



## 16. Social Housing Services

### WHAT IS THE SERVICE?

The *Social Housing Reform Act* (SHRA), December of 2000 transferred responsibility for social housing from the Province to municipalities. The act defines the role of the municipality as a 'Service Manager' and provides a legislative framework that ensures the efficient and effective administration of social housing programs.

The goal of social housing services is to ensure the provision of affordable homes for individuals whose income makes it challenging to obtain adequate housing in the private rental market. A variety of housing forms are provided as follows:

- ▶ Municipally owned and operated housing (through a department or municipally owned housing corporation)
- ▶ Non-profit housing that is owned and operated by community-based non-profit corporations governed by a board of directors
- ▶ Co-operative housing that is owned and operated by its members
- ▶ Rent supplement, where a private or non-profit landlord provides units to households at a rent-geared-to-income (RGI) and the municipality subsidizes the difference between that rent and the market rent for the unit

### WHAT ARE THE MAJOR SERVICE DELIVERY ISSUES?

Issues facing the delivery of Social Housing Services are:

- ▶ Supply of units – most municipalities have long waiting lists and demand far exceeds the supply of available stock
- ▶ Impact of legislated 'special priority placement' (SPP) - gives priority for placement of units to victims of domestic violence. Across the province, an increasing number of units are being allocated to SPP, resulting in longer waiting lists for all other client groups
- ▶ Capital funding to create new units - senior levels of government have provided limited funds to create new housing resulting in the need for municipalities to use their own funding
- ▶ Operating funding – pressures in operating costs without a corresponding offset in increased revenue is resulting in shortfalls
- ▶ Aging housing stock - under-funded capital reserves as many housing providers have insufficient reserves to cover the anticipated costs of future capital repairs

**WHAT ARE THE RESULTS?**

**How many units are available?**

FIG. 16.1 Number of Social Housing Units per 1,000 Households

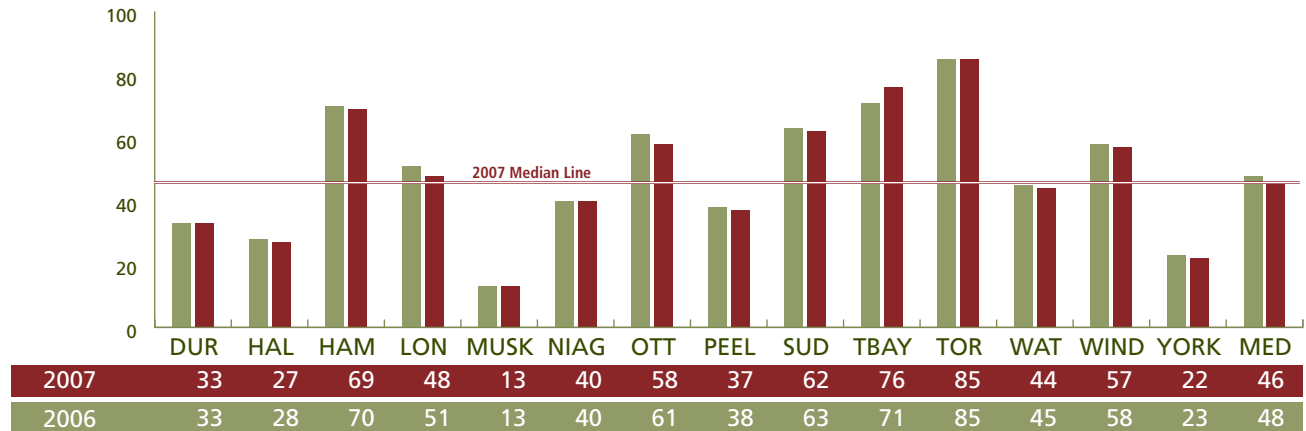


Figure 16.1 shows the number of housing units available per 1,000 households. Social housing units can include rent-geared-to-income (RGI) units, market rent units and rent supplement units. The results have remained fairly constant over the last two years, with any increases relating to new units constructed or additional rent supplement units brought into the program.

**What percentage of the waiting list is housed annually?**

FIG. 16.2 Percentage of Social Housing Waiting List Placed Annually

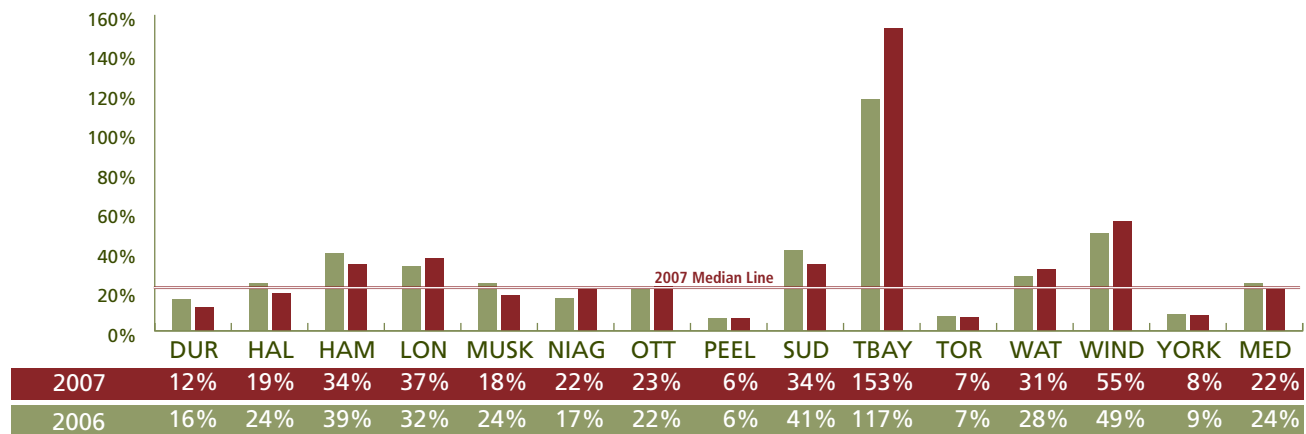


Figure 16.2 shows the percentage of households on the centralized waiting list placed in social housing units. Archived or cancelled applications are excluded from this measure. Thunder Bay has on average, the ability to place all waiting list applications in less than one year.

### What is the cost of providing a social housing unit?

FIG. 16.3 Total Social Housing Cost per Social Housing Unit

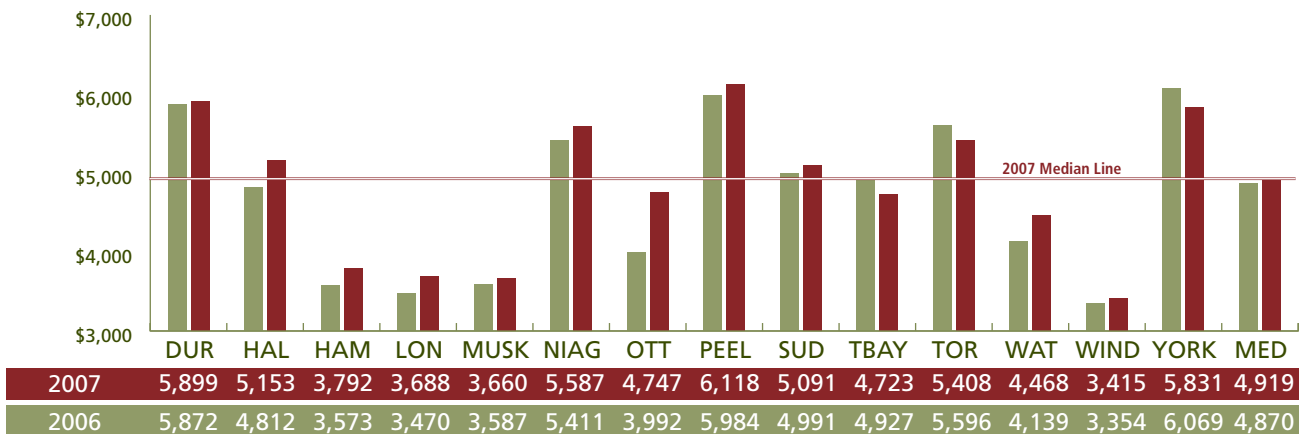


Figure 16.3 shows the total annual cost of providing one social housing unit. This figure includes the annually adjusted subsidy provided by the municipality plus administration costs, as well as any one-time grants (e.g., emergency capital repairs).

### What SHOULD YOU CONSIDER WHEN REVIEWING THESE RESULTS?

Each municipality's results are influenced to varying degrees by a number of factors, including:

- ▶ Age and supply of housing stock - both private and municipal
- ▶ Demographic and economic conditions - may increase waiting list pressure, e.g., loss of local industry, rapid growth, percentage of SPP applicants
- ▶ Waiting list management - frequency of the service manager to update the waiting list and cancel applicants no longer actively seeking RGI housing
- ▶ Portfolio mix – older federal units are generally less costly than units built under subsequent provincial programs (fewer assisted units, lower land costs)
- ▶ Geographic conditions - construction and land costs, higher snow removal costs in northern areas of the province, rental market availability, utility costs and usage profiles
- ▶ Tenant mix – seniors communities are usually less costly to operate than families and singles

For more information about the results contact the Municipality's representative listed in Appendix F, page 94.