



The Corporation of the City of Stratford
Social Services Sub-committee
Open Session
AGENDA

Date: September 14, 2021

Time: 3:30 P.M.

Location: Electronic Meeting

Sub-committee Present: Councillor Henderson - Chair Presiding, Councillor Bunting - Vice Chair, Councillor Burbach, Councillor Ritsma, Councillor Vassilakos

Staff Present: Kim McElroy - Director of Social Services, Alex Burgess - Manager of Ontario Works, Jeff Wilson - Manager of Housing/Acting Manager of Children's Services, Jodi Akins - Council Clerk Secretary, Jeneane Fast - Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator, Angie Juarez - Supervisor of Social Services

To watch the Sub-committee meeting live, click the following link: <https://stratford-ca.zoom.us/j/89173612644?pwd=TzdmM0orMDNSUjNJSzRYMDhDU01hUT09>

A video recording of the meeting will also be available through a link on the City's website at <https://www.stratford.ca/en/index.aspx> following the meeting.

Pages

1. Call to Order

The Chair to call the Meeting to Order.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary Interest and the General Nature Thereof

The *Municipal Conflict of Interest Act* requires any member of Council declaring a pecuniary interest and the general nature thereof, where the interest of a member of Council has not been disclosed by reason of the member's absence from the meeting, to disclose the interest at the first open meeting attended by the member of Council and otherwise comply with the *Act*.

Name, Item and General Nature of Pecuniary Interest

3. Delegations

None scheduled.

4. Report of the Supervisor of Social Services - Housing Division

- 4.1. 2021-2022 Approved Alternate AMR and Britannia St Housing Project Rent Increases (SOC21-011)** 4 - 20

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled 2021-2022 Approved Alternate Average Market Rent and Britannia Street Housing Project Rent Increases (SOC21-011) be received for information, including the alternate Average Market Rent (AMR) that has been approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for the City of Stratford, County of Perth, and Town of St. Marys for 2021-2022;

AND THAT staff be authorized to implement the proposed market rates for the Britannia Street Housing Project for 2022.

- 4.2. Britannia 2022 Rent Increase and Annual Rent Increases (SOC21-012)** 21 - 25

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report Britannia 2022 Rent Increase and Annual Rent Increases (SOC21-012) be received for information;

THAT City Council approve a 1.2% rent increase guideline for the Britannia Street Housing Project effective January 1, 2022;

AND THAT City Council amend Delegation of Authority By-law 135-2017 as amended, to delegate authority to the Director of Social Services to implement the Ontario Annual Rent Increase Guideline at Britannia Street Housing Project going forward.

5. Report of the Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator

- 5.1. 2021 Homeless Enumeration (SOC21-010)** 26 - 28

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "2021 Homeless Enumeration" (SOC21-010) be received for information.

6. Report of the Manager of Ontario Works

- 6.1. Update on the Ontario Works Caseload and Caseload Forecast for 2022-** 29 - 33

23 (SOC21-009)

Motion by _____

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Update on the Ontario Works Caseload and Caseload Forecast for 2022-23" (SOC21-009) be received for information.

7. Next Sub-committee Meeting

The next Social Services Sub-committee meeting is **Wednesday, October 13, 2021**. Meetings were shifted to accommodate Thanksgiving Monday.

8. Adjournment

Meeting Start Time:

Meeting End Time:

Motion by _____

Sub-committee Decision: THAT the Social Services Sub-committee meeting adjourn.



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: September 14, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Angie Juarez, Supervisor of Social Services - Housing Division
Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing
Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-011
Attachments: Stratford Business Case for Alternate AMR 2021-2022

Title: 2021-2022 Approved Alternate Average Market Rent and Britannia Street Housing Project Rent Increases

Objective: To inform the Social Services Sub-committee of the Approved Alternate Average Market Rent and to request approval for an increase to the market rent at the Britannia Street Affordable Housing Project.

Background: Since 2018, the Service Manager has conducted a local rental market scan for the City of Stratford, County of Perth, and Town of St. Marys using rental housing advertisements from online sources and a neighbourhood audit. The scan is used to determine AMRs that better reflect the local rental market by including secondary rental stock such as single-family homes, apartments, and secondary suites that are not surveyed in the CMHC primary rental market survey. The rental market information provided by CMHC is based on purpose built rental properties containing at least three units, which have been on the market for at least three months. The local scan indicates that average rental rates far exceed the amounts reported by CMHC.

Analysis: On July 13, 2021, the Ministry approved the following alternate AMRs for the Service Manager area based on the local rental scan and attached business case, detailing local rental data, and supporting information supplied by the Social Services Department.

2021-22 Average Market Rents (AMRs) for Stratford, Perth County and St. Marys

	Published AMRs based on 2020-2021 CMHC Rental Market Survey	Approved Alternate AMRs based on 2021 Local Rental Scan
Bachelor	\$716	\$1,050
1 bedroom	\$889	\$1,253
2 bedrooms	\$1,034	\$1,487
3 bedrooms	\$1,182	\$1,894
4+ bedroom	\$1,182	\$1,894

The approved 2021 alternate AMRs will be used for the following provincially funded programs:

- Investment in Affordable Housing-Extension (IAH-E)
- Social Infrastructure Fund (SIF)
- Home for Good (HFG)
- Strong Communities
- Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)
- Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)

Please refer to the attached business case "Stratford Business Case for Alternate AMR 2021-2022" for more detailed information regarding the approved AMRs.

While periodically reviewing and adjusting rental rates is not mandatory, it is a best business practice for all landlords including Affordable Housing Providers. Upon review, the rents are below the MMAH approved alternate Average Market Rents for the Perth-Stratford Service Manager area. Adjusting market rents will assist in generating all income available to best position the city to respond to increased operating as well as unexpected capital costs.

As such the City of Stratford should review their rents annually to ensure they are in keeping with the ministry approved alternate average market rents for the service area. This will assist in generating all income available to best position the City of Stratford to respond to increased operating as well as unexpected capital costs.

The proposed 2022 Market Rents, outlined below, would see the market rental rates increased to 80% of MMAH Approved Alternate Average Market Rent levels.

	Current Market Rates	2021 CMHC Average Market Rent Survey	2021 Ministry approved Alternate AMR	80% of 2020 Ministry approved Alternate AMR	2022 Proposed New Market Rates
1 Bedroom Affordable	\$991	\$889	\$1,253	\$1,002	\$1,002
2 Bedroom Affordable	\$1,137	\$1,034	\$1,487	\$1,190	\$1,190
1 Bedroom Market	\$1,030	\$889	\$1,253	\$1,002	\$1,253

Financial Impact: It is anticipated that the approved alternate AMRs will result in an increase in the operational sustainability of the Britannia Street Affordable Housing project, as well as a greater up-take for individuals and households accessing rent support programs.

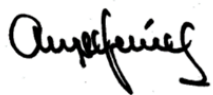
Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled 2021-2022 Approved Alternate Average Market Rent and Britannia Street Housing Project Rent Increases (SOC21-011) be received for information, including the alternate Average Market Rent (AMR) that has been approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) for the City of Stratford, County of Perth, and Town of St. Marys for 2021-2022;

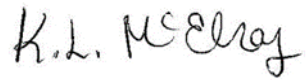
AND THAT staff be authorized to implement the proposed market rates for the Britannia Street Housing Project for 2022.



Angie Juarez, Supervisor of Social Services -Housing Division



Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing



Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services



Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



2021-2022 Request for Alternate Average Market Rents for Housing Allowance and Rent Supplement Programs

Business Case for the City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys and County of Perth

Prepared by

City of Stratford

Housing Division, Social Services Department

June 2021

Purpose

The City of Stratford Social Services Department provides various Housing Allowance and Rent Supplement programs (e.g., HFG, COCHI, OPHI, IAH-E, IAH, SIF, Strong Communities) to eligible households to help with housing costs. In order for these programs to have the most impact locally, the City of Stratford Social Services Department, as the Consolidated Municipal Service Manager for the City of Stratford, Town of St. Marys, and County of Perth, is requesting the use of an Alternate Average Market Rent (AMR) that more appropriately reflects the local rental market conditions of this predominantly rural service area.

Methodology

This is the fourth year that the City of Stratford has completed a local rental market scan. The methodology for the local rental market scan conducted in 2021 was comparable to those conducted in 2018, 2019, and 2020. One change was the removal of 4 bedroom units from the scan, and the addition of the 3+ bedroom units category. This was changed in response to the historical low numbers of 4 bedroom units obtained in the scan. The number of total unique responses for total units increased to 142 units in 2021, an increase of 23 units when compared to the 2020 scan.

The scan was conducted using rental housing advertisements from online sources and a neighbourhood audit. This scan occurred from the week of February 22 to May 10, 2021. Online sources included:

- Kijiji.ca (www.kijiji.ca/b-apartments-condos/ontario/c3719004)
- Rent Board (<https://www.rentboard.ca/>)
- Facebook (www.facebook.com)

Each source was scanned three times per week (typically occurring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays) and only the unique advertisements (i.e. those newly posted during that week) were recorded. The communities scanned were:

- Stratford
- St. Marys
- North Perth
- Perth East
- Perth South
- West Perth

Rental unit types were divided into the following categories:

- Bachelor (Bach)
- 1-bedroom (1-bdrm)
- 2-bedroom (2-bdrm)
- 3+ bedroom (3+bdrm)

The coverage of utilities (hydro, water, and gas) was recorded for each advertisement when available. The majority of advertisements (73%) included at least one utility in the cost of rent, while 26% of units surveyed did not include any utility costs. Only 1% of the advertisements did not specify whether or not utilities were included.

In total, rental data from **142 advertisements** were recorded, with a breakdown as follows:

Location	#	%
Stratford	113	79.6
North Perth	12	8.5
Perth East	3	2.1
St. Marys	3	2.1
West Perth	9	6.3
South Perth	2	1.4

Unit Type	#	%
Bachelor	5	3.5
1 Bedroom	63	44.4
2 Bedroom	46	32.4
3+ Bedroom	28	19.7

Ad Source	#	%
Neighbourhood Audit	1	0.7
Kijiji	123	86.6
Rentboard	15	10.6
Facebook	3	2.1

Data Findings

1. For All Communities

The following table below summarizes the total results of the rental market scan by bedroom size for all communities.

Total: All Communities

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	5	\$1,050
1 Bedroom	63	\$1,253
2 Bedroom	46	\$1,487
3+ Bedroom	28	\$1,894

2. Average Market Rent by Location

The following charts detail the average rental price by bedroom size for each of the municipalities located in the service area. The majority of findings and the highest rental rates were found in Stratford, which is the largest population centre in the service area (population of 31,465; 2016 Census).

Upper Tier Municipalities: City of Stratford and Town of St. Marys

Stratford

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	4	\$1,088
1 Bedroom	56	\$1,264
2 Bedroom	34	\$1,556
3+ Bedroom	19	\$1,955

St. Marys

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	0	-
1 Bedroom	1	\$950
2 Bedroom	1	\$1,350
3+ Bedroom	1	\$2,100

Lower Tier Municipalities: North Perth, Perth East, Perth South, West Perth

North Perth

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	1	\$900
1 Bedroom	1	\$1,600
2 Bedroom	7	\$1,284
3+ Bedroom	3	\$1,632

Perth East

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	0	-
1 Bedroom	2	\$800
2 Bedroom	1	\$750
3+ Bedroom	0	-

Perth South

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	0	-
1 Bedroom	0	-
2 Bedroom	0	-
3+ Bedroom	2	\$1,825

West Perth

Unit Type	# of Ads	Average Rent
Bachelor	0	-
1 Bedroom	3	\$1,332
2 Bedroom	3	\$1,467
3+ Bedroom	3	\$1,750

3. Changes over Time

The findings of the market scan show a continued rise in local rental market rates in the past year, with the highest increase for 3+bedroom units at 74% over the last 4 years.

Alternate AMR (Local Rental Scans)

Unit Type	2018	2019	2020	2021
Bachelor	\$723	\$910	\$1,231	\$1,050
1 Bedroom	\$793	\$1,023	\$1,239	\$1,253
2 Bedroom	\$958	\$1,351	\$1,421	\$1,487
3+ Bedroom	\$1,090	\$1,663	\$1,720	\$1,894

Change (2018-2021)

Unit Type	\$ Difference	% Difference
Bachelor	\$327	45%
1 Bedroom	\$460	58%
2 Bedroom	\$529	55%
3+ Bedroom	\$630	74%

4. Comparison to CMHC Average Market Rents

As illustrated in the table below, the results of the local rental scan for the year 2021 indicate that local rental housing costs are higher than the AMRs surveyed by Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) in October 2020. Depending on unit size, the variance ranges from \$334 for a bachelor unit to \$712 for a 3+bedroom unit in 2021.

Unit Size	Oct 2020 AMR* CMHC	2021 Service Manager Area Rental Scan	\$ Difference	% Difference
Bach	\$716	\$1,050	\$334	47%
1-bdrm	\$889	\$1,253	\$364	41%
2-bdrm	\$1,034	\$1,487	\$453	44%
3+bdrm	\$1,182	\$1,894	\$712	60%

*AMR is based on CMHC Rental Market Survey for the Stratford Service Manager area

*Insufficient data for 4-bedroom units from both CMHC and local rental market scan

There are a number of reasons why these AMRs are significantly higher than the CMHC rental market data used.

First, the local rental scan is based on units that have turned over and are not restricted to the Helping Tenants and Small Businesses Act, which froze rental rates of occupied units in 2021 due to the COVID pandemic. Rather, these rental rates are set by private market landlords according to current market conditions. By comparison, the CMHC AMRs capture a mixture of occupied units and units that have turned over in 2020.

Second, a local landlord survey that was conducted in 2018 indicates that the majority of rental stock in the Service Manager area is within the secondary rental market in which the majority of landlords own only 1 or 2 units. In contrast, CMHC's rental market information is based on purpose built rental properties containing at least three units.

See Appendix A for more detailed results of the 2018 Local Landlord Survey.

In light of the fact many of the households participating in Housing Allowance and Rent Supplement Programs will be looking for new units and will be accessing units in the secondary rental market, the local rental scan results represent a more accurate picture of actual rental housing costs locally.

Analysis of the Results

The rise in local rental costs has led to an extremely competitive rental market in the Service Manager area. It has also severely impacted both the affordability and availability of rental housing for individuals living on low and/or fixed incomes. CMHC

vacancy rates for all apartments surveyed in the Municipality of North Perth continue to decrease, down to 5.3% in October 2020 from 7.1% in 2019. That trend continues for the City of Stratford where vacancy rates continue to be a historical low of 1.5% in October of 2020.

Vacancy Rates of Private Apartments in the Municipality of North Perth, CMHC (2021)

Vacancy Rates – Municipality of North Perth	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom +	Total
Oct 2019	16.7%	9.1%	3.1%	24.1%	7.1%
Oct 2020	3.7%	9.5%	2.9%	N/A	5.3%

Vacancy Rates of Private Apartments in the City of Stratford, CMHC (2021)

Vacancy Rates – City of Stratford	Bachelor	1 Bedroom	2 Bedroom	3 Bedroom +	Total
Oct 2019	N/A	0.8%	1.6%	4.8%	1.6%
Oct 2020	N/A	1.7%	1.2%	0.7%	1.5%

*Note: N/A indicates data suppression to protect confidentiality or data not statistically reliable

High competition and increased rental rates in the private market have also significantly increased the Service Manager area's waiting list for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing. Between April 2018 and April 2021, the total number of households on the Centralized Waiting List increased 30.2% and the number of individuals with homelessness status increased by 172.5%.

Applicants on the Centralized Waiting List for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys, 2018-2020

Type of Applicant	April 2018	April 2019	April 2020	April 2021	% Change (2018-2021)
Total Applicants	281	405	437	366	30.2%
Chronological	218	278	283	212	-2.8%
SPP	12	31	10	17	41.7%
Local Priority (Homeless)	51	96	137	139	172.5%

This increased competition can be attributed to a number of local factors identified during a series of community consultations and stakeholder meetings that took place as a part of the 5-year review of the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan for

Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys. Over 100 individuals were engaged in this process and included local social service providers, economic development representatives, municipal planning departments, and members of the public.

Short-Term Rental Accommodations

Stratford is home to North America's largest classical repertory theatre company – The Stratford Festival. Short-term rentals are used to provide temporary housing for cast, creatives and theatre goers during festival season (April to November). In addition to being disruptive to the traditional lodging industry, the short-term rental market negatively impacts the already-limited supply of long-term rental housing in Stratford and area. The scarcity this creates is contributing to higher housing and rental prices.

Recruitment by Local Employers

The demand for workers in the manufacturing sector is significant for Stratford and Perth County employers. The Stratford & District HR Association reports that the lack of affordable housing is a key barrier to recruitment and retention efforts in the community. It is not uncommon for companies to hire workers from across the country to fill a number of positions; some local companies, for example, have bussed in workers from other regions to support their employment needs. These out-of-county workers require a place to live while employed in Perth County, resulting in an increased strain on an already tight housing market, particularly in Stratford.

Rising House Prices

Housing prices in Stratford, St. Marys and Perth County have historically been lower than in the GTA and surrounding communities (e.g., London and Kitchener-Waterloo). Many individuals and families from these communities struggling with rising house prices have migrated to Stratford and area in search of more affordable options.

Stratford and area is also considered an attractive retirement community. There has been an increase in the number of affluent seniors who have cashed in their big-city homes to fund their golden years, purchasing homes in the community.

However, the influx of new residents is driving up the price of homes in the community, negatively impacting the housing supply, and adding strain to the rental market. According to the Huron-Perth Association of Realtors, the year-to-date average price was \$569,750, a substantial gain of 37.7% from the first five months of 2020. Bidding wars, which were unheard of in this area a few years ago, have become common place.

Low Housing Supply

Kathy Dawson, President of the Huron Perth Association of REALTORS®, states that despite a “surge in new listings hitting the market keeping overall inventories from hitting near-zero levels...the persistent strength in demand is keeping this market in some of the tightest conditions in history. Competition among buyers for a record low supply of listings has now driven year-over-year-benchmark price growth into the neighbourhood of 40%.”

According to the Huron-Perth Association of Realtors, “new listings have only returned to average levels, not nearly enough to offset the red-hot pace of demand. As a result, available inventory continues trending at record lows and fierce competition among buyers is driving prices to new record highs.”

The average residential months of inventory was 0.8 months at the end of May 2021. This is down from 2.5 months as seen in May of 2020, meaning that houses that are put up “for sale” sell quickly, even with the average house price being “\$569,750, up sharply by 37.7% from the first five months of 2020.” (The number of months of inventory is the current number of months it would take to sell current inventories at the current rate of sale activity).

With fewer houses to buy, residents who would have been able to afford home ownership continue to rent, creating less options for lower-income households locally.

How an alternate AMR will help

Approval of the alternate AMR will help eligible households from a variety of different priority populations - including, but not limited to individuals experiencing homelessness, people living with disabilities, individuals awaiting RGI housing, and survivors of domestic violence - find and/or maintain housing that is appropriate for their needs and affordable for their budgets by providing eligible local households with a Housing Allowance or Rent Supplement that is reflective of the current rental market.

The following chart illustrates this affordability crisis locally based on four different income types: Ontario Works (OW), Ontario Disability Support Pension (ODSP), Minimum Wage, and Living Wage.¹

¹ In 2019, the Social Research and Planning Council of the United Way Perth-Huron calculated a living wage in collaboration with the Ontario Living Wage Network that adhered to the Canadian Living Wage Framework. The living wage is calculated based on the income needed to cover basic everyday expenses. <http://perthhuron.unitedway.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/LW-Summary-2019-Web.pdf>.

Income Source (for single person household)	Monthly Income	% of income spent on housing for a 1-bedroom unit (Proposed Alternate AMR - \$1,253.00)
Ontario Works	\$733	171%
ODSP	\$1,169	107%
Minimum Wage	\$2,161	58%
Living Wage	\$2,661 ²	47%

An alternate AMR would increase the housing benefit amount and create more affordable options for households. For example, under the current CMHC rates, individuals who earn minimum wage (\$25,932 a year) would be eligible for a subsidy of only \$63.00, however, with the proposed alternate AMRs, individuals earning minimum wage would be eligible to receive a benefit of \$355 (see table below). This finding is highly representative of how unaffordable the current rental market is with individuals earning a 'minimum wage' being eligible to receive a benefit to assist with monthly rental costs as the cost of living is so high.

Benefit Amounts

Income Source (for single person household)	Monthly Income	CMHC AMR (\$889)	Alternate Proposed AMR (\$1,253)
Ontario Works	\$733	\$491	\$783
ODSP	\$1,169	\$361	\$652
Minimum Wage	\$2,161	\$63	\$355
Living Wage	\$2,661	No benefit	\$204

In addition, many clients who are in receipt of some form of social assistance (e.g., OW, ODSP) and who are eligible to receive a portable housing benefit experience challenges securing safe and suitable units that are affordable given their budget. For example, individuals enrolled in the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP), which is funded by Home for Good (HFG), receive a housing allowance based on the

² The monthly income is calculated by multiplying 17.55 per hour by 35 hours per week, then multiplying by 52 weeks in a year, and dividing by 12 months. The Living Wage calculation uses CMHC rental data.

Ministry of Finance's Portable Housing Benefit formula. As illustrated in the table above, the maximum OW shelter entitlement for a single adult is \$390 and the maximum basic needs amount is \$343, giving a single SHOPP recipient on OW a monthly income of \$733. This client would be eligible for a HFG housing allowance of \$491 per month, or a total budget of \$1,224 for all monthly costs. This is \$29 less than the cost of a one bedroom unit in the Service Manager area (\$1,253), according to the findings of the local market rental scan. With the proposed new Alternate AMR, this client would have a total monthly budget of \$1,516, allowing him/her the ability to secure a unit in the private market. This is especially important for individuals actively experiencing homelessness and/or leaving domestic violence situations, who need to secure a suitable unit in the private market quickly.

The proposed new alternate AMR would also assist with the recruitment and retention of private sector landlords in rent supplement programs. Many private market landlords shy away from these programs as current rental rates offered in the private market are much higher. In addition, when leases turnover, some existing landlords are opting out of traditional rent supplement programs as they can charge more rent in the open private market.

Conclusion

A local rental housing scan conducted in early 2021 indicates that local rental rates (regardless of unit size) far exceed the amounts reported by CMHC. Affordability is compounded by low vacancy rates, limited housing supply, and local economic impacts including short-term rental accommodations and recruitment by local employers.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that the following alternate AMRs for various Housing Allowance and Rent Supplement programs (e.g. HFG, COCHI, OPHI, IAH-E, IAH, SIF, Strong Communities) be approved for the City of Stratford Service Manager Area for 2021-22:

- Bachelor unit = \$1,050
- 1-bedroom unit = \$1,253
- 2-bedroom unit = \$1,487
- 3 + bedroom unit = \$1,894

Appendix A: Landlord Survey Results

In the fall of 2018, the City of Stratford's Housing Division conducted an online landlord survey. The main objectives of the survey were to:

- A. Provide a more comprehensive understanding of the local rental market
- B. Inform a community-wide landlord engagement strategy for rent supplement and housing allowance programs

The results of the survey provided crucial insights pertaining to the state of the local rental market, in particular the location of units and property compositions. The following is a summary of the findings.

The majority of rental units are in the secondary market

As illustrated in the table below, 67 of the 74 respondents to the survey question about property types indicated that their rental units are single detached or semi-detached homes. Less than a quarter of respondents (24%) own or manage an apartment building.

Type of Rental Dwelling by Landlord Survey Respondent, 2018

Unit Type	Responses (%)	Responses (#)
Single Detached House	49%	36
Semi-Detached or Duplex	42%	31
Apartment Building	24%	18
Townhouse or Row House	14%	10
Other	12%	9
Main Floor Apartment	7%	5
Basement Apartment	5%	4
Rooming House	4%	3
Accessible Unit	3%	2
Single Room Occupancy	0%	0

*Note: Numbers are not mutually exclusive. Landlords could select more than one response.

Most landlords own a small number of rental units

Ninety percent of the survey respondents identified as property owners/landlords and 10% as property managers. The majority (59%) of landlords had only one or two rental units in their portfolio. Please note that a survey respondent may own multiple properties, and so these numbers do not reflect units per building but rather total units owned.

Number of Total Rental Units by Landlord Survey Respondent, 2018

Unit Type	Responses (%)	Responses (#)
1 or 2 Units	59%	38
3-5 Units	12%	8
6-10 Units	6%	4
10-50 Units	22%	14
50+ Units	3%	2

Most rental units are located in Stratford

The majority of survey respondents owned/managed units located in Stratford (61%), followed St. Marys (20%) and North Perth (18%). The remainders are located in Perth East and West Perth, or in other regions.

Location of Rental Units by Landlord Survey Respondent, 2018

Municipality	Population size (2016 Census)	Responses (%)
Stratford	31,465	61%
St. Marys	7,265	20%
North Perth	13,310	18%
Perth East	12,261	5%
West Perth	8,865	3%
Perth South	3,810	0%
Other	n/a	7%



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: September 14, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Angie Juarez, Supervisor of Social Services – Housing Division
 Jeff Wilson, Manager of Housing
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-012
Attachments: Ontario's 2022 Rent Increase Guideline

Title: Britannia 2022 Rent Increase and Annual Rent Increases

Objective: To inform the Social Services Sub-committee of proposed rent increases at 230 Britannia and to request direction to implement the rent increases.

Background: 230 Britannia St. is an affordable housing project that opened November 1, 2019. The term Affordable is defined as rents being set at 80% of Average Market Rents or the alternate Average Market Rents as approved by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH).

Landlords may only increase rent once every 12 months and landlords must also provide tenants with a minimum of 90 days notice. Therefore, the first opportunity to implement a rent increase would have been November 1, 2020. Every year, the Province of Ontario sets the maximum amount that landlords can raise market rents for most Ontario renters without approval from the Landlord and Tenant Board. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting provincial 2021 rent freeze, Britannia was not able to implement a rent increase last year.

The guideline for 2022 is 1.2%. The rent increase guideline applies to rent increases between January 1, 2022, and December 31, 2022. The guideline is based on the Ontario Consumer Price Index, a measure of inflation calculated monthly by Statistics Canada that reflects economic conditions over a 12-month period (June to May).

Analysis: While rent increases are not mandatory, they are a best business practice for all landlords including affordable housing providers. While Britannia Street Housing Project was built with the aid of government capital grants, unlike Public Housing it does not receive any ongoing funds for operations. As such the revenue generated

must be sufficient to cover all operating expenses including preventative maintenance, regular maintenance, and contributions to capital reserves for future capital needs. Therefore, increasing rents annually using the provincial guideline helps generate all income available to best position the City of Stratford to respond to increased operating costs as well as any unexpected capital costs.

The rent increase guidelines are based on the Consumer Price Index, which is a measure of inflation calculated monthly by Statistics Canada using data that reflects the economic conditions over the past year. Social Services staff intend to increase rent in accordance with the yearly rent increase guidelines moving forward.

Financial Impact: Increasing the rent for current market rent tenants will increase revenue by an approximated \$4,784 in 2022 based off the August 2021 rent roll.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Developing our Resources

Optimizing Stratford's physical assets and digital resources. Planning a sustainable future for Stratford's resources and environment.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report Britannia 2022 Rent Increase and Annual Rent Increases (SOC21-012) be received for information;

THAT City Council approve a 1.2% rent increase guideline for the Britannia Street Housing Project effective January 1, 2022;

AND THAT City Council amend Delegation of Authority By-law 135-2017 as amended, to delegate authority to the Director of Social Services to implement the Ontario Annual Rent Increase Guideline at Britannia Street Housing Project going forward.



Supervisor of Social Services, Housing Division



Manager of Housing

K.L. McElroy

Director of Social Services

Joan Thomson

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer

BULLETIN

Ontario's 2022 Rent Increase Guideline

June 16, 2021

[Municipal Affairs and Housing](#)

Based on the Ontario Consumer Price Index (CPI), the guideline on rent increases for 2022 in Ontario is 1.2 per cent. The CPI is a measure of inflation calculated monthly by Statistics Canada using data that reflects economic conditions over the past year.

The guideline applies to most residential rental accommodations covered by the [Residential Tenancies Act](#). It does not apply to rental units in buildings occupied for the first time after November 15, 2018, social housing units, long-term care homes or commercial property.

The rent increase guideline is the maximum most landlords can raise a tenant's rent without the approval of the [Landlord and Tenant Board](#) (LTB). It is applicable to most rent increases between January 1 and December 31, 2022.

Ontario has frozen rent for the vast majority of tenants in 2021. To support renters, the 2021 rent increase guideline was set at 0 per cent.

Rent increases are not automatic or mandatory. Landlords may only raise rent if they gave tenants at least 90 days written notice using the [correct form](#). In most cases, the rent increase cannot be more than the rent increase guideline. In addition, at least 12 months must have passed since the first day of the tenancy or the last rent increase. If a tenant believes they have received an improper rent increase, they may dispute it at the [LTB within 12 months](#).

Quick Facts

- Last year, Ontario passed legislation to [freeze rent at the 2020 level](#) for the vast majority of rented units covered under the *Residential Tenancies Act* to help give Ontarians financial relief as they deal with the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The rent increase freeze will end on December 31, 2021. Landlords can send a notice to tenants before the freeze is lifted for a rent increase that takes effect in 2022.
- Landlords can apply to the [Landlord and Tenant Board for above-guideline rent increases](#), under certain circumstances, such as after major capital work has been paid for and finished.
- In response to COVID-19, Ontario has [invested \\$765 million through the Social Services Relief Fund](#) to fund rent banks, utility banks and emergency loans for those most in need.
- Tenants who may need help to pay their rent are encouraged to contact their local [service manager](#) to see what housing supports are available in their community.

Additional Resources

- Learn more about [renting in Ontario](#) and your rights as a tenant, including easy-to-understand rental leases and new protections against wrongful or bad faith evictions enacted through the [Protecting Tenants and Strengthening Community Housing Act, 2020](#).
- Learn about [the rules for rent increases](#), including rent increase guidelines and resolving issues about rent control.
- [Visit Ontario's website for information on how to solve a disagreement with your landlord or tenant](#), and learn how we can help if a landlord or tenant breaks a rule under the [Residential Tenancies Act](#).
- Learn more about Ontario's [Roadmap to Reopen](#), a three-step plan to safely and cautiously reopen the province and gradually lift public health measures.

Related Topics

Government

Learn about the government services available to you and how government works. [Learn more](#)

Home and Community

Information for families on major life events and care options, including marriage, births and child care. Also includes planning resources for municipalities. [Learn more](#)

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MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: September 14, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Jeneane Fast, Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator
 Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-010
Attachments: None

Title: 2021 Homeless Enumeration

Objectives: To inform Sub-committee of the upcoming homeless enumeration required by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH).

Background: In March 2021, MMAH released guidelines for Service Managers outlining the requirements and standards for developing and maintaining a By-Name-List and for conducting a homeless enumeration before the end of the year. Both a By-Name-List and an enumeration are tools for: 1) understanding the scope of homelessness; and 2) providing services to people experiencing homelessness. By mandating these tools, the Ministry intends to establish a comprehensive, collaborative, and effective approach for addressing homelessness across the province.

The Ministry's requirement to develop and maintain a By-Name-List has already been met. The Service Manager area of Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys has had a By-Name-List since 2017 and a quality By-Name-List since 2019 (**SOC20-001**). The focus of this report is on meeting the second requirement of conducting a homeless enumeration before the end of 2021.

Analysis:

How will the enumeration be implemented?

MMAH has mandated that the enumeration method be a Point-in-Time (PiT) count, which gathers population-level information on households experiencing homelessness on one specific night. This information will be collected using a 13-question survey provided by the Ministry.

Locally, the By-Name-List already counts and gathers information on households experiencing homelessness on an ongoing basis. For this reason, the enumeration will be implemented using processes, procedures, resources, and community partnerships that are currently in place for the By-Name-List. This will help to ensure that the enumeration findings are up-to-date and accurate. It also offers an opportunity to complete a wide-scale data clean of the By-Name-List.

When will it take place?

October 30 has been designated as the PiT count night. However, data collection will take place over a longer period – from November 1 to the 10 – to coincide with the By-Name-List monthly update process. This extended timeframe falls within Ministry guidelines so long as the information gathered is based on a household's overnight location on the night of the PiT count (i.e. October 30).

Who will be counted?

- Households currently on the By-Name-List
- Households newly referred to the By-Name-List during the enumeration timeframe

Who will conduct the surveys?

A combination of Social Services staff and staff from organizations that act as access points for the By-Name-List will be responsible for administering the PiT survey. This includes the following organizations and programs:

- Canadian Mental Health Association Huron Perth
- Choices for Change Alcohol, Drug, and Gambling Counselling Centre
- Emily Murphy Centre
- John Howard Society of London and District
- Ontario Works
- Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services
- Salvation Army Housing Resource Centre
- Social Services Outreach Program
- Stratford-Perth Shelterlink
- Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP)

Training will be provided for all those involved in the enumeration.

How will the findings be shared?

The aggregated survey results will be shared with the Ministry by December 31. The findings will also be used to update information on the By-Name-List.

Financial Impact: Provincial Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) funding will cover the costs associated with the enumeration. These are expected to be minimal since the enumeration will be implemented using existing processes, procedures, resources, and community partnerships related to the By-Name-List.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Other

Housing and Homelessness Plan for Stratford, Perth County, and St. Marys (2020-2024)

“Collecting and using reliable, local data to make informed decisions” is one of the four implementation drivers moving the Plan’s strategic objectives forward.

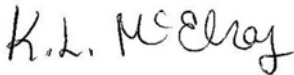
Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled “2021 Homeless Enumeration” (SOC21-010) be received for information.



Jeneane Fast, Housing Stability Policy and Program Coordinator



Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works



Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services



Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer



MANAGEMENT REPORT

Date: September 14, 2021
To: Social Services Sub-committee
From: Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works
 Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services
Report#: SOC21-009
Attachments: None

Title: Update on the Ontario Works Caseload and Caseload Forecast for 2022-23

Objective: To provide Council with an update on the local Ontario Works caseload as it sits currently and provide an estimated forecast for OW caseload growth into 2022-23.

Background: Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, the local Ontario Works office has been a source of financial support for many residents across Stratford, Perth County and St Marys. In March and April of 2020, the Province of Ontario dedicated additional resources and made legislative changes that improved the emergency assistance program offered through Ontario Works legislation.

During this time, due to the onset of increased financial supports through the federal government, the Ontario Works caseload saw a decline in individuals receiving ongoing financial support. This decline has stabilized over the past six months, though there is continued anticipation of an increase in caseload size once the federal benefits are expected to cease in October 2021.

The Ontario Works Division was still required to monitor and achieve employment outcomes that are set by the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS), though they identified that there would be leniency regarding potential financial penalties for municipalities that could not achieve their targets. Previous reports related to employment outcomes and provincial targets – SOC20-003, SOC19-010, SOC18-003 - have highlighted the increasingly concerning trend related to the unachievable targets being set by MCCSS, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. The local Ontario Works office continues to work closely with community partners and Ministry funders toward offering the highest level of service possible, with a focus on meeting people where they are at, providing support to ensure they can meet their basic needs and assisting them with re-entering the workforce where they are able to.

The COVID-19 pandemic proved to be exceptionally hard on clients in receipt of Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program, and we have seen this trend reflected in our employment outcomes, specifically regarding the percentage of the caseload that is currently employed.

The local Ontario Works office focused on two employment targets for the 2020 and 2021 service planning years, the percentage of clients exiting Ontario Works each month who exit to employment and the percentage of the overall caseload exiting to employment.

Analysis: Over the course of 2020, the local Ontario Works caseload averaged 648 active files, representing an average of 1134 individuals receiving ongoing case management support. The overall caseload numbers varied from 702 in May, during the height of the pandemic, to 580 in December as federal benefits were in full-swing and eligibility criteria for Employment Insurance continued to be more relaxed than previous years. In the first five months of 2021, the OW caseload has averaged 557 benefit units, servicing 998 individuals. This is consistent across the province as we see Ontario Works caseloads reduced due to alternate financial assistance programs being available.

During this time, our Temporary Care Assistance (TCA) caseload stayed comparable to previous years, averaging 64 total benefit units receiving support in 2020 and 65 benefit units through the first five months of 2021.

The caseload composition, utilizing monthly averages over the course of 2020, is listed below:

Singles without children	399
Singles with children	217
Couples without children	13
Couples with children	20

The largest age group represented locally is those whose head of households (the applicant on the Ontario Works file) aged 25-34 years old. This age range comprised 34% of the local caseload.

The biggest impact on the local Ontario Works caseload, aside from the overall caseload number, is the number of individuals receiving assistance who are actively employed. 2020 saw a significant drop in the percentage of the overall caseload actively employed to an average of 11% from the 2019 average of 16%. This is mostly attributed to a reduction in caseload and the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on the local economy.

Outcomes and Targeted Improvement

During the current service planning cycle, the City of Stratford's Ontario Works Division is being measured on two targets; the percentage of files which close each month due

to employment reasons. The second being the overall percentage of the caseload which exits assistance to employment each month.

The Ontario Works Division met 1 of 2 targets in both 2019 and 2020. As per report SOC20-003, there were concerns set forth from the outset of this service planning cycle regarding the unrealistic targets that were set. Due to the great work of the Division in 2018, 2019 targets were set at 2-3% higher than 2018 actuals. Though the local office has exceeded Provincial targets year over year, as detailed in SOC20-003, the office was penalized for having successful employment outcomes and arbitrarily expected to increase outcomes by 3% without taking into consideration other factors. 2020 was treated the same way, with the target for 2020 being set as 3% above 2019 actuals. External influences/factors were not considered by the Ministry in their calculations of local targets.

Year	% of files exiting to employment	Target set by MCCSS	% of overall caseload exiting to employment	Target set by MCCSS
2018	31.35%	13.13%	2.51%	N/A ¹
2019	31.97%	31.97%	2.04%	2.56%
2020	31.05%	30.80%	1.64%	2.10%

As detailed above, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the office was able to meet the targeted improvement in 1 of 2 measured outcome areas in both 2019 and 2020. Furthermore, the office was able to meet the four-day booking window, from contact to granted application, over the course of both 2019 and 2020.

The Ministry has advised that at this time there will be no financial penalty for offices who were unable to meet their targeted improvement.

Caseload Forecast

MCCSS has provided a detailed analysis regarding caseload expectations and their projected caseload forecast as federal benefits wind down in the Fall of 2021. As discussed, there is an expectation that individuals currently in receipt of federal benefits who are unable to find gainful employment will be reliant on Ontario Works financial assistance once benefits are wound down and no further programs are introduced at either the federal or provincial level. The local Ontario Works office continues to work diligently with the current participants active on the caseload to move toward stable employment and improved life stabilization. Current rates of assistance continue to be a cause of concern for Ontario Works offices across the province, as detailed in report SOC20-003. Further reliance on Ontario Works assistance, coupled with an increased cost of living and decreased affordability for housing will put increased pressure on the local Social Services office. The Social Services Department continues to advocate at Provincial-Municipal tables to ensure this is acknowledged and appropriate supports are

¹ This target was not included in the 2017-2018 service planning cycle.

put in place. Due to the continued freeze of Program Delivery Funding for Ontario Works offices, there has not been an increase to the administrative program delivery funding since 2018.

The Ministry provided a projected caseload increase for the local office, including temporary care assistance, is detailed in the chart below:

Current Caseload	686
2021-22 (fiscal year)	734
2022-23 (fiscal year)	860

Financial Impact: Currently, the potential financial impact of an increase to the Ontario Works caseload is unknown. Social assistance payments are paid fully by MCCSS, so any increase in caseload and corresponding social assistance payments will not impact the municipal tax levy.

Program delivery funding for the administration of Ontario Works is frozen at 2018 actuals, with no indication that funding levels will be increased to account for the projected Ontario Works caseload. Fifty percent (50%) of administrative costs for the Ontario Works program are paid by MCCSS.

Further reports will be put forth when budgetary impacts, as well as program modifications, are further understood.

Alignment with Strategic Priorities:

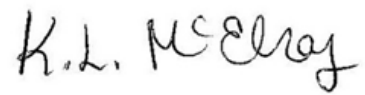
Strengthening our Plans, Strategies and Partnerships

Partnering with the community to make plans for our collective priorities in arts, culture, heritage and more. Communicating clearly with the public around our plans and activities.

Staff Recommendation: THAT the report titled "Update on the Ontario Works Caseload and Caseload Forecast for 2022-23" be received for information.



Alex Burgess, Manager of Ontario Works

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.L. McElroy". The letters are cursive and slightly slanted to the right.

Kim McElroy, Director of Social Services

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Joan Thomson". The letters are cursive and fluid.

Joan Thomson, Chief Administrative Officer