



**The United Counties of Prescott and Russell
Social Services Department
Housing Services**

**Room for everyone—Homelessness Prevention in Prescott and Russell
Five Year Revision of the Housing and Homelessness Prevention Plan**

2013–2018

Executive Summary

Presented to

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November 2019

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Participating Organizations

Canadian Mental Health Association, Champlain East
 Carefor Health and Community Services, Eastern Counties
 Centraide/United Way Prescott-Russell
 Centre Novas CALACS francophone Prescott Russell
 Clinique Juridique de Prescott et Russell inc.
 Community Information Centre of Ottawa
 Community Services Prescott-Russell
 Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario
 Conseil Scolaire de District catholique de l'Est ontarien
 Corporation du Canton de Russell
 Corporation of the Town of Hawkesbury
 Early ON Child and Family Centres, Prescott-Russell
 Eastern Ontario Health Unit
 Employment Service Centre of Prescott Russell
 Collège La Cité
 Group Home pour la Santé mentale
 Groupe Action pour l'enfant, la famille et la communauté de Prescott-Russell
 Hôpital Général de Hawkesbury et District
 L'Oasis Résidence Simon
 La Résidence Lajoie de St-Albert Inc.
 Le Centre Moi J'apprends
 Maillon Santé
 Maison Fraternité
 Maison Interlude House
 Montfort Renaissance
 Ontario Provincial Police, Hawkesbury Division
 Ontario Works, Social Services
 Pavillon Laurier inc.

Plantagenet Family Health Team
Probation & Parole Office (Hawkesbury)
Résidence Limoges
Résidence Place Mont Roc
Résidence Servant
RMJ Properties
Service Canada
Valoris for Children and Adults of Prescott-Russell
Van Kleek Senior Citizens Manor

Participating Non-Profit Housing Corporations

Centre Urgel J. Forget
Corporation de logement à but non lucratif de Casselman
Corporation de logement à but non lucratif de Hawkesbury
Corporation de logement à but non lucratif de St - Isidore
Corporation de logement du village de Plantagenet
Logement à but non lucratif de la corporation du village d'Alfred
Rockland Non-Profit Housing Corporation

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1.1 Project Overview

The UCPR sought to undertake a review and update of its 10-year Housing and Homelessness plan in accordance with the Ministry of Housing's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy and the Housing Services Act. The 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan is now entering into its sixth year, and as with other Service Managers across the province, UCPR was required by the Ministry to complete a review of its Plan.

The objectives of this project were to ensure that the plan continues to meet provincial requirements for housing and homelessness plans established by the *Housing Services Act, 2011* and the *Promoting Affordable Housing Act, 2016*, aligns with the Province's Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy, and new provincial requirements, continues to reflect housing and homelessness needs in Prescott-Russell and utilize effective strategies from the Plan.

A needs assessment took place between April and July 2019, and action planning took place between August and September 2019. Research activities included a document review and the engagement of a variety of stakeholders. Service providers, housing providers and internal working group members were engaged through a multi-pronged approach including one-on-one interviews, data requests, an online survey, a stakeholder workshop and a planning workshop. Individuals with lived experience of housing insecurity and homelessness were engaged through one-on-one interviews.

1.2 Assessment of Current Housing Needs

The population of Prescott-Russell is growing at a moderate pace. The service area counted 89,000 residents in 2016 and was up 4.6% since 2011. The communities of Clarence-Rockland, Russell and The Nation experienced the most rapid growth influenced by the migration of first-time homeowners or higher income commuters to Ottawa, looking for lower municipal tax rates and lower home prices. At the same time eastern communities, such as Hawkesbury and Hawkesbury-East, have seen their population decline.

The influence of National Capital Region on employment and migration was reflected in recurring disparities between eastern and western communities on

many demographic describers, including the median age of the population, the workforce participation and unemployment rate, household incomes and the proportion of low income. Overall, western communities and the community of The Nation tend to be younger, more participating in the workforce, having a higher income and a lower proportion of low income. When looking at Prescott-Russell as a whole, the workforce participation continued to decrease, due to the outward migration of the population aged 18–24, and overall aging of the population. This has a significant impact on the need of the population for social services and supports, and for affordable housing.

Service providers considered that individuals with mental health issues, those struggling with addictions, and those with physical or developmental disabilities as most vulnerable in Prescott-Russell. Youth transitioning from the child welfare system, seniors and children and youth were also perceived very vulnerable. In addition, the homeless enumeration indicated an over-representation of women, youth, people with mental health illness and people who identified as being of indigenous descent. Service providers expressed that homelessness continues to be a hidden issue in Prescott-Russell and noted that they had seen an increase in the number of individuals living in their cars. While it was clear that there are strong supports available in Prescott-Russell, it was also clear that there is a dependence on Ottawa to support the needs of individuals with more complex needs, as well as those within the Indigenous or other marginalized (e.g. LGBT, newcomers) communities.

1.3 Housing Stock

Hawkesbury historical importance to the Prescott-Russell economy has resulted in a higher concentration of social and community services. Hawkesbury continues to attract many people who wish to reside close to the social and community services they access. While residential service home units are relatively equally distributed throughout Prescott-Russell, social housing units have historically been concentrated in Hawkesbury, with significantly fewer units in the western communities of Russell and Clarence-Rockland. Non-profit housing units are also spread across Prescott-Russell with a higher concentration in Hawkesbury.

In total in 2019, there were 311 public housing units with rent geared to income, 258 non-profit housing units with rent geared to income, 88 private housing units with rent below 80% of the local market rent, 94 private housing units with rent supplements, and 450 units in private residential service homes with rent supplements. In total they represent 1,201 housing units. Among the 1,201 units, 39 are adapted units.

Over the past 5 years, UCPR has supported the development of two new affordable housing facilities for seniors in the western communities of Embrun and Rockland, adding 18 new units that are rented at 80% or less than the average local market price, including 3 adapted units. While the recent additions have increased the availability of affordable housing for seniors, it has hardly supported the growing needs of the population for affordable housing, as shown but the steady growth of the housing waiting list. Between 2014 and 2019, the average yearly growth of the waiting list has been of 10% for family housing and 19% for senior housing. In 2019, the waiting list counted 684 family households and 490 senior households waiting for public housing units, and 651 family households and 489 senior households waiting for non-profit housing units.

The stock of social housing and non-profit housing is in relatively good condition and a number of measures were implemented to promote energy efficiency. However, housing providers indicated that most non-profit run and social housing facilities in Prescott-Russell are 25 or more years old and will require significant investments in the maintenance of these capital assets. Setting up a local capital improvement fund would help finance these capital improvements.

1.4 Future Housing Needs

The population of Prescott-Russell is expected to have a modest growth of 32% between 2011 and 2036, to reach nearly 117,000 residents. The Ontario Ministry of Finance predicted in 2006 a growth of 22% between 2006 and 2031, with more significant growth of the segment of 55–64 years of age (a 34.2% growth) and the segment of people over 65 (a growth of 149.6%). Migration from the City of Ottawa was expected to continue to be a key driver of growth. The number of housing units was projected to grow by 9,704 between 2011 and 2035.

Conversations hosted with community organizations, social service providers and housing providers as part of this project identified several priorities for housing.

The most prominent included a need for affordable housing outside of Hawkesbury, as well as the need for an emergency shelter and/or transitional housing facility for men in the western communities. Service providers report that the lack of affordable housing is disproportionately impacting youth, immigrants, and people receiving social assistance through Ontario Works.

Members of the Working Group and Service Providers identified the following specific needs with regards to the type of housing needed:

- 1-bedroom units are needed for singles or couples without children, and below 60 years old.
- 2-bedroom units are needed for singles or couples with children.
- Family units are needed in the western communities.
- Demand for townhouses is increasing due to the growing number of lower-income households, which includes entry-level homeowners, and seniors who are looking to downsize.
- The locations reported being most in need include Rockland, Clarence and the township of Russell. In particular, Clarence and Rockland are in great need of family units.

The number of projects currently approved for land development would meet 44% of the required growth in the region and could be completed in the next 5 to 7 years. Overall, the planning department anticipates that development projects that are planned for the next 2 to 3 years will meet the demand for new housing, with reservations about the ability to meet the needs in Hawkesbury.

At the time of submitting this Plan review, information about the number units slated to be affordable at 80% of local market rent or less was not monitored by UCPR. The planning department is working on an application to monitor different targets. The application is expected to be implemented in early 2020. Still, cooperation from the local municipalities is paramount to the success of the accuracy of information.

1.5 Achievements Towards the Plan

UCPR can celebrate the implementation of the majority of key initiatives identified by the Plan as priorities in the horizon of 2024. These actions have

been vital to distribute service provision across Prescott-Russell in a manner that meets the needs of residents.

Among key achievements, UCPR counted the following activities:

Biannual breakfast with all service agencies—Starting in 2014, breakfast meetings were hosted twice a year and were well attended by up to 40 agencies and up to 120 participants. Starting in 2015, the biannual breakfast included agency presentations to inform the service agency network on the initiatives implemented in the various communities of Prescott and Russell. A total of 30 agencies have presented their work over 3 years, providing multiple opportunities to showcase successes of different agencies, to better understanding available services and supports in Prescott-Russell, and to envision multi-stakeholder collaborations.

Biannual Meeting with Non-Profit Providers—This ongoing activity allows to review policies and procedures, resolve issues and obtain feedback on a range of issues. Over the years, issues discussed included the End of Operating Agreements, the Portable Housing Benefit program, cannabis legalization, Community Paramedics, hydro credits, Social Welfare of tenants, annual reviews, 5-year review of 10-year Housing and Homelessness Plan, smoking in units and grandfathering existing smokers, subsidy reconciliation, National Housing Strategy, Wait list, and electric stations for e-cars.

Portable Housing Benefit for Victims of Household Violence—the new subsidy program was initiated in 2016 and benefited 57 households between 2016 and 2018. The program was developed to support women with a new form of rent supplement, which is flexible and provides a quick solution to victims of violence with urgent needs for housing.

Transportation Study—UCPR received \$2 million over 5 years for the development of 3 scenarios for transportation routes, and the piloting of the most viable scenario over a period of 36 to 42 months. A financial analysis of the 3 scenarios started in April 2019, and a pilot will start in October 2019 or after the winter in April 2020. \$500,000 of the \$2 million will be allocated to the adaptation of a wheelchair-accessible van, which will be operated by UCPR's non-profit partners in the pilot, Carefor - a charitable non-profit organization providing home health care and community support - and Prescott-Russell Community Services.

Integrated Social Services Reception—the social service offices in both Rockland and L'Original adopted an integrated reception model to simplify the client experience and reduce stigma. Several clients interviewed for this report acknowledged the change and reported positive outcomes such as simplicity of navigation and better guidance.

Participation in Prescott-Russell Situation Table—in 2017, the Situational Table was formed by the Hawkesbury OPP Detachment for service providers to discuss complex cases of individuals at risk of hurting themselves or other people, and provide a multi-agency rapid response. The Situational Table meets every two weeks and is attended by 20 organizations, including mental health services, the police, victim services, the hospital, social services, probation and parole officers, school boards, children's aid services, and developmental services. The table helps organizations to align their understanding of cases and to choose the most appropriate intervention, by the appropriate service or services.

To date, only two activities recommended in the plan were not fully implemented for lack of resources: the hiring of a Street Coordinator and the adaptation of 6 units into full accessibility. Aside from key initiatives that the Plan committed to implement, the review of UCPR accomplishments toward the Plan highlighted a few areas that UCPR needs to progress on. They include the following:

- Raising public awareness about the issues of affordable housing and the homelessness in UCPR, in order to gain public support and ultimately Council support in developing more initiatives that prevent homelessness.
- Continue to extend the provision of affordable housing to meet the increasing demand.
- Developing an evaluation framework which identifies outcomes that UCPR will commit to measure and report on.

1.6 Setting Housing Targets in Prescott-Russell

The 2018 UCPR Official Plan made 22 strategic recommendations around the development of affordable housing to meet the projected demographic and market requirements of current and future residents of the United Counties. These include a focus working with area municipalities in order to:

1. Monitor the needs of social assisted housing for households and seniors
2. Identify specific needs and work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and Social Services Department to meet the needs

The Official Plan also set an over target of 10% of all new residential units should be affordable; this has been set in the official plan as a target which includes new development and intensification through conversion of non-residential structures, infill and redevelopment.

Specific affordable housing annual targets for new construction of rental ownership units were set in the UCPR Official Plan as follows:

- a. West: 48 to 68 units
- b. Central-East: 33 to 47 units
- c. Hawkesbury: 10 to 14 units

Moving forward the service area will consider affordable any housing units that meet the following definition:

- a) In the case of ownership housing:

Housing for which the purchase price results in annual accommodation costs which do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income for households within the 60 percent lowest earning of the income distribution by municipality;

- b) In the case of rental housing:

A unit for which the rent does not exceed 80 percent of the average market rent in the municipality.

1.7 Action Plan

The following strategic priorities were developed in partnership with multiple departments of UCPR.

Strategic Priority: Ending Homelessness

Strategic Goal	Objectives
Increase understanding of housing insecurity and homelessness in Prescott-	To raise awareness about the prevalence of homelessness and homelessness prevention services

Russell	To improve available data to understand the problem of homelessness and housing
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Strategic Goal	Objectives
Improve access to housing assistance and related supports to obtain and retain housing	To support early detection of housing insecurity
	To better fulfill the need for emergency shelter
	To increase access to eviction prevention supports
	To increase accessibility to current programs and supports
	To continue to simplify the housing waiting list process
	To improve efficiency of housing and homelessness service provision
	To improve people's ability to retain housing
Increase the stock of affordable and supportive housing to meet the targets of the Official Plan	To align long-term municipal planning with provincial and federal policies
	To integrate housing clients into Prescott-Russell's diverse communities
	To support housing providers in developing new supportive housing that are not available in the community, based on priority needs

Strategic Priority: Indigenous Peoples

Strategic Goal	Objective
Increase access to culturally appropriate housing and homelessness services for Indigenous peoples	To offer culturally appropriate housing and homelessness prevention services to Indigenous peoples
	To facilitate an inclusive process for developing Indigenous supports and programs

Strategic Priority: Coordination with Other Community Services

Strategic Goal	Objective
Demonstrate commitment to working with partners across service systems	To engage community stakeholders in current and future planning
	To further include the voice of people with lived experience of homelessness in planning
Progress toward integrated service delivery system	To provide a coordinated response of service providers to manage cases effectively
	To provide a coordinated care plan for individuals with complex needs

Strategic Priority: A Broad Range of Community Needs

Strategic Goal	Objective
Increase access to inclusive and culturally diverse services	To promote a culture of diversity and inclusion across housing and social service providers in Prescott-Russell
Increase accessibility of housing for people with disabilities and limited mobility	To increase accessibility of affordable housing units
	To provide public transportation and/or innovative options in UCPR that promotes independence and mobility
	To provide a coordinated response to support residents in need of affordable or free transportation
Increase access to services and supports for vulnerable groups	To support the mental health of youth and prevent homelessness
	To prioritize vulnerable groups (for people exiting detention, people with mental health and/or addiction, young adults with inadequate social network)
	To support emergency needs of victims of domestic violence
	To address the growing hoarding issues in Prescott-Russell
	To increase access to employment supports for tenants of affordable housing
	To increase access to emergency food

Strategic Priority: Non-Profit Housing Corporations and Non-Profit Cooperatives

Strategic Goal	Objective
Engage non-profit housing providers in planning	To continue to engage non-profit housing providers in current and future planning
Increase support in the delivery of non-profit and co-op housing	To maintain the number and quality of existing non-profit housing stock
	To increase awareness and capacity to access additional financial support that becomes available
	To increase the stock of existing housing providers to meet community needs

Strategic Priority: The Private Market

Strategic Goal	Objective
Encourage actions for municipalities and the planning department to support the role of the private sector in developing affordable housing	To maintain the number and quality of existing private sector affordable housing stock
	To encourage the development of mixed housing and private with public investments
	To raise awareness about available services and supports with the private sector

Strategic Priority: Climate Change and Environmental Sustainability

Strategic Goal	Objective
Improved energy efficiency of the affordable housing stock	To increase energy efficiency of new and existing affordable housing units
	To decrease GHG emissions