

REPORT NO. 244 of the
**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT,
HEALTH & CULTURE STANDING COMMITTEE**
of its meeting held September 10, 2014

Present: Councillor Ed Sleiman, Chair
Councillor Jo-Anne Gignac
Councillor Alan Halberstadt
Councillor Fulvio Valentinis

Regrets: Councillor Al Maghnieh


That the following recommendation of the Social Development, Health and Culture Standing Committee **BE APPROVED** as follows:

Moved by Councillor Gignac, seconded by Councillor Valentinis,
THAT the minutes of the Housing Advisory Committee meeting held March 19, 2014 **BE RECEIVED** for information.
Carried.

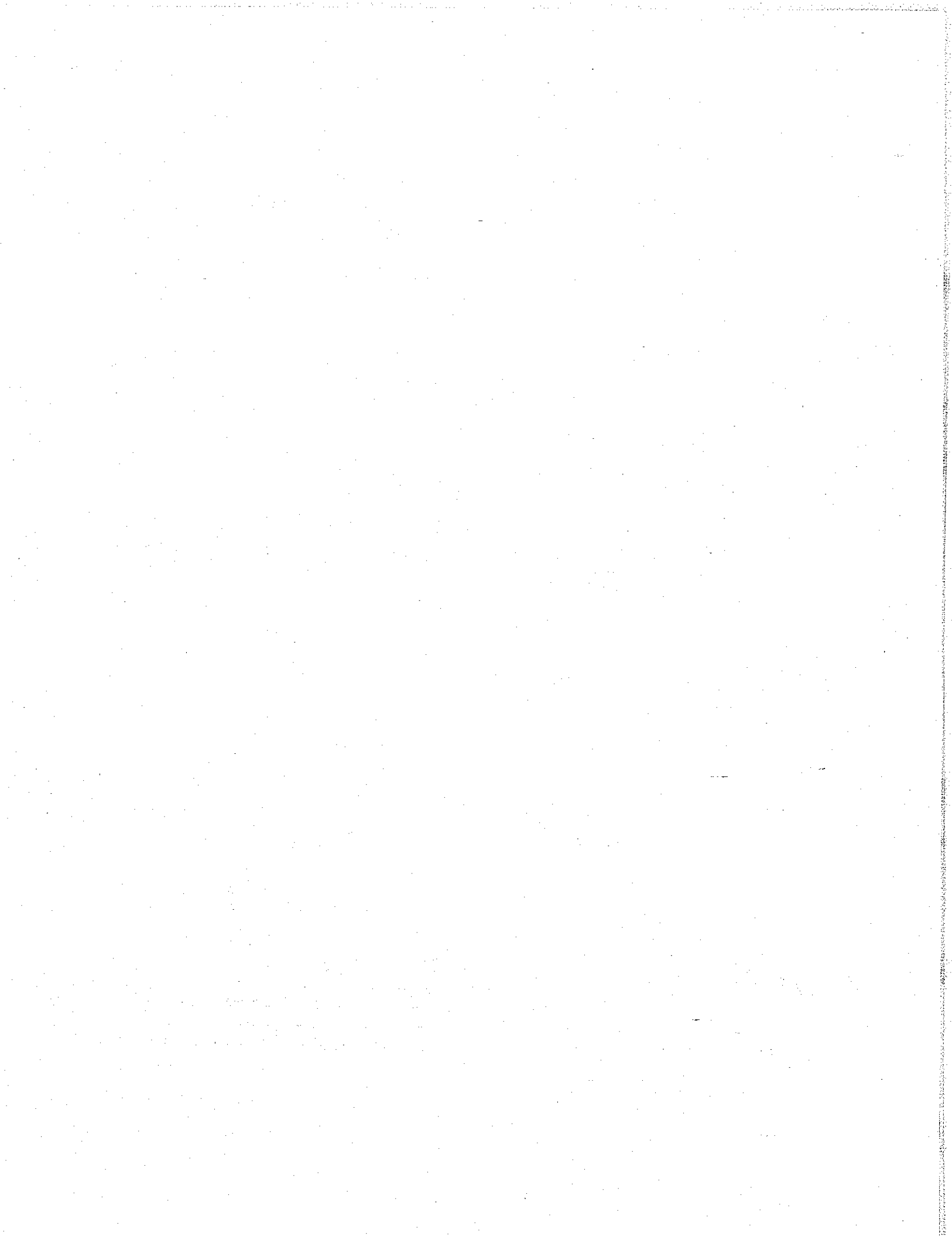
Clerk's Note: The minutes of the Housing Advisory Committee meeting held March 19, 2014 are attached as background information.



CHAIRPERSON


SUPERVISOR OF COUNCIL SERVICES

NOTIFICATION :				
Name	Address	Email Address	Telephone	FAX



KK/
Windsor, Ontario March 19, 2014

A meeting of the **Housing Advisory Committee** is held this day commencing at 9:00 o'clock a.m. in the Town of Walkerville Meeting Room, 3rd floor, City Hall, there being present the following members:

Marina Clemens, Chairperson
Anna Angelidis
Frank Duralia
Elayne Isaacs
Gary McNamara
Heather McNamara
Cheryl Porter
Paul Renaud
Lorena Shepley (arrives at 9:20 a.m.)
Linda Wilson
Kirk Woodall (for Jim Steele)

Regrets received from:

Bill Bijl
Steve Govette

Also present are the following resource personnel:

Chris Aspila, Policy Planning
Judith Binder, CMHC
Dawn Bosco, Manager of Residential Support Services (A)
Debbie Cercone, Executive Director of Housing & Children's Services
Rob Oleynik, Program Coordinator, Housing & Children's Services
Karen Kadour, Committee Coordinator

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairperson calls the meeting to order at 9:14 o'clock a.m. and the Committee considers the Agenda being Schedule "A" **attached** hereto, matters which are dealt with as follows:

2. **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT**

None disclosed.

3. MINUTES

Moved by A. Angelidis, seconded by H. McNamara,
That the minutes of the Housing Advisory Committee of its meeting held
November 5, 2013 **BE ADOPTED** as presented.
Carried.

4. BUSINESS ITEMS

4.1 2014 Update of the Investment Affordable Housing (IAH) Program

R. Oleynik distributes a document entitled "Data Summary March 2014
2013 IAH Program Component Implementation – April 1, 2013 to December 31, 2014",
attached as Appendix "A". The salient points of discussion relating to the document are
as follows:

IAH Rent Supplement Component Allocation \$6,451 M over 10 years
Overall target to March 31, 2014: 163 units – Actual take-up to date: 166 units
Program Year 3 April 3, 2013 to March 31, 2014
Unit allocation at full take-up
Funding not all full take-up due to ramp up and lower than budgeted per unit subsidy
Budgeted for average subsidy of \$400 per month
Actual to-date average of \$364 per month
Program Response City @ 92% County @ 8%

IAH Homeownership Downpayment Assistance Program – Total \$748,630
2013 Original Allocation plus Round 2 revolving funds and Ontario Renovates Transfer
\$692,230 IAH plus \$54,400

Maximum Assistance	\$17,300
Final Approvals	53 applications
Average Amount	\$14,144 per transaction
Remaining balance	\$0
Program Response	City at 58% County at 42%
App return ratio	10%

Ontario Renovates

Program Allocation	Homeowner \$913,120	Multi-Res \$214,000
Approved Apps	39	4 apps (13 units)
Average amount	\$23,413	\$16,462 per unit
Remaining funds	\$0	\$0
Program City	69%	100%
Response County	31%	0%
App return ratio	10% to 15%	

2014 IAH April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

A housing allowance program will be introduced in 2014 to determine the benefits and challenges when compared to a rent supplement program.

2014 HOP Program Allocation effective April 1, 2014 - \$0.00

The Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Program will not be offered in 2014. This was known from the onset of the IAH program and is not an unexpected development.

2014 Ontario Renovates Program effective April 1, 2014 - \$1,115,831

The 2014 Ontario Renovates Program for Homeowners was released on March 8, 2014. The program runs until December 10, 2014 or when funds are depleted, whichever occurs first.

In response to a question asked by E. Isaacs if statistics are available relating to the sales of homes including bankruptcies, R. Oleynik responds this information can be provided for the next meeting.

In terms of the Ontario Renovates program in the County, J. Binder suggests the creation of small units in buildings as there are challenges locating housing for low income families.

P. Renaud questions if commercial properties can be converted to residential housing to which R. Oleynik responds commercial/residential conversions are not eligible under the program.

F. Duralia asks if there is a component for recipients who apply for the various programs, i.e. age. R. Oleynik states the programs are driven by a "crisis, adverse exceptional circumstances" criteria which can be applied to persons of any age.

F. Duralia indicates it appears the City of Windsor is an aging population growing into poverty. J. Binder states in a 2011 National Household Survey, the results showing the area of concern were women over 85 years of age.

4.2 Final Review of Local Rules – Housing Services Act

R. Oleynik advises the *Housing Services Act* came into force on January 1, 2012 and notable changes in the Act include that Service Managers have more flexibility and are responsible to develop 10-year housing and homelessness plans to be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. As it relates to the Windsor Essex Summary – Areas of Local Service Manager Flexibility to adopt Local Rules – 2014, the following highlights relating to the *Housing Services Act* Recommendations (HSA) are provided:

1. Time Period for Household to Report changes in come of household composition:

Recommendation: Adopt 30 day calendar notification period. Housing provider or service manager may extend the notification period either before or after the period has expired in individual cases.

2. Requirement to pursue certain types of income:

Recommendation: Status Quo – adopt existing Pursuit of Income Rule.

3. Maximum Housing Income Limits

Recommendation: Adopt one set of housing income limits (HIL) for the entire Windsor Essex Service Area using the minimum Windsor HIL limits. The HILs for all municipalities in Windsor Essex will remain the same with the exception of Kingsville and Leamington. The HILs for Kingsville and Leamington will increase.

4. Asset Limit

Recommendation - Adopt Status Quo for now but complete a review of this matter and explore and identify the impact of adopting an Asset Limit.

5. Previous Rent Geared-to-Income (RGI) Criminal Conviction Ineligibility

Recommendation - Status Quo- Households with a criminal code conviction or a Tribunal decision confirming RGI fraud not eligible for rent geared-to-income assistance for two years.

6. Maximum Absence from Unit

Recommendation - Status Quo – adopt Local Absence Rule in place prior to the HSA.

7. Overhoused Rule

Recommendation - Adopt amended local Overhoused Rule providing clearer direction to tenants and housing providers.

8. Refusal of Three Offers – Ineligibility

Recommendation – Status Quo – retain and adopt the three refusal rule.

9. Occupancy Standards

Recommendation – Adopt amended Occupancy Standards to include kinship arrangements, improve child visitation rules and, improve reporting standards required by housing providers.

10. Annual Income and Occupancy Review Intervals

Recommendation – Status Quo – continue with 12 month annual reviews and more frequently, if required for both Central Housing Registry applicants and RGI households.

11. Deferral or Forgiveness of RGI Rent

Recommendation – Establish a rule to defer or forgive RGI rent to address dual rent circumstances and retroactive RGI rent adjustments in certain cases.

12. Conflict of Interest

Recommendation – Adopt existing Conflict of interest provisions in place prior to the HSA with added provision to address tenant Board members in arrears.

13. Review of Certain Decisions

Recommendation – Establish one central review body but allow the Community Housing Corporation to continue to conduct internal reviews generated within their portfolio. Defer the development of a review system for decisions made by the service manager until such time as the type of decision eligible for review is identified in the Regulations by the province.

14. Ranking and Selection System

Recommendation – Status Quo – retain existing centralized waiting list systems and application selection rules for now. Explore changes throughout 2014 and 2015 to address and improve applicant ranking to recognize need rather than ranking solely by date of application and include changes to achieve implementation of recommendations in the Ten Year Housing and Homelessness Plan.

As referenced in Item 9.4 Kinship Service Care Arrangement, E. Isaacs suggests the wording as it relates to “kinship arrangements” be amended. She distributes an excerpt from the Ministry of Children and Youth Services “Formal Customary Care – A Practice Guide to Principles, Processes and Best Practices”, attached as Appendix “C”.

Moved by G. McNamara, seconded by A. Angelidis,

That the Local Rules Windsor Essex 2014 pursuant to the *Housing Services Act* and Related Regulations Draft – Subject to City Council Approval” document **BE APPROVED**, and further that Topic #9.4 – Kinship Service Care Arrangement **BE AMENDED** to include the Formal Customary Care provisions.

Carried.

4.3 Review HAC’s Role under the 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan

The “Proposed Structure for the Implementation of Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing Homelessness Plan” document is distributed and attached as Appendix “B”. D. Cercone provides an overview of the proposed strategies for HAC to oversee as follows:

- The Housing Advisory Committee will be responsible for championing the implementation of the Plan.
- Develop outcome measures for key strategies in the Plan and engage in ongoing monitoring and reporting, including publishing an annual report card and semi-annual homelessness management information system reports once implemented,

as well as reporting quarterly and annually on municipally, provincially and federally prescribed performance measures.

- Establish a strategy for regular performance evaluation of the 10 year Plan and its strategies and invest in continuous improvement of housing and homelessness services.

D. Cercone also reviews the Proposed Strategies for the City of Windsor to Oversee, the Proposed Strategies for the Access Working Group to Oversee and the Proposed Strategies for the Housing First Working Group to Oversee.

G. McNamara states the housing issue should be a national strategy in Canada as the burden of providing housing to the community falls to the municipality.

4.4 Updates from HAC Members

None.

5. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, May 21, 2014 at 9:00 o'clock a.m. in the Town of Walkerville Meeting Room, 3rd floor, City Hall.

6. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting is adjourned at 11:05 o'clock a.m.

CHAIRPERSON

COMMITTEE COORDINATOR



AGENDA
And Schedule "A"
to the minutes of the meeting of the
HOUSING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
held Wednesday, March 19, 2014
at 9:00 o'clock a.m.
Town of Walkerville Meeting Room
3rd floor, City Hall

1. **CALL TO ORDER**

2. **DECLARATIONS OF CONFLICT**

3. **MINUTES**

Adoption of the minutes of the meeting held November 5, 2013 *(attached)*

4. **BUSINESS ITEMS**

4.1 **2014 Update of the Investment Affordable Housing Program**
Update.

4.2 **Final Review of Local Rules – Housing Services Act**

- The 'Local Rules Windsor Essex 204 pursuant to the Housing Services Act and Related Regulations – Draft – Subject to City Council approval' – *attached.*
- The "Windsor Essex Summary – Areas of Local Service Manager Flexibility to adopt Local rules – 2014" – *attached.*

4.3 **Review HAC's Role under the 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan**

The "Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan 2014-2015 Priorities" – *attached.*

4.4 **Updates from HAC Members**

5. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To be determined.

6. **ADJOURNMENT**

Data Summary March 2014
2013 IAH Program Component Implementation – April 1, 2013 to December 31, 2014

1. IAH Rent Supplement Component Allocation - \$6.451M over 10 years

Overall Target to March 31, 2014: 163 units Actual Take up to Date: 166 units

Program Year 3 April 1, 2013 to March 31, 2014

Initial Take-up Target: 25 units Actual Take-up: 30 units

- Unit allocation at full take-up
- Funding not all full take-up due to ramp up and lower than budgeted per unit subsidy
- Budgeted for average subsidy of \$400 per month
- Actual to-date average at \$364 per month
- Program Response City @ 92% County @ 8%

2. IAH Homeownership Downpayment Assistance Program - Total \$ 749,630.00

2013 Original Allocation plus Round 2 Revolving Funds and Ontario Renovates Transfer	\$ 692,230.00 IAH plus \$57,400.00 RF
Maximum Assistance	\$17,300
Final Approvals	53 applications
Average Amount	\$14,144.00 per transaction
Remaining balance	\$0.00
Program Response	City at 58% County at 42%
App return ratio	10%

Note: 2013 Round 2 issued in August 2013 – Revolving Fund added \$134,600 to allocation.

3. Ontario Renovates - 2013 Original Allocation \$1,254,247 Revised to \$1,127,120.00

Program Allocation	Homeowner \$913,120	Multi-Res \$214,000
Approved apps	39	4 apps (13 units)
Average amount	\$ 23,413.00	\$ 16,462.00 per unit
Total funding committed	\$ 913,120.00	\$ 214,000.00
Remaining funds	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Program City	69%	100%
Response County	31%	0%
App return ratio	10% to 15%	

Note 1. Numbers rounded.

Note 2. Applicant circumstances change creating changes to program take-up numbers in any given time period.

**4. Overall Summary of the IAH program Component Delivery
January 1, 2012 to December 2013**

Dollar Numbers Rounded

Item	Rent Sup	HOP	Ontario Renovates	
			Homeowner	Multi-Res
Approved Apps	164	87	88	69 units
Total Funding	\$966,445	\$1,247,300	\$1,909,615	\$562,000
Average per App	\$364	\$14,175	\$21,700	\$8,145
Funding Take-up %	66% Note 1	100%	98.5% Note 2	100%
City Program Take-Up %	92%	62%	73%	97%
County Program Take-Up %	8%	38%	27%	3%

Note 1.

Program expires March 31, 2022. Funding take-up is on track with the program's method and timing requirements. It is estimated that a reduction in the number of units will be required commencing in 2018/19 to remain within the total funding envelope and program expiry date.

Unit Take-up is 99% (164 of 166 units) at February 28, 2014.

Note 2.

A Ontario Renovates Homeowner approved applicant cancelled their project too late in the process to enable re-allocating the funds under the provincial timeline rules.

5. 2014 IAH April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015

5.1 **2014 Rent Sup Program effective April 1, 2014 – add 20 units**

A housing allowance program will be introduced this year to determine the benefits and challenges when compared to a rent supplement program.

5.2 **2014 HOP Program Allocation effective April 1, 2014 - \$0.00**

The Homeownership Down Payment Assistance Program will not be offered in 2014. This was known from the outset of the IAH program and is not an unexpected development.

5.3 **2014 Ontario Renovates Program effective April 1, 2014 - \$1,115,831**

The 2014 Ontario Renovates Program for Homeowners was released on March 8, 2014. The program runs until December 10, 2014 or when funds are depleted, whichever occurs first.

The Ontario Renovates Program for Homeowners provides up to \$20,000 (with provision to increase the amount in extenuating circumstances) to homeowners to complete a variety of needed repairs and/or renovate to provide accessibility features. The program is provided on a 10 year, payment-free forgivable loan basis. Income and asset limits apply. The Windsor Essex 2014 allocation is \$1,115,800 (\$1,241,665 in 2013) and it is expected that, depending on the average amount requested by applicants, the program can assist some 50 to 60 households to address needed repairs.

Each round of the Ontario Renovates Program provides the opportunity to assess features that work well and features that need improvement or changes. Three primary changes have been made to the program in 2014 to enable a focus to maximize the program's benefits in the community. This year's changes include:

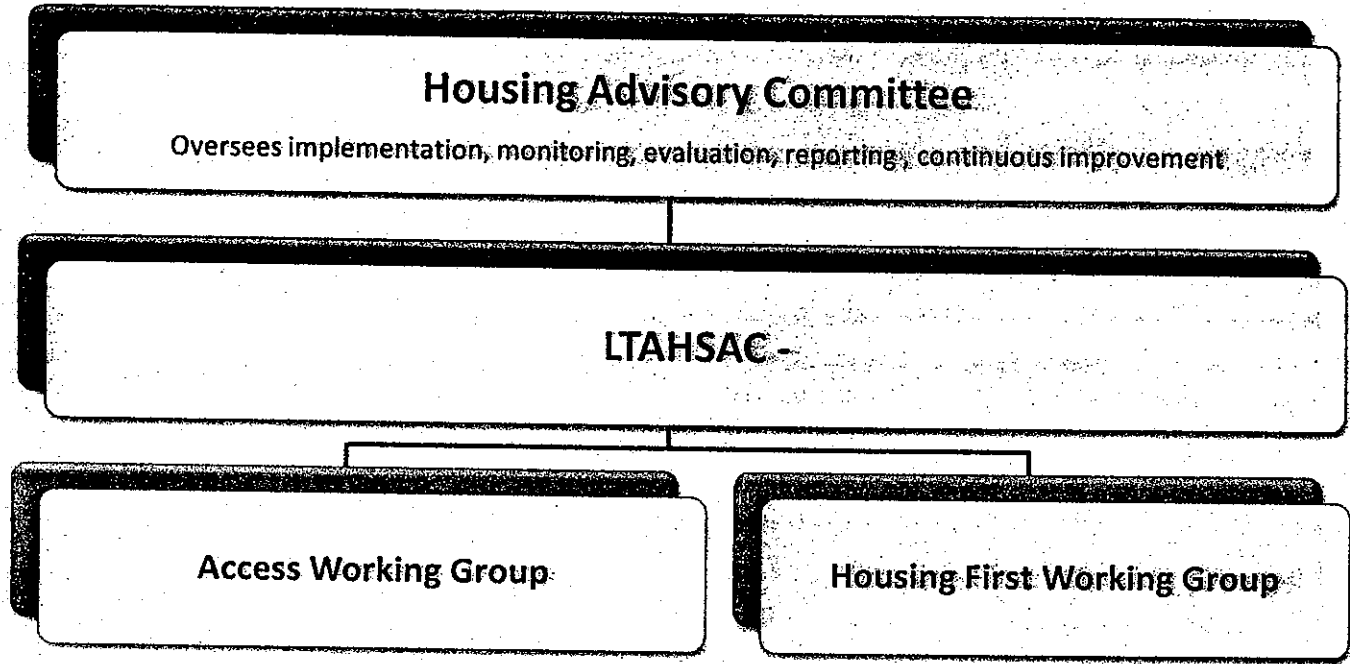
- a) **Maximum loan amount** has been established at \$20,000 with provision to increase the amount in adverse, exceptional circumstances. The amount was established to attempt to accommodate more applications with a reduced year over year funding allocation. (Previous Rounds - \$50,000 under Rounds 1 and 2 provided average loan amount did not exceed \$25,000, \$16,000 in Round 3)
- b) **Asset Limit** reduced to target applicants with lower household income and in greater need of program funds.
- c) **Landlord component not funded in 2014** – In 2013, Housing Services allocated 70% of the funds to homeowner applications and 30% of the funds to landlord applications. The number and nature of landlord applications in 2013 was disappointing; the demand for homeowner repairs is significant and; the overall 2014 funding allocation is less than the 2013 allocation. As a result, a Landlord component of the program will not be offered and all Ontario Renovates funds will be allocated to homeowner applications in 2014.

Proposed Structure for the Implementation of Windsor Essex 10 Year Housing & Homelessness Plan

Goal of Implementation of the Plan:

- Community of Windsor Essex will have an active role in the implementation of the 10 Year Housing and Homelessness Plan

Potential Structure for Implementation



System Redesign

- Strategies will follow a system re-design

Investment Strategy

- To be informed by the System Re-design
- May lead to re-allocation/adjustment of some funding
- City of Windsor will be responsible for the investment strategy

Proposed Working Groups

Access

- Responsible for assessment, prioritization, rules
- Goal is not just RGI.
- It will need to be inclusive of Rent Supplement, Market Rent, Home Ownership, Affordable Housing, Housing Allowance, RGI, etc.

System Components

- Rental Housing
- Rent Supplement
- Housing Allowance
- Interim Housing
- Housing with Supports
- Housing Stability Plan

Housing First

- Intensive Case Management (ICM)
- Housing Help
- Rapid Rehousing
- Landlord Liaison
- Crisis Response

Windsor Essex 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2015 Priorities
According to Strategies and Working Groups

Proposed Strategies for HAC to Oversee

Goal	Strategy	Current Status/Progress	Working Group Required?	Start Date	Completion Date
Rental Housing	5.8 In complying with legislative requirements for secondary suites, encourage and support flexible policies for community-wide inclusivity of secondary suites as an affordable rental housing alternative	HAC has brought this forward for review	Yes	2014	2015
Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	7.1 The Housing Advisory Committee will be responsible for championing the implementation of the Plan		Yes	2014	2015
Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	7.2 Develop outcome measures for key strategies in the Plan and engage in ongoing monitoring and reporting, including publishing an annual report card and semi-annual homelessness management information system reports once implemented, as well as reporting quarterly and annually on municipally, provincially, and federally prescribed performance measures		Yes	2014	2015
Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	7.3 Establish a strategy for regular performance evaluation of the 10-Year Plan and its strategies and invest in continuous improvement of housing and homelessness services		Yes	2014	2015

Draft subject to Council approval

Windsor Essex 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2015 Priorities
According to Strategies and Working Groups

Proposed Strategies for City of Windsor to Oversee

Goal	Strategy	Current Status/Progress	Working Group Required?	Start Date	Completion Date
Person-centred Housing Supports	2.1 Refine and disseminate information on the changes to the Housing Stability Plan which offers financial assistance for housing stability and homelessness prevention	HSP Flyer has been developed and distributed	Yes	2014-2015	2015
Housing with Supports	4.6 Conduct a review of policies and practices related to housing with supports funded through CHP		Yes	2014	2015
Housing with Supports	4.7 Implement and establish consistent accountability for standards for housing with supports funded through CHP to be developed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH)		Yes	2014	2015
Housing with Supports	4.8 Re-evaluate per diem rates for housing with supports funded through CHP	A 3% increase was approved effective April 1, 2013. Evaluating possible increases in the future.	Yes	2014	2015
Rental Housing	5.1 Review social housing policies to identify opportunities to remove barriers to accessing social housing	E.g. Option of Housing Allowance has been introduced.	Yes	2014	2015
Rental Housing	5.12 Review income eligibility requirements for financial assistance for homeowner renovation and repair		Yes	2014	2015
Implementation, Monitoring, Reporting, Evaluation and Continuous Improvement	7.7 Develop a change management strategy to support stakeholders in embracing the principles and strategies of the Plan, ensuring awareness of changes in the housing and homelessness system, better service and resource coordination, and appropriate allocation of resources		No	2014	2015

Draft subject to Council approval

Windsor Essex 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2015 Priorities
According to Strategies and Working Groups

Proposed Strategies for Access Working Group to Oversee

Goal	Strategy	Current Status/Progress	Working Group Required?	Start Date	Completion Date
Access	1.1 Establish a single phone number and website for housing help that includes an after-hours housing crisis line		Yes	2014	2015
Access	1.2: Develop and maintain an education strategy for trusted access points, housing providers, and support service providers		Yes	2014	2015
Access	1.3 Ensure awareness of available services		Yes	2014	2015
Access	1.4 Establish an effective referral and follow-up process among housing and service providers that is linked to a common intake and assessment process		Yes	2014	2015
Access	1.5 Implement coordinated access and common assessment for individuals experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness with (referring to appropriate services, including Interim housing where required)	Combines with 4.2. Research is currently being conducted on various intake and assessment tools for use in Windsor Essex	Yes	2014	2015
Interim Housing	3.1 Pilot an initiative where social housing units would be re-targeted to accommodation with an interim affordable rent for families, with the intention that the family would be able to stay in the unit on a permanent basis if eligible		Yes	2014	2015
Interim Housing	3.2 Right-size the shelter system, including beds for victims of domestic violence, by conducting an assessment of demand for shelter beds and adding and reducing beds where warranted		Yes	2014	2014 (Complete Assessment)

Draft subject to Council approval

Windsor Essex 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2015 Priorities
According to Strategies and Working Groups

Interim Housing	3.3 Re-evaluate the funding formula for emergency shelters to better achieve the strategies in the Plan	Currently partially block and per diem funded	Yes (Shelter Providers)	2014-2015	2015
Interim Housing	3.4 Review shelter policies (i.e., the informal 14-day policy), and amend where required, to ensure policies are not supporting housing instability and inappropriate housing choices	14 day rule has been eliminated	Yes (Shelter Providers & Support workers)	2014-2015	2015
Housing with Supports	4.2 Implement coordinated access and common assessment to housing with supports funded through CHPI	Combines with 1.5	Yes	2014-2015	2015

Proposed Strategies for Housing First Working Group to Oversee

Goal	Strategy	Current Status/Progress	Working Group Required?	Start Date	Completion Date
Person-centred Housing Supports	2.2 Refine the services funded through the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative to better align with the strategies in the Plan		Yes	2014-2015	2015
Person-centred Housing Supports	2.3 Enhance housing support worker roles to provide support, using a person-directed approach, to individuals with moderately complex challenges		Yes	2014-2015	2015
Person-centred Housing Supports	2.4 Develop and implement a Housing First intensive support initiative for individuals experiencing chronic homelessness and/or who have the highest needs.	Some programs currently reflect a Housing First approach	Yes	2014-2015	2015
Person-centred Housing Supports	2.5 Dialogue and collaborate with health sector and community stakeholders to increase the number of people with support needs who receive a coordinated package of services and programs to maintain their housing and optimal health.		Yes	2014-2015	2015 (to establish formal partnerships)
Person-centred Housing Supports	2.6 Increase the number of trusteeships available to individuals voluntarily seeking a trustee		Yes	2014-2015	2015
Interim Housing	3.7 Evaluate the need for interim housing for youth, and expand supply if appropriate		Yes	2014-2015	Evaluate by 2015
Interim Housing	3.8 Evaluate the need for interim housing for Aboriginal families, and expand supply of transitional housing if appropriate		Yes	2014-2015	Evaluate by 2015

Draft subject to Council approval

Windsor Essex 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2014-2015 Priorities
According to Strategies and Working Groups

Housing with Supports	4.3 Develop interdisciplinary team roles to support individuals living in housing with supports funded through CHPI, including:	Quality of Life funding has been disseminated	Yes	2015	2018
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="radio"/> housing supports <input type="radio"/> quality of life programming <input type="radio"/> staff training and capacity building, and <input type="radio"/> monitoring of services provided. 				

Draft subject to Council approval

To summarize, the following are five Ministry requirements for Formal Customary Care:

1. A child is believed to be in need of protection and requires placement with alternative caregivers in order to be safe;
2. The First Nation issues a BCR declaring that the child will be cared for pursuant to the custom of the First Nation and as specified in a Formal Customary Care Agreement;
3. A subsidy is paid to the child's caregivers by the CAS;
4. The placement is supervised by the CAS or a CAS designate; and
5. Customary caregivers who are in receipt of a subsidy from a CAS must meet the same licensing standards as a foster home.

Why Use Formal Customary Care

Formal Customary Care provides benefits for First Nation children, their families and their communities as it:

- Reinforces the value of community systems of care;
- Connects First Nation children to language, land and culture, and provides opportunities to acquire traditional and community knowledge through interaction with Elders and other keepers of ancestral knowledge;
- Acknowledges the First Nation's central role in matters related to children and families;
- Gives a stronger sense of value and belonging for First Nation children; and
- Promotes a positive cultural identity for First Nation children.

Customary care has been a viable permanency option for First Nation children since 1985. Child Welfare Transformation between 2005 and 2006, including amendments to child welfare legislation in 2006, emphasized permanency planning for every child involved in the child welfare system. It included Formal Customary Care as a viable permanency option for First Nation children.

Section 63.1 of the CFSA sets out a CAS's obligation to a Crown ward, specifically: "*Where a child is made a Crown ward, the Society shall make all reasonable efforts to assist the child to develop a positive, secure and enduring relationship within a family through one of the following:*

1. *An adoption,*
2. *A legal custody order, or,*
3. *In the case of a child who is an Indian or native person, a plan for customary care as defined in Part X."*

Research indicates that children raised in stable, nurturing environments that allow for continuity of care and the development of lifelong relationships with at least one healthy adult have better outcomes as adults. Critical to the development of lifelong relationships is healthy identity development and formation. For First Nation children, the development of a positive identity is intertwined with a sense of connectedness, belonging and cultural safety found within their communities and extended family circle of care.