

2014 Report on **Housing** & Homelessness

in the City of Kingston & County of Frontenac

782 individuals
used an emergency
shelter in 2014 –
down from 864 in
2013

1.9% – Kingston's
rental vacancy rate
Ideal rate is 3%

\$287,186

average home sale price in
2014, up 2.5% from 2013
(MLS average sales in Kingston)

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Introduction

We are delighted to publish the third annual *Housing and Homelessness Report* that includes information about our community's response to housing and homelessness. We have included a few stories and performance indicators to highlight our activities in response to varied housing needs of our residents.

"To realize our vision as a smart city we work to improve the quality-of-life of all our residents because a smart city is a caring city where we all have the opportunity to succeed. In December 2013, Kingston city council approved the *10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan* and this report highlights progress made in 2014. Our plan aims to meet the diverse needs of individuals and households across our community by encouraging a wide range of housing options. From homelessness prevention to affordable home ownership, this report highlights that we are moving forward with new policies and approaches to reduce homelessness and improve affordability across the housing continuum."

– Bryan Paterson
Mayor, City of Kingston

"Last year was the first full year of implementing the City and County's *10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan*. The plan provides a map to addressing housing and homelessness issues. Some of the accomplishments of 2014 included: the opportunity for homeowners to have secondary suites in their homes across much of the city, and a complete redesign of the homeless-service system. The City is committed to providing a range of programs that address every aspect of housing and homelessness. These include subsidized housing, accessibility for seniors and incentives for renters to move into home ownership."

– Sheldon Laidman
Director, housing and social services department

Kingston Frontenac renovates

In 2014, Kingston Frontenac renovates program allocated more than \$200,000 in forgivable loans and/or grants to households requiring home repairs or accessibility modifications to help eligible homeowners stay in their homes.

In 2014 Kingston Frontenac renovates had:

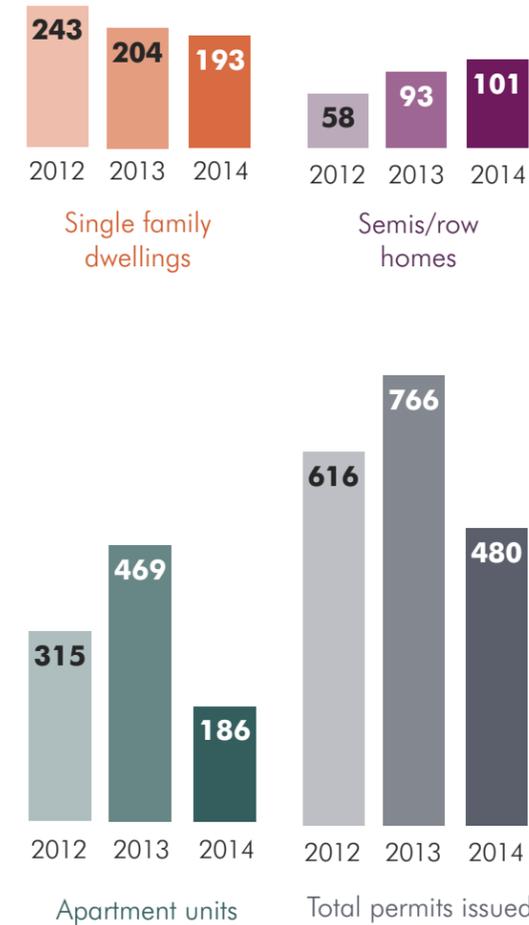
26 participants **24%** were from Kingston **76%** were from Frontenac County

Since the program began in 2012, 86 participants have received more than

\$600,000

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

New housing permits issued by unit type in the city of Kingston



"I found myself in a situation where I was left with emergency repairs for a new roof, which I could not afford. The application process to Kingston Frontenac renovates was clear and fast, and I was treated with respect by staff during the crisis. The repairs were quick and the roof warranty was placed in my name. With the help of the program, a huge weight has been lifted from my shoulders and I can now stay in my home."

– A program participant,
Kingston Frontenac renovates

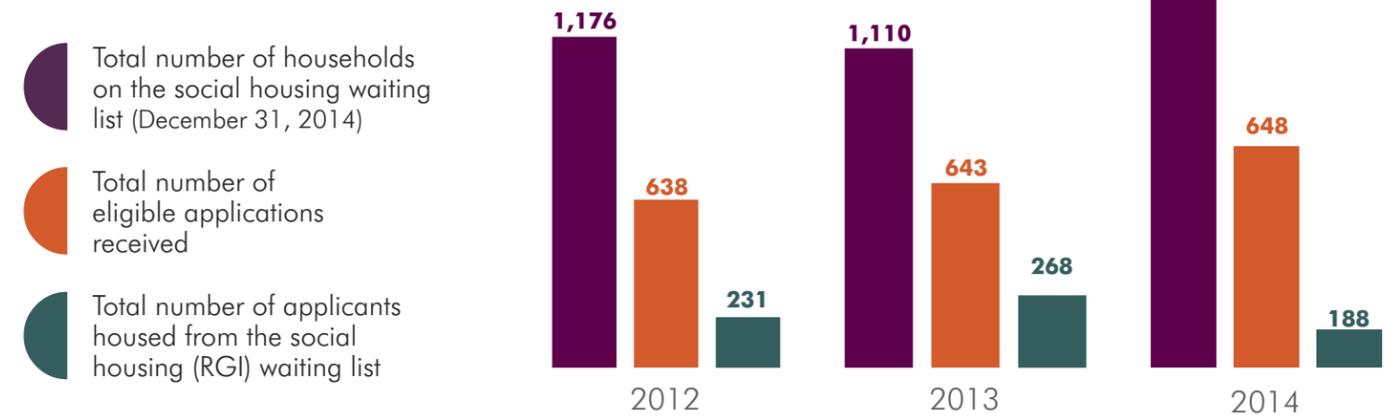
What is social housing?

Social housing, rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing and public housing are all terms to describe housing where rents are based on the tenant's gross monthly income. The City is required to make a minimum of 2003 RGI units available.

For those receiving Ontario Works or Ontario Disability Support, rent is based on a scale prescribed by provincial legislation. For others, rent is calculated at 30 per cent of the income earned by all members of the household.

As the service manager for the City of Kingston and County of Frontenac, the City maintains a centralized waiting list for those wishing to move into one of the 2003 RGI units.

2014 social housing centralized wait-list statistics



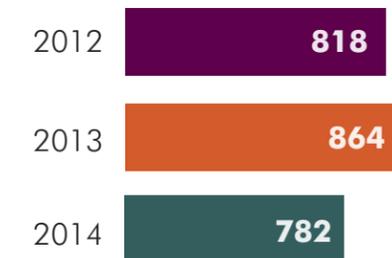
Shelter Services

In 2014, the total use of available bed-nights increased by 3,473 nights over 2013 while the number of individuals staying in the shelters decreased by 82. This suggests that although there were fewer individuals using a shelter, the shelter stays were longer in duration.

Even though people might be staying longer, there remained extra bed capacity in the system. In 2014, there were 25,997 bed-nights used from an available 31,390 bed-nights. This represented 83 per cent of the available capacity. An optimal capacity is between 90 and 94 per cent.

The housing first approach, which is being implemented in 2016, is expected to decrease the demand for shelter beds as individuals and families move into permanent housing.

Number of individuals staying in emergency shelters



Shelter usage – Annual bed-nights

Bed-nights: Total beds available per night, city-wide, is 86. Over the course of the year, this translates to 31,390 available bed nights.



The “housing first” approach aims to end homelessness

During 2014 the framework has been developed to implement the plan for a seamless, co-ordinated, and client-oriented homelessness service system as approved in the *10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan*. Community partner organizations have focused on planning and training for implementation, which begins early in 2015. Using a housing first approach, individuals and families who are experiencing homelessness and have the deepest and most chronic need, are offered individually tailored supports to help them obtain and maintain permanent housing.

Kingston and Frontenac agencies using a housing first approach:

- ✓ Frontenac Community Mental Health and Addiction Services (FCMHAS)
- ✓ Kingston Home Base Non-Profit Housing
- ✓ Kingston’s emergency shelters: Dawn House; Elizabeth Fry, Kingston; In From the Cold; Kingston Youth Shelter; Lily’s Place; Ryandale; Salvation Army - Harbour Light
- ✓ Salvation Army, Kingston – Community and Family Services
- ✓ Southern Frontenac Community Services Corporation, in partnership with Northern Frontenac Community Services Corporation and FCMHAS.

Housing first is about:

- Moving people from emergency shelters to permanent housing with supports
- Obtaining the right services at the right time through co-ordinated access
- Providing rent subsidies through private landlords to make rent affordable

What are our partners saying about the changes in our homelessness services system?

“The City of Kingston is taking a progressive leadership role among Canadian municipalities to use the existing best practices and the recent information from the national housing study *At Home/Chez Soi*. By providing an assertive program to support people in being successful in obtaining and maintaining housing, the root cause of homelessness can be addressed.”

– Victoria Huehn, executive director, Frontenac Community Mental Health and Addiction Services

“Rural homelessness is often hidden. We are grateful for the support offered through the City of Kingston’s community homelessness prevention initiative and are very much looking forward to ways and means to end rural homelessness in the years ahead.”

– David Townsend, executive director, Southern Frontenac Community Services Corporation (SFCSC)



Kingston Home Base Non-Profit Housing: On the move

For more than 10 years leading to 2014, In From The Cold, Kingston’s largest emergency shelter operated by Home Base Housing, had provided services in a 1,600 square foot low-ceilinged basement with one shower, two washrooms, a small kitchen and laundry facilities. On a busy night, clients slept on mattresses on the floor in the centre of the room.

In the same building on Barrie Street, 6,000 clients a year were assisted to find or keep housing. In the summer of 2014, Home Base Housing moved into its new facility at 540 Montreal St.

In addition to the existing programs, seven new affordable apartments were added with a separate entrance giving people with long histories of homelessness a chance to live independently in their own units with support from staff.



We love it here!

“We admit that we had a lot of trepidation about moving. Change is hard, we didn’t know what to expect.

We watched as our clients entered this new space tonight. It was magical to share their excitement – after years in the crowded basement at 426 Barrie St., it was like we had arrived in a new world. At first people were in awe and maybe a bit overwhelmed. But that was quickly followed by a wonderful calm contentment – that this time in their lives, a time of struggle and uncertainty, did not define what they are worth. We think there was a realization that this agency respects them as people, deserving of a place like this, because they are worth it.

Although 540 Montreal St. is just a ‘building,’ we felt like we were part of restoring hope and dignity to people tonight.”

– Thoughts from Alex and Brooke, Home Base Housing shelter staff on opening night

Rideau Heights Regeneration

The planning for the revitalization of the social housing properties and public parklands in the Rideau Heights neighbourhood continues to develop.

The planning process is led by a team of experts with backgrounds in public housing and neighbourhood renewal with input and support provided by staff from the City of Kingston and the Kingston and Frontenac Housing Corporation. In order to recognize and incorporate the perspectives and experiences of the community, area residents and local service providers have been engaged at various stages to establish the goals and expectations for neighbourhood renewal.

The community supports the best practice of reducing the concentration of subsidized housing units by relocating portions to other areas of the city and introducing private rental and ownership homes into the renewed neighbourhood.

The first phase of neighbourhood revitalization is the redevelopment of Shannon Park and the new community centre.

The revitalized park will include an integrated pathway network, a multi-use sports court that will accommodate outdoor skating in the winter, Kingston's largest skateboard park, new playground equipment, community gardens, lighting and landscaping enhancements and naturalized stormwater controls. In partnership with the Limestone District School Board, the new community centre will connect to Rideau Heights Public School and provide:

- a full-sized gymnasium
- community kitchen facilities
- various meeting and multi-use spaces for community organizations and service providers

A new public street will provide east-west access across the park and enhance visibility and safety within the park – a key objective expressed by the community.

The final neighbourhood revitalization plan will establish direction for other improvements to the area to be phased in to create a balanced and sustainable community.

Conceptual design of the Shannon Park redevelopment plan and Rideau Heights Community Centre.



- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. New stormwater swales | 7. Improved park entrances |
| 2. New proposed market townhouses | 8. Existing splash pad, washrooms and new playground equipment |
| 3. New playground equipment | 9. New public street |
| 4. New skate park and multi-sports court | 10. Relocated sports fields |
| 5. New community centre | 11. New community gardens |
| 6. Rideau Heights Public School | |

Key objectives established by the community include:

- continuing to provide affordable housing options
- improving neighbourhood safety
- supporting youth through recreation programming and social activities
- renewing walkable public park spaces
- providing better connections to available programs and services
- creating a mixed-income neighbourhood that integrates various forms of housing and household types

For more information on this project visit: www.CityofKingston.ca/Projects

Youth homelessness



In 2013, the United Way of KFLA and community partners worked on a pilot project to mobilize local efforts to end youth homelessness. Since then, there have been numerous conversations and extensive consultation with youth, partners and stakeholders. The community identified the number of youth who were homeless in 2013 through a point-in-time count. Data showed us that one-third of the people in shelters are youth between the ages of 15 and 24. A point-in-time count in March 2014 identified 60 youth as precariously housed and 20 as homeless and staying in shelters.

A plan to end youth homelessness was developed in 2014 and includes strategies based on youth input.

The steering committee has worked to identify gaps and opportunities, facilitate awareness and access and introduce programs like family-mediation services.

The three areas of focus are:



United Way and the City have aligned funding for some of the new programming. The committee is working on a communications and awareness plan to:

- help youth access the system of care
- provide awareness about youth homelessness to youth, their families and the community
- increase the range of housing options to meet the needs of youth

The steering committee will develop evaluation plans and monitor progress through our implementation phase.

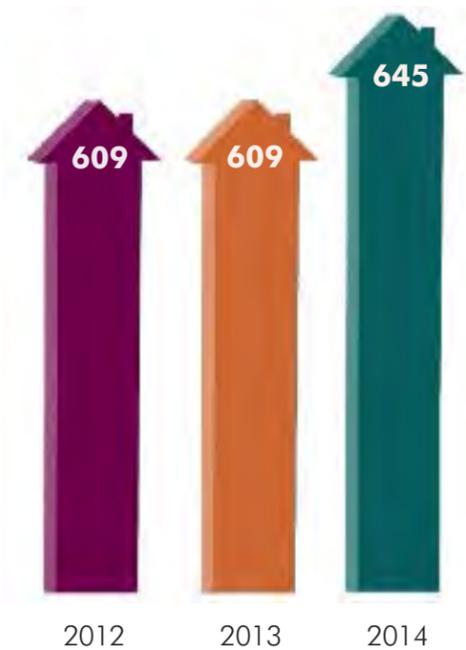
Rent-supplement program

A rent supplement is the difference between the rent that a household can afford to pay based on a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) calculation and the landlord's market rent. This monthly supplement is typically paid to the landlord on the household's behalf.

For instance, a household that rents a two-bedroom apartment with a monthly market rent of \$1,000 and pays \$550 based on its RGI calculation would receive a rent subsidy paid to the landlord in the amount of \$450 each month.

The City of Kingston administers several rent-supplement programs that subsidize approximately 645 units. Each program has separate guidelines and restrictions with funding derived from federal, provincial and municipal governments.

The number of units subsidized under the rent-supplement program fluctuates as existing rent-supplement agreements expire, new agreements are entered into, and existing rent-supplement funding programs end. Landlords interested in participating in the rent-supplement program with the City should contact the housing department at housing@cityofkingston.ca or 613-546-2695 ext. 4907.



Number of units subsidized through rent-supplement program

Secondary suites

Municipalities in Ontario are now required to support the development of secondary suites as an alternative housing format.

Experience has shown that secondary suites form an important component of the rental housing market and can be compatibly integrated into many neighbourhoods. Not only do secondary suites tend to rent at more affordable rates, they also provide a housing format that meets the needs of many households including: seniors/multi-generational households, disabled individuals receiving support from the primary resident, single parents and low-to-moderate income households.

In addition, secondary suites support sustainability objectives including re-populating neighbourhoods where average household sizes are in decline and supporting more compact urban development, which supports the efficient and economical provision of infrastructure, public services and transportation options.

As part of the City's ongoing secondary suites initiative, the affordable housing secondary suites grant offers capital funding of up to \$15,000 to create a secondary suite and, in addition, application fee relief when required. To learn more about the secondary suites affordable housing grant program please visit www.CityofKingston.ca/SecondarySuites.



Orange shading identifies location of example second residential units

“ It has always been important for me to allow my son to experience the usual stages of life including growing up and living on his own, but I knew it would be challenging...Our home started to feel crowded and both of our needs for privacy and independence were becoming difficult to maintain...while I expected this new independence to be a positive experience for both of us, I was most surprised by the responsibility and independence he took in maintaining his new home from day one. ”

– Program participant who constructed a secondary suite for her son who is on the Ontario Disability Support Program

Municipal capital investment in affordable housing program

The capital investment in affordable housing program offers money to private and not-for-profit developers in exchange for creating below-market rental units in their housing developments. This creates affordable housing in the city and stimulates the development of rental housing stock more broadly. In 2012, city council approved a five-year commitment of \$1 million per year to fund the capital investment program.

In 2014, municipal capital funding was awarded to create a total of 33 units. Since its inception in 2012, this municipally funded program has created 51 below-market rent apartment units for low-to-moderate income households.

For more information about the capital investment program, contact the housing division at housing@cityofkingston.ca. While proposals are encouraged at any time, capital funding is based on available budget.

33 affordable units funded in 2014



We asked – you answered: Home is...

The City of Kingston's "Home is..." social media campaign was created to gather positive ideas around housing and encourage residents to review the City's 10-Year Municipal Housing and Homelessness Plan.

Individuals were encouraged to write what home meant to them, snap a selfie with their idea and share it on Facebook and Twitter using the hashtag #HousingFirst.

The City received nearly two dozen submissions for the campaign. The submitted photos can be viewed at www.CityofKingston.ca/Housing where you can also learn more on how to submit your photo and share what home is to you.

Home is...



Addressing housing and homelessness needs in our community



The City of Kingston, as service manager, administers the following programs and initiatives to address housing and homelessness issues in the City of Kingston and the County of Frontenac.

Social housing program

Sixteen housing providers manage 2003 Rent-Geared-to-Income (RGI) units in Kingston and Frontenac with oversight and direction provided by the service manager and governed by *Ontario's Housing Services Act (2011)*. Eligibility for RGI units is administered by the City's social housing registry.

Investment in Affordable Housing (IAH) for Ontario program

The province provides funding to the service manager to deliver various programs. Funding under this program and its predecessor programs has been provided since 2006. The funding is used to improve access to affordable housing through rent supplements, home ownership and home renovation assistance and capital funding for affordable housing.

Kingston Frontenac renovates program

Funded through IAH, this program provides forgivable loans and/or grants to households requiring home repairs or accessibility modifications needed to help people stay in their homes.

Land acquisition and disposition program

This program is created under local policy and funded through municipal dollars. The program allows the City to purchase available land suitable for development and then offer it for sale at a reduced price in exchange for affordable units being offered in the new development.

Capital investment program for affordable housing

The City provides capital funding to developers in exchange for affordable units being offered within the development. This program was created under local policy and funded through municipal dollars to stimulate development while creating affordable units.

Home ownership program

Residents in the City of Kingston and the County of Frontenac who are renting may be eligible for down payment assistance equal to five per cent of a home's purchase price based on program criteria.

Secondary suites affordable housing grant program

Homeowners in the City of Kingston may be eligible to participate in the creation of additional modestly priced rental units such as a basement apartment in their home. In exchange the City may apply a municipal fee rebate or grant to offset the cost to qualifying homeowners.

Housing and homelessness programs

The service manager enters into contracts with local service providers to deliver a range of programs and services to assist individuals and families who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. Services include emergency shelters, supportive housing, drop-ins, eviction prevention and other programs for adults and youth living in Kingston or the County.

For more details on these programs and eligibility visit www.CityofKingston.ca/Housing or call the housing division at 613-546-2695 ext. 4907.

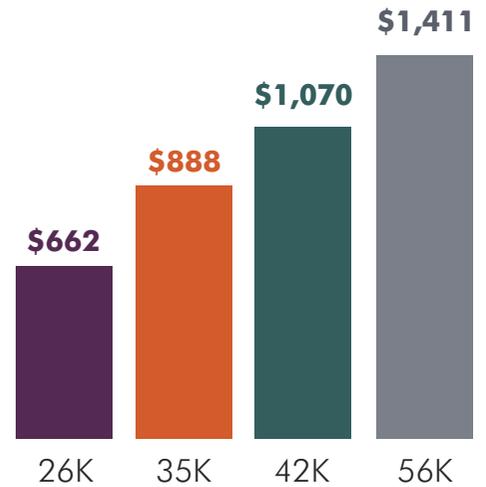


Average Market Rent 2014

Based on October 2014 Rental Market Survey,
Canada Mortgage and Housing

-  Bachelor apartment
-  1 bedroom
-  2 bedroom
-  3 bedroom

This October, the average two bedroom rent in existing apartment buildings rose by 1.5 per cent in Kingston. The rate of increase in rents is lower than the previous year. This reduced rate may be due in part to the allowable rent review guideline increase dropping to 0.8 per cent this year. It permits landlords to increase rents by this amount for sitting tenants.



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



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

Cityscape graphic created by BmDodo Strategic Design.