

Bringing Lethbridge Home

Strategic Plan to “Raise Roofs: Build Hope”

Brief prepared for the Affordable Housing Task Force

Presented by the
City of Lethbridge and Social Housing in Action (SHIA)
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PRESENTATION PREPARED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

In partnership with:
Lethbridge Real Estate Board
Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing
Harbour House (YWCA)
Lethbridge Shelter & Resource Centre
Native Women's Transition Home
Emergency Youth Shelter Wood's Homes

SOCIAL HOUSING IN ACTION (SHIA) PARTNERS

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AADAC
Aboriginal Housing in Action
Alberta Mental Health Board
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Lethbridge Real Estate Board
Lethbridge Shelter & Resource Centre
Metis Association
Mobile Urban Street Team - MUST
Native Women's Transition Home Society
Red Crow College
Sun City Realty Ltd.
South West Alberta Child & Family Services Authority
Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority
University of Lethbridge
Wood's Homes
YWCA Lethbridge & District

INTRODUCTION

The City of Lethbridge and the community-based organization, Social Housing in Action, extends the Affordable Housing Task Force a warm welcome to our community. We thank you for the opportunity to present to the Provincial Task Force on Affordable Housing and are encouraged by the priority that the Government of Alberta has placed on this significant issue facing people in Lethbridge and across the province.

The approach we are utilizing in our presentation and brief is viewed as an opportunity to challenge our current thinking about housing and homelessness. This approach requires a system-wide cultural and paradigm shift from a focus on emergency shelter to housing. This includes the essential education and support systems that must accompany this transition. This is a long term commitment requiring a dedicated source of sustainable and predictable funding.

WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

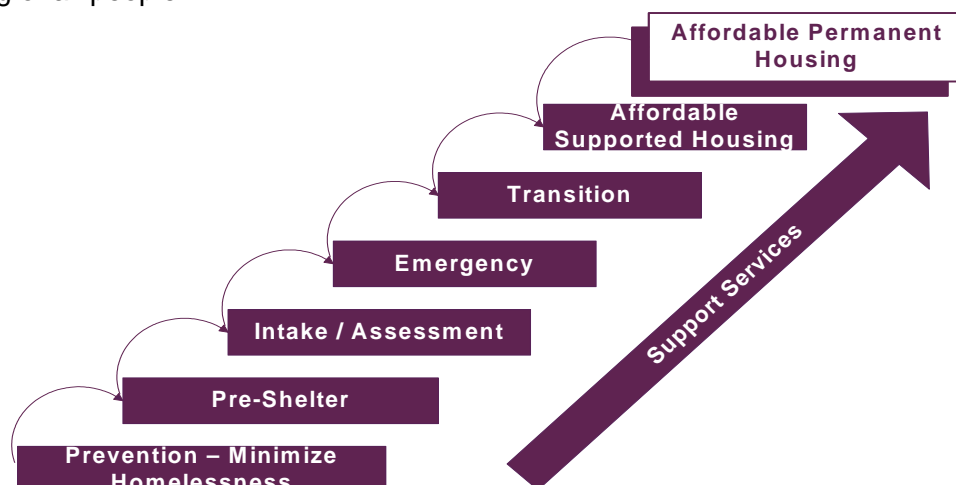
The cost of adequate and appropriate shelter should not exceed 30% of household's gross income. This includes the cost of utilities. Housing which costs less than this is considered affordable.

Affordable housing means housing that is available at a cost that does not compromise the attainment and satisfaction of an individual's other basic needs of life, including needs for food, clothing, and access to education and the ability to actively participate in community life (Affordable Housing: Strategies for our Community, 2005).

OUR FOUNDATION

All people have the right to safe, appropriate and affordable housing

Everyone has a fundamental right to live in a home. A committed focus on the Continuum of Housing leading to permanent housing and self-sufficiency is critical. The paradigm shift requires an inherent philosophy that reflects the need for people to live in the 'right type of housing'. This includes access to the full spectrum of housing options within the Continuum. This Continuum of Housing with appropriate support services is integral to the successful housing of all people.



Social Housing in Action (SHIA) is committed to the following core beliefs which serve as the foundation for the strategic Plan “Bringing Lethbridge Home” (Appendix 1).

- There is no single solution. A multi-faceted approach is critical and requires a comprehensive system-wide ‘Housing First’ approach. Communities that are making progress in ‘ending homelessness’ benefit from the support of all levels of government and the corporate community. There is a need for a critical, collective province wide effort.
- A community is strengthened and the health and well-being of people improves when people are able to access the ‘right’ housing option. A key determinant of health is directly related to access to safe and affordable housing. (Social Determinants of Health: An Overview of the Implications of Policy and the Role of the Health Sector, 2004, Public Health Agency of Canada).
- The leadership of the municipality and all levels of government is essential to meeting housing needs. Cooperative and collaborative partnerships between the local, provincial and federal governments are critical. This requires a multi-dimensional, cross-ministerial and municipal approach. The “Ten essentials to ending homelessness” is not possible without an adequate supply of permanent affordable housing and ensuring people have incomes to pay for housing (National Alliance to End Homelessness, 2003).
- Community based decision making and implementation of federal and provincial program grants accelerates the rapid execution of housing initiatives.
- Perpetuation of homelessness has a significant economic, health and social impact in our community. This includes the health of individuals and families and their ability to find and maintain employment, participate in community life and share in the prosperity of our province.
- “Our goal is to work ourselves out of a job” (Lethbridge Shelter & Resource Centre, Emergency Youth Shelter, Harbour House, 2005). Investment in prevention of homelessness enhances the goal of “Bringing Lethbridge Home”.
- Continuous learning and the identification of best practices is critical. Shared understanding of assets, needs and promising practices will lead to shared opportunities in all communities.
- Recognition of the complexities of housing needs and the ‘root causes’ of homelessness and poverty is vital. The many factors affecting housing and homelessness are understood and identified (Affordable Housing Task Force, 2007).
- The Impact of stress, poverty and the environment in which people live directly impacts a child’s development, family function and their health and wellness. Research indicates the cycle of poverty can be broken as a result of mixed use neighbourhoods (“Mixed Income and the HOME Program (2003) and U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development: Community Planning & Development (2003).

CURRENT SITUATION IN LETHBRIDGE

- Lethbridge is ‘community’ personified with identified assets that serves its citizens well. These assets include:
 - Strong Leadership
 - Community involvement

- Innovation
- Collaborative partnerships (Schissel et al, Road to a Brighter Future, 2005)
- SHIA, a successful and unique community based organization, is supported by the City of Lethbridge as the community entity.
- Lethbridge, a mid-sized city with a population of approximately 79,000, experienced a 12% population increase over the past 4 years (City Census, 2006). Lethbridge is a unique community which is a regional business hub and is adjacent to 2 large reserves with an unprecedented migration and population projection rate for urbanization (Urban Futures Institute, 2003).
- Lethbridge is identified as one of ten cities in Canada as an ideal community for immigrant settlement (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2006).
- The expanding energy sector is not the only determining factor for increasing housing needs and demands on the sustainability of a community. Unprecedented growth has economic and social impacts, including the unparalleled migration of people searching for employment, housing and improved quality of life. Migration from other communities, provinces and adjacent reserves for improved quality of life, services, and housing prices is increasing, but housing is not keeping up with the demands.
- Our homeless population doubled in the past year (Homeless Census, 2006). All emergency shelters (adult, youth and women and children's) are operating at either full or over capacity. Transition homes and subsidized housing are experiencing long waiting lists.
- The vacancy rate is currently less than 1% (CMHC, 2006). Rental stock is declining with over 300 rental properties condominiumized this year alone (Real Estate Board, 2007). Gentrification is also occurring, further reducing affordable rental and ownership stock. The rental industry has seen significant increases in rental costs; 22% in the past year.
- Mayor Tarleck declared that "ending homelessness" is the only "right" option for people living amongst the current prosperity in Alberta and Lethbridge. The Strategic Plan 'Bringing Lethbridge Home' (Appendix 1) was developed, approved by City Council and SHIA has assumed the responsibility for its implementation.
- Social Policy identified access to affordable housing as a need through all sectors in Lethbridge. (Road to a Brighter Future, City of Lethbridge, 2005). A comprehensive needs assessment and the development of an Affordable Housing Policy will be presented to City Council June, 2007. The availability of housing needs to be addressed when major industrial developments are being considered.
- The single family dwelling market is booming. Potential home owners are waiting over 18 months for a new home. Based on this market, builders and developers have no economic or business reason to build multifamily and affordable housing if incentive and land is not available.
- As a result of the Mayors and the 7 Cities Community Based Organizations presentation to the Standing Policy Committee on Health and Community Living (Appendix 2), the Government of Alberta has executed the outreach support services project funding. SHIA is implementing innovative outreach support services to further ensure people are able to secure and maintain the right housing option for their situation. We are most appreciative of the provincial government's insightful funding opportunity. ***But with the current housing market and low vacancy rates, where will people live in the meantime?***

- Lethbridge does not have vacant public or private buildings for conversion into housing and the few that are available, are being converted.

OUR CURRENT BARRIERS

In addition to the complex challenges outlined in the Affordable Housing Task Force Discussion Guide (Government of Alberta, 2007), the following portray the unique characteristics of current barriers in Lethbridge:

- Poverty. One-third of Lethbridge earners make under \$12 per/hour which is the highest rate per capita of people living below a living wage in Alberta. (“Working Poor or Making a Living? The Reality of Low Wages in Alberta”, 2007). In addition Lethbridge has the second highest poverty rate in the province (“Making Ends Meet”, 2005).
- Increasing land, housing and construction costs.
- Construction labour shortage.
- Affordable housing needs are identified and projects are developed and supported by community partnerships. Private developers are engaged only to experience long delays in the Provincial Grant approval process. Mostly recently, 3 current projects have been delayed or declined. Submitted projects have experienced approval delays of 1.5 - 2 years.
- Currently, over 700 individuals and families are on waiting lists for subsidized housing (Quarterly Reports, Lethbridge Housing Authority and Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing, 2007).
- Working people living with low incomes are unable to save enough to pay the damage deposit, first and last month’s rent. There are significant delays in getting people housed resulting in increased pressures on the emergency shelters and more people entering into the cycle of homelessness.
- Given the current demands and lack of affordable housing stock, it’s a landlords market.
- Discrimination practices decrease opportunities for people to secure rental accommodations. These include discrimination against race, age, students, persons with disabilities, people living with a low income, single parents, families and people with pets (Last on the List, 2001).
- Lethbridge is experiencing a lack of housing options as well as a lack of suitable sites for higher density housing.
- Myths regarding the impact of ‘affordable’ and higher density housing within existing neighbourhoods exist. A lack of understanding of the people and families who need access to various housing options (Appendix 3) perpetuates this belief. This is exacerbated with a perception that “There shall not be a house of lesser value than mine in my neighbourhood”. Myths regarding the negative impact of affordable and higher density housing on property values also dominate neighbourhood perceptions.
- Gentrification and condominiumization of existing rental properties leading to reduced availability of affordable stock.

OUR SOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

For people in core housing need (their income below living wage)

- Immediate expansion of provincial Rent Supplement programs
- Outreach support services for people requiring supports to access and maintain the 'right' option for housing
- Increase subsidized housing stock in communities
- Support incomes to a living wage
- Innovative ways to acquire or develop a stable housing stock and tips to programs looking to own rental properties

Education and awareness:

- Put a face to those who require housing
- Landlord -Tenant education programs
- HOME Education programming (AB Real Estate Foundation)
- Respect for the diversity and programs in order to acquire Cultural Competency (ability of a system to value cultural differences while delivering services to underserved populations includes race, language, sexual orientation, family structure, geography and other differences).

OUR SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

- Immediately identify and approve the backlog of proposals submitted for the Canada Alberta Affordable Housing Partnership Grant.
- Immediately match the federal government's contributions to housing and homelessness initiatives and through the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP), the Alberta Affordable Housing Trust Fund and Off Reserve Housing.
- Immediately enter into agreements with municipalities to coordinate and approve projects at the local level using the existing '7 Cities' community based organizations. The province may coordinate other projects with smaller municipalities requiring additional capacity and expertise.
- Immediately increase response time and approval process of the Alberta Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative. Simplification and a rapid approval process for Affordable Housing Grants are essential to engage private builders and developers.
- Consider a dedicated provincial **Ministry of Housing** to decrease fragmentation and support an integrated, systemic and comprehensive approach to housing.
- Immediately create a **Mayor's Task Force and Commission** to implement a program to 'Bring Alberta Home'. This group shall focus on 'Housing First' strategies" to prevent and end homelessness and under-housing through initiatives that are systemic in nature and recognize the economic impact of lack of housing.
- Make sure inter-ministerial coordination with economic development strategies occur to ensure housing is available to support active recruitment of labour and unprecedented population growth.

- Create Incentives for builders and developers to ensure their profit margins. This may require a review the Municipal Government Act, improved definitions and a shared understanding to create the following:
 - Subsidies to reduce development fee levies for developments
 - Subsidies for municipalities to waive land use amendments, subdivisions and development and building permit fees for affordable housing projects
 - Low interest loans for homeowners to upgrade secondary suites to current standards
- Partner with homebuilders, developers, the real estate industry, financial institutions and CMHC to create opportunities for affordable home ownership while maintaining profit margins. This strategy releases rental properties for other people living with lower incomes. This includes extending mortgage periods to 30 + years.
- Partner with Lethbridge, academic institutions in collaboration with McGill University, to implement an **Affordable Housing Institute**. The purpose of the institute is to further knowledge, share outcomes, best practices, strategies as well as effective, affordable design options for liveable neighbourhoods.
- Contribute surplus or underutilized provincial properties for development as protected affordable, appropriate and supported housing initiatives.
- Increase access to provincial Rent Supplement Programs. Promote below market rent through tax rebates for the private sector.
- Assist communities to locate and build affordable housing through the implementation of a marketing campaign for public education and awareness regarding the economic and social benefits of meeting housing needs and the faces of the people who need housing.
- Implement the provincial innovative support services program. Supportive housing will leading to independence including education and job-training programs, recreational activities, child care to improve the social and economic well-being of residents. This translates into sustainable neighbourhoods, communities and province.
- Initiate best practices for housing and supporting people with mental illness, addictions, family violence and unemployment, young mothers, youth leaving foster care.
- Address the shortage of skilled trades people through the expansion of training programs and accelerate training programs for the aboriginal labour force.

OUR LONG TERM SOLUTIONS

Provincial:

- Actively support major paradigm shift to ending homelessness through *housing first*. This is a long term commitment that needs to be supported by Policy.
- Redesign of the Rent Supplement and Housing Subsidy to short-term, shallow and gradually declining subsidies as appropriate; even leading to home ownership.
- Education and awareness regarding the economic and social benefits of the 'right' housing options for people with various needs

Municipal

In addition to creating an Affordable Housing Policy, the City of Lethbridge also contributes financially to reducing the impact of reduced affordable housing stock. During budget proceedings (2006-2008), City Council approved an Affordable Housing Fund for the initiation of projects as well as funding a Rent Supplement program through the Lethbridge Housing Authority. Building inclusive, sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods is a priority.

Both the City's role as a municipal governance authority and as a land development agency offers opportunities to support and enhance the vision for 'Bringing Lethbridge Home'. The City of Lethbridge, in partnership with SHIA, is prepared to consider the following (Affordable Housing Strategies for our Community, 2005):

As a Municipal Governance Authority:

1. Continue to act upon affordable housing directives already identified in the Municipal Development Plan;
2. Enact 'density bonusing' legislation for specific areas of City (where appropriate) to create incentive for private and public sector to provide additional rental and home ownership opportunities;
3. Encourage infill housing where appropriate, particularly in residential neighbourhoods undergoing renewal;
4. Pursue (following community and interest group consultation), passage of 'inclusionary housing' legislation via Municipal Development Plan (% of lots for affordable housing);
5. Review municipal by-laws and standards to create incentives for private sector to provide affordable housing;
6. Legislatively and financially support, the creation of affordable housing component within the City's operations in order to:
 - Act as spokesman for affordable housing;
 - Monitor and utilize opportunities offered by provincial and federal grants and legislation to create more affordable housing;
 - Develop and promote community awareness of affordable housing by ongoing contact with residential neighbourhood associations, other interest groups and the general public;
 - Aggressive and long term Housing policy for the identification of appropriate sites for housing to prevent push back from public; and
 - Create and maintain zoning for higher density developments

As a Land Development Agency:

- Sponsor affordable housing projects on its lands directly or in partnership with private sector;
- Ensure that the City, where opportunities avail themselves, sets aside parcels for affordable housing in its development projects;

- Where opportunities occur, require affordable housing components in City redevelopment projects (e.g. downtown);
- Create policy directing that a portion of profits from City residential land development activities are allocated to an affordable housing trust fund; and
- Act as a leader in this field by carrying out demonstration projects for affordable housing, either unilaterally or in partnerships.

Social Housing in Action (SHIA)

The successful implementation of ‘Bringing Lethbridge Home’ is contingent upon the following comprehensive and systemic approach with municipal, provincial and federal inter-ministerial collaboration:

- Maintain community- based approach and local decision making in partnership with provincial and federal governments
- Continue strengthening the community based organization SHIA in its collaborative efforts to implement the Strategic Plan “Bringing Lethbridge Home”
- Continue to support the 7 Cities and other provincial networks to work together for a unified provincial approach to addressing the housing needs

In partnership with all levels of government and the private sector, SHIA is prepared and well positioned to implement ‘Bringing Lethbridge Home’ and includes the following:

Plan for Quality and Outcomes (Assessment and Intake)

Planning for outcomes and using data to manage and evaluate programs are critical components to bring Lethbridge home. This data clearly reflects the difference programs and initiatives make with a comprehensive systemic approach. The ability to maximize the number of people-services to obtain the best results is critical. SHIA will design a community- wide system for intake, assessment and matching interventions to those most in need through a case management model.

Close the Front Door

- **Prevention Programs:** Target prevention dollars and resources. Ending homelessness will never occur if we do not prevent it from occurring in the first place. Current public policies (Justice, Health & Wellness, Children’s Services, Mental Health, and Addiction Treatment) too often “graduate” people directly into the homeless system. There is a need to stop early discharges through basic transition planning that includes stable housing and support systems.
- **Eviction Prevention:** Requires education programs, ability to rapidly re-house people to the ‘right’ housing option and ensure the availability of housing placement and stabilization services. Landlord -Tenant mediation and conflict resolution programs are essential.
- Adopt a philosophy of rapid re-housing and the strategies and relevant support programming to sustain the process.

- **Permanency Planning:** for permanent supportive housing for people and families with significant disabilities. Supports will enhance their progress toward self sufficiency.

Open the Back Door

- Continue the implementation of the Housing Continuum and critical coordinated support services. The Lethbridge emergency shelters would then require minimum spaces if the continuum were fully implemented.
- Reduce and minimize the length of time people are homeless and the number of times they become homeless.
- Ensure the 'right' housing option and supports are available.
- Accessible and available services need to exist to rapidly re-house people.
- Maintain current information regarding housing needs and a housing registry service.
- Re-housed people and families have rapid access to appropriate support services
- Recruiting landlords to assist meeting housing needs through education and awareness, rapid access to supports to overcome their concerns and address their needs.

Build Accessible Community Physical and Social Infrastructure

This strategy requires federal and provincial inter-ministerial action and community based implementation and includes the following:

- Continue to co-ordinate activities of the City and SHIA with other stakeholders and partners i.e. Lethbridge Housing Authority, Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority, financial institutions, funders, service providers and the private and public sector land developers.
- In partnership with the province, continue to address the complexities and root causes of homelessness at the community level.
- Implement the innovative outreach service programming in partnership with allied service providers (Health, Mental Health, AADAC, Justice, Employment and training agencies, other support services). Implement and promote Landlord-Tenant and mediation services to maintain secure housing and prevent eviction.
- Immediately complete currently identified demonstration projects; single resident, infill rental accommodation and affordable home ownership.

WHAT IS SUCCESS?

Success will be defined as:

- Decreased utilization of the Emergency shelters and re-sheltering while ensuring emergency shelter availability only in the event of a crisis.
- Active and effective outreach support and transition services based on prevention rather than crisis management.
- People in Alberta will understand the need and accept the need for access to various housing options and supports.

- People facing eviction are either rapidly re-housed and/or mediated to maintain current housing.
- Myths about the impact of affordable housing in neighbourhoods are dispelled
- Increased rental and affordable housing stock.
- Sustainable, liveable and mixed-use neighbourhoods are built.

How could this success be measured?

An effective Performance Measurement system is meaningful and assists communities and stakeholders to continuously learn. This results in improved planning, management and monitoring the effectiveness of programs. A province- wide aggregated data management and outcome evaluation program would be most effective.

Outcome measures:

Needs to focus on the short, mid and long term outcomes: “What difference did we make in the lives of Albertans in the ‘right’ housing option?”

Potential Outcome Measures:

- Municipalities and Province are partnered to immediately provide innovative solutions to housing shortages.
- Accessible, appropriate and affordable housing options support the continued economic growth of Alberta and lack of housing is *not* an impediment to attracting business.
- Healthy economic and social development exists within all Alberta communities.
- Services including outreach support and transition services are available to address the root causes of homelessness and to secure and maintain housing.
- Strengthened community assets will reduce housing needs.
- Increased opportunities for affordable home ownership with access to living wages.

CONCLUSION

Lethbridge is a strong, committed, policy focused community prepared and well positioned to move our plan forward. We are fortunate to have an involved supportive City Council and a strong collaborative community based organization through SHIA. We’re “good to go” and ready to implement the strategies we have outlined today and are willing to work with the province and other communities to *Bring Alberta Home*.

Social Housing in Action

***”BRINGING
LETHBRIDGE
HOME”***

**STRATEGIC PLAN TO
“END HOMELESSNESS”
IN LETHBRIDGE
2006-2011**

**Presented to City Council
December 12, 2005
By Social Housing in Action**

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Social Housing in Action
“Bringing Lethbridge Home”

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Dr. Gary Bowie
Chair, Social Housing in Action

Bob Campbell
Chair, Structure & Research Sub-committee

Stan Mills
Chair, Finance Sub-committee

Brian Kinahan
Chair, Affordable Housing Sub-committee

Tom Hudson
Chair, Shelter, Transition & Resource Centre Sub-Committee

Alderman Barbara Lacey
City Council Representative

Lonnie Slezina
Member at Large

Diane Randell
Manager, Community & Social Development

SHIA Steering Committee

Leah Bruder
Administrative Assistant



Social Housing in Action
“Bringing Lethbridge Home”

Purpose & Scope

In February of 2005, Social Housing in Action (SHIA) conducted a Strategic Planning retreat for the purpose of establishing a foundation for “ending homelessness” in Lethbridge. It focuses on the anticipated outcomes and strategies required to meet this goal. In addition, the retreat further described the:

- Challenges facing SHIA as the community based organization for the National Homelessness Initiative
- Strengths and accomplishments
- Opportunities for change and direction
- Gaps in current services and projects
- Value-added involvement and commitment of volunteerism and partnerships
- Reaffirmation of the vision, mission and guiding principles of SHIA
- Next Steps

During the retreat, Mayor Bob Tarleck announced that homelessness in Lethbridge is not acceptable and challenged SHIA to find the ways and means to “End Homelessness”. Using the retreat format, a strategic plan was commenced to achieve this goal. Following the retreat and utilizing its outcomes, the Executive Committee, in consultation with allied partners and the Steering Committee, further defined the strategies required to achieve this Vision.

The Strategic Plan “Bringing Lethbridge Home”, addresses the direction that is expected to prevail in the community from 2006-2011. It is also reflective of the most critical challenges facing SHIA and incorporates strategies for change. It is a reinforcement of our commitment to the people in our community and a tool for decision making and planning. Furthermore, it provides context and direction for SHIA, the community, the political and community leaders, funders and decision makers.



Social Housing in Action
“Bringing Lethbridge Home”

Background

In response to the National Homelessness Initiative, City Council approved the Community Social Housing Plan (October, 2001). This plan provided a framework for the community based organization (Social Housing in Action (SHIA)), to address homeless issues in our community. Funding from the Federal and Provincial governments, accompanied by the support of City of Lethbridge, was used to successfully implement the plan which is currently completing Phase 2.

Despite the successful implementation of the Community Plan (2001) and the achievement of significant outcomes to address homelessness in Lethbridge (Raising Roofs: Building Hope, 2003), there remains gaps in both support services and access to safe and affordable housing.

Over 20 years ago, homelessness in Canada was not widespread; however, just tonight alone nearly ½ million people will be homeless and/or will sleep in emergency shelters. In 1998, homelessness was declared a national disaster by the Big City Mayor’s Caucus. Significant energy, time and monetary resources have been used in an attempt to alleviate homelessness and the affordable housing crisis over the past several years. Housing advocates are concerned that the concept of homelessness is becoming accepted and institutionalized: a separate “homeless” system” has evolved and is becoming entrenched. The focus on homelessness has led to an increase in shelter beds and separate services for individuals who are homeless.

Living in the “wrong” type of housing and not receiving appropriate and accessible support services can result in significant compromises to people’s health and social well-being. Access to safe, appropriate, affordable housing is limited for people in Lethbridge. The number of people using shelter beds has increased; since 2001, the Emergency Shelter has increased its utilization by 100%. Many of the clients have mental illness, active addictions, mental and/or physical disabilities or any combination of these conditions. At least 20% of the chronically homeless are also experiencing aging related disabilities. Approximately 50% of the shelter clients are under 35; either employed and/or furthering their education and employment options, but are unable to find suitable housing. Having few options for housing and support services, the Youth Shelter is also well utilized since its opening, averaging 75% occupancy.

Following this assessment and the planning retreat, it is clearly evident+ the only way to “End Homelessness” is to ensure that every person who resides in Lethbridge has access to the “right” housing for their individual and family situation. Just managing the “problem” of homelessness is not enough. Preserving existing housing as well as the demonstration of innovative and affordable housing options is required as well as addressing the root causes of homelessness. Developing sustainable solutions to end homelessness and its impact is critical to the health and social well-being of Lethbridge.

Affordable Housing continues to be a priority of City Council as defined in “Shared Direction for the Future” (2003), “Working Together for a Better Tomorrow” (2005), as well as the implementation of the Social Policy (2005). These are aligned with this Strategic Plan.

As a result of this assessment of the current situation, gaps and opportunities, SHIA has determined that the future direction of Social Housing in Action is to increase access to the “right” housing and supports by

“Bringing Lethbridge Home”.



Social Housing in Action
“Bringing Lethbridge Home”

Vision, Mission, & Beliefs:

Our Vision

Bringing Lethbridge Home ... a declaration that homelessness is unacceptable and solvable in our community.

Our Mission

To end and prevent homelessness in Lethbridge by creating and implementing an innovative and comprehensive strategic plan.

Our Beliefs

We believe...

- All people have the right to appropriate, safe and affordable housing
- The Continuum of Housing with Support Services is integral to successful housing of all people.
- A community is strengthened and the health and social well being of people improves through equal access to safe and affordable housing.
- The leadership and support of the municipality is essential to ending homelessness.
- Continuous learning and the development and implementation of best practices
- In community involvement, collaborative partnerships and voluntarism.
- Cooperation and collaboration best serves the community

Guiding Principles

1. *The value and dignity of every individual:* People are a community's most valuable resource. The right to self-determination is respected.
2. *Investment:* Investments made in the development and support of people enhances the quality of community life in all its aspects.
3. *Empowerment:* The City of Lethbridge and its citizens are best able to recognize and build upon community strengths. Similarly, service priorities can best be identified at the local level.
4. *Collaboration:* Partnerships and collaboration between people, associations, institutions and government are fundamental to creating the momentum required for social change and ending homelessness.
5. *Prevention:* Investment in prevention enhances the well-being of individuals, strengthens families and benefits the community as a whole.
6. *Early Intervention:* Rapid re-housing for people who become homeless needs to be aligned with accessible information about available options and support services and is critical to ending homelessness.
7. *Building Strengths:* Enhancing existing services and strengthening organizational capacity best serves people who are homeless.
8. *Root Causes:* The complexity and root causes of homelessness guides the development of support service systems and innovative housing initiatives.
9. *Outcomes:* The success of housing initiatives will demonstrate the successful achievement of outcomes and the furtherance of Best Practices.



Social Housing in Action
“Bringing Lethbridge Home”

Structure and Process

Social Housing in Action has devised a structure and process to *Ending Homelessness*. This is framework includes: Assessment, “Closing the Front Door”, “Opening the Back Door”, and the implementation of the Housing Continuum. This outlined process is the framework that will end homelessness through the structure and goals of the Strategic Plan “**Bringing Lethbridge Home**”:

Assessment

- Implement and maintain an Outcome Evaluation System to assess:
 - Utilization of emergency shelter and supportive housing
 - Length of time people are homeless and frequency of repeat admissions
 - Shelter, housing, service needs and gaps
 - Causes of homelessness and at-risk situations
 - Impact and effectiveness of housing support systems
 - Effectiveness and outcomes of prevention and intervention, support services and the number of homeless people at any given time.
 - Profile of the homeless and those at risk
 - Barriers and gaps experienced by people accessing housing.

“Close the Front Door”

- Oversee the implementation of an emergency homelessness prevention program that includes rent/utility assistance, case management, landlord intervention and other strategies to prevent eviction and homelessness.
- Support service programs that provide care and services to people with low income, assess and respond to their housing needs through information and referral.
- Ensure an outreach system that is designed to reduce barriers and encourage homeless people and those at risk to access appropriate housing linked to effective support services.

“Open the Back Door”

- Reduce and minimize the length of time people are homeless and the number of times they become homeless.
- Ensure the right housing is available for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.
- Services are available and accessible to rapidly house the homeless and retrain housing for people who are at risk of becoming homeless.
- The re-housed have rapid access to appropriate support services.
- A sufficient supply of permanent supportive housing is in place to meet the needs of the aging and chronically homeless people, youth and families.
- A plan is in place to address the permanent housing needs of people living with a low income.

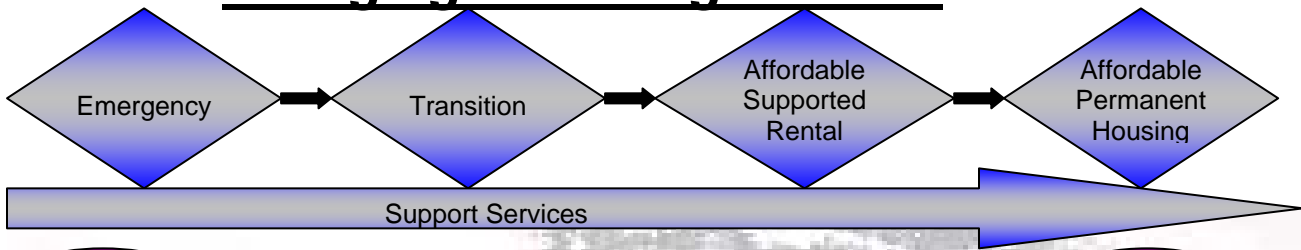
Continue the Implementation of the Housing Continuum

- Increase the supply of innovative, supported and safe and affordable housing options
- Strengthen and sustain appropriate support services.
- Complete the Demonstration Projects (Rental and Ownership) for families with low income.



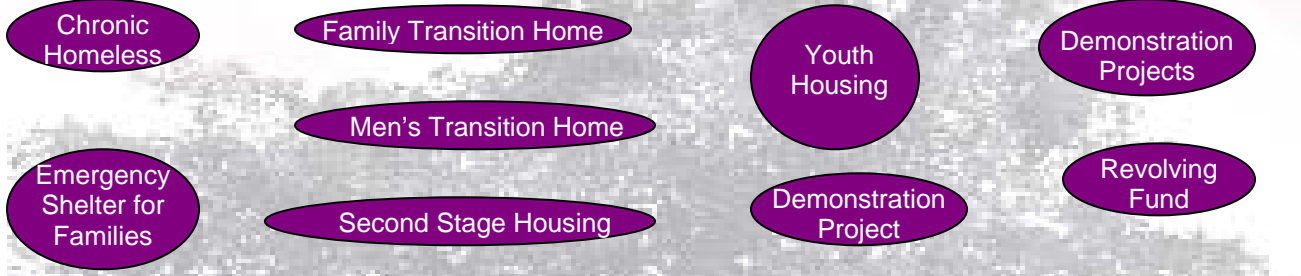
Social Housing in Action
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"Bringing Lethbridge Home"

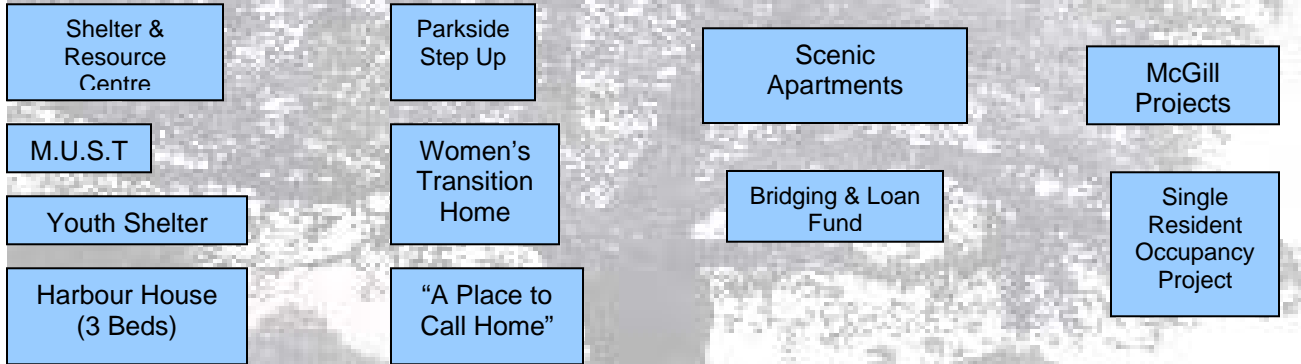


COMMUNITY

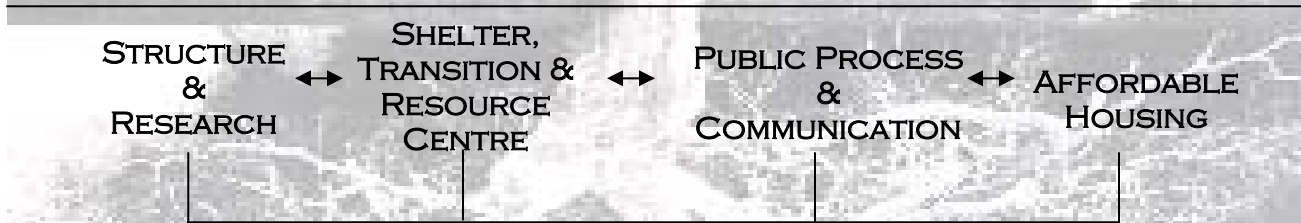
PHASE III



PHASE I & II



TASK FORCES



SUB-COMMITTEES

FOUNDATION



SOCIAL HOUSING IN ACTION

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

STEERING COMMITTEE

CITY COUNCIL



Social Housing in Action
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Roles & Responsibilities

Federal

The Federal government is responsible for:

- a) setting national standards in order to ensure that all Canadians are provided with reasonably comparable levels of public services; and
- b) providing financial and income support.

Provincial

As stated in the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) Policy Statement of Social Infrastructure (2004), the Provincial government is responsible for:

- a) developing programs/services in keeping with the province’s own distinct realities
- b) cooperating with municipalities in identifying needs
- c) ensuring equity between groups and municipalities

Municipal

Given that a safe and viable community cannot be created through physical infrastructure alone, the Alberta Municipal Government Act clearly states that local governments can include in their mandates social infrastructure considerations.

Part 1, Section 3 (Municipal Government Act)

“The purposes of a municipality are:

- a) to provide good government
- b) to provide services, facilities or other things that, in the opinion of council, are necessary or desirable for all or part of the municipality, and
- c) to develop and maintain safe and viable communities.”

As the Community Entity for the National Housing Framework and Homeless Initiatives, the City of Lethbridge will continue to:

- Act as the managing partner;
- Build collaborative partnerships and strengthen relationships with stakeholders;
- Develop and manage the contract agreements;
- Provide centralized flow of funding and reporting;
- Provide administrative and project coordination; and
- Strengthen community and organizational capacity and development.

Steering Committee

As the Steering Committee of Social Housing in Action, the mandate and purpose is to:

1. Oversee the Implementation of the Community Housing Plan, Raising Roofs: Building Hope Report (2003) and “Bringing Lethbridge Home” Strategic Plan (2005);
2. Provide direction and support as required to oversee the activities of the sub-committees and Task Forces that are appointed to implement the Strategic Plan;
3. Engage the community and ensure community based process is utilized in the implementation of the plans;
4. Ensure the identification of the needs as per the framework and the Continuum of Housing;
5. Prioritize the housing needs as identified by the community and current research;



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6. Ensure the engagement of appropriate protocols and processes to strengthen Aboriginal, New Canadian and Persons with Disabilities participation in the activities of the Social Housing in Action; and.
7. Monitor project outcomes within the continuum of housing framework and ensure appropriate and current improvement plans occur.

Executive Sub-Committee

The mandate and purpose of the Executive Committee is to:

1. Function on behalf of the Steering Committee to oversee the functions of the Sub-Committees and Task Forces
2. Respond to emergent issues when it is neither practical or necessary to convene a meeting of the entire Steering Committee
3. Provide direction, coordination and support to the Sub-Committees/Task Forces
4. Oversee the financial and agreement processes as presented by the funders and the City of Lethbridge;
5. Support and provide the operational direction and the community participation process as required for the implementation of the Community Social Housing Plan, the Strategic Plan;
6. Oversee, monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Strategic Plan; and
7. Develop agendas for the Steering Committee and convene special meetings as required for the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan.

Affordable Housing Sub-Committee

The mandate and purpose of the Affordable Housing Sub-Committee is to:

1. Explore various, feasible and inclusive affordable housing initiatives that will adequately meet the housing needs of low income and those at risk of becoming homeless;
2. Facilitate and coordinate the mandates of the Task Forces that includes the design, selection, and implementation of innovative affordable housing initiatives;
3. Develop and implement a community-based system for the inclusive design and initiation of various affordable housing projects to meet the housing and support need within the community;
4. Initiate a mutually beneficial working relationship with landlords homebuilders, developers, Real Estate Board and to facilitate meeting needs of tenants and homeowners;
5. Promote collaborative affordable housing initiatives and options
6. Coordinate education opportunities for potential and new homeowners, tenants and landlords; and
7. Monitor and report the affordable housing needs within Lethbridge.

Structure & Research Sub-Committee

The mandate and purpose of the Structure and Research Sub-Committee is to:

1. Ensure a structure and process is functional and effective in fulfilling the mandate outlined in the Community and Strategic Plans;
2. Ensure Terms of Reference and Mandates of all the committees and Task Forces are clear with no identified gaps to fulfill the plans;
3. Identify research opportunities and requirements, coordinate research projects, review and monitor the dissemination of results;
4. Ensure all committees and Task Forces have access to required information and results of research;
5. Design and implement a standard process for reporting the activities of Sub-Committees and Task Forces as required;



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6. To monitor trends relating to homelessness and affordable housing and report to Steering Committee on quarterly basis;
7. Ensure an outcome evaluation system is appropriate and effective; and
8. To ensure the ongoing review of sustainability

Public Process and Communication Sub-Committee

The mandate and purpose of the Public Process and Communication Sub-Committee is to:

1. Develop, coordinate and oversee a communication plan throughout the implementation of the Strategic Plan to:
 - o Create public awareness and understanding of homelessness and affordable housing issues in our community;
 - o Be proactive in media relations;
 - o Inform the community and stakeholders of new initiatives and events;
 - o Assist the Social Housing in Action Steering Committee to engage the community and stakeholders; and
 - o Provide direction and effective communication strategies to Social Housing in Action Steering Committee, Sub-Committees and Task Forces as required.
2. Provide the Social Housing in Action Steering Committee, Sub-Committees and Task Forces with direction and strategies for effective public process and communication.

Shelter, Transition and Resource Centre Sub-Committee

The mandate and purpose of the Shelter, Transition and Resource Centre Sub-Committee is to:

1. Ensure appropriate location, design and implementation of the new projects and the support services to meet the needs of the target populations;
2. Develop and implement a community-based system to support transition housing and second stage housing that resolves social and housing needs through pre-shelter, emergency and transition housing;
3. Oversee the implementation of the Task Forces for identified projects;
4. Monitor the outcome evaluation of the Resource Centre and other contracted services for Emergency Shelter and Transition housing;
5. Assist the Shelter, Resource Centre, Transition Homes and Emergency Youth Shelter in development and implementation of a sustainability plan; and
6. Ensure outcome evaluation is integrated within all levels of supported programs.



Goals, Strategies & Anticipated Outcomes

Aligned with the Vision, Mission, Beliefs and Guiding Principles, the following goals and strategies will be implemented (2006-2011):

1. Decrease the number of people living on the streets, in the coulees and in the Emergency Shelters.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<p>A. Adopt a city wide “ending homelessness” approach by ensuring an adequate supply of appropriate, safe and affordable housing options with support services;</p> <p>B. Increase number of emergency shelter beds to for the chronic aging homeless and homeless families. Adjust the number of emergency shelter beds downward as the need decreases;</p> <p>C. Ensure the homeless have access to appropriate shelter and provide the necessary support services to promote empowerment, independence and self-reliance;</p> <p>D. Reduce the number of homeless people and those at risk of being homeless through a combination of appropriate and accessible services;</p> <p>E. Strengthen the outreach services through M.U.S.T.; and</p> <p>F. Increase access to appropriate community resources to reduce and prevent homelessness</p>	<p>Steering Committee Shelter, Transition & Resource Centre Committee</p> <p>Affordable Housing Committee</p> <p>Public Process & Communication Committee</p>	<p>1. Homeless Count Reflects annual decrease of homelessness.</p> <p>2. Increased awareness of community resources</p> <p>3. Increased utilization of the Resource Centre services</p> <p>4. Shelter beds and services for homeless families and chronic homeless.</p>	<p>1. Number of Homeless as per the Homeless Count</p> <p>2. Utilization of Resource Centre</p> <p>3. Number of people access the Shelters and Resource Centre</p> <p>4. Increased stock of housing that is safe, affordable and geared towards the clients needs</p>



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2. Assess, prioritize and address gaps and housing needs as identified by our citizens, services providers and community.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
A. Conduct and coordinate research and outcome evaluation initiatives; B. Develop and implement a Communication and Advocacy Plan to disseminate information and create awareness of housing needs in the community; C. Host forums and provide opportunities that engage the community; D. Identify priorities and action plans required to reduce and prevent homelessness; and E. Identify housing and support service assets, needs and gaps.	Structure & Research Public Process & Communication Committee	1. Understanding the profile of homelessness 2. Community is engaged and aware of housing needs, assets and gaps and required initiatives 3. Informed SHIA committees to reduce and prevent homelessness and its impact 4. Increase circulation of Newsletter	1. Number of Vacancies 2. Number of Community Forums and participants 3. Number of Participation Levels by community members 4. Readership of website and newsletter

3. Implement and maintain a current community social housing plan aligned with the community based process.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
A. Implement and maintain the housing framework and continuum B. Provide opportunities for evaluation and community consultation; and C. Ensure diverse community participation in the community based organization from all stakeholder sectors	Steering Committee Executive Committee Public Process & Communication	1. Diverse, committed membership of SHIA, Sub-Committees and Task Forces 2. Current Community And Strategic Plan to end homelessness	1. Number of vacancies from sectors & stakeholders 2. % participation in SHIA



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4. Provide direction and support to oversee the strategic implementation of the subcommittees required to implement the plan and continued evaluation of overall strategic direction.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
A. Implement the framework and organizational structure and process of SHIA; B. Review Membership of the Steering Committee and adjust to reflect diverse Stakeholders C. Provide Fiscal Stewardship; D. Monitor process, progress and outcomes; and E. Evaluate, identify and implement best practises.	Steering Committee Executive Committee Structure & Research	1. Effective and engaged committees 2. Best Practices identified and implemented 3. Alignment of Sub Committees with Strategic Plan	1. Attendance and participation in SHIA 2. % of targets achieved 3. Recognition and report of best practices at local, provincial and national level

5. Increase community awareness and education of the overall impact of homelessness, status and outcomes of community initiatives through strengthening the following:

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
A. Newsletter B. Website C. Research and information dissemination (housing needs, assets and gaps including waiting lists) D. Social marketing campaign E. Conduct Neighbourhood consultations/forums to reduce the impact of NIMBY (Not in my Backyard) F. De-mystify homelessness and define the benefits of safe and affordable housing	Public Process & Communication Committee Structure & Research Committee	1. Less resistance to housing initiatives 2. Increased community support for housing options 3. Increased understanding of the complexity of homelessness 4. Community Support of the Strategic Plan	1. Number of community presentations/forums/consultations 2. Number of requests for information and consultation 3. Community survey and response 4. Number of Community Initiated Solutions



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6. Continue the implementation of the housing continuum and appropriate support services. Plan and implement the following:

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
A. Shelter for the Aging Chronic Homeless B. Emergency Shelter for Families C. Family Transition Home D. Men’s Transition Home E. Second Stage Housing (from Harbour House) F. Supported Housing for Youth G. Implement Affordable Housing Demonstration Projects (utilizing all sources of funding including the revolving fund) including affordable home ownership H. Implement and Evaluation the impact of Rent Supplement Program (City of Lethbridge)	A-F: Shelter, Transition & Resource Centre Committee G & H: Affordable Housing Committee	1. Implemented Task Forces 2. The creation and fulfillment of the Strategies outline by the Task Forces 3. Completed Projects 4. Increased home ownership within targeted income levels.	1. Number of people living in appropriate housing 2. Decrease in Emergency Shelter and Youth Shelter utilization 3. Number of new incentives outside of Demonstration Projects 4. Decreased re-admission to Emergency Shelters 5. Homeless Count continuously decreases.



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7. Preserve and increase the supply of affordable housing and promote sustainable neighbourhoods.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<p>A. Engage and provide a guide to the community (diverse funders, planners, community, builders and developers, faith community, business, landlords, citizens and volunteers) to take ownership to end homelessness through access to safe and affordable housing options;</p> <p>B. Build partnerships with the private sector and stakeholders;</p> <p>C. Define and implement appropriate Affordable Housing Policy and the required projects;</p> <p>D. Continue the implementation of the Affordable Housing: Strategies for our Community;</p> <p>E. Lobby for timely access to available provincial and federal grants;</p> <p>F. Implement an education and awareness campaign to cultivate community support for affordable housing development and promote options; and</p> <p>G. Complete Demonstration Projects.</p> <p>H. Implement the H.O.M.E. Program</p>	<p>A: Public Process & Communication</p> <p>B: Steering, Affordable Housing</p> <p>C: Affordable Housing Committee</p> <p>D: Affordable Housing Committee</p> <p>E: Steering Committee</p> <p>F: Affordable Housing Committee, Public Process & Communication Committee and Structure & Research Committee</p> <p>G: Affordable Housing Committee</p>	<p>1. Sustainable neighbourhoods with mixed housing;</p> <p>2. New initiatives for affordable housing from public and private sectors</p> <p>3. Increased funding for affordable housing and home ownership</p> <p>4. Identified Best Practices to ensure sustainability</p> <p>5. Increased home ownership opportunities</p> <p>6. H.O.M.E. Program results in crease in home ownership</p>	<p>1. More affordable housing units</p> <p>2. More private sector involvement</p> <p>3. Increased initiatives outside of SHIA</p> <p>4. Stable occupancy</p> <p>5. More diverse communities</p> <p>6. Participation rates in H.O.M.E. program and % own homes after 1 year, 2 years</p>



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8. Strengthen and support partner agencies and stakeholders that contribute service for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<p>A. Enhance existing programs and increase the capacity and sustainability of agencies within the community to further implement the housing continuum (Wood’s Homes, YWCA Harbour House, Women’s Transition Home, Lethbridge Shelter & Resource Centre, Lethbridge Housing Authority);</p> <p>B. Promote self-care and wellness for individuals within organizations that serve the homeless and at risk populations</p> <p>C. Support Not-For- Profit organizations championing new initiatives and ensuring the programs and services are coordinated;</p> <p>D. Strengthen and promote collaborative partnerships with all sectors of the community;</p> <p>E. Integrate, redesign and improve support service delivery systems to increase the ability and accessibility to rapidly house and re-house people who become homeless;</p> <p>F. Increase opportunities for the homeless and at risk people to increase their income through community economic development, employment and appropriate access to support services;</p> <p>G. Lobby and advocate for appropriate, sustainable and predictable funding for community based initiatives;</p> <p>H. Organize and deliver best practise and organizational development education sessions;</p> <p>I. Support and strengthen the capacity of agencies in growth and organizational development initiatives;</p> <p>J. Encourage and support agencies in innovative and evidence based practise; and</p> <p>K. Continue implementation of outcome evaluation and quality improvement strategies.</p>	<p>Steering Committee & All</p>	<p>1. Increased sustainability of partner agencies</p> <p>2. Increased communication between SHIA and community stakeholders</p> <p>3. Workshops and compliance with self-care</p> <p>4. Decreased time spent in emergency shelters</p> <p>5. Collaboration with perspective employers</p> <p>6. Increased community economic development initiatives</p>	<p>1. Sustainable Service Providers with predictable funding</p> <p>2. Number of Agencies with Strategic Business Plans</p> <p>3. Number of new initiatives</p> <p>4. Job Satisfaction and retention rates</p> <p>5. Increased Employment rates</p>



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9. Increase Lobbying and advocacy efforts at the local, provincial and federal levels.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<p>A. Identify opportunities, barriers and challenges encountered in to implement the Housing Continuum.</p> <p>B. Provide the community, City Council, Provincial and Federal Representatives regular progress reports, outcomes of initiatives and quality improvement initiatives;</p> <p>C. Maintain and strengthen investment in positive relationships and partnerships with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. MLA & MP ii. Senior Officials iii. Funders and Partners iv. Alberta Real Estate Foundation v. Local Real Estate Board <p>D. Continue Participation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Inter-City Forum on Social Policy & Homelessness ii. NHPOT – National Housing Policy Options Team iii. FCM – Federation of Canadian Municipalities iv. Alberta Housing Coalition v. Canadian Housing Renewal Association vi. AUMA – Alberta Urban Municipalities Association <p>E. Maintain City of Lethbridge as the Community Entity</p>	<p>Steering Committee</p> <p>Community & Social Development Group</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased ability to communicate success and influence policy 2. Predictable and sustainable funding for initiatives 3. Increased new incentives that are in line with Community assets, needs and the SHIA Strategic Plan (2006-11) 4. People experience reduced barriers to access the “right” housing and support services 5. Provincial & Federal alliance and support to “end homelessness’ 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality and volume of participation 2. Vacancy Rates for Affordable Housing 3. Predictable and sustainable funding is maintained <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Provincial o Federal



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10. Nurture and value diversity and inclusiveness as it relates to “ending homelessness”.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<p>A. Ensure the engagement of appropriate protocols and process to strengthen relationships and participation with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aboriginal people, ○ New Canadians, ○ Persons with disabilities. ○ Youth <p>B. Engage Aboriginal Housing in Action</p>	<p>Structure & Research All</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Decreased waiting lists for affordable housing 2. Social Housing in Action reflects the diversity in the community. 3. Reduced barriers for people accessing housing and services 4. Cultural diversity is a community norm 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Diverse community participation 2. Decrease number of people on waiting lists 3. Decrease number of people identified in homeless count.

11. Improve the overall health and social well-being of the homeless and at risk children youth, adults and families through the successful implementation of the housing continuum and addressing root causes of homelessness.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
<p>A. Lobby and advocate for appropriate, accessible mental and physical health care among homeless people;</p> <p>B. Work collaboratively with the Community & Social Development Committee to further implement the Social Policy</p> <p>C. Strengthen initiatives at provincial and federal levels to “end homelessness”;</p> <p>D. Lobby and advocate for increased timely access to substance abuse treatment, mental health, employment initiatives and family resource support services</p> <p>E. Ensure appropriate community support systems are in place;</p> <p>F. Continue the implementation of the inter-disciplinary service delivery at the Resource Centre; and</p> <p>G. Strengthen the role of M.U.S.T. as outreach support service</p> <p>H. Foster Multi-service Partnerships</p>	<p>A & B Steering Committee B-H: Shelter Transition & Resource Centre</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. People access appropriate services 2. Services are available, appropriate, accessible and timely 3. Increased understanding of the impact of homelessness on the economy, health and justice systems and community. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of life indicators are improved 2. Improved client outcomes 3. Implementation of Social Policy 4. Continued Support to address root causes of homelessness while appropriately sheltered.



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12. Continue to develop and implement evidence based Best Practices.

Strategy	Committee Action	Anticipated Outcomes	Indicators of Success
A. Research strategies and Best Practices to minimize the impact of NIMBY (Not In My Back Yard) B. Implementation of the Good Neighbour Communication Plans C. Engage experts throughout the implementation of the housing Continuum D. Conduct research and outcome evaluation E. Implement Best Practices in the implementation of the Housing Continuum and Support Services	Structure & Research Committee All	1. Maximized positive neighbourhood impact of various housing projects	1. Positive impact of meetings/consultations in neighbourhoods 2. Impact and evaluation of housing projects 3. Satisfaction living in integrated mixed use neighbourhoods.



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Evaluation

Ongoing monitoring, evaluation and continuous improvement is required to fully implement “Bringing Lethbridge Home”. SHIA, through the Structure & Research sub-committee will also conduct formal evaluations at the end of each funding period. These will include Outcome Evaluations, Financial Audits and adjustments to the Strategic Plan.

Federal & Provincial Programs

National Homelessness Initiative

The National Homelessness Initiative (NHI) assists governments and community organizations to come together and alleviate homelessness. By encouraging innovative and progressive cooperation, this approach is supporting long-term local solutions to address homelessness. (http://www.homelessness.gc.ca/home/index_e.asp)

Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Program

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports facilitates the development of affordable housing in high-growth, high-need communities and northern remote areas of the province through two initiatives: the Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative (AHPI) and the Sustainable Remote Housing Initiative (SRHI). The AHPI provides stable, affordable housing for low-income families and individuals with special needs and the SRHI provides people in remote northern communities access to safe, adequate and suitable shelter.

These initiatives were announced as part of the Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Program Agreement signed between Alberta Seniors (now Alberta Seniors and Community Supports) and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation June 24, 2002. (http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/housing/affordable_housing/affordablehsg_initiatives/index.asp)

Affordable Housing Partnership Initiative

The Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative (AHPI) resulted from the Canada-Alberta Affordable Housing Program Agreement being signed between Alberta Seniors (now Alberta Seniors and Community Supports) and Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation on June 24, 2002.

The Affordable Housing Partnerships Initiative provides capital grants to assist in the construction of new affordable housing projects, major renovations to convert existing non-housing projects into housing, or undertake major restoration of existing housing stock to accommodate low and moderate-income working households.

Alberta Seniors and Community Supports encourages municipalities (or organizations representing or authorized by the municipality) to support proposals for funding under this initiative. Parties interested in preparing affordable housing proposal applications are requested to work with their local municipality to ensure their project addresses local needs. (http://www.seniors.gov.ab.ca/housing/affordable_housing/affordablehsg_initiatives/initiative_info/index.asp)



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Appendix I – Definitions

Chronic Homelessness - An unaccompanied homeless individual with a disabling condition who has either been continuously homeless for a year or more or has had at least four (4) episodes of homelessness in the past three (3) years.

Homeless - A person is considered homeless only when he/she resides in one of the places described below:

- In places not meant for human habitation, such as cars, parks, sidewalks, abandoned buildings (on the street).
- In an emergency shelter.
- In transitional or supportive housing for homeless persons who originally came from the streets or emergency shelters.
- In any of the above places but is spending a short time (up to 30 consecutive days) in a hospital or other institution.
- Is being evicted within a week from a private dwelling unit and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.
- Is being discharged within a week from an institution, such as a mental health or substance abuse treatment facility or a jail/prison, in which the person has been a resident for more than 30 consecutive days and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.
- Is fleeing a domestic violence housing situation and no subsequent residence has been identified and the person lacks the resources and support networks needed to obtain housing.

Sub-Population Definitions

General Groups:

At Risk Homeless

Family - Family is defined as any of the following: Minor parents with child(ren); one or more adults with legal custody of minor child(ren); a couple in which one person is pregnant; grandparents or others who are legal guardians with child(ren) present; multi-generational families with grandparents, parents (adult child) and minor child(ren).

Individual - A person over age 18, not accompanied by minor child(ren).

Specific Groups:

Domestic Violence, Families - Families that are homeless due to an abusive partner. The abuse could be physical, mental, or emotional. The cause of the family homelessness or housing instability must be related to domestic violence.

Domestic Violence, Individuals - Individuals who became homeless because of an abusive partner or guardian. The abuse could be physical, mental, or emotional.



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Dually Diagnosed, Individuals - Individuals who are substantially limited in one or more major life activity by mental illness and alcohol or drug addiction. Persons with other diagnoses qualify under multiple diagnoses.

Elderly Homeless - An elderly homeless individual is 65 years old or older.

Homeless Emancipated Foster Youth - Young adults who have reached majority age (18 years), were in the foster care system and who now have no other home.

Individuals with Disabilities - A person has a disability if she or he has at least one of the following: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity, (2) has a record of such an impairment, or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

Individuals with multiple diagnoses - Individuals whose ability to live independently is impaired by two or more of the following conditions: Physical disability (including HIV/AIDS), mental disability, substance abuse. This may include a diagnosis of multiple physical disabilities, multiple mental disabilities, or the combination of the two.

Mentally Ill, Families - Families in which at least one member is substantially limited in one or more major life activity by mental illness, based on confirmed clinical diagnosis, or initially by referral or staff assessment and later confirmed by clinical diagnosis.

Mentally Ill, Individuals - Individuals substantially limited in one or more major life activity by mental illness based on confirmed clinical diagnosis, or initially by referral or staff assessment and later confirmed by clinical diagnosis.

Substance Abuse, Individuals - Individuals who have acknowledged addiction problems related to alcohol and drug use and who seek services or housing to support their sobriety.

Youth 12-24 - Unaccompanied persons, age 12 to 24. Youth may have run away or were forced out of their home and are not in the company of a parent or guardian, and who may or may not be legally emancipated.

Adapted from: Bring LA Home Definitions

Presentation to:

***STANDING POLICY COMMITTEE ON HEALTH
AND COMMUNITY LIVING***

August 21, 2006

Presentation by:

*Community based organizations (CBO's)
Responsible for Managing Funding for Homelessness
in Alberta*

***CALGARY
EDMONTON
FORT MCMURRAY
GRANDE PRAIRIE
LETHBRIDGE
MEDICINE HAT
RED DEER***

Sustainable Solution for Homelessness

Seven major centres extend collaborative approach

- Presentation to:** Standing Policy Committee on Health and Community Living
- Presentation by:** Mayor Stephen Mandel, City of Edmonton
Mayor Robert Tarleck, City of Lethbridge
Ron Hystad, President, Carmacks Construction, Edmonton
Mr. Doug Atha, Grand Prairie, Homeless Serving Representative
- Submitted by:** Community Based Organizations (CBOs) responsible for managing funding for homelessness in Alberta – serving the seven major centres in the province:
- Calgary
 - Edmonton
 - Fort McMurray
 - Grande Prairie
 - Lethbridge
 - Medicine Hat
 - Red Deer
- Date:** August 21, 2006

THE CHALLENGE: Homelessness funding from the Alberta Government and the Government of Canada have produced valuable results in addressing homelessness. Many homeless have found refuge in Alberta shelters and transitional housing. Some have been removed from the streets permanently into affordable housing. However, homelessness in Alberta continues to rise. This trend is corroborated by counts and studies in communities across the province. For example:

- **Fort McMurray:** Salvation Army shelter and mat program turned away an average 27-32 people a night in October/November 2005, up from 4-8 people in 2004.
- **Edmonton:** Total homeless count rose to 2192 in Oct. 2004 from 1160 in Sept. 2000.
- **Lethbridge:** In 2005, the Emergency Shelter for Women turned away 1,186 women and children, well over the total number of those served in the previous year. Over 420 individuals and families (not including those on wait lists for rent supplement programs) are on a waiting list for one of 410 subsidized community housing units.
- **Red Deer:** From 2005 to 2006, People's Place Shelter experienced an increase in both length of stay (from 7.9 to 10.2 days per guest) and number of guests (from 19.5 to 22.7 per night). The Shelter reported having to turn individuals away at an unprecedented rate this past year, and were unable to provide alternatives on those nights.
- **Calgary:** In May 2006, Calgary conducted its 8th biennial "homeless count" (begun in 1992). The total number of homeless increased 32% compared to 2004, to 3,436 including over 400 persons sleeping outdoors in parks, alleys and streets.
- **Grand Prairie:** The (SOS) Street Outreach and Support Van operated out of the One Window Resource Centre of Grande Prairie's Friendship Centre provide basic necessities of life to individuals living on the street. In 2005, 20 - 25 persons were assisted per night. In 2006, 20 -25 camps are assisted each night."

The Alberta CBO's are committed to addressing this problem particularly for the chronically homeless, families, youth and those with addictions and mental health issues. There are factors present which inhibit the ability of CBOs and organizations working directly with the homeless to effectively address the problem.

1. Homeless funding must be available for the capital and on-going operational needs of organizations working with the homeless.
2. Intra-governmental workings have not effectively addressed the problem of interrelated responsibility for homeless individuals between government departments.
3. An inability of CBOs and homeless organizations to make long range plans because we are uncertain as to the future of Provincial and Federal Funding.

RECOMMENDED SOLUTION: The seven community-based organizations that manage homelessness funding in Alberta have joined together to offer a solution to the Provincial Government.

1. **THAT the Provincial Government initiate Project Innovation Funding of \$20 million:** This funding could include funding outreach teams and other demonstration initiatives throughout the province. This funding would be in addition to and in support of homeless initiative funding much of which has been spent on capital projects. Research from the United States and Europe, as well as experiential evidence in Canada; demonstrate the value of attaching support services to housing for the chronically homeless.
2. **THAT the government of Alberta make a five year commitment to continue Homelessness Initiative funding and Affordable Housing Initiatives.** Along with this pledge of funding, the Alberta Government will encourage the Federal Government to join them through their own recommitment to the National Homelessness Initiative for at least a three-year period and extend the Provincial commitment to affordable housing projects.
3. **THAT a formal mechanism be established, with appropriate resources and measures, to bring together** departments associated – directly and indirectly – with homelessness.

With a net migration of over 38,000 people in 2005, the responsibility to address Alberta's homeless problem must be shared with the Federal Government.

PROJECT INNOVATION FUNDING

In most Alberta communities, homeless funding to date has primarily been focused on capital for buildings. Along with infrastructure, communities need "24/7" support services in the form of a case management approach to help people once they are housed to remain housed. Examples of the results that communities experience with this kind of model include:

- **Fort McMurray's** Supportive Transitional Housing Team focuses on 'hard to house' individuals with whom they develop service and maintenance plans. Success shows in the statistics: 41% of clients involved with the program were housed; 80% of those housed successfully maintained housing for one year or longer.
- **Lethbridge's** Resource Centre is considered a best practice example providing interdisciplinary support services with the co-location of stakeholders utilizing an integrated case management system. 27 different service providers provide services and integrated programs to the homeless and those at risk, including addictions counseling, outreach, mental health and nursing services, life skills and employment readiness. Since opening in 2005, there is demonstrated evidence of positive outcomes. Within 5 months, over 200 individual clients were discharged from the program to housing and other support services.
- **Calgary's** Rainbow Lodge project is a 32 apartment complex with full supports, serving homeless families. Having completed their first year of operation, they report that of the

- total of 38 families aided this year, 31% have received assistance in dealing with previous and current addictions, 65% received aid in finding and maintaining steady employment, and 82% of the families received support in the development of their parenting, life skills and cultural understanding. 9 families have successfully transitioned into alternate independent and sustainable housing.
- Results of **New York City's** Pathways to Housing program – known as the Housing First initiative which combines housing with supports – show 80% of a studied group were living in stable housing after 12 months compared to only 24% of the control group. In the second year of this study, 78% of the Pathways clients remained housed as opposed to 35% of the housed-as-usual consumers. (from *Pathways to Housing, A Snapshot*).
 - In **San Francisco**, its “Plan to Abolish Chronic Homelessness” resulted in a 28% decrease in chronic homelessness from 2002-2005, and a 40% decline in street homelessness from 2003-2005. Its Housing First approach requires all homeless services to operate in the context of permanent supportive housing.

To date in Alberta, such support service teams and timely case management are not generally available. As a result, chronically homeless people either never become housed in a permanent setting, or do not stay housed. In Alberta, the insufficiency of stable support service funding begins in emergency shelters and extends to affordable housing:

- Sunrise House, **Grande Prairie's** first youth emergency shelter, opened with assistance of capital funding from the National Homelessness Initiative. It has struggled to remain open ever since due to the inability to secure core support and operational dollars. The shelter manager -- whose time goes more to developing income than providing service -- notes, “There are many needs that we are in a position to meet, many ways we can assist the community and youth at risk, but we do not have the resources to do so.”
- **Edmonton:** From spring 2003 to spring 2004, EHTF funded the Crossroads Duplex project, bridging the costs while the recipient sought more sustainable funding for the project. The Crossroads Duplex provide transitional housing to 53 homeless persons wanting to leave the sex trade or situations of sexual exploitation and the program operated at over 84% occupancy at an estimated cost of \$1,962.10 per client per month, for room board and programming services. The Crossroads Duplex project was not successful in obtaining funding and the program was terminated.

Alberta needs well-funded, accessible, sustainable support services – which are a form of prevention as well as service. Organizations and managers know what is required; many support programs and innovative models are already available in Alberta, despite the lack of government funding. Sufficient quantity, though, is lacking as is coordination and access because levels of funding are insufficient. Innovation Projects will demonstrate the difference that adequate supports can make in reducing the number of homeless and at-risk Albertans. Significant improvements can be accomplished by combining the outreach services with private sector housing and rent supplements.

The \$20 million funding is a short-term solution, leading to a long-term sustainable approach for which concepts are under development. An “endowment” fund is one such possibility being examined.

Others' experience shows that efficiency and effectiveness result for government and other funders when customized support services are available along with housing. *The Cost of Homelessness: Analysis of Alternate Responses in Four Canadian Cities*, prepared for the National Secretariat on Homelessness in March 2005, examined the relative cost of addressing homelessness through institutional and emergency response systems, such as psychiatric

hospitals, treatment centres and emergency shelters, compared to purposefully designed community based supportive and affordable housing. Results include:

- Literature review, which was predominantly Canadian, quantified positive outcomes and reduced expenditures for supportive housing relative to hospital and institutional costs.
- The City of Toronto's "Tent City" emergency pilot demonstrated that people experiencing long-term homelessness can be successfully housed and, more significantly, can retain their housing with limited ongoing supports.
- Overall costs among existing facilities for institutional responses tend to be significantly higher than for community/residentially based options (\$200-\$600 a day compared to \$60); likewise emergency accommodations tended to be higher, ranging from \$25-\$110.
- Estimates for new supportive housing options remained significantly lower than costs of institutional and emergency services for comparable sub-populations. For example, supportive housing with 24/7 supports requires one-third less funding than the cost of institutional tertiary care.

In **Alberta**, keeping people adequately housed and supported also is more effective and uses fewer resources than other alternatives.

- For example, from the Health and Wellness perspective, to house a person in a psychiatric hospital costs between \$180-\$550 daily or between \$65,700-\$200,750 annually. To house the same mentally ill homeless person in a one-bedroom apartment with a high level of support would cost between \$81-\$129 daily or \$29,700-\$47,100 annually – a significant saving.
- Within the justice system, studies show homeless people are more likely to be held in custody or, if found guilty, to be jailed than people with stable housing who commit the same type of crime. As an example of potential cost savings, the daily cost of incarcerating an inmate in Alberta in 2000-01 was \$96 a day or \$35,040 annually. A small one-bedroom apartment with minimal support services costs \$30-\$38 daily or \$11,100-\$13,700 a year – another significant saving.

Potential savings can be realized with less pressure on the existing shelter system that Alberta Seniors supports, by providing funding for housing support services.

FORMAL GOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION

A formal mechanism, with appropriate resources and measures, would bring together departments associated – directly and indirectly – with homelessness.

This includes departments within the Standing Policy Committee on Health and Community Living's reporting structure:

- Seniors and Community Supports
- Health and Wellness
- Community Development
- Children's Services
- Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development

As well, departments affected by homeless and housing issues must be included in the formal collaboration. By working and planning together, their programs can achieve the most toward eradicating Alberta's homeless and housing challenges. Such departments include, not exclusively:

- Education
- Human Resources and Employment
- Justice and Attorney General

Collaboration is recognized as a strategic priority for the homelessness issue within government and in the business plan for Seniors and Community Supports in particular. The Community-

Based Organizations of Alberta support this priority and recommend a more formalized mechanism to achieve it. A staffing and funding commitment, along with clarification of roles, responsibilities and outcome measures, will provide concrete steps toward tangible results – a reduction in the number of homeless people and families at-risk of homelessness in Alberta.

THE ALBERTA CBOs' EXPERIENCE

The collaborative community-based model used within and among the seven major centres dealing with homelessness is working. Most major urban centres have community plans on housing or homelessness that emphasize the need for support services as well as housing. To accomplish the development of these plans, they have worked with such organizations as the Regional Health Authorities and local not-for-profit community organizations.

The seven CBO communities want to work toward solutions with the Provincial Government in the same collaborative way. Implementation of this proposal is key to making a tangible difference – resulting in resource efficiency and effectiveness for government and fewer homeless and at-risk people within Alberta.

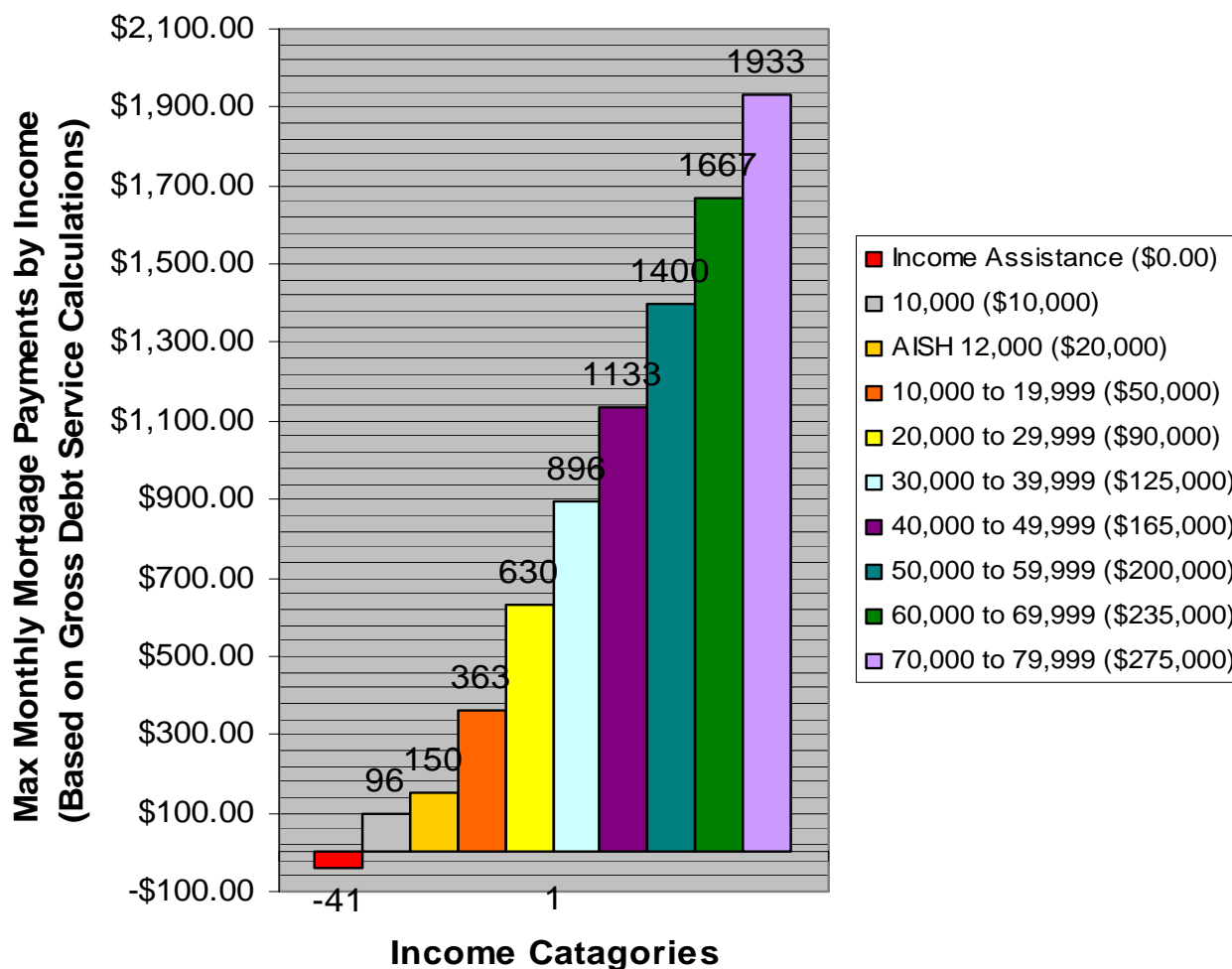
Estimated Annual Income by Occupation: Lethbridge

Under 10,000	10, 000 to 19, 999	20, 000 to 28, 211	Living Wage minimum cut-off for a single person *	28,212 to 39,999	40, 000 to 49,999	50, 000 to 59,999	60,000 to 69,999
Income Support	Cooks	Retail Sales Persons		User Support Technicians	Head Nurses	Land Surveyors	School Teachers
Part-Time Workers	Service Station Attendants	Shippers and Receivers		Data Entry Clerks	Retail Trade Managers	Electricians	Engineering Managers
Casual Labour	Cashiers	Janitors/Caretakers and Building Superintendents		Dental Assistants	Plumbers	Banking Credit and other Service Managers	Agricultural Representatives, Consultants and Specialists
Students	Food Service Supervisors	Graphic Designers and Illustrators		Radio Dispatchers	Health Inspectors	Loan Officers	Industrial Engineers
	Housekeepers	Teaching Assistants		Ambulance Attendants	Information Systems Analysts	Urban Planners	Carpenters
	Casino Occupations	General Farm Workers		Paralegals	Dieticians	Ironworkers	Construction Managers
	Hotel Front Desk Clerks	Community and Social Service Workers		Licensed Practical Nurses	Mechanical Engineers	Industrial Instrument Technicians	
	Early Childhood Educators	Visiting Homemakers/ Housekeepers		Secretaries including Legal and Medical	Residential Home Builders/Renovators	Senior Trade Managers	
	Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped	Restaurant and Food Service Managers		Truck Drivers	College Instructors		

Employment information was compiled from Service Canada – Labour Market Information – Wages and Salaries for Lethbridge/Medicine Hat/Crowsnest Pass Area. These numbers are based on working 1950 hours annually and do not reflect overtime. Data was retrieved on January 18th, 2007 from <http://www.labourmarketinformation.ca>

*This number is the estimated amount for an individual in their mid-thirties to live a safe, healthy lifestyle, independently without any need for social supports which was published by: Public Interests Alberta. *Working Poor or Making a Living? The Reality of Low Wages in Alberta.*

Mortgage Maximum Thresholds by Income (Lethbridge, AB)



- In 2006 the average price of a single family new home was \$244,000 and the average resale home price was \$189,000.
- In 2007 the average price of a single family new home is projected to increase to \$270,000 and a resale home to \$210,000 (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2006). *Housing Market information; Market at a Glance – Lethbridge*).

*Values were calculated using the *Home Program Manual, Worksheet 4 - Affordability Guide*. Gross Debt Service Calculations (GDSC) were done using an estimated average monthly heating cost of \$85.00 and \$85.00 for property taxes for incomes up to \$39,999. To somewhat allow for the increased costs affiliated with more expensive properties, for incomes over \$40,000 the GDSC was calculated with estimated heating costs averaged at \$100 and property taxes at \$100.00.