

First Unitarian Congregation

Housing Need Assessment

Housing Need

Overview

According to the City of Ottawa 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan 2018 Progress Report, in Ottawa, nearly 8,000 individuals used shelters last year, including 1,078 families. There are over 12,000 households on the centralized wait list for affordable housing, and people wait for up to 8 years for an affordable unit. On average, only about 100 units of affordable housing are built each year. This demonstrates that the need greatly outweighs what is currently being developed.

Figure 1: Overview of Affordable Housing Waitlist vs Builds



Priority Groups

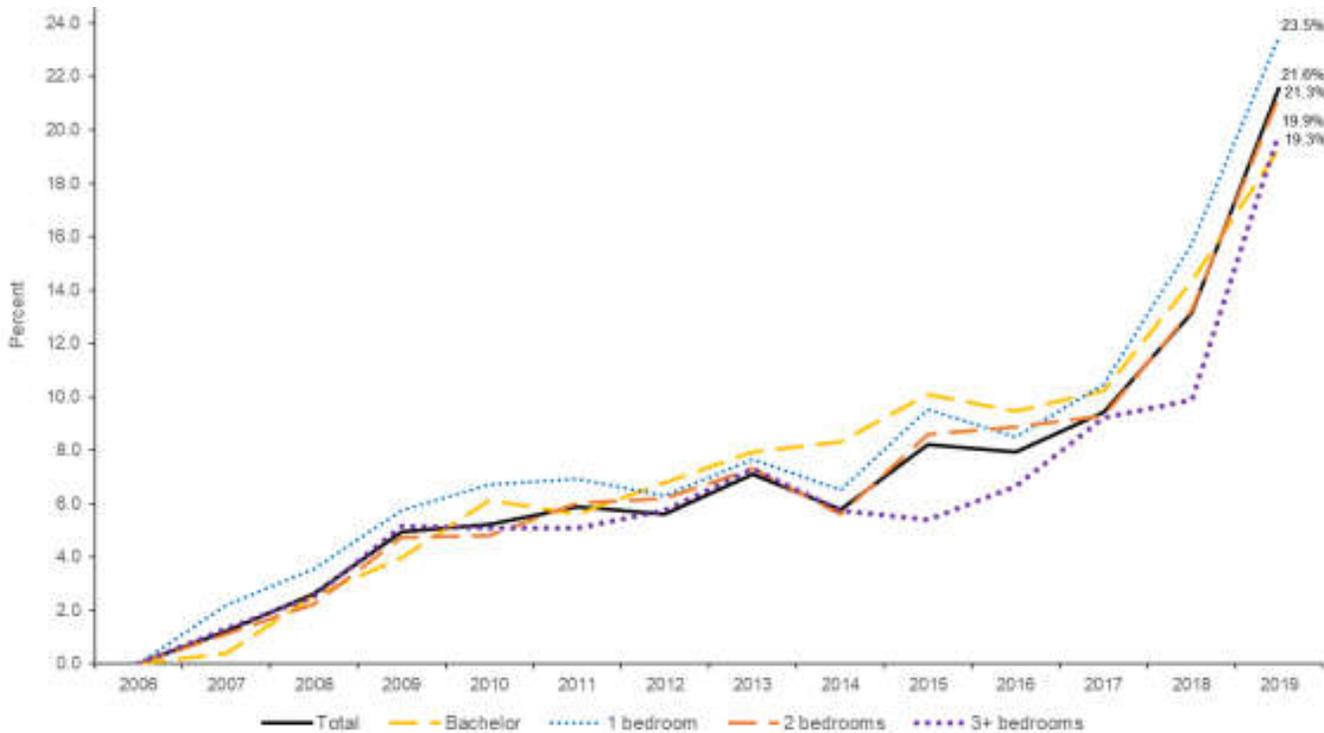
Many Canadians have difficulty finding and affording housing that meets their needs. Through the National Housing Strategy, CMHC has identified a number of key priority groups that will be the focus for addressing the housing needs of vulnerable Canadians. These groups are as follows:

- Women and children fleeing domestic violence
- Seniors
- Indigenous peoples
- People experiencing homelessness
- People living with disabilities
- Veterans
- Young adults
- Racialized groups
- Recent immigrants, especially refugees
- People living with mental health and addiction issues
- LGBTQ2+

Rising Rents

Demand for housing options in Ottawa is increasing more than the supply. According to the 2016 Census, nearly 12% of households in Ottawa were experiencing core housing need. Core housing need occurs when a household must spend more than 30% of pre-tax income to pay for the median rent of local housing that meets all adequacy, affordability, and suitability standards. Figure 2 demonstrates that since 2006, average monthly rent has increased by more than 23% for one-bedroom units, 21.3% for two-bedrooms, and 19.9% for three-bedrooms.

Figure 2: Change in Average Monthly Rent Since 2006 in Ottawa



Source: CMHC, 2019. [Accessed 24 February 2020](#)

Supply and Demand

According to the City Housing Needs Summary (2019), if the current housing construction rates continue with the same trend, it is estimated that by 2031 there will be a gap of approximately 18,000-19,000 dwellings available in Ottawa. In this scenario, average apartment rents would be expected to rise by 41% in the period between 2018 and 2031. This would result in almost 25,000 more households living in unaffordable dwellings by 2031.

The following are other key statistics related to the supply and demand of housing in Ottawa:

- Only 10% of new housing starts have been rental housing in the last seven years, in a city where 34.6% of households are renter households.
- The rental housing stock in the City of Ottawa is aging, almost half of Ottawa's existing housing stock was built prior to 1980. Approximately 60% of Ottawa's rental units are at least 40 years old.
- Between 2016 and 2018, the supply of rental units has increased by 1% and during the same period the population living in rental housing has increased by 2.9%.
- Between 2014 and 2018, the City increased its affordable housing supply by 516 units.

Seniors

- In 2019, over 15% of the population was 65 and older, an increase of 23.6% since 2011.
- Ottawa's population aged 55 and over increased by 18% between 2011-2016, compared to an increase of less than 2% for the population under age 55.
- It is estimated that the number of seniors will grow to 25.8% of the population by 2029 from only 10% in 2019.

In 2018, the City engaged 1,900 older adults to reconfirm their priorities and identify potential actions for the Older Adult Plan 2020-2022. The consultations confirmed the pressing housing needs of groups of older adults, including:

- Offering more options for subsidized rents for middle- and low-income seniors.
- Increasing the number of affordable housing units, especially for senior women and seniors with disabilities.
- Providing more community support services to keep people in their home and in their communities, such as home improvements.
- Exploring and supporting innovative solutions, such as co-op housing for seniors and home-sharing.

Seniors are the second largest household type on the Ottawa Wait List for supportive housing (Table 1). They are the third largest household type on the Ottawa Wait List over all (Table 2)

Table 1: Active Households on the Centralized Wait List for Supportive Housing, 2014-2018

Household Type	2014		2015		2016		2017		2018	
	On the List	Housed								
Single Adult	1,346	78	1,042	62	1,010	57	978	74	1,045	48
Senior	132	1	96	3	113	2	118	5	133	2
Household with Children	89	8	40	4	33	5	23	2	30	2
2+ Adults	32	1	19	0	17	1	23	2	24	0

Source: City of Ottawa Needs Assessment, 2019.

Table 2: Centralized Wait List Demand for all Households, 2018

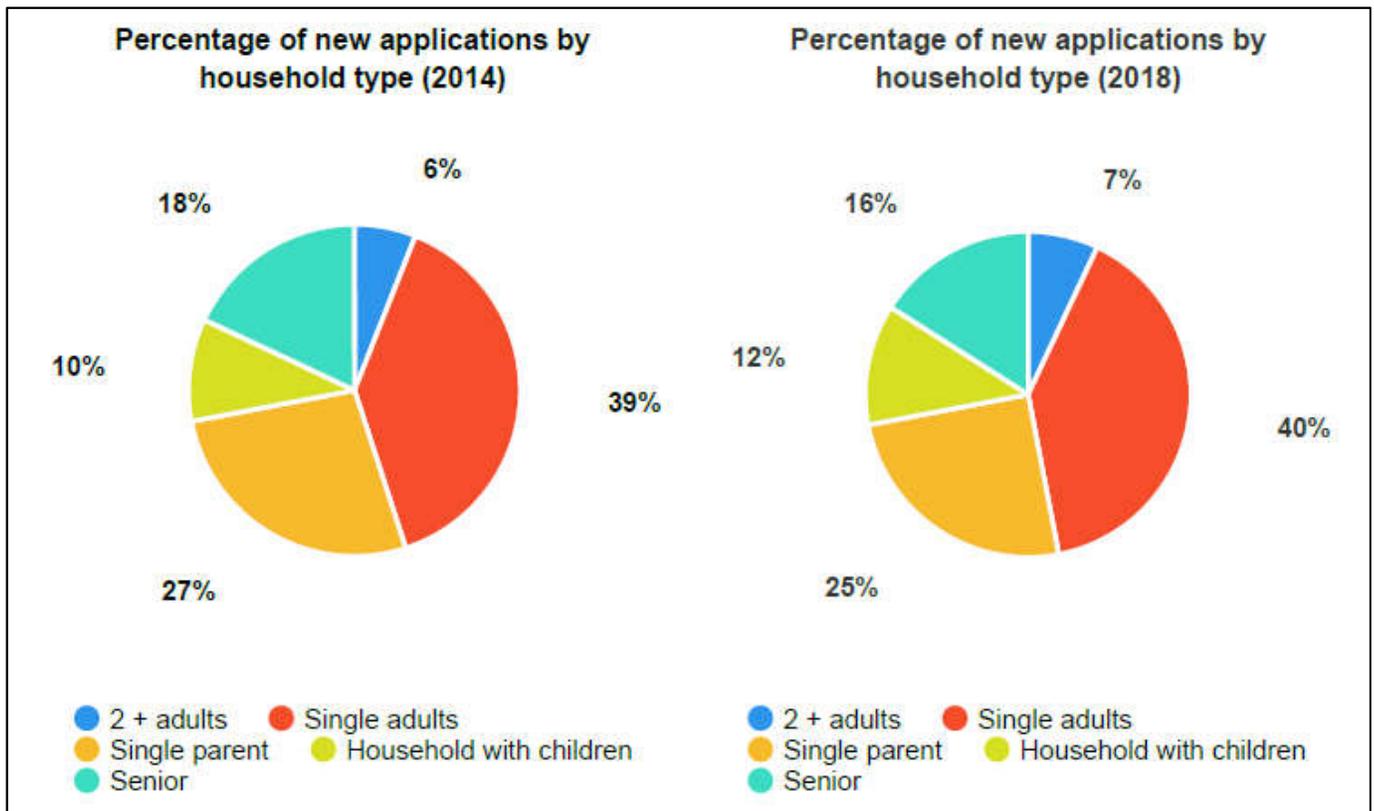
Household Type	2018 Total Households	Percentage	Mean	Median
Single Adult	4,423	36%	5.8	4.5
Household with Children	4,295	35%	4.8	3.4
Senior	2,680	22%	4.9	4.1
2+ Adults	557	5%	4.2	3.8
3+ Adults	208	2%	4.0	4.0

Source: City of Ottawa Needs Assessment, 2019.

Single Adults

Single adults have the highest demand for housing on the City of Ottawa’s Centralized Wait List (Table 2) as well as for supportive housing (Table 1). Since 2014, this group of people have accounted for the largest number of applications for social housing of all the household types, 40% in 2018 (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Percentage of New Applications by Household Type



Source: City of Ottawa Needs Assessment, 2019.

Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is defined as housing that combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use. It is one option to house chronically homeless individuals with high acuity. Usually, units are in one home or building.

The lack of available, affordable housing in the city is causing a backlog in the shelter system because there is decreasing movement from shelters into affordable or supportive housing. The shelter system is facing challenges with the increased incidence and complexity of mental health and addiction issues among clients. The increasingly complex nature of clients accessing shelter services has created an increased need for support services, and directly impacts the ability of agencies to be able to find and maintain housing for these clients. This has resulted in a call to increase the supply of supportive housing for people who experience chronic homelessness and are living with developmental disabilities, acquired brain injuries, serious physical, mental illness and/or addictions.

As of 2018, the City provided and funded up to 1,725 supportive housing options. At the end of 2018, the total number of people on the Centralized Wait List for subsidized supportive housing units was 1,233. Of this, 1,045 were single adults (Table 1).

Homelessness

An individual is considered chronically homeless if they have been homeless for six months or more in the past year. A sharp increase in the number of chronically homeless family units in Ottawa began in 2016, primarily driven by increases in refugee claimants arriving from the United States. Compared with 2014, there was a 320.3% increase in the number of family units deemed chronically homeless in 2019.

During 2018, all shelters in Ottawa were using overflow beds to meet the demand. Table 3 outlines the capacity gap of permanent beds based on nightly occupancy in 2018.

Table 3: Community and family shelters gap - demand vs. capacity, 2018

Shelter Type	Shelter Permanent Bed Capacity	Average Nightly Occupancy	% Above Permanent Bed Capacity
All Shelters	943	1,964	108
Men	497	535	8
Families	287	1,234	330
Women	131	161	23
Youth	28	34	21

Source: City of Ottawa Needs Assessment, 2019.

In order to help manage shelter capacity and demand, the City, in collaboration with the largest community shelters, developed and standardized a process for “diverting” new clients from using emergency shelters, in situations where the client has safe and appropriate alternative accommodation.

Housing Providers in Ottawa

First Unitarian will explore partnerships with housing providers in Ottawa to operate any housing that is developed on their campus site. Table 4 outlines five housing providers that First Unitarian may be interested in speaking with.

Table 4: A Few Housing Providers in Ottawa

Housing Provider	Type of Tenants	Type of Housing	# of Buildings	Approximate # of units and/or beds
Multifaith Housing Initiative	Families & single adults at risk of homelessness	Mixed-income; supportive housing	5	179
Ottawa Salus	Single adults living with mental illnesses	Supportive housing	14	214 (partner with other housing providers for an additional 148 supportive units)
CCOC	Families & single adults	Mixed-income	52	1,600
Cornerstone Housing for Women	Single adult women	Emergency shelters & supportive housing	5	174
Wigwamen Incorporated	Indigenous and non-indigenous people; Families, singles and seniors	Mixed affordable	1 in Ottawa, multiple in the GTA	41 units in Ottawa