



# London Community Plan on Homelessness

London  
CANADA

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## A Compendium Guide

to the London Community Housing Strategy 2010 to 2015  
focused on Community Based Homelessness Prevention and Intervention Plans

*Prepared by*

**OrgCode Consulting Inc.**





**Contents**

**Preamble:** ..... 5

**Foreword:** ..... 7

**Part 1: Executive Summary** ..... 9

    Overview of Themes and Directions.....9

    Implementation ..... 11

**Part 2: Introduction** ..... 13

    About Homelessness..... 13

    About this Community Plan on Homelessness ..... 15

    Scale of Homelessness in London ..... 15

    Direct Funding for Homeless Programs and Services in London..... 16

    Relevant Recommendations from the London Community Housing Strategy ..... 18

**Part 3: Development of the Community Plan on Homelessness**..... 19

    Structure of the Community Plan on Homelessness..... 19

    Key Informant Interviews..... 19

    London Homeless Coalition..... 20

    Research..... 20

    Themed Consultations and Community Roundtable ..... 20

    Special Focus Group with Youth ..... 22

    Emerging Directions..... 22

**Part 4: Detailed Themes and Directions**..... 23

    THEME 1: Integration between housing and homeless programs and services..... 23

    Theme 2: The future roles and opportunities for shelters..... 26

    Theme 3: Aligning services to focus on housing as the solution to homelessness ..... 28

    Theme 4: Supportive housing and housing with supports..... 33

    Theme 5: Prevention and discharge strategies..... 36

    Theme 6: Understanding who we are serving and the impacts of our services ..... 38

**Part 5: Conclusion** ..... 41

**Additional Resources** ..... 43

**OrgCode Contact Information** ..... 47



### **Preamble:**

London is poised for success. Our extensive work with all stakeholders over the course of 2010 reflects a strong and caring community that has demonstrated an appetite for innovation and embracing bold new directions.

Service providers and municipal leadership deserve to be proud of their accomplishments to date. It is from that strength-based experience that the new directions grow. With a strong sense of accountability permeating the City, this new Community Plan on Homelessness also sets the stage for improved tracking of performance and transparency regarding both progress and challenges.

In recent years, London has risen to the challenge to address a range of community needs. The Child and Youth Agenda, the Strengthening Neighbourhoods Strategy, and the Kipps Lane Initiative are all examples of London's commitment to improve the quality of life of Londoners and the ability to draw upon local strengths and expertise to positively create community change. In addition, specific initiatives such as No Fixed Address and Hostels to Homes — outlined in greater detail in the London Community Housing Strategy — reflect the community's readiness to engage in integrated solutions across service sectors to address issues of homelessness. The London Community Housing Strategy (LCHS) and the Community Plan on Homelessness (CPH) are both designed to encourage positive change and build upon the momentum of successful local initiatives.

The CPH is a compendium to the LCHS and acts as a project guide for subsequent and more detailed implementation plans and action. This document recognizes the expressed readiness of the City, community agencies, and other service partners to work together with individuals, youth and families with lived experience to begin developing the implementation details associated with each direction. Like elements of the LCHS, the directions contained within the London Community Plan on Homelessness are subject to regular review in the spirit of the general themes of this Plan. Specific features, such as the continued application of a gender lens, recognition of the ongoing changes within specific populations in need, and the requirement to refocus on new priorities and opportunities that may emerge during the timeframe of this Plan will need to be addressed throughout the implementation process.

The Plan also exists within a context of considerable systemic inequalities and inequities that pose considerable barriers. Poverty, inadequacy of housing, lack of affordability in housing, insufficient incomes and discrimination are just some of the barriers that are amplified by compromised opportunities related to gender, age and ability. When combined with complex health and mental health systems that are difficult to navigate and intergenerational life skill deficiencies and reliance on social interventions, this presents a formidable backdrop for Londoners to think about homelessness and appropriate responses to it. London is not immune to the broader social policy and economic issues impacting Ontario and Canadian society as a whole. It has been and will be London's commitment to innovation, creativity and resiliency that will serve it well in appropriately addressing homelessness.

Most importantly, this document would not exist if it were not for the courageous participation of those with lived experience. During the development of the London Community Housing Strategy and the Community Plan on Homelessness, agencies, the City, and Consultants engaged directly and indirectly

with those who, through their experiences, best inform the needs and strategies that are outlined. Their stories, experience, expressed needs and vision have been integrated into this Plan and have helped inform its structure, priorities, and directions.

We thank each person who took time to assist in the development of this London Community Plan on Homelessness — you have helped to make it truly a local initiative.

**Foreword:**

London’s Community Plan on Homelessness (CPH or the “plan”) is an extension of the London Community Housing Strategy (LCHS). Grounded in recommendations approved by Council in June 2010, the plan establishes policy and program direction until December 31, 2015 for homeless programs and services in London.

This plan is an essential next step to creating strategic and lasting interventions for those in our community that are experiencing homelessness or a housing crisis and who are most often also living with the effects of other complex social and health challenges.

For the next five years, the City of London, in partnership with community stakeholders and the other orders of government, will be focused on permanent solutions to homelessness. London will embrace 29 new directions organized in six themes that will shape the homeless programs and service delivery until December 31, 2015.

This plan was made possible by the involvement of more than 215 participants in key informant interviews, consultation sessions, a community roundtable, a focus group with youth and, finally, a review session on the emerging directions. The Community Plan on Homelessness is built upon the strengths and needs of the London community. The themes and directions expressed in this plan clearly emerged both through extensive consultation in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy and the Community Plan on Homelessness as well as through known best practices and research.

To guide these next steps, London’s Community Plan on Homelessness is constructed in the following five parts:

1. Executive Summary:	An overview of the directions within the defined themes.
2. Introduction:	A brief synopsis and positioning of the CPH based on London’s extensive work and experience as a community in these matters.
3. Development of the CPH:	A summary of the process used in developing the CPH.
4. Directions:	A more detailed overview of directions within the CPH.
5. Conclusion:	Final comments and guidance related to implementation.

The content of the Community Plan on Homelessness relies upon the research and directions emerging from the LCHS, June, 2010. All efforts were made to align the CPH within the broad and integrated homelessness to housing continuum defined within the LCHS.



### Part 1: Executive Summary

This Community Plan on Homelessness builds on the considerable work and partnerships in London. It directs those involved in the implementation of this plan with a prioritized set of directions that support stronger, more measurable and integrated outcomes for all those who rely on these important services.

The permanent solution to homelessness is housing. The Community Plan on Homelessness is an integral part of the London Community Housing Strategy (June, 2010). Specifically, there are 22 recommendations from the London Community Housing Strategy that have a direct bearing on the Community Plan on Homelessness.

The success of the Community Plan on Homelessness will hinge on several factors, including: better defined service expectations, outcome-based funding, improved support programs, strategically aligned investment, improved committees, better prevention, enhanced and effective discharge planning, altering service delivery in shelters and very importantly, improving London's understanding of the homeless population. It relies on the full engagement of the City and service partners, agencies, and the community in the implementation and management of this new system of services and supports.

The Community Plan on Homelessness reflects many voices from the community, including: persons with lived experience, front line workers, executives and managers of homeless and housing services, staff from ancillary programs and services such as employment supports, the business community, members of the public service, elected officials, first responders such as police, ambulance, and fire and the general public.

The following theme areas emerged through the alignment of homelessness related recommendations within the LCHS, discussions with key informants, and the need to establish linked goals and initiatives to support a strong and effective Community Plan on Homelessness implementation in London:

1. Integration between housing and homeless programs and services
2. The opportunities and future role of shelters
3. Alignment of services and interventions to focus on housing and solutions to homelessness
4. Supportive housing and housing with supports
5. Improving discharge planning and prevention services while still meeting needs
6. Understanding who is served and their needs while striving for reductions in homelessness and increasing access to housing

#### Overview of Themes and Directions:

##### **Theme 1: Integration between housing and homeless programs and services**

- |            |     |   |
|------------|-----|---|
| Directions | 1.1 | Re-align housing and homelessness committees                            |
|            | 1.2 | Establish common assessment and prioritization tools across providers   |
|            | 1.3 | Develop appropriate peer support and mentoring programs                 |
|            | 1.4 | Create an Inter-Agency Community Roundtable on Housing and Homelessness |

**Theme 2: The opportunities and future role of shelters**

- Directions
- 2.1 Develop service maps for individual shelter operators
  - 2.2 Develop service maps for the emergency and domiciliary shelter system as a whole
  - 2.3 Explore shelter specialization needs in London, for example: wet shelter, respite, infirmary, palliative, etc.
  - 2.4 Establish housing worker functions within shelters

**Theme 3: Alignment of services and interventions to focus on housing and solutions to homelessness**

- Directions
- 3.1 Reinforce the City's role as Administrator and Service Manager
  - 3.2 Develop sector service maps for all other areas
  - 3.3 Develop clear policies and procedures
  - 3.4 Develop evidence-based performance measurement framework and funding
  - 3.5 Enhance London CAREs services and align with housing outcomes
  - 3.6 Review and align housing registry systems
  - 3.7 Convene a summit of other funders to align with the CPH
  - 3.8 Develop a community plan to better meet the needs of street involved sex workers
  - 3.9 Develop a community plan to better meet the needs of street involved youth
  - 3.10 Share and advocate the CPH with other orders of government

**Theme 4: Supportive housing and housing with supports**

- Directions
- 4.1 Develop common intake protocols and practices
  - 4.2 Create policies and procedures supporting scattered site housing
  - 4.3 Create a landlord roundtable
  - 4.4 Support OW/ODSP alignment to better meet client needs
  - 4.5 Develop daily programming activities for homeless and recently housed individuals and families

**Theme 5: Improving discharge planning and prevention services while still meeting needs**

- Directions
- 5.1 Host a summit on discharge planning
  - 5.2 Amend shelter intake functions
  - 5.3 Create a new prevention model

**Theme 6: Understanding who is served and their needs while striving for reductions in homelessness and increasing access to housing**

- Directions
- 6.1 Convene a research roundtable to determine the most appropriate methods for London to understand the number and service needs of the homeless population
  - 6.2 Determine numbers and service needs, data gathering tools, and practices
  - 6.3 Develop an annual report to the community

### **Implementation:**

The City, in its role as Service Manager and Administrator on housing and homelessness matters within the City and County of Middlesex, will function in a leadership and facilitating role for Plan implementation. The City will assemble community expertise to focus attention on the best way(s) to implement the Plan, as well as make adjustments to elements of the Plan as necessary should new opportunities or priorities change within the five years of the Plan. Community expertise will include representation from involved agencies, persons with lived experience, the community at large, and be reflective of gender and other demographic representation of both London and the populations served. As necessary, the City will also draw upon other experts to advise and help facilitate implementation of the Plan.

The community stakeholders invited by the City to focus attention on implementation will inform and refine detailed actions associated with each of the directions, as well as the sequence and timeline for implementation within the five years. The sequence of implementation will be informed by a number of variables – from complexity of the initiative to organizing resources – and it must be noted that implementation will occur throughout all five years. Not every direction can or should be implemented in years one or two of the Plan.

This plan is based on shared ownership and shared responsibility in the community between service providers and managers. It is not the City's sole responsibility to ensure all directions of the Plan are fulfilled. In a leadership role, the City will provide guidance through changes in the service delivery system, engage in meaningful process and communicate with those affected by changes and ensure the steps necessary to achieve the results envisioned in the Plan are specific, measureable and attainable. The City will liaise with other orders of government, share knowledge, help provide training when it is required and appropriately allocate resources within its purview to support the directions of the Plan.

The approach to implementation will also consider different lenses of analysis and the needs of different populations and specific unique interests. The approach to implementation will consider gender-focused solutions. Service efficiencies and value of investment in certain interventions relative to the depth of need of the population will be well thought through. The needs of Aboriginal people will be considered, as will the needs of youth, women, seniors, newcomers and persons with disabilities. Throughout the five years of the Plan should there be emerging needs of other populations or other lenses of analysis, these will also be given due consideration.



### **Part 2: Introduction**

In June 2010 London City Council approved the LCHS. The research and interviews conducted for the LCHS supported and form part of this Community Plan on Homelessness.

Together, the development of this plan included:

- more than 80 interviews with persons with lived experience;
- a series of consultations with different sectors using a process that generated ideas to solve problems and establish priorities;
- key informant interviews;
- a local initiatives survey; and,
- a review of more than 7,000 pages of research.

These discussions generally reiterated and confirmed research and best practices related to homelessness. Homeless services need to be nimble, responsive, timely and capable of meeting the needs of all of these individuals and families so that their homeless experience is minimized if not prevented. Through the work of the LCHS and the CPH, the directions in this plan emphasize the need to address the level and types of homelessness in London in a priority manner.

#### **About Homelessness**

For many individuals and families, homelessness is a once in a lifetime experience for a short period of time that is not repeated again at any other point in their lives. In these situations, homeless programs and services are used for the short-term and infrequent use for which many of them were designed. For others, homelessness is chronic and part of a complex and inter-related series of crises. These individuals and families have a higher incidence of involvement with other systems such as police, courts, jails, hospitals, detox programs, ambulances, mental health facilities and/or treatment centres.

The state of homelessness itself is a consequence. Sometimes, it is a consequence of personal decisions. Other times, it is a consequence of trauma. In other instances, it is a consequence of events that are completely outside of one's personal control. Homelessness can also be a result of the "system" not meeting an individual or family's needs at a critical time. Homelessness can also be the result of an individual or family not knowing how to navigate the system to secure the resources and help that they need to avoid homelessness. The traumatic effects of homelessness, on individuals and families along with the detrimental social impacts of homelessness, increase the longer a person is homeless.

Homelessness has existed in Canada for generations. Over the past two decades, valid research has improved our understanding of the issue at the same time that the size of the homeless population has increased in Canada. The majority of Canadians recognize that homelessness is an issue and research supports the fact that homelessness affects all Canadians — directly or indirectly.

As homeless programs and services become more refined and focus attention on ending homelessness rather than managing homelessness, it is important to understand the depth of need of those seeking services.

The ability to assess the readiness of an individual or family (i.e. assessing the severity of their presenting issues or crisis and their capacity to respond) usually requires an understanding of pre-existing and interrelated health, mental health, addictions, length of homelessness, poverty, and life skill capacities.

Comprehensive yet simple assessment tools have been introduced in many sectors to provide a holistic perspective on the individual or family. These tools provide consistency and understanding to the needs and capacities of an individual or family and make it possible to match them to the most appropriate service and/or housing provider to meet their needs.

Individuals or families do not all have the same needs. Many may require less intensive service and can usually have their needs met through passive referrals and casual contact with various parts of the system. Some require intensive and often specialized service delivered by professionals who know how to navigate complex systems.

There are various examples of assessment tools used in the mental health and Housing First fields. These include standards such as the Camberwell Assessment of Needs (CAN) and Denver Acuity Scale by mental health providers. In homeless and housing first programs, tools such as the Vulnerability Index can be used for a street homeless population and is the cornerstone to the 100k homes campaign in the United States. The Global Appraisal of Individual Needs – Short Screener (GAIN SS) is a tool already in use and familiar to many service providers in London.

In other housing first programs that extend beyond solely a street homeless population, tools such as the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool are gaining attention. Some information systems such as ServicePoint also have a module on self-sufficiency that is used to help rate acuity and level of care required.

In addition to this, definitions of homelessness change over time and across contexts. Tying into local initiatives related to income supports, homelessness in London is defined to include all persons with no fixed address, including persons who are:

- living outdoors or living in their vehicle;
- living in buildings not designed or fit for human habitation (squatting);
- residing in shelters;
- “couch surfing” – temporarily staying with friends or family as a result of having no other fixed address or place to stay; and
- residing in London hospitals, jails and institutions and deemed to have “No Fixed Address” at their discharge or release date.

The root causes for homelessness are numerous and dissecting each cause or co-occurring causes is not the purpose of the Community Plan on Homelessness. It is rarely one particular event or life situation that causes homelessness. Instead, studies conclude that it is a confluence of events and that it can take the form of a specific trigger, sequence or intensity with homelessness as the result.

“While homelessness is rarely only a housing issue, it is always a housing issue”, said Dr. David Hulchanski. Any community that is focused on addressing homelessness must connect the homeless service

response to housing to make any progress towards ending homelessness in the community. For this reason, in 2010, London integrated its Community Plan on Homelessness with the Community Housing Strategy.

The City of London has recognized that good housing policy is also good social policy. Through pilots like Hostels to Homes, London has also clearly displayed that housing is also an important harm reduction strategy, and a key first step to employment and community engagement.

### **About This Community Plan on Homelessness**

London has had two previous plans on homelessness. These plans were created as a requirement of federal funding programs, specifically, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) that later became the Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS).

Unlike previous plans, this Community Plan on Homelessness is a comprehensive reflection of the voice of the community. The Community Plan on Homelessness transcends any one funding program and is designed for alignment across a broad range of initiatives to focus on permanent solutions to homelessness.

In the current context, providers of homeless programs and services and government entities in London have demonstrated leadership and innovation — especially over the past few years — with locally created and effective programs such as London CARES, No Fixed Address and Hostels to Homes. Building upon a culture of innovation and the strengths provided by partners within the community, the Community Plan on Homelessness steers direction within six thematic areas.

The following theme areas emerged through the alignment of homelessness related recommendations within the LCHS, discussions with key informants, and the need to establish linked goals and initiatives to support a strong and effective Community Plan on Homelessness implementation:

1. Integration between housing and homeless programs and services;
2. The opportunities and future role of shelters;
3. Alignment of services and interventions to focus on housing and solutions to homelessness;
4. Supportive housing and housing with supports;
5. Improving discharge planning and prevention services while still meeting needs; and
6. Understanding who is served and their needs while striving for reductions in homelessness and increasing access to housing.

### **Scale of Homelessness in London**

As of October 2010, there is limited reliable homelessness data including the number of homeless people in London at any single point in time. Although there is no reliable figure for the number of homeless people throughout the entire year across all service sectors, there is knowledge that many services and sectors support the same individuals.

This Community Plan on Homelessness is built upon the best available information from service providers and government. There is a clearly articulated understanding within agencies that a more integrated service system with linked business tools will support integration efforts and help better understand the service needs of people who rely on multiple supports and programs.

The absence of current reliable data imposes some limitations on the Community Plan on Homelessness, however, in response, the proposed introduction of consistent metrics and business tools will support the gradual accumulation of more reliable data that can be used to better understand and continuously refine services and outcomes in the future.

In this way, the directions and priorities of the CPH have been mapped out based on the best available information, the capacity and readiness of service providers, and the need to begin establishing clear and consistent practices that will support future CPH implementation needs.

### **Direct Funding for Homeless Programs and Services in London**

The chart below outlines funding for homeless related programs from all three orders of government. Additional information regarding the individual services, funded agencies, and various sources of funding administered by Community Services related to homelessness programs and London CARES activities is available within reports to Municipal Council.

The homelessness portfolio also includes the Hostels to Homes pilot as well as service agreements with emergency shelter and domiciliary hostels. Although these services are included in the overall homeless program, they are reported separately within London's Consolidated Municipal Service Manager (CMSM) regulated Ontario Works programs.

It is recognized that homelessness costs are also borne by other service sectors. Jails, courts, hospitals, and agencies all absorb these less visible but often more costly forms of support to those in need.

Although these costs are more difficult to define, programs and initiatives such as Hostels to Homes (H2H) reflected the savings within the homelessness sector as well as other sectors due to more timely and directed supports. In addition to these, longer term savings and economic benefits are recognized from the inclusion of individuals and families as they move from social isolation and crisis to increased stability, safety, community engagement, and employment that often accompanied housing with appropriate supports.

Funding for these programs comes from all orders of government; however, specific local initiatives may receive funding from more than one source. These funds enhance other direct services such as those through Ontario Works programs including the Provincial Addiction Services Initiative.

## London Community Plan on Homelessness

The following chart reflects a summary of specific homelessness funding allocations and sources and London's position as a primary funder:

<b>Program</b>	<b>Funding Source</b>	<b>2010 Allocation</b>
Energy Emergency Fund (EEF) for CMSM	100% Provincial	69,150
Rent Bank for CMSM	100% Provincial	188,200
The Heat and Warmth Program (THAW)	100% Municipal	100,000*
Mayors Anti-Poverty Action Group (MAPAG)	100% Municipal	185,000
Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Strategy (CHPP) for CMSM	100% Provincial	544,213
Homelessness Prevention Strategy (HPS) Based on Fiscal Allocation (2009/10)	100% Federal	513,214
London Community Addiction Response Strategy (London CARES)	100% Municipal	1,250,255
Emergency Shelters	80% Provincial/ 20% Municipal*	6,115,356
Domiciliary Hostels	80% Provincial/ 20% Municipal*	299,022
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$9,264,410</b>

\* subject to provincial funding changes

### Relevant Recommendations from the London Community Housing Strategy

There are 22 recommendations from the Council-approved London Community Housing Strategy that have a direct impact on the Community Plan on Homelessness. Many of the other recommendations also provide context or policy framework, but the CPH focuses on those that have the most direct bearing on homelessness. These recommendations were shared and affirmed during the community consultations, key informant interviews and public session on the emerging directions that were used to develop Community Plan on Homelessness.

The 22 relevant recommendations from the London Community Housing Strategy, include:

1. Focus on housing and homelessness together
2. Central administration within the City for housing and homelessness change initiatives
3. Review London CARES for alignment with Community Housing Strategy
4. Reduce shelter beds and shelter use over the next five years
5. Align all funding to support investment in priorities and needs
6. Target Hostels to Homes – or similar program – to the most chronically homeless people
7. Review shelter system and programming
8. Increase supports to people once housed
9. Invest in prevention strategies
10. Outcome based funding
11. Improve discharge planning/shelter diversion
12. Decentralize Ontario Works office
13. Regional identity
14. Consider supported employment
15. Shared Client Information System
16. Determine the number and service needs of persons who are homeless
17. Supported and/or alternative housing targets for other orders of government
18. Increase investment in settlement services and culturally appropriate assistance for newcomers
19. Expand the opportunities to meet the needs of Aboriginal people
20. Build capacity amongst property managers
21. Obtain cost recovery from programs that divert people away from hospitals, corrections, etc and reinvest in new affordable housing capital and affordable homeownership
22. Improve the waiting list for subsidized housing

For a full list of the recommendations in the LCHS, please visit: <http://www.housing.london.ca/LCHSJune2010Report.pdf>

**Part 3: Development of the Community Plan on Homelessness**

The City of London has provided leadership in funding and policy direction to create the Community Plan on Homelessness. This does not mean that the City shoulders the entire burden of funding or that the City is solely responsible for implementation — that is a shared responsibility with the community and other orders of government.

The Community Plan on Homelessness reflects the voice of the community, the insights of municipal staff and the best ideas from other communities appropriate for the London context. In summary, the methods used to create the Plan included:

- The relevant components of the Council approved London Community Housing Strategy;
- A multi-department Municipal Steering Committee;
- Key informant interviews;
- The London Homeless Coalition;
- Research of other jurisdictions applicable to London;
- Themed & open consultations and community roundtable;
- Special focus group with youth; and,
- Community discussion of emerging directions.

This section contains a brief description of the related methods, processes, and structure.

**Structure of the Community Plan on Homelessness**

There are six main sections to the Community Plan on Homelessness and each of the sections is related to the themes discussed above. While other parts of the Plan provide background context, recommendations from the London Community Housing Strategy and conclusions about how the Plan is integrated, each section is designed for independent review and implementation.

Within each section there is background information that describes the theme, as well as an overview of the information that was gathered related to the development of the CPH. Recommendations are provided in each section.

**Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews were conducted with 38 people using a semi-structured interview process. The interviewees came from the following sectors:

- Mental Health & Addictions
- First Nations/Aboriginal
- Children and Youth Services
- Seniors and Older Adults
- Child Protection
- Emergency Health/Hospital
- Emergency Shelters
- Community and Neighbourhood Associations
- Supportive Housing
- Health Funding
- Justice
- London Homeless Coalition

The key informant interviews lasted approximately 90 minutes each, with one to five people in attendance, and were structured around questions related to the six themes that comprise the Community Plan on Homelessness.

### London Homeless Coalition

Significant time was invested engaging both the Steering Committee and the general membership of the London Homeless Coalition – London's advocacy voice on matters of homelessness. This included:

- Meeting with the Executive to review proposed methods and to seek input on engagement.
- Meeting with the general membership of the London Homeless Coalition to explain and update the process. In addition, members of the London Homeless Coalition were asked to submit examples of local promising and best practices for consideration in the Plan.
- Key informant interview with the Executive Committee.
- Invitation to attend all consultations, community roundtable and emerging directions session and invite co-workers and clients to attend.
- Follow-up with the Chair of the London Homeless Coalition to ensure that there were no additional points of process or information exchange.

### Research

Building upon the research already conducted for the London Community Housing Strategy, the research for the Community Plan on Homelessness focused on promising and best practices – as determined through expert, independent review and research – that may be applicable to London relative to the six themes for the Plan. This included a review of evidence-based practices described in academic literature and other peer reviewed community-based research. More than 80 practices were reviewed from Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom. When necessary, the consultants contacted the researchers and/or local practitioners for clarification regarding application.

In addition to reviewing the sources cited in the LCHS, persons interested in some of the evidence and initiatives discussed in the CPH may want to peruse the additional resources included at the end of this document.

### Themed Consultations and Community Roundtable

The City of London sent out invitations to attend the community consultations to a broad range of organizations, community stakeholders and interest groups. A total of 136 people attended the consultations. Six of the consultations each focused specifically on one of the six themes and one consultation was open for those unable to attend the previous six consultations. A facilitated community roundtable focused on service gaps that emerged and helped to clarify issues raised during the consultations.

The six broad themes of the consultation were established through the review of the LCHS recommendations related to homelessness as well as the likely areas of defined project implementation. The community consultations lasted approximately two hours and each consultation followed the following process to maintain the integrity of the information gathering:

- The consultants outlined the agenda and expectations for the consultation.
- Specific to each theme, the consultants outlined:
  - The relevant recommendations from the Community Housing Strategy
  - The salient points shared in the key informant interviews
  - What the research has to say about the theme, specific to promising and best practices
- Using this information and local knowledge, the participants self-organized into small groups with others who shared a similar interest within the theme.

- Small groups were then instructed about how to use a Process Animation — an experiential exercise that simulates real situations and requires groups to:
  - Identify the problem statement as it currently exists
  - Identify the desired future – the vision of how things can work better to address the problem identified
  - Outline the specific process steps and tasks necessary to achieve the desired future
  - Identify the barriers likely to be experienced and propose solutions to those barriers
  - Detail the metrics (data) that should be collected and analyzed to know if the process is effective and that the desired future is being achieved

The participants in the consultation were welcomed and encouraged to attend one or more of the sessions regarding the themes that they were most interested in. Some individuals participated in all seven consultations as well as the community roundtable. It should also be noted that the consultations were held in a vacated music store in the Citi Plaza (Galleria Mall) at 355 Wellington Street making the concept of “transparency” very real for this public discourse. The open space attracted many people who were just walking. Even though they did not get an invitation to the consultations, many people decided to participate or inquire at length about the proceedings. The Community Plan on Homelessness has benefitted from a wide range of perspectives from the general public and persons with lived experience of homelessness. It also provided a forum for members of the public to ask specific questions of City staff about housing and homelessness in London.

The consultants identified areas for the community roundtable where further clarification and input was required from the community. These discussion points included:

1. In various themes it has been suggested that there is a lack of communication across agencies or that one of the major barriers is agencies working in silos.
2. It has been suggested numerous times that people should be supported to maintain their housing, but not a lot of specifics on exactly what people think this should look like.
  - What model/approach/intervention(s) do people have in mind?
  - Is this a cross-agency initiative or a matter of continuity of contact with one agency?
  - How does this relate to the recommendations of the LCHS?
  - How will this relate to the system as a whole?
3. Specialization of shelters and specialization within shelters came up numerous times, e.g., wet shelters; respite in shelter; safe haven in shelter; housing within existing shelters; etc.
  - What specializations should be the priority and why?
  - What mechanism(s) do you see being used to coordinate service user “fit” with program specialization?
4. Much has been said about prevention and diversion, but we have not seen a clear articulation of a proposed model that would be of benefit to London.
  - What approach do you see best working?
  - Is the approach about having specialization within one or more organizations or a shared response across organizations?
5. Outreach services have been mentioned on several occasions, but with different perspectives, such as:
  - there is too much outreach
  - there isn't enough outreach
  - outreach should be exempt from data collection
  - lack of coordination and integration with the broader system
  - the only real issue with outreach is lack of training and specialization

6. Specific populations, (including women experiencing homelessness, individuals with physical disabilities, First Nations people) have received little mention.
  - Are there any specific needs of populations that you think warrant particular mention or attention in the Plan?
  - Are there specific strategies that need to be considered for those populations?

### **Special Focus Group with Youth**

Based on the key informant interviews with representatives from child protection services, a separate meeting was held with youth to hear their voice directly. A focus group of four youth, all of whom had lived experience with homelessness and child protection services proved valuable and provided the youth a safe place to have their voice heard.

### **Emerging Directions**

The City invited people with a broad range of interests to attend a review session on the emerging directions of the Community Plan on Homelessness. This important step in public participation provided individuals an opportunity to indicate their perception of the community's "state of readiness" relative to the proposed directions contained in the Community Plan on Homelessness. The participants had the opportunity to suggest amendments to proposed recommendations, additional recommendations to be considered or ask questions of clarification relative to what was proposed in the Community Plan on Homelessness.

There were fifty-five people in attendance at the reviewing session that was facilitated at the London Central Public Library. In addition to providing written feedback, and to maximize opportunities for engagement, participants were asked to send their feedback directly to the consultants via email or fax during the 48 hours following the meeting.

Forty people (73%) responded with the written feedback forms that included the state of readiness scale. Fourteen people chose not to use the feedback form and email their comments directly to the consultants. Based on the 4-point scale of readiness that ranged from "strongly disagree to strongly agree", there was over 90% agreement that the community was ready to implement the directions that they reviewed from the new London Community Plan on Homelessness.

### **Part 4: Detailed Themes and Directions**

#### **THEME 1: Integration between housing and homeless programs and services**

##### **Background on Theme 1:**

The London Community Plan on Homelessness is an integral part of the London Community Housing Strategy. Therefore, it is necessary to ensure that there are processes put in motion that will continue to break down the “silo” approach in the separate delivery of housing and homelessness services. This momentum towards integration will encourage other “systems” to be included and improve outcomes for individual or families who are homeless or at risk of being homeless. One of the first steps towards integration is to immediately review, assess and realign the committee structures that are currently in place.

It is necessary for the Housing and Social and Community Support Services Divisions to work with the City Clerks department to assess and recommend a revised and simplified advisory group structure to support the needs of integrated affordable housing development within London. This new structure will take into consideration best practices from other municipal and community housing and homelessness committees during the process. Supporting this review is Council’s recent direction: “...as part of Municipal Council’s implementation of the Report of the Governance Task Force it will review the terms of reference, structure, and composition of advisory committees related to housing with the objective of harmonizing and simplifying existing committees and, where possible considering the roles of other related community or administrative committees.”

There are lessons to be gleaned from the research and practices in some other jurisdictions concerning integrated services. For instance, there are longer-term positive housing outcomes, especially for persons with barriers such as severe mental illness and addictions when there is an integrated approach. An integrated approach also results in fewer days homeless and improved cost-efficiencies in service delivery.

It is clear through the key-informant interviews and consultations that service providers in London are ready for greater integration. Many people see integration as the missing link to improved client outcomes and, as one person stated, “Getting everyone on the same page”. It is imperative to create opportunities for homeless service providers to serve their clients with a “housing lens” on their programs and services.

Examples of problems stated during the consultations include:

- The current system is chaotic and not user-friendly
- Agencies are in silos with “turf wars”
- A shift in thinking is needed to ensure people served have the supports they need

Effective integration does not mean that all organizations have to do both housing and homeless programs. But, it does mean that it is necessary to have structured conversations, shared tools, increased awareness and improved opportunities for knowledge exchange across program areas. This does not preclude some organizations from becoming multi-service organizations – this has proven to be effective in some jurisdictions; however, is not a requirement for effective service delivery.

Another way to improve integration is to maximize local opportunities and leverage existing resources. For example, London has an allocation of 88 domiciliary hostel beds. In considering the continuum of housing, domiciliary hostels provide a unique opportunity to address the housing needs of a segment of the population, based upon their measured and analyzed presenting needs and unique circumstances. Domiciliary hostels are an important aspect of available housing – not just a shelter bed – which must be maximized in order to achieve the shelter reductions envisioned in the LCHS. Currently domiciliary hostels are under-utilized in London, and this trend of under-utilization must be reversed to achieve the success of the Plan’s directions, matched to the complexity of client needs. Furthermore, London should look to communities such as Waterloo and Ottawa that have used domiciliary hostels in innovative ways as part of the housing continuum in each of those communities.

There is also an opportunity to draw upon the unique perspective and knowledge of peers and mentors in providing assistance and support. Based upon the current state of the individual to be supported, mentors can be an effective part of the overall service system response – in addition to appropriate professional services.

Based upon the key informant interviews, research, consultations and information gleaned in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy, the following are the proposed directions for London.

<b>Direction 1.1</b>	Re-align Housing and Homelessness Committees Review, assess and realign committee structures to better support integration
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b><i>Implement the new structure.</i></b>
<b>Direction 1.2</b>	Establish Common Assessment and Prioritization Tools Common assessment and prioritization tool to be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• by all homeless service providers, with information shared (through consent of clients) with housing providers and support providers once the individual is housed</li> <li>• as a way of determining complexity of client needs and priority to determine choices for the client to consider in housing, e.g., dom hostel, supportive housing, scattered site with supports, independent, etc.</li> <li>• as a way of determining the type and intensity of supports that would be offered to a client in their housing</li> <li>• to create service pathways within and between community based agencies, hospitals, courts, and emergency services</li> <li>• to make “warm transfers” between agencies occur whenever possible</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b><i>Select appropriate common assessment and prioritization tool. Train on the chosen common assessment and prioritization tool. Implement the chosen common assessment and prioritization tool.</i></b>

<p><b>Direction 1.3</b></p>	<p>Develop appropriate Peer Support and Mentoring Programs                  Create a community working group on mentoring and peer support co-chaired by the City and community-based sector with a focus on choosing and implementing the most appropriate model for London.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><i>Initiate committee</i>  <i>Choose model</i>  <i>Train with peers</i>  <i>Implement new model</i></p>
<p><b>Direction 1.4</b></p>	<p>Create an Inter-Agency Community Roundtable on Housing and Homelessness                  This table would feature joint planning between the City and community-based service providers. The agenda and purpose of the roundtable is to focus on expanding service knowledge across sectors, and create vectors for knowledge transfer.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><i>The roundtable should meet approximately twice per year. This can be defined within the Terms of Reference.</i></p>

### **Theme 2: The future roles and opportunities for shelters**

#### **Background on Theme 2:**

Shelters play a vital role in the continuum of service available to homeless individuals and families. It is important that shelters remain consistent in their role to meet immediate, short-term needs while working to resolve an individual or family's homelessness as quickly as possible. Shelters should not (and do not want to) become de facto housing.

With a movement to change the City's homeless service systems from managing homelessness to ending homelessness, the role of shelters is reframed and it is understood that they are centres of opportunity. Discussions with shelter providers reveal that they are ready to make important and necessary changes in shelter programs and delivery in London. They have already started implementing changes to be more effective. Within the consultations, participants were also ready to provide commentary on what needs to be addressed with shelters, including:

- Lack of in-house integrated housing services;
- Lack of specialized services like wet shelters or respite care;
- A need to be able to separate the needs of new people to shelter from individuals experiencing chronic homelessness;
- Clients moving from service to service without a consistent support approach; and
- A need for improved diversion to support individuals in more appropriate services upon discharge and not discharging to shelter.

Based upon improved knowledge about who is using shelters in London and their needs, it becomes possible to design better services and programs to meet specific needs. This includes the need to review gender, youth, seniors, Aboriginal, newcomer and other population specific services where system needs may extend beyond current service users to others who are not relying on services and are not as easily identified without integrated networks with other sectors.

At the core of this redesign is ensuring that service delivery ultimately has a housing focus — the objective is to help people get out of the shelter and into housing quickly. Shelters are not housing.

Several approaches make this shift possible.

One is to map the service pathways to better understand the in-flow and out-flow of service users in shelters and the programs that they need across the entire system (not just within one shelter) to achieve the best results. Improved intake models and understanding of the complexity of client needs assists in this regard – as can improved integration with other systems.

Having housing workers within shelters aligned to the complexity of needs of those using the shelter is helpful at improving the out-flow and decreasing length of stay in shelters, while assisting clients in achieving housing.

The physical infrastructure is also targeted in the transition. More than changing a service model, when it comes to shelter, there is a need to invest in changing the physical plant as well.

It is important to work closely with and monitor other systems and shelters that influence the demand on homeless shelters in London. Discussed in other themes are the likes of hospitals, jails and treatment facilities discharging people to shelters. Close attention must be paid to shelters for abused women and children. While these shelters are under the purview of the province, it is homeless shelters, programs and services that the City provides oversight to that serve as the informal “overflow” when these shelters for abused women and children have no vacancy and abused households cannot have their service needs met in shelters for victims of domestic violence.

Based upon the key informant interviews, research, consultations and information gleaned in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy, the following are the proposed directions for London.

<p><b>Direction 2.1</b></p>	<p>Develop Service Maps for Individual Shelter Operators Shelter providers to jointly create service plans for their specific shelters, with each service plan to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem statement: the reason their shelter exists</li> <li>• Inputs from all sources, including funders</li> <li>• Activities performed in the shelter</li> <li>• Outputs as a result of all inputs and activities</li> <li>• Outcomes as the result of inputs and activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b><i>Create individual shelter service plan models.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Direction 2.2</b></p>	<p>Develop Service Maps for the Shelter System as a Whole Shelter providers to jointly create a system wide service plan for the entire shelter system and the integration with other systems including business processes and decision-making matrix that demonstrates a client care pathway and decision points related to care and housing, connectivity to additional resources, housing outcomes and length of stay. The shelter system service map is to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem statement: the reason the shelter system exists</li> <li>• Inputs from all sources</li> <li>• Activities performed across all shelters</li> <li>• Outputs as a result of all inputs and activities</li> <li>• Outcomes as a result of all inputs and activities</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b><i>Create system wide shelter service map.</i></b></p>
<p><b>Direction 2.3</b></p>	<p>Explore Shelter Specialization Needs in London Conduct feasibility studies on specialization within shelters which may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interim housing within shelters</li> <li>• Respite/infirmatory care</li> <li>• Palliative care</li> <li>• Wet shelters, etc.</li> </ul> <p>Feasibility studies should be informed by the results of the information gleaned in understanding the number and service needs of persons who are homeless in London.</p>

<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b>Conduct feasibility studies, assess applicability and need, and implement specialized programs as appropriate.</b>
<b>Direction 2.4</b>	<p>Establish Housing Worker Functions within Shelters</p> <p>Re-profile and/or reallocate funding to allow for additional housing workers in shelters in two major categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Specialists who initiate a case planning process with more chronically homeless individuals and individuals with multiple barriers to access and maintain housing, with supports from the shelter case management up to approximately 18 months. This acknowledges that for some clients, a transition to other community-based supports on a longer-term/more permanent basis</li> <li>2. Resources who provide general access to available housing units with opportunity for some general coaching</li> </ol> <p>The follow-up support model is approved by the City and focuses on community-based supports that are client centered, strength based and use formal case planning.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b>Re-profile and/or reallocate funding and develop consistent job functions. Implement new housing worker functions.</b>

**Theme 3: Aligning services to focus on housing as the solution to homelessness**

**Background on Theme 3:**

The matter of alignment is critically important. Many of the objectives of the London Community Housing Strategy and almost all of the objectives of the Community Plan on Homelessness are contingent on alignment.

The case for improved alignment is clear because it is the lack of alignment that is often the cause of bottlenecks in service and results in poor client outcomes. Financially, the lack of alignment results in a service system that is more expensive to operate. Most importantly, the lack of alignment increases the length of time an individual or family will remain homeless.

London has embraced a culture of innovation in recent years in the development and delivery of programs. For example, London CARES demonstrates the City’s willingness to take action to improve service delivery to street involved individuals while minimizing the negative impacts on the broader community. There are also challenges in this work. This new model of integration needs to continue to develop and strengthen services related to individuals with persistent and chronic barriers to both engagement and intervention. The need for ongoing recruitment, training, and development of street focused practitioners is required to strengthen services and responses. There is a need to examine alignment throughout the service system and to make amendments to London CARES to take it to its next level.

Alignment won’t happen by itself. It requires leadership to coordinate and establish a clear, shared policy direction for service providers. Through engagement with key informants and consultations, people stated:

- Current approaches are only band-aids
- There are not enough tracking mechanisms across case workers
- Workers and agencies are not aligned

It is especially true that additional work on alignment is required with other organizations that are independent of the City. These organizations also provide funding to a range of homeless services within the City. There is an opportunity to ensure that the City and organizations such as United Way, Trillium, London Community Foundation, the research community, service clubs, the Local Health Integration Network and others are proceeding cooperatively and collaboratively in the same direction – not at cross purposes.

Similarly, alignment is essential to the work of other orders of government where their initiatives directly impact and influence the work of the City. The City has demonstrated leadership and willingness to work with Provincial and Federal counterparts on housing and homelessness matters and will continue to do so. This is especially true with mental health and addictions changes at the provincial level.

Related to alignment with the work of other orders of government, it is important to ensure that there is alignment of the funding available and managed by the City from all orders of government with the direction and priorities confirmed in this plan. To that end, the time has come to explore alternative Community Advisory Board structures in London with the federal government and the Homeless Coalition to achieve effective and efficient mechanisms to support this funding portfolio.

There is also the opportunity in alignment to focus attention and resources to address currently unmet needs within the community. In this instance, the City needs to provide leadership in a process that allows the needs of certain populations to be better met. One example is street involved sex workers. It is necessary to step beyond the debate about legality and begin a discussion about meeting currently unmet needs. Another example is street involved youth, who may also be better served through a specific community plan created to address their unique needs.

Through alignment, there is the ability to improve accountability and performance measurement, with appropriate metrics to track progress. This establishes the foundation for improved funding decisions that reinforce alignment and focus on outcomes. There is the need to better align governance through committees and networks. This includes the need to review structures that support funding and determine priorities within the broader London Community Housing Strategy. The Homelessness Prevention Strategy of the Federal Government, as well as local funding strategies should align within a single governance model under the City's leadership.

Alignment must also be achieved in matching homeless individuals and families with available apartment units, including rental units in the private market. Various housing registries have emerged in London in recent years. These need to be reviewed, rationalized and improved to maximize opportunities of access to affordable and adequate accommodation and minimize the length of homelessness of individuals and families. Opportunities for increased engagement and partnership with private landlords must be sought, with improved communication and more efficient matching of prospective tenants to available units.

**London Community Plan on Homelessness**

Based on the key informant interviews, research, consultations and information gleaned in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy, the following are the proposed directions for London.

<b>Direction 3.1</b>	<p>Reinforce the City’s Role as Administrator and Service Manager</p> <p>The City, in its unique role as the service manager for London and Middlesex for social services, homelessness, and housing will better leverage this central administration role within its service contracts and funding agreements with service providers to reflect the service directions and outcomes related to the London Community Housing Strategy and this London Community Plan on Homelessness. The City will also realign funding envelopes internally and from other orders of government to support these initiatives and establish priorities and related compliance processes to ensure they are being effectively administered.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b><i>Amend all contracts and funding agreements, as required.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Explore alternative Community Advisory Board structures with the federal government and the Homeless Coalition to ensure alignment with priorities within this Plan.</i></b></p>
<b>Direction 3.2</b>	<p>Develop Sector Service Maps for Other Service Areas</p> <p>The City, as part of its responsibilities of providing leadership to housing and homelessness matters within the City and County, will work with each service sector to create program/sector based service maps that demonstrate client service pathways in and out of programs, the relationships across programs within each sector and programs across sectors, and clearly define the problem statement, input, activities, outputs and outcomes.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b><i>Create individual service plans.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Create service models for each sector/program area.</i></b></p>
<b>Direction 3.3</b>	<p>Develop Clear Policies and Procedures</p> <p>The City, as part of its responsibilities of providing leadership to housing and homelessness matters within the City and County, will create policies and procedures for the desired intent and outcomes of all homeless programs and services, including clear parameters of service expectations and approaches to interventions. There will be a strong emphasis on helping people access and maintain housing – including those housing programs offered outside the housing workers in shelters. The community-based sector will have the opportunity to review and provide input into the development of the policies and procedures.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b><i>Develop policies and procedures for review and comment.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Implement and reinforce new and revised policies and procedures.</i></b></p>
<b>Direction 3.4</b>	<p>Develop Evidence-Based Performance Measurement Framework and Funding</p> <p>The City will create a performance measurement framework using evidence-based practices that will allow for informed decision-making on outcome based funding. These will be tied to the service maps developed for each sector of service.</p>

<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b>Develop the performance measurement framework, including training for funded agencies on expectations related to the metrics and implement the metrics</b> <b>Change program funding decisions related to outcomes as part of the outcome based funding initiative.</b>
<b>Direction 3.5</b>	Enhance London CAREs Services and Align with Housing Outcomes The City will convene externally facilitated discussions with London CAREs partner organizations to chart a course for the next elements of the program. There will be a more intensive housing and case management focus while improving approaches to the service, where necessary, based on evidence and experiences from the past several years. Through this process, an implementation plan will be crafted to ensure that the changes are operational.
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b>Facilitate discussions on the implementation of refinements to London CAREs. Implement program changes based upon new implementation plan.</b>
<b>Direction 3.6</b>	Review and Align Housing Registry Systems The City will provide leadership to a review of housing registry systems with the intention of streamlining services and improving alignment to the housing and homelessness initiatives being implemented in other areas of the service system.
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b>Create terms of reference for the review</b> <b>Implement of the review</b> <b>Implement changes to housing registry system</b>
<b>Direction 3.7</b>	Convene a Funders Summit to Align to the Community Plan on Homelessness The City will convene a summit of local executives and senior decision makers of other entities such as United Way, Trillium, LHIN, London Community Foundation, etc. that provide funding to homeless programs and services within the City and/or fund research projects that results in services with the purpose of: Increasing awareness of other funders on the Community Plan on Homelessness and its objectives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing shared principles related to the directions of the Community Plan on Homelessness</li> <li>• Improving alignment and complementary approaches to service funding</li> <li>• Creating shared responsibility in tracking outputs and outcomes relative to investments</li> </ul>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b>Convene Summit</b> <b>Draft Principles</b> <b>Subject to agreement of other funders, implement shared approach or common objectives relative to the Community Plan</b>

<b>Direction 3.8</b>	<p>Develop Plan for Street Involved Sex Workers</p> <p>The City, in partnership with business, police, courts, EMDC, service providers, women (including women with lived experience) develop a community plan on street involved sex work. The partnership will work on the intersection of sex work with issues of housing and homelessness while focussing on appropriate trauma supports, addictions, mental health, family relationships and reunification, housing needs and supports, and street safety. Additional work may be required related to general female homeless populations outside of this action.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b>Create Terms of Reference for the Community Plan on Street Involved Sex Work.</b></p> <p><b>Create Community Plan</b></p> <p><b>Implement strategies/ recommendations of the Plan</b></p>
<b>Direction 3.9</b>	<p>Develop a Community Plan for Street Involved Youth</p> <p>The City, in partnership with business, police, courts, EMDC, service providers, youth (including youth with lived experience) develop a community plan on street involved youth. The partnership will work on the specific issues impacting street involved youth.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b>Create terms of reference for the Community Plan on Street Involved Youth.</b></p> <p><b>Create Community Plan</b></p> <p><b>Implement strategies/ recommendations of the Plan</b></p>
<b>Direction 3.10</b>	<p>Share and Advocate for the London Community Plan on Homelessness with Other Orders of Government</p> <p>The City will share the Community Plan on Homelessness with relevant provincial and federal counterparts with a view to continuing to align with cross-governmental objectives related to homeless programs and services.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b>Share Community Plan</b></p> <p><b>Advocate as appropriate and necessary for changes in Provincial and/or Federal policies or programs to support directions of the Plan.</b></p>

**Theme 4: Supportive housing and housing with supports**

**Background to Theme 4:**

The Community Plan on Homelessness is anchored in the evidence-based belief that housing is the only solution to homelessness.

Housing is a necessity of life which is now proven to be the best form of harm reduction for those with addictions who are homeless, a key step to employment for those unemployed, and, with appropriate supports, an important strategy in developing inclusive and healthy communities. This approach reinforces a focus on systematic and systemic issues that need to be addressed to ensure that all Londoners, regardless of their life circumstances, have appropriate housing options.

Housing is not “one size fits all.” The more choices that people have available to them and the more people are empowered to choose the type and location of housing, the more likely they are to build community and feel a sense of home. In this regard, housing is the anchor to building a vital and prosperous community.

For individuals and families who have experienced many life barriers and have complex issues, supportive housing or housing with supports may be a necessary choice to consider. Supportive housing is usually not-for-profit, rent geared to income and purpose built housing with on-site supports. Housing with supports are often apartment units scattered across buildings throughout the City where supports are provided to the individual or family by a not-for-profit agency that conducts home visits. Both are viable options regardless of the complexity of the individual or family. In other words, some will have greater success in scattered site with supports rather than supportive housing and vice versa. It depends on individual circumstances.

The London Community Housing Strategy calls for an additional 300 units of supportive and/or alternative housing to be provided by the Provincial government, and also focuses on supports to individuals once they are housed. Both of these initiatives are supported by the research which demonstrates that individuals with complex needs experience greater long-term housing outcomes and decreased use of alcohol and other drugs and emergency health services. The research also supports that there is significant cost savings to the “system” when individuals with complex needs are in supportive housing or housing with the right supports. Even individuals with co-occurring issues such as mental illness and substance use have achieved retention rates that exceed 85%.

Supportive housing and housing with supports overlaps with strong income support systems. The interface between Ontario Works and the Ontario Disability Support Program can be critical for long-term housing success and stability of the tenancy. This is especially true when an individual or family relies on the direct payment of rent from income supports to the landlord or when an individual or family transitions from Ontario Works to the Ontario Disability Support Program.

Through the key informant interviews and consultations, as well as research conducted for the Community Housing Strategy, various issues with supportive housing and housing with supports were identified, including:

- A lack of coordination amongst service providers and supportive housing providers;
- The cumbersome nature of supportive housing for tenants seeking service and that there isn't always choice of care model or environment;
- Too many service pathways and different types of intakes and expectations across supportive housing providers;

**London Community Plan on Homelessness**

- Problems with income supports, including transfers between Works and the ODSP
- Isolation of clients and lack of engagement in “mainstream” community;
- Helping clients access housing without adequate and appropriate supports is detrimental to the client and the landlord;
- The lack of shelter subsidy available to those who rely on social assistance;
- The high cost of housing in London; and
- The need for more rent supplement based programs.

Based upon the key informant interviews, research, consultations and information gleaned in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy, the following are the proposed directions for London.

<b>Direction 4.1</b>	Develop Common Intake Protocols and Practices The City will work with supportive housing providers to explore the development of a common intake form – or at a minimum, an intake application with common features – and a common waiting list by population.
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b><i>Work with supportive housing providers to explore the common intake form. Assuming agreement by all parties, train all supportive housing and service providers. Implement the common waiting list.</i></b>
<b>Direction 4.2</b>	Create Policies and Procedures Supporting Scattered Site Housing The City, in its role as service manager and central administrator, will create common policies, procedures and service strategies for housing with supports in scattered sites. This will take into account input from the community, focus on intervention strategies that are evidence-based, training needs of service providers, and the opportunities for specialized supports such as a multi-disciplinary service team or inter-agency service teams.
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b><i>Create the model including policy, procedure and service strategies. Train service providers, with optional training and information sessions for landlords as well. Fully implement new model</i></b>

<p><b>Direction 4.3</b></p>	<p>Create a Landlord Roundtable                  The City, in partnership with the London Property Management Association (with private and non-profit representation) will create a landlord roundtable to be co-chaired by the City and a representative of the landlord community. The roundtable will meet a minimum of three times per year and the agenda will be co-created by the City and Landlord co-chairs. The intent is to create a forum to discuss common approaches and problem-solving, identify support and training opportunities, improve the stability of tenancies and decrease turnover.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b>Create Landlord Roundtable with clear Terms of Reference.</b>  <b>Facilitate training opportunities to improve tenant relationships as outlined in the London Community Housing Strategy.</b></p>
<p><b>Direction 4.4</b></p>	<p>Support OW/ODSP Alignment to Better Meet Client Needs                  City staff involved with Works will work with their provincial counterparts involved with ODSP to become more strategically aligned and improve access to direct rental payment to the landlord (which can be of benefit to the client, housing support worker and landlord), seamless transfers of cases from OW to ODSP, and make improvements in other shared interests.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b>Improve process</b></p>
<p><b>Direction 4.5</b></p>	<p>Develop Daily Programming Activities for Homeless and Recently Housed                  The City and community-based sector will establish a special work group co-chaired by the City and the community, to work together to create a range of meaningful daily activities for homeless and recently housed individuals and families to be engaged in that will meet their emotional, physical, spiritual and intellectual needs, while focusing on community integration, especially with “mainstream” activities rather than segregation.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b>Create the terms of reference for the work group.</b>  <b>Initiate the group’s work.</b>  <b>Implement a broader range of meaningful daily activities to be incorporated into the work of housing support workers.</b>  <b>The work group to meet a minimum of twice per year thereafter for the duration of this Plan to update and amend opportunities for meaningful daily activities.</b></p>

### **Theme 5: Prevention and discharge strategies**

#### **Background to Theme 5:**

The desire to actually prevent homelessness is an attractive proposition. While this is ideal, it is not easily done – at least not in a targeted, effective manner. Emerging research into prevention strategies demonstrate that prevention is most effective when the individual or family has not yet reached a crisis point or experienced a first incidence of homelessness. Those at imminent risk of eviction are less likely to stay engaged with services and supports that would help them address the underlying issues and prevent them from needing future emergency assistance or landlord mediation. Research has suggested that “store front” approaches to prevention – where an individual or family has to come into an agency to request service – may be less successful than services delivered proactively in the community where specially trained prevention workers attempt to identify individuals and families before a crisis of tenancy occurs.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness in the United States indicates that there are common mistaken assumptions related to prevention activities, including:

- Households being evicted will become homeless if they are not helped (some will seek alternate resources or amend the situation independent of help from the “system”);
- When a household facing eviction is helped in their moment of need, homelessness has successfully been prevented (the immediate issue may be resolved but there is evidence to suggest that longer term supports are necessary to get to the root issues so that they do not face an eviction again in the short term);
- Households know when they are at risk of homelessness and will seek out help when they need it (not all households know when their tenancy is at risk and many households do not know how to navigate the “system” to get help if they did need help); and
- Households that can’t prove that they can stabilize quickly without assistance are bad risks (a simple risk analysis is insufficient to understand which households are the best candidates for assistance).

Creative thinking around the most appropriate prevention strategies in London is required. It begins with a question at the point where someone is about to be admitted to a shelter: What are the most appropriate ways to ensure all options have been exhausted prior to admission while still ensuring that the individual or family’s needs are met?

Related to prevention is the appropriateness of discharge planning. Too many individuals are discharged from hospitals, mental health facilities, addiction treatment, jails, prisons and remand to the street or to a homeless shelter. This inappropriate discharging practice has ramifications on the homeless service system and the community as a whole. Shelters are not funded to provide this depth of support and most are not trained or they are not equipped to provide the level of care or attention required. This discharge to no fixed address fails to respect that all systems must work together to have effective outcomes focused on ending homelessness in the community.

London has taken a leadership role to facilitate the integration of services that will lead to improved discharge planning and better outcomes. However, more needs to be done. Those involved in the key informant interviews and consultations spoke frequently about:

- Current, inappropriate methods for discharge are a “set-up” that reinforces a revolving door that does not solve the individual’s or family’s issues and is significantly more expensive;
- Lack of involvement of homeless and housing service providers in the actual discharge process – they are the recipients of clients with complex needs without any prior discussion;
- Compromised health, safety and rehabilitation outcomes as a result of inappropriate discharges; and
- Gross disconnects in understanding the timelines, resources and services available in the homeless service system.

Based upon the key informant interviews, research, consultations and information gleaned in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy, the following are the proposed directions for London.

<b>Direction 5.1</b>	<p>Host a Discharge Planning Summit</p> <p>The City will host a discharge planning summit with executives and senior managers of all relevant local stakeholders to:</p> <p>Agree on principles to guide future discharges from health, addiction and incarceration facilities (including remand); and</p> <p>Form a discharge planning committee with representatives from all relevant stakeholders to create an implementation plan and business practices to improve discharge planning.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b>Create principles.</b></p> <p><b>Create terms of reference and identification of discharge planning committee membership.</b></p> <p><b>Develop implementation plan and business practices.</b></p> <p><b>Train all relevant stakeholders on implementation prior to full implementation of all new practices.</b></p>
<b>Direction 5.2</b>	<p>Amend Shelter Intake Functions</p> <p>The City will work with shelter providers to amend intake functions and business processes to ensure that all alternate service options have been exhausted prior to shelter admission.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b>Develop a draft protocol.</b></p> <p><b>Train shelter staff.</b></p> <p><b>Implement across all shelters.</b></p>

<b>Direction 5.3</b>	<p>Create a New Prevention Model</p> <p>The City will work to create a new prevention model, and re-profile existing prevention services to be community based (not store front or agency based) with prevention workers working to identify individuals and households with increased risks to their household stability. The focus will be finding the right housing and supports to remain housed.</p>
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<p><b><i>Create a draft prevention model available for community feedback.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Finalize prevention model after community feedback.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Train all relevant parties.</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Implement new prevention model.</i></b></p>

**Theme 6: Understanding who we are serving and the impacts of our services**

**Background to Theme 6:**

Unlike some other programs or fields of study, homelessness is an area where there are often issues with data that hampers a comprehensive understanding of the population and impacts the ability to plan effectively. The reasons for the lack of valid and reliable data are numerous. There is often debate over what constitutes being homeless – a matter addressed earlier. Another reason is that there are some homeless individuals who use multiple services while there are some homeless individuals who do not use any services whatsoever. Also, individuals can cycle in and out of homelessness over an extended period of time.

Dealing with these issues is not insurmountable but it requires focus of attention and diligent adherence to proven practices.

It can be helpful to look at the work undertaken by Housing and Urban Development in the United States and their requirements for homeless counts. Homeless counts are by no means perfect. But over time there have been adaptations to improve the quality of the data and reliability of the findings. There have also been improvements that allow people undertaking the count to conduct a needs assessment of study participants at the same time. This is a slight variation on what is known as a “point in time count” and, like any census, captures the population and its characteristics and needs at a fixed point in time. It allows a community to have a baseline to understand that, at a minimum, on any given night a certain number of people are homeless. Of course, the value of this baseline increases as counts are conducted at regular, subsequent intervals for comparative analysis.

Indicators can be gleaned from other service systems on a more longitudinal basis, although it won’t account for those individuals and families that do not engage with the service system. To be accurate, it also requires that a client information system is in place and shared across service providers so that there is no duplication of counting, including aliases. This is one of the complications of using aggregate data in reporting to funders for homeless programs and services. Without a client identification system, it is impossible to know if the clients using shelters are the same people using drop-ins or the same people engaged by street outreach.

It has repeatedly been demonstrated that the best “guesstimates” in any given community result in wildly variable and highly unreliable service responses. This is unhelpful for planning purposes or tailoring service responses to match client needs. Another common mistake in many communities is to just

focus on the number of unique individuals that use shelter in a given year. Shelter use is not necessarily indicative of the service system as a whole.

The collection of high quality information needs to be linked to specific program areas and sectors with definitions shared within and across the programs and sectors. This improves the accuracy and richness of the data. It allows practitioners to become more reflective on their services, who is using them and to identify gaps — supported by evidence rather than hunches.

Jurisdictions that have made a commitment to end homelessness have embraced data and attention to outcomes as the critical pillars to success. Those jurisdictions that are demonstrating significant progress in meeting the targets within their plans to end homelessness also cite analysis of their data and refinements to the programs based on data as a necessary element of their success. Finally, those places that are achieving positive outcomes in addressing homelessness share their findings and status with the community at large.

It is a mistake to think that data needs to be complicated to be effective. There is a movement to limit the amount of information collected from individuals who are homeless to the most salient elements for effective service delivery, as well as ensuring non-duplication of data collection across services whenever possible.

Data issues within London were understood and presented during the development of the London Community Housing Strategy. These issues were further echoed in the key informant interviews and consultation sessions for the Community Plan on Homelessness. Participants indicated:

- There is currently no way to really measure the people we serve;
- A disconnect exists amongst and across agencies;
- There is a feeling that not only is there a lack of understanding of who is being served, there is also insufficient knowledge to know what is missing;
- Increased standardization in practices would be welcome; and
- Improved case management and centralized case management co-ordination with the City.

Based upon the key informant interviews, research, consultations and information gleaned in the development of the London Community Housing Strategy, the following are the proposed directions for London.

<b>Direction 6.1</b>	Convene a Research Roundtable to Determine the Most Appropriate Methods for London to Understand the Number and Service Needs of the Homeless Population The City will organize a research roundtable including community based organizations and researchers to determine the most appropriate method(s) for London to determine the number and service needs of the homeless population.
<b>Proposed Details:</b>	<b><i>Develop Terms of Reference and membership of the research roundtable. Implement the recommendation of the roundtable on the methods to be used in London.</i></b>

<p><b>Direction 6.2</b></p>	<p>Determine Number and Service Needs Data Gathering Tools and Practices The City and community will implement the recommended approach to determine the number and service needs of individuals who are homeless in London and, as necessary, contracts for funding with organizations will stipulate that participation is mandatory as a condition of funding.</p>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b>Implement the chosen approach.</b> <b>Consider refinements to the plan and specific programs as a result of findings.</b></p>
<p><b>Direction 6.3</b></p>	<p>Develop an Annual Report to the Community The City will prepare an annual report to the community by program areas identified in the service maps. The annual report will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A brief contextual understanding of any significant issues that year that impacted housing and homelessness (e.g., loss of funding) that can be supported by evidence</li> <li>• The total investment in homeless programs and services, by all sources, and naming each source including investments outside of the City's direct responsibility whenever possible;</li> <li>• A list of each organization that received funding, the amount of funding received, and the outputs and outcomes achieved;</li> <li>• The outputs and outcomes achieved in each program area</li> <li>• The finding related to average client readiness and prioritization in each program area;</li> <li>• A summary of the diversion and prevention activities (including inappropriate transfer of clients from other systems to shelters);</li> <li>• The total number of individuals and households (by household type) that moved into housing;</li> <li>• The total number of individuals and households (by household type) supported in their housing after being housed;</li> <li>• Commentary on the success or lack thereof in meeting the service and housing needs of specific populations (e.g., women, Aboriginal, persons with severe and persistent mental illness, youth, seniors etc.); and</li> <li>• Recommendations on changes to supportive housing targets within the Community Housing Strategy as a result of the data and analysis from the year of service.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Proposed Details:</b></p>	<p><b>Develop an annual report to the community.</b></p>

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### Part 5: Conclusion

The Community Plan on Homelessness represents a watershed moment in how London addresses homelessness. A comprehensive, well-designed and implementable plan, the Community Plan on Homelessness is anchored in the Council-approved London Community Housing Strategy. London is committed to the transition away from simply managing homelessness toward an integrated system of homelessness prevention and housing based interventions. This marks an improved, strategic investment of available funding on evidence-based practices that have proven to work in jurisdictions around the world and adapted to the unique characteristics of the London context.

The London Community Plan on Homelessness harnesses the creative energy that has emerged in London's social service and housing delivery system during the past several years. Community leaders have demonstrated a capacity and desire to engage in new practices. This is the sign of a mature system – one that has the capacity to make necessary adjustments rather than simply “bolting on” approaches that have not demonstrated success empirically.

The six thematic areas and their related directions of the Community Plan on Homelessness have been informed by a diverse range of community members. It represents the thoughts and inputs of low-income and homeless Londoners, service providers, those in the public service, the business community, the general public and others. It should be noted that even within each of these groups, there was considerable diversity. For example, among persons with lived experience, there were women, men and youth – both individuals and families. From the service provider sector, there were people representing shelter providers, employment programs and health services. From public service, there were City staff and perspectives from other orders of government.

Within each of the six themes, there are between three and ten specific directions defined for London. As implementation plans are created, each of these directions will have a timeline associated with it. In most instances, the process for implementation is also identified such as the forming of work groups, drafting terms of reference, recruiting membership or identifying community co-chairs. It is possible and strongly recommended to measure the investment, activities, outputs and outcomes associated with these directions.

Where will London be five years from now relative to the Community Plan on Homelessness and the London Community Housing Strategy? The homeless population in London will be better understood. This understanding includes how many individuals are homeless as well as an understanding of their self-identified needs for housing, supports or housing with supports.

In five years, homeless programs and services will be focused on helping individuals and families achieve affordable and sustainable housing with the right amount of supports that respect their needs in working towards greater independence. Training, cross-sector knowledge sharing and professional standards will continue to increase and one of the results will be implementation of additional evidence-based and evidence-informed practices. There will be enhanced public awareness regarding the trauma associated with homelessness or those at risk of being homeless. There will be an improved understanding about the emerging research on gender and culture that indicates the need for a gender lens to be applied to programs and supports for women.

In five years, homeless shelters will decrease in size through a revitalized focus. The business model that shelters implemented as a response to a crisis will be changed to one that identifies those with the greatest needs first and a model that works to get those individuals with complex needs out of the shelter and into housing. Investments in homeless programs and services will be for those organizations that can demonstrate positive outcomes for the type of population they are serving and that demonstrate a high level of professionalism in the programs that they are operating.

Finally, the City of London will take on an engaged and dynamic facilitating role and provide the leadership that is necessary to embrace its role as a service manager and central administrator. Contracts, policies, procedures and program development will all reflect the City's role to lead the community in achieving the stated vision: "...a City of London where all members of the community have access to housing that is safe, secure and suitable to their needs and the ability to pay."

# **London Community Plan on Homelessness**

**NOVEMBER 2010**

## **A Compendium Guide**

to the London Community Housing Strategy 2010 to 2015  
focused on Community Based Homelessness Prevention and Intervention Plans

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**



### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The bulk of the research for the Community Plan on Homelessness was conducted between January and June 2010 as part of the Community Housing Strategy. The citations noted below are part of the research that was conducted between August and October 2010. Persons interested in the references for the Community Plan on Homelessness – as a compendium document to the Community Housing Strategy – should first look to the bibliography prepared for the Community Housing Strategy to understand the full impact of integrating the homeless and housing plans.

Additional resources were considered in preparing the Community Plan on Homelessness, including the identification of topic specific facts to stimulate discussion during the themed consultations. Below is a series of links used for the consultation and key informant interview process but, once again, this resource list should not be considered an exhaustive list of references for the Community Plan on Homelessness.

- This article explores the cost effectiveness of supported housing for individuals with mental illness compared to other dominant options.  
[http://www.columbia-chps.org/assets/firefly/files/files/pdfs\\_articles/Cost-effectiveness\\_of\\_Supported\\_Housing\\_for\\_Homeless\\_Persons\\_With\\_Mental\\_Illness.pdf](http://www.columbia-chps.org/assets/firefly/files/files/pdfs_articles/Cost-effectiveness_of_Supported_Housing_for_Homeless_Persons_With_Mental_Illness.pdf)
- The Community Shelter Board in Columbus, Ohio are considered national leaders in the United States for their data driven programs and services, impacts thus far in reducing homelessness, and reducing length of shelter stay through a focus on housing solutions.  
<http://www.csb.org/>
- An article on Rosenheck's research looking at housing outcomes for individuals with mental illness when they had more appropriate community access to services and supports.  
<http://ps.psychiatryonline.org/cgi/content/abstract/53/8/958>
- Improved housing outcomes for individuals with mental illness.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/instance/1508580/>
- Success and challenges helping formerly homeless individuals with severe mental illness access housing.  
<http://www.springerlink.com/content/mh606u2m8486680m/>
- Comprehensive report on improving mental health, including a look at a system often in disarray that does not always effectively meet client needs.  
[http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/papers/Homeless\\_ADA\\_Compliant.pdf](http://www.mentalhealthcommission.gov/papers/Homeless_ADA_Compliant.pdf)
- Los Angeles Homeless Services Association on Cost Avoidance of various approaches to homeless intervention.  
<http://www.lahsa.org/docs/Cost-Avoidance-Study/Where-We-Sleep-Final-Report.pdf>
- The effect of housing and appropriate case management services.  
<http://jama.ama-assn.org/cgi/content/full/301/17/1771>
- Research on how supportive housing does not negatively impact property values.  
[http://furmancenter.org/files/FurmanCenterPolicyBriefonSupportiveHousing\\_LowRes.pdf](http://furmancenter.org/files/FurmanCenterPolicyBriefonSupportiveHousing_LowRes.pdf)

- Research results on the effectiveness of housing first and alternate approaches to housing for substance users and decreased costs on other systems.  
<http://www.seattle.gov/news/detail.asp?ID=8078&Dept=4>
- A collection of seminal HUD research pieces including: system changes, self-determination, characteristics of population, incarceration and homelessness, and others.  
[http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/homeless/homeless\\_symp\\_07.html](http://www.huduser.org/portal/publications/homeless/homeless_symp_07.html)
- Article exploring the effectiveness of various prevention initiatives.  
[http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=dennis\\_culhane](http://works.bepress.com/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1050&context=dennis_culhane)
- Article examining what it takes for a system to have a prevention-oriented approach to service delivery.  
[http://www.ich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors/DennisCulhane\\_PrevCentApproHomelessnessAssist.pdf](http://www.ich.gov/PDF/OpeningDoors/DennisCulhane_PrevCentApproHomelessnessAssist.pdf)
- National Alliance to End Homelessness overview of Housing First initiatives.  
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2489>
- Article examining consumer choice, harm reduction and housing first, especially for individuals with dual diagnosis.  
<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448313/>
- Research results of an examination of 10 Year Plans to End Homelessness.  
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/2502>
- Fact sheet on what a 10 Year Plan to End Homelessness entails.  
<http://www.endhomelessness.org/content/article/detail/1786>
- Article by the Corporation for Supportive Housing examining necessary system changes for effective service delivery.  
[http://documents.csh.org/documents/pubs/RHI\\_systems%20change\\_2010.pdf](http://documents.csh.org/documents/pubs/RHI_systems%20change_2010.pdf)
- Article explores point in time counts and their relationship to understanding housing needs.  
[http://documents.csh.org/documents/pubs/csh\\_estimatingneed.pdf](http://documents.csh.org/documents/pubs/csh_estimatingneed.pdf)
- Article of Thames demonstrated highly successful results in prevention programs through program re-design.  
<http://www.thamesreach.org.uk/welcome/>

**OrgCode Contact Information**



**Iain J. De Jong**  
*Managing Partner*

One Tecumseth Avenue  
Mississauga Canada L5G 1K5

**T** 416 698.9700  
**C** 416 432.0410  
**F** 416 352.1498  
idejong@orgcode.com



**John A. Whitesell** PhD  
*Managing Partner*

One Tecumseth Avenue  
Mississauga Canada L5G 1K5

**T** 416 698.9700  
**C** 416 994.9725  
**F** 416 352.1498  
jwhitesell@orgcode.com