

Report on

# Housing & Homelessness

in the City of Kingston & County of Frontenac

**864** unique individuals used an emergency shelter in 2013

**766** new housing permits issued – up from 615 in 2012

**\$279,339**  
average home sale price in 2013, up 3.18% from 2012  
(MLS average sales in Kingston)



**2013**

# Introduction

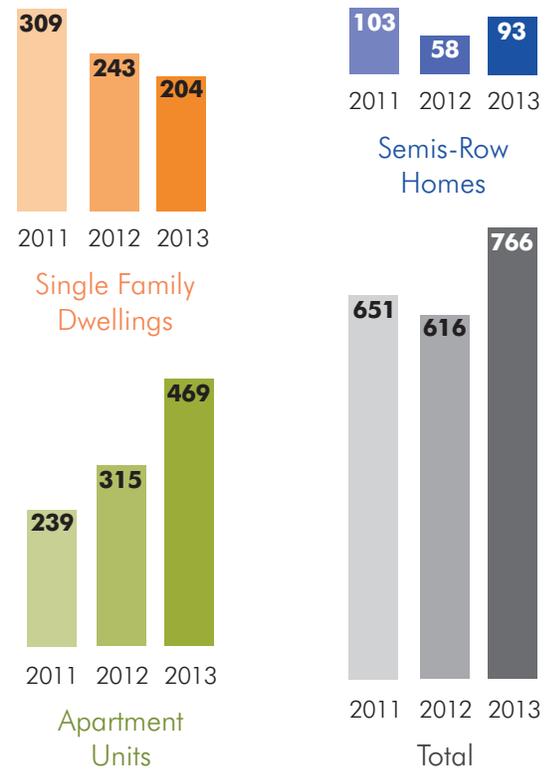
“The facilitation of affordable housing was selected by Kingston City Council as one of our key priorities for our term. Council set this priority to encourage investments and strategies to meet the long term community need for affordable, sustainable and social housing. This annual report provides an update on the state of housing and homelessness in the City and highlights key projects and services introduced or funded in 2013.”

– Mark Gerretsen  
Mayor, City of Kingston

“For more than a decade, the City of Kingston has been engaged in planning and action to increase the supply of affordable housing. The diverse membership of the City’s Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee has actively met over the last year to develop new strategies to increase affordable housing and reduce homelessness. Recently City Council approved the 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Strategic Plan – see overview in this report. It will help us to focus on more ways to reduce homelessness and to build the affordable housing we need in Kingston. As we move forward in shaping new approaches and policies our thinking will be better informed by the background and analysis in this report.”

– David Jackson  
Chair, City of Kingston, Housing and Homelessness Advisory Committee

## New Housing Permits issued by unit type in the City of Kingston

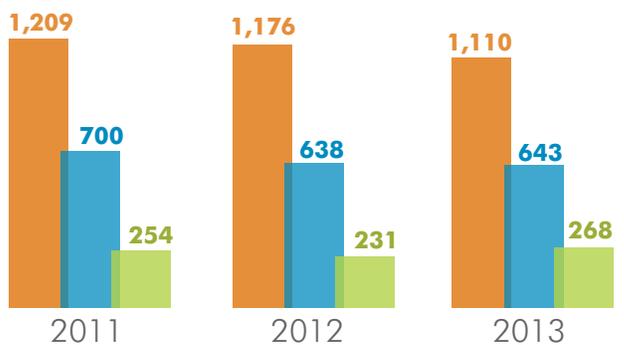


## The Registry – An applicant's point of view

“I am extremely happy with my new housing, it is clean, in a great location and now affordable. Now that I have retired, I may have been on the street without this, I believe things happen for a reason. The Registry has been so helpful, kind and treated me as an equal with respect.”

– Sharon Robinson, a tenant

## Social Housing



- Total number of households on social housing waiting list (December 31, 2013)
- Total number of eligible applications received
- Total number of applicants housed from social housing (RGI) wait list

## Social Housing Centralized wait list

The Registry is legislated by provincial legislation to manage the centralized wait list for rent-geared-to-income (RGI) assistance.

The Registry is located at 362 Montreal St. and all applications for RGI assistance are reviewed at this location. Eligible households are placed on the wait list in chronological order. Victims of domestic violence who meet provincial eligibility criteria receive priority on the wait list.

The number of households waiting for RGI assistance has remained relatively constant year-over-year since the number of new eligible applicants added to the list is offset by those removed due to being housed, cancelled, or ineligible based on eligibility criteria.

For further information on eligibility, wait times and how to apply for housing, please visit [CityofKingston.ca/Housing](http://CityofKingston.ca/Housing)

# Addressing Housing and Homelessness over the next decade

The 10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan was approved by Kingston City Council in December 2013. The Plan builds on the previous Municipal Housing Strategy, adding new strategies to address homelessness across the City and County of Frontenac. The resulting 12 strategies and 75 recommendations will guide activities to address the community's housing and homelessness needs over the next decade.

## Different households require different approaches to meet housing needs

The Plan encourages a wide variety of housing options to improve affordability in a way that acknowledges the needs of individual households in terms of tenure, location, building/unit type and cost .

The Plan also:

1. Identifies that there are challenges related to housing affordability for those households with the lowest incomes. Current rental rates in Kingston and Frontenac prevent people on social assistance or earning a low wage to find suitable, adequate and affordable rental housing.
2. Recognizes that there needs to be considerable changes in policies at every level of government to address housing affordability.
3. Recognizes that some housing will need to come with supports attached to assist tenants to successfully maintain their housing.

### Recommendation # 22:

*The City continue partnering with private and non-profit landlords to enable leveraging of all available resources in order to maximize affordable housing.*

## Creating a service delivery system to end chronic homelessness

People experiencing homelessness are a disparate group. What they have in common is a lack of housing. The Plan focuses on providing housing with an appropriate level of support as the key to reducing and ultimately ending chronic homelessness in Kingston and the County of Frontenac.

To understand the scope of homelessness in Kingston, the first-ever Homeless Point in Time (PIT) count was completed by more than 118 volunteers in October 2013. The count found that the City of Kingston's rate of homelessness averages 8.59 persons per 10,000 population. The Canadian average is 8.57.

### Recommendation #63:

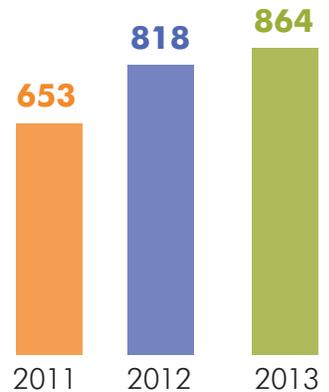
*Reallocate resources towards providing support to clients after being housed.*

The Housing Department is working with the broader community to implement the strategies and recommendations in the 10-Year Plan to create a service delivery system to help end chronic homelessness in our community.

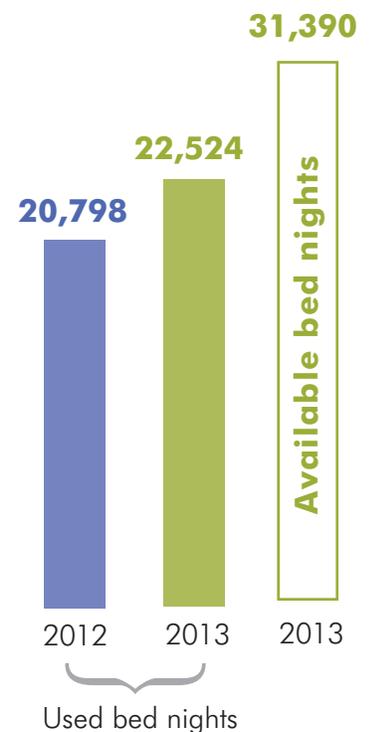
Visit [www.CityofKingston.ca/Housing](http://www.CityofKingston.ca/Housing) to download the 10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan or the Results of the Point in Time count and rural homelessness survey.

## Shelter Services

Number of individuals staying in emergency shelters



Shelter usage – Annual bed nights



Although the demand for emergency shelters continues to increase, on average 57 beds out of 86 were occupied nightly suggesting that emergency shelters had space most nights. The City funds 74 beds in the system.

# Rideau Heights Regeneration Strategy

The Rideau Heights Regeneration Strategy represents a partnership between the City of Kingston and the Kingston and Frontenac Housing Corporation (KFHC) to develop a long-term plan to ensure the community's housing, park spaces, and community services support the revitalization of the neighbourhood. Like other municipalities, Kingston is revisiting past public housing initiatives that concentrated a large supply of public housing units which are now outdated in terms of format, site design and energy efficiency. The objective of this project is to appropriately integrate mixed housing communities that accommodate households of various income levels within Rideau Heights and across the city.

To date, work to develop the Regeneration Strategy has included extensive public consultation and an assessment

of the current physical condition of the housing stock and supporting infrastructure. Future stages of the spring/summer planning phase of the project will include: neighbourhood and site-level design options to address building inefficiencies, deficiencies of existing site layouts, community health and safety needs, and appropriate housing formats.

While the Regeneration Strategy provides an opportunity to revitalize the neighbourhood, ongoing input from the community and the phasing of the project over approximately 15 to 20 years will ensure these efforts are planned and implemented. This will achieve the key community renewal and economic viability objectives for the benefit and enjoyment of those who live in Rideau Heights.



## Kingston Frontenac Renovates

The Kingston Frontenac Renovates Program provides Provincial grants up to \$3,500 for accessibility improvements, or forgivable loans up to \$10,000 for repairs so that eligible homeowners may stay in their homes. Audrey, who is a homeowner with a disability, benefitted from the program in 2013 and shares her story.

“Through this program I received bathroom renovations, a stair railing, and carpet on the stairs. This made my home more accessible and allowed more freedom for myself and less worry for my family. This program was simple to access; once a contractor was chosen, the renovations were done quickly and efficiently. The warranty was in my name should I need it in the future. I cannot thank this program enough for giving me my independence and dignity for years to come.”

For more information on the Kingston Frontenac Renovates Program visit [www.CityofKingston.ca/Housing](http://www.CityofKingston.ca/Housing).

In 2013 Kingston Frontenac Renovates had:

**31** participants

**28%** were from Kingston

**72%** were from Frontenac County

Since the Program began in 2012, 61 participants have received over

**\$400,000**

in grants and loans with funding made available from the province.

# Youth Homelessness Requires Solutions

Mobilizing Local Capacity to End Youth Homelessness project – United Way of KFL&A



One third of individuals in shelters are youth. The United Way began working with local youth-serving organizations and other stakeholders in early in 2013 to focus on youth between the ages of 15-24 years who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. A March 7, 2013 Youth Point in Time count found 45 youth in shelters, and an additional 64 youth precariously housed on the night of the count.

In May, focus groups were conducted with homeless and at-risk youth and identified these issues at the root of youth homelessness: Family Conflict, Mental Health, Addictions, Education, and Employment & Training. A Youth Planning Committee was created, whose members included those with lived experience, to explore and provide further input on these issues. They organized November's "Youth Out Loud Kingston" forum, featuring their video focusing on the voices and experiences of four homeless youth. Youth with lived experience also shared their personal stories. During the forum, students from St. Lawrence College organized youth participants into groups to engage them in discussions of solutions.

As a participant in a collaborative pilot project called "Mobilizing Local Capacity to End Youth Homelessness," the United Way is now documenting the process and developing a plan to end youth homelessness in our community. It will bring together local research and data, highlight the resiliency of youth, and identify solutions to end youth homelessness. The plan will incorporate recommendations from local service providers and best practices from other communities.

The reasons youth become homeless are different from adults and the solutions and plans need to reflect the unique needs of youth. This Plan complements the 10 Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan and will assist in developing the best plan for young persons who find themselves homeless.

## Secondary Suites

In February of 2013, City Council passed Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments which established a pilot project area where Secondary Suites are legally permitted.

The Housing Department has actively engaged homeowners and members of the development community to promote the Secondary Suites initiative as a means to create affordably priced housing within existing neighbourhoods. In addition to providing more affordably priced housing for the homeowner and tenant, Secondary Suites provide an alternative housing option for many households including seniors, extended families, smaller households and singles, people on low incomes, and in-house caregiver living arrangements.

The City has since issued 12 Building Permits to allow the construction of new or the renovation of existing suites to comply with Building Code requirements. As part of this initiative the Housing Department has created the Secondary Suites Affordable Housing Grant Program offering financial assistance to homeowners who create an affordable Secondary Suite.

For more information about Secondary Suites, please visit

[CityofKingston.ca/SecondarySuites](http://CityofKingston.ca/SecondarySuites)

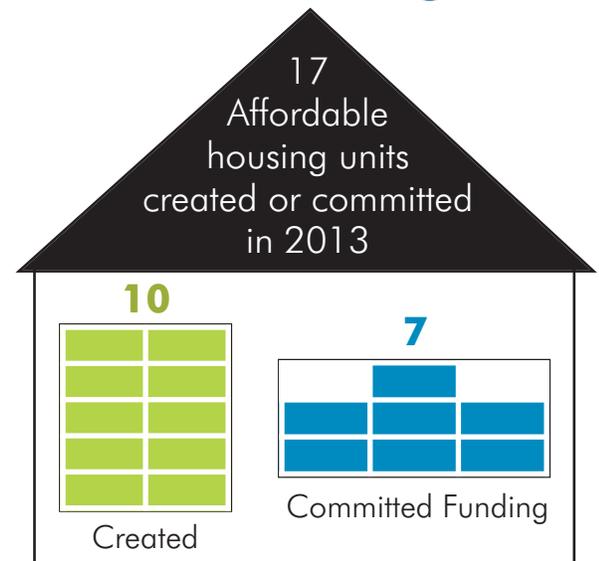


# Affordable Housing Capital Investment Program

Based on a recommendation of the Municipal Housing Strategy (2011), the City established the Affordable Housing Capital Investment Program which provides one million dollars a year for five years to assist in the creation of new affordable housing within the City.

Program funding is available to non-profit and private developers who commit to providing a portion of units within a new housing development at affordable rental rates. In 2013, capital funding was used to develop 10 new affordable housing units and another seven units received funding commitment. These 17 units will be provided at an affordable rate for a minimum 15 year period.

Developers and not for profit organizations interested in the Capital Investment Program or wishing additional program eligibility information are encouraged to contact the Housing Department at [housing@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:housing@cityofkingston.ca).



## Capital Investment Program

### The 500 Canatara Court Example

The project at 500 Canatara Court is an example how the Capital Investment Program stimulates new housing development while providing a portion of the new units at an affordable rental rate.

Following 2012 funding commitments, 10 affordable housing units became available in September 2013 at 500 Canatara Court, a senior's apartment development that includes a variety of recreational and social amenities. This 77-unit building provides one, two, and two-bedroom-plus-den units. Commercial units on the ground floor offer convenient access to personal services and retailing.

"We are pleased to have the City as a partner for this project" says building owner Jeff Fern. "The City's financial contribution allowed us to commence construction in a timely manner while enabling us to provide an additional level of affordability within the project."

A second 77-unit building is being developed on the property and funding for an additional 4 affordable units was committed in 2013. The new building will include the same high quality finishing and amenities as the first.



500 Canatara Court offers seniors a low-maintenance lifestyle in close proximity to a variety of retail and service outlets.



## Seniors housing identified as a priority in the County of Frontenac

In the summer of 2013, a group of citizens living on Wolfe Island began meeting to explore the needs for seniors housing as many long-time islanders do not want to leave their community and appropriate housing is lacking. The group is interested in creating a small cooperative housing cluster near Marysville and initiated meetings with the Township staff and Councillors as well as County staff. A Seniors Housing Task Force was recommended in accordance with the Seniors Housing Pilot Project Study (2012). Now approved by County Council, the Task Force will help move the Wolfe Island concept along and investigate other potential opportunities for seniors housing throughout the Frontenacs.

Joe Gallivan, Manager of Sustainability Planning, says the Task Force's job is to ensure a solid understanding of affordable housing in the rural areas and consider appropriate forms of housing in the County of Frontenac as it relates to seniors housing.

The County is also developing its first-ever County Official Plan. Two drafts were released in 2013, including a section dealing exclusively with regional housing issues. For more information, please visit [frontenacounty.ca/en/corporate/OfficialPlanCurrentProjects.asp](http://frontenacounty.ca/en/corporate/OfficialPlanCurrentProjects.asp)

## Homelessness in the County, while "hidden" is persistent and long-term

In the County of Frontenac, a "Homelessness Survey" indicated that 42 persons are homeless on any given night with over 50 per cent chronically homeless. The majority (83 per cent) are "hidden" homeless – couch surfing, doubled up with family or in other temporary accommodation. More than 40 per cent are parents.

The 10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan calls for the development of a rural strategy to address homelessness in the county.



## Social Housing, Affordable Housing, Rent Geared to Income



### What does it all mean?

There are two ways of defining "affordable" housing:

1. By the cost of the rental housing as compared to rents in a geographic area. Housing is viewed as "affordable" if rental cost is not higher than 80 per cent of the Canada Mortgage and Housing (CMHC) average market rent for the area. In 2013, the average monthly rent for a 2-bedroom unit in Kingston was \$1,054. Using the 80 per cent guideline, affordable rent would be \$843 or less. More information can be found at [cmhc.ca/housingmarketinformation](http://cmhc.ca/housingmarketinformation)

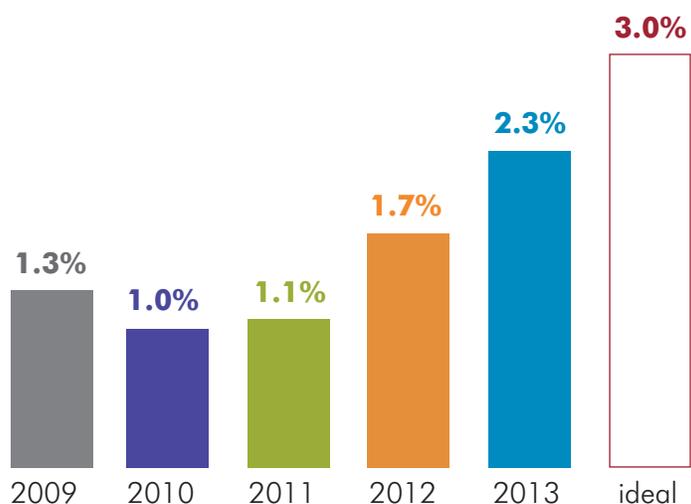
OR

2. By the affordability to the individual household paying the housing costs. All housing, rented or owned, is viewed as "affordable" to the household, if the monthly cost of the housing is 30 per cent or less of the household's gross monthly income.

"Social housing" or "rent-geared-to-income" (RGI) housing or "public" housing are terms used interchangeably to describe housing where rent is based on the tenant's gross monthly income. For social assistance recipients rent is based on a scale prescribed by legislation. For other non-social assistance recipients rent is calculated at 30 per cent of the tenant households' gross monthly income.

To apply for social housing or RGI assistance, households must apply to the Housing Registry at [www.socialhousingregistry.ca](http://www.socialhousingregistry.ca)

## Market Housing Indicators



### Local vacancy rate rises

The only other major centres with vacancy rates lower than Kingston's were Toronto, Guelph and Oshawa. In nearby smaller centres the vacancy rate changes were mixed. The average vacancy rates in Belleville and Cornwall saw an increase to 5.4 and 4.5 per cent respectively while vacancy rates in Greater Napanee and Brockville fell to 1.9 per cent and 2.6 per cent respectively (*CMHC Market Information Report – fall 2013*)

## Average Market Rent 2013

CMHC Market Information report – fall 2013.



Household income required to afford rent based on 30% of gross monthly income.

Kingston's average rent moved higher in 2013. Rents increased for all unit sizes, with 3-bedroom units seeing the largest increase at 3.7 per cent over 2012. In 2013, rent for the average 2-bedroom rose by 2.8 per cent, a pace similar to the Ontario Rent Guideline.



### For more information contact:

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The City of Kingston is the Service Manager for housing and homelessness programs for the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac, and welcomes your feedback. To comment on this document please contact: [housing@cityofkingston.ca](mailto:housing@cityofkingston.ca)

### City-scope graphic created by BmDodo Strategic Design.

Report design adapted from BmDodo Strategic Design of the 2012 Report on Housing and Homelessness in the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac.