

ONTARIO NON-PROFIT HOUSING ASSOCIATION (ONPHA) AND CHF CANADA RELEASE THEIR REPORT ON HOUSING IN ONTARIO FOR THE YEAR JUST PAST: SOME KEY POINTS

Harvey Cooper of CHF Canada writes:

The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA) and ourselves (CHF Canada) publish jointly an annual Ontario housing report known as *Where's Home?*.

This year's version tracks a number of critical housing trends over the last decade in Ontario, such as rental housing availability and affordability, demand for rental housing as well as development of additional stock. The report also profiles 22 municipal markets in the province.

Some the general key findings in this year's report seem to confirm observations of housing trends in Ontario such as: Rents in the province are, for the most part, rising faster than incomes.

- Vacancy rates continue to tighten – having fallen in December 2008 to 2.7% province-wide.
- Rental units lost to demolition and conversion continues to exceed new rental production – about 8,500 units lost over the last decade.
- Rental production remains low relative to need – less than 3,000 units were actually produced last year.
- Growing gap between incomes of tenants and homeowners.

As we state in the study, affordable housing must be a foundation of any systemic anti-poverty policies. Without secure housing, the ability to get and hold a job, maintain a harmonious household, look after one's health, and succeed in an educational environment, are all jeopardized.

All levels of government realize as we slide into one of the deepest recessions of the last 50 years the need to stimulate the economy. Maintenance of our existing social housing stock and the production of new, affordable housing have traditionally been excellent stimulus levers. Both are proven to create jobs.

We are hoping that with the Ontario Budget slated to be brought down on March 26th, particularly given that there are Federal housing funds available that require matching provincial contributions, housing will be seen as an important stimulus tool by Queen's Park. Anything that *Where's Home? 2008* can do to spur on the McGuinty government in this direction can only be helpful.

Please feel free to contact me, or Sharad Kerur of ONPHA, further regarding the report.

All the best,

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