

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF YORK REGION'S SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WAIT LIST

Presentation to the Human Services Planning Board of York Region

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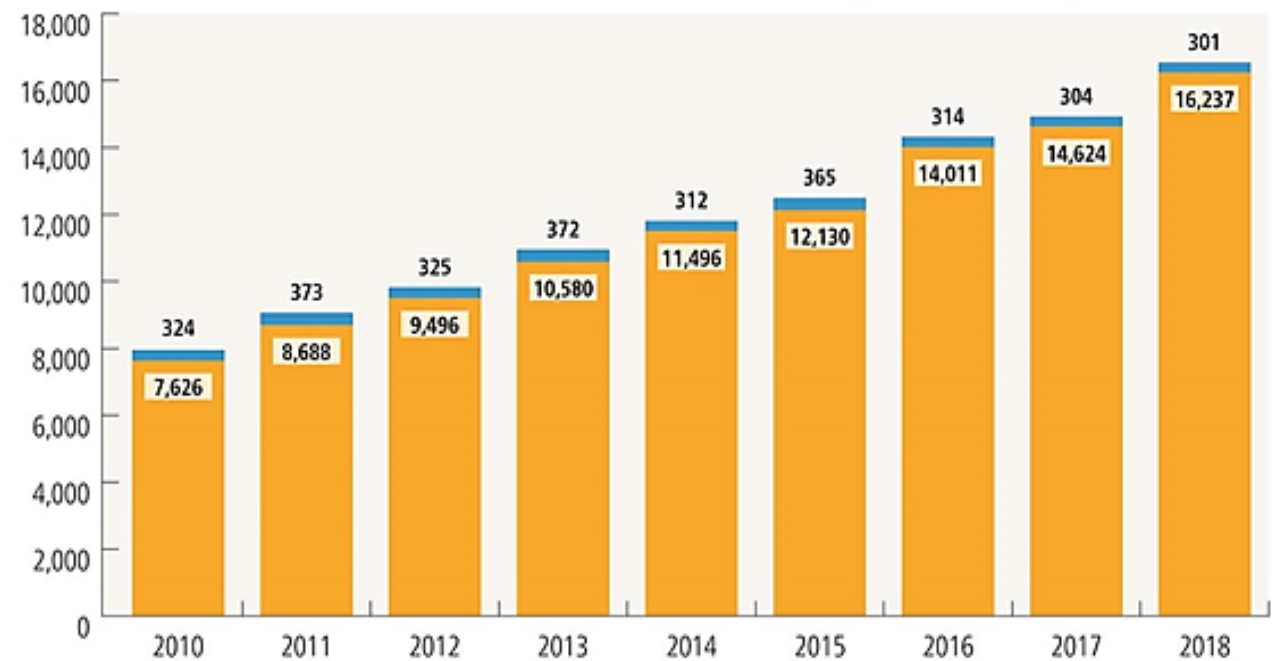
OUTLINE

- Background and legislative context
- Recent enhancements to the subsidized housing wait list
- Comprehensive review approach and results
- Recommendations and planned activities
- Discussion and next steps

BACKGROUND

- Housing options are not well-matched to York Region's current and future needs
- York Region is required to maintain a subsidized housing wait list based on chronology
- Over 16,000 households have indicated an interest in subsidized housing

Subsidized Housing Wait List Growth and Households Housed, 2010 to 2018



Source: York Region Community and Health Services Department, 2019.

Wait List Households Households Housed

CURRENT LEGISLATIVE CONTEXT

- Eligibility criteria:
 - 16 years of age or older
 - Legally entitled to live in Canada
 - No arrears to a community housing provider
 - Under the income and asset limit
- Administration of the wait list is heavily prescribed by the Province
 - Survivors of human trafficking and domestic violence receive priority, while all other applicants are offered subsidy in chronological order
 - Applicants may refuse three subsidy offers before being removed from the wait list
 - Households receiving a rent subsidy can be on the wait list

RECENT ENHANCEMENTS TO THE SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WAIT LIST

Purpose: Improve administration of the wait list to **streamline processes** and **enhance client service**



Implemented a Move-in Ready Program



Initiated phone applications through Access York



Enhanced technology through Rent Cafe



Implemented income and asset limits

COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW OF THE SUBSIDIZED HOUSING WAIT LIST

PURPOSE AND APPROACH FOR THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW

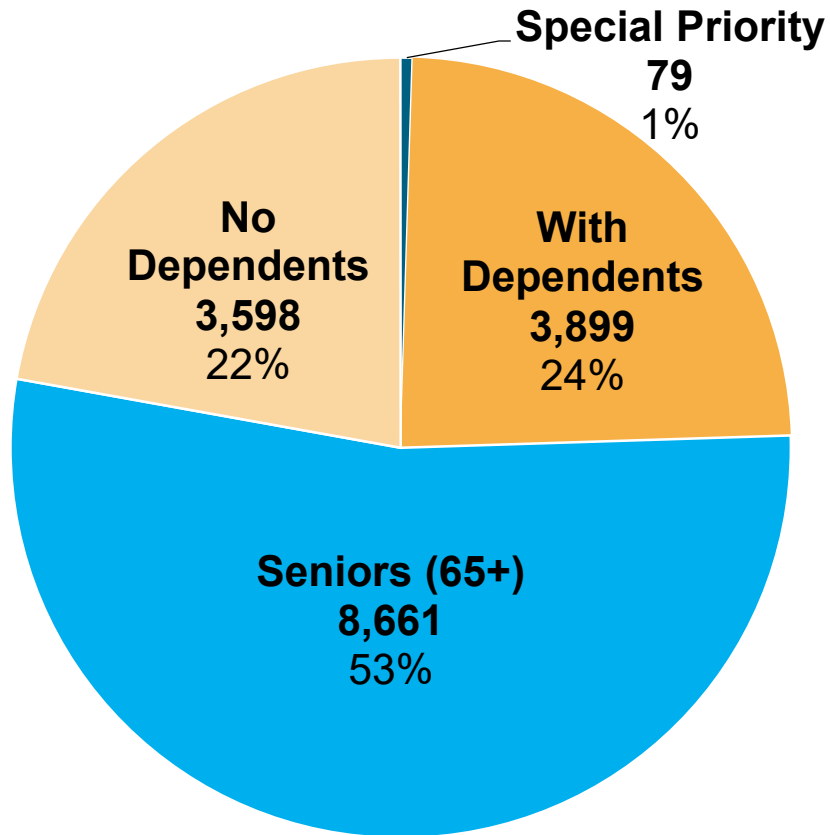
Purpose: Better understand applicants' needs, identify potential supports and continue enhancing administration of the wait list

- Analyzed subsidized housing wait list data, research and best practices
- Engaged 1,046 current applicants through surveys, focus groups and interviews to understand their needs
- Engaged Regional staff and external partners to understand challenges and identify opportunities
 - Partnership with York Region District School Board
 - Input from emergency housing service providers, housing providers, mental health and additions, United Way Greater Toronto, and other non-profit agencies supporting residents' housing and support needs

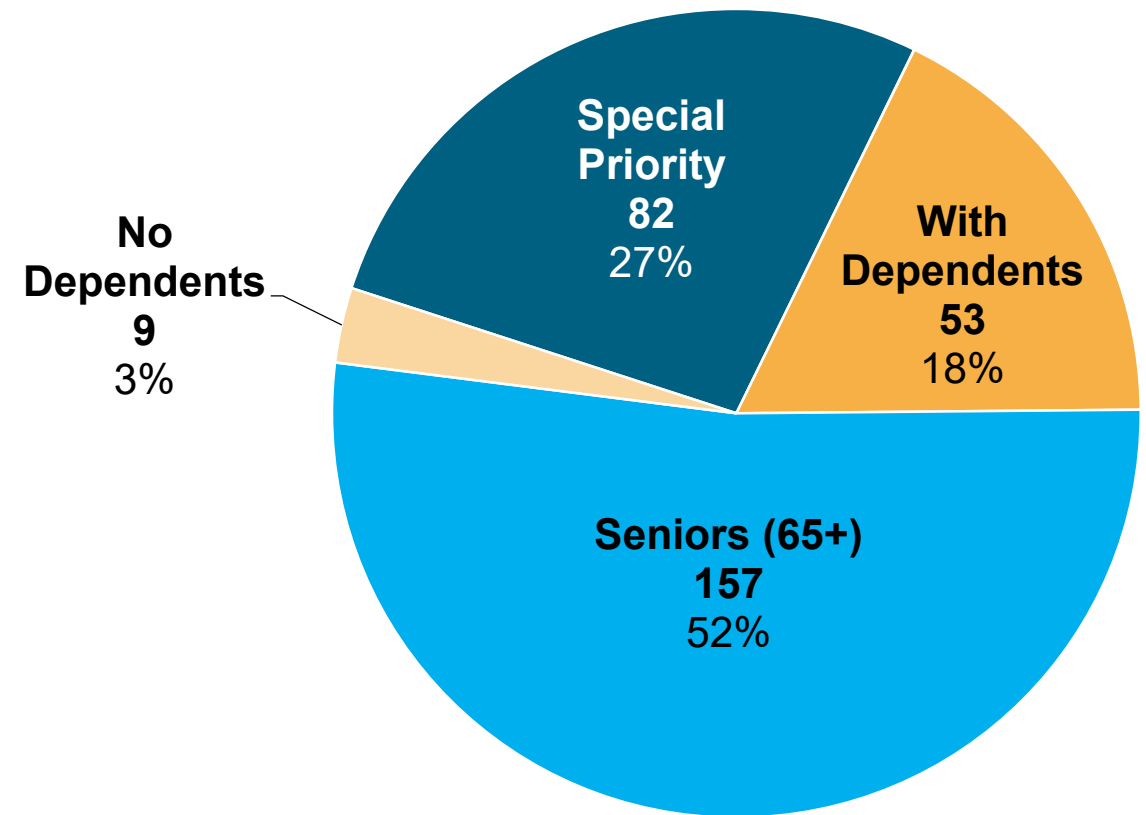
WHO IS ON THE WAIT LIST AND WHO WAS HOUSED?

Applicants by Household Type

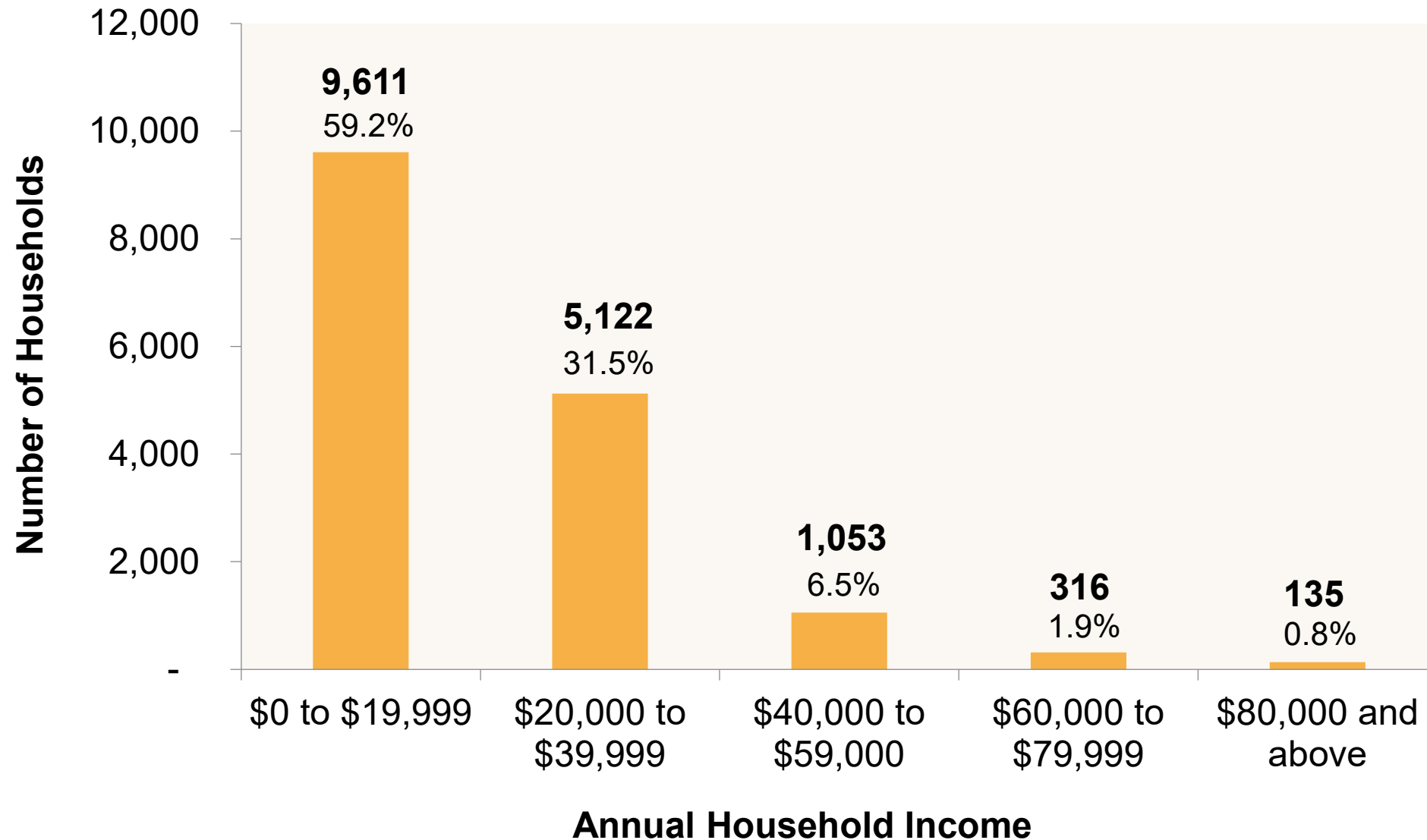
(as of December 31, 2018)



Applicants Housed in 2018 by Household Type



APPLICANTS BY ANNUAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME



RESULTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW — APPLICANTS

Findings:

- Of the 16,237 households waiting at the end of 2018, 53% are seniors
- Many households are living in low income with current rents that are unaffordable
- Housing affordability concerns was applicants' primary reason for applying
- Applicants indicated a need for services to help remain in their current housing
- Many applicants are not aware of the range of services available to support their needs

RESULTS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE REVIEW — STAFF AND PARTNERS

Opportunities:

- Implement better tools to assess housing need and gain a full picture of applicants' support needs using a coordinated intake and case management process
- Educate applicants on the range of services and affordable housing options in their communities so they can make informed decisions
- Consider alternative and innovative housing options such as portable housing benefits

RECOMMENDATIONS AND 2020 PLANNED ACTIVITIES

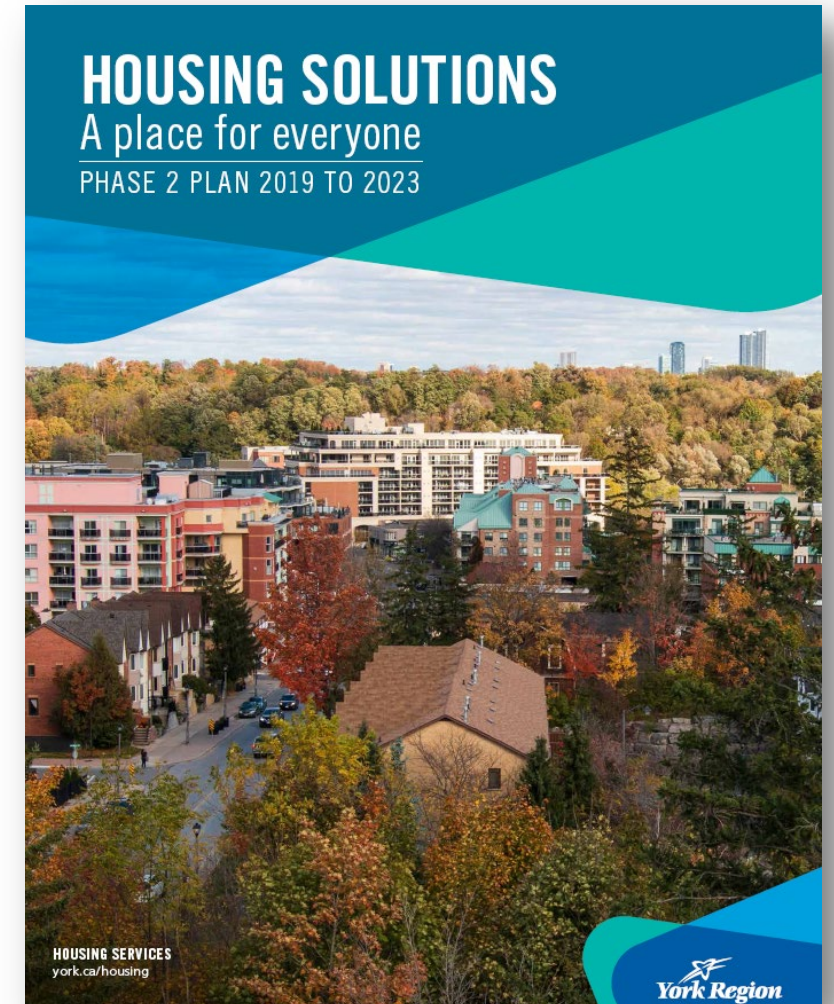
Recommendation	Planned Activities
1. Better assess applicants' needs when they first apply for subsidized housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement a more robust screening tool to identify applicants' needs, support referrals to help stabilize applicants' existing housing
2. Enhance processes and increase communication with applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand access to online information such as building turnover rates so applicants can make informed housing choices• Increase information-sharing with applicants on the status of their applications so they can better plan their futures
3. Support applicants while they wait for subsidized housing and help them make informed housing choices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Outline client pathways and better inform applicants of the supports available to access the right supports for their needs• Develop communications materials for seniors to support York Region's aging population and ensure the largest client group is aware of their housing options• Explore alternative forms of housing that may better suit applicants' needs, such as rent subsidies or mixed-tenure models

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

- Continue to advocate to the Province to help target subsidies to those most in need
 - Auditor General of Ontario recommended the Province work with Service Managers to develop a needs based eligibility and prioritization process
 - The Province recently announced regulatory changes to modernize the community housing system
 - Seek opportunities to participate on provincial technical working groups
- Explore opportunities to implement new technology solutions that provide applicants with more autonomy to manage their applications
- Pilot and evaluate alternative rent subsidy models
- Implement new business processes to streamline administration

ALIGNMENT WITH THE 10-YEAR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS PLAN

- *Housing Solutions 2019 to 2023* is the review and update of York Region's Housing and Homelessness Plan
- The Plan will continue to advance York Region's overall housing and homelessness system
- Specific 2020 actions support the results of the comprehensive review, such as:
 - Developing policies and practices to respond to the comprehensive review to better connect people with supports to help find or keep housing



DISCUSSION

1. Are there specific community agencies we could partner with to implement the recommendations and planned activities?
2. Are there other housing options or new communication tools we should consider to better serve applicants, including seniors?
3. Are there different key performance measures we should consider to measure our progress in addressing housing need?

THANK YOU

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