIA) and Addictions & Mental Health Services–KFLA (AMHS). Data compiled from the last three months show that 499 connections were made by trained staff with 165 unique individuals. Of these Individuals 81% are receiving AMHS support. The program’s staff have been able to encourage ongoing case management to get individuals the support they need. The staff also distributes necessities to address basic needs including transportation passes, harm reduction supplies, clothing and hydration options. The DBIA staff work closely with downtown business owners to ensure they know who to call in various circumstances and what supports are available across the community. This information is shared via information sessions and training opportunities.

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As this program continues to roll out, City staff will continue to bring updates back to the committee in 2024 to share additional outcomes and potential recommendations for the program moving forward.

Kingston Youth Shelter Renovation Work

At its November 7th meeting, City Council approved capital funding of \$150,000 to the Kingston Youth Shelter. The contribution supports the completion of renovation work at the new shelter facility located at 365 Nelson Street expanding the capacity at the site by 11 spaces. Upon completion, the site will provide a total of 24 overnight spaces. The funding is available under the shared provincially-federally funded Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI). The additional spaces are scheduled to be completed and available for overnight occupancy by year end.

Transitional Housing Program

Council approved a head lease initiative on May 16, 2023 ([Report 23-112](#)). Lionhearts, the operator of this program, is entering into leasing agreements with various property owners, and placing residents within new transitional housing spaces. The residents receive service supports and life skill programming. Thirteen of the possible 25 spots have been filled in 2023 with placements ongoing. One person has already found permanent housing after being in the program for two months. Lionhearts continues to add additional spots with another 25 spots anticipated to come online in 2024 with will bring the total number of spots to 50.

Rent Geared to Income Assistance (RGI)

Under the Housing Services Act 2011 (HSA), the City of Kingston, as Service Manager for housing and homelessness programs, is responsible for maintaining a target of 2,003 RGI units in the Kingston and Frontenac service area. The Housing & Social Services Department oversees the social housing system which includes fifteen non-profit housing providers that currently manage and directly operate 1,518 RGI units which follow eligibility rules set out in Part V of the HSA. The remainder of RGI units are secured through rent supplement agreements with private and non-profit housing providers, and recipients of the local Portable Housing Benefit (PHB).

Additionally, there are 61 municipally funded supportive housing units with tenants paying no more than 30% of their adjusted family net income or if on social assistance, rent is no more than maximum shelter allowance which count towards the City of Kingston's service levels. There are another 30 non-mandated RGI units funded by Federal and Urban Native programs. Social housing units and PHB benefits are accessed by way of the centralized waiting list (CWL) which is maintained by the Social Housing Registry. Information and updates regarding the CWL and RGI units are shared through Tables 2-5 below.

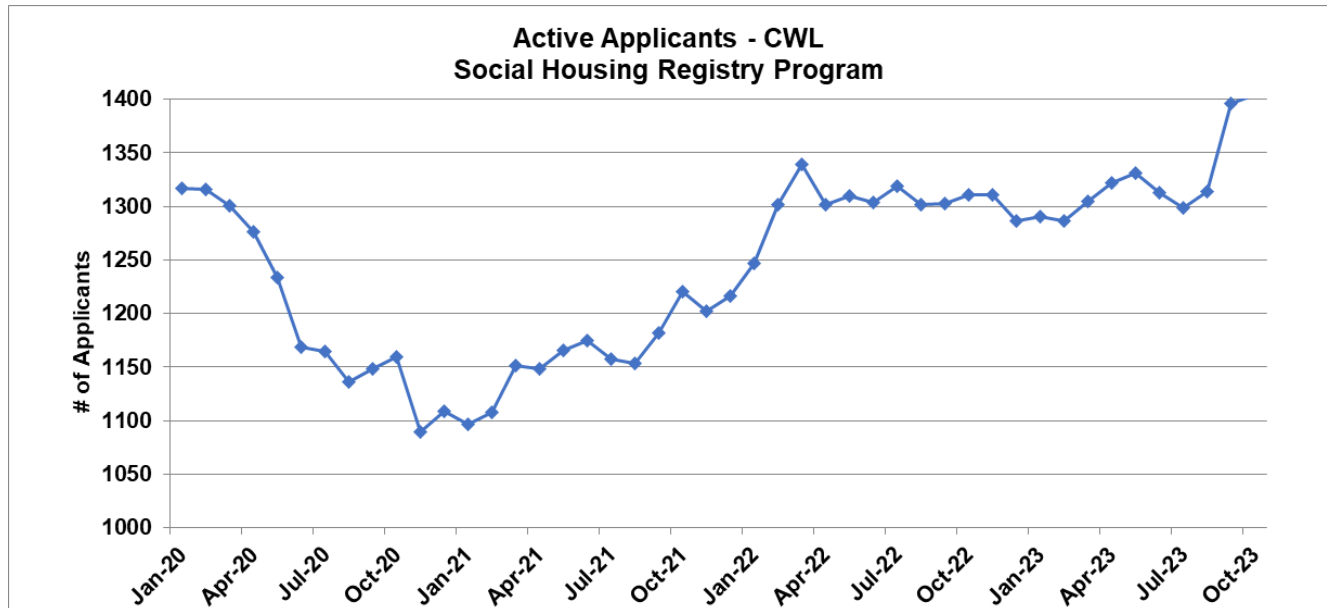
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Table 2: Centralized Wait List Data - Number of Active Eligible Households as of October 31, 2023

Household Type	Single	Family	Senior (65+)	Total
Special Priority	5	18	1	24
Chronological	782	410	188	1380
Total				1404
Already RGI requesting a transfer				212

Table 3: History of Number of Active Eligible Households – Jan 1, 2020 – Oct 31, 2023



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Table 4: Total Number of RGI Applications Received Jan 2023 – Oct 31, 2023

Household Type	No Dependants	Families	Seniors (65+)	Total
# of Applications	450	238	69	757
# of Eligible Households	368 (including 15 Special Priority)	204 (including 20 Special Priority)	60 (including 1 Special Priority)	632

Table 5: Total Number of Households Housed Jan 2023 – Oct 31, 2023

Household Type	Number Housed
Chronological (non-seniors) RGI Unit	42
Special Priority - RGI Unit	40
Chronological PHB	31
Special Priority - PHB	3
Chronological Seniors (65+) - RGI Unit	16
Total	132

Local Portable Housing Benefit (PHB)

A PHB is a monthly subsidy provided to a low-income household to assist with housing costs. Unlike other forms of housing assistance, the benefit is tied to the household and not a physical housing unit, allowing the benefit to move with the household to any rental unit within the City of Kingston or County of Frontenac. As a result, recipients will have more flexibility to choose

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where they live to be closer to family, social support networks, schools and employment opportunities.

In 2023, there are 138 PHB benefits available for eligible residents and as of October 31, 2023, 122 households are receiving a PHB.

Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB)

The COHB is a federal-provincial housing allowance program which provides a portable housing benefit across Ontario to assist with housing costs and can also include a one-time assistance with first and last month’s rent. Since the beginning of the program in April 2020, the City receives a funding allocation for new applicants. Funding continues each year for those households who maintain eligibility at annual review. The province has committed these funds until March 31, 2029.

The amount of the benefit is dependent on the household’s income, the Average Market Rent for the bedroom size that the household is eligible for based on occupancy standards, and the amount of actual rent paid. For households on social assistance who are not paying rent, or who are only paying the maximum amount of shelter allowance under Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) rates, they will be considered eligible for the benefit; however, with an amount of zero dollars. They will remain eligible for up to 24 months. Once these households have rental costs, the amount is re-calculated by the Ministry of Finance.

As of October 31, 2023, there are 294 households in the City of Kingston’s service area receiving the benefit, 35 of those are eligible but with zero payment. A total of \$147,286.97 per month is being provided to the remaining 259 households.

The City of Kingston’s 2023-2024 (April - June) original COHB funding allocation of \$399,600 was fully spent assisting eighty-five (85) households by July 2023. Four (4) households were made eligible prior to this year but received assistance with first/last month's rent, twenty-four (24) were made eligible for a zero payment and \$34,798.38 per month is currently being provided to fifty-seven (57) households.

The following tables provide an overview of the households made eligible in the 2023-2024 original COHB allocation.

Table 6: Family Composition

Single	Sole support - 1 dependent	Sole support - 2 dependents	Sole support - 3 + dependents	Couples	Couple - 1 dependent
56	7	7	5	5	1

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Table 7: Source of Income

OW	ODSP	CPP/OAS	CPP Disability	WSIB	Part-Time Employment
38	32	6	1	1	3

Table 8: Housing Situation at time of Application

Housing Status at time of application	Number of Households
Housed	50
Homeless	23
Transitional Housing	8

Note:

1. Housed applicants were either facing eviction/utilities disconnection, loss of household income, were precariously housed or affordability compromised housing.
2. Homeless included shelters, couch surfing and living rough.

At the end of September, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) updated the City of Kingston’s 2023-2024 COHB allocation with additional funding in the amount of \$399,600 reflecting funding to support new participants in the program up to June 30, 2024, and confirmed that the number of additional applications that can be submitted is estimated at 62. Staff received referrals from community partners and have reached the target number and are working through forwarding the applications to the Ministry for review.

Tenant Support Services Program

The City of Kingston funds Kingston & Frontenac Housing Corporation (KFHC) in an initiative to better support tenants in social housing units. KFHC offers a Tenant Support Services Program that provides crisis services, direct assessment and intervention services, and ongoing support to its tenants. As of September 30, 2023, there have been 127 intake referrals (48 singles, 48 families and 31 seniors) and support staff continue to work with 114 households.

Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)

Under the 2017 National Housing Strategy, the MMAH entered into a bilateral agreement between with the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation Canada establishing the Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI). COCHI provides funding to Service Managers to protect affordability for households in social housing by supporting the repair and renewal of existing social housing supply.

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The City of Kingston received an allocation of \$1,393,600 for the 2023-2024 fiscal year. To date, there are nine funding agreements with social housing providers in place totalling \$858,680 for work including new roofs, elevator modernizations, new windows, foundation work, new kitchens and bathrooms, new furnaces, HVAC and boilers.

Housing Provider Operational Reviews

Under the HSA, Service Managers may conduct an audit or investigation to ensure that a housing provider is complying with the HSA and its corresponding regulations and local priorities by way of an Operational Review.

An Operational Review is intended to identify areas in which the housing provider is successfully meeting the legislation's requirements and the Service Manager and those which present opportunities for improvement.

Prior to COVID-19, the City’s housing providers would undergo an Operational Review every five years. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the reviews were put on hold, but have recently resumed aligning with Council’s Strategic Plan under the Support Housing Affordability pillar, priority 1.3.4. One review took place in May of this year, and another in mid-November.

Affordable Housing Project and Initiatives

Since inception, affordable rental housing capital funding programs have provided financial assistance from municipal, provincial and federal sources to create over 510 units. The capital funding assistance is provided in exchange for long-term rents at below-market levels. These units are in addition to the service area’s 2,003 rent-geared-to-income units. Table 9 outlines ongoing affordable housing projects that have received capital funding commitments and are in development or under construction.

Table 9: Ongoing Affordable Housing Projects

Address	Proponent	Affordable Units	Description	Status
1316 Princess Street	Kingston & Frontenac Housing Corporation	52 units	Affordable and Rent-Geared-to-Income Housing	Construction started summer 2022; completion targeting summer 2024

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1336 Princess Street	Kingston Co-Operative Homes Inc.	38 units	Affordable Housing	Construction started summer 2022; completion targeting summer 2024
484 Albert Street	Kingston Home Base Housing	48 units	Supportive/ Transitional Youth Housing	Zoning By-Law Amendment approval obtained in summer 2021
1752 Bath Road	ARM Construction Company	28 units	Affordable Housing	Foundation permit obtained fall 2023
805 Ridley Drive (West Wing)	City of Kingston and Dawn House for Women	17 beds	Transitional housing for vulnerable women	Renovation starts targeting November 2023
111 MacCauley Street	Habitat for Humanity	8 units	Tiny House Pilot Project	Construction ongoing, completion targeting spring 2024
206 Concession Street	City of Kingston and Addiction and Mental Health Services	18 beds	Addiction and mental health housing stabilization program	Construction to start November 2023; completion targeting November 2024
255 Yonge Street	City of Kingston	3 units	Indigenous housing	Construction to start April 2024; completion

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				targeting November 2024
44-62 Barbara Avenue	HJK1 Holdings Ltd.	5 units	Affordable Housing	Construction underway; completion targeting late Fall 2023

Other Affordable Housing Programs

Second Residential Unit Affordable Housing Grant Program

Second residential units, also known as secondary suites or granny flats, are private, self-contained units within an existing dwelling (i.e. basement apartment) or in a detached, accessory structure such as a backyard coach house or converted detached garage. Second residential units provide additional housing diversity and support housing options for singles and smaller households, live-in caregivers and downsizing seniors, amongst other smaller household types. Second residential units also provide additional income which can be used to support low to moderate-income households achieve home ownership. In 2022, building permits were issued for 80 second residential units. The Second Residential Unit Affordable Housing Grant Program provides eligible homeowners funding of up to \$15,000 to support the costs of creating a new or legalizing an existing suite.

Kingston-Frontenac Renovates Program

The Kingston-Frontenac Renovates Program provides funding assistance to eligible homeowners to make their homes more accessible or to complete urgent or emergency repairs. Examples of eligible projects include accessibility ramps, stair lifts, handrails, roof replacement, foundation work, furnace replacement and window replacement. Projects are eligible for up to \$15,000 which is provided in the form of a forgivable loan forgiven at an equal rate over the ten-year term. For accessibility projects, \$5,000 is provided in the form of a non-repayable grant. The 2023 program is now available and accepting applications. The program is funded annually with \$200,000 which is available from a shared provincial/federal funding program. Repayments received from participants that sell their home within the ten-year term are returned to the program’s revolving fund which supports additional households. In 2023, 14 households have benefited from this program.

Home Ownership Program

The Home Ownership Program provides down payment assistance to low-to-moderate-income renter households. The purpose of the program is to support households that could afford the

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monthly costs of homeownership but are unable to fund the down payment requirements. Eligible households must be currently renting a home in the City of Kingston or County of Frontenac and meet specified income criteria. Funding is provided in the form of a 10% down payment which is forgiven after the 20-year affordability term. If the home is sold during the 20-year term, the principal amount and 10% of any capital appreciation is repayable to the program's revolving loan fund. While the unprecedented price escalation in recent years has impacted the number of successful purchases, for 2023, the asset limit has been raised from \$20,000 to \$50,000 to enable prospective participants to maximize down payment availability. In 2022, City Council approved program funding to also support non-profit organizations to purchase residential properties to house clients. In 2023, two households have benefited from this program in addition to one non-profit housing provider.

Existing Policy/By-Law

None

Notice Provisions

None

Financial Considerations

None

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Lori Kidd Velkova, Housing Program Administrator

Exhibits Attached:

None