THE PROMISES OF HOUSING FIRST AND THE REALITIES OF NEOLIBERALISM: LESSONS FROM TORONTO'S *STREETS TO HOMES* PROGRAMME

by

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

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Abstract

In 2005, Toronto City Council adopted the *Streets to Homes* programme, based on the "Housing First" (HF) approach, as the centrepiece of the City's strategy to address homelessness (City of Toronto, 2005). Under HF, a client is placed in permanent housing immediately, and then receives supports for concurrent issues, such as addiction and mental illness, that affect housing stability (Hwang et al, 2012). HF is being widely embraced by North American policymakers and academics, who applaud its utility in facilitating permanent housing retention (Waegemakers Schiff and Rook, 2012). However, critics argue that HF programmes facilitate the removal of marginalised populations from city centres and represents a retrenchment of front line emergency services, reflecting neoliberal governance and the regulation of space (Klowdasky, 2009; Willse, 2010). Both the heavy reliance of quantitative, medically-oriented measures employed by proponents of HF and the equally abstract arguments of its detractors fail to assess the implications of a city's embrace of HF on the overall housing and homelessness policies and the regulation of space. The current study intends to overcome these gaps by presenting qualitative research conducted through interviews with City of Toronto officials, service providers, and other key informants. The initial research questions focused on why the decision to adopt *Streets to Homes* was made, and its impacts on service delivery and access to public space. However, the employ of grounded theory allowed for a more holistic understanding to emerge of how HF does not represent neoliberalism, but rather is hampered by it. In order for HF programmes to succeed, they must be supported by a robust supply of affordable housing and adequate income supports, as well as a great deal of attention being paid to the psychosocial issues that often accompany homelessness. A failure to have these supports in place results in continued extreme poverty and poor community integration for clients.

Acknowledgments

This study contributes to a dialogue that is already well established; addressing homelessness in Canada means increasing the supply of affordable housing. In that sense, the manuscript has been frustrating to write. How much evidence do we need before we will simply act? Nevertheless, I owe a great deal of thanks to my participants who took the time to contribute to the dialogue yet again.

My supervisor, Dr. Ron Vogel's guidance, patience, and dedication were instrumental in my ability to produce what is before you. Dr. Patrizia Albanese's methodological expertise, mentorship, and friendship have been much appreciated. Thanks to Dr. Cheryl Teelucksingh for keeping me true to my critical roots.

My sister Emily, brother-in-law James, and late Nana encouraged me and asked questions throughout the process. A special thanks to Lyla for playtime that got her Uncle Colin out of his wheelchair and reminded him why he does what he does. As a person with a disability, I owe much to the dedication of my staff who ensure that I am able to do this work.

Finally, there are three people for whom I owe my deepest thanks. To my assistant on this project, and my best friend, Jared Scratch; thank you for a level of dedication like no other. Thank you for the laughs and the tears, and for understanding me like perhaps no one else. To my parents, Aileen and Jeff Phillips; thank you for believing in me, for pushing me, for giving me my independence. It is my working class and Scottish roots that have shaped who I am as an academic.

Then let us pray that come it may,
(As come it will for a' that,)
That Sense and Worth, o'er a' the earth,
Shall bear the gree, an' a' that.
For a' that, an' a' that,
It's coming yet for a' that,
That Man to Man, the world o'er,
Shall brothers be for a' that.

- Robert Burns, 1795, Dumfries, Scotland

Dedicated to the memory of

The Hon. Dr. Jack Layton, MP, PC

My friend and inspiration. His work continues.

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List of Abbreviations

ACT	Assertive Community Treatment
AHI	Affordable Housing Initiative
AHP	Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program
CAMH	Centre for Addictions and Mental Health
CHPI	Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative
CHRA	Canadian Housing and Renewal Association
CMHC	Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation
DESC	*Downtown Emergency Service Centre*
EI	Employment Insurance
GTA	Greater Toronto Area
HF	Housing First
HF ER-ICM	Housing First with Ethnoracial Intensive Case Management
HF-ACT	Housing First with Assertive Community Treatment
HF-ICM	Housing First with Intensive Case Management
HOT	Housing Opportunities Toronto
HPS	Homelessness Partnership Strategy
ICM	Intensive Case Management
LHIN	Local Health Integration Network
MCSS	Ministry of Community and Social Services
MHLTC	Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
MMAH	Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing
NYHS	New York Housing Study
ODSP	Ontario Disability Support Program
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
ONPHA	Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association
OW	OntarioWorks
REACH	*Reaching Out and Engaging to Achieve Consumer Health*
RGI	Rent-geared-to-income
S2H	*Streets to Homes*
SHRA	*Social Housing Reform Act*
SRO	Single room occupancy
SSA	*Safe Streets Act*
SSHA(D)	Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (Division)
TAU	Treatment-as-usual
TCHC	Toronto Community Housing Corporation

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Chapter I – Introduction

Over the last decade, the efficacy of the traditional approach to providing services to those who are experiencing homelessness, known as the continuum-of-care model, has been questioned by academics and policymakers alike in the wake of evidence that the Housing First (HF) approach produces better outcomes in areas such as housing retention and mental health stability. The continuum-of-care model asserts that people must be gradually prepared for re-settlement in permanent housing through progression in a system of emergency shelters, transitional housing, etc. Under this model, obtaining permanent housing is contingent upon being deemed "housing ready" after being treated for concurrent issues, such as addictions and mental illness when they are present. Instead, HF sees housing as a fundamental human right, and rapidly places clients in permanent accommodation and offers supports to facilitate housing retention (Hwang et al, 2012). In 2005, Toronto became one of a growing list of North American cities that have committed to "end street homelessness" (City of Toronto, 2005, p.1) with the adoption of *From the Streets into Home: A Strategy to Assist Homeless Persons Find Permanent Housing* (hereto referred as the Strategy). The cornerstone of this plan is the *Streets to Homes* programme, a service explicitly modeled after HF principles.

A literature review conducted by Waegemakers Schiff and Rook (2012) found that *Streets to Homes* has received scant attention from academics. Indeed, Falvo's (2009) analysis of research conducted by the City in 2007 (City of Toronto, 2007) was the only published paper found by the authors of the literature review. The literature concerning the broader HF approach is vast as well as robust, and can be divided into two categories: the quantitative analysis of positive psychosocial outcomes that is fuelling HF's embrace, and critiques of the underlying philosophy that question its ability to address the underlying causes of homelessness, a connection to a denial of access to space, and neoliberal urban policy. A major shortcoming of

both arguments is the failure to adequately analyse HF's implications for municipal housing and homelessness policy as a whole. The purely quantitative analysis fails to assess how HF affects the overall relationship between homeless people, urban space and urban policy. Likewise, highly abstract arguments often fail to account for the tangible effect that permanent housing has on a person's quality of life. This debate is symptomatic of the larger questions about the nature and the objectives of urban policy in an era of neoliberal governance – broadly defined as the belief that governments must follow the discipline of the market.

In 2013, the federal government placed HF at the centre of its response to homelessness (Gaetz et al, 2014). The uptake of HF as public policy requires that its scholarship expand to include questions of how programmes inform, and are informed by, existing policies and services in an era of neoliberal urban governance. That discussion is started here through the analysis of 29 elite and key informant interviews. A 'critical urban epistemology' and elements of grounded theory are used to develop a theory of the relationship between HF and the current state of neoliberalism. Three decades of neoliberal governance form the context in which *Streets to Homes* operates. Understanding its consequences is key to answering the questions posed here.

Background

Researching homelessness in Canada is contextualised in several realities: the growing number of people who are experiencing homelessness, increasing unaffordability in the private rental housing market, the lack of affordable housing, and governments that are withdrawing from the housing policy envelope. Arriving at a definitive and accurate count of the number of Canadians who experience homelessness is tremendously challenging. However, several statistics have been produced recently that attempt to explain the depth of the problem. Gaetz et al (2014)

suggest that approximately 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness annually. Of these, 50,000 are provisionally accommodated, 180,000 rely on emergency shelters, and 5,000 are entirely unsheltered. It is known that 147,000 unique individuals stayed in an emergency shelter at least once in 2009, which equates to 1 in every 230 Canadians (Segaert, 2012). A total of 56,533 single adults and youth (excluding families) utilised Toronto shelters between 2004 and 2007 (Aubry et al, 2013).

Whilst it is true that many causes of homelessness are rooted in mental health issues, past traumas, and substance abuse, simple housing affordability is also a major causal factor. The latest figures show that 40% of renters are experiencing core housing need, double that of owners (Government of Canada, 2013). It is further estimated that 18% of renters are in severe core housing need; these households pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs (Londerville and Steele, 2014). In Toronto, 56% of renters with an income below $30,000 annually are in severe core housing need (Gaetz et al, 2014).

As the private market becomes unsustainable for many households, the demand for subsidised housing increases. As of January 2011, "there were 152,077 households on [rent-geared-to-income (RGI)] housing waiting lists across the province, representing an increase of 7.4% since 2010" (ONHPA, 2011, 9). In Toronto, 88,891 households were on the waitlist for social housing in 2014. This number is an increase of approximately 5,200 households, or 6.2%, over 2013 figures (City of Toronto, 2014a).

The housing that was built prior to 1993 receives ongoing federal funding through operating agreements that were negotiated with the provincial governments and housing providers, and are administered by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation

(CMHC). Currently, there are 544,000 units that are still funded by CMHC operating agreements. It is important to note that many of these agreements are coming to an end. As a result, many units will lose their subsidies and providers will lose funding for operating costs. If the federal government stays on its current trajectory, no units will be funded after 2030 (Canadian Housing & Renewal Association, 2014).

The Strategy introduced two programmatic changes worth noting: first, the priorities of funding to social service providers explicitly changed to emphasize outreach services that lead to permanent housing; second, *Streets to Homes* commenced. Details of how the programme operates are given in the next chapter. It is important to stress that the purpose here is not to examine the broadly-defined experience of homelessness and housing insecurity; rather, three bodies of literature relate to this study, and the results are intended to contribute to all three.

Literature Review

First, it is paramount that an inquiry of this nature be rooted in an understanding of neoliberalism and its governmentality. It is too simplistic to view neoliberalism as just an ideology or policy programme. It is, rather, a shift in governance itself (Larner, 2000). Like the welfare state before it, neoliberalism has become the institutionalised ethos of governance. Whilst critics charge that neoliberal governance means a withdrawal from policy, a more nuanced view is that it is the content of policy itself that has changed. Peck and Tickell (2002) argue that universal, ameliorating programmes are (a) 'rolled back', whilst punitive targeted programmes are (b) 'rolled out'. Keil (2009) expanded upon Peck and Tickell's (2002) work and introduced the concept of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism. Keil's (2009) arguments serve as a central point of analysis here, and are expanded upon below.

Several authors have detailed neoliberalism's specific impact on municipal policies and the experience in cities. Accounting for its locally contingent nature – its ability to have different effects on different cities (Hackworth, 2007) – leads to the understanding that neoliberalism has very tangible effects on people's everyday experiences in cities (Boudreau et al, 2009). In the context of Toronto – a 'global city' (Sassen, 2005) – these effects become intensified when we consider the pressure these cities face to facilitate capital flows.
Along with these shifts in economic and social policy, cities have also changed land use policies, increasingly marginalising homeless and other vulnerable populations from having full access to urban space as it became commodified. These issues are the subject of the second body of literature that is reviewed here. Smith (1998) coined the term 'revanchism' to describe this turn in thinking. Here, the previous Keynesian notion that governments have a role to play in ensuring equality of access and enjoyment of the city is replaced with a vendetta against groups who are seen as being a blight on the urban landscape, including those who are homeless. Smith's (1998) findings were grounded in the experience in New York City. However, it is evident that Toronto has employed revanchist policies as well. For example, O'Grady et al (2011) argue that the degree of police attention that Toronto's homeless youth face amounts to social profiling that targets those who are young and living in extreme poverty.

Finally, the present study seeks to contribute to the HF literature, which can be conceived as being divided into proponent and opponent authors. Those who advocate for HF rely on place-based studies that show positive outcomes for clients. The largest such study has been the Mental Health Commission of Canada's *At Home/Chez-Soi* project. In preparing the final report for the Toronto test site, Stergiopoulos et al (2014) concluded that HF is an effective and economically prudent modality for housing previously-homeless persons with mental health issues. Key to this

success is adequate mental health supports that emphasize consumer choice and a recovery-oriented service delivery model. Notwithstanding these findings, Stergiopoulos et al (2014) identified shortcomings with the model; namely, there is a need to offer services that better address the psychosocial needs of clients, such as community integration.

These shortcomings form the basis of many of the criticisms of HF. For example, Willse (2010) suggests that the 'invention' of chronic homelessness as a matter of policy and the subsequent employment of HF does not serve to address the underlying psychosocial issues that lead to homelessness. Rather, this high-need population is merely managed in a manner that fails to address questions of poverty and housing security. This is a claim also made by Klodawsky (2009) and McNaughton Nicholls and Atherton (2011), who cite McNaughton's (2008) findings that participants had transitioned out of homelessness, but were not transitioning into meaningful lives. Pleace (2011) raises similar concerns; however, he does not see the issue as being the management of homeless people with psychiatric disabilities, but rather the privileging of this small population. He stresses that most people are homeless simply because they are poor, suggesting that attention should be focused on reducing poverty.

Research Questions and Methodology

The research questions for this study are:

(i) Why did the City of Toronto adopt a HF programme?

(ii) From the point of view of key informants, how has the *Streets to Homes* programme changed service delivery to those experiencing homelessness in Toronto?

(iii) Has *Streets to Homes* contributed to a regulation of the downtown core that limits the access of the homeless, and the agencies that serve them?

These questions were answered through 29 semi-structured interviews with key informants in Toronto. The sample included: officials and Councillors from the City of Toronto, executive directors or senior managers of agencies serving the underhoused, housing experts, and law enforcement officials. All interviews took place during the summer of 2014.

The state of the HF literature required a heuristic case study (Eckstein, 1975). The lack of attention that has been given to developing an evidence-based theoretical understanding of HF as an urban policy positions this study at the beginning of the knowledge building process. The knowledge that was gathered has been analysed using elements of grounded theory. Eckstein (1975) suggests that employing grounded theory is well-suited to analysing data for heuristic case studies. In developing grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that too often researchers tacitly adopt a convenient theory to explain their findings. Instead of simply marrying an established theory to a study's findings through deduction, researchers must allow those findings to inductively develop new theories. The analysis was completed through the lens of a 'critical urban epistemology' (Boudreau, 2010).

Findings and Conclusions

The findings are presented in three chapters, reflecting the major themes to which the participants spoke. First, and perhaps most importantly, the implementation of HF in Canada is wholly linked to broader housing policy and the lack of affordable housing stock. As one housing expert remarked, *Streets to Homes* will be under increasing pressure as they attempt to house greater numbers of clients with limited housing options. Second, questions were raised as to whether or not *Streets to Homes'* service delivery model adequately addresses the underlying psychosocial issues that lead to homelessness. Related to this is striking the appropriate balance between the City's operation of *Streets to Homes* and utilization of agencies' existing

relationships with the homeless population. This chapter also includes a brief discussion on how Housing First interacts with the gendered experiences of women's homelessness. Finally, participants confirmed that Toronto's homeless population's relationship with the built environment has changed in the context of Ontario's *Safe Streets Act* and the intensified commodification of the downtown core. *Streets to Homes* plays a mediating role in this relationship because of its spatially-oriented outreach activities and its very limited ability to find suitable housing in the core.

Smith (1998) argues that neoliberal urban planning has shifted the priority from communal enjoyment of public space to its commercial potential. Likewise, the shortage of affordable housing is a direct result of the programme of neoliberalism that has been adopted in Canada (Dalton, 2008; and McBride & McNutt, 2007). Moreover, it could be argued that the inability of *Streets to Homes* to address clients' mental health issues is symptomatic of the downsizing of the mental health system that occurred in the 1990s. *Streets to Homes* and, by extension, Housing First in Canada are programmes that are overwhelmingly impeded by neoliberalism. The participants in this study place a great amount of credence in the principles and methodology of Housing First. It is indeed not an instance of 'roll-out' neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002). In introducing the concept of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism, Keil (2009) argues that neoliberal policies of the past three decades – the retrenchment of the welfare state, and the embrace of the free market (Peck & Tickell, 2002) – continue to be promoted and affect communities. However, neoliberalism's failure to achieve social cohesion has created opportunities for policies to be advanced that are more redistributive yet still embedded in neoliberal orthodoxy: an evolution in neoliberal thought. Urban policies are particularly well-

suited for such development, given both their proximity to social issues and social movements that can incite change and the extent to which neoliberalism has influenced urban policy.

This study intends to further Keil's (2009) argument using Housing First as an example. The increased instances of homelessness in the 1990s and early 2000s created the need for robust policy and programmes to emerge as the traditional shelter system proved to be inadequate in meeting the needs of its users. Despite its progressive framework, clinical evidence base, and wide embrace, Housing First remains affected by previous neoliberal housing policy, namely the lack of affordable housing stock. It is, at the same time, hampered by policies and discourses that promote the regulation of space for the purposes of consumption. The constraints placed upon HF by neoliberalism do not necessitate its wholesale discount; indeed, any such discussion seems counterproductive and ill-informed at this point. Rather, we need to see HF as a redistributive policy that is impacted by other policies, such as the withdrawal of CMHC funding for social housing providers. It is important to stress that Keil (2009) does not see 'roll-with-it' neoliberalisation as an end of the previous tenets of the neoliberal policy agenda, but rather as an extension of them. He argues that, as neoliberalism evolves, its shortcomings and contradictions create opportunities for a return to redistributive politics. If such an evolution is accepted, it has implications for urban governance in general, and housing and homelessness policy in particular.

Chapter II – Background

To understand Housing First as an urban policy, it is necessary to understand the policy context within which it operates. Many (Gaetz, Gulliver & Richter, 2014) argue that homelessness is a very simple problem to solve: just build more affordable housing. Thus, understanding the affordable housing crisis in Canada is vital to this discussion. That crisis is rooted in both policy decisions, characteristic of "roll-back" and "roll-out" neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002), that the provincial and federal governments have made over the past two decades, and a failure in intergovernmental relations. As governments withdrew from affordable housing policy, communities saw a marked increase in homelessness. The withdrawal of the other two orders of government has largely left municipalities to deliver programmes and services for the homeless population and attempt to maintain a supply of affordable housing. In Toronto, several programmes and policies guide this work, including *Streets to Homes*. This work is carried out by the Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration (SSHA) Division and the Affordable Housing Office. Pertinent documents from both departments will be analyzed here.

Federal and Provincial Governments' Involvement in Housing and Homelessness Policies

Current Roles and Responsibilities

The nature of Canadian federalism, especially in the last two decades, means that the cities undertake the vast majority of service delivery in the areas of housing and homelessness. Nevertheless, the other orders of government have played important roles, and continue to do so - however limited. Before beginning, it is necessary to delineate the various federal and provincial ministries, as well as the municipal departments, that together make up the housing and homelessness support system (see Figure II.1). Federally, the Canadian Mortgage and

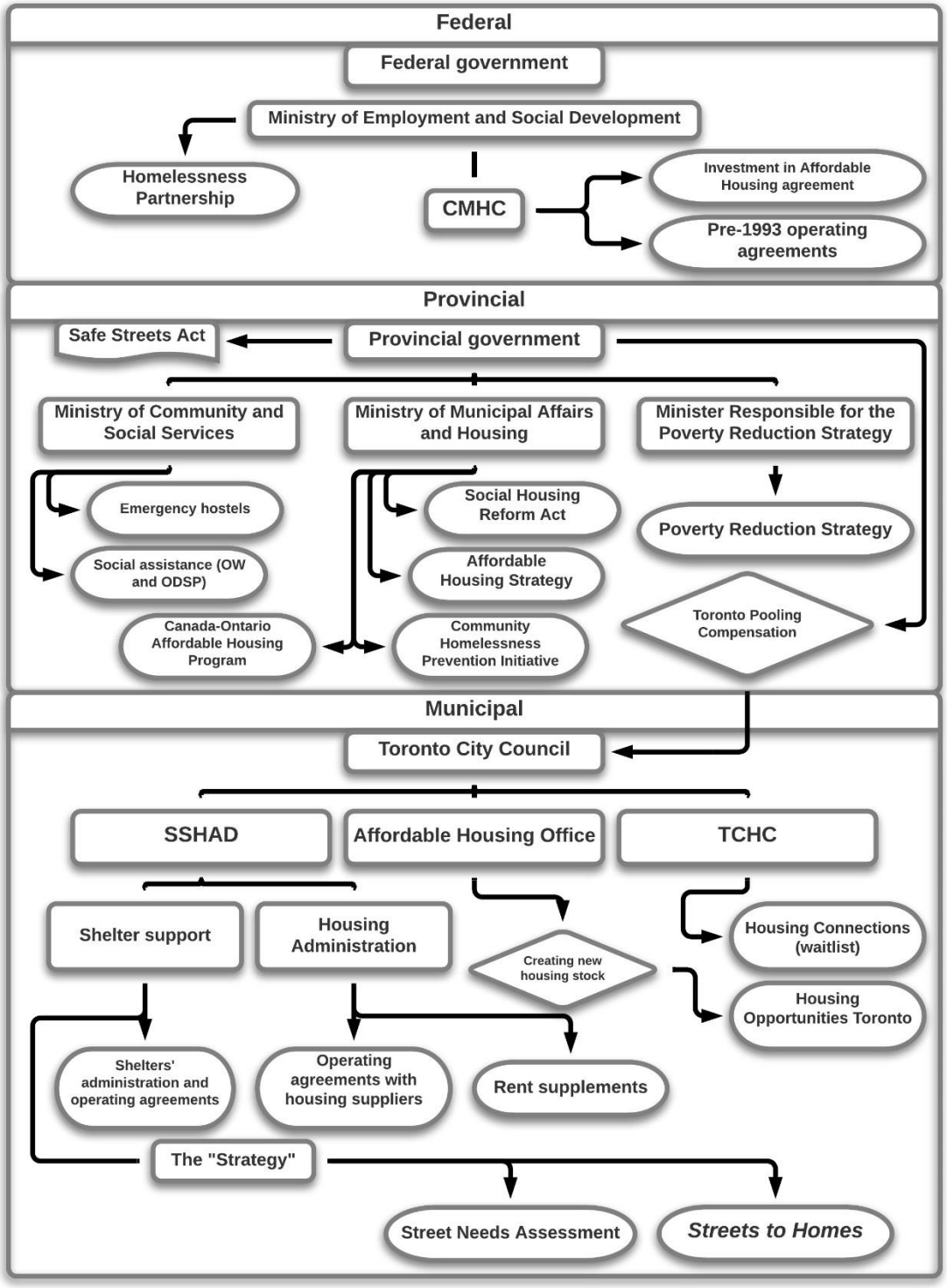


Figure II.1- Housing and homelessness programs by jurisdiction. Source: author.

Housing Corporation (CMHC) is the Crown corporation responsible for administering affordable housing funding. This includes the remaining commitment under the national housing strategy that was cancelled in 1993, as well as any new funding announced by the government. The Ministry of Employment and Skills Development houses the Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS), mainly a funding programme for communities.

Providing grants to municipalities is also the cornerstone of provincial homelessness policy in Ontario. Most notably, this includes cost-sharing the per diem received by shelters for services provided to clients. These funds are administered by the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS), which also sets forth minimum standards of operation that all shelters must meet. It is the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) that oversees funding for affordable housing, as well as prescribes the policies that govern the operation of the affordable housing stock under the *Social Housing Reform Act* (2002). For example, the 2010 *Affordable Housing Strategy* changed the procedure households have to follow when reporting income to be eligible for a subsidy (MMAH, 2010). Operationalizing these procedures is the responsibility of municipalities, and is often delegated to arms-length agencies such as the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC). The province's 2014 Poverty Reduction Strategy committed to end homelessness in Ontario. In January, 2015, the government appointed a thirteen-member Expert Advisory Panel whose work will inform plans to accomplish this goal. The Panel will also offer a common definition of homelessness, and methodologies to enumerate the population. Gaetz et al (2014) argue that the province should look to their counterparts in Alberta who have successfully implemented a similar strategy.

Although not tied to service provision, another piece of provincial legislation that must be considered is the *Safe Streets Act* (SSA). With the support of Toronto City Council, the Mike

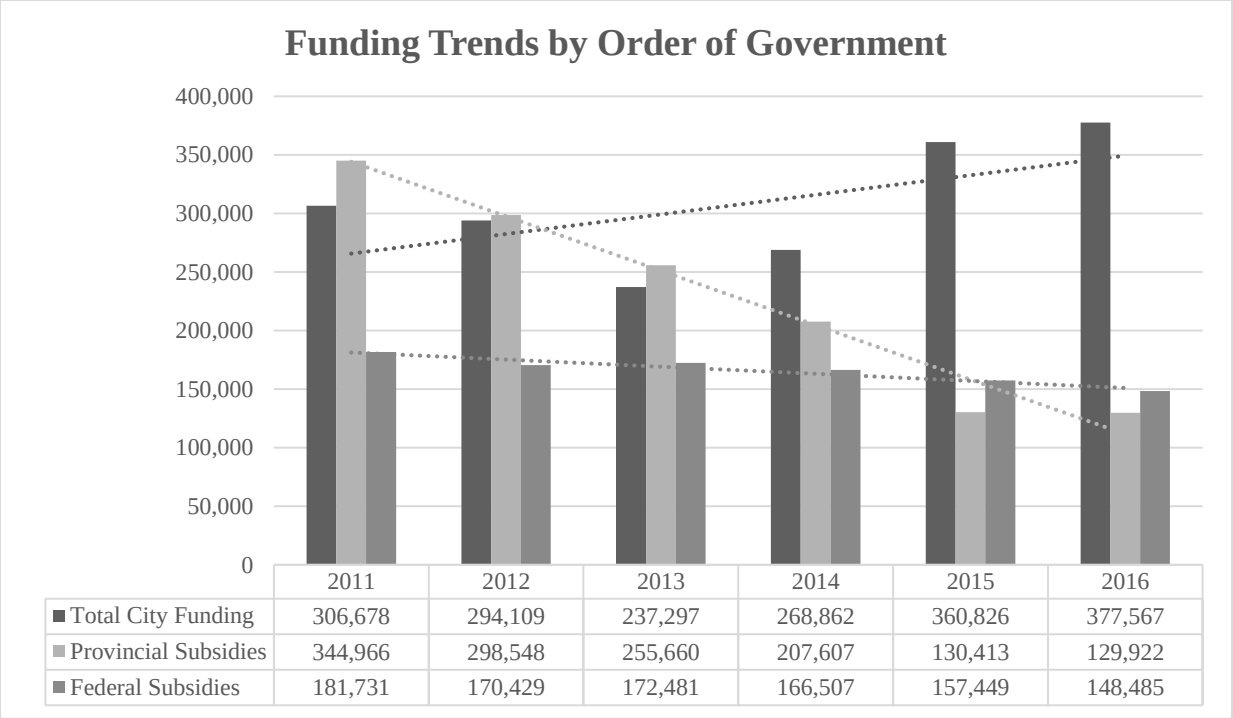
Harris government passed the SSA in 1999. The *Act* deals with three perceived offences: 'aggressive panhandling', 'squeegeeing' (washing car windshields for money), and the unsafe disposal of condoms and needles. For our purposes here, the question of aggressive panhandling is the most relevant. O'Grady et al (2011) argue that because the definition of aggressive panhandling is vague, it could be interpreted that simply being homeless and on the street is an offence. Aggressive behaviour is perceived aggression; that is, any behaviour that a marginalised person could carry out while panhandling could be deemed aggressive, even if no harm is intended. "Panhandling" is equally vague, as it includes both explicit and implicit communication requesting donations of money. This could imply that merely being destitute and living on the street expresses need and want (O'Grady et al, 2011). Although the *Act* does not specifically target homeless people, it targets their behaviour and is symptomatic of neoliberal social policy's tendency to punish those who are seen as undeserving or deviant. This process of categorizing the deserving and undeserving poor, buttressed by the belief that societal issues are best addressed by the market, forms the neoliberal argument for reducing the scope of the welfare state.

Housing Policy Retrenchment

Housing policy has been retrenched drastically, compared to its depth in the 1970s and 1980s (Dalton, 2008). To understand the current landscape, it is necessary to think of 1993 as a turning point in Canadian housing policy. Scholars argue that it was at this time that rates of homelessness increased (Layton, 2008). It was then that the Liberal government announced that they were ending the national housing programme, and would devolve responsibility for affordable housing to the provinces and territories. Since then, there has been a series of limited funding announcements (such as provision of 1.5 billion in 2004, and the time-limited

programmes discussed below), but not the sustained and systematic construction of new units of affordable housing that occurred prior to 1993 (Dalton, 2008).

The housing that was built prior to 1993 receives ongoing federal funding through operating agreements that were negotiated with the provincial governments and housing providers, and are administered by CMHC. Currently, there are 544,000 units still funded by CMHC operating agreements. Of these, approximately two thirds are rent-geared-to-income, while the remainder are priced just below market rent (CHRA, 2014). Although a full discussion of these operating agreements is not warranted here, it is important to note that many of them are coming to an end. As a result, many units will lose their subsidies and providers will lose funding for operating costs. If the federal government stays on its current trajectory, no units will be funded after 2030 (CHRA, 2014). The historical argument for ending these agreements was that operating costs would be covered by rent after mortgages were paid. However, rising costs associated with the upkeep of an aging stock is making this assumption untenable. The situation can only be described as fluid, as providers assess their situation in the context of the already existing housing shortage. As the City attempts to make up for the shortfall (see Figure II.2), the loss of this funding is also putting pressure on Toronto's social housing budget (City of Toronto, 2014a). For a fuller discussion, see CHRA (2014).



	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total City Funding	306,678	294,109	237,297	268,862	360,826	377,567
Provincial Subsidies	344,966	298,548	255,660	207,607	130,413	129,922
Federal Subsidies	181,731	170,429	172,481	166,507	157,449	148,485

Figure II.2 - Funding Trends by Order of Government. Source: City of Toronto (2014a).

At the time when the federal government stopped funding housing construction, the province did the same. Just days after being elected in 1995, the Ontario Progressive Conservative government cancelled the construction of 17 000 units of rent-geared-to-income (RGI) housing, along with any funding earmarked for future construction, representing a further loss of 54 000 units. It was also at this time that rent controls were removed on vacant privately-owned rental units. The government asserted that their withdrawal from the rental housing market would foster private sector construction of affordable housing, or that the construction of new, "luxury" units would have a "trickle-down effect" and increase affordability at the lower end of the market. However, the construction of rental units, as a share of total home construction, did not exceed 5% in the years between 1995 and 2002. This is in contrast to a high of 37% in 1991 (Layton, 2008).

Current Programmes

As Ontario's commitment to end homelessness demonstrates, it would be a mistake to represent the housing and homelessness policy envelope as being stagnant. With regards to homelessness, the 1999 federal budget saw the creation of the Homelessness Partnership Strategy (HPS). One of HPS's major contributions is supporting research on homelessness and developing an evidentiary base for policy making, as well as funding communities' response to homelessness. The Strategy was renewed in 2013 for another five years at a cost of $119 million a year - a $15 million per year decrease from previous levels - with a particular focus on Housing First. As of April 1, 2015, the largest communities receiving HPS will be required to spend 65% of their funding on HF programming. In the following year, smaller communities that receive over $200,000 in annual funding will be required to allocate 40% to HF. Gaetz and colleagues (2014) argue that these requirements could be the catalyst for profound changes in the Canadian response to homelessness. However, the extremely limited supply of affordable housing and tight restrictions on funding – there are no monies for clinical supports, for example – could hamper the success of these programmes.

Jurisdiction	Homelessness Services	Affordable Housing
Federal	Homelessness Partnership Strategy (1999) – Renewed in 2013	Investment in Affordable Housing (2011, 2014)
Provincial	Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (2012)	Canada-Ontario Investment Affordable Housing Agreement (2011, 2014)

Table II.1- Summary of Federal and Provincial Housing and Homelessness Programmes. Source: author.

From 2001 to 2011, the primary vehicle for federal government spending on affordable housing was the Affordable Housing Initiative (AHI) and its associated cost-sharing agreements with the provinces and territories. The Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program (AHP), Ontario's portion of the AHI, was originally signed in 2002, renewed and substantially revised in 2003, and renewed for an additional two years in 2009. Under the 2002 agreement, Ontario pledged a total of $358 million (Shapcott, 2008). The 2003 renewal saw commitments from the province to match a minimum of 85% of CMHC's approximately $367 million over six years (CMHC, 2003). The 2009 amendment saw both governments commit to spend an additional $622 billion (CMHC, 2009).

Despite these commitments, a 2008 analysis completed by The Wellesley Institute (Shapcott, 2008) revealed that spending on housing by the province over the intervening six years had, in fact, been cut by $732 million, leaving a gap, between promised and actual funding, of over $1 billion. Shapcott (2006) reports that the capital costs to build 4,500 units is $337 million. The $1 billion funding gap, therefore, represents the lost potential of approximately 12,000 new units. A schedule was appended to the agreement that commits to 16,145 units being brought online between January 2006 and December 2010 (CMHC, 2003). Despite this, according to data provided to the Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) (2011) by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, only 9,980 rental housing units were started under the AHP during that time.

In 2011, the new Investment in Affordable Housing agreement was announced between the federal government and the provinces, replacing the AHI. The federal government initially committed $716 million over three years. The programme was extended for five years in 2013, however, with the federal government committed to spending $253 million annually. New

agreements are being negotiated with the provinces (Gaetz et al, 2014). Whilst these developments are positive, Gaetz and colleagues (2014) emphasize that per capita spending on social housing has declined by almost half since 1989. Federal cuts in spending are only exasperated by the province's inability to meet its funding commitments. In sum, Hulchanski's (2003) argument, that it has not been legal or constitutional restraints that have impeded the federal and provincial governments' inadequate responses to housing insecurity, but rather political decisions to act or not, best captures federal and provincial governments' responses to issues of housing insecurity over the last two decades.

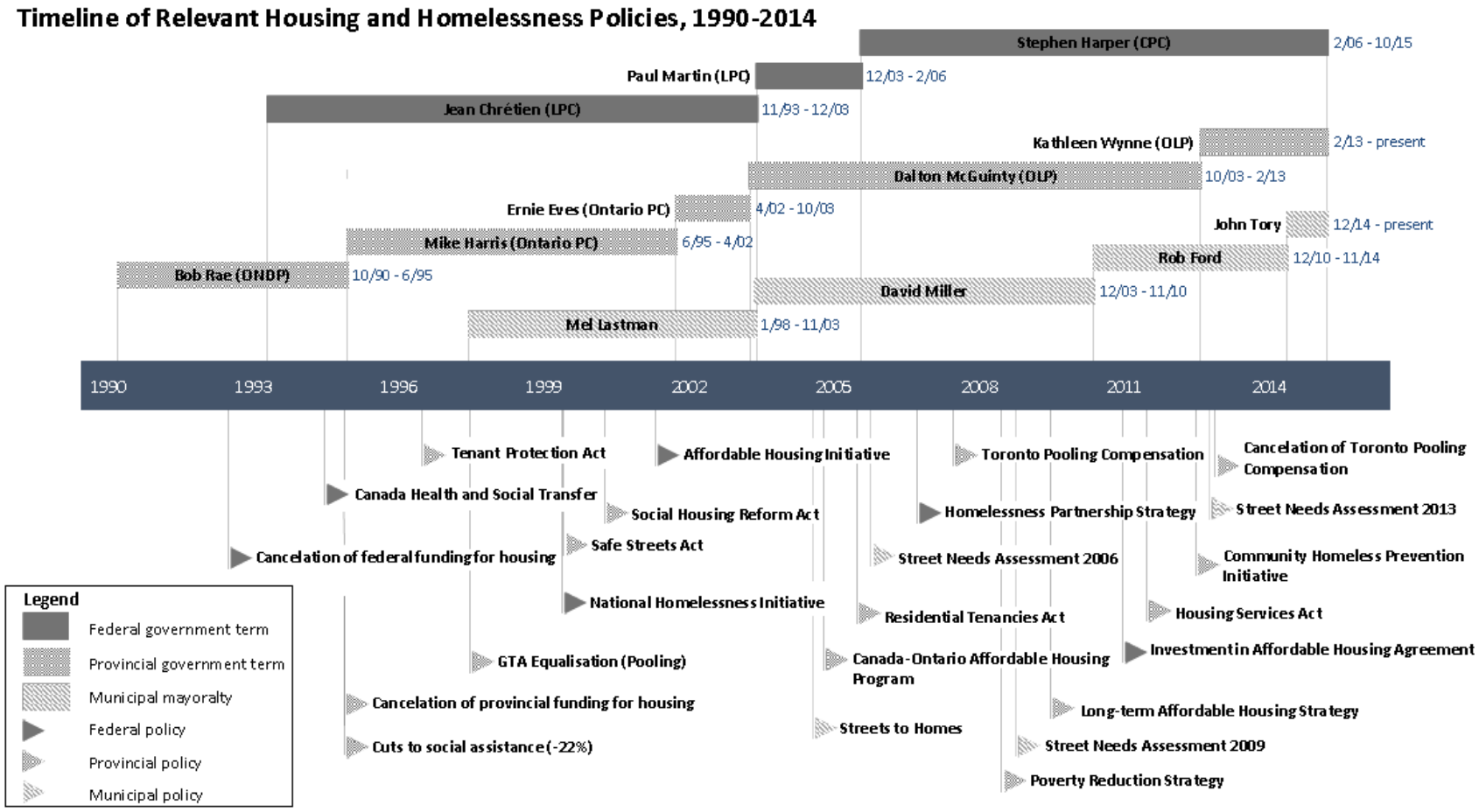


Figure II.3 - Timeline of Relevant Housing and Homelessness Policies, 1990-2014. Source: author.

The Experience and Extent of Housing Insecurity and Homelessness in Canada, and Particularly in Toronto

A Statistical Profile of the Homeless Population

The experience of homelessness can be seen as falling into three categories: (i) episodic, which has its roots in mostly economic factors such as job loss; (ii) cyclical, which is characterised by bouts of being housed then returning to the streets; and (iii) chronic, which is the segment of the population that has been continuously homeless for many years (Kuhn & Culhane, 1998; Gaetz et al., 2013). The concept of 'chronic homelessness' is one that has gained traction amongst policymakers, academics, and activists in conjunction with the embrace of HF. Statistics from the United States show that this population is disproportionately male, middle-aged and disabled, defined loosely as exemplifying mental health issues or substance abuse problems (Burt, 2003). Studies show that whilst this segment of the population is the smallest - at most 15% of service users - they consume nearly half of the resources in the sector (Gaetz et al., 2013).

Arriving at a definitive, and accurate, count of the number of Canadians who experience homelessness is tremendously challenging, due to both a lack of infrastructure necessary to keep reliable statistics, and, more importantly, the transient nature of the population. However, several statistics have been produced lately that attempt to explain the depth of the problem. For example, Aubry et al (2013) estimate that between 88-94% of those staying in emergency shelters are transitionally homeless. Gaetz et al (2014) estimate that 3-11%, or between 6,000-22,000 annually, are episodically homeless, while 2-4%, or 4,000-8,000 annually, are chronically homeless. Gaetz et al (2014) also suggest that approximately 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness annually. Of these, 50,000 are provisionally accommodated, 180,000 rely on emergency shelters, and 5,000 are entirely unsheltered. Further, it is known that 147,000 unique

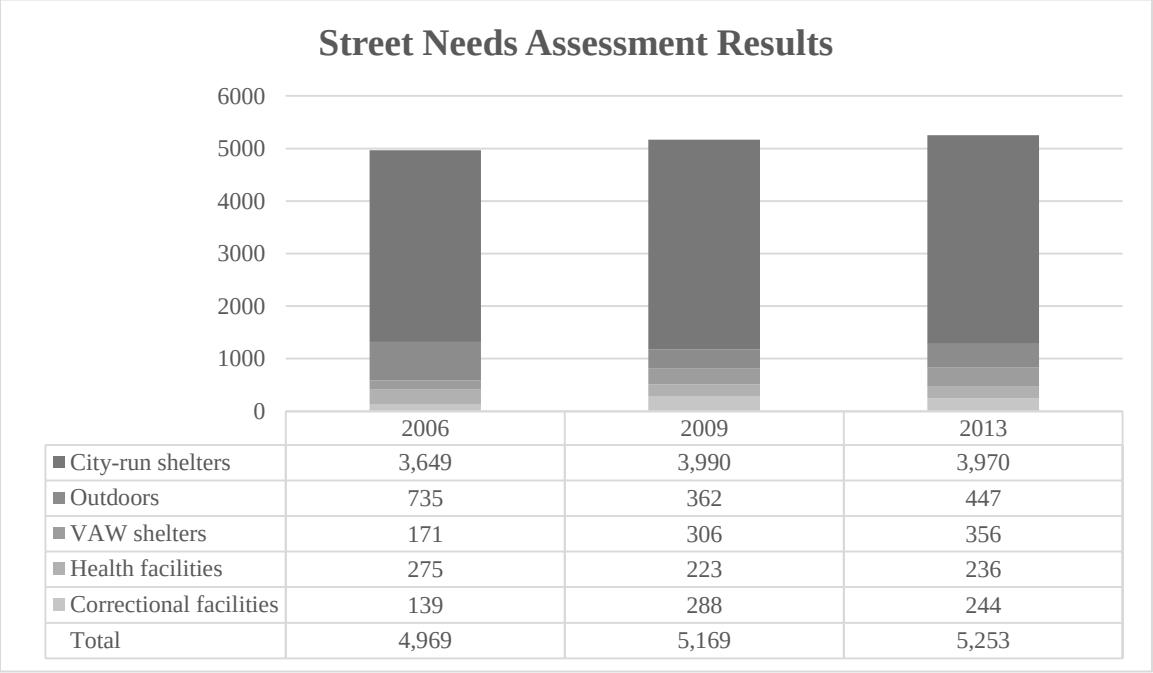
individuals stayed in an emergency shelter at least once in 2009, which equates to 1 in every 230 Canadians (Segaert, 2012).

An analysis of street censuses for 10 cities across Canada, including Toronto, found that, on average, there are four people who use shelters for every one person sleeping on the streets (Gaetz et al., 2013). The number of "hidden homeless" has also been investigated, though it is incredibly difficult to quantify. Gaetz and colleagues (2013) estimate that for every individual who is in an emergency shelter or is sleeping on the streets, there are 3 people who can be considered to be amongst the hidden homeless (this includes those who are staying with friends or family, staying in short-term transitional housing, or are in institutional settings with no home address).

Many of these statistics are, at least in part, derived from street censuses that many Canadian cities have begun to employ in order to count and determine the service needs of their homeless populations. Although questions are often raised about the accuracy and methodological rigor of these surveys, they have become widely used in the literature (Gaetz et al., 2013). It is noteworthy that the 2013 HPS renewal also included a request that funded communities begin to take point-in-time counts of their homeless populations, mirroring the Street Needs Assessment. The acceptance of these counts was bolstered on May 8, 2014, when the House of Commons passed Bill M-455, declaring that,

> One nationally standardised 'point in time' [count] should be recommended for use in all municipalities in carrying out homeless counts, with (a) nationally recognised definitions of who is homeless; (b) nationally recognised methodology of how the count takes place; and (c) the same agreed-upon criteria and methodology in determining who is considered to be homeless (as cited in Gaetz et al, 2014).

Toronto's take up of this endeavour was another component of the Strategy (City of Toronto, 2009b). The first Street Needs Assessment took place in 2006, with the second being in 2009. Results from the third, most recent assessment were released in August 2013 (City of Toronto, 2013). A search of the academic literature reveals a lack of a broad examination of Toronto's homeless population, with studies focusing on a specific sub-group such as youth, or access to food and other particular issues. Notwithstanding the concerns about methodology, the results from the Street Needs Assessments appear to be the most comprehensive profile of the homeless population in Toronto. Thus, its key findings are best equipped to serve as a comprehensive profile of the population (see Figure II.4).



	2006	2009	2013
City-run shelters	3,649	3,990	3,970
Outdoors	735	362	447
VAW shelters	171	306	356
Health facilities	275	223	236
Correctional facilities	139	288	244
Total	4,969	5,169	5,253

Figure II.4 - Street Needs Assessment Results. Source: City of Toronto (2013a).

Methodologically, the survey was divided into two parts. The larger component was an outdoor survey where teams of volunteers were assigned a census tract and asked to locate homeless people that were outdoors. All 91 tracts in the downtown core were surveyed, as well as 36 tracts known to be frequented by homeless persons outside of downtown. In addition,

volunteers randomly surveyed a further 168 survey areas, so that a total of 52% of the City's surface area was covered. Secondly, surveys were also conducted at all City-funded emergency shelters, all of the City's provincially funded Violence Against Women shelters, and nine health and treatment facilities, and participation was also offered to those being housed at Toronto's local correctional facilities who had previously indicated they are of no fixed address. For both components, those who were counted were asked to complete a survey. 1,981 surveys were collected. The entire Assessment was completed on April 17, 2013, mainly in the evening (City of Toronto, 2013).

It is important to remember that censuses such as this are limited to providing a date specific count of those enumerated. Two considerations highlight this reality. First, there were approximately 4,000 individuals staying in shelters on the evening of the Assessment. However, admission records show that 27,000 different people utilised the shelter system that year. The data that is collected is obviously only truly reflective of the situation on that night. Second, the count of the outdoor homeless is acknowledged to be under-representative due to the often hidden nature of outdoor homelessness, and the fact that the entire city was not covered. City staff account for this limitation by making a 'calculated adjustment' to the reported figures. Unfortunately, the methodology employed to arrive at this adjustment is not given.

Noteworthy findings from the 2013 Assessment include:

- An overall homeless population of 5,253 individuals, a 2% increase from 2009, and a 6% increase from 2006.

- An estimated 24% increase in the incidence of outdoor homelessness, compared to 2009. However, this sub-group is now 9% of the total population, whereas it was 15% in 2006.
- 35% of survey respondents had been homeless for more than two years. Amongst the outdoor population, this figure rises to 68%.
- The number of respondents over the age of 61 has doubled to 10% percent of the population, compared to 2006.
- Youth homelessness (those under 30) has remained a stable 30-31% across all three assessments.
- In total, 65% of respondents identified as male, 33% as female, and 1% as transgendered. 85% of the outdoor population was male.
- Although there have been gains in decreasing the overall rate of outdoor homelessness, the reverse is being observed in the Aboriginal population. Aboriginals comprised 29% of those sleeping outdoors in 2009, and 33% in 2013.
- 29% and 37% of respondents reported receiving ODSP and OW respectively.
- Rates of panhandling decreased from, 17% in 2006, to 6% in 2013 (City of Toronto, 2013).

The reduction in panhandling appears to be the only clear indicator of progression towards the policy goals of *Streets to Homes.* Otherwise, the marginal increases in the overall population, and the fluctuations in the outdoor population, point to the persistence of homelessness in

Toronto. It must be remembered that *Streets to Homes* explicitly commits to ending street homeless. It can be assumed that addressing the needs of the outdoor population is paramount in meeting this objective. However, the results of the *Street Needs Assessment* reveal that this population is older, disproportionately male and Aboriginal, and has been homeless longer (City of Toronto, 2013). The fact that its numbers have not decreased significantly since *Streets to Homes* was implemented raises questions about its efficacy in meeting the needs of individuals who are likely to have been homeless for many years, victims of trauma, and are currently heavily 'street involved'. As a result, it must be asked if the focus on rapid re-housing has altered the entire system's level of service.

The profile of Toronto's homeless population that the Street Needs Assessment provides has been augmented, and verified to a degree, by the work of Aubry et al (2013). The typology that shelter use is on a continuum of transitional, episodic, and chronic, was developed by Kuhn and Culhane (1998), after examining shelter data from New York City and Philadelphia. Utilizing the same type of data obtained from Guelph, Ottawa, and Toronto (three cities of differing sizes), Aubry et al's (2013) objective was to verify this work in the Canadian context. Their work also provides important insights into shelter use patterns in Toronto. The City of Toronto's database of shelter clients – including data on gender, date of birth, admission and discharge date, and a yearly total of the number of nights of service – was obtained for the period between 2004 and 2007.

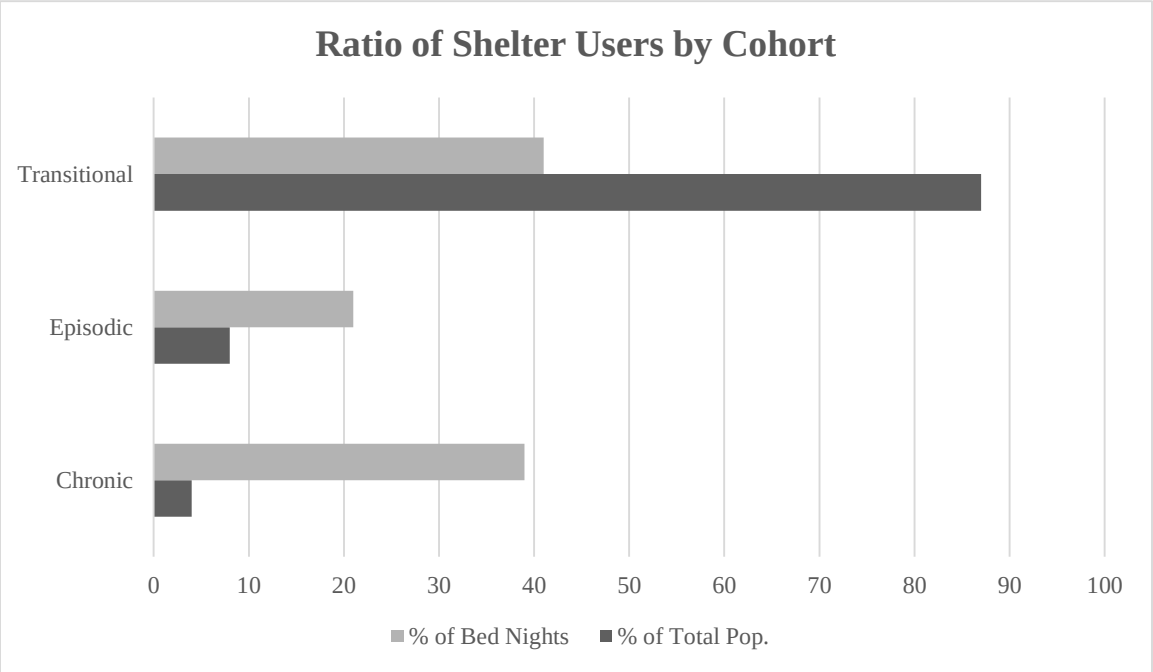


Figure II.5- Ratio of Shelter Users by Cohort. Source: Aubry et al (2013).

A total of 56,533 single adults and youth (excluding families) utilized Toronto shelters during this period. Of this, 87% were transitionally homeless, having one stay of 27 days on average. This cohort occupied 41% of bed nights during the study period. Whilst the episodic cohort accounted for 8% of the sample, they occupied 21% of the bed nights. On average, an episodic client experienced six admissions to a shelter over the study period, typically staying for a month. Finally, 4% of the sample was chronically homeless. As other studies have suggested (see Burt, 2003), this population consumes a disproportionate amount of resources, accounting for 39% of the bed nights (see Figure II.5). On average, shelter stays were 304 days, although some stays were for the entire four years. The average age of those experiencing transitional or episodic homelessness was 35, whereas a person experiencing chronic homelessness was typically 40. Seniors were three times more likely to experience chronic homelessness than transitional. Aubry et al (2013) conclude that their research extends Kuhn and Culhane's (1998) research to the Canadian context. This is an important finding. However, for our purposes here,

the study's utility is found in its detailing of the demand that the shelter system experiences. The SSHA 2014 Operating Budget (City of Toronto, 2014a) reports that this demand continues to increase, despite *Streets to Homes* being in operation. It would be beneficial to repeat this study using current data, in an effort to examine if a HF programme has an impact on overall demand and patterns of use, and any relationship between the two.

Housing Insecurity and the Need for Affordable Housing

Although housing instability, and ultimately homelessness, can stem from many psychosocial issues, the simple question of housing affordability and the lack of affordable housing is often the impetus for homelessness. The CMHC considers a household to be in core housing need if more than 30% of their household income is spent on housing costs. Thus, affordable housing can be defined as permanent housing that falls below this threshold for a low income household. It is important to remember that more affluent households will not experience the effects of core housing need (i.e. being unable to purchase adequate food) to the same degree (Gaetz et al, 2014).

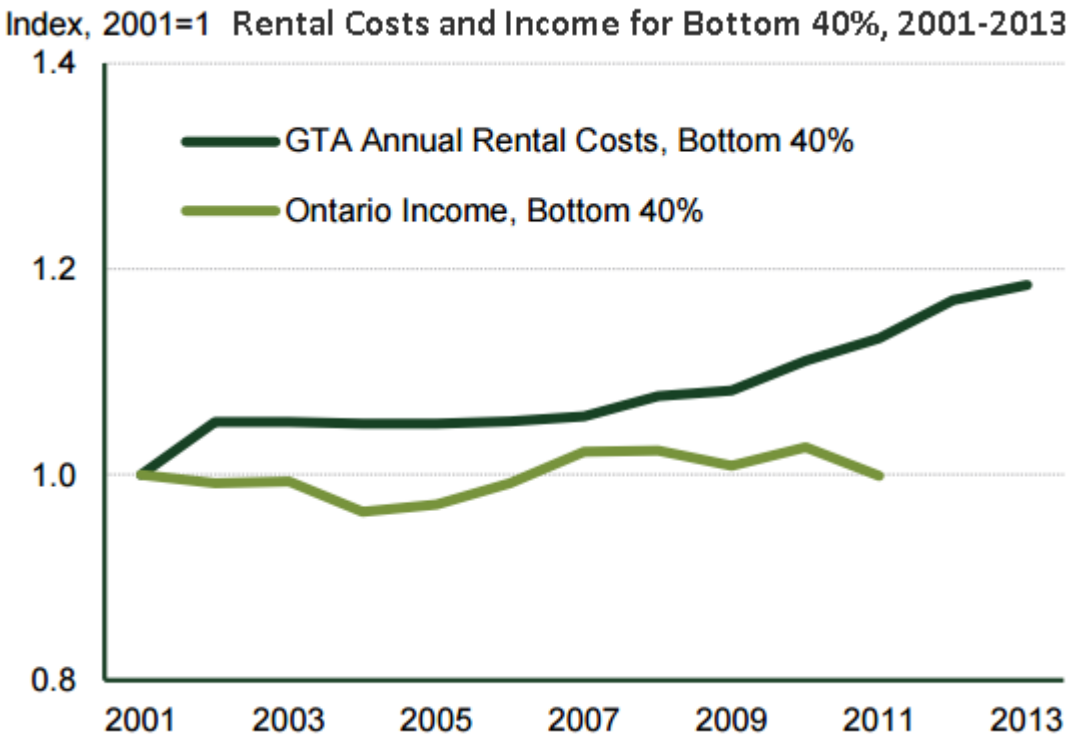


Figure II.6 - Rental Costs and Income for Bottom 40%, 2001-2013. Source: TD Economics (2015).

Recent figures show that 40% of renters are experiencing core housing need, double that of owners (Government of Canada, 2013). It is further estimated that 18% of renters are in severe core housing need; these households pay more than 50% of their income on housing costs (Londerville and Steele, 2014). In Toronto, 56% of renters with an income below $30,000 annually are in severe core housing need (Gaetz et al, 2014). In 2010, another report showed that 37.4% of all Toronto households live in core housing need and 13.2% live in severe housing need (CMHC, 2010). Incidents of core housing need have been increasing, largely due to a stagnation in tenant wages (see Figure II.6). Between 1990 and 2008, the average rent in Ontario for one and two-bedroom apartments in private rental units increased by twice the increase in median tenant incomes and well above the overall rate of inflation (ONPHA, 2011). Compounding this gap between incomes and rents is a lack of construction of private rental stock

(see Gaetz et al, 2014). With a limited supply, households with a modest income are being priced out of the lower end of the market.

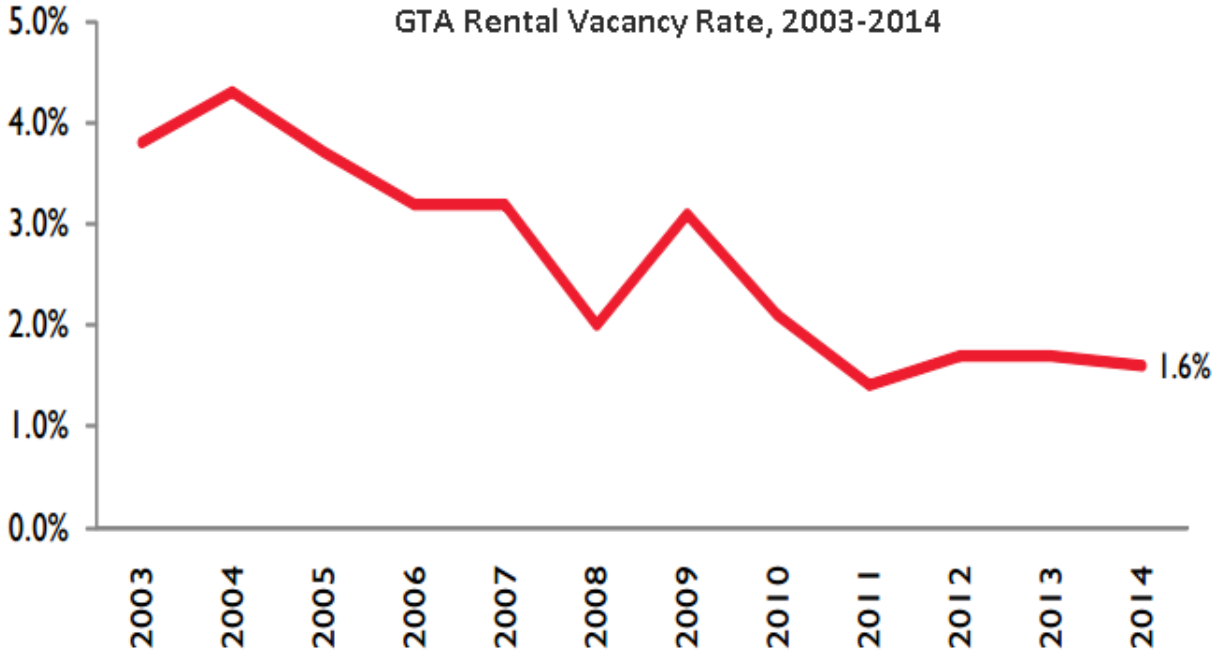


Figure II.7 - GTA Rental Vacancy Rate, 2003-2014. Source: CMHC (2014b).

Increasing rents and the lack of private market rental stock (as illustrated by the vacancy rate in Figure II.7) has resulted in increased demand on the supply of RGI housing. As of January 2011, "there were 152,077 households on RGI housing waiting lists across the province, representing an increase of 7.4% since 2010. Since 2009, these lists have increased by a total of 17.7%, up 22,824 households from 129,253" (ONPHA, 2011, 9). The City of Toronto has approximately 94,000 units of social housing; 7,439 of these are cooperative housing, 20,801 are operated by community agencies, and 58,925 are operated by TCHC. 88,891 households were on the waitlist for social housing in 2014. This number is an increase of approximately 5,200 households, or 6.2%, over 2013 figures (City of Toronto, 2014a). When these statistics are combined with the rising demand for shelter services, and the other order of governments' lack

of a coordinated response to housing insecurity, we can see the demand that is placed on the City (see Figure II.8). Their response must be measured within this context.

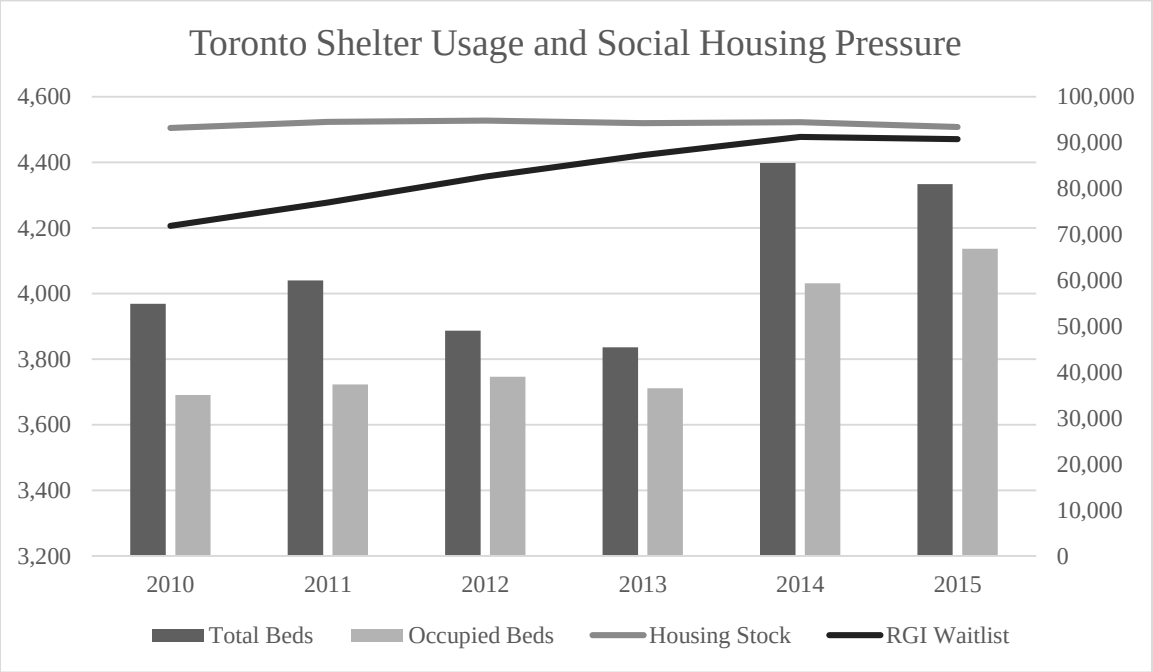


Figure II.8- Toronto Shelter Usage and Social Housing Pressure. Source: Housing Connections (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014); Toronto Foundation (2014); City of Toronto (2014a, 2015b).

The City of Toronto's Response to Housing Insecurity and Homelessness

The *Streets to Homes* Programme

Calls for a HF programme in Toronto first appeared in the 1999 *Golden Report* commissioned by Mayor Mel Lastman, to make recommendations on how to better serve the City's growing problem of homelessness (Ranasinghe & Valverde, 2006). Indeed, the *Golden Report's* introductory letter laments the increased incidence rate of homelessness in the City (Golden, Currie, Greeves & Latimer, 1999). At its February 2005 meeting, Toronto City Council adopted the Strategy. The core of Council's decision was a "…commitment to ending street homelessness… [and] to implement an outreach-based Homelessness Strategy to assist homeless persons find permanent housing" (City of Toronto, 2005, 10). Council's justification for the

launch of its homelessness strategy is the view that stable housing is a 'fundamental right'. The same section of Council's report also "recognizes that streets and other public spaces of the city should be accessible to all" (City of Toronto, 2005, 21). It is interesting to note that this important sentence is ambiguous. Is this an affirmation that those who are homeless have a right to public space, or is it the intent, as some have argued, to "clean the streets" of homeless individuals (see Klodawsky, 2009). One also wonders if the emphasis on street homelessness, as distinct from, episodic or cyclical homelessness, is in recognition of vulnerability of this group or if it is instead an attempt to target the most visibly homelessness.

The Strategy introduced two programmatic changes worth noting. First, the priorities of funding to social service providers explicitly changed to emphasize outreach services that lead to permanent housing. The Report seeks to avoid either structural or unintentional sustainment of street homelessness. Second, *Streets to Homes* was commenced. There are three stages of service for *Streets to Homes'* clients: first, outreach workers (usually City employees, but service providers are also contracted) identify people in need of housing and assist them in obtaining that housing (the new *Streets to Homes* Assessment Centre has facilities to house clients in the interim period); second, housing workers assist clients to find and secure housing; third, clients receive an average of one year of support to help them maintain their housing. These supports can include grocery shopping, budgeting, emotional support, et cetera. The programme also has an agreement with the Ministry of Community and Social Services (MCSS) whereby clients can be fast-tracked through the assessment process to receive Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) benefits (City of Toronto, 2007). The original scope of the programme was expanded in 2008 to include people who had marginal housing but were panhandling (City of Toronto, 2009a). Another indication of concerns about the use of urban

space was that the strategy prohibited sleeping in Nathan Phillips Square (the site of Toronto City Hall; see Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto) once outreach services were implemented (City of Toronto, 2005).

Outreach	Housing	Follow-up
Client engagement • Identification of client • Needs assessment	Landlord agreements and private market partnerships	Community integration
	Housing allowances and subsidy programmes	Emergency health assistance
Application assistance • Income supports • ID clinic	Housing search	Work preparation
	Housing set-up and furnishing	Mental health and addictions support
Service referrals	Exit strategy and rehousing, if needed	Landlord mediation and eviction prevention

Table II.2 - Streets to Homes staffing model. Source: personal communication with City staff.

The only substantial research exploring outcomes for *Streets to Homes* clients was conducted by City staff in 2007. It is important to note that Falvo (2009) questions the validity of the research project in two ways. First, clients were asked to retrospectively report their satisfaction with the programme, as well as independently report their health status. In other words, there was no baseline assessment upon entry into the programme. Second, there is the question of objectivity of the results, given that the survey was administered by City staff, and thus questions about the instrument's reliability arise. Notwithstanding those concerns, it remains the only research available and its findings contributed to this study's focus. The report found that 49% felt that they had a choice in the *type* of housing received (i.e. social housing, private market, or alternative/supportive housing), 22% felt they had 'somewhat' of a choice, while 29% felt they had no choice (City of Toronto, 2007).

Related to questions of neighbourhood choice, 51% said they felt they had a choice in the location of their housing, 17% said they had 'somewhat' of a choice, and 31% said they did not feel they had a choice. Those who reported the lowest levels of perceived choice indicated that their choice was limited by housing availability, personal income, or the desire for immediate housing compelled by emergency circumstances. Findings about neighbourhood satisfaction suggest a contradiction to the prevailing critique that HF serves to displace marginalized people from the city centre. While 79% across the City report satisfaction with their neighbourhood, satisfaction was highest for respondents living in Scarborough (91%) and Etobicoke (83%); these two boroughs were, before amalgamation, separate entities. This is an interesting finding that may point to *Streets to Homes* being a vehicle for displacing the homeless from the downtown core, but one that does not necessarily exclude marginalized people from being satisfied urban dwellers. The fact that respondents were still receiving housing supports does raise some suspicion, however. Neighbourhood satisfaction may decrease after the withdrawal of practical and emotional support offered by programme staff.

Finally, the City's research found that 66% of clients reported that they ran out of money to purchase basic needs, such as food, every month. Further, 67% of respondents were in core housing need. It is extremely noteworthy that *Pathways to Housing* clients are mandated to only pay 30 % of their income on rent (Falvo, 2009).

Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration's 2014 Operating Budget

Streets to Homes' results are, at least in part, contingent on the funding it receives as a programme of the Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA). Overall, the gross operating budget for SSHA in 2014 (City of Toronto, 2014a) was $644.028 million, or $197.441 million net. These figures represent a 9.4% decrease from 2013. Of this, 27% or $171.901 million was spent on homelessness services, including *Streets to Homes* and the provision of 1.4 million shelter bed nights, and the administration of HPS funding. The remainder is spent on social housing, primarily funding the 94,000 unit stock. The 2014 budget for shelter beds included both a 3.4% increase in the per diem rate paid to service providers, as well as an increase of 3,441 bed nights to meet increasing demand. It is noteworthy that the projected demand for 2014 was approximately 300 more beds per night over the 2010 actual usage. The significance of this becomes clear after one considers City Council's directive that the system operate at 90% capacity, and that the overall capacity of the system is 4,398 beds. The decision to increase the annual number of beds was partly an effort to uphold this directive.

The SSHA budget faces significant pressures, particularly in the area of social housing, as the federal and provincial governments withdraw funding. The lost revenue for the social housing portfolio included the end of federal/provincial programmes and stimulus funding totaling $16.142 million, and a $4.729 million reduction in funding to housing providers through CMHC operating agreements. As was discussed above, this trend will continue. The City expects further reduction of $9.05 million in 2015, and $8.96 million in 2016. Adding to these pressures is the loss of the provincial "Toronto Pooling Compensation". Recognizing that the City provided social services for the entire GTA, the province historically provided this compensation. However, the government has decided to end this programme. The loss equates

to $113.94 million between 2014 and 2016. These losses are being funded by deferred loan payments and a $28.12 million drawdown on programme reserves.

This is obviously not a sustainable, long-term solution. The City had been using these funds to provide subsidies to housing providers and is legally required to maintain these subsidies under the Housing Services Act. The structuring of the provincial social assistance programmes (OW and ODSP) also create a $77 million annual liability for the City. If a household is in RGI housing, the shelter portion of their social assistance is reduced. However, the City must make up the difference when it funds providers (City of Toronto, 2009b). For example, the maximum monthly shelter allowance for a single ODSP recipient is $479. If a RGI rent is $150, the City must pay the difference to the provider. Similarly, there will be a further loss of federal funding totaling $22.739 million between 2014 and 2016, as mortgages on federally administered properties expire. By 2020, withdrawn federal funding will total $120 million annually (City of Toronto, 2009b). The City is required to make up this shortfall to ensure units remain affordable. Although less so, homelessness services also face funding losses as a result of provincial policy decisions. Previously, municipalities were able to access funding for shelters based on service usage. The province has now capped these monies. For Toronto, this change represents a loss of approximately $3 million. One can assume that this loss will only get more acute as shelter demand increases.

Housing Stability Service Planning Framework

In 2014, SSHA released the 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework (City of Toronto, 2014b), a strategic plan for the division that guides its in-house operations, as well as its funding priorities for service providers. It can be assumed that financial pressures contributed to

the need to have a focused service plan. Overall, the division has adopted an approach to services that emphasizes Housing First and recognizes clients' individual needs. The seven strategic directions it prescribes were the result of a consultation that included the public, housing and other service providers, clients, and City staff. Over 2,000 individuals participated in the process. The broad themes that emerged from this process included: (i) housing affordability and the lack of affordable housing; (ii) the need for diverse affordable housing options; (iii) the need to increase housing stability through follow-up services; (iv) "the importance of homelessness prevention and the need to prioritize it within service planning" (City of Toronto, 2014b, 2); (v) the importance of better collaboration between all stakeholders. The seven strategic directions are:

I. Homelessness prevention, including eviction prevention, coordinated discharge planning from hospitals and correctional facilities, and ongoing housing supports.

II. An emphasis on assisting those living in shelters and on the street to obtain housing, with the goals that street homelessness will be reduced and shelter stays will be shortened. It is notable that there is a pledge to "refocus the *Streets to Homes* program to ensure program resources are best targeted to helping persons living without shelter find and maintain housing" (28). This document does not give specific details about the nature of this refocusing. There is also a commitment to designing a funding model for shelters that is performance-based, emphasizing housing placement.

III. Development of new affordable housing opportunities, including a permanent housing allowance programme, and working with existing housing providers and the private market to create more units of affordable housing. It is telling that the language used is vague and does not speak to actually building new housing.

IV. Development of strategies to ensure the financial stability and stewardship of the system, including developing 10-year capital plans for the social housing stock and the shelter system, and increasing programme monitoring.

V. Improving access to services by, for example, developing housing strategies for specific populations and implementing a harm reduction strategy across the shelter system.

VI. Improving service delivery, data collection, and employee wellness.

VII. Strengthening partnerships with other city divisions, levels of government, and the community.

Housing Opportunities Toronto

In 2009, City Council approved the Affordable Housing Office's Housing Opportunities Toronto (HOT) report (City of Toronto, 2009b), a 10-year strategic plan to increase the supply and viability of affordable housing in the City. Detailing the entire plan is not warranted here, as it touches on aspects of the affordable housing envelope that are not being analysed. Some portions are relevant, however. Most notable is the passage of the Toronto Housing Charter and an official policy statement affirming that "all residents should have a safe, secure, affordable and well-maintained home from which to realize their full potential" (9), and that there should be a range of housing options available in every neighbourhood. Although sweeping policy pronouncements such as this are undoubtedly somewhat symbolic – there is no evidence to suggest there are mechanisms in place to enforce this – it is nonetheless advantageous to use these particular sentiments as a tool to evaluate the implementation of *Streets to Homes*.

Consistent with Council's 2005 decision, the HOT report affirms the importance of HF in addressing homelessness and touts the successes of the enhanced *Streets to Homes*

programme. However, there is also the recognition that more supports are needed to assist vulnerable populations to maintain their housing once they have been housed. To this end, it is here where the City first proposed shifting the shelter funding model to a performance-based one that is rooted in HF. It is also here where reference is made to redeveloping shelter sites to include affordable and supportive housing, as well as the possibility of acquiring single room occupancy (SRO) hotels and converting those into supportive housing. Plans are currently well underway to redevelop Seaton House, the largest shelter in North America with about 600 beds (see Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto); it seems questionable to raise the possibility of acquiring SRO hotels given that Toronto has few of these compared to Vancouver and US cities.

In terms of the creation of new affordable housing stock, the report lays out the mechanisms at the City's disposal as it seeks to create 1,000 units annually between 2010 and 2020. These tools include revenue generation from development charges, requiring that new developments include affordable units, and the waiving of fees and property taxes for new social housing projects. There also exists policy that social housing providers have the right of first refusal on surplus city land.

These tools are undoubtedly limited in their capacity to generate the revenue necessary to build adequate amounts of affordable housing. The state's ability to generate funding needed to pay for once robust social programmes has been severely curtailed under neoliberalism. As this chapter has demonstrated, the last 20 years have seen a marked decline in social support to vulnerable populations.

Infrastructure and Service Improvement Plan for the Emergency Shelter System

Finally, it is worth noting that in March of 2015, the SSHA published a staff report outlining two major areas of change for the shelter system over the next 5 years. First, staff have identified that the system will need significant infrastructure upgrades and entirely new facilities over the next five years. These needs will be precipitated by aging infrastructure, changes in the real estate market, and the redevelopment of Seaton House, the City's largest men's shelter. Also, the City has identified six shelters that will need to be relocated in the next 5 years, two of which are facing immediate eviction because their leased properties have been purchased by developers. An additional eleven permanent or transitional shelters will be needed to respond to both increasing demands and the redevelopment of Seaton House. Crucially, the City is seeing this situation as an opportunity to disperse shelters away from the downtown core into "underserviced areas". Currently, approximately half of the wards in the City do not have any shelter beds, and 53% of beds are located in three downtown wards.

More relevant for our purposes, the second change is an enhanced focus on HF within the shelter system. Staff have thus recommended two pilot projects be implemented, both focused on shelter users who have been homeless for over a year.

First, city staff will be deployed to form a HF team within the shelter system similar to *Streets to Homes*. This team will work with shelter users to get them housed and offer a year of supports. The difference between this programme and *Streets to Homes* is that clients automatically receive a $400 a month housing allowance. A target has been set at housing 200 clients a year. Without this programme, the City projects having to create 200 new shelter beds a year. The HF approach will be $3.2 million less expensive than new beds. The second

programme appears less defined, but will see clients who are assessed to have too complex health or behavioural issues to be successful in housing receive supports from the Toronto Central LHIN, leveraged by housing allowance funding. Both programmes have the combined goal of "reducing the number of clients in the shelter system who have been homeless for one year or more by 20%" (City of Toronto, 2015, 14). To understand why the size of the homeless population in Toronto remains persistent, we must understand the tenants and governmentality of neoliberalism, particularly as it affects urban policy.

Chapter III – Literature Review

The intent of this study is not to verify, or contribute to, the preceding sketch of homelessness and housing instability in Canada. Nor is it intended to evaluate all of the policy developments mentioned. These facts form the context that necessitates Canadian HF programmes, and informs their implementation. Rather, three bodies of literature need to be critically reviewed in order to address the research questions. First, Toronto is a global city (Keil & Kipfer, 2002). As such, neoliberalism affects the content of City policy, as well as the City's relationship to other orders of government and global capital. The primary objective of this study is to assess neoliberalism's impact on the development and implementation of *Streets to Homes* within this context. Second, reviewing the existing literature regarding the exclusion of homeless and other marginalised people from public space is necessary to be able to address the spatial concerns about *Streets to Homes*. Third, contributing to an understanding of HF as an urban policy requires a knowledge of that literature.

Neoliberalism and Urban Policy

In order to understand the relationship between neoliberalism and HF, it is necessary to recognise the former as an ethos of governance that has changed the content, delivery, and scope of urban policies. Neoliberalism utilizes the general principles of classical liberalism. However, the supremacy of the individual is largely replaced with the supremacy of the free market. Individual freedoms are still prioritised, but in the context of the free market. It follows that political structures are deemed unnatural when they hamper economic exchange; the only legitimate role of government is to facilitate the flow of capital. It is in this context that private property rights should be emphasised, previous functions of the state should become the deregulated domain of the private sector or charitable organizations, and competition should be

celebrated (Harvey, 2007). Neoliberal thinking also discourages civil society initiatives such as labour unions and cooperatives (Connell, 2010), which is understandable after considering that the neoliberal philosophy is rooted in a total rejection of socialism. Braedley and Luxton (2010) explain that Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and other early proponents of neoliberalism saw socialism's promise of a life free from economic determinism as a falsehood that quickly descended into totalitarianism. Socialism is also seen as morally corrupt because it de-emphasizes competition. Competition, especially in the market, is covenanted as it is considered to be the best way to achieve social order and distribute inevitable inequalities.

In terms of the content of public policy, prior dominant thinking - that of advancing robust programmes, generous social spending, and high taxes - is seen as a market impediment that places states at a competitive disadvantage in the global economy (Kim and Zurlo, 2008). Connell (2010) argues that deregulation – coupled with the desire to increase the reach of the market – has led to the rapid commodification of goods and services that were once provided by the state as a part of citizenship rights.

The result of this thinking has been a widespread, though uneven and incremental (Theodore and Peck, 2011), change in governance in developed countries. It is too simplistic to view neoliberalism as just an ideology or policy programme. It is rather a shift in governance itself (Larner, 2000). Like the welfare state before it, neoliberalism has become the institutionalised ethos of governance (the governmentality of neoliberalism). Larner (2000) argues that the result of this new orientation has been the emergence of new characteristics of government operations.

Widespread critiques of the welfare state opened the door for market ideals to be adopted by government in two respects. First, the role of government became administrative. Instead of seeking social cohesion and appeasement of the working class through social policy, issues of fiscal accountability and cost-benefit analysis became the focus. The result has been a decline in social policy development and public sector delivery, and an emphasis on administering existing policies through less government intervention and increased voluntary sector involvement (Larner, 2000). The private sector has also been increasingly awarded contracts to deliver government goods and services. Public accountability has declined as a result, as concerns over privacy and competitiveness trump legislative oversight (Armstrong, 2010). Second, the concept of citizenship shifted to that of consumerism. The autonomous consumer is seen as being responsible for satisfying their own well-being via the market (Larner, 2000). It follows that the experience of poverty is not the result of a failure of the state or market, but rather a personal failure of the autonomous individual to function properly vis-á-vis the market (Mead, 1992, in Pierson and Castles, 2003).

McBride and McNutt (2007) suggest that Canada's shift to neoliberalism began in the 1970s with a rebuke of the Keynesian commitment to full employment, reducing the power of the working class in favour of capital, as most evidently seen in changes to Employment Insurance, and infringements on collective bargaining rights. However, it was not until the elections of Progressive Conservative and Liberal governments in 1984 and 1993, respectively, that fundamental changes to policy occurred. It is noteworthy that these changes are characterised as being incremental, or by "stealth" (McBride and McNutt, 2007, 186). Such an observation reinforces the concept of neoliberalism as governmentality. The federal

government's 1993 decision to end the national housing programme must be seen as the pivotal development of that era for our purposes here.

The Canadian federation traditionally operated on the cooperation between the federal, provincial, and municipal levels of government, each with distinct policy jurisdictions (with a degree of overlap, fiscal and programmatic cooperation, and occasional jurisdictional wrangling). Neoliberalism has brought about the phenomenon commonly referred to as 'downloading' – where a higher order of government disposes of its policy responsibilities onto a lower order. Harmes (2006) argues that this desire to "push policy down" can be directly linked to neoliberal thought. To understand this correlation, it is first necessary to understand that the way to keep the interventionist tendencies of regional (and by extension municipal) governments in check is to have them compete to attract mobile firms and citizens in the context of a national economy that is based on free enterprise. Thus, the policy objective of the national government must be the preservation of the economy whilst market inhibiting questions, such as social policy, become the domain of the lower levels. The pressure of competition and lesser spending power that is available to regions insures that these policies are kept to a minimum.

Neoliberalism has equally changed the operations of both national and local governments, and has done so incrementally. Theodore and Peck (2011) chronicled how neoliberalism has shaped urban policy globally over the last three decades in their analysis of policy prescriptions and pronouncements from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In so doing, they sought to demonstrate that the project of neoliberal urbanism did not merely appear, but has traceable roots. It is noteworthy that the OECD's first analysis of urban policy in the early 1980s saw urban problems, such as the decay of inner cities, as being the product of globalization (OCED, 1983, as cited by Theodore & Peck, 2011). The

document actually urged the adoption of Keynesian economic policies. However, subsequent reports on the health of cities and urban policy shifted to neoliberal thinking. For example, a 1994 report diagnosed urban poverty as being the result of a dependent, self-perpetuating underclass. Finally, the OECD's emphasis in the last decade has been on cities' roles in facilitating capital flows, and the need for restricted, entrepreneurial, competitive governments - a sentiment that seems to be the bedrock of present day neoliberal urbanism. Whilst these reports recognised that urban poverty continued to exist, redistributive social programmes were still denounced in favour of market-based solutions. Theodore and Peck (2011) recognize that the OCED does not have legislative authority over member countries. The organization does, however, have tremendous influence when it comes to policy discourse. Thus, these pronouncements contributed to the gradual evolution of the neoliberal discourse and resultant policy outcomes.

Theodore and Peck's (2011) work serves to verify earlier conceptualisations of how neoliberalism has developed, especially within the spheres of social and urban policy. Whilst critics charge that neoliberal governments have withdrawn from policy, a more nuanced view is that it is the content of policy itself that has changed, with the state decreasing interventions in some areas, and increasing involvements in others. Typically, universal ameliorating programmes are 'rolled back', whilst punitive targeted programmes are 'rolled out'. This process has had a particularly profound effect on urban policies such as welfare and housing. The targeted programmes, often operated by charities and religious organizations, are typically rolled out in response to shortcomings in neoliberalism, and often offer reduced benefits, compared to previous programmes (Peck & Tickell, 2002).

Keil (2009) expanded upon Peck and Tickell's (2002) work and introduced the concept of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism. Mirroring the governmentality literature, it is argued that neoliberalism is no longer seen as being in opposition to another economic system, but rather the normal state of capitalism and public policy. There are two characteristics of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism. First, its governmentality has been established to such a degree that the aggressive policies, such as workfare, that were symptomatic of 'roll-out' neoliberalism are no longer necessary. Second, and similar to the 'roll-out' phase, elites who have embraced the neoliberal project have come to see the need to respond to the consequences of those previous policies, although these solutions remain embedded in market ideology. The OECD's recent acknowledgment of the need to respond to urban poverty would be an example of this.

The combined works of Peck and Tickell (2002) and Keil (2009) serve as a useful typology of how the neoliberal project has been translated into policy. Examining *Streets to Homes* serves as an opportunity to better understand how housing and homelessness policies in Canada have been affected by these three phases. The programme could be an instance of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism: a programme without the harshness that characterised policies of two decades ago, but one that is nonetheless embedded in neoliberalism. Alternatively, it could be a progressive policy that is hampered by the legacy of earlier decisions. Some could argue that Keil's (2009) concept did not further the literature on neoliberalism a great deal. However, his contribution is found in furthering the idea of governmentality. The evolution of neoliberal governance has meant that the previous vigorous retrenchment of social programmes and advancements of policies that seek to regulate the behaviour of those who receive assistance (Workfare in Ontario for example) have been replaced by policies that still dismiss the need for

governments to ameliorate market inequalities, but reluctantly do so, whilst still promoting and adhering to market principles.

Hackworth (2007) further illustrates that neoliberalism is not an entity so much as a process by which institutions are changed. Crucially, this change is experienced spatially; what may occur in one jurisdiction might not occur in another. It is this locally contingent change that allows neoliberalism to alter the political economy of cities. Differently put, we can see neoliberal urban governance as the intersection of macro-economics and everyday life in cities (Boudreau et al, 2009). In the context of Toronto, the Canadian hub of commerce, this intersection becomes intensified when we consider the pressure cities face to facilitate capital flows: the idea of 'global cities'. In developing the concept of global cities, Sassen (2005) argues that, despite its globalised nature, the workings of the economy are still spatially rooted in cities. Corporate headquarters, and the auxiliary firms that support them, are located in a network of interconnected cities. Such cities are heavily controlled by corporate interests, and are prone to high levels of income disparity within their populations, as they are home to both business executives and a large service sector workforce that supports them. Cities must compete to be a part of these flows, and success hinges on adherence to market principles (Keil & Kipfer, 2003; Sassen, 2005). This need to be competitive has oriented city planning towards deregulation, a celebration of diversity, and the revanchist regulation of public space (Keil & Kipfer, 2003). The global/competitive cities literature is relevant to the present study in two ways, as follows.

First, the provision of services, such as transportation and housing, are prime examples of municipal policy during the Keynesian era. However, neoliberalism has brought about pressures on cities that have curtailed their ability to offer these services to the same degree (Smith, 2002). These pressures centre on the perceived need to keep taxes low in order to remain

competitive. Writing at a time just after amalgamation, when the City had just bid for the 2008 Olympics, Keil and Kipfer (2003) conclude that planning in Toronto was being shaped by the need to be a competitive city. Amalgamation was used as an opportunity for departments to rationalize their spending and adopt corporate management principles. This process particularly affected the City's social services. Again, these developments at the municipal level coincided with both the federal and provincial governments downloading responsibility for housing. The question thus becomes: how was the implementation of *Streets to Homes* affected by a policy climate where no order of government readily addressed issues of housing instability and homelessness?

Second, the demands placed on municipalities by the neoliberalisation of the global economy have also fostered a unique process of gentrification and revanchism. The Keynesian concept of the role of urban planning was to facilitate the equitable and sustainable use of urban space. The new emphasis on competition between cities conceptualizes space as a vehicle for capital accumulation (Smith, 2002; Smith, 1998). Now, instead of controlling, or at least being ambivalent to, gentrification, the state encourages it through policy (Hackworth, 2007). In the same vein, neoliberalism has reshaped the question of 'rights to the city' (Marcuse, 2009). The struggle for urban space is no longer about universal access to the benefits of urbanism; rather, it concerns consumers' access to privatised space (Keil, 2009). Although there is no evidence to suggest that *Streets to Homes* fosters gentrification – the redevelopment of low-income neighbourhoods in order to cater to the more affluent – it is easy to see how the regulation of marginalised populations' use of space could be dictated by the pressures of gentrification and capital accumulation.

All of the processes and convictions described here have either contributed to or exasperated homelessness in Canada. At the outset, the withdrawal of federal and provincial funding for affordable housing is illustrative not only of the spending reductions that are the hallmarks of neoliberalism, but also how an undue reliance on the market can have negative consequences for social welfare. Again, the justification given for these actions was that private development of luxury rental stock would create affordability at the lower end of the market. Construction of rental stock was largely stagnant in the decade that followed. Of course, the lack of housing stock is only partly to blame for homelessness. The federal government's 1996 cuts to the then Canada Assistance Plan reduced funding transferred to the provinces for health and social programmes. It was also at this time that Employment Insurance (EI) eligibility requirements and benefits were retrenched (McBride & McNutt, 2007). Cuts to EI have certainly increased the likelihood that unemployed workers will face questions of housing insecurity. However, the reductions in health funding also undoubtedly impacted housing security, particularly for those with mental health issues.

Provincially, the 1995 cut to social assistance rates (see Luxton, 2010), the removal of rent controls, and downloading of responsibility for housing onto the municipalities were all in keeping with the tenets of neoliberalism, as was the notions of deviance associated with the passage of the *Safe Streets Act* (O'Grady et al, 2011). It is clear that the mid-1990s saw the height of roll-back and roll-out neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002). The fact that policy developments from that era are still seen as pivotal in understanding homelessness points to a relative stagnation in the area, and ultimately the governmentality of neoliberalism.

The Regulation of Urban Space

Again, considering neoliberalism sees urban space as a vehicle for consumption (Keil & Kipfer, 2003), it is logical that the use of space by marginalised populations, who have limited capacity to consume, would be regulated. Smith (1998) coined the term 'revanchism' to describe this turn in thinking. Here, the previous Keynesian notion that governments have a role to play in ensuring equality of access and enjoyment of the city is replaced with a vendetta against groups who are seen as being a blight on the urban landscape, including those who are homeless. In his examination of revanchism in New York City under the mayoralty of Rudi Giuliani, Smith (1998) notes that the goal of further marginalizing, and even dispersing, the city's homeless population was an overt one. He points to public education campaigns that urged people not to give change to panhandlers, as well as public statements by the mayor, as evidence of this narrative. Linked with the broader neoliberal agenda, revanchism also seeks to curb municipal social programmes, such as shelters and affordable housing programmes, on which these populations rely.

Coupled with this attack on New York City's vulnerable populations came a new form of policing in the neighbourhoods in which they are normally found. The 'broken windows' theory (Smith, 1998; Sharp, 2014) posits that decaying neighbourhoods are breeding grounds for crime and disorder. As a result, these communities must be targeted for intensive street-level policing that has zero tolerance for offences such as street-level prostitution, or for misconduct such as sleeping on the street. Targeted neighbourhoods can also be candidates for urban renewal schemes, which can lead to gentrification. New York City saw a decreased crime rate after these tactics were employed, leading to the widespread embrace of this theory (Peck, 2006). Keil and Kipfer (2002) point to Toronto's support of Ontario's *Safe Streets Act*,

aggressive policing, and the use of parks and recreation programming as a means of social control to suggest that Toronto was fully ensconced in revanchism and employed 'broken windows' policing a decade ago as it sought to be a competitive city.

Ruppert (2006) links 'broken windows' policing with the commodification of space by arguing that such spatially-focused state interventions claim to be concerned about the safety and commercial viability of a community when, in actuality, they are concerned with regulating the conduct of groups that could impede this viability. One can see how groups' 'rights to the city' can be diminished as a result. The concept of the 'right to the city' is an important one for this discussion. Marcuse (2009) posits the 'right to the city' is not merely the right to enjoy public space. Rather, it is the moral and collective right to be in the city – to enjoy the full urban experience. It is clear that the revanchist city does not extend this right to those that are unable to participate in the market. It is likewise clear that moral judgements of what is proper conduct to be on display in public space can limit access to that space. Whilst Housing First does not openly rebuke a homeless person's 'right to the city', the question to be asked is whether or not these rights are diminished in the course of implementing HF. Mitchell (1997, 2003) posits that homeless outreach programmes similar to *Streets to Homes* are indeed attempts at clearing the homeless from public space when he argues that urban policy has gone past revanchism to create a climate where the homeless simply cannot exist in cities. It is noteworthy that this desire to rid a city of its homeless population is explicitly linked to interurban competition. In essence, Mitchell (1997) argues that the revanchism of previous decades has entered a new phase similar to that of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism (Keil, 2009). That is, previous policies that blatantly sought to remove homeless people from city centres have become more humane in their approach,

whilst still upholding that basic principle of exclusion. If Mitchell (1997) is correct, it is possible that HF has become the vehicle through which these policies are implemented.

Empirical studies concerning the regulation of space, for both housed and homeless individuals, shed light on the mechanisms through which this regulation occurs. Linked to global cities thinking, Florida's (2002) creative class theory argues that, for cities to survive, they must be attractive to the new creative class: IT professionals, artists, etc. (for a critique of Florida, see Peck, 2006). Sharp (2014) examined the degree to which policing in American cities regulates the use of space and how this correlates with their engagement with the creative class. She accomplished this by employing the concept of 'maintenance order' policing: police activities and arrests for (Canadian) summary convictions, such as public drunkenness and disturbing the peace. Echoing arguments made by Ruppert (2006), Sharp (2006) describes how much of this activity is dependent upon the moral judgment of the officer involved. For example, drunken hockey fans may not be charged, whereas an intoxicated homeless person might be. Using a sample of 180 cities each with a population greater than 100,000, the number of maintenance order arrests was compared against the total number of arrests. A city's creativity was assessed by obtaining employment and educational attainment demographics from the 2000 Census. The author tested for other hypotheses, none of which are applicable in the Canadian context due to differences in how municipal governments are structured. It was found that there is indeed a strong correlation between the use of maintenance order arrests and the 'creativity' of a city's population. The author concluded that "[t]he more that a city's economy is reliant upon the new economy and the creative class elements that are a part of it, the greater the priority given to the category of arrest activity that is distinctly associated with social control efforts" (Sharp, 2014, 357).

It is unfortunate that Sharp's (2014) study did not include the number of maintenance order offences that were committed by those who were homeless. This level of analysis would draw a clearer link between interurban competition and government led regulation of space for the most marginalised populations. With that said, several studies have explicitly researched how those experiencing homelessness have limited access and rights to public space. In their case study of several European cities, Doherty et al (2008) examined how a homeless person's use of quasi-public spaces – such as university campuses, shopping malls, and train stations – is regulated. The authors demonstrate that exclusion is accomplished by increased security, surveillance, and changes to the physical space that deter the homeless from utilizing it. The City of Warsaw's decision to replace wooden benches in its train station with less comfortable, smaller plastic seats typifies these architectural changes. All of these tactics are buttressed by multiple pieces of legislation and local ordinances. An important theme running throughout their findings is the commercialisation of once-public spaces – particularly train stations – which have traditionally served as places of refuge for the homeless in Europe. As the stations equally became shopping destinations and transportation hubs, a broader spectrum of the public utilised them. Yet, homeless people's use of these spaces – for purposes other than shopping and travel – became increasingly scrutinised. Access to these spaces thus became contingent upon one's ability to be a consumer. Doherty et al (2008) conclude that these developments are a cumulative example of revanchism: capital's expropriation of public space for the purposes of consumption, and the dismissal of all other uses.

Again, Keil and Kipfer (2002) argue that the Ontario *Safe Streets Act* is also a prime example of revanchism. How the SSA defines the relationship between homeless youth and the Toronto Police is a focus of O'Grady, Gaetz, and Buccieri's (2011) study. Here, 244 homeless

youth between the ages of 16 and 25 completed a survey and a follow-up interview to give "insight into the dynamics of their encounters with the police" (17). To be included in the study, a youth must have experienced homelessness, with or without shelter stays, for at least one week during the previous month. Secondary data, obtained from the Toronto Police Service through a *Freedom of Information* request, was analysed. This analysis revealed that the annual number of tickets issued under the *Safe Streets Act* more than doubled between 2000 and 2010, despite there being a 20% decrease in panhandling and squeegeeing over the same decade. It is also troubling that only 20% of the tickets issued were for aggressive panhandling. The authors conclude that SSA is used to target any kind of soliciting, not just aggressive panhandling. Youth reported significant interactions with, and received heightened attention from, the police for issues other than SSA violations. It is most telling that 60% of the sample had been stopped and searched. It is also common for youth to be ticketed for drinking in public or loitering. In other words, both youth and the general homeless population are criminalised for behaviour that is normally carried out in private space. Since these populations lack access to private space, these interactions essentially amount to harassment. The authors argue that this harassment must be contextualised in a "broader discourse which seeks to link the very experience and status of being homeless with criminality, and which frames the very presence of street youth on city streets as a reflection of growing urban disorder" (Hermer and Mosher, as cited by O'Grady et al, 2011, 64), and raises fundamental questions about citizenship and who has rights to public space. O'Grady et al (2011) argue that amount of police attention that Toronto's homeless youth face amounts to social profiling that targets those who are young and living in extreme poverty. The writings of both Rupert (2006) and Mitchell (2003) are validated here. Aggressive ticketing

of youth living on the streets amounts to spatially-oriented social control of a marginalized group that renders their very existence in the city almost impossible.

Before concluding this discussion, it is necessary to recognize a criticism of the literature's emphasis on the punitive regulation of space. DeVerteuil et al (2009) argue that it is too simplistic, and empirically unfounded, to say that the state has solely limited access to spaces that are hospitable to those who are homeless. Whilst state actions have limited this population's access to some spaces, efforts to contain or eliminate homelessness have created access to others, such as affordable housing projects, shelters, and drop-in centres. The authors see the combined punitive and accommodative measures as being a part of 'poverty management': "the creation of spatial and temporal structures designed to regulate and manage the spillover costs associated with so-called disruptive populations" (652). The challenge for researchers thus becomes investigating all of the geographies of homelessness, including inappropriate examples such as prison.

This discussion is simultaneously helpful yet flawed for an analysis of HF policies. First, although the argument that too much research attention is focused on the regulation of space and street homelessness – a small segment of the homeless population – is well taken, it must be recognised that this is where the policy discourse lies. The City of Toronto staff report which implemented *Streets to Homes* (City of Toronto, 2005) explicitly states that the programme targets the outdoor population. Given that this is generally true for the majority of HF programmes, and given the model's wide embrace, one wonders why DeVerteuil et al (2009) did not incorporate these realities into their analysis. The authors also fail to acknowledge that the hidden nature of indoor homelessness makes it methodologically challenging. Notwithstanding these shortcomings, the concept of poverty management fits well with the major criticisms of

HF. Housing individuals, with few supports to address the underlying causes of their homelessness, mirrors poverty management. This revelation serves to reinforce the question: does rapid re-housing enable individuals to truly improve their lives, or is it simply managing the visibility of their poverty?

Housing First

Waegemakers Schiff and Rook (2012) suggest that the origins of the HF model in North America can be traced to Toronto's *Houselink* agency, which provides both congregate living and individual units to those with a history of mental illness and/or substance abuse issues. It is important to remember that *Houselink* began operations before the *Pathways to Housing* programme in New York, and almost three decades before *Streets to Homes*. Considering this, *Pathways*' dominance in the HF literature needs to be questioned. First, whilst it is true that *Pathways* codified HF in theory and practice, we must recognize that the model has roots in other locations. Indeed, the term 'Housing First' was coined by the *Beyond Shelter* programme in Los Angeles, which was founded in 1988 (Waegemakers Schiff and Rook, 2012). Second, Waegemakers Schiff and Rook (2012) raise a concern that, as a whole, the *Pathways* literature is dominated by analysis of one data set originating out of a large, longitudinal study. It is also notable that many of these articles are authored by *Pathways* founder Dr. Sam Tsemberis and other staff. Questions of objectivity inevitably arise, but do not appear to be addressed in the literature. In an effort to achieve balance, others' works are drawn upon here as much as possible.

Irrespective of its origin, Housing First, as a model of service delivery, has developed five core principles: (i) no requirement of housing readiness to attain housing; (ii) choice and self-determination; (iii) individualised support services; (iv) an emphasis on harm reduction; and

(v) social and community integration (Gaetz et al, 2013). Gaetz (2014) argues that, with an uptake in communities adopting the HF model, these principles will act as a quality assurance mechanism to ensure there is not an undue amount of variance from the original concept. Indeed, the challenge is in striking a balance between upholding these principles and having the flexibility to respond to local needs in local policy contexts. As the model proliferates, these challenges will likely become subject to study.

When examining literature on the efficacy of Housing First, it is important to remember that three types of interventions are commonly employed to assist clients with housing retention, depending on the complexity of client needs: Assertive Community Treatment (ACT) teams offer support to those with the highest needs, often staffed by physicians and psychiatrists, and are available 24 hours a day; Intensive Case Management (ICM) - the model employed by *Streets to Homes* - offers a less acute service, matching clients with a case manager who assists in being able to perform activities of daily living, and brokers services from other community agencies; finally, rapid re-housing services target clients whose needs are the lowest (i.e. their homelessness is purely economic) and offers limited supports after successful housing (Gaetz, 2014).

Regardless of the specific services employed, the most predominant argument made by proponents of Housing First is that the model allows individuals to retain their housing when they have the proper supports. Pearson et al (2009) tested the validity of this assertion at three sites in the United States: *Downtown Emergency Service Center* (DESC) in Seattle, Washington; *Pathways to Housing* in New York City; and *Reaching Out and Engaging to Achieve Consumer Health* (REACH) in San Diego, California. The three agencies selected clients to be followed by the research team; information about programme design was collected, and focus groups were

held at each site to gather information about clients' experiences in the programme. Overall, all three programmes enjoyed a high retention rate, with 84% still housed at the end of 12 months. When looking at those who left the programme, it was found that those who entered housing directly from the streets were more likely to experience instability, whereas those who were previously housed in psychiatric institutions were the most stable. *Pathways* retention rates are thus likely influenced by heavy recruitment from psychiatric institutions. Again, *Streets to Homes* only serves clients who are street-involved. Pearson et al (2009) examined interruptions to housing stability, where a client would leave their unit for a period of time and return later. Findings showed programmes that were the most responsive to clients' needs and offered 24-hour service experienced less of these interruptions. It is important to point out that units were held for clients during these times of instability; thus, they did not lead to clients being re-housed in most circumstances. Staff at all three programmes reported instances of problematic behaviour. It is notable that the *Pathways* sample had significantly fewer behavioural issues. This corroborates the criticism (Johnson et al, 2012; Pleace, 2011) that *Pathways* does not serve the hardest to house. Finally, clients from REACH were significantly more likely to be re-housed by the programme within the study period; the average number of moves was two. Like *Streets to Homes*, REACH worked with third-party landlords and had the least control over acceptable tenant conduct. This study proves that the central tenet of HF is indeed valid. Variations in outcomes between programmes are noteworthy, as they provide insights into programme and policy design, as well as therapeutic best practices.

Significant contributions to that best practice literature stem from the Mental Health Commission of Canada's *At Home/Chez-Soi* project. Gaetz (2014) argues *At Home/Chez-Soi* has major significance for Housing First in at least two ways: first, with five test sites - Moncton,

Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, and Vancouver - it became the world's largest study of HF; second, with a total investment of $110 million, it signified the government's commitment to advancing HF. The research team for each location was able to choose a subpopulation with which to test the efficacy of HF. The results from the Toronto site will be highlighted here.

A total of 575 individuals participated in the Toronto site study. 274 were assigned to the treatment-as-usual group, and were encouraged to utilize existing services in the city. Over half of the total sample was aged from 35 to 54 years, and had typically experienced homelessness for at least 35 months in their lives. It is noteworthy that the team had a deliberate recruitment strategy for women. As a result, the sample was 68% male, 30% female and 2% other. 92% of participants had a mental illness of some kind, and 58% reported problematic substance use. The HF sample was distributed between three treatment types: Housing First with Assertive Community Treatment (HF-ACT), Housing First with Intensive Case Management (HF-ICM) and Housing First with Ethnoracial Intensive Case Management (HF ER-ICM).

In terms of results, housing outcomes are the most pronounced:

> At study end, HF participants across all three groups have been stably housed for 80 per cent of the time compared to 54 per cent among TAU participants. In the last six months of the study, 72 per cent of HF participants were housed all of the time, 16 per cent some of the time, and 12 per cent none of the time; whereas 36 per cent of TAU participants were housed all of the time, 25 per cent some of the time, and 39 per cent none of the time (Stergiopoulos et al, 2014, 15).

It is interesting to note that both the HF and TAU groups saw reductions in their use of health care services, including visits to the Emergency Room. Although these reductions were more pronounced early in the study for the HF group, rates were the same for both groups at the end of the study (Stergiopoulos et al, 2014). The authors do not offer any suggestions as to why

this is, but it is a question that needs to be addressed. One would assume HF participants would have a greater overall decrease.

Both groups saw improvements in mental health and lower rates of substance abuse. These results were so similar that it cannot be said that the HF intervention was a determining factor. These reductions in health care services were combined with reductions in involvement with the criminal justice system to produce a cost-benefit analysis. It was found that a $10 investment in HF netted $15.05 in savings for clients with complex needs, and $2.90 in savings for moderate needs. The difference was due to extra staffing costs associated with meeting more complex needs. It is common for HF's cost effectiveness to be calculated on an annual basis, as seen here. However, Johnson et al (2012) caution that these pronouncements are often methodologically flawed; they are based on the assumption that the client would spend the entire year in a hospital, prison, or psychiatric institution. That is, arguments are made that a full year of HF services are more cost effective than the equivalent time spent in institutions; however, it is rare for a person to spend a full year hospitalised, or incarcerated for petty crimes. It is unclear whether the calculations of Stergiopoulos et al (2014) were based on this assumption. It is, however, a fundamental flaw that must be addressed to ensure the accuracy and transparency of the HF literature.

Echoing Pearson et al (2009), Stergiopoulos et al (2014) conclude that HF is an effective and economically prudent modality for housing previously homeless persons with mental health issues. Key to this success is adequate mental health supports that emphasize consumer choice and a recovery-oriented service delivery model. Notwithstanding these findings, shortcomings with the model were identified; namely, there is a need to offer services that better address the psychosocial needs of clients. To this effect, the authors conclude that "[m]any participants

struggle with barriers to vocation, education, and community integration that may persist despite initial housing stability. Additional support is needed to overcome these barriers, which include discrimination related to race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, and mental health issues" (26). The conclusions of the Toronto site mirrored the overall conclusions of the national study. Aubry et al (2014) argue that the results of the project have several policy implications: (i) the effectiveness of Housing First has been established; (ii) improved access to community services contributes to cost containment; (iii) adherence to the core principles of the model is essential to programme success; (iv) effective implementation of a HF programme requires collaboration and partnership from government and community agencies; (v) meeting the needs of specific subpopulations requires adaptation.

The significance of the *At Home/Chez-Soi* study, and the fact that it took place in Toronto with the same population that is served by *Streets to Homes*, merits its in-depth attention here. It does, however, methodologically mirror the vast majority of place-based studies on HF's efficacy. In fact, its methodology is quite similar to the New York Housing Study (NYHS), of which the *Pathways to Housing* programme was an experimental condition. Using data from the entire 4-year study period, Padgett et al (2006) sought to examine differences in substance use patterns and the use of treatments for mental illness. A key difference between *At Home/Chez-Soi* and NYHS is the treatment-as-usual (TAU) group in New York mandated participation in abstinence-based treatment programmes. Results indicated no significant difference in substance use between TAU and HF groups. Although the authors saw this as a failure of TAU to reduce substance use, they did not address HF's similar inability to reduce substance use; this lack of difference demonstrates that HF on its own has little impact on substance use among its participants. These findings are similar to those of Stergiopoulos et al (2014). However, another

study performed in Phoenix, Arizona reported different results. Here, 47 clients of the city's HF programme completed surveys upon entry, after six months, and again after 12 months. Between the baseline and the six month follow up, there was a significant reduction in substance use, visits to primary care doctors, and incarcerations. These observations led the authors to suggest that positive outcomes from rapid re-housing come early after placement (Bean, Shafer & Glennon, 2013). However, as there was no comparison with a TAU group, these observations do not demonstrate a strong difference between HF and TAU outcomes. In sum, it has been shown that HF reduces substance use, however, these reductions are not significantly tied to rapid re-housing. Groton (2013) confirms this observation in her review of 16 HF studies. She concludes that neither HF nor continuum-of-care decrease substance use or psychiatric symptoms, stating that, "regardless of the type of housing strategy implemented in a community, more effective interventions for substance use treatment and mental health need to be investigated for this specific population" (61).

Besides its ambiguous success at reducing substance use, another key challenge for the HF model is integrating clients into their communities after placement (see McNaughton Nicholls and Atherton, 2011). Using the 3-dimensional definition of community integration - physical, social, and psychological - devised by Wong and Solomon (2002), Gulcur et al (2007) performed a quantitative experiment with 2 groups of individuals: one in a *Pathways* programme, and the other in congregate living settings that followed the continuum-of-care philosophy. Participants, who were recruited for a larger longitudinal study, were interviewed in person every six months. Statistical analyses were conducted based on participants' responses to various Likert scale questions, such as: "I feel like I belong to this neighbourhood" (Gulcur et al, 2007, 218). Results indicated that consumers felt socially and psychologically integrated into

their communities if they had choice in their housing, and if that housing was scatter-site. This, and other findings, led the authors to argue that a Housing First programme that emphasizes independent living is best suited to promoting community integration for previously homeless individuals with psychiatric disabilities. On the surface, these are valid and important findings; however, one must question if Likert scales and regression analysis techniques are able to truly capture something as experiential as community integration. There is no evidence that the authors accounted for qualitative data on how integration was, or was not, occurring. This type of knowledge is required to be able to holistically answer this type of question.

Concerns over the quantification of experiences of community integration are symptomatic of larger abstract critiques of HF. Limiting the evaluation of success to "key" indicators, such as improvements in mental and physical health, decreases in substance dependency, and housing retention for those who are enrolled in the HF programmes, may miss another essential component of policy success: the systematic capacity to maintain service levels that meet the needs of the entire homeless population. Stanhope and Dunn (2011) base their critique on the fact that the success of HF rests on reductionist notions of policy and are critical of evidence-based policy making as a whole. It is true that HF, as exemplified in Toronto by *Streets to Homes*, does employ a reductive, narrow definition of 'success'. Casting the definition more widely to include an assessment of the situation for the broader homeless population (i.e. those who are not receiving HF services) and an analysis of access to urban space for marginalised groups is needed.

Such an assessment must include quantitative knowledge about a client's quality of life after being re-housed. Willse (2010) suggests that the 'invention' of chronic homelessness as a matter of policy and the subsequent employment of HF does not serve to address the underlying

psychosocial issues that lead to homelessness. Rather, this high-needs population is merely managed in a manner that fails to address questions of poverty and housing security. This is a claim also made by Klodawsky (2009) and McNaughton Nicholls and Atherton (2011), who cite McNaughton's (2008) findings that participants had transitioned out of homelessness, but were not transitioning into meaningful lives. Pleace (2011) raises similar concerns; however, he does not see the issue as being the management of homeless people with psychiatric disabilities, but rather the privileging of this small population. He stresses that most people are homeless simply because they are poor. The question, then, becomes: why have policymakers decided to allocate resources to a narrowly targeted programme, when a broader range of services, such as income support, would have a broader impact? Although Pleace (2011) does not link his critique to neoliberalism, his argument essentially further highlights the inadequacies of the highly targeted social programmes of "roll-with-it" neoliberalism.

These critiques do have a great deal of merit, and they point to programmatic deficiencies with the HF model. They should not, however, be seen as a full-scale indictment of HF. Simply put, it seems rather short-sighted to have a wholesale discounting of the fact that, for a segment of the homeless population, mental health and addiction support is what is needed to secure and maintain housing. In many of these cases, poverty is a concurrent, rather than a causal, issue; though, undoubtedly, poverty is a causal issue in many cases as well (Layton, 2008). Unfortunately, this is a highly abstract argument that seems to ignore the experiences of those who are homeless. Reductionist or not, the deliverable of assisting a person to be stably housed has tremendous impacts on their quality of life. Willse (2010) is arguing that a focus on housing retention is consistent with neoliberalism and its policy outcomes; however, more weight should

be given to those outcomes in our assessments. A critique of HF needs to holistically examine its impacts on urban housing policy.

Johnson et al (2012) and Kertesz et al (2009) raise a noteworthy point to be considered when comparing housing and treatment outcomes achieved by HF and continuum-of-care programmes. Given the political embrace of HF, funding and other resources have shifted away from traditional programmes. This is especially true for the heavily resourced *Pathways* programmes. This shift could be hampering these traditional programmes from achieving the results they once did.

Conclusion

The rise of homelessness and housing insecurity in Canada is, at least in part, the product of a neoliberal shift in thinking that saw the federal and provincial governments withdraw from social policies such as affordable housing. These responsibilities were largely downloaded to municipalities; however, neoliberalism has also constrained the policy capacity of cities as they compete to attract business. It is in this era of competition that urban space has become commodified, and its use restricted to those who are able to participate in the market. Mitchell (2003) argues that this process has progressed to a point where outreach programmes for the homeless serve to cleanse them from urban space. Building on Keil's (2009) concept of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism, Mitchell's (2003) argument is an intriguing one. As with other 'roll-with-it' policies and programmes, it is possible that services for the homeless have halted their overt revanchism for more humane approaches, yet continue to uphold the underlying assumption that the use of public space is a vehicle for consumption. Housing First could be an example of such a programme.

Literature on Housing First is dominated by studies that explore its psychophysical outcomes. Close examinations of these works reveal that results have been mixed. More importantly, in the context of this study, critics of HF have questioned its methodology, psychosocial outcomes, and underlying assumptions about homelessness. Both proponents and opponents of the model fail to contextualise their arguments in the discourses of neoliberal urban policy. The questions of whether HF produces quantifiable outcomes are not especially relevant to this study; rather, the objective is to examine the overall relationship between homelessness policy and HF in the context of neoliberalism. *Streets to Homes* is ideally suited to act as a case study, given Toronto's status as a global city. Such a project must be grounded in expert knowledge of policy and its applications. The methodological considerations for such an undertaking are where we now turn.

Chapter IV – Methods and Procedures

Kipfer and Keil's (2002) assertion that Toronto is a global city that has adopted revanchist policies has methodological implications here. It is evident that Toronto has a unique status as a so-called "world city". At the same time, the literature surrounding HF is rather underdeveloped when considering its interventions not merely as having micro-level effects, but as urban policy. Thus, this study situates itself at the intersection of these realities and examines the *Streets to Homes* programme as an instance of HF, being implemented in the context of neoliberalism. Achieving a "deep understanding" of the programme is necessary to be able to address the question of HF as urban policy for two reasons. First, by their very nature, urban policies have a direct and concrete impact on people's lived experiences. This study is guided by this reality, and the belief that power relations mould these experiences. It is through a deep understanding of *Streets to Homes* that these relations are uncovered. Second, *Streets to Homes* is being used as a case study to develop an understanding of the policy implications of HF. As Woodside (2010) asserts, such endeavours are only successful when the researcher has an intimate knowledge of the case being examined. Perhaps the best endorsement of the research potential of case studies comes from Flyvbjerg's (2006) observation that "researchers who have conducted intensive, in-depth case studies typically report that their preconceived views, assumptions, concepts, and hypotheses were wrong and that the case material has compelled them to revise their hypotheses on essential points" (235). Such revisions are realizable because of the level of intensity with which the researcher becomes engaged with the case.

Because the purpose here is exploratory, as opposed to testing or verifying existing theories, this is a heuristic case study. Eckstein (1975) argues that heuristic case studies are ideal for this kind of study, and work well with the grounded theory approach (Glaser & Strauss,

1967). Given that Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed grounded theory with the belief that theory should come from data, it is appropriate to utilize in a project with a critical urban epistemology. The knowledge that was gathered from participants, through an adapted interpretation of the elite interview, is being used to understand the policy implications of HF through the construction of a policy narrative. All of these issues are discussed in detail throughout this chapter. However, it is first necessary to give a full description of the research questions that guided the fieldwork.

Research Questions

Again, the purpose of this study is to expand that literature to conceptualize HF not just as a response to an individual instance of homelessness, but as a part of a larger set of policies. This was accomplished by answering three questions.

(i) Why did the City of Toronto adopt a HF programme?

The implementation of *Streets to Homes* marked a significant policy change for the City. In order to understand its relationship to service delivery and the regulation of space, we must also understand the reasons behind its adoption. It was assumed that participants would cite three possible motivations, or a combination thereof: (i) an ideological belief that housing is a fundamental right and/or a discounting of the philosophy behind the continuum of care model, (ii) the desire to concentrate services on addressing chronic homelessness, or (iii) neoliberal pressures to decrease services and regulate space.

(ii) How has the *Streets to Homes* programme changed service delivery to those experiencing homelessness in Toronto?

It must be remembered that the Strategy prohibits City funding being used for outreach activities that enable outdoor homelessness, yet this segment of the population grew between 2009 and 2013. Whilst policies and services may not be perpetuating homelessness in Toronto, it does not appear to be eliminating it. Thus, the question to be answered was whether or not the focus on intensive interventions for a few has reduced the capacity to serve, and ultimately house, more people.

(iii) Has homeless people's and community agencies' access to the downtown core been limited as a result of the adoption of *Streets to Homes*?

Analysis of the Strategy shows a definite concern with spatial issues, however couched in ambiguous language. Heightened residential and commercial development in the core of the city is certainly increasing the pace at which space is becoming a commodity. The question for City officials was whether these pressures led, overtly or covertly, to the desire to eliminate outdoor homelessness. Further, the provision of services traditionally associated with the continuum of care model have a spatial impact (facilities such as shelters and drop-in centres, the distribution of sleeping bags, etc.). Agency staff were be able to report if they were prevented from offering these services, and if the change in their activities has affected their ability to serve the outdoor population. As was previously mentioned, there is a trend whereby municipalities will restrict the services available to those experiencing homelessness. It is apt to evaluate whether or not *Streets to Homes* is an instance of this movement.

A Critical Urban Epistemology

Answers to these questions were not quantifiable. Rather, they invited participants to give a narrative describing their understanding of *Streets to Homes*. As Lejano (2013) explains, recent

decades have seen an epistemological shift in policy sciences and policy making. Previously, the solutions to societal issues were thought to lie in objective and technical measurements.

The research questions for this study are reflections of the desire to move beyond the heavy emphasis on positivist measures of the success of HF and examine its implications for municipal housing policy. These measures are unable to give a detailed narrative of the relationship between HF, urban policy, and urban space. Solely relying on measures such as housing retention and improvements in mental health does not enable the researcher to give a "thick description" of HF. Achieving these broader, more in-depth descriptions of a phenomenon can only be realized through research that holistically seeks to understand the complex relationships between different phenomena through "inductive analysis that is premised on discovering new categories and being exploratory`` (Vromen, 2010, 257). That is, a policy narrative that is verifiable and based on objective evidence. As Vromen (2010) summarizes, there has been a renewal of the use of qualitative methods in political science, as scholars study the contextualized experience of politics found in textual analyses, interview transcripts, and historical contextualization.

As with many studies in the social sciences, this research is premised on the notion that these analyses cannot discount the issues of structure and agency that shape them. Hay (2002) argues that critical policy scholarship must account for the relationship between agency, the ability of actors to shape their environment, and the "structured context in which they find themselves" (254). Doing so positions the researcher to be able to hold actors to account, whilst calling for progressive structural changes. The researcher also produces knowledge that runs counter to neoliberalism's focus on individual behaviours. Hay (2002) goes on to say political analysis is "synonymous with the analysis of the distribution, exercise, and consequences of

power" (256). It follows that policy is the codified outcome of these processes. The exercise of power is undoubtedly agential. However, its distribution is heavily tempered by societal structures. Likewise, the implementation of a policy is influenced by both the amount of agency that affected stakeholders have, and the broader sociopolitical context.

Questions of the exercise of power take on an added dimension in the urban context where, as Boudreau (2010) describes, there is a heightened interdependency that affects everyday life, as individuals negotiate their geographically-situated relationship with each other. Borrowing from feminist standpoint theory, Boudreau (2010) has developed a 'critical urban epistemology' that stresses the importance of these interdependencies whilst recognising that "knowledge is produced by people who are situated in time and space" (68). Although there are other components of such an epistemology, its emphasis on everyday experiences and the interdependencies of urban life are the most relevant here. It is important to consider Boudreau et al's (2009) argument that neoliberal urban governance is the intersection of macro-economics and everyday life in cities, and that *Streets to Homes* is being implemented in a neoliberal context. If the works of Hay (2002) and Boudreau (2010) are taken in sum, a schema develops whereby *Streets to Homes* simultaneously exercises agency as it shapes reality for service providers and those who are homeless, and is affected by the structures in which it operates. Findings indicate that *Streets to Homes* has had both positive and negative implications for Toronto's homeless population. The fact that people are being housed cannot be ignored. However, there has been a decreased ability to perform adequate outreach due to increased geographic isolation amongst members of the homeless community. At the same time, the programme's ability to meet the demands for housing, and address underlying issues of

poverty, is curtailed by neoliberalism's governmentality. This research intended to hold both of these realities in tension, uncovering how they influence the programme and HF more broadly.

Adopting a critical urban epistemology had two impacts on the methodological decisions made here. First, the majority of interview questions were designed to offer participants the opportunity to reflect on either how *Streets to Homes* has tangibly shaped the experience of homelessness in Toronto (to the extent that this question can be answered by someone who is not homeless), or how services have been shaped by the programme. Homelessness, and meeting the needs of those who are experiencing it, are both heavily contextualized by space; they are shaped by the inclement weather on the street corner, or the line up at the soup kitchen. Facilitating the production of knowledge that is rooted in these contexts was important in arriving at the necessarily holistic understanding of HF. Second, Boudreau's (2010) contention that knowledge production is situated in spatial and temporal contexts leads to the understanding that it is inappropriate for a researcher who is removed from those contexts to harbor assumptions about that knowledge's implications. Employing grounded theory ensure that the conclusions presented here remain true to those realities, as opposed to conforming to researcher bias.

Case Studies

Even though participants' knowledge and reflections are unique to how *Streets to Homes* shapes everyday experiences and Toronto, it is important to remember that, assessing the experiences of the HF approach more broadly is the greater purpose here. Gerring (2004) defines case studies as the in-depth examination of a single unit (*Streets to Homes),* with the intention of understanding features of a larger phenomenon (Housing First). As the research questions illustrate, there is a temporal dimension to this study in assessing policy outcomes related to before and after the implementation of *Streets to Homes.* Thus, variations within policy outcomes can be measured

solely against the programme. Notwithstanding this basic understanding of what a case study is, Meyer (2001) reminds us that extremely few prescriptions have been made pertaining to the design of such a study. One could see how such an amount of latitude can afford the researcher the flexibility to be able to develop a research design that is most appropriate to their context. However, there is also the risk that the lack of a prescriptive design can lead to abuse of the case study label. Such an error has been avoided here by remaining focused on the relationship between *Streets to Homes* specifically, and HF more broadly.

Another strength of the case study method, particularly when it is coupled with a critical urban epistemology, is its ability to provide the researcher with a deep, holistic understanding of the phenomenon being examined because of its closeness to lived experiences. The consideration of both interviewer knowledge, and policy documents in this study further facilitates a holistic examination of *Streets to Homes* by necessarily privileging the link between policy and service outcomes. The result is the ability to arrive at a nuanced view of reality that recognizes the complexities of human behaviour (Flyvbjerg, 2006).

Flyvbjerg (2006) argues that the richness of case study data is further enhanced by the use of narratives that also serve to uncover the circumstances of real life. Whilst some critics argue that heavily relying on such narratives diminishes a study's ability to be generalizable, the counter argument is that a case study is *most* successful when it arrives at the unique particularities of the case. This line of thinking is no doubt congruent with the narrative turn in the policy sciences, as discussed by Lejano (2013). The objective here was therefore to produce a narrative understanding of *Streets to Homes* in order to extrapolate implications for HF more broadly.

The state of the HF literature requires a heuristic case study (Eckstein, 1975). The lack of attention that has been given to developing an evidence-based understanding of HF as an urban policy positions this study at the beginning of the knowledge building process. Heuristic case studies allow the researcher to develop a preliminary schema that is highly contingent on the particularities of the original case being analysed. Subsequent studies of different cases allows for verification and refinement. The strongest justification for employing a heuristic case study is the reality that theories are the product of a researcher's imagination and critical thinking skills (Eckstein, 1975). The heuristic model lends itself well to the present study because of both the lack of similar studies, and the realization that the findings are specific to Toronto's homeless population, and particular position as a global city. This study merely begins to theorize about HF as an urban policy in times of neoliberalism. Further studies will be able to expand upon the findings, building an understanding of the policy implications of HF in different urban contexts, and with varying homeless populations.

Yin (2003) suggests that exploratory case studies need to denote the criteria by which they will be deemed successful. It seems that this pronouncement should extend to heuristic studies as well. Again, success here is defined as producing a narrative understanding of *Streets to Homes* that can extend to an understanding of Housing First.

Of course, any study is judged partly on its generalizability. For case studies, this refers to the ability of the theoretical propositions developed from one study to be verified in another study (Meyer, 2001). It must be acknowledged that there are techniques to increase the generalizability of case studies. Meyer (2001) advocates for the multi-case approach, allowing the researcher to simultaneously apply learnings to more than one case. Flyvbjerg (2006) advocates for a strategic selection of cases to examine. Meyer (2001) echoes importance of

sampling in case studies, emphasising the necessity of generating rich information. Unfortunately, practicalities dictated that the present study be limited to Toronto. Nonetheless, Toronto`s status as a global city allows for the findings that are presented here to be generalized to that class of cities. The present findings also raise issues that are specific to the context of Canadian federalism, allowing for an analysis of HF within that context.

Key Informant Interviews

The study utilised knowledge from 29 semi-structured key informant interviews; participants included: City of Toronto officials, executive directors of agencies that provide services to homeless people, other housing experts and advocates, and law enforcement officials. A fuller description of the sample is below. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and analysed for themes, commonalities, and differences. A complete interview guide is found in Appendix A: Interview Guide. It must be acknowledged that some authors suggest it is ineffective to record interviews of this nature, as participants are more relaxed and willing to speak freely when they are not being recorded (Peabody et al, found in Harvey, 2011). However, the employment of grounded theory and the need of a full transcript necessitated a recording. Participants' responses were analysed in the context provided in the background chapter. General themes were identified, then further refined into specific categories. The policy landscape provided the lens through which this work was done.

The choice was made to solely interview key informants and those closely involved in formulating and implementing the programme - a common practice that is valid in political science and related disciplines (Harvey, 2011). Operationalizing who can be considered suitable to interview is highly contextualised to every study. However, the common variable is a unique

level of power and privilege amongst participants. The researcher's objective is to gain access to the knowledge that accompanies that status (Odendahl & Shaw, 2002)[1]. It must be acknowledged that the majority of the participants do not have decision-making power over *Streets to Homes*, but rather have expert knowledge of the programme's implications.

A shortcoming of only conducting key informant interviews must be acknowledged. A study that is examining the use of policy to regulate space will not include the perspectives of those who might be subject to that regulation: those who are homeless and under-housed. The participants who were recruited justified this delimitation. The overwhelming majority of participants work in settings that allow them to offer an analysis of policy that is also grounded in the lived experience of homelessness. For example, many of the executive directors routinely work in programme areas and know the agency's clients. With that said, future research can, and should, evaluate HF based on qualitative data gathered from programme participants.

Sample

Sampling and recruitment strategies for the three groups of participants were as follows:

- City officials were recruited via e-mail. Six key people were identified to interview, including: one City Councillor, three senior managers of the SSHA Division and the Affordable Housing Office, and two frontline workers from *Streets to Homes*. It was important to understand the official origins and interpretations of the programme, and more importantly, its recognized weaknesses.

[1] The literature being used here refers to 'elite interviews'. The term 'elite' carries with it certain connotations in urban studies, none of which participants in the current sample resemble. The term 'key informant' is therefore being used. The methodological considerations are the same, however.

- Recruitment of twelve social service agency executive directors, or their designate, accounted for the services offered, or population served, but with an emphasis placed on the geographic location of the agency. Agencies were found as far west as Bathurst St, reaching east to the Don Valley. One agency, a housing help centre, was intentionally found in a suburban community in order to assess any impacts *Streets to Homes* has had on housing security outside of the downtown core. As was expected, a majority of agencies (six) were located in the central business area and where there is a high concentration of poverty and homelessness. Two agencies exclusively serve women, three serve men, one serves youth, and the remainder had multiple services. Services offered include: emergency shelters, drop-in centres, health clinics, and permanent housing. One respondent in this category did not provide direct services, but rather coordination and advocacy for services across the city. Again, participants were recruited via e-mail. Recruitment was largely based on the researcher's knowledge of social services in the community, with some "snowballing". The perspective offered by those with leadership roles in service provision was seen as being paramount in understanding the ramifications of the adoption of *Streets to Homes;* it is in their shelters, drop in centres, etc. where the effects of the policy are seen on a daily basis.
- It seemed appropriate to interview six housing experts or advocates who are not employed by the City or an agency. These participants offered a broader perspective on *Streets to Homes* and the housing policy landscape. This group included academics, and staff at advocacy organizations. This cohort was conceptualized as being positioned between the first two; able to comment on services and the reality on the street, but with a

broad understanding, and critique, of policy trends. The recruitment strategy mirrored the techniques used for executive directors.

- Finally, it was necessary to gather knowledge specific to questions of the regulation of space. Thus, five interviews with members of the police service, private security, and officials who oversee aspects of the built environment in the downtown core were conducted. It was expected that these individuals would stress the security and maintenance order (Sharp, 2014) issues that are often associated with homelessness, and shed light on how they interplay with *Streets to Homes.*

All interviews were confidential. Harvey (2011) reports that interviewing elites involves a delicate balance of managing scarce time, whilst also avoiding close-ended questions that typically frustrate elites. To account for this reality, interviews with elites are often semi-structured. Flexible and open-ended questions allow the researcher to gather in-depth, qualitative data, whilst ensuring there is structure that ensures that the interview meets its research objectives (Leech, 2002).

Grounded Theory

Eckstein (1975) suggests that employing grounded theory is well suited to analysing data for heuristic case studies. In developing grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967) argue that too often researchers tacitly adopt a convenient theory to explain their findings. Instead of simply marrying an established theory to a study's findings through deduction, researchers must allow those findings to inductively develop new theories.

In general, Birks and Mills (2011) suggest that the employment of grounded theory is appropriate when little is known about the area of study, and the desired outcome is generation of theory with explanatory power. Both of these criteria are met here. However, the desire to

use knowledge of *Streets to Homes* to generate a theory of HF does not necessarily require the full use of the grounded theory methodology as it was described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). Birks and Mills (2011) report that it is common and legitimate for research to utilise only certain aspects of grounded theory. The danger comes when scholars claim to have used wholesale grounded theory when they have not. However, a modified use of grounded theory must come with a clear understanding of the techniques selection, and the ability to justify one's modifications. Thus, it is important to acknowledge that the data presented in the following chapters has been analysed using principles of grounded theory, but some essential elements of grounded theory procedures were omitted. For example, Glaser and Strauss (1967) advocate for a process whereby fieldwork and data analysis occur simultaneously, with the analysis informing the directions taken with respect to sampling and the line of inquiry that is pursued. The present project had a tighter timeline than this process would seem to necessitate. It was clear that the data collected reached saturation nonetheless.

However modified, grounded theory is being employed here in concurrence with the recognition that the complexities of modern social life require an explicit use of data when developing new theories: an outcome that is achieved through a 'constant comparative method of qualitative analysis' (Glaser and Strauss, 1967). Wassermann et al (2009) argue that this basic assumption makes grounded theory both a research method and an epistemological orientation. Other methods of data analysis entail either analysis being carried out after coding is completed, or constant analysis that searches for theoretical insights. The constant comparative method combines these two approaches. Coding and analysis are carried out simultaneously, allowing theory to be developed more systematically. It is argued that keeping analysis and theory-building at the fore of the coding stage allows the researcher to approach this work with

discipline, yet still have the flexibility needed for creativity. Said differently, constant comparison allows for specific data to be merged with already existing concepts in theory building (Wasserman et al, 2009).

Birks and Mills (2011) describe how grounded theory's layered coding process leads to theory development, which has led here to an understanding of the relationship between HF and neoliberalism, and the policy landscape that is necessary for HF programmes to succeed. To begin, open coding allows the researcher to use verbatim quotes of keywords or phrases from interview transcripts to act as codes, which are then grouped into categories. Categories are deemed to have reached saturation when new codes do not add to their properties. Second, intermediate coding serves to unite the data abstractly, by creating linkages between categories and drawing together sub-categories into unified whole. It is at this point that the researcher may wish to identify a 'core category' that is central to explain the theory being developed. Finally, advanced coding unifies categories into the coherent theory.

It is important to remember that the logical extension of the constant comparative method is the dismissal of the notion of outlying data during the coding process. Instead of finding explanations for discrepancies in the information gathered, those discrepancies are used to expand categories and the theoretical understanding of the phenomenon being studied (Wasserman et al, 2009). The utility of this method in the context of the present study was found in the discovery of patterns that are not able to be uncovered by the current trajectory in HF research. The next chapter details that there were indeed participants that had interactions with, and particularly negative views of, *Streets to Homes.* It is important not to disregard these realities, for they are integral to developing a complete theory of HF.

Finally, it is important to consider the criteria by which a grounded theory study can be deemed successful. For the current study, as previously mentioned, an element of its success must be its ability to critically examine the implications of HF on municipal housing policy. Employing grounded theory in research with a critical urban epistemology is appropriate because, as Oliver (2012) suggests, grounded theory is particularly well-suited to critically-oriented projects. Grounded theory allows the researcher to code and analyse data against categories, such as gender and class, which raise emancipatory questions. In this case, the categories used were not identity-based, but relied upon participants' memberships in the sampling cohorts.

More generally, Glaser and Strauss' (1967) 'classic' criteria for judging the quality of grounded theory research emphasised rigorous application of techniques, and "presentation of a clear, integrated theory that draws the reader in and provides evidence of logical conclusions and their relationship to the data" (Birks & Mills, 2011, 149). Birks and Mills (2011) summarize the views of Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Glaser (1978) pertaining to the evaluation of a theory that a study produces. Both works emphasize the need for the theory to fit with the data and the field in which it will be used. Other criteria include a theory's understandability, flexibility, and explanatory power. The issue of theoretical fit is one that is arguably intrinsically addressed by the epistemological assumption that urban policy has a direct impact on everyday life. Knowledge that is rooted in social interactions is undoubtedly best able to produce theories relevant to disciplines that are concerned with the distribution of power.

Validity

The rigor with which the various methodological elements of this study were executed contributed to its overall validity. The importance of producing a valid and reliable study in the

study cannot be understated. If HF is to become the dominant modality to address homelessness, then it is crucial that qualitative researchers offer sound descriptions of its effects and interplay with the experience of homelessness. Creswell (2013) defines validation "in qualitative research to be an attempt to assess the 'accuracy' of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants" (250) and offers several strategies to achieve validity. The process of Triangulation involves the use of different sources in order to corroborate the findings and themes being presented. It must be recognized that whilst all of the interviews for this study centred on the experiences of *Streets to Homes* and homelessness, the varied roles that participants have offers strong triangulation. Many of the themes presented in the next chapter were eluded to by multiple cohorts of participants, bolstering their validity. Triangulation has also occurred by comparing participants' assertions against the policy developments discussed in the Background chapter. Creswell (2013) further suggests that offering thick descriptions increases validation, as readers are then able to assess the transferability of the evidence presented.

Conclusion

In sum, this study privileges a narrative understanding of *Streets to Homes* in order to move past the positivist, deductive reasoning that dominates the Housing First literature. Such a task must be rooted in the epistemological understanding that the proximity of urban policy to peoples' daily lives impacts the relationship between a person and their city. The *Streets to Homes* programme is central to Toronto's response to homelessness, and thus shapes how the City is experienced by both those who are experiencing homelessness and those who provide services to them. The narratives of these experiences form the data from which a theory can be developed about the broader policy implications of HF. The findings are presented in the next chapter.

Chapter V - Findings

Employing grounded theory allows the researcher to go beyond the original research questions – which could serve to limit the creativity of theory-building – enabling the gathered knowledge to dictate the direction of research. This study is evidence of the utility of that freedom. It quickly became clear during the fieldwork that focusing on the original research questions would severely limit the ability to offer the necessary holistic understanding of *Streets to Homes* in its current policy context. The richness of the knowledge that is presented here is also evidence of the utility in employing semi-structured interviews; participants were able to freely offer observations and insights that led to the robust picture that is presented here. However, it must be acknowledged that police and security officials' focus on law enforcement, and perhaps a less extensive knowledge of the complexities of homelessness, meant that these respondents were less forthcoming in their answers or were simply unable to comment on certain issues. It is for this reason that their responses are used less frequently here.

This chapter presents participants' observations and narratives as they relate to three central themes that emerged during the course of the analysis. Overall, participants have depicted a programme that is both impeded in reaching its objectives by the policy context in which it operates and has significant service gaps. The combination of these two factors serves to incapacitate an otherwise effective strategy, and diminishes the programme to tacitly regulating public space.

Streets to Homes and the Retrenchment of Social Policy, 1995 to Present

The strongest element that emerged from the overall narrative was the contention that *Streets to Homes* is unable to eliminate homelessness – or related issues, such as extreme poverty and street involvement – because of policy retrenchment over the last twenty years. That is,

foundational policies that are required to address the needs of *Streets to Homes* clients, as discussed later in this section, have been retrenched to a degree where the programme is being rendered ineffective. The withdrawal of supports for the creation of affordable housing has had a particularly negative effect.

The Affordability and Availability of Housing

Participants' unanimous endorsement of the HF philosophy came overwhelmingly with the caveat that it only works when there is a supply of affordable housing stock. This sentiment is captured in an executive director's comment that "even if this was the best approach, there aren't the resources to implement it to the degree that would make a change, because there just isn't the housing stock."

Speaking to the overall affordable housing landscape in Toronto, a senior City official and a housing expert both pointed to the waiting list for affordable housing as evidence that the system is broken. The City official describes the situation as follows:

> I won't describe it as 'complex', I will describe it as challenging and dismal. I will go back to, there's over 90,000 households that are on the waiting list to get into social housing. We have, in Toronto, about 90,000 social housing units. So, for every person that's living in a unit, there's a person waiting to get into that unit; and only about 5% of the people on the waiting list get housed every year, about 5,000. So, it's desperate, it's challenging, it's broken, and we need a new paradigm to deal with this issue.

Speaking to the lack of cooperation from the provincial and federal governments, this official also said:

> So we've cobbled together different responses and different approaches, and I think we are making a difference. I would love to be able to double our efforts, but to do that, we need help from other partners, and the federal and provincial governments need to step up and lead. The responses we have from them, now, are next to pitiful.

However, for our purposes here, reflections from *Streets to Homes* staff best highlight the relationship between programme delivery and the lack of housing. A manager commented on the difficulty in engaging prospective clients when a placement is not readily available. They explain that, for individuals who have precarious circumstances and are often in crises, the prospect of working with *Streets to Homes* for an unknown amount of time until they are housed can be a hindrance to engage:

> If I meet on a street corner, and I say, yea come work with us on housing, don't you want to get into housing? And if I don't have something very quickly to provide to that person, why the hell would they want to work with us? I'm just going to make you maybe go to a shelter or do whatever. So I think the weakness is, we don't have enough housing stock to go out there and ask somebody immediately to house them.

The programme's lack of access to housing is best encapsulated in a frontline worker's assessment of the services available:

> I guess you could say the programme is designed to take as full advantage as possible of whatever resources exist, without us and ourselves actually bringing those resources to the table. So our main resource is that kind of "being with" that I mentioned, that: we'll make the landlord calls; we'll go to the viewing; we'll talk to your OW worker; we'll make sure that we'll apply to the subsidy, we'll get all that; we'll go to the furniture bank with you; we'll intervene if the landlord is pissed off about something; so "being with" is, I think, the main way you could say that's included in the programme.

Even though programme staff do not have sustained access to housing, there is a pool, though limited, of rent supplements available to *Streets to Homes* clients. However, as one official with the City explained, funding is contingent on federal and provincial monies. Because long-term funding is not a reality, a person's supplement is time-limited and only renews if a new fund is announced. Fortunately, recent history has shown that programmes are generally renewed by the federal and provincial governments, making the supplement

continuous. However, the tenuous nature of this programme has created anxiety for both the City and the service providers. One expert explained that supplements must be a long-term arrangement for clients with complex needs, who have little prospect of ever earning income.

The lack of social housing, and the scarcity of rent supplements, means that the majority of housing placements with *Streets to Homes* are drawn from the private market. However, the contraction of the vacancy rate means there is decreased access to this segment of the housing stock as well. A *Streets to Homes* manager commented that when the programme started, the vacancy rate was 3.4%, and it has since dropped to 1.7% (see Figure II.7). The higher demand has resulted in landlords being less willing to rent to *Streets to Homes* clients. This is partly due to rising rents that are forcing modest income households to compete with lower income households, including *Streets to Homes* clients, for less desirable stock. A senior manager of a multi-service agency suggested that rooming houses have even been seen as options for modest income households. It is perhaps because of the demand from prospective tenants without the issues that *Streets to Homes* clients have that landlords have also become less tolerant towards property damage and disruptive behaviour. A frontline *Streets to Homes* worker described a strategy used to place clients when describing examples of the types of housing found:

> Some of them are not great, but I have found myself sometimes wishing I had a "slumlord" or two that I could go to, because some clients, you know they're going to be a mess, you know they're not going to show any interest in the cleaning or the maintenance, so you don't want to move them into a place that's *too* nice. [...] Well, it's always a degree of matching the client's lifestyle and the kind of behaviour you can expect from a client to a building and a neighbour situation and a landlord situation that's going to be able to tolerate that. So, typically able to find a pretty decent match, and sometimes that match means an older building that's not really kept up, where there's not a lot of attention on that, where the client comes in and starts painting all over the walls, and they have 3 dogs who they're not going to clean up after, that's not automatically going to bring the wrath of the whole community down on them,

> because that's what the building is kind of already like, or that's what the neighbours are already doing.

The lack of tolerance has become so pronounced that frontline workers now expect their relationship with a landlord to deteriorate over time. To mitigate this, housing workers attempt to match a client's level of needs to a landlord's level of tolerance, rather than fostering conditions wherein a client's behaviour might improve. This practice seems to be happening despite evidence that problematic behaviour can change when the proper supports are in place. A police officer tells of a pilot project on George Street where Seaton House is located, wherein a building identified as having extremely high drug activity – with over 600 9-1-1 calls a year (Spurr, 2015) – was revitalised with $300,000 in annual funding from the province and supports provided through two social agencies: Fred Victor and Houselink. The officer explains how emergency calls from the building significantly decreased as a result of the supports that were put in place:

> [T]his was a building that had some significant issues at one point, in respect to they had some residents whose units were being overtaken by the drug element in the area, so they decided, okay, let's take a directed approach, let's take a look at the units where the anti-social behaviour is coming from, and let's provide supports, multi-faceted supports to those residents. [...] We had everyone at the table, the police assist in the way they do, TCH[C] will do what they have to do, everybody was there, everybody was available. [...] That was one building where we went from having significant calls for service to having almost none. Almost none.

It must be observed that the success of this project points to the reality that multiple supports, from multiple policy actors, are often needed to securely and adequately house people with complex needs. Participants spoke of this when discussing how other policies, apart from the lack of affordable housing, impede *Streets to Homes* and housing security in Toronto.

The Role of Other Government Policies, and Migration to Toronto

Participants reflected known trends in social policy by arguing that the efficacy of *Streets to Homes* is impaired by decisions made by the federal and the provincial governments. An expert and an executive director both argue that homelessness must be seen primarily as both an income security issue and a health issue. This executive director describes poverty as a provincial and federal responsibility:

> I think it's broader than the city. I think it's provincial, because it should be the Ministry of Health [and Long-term Care] that has responsibility for people with mental health and addictions, and all the addictions treatment programmes, which, we think, are failing people badly. [...] The City had the best of intentions with the *Streets to Homes* programme. [...] The core problem is poverty, and that's an income assistance issue, and that's a federal and provincial issue. So the city doesn't actually have [...] authority, but they certainly don't have the income source, the revenue stream, to work on income security issues.

Specific policy issues that participants cited as needing attention were: recognizing the migratory nature of the homeless population, supports for people with mental health and substance use issues, income supports, and changes in tenant protections.

Migration. Participants argued that placing the responsibility for homelessness entirely on the City is not only fiscally unsound, it also ignores the reality that homeless people migrate to Toronto (and other centres) from small cities and rural areas. In effect, Toronto provides homelessness services for large parts of Ontario without a level of funding that recognises this reality. One expert illustrated the pressure placed on the City:

> Toronto has 2.7 million people, Toronto has 3,900 emergency shelter beds. York region, just across the road, has a million people. So, about more than a third the size of Toronto, has 160 shelter beds, or fewer. So, Toronto can address chronic homelessness, but it's actually doing it for the whole region, but only gets funding for Toronto.

A former City Councillor told of incidents where York Regional Police would transport homeless men to Seaton House, the largest men's shelter in downtown Toronto, as the primary option. One can expand this argument to see that *Streets to Homes* is the *de facto* HF programme for a wide swathe of Ontario, but is not funded as such.

Evidence of the burden Toronto carries comes from agencies' assessments of whence their clients are migrating. With economic shifts that are eroding the manufacturing industry in Ontario, employment is becoming more precarious. One executive director who deals with the male population argued that these shifts are particularly affecting older men who have worked in manufacturing their whole life:

> Seemingly the lack of supports for [men] and for those communities as a whole means that they generally tend to gravitate towards cities, and find themselves not only without social supports, but without state-funded social supports either. So for the group that tends to come here, they tend to be older men; they tend to reflect, for the most part, society as a whole, but will tend to be kind of white, older… it's moving generationally now, but the group that uses this service are white men over the age of 60, and of course they are the fastest growing homeless group as a whole. Those men have worked with their hands for many years, that generally come from other parts of the province: London, Waterloo, Kitchener, Hamilton; all those places that have huge industrial bases that are now shrinking. They are much more precarious economically, so are only now adding to the problem of homelessness.

According to this respondent, these men come to Toronto seeking other employment and/or social supports, and find themselves homeless on the street.

Health care. The health care system undoubtedly has a role to play in supporting those who are homeless. Yet, both front line staff and City officials identified ways in which the provision of these supports is problematic. Speaking from a policy perspective, the City officials' comments paint a juxtaposing picture. On the one hand, it was suggested that there are

not enough resources to support the segment of the chronically homeless population with the most acute mental health and addiction issues to maintain housing.

> There is a population that has a complex set of needs, often they are of mental health and other kinds of health - addiction is connected - all tied to economic disadvantage. The interplay of all of those needs makes it very, very difficult for those people to maintain housing without quite intensive supports, and the supports are not always available or funded or coordinated. When we did our first Street Needs Assessment in 2006, I think we identified 800 purely street homeless, and 3 years later, that number was cut in half, we think partly because of interventions like a Housing First approach. [...] When we did the Street Needs Assessment [in 2013], the number had crept up again, not as high as it was in 2006 but it had crept up again. I think some of what's happening is the people that we're able to intervene with successfully, we have successfully intervened with, so I guess there's this residual population that gets harder and harder to serve successfully. There's a population that really needs a better coordination of housing and medical resources. That alignment isn't happening successfully or sufficiently at this point.

At the same time, a frustration was identified that housing programmes funded by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care are only available to those with the most complex health issues. An official questioned why it was necessary for a person to have multiple diagnoses in order to have access to housing.

> I think the other thing is that the Ministry of Health [and Long-term Care] today, through the Local Health Integration system, they do make some opportunities available, but you're required to have so many things wrong with you in terms of your diagnosis that if you were an alcoholic and you were having trouble with your housing, there's no programme for you. There's nowhere for you to go, right? You'd have to be alcoholic, mentally ill, chronic liver failure, you know? You shouldn't have to be that bad to get help. That's part of it: it's like you have to present yourself as being so bad to get any kind of assistance.

An executive director whose agency provides permanent housing that is funded by the Ministry of Health and Long-term Care also expressed frustration with feeling pressured to admit only those with extremely complex needs, who put a strain on the agency's human and other

resources. Another executive director echoed the argument that funding for mental health and addictions treatment must be increased.

For the City's front line staff, their concerns centred on the mental health system: specifically, issues of committing their clients for in-patient psychiatric treatment, and discharge planning. For example, *Streets to Homes* outreach staff will advocate for their clients who are admitted as a psychiatric in-patient to be treated for upwards of one week. Instead, as one outreach worker reported, discharge often occurs within 24 hours, with no other option than returning to the streets:

> Our clients will be put in hospital, we'll go in there and try to advocate to try to get them to try to stay at least a week, whether that's the psych ward or CAMH, but they're discharged in less than 24 hours, right back on the streets. How can they help themselves, when there's no self-care? Their mental health and their physical health declines.

A housing worker also expressed the need for more support for the clients with the most complex needs.

Income supports and tenant protections. Equally problematic has been the withdrawal of social assistance programmes. 37% of all participants argued that homelessness has been exasperated by changes to income security programmes. The erosion of tenant protection laws were also concerning to many. Speaking to Mike Harris' actions on these files, one expert illustrated how they have caused an increase in housing insecurity:

> I moved to Toronto in 1990; I watched, especially when we got a conservative government in Ontario, that homelessness just spiked, it was incredible how quickly it went up, because of 21% cuts to social assistance, because of the removal of rent control. So we had this explosion of homelessness in Toronto.

The reductions in social assistance were seen as particularly troubling for this individual. In 1994, a single parent with two children on social assistance would receive a

shelter allowance $70 below the average rent for a two bedroom apartment. The difference would now be over $500. This expert echoed Falvo's (2009) critique that many *Streets to Homes* clients remain in core housing need, paying over 30% of their income on rent. A frontline worker reported that, without a rent supplement, the rent for 90% of his housing placements exceed the OW shelter allowance. Changes to the federal Employment Insurance (EI) programme have also made it more restrictive in the last twenty years, according to this expert: 80% of unemployed Canadians qualified for EI in 1990, only 44% qualify now. City frontline staff and managers both report that clients often augment their income through panhandling, and lamented that this is indeed necessary.

Of course, inadequate income supports put households receiving them at increased risk of eviction. Speaking to the 1998 reforms of the *Tenant Protection Act*, another expert explained how this has impacted the evictions process and the rise of homelessness:

> What Mike Harris did in 1998 with the [*Tenant Protection Act*] is that he created a fast track eviction process where he said, "instead of courts deciding it, the decision on whether or not to evict her would be decided by an adjudicator"; in other words, by somebody who may or may not have legal training; there may not be a process for a fair trial, and the requirement was a decision had to be made within 5 business days of a landlord applying, so it was a very quick process. [...] The adjudicators were also getting paid, under the Mike Harris system, every time somebody was evicted. [...] So if you think, for just a second, how could you design a system to perfectly increase the number of people evicted and becoming homeless, you could say Mike Harris did it. He created a brilliant system, so you take away people's right to a fair trial, you take away any fairness in the process, you reward the adjudicator based on the amount of people they evict, as opposed to the number of fair hearings, or something like that; so it was a nightmare. So we found in the first 6 months after the new law was in, there was a 75% increase in the number of people that were evicted. Now, in a typical year in Toronto, between 30,000 and 40,000 households are evicted.

With such a dramatic increase in tenant evictions, there is a direct correlation between the rise in homelessness and changes to the evictions process. It is alarming that adjudicators were rewarded based on the number of successful evictions, under the Mike Harris system.

Obviously, the weakening of eviction legislation in Ontario would only effect the day-to-day operations of *Streets to Homes* in instances of rehousing. However, participants argued that the ease of evictions, inadequate social assistance rates, and tight restrictions on MHLTC-funded housing all contribute to the policy context in which the programme operates. That is, the persistence of homelessness can be traced to a lack of economic, psychosocial, and housing supports from the federal and provincial governments.

Streets to Homes as a Programme to Eliminate Homelessness in Toronto

It is clear that the City of Toronto adopted a Housing First approach to address homelessness because traditional services were not meeting the needs of the growing population that the neoliberal policy context created and continues to perpetuate. Although one participant in the expert cohort – a respected community activist – claimed that the City was motivated by gentrification, most other participants in this study overwhelmingly rejected this notion. However, it cannot be stressed enough, that this decision was a major departure for the City and service providers. Participants readily discussed *Streets to Homes'* implementation and its impacts on service delivery and, most importantly, those who are experiencing homelessness. These insights are now seen as crucial in understanding HF as an urban policy.

The Intensification of Visible Homelessness and the Rejection of the Continuum-of-Care Model

Influence of encampments. To begin, it is beneficial to explore in depth how participants saw the rise in homelessness as being a catalyst for the City to act. Whilst this rise

was seen throughout Toronto, mainly two encampments concerned the city. The most politically sensitive was Nathan Phillips Square, in front of City Hall, where 100-150 people slept each night. Respondents who saw this situation as being a catalyst for action felt that walking past people sleeping as they entered City Hall created a sense of urgency for Councillors and the mayor. An expert, who was involved in advocacy at the time, recalled the situation as follows:

> [T]here were 100 or 125 homeless people every night sleeping in Nathan Phillips Square. Many of them were there because, as you know, the architecture of the square is such that there is sort of a little bit of shelter, so if it was snowing or raining, you would be fairly dry, it wasn't great. There were also stairwells, so people would sometimes sleep in the stairwells going down to the underground parking lot. So, not only was there more homelessness, but actually it was more visible because it was right on the front doorstep of Toronto City Hall, and every politician - the mayor and every politician - had to walk by the homeless people every day in order to go to City Hall. It wasn't a problem that people could close their eyes and say, well, it's not really there, or they could drive around or they could do something; it was very, very visible.

A former City Councillor confirmed the mounting pressure, explaining:

> There have been attempts to deal with this street-involved homeless population in the downtown area, but there were some members of Council, especially on the right-wing, who used the presence of people sleeping around Nathan Phillips Square, in front of Toronto City Hall, as an indication that the City's attempt to provide shelter – if not shelter, then housing – was failing.

Another executive director, who was providing outreach to homeless women at the time, reported the Square being the initial focal point of *Streets to Homes*' efforts. She recalls this emphasis on the Square as having a significant impact on the population, as *Streets to Homes* staff asked long-time inhabitants to leave, and generally became more aggressive in getting people off of the streets. Agencies and experts frequently spoke negatively of *Streets to Homes* staff completing an *en masse* outreach and clearing of the Square in one morning, characterizing

it as a traumatic event. An executive director recalls that many agencies and activists at the time felt that the people sleeping in the Square were either housed or went to more secluded areas.

For the executive directors and experts participating in this study, the situation in Nathan Phillips Square was unanimously cited as the catalyst for *Streets to Homes*. However, City officials also pointed to "Tent City": a semi-permanent encampment of approximately 100 people on industrial land on the waterfront (see Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto). For a deeper discussion of Tent City, refer to the memoire of Bishop-Stall (2004). According to one senior official, resolving the issue with Tent City was seen as Toronto's first instance of HF, as residents were given rent supplements and immediately moved into housing after the City deemed it necessary that the land be cleared. The importance of Tent City was explained by this official as follows:

> [E]veryone knew they needed housing, and the folks that were living in Tent City, the average length of time they'd been homeless was 8 ½ years. Some of them had come out of shelters. What the City was saying, "well if you want services, you've got to go into a shelter," and they said, "we don't want a shelter; we want a place to live." So, we created a special housing programme for the residents of Tent City, and they got a rent supplement to essentially permit them - or, more importantly, to enable them - to move directly into housing from the streets. I would say to you, that was the beginning of Housing First in Toronto.

It was the learnings from that *ad hoc* initiative that prompted the creation of *Streets to Homes*, this official suggested.

Influence of *Pathways to Housing*. Some ambiguity exists surrounding the origin of Housing First in Toronto. A City official contends that the *ad hoc* Tent City programme was the sole foundation for *Streets to Homes*, and that the City was not aware of the HF philosophy or the *Pathways* programme in New York. Many other participants offered accounts that disputed this. Four executive directors reported a direct relationship between *Pathways* and *Streets to*

Homes, ranging from Toronto drawing on the research of Sam Tsemberis – *Pathways*' founder – to City staff going to New York for tours and meetings with their counterparts. One expert suggested that the influence of the New York experience was more overt, with Tsemberis and other policy makers being frequently invited to speak at meetings and conferences in Canada:

> I think some really powerful influential players, including Philip Mangano, and this fellow named Sam Tsemberis, who were like, he's done TED talks, really powerful, engaging speakers. They were beginning to be invited to Canada very, very frequently to national-type conferences on mental health, or housing and homelessness, but also by city mayors and their housing and shelter staff, and I think they had a huge influence. It felt to me like it was done very secretly. It felt like we heard about those people coming to town after they'd come to town and left, with the exception of conferences which we would see them as keynote speakers, and I think they had a really powerful impact.

Perhaps the best resolution to this ambiguity comes from another expert`s suggestion that whilst it is possible that City staff were not directly drawing on the New York experience as they conceptualised *Streets to Homes*, the ideals of HF were becoming a part of the discourse on homelessness, thereby influencing their decision-making:

> It's hard to say, because you know how sometimes you'll learn things without really noticing, and suddenly the idea is in your head and you come up with it as a new idea. So I can't say for certain what motivated them to actually put people into housing instead of just like, drag them off and dump them in shelters. They most certainly tried to adopt something similar to the Pathways model in New York.

Questions surrounding existing services. Whilst participants offered differing accounts of the influence that *Pathways to Housing* had on Toronto, both executive directors and City officials reported there being a realization at the time that the traditional continuum-of-care approach was inadequate, especially in light of the situations at Tent City and Nathan Phillips Square. City officials described a system of

outreach services that were only meeting basic survival needs, and a shelter system that was filling with chronic users who were not deemed 'housing ready':

> [I]t became increasingly clear that in order to stop more people from getting into that cycle of homelessness, of severe homelessness and fragility – because they were living outside and they were continuing through hot and cold weather, to stay in a very precarious and fragile health situation – that the way to stop it was to, first of all, try to eliminate further people from getting into that lifestyle, and secondly, trying to deal with the people who were already there. So there was a real concern to kind of do an intervention that was an intervention that secured long-term housing, rather than temporary housing that turned into long-term housing. So the shelter system, at that time, was overburdened; for a lot of older people, it felt dangerous; for some younger people, it also felt dangerous. So they were opting for this other alternative. What we discovered through our counts was that people were living on the street longer and longer periods of time, and never coming in.

One City official described the outreach services being offered as merely addressing issues of survival, with little to no case management being offered:

> [W]e had outreach programs that were going around the city, opening up the back of their vans and tossing out soup, sandwiches, tents, sleeping bags… that was our approach. Although they were doing a lot of crisis work, we weren't really getting to know who was on the street, what their needs were, and assisting them to get off the street. [...] We had to know the number of people who were experiencing homelessness and what their needs were around housing. We had to develop some change management in the outreach sector, so instead of just giving out those survival supports, we actually wanted them to go out and provide some case management and come up with a unique housing plan with each individual that they were working with.

This official acknowledges that the changes in how the City funds outreach (i.e. no longer funding the dispensation of sleeping bags, etc.) was initially seen as an attempt to 'clear the streets'; they claim, however, that agencies now see the utility in focusing on rapid rehousing:

> When it started, people thought we would clear the streets, or take them to jail, or scare them all out of the downtown core, and that's not what's happened, so I think over time, our partners have

> developed trust with us, and know that we're just working hard to get better outcomes for the people that we're working with.

Whether or not there is universal agreement on this is unclear, as one senior manager of a west-end agency lamented the discontinuation of outreach vans and the ability of agency staff to build relationships with those on the street.

> [A]ll of our services now are tied to the drop-in or some other kind of programme, not to the community outreach, we don't have any community outreach, so that limits our ability to bring people into the programme, perhaps people who are most vulnerable, because they're not just going to come to the drop-in. So we see folks with really serious mental health issues who are very isolated and I've learned over the years the best approach is to build a relationship with somebody like that - it takes a long time - and then you can kind of bring them into the services. Start that way, that is kind of what *Streets to Homes* does I guess but, as I mentioned, the loss of that outreach funding with all of the agencies, you kind of lose that community approach to outreach and connecting with people.

An executive director acknowledged that there has been a recognition that many shelter residents would be able to maintain housing within a model with adequate wrap-around supports:

> [S]helters are complicated places, and we recognize that the majority of people who live in the shelter system today are capable of maintaining housing if the proper supports are in place. So I think the goal is to move away from *de facto* shelters as housing, and move towards housing as the principal means of working with the homeless people who have histories of homelessness, or dealing with the challenges that lead to homelessness.

The Disconnect Between Supports Offered and Population Served

Appropriate versus actual clients. Despite the acknowledgment of HF's efficacy, there is a feeling that the persistence of homelessness in Toronto should be seen as an indication that Housing First programmes should not be a municipality's sole response to homelessness. Indeed, even a senior official cautioned against a heavy focus on the chronically homeless, to the detriment of other programmes, such as eviction prevention:

> [I]f you don't also deal with people who are being evicted and becoming homeless, you don't deal with prevention. This is amazing: Federal governments, homelessness partnering strategy, you're not permitted to deal with prevention, you can't fund prevention measures. Well, c'mon! We'll pollute the stream but let's make sure before it goes into the lake that we're not letting the pollution in… so, prevention is where [addressing] homelessness starts, because at some point everybody's got a place to live.

Although *Streets to Homes* has housed many people, the majority of agencies reported that their day-to-day operations have not changed, and that the demand for their services have remained constant. Two explanations were given for why this is the case. First, as is discussed in greater detail below, *Streets to Homes* clients remain street involved and engaged with services such as drop-ins. Second, a pronounced critique of the programme is that it only works for a high-functioning segment of the population. An executive director describes the type of client for which the programme is well-designed:

> The Housing First policy works with a particular type of homeless person. That homeless person generally hasn't suffered any kind of mental health trauma. [...] By the way, all of these guys tend to have been married, they're not this kind of single and on-their-own, there's been some kind of break down due to economic trauma - and Housing First comes along. Let me take a step back: sometimes they find themselves at Seaton House; so they've got nowhere to go. They've run out of money. [...] Somebody will say, you know what, this is the perfect person for the Housing First policy. They've had a home before, [..] and then they sort of attempt to find work, usually that doesn't happen because all of their skills are obsolete, so they spend the rest of their time on some kind of variation of OW, which they remain on until they find some low-paying horrible work or they remain forever unemployed. [...] So, on the whole, that's the kind of person Housing First works perfectly for. But that's only about 10-15% of the homeless population.

Paradoxically, the targeted nature of the programme is such that this appropriate type of client is often missed. Instead, evidence suggests that the programme engages with people with much less psychosocial functioning, as one expert portrays[2]:

> There's actually a lot of discrimination within the whole focus on Housing First, because it's "housing first" for all these people and "housing last" for all these other people, that's essentially how I summarize it. So it's like, housing last if you're a family with kids, or housing last if you're a senior citizen, or housing last if you're a person who's HIV-positive in a shelter. But you know if you're in that category of what people consider as disturbed, or causing trouble on the street, addicted or mental illness, then you fit the criteria of Housing First.

Questions of service and the population targeted. Executive directors and experts stressed that, if the City was going to attempt to offer services to people with such complex needs, then the level of wrap-around supports needs to be increased. Speaking to the level of supports clients receive after being housed, a senior manager of an agency's housing resettlement programme spoke of an incident in 2007-2008: approximately 200 *Streets to Homes* clients were housed in one large complex in the outer core, with the assurance that adequate supports would be provided. This was not the case, and all of the tenants were eventually evicted due to excess violence, property damage and drug activity. Other participants pointed to this situation as being an early failure of the programme. However, the fact that participants overwhelmingly pointed to the question of supports after housing suggests that the broader issue remains problematic. On the other hand, when frontline workers were asked about the supports they offered their housed clients, they reported being readily available for multiple years after housing occurs.

[2] It must be recognised that these comments were made well before the City released the Shelter Strategy (City of Toronto, 2015).

An executive director of a healthcare service had more profound critiques of *Streets to Homes*' ability to support the majority of the homeless population who have mental health issues or have experienced trauma. In their opinion, HF is based on normative assumptions around being housed, maintaining your housing, keeping personal hygiene, etc. Their clients repeatedly lose their housing due to the lack of supports that would be needed to foster the skills embedded in these assumptions. The participant explained how the transition from the street into housing, especially through a Housing First model, can be difficult:

> What it means to get yourself well, in every regard, is a skewed one, because: imagine you have been living on the street for 40 years, and all of a sudden we develop a policy that says, "let's adopt a Housing First model," and you find yourself in an apartment, you find yourself having to think about what it means to pay rent, to clean yourself every day, to maintain an apartment. All of those things are not value-free, and often times what Housing First policy fails to take into consideration enough is the reasons people are homeless are rooted in a variety of psychosocial dynamics that the system also has to pick up. So, what we find in terms of the people we deal with is they will all have been housed an average of 5 times in their lifetime. They're in, they're out. They're in, they're out. And the reason is, they're finding it difficult to cope with what it means to like, *live*. To pay your rent on time. To go shopping every week. To bathe yourself. To take care of yourself. All of those things say something about how you value 'self'. Among this population, that language is a different one.

This executive director extends the argument in describing the nature of supports *Streets to Homes* clients currently receive:

> At times, what a Housing First policy does is it makes certain assumptions about what it means to have a home and to cope in that home. So what Housing First policies try to do - because they all recognise that is the case - is they try to provide interventions at key times when people are about to lose their home, so perhaps you have a crisis intervention where a psychiatrist comes in and gives you a coping skill at the moment of crisis, to cope with that crisis but to keep you in your home.

This participant went as far as to question how rehousing is accounted for in *Streets to Homes*' measurement of success, after repeatedly seeing clients having to be rehoused after eight months, suggesting that, "the success rate of *Streets to Homes*, I think those numbers are slightly skewed, because it doesn't ever count who doesn't stay, it only ever counts who enters. Of course, everybody enters, everybody walks through the door; nobody stays." Data obtained from the City corroborates this sentiment. As Table V.1 shows, almost a third of housing events in the past 3 years were rehousing events. A housing event is simply an action by the City to place a client in housing. It is noteworthy that, in assessing why the size of Toronto's homeless population has not decreased, a senior City official mused that part of the issue is not being able to house the segment of the population with the most complex needs. This undoubtedly contributes to the assertion amongst service providers that their daily operations have changed little since *Streets to Homes* was implemented, and likely explains why new housing events have decreased despite the steady increase in homelessness (City of Toronto, 2013).

Year	Total Housing Events	New Unique Individuals (First time housed by program)	Re-housing Events
2014	424	257	167
2013	477	326	151
2012	607	407	200

Table V.1 - Housing Events 2012-2014. Source: personal communication with the City.

Others' observations concur with the argument that *Streets to Homes* is targeted to a specific cohort of the population. A senior manager suggests that *Streets to Homes* is heavily focused on outreach downtown, neglecting the outer core:

> It's also very focused on visible homelessness downtown, so I think for people who are experiencing homelessness in the outer core, or people who are not visibly homeless, I don't know if their experience is any different because the service is not necessarily accessible to them. So that was a frustration for us, I think *Streets to Homes* addressed that a little bit by having their community partnerships, but it took a while to get that rolling. So we had people staying in the

> Humber River Valley, and people staying in garbage rooms in apartment buildings in the outer core, and I couldn't refer them to *Streets to Homes* because they were very focused downtown, so for some people, it didn't make any difference.

Another expert offered a less controversial view and suggested that the programme is too targeted as a matter of policy priority:

> The final thing I would say is that, if it's an effective programme model, if it's working, then some of the early research they did says that they need to go to scale. So, it shouldn't be a boutique program. If it works, every person who experiences homelessness for any significant amount of time should have access and should be a priority. All of them.

If the methodology works, they suggested, then services need to be available for everyone who experiences homelessness. This suggestion would require a much more robust housing policy than what exists now.

The intersection of homelessness and trauma. During the course of the interviews, the question of how *Streets to Homes* supports clients who have survived psychological trauma was repeatedly raised, particularly by executive directors and senior managers in the west end of the downtown core. Several agencies in this community spoke with each other in 2013, discovering that, between them, 52 unique clients died in that year. This number was a very significant increase over previous years. The majority of the individuals who died were housed, yet still street-involved (it is important to recognize that participants were unable to say how many were housed by *Streets to Homes*). Suicide, overdose, and other health problems generated by a lack of self-care, were the most common causes of death, leading participants to speculate that issues related to isolation and past trauma led to these deaths. As one executive director said,

> [W]ith the learnings we've had from these deaths, we're throwing up a bit of a yellow flag, a caution about Housing First may be the right thing, but it's certainly not the only thing that should be done, or you may end up with a much worse situation, and it comes down

> to… sure, maybe housing gets people off the street, but what we're actually more interested in now is what keeps people alive, and I'm not sure housing is keeping people alive. We have a real concern that maybe it's the nature of the housing people went to, without adequate supports.

Poor housing and a lack of appropriate supports may lead to premature deaths among rehoused individuals who have experienced psychosocial trauma. Participants reported that the experience of trauma is extremely widespread amongst Toronto's homeless population. However, the trauma that is endured by homeless youth and women particularly affects their experience of homelessness.

Service issues for youth and women. Given that the experience of homelessness is different for people under the age of 25 (Karabanow, 2004) and women (Martin & Phillips, 2013), it was important to sample service providers that work with these populations. For both groups, participants had reservations about rapid rehousing, and a total dismissal of the continuum-of-care model. A senior manager of a large youth shelter stressed that youth often lack the life skills necessary to maintain housing, and this is often underappreciated in the HF literature. This participant describes the necessity of strong supports when housing youth:

> Our sense is that you can put a young person in a house, but there's lots of issues around isolation, loneliness, there's issues around life skills, connection to the community; many of our youth have no safety net in terms of families because their relationships with family members has disintegrated by the time they end up in a youth shelter. [...] So it doesn't really work if three months later they're back in our shelter because of those kinds of reasons.

This participant also noted that training for these skills must be accessed through either more intense follow-up or longer stays in shelters and/or transitional housing.

A housing provider for women also saw transitional housing as being key in addressing behaviour challenges that prevent women from maintaining housing:

> [S]helters and transitional housing, in our opinion, is really a vital part of the continuum of helping people get permanent affordable housing. [...] [D]irectly from the street to permanent housing has some serious flaws in it for a lot of the women that we deal with. In other words, we don't think they're sufficiently prepared for permanent housing, and the level of support that is required for them to be successful in permanent housing is very high.

Two other participants noted that the outreach model *Streets to Homes* employs fails to account for the fact that women's homelessness is often more hidden. Due to safety issues, women are less likely to be outdoors, instead relying on family and friends for temporary accommodations. Furthermore, a participant with experience doing outreach with street-involved women relayed that the difficulty lies in building trust and relationships with clients. They questioned the extent to which this is accounted for in HF:

> A lot of the reason for women's homelessness may be violence or partner violence, or family violence of some form or another, which, maybe, doesn't take the same path as people who are ending up on the street. So women may end up in violence against women shelters, which may sort of have a different stream of access to different kinds of housing. [H]aving worked with women for a really, really long time, that model of: say, I meet you on the street and I'm like, "Hi! I've got housing for you!" It doesn't work as well with women who need a bit more relationship building, and trust building. [...] It would be much longer in terms of building up that trust where they would connect with us, and then allow us to show them housing.

It is evident that all stages of the HF model fail to account for the hidden nature of women's homelessness, the higher demand for trust-building and the need for stronger supports. It is the question of adequate supports after the client has been housed that are foundational to participants' critique of *Streets to Homes.* The fact that these concerns are acknowledged, if not overtly shared by City officials should be both a validation of their authenticity, and cause for concern; the implicit recognition is that the programme is ill-equipped to fulfill its mandate.

Operational Issues

City officials, executive directors, and experts all offered observations of *Streets to Homes* that went beyond the question of service and spoke to how the programme is executed. These insights admittedly have little currency with the state of the HF literature. They do, however, offer insights into HF programme development.

Funding cuts to service providers. Executive directors expressed two concerns over how Toronto's embrace of HF has affected the funding they receive from the City. First, City operating grants to large outreach and housing programmes were withdrawn as the City began to offer these programmes through *Streets to Homes.* In contrast to the City's assessment of previous outreach programmes, some executive directors feel that agencies were better able to meet clients' needs by distributing survival necessities and building relationships that ultimately led to a person being housed. Now, with staff being tied to services like drop-ins, as opposed to being mobile, there is a decreased ability for agencies to build those relationships or respond to individuals in crisis, as described by a senior manager of a west-end agency:

> The outreach has really changed, so in the past, there were a lot of people who went out, and the focus was really on relationship-building, and also basic needs safety. So people gave out sleeping bags and socks and sometimes food. There were a lot of different programmes, some in vans, people on foot, and almost all of them are gone, the city-funded ones are gone. There are some that run out of community health centres, and they're funded differently so they still exist. Then there's this real movement to not giving things out to people that make it easy for them to stay on the streets, and I understand the logic behind that, but there's some people who just aren't leaving the streets, and we want to make sure that they have what they need, are warm enough and have food, that sort of thing. So it was hard to see all that go.

Another senior manager commented on how outreach become more institutionalized, perhaps making it harder to reach vulnerable people:

> Outreach workers in a neighbourhood connected to community-based organizations really form a conduit of information and relationships, and to sort of remove that and have it be a city public service, outreach workers look completely different and they wear vests and t-shirts that say City of Toronto, it's just a different vibe.

Second, there is the concern that grants are not adequate to cover costs, especially in a context where *Streets to Homes* clients continue to be street involved and heavily reliant on social services. Two participants commented that their funding has been frozen. According to one executive director, "Our funding from the city has not improved, at all. We get about $180,000 to operate a centre 7 days a week, 365 days a year; it's ridiculous." Another commented that funding for a small eviction prevention programme fails to account for administration costs:

> I don't know what the funding was before for the outreach programme, but it's really basic. The City doesn't give a lot for administering programmes or managing programmes, it's very basic kind of budget, but we're still happy to have it, it's a very useful programme, helps a lot of people.

Executive directors' frustrations were levelled at the City. However, it is important to note that a City official explained that the federal government's mandate that the majority of Homelessness Partnership Strategy funding be allocated to HF programming has limited the flexibility to fund other initiatives.

Service coordination. Connected to the issues with funding, some executive directors conveyed a frustration within the sector around the City's decision to run *Streets to Homes* itself, instead of putting it out to tenure. Although this frustration could simply be driven in part by a sense of territorialism, one third of executive directors and one City official expressed concerns that *Streets to Homes* staff do not coordinate services with the community. A City official describes the programme's initial service delivery, and the lack of an integrated solution:

> One of the final things I would say about, "do we have enough resources?" is that we don't work well with each other. So, for example, if I had a complaint about the *Streets to Homes* initiative, it was that in the beginning what they began to do was to put everybody into the same place, once again. That, of course, was Dundas / Sherbourne. It took a while for me to figure out that everyone was going into 155 Sherbourne, or Dundas / Sherbourne. They were just being, in a sense, warehoused in a different facility, with TCH[C] having no wrap-around services. One of the things I've been saying to TCH[C] for quite some time is they too need to be something other than just landlords. So, in some cases, landlords is fine; but in other cases, you really need supportive housing. So trying to figure out what their spectrum is, as well, is terribly important. [...] The pendulum swung way too much about just getting any space would do, and warehousing people in shelters, and not enough into an integrated journey down a road to permanent and stabilized housing.

A participant active in the drop-in sector commented that their centres could have been given a bigger role in delivering a HF programme, given the centrality of the role they play in people's lives. Many of the executive directors interviewed referenced the 2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework (City of Toronto, 2014b) as being key in shaping their relationship with the city going forward. Another participant who is involved with the *Out of the Cold* programme commented that *Streets to Homes* staff do not perform outreach at their programme sites. This is noteworthy given that many *Out of the Cold* guests have been banned from shelters and are particularly street involved.

One senior manager of an agency with multiple services argued that the City's staffing model itself was poorly designed. They argued that separating outreach, housing placement, and housing retention into three roles creates a disconnect in the relationship between the client and the service. Their agency runs a smaller HF programme and suggests that, for the sake of continuity and relationship building, clients are better served when a single staff member provides all three services.

Well resourced. Participants were quick to credit the City with resourcing the programme well, despite the shortcomings of service coordination. The quality and quantity of front line staff was particularly cited as a strength. Indeed, an official with the programme reported that staffing levels were "Cadillac", facilitating a thorough understanding of the city's homeless population and engagement with the majority of the individuals who are on the street. Participants from all three cohorts contributed to an understanding that the programme has assembled a well-paid and committed staff that is flexible in meeting client needs. An expert and an agency manager also credit the City with establishing the *Streets to Homes Assessment and Referral Centre* on Peter Street (see Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto), a permanent facility that offers respite from the streets, a point of entry into the programme, and forty beds for those who are waiting to move into housing. The expert explained that such centres are gaining traction in terms of HF best practices.

Participants also credited the City's leveraging of partnerships with certain social housing providers and private landlords as being a strength of the programme. Many participants expressed the sentiment that programme clients likely have access to the resources they require, given that they have the weight of a City-run programme behind them. One expert saw the City's arrangement, that *Streets to Homes* clients' eligibility for provincial social assistance (*Ontario Works* or the *Ontario Disability Support Program)* will be assessed immediately, as being the most important component of the programme as it facilitates rapid rehousing.

The City should be credited with facilitating these expedited assessments for social assistance. They do, however, speak to an undercurrent of privileging that has been evident throughout this discussion of *Streets to Homes* service issues. Funding decisions have privileged this programme over others, and findings here show that the programme is better able to respond

to the needs of segments of the homeless population more so than others. One is, again, reminded of the expert's assertion that, if the HF model works, it should be universally available to the entire homeless population. It is, however, clear that such an expansion would require fundamental changes to the programme, as well as the social policies its success hinges upon.

Streets to Homes' Role in the Regulation of Space

Despite being unable to fulfill its mandate of "eliminating homelessness" in Toronto (City of Toronto, 2005, 1), *Streets to Homes* is central to the City's efforts. It has therefore had a profound, yet wholly uneven, impact on how homeless and previously homeless people interact with public space.

The Need to Hide

For a segment of the homeless population, the presence of *Streets to Homes* outreach creates the desire to be more secluded as to not be engaged in a housing plan. Often having more complex mental health and addictions issues, these people will either hide in the Don River Valley, or move to areas of the City that are not heavily patrolled by outreach workers. According to a City official, outreach workers are actively avoided in some cases:

> [A] few of those people may hide from us more than they did in the past, they may be deeper into the Don Valley, they may be harder to find, but it's not the majority of people that we work with. [...] Some folks run from us when they hear about us.

An expert explains why people feel the need to hide:

> [T]he agencies that work with homeless people, especially mental health agencies, said it was harder for them to get a hold of people, it was harder for them to access people to provide services and supports. [...] But when you're dealing with a group of people who may have mental health issues, and then they begin to worry that if they see a police officer coming, the police officer is going to arrest them, they're going to drive them away, or something like that, people will try to hide or become less visible.

The aversion to contact with outreach workers seems to be partly driven by the aggressive approach used to engage with homeless individuals. In describing this approach, one manager of a multi-service agency that includes permanent housing told of a resident who panhandled, despite being housed. Under the outreach that was expanded in 2008 to target precariously-housed panhandlers, staff vigorously targeted this individual - visiting their residence - to the point where he felt harassed. Particularly concerning is the observation that those with severe mental health issues - arguably the most vulnerable and most likely to be chronically homeless - tend to avoid engaging with *Streets to Homes* outreach workers. Whilst some participants argued that outreach was too aggressive, others argued that this element was actually a strength of the programme. As one executive director stated,

> Any service outreach-based is always a good thing by me, where you attempt to meet people where they're at, as opposed to bring people into where you're at. I really couldn't care less what the service is; that always works for me, and it always works for people. *Streets to Homes*, without a doubt, is - in my opinion - a case-in-point for me, because it is able to get guys to access their service in a way that no other service can, because it doesn't ever ask them to go to an office, it meets them wherever they're at.

Active Displacement

The decreased visibility of homeless people due to hiding is just one element of the overall displacement of the population in Toronto. *Streets to Homes*, as an entity, does have a displacement policy. A senior official explained that people who establish an encampment will be visited by outreach staff. If the inhabitants refuse to engage, the City will clean up the site:

> We now have a policy where we will go to an encampment that we find, let's say in a park, and we will engage people living in an encampment. [...] We'll engage them, and say, "we're here to provide you service, and this is what we can offer; so, will you work with us on a housing plan?" Depending on their answer to that, and if they're willing to work with us, we'll let them stay there until we can find them a place to go. If folks say, no they're not interested, and don't

> engage with our teams, after a period of time we will work with the parks department - or the transportation department, if it's under a bridge - and actually go in and clean up the site. We'll go there many, many times before that happens, but we will also be there the day it gets cleaned up. But the goal is that, it's not good enough to allow people to live outside.

The official claimed that a 'clean-up' only occurs after several attempts to engage, and that staff are present on the site when crews dismantle the encampment, giving the impression that such actions are done with great care. However, one expert reported that "there were other homeless encampments around the City where the police came; in one case, there were bulldozers and police on horses, it was like a military operation sweeping in," suggesting these events do not always account for the complexities of the situation. Unfortunately, the police officers who were interviewed did not relate any experiences of clearing an encampment.

Streets to Homes' operations are just one way that participants see the homeless being displaced from urban space; policing and the enforcement of the *Safe Streets Act* has had an even more profound impact. For some experts, the fundamental disconnect in Toronto`s response to homelessness is the juxtaposition between the progressive foundation of HF and policies such as the banning of sleeping in Nathan Phillips Square, and the use of police enforcement to regulate urban space. One participant argued that the *Safe Streets Act* serves to explicitly displace homeless people, as they constantly have to stay mobile to avoid harassment and ticketing:

> We use policing not just to arrest people, but to harass them. So people who are downtown who might be visibly homeless are being displaced because they're constantly having the police come up and telling them they have to move on, the police are stopping and searching them or giving them tickets. So that's a very active thing that's wrong, but it's also a response to the fact that people phone up the police and say, "I'm afraid of that person, I don't like that person in front of my building, in front of my store." So what that has led to is pushing people that are homeless who are outside into more inhospitable places, maybe less safe places.

Evidence of this is found in the statistics of *Safe Streets Act* citations in Toronto: in 2000, the police issued approximately 700 *Safe Streets Act* tickets; by 2005, annual ticketing rose to 3600, and this increased to 15,000 in 2010 (O'Grady et al, 2011). These increases are despite the fact that panhandling has decreased, illustrating the point that law enforcement is based on the assumption that people are housed.

Many of these tickets are issued for so-called `lifestyle offences`, such as drinking or urinating in public. Participants were quick to point out that these offences occurred out of necessity, given that the individual lacks access to private space that would allow them to perform such acts legally. Moreover, the members of the police who were interviewed expressed an understanding that *Safe Streets Act* offenders are unlikely to have the capacity to pay their fines.

Despite the fact that the *Safe Streets Act* fines are seldom paid, police see the *Act* as being an important tool in controlling public behaviour and dispersing the homeless. However one senior manager argued that enforcement of this legislation amounts to social profiling:

> We have the Safe Streets Act, so people getting ticketed for panhandling, even though their activities may not be in violation of the Safe Streets Act, the police have this discretionary authority and use it to move people along and harass people. So I think it's a hostile relationship and people are, and continue to be, just at the mercy of the discretionary authority or power of the people who police either the public or private space. So the police and security guards are the gatekeepers, and there is less entitlement to use a public space for people who are homeless than there is for other residents and citizens. Even activities that are permitted for people who have a different social location in the space, for homeless people they're not. So people get moved along for sitting on a bench. Sitting on a bench is not a violation of the understood use of the space.

It is unlikely, they argue, that the *Safe Streets Act* will be enforced upon individuals who are not visibly street-involved or appear to be homeless. An affluent person would not be asked to move from a park bench, whereas street-involved individuals are routinely dispersed. This

conflicts with the perspective of the police in 52 Division (see Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto), who describe Toronto's enforcement of the SSA to be relatively lenient, when asked about the persistence of chronic homelessness:

> [M]oving someone from a storefront: well, if it's after hours, and the business is no longer open, if they're sleeping in that little doorway, we don't move them along. They're free to do pretty much whatever they want, as long as it doesn't interfere with businesses and impeding, say, people on the sidewalk, and forcing them out onto the street, or whatever. But it's pretty lax here, not like other places. I've heard other places, like Montreal, you're moved along. No ifs, ands, or buts about it, "you can't panhandle here". Maybe it's more accepted here in Toronto, I don't know if it's more liberal, I'm not quite sure. The question is, why does it seem like it remains more persistent in Toronto? Maybe we accept it.

It is notable that a senior City official acknowledged that dispersal occurs, without addressing the underlying causes of homelessness. For example, they remember the median of University Avenue (a 4-lane boulevard framing a long manicured garden) being used after Nathan Phillips Square was cleared:

> What I noticed was that, along the median on University Avenue, you started seeing people, or around this building. So people simply moved. I guess the equivalent I think of is wherever there is an activity, it might be some sort of illegitimate transaction going on that is happening in a particular area and authorities or a local community say, "we don't want that here," and they move it, push it away. The activity doesn't disappear, it just moves, because the underlying conditions that give rise to that activity aren't removed. So telling somebody that they can't sleep rough over here doesn't take away the underlying causes that lead them to sleep rough. It might change the physical location.

An assessment of the overall spatial implications of *Streets to Homes*, and the broader relationship between the homeless population and the urban landscape, is best encapsulated in one expert's observation that the implementation of *Streets to Homes* was simultaneously progressive and regressive in its attempt to limit access to space. Broadly speaking, the visibility of homeless people has changed in recent years. A police officer commented that the

movements of the homeless population have become more restricted, notably those of shelter users. In the past, shelter users vacated the shelter in the morning, and dispersed throughout the downtown core for the day. Now, it is more common for people to congregate outside their shelter, thus decreasing the overall visibility of the homeless, but increasing it in certain parts of the City - notably the Dundas-Sherbourne neighbourhood (see Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto).

Housing Placements, Isolation and Continued Street Involvement

The explicit displacement of homeless people by the *Safe Streets Act* and *Streets to Homes* policy is coupled with a further dispersal of *Streets to Homes* clients from the downtown core through their housing placement. This is due to the high cost and lack of availability of rental housing downtown. When asked where they place clients, a *Streets to Homes* housing worker did report that there is both public and private housing stock in the impoverished inner-city neighbourhoods of Parkdale and Dundas-Sherbourne. However, the majority of neighbourhoods cited were in the outer suburban communities. One executive director's depiction of people being housed exemplifies the housing situation that many *Streets to Homes*, and undoubtedly other previously homeless people, face:

> [P]eople who are isolated in those tiny units far away from us, sure they got housed, but now they are alone in that room, the size of this, with a toilet, sink and a bed. They're can't have friends over, they're not allowed to have anybody over, and they get incredibly lonely, and the demons come home to rest.

This situation has created two interrelated problems. First, a participant with intimate knowledge of Dundas-Sherbourne reported that the over-reliance on public housing stock in that community for *Streets to Homes* placements created a situation where buildings were not able to cope with an influx of tenants with high needs, due to a lack of support. Other participants

reported similar situations in other parts of the City. One manager, with experience working with impoverished communities in the north end of the City in the Weston neighbourhood (approximately 11km from the downtown core), reported that *Streets to Homes* clients, who were housed in the area, received little support to integrate into the community:

> So people are living in neighbourhoods they know nothing about, and living inside. One of the guys we have in Westin, he said, "I can't even stay in my apartment, I can't say inside." I said, well you could sleep on your balcony, that's always an option, you are free to do that. Or if you want to go back downtown, and come back up, and go back and forth, until you gradually get more comfortable, maybe you want to consider that. But it was this very suddenness of the move from one space to another.

An expert had therefore questioned *Streets to Homes*' overall commitment to community integration, which is central to HF. This expert's observation both demonstrates the need for this work to happen and questions the extent to which it is happening with *Streets to Homes*:

> [T]hey were taking people from downtown and putting them in Scarborough or Etobicoke, and people felt very isolated, which can be dealt with either by having people live closer to the city centre, or do that piece of work which is to help people integrate into the community. If you've lived yeeeears and your whole world is a group of people that you know and are very supportive on the streets, to be dumped in a building without any… you don't know anyone around you, you're nervous, you're lonely, you might be feeling guilty because, "why did I get housing and my buddies didn't?" So I think that was a problem early on, I don't know how they've addressed that, but it speaks to the nature of supports that people get, but also the question of choice.

Second, placement in the suburbs means little access to public transit, social services, or the client's established community. This is further aggravated by the cost of public transit and the lack of an affordable option for low-income households. As a result, clients are either isolated, or they are drawn downtown and remain street involved. Two executive directors of agencies that offer drop-in services report that many of their clients have been housed, but must

come downtown for supports. One of these executive directors described this phenomenon and its impact on success numbers:

> There's a difference between homelessness and people on the street. So in fact, many of the members downstairs now are housed, but they still come here every day and are still active on the street. So, in fact many of them are still sleeping rough, even though they have a place to stay, because it's isolated, it's in an area that doesn't have their friends, they can't have their friends in these very small units, [...] and they'll actually sleep out overnight down at Queen and Bathurst area. So, the actual technical homelessness numbers have actually gone down, thanks to *Streets to Homes*, but it hasn't eliminated at all the visibility of a lot of people on the street, so it's a bit of a wrinkle, I think, in some of the stats.

In extreme circumstances, these clients will maintain their housing, but sleep rough downtown to be nearer to available supports and their social network. Another agency manager reported that the lack of meal programmes and food banks in the suburbs necessitates people traveling from across the City to that particular downtown agency for meals:

> [T]here's a reason why all of these homeless people congregate down in the downtown core, and [...] there aren't soup kitchens, and there aren't enough food banks in communities that we have to… in some cases, we have to move guys out so far, they get some sort of affordable rent [...] that they have too far to walk, because the core issue of free transit for all homeless people has not been resolved. If they can move through the city without cost, then that would resolve trying to get to a food bank or a soup kitchen. [...] So there's a big reason why we have close to 1800 people coming for a meal, because most of those people are housed, and it's the only way they can get by.

A police officer confirmed there have been many cases of housed clients continuing their street behaviour after being "successfully" housed, responding to whether they could identify any change in homelessness after *Streets to Homes* was implemented:

> I've been on the other side where I've seen the homeless people get homes and taken off the street and have places to live, but I still see those same people who have a residence doing the exact same things that they were doing before they got their home placement. They still sleep on the street, they still do their panhandling, they still have their

> block that they run in; I know this, because I've been to their homes and assessed them for other reasons, and I'm like, "hey, what are you doing here?" and they're like, "well this is where I live." "I thought you're still on the corner of such-and-such?" "Well, that's where I work." So, the statistics on homelessness, I would say, are pretty extreme in terms of accuracy, I don't think they are as accurate as we think they are, because I do see them in their homes, but they're still on the streets. Do I see a change in homelessness? Yea, I've seen them in homes, but they are still continuing their regular behaviours, they still do what they do.

This officer's comments must be seen in the light of the entire narrative that has been presented here. The individuals that he is encountering remain street involved because they are isolated in their homes, because they lack the psychosocial supports necessary to integrate into the community and live independent, or simply because they live in extreme poverty and panhandle or rely on social services to survive in an environment of limited affordable housing and little social assistance. Put differently, understanding how *Streets to Homes* affects the experience of homelessness in Toronto means drawing connections between retrenched social policy, and limited psychosocial supports necessary to maintain housing, and a use of a hostile public space that has been simultaneously regulated and made necessary.

Chapter VI – Discussion: Understanding *Streets to Homes* through retrenchment, service issues, and revanchism

The purpose of this study was to move beyond the quantitative assessments of Housing First as a method of addressing homelessness, and to understand it as an urban policy - using Toronto's *Streets to Homes* programme as a case study. Through semi-structured interviews, twenty nine participants - City of Toronto officials and frontline staff, executive directors or senior managers of social service agencies, housing experts, and police officers – affirmed that Toronto's embrace of HF as a positive development. However, *Streets to Homes* is unable to fulfill its mandate of eliminating street homelessness in Toronto, as per the Strategy passed by City Council (City of Toronto, 2005) because of the social policy context within which it operates, and insufficient services for segments of the homeless population with complex needs. Participants' responses discounted the notion that the City adopted the programme as a part of a revanchist agenda. However, it does serve to tacitly regulate the homeless population's relationship with public space in light of these circumstances.

As the findings presented here indicate, *Streets to Homes* has created a nuanced policy and programmatic environment in the realm of homelessness and housing in Toronto. A critical urban epistemology (Boudreau, 2010) is rooted in the understanding that the urban experience is mediated by power relations. It is understood that one way power is exercised is through policy. This study's findings, summarised thematically in Table VI.1 (see page 120), along with the background material analysed, show that the experience of homelessness in Toronto has improved little since *Streets to Homes* was implemented in 2005. The lack of positive change is despite participants' nearly unanimous endorsement of the programme, which obviously points to the conclusion that its adoption was a positive development for the City. The policy and operational issues that have been identified point to a programme that is not achieving the

Summary of Responses (by Theme)

			HF policy				Service gaps				HF and space		
Role	Description	*(n)*	Lack of housing	Regional/ intergovern-mental issues	Social assistance	Poverty	HF cannot be "it"	S2H is well-resourced	Lack of wrap-around supports	Too targeted	Isolation	Active displacement	Housing geography
City official	Frontline worker, City official or Councillor	7	5	2	4	3	1	3	2	1	0	2	2
Expert	Housing policy authority, activist or academic	6	3	1	3	2	0	3	2	3	0	3	0
Executive director	Top-level management of social service agencies	12	4	3	2	2	2	4	8	4	5	1	2
Police officer	Law enforcement	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	27	12	6	10	7	3	10	12	8	5	6	4

Table VI.1 - Summary of Responses (by Theme).

objectives of ending street homelessness, especially if street homelessness is looked at broadly to include heavy street involvement and extreme poverty. The disconnect between a neoliberal governmentality - a reorientation of ethos and operations of government to facilitate capital accumulation (Larner, 2000) that fosters the regulation of urban space and retrenchment of the welfare state - and the philosophy and operation of Housing First - a premise of housing as a fundamental right and the principle of harm reduction (Gaetz, 2013) - is not only failing to address homelessness, it is also exasperating the daily experience of marginalisation on the street. This disconnect can be summarised as follows (Table VI.2):

Neoliberalism	Housing First
• Market-based solutions • Retrenchment of the welfare state • Revanchism • Deviance	• Housing as a right • Supporting community integration • Street outreach • Harm reduction

Table VI.2 - Comparison of Neoliberal and Housing First Tenets. Source: author.

Housing First in the Canadian Policy Context

This study's pivotal finding is that the lack of affordable housing, and needed supports, has ultimately undermined the City's capacity to realise the objectives of *Streets to Homes*. Retrenchment of social policy over the last 30 years, downloading of responsibilities to the City, and an urban policy discourse that emphasises competition is all at the root of this incapacitation.

The retrenchment of social policy

The work here serves to confirm that robust social policies are needed both to prevent low income households from becoming homeless and to assist those who are homeless to become securely housed. Respondents overwhelmingly confirmed Golden et al's (1999) and Layton's

(2008) observations that the incidence of homelessness in the City had increased in the decade prior to *Streets to Homes* being implemented[3]. 87.5% of respondents interviewed for this study made linkages between the rise of visible homelessness and the policies of the provincial and federal governments of that time, particularly the provincial Mike Harris government, which serves well to illustrate Boudreau et al's (2009) contention that neoliberalism affects the daily experience in cities as it shapes macroeconomics.

Participants' concerns about the inadequacy of provincial and federal programmes, such as income supports and mental health services, are rooted in the effects of the same neoliberal thinking that led to the withdrawal of housing policies. Scholarship that is critical of neoliberalism (see Harvey, 2006; Braedley & Luxton, 2010) abounds with descriptions of how notions of deviancy and personal irresponsibility galvanised neoliberal administrations to cut these types of programmes. Participants' discussion of the adequacy of income supports (as illustrated in Figure VI.1), both as a factor in the rise of homelessness and as an ongoing issue for housed *Streets to Homes* clients is particularly significant. As a participant illustrated in discussing the growing gap between market rents and social assistance rates (see Figure II.6), eligibility criteria and benefit amounts have not increased substantially since being tightened and reduced by Prime Minister Chrétien and Premier Harris (see Figure II.2).

[3] It is difficult to quantify these observations. Reliable, systematic counts of the homeless population only began with the 2006 *Street Needs Assessment.* Requests made to the City for the statistics on shelters' use from 1997 to 2010 went unanswered.

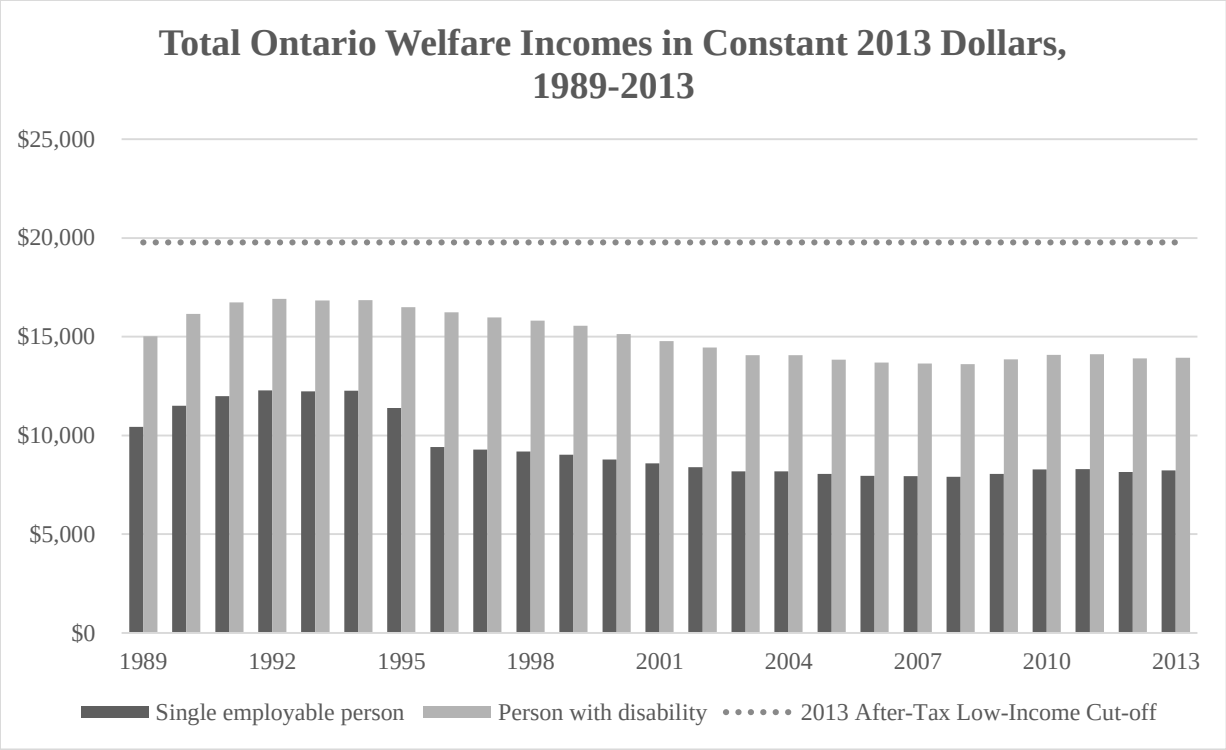


Figure VI.1 - Total Ontario Welfare Incomes in Constant 2013 Dollars, 1989-2013. Source: Tweddle et al, 2014.

At first blush, it is clear that the effects of roll-out neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002) are still being felt in Ontario if social assistance and Employment Insurance recipients are unable to be securely housed. However, a more nuanced discussion lies at the intersection between income supports and questions of quality of life for *Streets to Homes'* housed clients. It must be remembered that programme management and front-line staff unanimously reported that clients continue to panhandle in order to support their income. Not only does this phenomenon undoubtedly contribute to the continued street involvement that is discussed below, it also affirms issues of quality of life that McNaughton Nichols and Atherton (2011) raise. Inadequate income supports become a barrier to personal development and community integration when people must engage in survival activities such as panhandling. Of course, there is also the irony of neoliberal policies forcing marginalised people into public space to panhandle when neoliberal orthodoxy disallows such behaviour.

The capacity to ensure the availability of affordable, appropriate housing in which to place clients is the most critical requisite that is lacking. It would be easy to dismiss City officials' lamentations of the lack of provincial or federal housing strategies as an 'exercise in blaming' that has been commonplace in Canadian intergovernmental relations. However, participants' insights, policy trends over the past three decades (see Figure II.3), and the scholarly literature all suggest that this would be short-sighted.

Again, participants endorsed *Streets to Homes* as being a good programme overall. Those who were critical of its implementation or operationalisation still credited the City with having the best intentions and being the only level of government truly addressing housing affordability and homelessness. Policy developments show that this assertion is correct. Gaetz et al's (2014) findings that per capita federal spending on social housing has declined by almost half since 1989 (when adjusting for inflation) best encapsulates the situation. Whilst his analysis speaks to programmes that have been discontinued, Shapcott's (2008) findings that the Ontario government had a $1 billion gap between promised and actual funding for affordable housing in the years between 2001 and 2007 points to neglect at the provincial level as well.

It must be remembered that the funding Shapcott (2008) analysed was time-limited. Indeed, all of the funding programmes that both levels of government have announced since 1993 have been time-limited rather than stable and ongoing. The uncertainty surrounding the rent supplements available to some *Streets to Homes* clients typifies the effects of this situation. Although it is laudable that funding for these programmes are announced when a previous programme expires, the tenuous nature of these funds creates unnecessary anxiety. Coupled with the uncertainty of the longevity of the subsidy is the issue of their

scarcity. A *Streets to Homes* housing worker alluded to the subsidies as having an element of politics. Questions of which clients will receive assistance or how many subsidies will be allocated to *Streets to Homes* versus community agencies' housing programmes have become politically charged. The current context of very little construction of affordable housing lends itself to rent supplements being perhaps the most viable option when it comes to creating affordable housing. Yet, underfunding and a lack of long-term planning by the federal and provincial governments has created a climate where a sound policy option has been reduced to an *ad hoc* fix.

Of course, the utility of rent supplements is limited by vacancy rates in the rental market. Again, the vacancy rate for rental units in Toronto has dropped to 1.7% in recent years. The interrelated phenomena of low income households being priced out of the market and landlords becoming less tolerant of disruptive tenants can be linked to the contraction of the vacancy rate. Market forces dictate that limited supply will lead to increased rental rates, thus forcing middle income earners to compete with lower income earners. The 37.4% of Toronto renters who are in core housing need (CMHC, 2010) undoubtedly include households who would otherwise be considered securely housed if the rental rates had not risen by twice the increase in median tenant incomes (see Figure II.6), well above the overall rate of inflation (ONPHA, 2011). As segments of the rental housing stock that were traditionally the domain of lower income tenancies (rooming houses, bachelorettes, etc.) become more necessary for middle income earners who, it can be assumed, have higher psychosocial functioning, it is not surprising that landlords are becoming less tolerant of disruptive tenants. Of course, this phenomenon cannot be divorced from participants' concerns about the level of supports that clients receive after they've been housed.

The reliance on private rental stock by *Streets to Homes* is directly and unequivocally correlated to the lack of social housing. Shapcott (2008) details how social housing construction starts over the last three decades have gone from being 20,450 new units annually in 1982 to just under 4,400 new units as of 2006, which has been slowly climbing from a staggering low of around 1,000 new units in 1995. He goes on to estimate that the cancellation of federal and provincial housing strategies have resulted in the loss of 100,000 new social housing units over this span of time. Now, it must be recognised that *Streets to Homes* clients do have priority access to rent-geared-to-income (RGI) stock in the city, as do women escaping from domestic violence, and other specific populations. Data obtained from the City shows that 20% of *Streets to Homes* clients are placed in RGI housing, another 10% reside in RGI units with supports, and another 10% receive a rent supplement. However, a full 60% of housing events occur in the private market with no long term financial assistance. Surprisingly, the City does not keep statistics on rent-to-income ratios for these clients. One can however assume that the majority live in core housing need[4].

All of these factors have created two challenges. First, daily operations have changed little for service providers, especially for drop-ins and meal programmes. It is clear that this needs to be recognised by the City when they are allocating funds to agencies, although the City has indicated they have little control over funding allocation, due to the restricted nature of the funds. Second, it is short sighted to lay blame for the denial of the 'right to the city' (Marcuse, 2009) solely on the municipal government. Clients' placement in housing that necessitates

[4]Latest figures from CMHC (CMHC, 2014) show that the average rent for a bachelor apartment in Toronto is $899/month, meaning these clients may require an income of at least $2,700/month, or $16.88/hour full-time work, to avoid falling into core housing need. Although not impossible, most clients will not have this earning potential.

traveling downtown is undoubtedly linked to the lack of affordable housing anywhere. It would certainly be unrealistic to expect new affordable stock to be solely built downtown; however, new stock - be it public housing or privately-owned with tax incentives[5] - would create opportunities for more *Streets to Homes* placements in the core.

Downloading responsibilities

Federal and provincial governments' withdrawal from housing and other social policy areas was premised on the idea that they would become the responsibility of municipalities. Briefly summarised, political jurisdiction in Canada is the domain of sections 91 and 92 of the Constitution. The federal government retains responsibility of areas of 'national interest', such as the military, fiscal policy, and fisheries. In an effort to constrain provinces' political clout, the authors of the Constitution gave them jurisdiction over issues such as health, education, and social services. Although these divisions continue to exist, the complexities of modern governance means policy areas are now shared between both orders of government. The flowchart in Figure II.1 (see page 11) demonstrates how this is the reality for housing and homelessness programmes. For our purposes here, it is crucial to remember that provinces also have jurisdiction over municipalities. In other words, municipalities do not have Constitutional standing. The most salient result of this arrangement has been the limited ability of municipalities to generate revenue. It must be explained that the City of Toronto was granted additional limited taxation powers with the 2006 passage of the City of Toronto Act. However, these powers "were never intended to address the City's structural fiscal issues. The powers

[5] See Gaetz et al (2014) for a discussion of how tax incentives used to stimulate private rentals construction.

exist to help the City achieve its public policy objectives and raise revenues to deliver the municipal programs and services that would distinguish Toronto from other communities" (City of Toronto, 2007 as cited in Mascarin & Paulikot, 2007). The limitations put on City Council in terms of extra taxation powers surely stem from the neoliberal notion of the competitive city and the need to keep taxes low (Sassen, 2005). Even so, the City does have the ability to leverage rent controls to offset the impact of the rising costs of housing. For example, under the mayoralty of David Miller, landlords who made capital repairs to their properties were able to reduce their municipal taxes, instead of applying to the Province to raise rents above the prescribed rates.

The critiques that participants had about *Streets to Homes* were largely intergovernmental in nature. Harmes (2006) explains that downloading in federations, such as Canada, has been driven by an order of government's desire to be seen as attractive for investment. By downloading, or simply cutting, policy and programmes to lower levels of government, an administration can decrease its tax burden. Of course, if the receiving government does not have the ability to fund the policy and programmes, these programmes will likely be terminated or significantly reduced, which ultimately feeds into the neoliberal idea that social programmes should be minimised and needs should be met through market mechanisms (Connell, 2010).

The description of the resources available to *Streets to Homes* from the frontline worker typifies the effects downloading has had on municipalities in Ontario. The significance of a *Streets to Homes* employee vocalising that the programme exists to end street homelessness "without us and ourselves actually bringing those resources to the table" cannot be understated. The City finds itself in the position of being the government that is almost solely

responsible for providing direct services in the area of housing and homelessness, yet it has little capacity to fulfill this responsibility.

Equally interesting for our purposes here is the links participants made between intergovernmental coordination in the area of housing and homelessness, migration to Toronto, and the changing economy of Ontario. Given that social spending is particularly seen as a market-inhibitor (Harvey, 2006), it is little wonder that questions of housing security have been downloaded to the City of Toronto with little regard for how migration makes them regional in nature.

Neoliberal urban policy

It is important to recognise that cities are not immune from enacting overtly neoliberal policies. Indeed, Kipfer and Keil (2002) argue that Toronto was ensconced in revanchism and other neoliberal policies in the 1990s. These policies included the use of 'broken windows' policing, and the belief that undesirable behaviour on the part of marginalised people brings disorder to the community. The tenets of 'broken windows' undoubtedly influenced the conservative political pressure placed on Mayor Miller to address homelessness. The fact that the encampment in Nathan Phillips Square became a touchstone for conservative members of City Council is consistent with the idea that public space should facilitate the flow of capital (Smith, 1998, 2002).

A respondent's characterisation of *Streets to Homes* as being both a progressive and a punitive policy - i.e. banning sleeping in Nathan Phillips Square - typifies why the City of Toronto adopted a HF programme. In articulating 'roll-with-it' neoliberalisation, Keil (2009) suggests that policymakers have come to see the need to address social inequalities, but still

favour market-based solutions. The administration's decision to adopt a largely progressive policy that relies on elements of previous, revanchist thinking illustrates *Streets to Homes'* relationship to the policies of 'roll-with-it' neoliberalisation, which Keil (2009) sees as often having internal contradictions.

Issues Related to *Streets to Homes* Services

The migration of marginalised people to Toronto concretely points to the fallacy in downloading responsibility for housing and homelessness onto municipalities. An expert's depiction of how the lack of shelter beds in the neighbouring regional municipality makes Toronto the de facto service provider for the entire region illustrates the need for more intergovernmental involvement in a coordinated approach to homelessness that recognises the transient nature of the population. The current lack of such an approach, and the other policy issues discussed above, form the context in which *Streets to Homes* operates. Many of the service issues that participants identified are rooted in these circumstances.

Before beginning, it is important to address the question of loss of funding to existing social services after *Streets to Homes* was implemented. The knowledge gathered through this study's interviews suggest that Johnson et al's (2012) findings that traditional continuum-of-care programmes have faced funding cuts with the embrace of HF appears to be true in the Toronto context. However, this was due to outreach and housing programmes being taken over by the City, and run through *Streets to Homes.* Moreover, *Streets to Homes* is only 7.4% of the total budget for homelessness services, and the programme was initially funded through $1.5 million of pilot funding from the Federal government (personal communications with SSHAD employee, September 29, 2015); this seems to suggest that the implementation of *Streets to Homes* had the biggest impact on outreach and housing programmes being delivered by community agencies. In

the absence of data comparing outcomes for *Streets to Homes* and previous programmes, it would be impossible to offer definitive comment on participants' assertions that previous programmes were better able to build relationships, or that *Streets to Homes* outreach has become more institutionalised. These questions are worth investigating, however.

Poverty, isolation and street involvement

Executive Directors' concerns about reductions in City funding to their agencies largely stemmed from their contention that *Streets to Homes* had little impact on the volume of clients they assisted. Through its ban on funding for outreach vans and survival supplies, the City effectively made *Streets to Homes*, and crucially the HF model, its sole vehicle for responding to street homelessness. Respondents raised questions about the effectiveness of this decision, given the little change they have witnessed in their daily operations and service demand.

Despite a lack of change in demand for service providers, they have experienced decreased budgets; although *Streets to Homes* attempts to reduce service demand, it ultimately adds additional pressure to the system. Much of this stems from clients' continued reliance on agencies even after they have been housed. There are two sources contributing to this phenomenon: systemic policy issues, and the impact on the spatial movements of those experiencing homelessness. The pressure agencies face from housed *Streets to Homes* clients can be linked to issues of continued poverty and housing geography.

Spatially, these factors have translated into *Streets to Homes* clients traversing the City in order to meet their needs. Interestingly, whilst a common argument is that HF removes previously homeless people from City centres, this study has found that, due to a lack of supports, *Streets to Homes* clients often return to the downtown core for meals, community engagement, and other services. Without access to transit, many who are housed choose to stay

close to these services by sleeping outside. If we consider Marcuse's (2009) concept of the 'right to the city' to include the right to enjoy the urban experience *in place* - that is, in the neighbourhood one lives - and the right to security of person through urban policy, then it follows that the current level of supports available through *Streets to Homes* denies clients of their urban rights.

The inability to reach the 'hardest to house'

Although it was somewhat unsubstantiated, one expert's argument that *Streets to Homes* services are not available to those "with HIV or one leg" speaks to the broader concerns about the targeted nature of the programme. An interesting paradox arises when considering participants' opinions that *Streets to Homes* is too targeted, yet simultaneously is only well suited for a specific segment of the homeless population.

It is notable that two service providers, who work with older men, question *Streets to Homes*' ability to reach this population and assist them to maintain housing. Given that the Street Needs Assessment (City of Toronto, 2013) found that the number of respondents over the age of 61 has doubled to 10% of the population compared to 2006, this is a concerning observation to make. As the homeless population ages, and as economic trends force more older adults into homelessness, programmes will have to be tailored to meet the unique needs of this population. As a population ages, mental health needs increase in scope and complexity. It is likewise concerning that a senior manager at the City attributed the persistence of homelessness in Toronto to the segment of the population that *Streets to Homes* has difficulty servicing: those with the most complex mental health needs.

Streets to Homes and *Pathways to Housing* have different methods of intake; many *Pathways* clients are recruited from psychiatric institutions before they are discharged. Pleace

(2011) and Johnson et al (2012) argue that this practice reduces the likelihood that the *Pathways* programme will engage with those who are the 'hardest to house'. Whilst the difference in recruitment needs to be acknowledged, it appears that *Streets to Homes* also tends not to engage well with those who have complex needs. Indeed, this theme emerges again when participants argued that the programme is best suited for those who are housing ready. The one executive director's argument that *Streets to Homes* fails to account for the linkages between past trauma and the ability to maintain housing - based on normative assumptions of what it is to be housed - is further evidence of this.

Streets to Homes' inability to reach those who are the 'hardest to house', and crucially the inability to properly support housed clients who have complex needs, validates the critique amongst scholars (see Willse, 2010; Klodawsky, 2009; and McNaughton, 2008) and activists that HF programmes are merely vehicles to cleanse the urban core of homeless people and to engage in poverty management (McNaughton Nicholls & Atherton, 2011). McNaughton (2008), as cited in McNaughton Nicholls & Atherton (2011), argues that HF clients may transition out of homelessness, but they are not necessarily transitioning into meaningful lives. This sentiment was echoed by a senior manager at the City, who argued that improvement to income supports were needed.

Participants' concerns that there is little service coordination between *Streets to Homes* and community agencies could also be symptomatic of Johnson et al's (2012) argument that governments' uptake of HF has come at the expense of traditional continuum-of-care programmes. It is possible that the political weight behind *Streets to Homes* lead to a sense of an undue territorialism amongst its employees. However, as *Streets to Homes* was implemented and service gaps were identified, City staff have turned to community agencies to address these

shortfalls. Finally, the concern a senior manager of an agency raised about the staffing model at *Streets to Homes* is notable. Whilst there is robust literature on the types of HF interventions (see Stergiopoulos et al, 2014), research has not explored this particular question, and it is worth investigating.

Issues of past trauma and the question of adequate supports

The executive director's argument that HF is based on normative assumptions of housing success is based largely on their observation that housing instability is often rooted in experiences of trauma. Linkages between trauma, isolation, and premature deaths that west-end participants made point to how vital HF's commitment to community integration is. Indeed, Gaetz (2014) argues that HF clients' housing stability is compromised if this work is not done. Although he goes on to recognise that the extent to which it occurs depends on resource availability and other factors, it is notable that he includes recreational engagement as part of the process of integration. There is no evidence that *Streets to Homes* fosters recreational engagement. Again, it must be stressed that the participants who were concerned about the spike in deaths were unable to identify how many of the deceased were *Streets to Homes* clients.

Gaetz's (2014) argument needs to be extended to include 'purpose of living', which will ensure achieving the psychosocial determinants of health. If *Streets to Homes* housing supports are primarily focused on crisis intervention, as the same executive director suggested, it is little wonder that clients are not equipped with the resources to integrate into the community or transition into meaningful lives, as McNaughton (2008) found (as cited in McNaughton Nicholls & Atherton, 2011).

It can be assumed that these transitions are the most difficult for clients with the most complex needs. Instead of coupling the housing placements with appropriate supports that would address behavioural and lifestyle issues, and thus foster community integration, a frontline worker revealed that it is common for them to merely seek to avoid conflict by matching clients with landlords who can tolerate their behaviour. Stanhope and Dunn's (2011) charge that HF is based on reductive notions of 'success' is verified here. Rather than addressing underlying psychosocial issues, it appears that the City is still warehousing people. What is most troubling is that the Toronto *At Home/Chez-Soi* final report (Stergiopoulos et al, 2014) identified psychosocial supports as being a significant shortcoming of the HF model. Given that *Streets to Homes* works with the same populations, it is unacceptable that this situation is being addressed by relying on slumlords.

From a policy perspective, this speaks to Boudreau et al's (2009) description of neoliberal urban governance at its most intimate. Macro-economics is forcing vulnerable segments of the population into housing situations that are inappropriate because the necessary supports are not being made available. The result is a daily experience that undoubtedly is not much more secure than homelessness. The point here is not to deny the agency of formerly homeless individuals and determine their place in the housing market - something *Streets to Homes* staff appear to be doing - rather, the question is how to adequately support people to maintain housing.

Youth and gender

In sum, it is evident that entire *Streets to Homes* service model, from outreach to housing retention, is only successful for a sub-population of those who are homeless: a group that can be

loosely defined as men between the ages of 30 and 60 who have previously maintained housing and have little to no mental health or substance abuse issues. It was beyond the scope of this study to examine how *Streets to Homes* affects the lived experience of every sub-population; however, *Streets to Homes* is driven to reduce visible homelessness. O'Grady et al (2011) chronicle how visibly homeless youth were the target of much of the revanchist discourse in the decade prior to *Streets to Homes'* implementation, making it appropriate to examine how the programme interacts with youth. Conversely, the lack of attention to the less visible sub-populations, especially women, warrants their inclusion here. The concerns raised by the youth service provider echo those of Gaetz (2014). Whilst lamenting the scarcity of research that explores the efficacy of HF with youth, he too suggests that transitional housing, normally associated with the continuum of care model, is better positioned to assist youth with issues related to life development. Gaetz (2014) and the participant also agree that the lack of affordable housing and tightness in the private market leave youth vulnerable to discrimination from landlords when the HF programme is not coupled with housing stock. Regarding the experiences of homeless women, the disconnect between the style of outreach provided by *Streets to Homes*, and other HF programmes, and the hidden nature of women's homelessness. Here, participants echoed the consensus in the literature (see Martin and Phillips, 2013) that homeless women are seldom on the street, often out of concern for their personal safety. The need, therefore, exists for HF outreach efforts to be present in spaces that are safe for women.

Housing First and the Regulation of Space

The inappropriate housing of those with complex needs, and the failure to recognise the hidden nature of women's homelessness speaks to both policy issues - the lack of suitable housing - and the narrow services that *Streets to Homes* actually offers. To truly understand the cumulative

effects of these issues on the lived experiences of those who are homeless, it is important to ground research in the spatial reality of homelessness.

As with other aspects of *Streets to Homes*, its impact on the relationship between the homeless population and urban space is somewhat paradoxical. On the one hand, previously homeless people continue to be visible as they remain heavily street-involved, yet there are segments of the population who have become more isolated.

An expert reported that mental health agencies have experienced difficulty finding their homeless clients since *Streets to Homes* was established. The instance where *Streets to Homes* outreach workers were perceived as harassing a housed panhandler underscores both how these misconceptions can occur, and the dogged approach with which outreach happens.

The phenomenon of segments of the homeless population hiding in order to avoid contact with *Streets to Homes* outreach workers poses a question of service to those with the most complex needs. There is no evidence to suggest that this was an intended outcome of the programme; indeed, the charge that the City adopted *Streets to Homes* in order to disperse the homeless from the downtown core through housing placement is unfounded. As was discussed above, dispersal is largely a product of the limited supply of affordable housing. Overt dispersal clearly happens through enforcement of the *Safe Streets Act*. This study was not conceptualised as giving much credence to this legislation. It is clear, however, that it supersedes *Streets to Homes* as a primary method of regulating urban space. Participants overwhelmingly concurred with O'Grady et al's (2011) assertion that the enforcement of the *Safe Streets Act* amounts to social profiling and harassment. Again, DeVerteuil et al's (2009) argument that it is too simplistic to say that only urban spaces that were considered a refuge for homeless people were targeted and limited by the state is a valid one. It is true that some urban spaces have been

limited, but the effort to contain homelessness has created others. The police officer's observation that shelter users have become more likely to stay within the immediate vicinity of the shelter, as opposed to dispersing throughout the City during the day, is a testament to this. The *Safe Streets Act*, however, is a clear example of the want to limit access to public space. It does not contain any elements of 'poverty management' - however futile they are at addressing the underlying causes of poverty - because, as O'Grady et al (2011) demonstrates, the *Act* is so vague that merely being homeless could be considered illegal. The *Safe Streets Act* overlays *Streets to Homes* and any other outreach-based HF programme in Ontario. It creates a climate of fear and mistrust that undoubtedly perpetuates the issue of the need to hide. The fact that police see the *Act* as an invaluable tool in maintaining order is, at first blush, valid. Several participants argued that cutbacks in mental health services and de-institutionalisation that occurred in the 1990s compounded homelessness in Toronto. DeVerteuil et al (2009) go on to say that responses to poverty can include inappropriate geographies such as prison.

Peck (2005) points to there being a spatial dimension to the luring of the 'creative class'. There have been several instances of cities facilitating the gentrification of neighbourhoods that would be appealing to desirable residents, and other examples of public spaces being cleared of homeless people. In other words, the policy regime that Florida (2002) espouses employs the same revanchism and 'broken windows' policing that Smith (2002) and Peck (2006) describe. Given that these ideas remain a part of the policy discourse, it is little wonder that O'Grady et al (2011) found that the number of tickets issued under the SSA doubled between 2000 and 2010. Privileging the 'creative class' has not dislodged the notion of ridding homeless people from public space. Rather, the evidence that Peck (2005) and Sharp (2014) provide point to these practices continuing, despite being couched in far less overt language.

Equipping the police with the *Safe Streets Act* to deal with the fallout of policy changes that resulted in the current homelessness crisis is an example of the previous, more overt revanchist practices. The *Safe Streets Act* is embedded with the tenets of 'roll-out' neoliberalism (Peck and Tickell, 2002) and fosters order maintenance policing, which Sharp (2014) describes. At its core, HF works to address homelessness and its associated issues, such as addictions and mental illness. By doing so, HF rejects the neoliberal idea that those living in poverty are deviant, and embraces harm reduction. In contrast, the *Safe Streets Act* is firmly rooted in the discourse of deviancy and the commodification of space. From both a policy and operational perspective, *Streets to Homes* and the *Safe Streets Act* are in conflict. It thus becomes clear that a spatially-oriented, outreach-based programme like *Streets to Homes* cannot operate in conjunction with a spatially-oriented, revanchist policy like the *Safe Streets Act*.

There does exist a tension between the City and service providers over the decision to eliminate funding for outreach services as a means of not enabling street homelessness (City of Toronto, 2005). Whilst a City official argued that social service agencies are now in agreement with the focus on rapid rehousing, at least one senior manager expressed frustration at the discontinuation of these services, and their ability to reach those who are particularly vulnerable or in distress on the streets. It is noteworthy that the same official explained that city staff and funded agencies are directed to build a relationship with those on the street – to know their circumstances and service needs – by distributing "coffee and not much of anything else". It was this same individual who cited outreach workers' inability to offer housing immediately as being a significant flaw in the programme.

The decision not to fund the dispersal of survival supplies certainly invoke notions of Mitchell's (1997, 2003) contention that policies and programmes serving the homeless have shed

their overt revanchism of previous decades in favour of programmes that appear less punitive, but still create spaces where homeless people cannot exist. A disconnect seems to exist between the City's policy objectives, the availability of affordable housing, and the realities on the street. Whilst the policy objectives of ending street homelessness and shifting services to focus on rapid rehousing are valid, consideration must be given to the housing landscape. Without a supply of housing to immediately place people, and mechanisms to meet the needs of those who are in distress, *Streets to Homes* appears to be exemplifying Mitchell's (1997, 2003) argument. Again, it is important to stress that this research did not find credible evidence that *Streets to Homes* was intentionally devised as a mechanism to disperse the homeless from the downtown. Only one participant, a respected community activist, emphasised this as a motive, and only offered conjecture as evidence. However, it is clear that the broader policy environment, especially as it is propelled by the ideals of the global city, and public discourse still seek to limit homeless people's access to public space. The continued use of the SSA, and participants' accounts of the harassment endured by those who are street involved speak to this. The lived experiences of Toronto's homeless population are characterised by a denial of access to public space. Yet, the lack of affordable housing and/or income and other supports necessary to address housing security and poverty has led to the persistence of homelessness in Toronto, as well the need for those living in extreme poverty to remain street involved in order to meet basic needs. The lack of investment in affordable housing severely limits the capacity of any housing programme, HF or otherwise. However, participants' linkages between housing retention and mental health show that the question of ending street homelessness goes beyond new housing stock to include psychosocial supports to maintain housing, as well as financial supports to alleviate poverty. As long as governments fail to take a holistic approach, the City's capacity to

achieve its goal of ending street homelessness is ineffective. The result is a continued presence of homeless people in urban spaces that are defined by a revanchist discourse that permeates neoliberal urban policy. In other words, Toronto has not overtly adopted the new revanchist policies that Mitchell (1997, 2003) describes, but has done so tacitly due to the circumstances in which the City operates.

Understanding Housing First through Grounded Theory and a Critical Urban Epistemology

In articulating a critical urban epistemology, Boudreau (2010) argues that knowledge production must be a process rooted in the temporal and spatial contexts of the phenomenon being studied. Actors who are familiar with these circumstances are best able to provide insights into the primary objective of the inquiry – understanding how the exercise of power mediates the everyday experiences of what is being studied. For Boudreau (2010), power relations take on a particular significance in the urban context because of the heightened interdependencies between individuals who negotiate their geographically-situated relationships with one another. This epistemology has essentially been expanded, for our purposes here, to include Boudreau et al's (2009) contention that neoliberal urban governance is the intersection of macro-economics and everyday life in cities. That is, it is being argued here that a critically important exercise of power, which influences the urban experience, manifests itself through public policy. This is particularly the case for marginalised populations who rely on the ameliorating capacity of social welfare. *Streets to Homes* epitomises the capacity of social policy to dramatically influence the quality of life for clients; the depth of case management that is offered, the quality of the housing that is obtained, and the attention that the programme pays to questions of community integration are all ways in which the programme exercises agency over its clients. However, it has been clearly demonstrated here that the programme operates within structures that limit its own

agency. Boudreau (2010) argues that arriving at an understanding of these dynamics requires a researcher who is geographically removed from the phenomenon to suspend preconceived assumptions and allow participants to drive the trajectory of the inquiry.

The foundation of Glaser and Strauss' (1967) work developing grounded theory was also based on the belief that the development of theory must be driven by the knowledge that is generated through research. They argue that researchers too often carry assumptions about the outcome of a study and attempt to mould their findings to fit what is expected. The rigorous coding procedures employed by grounded theorists are designed to prevent this. Multiple rounds of increasingly refined coding ensures that the authentic meaning of the acquired knowledge forms the theory that is developed.

Much of the literature on neoliberal urban policy and governance that has been reviewed in this manuscript focuses on municipalities' uptake of neoliberalism. The commodification of public space, retrenchment of municipally-run social welfare programmes, and courtship of the creative class are indeed examples of how neoliberalism has affected municipal policy. An orthodox critical urban epistemology would see these developments as negatively affecting the daily urban experience. This too is quite justified. The orthodoxy of a critical urban epistemology would carry the assumption that *Streets to Homes* represents another example of unjust neoliberal urban policy. Indeed, such an assumption would mirror sentiments in the community and is arguably reflected in the research questions of the study. However, utilising grounded theory allowed for the production of knowledge that leads to a different understanding of HF, municipal policy, and ultimately critical urban epistemology.

Participants' overwhelming sentiment that *Streets to Homes* is fundamentally a good programme lays the foundation for a shift in perception. More important, however, is the caveat that was echoed across all four cohorts of participants: Housing First programmes cannot succeed in the Canadian context without meaningful participation from the federal and provincial governments who have the jurisdictional authority and financial resources to put the necessary auxiliary policies and programmes in place to foster HF's success. It is these governments' continued embrace of neoliberalism that is hampering HF. Put differently, the exercise of power *external* to the city also influences the daily urban experience. Conceptualising municipal policymakers as having the most tangible impact on daily life due to the heavy reliance on municipal policy and programmes ignores the restrictions placed on these actors by the other orders of government.

Kipfer and Keil (2002) detail how Toronto engaged in neoliberal governance in the past. The recent mayoralty of Rob Ford demonstrates a continuation of this thinking. The arguments being made here should not be seen as absolving municipalities from any uptake of neoliberal governmentality, nor are they a justification for municipalities to implement insufficient policies. Indeed, the City of Toronto must explain why *Street to Homes* was designed with deficiencies which should be evident. However, a critical urban epistemology must recognise how the embrace of neoliberalism in all spheres of government affects urban life.

Chapter VII – Conclusion

It cannot be stressed enough that the intent of the *Streets to Homes* programme was to "eliminate street homelessness" in Toronto (City of Toronto, 2005, 1). Such ambitious goals were not unjustifiable given the discourse that surrounds HF – especially in light of the fervour with which positive studies were emanating from the *Pathways* programme in New York. Indeed, Medicine Hat, Alberta has declared homelessness solved in that city because of its HF programme (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 2015). A search reveals that scholarly examinations of the Medicine Hat programme have yet to occur. However, officials credit its success with their ability to build new affordable housing in collaboration with the province. It is also established that *Pathways* clients do not pay more than 30% of their income on housing (Falvo, 2009), and that the programme employs the more robust Assertive Community Treatment service model (Padgett et al, 2006). Put differently, these programmes are able to claim success because of broader policies, or programmatic decisions that support that success.

The preceding chapters show that, at its core, the Housing First model, and ultimately *Streets to Homes*, has been a positive development for Toronto in addressing homelessness. Nevertheless, the context within which the programme is operationalised renders it inadequate. In other words, critiques of HF need to be couched in an understanding of neoliberal urban policy and how it impedes HF's success. At the same time, to exonerate the City of Toronto from any fault in creating service issues for *Streets to Homes* or pre-existing agencies would be oversimplifying these realities. City officials would have been acutely aware of the lack of affordable housing, and the inadequacies of other social supports when they devised the programme. However, there are questions of the extent to which these realities were accounted for. This study`s findings thus locate themselves at the intersection between policy progress and impediments caused by entrenched notions of neoliberal governmentality (Larner, 2000), a

phenomenon that Keil (2009) speaks of when describing possibilities left after the initial phases of neoliberalism.

The use of components of grounded theory allowed for these revelations to emerge. Glaser & Strauss's (1967) argument - that research is too often driven by the researcher's preconceptions, thus denying the possibility of theory building through emerging data - is confirmed here. A narrow focus on the initial research questions would have prevented a more holistic understanding of the situation. It follows that the heuristic being developed (Eckstein, 1975) will give a fuller description of how HF is implemented in Canadian cities. Obviously, the heuristic goes beyond spatial components to examine the broader relationship between the philosophy and neoliberalism. HF's relationship with urban space is, however, the most concrete manifestation of how the daily experience of homelessness has, or has not, changed with the uptake of HF.

Employing a critical urban epistemology (Boudreau, 2010) necessitates privileging space. For example, when the outreach components of *Streets to Homes* are coupled with the Safe Streets Act, they structure the experience of homelessness. A combination of revanchism and fear has made public space hostile for those who are street involved, especially those with mental health issues. The tension between *Streets to Homes*' agential capacity and its structural inadequacies (Hay, 2002) is one that is very much present in all of the interviews that were conducted. Frontline staff's reliance on housing that is in poor condition in order to house those who have complex behavioural issues is simultaneously agential - placing clients in assumedly inadequate conditions - and a result of the structural limitations placed upon it by the lack of affordable housing. A resolution to this tension admittedly remains elusive in the current policy context.

Whilst it is argued here that the majority of *Streets to Homes*' agency to be able to affect - or, more to the point, not affect - clients' lives is a product of the structures within which it operates, we must be cognisant of the fact that the City understood this context when making programmatic decisions. Figure VII.1 and Figure VII.2 illustrates the difference between the programme's intended outcomes and the reality of the client experience. It is clear that the programme was designed on the practical assumptions of: (1) housing security gleamed through affordable housing and/or adequate income; and (2) a high level of psychosocial functioning amongst climate. Neither of these assumptions are in fact the case. Perhaps more importantly, it appears that the programme, and the aspirations for it, are rooted in the assumption that the experience of homelessness can be universally eliminated through an immediate placement in housing. Whilst it is simply irresponsible to remotely suggest that access to appropriate housing is not crucial to end homelessness, participants in this study made it clear that this assumption fails to account for the complexity of needs that are exhibited by segments of the homeless population. There are various outcomes that are experienced after a placement in housing occurs that stem from these false assumptions. The central conclusions of this study are that these unwarranted outcomes can be avoided with:

- **An adequate supply of affordable housing and income supports to ensure housing stability;**
- **Robust follow-up supports to ensure housing is maintained;**
- **The recognition that the HF model cannot be seen as an all-encompassing solution to ending homelessness.**

Unearthing the tensions and false assumptions associated with *Streets to Homes* is central to the set of more holistic findings that the employ of grounded theory fostered. Nevertheless, it is

important to answer the study's original research questions. This chapter turns to these questions now. The study's theoretical contributions, resultant policy recommendations, possible courses of future research and limitations of what has been presented here, and concluding thoughts are offered in the final sections.

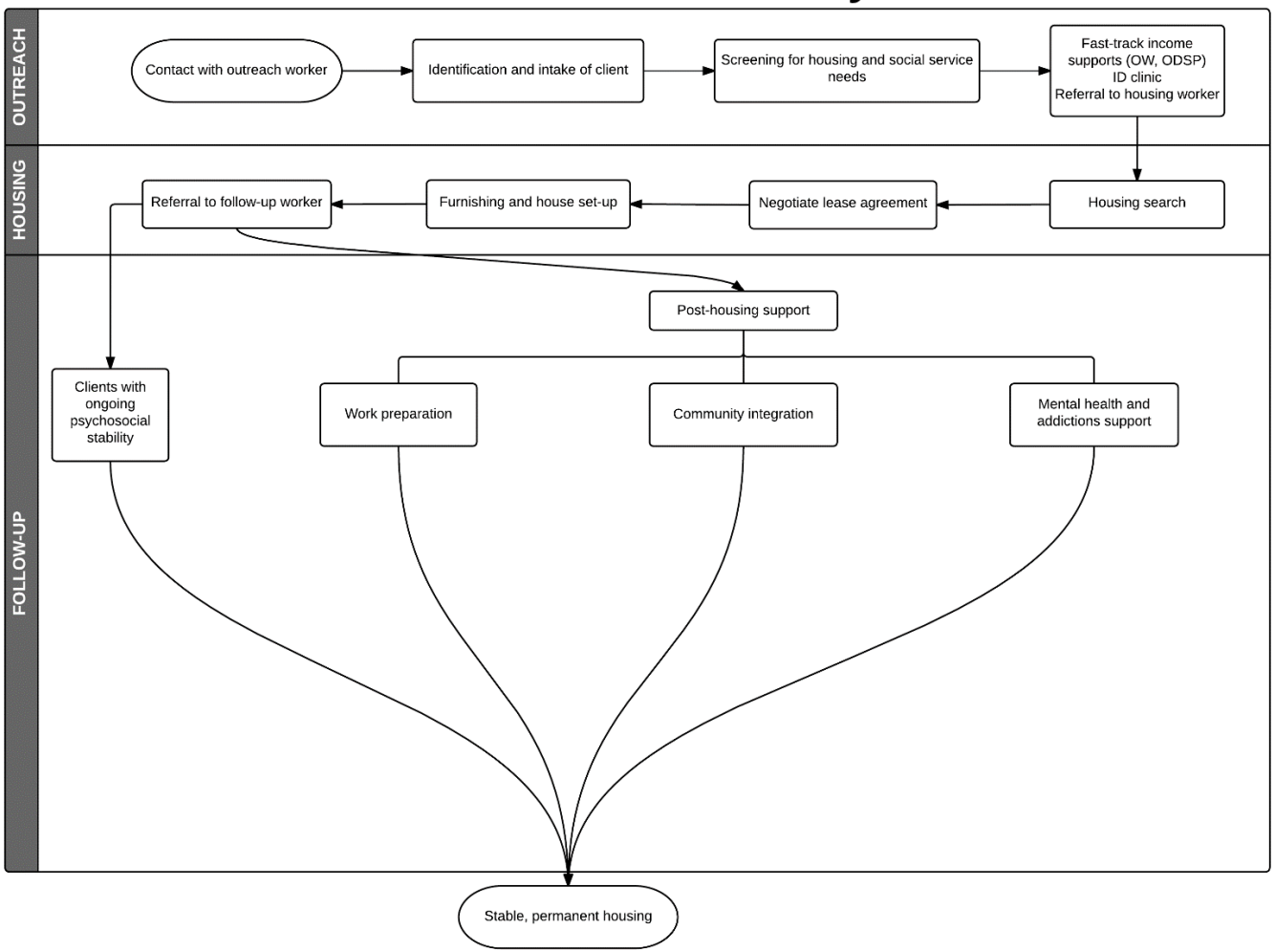


Figure VII.1 - Streets to Homes Service Delivery Model. Source: author.

Streets to Homes Client Outcomes

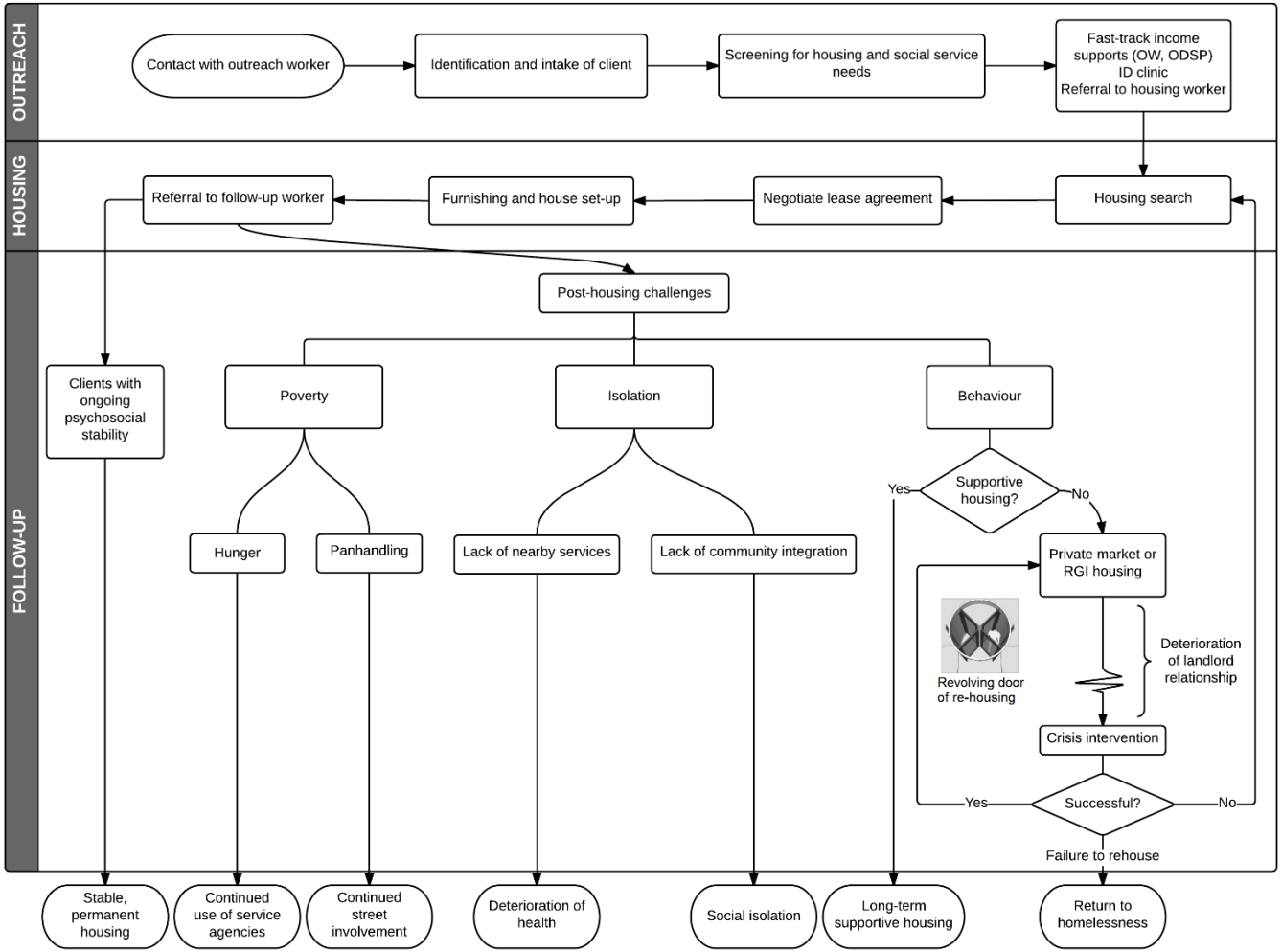


Figure VII.2 - Streets to Homes Client Outcomes. Source: author.

Research Questions Answered

(i) Why did the City of Toronto adopt a HF programme?

It is clear that Toronto's embrace of HF was an attempt to address the growing incidences of outdoor homelessness in the city. The visibility of the situation made inaction politically untenable, especially for conservative members of City Council. With that said, it must be remembered that pressure also came from progressives who equally saw the situation as unacceptable. Again, the literature is relatively scarce with respect to a broad examination of homelessness in Toronto. However, that both conservatives and progressives had come to see the existing approach - the continuum-of-care model - as inadequate in addressing the depth of homelessness. Perhaps the best indication that the continuum-of-care model lacks efficacy was the acknowledgement that many shelter residents would be able to maintain housing if the proper supports were in place.

As for the possible influence of *Pathways to Housing* on *Streets to Homes,* both arguments appear to be based on conjecture, with little evidence. The most credible explanation seems to be one expert's contention that HF, predominantly as experienced in New York, was gaining traction in the homelessness discourse at the time, and therefore informed Toronto. The question seems moot, however; it is clear that the Miller administration was experiencing pressure to act. It is also clear that motivations behind *Streets to Homes* were well-intended, if occasionally misplaced. Discontinuing the dispersal of survival supplies and the *en masse* eviction of Nathan Phillips' Square surely created unnecessary suffering and tension between the City and both the homeless population and service providers. It was when these actions were coupled with the ban on sleeping in Nathan Phillips Square, in the context of the SSA, that the programme was incorrectly labelled as revanchist.

(ii) How has the *Streets to Homes* programme changed service delivery to those experiencing homelessness in Toronto?

In assessing *Streets to Homes'* impacts on service delivery, it is necessary to separate underlying assumptions from daily realities. Both the City and, perhaps worth particularly noting, agencies see *Streets to Homes* as prompting a shift in thinking towards assisting clients to acquire and maintain permanent housing. It is significant that agencies offering a spectrum of services (shelters, drop-in centres, and permanent housing) expressed this sentiment, However, HF has had little impact on the routine experience of service delivery because of: (i) the persistent size of the homeless population due to continued housing insecurity and migration to Toronto; (ii) the targeted nature of *Streets to Homes* and its inability to meet the most complex needs; and (iii) the continued street involvement of those who have been housed.

(iii) Has homeless people's and community agencies' access to the downtown core been limited as a result of the adoption of *Streets to Homes*?

The relationship between those experiencing homelessness, social services, and public space is extraordinarily complex. At first blush, there is no question that *Streets to Homes* has limited access to the downtown core; sleeping in Nathan Phillips Square was banned, City outreach workers are said to be aggressive, those with severe mental health issues are going to more remote locations, and funding was withdrawn for the dispersal of survival supplies. It is also the case that housing placements have removed marginalised people from the core and isolated them from their communities and supports. The response to that isolation is where the complexities lie, however. The visibility of extreme poverty has not been limited, as people continue to panhandle and sleep rough in order to cope with their extreme poverty.

It is necessary to examine the nuances between the overt revanchism that Smith (1998) describes and the social control that *Streets to Homes* attempts to exert. If the programme was overtly revanchist – wanting to rid the core of deviant homeless people – that would have been a stronger theme in the fieldwork. It would also be the case that clients' current street involved would not be tolerated. Rather, the City has attempted to exercise social control by limiting the movements of those who are homeless. Again, the intention was rooted in progressive ideas of homelessness being unacceptable. However, poor planning has made these policies appear regressive, and ironically forces marginalised people to transverse the City to a greater degree.

Theoretical Contributions

By broadening academic inquiry of HF beyond reductionist notions of success – most commonly seen as being increased rates of housing retention, improved psychological functioning, and decreased substance abuse – this study has contributed to a better theoretical understanding of HF as a modality to address homelessness, as well its relationship with the neoliberal urban political economy. The latter has implications for municipally-operated social services writ large, as the concurrent instantiations of 'roll-back', 'roll-out' (Peck & Tickell, 2002), and 'roll-with-it' (Keil, 2009) neoliberalism shape their content and scope.

In his critique of HF, Willse (2010) suggests that rapid rehousing without robust social and health supports is an example of social service provision within the neoliberal paradigm. He argues that failing to address the psychosocial and physiological issues that often underlie homelessness reduces clients to a (neoliberal) economic determinism; the only issue being addressed is the inability to participate in the housing market, while other issues are left out of the service plan as they are seen as being economically irrelevant. HF programmes, according to

Willse (2010), are merely vehicles to control undesirable populations. This study simultaneously confirms and offers a departure from this analysis.

The placement of *Streets to Homes* clients into housing that is inadequate and/or far from necessary social supports does indeed amount to population management – however unsuccessful it is, given the continued street-involvement of clients. Indeed, these placements could be seen as an inappropriate geography (DeVerteuil et al, 2009) that is now inhabited by those who are experiencing housing insecurity. However, it is too simplistic to lay blame entirely on the lack of supports around issues such as community integration and mental health. Rather, it is also necessary to question the universal reduction of the experience of homelessness to a lack of housing. Participants in this study made it clear that the experience of homelessness is mediated, if not precipitated, by issues related to trauma, psychosocial functioning, gender, and age. The evidence presented here demonstrates that these realities were largely overlooked when *Streets to Homes* was designed and implemented.

Understanding the implications of *Streets to Homes'* omissions has significant implications for academic inquiry and service planning around HF and homelessness. A wholesale return to the continuum-of-care model is completely unwarranted; the efficacy of HF has been unequivocally proven. However, the privileging of HF programmes to the detriment of other programmes is problematic. As a City official reported, the federal government's stipulation that 65% of Homelessness Partnership Strategy funding be allocated to HF programmes limits the flexibility that the City has to fund other initiatives. HF must be seen as an important, albeit not exclusive, avenue to achieve housing stability. Shelters, and especially transitional housing, play an important role in readying individuals for successful permanent housing. It is now evident that this reality needs to be incorporated into the HF discourse. The

barriers youth experience when engaged with a HF programme were clearly defined by participants, who echoed what is found in the literature (Gaetz, 2014). Somewhat more ambiguous is the link between trauma and poor housing outcomes. The immediate programmatic answer to the question seems to be to utilise the Assertive Community Treatment model of delivering services after clients are housed. However, more attention needs to be paid to an executive director's assertion that HF is based on normative assumptions of what it means to be housed that have little currency for those who are chronically homeless. One City official indeed suggested that the City was too vigorous in its commitment to rapid rehousing, ignoring the steps that must be taken with a client in order to ensure successful housing retention in favour of seeing the individual housed at any cost. This study serves as a call both for these steps to receive more attention in the HF literature and programme planning, and also for the normative assumptions around housing and what it means to have a 'home' to be better integrated into homelessness scholarship in general.

Willse's (2010) argument that HF programmes merely amount to population management find their validity in these gaps in the understanding of HF's implications. However, it is short sighted to see the HF philosophy as being embedded with neoliberal governmentality. Again, it has been shown here that it is rather more accurate to see neoliberalism as inhibiting the ability to realise HF's commitment of seeing housing as a fundamental right. Harmes' (2006) description of the neoliberal justification for downloading responsibility of social policy questions to 'lower' orders of government does well to explain why Toronto's efforts, and those of other Canadian municipalities who actually deliver HF programmes, have been hampered. According to neoliberal thought, the way to keep the interventionist tendencies of sub-nation governments in check is to have them compete to attract mobile firms and citizens in the context

of a national economy that is based on free enterprise. Thus, the policy objective of the national government must be the preservation of the economy, whilst market inhibiting questions, such as social policy, become the domain of the 'lower' levels. The pressure of competition and lesser spending power that is available to regions or municipalities ensures that these policies are kept to a minimum. It is also important to remember that 'roll-with-it' neoliberalism has brought about the recognition, on the part of governments and other neoliberal thinkers, that social inequalities need to be ameliorated, albeit using market mechanisms (Keil, 2009).

When these two arguments are combined, a clearer picture of the policy landscape that surrounds HF and similar initiatives emerges. Key to understanding the state of social policy in Canada is examining the incongruencies between what is mandated onto the municipal policy agenda by the other orders of government and the financial resources that those other orders, who have more revenue potential, offer to support policy objectives. Two decades ago, the federal and provincial governments successively downloaded responsibility for affordable housing onto municipalities. With almost no support to sustain a supply of affordable housing, the homelessness crisis, which has been described here, developed. It is now the case that municipalities are being mandated to adopt the HF philosophy, with little support to adequately do so. It is clear that, when it comes to housing policy, it has been recognized that ameliorating policies are needed, although they remain confined to market mechanisms and must largely be delivered by municipalities. Keil (2009) also suggests that cities are the primary sites where the orthodoxies of neoliberalism are being challenged and new policy approaches are being developed. *Streets to Homes* can be seen as an example of this; these policies are fundamentally interventionist. Whilst the federal and provincial governments may have accepted their necessity, it is clear that any return to significantly redistributive policies at the municipal order of

government must overcome the engrained neoliberalism at the national and sub-national levels. It can only be hypothesized at this point that this schema will be replicated in other areas of social policy. Future research should confirm this.

Finally, it would be short sighted to exonerate the City of Toronto from any involvement in the neoliberal policy programme. This study builds on the existing literature that details how public space is overtly hostile to those who are street-involved[6], showing that this relationship has become more complex. It is clear that: (i) downtown Toronto is becoming more commodified and the movements of marginalised people have been reduced to a few neighbourhoods as a result; (ii) *Streets to Homes* does facilitate the removal of homeless people from the downtown, primarily as a result of housing affordability; and (iii) mechanisms of explicit revanchism, namely the SSA, orders the experience of those who are street-involved. However, there is no evidence that the programme is overtly revanchist. Indeed, outreach services would not emphasize harm reduction efforts if this was the case. Thus, as with questions of social policy, HF points to a softening of the neoliberal regulation of urban space. Whilst hostilities towards marginalised people still permeate, there is beginning to be an acceptance once again of their existence and the need for services in public space.

Policy Recommendations

Each of the three themes that emerged from the findings have led to specific policy recommendations that would either directly improve *Streets to Homes'* outcomes, or would create a better operating context. These recommendations are a component of the heuristic that

[6] The literature primarily sees this population as being homeless. As a result of the findings that have been presented here, it is more accurate to see them as street-involved.

has been developed by using Toronto as a case study. Although their applicability in other settings will need to be confirmed, it is argued here that they have merit in the Canadian context.

Social Policy

- At the core of *Streets to Homes'* inability to fulfill its mandate is the lack of affordable housing and policies that foster housing security. If the provincial and federal governments are going to embrace HF, then a national housing strategy is required, with coordinated and sustained commitments from all governments. This study's findings do not lend themselves to expounding specific details of such a strategy, like the number of units of housing that are needed. Rather, this strategy can be broadly defined as including construction of new social housing, tax incentives and other planning measures to encourage the construction of private rental stock, sustained funding for rent supplements for low-income households, and an overhaul of Ontario's eviction process. Figure II.6 illustrates how rental costs are outpacing low and modest incomes. Without government intervention, households experiencing poverty will continue to be priced out of the market.
- The extreme poverty that housed *Streets to Homes* clients experience could be alleviated if social assistance rates in Ontario were increased. The current Liberal government has offered a series of increases that are approximately in line with the rate of inflation. Participants made it clear however that recipients are still severely disadvantaged from the 22% cut that occurred during the Harris administration (see Figure VI.1). A one-time substantial increase that is coupled with regular inflationary adjustments would improve functioning and access to the social determinants of health for the majority of *Streets to Homes'* clients. Tweddle et al (2014) found that a single adult on OW has an income 42%

below the Low Income Cut Off for Ontario (see Figure VI.1). A clear line has been drawn between the extreme poverty endured by *Streets to Homes* clients who receive social assistance and their continued street involvement.

Service Issues

- It must be recognised that the majority of service issues that participants identified would be mitigated, if not entirely addressed, by implementing the previous two recommendations. It is particularly the case that more supportive housing would address the needs of clients with complex mental health and addiction issues. However, the absence of these supports means that the City must adjust the program. The Intensive Case Management model (see page 57) that is currently being utilised is unable to respond to clients' needs. An investment in the resources associated with the Assertive Community Treatment model is needed. It is foreseeable that access to 24 hour supports, and specialised services like psychology, would increase clients' ability to maintain their housing, and decrease break downs in landlord relationships and the need to place clients in inadequate housing units. More robust supports must also emphasize community integration.
- There is a need for *Streets to Homes* to better adapt to the specific experiences of homeless women and youth. It would behoove the City to convene working groups for both cohorts, consisting of service providers and clients, to develop strategies of how this can be accomplished.

The regulation of space

- As was discussed in the last chapter, *Streets to Homes* and the *Safe Streets Act* are in direct conflict with each other. It is not possible for one arm of government to effectively operate a street based outreach programme for those who are homeless, many of whom have decreased cognitive functioning, when another arm uses a revanchist tool to regulate their movements. Police officers' assertion that the tool is a necessary one needs to be juxtaposed against the other pieces of legislation that they have at their disposal, namely the *Criminal Code* and the *Highway Traffic Act*. People can be protected from harassment and the right-of-way can be maintained without the social profiling associated with the SSA. If the provincial government is committed to ending homelessness through a HF approach, then this piece of legislation must be repealed.
- The sentiment that *Streets to Homes* is intended to clear the downtown core of homeless people is connected to the programme's heightened focus on the downtown. A senior manager's demonstration of how homelessness in other parts of the city is largely ignored by programme staff speaks to the need to geographically expand the programme's outreach activities.

Limitations and Future Research

Despite its contributions to the dialogue around Housing First in Canada, this study does have two significant limitations. First, it must be acknowledged again that the perspectives of those who have been housed by *Streets to Homes* are absent from this study. The decision to make this delimitation was not taken lightly, but was a deliberate attempt to give room for an initial heuristic of HF's policy implications to be developed. That is, it was necessary to first privilege knowledge that, although grounded in lived experiences, was heavily influenced by an

understanding of the policy trends that have developed over the last two decades. Eckstein (1975) maintains that heuristics can be further developed and refined with further study. The heuristic presented here – broadly seen as neoliberalism being an impediment to the full implementation and success of HF programmes – would, and must, be expanded upon with firsthand experiences with the struggles associated with housing insecurity, the lack of supports for community insecurity, and revanchism.

Second, the evidence presented here would be more robust if it was buttressed with statistics. Whilst this study's contention is that the over reliance on quantitative data has been detrimental to fully understanding HF, statistics on programme outcomes should not be totally discounted. For example, knowing how long *Streets to Homes* clients wait to be housed, or the prevalence of core housing need amongst clients housed in the private market would indicate both programme success, and the need for other policies to support HF initiatives. Requests made to the City for this and other information either went unanswered or could not be granted because the City does not collect the data. SSHAD's *2014-2019 Housing Stability Service Planning Framework* (City of Toronto, 2014b) does identify improved data collection as a priority. The limitations placed on this study affirms this need.

Despite the frustration that stemmed from the lack of data being available from the City, it must be acknowledged that Canadian research on homelessness has generally favoured personal accounts over statistical profiles (Peressini, 2007). What has been presented here is deliberately keeping with that tradition given the state of the HF literature. However, the lack of supporting statistical evidence speaks to Peressini's (2007) call for researchers to undertake more quantitative analysis of the homeless population in Canada.

Along with generally expanding the heuristic of Housing First in Canada by including client perspectives, researchers must urgently engage with the specific question of life expectancy amongst homeless people who have been housed. Participants who witnessed an increase in deaths amongst this population were only able to speculate about underlying causes linked to past trauma and a lack of access to the social determinants of health. Social scientists, as well as medical researchers, need to answer these questions. The urgency with which participants wanted to speak to the researcher about these deaths is a testament to the concern that surrounds them.

Gaetz (2013) rightly credits the *At Home/Chez-Soi* project with being a significant development in HF research. However, the literature remains dominated with studies emanating from the *Pathways* programme in New York. Three considerations lead to this situation being problematic. First, as Waegemakers Schiff and Rook (2012) describe, the majority of publications have been derived from two data sets connected to the New York Housing Study. Whilst this study is undoubtedly reliable, rigorous, and informative, such a saturation of the literature can only be cause for concern. These questions must be raised as they relate to the political embrace of *Pathways* in New York, the second issue with the state of the literature. *Pathways* undoubtedly enjoys a unique, privileged status in the city. There are also questions of its lack of recruitment of clients with the most complex needs (Johnson et al, 2012). These circumstances lessen the generalizations that can be made about *Pathways* studies. Finally, many of these works are authored by Sam Tsemberis, *Pathways'* CEO. Questions of objectivity and impartiality arise, but seemingly go unaddressed in the literature. All of these concerns point to continued need for place-based studies of HF that employ both quantitative and qualitative methods.

Finally, urban policy researchers may wish to examine the application of these findings to other policy issues. That is, are other municipal programmes in areas such as childcare, the environment, and infrastructure unable to fulfill their inherently progressive mandates due to the legacies of the policies of roll back and roll out neoliberalism (Peck & Tickell, 2002) enacted by other orders of government? Keil (2009) argues that the urban politics of roll-with-it neoliberalization has created opportunities to contest the orthodoxy of neoliberalism's governmentality. One of these contestations has clearly become downloading as a practice. Researchers will need to investigate how other orders of government respond, and if urban policies ultimately return to a progressive orientation with the necessary supports.

Conclusions

A City official crudely assessed the importance of HF and *Streets to Homes* by stating "[y]ou can't get your shit together if you don't got a place". There is indeed a vast literature affirming that stable, permanent housing improves physical and psychosocial well-being (see Layton, 2008). Critics of HF do not dispute this, but rather question HF's ability to address the underlying causes of homelessness. McNaughton-Nichols and Atherton (2011) recognise that housing provides access to private space, "but if their personal circumstances remain potentially mired in difficulty, such as substance abuse, can the outcome be viewed as a 'success' or even as fair to those economically disadvantaged but without multiple needs?"

City officials, executive directors, housing experts, and police officers in Toronto all affirm that these criticisms hold truth in the context of the *Streets to Homes* programme. Clients typically remain in extreme poverty, have little psychosocial supports, and ultimately remain street-involved with repeated episodes of homelessness. These circumstances do not occur when a person is sufficiently independent, or when economic and health issues are addressed in a

supportive housing environment. Thus, it is clear that HF works when the auxiliary policies are put in place to support it. Unfortunately, those policies have been largely retrenched under the governmentality of neoliberalism. The federal government's retrenchment of social policies was national in scope (McBride and McNutt, 2007) and Layton (2008) details how the lack of provincial and federal housing policies have increased housing insecurity in every province. Applying the heuristic that has been developed here to other Canadian cities will have to account for specificities of the local homeless population, such as the high incidence of intravenous drug use in Vancouver. It is, however, true that the policy landscape across the country has enough similarities that the case that is presented here has generalisability across the country.

One executive director credited *Streets to Homes* with changing the way the City and service providers "think about people who are homeless, that it is just a state that people are in, it's not an identity," implying that homelessness is no longer viewed as an intrinsic quality of a person. Alluding to participants' overwhelming endorsement of HF, she continued by saying "I think some people approached it, you know: [a] homeless person, that is their life, they're going to stay there, we just have to support them on the street. I think *Streets to Homes* has shown everyone that doesn't make sense, that people can succeed in housing," The debate over the efficacy of HF is clearly over. The question that remains is whether there are adequate policies surrounding HF programmes, thus ensuring that clients are afforded full rights to the city (Marcuse, 2009).

Appendix A: Interview Guide

General Questions

1. In your opinion, why did Toronto adopt a Housing First approach to addressing homelessness?

2. The Street Needs Assessment reveals that chronic homelessness remains persistent in the city. Why do you think this is? Are there adequate resources to meet the needs of people experiencing chronic homelessness?

3. How have the movements of those who are homeless changed since the Strategy was implemented?

4. What are strengths and weaknesses of the *Streets to Homes* programme?

5. Hypothetically, what would a good housing strategy look like? What would be the City's roll in executing it? How would we measure success?

Questions for City Officials

1. Can you explain how the City`s directive not to provide services that enable street homelessness is operationalised?

2. What pressures is the city under to keep the downtown core physically attractive to investors and residents?

3. Many *Streets to Homes* clients are experiencing core housing need. How do issues of housing affordability factor into the design and execution of the programme?

Questions for Executive Directors

1. How have the services you offer changed since *Streets to Homes* was implemented?

2. How has the City`s homelessness Strategy changed your ability to meet the service needs of the population you serve?

3. Has the Strategy changed the visibility of your services in the community? If so, how?

Questions for Key Informants

1. Do you have any observations about how the experience of homelessness has changed in Toronto since *Streets to Homes* was implemented?

2. Why do you think senior homelessness is increasing in the city?

Appendix B: Map of Downtown Toronto

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