

Rebuilding the Foundations

ONPHA's Response to the Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy

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November 5, 2009



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Ontario
Non-Profit Housing
Association

presentation to
Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC)



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The Liberal Promise

- Develop a Long-Term Affordable Housing Strategy:
 - “Create a **long-term strategy** for affordable housing. We will ensure this strategy contains **a mix of non-profit and co-operative housing,** and takes advantage of **creative financial options**”



Problems and Challenges

- Core housing need as measured by CMHC hasn't improved since the '70's despite favourable economic conditions
- Reduction of new housing investments in social housing
- Void in funding between 1995-2002
- An aging social housing stock
- Social housing is increasingly becoming housing of "last resort"



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Problems and Challenges

- “legacy” housing programs constrain providers in being able to manage assets effectively – programs are not coordinated
- Access to ownership has had a residualizing effect on the rental sector
- Net loss of 14,000 rental units between 1996 and 2006



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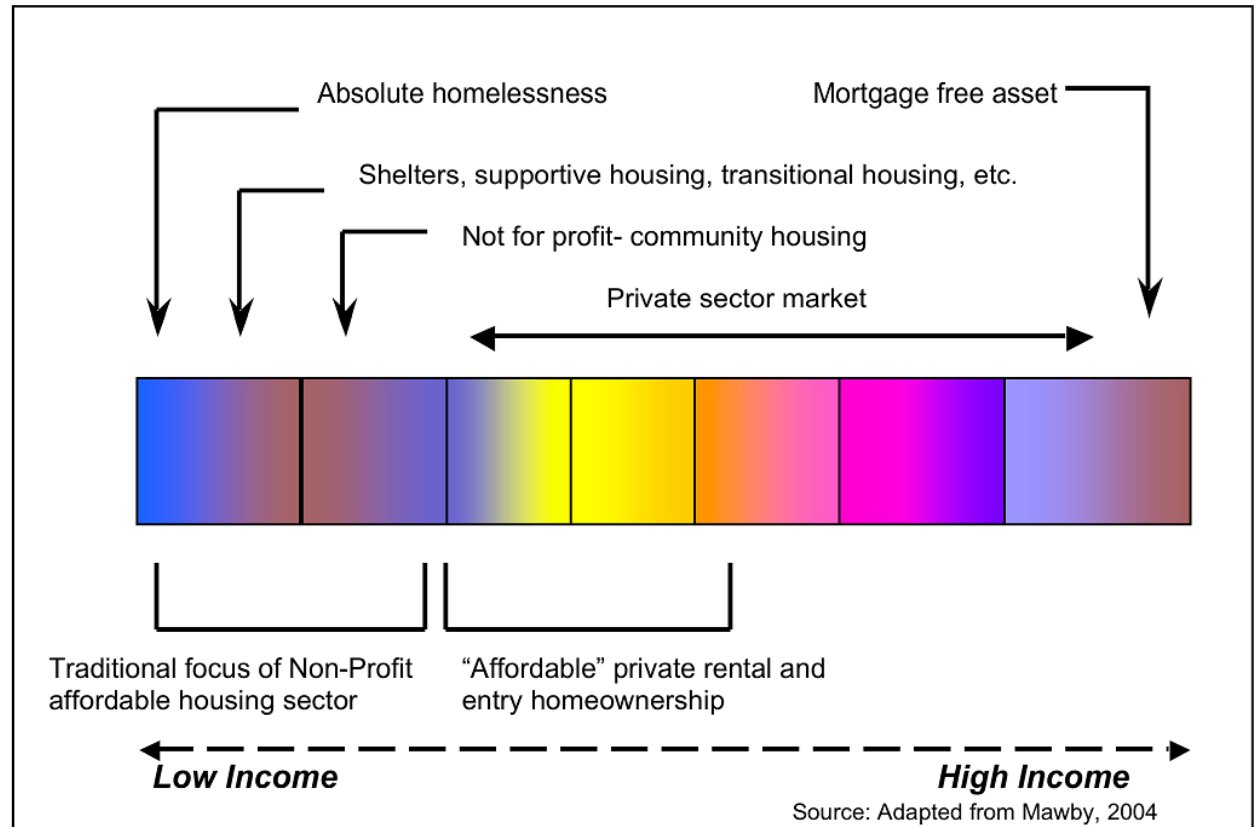
Problems and Challenges

- 1 of 5 renters pay more than 50% of income on rent
- Nearly 130,000 on social housing waiting lists with wait times anywhere up 21 years
- Low supply exacerbated by inflation in rent levels
- Housing and related policies are “silo-ized” – housing is constantly bombarded by new costs



Setting the Context

- Affordability is a continuum not a point
- Different regions have varying needs





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Setting the Context

- Housing is:
 - Bricks and Mortar
 - People living within Bricks and Mortar
- Bricks and Mortar (supply side)
 - Requires “place-based” elements (i.e. new supply, preservation of existing supply)
- People (demand side)
 - Require “person-based” elements (i.e. income assistance and other supports)

Learning from International Experience

- Rental assistance as a significant priority (US, UK, EU, AU) as part of subsidy system reform;
- Increasing recognition of housing issues as central in urban form/sprawl (US, AU);
- Major reinvestment in social housing renewal and broader neighbourhood regeneration, using social housing as a catalyst for change (US, UK, EU);
- Recognition of the need to manage housing investment flows as part of macroeconomic management (AU, UK, EU);
- Inclusionary development (US, UK);
- Recognition of housing conditions as a key aspect of quality of life and social welfare (EU, UK);
- Rental housing a significant sector, requiring significant state involvement (UK, EU);



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Main Principles Driving Housing

- Housing is a key to success in other spheres
- Implies joint fed-prov-mun responsibility (but not necessarily in partnership)
- No one-size-fits-all – the needs of communities vary
- Strategy must address full range of continuum – non-profit sector is one component



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Main Principles Driving Housing

- Programming should be designed and delivered locally but with a legislative framework and funding from senior government
- Income redistribution programs should not be funded from property tax base
- Housing is a “system” – policies in one area impact and reverberate across the system
- A long-term strategy should be goal-based with measures to monitor outcomes



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ONPHA Recommendations

1. Better integration of community-based support services with affordable housing
2. Implement a housing benefit program
 - to deal with affordability and assist the working poor
3. Reform funding to sustain social housing assets
 - via an ongoing capital program or reform of the rent structure
4. Examine and reform overlapping income assistance mechanisms
5. Expand the size and impact of the non-profit sector
 - Benefit of the NP sector is its ability to preserve long-term affordability because of its non-profit business model



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ONPHA Recommendations

6. Stimulate rental supply at realistic rents
 - Project viability becomes questionable if rents kept artificially low
7. Encourage/assist affordable homeownership
8. Use housing investment strategically in place-based redevelopment and green field growth
 - Inclusionary housing can help here
9. Implement a system to measure impacts and outcomes



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Concluding Remarks

- We don't need more on-again/off-again programs – we need a “housing system”
- The system is best defined and delivered locally to address unique community needs
- Communities need a menu of “place-based” and “person-based” tools from which to choose
- A good housing system needs to be measured and monitored – course corrections need to be made with changing circumstances



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ONPHA's Position Paper

“Rebuilding the Foundations:

ONPHA's Vision for a More Effective Affordable
Housing System in Ontario”

Available at:

www.onpha.on.ca