



Presentation to the Standing Committee on Heritage, Infrastructure and Cultural Policy on Bill 134

Peter Simcisko, Managing Partner
Erik Karvinen, Manager

November 15, 2023 0

Introduction



- At the outset, we would like to thank the Committee for inviting us to speak.
- We are providing a high-level summary PowerPoint presentation along with a detailed letter submission regarding Bill 134 as it relates to:
 - Definition of an “affordable residential unit” for the purposes of development-related charge discounts and exemptions.
- This presentation will provide certain highlights for the Committee’s consideration.

Watson & Associates Economists Ltd.

Powerful Insights. Informed Strategies. Since 1982.



- Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. is a firm of municipal economists, planners and accountants which has been in operation since 1982. With a municipal client base of more than 250 Ontario municipalities and utility commissions, the firm is recognized as a leader in the municipal finance/local government and land economics field.
- Our background is exceptional and includes:
 - Having undertaken over one-half of the consulting work completed in Ontario in the development charges field during the past decade;
 - Provided submissions and undertook discussions with the Province when the *Development Charges Act* was first introduced in 1989 and with each subsequent amendment undertaken in 1997, 2015 and 2019 (including being a member of the Provincial Technical Working Group on the 2020 development charges and community benefits charges regulations);
 - Having undertaken a significant number of community benefits charges strategies and parkland dedication reviews for municipalities arising from the recent *Planning Act* amendments;
 - Undertaking numerous studies that focus on growth management, population and employment forecasting, urban land needs, municipal competitiveness, land use planning policy and financial/economic impact analysis;
 - Preparing asset management plans and conservation authority fees and charges studies.

Observations



- Preliminary analysis of the potential impacts of the proposed definitions of affordability have been assessed using data from the Provincial Policy Statement – 2022 Housing Tables.

Market rent lower than “affordable” rent in all regional market areas.

Affordability threshold for ownership units calculated using the income test is generally lower than 90% of the average market purchase price.

Based on the provincial averages, market purchase prices are approximately double the affordable purchase prices.

- The source of data to be used for the Affordable Residential Units Bulletin and the level of data disaggregation (by geography and unit type) have not yet been specified. Until these are known, the full impacts of the proposed definitions cannot be assessed with accuracy.

Technical Clarifications Needed with Respect to the Bulletin



- Geographic scope of the Bulletin (local municipal data vs. regional market data).
- Level of data disaggregation by unit type.
- Definition of accommodation costs.
- Definition of rental units (relative to definition for the purposes of sections 26.1 and 26.2 of the *Development Charges Act*).
- Bulletin publication frequency.
- Basis for determination of gross annual income.
- Basis for determination of average market rents and purchase prices.

Considerations for the Standing Committee



Technical details related to the Bulletin need to be carefully considered.

Effectiveness of the proposed exemptions with respect to incentivizing affordable housing needs to be analyzed and periodically reviewed.

Administration of agreements and funding of exemptions continue to place further resourcing and financial burdens on municipalities.

October 27, 2023

To Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing:

Re: Changes to the Definition of an "Affordable Residential Unit" in the Development Charges Act, 1997 for the Purpose of Municipal Development-Related Charge Discounts and Exemptions (Tracking Number 23-MMAH017)

On behalf of our many municipal clients, we are submitting our comments related to the proposed changes to the *Development Charges Act* (D.C.A.) under Bill 134 (*Affordable Homes and Good Jobs Act*).

1. Introduction

The exemptions for affordable residential units were included in the *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23), enacted by the Province on November 28, 2022. Under this legislation, affordable residential units were defined within subsection 4.1 of the D.C.A. and exemptions for D.C., C.B.C. and parkland dedication were provided in respect of this definition. While the legislation was enacted in November 2022, the ability for municipalities to implement the exemptions required the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to publish an "Affordable Residential Units for the Purposes of the Development Charges Act, 1997 Bulletin." This bulletin would inform average market rent and purchase price to be used in determining which developments qualify as affordable residential units. At the time of writing, this bulletin had not been published by the Minister.

2. Proposed Amendments to the D.C.A.

The definition proposed under Bill 134 modifies the affordable residential unit definition by:

- introducing an income-based test for affordable rent and purchase price; and
- increasing the threshold for the market test of affordable rent and purchase price.

The proposed amendment would provide the exemption based on the lesser of the two measures. Moreover, the rules in subsection 4.1 of the D.C.A. are unchanged with respect to:

- the tenant and purchaser transacting the affordable unit being at arm's length;
- the intent of maintaining the affordable residential unit definition for a 25-year period, requiring an agreement with the municipality (which may be registered on title); and



- exemptions for attainable residential units and associated rules (requiring further regulations).

3. Illustration of the Proposed Amendment

The proposed definition of an affordable residential unit is generally consistent with the 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (P.P.S.) and considers both income-based and market-price approaches to derive an affordable housing definition for both rental and ownership housing units. This is in contrast to the current D.C.A. definition implemented through Bill 23, which is solely based on the market-price approach.

The following provides an illustrative example of the two approaches and how the application of the affordable residential unit definitions would differ for rental and ownership housing. This example uses 2022 data for the Kingston regional market area. Note, this example is meant to be illustrative and uses data from the P.P.S. Housing Tables (provided for reference in the appendix). The source of data to be used by the Province for the Affordable Residential Units bulletin, and the level of data disaggregation (by geography and unit type) has not yet been specified.

3.1 Rental Housing Example

Applying the proposed affordable residential unit definition under Bill 134 for the Kingston regional market area:

- The average annual household income for renter households in the 60th percentile in 2022 was \$68,900.
- 30% of this annual household income is \$20,670 or \$1,720 per month.
- The average market rent is \$1,390 per month.
- 80% of the average market rent is \$1,120 per month.
- Under the proposed definition, affordable residential units with a rental rate of \$1,390 per month or less would be exempt from D.C.s. This rental threshold is 25% (or \$278/month) higher than the current D.C.A. definition, which would establish this rental threshold at \$1,112 per month.

Proposed Bill 134 D.C.A. Definition (October 2023)

Lesser of a) or b) of the following

a) the income-based affordable rent based on 60 th percentile average household income \$68,900.	\$1,720 (1)
b) average market rent identified for the residential unit.	\$1,390 (2)
Affordable Rental Unit (max. rent)	\$1,390

Current D.C.A. Definition (More Homes Built Faster Act)

Where rent is no more than 80% of the average market rent	\$1,112 (2)
---	-------------

Affordable Rental Unit (max. rent)	\$1,112
---	----------------

Notes:

(1) Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table - Table 3: Renter Household Incomes and Affordable Rents, 2022

(2) Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table - Table 4. Average Rent by Bedroom Count



3.2 Ownership Housing Example

Applying the proposed affordable residential unit definition under Bill 134 for the Kingston regional market area:

- The average annual household income for all households in the 60th percentile in 2022 was \$108,300.
- Annual accommodation costs equal to 30% of this annual household income ($\$108,300 \times 0.3 / 12 = \$2,708$) represent the carrying cost per month derived from typical monthly mortgage costs, property taxes, and mortgage insurance costs.^[1] This calculation equates to a purchase price of \$372,500.
- 90% of the average purchase price is \$523,500 (based on an average resale house price of \$581,700).
- 80% of the average purchase price is \$465,360.
- Under the proposed definition, affordable residential units purchased at \$372,500 or less would be exempt from D.C.s. This purchase price threshold is approximately 20% (or \$92,860) lower than under the current D.C.A. definition, which would establish the purchase price at \$465,360.

Proposed Bill 134 D.C.A. Definition (October 2023)
Lesser of a) or b) of the following

a) the income-based affordable purchase price based on 60 th income percentile household income of \$108,300.	\$372,500 (1)
b) 90% of the average purchase price.	\$523,500 (2)
Affordable Ownership Unit (max. purchase price)	\$372,500

Current D.C.A. Definition (More Homes Built Faster Act)

Where the price of the unit is no more than 80% of the average purchase price.	\$465,360 (2)
--	---------------

Affordable Ownership Unit (max. purchase price)	\$465,360
--	------------------

Notes:

(1) Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table - Table 1: All Households Incomes and Affordable House Prices, 2022

(2) Provincial Policy Statement Housing Table - Table 2: Average Resale House Price and 10% Below Average Resale Price, 2022

4. Comments on the Proposed Amendment

In comparison to the current D.C.A. definition of affordable residential units, the following observations are provided:

- The refined definition of affordable residential units presented in Bill 134 aligns with the income-based approach utilized in the 2020 P.P.S. This, in contrast to

^[1] Mortgage payments based on a 25-year mortgage at 4.79% interest rate and 5% down payment. Estimated monthly property taxes = 0.125% of house value. Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation mortgage loan insurance premium = 4.0% of loan amount. It is not yet clear if/to what extent these align with “accommodation costs” to be considered for the purposes of the income-based test proposed in Bill 134.



the current market-based approach, better aligns with how a number of municipalities define affordable developments in their housing strategies. However, as provided in our comments on Bill 23, while it is an admirable goal to create additional affordable housing units, further D.C., C.B.C., and parkland exemptions will continue to provide further financial burdens on municipalities to fund these exemptions.

- Based on the P.P.S. Housing Tables provided in the appendix:
 - The rent at which a residential unit would be considered affordable is higher under the Bill 134 proposal, compared to the current D.C.A. definition. This would imply that more rental units would receive the exemption relative to the wording provided in Bill 23, providing a greater incentive for affordable rental units.
 - Based on the information contained in this data source, the income test appears to be irrelevant for rental units, as market rent is consistently lower than the affordable rent (based on 60th percentile average household income) across all regional market areas.
 - Conversely, the affordability threshold for ownership housing units, exhibited in this data source, would generally appear to be lower when applying the income-based approach. As a result, Bill 134 is anticipated to incentivize purpose-built rental units over ownership housing.
 - Moreover, this would appear to provide exemptions for ownership affordable residential units that are more aligned with household income than market value.
 - It should also be noted that, based on the provincial average in the data tables, average market purchase prices are approximately double the affordable purchase prices. Based on this observation, only very small residential units, such as studio-type condominium units, may be priced at a point where they would qualify for the affordable residential units exemption. This would mean that establishing affordability using averages across all unit types may not help address the problem of “missing middle”^[1] housing, which would typically be geared towards families.
- The proposed definition considers local income in addition to market prices. While the definition clearly identifies that annual incomes for households within

^[1] The “missing middle” describes a range of medium-density housing types between single-detached houses and apartment buildings. This includes a range of multi-unit or clustered housing types compatible in scale with single-family homes that help meet the growing demand for walkable urban living, such as duplexes, triplexes, fourplexes, rowhouses, and townhouses. Source: [https://www.evergreen.ca/downloads/pdfs/2018/What is the Missing Middle Evergreen CUI s2.pdf](https://www.evergreen.ca/downloads/pdfs/2018/What%20is%20the%20Missing%20Middle%20Evergreen%20CUI%20s2.pdf)



the “applicable local municipality” will be used in the income-based test, the local municipality does not appear in the average market rent/purchase price definition. Concerns about the geographic scope of the bulletin and potential implications across local municipalities due to variations in income levels still remain.

- The income level is set at the 60th percentile of gross annual income in the applicable local municipality, distinguishing between renter households and all other households. The basis for determination of gross annual income is not provided in the legislation and will be informed by the Minister’s bulletin.
- For affordable households, the rent would be established at 30% of income, and purchase price at accommodation costs equal to 30% of income. A definition of accommodation costs is not provided in the legislation and will be informed by the Minister’s bulletin. The basis for calculating accommodation costs is unclear, and carrying costs need to reflect representative costs of home ownership, including typical mortgage costs, property taxes, and property insurance, as well as condominium fees, where applicable.
- The basis for market rents and purchase prices will be required. Many municipalities utilize Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation data for establishing average market rents in affordable housing strategies. As noted earlier, it is unclear from the legislation how the average market rents and purchase prices will be determined.
- As currently written, the legislation is unclear if market rent and purchase price will be determined using overall averages or averages disaggregated by dwelling unit type or size. Establishing average rents and purchase prices using overall averages across all dwelling unit types will provide higher average values than those established by dwelling unit type and size, which would have greater exemption implications for municipalities with a larger amount of high-density development. As noted earlier, this approach would also tend to favour smaller condominium units, which would more likely meet the affordability threshold, in contrast to larger family sized units, which would likely not qualify for D.C. exemptions.
- Subsections 4.1 (5) and (6) of the D.C.A. currently identify the market rent/purchase price in the year the unit is occupied/sold as identified in the bulletin. This would appear to indicate an annual publication of the bulletin. The proposed definition of the “affordable residential units bulletin” does not imply an annual publication. The timing for publishing the bulletin should be clarified.
- The D.C.A. defines “rental housing development” for the purposes of the mandatory instalment payments in section 26.1 of the D.C.A. and the discounts for rental housing development in section 26.2. Affordable residential rental units within subsection 4.1 (2) are not specifically defined as rental housing



development and, therefore, it does not appear that there is a requirement for those units to be in a building or structure with four or more units.

- The introduction of the income test for affordable residential units will increase municipal administration costs of agreements and the requirement to ensure these units remain affordable over a 25-year period. These administrative burdens will be cumbersome and will need to be monitored and coordinated by both upper-tier and lower-tier municipalities. Further clarification is required with respect to:
 - The parties to the agreement (e.g., developer vs. builder vs. owner);
 - The Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing establishing standard forms of agreement, as provided under subsection 4.1 (12); and
 - Reporting requirements and onus (i.e., should the municipality reach out to the parties of each agreement or should the parties to the agreement be required to report to the municipality?).

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments related to the proposed changes on behalf of our municipal clients.

Yours very truly,

WATSON & ASSOCIATES ECONOMISTS LTD.

Gary Scandlan, BA, PLE, Managing Partner

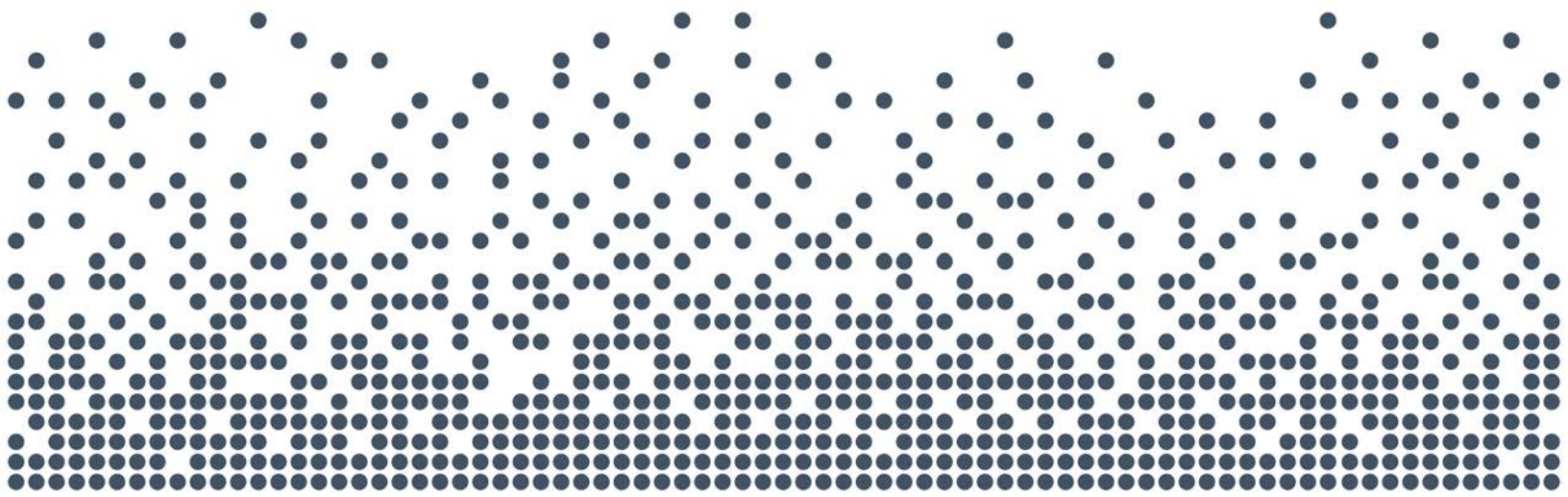
Andrew Grunda, MBA, CPA, CMA, Principal

Jamie Cook, MCIP, RPP, PLE, Managing Partner

Peter Simcisko, BA (Hons), MBE, Managing Partner

Sean-Michael Stephen, MBA, Managing Partner

Jack Ammendolia, BES, PLE, Managing Partner



Appendix

Table 2: 10% Below Average Resale Price, 2022

Regional Market Area	Average Resale Price 2022	10% Below Average Resale Price 2022
Ontario	\$813,000	\$731,700
City of Toronto	\$1,146,500	\$1,031,800
Central	\$1,030,100	\$927,100
Regional Municipality of Durham	\$893,000	\$803,700
Regional Municipality of Halton	\$1,206,300	\$1,085,700
City of Hamilton	\$805,100	\$724,600
District Municipality of Muskoka	\$920,800	\$828,700
Regional Municipality of Niagara	\$667,700	\$601,000
Regional Municipality of Peel	\$1,052,500	\$947,300
County of Simcoe	\$791,500	\$712,300
Regional Municipality of York	\$1,271,000	\$1,143,900
Eastern	\$536,800	\$483,100
City of Cornwall	\$384,400	\$345,900
County of Hastings	\$495,000	\$445,500
City of Kawartha Lakes	\$671,100	\$604,000
City of Kingston	\$581,700	\$523,500
County of Lanark	\$520,300	\$468,200
UC of Leeds and Grenville	\$470,000	\$423,000
County of Lennox and Addington	\$638,700	\$574,800
County of Northumberland	\$673,300	\$606,000
City of Ottawa	\$670,900	\$603,800
City of Peterborough	\$675,200	\$607,700
UC of Prescott and Russell	\$462,400	\$416,200
County of Renfrew	\$399,600	\$359,700
Southwestern	\$650,900	\$585,800
City of Brantford	\$672,400	\$605,200
County of Bruce	\$589,500	\$530,500
Municipality of Chatham-Kent	\$410,900	\$369,800
County of Dufferin	\$923,900	\$831,500
County of Grey	\$712,200	\$641,000
County of Huron	\$569,700	\$512,700
County of Lambton	\$527,000	\$474,300
City of London	\$621,600	\$559,400
County of Norfolk	\$626,900	\$564,200
County of Oxford	\$639,000	\$575,100
City of St. Thomas	\$558,400	\$502,600
City of Stratford	\$609,000	\$548,100
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	\$754,800	\$679,300
County of Wellington	\$830,400	\$747,400
City of Windsor	\$523,400	\$471,000
Northeastern	\$375,800	\$338,200
Algoma DSAB	\$256,700	\$231,000
Cochrane DSSAB	\$254,400	\$229,000
City of Greater Sudbury	\$414,600	\$373,100
Manitoulin-Sudbury DSSAB	\$332,800	\$299,500
Nipissing DSSAB	\$393,800	\$354,400
Parry Sound DSSAB	\$692,300	\$623,100
Sault Ste. Marie DSSAB	\$312,600	\$281,300
Timiskaming DSSAB	\$246,300	\$221,700
Northwestern	\$322,500	\$290,300
Kenora DSSAB	\$356,400	\$320,800
Rainy River DSSAB	\$247,800	\$223,000
Thunder Bay DSSAB	\$320,400	\$288,300

Source: Real Property Solutions House Price Index

Note: The average resale price may be influenced, particularly in smaller areas, by the number and type of house resales.

Contact: Stewart Houghton | Community and Supportive Housing Division | Housing.Research@ontario.ca

Average Apartment Rents, Ontario, 2022

Table 4. Average Rent by Bedroom Count

Regional Market Area	Bachelor Rent	1 Bedroom Rent	2 Bedroom Rent	3 Bedroom Rent	4+ Bedroom Rent	Total Bedroom Rent
Ontario	\$1,179	\$1,350	\$1,555	\$1,835	\$2,549	\$1,470
City of Toronto	\$1,316	\$1,537	\$1,811	\$2,083	\$2,633	\$1,673
Central	\$1,297	\$1,514	\$1,754	\$2,014	\$2,425	\$1,644
Regional Municipality of Durham	\$1,074	\$1,284	\$1,460	\$1,662	**	\$1,425
Regional Municipality of Halton	\$1,145	\$1,510	\$1,784	\$1,910	**	\$1,696
City of Hamilton	\$919	\$1,142	\$1,334	\$1,486	**	\$1,238
District Municipality of Muskoka	\$814	\$965	\$1,203	\$1,281	**	\$1,143
Regional Municipality of Niagara	\$858	\$1,071	\$1,260	\$1,389	**	\$1,199
Regional Municipality of Peel	\$1,148	\$1,484	\$1,666	\$1,849	\$1,768	\$1,601
County of Simcoe	\$985	\$1,226	\$1,430	\$1,572	**	\$1,338
Regional Municipality of York	\$1,048	\$1,383	\$1,539	\$1,881	**	\$1,489
Eastern	\$1,078	\$1,273	\$1,485	\$1,694	\$2,773	\$1,381
City of Cornwall	\$780	\$825	\$1,003	\$1,035	**	\$941
County of Hastings	\$913	\$1,109	\$1,295	\$1,579	**	\$1,245
City of Kawartha Lakes	\$777	\$1,070	\$1,292	\$1,294	**	\$1,169
Haliburton County	**	**	**	**	**	**
City of Kawartha Lakes + Haliburton County	\$777	\$1,070	\$1,292	\$1,294	**	\$1,169
City of Kingston	\$975	\$1,211	\$1,472	\$1,624	**	\$1,390
County of Lanark	**	\$900	\$1,119	**	**	\$982
UC of Leeds and Grenville	\$767	\$912	\$1,141	\$1,161	**	\$1,066
County of Lennox and Addington	**	\$913	\$989	**	**	\$955
Prince Edward Division	**	\$1,024	\$1,124	**	**	\$1,089
County of Lennox & Addington + Prince Edward Division	**	\$943	\$1,042	**	**	\$1,002
County of Northumberland	**	\$1,231	\$1,650	\$1,756	**	\$1,544
City of Ottawa	\$1,122	\$1,348	\$1,633	\$1,865	**	\$1,462
City of Peterborough	\$873	\$1,090	\$1,339	\$1,517	**	\$1,244
UC of Prescott and Russell	\$501	\$680	\$1,131	**	**	\$1,014
County of Renfrew	\$508	\$879	\$1,066	**	**	\$1,028
Southwestern	\$888	\$1,132	\$1,354	\$1,472	**	\$1,261
City of Brantford	\$885	\$1,165	\$1,259	\$1,326	**	\$1,233
County of Bruce	**	\$1,054	\$1,409	\$1,488	**	\$1,324
Municipality of Chatham-Kent	\$867	\$954	\$1,088	\$1,058	**	\$1,036
County of Dufferin	**	\$1,269	\$1,455	\$1,588	**	\$1,372
County of Grey	\$742	\$931	\$1,069	\$1,145	**	\$1,019
County of Huron	**	\$787	\$948	**	**	\$877
County of Lambton	\$873	\$1,011	\$1,221	\$1,554	**	\$1,142
City of London	\$863	\$1,127	\$1,400	\$1,617	**	\$1,291
County of Norfolk	\$610	\$882	\$1,021	**	**	\$979
County of Oxford	\$886	\$1,161	\$1,384	\$1,468	**	\$1,311
City of St. Thomas	\$790	\$1,042	\$1,292	**	**	\$1,208
City of Stratford	\$743	\$1,257	\$1,350	\$1,434	**	\$1,310
Regional Municipality of Waterloo	\$1,075	\$1,245	\$1,469	\$1,631	**	\$1,398
County of Wellington	\$989	\$1,324	\$1,490	\$1,504	**	\$1,424
City of Windsor	\$791	\$1,010	\$1,174	\$1,316	**	\$1,065
Northeastern	\$751	\$914	\$1,151	\$1,281	**	\$1,064
Algoma District	\$741	\$880	\$1,009	\$964	**	\$958
Algoma DSSAB	\$741	\$880	\$1,009	\$964	**	\$958
Cochrane DSSAB	\$570	\$944	\$1,062	\$1,120	**	\$1,004
City of Greater Sudbury	\$796	\$930	\$1,254	\$1,472	**	\$1,135
Manitoulin District	**	**	**	**	**	**
Sudbury District	**	**	**	**	**	**
Manitoulin - Sudbury DSSAB	**	**	**	**	**	**
Nipissing DSSAB	\$674	\$905	\$1,116	\$1,311	**	\$1,040
Parry Sound DSSAB	**	**	**	**	**	**
City of Sault Ste. Marie	\$746	\$917	\$1,087	\$1,005	**	\$1,015
Timiskaming DSSAB	**	**	**	**	**	**
Northwestern	\$751	\$956	\$1,168	\$1,446	**	\$1,084
Kenora DSSAB	**	\$836	\$1,008	**	**	\$911
Rainy River DSSAB	**	**	**	**	**	**
Thunder Bay DSSAB	\$757	\$964	\$1,175	\$1,457	**	\$1,094

Source: CMHC, Rental Market Survey, October 2022

** Data suppressed to protect confidentiality, not statistically reliable or not available

Contact: Stewart Houghton | Community and Supportive Housing Division | Housing.Research@ontario.ca

