

# Environmental Scan: Subpopulation Housing Needs in Lethbridge

December 12, 2016 – Final Report

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# Executive Summary

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In collaboration with the City of Lethbridge Community and Social Development Department, an environmental scan was conducted in November 2016 to identify subpopulations most in need of supportive and affordable housing, and to identify housing models best suited to meet the subpopulation needs within Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada. The data collection process for the environmental scan included consultations with key informants, a review of scholarly and grey literature, and targeted interviews as required. In total, 27 Housing First and other service providers participated in the consultation process, representing 16 different agencies in Lethbridge, for this environmental scan.

The following five key questions were used to focus the scope and guide consultations:

1. What subpopulations are most at-risk for homelessness?
2. What subpopulation is most in-need of supportive permanent or affordable housing in Lethbridge?
3. What housing models are best suited to meet the need of at-risk subpopulations in Lethbridge?
4. What underlying *causes* or *conditions* are unique to subpopulations at-risk in Lethbridge?
5. What barriers and/or opportunities exist in Lethbridge to house at-risk subpopulations?

Throughout the consultation process there was a high level of consistency among participants in their responses to the five key questions. For example, when asked to comment on subpopulations *most at-risk* the participants were quick to identify young adults 18-24, men 30-55 years of age, and people of Aboriginal Status as major risk factors for homelessness. When questioned, who is *most in-need* of supportive permanent housing respondents indicated people living with addictions, women across all ages, FASD and mental health issues (diagnosed or suspected), also a history of generational poverty and trauma was identified. In addition, specific *causes* and *conditions* were identified to further clarify specific risk factors, services, and supports needed for success-based housing initiative in Lethbridge. It should be noted that financial difficulty was not identified as a primary *cause* or *condition* of homelessness in Lethbridge for the *most at-risk* or *most in-need* subpopulations. Rather, a lack of “appropriate” supportive housing with a focus on harm reduction, guest related evictions, and time limited support services were identified most often.

When participants were asked to comment on housing models to meet the need of at-risk subpopulations the majority quickly identified the need for “more River House” and to “replace Van Haarlem Apartments that burnt down”. Beyond Lethbridge, three examples were referenced most often: Alpha House in Calgary, Bissell Centre in Edmonton, and Buffalo Apartments in Red Deer. When asked to describe the essential elements or assets of the example models respondents indicated the harm reduction approaches, guest management supports, and intensive on-site and ongoing case management as most needed in Lethbridge.

The greatest strength identified by this environmental scan is the genuine interest and desire to engage in solution focused action, this high level of readiness among service providers and agencies presents many opportunities for action-oriented decision-making. There is a high level of interest to collaborate across agencies, however, the coordination and “not knowing” what other agencies are doing was identified as a challenge. Recent changes in the Housing First organizational structure and perceived “hold” on services may be contributing to the lack of awareness across agencies. Also, restructuring seems to have created a “backlog” thus has increased waitlists for Housing First services which is problematic, particularly at a time when inventory is low.

In summary, there is strong motivation to seek out and secure funding to address homelessness for the most at-risk and most in-need subpopulations in Lethbridge. There is a collective readiness and hope among housing professionals and local agencies in Lethbridge thus the timing is right to plan a strategic direction forward.

# Background

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Considering the recent changes in the Canadian national and provincial political landscape, municipalities are preparing for potential funding opportunities to advance affordable and permanent supportive housing projects in their jurisdictions. As per the recent document published by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2016) “Canada’s federal government has made a commitment to develop a national housing strategy. Canadians have also given this government an unprecedented mandate to robustly invest in social infrastructure across the country. Together, these two realities create a once-in-a-generation window of opportunity to transform Canada’s housing sector and improve lives.” (p.3)<sup>1</sup> For this reason the timing is right for the City of Lethbridge to prepare evidence to support funding applications.

To date various transformative social housing initiatives have been developed and implemented in Lethbridge. The City of Lethbridge was one of the first cities in Canada to develop a local 5-year strategy to end homelessness<sup>2</sup>. The ‘Bringing Lethbridge Home – the 5-year plan to end homelessness (2009 – 2014)’ has demonstrated significant success in decreasing absolute homelessness and shelter use in this city.

Lethbridge is also known for River House, a cottage style congregate living facility, established as a Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH) program that provides a home for chronically homeless seniors, either by age or functionality, who are struggling with chronic addictions, mental health, and/or physical health issues. These individuals do not thrive in existing facilities or programs and most had no viable housing options prior to the establishment of River House. River House is based on harm reduction principles and uses a Managed Alcohol Program (MAP) as one of its key strategies.

Another leading example is the Transition to Independence Program (TIP) which provides flexible and responsive housing options for youth aged 16-24 years who have Child Intervention status. It is funded through a unique collaborative partnership between McMan Youth and Family Services, Southern Alberta Child and Family Services, and the City of Lethbridge. The program assists youth who are experiencing housing placement difficulties due to multiple barriers and complexities, for whom all other options for second stage housing services are exhausted, and who are likely facing homelessness or long-term homelessness without TIP.

Although excellent work has been done and many lives have improved, more funding is needed to address the unique and complex needs of subpopulations in Lethbridge. This environmental scan will provide the case-for-support to apply for much needed funding to expand housing options for the most vulnerable in Lethbridge.

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<sup>1</sup> Federation of Canadian Municipalities (2016) Canada’s Housing Opportunity: urgent solutions for a national housing strategy.

<sup>2</sup> Stephen Gaetz, Fiona Scott & Tanya Gulliver (Eds.) (2013): Housing First in Canada: Supporting Communities to End Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

## Consultation and Data Collection Process

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In collaboration with the City of Lethbridge Community and Social Development Department the scope of the environmental scan was negotiated. The primary intent was to identify subpopulations *most at-risk* and *most in-need* of supportive permanent housing or affordable housing within the City of Lethbridge. The secondary intent was to identify the most appropriate housing models to meet the needs of the identified subpopulation within Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

Participant recruitment started with a preliminary email sent from the City of Lethbridge, Community and Social Development Department, to key contacts who are most involved in housing the homeless in Lethbridge. This communication provided context and an introduction to the consultant. A follow-up e-mail was sent by the consultant inviting key contacts to participate in a 30-min interview (face-face or via telephone) to discuss the five key questions for the environmental scan. Voluntary participation was expressed via email directly to the consultant and meetings were coordinated with individual participants.

The following five key questions were used to stimulate interview discussions, responses were documented by the consultant during the interviews.

1. What subpopulations are most at-risk for homelessness?
2. What subpopulation is most in need of supportive permanent or affordable housing in Lethbridge?
3. What housing models are best suited to meet the need of at-risk subpopulations in Lethbridge?
4. What underlying *causes* or *conditions* are unique to subpopulations at-risk in Lethbridge?
5. What barriers and/or opportunities exist in Lethbridge to house at-risk subpopulations?

The Canadian National Collaborating Center for Methods and Tools secure online resources were used to develop a data gathering process, summarize the data, analyze influences, and identify possible opportunities for actions.<sup>3</sup> The primary data collection process included interviews with key contacts, and others who were identified throughout the process. Interviews continued until saturation was reached for the five key questions. In total, 24 Housing First and other service providers were interviewed face – face, 2 via telephone, and 1 by e-mail. In terms of housing agencies, 16 are represented in this environmental scan. Due to strict time limitations, it was not feasible to consult with all agencies, however, concerted effort was made to ensure a wide representation was captured. Secondary data was collected through a review of scholarly, best practice, and grey literature to identify feasible and appropriate housing models to cross reference with suggestions provided by participants.

Primary data was summarized and prepared in a format to analyze factors that influence the current housing situation in Lethbridge. Using a force-field analysis approach, participant identified *causes* and *conditions* that negatively influence the *most at-risk* and *most-in need* for homelessness were input into a template and ranked. This analysis clarified priority *causes* and *conditions* which lead to the identification of positive factors that are required to improve the housing situation, or negate the negative influences (see Appendix A).

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<sup>3</sup> National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools. Retrieved from: <https://secure.publichealthontario.ca/en/ServicesAndTools/ohpp/Pages/default.aspx>

To complete the process a variety of recommendations were identified. These are not prioritized; rather relevant information is provided in point form for consideration and decision-making. Where possible cost effectiveness was considered. The short time frame to complete this work was a limitation which should be considered when reviewing recommendations. This is a report of a time limited snapshot, not a comprehensive detailed research report.

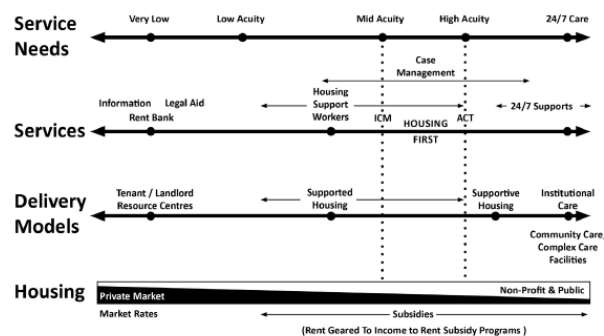
## Subpopulations

A variety of strategies were used to identify subpopulations *most at-risk* for homelessness in Lethbridge. During the interviews participants were asked to describe the population they serve most and the services provided. When summarizing the information, specific attention was given to identifying ‘inclusion criteria’ and the ‘exclusion criteria’ for the services and supports provided. Participants were also asked to describe circumstances that *caused*, or *conditions* contributing to complex housing situations.

A force-field analysis (see Appendix A) of identified *causes* and *conditions* revealed the specific characteristics of the subpopulations who are *most in-need*. The force field analysis illustrates the level of influencing factors which make the situation better or worse which was used to identify essential service requirements (inclusion criteria) for housing models best suited to address homelessness in Lethbridge.

Continuing with the concept of ‘inclusion’ and ‘exclusion’ a Housing-Services Spectrum for Persons Homeless or at Risk<sup>4</sup> highlighted in the Eviction Prevention: Tool kit for Promising Practices (2015) was used to further clarify the service needs, types of services, suggested delivery models, and housing types needed to successfully address the complex housing situation in Lethbridge. This strategy used to cross reference primary data validated a high level of agreement for permanent supportive housing models that include 24/7 on-site services. Also, consistent reference to three specific examples of housing models being Alpha House in Calgary, Bissell Centre in Edmonton, and Buffalo Apartments in Red Deer provided another form of cross reference for sub-populations who are *most in-need*.

### A Housing–Services Spectrum for Persons Homeless or at Risk



Using the force field analysis and the housing service spectrum model subpopulations *most at-risk* and *most in-need* were confidently identified as indicated in the table below. Commonalities between subpopulations and unique factors for each are included in the table. The lists the local resources were used to validate consultation findings. It should be noted that Aboriginal status is a major contributing factor to homelessness in Lethbridge. In this report, Aboriginal status is not identified as a stand-alone subpopulation, rather, it is identified as a major factor across all subpopulations.

<sup>4</sup> Distasio, J (2015). Eviction Prevention: Tool kit of Promising Practices. The Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.

Subpopulations *most at-risk and most in-need* of permanent supportive or affordable housing in the City of Lethbridge

Subpopulation	Men 30-55 years'	Youth 18-24 years'	Women	Multigenerational families <sup>5</sup>
<b>Major Factor</b>	- Aboriginal Status	- Aboriginal Status	- Aboriginal Status	- Aboriginal Status
<b>Common <i>causes &amp; conditions</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high recidivism (eviction/incarceration)</li> <li>- active drug use</li> <li>- FASD, mental health, and/or medical conditions</li> <li>- exposure to trauma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- at risk for drug use</li> <li>- FASD, mental health, and/or medical conditions</li> <li>- exposure to trauma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- high recidivism (eviction/incarceration)</li> <li>- active drug use</li> <li>- FASD, mental health, and/or medical conditions</li> <li>- exposure to trauma</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- generational poverty</li> <li>- parenting challenges</li> <li>- exposure to trauma</li> </ul>
<b>Unique <i>causes &amp; conditions</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- history of violence</li> <li>- unable to sustain employment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- transitioning out of care</li> <li>- LGBTQ</li> <li>- history of generational homelessness</li> <li>- lack of independent living experience and/or skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 55+ with limited income</li> <li>- Younger expectant or lone parent mothers</li> <li>- lack of independent living experience and/or skills</li> <li>- vulnerable to trade sexual services for safe shelter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- large immigrant families</li> <li>- racism toward large aboriginal families</li> </ul>
<b>Examples of housing models for subpopulations <i>most in-need</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alpha House (Calgary)</li> <li>- Bissell Centre – FASD housing (Edmonton)</li> <li>- Buffalo Apartments (Red Deer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Foyer, scattered-site, privately owned by non-profit organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Alpha House (Calgary)</li> <li>- Bissell Centre – FASD housing (Edmonton)</li> <li>- Buffalo Apartments (Red Deer)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Scattered-site market rental or privately owned by non-profit, with continuous case management (Grand Prairie)</li> </ul>
<b>Supporting Evidence for Lethbridge Subpopulation <i>most at-risk</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government of Alberta: P12 – Test center results summary for Lethbridge (2012)</li> <li>- Vibrant Lethbridge, Community and Social Development, City of Lethbridge (2015). Understanding the Impacts of and Finding Community Solutions to Poverty in Lethbridge</li> <li>- Population &amp; Housing Projections for the City of Lethbridge (2014)</li> <li>- Assessing Youth Homelessness in Lethbridge, Alberta (2014)</li> </ul>			

<sup>5</sup> Walsh, et al (2014). Permanent Supportive Housing for Families with Multiple Needs

# Current Housing Situation

Using a housing continuum approach, the current situation in Lethbridge will be outlined for contextual purposes only. Information for local services described was obtained from the Community Links website<sup>6</sup> and agency informants. The categories for the housing type continuum were adapted from the City of Lethbridge Affordable Housing Policy<sup>7</sup> to reflect current language which includes: emergency shelters, second-stage housing (transitional), permanent supportive housing (PSH), affordable housing (formal and informal), and attainable home ownership. Where possible, definitions and terminology were aligned with the Housing First in Canada: Supporting Communities to End Homelessness document.<sup>8</sup>

In addition to identifying current housing supply, a brief overview of ‘common challenges’ and ‘perceived opportunities’ will be presented for each housing category. Common challenges were identified during the interviews. Secondary data from Lethbridge specific documents were used to establish context for the challenges. These documents include: The Community Foundations 2016 Vital Signs report; Continuing to ‘Bring Lethbridge Home’ 2015-2016 Annual Progress; Vibrant Lethbridge (2015) Understanding the Impacts of and Finding Community Solutions to Poverty in Lethbridge; and program websites. The information gathered from these documents provided valuable insight and objective support for both opportunities and barriers listed in the specific housing type tables.

Emergency Shelter	
This type of housing is intended to provide temporary accommodations and essential services for individuals experiencing homelessness, are displaced, or who are fleeing violent or abusive situations	
<p><b>Lethbridge Shelter and resource Centre</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 80 beds</li> <li>- male + female adult 18 years and older</li> <li>- daily discharge / check-in</li> </ul> <p><b>YWCA Harbour House Women’s Emergency Shelter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 24 bed crisis unit</li> <li>- female only 18 – 60 years of age</li> <li>- female with dependent children</li> <li>- Max 21-day stay</li> <li>- secure facility for guest management</li> </ul> <p><b>Woods Homes Emergency Youth Shelter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- male + female 18 years and younger</li> <li>- 8 beds</li> <li>- max 15-day stay</li> <li>- secure facility for guest management</li> </ul>	
Barriers	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ over capacity thus people are turned away</li> <li>▪ wait list to access Housing First               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lack of housing inventory</li> <li>○ demand for case management exceeds capacity to provide services</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ dependence on emergency shelter due to high recidivism               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lack of inventory for the “hard to house” or “complex clients” who require intensive ongoing case management</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ case manager moral distress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ possibility to expand existing services</li> <li>✓ recent re-configuration of Housing First Teams to improve services</li> <li>✓ high level of cooperation among Housing First Team Leads               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ coordinated problem solving</li> <li>○ collegial support system</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> Lethbridge Community Links. Retrieved from: <http://community-links.ca/Home.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> City of Lethbridge: Affordable Housing Policy (2007)

<sup>8</sup> Stephen Gaetz, Fiona Scott & Tanya Gulliver (Eds.) (2013): Housing First in Canada: Supporting Communities to End Homelessness. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.



## Second Stage Housing (Transitional Housing)

Provides a safe, supportive environment where individuals can overcome trauma, begin to address the key issues that lead to homelessness and begin to rebuild their support networks. Often this housing is time limited, determined by the agency offering the service.

### Blackfoot Family Lodge

- 8 family units - women and children only
- max stay 3 months

### HESTIA Houses

- young adults 18-24 with an on-site live in mentor
- 3 homes with 3 bedrooms each

### McMan Youth and Family Services (TIP program)

- youth 14 bed program
- 18 – 24 years' old
- youth transitioning out of care

### Challenges

- over capacity thus people are turned away
- landlord issues
  - reluctant to rent to youth, large families
  - reluctant to rent to Aboriginal People
- length of stay is too short for sufficient stabilization
- lack inventory for large and / or multi-generational families
  - often families are split up
- wait list to access Housing First
  - lack of housing inventory
  - demand for case management exceeds capacity to provide services
- qualification of providers need to match client needs

### Opportunities

- ✓ possibility to expand existing services
  - create graduated options to promote independence with flexible length of stay
  - incorporate low-intensity on-going case management for clients who graduate to independence (a safety net with a familiar service provider)
- ✓ high compassion and commitment of Housing First case managers
- ✓ acquire new inventory (duplexes) with physical space for meaningful program and skill development



Homeward Trust: Duplex Project <http://www.homewardtrust.ca/programs/completed-details.php?id=3>

## Permanent Supportive Housing (PSH)

An integrated model of housing and services for individuals with complex and co-occurring issues where the clinical services and landlord role are performed by the same organization. Those who may benefit from tightly linked and supportive social, health and housing supports as a means of maintaining their housing stability may be best served by this model.

### River House (MAP)

- 9 units for older males only (geriatric by age and/or ability)
- Managed alcohol program for chronic alcoholism resulting in chronic homelessness
- on-site assistance 24/7 and secure facility for guest management

### YWCA Residence

- 30 units for female only 18 - 60 years of age
- female with dependent children (depending on age and gender)
- secure facility for guest management

### Challenges

- over capacity at YWCA thus women and children are turned away
  - first-come-first serve,
  - not feasible to manage a waitlist
- barriers to access River House
  - men 30-55 are excluded
- wait list to access Housing First
  - lack of housing inventory
  - demand for case management exceeds capacity to provide services
- high recidivism for people in need of PSH due to
  - addiction / mental health and/or FASD
  - guest management issues
  - poor financial management
- case manager moral distress
  - placing people in need of PSH in market rental knowing they will not be successful

### Opportunities

- ✓ River House provides a much-needed service for the *most at-risk* and *most in-need* subpopulation
  - Replicate program for men 30-55
  - Replicate program for women 30 +
- ✓ expand existing services through River House to optimize on-site staff utilization
- ✓ high compassion and commitment of Housing First case managers

“The moment we all have been waiting for ..... Referrals are now being accepted for Bissell Centre’s Permanent Supportive Housing program for individuals diagnosed with a Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).”



<https://edmontonfetalalcoholnetwork.org/tag/bissell-centre-fasd-housing/>

## Affordable Scattered site Housing

Housing units are spread out in various locations around the city rather than all in one common building. Scattered site housing may be either market or social housing.

### Lethbridge Housing Authority

rent subsidy program - 550 people receiving financial support for rent supplement  
 affordable community housing units - 291 units with low turnover  
 private landlord rent supplement - 150 landlords participating  
 advertise non-subsidized rentals  
 affordable housing units - 30 at 20% less CMHC

### Lethbridge & Region Community Housing Corporation

Haig Tower- 136 units for male + female seniors  
 Hardie Manor- units for male + female seniors  
 Halmrast Manor - 145 units for male + female seniors  
 Castle apartment - 78 units for male + female with complex case management needs

### Treaty 7 Urban Indian Housing Authority<sup>9</sup>

Most common housing is 2 and 3 bedroom units. There has been an increase in the waitlist, due to families moving into the city for education and/or employment and because of poor housing on-reserve or overcrowding.

- o Averages 20 to 30 vacancies per year from 2011 to 2013.
- o Households on the waiting list: 15 for 2 bedroom units
- o 18 for 3 bedroom units
- o 8 for 4 bedroom units

### Aboriginal housing Society – Rental Program

Offer stable housing for FNMI people in the rental program with option to progress to home ownership. The organization works with clients to build credit, learn how to take care of property and manage housing responsibilities. They report rent payments as on time or late to a credit bureau in order to assist in establishing a genuine payment history that will benefit clients when they do apply for mortgage pre-approval. This broad-spectrum approach is sustainable and does not require annual grant funding for administration.

Koh Koonoon - 29 units (2 and 3 bedroom units)  
 Iiniiskim – 8 unit row housing (3 bedroom units)  
 Eagle Landing 2 duplexes & Copperwood – 4 units (4 X 5 bedroom units)  
 14 Street Duplex – Fair market value units to house two large families

### Challenges

- waitlist for rent subsidy with fewer people leaving the program
  - o 325+ people waiting on average
  - o Lost a large amount inventory which was never replaced
- landlord issues
  - o reluctant to rent to youth, large families, and Aboriginal People
  - o high taxes and no compensation for property damage
- lack inventory for families
  - o limited options for immigrant families and multigenerational Aboriginal families
- expectant women are disadvantaged
  - o not eligible till the baby is born
  - o limited 'safe' affordable housing options for expectant women 18-24
- people on Alberta Works are not a priority for rent supplement
- wait list to access Housing First
  - o lack of housing inventory
  - o demand for case management exceeds capacity to provide services
  - o competition from post-secondary students
  - o market rental affordable housing is not always adequate, affordable, or suitable Registered Nurses often refuse to provide care in these unsafe environments (Lethbridge Hotel or Kings Residence)

### Opportunities

- ✓ acquire new inventory for shifting demographics in Lethbridge
- ✓ adjust taxation rates (tax relief) for social housing property owners
- ✓ high compassion and commitment of Housing First case managers

<sup>9</sup> Vibrant Lethbridge, Community and Social Development, City of Lethbridge (2015). Understanding the Impacts of and Finding Community Solutions to Poverty in Lethbridge.

## Affordable Home Ownership

### Aboriginal Housing Society – Home Ownership Program

If deemed a low-risk candidate in the rental program, the option for a graduated lease program of 3-3-6 is offered and the principal of rent is returned as down payment for homeownership.

Eagle Landing (2 Duplexes) In Copperwood 4 Units (bedrooms per Unit)

Cougar Cove – 56 (2 units) & 60 (4 units) Cougar Cove North – 6 Units

Challenges	Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ market rental is cost prohibitive to secure sufficient inventory for graduated lease program</li><li>▪ city taxes are high for landlords offering affordable housing options</li><li>▪ lack of landlord support for property damage</li><li>▪ most grants do not allow funds to be used on property damage</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ graduated lease program is working</li><li>✓ immigrant families are participating in the graduated lease programs</li></ul>

## Recommendations

A variety of recommendations were generated through the consultative process of this environmental scan. The recommendations are not prioritized; rather point form information suggestions were provided in a way to support informed decision-making. Where possible cost effectiveness was considered and is reflected in the descriptions for each housing type recommendation. Time did not permit the preparation of capital or operational costs for the recommendations which is a limitation of this report. The following fundamental principles are relevant to all the housing type recommendations:

- **Eviction prevention**<sup>10 11</sup> - evictions are costly and taxing on Housing First case managers, therefore, a wide variety of eviction prevention strategies should be included in all permanent supportive and affordable housing initiatives as a strategy to contain operational costs.
  - o • For “positive moves” or basic turnover the cost is <\$1000
  - o • For Evictions, typical costs are \$3000-\$6000
  - o • For exceptional damage situations costs can range from \$10,000-\$60,000+
- **Flexible timeframe for stability**<sup>12</sup>- recent evidence suggests, for more complex clients, it can take two to three-years for tenants to begin to feel stable and comfortable with being housed. Where possible, eliminate fixed time limits on length of stay and consider graduated tenancy and convertible leases.
- **Ongoing aftercare** – as with flexible timeframes, housing support models that incorporate permanent or long-term low intensity aftercare supports have demonstrated positive outcomes for housing stability for populations at high risk for homelessness. Currently the Lethbridge YWCA provides low intensity ongoing aftercare services which has proven to be successful on many levels, and low cost to sustain. Ongoing aftercare should be considered as an eviction prevention strategy.

<sup>10</sup> Gaetz, Stephen (2012): The Real Cost of Homelessness: Can We Save Money by Doing the Right Thing? Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press.

<sup>11</sup> Distasio, J (2015). Eviction Prevention: Tool kit of Promising Practices. The Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.

<sup>12</sup> Distasio, J & McCullough, S (2014) Holding On!: Supporting Successful Tenancies for the Hard to House. Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.



## Permanent Supportive Housing with 24/7 on-site services

- Single occupancy residence units for men and women (couple units optional)
  - o Example models: Alpha House, Buffalo Apartments, Bissell Centre
  - o Developing a large multi-purpose facility to meet a variety of sub-population needs may be more cost effective.
  - o Alternatively, smaller complexes strategically situated close together to make a “park like setting” on the property surrounding the complexes. The subpopulation who qualify for this facility are drawn to Gault Gardens. An additional building for services, programming, laundry facilities, social enterprise coffee shop, etc. can be developed.
  - o Suggested location: the old Eldorado property near the Lethbridge shelter and close to other services.
- Must be harm reduction focused, and offer medication and financial management supports.
- On-site enhanced service coordination for residents. Staff require a level of expertise to support complex clients, and the ability to form genuine relationships to foster trust.<sup>13</sup>
  - o Must have dedicated units and staff expertise for adults living with FASD
- Inclusive of Aboriginal specific programming for cultural reconnection and other social programming.<sup>14</sup>
- Include social enterprise opportunities for operational, housekeeping, or property management services to offset operating costs and provide opportunities for residence to engage in daily meaningful activities, if they choose to do so.<sup>15</sup>
- Property owned by a Housing First or not-for-profit agency so to eliminate housing related racism for Aboriginal men and women, and to reduce evictions and related property damage costs.<sup>16</sup>
- Must be built with durable materials to reduce potential for damage and include barrier free units to accommodate a sub-population with physical disabilities.
- Consider graduated lease programs commensurate with increased independence to scattered-site market housing or an open space cottage community.
- This recommendation is a result of the consistent recognition to replace Van Haarlem Apartments that burnt down in Lethbridge. Although it was a sub-standard living option, it was valuable inventory for the most at-risk hard to house subpopulation in Lethbridge



<http://blocksmodular.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Motel-24plex-Model-A.jpg>

<sup>13</sup> Government of Alberta: P12 – Test center results summary for Lethbridge

<sup>14</sup> Final Report: Improving housing outcomes for Aboriginal people in Western Canada: National, regional, community and individual perspectives on changing the future of homelessness (2011)

<sup>15</sup> Distasio, J (2015). Eviction Prevention: Tool kit of Promising Practices. The Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.

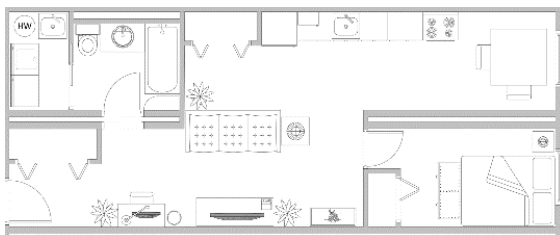
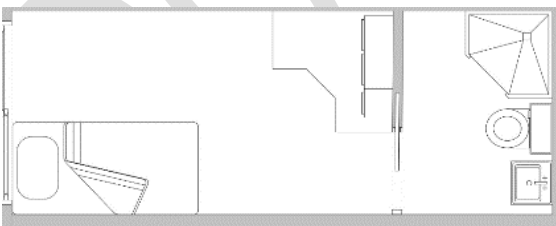
<sup>16</sup> Population & Housing Projections for the City of Lethbridge (2014)



<https://www.theguardian.com/housing-network/gallery/2013/oct/24/brighton-housing-homeless-shipping-containers-gallery>

### ✚ Second stage communal housing (Recommendation from Lethbridge Police)

- Males with a history of incarceration and are unsuccessful in the Housing First program. Four males were identified who thrive in the jail setting thus could benefit from highly structured, purposeful daily routines and meaningful activities.
- 24 / 7 on-site services with high acuity case management support. Staffing must have appropriate training for safety and security purposes. High intensity, client-centered case management and the inclusion of support workers will enhance success
- 2-year stabilization with flexibility to extend to indefinite.
- History of violence and the number of residents must be seriously considered to ensure success-based outcomes.
  - o Consultation with Lethbridge police is required to develop this option for a unique sub-set of a subpopulation in greatest need in Lethbridge
- Overall public safety in Lethbridge will also improve with a decrease in “cyclical escalation of explosive and dangerous behavior” which places the public at great risk. The risk is eliminated when the individuals return to jail. “While in jail these individuals do extremely well”.
- Single occupancy units could be sparse initially with an option to progress into a self-contained unit if desired.
- A graduated lease program could provide opportunities for goal setting and skill development while still being connected to the strict programming routine for the second stage communal housing facility.

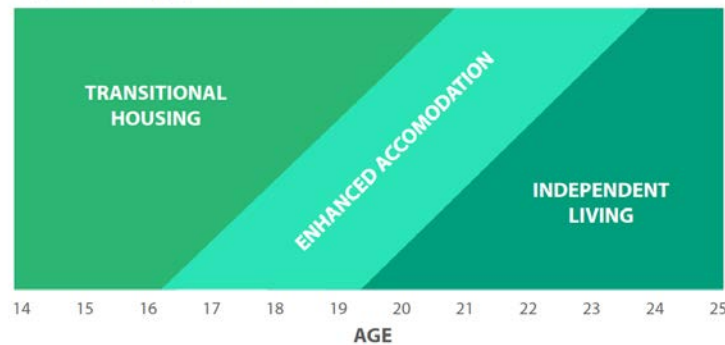


<http://blocksmodular.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Module-1-bed-1-bath-Model-E.jpg>

## 📌 Foyer Model - continuum of housing with scattered site duplex units<sup>17</sup>

- Young adults 18-24 for male and female
- 5-6 scattered-site duplexes, with 3 bedrooms per unit for a total of 30 spaces for this subpopulation.
- This recommendation is intentional so to segregate young vulnerable adults from the chronically homeless population who use existing Adult shelter services.
- Young adults are vulnerable, particularly females and LGBTQ individuals who feel extremely unsafe in adult oriented shelters<sup>18</sup>
- 24/7 on-site support services with developmentally appropriate trauma supports and family conflict resolution services.
- Duplexes provide physical space for on-site meaningful daily activities and educational programming (budget, service awareness and navigation supports, rapid access to health services).
- Youth new to homelessness can directly enter a “Foyer Duplex” or utilize the Woods Homes Youth Emergency Shelter to stabilize until a room in a duplex is available.
- One half of the duplex is for stabilization, skill development and high intensity services, as youth mature and desire more independence they can “move next door” where they still have access to services and supports while they experience more responsibility, develop confidence with life skills, and have time to mature.
- When the young adult is ready to move to independent living the ‘after care’ supports to assist transition and support stabilization should continue as an eviction prevention strategy.
- This recommendation is in keeping with the Foyer Model and is in line with a supportive progression toward independent living over time as indicated in this diagram.

Diagram 1 Housing Options for Homeless Youth



## 📌 Foyer Model - Lethbridge Youth Shelter expansion

- This recommendation offers individuals who have maxed out their time at the Lethbridge Youth Shelter an option to access a single occupancy resident room within the same physical building, thus allows for continuity in services and more time for stabilization.
- Youth who access the Woods Homes Youth Shelter do so because they desire a safe secure age appropriate environment separate from the adult systems which are often intimidating and potentially unsafe for this vulnerable subpopulation.<sup>19</sup>
- Suggested location: convert the existing upstairs offices of Woods Homes to individual private single occupancy rooms with a common living, kitchen and washroom facilities which already exists in the space.
  - o This is a very cost effective and efficient strategy to leverage existing resources (repurposing existing space and expanding operational effective programming) for youth.

<sup>17</sup> Live, Learn, Grow: Supporting Transitions to Adulthood for Homeless Youth - A Framework for the Foyer in Canada. (2012)

<sup>18</sup> Assessing Youth Homelessness in Lethbridge, Alberta (2014)

<sup>19</sup> Assessing Youth Homelessness in Lethbridge, Alberta (2014)

- Woods Homes owns the youth shelter building in Lethbridge, however, the organization leasing the office space would need to be relocated (preferably within the immediate vicinity).
- Woods Homes have existing programs in other cities to model the expansion of stabilization services and there is a strong willingness to "make it happen" locally.

#### **✚ Cottage style family units<sup>20</sup>**

- 1 or 2-bedroom self-contained single family units for mothers and dependent children or expectant mothers
- Priority given to 18-24-year-old mothers
- Security and guest management to protect occupants, private units are connected to a safe, secure, communal living space.
- Communal space required for meaningful programing, skill and social development, and cultural activities.
- 24/7 on-site case management with access to childcare.
- Option to remain in the housing unit for 1-2 years to further stabilize and develop necessary skill in a stable safe environment. Extended time for stabilization will promote a successful transition to affordable housing.
- Ideally services are coordinated through the YWCA to leverage existing expertise who work with this highly vulnerable population.
- Suggested location and structure: renovate the old Lethbridge Curling Club space at the Civic Centre, this is geographically well positioned for family focused services, building could be retrofitted to maximize the internal physical environmental to enhance security.

#### **✚ Scattered-site market purchase to increase non-profit affordable housing inventory**

- This recommendation would alleviate the long waitlist for rent subsidy programs.
- An innovative graduated lease with option for rent-to-own could be implemented. The Aboriginal Housing Society in Lethbridge currently offers such programming which could be replicated. This approach would also address a need for affordable home ownership in Lethbridge.
- Suggestion: Purchase and remodel the old London Drugs building or the old Save-on-foods building with single occupancy self-contained residences. Or demolish and use land for reconstruction of 'cottage communities'.
- Cottage housing developments<sup>21</sup> or 'tiny homes' are widely represented in popular literature as affordable and efficient housing models to meet the local needs to address homelessness.
- Sea container 'cottage' style self-contained housing units are a viable option in Southern Alberta.



[www.oregonmetro.gov](http://www.oregonmetro.gov)



<http://www.blockscontainerstructures.com/residential/>

<sup>20</sup> Walsh, et al (2014). Permanent Supportive Housing for Families with Multiple Needs

<sup>21</sup> Model Ordinance Cottage Housing Development (2015)



# Summary

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This brief, time limited, environmental scan represents the views of various individuals and agencies working toward ending homelessness in the City of Lethbridge. Through a consultative process 27 participant interviews were documented with representation from 16 different agencies. Through this process recommendations were provided to support a case-in-point for funding needed to address the complex housing needs in Lethbridge.

At present, the subpopulations *most at-risk* and *most in-need* in Lethbridge are described as:

- men 30-55 years of age,
- youth 18-24 years of age,
- women of all ages, and
- multigenerational families

A high level of consistency among participants was demonstrated when all 27 identified Aboriginal Status as a major risk factor for homelessness in Lethbridge. Other common factors include history of eviction, active drug use, mental health and/or FASD, and exposure to trauma. Strong agreement among participants and across agencies should be recognized as a strength and leveraged as such.

In terms of housing models best suited to meet the needs of the subpopulations identified, three examples were consistently referenced which were Alpha House in Calgary, Bissell Centre in Edmonton, and Buffalo Apartments in Red Deer. Again, strong agreement suggests the following services / supports represent gaps in the current housing options within Lethbridge.

- harm reduction focused supportive housing
- housing options with 24 hour on-site supports
- guest management services and supports to prevent eviction
- meaningful daily programming opportunities for permanent supportive housing clients

The greatest strength identified by this environmental scan is the genuine interest and desire to engage in solution focused action. Also, the strong agreement and a collective understanding of what is needed to successfully house the most complex clients in Lethbridge is an asset. Although barriers were identified participants were quick to identify possible solutions.

In summary, this environmental scan sought to answer five key questions which have been addressed in this report. In addition, the consultative process revealed a strong motivation across a variety of agencies to seek out, and secure funding for innovative permanent supportive housing and affordable housing solutions in the City of Lethbridge. A collective readiness and a genuine sense of hope is evident. Now is the time to aggressively seek out funding opportunities for new and innovative initiatives to end homelessness in this community.

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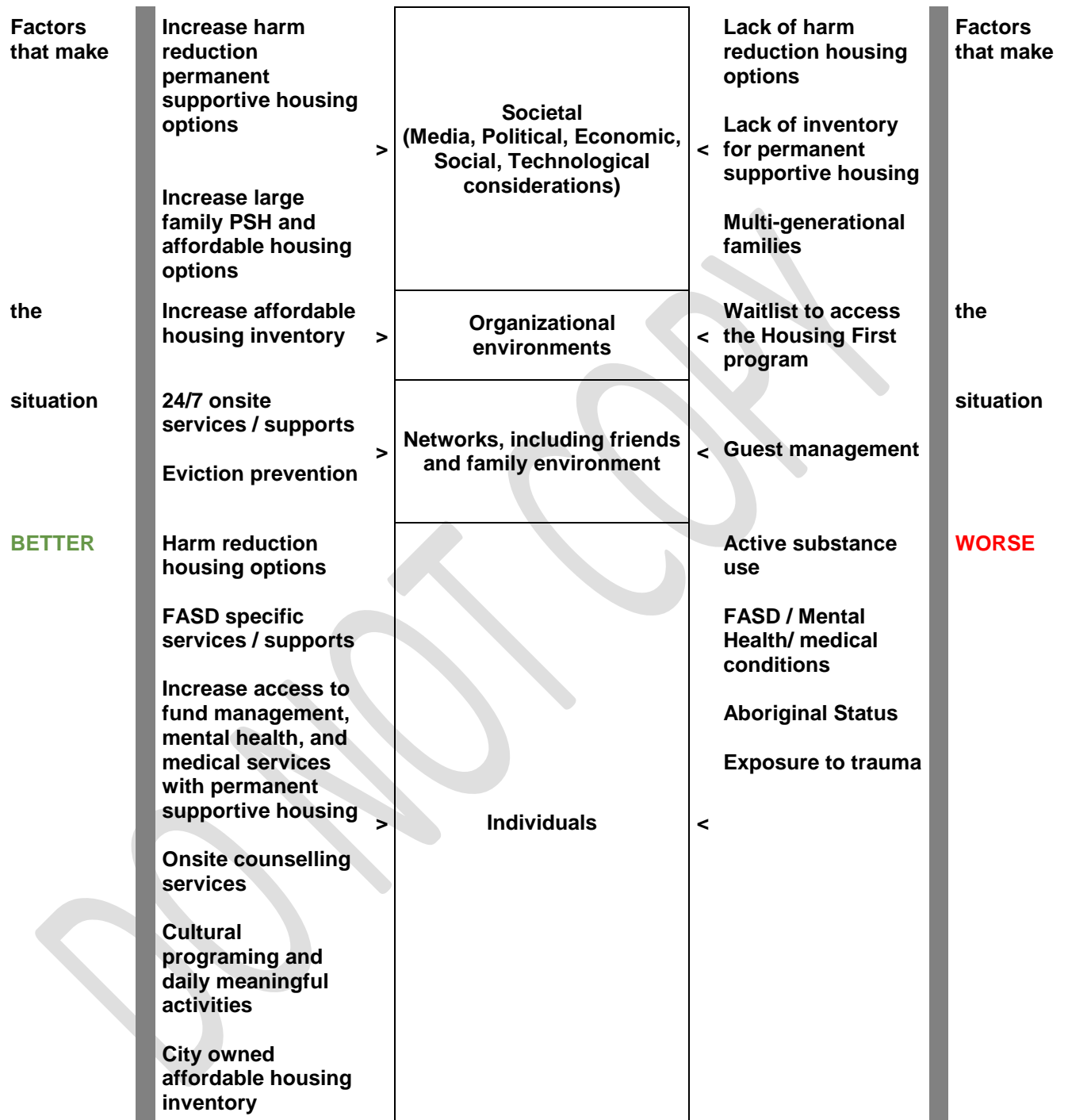
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## Appendix A

### Analyze influences on the situation

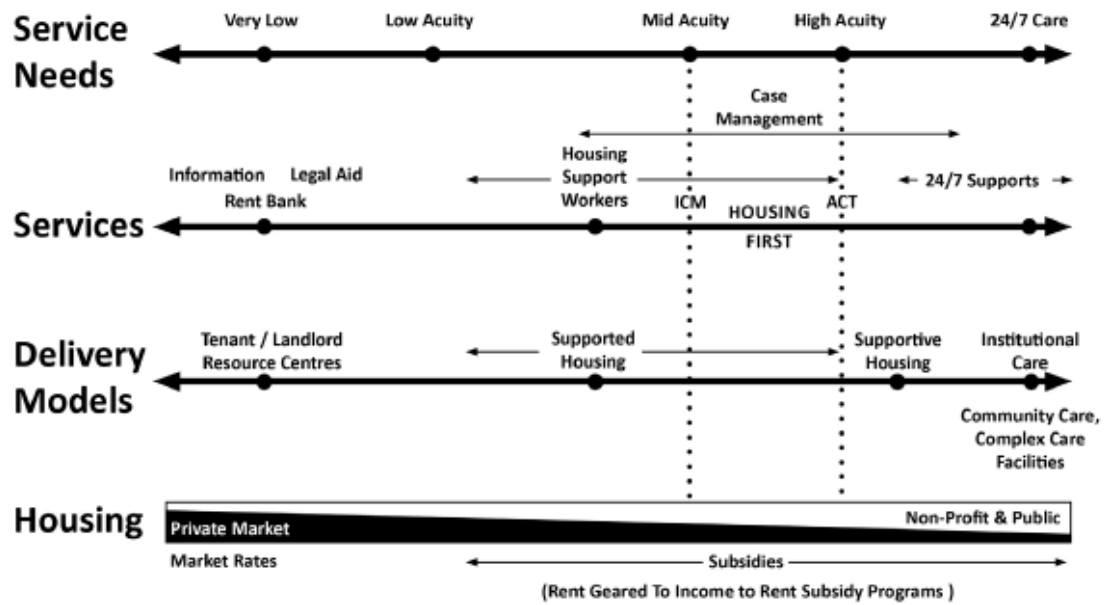
	Factor	Factor short form	Level of influence	Direction of influence	In top three priorities?	Source	Direction of change and recommendations
1	Eviction	Guest management	Societal (includes political, economic, environmental, and technological considerations)	It is making the situation worse.	Yes	Stakeholder view Scholarly literature	Increase services - 24/7 on-site case management, guest management support, eviction prevention education for landlords and clients, property damage fund for extreme cost recovery
2	Racism	Aboriginal Status	Societal (includes political, economic, environmental, and technological considerations)	It is making the situation worse.	Yes	Stakeholder view Scholarly literature	Increase inventory - City and agency owned properties to remove barriers at all levels,
3	Addictions	Active substance use	Individual	It is making the situation worse.	Yes	Stakeholder view Local research Scholarly literature	Increase harm reduction housing options
4	Medical conditions	FASD / Mental Health / medical conditions	Societal (includes political, economic, environmental, and technological considerations)	It is making the situation worse.	Yes	Stakeholder view Local research Scholarly literature	Increase permanent supportive housing inventory
5	Generational poverty	Multi-generational families	Organizational	It is making the situation worse.	Yes	Stakeholder view Local Research Literature	Increase housing inventory for large family units
6	Housing First case management services	Waitlist to access Housing First	Organizational	It is making the situation worse.	Yes	Stakeholder view	Increase permanent supportive housing inventory with onsite 24/7 intensive case management.  Increase community workers for low intensity ongoing aftercare

# Force Field Analysis



## Appendix B

### A Housing–Services Spectrum for Persons Homeless or at Risk



Distasio, J (2015). Eviction Prevention: Tool kit of Promising Practices. The Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg.

## Appendix C

**Preliminary report: submitted Nov 8<sup>th</sup> 2016**

**Environmental Scan: Subpopulation Housing Needs in Lethbridge**

November 7, 2016

**Final Report Due: November 30, 2016**

<p>Activities completed to date:</p>	<p>Project activities started on Oct 27<sup>th</sup> 2016.</p> <p>A list of agencies was provided to start the process with known Housing First partner agencies. Consultation with 13 agencies were booked via e-mail, all invitations to participate included 5 key questions for discussion.</p> <p>Elicited the support of a Public Health practicum student from the University of Lethbridge who is currently working with the City of Lethbridge.</p> <p>10 Housing First partner agency consultations completed, with a total of 17 key informants participating in the consultation meetings. Many key informants solicited feedback from their front-line staff who could not attend so a broad range of views were represented in the discussions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 2 consultations were rescheduled therefore 5 remaining scheduled consultations to complete next week. <b>Note – agencies representing women comprise the bulk of interviews remaining, therefore, needs, causes, and conditions leading to homelessness for women and single parent families are underrepresented in this preliminary report.</b></li> <li>● 4 agencies have not yet responded to an e-mail invitation so additional efforts will be made to connect before November 15<sup>th</sup> 2016.</li> <li>● A summary of each agency consultation was completed.</li> </ul>
<p>Key Questions guiding consultations:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) What subpopulations are <u>most at-risk</u> for homelessness?</li> <li>2) What subpopulation is <u>most in need</u> of supportive permanent or affordable housing in Lethbridge?</li> <li>3) What <u>housing models</u> are best suited to meet the need of at-risk subpopulations in Lethbridge?</li> <li>4) What underlying <u>causes</u> or <u>conditions</u> are unique to subpopulations at-risk in Lethbridge?</li> <li>5) What <u>barriers and/or opportunities</u> exist in Lethbridge to house at-risk subpopulations</li> </ol>
<p>Preliminary summary of consultations:</p>	<p><b>Q1) Subpopulations <u>most at-risk</u> for homelessness:</b></p> <p>Men 30-55 years old – previously housed but high eviction rates, have an addiction and / or mental health issue, on AISH or PDD funding</p>

	<p>Aboriginal men  Youth 18-24 years old, transitioning out of care and/or previous history of homelessness  Multigenerational Aboriginal families with history of homelessness (grandparent, parent, youth)  Men transitioning out of prison  Women experiencing violence</p> <p><b>Q2) Subpopulation <u>most in need of housing</u>:</b>  Men 30-55 years old – previously housed, with high eviction rates, an addiction and / or mental health issue, on AISH or PDD funding  Aboriginal men  Youth 18-24 years old, transitioning out of care and/or previous history of homelessness</p> <p><b>Q4) <u>Causes and conditions</u> which increase risk factors</b>  Racism toward Aboriginal Peoples<sup>22</sup>  Mental or physical disability (complex mental health, FASD, low literacy, low cognitive function, and medication compliance issues)  Three primary property management companies in Lethbridge.  Previously evicted clients are often refused re-housing; this causes significant challenges for case managers.  Affordable market housing competition from post-secondary students<sup>23</sup>  Lack of on-site guest management service. Majority of evictions occur outside of case management regular working hours. The cost of eviction is problematic, typical costs: \$3000-\$6000 and for exceptional damage situations: \$10,000-\$60,000+ <sup>24</sup>.</p>
<p>Preliminary recommendations for consideration:</p>	<p><b>Q3) <u>Most suitable housing models to meet current at-risk population needs</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ 50-unit place-based housing facility with 24/7 on-site services for men experiencing chronic homelessness. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ On-site enhanced service coordination for residents. Staff require a level of expertise to support complex clients, and the ability to form genuine relationships to foster trust.<sup>25</sup></li> <li>○ Must be harm reduction focused, not abstinence based, and offer medication and financial management supports.</li> <li>○ Property owned by a Housing First agency so to eliminate housing related racism, reduce eviction related and property damage costs.<sup>2</sup></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>22</sup> Understanding the Impacts of and Finding Community Solutions to Poverty in Lethbridge (2015)

<sup>23</sup> Population & Housing Projections for the City of Lethbridge (2014)

<sup>24</sup> Eviction Prevention: Tool kit of Promising Practices (2016)

<sup>25</sup> Government of Alberta: P12 – Test center results summary for Lethbridge

- Must be built with durable materials to reduce potential for damage and include barrier free units to accommodate a sub-population with physical disabilities.
  - Recommendation from consultations: use converted shipping container units as 'cottage housing' for private rooms, placed within a large open space building. Cottages situated within a larger building will allow for guest management, on site security (for staff and clients), and 24/7 intensive case management within the building.
  - Shipping containers are cost effective ready-made units, easy to sanitize, extremely durable, and can be easily repurposed if needed.
  - Suggested large open space building locations near existing services: old London Drugs building, old Save-on-Foods building, Civic Centre
- Graduated lease programs commensurate with increased independence to scattered site market housing or an open space cottage community.
- Inclusive of Aboriginal specific programming for cultural reconnection and other social programing. <sup>26</sup>
- Includes social enterprise opportunities for maintenance / janitorial services to offset operating costs and provide opportunities for residence to engage in daily meaningful activities, if they choose to do so.<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ Foyer Model "Enhanced Accommodations" for youth 18-24 years old. <sup>27</sup>
  - A graduated housing option from the Lethbridge youth shelter to a temporary stable individual 'bedroom' unit to promote increased independence.
  - Provide an option for youth 18-24 who otherwise would utilize the adult shelter. Youth require dedicated and coordinated services to meet their unique developmental needs. <sup>28</sup>
    - Recommendation from consultations: Physical environment - convert the existing upstairs offices to individual private rooms; common living, kitchen and washroom facilities already exist. Very cost effective to repurpose the space into a welcoming environment for youth.
    - Woods Home owns the youth shelter building in Lethbridge, however, the organization leasing the office

<sup>26</sup> Final Report: Improving housing outcomes for Aboriginal people in Western Canada: National, regional, community and individual perspectives on changing the future of homelessness (2011)

<sup>27</sup> Live, Learn, Grow: Supporting Transitions to Adulthood for Homeless Youth - A Framework for the Foyer in Canada. (2012)

<sup>28</sup> Assessing Youth Homelessness in Lethbridge, Alberta (2014)



	<p>space would need to be relocated (preferably within the immediate vicinity).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Woods Home have existing programs in other cities to draw from; and there is a strong willingness to "make it happen" locally.</li> </ul>
Next Steps:	<p>Complete consultations with Housing First partners in Lethbridge</p> <p>Complete literature review (scholarly and grey literature) to support / negate information collected during consultations</p> <p>Complete best practice scan of relevant housing models, conduct phone consultations as needed</p> <p>Complete cost-benefit data collection for relevant housing models, conduct phone consultations as needed</p> <p>Prepare recommendations and final report</p>

## Summary

In summary, this interim report is a brief overview of consultations completed to date; a snapshot of emerging trends and suggestions for action from Housing First partner agencies; and a limited cross-reference with existing local reports, best practice and scholarly literature. **It must be noted that women and single parent families are underrepresented in this interim report.** A second interim report can be provided for the underrepresented subpopulations upon completion of consultations if required.

Please contact me with questions, concerns, or suggestions related to this interim report. I am also available to meet in person if this is of value at this stage in the environmental scan.

Kathy Haight RN, BSN, MN