



August, 2001

Regional Municipality of York, Community Services and Housing Department
in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada and the
Community Planning Group



York Region's

Community Plan to Address Homelessness

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Community Plan
to Address Homelessness**

August, 2001

*Prepared for York Region's Community Planning Group
By Christine Pacini and Associates Inc.*

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Executive Summary

York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness has been developed in response to a new federal government initiative, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative.

The Government of Canada announced on December 17, 1999 that \$753 million would be invested over three years in a strategy to reduce and prevent homelessness across Canada. The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) recognizes that no single level of government or sector of our society can solve homelessness and it encourages new partnerships to be formed with all levels of government, as well as private and volunteer sectors.

SCPI has been set up to run between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2003. All initiatives funded through this program will be required to secure any funding needed past March 31, 2003 through other means. York Region has been allocated \$1,635,000 for the three year period of the initiative. In addition, \$90,741 per year for three years has been allocated to York Region under the federal government's Youth Employment Strategy.

The Community Plan is intended to provide a focal point for joint community action and to achieve the following objectives:

- To give community service organizations a framework within which to work together to achieve common goals;
- To assist the community to make the best possible use of scarce resources by reducing overlap and duplication;
- To enable the community to evaluate its progress in reaching its shared objectives; and,
- To set a common vision for the identification of matching funding for SCPI funds.

York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness was developed between March and July 2001. It will be updated on an ongoing basis to ensure that the needs of the homeless and those at risk of becoming homeless are addressed. The plan has ten major components.

1. Geographic Area

The geographic area targeted by the Community Plan lies within the boundaries of the Region of York, including the municipalities of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

2. Objectives & Principles

The goal of *York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness* is to build upon the long-term strategies to address homelessness issues identified by the

Homelessness Task Force and adopted by Regional Council in September 2000. The objectives that York Region hopes to achieve by March 31, 2003, through the implementation of the community plan are:

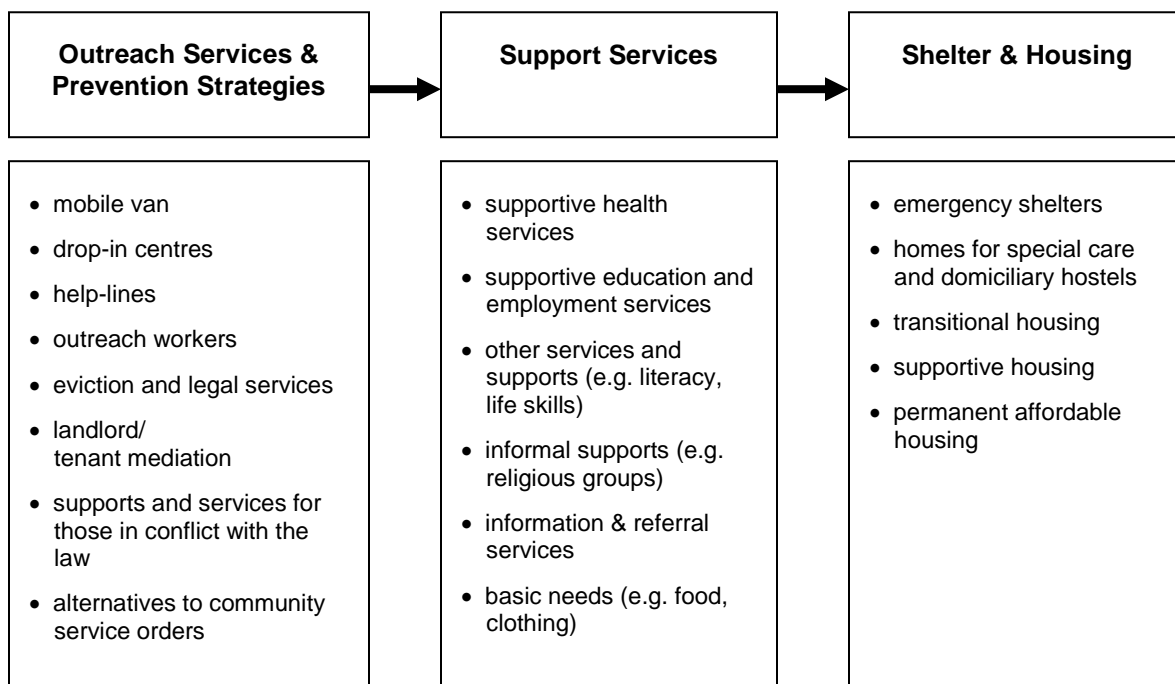
- to alleviate the hardship of those who are absolutely homeless by increasing, for example, the number of beds available in shelters (either indirectly, by providing alternative housing for current long-term shelter residents, or directly by providing additional shelter space) and supports;
- to promote a “continuum of supports” approach to reducing homelessness;
- to strengthen the capacity of the community to serve homeless people and those who are at risk of homelessness;
- to reduce homelessness by bringing community service providers together to develop plans that address all the needs that are common to homeless people;
- to address the issue of homelessness at a community level by promoting the development of collaborative processes and broad-based partnerships among all stakeholders---e.g. the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors, labour organizations and all levels of government; and
- to develop a base of knowledge, expertise and data about homelessness and share it among all concerned parties and the general public.

The Community Planning Group developed a list of principles that will guide the selection of proposals to be funded by SCPI. The initiatives to be funded should address as many of the following principles as possible:

- 1) have the goal of preventing homelessness and addressing the conditions that put people at risk of homelessness;
- 2) to mitigate the reality of poverty of the homeless or those at risk of homelessness through initiatives aimed at increasing access to adequate income;
- 3) address the continuum of supports approach to meeting the needs of homeless individuals and those at risk of becoming homeless;
- 4) ensure that appropriate services are in place to support any new shelter beds, transitional housing and supportive housing;
- 5) integrate new initiatives with existing programs and services and ensure that services are not duplicated;
- 6) build upon existing partnerships or develop new partnerships, including public/private partnerships, with other community agencies, all levels of governments, the private sector, and funders;
- 7) provide or move towards providing services to homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless on a 24/7 basis;
- 8) include addressing the transportation needs of homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless, especially due to the extensive geographic area, limitations of existing transit system, and the urban/rural nature of the region;

- 9) focus on meeting the basic needs of homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, safety);
- 10) give priority to proposals for funding that address multiple priority issues and target areas.

The “continuum of supports” approach to reducing homelessness is a holistic approach to addressing the needs of homeless individuals. It includes all supports and services that would be needed to assist a homeless person or someone at risk of becoming homeless to becoming self-sufficient, where possible. The continuum of supports falls into three basic categories. The categories and examples of supports and services that fall into these categories are as follows:



3. Community Plan Development Process

The process for developing this plan has been extensive and inclusive. Every attempt was made to ensure that the planning process was representative of the views and needs of all stakeholders.

The Community Planning Group provided overall guidance in the development of the plan and stakeholders across the Region had several opportunities to participate in identifying priority issues and target areas.

4. Assets and Gaps in Supports and Services

A wide range of existing assets to assist the homeless and those at risk of homelessness, as well as gaps in services were identified in the preparation of the Community Plan.

5. Priority Issues and Target Areas

One of the key elements of a Community Plan is to identify priority issues or areas of greatest need for homeless people and those who are at risk of homelessness in York Region, as well as, the specific aspects of these priorities (target areas) that the community will attempt to address over the life of the plan. The ten priority issues and thirty-one target areas identified in the plan have not been restricted to those that can be achieved by the SCPI funding program. The Community Plan will continue to be used as the framework for addressing homelessness in the Region after SCPI is complete.

For the purposes of establishing overall funding priorities, the priority issues and target areas have been grouped into “funding envelopes”. The table on the next page shows funding levels for each funding envelope based on the SCPI funding available between March 1999 and March 2003. Approximately \$314,800 of SCPI funding has already been allocated to Urgent Needs projects and has not been included in the table on the next page.

The Community Planning Group recognizes the importance of putting in place strategies and initiatives to reduce and prevent homelessness. Approximately one-half of the target areas or initiatives identified in this plan are considered initiatives that will reduce and prevent homelessness, while the balance are considered initiatives that will mitigate the effects of homelessness. The funding envelopes shown on the next page will be used as a guide for the allocation of funding for homelessness initiatives in York Region. In addition, this plan identifies a target of approximately one-half of the allocations for initiatives that mitigate the effects of homelessness and a target of approximately one-half of the allocations for initiatives that reduce or prevent homelessness. The Region of York may adjust the funding envelope guidelines as required. The funding guidelines will be revisited as part of the annual review of the Community Plan.

Funding Envelope	Funding Guideline	Total Funds Available
Capital Funding and Improvements	55.0%	\$ 724,990
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transitional & supportive housing, including second stage housing, SROs and for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse problems (1b), (5b), (6a) Protection of existing programs/beds (3a) Enhancement of space in existing facilities (3b) New shelter beds (3c) 		
Programs and Services	33.0%	434,995
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services directed at homelessness and individuals at risk, including those leaving correctional institutions (2a) Services directed to the prevention of homelessness (2b) Availability of services extended to 24/7 and in areas not currently served (2c) Mobile mental health services for community, including shelters (5a) Non-traditional addiction services (5c) Harm reduction services (5d) Non-traditional employment strategies & programs for people with mental health and/or substance abuse problems (5e) Services that enhance safety and security of women and children who have left or are leaving a violent situation (6b) Multi-service centres that meet basic needs of homeless youth or those at risk (7a) Innovative programs to address specific needs of youth (7b) Non-traditional pre-employment and employment services for youth who are homeless or at risk (7c) Improved health services for homeless or those at risk (8b) Financial support to homeless people or those at risk (10a) Access to basic needs for homeless individuals or those at risk (10b) 		
Planning, Research & Education	5.0%	65,908
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Co-ordinate access to funding programs (1a) Co-ordinate services throughout Region (2d) Research on co-ordinated service planning (2e) Shelter needs study to confirm client groups, cultural and diversity issues, location (4a) Monitor need for shelter beds (4b) Training for frontline workers on mental health and substance abuse issues (5f) Education and awareness raising of women's legal rights re landlord issues, etc. (6c) Best practices to increase opportunities for homeless people or those at risk to access health services (8a) Public education of homelessness issues in York Region (9a) Advocate for improved funding for homeless or those at risk (9b) Programs to educate and increase awareness of community organizations re access appropriate services, programs & housing (9c) 		
Administrative/Evaluation	7.0%	92,272
Total		\$1,318,165
Urgent Needs		314,813
Total SCPI Funds Available (2000- 2003)		\$1,632,978
HRDC Youth Employment Strategy (\$90,741 per year for three years)		272,223

The table below shows the proposed SCPI funding guidelines by year.

Guideline for SCPI Funding By Year

Funding Envelope	Funding Guideline (To Mar/02)	Funding Guideline (Apr/02- Mar/03)	Funding Guideline TOTAL
Capital & Improvements	\$425,612	\$299,379	\$724,990
Program & Services	255,367	179,628	434,995
Planning, Research & Education	38,692	27,216	65,908
Administration/Evaluation	54,169	38,103	92,272
Total	\$ 773,839	\$ 544,326	\$ 1,318,165

6. Sustainability

SCPI is a time-limited, three year program. The Community Planning Group has addressed the issue of sustainability of the plan in a number of ways:

- Link the Community Plan to other Regional initiatives and work carried out by the Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation;
- Foster public support of the plan through education and increased awareness;
- Encourage partnerships and co-operation, including working with the Funders Alliance and encouraging co-operation amongst service providers;
- Make the Community Plan a “living document” that is continually reviewed and updated;
- Emphasize capital projects that will yield benefits that extend beyond the three years of SCPI;
- Emphasize proposals that involve prevention and capacity-building initiatives;
- Use sustainability as a criterion for proposal evaluation;
- Advocate for more equitable funding from senior levels of government.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

There are four components to an evaluation strategy that the plan must address. The following identifies those components and identifies the evaluation strategy for each component.

Reporting on the Progress of Implementing the Plan

There is a need to report to the community and governments on the progress of implementing the plan, at least during the three years of SCPI. The Community

Planning Group has identified four major measurable outcomes anticipated from the individual initiatives that would be funded by SCPI.

- What difference has expending these funds made in increasing York Region's ability to address the needs of the homeless?
- What difference has expending these funds made in building awareness through education of the community about the issues that cause individuals to become homeless or at risk of homelessness?
- What difference has expending these funds made in providing opportunities for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to make positive changes in their lives to reduce that risk?
- What barriers or issues arose during the implementation of your initiative (if any) and how did you overcome this barrier?

The outcomes of each individual project funding by SCPI will be consolidated and presented to the community as part of its annual review process.

Process for Reviewing and Updating the Plan

The Community Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis to assess appropriateness priorities, targets and funding envelopes identified in the plan. This review will take place shortly after the annual report. Priorities, targets, funding envelopes and other relevant sections of the Community Plan will be revised as necessary.

Method to Determine if Plan Has Met Its Objectives

The Community Planning Group will develop a detailed evaluation plan to determine if the Community Plan has met its objectives. There are a number of different ways that the plan may be evaluated at the end of the three years of SCPI.

- Conduct a Community Plan review session with all community stakeholders to evaluate if the initiatives funded through SCPI have helped to meet the objectives outlined in the Community Plan;
- Hire an independent company or organization to conduct program and service evaluations on all initiatives funded by SCPI and use the results of the evaluation to assist the community in determining if the initiatives funded through SCPI have helped to meet the objectives outlined in the Community Plan;
- Hire a group of people who have at some point in their lives experienced homelessness and train them to conduct an evaluation of the initiatives funded by SCPI to determine if they helped meet the objectives outlined in the plan.

Lessons Learned

The Community Planning Group recognizes that there is a need for the community to get a better understanding of what initiatives are the most successful in addressing the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Information will also be gathered from agencies that received SCPI funding on what works well, what could be improved, etc. The goal of this additional information is to get a better understanding of the homeless population and to learn from the experiences of other community agencies.

8. Communication Strategy

The Community Plan describes the framework that will be used to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for the plan. York Region Corporate Communications and York Region Human Services Planning Coalition will work together to fine-tune and implement the communication strategy.

The goal of the communication strategy is to effectively communicate the importance of York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness to stakeholders. Other goals of the communication strategies are to: explain purpose of plan, process of plan development and how the plan will be used in the future; raise public awareness of the issues and solutions to homelessness; inform service providers how SCPI funding will be distributed in the community.

9. Community's Financial Contribution

Under the terms of SCPI, a matching financial contribution is required from the community. Funds must be non-federal and used to address homelessness in the community over the three-year period of SCPI to be eligible as community contributions.

The required community financial contribution for York Region is as follows: April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2002 - \$ 1,088,652 and April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003 - \$544,326.

The table on the next page describes funds eligible to match SCPI from the Region and the Government of Ontario. The contributions listed for each year may not be exact because funding from the Region is based on calendar year budgeting.

Sources of Funding	Matching Contribution		
	Years 1 & 2 (April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2002)	Year 3 (April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003)	Total
Domiciliary Hostels – 80% Province/ 20% Region	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 4,500,000
Emergency Shelters – 80% Province/ 20% Region	1,510,000	755,000	2,265,000
Community Partners Program – 100% Provincial	154,000	77,000	231,000
Shelter Re-direct – 80% Provincial/20% Region	128,000	64,000	192,000
Provincial Homelessness Initiatives Fund – 100% Provincial	600,000	300,000	900,000
York Region Homelessness Initiative Fund – 100% Region	300,000	300,000	600,000
Off the Street, Into Shelters – 100% Province, 80/20 in Year 3	33,000	33,000	66,000
Total	5,725,000	3,029,000	8,754,000

The community financial contribution for the first two years of SCPI has been confirmed by approved funding (either provincial or regional) for programs and initiatives currently underway. Matching contributions for Year 3 will be confirmed by March 2002.

10. Governance

Four levels of participation are required to undertake SCPI homelessness initiatives in York Region: a decision-making body for program administration; a body to evaluate proposals and recommend selection of projects for funding; a body to identify needs, prepare and update the Community Plan and communicate with the public; and the community service providers. The roles and responsibilities of each body and the composition of the organization are described in the plan.

Introduction & Background

York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness has been developed in response to a new federal government initiative, the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). A glossary of terms used in this plan is included in Appendix 1.

A. Overview of SCPI Initiative

The Government of Canada announced on December 17, 1999 that \$753 million would be invested over three years in a strategy to reduce and prevent homelessness across Canada. The Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI) builds on the successful past experiences of all levels of government. This initiative recognizes that no single level of government or sector of our society can solve homelessness and it encourages new partnerships to be formed with all levels of government, as well as private and volunteer sectors.

The program initially identified ten communities across Canada for funding that had a demonstrated absolute homelessness problem: Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto, Hamilton, Ottawa, Montreal, Quebec City and Halifax. Other communities such as York Region were reviewed for participation, and the recommendation for funding for these communities has been made jointly by the federal and provincial/territorial governments.

SCPI is the cornerstone of the Government of Canada's strategy to combat homelessness. The initiative encourages communities to work with provincial, territorial and municipal governments and private and non-profit organizations to address the immediate needs of homeless people and take steps to reduce and prevent homelessness. Flexible funding is provided for local strategies, as well as encouraging the participation of a number of partners.

SCPI recognizes that the particular problems of the homeless vary from community to community. Therefore, a community-based approach has been taken which will enable community service providers in a particular community to work together to jointly plan, prioritize activities and recommend how funds should be disbursed. The development of a Community Plan for Homelessness is a crucial tool in achieving this objective.

The program has been set up to run between April 1, 2000 and March 31, 2003. All initiatives funded through this program will be required to secure any funding needed past March 31, 2003 through other means.

York Region has been allocated \$1,635,000 for the three year period of the initiative. In addition, \$90,741 per year for three years has been allocated to York Region under the federal government's Youth Employment Strategy.

B. Purpose of the Community Plan

The Community Plan is intended to provide a focal point for joint community action and to achieve the following objectives:

- To give community service organizations a framework within which to work together to achieve common goals;
- To assist the community to make the best possible use of scarce resources by reducing overlap and duplication;
- To enable the community to evaluate its progress in reaching its shared objectives; and,
- To set a common vision for the identification of matching funding for SCPI funds.

C. Background

The nature of the homelessness problem across the country is different from community to community. This section provides background information on York Region's community profile, work that has already been done to identify the nature of the problem in York Region and a definition of homelessness in the Region.

i) Location and Size

York Region is located in the heart of Greater Toronto Area (GTA) in Southern Ontario and is composed of nine area municipalities covering 1,756 square kilometers (678 square miles), stretching from Steeles Avenue in the south to Lake Simcoe and the Holland Marsh in the north.¹

York Region's nine municipalities include: Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

¹ York Region Web Site

ii) Population and Population Growth

York Region is a fast growing community with an average population growth of 25,600 people per year. In 2000, the population of York Region totaled almost 730,000 people. Most of York Region's residents live in the southern part of the Region and in urban areas.²

York Region's population is, on average, younger than that of the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and Canada. The largest age group is the 35 to 39 year old cohort which makes up 9.2% of the population.³

iii) Ethnicity

The population of York Region is ethnically diverse. Between 1986 and 1996, the number of residents who reported a language other than English or French as their mother tongue nearly doubled, to form 33% of the total population of the Region.⁴

iv) Aboriginal Population

York Region has a relatively small aboriginal population. In 1996, Aboriginal people comprised approximately 0.3 % of the region's population. The majority of the 1,760 aboriginal people living in York Region reside in Georgina (30%), Newmarket (14%) and Richmond Hill (11%). Almost 10% of the aboriginal population in York Region lives on the Georgina Island reserve.⁵

v) Youth Population

In 1996, youth aged 15 to 24 comprised approximately 14.2% of York Region's population (86,961 people). The youth population in the Region has grown by 30,864 people or about 55% since 1996. It is estimated that this segment of the population totals about 103,304 people in 2001.⁶

vi) Income and Poverty

York Region possesses the highest average household income in the GTA, and this average income is higher than the provincial and national average.⁷ However, a recent study by the Canadian Council on Social Development found that the gap between lower and higher income residents in York Region is

² Regional Municipality of York, *Housing Directions Study*, 2000, page 5, 7

³ Ibid, page 6

⁴ Ibid, page 9

⁵ Statistics Canada, 1996 Census

⁶ *Housing Directions Study*, Appendix G

⁷ Ibid, page 31

widening. Between 1991 and 1996, the poverty rate for York Region grew from 7% (34,720 persons) to 13% (76,060 persons). During the same time period, there was a 17% increase in the number of families living in the Region, but a 114% increase in the number of families living in poverty.⁸

vii) Housing Costs and Affordability

Housing costs in York Region are high. The average house price for single family dwellings in the Region (resales) is \$267,180 or 16% higher than the GTA as a whole. Between 1989 and 1999, rents have increased at a rate that is twice that of inflation.⁹

Housing affordability is a problem in York Region with one in ten homeowners and one-fifth of all tenants experiencing a severe affordability problem. In particular, the proportion of tenants paying more than 30% of their income on rent grew from 32% in 1991 to 42% in 1996. The proportion of tenants with severe affordability problems – those paying 50% or more of their income on rent – rose from 13% to 20% over the same period. The *Housing Directions Study* found that housing affordability problems are greatest for young and old tenants, females and all household types.¹⁰

D. Existing Research on Homelessness in York Region

Homelessness in York Region is an issue that has drawn the attention of policy makers, service providers and the general public in last three or four years. Three major research reports have been prepared that identify what homelessness means to York Region and ways to respond to homelessness.

Out in the Cold: A Report on Outreach to the Homeless in York Region (Spring 1999) was the community's first attempt to begin to record and define homelessness in York Region. The report painted a picture of the lives of homeless men, women and children in York Region by counting contacts with different individuals and learning about their locations, habits, preferences and issues. Outreach workers from Crosslinks Housing and Support Services between January 1 and March 31, 1999 undertook extensive fieldwork on homelessness. The report made seven recommendations on how all levels of government and community agencies could work together to address homelessness.

In May 1999, more than 100 individuals participated in a two day workshop entitled "Homelessness in York Region: A Community Forum". The forum built upon the findings of the *Out in the Cold* report, as well as information from three

⁸ Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Widening Gap: The Changing Trends in Income Distribution in York Region*, December 2000, page 3

⁹ *Housing Directions Study*, pages 32 to 35

¹⁰ *Ibid*, pages 36 to 41

other relevant sources: *United Way, A Needs Planning Initiative* (1996); proceedings from a forum held by the Simcoe-York District Health Council on the *Provision of Services to the Homeless and Mentally Ill in York Region* (1998); and the York Region sponsored forum, “Food, Health and Hunger Forum” (1998) which discussed food insecurity and access to food in the region. Six priority approaches were developed by the forum participants to address homelessness. A list of the community forum participants is included in Appendix 6.

In September 1999, York Regional Council created the York Regional Homelessness Task Force. The mandate of the Task Force was “to identify and develop long-term strategies to address homelessness issues in York Region.” A number of key issues and recommendations were identified in a report prepared by the Task Force. Appendix 2 contains a copy of the Executive Summary of the report.

E. Defining Homelessness in York Region

The Crosslinks study identified a set of categories of homelessness in York Region. These categories were supplemented by the Task Force report to provide a snapshot of homelessness in the region, as follows¹¹:

i) A few people in York Region are chronically homeless

People who have been homeless over a long period of time are often marginalized because they have mental health problems, display inappropriate behaviour and are unable to “fit in” with social norms. Of the 496 people enumerated in the Crosslinks study, only eight (or less than 2%) were considered chronically homeless or at risk of becoming so.

ii) Many people drift in and out of housing

People who lose their housing from time to time, with periods of homelessness from weeks to months make up a significant portion of York Region’s homeless. They may have been discharged from correctional or psychiatric facilities or are youth who have left home as a result of abuse or conflict.

iii) Some people are homeless because of situations not of their own choosing

Many women become homeless because of crises and situations affecting their ability to find or retain suitable housing. Others may be affected by job loss,

¹¹ York Region Homelessness Task Force, *Responding to Homelessness in York Region: from Awareness to Action*, September 2000

disability, relationship breakdown, continuing unemployment, lack of affordable housing and/or domestic violence.

iv) There are increasing numbers of people with jobs who cannot afford housing

Shelters in York Region have noted an increase in the number of homeless families with at least one adult working. Homeless people in the Region include working families who cannot find accommodation that they can afford, or who lost their accommodation when faced with a choice of buying food or paying rent.

v) Youth under 25 comprise an increasing proportion of the Region's homeless

There is a disproportionate rate of homelessness among youth in York Region. Homeless youth face extra hardships and dangers. Many end up in a lifestyle that includes substance abuse, prostitution and other criminal activities.

vi) People may be under-housed or at risk of homelessness

Those who are under-housed or at risk of homelessness are extremely difficult to identify and count because they are rarely seen sleeping on the streets or shelters; however, they cannot be ignored. Those who are at risk for homelessness reflect a broad population and include the working poor, the mentally ill, the elderly, those with physical or developmental disabilities, troubled youth and anyone else whose income or whose ability to cope at home or in the broader community is threatened.

1.0 Geographic Area

The geographic area targeted by the Community Plan lies within the boundaries of the Region of York, including the municipalities of Aurora, East Gwillimbury, Georgina, King, Markham, Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Vaughan and Whitchurch-Stouffville.

The geographic area of York Region covers 1,756 square kilometers (678 square miles) that stretches from Steeles Avenue in the south to Lake Simcoe and the Holland Marsh in the north. Most of York Region's residents live in the southern part of the Region and in urban areas. In 1997, about 83% of the population lived in larger urban areas while the other 17% lived in villages and rural areas. About 85% of the urban population is clustered in the "inverted T" that includes the municipalities of Markham, Vaughan, Richmond Hill, Aurora and Newmarket.

2.0 Objectives & Principles of the Community Plan

The Community Planning Group established a set of objectives and principles of the Community Plan that are in keeping with the SCPI objectives. They are described in the following.

2.1 Objectives

The goal of York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness is to build upon the long-term strategies to address homelessness issues identified by the York Region Homelessness Task Force. The objectives that York Region hopes to achieve by March 31, 2003, through the implementation of the community plan are:

Short-term Objectives (2001 to 2003)

- to alleviate the hardship of those who are absolutely homeless by increasing, for example, the number of beds available in shelters (either directly, by providing alternative housing for current long-term shelter residents, or directly by providing additional shelter space) and supports;
- to promote a "continuum of supports" approach to reducing homelessness;
- to strengthen the capacity of the community to serve homeless people and those who are at risk of homelessness;
- to reduce homelessness by bringing community service providers together to develop plans that address all the needs that are common to homeless people;
- to address the issue of homelessness at a community level by promoting the development of collaborative processes and broad-based partnerships among all stakeholders---e.g. the private, non-profit and voluntary sectors, labour organizations and all level of government; and
- to develop a base of knowledge, expertise and data about homelessness and share it among all concerned parties and the general public.

Long term objectives have also been identified that will guide the community in planning the way in which it addresses homelessness. These objectives are as follows:

Long-term Objectives (5 Years +)

- to ensure that no individuals are involuntarily on the streets by providing sufficient shelters and adequate supports;
- to significantly reduce the number of individuals requiring emergency shelter and transition and supportive housing by providing, for example, sufficient health services, low-cost housing, discharge planning, early intervention and prevention strategies;
- to help individuals move from homelessness to self-sufficiency;
- to help communities strengthen their capacity to address the needs of their homeless population; and,
- to improve the social, health and economic well being of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

The Community Plan will cover both short-term and long-term goals for reducing and preventing homelessness in York Region. The Community Planning Group recognizes the need for a comprehensive approach to deal with the full range of needs of people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless, and will ensure these needs are met through the development of a “continuum of supports” approach described in section 2.3.

2.2 Principles

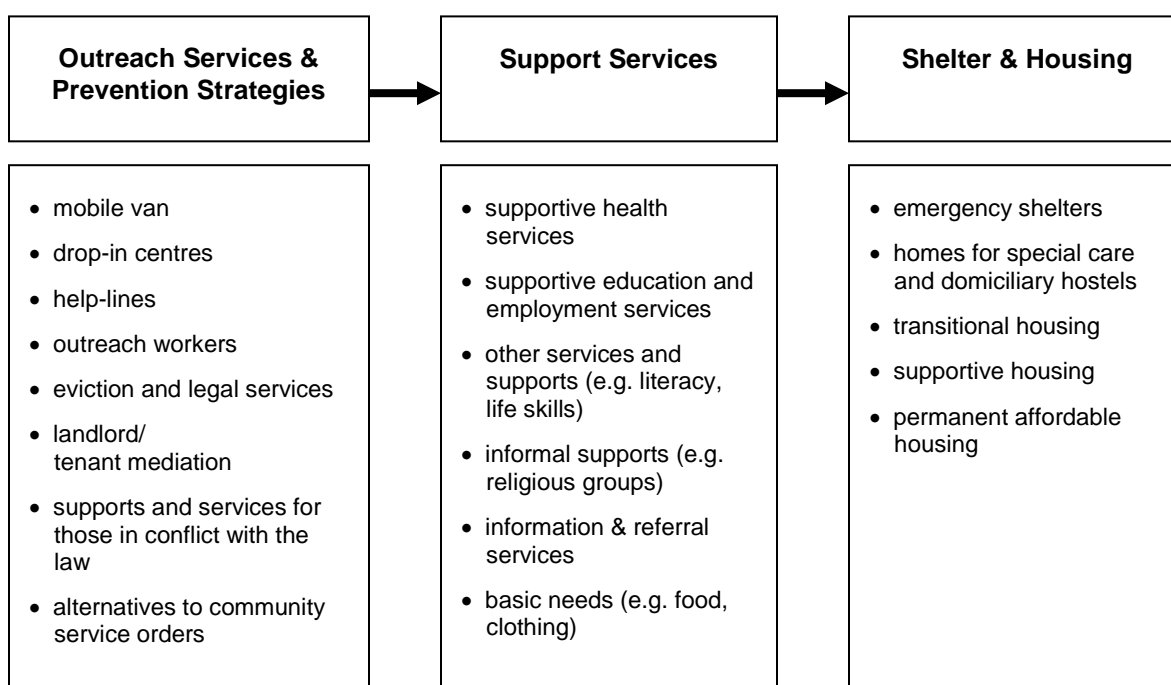
The Community Planning Group developed a list of principles that will guide the selection of proposals to be funded by SCPI. The initiatives to be funded should address as many of the following principles as possible:

- 1) have the goal of preventing homelessness and addressing the conditions that put people at risk of homelessness;
- 2) to mitigate the reality of poverty of the homeless or those at risk of homelessness through initiatives aimed at increasing access to adequate income;
- 3) address the continuum of supports approach to meeting the needs of homeless individuals and those at risk of becoming homeless;
- 4) ensure the appropriate services are in place to support any new shelter beds, transitional housing and supportive housing;
- 5) integrate new initiatives with existing programs and services and ensure that services are not duplicated;

- 6) build upon existing partnerships or develop new partnerships, including public/private partnerships with other community agencies, all levels of governments, the private sector, and funders;
- 7) provide or move towards providing services to homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless on a 24/7 basis;
- 8) include addressing the transportation needs of homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless, especially due to the extensive geographic area, limitations of existing transit system, and the urban/rural nature of the Region;
- 9) focus on meeting the basic needs of homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless (e.g. food, shelter, clothing, safety);
- 10) give priority to proposals for funding that address multiple priority issues and target areas.

2.3 Continuum of Supports

York Region intends to promote a “continuum of supports” approach to reducing homelessness. This is a holistic approach to addressing the needs of homeless individuals. It includes all supports and services that would be needed to assist a homeless person or someone at risk of becoming homeless to becoming self-sufficient, where possible. The continuum of supports falls into three basic categories. The categories and examples of supports and services that fall into these categories are as follows:



3.0 Community Plan Development Process

The process for developing this plan has been extensive and inclusive. Every attempt was made to ensure that the planning process was representative of the views and needs of all stakeholders.

The Community Planning Group provided overall guidance and stakeholders across the Region had several opportunities to participate in identifying priority issues and target areas. The process for developing this plan is described in the following.

3.1 Identify Community Entity

The Community Entity is responsible for the implementation of the plan and plays an important role in the development of the Community Plan. The Community Entity contracts with the federal government for SCPI funds and is responsible for determining which community service providers receive funding for specific projects that fit within the priorities outlined in the Community Plan, in consultation with the Community Advisory Board (refer to Section 10 for more information on the Community Advisory Board).

Shortly after HRDC announced the SCPI funding allocation for York Region, the Regional Municipality of York Region approached the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation (the "Alliance") on the issue of identifying a Community Entity as required by the SCPI guidelines. York Region staff made a presentation to the Alliance in November 2000 to inform them of the SCPI funding program. It was agreed by both parties that the Region of York was the most appropriate body to act as the Community Entity for a number of reasons:

- Region of York is designated a "Consolidated Municipal Service Manager" (CMSM) by the Province of Ontario and as such, is responsible for administering and funding a number of social programs, including social housing;
- The Region of York is responsible for administering the Provincial Homelessness Initiative Funding on behalf of the Province of Ontario;
- Effective November 2001, the Region of York will be responsible for the administration of all social housing within its boundaries (with the exception of federal co-operative projects) on behalf of the federal and provincial governments;
- The administration of SCPI program funding will compliment the Region's existing and future funding responsibilities in the areas of homelessness and social housing.

As the Community Entity, the Region will be able to ensure that homelessness issues are addressed in a comprehensive and efficient manner and that services are delivered cost effectively.

3.2 Establish Community Planning Group

The Region of York, in consultation with the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation, identified community members to form the Community Planning Group. The Co-Chair of the Alliance provided the Region of York with a list of representatives from service agencies that serve the homeless and those at risk of homelessness to be members of the Community Planning Group. The Region of York augmented the list provided by the Alliance with representatives from the aboriginal community, private industry and the building industry.

Terms of Reference for the group were developed. The Community Planning Group held its first meeting on March 22, 2001 and will have met a total of seven times during the development of the plan (Note: Finalization of the plan is expected to take place in Summer 2001). Appendix 3 includes the terms of reference for the group.

The members of the Community Planning Group are as follows

Shelters:	Monica Auerbach	Transitional and Supportive housing of York Region, Co-Chair York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation and Member of the York Region Homelessness Task Force
Public Health:	Cathy White	York Region, Public Health, Co-Chair York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation and Member of the York Region Homelessness Task Force
Mental Health:	Colleen Zakoor	Canadian Mental Health Association – York Region and Member of York Region Alliance on Homelessness
	Kim McKinnon	Krasman Centre and Member of York Region Alliance on Homelessness

Women:	Patti Bell	Sandgate Women’s Shelter of Georgina, Member of the York Region Homelessness Task Force and Member of York Region Alliance on Homelessness
Youth:	Marg Campbell	Pathways Centre for Children and Youth and Member of the York Region Homelessness Task Force
Aboriginal:	Carol Taylor	Georgina Island First Nation
Police:	Armand LaBarge	York Region Police and Member of the York Region Homelessness Task Force
Business:	Maria Gatzios	UDI – Development Representative
	Doug McIntyre	Business Representative
Region of York:	Gabe Tropea	York Region, Housing and Residential Services and Member of York Region Alliance on Homelessness
	Kathy Kantel	York Region, Housing and Residential Services
	Susan Taylor	York Region, Human Services Planning Branch
	Jane Wedlock	York Region, Community Services and York Region Youth Strategy and Member of York Region Alliance on Homelessness
HRDC:	Cynthia Taylor	Human Resources Development Canada

3.3 Secure Planning Funding

On February 5, 2001, the Region of York as the Community Entity applied to Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) for Planning Project Funding. At the end of March 2001, the Region received confirmation from HRDC that it had been approved for this funding.

3.4 Hire a Facilitator

The Region of York hired a facilitator, Christine Pacini and Associates Inc., to assist the Community Planning Group in plan development, including facilitating meetings, conducting research, and preparing the plan and supporting documents. Christine Pacini has more than 16 years experience in housing

research and development. She also contributed to the preparation of Durham Region's Community Plan.

3.5 Ongoing Consultation with Alliance

Consultation with the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation was considered an important consideration in the development of the Community Plan. The Alliance is a group of more than 60 individuals representing over 30 different agencies/organizations in York Region who meet on a monthly basis to understand, plan and co-ordinate activities related to homelessness and social isolation in York Region. The Alliance was created when two committees merged in the summer of 1999: the York Region Advisory Committee on Homelessness (initiated by the Region of York in the winter of 1998/99) and the York Region Task Force on Mental Health Services for the Homeless and Socially Isolated (initiated by the Simcoe York District Health Council in the summer of 1998).

The Alliance has been involved in the process since the initial identification of the Regional Municipality of York as the Community Entity and throughout the plan development. The following is a list of members of York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation:

<u>Alliance Member</u>	<u>Organization Representing (if applicable)</u>
<i>Community Agencies</i>	
Anne Amodeo	Community Care Access Centre
Dennis Bailey	Georgina Community Legal Services
Arieh Cohen	Out of the Cold Program
C. Francis Folz	Catholic Community Services York Region
Peter Formica	Housing Help Centre
Bonnie Harkness	Pathways Youth Drop In
David Jackson	The Salvation Army, Georgina Family Services
Imani Hennie-Hamadi	Southlake Regional Health Centre
Heather Jongsma	Heart of York NEIGHBOURLINK
Nancy Kula	Simcoe York District Health Council
Kim McKinnon	Krasman Centre
Jai Mills	Krasman Centre
Anne Mossey	York Support Services Network

Alliance Member**Organization Representing (if applicable)**

Jane Nielsen	Salvation Army
Cathy Rogers	Community Care Access Centre York Region
Shirley Scott	Salvation Army Markham Community Church
Karen Setter	Women's Centre for York Region
Tanya Shute	Krasman Centre
Rosemary Smirnis	Family & Credit Counselling Services
Rob Spence	Out of the Cold Program
George Stamper	Pathways for Children, Youth & Families of York
Bev Theakston	York Support Services Network
Dean Turner	Canadian Red Cross Society
Colleen Zakoor *	Canadian Mental Health Association
	Crosslinks Housing & Support Services

Shelters & Other Housing Providers

Monica Auerbach *	Transitional Supportive Housing Services
Greg Bell	Transitional Supportive Housing Services
Patti Bell *	Sandgate Shelter for Women & Children
Marlene Berry	Crosslinks Housing & Support Services
Cathy Dowling	Cedar Lane
Kevin Kennedy	Transitional Supportive Housing Services
Ingrid McCann	Transitional supportive Housing Services
Trish Richens	Yellow Brick House
Lorraine Sobaszek	Homes for Special Care-CAMH

York Region Staff

Vincent Ching	Regional Municipality of York
Joan Christensen	Regional Municipality of York
Rebecca Davids	York Region Health Services
Sylvia Patterson*	Regional Municipality of York
Jo-Anne Richardson	Regional Municipality of York

Alliance Member

Organization Representing (if applicable)

Gabe Tropea *

Regional Municipality of York

Jane Wedlock *

Regional Municipality of York

Cathy White *

Regional Municipality of York

Provincial Staff

Carol Lever

Ministry of Health & LTC, Mental Health Programs

Funders

Wyn Chivers

United Way York Region

Tracy McCague-McElrea

United Way of York Region

Public/Interested Citizens

Stephen Armstrong

Sam Bowman

Frank King

Economist & Sun

Mandy Hillyard

Simcoe County Alliance to End Homelessness

Lisa Queen

Era Banner, Pat Casey

Joyce Riettie

Andrew Woodend

Members of the Community Planning Group that are also members of the Alliance, present an update on the progress of the development of the community plan at the monthly Alliance meetings. A "*" denotes those people who are members of both the Community Planning Group and the Alliance.

3.6 Develop the Work Plan

A work plan was developed for the preparation of the plan, including identifying key points when material would be presented to the Alliance for input.

3.7 Review Existing Documents

Significant research on homelessness in York Region has been undertaken in the last few years. Refer to Appendix 4 for a complete list of the sources of information used in the preparation of the plan.

There are two major documents that provided a framework for the development of the Community Plan: The SCPI Community Guide and The Report of the York Region Homelessness Task Force. In addition, the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation and its work plan to address homelessness guided the development of this plan.

3.7.1 Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative – Community Guide

The primary impetus for the development of this Community Plan was the recent establishment of the Supporting Communities Partnership Initiative (SCPI). In August 2000, the federal government released a handbook to guide community organizations applying for funding under SCPI. The SCPI Community Guide, as well as supplementary information provided by HRDC was used as a reference in the development of this plan.

3.7.2 Region Homelessness Task Force Report

This Community Plan builds upon the recommendations that resulted from the extensive research and consultation undertaken by the York Region Homelessness Task Force between 1999 and 2000. The mandate of the Task Force was “to identify and develop long-term strategies to address homelessness issues in York Region.” Regional Council adopted the Report of the York Region Homelessness Task Force, including 26 recommendations, in September 2000. A copy of the Executive Summary of the Task Force Report is in Appendix 2.

3.8 Identify Areas Requiring Further Community Input

Upon review of the existing research material, the Community Planning Group identified priority issues that required further community input through interviews, focus group discussions and a brief survey of community agencies. This additional research is described in sections 3.9, 3.10 and 3.11 below.

3.9 Conduct Interviews

A number of interviews were conducted with individuals that were identified as being able to provide additional information on a number of key areas: youth, addiction services and provincial health funding. A list of individuals interviewed is included in Appendix 4.

3.10 Conduct Focus Group Sessions

The Community Planning Group identified the need to gather additional information on homelessness issues for three client groups: youth, individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues and women experiencing violence. The purpose of the focus group sessions was to identify potential target areas or the specific aspects of the priority area that the Community Plan should address in the short and long term.

Community Planning Group members volunteered to co-ordinate the focus group sessions, including providing the location, inviting the participants and assigning a staff person to facilitate the discussion. York Region staff, as required, provided recording services. A standard focus group format was developed by the facilitator and York Region staff with input from the Community Planning Group members who volunteered to co-ordinate a focus group. Appendix 5 contains a copy of the focus group format, including standard questions used by the focus group facilitators.

During the month of May, a total of six focus group discussions were conducted with homeless individuals or those at risk of becoming homeless. Individuals participating in programs (e.g. group counselling session) at the various community agencies that volunteered to conduct focus group sessions were invited to participate in the discussion.

For the most part, the focus group sessions supported the findings and recommendation of the Task Force report. There were additional issues raised during the focus group sessions that were not covered in the Task Force report. These are summarized below.

3.10.1 Youth

Two focus groups were held with homeless youth or those at risk of homelessness. Youth Shelter/Drop Zone in Newmarket hosted one focus group session on May 19th. Home Base Drop-in in Richmond Hill hosted another focus group session on the same day.

Seven individuals, ranging in age from 17 to 24 participated in the youth focus group session held at the Drop Zone. Six participants (2 female, 4 male), ranging in age from 16 to 22 participated in the Home Base focus group session.

The following is a summary of the gaps in services identified by homeless youth or those at risk of homelessness during the youth focus group sessions:

- shelter beds: females only, co-ed, in Richmond Hill
- drop-in centres that are open 24/7, meals

- non-traditional assistance finding employment opportunities (e.g. employers to visit shelter)
- assistance finding permanent housing
- financial support, easier access to welfare
- emotional support and ongoing support
- non-traditional addiction services (e.g. provided by experienced service agencies at shelter locations)
- anger management

3.10.2 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Issues

Two focus group sessions were held with homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness who may also have mental health and/or substance abuse issues. The Canadian Mental Health Association held one session at its New Directions program. Fourteen (14) participants ranging in age from 15 to 60+ attended this discussion on May 22nd in Newmarket. Porter Place Men's Shelter in East Gwillimbury held another focus group session on May 23rd. Sixteen (16) participants ranging in age from 25 to 55 participated in this discussion.

The following is a summary of the gaps in services identified by homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness during the mental health/substance abuse focus group sessions:

- low-income housing, including accessible housing and small units
- hostel-like shelters
- rooming housing, boarding houses
- second stage housing for post-detox
- life skills training
- substance abuse services, especially a detox centre
- harm reduction programs for residential settings
- accessible mental health programs on a 24/7 basis, during crisis (e.g. transportation and waiting lists raised as a concern)
- respite beds (e.g. "safe bed model")
- emergency shelters that understand about health care issues, more psychiatric beds
- employment opportunities
- financial support (e.g. easier access to ODSP, increase ODSP, CPP, OW)

3.10.3 Women Experiencing Violence

Two focus group sessions were held with homeless women and those at risk of homelessness who have fled violent situations. The Women's Sexual Assault Helpline in Georgina held one focus group session on May 17th where 4 women participated ranging in age from 22 to 43. Sandgate Women's Shelter in Georgina held another discussion on May 22nd. Five women participated in this discussion and they ranged in age from 19 to 48.

The following is a summary of the gaps in services identified by homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness during the violence against women focus group sessions:

- better access to information about OW, shelters, housing, rights and responsibilities and other services available to women and their children
- safe, secure housing
- additional shelter beds
- second stage housing
- assistance finding affordable housing
- more services for young women and in rural areas
- food banks
- financial support
- public education on women's issues, especially for landlords, government
- vehicle for women to be heard (e.g. advocacy)
- prevention strategies (e.g. rent bank, stabilize existing housing, supportive services)
- mental health supports in women's shelters

3.11 Incorporate Written Comments from VAWCC

Local women's shelter staff from Sandgate, Yellow Brick House and Leeder Place met to provide input from women directly affected by homelessness. Feedback was also solicited from the entire York Region Violence Against Women Co-ordinating Committee (VAWCC) and a written submission was provided to the Community Planning Group for inclusion in the Community Plan. The written submission provided by the co-ordinating committee supports the findings of the focus group sessions.

There are about 20 organizations that belong to the VAWCC including: Abuse Program of York Region, Sandgate Women's Shelter, York Central Hospital's Sexual Assault Care & Resource Centre, Women's Centre of York Region,

Women's Sexual Assault Helpline, COSTI Family Counselling, Jewish Family & Child Services, Aurora Newmarket Family Life Centre, Yellow Brick House, Ministry of the Attorney General – Domestic Violence Program, Victim Witness Assistance Program, York Regional Police, Krasman Centre, Southlake Regional Health Centre, York Region Children's Aid Society, York Region Neighbourhood Services, York Support Services Network, Regional Municipality of York, Ministry of Community and Social Services and the United Way.

3.12 Survey Primary Community Agencies Serving Homeless

Twelve community agencies were approached to provide the Community Planning Group with supplementary information on the current demand for supports and services for homeless individuals and those at risk of homelessness, as well as the identification of any gaps in supports or services. The following agencies responded to the request for additional information on existing services: Transitional and Supportive Housing Services, Food Access Programs and Services in York Region, Out of the Cold, CMHA, York Region Co-ordinated Access, Housing Help Centre, Street Outreach Van, York Shelter Services, Pathways for Children, Youth and Families, York Support Services Network (310-COPE), York Region Public Health. The information gathered from these agencies was incorporated in section 4.0, Assets and Gaps in Supports and Services.

3.13 Identify Additional Research Required

Although significant research has already been undertaken on homelessness in York Region, the development of the Community Plan process identified that more research is needed. In particular, a shelter needs study is required to identify where in the region shelters are most needed (e.g. geographic location) and which client groups are in most need (e.g. youth, families). Better information on the type of programs that would be the most suitable for addressing the needs of youth in York Region is also required. In addition, it was identified that not all agencies have the capacity to collect statistics on the current demand for supports and services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness in York Region. For those agencies that do gather statistics, the method of tracking the demand for services is not always consistent.

The need for additional research has been incorporated into the priority issues and target areas identified in this plan, as well as the need for an efficient and consistent method for service providers to track statistics on demand for services for the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

3.14 Distribute the Draft Plan

This draft Community Plan has been distributed to a wide range of stakeholders for consultation purposes, including all members of the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation, York Region Violence Against Women Coordinating Committee and elected officials.

3.15 Meet with Aboriginal Community

Time constraints and transportation from Georgina Island made it difficult for the representative from the Aboriginal community to attend many of the Community Planning Group meetings. Although many opportunities were made available for input to draft materials prepared as a result of Community Planning Group meetings, it was felt that a one-on-one meeting with the aboriginal community would be beneficial to the finalization of the Community Plan.

Two members of the Community Planning Group met with Carol Taylor of the Social Services Department of the Georgina Island First Nation to discuss the challenges being faced by the community in addressing the needs of aboriginals who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and to review the draft plan. A number of additional gaps in services were identified and incorporated into the priority and target areas of the final plan.

Aboriginal participation in the implementation of the plan is anticipated to occur through continued involvement in the Community Planning Group, as well as invitations to the off reserve aboriginal community by the Community Entity to participate in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

3.16 Revise and Finalize Community Plan

Comments and suggestions provided by the community were reviewed by the Community Planning Group and incorporated into the final Community Plan, as appropriate.

4.0 Assets and Gaps in Supports and Services

In order to define what the York Region community envisions as the necessary components of its continuum of supports, an inventory of the existing supports and services, the demand for these services and gaps were identified.

The inventory of existing supports and services was developed using a number of sources including *YorkLink 2001: A Community Services Directory*, *York Region Special Needs Housing Study 2000*, *York Region Homelessness Task Force Report* and input from the Community Planning Group. For a more detailed description of these services and the agencies providing the services, refer to the directory *YorkLink 2001*.

The demand and gaps in existing shelters, services and supports was identified using a number of sources including the resources listed in Appendix 4, focus group sessions, and information supplied by Community Planning Group members, the Regional Municipality of York Community Services and Housing Department and other community agencies.

The table on the following pages summarizes what services and supports currently exist in York Region, the demand for these services and gaps in shelter, supports and services.

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
<i>Outreach Services & Prevention Strategies</i>			
Mobile Services & Community Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile Street Outreach Health Services Van (Primarily along the Yonge Street Corridor of York Region) – Operated by Loft Services and York Region Public Health • Sandgate Women’s Shelter (Georgina) • Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region (Aurora, Keswick, Markham, Newmarket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mobile outreach van operates three nights per week from 3 p.m. to 9 p.m. 327 served in first 10 months of 2000, exceeding the first year goal of 200 people. • CMHA delivered the Youth Wellness Program to 8393 students in the region in 2000/01. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase the hours of operation of the Mobile Street Outreach Health Services Van to 7 days/week to cover a broader geographic area. This will allow for a day in Sutton in the north and a day in Vaughan and Markham in the south. <i>(Source: Report on the First Year of Operation of the Street Outreach Van Project)</i> • There is a need for a Mental Health advocate who could offer outreach, advocacy and information to psychiatrized women who are dealing with or fleeing abusive situations. <i>(Source: VAWCC)</i> • There is a need for mobile mental health services, including in shelters, second stage housing and private homes. <i>(Source: Community Forum, Focus Group Session)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Drop-in Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Base - Youth (Richmond Hill) • Drop Zone – Youth (Newmarket) • New Directions –Mental Health (Aurora) • Krasman – Mental Health (Richmond Hill) • Women’s Centre of York Region – Single mothers or women leaving difficult relationships (Aurora) • Paul’s Place –Social Support & Meals (Keswick) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total of 1026 youth were served by Home Base in 2000, its first year of operation. The average number of youth served per month in 2001 to date is 226. Based on this average, the number of youth served in 2001 is anticipated to double from the number served in 2000. • About 78 youth used the Drop Zone program in 2000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase services for homeless people on evenings and weekends and in some geographic areas, including rural areas. <i>(Source: Task Force Report, Statistics from Home Base)</i> • There is a need to create more drop-in centres or other facilities that provide food, clothing, shower facilities, outreach for youth. <i>(Source: Task Force Report, Focus Group Sessions)</i> • Many of the churches participating in the Out of the Cold Program do not have facilities to adequately meet the needs of homeless individuals (e.g. showers, kitchens, fire safety)
Help-lines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Sexual Assault Help-line (Region wide) • 310-COPE - York Support Services Network (Region wide) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its second year of operation, 310-COPE answered 7,905 calls. Of these calls, about 4% or 317 calls were from homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase public awareness of 310-COPE’s services. <i>(Source: Community agency)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Meal Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of the Cold Program: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temple Har Zion (Thornhill) ○ St. Luke’s Parish (Thornhill) ○ Thornhill United Church (Thornhill) ○ Richmond Hill United Church (Richmond Hill) ○ Ja’Fari Islamic Temple (Richmond Hill) ○ Aurora United Church (Aurora) • Timothy’s Table at St. Timothys Anglican Church, Newmarket (Thursdays) • LAMP – Lunch program at St. Lukes, Newmarket (Tuesdays) • Newmarket Youth Centre – Stone soup dinner for youth (Tuesdays) • Paul’s Place, Keswick 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of the Cold Program is utilized by between 40 and 50 people each night that the program operates. Most programs are open three nights per week. About 50% of those visiting the program come for a hot meal only and the other 50% stay the night. Program operators indicated that there are more women and youth using the Out of the Cold Program. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase services, including meals, for homeless people on evenings and weekends and in some geographic areas, including rural areas. <i>(Source: Task Force Report, Statistics from Home Base)</i> • There is a need to create more drop-in centres or other facilities that provide food, clothing, shower facilities, outreach for youth. <i>(Source: Task Force Report, Focus Group Sessions)</i> • There is a need to provide transportation (either through the lease of a van or script program developed with GO/York Region Transit) for individuals using meal programs. <i>(Source: community agency)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Clothing/Furniture Banks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coats for Kids • Newmarket Clothing Centre • Salvation Army Family Services and Resource Centre • Sandgate Women’s Shelter • Women’s Centre of York Region • Unionville Alliance Church 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased hours of operation are required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to create more drop-in centres or other facilities that provide food, clothing, shower facilities, outreach for youth. <i>(Source: Task Force Report, Focus Group Sessions)</i>
Prevention & Public Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women’s Sexual Assault Help-in – visits schools, primarily in northern York Region • Pathways – visits schools (Markham) • Yellow Brick House – visits schools (Aurora) • Canadian Mental Health Association – visits schools (Aurora, Keswick, Markham) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2000, CMHA provided about 8393 units of service of the Youth Wellness Program to a wide range of students in York Region. (One unit is about one hour). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to increase services directed to the prevention of homelessness, including rent banks, stabilizing housing and other supportive services. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions)</i> • There is a need for more public education on women’s issues, especially for landlords. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Eviction, Legal Services & Support for Individuals Who Have Left Correctional Institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgina Community Legal Clinic (Georgina) • Yellow Brick House Counselling and Legal Support Services for women in crisis (Thornhill) • Canadian Mental Health Association (Aurora) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is only one community legal clinic in York Region that assists individuals at risk of homelessness. It is located in the northern section of York Region. • Yellow Brick Housing in Aurora provides legal support services to women who are staying or have stayed at the shelter. • CMHA provided 172 consumers with court support in 2000/01. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a rent bank. (<i>Note: Salvation Army has been identified to create and operate a rent bank using funding from the Region's Homelessness Prevention Program</i>) • There is a need for landlord/tenant mediation services in York Region. (<i>Source: Community agencies</i>)
Eviction, Legal Services & Support for Individuals Who Have Left Correctional Institutions (Continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 55% of the 760 men that stayed in Porter Place in 2000 had some involvement in the corrections system. About 20% are on probation, bail or have restraining orders against them. • About 35% of the 65 families that resided in Leeder Place in 2000 had involvement with corrections. • About 65% of the 86 youth that resided in the York Region Youth Shelter in 2000 had involvement with corrections. 	

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Financial Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ontario Works, CPP, ODSP, OHIP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between 1991 and 1996, the number of low-income families in the Region, as determined by Statistic Canada's low-income cut-off, increased by 114 percent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need to provide financial support to homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless. <i>(Source: Community Forum, Focus Group Sessions)</i> There is a need for a place in York Region to get identification and OHIP cards at no charge. Homeless individuals currently must go to Toronto for this important service to access income support.
Support Services			

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
<p>Access to Housing & Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Help Centre (Aurora) • York Region Co-ordinated Access (Access points throughout the Region) • Transitional and Supportive Housing Services of York Region - Community Housing Support Program (Newmarket) • Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region – Case Management Program (Keswick, Newmarket, Markham, Aurora) • Home Base Drop-in Centre (Richmond Hill) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Help Centre served about 7,250 people looking for housing in York Region in 2000. About 2,100 of these calls/visits were from community agencies. The average number of new listings of available rental units is about 42 per month. • About 195 new applicants per month or about 2,340 applicants per year apply for social housing in York Region. As of June 2001, there were 4,744 applicants on the waiting list for social housing. • Community Support Program assisted almost 300 families, youth and single males to find housing in 2000. • Approximately 10% of youth using the Home Base Drop-in Centre receive assistance with housing (approximately 24 youth per month). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to better co-ordinate services to homeless people. <i>(Source: Task Force on Provision of Mental Health Services)</i> • There is a lack of understanding of the type of help that is currently available in the community. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions and Violence Against Women Co-ordinating Committee (VAWCC))</i> • There is a need for more assistance for youth looking for permanent housing <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Food Banks and Food Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aurora Food Pantry • Georgina Community Food Pantry • Markham Foodbank North • Newmarket Food Pantry • Richmond Hill Community Foodbank • Salvation Army Newmarket, Emergency Foodbank (Vaughan) • Whitchurch-Stouffville Foodbank • York Region Food Bank, Vaughan • Sandgate Community Kitchen (Georgina) • Women’s Centre of York Region (food bank for clients only) (Georgina) • St. Vincent De Paul Society – Food vouchers for emergency situations • Salvation Army – Food vouchers for emergency situations • Unionville Alliance Church • Rose of Sharon • Stone Soup • Richmond Hill United Church Breakfast Club 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first month of 2001, five food banks in York Region indicated that they serviced 13,000 clients. Of the 13,000 clients served, almost 6,000 or 45% were children between the age of 0 and 18 years old. This figure for the demand for food banks is underestimated because there are a number of food banks that do not participate in the gathering of food bank statistics. • Newmarket Youth Centre operates a weekly food program called Stone Soup. It serves approximately 15 to 25 youth per week on an ongoing basis. • The Richmond Hill United Church Breakfast Club supports six schools (five in Richmond Hill and one in Markham) and provides breakfast to approximately 200 children/day. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to provide services on a 24/7 basis, especially services addressing the basic needs of homeless individuals or those at risk of homelessness. <i>(Source: Task Force Report and York Region Food Security)</i> • There is a need for more food bank services for women and their children, especially in rural areas. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions)</i> • There is a need to support volunteers that provide many of the food support services in York Region. Volunteer fatigue is a common issue that many community organizations must deal with. <i>(Source: community agency)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Community Mental Health Agencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region (Keswick, Newmarket, Markham, Aurora) • Crosslinks Housing and Support Services (Aurora) • Mental Health Services of York Region • York Support Services Network (Aurora) • Krasman Centre (Richmond Hill) • York Centre of Children, Youth, and Families (Richmond Hill) • Blue Hills Children & Family Services (Aurora & Newmarket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studies show that, on average, two percent of the population suffers from a serious mental illness. Based on April 2000 figures, this works out to approximately 14,400 people in York Region. Approximately 19% of the population suffers from a diagnosable mental disorder. With the continued increase in population the number of people with a serious mental illness or diagnosable mental disorder will continue to grow. • There is a 3 year waiting list for case management and other long-term mental health services. • About 10% of youth that use the Home Base Drop-in Centre have mental health issues (approximately 23 per month). • About 40% of the 760 men staying in Porter Place in 2000 had some form of mental illness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for mental health programs that are accessible on a 24/7 basis, especially during crises. <i>(Source: Task Force Report, Focus Group Sessions)</i> • There is a need for mental health supports for women staying in shelters. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions)</i> • There is a need to train frontline workers across the Region on mental health and substance abuse issues. <i>(Source: Community Planning Group)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Community Mental Health Agencies (Continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Between April 2000 and March 2001, CMHA served 4,821 units in Aurora, 687 units in Markham and 734 units in Keswick. About 30% of the 65 families that resided in Leeder Place in 2000 had mental health issues. About 40% of the 86 youth that resided in the York Region Youth Shelter in 2000 had mental health issues. 	
Addiction Treatment Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Addiction Services for York Region (Aurora) The Vitanova Foundation (Woodbridge) Woodbridge Addiction Treatment Centre – Methadone Treatment (Vaughan) York Region Health Services – Needle Exchange Services (Oak Ridges, Richmond Hill & Outreach Van) Needle Exchange Sites – Oak Ridges Methadone Clinic, Krasman Centre and Outreach Van 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are approximately 4,800 admissions per year to the various clinical substance abuse services provided by Simcoe York agencies. The Simcoe York District Health Council estimates the number of substance abuse disorders in Simcoe York at 36,463 in 1996. This number is expected to grow to 57,611 by 2011. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for a detox centre. <i>(Source: Community Forum, Focus Group Session)</i> There is a need for a treatment centre for addictions. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i> There is a need for outreach addiction services to shelters, as well as transportation to treatment programs. <i>(Source: Simcoe York District Health Council, Focus Group Session)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Addiction Treatment Centres (Continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simcoe York has one of the lowest per capita funding levels for addictions services in Ontario. Per capita funding in Simcoe York is \$2.97 per person, compared with an average of \$6.12 per person in Ontario as a whole. • Approximately 70% of youth that use the Home Base Drop-in Centre have substance abuse problems (or 158 per month). • Approximately 70-75% of the 760 men that stayed at Porter Place in 2000 are estimated to have addictions problems. • About 40% of the 65 families served by Leeder Place in 2000 had addictions problems. • About 15% of the 86 youth that resided in York Region Youth Shelter in 2000 were diagnosed with addiction issues. Many more were using substances. • Needle Exchange Program opened in April 1999 and is presently exchanging 300 needles/month. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for harm reduction programs for residential settings. (Source: Focus Group Sessions)

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
General Hospitals, Clinics, Family Doctors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Markham Stouffville Hospital (Markham) • York Central Hospital (Richmond Hill) • South Lake Regional Hospital (Newmarket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outreach workers and the shelters have indicated that some homeless people are having difficulties obtaining medical attention in hospitals and from family doctors. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for better accessibility to health services for homeless people and those at risk of homelessness. In particular, there is a need to explore “street health” type services. <i>(Source: Community agencies)</i>
Employment Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional employment services: The Career Foundation; Centre for Information and Community Services; COSTI-IIAS; Job Skills; Career Solutions; Neighbourhood Employment Resource Centre; HRDC • Non-traditional employment services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pathways For Children, Youth and Families of York Region (Richmond Hill) ○ Transitional and Supportive Housing Services of York Region – Drop Zone (Newmarket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately 70% of youth using the Home Base Drop-in Centre receive assistance with resume preparation (approximately 158 per month). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for non-traditional employment strategies and programs, especially for youth and people with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions, discussions with community agencies)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Life Skills Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transitional and Supportive Housing Services of York Region (Newmarket) • Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region (Keswick, Newmarket, Aurora, Markham) • Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region (Markham) • Krasman Centre (Richmond Hill) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life skills programs are a large part of the services and supports provided by most drop-in centres and shelters. Separate statistics are not gathered for these programs specifically. However, it is interesting to note that the CMHA provided about 6,242 units of service in 2000; and TSHSYR provided services to about 1,120 people in 2000. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for more anger management and life skills programs for youth and others staying in shelters. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session, Community Agencies)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Youth Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Mental Health Association of York Region (Aurora, Newmarket, Keswick, Markham) • Kinark Child & Family Services (Keswick, Newmarket, Sutton West) • Markham Stouffville Hospital – Youth in Transition Program (Markham) • New Path Youth & Family Counselling – South (Cookstown) • Pathways for Children, Youth and Families of York Region (Markham) • Transitional and Supportive Housing Services of York Region – Youth Shelter and Drop Zone (Newmarket) • York Centre for Children, Youth and Families (Richmond Hill) • York Support Services Network – Crisis Line For Youth (Markham, Newmarket, Sutton) • York Central Hospital – The Shaw Clinic: Mental Health Services for Youth (Richmond Hill) • York Region Health Services – Sexual Health Clinics (Throughout Region) • Blue Hills Children & Family Services (Aurora & Newmarket) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 37% of the region’s population is under the age of 25, with 14 percent aged 15 to 24. By contrast, the Crosslinks study found that 54.4% of the identified homeless in York Region were under the age of 25. • The Addiction Research Foundation’s 1992 study revealed that more than 70% of young people leave home for the streets because of physical and/or sexual abuse. • Approximately 50% of youth that visit the Home Base Drop-in Centre have been in trouble with the law (approximately 113 per month). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for more information on the services required for homeless youth or those at risk of homelessness. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions and discussions with community agencies)</i> • There is a need to increase services for individuals leaving corrections institutions. <i>(Source: Statistics from Home Base and other community agencies)</i> • There is a need to provide access to services for youth on a more continuous and stable basis throughout the Region. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Services for Women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandgate Women’s Shelter (Georgina) • Project Hostel/Yellow Brick House (Aurora) • Women’s Centre of York Region (Aurora) • Women’s Sexual Assault Help-in 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 1988, the two women’s shelters in York Region served 800 women and children. However, they turned away 383 people for lack of space. • Many of the region’s existing services for the homeless are not appropriate for women and children fleeing abusive situations because they need extra security and supportive counselling. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need to provide services to enhance the safety and security of women and children who have left or are leaving a violent situation (e.g. security, cameras, locks, mobile phones). <i>(Source: VAWCC, Focus Group Sessions)</i>
Aboriginal and Cultural Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COSTI-IIAS (Markham, Richmond Hill, Woodbridge) • York Region Neighbourhood Services Inc. (Aurora, Concord, Maple, Thornhill, Woodbridge) • Catholic Community Services of York Region (Richmond Hill, Unionville) • Centre for Information and Community Services of Ontario (Markham) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Home Base Drop-in Centre for youth noted that with the hiring of an Afro Canadian worker, there was a significant increase in Afro Canadian youth attending the drop-in centre. • Of the 760 men who stayed in Porter Place in 2000, about 85 were Aboriginal. While white Anglo Saxon remains the primary descriptor of Porter Place clients, the shelter is starting to house people from a range of cultures. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for staff working with the homeless or those at risk of homelessness to reflect the cultural diversity of the community. <i>(Source: Community Agencies)</i> • There is a need for a safe house/cooling off place where youth living on Georgina Island could stay while a return to their family is worked out through counselling for both the youth and his/her parents.

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Aboriginal and Cultural Services (Continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Of the 65 families (169 individuals) who stayed in Leeder Place in 2000, 2 families were identified as Aboriginal. Many more cultural issues have arisen over the past two years, primarily related to diet and child rearing. • About 10% of the 86 youth that resided in the York Region Youth Shelter in 2000 were Aboriginal. • About 7/1120 people served by TSHYR had significant cultural and language needs. Translation rarely a problem. 	
Shelter & Housing			
Subsidized rental housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are approximately 6098 subsidized rental housing units in a number of non-profit, co-operative and public housing projects across the region. • There are 135 rent supplement units in private rental buildings in various communities in the region. • No new social housing units have been built in York Region since 1995. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Task Force report observed that rental housing is in short supply in the Region. • Rental housing comprises only 18 percent of total housing units and the vacancy rate in York Region is 0.7 percent, well below the healthy rate of 3 percent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for more affordable rental housing throughout the Region, including rooming housing, boarding houses, other small housing units and accessible housing. (<i>Housing Directions Study, Social Housing Waiting List, Focus Group Sessions</i>)

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Subsidized rental housing (Continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, the rental housing that exists in the Region is costly. In 1999, the average rents were \$571 for a bachelor apartment; \$717 for a one bedroom; \$824 for a two bedroom; and \$986 for a three bedroom. In 2000, the rents increased to \$624 for a bachelor apartment; \$748 for a one bedroom; \$881 for a two bedroom; and \$1057 for a three bedroom. • There are 4,744 applicants on the waiting list for social housing (June 2001). Of those on the waiting list, 907 are singles/couples, 2,237 are families and 1,600 are seniors. With a turnover rate of less than 14%, it would take more than eight years to clear the backlog if no new applicants were added to the list. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women in shelters have a particular difficulty accessing subsidized housing and private rental housing. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session and VAWCC)</i> • There is a need to provide support to the community to access funding for more affordable housing. <i>(Source: Task Force Report)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Homes for Special Care & Domiciliary Hostels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Homes for Special Care – 21 homes with 680 beds (Newmarket – 12 homes, Stouffville – 1 home, Jackson’s Point – 2 homes, Holland Landing – 3 homes, Keswick – 2 homes, Queensville – 1 home) Domiciliary Hostels – 8 homes with 230 beds (Mount Albert – 1 home, Newmarket – 2 homes, Jackson’s Point – 1 home, Keswick – 1 home, Sutton – 1 home, Queensville – 1 home) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The vast majority of Homes for Special Care (HSC) and Domiciliary Hostels are at full capacity most days. Overall HSC and domiciliary hostels have low vacancies (less than 1%) at any given time, with the more desirable homes having waiting lists. (Source: <i>Special Needs Housing Study</i>) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a lack of the full range of support services required by the many residents with mental illness that reside in HSC/ domiciliary hostels. (Source: <i>Special Needs Housing Study</i>)
Transitional Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reta’s Place – Second Stage Housing for Women and Children (Aurora) Pathways – 13 beds for Youth (Markham) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reta’s Place has a waiting list. The Violence Against Women Co-ordinating Committee identified the need for additional second stage housing for women leaving shelters. Pathways’ group home for youth housed 32 youth in 2000. There is currently a waiting list of 9 youth for the group home. There has been a huge increase in the number of young women in the Pathways program in the last year and young women currently comprise 80% of the resident population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There is a need for second stage housing specific to women experiencing violence. (Source: <i>Task Force Report, Focus Group Sessions, VAWCC</i>) There is a need for second stage housing for individuals leaving detox centres. (Source: <i>Focus Group Sessions</i>) There is a need for transitional housing for individuals with mental illness. (Source: <i>Community Forum</i>)

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Supportive Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loft Services – 28 beds + approximately 100 under development (throughout York Region) • Community Support Housing Richmond Hill – 6 beds • Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region – 9 beds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CMHA served 343 consumers in supportive housing in 2000/01 and has 112 people on their waiting list for supportive housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for supportive housing for individuals who are addicted and actively using substances. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Emergency Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sandgate Women’s Shelter – 33 beds (funding for 10 beds) (Georgina) • Yellow Brick House (Shelter for Women) – 21 beds (Aurora) • Porter Place Men’s Hostel – 29 beds (East Gwillimbury) • Leeder Place Family Shelter – 5 families (Newmarket) • York Region Youth Shelter – 10 beds (Newmarket) • Motel/Hotels – 10 motels/hotels providing rooms as needed (Throughout the Region) • Out of the Cold Program (including shelter): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temple Har Zion (Thornhill) ○ St. Luke’s Parish (Thornhill) ○ Thornhill United Church (Thornhill) ○ Richmond Hill United Church (Richmond Hill) ○ Ja’Fari Islamic Temple (Richmond Hill) ○ Aurora United Church (Aurora) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter operators indicate that they are consistently turning away individuals looking for emergency accommodation due to lack of space. In 1999, almost 400 women and their children are turned away from the two women’s shelters in York Region. More than 150 people are turned away from the other emergency shelters in York Region in 1999. • York Region has increased the number of contracts it has with private motel owners from two to ten in the last two years. In 2000, 313 clients stayed in motels for a total of 797 days. • Days of housing provided in shelters in York Region increased from 19,258 in 1996 to 26,506 in 1999. • In 2000, 65 families (169 individuals) lived at Leeder Place; 86 youth resided in the youth shelter; and more than 760 single males stayed at Porter Place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a need for a shelter for individuals who are addicted and actively using substances. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i> • There is a need for shelter beds for females only, co-ed and in Richmond Hill. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i> • There is a need for a shelter for single young women who are victims of family violence. <i>(Source: VAWCC)</i> • There is a need for hostel-like shelters for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse issues. <i>(Source: Focus Group Sessions)</i> • There is a need to repair some of the existing shelters in the Region. <i>(Source: TSHYR, women’s shelters)</i> • There is a need for respite beds for individuals with mental illness. <i>(Source: Focus Group Session)</i>

Shelter, Services & Support	Inventory/Main Service Provider	Demand	Gap
Emergency Shelters (Continued)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In 2000, many shelters experienced a high rate of repeat stays (about 65% at Porter Place) • Between April 2000 and March 2001, Sandgate Women's Shelter turned away approximately 376 women and children for housing and/or counselling due to lack of space (or approximately 31 people per month). • Out of the Cold Program is utilized by between 40 and 50 people each night that the program operates. Most programs are open three nights per week. About 50% of those visiting the program stay the night. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In lieu of other more permanent shelters or housing, there is a need to extend the Out of the Cold Program in the north, west and east areas of the Region. • There is a need for better transportation for those using the Out of the Cold Programs. Public transportation is not very often a viable option for those using the programs. • There is a lack of resources and/or skills to counsel and support individuals using the Out of the Cold Programs. Also, volunteers run the OOTC programs and they are subject to volunteer fatigue, especially to support overnight monitoring. (<i>Source for above noted gap: community agency</i>)

5.0 Priority Issues and Target Areas

One of the key elements of a Community Plan is to identify priority issues or areas of greatest need for homeless people in the community. This section describes the process for identifying priority issues and target areas and identifies the 10 priority issues and more than 30 target areas.

5.1 *Process for Identifying Priority Issues and Target Areas*

The Community Planning Group carried out an extensive process to identify the priority issues for homeless people or those who are at risk of becoming homeless in York Region and the specific aspects of these priorities (*target areas*) that the community will attempt to address over the life of the plan. The process involved:

- a review of the ‘gaps’ identified in the Task Force report and other sources of information listed in Appendix 4;
- updating the status of the Task Force recommendations;
- identifying issues which could be addressed by SCPI funding;
- identifying additional ‘gaps’ in services by comparing the “continuum of supports” approach to the existing supports and services in the community;
- conducting focus group sessions and interviews for priority issues identified as requiring further information;
- obtaining input on the priority issues and target areas from Alliance members;
- conducting a brief survey of about 11 community agencies on their current demand for services and supports;
- fine-tuning the priority issues and target areas using information gathered and facilitated discussions during three separate meetings of the Community Planning Group;
- securing community input through the distribution of this draft of the plan.

5.2 *Priority Issues and Target Areas*

The priority issues and target areas that the York Region community proposes to address over the life of the Community Plan are identified below. The issues identified in this plan have not been restricted to those that can be achieved within the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative. The Community Plan will continue to be used as the framework for addressing homelessness in the Region after SCPI is complete. Section 6.0 identifies several ways that the plan will be sustained after the SCPI funding is exhausted.

The priority issues and target areas are not listed in order of priority.

5.2.1 There is a crisis in affordable housing supply

The Task Force report observed that rental housing is in short supply in the Region. Rental housing comprises only 18 percent of total housing units and the vacancy rate in York Region is 0.7 percent, well below the healthy rate of 3 percent. In addition, the rental housing that exists in the Region is costly. In 2000, the average rents were \$624 for a bachelor apartment; \$748 for a one bedroom; and \$881 for a two bedroom; and \$1057 for a three bedroom.

Priority Issue 1	There is a crisis in affordable housing supply in York Region.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide support to the community in co-ordinating access to funding programs; b) To create more transitional and supportive housing, including second stage housing and single room occupancy (e.g. rooming houses, boarding houses).

5.2.2 Supports and services for homeless people and those who are at risk of becoming homeless are limited

Homeless people face particular obstacles to accessing services; they may be struggling with a range of problems, such as the need for food and shelter, difficulty finding and retaining employment, mental health concerns and ongoing medical conditions or family breakdown. The 1998 York Region Task Force on the Provision of Mental Health Services to the Homeless and Socially Isolated found that poor co-ordination of services denies people access to services that could help them. Although a range of supports and services exist, the Task Force report identified that there is a shortage of service agencies directed to homelessness and its prevention. These findings were confirmed by the focus group sessions and the gap analysis contained in section 4.0.

Priority Issue 2	Supports and services for homeless people and families and those who are at risk of becoming homeless are limited.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To increase services and service agencies directed to homelessness and those at risk of becoming homeless, including individuals leaving correctional institutions and Aboriginals; b) To increase services directed to the prevention of homelessness (e.g. assisting individuals find, get and keep housing); c) To increase services for homeless people and those who are at risk of becoming homeless on evenings and weekends (e.g. provide services on 24/7 basis) and in some geographic areas (including rural areas); d) To co-ordinate services to homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless; e) To conduct research on co-ordinated service planning.

5.2.3 There is a limited number of shelter beds

Shelters do not solve the homelessness problem; however they are critical front-line support for those who have no other housing. Due to the increased demand for shelter beds, the Region has increased its contracts with hotel/motel operators from two to nine to accommodate emergency overflows.

Priority Issue 3	There is a limited number of shelter beds
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To protect existing programs/beds by, for example, repairing existing facilities; b) To enhance space in existing facilities; c) To create new shelter beds with a focus on meeting the needs of individuals with multiple barriers.

5.2.4 Demographics of the clientele are changing, as is their geographic distribution

The Task Force report identified that York Region's shelter system needs to change to reflect the needs and the geographic distribution of the clientele. Focus group sessions and input from the community identified that there is a need to prepare a shelter needs study to confirm the client groups requiring shelters and to identify cultural and diversity issues, location, and other issues that may impact shelter needs in the Region.

Community agencies currently providing shelter beds in the Region indicated that there is also a need for a simple model or system to track information required to monitor the ongoing need for additional shelter beds. The model developed must be user-friendly and efficient, as shelter staff are currently stretched to capacity.

Priority Issue 4	Demographics of the clientele are changing, as is their geographic distribution
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To prepare a shelter needs study to confirm the client groups in need of shelters (e.g. seniors, youth, women, men, families, individuals with mental health or substance abuse problems), cultural and diversity issues, location, etc.; b) To continue to monitor the need for shelter beds.

5.2.5 Risk of homelessness is increased with mental health or substance abuse problems

The Task Force report identified that people with mental illness or substance abuse problems often end up homeless. The report further concluded that there are already shortfalls in funding for services that support people with mental illness or substance abuse problems and that these populations will continue to grow in York Region. The focus group sessions, interviews with funders and community agencies, and proceedings from the May 1999 Community Forum confirm this priority issue and identify a number of specific initiatives that could address this concern.

Priority Issue 5	Risk of homelessness is increased with mental health or substance abuse problems.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide mobile mental health services for the community, including shelters, second stage housing and private homes; b) To increase the number of transitional and supportive housing units for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse problems; c) To increase the availability of non-traditional addiction services for homeless individuals and those at risk of becoming homeless (e.g. outreach services to shelters); d) To provide non-traditional employment strategies and programs for people with mental health and/or substance abuse problems; e) To increase harm reduction services for individuals who are addicted and actively using substances;
Target Areas: (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) To create training opportunities for frontline workers across the Region on mental health and substance abuse issues.

5.2.6 Violence against women often drives women and children from home

The Crosslinks study concluded that many people identified as homeless find themselves affected by life changes such as domestic conflict. Most are women and children fleeing abusive situations. The target areas have been identified from information gathered from the Task Force report, two focus group sessions with women (one at the Women’s Sexual Assault Helpline and the other at Sandgate Women’s Shelter of Georgina) and input from the York Region Violence Against Women Co-ordinating Committee.

Priority Issue 6	Violence against women often drives women and children from their home.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To create additional second stage housing; b) To provide services to enhance the safety and security of women and children who have left or are leaving a violent situation (e.g. security cameras, locks, mobile phones). c) To educate and increase awareness of women’s legal rights and responsibilities concerning landlord and tenant issues, financial support, the family home, etc.

5.2.7 Youth (12-29 year olds) are a significant group of the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless and they need specific services

There are a number of reasons why the Task Force report identified youth as a risk factor for homelessness. First, the Crosslinks study found that many of the Region’s homeless people are under age 25. Second, youth homelessness is often caused by abuse as confirmed by the Addiction Research Foundation’s 1992 study. Third, homeless youth often face barriers to homelessness services due to the recent legislative changes that limit the eligibility of 16 and 17 year olds for social assistance and the legal requirement that those staying in shelters (without a parent) must be 16 years of age. Fourth, the services available for youth in the Region have limited resources and have mandates that focus on only one particular issue, for a specific sub-set of youth, in a designated geographic area.

A collaborative, region-wide strategy that crosses all sectors and supports all children and youth is currently under development by the Region. However, the two focus group sessions and community agencies serving youth who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless confirm that there is still a need to address the pressing issues facing youth. The specific initiatives to address this priority issue are identified below.

Priority Issue 7	Youth (12-29 year olds) are a significant group of the homeless population and those at risk of becoming homeless and they need specific
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	services.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To create more multi-service centres (e.g. facilities that provide food, clothing, shower facilities, outreach) that meet the basic needs of homeless youth or those at risk of becoming homeless throughout the Region; b) To provide innovative programs to address the specific needs of youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless and, in particular, to provide access to services for youth on a more continuous and stable basis throughout the Region; c) To provide non-traditional pre-employment and employment services to youth who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

5.2.8 There is a need for improved health services of homeless people and those who are at risk of becoming homeless

The provision of supportive health services is one of the key components of the “continuum of supports” model described in Section 2.3. Community agencies and the focus group sessions confirmed that there is a need for improved health services for homeless people and those who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Priority Issue 8	There is a need for improved health services for homeless people and those who are at risk of becoming homeless.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To identify and investigate “best practices” to increasing opportunities for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless to access health services (e.g. street health services); b) To provide improved health services for homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless.

5.2.9 There is a need for more public education and advocacy on homelessness in York Region

Another service and support identified in the “continuum of supports” model is public education and advocacy. Community Planning Group members confirmed this as a priority issue and identified a number of initiatives to address this priority.

Priority Issue 9	There is a need for more public education and advocacy on homelessness in York Region.
Target Areas:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) To provide public education and increased awareness of homelessness issues in York Region; b) To advocate for improved funding, services, etc. for

	<p>homeless people and those at risk of becoming homeless from provincial and federal governments;</p> <p>c) To increase programs aimed at educating and increasing awareness of community organizations (e.g. police, housing providers, hospitals, schools, faith communities) to help homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless access appropriate services, programs and housing.</p>
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5.2.10 There is a need to mitigate the impacts of poverty

The Task Force report found that between 1991 and 1996, the number of low-income families in the Region, as determined by Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off, increased by 114 percent. Poverty may increase the risk of homelessness and those who are homeless may have a need for increased health care and social services.

Priority Issue 10	There is a need to mitigate the impacts of poverty.
Target Areas:	<p>a) To provide financial support to homeless people or those at risk of becoming homeless;</p> <p>b) To increase access for homeless individuals and those at risk of becoming homeless to basic needs (e.g. food, clothing, shelter, transportation).</p>

5.3 Creating Funding Envelopes

The Community Planning Group has identified 10 priority issues and more than 30 target areas. For the purposes of establishing overall funding priorities, the priority issues and target areas have been grouped into the following “funding envelopes”.

The table below has been prepared to demonstrate funding levels for each funding envelope based on the SCPI funding available between March 1999 and March 2003. Approximately \$314,800 of SCPI funding has already been allocated to Urgent Needs projects and has not been included in the table on the next page.

The Community Planning Group recognizes the importance of putting in place strategies and initiatives to reduce and prevent homelessness. Approximately 50% of the target areas or initiatives identified in this plan are considered initiatives that will mitigate the effects of homelessness, while the balance are considered initiatives that will reduce and prevent homelessness. The funding envelopes and guidelines shown on the next page will be used as a guide for the allocation of funding for homelessness initiatives in York Region. In addition, this plan identifies a target of 50% of the allocations for initiatives that mitigate the effects of homelessness and a target of 50% of the allocations for initiatives that reduce or prevent homelessness. The Region of York may adjust the funding envelope guidelines as required. The funding guidelines will be revisited as part of the annual review of the Community Plan.

Guideline for SCPI Funding

Funding Envelope	Funding Guideline	Total Funds Available
Capital Funding and Improvements	55.0%	\$ 724,990
Transitional & supportive housing, including second stage housing, SROs and for individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse problems (1b), (5b), (6a) Protection of existing programs/beds (3a) Enhancement of space in existing facilities (3b) New shelter beds (3c)		
Programs and Services	33.0%	434,995
Services directed at homelessness and individuals at risk, including those leaving correctional institutions (2a) Services directed to the prevention of homelessness (2b) Availability of services extended to 24/7 and in areas not currently served (2c) Mobile mental health services for community, including shelters (5a) Non-traditional addiction services (5c) Harm reduction services (5d) Non-traditional employment strategies & programs for people with mental health and/or substance abuse problems (5e) Services that enhance safety and security of women and children who have left or are leaving a violent situation (6b) Multi-service centres that meet basic needs of homeless youth or those at risk (7a) Innovative programs to address specific needs of youth (7b) Non-traditional pre-employment and employment services for youth who are homeless or at risk (7c) Improved health services for homeless or those at risk (8b) Financial support to homeless people or those at risk (10a) Access to basic needs for homeless individuals or those at risk (10b)		
Planning, Research & Education	5.0%	65,908
Co-ordinate access to funding programs (1a) Co-ordinate services throughout Region (2d) Research on co-ordinated service planning (2e) Shelter needs study to confirm client groups, cultural and diversity issues, location (4a) Monitor need for shelter beds (4b) Training for frontline workers on mental health and substance abuse issues (5f) Education and awareness raising of women's legal rights re landlord issues, etc. (6c) Best practices to increase opportunities for homeless people or those at risk to access health services (8a) Public education of homelessness issues in York Region (9a) Advocate for improved funding for homeless or those at risk (9b) Programs to educate and increase awareness of community organizations re access appropriate services, programs & housing (9c)		
Administrative/Evaluation	7.0%	92,272
Total		\$1,318,165
Urgent Needs		314,813
Total SCPI Funds Available (2000- 2003)		\$1,632,978
HRDC Youth Employment Strategy (\$90,741 per year for three years)		272,223

The table below shows the proposed SCPI funding guidelines by year.

Guideline for SCPI Funding By Year

Funding Envelope	Funding Guideline (To Mar/02)	Funding Guideline (Apr/02- Mar/03)	Funding Guideline TOTAL
Capital & Improvements	\$425,612	\$299,379	\$724,990
Program & Services	255,367	179,628	434,995
Planning, Research & Education	38,692	27,216	65,908
Administration/Evaluation	54,169	38,103	92,272
Total	\$ 773,839	\$ 544,326	\$ 1,318,165

6.0 Sustainability

SCPI is a time-limited, three-year program. The Community Planning Group has addressed the issue of the sustainability of the plan in a number of ways.

6.1 *Link Community Plan to Other Work*

One way to ensure the Community Plan is sustainable is to link it to other Regional initiatives and the work of the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation. Initiatives currently underway at York Region that could quite effectively be linked to this Community Plan include the Human Services Planning Coalition, Youth Strategy, Women Abuse Initiative, Violence Against Women Co-ordinating Committee and the York Region Food Steering Committee. Every effort will be made to secure the endorsement of the plan by those involved in other complementary initiatives.

6.2 *Foster Public Support*

Fostering public support through education and awareness may help secure long term funding, an enhanced volunteer base, donations and so on. There is the potential for the broader York Region community to respond on a whole variety of different levels if the issues are understood and the possibilities for involvement presented. Fostering public support of the plan will form part of the communication strategy (see Section 8.0).

6.3 *Encourage Partnerships and Co-operation*

Another way to ensure the sustainability of the plan beyond SCPI is to encourage community agencies to develop long-term partnerships, including for example, working with the Funders' Alliance and encouraging co-operation amongst service providers (e.g. sharing staff, resources) wherever possible. The Funders' Alliance includes representatives from Casino Rama, Simcoe York District Health Council, HRDC, La Cle de la Baie, Ministry of Citizenship and Culture, Network Simcoe, Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition - Central-North Office, Community Foundation of Orillia, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Regional Municipality of York – Community Services and Housing Department, United Way of York Region and the Ministry of Community and Social Services. A description of a range of federal and provincial funding programs that may be complementary to initiatives that may be proposed to address this plan is included in Appendix 7. Emphasis will be placed on proposals that develop long-term partnerships and demonstrate co-operation amongst service providers.

6.4 Community Plan as a “Living Document”

Making the plan a “living document” that is continually reviewed and updated (e.g. evaluation will make the plan meaningful to decision-makers) is another way to ensure its sustainability. Section 7.0 describes the proposed monitoring and evaluation strategy for the plan.

6.5 Emphasis on Capital Projects

The Community Plan will emphasize capital projects that will yield benefits that extend beyond the three years of SCPI. Capital projects enhance the sustainability of existing supports and services because they do not create a gap in funding when the project is built. However, capital projects may result in ongoing operating expenses. All capital projects funded by SCPI will be required to have a viable multi-year operating plan. There will be an emphasis on projects that cover as much as possible of the upfront capital costs in order to reduce ongoing mortgage financing requirements, thereby reducing the ongoing operating costs of the project. Upfront capital costs may be paid by SCPI and other capital contributions (e.g. fundraising, other government programs).

6.6 Emphasis on Prevention and Capacity Building

There will be an emphasis on proposals that involve prevention and capacity-building initiatives. Capacity building activities also enhance the sustainability of existing supports and services by providing organizations and people working in these organizations with the necessary skills to deal with the many unique situations faced by people who are homeless and those who are at risk of becoming homeless. Prevention strategies are an important element of the Community Plan; however, such initiatives may not all be sustainable. Consideration will be given primarily to proposals that include a plan to deal with sustainability of the proposed initiative.

6.7 Sustainability as a Criterion for Proposal Evaluation

Projects with the highest degree of sustainability will be those that impact positively on the participants (e.g. people who are homeless, outreach workers) and generate public support (e.g. volunteerism, donations). These two benefits will assist community agencies to secure the ongoing funding needed to sustain their services and support programs. Consequently, sustainability will be a criterion for proposal evaluation for SCPI funding.

6.8 Advocate for More Equitable Funding From Senior Governments

York Region has historically been underfunded in the area of human services. This has been documented in a number of reports prepared in the last few years, most recently in the *Human Services Strategy*. One of its major recommendations is that “base funding for all human services should be increased immediately to be, at minimum, on par with provincial per capita averages.” This is critical to York Region’s ability to meeting the short-term and long-term objectives of the Community Plan. The Regional Municipality of York urges provincial and federal levels of government to spend more on protecting and enhancing the quality of life that has been built in the Region and to work co-operatively with the municipality to target additional resources at its most pressing problems.

7.0 Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy

There are four components to an evaluation strategy that the plan must address. The following identifies those components and identifies the evaluation strategy for each component.

7.1 Reporting on the Progress of Implementing the Plan

There is a need to report to the community and governments on the progress of implementing the plan, at least during the three years of SCPI. The Community Planning Group has identified four major measurable outcomes anticipated from the individual initiatives that would be funded by SCPI.

- 1) What difference has expending these funds made in increasing York Region's ability to address the needs of the homeless? This may be demonstrated by providing statistics on:
 - number of extra beds created
 - number/volume of extra services created
 - measures that demonstrate increased community capacity
- 2) What difference has expending these funds made in building awareness through education of the community about the issues that cause individuals to become homeless or at risk of homelessness? This may be demonstrated by giving examples of:
 - new community initiatives
 - increased advocacy
 - new innovative partnerships
 - increased allocations of funding from other sources
 - creation of a safer, less dangerous environment for people who are homeless
- 3) What difference has expending these funds made in providing opportunities for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness to make positive changes in their lives to reduce that risk? Provide anecdotal examples.
- 4) What barriers or issues arose during the implementation of your initiative (if any) and how did you overcome this barrier?

The outcomes of each individual project funding by SCPI will be consolidated and presented to the community as part of its annual review process and incorporated in the operational plan for HRDC (see Section 7.2 below).

7.2 Process for Reviewing and Updating the Plan

The Community Plan will be reviewed on an annual basis by the Community Planning Group to assess appropriateness priorities, targets and funding envelopes identified in the plan. This review will take place as part of the annual report process described in Section 7.1 and is anticipated to occur between January and March. The process for reviewing and updating the plan will involve gathering input from:

- Homeless or those who have experienced homelessness
- Community Planning Group or Community Advisory Board
- Relevant federal and provincial ministries
- York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation
- Other community agencies
- Other funders and/or partners (e.g. United Way)

The Community Planning Group will hold a one-day workshop to review the information gathered from the stakeholders listed above, as well as compare how the funding was allocated against the priorities, targets and funding envelopes identified in the plan. Priorities, targets, funding envelopes and other relevant sections of the Community Plan will be revised as necessary.

An update of the status of the Community Plan, as well as any required modifications, will be provided to York Regional Council and HRDC. In addition, the update will be posted on the Region's website.

7.3 Method to Determine if Plan Has Met Its Objectives

The Community Planning Group will develop a detailed evaluation plan to determine if the Community Plan has met its objectives. There are a number of different ways that the plan may be evaluated at the end of the three years of SCPI. Some methods the Community Planning Group is considering to determine if the plan has met its objectives are:

- 1) Conduct a Community Plan review session with all community stakeholders to evaluate if the initiatives funded through SCPI have helped to meet the objectives outlined in the Community Plan;
- 2) Hire an independent company or organization to conduct program and service evaluations on all initiatives funded by SCPI and use the results of the evaluation to assist the community in determining if the initiatives funded through SCPI have helped to meet the objectives outlined in the Community Plan;

- 3) Hire a group of people who have at some point in their lives experienced homelessness and train them to conduct an evaluation of the initiatives funded by SCPI to determine if they helped meet the objectives outlined in the plan.

7.4 Lessons Learned

The Community Planning Group recognizes that there is a need for the community to get a better understanding of what initiatives are the most successful in addressing the needs of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Information will also be gathered from agencies that received SCPI funding on what works well, what could be improved, etc. The goal of this additional information is to get a better understanding of the homeless population and to learn from the experiences of other community agencies.

8.0 Communication Strategy

The communication strategy details how information will be communicated to interested parties within the community. It also outlines the process and schedule for annual reporting to the community and stakeholders on progress towards achieving the plan's objectives. The following is a framework that will be used to develop a comprehensive communication strategy for the Community Plan.

York Region Corporate Communications and York Region Human Services Planning Coalition will work together to fine-tune and implement the communication strategy. The Human Services Planning Coalition is currently in the process of establishing communication vehicles that may support the Community Plan's communication strategy, especially regarding education and increasing public awareness of homelessness issues. Some of the communication vehicles that are being developed by the Coalition include public service announcements, calendar of events, newsletters, ongoing communication consulting process and web sites. Wherever possible, the services of the Human Services Planning Coalition will be utilized to support the Community Plan's communication strategy.

8.1 The Goals

The goal of the communication strategy is to effectively communicate the importance of York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness to stakeholders.

Other goals of the communication strategies are to:

- explain purpose of plan, process of plan development and how the plan will be used in the future;
- raise public awareness of the issues and solutions to homelessness;
- inform service providers how SCPI funding will be distributed in the community.

8.2 The Strategy

There are a number of key milestones during the Community Plan development and implementation stages that communication to stakeholders would be appropriate. These key milestones including:

- during plan development;

- once the plan has been finalized and when any revisions are made;
- during the annual review and update of the plan;
- to announce Requests for Proposals (RFP);
- to announce allocation of funding;
- at the end of the three years of SCPI to inform stakeholders on how well the objectives of the plan have been met.

The target audience for the communication strategy includes the following:

- MPs, MPPs, Regional and Local Councillors
- Federal, provincial, municipal staff
- Funders
- Alliance & other co-ordinating bodies
- Others interested in homelessness issues, including faith communities, Aboriginal people, youth, homeless people, women who have experience violence and other groups who are at higher risk of becoming homeless, service providers and shelter operators, including domiciliary hostels & Homes for Special Care
- general public

Depending on the stakeholder, different communication vehicles will be used, including:

- Direct mail
- Web-site and e-mail address
- Newsletters
- Press releases and advertisements
- Calendar of events
- Postings in municipal buildings

The table on the next page summarizes the communication strategy for York Region's Community Plan to Address Homelessness.

Stakeholder	Communication Strategy
MPs, MPPs, Regional and Local Councillors	<p><i>How:</i> direct mail and/or fax</p> <p><i>What:</i> copy of the draft and final plan; all press releases to general public</p> <p><i>When:</i> draft plan, final plan, RFP, allocation of funding, annual review of the plan, final evaluation of SCPI</p>
Federal, provincial, municipal staff and Funders	<p><i>How:</i> direct mail and/or fax</p> <p><i>What:</i> copy of the executive summary of the plan; RFP; and allocation announcements</p> <p><i>When:</i> draft plan, final plan, RFP, allocation of funding, annual review of the plan, final evaluation of SCPI</p>
Community Planning Group, Alliance Members and Other Co-ordinating Bodies	<p><i>How:</i> direct mail, fax and/or e-mail</p> <p><i>What:</i> copy of the draft and final plan; all press releases to general public; information sessions</p> <p><i>When:</i> draft plan, final plan, RFP, allocation of funding, annual review of the plan, final evaluation of SCPI</p>
Community Agencies, Faith Communities and others Interested in Homelessness Issues	<p><i>How:</i> web-site; press release; information bulletins posted in libraries, community centres and other municipal buildings; information sessions</p> <p><i>What:</i> basic information about the plan, SCPI and funding allocations</p> <p><i>When:</i> draft plan, final plan, RFP, allocation of funding, annual review of the plan</p>
Focus Group Participants	<p><i>How:</i> group discussions at community agency that sponsored the focus group session</p> <p><i>What:</i> basic information about the plan; feedback on their input into the plan development process</p> <p><i>When:</i> draft plan</p>
General Public,	<p><i>How:</i> web-site; press release; information bulletins posted in libraries, community centres and other municipal buildings</p> <p><i>What:</i> basic information about the plan, SCPI and funding allocations</p> <p><i>When:</i> draft plan, final plan, RFP, allocation of funding, annual review of the plan</p>

8.3 The Messages

The following are some of the key messages that will be promoted by the communication strategy. The messages will be fine-tuned once the comprehensive communication strategy is developed.

- 1) Community Plan builds on work done by York Region Homelessness Task Force;
- 2) The plan provides a guide for decisions on allocation of funding of homelessness initiatives in the Region;
- 3) Homelessness is a growing concern across Canada, including in York Region;
- 4) Homelessness undermines the stability of individual lives and communities and therefore addressing homelessness makes good social and economic sense;
- 5) Many groups in York Region have been working to support people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- 6) The intended outcome of the plan is a reduction in the number of people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- 7) SCPI provides a unique opportunity for community groups to use federal funding in conjunction with other funding from the province, region and community to address the issues of homelessness in York Region.

9.0 Community's Financial Contribution

Under the terms of SCPI, a matching financial contribution is required from the community. Funds must be non-federal and used to address homelessness in the community over the three-year period of SCPI to be eligible as community contributions.

The required community financial contribution for York Region is as follows:

April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2002 - \$ 1,088,652

April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003 - \$ 544,326

The community financial contribution for the first two years of SCPI has been confirmed by approved funding (either provincial or regional) for programs and initiatives currently underway. Matching contributions for Year 3 will be confirmed by March 2002.

The table below describes funds eligible to match SCPI from the Region and the Government of Ontario. The contributions listed for each year may not be exact because funding from the Region is based on calendar year budgeting.

Sources of Funding	Matching Contribution		
	Years 1 & 2 (April 1, 2000 to March 31, 2002)	Year 3 (April 1, 2002 to March 31, 2003)	Total
Domiciliary Hostels – 80% Province/ 20% Region	\$ 3,000,000	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 4,500,000
Emergency Shelters – 80% Province/ 20% Region	1,510,000	755,000	2,265,000
Community Partners Program – 100% Provincial	154,000	77,000	231,000
Shelter Re-direct – 80% Provincial/20% Region	128,000	64,000	192,000
Provincial Homelessness Initiatives Fund – 100% Provincial	600,000	300,000	900,000
York Region Homelessness Initiative Fund – 100% Region	300,000	300,000	600,000
Off the Street, Into Shelters – 100% Province, 80/20 in Year 3	33,000	33,000	66,000
Total	5,725,000	3,029,000	8,754,000

10.0 Governance

Four levels of participation are required to undertake SCPI homelessness initiatives in York Region: a decision-making body for program administration; a body to evaluate proposals and recommend selection of projects for funding; a body to identify needs, prepare and update the Community Plan and communicate with the public; and the community service providers. The roles and responsibilities of each body and the composition of the organization are discussed below.

10.1 Decision-Making Body for Program Administration

The Regional Municipality of York has been identified as the Community Entity for York Region. The process for identifying the Region of York as the Community entity is described in section 3.1. The Community Entity is the organization that will receive SCPI funding. The role of the Community Entity is to:

- co-ordinate the development of the Community Plan and submit the plan to HRDC for approval;
- implement the communication strategy;
- ensure that decision making mechanisms and administrative practices are in place for the calling for project proposals, evaluating proposals and flowing SCPI funding to projects;
- review proposal recommendations from the Community Advisory Board, communicate decisions to HRDC on SCPI projects and Youth Homelessness projects (which will be contracted directly by HRDC with the agencies) and make decisions on any additional funding that may be provided through the Region's funding sources (e.g. PHIF);
- carry out the monitoring and evaluation strategy.

10.2 Body to Prepare and Update the Community Plan

Community Planning Group is comprised of representatives from the various sectors interested in homelessness and it includes representatives from the Youth and Aboriginal sectors. Section 3.2 describes the process for establishing the Community Planning Group and its membership.

The roles and responsibilities of the Community Planning Group include:

- work with service providers, the Region of York, and HRDC to determine the priority needs of the homeless and identify funding sources;
- develop the Community Plan and submit the Community Plan to the Regional Council and HRDC for approval;
- respond to suggestions for revisions to the plan;
- oversee the development of the Community Plan updates on an annual basis.

10.3 Body to Evaluate Proposals and Recommend Projects

Community Advisory Board will be responsible for the development of evaluation criteria for proposals for funding based on the principles outlined in the plan, as well as making recommendations to the Region (Community Entity) for funding allocations under SCPI.

The Community Advisory Board will be comprised of representatives of the Simcoe York Funders' Alliance. The Simcoe York Funders' Alliance is comprised of representatives from more than a dozen funding agencies as noted in Section 6.3. Ideally, the Community Advisory Board will be comprised of five members plus a representative from HRDC that will act as a SCPI technical advisor (non-voting) and chaired by a representative from the Region of York. The Region will work with the Funders' Alliance to identify members to sit on the Community Advisory Board.

10.4 Community Service Agencies

Community service providers and agencies, through the Alliance, had an integral part in the preparation of the Community Plan, and will continue to take an important role in the following areas:

- contributing to updates of the Community Plan on an annual basis;
- preparing and submitting proposals for consideration by the Community Advisory Board;
- providing services as project funding is provided for projects selected under the proposal submission process;
- participating in the update of the plan;
- participating in the evaluation at the end of the SCPI initiative (March 2003).

10.5 SCPI Process for Allocating Funding

The Regional Municipality of York will administer SCPI. This model will entail the Region of York contracting directly with community service providers and

agencies. Projects will be selected through a process involving community representatives and others as described below.

- 1) The Region of York (Community Entity) prepares and issues Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for projects to be funded by SCPI. The RFPs will be in keeping with the Community Plan, in particular the funding envelopes developed as part of the plan.
- 2) Community agencies interested in responding to the Region's RFP send a proposal, including budget submission to the Region of York, Community Services and Housing Department.
- 3) Director of Housing and Residential Services acknowledges receipt of the proposal to the community agency and forwards the proposal to the Community Advisory Board for review and evaluation.
- 4) Community Advisory Board makes recommendations to the Region of York, in writing, on all proposals it receives.
- 5) Commissioner of Community Services and Housing reviews the Community Advisory Board's recommendation and prepares a report and recommendations for the Region of York's Community Services and Housing Committee.
- 6) Community Services and Housing Committee considers the report from the Commissioner and makes a recommendation to Council.
- 7) Council makes a decision on the recommendation of the Committee.
- 8) Community Services and Housing Department staff inform Human Resources Development Canada of which projects have been approved for SCPI funding.
- 9) Community Services and Housing Department staff inform the appropriate community agencies of Council's decision.
- 10) Community Services and Housing Department staff executes a contract between the community agency and the Region for the provision of the service.

10.6 Youth Programs

York Region's funding for Youth Homelessness Initiatives is separate from the broader SCPI allocation. Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) will administer the Youth Component of the National Homelessness Initiative in keeping with the principles and priorities identified in this plan and recommended

by the Community Advisory Board. York Region's allocation for this funding is \$90,741 per year or \$272,223 for the SCPI funding period.

Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

- **Absolute homelessness** – refers to those living on the street, in temporary shelters or in locations not meant for human habitation.
- **Affordable Housing** – a generic term for housing that is generally accessible to a wide segment of lower income wage earners. While Affordable Housing should form part of the community’s Continuum of Supports Plan, it cannot be funded through the SCPI.
- **Assets** – are all elements currently used to support the community plan. They include but are not limited to: services, human resources, equipment, buildings and land.
- **Community Advisory Board** – ideally comprises community service providers, funders and academics. At a minimum, the Board comprises community funders. This Board provides recommendations to the Community Entity or HRDC (whichever is applicable) on which projects to approve for funding.
- **Community Entity** – is an incorporated organization that will receive SCPI funding. It will take on the task of ensuring that community planning is undertaken, decision making mechanisms and administrative practices based on transparency and financial probity are in place for the calling for project proposals, evaluating proposals and flowing SCPI funding to projects.
- **Community Plan** – is the plan that uses the continuum of supports approach to identify all of the supports and services currently available within a community as well as those that are missing or needed. It will also have a clear statement of objectives, identify the geographic area of the community, description of the process used to develop the plan, statement of priority issues, a description of how the community will address the need for future funding for services once SCPI funding ends, a strategy for evaluating progress in implementing the plan and a communications strategy. It must address the specific needs of homeless urban Aboriginal people and youth within the community. A financial plan must be attached to each Community Plan.
- **Community Planning Group** – is comprised of representatives from the various sectors (stakeholders) interested in homelessness. All reasonable effort must be taken to include representatives from the Youth and Aboriginal sectors.

- **Continuum of Supports** – is a holistic approach to addressing the needs of homeless individuals within a community plan. It includes all supports and services that would be needed to assist a homeless person or someone at risk of becoming homeless to become self-sufficient, where possible.
- **Service Providers** – are those agencies and organizations that deliver programs and services to individuals that are or may become homeless, regardless of their point on the continuum of supports.
- **Shelters** – housing intended for very short tenures of a few days up to six months, usually available on an emergency basis.
- **Social Housing** – public or non-profit owned housing receiving long-term federal subsidies (3+ years).
- **Stakeholders** – are those individuals, agencies, organizations, and funders that are interested in making a contribution to reducing or preventing homelessness. This also includes the private sector, churches and homeless individuals.
- **Supportive Housing** – public, private or non-profit owned housing with some form of support component, intended for people who cannot live independently in the community, where providers receive funding for support services. The tenure may be long-term.
- **Sustainability** – refers to the concept of the future state of a project receiving SCPI funding. Each project proposal must include either a plan for continued resourcing of a project beyond April 1, 2003 (when SCPI funding ends) or an impact statement for all projects that will end April 1, 2003, as a result of the termination of the SCPI.
- **Transitional Housing** – a combination of housing and services intended to facilitate self-reliance and self-sufficiency. This housing is intended for an individual's use for up to three years.
- **Urgent Need** – refers to work (projects/activities) that must be undertaken before a community plan is in place (plan written, priorities identified and agreement among planning group reached) due to time sensitive issues. In order for a project to qualify as an 'urgent need', the community would have to show that homeless people would suffer from extreme hardship if the project did not commence immediately.

Appendix 2: Executive Summary Task Force Report

1. A Unique Situation

Although York Region is facing the issue of homelessness, the nature and degree of the problem is different from that in other cities across Canada. The root causes, however, are similar; the pressures of modern life, corporate downsizing, family dysfunction and breakdown, lack of support services for the mentally ill and the loss of support from senior levels of government for housing programs targeted to low-income families.

The relative wealth of the Region and its residents can mask the fact that some people are homeless or at risk of being homeless. Many people face the prospect of having no place to live or are already dependent on shelters, friends and relatives or the streets for accommodation. They do not look like the street people found in centres such as Toronto and Vancouver. But they can be only one pay cheque away from homelessness.

Because the Region's homelessness problem is still relatively minor in extent, York Region has the opportunity to benefit from knowing the experiences of other cities in attempting to prevent homelessness. It has the opportunity to identify effective solutions to homelessness and to prevent the erosion of its quality of life.

2. The Region's Role

In the fall of 1998, the Province funded Consolidated Municipal Service Managers (including York Region) to support homelessness initiatives. Through 1999, the Region, in consultation with community providers and consumers, identified priorities and funded several programs aimed at meeting the short-term needs of people in the shelters or on the street.

The Region also formed the Homelessness Task Force to develop long-term strategies addressing the problem. The Task Force members include regional and local municipal councilors, representatives from community agencies and service providers, staff from federal, provincial and regional governments and community members.

The Task Force has worked in a highly complex environment. The Region is developing a Human Services Strategy to guide the development of a wide range of health, social services, education, recreation and other community services over the next 25 years. The Region has also undertaken a comprehensive Housing Needs Study. The Homelessness Task Force has

taken the deliberations of the Human Services Steering Committee into account in the preparation of this report.

3. The Challenges of a Growing Community

York Region is one of the fastest-growing areas in Ontario, with its current population of 720,000 residents expected to grow to 1.28 million by 2026, and an employment base of 696,000 jobs. The population is young, affluent, educated, and family-oriented. People are drawn to York Region because of the natural, social, geographic and economic advantages supporting its quality of life.

But growth brings challenges. Disparity in incomes, barriers to affordable housing, cultural differences, and changes to family and household structures make it harder for people to find common bonds. As well, growth increases the number of non-family households, leaving more people living without the support of a family structure.

The rapid urbanization in the Region and recent government policy changes have set the stage for a growing number of households at the lowest end of the income scale. In 1995, social assistance payments were cut by 21.6 percent, as part of provincial government spending cutbacks and downloading. Between 1991 and 1996, the number of low-income families in the Region, as determined by Statistics Canada's low-income cut-off (LICO), increased by 114 percent.

4. Homelessness in York Region

As the gap between "rich" and "poor" grows, the capacity of one group to understand the situation and perspectives of the other group decreases.

The causes of homelessness are rarely simple. Some people are affected by mental health problems, display inappropriate behaviour and are unable to "fit in" with social norms. They may have been discharged from institutions; some are youth or women suffering from abuse. Increasingly, families with at least one person working are ending up in shelters. Finally, some people are living in a place that is not permanent or safe (for example, a situation that depends on someone's goodwill or a dwelling that is overcrowded).

5. The Issues

There are a number of issues that must be addressed in developing an action strategy for York Region:

- a. There is a shortage of affordable housing, particularly rental housing.
- b. The cost of rental or ownership housing under construction is high.
- c. There is a lack of subsidized housing.
- d. Services to homeless people are poorly co-ordinated.
- e. There is a shortage of service agencies directed exclusively to the needs of the homeless.
- f. Shelter services are underfunded and stretched to capacity.
- g. The risk of homelessness is increased with mental health or substance abuse problems, and these population groups will grow.
- h. Other groups at risk of homelessness will also increase: seniors, youth and those from groups with cultural or linguistic support needs.
- i. There are already shortfalls in mental health services and substance abuse funding.
- j. Domestic conflict often drives people from their homes.
- k. Many of the Region's homeless people are under 25.
- l. Lack of public transit is a barrier to accessing services.

6. Recommendations

The Regional Task Force has developed a series of strategic recommendations that are designed to address the issues and build on the strengths of the Region – commitment to sustaining a high quality of life, a network of agencies and volunteers ready to work together, and an awareness of the problem.

It is recommended that:

a. Increasing the supply of affordable housing

1. The Region build on the Housing Needs Study that is currently in process and develop the capacity to monitor housing needs on an ongoing basis, reporting results regularly to Regional Council.
2. The Region review the existing Official Plan Housing Policies, in light of the findings of the Housing Needs Study, the recommendations of the Homelessness Task Force and the Human Services Strategy report.
3. The Region, in concert with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and other municipalities, aggressively pursue the commitment of all levels of government to provide funding and policy frameworks which support the development of affordable housing.
4. The Region demonstrate leadership by developing a policy that allows non-profit housing developments to be eligible to have development

- charges waived by Council, subject to the property maintaining its use for non-profit housing. Implementation of such a policy is to be subject to annual review for fiscal impact and effectiveness. The development charge revenue lost as a result of this policy would be funded from the Social Housing reserve, to minimize the financial impact on other forms of development.
5. The Region encourage area municipalities and other levels of government to consider adopting policies to waive or defer municipal fees and development charges related to the development and/or redevelopment of housing to meet the needs of low-income households.
 6. The Region consider developing a preferential development charge approach, in order to encourage higher density affordable housing development in regional centres, as identified in the Official Plan and Growth Management Strategy.
 7. The Region consider adopting a Housing First Policy for use of surplus land, subject to the constraints of the Municipal Act, and:
 - develop a system giving priority consideration to the use of Region-owned surplus land for the creation of affordable housing;
 - consider providing favourable purchase or lease terms to non-profit housing developments on surplus land;
 - undertake a fiscal impact analysis on this initiative;
 - encourage area municipalities to consider adopting a similar Housing First Policy.
 8. The Region work with area municipalities to explore the development of an incentive program to encourage homeowners to bring the pre-1995 secondary suites into compliance with building standards and fire safety regulations.
 9. The Region acknowledge that second suites form an important component of the rental housing stock across the Region, and encourage area municipalities to consider implementing zoning by-laws to permit second suites in single and semi-detached houses. Such by-laws must ensure that appropriate safety, building code and parking requirements are met.
 10. The Region create a series of framework documents to assist area municipalities in developing zoning by-law provisions which support a variety of affordable housing opportunities, in ways that complement their own municipal objectives, e.g. second suite by-laws, rooming house by-laws, group home by-laws, intensification efforts, conversion of non-residential to residential uses, etc.

11. The Region explore the feasibility of a Housing Trust Fund in meeting the Region's affordable housing needs, and that consideration be given to supporting the concept of a national housing trust fund as suggested by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Canadian Housing and Renewal Association.
12. The Region, as part of its role as system manager for homelessness, continue developing its capacity to provide support to the community in co-ordinating access to funding programs. This support could include:
 - co-ordination of funding information related to housing and homelessness;
 - acting as a clearing house and development expert;
 - assisting in proposal development; and
 - providing support and leadership to community agencies interested in developing housing opportunities.
13. The Region continue to advocates for the needs of its residents to funding sources and liaise with funding sources to ensure that the Region is getting a fair share of available funding to meet its emerging needs.

b. Improving the service infrastructure for homeless people

14. Special efforts be made to ensure that necessary support services are in place to assist clients using any part of the short-term shelter system in the transition from homelessness to permanent housing.
15. The Region continue supporting the Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation as they develop inter-agency collaborative protocols and procedures to co-ordinate service planning for their client group.
16. The Region maintain the YorkLink database, in website and hard copy form, to support their formation needs of the human services sector in accessing appropriate services.
17. The Region actively pursue additional emergency shelter funding with the Ministry of Community and Social Services, to be allocated for homelessness prevention.
18. The Region facilitate, in collaboration with United Way of York Region, York Region Association of Volunteer Administrators, Helpmate Richmond Hill and Information Markham, a series of volunteer training and management sessions to support the identified needs of community agencies providing supports to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness.

19. The Region work with the Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation to explore “best practices” for recruiting and maintaining volunteers related to homelessness, including learning from the models used by the Yellow Brick House and Out of the Cold programs.
20. The Region continue to support the Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation.
21. Regional Council approve a one-time allocation of \$5,000 from the Homelessness Initiatives Fund to support the community driven public education initiatives to be identified, developed and forwarded through the Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation.

c. Meeting the service needs of the homeless

22. The Region review emergency and other shelter facilities and requirements, and work with the community to develop a strategy to address issues such as the availability, accessibility, diversity and geographic distribution of emergency shelters in the Region.
23. Regional Council indicate its support of the Simcoe York District Health Council’s Substance Abuse Plan, as submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that implementation of the report’s recommendations will assist the Region in its efforts to end homelessness.
24. Regional Council indicate its support of the Simcoe York District Health Council’s Mental Health System Planning Proposal, as submitted to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, and advise the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care that implementation of the report’s recommendations will assist the Region in its efforts to end homelessness.
25. Regional Council support the request of the Women Abuse Initiative for short-term funding through the Homeless Initiatives Fund to assist in co-ordinating services, accessing additional funding supports and maintaining the regional Women Abuse Protocol.
26. The Region facilitate the development of a regional youth strategy that brings together key partners including: youth, local municipalities, Community Services and Housing Department, Health Services Department, Boards of Education, Police Services, Parks and Recreation, Community Colleges, Simcoe York District Health Council, Simcoe York Training and Adjustment Board, Ministry of Community and Social Services, Human Resources Development Canada, youth serving agencies and other interested parties.

Appendix 3: Terms of Reference of Community Planning Group

BACKGROUND

On December 17, 1999, the Government of Canada announced an investment of \$753 million over three years in a strategy to help reduce and prevent homelessness across Canada. The SCPI program was part of this announcement.

The program encourages communities to work with all levels of government, private and non-profit organizations to address the immediate needs of homeless people and take steps to reduce and prevent homelessness.

York Region has been advised that approximately \$653,000 per annum for the next three years (2000-2003) has been allocated to this community.

The community must match SCPI dollars. Community funding can be in the form of current or new municipal expenditures, provincial funding or money contributed by community organizations.

The Region of York is prepared to take on the responsibility of the Community Entity-- responsible for administering the SCPI funding on behalf of the federal government. This role is consistent with the Region's current function as the administrator of the provincial homelessness initiative funding (\$300,000 per annum) and the Region's own homelessness initiative funding (\$300,000 per annum, subject to budget approval). The Region also provides funding for Domiciliary Hostels, Emergency Hostels and temporary use of motels during those periods where the hostels are at capacity. These expenditures total approximately \$519,195 per annum. The York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation in a letter dated January 1, 2001 supported the Region in this role.

As the Community Entity, the Region of York, in partnership with the Community Planning Group, and with the assistance of a Consultant hired for the purpose, will prepare a Community Plan for submission to HRDC. The community plan will be a long-term, comprehensive approach to homelessness that deals with the full range of needs of people who are homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. This kind of approach is often referred to as a "continuum of supports" approach.

Upon approval of the Community Plan, a Community Advisory Board will be convened to review and recommend individual proposals for funding under SCPI, based on their eligibility and relevance to the priorities identified in the Plan.

COMMUNITY PLAN

The preparation of the Community Plan is consistent with the recommendation of the Homelessness Task Force Report that long-term strategies be developed that address the problems associated with homelessness. The Community Plan is intended to reduce and prevent homelessness, and provide a focal point for joint community action. The plan will:

- Give community service organizations a framework within which to work together to achieve common goals;
- Assist the community to make the best possible use of scarce resources by reducing overlap and duplication;
- Enable the community to evaluate its progress in reaching its shared objectives.

By consolidating the administration of the SCPI program along with the provincial and municipal homelessness initiatives, York Region can ensure that all of the homelessness initiatives carried out within its borders are streamlined, and maximum use of funding is achieved.

OBJECTIVE

To co-ordinate the research and discussions necessary to develop a plan to address homelessness in York Region.

GOALS

Identify the existing range of services offered to the homeless and those at risk of homelessness within the Region. This work will build upon the work already completed by York Region and its community partners, namely, the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation, the Homelessness Task Force Report, the findings in the Human Services Strategy, and the recommendations stemming from the Special Needs Housing Study, and the Housing Directions report.

Assist the Consultant, who has been engaged to facilitate the process, in identifying the gaps, priorities and initiatives to address the needs of the homeless and those at risk of homelessness within the Region.

Review and provide input to the development of a three-year Community Plan to address homelessness in York Region.

MEMBERSHIP

The Community Planning Group will consist of members of the community representing a wide cross section of interests, including:

- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Sandgate Women's Shelter
- Georgina Island First Nation
- Pathways Centre for Children and Youth
- Krasman Centre
- Transitional and Supportive Housing Services
- Urban Development Institute
- York Region Police
- Business Sector
- HRDC
- York Region

In addition, workshops and focus groups will be held to ensure that specific client groups, as identified by the Community Planning Group, have input into the creation of the Community Plan.

The Community Planning Group is committed to seeking input and advice from the York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation in the preparation of the Community Plan.

DELIVERABLES

A detailed work plan and timelines, including a schedule of meetings with the Community Planning Group, Regional staff, and any focus groups sessions;

An interim report in the form of a draft Community Plan outlining the gaps, priorities and initiatives as identified in the Community Planning Group sessions and other sources of information; and

Submission of the final version of the Community Plan to Region of York Council and HRDC.

ACCOUNTABILITY

York Region as the Community Entity will enter into a contractual relationship with HRDC for the administration of the SCPI funding. This includes contracting with the Consultant who is facilitating the planning process. York Region will also be responsible for executing agreements with community service providers in carrying out the strategies and initiatives identified in the Community Plan. York Region will provide administrative support to the Community Planning Group and the Community Advisory Board.

The Community Planning Group will be responsible for providing input, direction and advice in the preparation of the Community Plan. The Community Planning Group will also establish evaluation criteria for assessing the progress of the Community Plan and ensure that ongoing monitoring of the plan occurs.

The Community Advisory Board will be responsible for evaluating and making recommendations on the initiatives put forth by the community partners in response to the Community Plan. Regional staff will bring the recommendations, direction and advice forward in their reports to Regional Council.

The Commissioner of Community Services and Housing will be responsible for reporting all SCPI related activities to Regional Council and for ensuring that the necessary approvals are secured for the release of funding for the various SCPI initiatives.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Given that the participants all have busy schedules, this committee will attempt to limit the number of full team meetings to a maximum of 5. Housing and Residential Services staff may require input from specific committee members so that work completed can be presented to the entire team for discussion and direction.

TIMING

First meeting of the Community Planning Group. March 22, 2001

Review existing material; conduct interviews; identify gaps and priorities.

Community Planning Group to develop evaluation methodology and a communication strategy.

Develop draft Community Plan and circulate to CPG members, Alliance and other stakeholders.

Finalize Community Plan. July, 2001

SCHEDULED MEETINGS

March 22, 2001, 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

April 19, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

May 3, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.

May 24, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

June 12, 2001, 1:30 to 4:30 p.m.

July 12, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

August 1, 2001, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Appendix 4: Sources of Information

A number of different sources of information were used to assist the Community Planning Group in the preparation of the Community Plan, including existing reports, studies and other documents, interviews and focus group sessions. Details on the sources of information used are outlined in the following.

Reports, Studies and Other Documents

Canadian Council on Social Development, *The Widening Gap: The Changing Trends in Income Distribution in York Region*, December 2000

Christine Pacini & Associates, *York Region Special Needs Housing Study*, August 2000

Crosslinks Services and Supports, *Out in the Cold: A Report on Outreach to the Homeless in York Region*, 1999

Mental Health Reform Planning Committee, York Region District Health Council, *Implementation Plan for Mental Health Reform in York Region*, February 1997

Simcoe York District Health Council, *An Integrated Addiction Treatment Service Plan for Simcoe York*, November 1999

York Region, *Housing Directions Study*, 2000

York Region, *Human Services Strategy: Final Report*, November 2000

York Region, *Strengthening the Ties That Bind: A Report on the Proceedings of "Homelessness in York Region: A Community Forum, May 25 & 28, 1999*

York Region, Community Services and Housing Department, *York Link 2001: A Community Services Directory*, 2001

York Region Alliance on Homelessness and Social Isolation, Minutes/Agenda of various meetings in 1999 and 2000

York Region District Health Council, *Mental Health System Design: A New Plan for the Mental Health Services System in York Region*, August 1996

York Region Homelessness Task Force, *Responding to Homelessness in York Region: from Awareness to Action*, September 2000

Individuals Interviewed

Carol Lever, Mental Health Consultant, Ministry of Health and Long Term Care

Bryan Salmers, Executive Director, Addiction Services For York Region

Susan Taylor, York Region Planning and Development Services

Carol Taylor, Social Services, Georgina Island First Nation

Appendix 5: Focus Group Sessions

A total of six focus group sessions were facilitated by community agencies during the month of May. A framework for the focus group discussions was developed, including standard questions. Focus group facilitators used this framework when they conducted their sessions.

A copy of the framework provided to the facilitators is shown below.

Focus Groups:	Violence Against Women (2) Youth (2) Individuals with mental health and/or substance abuse problems who are homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless (2)
Location:	To be determined by focus group co-ordinators, anticipated to be in a shelter, drop-in centre, agency, etc.
Time Frame:	To be completed by May 22 nd
Duration of Focus Group Discussion:	One to two hours, at the discretion of the co-ordinators
Role of the Focus Group Co-ordinator:	Agencies who have volunteered to facilitate the sessions are requested to: Arrange the meeting location where participants will feel most comfortable; Appoint a facilitator for the session who is familiar with the participants-again to put participants most at ease; Arrange appropriate refreshments and provide bills/invoices to the Region for reimbursement.
Support from York Region:	The Region is prepared to provide the following supports to help facilitate the focus group discussions: Minute-taker, recorder of focus group discussion; Out-of-pocket expenses for agency hosting the focus group discussion (to an upset limit of \$250).
Purpose:	To identify potential target areas or the specific aspects of the priority area that the York Region community should address in the short-term (to March 31, 2003) and the long term.

To also identify, if possible, potential initiatives for these target areas.

Framework: Use the continuum of supports approach as a framework for discussions about target areas (attached).

Standard Questions: The following questions are suggested questions to ask participants. Focus group facilitators may ask these questions in a different way, ask additional questions or delete questions as they feel it is appropriate for their focus group, keeping in mind that the purpose of the focus group discussions is to gather information on continuum of supports in order to identify key target areas.

1. Tell us a bit about yourself --- your age, if you have dependents, your current situation. (*This information may be obtained privately before or after focus group*)
2. What does housing mean to you?
3. What does homelessness mean to you?
4. Have you ever been afraid of losing your housing or safe place to live?
5. Where would you go if you did not have a safe place to live? (This question may not be applicable for all focus group discussions)
6. What do you know about services and supports that are available for people who lose their housing or safe place to live?
7. How did you learn about these services or supports?
8. Have you made use of any of these services or supports? If yes, what was good and not so good about these services or supports?
9. Are there other services or supports that would be helpful for people who lose their housing or safe place to live?
10. As you think about your future, who and what would

help you get where you'd like to go?

**Duties of Focus
Group Recorder:**

The recorder of the focus group should identify the location and time of focus group discussion, how many people participated in the focus group discussion, questions asked by the facilitator and information shared by participants.

Appendix 6: List of Participants of Community Forum

Participants of the two-day workshop on homelessness in York Region (May 25th & 28th, 1999) represented a cross-section of community agencies, organizations, faith communities, and residents, including:

Regional Councillors

- Joyce Frustaglio
- Mayor Tom Taylor
- Tony Wong
- Janet Mabley

Members of Parliament

- Brian Wilfert

Other attendees

- Simcoe York District Health Council
- Sandgate Women's Shelter
- Leeder Place
- Richmond Hill Vineyard Church on the Hill
- Pathways
- Parks and Recreation Department, Richmond Hill
- Canadian Mental Health Association
- Crosslinks Transitional and Support Housing
- Neighbourlink
- York Region residents
- St. Elizabeth Health Care
- Ministry of Community and Social Services, Barrie Office
- York Region Housing Authority
- York Region Housing Corporation
- Krasman Centre
- St. Vincent de Paul
- Salvation Army
- York Region Food Security Advisory Committee
- CO-AD Board of Directors

- Open Quest Publishing, Education and Counseling
- United Way of York Region
- Catholic Community Services of York Region
- Transitional and Supportive Housing Services of York Region
- Family and Credit Counseling Services
- Yellow Brick House
- Canadian Red Cross – Newmarket
- York Neighbourhood Support Services
- York Region Food Network
- York County Hospital
- 310 – COPE
- Markham Inter Church Affordable Housing
- Georgina Community Legal Clinic
- Human Resource Development Centre
- Social Services Department staff: Community Programs Division, Social Assistance Division; Policy and Community Development Division
- Public Health Department Staff

Appendix 7: Other Sources of Funding

There is a range of funding sources that community organizations may access to augment funding received from the SCPI initiative. Some of these funding sources are summarized below. There may be other sources of funding, especially related to the prevention of homelessness (e.g. Ontario Women's Directorate, Centre for Crime Prevention, Laidlaw Foundation), that may also be used to augment the SCPI funding.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

1) Youth Employment Strategy

Through the Youth Employment Strategy, the federal government has allocated \$59 million over three years to address homelessness among youth. Youth Service Canada (YSC) and Youth Internship Canada (YIC), both under Human Resources Development Canada's (HRDC) Youth Employment Initiatives, have been given the responsibility of assisting the homeless youth population.

Much like Aboriginal homelessness projects, youth homelessness projects will not require a 50 percent community contribution, nor will the funding be limited only to communities identified under the SCPI. However, all youth projects funded in a city that is receiving SCPI assistance must be linked to the overall Community Plan to address homelessness in that particular community.

2) Urban Aboriginal Strategy

Through the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS), announced in January 1998, the federal government allocated \$59 million to address the needs of Aboriginal people. The UAS brings together federal departments in an effort to ensure that federal programs more effectively serve urban Aboriginal communities.

Under the strategy, the Regional Council of Senior Federal Officials in each province or territory will develop a plan to flow funding to specific federal departments to allow them to deliver projects that will reduce and prevent Aboriginal homelessness.

Aboriginal homelessness projects will not require a 50 percent community contribution, nor is funding limited only to the communities identified under the SCPI. However, Aboriginal projects funded in a city receiving SCPI assistance must be linked to the overall Community Plan to address homelessness in that particular community. Aboriginal concerns must be integrated into the SCPI plan

through consultation with Aboriginal people and their representation on the Planning Committee.

3) Other HRDC Programs

Human Resources Development Canada has a number of grants and contributions programs that are aimed at helping individuals and organizations manage transitions and challenges. Programs that community agencies may consider to augment SCPI funding include: Office of Learning Technologies; Local Labour Market Partnerships; Job Creation Partnerships; and Research and Innovations.

4) Shelter Enhancement Initiative

CMHC's Shelter Enhancement Initiative provides grants to repair and improve existing shelters for women and children who are victims of family violence. This program was recently expanded to include shelters and second-stage housing for youth who are victims of family violence. While the funding is primarily directed to existing facilities, some funding is available for the creation of new spaces or acquisition of existing space for use as emergency or second-stage housing.

5) Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships in Housing

In October 1990, the Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) approved the creation of the Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships in Housing under the direction of CMHC. The Centre officially opened for business on September 25, 1991. The mandate of the Centre is to act as a catalyst to promote private/public partnerships in Canada.

The Centre's core functions include identifying and stimulating opportunities for public-private partnerships; assisting in the development and implementation of various insured financial techniques/instruments and property tenures; initiating and facilitating public-private partnerships; researching and analyzing current and future trends in partnerships in different market settings; and promoting, contributing and transferring information on partnerships.

The Centre publishes a quarterly report, *Partnership Courier*, which chronicles the activities of the Centre and provides best practice information about housing-related matters to assist and inspire those who work for the cause of affordable housing for Canadians.

6) Proposal Development Fund (PDF) Loan

CMHC provides Proposal Development Fund Loans to encourage the development of projects that provide affordable housing for seniors, the disabled or low-income Canadian households through partnership arrangements. The up set limit of each loan is \$75,000.

This is an annual program and it is restricted to private non-profit groups (municipal non-profit groups do not qualify). The deadline for the next request for submissions is June 29, 2001.

7) CMHC Mortgage Loan Insurance for Non-Profit Groups

Mortgage loan insurance makes it easier for non-profit groups to obtain financial backing from lenders of affordable housing projects. CMHC has developed mortgage loan insurance requirements geared specifically for non-profit groups. CMHC may insure up to 85% of the lending value of an affordable housing project, as determined by CMHC.

CMHC requires that non-profit groups provide a minimum of 15% equity towards the development costs of the project. In addition, the non-profit must demonstrate that it is a bona fide non-profit group with relevant experience; the current directors must have relevant housing experience; the group and its property management team must demonstrate that they have successfully management real estate properties; the non-profit group must have successfully developed at least one other rental housing project; the group must have an excellent credit rating; and a breakeven cash flow projection must be provided.

8) Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP)

As part of its initiative to alleviate and prevent homelessness, the federal government announced a \$268 million increase in funding for the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program (RRAP). Previous annual funding for RRAP was \$50 million a year. The funding is intended to support the renovation and repair of housing occupied by low-income people to bring it up to basic health and safety standards. With this recent announcement, the federal government announced new program flexibility which will allow for the conversion of non-residential buildings into accommodation for low-income people.

The RRAP has the following four components:

1. Rental RRAP provides financial assistance for landlords owning existing affordable housing to pay for mandatory repairs to self-contained units occupied by low-income tenants.

2. Rooming House RRAP offers repair assistance to owners of existing rooming houses who offer affordable rents to low-income individuals.
3. RRAP for Persons with Disabilities provides assistance to owners of existing units occupied by low-income persons with disabilities who require special modifications to their residences to improve accessibility.
4. RRAP Conversion provides financial assistance to convert non-residential properties into affordable, self-contained rental units or bed-units.

RRAP is for existing buildings only and cannot be used for new construction.

9) Federal Properties for Housing

In December 1999, the federal government announced that Public Works and Government Services Canada will co-ordinate a new initiative to make certain surplus federal properties available on an exceptional basis.

The Surplus Real Federal Property for the Homeless Fund was created to help communities combat often-prohibitive capital costs that many homelessness projects face, such as those incurred in purchasing land and building. The fund provides \$10 million (\$4 million in 00-01, \$3 million in 01-02, and \$3 million in 02-03) worth of surplus federal properties for homelessness projects. The fund encourages federal departments to identify surplus properties by compensating them for lost revenues when the property is transferred to a group for the purpose of assisting homeless people.

Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC) and Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) along with the assistance of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) will work as partners to implement and manage this initiative: HRDC will assume the lead responsibility for approving proposals; CMHC will assist HRDC and proponents in developing proposals, and PWGSC will manage the fund.

Non-profit organizations and other levels of government are eligible to receive federal surplus lands to assist homeless people in cases where their community has a demonstrable homeless population and their proposal is supported by a recognized Community Plan. The fund will cover the difference between the market value of the property and the amount of money that the successful organization can afford to pay.

10)Affordability and Choice Today (ACT) Program

The ACT Program is sponsored by CMHC and managed by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Canadian Home Builders Association and the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association. The program is designed to eliminate by-law barriers to new approaches in planning, design, construction or servicing.

Municipalities, homebuilders and developers are eligible for grants to undertake demonstration projects, to investigate streamlined approval process projects or to document existing initiatives. The grants may be used to help offset costs of undertaking and documenting regulatory reform initiatives. They *cannot* be used to offset the normal costs of construction. Grants of up to \$20,000 are provided for demonstration projects; up to \$10,000 for streamlining approval process projects; and \$2,000 for case studies of previously completed initiatives.

11)Homegrown Solutions

Homegrown Solutions is a joint initiative of CMHC, the Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, the Co-operative Housing Federation of Canada, the Canadian Home Builders Association and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Its goal is to support and stimulate interest in affordable housing at the local level, with the objective of identifying new approaches to meeting housing need that do not require ongoing subsidy.

Seed grants of up to \$1,000 are available to develop ideas into detailed proposals for the next stage of the selection process. The groups that submit proposals that best meet the objectives of the initiative will receive up to \$20,000 to conduct demonstration projects that encourage and support community partnerships.

ONTARIO GOVERNMENT FUNDING SOURCES

12)Homelessness Rent Supplement Initiative

The rent supplement program provides rent subsidies to low-income tenants who live in private and non-profit buildings. The Ontario Government recently announced a new rent supplement initiative that would fund up to 10,000 more units across the province. Approximately 25% of the units will be allocated for new construction in areas with low vacancy rates. The units are primarily targeted to private sector landlords and developers; however, non-profit providers will not be excluded. The rent supplement agreements will have a three to five year term. York Region has been allocated 260 new rent

supplement units. Refer to Appendix C for more details on the new rent supplement program.

13)Mental Health Homelessness Initiative

The Ministry of Health and Long Term Care has committed \$45 million over the next three years (1999-2002) to develop housing spaces and supports for people with serious mental illness. The program will fund existing transfer payment agencies to: (i) initiate head lease agreements and the necessary housing support services for the target population; and/or (ii) purchase existing/renovate properties to provide housing and the necessary support services to the target population.

14)New Off the Street, Into Shelter Fund

Starting January 1, 2001 a new provincial fund, the Off the Street, Into Shelter Fund, will be available to municipalities to help people get off the street and into shelter. The fund will be available year-round, starting now to address the most severe weather conditions.

Depending on municipal response, this new fund could provide money to hire 50 or more new street outreach workers. These new workers would get to know homeless people as individuals, help them to understand that improvements are being made to hostels, and encourage them to come into shelter.

Approximately \$4.1 million will be available in the first year. The fund is available to all municipalities. The maximum amount available to a municipality is equal to 5 per cent of its 1999 gross spending on emergency hostels. It is up to municipalities to request the money.

The maximum estimated annual amount available, by municipality: Toronto \$3.2 million, Ottawa \$364,000, Hamilton \$122,000, London \$88,000, Durham Region \$73,000, Peel Region \$50,000, York Region \$33,000, others \$17,000 or less.

For the first year, the province will provide 100 per cent funding; in subsequent years, the province will pay 80 per cent and municipalities will pay 20 per cent, in the same way that annual emergency hostels costs are cost-shared.

15)PST Grant Program for Builders

In March 1999, the Province of Ontario announced its new Provincial Sales Tax Grant Program to help stimulate the construction of affordable rental housing. The PST Grant Program provides eligible builders with a grant of \$2,000 per

rental unit to offset the provincial sales tax on building materials. The grant applies to the construction of new rental units and the conversion of non-residential space to rental units. There is a limit to the size of the units eligible under the program.

At this time, the PST Grant Program no longer has any funding available; however, it is anticipated that this program may be re-instated in the near future.

16)Government Land for Affordable Housing Initiatives

The province is investigating a number of government-owned land sites for affordable housing for the homeless or those at risk of becoming homeless. Negotiations are continuing with both the federal government and affected municipalities.

17)Ontario Trillium Foundation

The goal of the Ontario Trillium Foundation is to work with others to make strategic investments to build healthy, caring, and strong economic communities in Ontario. Within each sector or across several, the Ontario Trillium Foundation funds initiatives that achieve one or more of seven goals:

- Contribute to Community Vitality by making a significant contribution to the quality of life within a community;
- Increase Access by removing financial, physical, social cultural and language barriers that prevent participation in all aspects of life;
- Create Economic Opportunities for low-income communities by building skills, creating work or developing income-generating activities;
- Foster Community Harmony and Safety by encouraging people to value and treat each other with respect;
- Find Community Solutions by preventing or addressing the underlying causes of problems and building accessible, responsive support systems;
- Make Better Use of Community Facilities or Land by repairing, renovating, regenerating or making them available to community groups;
- Increase the Effectiveness of Organizations by finding better ways to do their work in order to support their community more effectively.

Types of funding available include: operating grants, project grants; and, equipment and renovation grants.