

2017 Housing Inventory City of Grande Prairie



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Introduction

In moving towards a goal of identifying existing stock and future housing needs the City of Grande Prairie's Affordable Housing Committee¹ has updated the inventory of affordable, social, temporary and shelter housing in the City in preparation for a larger community assessment. In addition to providing background information, the Inventory orients work towards establishing new partnerships and fulfills monitoring recommendations outlined in the City of Grande Prairie's Affordable Housing Master Plan: 2011-2021 (2011 AHMP).

The Inventory uses information from local housing providers including: number and type of units available, vacancy and rental rates, current residents, wait lists and plans for new developments or changes to programming. Key concepts from the 2011 AHMP and the 2014 Housing Needs Analysis (2014 HNA) for the City of Grande Prairie have also been included and updated with more current information. The most recent Census information (2016) will be released throughout 2017 and will be reviewed once available as part of the larger community assessment.

The Inventory focuses on priority populations identified in 2011 by the AHMP and confirmed more recently by the Affordable Housing Committee, as listed below. When reviewing Census data, the Inventory focuses on households in Core Housing Need²:

- Individuals requiring accessible units
- Seniors
- Youth
- Families
- Individuals with a history of homelessness, including those with complex needs
- Students
- Immigrants/Refugees
- Indigenous Individuals

Primary questions that the Inventory seeks to answer are:

- What is the current supply of housing and approach to accompanying programming in Grande Prairie?
- What is the current need for housing and approach to accompanying programming in Grande Prairie?
- What will housing demand, supply and programming look like in the next five and ten years?

The inventory also provides opportunity for housing providers to identify opportunities for partnerships.

¹ A subcommittee of the Community Advisory Board on Housing and Homelessness

² A household is in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three standards).

- Adequate dwellings are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.

- Suitable dwellings have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.

- Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income. (CMHC, 2017)

Note that this category excludes full-time students.

Method

The Community Housing Coordinator, responsible for managing the City's Affordable Housing, developed a list of key housing providers. These housing providers shared data using an email/telephone survey. Follow-up was done via email and telephone. Excel was used to aggregate the data. Historic documents and current data was reviewed. Additional information was gathered from shelters, temporary housing providers and Housing First service providers via email and telephone on an individual basis.

Definitions

The following definitions are based on Provincial guidelines, the Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation and local practice.

Affordable Housing: Affordable housing includes government owned or supported housing provided by the public, non-profit, and private sectors for persons who due to financial, social or other circumstances are unable to obtain or maintain housing accommodation through the private market. Affordable Housing programs in Alberta include:

- 1) the development of units where the owner rents at least 10% lower than market rate for up to 20yrs, 2) seniors housing, community housing subsidized for families, seniors and individuals with special needs,
- 3) special needs housing for seniors, those with physical disabilities and victims of family violence, and
- 4) rent supplements for households to subsidize the difference between private rent and 30% of household income.

Permanent Housing: Occupants in permanent housing do not have end-dates on their residency, outside of the lease agreement. Permanent housing examples include market rental, homeownership and affordable housing that is not linked to program delivery. This report focuses on Permanent *Affordable* Housing rather than on market housing.

Temporary Housing: Occupants in temporary housing have end-dates on their residency, often linked to program parameters or age. Temporary Housing examples include second stage housing for women and children leaving domestic violence situations, residential addiction treatment facilities and other housing arrangements that limit the occupant term of residency to two years or less. Temporary Housing providers in this report include:

- Serenity Place - Transitional Housing for Women
- Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter - Youth Transition House
- Rising Above – Residential Addiction Treatment
- GPRC – student housing. Not typically classified in temporary housing, but for the purposes of this report, GPRC is classified as such.
- Mental health beds on the second floor of Rotary House Emergency Shelter, utilized by Alberta Health Services³

Shelter: Shelters do not offer any prospect of permanence to occupants. Occupants are in housing crisis and experiencing homelessness.

³ Not included in the report tables

Homelessness: Individuals and households without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. Often the result of societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, individual financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. An individual with a history of homelessness has been either chronically or episodically homeless in the past three years.

Complex Needs: Individuals experiencing or with a history of homelessness who also face severe mental, cognitive, behavioural, substance abuse and physical challenges. Individuals with complex needs often require additional supports to obtain and maintain housing. Rotary House second floor is the only housing provider in Grande Prairie able to accommodate individuals with complex needs. However, individuals with complex needs still face a major housing and services gap in Grande Prairie, resulting in an ongoing cycle of homelessness.

Accessible; Barrier Free: Accessible housing incorporates elements such as lower countertops, ramps, single-level living, wider doorways, adapted bathrooms, etc in order to accommodate individuals who require a wheelchair, walker or other mobility support equipment. Barrier free (or universal) housing seeks to accommodate anyone, including those with unique needs in addition to general accessibility, such as blindness and hearing impairment. Barrier free can also refer to gender-neutral housing options. For example, Sunrise House offers one single bedroom to accommodate transgendered youth, while the remaining rooms are shared, male or female.

Core Housing Need: A household is said to be in core housing need if its housing falls below at least one of the adequacy, suitability, or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its total before-tax income to pay the median rent of alternative local housing that is acceptable (meets all three standards). Note that this category excludes full-time students. (CMHC, 2017)

- Adequate dwellings are those reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs.
- Suitable dwellings have enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements.
- Affordable dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income.

Housing First: Housing First places priority on providing affordable, safe and permanent housing quickly, with minimal requirements beyond a standard lease agreement. There is an expectation that individuals served through the intervention will access a broader range of community resources, have meaningful daily activities, and work towards greater independence and improved quality of life. Basic criterion of an Alberta Housing First approach includes the following:

1. Move people into housing directly from streets and shelters without preconditions of treatment acceptance or compliance.
2. A service provider is contracted to make available robust support services which must be available to the client. These services are predicated on assertive engagement, not coercion.
3. Embraces a harm reduction approach to addictions rather than mandating abstinence. At the same time, the provider must be prepared to support client commitments to recovery.
4. Continued tenancy is dependent on fulfilling a landlord-tenant agreement and clients have protection under the law.
5. Implementation is either a project-based or scattered site model.
6. Long range goal is to move clients toward the highest level of self-reliance as possible.

Families: Those who are parents with minor children, adults with legal custody of children, a couple in which one person is pregnant, multi-generational families, part of an adult interdependent relationship.

Indigenous: Individuals and households who identify as First Nations, Inuit and Metis. Approximately 10% of the general population in Grande Prairie is Indigenous. Grande Prairie is located in Treaty 8 Territory, near 24 Alberta First Nations.

Seniors: Individuals over 65 years.

Youth: Individuals 24 years and under.

Current Supply

An overview of permanent, temporary and shelter housing in Grande Prairie as of March 1, 2017 are included in Table A-1 (permanent). Table A-2 (Temporary) and Table A-3 (Shelter).

Permanent Housing: There are eight providers of permanent affordable and social housing in the City of Grande Prairie, the largest being the Grande Spirit Foundation which manages 72% of units. Nearly half of permanent affordable and social housing available in Grande Prairie is in the form of bachelor apartments.

1. Grande Spirit Foundation
2. Canadian Mental Health Association
3. Prime Property – CAIRN on the Boulevard
4. GP Residential Society
5. Oasis Fellowship of Ministries
6. Elder's Caring Shelter
7. Rotary House - Second and Third floors
8. Glenn Penner

TABLE A-1. Permanent Affordable Housing Resources

	March 2017 Residents*	Total Units	Bach	1 bed	2 bed	3+ bed	Rooms & Beds	Accessible Units
Grande Spirit Foundation Lodge	251	235	195	38	2			General
Grande Spirit Foundation and GP Residential Society	436	289**	30	111	119	29		42
Glenn Penner	1	3				3		0
Oasis	22	20	6	9	5			1
Prime Property	NA	65	44	4	6	11		7
Elders Caring Shelter	17	16					16 rooms	3
CMHA ***	63	63	57	1	2	3		
Rotary House	29	32	20				12 rooms; 24 beds	4
Total Permanent	819	723	352	163	134	46	28 rooms; 40 beds	57
Proportion			49%	23%	19%	6%	4%	8%

*Does not include dependents

**110 affordable, 179 social

***Includes 20 units that are current rented at CMHA's affordable housing rate, although CMHA has the ability to increase the rent to market rate.

Temporary and Student Housing: There are four providers of temporary housing in the City and one student housing provider included in this report⁴. Serenity Place is the only temporary housing provider designated as affordable, though all providers offer housing at relatively low cost. The majority of Temporary housing is available as room and board (bedroom with common bathroom, kitchen and living area).

1. Serenity Place - Second Stage Housing for Women
2. Rising Above - Residential Addiction Treatment
3. GPRC – Student Housing
4. Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter - Youth Transition House
5. Aurora Home – Transition for Women⁵

TABLE A-2. Temporary Housing Resources

Temporary Housing	March 2017 Residents*	Total Units	Bach	1 bed	2 bed	3+ bed	Rooms & Beds	Accessible Units
Rising Above	31	31					Dorm style; 31 beds	2
Youth House	2	4					4 rooms; 4 beds	
GPRC Student	379	371				9	362 rooms; 362 beds	6
Serenity Place	10	14	3	8	3			
TOTAL Temporary	422	420	3	8	3	9	397 beds	
Proportion			1%	2%	1%	2%	95%	2%

*Does not include dependents

Shelter: There are three providers of emergency shelter in the City. Rotary House cots are \$10 per night. Rotary House mats, Odyssey House and Sunrise House are available at no cost.

1. Rotary House – Adult Male or Female - Cots and Mats
2. Odyssey House – Adult Female and dependents
3. Sunrise House – Youth

Table A-3. Shelter Resources (Beds)

Temporary Housing	Total Units	Bach	1 bed	2 bed	3+ bed	Rooms & Beds	Accessible Units
Odyssey House	42					42 beds	
Rotary House (cots)	52					52 beds	General
Rotary House (mats)	40					40 mats	Not accessible.
Sunrise House	12					12 beds	Not accessible
TOTAL Shelter	106					146	

*Does not include dependents

⁴ Five including Rotary House mental health beds used by Alberta Health Services

⁵ Aurora Home did not participate in the inventory.

Affordable and Market Housing Rates

The March 2017 average rents for affordable housing units in Grande Prairie are compared to similar market unit rents in Table B-1. Bachelor units are available at the absolute and relative lowest cost. 2-bedroom affordable units are closest in cost to market units. Table B-1 does not include Grande Spirit Foundation rents, as these are variable based on tenant.

October 2016 market rental rates are 13% below rates seen in October 2015. Grande Prairie's current rental rates will increase as Alberta's resource sector continues to recover. In a booming economic environment, affordable housing can provide more savings for households living with low income. However, while some affordable housing providers do not change their monthly rental rates regularly to match the current market rates, some do, meaning that the cost of some affordable housing in the City will rise and fall in the coming years. In economic down turn affordable units become more closely comparable in terms of price with market units.

TABLE B-1. Comparison of Permanent, Affordable and Market Housing Rent					
Affordable Units Characteristics	Average Affordable Housing Rent (March 2017)	Average Market Rent Oct 2016 ("bust")	Difference Between 2017 Affordable and 2016 Market Rate	Average Market Rent Oct 2015 ("boom")	Difference Between 2017 Affordable and 2015 Market Rate
Bachelor	\$665.00	\$735.00	\$70.00 or 10%	\$858.00	\$193.00 or 22%
1 bedroom	\$788.33	\$ 839.00	\$50.67 or 6%	\$989.00	\$200.67 or 20%
2 bedroom	\$986.67	\$1,030.00	\$43.33 or 4%	\$1,203.00	\$216.33 or 18%
3 + bedroom	\$1025.00	\$1,127.00	\$102.00 or 9%	\$1,341.00	\$316.00 or 24%
Rooms	\$600.00	NA	NA	NA	NA
Total					

Putting Cost into Context: The average income for a lone-parent family in Core Housing Need in 2011 was \$26,452. For this type of family, an affordable 2-bedroom apartment at the current average rate would require 45% of their monthly income. For a senior in Core Housing Need with an income of \$20,099, an affordable 1-bedroom apartment at the current average rate would require 47% of their monthly income.

For a senior in Core Housing Need residing in the Grande Spirit Foundation's Grande Prairie Lodge, rent would require, on average, 76% of their monthly income (Grande Spirit Foundation, 2016). However, Lodge rent includes health support, housekeeping, programming and meals, significantly reducing the amount of income required for expenses outside of housing. The Grande Spirit Foundation notes that the average monthly operating cost per resident in the Grande Prairie Lodge is \$1733.

Priority Populations

Housing Providers identified units or programming geared specifically towards priority groups outlined by the 2011 AHMP, 2014 HNA, and Affordable Housing Committee.

Permanent Affordable Housing

Table C-1 contains an overview of housing resources according to the priority groups supported by providers of **permanent affordable** housing. 53% of permanent affordable housing in Grande Prairie is available for seniors, followed by 28% available to all groups and 15% available to individuals with complex needs.

Table C-1: Permanent Affordable Housing by Priority Group

	Bachelor	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	Room and Board	Shared Bachelor (2 beds per unit)	Total	Proportion
Available to Any Group	57	15	94	35	0	0	201	28%
Individuals Requiring Accessible Units	1	3	35	5	0	0	44	6%
Families	0	0	0	3	0	0	3	0%
Complex Needs	57	1	0	0	0	0	58	8%
Complex Needs Mental Health	18	0	0	0	0	0	18	2%
Complex Needs Mental Health Accessible	2	0	0	0	0	0	2	0%
Complex Needs with Physical Health	0	0	0	0	0	10	10	1%
Complex Needs with Physical health and Accessible	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0%
Families with Complex Needs	0	0	2	3	0	0	5	1%
Seniors with Complex Needs	0	0	0	0	13	0	13	2%
Seniors Accessible with Complex Needs	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0%
Seniors	217	137	3	0	0	0	357	49%
Seniors Accessible	0	7	0	0	0	0	7	1%
Total	352	163	134	46	16	12	723	100%
Proportion	49%	23%	19%	6%	2%	2%	100%	
SUMMARIES*								
Complex Needs Summary	77	1	2	3	16	12	111	15%
Seniors Summary	217	144	3	0	16	0	380	53%
Families Summary	0	0	2	6	0	0	8	1%
Accessible Summary	3	10	35	5	0	2	55	8%

*These categories contain some duplicate numbers and should not be added. For example, accessible units for individuals with complex needs are included in the summary for complex needs and the summary for accessible.

Temporary Affordable Housing and Shelter Beds

Table C-2 contains an overview of **Temporary** housing by priority group. Each Temporary housing provider supports a different priority group, and all Temporary housing providers will support individuals with homeless history. Table C-3 contains an overview of shelter beds by priority group. Each of the City's three shelters supports a separate group.

Table C-2: Temporary Housing by Priority Group

	Bachelor	1 bed	2 bed	3+ beds	Beds	Shared Bach	Total	Proportion
Men with addictions	0	0	0	0	19	0	19	5%
Women with addictions	0	0	0	0	12	0	12	3%
Female-led Families leaving domestic violence situations	0	3	8	3	0	0	14	3%
Youth	0	0	0	0	4	0	4	1%
Students	0	0	0	9	362	0	371	88%
Total	0	3	8	12	397	0	420	

Table C-3: Shelter Beds by Priority Group

	Beds	Proportion
Female-led Families leaving domestic violence situations	42	29%
Youth	12	0%
Homeless History	92	71%
Total	146	100%

Resident Households

Table D contains: **1)** the number of residents currently in **Permanent Affordable** housing and **2)** the number of households on wait lists for Permanent Affordable housing as of March 2017⁶. Although Housing Providers shared information about the average income, ethnicity and immigrant/refugee status of current residents and households on wait lists as of March 2017, the information received was incomplete and therefore not included. *Complete information about wait list households requiring accessible units as of March 2017 was also unavailable.* However, **477 households were waiting for Grande Spirit Foundation family housing as of December 2016** (Grande Spirit Foundation, 2016).

Table D. Households in or on a Wait List for Permanent Affordable Housing				
	Proportion	Total	Require Accessible Unit	History of Homelessness
Current Residents				
Total, excluding dependents	100%	819	43	106
Seniors	37%	299	0	17
Families	11%	90	0	0
Require accessible unit	5%	43	--	NA
Complex needs	13%	106	NA	--
Households on Wait List				
Total, excluding dependents	100%	683	NA	37
Seniors	65%	281	NA	29
Families: <i>477 households on wait list for Grande Spirit Foundation family housing, December 2016.</i>				
History of Homelessness	9%	37	NA	--
Require accessible unit	NA	NA	--	NA

Smaller **Temporary Housing** Providers reported 43 current residents, including one resident who required an accessible unit, two youth and five families. **GPRC** reported 375 current residents. **Shelter Bed** providers reported 52 program participants (excluding Intox/Mats at Rotary House) as of March 1, 2017.

GPRC manages a wait list, generally consisting of 50-100 students and up to 100 student families. Other temporary housing providers were not managing wait lists as of March 2017, and all three shelters had vacant spaces available.

⁶ Note: **Number of residents** counts all individuals, excluding dependents. **Number of households** counts family groups, where one household may represent more than one individual.

Table E compares permanent affordable housing wait lists to available units. The majority of permanent housing providers reported a vacancy rate of 0% during 2016. Four permanent housing providers were managing wait lists as of March 2017.

Table E: Wait List as of March 2017	Households on Wait List	Total Units Managed
Grande Spirit Foundation/GP Residential Society	388	289
Grande Spirit Foundation Lodge	250	235
Oasis	7 ⁷	20
CMHA	9	63
Elder's Caring Shelter	29	16
TOTAL	683	623

Turnover

The Grande Spirit Foundation reported that move-ins nearly matched move-outs for Lodge, Senior Apartments, Family Housing Direct Rental, Affordable Housing and Accessible Housing during 2016, with move-ins totalling 174 households (Grande Spirit Foundation, 2016). If the rate of turnover remains stable, Grande Spirit might expect to accommodate 51% of seniors on Lodge wait lists, 32% of seniors on seniors apartment wait lists during 2017. The Grande Spirit Foundation reported that there will be very little movement on the wait list for Family & Special Purpose Housing (477 households in December 2016) during 2017 due to budget limitations.

Current Need

Update on Past Needs Assessments

The Needs Assessment included in the 2011 Affordable Housing Master Plan (AHMP) and 2014 Housing Needs Analysis (HNA) identified similar needs for affordable housing. These consistent findings have been included below and, where possible, updated. Complete 2016 Census data will be available later in 2017.

Population Growth and Housing Stock: The AHMP outlined a range of expected growth scenarios, the most modest being approximately 1,667 individuals per year, or 617 households assuming an average household size of 2.7 (p. 12). Five years later, Statistics Canada's 2016 population estimate suggests that the City has grown by approximately 1289 people per year, or 477 households per year. This is more modest than the growth scenario set out in the AHMP. New housing starts have averaged at approximately 540 per year between 2009 and 2016, falling between actual and expected household growth (CMHC, 2017). 85% of housing starts between 2009 and 2016 were destined for the homeowner market, while 13% were rentals and 2% were condominiums⁸, indicating that the majority of new households must move into homeownership.

Core Housing Need: In 2006 over 7% of households were living with an annual income of less than \$20,000 and 14% were living with an annual income of \$20-\$40,000. In 2006 there were also 2110 households (9%) in Core Housing Need (AHMP, p.12). In 2011, the proportion of households in Core

⁷ Applications under review.

⁸ This translates to 3656 homeowner units, 558 rental units and 104 condominiums.

Housing Need remained the same, at 9%. However, the average shelter to income cost ratio for households in Core Housing Need increased from 48.6% in 2006 to 54.1% in 2011 (CMHC, 2017).

Households with Low to Moderate Income in Core Housing Need: The 2014 HNA and 2011 AHMP both reviewed Grande Spirit Foundation's wait lists and current residents and confirmed that Core Housing Need and other income measures applied to the general population were consistent with the population currently accessing affordable housing supports.

Family households: In 2006, 53% of households in Core Housing Need were families, with lone parent families representing 42% of this amount. In 2011 the make-up of had changed somewhat, with families representing 42% of households in Core Housing Need and lone parent families representing 60% of this amount. Between 2006 and 2011 the average income for all family households in Core Housing Need went down 13%, while the average housing cost increased 11%. The AHMP identified families as a priority group for consideration in affordable housing initiatives, as did the 2014 HNA.

Senior-Led Households on Fixed Income: The proportion of senior-led households in core housing need increased slightly between 2006 and 2011, from 20% to 22%. Overall, senior households in Core Housing Need represented 26% of all households in Core Housing Need in 2011.

Indigenous Households: While Indigenous households make up 10% of the general population, they represented 15% of households in Core Housing Need in 2006 and 14% in 2011.

Update on Homelessness and the Need for Affordable Housing

In addition to looking at low and moderate income households via Census information, the 2011 AHMP and 2014 HNA, this Inventory reviewed information from the 2016 Point in Time Count, shelters, Temporary housing providers and City-funded Housing First service providers to identify areas where severe and acute gaps in housing and services exist. Housing First service providers shared the following information to this Inventory:

Wait List for Placement with a Housing Team: As of March 2017, 13 people experiencing homelessness were on the wait list for placement with a housing team. Of these 13, nine were waiting for Intensive Case Management support and four were waiting for Rapid Rehousing support:

- 100% single
- 92% mental health issues
- 38% indigenous
- 54% addictions issues
- 54% physical health issues
- 1 requiring accessible housing

According to Centralized Triage & Assessment staff, the wait list above is historically short, and the wait list between January and March is more representative: 32 people in total, including the 13 still on the wait list as of March 2017 and 19 housed between January and March 2017.

- 94% single
- 94% mental health issues
- 53% indigenous
- 69% addictions issues
- 50% physical health issues
- 2 lone-parent families

- 68% of those who were placed with a housing team waited 2 to 4 months for placement.

Referrals from Centralized Triage & Assessment to Affordable Housing Providers: Between April 2016 and April 2017, Centralized Triage & Assessment referred **84 individuals** to the Grande Spirit Foundation for housing and financial support. Centralized Assessment also referred four individuals to Rising Above, two to Elder's Caring Shelter, 54 to Odyssey House, 49 to Rotary House and four to Aurora House. Overall, 27% of referrals from Centralized Assessment to community resources were tagged as "Housing & Support Services".

Housing First Participants and Affordable Housing: To bridge housing affordability gaps, Housing First agencies provide rent enhancements to participants who need them on a month-to-month basis. Housing First agencies also assist participants in accessing affordable housing. Table F-1 contains an overview of rent enhancements and participants in affordable housing in April 2017.

Participants currently in or on a wait list for affordable housing account for 99 (50% of) Housing First participants. Of those currently in affordable housing, 16 (38%) still require rent enhancement support, indicating a major affordability gap.

Table F-1. Housing First Participants, Rent Enhancement and Affordable Housing. April 2017.	Rapid Rehousing	Intensive Case Management	Permanent Supportive Housing	Total	Proportion
All housed participants	50	91	58	199	
Require rent supplements	9	32	14	55	28%
April number in comparison to historic	Average	Low/Average	Low		
In affordable housing	10	10	22	42	21%
In affordable housing and require rent enhancement	0	8	8	16	38%
On wait list for affordable housing	9	24	24	57	29%

High Chronic Needs: In March 2017, approximately 40 individuals were known to require specialized intervention in order to obtain housing that was generally beyond the capability of existing Housing First programs. Housing First programs pool resources and create case-by-case solutions in order to support these individuals due to the complexity of their needs and the lack of appropriate housing and supports.

Street Outreach: In March 2017, Grande Prairie's Street outreach Team recorded 930 interactions. The Team has typically reported having contact with 20-30 new people per month in the City.

The Next Five Years

New Units and Funding Stability

Permanent, Temporary and shelter housing providers shared concrete plans for new builds, purchases or changes to programming within the next five to ten years. Summaries are provided below:

CMHA shared plans for a new affordable housing building containing 65 suites, including 10 accessible and five 1-bedrooms. The second floor is earmarked for a 24-hour Supportive Housing program and will offer 10 bachelor suites, two accessible suites and one 1-bedroom suite. The total estimated value of the build is \$13,000,000. The Supportive Housing program will add an estimated \$250-\$400,000. External funding is needed for the Supportive Housing program.

Proposed Timeline: Fall 2018-Spring 2019 for breaking ground.

Grande Spirit Foundation will open a new seniors building in April 2017. The building contains 72 seniors lodge and 78 senior apartments.

Sunrise House Youth Shelter plans to launch a capital campaign in 2017 to support development of a new shelter. The shelter will accommodate up to 20 youth and include at least two single bedrooms for youth in crisis or transgendered youth. The new shelter will also be more accessible. This plan is still in development, and the shelter hopes to purchase or begin building within five years. Sunrise House noted that youth shelters do not currently receive core funding from the Province and that during 2016, fundraising and grants accounted for 63% of the shelter's funding.

Elder's Caring Shelter has designed a new building containing 29 units and is advocating for funding. The focus will remain on seniors with a history of homelessness, but with increased support for seniors with mental health and health needs.

Temporary Housing Providers highlighted difficulties surrounding funding stability:

Sunrise Youth Transition House: The Youth Transition House is a pilot program ending in July 2017. Funding currently comes from the City's Homeless Initiatives budget and evaluation of the pilot is underway to determine the future of the House.

Rising Above: During 2016, fundraising and grants accounted for 85-90% of Rising Above funding. Although residents do pay rent, it is highly subsidized by Rising Above, including trade for hours worked at the organization's social enterprise.

Elder's Caring Shelter: During 2016, fundraising and rent accounted for approximately half of the funding for Elder's Caring Shelter.

Inventory Summary

Focus on Families

Both the 2011 AHMP and 2014 HNA identified families as a key priority group for affordable housing, and particularly female-led lone parent families. This inventory also identifies families as a key priority. Overall, 570 families are connected to permanent housing providers at this point in time (in housing or on wait lists). In addition, GPRC reported a wait list of approximately 100 student families, bringing the total to 670.

Point-by-Point:

- Low income estimates suggest that many additional families are in need of affordable housing but not currently on a wait list for affordable housing.
- Affordable housing providers did not report plans to increase the number of family units in Grande Prairie during the next five years.
- The Grande Spirit Foundation supports the majority of families in need of affordable housing. However, Grande Spirit has reported budget limitations that will impact movement on their family housing wait list.
- Increases in the income of families in Core Housing Need have not kept up to increases in housing costs, leading to a current situation where families in CHN may have difficulty paying for affordable housing, let alone market housing.
- The proportion of lone parent families in Core Housing Need has grown, while the overall proportion of families in CHN has reduced, indicating that lone parent families are a high priority for affordable housing.

Current Affordable Stock: Looking at the current stock of permanent affordable housing in Grande Prairie, family housing is relatively limited. 2 and 3-bedroom units that could potentially accommodate families account for 25% (180) of the physical units available, while 1% of affordable units are earmarked specifically for families. The majority of affordable family housing in Grande Prairie is supplied via Grande Spirit Foundation rent supplements, requiring an ongoing input of funding: 203 paid directly to and 308 paid to landlords. As mentioned previously, the Grande Spirit Foundation reported that the wait list for rent supplements may see very little movement during 2017 due to budget limitations.

New Opportunities for Families:

The City of Grande Prairie will be offering five \$20,000 down payment grants to low income families during 2017 as part of the Affordable Home Ownership Assistance program. The program targets households currently residing in or on a wait list for affordable housing, meaning that up to five new families may be able to move into affordable housing in addition to the five grant recipient households.

Serenity Place has increased the affordable housing options for female-led lone parent families by 14 units. Although Serenity Place technically provides Temporary housing, the 24-month length of stay at Serenity Place means that the families who reside there consider it relatively permanent. Serenity Place currently has vacant units.

Low-income family measures used locally include the LIM-AT, Living Wage and Core Housing Need:

LIM-AT: The 2016 Grande Prairie Poverty Profile identified the Low Income Measure After-Tax (LIM-AT⁹) as one of the most promising Statistics Canada measures of poverty (M. Haener Consulting Services, 2016). In 2014, 3550 families, including 930 lone parent families, reported income at or below LIM-AT threshold¹⁰. Individuals in “non-census families”, including those living with married children, grandchildren, friends or other relatives, made up 55% of low income families in 2014 (Statistics Canada, 2014).

Living Wage: Grande Prairie’s 2016 Living Wage Estimate for a lone-parent family with one child was \$14.53 per hour; a couple with two children was \$16.05 (M. Haener Consulting Services, 2015). Families at these wages with full-time work over one year could earn \$30,222¹¹ and \$66,768¹², respectively, before tax¹³. If these earners were able to access affordable housing in Grande Prairie at current monthly rates, they would likely contribute 39% and 19% of their monthly income to housing. The amount of contribution is similar for market units using October 2016 average rent estimates from CHMC, although this is only typical during economic “bust”. The amount of contribution for housing during a “boom” can be estimated using October 2015 market rates, in which lone parent and couple families making a living wage could expect to contribute 48% and 24% of their monthly income to housing, respectively. This suggests that while couple families making a living wage will be able to afford market housing in Grande Prairie in most economic cycles, lone parent families will face affordability challenges, even with a living wage.

Core Housing Need: 730¹⁴ family households were in Core Housing Need in 2011, with an average income of \$27,353 (CMHC, 2017). As stated previously, an affordable 2-bedroom apartment at the current average rate would require 45% of a family’s in Core Housing Need’s monthly income¹⁵. 60%¹⁶ of families in Core Housing need were Lone-Parent Families.

Focus on Seniors

The 2011 AHMP and 2014 HNA identified seniors as a priority population for affordable housing, as does this inventory. Low income and need for accessible and supportive housing lead to this recommendation.

New Opportunities for Seniors:

The Grande Spirit Foundation is opening a new lodge in Clairmont in April 2017 that contains 72 seniors lodge and 78 senior apartments.

The Elder’s Caring Shelter has plans to build a 29-unit seniors residence within the next five to ten years, with additional health care and staff support to accommodate people with mental health and health issues.

⁹ A LIM-AT Threshold is 50% of median adjusted after-tax income of households, observed at the person level. The number of people in a household determines the threshold amount used.

¹⁰ 11% of all families were low income; 3% of all families were lone parent low income.

¹¹ Lone-parent; One earner

¹² Couple Family; Two earners

¹³ This income is above the LIM-AT threshold for both lone parent and couple family households **Invalid source specified..**

¹⁴ 5% of family households.

¹⁵ Average Shelter to income Ratio (STIR) for this group is 53.1%.

¹⁶ 435 households.

Seniors in Low Income: In 2011, 455 (22%) of senior households examined in Grande Prairie were in Core Housing Need, with an average income of \$20,099 (CMHC, 2017). Nation-wide, the number of seniors in low income has risen between 1995 and 2014 to 12.5%. However, seniors are generally better off financially than they were prior 1995 (Statistics Canada, 2017). This is consistent with estimates of affordability gaps from the 2011 AHMP, where it was identified that many seniors face affordability gaps, but the gaps are smaller than those faced by families.

Seniors Unique Housing Needs: Approximately one in three adults 65 and older and 42.5% of those 75 and older report having a disability. The most common disabilities reported by seniors are pain, flexibility, mobility and hearing loss (Statistics Canada, 2012), and 85% of seniors age 65-74 and 90% of seniors age 75 or older use aids or assistive devices (Statistics Canada, 2012). As a result of the high prevalence of disability among seniors, accessible housing and supports including housekeeping, health and other services are often required for seniors housing. The combination of disability and health needs with low income makes affordable housing for seniors a high priority. Seniors with dementia and Alzheimer's are also a high priority group, and according to the Alzheimer's Society of Canada 564,000 Canadians were living with dementia in 2016, with an expected increase of 66% by 2031 (2016). While individuals with severe dementia may live in nursing home/long-term care facilities or hospitals, those at milder stages may live in supportive/independent housing centers similar to the Lodges operated by the Grande Spirit Foundation. Some individuals continue to live at home with support from family or home health care assistance (Alzheimer's Society of Canada, 2016).

Focus on Youth

Until recently, the only housing option in Grande Prairie for unaccompanied youth¹⁷ was the Sunrise House Youth Emergency Shelter. In 2016, Sunrise House, Royal LePage and the City of Grande Prairie collaborated to establish a Youth Transition House, containing 4 transitional housing bedrooms for youth up to age 18.5. Youth can reside in the house for up to 6 months, during which time a Youth Navigator and Supportive Roommate assist them in preparing to transition into market rental. As of March 2017, three of four rooms were occupied.

Youth are a priority group for housing because of the unique barriers that they face when attempting to obtain housing, work or income support, and to balance these responsibilities with education. Youth experiencing homelessness are also priority in order to prevent them from becoming entrenched in risk behaviours or homelessness. Barriers to housing faced by many youth include:

- Lack of work, rental or credit history
- Lack of references or co-signer
- Lack of life skills that enable successful tenancy
- Lack of protection under the Residential Tenancy Act for individuals under age 18
- Limited income sources
- Limited ability to work full time while still in school

To some extent youth barriers to housing may be addressed by education, advocacy and policy change, rather than the development of housing units or programs. Another area worth exploring for youth housing is accessibility. The Youth Transition House and Youth Shelter cannot accommodate

¹⁷ Not connect with Child and Family Services. Youth connected with Child and Family Services have options available.

youth who require accessible units. GPRC has three accessible bedrooms available in one accessible housing unit, but these are only available to full-time college students.

A second area worth exploring is gender. At Sunrise House, one bedroom is available for youth who identify as transgender. The remaining bedrooms are either male or female, shared accommodations. The Youth Transition House could potentially accommodate youth who identify as transgender, since each youth has their own room. Two rooms are on the upper level, while two are on a separate lower level. However, at this time the house is ordered according to Male/Female gender, with female residents living on the upper level and male residents living on the lower level.

Focus on Homelessness Experience

15% or 111 permanent, affordable housing units are available specifically to individuals with homeless experience. All Temporary and Shelter housing is available to individuals with homeless experience.

Permanent Supportive Housing: Grande Prairie faces a gap in Permanent Supportive Housing that can accommodate individuals who are experiencing homelessness as well as mental health, addiction and physical health issues (complex needs). In 2015/16, Rotary House began using 12 transitional units on their second floor as permanent supportive units. In 2017 Alberta Health Services staffing was put in place to provide support to the individuals residing in these units. These residents may be connected with Housing First or other external agencies for additional supports. Some additional figures for individuals with complex needs in Grande Prairie:

- In March 2017, 10 individuals were residing in Rotary House Permanent Supportive Units.

Families: The majority of units available to individuals with complex needs are bachelor, room and board or shared bachelor, meaning that families cannot occupy these units. Two 2-bedroom and three 3-bedroom units are available for families with complex needs. Data from Housing First shows that the majority of families that come through the program work with a Rapid Rehousing team, indicating a lower need for supports in maintaining housing long term. This implies that most families can likely be housed in any affordable 2 or 3-bedroom unit.

Accessibility: Seven units available specifically for individuals with complex needs are accessible. At the time the Inventory was created, none of these units were occupied by individuals requiring an accessible unit.

- 2, Rotary House Third Floor, Mental Health only
- 2, Rotary House Second Floor, Permanent Supportive
- 3, Elder's Caring Shelter (only somewhat accessible)

Focus on Indigenous Households

In 2011, 13% of indigenous households were in Core Housing Need, compared with 9% in the general population. Indigenous households are able to access any of the physical or financial housing resources in Grande Prairie, although the only one geared specifically toward indigenous households is the Indigenous Affordable Home Ownership Grant (one grant of \$20,000). Homeless Initiatives also offers a Cultural funding program that supports indigenous individuals to attend cultural events or learning opportunities. This program is indirectly intended to prevent or reduce risk of homelessness by increasing engagement with the community and personal well-being. Research into the value of indigenous housing programs and what kind of indigenous housing is most suitable (family, homelessness, senior, individual, etc) would be useful for Grande Prairie.

Focus on Immigrants and Refugees

None of the affordable, transitional or shelter providers involved in the inventory were able to report on immigrant or refugee households. Grande Prairie is not a major immigration centre, but increased partnership could be developed with immigrant and refugee organizations in the City.

Appendix A: 2011 Housing Inventory

Taken from the Affordable Housing Master Plan 2011-2021.

Initiatives

Rent-Geared to Income Housing Assistance (RGI)

The Province of Alberta has a number of programs to assist low income households (families, seniors and households with special housing needs). The Province maintains an inventory of approximately 10,700 subsidized housing units Province- wide including a portfolio of 70 units in Grande Prairie. It also includes the provision of rent supplement assistance for households living in housing in the private rental market through the Province's rent support programs with approximately 430 households in Grande Prairie being assisted through these various programs.

Housing Projects

A number of affordable housing projects have been developed in Grande Prairie, with land and financial contributions from the City, including:

1. Emergency and Transition Housing: Rotary House
 - 29 shared suites (2 beds in each) 20 private suites
 - 143 emergency beds
2. Affordable Housing
 - Willow Place – 58 bachelor suite apartment, with 38 affordable units for low income single adults (Canadian Mental Health Association)
 - Margaret Edgson Manor – 70 affordable units for individuals with disabilities and families
 - Hearthstone Manor – 40 units of affordable housing (9 fully accessible, from bachelor to 3 bedroom units)
 - Elders Caring Shelter – 19 beds for people 55 and over (Metis Nation of Alberta Association Local Council #1990 of Grande Prairie)
 - City House – 3 units of affordable housing

The City has also provided funds to Grande Spirit Foundation to expand Wild Rose Manor by 15 enhanced units for seniors, and to Grande Prairie Women's Residence Association for 15 additional affordable second stage housing units. They have also provided funds to develop 16 units for the hard to house, and grants to builders of up to \$50,000 per unit of affordable housing created.

Entry-Level Ownership Opportunities

The City has undertaken a number of initiatives to provide an expanded range of housing choices for households entering the ownership market. This includes support for Habitat for Humanity as well as targeted initiatives to support access to entry-level ownership opportunities for Aboriginal people through the Off-Reserve Aboriginal Home Ownership Assistance Program funding made available by the Alberta government. Most recently, the City has launched an Affordable Homeownership Assistance Program that provides down payment grants of up to \$20,000 to eligible households.

Homelessness in Grande Prairie

The City of Grande Prairie has continued to engage in regular homeless counts including counts in 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2008. While the 2008 homeless count showed a significant improvement in the

number of street homeless, the findings suggest that the emergency shelters continue to experience significant demand.

There are 134 emergency shelter beds available in Grande Prairie. The City of Grande Prairie has also adopted a Multi-Year Plan to End Homelessness which has set a target of approximately 550 new affordable housing units over the next five years, including 75 supportive units (an average of 110 units per year, including 15 supportive units).

Grande Spirit Foundation

The Grande Spirit Foundation administers a portfolio of affordable seniors and family housing units in the City of Grande Prairie and the surrounding region. The Foundation also manages wait lists for subsidized housing and administers rent supplement assistance on behalf of the Province.

Table 18. Grande Spirit Foundation Portfolio May 2010	Grande Prairie Region - # of housing units	City of Grande Prairie - # of housing units
Seniors Lodge	261	219
Seniors Apartment Units	256	122
Family Housing	93	70
Rent Supplement	264	239
Direct Rent Supplement	216	n/a

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