

Housing *matters*

George Brown
January 20, 2011

Michael Shapcott
Director, Affordable Housing and Social
Innovation, Wellesley Institute



Very big



Very rich



Very few people



THE PRECARIOUS HOUSING “ICEBERG”

Visible homeless: 150,000 - 300,000

Hidden homeless: 450,000 - 900,000

Overcrowded: 705,165 h/hs

Substandard housing:
1.3 million h/hs

Core housing need:
1.5 million h/hs

Inadequate housing: 2 million h/hs
(minor repairs)

Annual housing supply deficit:
220,000 h/hs

Unaffordable housing: 3.1 million h/hs
(paying > 30%)

Making the “invisible” visible:

Hidden people, hidden needs





Health

Toronto 1912:
Founding of
Wellesley Hospital



Toronto 1910



Housing

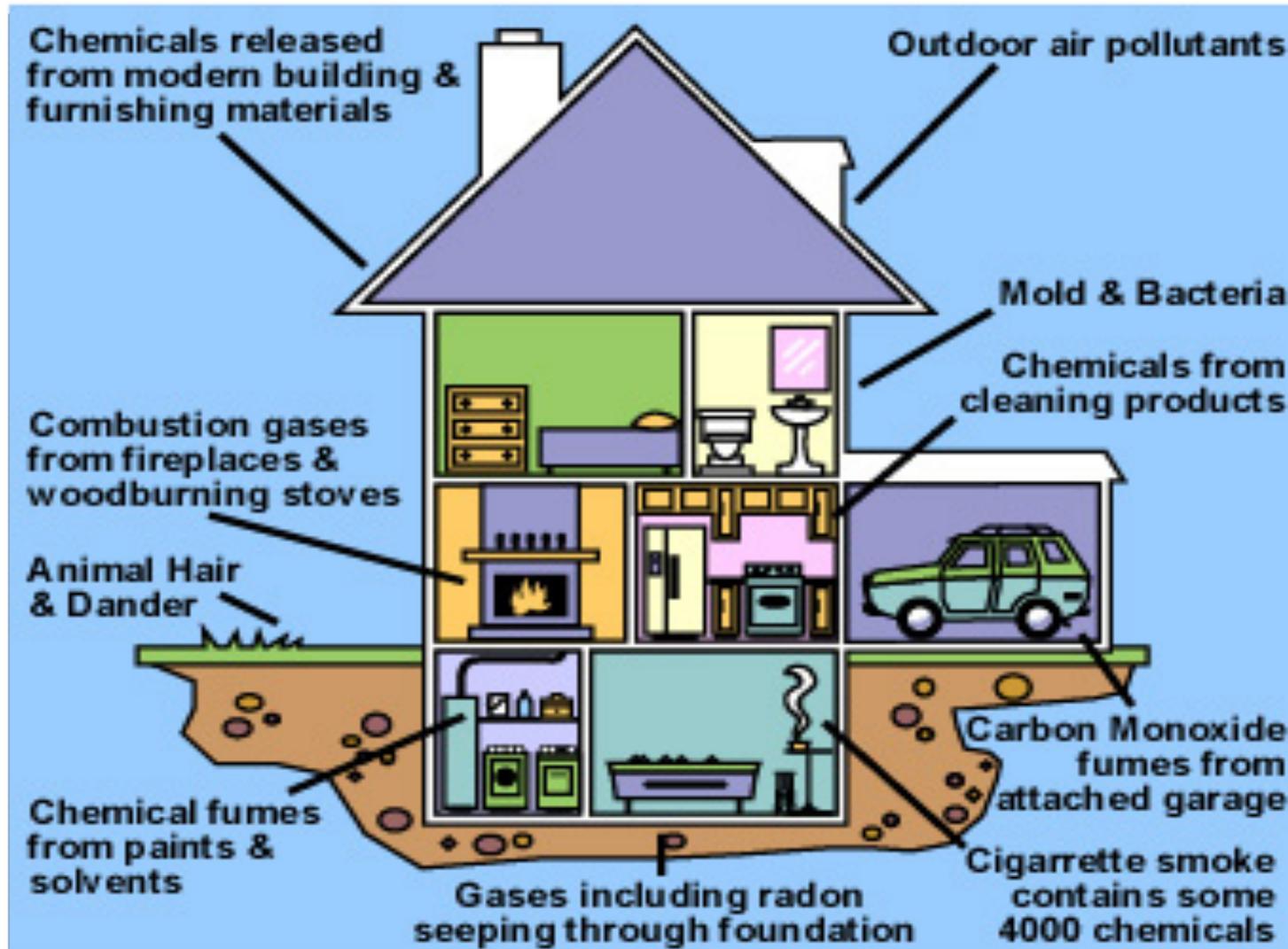
*“The health of
Toronto must
necessarily
mean the
health of
its
citizens.”*

Dr. H.A. Bruce,
Lieutenant-Governor
of Ontario, 1934





How can your home affect your health?



How can your home affect your health?

Biological, chemical and physical hazards

Physical design (accidents, size, organization of space)

Psychological benefits (control, meaning)

Social benefits (friendships, neighbours, social networks)

Financial security (own / rent, affordability)





**Mental
health**

Housing

**Chronic
disease**

**Infectious
disease**



“Overall, the mental health status of homeless people was severe and alarming. Homeless people reported extremely high rates of mental health symptoms, suicidal ideation and attempted suicide. Contrary to the stereotype, the most common mental health issues were depression and anxiety.”



THE STREET HEALTH REPORT

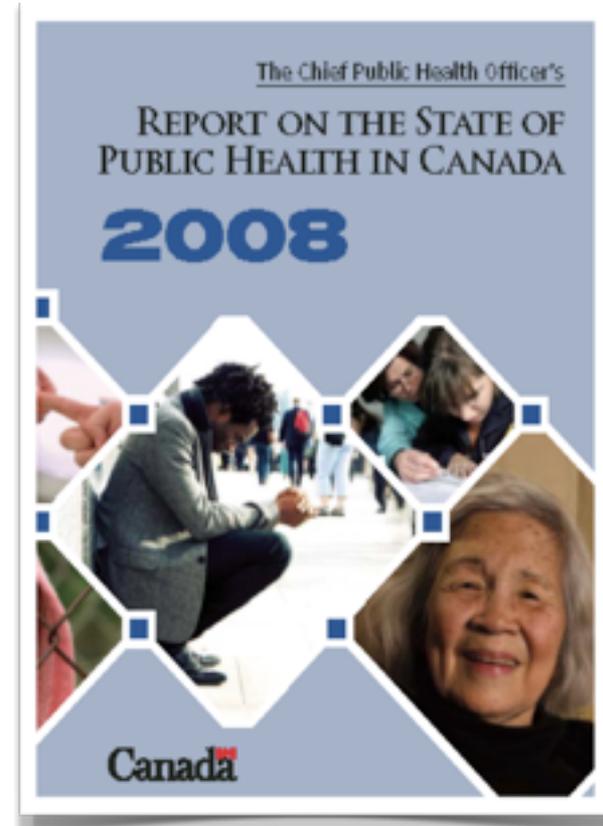
HIGHLIGHTS &
ACTION PLAN

2007



Chief Public Health Officer of Canada:

“While certain disadvantaged [people] have poorer health than most of us, none of us is immune to health inequalities. With few exceptions, the evidence shows people with better incomes, better education and better social supports enjoy better health than those with fewer social and economic opportunities.”

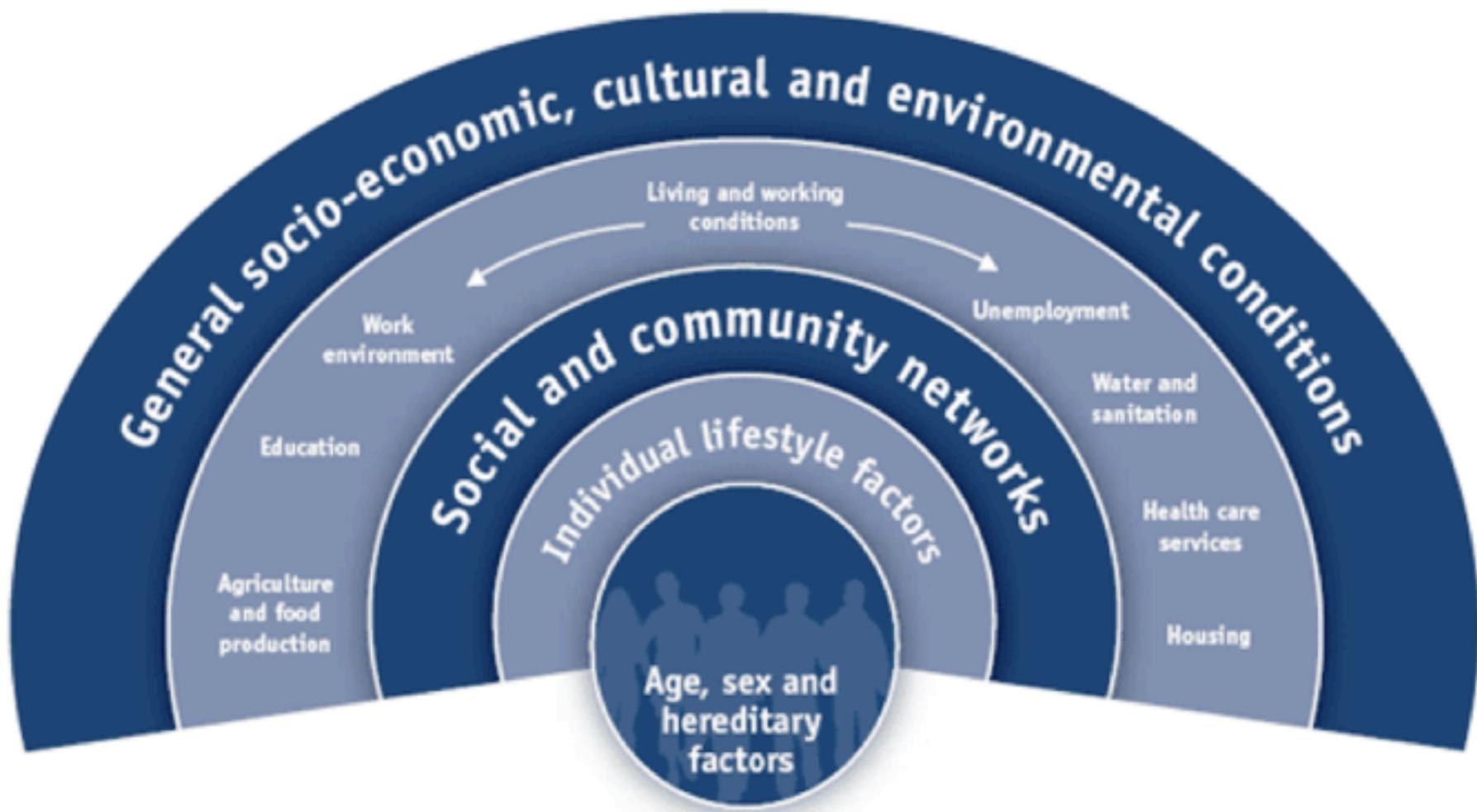


“Health outcomes related to housing are **complex...**”

“Inadequate housing may produce direct effects in **extreme climates.**” “Respiratory disease/poor lung function and allergies related to **moulds** from cold, damp or poorly ventilated houses may develop.” “Other health conditions can arise related to exposure to **specific toxic substances...**”

“Overcrowding and poorly ventilated houses can also increase **susceptibility to disease.** The number of people per dwelling has been known to greatly impact the physical and mental health of inhabitants, including raising the risk of acquiring tuberculosis. This is especially true for many Canadian Aboriginal populations and for immigrants.”





Closing the gap in a generation

Health equity through action on the social determinants of health



World Health Organization:

"(The) toxic combination of bad policies, economics, and politics is, in large measure, responsible for the fact that a majority of people in the world do not enjoy the good health that is biologically possible."



“Many cities are facing a **crisis in the availability of, and access to, affordable quality housing**. This crisis will worsen social inequities and in health. In the United States, inequities are exacerbated by neighbourhoods that have adopted low-density-only zoning. These have become more exclusionary, leading to fewer African American and Hispanic residents.”

“It is important that local government regulates land development for low-income housing. **Creating more equitable housing development means reversing effects of exclusionary zoning** through inclusionary zoning, fair housing laws, health and health-equity impacts of housing, building, and infrastructure standards.



SICK AND TIRED

The Compromised Health of Social Assistance Recipients and the Working Poor in Ontario

Produced by the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, the University of Toronto's Social Assistance in the New Economy Project and the Wellesley Institute

February 2009



Social Assistance
in the New Economy

Poverty is making us sick

A comprehensive survey of income and health in Canada

Ernie Lightman, Ph.D
Andrew Mitchell, MIR
Beth Wilson, MSW

December 2008

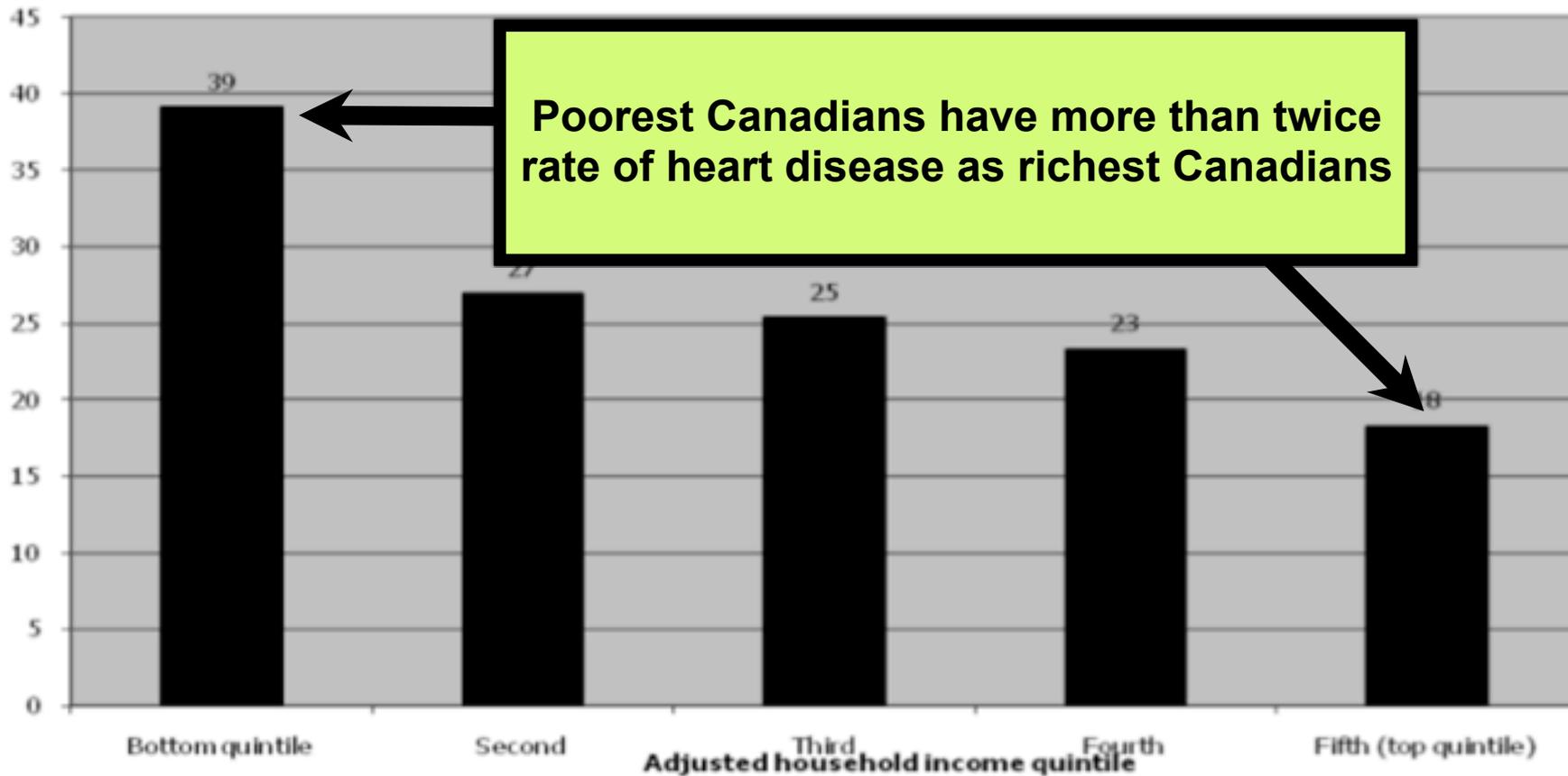


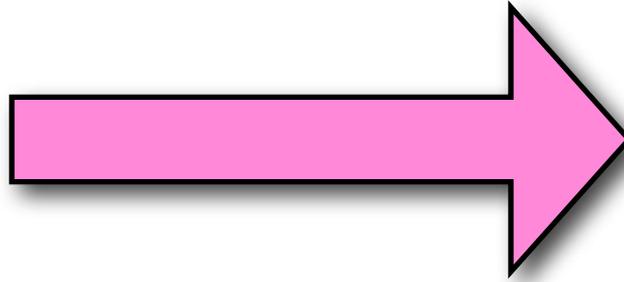
Social Assistance
in the New Economy



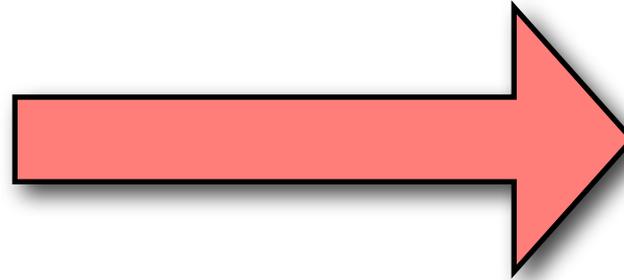
Heart disease

Age-adjusted rate per thousand, by adjusted household income quintile
Canada population 18-64, 2005





Bad housing makes you sick!
Good housing is good for your health!



North American HIV / AIDS research

Medical care hospitalization - PLWHA 12 months before/after DAH (n=250)

	12 mos pre	12 mos post	Change (\$)
Sum	5,636,924	2,513,270	-3,123,654
Mean	22,638	10,093	-12,545 *
Median	211	0	-211

* P value: < .01 (ttest)



Making the links...

**Insecure housing
Homelessness**

Substandard / overcrowded
housing and shelters

Constant moving

Poverty

Poor nutrition

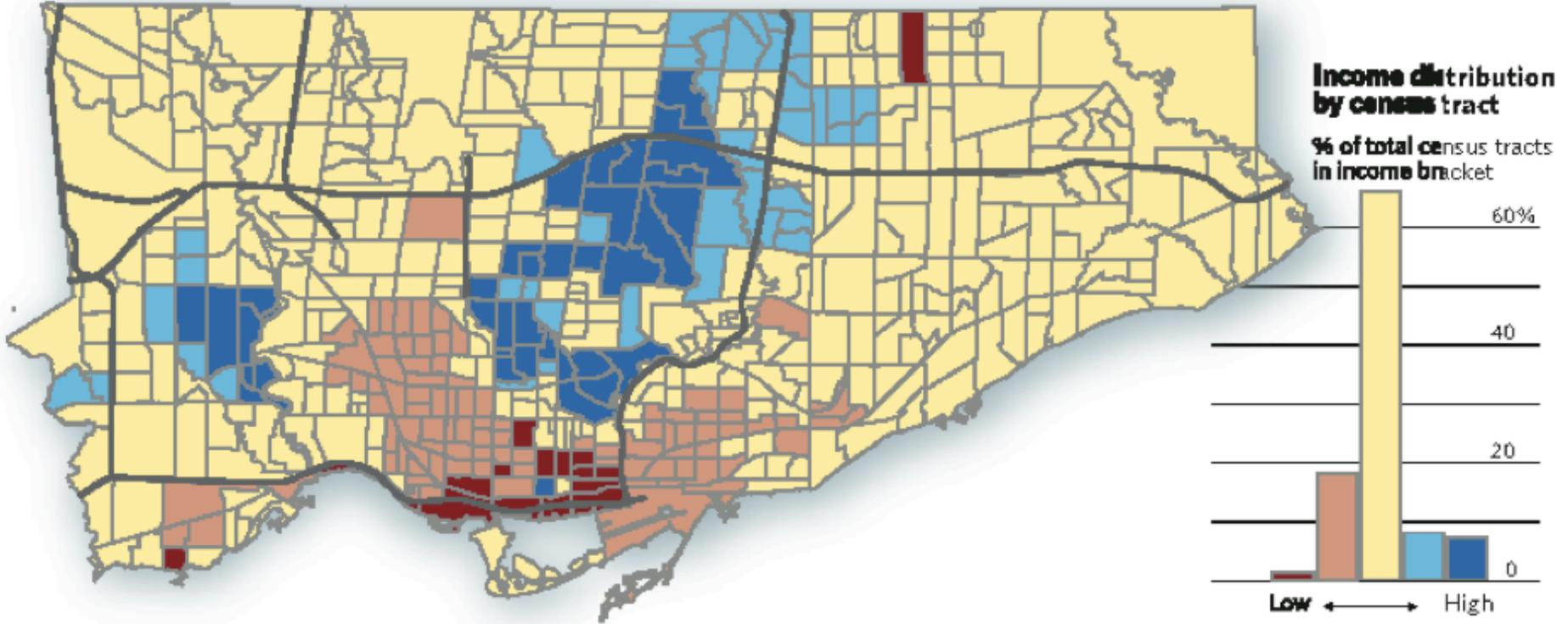
Race / gender

Inability to engage in
proper health practices

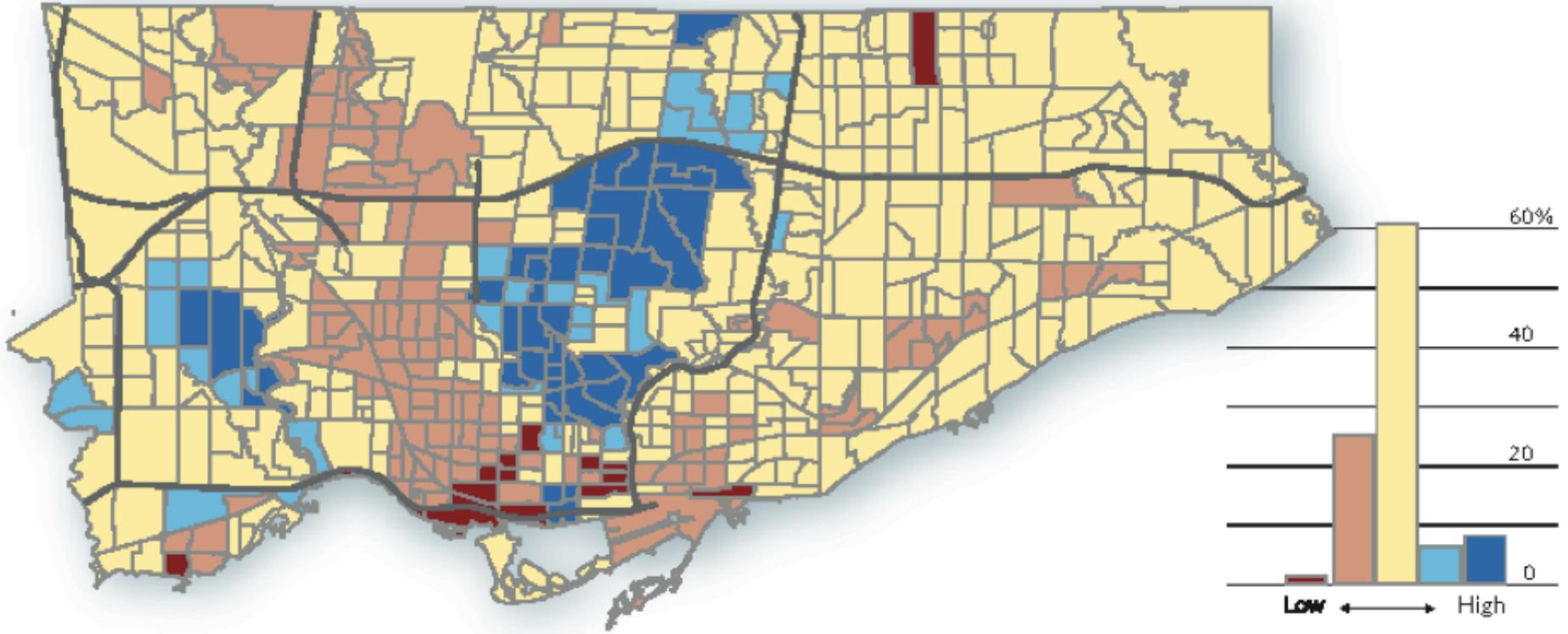
**Increased morbidity
Premature death**



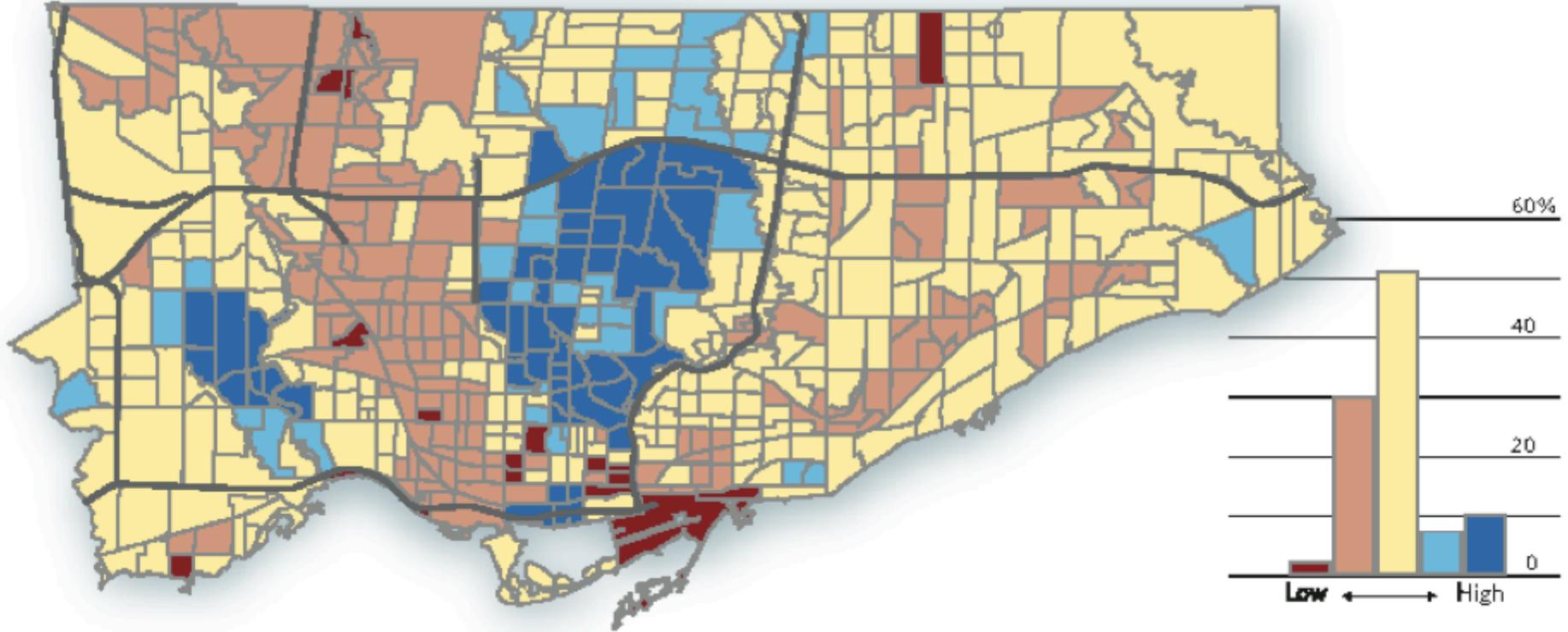
Toronto - 1970



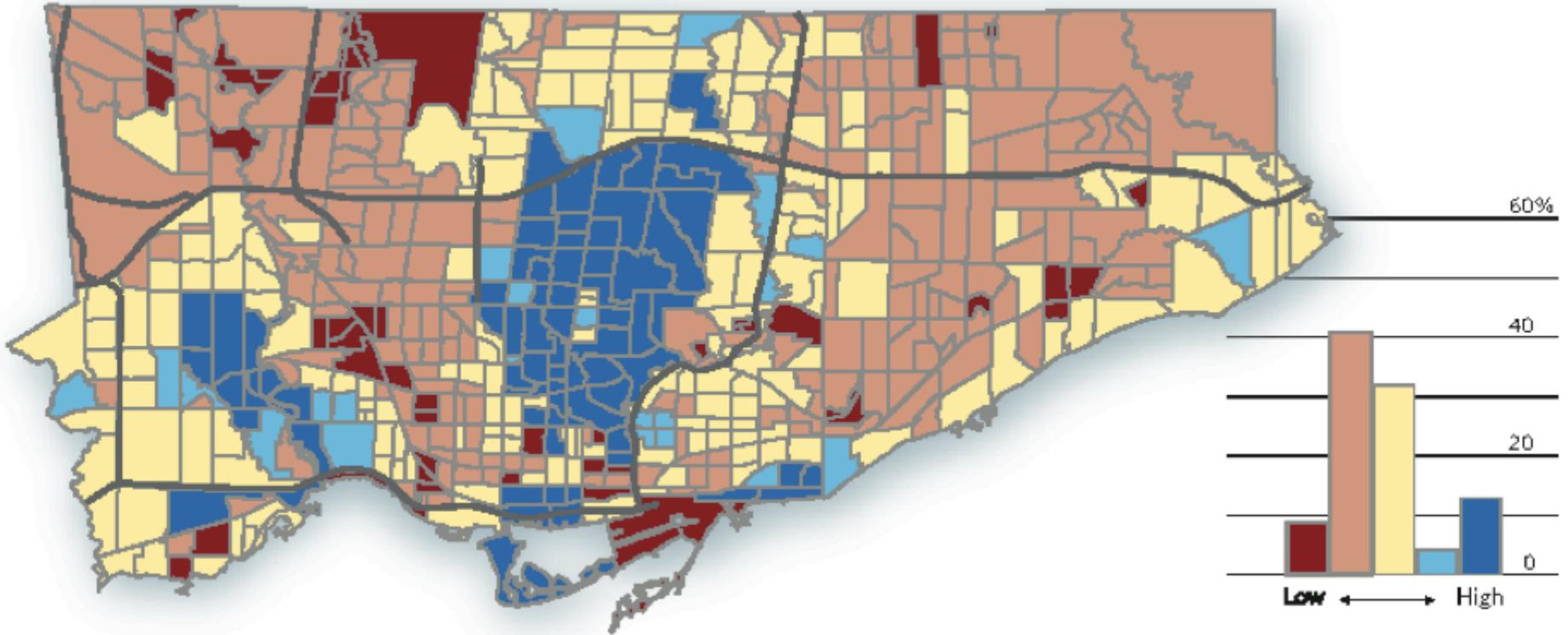
Toronto - 1980

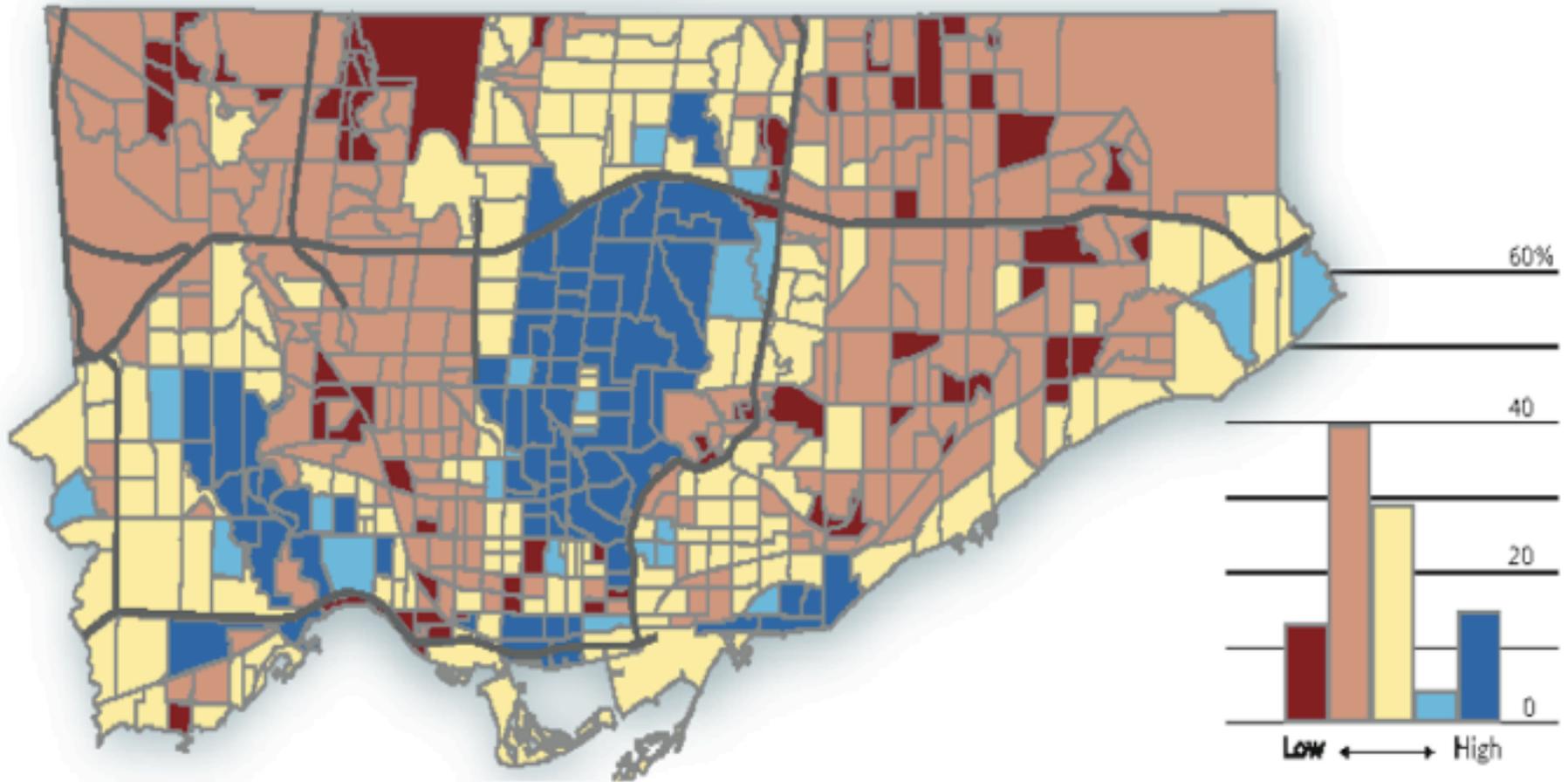


Toronto - 1990



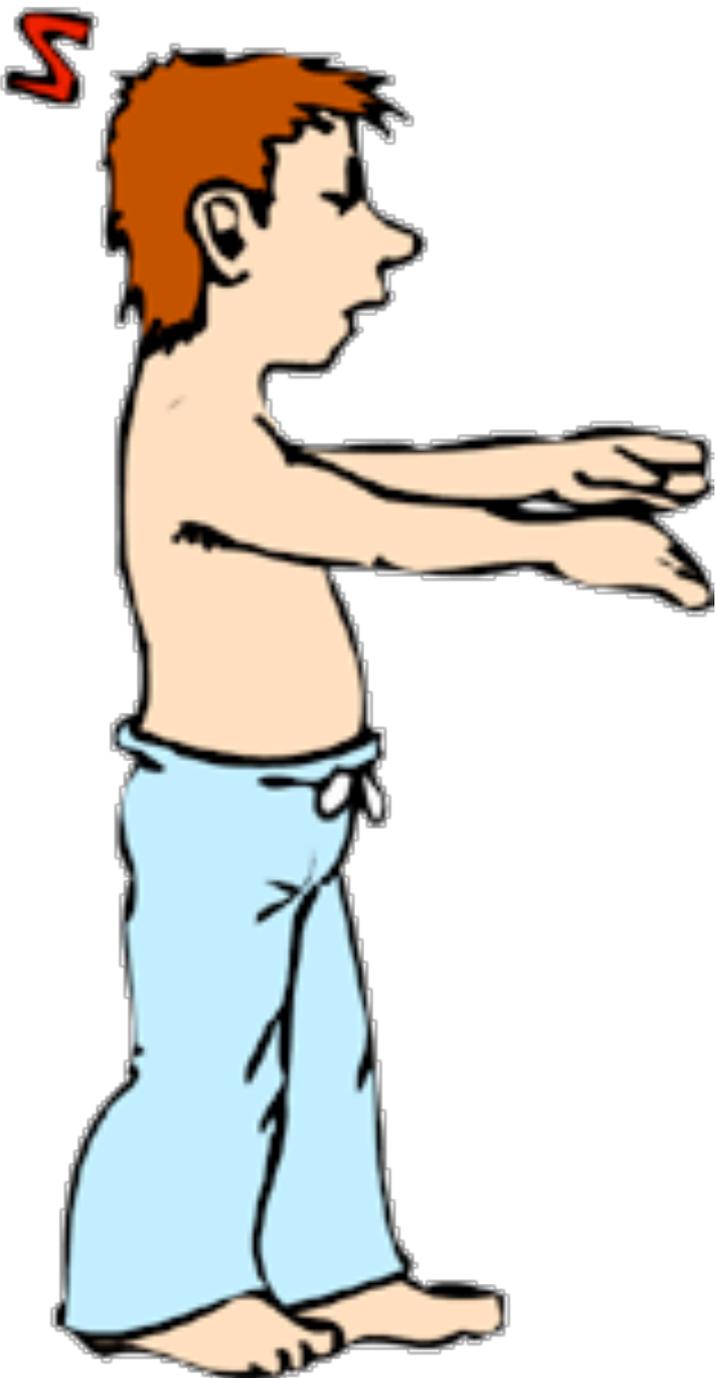
Toronto - 2000





Toronto (2005) - *segregated by income*





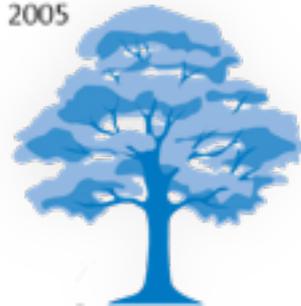
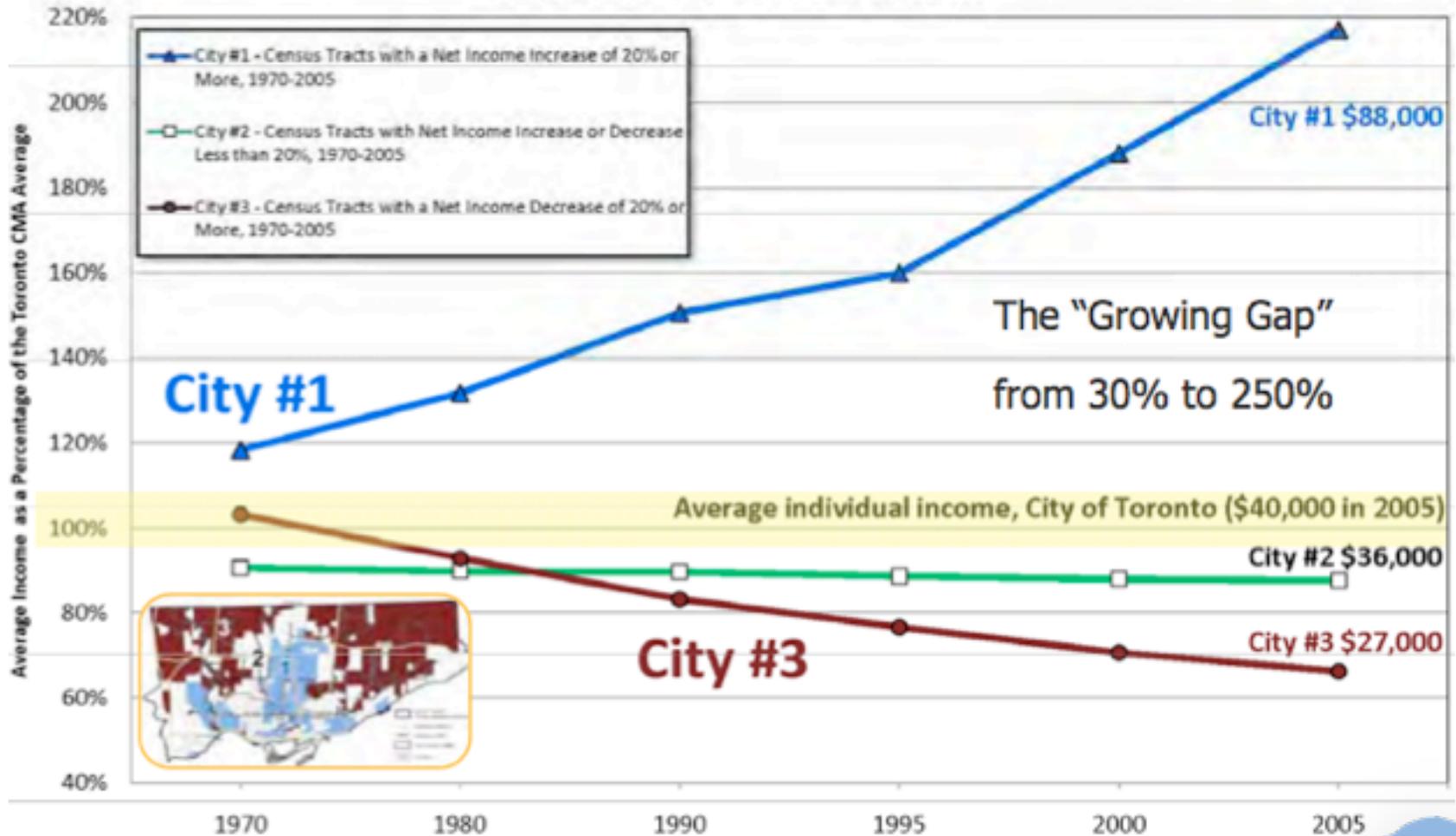
'Sleep walking to segregation'

- the growing gap
- the nouveau poor

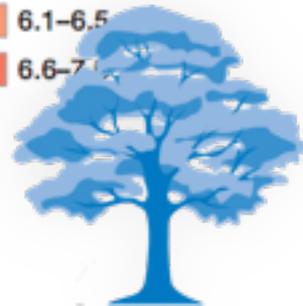
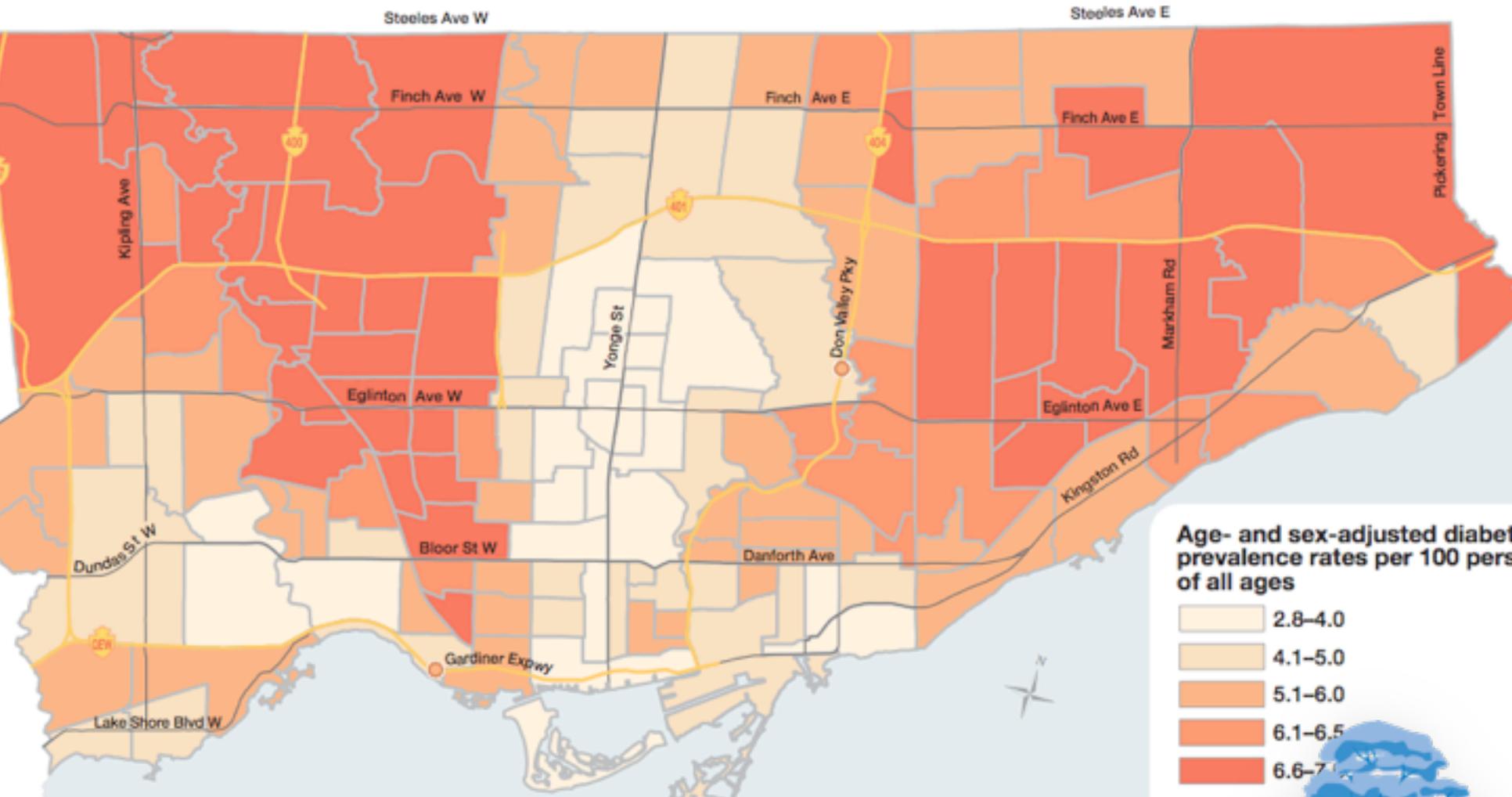


Average Individual Income in the Three Cities of Toronto, 1970 to 2005

Income of Persons 15 and Over from all Sources



Toronto (2005) - *segregated by health*



The Unequal City:

Income and Health Inequalities in Toronto

2008



416.338.7600 toronto.ca/health | toronto.ca/publichealth

Inequality costs:

❖ 1,100 premature deaths;

❖ 1,300 low birth weight babies.



Inequality is main culprit, not simply deprivation



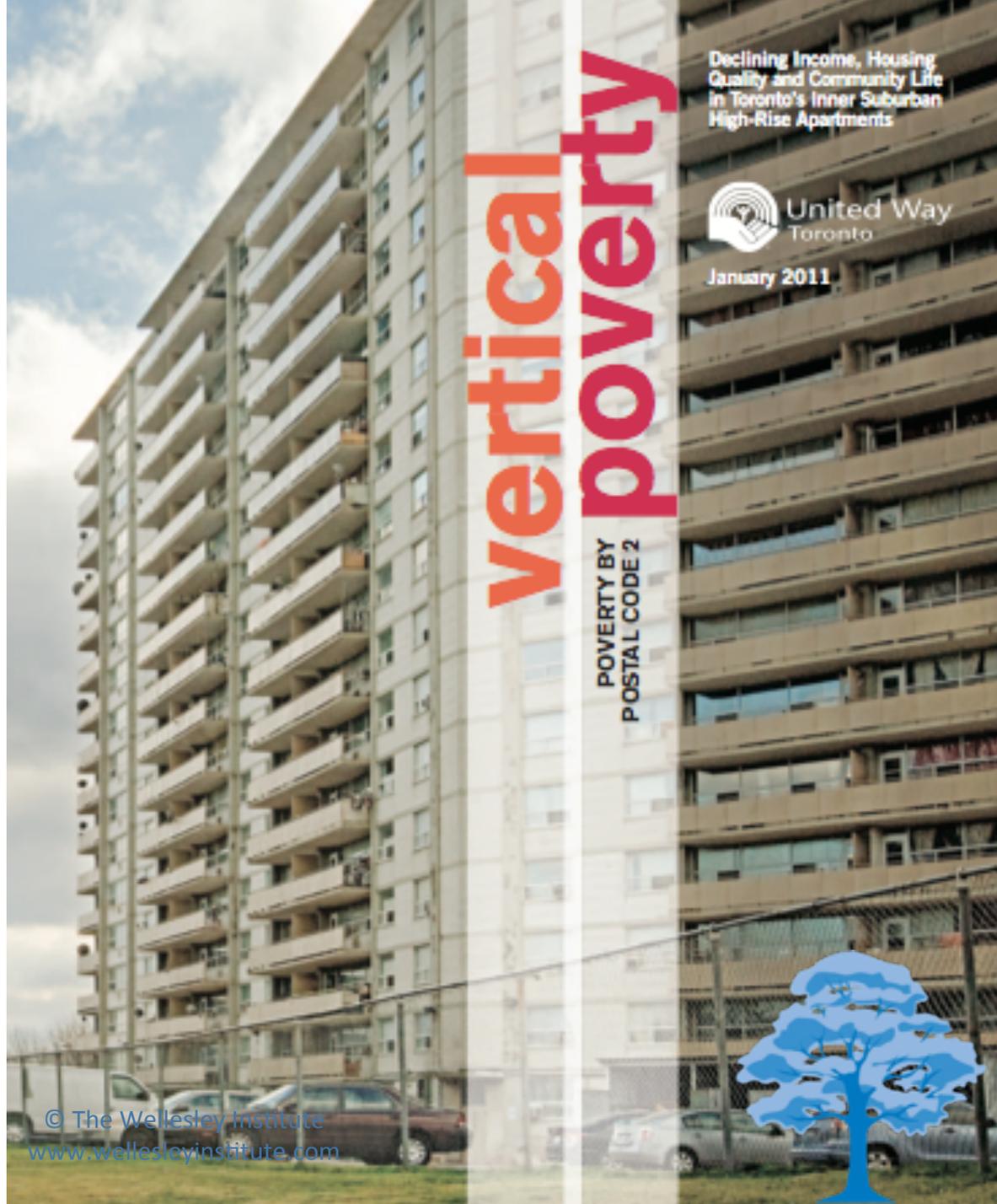
The Equality Trust



...because more
equal societies work
better for everyone



Toronto's one thousand highrise towers



**vertical
poverty**

POVERTY BY
POSTAL CODE 2

Declining Income, Housing
Quality and Community Life
in Toronto's Inner Suburban
High-Rise Apartments



January 2011



HIGHRISE

DIRECTOR'S BLOG ABOUT CONTACT SUBSCRIBE SHARE MENTIONS TRAILER PROLOGUE 1000th TOWER OUT MY WINDOW INSTALLATION



2010 INNOVATION
BY VISION SHEFFIELD INNOVATION AWARD
SHEFFIELD DOCFEST U.K.



WINNER
INAUGURAL IDFA DOCLAB AWARD
FOR DIGITAL STORYTELLING 2010

NEW 360° DOCUMENTARY!

OUT MY WINDOW

ENTER >

<http://highrise.nfb.ca/>

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Very big



Very rich



Very few people

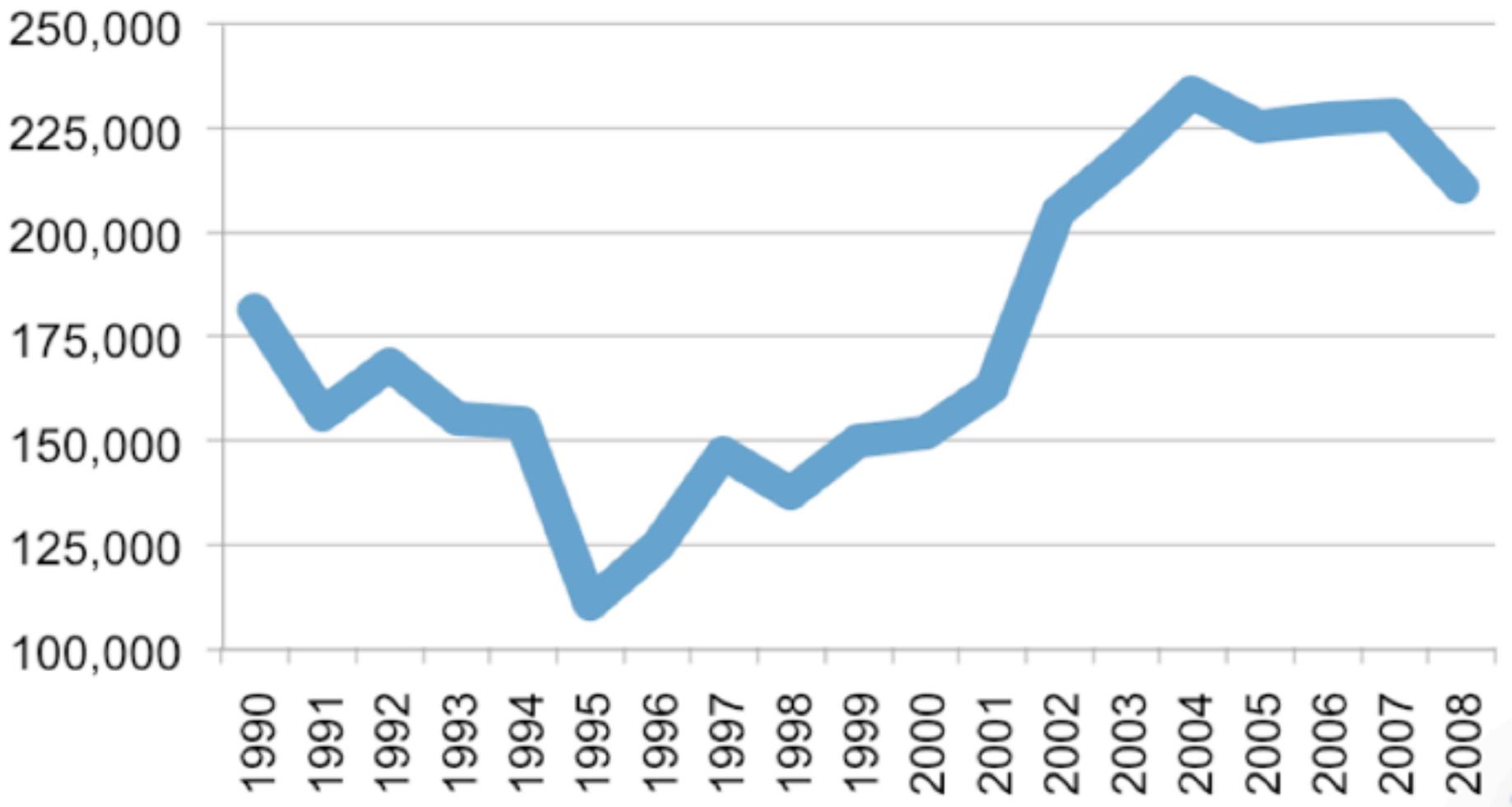


Four observations:



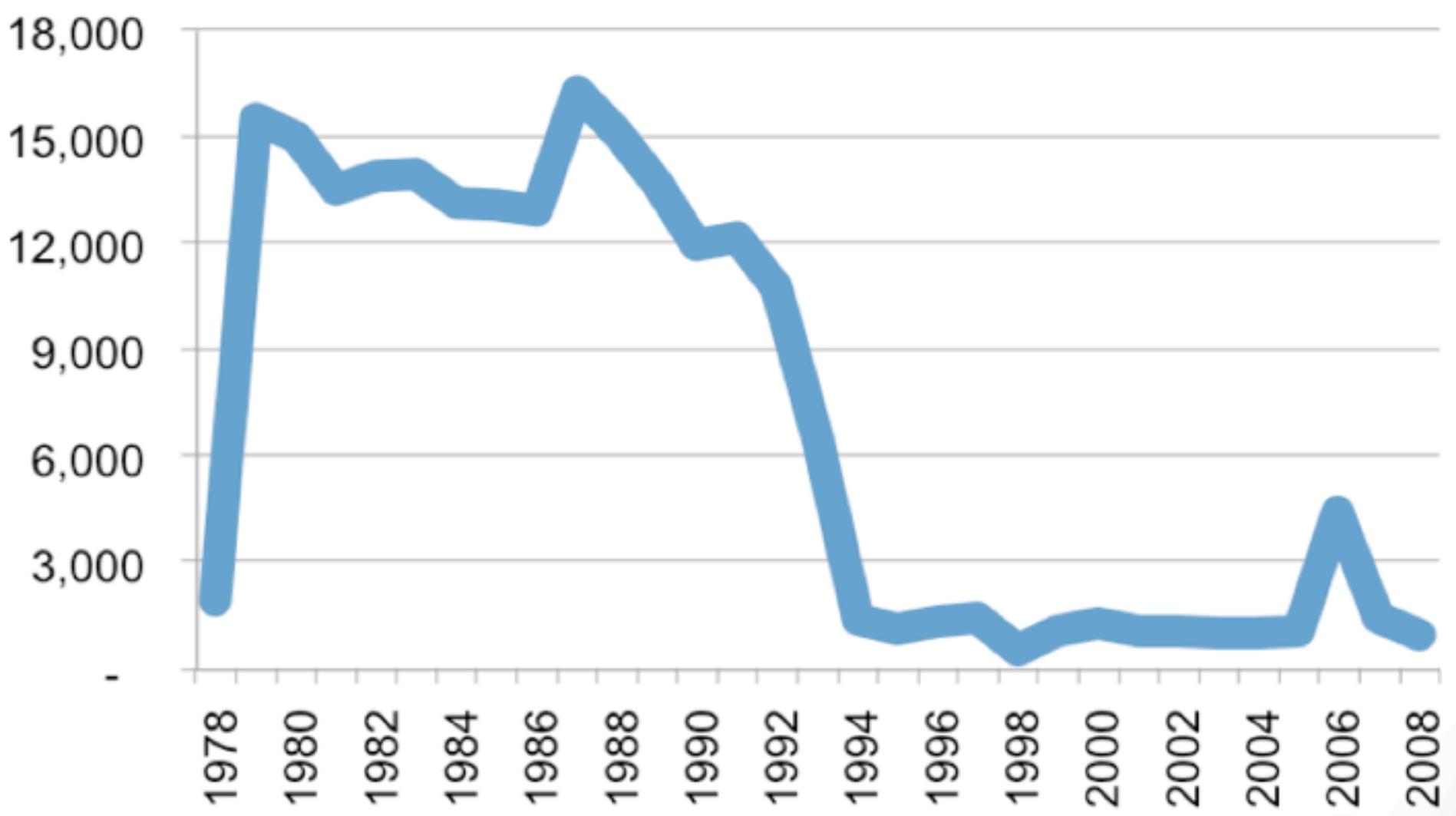
1. **Housing insecurity deep and persistent**
2. **Costly to people, communities, economy, government**
3. **Federal housing / homelessness investments eroding**
4. **No comprehensive, effective national plan**





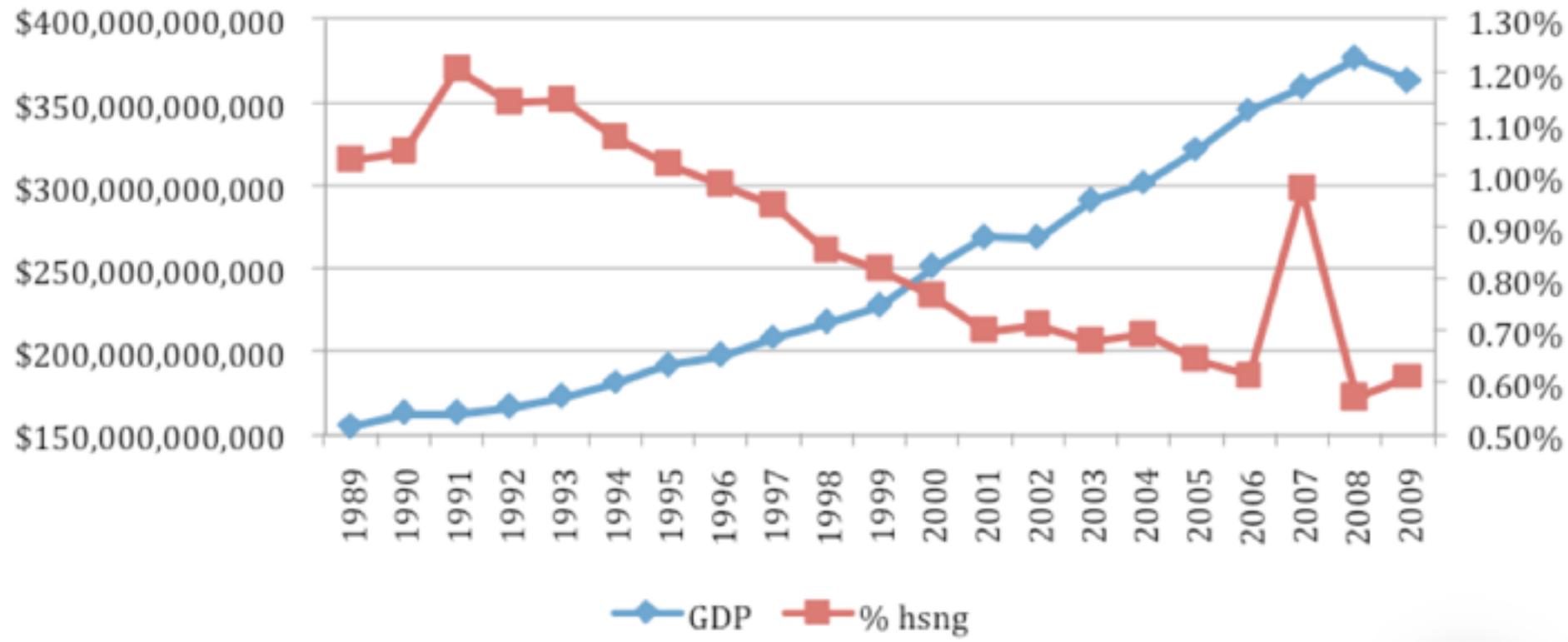
New housing starts - Canada





Affordable *housing starts* - Canada

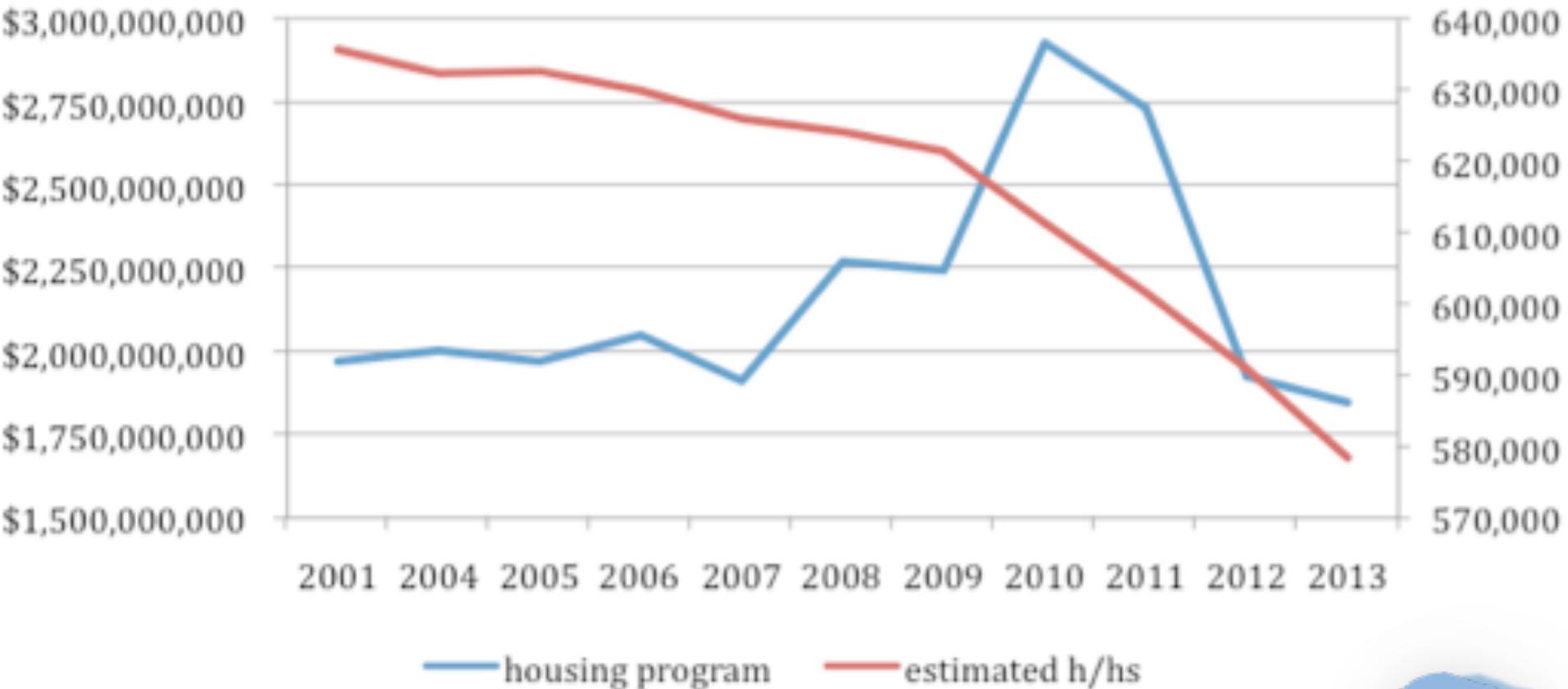




Shrinking government investments in housing - even as economy roars

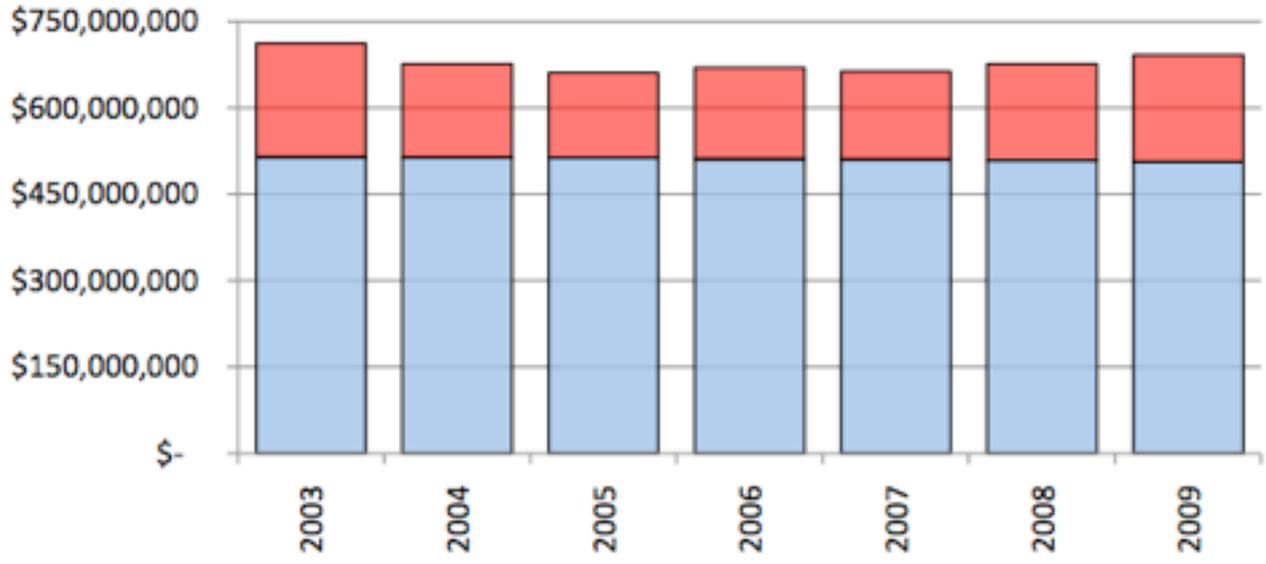


Looking ahead - more federal cuts



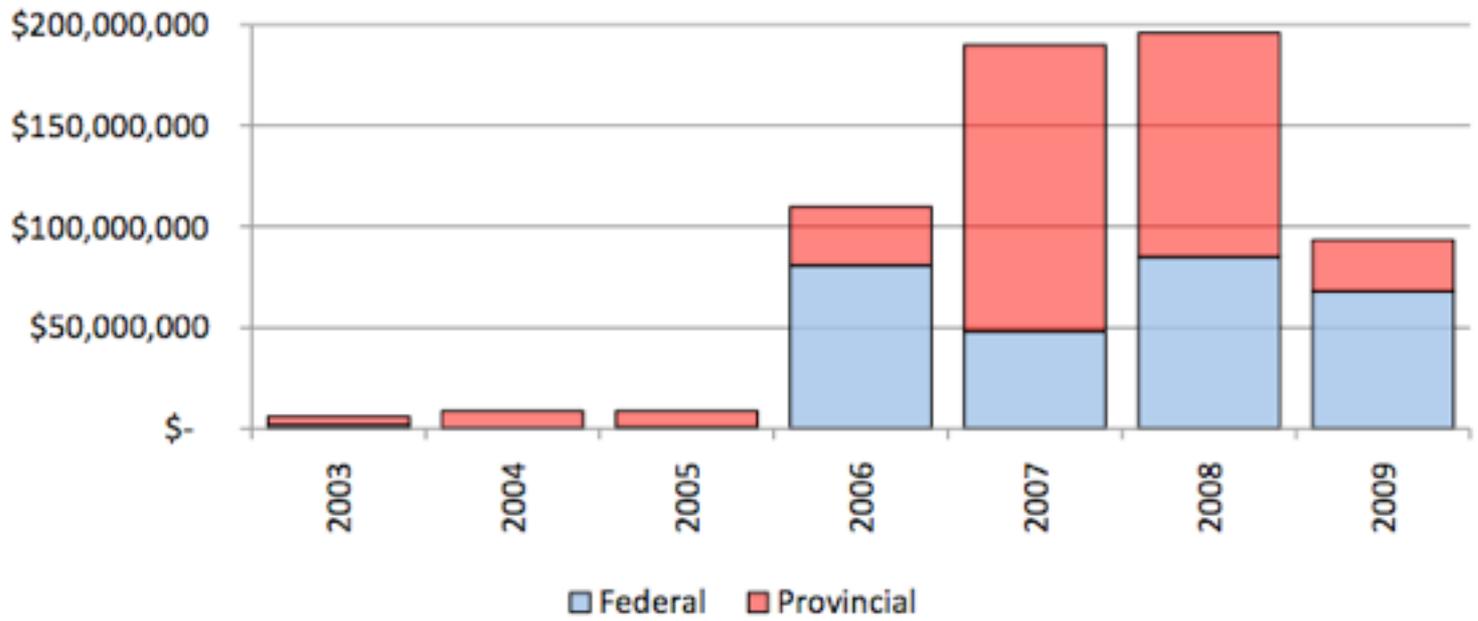
Ontario affordable housing operating spending to fiscal 2009

(source: Public Accounts of Ontario)



Ontario affordable housing capital spending to fiscal 2009

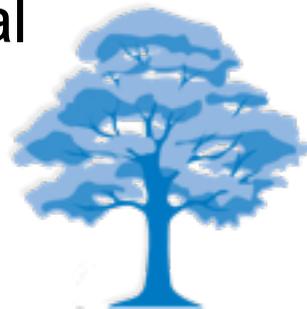
(source: Public Accounts of Ontario)



Ontario auditor general, 2009:

“No provincial strategy to help ensure long-term sustainability of sufficient numbers of well-maintained social housing units.”

- No provincial plan to deal with expiry of federal subsidies.
- ‘Fragmented and inefficient approach’ among more than 20 housing programs in three provincial ministries.
- Poor design, lack of monitoring, left Ontario ‘unable to determine whether funds were spent fulfilling most critical social housing needs’
- Ontario unable to account for \$330 million in federal housing funds transferred to the province.



Devolution of housing



Brian Mulroney:
Cut billions in
housing funding;
Cancelled national
social housing
program



Jean Chretien / Paul Martin:
Promised to restore funding,
but didn't; downloaded most
housing to provinces



Mike Harris:
Cut hundreds of
millions in funding;
downloaded to
municipalities

Deliberate policies - deliberate decisions



Federal / Ontario actions

1984 to 1993 - \$2 billion in federal housing cuts

1993 – new federal housing spending cancelled

1995 - Ontario cancels all new housing spending

1996 – federal housing downloaded to provinces

1998 - CMHC partially commercialized

1998 - ON downloads housing to municipalities

1998 - ON guts tenant protection / rent regulation



\$66 billion for banks for mortgage-backed securities

\$2 billion for federal housing spending



Vision 2020: Build a national housing plan from community up



- **New affordable homes – 600,000 over 10 years**
- **Repairs to existing homes – 200,000 over 10 years**
- **Affordability measures – 1.5m households**
- **Co-ordinated with provinces, territories, municipalities, community and private sectors, Aboriginals**
- **Real targets, timelines and funding**

Affordable housing is critical for healthy, inclusive neighbourhoods and effective city-building



International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Article 11, 1: The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.



Re-building housing plan...

- Legislation*
- Regulation*
- Housing / tenant protection*
- Access to financing*
- Planning / zoning*
- Co-ordinated response*
- Supports / services*



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