

The Regional Municipality of York

Committee of the Whole
Community and Health Services
October 3, 2019

Report of the Commissioner of Community and Health Services and
the Commissioner of Corporate Services and Chief Planner

Five-Year Review and Update of *Housing Solutions*

1. Recommendations

1. Council approve *Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023*, the second phase of York Region's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan (Attachment 1).
2. The Regional Clerk send a copy of this report and Attachment 1 to the Clerks of the local municipalities and to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing for review as required under the *Housing Services Act, 2011*.

2. Summary

This report seeks Council approval of *Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023*, the second phase of York Region's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan. The Plan includes updated goals for 2019 to 2023 and new actions to be carried out over 2019 and 2020.

Key Points:

- As Service Manager, York Region is required by the *Housing Services Act, 2011* to prepare a 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan and complete a review of the plan at least every five years.
- To complete the review, York Region engaged community partners and residents and conducted an in-depth needs assessment of the housing and homelessness system.
- The 2019 to 2023 update refines the original *Housing Solutions* goals to better align with current housing needs and new opportunities for the Region and community partners to work together to help residents find and keep affordable housing.

3. Background

Council approved the Region's first Housing and Homelessness Plan in June 2014

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* requires the Region, as Service Manager, to develop and implement a 10-year plan that addresses local housing and homelessness needs. In [June 2014](#), Council approved the Region's first plan, [Housing Solutions: A place for everyone](#) (*Housing Solutions*).

Housing Solutions set out strategic directions for the housing and homelessness system in York Region. It focused on four goals and 49 actions related to increasing and sustaining the rental housing supply, supporting home ownership affordability and strengthening the homelessness and housing stability system. Between 2014 and 2018 – the first phase of the 10-year plan – most actions were completed and the balance initiated. Staff communicated key accomplishments over this period to Council through progress reports in June of each year. Highlights of key annual accomplishments are presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Housing Solutions Key Accomplishments from 2014 to 2018

Year	Accomplishments
2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Piloted a 36-month development charge deferral to support development of 225 private market rental units, in partnership with the Town of Newmarket• Completed construction of Lakeside Residences in the Town of Georgina, offering 97 new affordable housing units
2015	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Established a permanent policy for development charge deferrals to support construction of purpose-built rental housing• Opened Belinda's Place in the Town of Newmarket to support adult women who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through a new service delivery model with emergency and transitional housing, drop-in services, wraparound supports and aftercare
2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opened the Richmond Hill Hub in the City of Richmond Hill with:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 202 new affordable housing units using an innovative tired-rent model that provides affordable rents without the need for an ongoing operating subsidy○ The Youth Hub to support youth who are homeless or at risk of homelessness with a wraparound service delivery model
2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Began construction of Woodbridge Lane in the City of Vaughan to

Year	Accomplishments
	provide 162 new affordable housing units to households with a range of incomes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Began developing an integrated and coordinated homelessness supports service delivery model to prevent and address homelessness by helping clients find and retain housing
2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched the Home Now Program using a Housing First approach to help people experiencing chronic homelessness find and keep housing • Conducted I Count, an enumeration and survey of people experiencing homelessness to better understand homelessness in York Region, and created a By Name List to match people with the right supports

For the five-year review of *Housing Solutions*, York Region engaged community partners and residents and conducted an in-depth needs assessment of the housing and homelessness system

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* requires Service Managers to review their local housing and homelessness plans at least once every five years and make amendments as necessary. The Province has directed Service Managers to report on their five-year reviews and updated plans to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing by December 31, 2019.

The five-year review and update of *Housing Solutions* began in 2018 and was led by a staff working group appointed by the multi-departmental Housing Strategy Steering Committee. The review process included:

- Engagement with the community through focus groups, workshops and surveys to better understand current housing needs
- Analysis of housing and homelessness data, including the [I Count](#) homeless enumeration findings, *Housing Matters* market research to be published in fall 2019, and previous [Affordable Housing Measuring and Monitoring Reports](#)
- Detailed review of the original goals and actions to identify opportunities to build on past achievements in accordance with approved budgets and Regional priorities

As communicated to Council in [June 2019](#), the community consultations and needs assessment confirmed that York Region’s population and economy are growing and diversifying and the urban structure continues to mature. However, the available mix and range of housing options has not kept pace with residents’ changing needs. At the same time, an increasing proportion of York Region residents live with low income and have other complex needs and barriers that can impact their ability to find and keep housing, placing

greater pressure on homelessness and housing stability services. Detailed findings from the community consultations are included in Attachment 1.

4. Analysis

To build on key accomplishments and respond to current needs and challenges, *Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023* includes new goals and actions

Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023 continues to provide a coordinated framework to address housing affordability and build homelessness prevention and related support services. It also recognizes the roles of the Region and multiple partners and sectors within the housing system through an overall outcome statement: “Together with our partners, we help people find and keep appropriate housing.”

The 2019 to 2023 update, Attachment 1, sets out three goals that replace and update the four original *Housing Solutions* goals set in 2014 to reflect current needs and opportunities, and simplify concepts. Changes are as follows:

- Consolidated actions on housing supply into a single goal. This approach better reflects the Region’s available tools to address housing supply, including rental and ownership housing. It also takes into account the Region’s roles both as Service Manager responsible for community housing and as an upper-tier municipality that works in partnership with local municipalities to manage growth and development
- Created a new goal to capture actions that increase long-term housing stability for people with a wide range of different needs and provide supports to those who are experiencing homelessness
- Combined actions supporting capacity building and sustainability of the housing and homelessness system into a single goal

The revised goals are presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1
***Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023* Goals**



Housing Solutions sets out strategic objectives for the next five years and key actions for 2019 and 2020

Each of the three goals includes objectives to guide the Region’s actions over the next five years. The objectives of each goal are outlined in Table 2. Each objective includes one or more actions to be carried out over 2019 and 2020.

Table 2
Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023 Objectives

Goals	Objectives
1. Increase the supply of affordable and rental housing	1.1. Plan for a full mix and range of housing options to support the achievement of complete communities and promote economic development
	1.2. Implement tools and policies to increase the affordable housing supply
	1.3. Build community housing and encourage affordable rental housing to meet the housing needs of low and moderate income households
2. Help people find and keep housing	2.1. Deliver programs that help low and moderate-income residents living in private market housing keep their homes
	2.2. Support long-term housing stability by strengthening individuals and communities
	2.3. Advance prevention programs through continuous improvements to help people at risk of homelessness remain stably housed
	2.4. Strengthen homelessness and housing stability services to help people experiencing homelessness find and keep housing
3. Strengthen the housing and homelessness system	3.1. Sustain the existing stock of community housing
	3.2. Build an integrated system to plan and deliver homelessness and housing stability services
	3.3. Conduct research, engagement and knowledge sharing to identify service system gaps and build community capacity in the homelessness and housing stability service system
	3.4. Encourage and facilitate expansion of long-term care to help residents age in their communities

Annual progress reports to Council will continue to identify accomplishments from the previous year, and will also identify new actions moving forward that advance the goals and objectives of the plan. This approach ensures *Housing Solutions* maintains an overall strategy while remaining responsive to new opportunities and pressures, including emerging local needs and federal and provincial policy changes and funding opportunities. A flexible approach in identifying short-term actions is important given the changing funding landscape for housing, including the National Housing Strategy and the provincial Community Housing Renewal Strategy.

Affordable and rental housing targets will be addressed through the Municipal Comprehensive Review

The *Housing Services Act, 2011* requires Service Managers to set “objectives and targets” in their 10-Year Housing and Homelessness Plans, but does not require targets for specific housing types. The Growth Plan requires that municipalities support housing choice through the achievement of minimum intensification and density targets. The Growth Plan also requires municipalities to identify a diverse range and mix of housing options and densities, including second units and affordable housing to meet projected needs of current and future residents, and establish targets for affordable ownership housing and rental housing.

At this time, it is clear that York Region requires more affordable ownership housing options and more rental options at all price points. Targets for specific housing types, such as rental and affordable units, have not been incorporated into this plan as they are being established through the Municipal Comprehensive Review, with a draft Official Plan expected to Council in 2020. This approach to updating and establishing housing targets will allow for the opportunity to align the updated forecast, the Regional Official Plan, and *Housing Solutions*.

A Council-approved draft of *Housing Solutions* must be submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing by December 31, 2019

The Region is required to submit the five-year review and update of *Housing Solutions* to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing by December 31, 2019. The Province will then have an opportunity to review and comment on the revised plan and may recommend adjustments to reflect any additional changes in provincial direction or policies. Should substantial changes be required by the Province, a revised version of the plan will be brought to Council in early 2020.

Implementation of *Housing Solutions* aligns with *Vision 2051* by supporting appropriate housing for all ages and stages and the Corporate Strategic Plan priority to support community health and well-being

Providing affordable housing options that meet the different and changing needs of York Region residents is a key priority reflected in the Region’s [Vision 2051](#) and the [2019 to 2023 Corporate Strategic Plan](#). The goals, objectives and actions presented align with the Region’s existing strategies and plans and consistent performance measures have been identified where possible to help track progress in implementing the plan.

5. Financial

Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023 continues to bring together partners and identifies how the Region will leverage available resources and funding to work toward common goals. The 2019 and 2020 actions were developed with consideration given to available federal and provincial funding and the projected impact of provincial funding reductions to the Community and Health Services Department. Actions beyond 2020 will be informed by the available budget and fiscal pressures.

In addition to approved tax levy contributions for community housing, homelessness and housing stability and the Community Investment Fund, the Region has received short-term funding allocations from a number of federal and provincial programs that will be used to implement actions identified in *Housing Solutions*. Table 3 outlines confirmed and planned funding allocations for 2019 to 2022, previously reported to Council in [June 2019](#).

Table 3
Federal/Provincial Funding Allocations for Community Housing and Homelessness Prevention/Housing Stability Programs

Funding Stream		2019-20 confirmed	2020-21 planned	2021-22 planned
Housing Programs	Canada-Ontario Community Housing Initiative (COCHI)*	\$0.05 million	\$0	\$0
	Ontario Priorities Housing Initiative (OPHI)*	\$7.5 million	\$3.9 million	\$6.0 million
	Investment in Affordable Housing – Extension (IAH-E)	\$4.3 million	N/A**	N/A
Homeless Programs	Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI)***	\$14.0 million	\$15.7 million	\$15.7 million
	Home for Good operating funding	\$0.5 million	\$0.5 million	\$0.5 million
Total Annual Funding		\$26.3 million	\$20.1 million	\$22.2 million

*New program

**This program ends March 31, 2020

***The Region was anticipating an increase in CHPI funding of \$1.7 million for 2019-20, contingent on provincial budget approval. In April 2019 the Province advised funding for 2019-20 would remain at the 2018-19 allocation level and the planned increase would be delayed to 2020-21.

The Region also received a one-time funding allocation for 2020 from the Canada-Ontario Social Housing Agreement that may be used to implement recommendations from the October 2019 Committee of the Whole report, *Comprehensive Review of the Subsidized Housing Wait List*.

In addition, as the Community Entity for York Region under Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy, United Way Greater Toronto administers federal funding for homelessness services. York Region works closely with community partners, including United Way Greater Toronto, to continue building, coordinating and leveraging opportunities within the housing and homelessness system.

6. Local Impact

The increasing cost of housing, the limited supply of affordable and rental housing and the need for a range of support services that can help people find and keep stable housing are challenges in all municipalities across the Region.

Local municipalities are critical partners in increasing the rental housing supply and supporting the development of affordable housing options. To better understand local needs, municipal staff were engaged during the five-year review and update of *Housing Solutions*, and will continue to play a key role in implementing the 2019 to 2023 Plan.

7. Conclusion

Since Council approved *Housing Solutions* in 2014, the Region has been successful in increasing the supply of community and purpose-built rental housing and building capacity within the homelessness prevention and housing stability system. The Region's needs assessment and community consultations confirmed that despite these successes, challenges still exist. These include rising housing costs, a limited rental supply and limited diversity in the types of ownership options that are affordable. There is also an ongoing need for a range of supports to help people stay housed.

Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023 provides a roadmap for York Region and its partners to continue working to help residents find and keep affordable and appropriate housing. It enables the Region and its partners to work together under a long-term strategic direction, while offering flexibility to respond to new opportunities and challenges impacting residents and the housing and homelessness system. Working together as a system, York Region and its partners can help build housing options and supports for residents at all ages and stages of their lives.

For more information on this report, please contact Rick Farrell, General Manager, Housing Services at 1-877-464-9675 ext. 72091 or Paul Freeman, Chief Planner at ext.71534. Accessible formats or communication supports are available upon request.

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September 20, 2019
Attachment (1)
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