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The Regional Municipality of Durham Information Report

From: Commissioner of Social Services
Report: # 2026-INFO-002
Date: January 16, 2026

Subject:

Homelessness in Ontario – 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Update

Recommendation:

Receive for information.

Report:

1. Purpose

1.1 To provide Regional Council with an overview of Ontario's homelessness crisis, based on the latest data and analysis from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and partners. This package includes the updated report, "Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Later," highlighting the urgent need for collective action and outlining recommended strategies for all levels of government.

2. Background

2.1 In January 2025, AMO released updated data showing that nearly 85,000 Ontarians experienced homelessness in 2025, an 8 per cent increase from the previous year and a 50 per cent increase since 2021.

2.2 The crisis is growing fastest in rural and northern communities, with rural homelessness up by more than 30 per cent and northern homelessness up by more than 37 per cent in the past year.

2.3 The update was conducted by HelpSeeker Technologies in partnership with AMO, Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), and Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA).

2.4 Municipalities continue to bear a disproportionate burden, spending \$2 billion annually on homelessness services and affordable housing, despite these issues being driven by poverty and systemic factors beyond municipal mandates.

2.5 Without significant intervention, homelessness in Ontario could double by 2035 and reach nearly 300,000 people in an economic downturn.

3. Key Messaging

3.1 The scale of homelessness across Ontario is alarming and continues to deteriorate.

3.2 Temporary measures are no longer sufficient; strategic investments in deeply affordable housing, enhanced income supports, and comprehensive mental health and addictions services are needed.

3.3 To end chronic homelessness, AMO recommends an additional \$11 billion over 10 years to refocus investments into capital, increase prevention, and create more than 75,000 new affordable and supportive housing units.

3.4 To begin addressing immediate needs, an additional \$2 billion over eight years is essential to significantly expand support services and increase the availability of supportive, transitional, and community housing.

3.5 Municipalities continue to shoulder the rapidly increasing share of housing and homelessness funding.

3.6 The full report and news release provide further analysis and actionable solutions.

4. Relationship to Strategic Plan

4.1 This report aligns with/addresses the following strategic directions and priorities in the Durham Region 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:

a. Connected and Vibrant Communities

- C2. Enable a full range of housing options, including housing that is affordable and close to transit.

b. Healthy People, Caring Communities

- H3. Integrate and co-ordinate service delivery for positive life outcomes, including investments in poverty prevention, housing solutions, and homelessness supports.

c. Strong Relationships

- S4. Advocate to the federal and provincial government and agencies to advance regional priorities.

- 4.2 This report aligns with/addresses the following Foundations in Durham Region's 2025-2035 Strategic Plan:
- a. Processes: Continuously improving processes to ensure we are responsive to community needs.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 Ontario's homelessness crisis is escalating, with significant impacts on individuals, communities, and municipal resources. The scale and complexity of the issue demand urgent, coordinated action and long-term investment.

6. Attachment:

- 6.1 Attachment #1: [Municipalities Under Pressure: One Year Review](#)
- 6.2 Attachment #2: [Municipalities Under Pressure One Year Later: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis](#)

Respectfully submitted,

Original signed by

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Commissioner of Social Services